



Parent Child Home

**Child Care Quality
Enhancement**

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 Florence 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 Florence County children under 5:
9,119

Number of Florence County children living in poverty:
9,519

Babies born each year in Florence County to a mother less than a high school diploma:
15%

Our Programs

Parents as Teachers

Child Care Quality Enhancement

Child Care Training

Child Care Scholarships

Our Results

- ✓ 48 children were awarded child care scholarships
- ✓ 32.5 hours of certified training provided
- ✓ 140.5 hours of TA provided



Spencer R. Scott
 Executive Director

Parents and Supporters:

The future of our communities' children continues to be a reminder of the constant need for Child Care Quality Enhancement, ABC Scholarship opportunities, participation in the Parenting Home Visitation Program, and attendance at quality Child Development Centers. FY 2015 has been a year of continued aspirations to achieving Florence County First Steps' goals of nurturing the future of as many children as possible.

Through the partnership between Florence County First Steps and South Carolina Department of Social Services, 48 Child Care Scholarships were awarded to children of families whom were identified with two or more of the First Steps risk factors.

Florence County First Steps has continued to make successful connections in the area of Family Strengthening. Through successful partnerships with Florence County School Districts #1, #4, and #5, we expanded the Parent Child Home Program. Through this program 2,087 home visits were conducted with children ages 2 and 3.

Kids First and Jack J Hanna participated in Technical Assistance along with returning centers Precious Ones Daycare and Sunshine Daycare.

As Florence County First Steps continues to boost its efforts to improve child care quality, Child Care Training was provided not only to Florence County First Steps Facility Quality Enhancement providers but to other providers in the five neighboring counties: Darlington, Dillon, Marlboro, Marion, and Horry.

By implementing these initiatives, we're helping our young children succeed and our community to flourish. Please assist Florence County First Steps to advocate for our youngest leaders, their families and early child care educators. Just as the triumphs have continued throughout this past year, Florence County First Steps will continue to strive and accomplish well into the future for the betterment of our children, their futures, and the future of our communities.

Please join us in lending your voice to the early childhood community. If you would like to help Florence County First Steps make a positive impact in the lives of children, please contact us with the information provide in the box below.

Sincerely,

Spencer R. Scott

Spencer R. Scott
 Executive Director
 Florence County First Steps

Board Chair
 Ivey N. Staley

Executive Director
 Spencer Scott

415 S. Coit Street
 Florence, SC 29501

(843)629-0202

Website:
www.florencefirststeps.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, Florence County First focuses its investments in....Quality Childcare and Family Strengthening.

Parent Child Home

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

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

- 100% ... live in poverty
- 50% ... didn’t graduate from high school
- 25% ... were teen parents

Below, PCH Home Visitor, Brenda Hannah with one her families



Below, PCH Participant, Janice Cooper-Mobley with her son, Justus Cooper



PCH by the Numbers 2014-15

Families Served	42	
Children Served	42	
Total Home Visits	2,087	
Hours Spent Serving Families	1,076.01	
Average gain, <i>Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale</i> (pre-to-post):	KIPS .83	ACIRI A=.62 C=.66

This year, our Parent Child Home program:

- ✓ Averaged 7.16 home visits per family
- ✓ Identified and addressed 13 potential developmental delays
- ✓ Above KIPS Pre and Post scores show significant improvement from the start of services to the end of services.
- ✓ Vinidiana Medrano completed two years of PCH and says, “My family enjoyed the help we received.” She is now enrolled in the GED program.
- ✓ Faith Gibbons, shown in picture on the top right, says, “My daughter enjoys the toys/books and participating in all of the events.”
- ✓ Janice Cooper-Mobley, also shown above, says, “My child wakes up every morning asking if the home visitor is coming today.”

Thank you to our partners!

Florence School District One
 Florence School District Four
 Florence School District Five

Florence County First Steps

415 S. Coit Street Florence, SC 29501
 843-629-0202

Email: www.florencefirststeps.org

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	4
Number of TA Visits Provided	83
Number of Children 0-5 Enrolled in Provider Classrooms	63

Congratulations to our QE participants for 2014-15!

Child Care Provider	Pre/Post Improvement
Precious Ones Learning Center	3.08/3.39
Sunshine Daycare	3.39/3.52
Kids First	3.05/3.26
Jack J Hanna	3.83/NA – Center closed

Lead Teacher, Shurrie Timmons inspiring her student at Jack J Hanna Academy!



This year, our Quality Enhancement program:

- ✓ Improved quality, on average, by .22 based on pre/post Environment Rating Scale assessments.
- ✓ Provided 140.5 hours of technical assistance to child care providers
- ✓ Provided in materials grants to participating child care providers (if applicable)
- ✓ Funded scholarships for 7 children within participating child care providers (if applicable)

Thank you to our partners!

- Precious Ones Learning Center
- Sunshine House
- Kids First Childcare Center
- Jack J Hanna Academy

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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.

"My staff and I have been attending child care trainings offered by FCFS since 2007. We love attending because FCFS brings in trainers that are informative on a variety of topics, keeps us active and awake."

-Lisa Hobbs, Director
 Immanuel Child Care Center

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

<u>Topic:</u>	<u>Sessions:</u>
Child Care Business Basics	1 Session
Physical Activities for Children	4 Sessions
Brain Development	2 Sessions
Language and Literacy	3 Sessions
Blood Borne Pathogens	1 Session
Classroom Interest Centers	2 Sessions
Caring Classroom	1 Session
Illnesses and Diseases	1 Session
Diapering	1 Session



Teachers learning new and exciting experiments to integrate in their daily activities and lessons.

Training by the Numbers, 2014-15

Total Training Attendance	268
Child Care Teachers and Directors Served	142
Number of Training Sessions Offered	16

This year, our Training program provided:

- ✓ 142 early childhood staff with high quality training
- ✓ 32.5 hours of certified training for staff to meet annual re-certification requirements
- ✓ 16 child care training classes.

Thank you to our partners!

Florence Darlington Technical College
 Drs. Bruce and Lee Foundation Library
 South Carolina Resource and Referral

Florence County First Steps
 415 S. Coit Street Florence, SC 29501
 843-629-0202
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Child Care Scholarships

Too many families in Florence 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.

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

- 31 ... live in poverty
- 15 ...substance abuse
- 23 ... caregiver suffers with depression
- 6 ... 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.

“It is nice to be able to drop my daughter off at a quality child care.”
 -Kelli Spencer
 Scholarship Parent



A Florence County parent fills out child care scholarships for her two children.

Scholarships by the Numbers, 2014-15

Children Served	48
Providers Served	13

This year, our Scholarship program:

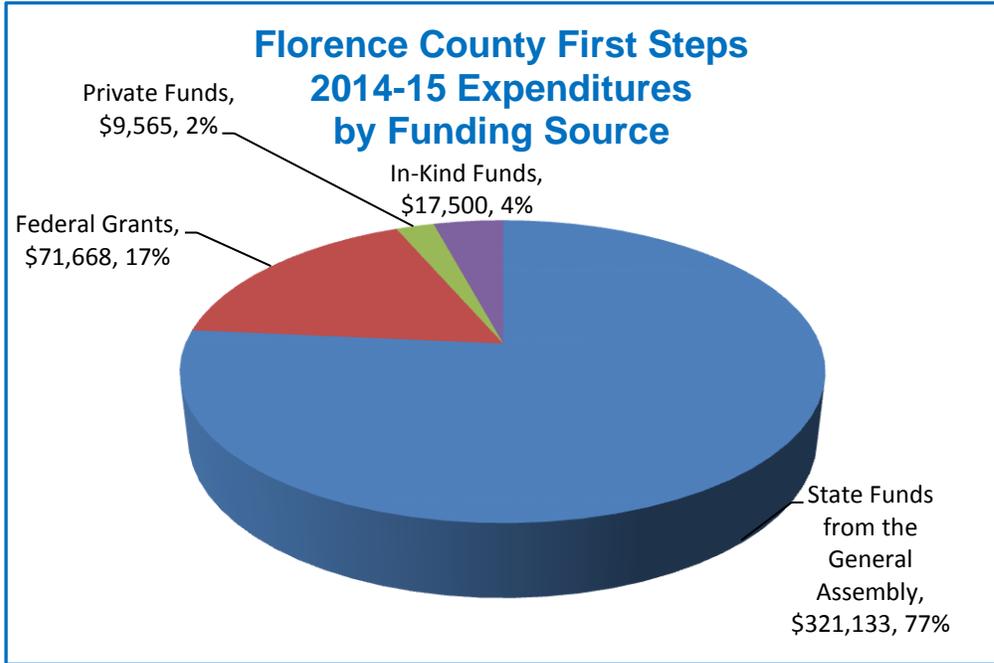
- ✓ Provided 48 children with scholarship assistance so their parents could work or attend school
- ✓ Identified and addressed 6 potential developmental delays among scholarship children
- ✓ Made 7 connections for families to services such as BabyNet and PCH.
- ✓ Supported 13 small businesses in Florence County by subsidizing child care tuition for families who would not otherwise be able to afford quality care

Thank you to our partners!

- South Carolina Department of Social Services
- Excellent Learning Preschool
- Zion Canaan CDC
- Mon-Dae Morning CDC
- La Petite Academy
- Angels Inn Child Care
- Echols Family Child care
- Precious Ones Learning Center
- FMU Center For the Child
- Sunshine Daycare Center
- Little Scholars Academy
- Jack J Hanna Academy
- The Sunshine House
- Little Places

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Financial Impact



Total 2014-15 Expenditures: \$419,866

State Funds Leveraged in 2014-15*: 30.75%

*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 Child Home	\$48,931	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$48,931	12%
Child Care Quality Enhancement	\$22,390	\$71,668	\$6,174	\$0	\$100,232	24%
Child Care Training	\$23,247	\$0	\$2,669	\$0	\$25,916	6%
Child Care Scholarships	\$122,500	\$0	\$0	\$17,500	\$140,000	33%
Nurse Family Partnership	\$0	\$0	\$524	\$0	\$524	0%
Program Support	\$64,615	\$0	\$107	\$0	\$64,722	15%
Administrative Support	\$39,450	\$0	\$91	\$0	\$39,541	9%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$321,133	\$71,668	\$9,565	\$17,500	\$419,866	

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

Since inception, Florence County First Steps has leveraged \$1,666.728 from sources outside of state government. That's 18 cents for every state dollar.

Paving the Ways for Families

Child Care Scholarships

Kelli Spencer, mother of Kerystnn Barr, greatly appreciates FCFS scholarship Kerystnn received for the past two years. Mrs. Spencer stated “receiving the scholarship allowed Kerystnn to attend Echols Family Daycare, which is a quality Licensed Family Child Care Home.”



Mrs. Spencer spoke very highly of Mrs. Echols and how she prepared Kerystnn for K4 in August 2015. “It is nice to be able to drop my daughter off at a quality child care, this way I am less stressed at work worrying if Kerystnn is in a safe, learning environment.”

Thanks again to FCFS for offering child care scholarships to parents of Florence County!

Derika Garner, parent of De'Laysia Garner would like to say thanks for such an opportunity for her child to attend Zion Canaan Child Development Center.

She is recognizing letters in sentences and different places we go. Her thinking skills have sharpened and vocabulary has become broader since starting the program. We work really hard with De'Laysia at home every day, so it is very important to us, as parents that she utilizes what she learns at school and home. She will be kindergarten ready in no time!



Thank you to our partners!

Funding Support

CCCCD Grant \$2,000

SC Department of Social Service \$100,375

In-Kind Support

Florence County School District 1

Florence County School District 4

Florence County School District 5

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

April 28, 2015

We are very happy at Precious One Learning Center!!!

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands (clap clap)
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands (clap clap)
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. (clap clap)



It has been another awesome year at Precious One Learning Center. Our students and staff members have all grown tremendously and that growth is largely attributed to the continued support, guidance and assistance of our local First Steps Program. The program has provided educational opportunities, and countless supplies and equipment that helped shape our environment for learning. We are truly pleased with our progress however we continue to strive to be the best learning center that we can be.

Our students Shine Bright at Precious One Learning Center!



Sincerely,
Mrs. Erica "Precious" Jones.

First Steps Partnership Board

Florence County First Steps Partnership Board, 2014-15

Name	Position	Board Category
Ivey Staley, Chair	Elementary School Teacher/FSD #1	Family Ed. Provider
Debbie Quesada, Treasurer	Florence County Library	Florence County Library
Linda Heron, Secretary	Zion Canaan CDC Director	Member of Early Childhood Ed.
Shurrie Timmons	Jack J Hanna Daycare-Teacher	Pre-K thru Primary Teacher
Nicole Weeks	Preschool Teacher/FSD#4	FSD #4
Margaret Echols	Echols Family Daycare-Owner/Provider	Child Care Provider
JoDeen McAllister	Mon-Dae Morning Child Care-Director/Owner	Child Care Provider
Meg Temple	The Care House-Director	Non-Profit Organization
Valencia Brand	Darlington County School District	Business Community
Pheobe Clark	Wukela Law Firm	Business Community
Amanda Theriot	Pearce Land Company	Parent
Darren McClam	Pastor	Faith Based Community
Yolanda McCall	Head Start	Head Start
Debra Donahue	Florence County DSS- Director	Florence County DSS
Dianne Oliver	Florence School District #3-Parenting Program	FSD #3
Brenda Hanna	Florence School District #5-Parenting Program	FSD #5
Marty Hucks	FMU Nursing Instructor	Senate Appointment
Ernest Frierson	Pastor	Senate Appointment
Nicole Echols	American Red Cross	Non-Profit Organization



Rev. Darren McClam
Newly Elected Board Chairman



Nicole Weeks
presents at Annual Celebration

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 Florence County:
843-669-8689

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