

Position Announcement - January 2013
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Smart Start of Buncombe County
Asheville, NC



Smart Start of Buncombe County seeks an experienced and passionate Executive Director (ED) to lead the organization and continue its significant accomplishments in young children’s early development, health, and future success.

Smart Start of Buncombe County is affiliated with the North Carolina Partnership for Children (NCPC), an award-winning early childhood initiative designed to ensure that young children enter school healthy and ready to succeed. NCPC is funded through a combination of public and private support. Smart Start of Buncombe County has strong relationships with schools, childcare providers and local and regional nonprofit and government agencies. It has a diverse and committed 34-member board and a talented, experienced 11-member staff. The staff has nearly doubled in size over the past two years, and its current budget is approximately \$4.3 million.

Created as an innovative statewide initiative to prepare children for learning, Smart Start coordinates, plans and funds programs for children aged birth through five and their families, and contracts with local organizations to implement many of these programs. Approximately 55% of their programs are in – house initiatives and 45% are contracted out to other providers. Together with community volunteers, child care providers, schools, partner organizations, and local businesses, Smart Start of Buncombe County strives to realize its mission: *to strengthen the capacity of educators, families, and the community to build a strong foundation for children’s learning and development beginning at birth.*

Smart Start of Buncombe County’s current programs include:

- **Early Childhood Enhancement Programs:**
 - Child Care Health Consultation – provides on site health and safety consultation and education for childcare providers
 - Child Care Quality Enhancement – offers technical assistance to child care providers preparing for licensure, re-licensing and/or rating scales
 - Preschool Intervention and Inclusion – gives support to child care providers working with children’s social, emotional or behavioral issues
 - Transition to Kindergarten – promotes children’s successful transition to kindergarten through family education and professional development/technical assistance for teachers
 - Sustaining Facility Quality – makes available unrestricted grants aimed at maintaining or further improving high quality as documented by star rating to eligible early care and education centers and family child care homes
- **Child Care Resource and Referral**– delivers quarterly professional development opportunities and start up technical assistance to potential and new family child care home and center providers.
- **Affordable Child Care** –NC Pre-Kindergarten Program offers high quality, free educational experiences for income-eligible four-year-olds in order to enhance their kindergarten readiness. The Child Care Subsidy Program makes available child care vouchers to income-eligible families who are working or in school 30 hours or more a week.
- **Family Support** – Play and Learn Groups meet weekly for an 8 session series for families of children 3 to 5 years old who are not enrolled in childcare. The Incredible Years Parent Education Program is for families of 3 to 5 year olds who identify their children as having challenging behaviors and teaches parenting strategies to promote children’s social skills and positive behavior.
- **Professional Development** – the Child Care WAGE\$ Project gives professional development supplements to

early childhood educators based on their level of education in an effort to stabilize the workforce and encourage increased education.

- **Champions for Children** – is a public education initiative supported through the recruitment of community leaders who help raise awareness about the importance of early childhood development and spread the statewide messaging of the significance of “First 2000 Days.”
- **Shape NC Initiative** - this program supports model early learning centers and their communities in implementing proven strategies that help reduce childhood obesity. Smart Start of Buncombe County serves as the regional hub for this initiative covering a twelve-county area.

Organizational Culture

Smart Start’s organizational culture can be described as empowered, hardworking, mission-driven, compassionate, and engaged with the childcare community. Smart Start is seen by the community as an innovative and responsive partner. The longevity of leadership staff is remarkable, with an average tenure of 11 years.

The Region

Western North Carolina is a culturally rich region that is economically, politically, and geographically diverse. The position is based in Asheville, which is often referred to as one of the top places in the country to live, and has been described as “America’s Happiest City.” Located in the heart of the Southern Appalachian Mountains, Asheville provides a thriving and eclectic arts and music scene, a vibrant central downtown district, and a strong sense of community, with wide-ranging opportunities for year-round outdoor activities. Western North Carolina, particularly Asheville, includes a remarkably large and collaborative nonprofit sector.

The Position

The incoming ED will succeed the retiring Ron Bradford, who has led the organization since its inception in 1995 as a visionary leader in North Carolina’s early childhood community. Mr. Bradford’s leadership has positioned Smart Start of Buncombe County as one of the largest and most dynamic NCPC partnerships in the state.

Smart Start of Buncombe County seeks an individual who is well prepared to provide the inspired external and internal leadership required of this role. The new ED must have proven, significant, and successful organizational leadership experience and the ability to oversee fundraising, programmatic, and overall operations while working in collaboration with the board to guide the organization. The ED must also possess the talent to communicate effectively and to build relationships with multiple diverse constituencies, including the board, staff, donors, media, government officials, agency partners, and other community leaders. The new ED must also show a demonstrated history and passion for families and early childhood education.

A unique challenge facing Smart Start is the change in state leadership at both the governor and legislature level. It is unsure at this point how this change will affect Smart Start but it is clear that the board and staff leadership will need to be more involved in state and regional wide advocacy. The new ED will need to be a strong communicator, able to “speak across the aisles,” and manage politically sensitive environments.

Organizational Priorities

The Board of Directors of Smart Start of Buncombe County has identified the following as the highest priorities for the new executive, the board, and the staff over the next 12 to 18 months:

- Continue to fulfill the organization's programmatic goals for the year as identified in its Strategic Plan by developing its Annual Plan with measurable objectives and accompanying budgets.
- Increase the organization's focus on strong advocacy for early childhood development and health at the local, regional, and state levels.
- Grow existing and new connections with local and regional partners to share expertise and to forge partnerships/collaborations that can leverage the impact of Smart Start's work and resources.
- Strengthen and promote Smart Start's identity and vision through strong external communications.
- Continue to diversify funding sources with a focus on growing grant, corporate, and individual giving revenue.
- Build upon Smart Start's internal staff development and training initiatives, increasing the staff's expertise and capacity in communications, fund development, and advocacy.

Ongoing Responsibilities

- **Vision, Mission, and Strategies** - Working with the Board and staff, the ED will oversee the implementation of annual and strategic planning to guide the organization towards achievement of its vision and mission.
- **Fiscal Management** - It is the role of the ED to see that solid planning and budgeting systems are in place to ensure that income is managed wisely to serve the organization's goals. The ED ensures that systems and staff are in place to accurately monitor, assess, and manage the financial health of the organization. The ED works closely with the Board, Finance Committee, and Director of Finance.
- **Board Relations** – The ED works with the Board of Directors to develop a proactive vision for the future achievement of the organization's mission. The ED serves as an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Board, Executive Committee, Finance Committee, and other ad hoc committees as requested by the Board President.
- **External Liaison and Public Image** - As primary champion and spokesperson for the organization, the ED will inspire external partners to collaborate with Smart Start on strategies to fulfill its mission. The ED must position the organization to be highly visible and work to develop dynamic working relationships with diverse constituencies including government, education, nonprofit, business, religious, and donor groups.
- **Fundraising and Resource Development** - The ED, in partnership with the Board and Development team, will drive fundraising initiatives for developing and implementing appropriate and diversified fundraising strategies.
- **Accomplishment of Management Objectives** – The ED will encourage teamwork in the development and implementation of work plans aimed at achieving strategic plan priorities. The ED will foster an environment in which staff can most effectively contribute to the organization's mission. This will include developing a strong staff built on teamwork and collaborative decision-making. Through organizational development and oversight of its leadership team, the ED will ensure that Smart Start maximizes and supports its human resources.

- **Human Resources Management** - The ED is responsible for supervising, recruiting and retaining a strong staff built on teamwork and collaborative decision-making. The ED provides for staff leadership development activities that upgrade employee skills, motivate performance, promote staff retention, and ensure adherence to the personnel policies in all hiring and employment practices.
- **Facilities** – Ensures the efficient operational management and maintenance of the organization’s campus and all its facilities and equipment, including long term plans to address future capital improvement or expansion needs, standards of safety, and a safe environment for employees and others.

Required Qualifications

- A demonstrated passion for the well being and education of young children and their families
- A personal zeal for visionary leadership based on strong and proactive strategic thinking
- A proven track record of leadership and management with at least five years of senior management experience
- Demonstrated fundraising and relationship building experience
- A high degree of financial literacy and financial management experience
- Experience in advocacy and public policy
- Collaborative leadership experience with an exceptional ability to build and maintain relationships and foster a spirit of cooperation with external partners and among board members and staff
- Exceptional written and verbal communication skills - strong interpersonal and public speaking skills and experience with diverse populations and multiple constituencies
- Demonstrated ability to work with and develop strong board leadership
- A Bachelor’s Degree

The ideal candidate will also have:

- Nonprofit leadership experience
- Previous Smart Start experience
- Awareness of local and state issues and leaders
- Marketing and public relations experience
- A strength-based approach to staff, communities and families
- Political awareness/astuteness
- A creative, entrepreneurial spirit
- An advanced degree

Compensation

- The salary range is \$70,000 - \$82,000 annually.
- Smart Start of Buncombe County also offers a very competitive and comprehensive benefits package.

Application Process

- To apply, please send a letter of interest, resume and salary history *via email only* to:

Smart Start ED Search Committee
EDsearch@smartstart-buncombe.net

- Please, no phone calls or faxes.
- Application Deadline: February 28, 2013

For more information about Smart Start, please visit the website at: <http://www.smartstart-buncombe.org>
Smart Start of Buncombe County is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to recruiting a broadly diverse pool of qualified candidates for the position.