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## North Carolina Children Featured in 'Smart Start Kids'

Step aside, weekend morning cartoons. There's a new kids' program in town.

In October, "Smart Start Kids" began airing across the state.

The half-hour television program features North Carolina pre-schoolers each week. The children interact with the show's host, Willa Brigham, and learn about North Carolina. As a group, the children visit new places across the state, participate in hands-on activities, and create their own music and stories with Brigham's help.

The program is targeted toward children between the ages of 3 and 5 years and their families. "Smart Start Kids" works to show the best child development practices, and families with young children will be encouraged to emulate these positive behaviors in their daily lives.

Locally, the program will air each Saturday at 7 a.m. on the WB (WWWB), each Sunday at 9 a.m. on UPN (WJZY) and Sundays at 8

a.m. on UNC-TV. WJZY and WWWB have worked to spread the word about the program locally.

"We are truly excited to be working with local organizations like the Partnership for Children of Lincoln & Gaston Counties," said Will Davis, vice president and general manager of WJZY-TV and

WWWB-TV. "Our goal is to increase support for Smart Start through our television broadcasts and give the viewers a reason to be enthusiastically committed to the project in their community."

"Smart Start Kids" is designed to let its pre-school-aged audience take part in the experience, too. Children viewing the program can participate by calling the Smart Start toll-free number and sharing their personal news, such as their first trip to the beach or the arrival of their new puppy.

Phoning in to the show is simple. Parents discuss

what news the child is going to talk about before the call. When ready, the parent calls the toll-free number, 1-888-912-3450.

Your child will hear a recorded greeting from Brigham. She will ask the child to say his or her first name and the city where the child lives. The child will then be asked for their news.

Parents should prompt the child during the story with questions like, "Then what happened?" because the operator will ask if the child wants to continue after five seconds of silence. Adult voices will be edited out so only the children are heard on the air.

"Smart Start Kids" also has a Web page on the North Carolina Smart Start Web site, which will allow parents to log on and get additional information, such as ideas for "Story Starters," an activity Brigham does with the kids on the show that parents can do at home. There are also ideas for field trips and music activities. The Web page for "Smart Start Kids" is located at [www.ncsmartstart.org/kids.htm](http://www.ncsmartstart.org/kids.htm).

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# Gaston County Ready for School Task Force Offers Opportunities for Collaboration

Providers interested in early childhood issues are invited to join the Gaston County Ready for School Task Force.

The mission of the Task Force is to facilitate communication and collaboration among early childhood professionals. Providers, teachers, health and mental health professionals, among others, are active participants in the group.

The group meets quarterly and plans enrichment activities for providers and the community at large.

One of the group's largest projects is the annual State of the Young

Child Celebration. Members of the community, including child care providers, clergy, teachers, principals, legislators and other interested individuals are invited to hear a keynote speaker on young children's issues and be presented with the facts on how far child care has advanced in the past year in Gaston County. Emphasis is also placed on what goals still need to be reached and plans for doing so. Last year's keynote speaker was U.S. Rep. Sue Myrick, and more than 200 people attended.

The Ready for School

Task Force also sponsors events such as Teacher-Provider Night, an event where teachers and private child care providers can gather and brainstorm, Kindergarten Nights and literature for providers and parents on how to best prepare your child to begin kindergarten.

Those interested in becoming involved with the Ready for School Task Force may attend any meeting to learn more and possibly join. All members of the community are invited to attend.

Meeting times alternate between midday and eve-

ning in order to accommodate as many members as possible.

The meeting schedule for the rest of the year is as follows:

- March 4, 2003 at 6:30 p.m.
- May 7, 2003 at noon
- Oct. 7, 2003 at 6:30 p.m.

All meetings will be held at the Gaston County Schools Administrative Building.

For more information on the Gaston County Ready for School Task Force, contact Linda McConnell with Gaston County Schools at (704) 866-6124.

## Early Childhood Professionals set Mid-Winter Conference date

The Early Childhood Professionals of Gaston and Lincoln Counties will hold their Mid-Winter conference Jan. 25.

The subject matter of the conference will be "Merging Literacy." The conference will take place from 8 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 25 at Hope Lutheran School

on Robinwood Road in Gastonia.

Further information on the conference will be mailed out Jan. 2. There are 200 spaces available for the day, and they will be reserved on a first-come, first-serve basis.

For more information, call (704) 864-2469.


## In-Service Training Opportunities

Developing Together, LLC is offering the following training sessions for child care providers for the remainder of 2002:

- Parent-Teacher Conferences, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Dec. 10, Gaston County Public Library, Gastonia

and First Baptist Church, Lincolnton  
■ Behavior Management, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Dec. 17. Locations TBA.

For more information call Barbara Romich at Developing Together at (704) 484-8599.



The following child care centers or homes in Gaston and Lincoln counties have recently increased their STAR ratings:

- ★★★★  
Dacus Family Day Care, Gastonia
- ★★★  
Cheri's Family Child Care Home, Lincolnton  
Childcare Network No. 99, Gastonia
- ★★  
Friday's Day Care, Gastonia  
Kiddie Kollege, Lincolnton  
Kiddy Kountry Day Care, Vale

**To learn more about earning higher star ratings for your child care center or family child care home, call Susan Durrer, early childhood education director at the Partnership, at (704) 922-0900 or (704) 736-9008.**

# JUST FOR PARENTS

## More at Four Comes to Lincoln County

Lincoln County will open three "More at Four" classrooms Dec. 9, which will allow up to 54 local children to attend a pre-school program that is designed to promote school success.

More at Four is a state-wide educational initiative designed to prepare four-year-olds to start kindergarten the next school year. Lincoln County received approximately \$151,200 for the project. The Partnership for Children of Lincoln & Gaston Counties was granted the contract and, in cooperation with Lincoln County Schools and the child care community, will

be opening classes for the 2002-2003 school year.

Priority will be given to children who are not currently being served in a child care setting. Participation will be voluntary. There will be three classroom locations for the current school year in Lincoln County:

- G.E. Massey Elementary School, Lincolnton
- Mini Academy at Denver
- Ms. Em's Child Development Center, Stanley (physically located in Lincoln County)

Factors for determining whether a child can be admitted to the More at

Four program, which is fully funded by state and local resources, include family income, the child's health, special needs of the child, housing stability, English proficiency and family composition. These factors were selected because they affect whether a child can begin kindergarten healthy and ready to learn.

Children must also have turned four years old on or before Oct. 16, 2002 and must be eligible to start kindergarten for the 2003-2004 school year.

The Partnership for Children, Lincoln County or (704) 736-9991.

Schools, Mini Academy at Denver and Ms. Em's Child Development Center are collaborating on the Lincoln County More at Four program.

In March, Gov. Michael Easley granted 34 counties, including Gaston, money for the initial run of the program. For the current school year, the program was expanded to more counties, including Lincoln.

For more information about More at Four or to apply, please contact Rebecca Powell at the Partnership at (704) 922-0199

### Holiday Project: Stringy Gift Wrap

You and your child can make homemade wrapping paper that adds a unique touch to each holiday gift! Here's what you'll need:

- Plain white newsprint
- Water-based paints
- Empty toilet paper tubes
- String
- Muffin pan
- Paint brushes

Mix paints and place several colors in a muffin pan with a separate paint brush for each color.

Wind string around cardboard tubes, tying or tucking away the loose ends.

Spread the paper on

a flat surface and stabilize with thumb tacks or tape.

Paint the string on the tubes and while still wet, roll tube over paper until the paint is used up. Repaint string with another color and roll again.

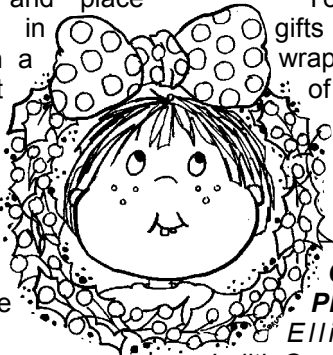
When finished rolling, make sure the paint is completely dry before removing and using the paper.

Your holiday gifts will go out wrapped in works of art from your child!

*Project adapted from the book 365 Days of Creative*

*Play by Sheila Ellison and*

*Judith Gray.*



## Children... a wise investment.

The Partnership for Children of Lincoln and Gaston Counties is working every day to make a difference in the lives of local children. Your support makes that difference possible. If you want to invest in the future of children in Lincoln and Gaston counties, please volunteer or make a tax-deductible donation.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed:  \$10  \$20  \$50  \$100  Other

Please contact me about volunteer opportunities.

Please make checks payable to Partnership for Children of Lincoln & Gaston Counties. Return check with this form in person or via U.S. Mail to Partnership for Children, 1012 Philadelphia Church Road, Dallas, NC 28034.

## The Partnership for Children of Lincoln & Gaston Counties

1012 Philadelphia Church Road  
Dallas, NC 28034  
phone: (704) 922-0900 or (704) 736-9008  
fax: (704) 922-0996  
On the Web: [www.pfclg.com](http://www.pfclg.com)  
E-mail: [pfclg@pfclg.com](mailto:pfclg@pfclg.com)

**Our vision:** A community where young children will reach their full health and educational potential.

**Our mission:** To serve as a leading advocate and financial resource, in collaboration with other community agencies, to provide affordable access to high quality services for young children.

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Please note that the Partnership office will be closed on the following dates in observance of the holidays:

- Dec. 24-25
- Jan. 1

### DO YOU WANT TO RECEIVE THIS NEWSLETTER?

If you would like to receive the Partnership's newsletter by mail, call Shannon Clubb at (704) 922-0900 or (704) 736-9008 or e-mail her at [publicinfo@pfclg.com](mailto:publicinfo@pfclg.com).

Be sure to include the following information:  
Name

Organization, if applicable

Complete preferred mailing address (*Note whether address is home or work.*)

Daytime phone number (*if we have any questions*)

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