

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2019

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HOUSE BILL 124

Short Title: Smart Start Funds. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Dobson, Murphy, Lambeth, and Jackson (Primary Sponsors).
For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: Health, if favorable, Appropriations, Health and Human Services, if favorable,
Appropriations, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

February 21, 2019

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO PROMOTE YOUNG CHILDREN'S HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH
CONTINUED INVESTMENT IN THE SMART START PROGRAM.

Whereas, children are born ready to learn but may not have access to the experiences
or environments that foster healthy brain development; and

Whereas, the Smart Start program serves children from birth to five years of age and
works across the State to raise the quality of child care, strengthen families, advance child health
and development, and improve early literacy; and

Whereas, Smart Start is a network of 75 nonprofit local partnerships that delivers
early childhood programs and services in a consistent, efficient way by achieving strong
outcomes that benefit North Carolinians across all 100 counties; and

Whereas, local Smart Start partnerships use community-based, data-driven decision
making to improve the health, well-being, and development of children based on the needs and
resources of their local communities; and

Whereas, the Smart Start network is led by the North Carolina Partnership for
Children, Inc. (NCPC), that ensures fiscal and programmatic accountability and coordinates a
statewide network to create better outcomes for children and families; and

Whereas, Smart Start provides fiscal and programmatic oversight of all services
administered through local partnerships and reports annually to the General Assembly on
outcomes for children; and

Whereas, North Carolina is recognized as a national leader in early education, and the
Smart Start model has been adopted in several states across the country; and

Whereas, investment in Smart Start has declined significantly since 2001, and the
2018-2019 fiscal year appropriation of one hundred fifty-four million dollars (\$154,000,000) is
thirty-three percent (33%) below the 2001 funding levels; and

Whereas, the population of children birth through five years in North Carolina has
increased by more than 100,000 since 2001; and

Whereas, a greater State investment in Smart Start can help ensure that more children
begin kindergarten reading and ready to learn and succeed; Now, therefore,
The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of
Health and Human Services, Division of Child Development and Early Education, the sum of
twenty million dollars (\$20,000,000) recurring for each year of the 2019-2021 fiscal biennium to



1 be allocated to the North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc., to distribute to the Smart Start
2 local partnerships.
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SECTION 2. This act becomes effective July 1, 2019.