

FIRST STEPS

Getting children ready for school.

2004 ANNUAL REPORT

LETTER FROM THE VICE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

Business leaders know that success isn't measured in quarterly earnings reports but in the ability of companies to develop long-term prosperity. In much the same way, educators, legislators, parents, industry and community leaders came together in 1999 to create the First Steps to School Readiness initiative to help children arrive at first grade ready to succeed. First Steps is the only state agency in South Carolina whose sole focus is school readiness.

First Steps is about creating a South Carolina where all children have the tools to succeed and become a vital part of our social, cultural and business communities.

Research studies repeatedly show that children who arrive unprepared for first grade have difficulty catching up, thwarting their academic progress and later success in life. It has been proven that providing high-quality early childhood care and education programs to children generates a high return per dollar invested — as much as \$7 for every \$1 invested.

Early education is an investment in a brighter future for South Carolina. First Steps is working across our state to get children ready for school — and we're getting results.

Lewis Smoak

*Vice Chair of First Steps Board of Trustees
Founding partner of Ogletree, Deakins,
Nash, Smoak & Stewart Law Firm*

GETTING RESULTS IN SOUTH CAROLINA'S SCHOOL READINESS BUSINESS

Creating the vision for quality and accountability in early care and education

FIRST STEPS TIMELINE

1999

- First Steps authorizing legislation is ratified June 28, 1999

2000

- FY'00 appropriation \$20M
- Structure, board and goals are established
- 46 county partnership boards are formed
- TEACH child care higher education scholarship training program launched
- 46 county needs and resources assessments completed
- 96% of counties develop strategic school readiness plans
- "Making All the Difference," brain development video series for parents, is introduced, delivering emerging research to all SC parents
- Corporate partners contributions total \$7.3M
- More than \$.5M in matching, federal and in-kind support raised

2001

- FY'01 appropriation: \$30M
- 100% of county school readiness strategic plans are completed by October
- Early implementation underway; 7 counties begin programs
- 1,400 child care workers advance their education through TEACH by year-end
- "Teach Your Children Well," a privately funded, public education campaign is launched to rivet SC's attention to the need for early learning exposure
- Established SC Family Friendly Workplace Award
- More than \$8M matching, federal and in-kind support raised

2002

- FY'02 appropriation: \$23.04M
- First year of statewide implementation; all 46 counties delivering on plans
- 18,000 children and families served through 350 programs across the state
- 3,000 children served in full-day, extended day and half-day 4-year-old kindergarten programs
- 656 child care providers increase the quality of care they provide to children
- More than 1,000 child care scholarships provided to parents across the state
- More than 2,000 child care providers enrolled in the TEACH program
- 2,300 children receive health services, including hearing, dental and vision care
- More than \$8.5M in matching, federal and in-kind support raised
- Corporate partner contributions total \$8M
- Awarded 7 SC businesses with SC Family Friendly Workplace Award

2003

- FY'03 appropriation \$27.9M
- 23,881 children and 9,836 families directly served through ongoing programs across the state
- 3,492 children served in full-day, extended day and half-day 4-year-old kindergarten programs
- 664 child care providers increased the quality they provide children
- 1,948 child care scholarships were provided to parents across the state
- 9,021 children reached through health services
- 3,274 enrolled in TEACH program by FY'03
- Child Trends concludes required evaluation of first three years, stating that First Steps is "ambitious and innovative," and has "engendered a culture of accountability"
- More than \$12.5M in matching, federal and in-kind support raised
- Awarded 7 SC businesses and agencies SC Family Friendly Workplace Award

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WHY FOCUS ON EARLY EDUCATION?

In South Carolina:

- 13% of children fail during grades 1–3¹
- 20% of children under 6 live in poverty¹
- 29% of children under 6 live in single-parent families¹
- 21% of births are to mothers who have not completed high school¹
- 35% of young adults don't complete high school¹
- 62% of children under 6 have parents who work outside the home¹
- According to the 2003 SCRA data baseline, between 20–40% of children in SC do not consistently demonstrate the skills they need to be ready for first grade²

¹ 2003 SC KidsCount

² SDE

VISION

Every child will arrive at first grade ready to succeed

HOW

Health

- Helped 2,100 children secure a family doctor, reducing emergency room visits and high medical costs.
- Facilitated 3,700 health screenings for hard-to-reach children through home visiting programs.

The Building Blocks of School Readiness

Accountability

- The 2003 evaluation report delivered to the General Assembly from Child Trends, a national research center, stated First Steps has “engendered a culture of accountability regarding expenditures and program implementation.”

Families

- Increased parenting capacity through 81,000 home visits.
- Increased the educational attainment of parents. 115 parents in family literacy and adult education programs earned high school diplomas or GEDs. Another 277 parents improved their basic reading skills.

Results

First Steps-funded school readiness activities provided direct services to approximately 23,881 children and 9,836 families statewide in 2003. First Steps provided indirect services to 68,321 children and 8,847 families statewide during 2003.

First Steps reaches nearly 30 percent of South Carolina's 318,000 children age 0–6.

Partnerships

- First Steps leveraged \$7M in federal dollars for child care scholarships, enhancement and training in public and private settings across SC through agency partnership with DHHS.
- First Steps County Partnerships contributed more than 27,500 volunteer hours with a value of about \$454,000.

Early Education

- Positively impacted 20 percent of regulated child facilities in SC through quality enhancement, teacher scholarships and ongoing training.
- Increased, by nearly 400 percent, participation in college-level early care and education training (ECD 101) since 1999.

2003 FIRST STEPS RESULTS

- 2,092 children were linked to a medical home (*a doctor*)
- 3,688 health screenings were conducted:
 - 1,304 general health screenings
 - 491 dental screenings
 - 1,350 hearing screenings
 - 543 vision screenings
- 3,036 referrals were made to support services such as doctors, dentists, WIC and Baby Net
- 353 well-baby visits
- 3,190 home visits by nurses
- 387 child care centers or schools received a health visit, affecting 3,250 children
- 270 families and 178 child care providers received nutrition education, serving a total of 1,930 children
- 4,616 children in First Steps-supported parent education programs received developmental screenings. (*Providing developmental screening is a significant component of parent education programs — 10% (464) of children were identified with possible developmental delays, physical, vision or hearing problems; 5% of children screened (219) received follow-up services such as eye care or occupational therapy as a result of early screening and detection*)
- 92% of children in First Steps-supported Parents as Teachers programs were fully immunized by age 2, four percentage points higher than the state average.

Healthy children learn better than children who experience poor health.

Research tells us that a child's early physical and mental health are critical determinants of school readiness and later academic success. In an effort to promote healthy children, First Steps identifies health-related factors as important contributors to school readiness and implements programs in the following areas:

- **Nutrition education** — Nutrition programs are geared to provide low-income families and child care providers with on-site and home-based nutritional counseling, preventing undue developmental delays and deficiencies related to poor nutrition.
- **Early and periodic screenings** — These programs, conducted at child care centers, as part of pediatric home visits or in conjunction with parenting programs, focus on the importance of immunizations and early identification, prevention and

treatment of physical problems that affect learning. For example, young children whose hearing loss is identified before 6 months, and who receive early intervention, have significantly higher developmental function than children whose hearing loss is identified after age 5. Costs associated with special needs children are reduced when early screenings and intervention occur.

- **Postpartum and pediatric home health visits** — These visits include health and physical assessments of infants and their mothers, an evaluation of the overall safety conditions of the home, providing information about growth and development, and linking families to a physician. We know that linking families to doctors reduces the number of inappropriate emergency room visits, saving health care dollars. This program is offered in collaboration with SC DHEC.

■ **Technical assistance and consultation for child care providers** — Health and safety issues are highlighted in this program, offered as part of First Steps' overall child care outreach initiative. Child care workers are taught how to prevent the spread of infection and food-borne illnesses and spot illnesses likely to spread among children in a care facility.

For example, in Lancaster County, First Steps (in partnership with the local health department) provided two public health nurses to work with 12 child care providers, improving health and safety standards in child care centers touching 477 children. The nurses assessed the centers using the health and safety component of a standard environment rating scale and developed improvement plans based on needs identified during the assessments.



"An important part of ensuring that every child enters school ready to learn is to identify problems early and then address them before they become overwhelming."

*Margaret Dunkle
and Louis Vismara, MD
Education Week
September 2003*

**Learning
starts with
healthy
children**

"Children with medical homes are provided efficient, preventative, continuous care — children without medical homes receive episodic, expensive, crisis care."

*Dr. Dexter L. Cook Jr., MD
Rock Hill Pediatric Associates, PA
First Steps External
Evaluation Panel member*

Health

2003 FIRST STEPS RESULTS

- 81,731 home visits served 6,572 families:
 - 7,714 children were served through parent education programs
 - 89 percent of the children served through parent education programs were between the ages of 0–3
- 16,581 children were served in early literacy services
- First Steps successfully directed services to families with the greatest needs:
 - The majority of families served by First Steps-funded parenting programs were enrolled in Medicaid and Food Stamps programs
 - Nearly 40 percent of mothers served in First Steps programs had less than a high school diploma
- 2,233 at-risk children in First Steps-supported PAT programs were linked to the support services they needed such as Food Stamps, WIC and housing assistance
- 621 parents were served in family literacy and adult education programs. 115 parents earned high school diplomas or GEDs

First Steps is helping parents build capacity as their child's first and most important teacher. Parent education and early literacy programs support and encourage parents in their primary role of raising their children, giving our youngest citizens the strongest possible start in life.

PARENT EDUCATION

Social and emotional development is a core component of readiness for school. James Heckman, 2000 Nobel *Laureate* in economics and professor of Economics at the University of Chicago said, "Learning starts in infancy. Mounting research as well as everyday common sense shows how the early social and emotional experiences of very young children affect their future growth and potential."

Model parent education programs such as Parents as Teachers (PAT) and Parent-Child Home (PCH) increase parents' ability to stimulate their child's intellectual, social and physical development. Ninety percent of parenting programs supported by First Steps use PAT, PCH or a combination of both, using the curriculum that best fits the families' needs.

Studies show that parents participating in PAT and PCH programs increase their verbal interaction with their child, resulting in an increase of the child's scores in reading, math, social and cognitive skills. Moreover, these children score higher on kindergarten readiness tests and on standardized measures in first through fourth grades.

EARLY LITERACY

Quality family literacy programs include the following four components: 1) parent education; 2) parent literacy training (including adult education); 3) age-appropriate education for children; and 4) interactive literacy activities (between parents and their children).

Research tells us that a parent's educational attainment is strongly correlated to a child's success in school, which is why helping parents boost their own educational levels makes sense for South Carolina. The 1995 Hart and Risley study indicates that children from predominately low socio-economic and/or low educated families experience a 300M word gap when compared to middle/upper income and well-educated

families. This language deficit, present before children arrive at school, makes it difficult for at-risk children to build reading skills and to develop vocabularies at the same rate of achievement as their language-enriched peers.

According to national research, books in the home affect school readiness by increasing exposure to language. **Reach Out and Read** promotes the importance of reading through pediatricians' offices where doctors prescribe parents to read to their young children, instead of a lollipop, children are given a book to keep.

"Children form basic cognitive abilities in their earliest years, and those who don't get exposed to letters, numbers and social skills at home quickly lag behind those who do."

*Business Week
August 26, 2002*



**Learning
begins at
home**

Families

Early Education: Learning is *hardwired* when kids are young

2003 FIRST STEPS RESULTS

- 1,535 children were served in full-day 4-K in public school
- 274 children were served in pilot private child care full-day 4-K programs in 13 sites across South Carolina
- 405 children were served in half-day 4-K in public school
- 78 half-day 4-K classes were extended to full-day, serving 1,552 children
- 80 children were served in Head Start programs
- 111 children under 4 years of age were served in early education programs
- 762 children were served in summer readiness programs
- 449 children received First Steps-funded home visits in preparation for attending 5-K
- 96.4% of First Steps-funded 4-K programs use screening criteria ensuring we reach children at greater risk of academic failure
- 99.1% of First Steps-funded 4-K teachers were certified in Early Childhood Education
- 97.4% of First Steps-funded 4-K classes use curricula supported by the State Department of Education's (SDE) Office of Early Childhood Education
- 63.2% of First Steps-funded 4-K teachers participated in High/Scope or Creative Curriculum training, SDE-approved curricula for 4-year-old instruction

WHY IS QUALITY EARLY EDUCATION IMPORTANT?

Quality preschool programs have been shown to improve school readiness and reduce grade retention (especially in high-risk student populations). Greenville County Schools recently conducted a study of 4-K student success in first grade. The study compared the percentage of all students retained to the percentage of students who were retained after having participated in district 4-K programs over the last five years. Students with 4-K were retained less often (less than 1%) than the total group of first graders (who showed a retention rate ranging from 6.9% to 8.4% annually). These numbers are particularly compelling because the children served in this program were among Greenville's most at-risk young students.

Studies show that high-quality early education has multiple benefits for both children and the general public. Quality early education programs affect not only initial school readiness, but long-term academic success and economic success as the children move into adulthood. All of these mean a significant return on investment for public funds directed to quality early education.

PRIVATE PUBLIC PARTNERSHIP — 4-K PILOT PROGRAM

First Steps, in partnership with the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (SC DHHS), launched a pilot program in FY'03, housing 4-K classes in private child care facilities across the state. These classes are held to the same high-quality standards as SC public schools, using certified teachers, approved curriculum, and requiring curriculum-based training for both teacher and teaching assistant.

Nine sites were funded for the 2002–2003 school year in Charleston, Clemson, Columbia, Georgetown, Greeleyville, Greenville, Greenwood, Lexington and Orangeburg. In addition to these nine, five counties (Charleston, Cherokee, Greenville, Spartanburg and York) funded pilot sites as well. Through this pilot program, 274 children were served in quality early education settings at no cost to parents. Center staff report additional benefits to all children at these sites, as a result of the strong, quality 4-K classrooms at their locations.

“Studies document a wide gap between lower- and higher-income children before they enter kindergarten. When children begin school behind, they tend to continue to fall further and further behind. High-quality early education can help close this gap. Long-term positive outcomes and cost-savings include improved school performance, reduced special education placement, lower school dropout rates and increased lifelong earning potential.”

*Business Roundtable
May 2003*

**Learning is
hardwired
when kids
are young**

**Early
Education**



2003 FIRST STEPS RESULTS

In an effort to improve the quality of child care and support working families in South Carolina, First Steps implemented the following child care initiatives:

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

First Steps helps child care centers improve their quality by providing funds for minor renovations to meet child care licensing and health and safety requirements, educational curricula, equipment and supplies. Technical assistance is offered by qualified staff to assist providers with their goals for improvement.

- **40,107 children were served through child care quality enhancement programs**
- **22% of the regulated child care facilities in South Carolina participated in First Steps child care quality initiatives; 664 child care providers participated in quality enhancement programs**
- **49 child care providers became licensed and 89 providers are working toward becoming licensed** (*being licensed meets the minimum standard of care set by the State*)
- **78 child care providers became enhanced and 118 are working toward enhancement.**
- **5 child care providers became NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) accredited, which is the highest standard of care. There are only 89 accredited child care facilities in South Carolina.** (*120 child care facilities are currently working toward accreditation*)

STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

First Steps provides ongoing staff training and development, increasing the knowledge of child care workers and improving the quality of programs offered in participating child care facilities. The First Steps Center for Child Care Career Development-managed Teacher Education And Compensation Helps (TEACH) Early Childhood Project provides scholarships for teachers working in child care to complete college course work in early childhood education and increase their compensation. TEACH Scholarships are available for the SC Early Childhood credential (ECD 101) or an Associate's degree in Early Care and Education.

- **4,777 children were affected through high-quality child care center staff training and development**
- **800 child care providers received technical assistance and/or mentoring**
- **3,016 workshops for child care workers were held in First Steps partnerships across the state**

VOUCHERS

Child care vouchers were used to provide child care subsidies to eligible families and their children, and to increase the number of child care slots in South Carolina, which are in great demand. First Steps works to ensure parents have high-quality choices for child care vouchers.

- **1,948 child care vouchers were provided to families**
- **69% of the families receiving First Steps child care vouchers chose either enhanced or accredited child care facilities.** (*enhanced programs meet standards above DSS licensing standards; accredited facilities offer the highest standard of care possible*)

Research consistently shows that a child's educational development and later school success is affected positively by quality child care. Children attending child care centers that meet professional standards for quality score higher on school readiness and language tests.

TEACH EARLY CHILDHOOD® SOUTH CAROLINA

The TEACH program provides scholarships for child care teachers to take college courses toward the South Carolina Early Childhood Credential, a certificate, a diploma or an Associate's degree in Early Care and Education at South Carolina technical colleges. First Steps administers this program in partnership with the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (SC DHHS). TEACH yields increased education and compensation for child care teachers, and reduced staff turnover in child care settings — both better for children. The end result is higher quality child care in South Carolina.

RESULTS

Since the program's inception in January 2001:

- 3,274 child care providers enrolled in TEACH
- 2,307 South Carolina Early Childhood credential scholarships awarded
- 967 Associate's degree scholarships awarded
- 1,640 credentials earned by recipients of TEACH
- 31 Associate's degrees completed

During the 2002–2003 Fiscal Year:

- 1,210 child care providers enrolled in TEACH
- 798 South Carolina Early Childhood credential scholarships awarded
- 412 Associate's degree scholarships awarded
- 723 credentials earned by recipients of TEACH



Early Education



2003 FIRST STEPS RESULTS

- First Steps enabling legislation requires the Office of First Steps (OFS) to create a statewide standard Fiscal Accountability System. The development of such a system resulted in the following:
 - Regional Finance Managers (RPM) — CPA firms and professional bookkeepers were selected to provide regional management of accounting and tax functions, thereby assuring quality. This eliminated the need for each county to purchase the same function independently, thereby achieving economies of scale.
 - Audits — Statewide audits were conducted of each county partnership and RFM by an independent auditing firm. These audits showed a very positive financial position for all county partnerships. No material problems were uncovered at any level of the audit (nor have they been since 1999).
 - Evaluation — A national, independent evaluator viewed the fiscal accountability system as sound and cost effective for ensuring quality financial management for the State of South Carolina.
 - First Steps law requires that no county may supplant other state or federal funding with First Steps state allocation, eliminating duplication and maximizing resources.

STATE-LEVEL BUDGET

	<i>(Thousands)</i>	Percentage
Total Funding	\$ 39,080	
Interest	\$ 453	
Mid-Year Budget Cuts	\$ (2,386)	
	\$ 37,147	

DISTRIBUTION OF BUDGET

State Office Administration	\$ 1,658	4.5%
State Office Programs	\$ 817	2.2%
Available for County Partnerships	\$ 34,672	93.3%
	\$ 37,147	100.0%

ACTUAL EXPENDITURES

State Office Administration	\$ 1,512	4.1%
State Office Programs	\$ 963	2.6%
Disbursed to County Partnerships	\$ 34,672	93.3%
	\$ 37,147	100.0%
NET (Carryover to Fiscal Year 2004)	\$ —	

NOTE: State-Appropriated Funds Only

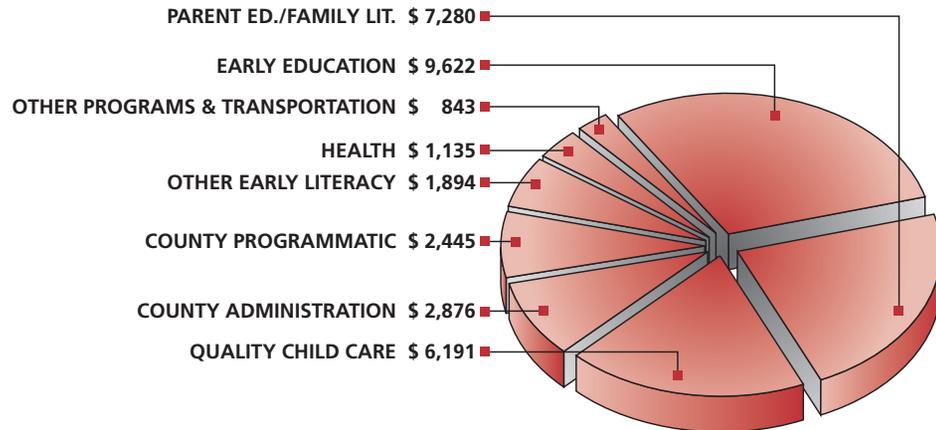
STATEWIDE EXPENDITURES

Funding Source	Spent <i>(Thousands)</i>
State Appropriated	\$ 37,147
State Private	\$ 2,927
Local Private	\$ 568
In-Kind	\$ 7,787
Federal	\$ 1,267
Volunteer Hours (\$)	\$ 456
TOTAL	\$ 50,152

First Steps has "engendered a culture of accountability regarding expenditures and program implementation."

*Child Trends
Washington, DC
Evaluation Report to SC Legislature
January 2003*

STATEWIDE PARTNERSHIPS STATE APPROPRIATED DOLLARS SPENDING (THOUSANDS)



**Account-
ability**

**Ensuring
dollars are
well spent &
programs are
effective**

2003 FIRST STEPS RESULTS

DOING THE RIGHT THINGS

- Regular county-level needs assessments inform local strategies, decision making, and resource allocation
- Programs are rooted in science and research-based practice and are monitored by qualified professionals at the state level
- State Board of Trustees approves all program plans proposed by county partnerships

IN THE RIGHT WAY

- Quality guidelines ensure consistency across programs and across the state
- Annual effectiveness reports are completed for each program or service delivered in counties across South Carolina. Reports include program delivery data (qualifications of staff, level of participation and methodology) and specific learning outcomes (client satisfaction and other indicators)
- Statewide data collection system to monitor program results is in its second year of full implementation

FOR THE RIGHT PEOPLE

- In FY'03, the Office of Research and Statistics partnered with First Steps to look at individuals directly served in First Steps programs who were most at risk for school failure. Sample findings are as follows:
 - First Steps supports the intent of ACT 135 by offering services to families whose children are most at risk for school failure. A large percent (65–80%) of children in parenting-centered home-visiting programs (such as Parents as Teachers) are enrolled in Medicaid. These at-risk children need intervention before they arrive in kindergarten.
 - Nearly 40 percent of children served in First Steps programs were born to mothers with less than a high school diploma. In parenting and literacy programs, 48 percent of children's mothers had less than a high school diploma. *(In South Carolina, nearly a quarter of the 18–26-year-old population doesn't have either a high school diploma or a GED.)*

EVALUATION

The legislatively-required evaluation report released January 1, 2003 stated that First Steps was not only on the right track in getting children ready for school, but also doing it in a fiscally accountable manner. The report by Child Trends (a national, nonpartisan research center) called First Steps' first three years "ambitious and innovative," and noted that First Steps has "engendered a culture of accountability regarding expenditures and program implementation."

The results of the evaluation present an opportunity to learn about First Steps' early accomplishments, and strengthen and expand on those accomplishments. A second evaluation report is due in 2006.

"Overall, our review indicates that the early implementation of First Steps is in keeping with both the intent of the enabling legislation and with research on effective child development practices," said Dr. Martha Zaslow, vice president for Research, Child Trends.

"First Steps represents a long-term investment — one with a potentially large payoff. Making sure that kids start well in school can put them on a path that will save the state money later."

*Dr. Martha Zaslow
vice president for Research
Child Trends*



Accountability

"AUDIT SHOWS FIRST STEPS STARTING ON THE RIGHT TRACK. FIRST STEPS MUST BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE MEETING THE CRUCIAL NEED TO IMPROVE SCHOOL READINESS."

*The State
January 10, 2003*

"RESEARCHERS FIND THAT FIRST STEPS IS WORKING WELL AND SPENDING PRUDENTLY. FIRST STEPS CLEARLY IS MEETING THE MANDATE OF LAWMAKERS THAT PROGRAMS BE LOCALLY CONTROLLED AND TAILORED TO LOCAL NEEDS."

*Greenville News
January 4, 2003*

First Steps has "engendered a culture of accountability regarding expenditures and program implementation."

*Child Trends
Washington, DC
Evaluation Report to SC Legislature
January 2003*

Partnerships: Leveraging resources for greater results

An increasing number of states are identifying ways that agencies and organizations serving young children and their families can form partnerships to expand and enhance services. This is primarily due to the need to create systems that are more responsive to the needs of families and children while resources are shrinking.

First Steps collaborates with both public and private sector organizations across the state to focus and intensify services, assuring optimum efficiency and effectiveness of all available resources by leveraging dollars and streamlining services for children to yield greater results for South Carolina's school readiness dollar. Below are examples of First Steps' successful partnerships.

2003 FIRST STEPS RESULTS

- **Leveraging federal funds** — Through a partnership between the SC Department of Health & Human Services (SC DHHS) and First Steps, South Carolina leveraged \$7M additional federal funds in 2003 for child care scholarships to families, training to child care staff and enhancement of child care facilities around the state.
- **Initiating 4-K in the private sector** — SC DHHS and First Steps collaborated with private child care facilities around the state to provide 4-K classes to 274 children at no cost to parents. This 3-year pilot program has been paid for with \$600,000 in federal funds and \$250,000 in state-level private First Steps funds.
- **Providing parent resources** — In collaboration with SC DHEC, SC DHHS and First Steps, 38,428 "brain development" videos in English and Spanish were delivered in FY'03 to new parents through hospitals, doctors' offices and health departments — 231,000 videos have been distributed since the project began in 2001. In addition, with the support of the March of Dimes, a prenatal and well-baby resource guide was developed in English and Spanish.

- **Recognizing family friendly businesses** — The SC Family Friendly Workplace Award (SCFFWA) was established to recognize businesses statewide that consistently demonstrate family friendly practices and to educate employers about the economic and social benefits of such practices. First Steps initiated the award in 2000 and staffs the initiative, joined by sponsoring organizations including the Governor's Office, the SC Chamber of Commerce, the Education Oversight Committee and the United Way. Thirty-one businesses have received recognition since 2001. Hundreds of industry leaders from across the state assist South Carolina in awarding this prestigious honor each year.
- **Earning national recognition** — Georgetown County Public Library and Georgetown County Public Services partnered with Georgetown County First Steps to provide a mobile library-based literacy program and training initiative to 42 child care centers serving more than 600 children. The innovative program was one of eight programs nationwide to receive the "Counties Care for Kids Award" by the National Association of Counties.
- **Partnering with higher education** — The First Steps office in Horry County partnered with its local technical college and library to create the Interactive Learning Lab and Training Center. In 2003, 111 child care providers and students received hands-on training in early care and education "model classrooms," housed on the college campus. First Steps contributed \$32,000 to this effort.
- **Putting books in the hands of children** — The Dolly Parton Imagination library program, which delivers a book each month to children from birth to 5, was brought to Allendale County as a result of a partnership between the local First Steps office, Allendale Alive, the county hospital and the Low Country Health Care System, along with private contributions. 125 children receive books monthly. Emerging research shows that Dolly Parton literacy intervention is making a difference in young children in Tennessee.

■ **Building successful coalitions** — Working with the local United Way agency, Beaufort County First Steps and other local organizations formed the Early Childhood Coalition. This coalition secured a \$785,298 federal grant to serve families with young children by providing family literacy services and expanding home visiting services, using no additional state dollars yet serving 468 more families.

■ **Garnering volunteer leadership** — During fiscal year 2003, First Steps County Partnerships contributed more than 27,500 volunteer hours with an estimated value of \$454,000. *(The Independent Sector, a nonprofit, nonpartisan coalition of leading nonprofits, foundations and corporations, sets the value of volunteer time at \$16.54 per hour for 2003.)*

■ **Generating private industry support for early education** — More than \$8M in county partnership in-kind and private funds were raised during 2003. Since inception, First Steps has raised \$20M (including in-kind contributions) at state and county levels, essentially raising \$1 for every \$4 received from South Carolina.

IBM DONATES COMPUTERS TO FIRST STEPS LEARNING CENTERS

“IBM is committed to improving education and giving kids a jump start at school,” said Anne McNeill, program manager for corporate community relations.

Through First Steps, IBM donated 40 KidSmart™ Early Learning computer centers and award-winning software to nonprofit and school-based pre-kindergarten classrooms in Chester, Lancaster, Lexington, Richland and York counties. IBM’s donation represents a \$100,000 investment in South Carolina’s efforts to improve achievement in elementary schools by increasing the quality of early learning programs statewide.

“The partnership between Lexington County First Steps and School District Five of Lexington and Richland Counties has made it possible to develop a parenting center for parent and family strengthening in the district. Many at-risk children and parents (who otherwise would not receive these services due to a lack of funding) are being served through the center and home visits.”

*Dr. Dennis McMahon
Superintendent of District Five of
Lexington and Richland Counties*

“QUALITY EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION SHOULD BE A FAMILY, GOVERNMENT, PRIVATE AND FAITH-BASED PARTNERSHIP.”

*Primary value statement
“On the Cost of Early Care
and Education” Task Force*

Leveraging resources for greater results



Partnerships

BUSINESSES INVEST IN FIRST STEPS

Businesses know that contributing to First Steps is a wise investment for the future of South Carolina. To date, more than \$20M in private sector support at the state and county level has been raised.

Strategies by county: 2003 FIRST STEPS RESULTS

ABBEVILLE

- ★ Served 60 children through the expansion of three 4-K classes from half-day to full-day; created an additional full-day 4-K program that served 20 children and an additional half-day 4-K program to serve 20 children
- Provided quality enhancement grants to three child care facilities serving 200 children
- Provided trainings for all child care providers and provided monthly network meetings and book crates for in-home child care providers
- Provided funding for a total of 32 child care slots, six full scholarships and 26 partial scholarships
- Served 66 families with 77 children through the Parents as Teachers program and provided parent education at high schools for 20 teen parents
- Provided a lending library with an age-appropriate curriculum for child care centers to serve 200 children
- Provided a second follow-up visit by a registered nurse to parents of newborns from Abbeville County Memorial Hospital to address safety issues and breastfeeding techniques
- In collaboration with DHEC, provided a home visit by a registered nurse to infants released from the neo-natal intensive care unit
- Created an after-school program for Head Start to extend school hours for 30 children with working parents or parents continuing education

AIKEN

- ★ Provided prenatal care and delivery services for 63 uninsured, non-Medicaid-eligible women; 34 of these women and their infants received additional home visitation and case management
- Served 200 children through the expansion of 10 4-K classes from half-day to full-day at five schools with the highest poverty count
- Provided training and technical assistance to 24 child care facilities serving 1,503 children
- Provided funding for 90 child care slots
- Provided on-site training for 621 child care providers
- Provided a Parent-Child Home visitation program to provide home-based literacy services to 20 2- and 3-year-old children and their families
- Provided funds through a family literacy center education program to create a parenting center that served 16 children and 31 adults
- Served 110 families through 28 support sessions for teen parents and grandparents
- Provided the First Smiles program to serve 57 uninsured children age birth to 3; enrolled 36 children in Partners for Healthy Children
- Provided well-baby, well-child and preventive dental services through 85 visits to 23 children

ALLENDALE

- ★ Served 125 children through the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program with start-up funds donated by Allendale Alive, Allendale County Hospital, Low Country Health Care System and private contributions
- Served 20 children through a full-day 4-K class and provided curriculum materials and supplies for six 4-K classrooms
- Provided quality enhancement mini-grants of up to \$1,000 to four child care centers serving 173 children
- Provided training to six child care centers serving 173 children to enhance the quality of child care
- Provided funding for 20 child care slots, plus an additional eight slots through DHHS in-kind
- Served 40 families with 45 children through Parents as Teacher visits
- Provided child care services at Low Country Health Care System Clinic, serving 478 children
- Provided a Community Early Childhood Development Advocate that served children not enrolled in child care or preschool programs

ANDERSON

- ★ Served 1,906 families and children through health and human services coordination in three school districts linking target populations to needed services and resources. Children with developmental delays, who otherwise might have gone unserved until beginning school, were identified and connected to services that, when offered in a timely manner, support future school success
- Served 40 children through the expansion of two 4-K classes from half-day to full-day, an additional 80 children in half-day programs, and 50 children in before- and after-school program
- Provided quality enhancement grants to 13 child care facilities serving 635 children
- Provided 32 training sessions and 116 training hours to 456 child care staff members
- Served 217 families with 274 children through Parents as Teacher visits
- Distributed 4,426 books plus parenting and learning materials through Project REACH, a comprehensive reading enrichment program designed to help parents and children age 0-5 address early literacy skills
- Partnered with DHEC to hire, train and supervise three community health nurses to serve 385 children in child care centers and five school districts
- Conducted two summer enhancement programs for 137 preschool children

BAMBERG

- ★ Served 53 families with 44 children through Parents as Teachers visits
- Served 32 children through the establishment of two new full-day 4-K classes at Denmark-Olar Learning Center
- Provided a new curriculum to 14 child care providers and two 4-K classes serving a total of 424 children
- Funded the "Jumpstart" summer enhancement program at one school district site for 31 children

BARNWELL

- ★ Expanded outreach activities to improve access to health care by facilitating 314 referrals to a private physician and making 150 successful home visits
- Served 40 children through the expansion of two 4-K classes from half-day to full-day
- Hired an early childhood coordinator who created a parenting/family literacy program for School District 19, developed a curriculum for 3- and 4-year-old transitional classes, and provided activities for parent-child interaction
- Served 137 families and children through Parents as Teachers visits in school districts 19, 29 and 45
- Expanded and enhanced the Success By 6 early childhood development reading program — 21 volunteer readers and 39 children participated
- Served 263 children through children's reading programs at the county library by hiring a children's librarian — 198 story hours, in-library and/or outreach child development activities and special events were held

BEAUFORT

- ★ Offered training to more than 695 child care staff in Beaufort and Jasper Counties
- Provided quality enhancement grants and assistance to 51 child care facilities serving 1,610 children; ten slots in NAEYC-accredited child care facilities were made available to children in target areas; 90 additional slots were created as a result of moving group homes to child care center status
- Through the Family Learning Connections Program, 52 families with 76 children were served in three target areas
- Child health consultants worked with 51 child care facilities to develop health and safety plans; more than 700 families received instruction from trained volunteers on how to properly install car seats; 400 car seats were distributed to families in need

BERKELEY

- ★ Served 167 adults with 191 children through Parents as Teachers visits
- Served 167 children through nine 4-K classes at seven schools

- Provided quality enhancement grants and assistance to nine child care facilities serving 132 children
- Provided funding for 62 child care slots, plus an additional 33 slots through DHHS in-kind
- Provided support to 521 children and 482 adults through comprehensive home visits by a professional nurse to new mothers; distributed a resource guide to families of young children

CALHOUN

- ★ Served 15 children through a summer enhancement program; post-test results show that all 15 students improved in all areas with eight points as the average gain in math and 17.8 points as the average gain in reading "word recognition"
- Established two full-day 4-K classes to serve 40 children
- Served an additional 69 families (86 children) through a family literacy program
- Served 114 children through a library-based program

CHARLESTON

- ★ Served 445 parents with 415 children through parent education programs; distributed 2,249 books and made 461 referrals
- Served 80 children through four full-day 4-K classes and 140 children through the expansion of seven 4-K classes from half-day to full-day
- Provided quality enhancement grants and assistance to 42 child care facilities serving 2,437 children
- Provided funding for 147 child care slots, plus an additional 29 slots through DHHS in-kind
- Served 323 parents and 330 children through family literacy programs; provided 107 home visits and distributed 3,904 books
- Served 94 adults and 84 children in a site-based program for English as a Second Language
- Served 243 rising first graders through a summer enhancement program
- Served 160 families through 1,395 family health home visits; distributed 1,972 books and made 172 referrals

CHEROKEE

- ★ Served 20 children through one new full-day private 4-K class
- Served 38 children through full-day 4-K classes at two elementary schools
- Provided quality enhancement grants to 15 child care facilities serving 496 children and provided 42 child care staff trainings
- Provided funding for 28 child care slots, plus an additional 28 slots through DHHS in-kind
- Served 41 families with 67 children through Parents as Teachers visits and 55 parents through Hispanic outreach/PAT program

CHESTER

★ Served 88 families with 90 children through Parents as Teachers visits; 642 visits were provided

- Served 79 children through the expansion of four full-day 4-K classes from half-day to full-day
- Provided training to 12 child care facilities serving 680 children and 62 staff members
- Provided funding for 35 child care slots, plus an additional 11 slots through DHHS in-kind
- Created a Parent Resource Center at the Fort Lawn Community Center

CHESTERFIELD

★ Provided supplementary packets and teacher home visits for parents of 449 kindergarten children to: establish a positive home/school relationship; advise parents concerning their role in their children's educational success; and reduce the anxiety about the school experience

- Established three half-day 4-K classes to serve an additional 54 children
- Provided quality enhancement grants and assistance to three child care facilities serving 75 children
- Provided training and technical assistance to 181 participating early childhood educators from 20 child care centers and schools
- Provided start-up assistance to one new child care center serving 22 children
- Served 66 families with 98 children through Parents as Teachers visits
- Provided 200 children with 10 age-appropriate books and early literacy tips for parents
- Served 80 children through a summer enhancement program
- Provided 10 postpartum and newborn home visits to non-Medicaid families

CLARENDON

★ Provided quality enhancement grants and assistance to nine child care facilities serving 287 children

- Served 97 children through five full-day 4-K classes
- Served 33 families with 36 children through the Parent-Child Home Program

COLLETON

★ Provided quality enhancement grants and assistance to eight child care facilities serving 98 children. Providers were especially grateful that certified training was offered locally and were quite receptive to the information regarding classroom set-up and appropriate instruction for young children

- Served 124 students through seven full-day 4-K child development classes
- Provided funding for 36 child care slots
- Served 39 parents with 40 children through Parents as Teachers visits

- Provided nutrition services to 29 adults and 71 children, and served an additional 33 children at six child care centers

- Collaborated with the Colleton County Memorial Library to promote family reading and interaction through a summer reading program that served 185 children

DARLINGTON

★ Expanded half-day 4-K classes in the Hartsville and Darlington attendance areas to serve an additional 79 children; extended an existing 4-K program from half-day to full-day to serve 20 additional children in the Lamar attendance area

- Provided quality enhancement grants and assistance to 12 child care facilities serving 502 children and nine training sessions to more than 20 child care providers
- Provided funding for 76 child care slots
- Served 151 adults with 168 children through Parents as Teachers visits

DILLON

★ Served 61 families with 68 children through the Parent-Child Home Program

- Served 60 children through three full-day 4-K classes
- Served an additional 19 children in the full-day Head Start 4-K program
- Provided funding for 23 child care slots, plus an additional 11 slots through DHHS in-kind
- Established Lending Literary Kits for child care providers in Dillon County, serving 160 children
- Offered a home-based health program to provide health education and referral information to 91 adults and 146 children

NEW PARTNERS IN EARLY EDUCATION: LAW ENFORCEMENT

"Through collaborative efforts with First Steps, the Saluda Police Department is embarking on a campaign to link at-risk families with support services provided by First Steps. Establishing a positive relationship in the early years may help to deter young people from becoming involved in criminal activities later in life."

*Chief Staten
Police Chief, Saluda Police Department*

DORCHESTER

★ Established four full-day 4-K classes in Dorchester School District Two and Four to serve 80 children

- Provided quality enhancement grants and assistance to 13 child care facilities serving 504 children
- Provided funding for 25 child care slots, plus an additional 12 slots through DHHS in-kind
- Served 127 families with 172 children through Parents as Teachers and Parent-Child Home Program visits
- Provided early literacy activities to 346 children through the Bright Beginnings Library Program



BOOK FLOOD PROGRAM GETS RESULTS

Pickens County First Steps conducted a program that engaged 485 young children and their parents with books. Teachers in public and private 4-K classrooms organized a rotation process in which each student, taking an average of 108 books home and were read to by family members over a period of 27 weeks. Evaluated by Dr. Dee Stegelin of Clemson University, pre- and post- test data on a random sampling of children who participated in the "Book

Flood" program demonstrated gains in alphabet recognition and familiarity with books. But, just as important, Dr. Stegelin noted, *"This project has strengthened the link between school and home, and parents have become more comfortable in their children's classrooms and engaging in conversations with the teacher."*

Pickens County First Steps

Results

Strategies by county: 2003 FIRST STEPS RESULTS

- Provided two community workshops (Parenting Children's Activity) during the "Week of the Child" sponsored by a private donor
- Provided eight developmentally appropriate and DSS-accredited Early Childhood PATS (Parenting with All Teachers for Success) sessions with 152 participants
- Provided nutritional workshops by Clemson Extension for Windsor Hill Elementary and Beech Hill Elementary

EDGEFIELD

- ★ Served 75 children and 48 adults through the Parents as Teachers program in partnership with Edgefield School District's Even Start Family Literacy Program
- Served 37 children through two half-day 4-K classes at Merriwether Elementary School and 19 children through one full-day 4-K class at Johnston Elementary School
- Served 13 children through the expansion of one 4-K class from half-day to full-day at Douglas Elementary School
- Provided quality enhancement grants to four child care providers serving 147 children
- Provided funding for 41 child care slots
- Collected and distributed 1,000 books to children under the age of 6
- Provided 51 adults and 76 children from low-income families with nutritional counseling in homes, schools and child care facilities

FAIRFIELD

- ★ Served 20 children through the Head Start program. Through the partnership with Fairfield County First Steps, GLEAMNS Head Start was able to open a classroom located in a previously unserved and rural area of Fairfield County
- Provided quality enhancement grants and assistance to seven child care providers serving 193 children
- Provided funding for 35 child care slots; served an additional 23 children through the 3-K and 4-K preschool scholarship program
- Served 62 families with 78 children age birth to 5 through Parents as Teachers visits
- Reach Out and Read (ROAR), serving patients in three physician's offices, distributed 632 developmentally-appropriate books to children attending well-child check-ups
- Partnered with the Fairfield Community Coordinating Council to provide integrated resource and referral information for preschoolers and their families
- Served 287 children through a nutrition program

FLORENCE

- ★ Provided home health visits to families uninsured and non-Medicaid eligible — 371 families with 400 children were served

through the McLeod Home Health Program and 84 families with 124 children were served through Pee Dee Healthy Start

- Served 60 children through the establishment of three full-day 4-K classes and 56 children through the expansion of three 4-K classes from half-day to full-day
- Established 17 full-time 4-K slots in a full-day Head Start program
- Provided funding for 79 child care slots, plus an additional 74 slots through DHHS in-kind
- Served 128 families through the Parent-Child Home Program

GEORGETOWN

★ Provided age-appropriate books and literacy activities in 42 child care facilities and "take home" books to 665 preschoolers; 5,286 books were distributed

- Served 60 children through the expansion of three 4-K classes from half-day to full-day
- Provided quality enhancement grants and assistance to 12 child care providers serving 133 children
- Provided materials and on-site training in the motor development of children to 23 child care providers
- Enhanced the quality of child care by offering 36 hours of training and learning material to seven family child care providers; conducted five workshops for child care providers
- Provided funding for child care slots to 48 families
- Served 72 families and children through Parents as Teachers visits and increased parent knowledge of child development through the Parenting Plus program
- Improved access to necessary health care services by providing transportation for 48 families

GREENVILLE

★ Served 470 families with 518 children through Parents as Teachers visits

- Served 215 children through full-day 4-K
- Provided quality enhancement grants and assistance to 75 child care facilities serving over 8,000 children
- Provided funding for 80 child care slots, plus an additional 30 slots through DHHS in-kind
- Served 173 families through the Literacy Program; 26 GEDs were attained

GREENWOOD

★ Provided funding for 80 child care scholarships, plus an additional 22 scholarships by leveraging federal dollars. Scholarships serve the entire community: children attend quality child care; parents attend training programs, school or work while their children are safe; and child care providers earn money, keeping staff in local jobs

■ Provided technical assistance to 10 child care centers and quality enhancement grants to four centers, serving a total of 133 children

- Served 40 children through two new full-day 4-K classes at two elementary schools
- Served 69 families and children through Parents as Teachers visits
- Provided 22 teen parents with a Teen Parent Education program focused on providing adequate parenting resources
- Expanded and enhanced home visitation services by serving 107 families through the Healthy Families visitation program
- Provided 42 postpartum/newborn home visits

HAMPTON

★ Provided quality enhancement funds and assistance to nine child care facilities serving 251 children

- Provided funding for 43 child care slots, plus an additional 16 slots through DHHS in-kind
- Served 40 children through two full-day 4-K classes
- Provided seven training classes for nine childcare providers
- Served 90 families with 107 children through Parents as Teachers visits
- Provided 60 parent/child involvement Literacy Kits for three 4-K full-day classes, book/activity crates for rotation in child care facilities and additional supplies for five Head Start classrooms

HORRY

★ Provided quality enhancement grants and assistance to 38 child care facilities and professional development training for 111 child care providers to serve a total of 1,767 children

- Provided five full-day 4-K classes serving 96 children
- Provided funding for 91 child care slots, plus an additional 46 slots through DHHS in-kind
- Served 103 families and children through the Parent-Child Home Program
- Provided 2,817 "Welcome Baby Bags" to families with newborns
- Provided 11 newborn health home visits

JASPER

★ Served 60 children through three full-day 4-K classes and served 60 children through the expansion of three 4-K classes from half-day to full-day

- Created a new full-day English as a Second Language class for 20 Spanish-speaking 3- and 4-year-old children
- Served 167 families and children through Parents as Teachers visits (139 completed the program; budget cuts resulted in early termination of program); after receiving Parents as Teachers support, 20 parents returned to school to earn GEDs

■ Served nine children and nine families through increased access for uninsured, non-Medicaid mothers to receive prenatal education, offered in both English and Spanish, and postpartum home visits

KERSHAW

★ Provided quality enhancement grants and technical assistance to six child care facilities serving 455 children; in addition, parent training and child care provider workshops were part of the quality enhancement program

- Served 20 children at Baron DeKalb Elementary School through the expansion of one 4-K class from half-day to full-day
- Provided funding for 24 child care slots, plus an additional five slots through DHHS in-kind
- Served 18 families with 22 children through Parents as Teachers visits
- Served 28 fathers with 33 children through the Kershaw County DADS program
- Added a parenting component to existing GED and English as a Second Language (ESL) Adult Education Classes to promote family literacy to 36 participating parents

LANCASTER

★ Created and implemented the infant and toddler "BASICS>tr" curriculum; 224 child care staff from 22 centers received 256 training hours, 200 mentoring hours and approximately \$2,000 worth of materials per center involved; participating centers demonstrated an increase in Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) scores and the curriculum was presented at both the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Leadership Conference and the Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI) Conference as an effective practice

- Developed 24 new early childhood education slots through Early Head Start
- Received \$485,686 in federal funds from the Early Learning Opportunities grant
- Through technical assistance from Lancaster County First Steps, three child care centers serving 162 children completed the NAEYC self-study and increased their capacity to obtain national accreditation
- Served 94 families (23 Hispanic) with 115 children through the Parent-Child Home Program
- Served 48 children and 44 adults through the Families and Schools Together (FAST) program; 477 parents and children graduated from RATIC (Raising a Thinking Child), both being comprehensive and coordinated modes of parent training based on best practices
- Distributed 852 books through the Reach Out and Read (ROAR) program

- Implemented a Story Time Express to provide library services to serve 2,310 children and created 27 early literacy kits for rotation at child care centers
- Provided 711 children with developmentally appropriate books monthly through the Dolly Parton Imagination Library project
- Produced a 30-minute television broadcast on early childhood education issues such as "Before and After Pregnancy" and "How to Choose a Child Care Center" which was shown 25 times
- Provided two public nurses to work with on-site nursing and health services at 12 child care centers to serve 477 children

LAURENS

★ Provided training, support and materials to 19 child care sites with 197 staff, including home and family providers and centers. 58% of all regulated providers in the county participated in this program; facility improvement plans were developed using nationally recognized standards and scales

- Funded 123 extended-day 4-K slots in Laurens County School Districts 55 and 80 slots in Laurens County School District 56
- Served 125 families and children through Parents as Teacher visits

LEE

★ Served 74 families with 97 children through the Parents as Teachers program in collaboration with the Lee County School District Family Learning Center

- Served 55 children through three full-day 4-K classes
- Provided quality enhancement grants and assistance to five child care facilities serving 114 children
- Provided funding for 16 child care slots, plus an additional four slots through DHHS in-kind
- Provided training to 30 early childhood professionals serving 246 children
- Provided eight HATCH touch-screen computers and one CPU age-appropriate computer system for child care facilities

LEXINGTON

★ Served 563 families with 587 children through Parents as Teachers visits by expanding parenting centers in all Lexington County school districts and the county administrative office

- Provided quality enhancement grants, training, technical assistance and mentoring to 70 child care centers serving 5,166 children

- Served 15 children through one full-time public 4-K class
- Provided renovation grants to 31 centers serving 2,635 children
- Through the Childcare Provider Resource Center, services were provided to 31 centers with 2,635 children
- Through the Childcare Provider Recycling Center, services were provided to 25 centers with 3,750 children
- Education and training opportunities served 1,298 child care provider staff with 71 training hours
- Served 46 families and 46 children through the Parent-Child Home Program
- Contacts with 1,245 families were made through the Family Fair
- Provided the New Mom's Hospital Visitation program to serve 1,900 new mothers with First Steps hospital bags

MARION

★ Served 88 families with 95 children through the Parent-Child Home Program and Parents as Teachers visits

- Served 35 children through two full-day 4-K classes and 40 children through two half-day 4-K classes
- Offered quality enhancement grants and assistance to eight child care facilities serving 211 children
- Provided funding for nine child care slots

"...high-quality early education is cost effective and pays big dividends in the long run. The business community supports high-quality early education programs because they lead to improved education results, a world-class work force, a healthier society and, ultimately, a stronger economy."

*Joseph M. Tucci
Chair of the Business Round Table
Education and the Work Force Task Force*

The Business Roundtable is an association of chief executive officers of leading corporations.

MARLBORO

★ Offered quality enhancement grants and assistance to seven child care facilities serving 204 children

- Established one full-day 4-K class and expanded four 4-K classes from half-day to full-day, serving an additional 100 children
- Provided funding for 17 child care slots, plus an additional 24 slots through DHHS in-kind
- Served 32 families through the Parent Skills Visitation program
- Served 60 children through a 5-K summer enhancement program



National Honor for Georgetown County

Georgetown County Library and Georgetown County Public Services received a "Counties Care for Kids Award" from the National Association of Counties for the unique First Steps preschool initiative: providing a mobile library-based literacy and physical development program directly to 42 child care centers throughout the county, thereby reaching 665 preschoolers. Georgetown County was one of only eight communities in the nation to receive this honor.

Results

"What makes this award so special is that it is intended as a tool to break the cycle of ignorance that continues to permeate far too much of the county's residents. According to the county statistics, our illiteracy rate is higher than 30 percent, with about 17 percent of our citizens falling below the poverty level. The latest unemployment rate for Georgetown County was 14.2 percent."

*Georgetown Times editorial
March 21, 2003*

Strategies by county: 2003 FIRST STEPS RESULTS

MCCORMICK

- ★ Served 18 infants and toddlers with high-quality child care linked with parent education through the only licensed child care facility available in McCormick County, which is currently in the process of working toward NAEYC accreditation
- Established a classroom for 20 developmentally delayed children
- Served 51 families with 55 children through Parents as Teachers visits
- Increased parent knowledge and skills needed to carry out parenting roles and responsibilities by utilizing the Mobile Learning Center
- Provided 93 children with early childhood exposure to library facilities and promoted reading skills through a weekly story hour

NEWBERRY

- ★ Provided quality enhancement grants and assistance to 11 child care facilities serving 575 children; used the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) tool to assess child care facilities; partnered with Interfaith Child Care Resource and Referral to offer free training sessions for child care directors and care givers
- Served 60 children through the establishment of three full-day 4-K classes in high-need areas
- Provided funding for 12 child care slots, plus an additional seven slots through DHHS in-kind
- Served 152 adults with 206 children through Parents as Teachers visits
- Provided a trained children's librarian to travel to child care facilities providing a reading program; 405 4-year-old children received a collection of nine books each (3,649 total books distributed)

OCONEE

- ★ Provided training to child care staff from 35 facilities serving over 800 children. 60% of all child care facilities in the county received free early education training conducted by the school district, thus enhancing the experiences of children as they transition from child care to the school environment, as well as strengthening the collaboration between child care providers and the school district
- Served 60 children through the continuation of three full-day 4-K classes; designed and published a school handbook, written in Spanish, to assist Hispanic families in navigating the school system
- Established a home-based parent education program for 80 families and 88 children
- Established an English as a Second Language (ESL) summer program at James M. Brown Elementary School to serve 11 4-year-old children
- Assisted the Even Start family literacy project by assisting with transportation costs

- Served 39 families with 55 children through an early literacy program entitled "TV OFF/NEURONS ON"
- Served 15 adults and 107 children through a health care initiative, the goal of which is to identify developmental delays in order to intervene and promote school readiness

ORANGEBURG

- ★ Provided quality enhancement grants and assistance to 22 child care facilities serving 5,442 children
- Served 80 children through four public full-day 4-K classes
- Provided funding for 58 child care slots, plus an additional 23 slots through DHHS in-kind; for a total of 81 children receiving scholarships
- Served 213 families with 233 children through Parents as Teachers visits
- Placed a Parents as Teachers coordinator at the Regional Medical Center to inform mothers of newborns about being their child's first and best teacher, and to supply new mothers with literacy materials; 80 referrals were made to Parents as Teachers programs in the school districts
- Implemented a home-based service to assist 116 children experiencing health problems and provided funds to assist those not insured or covered by Medicaid

PICKENS

- ★ Implemented an emergent literacy program, Book Flood — 485 children enrolled in public and private 4-K, each took an average of 108 different books home and were read to by family members over the course of 27 weeks. A Clemson University evaluation found that this program improved children's early literacy skills, such as alphabet recognition, and strengthened the link between home and school
- Continued one full-day 4-K class and established an additional full-day 4-K class to serve a total of 40 children
- The Child Care Leadership Training Institute trained a total of 39 staff representing a total of 11 facilities, affecting 704 children; five centers received additional on-site technical assistance to 76 staff serving 544 children
- Served an average of 74 families and children through Parents as Teachers visits and workshops
- Served approximately ten families with ESL, GED and activities for parent-child interaction through the Family Literacy Center

- Continued Reach Out and Read (ROAR) program at medical facilities throughout the county who voluntarily distribute 2,811 age-appropriate books to 485 children age 0-6 who arrive for well-baby/child visits
- Distributed 522 medical/child development manuals to families of children age 0-5
- Increased school readiness for 185 rising first graders through the Jump Start summer enhancement initiative

RICHLAND

- ★ Provided weekly technical assistance and quality enhancement funds to 48 child care facilities serving 3,754 children
- Provided funding for 87 child care slots
- Served 131 families with 139 children through Parents as Teachers visits
- Served approximately 4,500 children through the Resource for Readiness partnerships that includes early education, parenting/family strengthening and family literacy programs
- Partnered with the public library to provide 48 child care programs with 6,659 library books, each in a permanent collection, and technical assistance on literacy development — served 1,904 children
- Partnered with Clemson Extension's Lifelong Improvement in Nutrition and Community (LINC) program to provide nutritional services to 1,489 children, 186 adults and 61 child care programs to increase knowledge of nutritional needs of young children
- Served 65 families with 76 children through the continuation of Project Breathe Easy to provide parent-to-parent support for families whose children have asthma
- Implemented the Young Children's Community Health Nurses program to serve 1,040 children through newborn and postpartum home visits, classroom activities and well-child screenings; provided vision, hearing, speech and developmental screenings for 363 children

SALUDA

- ★ Provided quality enhancement grants and assistance to six child care facilities serving 254 children; 64% completed ECD 101
- Served 120 children through the expansion of six 4-K classes at two elementary schools from half day to full-day
- Served 20 families with 26 children through Parents as Teachers visits
- Provided postpartum home visits to newborns in 21 families

SPARTANBURG

- ★ Served 463 families with 580 children through Parents as Teachers visits
- Served 95 children through half-day 4-K and 89 children through full-day 4-K
- Provided quality enhancement grants to two child care facilities serving 132 children
- Delivered 25 incentive awards to participants in TEACH; provided seven training opportunities for 290 child care providers; provided the First Steps Parent/Childcare Conference for 560 participants
- Provided funding for 12 new child care slots, plus an additional three slots through DHHS in-kind
- Served 110 families with 137 children through the family literacy program at three sites

SUMTER

- ★ Served 230 families with 247 children through the Parents as Teachers program
- Provided quality enhancement grants to 31 child care facilities serving 997 children
- Provided funding for 79 new child care slots, plus an additional 35 slots through DHHS in-kind
- Provided family literacy programs through the expansion of adult education to serve 227 adults and 274 children
- Provided 96 families with postpartum newborn home health visits

UNION

- ★ Served 120 families through Parents as Teachers visits
- Served 100 children through the expansion of five 4-K classes from half-day to full-day
- Provided continuing education through High/Scope Conference Training to serve 12 child care providers with 425 children; provided additional monthly education to all child care providers through certified trainers
- Served 22 pregnant/new teen mothers through Resource Mothers mentoring program
- Provided a traveling storytelling program that served approximately 400 children twice each month

WILLIAMSBURG

- ★ Provided quality enhancement grants and assistance to 24 child care facilities serving 437 children
- Served 40 children through the expansion of two 4-K classes from half-day to full-day and served an additional 34 children through full-day 4-K at Greeleyville and Chavis Elementary Schools
- Partnered with a private medical pediatrician to distribute 1,169 children's books to emphasize the importance of reading to young children
- Served 44 families and children through the Parent-Child Home Program

YORK

★ Provided 174 families with scholarships covering 50 percent of their child care costs through York County DSS

- Served 19 children through a private full-day 4-K class at Sunshine House
- Early childhood specialists worked with 27 child care facilities serving 1,493 children to assist in moving from licensed to enhanced status or NAEYC accreditation; provided 1,809 books to participating centers
- Provided 84 child care providers with Infant/Toddler and Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ITERS/ECERS) trainings; 190 child care staff participated in Quality Enhancement Training
- 419 SLED checks were done for new potential employees of child care centers
- Served 91 families with 106 children through Parents as Teachers visits
- Established a comprehensive family literacy program inclusive of adult education, parent/child activities, parenting and early childhood education to serve 19 adults and 22 children
- Served 37 children through a dental mobile unit provided by Dental Access Carolina, LLC and located at the Rock Hill Resource Center; the York County Hispanic Task Force assisted in identifying participants
- Established four one stop shop/family resource centers through a collaboration with Success by 6 and the York County school districts to serve 809 adults and 551 children

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Appointed by Senate President Pro Tempore

- Ms. Kristin Hook, Parent of Young Child (Lexington)
- Mr. Dan Wuori, Early Childhood Educator (Columbia)
- Mr. Walter Miller, Med/Child Care Provider (Johns Island)
- One vacancy, Business Community

Appointed by Speaker of the House

- Mr. Lee Cory, Business Community (Greenville)
- Ms. Doris Ballard, Early Childhood Educator (Greenville)
- Ms. Marileen Chapman, Med/Child Care Provider (Spartanburg)
- Ms. Judith Aughtry, Parent of Young Child (Greenville)

Appointed by Chairman of Senate Education Committee

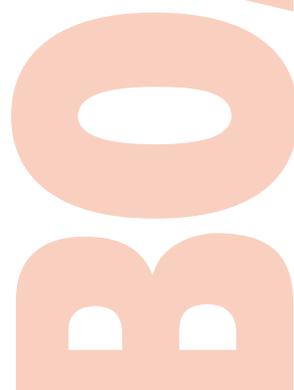
- Sen. John Matthews, SC Senate (Bamberg, Colleton, Dorchester, Hampton and Orangeburg)

Appointed by Chairman of House Education and Public Works Committee

- Rep. Vida Miller, SC House of Representatives (Georgetown and Charleston)

Representatives of State Agencies and Other Organizations

- Ms. Kim Aydlette, Department of Social Services
- Mr. Bobby Bowers, Budget and Control Board
- Dr. Stan Butkus, Department of Disabilities and Special Needs
- Mr. George Gintoli, Department of Mental Health
- Mr. Jim Griffith, Transportation Association of South Carolina
- Dr. James Hudgins, SC Technical College System
- Dr. Lisa Waddell, designee for Mr. C. Earl Hunter, Department of Health and Environmental Control
- Mr. Jim Johnson, State Library
- Ms. Susan Jones, designee for Ms. Elizabeth Mabry, Department of Transportation
- Mr. Robert Kerr, Department of Health and Human Services
- Mr. Lee Catoe, Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services
- One vacancy, State Advisory Committee on the Regulation of Child Day Care Facilities



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