



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

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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends:

Thank you for your continued support and interest in Chesterfield County First Steps to School Readiness. The board and staff are committed to building upon the reputation of nine years of clean annual audits and quality services for young children and their families. The 2008-2009 fiscal year presented economic challenges for our organization with a 21.9 percent reduction in the allocation from the state. These economic challenges have made our board and staff more determined than ever to do all we can to help families with young children and the child care community deal with continuing and new stresses. Even with the 21.9% decrease in state funding, our commitment to the mission remains strong.

Over the past year, we collaborated with many community partners to leverage resources to serve young children. Highlighted below are a few of our successes:

- ❖ Chesterfield County School District Title I funds provided books to 100 children under 5.
- ❖ Board and staff completed and updated Needs Assessment and produced an Indicators Report.
- ❖ Clemson University Rural Compassion grant assisted in the development of a five year strategic plan: Chesterfield Vision 2013.
- ❖ *The Link* and *Pageland Progressive Journal* newspapers featured the partnership's columns related to young children's issues.
- ❖ Classrooms participating in the ExCEL program demonstrated significant improvement on the Environment Rating Scale.
- ❖ Wal-Mart provided books to 300 children under 5.

Sadly, the Resource Center located on the campus of Northeastern Technical College closed due to budget reductions. While we celebrate success, we do so with the knowledge that there are still many challenges ahead such as providing more parenting education, reaching children who aren't in formal child care and continuing to provide quality responsive services in spite of shrinking funding from the South Carolina General Assembly.

Sincerely,

*Karen Martini-Odom*

Executive Director

Chesterfield County First Steps

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**Total number of children in county under age 6 is 3,247.**

**Total number of children in county under 6 living in poverty is 20.2%.**

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## Chesterfield County Highlights

- Child care centers improve quality of health and educational opportunities
- Partnerships /collaborations with public and private entities saves the Imagination Library program
- Children served by Jumpstart are healthier

## **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**

#### **Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Program**

**Program Description:** Founded by Dolly Parton in 1988, the Dolly Parton Imagination Library provides age-appropriate books to children age birth to 5 years. Many children receiving books might not otherwise have quality books at their reading level in their homes. Children who are registered in their local communities are mailed one book per month through their fifth birthday. The annual cost per child is only \$30 or around \$2.50 per month. The initiative in Chesterfield County is supported solely by local funds.

#### **Program Results:**

- 4,653 books were placed in low-income homes.
- On average, 420 children received a book each month.
- A random survey indicates that 96% of participants are extremely satisfied with the program.
- Collaborated with the county post offices to identify address changes of participants ensuring children receive their books. This collaborative effort safeguards the resources utilized to purchase and mail the books by identifying invalid or changed addresses.
- Collaborated with the local health department to identify eligible children.

### **HEALTHY START**

#### **Jumpstart to Good Health**

**Program Description:** In collaboration with community partners, implemented an evidenced based health prevention program that will curb and reduce the risk of childhood obesity in young children. The target population is 40 to 60 underserved children age 3 and 4 and their families being provided child care services at four child care centers in Chesterfield County. The key partners are: Chesterfield County Coordinating Council, Chesterfield County First Steps, Chesterfield Family YMCA, CareSouth Carolina, and SC DHEC Region 4 Health Education Program.

#### **Goal(s):**

1. Improve health knowledge and reduce risk of obesity for 40 to 60 children 2 through 4 years old.
2. Improve the nutrition & physical activity environment at 4 child care centers.
3. Effect positive healthy lifestyle changes by families with young children.

4. Engage the community in a health care prevention message for young children.

**Program Results:**

- Percent of children identified as overweight or obese on body mass index scale dropped from 60% to 42%.
- All children assessed/participating had a medical home and remained current on well-child checkups.
- Child Care Centers made positive environmental changes to curriculum, nutrition and activities that impact the health of children served, earning 70% improvement on the ECERS – R (Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised) assessment tool.
- Parents reported an 8 to 23 percent improvement on the provision, access and selection of healthier foods and drinks for their children.
- Healthy Kids Day & Family Fest had 290 people in attendance: 60 youth received a hearing screening; 119 youth had BMI measured, 147+ youth/adults were screened for diabetes, 66 youth prepared fingerprint/DNA/ID kits; and 161 Frisbees were distributed to those that watched lead poisoning prevention video.
- Using the ECERS –R (Environmental Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised) assessment tool, all four centers significantly improved on the Meal and Snack section of the assessment. See chart above. (.5 is significant on the ERS)

Center Name	Pre-Assessment Score	Post-Assessment Score	Gain in Overall Score	Loss in Overall Score
Center A	1.00	4.00	3.00	0
Center B	2.00	2.5	.50	0
Center C	3.1	4.0	.90	0
Center D	1.00	2.00	1.00	0

**QUALITY CHILD CARE**

**ExCEL (Excellence in Care and Early Learning)**

**Program Description:** Chesterfield County First Steps Early Childhood Specialist provided technical assistance to child care providers in Chesterfield County to:

- 1) increase the providers’ and educators’ understanding of core knowledge and competencies that will improve their ability to administer and provide quality early care and education;
- 2) enhance the overall quality of early care and education provided to infants, toddlers, and preschool children;

- 3) enhance the overall program administration of early care and education facilities; and
- 4) ensure accountability in the use of child care grant funds, and project evaluation.

**Program Results:**

- Six (6) classrooms received individualized technical assistance from one Early Childhood Specialist.
- Served 150 children and 31 child care providers.
- Eight (8) CCCCD approved in-service trainings were offered totaling 28 hours; 31 child care providers attended the in-service trainings.
- Provided 218 contact hours to childcare providers in their natural environment.
- The Early Childhood Specialist collaborated with the Child Health Coordinator to enhance meals snacks and gross motor play at four child care centers.
- Three (3) child care centers achieved an overall Environment Rating Score (ERS) of 3.79-4.73;
- Three (3) child care centers increased their overall ERS scores by more than 1 point (.5 is considered scientifically significant);
- Post-assessment scores from the ERS classrooms reveal an average interaction score of 5.
- All centers made significant improvements in various areas on the ERS such as: staff to child interactions, provisions for parents, free play, and music and movement.

**Directors Leadership Symposium**

- Offered 3 forums for child care directors county-wide.
- Resources provided during the forums were used by directors to strengthen administrative skills.

**EARLY EDUCATION**

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

**Program Description:** CDEPP offers state-paid tuition for 4-year-old kindergarten 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, and live in an eligible school district.

**Program Results:**

- Served 13 students.
- Two providers offered CDEPP 4K classes

## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

<b>Expenditures By Funding Source</b>	
State Appropriation ( <i>Fund 10</i> )	\$136,708
E.I.A. Appropriation ( <i>Fund 55</i> )	\$8,223
Lottery Appropriation ( <i>Fund 35</i> )	\$
C.D.E.P.P. Appropriation ( <i>Fund 60</i> )	\$48,901
C.O.E. Appropriation ( <i>Fund 65</i> )	\$
N.F.P. Appropriation ( <i>Fund 70</i> )	\$
State Private ( <i>Fund 15</i> )	\$1,908
Local Private ( <i>Fund 20</i> )	\$20,770
Federal ( <i>Fund 30</i> )	\$59,136
In-Kind ( <i>Fund 25</i> )	\$21,897
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$297,543</b>

*Note Fund 10 represents state allocation and carry-forward*

<b>Expenditures By Program / Strategy Name</b>	
1012 Administrative Function	\$36,862
1502 Program Function	\$89,436
2122 Imagination Library	\$11,482
3140 Full Day CDEPP	\$47,796
6012 Child Care Quality Enhancement	\$63,121
6052 Child Care Training	\$31,689
7020 Child Care Facility Expansion	\$3,898
9032 Nutrition Services	\$13,259
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$297,543</b>

## RECOGNITION OF NOTABLE DONORS

The gift amount of individual donors is not disclosed; however, the level of the gift is noted. Chesterfield County First Steps gift levels are as follows:	
<b>Playschool Pal</b>	\$25-\$99
<b>Preschool Friend</b>	\$100-\$499
<b>Bookworm Buddy</b>	\$500-\$999
<b>Champion of Children</b>	\$1,000-\$4,999
<b>Hero</b>	\$5,000 and more

<i><b>DONOR'S NAME</b></i>	<i><b>AMOUNT</b></i>
Ann K. Huntley	Playschool Pal
Ansley Starr	Preschool Friend
Betty J. McGregor	Preschool Friend
Bowling C. Yates, III	Preschool Friend
Chesterfield County Coordinating Council (JTGH grant)	\$36,102.55
Chesterfield County Education Association Retired	Playschool Pal
Chesterfield County School District Title I	\$3,000.00
Clemson University	\$20,000.00
**Fundraisers – Carolina Fest \$336.41 & Yard Sale \$227.91	\$554.32
George W. Long (Memorial Presbyterian Church)	Playschool Pal
Tammy Bittle	Preschool Friend
Haley Drew Teal	Playschool Pal
Holmes & Associates	\$500.00
Joan S. Yates	Preschool Friend
Karen Odom	Preschool Friend
Kyle & Dayna Gladden	Playschool Pal
Laura T. Cooper	Playschool Pal
Malloy Foundation	\$700.00
Mary B. Redfearn	Playschool Pal
Michael & Nikki Wooten	Playschool Pal
Michelle G. Stroud	Playschool Pal

<i><b>DONOR'S NAME</b></i>	<i><b>AMOUNT</b></i>
Northeastern Technical College	\$115.25
Omicron Chapter Delta Kappa Gamma	Playschool Pal
Penny Angle	Preschool Friend
Randy & Janice Sowell	Preschool Friend
Sandhills Telephone (Capital Credit)	\$311.32
South Pointe Christian School	Preschool Friend
Susan J. Griggs	Playschool Pal
Triangle United Way	\$74.01
United Way of Chesterfield County	\$1,240.46
United Way of Jefferson & Pageland Area	\$560.00
Wal-Mart Foundation	\$1,000.00
<b>Total Cash Contributions</b>	<b>\$65,330.32</b>

Local Match Percentage for FY 2009: 71.6%  
(at least 15% Legislative requirement)

## **COUNTY PARTNERSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Board Category</b>
Ms. Margie Gaskins	Business Community
Ms. Sandy Brown	Business Community
Dr. John Williams	Chesterfield County School District-Superintendent
Ms. Audrey Toney	Childcare/Early Childhood Development Provider
Ms. Tammy Bittle	Childcare/Early Childhood Development Provider
Mr. Charlie Gray, Treasurer	County Legislative Delegation Appointee
Ms. J. Drusilla Carter, Board Chair	County Library Designee-County Director
Mrs. Bernadine White	Early Childhood Education
Mrs. Billie Stoudemire	Early Childhood Education
Ms. Katie Harrington	Early Childhood Education

<b>Name</b>	<b>Board Category</b>
Rev. John Gerstenmier	Early Childhood Education
Rev. Joan Yates	Faith Community
Rev. Lee Coyle	Faith community
Ms. Bernice Linton	Family Education, Training & Support
Ms. Mary Bennett	Family Education, Training & Support
Mrs. Carrie Turner	Head Start-County Director
Mr. Calvin Hancock, Jr., Vice Chair	Health Care Provider
Mr. Todd Shifflet, Secretary	Health Care Provider
Mrs. Pamela Mills	Nonprofit serving families & children
Ms. Carla Brown	Nonprofit serving families & children
Mrs. Missy Brown	Parent of pre-school child
Ms. Shannon Peyton	Parent of pre-school child
Mrs. Mary B. Redfearn	Pre-K- Primary Educator
Ms. Ann Huntley	Pre-K- Primary Educator-Director of Early Childhood
Mr. Jack Rhyne	Department of Health & Environmental Control
Mr. Ralph Laney	Department of Social Services-Director
Mr. Frank Patterson	Transportation Provider-Assistant Superintendent
Mrs. Teresa Gaskins	Transportation Provider

## **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.

## **Letter from a Child Care Provider**

Dear First Steps,

I, LaNaireca L. Rivers, director and owner of Tiggerland Childcare, cannot think of words to use to let you know how appreciative I am to you. I have received shelving, tables, numerous amounts of age appropriate toys in all areas, books, and many multicultural items to name a few. These items have been such a blessing to me as well as to my children. Now playtime runs so much more smoothly. My children are no longer bumping into each other during play, nor fighting over a popular toy. I feel better performing my job because I don't have to worry about whether or not I have the correct things needed to make my children happy while they are learning through play. I am grateful to be in a program such as First Steps and for the technical assistance from Allison Becker. Thanks for helping me to become a better teacher and director.

Sincerely,

**LaNaireca L. Rivers**

*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:*

In 2001-2002, Chesterfield County First Steps began implementing a variety of efforts to lay the groundwork for a child's success in school. Many of these initiatives continue today, in addition to other efforts:

- Pilot summer program for rising first graders identified as “at-risk.”
- Partnered to expand four- year- old kindergarten.
- Conducted home visits by kindergarten teachers and distributed learning packets to students and their parents
- Provided technical assistance, coaching and grants to enhance and improve the quality of childcare centers.
- Formed the Chesterfield County Early Childhood Professional Association that provided free trainings on childhood development and curriculum
- Provided post-partum home visits to uninsured families and newborns.
- Distributed books to at-risk children aged birth to 5.
- Implemented the Parents As Teachers program that provided home visits and group meetings to parents.

Effective collaboration provides the framework for Chesterfield County First Steps, which is encouraging parents, business and community leaders, teachers, local agencies, non-profit organizations and the faith-based organizations to work together to improve school readiness. Our success is contributed to our adherence to the set of guiding principles as articulated in the legislation. The primary focus of Chesterfield County First Steps programs is to target the hardest to reach population, essentially those living in isolated/rural areas of the county.

Below are some of our notable moments at a glance:

# Chesterfield County Children Show Major Gains

## First Steps Initiatives Cited as Success

-  Child care quality is improving
-  Children are better prepared for school

Studies show that high-quality early childhood education improves children's success in school, increases graduation rates, reduces their involvement in crime, and increases their adult earnings.

## Jumpstart to Good Health

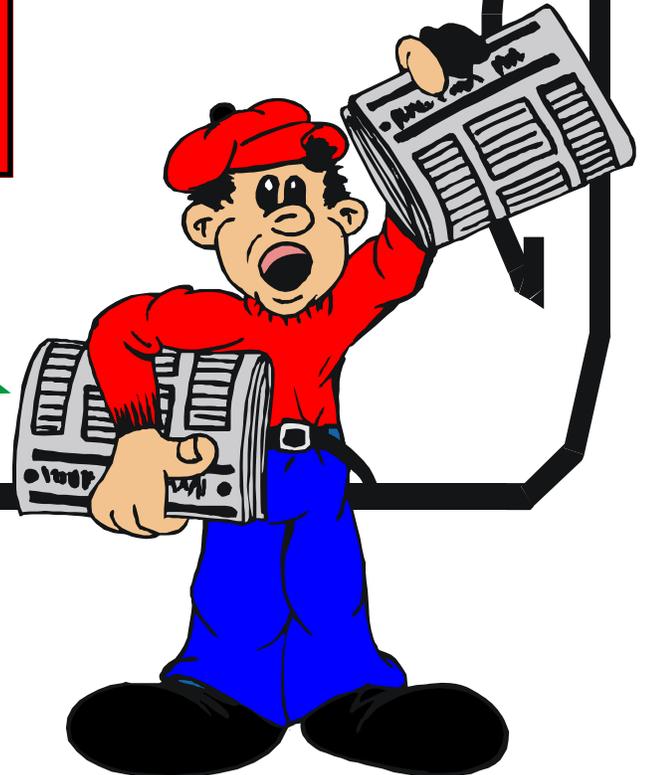
-  Children are healthier
-  Child care centers offer nutritious meals and snacks
-  Increase physical activity

What we do for children in the first 5 years will make a difference for a lifetime.

## Parents Praise Resource Center

Parents have access to more resources

**EXTRA!  
EXTRA!!**





# 2008 School Readiness Risk Profile Chesterfield County

Total Children Under Six: 3,240

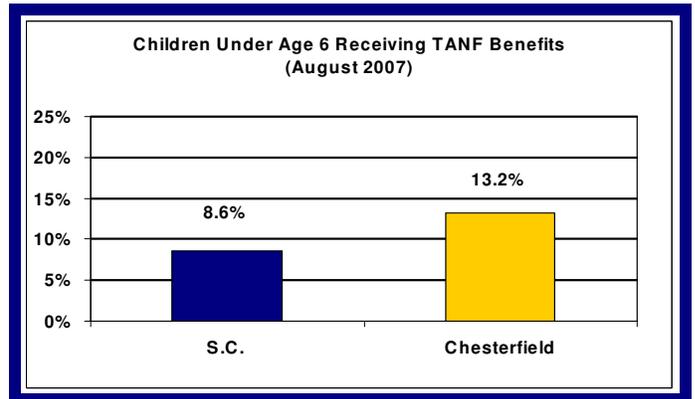
## CHILD POVERTY (Children in Families Receiving TANF Benefits)

Statewide Average (2007): 8.4%

Chesterfield County (2007): 13.2%

**Fast Fact:** Roughly 1 in 8 Chesterfield 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.
- 429 of Chesterfield County’s 3,240 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.



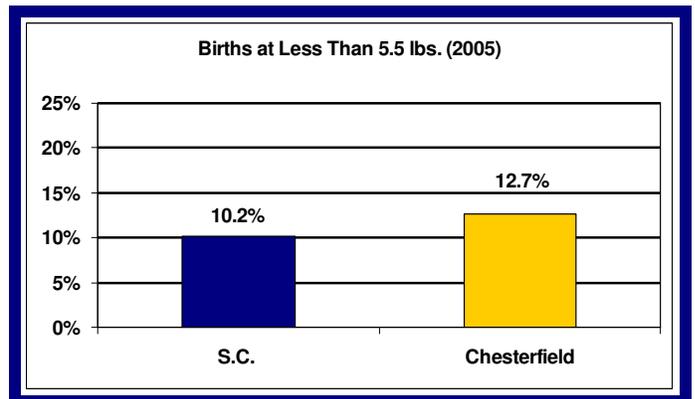
## CHILDREN AT LOW BIRTH WEIGHT (Less Than 5.5 lbs.)

Statewide Average (2005): 10.2%

Chesterfield County (2005): 12.7%

**Fast Fact:** Roughly 1 in 8 Chesterfield 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.
- 68 of the 534 children born in Chesterfield County during 2005 weighed less than 5.5 lbs.



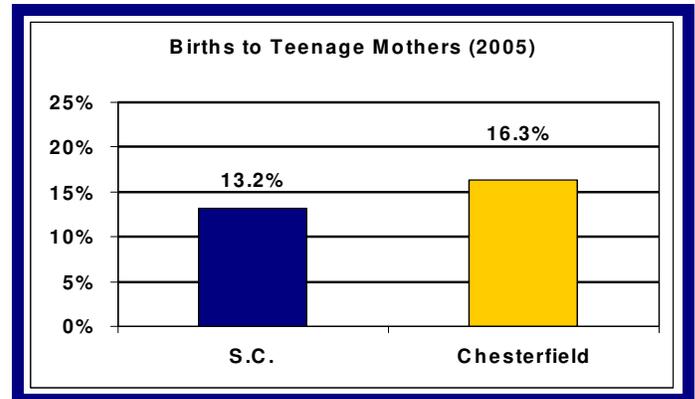
## BIRTHS TO TEENAGE MOTHERS

Statewide Average (2005): 13.2%

Chesterfield County (2005): 16.3%

**Fast Fact:** Just over 1 in 6 Chesterfield 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.
- 87 of the 534 children born in Chesterfield County during 2005 had teenage mothers.



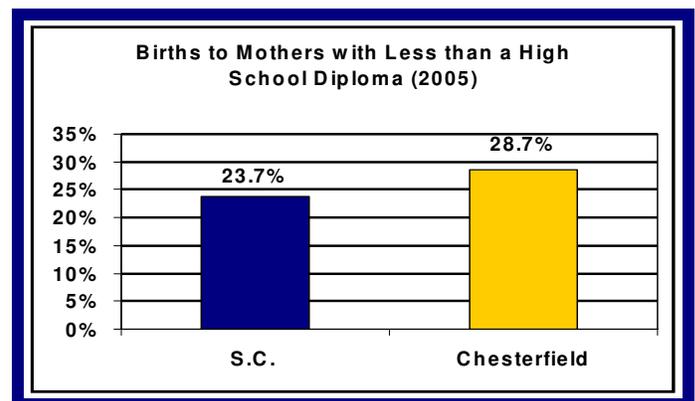
## BIRTHS TO MOTHERS WITH LESS THAN A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

Statewide Average (2005): 23.7%

Chesterfield County (2005): 28.7%

**Fast Fact:** Just over 1 in 4 children in Chesterfield 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.
- 153 of the 534 children born in Chesterfield 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