



# The Children's Council

of Watauga County, Inc.

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## Annual Report 2011-2012

*The Children's Council builds upon the strengths of children, families, and educators by investing resources, information, and training toward promoting the future health and success of our greatest community asset:*

### Our Children.



The Children's Council of Watauga County convenes stakeholders to assess local needs; to ensure accountability; and to manage community, state and federal resources. The Children's Council has established community networks that bridge education, health services and family supports to best meet the needs of young children and their families.

This has been quite the year of transition for this organization. We have had a change in leadership and a shift in the course of direction. Even in these times of budget cuts and unstable funding, we have come together to focus resources on the most vital programs and services for young children and their families.

Today, neuroscientists are able to show that early experiences actually shape the architecture of the brain and strongly affect whether a child grows up to be a healthy, productive member of society.

Research shows us the first five years of life are critical to long term achievement. Investment in early childhood helps to create a healthier, happier world.

*There are only 2000 days between when a baby is born and when that child enters kindergarten.* Through family support, early literacy programs, child care technical assistance and professional development, and innovative enrichment opportunities we are working to ensure that every child has access to quality early experiences that prepare them to be ready to succeed in school.

Did you know we have undergone a makeover this year! Our newly renovated Family Resource Corner is a friendly, welcoming space for parents with young children to come and gain information about child development, parenting, community resources, and to peruse our extensive lending library.

We aim to be THE resource for families with young children in the High Country. Through community collaborations and partnerships with providers, agencies, professionals, and families we hope to build a community that values and supports the importance of early childhood!

On behalf of the Children's Council staff, Board of Directors and Committee members I am pleased to share the positive impact the Children's Council has had in our community. Through Smart Start funding and technical support, and a multiplicity of community funders, collaborative partners and volunteers, we are able to bring about change for the children and families in Watauga County.

*Crystal Kelly, Executive Director*



## Child Care Resource & Referral

Child Care Resource and Referral has three main components:

### Consumer Education:

We educate individuals and families about the importance of early childhood programs.

- ♥ **382** families received outreach and education about quality child care and programs and services for young children this year.

### Technical Assistance:

Technical assistance is provided in child care facilities to help child care professionals work through challenges and opportuni-

ties and to enhance quality in programs.

- ♥ **63** preschool classrooms received technical assistance services this year.

### Professional Development:

This service promotes increased education of early educators by offering after work and weekend training sessions, as well as a textbook loan program and technical support for college coursework.

- ♥ **267** direct teaching staff attended training sessions.
- ♥ **48** direct teaching staff enrolled in a college course.

## Childcare Subsidies

The Children's Council of Watauga County and the Watauga County Department of Social Services hold a Memorandum of Understanding for the Smart Start funds for child care subsidies.

With the Smart Start funds, the Watauga County Department of Social Services manages and distributes Smart Start funds to child care providers to support families who are working and/or continuing or completing an education.

For the period of July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012 the Children's Council of Watauga County, Inc., provided funding of **\$141,776.00** for purchase of child care services and **\$21,150** for administration of the program.

## Teen Pregnancy & Parenting Program

This innovative program provides services to pregnant and parenting teens to support them staying in school. We offer support groups, childbirth classes, case management, doula services, home visiting, parenting education, and social outings.

Through partnerships with our local transportation authority, mentoring program, Watauga County Schools, and the Health Department we have been able to provide a wraparound approach for this population.

- ♥ **17** pregnant and/or parenting teens/parents and **17** children of teen parents were served from January 2011 --June 2012.

- ♥ **7** teen parents were matched with a mentor
- ♥ **8** teen parents received transportation services to get to and from school with their child

Due to the ongoing success of this program, we were nominated for and **awarded** the Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention of North Carolina annual award for our collaborative work with Western Youth Network in the development of an interagency mentoring program for teen parents.

We were also featured on the Oprah Winfrey Network "Our America with Lisa Ling" where the profiled teen parents across the country. Our program participants and support group

were highlighted on this program.

*This program is funded through a grant application process to the NC Department of Public Instruction.*



## Parents as Teachers



Parents as Teachers (PAT) is a voluntary family education and support program that begins before birth and extends through kindergarten entry. The program is based on the beliefs **that parents are their children's first and most influential teachers** and that the early years lay the foundation for children's success in school and in life.

PAT recognizes the family as the expert on their child.

The program helps parents become involved from the very beginning of a child's life.

PAT provides monthly home visits to parents with children ages birth to five, group meeting opportunities, developmental and health screenings, and community referrals.

**Watauga County Parents as Teachers 2011-2012 accomplishments:**

- ♥ **50** children received home visits.
- ♥ **26** teen parents received home visits.
- ♥ **272** visits were completed by PAT parent educators.
- ♥ **23** children received developmental screenings.
- ♥ **28** group meetings were provided for families.
- ♥ **110** community referrals were made to families.

## G.E.D Program

G.E.D classes held at the Council are offered in collaboration with Caldwell Community College. Free child care and limited transportation is provided for participants.

- ♥ Last year the program served approximately **25** students.
- ♥ The child care room served **26** children ranging from infants as young as 4 weeks old to children as old as 5 years.
- ♥ From July 2011 through June 2012, eight women graduated with a GED.
- ♥ Due to high demand, a waiting list for enrollment was started.

## Kindergarten Orientation

In an effort to help support children and their families as they transition into Kindergarten:

- ♥ A member of our staff attended Kindergarten Orientation meetings at **8 of the 9** elementary schools.
- ♥ **327** gift bags with information about Kindergarten readiness and resources available in Watauga County were shared with families. The bags also included scissors, crayons, a child-sized pencil, watercolor paints, play dough, a glue stick, a book mark, and a book.

## The Resource Corner

The Children's Council has a lending library of reference books and age-appropriate toys, books, and materials for child care providers and parents to check out. These materials can offer hours of "play-together" times for families, as well as provide child care professionals with materials to enhance learning in their programs. This year, we did a complete 'makeover' of our Resource Corner and created a family friendly space for parents with young children to come and peruse our resources as well as interact with their children in a calm atmosphere. Early childhood educators are available to answer questions and to give ideas for activities to do with young children.

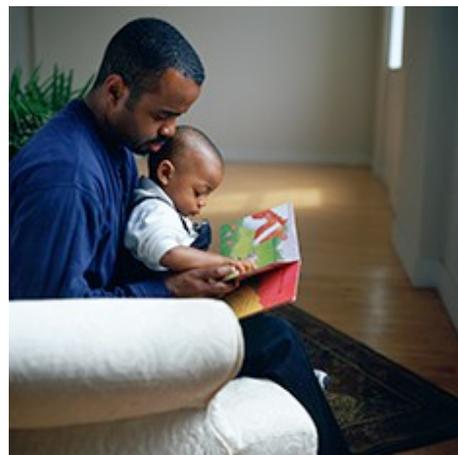
## Reach Out and Read

From promoting reading aloud to your pregnant belly to delivering developmentally appropriate books to area providers, we are invested in early childhood.

Our local initiative is called **Reach Out and Read**. By partnering with local pediatricians, high quality books are entering the homes of low-income families with young children through a "prescription to read" from their family doctor. Pediatricians involved in the Reach Out and Read program in Watauga County distribute thousands of

books each year. Through support from the North Carolina Partnership for Children, The North Carolina Community Foundation, and local donors we are able to provide books to Blue Ridge Pediatrics and the Watauga County Health Department so that EVERY child who attends a well child visit receives a free book at each visit.

This program began in January 2012. During the course of six months, over **1450** books were distributed to children in Watauga County.



## Child Care WAGES® Project

The Children's Council funds this project to provide education-based salary supplements to qualifying early educators. It encourages teachers to take college-level early education classes and rewards them for their progress.

The WAGES Project impacts the community by improving the quality of early care and education for young children. Through graduated salary supplements, the project helps decrease turnover and encourages continued educational pursuits of the child care workforce.

**23** early childhood educators from **11** child care programs participated in the WAGES® project during this fiscal year.

The turnover rate in early childhood programs for Watauga County was **4%** for the 2011-2012 fiscal year.

**100%** of participants reported the WAGES supplement helps ease financial stress and encourages retention at current program.

*In a countywide survey completed in 2011-2012, one provider shared the following comments about the WAGES® project:*

***"The program has helped prevent turnover and provide stability for the children. The supplement has helped employees financially. In addition, employees have felt valued and appreciated for the job they do."** — Director*



## 2011-2012 Financial Report

<b>Total Funds Available By Category:</b>	<b>\$636,351.00</b>
Administration:	\$109,666
Child Care Subsidy:	\$162,926
Early Care and Education:	\$149,637
Family Support:	\$196,515
Program Coordination	\$8,012
Early Literacy	\$9,344
Other	\$251

The Council provides programs and services through collaborative efforts with community agencies and partners. We were funded in part by the following sources, equal to the total budget listed above:

NCPDI—Drop out Prevention	\$102,736
Watauga County	\$2,500
Town of Boone	\$8,000
Boone Service League	\$1,000
Valle Fair Grant	\$1,000
Blue Ridge Electric	\$1,500
United Way	\$19,500
High Country Women’s Fund	\$8,360
Appalachian Women’s Fund	\$500
Watauga County Community Foundation	\$1,000
Smart Start	\$443,048
NC Division of Child Development	\$16,827
Private Contributions	\$5,397
Other	\$24,993

## 2011-2012 Staff

- Brian Cornell**, Executive Director
- Crystal Kelly**, Teen Parenting Program Director and Executive Director
- Charisse Cuthbertson**, Contracts and Finance Manager
- Diana Smith**, Administrative Assistant
- Lee Marshall**, Child Care Resource and Referral Director
- Lorrie Looper**, Resource and Referral Family and Community Educator & Reach Out and Read Coordinator
- Robin Triplett**, Parents As Teachers Coordinator & Teen Parenting Specialist
- Lynette Walker**, Parents As Teachers— Parent Educator
- Nancee Pond**, GED Teacher
- Birdie McKinney**, Child Care Provider
- Fayza Rink**, Child Care Provider
- Brittany Bolser**, MSW Intern; Teen Parenting Program



## 2011-2012 Board Of Directors

- ♥ Judith Winecoff, Chair: Appalachian Regional Library
- ♥ Elaine Norris, Secretary: Department of Social Services
- ♥ Freda Smith, Treasurer: CPA
- ♥ Karee Mackey: NC Cooperative Extension
- ♥ Scarlet Davis: Watauga County Schools
- ♥ Sherry Street-Tobin: Appalachian State University
- ♥ Leigh Girard: Community Representative
- ♥ Angie Boitnotte: Project on Aging
- ♥ Tawnya Tester: Child Care Center Director
- ♥ Maggie Farrington: Smoky Mountain Center
- ♥ Bryan Belcher: Healthy Carolinians
- ♥ Bruce Kaplan: Attorney
- ♥ Tim Futrelle: County Government
- ♥ Carson Coatney: Business Community Representative
- ♥ Kyle Sigmon: Faith Community Representative
- ♥ Julie Kever: Child Care Representative; Head Start
- ♥ Jennifer Perry: Parent Representative
- ♥ Andrea Anderson: Child Care Representative