

SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS TO SCHOOL READINESS

South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness (SCFS) is the state's comprehensive, public-private early childhood initiative. In addition to serving community needs via a network of independent, non-profit grantee organizations (**First Steps' 46 local partnerships**), SCFS is home to South Carolina's **Early Childhood Advisory Council**, administers the state's **4-year-old prekindergarten** program in more than 150 private preschool settings, and serves as the state's lead/sponsor agency for **Parents as Teachers, Nurse-Family Partnership, and Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (BabyNet)**.

Since inception in 1999, First Steps has invested **\$62.3 million (all sources) in the delivery of Parents as Teachers**, with an **additional \$4.2 million budgeted for FY15**. During FY14, First Steps provided **21,517 PAT home visits to 1,100 families with 1,263 at-risk children**. Since 1999, First Steps has delivered **more than a half-million home visits**. Given this sizable expenditure, the First Steps Board of Trustees takes a strong interest in model fidelity.

SOUTH CAROLINA'S EFFORTS TO ENFORCE MODEL FIDELITY

In 2007, the Board adopted a detailed set of **PAT fidelity standards**. These implementation guidelines – measured as part of the Board's annual grant renewal process include requirements related to:

Targeting Clients At-Risk of Early School Failure: At least **60% of First Steps' Parents as Teachers Clients** must be identified on the basis of **two or more readiness risk factors**, with 100% of clients possessing at least one risk factor at the time of enrollment. These factors include:

- A preschool-aged child has been **abused**, neglected or placed in foster care.
- Eligibility for the **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, e.g. Food Stamps)** or **Free School Lunches** (130% of federal poverty level or below – with first priority given to TANF-eligible clients whose annual family income levels fall at 50% of federal poverty level or below)
- Eligibility for services under the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Parts B** (Preschool Special Education, ages 3-5) or **C (BabyNet, ages 0-3)**
- A preschool aged child with a **developmental delay** as documented by a physician or standardized assessment
- **Teenage mother/primary caregiver** (at the time of the focus child's birth)
- **Low maternal/primary caregiver education** (less than high school graduation at the time of focus child's birth)
- A preschool-aged child has been exposed to the **substance abuse of a caregiver**
- A preschool-aged child has been exposed to **parental/caregiver depression**
- A preschool-aged child has been exposed to **parental/caregiver mental illness**
- A preschool-aged child has been exposed to **parental/caregiver intellectual disability**
- A preschool-aged child has been exposed to **domestic violence** within the home
- **Low birth weight (under 5.5 lbs.)** in association with serious medical complications

During FY14, **89.4%** of all First Steps PAT clients possessed two or more risk factors, with **more than a third (35.2%)** possessing **three or more of these factors concurrently**.

SOUTH CAROLINA'S EFFORTS TO ENFORCE MODEL FIDELITY - CONTINUED

Client Targeting by Age: At least **70%** of newly enrolled Parents as Teachers client families **must contain a child under 36-months of age**.

Home Visit Intensity and Duration: First Steps' Parents as Teachers vendors, are required to match the intensity of their service delivery to the specific needs of each family, with **no client to receiving less than 2 visits monthly**. Clients identified as possessing two (2) or more school readiness risk factors may receive **visits up to weekly** as the needs and availability of the family dictate, with each visit lasting at **least an hour in duration**.

Common Statewide Outcome Measures: First Steps' Parents as Teachers programs employ a pair of valid and reliable outcome measures.



The **Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (KIPS)** is an observational measure designed to assess 12 key facets of parenting behavior. Its completion is required for all PAT clients within 45 days of enrollment, with a post assessment 6-9 months later and at 12 month intervals thereafter.

The **Adult-Child Interactive Reading Inventory (ACIRI)** is an observational measure designed to assess the interactive reading behaviors of both the adult and child. It is required, on the same timeline, for all PAT families containing a child between 2 ½ and 5 years of age.

Additionally, the First Steps Fidelity Standards require:

- National Affiliate Status
- Monthly Group Connection
- Visit-Level Data Collection
- Screenings and Referrals
- Family Assessment and Goal Setting (Life Skills Progression)

SOUTH CAROLINA VS. THE NATION

Descriptor	2012-2013 National PAT Data	2012-2013 South Carolina PAT Data
Families with 2 or More High Risk Characteristics	48%	70%
Teen Parents	11%	22%
Low Educational Attainment	23%	33%
Low Income	59%	85%
Immunization Rates	86%	92%
Parent Educators with a Masters Degree or Higher	15%	20%

SOUTH CAROLINA'S EFFORTS TO ENSURE CLIENT RETENTION

In order for home visitation to be effective, it is critical that client families remain in the program long enough to benefit from the planned intervention. Each First Steps-funded Parents as Teachers vendor is required to demonstrate its **successful, retention of at least 75% of its PAT clients** across nine or more months of program participation. During FY13, **80.58% of First Steps' clients were served for at least 9 continuous months**.

While often difficult to retain high-risk families, First Steps partnerships prioritize efforts to do so through the development of **culturally competent relationships** and efforts to **match service intensity to the unique needs of each family**. Many local First Steps partnerships find success in pairing the provision of PAT with additional services, including **child care scholarships** – with the **provision of financial support contingent upon the family's ongoing participation in PAT**. In doing so, First Steps pairs evidence-based home visitation with access to high quality preschool.

During FY14, **158 (14.3%)** of First Steps' PAT clients families were simultaneously **connected to a child care scholarship**. During this same period, PAT client families were **connected to more than 1,700 additional services** as a result of their PAT participation.

SC PARENTS AS TEACHERS SNAPSHOT* FY14

**Includes both First Steps-funded and other programs*

- Total Families Served: **2,093**
- Total Children Served: **2,452**
- Total Parents as Teachers Home Visits Delivered: **33,013**
- First Steps Partnerships Investing in PAT: **30 of 46**
- Total PAT Families with 2 or More Risk Factors: **77%**
- First Steps PAT Families with 2 or More Risk Factors: **89.4%**
- First Steps PAT Families Receiving TANF (50% of Poverty): **66.5%**
- Total Families Receiving Food Stamps/Subsidized Lunches: **84%**
- Total PAT Mothers with Less than a High School Diploma: **40%**
- First Steps PAT Children Exposed to Parental Depression: **26.18%**

“Under First Steps' leadership, Parents as Teachers in South Carolina has set the national example in fidelity and accountability. We hold you up to other states doing home visitation as an example of how it can be done right.”

**- Scott Hippert, CEO,
Parents as Teachers National Office**

CONTACT INFORMATION

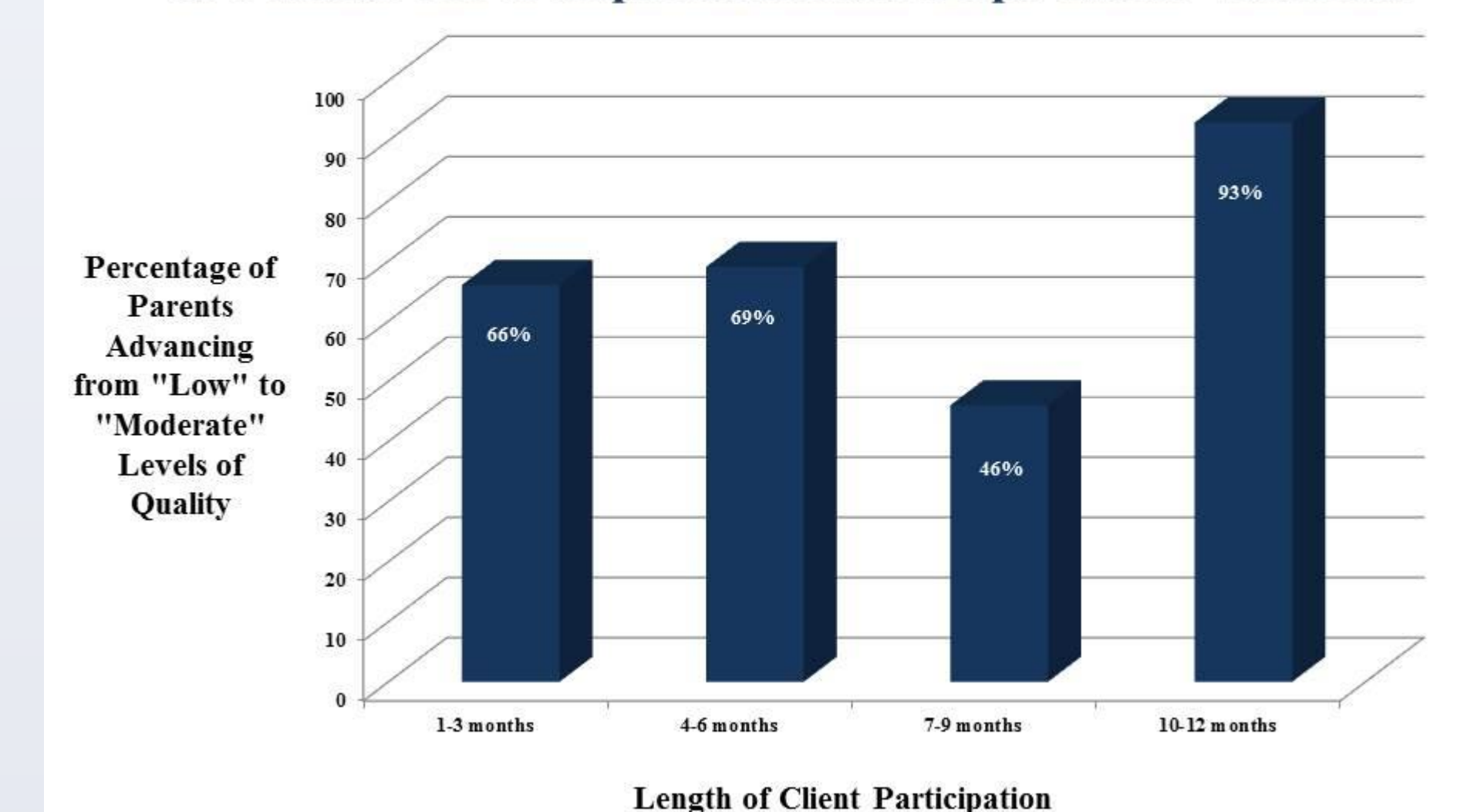
Dr. Dan Wuori
Deputy Director, South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness
dwuori@scfirststeps.org or 803-734-0100

Mary Anne Mathews
State Director, Parents as Teachers
Director of Parenting Services, SC First Steps to School Readiness
mmathews@scfirststeps.org or 803-734-0397

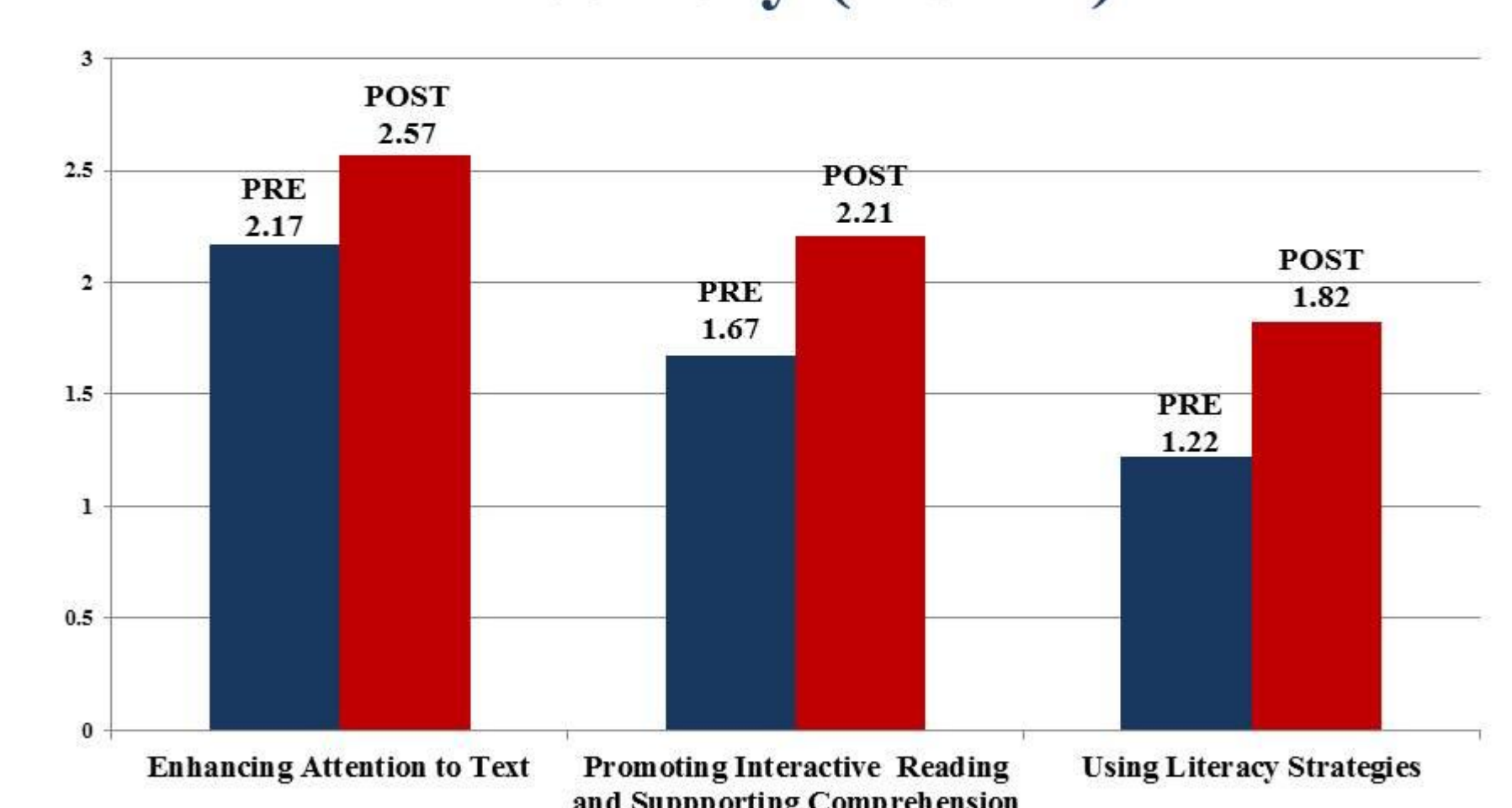
FIRST STEPS' HOME VISITATION OUTCOMES

In a 2010 analysis of First Steps' home visitation outcomes, the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation found statistically significant benefits from program participation.

Percentage of Parents Initially Assessed at "Low" Levels of Parenting Quality (KIPS) Who Advanced to Moderate Levels as a Result of Participation in First Steps' Home Visitation



Adult Literacy Outcomes as Measured by the Adult Child Interactive Reading Inventory (ACIRI)



Child Literacy Outcomes as Measured by the Adult Child Interactive Reading Inventory (ACIRI)

