



Saluda County First Steps Partnership *Fiscal Year 2008 Annual Report*

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**Total children in county under
age 6: 1,447**

**Children under age 6 living in
poverty: 7.5%**

Saluda County Highlights

- 50% of full-time staff at COE-sponsored child care site are working towards attaining their Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education.
- Attained ERS scores of 4.51 in 3-year old classroom and 5.0 in CDEPP (4K) classroom.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Based on current school enrollment information, 86% of the k-2 population at Saluda Primary School, and 72% of the K-2 population at Hollywood Elementary School, are eligible for Medicaid. Challenged with these high statistics regarding the poverty index in Saluda County and the limited funds available through First Steps, great strides have been taken to enhance school readiness skills for children in the county and community.

42% of the enrollment at a state-funded Centers of Excellence (COE) site received free tuition for high-quality child care services. To achieve our goal of higher teacher qualifications based on formal education, 90% of the full-time teaching staff have completed college coursework in ECD101, and 45% of the full-time teaching staff are continuing their formal education as they work to attain an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education. 100% of the full-time staff received 30 hours or more in professional development training. All children at the COE site were eligible for hearing, vision, speech, and dental screenings. Environmental Rating Scores of 4.51 in the 3-year old classroom and 5.0 in the CDEPP (4K) classroom assure us that gains are being made in providing high-quality childcare in Saluda County.

Because there is no full-day public school 4K program in Saluda County, a full-day 4K program was implemented in a private child care center through the state-funded Child Development Education Pilot Program (CDEPP). 47% of the children enrolled received free tuition.

Focused on Children,
Deborah Padgett
Executive Director
Saluda County 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.

2007-08 County Partnership Programs by Strategy

FAMILY STRENGTHENING.

Program description:

Parent education. Because a parent is a child's first and best teacher, First Steps works to help parents become the best they can be, all while respecting a family's personal environment, customs and culture.

Family literacy. Learning begins at home, and early building blocks that help children read are impacted by parents' literacy levels. First Steps works with parents to help their children gain literacy skills through guided, age-appropriate learning activities.

Program results:

- 11 families (12 children) served
- The KIPS is an evaluation of parenting behaviors related to interactions between parents and children. An evaluation based on a 5-point scoring scale, the KIPS is used to observe parents of children ages 2 months old up to 5 years of age. It involves an observation of a parent playing with his or her child for 20 minutes in order to examine 12 different behaviors. Average scores ranging from 4 to 5 reflect high-quality parenting, scores ranging from 3 to 4 reflect moderate-quality parenting, and scores ranging from 0 to 3 reflect low-quality parenting. 10 of 11 parents scored higher in the post KIPS assessment. On average, participants with both pre- and post-scores showed a 13.3% improvement on the KIPS.
- The ACIRI is an interactive reading inventory for parents and their children ages 2.5 to 5. The ACIRI is a literacy-specific evaluation based on the observation of a parent and child reading together; is scored on a 3-point scale; and it evaluates the interaction between parents and children relating to literacy acquisition. Five families with children ages 2.6 years or older scored higher in the post ACIRI assessment. On average, adult participants with both pre- and post-scores showed a 4.9% improvement on the ACIRI, while child participants showed a 4.5% improvement.
- 100% of families received an average of 1.7 home visits per month, thereby exceeding the standard requirement of 1.5 home visits per month.
- 100% of home visits averaged 1.03 hours, thereby exceeding the standard requirement of 0.75 hours per month.
- 50% of families attended a minimum of 5 group meetings through-out the year.

QUALITY CHILD CARE.

Centers of Excellence

Program description:

In 2006, the General Assembly approved \$2 million for a statewide expansion of the Centers of Excellence project, created by Georgetown County First Steps in partnership with the Frances P. Bunnelle Foundation in 2004. The Centers of Excellence project offers families child-care scholarships, developmental screenings and individualized instruction for children. Center staff receive intensive training and guidance to enhance their services.

Quality enhancement. Research says the level of quality at a child-care center is directly related to child outcomes. Therefore, First Steps works to help providers offer safe and healthy environments, build effective relationships with children and their families, and provide a stimulating learning environment.

Affordability. High-quality care can often carry a cost that makes quality inaccessible to many families. First Steps works to make high-quality care more affordable.

Staff training. Child-care staff and teachers enhance their knowledge and skills to improve the quality of their services through training and technical assistance.

Advanced staff education level. First Steps and its partners work to make college-level coursework and degrees more accessible to child-care staff.

Program results:

- 26 children served
- Although there was no significant difference between pre- and post-ITERS assessments, post-ECERS assessments showed a gain of 1.18 points.
- 184 intensive technical assistance visits were provided with an average duration of each visit being 2 hours 21 minutes.
- 48% of teaching staff have returned to school to increase their knowledge of early education and child development.
- 90% of teaching staff have completed ECD101.
- 100% of teaching staff completed 30 hours of professional development training.
- Teachers are more motivated to conduct developmentally appropriate activities and spent more time interacting with the children.
- Teachers are practicing intentional teaching as they deliberately implement early education and child development knowledge into their lesson plans.
- In Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, COE scholarship children averaged a growth of 18.34 months within a nine month period. CDEPP scholarship children showed average growth of 14.75 months during the same period.
- E-LAP and LAP-3 assessments were on-going during the 2007-2008 year. Teachers used the emerging skills in the seven domains as part of their lesson plans.

Staff Training and Professional Development

Program description:

Staff training. Child-care staff and teachers enhance their knowledge and skills to improve the quality of their services through training and technical assistance. First Steps works to help child-care staff develop skills and knowledge to work more effectively with children and their families, as well as meet licensing requirements of the S.C. Department of Social Services.

Advanced staff education level. First Steps and its partners work to make college-level coursework and degrees more accessible to child-care staff. The Teacher Education and Compensation Helps Early Childhood Project (T.E.A.C.H.) provides scholarships for teachers working in the child-care field to help them complete college-level early childhood coursework. T.E.A.C.H. is located within a First Steps satellite office in Greenville, S.C., (Center for Child Care Career Development) and is funded with federal dollars through the S.C. Department of Social Services.

Program results:

- 5 staff members completed 3.0 hours of college-level coursework.
- 4 staff members are continuing to work towards an Associate Degree in Early Education.
- 10 staff members received 30 hours of professional development training (100% of the full-time staff members and the director).
- Lead teachers of each classroom completed 10 hours of Creative Curriculum training.

EARLY EDUCATION.

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

Program description:

CDEPP offers state-paid tuition for 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:

- 8 students served
- 1 provider offering CDEPP 4K classes
- 4K classroom achieved a score of 5.0 on Environmental Rating Scale

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

<u>Expenditures</u> By Funding Source	
State Appropriation (<i>Fund 10</i>)	\$117,181
E.I.A. Appropriation (<i>Fund 55</i>)	\$61,812
Lottery Appropriation (<i>Fund 35</i>)	\$0
C.D.E.P.P. Appropriation (<i>Fund 60</i>)	\$31,480
C.O.E. Appropriation (<i>Fund 65</i>)	\$105,787
N.F.P. Appropriation (<i>Fund 70</i>)	\$0
State Private (<i>Fund 15</i>)	\$0
Local Private (<i>Fund 20</i>)	\$703
Federal (<i>Fund 30</i>)	\$4,144
In-Kind (<i>Fund 25</i>)	\$28,437
TOTAL:	\$349,544

<u>Expenditures</u> By Program / Strategy Name	
2012 – Parents as Teacher	\$32,004
2022 – Motherhead Read	\$35,064
3140 – Full Day 4K	\$30,564
6012 – Quality Enhancement	\$117,040
6052 – Child Care Training/Professional Dev.	\$31,982
7032 – Scholarship Initiative	\$30,703
9012 – Health-Based Services	\$7015
Indirect Programmatic Functions	\$40,613

Administrative Functions	\$24,559
TOTAL: \$349,544	

NOTABLE DONORS

<i>DONOR'S NAME</i>	AMOUNT
All South Federal CU	\$200.00
Amick Farms	\$200.00
Bailey & Son Music	\$200.00
Capital Bank	\$100.00
Crawford's Contracting	\$50.00
First Citizens	\$100.00
Gentry's Poultry	\$100.00
Palmetto Screen Print	\$25.00
Prevention Net	\$200.00
Rosie's Pizza	\$100.00
Saluda Chamber of Commerce	\$100.00
SCE&G	\$50.00
Strawbridge Promotional Advertising	\$100.00
ABC Academy	\$200.00
	\$
TOTAL: \$1725.00	

Local Match Percentage for FY 2008: 28.62%
(at least 15% Legislative requirement)

COUNTY PARTNERSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Russ Terrell, Board Chair, Non-Profit Organization
Misty Pearson, Vice-Chair, State Agency Designee, DHEC
Helen Hallman, Secretary, Child Care
Tiffany Bosket, Family Education
Debra Gantt, Early Childhood
Chris Collins, Healthcare Provider
Aileen Miller, Faith Community
Steve Teer, Business Community
Shay Dumit, Parent
Jerry Brunson, Legislative Appointment
Kristy Fulmer, State Agency Designee, DSS
Amanda VanScyoc, State Agency Designee, Library

Diane DuBose, School District Designee, Aiken County
Melissa Keisler, School District Designee, Lexington County School District 3
Kathy Matthews, School District Designee, Saluda County

COUNTY DATA SNAPSHOT

In FY08, 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.

Executive Director's Data Note:

Parents are becoming more interested on the "how" of children learning. They are becoming aware of the significance and importance that early education and experiences are to the development of their child; the PAT curriculum and resources offers assistance and support, and it promotes teaching thru play and repetition. Most parents are embracing the home visits, and are requesting information regarding, bed wetting, biting, discipline etc. i.e. A parent requested the curriculum for the period in which she would not be receiving visits. When COE commenced and the Parent Educator resumed visits, the mother and children proudly showed off a scrap book they had made of events and places they had visited during the summer, the pages were decorated with home made items, stickers and pictures; and in the last page, a picture of both children all dressed up standing in front of the house, the caption read "We are off to a great start for 2008-2009".

2008 School Readiness Risk Profile

Saluda County

Total Children Under Six: 1,447

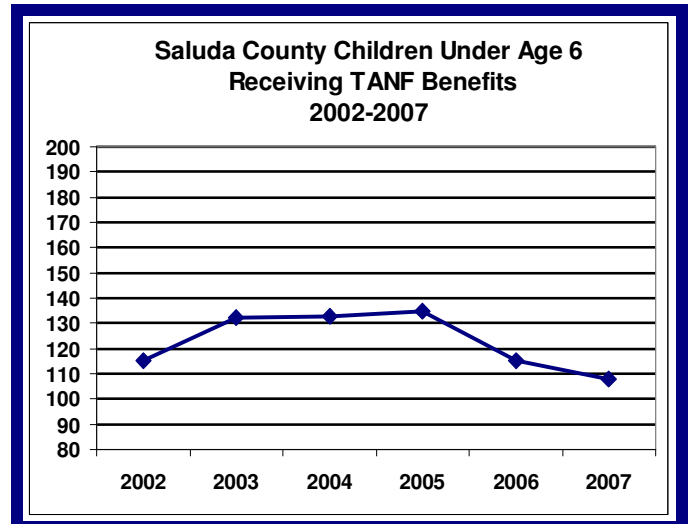
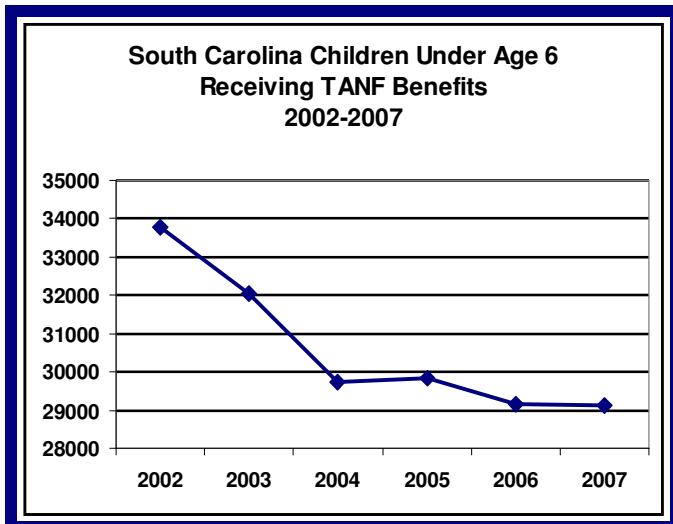
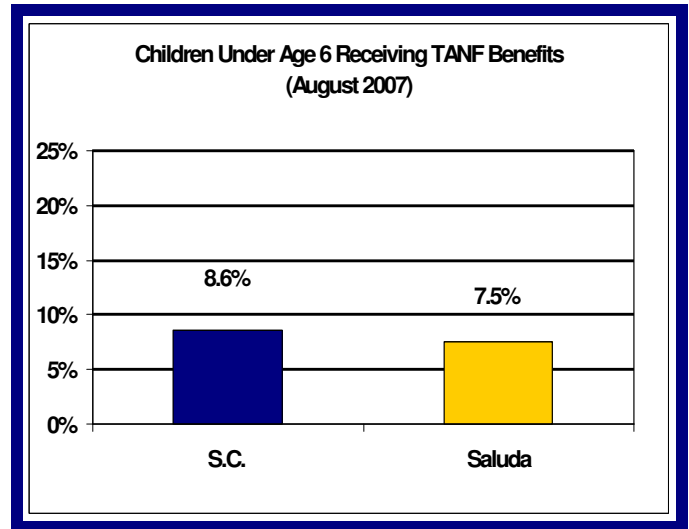
CHILD POVERTY (Children in Families Receiving TANF Benefits)

Statewide Average (2007): 8.4% Saluda County (2007): 7.5%

Fast Fact: Roughly 1 in 13 Saluda 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.

108 of Saluda County’s 1,447 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.



2008 School Readiness Risk Profile

Saluda County

Total Children Under Six: 1,447

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

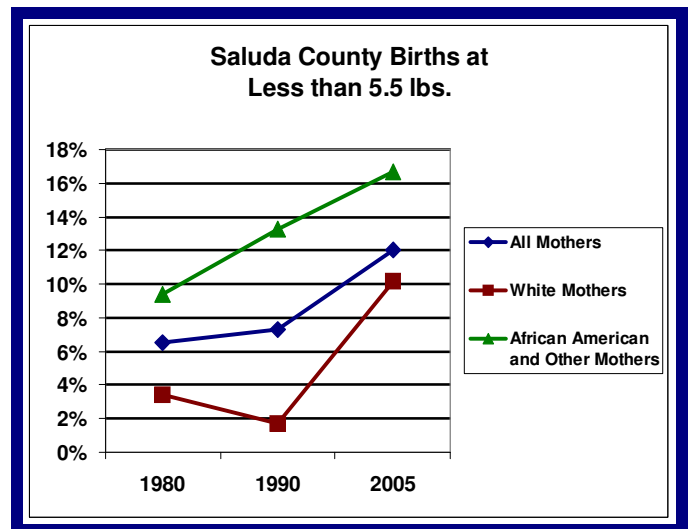
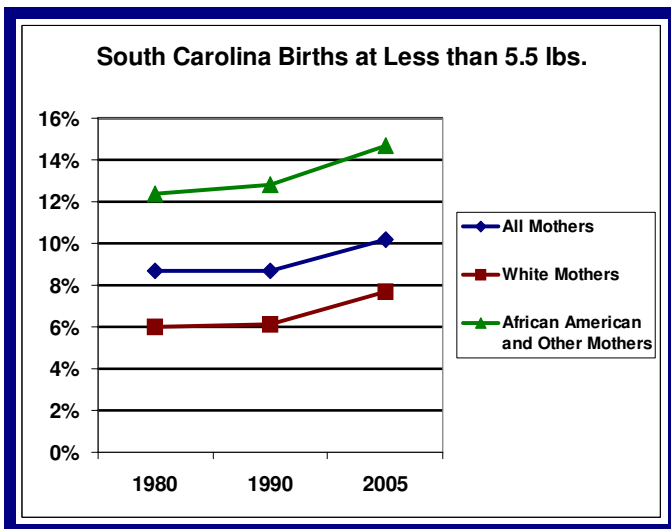
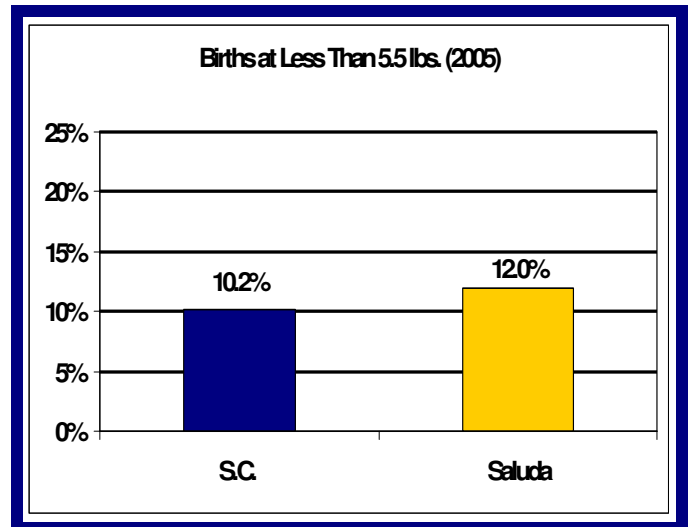
Statewide Average (2005): 10.2% Saluda County (2005): 12.0%

Fast Fact: Roughly 1 in 8 Saluda 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.

31 of the 259 children born in Saluda County during 2005 weighed less than 5.5 lbs.



2008 School Readiness Risk Profile

Saluda County

Total Children Under Six: 1,447

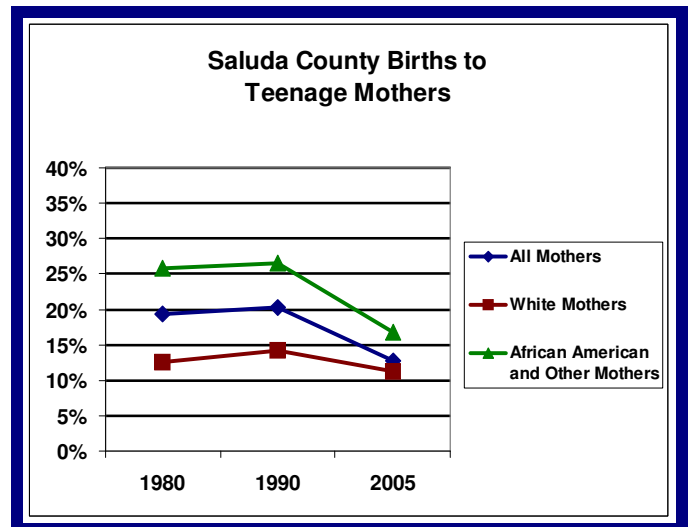
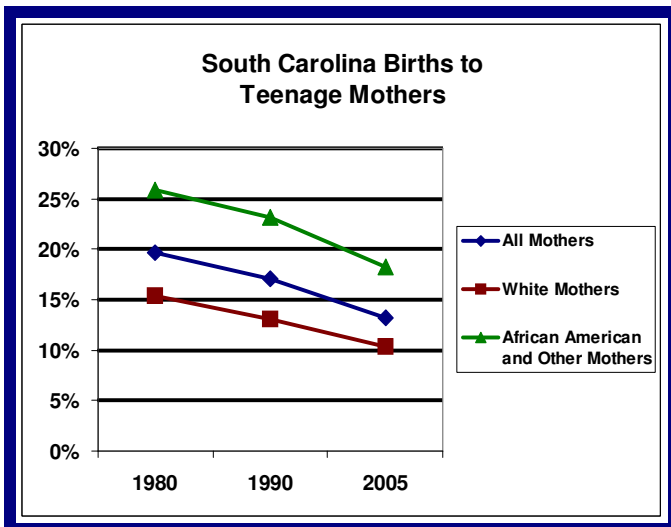
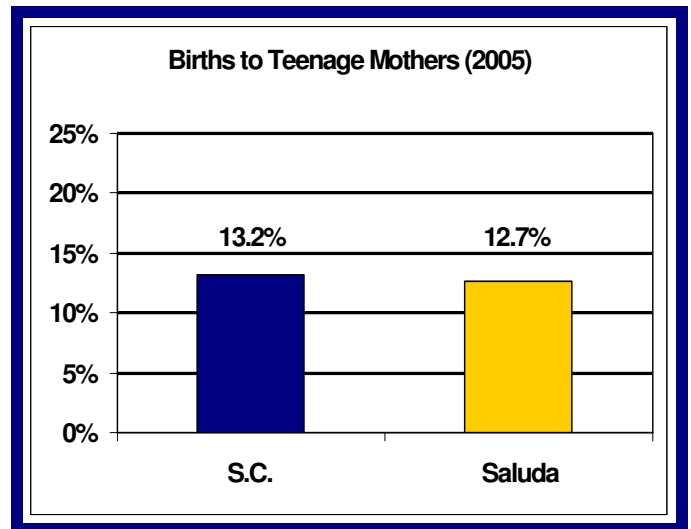
BIRTHS TO TEENAGE MOTHERS

Statewide Average (2005): 13.2% Saluda County (2005): 12.7%

Fast Fact: 1 in 8 Saluda 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.

33 of the 259 children born in Saluda County during 2005 had teenage mothers.



2008 School Readiness Risk Profile

Saluda County

Total Children Under Six: 1,447

BIRTHS TO MOTHERS WITH LESS THAN A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

Statewide Average (2005): 23.7% Saluda County (2005): 41.3%

Fast Fact: 2 in 5 children in Saluda 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.

107 of the 259 children born in Saluda County during 2005 had mothers with less than a high school diploma.

