



# Allendale County First Steps Partnership *Fiscal Year 2009 Annual Report*

**Board Chair:**  
Lee Harley-Fitts

**Executive Director:**  
Patricia Hall

**Contact Information:**  
176 Main Street North  
Allendale, SC 29810

**Phone:** (803) 584-6000  
**Fax:** (803) 584-7000

**E-mail:**  
[phall@scfirststeps.org](mailto:phall@scfirststeps.org)

**Total children in county under  
age 6: 936**

**Total Children in county  
living in poverty %: 46%**

## Allendale County Highlights

- Provided 28 ABC Scholarships to children
- DSS Certified Workshops Provided
- PAT served 16 families with 100% home visits

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

At Allendale County First Steps, the staff and I take pride in providing parents with access to the support they might seek and want to strengthen their families and to promote the optimal development of their children. We do not take lightly our goal to provide quality enhancing services to our partnering centers. We ensure this happens through having qualified staff to provide mentoring, technical assistance, administer parenting programs, implement research-based curriculum and providing best practice training.

This has been a very successful fiscal year for the Allendale County First Steps Program. Our Parents as Teachers program data showed an increase in family assessment scores and the strategy met the requirements for average duration and visits. We served 20 children in our Countdown to Kindergarten Program. Of these 20 children, 95% received six home visits. We also provided 28 scholarships through ABC Vouchers and 15 through the Center of Excellence Program. There are currently five childcare centers in Allendale County and we provided workshops for the directors and their staff. Over 90% of the parents participating in these programs possessed one or more of the State Board of Trustees risk factors. We will continue to provide services to ensure that children in Allendale County arrive at first grade healthy and ready to succeed.

On behalf of the Allendale County First Steps Board and staff, I thank you for your support in the past and look forward to having your continued support in the future. You are the lifeline of this organization and we thank you.

Sincerely,  
Patricia Hall  
Executive Director  
Allendale First Steps

## **First Steps to School Readiness Strategy Areas**

*The First Steps initiative approaches children's school readiness needs in five ways:*

**Family Strengthening:** A parent is a child's first and best teacher. First Steps works to help parents become the best parents they can be. First Steps also helps parents further their own education.

**Healthy Start:** Children's development and ability to learn are profoundly impacted by their health in the earliest years. First Steps works to help families understand children's health needs through education and screenings while also working to help them access needed health services.

**Quality Child Care:** Quality child care provides immediate and long-term learning benefits for children. First Steps works to expand the availability of quality child-care to families and to enhance the level of quality in existing child-care environments.

**Early Education:** Research shows that children who participate in high-quality preschool classes are more likely to start school ready to learn, as well as be more successful later in life. First Steps works to expand high-quality 3-year-old and 4-year-old kindergarten opportunities in public and private settings.

**School Transition:** The transition into kindergarten is a critical time that sets the tone for children's perspectives about the school years, as well their parents' perspectives. Making a strong initial connection between school and home -- and supporting both parents and students during this transition time -- has been shown to impact students' later school success and parents' later involvement during the school years.

## **2008-09 County Partnership Programs by Strategy**

### **FAMILY STRENGTHENING.**

#### **Parents as Teachers (PAT)**

**Program description:** The parent educator conducts home visits to families with children 0-5 years of age using the Parents as Teachers model to ensure that these children enter school ready to succeed. The parent educator makes two home visits per month, host a monthly group meeting, and use Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (KIPS) and Adult-Child Interactive Reading Inventory (ACIRI) to assess twice a year.

#### **Program results:**

- Served 16 families and 18 children
- 341 home visits were conducted
- 100% of families served possessed one or more of the State Board of Trustees risk factors
- 8 families were assessed (pre and post) ACIRI

- Adult average score increased 0.64% and the child average score increased 0.46%
- 16 families were assessed (pre and post) KIPS, scores increased 0.45%
- 425 books were given to families during home visits and at community events

## **QUALITY CHILD CARE.**

**Program description:** A certified technical assistant works with our partnering centers to provide quality enhancement using best curriculum practices. Activities are designed to assist childcare providers in attaining a higher level of care (registered to licensed, enhanced, or national accreditation).

### **Program results:**

- Provided 28 ABC scholarships for children to attend quality enhanced centers
- 92% of parents possessed one or more of the State Board of Trustees risk factors
- Services were provided by a state certified trainer

## **Training & Professional Development**

**Program description:** Staff training and professional development is provided by a certified technical assistant to enhance the childcare provider's knowledge of early childhood education.

### **Program results:**

- 22 childcare providers were served to meet DSS training requirements
- 100% of the participants stated that the training was needed and they were able to apply learned strategies and skills in their classrooms.

## **CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE**

**Program description:** Entering its second year of implementation in partnership with Allendale County Schools Little New Steps Childcare Center, this comprehensive program targets children and families through providing needs-based scholarships, nurturing care and research-based instruction, developmental screenings and appropriate child assessment, parent education and involvement, health supports for the center, quality enhancement (facility and curriculum materials), on-site mentoring and technical assistance, and incentives to staff and personnel.

### **Program results:**

- Served 14 families and 15 children
- 307 home visits were conducted
- 100% of families served possessed one or more of the State Board of Trustees risk factors
- 5 families were assessed (pre and post) ACIRI  
Adult average score increased 0.03% and the child average score increased 0.11%
- 14 families were assessed (pre and post) KIPS, scores increased 0.27%
- 350 books were given to families during home visits and at community events

## **EARLY EDUCATION**

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

**Program description:** CDEPP offers state-paid tuition of 4-year-old kindergarten classes to eligible students living in the 37 trial and plaintiff school districts involved in the school funding equity lawsuit, *Abbeville et al. vs. South Carolina*. First Steps oversees CDEPP 4K classes offered in non-public school environments. To qualify for state-paid tuition, a student's family must qualify for TANF or free/reduced-price lunch, be 4 years old by Sept. 1, 2007, and live in an eligible school district.

#### **Program results:**

- 6 students served
- One provider offered CDEPP 4K classes

## **SCHOOL TRANSITION.**

### **Countdown to Kindergarten**

**Program description:** Countdown to Kindergarten is a school transition strategy designed to successfully bridge at-risk students into the K-12 school environment. There are three components; 1) public awareness – use of media to inform parents/community; 2) kindergarten home visitation and 3) countdown celebration at the end of the program.

#### **Program results:**

- 20 children served
  - 19 children received 6 home visits
  - 8 children assigned to home visitor as their Kindergarten teacher for the school term
- Nineteen families participated in visiting their home visitor's classroom, receiving school supplies, and attending an ice cream social celebration at the culmination of the program.

## **FINANCIAL SUMMARY**

<b><u>Expenditures By Funding Source</u></b>	
State Appropriation ( <i>Fund 10</i> )	\$110,233
E.I.A. Appropriation ( <i>Fund 55</i> )	\$55,966
Lottery Appropriation ( <i>Fund 35</i> )	\$
C.D.E.P.P. Appropriation ( <i>Fund 60</i> )	\$29,982
C.O.E. Appropriation ( <i>Fund 65</i> )	\$136,461
N.F.P. Appropriation ( <i>Fund 70</i> )	\$
State Private ( <i>Fund 15</i> )	\$
Local Private ( <i>Fund 20</i> )	\$4,685
Federal ( <i>Fund 30</i> )	\$12,244
In-Kind ( <i>Fund 25</i> )	\$28,200
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$377,771</b>

<b><u>Expenditures</u> By Program / Strategy Name</b>	
Parents as Teachers	\$88,642
Full Day 4K	\$29,191
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$8,896
Childcare Quality Enhancement	\$49,329
Childcare Training & Professional Development	\$18,477
Scholarships Initiatives	\$131,793
Public Health-Based Services	\$3,500
Indirect Programmatic Functions	\$20,044
Administrative Functions	\$27,899
<b>TOTAL: \$377,771</b>	

**CLARIFICATION(s)**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTABLE DONORS**

<b><i>DONOR'S NAME</i></b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
Allendale County School District	\$3,070
Coastal Community Foundation	\$2,000
United Way of Allendale	\$1,000
Camille Narin	\$200
Ann Crocker-Carmichael	\$100
Faith & Deliverance	\$100
Mark Lott	\$20
<b>TOTAL: \$6,490</b>	

*Local Match Percentage for FY 2009: 27.15%*  
*(at least 15% Legislative requirement)*

## **COUNTY PARTNERSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Mrs. Lee Harley-Fitts, Chair – Legislative Appointee  
Rev. James Brewton, Faith Community  
Mr. Willard Branch, Parent of Pre-School Child  
Mr. Tom Carter, Legislative Appointee  
Mrs. Estella Cohen, Non-Profit Organization  
Mr. DeWayne Ennis, Parent of Pre-School Child  
Ms. Verona Grant, Kindergarten-Pre-School Educator  
Mrs. Ruby Gray, Early Childhood Education  
Mrs. Vernie Harney, Family Education, Training, and Support Provider  
Mrs. Lainey Reed, Allendale County Library  
Mrs. Donella Robinson, Department of Social Services  
Mrs. Catherine L. Russell, Family Education, Training and Support Provider  
Ms. Yvonda Speights, Allendale County Head Start  
Ms. Willa Jennings, School District Representative  
Mrs. Gwen Walker, Transportation  
Mrs. Denise Cone, DHEC  
Mr. Mark Lott, Business

---

## **COUNTY DATA SNAPSHOT**

In FY09, First Steps County Partnerships statewide made it a priority to become increasingly data-driven. County Partnerships successfully began using powerful new components of the First Steps data system, and County Partnerships also utilized data in new ways to drive their FY09 program plans. In addition to enhanced program data tracking, County Partnerships are also focusing on the best available data about children and families to best understand their communities' needs. At the end of FY08 and the beginning of FY09, County Partnerships began an extensive analysis of this data, including data about the risk factors known to impact children's potential school success, such as low birth weight, teen mothers, and families living in poverty. A county-level risk data report is included in the subsequent pages of this report.

**Success Stories:**

*Hello,*

*My Name is Lor'Teshia and in 2007 I became a teen parent. I didn't have much help because my grandmother whom I lived with was sick. Like most teen mothers, I would have to withdraw from high school immediately if I didn't get any help. Thanks to Allendale County First Steps, I am able to continue my education. I will be graduating in May 2010. I have been awarded childcare scholarships for the past two years which allows my child to attend a childcare center (Little New Steps) where his educational needs are met. Since he is in a safe and clean environment, I don't have to worry about him; which allows me to focus on my classes during the day. I just want to say, Thanks for all of your support and effort put forth to assist me with resolving my childcare problem and turning my life around.*

*Lor'Teshia*

*Allendale County First Steps is an asset to our program. It provides what is needed for families to be successful. Allendale County First Steps assist in decreasing the illiteracy and poverty levels of the families. They provide services to families with multiple needs who would fall through the cracks. Because of First Steps, these families are able to continue their education and/or employment. Without Allendale County First Steps, our families would not be successful and productive citizens in our county.*

*Edna Youmans*

*Little New Steps Director*

*My name is Shunte and I am a single mother of three. I am employed and attend classes three days a week. Because my schedule is full, my time with my children is limited. Thanks to Allendale County First Steps scholarship and parenting program, I am able to get the extra help I need. My children attend a quality enhanced childcare center that partners with First Steps; which means, they are well trained and ready to teach my children. A parent educator comes out to my home and visits me at least three times a month providing me with information and sharing skills I need to help prepare my children for school. I know my children will be ready to enter school ready to learn and I will be a better parent using what has been instilled in me from the parent educator. Again, Thanks Allendale County First Steps Partnership, Board, staff, and everyone that supports this organization.*

*The SC General Assembly created in 1999 the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Initiative as 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”...here’s what happened next:*

First Steps Strategy Areas	Notable Moments
Family Strengthening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allendale County School District provided 1.5 Parent Educators FY04</li> </ul>
Healthy Start	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• March of Dimes Grant to decrease low birth weight babies FY04 - FY06</li> </ul>
Quality Child Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little New Steps Childcare Center received NAEYC certification FY06</li> <li>• Little New Steps became one of the Regional Model Childcare sites FY05</li> <li>• 19 childcare staff trained in Creative Curriculum FY08</li> <li>• Center of Excellence (COE) Childcare Pilot Program FY07- FY09</li> <li>• Provided childcare scholarships since inception</li> </ul>
Early Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allendale County School District/First Steps Partnership provided a Lending Library for school district and First Steps parents, teachers and childcare providers FY03</li> <li>• CDEPP (Kids R Us Childcare Center) FY07</li> </ul>
School Transition Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Countdown to Kindergarten FY05</li> </ul>
Non-Standard Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library FY03</li> <li>• Motherread/Fatheread FY03</li> </ul>

Other notable moments:

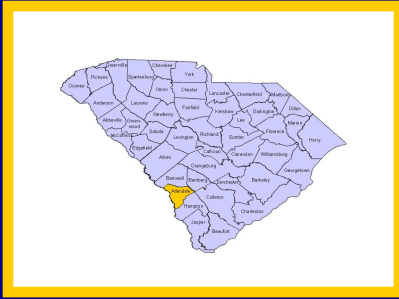
Award for Support of the Allendale County School District

and its Early Childhood  
Initiatives FY01

Best Community Engagement  
Effort Award FY04

Special Service to the  
Community Award FY04

Hickory Street Park Project  
Collaboration Partnership with  
community agencies FY01



# 2008 School Readiness Risk Profile

## Allendale County

Total Children Under Six: 936

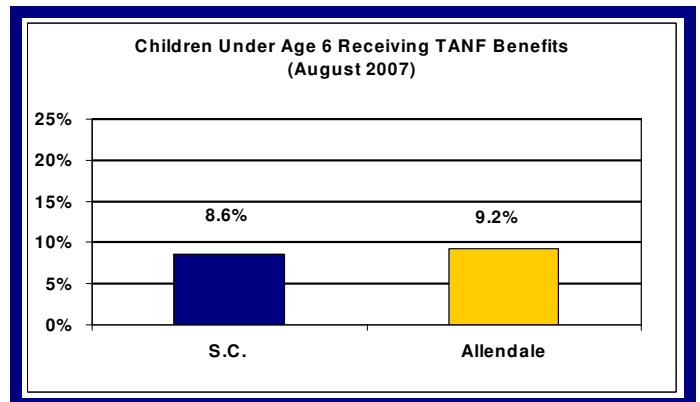
### CHILD POVERTY (Children in Families Receiving TANF Benefits)

Statewide Average (2007): 8.4%

Allendale County (2007): 9.2%

**Fast Fact:** Roughly 1 in 10 Allendale County children has an annual family income equivalent to \$10,325 (or less) for a family of four. A recent statewide analysis suggests that 45% of these children will be retained or score at the “below basic” level (PACT) by third grade.

- Children in deep poverty often face a wide variety of school readiness obstacles, ranging from inadequate prenatal care and nutrition to low maternal education.
- 86 of Allendale County’s 936 children under age 6 received federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits during 2007, indicating a family income at or below 50% of the federal poverty definition.



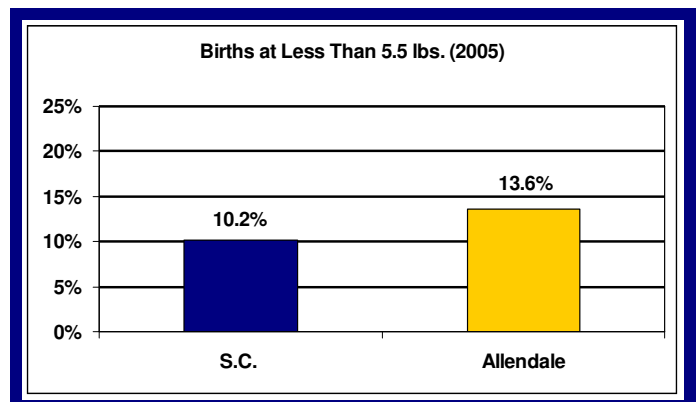
### CHILDREN AT LOW BIRTH WEIGHT (Less Than 5.5 lbs.)

Statewide Average (2005): 10.2%

Allendale County (2005): 13.6%

**Fast Fact:** Just over 1 in 10 Allendale County children is born at a weight less than 5.5 lbs. A recent statewide analysis suggests that at least one-third of these children (36%-52% depending on weight category) will be retained or score at the “below basic” level (PACT) by third grade.

- Babies born at low weights are often prone to developmental delays associated with early academic failure.
- Many have received inadequate prenatal care and suffer from significant health complications.
- 20 of the 147 children born in Allendale County during 2005 weighed less than 5.5 lbs.



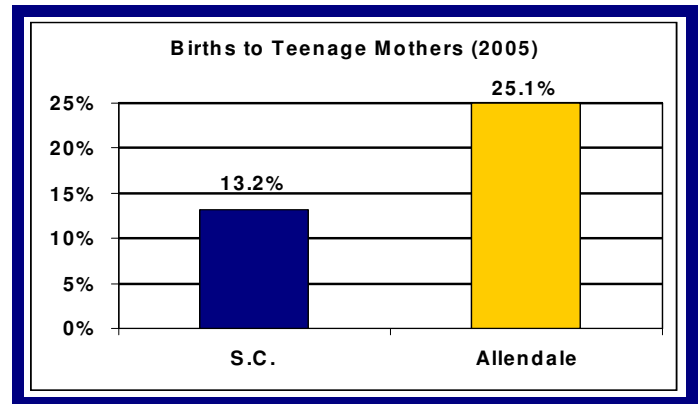
## **BIRTHS TO TEENAGE MOTHERS**

Statewide Average (2005): 13.2%

Allendale County (2005): 25.1%

***Fast Fact: 1 in 4 Allendale County births is to a mother under 20 years of age. A recent statewide analysis suggests that 43% of these children will be retained or score at the “below basic” level (PACT) by third grade.***

- Teenage parents often lack the maturity and knowledge required to optimally fulfill important parental responsibilities, are less likely to advance their own educational attainment and often fail to advance beyond low-income status.
- 37 of the 147 children born in Allendale County during 2005 had teenage mothers.



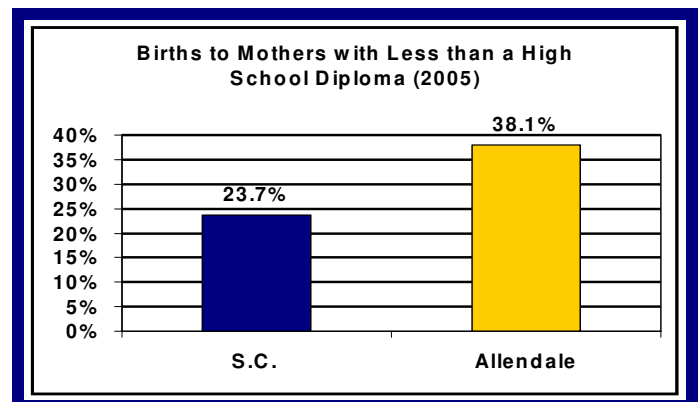
## **BIRTHS TO MOTHERS WITH LESS THAN A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA**

Statewide Average (2005): 23.7%

Allendale County (2005): 38.1%

***Fast Fact: Nearly 2 in 5 children in Allendale County are born to mothers possessing less than a high school diploma. A recent statewide analysis suggests that roughly half (48%) of these children will be retained or score at the “below basic” level (PACT) by third grade.***

- Research suggests that a mother’s own educational attainment is closely linked to the subsequent academic performance of her children.
- 56 of the 147 children born in Allendale County during 2005 had mothers with less than a high school diploma.



All data provided by the SC Budget and Control Board’s Office of Research and Statistics