Strong Couples—Strong Children supports families expecting the birth of a child by strengthening their relationship and assisting them with every day practical needs.

Strong Couples—Strong Children aims to strengthen relationships among unmarried couples who are expecting a child or have a child 3 months or younger by providing them with tools needed for effective communication, problem-solving, conflict resolution and financial management.

Strong Couples—Strong Children is a FREE program that offers these relationship skills using a curriculum called “Love’s Cradle.” At the sessions couples have dinner while their children are cared for by certified child-care providers. All of this adds up to a couples ‘night out’ for expecting and new parents.

The SC—SC Program also focuses on concrete needs that parents may have by offering family and fatherhood support services. Recognizing that a new baby often creates changing needs and new stresses, these family support staff work with both parents, individually and together to assist them in identifying and finding community resources such as improved job skills, housing, and child-care.

These three program components: (1) Relationship skills sessions; (2) Family Care Service and (3) Fatherhood Support Services are offered through the Durham County Health Department and the Durham County Cooperative Extension Service.

What Participants Receive from this FREE program:

- Twelve weeks of relationship-skills sessions with your partner and other couples like yourselves.
- Resources to assist with job training, education, housing, health care, child care and other needs.
- One-on-one assistance from a Fatherhood Support Coordinator who understands the challenges men face in becoming fathers and maintaining healthy relationships.
- FREE dinner and child care at the sessions
- Assistance with transportation to and from the sessions
- GIFT cards (up to $200 per couple) and other small gifts for completing the program

If you are interested in participating in the STRONG COUPLES—STRONG CHILDREN program, please call (919) 560-7624 for more information.

The Love’s Cradle sessions are held evenings and weekends at the Durham County Cooperative Extension Service, 721 Foster Street (next to the ballpark) and Immaculate Conception Church, 810 W. Chapel Hill St, Durham.

We are currently recruiting for upcoming groups.
Is STRONG COUPLES—STRONG CHILDREN RIGHT FOR YOU?

- Do you live in Durham County?
- Are you unmarried and pregnant or have a baby 3 months old or younger?
- Are you 18 or older?
- Are you looking for ways to strengthen your relationship with your partner?

AND DO YOU WANT?

- A close, happy relationship with your partner?
- Help with practical needs like job training and childcare?
- A strong family foundation to support your child’s future?

If you answered yes to all of the above, SC—SC may be right for you. It is a free program in Durham County with three core components:

- Relationship skill sessions
- Family care coordination services
- Fatherhood support services

Assistance with transportation, food and childcare services are provided free of charge.

Couples Corner

Vondeara Faulkner and Tynisha Green have been together for four years. They completed 12 weeks of skill building sessions with SC—SC and celebrated the completion of the program on September 23, 2008. Vondeara and Tynisha have two children, 4 year old Kameren and 5 month old Kamiah.

On Dec. 31st at midnight Vondeara got on one knee and popped the question with a ring—Will you marry me? They both remember this event as if it was yesterday. Vondeara explained that he called Tynisha from upstairs and with all of her family looking on he promised to be true to her. He told her that he wanted to spend the rest of his life with her. The couple plan to marry on June 26, 2009.

Vondeara and Tynisha recalled that things weren’t always this happy. Only six months ago they were on the verge of breaking up. “We were both fed up with a lot of stuff”, Tynisha recalls. “I’m not sure it would have lasted. My sister, my whole family couldn’t stand him.” Back then they were having a lot of disagreements and holding grudges. Sometimes they would go for as much as a week without speaking. Vondeara was out a lot with his friends and acknowledges that, “I was doing things I should not do.” Then they started attending the Love’s Cradle sessions which are part of the Strong Couples—Strong Children Program. Somewhere during those sessions something began to change.

“Going to Love’s Cradle brought out a lot of things we didn’t know about each other. We learned how to talk to each other. We don’t yell at each other about small things anymore…I think it was the night we talked about trust. That night really broke the ice…Now we don’t have to have secrets. We really know and trust each other.”

There have also been lots of other changes. Working with the SC—SC Fatherhood Support Coordinator, Allen Reddick, Vondeara learned about a construction program at Durham Technical Community College. “I went to Durham Tech and now I have a construction certificate.”

The construction program opened up still another door. Mr. George Digsby, Vondeara’s construction instructor, referred the couple to an affordable housing program that was able to provide them with a new place to live. Vondeara and Tynisha are now about to move into their own home. In addition to doing construction, Vondeara has also started a landscaping business.

“I love him”, Tynisha softly stated. “I couldn’t ask for a better spouse. I have this program to thank for that.”

For more information or to join the Strong Couples—Strong Children program, contact Erline Harvin (919) 560-7624 or Alicia Nelson (919) 560-7859 (Español)

Funding for this project was provided by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Grant No. 90FE0094. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author (s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.
Let’s Celebrate!

Congratulations to Ivonee Micete and Mizraim Rangel on their baby boy, Daniel. They were also recently married.

Congratulations to Ashley Canady and Sean Pass on their new baby boy.

Congratulations to Verna York and Jarvis Little on their new baby boy.

Congratulations to Brianna Caviness and Alphonse Estell on their new baby and new jobs!

Congratulations to Charessa Sawyer and Michele Bertuglia-Haley Strong Couples-Strong Children interns, they just graduated with their Master’s of Social Work degree!

Sponsor recognition
Thank you to
AMF Bowling
Carolina Theater in Durham
Chick-fil-A
Durham’s Partnership for Children
LOCO Pops Ice Cream
Stadium 10 at Northgate
Texas Roadhouse
The Chicken Hut
Your generous contributions to the SC—SC families are appreciated.

Strong Couples—Strong Children is a partnership program of the School of Social Work at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Durham County Health Department; Durham County Cooperative Extension Service and UNC’s Jordan Institute for Families.

Message from the Program Manager

We are proud of our fatherhood component because most service agencies traditionally focus on the mothers and/or children. Our Fatherhood Support Coordinator provides services to new or expectant fathers who may need assistance, moral support and a positive male figure to discuss challenging social, psychological or medical issues and concerns. These young fathers have a separate resource person to assist them in building their families and moving forward in life. Allen, our Fatherhood Support Coordinator also offers assistance with practical kinds of male concerns and provides support and information to help dads adjust to this new role. For more information about the Fatherhood Support Coordinator services contact Allen Reddick at (919) 560-7777 or Erline Harvin at (919) 560-7624.

Erline Harvin

Special thanks to all the couples who participated in the program. We wish you success and happiness as you continue to strengthen your family!

Spotlight on Fatherhood Support
by Allen Reddick

Strong Couples—Strong Children is a very useful and beneficial program to the Durham Community. I’m excited and pleased to be part of it. The current reward I receive is the development of young men becoming fathers.

It is exciting when fathers get involved and realize the importance of their presence and the positive effect it has on their family. The Fatherhood Support component is vital to the Strong Couples—Strong Children program. When men/fathers are included in the home this provides strength, love, and direction for the family. When the families include both the mother and the father the benefit to the children and the Durham Community as a whole is very substantial. Some of these benefits include: higher school achievement, fewer school dropouts, less use of government assistance and less crime. In addition, statistics show that children become better citizens when parented by both parents.

Allen helped me turn my life around. I’m working and I’m a much more responsible father now.

—T.K.

Some of the organizations that I work with are the Durham Employment Security Commission, Operation Breakthrough Fatherhood Program, Community Partnership INC., Durham County Child Support, Social Services, and Durham Technical Community College. By working closely with these organizations we have been successful in helping many young men develop career goals, find new job opportunities and feel good about themselves as partners and fathers. SC—SC is a jewel of a program but one that has not yet been widely discovered. The program is very effective and I am honored to be a part of it.

Let’s Celebrate!

Congratulations to Ivonee Micete and Mizraim Rangel on their baby boy, Daniel. They were also recently married.

Congratulations to Ashley Canady and Sean Pass on their new baby boy.

Congratulations to Verna York and Jarvis Little on their new baby boy.

Congratulations to Brianna Caviness and Alphonse Estell on their new baby and new jobs!

Congratulations to Charessa Sawyer and Michele Bertuglia-Haley Strong Couples-Strong Children interns, they just graduated with their Master’s of Social Work degree!
Five win-win ways of managing conflicts in your relationship

1. Identify one specific issue to talk about at a time
2. Brainstorm – write down as many ideas as you can think of that might resolve the issue
3. Consider the pros and cons of each idea – cross out the ideas that you do not like or you think will not work
4. Choose one solution – pick one that both sides can live with
5. Agree to try it out – put your agreement in writing like a contract
   • Be specific
   • Set a date when you will meet again and review your plan

Four common mistakes to avoid

1. Don’t drag others into your conflict
2. Don’t try to avoid the problem or the person
3. Don’t get personal (criticizing or blaming)
4. Don’t bring up past conflicts

How you can get involved

Paid Opportunities
Love’s Cradle Group Facilitators.
Are you outgoing? Do you have experience teaching or facilitating groups? Call Nekeidra Morrison at 560-0501 for more information. (Couples welcome)

Volunteer Opportunities
Can you help with transportation (getting couples to and from group sessions)? Would you like to mentor a young couple once they leave our program? Can you or your organization members cook a meal for about 6 couples? Could you donate diapers, formula or other items for infants? If so, please call Nekeidra Morrison at 560-0501 for more information about volunteer opportunities.


Four common mistakes to avoid

1. Don’t drag others into your conflict
2. Don’t try to avoid the problem or the person
3. Don’t get personal (criticizing or blaming)
4. Don’t bring up past conflicts

Working things out
Staying together
Feeling close
Building a future

It’s good for you
It’s good for your child