



Anderson County First Steps Partnership *Fiscal Year 2007 Annual Report*

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Summary

Numbers Served: 3,094 children; 1,585 adults/families; Provided 913 hours of technical assistance to 37 child care facilities impacting 1,494 children at those facilities; 5 child care centers achieved a higher quality enhancement score; 12 higher adult education levels achieved; 82 health assessments and screenings; 83 child care staff trained representing 17 child care providers; 37 4-K half-day slots provided; and 1,110 books circulated through 37 child care centers in collaboration with Anderson County Library.

Total Budget:
\$738,011

Anderson School Readiness Profile

Population Characteristics	Figure
Population of Young Children (Ages 0-5)	13,450 8 %
Children Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch (5K)*	44 %
Average Per Capita Personal Income	26,249
Children in Poverty (Ages 0-5)***	19 %
Children Who Are Over Age in Third Grade**	16 %
Children in Third Grade Performing below Basic on PACT Reading **	7 %
Children in Third Grade Performing below Basic on PACT Math**	12 %
Low Birth Weight Infants	9 %
Births to Mothers with Less than High School Education	24 %
Less than Adequate Prenatal Care	25 %

*Note: Data is for 2003 except where noted (*2005, **2004, ***1999).*

Profile Comments:

According to Kids Count 2005, an unacceptably large number of Anderson County children still begin school without good prospects of success in future school achievement and graduation: 26.3% have been assessed not consistently ready for the 1st grade and 16% are over age in grade 3. Trends in Anderson County that appear to be promising are data on increased readiness, reduced school failures, and fewer students over-age for grade 3. Approximately 27.9% of 3rd graders in South Carolina perform below a basic level on the National Assessment of Education Progress in math and 22.5% in reading, as compared with 12% of 3rd graders below basic in math and 7% below basic in reading on PACT in Anderson County. Based on the Partnership's original needs assessment in 1999, 2004, and more recently in 2007, Anderson County's focus is Parenting/Family Literacy and

Anderson County First Steps Partnership

Early Education/Quality Child Care. Acknowledging the value of literacy activities on school readiness, during 2006, the Partnership began collaborating with the Anderson County Library and Success By 6 to promote literacy initiatives in child care settings across the county. The Book Crate initiative circulates 1,110 books among 37 child care providers monthly.

Over the past seven years, Anderson County First Steps has been a catalyst for change in the community, filling gaps and linking people to services to assure that Anderson County children are healthy and ready for success when they enter the first grade. We have had an impact on literally thousands of lives, including pre-school children and their families. We have had many strong community partners to help us, including the five Anderson County school districts, Anderson County Library, DHEC, Success by 6, Anderson School Districts Adult Education programs and AnMed. With their help, First Steps has begun to change the culture of the way people view the importance of pre-school education.

SCHOOL READINESS STRATEGIES

Early Education

Statewide Goal – South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness will leverage 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 will be placed on *fidelity* to research-based instructional models and *targeting* of students at-risk of early school failure.

FY 2007 Results:

Partnership Goal – Increase the number of at-risk children attending high quality pre-school programs by establishing two half-day 4-K classes at Hunt Meadow Elementary School.

- *37 children completed Anderson School District 1 4-K half-day classes at Hunt Meadows Elementary School; 100% moved to 5-K classes.*
- *All participating students were targeted for participation on the basis of compounded risk factors indicated on DIAL-3.*
- *37 families (100%) participated in all parent conferences and home visits. 100% of the families reported satisfaction with program services and staff.*
- *4-K classes met South Carolina 4-K requirements for curriculum (including High Scope and Creative Curriculum), pupil-teacher ratio, materials and class size.*

Family Strengthening

Statewide Goal – South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness will work 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 long-term academic success of the state's young children.

FY 2007 Results:

Partnership Goal – Support parents in strengthening their families and in promoting the optimum development of their young children to assure school success by providing Family Literacy and Literacy Outreach Services.

- *82 children received health assessments and developmental screenings through Anderson School Districts 1, 2 and 3 First Steps-funded Other Family Literacy programs.*
- *1,491 adults/families and 1,533 children participated in Anderson School Districts 1, 2 and 3 Other Literacy Programs.*
- *11 adults and 20 children participated in the Anderson School District 4 Family Literacy Program and 2 adults obtained GEDs.*
- *10 teen mothers stayed in school and participated with their 11 children in the Anderson School District 5 Family Literacy Infants and Toddlers Program. 100% of the mothers moved to their next grade level or graduated with a diploma.*

Child Care

Statewide Goal – South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness recognizes quality child care as a research-based determinant of school readiness. As such, First Steps will collaborate with parents, the child care community and its agency and community partners to maximize child care quality throughout the state. Particular emphasis will be placed on assisting parents in their efforts to identify those settings most likely to maximize developmental outcomes, and assisting providers in their own efforts to maximize the learning environments they provide for young children.

FY 2007 Results:

Partnership Goal – Improve the quality of child care by offering quality enhancement grants, technical assistance and training opportunities to child care providers.

- *Awarded Quality Enhancement mini-grants in the amount of \$10,180 to 3 providers serving 213 children 0-5; Completed post-assessments for five 2006 Quality Enhancement mini-grant recipients who received 100 hours of administrative technical assistance and follow-up; 100% increased their Quality Enhancement scores.*
- *Provided 8 hours of certified training for 83 child care staff and directors representing 17 providers and impacting 1,067 children 0-5.*
- *Provided 813 hours of technical assistance to 37 child care providers impacting 1,494 children in all 5 school districts.*
- *In collaboration with the Anderson County Library, continued the Book Crate Program which circulates 1,110 books among 37 child care providers monthly.*

SCHOOL READINESS STRATEGIES FOR 2007-2008

Developed on a concept we have called the Integrated Community, the Anderson County First Steps Partnership Renewal Plan is designed to take programs directly to the targeted at-risk population in their own neighborhoods, within the confines of each of the five Anderson County school districts.

Parenting/family strengthening and early education /quality child care make up the core of the programs. *While the primary delivery areas will be bounded by the geographic areas of the five school districts, linkages will be extended across the county to meet the population's needs.*

Over the years, we have improved the transition of children from child care to the first grade by establishing a direct link between the school districts and the child care community. We will continue this strategy which allows the child care community to begin to become an integral part of the educational process that forms a seamless transition from birth to first grade and beyond. The results to date include shared curriculum guides, shared Standards and Expectations; increased dialogue and mutual respect and understanding between districts and providers; increased understanding of the importance of pre-school experience, early quality interventions, and nurturing; mentoring; on-site technical assistance; and modeling programs. The Technical Assistance model, developed by Anderson County First Steps Partnership, has served as a prototype for other technical assistance programs across the state. Activities, services and qualifications of personnel have been shared with State agency personnel who are developing criteria and templates for standardization of technical assistants in the state of South Carolina. On-going technical assistance through the County-administered Quality Enhancement Program has resulted in increased pre-post assessment scores (ITERS, FDCRS, ECERS) at five of the participating child care providers. While we will continue the Child Care Quality Enhancement program, we will concentrate on fewer providers and offer more intensive service.

We are not simply putting band aids on problems, but we are collaborating with community partners to bring about a systematic change in the way we deliver pre-school services. We are helping both parents and child care providers understand that they are an important part of the educational process. Our plan includes program activities based on researched best practices, tied to intense service delivery by outstanding professionals and includes strong recruitment, evaluation, data collection and outcomes measurement process. In short, this plan embraces the priorities of the OFS Blue Print for South Carolina's Children and adheres to the principles of quality, accountability, collaboration and leadership. Using collaborations and community partnerships as a cornerstone, Anderson County First Steps is effectively and efficiently preparing its children for success in the first grade.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

State Appropriation	State-Private	In-kind	Local-Private	Lottery Appropriation	Federal	EIA Appropriation	TOTAL
\$525,405	3,624	145,362	15,435	-0-	-0-	48,185	738,011

NOTE: The above State Appropriation amount leveraged all state-private, in-kind, local-private, lottery and federal dollars.

READINESS STRATEGIES	BUDGET	ACTUAL EXPENDITURES	DIFFERENCE
2041 Other Family Lit/Learning	190,900	190,144	756
2111 Family Literacy Model Progs.	202,999	202,489	510
3161 Partial Day 4-K	95,891	94,390	1,501
6011 Facility Quality Enhancements(Public)	21,914	21,914	-0-
6012 Facility Quality Enhancements (In-House)	66,992	74,914	(7,922)**
0605 Center Staff Training/Dev.	19,335	14,708	4,627
Pending	17,637	-0-	17,637*
County Programmatic	66,184	60,580	5,604
County Administrative	56,159	50,451	5,708
TOTAL	\$738,011	\$709,590	\$28,421

NOTES: *Of the \$28,421 shown as the difference between Budgeted and Actual expenditures, \$17,637 is approved “carry forward” from pending funds.

**This amount (\$7,922) is for over-matching in-kind funds from the Anderson County Library.

Local Match Percentage for 2007: 31.60% (at least 15% required)

BOARD INFORMATION

During FY 07, the Anderson County First Steps Partnership board members volunteered 300 hours, including assistance with child care training facilitation and coordination.

Value of Volunteer Time¹: \$18.77 X 300 = \$5,631.00

ANDERSON COUNTY FIRST STEPS BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Board Chair:

Betty Keys, early childhood education

Board Members:

Ron Acker, business

Laurie Ashley, non profit

Suzie Bannister, family education/training

Jan Bratcher, Anderson School District Two

Susan Brown, family education/training

Dr. Doris Cole, Pre-K-primary education

Marilyn Cosgrove, DSS

Dr. Joe Geer, health care

Leretta Heller, early childhood education

Roy B. Jeffcoat, business

Laura Long, DHEC

Dawn Marcie, childcare/early education

Nancy Mauldin, childcare/early education

Dianne Mizzell, Anderson School District Five

Keith Moody, transportation

Tanya Richbourg, Anderson School District One

Deborah Roegge, health, AnMed

Kempie Shepard, faith community

Vicki Simpson, Anderson School District 3

Angie Starks, Head Start

Cheryl Stewart, transportation

Carl Stone, Anderson County Library

Kurt Stutler, non-profit

Amika Thomas, early childhood education

Charity Walker, Anderson School District 4

Neil Westbrook, faith community

Administrative Staff:

Jeanne Yarborough, Executive Director

Deborah Sanders, Program Coordinator

Paige Wall, Program Assistant

¹ http://www.independentsector.org/programs/research/volunteer_time.html

SUCCESS STORIES

Anderson School District 1: A parent of an at-risk 4-K child enrolled in Family Literacy and went from being extremely shy making no eye contact to obtaining her GED and speaking at the graduation ceremony. She credited her new friends in Family Literacy with helping her meet her goals. The child had excellent attendance and the parent developed skills such as reading daily. Another 4-K at-risk child's mother enrolled in Family Literacy, obtained her GED, and is now working on becoming a substitute in the district. She went from being very needy and unsure of herself to recognizing her leadership skills in the weekly group. Her 4-K child had poor attendance which improved greatly as the year progressed.

Anderson School District 2: A single mom, TJ, (a working high school graduate) shared with me that she had a hard time succeeding in school. She has shared with me that because of our discussion about "multiple" types of intelligences, she has begun to realize that even though she has some spelling and writing difficulties, she has other talents that help her realize that she is not "dumb." She also shared that because of our discussion about engaging in activities from birth, she made it a point to do the activities with her child which we had discussed during our visits. Over the last three years, she has continued to engage in the activities that we have talked about during home visits. I have observed her child's language, fine motor skills and overall development to be advanced for her chronological age.

Anderson School District 3: During the 2006-2007 school year, the First Steps Staff have positively engaged the local child care providers through model lessons at their centers. The model lessons are developed to increase the knowledge and skills of the preschool care givers and also expand the teacher/child interactions in the classroom setting. The lessons are literacy based, including story time, a literacy activity and music. Modeling includes ways to maximize the use of books and book related materials to encourage a child's development and learning. Staff members demonstrate ways to create games and learning activities with low cost and everyday household items. The providers gain insight into the ways in which children learn to help the children in their charge to be ready for school. They also learn which readiness skills are necessary for children to be successful in 5 year old kindergarten. Information is provided on the South Carolina Preschool standards and the in- school evaluation method used in the South Carolina Readiness Assessment Instrument. Workers were observed to be practicing many of the strategies demonstrated. They began to request music and materials. Children began to stop us in public places to introduce us to their parents. This led to conversations about being prepared for school and invitations to Preschool Club. Child care providers were exposed to strategies used in public school classrooms that stimulate the growing child's cognitive and physical development. The children in the centers are always very excited to see the First Steps staff, often erupting into cheers as we enter the room!

Anderson School District 4: A Hispanic parent wrote: "Sharing my experience in FLC (Family Learning Center) is a big joy for me. One of my goals in life is to get my GED. During this time, I can see a big difference in my family. I really have a difficult time trying to find somebody who can take care of my children in the time I go to school. I registered in different programs to get my GED, but it was just difficult to stay. Since I started coming to FLC, everything has changed. Now I can say I am doing something for me and my family. I have been learning things I didn't know. Having everything in one program, that's wonderful. FLC provides child care, parenting, counseling, nutritional education, adult education, and home visiting. All of these programs are a good source of education. It has been a big benefit for me. It not only teaches how to be prepared for the outside

world, it teaches how to be a good parent, good person, good employee, and a good citizen for our community and our country. Thanks to this program, I am going to get better opportunities when I get my GED. And I will like to thank all the people who make this possible. Thanks so much for the chance and God bless you all.”

Anderson School District 5: The children continue to be very enthusiastic about the TA's (child care technical assistant) visits. They always eagerly participate in the activities that she provides for them. One day a four-year old boy told the TA that he "loved" the binoculars in the science box. According to his teacher, this same child was overheard excitedly telling his mother about the lesson the TA did with the balance scale. Teachers are using the theme notebooks to extend activities and expand lessons on the various themes. The new math and alphabet boxes are extremely popular with the teachers. Several favorable comments have been made in reference to the materials and games that are included in these boxes. On a beautiful day, as a culmination of their study of the pond (and after using the pond theme enhancer box), the preschool children at one center took a field trip to Cater's Lake where the children saw turtles and fed the ducks. They also enjoyed a picnic lunch there. When another center used the theme enhancer, Community Helpers, the director invited several community workers to speak to the preschoolers about the jobs they do. The workers wore uniforms and brought props to aid in the description of their jobs. According to the director, this was a very exciting and successful way to wrap up the children's study of community helpers. The teachers in a recently assessed two-year old classroom have received rave reviews from ABC personnel for the excellent job they are doing with their children. The Quality Enhancement grant that they received from First Steps allowed them to order a wealth of age-appropriate materials and furniture for learning centers. The children are thoroughly enjoying their "new" classroom!