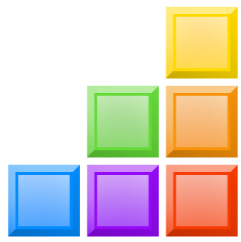


DARLINGTON COUNTY



# FIRST STEPS

Getting children ready for school.



Community Education  
Countdown to Kindergarten  
Family Literacy/Early Education  
Fatherhood Initiative  
Health & Human Services Coordination  
Motherread/Fatheread  
Parents Are First  
Parents as Teachers  
Reach Out and Read  
Strengthening Families Program

## Annual Report

2017-18



### OUR VISION:

Strong Families in  
Healthy Communities.

[www.darlingtoncountyfirststeps.org](http://www.darlingtoncountyfirststeps.org)

437 W. Carolina Ave., Bldg. 1, Hartsville, SC 29550 ♦ 843.857.3148 ♦ [dmcphers@scfirststeps.org](mailto:dmcphers@scfirststeps.org)

# Strong Families. Healthy Communities.

“Strong families and healthy communities” is the vision we have embraced for Darlington County. We have aligned our programs and services to respond to the needs of our communities and translated those needs into our vision statement!

We are only as strong as our weakest link; therefore, we maximize our impact by engaging a diverse group of community partners, funders, donors and Board of Directors. Our collective impact is reflected in the pages of this Annual Report.

We express sincere gratitude and appreciation to our state level partners: S. C. First Steps, Children’s Trust of South Carolina, New Morning Foundation, S. C. Center for Fathers and Families, and S.C. Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy as well as our regional partner, The Duke Endowment. These organizations have enhanced our capacity to change the life trajectory of our children and their families through additional funding and professional development opportunities. We are also indebted to Charles Weathers, of The Weathers Group, for his able guidance and support on our journey. We continue to sharpen our saw!

The Masai Warrior Tribe greet their neighbors by asking the question, “And, how are the children?” As a team of committed professionals, we will also continue to use this question as a guiding light. We are committed to improving the lives of our children by supporting their families and creating strong, positive communities where they will thrive and grow!



*“I admire and appreciate all of the work that is being done everyday for children, families and communities.”*

**Crystal R. Gardner**  
Board Chair-Elect



*“Working on behalf of the community is my passion! I am driven to create an equitable environment for all.”*

**Patricia Sullivan,**  
Communications Specialist/Project Coordinator

## OUR MISSION:

To provide programs, services, and information to strengthen families and communities in Darlington County.






Find Darlington County First Steps:



# We get children ready.

## THE NEED

School readiness **depends on the capacity of caregivers** to provide children with consistent, nurturing, and responsive relationships in safe, stimulating learning environments, **continuously**, starting at birth. Unfortunately, these quality early childhood experiences happen for too few children in Darlington County.

How are Darlington County's children doing?	What early learning programs are available for children in our county? Last year:	Where can families access child care in our county?
<b>4,003</b> are under age 5	<b>0</b> attended Early Head Start as infants and toddlers	<b>356</b> licensed child care centers
<b>4,876</b> live in poverty	<b>173</b> attended free preschool or Head Start as 3-year-olds	<b>8</b> licensed group/family homes
<b>19.1%</b> of babies born in 2016 were to moms without a HS diploma	<b>206</b> 4-year-olds attended free full-day public school 4K or Head Start	<b>13%</b> participate in the state's Quality Rating System (ABC Quality)
<b>11.4%</b> of babies born with low birth rates	<b>216</b> 0-5 year olds received early intervention or special ed.	<b>9</b> providers are rated B or higher by  ABC Quality
<b>28.9%</b> of last year's kindergartners demonstrated readiness	<b>68</b> were served by 	<b>417</b> families received assistance with affording child care last year
Kids Count data provided by: 	Data provided by: 	

## THE GOALS

Our partnership's work, in collaboration with state and local partners, is focused on advancing Darlington County towards these strategic goals in support of the **Profile of the Ready Kindergartner**, South Carolina's description of school readiness:

1. To establish significant relationships and partnerships which engage our communities and supports building strong families and healthy communities.
2. To support parents as the primary educators of their children.
3. To offer comprehensive programs and services, in partnership with other key stakeholders, which improve overall health and educational outcomes for young children, their families, and communities we serve.

## THE IMPACT

In 2017-18, Darlington County First Steps provided:

- ✓ **165 children** and **100 adults** with **intensive support** to equip parents and caregivers with the confidence and competence to be a child's first and best teacher, and strengthen their family's health, economic, and overall well-being
- ✓ **5700 books** to **spark the love of reading** for through our **Reach Out and Read** Program at Eastern Carolina Pediatrics
- ✓ Books are also provided through our other programs: **Parents as Teachers, Mothread/Fatheread, Welcome Baby Bags, and Countdown to Kindergarten.**

# School Readiness Outcomes

## What is the KRA?

In 2017-18, kindergartners across the state were given for the first time South Carolina's newest assessment of school readiness: the **Kindergarten Readiness Assessment**, or KRA. The KRA provides a snapshot of students' abilities at the beginning of the school year, in four domains: Social Foundations, Language and Literacy, Mathematics, and Physical Development and Well-Being. Here are the results locally and for the state:

DARLINGTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT (623 children)			
Domain	Emerging	Approaching	Demonstrating
Social Foundations	34%	26%	40%
Language&Literacy	24%	48%	28%
Mathematics	37%	40%	23%
Physical Dev&WB	40%	23%	37%
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>29%</b>

SOUTH CAROLINA (54,927 children)			
Domain	Emerging	Approaching	Demonstrating
Social Foundations	28%	27%	45%
Language&Literacy	23%	43%	34%
Mathematics	31%	38%	31%
Physical Dev&WB	28%	24%	48%
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>36%</b>

- 1. Language and Literacy:** reading, writing, speaking, and listening
- 2. Mathematics:** counting, comparison, and sorting
- 3. Physical Well-Being & Motor Development:** dexterity, muscular coordination, and balance
- 4. Social Foundations:** following rules, asking for help, task persistence and other skills necessary to function within the kindergarten classroom

**Demonstrating Readiness:** student demonstrates foundational skills and behaviors that prepare him/her for instruction based on kindergarten standards.

**Approaching Readiness:** student demonstrates some foundational skills and behaviors that prepare him/her for instruction based on kindergarten standards

**Emerging Readiness:** student demonstrates limited foundational skills and behaviors that prepare him/her for instruction based on kindergarten standards

*\*Highlighted areas show where scores are higher than the state of S.C.\**

Darlington County First Steps collaborates with partners in Darlington County and beyond to achieve outcomes for all community members- adolescents, young people, men, women, and children. In order to get children ready for school, the community has to understand their valuable positions and how their choices impact children directly and indirectly. We address issues within the homes of family to include poverty, teen pregnancy, reproductive health, literacy, and much more.

School readiness begins with parent engagement and empowerment. Our program services are designed to engage parents, strengthen their skills, and give them new insights to boost their children's school readiness. Our programs teach parents how to read to their children, provide them with books at every well baby visit, and upon delivering a baby at our local hospital, Carolina Pines Regional Medical Center, parents receive two baby bags and other information to support early literacy.



## Informing, Engaging and Encouraging!

Community Education in Darlington County translates into participation at as many community events among other strategies. We call our presence at community events: “Tabling Events”. This strategy allows DCFS to recruit new enrollees and share information about program services! We have a weekly tabling event at Florence-Darlington Technical College in an effort to reach young parents. We have tabling events throughout the county at the Spring-Summer Gospel in the Park series, Egg Scramble Jamboree, Week of the Young Child, Back to School events, and Mini- Health Fairs.

Our website presence continues to grow as we offer an opportunity for individuals to complete a referral to DCFS online portal. The Office of Adult Education has a referral form on our website. An individual can find the Resource Directory published by the Darlington County Coordinating Council on our website as well.

We employ over almost twenty-five (25) contract employees in our various programs who are ambassadors for First Steps! These Ambassadors provide person-to-person contact with others in the communities we serve and beyond. They are an asset in helping us educate the community about our vision and our services.

We connect with other organizations whose missions align with our work. Over the past year, we have facilitated opportunities for the S. C. Cancer Alliance to meet with our Community Work Group and local Ministerial Alliances to begin a community awareness campaign about the importance of early screening for cancer. It has been determined Darlington County is one of three counties with the highest incidences of all types of cancer. As we promote men’s health, cancer awareness, and sexual health, we support any effort to improve the lives of families we serve who are disproportionately represented.



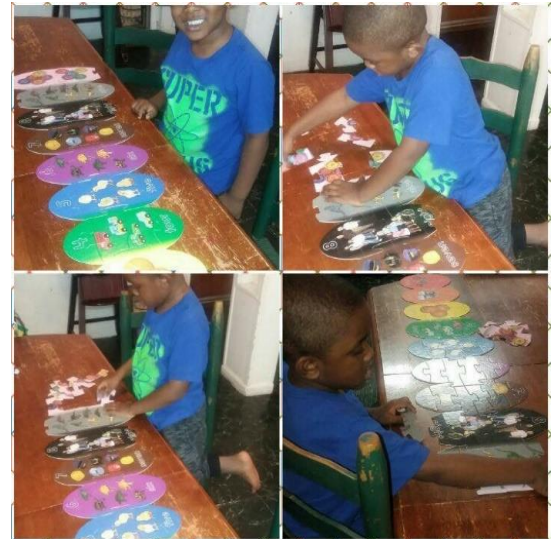
**Bringing parents and teachers together as partners sets the foundation for success in school.**

## Program Description

Countdown to Kindergarten (CTK) is a summer home visitation model connecting rising kindergartners and their families with their future teachers. The program is designed:

- ✓ to forge strong and lasting home-school relationships,
- ✓ to acquaint children and families with the state and classroom expectations to increase the likelihood of school success,
- ✓ 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.

### Growing a scientist!



Countdown to Kindergarten integrates all of the following:

**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.

### CTK by the Numbers 2017-18

Children Served	48
Families Served	48
Home/School Visits	288

*\*CTK program data is for June-August 2018, whereas CTK fiscal data includes expenditures from July 1, 2017*

### This year, our Countdown to Kindergarten program:

- ✓ Parents increased their knowledge of kindergarten expectation by 69%
- ✓ Increased the amount of time parents spent reading to children by 50%
- ✓ Feelings about starting kindergarten improved by 59%
- ✓ 100% of children were placed in CTK teacher's classroom

**Thank you to Ms. Brandy Weaver, our CTK Coordinator!**

### Thank you to our CTK partners!

Darlington County School District: Southside Early Childhood Center,  
St. John Elementary, Lamar Elementary, Rosenwald Elementary  
Kiwanis of Hartsville  
United Way of Hartsville

### Evidence of Effectiveness:

Our partnership's Countdown to Kindergarten program meets the First Steps legislation's definition of an **evidence-informed** program.



# Fatherhood Initiative



**Making a difference one dad at a time!**



**SOUTH CAROLINA CENTER  
FOR FATHERS AND FAMILIES**

## Program Description

The Fatherhood Initiative is implemented in the Dad Cave: A special nonjudgmental place where fathers receive support and valuable resources. It is a place set aside to learn, have fun, find support and to gather with other fathers as they share with each other their exciting fatherhood journey. Meetings are two-hour groups led discussions in a comfortable and open atmosphere that cover issues facing today's fathers.

Fatherhood sessions include:

- ✓ Job Skills/Readiness
- ✓ Parenting/Co-Parenting
- ✓ Men's Health
- ✓ Navigating the Legal System
- ✓ Financial Stability

The 24/7 Dad Curriculum was also offered.

We attended monthly family court sessions in Darlington, along with The South Carolina Center for Fathers and Families-Man2Man Program. Assistance was provided with family court related issues such as child support payment modifications, visitation, and custody matters.

### Fatherhood by the Numbers, 2017-18

# of Sessions Held	42
# of Families Served	25



*Dads in the Diva Den*



### This year, our Fatherhood Initiative:

- ✓ Graduated 12 fathers from a two week Employability Boot Camp.
- ✓ Held 4 Health Fairs, serving a total of 50 fathers
- ✓ Assisted several fathers with obtaining Fork Lift Certifications from Florence-Darlington Technical College

### ***Thank you to our Fatherhood partners!***

Children's Trust of S.C.

S.C. Center for Fathers and Families

Man2Man

Saint Joseph Head Start Center

## Duke Endowment Initiative

The Duke Endowment Initiative is designed to reduce rates of teen pregnancy in Darlington County. Funded by the Duke Endowment and with the support of the South Carolina Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, Darlington County First Steps has designed and implemented a comprehensive teen pregnancy prevention initiative.

- **AC/DC Program:** Provides free condoms and health literature which supports condom use in various locations throughout the county including local businesses, non-profits and individual providers.
- **Community Work Group:** Monthly meetings of representatives from our Community Partners with the goal of strengthening existing partnerships and cultivating new ones, while sharing ideas, solutions and available resources; brainstorming ideas to address problems and creating solutions to increase both the scope and quantity of services; soliciting help with recruitment and cross-referrals; as well as creating champions within the community for the work we do.
- **Youth Leadership Team:** (YLT): Bi-monthly meetings with selected teens. The YLT is designed to educate and develop teens to become advocates for Darlington County First Steps and the Duke Endowment Initiative. Members of the YLT are trained in reproductive health and physiology, methods of contraception and STIs/HIV in order to prepare them to be a source of accurate information for their peers. In addition, members of the YLT host and assist with events designed to raise awareness of the teen pregnancy prevention in our communities.
- **17 Days Parties:** Evidence-based interactive theory-based film designed to educate young people about contraceptive health care and sexually transmitted infections. The target audience is teens ages 14-19.
- **ACT Assessment:** Provides a comprehensive tailored assessment and health education directing youth towards the creation of a positive behavior change plan. The ACT Assessment is based on youth reported behaviors and provides feedback on negative or risky behaviors with suggestions for alternative behaviors which will result in a more positive outcome. The ACT Assessment offer youth text message follow up to continue their engagement in positive health behaviors.
- **Let's Talk:** Workshops and other events for parents and trusted adults who interact regularly with teens and/or adolescents. Let's Talk parties are designed to encourage parents and trusted adults to have open and accurate discussions about love, sex and relationships. Roots and Wings Workshops are designed to equip parents and trusted to effectively communicate with teens about tough topics. October is designated "Let's Talk" Month with a wide array of special events; however, these services are provided throughout the year.
- **Clinical Referrals/Follow-Up:** Teens are referred to our Clinical partners as needed for contraceptive and personal health care. The Community Health Worker provides follow-up to ensure teens are receiving the services they need.

## This year, the Duke Endowment Initiative:

- ✓ Distributed over 44,000 condoms, increased the number of AC/DC partner sights to 33 and increased the number of AC/DC individuals to 18
- ✓ Facilitated 8 Community Work Group Meetings with community partners
- ✓ Hosted 8 meetings with YLT involving 40 teens; hosted 3 events which served 54 individuals
- ✓ Coordinated 17 Days Parties with at total attendance of 42 teens
- ✓ Conducted ACT with 42 teens
- ✓ Hosted "Let's Talk Party" with 12 teens and 10 adults



## Thank you to our partners!

AC/DC Partner Sites (see full list at [www.darlingtoncountyfirststeps.org](http://www.darlingtoncountyfirststeps.org))

The Duke Endowment

S.C. Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy

Website resource:  
[NotRightNowSC.org](http://NotRightNowSC.org)





# Health & Human Service Coordination *Continued*



## Choose Well Initiative

Choose Well is a statewide contraceptive access initiative working to reduce unintended pregnancy across South Carolina. Through its large network of Partners and more than 150 clinical sites, Choose Well is improving consumer knowledge and access to contraceptive care services, increasing provider knowledge and training, and removing the cost barriers to contraceptive care and birth control for women.

As an official Partner in Choose Well, we offer contraceptive care education and referrals to clinical sites throughout our service area. We help connect community members with the resources needed to make the best contraceptive care decisions. Funding for the Choose Well Initiative is from January 2018- December 2020.

### Choose Well Objectives:

1. Increase access to contraceptive care services for men and women, ages 24-40
2. Expand current contraceptive care services
3. Expand current work pertaining to contraceptive care on college campuses.
4. Strengthen capacity of key stakeholders, including clinical partners, community reaching organizations, and others to ensure commitment to the Choose Well Initiative.

### Choose Well by the Numbers, 2017-18

# of Adults Reached Since April 2018	52
# Contraceptive Presentations & One-on-One Counseling Sessions	7



### This year, our Choose Well program:

- ✓ Hired full time Health Educator in April 2018 to execute objectives and goals of The Initiative
- ✓ Health Educator received official certification as Family Planning Health Worker
- ✓ Established new partnership with the Darlington Housing Authority
- ✓ Coordinated and hosted a Community Health Fair for the Darlington Community
- ✓ Hosted successful kick-off Community Work Group Meeting with partners in Darlington, facilitated by Charles Weathers of The Weathers Group

Website resource:

[WWW.NODRAMA.ORG](http://WWW.NODRAMA.ORG)

***Thank you to our partners!***

New Morning Foundation

Charles Weathers, The Weathers Group



# Health & Human Service Coordination Continued

**Fathers who maintain a healthy lifestyle are role models for their children and have happier, healthier children.**

## Men's Health Collaborative

In our work with fathers/males over the past three years, it has become increasingly clear many fathers/males have both physical and mental health issues and needs that are unaddressed. One of our core strategies: to strengthen families, provides services directly targeting the fathers/males in our families. Often times, fathers/males are a forgotten piece of the puzzle when working with mothers and their children but the MHC will help to change that.

### Men's Health Collaborative Goals:

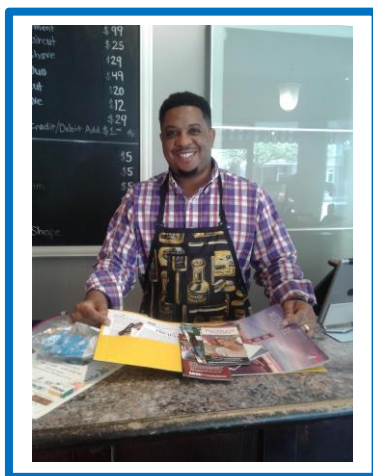
- ✓ Increased awareness of the advantages and value of good health of the individual, their family, and society/the community.
- ✓ Provide information, resources, and access to reduce health disparities in men of color.
- ✓ Continue to engage community partners and stakeholders and develop strategies/solutions to address health disparities among all men of color.

**We actively promote men's health by having a health professional visit local barbershops to:**

- ✓ Check blood pressures while clients await services
- ✓ Make referrals to appropriate healthcare providers or clinics if blood pressure is abnormal
- ✓ Educate men on how to maintain a healthy lifestyle
- ✓ Disseminate informational material about health
- ✓ Train barbers and stylists to conduct blood pressure checks

### MHC by the Numbers 2017-18

Barbershop Sites	5
Beauty Salon Sites	4
# of Blood Pressure Cuffs Distributed	9



**Brian Ham, Owner of The Barbershop Experience**



**Celebrating Men's Health Month**



**City of Hartsville Proclamation**

**Thank you to our partners!**

**The Barbershop Experience | Blessed Creation | CareSouth Carolina | Cooper's Barbershop  
Gospel in the Park | Man2Man | The Cutting Edge | Tag's Barbershop | Miracles by Lisa | Cut N' Up  
Lisa's NewCreation | Roger's Barbershop**

# Family Literacy/Early Education

**Making education a family affair.**

## Program Description

We partner with Darlington-Lee County Adult Education to implement the Family Literacy Program. The Program is designed to assist parents in obtaining the educational skills necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children.

- ✓ Family Literacy is available at no cost to families
- ✓ Parents enrolled in Adult Education participate in Early Literacy Sessions.
- ✓ Children under the age of 5 whose parents are enrolled in **BabyNet**, or any program operated by DCFS (**Parents as Teachers, Parents Are First**, etc.) are eligible to enroll their child(ren) in free childcare (Family Literacy/Early Education Program).
- ✓ Family Literacy Classrooms are designed to encourage exploration and intellectual and social development through play, reading, and social activities.

Family Literacy/Early Education is held four days per week in the morning and two days per week in the evening at both locations: Darlington and Hartsville Adult Education Sites.

We continue to partner with BabyNet in Darlington County by providing space in our childcare facility for intake and assessment of potential enrollees.

## FL/EE & BabyNet by the Numbers, 2017-18

# of Families Served	29
# of Children Served	42
# of BabyNet Intake Evaluations	70



***Thank you to our partners!***

Byerly Foundation  
 Darlington County School District- Darlington-Lee Adult Education  
 Harriet Ward Tiller

**"Literacy changes lives, Motheread changes literacy."**

## Program Description

Motheread is an evidenced-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:

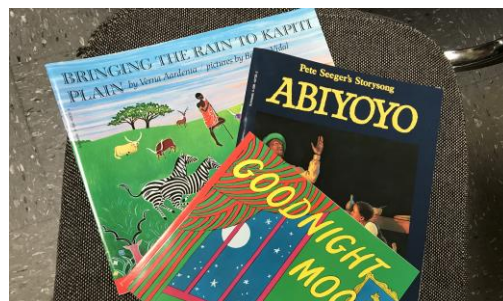
1. Groups are led by a certified Motheread facilitator.
2. Group meetings with parents are held at local Head Start centers, local county libraries, and at Darlington County First Steps' location.
3. The curriculum uses a variety of activities that promote the use of oral and written language to explore every day experiences and encourage vocabulary development.
4. The Motheread sessions encourage 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 parents see themselves as learners and participants in a literate society.
6. Sessions with fathers are titled Fatheread.
7. Pre/post assessments.



**Motheread facilitator and grandparents who've completed their Motheread sessions.**

### Motheread/Fatheread by the Numbers, 2017-18

# of Sessions	13
Children Served	54
Families Served	24
Books Given to Children families	72



**Motheread/Fatheread Books**

***Thank you to our partners!***

Darlington County Community Action Agency- Head Start  
Rosenwald Elementary and Rosenwald Middle School  
United Way of Hartsville



**Parents are their children's first and most important teachers.**

## Program Description

Parents Are First, PAF, is a federally funded program awarded to Darlington County First Steps through the Children's Trust of South Carolina. PAF is currently in its sixth year of operation and provides comprehensive services to young mothers and fathers, ages 15 -24 and their families. PAF is built on the a foundation of collaboration with Community Partners to ensure young families receive the services they need in the most efficient and streamlined manner.

### PAF Services:

Services for young parents, ages 15 – 24 include the following:

- ✓ Education/Employment Services
- ✓ Health Care Services
- ✓ Reproductive Health Care Services
- ✓ Parental Support for young mothers and fathers
- ✓ Child-Related Services
- ✓ Concrete Support
- ✓ Family Activities

### This year, our PAF program:

- ✓ Participated in a project with the nationally recognized BUILD Initiative to better understand the experiences of young parents and families in building two-way communications and positive relationships with early childhood and education providers.
- ✓ Co-Hosted Young Father's Forum with a panel of young fathers discussing the realities of becoming a father at an early age.
- ✓ Provided weekly workshops for young mothers and young fathers.
- ✓ Hosted monthly Community Work Groups for Community Partners which included guest speakers, partner updates and sharing information on upcoming events.

### PAF by the Numbers, 2017-18

Young Parents Served	124
Extended Family Members Served	45
# of Children Served	186



*Group Session with Parents*

### *Thank you to our PAF partners!*

CareSouth Carolina  
Children's Trust of South Carolina  
Darlington County School District  
Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity- Hartsville Chapter  
Man2Man  
South Carolina Center for Fathers and Families  
McLeod's Nurse-Family Partnership



**Parents play a critical role in their child's development.**

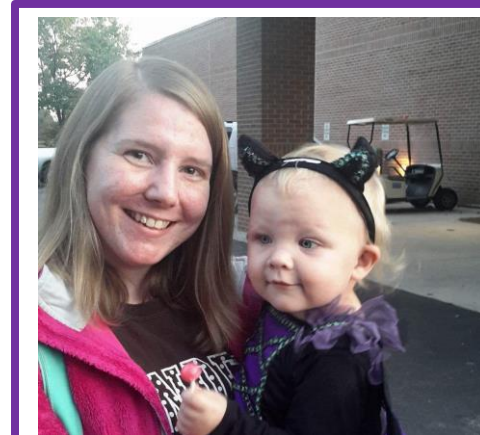
## Program Description

Parents as Teachers (PAT) is an evidence-based home visiting program designed to build strong communities, thriving families and children who are healthy, safe and ready to succeed. PAT services include:

1. **Personal Visits** at least twice monthly
2. **Monthly Group Connections** with other PAT families
3. **Screenings and Assessments** to identify developmental concerns
4. **Connections to Outside Resources** that families may need to succeed

**Darlington First Steps serves families in greatest need.**  
**Among our PAT families:**

100% ... live in poverty  
10% ... didn't graduate from high school  
30% ... were teen parents



*"This is my first year as a Parents as Teachers parent. My daughter looks forward to the home visits as much as I do. We are both learning and growing together!"*

*-Kimberly Hendrickson, PAT Parent*

## PAT by the Numbers 2017-18

Families Served	14
Children Served	15
Total Home Visits	50
Hours Spent Serving Families	57

## This year, our PAT program:

- ✓ Completed the Quality Endorsment Improvement Process and earned Blue Ribbon status!
- ✓ Provided books to each child at each home visit
- ✓ Partnered with Darlington-Lee County Adult Education to offer family literacy classes to parents in family literacy
- ✓ Hired new PAT Parent Educator
- ✓ Offered enrollment opportunities to BabyNet families, Adult Education families, and local teen parents at area high schools.

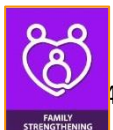
***Thank you to our PAT partners!***

**Darlington School District- Adult Education**

**Parents as Teachers National**

## Evidence of Effectiveness:

Parents as Teachers meets the First Steps legislation's definition of an **evidence-based** program.



**Reading opens up a world of imagination and is fundamental for school success.**

## Program Description

The Reach Out and Read (ROAR) Model prepares young children to succeed in school by partnering with doctors to prescribe books and encourage families to read together. ROAR begins at the 6-month checkup and continues through age 5, with a special focus on children growing up in low-income communities.

Darlington County First Steps partnered with Dr. Dante Lewis of Eastern Carolina Pediatrics in Darlington and the Darlington County Library System. Eastern Carolina Pediatrics is dedicated to the ROAR Model and supports early literacy in partnership with First Steps and the Library. Their facility has a literacy rich waiting room for parents and their children to explore the wonders of books together.

*"We are passionate about the mental and physical health of children and their parents and equally passionate about their literacy health. Reading together builds strong relationships and a love for literacy which is foundational for success in life."*

*-Dr. Dante Lewis*

### ROAR by the Numbers, 2017-18

Well Baby Visits	5700
Books Distributed	5700



### This year, our ROAR program:

- ✓ Received 1000 gently used books for siblings and sick visits
- ✓ Parents received literacy materials that included reading tips, anticipatory guidance on the importance of reading to their children daily, age appropriate bookmarks that share tips on how to read to their age child/ren
- ✓ Provided families with access to the Reach Out And Read document library which provides hundreds of tips for special needs and brain development

### *Thank you to our ROR partners!*

Darlington County Library System

Eastern Carolina Pediatrics

Reach Out and Read Carolinas

# Strengthening Families Program

The Strengthening Families Program builds communications and bonding skills between parents and their elementary school-age children.

## Program Description

The Strengthening Families Program, SFP, is an evidence-based program which serves families with children ages 6 to 11. The SFP is designed to help families develop positive discipline practices, stay resilient in tough times; reduce conflict; improve parenting skills and assist children with social skills, relationships and school performance. The SFP is a 14-week cycle where parents and children spend time together enjoying a family style meal before participating in separate workshops. Each program is ended with families coming back together to share what they have learned and celebrate their families. SFP is funded by the Children's Trust of S.C.

### Services:

- ✓ Family-style meals each week
- ✓ Parental support workshops for parents
- ✓ Child-focus activities for children
- ✓ Childcare for children younger than 6
- ✓ Teen support group for children over 11
- ✓ Door prizes and incentives each week
- ✓ Graduation celebration and ceremony for families completing the program.

## \*SFP by the Numbers, Summer 2017

Families Served	11
Children Served (ages 6-11)	18
# Teens Served	10
# of Sessions	14



*Speaker of The House, Jay Lucas, spoke during SFP Graduation Ceremony, and presented a letter of Congratulations from Governor Henry McMaster.*

*"Getting to serve in the community where we support family foundations with ways to be strengthened and thrive is the core of SFP. I am honored to hold hands with partners that share the vision for families." – Tracy Redfearn, SFP Site Coordinator and Founder of Child & Family Resource Center.*

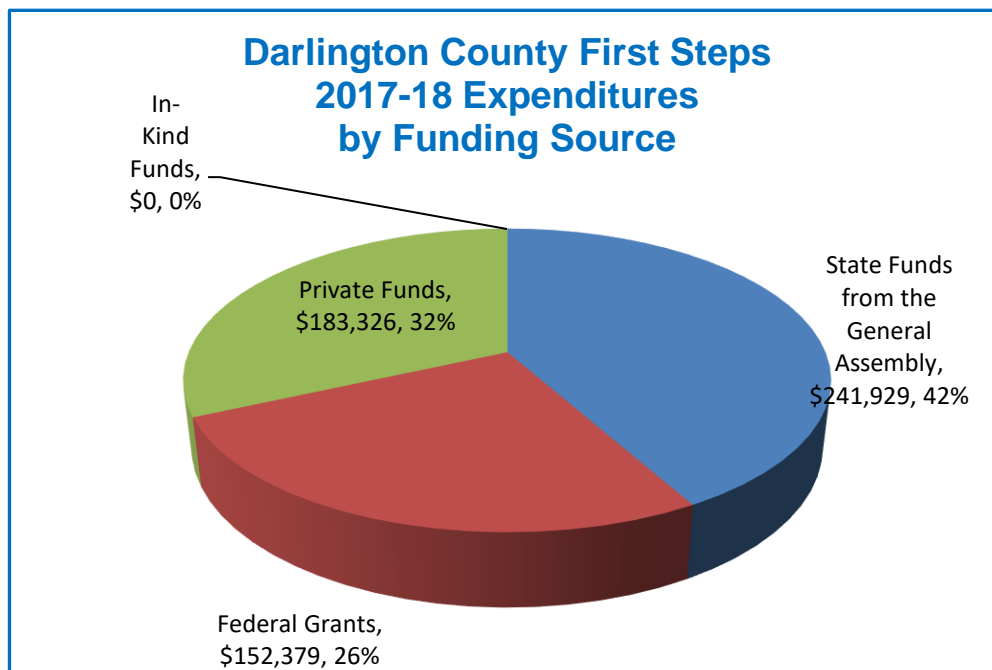


***Thank you to our SFP partners!***

Children's Trust of South Carolina  
 Darlington County School District  
 West Hartsville Elementary  
 Child and Family Resource Center



# Financial Impact



**Total 2017-18 Expenditures: \$468,556**

**State Funds Leveraged in 2017-18\*: 42%**

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

## 2017-18 Expenditures by Strategy

	State \$	Federal \$	Private \$	In-Kind \$	Total \$	% of 2017-18 Expenditures
Parents as Teachers	\$61,920	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$61,920	13%
Parents Are First	\$32,764	\$111,264	\$6,968	\$0	\$150,996	32%
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$3,427	\$0	\$13,458	\$0	\$16,885	4%
Family Literacy/Learning	\$15,216	\$0	\$8,742	\$0	\$23,958	5%
Health & Human Service Coordination	\$0	\$0	\$127,119	\$0	\$127,119	27%
Motheread/Fatheread	\$20,162	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$20,162	4%
Program Support	\$43,571	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$43,571	9%
Administrative Support	\$23,945	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$23,945	5%
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$201,005</b>	<b>\$111,264</b>	<b>\$156,287</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$468,556</b>	

Unaudited numbers for the period July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018

**Since inception, Darlington County First Steps has leveraged \$6,151,306 from sources outside of state government.**

# Thank you supporters!

Through partnerships and collaborations, as well as financial support from grants and contributions, Darlington County First Steps leverages state dollars to enhance and expand services to children and families.

## Funding Support

State of South Carolina: \$241,929  
*(through South Carolina First Steps)*

Belk Charity- \$75

CareSouth Carolina: \$300

Children's Trust of South Carolina:  
 \$139,795

Darlington-Lee County Adult Education:  
 \$40,580

Darlington Dragway: \$150

Darlington IGA: \$50

Kiwanis of Hartsville: \$1,200

New Morning Foundation: \$24,344

S.C. Campaign to Prevent Teen  
 Pregnancy: \$65,000

Darlington County Sheriff's Department  
 Captain Kaynera Capers: \$150

United Way of Hartsville: \$18,000

Hartsville Wal-Mart: \$75

## In-Kind Support

Darlington County School District-  
 Darlington-Lee County Adult Education

Darlington County Community Action  
 Agency

Department of Health and Environment  
 Control- Hartsville Health Department

Greater Hartsville Chamber of Commerce

United Way of Hartsville

West Hartsville Elementary School



*Donation of Infant Formula from the  
 Department of Health and Environment Control*

## How your support helps children in Darlington County:

- ✓ \$184 for (1) Countdown to Kindergarten Toolkit
- ✓ \$8 per United Way Born Learning Campaign Booklet
- ✓ \$25 for a case of wipes included in Welcome Baby Bags/Literacy Kits
- ✓ Average cost of 10 copies of one Motherhead book is \$50-\$75

**HOW TO GIVE:** Mail a check to Darlington County First Steps  
 437 W. Carolina Avenue, Bldg. 1  
 Hartsville, SC 29550

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

## Community Impact

# Welcome Baby Bags/Literacy Kits

Darlington County First Steps, Darlington Library System, and Carolina Pines Regional Medical Center (CPRMC) have partnered for four years to present Welcome Baby Bags/Literacy Kits to moms who deliver new babies at our local hospital, CPRMC. Welcome Baby Bags and its content promote early learning and school readiness. This year, we distributed 420 bags to new parents!

Upon being discharged from the hospital, mothers receive a diaper bag that contains wipes, parent literature, growth charts, milestone booklets developed by the United Way Born Learning Campaign, library card forms, Future Scholar Brochures- South Carolina's 529 College Savings Plan, and two baby books: One from Darlington County First Steps and one from Darlington County Library System. There is also a Gift Invitation inside which invites parents to our office to receive an additional gift. This strategy allows us to speak one on one to parents about services that are provided through the our organization and how they can utilize them. Gifts are composed of Literacy Calendars provided by the State Library, books, wipes, diapers, linens, bottles, baby shampoos, lotions and infant formula.



**Welcome Baby Bags and materials for families.**



**Gifts for families who visit our office.**

***"Learning begins in the womb and continues for a lifetime."***

## Community Impact

### *Rising Above Challenges: Welcome Baby Bag Brings Jeremiah to First Steps*

On August 15, 2015, a baby boy was born prematurely to a drug addicted mother. He was born at our local hospital, Carolina Pines Regional Medical Center (CPRMC), weighing four pounds and six ounces. His biological mother named him Jeremiah.

When Jeremiah and his mother were released from the hospital, she soon realized she was not equipped to care for him properly. She began asking neighbors and people in the community if they would take him in. Luckily, she came upon a caring and patient family: The Suttons.

Maurice Sutton is the daughter of Autistine Sutton. Maurice had recently retired from the Air Force after 26 years and Autistine was re-entering the work force. Autistine has decades of experience working in the Child Care field and caring for children is second nature to her. Jeremiah became the first and the only child Maurice has ever had and became one of several grandchildren for Autistine. They personally knew Jeremiah's biological mother and did not think twice to take Jeremiah into their home. They felt an instant connection with Jeremiah.



Shortly after Jeremiah came to live with the family, they received a First Steps **Welcome Baby Bag which contained an Invitation to visit the First Steps Office to receive a special baby gift.** The head nurse at CPRMC attends the same church as Maurice and Autistine and was very familiar with Jeremiah's story. The nurse went the extra mile to make sure Jeremiah and the Sutton's were directed to our organization by way of the **Welcome Baby Bag.**

When Jeremiah and his new family entered the Darlington County First Steps Office, they recognized long time friends and colleagues that were a part of the First Steps Team. Darlington County Adult Education just so happened to be looking for an employee for the Family Literacy Program at their Darlington Site- Autistine was the perfect candidate for this position. When Autistine was approached with the employment opportunity, she acquiesced because she cared for Jeremiah while his mother was away at work, only to find out that Jeremiah could enroll in the Family Literacy Program. She accepted the offer, began working, and Jeremiah was officially in the program.

Autistine and Jeremiah eventually transitioned to the Family Literacy Program at the Hartsville Site, continuing their journey. BabyNet, is a program to serve children under the age of three with developmental delays. The BabyNet Intake Coordinator conducts assessments for children in Darlington County in the afternoons at our Family Literacy/Child Care Center. Jeremiah was screened for developmental delays and any delays were manageable based on his participation in an early learning environment.



Jeremiah was immersed in the Family Literacy Program from the time he was a month old until he was two and a half years old. He was enrolled this fall, as a three year old, in preschool child development program, Head Start. He rides the bus to and from his Center and has endeared himself to the teachers who are amazed by his behavior and interest in reading. The social skills Jeremiah gained in the Family Literacy Program set the foundation for his love of learning. He has a great ability to retain information and is always searching for new knowledge. We love

Jeremiah and are so fortunate to have made an impact in his and his family's lives.

***Thank you United Way of Hartsville for supporting early learning for young children!***





# First Steps Partnership Board

## Restructuring, Refocusing, Forward!

We have a diverse, committed group of Board of Directors who have provided many hours of volunteer services over the years. The able leadership of our outgoing Board Chair, Dr. Alvin T. Heatley, allowed the organization to truly impact the lives of Darlington County children and families. Dr. Heatley's vision for First Steps was grounded in his early association with was a "movement in 1999. He returned to the Board to refocus and restructure our approach to community services. He embraced our efforts to reduce the incidences of teen pregnancy in our county; he advocated for First Steps to create a transition program to Head Start; and he ensured with held Board of Directors meeting which dealt with issues and were substantive in nature. Dr. Heatley, a highly regarded former educator, strongly believed supporting young mothers and fathers as the primary educators of their children was paramount to a high quality First Steps program! We salute and honer the legacy Dr. Heatley established as a trail blazer for early learning and parent engagement in education! A lifetime member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Dr. Heatley and Mrs. Heatley, are active members of Mt. Calvary A.M.E. Church and proud parents to two (2) beloved married adult children and two adored grandchildren. Thank you Dr. Heatley!

In Fiscal Year 19, we will move forward under the leadership of Chair-elect, Ms. Crystal R. Gardner, President, Mutual Savings Bank, Hartsville. Ms. Gardner has already envisioned moving DCFS to yet another level of service delivery and community engagement. Many of our committed Board Members who represent core agencies will transition in Fiscal 19: Department of Health and Enviornmental Control, Library, Department of Social Services, and Head Start. We salute this individuals as true advocates for early education and DCFS! Board members have supported our fundraising efforts, identified potential funding sources, and attended events and activities we hosted in the community. Thank you to Ms. Bellamy, Mr. Epling, Mrs. Baker, Ms. McIver, Mrs. Campbell, and Mr. Herrington for your commitment to the communities, families and children of Darlington County! Well done!

Name	Position	Board Category
Baker, Allison	Member	School District Designee
Bellamy, Lucretia	Member	DHEC Designee
Campbell, Beth	Member – Acting Secretary	DSS Designee
Davis, Thomasena	Member	Childcare Provider
Epling, Jimmie	Vice Chair	Library Designee
Gardner, Crystal	Chair-Elect	Business Community
Harris, Alma	Member	Family Education, Training
Heatley, Alvin	Chair	Non- Profit Organization
Herrington, Winfred	Member	Faith-based Community
McIver, Diane	Member	Head Start

# What is First Steps?

**At the state level and in every county**, First Steps leverages state funding with other public and private resources to help South Carolina's children enter kindergarten healthy and ready to succeed. First Steps programs and services support families as their child's first and most important teacher and are customized to meet the unique needs of local communities, grounded in strong evidence, fueled by stakeholder collaboration, and accountable for results.

## First Steps Goals

- (1) provide parents with access to the support they might seek and want** to strengthen their families and to promote the optimal development of their preschool children;
- (2) increase comprehensive services** so children have reduced risk for major physical, developmental, and learning problems;
- (3) promote high-quality preschool programs** that provide a healthy environment that will promote normal growth and development;
- (4) provide services** so all children receive the protection, nutrition, and health care needed to thrive in the early years of life so they arrive at school ready to succeed; and
- (5) mobilize communities** to focus efforts on providing enhanced services to support families and their young children so as to enable every child to reach school healthy and ready to succeed.

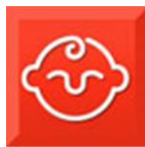
### First Steps Building Blocks of Quality Early Childhood Programs and Services



Healthy  
Start



Family  
Strengthening



Early  
Intervention



Quality  
Child Care



Early  
Education



School  
Transition

From Greenville to Charleston, Abbeville to York, First Steps local partnerships serve as ...

**Local portals** connecting preschool children and families to services

**Conveners** of community stakeholders to address the needs of young children and their families

**Champions** of the importance of school readiness to our children's future.



for South Carolina and to learn about First Steps 4K programs in your area:

**[scfirststeps.org](http://scfirststeps.org)**

for Darlington County First Steps:  
**[www.darlingtoncountyfirststeps.org](http://www.darlingtoncountyfirststeps.org)**



[I CAN] is First Steps' public awareness campaign for school readiness, in support of the state's Profile of the Ready Kindergartener. Includes resources for parents, providers and communities to learn what they can do to support school readiness.

Visit: **[ican.sc](http://ican.sc)**

Like us on Facebook: **[icansc](https://www.facebook.com/icansc)**