



Contact: **Karine Stallings**
Durham's Partnership for Children
Community Development Manager
403-6960 x221 599-5855 (mobile)
Karine@dpfc.net

PRESS RELEASE

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THE NEED FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD SUPPORT SERVICES TOPS RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION'S COMMISSION TO BUILD A HEALTHIER AMERICA

Health is where you live, learn, work and play

Durham, NC – **Durham's Partnership for Children** announced Monday that The Robert Wood Johnson (RWJ) Foundation's Commission to Build a Healthier America, an initiative to examine the many factors outside of medical care that influence health, released 10 recommendations to improve the health of all Americans. The first recommendation was based in part on testimonials from early childhood organizations, including Durham's Partnership for Children.

The recommendations to RWJ, a national, independent, non-partisan group of leaders, were based on three field hearings to learn from communities in different states what they do to increase the health of their residents.

North Carolina's expertise in early childhood services and its national leadership status through the Smart Start initiative and the More at Four Pre-kindergarten Program was well received and recognized. The RWJ Foundation's first recommendation is to ***"Ensure that all children have high-quality early developmental support (child care, education and other services). This will require committing substantial additional resources to meet the early developmental needs particularly of low-income children."***

"It is wonderful to learn that yet another, well-recognized, national entity puts its focus on young children. We know that investing in building and maintaining our county's early childhood system improves the lives of young children" said Marsha Basloe, Executive Director of Durham's Partnership for Children. "We are excited to learn that the Commission's top recommendation speaks to all we stand for and support. Starting early, this is the key to later success. We hope our Governor and the legislature will keep this in mind as they finalize the state budget. The early childhood system cannot sustain any additional cuts. We must invest in our young children to create a healthier future for everyone."

The first field hearing was held in Raleigh, NC in June 2008 and among many other local advocates and key system leaders from around the state, **Marsha Basloe, Durham's Partnership for Children Executive Director, presented to the Commission on Durham County's Results Based Accountability (RBA) Initiative and the work of its 'Children Ready for and Succeeding in School' Outcome Committee.**

For more information on the Commission's work, go to <http://www.commissiononhealth.org>

About Durham's Partnership for Children

Durham's Partnership for Children celebrates 15 years making young children a priority. Founded in 1994 and first funded in 1995 to administer the Smart Start grant in Durham County, the Partnership works as an independent, local nonprofit that serves young children birth to age 5 and their families under North Carolina's nationally recognized initiative to ensure all children enter school healthy and ready to succeed. For 15 years, the Partnership has helped working parents pay for child care, improve the quality of child care and provided health and family support services to thousands of Durham County families with young children. The Partnership works to achieve its mission: *To mobilize and unify the Durham community to create and support innovative and successful approaches to serving the needs of children birth to age 5 and their families,* by working with funded partners and mobilizing groups and organizations in Durham County to support and coordinate efforts impacting young children and their families. The Partnership also administers the More at Four Program in Durham County serving nearly 400 children. For more information about Durham's Partnership for Children, visit www.dpfc.net or call 919-403-6960, ext 221.

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