

FAIRFIELD COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.



Parents as Teachers

Imagination Library

Countdown to Kindergarten

Child Care Quality
Enhancement

Child Care Scholarships

Early Identification and
Referral

Car Seats

1000 Books Before
Kindergarten

Annual Report

2014-15



OUR VISION:

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

First Steps WORKS for the children of Fairfield 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 Fairfield County children under 5:
 1205

Number of Fairfield County children living in poverty:
 1668

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

Our Programs

Parents as Teachers

Imagination Library

Countdown to Kindergarten

Child Care Quality Enhancement

Child Care Scholarships

Early Identification & Referral

Our Results

- ✓ EVERY child enrolled in any other FCFS program is registered in Imagination Library as well.
- ✓ 86% of the children assessed through EI&R were referred due to some type of delay.
- ✓ TWO new childcare centers opened in Fairfield County

Our children are our community

Patti Wilkes, Executive Director

As I reflect on the 2014-2015 year of Fairfield County First Steps, I am pleased with the changes I see. Growth can be found in our office, in our families, and in our community. We can see that our community is becoming a community of learners. Whether it is learning to work better with others, learning to read, or simply learning to put one foot in front of the other, we are making positive progress.

On July 1, 2014, as we were gearing up for a new year, we found Fairfield County without any Childcare Centers. At the time of this writing, we now have one center that has already obtained their Level B rating through ABC, while another new facility is working towards that level. Reliable, quality childcare is vital in order to have a reliable work force in our community.

Although not a stand-alone program in the 2015 fiscal year, we decided to try the 1000 Books Before Kindergarten program with our local child development classes. We were very pleased to start this program with seven classes, representing four different elementary schools, even though we had a very short window for enrollment. As a United Way designated agency, we were able to use United Way funds to purchased books for the classrooms.

Countdown Before Kindergarten continues to prepare rising kindergarteners for school. The teachers make home visits during the summer working with the parent and child.

Imagination Library continues to open doors across the county!

Parents As Teachers and the Tuition Assistance continue to work together monthly at their Parent Workshops. These programs always have waiting lists due to the need.

We continue to assess children who may have delays through our Early Identification and & Referral program.



Jacky is happy to introduce her little brother to all of the families in attendance at the Parent Workshop meeting.

Board Chair
 CONNIE PETE

Executive Director
 PATTI WILKES

PO BOX 215
 101 N CONGRESS ST. STE 1
 WINNSBORO, SC 29180

(803)635-1590

fcccouncil@truvista.net

What We Do

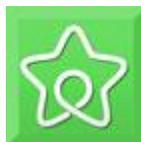
Each of the six color blocks of the First Steps logo represents a core area of service, outlining our comprehensive strategy to prepare children for long-term school success.

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, Fairfield County First focuses its investments in ***FIVE*** of the six areas including: Family Strengthening; Early Intervention; School Transition; Early Education; and, Quality Childcare.

Early Identification and Referral

Identifying and referring children with possible developmental delays can help assure

Program Description

First Steps' Early Identification and Referral (EI&R) programs serve families with young children with suspected delays in development and coordinates public awareness for BabyNet services, acting as a local portal to connect families to community-based services they may need or desire to ensure the school readiness of their children

EI&R services include:

1. **Screenings** (developmental, vision, hearing) for children ages birth to 5 years with suspected delays in development
2. **Referrals**, based up the screening results, to appropriate community resources. This could include the local BabyNet System Point of Entry Office, the local school district, and/or support services such as speech therapy, physical therapy, and programs in libraries and other community resources.
3. **Parent information** including strategies to monitor growth and development.

Our EI&R program:

- ✓ Provides early detection of developmental delays and health issues
- ✓ Promotes services and activities that promote child development
- ✓ Increases children's school readiness and school success

As word spreads that we are able to assess children for delays, interest in other programs follows.



Playing with other children is a very valuable lesson for young children.

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

- 71% ... live in poverty
- 43% ... had developmental delays
- 29% ... had less than high school education

EI&R by the Numbers 2014-15

Children Served	7
Children Referred to BabyNet, Local School, or Other Services	6

This year, our Early Identification and Referral program:

- ✓ Screened 4 number of children for hearing
- ✓ Screened all of the 7 children using Ages and Stages Questionnaire
- ✓ Referred 6 families to community resources after screening indicated need

Thank you to our partners!

Fairfield County School District
 BabyNet

Fairfield County First Steps

101 N. Congress St., Ste 1
 Winnsboro, SC 29180
 803-635-1590
 fcccouncil@truvista.net

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

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

100% ... live in poverty
 18% ... didn't graduate from high school
 27% ... were teen parents

Parents are learning to do more descriptive talking with their children. We encourage them to follow their child's lead in play and talk with them about what they are doing. These strategies are reflected in KIPS score growth.

Book reading has become a bigger part of our families' routines, facilitated by the books given during home visits and those mailed to their homes via the Dolly Parton Foundation. A book experience is part of every home visit



Childcare is provided during the monthly parent workshops. This allows parents an opportunity to have an open discussion with other parents who are in similar situations.

PAT by the Numbers 2014-15

Families Served	11	
Children Served	12	
Total Home Visits	188	
Hours Spent Serving Families	204.50	
Average gain, <i>Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale</i> (pre-to-post):	3.56	4.28

This year, our Parents as Teachers program:

- ✓ Averaged 17 home visits per family
- ✓ Identified and addressed 4 potential developmental delays
- ✓ Improved parenting practices include parents learning to use more descriptive talking with their children. More focused interaction is reflected in the KIPS scores.
- ✓ Improved literacy skills are seen in the homes of our families. 240 books were distributed to the Parents As Teachers families. Additionally, every child in the PAT program are enrolled in the Imagination Library program, which means they each receive a book mailed directly to them once a month.
- ✓ Made 3 connections for families to services such as Early Education, Vision, and Hearing services

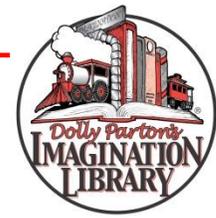
Thank you to our partners!

ABC Child Care
 Lotz of Love Learning Center, Too
 Majestic Academy

Fairfield County First Steps

101 N. Congress St., Ste 1
 Winnsboro, SC 29180
 803-635-1590
 fcccouncil@truvista.net

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.**

Fairfield 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 Fairfield 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. A child could potentially have a library of 60 books by their fifth birthday.



There is nothing like the love of reading!! Having books delivered directly to the homes of children across Fairfield County is a favorite program.

Imagination Library by the Numbers, 2014-15

Children Served	181
Books Given to Children 0-5	1861

This year, our Imagination Library program:

- ✓ Provided one book per month to 181 children who were referred from other First Steps programs, other community programs, and through word of mouth.
- ✓ We made connections to other program such as Parents As Teachers, Tuition Assistance, and Countdown to Kindergarten, Head Start, etc.
- ✓ Donations for this program were received from board members, community members, Fairfield County Council, and other organizations in support of Imagination Library.



Thank you to our partners!

- Dollywood Foundation
- Fairfield County Library
- Community Members
- First Steps Board Members

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 Winnsboro, SC 29180
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 fcccouncil@truvista.net

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)

QE by the Numbers, 2014-15

Child Care Providers Served	2
Number of TA Visits Provided	62
Number of Children 0-5 Enrolled in Provider Classrooms	22

New Childcare Centers

Fairfield County was most excited to see **TWO** new childcare facilities open in 2014-2015. At the beginning of the year, we had zero. We have worked closely with the two facilities to get them ABC ready. One has already reached their goal of ABC Level B. The other is currently working towards that goal. Getting these facilities to a level of quality for caring for Fairfield County children was a major priority for us. We stand with them proudly.

This year, our Quality Enhancement program:

- ✓ Worked with two different owners to open childcare in the community.
- ✓ Worked with providers to reach ABC Level B at one facility.
- ✓ Provided 55 hours of technical assistance to child care providers
- ✓ Provided over \$2500 in materials grants to participating child care programs
- ✓ Funded scholarships for 11 children within participating child care providers

Thank you to our partners!

- Lotz of Love Learning Center, Too
- Majestic Academy
- ABC Childcare

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 fcccouncil@truvista.net

Child Care Scholarships

Too many families in Fairfield 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.

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

- 82% ... live in poverty
- 18% ... didn't graduate from high school
- 54% ... were teen parents
- 45% ... had developmental delays

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

Our Tuition Assistance program works closely with our Parents As Teachers program. 60% of our PAT families are also Tuition Assistance families. Monthly, we host joint mandatory Parent Workshops. We take suggestions from the families for program topics and we incorporate the Parent Café' into these workshops.

"Knowing that my child is in a safe, reliable place every day makes going to work a bit easier for me. I don't have the stress of finding someone to help with her anymore."



Knowing that your child is in reliable, quality care makes going to work and/or school easier for the parent.

Scholarships by the Numbers, 2014-15

Children Served	11
Providers Served	3

This year, our Scholarship program:

- ✓ Provided 11 children with scholarship assistance so their parents could work or attend school
- ✓ Identified and addressed 13 potential developmental delays among scholarship children
- ✓ Made 3 connections for families to services such as Parents As Teachers, Speech services, and Early Childhood Education
- ✓ Supported 2 small businesses in Fairfield County and 1 in Richland County by subsidizing child care tuition for families who would not otherwise be able to afford quality care
- ✓ Provided 16.5 hours of training for scholarship parents in topics such as using the Parent Café' ©, Springtime Fun in the Park, State Museum at the library, early literacy, and safety around the house.

Thank you to our partners!

- Fairfield County School District
- Lotz of Love Learning Center, Too
- Majestic Academy

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 fcccouncil@truvista.net



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	42
Families Served	42
Home/School Visits	42

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



"I think the program is remarkable. It is a great way to have a one on one face connection between the teacher and parent. I love it!"
 CTK Teacher Rebecca T. Douglas

This year, our Countdown to Kindergarten program:

- ✓ Increased the amount of time parents spent reading to children by 80%.
- ✓ According to kindergarten teachers, CTK children performed 25% better than their fellow students academically, socially, behaviorally, and attendance wise during the 2014-15 school year.
- ✓ According to kindergarten teachers, CTK parents were 75% more involved than other parents in their child's education in the areas of maintaining contact with the teacher.

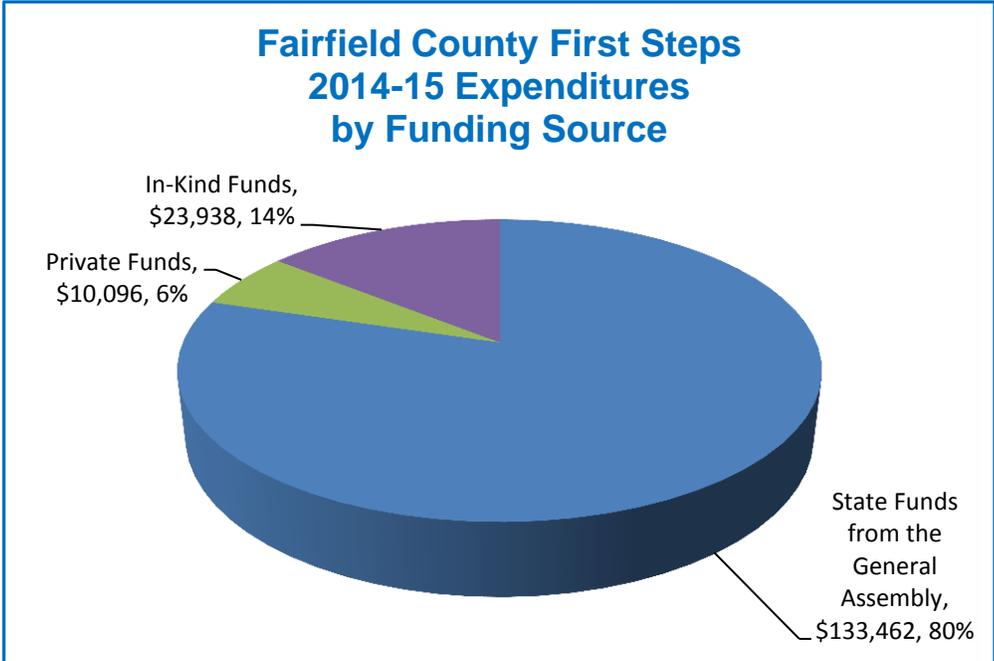
Thank you to our partners!

Fairfield County School District
 Kaplan Early Learning Company
 United Way of the Midlands

Fairfield County First Steps

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 Winnsboro, SC 29180
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Financial Impact



Total 2014-15 Expenditures: \$ 167,496

State Funds Leveraged in 2014-15*: 26%

**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	\$31,105	\$0	\$675	\$2,100	\$33,880	20%
Imagination Library	\$1,000	\$0	\$2,862	\$12,598	\$16,460	10%
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$7,278	\$0	\$2,930	\$0	\$10,208	6%
Child Care Quality Enhancement	\$11,288	\$0	\$0	\$1,320	\$12,608	8%
Child Care Scholarships	\$21,595	\$0	\$0	\$1,320	\$22,915	14%
Early Identification & Referral	\$8,121	\$0	\$0	\$1,320	\$9,441	6%
Program Support	\$36,820	\$0	\$1,903	\$3,960	\$42,683	25%
Administrative Support	\$16,255	\$0	\$1,726	\$1,320	\$19,301	12%

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

Since inception, Fairfield County First Steps has leveraged \$1,054,696 from sources outside of state government. That's 42 cents for every state dollar.

Parents As Teachers is making a difference in the lives of our young mothers.

Although we see great growth in all of our Parents As Teachers families, we are highlighting two who we feel are making great strides towards independence.

One mother we first started working with while she was still in high school. Her daughter was four months old at the time. We enrolled her in both the Tuition Assistance program and PAT. This mother graduated in May of 2014. While going to school, she also managed to work a part-time job, keep her appointments with our parent educator, and attend the monthly parent workshops. In the year and a half that she has been in our program, she has graduated high school, gotten a full time job, locally, and moved into a home of her own. She continues to make the monthly parent workshop meetings and very rarely misses a home visit. Her young daughter has just celebrated her second birthday. She is quite verbal and is a happy little girl who is developing very well. We love to hear her sing children's songs.

Another child was less than a month old when we first started our bi-weekly visits. Her mom is supported by a close-knit Hispanic family with whom they still live. Once again, we celebrate that word of mouth about our programs is our best form of advertisement in a small, rural community. In this case, the grandmother is acquainted with our Executive Director and asked about services for her daughter. This teenage mother has been taking classes at Midland's Tech, working towards a degree in the medical field, while she continues to work within the family owned business. This bi-lingual little girl has just turned three. She is very imaginative in her play. She attends the monthly parent workshops with her mother and enjoys her time playing with the other children.



Thank you to our partners!

Funding Support

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

United Way of The Midlands

Dwayne Perry, Fairfield County Council Member

Central Carolina Community Foundation

In-Kind Support

Wells Fargo

Dolly Parton Foundation

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



First Steps Partnership Board

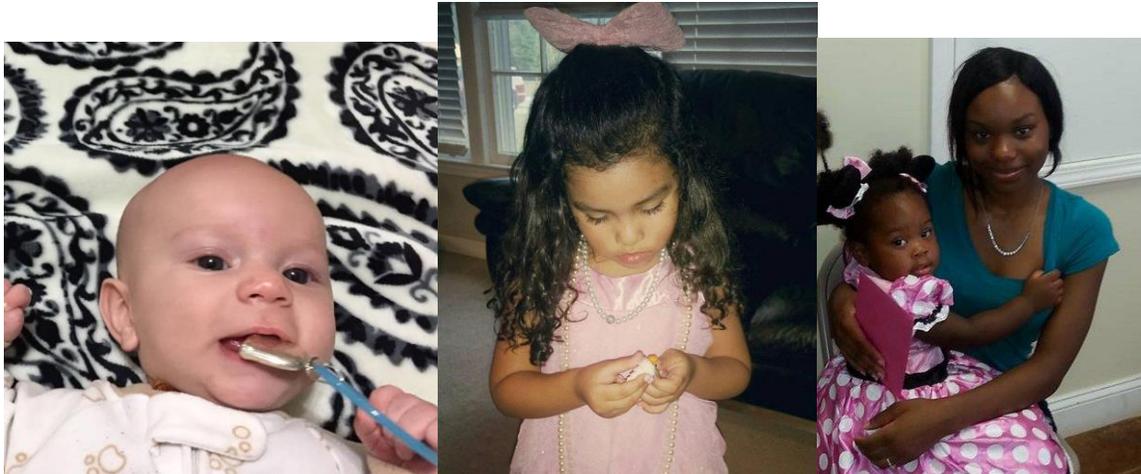
Board training leads to success!

“I’ve attended board trainings for thirty years and had never gained as much as I did in this one!” This is what was heard as our board left after two days of training with Charles Weathers of The Weathers Group. For two nights, gathered in part thanks to a Central Carolina Community Foundation grant, the Fairfield County First Steps Board members gathered for intensive training on their responsibilities as members of this group. Mr. Weathers lead the group through situational awareness for addressing the community, and most especially community leaders, in their role as spokesperson for First Steps. Members learned that trust and facilitating are two important factors for board cohesiveness. Being intentional about the future of First Steps is important as we seek to implement the vision of the board.

Fairfield County First Steps Partnership Board, 2014-15

Name	Position	Board Category
Connie Pete, Chair	QA Technician, Shipping/Receiving Clerk, Palmetto Imaging	Business Representative
Mac Russell, Vice-chair	Nutritionist IV – Registered Dietician, WIC SCDHEC	Legislative Liaison
Jill Wagers, Secretary	Speech Therapist, Fairfield County School District	Childcare & Early Development
Jimmy Burroughs	Christ Central Ministries	Faith Community
Dee Mattox	Fairfield County Council on Aging	Healthcare Provider
Sarah McMaster	Director, Fairfield County Library	Mandated
Jim Nichols	Director, Fairfield County DSS	Mandated
Jennifer A. Dukes	Lead Teacher, GLEAMNS Head Start	Mandated
Yolande Montgomery	Parent Specialist, Fairfield County School District	Mandated
Kay Hensley	Fairfield County School District	Family Education, Training and Support Provider
Sandi Gratic	Social worker, Fairfield County School District	Family Education, Training and Support Provider
Tiffany Simpson	Assistant Principal, Fairfield Elementary School	Pre-kindergarten through Primary Educator
Mollie Kirkland	K5 Teacher, Kelly Miller Elementary School	Pre-kindergarten through Primary Educator
Javad Wigfall	K5 Teacher, Geiger Elementary School	Pre-kindergarten through Primary Educator
Rebecca Douglas	K5 Teacher, Fairfield Elementary School	Legislative Appointee

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 Fairfield County:
 LOCAL SPOE PHONE # - 803-734-0235
 Whitney Tipton
<http://scfirststeps.org/babynet/>

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