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Total children in county under
age 6: 471

Children under age 6 living in
poverty: 30.2%

**McCormick County
Highlights**

- Served 361 families and 380 children
- All families in parenting program showed a measurable improvement in parenting skills
- 1579 home visits made
- Child care center quality ratings improved
- 3619 books given to children to keep
- Gym is clean, painted and now in use for the children at our Learning Center

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

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

It's been a challenging year for McCormick County First Steps. Because of the tough financial climate, we've worked even closer with our partners in the community. Representative from all areas in the county joined me at a Children's Summit. We looked closely at local and regional factors hindering school readiness and brainstormed solutions to improve outcomes for children birth to five. We also met locally to determine how we could strengthen our collaborations and stretch our resources.

We strengthened our partnerships with the McCormick Public Library and the McCormick Arts Council. Stories, from the library, and Art projects, from the Arts Council, were provided for all the children in our center. In addition, we have formed a strong partnership with the Lutheran Church by the Lake. Our volunteer hours more than doubled this year.

Men from the Church painted our gym and provided bright, artistic decorations on the walls. They also provided a big toy box and a puppet theater. We now have a gym that is bright and beautiful, which the children are enjoying daily.

Women from the church are reading and providing music for the children at our center. They have also been working in our library. This summer they provided lunch and a celebration for the Countdown to Kindergarten children. This group of women is committed to continuing their support of all our children.

This year, as a trial, we established a Fatherhood Program. We held meetings focused on the fathers of the children in our programs. Pending grant requests might make fatherhood initiatives in McCormick possible in the future.

We absorbed three major budget cuts this year—reducing our budget by 20%. To improve the financial situation, we had a calendar fund raiser and applied for numerous grants.

We are proud of the children we serve and of how they are progressing. We will continue to dedicate our resources and energy to ensure that these children will be ready to succeed in school.

Sincerely,
Ruth Detrick, 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: We provide home-based literacy and parenting services to families challenged by poverty and poor education. At-risk families receiving these services have children ages birth to five. This program helps parents understand their children's stages of development. The parent educators offer practical guidance to encourage learning, manage challenging behavior, and promote a strong parent-child relationship. Parent Educators provide age appropriate materials and activities for parents to use with their children. Parent Educators also stress the importance of reading and ensure that parents are able to become the first and most influential teacher in the development of their child.

Program results:

- Served 60 Adults and 74 Children
- Families averaged 2.8 visits per month, with an average duration of 1.03 hours. Parent educators completed a total of 1579 successful visits.
- Family group meetings were held monthly.
- 95% of families served possessed one or more risk factors.
- 41 Families, with children ages 2 months old to 5 years, received one or more KIPS assessments. KIPS is an evaluation of parenting behaviors related to interactions between parents and children. It involves an observation of a parent playing with his or her child for 20 minutes to examine 12 different behaviors. Results Pre-to-Post indicated improvement in skills and behaviors by 6%
- 28 Families, with children 2.5 to 5 years old, received one or more ACIRI assessments. ACIRI is an interactive reading inventory for parents and children. It is a literacy-specific evaluation based on the observation of a parent and child reading together. Results Pre-to-Post indicated improvement in skills and behaviors for both adults by 5.8% and children by 4.5%.
- Family Satisfaction Surveys indicate that 100% agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the services they received from this program. In addition, 100% said their family had benefited from the services we provided.

Library Based Literacy Program

Program description: A library has been established at our campus where we serve approximately 100 children, between the ages of birth and five, in either the First Steps/Even Start child care center or the Head Start classrooms. A Public Library representative reads to each group of children in our library twice each month. At each session the children receive a copy of one of the books read, to take home and keep. With this program we enhance listening skills through storytelling and improve children's pre-reading literacy skills.

Program results:

- Served 98 Children
- Surveys completed by Head Start teachers and care givers indicated that 100% felt the library program was very valuable and 100% felt that the librarian did very well at engaging the children's interest. Most importantly 100% felt that the children enjoyed the story time and benefitted from this program. 90% felt that the librarian did very well at introducing new words to increase children's vocabularies; 10% felt she did well. One teacher commented that "The reading increases children's vocabulary and it enhances their ability to act quietly in a library setting."
- The librarian rated the children's listening skills at each session. On a scale of 1-5 toddlers listening results increased from 1.6 for the first half of the program , to 2.25 for the second half. Head Start students' results increased from 3.3, for the first half of the program, to 3.5 for the second half.

- During the 9 months of this program, 359 stories were read, 114 activities were done, such as songs, finger play, rhymes, etc. and 1512 books were given to children to take home and keep.
- Because of the partnership with the McCormick Public Library and a large grant of books received, we operated this program at a cost of \$20.76 per child served.

Other Family Literacy/Learning—Reach Out and Read

Program description: We contribute 75% of the funds required to serve 160 children in McCormick’s Reach Out and Read Program. At every well-child check-up, doctors and nurses encourage parents to read aloud to their young children and offer age-appropriate tips. Parents, who may have difficulty reading, are encouraged to invent their own stories to go with picture books and to spend time naming objects with their children. At each well-child visit, providers give every child, between the ages of six months and five years, a new, developmentally appropriate children’s book to keep.

Program results:

- Served 170 children/families
- 100% of the parents, who received the intervention and completed the survey stated that they read to their child every week.
- 80% of the parents, who received the intervention and completed the survey, stated that reading was one of their child’s preferred activities..
- We supported this program with \$742 or a unit cost of only \$4.36 per family.
- Semi-annual progress reports and an observation tool used by the Reach Out and Read State Office indicate that this program is implemented with quality and fidelity to the research-based Reach Out and Read model.
- This program has allowed us to develop a collaborative relationship with the medical community in McCormick.

EARLY EDUCATION.

Early Education for Children Under 4

Program description: We provide quality child care for infants and toddlers. We serve 25 children with emphasis on the most at-risk children. We use certified child care providers, who increase their knowledge of early childhood development through at least 20 additional hours of training each year. We use Creative Curriculum for infants and toddlers to aid in the children’s development and improve their vocabulary. We hold monthly family activities nights with emphasis on providing opportunities for parents and children to interact, and on providing parents with information necessary to support their child’s successful development.

Program results:

- Served 32 families and 38 children, with a monthly average of 21 children in the child care center.

- We achieved an ITERS assessment result of 4.63 for the Infant Room and 4.67 for the Toddler Room.
- Our current DSS ABC Enhanced score is 98% for the combined child care
- 100% of participating children 2.5 years old to 5 demonstrated annual progress in receptive language development as evidenced by Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test.
- Observation by the McCormick School District’s Family Literacy Coordinator ensures that this program is implemented with quality and fidelity to the Creative Curriculum model.
- Family Satisfaction results indicate that 100% of the families agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the services they received and felt that their family had benefited from the services we provide.
- When surveyed about this program, parents stated: “This program has allowed me to go back to college” and “I am able to keep my job” and “It has helped my child learn how to share and get along with others.”

SCHOOL TRANSITION.

Countdown to Kindergarten

Program description: Three qualified kindergarten teachers serve a total of 30 at-risk children, over a 6-week period. They visit the families each week, with learning activities designed to prepare children and their families for classroom success. Teachers focus on improving the quality of parent-child learning interactions and the parent’s involvement in the child’s education. They help parents realize the importance of preparing children for school. Participating families receive a “Kindergarten Tool Kit”. This kit helps parents assist children with activities which will develop skills necessary for kindergarten success. The final visit is a field trip to the school, where the child will attend class in the fall. At the conclusion of the program, families are invited to a celebration, to honor their hard work.

Program results: (Summer 2009)

- Served 29 Children/Families
- 100% of the required visits were made.
- 100% of the families possessed one or more of the required risk factors—most had more than one.
- 86% of our children’s home visitor became their kindergarten teacher
- Pre and Post surveys were conducted with each family. Our goal is to show improvement in behaviors. At this time surveys have been sent to an independent research organization and results are not yet available.
- 100% of the families served were Extremely Satisfied or Satisfied with the program, the materials provided, and the kindergarten teacher who visited them.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

| <u>Expenditures</u> By Funding Source | |
|--|-------------------|
| State Appropriation (<i>Fund 10</i>) | \$ 66,320 |
| E.I.A. Appropriation (<i>Fund 55</i>) | \$ 55,095 |
| State Private (<i>Fund 15</i>) | \$ 3,243 |
| Local Private (<i>Fund 20</i>) | \$ 3,436 |
| Federal (<i>Fund 30</i>) | \$ 19,936 |
| State Appropriation Carry Forward (<i>Fund 11</i>) | \$ 4,554 |
| EIA Appropriation Carry Forward (<i>Fund 56</i>) | \$ 2,692 |
| In-Kind (<i>Fund 25</i>) | \$ 127,313 |
| TOTAL: | \$ 282,589 |

| <u>Expenditures</u> By Program / Strategy Name | |
|---|-------------------|
| Parents as Teachers | \$ 81,729 |
| Other Family Literacy/Reach Out and Read | \$ 743 |
| Library Based Literacy | \$ 12,991 |
| Early Education for Children Under 4 | \$ 130,703 |
| Countdown to Kindergarten | \$ 13,952 |
| Indirect Programmatic Functions | \$ 25,206 |
| Administrative Functions | \$ 17,265 |
| TOTAL: | \$ 282,589 |

| NOTE(s) | |
|----------------|---|
| 1. | Administrative Percentage equals only 5.2% of Grand Total. |
| 2. | Grand Total of Expenditures by Program includes actual funds spent (\$155,276) and In-Kind donations (\$127,313). |

NOTABLE DONORS

| <i>DONOR'S NAME</i> | AMOUNT |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Wal-Mart Foundation | \$ 1000 |
| McCormick Lions Club | \$ 500 |
| Mary Ann Perry | \$ 25 |
| Samuel Marshall | \$ 75 |
| Sally Mitchell (Red Hat Group) | \$ 100 |
| Paula Goldman | \$ 25 |
| TOTAL: | \$ 1250 |

In addition to financial donations we had a Calendar Fund Raiser and made \$150

In addition to financial donations we received 5 book grants:

| | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Volunteers of America | 816 Books | Value \$ 2,448 |
| First Book | 664 Books | Value \$ 10,823 |
| First Book & DOE | 120 Books | Value \$ 580 |
| First Book | 636 Books | Value \$ 5,544 |
| First Book | 100 Books | Value \$ 500 |

Local Match Percentage for FY 2009: 86.9%
(compared to 15% Legislative requirement)

COUNTY PARTNERSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Ms. Edwina Austin, DHEC Appointee
Ms. Tracy Baldwin, Parent pre-school child
Rev. Eric Butler, Chair, Faith Community
Ms. Brenda Collins, Primary educator
Mrs. Luella Crosby, School District Appointee
and Family Education, training and support
Mrs. Victoria H. Durant, Childcare provider
Ms. Johnnie P. Ingram, Early childhood educator
Ms. Jenifer Jennings, Primary educator
Ms. Daisy Johnson, Head Start Appointee
Ms. Andrea Mann, Parent pre-school child
Ms. Kathie Marathon, Library Appointee
Mr. Samuel Marshall, Business Owner
Ms. Robbie Seigler, DSS Appointee
Mrs. Mary Thompson, Legislative Appointee
Mrs. Mary Westgate, Non-Profit Organization
Ms. Corliss Wideman, Legislative Appointee
Ms. Jewell Williams, Primary Educator

During FY09, the McCormick board members and other volunteers donated 331 hours of their time. Based on Independent Sector research, the value of volunteer time for 2008 was \$20.25 per hour. (331 hours x \$20.25 = \$6703)

COUNTY DATA SNAPSHOT

McCormick County Partnership has become increasingly data-driven. We have redoubled our efforts to reach the most at-risk children in our county. We have obtained the best available data about children and families to better understand our communities' needs. We are aware of the risk factors known to impact children's potential school success, such as low birth weight, teen mothers, and families living in poverty. We have targeted and are serving the most at-risk children in McCormick County. These children deserve to have every chance possible to succeed in school. A county-level risk data report is included in the subsequent pages of this report.



Children playing in newly refurbished gym



Children learning and playing music

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:

McCormick County's First Ten Years

| First Steps Strategy Areas | Notable Moments |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Family Strengthening | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents as Teachers has become more results oriented and all quality and numeric benchmarks are being met • We are using two assessments with families to ensure that the time we spend with them is producing positive results |
| Early Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child care center moved from small portables to big beautiful rooms in the McCormick Learning Center • Playground equipment was added to the center • The children now have a gym to use on days that are too cold, too hot or too wet to play outside • Quality ratings of the center have allowed for ABC bonuses of \$2000 each of the last three years |
| School Transition Areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We increased our number served from 10, then to 20, and then to 30 children served each of the last three summers |
| Library Literacy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We began a Literacy program where children receive stories, books and literacy activities • We have established a pre-school library on our campus |

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| | at the McCormick Learning Center |
| Notable Grants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have received the Evenstart Grant now for the fifth time • We have received many book grants—one of over 8000 books. This has allowed us to ensure that all the young children in McCormick have books in their homes. • We have received grants from Wal-Mart, Target, LEGO, the local Lions Club, and other local organizations |
| Notable Collaborations Efforts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a strong collaborative relationship with McCormick School District. We continue to work together to ensure that resources are shared and used wisely for the children we both serve. • We have a strong collaborative relationship with McCormick Head Start. We share resources to support the children in both of our programs. • We continue to partner with the McCormick Public Library to bring stories and literacy activities to the children we serve. • We continue to partner with the local Arts Council (MACK) to bring crafts and art experiences to the children we serve. • We have established a strong partnership with the Lutheran Church by the Lake. Members of the church have donated |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>their time, their talents, and their resources to enrich the experiences of our children and to help our funds stretch farther.</p> |
|--|--|



2008 School Readiness Risk Profile McCormick County

Total Children Under Six: 472

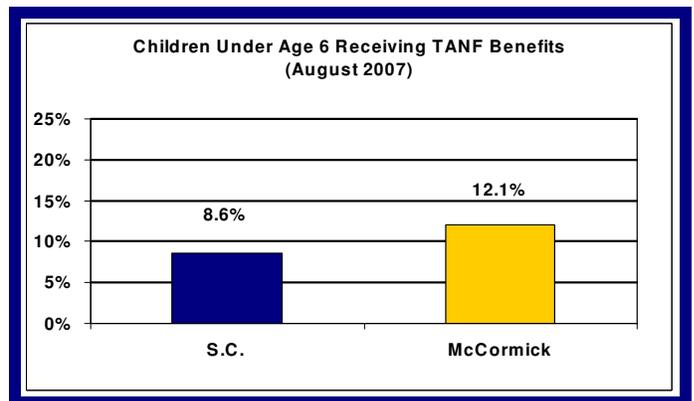
CHILD POVERTY (Children in Families Receiving TANF Benefits)

Statewide Average (2007): 8.4%

McCormick County (2007): 12.1%

Fast Fact: Roughly 1 in 9 McCormick 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.
- 57 of McCormick County’s 472 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.



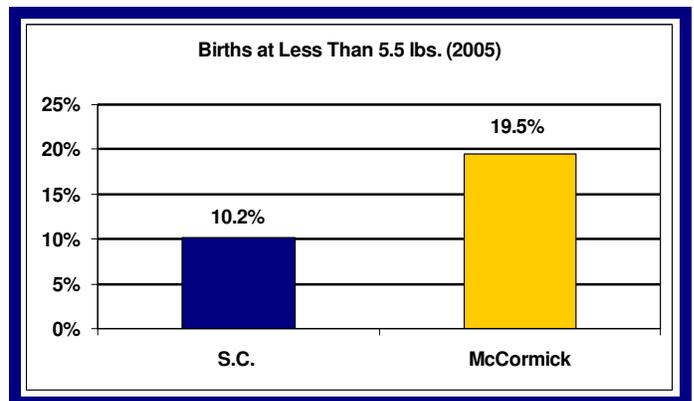
CHILDREN AT LOW BIRTH WEIGHT (Less Than 5.5 lbs.)

Statewide Average (2005): 10.2%

McCormick County (2005): 19.5%

Fast Fact: Roughly 1 in 10 McCormick 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.
- 15 of the 77 children born in McCormick County during 2005 weighed less than 5.5 lbs.



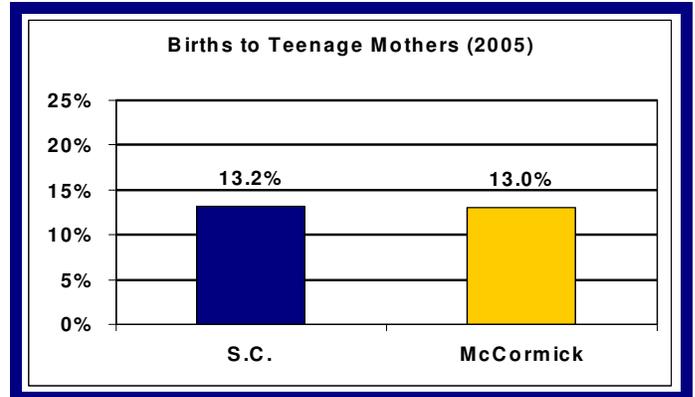
BIRTHS TO TEENAGE MOTHERS

Statewide Average (2005): 13.2%

McCormick County (2005): 13.0%

Fast Fact: Roughly 1 in 8 McCormick 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.
- 10 of the 77 children born in McCormick County during 2005 had teenage mothers.



BIRTHS TO MOTHERS WITH LESS THAN A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

Statewide Average (2005): 23.7%

McCormick County (2005): 18.2%

Fast Fact: Nearly 1 in 5 children in McCormick 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.
- 14 of the 77 children born in McCormick County during 2005 had mothers with less than a high school diploma.

