

## Parents as Teachers South Carolina

### Summary

The Parents as Teachers (PAT) evidence-based home visiting model is designed to ensure young children are healthy, safe, and ready to learn. The model has demonstrated successful results in increasing parent knowledge of early childhood development, improving parenting practices, providing early detection of developmental delays and health issues, preventing child abuse and neglect, and promoting young children's healthy development and school readiness, including social-emotional and early literacy skills. Services to families are delivered by certified parent educators who emphasize parent-child interaction, development-centered parenting and family wellbeing in their work with families. PAT services include four interrelated and integrated components of the model: personal visits, group connections, screening and resource networks. Together these form a dynamic package of services. South Carolina Parents as Teachers Affiliate Programs served 2,467 children and 2108 families in 2014 and is currently the largest home visiting model implemented in the state. South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness is the state office for PAT and provides technical assistance, training and support to each of the states' 51 affiliate programs.

### Demographics

- *Target Settings:* Rural, urban, suburban; in 2014 there were 51 PAT affiliates in 36 counties in SC.
- *Target Groups Served:* Families of children prenatal to kindergarten entry with identified school readiness risk factors. Most common are low income, parent low educational attainment and teen parents.
- *Districts Served:* PAT affiliate Programs' children feed into more than 50 districts in the state in the following counties: Abbeville, Aiken, Allendale, Anderson, Bamberg, Barnwell, Beaufort (2), Berkeley, Calhoun, Charleston, Cherokee, Chester, Clarendon (2), Darlington, Dillon, Dorchester, Fairfield, Florence, Greenwood (3), Hampton, Horry, Jasper, Kershaw, Laurens (2), Lee, Lexington (5), Marlboro (2), McCormick, Newberry, Oconee, Pickens, Richland, Saluda, Spartanburg (3), Sumter, and York (4).

### Research and Evaluation

*What national or other research was considered during the development of this program/initiative? Describe the evidence that shows the program/initiative works.*

Independent evaluations have been integral to the success of the National Parents as Teachers model. A range of research studies conducted by external researchers and supported by state governments, independent school districts, private foundations, universities and research organizations, and outcome data have been collected from more than 16,000 children and parents. These studies demonstrate that Parents as Teachers makes a real difference in the lives of parents and their children. The evidence that implementation of the Parents as Teachers model leads to statistically significant, positive effects for parents and children comes from rigorous research designs, including both randomized controlled trials and quasi-experimental studies. The results from these studies have resulted in 7 peer-reviewed professional journal publications. For more info: <http://www.parentsasteachers.org/results/research>.

#### *First Steps' 2009 High Scope Educational Evaluation:*

An outside independent evaluation of South Carolina First Steps home visitation programs conducted by High Scope Educational Research Foundation in 2009 showed that Home Visitation Programs improve parenting skills among the states most at risk families with children under 5. Programs saw significant increases in their pre-and post-assessments. Overall, 54% of participants who scored at a low quality of parenting improved to a moderate quality of parenting, 44% who had moderate parenting skills moved to high quality, and 11.9% who had low quality parenting at pre-test increased their skills to high quality. For more information go to the full evaluation report at <http://www.scfirststeps.org/evaluations.htm>

### *First Steps' 2014 Compass Evaluation:*

The most recent independent evaluation of South Carolina First Steps (Compass Evaluation and Research, Inc. from 2011-2014) showed that First Steps is meeting legislated goals. Parent as Teachers is the most prevalent Family Strengthening program directly supported by local First Steps partnerships. Findings from the report showed that local partnerships referenced a strong need for parenting support and it was the top need based on recent community needs assessments. Partnerships had data supporting the contribution for services for positive child and family outcomes. Home visitation programs were considered beneficial for their ability to address multiple family needs over an extended period of time.

A summary of findings from the Compass evaluation was that 1) First Steps is investing "in multiple efficient and evidence-based strategies for ensuring children have reduced risk for major physical, developmental, and learning problems and can enter school healthy and ready to succeed. For example, children's pre-literacy skills are being addressed through family strengthening programs (PAT) and available data suggest progress in child and family outcomes."; 2) Echoing previous evaluations, Compass notes First Steps' considerable success "in finding and serving the state's most high-risk children and families, with evidence suggesting a large percentage of current clients possess two or more readiness risk factors." To read more go to: <http://scfirststeps.com/resources-and-state-reporting/>

### *SC PAT Annual Performance Report*

SC PAT's Annual report for 2014 showed that immunizations in SC was at 96.59% and was up from SC's 2012 rate of 87.58% and 92% (2013). SC continues to serve 81% of total families with two or more high risk characteristics, including teens (21%), parents with low educational attainment (39%) and 82% with low income. Additionally, 91% of all of SC's certified parent educators have a degree which shows that parent educators are well prepared to provide quality of services.

### *SC PAT Impact*

SC PAT impact in 2014 showed 32,631 home visits, 2050 children with complete screenings including developmental, health, vision, and hearing screening. 1,116 families attended group parent education sessions, and 1,611 families were linked to at least one community resource during the program year. 1,819 families served had at least one documented goal and 1,448 met at least one goal. South Carolina's commitment to implementation with fidelity and accountability has served as a model for other states' efforts, national wide.

## **Resources**

- *Annual Cost:* The annual cost for a PAT program varies according to size and scope of the program. In SC the cost is currently at approximately \$2400 per family served.
- *Funding Sources:* Funds in SC primarily come from state (SCFS) and local public funds (school districts) with some private and federal Title One funds blended in.
- *Staffing Needs:* There is a need for more affordable and targeted professional development and Technical assistance support designed specifically for those who work with highly challenged families. Two of SC's PAT goals for 2014 is to provide more training on early literacy and language and to provide a deeper level of understanding about how poverty affects brain development.
- *Infrastructure/Equipment Needs:* Otoacoustic Emissions (OAE) instruments for hearing screening (for the birth to age 3 child) is needed to detect the earliest possible hearing problems. Resources to help provide the experiences that we know can change the brain in those earliest years such as leaving appropriate books in the home after a home visit. A menu of Quality Professional Development for providers who visit in the home is a continuous need.
- *Partner Organizations:* South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness, South Carolina Department of Education, Local First Steps Partnerships, Local School Districts, DSS, ICS, Part C of IDEA, Early Head Start, ECCS, and many more local partners that vary by location .

## **Contact Information**

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