

AIKEN COUNTY

**FIRST
STEPS**

Getting children ready for school.



Parents as Teachers

Countdown to Kindergarten

**Child Care Quality
Enhancement**

Child Care Training

Child Care Scholarships

Health and Education Classes

Annual Report

2014-15



OUR VISION:

**Every Aiken County child
will arrive at
kindergarten
ready to succeed.**

First Steps WORKS for the children of Aiken County.



Annual Report 2014-15

BUILDING THE STARS OF TOMORROW

Who We Serve

First Steps serves South Carolina's young children and their families, with the goal of ensuring each is prepared for school success.

<http://datacenter.kidscount.org/>

Number of Aiken County children under 5:
9,484

Number of Aiken children living in poverty:
19.2%

Babies born each year in Aiken County to a mother less than a high school diploma:
1 in 5

Our Programs

Parents as Teachers

Countdown to Kindergarten

Child Care Quality Enhancement

Child Care Training

Child Care Scholarships

Health and Education Classes

Our Results

- ✓ Served 272 children 0-5 through the P.A.T., Scholarship and CTK programs.
- ✓ Provided 350 child care providers with 16 hours of Certified training

Marcia L. Nash, Executive Director, M.Ed.

I often visit the children at our local child care centers as a way to refresh the spirit of the little girl in me. When I walk through the door, the eyes of one grabs me immediately, the smile of another gives me goose bumps, and the stares of those that I am new to goes deep as they try to figure out who the silly lady is that has made my classmates jump and squirm with excitement.

As I wash my hands, their excitement rises to another level, because at that moment, they knew that I was there to play, laugh, read, sing and dance with them. I, to, get excited because what they don't know is they have made my day too!

The connections formed with my little people remind me that while their glass may appear half empty, we must assist them and their families in completing the process of adding to that glass, causing it to overflow with a *common language for understanding, loving, and supporting children's development.*

The Aiken County First Steps Partnership Board and Staff have witnessed the commitment and passion of parents, collaborating partners, community agencies, and early care and education providers in Aiken County. Because of YOU, from day one to grade one, we are continuing to build the stars of tomorrow. Because of YOU, the children of Aiken County are continuously entering school healthy and ready to learn.

Keep Children FIRST!

Marcia L. Nash

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much”

Helen Keller
1880-1935

Board Chair
Shirley von Beck

Executive Director
Marcia L. Nash M.Ed.

1 Willis Circle
Graniteville, SC 29829

(803)663-5604

aiken1stepsed@bellsouth.net

www.scfirststeps.org

What We Do

Each of the six color blocks of the First Steps logo represents a core area of service, outlining our comprehensive strategy to prepare children for long-term school success.

With **measurable outcomes across each of its six school readiness strategy areas**, First Steps is getting results.



Healthy Start

We begin with a focus on providing a healthy start to life. This includes prenatal and post-partum services for both mother and baby. In 2007, First Steps collaborated with key philanthropic and agency partners to bring Nurse-Family Partnership to SC having a significant impact on reducing premature births and Medicaid costs.



Quality Childcare

Quality childcare starts with quality childcare providers. Our quality enhancement and training strategies lead to improved teacher-student interaction, which research shows has a significant impact on a child's development and success in school.



Family Strengthening

Our home visitation strategies, such as Parents as Teachers, Parent-Child Home and Early Steps to School Success, are helping parents understand their responsibilities to care for and be positive models for their children. As a result of First Steps' intervention and parenting support, 66% of clients initially assessed at "low" levels of parenting have achieved moderate or high levels of parenting skill.



Early Education

Private-public partnerships through First Steps 4K have led to significant cost efficiencies in the delivery of publicly funded 4K. One recent analysis suggests First Steps is achieving comparable results, without the need for costly capital construction, for 80 cents on the dollar.



Early Intervention

According to recent federal evaluations, outcomes for clients participating in BabyNet early intervention programs are above national averages. BabyNet matches the special needs of infants and toddlers who have disabilities and/or developmental delays with customized, community-based resources.



School Transition

Each of the corresponding blocks of services leads ultimately to the goal of transitioning children successfully to school. Programs like Countdown to Kindergarten and From Day One to Grade One are ultimately preparing children for school success.

Based on the needs of our community, Aiken County First Steps focuses its investments in Quality Child Care (Enhancement, Training, and Scholarships), Family Strengthening (Parents as Teachers), School Transition (Countdown to Kindergarten), and Health and Education.

Parents play a critical role in their child's development.

Program Description

Parents as Teachers (PAT) is an evidence-based home visiting program designed to build strong communities, thriving families and children who are healthy, safe and ready to succeed. PAT services include:

1. **Personal Visits** at least twice monthly
2. **Monthly Group Connections** with other PAT families
3. **Screenings and Assessments** to identify developmental concerns
4. **Connections to Outside Resources** that families may need to succeed

Aiken County First Steps serves families in greatest need. Among our PAT families:

100% ... live in poverty
99% ... receive SNAP; 24% receive TANF
39% ... low maternal/primary caregiver education



Ms. Rheumel and her nephew Micah visit the Aiken County Library Children's Center during a Parent's as Teachers Play Group.

The Parents as Teachers program has taught me how to teach my little girl.

Thank You Ms. Shonda!

Ms. Bianca

PAT by the Numbers 2014-15

Families Served	33	
Children Served	41	
Total Home Visits	485	
Hours Spent Serving Families	545.94	
Average gain, <i>Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale</i> (pre-to-post):	KIPS Pre: 3.73 Post: 4.39	ACIRI Adult Pre:2.36 Adult Post:2.8 Child Pre: 1.83 Child Post: 2.39

This year, our Parents as Teachers program:

- ✓ Averaged 14.7 home visits per family
- ✓ Identified and addressed 5 potential developmental delays
- ✓ Improved parenting practices with a .66 difference from pre to post (KIPS).
- ✓ Improved literacy skills with an Adult difference of .44 and a child difference of .56 from pre to post. The Parents as Teachers program distributed 91 books to children and families.
- ✓ Made 50 referrals for families to services such as Adult Education, Housing, and literacy, employment and food.

Thank you to our partners!

Aiken County School District Adult Ed. and Family Lt. Programs
Aiken County Community PAT Advisory Board Members
Mental Health America

Aiken County First Steps

1 Willis Circle, Graniteville, SC, 29829
(803)-663-5604
aiken1stepsed@bellsouth.net
www.scfirststeps.org

Child Care Quality Enhancement

In order to thrive, children need nurturing, responsive relationships and a supportive learning environment, both within and outside the home.

Program Description

The quality of care they received by young children is crucial to their healthy development and school readiness. Child care providers strive to provide high quality care, but may lack the resources that are commonly available to publicly-funded early childhood programs, such as educational materials, on-site professional development, and other support.

First Steps' Child Care Quality Enhancement (QE) is intended to produce measurable improvements in the quality of care provided to young children. Participating child care providers must serve a high percentage of at-risk children, and are selected through a competitive process that requires a strong level of commitment to the QE process.

Program Components

1. On-site Technical Assistance (TA) at least twice monthly
2. Equipment and materials funding
3. Integration with locally available training, provided by First Steps and other partners
4. Workforce Development
5. Coordination with community partners
6. Pre/post assessments of the classroom environment and teacher-child interaction, using nationally-recognized observational tools for infant/toddler and preschool settings (ITERS, ECERS, FCCERS)

QE by the Numbers, 2014-15

Child Care Providers Served	4
Number of TA Visits Provided	98
Number of Children 0-5 Enrolled in Provider Classrooms	127

Congratulations to our QE participants for 2014-15!

Child Care Provider	Pre/Post Improvement
Mother Care, Center	From 5.47 to 6.13
Freedman Family Lit., infant room	From 4.7 to 4.92
First Providence, 2-yr-old room	From 4.82 to 5.47
Tiny Treasures, 3-yr-old room	From 5.15 to 5.52

This year, our Quality Enhancement program:

- ✓ Improved quality, on average, by .1 based on pre/post Environment Rating Scale assessments
- ✓ Provided 157.75 hours of technical assistance to child care providers
- ✓ Funded scholarships for 32 children within participating child care providers

Thank you to our partners!

- Child Care Resource and Referral of the Midlands (CCRR)
- Advocates for Better Care (ABC)
- Department of Social Services Child Care Division
- Freedman Family Literacy
- Tiny Treasures Child Care Center
- First Providence Learning and Development Center
- Mothers Care Group Child Care Home

Aiken County First Steps
 1 Willis Circle, Graniteville, SC 29829
 (803)-663-5604
aiken1stepsed@bellsouth.net
www.scfirststeps.org

Child Care Training

Those who care for young children need high-quality, accessible, and affordable professional development.

Program Description

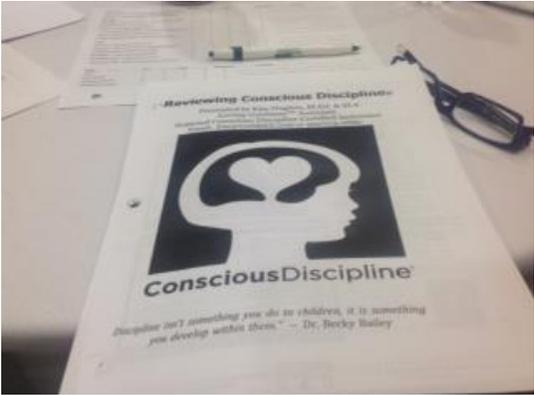
High-quality child care hinges on high-quality professional development that meets the needs of the local child care workforce.

First Steps-sponsored training is certified through the SC Center for Child Care Career Development and includes topics in the areas of nutrition, health and safety, curriculum, child guidance, professional development and program administration. Best practices in training include not only the training itself, but follow-up in the classroom.

The Parent training given by First Steps has helped me understand how I can better help my children in school. Thank you First Steps.
 Keandra Green

Child Care Training Sponsored by Aiken County First Steps, 2014-15

Topic:	Sessions:
ECE 2014 Conference	18 Sessions
FLIP IT Curriculum	4 Sessions
Blood-Borne Pathogens	2 Sessions
The Child's Perspective	1 Session
Adults are Role Models	1 Session
Challenging Behaviors and SE Dev.	1 Session



Conscious Discipline Training: Discipline is not something you do to children; it is something you develop with them. SHIFT!

Training by the Numbers, 2014-15

Total Training Attendance	350
Child Care Teachers and Directors Served	267
Number of Training Sessions Offered	21

This year, our Training program provided:

- ✓ 267 early childhood staff with high quality training
- ✓ 16 hours of certified training and 9 hours of registered training for staff to meet annual re-certification requirements
- ✓ 4 follow-up visits with training participants to help put training into practice
- ✓

Thank you to our partners!

- Edgefield and Saluda County First Steps
- SCECA District VI
- Aiken County Schools District
- Children's Place Inc.
- United Way of Aiken County

Aiken County First Steps
 1 Willis Circle, Graniteville, SC 29829
 (803)-663-5604
aiken1stepsed@bellsouth.net
www.scfirststeps.org

Child Care Scholarships

Too many families in Aiken County cannot afford quality care for their children.

Program Description

Access to quality child care is essential for children while away from their primary caregivers. Yet, of those families income-eligible for child care assistance in South Carolina, only a small fraction receive it due to lack of funds. In the absence of nurturing and consistently available family, friends or neighbors, parents are faced with few - or no - affordable care options.

Aiken County First Steps serves families in greatest need. Among our scholarship families:

- 100% ... live in poverty
- 87% ... receive TANF/SNAP
- 38% ... exposed to caregiver depression
- 25% ... low birth weight
- 38% ... domestic violence

In addition to regular monitoring of child care providers that receive First Steps scholarships, First Steps conducts at least one developmental screening each year with scholarship children and connects families to needed services within the community.

Aiken County First Steps also integrated 9 scholarship families with the Parents as Teachers program.

Aiken County First Steps scholarship program provided my daughter with quality childcare; which allowed me to soar to success with a 4 year degree from USCA!
Mariam Zeidan



Ms. Miriam and her daughter Zoe pose for a holiday picture during the ACFS 2014 winter wonderland event.

Scholarships by the Numbers, 2014-15

Children Served	32
Providers Served	4

This year, our Scholarship program:

- ✓ Provided 32 children with scholarship assistance so their parents could work or attend school
- ✓ Identified and addressed 4 potential developmental delays among scholarship children
- ✓ Made 9 connections for families to services such as Parents as Teachers
- ✓ Supported 4 small businesses in Aiken County by subsidizing child care tuition for families who would not otherwise be able to afford quality care
- ✓ Provided 14 hours of training for scholarship parents in topics such as What is Quality Child Care, Domestic Violence, and FLIP-IT

Thank you to our partners!

- Freedman Family Literacy
- Tiny Treasures Child Care Center
- First Providence Learning and Development Center
- Mothers Care Group Child Care Home

Aiken County First Steps
 1 Willis Circle, Graniteville, SC 29829
 (803)-663-5604
aiken1stepped@bellsouth.net
www.scfirststeps.org



Bringing parents and teachers together as partners sets the foundation for success in school.

Program Description

Countdown to Kindergarten (CTK) is a summer home visitation model connecting rising kindergartners and their families with their future teachers. The program is designed:

- ✓ to forge strong and lasting home-school relationships,
- ✓ to acquaint children and families with the state and classroom expectations to increase the likelihood of school success,
- ✓ to increase parent involvement in the early grades (particularly in hard-to-reach communities), when children's learning is foundational for life success; and
- ✓ to increase public awareness of the importance of school readiness and provide ways for parents and communities to impact children's early school success.

Countdown to Kindergarten integrates all of the following:

Home Visitation. Teachers make six visits over the summer to the homes of participating students and families. Children and families are introduced to actual materials used in kindergarten and are given a Kindergarten Transition Toolkit to keep.

Learning Celebration. The last visit is a "field trip" to the school where the child will attend class in the fall.

Public Awareness. Throughout the summer, First Steps releases tips to media to help parents and caregivers get children ready for kindergarten.

*CTK by the Numbers, Summer 2014

Children Served	20
Families Served	18
Home/School Visits	114

**CTK program data is for June-August 2014, whereas CTK fiscal data includes expenditures from July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015.*



2014 CTK CELEBRATION

Ridge-Spring Monetta Elementary

This year, our Countdown to Kindergarten program:

- ✓ Increased the amount of time parents spent reading to children by 95%
- ✓ According to kindergarten teachers, 60% of CTK children performed as well as, or better than, their fellow students in reading during the 2014-15 school year.
- ✓ According to kindergarten teachers, 95% of CTK parents were more involved than other parents in their child's education in the areas of reading to their child.

Thank you to our partners!

Aiken County School District

Kaplan Early Learning Company

Ridge Spring Monetta Elementary School

Aiken County First Steps

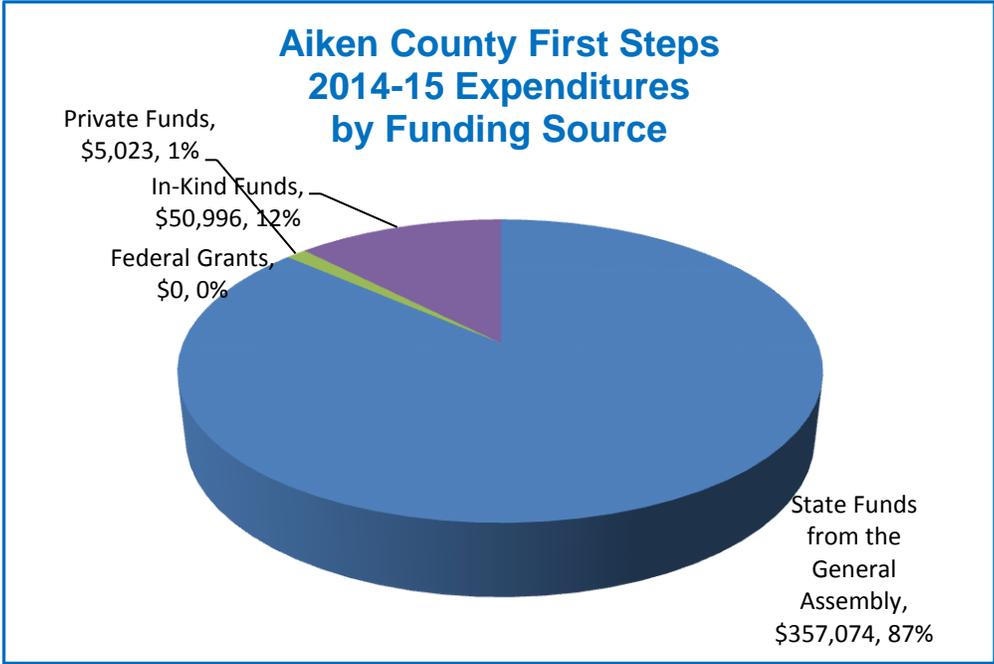
1 Willis Circle, Graniteville, SC 29829

(803)-663-5604

aiken1stepsed@bellsouth.net

www.scfirststeps.org

Financial Impact



Total 2014-15 Expenditures: \$413,093.10

State Funds Leveraged in 2014-15*: 16%

*Percentage of state dollars matched by additional federal, private, and/or in-kind funds

2014-15 Expenditures by Strategy

	State \$	Federal \$	Private \$	In-Kind \$	Total \$	% of 2014-15 Expenditures
Parents as Teachers	\$104,112	\$0	\$398	\$15,643	\$120,153	29%
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$7,043	\$0	\$299	\$2,431	\$9,773	2%
Child Care Quality Enhancement	\$54,897	\$0	\$0	\$3,788	\$58,685	14%
Child Care Training	\$19,303	\$0	\$2,387	\$5,141	\$26,831	6%
Child Care Scholarships	\$89,111	\$0	\$194	\$4,861	\$94,166	23%
Program Support	\$6,322	\$0	\$0	\$11,502	\$17,824	4%
Administrative Support	\$76,286	\$0	\$1,745	\$7,631	\$85,662	21%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$357,074	\$0	\$5,023	\$50,996	\$413,093	

Unaudited numbers for the period July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015

Since inception, Aiken County First Steps has leveraged \$2,301,017.10 from sources outside of state government. That's 33 cents for every state dollar.

Community Impact

Thank You W.O.W!

Jerrie Shepherd and Donna Hovath from Women of Woodside (W.O.W.) surprised Aiken County First Steps Executive Director Marcia Nash with a \$500 donation. The donation was used to purchase 250 books for the 2015 Month of the Young Child Read Across Aiken event held annually. 366 children ages 0-4 received the book "If You Give a Mouse a Cookie".

The Women of Woodside is dedicated to contributing to the well-being of the community through fundraising and volunteering.



The Women of Woodside (W.O.W.) surprises the ACFS Executive Director with a \$500 donation!



2014-2015 FLIP-IT Child Care Multi-Session Training



Winter Wonderland 2014



2015 BOWLING FOR BABIES Fundraiser



Staff enjoys the SCECA 2015 Conference

Thank you to our partners!

Funding Support

State of South Carolina: \$357,074
(through South Carolina First Steps)

Women of Woodside: \$500.00

Allegra Printing

\$500.00

In-Kind Support

Aiken County School District

Aiken County First Steps Board Members and Staff

Community Members

Support Aiken First Steps today through a tax-deductible donation, or volunteer.

Community Impact

WE ARE FIRST STEPS!



Annual Board Orientation June 2015



2015 Bowling for Babies Fundraiser!



2014 CTK Teachers discuss the final countdown to kindergarten with two fathers during their visit to their children's classroom.



Support Aiken County First Steps today through a tax-deductible donation, or volunteer.

First Steps Partnership Board



Aiken County First Steps Partnership Board, 2014-15

Name	Position	Board Category
Shirley von Beck, Chair	Business	Category 1
Charlotte McNichols, Vice Chair	Transportation (ACOA)	Category 1
Catherine Laufer, Treasurer	Pre-Kindergarten-Primary Educator	Category 1
Cherell Butler, Secretary	Family Education/Training/Support Provider	Category 1
David Walker, NP Chair	Faith Community	Category 1
Barbara Sanders, Family Strengthening, Chair	Non-Profit	Category 1
Tracy Brown, Child Care, Chair	Parent of a Pre-School Child	Category 1
Kiki Bennett	Legislative Appointee	Category 3
Marlea Bodie	Healthcare	Category 1
Takiyah Bryant	Business	Category 1
Jamie Creasy	School District	Category 2
Margaret Ford	Legislative Appointee	Category 3
Kenyatta Finklin	Parent of a Pre-School Child	Category 1
Pamela Frazier	Parent of a Pre-School Child	Category 1
Shadie Hall	Head Start	Category 2
Marilyn Harris	Family Education/Training/Support Provider	Category 1
Gloria Jones	Family Education/Training/Support Provider	Category 1
Chalma Lindler	Pre-Kindergarten-Primary Educator	Category 1
Kimberly McSpadden	Library	Category 2
Rhonda Mitchell	Transportation (LSCOG)	Category 1
Charlene Moore-Peterson	Early Childhood Education	Category 1
Alexander Pope	Faith Community	Category 1
Corine Simpkins	DHEC	Category 2
Jessica Smith	Parent of a Pre-School Child	Category 1
Motek Simmons	Parent of a Pre-School Child	Category 1

Getting children ready for school.

The Goals of First Steps

- (1) provide parents with access to the support they might seek and want** to strengthen their families and to promote the optimal development of their preschool children;
- (2) increase comprehensive services** so children have reduced risk for major physical, developmental, and learning problems;
- (3) promote high-quality preschool programs** that provide a healthy environment that will promote normal growth and development;
- (4) provide services** so all children receive the protection, nutrition, and health care needed to thrive in the early years of life so they arrive at school ready to succeed; and
- (5) mobilize communities** to focus efforts on providing enhanced services to support families and their young children so as to enable every child to reach school healthy and ready to succeed.

-- Section 59-152-30



Interested parents can contact any participating 4K providers to complete an application. To view a list of participating First Steps 4K providers, visit:

<http://scfirststeps.org/4k>



BabyNet

South Carolina's Early Intervention System

BabyNet in Aiken County:
LOCAL SPOE PHONE # - (803)-648-4352

<http://scfirststeps.org/babynet/>