



# Allendale 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: 936**

**Children under age 6 living in poverty: 9.2%**

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## Allendale County Highlights

- “While receiving childcare, I received a degree at USC Aiken in Business Administration as a full-time student, with a full-time job, and participated in the majority of Allendale County First Steps activities.”

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S MESSAGE

At Allendale County First Steps, the staff and I take pride in providing parents with access to the support they might seek and want to strengthen their families and to promote the optimal development of their children. We do not take lightly our goal to provide quality enhancing services to our partnering centers. We ensure this happens through having qualified staff to provide mentoring, technical assistance, administer parenting programs, implement research-based curriculum and best practices training.

We served 30 children in our Countdown to Kindergarten Program. The children had a smooth transition into kindergarten this year as a result of this service. Data from this program indicated that 85% of participating children received seven home visits and there was substantial change in parents reading to children and taking them to the library this summer. We were able to provide 24 scholarships through ABC Vouchers and 18 through the Center of Excellence Programs. Over 80% of parents in these programs possessed one or more priority risk factors.

We salute our partners in Allendale County for their support of Allendale County First Steps initiatives. We currently have 18 partners that ensure our success through their support.

Sincerely,  
Patricia Gray-Hall  
Executive Director  
Allendale 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 description:** The Parent Educator served 17 families with children 0-5 years of age using the Parent as Teachers model to ensure that these children entered school ready to succeed. The parent educator made two home visits per month, hosted monthly group meetings, and used Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (KIPS) and Adult-Child Interactive Reading Inventory (ACIRI) to assess twice a year.

#### **Program results:**

- Provided service to 17 families.

- All families served during fiscal year 2008 possessed one or more priority risk factors.
- 88% of families served met the minimum duration for requirements for home visits.

### **Planned Program Improvements:**

The average number of home visits, per family during '08 was less than 1.5 monthly. We attempted home visits to meet the fidelity standards. We will schedule visits with parent input and make at least 3 attempts for each meeting missed by a parent. Additionally, parent educators needed to be retrained in KIPS and ACIRI to gain a better understanding of the scoring process.

- Parent educators and other staff have been retrained in ACIRI and KIPS.
- We schedule a minimum of two home visits and one group meeting per month with parent input.

## **QUALITY CHILD CARE.**

### **Childcare Quality Enhancement**

Program description: Activities are designed to assist childcare providers in attaining a higher level of care. Quality enhancement grants to purchase materials, supplies, and equipment for improvements to childcare facilities are provided. A certified technical assistant works with partnering centers to provide quality enhancement using best curriculum practices.

- We provided quality enhancement grants to two childcare facilities.
- We provided 24 scholarships for children to attend quality enhanced centers.
- We had 83% of parents possessing one or more of the priority risk factors.

### **Planned Program Improvements**

We had less than 90% of participating child care facilities with at least one matched pre- and post- using ERS. We were unable to hire a Technical Assistant that met state standards.

- We have hired a certified Technical Assistant that meets state standards.

### **Training & Professional Development**

Program description: Provided state mandated trainings to assist childcare centers to move to higher levels of quality.

Program results:

- We served 17 childcare providers
- 100% of the participants felt the training was needed and were able to apply learning in the classroom.
- 94% of the childcare facilities had staff participate in 8 or more hours of childcare quality training.

### **Centers of Excellence:**

Program description: Little New Steps Childcare Center is a Center of Excellence entering its second year of implementation in partnership with Allendale County Schools. This comprehensive program targets children and families by providing needs-based scholarships, nurturing care and research-based instruction, developmental screenings and appropriate child assessment, parent education and involvement, health supports for the center, quality enhancement (facility and curriculum materials), on-site mentoring and technical assistance, and incentives to staff and personnel.

Program results:

- 17 families and 18 children have been served to date in COE
- 90% of participants possessed one or more of the priority risk factors
- 100% of the staff participated in a Creative Curriculum Training and received certificates

### **EARLY EDUCATION.**

#### **S.C. Child Development Education Pilot Program (CDEPP)**

**Program description:** CDEPP offers state-paid tuition of 4-year-old kindergarten classes to eligible students living in the 37 trial and plaintiff school districts involved in the school funding equity lawsuit, *Abbeville et al. vs. South Carolina*. First Steps oversees CDEPP 4K classes offered in non-public school environments. To qualify for state-paid tuition, a student's family must qualify for TANF or free/reduced-price lunch, be 4 years old by Sept. 1, 2007, and live in an eligible school district.

**Program results:**

- Five Students were served in the CDEPP 4K class
- One provider offered a CDEPP 4K class

### **SCHOOL TRANSITION.**

Countdown to Kindergarten

**Program description:** Countdown to Kindergarten is a school transition strategy designed to successfully bridge at-risk students into the K-12 school environment. There are three components; 1) public awareness – use of media to inform parents/community; 2) kindergarten home visitation and 3) countdown celebration at the end of the program.

**Program results:**

- 30 children were served in the Countdown to Kindergarten program
- 85% of the participants received seven home visits
- Increase of 37% more parents reading to their child(ren)
- Increase of 42% more children visiting the library with a parent
- 23% increase of parents maintaining morning or bedtime schedule for their child
- 25% increase in parents talking about letters, words, or numbers with their child

## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

<b>Expenditures By Funding Source</b>	
State Appropriation ( <i>Fund 10</i> )	\$136,199
E.I.A. Appropriation ( <i>Fund 55</i> )	\$56,956
Lottery Appropriation ( <i>Fund 35</i> )	\$
C.D.E.P.P. Appropriation ( <i>Fund 60</i> )	\$32,732
C.O.E. Appropriation ( <i>Fund 65</i> )	\$119,970
N.F.P. Appropriation ( <i>Fund 70</i> )	\$
State Private ( <i>Fund 15</i> )	\$
Local Private ( <i>Fund 20</i> )	\$4,947
Federal ( <i>Fund 30</i> )	\$3,255
In-Kind ( <i>Fund 25</i> )	\$31,400
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$385,459</b>

<b>Expenditures By Program / Strategy Name</b>	
Parents as Teachers	\$72,828
Full Day 4K	\$32,732
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$9,334
Childcare Quality Enhancement	\$68,562
Childcare Training & Professional Development	\$52,600
Scholarship Initiatives	\$117,151
Public Health Based Services	\$4,500
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
Indirect Programmatic Functions	\$876
Administrative Functions	\$26,876
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$385,459</b>

### NOTABLE DONORS

<b><i>DONOR'S NAME</i></b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
Allendale Community Development Corp.	\$150
Allendale IGA #71	\$300
Coastal Community Foundation	\$2,500
County Council of Allendale	\$300
Greater Savannah River Foundation	\$1,000

Sam's Club Foundation	\$1,000
United Way of Allendale	\$700
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
<b>TOTAL: \$5,950</b>	

***Local Match Percentage for FY 2008 29.08%***  
*(at least 15% Legislative requirement)*

## **COUNTY PARTNERSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Mrs. Lee Harley-Fitts, Chair – Transportation Provider, Director Department of Social Services  
 Rev. James Brewton, Faith Community  
 Mr. Tom Carter, Legislative Appointee  
 Mrs. Estella Cohen, Non-Profit Organization  
 Mr. DeWayne Ennis, Parent of Pre-School Child  
 Ms. Verona Grant, Kindergarten-Pre-School Educator  
 Mrs. Ruby Gray, Early Childhood Education  
 Mrs. Vernie Harney, Family Education, Training, and Support Provider  
 Mrs. Cindy Holyfield, Early Childhood Education  
 Mrs. Lainey Reed, Allendale County Library  
 Mrs. Donella Robinson, Department of Social Services  
 Mrs. Janice Roberson, Legislative Appointee  
 Mrs. Catherine L. Russell, Family Education, Training and Support Provider  
 Mrs. Diana Smith, Kindergarten, Preschool Educator  
 Ms. Yvonda Speights, Allendale County Head Start  
 Mrs. Gwen Wall, Health Care Provider  
 Mrs. Edna Youmans, Childcare Provider

## **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:***

*We had a parent to graduate from college in the health field and to move from the poverty/TANIF band. She is employed at one of the regional hospitals in our area.*

*We had several parents to enter college and work part-time as a result of receiving childcare scholarships.*

*We were able to provide much needed research-based curriculum training for local childcare center providers.*

*The Count Down to Kindergarten Teacher has expressed her enthusiasm and success with the program this year. Students entered her classroom without fanfare and were ready to get down to learning. The transition was great!!!!*

# 2008 School Readiness Risk Profile

# Allendale County

Total Children Under Six: 936

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

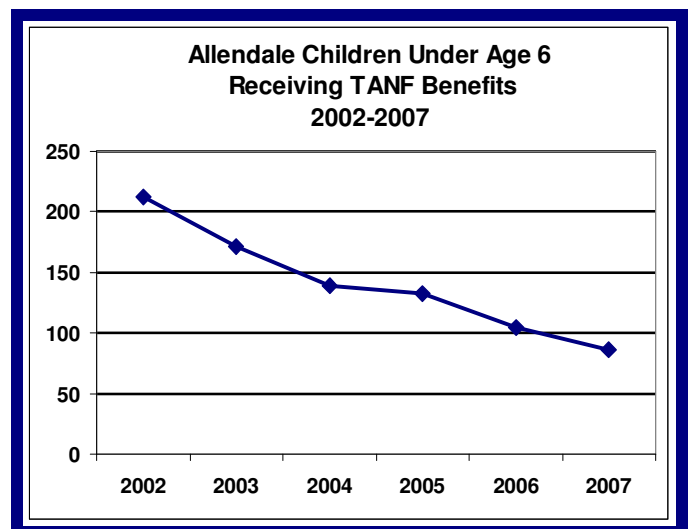
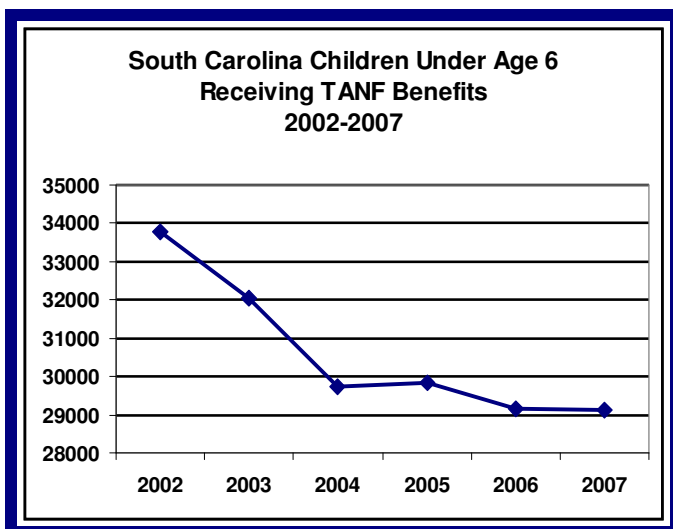
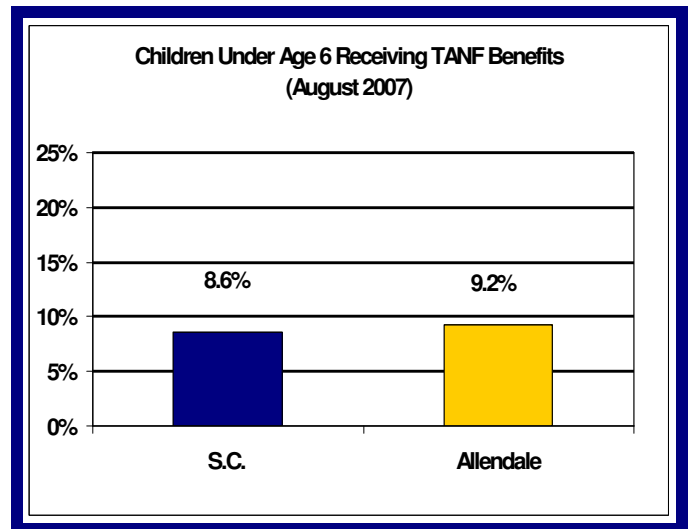
Statewide Average (2007): 8.4%

Allendale County (2007): 9.2%

**Fast Fact:** Roughly 1 in 10 Allendale 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.

86 of Allendale County’s 936 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.





# 2008 School Readiness Risk Profile

# Allendale County

Total Children Under Six: 936

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

Statewide Average (2005): 10.2%

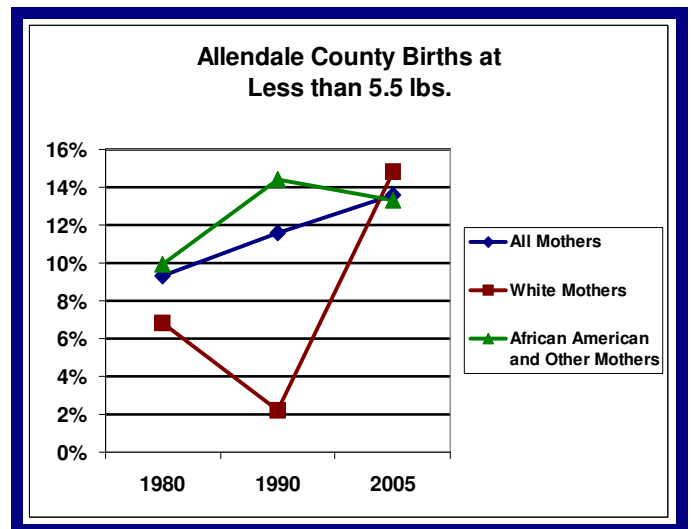
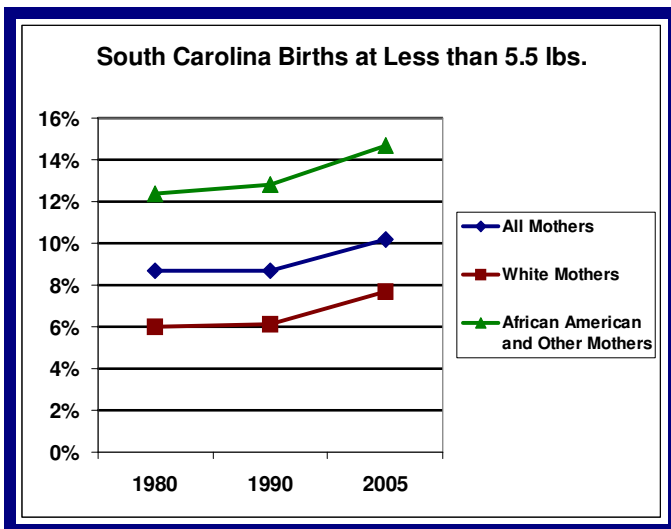
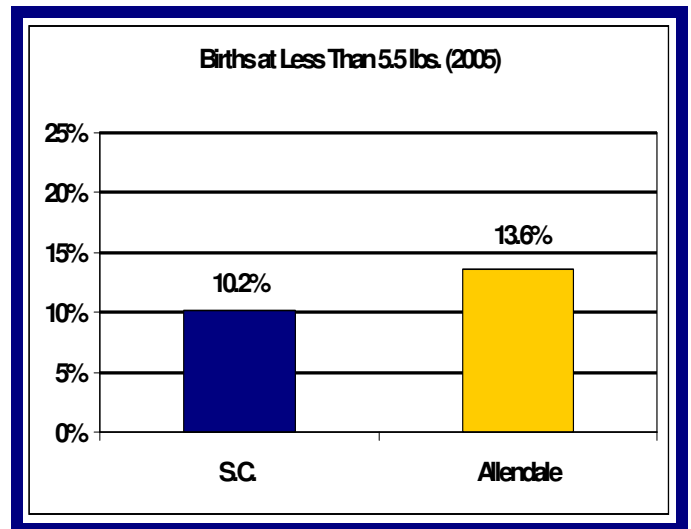
Allendale County (2005): 13.6%

**Fast Fact:** Just over 1 in 10 Allendale 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.

20 of the 147 children born in Allendale County during 2005 weighed less than 5.5 lbs.



# 2008 School Readiness Risk Profile

# Allendale County

Total Children Under Six: 936

## BIRTHS TO TEENAGE MOTHERS

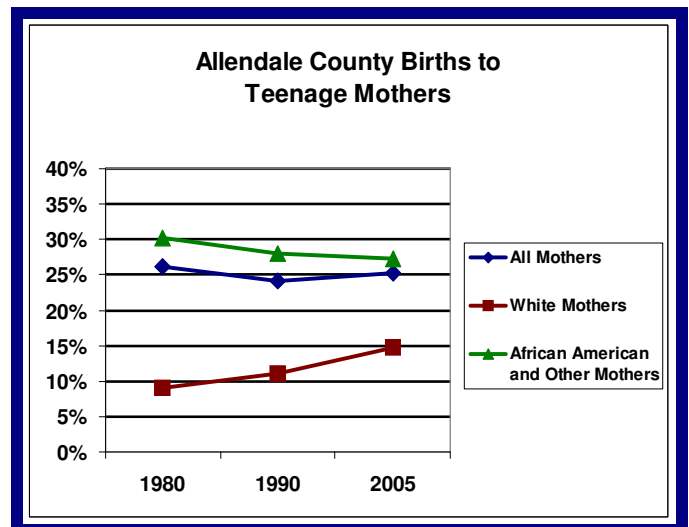
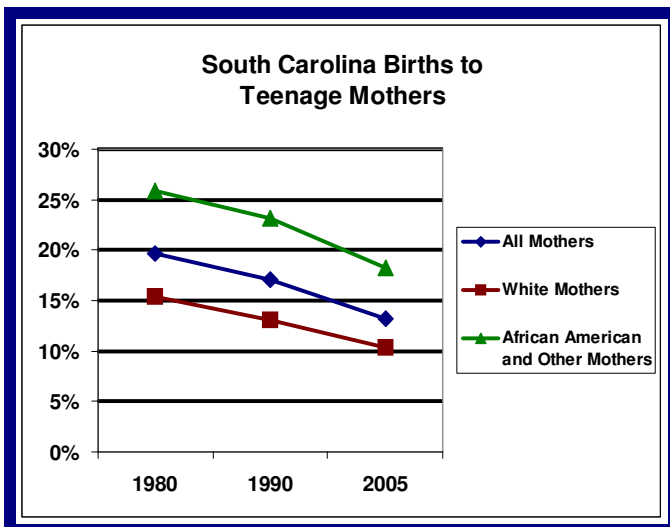
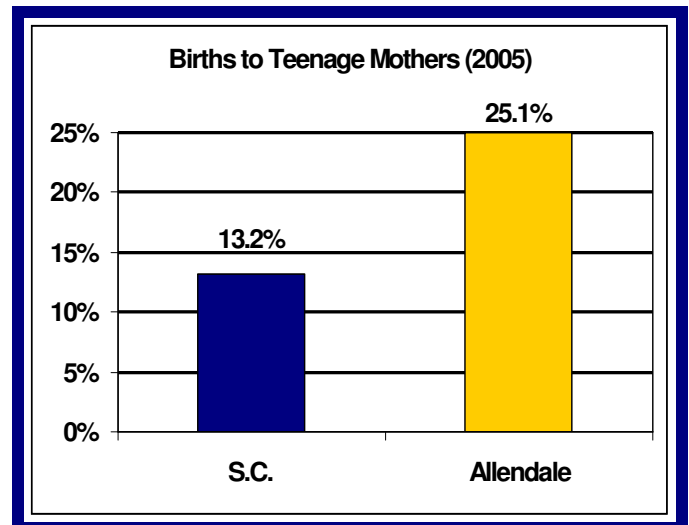
Statewide Average (2005): 13.2%

Allendale County (2005): 25.1%

**Fast Fact:** 1 in 4 Allendale 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.

37 of the 147 children born in Allendale County during 2005 had teenage mothers.



# 2008 School Readiness Risk Profile

# Allendale County

Total Children Under Six: 936

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

Statewide Average (2005): 23.7%      Allendale County (2005): 38.1%

**Fast Fact:** Nearly 2 in 5 children in Allendale County are born to mothers 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.

56 of the 147 children born in Allendale County during 2005 had mothers with less than a high school diploma.

