



**For Immediate Release**  
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**STUDY PUBLISHED IN LEADING ACADEMIC JOURNAL  
DOCUMENTS HOW THE PARENT-CHILD HOME PROGRAM  
HELPS TO ELIMINATE EDUCATIONAL OBSTACLES  
FACED BY LOW-INCOME CHILDREN IN SOUTH CAROLINA**

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**PROGRAM SUCCESSFULLY PREPARES  
YOUNG CHILDREN FOR SCHOOL**

**Lake City, South Carolina** – Across the state of South Carolina, families that have not had access to educational opportunities are learning how to prepare their young children to succeed in school, developing critical language and literacy skills through reading, playing and talking with their children. New research published recently in the *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology* demonstrates that the Parent-Child Home Program is helping low-income children be better prepared to learn as they enter grade school.

“The school readiness of former Parent-Child Home Program toddlers when they reach first grade in South Carolina confirms that the program is an effective home-based preschool program, with its practicality underlined by its low costs (about \$2,000 per child per year) and by the almost universal acceptance by its participants,” said lead author Phyllis Levenstein, Ed.D., who is affiliated with the State University of New York at Stony Brook.

The Parent-Child Home Program focuses on building strong language and literacy skills through parent-child interaction, emphasizing the joy that comes from reading and playing together. Home Visitors show parents how they can read, talk about books, and build vocabulary through play with their children. Families participating in the program, who often have no children’s books when they enter the program, assemble a library of high-quality children’s literature and a collection of educational toys that they will use for many years. As their children’s vocabulary blossoms, parents feel a sense of pride and accomplishment that spurs them to continue regular, positive verbal interaction with their children.

“The program’s success is due to our unique approach in working with parents and children ages two and three, engaging them in interactive reading and constructive play with quality books and toys,” said Sarah Walzer, Parent-Child Home Program Executive Director.

In Levenstein’s study, the 84 toddlers in the program were identified as being at high risk for inadequate school readiness due to lack of access to educational opportunities and parents’ low levels of education. The pass rate of the program group not only significantly surpassed that of the low-income first graders in the state but also was numerically higher than that of all the first graders in the state, of any income or ethnicity: a 92.2% pass rate for the program first graders as compared to 82.4% for all first graders statewide. Most significantly, passing scores were achieved by only 75% of African American children statewide but by 92.7% of Parent-Child Home Program African Americans, and by only 74% of the children receiving free lunch statewide, but by 93.2% of the Parent-Child Home Program participants receiving free lunch.

Thus, four successive years of first graders who had been in the pre-preschool Parent-Child Home Program demonstrated that they were more likely to be prepared for schools than their socio-economic peers and than all children in the state.

“This newly published study on the Lake City Parent-Child Home Program confirms what we are seeing first-hand in district. As we look at the progress of our preschool, kindergarten and first-grade children, we see a dramatic increase in the educational potential of these children,” said Beth M. Wright, Superintendent, Florence School District 3. “We strongly feel that this is a direct result of the powerful foundation laid by the Parent Child Home Program, which establishes that initial support for school that follows them through all aspects of their education.”

While the program has proven to be a demonstrated success, sufficient funding continues to be a challenge. The South Carolina program sites are funded by individual school districts or agencies pulling together the funding locally, often using First Steps funds, parenting education funds and Title I. The South Carolina Department of Education has been able to support training

and some start-up costs for new sites and works closely with the Parent-Child Home Program National Center to assure the quality of the South Carolina sites. Availability of additional funds is critical to the program's ability to continue to grow and provide critical school readiness services to children in need around the state.

Since 1994, the Parent-Child Home Program has established 34 sites new sites across the state, and an estimated six more will be in place by 2003. In the Lake City site, every family invited to participate in the program accepted the offer. Almost 97% of the families stayed in the program for one year and 83% stayed for the full two years. In total, the Program served approximately 800 South Carolina families this past year and will serve over 1,000 families in the coming year, making South Carolina's Parent-Child Home Program the second largest cluster of Parent-Child Home Program sites in the country.

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