

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2019**

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SENATE BILL 336*

Short Title: Smart Start Funds. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Krawiec and Hise (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

March 25, 2019

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO PROMOTE YOUNG CHILDREN'S HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH
CONTINUED INVESTMENT IN THE SMART START PROGRAM.

Whereas, children are born ready to learn but may not have access to the experiences or environments that foster healthy brain development; and

Whereas, the Smart Start program serves children from birth to five years of age and works across the State to raise the quality of child care, strengthen families, advance child health and development, and improve early literacy; and

Whereas, Smart Start is a network of 75 nonprofit local partnerships that delivers early childhood programs and services in a consistent, efficient way by achieving strong outcomes that benefit North Carolinians across all 100 counties; and

Whereas, local Smart Start partnerships use community-based, data-driven decision making to improve the health, well-being, and development of children based on the needs and resources of their local communities; and

Whereas, the Smart Start network is led by the North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc. (NCPC), that ensures fiscal and programmatic accountability and coordinates a statewide network to create better outcomes for children and families; and

Whereas, Smart Start provides fiscal and programmatic oversight of all services administered through local partnerships and reports annually to the General Assembly on outcomes for children; and

Whereas, North Carolina is recognized as a national leader in early education, and the Smart Start model has been adopted in several states across the country; and

Whereas, investment in Smart Start has declined significantly since 2001, and the 2018-2019 fiscal year appropriation of one hundred fifty-four million dollars (\$154,000,000) is thirty-three percent (33%) below the 2001 funding levels; and

Whereas, the population of children birth through five years in North Carolina has increased by more than 100,000 since 2001; and

Whereas, a greater State investment in Smart Start can help ensure that more children begin kindergarten reading and ready to learn and succeed; Now, therefore, The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Child Development and Early Education, the sum of twenty million dollars (\$20,000,000) recurring for each year of the 2019-2021 fiscal biennium to be allocated to the North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc., to distribute to the Smart Start local partnerships.

SECTION 2. This act becomes effective July 1, 2019.

