



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

Board Chair:
Gina Henderson
Executive Director:
James H. Riddle, Jr.
Contact Information:
101 West Columbia Ave.
Batesburg-Leesville, SC 29006
Phone: 803 532-6861
Fax: 803 532-6497
Email: jriddle@lex3.k12.sc.us
Website:
<http://lcfirststeps.blogspot.com/>

Summary

Numbers Served:

2,276 children; 1,779 adults/families; 5 child care facilities, with 508 children total at those facilities; 504 health assessments and screenings; 3,097 parenting home visits; 102 childcare programs participated in training with 993 (unduplicated) staff trained; 7,546 books distributed.

Total Budget:

1,356,288 (includes all funding sources)

Lexington School Readiness Profile

Population Characteristics	Figure
Population of Young Children (Ages 0-5)	18,857 - 8%
Children Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch (5K)	37 %
Average Per Capita Personal Income**	31,282
Children in Poverty (Ages 0-5)***	14 %
Children Who Are Over Age in Third Grade**	10 %
Children in Third Grade Performing below Basic on PACT Reading *	12 %
Children in Third Grade Performing below Basic on PACT Math*	13 %
Low Birth Weight Infants	8 %
Births to Mothers with Less than High School Education	20 %
Less than Adequate Prenatal Care	31%

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

Profile Comments: The commitment of the Lexington County First Steps Board of Directors has always been to serve the needs of the county through the defined services of teaching & enhancing parenting skills and also improvements in quality childcare. This commitment remains the same today. In the 2004 Needs and Resource Assessment Survey, attempt was made to survey parents and teachers in every public school from 4-year kindergarten through grade 2 in addition to all childcare providers & staffs, and the parents of all children served by these providers. A total of 22,140 surveys was distributed resulting in an overall response rate of 14%. Without childcare provider surveys included, the response rate improved to 30% with the highest return being 50% from public school classroom teachers. It was quite evident from all populations surveyed, that parent & family strengthening coupled with

issues of quality childcare are the most critical needs in Lexington County. These findings are consistent with the initial Lexington County Needs and Resource Assessment Survey conducted after the first elected/appointed Board of Directors was named 1999. To this end, the county Board has continued to concentrate resources in these two defined areas. Each of the five school districts in Lexington County support a Parent Center. Their in-kind support represents an additional 56% compared to the total state funding to Lexington County. This is obviously a very strong collaborative effort and has been an ever increasing percentage. PAT home visits have increased to twice per month rather than one visit per month as was the custom. As a recruitment tool to introduce available parenting services to new parents across the entire county, a Lexington County First Steps “New Moms Hospital Bag” (aka From Day One to Grade One), is distributed to every mother who delivers a newborn at Lexington Medical Center. Lexington County Medical Center now underwrites the actual costs (\$13,000) for the canvas bag given to each new mother. As many as 2,500 – 3,000 new parents each year receive age appropriate materials and information for their child and they are made aware of the parenting services available through Lexington County First Steps. A board book, furnished by the Lexington County Library System, is placed in every bag and this is possibly the only book in a household. With HIPPA regulations today and other concerns of patient confidentiality, this also is a strong statement of collaboration between Lexington Medical Center and Lexington County First Steps. In addition, Lexington County First Steps participates in the matching funds program of local dollars with lottery funds to support Countdown to Kindergarten, a school transition initiative of in-home parent/child training for at-risk children entering 5-year kindergarten. CTK Teachers continually comment on the relationship with parents of these hard to reach families as a direct and distinct advantage of Countdown to Kindergarten. For the first time (CTK 2007), each of the county’s five school districts participated financially in the costs of CTK. Childcare training is another service with participation from a growing numbers of providers. Pre-registration is required and virtually all evening classes are at capacity (usually 65). The county child care providers receive a majority of their required DSS hours from Lexington County First Steps. The Early Care and Education annual conference serves 500 participants each year. This conference, regarded as one of quality, is one of the largest of its kind in the state. Technical assistance to childcare centers continues. The Fun Fair, held annually at the Lexington County Library Main was attended by over 1,000 persons, both children and adults. It has become increasingly obvious that truly improving the quality of many centers is a huge challenge and takes many years of technical assistance, intense teacher training and a sincere willingness to be better on the part of the center’s owner, director and staff members.

SCHOOL READINESS STRATEGIES

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.

- 3,335 Parents As Teachers (PAT) home visits with *79 of these families speaking Spanish (see note below) as the primary language in the home. Detail by school district parent center is as follows:

(The 79 families speaking Spanish is an FY06 number.)

	Number of home visits					Total	Number of families where Spanish is the primary language spoken in the home.
	1 to 5	6 to 9	10 to 12	13 to 19	20+		
District One	13	23	78	0	0	114	28
District Two	14	32	13	4	0	63	5
District Three	18	19	22	14	2	75	32
District Four	18	15	5	5	3	46	7
District Five	<u>38</u>	<u>22</u>	6	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>69</u>	<u>7</u>
Total	153	135	151	56	0	367	79

- 330 families are typically on the PAT waiting list county-wide (FY06 number)
- A total of 3,335 home visits were delivered providing parents with information and resources to strengthen their role as their child’s most important teachers.
- 508 children were referred for health assessments and screenings.
- All parent educators in the five centers are certified in Born to Learn.
- Approximately 2,300 New Moms bags were delivered to Lexington Medical Center with a 10% return rate asking for a PAT contact from their school district parent center.
- Bimonthly Growing Together are sent to 985 new moms, a cumulative database

Child Care

Statewide Goal – South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness recognizes quality childcare as a research-based determinant of school readiness. As such, First Steps will collaborate with parents, the childcare community and its agency and community partners to maximize childcare 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 quality enhancement grants, technical assistance to childcare providers, childcare training workshops and access to a Resource Center (due cuts, laminator, books on tape, literacy bags, theme box activity kits, binding machine).

- Quality enhancement grants were offered to 4 childcare providers, serving 427 children and began serving an center with 81 children for a total of 575 children; these providers included licensed centers and faith based programs.
- Quality assurance was monitored weekly and certified training was provided to all 4 providers and staff. Two centers (both having received QEP grants before) received training only. One of

these centers closed and was sold. Unspent QEP funding for this center was divided among the remaining centers.

- *Director's forums were offered to center directors.*
- *Technical assistance, performed by an individual with 35 years experience in the field of early childhood, was provided weekly with a minimum of 10 hours per month per provider and individually as needed.*
- *NAEYC centers (4) were assisted financially (\$500 each) in attending the national conference in Atlanta.*
- *Childcare QEP funded Fun Fair with \$1,000 and \$800 for books at the Fun Fair*
- *Pre and post Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scales(ECERS) and Infant/Toddler Environmental Rating Scales (ITERS) reflected significant improvements in centers.*
- *102 childcare providers participated in training with 993 staff trained.*
- *The Resource Center served 14 childcare centers serving 943 children to include all types of providers; namely licensed centers, faith based programs and in-home providers.*
- *Monthly newsletters were sent to childcare providers*
- *Growing Together newsletter is sent bimonthly to 315 providers*
- *An Early Care and Education Conference was attended by 500 persons and the Fun Fair had over 1,000 people, both children and adults.*

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.

Partnership Goal –Ensure an educationally beneficial school transition by serving at-risk children in Lexington County school districts.

FY 2007 Results:

- *70 students in the five Lexington County school districts completed the Countdown program during summer 2007. Districts One, Two and Three each identified 10 students at a particular school who qualified for the program. These districts funded 50% of the costs associated with the program. Districts Four and Five identified 20 students in a single school and paid 50% of the first 10 students and fully funded an additional 10 students.*
- *80% of the visits included mothers, 15% included fathers and grandparents were 7%.*
- *94.44 percent of teachers (statewide) participating in Countdown to Kindergarten reported that the program made a positive difference in students' readiness for school. 100% of these same respondents agreed that the program strengthened their abilities to help participating students meet state curriculum standards.*

SCHOOL READINESS STRATEGIES FOR 2007-2008

Lexington County First Steps will continue parent and family strengthening efforts through the five school district Parent Centers using Parents As Teachers (PAT) curriculum. Two monthly visits in most cases is encouraged as increased intensity demonstrated through increased home visits remains a priority. Contacts to Lexington County businesses will be made for cash donations in support of the hospital bags for new moms and will offer the contributing business an advertising opportunity to reach every home in Lexington County who delivers a newborn at Lexington Medical Center. Lexington Medical Center has agreed to underwrite the costs of the bags (13,500) which is an increase of \$3,000 due to additional births projected. One childcare provider will continue in its second of technical assistance to work toward improved quality with appropriate pre and post evaluation reviews. Three new centers will be served with QEP grants and a NAEYC center will assisted financially in its efforts to maintain it accreditation. Thirteen centers will begin a new QEP program of Literacy Enrichment. Training workshops, capped at 75 individuals per presentation, will continue at \$5.00 per class per participant (increased during FY2005 from \$3.00) requiring a non-refundable prepayment registration. Prepayment has proven essential to control “no shows” with the required upfront investment on the participant’s part. Countdown to Kindergarten will continue as a summer program in preparation for public school 5-year kindergarten programs. The LCFS Board has enthusiastically embraced this transition strategy and has requested that additional funding be budgeted in the future. School Districts will again be expected to fund 50% of the costs.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

DOLLARS (budget only)							
State Appropriation	State-Private	In-kind	Local-Private	Lottery Appropriation	Federal	EIA Appropriation	TOTAL
703,871	47	433,275	87,899	36,816	0	51,760, 42,620 (4K)	1,356,288

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

READINESS STRATEGIES	EXPENSES
Parent and Family Strengthening	1,006,432
Parent Training	34,573
Full 4-Day Kindergarten	10,537
Countdown to Kindergarten	22,166
Childcare Quality Enhancement	68,511
Childcare Training & Professional Development	63,411
County Programmatic	68,263
County Administrative	67,824
TOTAL	\$1,341,718

Local Match Percentage for 2007: **67.8%**

NOTABLE DONORS

DONOR'S NAME	AMOUNT
Chapin Women's Club	\$1,000
Childcare Provider Trainings	\$26,473
School District 1	\$1,780
School District 2	\$1,780
School District 3	\$1,780
School District 4	\$5,340
School District 5	\$5,340
Lexington Medical Center	\$13,500
Sam's Club	\$1,000
Walmart	\$1,000
TOTAL	\$58,993

BOARD INFORMATION

During FY 07, the Lexington County Partnership Board members volunteered 561 hours, including 25 hours at the annual Fun Fair and 100 hours at the annual Childcare Provider Conference.

Value of Volunteer Time: \$20 X 561 = \$11,220

LEXINGTON COUNTY FIRST STEPS BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Henderson, Gina Chair	School District Two
Arroyo, Maria Ph.D.	Family Education, Training & Support Services
Brazell, Wayne Ph.D.	School District One
Campbell, Chrystal	Early Childhood Education
Danielson, Penny	Business Community
Grisby, Tara	Legislative Delegation Appointee (by Senate)
Hackley, Sandra	Early Childhood Education
Hinson Dianne	Non-Profit Organization/Services to Families & Children
Hodge, Clare, Ph.D.	Early Childhood Education
Johnson, Julia OT	Health Care Provider
Kennerly, Mary Ph.D.	School District Five
King, Claudette	Faith Community
Knopf, Herman Ph.D.	Early Childhood Education
Lucas, Sylvia	School District Four
McLeod, Kristi	Business Community
Samuels, Jeanette	Transportation Provider
Saylor, Pam	Family Education , Training & Support Services
Setzler, Ada jane	Legislative Delegation Appointee (by Senate)
Shealy, Debbie	Legislative Delegation Appointee (by House)
Sponhour, Michael	Legislative Delegation Appointee (by House)
Sparks, Tom	School District Three
Stringer, Ellen	Public Library System
Sweigart, Cindy	Health Care Provider
Tabor, Linda	Parent of Child Served in First Steps
Thompson, Martha	Non-Profit Organization/Services to Families & Children
Tinder, Judy	Pre-Kindergarten through Primary Educator
Torrey, David	Faith Community
Tucker, Roy	Department of Health & Environmental Control
Walker, Cathy	Childcare/Early Childhood Development/Education Provider
Wiley, Rhonda	Childcare/Early Childhood Development/Education Provider
Willis, Angela	Pre-Kindergarten through primary Educator

SUCCESS STORIES

Childcare Quality Enhancement

It was clear to the "educated eye" of the technical assistant who frequently visited the child care center in rural Lexington County, but not so clear to the teachers and staff!!! This small two year old girl had some developmental delays. She often cried and screamed, could not transition, was still eating baby food and had to be spoon fed when eating. There was no eye contact and was only comforted by being held. After discussions with the director and the parents, the child is now receiving services through Baby Net and other special needs organizations. This is a child who would have never been ready for school without early intervention and the special attention by a director and LCFS.

Lexington School District Two

“The STAR program has given us our ally in our children’s early development. We have received help for our son that we didn’t know how to begin looking for on our own. Even our pediatric office didn’t have the time and concern that this program has provided. Whereas they brushed aside my concerns, the STAR program has given us answers and hope for our family’s future. Thank you.”
From a parent served through the Parent Center

Countdown to Kindergarten

I have all of my CTK students in my classroom. Most of them are children from poverty. It is soooo nice the first day of school when they show up with new bookbags and all their supplies that they need in them! Most of my students could not recognize any letters of the alphabet. By the time school started, most of them could recognize all the letters in their name! On the first day of school they were ready to begin to learn the others.