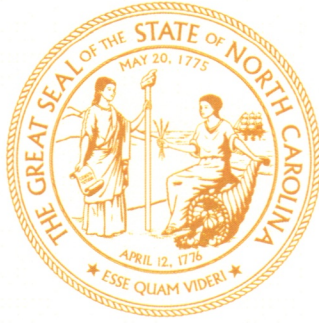




State of North Carolina

JOSH STEIN
GOVERNOR

SMART START MONTH

2026

BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the nationally recognized Smart Start Network has worked to ensure all young children enter school healthy and prepared for success throughout North Carolina for more than 30 years; and

WHEREAS, the first five years of life are a critical window of development, shaping a child's brain architecture and building the foundation for future cognitive, social, emotional, behavioral, and health outcomes; and

WHEREAS, high-quality birth-to-five strategies and programs focusing on early education, health and well-being, and family support create better K-12 and post-secondary educational opportunities for students and a more skilled workforce for employers; and

WHEREAS, the Smart Start Network supports quality early care and education, preventative health services, and family support for children from birth to five years old; and the Smart Start Network has a proven track record in improving early childhood education, promoting healthy births, preventing child abuse and neglect, and enhancing family support systems; and

WHEREAS, the Smart Start Network serves all 100 North Carolina counties through 75 local partnerships that incorporate community voices and needs in program design and delivery to ensure each community receives the support it deserves; and

WHEREAS, Smart Start's Local Partnerships coordinate services, raise awareness, and create collective impact across North Carolina for children and families, generating systemic changes to ensure the comprehensive well-being of our state's youngest citizens;

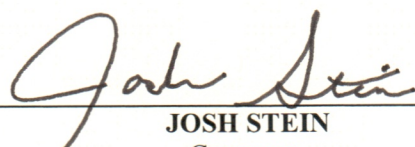
WHEREAS, the Smart Start Network recognizes and supports early childhood teachers and providers as the essential workforce behind the workforce and the important role they play in helping children and families thrive and in enhancing North Carolina's businesses and economy; and

WHEREAS, the Smart Start Network helps to provide critical infrastructure for the early childhood system through collaboration and partnerships with state and federal agencies and other nonprofits, bridging service gaps, and providing needed administration to statewide programs; and

WHEREAS, investing in high-quality early childhood initiatives like the Smart Start Network can yield substantial long-term benefits for children, families, and society through increased educational attainment, higher earnings, reduced crime, and better health outcomes;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOSH STEIN, Governor of the State of North Carolina, do hereby proclaim September 2026 as "SMART START MONTH" in North Carolina and commend its observance to all residents.




JOSH STEIN
Governor

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the Great Seal of the State of North Carolina at the Capitol in Raleigh this twenty-seventh day of August in the year of our Lord two thousand and twenty-sixth and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fifty-first.