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Subject: New ICS Issue Brief of School Readiness, Introducing New ICS Board Members, Legislative Reception Recap, New Blog Post and More

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ICS Releases New White Paper and Issue Brief on School Readiness

The Institute for Child Success recently released an issue brief and white paper on school readiness. The two publications "School Readiness: Moving Toward a Shared Definition, Standardized Assessment, and Unifying Language" present the need for a statewide definition and description of school readiness as well as a tool to determine children's school readiness. The papers address the use of kindergarten entry assessments, considerations for selecting an assessment, and domains that are typically measured in kindergarten assessments.

To download the issue brief or more-detailed white paper, [click here](#).

New Members Elected to ICS Board of Directors

Sam Cook lives in Georgetown County and was received as a Business Development Consultant and Nonprofit Marketing expert for a couple of nonprofit organizations and the \ Community Foundation in Murrells Inlet. It was in this capacity that ICS came to know Mr. Cook and began work with him on early childhood issues. In 2013, Sam became Director of the Sustainable Forestry Program of The Center for Heirs' Property Preservation. In this role, he develops and implements a program of support that allows landowners and forest landowners to increase their income through technical support and implementing sustainable forestry practices on their land.

Mr. Cook received his Associate degree from Tuskegee University and Bachelor of Science from North Carolina State University in Forest Resource Management and spent much of his career working in Forest Management and Wood Procurement for International Paper Company Forest Resources Division. Additionally, his work experience includes Real Estate Brokerage for a Eastern North Carolina Land Development Company and a Distribution and Right a Way Specialist for Duke Power/Energy.

Mr. Cook has served on many local and state nonprofit boards including: Duke Children's Hospital Board of Governors, Literacy Alive Coalition Director for Horry County, Member of the ICS Early Childhood Social Impact Finance Working Group, Georgetown Chamber of Commerce, CARETEAM, INC., and the NC State Forestry Foundation Board. Mr. Cook has served as a member of the ICS Advisory Council and is currently serving on the boards of the SC Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, North Carolina State University Natural Resources Foundation, and SC Thrive, formerly The Benefit Bank of SC.

Sylvia Echols is a member of the Board of Directors of the Early Learning Partnership of York County, which is a comprehensive, results-oriented initiative, supported by public and private partnerships to help prepare children, mentally and physically for school. Ms. Echols has been the First Lady of Rock Hill since 2011 when her husband was first elected Mayor.

Ms. Echols is a former public school principal. In addition to being a founding member of the Early Learning Partnership, she is also very involved in the former "Success by 6" initiative in Rock Hill. She was recently honored by Winthrop University for her many years of "tireless work in advocating for York County children and to reminding city residents to remember the effect on children's lives as policies are created." Ms. Echols is also ambassadorial chair of the successful "The #1 Question: Is It Good for the Children" campaign in Rock Hill. Ms. Echols is an active member of St. John's United Methodist Church and serves on numerous community boards.

ICS Hosts Legislative Reception

ICS honored seven members of the South Carolina General Assembly at the Institute's annual legislative reception in Columbia on Wednesday, March 5th. These legislators were honored for their outstanding commitment to South Carolina's youngest children and for their bipartisan and research-informed efforts to implement policies to improve outcomes for children in the Palmetto State.

The honored legislators were:

- Sen. Nikki Setzler (D- Lexington)
- Sen. Thomas Alexander (R- Oconee)
- Sen. Gerald Malloy (D-Darlington)
- Rep. Jay Lucas (R- Darlington)
- Rep. Andy Patrick (R- Hilton Head Island)
- Rep. Jenny Anderson Horne (R- Dorchester)
- Rep. Terry Alexander (D- Florence)

ICS President Jamie Moon noted: "These legislators represent both political parties and the geographical diversity of our state, but they are firmly united in their commitment to improve outcomes for all young children in South Carolina. We are pleased to honor them for their efforts- at the State House and in their local communities- to build a brighter future for the Palmetto State."

Clockwise from left: Sen. Gerald Malloy, Rep. Andy Patrick, Rep. Jenny Horne, and Sen. Thomas Alexander receive their awards from ICS Board Chair Susan Thomson Shi and Vice President Joe Waters.

To view all pictures from event please visit our facebook page.

Working Group Takes on Rural Community Challenges

On March 6, ICS convened the first meeting of the Working Group on Early Childhood Opportunities and Challenges in Rural South Carolina. Darnell McPherson, Executive Director of Darlington County First Steps, served as the host for the event, held in Hartsville at the historic Butler Heritage Foundation Building. The program included presentations by Vanessa Elkan of the Southern Education Foundation, Debbie Robertson with South Carolina First Steps, and Ben Goodman from Duke University's Center for Child and Family Policy. The next meeting of the rural working group will take place on June 18 in Greenwood. For more information, please contact Joe Waters.

News and Tools Highlight

Why breastfed babies are so smart: Moms who breastfeed are often responsive and read to their babies

Brigham Young University

Science Daily

February 26, 2014

According to a new study out of Brigham Young University, two parenting skills deserve the credit behind research that shows that children who were breastfed score higher on IQ tests and perform better in school. BYU researchers say that parent responsiveness to children's emotional cues boosts kids' math and reading skills. Reading to children as early as 9 months of age also significantly improves school readiness. These two skills can give kids an extra 2-3 months' worth of brain development. Previously, the reason behind the increased intelligence of breastfed babies was unclear.

To read about more articles like this, sign up for our bimonthly News and Tools bulletin by emailing [Heather Frey](#).

ICS Joins in Discussion of South Carolina's Pay for Success Efforts to Improve Birth Outcomes

ICS Vice President Joe Waters and ICS Fellow Megan Golden joined Rhett Mabry of The Duke Endowment and Erica Brown of Harvard's SIB Lab in discussing South Carolina's Pay for Success efforts to improve birth outcomes on a conference call with the University of Chicago's Human Capital and Economic Opportunity Global Working Group co-chaired by economists Robert Dugger, James Heckman, and Steven Durlauf. A recording of the call is available [here](#).

ICS Welcomes Two Interns

Lydia Guo

Lydia Guo is a sophomore at the New York University Stern School of Business originally from Palo Alto, California pursuing a concentration in Economics and minors in Math and Public Policy. Since her time at Stern, she has developed interests in the role of business and finance in economic development and sustainable solutions to social issues. Last spring, Lydia studied the effects of childhood development and parent education programs in reducing the academic achievement gap between different socioeconomic strata and thus became involved with the Institute for Child Success. Recently, she has been working with ICS Fellow Megan Golden on researching programs to pursue for Pay for Success financing. After graduating, Lydia hopes to find a career related to economic development and poverty alleviation.

Ben Riddle

Messy problems hide in broken systems. Ben Riddle works with stakeholders across sectors to build capacity and retool broken systems from within. As a Duke Scholar at Furman University, Ben has worked with the Office of the President to explore design thinking and social entrepreneurship as strategies for engaged learning. Ben has represented Furman at the HPI School of Design Thinking's d.convestival, and brought Cannon Design, the Associated Colleges of the South, and two Furman departments together to create Design for Social Change, an interdisciplinary course that serves as a model for reinvigorating the liberal arts through design. He has also launched POP Studio - a social design studio for public works projects.

From TEDx events and community celebrations to multi-million dollar fundraising campaigns, Ben creates events and experiences that connect networks to create shared value. Over the past several years, Ben has worked with Future Partners and Project M to further explore his interests in community-building and human centered design. Ben regularly partners with communities in the Southeast to create social ventures that

preserve local identity and drive positive change.

New: ICS Events Calendar now Accessible via Website

ICS is pleased to announce that our Events Calendar has now been added to our Website. If you would like to view our upcoming events, please [click here](#).

New ICS Blog Post: Pay for Success Financing for Early Childhood Interventions: pushing through challenges and building momentum.

The Institute for Child Success was thrilled to work with ReadyNation/America'sEdge to organize a conference on using Pay for Success financing to scale up effective early childhood interventions. Sponsored by the Pritzker Children's Initiative, and hosted by Bank of America, last week's event brought together folks representing 133 organizations, from 27 states and three countries, who are working in this field. The participants included bankers, non-profit executives, business executives, and representatives of every level of government - from the White House to local school systems.

This event was very much a working conference. The participants are pioneering Pay for Success financing in the early childhood space, and they came to Charlotte to share their experiences and strategize about the best paths forward. We worked through issues surrounding feasibility studies, data systems, the contracting process, financing models, and policy and legislative issues at state and federal levels. One of the sentiments that most of the speakers repeated: Pay for Success deals are hard to create - harder than most expect - but it continues to build momentum because the results are so valuable to everyone involved.

Why is it so difficult?

To continue reading [click here](#)

Upcoming Events

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