



# Calhoun County First Steps Partnership *Fiscal Year 2009 Annual Report*

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Okereta Watson

## Executive Director:

Virginia Newman

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**Total children in county under  
age 6: 1,052**

**Total Children in county  
under 6 living in poverty:  
19.7%**

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## Calhoun County Highlights

- 12 three-year olds enrolled in school-based Montessori Program
- Montessori students earned 6 of the top 10 math scores for all third grade classes.
- 3,915 age-appropriate books given via Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.
- National First Books donated 300 books for distribution.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Calhoun County First Steps continues its aim to fund and implement programs that are built on the national understanding that children begin learning the day they are born; and that parents are their child's first and most important teacher. The foundation of the organization is based on QCAL (Quality-Collaboration-Accountability-Leadership.)

Calhoun County First Steps is honored to be the first organization in Calhoun county to initiate a school-based early education program that enrolled three-year olds. 2009 marks the sixth anniversary of a Montessori School housed at Guinyard Elementary. Over the past six years, Calhoun County First Steps and Calhoun County Schools partnered to offer a Montessori School within Guinyard Elementary School where 90% of the students are on free or reduced lunch. Due to academic success of the Montessori School over the past six years, Calhoun County Schools will expand the Montessori School. Beginning with the 2009-2010 school year. A Montessori School will be offered at Sandy Run School where additional three-year olds will be given an opportunity to enroll in a quality, school-based early education program.

We take this opportunity to acknowledge our unwavering partners known as *Champions of Calhoun County Children*: Calhoun County School District, Calhoun County Council, Calhoun County Library, OCAB/Head Start, Department of Social Services, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Health and Environmental Control, Tri-County Electric Trust, Wal Mart, Target, United Way, St. Matthews Rotary, Eastman Chemical and Delta Sigma Theta-Orangeburg Alumni Chapter.

*Respectfully,*

*Virginia L. Newman*

*Executive Director, Calhoun 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.

## **2008-09 County Partnership Programs by Strategy**

### **FAMILY STRENGTHENING.**

#### **PARENTS AS TEACHERS**

**Program description:** *Parents As Teachers* is an international early childhood parent education and family support organization serving families throughout pregnancy until their child enters kindergarten. Goals are to increase parent knowledge of early childhood development and improve parenting practices, to provide early detection of developmental delays and health issues, to prevent child abuse and neglect and to increase children's school readiness and school success. Program activities include:

- 1) **Personal visits** (bi-weekly or weekly) are the major service delivery component. During these visits, parent educators share age-appropriate child development information with parents, help them learn to observe their own child, address their parenting concerns, and engage the family in activities that provide meaningful parent-child interaction.
- 2) **Group meetings** provide opportunities to share information about parenting issues and child development. Parents learn and support each other, observe their children with other children, and practice parenting skills. Group meetings are also built into the program to allow parents and children to work together on educational activities.
- 3) **Screenings** to assess the child's overall development, health, hearing and vision.
- 4) **Resource network** that link families to other community services.

#### **Program results: (January – June 2009)**

- 22 families completed the program
- 2 families were prenatal families
- 100% of families surveyed agree or strongly agree that they were satisfied with the services received and would recommend this program to a friend.
- 81% of families served met BOT priority risk factors
- 20 families completed pre-KIPS assessment
- 2 families completed the ACIRI assessment
- Met program requirement of 2 1-hour visits per month
- 100% of children receive books through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
- 186 home visits were completed.

#### **DOLLY PARTON'S IMAGINATION LIBRARY**

**Program description:** An early literacy program designed to increase the number of books in homes and to encourage parents to spend more time reading to their children. All children born or residing in the county under age 5 are eligible to participate in this program. Participants receive one age-appropriate book each month via U.S. Postal Service. Calhoun County DHEC registers newborns for program when enrolling them for Medicaid.

#### **Program results:**

- An average 329 children (birth to 5 years) were served monthly

- 8 children receiving books were non-English speaking
- 3,915 age-appropriated books were distributed via US mail.

## **EARLY EDUCATION.**

### **MONTESSORI SCHOOL (PROGRAM)**

**Program description:** Montessori is a school within a school offering an alternative curriculum. It is a full day, school-based program for three and year olds. One certified teacher and teacher assistant are highly trained in the Montessori curriculum. The classroom environment accommodates the areas: practical life, sensorial, language, math, history geography, science and art/music. The Dial 3 Instrument and teacher observation are used in identifying program participants.

#### **Program results:**

- Number Served: 20 (12 three-year olds and 8 four-year olds)
- 1 referral to speech services
- 1 referral to vision services
- An average 13.5 attended parent-teacher conferences.
- 100% of students received books through Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library.
- Three-year olds students made significant improvements in DIAL-3 test scores. The average score gain from pre-test to post-test was 21 points.
- Four-year old students made significant improvement in DIAL-3 test scores. The average score gain from pre-test to post test was 46 points.

## **SCHOOL TRANSITION.**

### **Countdown To Kindergarten**

**Program description:** A school transition strategy designed to successfully bridge at-risk students into the K-12 school environment. Three certified kindergarten teachers make 8 home visits to 30 families and students during the summer prior to the student beginning kindergarten. Throughout home visits, children and families are introduced to actual materials used in kindergarten classrooms, and are given a Kindergarten Transition Toolkit to keep. In the 8<sup>th</sup> and final visit, children and their parents visit their teacher’s classroom. The strategy targeted at-risk families identified by the two county elementary schools and county Department of Social Services. A Determination of Eligibility form is the screening tool used for program participation. Parent participation is required.

#### **Program results:**

- 29 of 30 rising kindergarteners completed the 8-week program
- 66% of the families participated in the classroom visit
- 100% of the participants received 7 home visits
- 44% of the children had never participated in 4K, Head Start, or other structured early childhood programs.

## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

<b>Expenditures By Funding Source</b>	
State Appropriation ( <i>Fund 10</i> )	\$70,403
State Appropriation ( <i>Carry Forward</i> ) ( <i>Fund 11</i> )	\$10,888
E.I.A. Appropriation ( <i>Fund 55</i> )	\$87,675
E.I.A. Appropriation ( <i>Carry Forward</i> ) ( <i>Fund 56</i> )	\$ 1,398
Local Private ( <i>Fund 20</i> )	\$14,681
Federal ( <i>Fund 30</i> )	\$14,514
In-Kind ( <i>Fund 25</i> )	\$24,109
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$223,668</b>

<b>Expenditures By Program / Strategy Name</b>	
2012/Parents As Teachers	\$48,300
2122/Imagination Library	\$ 9,029
3141/Public Early Education	\$64,344
4062/Countdown to Kindergarten	\$ 5,924
In-Kind	\$24,109
Indirect Programmatic Functions	\$52,207
Administrative Functions	\$19,755
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$223,688</b>

### NOTABLE DONORS

<i><b>DONOR'S NAME</b></i>	<i><b>AMOUNT</b></i>
Calhoun County First Steps Partnership	\$ 500
Tri-County Electric Trust	\$1,500
Walmart	\$1,000
Target Stores	\$2,000
United Way	\$5,359
International Papers	\$ 386
Rotary of St. Matthews	\$1,000
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Orangeburg Alumnae	\$ 500
Eastman Chemical	\$ 900
Calhoun County Public Schools	\$1,535
	\$
	\$
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$14,680</b>

*Local Match Percentage for FY 2009: 31.29%*  
*(at least 15% Legislative requirement)*

## **COUNTY PARTNERSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Ms. Okereta Watson, Board Chair, Retired pre-K Educator  
Rev. Stanley Rivers, Co-Chair, Faith Community  
Mr. James Amaker, Transportation Provider  
Mr. Vivian Bodrick, Early Childhood Educator  
Ms. Susan Chavis, Healthcare Provider  
Ms. Janice Crosland, Non-profit Organization for Families and Children  
Ms. Treda East, Early Childhood Educator  
Ms. Gloria Frazier, OCAB/Head Start Appointee  
Ms. Amanda Jenkins, Retired Childcare and Early Childhood Development Educator  
Ms. Cynthia Keller, Legislative Appointee  
Ms. Toni O’Cain, Department of Health and Environmental Control Appointee  
Dr. Jacqueline Mayo, School District Appointee  
Mr. Richard Dantzler, County Department of Social Services Appointee  
Ms. Retana Reed, Non-profit Organization for Families and Children  
Ms. Kristen Simensen, Calhoun County Library Appointee  
Ms. Rhonda Mooror, Parent of Child in Montessori Program

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## **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.

*Your 2008 School Readiness Risk Profile will be inserted by OFS after this section. For your reference, a PDF of this risk profile was sent to you along with your Annual Report Template*

## **Success Stores**

*The Parents As Teachers Program is a great program for new and young parents. This program has taught me things about my child's growth and development skills that I didn't know. I have truly learned a lot about the storage of memory that the brain develops. The teachers work hard to teach the parents on what they need to know about the experience of being a parent and setting group meetings to interact with other families and having a wonderful time.*

**Tiffany Houser**

*The First Steps Program has helped me a lot. I'm learning how to teach my son to get ready for school and how I can help him to do things himself. Misty is so patient with me and my baby and I appreciate it because that makes me feel comfortable. I also enjoy group meetings because I learn more things there too. I really like this program and I would like to continue with my next baby. Thanks to everyone who makes this possible.*

**Sandra Torres**

*The First Steps Program is really helping me understand my child better. It helps me understand the stages that she's going through and the ones she will go through. It lets me know how to handle her in an orderly manner. The program also helps me understand how the brain develops. I thank the program for all of the information that has been given and I'm eager to learn more to help my child.*

**Shavonda Hair**

*The Parents As Teachers Program helped me to look for signs when my son is stressed. It showed me how to handle him when he throws his temper tantrum. It helped me create little fun activities that I can play with my son. It also showed me that when bath time comes, I can teach him his body parts and bonding time. The First Steps Program is really fun and educational experiences and I love it. I love the group meetings. You can learn a lot of things and its hands on. You have so much fun. You get to meet other families and create a bond and the kids can get to know each other. You can learn other things from the families, like what tactics they use when punishing their kids or what games do they play. It is a great experience.*

**Sylvovia Parker**

*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:*

First Steps Strategy Areas	Notable Moments
Family Strengthening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 371 adults and 419 children receive 1 hour weekly or bi-weekly home visits through PAT</li> </ul>
Early Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 200 three and four year olds participated in a school-based Montessori Program</li> </ul>
School Transition Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 94 rising kindergarteners participated in Countdown to Kindergarten</li> </ul>
Early Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18,613 age-appropriate books distributed through the Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library</li> </ul>

**Other notable moments:**

In 2004, Calhoun County First Steps initiate funding and implementation of a school-based, early education program that enrolled three-year olds. From July 2005 to June 2009, the organization partnered with Calhoun County School District to offer a Montessori School within Guinyard Elementary School. 95% of Guinyard’s students are eligible for free or reduced lunch. Records show that all three-year olds enrolled in the 2004-2005 Montessori classroom tested “gifted and talented” as third graders for this 2009-2010 school year. 2008 records indicate Montessori students earned 6 of the top 10 math scores for all third grade classes.



# 2008 School Readiness Risk Profile

## Calhoun County

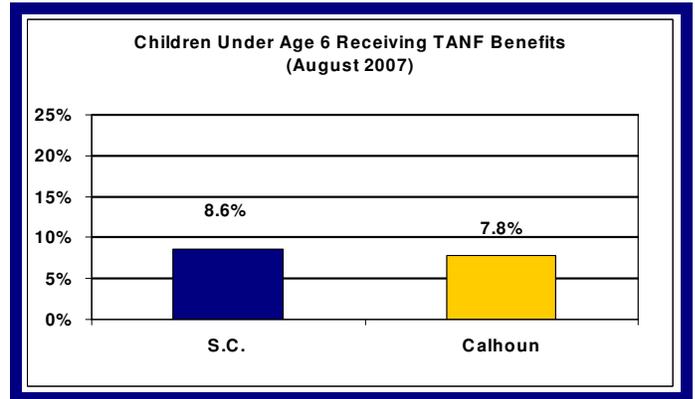
Total Children Under Six: 1,002

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

Statewide Average (2007): 8.4%      Calhoun County (2007): 7.8%

***Fast Fact:*** Roughly 1 in 13 Calhoun 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.
- 78 of Calhoun County’s 1,002 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.

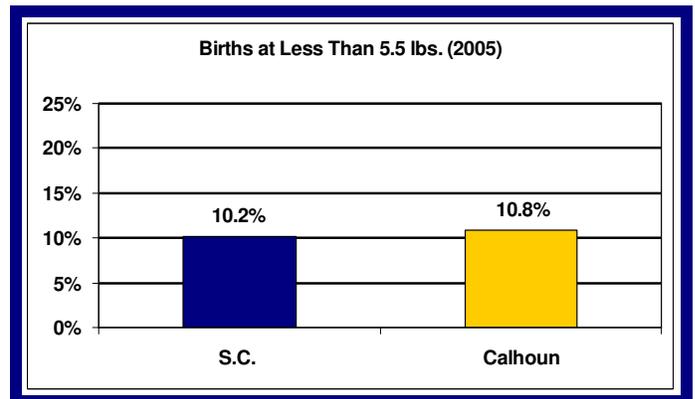


### CHILDREN AT LOW BIRTH WEIGHT (Less Than 5.5 lbs.)

Statewide Average (2005): 10.2%      Calhoun County (2005): 10.8%

***Fast Fact:*** 1 in 10 Calhoun 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.
- 18 of the 167 children born in Calhoun County during 2005 weighed less than 5.5 lbs.



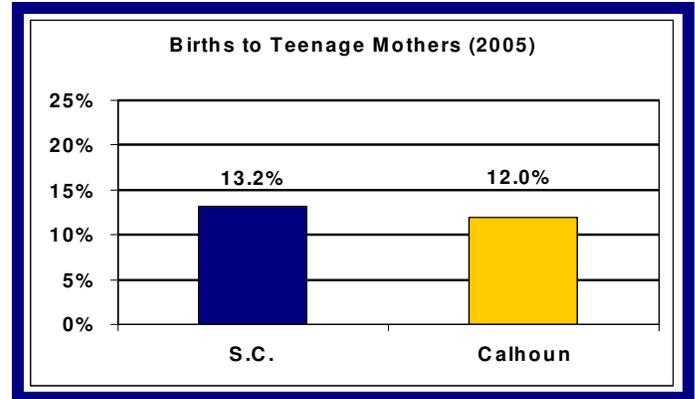
## BIRTHS TO TEENAGE MOTHERS

Statewide Average (2005): 13.2%

Calhoun County (2005): 12.0%

**Fast Fact:** Just over 1 in 10 Calhoun 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.
- 20 of the 167 children born in Calhoun County during 2005 had teenage mothers.



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

Statewide Average (2005): 23.7%

Calhoun County (2005): 15.0%

**Fast Fact:** Nearly 1 in 7 children in Calhoun 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.
- 25 of the 167 children born in Calhoun County during 2005 had mothers with less than a high school diploma.

