

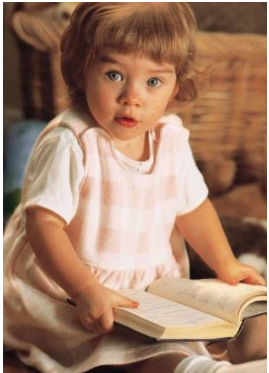
The Need

Quality child care is, far too often, out of reach for South Carolina's children.

Quality Child Care is Paramount.

A child's brain is mostly "wired" by age 4. Therefore, early experiences have a *profound impact* on the development of children's brains.

For the 63% of South Carolina children under 6 whose primary caregiver works outside the home, those early experiences take place, in large part, in some form of child care. Unfortunately, much of this care happens in poor quality settings, which research suggests can *actually harm* a child's development.



Fewer SC Families Can Afford Quality Child Care.

Very little public child care is available in South Carolina for children under age 3 - therefore, low income families need help affording the cost of tuition.

Unfortunately, government resources to help families afford quality child care – already limited prior to the current economic downturn – are being exhausted by the increasing numbers of families on public assistance. Due to lack of funding, the *majority* of income eligible families (150% of poverty or below) *do not* receive child care tuition assistance in South Carolina.

The Opportunity

- Thanks to one-time funding from DSS through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and the State Office of First Steps, there is limited funding available to help First Steps County Partnerships assist families affected by the current economic crisis afford quality child care so that they can return to the workforce or go back to school.
- These scholarships will be targeted to children with two or more school readiness risk factors. Child care providers must be either at the highest quality level or be enrolled in a quality improvement program.
- To receive these scholarship funds, First Steps County Partnerships must raise **one-third** of the cost for each child care scholarship from their communities, including local businesses, organizations, and individuals. Counties must raise a minimum of \$4,000.
- Funds are available on a **first-come, first-served basis**. Counties who raise funds the fastest will be the ones whose children will benefit.

Help Chesterfield County First Steps raise needed scholarship funds so that our county's at-risk children can benefit from quality child care.

What it costs:

The cost of child care varies depending on the local market rate and the age of the child – up to \$100 per week or more for infant care.

BUT, with your help, Chesterfield County First Steps can provide a low-income, at-risk child with a scholarship for just **\$1,333** for one year of child care. That's only:

\$111 per month!

or

\$25.63 per week!

or

\$5.13 per day!

Chesterfield County First Steps will use each dollar contributed to draw down **\$2 additional dollars** in scholarship funds. Donations of all sizes are welcome.

Invest in a child today!
Matching funds are available for a limited time only.