

**Media contact:**

**Elaine Erteschik**  
Communications Manager  
Durham's Partnership for Children  
919-403-6960, ext. 221  
[elaine@dpfc.net](mailto:elaine@dpfc.net)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

February 16, 2016

**Durham's Partnership for Children launches the Early Childhood Training Institute**

**Durham, NC – Durham's Partnership for Children (the Partnership), a Smart Start Initiative,** announces the launch of the Early Childhood Training Institute (ECTI) to provide training and resources for professionals who work with families with young children.

The ECTI serves as a collaborative platform for providers, emphasizing a common language and a consistent, strengths-based approach for professionals across disciplines. Through the ECTI, the Partnership seeks to change the way systems, providers and families work together for the long-term benefit of children and the community.

The development of the ECTI grew out of the success of the Durham Touchpoints™ Collaborative, founded by the Partnership in 2013. Touchpoints is an evidence-based theory of child development based on the work of Dr. T. Berry Brazelton that brings together providers from across disciplines to strengthen relationships and provide a common approach to working with families during child development milestones. To date, 121 providers and leaders from 16 service organizations have completed training, and the Durham Touchpoints Collaborative is a certified training site with a training team of 10 professionals. More than 3,000 families in Durham have received services from Touchpoints-trained practitioners.

Using the Durham Touchpoints Collaborative as its central pillar, the ECTI will continue to offer the Touchpoints training as a foundation, as well as address additional needs identified by professionals in an effort to provide the best support to young children and their families. These needs include training components that increase professionals' skills in working with parents with mental health concerns such as maternal depression, cultural competency and racial equity, and the impacts of poverty and toxic stress.

"The ECTI will address the passion that service providers have for adopting new knowledge and skill to enhance their work with Durham's most vulnerable children and families," says Partnership Executive Director Laura Benson. "Service providers are collaborating across systems more than ever before, and the ECTI offers a new way to strengthen those relationships for the benefit of the whole community."

The ECTI will focus on offering the trainings to professionals who have the most impact on young children, while also engaging with the larger community around these critical issues affecting families in Durham. Through the ECTI, the Partnership will continue to build a healthy and thriving community for all of Durham's children and their families.

**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 20 years, the Partnership has helped parents pay for child care, improved the quality of child care and provided 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.

###