

United Way of the Piedmont: Focusing on Community Impact

United Way of the Piedmont's "**Nurturing Children**" Community Impact Area focuses resources on programs and services that help prepare children for school and a lifetime of learning. By focusing resources on early learning and literacy, quality child care, programs supporting elementary education, and parenting skills education, United Way provides support to help children get a good start.

Family Connections is a family literacy program in which parents and children attend school together. Parents attend adult education and take their preschool children, ages two months to four years, to attend early childhood education classes. During parenting classes and interactive literacy activity time, parents acquire important life skills as well as increased parenting competence as they learn to spend quality time with their children.

Spoken words serve as the foundation to early learning and literacy. By age 4, children living in poverty hear about 40 million words less than their peers who do not live in poverty, affecting their learning ability before they even enter school. Family Connections' family literacy program teaches parents how important spoken language is to the development of children through parent and child interaction time and reading time. Family Connections helps parents from low socioeconomic levels to encourage positive school interactions for their children.

Early literacy and adult education programs like Family Connections not only help the families who participate, but improve the community as a whole. In South Carolina, the cost of one year of schooling per child is \$7,555. If family literacy prevents ten children from repeating a grade, the cost savings will be over \$75,000.

Your support of United Way of the Piedmont's Community Impact Agenda ensures programs like the family literacy model at Family Connections are available to families in our community. You help build stronger families, and in turn a stronger community by giving to United Way of the Piedmont.