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

Summary

Numbers Served:

860 children; 197 adults/families; 12 child care facilities, with 648 children total at those facilities; 12 child care centers achieved a higher quality status; 20 health assessments and screenings; 569 home visits; 228 staff trained, affecting 1,435 children total; 20 4-K slots and 5,442 books distributed.

Total Budget:

\$429,302 (includes all funding sources)

Darlington School Readiness Profile

Population Characteristics	Figure
Population of Young Children (Ages 0-5)	5,230 8 %
Children Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch (5K)	67 %
Average Per Capita Personal Income**	24,558
Children in Poverty (Ages 0-5)***	26 %
Children Who Are Over Age in Third Grade**	17 %
Children in Third Grade Performing below Basic on PACT Reading *	18 %
Children in Third Grade Performing below Basic on PACT Math*	21 %
Low Birth Weight Infants	13 %
Births to Mothers with Less than High School Education	28 %
Less than Adequate Prenatal Care	28 %

*Note: Data is for 2005 except where noted (*2006, **2004, ***2000).*

As reported by Kid Count 2003, Darlington County has 5,230 young children age 0-5, which represents 8.2% of the total population. A substantial percentage (36.8%) of children under age 6 lived in single parent families. Furthermore, 28% of mothers have less than a high school education. A vast percentage (60.5%) of mothers with children under 6 were reported as being in the labor force. With the average per capita income reported at \$23,797, 66.5% of children in 5K program are eligible for free lunch. There are currently four nationally accredited childcare facilities. These facts along with results from the county's most recent needs assessment indicated the following priority areas as determined by respondents:

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 number of children attending high-quality early childhood education programs by establishing a new full-day 4K classroom at Southside Early Childhood Development Center in the Hartsville attendance area.

- *20 participating children were documented to have met all South Carolina Curriculum Standard for 4K.*
- *All participating children were targeted for participation on the basis of compounded school readiness risk factors (Dial-3 screening score in the bottom 25%, free and reduced lunch status, mother's education, etc.)*
- *DCFS funded classroom met South Carolina 4K requirements for curriculum, teacher-child ratio, materials and class size.*
- *90% of children attended class daily.*
- *50% of parents volunteered their services and/or donated materials and supplies.*
- *All participating children received health screenings.*
- *80% of participating children received home visits.*

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 - Increase the capacity of parents to be their child's best and most important teacher by expanding home visitation services, increasing parent involvement with their children, enhancing their parenting skills, enhancing the learning environment in the home and increasing the family's awareness of community resources which augments the school experience.

- *DCFS partnered with 5 county churches to delivery a Parent Education Program using the Standard Triple P Parenting Model.*
- *537 home visits were made to participating families.*
- *37 adults and 27 children participated in the program.*
- *18 parenting groups meetings were held with an average of (16) 43% attendees were held.*
- *Approximately 530 Triple P Parenting Tip sheets were distributed.*
- *100% of all participating families received at least one (1) home visit per month.*
- *Approximately 65 books distributed to participating children through this program.*
- *A total of 45 homes visits were conducted.*
- *54% (20) participating families received 2 home visits per month.*

Partnership Goal: Increase parent-child interaction and early literacy skills by providing a book distribution program.

- *351 children served through the Dolly Parton Imagination Library (DPIL) Program.*
- *Program provided in partnership with Darlington County Library System – Hartsville Memorial Library.*
- *3,484 books were distributed.*
- *Program is integrated into the local school district homebound program for teen parents.*
- *Program is entirely community-driven with local funds from the community.*
- *Children participating in other First Steps Programs i.e., Child Care Scholarships, Facility Quality Enhancement, and Child Care Training programs receive books through the DPIL Program.*

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 childcare by offering facility quality enhancement grants and assistance to child care providers.

- *Quality enhancement grants were offered to 12 county child care providers serving 648 children. These facilities represent 16% percent of the childcare community for Darlington County. Through intensive technical assistance the following program outcomes were achieved:*
 - *12 child care providers with 648 children participated in the Quality Enhancement Program.*
 - *2 out of 3 child care providers moved from license status to ABC enhanced*
 - *2 child care providers working to receive license status*
 - *7 child care providers working to receive national accreditation (NAEYC)*
 - *Partnering with Darlington County Library to provide a lending library, approximately 1,733 books were used*
 - *100% of the facilities with Environmental Rating Scale Assessment posttest scores showed an increase of at least one point or higher.*

Partnership Goal – Increase the availability of quality childcare by providing training and professional development opportunities to increase the knowledge and skills of childcare providers in the areas of early childcare development.

- *Darlington County First Steps Partnership and other First Steps Partnerships in the Pee Dee collaborated with area technical colleges to provide distance learning to area childcare providers via video-conferencing. Local training was also offered to county providers who were more at ease with one-on-one training. As a result, the following outcomes were achieved:*

- *In May 2007, three (3) participating child care staff completed their Infant and Toddler Care certificates at Florence-Darlington Technical College*
- *3 child care staff working participating in the TEACH Program – (2) working toward an early childhood education diploma and (1) working toward an early childhood education degree*
- *100% of Facility Quality Enhancement Grant recipients attended one or more First Steps Center Staff Training and Professional Development training sessions.*
- *In April 2006, partnered with Florence-Darlington Technical College to provide the Building Tools for Early Learning Conference with approximately 175 child care providers in attendance*
- *A total of 228 childcare staff participated in training impacting 1,435 children.*
- *26 child care facilities (35% of the regulated facilities in Darlington County) attended one or more training sessions.*
- *19 training sessions totaling 52 hours of training were conducted by certified trainers from the Center for Child Care Career Development.*
- *Incentives such as food, door prizes, materials and supplies were offered.*

Partnership Goal: Increase the accessibility of educational opportunities for children in Darlington by offering child care scholarships to low-income families. This strategy was implemented in collaboration with the South Carolina Department of Social Services. The following outcomes were achieved:

- Funded 12 childcare scholarships to needy families.
- 95% of families receiving child care scholarships went to enhanced providers
- 100 providers receiving scholarships have participated in the Facility Quality Enhancement Program.

School Transition

Statewide Goal: South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness 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 initiative will develop strategies to maximize parents' understandings of state and local expectations and ensure a smooth and beneficial school transition for each child.

FY 2007 Results

Partnership Goal: Ensure an educationally beneficial school transition by serving 40 at-risk children in the Countdown to Kindergarten program.

- *40 children were identified and served in the 2006 Countdown program during summer 2006.*
 - 100% percent of the children received full amount of home visits⁷ for the program.*
 - *30% percent of the children were placed in their Countdown home visitor's kindergarten class.*
 - *97 % percent of the children qualified for free lunch.*
 - *3% percent of the children qualified for reduced lunch.*
 - *4.2 target score which measures DCFS ability to serve children that meet multiple at-risk criteria, which was consist with the state average of 4.2.*
 - *Countdown to Kindergarten resulted in improvements in parent-child interactions, including:*
 - *9% improvement in families/child conversation.*
 - *17% improvement in families/child playing with toys games or sports together.*
 - *18% improvement in families took child along to do errands.*

- 10% improvement in families involved child in household chores like cooking, cleaning, setting the table, or caring for pets
- 27% improvement in families reading to or listening to child read from a book.
- 19% improvement in families talking about letters, words or numbers to child.
- 14% improvement in families sang songs or danced with child.
- 30% improvement in families drew, painted, or did other arts and crafts with child.
- 12% improvement in families that kept a regular morning or bedtime schedule for child.
- 7% improvement in families who praised child for accomplishments or doing things that you want him/her to do.
- Countdowns to Kindergarten families were asked how often in the PAST MONTH did they do the following with their child. Responses are as indicated below:
 - 54% improvement in families visited a library with child during the past month.
 - 12% improvement in families attended a house of worship with child during the past month.
 - 48% of families visited a playground, park or went to a picnic.
- 100% of parents reported that they were satisfied with the program services.
- 25% of CTK children perform better in “reading” than other children in class.
- 39% of CTK children score above average in “identifying letters” than other children in class.
- 41% of CTK children score above average in “identifying numbers” than other children in class.
- 35% of CTK children score above average in “social interactions with other children”.
- 43% of CTK children’s parents/guardians communicate more with the teacher.
- 48% of CTK children score above average in “classroom behavior”.

SCHOOL READINESS STRATEGIES FOR 2007-2008

Darlington County originally planned to offer a Parent Education Program using the Triple P model. Instead, the partnership intends to provide parenting by implementing the Parents as Teachers Program. Fewer churches participated in the Triple P Parent Education Program with fewer than anticipated volunteers leaving excessive funds in parenting program. These funds were reallocated to an early education strategy to implement a Summer Readiness Program for children who were identified as not being ready for school. Some funds were also reallocated to the Dolly Parton Imagination Library (DPIL). The partnership intends to fully support the DPIL program with private funds next fiscal year. Originally, the partnership planned to offer 10 quality enhancement grants to county child care providers, but determined working more intensely with fewer providers results in more sustained quality improvement. The partnership intends to contract with one or two early childhood educators to provide more intensive one-on-once contact with child care grant recipients.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

D O L L A R S (budget only)							
State Appropriation	State-Private	In-kind	Local-Private	Lottery Appropriation	Federal	EIA Appropriation	TOTAL
\$306,049	\$2,863	\$70,823	\$19,899	\$0	\$1,159	\$28,509	\$429,302

Darlington County First Steps Partnership

NOTE: The above State and EIA appropriation amounts leveraged all state-private, in-kind, local-private, lottery and federal dollars.

READINESS STRATEGIES	EXPENSES
4062 Countdown to Kindergarten	\$13,049
4020 Summer Program	\$49,650
3141 Full-Day 4k	\$110,464
2122 Imagination Library	\$8,446
2032 Parent Training	\$49,281
1012 County Programmatic	\$41,093
1502 County Administrative	\$ 22,818
6012 Childcare Quality	\$38,770
6052 Childcare Training	\$29,067
7031 Scholarship Initiatives	\$36,000
TOTAL	\$398,638.00

NOTABLE DONORS

DONOR'S NAME	AMOUNT
Crystal Walters	\$54.00
Charles Oates	\$27.00
Cathy Nutt	\$27.00
Anderson Brass Company	\$2,700.00
North American Company	\$50.00
Burry Bookstore	\$50.00
Darlington Too Tough	\$100.00
Emily Lunn	\$10.00
Maureen Thomas	\$10.00
Palmetto Bank Interest	\$2,645.00
Child Care Training Seminars	\$1,460.00
Darlington County School	\$5,340.00
TOTAL	\$12,473.00

Local Match Percentage for 2007: 22,097% (at least 15% required)

BOARD INFORMATION

During FY 06, the Darlington County First Steps Partnership Board Members volunteered 50 hours, including 260 hours as office support staff.

Value of Volunteer Time¹: \$18.77 X 310 = 5,819

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

DARLINGTON COUNTY FIRST STEPS BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Mr. Rujon Williams, Board Chair, Business Community
Mr. Edward Arthur, Transportation
Mr. Bob Ellen, Darlington County Dept. of Social Services
Ms. Audrey Hogan, Early Childhood Education
Mr. Bhakti Larry Hough, Business Community
Ms. Lurline Jerry, Family Education, Training & Support
Ms. Ella Johnson, Legislative Appointee
Ms. Emily Lunn, Early Childhood Education
Ms. Janie McKenzie, DHEC
Ms. Jacqueline Moore, Darlington County School District
Ms. Evelyn Patterson, Head Start
Ms. Shari Stokes, Pre-Kindergarten, Primary Education
Ms. Maureen Thomas, Family Education Training & Support
Ms. Audrey Tripp, Darlington County Library
Mr. Robert Williams, Parent of Pre-School Child
Ms. Barbara Wright-Bruce, Healthcare Provider

SUCCESS STORIES

The staff of Prosperity Childcare, Inc. would like to thank First Steps of Darlington County. When Prosperity began its unity with First Steps in 2001, we had no idea what would transpire. First Steps assisted Prosperity Childcare in receiving grants, purchasing toys and materials for the classrooms, and provided educational workshops for the staff. Childcare vouchers were given to families who enrolled their children in our child care center. These families could not afford to pay for childcare services and if they had not received assistance from First Steps, these children would have missed out on an opportunity of getting prepared for school. In 2005, five of the staff from Prosperity Childcare began taking their first early childhood education course (ECD 101) at Florence-Darlington Technical College through First Steps. These five staff members completed ECD 101 and now they are more confident and determined to go further. Taking one class started a chain of classes. Three staff members here at Prosperity Childcare Center are currently attending Florence-Darlington Technical College to receive an early childhood education diploma or degree. In May 2007, Ms. Linda Faircloth, Ms. Betty Howard and Ms. Barbara Fullard received their Infant and Toddler certificates. In 2008, Ms Fullard and Ms. Howard will receive an Early Childhood Education Diploma and Ms. Faircloth will receive an Associate Degree.

Sincerely,

Linda Faircloth