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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Governor Sanford Issues Executive Order Moving BabyNet to First Steps

Columbia, S.C. – September 18, 2009 – Governor Mark Sanford yesterday issued an Executive Order placing the federally funded BabyNet program under the control of South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness. Until now the program has been overseen by the Department of Health and Environmental Control, although S.C. First Steps is the state’s only program devoted solely to meeting the needs of infants and toddlers with developmental challenges.

“Given that the BabyNet program aligns far more closely with the core mission of First Steps, we think this is an important step toward managing the program more effectively,” Gov. Sanford said. “Matching BabyNet with state resources better able to handle its original purpose represents a better use of taxpayer dollars – and ultimately a more effective service to those moms and dads whose young children have real challenges.”

BabyNet was originally established by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1986. Its intent was to enhance the development of infants and toddlers with disabilities; reduce educational costs by minimizing the need for special education through early intervention; minimize the likelihood of institutionalization; and assist families in meeting their children’s needs.

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