

DARLINGTON COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.



Parents as Teachers

Countdown to Kindergarten

Motheread/Fatheread

Parent Training/Community
Engagement

Personal Responsibility
Education Program

Parents Are First

Annual Report

2014-15



OUR VISION:

Every South Carolina child
arrives at kindergarten
ready to learn.

First Steps WORKS for the children of Darlington County



Annual Report

2014-15

Who We Serve

First Steps serves children pre-birth to 5 years old and their families who are at risk of not being ready for school.

<http://datacenter.kidscount.org/>

Number of Darlington County children under 5:

3,955

Number of Darlington County children living in poverty:

6,095

Children living in households with incomes below the poverty level:

39.2%

Babies born each year in Darlington County to a mother without a high school diploma:

1 in 5

Children living in single parent families:

50.4%

Teen Pregnancy Rate: **44.3%**

Repeat Teen Pregnancy Rate:

5th Highest in SC

Our Programs

Parents as Teachers

Countdown to Kindergarten

Motheread/Fatheread

Parent Training/Community Engagement

Personal Responsibility Education Program

Parents Are First

Our Results

- ✓ Over 570 families served
- ✓ Over 770 children received direct or indirect services

A Holistic Approach to Improving Outcomes for Children and their Families in Darlington County

Darnell Byrd McPherson, Executive Director

“Great events may stem from works of no importance; however, nothing great will happen if we do not make all work important.”

The Board of Directors of Darlington County First Steps accepted the challenges presented through the data and information found in the annual Annie E. Casey’s Kids Count Report published by the Children’s Trust of South Carolina, The Duke Endowment commissioned report, Accelerating Progress: A road map for achieving further reductions in teen pregnancy, as well as the Institute for Child Success’ Brief, When Brain Science Meets Public Policy: Designing for Outcomes through a Two-Generation Lens – Good Science and Good Common Sense. This annual report reflects our continued belief in the importance of the two generation approach to achieving school readiness.

School Readiness: In collaboration and partnership with local and state partners, we engage in activities which support school readiness.

- Annually co-host NAEYC Week of the Young Child Events with DCCAA Head Start.
- Partner with DCSD Adult Education to provide on-site child care and family literacy services to parents enrolled in programs of Adult Education and First Steps, to include BabyNet.
- Parents as Teachers expanded services for families to include weekly parenting classes in collaboration with the federally funded Parents Are First.
- Parents as Teachers provided resource speakers from Community Partners.
- Parents as Teachers parents visited Payless Shoes for free shoes at Christmas through an award from the State Office of First Steps.
- IAAP, sponsored PAT family for Christmas.
- In partnership with regional Nurse-Family Partnership, we provide baby books which are provided during home visits.
- Family Literacy Room; Work with Child Care Providers.
- Continuing to offer Welcome Baby Bags (literacy kits) to all parents who give birth to their baby at Carolina Pines Regional Medical Center in collaboration with the Darlington Library System.
- Joined forces with stakeholders from across our community, our state, and at the national level to address equity in access to early education services.
- Selected to serve as a member of BUILD’s Equity Leaders Action Network along with a representative of the State Office of First Steps.
- Current member of Board of Directors of the research and policy organization, the Institute for Child Success. Participated in rural education summits hosted throughout the state to bring attention to the strengths and challenges in these communities.
- Invited to provide input in to the First Steps Legislative Study Committee.

Building brighter futures for South Carolina’s youngest learners.

Continued

Message from Executive Director

- Served as a member of Racial and Ethnic Disparities Committee in support of the Early Childhood Common Agenda, sponsored by The Children's Trust of South Carolina, the United Way of South Carolina and the Institute of Child Success.
- Hosted on behalf of the Children's Trust a focus group on equity in early childhood education at the Hartsville Memorial Library.

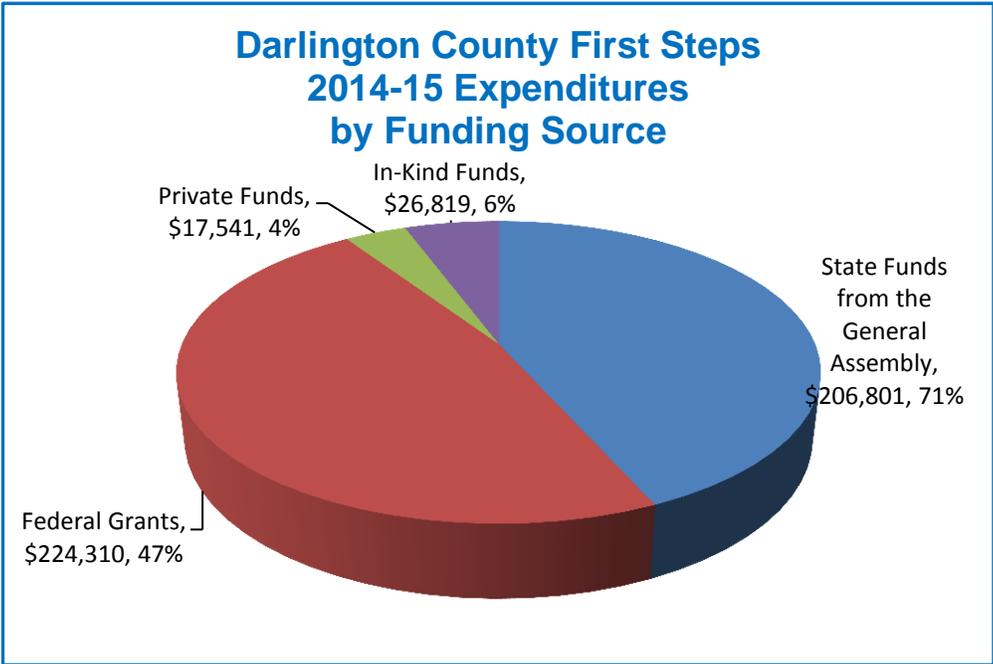
Pregnancy Prevention:

- Awarded a second round of funding to implement an evidence based pregnancy prevention curriculum for middle school students. Served 213 students.
- Expanded work with expectant and young parents both males and females through the federally funded Parents Are First grant.
- Renovated a modular unit on the property of DCCAA Head State to create a father friendly environment. Open house at the Dad Cave was a media event which attracted community supports and parents.
- Implemented a Fatherhood Initiative, to include hiring a Fatherhood Specialist.
- Fatherhood Specialist is mentored and coached by Richard Barr, SC Center for Fathers and Families and Derrick Dease, Man2Man, a program of the S. C. Center for Fathers and Families.
- Provided support of the Duke Endowment Planning Grant in partnership with the S. C. Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy.
- Continued work with the SC Campaign's Accelerating Progress Report through the implementation of a condom access effort (AC/DC) which places condoms throughout the county.
- Hosted Community Focus Groups to discuss pregnancy prevention. Including groups with community leaders, faith-based community; businesses, and parents and teens.
- Worked with the S. C. Campaign to submit full implementation grant to Duke Endowment to include working with Darlington County School District, Care South Carolina, Carolina Pines Regional Medical Center, and other health care providers.
- The Murray L. Vincent Pregnancy Prevention Professional of the Year Award presented to Executive Director in June.

Community Partnerships/Engagements:

- Recruited and hired Communications Specialist who designed and launched www.darlingtoncountyfirststeps.org, website and created a Facebook page.
- Expanded quantity and quality of Community Partnerships to include other non-profit organizations serving children and families, such as Macedonia Family Life Center, and the faith based communities in our county.
- Co-hosted state and nationally known speakers for staff, partners and parents. (*Responsible Fatherhood Training - 30 participants; Author Dr. Dave Walsh – 65 participants and Shane Slater; 30 people*)
- Hosted Focus Groups for Parents Are First federal grant and Duke Endowment Planning Grant.
- Conducted workshops on engaging fathers at S. C. State Head Start Association 5th Annual Male Coalition Conference.
- Provided literacy calendars for the S. C. State Head Start Association 5th Annual Male Coalition Conference.
- Recipient of grants and awards from The Byerly Foundation, a philanthropic organization which supports education efforts in the City of Hartsville. Funds received to expand the Countdown to Kindergarten program and Caring for the Babies (child care and family literacy program) and funds to create a teen friendly meeting environment for young mothers (Diva Den).
- Participated in the Pinwheels for Prevention Campaign sponsored by the Children's Trust of S. C.
- Coordinated, with Kershaw County First Steps, a learning community with a focus on improving community engagement and outreach. This work is facilitated by external consultant in partnership with the State Office of First Steps.
- Provide community with updates on DCFS through newspaper articles; Facebook posting; web page updates; and regular guest appearance on local radio show.
- The United Way of Hartsville and City of Hartsville will partner with DCFS to establish the second Born Learning Trail at Pride Park in the spring of 2016.
- Hosted Launch Meeting/Kick-Off Event with more than 70 community and state partners attending, to include Speaker of the House of Representatives, Jay Lucas.

Financial Impact



Total 2014-15 Expenditures: \$473,702

State Funds Leveraged in 2014-15*: 131%

**Percentage of state dollars matched by additional federal, private, and/or in-kind funds*

	State \$	Federal \$	Private \$	In-Kind \$	Total \$	% of 2014-15 Expenditures
Parents as Teachers	\$53,486	\$0	\$3,038	\$2,960	\$59,484	13%
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$5,291	\$0	\$9,978	\$0	\$15,269	3%
Motheread/Fatheread	\$27,453	\$0	\$1,083	\$3,435	\$31,971	7%
Parent Training	\$42,990	\$224,311	\$2,500	\$16,360	\$286,161	60%
Program Support	\$57,149	\$0	\$425	\$3,111	\$60,685	13%
Administrative Support	\$18,662	\$0	\$508	\$953	\$20,123	4%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$205,031	\$224,311	\$17,532	\$26,819	\$473,693	

Unaudited numbers for the period July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015

Since 2002, Darlington County First Steps has leveraged \$2,315,127 from sources outside of state government.

Educating and Engaging Young Parents for Maximum Community Impact!



Background

Since its inception in 1999, Darlington County First Steps has served thousands of young children through a wide range of programs designed to prepare them for school. During this time, it has become increasingly obvious that far too many of the children served were facing almost insurmountable odds before they ever walked through the school house gate. And the stories were the same over and over again: low-income families; single parent families; young parents under the age of 25; absent fathers and sometimes absent mothers; families without a home, living with parents and grandparents; under-educated parents and high school drop-outs; and unemployment to name a few. Under the current leadership, it was decided that in order to make a real difference in the lives of these young children, Darlington County First Steps must start with the parents.

Rationale

Research clearly indicates that the odds for children born to teen/young parents are not favorable. Young mothers have consistently higher rates of low birth weight babies and are 20% more likely to give birth prematurely, which can lead to physical, psychological, and intellectual disabilities and/or delays. Approximately 62% of teen mothers never complete high school and less than 2% ever attend and complete college. More than 60% of young mothers receive some type of public assistance and 25% or more have a second child within twenty-four months after the birth of their first child. Darlington County has historically had a very high teen pregnancy rate and is currently ranked the 14th highest in the state, with the 5th highest repeat pregnancy rate among teens. Teen pregnancies cost tax-payers in Darlington County approximately 4 million dollars per year. And as is common with most teen pregnancies, the teen fathers are more often than not, unavailable and unengaged in their children's lives.



Programs

The *Parents as Teachers* (PAT) home visiting program has made a concerted effort to recruit and serve young parents over the past few years. Many of the young families currently enrolled are teen parents and/or parents in their early twenties. The PAT program is based on the belief that all children can learn, grow and develop to realize their full potential. Through weekly home visits and monthly parenting workshops, PAT provides information, support and encouragement that these young parents need to help their children develop optimally during the crucial early years of life.

The *Parents Are First* (PAF) Program is built on the fundamental beliefs that parents are a child's first and most important teacher and supporting young parents is crucial to ensuring that their children are nurtured and well cared for. The PAF Program serves young parents, both mothers and fathers, between the ages of 15 and 24. The goals of this program are to: increase educational attainment; prevent repeat pregnancies; enhance parenting skills; and mobilize community partners to ensure that young parents and their children have access to needed services in the community. This program has many "moving parts" including a fatherhood initiative, a Clinical Partners coalition, and a strong community partnership approach that is crucial in making a difference in the lives of these young families.

Community Impact Cont.

All other programs presented by Darlington County First Steps including both Countdown to Kindergarten, and the Motherread/Fatheread make an intensive effort to recruit and serve young parents as well.

Community Connections

The myriad of problems that exist in a community where teen pregnancy rates are habitually high affect all factions of the community and cut across all socioeconomic, social status, professional, racial, ethnic, and religious lines. Teen pregnancy is all inclusive and does not exist in a vacuum and cannot be solved in a vacuum. Armed with this knowledge, Darlington County First Steps has parlayed their rich history of collaboration within the community into a strong and committed assemblage of Community Connections. These connections include the following: Darlington County School District; Adult Education Department, Darlington County Community Action Agency; Head Start; Department of Social Services; Health Department; Pee Dee Healthy Start; SC Works; Department of Juvenile Justice; Housing Authority; CareSouth Medical Center; Carolina Pines Regional Medical Center; Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity; Child and Family Resource Center; Rubicon; Clemson Extension; Coker College; Florence-Darlington Technical College; Project Hope; Pee Dee Coalition to Prevent Domestic and Sexual Assault; among others.



Funding Support

State of South Carolina: \$205,030
(through South Carolina First Steps)

Belk Charity: \$1,191

Big Give of the Pee Dee: \$575

Byerly Foundation: \$29,630

The Children's Trust of SC: \$202,672

Kiwanis of Hartsville: \$1,800

Private Donations: \$200

S.C. Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy: \$30,000

United Way of Hartsville: \$15,000

In-Kind Support

Butler Heritage Foundation

Carolina Pines Regional Center

CareSouth Carolina

Carolina Family Planning

Child and Family Resource Center

Darlington County CAA Head Start

Darlington County Library System

Darlington County School District

DCSD/Office of Adult Education

Darlington County Sheriff's Department

Greater Hartsville Chamber of Commerce

Florence Darlington Technical College Library Services

Institute for Child Success

Kappa Alpha Psi- Hartsville

McLeod Regional Medical Center

Pee Dee Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Assault

Pee Dee Healthy Start

S.C. Department of Social Services- Project Hope

Support Darlington County First Steps today through a tax-deductible donation, or volunteer!



Parents play an irreplaceable role in their child's development.

Program Description

The Parents as Teachers (PAT) model is an evidence-based early childhood home visiting framework for families with children prenatal through kindergarten entry that builds strong communities, thriving families and children who are healthy, safe and ready to learn.

Program Components

- 1. Personal Visits** are designed to meet the needs of each individual family with intensity ranging anywhere from twice monthly to weekly.
- 2. Group Connections** are provided monthly to ensure families build social connections with each other and learn new ways to support their child's development.
- 3. Screening** is done on a regular basis for each child's health and developmental progress.
- 4. Resource and Referral Network** connects families to needed resources, strengthening protective factors and fostering positive change.

Teen and young parents are recruited through our relationships with the Darlington County School District's Office of Adult Education, local high schools, and DCCAA Head Start. We accept referrals from other partners as well. 40% are enrolled in local high schools.

PAT Parents were featured in a recently released filmed documentary, *Small Steps*, which highlighted challenges faced by these parents and possible community based solutions.

Risk Factor Profile:

% in Poverty	100%
% < HS Diploma	40%
% with Developmental Delays	12%

PAT Outcomes

- ✓ **Increases parent knowledge of child development and improves parenting practices**
- ✓ **Provides early detection of developmental delays and health issues**
- ✓ **Prevents child abuse and neglect**
- ✓ **Increases children's school readiness and school success**

First Steps PAT programs measure progress through pre/post assessments of parenting skills using the Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (KIPS) and the Adult-Child Interactive Reading Inventory (ACIRI).

Why PAT Works

The parent satisfactory surveys show that the outcomes are consistent with the goals of PAT. Parents felt encouraged by parent educators to strengthen relationships with their children, motivated to try new parenting strategies and parent educators helped them to understand their child's development.

"This program has been the most helpful in teaching us many things about being parents and has introduced us to great people who have helped us prepare a new life".

-Excerpt from PAT Parent Satisfactory Survey

Program Results 2014-15

- ✓ **95% of families enrolled in average of 10 months**
- ✓ **88% of children are accessed as developmentally on track**
- ✓ **All parents connected to at least one resource.**
- ✓ **Each parent received an age appropriate book during each home visit to promote reading and early literacy**
- ✓ **100% of families possessed two or more risk factors**

PAT by the Number\$

	2013-14	2014-15
State Funds	\$52,752	\$53,486
Federal Funds	\$0	\$0
Private Funds	\$2,945	\$3,038
In-Kind Funds	\$2,960	\$2,960
Total	\$58,657	\$59,485
State \$ Leveraged	20%	11%
Families Served	18	15
Cost per Family	\$3,259	\$3,768
Number of Visits	429	249
Cost per Visit	\$137	\$227

Thank you to our partners!

**United Way of Hartsville
Darlington County School District**



Countdown to Kindergarten



and teachers together as partners sets the foundation for success in school.

Program Description

Countdown to Kindergarten (CTK) is a First Steps program based on other successful school transition models from around the country. Its goals are:

- ✓ to increase the successful transition of South Carolina's most at-risk children into the K-12 school system;
- ✓ to increase parent involvement in the early grades (particularly in hard-to-reach communities), when children's learning is foundational for life success; and
- ✓ to increase public awareness of the importance of school readiness and provide ways for parents and communities to impact children's early school success.

Program Components:

Home Visitation. Teachers make six visits over the summer to the homes of participating students and families. Children and families are introduced to actual materials used in kindergarten and are given a Kindergarten Transition Toolkit to keep.

Learning Celebration. The last visit is a "field trip" to the school where the child will attend class in the fall.

Public Awareness. Throughout the summer, First Steps releases tips to media to help parents and caregivers get children ready for kindergarten.

Countdown to Kindergarten Schools:

- Cain, St. John, and Pate Elementary schools, Darlington
- Lamar Elementary, Lamar
- Rosenwald Elementary, Society Hill
- Southside Early Childhood Center, Hartsville

Darlington County School Districts places all CTK children in their home visitor's classroom for kindergarten, thereby building upon the teacher-child and parent-teacher relationships built over the summer.

Darlington County First Steps serves families in greatest need. Among our Countdown to Kindergarten families:

100% ... live in poverty
15% ... had behavioral challenges in preschool

Why CTK Works

Pre- and post-survey results show that home visits had a significant positive impact on the frequency of parent-child interactions around early numeracy, reading and early literacy, and arts and crafts activities. Long-term results reported by teachers of Countdown students include stronger school participation among families served by the program as measured in terms of student attendance, parent teacher conferences, and parent volunteering.

-Teachers College, Columbia University

Program Results 2014-15

- ✓ All CTK parents provide volunteer services to their child's school during the school year.
- ✓ All CTK parents increased the number of hours and days they read to their children.
- ✓ All CTK parents expressed high levels of satisfaction with the program services.

CTK by the Number\$

	2013-14	2014-15
State Funds	\$7,167	\$5,290
Federal Funds	\$0	\$0
Private Funds	\$3,719	\$9,977
In-Kind Funds	\$10,885	\$0
Total	\$10,855	\$15,269
State \$ Leveraged	66%	188%
Children Served	30	43
Number of Visits	180	258
Cost per Child	\$363	\$355

Thank you to our partners!

Kiwanis of Hartsville
The Byerly Foundation

Darlington County First Steps

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www.darlingtoncountysteps.org

Motheread/Fatheread Inc.

Parents are the primary educators of their children. Developing literacy skills and strengthening the bond between parent and child is fundamental to Motheread/Fatheread.

Program Description

Motheread/Fatheread is evidence based family literacy program model. Parents are engaged in learning how to select age-appropriate books, to read to their children, to extend the story line of each book, to learn about child development, and to introduce parents to adult literature.

Program Components

1. Groups are led by a certified Motheread/Fatheread facilitator.
2. Group meeting with parents are held at local Head Start centers and local county libraries.
3. The curriculum uses a variety of activities that promote the use of oral and written language to explore every day experiences and encourage vocabulary development.
4. The Motheread/Fatheread sessions encourages adults to hold or sit close to children, engaging them in the story-reading process through the use of props, discussion questions and story related activities, songs, and games.
5. Helping parent see themselves as learners and participants in a literate society.
6. Pre/post assessments

Why Motheread/Fatheread Works

An important goal of Motheread/Fatheread classes is to develop a learning environment where parents (students) improve their literacy skills as they also enjoy reading and discussing themes in children’s books and other literature. Participants invest time and effort in their own skill development, with support from other adults, with an aim toward improving their relationship with their children. -Measuring Success: Review of Research & Evaluation

I was encouraged to create a short poem based on one of the books that I read to my child. I learned the importance of using everything that is in the home as a part of helping my child learn to read.

-J. Fields, Saint Joseph Head Start Center

Motheread/Fatheread by the Number\$

	2013-14	2014-15
State Funds	\$23,004	\$27,453
Federal Funds	\$0	\$0
Private Funds	\$2,093	\$1,083
In-Kind Funds	\$3,435	\$3,435
Total	\$26,819	\$31,971
State \$ Leveraged	24%	17%
Families Served	46	134
Number of Sessions	64	18
Avg. Cost per Book	\$5	\$7
Cost per Family	\$295	239

Program Results 2013-2014

- ✓ 100% of parents reported an increase of 20 minutes in the amount of time spent reading to their children
- ✓ 75% of parents reported obtaining a library card
- ✓ 100% of parents demonstrated improved comfort level in public speaking and in writing such things as a thank you note or short poem.
- ✓ 100% of parents reported an increased understanding of the importance of reading to their child, how to select age appropriate books and how to make reading fun.

Thank you to our partner!

United Way of Hartsville
DCCAA Head Start

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Parent Training/Community Engagement

All parents deserve and may need information, ideas, and support in their role as primary educators of their children. Public/Private partnerships are vital when implementing programs which measure and demonstrate progress.

Program Description

This strategy supported a number of activities designed to increase parental knowledge of child development and supported their role as the primary educators of their children. Child care services are provided to parents/students in conjunction with DCSD Adult Education Program. In partnership with the Darlington County Library Center and the Carolina Pines Regional Medical Center we offered Welcome Baby Bags, Literacy Kits, to parents of children born at Carolina Pines. Each baby bag contained books, reading materials, informational materials specific to child rearing practices, baby books, supplies, etc.

The agency also partnered with DCCAA Head Start in celebration of Week of the Young Child. In January, talks began with representatives of the Duke Endowment and other community partners to discuss findings in a report, Accelerating Progress: a roadmap for achieving further reductions in teen pregnancy. This planning phase will continue through FY16.

In conjunction with Kershaw County First Steps, we created a Community Engagement Learning Community that focuses on promoting school readiness on a larger scale in S.C.

We supported the work of The Children’s Trust of S.C. by participating in Child Abuse Prevention Month by planting a pinwheel garden on the City of Lamar’s Town Hall Lawn. We secured a proclamation in conjunction from the City of Lamar officially made the town a Pinwheel City. We also highlighted the work of the S.C. Campaign to introduce May as Pregnancy Prevention Month and secured a proclamation from Darlington County Council, the City of Darlington, and the City of Hartsville.

“Darlington County First Steps and it’s community partners were chosen based on the need as well as the ability to successfully implement the collaborative model.” -Forrest Alton, CEO S.C. Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy

“Carolina Pines is committed to ensuring every parent who delivers a baby here knows we are supporting the development of healthy brains as well as healthy bodies.” -Tim Browne—CEO, Carolina Pines Regional Center

PT/CE

	2013-14	2014-15
State Funds	\$50,686	\$42,989
Federal Funds	\$37,470	\$0
Private Funds	\$11,291	\$2,509
In-Kind Funds	\$16,360	\$8,180
Total	\$115,808	\$53,678
State \$ Leveraged	56%	80%
Children Served	412	447
Families Served	482	493
Group Meetings	142	64

This year, our program:

- ✓ Distributed 836 early childhood related materials and age appropriate Books.
- ✓ Hosted 13 community events attended by 368 people.
- ✓ Co-sponsored events with the S.C. Campaign and The Children’s Trust of S.C.
- ✓ Served 45 families in “Caring for Babies” family literacy child care service.
- ✓ Provided the S.C. State Head Start Association’s Fatherhood Coalition literacy calendars for their 5th Annual Conference.
- ✓ Partnered with Darlington County Office of Adult Ed, to provide onsite childcare services (Caring for Babies) to parents enrolled in Adult Education, Parents as Teachers, Parents Are First, and BabyNet.

Thank you to our partners!

Darlington County School District • United Way of Hartsville • Butler Heritage Foundation • Darlington County Library System • S.C. Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy • DCCAA Head Start • The Children’s Trust of SC • Linda Leonard, Consultant • The Duke Endowment • The Byerly Foundation

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Personal Responsibility Education Program



Encouraging the youth to make responsible choices by equipping them with accurate information.

Program Description

PREP projects replicate effective, evidence-based program models or substantially incorporate elements of projects that have been proven to delay sexual activity, increase condom or contraceptive use for sexual active youth, or reduce pregnancy among youth. The *Making Proud Choice!* Curriculum is used for PREP. This evidence-based program is designed to target teens/pre-teens, ages 11-13, attending middle school or other community based programs.

Program participants, males and females, ages 11-13, will increase their ability to negotiate abstinence and/or safe sex practices.

Program Components

1. Recruit eligible participants from concentrated and intense poverty.
2. Select evidenced based program, Making Proud Choices, with fidelity for 200 youth.
3. Ensure a community resource guide is available.
4. Conduct entry and exit surveys, and complete attendance and fidelity logs, with USC approved tools.
5. Participate in other evaluation activities as determined by SC DHEC, SC Campaign, or USC.

Darlington County First Steps participant population demographic among our 213 families:

Average Age: 12 years
 Male: 43% Female: 57%

Race
 American Indian or Alaskan Native: 1%
 Asian: 0%
 Black or African American: 90%
 Hispanic: 1%
 Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: 0%
 White or Caucasian: 2%
 Multi/Other: 6%

Why PREP Works

The Making Proud Choices! Curriculum (MPC) : A Safer Sex Approach to STDs, Teen Pregnancy, and HIV Prevention was selected as the evidence based program for this initiative. MPC is designed for targeted audiences of ages 11-13, attending middle school or other youth community- based programs and is based on cognitive- behavioral theories. MPC provides youth with the knowledge, confidence, and skills necessary to reduce their risk of sexually transmitted diseases, HIV, and early pregnancy. MPC fits with First Steps overall legislative goals including: providing parents with access to the support they need to strengthen their families; increasing comprehensive services; and mobilizing communities to focus efforts on providing enhanced services to support families and their young children.

Program Results 2014-15

- ✓ Exceeded the goal of serving 200 program participants; 213 participants were served.
- ✓ Secured community partners as advocates for the program and increased their knowledge base on STD's/STI's, HIV and pregnancy prevention.
- ✓ Awarded extra funds to provide services to additional participants within Darlington County.

PREP by the Number\$

	2013-14	2014-15
State Funds	\$0	\$0
Federal Funds	\$0	\$0
Private Funds	\$26,015	\$30,000
In-Kind Funds	\$0	\$0
Total	\$26,015	\$30,000
State \$ Leveraged	\$0	\$0
Families Served	154	213
Number of Sessions	89	104

Thank you to our partners!

- South Carolina Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy • Carolina Pines
- Regional Medical Center • Coker College, Department of Social Work
- Clemson Extension • CareSouth Carolina • Child and Family Resource Center • Boys & Girls Club of the Pee Dee • Darlington
- County School District • DCCAA Head Start

The relationship between a parent and child impacts all areas of a child's life from birth through adulthood.

Program Description

Parents Are First (PAF) is a federally funded program that was awarded to DCFS in April 2014. Parents Are First is a comprehensive program designed to mobilize community partners to enhance the availability and quality of services for young parents, ages 15-24, in Darlington County. The program provides a variety of direct and in-direct services to expectant and parenting mothers as well as fathers. Collaboration is the cornerstone of this program and PAF works closely with many Core and Community Partners to ensure the goals of this program are met.

Program Components:

- Academic Achievement:** Program participants are encouraged to stay in school or return to school to complete their education. PAF works closely with the Darlington County School District high schools and Adult Education Department and the local colleges including Coker College and Florence-Darlington Technical College.
- Pregnancy Prevention:** The evidenced-based program, *Be Proud! Be Responsible! Be Protected!*, is provided through workshops for program participants throughout the county. PAF Clinical Partners provide health and family planning services for program participants. The *AC/DC*, Access Condoms in Darlington County, program provides free condoms at various locations throughout the county in locations including: the "Dad-Cave", local barber and beauty shops, and other places.
- Parenting:** The evidenced-based curriculum, *Nurturing Parenting*, is used for parenting workshops for program participants. Parenting tips and articles are shared with program participants through a range of mediums including social media.
- Fatherhood Initiative:** The "Dad-Cave", located on the campus of St. Joseph's Head Start Center, provides a safe and welcoming environment for young fathers served by PAF as well as fathers served by our Core and Community Partners to grow in their most important role as a "Dad". The *Responsible Fatherhood Curriculum* is used for weekly meetings covering a wide range of topics and as needed, fathers are provided support and direction in dealing with custody and child support issues. Special events include pool tournaments, mobile video arcade, and seasonal events for the fathers and their children. Enrichment activities include speakers from our Core and Community Partners as well as the business community.
- Information and Referral:** Program participants are connected to a wide variety of Community Partners through the PAF program including non-profits, government, private and faith-based partners. The Community Partners provide the full gamut of services from educational to health and medical to family planning to counseling to financial assistance, to name a few.

Why PAF Works

This first relationship between a parent and child determines much of a child's future. This relationship impacts their current and future health and development, relationships, emotional and psychological well-being, academic achievement and success, and their life choices. Educating young parents and giving them the skills and tools to be better parents has the potential to change the course of young child's life.

2014-15 PAF Program Results:

- ✓ PAF program fully implemented.
- ✓ 56 families enrolled; 100+ families served.
- ✓ 23 Core Community Partners secured.
- ✓ Dad-Cave renovated and opened; Fatherhood Specialist hired.
- ✓ Community Needs Assessment completed.

PAF by the Number\$

	2013-14	2014-15
State Funds	\$0	\$0
Federal Funds	\$37,470	\$202,672
Private Funds	\$0	\$0
In-Kind Funds	\$1,360	\$8,180
Total	\$38,830	\$210,852
State \$ Leveraged	0%	0%

Thank you to our partners!

Children's Trust of South Carolina • Butler Heritage Foundation • Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity- Hartsville • DCCAA Head Start • S.C. Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy

Darlington County First Steps

P.O. Drawer 1357
 Hartsville, S.C. 29551
 (843)857-3148
 dmcphers@scfirststeps.org
 www.darlingtoncountyfirststeps.org

Community Leadership in Darlington County

Advocating, Collaborating, and Coordinating!

"Everything Darlington County First Steps has implemented in the community has had a positive effect. When thinking of how DCFS addresses teen pregnancy in the area, it should take precedent because it is an issue that has been dodged in the community for so long and this organization has taken the initiative to find and solve the root of the problem. DCFS' collaboration with numerous organizations on this matter has been vital because it has brought stakeholders to the table and has brought this topic to the forefront."

-Dr. Alvin T. Heatley

Darlington County First Steps Partnership Board

Name	Position	Board Category
Alvin T. Heatley	Board Chairman	Non- Profit Organization
Allison Baker	Member	Darlington County School District
Alma Harris	Member	Family Education, Training and Support Provider
Beth Campbell	Member	D.S.S. Designee
Crystal Gardner	Member	Business Community
Diane McIver	Member	Head Start Designee
James Jackson	Member	Legislative Appointee
Jimmie Epling	Board Vice-Chairman	County Library Designee
Lucretia Bellamy	Member	DHEC Designee
Sharman Poplava	Member	Philanthropic Community
Thomasena M. Davis	Member	Child Care Provider
Tracy Redfearn	Member	Healthcare Provider
Winfred Herrington	Member	Legislative Appointee

Getting children ready for school.

What is First Steps?

South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness was created in 1999 by the South Carolina General Assembly for the purpose of **having every child in South Carolina arrive at kindergarten ready to learn**. Sadly, many South Carolina children possess one or more risk factors that put them at **high risk** (greater than a 1 in 3 chance) for **“early school failure”** – either being retained or scoring below grade level in reading or math – by third grade.

First Steps works to accomplish its mission through a state coordinating office and a network of county partnerships (46), each a private non-profit organization led by a board of early childhood stakeholders. With a modest recurring appropriation of state funding, First Steps leverages cash and in-kind resources at the federal, state and local level to improve services for young children in five strategy areas:

Family Strengthening

A parent is a child’s first and best teacher.

Healthy Start

Children’s development and ability to learn are profoundly impacted by their health.

Quality Child Care

Access to high-quality care is a critical component of a child’s healthy development.

Early Education

Quality preschool opportunities set the stage for success in school.

School Transition

Preparing children and parents for a successful transition into kindergarten.

Each First Steps county partnership determines how to spend its funds based on a needs and resources assessment and collaboration with community partners to **fill gaps in local services** for young children and their families. First Steps has proven its impact through strong program and fiscal accountability and independent evaluations - a requirement of its enabling legislation.

All programs that receive First Steps funding must adhere to following program standards: programs to be research-based and operated with fidelity; staff must have appropriate qualifications, training, and supervision; services to be comprehensive and coordinated with available community resources; use of standard assessment instruments that document client outcomes; and programs must **target services to children most at risk** for not being developmentally ready for school.

Other First Steps Services in Darlington County

Public 4K Expansion

Since 2006, First Steps has been the administrator of our state 4K funds to expand access of low-income children to full-day, four-year-old kindergarten within select rural and high poverty school districts, using community-based settings such as Head Start and private child care.

As of 2014, the General Assembly has appropriated funding to expand 4K eligibility to residents of Darlington County.

Qualifying children must live in list eligible school districts in Darlington County, be four years old by September 1 of the current year, and qualify for free/reduced lunch or Medicaid. Interested parents should contact one or more participating 4K providers to complete an application. Qualifying children may enroll at any participating 4K provider, regardless of their county of residence.

To view a list of participating 4K providers, go to:

<http://scfirststeps.org/4k/>



BabyNet

South Carolina's Early Intervention System

First Steps is the lead agency for BabyNet, South Carolina’s early intervention system for children under 3. Parents of children 0-2 years old with disabilities or suspected developmental delays should contact their local BabyNet office to schedule an evaluation.

BabyNet in Darlington County:
864-634-6676

<http://scfirststeps.org/babynet/>

First Steps Works for the Children, Parents, and Taxpayers of South Carolina:

First Steps works with community partners to reduce first grade retention. **From 2001 to 2012, first grade retention dropped by 51% statewide, saving taxpayers \$23 million annually.**

First Steps leverages resources for families of young children through public-private partnerships. **Since 1999, local partnerships have leveraged an additional 47 cents for every state dollar invested.**

First Steps has increased the quality of services available to young children and families, using research and data to improve programs.

First Steps is a national leader in state-local collaboration to benefit families and communities.

www.scfirststeps.org

Board Chair

Dr. Alvin T. Heatley

Executive Director

Darnell B. McPherson

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