

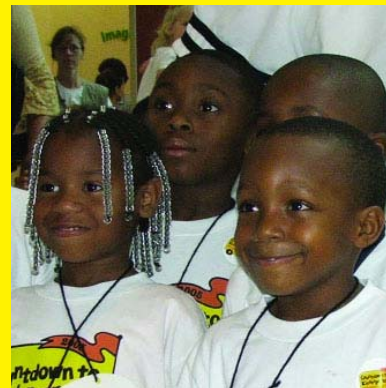
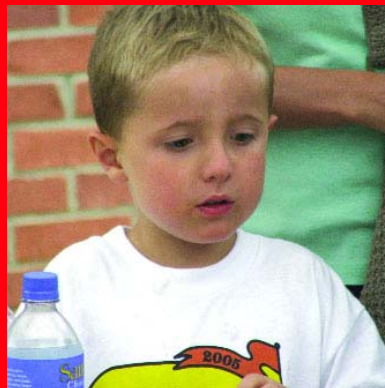
SOUTH CAROLINA



Getting children ready for school.

Annual Report 2005

STATE FOCUS. LOCAL IMPACT. EVERY CHILD READY.



## FIRST STEPS QUICK FACTS 2005

**Children Served:**

55,156

**Families and Adults Served:**

12,941

**Child Care Facilities Served:**

656

**Scholarships for Quality Child Care:**

59

**Early Education First Steps Slots:**

862

**First Steps County Partnerships:**

46

**SC Education Lottery Investment in First Steps as Match per SC General Assembly:**

\$3 MILLION

**First Steps Lottery Expansion and Leverage of Services to At Risk:**

31.7%

## SOUTH CAROLINA'S CHILDREN ARE OUR FUTURE.

But are we doing everything we can to give our children the tools they need to succeed? Are we using a comprehensive approach to school readiness that focuses on the whole child? Are we best leveraging our limited resources? Are we ensuring quality and accountability?

# Are our children ready?





## LEGISLATION

“There is established South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness, 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.”

– SECTION 59-152-10 (June 1999)

### FAST FACT:

Recent population data for South Carolina estimates 334,241 children ages 0-5. (U.S. Census, SC Budget and Control Board’s Office of Research & Statistics, 2004)

## PURPOSE

“South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness exists to develop, promote, and assist efforts of agencies, private providers, and public and private organizations and entities, at the state level and the community level, to collaborate and cooperate in order to focus and intensify services, assure the most efficient use of all available resources, and eliminate duplication of efforts to serve the needs of South Carolina’s young children and their families.”

– SECTION 59-152-20

## GOALS

“The goals for South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness are to:

- (1) **provide parents with access** to the support they might seek and want to strengthen their families and to promote the optimal development of their preschool children;
- (2) **increase comprehensive services** so children have reduced risk for major physical, developmental, and learning problems;
- (3) **promote high quality preschool programs** that provide a healthy environment that will promote normal growth and development;
- (4) **provide services** so all children receive the protection, nutrition, and health care needed to thrive in the early years of life so they arrive at school ready to learn; and
- (5) **mobilize communities** to focus efforts on providing enhanced services to support families and their young children so as to enable every child to reach school healthy and ready to learn.”

– SECTION 59-152-30



## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### Voting Members

The Honorable Mark Sanford, Governor, *Chair*  
 The Honorable Inez Tenenbaum, *Superintendent of Education*  
 Mr. Lewis T. Smoak, Business Community, *Vice-Chair*  
 Ms. Lisa Van Riper, Parent of Young Child, *Secretary*  
 The Honorable John Matthews, *SC Senate*  
 The Honorable Mike Fair, *SC Senate*  
 The Honorable Bessie Moody-Lawrence, *SC House of Representatives*  
 The Honorable Shirley Hinson, *SC House of Representatives*  
 Ms. Doris Ballard, *Early Childhood Educator, Chair, Program and Grants Committee*  
 Mr. G. Lee Cory, *Business Community, Chair, Strategic Planning and Administration Committee*  
 Mr. Walter Miller, *Medical Provider, Chair, Evaluation and Accountability Committee*  
 Ms. Marileen Chapman, *Child Care Provider*  
 Ms. Kristin Hook, *Parent of Young Child*  
 Mrs. Judith Aughtry, *Parent of Young Child, Co-Chair, Parenting and Family Strengthening Committee*  
 Dr. Thaddeus Bell, *Medical Provider, Co-Chair, Parenting and Family Strengthening Committee*  
 Ms. Claudia Cordray, *Early Childhood Educator*  
 Mrs. Katherine Davis, *Parent of Young Child*  
 Ms. Sabine Lang, *Business Community, Co-Chair, Early Childhood Education Committee*  
 Mr. Henry Parr, Jr., *Business Community*  
 Ms. Linda M. O'Quinn, *Child Care Provider, Co-Chair, Early Childhood Education Committee*  
 Vacant, *Early Childhood Educator*  
 Vacant, *Early Childhood Educator*

### Non-Voting Members

Mr. Bobby Bowers, *Budget & Control Board, Office of Research and Statistics*  
 Dr. Stan Butkus, *Department of Disabilities and Special Needs*  
 Mr. Lee Catoe, *Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services*  
 Dr. Nancy Freeman, *Governor's Advisory Board on Child Care Regulation*  
 Mr. John J. Conner, *SC Department of Mental Health*  
 Mr. Jim Griffith, *Transportation Association of SC*  
 Dr. James Hudgins, *Technical College System*  
 Ms. Patti Butcher, *SC State Library*  
 Mr. Robert Kerr, *Department of Health and Human Services*  
 Ms. Leigh Bolick, *Designee for Kim Aydlette, Department of Social Services*  
 Ms. Susan Jones, *Designee for Ms. Elizabeth Mabry, Department of Transportation*  
 Dr. Lisa Waddell, *Designee for Mr. C. Earl Hunter, Department of Health and Environmental Control*

### Advisory and Committee Members

Dr. Conrad Festa, *Commission on Higher Education*  
 Dr. Paul Krohne, *SC School Boards Association*  
 Ms. Mary Payson, *Budget & Control Board, Office of Research and Statistics*  
 Mr. David Potter, *SC Education Oversight Committee*  
 Mr. Bob Staton, *United Way Association of SC*



December 31, 2005

Dear Friends,

In the short six-year period since its creation, First Steps has become recognized across the state as a program with the best interests of our youngest students at heart.

Dedicated to improving the school readiness of all of South Carolina's children, the program works to ensure that their early experiences are both healthy and stimulating. By doing this, First Steps looks to increase the well-being and long-term academic success of all of the Palmetto State's young learners.

In each of South Carolina's 46 counties, First Steps works with parents to get them the important tools they need for their children. Proper prenatal care, health and nutrition resources, quality child care, books and educational materials are all a part of the First Steps effort. In the pages of this annual report, you'll find part of the First Steps story and commitment to children and families across South Carolina.

We all need to continue to work toward improving our children's chances for future success. Whether you are a parent, teacher, concerned citizen or legislator, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for both your time and efforts in helping all of our children perform at their best. Take care.

Sincerely,

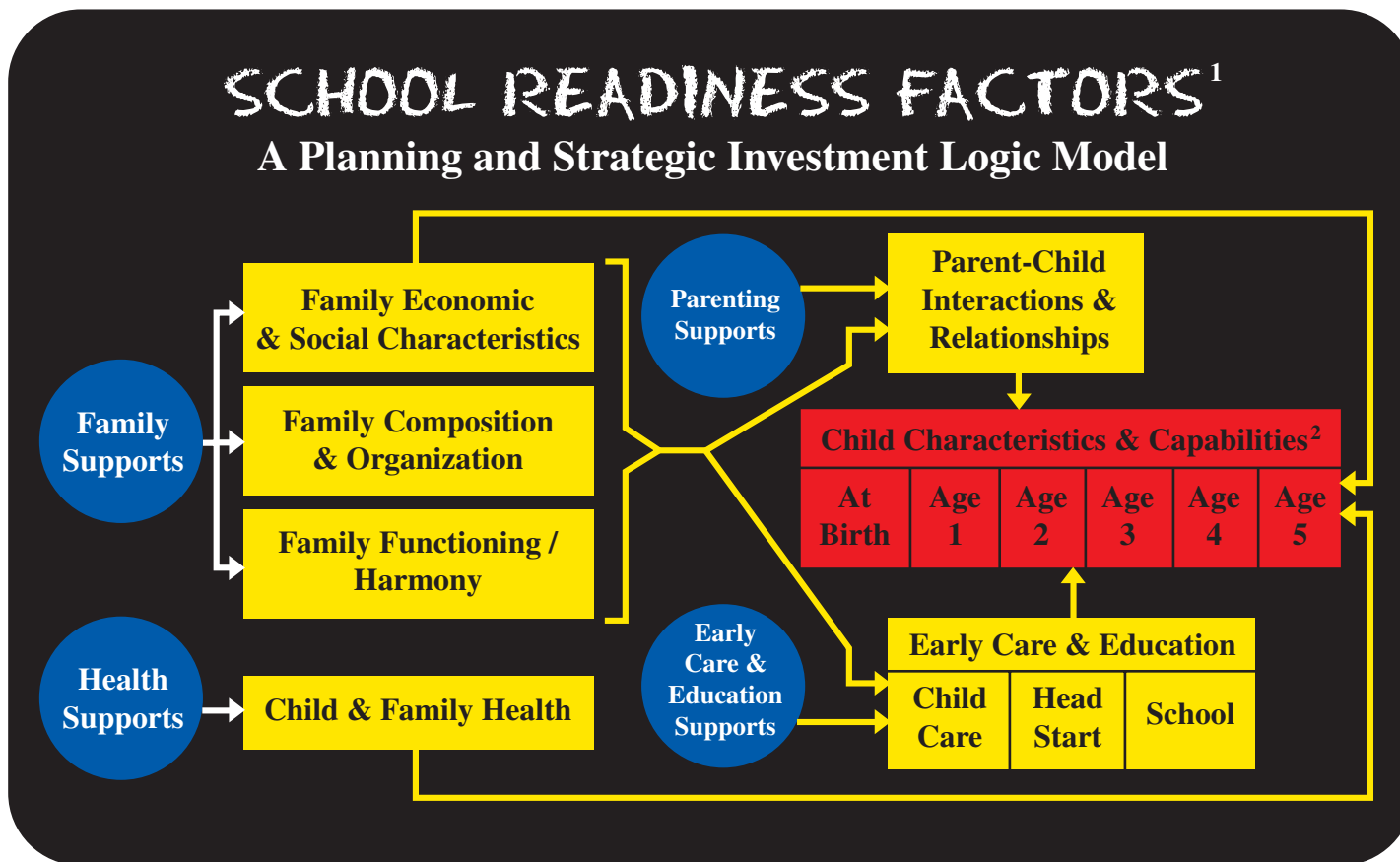
A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark Sanford".

Mark Sanford  
Governor  
State of South Carolina



# ARE OUR CHILDREN READY?

**Research makes it clear: a child's school readiness is determined by many factors.** Among the most critical components include good health and positive, participatory parenting and nurture by families. Healthy children learn best; parents are the child's first and strongest teachers. High quality early learning experiences in home, child care, and school settings add to the school readiness foundation, allowing children to thrive at a time when the brain is most formative and providing a trajectory toward later school success. First Steps' logic model helps community-based partnerships examine current needs based on research-based, "readiness determinants" and plan programmatic supports which leverage existing assets for children and families at the local level.



<sup>1</sup>Source: Holmes, B., Hall, Tamara (2002)

<sup>2</sup>The National Education Goals Panel (1995) defines a child's school readiness at each age in the following domains: (1) physical well-being and motor development, (2) social and emotional development, (3) approaches to learning, (4) language development and communication, cognition and general knowledge.



“Early childhood policies and practices are highly fragmented, with complex and confusing points of entry that are particularly problematic for underserved segments of the population and those with special needs. This lack of an integrative early childhood infrastructure makes it difficult to advance prevention-oriented initiatives for all children and to coordinate services for those with complex problems.”

Jack Shonkoff and Deborah Phillips,  
*From Neurons to Neighborhoods*

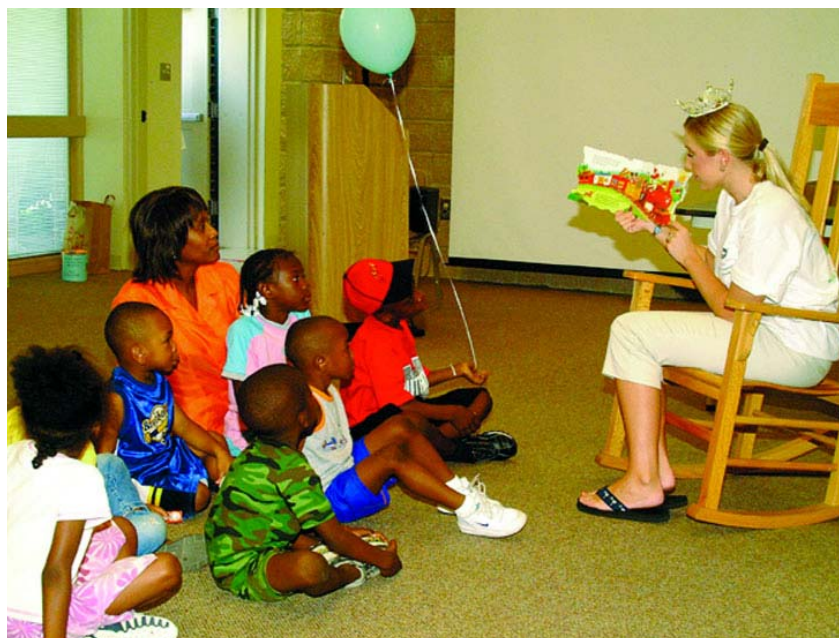
## FIRST STEPS' STRATEGIES TO INCREASE READINESS

Since 1999, First Steps has been helping South Carolina's youngest children and their families get ready for school, serving 339,046 children since inception through its community-based partnerships. As the *state's only entity focused exclusively on increasing school readiness outcomes* for all children, First Steps partnerships served more than 56,156 children ages 0-5 and their families in 46 South Carolina counties during fiscal year 2005. To achieve the goals outlined in First Steps' enabling legislation, local and regional partnerships focus on five broad strategy areas:

### FAMILY STRENGTHENING

**GOAL:** "First Steps works collaboratively with its agency partners, the faith community and private sector to support parents and families in their own efforts to maximize the school readiness, well-being and preparation for long-term academic success of the state's young children."

- ▶ **In 2005, First Steps served 8,479 families and 18,813 children through family strengthening strategies in 44 counties (ex: Parents as Teachers, early and family literacy programs).**



### HEALTHY START

**GOAL:** "First Steps recognizes the importance of a healthy start in maximizing both school readiness and the long-term well-being of children. The initiative partners with families, the medical community and other stakeholders to leverage resources for – and increase awareness of – the healthcare, nutrition and early developmental needs of the state's young children."

- ▶ **In 2005, First Steps served 3,569 families and 3,609 children through healthy start programs in 15 counties (ex: early vision and dental screenings, referrals to medical homes, child care nutrition and Healthy Start programs, asthma programming, prevention of maltreatment and abuse).**

#### FAST FACT:

First Steps served more than 56,156 children ages 0-5 and their families in 46 South Carolina counties in 2005.

## CHILD CARE QUALITY

**GOAL:** “First Steps recognizes quality child care as a research-based determinant of school readiness. As such, First Steps collaborates with parents, the child care community and its agency and community partners to maximize child care quality throughout the state. Particular emphasis is placed on assisting parents in their efforts to identify settings most likely to maximize developmental outcomes, and assist providers in their efforts to maximize the learning environments they provide for young children.”

▶ **In 2005, First Steps served 656 facilities and 31,495 children through child care quality programs in 44 counties (ex: child care scholarships, facility quality enhancement, child care staff training and consultation).**

## EARLY EDUCATION

**GOAL:** “First Steps leverages state, local and private resources to increase the quality of, and number of children participating in, developmentally appropriate pre-kindergarten programs in both the public and private sectors. Particular emphasis is placed on fidelity to research-based instructional models and targeting of students at-risk of early school failure.”

▶ **In 2005, First Steps served 862 children through early education strategies in 25 counties (ex: expanded public and private 4-year-old kindergarten).**

## SCHOOL TRANSITION

**GOAL:** “First Steps recognizes school entry as a pivotal transition point in each child’s educational career. In an effort to ensure strong collaborative relationships between the state’s families and schools, the First Steps initiative develops strategies to maximize parents’ understandings of state and local expectations to ensure a smooth and beneficial school transition for each child.”

▶ **In 2005, First Steps served 1,377 children through school transition strategies in 37 counties (ex: Countdown to Kindergarten).**



## Goals for Family Strengthening

1. Increase family literacy and parent education levels;
2. Improve parental employability and employment;
3. Increase effectiveness of parenting related to child nurturance, learning and interaction, language, health and safety;
4. Increase successful parenting/family literacy program targeting, service integration, results documentation; and
5. Increase early parent involvement in 4-K-12 education settings.

## FOCUS. FAMILY STRENGTHENING. IMPACT.

### FIRST STEPS STRATEGIES FOR FAMILY STRENGTHENING:

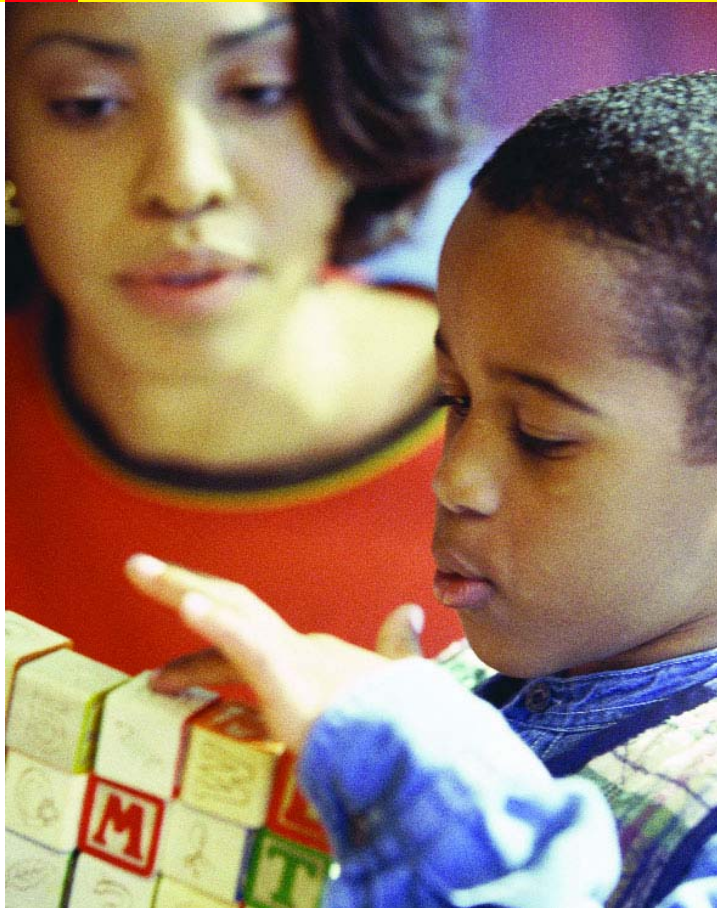
- ▶ **Parent Education** – Increase parents' ability to stimulate their child's intellectual, social and physical development with model parent programs such as Parents as Teachers (PAT) and Parent-Child Home-Program (PCH-P).
- ▶ **Early and Family Literacy** – Extend the abilities of families to read with their children through programs such as the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, English as a Second Language, Mother Read/Father Read or library-based programs.

**“Parents have a strong challenge today, bringing up their children when so many influences are beyond their control. I sense that parents want to know how to cope and what strategies they can use to get their children ready for school. I see the partnership of the faith community, First Steps and Triple P bringing tools, providing support and broadening the knowledge base of parents.”**

*Dr. Ron Carter, Pastor  
Lawson Grove Baptist Church and  
Provost/Dean, Coker College, Hartsville, SC*

TOTAL CHILDREN  
AFFECTED BY  
FAMILY  
STRENGTHENING  
PROGRAMS:  
**18,813**





**First Steps  
Partnerships  
Participating in  
Family Strengthening  
Strategies**

## RESULTS

### 1. Increased parent knowledge and public awareness of the importance of early learning.

- 58,729 home visits served 10,820 families.
- 90 percent of children served through family strengthening programs were between the ages of 0–3.
- Provided practical, focused school readiness tips for parents through print media reaching 939,000 homes.

### 2. Enhanced the school readiness of children through literacy-based services and programming for families.

- 20,279 children served in First Steps-funded family literacy/learning programs. 6,334 health and developmental screenings provided.
- Over 10,000 children served through book distribution and library-based literacy programs.
- More than 141,000 books given to children, with 100 percent partnerships offering integrated programming for families whose 7,393 children receive Dolly Parton Imagination books in the home.

### 3. Conducted a client level analysis of parenting programming expenditures and results funded by both federal and state resources.

- 7,190 adults were served in family strengthening programs, of which 68.11 percent were enrolled in Medicaid.
- 3,495 at-risk children in First Steps-supported Parents as Teachers (PAT) programs were linked to the support services they needed such as Food Stamps, WIC and housing assistance.
- 506 parents achieved a higher education level through First Steps-supported programs.
- Leveraged \$159,000 in new federal funds were applied to family strengthening programs for targeted groups of families.

### FAST FACT:

23.7% of South Carolina's adults have less than a high school diploma.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup>SC Kids Count 2004, [www.sckidscount.org](http://www.sckidscount.org)

## Goals for Healthy Start

1. Improve the health, growth, and development of young children so they enter school physically and mentally prepared to succeed;
2. Integrate medical provider, school readiness and early literacy services; and
3. Leverage federal resources for targeted families with young children at greatest risk for school failure, expanding medical anticipatory guidance to parents with special needs and other at-risk children.

## FOCUS. HEALTHY START. IMPACT.

### FIRST STEPS STRATEGIES FOR BETTER HEALTH AMONG YOUNG CHILDREN:

**Early Periodic Screenings & Confirmed Diagnosis and Treatment** – Conduct screenings at child care centers with a focus on the importance of immunization and early identification, prevention and treatment of physical problems that affect learning.

**Technical Assistance and Health Consultation for Child Care Providers** – Identify health and safety issues in child care facilities. Teach child care workers how to prevent the spread of infection and food-borne illnesses, and to spot illnesses likely to spread among children in a child care facility.

**Nutrition Education** – Provide low-income families and child care providers with on-site and home-based nutritional counseling, reducing preventable developmental delays and deficiencies related to poor nutrition.

**Pediatric and Postpartum Home Health Visits** – Assess the overall physical health of infants and their mothers, evaluate the overall safety conditions of the home; and provide information about growth and development and linking families to medical homes. These services will be offered in collaboration with the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC).

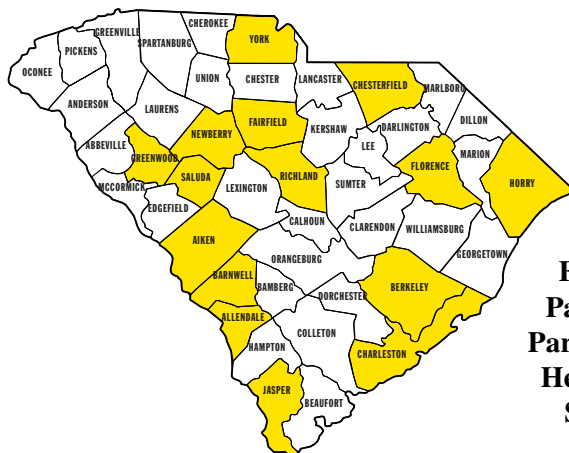
**“First Steps’ lottery challenge 2005 provided resources to leverage an added \$20,000 federal dollars into our state, serving 125 additional children (ages birth to five) who have asthma in 10 South Carolina counties. Our partnership with First Steps is one small but focused example of effective synergy between two non-profit entities that put children’s needs front and center.”**

*Connie Ginsberg,*

*Executive Director of Family Connection of SC, Inc.*

TOTAL CHILDREN  
AFFECTED BY HEALTHY  
START PROGRAMS:  
**3,609**





**First Steps  
Partnerships  
Participating in  
Healthy Start  
Strategies**

## RESULTS

### **1. Increased reach of school readiness services to Medicaid-eligible families; referrals of uninsured and underinsured families with children 0–5 to medical homes through school readiness interventions.**

- 2,048 referrals made to support services such as doctors, dentists, WIC, and BabyNet for 1,535 families.
- 1,563 families linked to a doctor/medical home.
- 542 children served through public health promotion programs.
- 265 children served through nutrition programs.

### **2. Increased immunization rates, adequate medical care and early referral for learning disability/health issues which impact school performance among South Carolina families with children 0–5.**

- 2,412 general health screenings.
- 328 dental screenings, 290 hearing screenings, 255 vision screenings.
- 226 home environment assessments.

### **3. Improved parent/caregiver knowledge regarding health and safety issues for young children, and potential educational success impact.**

- 1,282 children served through home-based health services.
- 270 prenatal and 556 postnatal assessments/visits.

### **4. Increased medical service delivery/integration at school and child care sites where it is possible to meet parent needs and ensure health needs of young children are met.**

- 110 children served through non-home-based health services.
- 58 child care facilities or early education classes received a health visit.

### **5. Increased involvement of pediatric community in family literacy/school readiness referral and guidance.**

- 1,043 books distributed through medical providers.

### **FAST FACT:**

**1 in 10 South Carolina's  
children are born  
low birth weight.<sup>4</sup>**

<sup>4</sup>SC Kids Count 2004, [www.sckidscount.org](http://www.sckidscount.org)

## Goals for Child Care Quality

1. Increase availability of quality child care choices for parents, as measured by increasing numbers of child care providers operating at higher levels of quality;
2. Increase number of child care vouchers available to SC families for quality child care;
3. Increase school readiness focus in child care settings;
4. Increase leverage of federal and private resources to serve the state's most at-risk children;
5. Increase number of child care workers achieving progress toward early education certification and continued professional development;
6. Improve quality of physical and learning environment in child care settings of all type; and
7. Expand public and private partnerships in 4-K education.

## FOCUS. CHILD CARE QUALITY. IMPACT.

### FIRST STEPS STRATEGIES FOR CHILD CARE QUALITY:

**Quality Enhancement** – Assist child care providers to improve program quality by funding targeted upgrades to meet DSS licensing or ABC-enhanced requirements (health and safety, educational curricula, equipment and supplies), and to further enhance learning environments for young children. Qualified staff provide technical assistance and mentoring to assist providers with improvement planning.

**Staff Training and Development** – Provide ongoing staff development and mentoring to assist providers in meeting DSS training requirements, increasing the knowledge of child care workers and improving the quality of programs offered in participating child care facilities.

**Child Care Vouchers** – Provide subsidies for quality child care programs to eligible families and their children and increase the number of child care slots in South Carolina.

**Teacher Education And Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.) Early Childhood Project** – Provide scholarships for teachers working in child care to complete college coursework in early childhood education, often enabling them to increase their compensation. T.E.A.C.H is jointly managed by First Steps and DSS through the Center for Child Care Career Development in Greenville.

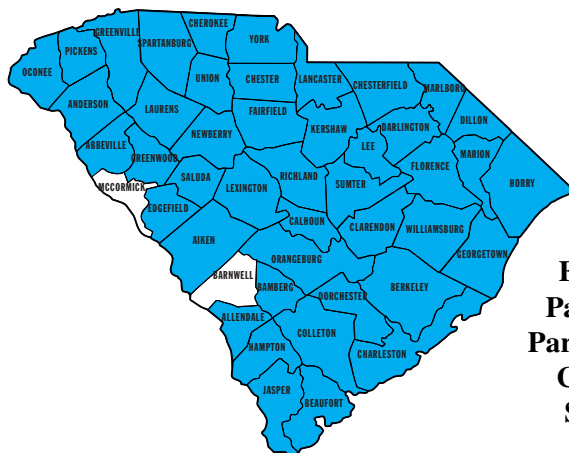


**“High-quality care and early education – at home, school, or in the private and faith-based community – for all South Carolina’s children yields direct positive benefits for our state’s economic competitiveness.”**

*Bob Faith, SC Secretary of Commerce*

TOTAL CHILDREN  
AFFECTED BY CHILD  
CARE PROGRAMS:  
**31,495**





**First Steps  
Partnerships  
Participating in  
Child Care  
Strategies**

## RESULTS

### 1. Increased availability of quality child care choices for parents, as measured by increasing numbers of child care providers operating at a higher rate of care.

- 15,641 children were served through child care quality enhancement programs.
- 390 child care providers participated in quality enhancement programs.
- 40 child care providers became licensed, 94 child care providers became ABC-enhanced and 16 child care providers became National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accredited.

### 2. Increased school readiness knowledge and skill of child care professionals.

- 13,599 children were affected through high-quality child care center staff training and development.
- 1,444 training sessions and workshops for child care workers were held by First Steps partnerships across the state.
- 2,264 hours of training in literacy techniques offered to 246 early care and education staff and parents.

### 3. Increased leverage of federal monies for targeted at-risk student populations.

- \$570,000 in federal funds were applied to child care programs through leveraging allocated state funds.

### 4. Increased access to other quality child care programs through ABC voucher system/other needs-based scholarships.

- 59 child care scholarships were provided to families offering expanded resources to families in need.

### 5. Increased number of child care providers who have completed Early Childhood Development (ECD) 101 and received their SC Early Childhood Credential.

- 1,304 child care providers are currently active in the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship program, an increase of 41 percent over 2004.
- 3,412 SC Early Childhood Credential Scholarships awarded from 2001-2005.
- 1,530 scholarships for participants pursuing Associate's Degrees awarded from 2001-2005.
- 2,569 ECD 101 credentials earned by T.E.A.C.H. recipients from 2001-2005.
- 90 Associate degrees completed by T.E.A.C.H. participants 2001-2005.

<sup>5</sup><http://www.sckidscount.org/kc03.asp?COUNTYID=47#Family>

## FAST FACT:

63% of SC children are in families where both parents work outside the home.<sup>5</sup>

## Goals for Early Education

1. Increase first grade readiness and pre-literacy skills of children through quality early education intervention;
2. Increase ongoing 4-K documentation, reporting and evaluation of results;
3. Increase the number of served at-risk children in quality 4-K environments, public and private;
4. Increase the qualifications, professional development and access to training for personnel teaching in public and private 4-K programs;
5. Reduce the number of at-risk 4-year-old children on waiting lists for the public school Child Development program;
6. Increase the evaluation and impact analysis of federal early education spending (Head Start, Early Head Start, Even Start, Title I monies) in quality early education strategies at district levels;
7. Increase parent involvement strategies in 4-K and 5-K to impact involvement in K-12; and
8. Increase documentation and analysis of the state's school readiness progress.

## FOCUS. EARLY EDUCATION. IMPACT.

### FIRST STEPS STRATEGIES FOR EARLY EDUCATION:

**4-year-old Kindergarten (4-K)** – Add half-day and full-day public and private 4-K classes and expand existing 4-K child development half-day programs to full-day programs.

**Family Initiatives** – Create public-private partnerships or expanded 4-K choice in targeted areas; offer school readiness service integration for parents.

**A Nobel Economist speaks out on US pre-Kindergarten investment:** “As an economist, I would argue, go where the returns are highest...Right now, there’s plenty of room for intervention in disadvantaged families.”

*Dr. James J. Heckman, US Nobel Prize, Economics (2002),  
Professor of Economics, University of Chicago,  
Federal Bank of Minneapolis Interview (2005).*

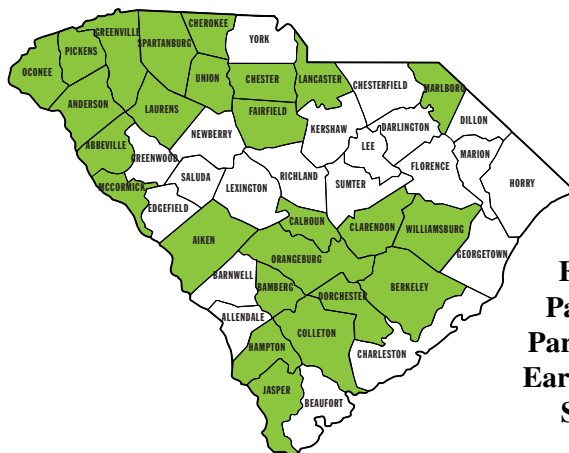
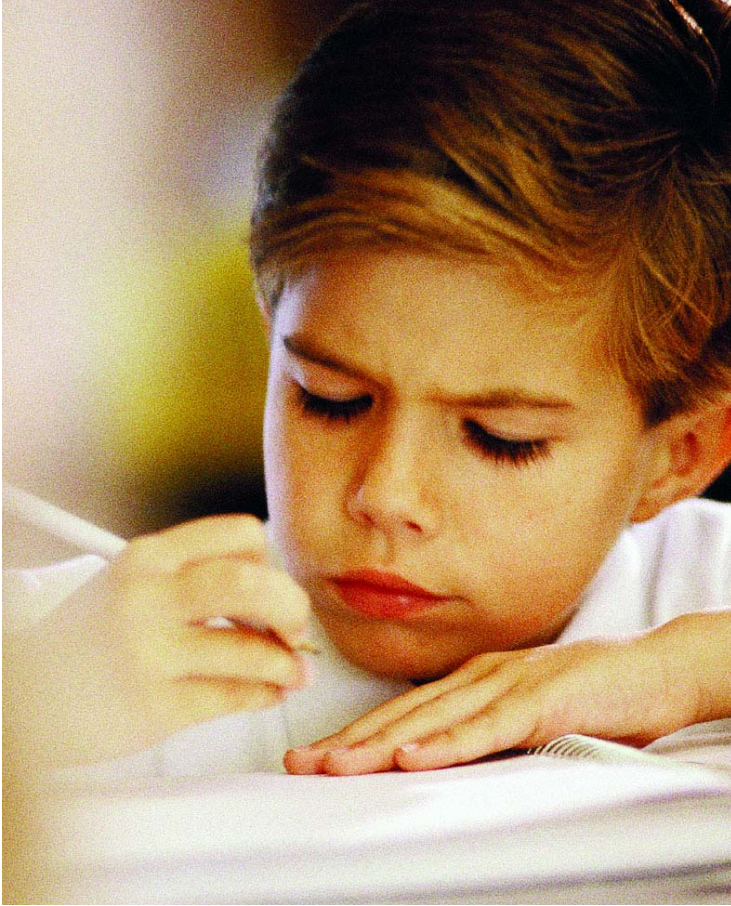
TOTAL CHILDREN  
AFFECTED BY  
EARLY EDUCATION  
PROGRAMS:

862

### FAST FACT:

Partnering with the State Dept. of Education and local school districts, First Steps funded 11 additional family literacy programs through the SC Education Lottery challenge during 2005, providing services for families in need.





**First Steps  
Partnerships  
Participating in  
Early Education  
Strategies.**

## RESULTS

### 1. Increased the number of at-risk children being served in quality 4-K classes, public and private.

- 421 additional children were served in full-day public and private 4-K.
- 112 additional children were served in half-day 4-K in public school.
- 109 additional children were served by having half-day 4-K classes extended to full-day.
- 182 additional children were served in Head Start programs.
- 38 additional children under 4 years of age were served in early education programs.

### 2. Increased number of teachers in public and private 4K and 5k whose certification is Early Childhood Education.

- 3,412 SC Early Childhood Credential Scholarships awarded from 2001-2005.
- 1,304 child care providers are currently active in the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship program, an increase of 41 percent over 2004.
- 3,412 SC Early Childhood Credential Scholarships awarded from 2001-2005.
- 1,530 scholarships for participants pursuing Associate's Degrees awarded from 2001-2005.
- 2,569 ECD 101 credentials earned by T.E.A.C.H. recipients from 2001-2005.
- 90 Associate degrees completed by T.E.A.C.H. participants 2001-2005.
- 100 percent of 4-K teachers in First Steps-funded classrooms across South Carolina are early childhood certified.

### 3. Increased the number of parents actively participating in their child's school and education as reported by the schools at 4-K and 5-K (i.e., parent-teacher conferences, school governance, etc.).

- 1,572 children received First Steps-funded home visits in preparation for attending 5-K.

### 4. Increased leverage of federal monies for at-risk student populations for early education spending.

- \$1,396,000 new federal dollars have been applied to early education programs by leveraging allocated state funds.



## Goals for School Transition

1. Maximize parents' understandings of state and local expectations and ensure a smooth and beneficial school transition for each child;
2. Introduce children and families to materials and standards to be found in Kindergarten or first grade classroom; and
3. Increase parent's positive relationship with the school and faculty.

**“South Carolina’s COUNTDOWN program is an innovative public awareness and home visitation initiative to support kindergarten transition.”**

*National Governor’s Association:  
A Governor’s Guide to  
School Readiness (2005)*

## FOCUS. SCHOOL TRANSITION. IMPACT.

### FIRST STEPS STRATEGIES FOR HELPING STUDENTS TRANSITION INTO SCHOOL SUCCESSFULLY:

**Countdown to Kindergarten** – Affect the early parent involvement of rising 5-K parents whose children are screened as at-risk for school readiness.

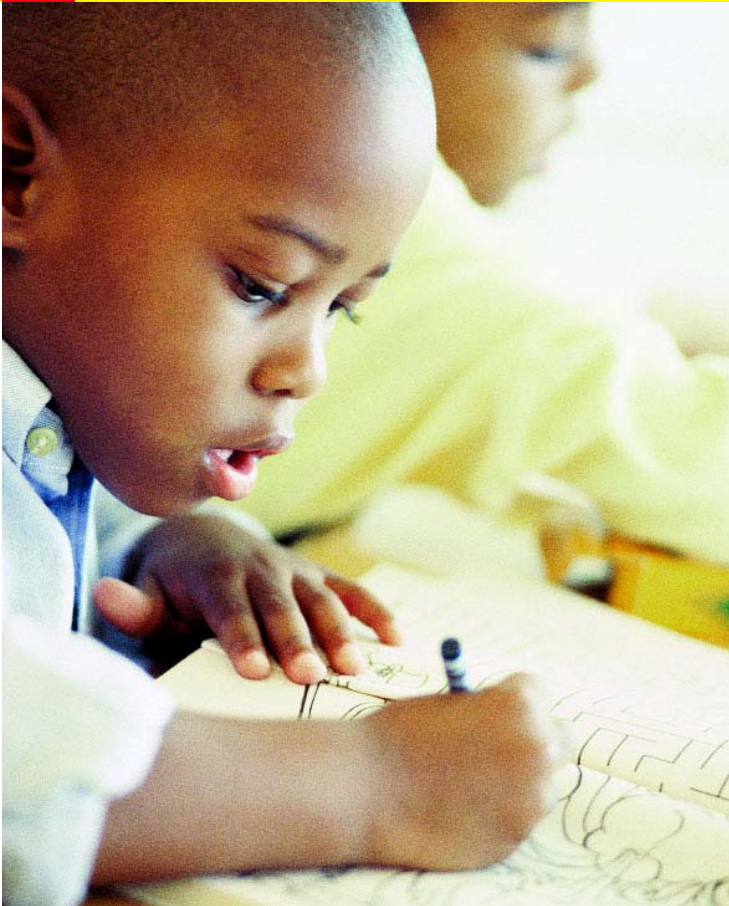
**Summer Readiness Initiatives** – Assist pre-5-K and pre-first grade children in making successful transitions in school; connect at-risk families to their child’s school. Work to help students succeed by providing educational opportunities, encouragement and support services.

**“Countdown is the greatest thing that’s ever happened to children in South Carolina. The relationships built over the summer between the teacher and families created a trust and support that has helped the children blossom in kindergarten. It’s the only way to break the cycle and model for parents how effectively they can work with their own children through reading and playing and learning with hands on materials.”**

*Mrs. Gayle Troutman,  
Kindergarten Teacher, Burnside Elementary School*

TOTAL CHILDREN  
AFFECTED BY  
SCHOOL TRANSITION  
PROGRAMS:  
**1,377**





## RESULTS

### 1. Supported the successful transition of SC's most at-risk children into the K-12 school environment.

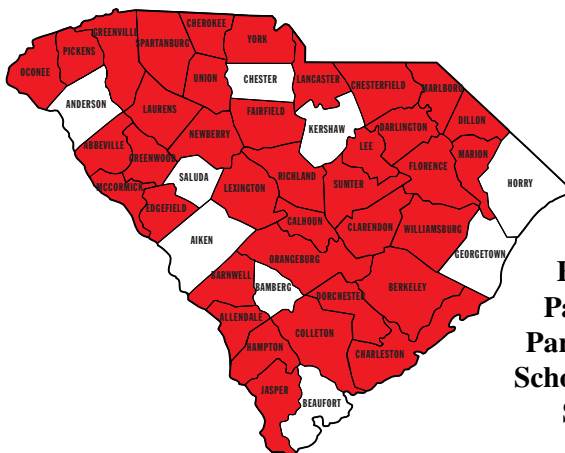
- 1,117 children were served through Countdown to Kindergarten, 74.4 percent of whom qualified for free lunch.
- 227 children were served by a public summer or evening early education program.
- \$54,000 in federal funds have been applied to school transition programs through leveraging allocated state funds.

### 2. Increased attention to the importance of parental involvement in the early grades (particularly among the hard-to-reach, at-risk communities).

- Of Countdown participants, families were more likely to be single parent families (over 50 percent) and nearly 1 of 3 parents did not graduate from high school (30 percent).
- In 2004, the results from the pre- and post-assessment evaluation Home Visit Surveys report that participation in Countdown to Kindergarten resulted in a 95-percent improvement in families reading to their children, a 78-percent increase in families telling their children stories and a 93-percent increase in families teaching their children letters, words and numbers.

### 3. Expanded public awareness strategies on the importance of school readiness; provided simple tools for parents, caregivers, and communities to impact children's early school success.

- 10 weekly sets school readiness tips were released during summer as companion to Countdown to Kindergarten program, through print and other media (141 total newspaper articles were published in daily and weekly South Carolina newspapers with a combined circulation of 936,009 readers).
- WLTX-TV Columbia produced/donated four 30 second public service announcements aired 260 times for a total of 130 minutes (13 county viewing audience). WLTX-TV also hosted Countdown tips and information on their website.
- Countdown articles were included on several websites, including, one article on the Business Wire (a site receiving 2.4 million hits per month), and four articles on the SC Hotline (1,500 page views per day).



**First Steps  
Partnerships  
Participating in  
School Transition  
Strategies**

FOCUS. FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY. IMPACT.

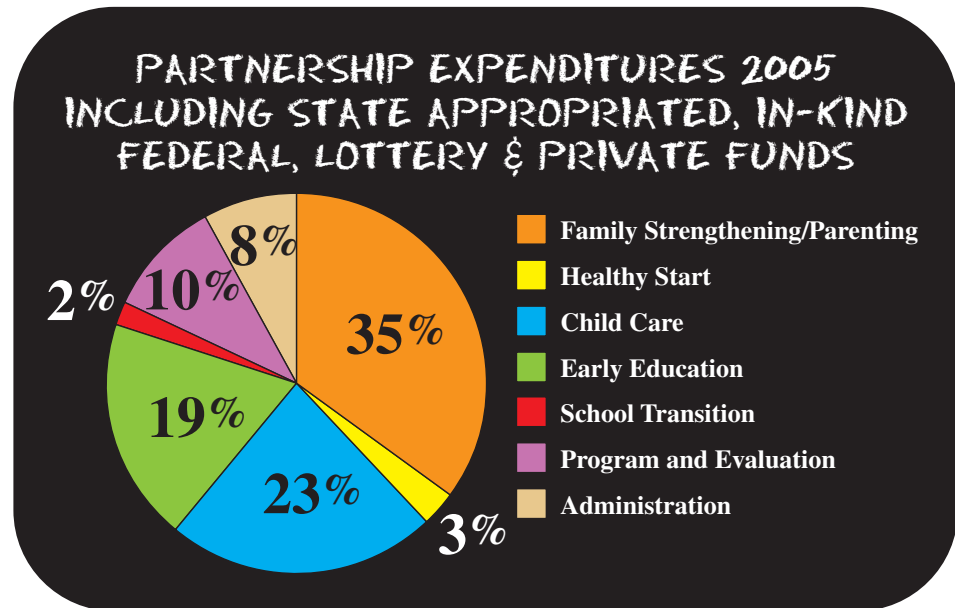
South Carolina’s First Steps to School Readiness brings individuals and resources together to address the most urgent readiness issues facing South Carolina’s children and families. Through its 501(c) 3 status, First Steps mobilizes resources beyond state-allocated dollars, leveraging local private and public funds, federal grants, planned gifts, in-kind contributions, and volunteer time.

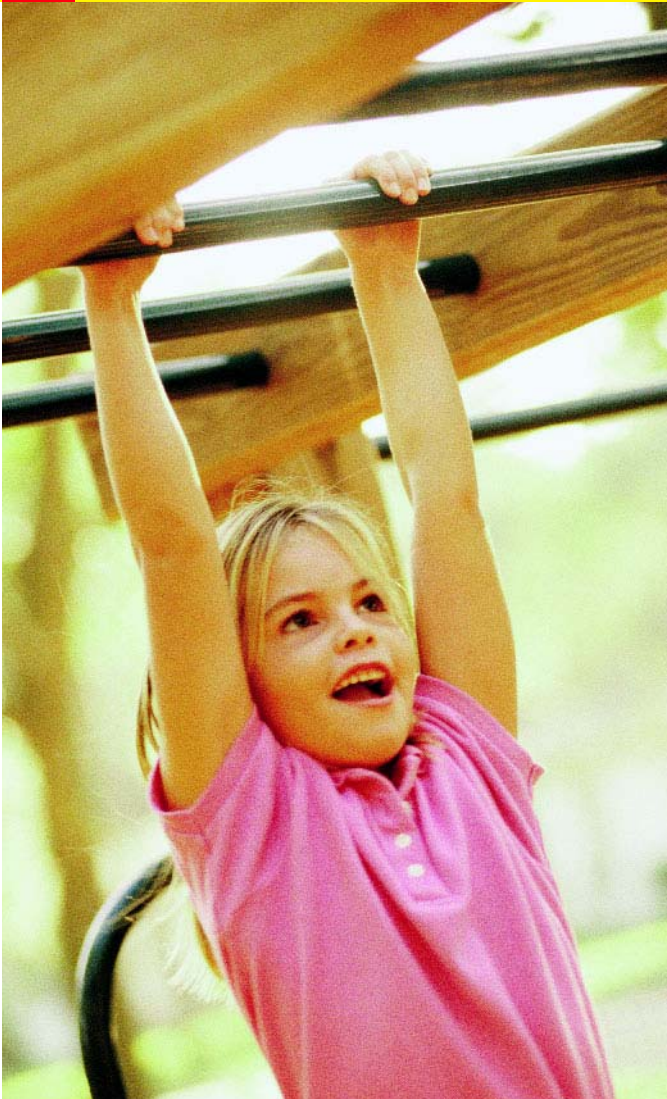
LEVERAGE OF LIMITED RESOURCES

Initially serving South Carolina’s children with 100 percent state-allocated monies (and required annual 15 percent match by each local county partnership), the First Steps initiative today uses a combination of state funds, federal, and private funds and in-kind donations – leveraging greater resources for expanded reach to children while reducing dependence on state funds alone. In 2005, First Steps raised an additional \$3 million to match a \$3 million SC Lottery set-aside match provided by the SC General Assembly, increasing by \$6 million (or 32 percent) the First Steps services to at-risk children through lottery strategies. Finally, First Steps partnerships at state and local levels have assisted other state entities, such as the SC Department of Social Services, to achieve greater federal funds for its own child-serving programs aligned with the mission of First Steps since 2002.

Through its volunteer partnerships, First Steps realized nearly \$550,000 in volunteer time in 2005.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup>[http://www.independentsector.org/programs/research/volunteer\\_time.html](http://www.independentsector.org/programs/research/volunteer_time.html)





## STATEWIDE BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES

Fiscal Year 2005  
State Appropriated Dollars Only

STATE - LEVEL BUDGET	Thousands
State Appropriated (Recurring Funds)	\$ 18,145
Lottery Appropriated (Non-recurring Funds)	\$ 3,000
Interest Income	\$ 214
State Appropriated Carryover from FY 2004	\$ 188
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 21,547</b>
DISTRIBUTION OF BUDGET	
County Partnerships	\$ 16,634
Lottery Direct Educational Services to At-Risk Children	\$ 3,000
Administration	\$ 1,474
State Program and Evaluation	\$ 439
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 21,547</b>
ACTUAL EXPENDITURES	
County Partnerships	\$ 16,233
Administration	\$ 1,439
Lottery Direct Educational Services to At-Risk Children	\$ 1,021
State Program and Evaluation	\$ 206
Total Expenditures	\$ 18,899
NET (Carryover to Fiscal Year 2006)	\$ 2,648
<b>FISCAL YEAR 2005</b>	<b>TOTAL \$ 21,547</b>

### Note:

1. Fiscal Year 2006 Carryover amount represents \$2 million of unspent lottery appropriation committed to be spent during Fiscal Year 2006 for direct educational services to at-risk children.
2. Annual budgets are approved for each county partnership by the state board.
3. All goods or services procured by counties at or above \$10,000 are bid competitively. Local boards manage results through contracts and collaboration agreements, specifying deliverables to families and children.
4. Audits are conducted annually on all county partnerships and regional finance managers by an independent auditing firm.

# FIRST STEPS FUNDING FORMULA

Section 59-152-90 (E) of the enabling legislation mandates that the SC First Steps State Board of Trustees allocate funds by demographic formula to county partnerships. The formula is based on per capita income and population distribution variables. Risk variables are weighted as follows:

## FIRST STEPS FUNDING MODEL:

Population of young children .....	30%
Children eligible for free/reduced lunch .....	25%
Average per capita income .....	20%
<b>SC Kids Count Factors<sup>7</sup></b>	
Children who are over age in third grade .....	5%
Children in third grade performing below basic on PACT reading ..	5%
Children in third grade performing below basic on PACT math ...	5%
Low birth weight infants .....	5%
Birth to mothers with less than high school education .....	5%
<hr/>	
Total .....	100%

<sup>7</sup><http://www.sckidscount.org>



**FAST FACT:**  
 The SC General Assembly set aside a \$3 million match from the SC Education Lottery for First Steps in 2005. As a result, one penny of every dollar in lottery revenue was dedicated to our most at-risk children, ages 0-5, through First Steps and its partners.

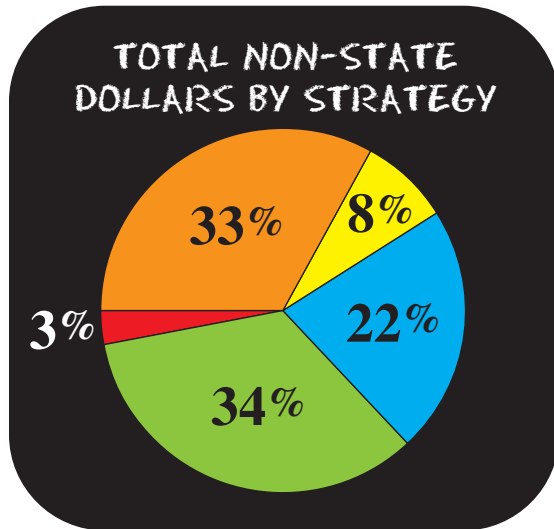


<b>30%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>25%</b>
Population of young children	Children eligible for free/reduced lunch	Average per capita income	South Carolina Kids Count Factors

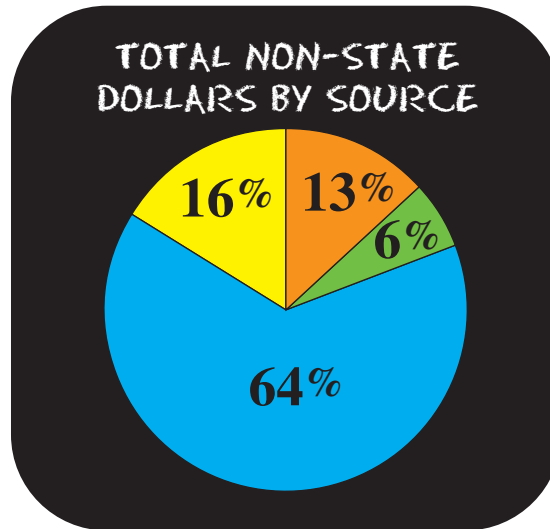


FOCUS. LEVERAGING INVESTMENTS FOR CHILDREN SINCE 1999. IMPACT.

First Steps' unique legislation, fostering collaboration and accountability at the state and local levels, allows First Steps to assist the state in leveraging resources for our youngest learners. First Steps five "lines of work" are broken out by investment below, as is the non-state investment "portfolio." In addition, some First Steps certified public expenditures can count as match, allowing other child-serving agencies to draw down federal dollars annually to serve children and families.

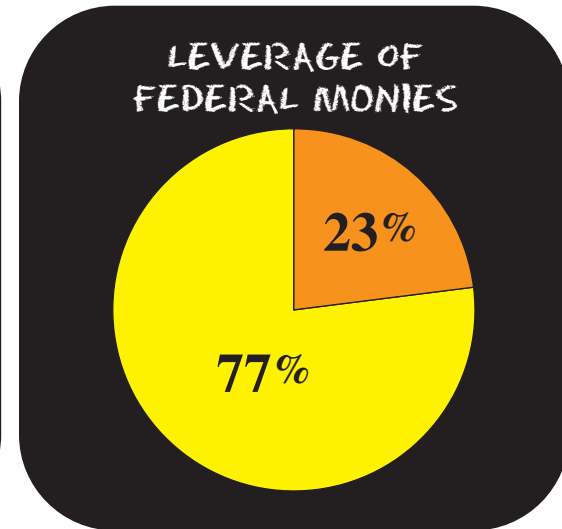


STRATEGY	THOUSANDS
Family Strengthening	\$ 10,698
Healthy Start	\$ 2,589
Child Care	\$ 7,112
Early Education	\$ 10,830
School Transition	\$ 888
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 32,117</b>



SOURCE	THOUSANDS
State-Level Private	\$ 4,627
Local-Level Private	\$ 2,337
In-Kind Donations	\$ 23,165
Federal Grants	\$ 5,927
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 36,056*</b>

\*Includes state-level projects and evaluation.



SOURCE	THOUSANDS
First Steps Match	\$ 9,458
Federal Dollars to Other State Agencies	\$ 31,379
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 40,837</b>

**“First Steps is engendering a ‘culture of accountability’ regarding expenditures and program implementation.”**  
*Child Trends 2003 Evaluation of SC First Steps*

## FOCUS. PARTNERS. IMPACT.

First Steps' ability to deliver quality early education services for children and their families is enhanced through partnerships with community-minded groups and individuals. From parents to politicians, school boards to corporate boardrooms, and charity groups to churches, collaboration with public and private organizations at the state and local level is vital to the First Steps mission.

Hundreds of statewide and local organizations are counted among First Steps' partners. First Steps works to leverage local funds and resources to help its partners brighten the future of South Carolina's children. By working together, critically needed services are delivered more effectively, eliminating unproductive duplication of efforts. In turn, many partners and organizations have supported First Steps' efforts with generous donations of funds and volunteer time that allow First Steps to build on its ability to improve school readiness for young children.

First Steps legislation requires each county partnership board to be made up of at least 32 local individuals from the following categories. In addition, each legislative delegation may appoint up to four additional representatives.

1. Pre-kindergarten through primary educator,
2. Family education, training, and support provider,
3. Child care and early childhood development/education provider,
4. Healthcare provider,
5. Transportation provider,
6. Nonprofit organization that provides services to families and children,
7. Faith community,
8. Business community,
9. Parents of pre-school children,
10. Early Childhood Education Representatives,
11. County Department of Social Services,
12. County Department of Health and Environmental Control,
13. Head Start,
14. County Library, and
15. Each of the school districts in the county.

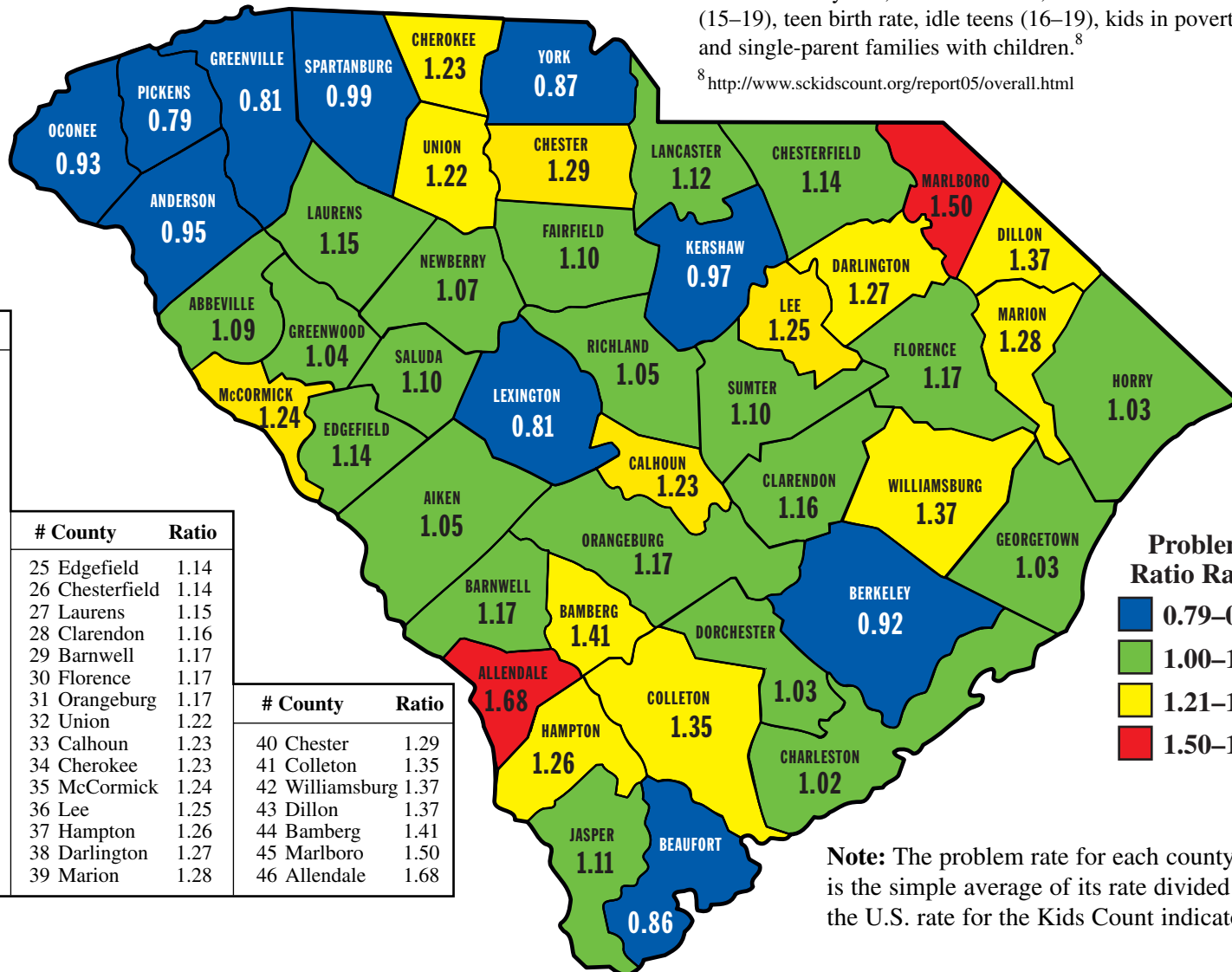
Since the establishment of SC First Steps to School Readiness, corporations and individuals across SC have shown their support for the First Steps initiatives. Pursuant to the enabling legislation, sections 20-7-9700 & 20-7-9740, donor pledged private contributions to the state office are listed below – 91 percent has been received, but 100 percent of pledges has been committed either to state or local projects.

<b>Donor</b>	<b>Pledge</b>
<b>Bank of America</b>	<b>\$ 1,000,000</b>
<b>J. Marion Sims Foundation</b>	<b>\$ 1,000,000</b>
<b>Psaras</b>	<b>\$ 1,000,000</b>
<b>Duke Energy</b>	<b>\$ 550,000</b>
<b>CP&amp;L/Progress Energy Foundation</b>	<b>\$ 500,000</b>
<b>SCANA</b>	<b>\$ 500,000</b>
<b>Springs Industries</b>	<b>\$ 500,000</b>
<b>Wachovia Foundation</b>	<b>\$ 500,000</b>
<b>Westinghouse/Washington Group International</b>	<b>\$ 400,000</b>
<b>The Springs Close Foundation</b>	<b>\$ 300,000</b>
<b>Carolina First</b>	<b>\$ 250,000</b>
<b>Blue Cross Blue Shield</b>	<b>\$ 200,000</b>
<b>Santee Cooper</b>	<b>\$ 200,000</b>
<b>Springs Company</b>	<b>\$ 200,000</b>
<b>V. Kann Rasmussen Foundation</b>	<b>\$ 200,000</b>
<b>Michelin</b>	<b>\$ 150,000</b>
<b>First Union</b>	<b>\$ 125,000</b>
<b>AT&amp;T Foundation</b>	<b>\$ 100,000</b>
<b>Hootie &amp; the Blowfish</b>	<b>\$ 60,000</b>
<b>First Citizens Bank</b>	<b>\$ 50,000</b>
<b>Alcoa Foundation</b>	<b>\$ 30,000</b>
<b>Sunshine Foundation</b>	<b>\$ 30,000</b>
<b>Donations Under \$30,000</b>	<b>\$ 35,741</b>
<b>TOTAL PLEDGED FROM 1999 – 2005</b>	<b>\$ 7,880,741</b>

# SOUTH CAROLINA COUNTIES BY OVERALL CHILD WELL-BEING

**Overall Child Well-being** – Rank is determined by U.S. Problem Ratios. Those ratios include low birth weight babies, infant mortality rate, child death rate, violent teen deaths (15–19), teen birth rate, idle teens (16–19), kids in poverty, and single-parent families with children.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.sckidscount.org/report05/overall.html>



**Problem Ratio Rates**

- 0.79–0.99
- 1.00–1.20
- 1.21–1.48
- 1.50–1.99

**Note:** The problem rate for each county is the simple average of its rate divided by the U.S. rate for the Kids Count indicators.

#	County	Ratio
01	Pickens	0.79
02	Lexington	0.81
03	Greenville	0.81
04	Beaufort	0.86
05	York	0.87
06	Dorchester	0.89
07	Richland	0.91
08	Berkeley	0.92
09	Oconee	0.93
10	Anderson	0.95
11	Kershaw	0.97
12	Spartanburg	0.99
13	Charleston	1.02
14	Georgetown	1.03
15	Horry	1.03
16	Greenwood	1.04
17	Aiken	1.05
18	Newberry	1.07
19	Abbeville	1.09
20	Saluda	1.10
21	Sumter	1.10
22	Fairfield	1.10
23	Jasper	1.11
24	Lancaster	1.12
25	Edgefield	1.14
26	Chesterfield	1.14
27	Laurens	1.15
28	Clarendon	1.16
29	Barnwell	1.17
30	Florence	1.17
31	Orangeburg	1.17
32	Union	1.22
33	Calhoun	1.23
34	Cherokee	1.23
35	McCormick	1.24
36	Lee	1.25
37	Hampton	1.26
38	Darlington	1.27
39	Marion	1.28
40	Chester	1.29
41	Colleton	1.35
42	Williamsburg	1.37
43	Dillon	1.37
44	Bamberg	1.41
45	Marlboro	1.50
46	Allendale	1.68

#	County	Ratio
25	Edgefield	1.14
26	Chesterfield	1.14
27	Laurens	1.15
28	Clarendon	1.16
29	Barnwell	1.17
30	Florence	1.17
31	Orangeburg	1.17
32	Union	1.22
33	Calhoun	1.23
34	Cherokee	1.23
35	McCormick	1.24
36	Lee	1.25
37	Hampton	1.26
38	Darlington	1.27
39	Marion	1.28

#	County	Ratio
40	Chester	1.29
41	Colleton	1.35
42	Williamsburg	1.37
43	Dillon	1.37
44	Bamberg	1.41
45	Marlboro	1.50
46	Allendale	1.68

# SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS ANNUAL REPORT 2005

## South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness

1300 Sumter Street, Suite 100 • Columbia, SC 29201

Phone: (803) 734-0479 • Toll Free: (877) 621-0865

Fax: (803) 734-1431

Email: [1ststeps@sde.state.sc.us](mailto:1ststeps@sde.state.sc.us)

Website: [www.scfirststeps.org](http://www.scfirststeps.org)

