

CLARENDON COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.



Parents as Teachers

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

Countdown to Kindergarten

Child Care Training and Professional Development



# Annual Report

2014-15



## OUR VISION:

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

First Steps WORKS for the children of CLARENDON County.

### Director's Message

#### 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 Clarendon County children under 5:  
**1,736**

Number of Clarendon County children living in poverty:  
**393**

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

#### Our Programs

Parents as Teachers

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

Countdown to Kindergarten

Child Care Training

#### Our Results

- ✓ 278 children impacted through direct services programs, such as Parents as Teachers;
- ✓ Over 300 children impacted through indirect programs, such as child care training and professional development.

Dear Friends:

Since 1999, the Clarendon County First Steps Partnership Board has been charged with implementing quality, research-based early childhood education programming in Clarendon County to ensure that Clarendon County's children have the best possible chance of arriving at first grade healthy and ready to succeed. We take that mission seriously, and as such, have worked diligently over the past several years to maximize the resources available to us so that we can make a positive difference in the lives of as many of Clarendon County's preschool children and their families as possible.

Through partnerships with organizations throughout and outside of Clarendon County, we have impacted in one or more ways thousands of preschool children and their families, as well as those who serve as caregivers in the absence of their parents and/or guardians.

The Partnership Board and I believe absolutely, whole-heartedly that our children are our future, and as such, we owe it to them and ourselves to "teach them well". We seek to teach them well through Parents as Teachers (PAT), the Dolly Parton Imagination Library (DPIL), Countdown to Kindergarten (CTK), and Child Care Training and Professional Development (Training). PAT helps parents to build the skills and competencies necessary to be their child's first and best teacher; the DPIL gives participant families with young children access to quality books that cover an array of themes; CTK facilitates a smooth transition for participant children from preschool to kindergarten; and Training allows child care staff the opportunity to learn more about best practices in early care and education and how they can successfully implement those best practices into their work with young children and their families.

Together, with the help of our many and diverse partners throughout Clarendon County and across the State of South Carolina, all our programs work together to help us to "teach our children well" so that they can have a solid foundation on which their hopes and dreams can grow. Clarendon County First Steps is proud of the work we have done thus far, and we look forward to doing more to ensure that all of our children reach first grade healthy and ready to succeed.

*Sharon*

Sharon P. Williams, Executive Director

**Board Chair**

Tonia M. Smith, GPC

**Executive Director**

Sharon P. Williams, MPA

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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, Clarendon County First focuses its investments in family strengthening, quality childcare, 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; and
4. **Connections to Outside Resources** that families may need to succeed.

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

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



*Parents are teachers, guides, leaders, protectors, and providers for their children.*

~Iyanla Vanzant

## PAT by the Numbers 2014-15

Families Served	27	
Children Served	29	
Total Home Visits	482	
Hours Spent Serving Families	526	
Average gain, <i>Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale</i> (pre-to-post):	0.44	0.61

## This year, our Parents as Teachers program:

- ✓ Averaged 18 home visits per family;
- ✓ Identified and addressed 10 potential developmental delays;
- ✓ Worked to improve literacy skills by giving 544 books, lending 105 books, and lending 141 literacy kits to families; and
- ✓ Made 17 connections for families to services such as follow-up medical assessments, employment resources, and housing, social services.

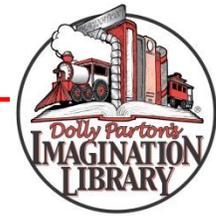
## Thank you to our partners!

Clarendon County School Districts One, Two and Three  
 Harvin Clarendon County Library  
 Save the Children

### Clarendon County First Steps

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# Imagination Library



**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.**

Clarendon County 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 Clarendon County 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.



*"The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more you learn, the more places you'll go." ~Dr. Seuss*

## Imagination Library by the Numbers, 2014-15

Children Served	202
Books Given to Children 0-5	1696

### This year, our Imagination Library program:

- ✓ Provided one book per month to 202 children who were referred from parent education programs, early care and education programs, and others that work with parents of pre-school age children;
- ✓ Provided American Library Association Early Literacy Guides with tips on reading to children of various ages to all new program participants.



### Thank you to our partners!

Dollywood Foundation  
 Clarendon County Council; and  
 Clarendon School Districts One, Two and Three Parenting Centers.

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# 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.

*“You can’t put a price on the training Ms. Williams and First Steps offers us! I always learn something that I can take back to the classroom to use with my children.”*

~Tammy R.

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

Titles of Training Sessions:

- A Brief Look at the Young Child: Birth-8;
- Curriculum Basics: Understanding How Play Can Be A Powerful Parenting Practice;
- Ensuring Children’s Health & Safety;
- Understanding Why Children Do What They Do;
- Blood-Borne Pathogens;
- The Powerful Role of Stories in Supporting Early Language & Literacy;
- The Importance of Relationships in Early Language & Literacy Learning;
- Early Language & Literacy Development;
- Emergent Literacy in Two Languages;
- The Role of Meaningful Experiences; and
- Strategies for Supporting Early Language and Literacy



*Early care and education workers from throughout Clarendon County participate in a curriculum training sponsored by CCFS.*

**This year, our Training program provided:**

- ✓ 23 early childhood staff with high quality training;
- ✓ 33 hours (11 sessions) of certified training necessary for child care staff to meet annual re-certification requirements;
- ✓ Offered follow-up technical assistance visits to help participants to put training into practice in their work with the children they serve.

***Thank you to our partners!***

Clarendon County Recreation Department;  
 SC Center for Child Care Career Development; and  
 The many early care and education professionals that participated in our training sessions.

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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	47
Families Served	46
Home/School Visits	282

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



*"I love Countdown to Kindergarten! My daughter is very shy. Getting to be able to meet her teacher during the summer helped her to be more comfortable with her new teacher and class. I hope every child in Clarendon gets to participate in CTK!"*

*~Tasha R.*

## This year, our Countdown to Kindergarten program:

- ✓ Received financial support from the Race to the Top Federal Grant, which allowed CCFS to serve significantly more children than we have been able to serve in previous years. Clarendon School District Two was part of a consortium of school districts that applied for and received funding.
- ✓ 93 % of parents of participant children reported feeling more confident in their child/children's ability to successfully meet the challenges of kindergarten and be successful.

## Thank you to our partners!

Clarendon County School Districts 1, 2 & 3

Kaplan Early Learning Company

EdVenture Children's Museum

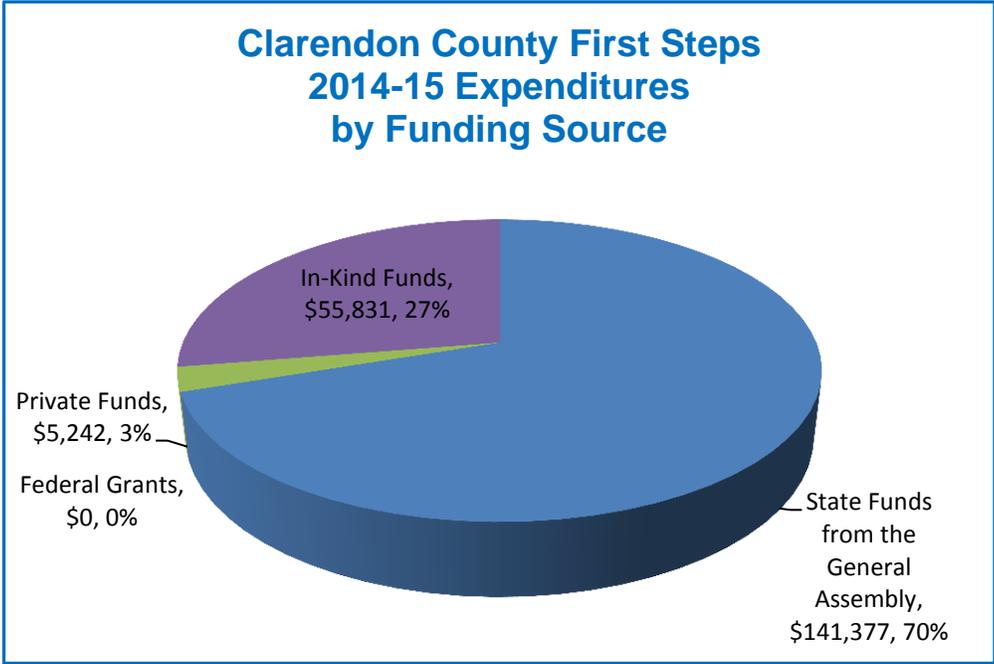
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**Total 2014-15 Expenditures: \$202,450**

**State Funds Leveraged in 2014-15\*: 30%**

\*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	\$43,182	\$0	\$0	\$36,369	<b>\$79,551</b>	<b>39%</b>
Imagination Library	\$531	\$0	\$3,242	\$8,463	<b>\$12,236</b>	<b>6%</b>
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$3,306	\$0	\$0	\$5,081	<b>\$8,387</b>	<b>4%</b>
Child Care Training	\$26,507	\$0	\$2,000	\$650	<b>\$29,157</b>	<b>14%</b>
Program Support	\$43,421	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$43,421</b>	<b>21%</b>
Administrative Support	\$24,430	\$0	\$0	\$5,268	<b>\$29,698</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$141,377</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$5,242</b>	<b>\$55,831</b>	<b>\$202,450</b>	

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

**Since inception, Clarendon County First Steps has leveraged \$941,556.00 from sources outside of state government. That's 30 cents for every state dollar.**

## **CCFS: Making a difference in the lives of Clarendon County's children...**

Famed cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead once said, “never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has”. In Clarendon County, we have a small group of thoughtful and committed citizens that comprise the board of directors that governs Clarendon County First Steps. They know first-hand of the many needs of Clarendon County's citizens, particularly its youngest citizens, the resources necessary to meet those needs, and the very limited resources we have available to address those needs. Through it all, however, they remain committed to Clarendon County First Steps and our mission to prepare Clarendon County's youngest and most vulnerable citizens for success in school and in life. I am thankful to have them as partners on this most critical journey for Clarendon County's children. Together, we can and will change their world for the better!

### **Clarendon County First Steps Partnership Board, 2014-15**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Board Category</b>
Tonia M. Smith, GPC, Chair	Director, TMS Consulting	Nonprofit Organization
Pamela Clavon-Brunson, Vice Chair	Director, Golpher 1, LLC	Business Community
Jennifer Jean, Secretary	Children's Librarian, Harvin Clarendon County Library	Parent of a Young Child
Christy Coker	Kindergarten Teacher	Pre-K through Primary Educator
Dr. Connie Dennis	Superintendent	Clarendon School District Three
Kathleen Gibson	Parenting Coordinator	Representative, Clarendon School District One
Priscilla Green	Kindergarten Teacher	Pre-K through Primary Educator
Judy Holmes	Director of Gifted & Talented and Special Projects	Representative, Clarendon School District Two
Helen Jackson	N/A	Parent of a preschool child
Joni James Jackson	Director, Wee Academy Learning Center	Child Care Provider (center-based)
Michael Jonas	CS/IT Manager, Santee Wateree RTA	Transportation Provider
Robin Layton	Director, Clarendon County DSS	DSS Representative
Darla Lee	Nurse, Clarendon County DHEC	Health Care Provider
Georgia Mance	Director, Wateree Head Start	Head Start Representative
Jason Montgomery	Judicial Clerk, City of Manning	Local Government
Wanda Nelson	Assistant Pastor, Goodwill Baptist Church	Faith Community
Dr. Myra Pearson	Pastor, Jehovah-Jireh Outreach Ministry	Family Education, Training & Support Provider
Faye Ragin	Director, Faye's Day Care	Child Care Provider (family/group)

# 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 Clarendon County:  
LOCAL SPOE PHONE #: (843) 669-8689

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