

EDGEFIELD COUNTY



Family Literacy

Imagination Library

Nurse Family Partnership

**Countdown to
Kindergarten**

Child Care Training

Child Care Scholarships

Annual Report

2014-15



OUR VISION:

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

First Steps WORKS for the children of Edgefield 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 Edgefield County children under 5:
1175

Number of Edgefield County children living in poverty:
314

Babies born each year in Edgefield County to a mother less than a high school diploma:
1 in 4

Our Programs

- Family Literacy
- Imagination Library
- Nurse Family Partnership
- Countdown to Kindergarten
- Child Care Training
- Child Care Scholarships

Our Results

- ✓ Served 30 first-time, low-income mothers in our Nurse Family Partnership Program
- ✓ Offered 40 hours of certified training
- ✓ Served 14 adults and 29 children in our Family Literacy Program.

Edgefield County – A Strong Community Working Together for the Education of Young Children and Their Families

A successful program is only as strong as its weakest link. Fortunately for Edgefield County First Steps, there are no weak links. The strong partnerships and collaborations that have been built and nurtured in the past 14 years have allowed Edgefield County First Steps to maximize resources we would not have otherwise.

The Edgefield County Chamber of Commerce so graciously provides our office space and training room. The Edgefield County School District provides space and utilities for the Family Literacy program, as well as in kind supervision of this program. Carolina Health Centers, Inc. provides in kind support for our Nurse Family Partnership program in the forms of training, travel, and supervisory costs. There are more than 50 generous businesses, organizations, and individual citizens of Edgefield County who give cash donations so children can receive books in our Imagination Library program.

I want to personally thank the program staff members who work with these children and families daily, as they are truly assisting these families with changing their lives for the better. Many thanks also go to our legislators, agencies, businesses, and community advocates, both on and off our Board, who show their commitment to Edgefield County First Steps every day. This report is your success as well.

Yours in Service to Children,

Candi Lalonde, Executive Director



Board Chair
 Bridget Clark

Executive Director
 Candi Lalonde

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 Edgefield, SC 29824

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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, Edgefield County First focuses its investments in Healthy Start, Family Strengthening, Quality Childcare, and School Transition strategies.

Nurse-Family Partnership

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 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.



In Edgefield County, Nurse-Family Partnership is implemented through Carolina Health Centers, Inc.

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

- 100% ... live in poverty
- 30% ...did not graduate from high school
- 22% ... are teen mothers

NFP by the Numbers, 2014-15

Children Served	30
Number of Home Visits	339

This year, our NFP program:

- ✓ 96 % of babies were healthy birth weights
- ✓ 100% of babies who are old enough have had developmental screenings done and there have been no delays.
- ✓ 100% of babies have had immunizations
- ✓ 97% of women during pregnancy had a medical home
- ✓ 3 women graduated from the program upon their child's 2nd birthday

Thank you to our partners!

- Carolina Health Centers, Inc.
- McCormick County First Steps
- Edgefield County DHEC

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Family Literacy

Parents are their child's first and best teachers.

Program Description

Family literacy programs offer an integrated and family-friendly approach, helping both parents and children to improve their literacy skills. Family literacy services integrate all of the following:

1. Adult Education
2. Child Education
3. Parent Education
4. Interactive Parent/Child Activities



Our family literacy program:

- ✓ **Helps parents of young children increase their education levels**
- ✓ **Teaches parents how to support their child's literacy and overall development**
- ✓ **Provides quality early learning experiences for children 0-5 while their parents attend adult education**

Edgefield County First Steps serves families in greatest need. Among our family literacy program families:

- 100% ... live in poverty
- 100% ... didn't graduate high school
- 86% ... enrolled in our program with less than an 8th grade education

Family Literacy by the Numbers 2014-15

Adults Served	14
Children Served	29
Adult Education Hours Offered	306
Early Childhood Education Hours Offered	496
Parenting Education Hours Offered	206
Number of adults that achieved their HS diploma or GED	2

This year, our Family Literacy program:

- ✓ Increased the education levels of participating parents by an average of 2.75 grade levels in reading and/or math
- ✓ 100% of participating children under age 2.5 posted gains on the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)
- ✓ 86% of participating children ages 2.5 to Kindergarten posted gains on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT-III)
- ✓ 91% of participating parents demonstrated growth in supporting their children's learning in the home environment
- ✓ 91% of participating parents demonstrated growth in supporting their children's learning in formal educational settings
- ✓ 91% of participating parents demonstrated growth in supporting interactive literacy activities

Thank you to our partners!

Edgefield County School District

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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.**

Edgefield 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 Edgefield 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.



Imagination Library by the Numbers, 2014-15

Children Served	224
Books Given to Children 0-5	1984

This year, our Imagination Library program:

- ✓ Provided one book per month to 224 children who were referred from local state and community agencies
- ✓ Pre-Survey results indicate that 56% of the children enrolled have fewer than 10 books in their homes
- ✓ Post-Survey results indicate that 56% of the families enrolled report an increase in the amount of time they spend reading to their children
- ✓ 100% of this program is funding by private donations from organizations, groups, businesses, and individuals

Thank you to our partners!

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Dollywood Foundation | Town of Trenton |
| Edgefield County Hospital | Jennie’s Flower Shop |
| Edgefield County Senior Citizens Council | Frazier’s Automotive |
| Log Creek Timber Co., Inc. | Creative Learning Center |
| Maxwell and Halford Drug, Inc. | Reel Insurance Agency |
| Edgefield County Chamber of Commerce | United Way of Edgefield |
| Women Involved in Rural Electrification c/o Aiken Electric Cooperative | |
| More than 40 additional donors | |



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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.

"I love that we have quality training right here in Edgefield. We also get many opportunities for hands-on training that we can take right back to the classroom."

Carolyn Ramsey
 4-K Teacher
 Little Folks Day Care

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

Title of Training:

Defining Social-Emotional Development
 Directors: Gatekeepers to Quality Programs
 Motivating Staff Starts with YOU!
 Color Me Healthy: Physical Activities
 Color Me Healthy: Nutrition Activities
 Bloodborne Pathogens
 Developing a Healthy Brain
 Being an Intentional Teacher
 The Importance of Relationships in Early Language and Literacy Learning
 Using Positive Feedback and Encouragement
 Development of Early Literacy Skills
 Dialogic Reading
 The Big Red Barn
 Early Language and Literacy Development
 Mandated Reporter
 Rules, Regulations, and the Serenity Prayer
 Don't Sweat the Small Stuff
 Pete the Cat and His Four Groovy Buttons
 Take It To The Next Level: Reading Strategies
 Supportive Responses to Troubled Parent-Child Interactions

Training Area:

Growth and Dev.
 Program Admin.
 Program Admin.
 Curriculum
 Nutrition
 Health and Safety
 Growth and Dev.
 Curriculum
 Growth and Dev.
 Curriculum
 Curriculum
 Growth and Dev.
 Health and Safety
 Program Admin.
 Program Admin.
 Curriculum
 Curriculum
 Child Guidance

Training by the Numbers, 2014-15

Total Training Attendance	266
Child Care Teachers and Directors Served	82
Number of Training Sessions Offered	23

This year, our Training program provided:

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

Thank you to our partners!

- Creative Learning Center
- Little Folks Day Care
- Center for Child Care Career Development
- S.C. Child Care Resource & Referral Network
- Saluda County First Steps

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Child Care Scholarships

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

Program Description

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

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

- 86% ... live in poverty
- 64% ... exposed to parental/caregiver substance abuse
- 43% ... exposed to parental/caregiver depression
- 21% ... affected by domestic violence



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

All of the scholarship children under age 4 are enrolled in our Imagination Library Program and receive a book in the mail every month.

Scholarships by the Numbers, 2014-15

Children Served	19
Providers Served	2

This year, our Scholarship program:

- ✓ Provided more than 25 development screenings for enrolled scholarship children
- ✓ Identified and addressed 4 potential developmental delays among scholarship children
- ✓ Made 2 connections for families to services such as BabyNet and School District Special Services
- ✓ Supported 2 small businesses in Edgefield County by subsidizing child care tuition for families who would not otherwise be able to afford quality care
- ✓ Provided 9 hours of training for scholarship parents in topics such as car seat safety, quality child care, dialogic reading, social-emotional development, ages and stages, and conscious discipline.

Thank you to our partners!

- Creative Learning Center
- Little Folks Day Care
- BabyNet
- Edgefield County School District

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Countdown to Kindergarten

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.

*CTK by the Numbers, Summer 2014

Children Served	3
Families Served	3
Home/School Visits	18

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



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.

This year, our Countdown to Kindergarten program:

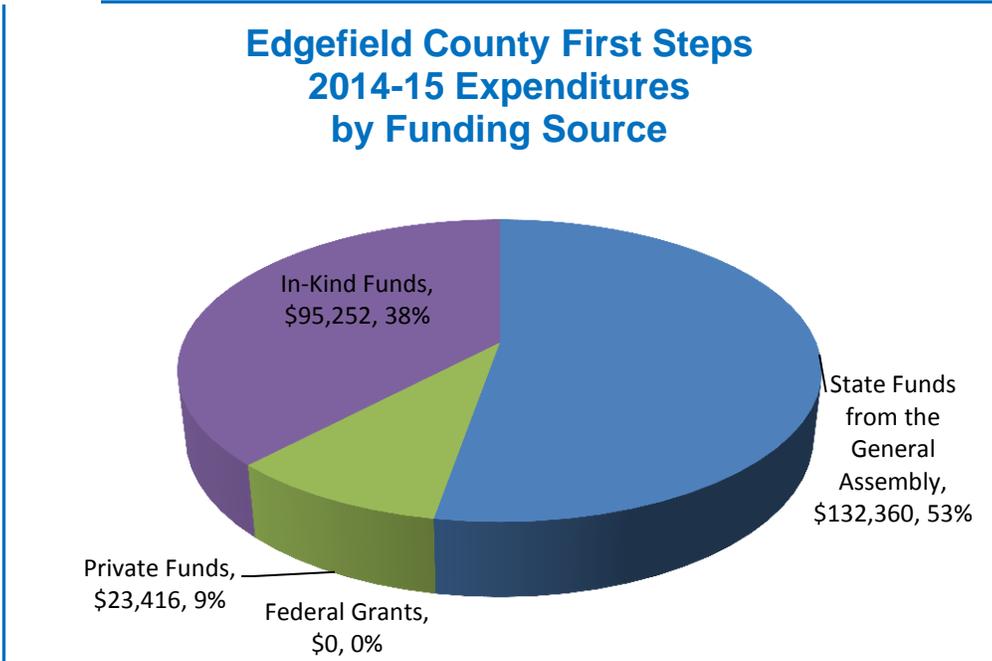
- ✓ Increased the amount of time parents spent reading to children by 67%
- ✓ Placed 100% of the Countdown to Kindergarten Children in their Countdown to Kindergarten’s Teacher’s classroom

Thank you to our partners!

- Edgefield County School District
- Kaplan Early Learning Company
- Head Start

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Financial Impact



Total 2014-15 Expenditures: \$251,028

State Funds Leveraged in 2014-15*: 89.66%

*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
Family Literacy	\$33,629	\$0	\$327	\$69,703	\$103,659	41%
Imagination Library	\$0	\$0	\$4,577	\$0	\$4,577	2%
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$858	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$858	0%
Child Care Training	\$10,097	\$0	\$4,025	\$840	\$14,962	6%
Child Care Scholarships	\$37,416	\$0	\$0	\$840	\$38,256	15%
Nurse Family Partnership	\$18,559	\$0	\$6,250	\$6,421	\$31,230	12%
Program Support	\$18,736	\$0	\$8,189	\$16,819	\$43,744	17%
Administrative Support	\$13,064	\$0	\$48	\$630	\$13,742	5%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$132,359	\$0	\$23,416	\$95,253	\$251,028	

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

Since inception, Edgefield County First Steps has leveraged \$1,473,322 from sources outside of state government. That's 60 cents for every state dollar.

There are many successes along the way, but one student's commencement speech at the Family Literacy Awards Ceremony says it all:

My name is Latoya Dunbar, and I am a proud mother of three and a graduate of the class of 2015. There is a time in life when you have to stop making excuses and go after your dream. In 2014, I decided to make that change for me and my family! I had previously participated in the Adult Education Program in 2005, but personal circumstances forced me to leave. At the time, I had two small children. This time it was different! I was sitting at home and said to myself, "I need to go back and finish my education". I wanted my kids to be able to proudly tell the story of how their mother went back to school and obtained her Diploma. The two oldest are now teenagers and I needed to set an example for them that school is important.

While I was excited to go back to school, it was not easy. I had a lot of trials and tribulations arise. I lost some family and friends due to death. At times, I wanted to stop because of the pain, but I always remained focused. I felt that my loved ones would want me to finish school. Personal issues came up again, but this time, I fought my way through them and remained positive and focused.

The most inspirational part for me was with how the program has helped me to become a better mother. My youngest child, who is 17 months old, attended the child care program at the school. She has learned so many new words and her connection with the other kids is wonderful. She is also interested in books and reading. Now, we read regularly and I can see how much she is learning. She can turn the pages herself and pretends to read the words. She has been able to accomplish this because both the child care teachers and I have been working with her. She loves her teachers. It is great to know that she is being treated with kindness. When we pull up at school, she tries to run down the hall to her classroom. Even though I finished my academic goals in April, I continued to attend school because she needed to finish her school year with her teachers.

I did not accomplish this alone. There were a lot of people that gave me strength. I want to thank my classmates that worried when I was not in class, my mother, my sisters, and my kids. I can truly say that God answers prayers.

I also want to thank the Edgefield School District and the First Steps Program for offering family literacy services.

Without their support, there would not have been a child care center or transportation for my family to attend. Also, to my teacher, thank you for showing me how to achieve my goals. At the age of 33, I can now pursue my dream of attending college. In the fall, I will begin classes at Piedmont Technical College's Edgefield campus.

The family literacy program not only makes you want to succeed in life as a young single parent, it also makes you have a goal of saying that "I can make it and I'm not stopping until I'm there". To my fellow graduates, it is up to you to go out and reach for the stars. There are no excuses to say "I can't"; there is only a reason to say "I will". Just remember...for every ending, there is a new beginning; for every bad memory, there is a dream ahead.

Thank you to our partners!

Funding Support

State of South Carolina: \$138,000
(through South Carolina First Steps)

Center for Child Care Career Development
\$2,000

United Way of Edgefield: \$540

More than 60 business/organization and
individual donors

In-Kind Support

Edgefield County School District

Edgefield County Chamber of Commerce

First Book

Carolina Health Centers, Inc.

Kaplan

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

Volunteers working together for Edgefield County's Youngest Learners

The success of Edgefield County First Steps rests heavily on the dedicated and diligent individuals that are our Board members. They spend hours reviewing program and financial data in order to make the best decisions for the families with young children in Edgefield County. Although they come from different organizations throughout the county, no one ever comes to the table with any hidden agendas or personal motives. What is best for the community at large always takes priority for this Board. A huge thank you for the job well done is offered as a part of this annual report.

Last year, they worked on a comprehensive resource development plan to ensure that Edgefield County First Steps has all the resources necessary to sustain (and even grow) the programs that fulfill the mission of the Board. Not only do 100% of Board members financially support Edgefield County First Steps, but also through the hard work of Board and Staff members, 100% of the goals in the resource development plan were exceeded.

Edgefield County First Steps Partnership Board, 2014-15

Name	Position	Board Category
Bridget Clark, Chair	CDEP/Read to Succeed Coordinator, Edgefield County Schools	County Library Representative
Desiree' B. Council, Vice Chair	County Coordinator, Edgefield/McCormick/Saluda Guardian Ad Litem Program	Non-Profit Organization that Provides Services to Families
Gail Jackson, Secretary	Speech Therapist, Edgefield County Schools	Early Childhood Development
Liz Posey, Treasurer	RN II, Site Supervisor, Edgefield County Health Department	DHEC Representative
Lena Baker	Family Literacy Coordinator, Edgefield County Schools	School District Representative
Larry Bowe	Executive Director, Edgefield County Senior Citizens Council	Transportation Provider
Judy Layman	Owner, Creative Learning Center	Childcare Provider
Moronda Talley	Director, Edgefield County Department of Social Services	DSS Representative
Amy Wilhelm	K-5 Teacher, Edgefield County Schools	Pre-K through Primary Educator
Renee Williams	Interim Coordinator, GLEAMNS Head Start	Head Start Representative
Lynda Yoder	Nurse, Edgefield County Hospital	Healthcare Provider
Jane Doolittle	Business Office Director, Edgefield County Hospital	Business Community
Cynthia Howard	2 Year Old Teacher, Creative Learning Center	Childcare Provider
Blair Massey	Attorney	Business Community
Jenny Mims	K-4 Teacher, Edgefield County Schools	Pre-K through Primary Educator
Donna Thompson	Early Head Start Case Manager	Early Childhood Development



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 Edgefield County:
864-225-6465

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

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