



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Wake County Smart Start to Host 2nd Annual Block Party & Resource Fair Celebrating Early Childhood

**Raleigh, NC** -- Wake County Smart Start (WCSS), the leading early education agency in Wake County, will host its **2nd Annual Block Party and Resource Fair** on **Saturday, May 17, 2025**, from **10:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m.** at **Roberts Park** in southeast Raleigh. This free, family-friendly event is expected to welcome over 1,500 community members and will celebrate young children--from birth to age 5 --and the families who support them.

The event will feature a variety of activities and community resources designed to highlight the importance of early childhood development. Attendees can look forward to interactive experiences, including a story walk, bounce house, touch-a-truck, cooking demonstrations, youth performances and local food trucks. Families will also have access to a wide range of early childhood resources from local organizations.

To help ensure the event is welcome to all, a **Sensory-Friendly Quiet Hour** will be held from **10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.**, creating a calmer environment for families and children who prefer a more peaceful setting.

This year's event theme, **Parenthood**, honors the essential role of parents, grandparents, foster parents, and other caregivers in building a solid foundation for children's growth and development. The event will highlight the many ways caregiving comes to life in our community, the critical role families play in giving young children the best start in life, and the importance of community support in helping all families thrive.

“Early childhood education is one of the smartest investments you can make in your community,” said Gayle Headen, Executive Director of Wake County Smart Start. “It’s upwards of a 13% return when you invest in early education programs.” She added, “When working parents and caregivers can’t access high-quality child care and family support, businesses lose revenue – an estimated \$507 million in annual losses for NC businesses. When communities support affordable child care and services for young children, they help parents succeed in their careers and prepare children for school and life ahead.”

Wake County Smart Start proudly recognizes **PNC Bank** as the event’s Premier Sponsor. “PNC is a longtime supporter of high-quality early childhood education because this important work creates impact in our community and local economy for generations to come,” said Jim Hansen, PNC Regional President for Eastern Carolinas and Southeast Territory Executive. “We share with Wake County Smart Start a vision for every child to develop a lifelong passion for learning.”

To learn more and register for the Block Party & Resource Fair, visit the [event landing page](#).

Wake County Smart Start invests in young children, their families and a connected early education system that supports and prepares them for school and life ahead. Learn more about our mission and impact through [this video link](#).