



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

Board Chair:

Jackie T. Holman

Executive Director:

Ethel T. Faust

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Total children in county under age 6: 1,976 pre-schoolers under age 6

Total Children in county under 6 living in poverty: 30.0%

Barnwell County Highlights

- 30 Countdown to Kindergarten students served – 10 in each school district
- 35 four-year olds served in CDEPP 4K classes at 2 Private Child Care Centers
- NAEYC Conference Presentation in Collaboration with Clemson University – Enhancing Child Care Quality

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

A decade of "First Steps", still yet not enough! However, we are sincerely grateful for the continued effort of our State of South Carolina to continue to key in on what can really make the difference in a time that seems so dim economically. The future of our state, and world rest assuredly on the shoulders of every stakeholder for the best possible early development of our youngest citizenry of learners. We know the research tells us that for our young people to be competitive their progress will be based on their early educational foundation.

And with this, we know that their education cannot start at first grade, we must reach them as early as when their mother is aware that she is expecting. Early steps, is a MUST in rural Barnwell County. That's why we have chosen to partner with "Save the Children" to ensure that all our children's needs are met early and into the primary years. This strategy was piloted in FY09 and will expand in FY2010.

Our partnership with one of SC's major universities, Clemson University has allowed us to build upon an established foundation to further enhance support to the childcare population where many of our youngest are cared for daily. We offered quality enhancement for childcare/preschool in areas of facility improvement to staff development.

As we end the first quarter in FY2010, we continue to lay the building blocks for a continuum of services from home, to school, to the community in collaboration with our parents, childcare, public schools, and community agencies. We have and continue to develop a core team of expertise to ensure that quality is ever so present in our staff and our services for our youngest learners' guiding-path on the education and life journey to bright futures.

On behalf of the Barnwell County First Steps Partnership,

Ethel T. Faust
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.

Parents As Teachers

Program description: A home visitation program that overarches each partner school district's program philosophy of providing parents with child development knowledge and parenting support. The program's support allows all children to learn, grow and develop to realize their full potential while providing the information, support and encouragement parents need to help their children develop optimally during the crucial early years of life.

Program results:

- 102 Cases/families Enrolled
- Served 102 Adults and 122 Children
- Developmental Assessments of Use
 - ASQ – Ages and Stages
 - KIPS – Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale
 - PPVT – Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test
- Home Visits
- Group Meetings

Early Steps to School Success

Program description: A home visitation program designed to provide early childhood education services to pregnant women and children birth to age two, and children age three through five as a foundation to a continuum of services in collaboration with Save the Children US Programs. This program focuses on language and pre-literacy development, building strong caregiver/child relationships to support the overall development and to motivate the children's learning.

Program results:

- Program operated for 7 months
- 13 Cases Enrolled Serving 13 Adults and 16 Children
- Developmental Assessments of Use
 - ASQ – Ages and Stages
 - HOME
 - KIPS – Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale
 - PPVT – Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test
- Raising A Reader – Interactive book bag exchange program for children ages birth – 2 and children ages 3 – 5
 - 1,314 readings for birth – age 2 children
 - 693 readings for – Macedonia Elementary School pre-kindergarten class
- Play Group Sessions

- 6 with a total attendance of 213
- Professional Development – orientation conference, curriculum conference and monthly distance learning and support via facilitated blackboard discussions, etc.

QUALITY CHILD CARE.

Quality Enhancement

Program description: A program designed to improve the quality of care while offering current research knowledge, skills and curricula enhancement to childcare and other preschool providers, which include direct site observation of their program practices. The use of appropriated environmental rating scales are applied to assess classrooms and centers for guiding the development of the quality improvement plan used to show quality measures of result.

Program results:

- 11 Centers Served Impacting 352 Children
 - 4 Centers participated for 11 months, 2 centers for 10 months, 1 center for 9 months, 4 center for 6 or less months
- Average site visits ranged from 1 to 2.45 monthly – need based
- 16 Classrooms among 9 Centers were Assessed
 - 5 Private child care, 8 Head Start, 3 public schools
 - Average ERS pre-score – 5.85
 - 79% who participated for past 2 years demonstrated overall improvement
 - 5 classrooms receive above 6.5 on applicable ERS
- Enhanced Research – Clemson University
- Mentoring & Support
 - USC Gateway Academy
 - 4 Providers
- Professional Development – NAEYC
 - Quality Enhancement Coordinator, Center Director and First Steps Director
 - Presented 1st Directors’ Conference
- Quality Enhancement Grants – \$2,500 total to
- Clemson University In-Kind Support - \$23,000 (Not included in Financial Summary)

Professional Development & Training

Program description: A program designed to offer quality training locally, certified through the SC Center for Child Care Career Development in coordination with other training providers. These training offerings are an integral part of the Quality Enhancement program to intensify and maximize support to centers for overall quality improvement showing measurable result.

Program results:

- 10 In-County Centers Served
- 10 Certified 5-Hour Sessions Held
 - Averaged Participants - 35
- 79 Providers Participated

- 4 Centers participated for 11 months, 2 centers for 10 months, 1 center for 9 months, 4 center for 6 or less months

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, 2008, and live in an eligible school district.

Program results:

- 35 students served
- Two providers offered CDEPP 4K classes
 - Bedford's Stay and Play Child Care Center
 - New Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church Day Care
- Centers Staff received professional development

SCHOOL TRANSITION.

Countdown to Kindergarten

Program description: Countdown to Kindergarten offers home visitation over the summer to up-rising kindergarteners in preparation for a smooth transition into their kindergarten classroom. Learning activities are focused to support and strengthen the child's success in kindergarten and to build positive relationships among the child, parents, kindergarten teacher, school and broader community.

Program results:

- 30 Children Served
- 100% received all 6 home visits as required
- 100% assigned to their Home Visitor as their Kindergarten Teacher

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Expenditures By Funding Source	
State Appropriation (<i>Fund 10</i>)	\$124,897.00
E.I.A. Appropriation (<i>Fund 55</i>)	\$ 5,272.00
Lottery Appropriation (<i>Fund 35</i>)	\$ -
C.D.E.P.P. Appropriation (<i>Fund 60</i>)	\$143,267.00
C.O.E. Appropriation (<i>Fund 65</i>)	\$ -
N.F.P. Appropriation (<i>Fund 70</i>)	\$ -
State Private (<i>Fund 15</i>)	\$ 19,459.00
Local Private (<i>Fund 20</i>)	\$ 47,786.00
Federal (<i>Fund 30</i>)	\$ -
In-Kind (<i>Fund 25</i>)	\$ 53,004.00
TOTAL:	\$ 400,355.00

Expenditures By Program / Strategy Name	
Parents As Teachers	\$118,687.00
C.D.E.P.P. 4 Year Old Kindergarten	\$143,267.00
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$ 8,476.00
Childcare Quality Enhancement	\$ 29,749.00
Childcare Professional Development & Training	\$ 35,574.00
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
Indirect Programmatic Functions	\$ 45,434.00
Administrative Functions	\$ 19,157.00
TOTAL:	\$400,355.00

NOTABLE DONORS

<i>DONOR'S NAME</i>	AMOUNT
Barnwell County United Way	\$ 407.00
Clemson University	\$25,000.00
	\$
TOTAL:	\$

Local Match Percentage for FY 2009: 87.88%
(at least 15% Legislative requirement)

COUNTY PARTNERSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Category I – Community Elected

Rev. Beverly Ashley ----- Faith Community
Loretta Atkinson ----- Early Childhood Education
Fred Geier ----- Non-profit Family/ Children Organization
Cathy Glass ----- Family Education/Training/Support
Shadie Hall ----- Non-profit Family/ Children Organization
Ashok Kabatisapthy ----- Business Community
Biju Kabatisapthy ----- Early Childhood Education
Brooke Kearse ----- Healthcare
Shari Mosley – Secretary ----- *Childcare/Early Childhood*
Diane Williams ----- Family Education/Training/Support
Melinda Wilson – Vice Chair ----- *Early Childhood Education*

Category II – Agency Appointees

Lee Davis ----- Williston School District #29
Karen Flowers ----- Barnwell County Library
Dr. Teresa Pope ----- Blackville School District #19
Melissa Robinson ----- Aiken Barnwell Head Start

Category III - Legislative Appointees

Dwayne Eubanks ----- Big Seven Association
Jackie Holman – Chair ----- *Mayor, Town of Blackville*
Teresa Reid ----- Principal, Macedonia Elementary School

COUNTY DATA SNAPSHOT

In FY09, 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...

Barnwell District #29 – Williston is very excited to partner with Barnwell County First Steps Partnership and the Save the Children Foundation to provide literacy services to pregnant mothers and families of young children. Our previous Family Literacy home visitation program, Parents As Teachers, focused on families with children ages 0- 5 but literacy was just one of its components. However, the program from Save the Children, Early Steps to School Success, will focus almost entirely on literacy. We feel this program, Early Steps to School Success, will be a better fit for our parents and young children because it will provide more opportunities for interaction between the home visitor and the parents to discuss issues that affect each child's successful transition to formal schooling. It will also provide opportunities for this group of parents to interact and thereby give support to each other. We are grateful to the Barnwell County First Steps Partnership for providing the initial funding for this partnership effort.

*Melinda C. Wilson
Early Childhood Coordinator
Kelly Edwards Elementary School*

“This is a letter letting anyone and everyone know how valuable the PACE – Parents and Children Education program really is. This opportunity has really made my child love school.” *Extracted from a Barnwell School District 45 parent letter at year-end.*

“I want to be responsible, accountable and willing to invest in my child's future so that he may succeed academically.” *Shared expectation of an Early Steps to School Success Parent*

“The Raising A Reader book exchange program is a wonderful program and it provides a good quality of books for the children who would not otherwise have the books.”
Ms. Tina Sanderlin – Pre-Kindergarten Teacher

To whom it may concern,

I thoroughly enjoyed working with the Countdown to Kindergarten Program over the summer. This was my first experience with the program, and I now realize how important it is to have this program. I really got a chance to know my children and their parents. This has made it an easier start to our Kindergarten year. I was able to start the year knowing exactly where those students stood both academically and socially. I knew

where my students were coming from, and what I needed to do to ensure they succeed. This will be an ongoing process. The students and parents feel comfortable with me, and it has made our relationships stronger.

The program gave me a chance to get a "head start" with these children to make sure they started the year knowing what they should. I was able to plan my lessons for the beginning of the year according to where their needs were. It, also, helped me to see such things as who could not afford school supplies, and this gave me the opportunity to purchase the supplies for these children.

I am looking forward to having the opportunity to participate in the program for many years to come.

*Sincerely,
Kim Richardson
Kindergarten Teacher
Williston School District #29*

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”...here’s what happened next:

The Barnwell County Human Services Coordinating Council expediently acted and became the 5th County to be awarded the Implementation/Management Grant – Level II providing services to the children and their parents.

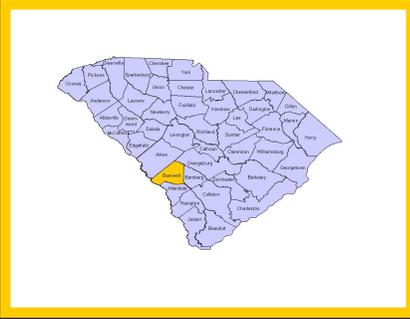
Along the way, the greatest accomplishment is when Barnwell County First Steps Partnership facilitated the establishment of Head Start within Barnwell School District #19 – Blackville. This partnership has strengthened, and grown from 1 classroom of 20 children to 2 classrooms of 20 children each.

Barnwell County First Steps Partnership has had a keen focus on family strengthening aligning with the local school districts. Therefore, it allocated the vast majority of its fund in this strategy. We believe it is our charge to equip parents of our youngest learners with the most cost-effective home-based services for them to be the foundational block of their children’s early childhood success. Past opportunities have ranged from Parent Child Home to Parents as Teachers as part of a full family literacy program, and now to Early Steps to School Success where the difference is truly supporting a linked continuum of early childhood services that can address a wide range of family needs and achieve results in a cost effective manner within each of our local school districts. Linking with these services will bring greater resources of approximately \$360,000 on a yearly average above what First Steps has provided.

The overall increase in community awareness of the importance, and the community’s involvement and support for quality early childhood development has been a great impact of the First Steps legislation. .

First Steps Strategy Areas	Notable Moments
Family Strengthening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand alone parenting programs become Comprehensive Family Literacy focused
Healthy Start	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Axis I Center Collaboration on Medical Outreach
Quality Child Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clemson University

	<p>Collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NAEYC Affiliation
Early Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head Start & Blackville School District #19 Collaboration
School Transition Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Countdown to Kindergarten Annual Participation since inception
Non-Standard Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barnwell County United Way Collaboration



2008 School Readiness Risk Profile Barnwell County

Total Children Under Six: 2,010

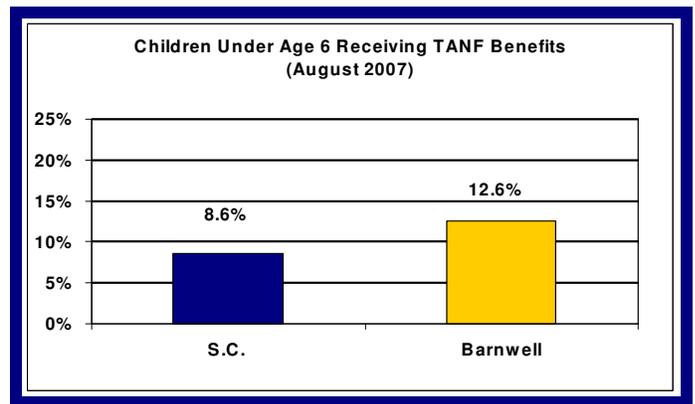
CHILD POVERTY (Children in Families Receiving TANF Benefits)

Statewide Average (2007): 8.4%

Barnwell County (2007): 12.6%

Fast Fact: Roughly 1 in 8 Barnwell 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.
- 253 of Barnwell County’s 2,010 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.



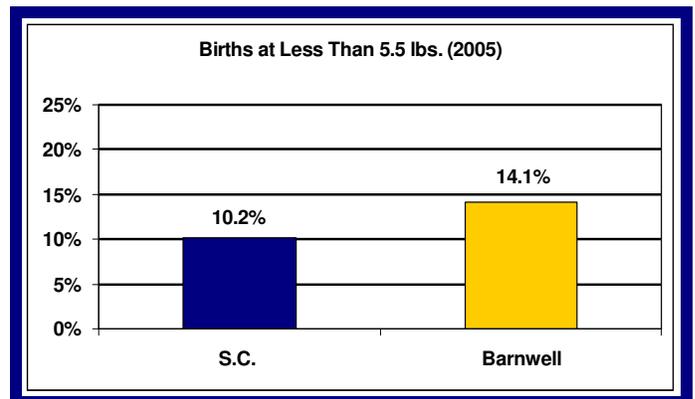
CHILDREN AT LOW BIRTH WEIGHT (Less Than 5.5 lbs.)

Statewide Average (2005): 10.2%

Barnwell County (2005): 14.1%

Fast Fact: Just over 1 in 10 Barnwell 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.
- 44 of the 311 children born in Barnwell County during 2005 weighed less than 5.5 lbs.



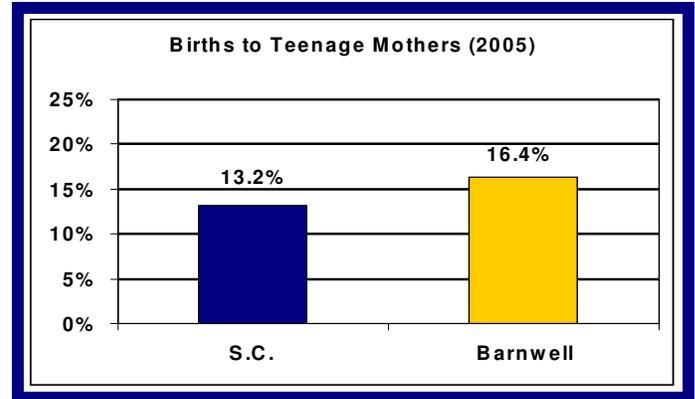
BIRTHS TO TEENAGE MOTHERS

Statewide Average (2005): 13.2%

Barnwell County (2005): 16.4%

Fast Fact: Nearly 1 in 5 Barnwell 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.
- 51 of the 311 children born in Barnwell County during 2005 had teenage mothers.



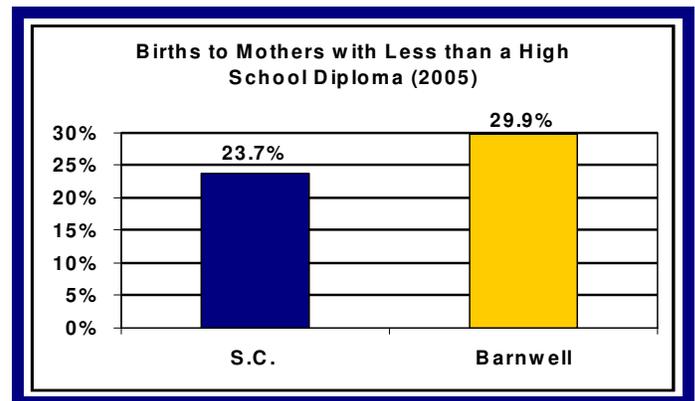
BIRTHS TO MOTHERS WITH LESS THAN A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

Statewide Average (2005): 23.7%

Barnwell County (2005): 29.9%

Fast Fact: 3 in 10 children in Barnwell 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.
- 93 of the 311 children born in Barnwell 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