



# Abbeville County First Steps Partnership *Fiscal Year 2008 Annual Report*

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**Executive Director:**  
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**Total children in county under  
age 6: 1,865**

**Children under age 6 living in  
poverty: 9.7%**

## Abbeville County Highlights

- 19 families received comprehensive services
- 400 child care staff were trained in three counties
- 2,464 children were served by training local center staff
- “The First Steps Program has made a difference in my family’s life.” –parent of a preschool child.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S MESSAGE

Abbeville County First Steps has been very proud to receive various grant funding opportunities, which has increased our visibility in the community and expanded services to young children and families within the community. Through the Centers of Excellence funding, we have been able to build more community partnerships with health strategies as well as connecting vital services for young children. We have been able to provide comprehensive services to nineteen families throughout Abbeville County. Each family has received child care scholarship assistance, quality care and research-based instruction at each center, child assessments and screenings, and parent education services. We have also been very excited about our new fatherhood initiative, which started through a capacity building grant for this program. Through our local board as well as community partners, we are focusing on each parent’s roles in a young child’s life and how these roles impact school readiness. Through this program, fathers are becoming more actively involved with the mothers and children in the Parents As Teachers Program. Comprehensive services are best for the entire family, and once we make this connection, we are ready to begin the school readiness process. Finally, we have had success with collaboration. We have been collaborating with Greenwood County First Steps for several years in providing child care trainings, and last year we were able to sponsor quality child care trainings to 400 staff members. Working together within our own community and with other communities, we can start to make a difference in the lives of young children.

Thank you,  
Angela S. Pruitt  
Executive Director  
Abbeville First Steps

## **First Steps to School Readiness Strategy Areas**

*The First Steps initiative approaches children's school readiness needs in five ways:*

**Family Strengthening:** A parent is a child's first and best teacher. First Steps works to help parents become the best parents they can be. First Steps also helps parents further their own education.

**Healthy Start:** Children's development and ability to learn are profoundly impacted by their health in the earliest years. First Steps works to help families understand children's health needs through education and screenings while also working to help them access needed health services.

**Quality Child Care:** Quality child care provides immediate and long-term learning benefits for children. First Steps works to expand the availability of quality child-care to families and to enhance the level of quality in existing child-care environments.

**Early Education:** Research shows that children who participate in high-quality preschool classes are more likely to start school ready to learn, as well as be more successful later in life. First Steps works to expand high-quality 3-year-old and 4-year-old kindergarten opportunities in public and private settings.

**School Transition:** The transition into kindergarten is a critical time that sets the tone for children's perspectives about the school years, as well their parents' perspectives. Making a strong initial connection between school and home -- and supporting both parents and students during this transition time -- has been shown to impact students' later school success and parents' later involvement during the school years.

## **2007-08 County Partnership Programs by Strategy**

### **FAMILY STRENGTHENING.**

#### **Parents As Teachers Program**

**Program description:** Parent educators provide home visits twice a month and monthly parent meetings. Books are given on each home visit, and at family meetings. Each child in the program has developmental, vision, hearing, and dental screenings. Parent educators set goals for each parent and child, and develop an individual service plan for each family based on the family goals. Parent Educators also drive the Preschool Learning Bus, as a recruitment tool for the program, throughout the community. The Parents as Teachers Program is also closely linked with the new fatherhood initiative to encourage involvement of fathers in both programs.

#### **Program results:**

- 75 families and 107 children were served
- 21% scored higher on family assessments after receiving home visits
- 83% of the families who returned their satisfaction surveys reported positive results on all services
- Families received an average of 1.3 visits a month with the program, with the goal being 2 visits a month
- 48% of families in the program attended at least one parent meeting
- 95% of children in the program had a developmental screening
- 100% of two year olds had their immunizations completed

#### **Fatherhood Initiative**

**Program description:** The mission of Real Fathers are Dads program is to equip, educate, and empower fathers with the necessary tools to engage positively in their children's quest to be successful. Abbeville County First Steps' fatherhood initiative is designed to target fathers with children prenatal to five years old. Workshops are setup twice a month. The workshop topics range from budgeting/financial management, self-esteem and responsibility, to parenting and life skills. Additional activities are offered for fathers and children to do together, such as sporting events or community activities. Outdoor activities are also offered for dads to create team building skills. Books are given for children at each workshop. All fathers are encouraged to attend monthly parent meetings with the mothers in the Parents as Teacher Program. Through local collaboration, our program is really starting to grow, with additional workshops being offered in rural parts of the community as well as in the city.

#### **Program results:**

- Eight fathers were served by the program
- 50% of fathers are actively involved in Parents as Teachers, Countdown to Kindergarten, and the Fatherhood Program

- 95% of the fathers are attending workshops on a continuous basis
- 100% of participants receive information on the Doctor DAD and 24/7 DAD curriculum

## **QUALITY CHILD CARE.**

### **Centers of Excellence**

**Program description:** Kids Under Construction and Higher Heights Academy receive technical assistance visits once a week from the Centers of Excellence Coordinator. On-site visits consist of help with classroom materials, health and safety, room arrangement, staff/child interaction, and scheduling routines. Centers receive quality enhancement funding to increase the quality of early childhood environments in their classrooms based on assessments. All families who are in the program receive scholarships to the centers, parenting services, and developmental assessments and health screenings on their children.

#### **Program results:**

- Two child care centers participated
- 27 children received child care scholarships
- 117 technical assistance visits were completed
- Seven health screenings were completed
- 20 dental screenings were completed
- Six center staff completed ECD 101.

### **Child Care Trainings**

**Program description:** Child Care trainings have been offered jointly with Greenwood County First Steps for five years serving Abbeville, Greenwood, and McCormick Counties. All child care trainings are conducted by trainers certified through the Center for Child Care Career Development. All training topics coordinate with local county quality enhancement efforts. An annual child care conference was held at Lander University serving over 200 providers. Through this multi-county collaboration, more providers were served with quality trainings, thus enhancing learning environments for young children.

#### **Program results:**

- 400 staff members from ninety-four different facilities were trained
- 2,454 children were served by staff who attended the quality trainings
- 19 training sessions with over twenty-five DSS credit hours earned

## SCHOOL TRANSITION.

### **Countdown to Kindergarten**

**Program description:** Five kindergarten teachers conducted eight intensive home visits for five year olds, during the summer months, before the start of kindergarten. The home visits consisted of lesson plans and materials for families to use. During the last session, children had an opportunity to their new kindergarten classroom. At the end of the program, a trip was offered to a celebration program at EdVenture Children's Museum in Columbia.

### **Program results:**

- 37 children were served by the program  
After completing eight home visits:
- 21% of parents stated that they would visit a library
- 25% of parents stated that they would keep their child on a routine or daily schedule
- 10% of parents stated that would read a book to their children
- 16% of parents stated that they would draw and paint with their children

## Financial Summary

### Expenditures by Funding Source

State Appropriation.	\$146,201	State Private	\$2,371
E.I.A. Appropriation	\$50,176	Local Private	\$14,028
C.O.E Appropriation	\$172,634	In-Kind	\$13,594
Total	<b>\$399,004</b>		

### Expenditures by Program/Strategy Name

Parents As Teachers	\$140,612
Fatherhood Initiative	\$27,494
Quality Enhancement	\$56,495
Quality Child Care Trainings	\$39,638
Child Care Scholarships	\$64,424
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$13,654
Health Based Public Services	\$326
Indirect Programmatic Functions	\$34,262
Administrative Functions	\$22,099
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$399,004</b>

## NOTABLE DONORS

<i>DONOR'S NAME</i>	AMOUNT
Abbeville Savings and Loan	\$500.00
Abbeville Women's Club	\$150.00
Paul Agnew	\$583.00
Harris Funeral Home	\$350.00
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$1583.00</b>

*Local Match Percentage for FY 2008: 33%*

## COUNTY PARTNERSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Charles Costner, Board Chair: Pre-Kindergarten through Primary Educator,  
Brad Evans, Vice Chair, Business Community  
Henry Green, Secretary: Legislative Appointee  
Lynette Cobb: Business Community  
Melody Griffin: Child Care and Early Childhood Development/Education Provider  
Dr. Randall T. Ruble: Faith Community  
Pam Randolph: Family Education, Training and Support Provider  
Tracey Jackson: Health Care Provider  
Linda Talbert: Non-Profit Organization that Provides Services to Families and Children  
Jessica Young: Parent of a Pre-School Child  
Stacia Powell: Parent of a Preschool Child  
Esther Marner: Parent of a Preschool Child  
Jean Smith: Provider of Early Childhood Education, School District Appointee  
Gail Johnson: Provider of Early Childhood Education  
Frankie McNair: Provider of Early Childhood Education  
Yvonne Hill: Provider of Early Childhood Education  
Mary Elizabeth Land: Library Appointee  
Delano Freeman: Head Start Appointee  
Mary Stackhouse: Health Department Appointee  
Tamikia Jackson-Williams: DSS Appointee  
Barry Jacks: Legislative Appointee  
Joanne Johnson: Pre-Kindergarten through Primary Educator

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## **COUNTY DATA SNAPSHOT**

In FY08, First Steps County Partnerships statewide made it a priority to become increasingly data-driven. County Partnerships successfully began using powerful new components of the First Steps data system, and County Partnerships also utilized data in new ways to drive their FY09 program plans. In addition to enhanced program data tracking, County Partnerships are also focusing on the best available data about children and families to best understand their communities' needs. At the end of FY08 and the beginning of FY09, County Partnerships began an extensive analysis of this data, including data about the risk factors known to impact children's potential school success, such as low birth weight, teen mothers, and families living in poverty. A county-level risk data report is included in the subsequent pages of this report.

## ***Success Stories by Parents:***

*-I enjoy all the help that I am getting from everyone at First Steps. I really do appreciate it and as long as there is a First Steps Program, and my children are eligible for the program, we will be members. Once again, thanks for all the help. – Parent of a Preschool Child (Centers of Excellence)*

*-This program has helped me to be more confident in what I'm doing, and my son is progressing better than I thought he ever would. –Parent of a preschool child (Centers of Excellence Program)*

*-We love books. Books and the dental contact through screenings has been the most helpful. Some activities, I would have never thought of, are useful and interesting. We love Mrs. Betty! –Parent of a preschool child (Parents as Teachers Program).*

*-I think everything was great. Lots of hands on activities, reading, and learning colors was great! Mrs. Hilley was great! –Countdown to Kindergarten Parent*

*First Steps Joint Child Care Trainings*



*Preschool Learning Bus*







# 2008 School Readiness Risk Profile

## Abbeville County

Total Children Under Six: 1,865

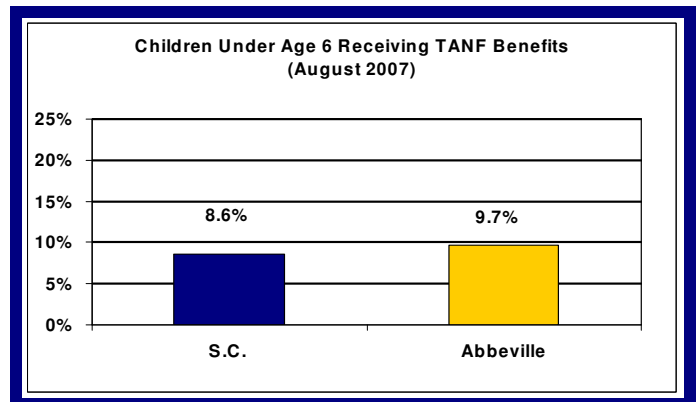
### CHILD POVERTY (Children in Families Receiving TANF Benefits)

Statewide Average (2007): 8.4%

Abbeville County (2007): 9.7%

**Fast Fact:** Roughly 1 in 10 Abbeville County children has an annual family income equivalent to \$10,325 (or less) for a family of four. A recent statewide analysis suggests that 45% of these children will be retained or score at the “below basic” level (PACT) by third grade.

- Children in deep poverty often face a wide variety of school readiness obstacles, ranging from inadequate prenatal care and nutrition to low maternal education.
- 181 of Abbeville County’s 1,860 children under age 6 received federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits during 2007, indicating a family income at or below 50% of the federal poverty definition.



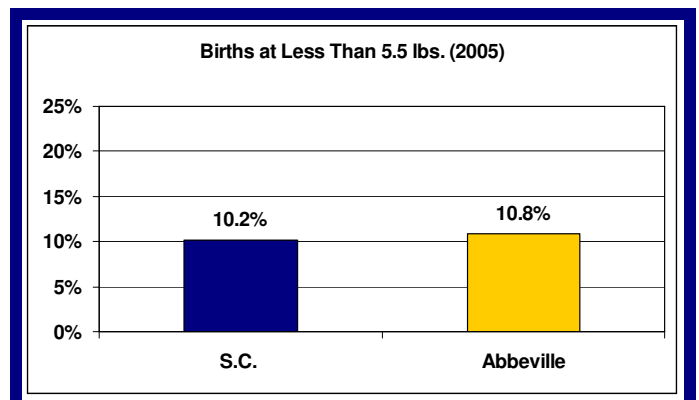
### CHILDREN AT LOW BIRTH WEIGHT (Less Than 5.5 lbs.)

Statewide Average (2005): 10.2%

Abbeville County (2005): 10.8%

**Fast Fact:** 1 in 10 Abbeville County children is born at a weight less than 5.5 lbs. A recent statewide analysis suggests that at least one-third of these children (36%-52% depending on weight category) will be retained or score at the “below basic” level (PACT) by third grade.

- Babies born at low weights are often prone to developmental delays associated with early academic failure.
- Many have received inadequate prenatal care and suffer from significant health complications.
- 29 of the 269 children born in Abbeville County during 2005 weighed less than 5.5 lbs.



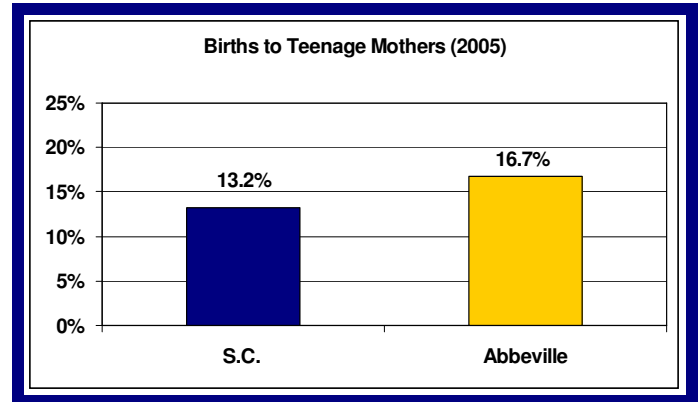
## **BIRTHS TO TEENAGE MOTHERS**

Statewide Average (2005): 13.2%

Abbeville County (2005): 16.7%

***Fast Fact: Nearly 1 in 5 Abbeville County births is to a mother under 20 years of age. A recent statewide analysis suggests that 43% of these children will be retained or score at the “below basic” level (PACT) by third grade.***

- Teenage parents often lack the maturity and knowledge required to optimally fulfill important parental responsibilities, are less likely to advance their own educational attainment and often fail to advance beyond low-income status.
- 45 of the 269 children born in Abbeville County during 2005 had teenage mothers.



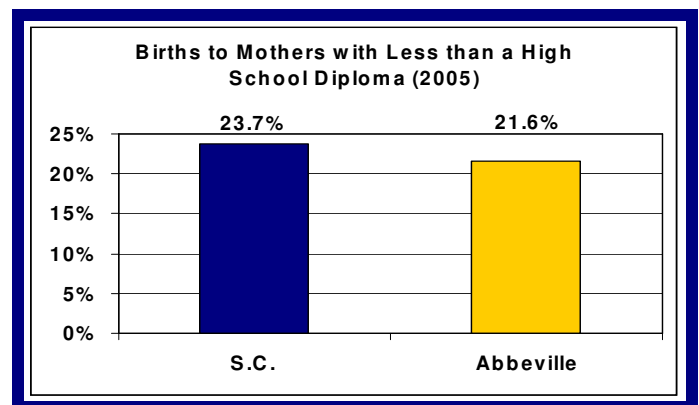
## **BIRTHS TO MOTHERS WITH LESS THAN A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA**

Statewide Average (2005): 23.7%

Abbeville County (2005): 21.6%

***Fast Fact: 1 in 5 children in Abbeville County is born to a mother possessing less than a high school diploma. A recent statewide analysis suggests that roughly half (48%) of these children will be retained or score at the “below basic” level (PACT) by third grade.***

- Research suggests that a mother’s own educational attainment is closely linked to the subsequent academic performance of her children.
- 58 of the 269 children born in Abbeville County during 2005 had mothers with less than a high school diploma.



All data provided by the SC Budget and Control Board’s Office of Research and Statistics