



Strategic Plan 2011 – 2014

March 29, 2011

Developed October 2010 – April 2011

Pending Strategic Planning Committee Review (April 6) and
Board Approval (April 20)

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Introduction

April 2011

Dear Friends and Partners of Smart Start of Buncombe County:

We are pleased to share this strategic plan for Smart Start of Buncombe County that is intended to guide our work over the next several years. Given the uncertainty about legislative funding for Smart Start and our related programs, this plan provides essential direction for different scenarios.

Smart Start of Buncombe County directly impacts the quality of child care by funding activities that provide quality maintenance and improvement assistance, family support programming and professional development opportunities; serves over 4,000 children and families each year; and recently expanded our capacity by taking over critical Child Care Resource and Referral services.

Highlights of the Strategic Plan

This plan was developed through the participation and dedication of our Board of Directors and staff at Smart Start of Buncombe County. We believe that the strategic plan provides the following highlights:

- ✓ Brainstorm this list at the Planning Committee meeting.

This document includes the vision and mission statements, core values, and goals, strategies and objectives. The appendix includes a summary of the planning process; the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges (SWOC) Analysis that was developed through this process; and a list of the members of the Board of Directors.

Please share your comments and ideas about this plan with me and the members of our Board of Directors. We look forward to an ongoing dialogue as we implement this plan, making modifications as needed.

Warm regards,

Ron Bradford
Executive Director

Dan Anderson
Chair, Board of Directors
Executive Vice President
Southern Community Bank & Trust

Strategic Plan Summary

Vision Statement

Every child in our community will reach his or her fullest potential and be prepared for lifelong success.

Note for Planning Committee—Previous version was:

Every child will arrive at school healthy and prepared for success.

Mission Statement

The mission of Smart Start of Buncombe County is to strengthen the capacity of, educators, families and the community to foster children’s learning and development from birth.

Note for Planning Committee—Previous version was:

To promote high quality, affordable, early childhood care and education to ensure that young children are healthy and prepared to succeed when they enter school.

Core Values

We believe that:

- 1) Learning begins at birth;
- 2) Children deserve the best opportunities for learning and development;
- 3) Families play a critical role in children’s learning; and
- 4) Collaboration is essential to accomplish our vision.

Note: Should the following value be included? Programs should be based on best practices in child development.

Priority Goals and Strategies:

Goal 1. Establish Smart Start as a regional leader in early care and education.

- Strategy A: Identify regional leadership opportunities.
- Strategy B: Build and maintain relations with key community partners/constituent groups throughout the year.
- Strategy C: Build a local presence with a variety of media outlets serving the Asheville/Buncombe area.

Goal 2. Support high quality early care and education and school-age programs.

- Strategy A: Provide quarterly training opportunities that are based on research to support early educators and school-age providers.
- Strategy B: Assist early educators and school-age providers in maintaining program quality.
- Strategy C: Make trainings available to families of children not enrolled in licensed child care to support their school readiness.
- Strategy D: Establish strong working relationships with key school-age providers to determine their technical assistance and training needs.

Goal 3. Expand services for children who are not in licensed child care and their families.

- Strategy A: Expand Play and Learn groups.
- Strategy B: Explore a mentor model to support family-led play groups to continue after completion of series.
- Strategy C: Assess needs of children not in licensed child care.

Goal 4. Identify creative approaches to implementing programs and refine outcomes reporting.

- Strategy A: Provide additional training through CCR&R training calendar and explore alternative training methods.
- Strategy B: Increase the Board of Directors' understanding of program outcomes.
- Strategy C: Partner with the school systems to continue elements of the Transition to Kindergarten Program.

Goal 5. Develop and apply a framework for assessing and implementing regional collaborations and mergers.

- Strategy A: Develop a framework for assessing collaborations and mergers.
- Strategy B: Apply this framework when assessing collaborations and mergers.

Strategic Plan Goals, Strategies, and Objectives

Goal 1. Establish Smart Start as a regional leader in early care and education and school age programming.

<i>Strategies and Objectives</i>	<i>How to Measure the Success of the Strategies</i>
<p>Strategy A: Identify regional leadership opportunities.</p> <p>Objective 1: As a co-sponsor of the Western Regional Early Childhood Conference, strengthen the overall design and delivery of the conference.</p> <p>Objective 2: Through the Shape NC initiative, deliver a minimum of two regional trainings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of new presenters • % of overall positive rating of conference based on conference evaluations • # of regional trainings developed and facilitated
<p>Strategy B: Build and maintain relations with key community partners/constituent groups throughout the year.</p> <p>Objective 1: Create an “elevator speech” for staff, direct service providers, and board members to utilize when talking about Smart Start.</p> <p>Objective 2: All management staff to serve on at least one community board and/or committee.</p> <p>Objective 3: Increase the organization’s visibility with the local business community through active membership with The Asheville Chamber of Commerce.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elevator Speech developed and shared • List of external committees/boards on which Managers serve • Membership maintained on Asheville Chamber • Smart Start Program Highlights and advocacy materials distributed to appropriate Chamber committees
<p>Strategy C: Build a local presence with a variety of media outlets serving the Asheville/Buncombe area.</p> <p>Objective 1: Develop a media relations plan identifying quarterly themes to promote.</p> <p>Objective 2: Implement a quarterly public service announcement on radio and/or television to deliver key messages as identified in the media relations plan.</p> <p>Objective 3: Investigate sponsorship opportunities with WLOS-TV.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media plan developed and implemented • 4 public service announcements developed and aired/publicized

Goal 2: Support high quality early care and education and school-age programs.

How to Measure the Success of the Strategies

Strategies and Objectives

<p>Strategy A: Provide quarterly training opportunities that are based on research to support early educators and school-age providers.</p> <p>Objective 1: Deliver an annual training series for administrators.</p> <p>Objective 2: Deliver at least 1 CEU eligible training per quarter.</p> <p>Objective 3: Promote training opportunities that focus on meeting the needs of children ages 0-3.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual administrators series developed & facilitated • # of CEU trainings provided per quarter • # of trainings offered w/ focus on children 0-3
<p>Strategy B: Assist early educators and school-age providers in maintaining program quality.</p> <p>Objective 1: Provide Technical Assistance on developing a quality maintenance plan.</p> <p>Objective 2: Conduct drop-in visits after completion of scheduled Technical Assistance to encourage on-going maintenance of quality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of ece programs with maintenance plans • # of programs requesting drop-in TA visits • # of TA visits conducted
<p>Strategy C: Make trainings available to families of children not enrolled in licensed child care to support their school readiness.</p> <p>Objective 1: Promote trainings through a variety of venues.</p> <p>Objective 2: Collaborate with other organizations to provide trainings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of trainings offered to families • # of trainings offered collaboratively
<p>Strategy D: Establish strong working relationships with key school-age providers to determine their technical assistance and training needs.</p> <p>Objective 1: CCR&R staff schedule visits to school-age programs to build relationships with directors.</p> <p>Objective 2: Offer annual focus group sessions for school-age providers to gather their input.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of programs visited • # of focus groups offered; summary of focus group results

Goal 3: Expand services for children who are not in licensed child care and their families.

How to Measure the Success of the Strategies

Strategies and Objectives

<p>Strategy A: Expand Play and Learn groups.</p> <p>Objective 1: Recruit sufficient volunteers to assist with the groups.</p> <p>Objective 2: Develop outdoor play group model to extend current series.</p> <p>Objective 3: Introduce outdoor play group model to existing formal and informal moms play groups in the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of volunteers recruited and trained • Creation of outdoor play content • # of outdoor play sessions offered to existing groups • # of community play groups introduced to outdoor play group model.
<p>Strategy B: Explore a mentor model to support family-led play groups to continue after completion of series.</p> <p>Objective 1: Identify key program elements and resources needed to support family led groups.</p> <p>Objective 2: Determine if family mentor is volunteer or paid part-time position.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of family led play group model • Completion of feasibility study for mentor position.
<p>Strategy C: Assess needs of children not in licensed child care.</p> <p>Objective 1: Conduct a survey of families with children not in regulated child care to identify their needs.</p> <p>Objective 2: Gather input from other organizations on the needs and interests of families and children not in licensed child care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of family survey. • Documentation from 2 organizations on families' interests/needs

Goal 4: Identify creative approaches to implementing programs and refine outcomes reporting.

How to Measure the Success of the Strategies

Strategies and Objectives

<p>Strategy A: Provide additional training through CCR&R training calendar and explore alternative training methods.</p> <p>Objective 1: Deliver a collegiate education counseling series on higher education opportunities, registration processes, financial aid resources, and developing educational plans.</p> <p>Objective 2: Deliver quarterly TTK workshops for early childhood educators.</p> <p>Objective 3: Promote and deliver quarterly TTK workshops for families.</p> <p>Objective 4: Explore webinar and videoconferencing as formats to offer selected professional development opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collegiate education series workshop is delivered • # of education counseling workshops facilitated • # of TTK workshops facilitated for educators • # of TTK workshops facilitated for families
<p>Strategy B: Increase the Board of Directors’ understanding of program outcomes.</p> <p>Objective 1: Collect program outcomes at mid-year in addition to end of year.</p> <p>Objective 2: Identify the 4-5 PBIS criteria that best reflect our programs.</p> <p>Objective 3: Present PBIS results on the selected criteria at board member orientations and at an annual presentation to the board.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid and year-end program outcomes reports • Identification of PBIS criteria • # of outcomes presentation to Board
<p>Strategy C: Partner with the school systems to continue elements of the Transition to Kindergarten Program.</p> <p>Objective 1: Review the All About Me! form to determine additional information that would assist Kindergarten teachers.</p> <p>Objective 2: Develop plan for cost sharing and distribution of All About Me! Forms.</p> <p>Objective 3: Distribute posters promoting kindergarten registration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft of revised form • Plan developed for All About Me! Continuation • # of posters distributed

Goal 5: Develop and apply a framework for assessing and implementing regional collaborations and mergers.

Strategies and Objectives

How to Measure the Success of the Strategies

<p>Strategy A:</p>	<p>Develop a framework for assessing collaborations and mergers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a program analysis based on an organizational Viability Model • Create and finalize a findings and recommendations position paper for Board review and discussion. • Implementation plan created.
<p>Objective 1:</p>	<p>Create a checklist of key metrics to evaluate.</p>	
<p>Objective 2:</p>	<p>Assess the implications of the key evaluators.</p>	
<p>Objective 3:</p>	<p>Create an implementation plan.</p>	
<p>Strategy B:</p>	<p>Apply this framework when assessing collaborations and mergers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of merger possibilities • Application of framework
<p>Objective 1:</p>	<p>Identify any opportunities for a merger and use this framework to assess.</p>	

Appendix A

Strategic Planning Process

In 2010 the Board of Directors of Smart Start of Buncombe County made the decision to develop a strategic plan. The formal planning process was conducted from October 2010 – April 2011.

The organization's leadership determined that the formal planning process should:

- a) focus on gaining consensus for the future priorities of Smart Start;
- b) identify a shared set of values;
- c) increase Smart Start's understanding of current perceptions among key constituencies;
- d) assess goals and strategies in the context of potential funding sources;
- e) increase the effectiveness and focus of annual work plans and the ways in which outcomes are measured;
- f) identify strategic issues and needs resulting from expanded staffing and new programs;
- g) engage board members in increasing board effectiveness;
- h) result in a clear, shared understanding of the future direction of the work and programs of Smart Start of Buncombe County; and
- i) provide a process to keep the strategic plan in front of the staff and the Board of Directors.

A Planning Committee was established to lead and conduct the planning process. This committee met 4 times. Members included:

- Board Members: Dan Anderson, Jennie Eblen, Suzanne Fullar, Donna James, Gary Landwirth, Debra Preneta, Melinda Raab, Brian Repass, Larry Thompson, and Mark Upright.
- Staff: Amy Barry, Program Manager; Ron Bradford, Executive Director; Larry Kowalski, Finance and Contracts Manager; and Leslie Moss, CCR&R Manager.

A Committee for vision, mission, and values input was formed to revise the vision and mission statements and to develop stated core values. This committee met 1 time. Members included:

- Allison Jordan, Amy Barry, Amy Rickman, Donna James, Jennifer Buchanan, Kevin Kopp, Mark Upright, Melinda Raab, Suzanne Fullar

There was much participation from the following staff members throughout the planning process:

- Staff: Amy Barry, Program Manager; Stacey Bailey, More at Four/Communications Coordinator; Ron Bradford, Executive Director; Larry Kowalski, Finance and Contracts Manager; and Leslie Moss, CCR&R Manager.

The Board of Directors was actively involved in developing and approving this plan, and 2 planning sessions and 1 retreat were conducted with the board. A list of members of the Board of Directors is included in Appendix B.

Organizational Information that Informed the Planning Process

The following information from Smart Start of Buncombe County was gathered, reviewed or generated by the group to inform the planning process.

Organizational Information:

1. Financial results and future budget projections
2. Staff and volunteer leadership documents: role, structure and responsibilities
3. Internal Assessment that used the Core Capacities Assessment Tool (CCAT) will be integrated into strategic planning.
4. Internal profile to include summary of current programs with key data for the future in order to conduct a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) in each area; listing of programmatic opportunities for the future
5. Mission and Vision statements
6. Organization timeline
7. Previous strategic plans to identify any goals/objectives to carry forward into this plan
8. Organization dashboard
9. Memo about milestones and decision factors for potential merger
10. Description of oversight and requirements of NCPC, CCR&R, and More at Four

Constituent/Stakeholder Input:

11. Input from board and staff members via electronic survey
12. Staff synthesis of input from programmatic stakeholders (e.g., partners, community agencies)
13. NC Partnership for Children (NCPC): information about its vision for the future

External Information:

14. Board input on trends in the field and community

Appendix B

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges (SWOC) Analysis

Developed by the Board of Directors on January 28

Based on Review of Program Assessments.

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>
<p><i>Mission/Scope</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We have a clear definition of focus on early childhood• We focus on young children• We consider the whole child• We are a bridge to education <p><i>Programs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unique programs• Family support for those not in child care• Series of supports for providers benefits children & families• Opportunities for professional improvement• Focus on affordable child care• Focus on high quality child care• Quality of placement has high results (PBIS measurements)• Emphasis on quality <p><i>Resources</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Long-term state funding• Multiple state funding• Process in place to guide budget <p><i>Administration & Governance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Great resource in staff and board• Engaged and knowledgeable board• Board involvement & commitment regarding funding• We are doing proactive planning	<p><i>Mission/Scope</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• lack of public understanding of Smart Start• No written core values to guide decisions• Health—is SS the best org?• “Health”—not clear about whether we address mental health• In mission, family component is not clear• In mission/vision definitions, clarify “school readiness” or “early childhood education” <p><i>Programs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited service to non-enrolled children• Highly dependent on government funding• Staff education metric is lower than state average <p><i>Resources</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Having multiple funding sources• Declining resources• Too few resources for those not in child care• Limited resources <p><i>Administration/Governance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited infrastructure for fund development

<p><u>Opportunities</u></p> <p><i>Programs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilizing evidenced based programs • CCR&R—new people/resources/opportunities • Improving and sustaining quality programs • Flexibility in programming (change & improve) • Benefit from statewide initiative (NCPC) Benefit from statewide initiative (NCPC) <p><i>Resources</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop more funding sources <p><i>Mission/scope</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve/reduce duplication (i.e. Madison County) • Chance to impact children’s future • Bring child care community together 	<p><u>Challenges</u></p> <p><i>Mission/scope</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact vs. safety net • Health – are we best? How to define. <p><i>Programs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define measures of success (outcomes) • Funding evidence-based programs • Question—decreasing programs will have long-term impacts • Increased state direction of programs <p><i>Resources</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited resources • Multiple funding sources (with multiple expectations and requirements) • Budget/state
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Appendix C

List of the Board of Directors

Name	Title and Organization	Title	Position on Board
Dan Anderson	Executive Vice President, Southern Community Bank & Trust	Board Chair	Representative of the Business Community
David Bailey	President, United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County	Board Treasurer	President, United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County
Gardner Bridges	Principal, Johnston Elementary School		Non-Designated Position
Jennifer Buchanan	Director, First Baptist Church Child Development Center		Representatives of Licensed Child Care Centers
Chastity Case	Medical Sonography Instructor, AB Tech Community College		Representative of Parent I Family of Child With Special Needs
Michelle Dixon-Millard	Director, Nanny Nanny Poo Poo		Representative of Family Home Child Care Providers
Stephen W. Duckett	Director, Buncombe County Cooperative Extension Service		Director of the Buncombe County Cooperative Extension Service
Jennie Eblen	Community Volunteer, Eblen Foundation		Representative of Local Foundation
Ned Fowler	Dean, Allied Health and Public Service Education, A.B. Tech Community College		President, A.B. Tech Community College Designee
Suzanne Fullar	Community Volunteer		Representative of Citizen's Group/Community Volunteer Group
Patricia Glazener	Pack Library Children's Librarian, Buncombe County Public Library		Representative of the Public Library
Lael Gray	Marketing Coordinator, Asheville Jewish Community Center		Non-Designated Position
Nelle Gregory	Program Administrator, Buncombe County Department of Health		Director of the Buncombe County Health Department Designee
Dr. Donna James	State Director, NC-SACS CASI, Western Carolina University	Board Vice-Chair	Non-Designated Position
Allison Jordan	Executive Director, Children First		Executive Director, Children First
Kevin Kopp	Partner, Roberts & Stevens PA	Chair, Personnel Committee	Representative of the Legal Community
Gary Landwirth	Founder, Giving Ideas, Inc.		Non-Designated Position
Laurie McDanel	Director, Asheville City Schools Preschool		Superintendent of Asheville City Schools Designee
Sabrina Miller	Regional Executive, Bank of America		Representative of the Business Community
Sara Mitchell	Owner/Director, Seraphim Children's Therapy		Representative of Parent/Family Receiving Smart Start Services for Pre-School Child
Maggie Panther	Director, Children's Developmental Services Agency	Board Secretary	Director, Children's Developmental Services Agency ; Representative of the Interagency Coordinating Council
Carol Peterson	Buncombe County Commissioner		Chair of the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners Designee

Name	Title and Organization	Title	Position on Board
Debra Preneta	Retiree		Non-Designated Position
Dr. Melinda Raab	Associate Research Scientist, Orelena Hawks Puckett Institute		Non-Designated Position
Brian Repass	Community Action Opportunities, Head Start Program Operations Manager		Representative of Head Start
Tim Rhodes	Program Administrator, Buncombe Co. Dept. of Social Services		Director, Buncombe County Department of Social Services Designee
Amy Rickman	Director, Child Care Services 1 Senior Opportunities		Representative of Asheville City Government
Candie Sellers	Director, Elementary Education, Buncombe Co. Schools		Superintendent of the Buncombe County Schools Designee
Mandy Stone	Assistant County Manager		County Manager Designee
Larry Thompson, III	Chief Executive Officer, Blue Ridge Foundation	Immediate Past Chair of the Corporation	Representative of the Mental Health Community
Susan Travers	Exceptional Children Curriculum Manager, Buncombe County Schools		Representative Who Works with Special Needs Children
Mark Upright	President and CEO, Eliada Homes, Inc.		Representative of a Child Care Resource and Referral Agency or of Another Non-Profit Child Care Related Organization
Karen Vernon	Vice President, CarePartners Health Services		Non-Designated Position
Robbie J. Williams	Executive Director, One Youth at a Time		Representative of the Religious Community