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## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Durham's Partnership for Children and Durham Public Schools co-host Durham's first Kindergarten Registration Week April 12<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>**

Durham, NC – Durham's Partnership for Children (the Partnership), a Smart Start Initiative, and Durham Public Schools (DPS) are co-hosting Durham's first Kindergarten Registration Week, April 12<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>. This community-wide effort is part of Durham's Transition to Kindergarten (TTK) Initiative, a collaborative project of the Partnership and DPS that prepares children, families and schools for a successful entrance into kindergarten from formal pre-school programs or home settings.

Entering kindergarten is one of the most significant events that a young child experiences. It sets the tone for his or her educational experience for many years to come and lays the foundation for future success in school and life. The first critical step to a smooth transition is a smooth and early registration.

"We know from extensive research that attendance on the first day has a huge impact on a child's entire educational career, and early enrollment allows school and teachers to prepare for their incoming class so that they can best meet each student's needs," says Partnership Executive Director Laura Benson. "Ultimately, we hope to increase the number of children registered and in school on the first day of kindergarten in 2015!"

Kindergarten Registration Week takes place during the nationally-recognized Week of the Young Child, an event that focuses public attention on the needs of young children and their families and recognizes the early childhood programs and services that meet those needs. Kindergarten registration at Durham Public Schools is ongoing, but this week provides an opportunity to have a unified, focused effort throughout Durham.

Registration packets have been created to provide parents with all of the information and forms they need to ease the process of registering for school. In order to reach as many people as possible, packets will be distributed to rising kindergartners in DPS classrooms and child care centers, as well as to families throughout the community at local businesses and agencies, including: Barnes & Noble, Chik-Fil-A, Compare Foods, DATA, Durham County Department of Public Health, Durham Housing Authority, Durham Public Library, Food Lion, La Superior, Walmart, Museum of Life and Science, Northgate Mall, Scrap Exchange, and the YMCA.

Kindergarten Registration Week seeks to mobilize the community to address the needs of Durham's youngest learners, and nearly 150 volunteers will be stationed at the participating businesses throughout the week. A smooth transition to kindergarten is a shared responsibility among many individuals and institutions, and this collaborative registration effort offers all sectors of the community an opportunity to be involved in the important work of preparing children for school.

To learn more about Kindergarten Registration Week, April 12<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>, and to find out how to volunteer, visit [www.durhamgoestokindergarten.com](http://www.durhamgoestokindergarten.com).

#### **About Durham's Partnership for Children – Preparing our children to succeed.**

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 to ensure that all children enter school healthy and ready to succeed. For more than 18 years, the Partnership helps parents pay for child care, improves the quality of child care and provides health and family support services to thousands of Durham County families with young children. The Partnership leverages the public and private sectors to achieve its mission: *To ensure every child in Durham enters school ready to succeed, we lead community strategies for children birth to 5 and their families that promote healthy development and learning and enhance access to high quality care.* The Partnership administers Smart Start, NC Pre-K, and Early Head Start in Durham County. For more information about the Partnership, visit [www.dpfc.net](http://www.dpfc.net) or call 919-403-6960, ext. 221.

#### **About Durham Public Schools – One vision. One Durham.**

Durham Public Schools is one of the ten largest school districts in the state, serving some 34,000 students through 54 school choices. Learn more about the district's schools and students at [www.dpsnc.net](http://www.dpsnc.net).