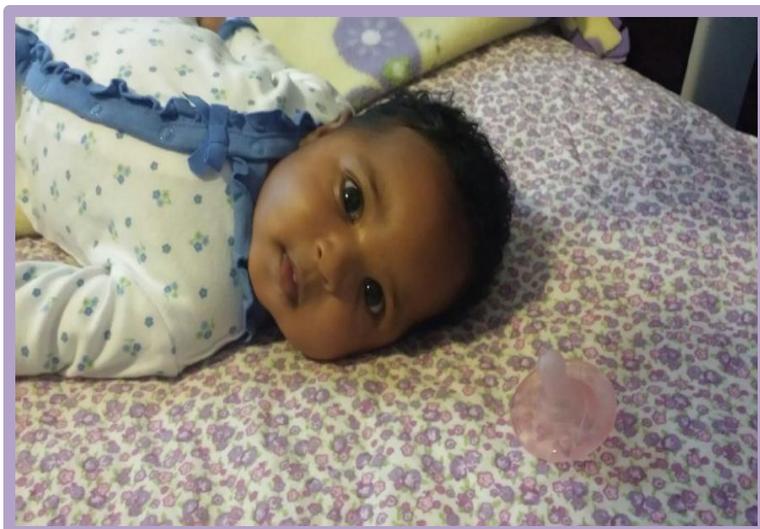


CALHOUN COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.



Parents as Teachers

Parents are their children's first and most important teacher

Imagination Library

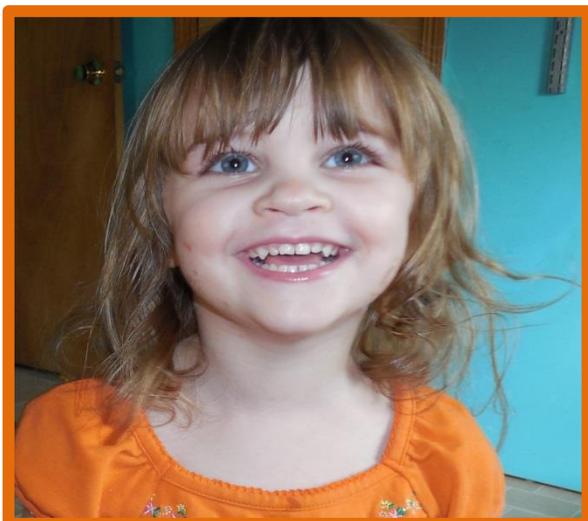
One of the easiest and most effective ways to build the language neural connections in a young child's brain is to read to them (Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University)

Countdown to Kindergarten

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

Annual Report

2014-15



OUR VISION:

Every South Carolina child will arrive at kindergarten ready to succeed.

First Steps WORKS for the children of Calhoun County.

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.

Number of Calhoun County children under 5:
780

Number of Calhoun County children living in poverty:
948

Babies born each year in Calhoun County to a mother less than a high school diploma:
1 in 8

Our Programs

- Parents as Teachers
- Imagination Library
- Countdown to Kindergarten

Our Results

- ✓ 42 families received two one-hour home visits each month for 11 months
- ✓ 48 children received health and developmental screenings
- ✓ 3,082 books were distributed to children, families and childcare providers.
- ✓ 230 children enrolled in Imagination Library

Working Together to Build Strong Foundations for Our Children

Virginia Newman, Executive Director

Tri-County Electric Trust joins Calhoun First Steps in promoting early literacy. For several years Tri-County Electric, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Target and Calhoun First Steps board members have covered the entire cost of implementing the Imagination Library program. During fiscal year 2015 over 230 children residing in Calhoun County received an age-appropriate book each month selected especially for them.

The Calhoun school district identified thirty students from St. Matthews K-8 and Sandy Run K-8 to participate in our Countdown to Kindergarten. Mr. Charley, principal at St. Matthews K-8 worked with us in identifying an additional kindergarten teacher to serve as CTK teacher. Mr. Charley supported the program's aim to have CTK children enrolled in the CTK teacher classroom doing the school year. Ms. Fanning, a kindergarten teacher from Saint Matthews K-8 expressed the value of establishing a working relationship with students and parents prior to the school year.

Sharing Resources through Joint Efforts

For six weeks during the summer our parent educators team up with the library to implement it summer reading program. Parent educators are responsible for the reading and movement activities for families with toddlers. Age-appropriate books are distributed to toddlers participating in the summer reading program. This opportunity also affords Calhoun First Steps the opportunity to register families for the Imagination Library and Parents as Teachers programs.

Virginia Newman



Bryce shares a smile with his sister, Avery. His favorite book is *Where's My T·R·U·C·K?* - an Imagination Library selection.

Board Chair
 Stanley Rivers

Executive Director
 Virginia Newman

304 Agnes Street
 Saint Matthews, SC 29135

(803)655-5126

calhoun1steps@windstream.net

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, Calhoun County First Steps focuses its investments in.... FAMILY STRENGTHENING, EARLY INTERVENTION, AND SCHOOL TRANSITION.

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

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

78% ... live in poverty
 33% ... didn't graduate from high school
 5% ... were teen parents



Speech pathologists from Calhoun School District administer speech and hearing tests for PAT participants.

"Both of my grandchildren participated in Parents as Teachers for two to three years. Both children are doing well in school".

Marian Aiken

PAT by the Numbers 2014-15

Families Served	42	
Children Served	48	
Total Home Visits	762	
Hours Spent Serving Families	766	
Average gain, <i>Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale</i> (pre-to-post):	KIPS Report 28%	ACIRI Report 67%

This year, our Parents as Teachers program:

- ✓ Averaged Calhoun First Steps home visits per family (2 home visits each month for eleven months.)
- ✓ Identified and addressed 5 potential developmental delays (ASQ Report)
- ✓ Improved parenting practices shows parents improve times spent reading to their child by maintaining reading logs.
- ✓ Improved literacy skills results show that average gain of 28% in KIPS and 67% gain in ACIRI.
- ✓ Made 10 connections for families to services such as Early Head Start and 4K Program, BabyNet; Preschool Special Education (IDEA Part B and C)

Thank you to our partners!

Calhoun School District
 Calhoun County DSS
 Calhoun County Council OCAB Head Start

Calhoun County First Steps

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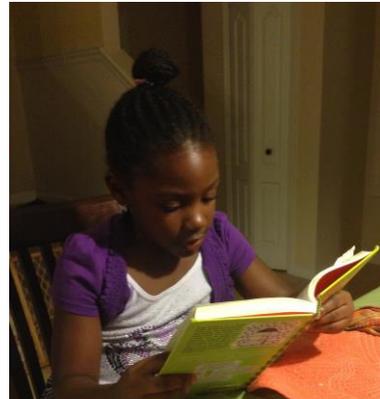
Children’s reading scores improve dramatically when parents are involved in helping them learn to read.

Program Description

According to the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, the peak period for brain development related to language is around **nine months of age. One of the easiest and most effective ways to build this capacity in young children’s brains is to read to them.**

Calhoun First Steps is the local sponsor of Dolly Parton Imagination Library, which provides free, age-appropriate books to children age birth to 5 years. Operated by the Dollywood Foundation, Imagination Library is currently in more than 1,600 communities internationally and mails books to about 700,000 children each month.

Children who register with Calhoun First Steps receive one book per month by mail through the month of their fifth birthday. Each book is carefully selected by a committee of educational specialists.



I’m Kaelyn. My dad and Nana read to me when I was a kid. I’m a second grader. I love reading chapter books.

Imagination Library by the Numbers, 2014-15

Children Served	230
Books Given to Children 0-5	2542

This year, our Imagination Library program:

- ✓ Provided one book per month to 230 children who were referred from St. Matthews Head Start, Calhoun School District, Calhoun DHEC and local child care centers.
- ✓ Registered children in Parents as Teachers and St. Matthews Head Start
- ✓ Received donations from Tri-county Electric Trust and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority in support of children’s literacy



Thank you to our partners!

- Dollywood Foundation
- Calhoun First Steps Board
- Tri-county Electric Trust
- Target Stores
- Delta Sigma Theta Sorority-Orangeburg Alumnae

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 304 Agnes Street, St. Matthews, SC 29135
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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	25
Families Served	24
Home/School Visits	142

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



My best CTK experience is seeing Ms. Fanning interacting with Byron

Laquanna Haigler

This year, our Countdown to Kindergarten program:

- ✓ Increased the amount of time parents spent reading to children by 90%
- ✓ According to kindergarten teachers, 45% of CTK children performed as well as, or better than, their fellow students in reading and language during the 2014-15 school year.
- ✓ According to kindergarten teachers, 45% of CTK parents were more involved than other parents in their child's education in the areas homework assignments and classroom involvement.

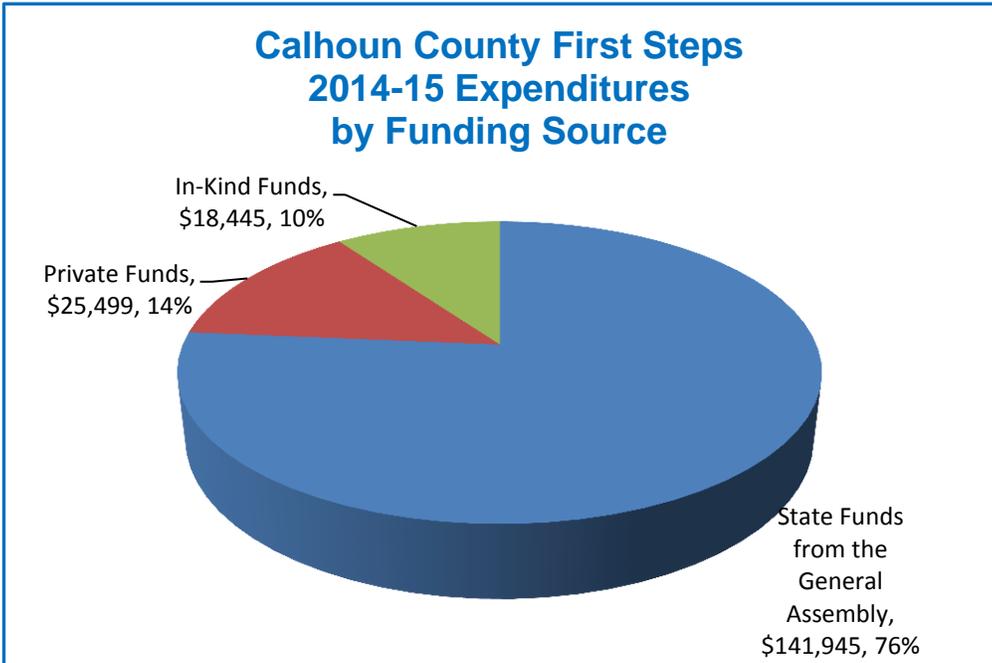
Thank you to our partners!

Calhoun County School District
 Kaplan Early Learning Company
 EdVenture Children's Museum
 WACH Fox 57

Calhoun County First Steps

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Financial Impact



Total 2014-15 Expenditures: \$185,888

State Funds Leveraged in 2014-15*: 31%

*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	\$99,908	\$0	\$12,476	\$10,440	\$122,824	66%
Imagination Library	\$0	\$0	\$5,265	\$0	\$5,265	3%
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$3,945	\$0	\$4,634	\$205	\$8,784	5%
Program Support	\$19,756	\$0	\$555	\$5,850	\$26,161	14%
Administrative Support	\$18,336	\$0	\$2,568	\$1,950	\$22,854	12%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$141,945	\$0	\$25,498	\$18,445	\$185,888	

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

Since inception, Calhoun County First Steps has leveraged \$705,707 from sources outside of state government. That's 30 cents for every state dollar.

Ethan Connects to the Montessori School at Saint Matthews K-8

Ethan Collier is one of four three- years old students accepted into the Montessori classroom at St. Matthews K-8. Prospective three-years-old students are required to visit the Montessori classroom for two days of observation prior to admission into the program to ensure the child is a good fit for the Montessori curriculum. Ms. Marian Aiken, Ethan’s grandmother, was very pleased to learn that Ethan was admitted into the Montessori program for the 2015-2016 School year. Each year there is an extensive waiting list for this Montessori classroom. Students in the Montessori program test higher than those students in the regular classrooms.

Ethan has adjusted well in the Montessori program and is ready to succeed at St. Matthews K-8.

Success Begins with Parents -- the child’s first teachers

Marian Aiken, Ethan’s grandmother, enrolled Ethan in our Parents as Teachers program in April, 2012. She was always excited about the PAT home visits, asking questions and actively participating in all activities during the home visit. Ms. Aiken is on our partnership board serving as parent with a child enrolled in one of our partnership’s program. Ms. Aiken and Ethan attend nine of our eleven group connections during the fiscal year.

Ethan was the second grandchild of Ms. Aiken to participate in our Parents as Teachers program. Ms. Aiken is so pleased with the programs offered by Calhoun First Steps. Ms. Aiken advocates for the Parents as Teachers program and has encouraged several families to be a part of our PAT family.



Ethan at 18 months, front row far right, enjoys a day with peers at the State House

Funding Support

- State of South Carolina: \$138,000
(through South Carolina First Steps)
- U.S. Department of Education: \$3,114
- Tri-County Electric Trust: \$1,800
- United Way of the Midlands: \$14,900
- Delta Sigma Theta Sorority: \$500
- United Way Designations: \$3,850
- Target: \$3,000
- Calhoun First Steps Board: \$3,253
- Alaglass Pools: \$250.00

In-Kind Support

- Calhoun County School District
- Calhoun County Council

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 Calhoun County:
LOCAL SPOE PHONE # - 803-533-5446

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

Support Calhoun First Steps today through a tax-deductible donation, or volunteer!