



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

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Executive Director: Cheryl Caldwell

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Total children in county under age 6: 1,829

Children under age 6 living in poverty: 7.3%

Fairfield County Highlights:

- 100% of parents receiving Tuition Assistance participated in our Parent Workshops
- Celida Roman, owner, Celida's Playpen: "When I decided to get involved in the childcare profession, I never imagined that there would be an agency that shows so much interest in our children's education."

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

For the past year, affordable, quality child care has remained a key focus of the Fairfield County First Steps Partnership Board. We are committed to the in-house Tuition Assistance program for full-time child care. This program is based on income guidelines of parents falling below 150% of poverty. We provided tuition assistance for 17 children whose parents must be working or attending school full-time and agree to attend three parenting workshops provided by our office. We are pleased to report that 100% of the participating families attended the three workshops. Having this program in-house affords us the opportunity to have a relationship with the families. Without assistance with tuition, these children would not be able to attend a quality child care facility. We are proud of our Quality Enhancement program and the Tuition Assistance program and hope to be able to serve more families in the future.

Sincerely,
Cheryl C. Caldwell
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 Teachers

Program Description: Using the Parents as Teachers model to differentiate intensity according to need, we continue to serve a minimum of ten families providing a minimum of two home visits per month.

Program Results:

- Served 18 families with 28 children. Ten families were maintained throughout the year.
- Pre- and Post-KIPS were performed on six of the families. The average score rose from 3.89 to 3.99.
- Eighteen adults and 28 children were served in the program. The average number of home visits per family, per month was 1.42. 44.44% of the families met the minimum frequency requirements for home visits and 66.67% met the minimum duration requirement for home visits. While the number of visits is slightly lower than the required minimum, the required duration exceeds this time.
- The average duration of home visits was 1.08 hours.

Imagination Library

Program Description: Use the Imagination Library as a tool in educating the community about the importance of early literacy and for introducing participating families to all other FCFS programs.

Program Results: 284 children received books mailed directly to the home on a monthly basis. All children who participate in Parents as Teachers, the Tuition Assistance Program and Head Start are included in this program.

- Over \$2,800 private dollars were received for this program.
- Ninety-two new children were enrolled into the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program.
- Ninety-seven children ‘graduated’ from the Dolly Parton Imagination Library.
- Two hundred and fifty children were projected to be served; however, this number was increased to 284 that were actually served.
- A fundraiser was held during the summer in a partnership with Bi-Lo. One thousand, two hundred dollars was raised for FY 09.

HEALTHY START

Non-Home Based Services

Program Description: Partner with the Fairfield County Health Department and John A. Martin Primary Healthcare Center to provide infant car seats for successful completion of ten hours of prenatal classes.

Program Results:

- Eight mothers successfully completed the prenatal classes and received the infant car seats before our Renewal Plan had to be submitted to the state office.
- Nine additional mothers of ten babies (one with twins) successfully completed the prenatal classes and received infant cars seats.
- Eight hundred dollars of in-kind dollars was received through this program.

QUALITY CHILD CARE

Childcare Quality Enhancement

Program Description: Provide Technical Assistance for participating child care classrooms. Classrooms are assessed using the appropriate environment rating scale (ERS). A plan is developed to improve the quality of the classroom.

Program Results:

- Four facilities with six classrooms participated in the program.
- An average of 192 children benefitted from the technical assistance (TA) provided to these classrooms
- Nearly 100 TA hours were spent in the classrooms.
- Overall increase from pre- to post- ERS scores was 3.99.
- ‘Graduated’ one class to quarterly TA for reaching goal on ERS scores of above 5

Tuition Assistance Program

Program Description: This program is administered by the County Partnership and provides tuition assistance for one child per family who falls within the 150% poverty level. Parents must be working or attending school full-time. They are required to attend a minimum of three parent workshops during the year. Parent(s) their child in one of the centers participating in the on-going Quality Enhancement program. Attendance requirements are enforced to a maximum of 10 absences.

Program Results:

- Seventeen families received tuition assistance of \$65 per week for quality childcare.

- 100% of the participating families participated in at least three parent workshops held at the First Steps office.
- 100% of the children complied with the attendance requirements.
- 100% of the families served possessed one or more of the priority risk factors identified by the First Steps Board of Trustees.
- A relationship has been formed between the office staff and the families receiving tuition assistance.

Childcare Training and Professional Development

Program Description: Certified trainers with the SC Center for Child Care Career Development (CCCCD) provide quality workshops to child care providers in Fairfield County.

Program Results:

- Local trainings were provided for all DSS required hours.
- 100% of the Quality Enhancement participants attended the local workshops.
- 100% of all trainings were certified through CCCCCD.

EARLY EDUCATION

Head Start

Program Description: Provide a comprehensive early education classroom in an underserved rural area.

Program Results:

- 20 children were projected to be served, 21 children were served.
- 100% of the children received dental screenings.
- 100% of the children received speech and hearing screenings.
- 100% of the families received a minimum of two home visits during the year.
- A minimum of 85% of the students attended class daily.
- 100% of the students were immunized.
- Two parent/teacher conferences were conducted with each family during the year.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Expenditures By Funding Source	
State Appropriation <i>(Fund 10 and Fund 11)</i>	\$ 148,124.00
E.I.A. Appropriation <i>(Fund 55)</i>	\$ 37,421.00
Lottery Appropriation <i>(Fund 35)</i>	\$
C.D.E.P.P. Appropriation <i>(Fund 60)</i>	\$
C.O.E. Appropriation <i>(Fund 65)</i>	\$
N.F.P. Appropriation <i>(Fund 70)</i>	\$
State Private <i>(Fund 15)</i>	\$ 488.00
Local Private <i>(Fund 20)</i>	\$ 12,131.00
Federal <i>(Fund 30)</i>	\$
In-Kind <i>(Fund 25)</i>	\$ 49,083.00
TOTAL:	\$ 247,247.00

Expenditures By Program / Strategy Name	
Parents As Teachers	\$ 35,627.00
Imagination Library	\$ 7,271.00
GLEAMNS Head Start	\$ 58,332.00
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$ 3,153.00
Quality Enhancement	\$ 17,733.00
Childcare Training and Prof. Development	\$ 865.00
Scholarship Initiatives	\$ 56,378.00
Non-home based Services (car seats)	\$ 1,127.00
Indirect Programmatic Functions	\$ 44,317.00
Administrative Functions	\$ 22,444.00
TOTAL:	\$247,247.00

NOTABLE DONORS

<i>DONOR'S NAME</i>	AMOUNT
Fairfield County Career & Technology	\$ 1007.00
Sabine Lang	\$ 255.75
Tony Caulder	\$ 30.00
Jackie Miller	\$ 30.00
Insurance of Fairfield	\$ 1000.00
Tiffany Harrison	\$ 30.00
Mary Urias	\$ 50.00
Margaret & Bill Dubard	\$ 30.00
Antonio Perez	\$ 100.00
Ltc. (Ret.) Nelson Lacey	\$ 30.00
Harold & Pat Frish	\$ 60.00
Inquirendo Book Club	\$ 60.00
Steve Brakefield	\$ 30.00
Bobb Hane	\$ 30.00
Jim & Esther Baughman	\$ 30.00
Roy Jeffocat	\$ 30.00
TOTAL: \$ 2,802.75	

*Local Match Percentage for FY 2008: 20%
(at least 15% Legislative requirement)*

FAIRFIELD COUNTY PARTNERSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES

William P. Frick, Chair, Legislative Appointee
 Lillian R. P. Arnold, Early Childhood Education
 Beverlyann Austin, Healthcare Provider
 Raye O. Boyd, School District Representative
 Ellen Cooper, DHEC Representative
 Sarah Forseth, Pre-kindergarten through Primary
 Bobb Hane, Legislative Appointee
 Gwen Harden, Business
 Jena B. Johnson, Legislative Appointee
 Dee B. Mattox, Healthcare Provider
 Karen D. Mattox, Childcare and Early Development
 Sarah McMaster, Library Representative
 LaCheryl Mobley, Head Start Representative

Yolande Montgomery, Family Education
Mac R. Russell, Parent of a Preschool Child
James Nichols, DSS representative
Becky Swearingen, Transportation
Mary Urias, Non-profit Organization
Zakia White, Parent of a Preschool Child

COUNTY DATA SNAPSHOT

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, to drive our FY09 program plans. In addition to enhanced program data tracking, County Partnerships focused on the best available data about children and families to 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.

County Narrative

While parenting continues to be recognized as a vital need in Fairfield County, we are seeing less interest in our Parents as Teachers program. We find it difficult to recruit families willing to allow pre- and post- video taping to assess their parent/child interaction. Many parents feel this is a judgment of their parenting skills rather than a means to make strides in areas of weakness. We feel very strongly that the Parents as Teachers program make an important difference in the lives of the families. Our fear on the local level is that we will not reach the families who are the most "at-risk."

The Tuition Assistance Program remains the most popular of our strategies. The parents have not shown any difficulty in attending the required three parent workshops. Parents support one another during the parent workshops.

We also provide Child Care Training and Development so that our providers are able to attend classes locally to fulfill their DSS training requirements. We offer local training so that our child care providers do not have to travel after hours or on weekends.

Imagination Library is a program that our board is committed to. Primarily funded with private dollars, this program is used as a tool to introduce First Steps to all families in the county. We continue to receive notes of appreciation from the parents of children receiving these books. The children are excited to receive the books and especially pleased to have their parents read to them. The Winnsboro Rotary Club is and continues to be a primary source of private funding for this program.

2008 School Readiness Risk Profile

Fairfield County

Total Children Under Six: 1,829

CHILD POVERTY (Children in Families Receiving TANF Benefits)

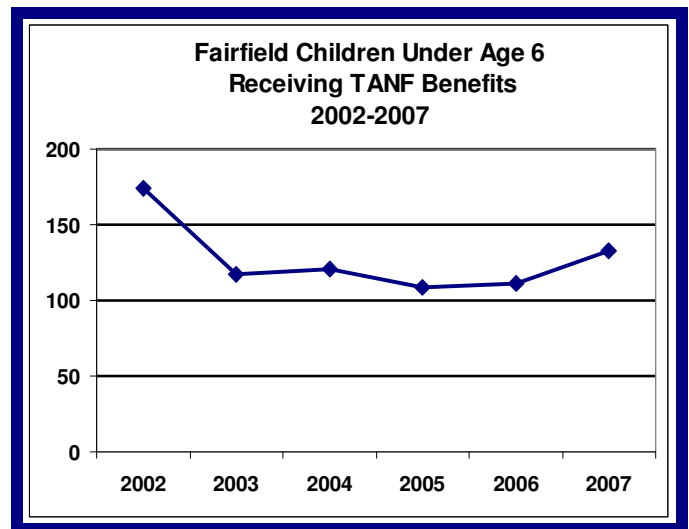
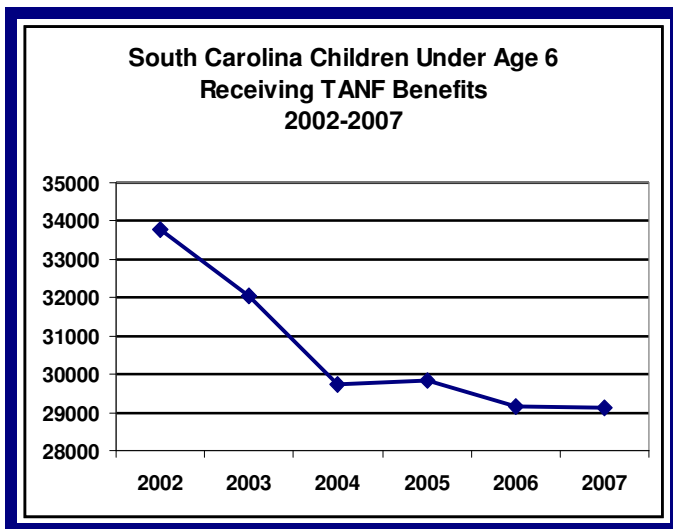
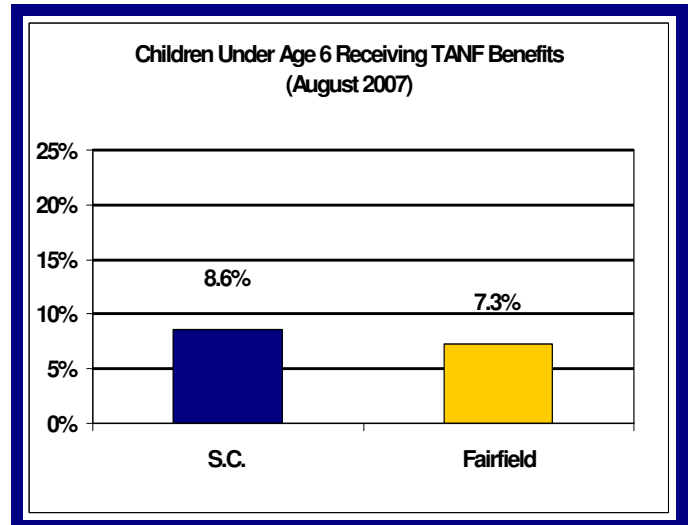
Statewide Average (2007): 8.4%

Fairfield County (2007): 7.3%

Fast Fact: Roughly 1 in 13 Fairfield 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.

133 of Fairfield County's 1,829 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

Fairfield County

Total Children Under Six: 1,829

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

Statewide Average (2005): 10.2%

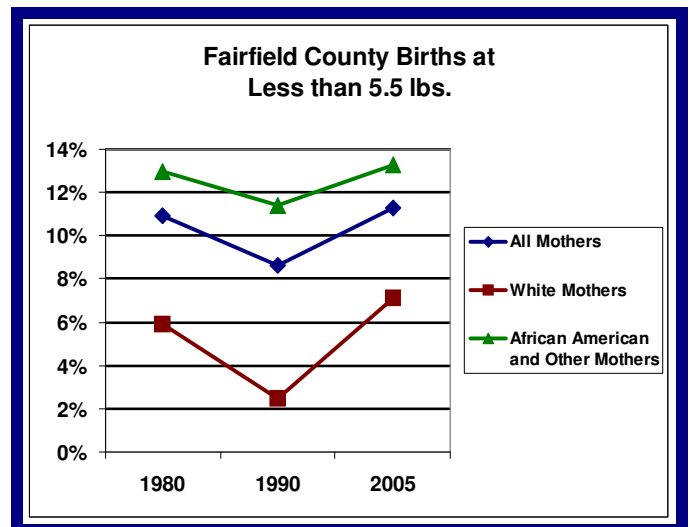
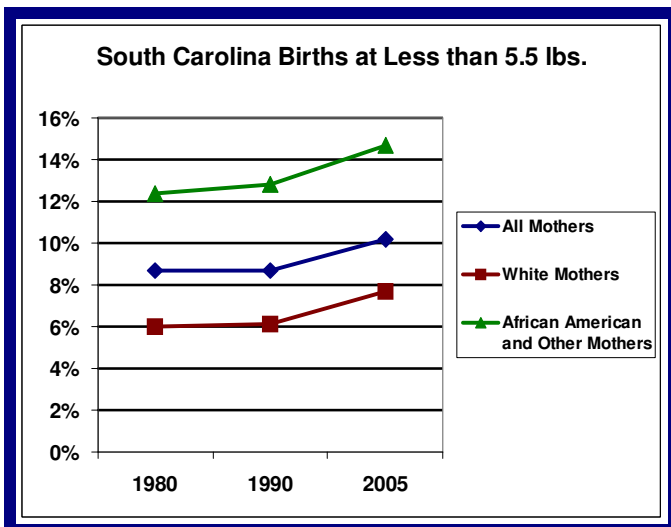
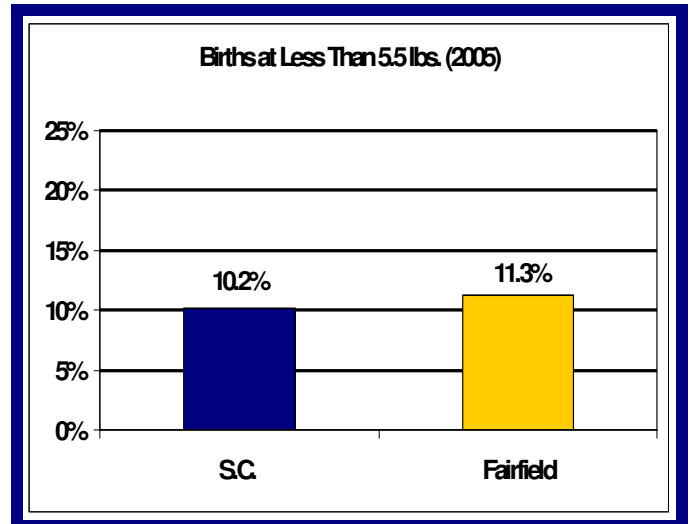
Fairfield County (2005): 11.3%

Fast Fact: Nearly 1 in 9 Fairfield 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.

35 of the 309 children born in Fairfield County during 2005 weighed less than 5.5 lbs.



2008 School Readiness Risk Profile Fairfield County

Total Children Under Six: 1,829

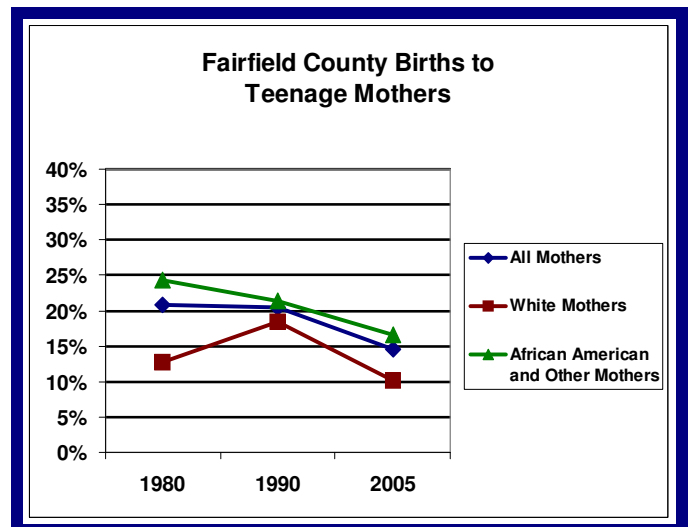
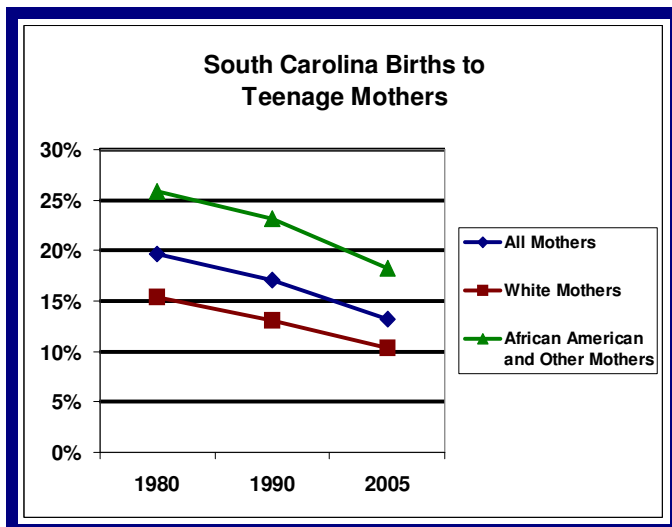
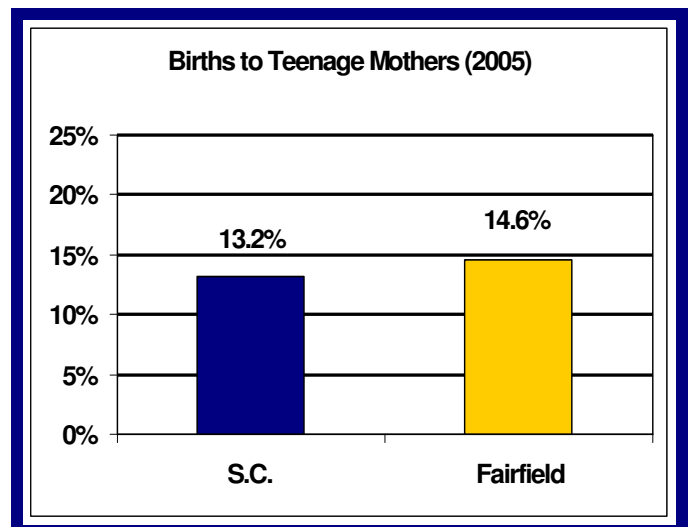
BIRTHS TO TEENAGE MOTHERS

Statewide Average (2005): 13.2% Fairfield County (2005): 14.6%

Fast Fact: Nearly 1 in 7 Fairfield 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.

45 of the 309 children born in Fairfield County during 2005 had teenage mothers.



2008 School Readiness Risk Profile Fairfield County

Total Children Under Six: 1,829

BIRTHS TO MOTHERS WITH LESS THAN A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

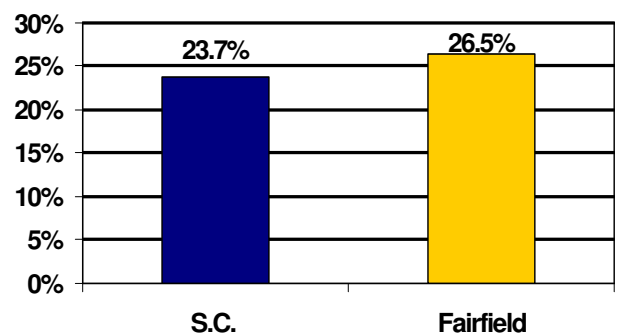
Statewide Average (2005): 23.7% Fairfield County (2005): 26.5%

Fast Fact: Just over 1 in 4 children in Fairfield 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.

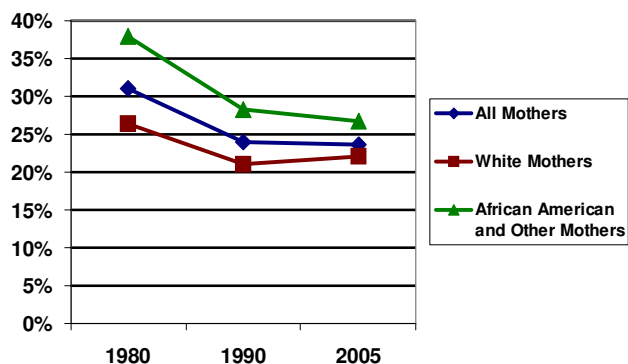
Research suggests that a mother’s own educational attainment is closely linked to the subsequent academic performance of her children.

82 of the 309 children born in Fairfield County during 2005 had mothers with less than a high school diploma.

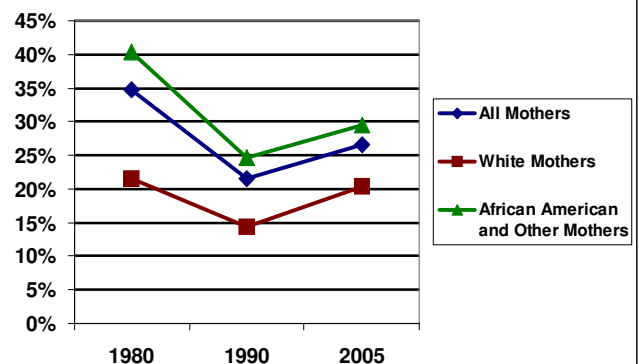
Births to Mothers with Less than a High School Diploma (2005)



SC Births to Mothers with Less than a High School Diploma



Fairfield County Births to Mothers with Less than a High School Diploma



County Narrative

While parenting continues to be recognized as a vital need in Fairfield County, we are seeing less interest in our Parents As Teachers program. We find it difficult to find families willing to allow pre- and post- video accessing of the parent/child interaction. Many feel that this is a judgment of their parenting skills rather than looking at it as a means to make strides in areas of weakness. We feel very strongly that the Parents As Teachers program makes an important difference in the lives of the families it serves. Our fear on the local level is that we will not reach the families with the most risk factors.

The Tuition Assistance Program remains the most popular of our programs. The parents have not shown any difficulty in attending the required three Parent Workshops. Having this program 'in-house' has allowed us to have a relationship with these families. The parents are also finding support from one another during the parent workshops. Included in this program are attendance requirements and the requirement that the child attend one of the facilities participating in our Quality Enhancement program. The Quality Enhancement program consists of pre- and post- ERS assessments. The ERS scores rose an average of 3.99. One classroom received a post score of over 5 overall. We have moved that classroom to a quarterly basis and added another classroom for FY 09. We also provide Child Care Training and Development so that our providers are able to attend classes locally to fulfill their DSS training requirements. We offer local training for all of the DSS required hours so that our providers do not have to travel after hours or on weekends.

Imagination Library is a program that our board is committed to. Primarily funded with private dollars, this program is used as a tool in introducing First Steps to all families throughout the county. We continue to receive notes of appreciation from the parents of children receiving these books. The children are excited to receive the books and especially pleased to have their parents read to them. The Winnsboro Rotary Club has been and continues to be a primary source of private funding for this program.

Our car seat program is another that is a great tool for introducing expectant parents to all of the First Steps programs. Mothers attend a minimum of five prenatal classes in order to qualify for the car seat class. They receive a car seat at the sixth class. For this class they are requested to bring the vehicle in which the baby will travel. Instructions are given on the correct use of infant car seats. Moving these classes to the weekends has seen a tremendous growth in class attendance. This is a partnership with DHEC and the John A. Martin Primary Healthcare Center.

The Head Start class at Kelly Miller serves a rural area of the community that was underserved prior to the involvement of First Steps. Twenty children in the Greenbrier/Bethel area attend these classes. These families receive home visits and have workshops offered throughout the school year. The children are afforded speech, hearing and vision screenings through the school district. Referrals to other agencies are made as necessary. First Steps receives a large amount of "in-kind" dollars from GLEAMNS for this program.