

# Spartanburg City Council unanimously approves funding for innovative 'Hello Family' program

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28



## Program will provide free evidence based early childhood support tools citywide

It's been on the City's priority list for years, and after City Council's 6-0 approval Monday (Mayor Junie White was absent from the meeting) allocating \$1.5 million in federal funding for ["Hello Family,"](#) a collection of support systems that will seek to improve outcomes for young children and their families by providing a continuum of evidence-based services for all children born in the City of Spartanburg from prenatal care through age five.

Designed to significantly improve child wellbeing, boost future prosperity, and provide quantifiable financial benefits to our community well in excess of its cost, Hello Family Hello Family will provide, at a full citywide scale, free universal nurse home visiting, free evidence-based parent education and support tools, and significantly enhanced early learning opportunities.

Based on the work of James J. Heckman, a Nobel Prize-winning economist who found that investing in programs targeted at the earliest years of life yield the most lasting and cost-effective results, Hello Family seeks to improve birth outcomes, reduce child abuse and neglect, and improve kindergarten readiness throughout the City.

The City's investment triggers additional investment in the program from a wide range of partners including:

- A local individual philanthropist committed \$1 million to the effort.
- The Mary Black Foundation committed \$1 million.
- The Duke Endowment committed \$1.5 million.
- The BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina Foundation committed \$1.5 million.
- Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System committed services valued at nearly \$1 million

In a memo to Council, City Manager Chris Story said, "doing what the evidence suggests we should to provide each child in the City the early boost they need is an essential step toward breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty. In the process, we hope to strengthen ourselves and our partners, help city families prosper, and make our local economy stronger. By approving this action, the City of Spartanburg would become the Southeast's leader in giving kids in need a real opportunity to thrive."

