

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2019

H.B. 124
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HOUSE PRINCIPAL CLERK

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HOUSE BILL DRH30044-LUa-33

Short Title: Smart Start Funds. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Dobson, Murphy, Lambeth, and Jackson (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

23 Whereas, investment in Smart Start has declined significantly since 2001, and the
24 2018-2019 fiscal year appropriation of one hundred fifty-four million dollars (\$154,000,000) is
25 thirty-three percent (33%) below the 2001 funding levels; and

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

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

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

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

