



Getting children ready for school.

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"The new centers in our room have brought joy to the space," said Lisa Starnes and Tameca Joines. "The children are learning self-control through sharing. We are glad that First Steps is part of our center."

"The excitement over the new centers in the 2-year-old room has been phenomenal," said South Pointe Christian School's Director, Teresa Clark. "The centers have taught the children responsibility through keeping the space clean. The children and staff have adapted fast. I am so pleased with the awareness the centers have provided for the parents and teachers. Everyone is working together to get these children ready for school."

May- June 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
10	11	Immunizations at Health Department Appt: 623-2117 12	13	14	15	16
Reading Is Fun Week 17	18	Immunizations at Health Department Appt: 623-2117 19	20	Leadership Symposium 9:30 a.m. 21	22	23
24	Memorial Day 25	Immunizations at Health Department Appt: 623-2117 26	27	28	29	30
31	1	Board Meeting Karen's House 6:00 p.m. 2	3	Last Day of School for Students 4	5	6
7	8	Immunizations at Health Department Appt: 623-2117 9	10	11	12	13

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Volume 1, Issue 1

A Quarterly Newsletter from Chesterfield County First Steps

May 2009

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Week of the Young Child

April 19-25, 2009



Chesterfield County First Steps and local partners celebrate Week of the Young Child (April 19-25, 2009) to recognize the needs of young children and thank educators and others involved in building better futures for all children. Week of the Young Child is celebrated across the country by hundreds of local organizations working to improve opportunities for all young children.

"Early learning experiences are crucial to the growth and development of young children," said Karen Odom, executive director of Chesterfield County First Steps. "Week of the Young Child is a time when we can all work to recognize the importance of providing early learning opportunities and working to build

better futures for all young children." Across the country, young children and their families depend on quality education and care, which help children get a great start, and bring lasting benefits for our society as a whole. Week of the Young Child is a time to recognize the people, programs and policies that are helping to build better futures for all children.

Early childhood education is vital to all communities:

- The majority of mothers with children under 18 work, and working families rely on child care providers to help them care for their children while they work.
- Research shows that high-quality early child-

hood programs help children- especially those from families with low-income- develop the skills they need to succeed in school, including language, pre-mathematics and social skills.



Teachers, parents, and children from South Pointe Christian School enjoyed a picnic on the lawn of the State House in Columbia, S.C. during the Week of the Young Child.

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Make a difference in your community:

- Support programs that provide quality early childhood education by volunteering at a local school, First Steps program, community center, Head Start or child care program.
- Educate yourself and others about the importance of quality early childhood education in preparing young children for school.
- Support policies at the local, state, and federal levels that provide quality early learning opportunities for all young children.

We can all help to build better futures for all children!



Katie Phillips, Karen Odom, executive director of Chesterfield County First Steps, Kalyn Truesdale, and Tameca Joines, 2-year-old teacher at South Pointe Christian School danced the *Hokey Pokey* on the State House grounds in Columbia, S.C. (Right Picture)



April 21, 2009, Senator Vincent Sheheen (left), and Representative Ted Vick (right) picnicked on the State House grounds with some young children who participate in programs provided by Chesterfield County First Steps. Pictured from left to right, Austin Currie, Katie Phillips, and Kalyn Truesdale. (Left Picture)



Deputy Sheriff, Troy Timney, read to a 2-year-old class at South Pointe Christian School. The children listened intently to one of their favorite books, *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*.

State Cuts First Steps Budget by 21.1 Percent

With the economy slowing, local first Steps partnerships have been asked to trim their budgets. In Chesterfield County, the state requested a 21.1 percent cut, or a cut of \$43,853, from the First Steps budget. "The economy is impacting almost all businesses," said Karen Odom, executive director, "and we're no different." Although it hurts to have a funding cut, we do understand the need. Still it's very difficult to cut programming dollars and continue to fulfill our mission of providing extensive health and education services to children ages 5 and younger and their families.

Like other counties, Chesterfield County has a great need for programs that impact child care, health, education and provide family support. "With the declining economy," Odom said, "the need for First Steps funded services will become even greater. Many families with young children are facing severe financial concerns, which increases their need for our funded services. We have a very tight budget now, but our staff and board of directors are reviewing the budget to locate any areas where a small funding cut won't dramatically affect the service. We hope there are no more cuts, but we want to be prepared for the worst case scenario."

Meet the Board of Directors

Chesterfield County First Steps is pleased to introduce its board members. "We have a fine group of very capable people with a variety of backgrounds," said Drusilla Carter, board chairman. "This diversity gives us an extraordinarily wide range of expertise to guide us as we make program decisions." These individuals give countless hours without any compensation at all to benefit Chesterfield County's youngest citizens.



Mary Bennett, S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control designee



Missy Brown, transportation



Sandy Brown, business



Drusilla Carter, Board Chair, Chesterfield County Library designee



Rev. Lee Coyle, faith



Margie Gaskins, business



Charlie Gray, Treasurer, legislative appointee



Calvin Hancock, Jr., Vice Chair, healthcare provider



Katie Harrington, early childhood education



Ann Huntley, primary educator



Ralph Laney, DSS designee



Bernice Linton, family education



Pamela Mills, non-profit



Mary B. Redfearn, primary education



Jack Rhyne, family education



Todd Shifflet, Secretary, healthcare provider



Billie Stoudemire, early childhood education



Carrie Turner, Head Start designee



Bernadine White, early childhood education



Dr. John Williams, Chesterfield County School District designee



First Steps had a booth at the *Yard Sale of the Carolinas* in Chesterfield on May 2, 2009. The board and staff enjoyed interacting with the children who came by to play the *Flower Toss* and *Fishing for Duckies* games. Pizza and drinks were sold as well. The money earned will help pay for children to receive Imagination Library books.

