



Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership

Parents As Teachers

Early Head Start – Parents As Teachers

Child Care Quality Enhancement

Child Care Center Training & Development

Raising a Reader

Nurse-Family Partnership

Annual Report

2014-15



OUR VISION:

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

First Steps WORKS for the children of Charleston 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.

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

Number of Charleston children under 5:

12,760

Number of Charleston children living in poverty:

19,305

Babies born this year in Charleston County to a mother with less than a high school diploma:

13,370

Our Programs

Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership

Parents As Teachers

Early Head Start – Parents As Teachers

Child Care Quality Enhancement

Child Care Center Training & Development

Raising a Reader

Nurse-Family Partnership

Our Results

- ✓ **3,257** Total home visits
- ✓ **79** New children's library cards issued
- ✓ **1,469** Total children served
- ✓ **22** Children were enrolled in the new Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership program within 2 months of start-up.

Good Health, Strong Families, and Positive Early Learning Experiences

James Ella Collins, Executive Director

Early experiences in a baby's life are what shape their brain's architecture into a strong (or delicate) foundation for learning, health, and success in the workplace. Experiences that adversely affect us, such as poverty, can weaken the development of a baby's brain and follow them their entire lives. By evaluating the facts and using them to improve relevant programs and services, we have the ability to re-prioritize infants, toddlers, and their families and change the future for all of us. All babies need good health, strong families, and positive early learning experiences to foster healthy brain development and realize their full potential.

GOOD HEALTH

Good health is the foundation from which young children grow and develop physically, cognitively, emotionally, and socially. The need for high-quality medical care and adequate nutrition before birth and during a child's earliest years is more crucial than at most other times in life. Preventive care and screening can catch problems early and are key building blocks for healthy early development.



Quality programs can help ensure that South Carolina's babies get a healthy start in life. Nurse Family Partnership is one of those programs and others include Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

STRONG FAMILIES

Young children develop in the context of their families, where supportive relationships nurture their growth. Especially during an economic downturn, it can be challenging for parents to provide their children the necessities of life. During these early years, factors like family stress, multiple moves, fluctuating family structure, difficult economic situations, abuse and neglect can impair the development of infants and toddlers.

POSITIVE EARLY LEARNING EXPERIENCES

For very young children, learning takes place through play, the active exploration of their environment, and most importantly, through positive interactions with the significant adults in their lives. Gaps between children of different income levels in the amount of talk, vocabulary growth, and style of interaction appear early and widen long before a child enters school. Relationships with parents, early childhood professionals, and caregivers are critical as the brain forms the complex web of visual, language, motor, and social-emotional connections essential for later learning.



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Lorraine Powers

Executive Director
James Ella Collins

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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, Charleston County First Steps focuses its investments in Healthy Start, Quality Childcare, Family Strengthening, Early Education and Early Intervention.

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

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

100% ... live in poverty
43% ... didn't graduate from high school
30% ... were teen parents



"Children learn as they play. Most importantly, in play children learn how to learn." – O. Fred Donaldson

This year, our Parents as Teachers program:

- ✓ Averaged 19.04 home visits per family
- ✓ Identified and addressed 25 potential developmental delays
- ✓ Improved parenting practices by sharing and modeling with parents correct parenting behaviors from KIPs to increase average gain
- ✓ Improved literacy skills and increased in-home libraries by distributing 1,449 books to families
- ✓ Made 20 connections for families to services such as Adult Education, English Language Classes, and Financial Management

"The information and activities that my Parent Educator provides for me are very helpful. I use them with my 3 and 8 year old. It really helps!" -I. Fludd

PAT by the Numbers 2014-15

Families Served	69	
Children Served	83	
Total Home Visits	1,314	
Hours Spent Serving Families	1,364	
Average gain, <i>Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale</i> (pre-to-post):	KIP's average gain: .74	ACIRI average gain Adult: .49 Child: .44

Thank you to our partners!

- ✦ Charleston County Public Library
- ✦ MUSC (Junior Doctors)
- ✦ Molina Healthcare
- ✦ Charleston Mental Health
- ✦ Reading Warehouse
- ✦ ShelterNet
- ✦ Charleston County School District
- ✦ Sea Island Comprehensive
- ✦ Humanities Foundation
- ✦ Abrazo Program

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Parents As Teachers – Early Head Start

Parents are their children's first learning model.

Program Description

The Parents as teachers (PAT) model/Early Head Start Home-based option is an evidence-based early childhood home intervention framework for families with children prenatal through three years old. Early Head Start is a federal initiative providing child development and parent support to low income families. It focuses on the role of the parent as the child's first and most important teacher. The program includes:

1. **Personal Visits** conducted once weekly for a duration of 90 minutes.
2. **Group Socializations** conducted twice per month for two hours with a focus on both the parent and child. It emphasizes peer group interaction through age appropriate activities.
3. **Screenings and Assessments** conducted on a regular basis for each child's health and developmental progress.
4. **Family Partnership Agreement** provides an individualized focus for each enrolled child and family. The agreement defines goals and skills that will be incorporated into their child's curriculum.
5. **Services to Pregnant Moms** that ensures women have access to comprehensive prenatal and postpartum care.

First Charleston First Steps serves families in greatest need. Among our EI&R families:

- 100% ... live in poverty
- 10% ... didn't graduate high school
- 93% ... were TANF eligible

"The home based program was very helpful for me and my son. I learned many things about toddlers and my son learned how to share and be kind to others. It is an excellent program for pre-school children." -S.Brown



Home visitors work with children and parents to encourage book cuddling and create a special bonding time.

This year, our EHS Parents as Teachers program:

- ✓ Screened 32 children for hearing
- ✓ Screened 29 children using Ages and Stages Questionnaire
- ✓ Referred 29 families to community resources after screening indicated need

EHS by the Numbers 2014-15

Families Served	29
Children Served	32
Total Home Visits	682
Hours Spent Serving Families	1,117
Average gain, <i>Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale</i> (pre-to-post):	KIP's average gain: .57

Thank you to our partners!

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Molina Healthcare | Charleston County Public Library |
| Crystal Transportation | Reading Warehouse |
| MUSC (Junior Doctors) | Charleston County School District |
| ShelterNet | Palmetto Community Action Partnership |

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New Federal Grant Supports Working Families to Create Bright Futures

Charleston County First Steps is delighted to be a part of a brand new Head Start initiative, Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership (EHS- CCP). Awarded in April 2015, the program was funded with \$6.5 million over a 54 month period. The dynamic structure of this initiative includes:

EHS-CCP partners with local child care centers to provide infants and toddlers from 6 weeks to 3 years old with continuous, intensive and comprehensive child development and family support services to build school readiness. EHS-CCP promotes parent employment and self-sufficiency with full-day (10 hours) year round (50 weeks) child care.



Our Target

- Working families ...
- Who are under 100% of US Poverty Guidelines
- Who are receiving a childcare voucher and need continued child care when vouchers end
- And a guaranteed spot in Charleston County School District Head Start program when their child reaches the age of 3

A Special Thanks to our partners

The Office of Head Start has called EHS-CCP their most ambitious and complex program offering ever. But they also say it holds the greatest promise of transformation in supporting family self-sufficiency. Charleston First Steps plans to transform lives, but we could not have been awarded this grant without the guidance and amazing collaboration of these individuals, their staff + many others too numerous to mention:

- Carolyn Brooks, Spartanburg County First Steps
- Candace Jaruszewicz, College of Charleston
- Ruth Taylor, Charleston County School District
- Leigh Bollick, SC DSS Division of Early Care and Education
- Stephany Hewitt, Trident Tech. College

EHS-CCP by The Numbers:

- ✓ 3 child care partners
- ✓ 15 EHS-CCP classrooms
- ✓ 119 infants and toddlers
- ✓ 40% ABC voucher recipients
- ✓ \$1 million + in Federal Funding
- ✓ 22 children were enrolled in EHS-CCP within two months of program start-up

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What EHS-CCP provides:

High Quality Child Development & Education.

We partner with child care centers to provide them with supports:

- Creative Curriculum & full-time Curriculum Coach
- Updated furnishings and materials
- Funds to achieve 1:4 ratios and class size of 8
- Teaching Strategy GOLD for individualized child learning
- Supports for all teachers achieving an AA degree



Parent, Family & Community Engagement. We strive to be the ultimate in family-friendliness:

- We take applications at the home, child care center or even over the phone
- Each child care center has a full time Family Service Specialist (FSS) who supports families with: family goals, assistance with voucher eligibility and referrals to resources
- Families have monthly meetings on topics of their interest

Health & Nutrition. We support healthy children:

- Vision and hearing screenings + speedy referrals as needed
- Supports in up-to-date well-child checkups and immunizations
- BMI screenings + speedy nutrition counseling as needed
- Lots of exercise - gross motor experiences built into curriculum indoors and outdoors



Measuring Progress: What Matters Most

- ✓ Early learning & health in children
- ✓ Family goal attainment
- ✓ Teacher education, skills & salary improvements
- ✓ Center ABC rating improvements

How We Measure Progress:

Using a mix of familiar tools + unconventional tools:

- Vision & hearing screenings + speedy referrals
- BMI testing + support of a nutritionist
- Infant-Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ITERS)
- Teacher completion of ECD classes (an AA degree is our goal)
- Proof of teacher pay increases of at least 10%
- Child care center ABC rating improvement
- Teaching Strategy GOLD observations
- Creative Curriculum Monitoring Tool to assess teacher – child interactions
- Parent gains in employment (wages) and education

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)

This year, our Quality Enhancement program:

- ✓ Improved quality, on average, by 1.43 points based on pre/post Environment Rating Scale assessments.
- ✓ Provided 377.5 hours of technical assistance to child care providers
- ✓ Provided \$15,160 in materials grants to participating child care providers

Thank you to our partners!

- The Gibbes Museum of Art
- Charleston County Public Libraries
- MUSC Dental Assistants
- TEACH and Trident Technical College

QE by the Numbers, 2014-15

Child Care Providers Served	12
Number of TA Visits Provided	225
Number of Children 0-5 Enrolled in Provider Classrooms	632

Congratulations to our QE participants for 2014-15!

Child Care Provider	Pre/Post Gains
Carousel – 2-yr-old room	+ .28
Carousel 4-yr-old room	+ .28
Foster's 2-yr-old room	+ 2.62
Child and Family 4-yr-old room	+ 1.72
First African 2 y-old room	+ 2.48
First African 4-yr-old room	+ 2.38
New Israel – 3-yr-old room	+ 2.44
Rising Star – 2 yr.-old-room	+ 2.09
NIA – 3-yr-old room	+ 2.3
VanBuren – 3-yr-old room	+ .18



Gibbes Museum of Art educators work with children in the classroom on learning the elements of art.

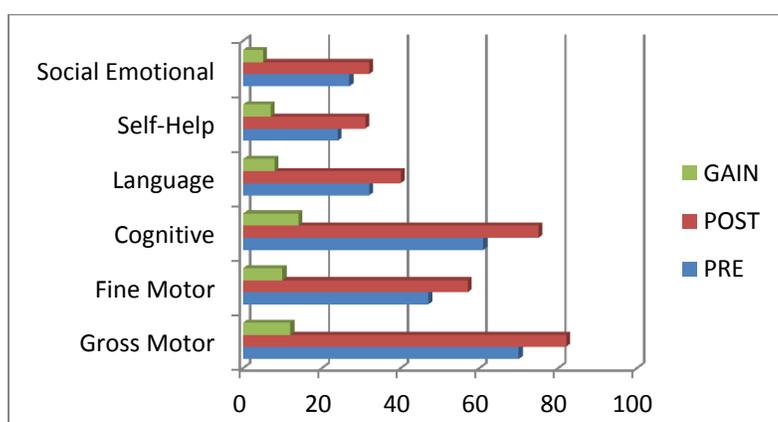
Quality Enhancement Child Care Centers

Early Learning Accomplishment Profile (ELAP) Scores, ages 0-2

ALL CENTERS, 2014-2015

(average individualized child assessments)

	Gross Motor	Fine Motor	Cognitive	Language	Self-Help	Social Emotional
PRE	70.28	44.44	60.18	29.98	22.84	26.30
POST	83.72	57.09	76.50	41.57	32.36	32.11
GAIN	12.43	13.58	17.34	12.36	10.14	6.18

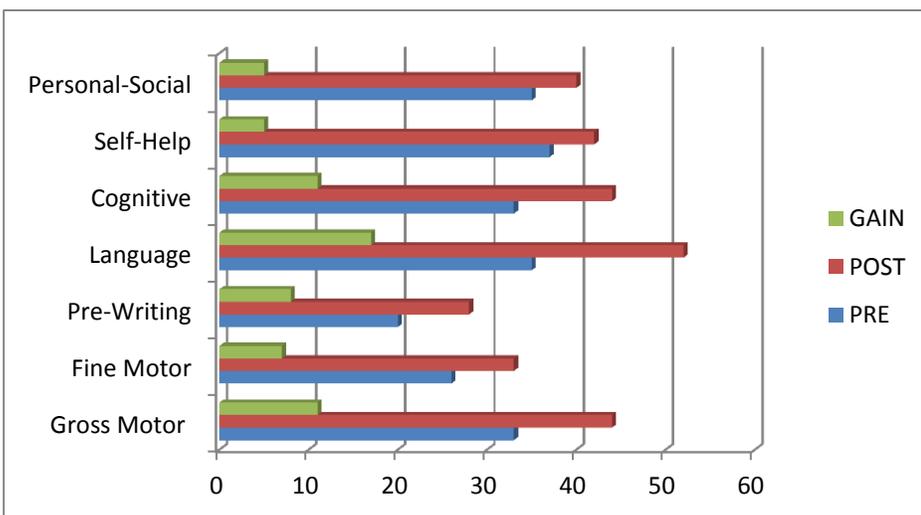


Learning Accomplishment Profile (LAP3) Scores, ages 3-5

ALL CENTERS, 2014-2015

average individualized child assessments

	Gross Motor	Fine Motor	Pre-Writing	Language	Cognitive	Self-Help	Personal-Social
PRE	33.05	26.72	20.15	33.26	30.33	34.21	32.71
POST	47.16	34.23	29.33	56.03	45.89	43.40	40.35
GAIN	14.11	7.98	9.18	22.78	15.57	9.13	7.63



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.

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

Topic:
 New Arrivals: What to do
 Block Play
 Room Arrangement and Design
 Expanding on Dramatic Play
 Literacy in the Classroom
 The Powerful Role of Stories
 Why do Children Do What They Do?
 Cultural Influences on Language
 The Importance of Relationships
 Families as Partners

“Quality enhancement training has helped my staff and I learn new and better ways to interact with parents and help children to have more fun with learning!”
 - Laurie Foster – Center Director

“I have learned to be flexible not only with my classroom space, but with my use of time, and with the kids! “
 - Anonymous teacher attending a public training



Teaching staff from our Quality Enhancement Schools learned the importance of nonverbal language by arranging themselves in chronological order by the month and day of their birthday without speaking.

Training by the Numbers, 2014-15

Total Training Attendance	446
Child Care Teachers and Directors Served	156
Number of Training Sessions Offered	10

This year, our Training program provided:

- ✓ 156 early childhood staff with high quality training
- ✓ 20 hours of certified training for staff to meet annual re-certification requirements

Raising a Reader

Engaging Families through Early Literacy at Home.

Program Description

Raising a Reader is an evidence-based early literacy and parent engagement program that has demonstrated it can improve the reading readiness skills of children entering school. The program fosters family engagement and literacy behaviors, promotes connections with local libraries and develops early language and literacy skills in young children.

Core program components:

1. School staff are trained to promote family engagement and implement the program in the classroom
2. Parents are trained to develop book-sharing routines in the home and to practice interactive techniques during story time.
3. Each week, children bring home a different bag filled with beautiful, high-quality multicultural books.
4. Families are connected to their local libraries so they can sustain their family book sharing routines.



St. James Santee Head Start classroom held their Blue Bag Bonanza at the school library. Each student received a certificate and blue book bag to take with them.



Teachers use puppets 'Samuel' and 'Burgundy' to help teach the children proper book handling and how to take care of their new book bags.

Early Education by the Numbers | 2014-15

Children Served	86
Classrooms served	6
New Library Cards Issued	79

This year, our Early Education program:

- ✓ **69** out of the **86** families enrolled in the Raising a Reader program reported on average reaching their weekly goal of reading 4 books with their child (4 books provided weekly in each RAR bag).
- ✓ At the end of the program year, **71%** of parents reported an increase in time spent reading together with their child during the week.

Thank you to our partnering schools:

Child & Family Development Center Head Start
St. James Santee Head Start
Stall High School Early Head Start

Helping vulnerable first-time mothers and empowering them to achieve a better life for themselves and their child.

Program Description

Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) helps transform the lives of vulnerable first-time moms and their babies. Through ongoing home visits from registered nurses, low-income, first-time moms receive the care and support they need to have a healthy pregnancy, provide responsible and competent care for their children, and become more economically self-sufficient. From pregnancy until the child turns two years old, Nurse-Family Partnership Nurse Home Visitors form a much-needed, trusting relationship with the first-time moms, instilling confidence and empowering them to achieve a better life for their children – and themselves.

Charleston, Berkeley, Dorchester, and Colleton County, Nurse-Family Partnership is implemented through SC DHEC Lowcountry Region. A strong partnership has been created to bring NFP to South Carolina. The Blue Cross Blue Shield of South Carolina Foundation, The Duke Endowment, SC Department of Health and Environmental Control, SC First Steps to School Readiness, The Children’s Trust of South Carolina and the Nurse Family Partnership National Service Office are providing long-term support of the program in the state.

"I love my nurse, she's great! She helps find resources for me and my baby. She's there whenever I need her."

- NFP Client



NFP by the Numbers, 2014-15

Children Served	78
Number of Home Visits	1261

Charleston First Steps serves families in greatest need. Among our NFP families:

- 90% ... live in poverty
- 33% ... didn't graduate high school
- 44% ... teen parents

Charleston's NFP Program achieved:

- ✓ Achieved 78% participation in initiate breastfeeding; 23% continue at 6months; and 14% continue at one year.
- ✓ Achieved 99% participation with immunizations being up to date at 18 months old.
- ✓ Achieved 37% enrollment rate of entering school within 6 months postpartum.
- ✓ Achieved 61% employment rate after 6 months postpartum. By 24 months, 30% enrolled in a certificate program or pursuing a college degree.
- ✓ Graduated 28 families.

Contact Victoria Manigault at manigavw@dhec.sc.gov for assistance, if needed

Thank you to our partners!

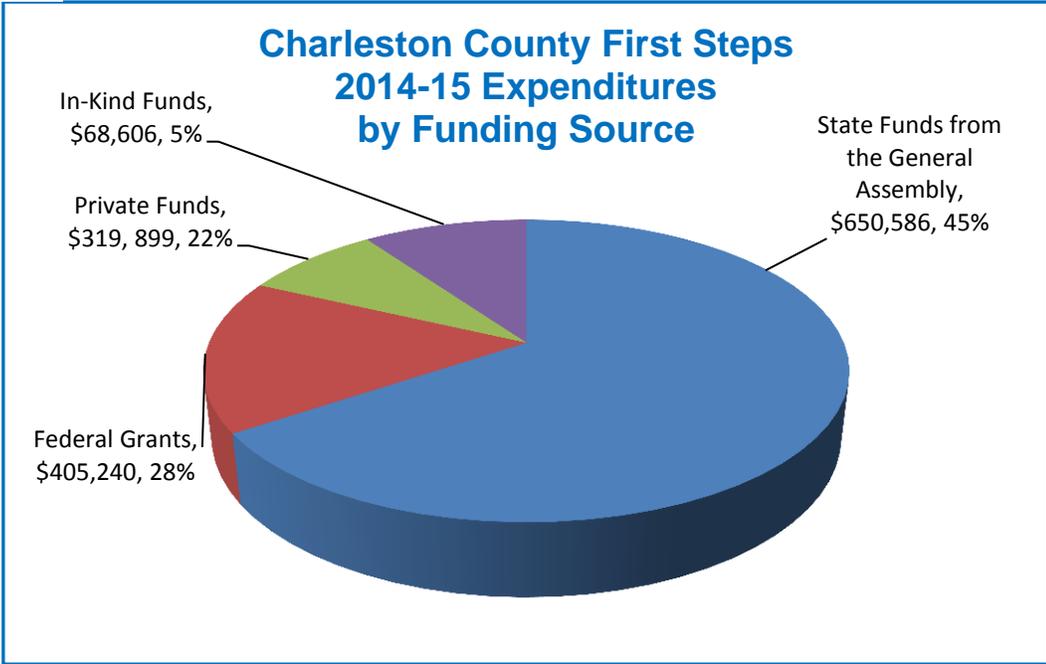
- ✚ Blue Cross Blue Shield of South Carolina Foundation
- ✚ DHEC Lowcountry Region
- ✚ The Children's Trust of South Carolina

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Financial Impact



Total 2014-15 Expenditures: \$1,444,331

State Funds Leveraged in 2014-15*: 122%

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

	State \$	Federal \$	Private \$	In-Kind \$	Total \$	% of 2014-15 Expenditures
Parents as Teachers	\$214,513	\$104,466	\$22,315	\$3,200	\$344,494	24%
Child Care Quality Enhancement	\$143,775	\$0	\$277	\$5,206	\$149,258	10%
Child Care Training	\$53,975	\$0	\$808	\$0	\$54,783	4%
Child Care Scholarships	\$5,804	\$0	\$0	\$612	\$6,416	0%
Early Identification & Referral	\$12,852	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$12,852	1%
Nurse Family Partnership	\$5,000	\$0	\$289,885	\$0	\$294,885	20%
Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships	\$0	\$288,799	\$0	\$56,927	\$345,726	24%
Other Literacy - Raising A Reader	\$50,160	\$0	\$90	\$0	\$50,250	3%
Program Support	\$95,436	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$95,436	7%
Administrative Support	\$69,071	\$11,975	\$6,524	\$2,662	\$90,232	6%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$650,586	\$405,240	\$319,899	\$68,607	\$1,444,332	

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

Since inception, Charleston County First Steps has leveraged \$6,388,550 from sources outside of state government. That's 49.246 cents for every state dollar.

Building Thriving Families

Parents As Teachers

Evidence-based practices provide First Steps with the best tools possible to deliver both adequate and accurate services to our families. Through our Parents As Teachers program the resource and referral network tool equips the Parent Educators to connect families to needed resources within the community and helps to foster positive change. The Parent Educators are always eager to support each family with setting and reaching attainable goals that focus on the parent, child, and family as a whole.

We continue to see these goals reached with the Montoya family who has been a part of our Parents As Teachers program since 2013. Mrs. Montoya's Parent Educator helped her to set personal goals and encouraged her to continue with her GED classes. She has since passed her exam, graduated, and delivered the speech at her ceremony! Mrs. Montoya is looking forward to continuing her education in the near future and obtaining a degree in Nursing.

The Montoya family has gained a valuable asset that will indefinitely foster positive change within their family. They have also become more knowledgeable about interacting with their 3 year old son, Yaziel. He recognizes shapes, colors, and is even counting backwards. We wish the Montoya family all of the best and look forward to maybe even walking into what would be Mrs. Montoya's passion, her very own bakery.



*"I am a proud daughter,
wife, mother and now
graduate...but ladies and
gentlemen this is not the
end, college is next! "*

-Y. Montoya

Make A Lasting Impression: Creating fun and excitement at the local library

Raising A Reader

Interactive story time encourages children to ask questions, learn vocabulary and make connections to the world around them. Through the *Raising a Reader* early literacy and family engagement program, participating children engage in “book-sharing” together in the classroom, at home and at their local library.

A key indicator of success for the program is for families to make a strong connection to their local libraries. At the end of the year each *Raising a Reader* center celebrated their literacy accomplishments at a *Blue Bag Bonanza* held at their local library. Each child received their very own library card and bright blue canvas book bag to keep and use over the summer. The library events included a story time with the children’s librarian and a create-your-own bookmark activity. Each child was sent home with the summer reading and events calendar to encourage frequent visits to the library over the summer months.



Working as Partners – Reaching for the Stars!

Parents As Teachers Early Head Start

Participation in Parents As Teachers Early Head Start-Home Based program means more than just weekly home visits. Through family partnership agreements partnering includes family well-being, support from a home visitor, and goal setting. This may look different in each families home. Some families could use financial management and some may need the proper tools for a job search. Each Home Visitor arrives at the family’s home ready to help guide and provide resources. Families of the Early Head Start-Home Based program consistently express how supportive and helpful our Home Visitors are as they continue to help them reach for the stars.



“When I began working with the EHS home based program, my home visitor encouraged me to look ahead and see what kind of things I wanted for me and my son. When we began our visits my son and I were living with my mom and I was still searching for a job. My home visitor was able to help steer me in the right direction towards finding a job and I was able to save up to get my son and I our own apartment! I truly appreciated all of the resources and support my home visitor gave me. It was very helpful to know I was not alone in my journey.” – C. Florence

Training: A Community of Professionals

One of the goals of Charleston County First Steps this year was to empower the teachers and administrators that attend our trainings. One of the most common complaints we heard from our trainees was that they feel that the community think of them as “babysitters”, instead of the education professionals they are. To combat this, each training session began with a fun activity to get everyone engaged. Throughout the training, the importance of Early Childhood Education was reiterated through group discussions, videos created by students around the country, and our own experiences. We completed a variety team building activities to show the teachers that they are a part of a professional community, and that what they do every day is



extremely important. Specifically, we wanted the teachers to see that they are not alone. We all share the same struggles and successes.

Training surveys are now showing increased interest and motivation from the staff. We have attributed some of this to our efforts to create a professional and safe learning environment for our teachers and directors. We are very excited to continue building up our most important asset in the upcoming year; our qualified, motivated, and professional teachers.

Quality Enhancement: Family Style Dining

First African Child Development Center

Martha McCants and Barbara Amick, the two and four year old teachers at First African Child Development Center, successfully implemented family style dining with their classes. There are a variety of benefits to conducting meal times this way. One of the most important is the independence it encourages. Children serve their own food, pour their own drinks, and clean up their own messes; with close supervision, of course! Another benefit is the extreme language development seen with family style dining.

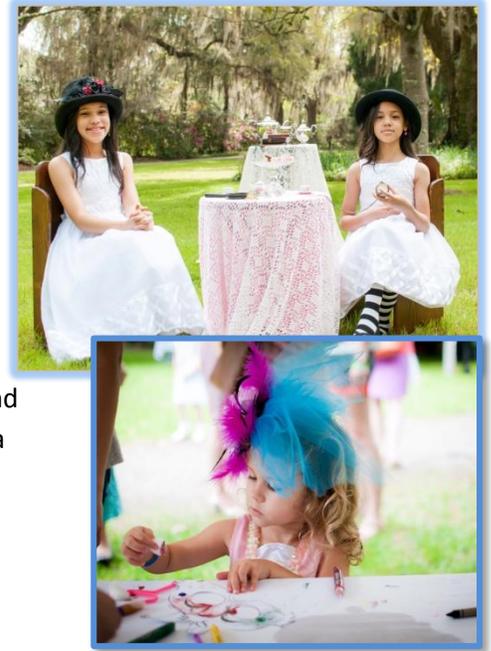


Sitting around the table, comfortably chatting about the school day encourages children to speak freely. It requires that they verbalize their own ideas, and recall activities from the day. As these conversations begin, social skills are also developed. Children engage in give-and-take discussion, encouraging them to listen to the other children and to respond appropriately. The students of First African have benefitted greatly from the hard work of their teachers!

Tri-County 1st Annual Mad Hatter Garden Tea Party

Partnership Board Collaboration

Charleston, Berkeley and Dorchester First Steps held a Tri-county Mad Hatter Garden Tea Party event at Magnolia Plantation & Gardens to celebrate *Week of the Young Child*. The planning and fundraising committee consisted of Board members from all three counties. At the inaugural event guests spent the day dancing in the rain, dashing to the finish line at the tea party race, listening to stories from the Queen of Hearts, and munching on some very sweet treats! Pink Flamingo Croquet and create-your-own Alice in Wonderland face masks had the children buzzing around the beautiful grounds of Magnolia Plantation. By pooling resources between the counties we were able to raise awareness and funding for First Steps programming.



Charleston County First Steps Partnership Board, 2014-15

Name	Position	Board Category
1. Lorraine Powers, Chair	Retired Principal	Business Community
2. Rev. Cecil Diggs, III	Kaleidoscope Site Director at Murray LaSaine Elem. School	Faith Community
3. Dr. Gail Fleming	Retired SC State University Dean - College of Education Humanities, and Social Services	Non-Profit
4. Violet Washington	Human Services Coordinator	DSS Representative
5. Karen Warren	DHEC Nurse	DHEC Representative
6. Stephany Hewitt	Trident Technical College Dean – Community, Family and Child Studies Division	Family Education, Training & Support
7. Bridget Ward	Children’s Librarian at Otranto Road Regional Library	Library Appointment
8. Harriet Wilder	Retired Business Owner/ Child Development Center	Early Childhood Development
9. Linda Lucas	School Counselor, Malcolm C. Hursey Elementary School	Legislative Appointee (House)
10. Ruth Taylor	Asst. Associate Superintendent, CCSD	School District Appointee
11. Rev. Michelle Johnson	Morris Brown AME Church	Faith Community
12. Rev. Dr. Arthur Lee Holmes	Asst. Superintendent, Jasper County	Legislative Appointee (House)
13. Emanuel Williams	Retired, Assistant Principal	Legislative Appointee (Senate)
14. Lorena Jordan	Government Administration	Legislative Appointee (Senate)
15. James Turner	Taxes & Accounting	Business Community
16. Richardine Singleton-Brown	Magistrate Judge	Business Community

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
- (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 Charleston County:
 LOCAL SPOE PHONE # - (843) 740-3193

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

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