

# SCSL Digital Collections

## Jasper County First Steps Partnership fiscal year 2008 annual report

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Jasper County



**Board Chair:**

Calvin Washington

**Executive Director:**

Cathy Gardner

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Total children in county under age 6: 1,850

Children under age 6 living in poverty: 10.2%

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**Jasper County  
Highlights**

- A 68% increase in parents visiting the library with their child.  
–Countdown To Kindergarten
- *“Ms. Polite really makes teaching easy and learning fun!”*

# Jasper County First Steps Partnership *Fiscal Year 2008 Annual Report*

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S MESSAGE

Jasper County First Steps is proud of the strategies that were funded this fiscal year. Our first is **Dollywood Imagination Library**. We had 375 children involved in this program in FY08. We continue to integrate this program into our other strategies and have been quite successful. Our next strategy is **Child Care Quality Enhancement**. We provided Pre-ECERS assessments for centers in order to determine their level of need. The scores reflected the need for First Steps to have a viable presence in the centers providing technical assistance and support to improve quality. We served 6 centers in FY08. Our next strategy was **Parents As Teachers**. This was the first time Jasper implemented this component. We had some challenges getting it off the ground, but we were still able to make a positive impact in the lives of the “at risk” families visited. 10 families and 16 children were served in FY08. We had 79 successful home visits. **Childcare Training and Professional Development** was another area that we felt was a significant need for the child care providers and teachers in our community. We offered 50 trainings attended by a total of 385 participants. Those attending were able to receive the necessary DSS credit hours to meet their recertification needs. Finally, I am elated that Jasper was one of the counties chosen to be the recipient of the **(COE) Center of Excellence Grant**. This grant has positively impacted our community by providing comprehensive services to 14 families. These targeted families receive scholarships, parenting support by a certified Parent Educator, as well as health and dental screenings. The program focuses on the well being of the entire family and strives to improve the quality of care for all children attending the center.

Sincerely,  
Cathy Gardner  
Executive Director  
Jasper County 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.

## **2007-08 County Partnership Programs by Strategy**

### **FAMILY STRENGTHENING.**

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

##### **Program Description:**

This program continues to be a favorite of our community. We provide age-appropriate books monthly to Jasper County children under the age of 5. The books cost approximately \$30 a year per child. We live in a very rural county and our library hours are not conducive with the work hour of parents. This program alleviates the cost of transportation to the library, and yet allows families to have books in the home. The availability of these books in the home increases positive parent-child interactions. This program was well integrated into our other strategies.

##### **Program Results:**

- 468 children were served in FY08.
- 90% of funding goes toward procurement of books.
- 10% of funding goes into Dollywood Reading Nights.
- Dollywood is well integrated into our other strategies.
- 62% of parents surveyed reported they had increased the amount of time spent reading to their children since enrollment in the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

#### **Parents As Teachers/2012**

##### **Program Description:**

Jasper County First Steps used the National Parents As Teachers Curriculum "Born To Learn" for ages 0-3, and PAT Curriculum for ages 3-5. Families received at least two home visits per month. Monthly PAT group meetings were held to discuss a variety of parenting topics such as health education and parenting skills. The PAT vision, health, and dental screenings were complete. This program is monitored by the Executive Director, Cathy Gardner. This program will help all children learn, grow, and develop to realize their full potential.

##### **Program Results:**

- 10 families (16 children) participated with the Parents As Teachers home visitation program.
- 79 home visits were made in FY 08.
- 100% of the children are enrolled in the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.
- 1.27 average visits per month (1.5 required). 30% met visit requirements.
- Parent Educator delivered 90.16 hours in home visits using PAT Curriculum.
- 100% met duration requirements.
- 60% of families had one or more priority risk factors
- 60% attended one or more group meetings.

## **QUALITY CHILD CARE.**

### **Child Care Training and Professional Development**

#### **Program Description:**

Our child care providers take advantage of our childcare trainings and professional development services. Child care providers and teachers are required by DSS to attend trainings to maintain licensing. All child care staff must have 15 credit hours of training and directors or operators must obtain 20 credit hours. We provide these trainings at a cost of \$5.00 per class. We pay certified instructors and provide meals for participants if we deem it is necessary. This strategy continues to attract providers and teachers from other parts of our region.

#### **Program Results:**

- 50 trainings total in FY08.
- 385 participants in FY08.
- 30.5 hours in workshop trainings.

### **Facility Quality Enhancement**

#### **Program Description:**

The Facility Quality Enhancement program provides individualized training and education to selected child care providers in the area. In consultation with the providers, we determine what the needs of the facilities are by doing a Pre-ECERS assessment. This assessment reveals areas in need of improvement, and allows us to provide the necessary technical assistance and materials to help correct the problem.

#### **Program Results:**

- 6 facilities were served in FY08.
- 100% of child care centers served were pleased with our services.
- 100% of directors surveyed believed the materials will increase interest and enrollment in their center.
- \$75,747 was spent in this program.
- 83 children ages 0-5 were served in FY08.
- 13 new slots were opened in this program.
- 1 facility moved from registered to licensed.
- 82 hours of TA was provided.

### **Centers of Excellence/7032 Little People Daycare**

#### **Program Description:**

Centers of Excellence is designed to offer low-income and/or high risk children and their families comprehensive resources such as parenting support, health screenings, and quality childcare services at no cost.

#### **Program Results:**

- Little People served 13 children by the end of November 2007.
- The coordinator did have meetings with parents at the center.
- The coordinator did visit the families at their residence.
- 65% of the families had one or more priority risk factors.
- 65% of these children received Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.
- This contract with Little People Daycare was terminated in December 2007, due to compliance issues.

### **Centers of Excellence/7032 Blessed One Learning Daycare**

**Program Description:** Same as above.

#### **Program Results:**

- 14 children received scholarships to attend the new COE site.
- 7 of the children from Little People Daycare transferred to the new site, Blessed One Learning Daycare.
- All of those families were given an opportunity to move to the new site.
- All 14 families participated with the Parents As Teachers home visitation program.
- 75 home visits were made in FY08.
- 6 of families attended group meetings.
- 70% of families had one or more priority risk factors.
- All of the children in the COE are signed up to receive Dolly Parton's books.
- The strategy's target population includes single parents, parents with low incomes, parents who have low weight births, and parents with no high school diploma.

## **SCHOOL TRANSITION.**

### **Countdown To Kindergarten**

#### **Program Description:**

The Countdown To Kindergarten strategy helps our most at-risk rising kindergartners move successfully into the K-12 school systems. We serve 20 children in our county, 10 in the Ridgeland area and 10 in the Hardeeville area. This program makes the transition from home to school a smooth one by providing 8 home visits over the summer to introduce both caregiver and child to books and activities used in the kindergarten classroom. The program has helped parents and communities realize the significance of preparing children for school. Partnerships use a variety of at-risk indicators to identify eligible participants.

#### **Program Results:**

- 20 children served.
- 10 children served in Ridgeland. 10 children served in Hardeeville.
- A 68% increase in parents visiting the library with their child.
- A 46% increase in parents attending a house of worship with their child.
- A 31% increase in parents reading to or listening to their child read from a book.

## **Early Education.**

### **S.C. Child Development Education Pilot Program (CDEPP) 3140**

#### **Program Description:**

CDEPP offers state paid tuition of 4 year old kindergarten classes to eligible students living in the 37 trials and plaintiff school districts involved in the school funding equality lawsuit. To qualify your child had to be 4 years old by September 1, 2007. Students attended classes 6.5 hours per day, five days per week during the 180 day school year. All classes are taught using research based curricula.

#### **Program Results:**

- 4 children received quality full day 4K.
- Parents enrolled did participate in parent conferences.
- 4K teacher attended trainings as needed.
- 100% of participants were enrolled based on school readiness factors.
- One licensed, ABC enhanced childcare facility offered the CDEPP.
- CDEPP contract was terminated from Little People Daycare in December 2007, due to compliance and licensing concern. No other childcare facilities in the county expressed the desire to have this program.

## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

<u>Expenditures</u> By Funding Source	
State Appropriation (Fund 10)	\$154,817
E.I.A. Appropriation (Fund 55)	\$38,011
Lottery Appropriation (Fund 35)	\$102
C.D.E.P.P. Appropriation (Fund 60)	\$6,718
C.O.E. Appropriation (Fund 65)	\$108,014
N.F.P. Appropriation (Fund 70)	\$0
State Private (Fund 15)	\$1,476
Local Private (Fund 20)	\$ 52,429
Federal (Fund 30)	\$ 665
In-Kind (Fund 25)	\$600
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$362,832</b>

<u>Expenditures</u> By Program / Strategy Name	
Parents as Teachers	\$88,844
Imagination Library	\$10,336
Full Day 4k	\$6,346
Countdown To Kindergarten	\$7,571
Childcare Quality Enhancement	\$75,747
Scholarship Initiatives	\$40,651
Indirect Program Functions	\$46,981
Administrative Functions	\$30,950
Childcare Training Professional Development	\$46,343
Public Health Based Services	\$9063
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$362,832</b>

### NOTABLE DONORS

<i><b>DONOR'S NAME</b></i>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
Jasper County Council	\$25,000
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>

*Local Match Percentage for FY 2008: 35.68%*  
*(at least 15% Legislative requirement)*



## **COUNTY PARTNERSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Beatrice Jones, Board Chair / Business Community  
Rev. Calvin Washington, Vice Chair / Faith Community  
Priscilla Drake-Jenkins, Secretary/DSS Representative  
Ronnie Malphrus, Non-profit Organization  
Velvet Bostick, Childcare Provider  
Dana Cash, Transportation  
Heather Davis, Parent  
Dr. Tricia Etheridge, Healthcare  
Shawana Green, Childcare Provider  
Swanetta Hall, Pre-K / Primary Educator  
Betty Mitchell, Early Childhood Educator  
Ozell Richardson, Head Start Representative  
Anne Walker, Early Childhood Educator  
Sheila White, Pre-K / Primary Educator  
Janie Williams, Non-profit Organization  
Janis Woods, Early Childhood Educator  
Saundra Woods, School District Representative  
Mary Wrighten, Retired DSS Director  
Taffeny McFadden, Parent

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## **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.

### **Director's Data Note:**

In FY08, our partnerships around the state continued to grow. Our First Steps Data system has been updated to more accurately capture the services we are providing statewide. We are looking forward in FY09 to continue to impact our children, so they will enter school prepared and ready to learn to the best of their ability.

## **Testimonials**

### **Taffeny M., Jasper County parent receiving parenting services:**

*“My family and I really enjoy the PAT program. It has opened my eyes to the many teachable moments I have with my children as we go about our daily routine. My kids love making the little crafts and books—Ms. Polite really makes teaching easy and learning fun!”*

### **TaKelya D., mother of KenNiyah, 3 years old, who receives Dolly Parton Imagination books:**

*“The Dollywood book club is a highlight of my daughter’s month. She gets so excited when she receives her special book in the mail and feels very grown-up when she reads her name on the label. One of our favorites is “Only You”. This program has helped to start her library of books, something I could not have afforded to do without First Steps’ support.*

# 2008 School Readiness Risk Profile

# Jasper County

Total Children Under Six: 1,850

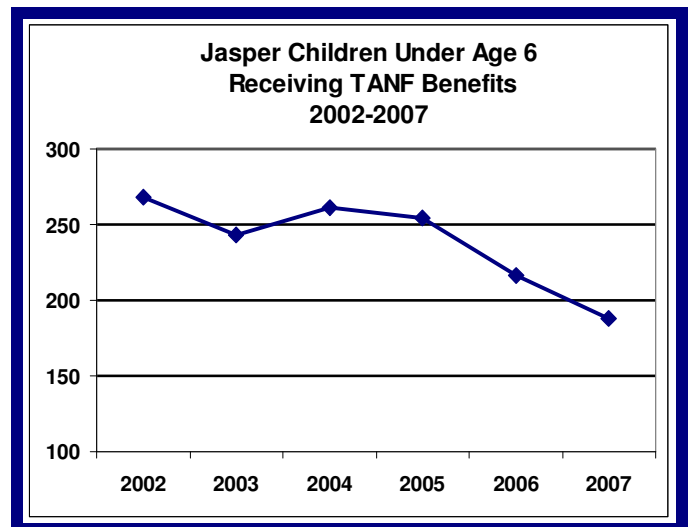
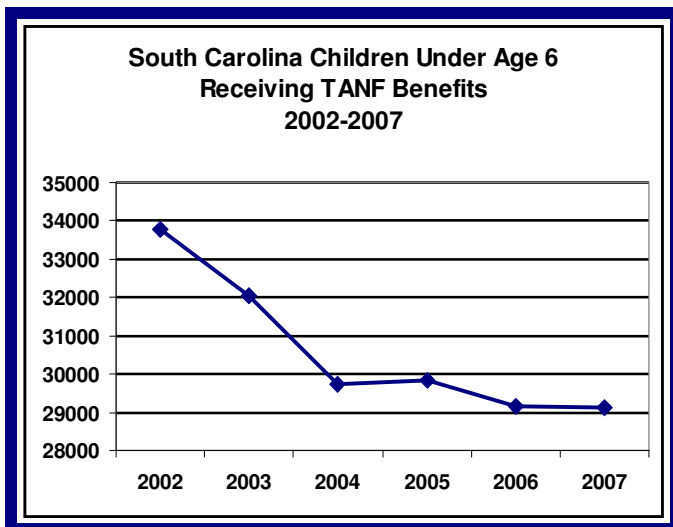
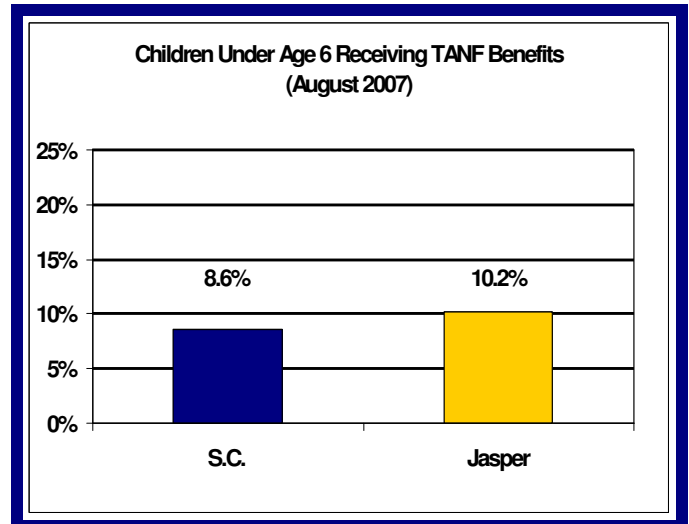
## CHILD POVERTY (Children in Families Receiving TANF Benefits)

Statewide Average (2007): 8.4%      Jasper County (2007): 10.2%

***Fast Fact: Roughly 1 in 10 Jasper 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.

188 of Jasper County's 1,850 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

# Jasper County

Total Children Under Six: 1,850

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

Statewide Average (2005): 10.2%

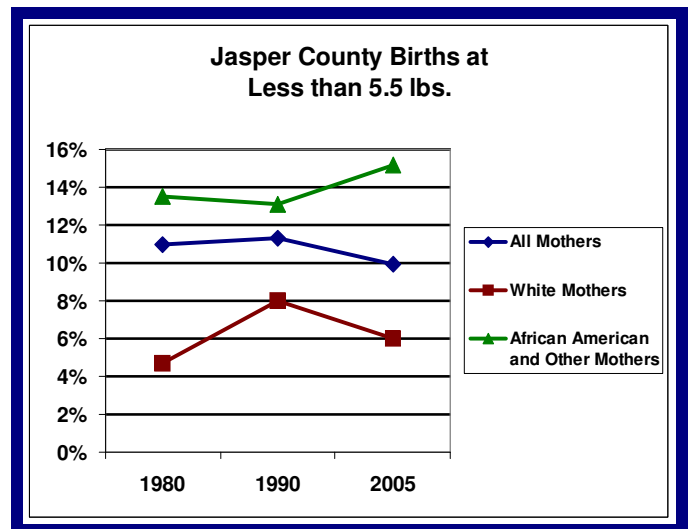
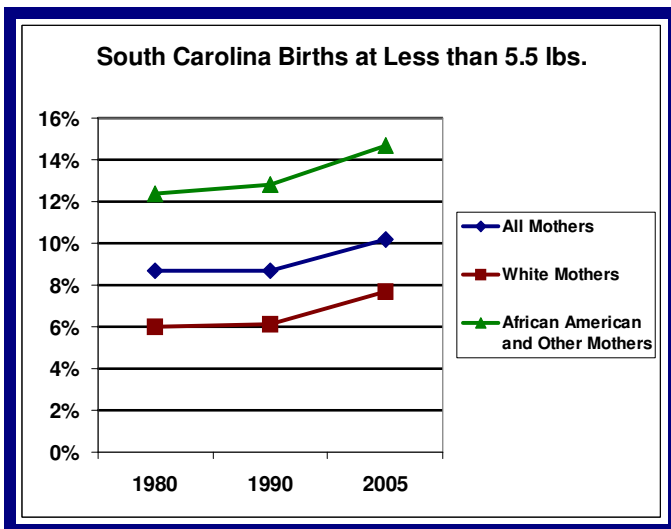
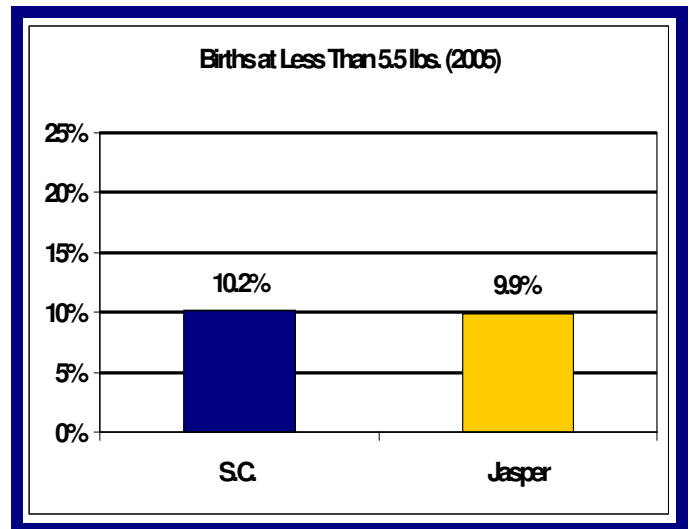
Jasper County (2005): 9.9%

**Fast Fact:** Roughly 1 in 10 Jasper 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.

37 of the 375 children born in Jasper County during 2005 weighed less than 5.5 lbs.



# 2008 School Readiness Risk Profile

# Jasper County

Total Children Under Six: 1,850

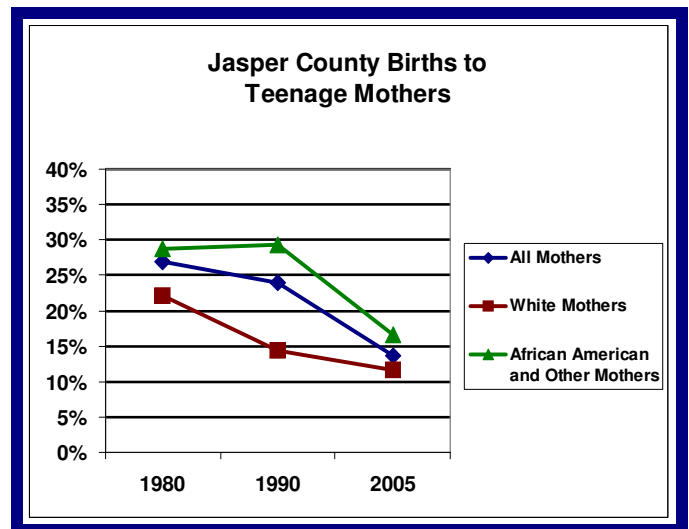
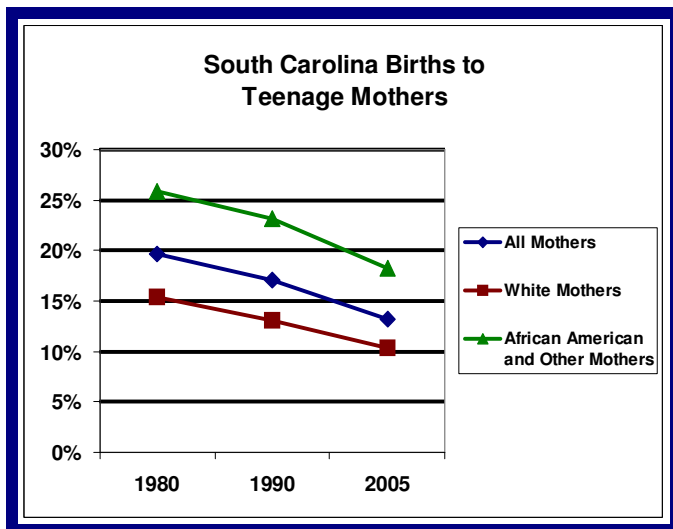
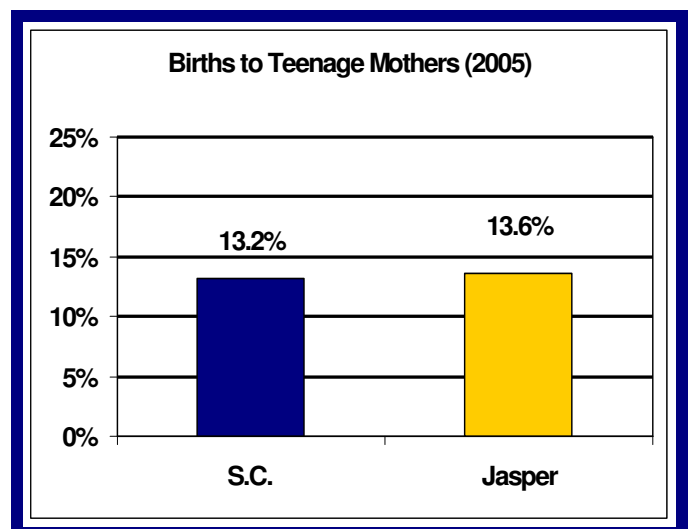
## BIRTHS TO TEENAGE MOTHERS

Statewide Average (2005): 13.2%      Jasper County (2005): 13.6%

*Fast Fact: Roughly 1 in 7 Jasper 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.

51 of the 375 children born in Jasper County during 2005 had teenage mothers.



# 2008 School Readiness Risk Profile

# Jasper County

Total Children Under Six: 1,850

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

Statewide Average (2005): 23.7%      Jasper County (2005): 37.1%

**Fast Fact:** Just over 1 in 3 children in Jasper 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.

139 of the 375 children born in Jasper County during 2005 had mothers with less than a high school diploma.

