



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Randolph Partnership for Children uses COVID-19 relief funds to support children and families during pandemic

ASHEBORO, N.C. (October 26, 2020) — Randolph Partnership for Children (RPC), part of the statewide Smart Start network, has launched two initiatives to support children and families during the COVID-19 pandemic using COVID-19 relief funds provided by The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc. (NCPC). The initiatives provide parents and early childhood professionals training to address ongoing stress as well as devices and broadband technology to increase virtual access.

"During this crisis, I'm proud Smart Start has worked quickly through our network of local partnerships to leverage these funds to meet the needs of children and families across the state," NCPC President Amy Cabbage said. "We are grateful that our state's policymakers recognized the importance of support for child care, children and families and invested in these needs."

These projects are made possible by \$20 million in federal COVID-19 relief funds allocated by the North Carolina General Assembly to support early childhood initiatives. The N.C. Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) allocated \$5 million of this funding to NCPC to be used throughout the Smart Start network for initiatives focused on children and families.

"The Randolph Partnership for Children is pleased to participate in two COVID-19 relief initiatives that fit perfectly with and further enhance work we had initiated pre-pandemic," RPC Executive Director Lisa Hayworth said. "This work centers on helping families with young children, early educators, and our larger community develop skillsets and support networks to be resilient in the face of stress and adverse experiences and to be connected to resources and available services. The COVID-19 relief initiatives, as described briefly below, will shore up this work for both the short- and long-term."

One of the Smart Start initiatives, Reconnect for Resilience, addresses the ongoing stress faced by young children and families. The program includes self-awareness and self-regulation training for parents and coaching for early childhood professionals provided by Resources for Resilience based in Asheville, NC. The program trains adults on what happens to children affected by stress, provides coaching to support resiliency tools and includes a schedule of drop-in Listening Circles for parents and educators to discuss the strategies learned.

In addition, RPC is supporting parenting education and home visiting programs by providing access to technology and internet for families and early childhood professionals. According to Census data, almost 25 percent of North Carolina households do not subscribe to any internet



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services, with a disproportionate impact on low-income, rural and minority families. The increased reliance on virtual tools during the pandemic has deepened this digital divide. Smart Start's goal is to ensure that a lack of internet access doesn't limit access to home visiting programs.

Families, early childhood professionals, and community partners interested in participating in these initiatives should contact Executive Director Lisa Hayworth at lhayworth@randolphkids.org or 336-629-2128 x10.

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About the Randolph Partnership for Children: Since 1999, the Randolph Partnership for Children (RPC), a non-profit organization, has been the community's lead organization for young children and their families. RPC brings together diverse agencies, individuals, organizations and communities to ensure all children enter school ready to succeed. RPC is a United Way agency. For more information, visit www.randolphkids.org.

About Smart Start: Smart Start serves all 100 North Carolina counties. This network is led by The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc. (NCPC), which ensures fiscal and programmatic accountability and coordinates the statewide network to create better outcomes for children and families. For more information, please visit www.smartstart.org.

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