



# Investing in What Works A Case for Home Visiting

**Collectively, the organizations behind the 2015 Early Childhood Common Agenda recommend a 50% expansion of home visiting programs in South Carolina by the end of 2020.**

We encourage the General Assembly to support and progressively fund high quality, evidence-based home visiting services as a way to improve outcomes for children, families, and the future of South Carolina.

South Carolina currently supports six federally-approved, evidence-based home visiting program models with a variety of public and private funding sources:

- Early Head Start (EHS)
- Family Check Up
- Healthy Families America
- Healthy Steps
- Nurse Family Partnership (NFP)
- Parents as Teachers (PAT)

The federally-funded Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program supports four of these six models, through either blended or full funding service.

Additional home visiting models operating in the state are:

- Early Steps to School Success (ESSS)
- Healthy Start
- Parent-Child Home

In 2014, the home visiting models funded by South Carolina First Steps outside of the MIECHV block grant and EHS received a total of \$4.9 million in funding, serving 2,417 families.<sup>1</sup> South Carolina received a total of \$8.4 million in MIECHV formula grants from 2010-2016. The state also applied for and won competitive funds of \$13.8 million in 2013 and \$6.3 million in 2014 to expand services to impact additional families, having served more than 2,200 families through 24,000 home visits since inception.<sup>2</sup> These programs, including state and privately-funded programs, have had significant expansion in recent years, but are still able to serve only a fraction of the state's nearly 30,000 Medicaid-eligible births and bring home visiting and family supports to scale.<sup>3</sup> Further public and private investments are needed to support the integration and expansion of evidence-based home visiting services to enhance early childhood systems in South Carolina.

## Why Home Visiting

The first 1,000 days of a child's life are critical to establishing a strong, stable, nurturing relationship between child and caregiver. These interactions are important for early brain development and for helping young children reach developmental milestones.<sup>4</sup> Evidence-based home visiting programs encourage positive interactions and the formation of constructive relationships. These programs have been used to connect low-income and at-risk families to voluntary services delivered within a family's home.

Home visiting programs are designed to reach families during the prenatal period and extend through early childhood.<sup>5,6</sup> Research has shown that "high-quality home visiting programs can increase children's school readiness, reduce child abuse and neglect, improve family economic self-sufficiency, and enhance a parent's ability to support their children's physical, psychological, social, and language development."<sup>7</sup> High quality home visiting programs are therefore considered cost effective – for every dollar spent on these efforts, at least \$2 is saved in future spending.<sup>8</sup> Some estimates are even higher, suggesting that the return on investment for each dollar toward home visiting programs can be as much as \$5.70.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup>South Carolina First Steps, 2015; <sup>2</sup>Children's Trust of South Carolina, 2015; <sup>3</sup>Markus et al., "Medicaid Covered Births, 2008 Through 2010, in the Context of the Implementation of Health Reform", 2013; <sup>4</sup>Zero TO THREE, "Policy Toolkit," 2010; <sup>5</sup>Daro, Deborah, "Home Visitation: Assessing Progress, Managing Expectations"; <sup>6</sup>Child Welfare League of America, "Home Visitation"; <sup>7</sup>ZERO TO THREE Policy Center, "Reaching Families Where They Live," 2012; <sup>8</sup>The Pew Charitable Trusts, "Home Visiting Project," 2015; <sup>9</sup>Child Welfare League of America, "Why Home Visiting is Important"

This document was created by the System Investment, Sustainability, and Alignment Committee of the 2015 Early Childhood Common Agenda. Written by Emily Carroll, Ph.D., Institute for Child Success. With assistance from Bill Brown, Ph.D., University of South Carolina

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