



# Chesterfield County First Steps Partnership *Fiscal Year 2006 Annual Report*

**Board Chair:**  
John Gerstenmier  
**Executive Director:**  
Karen Martini Odom  
**Contact Information:**  
106 Scotch Road  
Chesterfield, SC 29709  
**Phone:** 843-623-5904  
**Fax:** 843-623-5905  
**Email:**  
kmartini@chesterfieldfirst  
steps.org  
**Website:**  
www.chesterfieldfirststeps.org

## Summary

### *Numbers Served:*

1,781 children; 51 adults/families; 12 child care facilities, with 628 children total at those facilities; 1 child care centers achieved a higher quality status; 576 home visits; 65 staff trained; 3,822 books distributed to low-income children.

### *Total Budget:*

\$336,416 (includes all funding sources)

## Chesterfield School Readiness Profile

Population Characteristics	Figure
Population of Young Children (Ages 0-5)	3,520 / 8 %
Children Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch (5K)*	63 %
Average Per Capita Personal Income	20,981
Children in Poverty (Ages 0-5)***	28 %
Children Who Are Over Age in Third Grade**	14 %
Children in Third Grade Performing below Basic on PACT Reading **	18 %
Children in Third Grade Performing below Basic on PACT Math**	22 %
Low Birth Weight Infants	10 %
Births to Mothers with Less than High School Education	27 %
Less than Adequate Prenatal Care	15 %

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

**Profile Comments: Parents Working and Child Care:** Increasingly, parents must divide their time between children and employers. In order to meet family financial needs, most parents must work and thus have less time for family life. In 2000, 67.5% of mothers with children under 6 and 73.5% with children 6 - 17 were in the labor force. This has increased substantially from 1960 when 35.6% of mothers with children under 6 were in the labor force. Most fathers also work: 63.1% of children under 6 are in families where both parents or the single parent work; 37.8% of children under 6 have both their parents or their single parent working 35 hours or more. Caring for children is a problem for parents unable to obtain quality, affordable daycare while they are at work 35+ hours per week.

Overall, there are 844 spaces in state-regulated childcare facilities in the county; 84.2% of these are in licensed programs and 15.8% are in registered programs. Of the spaces, 70.6% are in licensed childcare

centers serving more than 12 children, 12.8% are in registered or licensed family childcare homes serving six or fewer children, 1.4% are in licensed group childcare homes serving 7-12 children, and 15.2% are in registered or licensed church programs.

The homes and centers are severely constrained by the limited ability of parents to pay. In the county during 2002, the average weekly charge was \$60.47 for centers and \$52.22 for homes. Consequently, center wages were low: 0% of centers with pre-school staff and 66.7% of centers with assistant pre-school staff reported paying these staff under \$6 per hour. Paying \$6-\$8 per hour were 71.4% of centers with pre-school staff and 33.3% of centers with assistants. Low wages attract workers with limited education. In 28.6% of centers, most pre-school staff and in 66.7% of centers most assistants had only a high school degree. In 42.9% of centers, few to none of the pre-school staff had early childhood credentials. In childcare homes, 75% of lead providers had no more education than a high school degree or GED; 25% had less than a high school degree.

The task of meeting the needs of our children is far beyond what any one agency or organization can do. We recognize the need for on-going collaboration with community partners and strive to build partnerships that will leverage the resources needed to expand quality services to the most at-risk children. Everything we do is with one goal in mind: healthy, happy children whose first five years give them the chance to develop their full potential. In the 2005-2006 fiscal year, Chesterfield County First Steps helped:

- **Early childhood education programs continually learn and improve;**
- **Parents excel in their vital role as first teachers;**
- **Professionals in the field get training and education about early education;**
- **Child care directors join a strong supportive network with their own forum;**
- **Lay the groundwork for a community-wide parent and early care and education resource center;**
- **The whole community understand and support early learning;**
- **Bring together many different groups serving our children, making all stronger.**

Each of these is a targeted strategy, based on the latest information about our county, its families, children, and early education resources. Where we see a need, we look for a solution, either boosting something already being done, or looking for a partner to get it done.

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

## 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 2006 Results:***

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

- *Seminar instructors were of high authority in their related fields: Health Education provided by a Registered Nurse RN/ Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) and a Doctor of Obstetrics and Gynecology (OB-GYN). Seminars provided by the Doctor of Obstetrics and Gynecology were provided as in-kind. School Readiness instructor holds a Masters plus 30 hours in Early Childhood Education and has been teaching kindergarten for 10 years.*
- *91% of parents demonstrated increased knowledge of methods for preparing their children for school.*
- *89% of parents demonstrated increased knowledge in their ability to identify their families' health priorities and how to best manage them.*
- *68% of parents participating in the program were between 16-21 years old.*
- *100% of parents participating had one or more child less than 5 years of age.*
- *97% of parents participating in the program were low-income. Indicator: Medicaid eligibility.*
- *92% of parents completed all seminars.*
- *98% of parents participating in the program report being extremely satisfied.*

**Partnership Goal** – Provide quality, age-appropriate books in the homes of all new-born Medicaid children until their fifth birth day. Developmentally appropriate books arrive each month to the child's home until he or she reaches five years of age. Children are enrolled in the program by the Health Department's Newborn Home Visit Nurse. Appropriately, 300 children in Chesterfield are born receiving Medicaid benefits (indicator of poverty). United Way, businesses, and individuals together with state funds support the program. Chesterfield County First Steps pays The Dolly Parton's Foundation-Dolly Parton's Imagination Library for the books and mailings.

- *3,822 age-appropriate books were distributed*
- *On average, 319 children received a book per month*
- *Collaborated with the local health department to identify eligible children*
- *A random survey indicates that 97% of participants are extremely satisfied with the program*

**Partnership Goal – Provide parents and professionals who work young children and their parents access to information related to early childhood development, health and resources.**

- *Launched first website in June 2006 funded by a federal grant*
- *Website serves as a communications medium that saves money in printed information for parents, and programs*
- *Parents have access to information on: School Readiness, Registration and Immunizations, School Routine, Child Development, Development Checklist, Recommended Reading List, Links to other Resources, and much more*
- *Executive Director invited to write a monthly column on issues related to young children for the two local newspapers*
- *Web address: [www.chesterfieldfirststeps.org](http://www.chesterfieldfirststeps.org)*



**Partnership Goal –**Provide parents and professionals, who work with parents of young children, access to information and materials they need to enhance early learning opportunities through the First Steps Resource Center. The resources and services of the First Steps Resource Center (FSRC) will affect the daily lives of young children directly by providing equipment such as a laminator, Ellison die cut machine, copy machine, paper cutter, along with space to create inexpensive materials to be used by and with young children and their families; by offering materials and props (multi-cultural toys, dolls, prop boxes) as well as resources (books, math and science materials, and puppets) to be checked out by the early childhood professionals (child care center and homes and part day preschools), early childhood students, early interventionists and parents.

- *Partner secured for the project. Northeastern Technical College has partnered with First Steps to provide space and other in-kind support of this project.*
- *Secured materials and software program for the FSRC.*
- *Received in-kind training and consultation on operation from North Carolina Smart Start-Union County Partnership for Children.*
- *Job description, policies, procedures, brochure, outcomes, and outputs developed.*
- *Center will open in October of 2006.*

### **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 2006 Results:**

**Partnership Goal** – Increase the providers’ and educators’ understanding of core knowledge and competencies that will help to improve their ability to administer and provide quality early care and education;

1. Enhance the overall quality of early care and education provided to infants, toddlers, and preschool children;
  2. Enhance the overall program administration of early care and education facilities; and,
  3. Ensure accountability in the use of child care grant materials, and project evaluation.
- *Secured Child Care Quality Specialists with established results in providing quality child care outreach services.*
  - *Technical assistance provided was based on best practice that is outlined in the Environment Rating Scales, NAEYC standards, and SC Child Care Laws and Regulations.*
  - *Provided 106 hours of technical assistance services to two child care centers.*
  - *One of the two centers achieved a higher quality status.*
  - *Assisted one center with fully correcting all DSS licensing violations.*
  - *Participated in the regional technical assistance network meetings and activities, as applicable. Participated and in the process of meeting the newly implemented requirements of South Carolina Early Care and Education Technical Assistance Protocol.*

**Partnership Goal-** Assist child care directors in the implementation and facilitation of a county-wide Child Care Directors Networking Forum.

- *Conveners Meeting held in October 2006*
- *Purpose, goals and the Chesterfield County Child Care Directors Networking Forum Mission Statement was developed*
- *7 networking opportunities for child care directors*
- *5 hours training in Program Administration offered*
- *The DSS Child Care Regional Consultant presented the new SC DSS Licensing Regulations to the Forum*
- *“The Visionary Director” was used as a guide in helping the Forum develop their vision statement. Three of the five trainings offering program administration hours came directly from “The Visionary Director”.*

**Partnership Goal** – Improve access to child care training hours and increase knowledge base related to best child care practices.

- *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.*
- *71 child care staff received an average of 8.33 hours of early childhood best practices training.*
- *Trainings were provided by experts in the related field.*
- *A total of 37 hours of trainings were offered.*

- *Participants expressed 100% satisfaction with the training.*

**Partnership Goal -** The Region II Childcare Enhancement Strategy will promote new approaches to enhancing the environment in all (40) centers involved in this program. Each county involved will improve early childhood developmental opportunities in the facilities, which will allow more children to start school ready to learn and be successful in school.

- *16 child care mentors (2 Cherokee County, 2 Chesterfield County, 4 Chester County, 1 Fairfield County, 5 Lancaster County, and 2 Union County) are trained to teach and develop mentoring relationships with their assigned child care centers.*
- *4 training sessions (25 hours) focus intensively on mentoring and technical assistance skills before mentors are allowed to begin working with the child care providers.*
- *Upon completing the training sessions, mentors are allowed to begin working in their respective child care centers to share the knowledge gained from their trainings. Mentors provide knowledge, supplies and instructions on the use of the provided materials.*
- *Mentors follow up on the use of these materials in the centers.*
- *Technical assistance is provided for 5 hours per month, per center from each mentor.*
- *All trainings for the child care centers are planned and designed to improve their ECERS/ABC scores and to enhance the learning environment. (Enhancement includes promoting health and safety issues.)*
- *A pre-assessment (ECERS and/or ABC Assessment) is done before mentoring and training begins and a post-assessment will be done at the end of the training period.*
- *Each center that has 80% of staff participate in trainings received \$1600.00 worth of high quality learning materials.*
- *Each county is developing a group of local experts and ensuring community capacity building in 6 counties.*
- *Each child care center involved will improve their average ECERS/ABC score by one or more points on each of the instrument subscales.*
- *Child care centers are reporting an increase in positive and mutually respectful relationships with First Steps staff and mentors in each county.*
- *Each child care center is increasing the amount of technical support to teachers regarding physical considerations and classroom management.*
- *Child care staff report an increase in networking opportunities for child care staff.*
- *25 % more child care staff completed ECD 101.*
- *Child care centers are receiving 5 hours of on-site mentoring and technical assistance monthly, to help providers understand how best practices can be applied to daily situations.*
- *3500 Early Educators/Child Care Staff will use the information technology which will enhance community engagement.*
- *The quality of the environment in each center is enhanced by manipulation of the environment. Childcare centers are working towards enhancement on NAEYC accreditation.*
- *Child care centers are decreasing the use of television as a teaching tool by 28%.*
- *25% of families are reporting increased conversation time with children.*
- *Increased knowledge and skills of childcare caregivers regarding early childhood development.*
- *Increased knowledge of ECERS and ABC environmental assessments.*
- *Enhanced the quality of resources and materials used by child care providers.*
- *Created high quality trainers in each community.*

## **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. Ensure an educationally beneficial school transition by serving 20 at-risk children in the Countdown to Kindergarten program.

### ***FY 2006 Results:***

#### ***Kindergarteners in Transition (KIT) FY 2006 Results:***

- *95.7% (576 of 602) kindergarten students and their families received a home visit prior to the beginning of school.*
- *100% of the 602 received information from the child’s kindergarten teacher on school policy, expectations, and a review of the classroom day/schedule.*
- *100% or 602 of all kindergarten students received beginning of the year educational packets with needed school supplies*
- *100% or 628 kindergarteners received an end-of-year packet of home supplies to continue learning activities in the home during the summer.*
- *Chesterfield County School District partnered with us to provide the home visits as well as utilized Title I funds to support this program.*

#### **Results of Parent Survey**

- *Survey administrated via random sample in the fall of the 2005 school year.*
- *76% of parents reported they felt more welcome at the child’s school as a result of the home visit.*
- *84% if parents reported the KIT program increased their involvement in school activities such as parent-teacher conferences, volunteering at child’s school, etc.*
- *93% of parents reported their child was more comfortable and/or more excited about starting school as a result of the KIT program.*

#### **Results of Teacher Survey**

- *78% of the kindergarten teachers reported the beginning of the year home visit as important for kindergarten students and their families.*
- *56% reported increased parent involvement as a result of the home visit.*
- *63% reported positive student achievement-impacted by the program.*
- *74% reported they think parents are more aware of kindergarten objectives and expectations.*
- *81% reported they are able to make more informed instructional decisions for individual students as a result of the home visit.*

### ***Countdown to Kindergarten FY 2005 Results:***

- 95.8 percent of identified children completed the Countdown program during summer 2005. (Greater than the state’s average)
- 83.3 percent of the children received all 7 home visits.(Greater than the state’s average)
- 90.5 percent of the children qualified for free lunch.(Greater than the state’s average)
- 4.8 percent of the children qualified for reduced lunch.
- 52.1% of the children lived with a single parent or guardian/foster parent.
- 38.1% of the children’s parents did not finish high school.

**SCHOOL READINESS STRATEGIES FOR 2006-2007**

Chesterfield County First Steps is making strides in fully-integrating a community-focused systemic approach to increase, expand and coordinate early learning opportunities for targeted young children and their families. Our program builds on current infrastructure and collaborative relationships to enhance early learning with the goal of integrating resources to concentrate on a defined target population of young children, families and service providers. A variety of approaches to achieve this goal include:

- Improved quality of early childhood education programs;
- Support of parents in their vital role as first teachers;
- Increased professional development opportunities;
- Creation of a strong supportive network through a forum of child care directors;
- Strong community awareness of and support for early learning;
- Creation and implementation of strategies for resource development and local partnerships, to support early learning opportunities and establish continued funding for First Steps initiatives; and,
- The expansion of child care services in the county with a focus on quality and best practices.

**FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

State Appropriation	State-Private	In-kind	Local-Private	Lottery Appropriation	Federal	EIA Appropriation	TOTAL
\$228,284	\$3520	\$42,990	\$28,518	\$1,550	\$29,704	\$1,850	<b>\$336,416</b>

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

READINESS STRATEGIES	BUDGET	ACTUAL EXPENDITURES	DIFFERENCE
0101 Administrative Functions	\$46,296	\$35,620.69	\$10,675.31
0150 Programmatic Functions	\$30,432	\$26,560.78	\$3,871.22
0203 Parent Training	\$25,863	\$16,928.76	\$8,934.24
0212 Imagination Library	\$32,232	\$22,641	\$9,591
0404 Enhanced Family Program	\$51,059	\$43,564.22	\$7,494.78
0406 Countdown to Kindergarten	\$8,433	\$6,643	\$1,790
0601 Facility Quality Enhancement	\$84,429	\$72,667.87	\$11,761.13
0605 Center Staff Training & Development	\$57,672	\$57,493.67	\$178.33
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$336,416</b>	<b>\$282,119.99</b>	<b>\$54,296.01</b>

Balance difference is reflective of non-state funding than was budgeted but not expended. For example, funding from a federal grant was not all expended as expected due to delays in the project’s implementation.

**NOTABLE DONORS**

ALL CASH contributions made to the partnership from July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006.

DONOR’S NAME	AMOUNT
Federal Funding	\$16,456
United Way	\$1,725
Wal-Mart	\$1,000
Community at Work	\$540
Carolina Bank	\$300
The Malloy Foundation	\$300
Eastern Star-Pageland	\$200
Zion UMC Women	\$108
Delta Kappa Gamma	\$108
“Miss Greater Greer Scholarship Competition”-Fund-raiser	\$300
Sandra Barbour	*
Sherrie Chapman	*
William Dargen	*
John Douglas	*
Mary Beth Freeman	*
Shelley Morgan	*
Karen Martini-Odom	*
Mary Redfearn	*
Janice Sowell	*
Carmen Spencer	*
Connie Spencer	*
Billie Stoudemire	*
Bernadine White	*
Gail Yancey	*
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$25,867</b>

\* **Amount** of contribution not disclosed at the request of the donor.

**Local Match Percentage for 2006:** 25.30% (at least 15% required)

## BOARD INFORMATION

During FY 06, the Chesterfield County First Steps Partnership board members volunteered 482.50 hours, including fund-raising activities.

Value of Volunteer Time<sup>1</sup>: \$18.04 X 482.50 hours = \$8,704.30

### CHESTERFIELD COUNTY FIRST STEPS BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Rev. John Gerstenmier, Chair, *faith*

Mr. John Bittle, S.C. Department of  
*Social Services designee*

Mrs. Missy Brown, *transportation*  
Mrs. Sherrie Chapman, Vice Chair,  
*early childhood education*

Rev. Lee Coyle, *faith*

Mr. Charlie Gray, Treasurer, *legislative  
appointee*

Mr. Calvin Hancock, *healthcare  
provider*

Mrs. Dorothy Hancock, *library designee*

Ms. Charlotte Henderson, *primary  
educator*

Ms. Ann Huntley, *Chesterfield County  
School District designee*

Ms. Bernice Linton, *family education*

Mrs. Pamela Mills, *non-profit*

Mrs. Susan Owens, *pre-kindergarten*

Mrs. Mary B. Redfearn, *early childhood  
education*

Mrs. Tara Rivers, *family education*

Ms. Joni Roberts, *business*

Mr. Doug Rorie, *non-profit*

Ms. Camilla Scott, S.C. Department of  
*Health and Environmental Control  
designee*

Mr. Todd Shifflet, *healthcare provider*

Mrs. Billie Stoudemire, *early childhood  
education*

Mrs. Crystal Stowe, *parent of preschool  
child*

Mrs. Carrie Turner, Secretary, *Head  
Start designee*

Mrs. Bernadine White, *early childhood  
development provider*

---

## SUCCESS STORIES

### Countdown to Kindergarten

"The Countdown to Kindergarten Program does a fantastic job of providing one-on-one modeling for parents of at risk pre-schoolers. These

---

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.independentsector.org/programs/research/volunteer\\_time.html](http://www.independentsector.org/programs/research/volunteer_time.html)

pre-schoolers also receive excellent instruction and materials which can be used as parents prepare them for their Kindergarten experience."-Pam Moore Toole, Countdown to Kindergarten Teacher

**Imagination Library:**

What parents tell us about the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Book program: (Please note that some parents did not give permission to disclose their full name).

Tiara states, "When my one year old gets sleepy, he'll get one of the Imagination Library books and brings it to me to read."

Stacy Jones: "My son Jessie and I really appreciate the books he has been receiving through your program. He just turned two and brings me the books to read all the time. I would have never started reading to him at such an early age for two reasons. First of all, I wasn't able to afford books because of our financial situation, and secondly, I never realized that reading from birth is so important and that he would start learning at such a young age. Because of this program, I know he will be a good reader and will always love to read".

Mr. Hill states, "My wife reads to our one year old but the older siblings are so excited when the books arrive they unwrap them and read them right away."

Tashia states, "Teaches my one year old to point to the objects on the page."

Lynn states, "My two year old daughter loves the books."

**Child Care Directors Networking Forum:**

"The forum helps us to expand our goals to work toward proper achievements."-Bernadine White, Director St. Paul Day Care, Chesterfield

"The meetings were an exciting start to what looks to be a very helpful tool in all areas of child care and early education. We were informed of important issues related to child care and received certified training in the process." – Mody Clark, Director Christian Community Child Care Center, Jefferson

**Child Care Region II B.A.S.I.C.S. Project:**

Chesterfield County—Ms. Carrie Turner, Director of Chesterfield-Marlboro Head Start Programs reported that the mentoring program has been positive in many ways for two of Chesterfield's centers. The trainings have eliminated many discipline problems as the activities leave very little time for the children to be bored or idle

which can be a precursor to discipline problems. The trainings are very fun, energetic and interactive and set the tone for this type setting in the classroom. The examples set for the classroom teachers have been positive and relevant to their daily routines. The child care centers in our areas are sharing ideas and the teachers are calling each other and sharing ideas. They have become very excited and motivated to make a great learning environment for their children. Students' attitudes seem to have improved as a result of the teacher attitudes.

Ms. Lillie Wilson from Mother of Love Daycare Center reported from her mentor evaluation that the mentoring program is so positive and the teachers enjoy working with their mentor. They do not feel threatened but trust that the mentor just wants to make their classroom the best it can be for the children in that class. They have developed a great working relationship with their mentor. They are willing to do whatever it takes to be able to provide quality materials to the children. The trainings have sparked an interest in learning more!

Submitted by Lori Short, Region II Childcare Enhancement Coordinator  
Taken from Mentor Evaluation Forms