

# COMMUNITIES THRIVE WHEN CHILDREN THRIVE



## PLEDGE TO PROTECT CHILDREN

**Whereas** North Carolina's prosperity depends on our ability to ensure that all children have the opportunity to develop intellectually, socially and emotionally. A child with a solid foundation becomes part of a solid community and contributes to our society.

**And whereas** North Carolina business owners, employees, and job seekers rely on high quality, reliable child care. Two-thirds of all North Carolina children ages birth through five live in families where all parents work. Studies show that high quality child care improves employee productivity, reduces absenteeism, and cuts turnover.

**And whereas** North Carolina's future workers are today's newborn babies. Building a strong and productive labor force largely depends on how we invest in children today. According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, *"Early childhood education has a tremendous impact on the national economic security and the viability of the American dream."*

**And whereas** during the height of the recession, more than 800 parents, business leaders, elected officials, health care providers, early childhood professionals and others representing every county in the state agreed that ensuring access to high quality early childhood care and education programs needed to be a top priority for the state.

**I pledge to protect early care and education for North Carolina's children.**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Sign online at: [www.thepetitionsite.com/10/North-Carolina-Children-Pledge](http://www.thepetitionsite.com/10/North-Carolina-Children-Pledge)

# WHAT QUALITY EARLY EDUCATION MEANS TO NORTH CAROLINIANS

**More than 800 North Carolinians signed a petition asking legislators to protect early childhood investments. Here were some of their reasons:**

“As a mother of 2, I need high quality child care options. I’m torn between leaving my children in questionable/unsafe child care so I can work, or trying to support a family of 4 off my husband’s teacher salary. That’s a horrible choice for any family to make. Smart Start makes a significant impact in high quality child care and in my family.”

- Stephanie Nelson

“A high quality preschool education is a priority in Catawba County where currently 50% of our children do not have previous preschool (high quality or otherwise) before entering kindergarten. We agree with other prominent business organizations such as the Committee for Economic Development, the Business Roundtable and the US Chamber’s Institute for a Competitive Workforce that quality preschool is the groundfloor of economic development (human capital) and gives the biggest bang for the educational dollar. We need to start centering our fiscal and political policies around children as the future of our great state.”

- Lamar Mitchell

“As a pediatrician working in rural NC, I have seen such positive results from our nationally recognized Smart Start program. It is such a sensible and comprehensive set of services offered to our youngest children that benefits their very important potential in brain development. These youngest children are the future of our fine state of NC. Smart Start has a proven track record in improving early childhood outcomes. Legislators: Please listen to those of us, like myself as a pediatrician. Smart Start is working and we need you to understand the importance of continuing this well recognized program for the excellence that it has accomplished.”

- Kathleen Clarke-Pearson

“It helped my child talk. He would get SO frustrated with me because I didn’t know WHAT he wanted. They helped him to speak so I could understand him! At 18 months old, he BARELY had 6 words that I could understand. In 9 short months, he was speaking in 3-4 word sentences. PLEASE don’t cut these services. Our kids DEPEND on them!”

- Tonia Williams

“Having worked in a prison for adolescents, I have really seen the need to start very young giving children a level playing field.”

- Noreen Quinn

“Both my children have attended or still is attending a Five star daycare in Fayetteville NC FTCC and I wouldn’t have them anywhere else..its nice to go to work and I don’t have to worry!”

- Amy McLean