



Dorchester County First Steps Partnership *Fiscal Year 2008 Annual Report*

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E. Elaine Glover

Executive Director:

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**Total children in county under
age 6: 9,015**

**Children under age 6 living in
poverty: 7.5%**

Dorchester County Highlights

- “This made the difference for my child and family”
- “Laughter! Fun-filled workshop!”

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S MESSAGE

I am pleased to present the Dorchester County First Steps Annual Report for 2007/2008 – a year of continued growth and achievement for DCFS as we continue to strengthen our support for children, families and community. DCFS has through partnerships with Trident Technical College, Tridents United Way, Local School Districts and other agencies developed a reputation throughout the community as a partner to assist in the development of programs that will strengthen the relationship of educational gaps for children, the childcare community and parenting.

We evaluate the effectiveness of our programs and keep abreast of the latest research to ensure that we are using the best practices in our Early Care and Education (4-K). We continue to recruit hundreds of childcare providers, teachers and parents for our Quality Staff and Training Workshops

In the upcoming year we plan to focus our efforts and see increasing parental involvement with the all programs. Demand and/or request for Full Day 4K continue to increase, with the number of parents unable to afford quality childcare as rates continue to increase privately.

The Board continues to assist with the ongoing recruitment for additional board members and planning. However, we continue to applaud each existing board member for their unwavering support of the First Steps mission.

Looking ahead, I am confident that we will continue our success in making sure that Dorchester County’s children reach school “ready to learn”.

Respectfully submitted,
Vanessa White Goodwin, 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.

2007-08 County Partnership Programs by Strategy

FAMILY STRENGTHENING.

PARENTS AS TEACHER & PARENT CHILD HOME

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: Strengthen and increase the capacity of parents to be a child's best and most important teacher by expanding home visitation services. The Parents As Teachers Program(PAT) is a voluntary early education program created to support and assist parents in this very important role at the crucial stage of their child's development, prenatally to age 5. PAT offers twice monthly personal visits by a certified parent educator who provides timely information on each child's development and

responds to parents' questions and concerns. The Parent Child Home Program (PCH) is a 2-year home-based program designed to prevent educational disadvantage in "at risk" two and three year olds by enhancing parent-child verbal interaction. The program's theory is that cognitive and social emotional growth results from the exchange of conceptually rich language between parent and child interactions are stimulated by curriculum materials, books and toys that remain permanently with the families.

PROGRAM RESULTS

- 61 children were directly impacted by the visitation services of PAT and/or PCH
- Only 17% of families were identified with the BOT Priority Risk Factors
- Group meetings were offered monthly for parents and children
- 32 children were enrolled in Dolly Parton Imagination Library Program
- 954 successful Parenting home visits
- 18 KIPS Pre Assessments~ 13KIPS Post/ 21 ACIRI Pre Assessments ~ 11 ACIRI Post were administered
- Each family received an average of 2.27 visits per month;
- During the FY08, both Districts did not meet the standard for duration of home visits for the OFS. These standards were not met because of late implementations dates, training etc. Both districts will provide a plan to implement earlier start dates so that each client will receive the minimum home visits duration time and visits required. County partnership will ensure that all client data is input accurately and exited when needed. The outcome data somewhat reflects the effectiveness of the program. However, since this was the first year of implementation it was a change that may have created a slight discomfort compared to the normal testing. With another year of continued implementation, we are hopeful that the parent educators will become more comfortable with the testing and this will reflect better scoring for the families and children that we serve.

DOLLY PARTON IMAGINATION LIBRARY

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: Introducing a child to reading can be an enjoyable process. Studies have shown that children react and associate sounds with emotions. By demonstrating how to use a book effectively, children learn how to associate pictures with the words. The Dolly Parton Imagination Library program was implemented to support the early literacy and early literacy experiences of young children. By increasing "the number and quality of early literacy experiences from birth through age five, the program is believed to make children more ready for school entry."

- 495 children are currently enrolled in program

QUALITY CHILD CARE.

QUALITY CHILDCARE ENHANCEMENT GRANTS

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: Quality Enhancement Grant promotes and supports improvements in childcare providers to move their programs to the next level of licensure. This program provides funding, technical assistance and training for the quality improvement of the childcare programs offered to children ages 0-5 in Dorchester County

Program results:

- 12 childcare facilities were selected to participate
- Centers received unlimited information, resources regarding developmentally appropriate material, referrals to the TEACH program and supplies
- All centers received an average of 12 hours in technical assistance
- In combination with the Enhancement Grants, the Resource Center & Lending Library (in house) contains age appropriate materials and supplies that childcare providers use to teach their children. Childcare providers can check out items during regular business hours or by appointment for after hours. The Resource Center & Lending Library has proven to be a key asset for childcare providers. Childcare providers can attend free training through our Center Staff Training and Development program or enroll in our Trident Technical College onsite program.

CENTER STAFF TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: A successful best practice forum that provides staff training, mentoring and guidance for centers to achieve higher levels of quality and to reach the needed DSS credit hours per year for childcare providers, parents and teachers entitled Parenting with all Teachers for Success (PATS). The forum topics varied monthly to include: Theme Based Activities, Motivating Your Childcare Staff, High Scope & Creative Curriculum, Understanding Children's Aggression etc. In addition to this free training, Dorchester County First Steps has partnered with Trident Technical College to provide college courses locally allowing students to work toward and Associates Degree in Early Childhood Education.

PROGRAM RESULTS

- 15 DSS Certified Training Classes completed
- 745 participating child care providers, parents and teachers (total includes participants from each class)
- Due to the high demand of new employees in the childcare industry and an overwhelming response for classes; these workshops were offered twice:

Cognitive and Language Development~96 participants, *Children with Disabilities*~99 participants. DCFS in partnership with DHEC sponsored *Childhood Obesity* and the “5-2-1-0” (“5” servings fruits/vegetable; “2” limit T.V. to two hours; “1” hour of physical activity; “0”~ zero sodas/sugar) training class in May with 52 participants.

EARLY EDUCATION.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: High quality, full and extended day, developmentally appropriate school- based program. Children with indicators that are statistically proven to predict low success are enrolled.

PROGRAM RESULTS:

- 40 children continually enrolled and successfully completed the school year

SCHOOL TRANSITION.

COUNTDOWN TO KINDERGARTEN

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: Countdown to Kindergarten is a school transition program designed to successfully bridge at-risk students into the K-12 school environment. It includes three components: Public Awareness through distribution of articles through the media and other community locations to help parents prepare children for kindergarten; home visits; and a Countdown Celebration – kindergarten students, their families, and teachers celebrate the culmination of the program prior to students entering school.

PROGRAM RESULTS:

- 40 children served
- According to Home Visit Survey Analysis Results for the Before/After Score, Dorchester County exceeded the state average for percent change at 35%. The County Partnership concludes that our retention of teachers, communication from the CP and their dedication to the clients has allowed the CP to maintain a high average for “change”.
- The outcome data depicted the effectiveness of our Countdown to Kindergarten program adequately. We continue to strive for quality instructors for our participants. Our program is a continued success because we have retained all Countdown to Kindergarten teacher from implementation to present.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

<u>Expenditures</u> By Funding Source	
State Appropriation (Fund 10)	\$353,515
E.I.A. Appropriation (Fund 55)	\$ 29,555
Lottery Appropriation (Fund 35)	\$
C.D.E.P.P. Appropriation (Fund 60)	\$
C.O.E. Appropriation (Fund 65)	\$
N.F.P. Appropriation (Fund 70)	\$
State Private (Fund 15)	\$ 6,276
Local Private (Fund 20)	\$ 27,246
Federal (Fund 30)	\$
In-Kind (Fund 25)	\$ 50,164
TOTAL:	\$ 466,756

<u>Expenditures</u> By Program / Strategy Name	
Childcare Training & Professional Development	\$25,852
Quality Facility Childcare Enhancement	\$52,988
Extended 4-K	\$43,242
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$12,949
Parents As Teacher/Parent Child Home ~ 2	\$ 39,500
Parents As Teachers/Parent Child Home ~ 4	\$ 39,500
Full Day 4-K	\$61,580
Imagination Library	\$8,343
EIA	\$ 24,096
PRIVATE ~ Local	\$4,623
PRIVATE~ State	\$2,605
INKIND	\$106,344
	\$
Indirect Programmatic Functions	\$ 39,078
Administrative Functions	\$26,347
TOTAL:	\$487,047

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

COUNTY PARTNERSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Ms. Wanda Brown, Dorchester County Library
Ms. Elaine Bryant, Early Childhood Education
Ms. Mary Davies, Early Childhood Education
Ms. Teresa Frasier, Non-Profit Organization
Ms. Susan Gadson, Dorchester School District Two
Ms. Elaine Glover, Business Community Chair
Ms. Yvonne Greatheart, Mandated Agency Representative, DSS
Ms. Flossie Grundy, Early Childhood Education
Ms. Betty Harrison, Head Start
Ms. Ethel Harrison, Non-Profit Organization
Ms. Karen Hill, Mandated Agency Representative, DHEC
Mr. John Pence, Legislative Delegation
Ms. Carrie Simpson, Childcare and Early Childhood Development

COUNTY DATA SNAPSHOT

In FY08, First Steps County Partnerships statewide made it a priority to become increasingly data-driven. County Partnerships successfully began using powerful new components of the First Steps data system, and County Partnerships also utilized data in new ways to drive their FY09 program plans. In addition to enhanced program data tracking, County Partnerships are also focusing on the best available data about children and families to best understand their communities' needs. At the end of FY08 and the beginning of FY09, County Partnerships began an extensive analysis of this data, including data about the risk factors known to impact children's potential school success, such as low birth weight, teen mothers, and families living in poverty. A county-level risk data report is included in the subsequent pages of this report.

2008 School Readiness Risk Profile

Dorchester County

Total Children Under Six: 9,015

CHILD POVERTY (Children in Families Receiving TANF Benefits)

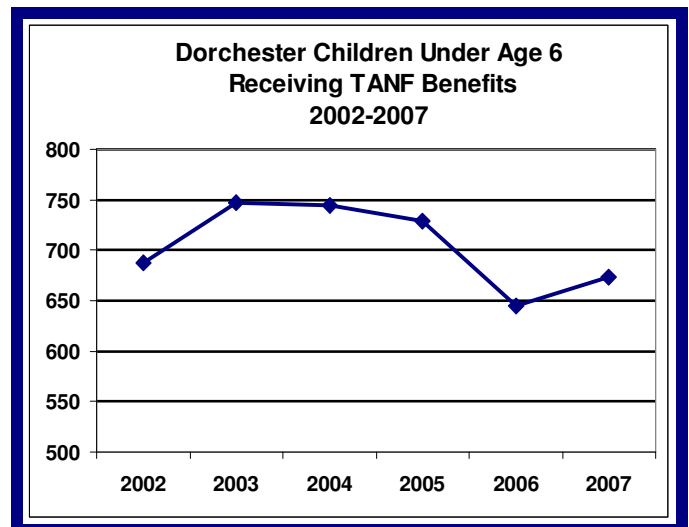
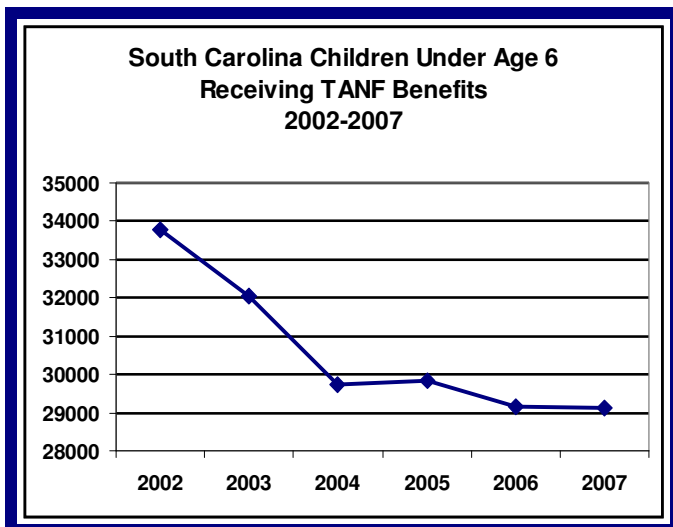
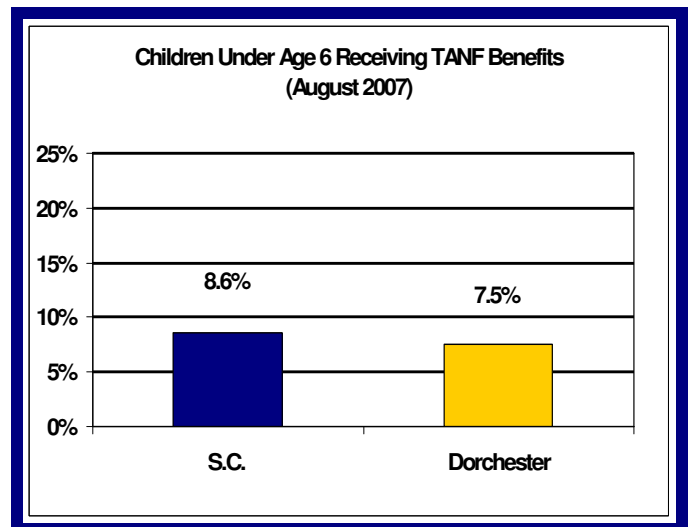
Statewide Average (2007): 8.4%

Dorchester County (2007): 7.5%

Fast Fact: Roughly 1 in 13 Dorchester 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.

673 of Dorchester County’s 9,015 children under age 6 received federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits during 2007, indicating a family income at or below 50% of the federal poverty definition.



2008 School Readiness Risk Profile

Dorchester County

Total Children Under Six: 9,015

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

Statewide Average (2005): 10.2%

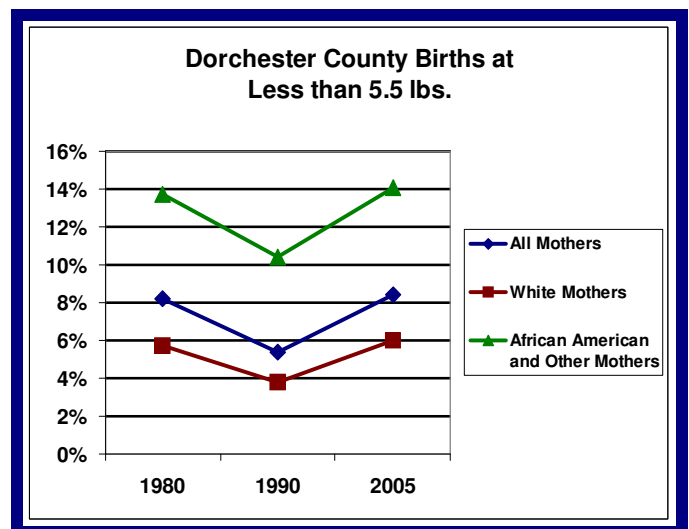
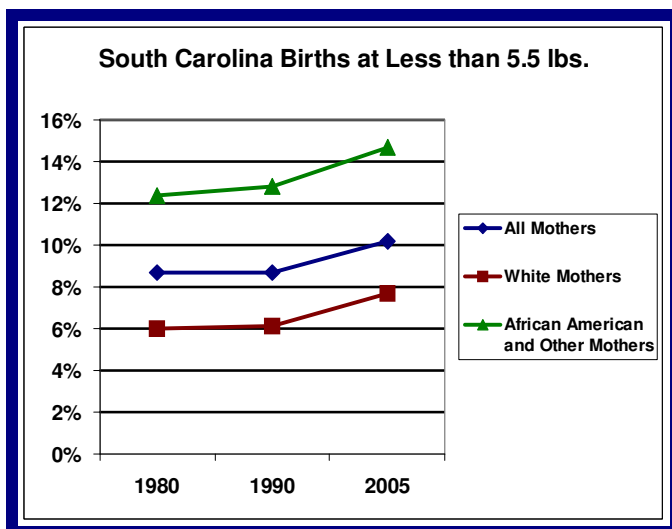
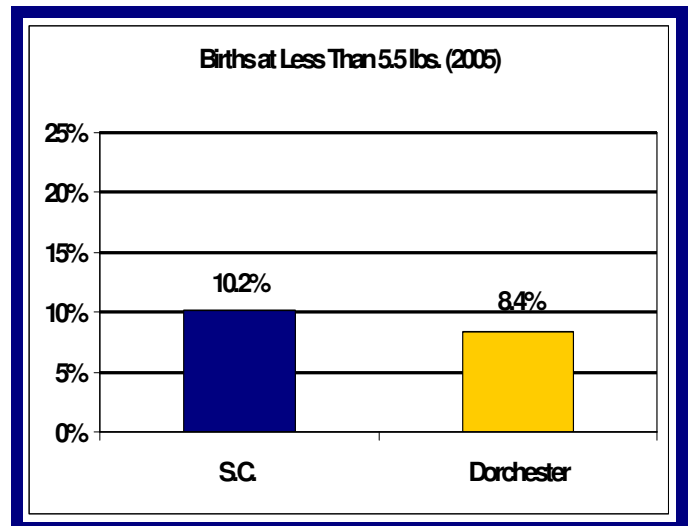
Dorchester County (2005): 8.4%

Fast Fact: 1 in 12 Dorchester 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.

132 of the 1,565 children born in Dorchester County during 2005 weighed less than 5.5 lbs.



2008 School Readiness Risk Profile Dorchester County

Total Children Under Six: 9,015

BIRTHS TO TEENAGE MOTHERS

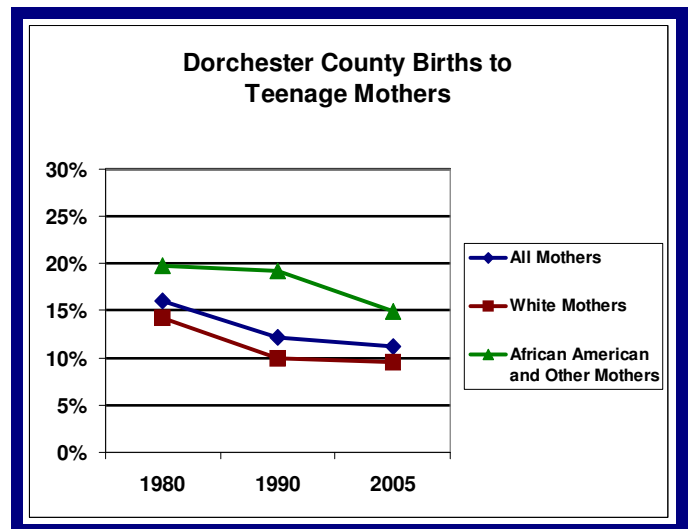
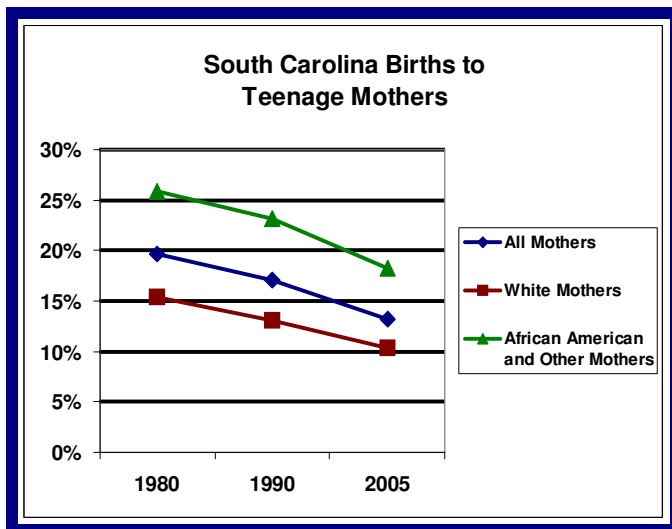
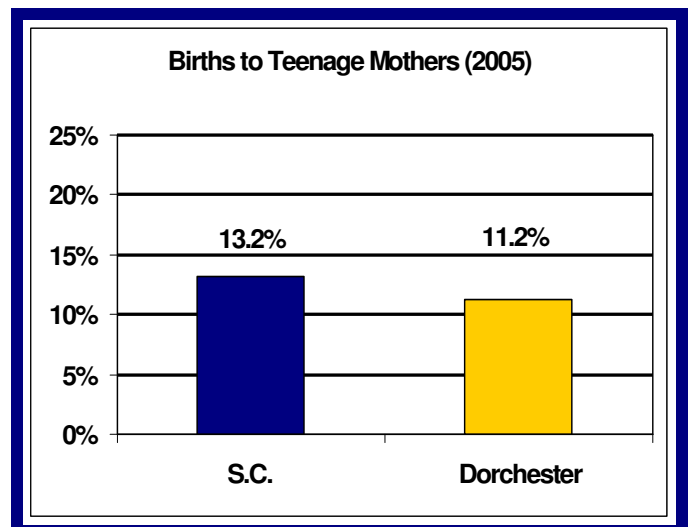
Statewide Average (2005): 13.2%

Dorchester County (2005): 11.2%

Fast Fact: Just over 1 in 10 Dorchester 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.

176 of the 1,565 children born in Dorchester County during 2005 had teenage mothers.



2008 School Readiness Risk Profile Dorchester County

Total Children Under Six: 9,015

BIRTHS TO MOTHERS WITH LESS THAN A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

Statewide Average (2005): 23.7% Dorchester County (2005): 17.2%

Fast Fact: Nearly 1 in 6 children in Dorchester 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.

269 of the 1,565 children born in Dorchester County during 2005 had mothers with less than a high school diploma.

