



Chesterfield County First Steps Partnership *Fiscal Year 2005 Annual Report*

Board Chair:
John Gerstenmier
Executive Director:
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Summary

Numbers Served:

931 children; 590 adults/families; 8 child care facilities, with 414 children total at those facilities; 2 child care centers achieved a higher quality status; 75 health assessments and screenings; 756 home visits; and 3,866 books distributed.

Total Budget:

\$277,987

Chesterfield County First Steps School Readiness Profile

Population Characteristics ¹	Figure
Population of Young Children (Ages 0-5)	3,520
Children Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch (5K)*	62.7%
Average Per Capita Personal Income	\$20,981
Children in Poverty (Ages 0-5)****	29.7%
Children Who Are Over Age in Third Grade***	14.9%
Children in Third Grade Performing below Basic on PACT Reading **	18.1%
Children in Third Grade Performing below Basic on PACT Math**	22.2%
Low Birth Weight Infants	9.6%
Births to Mothers with Less than High School Education	26.8%
Less than Adequate Prenatal Care	14.7%

*Note: Data is for 2003 except where noted (*2005, **2004, ***2001, ****1999).*

Profile Comments: *Family illiteracy, poverty, poor parenting skills, and multi-generational welfare dependency trap our parents in a grim lifestyle. One of four families with children lives in poverty, 62.6% (2,217) of preschoolers are enrolled in Medicaid, and 29.7% (658) live in poverty. The 1999 per capita income was \$14,233. 9.5% of the workforce (2,020) were unemployed in May this year (state avg. 3.6%, national avg. 3.7%-US Census). Most of the county is inadequately served by family support resources, yet First Steps has lost 50% in state annual funding. South Carolina is often ranked next to the last in state rankings on comparative indicators. If Chesterfield County were ranked as a State, our children would rank 51st in poverty, 51st in children with a single parent, 51st in the rate of teen births, 51st in low birth weight and infant mortality.*

¹ <http://www.sckidscount.org/report05/lbw.pdf>

Families at risk

The 2000 Census found that 9.6% of Chesterfield County children do not live with their natural parents. Eight hundred twenty-two (822) of all children lived with relatives, 193 (1.7%) lived with non-relatives, 21 (0.2%) were householders or spouses, and 60 (0.5%) were in institutional facilities.

The total number of children born to single mothers in 2003 was 270, or 50% of all infants born in Chesterfield County.

Teen and young mother pregnancies have long been a serious problem in Chesterfield. Only nine other counties in South Carolina have higher rates of births to mothers with less than a high school diploma.ⁱ Studies show that less than 40% of teen mothers who begin their families before age 18 ever complete high school. Even more troubling, 37% of teen mothers give birth a second time while they are still in their teen years.ⁱⁱ When paternity-acknowledged babies are added, the total number of children born to single mothers in 2003 alone was 270, or 50% of all infants born in Chesterfield County.ⁱⁱⁱ

Currently, there are more than 200 district students for whom English is a second language, and 3.4% of our children speak another language in the home. Two and a half per cent of them speak Spanish at home, and district educators are finding that Spanish bilingual services are needed more and more as this population grows.

Of the 7,217 children in Chesterfield County who were 5 to 15 years old in 2000, 5.8 % (420 people) had at least one type of disability. Of the 2,854 individuals in Chesterfield County who were 16 to 20 years old, 15.7% (449 people) had at least one type of disability. During the 2001-2002 school year, our county school district identified among students: 220 speech and language impaired, 747 learning disabled, 47 emotionally disabled, 240 mentally impaired, and 62 physically handicapped students. Special education classes served approximately 14% of all students in grades 1 - 12 during 2003-2004.ⁱⁱⁱ

In 2004, there were 298 investigations into reported cases of abuse and neglect involving children, of which the S.C. Department of Social Services (DSS) determined that 70 were indicated for abuse or neglect: 14.2% for physical abuse, 8.5% for sexual abuse, 67.4% for neglect.

Early Care and Education

The South Carolina Department of Social Services in June 2005 listed 38 registered childcare providers in Chesterfield County. If all operated at capacity, these centers could provide care for 1,376 preschoolers, which would represent only 39% of the preschool-aged population. Yet, the 2000 Census reported 67.5% of our mothers with children under age six are in the labor force. Participants in recent focus groups. Recent family surveys by Chesterfield County First Steps emphasized available affordable childcare as a problem. These families noted affordability, availability, and qualifications of staff as barriers to accessing childcare.

<i>Chart 1: Childcare in Chesterfield County</i>	<i>Number</i>
<i>Children under age 5</i>	<i>3,522</i>
<i>Childcare facilities registered, licensed, enhanced and/or accredited</i>	<i>38</i>
<i>Total ABC enhanced facilities</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Type of facility:</i>	
<i>Family</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Family ABC enhanced</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Family group home</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Family group home ABC enhanced</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Center (6 of which are faith-based)</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Center ABC enhanced</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Total spaces available</i>	<i>1,376</i>
<i>Estimated number of children in childcare</i>	<i>2,146</i>

Note: Advocates for Better Care (ABC) is the statewide system designed by South Carolina to administer the childcare program funded by the Childcare and Development Fund (CCDF).

Two childcare centers closed in 2003, one an ABC-enhanced center and the other licensed. The directors of both centers cited economic problems as the reason the centers closed. County providers still have many strides to make relative to quality. 46% of all childcare providers in the county are family-type providers, yet only 12% of those are ABC-Enhanced. According to the ABC Enhanced Providers Report, 88% of the providers in Chesterfield County are exempt from regulations. These include children kept by friends, neighbors, and relatives. There is no National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accredited center.

Childcare centers and homes are severely constrained by the limited ability of parents to pay. In the county, the average weekly childcare charge is \$60.47 for centers and \$52.22 for homes. Consequently, center wages are low. More than 71.4% of our centers pay their staff only \$6-\$8 per hour. Typically low wages attract workers with limited education. In 28.6% of childcare centers, most lead staff and in 66.7% of centers most assistants have only a high school diploma. In 42.9% of centers few to none of the lead staff have early childhood credentials. In childcare homes, 75% of lead providers have no more education than a high school diploma or GED, meaning that 25% have less than a high school diploma.

All these factors contributed to the disappointing results of the 2002-2003 S.C. Readiness Assessment (SCRA). The Education Accountability Act of 1998 requires that the Department of Education develop or select readiness assessment to determine students' readiness for first and second grade. SCRA is an unobtrusive measure that relies on teacher observation and documentation. It is an adaptation of the Work Sampling System, and was field-tested statewide in 2000-01. All children in kindergarten and grade one participate in SCRA. The assessment system is checklist based and relies on the collection of information during intervals within the school year. Completed checklists are submitted for state scoring at the end of the school year.

Thirty-three percent (33%) of our 543 children entering kindergarten in 2002 were assessed as “rarely or never demonstrates” or “sometimes demonstrates”, a set of 14 skills (SCRA) that they should possess.

In 2002, 5.7% of our first-third graders failed a grade in and 14.9% of 1st through 3rd graders that year were overage for their grade level. In 2004, 15.7% of children in grades k-6 participated in

Chesterfield County First Steps Partnership

special education (582 children). In addition, 25.2% of 3rd graders scored “Below Basic” on the math section of the PACT state achievement test, and 19.8% scored “Below Basic” on the English/Language Arts section.

Our review of risk information indicates needs in three areas: families and children; childcare center providers, and the community at large. Our families and children have an acute need for parenting skills and family literacy, health assistance and resources, more information about services, and financial assistance for quality childcare. Our childcare centers clearly need significant improvement, including professional development for teachers, center improvements, and classroom assessment. The community at large needs assistance and motivation to better support the needs of young children. This information has led our board to look closely at the needs of Chesterfield County children ages birth to five, and their families:

Chart 2: Risk Groups (A2c)	No. Children	No. Families
Teen mothers (births to teen mothers 2002-2003) ⁱ		270
Children under age 6 living in single-parent families ⁱⁱⁱ	845	
Children not living with parents ⁱⁱⁱ	1,096	
Children on Head Start waiting list ^{iv}	98	
Five year olds assessed poorly on SCRA	180	
Estimated four year olds who will assess poorly on SCRA	180	
Low-income families with children under age six:		
Children eligible for Medicaid	2,592	
Living below poverty	951	1,376
Receiving TANF		227
Receiving food stamps ⁱⁱⁱ		522
Children in need of regular health services, est. ⁱⁱⁱ		850
Children entering kindergarten in 2002, 33% assessed as “rarely or never demonstrates” or “sometimes demonstrates” on a set of 14 skills (SC Readiness Assessment	180	
Third graders scoring below basic on the SC Palmetto Achievement Test (math/reading) ⁱⁱⁱ	25.2%/19.8%	

Sources:

ⁱ U.S. Census Bureau

ⁱⁱ S.C. Department of Education

ⁱⁱⁱ S.C. Office of Research and Statistics

^{iv} National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy

^v S.C. Kids Count

^{vi} Chesterfield/Marlboro Head Start

^{vii} Chesterfield County School District

SCHOOL READINESS STRATEGIES

Family Strengthening

Statewide Goal – South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness will work collaboratively with its agency partners, the faith community and private sector to support parents and families in their own efforts to maximize the school readiness, well-being and long-term academic success of the state's young children.

FY 2005 Results:

Partnership Goal 1– Increase the capacity of parents to be their child's best and most important teacher by expanding home visitation services.

- *20 families (totaling 20 children served) received Parents As Teachers (PAT) visits. Using the program model to differentiate intensity according to need, 15 of these families received weekly or bi-weekly visits, while the remaining 5 families received at least one home visit monthly.*
- *A total of 104 home visits were delivered providing parents with information and resources to strengthen their role as their child's most important teacher.*
- *PAT educator completed Born to Learn Curriculum prior to visitation.*
- *PAT educator had a minimum of a Bachelor's degree level education.*

FY 2005 Results:

Partnership Goal 2– Provide parents with access to the support they might seek and want to strengthen their families and to promote the optimal development of their preschool children through the Parenting and Life Skills Seminars (PALSS).

- *84.8% (37 of 44) of parents demonstrated increased knowledge in their ability to identify their families' health priorities and how to best manage them.*
- *88% (33 of 38) of parents demonstrated increased knowledge of methods for preparing their children for school.*
- *37.4% (13 of 34) demonstrated increased in their ability to identify the county's resources for seeking employment and were able to demonstrate increase in professional interviewing skills.*

FY 2005 Results:

Partnership Goal 3– Provide access to age-appropriate books to low-income families with children from birth to age five and promote reading in the home through the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program.

- *3,866 books age-appropriate books were distributed.*
- *322 children enrolled.*
- *97% of families on the program are reading to their child.*
- *78% of families are reading daily to their child.*
- *62% strongly believe that reading with their child is one of the best ways they can help their child be successful in school.*

Child Care

Statewide Goal – South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness recognizes quality child care as a research-based determinant of school readiness. As such, First Steps will collaborate with parents, the child care community and its agency and community partners to maximize child care quality throughout the state. Particular emphasis will be placed on assisting parents in their efforts to identify those settings most likely to maximize developmental outcomes, and assisting providers in their own efforts to maximize the learning environments they provide for young children.

FY 2005 Results:

Partnership Goal 1 – Improve the quality of child care by offering quality enhancement grants and assistance to child care providers.

Quality enhancement grants were offered to 2 child care providers, serving 22 children. These facilities represent 5% of the childcare community for Chesterfield County. Through focused technical assistance the following program outcomes were achieved: (Outputs Web Site)

- *2 centers maintained the highest state licensing status (enhanced)*
- *6 staff participated in on-going DSS certified training regarding Health and Safety, Child Development and Curriculum*
- *Each center's ECERS scores increased from the lowest score [1] to the highest score [7] sub-section "Gross Motor Equipment and Supervision of Gross Motor Activities" (county records)*
- *15 child care staff received an average of 2 hours per person in support and assistance with regard to around setting up quality learning areas and how to maximize use of new materials.*

Partnership Goal 2 – Improve access to child care training hours, increase knowledge base related to best child care practices and increase access to training hours and successful completion.

- *Quality child care trainings were offered to all child care providers serving 8 centers/ 39 child care staff. These centers represent 21% of all centers in the county. All trainings were certified through the SC Center for Childcare Career Development. Six of the eight participating centers received early educational materials related to the topic of the trainings and on-site technical assistance.*
- *39 child care staff received an average of 6.75 hours of early childhood best practices training*
- *6 child care centers received an average of 2 hours in follow-up on-site technical assistance.*
- *6 child care centers received classroom materials related to the trainings.*
- *93% (36 of 39) of child care providers showed an increase in knowledge related to using language to develop reasoning skills.*
- *71% (28 of 39) of child care providers showed an increase in knowledge related to teaching math to 3 and 4 year olds.*
- *71% (28 of 39) of child care providers showed an increase in introducing science and nature concepts to 3 and 4 year olds.*

Early Intervention

Statewide Goal – South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness recognizes the importance of a healthy start in maximizing both school readiness and the long-term wellbeing of the state's children. The initiative will partner with families, the medical community and other stakeholders to leverage resources for - and increase awareness of - the healthcare, nutrition and early developmental needs of the state's young children.

FY 2005 Results:

Partnership Goal – Partner with the Board of Disabilities and Special Needs and DHEC to provide early intervention services for children with mild or moderate developmental delays not covered by the BabyNet program.

- *Program operated for five months until the state inclusion plan became effective.*
- *One child/family participated in the program.*
- *Child/family received continuity of services and transitioned onto the BabyNet program.*
- *Child received Speech Therapy and other early intervention services sooner than without the program.*
- *Child showed gains in speech as assessed by speech therapist and early interventionist.*

School Transition

Statewide Goal – South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness recognizes school entry as a pivotal transition point in each child’s educational career. In an effort to ensure strong collaborative relationships between the state’s families and schools, the initiative will develop strategies to maximize parents’ understandings of state and local expectations and ensure a smooth and beneficial school transition for each child.

Partnership Goal – Chesterfield County First Steps Partnership also recognizes school entry as a pivotal transition point in each child’s educational career. Our efforts to ensure strong collaborative relationships between the county’s families and schools involved two initiatives to promote successful transition of all Chesterfield County’s rising kindergarteners into the K-12 environment and to provide all kindergarteners with the basic materials needed to promote learning at home with parents. These goals were met through the Countdown to Kindergarten and the Kindergarteners Improving Transition (KIT) programs. Both programs ensure an educationally beneficial school transition serving 20 at-risk children in the Countdown to Kindergarten program and 533 in the Kindergarteners Improving Transition (KIT).

Countdown to Kindergarten FY 2005 Results:

- *20 identified children completed the Countdown program during summer 2004.*
- *94.44 percent of teachers (statewide) participating in Countdown to Kindergarten reported that the program made a positive difference in students’ readiness for school. 100% of these same respondents agreed that the program strengthened their abilities to help participating students meet state curriculum standards.*
- *95 percent improvement in families reading to their children.*
- *78 percent increase in families telling their children stories.*
- *93 percent increase in families teaching their children letters, words and numbers.*

Kindergarteners Improving Transition (KIT) FY 2005 Results:

- *95% (533 of 564) kindergarten students and their families received a home visit prior to the beginning of school.*
- *100% of the 533 received information from the child’s kindergarten teacher on school policy, expectations, and a review of the classroom day/schedule.*
- *76% of parents reported they felt more welcome at the child’s school as a result of the home visit.*
- *95% of parents reported their child was more comfortable and/or more excited about starting school as a result of the KIT program.*
- *100% or 564 of all kindergarten students received beginning of the year educational packets with needed school supplies*
- *100% or 560 kindergarteners received an end-of-year packet of home supplies to continue learning activities in the home during the summer.*

SCHOOL READINESS STRATEGIES FOR 2005-2006

Programs in the 2005-2006 fiscal year will undergo a few minor changes to include program enhancement or expansion in accordance with our needs assessment and program evaluation.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

D O L L A R S (budget only)						
State Appropriation	State-Private	In-kind	Local-Private	Lottery Appropriation	Federal	TOTAL
\$219,884	\$6,704	\$18,727	\$21,607	\$7,565	\$3,500	\$277,987

NOTE: The above State Appropriation amount leveraged all state-private, in-kind, local-private, lottery and federal dollars.

READINESS STRATEGIES	BUDGET	ACTUAL EXPENDITURES	DIFFERENCE
203 Parent Training	\$50,517	\$33,302	\$17,215
210 Parent Child Home	\$25,959	\$25,047	\$912
212 Imagination Library	\$17,108	\$10,940	\$6,168
404 Enhanced Family Program	\$39,364	\$45,980	\$-6,616
406 Kindergarten Home Visit	\$10,665	\$10,665	0.00
601 Facility Quality Enhancement	\$35,128	\$31,631	\$3,497
605 Center Staff Training	\$9,216	\$9,530	\$-314
901 Public Health-Based Services	\$14,971	\$16,771	\$-1,800
30-150 Programmatic	\$3,500	\$3,500	0.00
150 County Programmatic	\$36,730	\$31,117	\$5,613
101 County Administrative	\$31,225	\$23,427	\$7,798
Pending	\$3,604		\$3,604
TOTAL	\$277,987	\$241,910	\$36,077

More in-kind or private contributions were received than expected or budgeted which accounts for the difference in actual expenditures.

NOTABLE DONORS

The following represent CASH contributions made to the partnership from July 1, 2004 through June 30, 2005.

DONOR'S NAME	AMOUNT
BC Moore's	\$500
Joni Bell	\$27.00
Lillie Black-Burns	\$10.00
Kim Blakeney	\$10.00
Carolina Bank	\$300
Sherrie Chapman	\$54.00
Chesterfield United Way	\$2,159.00
Conbraco Industries, Inc.	\$1040.00
Rebecca Crosby	\$10.00
Delta Kappa Gamma	\$108.00
Ramonia Ellerbe	\$10.00
First Citizens Foundation	\$3,000.00
Founders Credit Union, Lancaster	\$700.00
Erica Funderburk	\$10.00

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Dorothy Hancock	\$27.00
Kimberly Herring	\$10.00
Brenda Hough	\$27.00
Coles Jackson	\$27.00
Jefferson/Pageland United Way	\$200.00
LaShanda Johnson	\$10.00
Patricia Lisenby	\$20.00
Malloy Foundation, The	\$600.00
Karen Martini	\$27.00
New Covenant Christian School	\$20.00
Susan Owens	\$27.00
Mary Redfearn	\$27.00
Robert Smalls Family Center	\$783.00
Sam's Club	\$750.00
Kyley Seegars	\$10.00
Sentry Bank & Trust	\$500
Sisters of Charity	\$9,990.00
Wal-Mart Foundation	\$2,000.00

CASH TOTAL \$22,993.00

Cash Match Percentage for 2005: 9.1%

Total Local Match (Cash and In-Kind) Percentage for 2005: 19.4% (at least 15% required)

BOARD INFORMATION

During FY 05, the Chesterfield County First Steps Partnership board members volunteered 894.5 hours, including community activities such as health fairs, and presentations to local organizations.

Value of Volunteer Time: $\$17.55^2 \times 894.5 = \$15,698.48$

CHESTERFIELD COUNTY FIRST STEPS BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Mrs. Mary B. Redfearn, chair, pre-kindergarten
Mrs. Joni Bell, business
Mr. John Bittle, Department of Social Services designee
Mrs. Sherrie Chapman, early childhood education
Mr. Bill Dargan, faith
Rev. John Gerstenmier, faith
Mr. Charles Gray, legislative appointee
Mrs. Dorothy Hancock, library designee
Mrs. Ann Huntley, school district designee
Mrs. Rebecca Jordan, family education
Mrs. Pamela Mills, non-profit
Mrs. Susan Owens, pre-kindergarten
Mrs. Helen Palmer, non-profit
Mr. Doug Rorie, transportation
Mrs. Charity Scott, parent of preschool child
Mrs. Janice Sowell, Department of Health and Environmental Control designee
Mrs. Billie Stoudemire, early childhood education
Mrs. Carrie Turner, head start designee
Mrs. Bernadine White, early childhood development provider
Mrs. Lillie Wilson, early childhood development provider

SUCCESS STORIES

Dear Ms. Martini and First Steps members:

I am a 28 year old mother of a one year old boy named Jessie. I didn't graduate from high school and I haven't been able to find a good paying job to support me and my son. Daycare is so high that I can't afford to work. I want to be a good mother and want my son to have the opportunities that I didn't have. He has given me new motivation to improve myself and to be able to help him.

A few months ago, I enrolled in the adult education classes which I understand is a First Steps program. I wanted you to know what a help this is to me. For the first time I am working towards my GED which I couldn't do if it weren't for the childcare that is provided while I'm in classes. They even have parent educators to help me learn more about things I can do with Jessie to help him be smarter. We have also been receiving the Imagination Library books since his birth and we love them. He is so excited when we go to the mail box and he has a book. He sits on my lap and we read and talk about the pictures. I think he will always love to read because of these books.

I just wanted to say thank you for giving us this chance to make life better. All we needed was a chance.

-Stacey Jones, parent

² http://www.independentsector.org/programs/research/volunteer_time.html

In addition to our programs, Chesterfield County First Steps and partners hosted a Child Health Exp. More than 75 children six and under received vision and hearing screenings, height and weight checks, and dental assessments. Two children were found to have auditory problems and were referred for further screening and connected to appropriate interventions. Every child got sealants placed on their teeth to prevent tooth decay and received tooth brushes. Our thanks to Chesterfield General Hospital, DHEC-More Smiling Faces, Board of Disabilities and Special Needs, Petersburg Primary School and Sandhills Medical.

Dear First Steps Board:

Mother of Love Child Development Center has been a tremendous success in Chesterfield County. Director, Lillie Wilson brought all the tools for success with her - a love of children and an openness to learn and respond to that learning. Lillie has attended the scheduled training sessions and come back to her center and implemented the practices she learned. She asked questions during technical assistance visits to refine her practice. She was eager to be successful. Her classroom is labeled and well arranged. She works to practice strategies that have been shared in trainings and technical assistance. She has used her own money to do things that couldn't be done with First Steps monies. She is ready, willing, and able to step out do what is best for her children and families! First Steps has provided her with the support she has needed to take those steps.

Mary Ashe, Technical Assistance Consultant
Chesterfield County



Hailey Bryant enjoys being read one of her Imagination Library books by her mother Stephanie at the Imagination Library Reading Party sponsored in partnership with the Chesterfield Library. More than 3,000 books were distributed assuring children receive early literacy opportunities in the home.



Jodi Jacobs enjoys visit six of Countdown to Kindergarten with teacher Pam Moore as they work with patterns and color, developing motor skills by coordinating and patterning blocks.



Pictured above are McBee area parents learning how to use music to teach their child in the Parenting and Life Skills Seminars. Forty-four parents participated in these workshops offered in the county.
