



2011 Legislative Agenda for Young Children

1. Do Not Cut Vital Services to Young Children

Our future workers are today's newborn babies. Investing in the very young makes economic sense and builds the human capital we need for our future economic success.

Legislators must focus on maintaining services to vulnerable young children and their families and address the needs of an increasing number of families who have been impacted by the recession, loss of jobs, and extended unemployment.

2. Support the Governor's Proposed Funding for Smart Start and More at Four

These collaborative initiatives have made *North Carolina a national leader in early childhood education*.

Smart Start is a comprehensive early childhood initiative that examines county needs through local partnerships and funds an array of measured programs for children birth to age 5 in the areas of early care and education, health, early intervention and family support.

More at Four is a pre-kindergarten program for at-risk 4-year-olds that builds social, emotional and academic competencies to help prepare children for kindergarten. The program operates under high quality program standards and provides a variety of program supports.

Smart Start and More at Four WORK in our community. They provide distinct quality services as well as monitoring, technical assistance, and local accountability through a comprehensive systems approach.

3. Provide Funding for Basic Needs

Science tells us that children's early experiences can create a strong or weak foundation for **all** future learning, behavior and health.

We must provide the basic needs for young children and families – food, clothing, housing and quality early education experiences from the beginning.

4. Provide Child Care Subsidy Funding

It is essential that during this economic period, we protect vital child care programs. In the face of increased budget cuts, constituents are relying on their elected officials to advocate for the continued need for available and affordable high-quality care.

Investing in quality child care initiatives supports working parents, helps our economy and ensures our children will thrive in the long run.

**What hurts children, hurts our economy.
Preserve investments for young children now!**



Durham's Young Children Rely on Smart Start Investments

Science tells us that children's early experiences can create a strong or weak foundation for all future learning, behavior and health. The achievement gap begins well before kindergarten, with many children entering school without basic social, emotional and cognitive skills. In Durham, a comprehensive continuum of early childhood programs and initiatives support children and families to be strong and healthy.

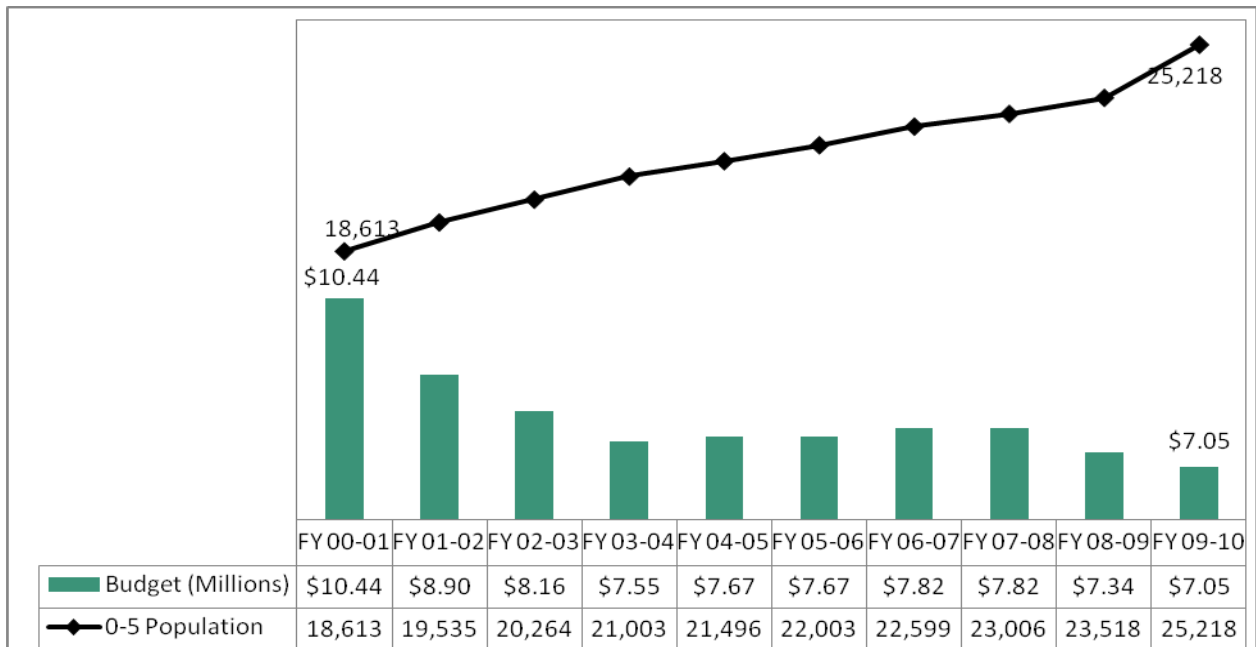
Fast facts about children birth to 5 in Durham County¹

- 25,218 children birth to 5
- 4,423 births
- 26.5% of children birth to 5 live in poverty
- One in five children ages 2 to 4 are obese²

Early childhood resources are shrinking and birth to 5 population is growing.

- Smart Start funding for FY 09-10 is at the lowest level in nine years. Current funding is 32% lower than funding in 2000.
- Meanwhile, there has been a 35% increase in the birth to 5 population between 2000 and 2009.

Durham County Smart Start Funding and Birth to 5 Population



Note: The budget listed includes Smart Start service dollars. Population data from Office of State Budget and Management

Recommendation:

Do not cut vital services to young children. The need for investments in early childhood are greatest during times of economic crisis.

¹ Data reflects 2009 figures. Sources: Office of State Budget and Management, North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics, U.S. Census, American Community Survey, and North Carolina Nutrition and Physical Activity Surveillance System (NC-NPASS).

² NC-NPASS includes data on children seen in North Carolina Public Health Sponsored WIC and Child Health Clinics and some School Based Health Center