



Anderson County First Steps Partnership *Fiscal Year 2009 Annual Report*

Board Chair:

Kurt Stutler

Executive Director:

Paige Wall

Contact Information:

605 N. Main Street

Anderson SC 29621

Phone: 864 222-0410

Fax: 864 222-9688

E-mail:

lstepsac@bellsouth.net

Web site:

www.lstepsac.org

Total children in county under age 6: 13,418 (SC OFS)

Children under age 6 living in poverty: 7.5% (SC Kids Count)

Anderson County Highlights

- Overall, 100% of our parents improved their pre/post assessment scores based on at least one scale of the Parent Education Profile.
- "I have something to look forward to like my GED test and how to raise my son in a positive and healthy way." Parent, Anderson School District 4 Family Learning Center

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

During the past year under challenging economic conditions, Anderson County First Steps Partnership continued to be a catalyst for change in the community - filling gaps and linking people to services to assure that Anderson County children are healthy and ready for success when they enter the first grade. Fortunately, we were able to maintain program services at current levels of funding. Through grants from the United Way/Americorp Program and the Palmetto Youth Association, we were able to employ two interns to provide administrative support in the ACFS office and at the Westside YMCA Child Development Center. Through the efforts of the Partnership and in collaboration with DHEC Region 1, AnMed, Anderson County United Way, Anderson Chamber of Commerce, and DocLink, the Anderson community was awarded one of the first Nurse Family Partnership grants in South Carolina from The Duke Endowment and the Office of First Steps. In addition, the Partnership, in conjunction with the Anderson County NFP, was recently awarded a grant to fully implement the Partners in Parenting Education curriculum. In collaboration with the five Anderson School Districts, at-risk parents and their children, ages 0-5, made tremendous gains in overcoming barriers to school readiness as demonstrated through pre- and post-assessments. The Westside YMCA director and staff continued their commitment to high quality child care services by winning a grant from ABC for improvement in its ratings and implementing the E-Lap and Lap-3 assessment process. Over the past ten years, we have had an impact on hundreds of of pre-school children and their families. We are grateful that we have strong community partners to help us including the five Anderson County school districts, Anderson County Library, DHEC, Success by 6, and AnMed. With their help, First Steps continues to change the culture of the way people view the importance of pre-school education and ensure that the most at-risk pre-school children and their families receive optimal opportunities for leading healthy and productive lives.

Paige Wall
Executive Director

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.

2008-09 County Partnership Programs by Strategy

FAMILY STRENGTHENING.

Anderson School District 1 Family Literacy Program

Program description: Anderson School District 1 and Anderson County First Steps Partnership collaborate to plan and implement a comprehensive Family Literacy program. The purpose of this strategy is to provide outreach and recruitment services to help prepare parents and children for success by integrating adult literacy, early childhood development, and parent/child interaction components; and to expand and enhance existing community resources. Families receiving these services must have children between the ages of birth and five who are likely to experience significant school readiness problems because of family literacy and/or other barriers to successful development.

Program results:

- 4 families – 5 adults and 5 children

- 3 clients received GEDs; 1 client progressed to the next grade level
- 100% of parents showed improvement on pre/post scores on at least one scale of the Parent Education Profile
- 100% of parents showed improvement scores on pre/post TABE
- 100% children increased their Ages and Stages pre/post assessments

Anderson School District 2 Family Literacy Program

Program description: The goal of the Anderson School District 2 Family Literacy Program is to provide a family-centered education program that integrates early childhood, adult literacy, parenting, and parent/child interaction components. The purpose of the strategy is to provide outreach and recruitment services and to coordinate with Anderson County First Steps Partnership to plan and implement a comprehensive family literacy program. Families receiving these services must have children between the ages of birth and five who are likely to experience significant school readiness problems because of family literacy and/or other barriers to successful development.

Program results:

- 10 families – 10 adults and 14 children
- 4 clients received high school diplomas; 2 clients received GEDs; 2 progressed to higher grade levels
- 100% of parents showed improvement on pre/post scores on at least one scale of the Parent Education Profile
- 100% of children showed improvement on pre/post scores on at least one scale of ASQ (Ages and Stages)

Anderson School District 3 Family Literacy

Program description: The goal of the Anderson School District 3 Family Literacy Program is to provide a family-centered education program that integrates early childhood, parenting, adult literacy, and parent/child interaction components. The purpose of this strategy is to provide recruitment and outreach services and to coordinate with Anderson County First Steps Partnership to plan and implement a comprehensive Family Literacy program. Families receiving these services must have children between the ages of birth and five who are likely to experience significant school readiness problems because of family literacy, parenting, and/or other barriers to successful development.

Program results:

- 8 families – 8 adults and 8 children
- 3 parents received GEDS; 1 parent progressed to next grade level; 2 received high school diplomas
- 100% of parents showed improvement on pre/post scores on at least one scale of the Parent Education Profile

Anderson School District 4 Family Literacy Program

Program description: The goals of the Anderson School District 4 Family Literacy Program are to: increase parent knowledge of child development; empower parents to provide children with a nurturing environment; increase literacy skills in parents; and encourage job acquisition or job advancement. Service activities include: 16 hours a week of center-based services such as Basic adult education, GED, developmentally-appropriate child care on site using Creative Curriculum, parent training and parent-child Interaction time.

Program results:

- 15 families served – 15 adults and 16 children
- 2 clients received GEDs; and 10 made grade-level gains
- 100% improved pre/post TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education) scores
- 100% of parents increased their pre/post scores based on at least one of the Parent Education Profile scales
- 100% of children increased their pre/post PPVT (Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test) scores
- 100% of children increased their pre/post ASQ (Ages and Stages) scores

Anderson School District 5 Family Literacy Program

Program description: Anderson School District 5 reaches out to its teen mothers from two high schools through its Family Literacy Program. First Steps funds provide quality early childhood education/child care in the form of an infant and toddler room for up to 12 children while their mothers have the opportunity to complete their education, i.e. high school diploma. Parent and child interaction sessions are conducted on a weekly basis.

Program results:

- 19 families – 19 adults and 20 children
- 5 clients received their high school diplomas; 1 received a GED; 9 clients progressed to the next grade level
- 100% of the parents increased their pre/post scores based on at least one of the Parent Education Profile scales

QUALITY CHILD CARE.

Anderson County First Steps Quality Child Care Enhancement Program

Program description: The mission of the Anderson County First Steps Quality Child Care Enhancement strategy is to improve the learning environments in child care programs to help assure school readiness. Based on ITERS and ECERS, the child care providers must work with the Partnership's technical assistant to develop a plan that includes a pre- and post-assessment, timeline and budget to achieve facility enhancement; participate in specific training programs approved by the Partnership and DSS; and participate in monitoring visits to ensure that materials, supplies and equipment are being used appropriately. During FY09, the Partnership continued to collaborate with the Westside YMCA Child Care Center and supported its efforts to become a Center of Excellence. The Partnership also continued to collaborate with the Anderson County Library to provide rotating Book Crates to 37 child care providers who have signed up

for the program. The Anderson County First Steps Partnership provided training opportunities to improve knowledge and skills of child care providers regarding early childhood development and to improve education qualifications of child care staff. All training is tied to the QE strategy. All training hours were DSS approved and certified.

Program results:

- 1 child care provider, Westside YMCA Child Care Center which impacts 73 children, participated in the QE program; the center received a \$2000 grant from ABC for its high ratings
- 39 site visits totaling 144.5 technical assistance hours were conducted
- 19 hours of DSS-registered, approved, and on-going training for QE participants were facilitated by the Partnership for 91 child care staff
- Center staff met OFS goal of 75% attendance at 8 hours of training

EARLY EDUCATION.

Anderson School District 1 4-K Half-day Classes at Hunt Meadows Elementary

Program description: Anderson School District 1 provides a high quality early education program serving an additional 38 at-risk 4K students in two half-day classes at Hunt Meadows Elementary School. This program follows all state guidelines, serves the most at-risk, and follows best practices including the implementation of High Scope, Creative Curriculum, and ECERS.

Program results:

- 38 children served in two 4-K half-day classes
- 100% of the children progressed to 5-K classes
- 100% of parents who responded expressed satisfaction with the 4-K program

SCHOOL TRANSITION

Anderson School District 5 Countdown to Kindergarten

Program Description: Countdown to Kindergarten is designed to foster important and lasting relationships between teachers, students, and families. Teachers visit rising kindergarten students' homes throughout the summer before they enter school, building a foundation of support for the coming year, and introducing important learning concepts drawn directly from the South Carolina Early Learning Standards. Through these unique home visits, teachers support parents and caregivers as they shape their expectations and hopes for their own children's school experience. In addition to building trusting relationships between school and home, each visit is designed to introduce important learning concepts and include books or other hands-on learning materials. Anderson County First Steps Partnership collaborated with Anderson School District 5 to implement this program during summer, 2009. Ten children were identified from 4-K and 5-K classes as potential participants.

- 10 families were served

- 10 families received all six visits
- Students visited their classrooms at Varennes, Whitehall, Nevitt Forest, Highland Park, Centerville, and Calhoun elementary schools. Whenever possible, children were introduced to their first grade teachers; however, not all teacher assignments had been made.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Expenditures By Funding Source	
State Appropriation (<i>Fund 10</i>)	327,378
E.I.A. Appropriation (<i>Fund 55</i>)	25,325
State Carry-forward (Fund	12,227
E.I.A. Carry-forward (Fund	17,460
State Private (<i>Fund 15</i>)	3,380
Local Private (<i>Fund 20</i>)	1,163
Federal (<i>Fund 30</i>)	91,876
In-Kind (<i>Fund 25</i>)	124,890
TOTAL:	603,699

Expenditures By Program / Strategy Name	
2111 Family Literacy Model	381,557
3161 Half-Day 4-K	94,814
4062 Countdown to Kindergarten	1,719
6012 Childcare Quality Enhancement (In-house)	35,480
6052 Childcare Training & Prof. Dev. (In-house)	11,642
Indirect Programmatic Functions	46,483
Administrative Functions	32,004
TOTAL:	603,699

Local Match Percentage for FY 2009: 57.88%
(at least 15% Legislative requirement)

COUNTY PARTNERSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Board Chair:

Kurt Stutler, faith community

Board Members:

Ron Acker, Business, The Peoples Bank of Iva

Laurie Ashley, nonprofit services, Meals on Wheels

Alice Bagby, DHEC, Anderson County Nurse-Family Partnership

Suzie Bannister, Family Education/Training, South Fant/West Market Child Development Centers

Jan Bratcher, Anderson School District Two

Susan Brown, Family Education/Training, Anderson School District 3

Dr. Doris Cole, Pre-K-primary education

Michael Cunningham, parent

Glenn Farrow, DSS

Betty Keys, early childhood education

Sheila King, childcare

Faith Line, Anderson County Library

Kay McKee, Pre-K - Primary

Shenicka McCray, parent, DHEC

Dawn Marcie, childcare provider

Dianne Mizzell, Anderson School District 5

Marcie Mynatt, faith community, Boulevard Baptist Church

Boyd Owens, Parent

Tanya Richbourg, Anderson School District 1

Deborah Roegge, AnMed Health

Vicki Simpson, Anderson School District 3

Natasha Smith, Healthcare

Angie Starks, Head Start

Cheryl Stewart, Transportation

Amika Thomas, Early Childhood Education, Westside YMCA Pre-School

Charity Walker, Early childhood Education Anderson School District Four Family Learning Center

Anthony Ware, Anderson School District 5

Lenna Young, early childhood education, Clemson University

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 available at the Anderson County First Steps Partnership office.

SUCCESS STORIES

Anderson School District 1: JG is a Hispanic girl whose mother speaks only Spanish. She has never known her father because he left the country when her mother was pregnant with her. JG has two younger brothers who have a different father that is not very involved in their lives. JG became pregnant while in 8th grade and for the first few months of her baby's life JG's mother was able to care for the baby while JG went to school but that changed when her mother had to go back to work. It looked to JG like she would have to drop out of school to care for her baby while her mother worked to support her, her two brothers and her baby. JG came to her guidance counselor to ask what her options were so she could stay in school. Guidance Counselor asked referred her for Family Literacy which allowed the parent educator to assist with finding a resource for funding for childcare. JG has shown a genuine commitment to weekly parenting group, where she receives support and parenting education, as well as resources and books to develop her child's at home library. JG appears committed to completing high school, plans on continuing to come to participate in Family Literacy next year and eventually wants to go to college to study archeology. She is an active participant in her school's ROTC program and is cultivating community resources for her and her family. Recently JG's mother became a U.S. citizen and is awaiting results on a GED test she took.

Anderson School District 2: SM is a true Family Literacy success story! She has seven children from high school age to 4K. She has been a drug addict for a number of years. S went through rehab and has been drug free for over a year. She enrolled in the GED program at the Anderson District I & II Career Center and did extremely well. She has received her GED and was asked to be one of the speakers at the commencement exercises in May 2009. She now works part time at the Shalom Center for women with drug problems. She is active in her children's school and is involving her children in outside activities, such as, football and cheerleading. Her children have made significant gains in their PPVI III test for 2008/09. A (currently in 5K) scored 5 yr. 6 mo. on her pretest while her posttest age equivalent score was 6 yr. 2 mo. M (currently in 4K) pretest score was 3 yr. 7 mo. and his posttest age equivalent score was 5 yr. 4 mo. The family outcomes for the PEP showed an overall gain in *Scale I: Support of Children's Learning in the Home Environment* from 1.75 to 2.25 and in *Scale II: Parent's Role in Interactive Literacy* from 1.67 to 2.33. S hopes to find gainful full-time employment in the upcoming months.

Anderson School District 3: TS and HS graduated from high school this year with a state diploma. TS worked after school on a special program to achieve extra credit so she could complete her diploma early. First Steps worked with TS to transition her from high school to Tri-County Technical College next year. HS will also be attending Tech next fall. First Steps collaborated with the high school guidance department to allow TG to participate in the graduating junior program next year. If she is successful this will allow her to complete high school a year earlier than planned. TG and TS gained confidence in reading with their child and choosing developmentally appropriate materials.

Anderson School District 4: A father who was enrolled in our program during the 06/07 school year stopped by to share his success story. At the end of his program year with us, he took the GED. By a very slim margin, he failed. I was afraid he was discouraged to the point of not trying again. Building on the foundation he started here, during the last year (while he was incarcerated), he was able to participate in a class and pass his GED. Now he has a job to support his family and is planning to enroll in Tri County Technical College.

At the start of the program year, a mother who is working on her English Language skills brought her two year old with her to the program. He was not using words, just yelling and pointing. We were able to refer him to BabyNet, who provided him services on-site. A combination of the early childhood class, BabyNet and the mom improving her parenting skills, the now three year old is using words in sentences, is potty trained and continuing to work on his language in speech services provided by the school district. The mom told me that her English skills have improved to the point that she can fill out applications, make appointments, and take her children to the doctor by herself.

Anderson School District 5: CB is the teen mother of one year old Camden. C, her son, has had several health issues during his short life. The last one was RSV causing him to be admitted in the hospital. The infant room teachers and parent educator got snacks together for CB because we know her well enough to know she would not leave the hospital. Dad works hard at being a good father and helps to provide for his son. He insisted that she go home every night; so that, she would be rested enough to attend school while he stayed at the hospital. CB has a great family support system. Her mother brings Camden to school every day. She also volunteers in the infant room often. She is there during the most active time, when parents are dropping little ones off that may not be ready to leave mother. Her help is most appreciated. It is difficult enough being a teen parent, but when your infant is sick that is even a bigger challenge. CB was sick as an infant also and has asthma.

CB has said more than once that she must graduate this year and move on to college in the fall. It is not an option for her to fail. During our most recent home visit we reviewed the Family Education Plan. She had met with her guidance counselor, she knows where she stands with her grades in each class, and she had completed her senior project receiving a wonderful grade of ninety-seven. The topic of her project was “Teen Parents.” CB said she had to use that topic because she felt what she had experienced being a teen parent might help someone else choose to do things differently by waiting to become a parent.

Anderson School District 5/Countdown to Kindergarten: One family qualified as homeless. We were able to purchase his school supplies and buy him shoes and clothes to start school. The family will be eligible for other services throughout the year.

Child Care QE Program: Westside YMCA Child Development Center

A child in the toddler room wasn't speaking *at all*. Through use of the E-Lap language domain, she progressed over 18 months in just six months and began speaking. A child in the Baby room at 12 months was making only garbled sounds. When the teacher spoke to

the parent about the child’s poor language scores and her concern about the child’s speech, the parent indicated that the child needed tubes in her ears. The mother had been hesitant to have the procedure done; however, seeing the language score gave the mother an extra push to go ahead with surgery. The child is now speaking and is making considerable improvement on the language score.

The SC General Assembly created in 1999 the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Initiative as a “comprehensive, results-oriented initiative for improving early childhood development by providing, through county partnerships, public and private funds and support for high quality early childhood development and education services for children by providing support for their families’ efforts toward enabling their children to reach school ready to learn”.

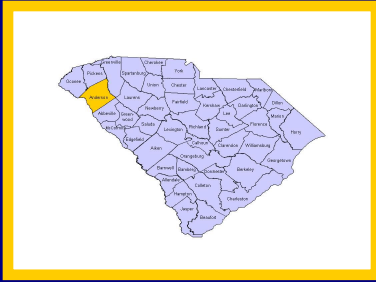
Anderson County First Steps Partnership is proud of the following milestones it has achieved during the past ten years:

First Steps Strategy Areas	Notable Moments
Family Strengthening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since 2007 when the Partnership transitioned to supporting model Family Literacy Programs in five school districts, 42 parents have received GEDs and 39 teen mothers have received high school diplomas. • 100% of parents improved their pre/post assessment scores based on at least one scale of the Parent Education Profile.
Healthy Start	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Partnership collaborated with DHEC Region 1, AnMed, Anderson County United Way, Anderson Chamber of Commerce, and DocLink to develop a successful grant application to implement the Nurse-Family Partnership Program, a nationally-recognized model program, to assist at-risk first-time mothers and their young children in Anderson County.

Quality Child Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Partnership has helped improve the learning environments of 19 Anderson County child care providers. • The Partnership is currently working with the Westside YMCA Child Care Center to implement E-lap and Lap-3 child assessments to help parents better prepare their children for first grade. • The Partnership also collaborated with the Anderson County Library to leverage lottery funds to implement the Book Crate Program which brought thousands of books into area child care centers.
Early Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Partnership expanded the number of available half-day and full-day 4-K classes impacting 539 at-risk children and their parents

Other notable moments:

During the past ten years, the Anderson County First Steps Partnership has distributed approximately \$5,357,738 to area service providers: to support parent and family strengthening programs and services; to expand the number of available 4-K classes for at-risk children; and to enhance child care learning environments by funding hundreds of hours of technical assistance, training, and learning materials, equipment and supplies. Local providers contributed an average of 29.6% annually in in-kind match.



2008 School Readiness Risk Profile Anderson County

Total Children Under Six: 13,418

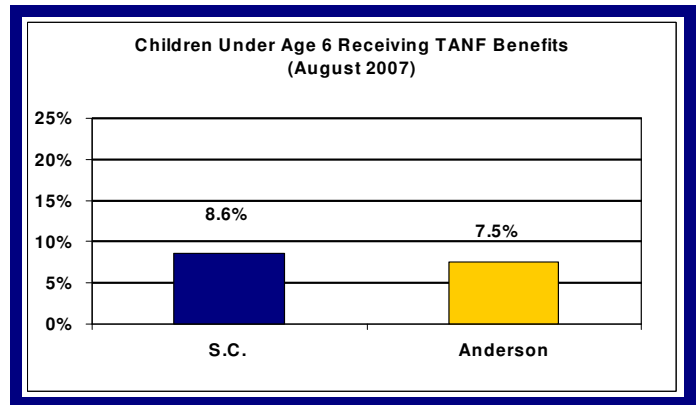
CHILD POVERTY (Children in Families Receiving TANF Benefits)

Statewide Average (2007): 8.4%

Anderson County (2007): 7.5%

Fast Fact: Roughly 1 in 13 Anderson 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.
- 1,001 of Anderson County’s 13,418 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.



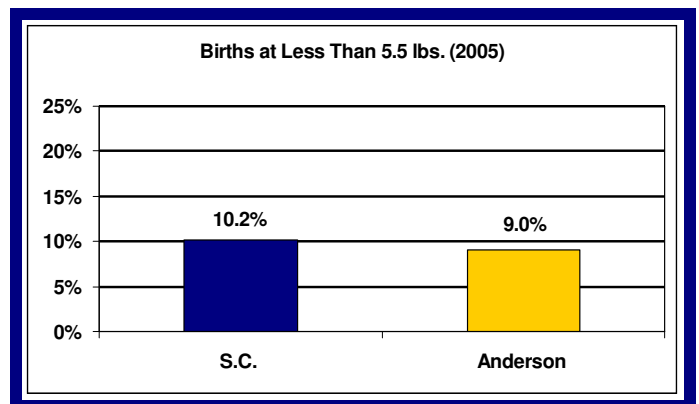
CHILDREN AT LOW BIRTH WEIGHT (Less Than 5.5 lbs.)

Statewide Average (2005): 10.2%

Anderson County (2005): 9.0%

Fast Fact: Nearly 1 in 10 Anderson 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.
- 202 of the 2,248 children born in Anderson County during 2005 weighed less than 5.5 lbs.



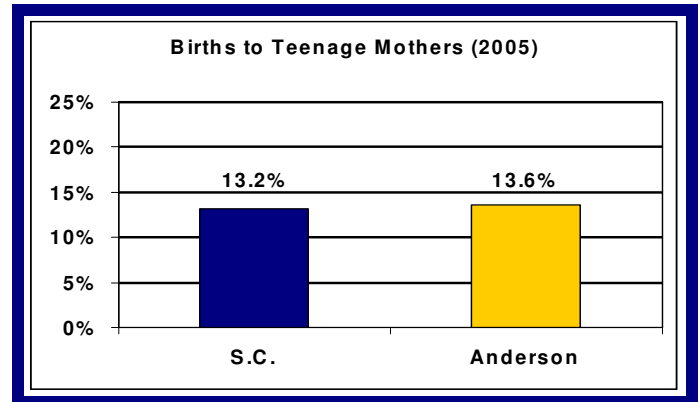
BIRTHS TO TEENAGE MOTHERS

Statewide Average (2005): 13.2%

Anderson County (2005): 13.6%

Fast Fact: Just over 1 in 10 Anderson 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.
- 306 of the 2,248 children born in Anderson County during 2005 had teenage mothers.



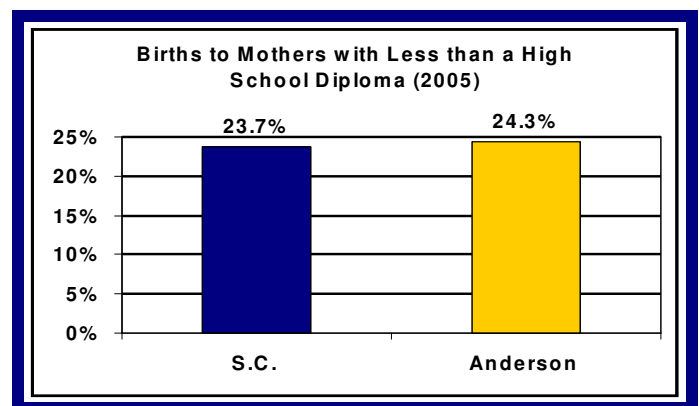
BIRTHS TO MOTHERS WITH LESS THAN A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

Statewide Average (2005): 23.7%

Anderson County (2005): 24.3%

Fast Fact: Nearly 1 in 4 children in Anderson 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.
- 546 of the 2,248 children born in Anderson 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