

2006/2007

Summary of Progress on Strategic Goals

Engaging Durham to make a difference
in the lives of our young children.



Jim & Carolyn Hunt Child Care Resource Center
1201 S. Briggs Ave., Suite 210
Durham, NC 27703

919-403-6960 (office)
919-403-6963 (fax)

www.dpfc.net



Durham's Partnership for Children

Summary of Progress on Strategic Goals
Fiscal Year 2006-07

Prepared by
The Program Evaluation Group
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Introduction

Durham's Partnership for Children (DPfC) is a non-profit organization that administers state Smart Start funds to direct service providers in Durham County. In 2006-07, administrators, staff, and consultants work together to advance the Partnership's mission on behalf of young children (ages 0-5) in Durham County:

To continuously mobilize and unify the Durham community in creating, supporting and strengthening innovative and successful collaborative approaches to serving the needs of all young children and their families, enhancing readiness for success in school and life.

External evaluation services are provided by The Program Evaluation Group (TPEG) of Pittsboro, NC. To complement the Final Activity Evaluation Report, TPEG was asked to write a summary of the Partnership's progress toward achieving the four Strategic Goals established in its five-year Strategic Plan (2003-08). The following summary was compiled on the basis of our

ongoing work with the Partnership, final outcomes data for 2006-07, and interviews with DPfC staff. The four Strategic Goals to be addressed are:

Goal 1 - Meet or exceed PBIS and local standards for excellence in the Partnership's Early Care and Education, Health, and Family Support areas.

Goal 2 – Increase Partnership resources and visibility.

Goal 3 - Stabilize management, allocations and administrative systems w/continuous improvement efforts

Goal 4 - Enhance and sustain excellence in agency staff and board leadership.

Goal 1 - PBIS and local standards for excellence

NCPC evaluates the success of each partnership using the Performance-Based Incentive System (PBIS) Criteria and Standards. This system lays out expected outcomes in Early Care and Education, Health, and Family Support. Data compiled in the Final Activity Evaluation Report confirm that the greatest strength of DPfC and its funded partners continues to be placement of children in high-quality, regulated child care. Positive outcomes have also been achieved in teacher compensation, parent education and support, and early intervention for children with or at risk of special needs or disabilities. Areas for improvement include the quality of child care placements for children with special/developmental needs, lead teacher education points earned by child care programs, family literacy, and Health Check participation in Durham County. Strategies for improvement in some of these areas are already being implemented.

Reaffirm high quality efforts; specifically, to increase the county child care standard through more 4 and 5 star centers

The Partnership is consistently strong in placing children in regulated high quality child care. Funded partners help parents become more knowledgeable about selecting high quality care (Choosing & Using) and coordinate placements in high quality care (DACCA, More at Four). The Child Care Quality Improvement Project (QUIP) is the direct service activity that best addresses the need to increase the number of child care programs in Durham County that have been awarded 4 or 5 stars. QUIP activities encompass technical assistance to child care sites that

wish to improve their licensure or accreditation status, professional development for child care providers, and substitutes who fill in while teachers pursue additional course work in Early Childhood Education.

Participate in closing the achievement gap and increasing school readiness

All of DPfC's funded activities are selected for their potential to address critical issues related to increasing school readiness and ultimately to close achievement gaps defined by race/ethnicity or socioeconomic status. However, data for demonstrating impact on school readiness have been difficult for the Partnership to obtain. Some progress was made in this area in 2006-07.

As a courtesy to DPfC, the Durham Public Schools (DPS) administer a Child Care Survey to parents when they enroll their children in Kindergarten. In 2006-07, the Partnership arranged with DPS for a Masters degree candidate in Duke University's Institute of Public Policy to link selected school readiness indicators (letter identification and concepts about print) with information about the kind of child care students received prior to enrolling in Kindergarten. The resulting baseline data indicated that students who had attended regulated child care programs outperformed those who had been cared for in their homes by a parent or other family member. Baseline data also reveal significant gaps in letter identification and concepts about print between Hispanic children and other children (Black and White). Black and White children perform equally well on both school readiness indicators. Using this information, DPfC and DPS will set baselines and look at whether additional school readiness indicators such as social and emotional development can be included. DPfC will continue to work with DPS to gain access to school performance data and monitor progress beyond the baseline.

Address child care and school readiness for children with special needs

In 2006-07, the Partnership funded three partners (Choosing & Using, DACCA, and More at Four) to advise parents about their child care options and place children in the highest quality available care that meets their individual needs. Included in their client population are children with or at risk of special, developmental needs who receive child care subsidy. For the past two years, the funded partners have not established expected outcomes with respect to these children and therefore have not reported outcome data regarding either the star rating of centers that

enroll them or the percentage that are enrolled in 4-5 star rated programs. At the same time, 2005-06 PBIS-related data from NCPC indicates that the centers that serve these children in Durham County have not achieved the minimum expected star rating (4.0). Further, the number of children with special needs children with subsidy that are enrolled in 4-5 star centers is also below the expected minimum (75%). In 2007-08, the appropriate partners will begin to collect enrollment data for children with special needs who receive subsidy in order to monitor the quality of centers that enroll them and identify strategies to increase quality in these programs.

In addition to funding efforts to improve the quality of enrollments for special needs children in subsidized care, funded partners also provide training to child care providers and families to help them work more effectively with children who exhibit challenging behaviors or have special needs. Services offered by Child Care Based Mental Health Initiative and EChO promote appropriate, stable child care settings that support children's growth and development.

Continue and upgrade family support and family involvement in Smart Start programs

In 2006-07, three funded partners served as family resource centers (FAMOSA, Little River, Welcome Baby) to provide parent education and support in parenting skills and family literacy, among other things. Although not "officially" funded as family support programs, a number of other partners also provide services that support families. Choosing & Using advises parents on quality child care; EChO provides support to families of children with challenging behaviors; Family Support Subsidy provides financial assistance to families of children with special needs so they can acquire needed equipment and services; Healthy Families Durham conducts an in-home visiting program for families of children at risk of child abuse; and Hispanic/Latino Consultation provides translation and interpretation services to Spanish-speaking families who have children with or at risk of special needs.

Smart Start regulations limit the proportion of funds that can be used for non-ECE activities. Accordingly, the Partnership allocates a small percentage of its budget (approximately 5%) for family support activities. As a result, many family support needs are currently unmet in Durham County. In 2006-07, the Partnership began working with staff from the family resource centers to identify needs that are not covered by Smart Start dollars, in preparation for seeking additional funds (besides Smart Start) to address the highest priority unmet needs.

Impact school readiness and reach children not served in licensed child care system

For a variety of reasons, a number of families in the Durham community do not use regulated child care. This is especially true among Hispanic families who often place their children in the care of a friend or family member. Some families who do not use regulated child care access other family support programs, including the family resource centers. FAMOSA is particularly active in the Hispanic community, providing community referral assistance through its Linkages program, training parents in family literacy techniques, and, through their Preschool Room, providing many Latino children (and their parents) with their first exposure to a formal classroom experience, thus helping prepare them for school. Likewise, Welcome Baby and Little River also provide school readiness activities and parent information to families and children not in licensed child care.

Goal 2 –Resources and visibility

Increase dollars and volunteers

In 2006-07, a part-time Early Childhood Grant Writer began seeking external funds to augment and expand the services that DPfC can provide beyond what can be funded through Smart Start. He helped prepare proposals to NCPC and the Results-Based Accountability initiative in Durham County for competitive grants and worked collaboratively with Triangle United Way on collecting data. In addition, he was part of a \$190,000 collaborative grant to bring resources to the community for breast feeding practices in the African American community. . He also coordinated small teams of funded partners to write proposals to the Barbara Bush Family Literacy Foundation (to augment family literacy services currently provided to Spanish-speaking families) and to GlaxoSmithKline (for a Ribbon of Hope grant to train case workers in the mental health system about early childhood issues and resources).

The Resource Development Consultant convenes the Champions for Children initiative. Champions for Children is comprised of Durham County business leaders who meet twice a year to learn about early childhood education as a long term strategy for economic development and to discuss strategies for increasing funding and other resources for early childhood initiatives.

The Partnership's Executive Director recruits volunteers from local government, non-profit service providers, and businesses to join the Board of Directors and serve on Board committees that oversee and advise about the work of the Partnership. In 2006-07, a new collaborative effort was launched to host the First State of Durham's Children event, engaging new partners in these efforts. In addition, Board members are asked to make a personal financial commitment to the Partnership. All members (100%) have made personal contributions.

Improve public relations

The Partnership employs a Community Development Manager to develop and disseminate print and electronic materials about DPfC and its funded partners, to engage community members and increase their awareness of the importance of early care and education, and to coordinate the Partnership's involvement in community-wide events.

In 2006-07, the Partnership produced the following reports:

- *A Needs Assessment of Child Care in Durham's Latino Community*, which identifies cultural and economic issues that must be faced to increase Latinos' access to, and desire for, regulated child care.
- *2007 Community Report* on the importance and impact of early childhood education in Durham County.
- *2007 Fatherhood Study* that identifies gaps in support and programming for Durham County fathers and makes recommendations for direct services as well as a broader community-wide approach to serving the needs of fathers.

In 2006-07, DPfC participated in the following public relations and community awareness events in addition to multiple community committees:

- The State of Durham's Children, which was convened in collaboration with the Durham Public Schools, Durham Public Education Network and the Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce.
- Annual Durham County Health Summit, a coordinated effort by the Duke University Health System, Triangle United Way, and city and county government to "develop an effective response to Substance Abuse and Addiction."

Increase advocacy and community outreach

The Executive Director and Partnership staff members represent the Partnership and the interests of young children and their families on numerous committees, work groups, and advisory groups in Durham County. Chief among them are the following:

- Results Based Accountability – Children Ready for and Succeeding in School Committee
- School Readiness/More at Four Committee
- End Poverty 0 – 5 Initiative (Faith community)
- Greater Durham Chamber Legislative Committee
- Prevention Workgroup – Durham County System of Care
- Durham Council for Children with Special Needs (the local interagency coordinating council)
- Child Mental Health Task Force
- DACCA Management, Leadership and Executive Leadership committees (3 separate committees with multiple staff)
- Triangle United Way Children’s Committee for Durham County
- Early Childhood Fund Development Group
- Access to Care – Partnership for a Healthy Durham
- Durham County Health Check Improvement Taskforce
- ABCD Quality Assurance (statewide)
- North Carolina Partnership for Children Development Committee (statewide)

Working with these groups provides the Partnership with access to information about available services and resources in the community, allows DPfC to share what it has to offer with a wide circle of agencies and organizations, and ensures that the needs of young children (ages 0-5) and their families are considered by all who seek to impact school readiness, economic development, and general quality of life in Durham County.

Other targeted advocacy efforts include:

- Tuesdays for Tots - Each Partnership has a designated Tuesday when the General Assembly is in session to visit with their local legislators and educate them about the needs of young children and families in their community;
- Keep the Promise Day - An annual rally in Raleigh to ensure continued focus in the legislature on the needs of young children), and
- Docs for Tots - A nationwide network of physicians who advocate for the health and development of young children, now opening a chapter at Duke University.

Goal 3 - Management, allocations and administrative systems

Stabilize management, policy structure and administrative systems

After years of turnover in the Executive Director (ED) position, the current ED has been with the Partnership for more than four years, and the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors has remained fairly stable over the same period of time. A high priority for the ED has been to develop a system of committees of the Board of Directors to make policy for the Partnership, assist in key decisions about funding and future directions, and provide guidance to the staff and consultants who work for DPfC.

Committees of the Board of Directors include:

- **Allocations Committee** – Recommends awards to funded partners on the basis of DPfC’s mission and likelihood, or past record, of meeting PBIS standards that are either mandated by NCPC or selected by DPfC.
- **Evaluation Committee** - Advises the external evaluation team (on-site Evaluation Coordinator and supervising Team Leader) to ensure that meaningful data are collected to inform that Partnership’s work on behalf of young children. Provides feedback to the Allocations Committee during proposal review.
- **Finance and Audit Committee** – Provides oversight of the financial management of the Partnership and of the annual audit by the State Auditor’s Office.
- **Community Awareness Committee** – Advises the Community Awareness Coordinator regarding strategies to increase the Durham community’s awareness of early childhood issues and their long-term impact on the community.
- **School Readiness/More at Four Committee** –Advises the More at Four program in Durham County and other local programs that promote school readiness for children.

- **Champions for Children Initiative** – Composed of corporate leaders in Durham County; provides guidance and advice to the Resource Development Consultant on resource development efforts.

Another of the Executive Director’s priorities for DPfC was to set up a formal Finance Department. In 2006-07, the Partnership passed its state monitoring by NCPC for 2005-06 with no challenges. The Partnership will be audited by the State Auditors Office for 2006-07 in 2007-08.

Set and realign funding priorities based on strategic directions and PBIS and achieving high quality projects and outcomes

In 2006-07, funded partners and a few prospective partners submitted proposals to the Partnership for the 2007-09 funding cycle. The Evaluation Committee reviewed the proposals to assess the extent to which proposed activities were likely to support DPfC’s mission and achieve the PBIS standards for which the Partnership is accountable. Their input was provided to the Allocations Committee, which conducted its own independent review and made the final funding recommendations. Funding requests were modified and compulsory “recommendations” were made to funded partners depending on the basis of past performance and priorities established in NCPC’s Performance-Based Incentive System. New activities were funded for 2007-08 to fill selected gaps in programming and better address specific PBIS criteria.

Goal 4 – Agency staff and board leadership.

Develop and support Partnership staff excellence and accountability

Every employee develops an annual work plan to organize and prioritize their activities and is accountable for achieving individual goals. Budgets include a line item for training and travel, and all employees are encouraged to take advantage of professional development opportunities as they arise. All employees are given the opportunity to attend NCPC training, MAF training, and the annual National Smart Start Conference.

Sustain an active, knowledgeable, accountable and committed board of directors and strong board leadership

For two years in a row, 100% of Board members have made personal financial contributions to the Partnership. A majority of members are active on Board committees. Members of the Executive Committee include the Board chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and committee chairs chosen by the Board Chair. The Executive Committee has the power of the Board.

In 2006-07, the full Board met eight times, including an annual Board retreat. Board meetings are an opportunity for members to set policy, to receive information updates from the Partnership, network with one another, and identify areas for collaboration. The Executive Committee met each month. In 2007-08, it will meet only during the months when the full Board does not meet. Board committees meet independently of the full Board and on different schedules.

Summary of Progress

Durham's Partnership for Children (DPfC) has made progress on all four of its Strategic Goals:

- **Goal 1 - Meet or exceed PBIS and local standards for excellence in the Partnership's Early Care and Education, Health, and Family Support areas:** NCPC data for 2005-06 indicate excellence in the quality of child placement, and 2006-07 data provided by funded partners is consistent with this result. Positive outcomes have also been reported for teacher compensation, parent education and support, and early intervention for children with or at risk of special needs or disabilities. The Partnership is working in collaboration with funded partners to improve the quality of child care placements for children with special/developmental needs, increase the number of lead teacher education points earned by child care programs, increase literacy activities in client families, and increase Health Check participation in Durham County.
- **Goal 2 – Increase Partnership resources and visibility:** The Early Childhood Grant Writer and Resource Development Consultant are working with funded partners and Board members to develop proposals for foundation grants and to identify additional resources in the corporate community. The Community Development Manager develops

and disseminates print and electronic materials about DPfC and its funded partners, to engage community members, increase their awareness of the importance of early care and education. She also coordinates the Partnership's involvement in community-wide events.

- **Goal 3 - Stabilize management, allocations and administrative systems w/continuous improvement efforts:** The Executive Director and the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors have stabilized over the past four years. A committee structure has been set up within the Board to guide and support the work of Partnership administration, staff, and consultants.
- **Goal 4 - Enhance and sustain excellence in agency staff and board leadership:** All staff members are encouraged to pursue the professional development opportunities available to them. The Board of Directors is kept informed of Partnership and committee activities, as well as issues affecting early care and education, through regular Board meetings and an annual Board retreat.