

## Nikki Byers

**BY KAREN JARVIS | Posted: Sunday, March 30, 2014 9:08 pm**

To say Nikki Byers is an expert in parenting and child development is an understatement. Byers serves as executive director for IMPRINTS, a Forsyth County nonprofit that partners with children and their families to build a foundation for success in school and life. She has been with IMPRINTS for almost 22 years, advocating for children and educating families dealing with economic uncertainties. But perhaps her biggest on-the-job training came at home raising nine children, now ages 23 to 38.

“I think whether you have one or nine children, parenting is daunting,” says Byers. “I remember how hard it was with my first child. I don’t think young women can really prepare for this part of the experience.”

Byers’ personal journey is the key to her vision for IMPRINTS, which began as a child development center in 1969. It now reaches more than 2,000 local families, crossing all demographic and socioeconomic factors. In the past year, the agency hosted 255 parenting workshops and conducted over 4,000 home visits, offering countless parenting tips along the way.

IMPRINTS’ services include before-school, after-school, and summer enrichment at Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools; school readiness through preschools, child-care centers, and house calls; the Wake Forest Baptist Health Pediatric Partnership for education and healthy development; and the Children’s Scholarship Fund, which allows donors a chance to pay it forward.

Families know IMPRINTS as a trusted member of their family—a testimony to the seasoned family educators and child development specialists on staff.

“For parents with few resources, life sort of hits from all angles,” says Byers. “They struggle with basic survival on a day-to-day basis, so to concentrate on being a really good parent can be a major challenge.”



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Nikki Byers reads to local children as part of IMPRINTS

Byers says what happens in a child's home during the first five years of life will make a difference for the rest of his or her life. "Parents often feel they're not good enough or they're not doing a good enough job," she says. "In many ways IMPRINTS can be that family coach that encourages them along the roller-coaster of life, whether dealing with discipline, sleep issues, or a number of other things that come up."

As IMPRINTS celebrates its 45th anniversary, the agency continues to abide by its long-held motto: "Stronger families build stronger communities."