



THE *Heart* OF THE TRIANGLE

Sharing the vision and supporting the mission of the Triangle area non-profit community.

WAKE Up and Read

by Judy Liu, MPH

You can provide books to support a child's reading journey. Studies have shown that children who receive a high-quality early childhood education:

- Perform better in school
- Stay in school longer and are more likely to attend college
- Earn more and are less likely to need government assistance
- Lead healthier lives
- Give back to the community

Wake County SmartStart (WCSS) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Since inception in 1996, WCSS has supported hundreds of children in learning to read. WCSS is part of a network of 75 local nonprofit partnerships led by The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc. (NCPC). Their mission is to build the capacity of families and the community to ensure that children, age birth to five, are prepared for success in school and in life. WCSS believes each child has the potential to do great things! WCSS works to improve the quality, accessibility and affordability of child care; provide preventive healthcare and early intervention services; and offer family support services—all delivered as part of a strong and diverse integrated early childhood system.

WCSS funded partners provide direct services for children and their families. Community volunteers, staff members, child care providers, schools, civic organizations and local businesses all strive to realize the WCSS mission and build a strong foundation for children's learning and development beginning at birth. In addition to programs directly managed by WCSS, 10 partner agencies also receive funding. Together, 11 local agencies provide services through 22 programs focused on the following goals:

- Children are in safe, supportive home environments
- Children are in high quality care that contributes to a positive outcome

- Children are healthy and are developmentally ready for school
- Children and families are supported by a strong and diverse early childhood system

WCSS and their partner agencies support high-quality early care and education through:

- Nurturing and responsive learning communities that promote trusting relationships
- Engaging and positive interactions with children, families and staff
- Inclusive and safe play environments with opportunities for physical, social-emotional, language and cognitive skill development
- Teaching strategies that address the varying abilities of each child
- Practices that respect diversity

WAKE Up and Read is a collaborative effort to engage and educate Wake County residents about the importance of childhood literacy and to increase access to literacy resources and opportunities for all children. By partnering with community agencies and partners, resources and opportunities focused on increasing early literacy skills of young children are developed and shared. The WAKE Up and Read collaborative meets regularly to share programming, research and funding information. By communicating and planning with organizations doing similar work, the system of response on early literacy work is more efficient.

To learn more, call 919-852-3319, visit <http://wakeupandread.org> or email wakereads@gmail.com.

Have a question about book drives? Call 919-431-7207 or write to Wake Up and Read, Wake County Public Schools, Office of Early Learning, Crossroads II, 110 Corning Road, Cary, NC 27518.

Natural Awakenings supports Triangle area non-profits by offering a free full-page feature article each month. It is a very visible platform from which an organization can tell its story and detail the services it offers. Please let us know if you would like for your non-profit organization to be considered for inclusion in an upcoming issue. Call 919-342-2831 or email TrianglePublisher@NaturalAwakeningsMag.com.