

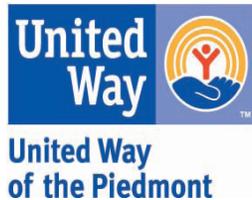
2014

SOUTH CAROLINA'S
EARLY CHILDHOOD
COMMON AGENDA



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INSTITUTE for CHILD SUCCESS



United in support of young children (ages 0-5) and their families, we propose the following agenda as a framework for building a smart, comprehensive early childhood policy for the Palmetto State.

WHAT GETS MEASURED GETS DONE.

We support investment in evidence-based solutions, and holding early childhood providers, funders, and state agencies that serve young children and their families responsible for positive outcomes.¹ Programs and interventions to improve outcomes for South Carolina's children and families exist, but are not deployed efficiently or to scale. We believe that rigorous evaluation of programs and accountability for outcomes promotes the efficient use of resources and generates bold, positive impact for children and families.

QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES ARE DRIVEN BY MEANINGFUL INTERACTIONS WITH THE PEOPLE IN A CHILD'S LIFE.

Neurological research conducted at the Harvard Medical School has clearly demonstrated that among the most critical experiences in shaping the architecture of the developing brain are the "serve and return" interactions between children and significant adults in their lives.² We believe in supporting and empowering parents to be responsible teachers and safe, nurturing caregivers. The quality of out-of-home care is built on the strength of interactions between children and their caregivers. Quality early care and education, and early childhood programs must build parental resilience, social connections, knowledge of parenting and child development, provide concrete support in times of need, and support development of the social and emotional competence of children. These programs must support parents and other caregivers, create safe environments for young children, and buffer the impacts of adverse early experiences.



CHILDREN FROM LOW-INCOME FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES BENEFIT MOST FROM ACCESS TO SERVICES.

According to Nobel Prize winning economist and University of Chicago Professor James Heckman, gaps open early in life between socioeconomically advantaged children and disadvantaged children.³ Early intervention can improve the health, cognitive and social-emotional abilities of disadvantaged children. We must support low-income and at-risk children and their families with quality, equitable, and accessible services.

TWO YEARS ARE BETTER THAN ONE.

Evaluations of the Perry Preschool Program and the Chicago Child-Parent Center, demonstrate that investing in two years of early childhood education and quality care yield greater impacts than investment in a single year of these programs.⁴

NURTURING FUTURE CITIZENS IS LONG-TERM WORK THAT REQUIRES THE COMMITMENT AND PATIENCE OF DECADES NOT THE FLEETING COMMITMENT OF A SINGLE YEAR OR ELECTION CYCLE.

Supporting early childhood health, education, and development yields a brighter future for South Carolina. We envision all children ready for school, healthier, more productive adults, stronger families, reduced crime, significant government cost avoidance, a more competitive workforce, and a stronger economy for the Palmetto State.⁵

At the beginning of the 2014 Legislative Session and in view of the upcoming statewide elections, we urge our elected leaders and policymakers to give this agenda serious consideration as decisions are made and policies advanced that impact young children and their families.

Works Cited

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