

COLLETON COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.



Parents as Teachers

Family Strengthening/Parent Training

Countdown to Kindergarten

Nurse Family Partnership

Child Care Training

Child Care Scholarships

BabyNet
(Program administered by SC
First Steps)

Annual Report

2014-15



OUR VISION:

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

First Steps WORKS for the children of Colleton County.

Serving the Community and Maintaining Collaborative Partnerships to Increase Child Resources for Families in Colleton County

Cindy L. Dickerson, Executive Director

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 Colleton County children under 5:
2,326

Number of Colleton County children living in poverty:
39%

Children failing 1st, 2nd, or 3rd grade:
7%

Our Programs

- Parents as Teachers
- Strengthening Families
- Countdown to Kindergarten
- Nurse Family Partnership
- Child Care Training
- Child Care Scholarships

Our Results

- ✓ We served 9 families in fiscal year 2015 in our Parents as Teachers program.
- ✓ We served 36 families in fiscal year 2015 in our Nurse Family Partnership program.
- ✓ We distributed 4,093 books to children in fiscal year 2015.

The Colleton County First Steps Board and I believe our most significant achievements in the past fiscal year were implementing additional "home visitation" programs. These programs include: Nurse Family Partnership, Parents as Teachers, and Countdown to Kindergarten. These programs consisted of over 50% of our budget.

These family involvement programs implemented over the past 5-10 years, according to data from the Kids Count report for 2014, reflect an improvement in low-birth weight babies and child deaths ages 1-4. We believe that these programs have helped to make this difference in Colleton County. Children that participated in Countdown to Kindergarten show they have a 90% rate of passing first grade.

Also, we have seen an increase in DSS/ABC scores for some of our child care providers during the past 4 years. This increase in scores we believe is directly related to quality child care provider training through funding received from outside sources. We are thankful for partners who provide funding for this important program.

Our programs require a successful collaboration with community partners. We ask all parents and partners to join us as we launch new programs and continue programs that have proven outcomes. Parents find our programs easy to participate in and appreciate the educational books and materials we supply to enhance their role as their child's first teacher.

Cindy L. Dickerson, MPA

Executive Director, Colleton County First Steps



Board Chair
 Juliette Green

Executive Director
 Cindy L. Dickerson

609 Colleton Loop
 Walterboro, SC 29488

843-542-9494

cdickerson@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, Colleton County First Steps focuses its investments in Healthy Starts, Quality Childcare, Family Strengthening, and School Transition. The Board of Colleton County First Steps believes in supporting in-the-home programs have produced the best results and outcomes.

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

Program Description

Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) helps transform the lives of vulnerable first-time mothers 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 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.

In Colleton County, Nurse-Family Partnership is implemented through the SC Department of Health & Environmental Center.



Colleton County First Steps serves families in greatest need. We encourage education and breastfeeding. Among our NFP families:

- 36% ...do not have a high school diploma/GED
- 9% ... of babies born in Colleton County are low-birth weight babies
- ...are attending school to obtain a high school diploma/GED or a college degree/certified program
- 42%

NFP by the Numbers, 2014-15

Children Served	36
Number of Home Visits	503

Colleton County First Steps partners with Charleston, Dorchester, and Berkeley Counties to implement the Nurse Family Partnership program throughout the four counties. Over the past five years, Colleton County has supported a nurse exclusively to serve first time mothers in Colleton County. Colleton County's Executive Director currently serves as the Co-Chair of the Community Advisory Board that oversees the 4 counties.

This year, our NFP program:

- 22% of our clients are breastfeeding
- 64% of our clients are currently employed
- 33% of our clients have completed or are enrolled in a college degree/certified program

Thank you to our partners!

SC Department of Health & Environmental Control
 Blue Cross/Blue shield of South Carolina
 Duke Endowment Fund

Colleton County First Steps

609 Colleton Loop
 Walterboro, SC 29488
 843-542-9494
 cdickerson@scfirststeps.org

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

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

78% ... live in poverty

33% ... exposed to domestic violence

22% ... were teen parents



Colleton County First Steps began implementation of the Parent as Teachers program beginning July 1, 2014. After hiring Edith Bright-Washington, a retired kindergarten teacher with over 30 years experience as a teacher and early childhood educator. After hiring Mrs. Bright-Washington we met the standards and we began implementation of the program in October, 2014. We have adhered to the state standards that are required to correctly implement the program.

PAT by the Numbers 2014-15

Families Served	9
Children Served	13
Total Home Visits	69
Hours Spent Serving Families	141

This year, our Parents as Teachers program:

- ✓ Conducted 2 home visits per family/per month.
- ✓ Identified and addressed 2 potential developmental delays.
- ✓ Improved parenting practices by providing books to families and spending time teaching techniques to parents.
- ✓ Made 4 connections for families to services such as Baby Net and Employment Services

Thank you to our partners!

Colleton County Library

Colleton County School District

Molina Health Care

Colleton County First Steps

609 Colleton Loop
Walterboro, SC 29488
843-542-9494
cdickerson@scfirststeps.org

Parent Training

Parents are their child's first and best teachers.

Program Description

- Providing literacy materials, to new mothers at the local hospital when they give birth.
- Promoting interest in reading to their child beginning at birth.
- Approximately 156 bags were provided to new mothers in the 2014-15 FY.
- Receiving 70% of parent information from the new mothers we are able to connect with parents once they leave the hospital. This information is used to reach out to parents and promote additional opportunities to the parents regarding literacy training and materials.
- Invite parents to participate in family group connections and other events that will provide additional literacy support.



Lori Litchfield, Nursery Supervisor, at Colleton Medical Center and Cindy Dickerson, Colleton County First Steps Executive Director, at the hospital, when the first bags were delivered.

Family Literacy by the Numbers 2014-15

Adults Served	156
Children Served	156

Thank you to our partners!

- Colleton Medical Center
- SCDSS Child Care, supplying brochures
- Adult Education, supplying brochures
- Baby Net, supplying brochures
- Family Connection, supplying brochures
- Colleton Library, supplying materials (calendar and Literacy on the go brochure)
- Text for Baby, supplying brochures
- Eat Smart/Move More, supplying brochures/books
- Family Dollar Stores, supplying baby items for bags (lotion, hair brushes, wipes, other baby items)
- Smoaks Chapter Sorority Judge Sophia Henderson, funds for literacy materials

Colleton County First Steps
 609 Colleton Loop
 Walterboro, SC 29488
 843-542-9494
 cdickerson@scfirststeps.org

Early Education

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.**

Colleton County First Steps provides free, age-appropriate books to children age birth to 5 years throughout the county.

Our partnership with our library provides collaboration between the agencies that both promote reading and literacy to children in Colleton County.

We have collaborated with the library to supply books to the bookmobile that supports rural parts of the county.

Colleton County First Steps exists to bring together efforts in early childhood at the local level, public and private, to focus and intensify services and assure the most efficient use of all available resources to serve the needs of SC’s young children and their families.



Colleton County First Steps (CCFS), as a part of South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness was created in 1999 by the SC General Assembly for the purpose of **having every child in SC arrive at kindergarten ready to learn.** Sadly, many Colleton County children possess one or more risk factors that put them at high risk (greater than a 1 in 3 chance) for **“early school failure”** – either being retained or scoring below grade level in reading or math by third grade.

CCFS works to accomplish its mission as a private non-profit organization led by a board of early childhood stakeholders. With a modest recurring appropriation of state funding, CCFS leverages cash and in-kind resources at the federal, state, and local level to improve services for young children in five strategy areas:

Early Education by the Numbers, 2014-15

Child Care Providers Participating	20
Books Given to Children 0-5	4,093

Thank you to our partners!

- Colleton County Library
- First Books
- Colleton County Child Care Providers
- United Way of Colleton County

Colleton County First Steps
 609 Colleton Loop
 Walterboro, SC 29488
 843-542-9494
 cdickerson@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.



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

Topic:	Sessions:
Curriculum	13 hours
Child Growth & Development	5 hours
Blood-Borne Pathogens	3 hours
Program Administration	5 hours
CPR/First Aid	2 Classes

Training by the Numbers, 2014-15

Total Training Attendance	151
Child Care Teachers and Directors Served	51
Number of Training Sessions Offered	9

Colleton County First Steps sees its position as the organization that supports child care providers in Colleton County. Our plan includes finding centers that really want change and improvement from their training activities. Our plan includes providing a selection of trainings for providers that will allow for them to choose what they want to commit their center to and not just to obtain the hours required.

This year, our Training program provided:

- ✓ 51 early childhood staff with high quality training
- ✓ 23 hours of certified training and 1 hour of registered training for staff to meet annual re-certification requirements
- ✓ 63 follow-up visits with training participants to help put training into practice

Thank you to our partners!

- Child Care Resource & Referral
- DSS Child Care Licensing & ABC Child Care Office
- The Beaufort Fund, Coastal Community Foundation
- Child Care Center for Career Development

Colleton County First Steps
 609 Colleton Loop
 Walterboro, SC 29488
 843-542-9494
 cdickerson@scfirststeps.org

Child Care Scholarships

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

Program Description

Access to quality child care is essential for children while away from their parents. 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.

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

- 78% ... live in poverty
- 33% ... exposed to domestic violence
- 22% ... were teen parents



It is so important to have parents with children during programs. Sharing activities during group connections enforces the relationship.

In addition to regular monitoring of child care providers that receive Colleton County 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.

Colleton County First Steps requires parents receiving scholarships to participate in our Parent as Teachers Program.

Scholarships by the Numbers, 2014-15

Children Served	4
Providers Served	3

This year, our Scholarship program:

- ✓ Provided 4 children with scholarship assistance so their parents could work or attend school
- ✓ Identified and addressed 2 potential developmental delays among scholarship children.
- ✓ Made 4 connections for families to services such as Baby Net and employment services.
- ✓ Supported 4 small businesses in Colleton County by subsidizing child care tuition for families who would not otherwise be able to afford quality care

Thank you to our partners!

- SC Department of Social Services-Child Care
- Colleton Child Care Providers

Colleton County First Steps
 609 Colleton Loop
 Walterboro, SC 29488
 843-542-9494
 cdickerson@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	27
Families Served	27
Home/School Visits	162

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



All of our parents were excited about the program and wanted to participate in the celebration activities.

This year, our Countdown to Kindergarten program had parents complete a pre/post survey. The surveys reflected the following:

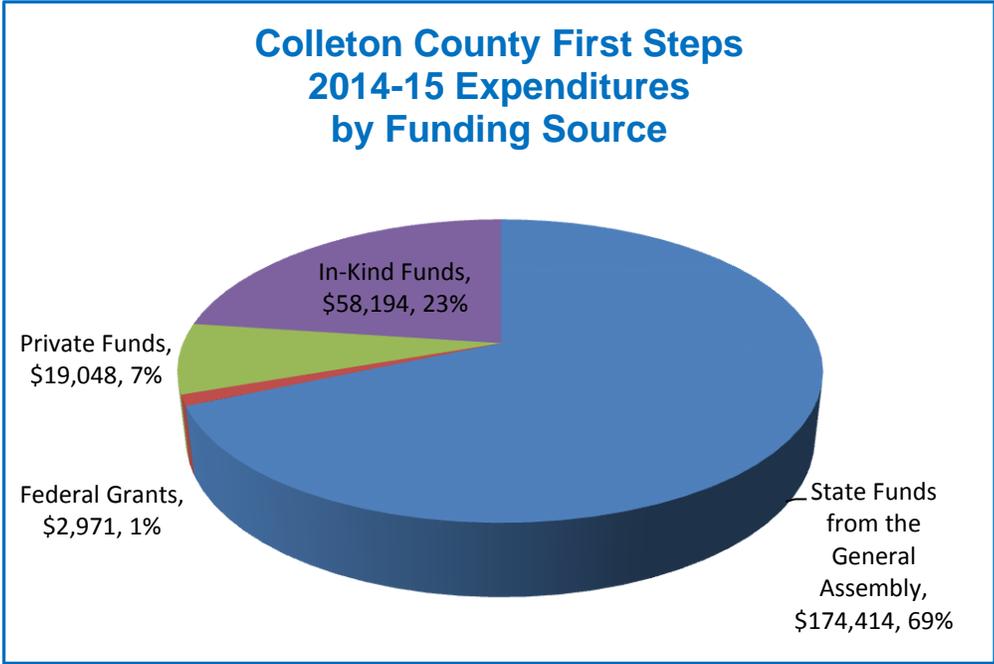
- ✓ Parents expressed an interest in extending the amount of time they spent reading to their child
- ✓ Parents responded to plans to attend teacher conferences and open house at the school
- ✓ Parents showed more interest in joining the PTA

Thank you to our partners!

Colleton County School District
 Kaplan Early Learning Company
 Colleton Memorial Library
 Palmetto Rural Telephone

Colleton County First Steps

609 Colleton Loop
 Walterboro, SC 29488
 843-542-9494
 cdickerson@scfirststeps.org



Total 2014-15 Expenditures: \$254,627

State Funds Leveraged in 2014-15*: 46%

*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	\$44,720	\$0	\$397	\$0	\$45,117	18%
Nurse Family Partnership	\$26,000	\$0	\$775	\$36,625	\$63,400	25%
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$3,271	\$2,970	\$6,598	\$0	\$12,839	5%
Child Care Quality Enhancement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0%
Child Care Training	\$5,958	\$0	\$10,435	\$300	\$16,693	7%
Child Care Scholarships	\$35,000	\$0	\$0	\$7,000	\$42,000	16%
Other Program	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0%
Program Support	\$42,783	\$0	\$843	\$10,842	\$54,468	21%
Administrative Support	\$16,682	\$0	\$0	\$3,427	\$20,109	8%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$174,414	\$2,970	\$19,048	\$58,194	\$254,626	

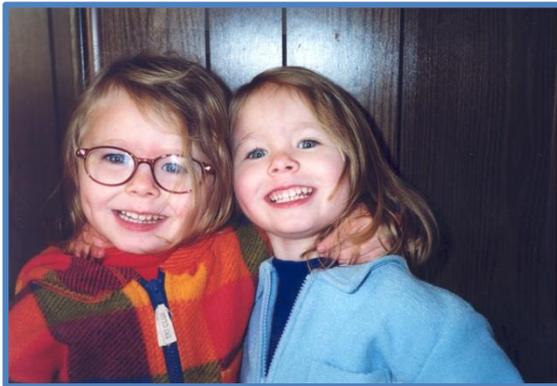
Unaudited numbers for the period July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015

Since inception, Colleton County First Steps has leveraged \$1,646,171 from sources outside of state government. That's \$.56 cents for every state dollar.

Collaboration with Community Partners

Colleton County First Steps builds on collaborative efforts already underway in Colleton County through partnerships with many other school readiness stakeholders. Previous collaborative efforts have resulted in improved readiness outcomes for economically disadvantaged children by focusing efforts on early literacy. Successes have established the foundation for working collaboratively to help early learning child care providers transform their programs into *high-quality* programs. These collaborations consistently produce positive readiness outcomes for all children by directly addressing the barriers to academic success.

Colleton County First Steps is committed to and actively engaged with multiple community partners to address problems that affect future economic prosperity and quality of life in Colleton County. The Colleton County First Steps (CCFS), a local partnership, whose mission is enhancing achievement for all Pre-K students, especially those at risk of future academic failure, supports community engagement commitments by working collaboratively with community partners. These commitments provide strong institutional support to collaborative initiatives.



Colleton County First Steps Guiding Principles

- Developing, through collaboration, a clear vision and expected outcomes;
- Reaching, through collaboration, consensus on problem(s) of practice on which to focus;
- Developing a plan for support and assistance that is aligned with the phases of development of innovations and/or interventions;
- Monitoring progress, measuring the extent to which development cycles are achieved and the expected outcomes are realized;
- Ensuring diversity and inclusion in partner membership;
- Focusing on building networks and individual expertise.

Thank you to our partners!

Funding Support

- State of South Carolina: \$174,414
(through South Carolina First Steps)
- SC Department of Social Services/Child Care Services: \$7,000
- Beaufort Fund: \$12,000
- Bakker Family Fund: \$2,000
- Colleton County School District: \$7,875
- Center for Child Care Career & Development: \$2,000
- Zaxby's: \$1,202

In-Kind Support

- Colleton County School District
- SC Department of Health & Environmental Control
- Coastal Electric Cooperative
- Colleton County Library
- SC Department of DSS, Child Care

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

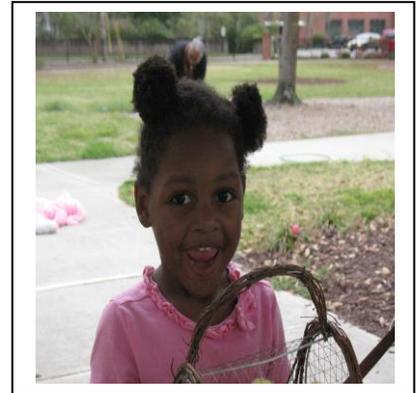
Leveraging State Funds for Maximum Community Impact

Fundraising:

Colleton County First Steps works hard to leverage funds beyond the state dollars provided. The Board and staff participated in several fundraisers last year through the support of **Belks, Zaxbys, Little Ceasars, Bi-Lo**, and individual contributions throughout the county. Our Board participated in fundraising with 100% of them contributing to Colleton County First Steps.

Group Parenting:

Colleton County First Steps is a portal of information and community support for families. Through our parenting program, parent training program, and partnership with other agencies helping families with young children, we are constructing a solid foundation from which to foster the growth of their young children. Our programs include connecting families to one another, enhancing parenting skills, helping during crises, integrating families into the community, strengthening children's social skills, and encouraging parents to be the best teacher for their child they can be.



Grants:

We received \$12,000 from **The Beaufort Fund** to provide training and materials to the child care providers in Colleton County. These funds allowed child care providers to have updated educational materials and books for the children that they are providing care for.

We received \$2,000 from **The Bakker Family Fund**, provided \$2,000 for our Countdown to Kindergarten program. These funds allowed leveraged funding to allow us to receive funds from Colleton County School District, Title One and additional children were able to participate in this important program.

We received \$2,000 from the Center for Child Care Career and Development to provide trainers for child care providers in Colleton County.

In-kind/Match:

Colleton County School District provides match to our partnership for office space, internet service, utilities, and meeting space. Without this match, we would not be able to utilize as many funds as we have for programs that are used to enhance children and families lives in Colleton County.

SC Department of Health & Environmental Control provides match for our Nurse Family Partnership program. We appreciate our partnership with SC DHEC and believe we are making a difference in our parents lives by implementing this important program.

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



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 in Colleton County:

843-782-3405

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

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