

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ICS Board Elects First Steps Executive Director

Hartsville, S.C., January 27, 2015—Darnell McPherson, Executive Director of Darlington County First Steps (DCFS), has been elected as the newest member of the Institute for Child Success' (ICS) Board of Directors in Greenville, South Carolina.

McPherson has been the Executive Director of DCFS since 2008. During her tenure as Executive Director, she has expanded the range of services and the number of families served in Darlington County with the help of DCFS' partnering agency, United Way of Hartsville.

ICS is a South Carolina nonprofit corporation that is dedicated to research, advocacy, and integration and supports advocates and service providers who are focused on early childhood development, healthcare and education. McPherson has over 30 years of experience in early childhood education and as an advocate for young parents and their children. Her prestigious background and experience is conducive to ICS' plan.

"Already, Darnell has demonstrated her value to our organization and her commitment to the ICS mission of ensuring the success of all young children in South Carolina and beyond" said Susan Thomson, Chair Emerita of ICS.

ICS and First Steps has some of the same focal points which are to prepare young children (birth to age five) for school and to make sure their teachers, whether it is in the school or at home, are well equipped to meet their educational needs. In 2013, ICS worked with many stakeholders to craft the School Readiness Legislation to reauthorize and improve South Carolina First Steps which led to the legislation being passed as law in June 2014.

"I was on SC First Steps' Reauthorization Committee when I was introduced to the Institute" said McPherson. "They were leading the meeting and I was really impressed because of their dedication to ensuring First Steps was refined and that the reauthorization would occur."

McPherson attended *Ensuring the Success of Young Children in Rural South Carolina* hosted by ICS at Francis Marion which was a symposium focusing on the different challenges and opportunities enjoyed by rural communities in the state of South Carolina. From this,

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McPherson's relationship with the Institute grew.

DCFS was given the opportunity to co-host The Summit on Rural Education at the Butler Heritage Foundation in March 2014 where they continued the conversation about the importance of early childhood education.

McPherson stated, "It is an honor to be asked to represent the rural community based organizations on the ICS board of directors. My goal is to highlight the issues of early childhood education in our rural areas and to make sure they are continuing to improve."

ICS and First Steps understand that if they want their goals of having efficient leaders in the future to prosper, then it is required to share the knowledge to educators and other advocates of early childhood education about how critical it is to start working with children in the very early years of their lives.

The mission of DCFS is to develop, promote, and assist efforts of partner agencies, private providers and private organizations at the community level to collaborate in order to focus and intensify services and assure the most efficient use of all available resources to serve the educational needs of young children and their families.

For more information about services provided by DCFS, call 843-857-3148. The office is located on 437 West Carolina Avenue, Building One in Hartsville South Carolina.