



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **Chesterfield County First Steps is a Partner in Childhood Obesity Prevention Project**

**Chesterfield, S.C.** – Chesterfield County First Steps will collaborate with Chesterfield County Coordinating Council and other local organizations to launch a new program aimed at curbing childhood obesity among Chesterfield County children ages 2 to 5 years old. The program began in late January and will be offered through December.

Chesterfield County Coordinating Council recently received a \$105,390 grant from the Prevention Partnership Grant at the S.C. Department of Health and Human Services to fund the JumpStart to Good Health program. In addition to Chesterfield County Coordinating Council's participation, the grant will also involve the Chesterfield County First Steps, Chesterfield Family YMCA, the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control Region 4 Health Education Division and CareSouth Carolina.

“Prevention is a good investment. This is a perfect role for state funds to pilot programs that will have lasting impact on the total community and save money in the long run,” said Rep. Ted Vick, CCCC Chairperson and S.C. House of Representatives Member (District 53).

The JumpStart to Good Health program will provide a comprehensive, evidenced-based prevention program targeting children, their families, their child-care environments and community culture. Community-based childhood obesity prevention strategies will include:

- Impacting the risk factors and health status indicators in individual children (40-60 underserved 3- and 4-year-old children and their families will be targeted);
- Improving the nutrition and physical activity environment at four selected child-care centers: First Presbyterian Child Development Center, Giggles and Wiggles Academy, Christian Community Child Care Center, and New Covenant School;
- Generating incentives and support for sustainable, healthy lifestyle changes by families; and
- Creating and implement a community-wide prevention campaign that focuses on the importance of a healthier lifestyle for children in Chesterfield County.

“This is really an exciting opportunity that will bring together key resources, skills, agencies, and people to work together toward a healthier future for our young children. JumpStart to Good Health seeks to engage the child, his or her family, the child care centers and the greater community in a community-based program that is not currently available, but desperately needed,” said Chesterfield County First Steps Executive Director Karen Martini Odom.

Chesterfield County First Steps has employed a LPN, Jennifer Weaver, as the new Child Health Coordinator who will provide assistance to child-care directors and teachers on making environmental changes to facilities, program processes, curricula, nutrition and other activities that impact the health environment of the children at the centers. Each center will receive guided expertise on nutrition standards, exercise/activity curricula and gross motor play. The Child Health Coordinator will also encourage the parents to engage in healthy behaviors by making home visits and helping parents navigate the health and social service systems.

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*Chesterfield County First Steps to School Readiness is a comprehensive, results-oriented countywide education initiative to help prepare children to reach school healthy and ready to succeed. Public and private support is combined through county partnerships to enable individual communities to address the unmet needs of young children and their families.*