

J A S P E R C O U N T Y



Getting children ready for school.



Parents as Teachers

Imagination Library

Countdown to Kindergarten

Child Care Training

Early Identification & Referral

Annual Report

2014-15



OUR VISION:

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

First Steps WORKS for the children of Jasper County.

Readiness Matters in Jasper County

Duchett Polite, Executive Director

“Getting children ready for school” is more than a slogan. It’s a mission, a call to action, a charge to do our part to facilitate a body of students entering kindergarten with the skills and experiences needed to succeed in school. Children are born learning and their early experiences impact the success they will achieve later in school. But readiness matters more than in the assessment of a child’s abilities entering kindergarten; readiness matters when we look at parenting, the educational environment, and ultimately our community as well.

Readiness matters for our children – The ready child is one who enters kindergarten with the social, emotional, cognitive and motor skills needed to succeed in school. Readiness matters for children – because when a child enters school with the curiosity and joy in discovery, learning happens. The ready child kindergartener will be the prepared 3rd grader... and the successful graduate. Readiness matters for children because if we start early, we can finish strong in Jasper County.

Readiness matters for our parents – But readiness does not start with the child. Readiness starts with the environment, and a child’s first and most important learning experiences will take place in the home. The parents’ role in school readiness is crucial. In everything from forming loving, nurturing attachments to reading to your child 15 minutes each day to walks outside to notice the changing leaves during the fall – the parent prepares the child to be ready to learn before ever coming into a classroom. Readiness matters for parents, so in Jasper County we support, encourage and educate them to be a child’s first teacher.

Readiness matters for our schools – When our children enter public schools in South Carolina, they are now administered a readiness assessment. This assessment gives educators a starting glimpse of a child’s prior knowledge. A child that enters school with certain “hard” skills – like some letter recognition, numeracy literacy, etc. and “soft” skills – like self-control and self-assurance are ready to take their learning to the next level = Excellence! Readiness matters for schools; that’s why in Jasper County, we work closely with our providers to ensure early educational experiences complement the expectations of the school district for a ready student and a ready graduate.

Readiness matters for our community – Today’s children will be tomorrow’s adults. That’s why readiness must matter to our community-at-large. In Jasper County, we want to change the perception of deficit because we live in a rural community. Our efforts today is so we will have a ready workforce tomorrow. Our mission is to prepare young learners to become future leaders. Our call of action to our community is to support the work of Jasper County First Steps – together we can get Jasper’s children ready for school, graduation & the world!

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 Jasper County children under 5:
1623

Number of JASPER County children living in poverty:
2380 (40.3%)

Babies born each year in JASPER County to a mother less than a high school diploma:
1 in 3 (29.2%)

Our Programs

Parents as Teachers

Imagination Library

Countdown to Kindergarten

Child Care Training

Early Identification & Referral

Our Results

- ✓ Increased Countdown participation **300%** from 10 to 30 students, Summer 2014
- ✓ Increased Resource Network for Families:
 - * Safe Kids of Lowcountry
 - * Cribs for Kids
 - * PASOs
 - * Antioch Education Center



Ms. Duchett Polite as “The Cat in the Hat”
 Read Across America Day - 2015

Board Chair
 DELORIS DUNHAM

Executive Director
 DUCHETT POLITE

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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, Jasper County First focuses its investments in... Family Strengthening, Early Intervention, Quality Child Care, Early Education, and School Transition.

Early Identification and Referral

Identifying and referring children with possible developmental delays can help assure school readiness.

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

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

85% ... live in poverty

43% ... didn't graduate high school

I am happy to offer developmental screenings to the children in my center.

Linda DuPont, Owner

Growing Together Daycare



Community Outreach & Education

Children of parents attending ESOL classes join us during our Christmas Drop-In

EI&R by the Numbers 2014-15

Children Served	7
Materials Distributed	250
Children Referred to BabyNet, Local School, or Other Services	1

This year, our Early Identification and Referral program:

- ✓ Screened **7** number of children for hearing; Referred **2** children for hearing follow-up
- ✓ Screened **7** number of children using Ages and Stages Questionnaire
- ✓ Referred **3** number of families to community resources after screening indicated need

Thank you to our partners!

Jasper County Department of Social Services

Growing Together Daycare

Jasper County Health Department

Jasper County First Steps

456 Grays Hwy., Ridgeland, SC 29936

843-726-5100

dpolite@scfirststeps.org

www.jaspercountyfirststeps.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

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

100% ... live in poverty
 46% ... didn't graduate from high school
 8% ... were teen parents



PAT by the Numbers 2014-15

Families Served	24	
Children Served	32	
Total Home Visits	191	
Hours Spent Serving Families	204.5	
Average gain, <i>Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale</i> (pre-to-post):	KIPS .21	ACIRI .91

PAT families enjoying SC Read In, Columbia, 4/14/15

Theme: "Wild Things" based on [Where the Wild Things Are](#)

This year, our Parents as Teachers program:

- ✓ Averaged **2** home visits per family per month
- ✓ Identified and addressed **5** potential developmental delays
- ✓ Made connections for families to services such as Cribbs for Kids (safe sleep education and resources); Car Passenger Safety (training and car seat check/replacement); Stork's Nest Referral (resources for expectant parents for keeping prenatal appointments)

Thank you to our partners!

Jasper County School District – Student Services
 Jasper County Department of Social Services
 Dr. Earl Bostick, DMD – Ridgeland Family Dentistry
 CAPA - Cribbs for Kids Program

Jasper County First Steps

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Imagination Library



Children’s reading scores improve dramatically when parents are involved in helping them learn to read.

Program Description

According to the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, the peak period for brain development related to language is around **nine months of age**. **One of the easiest and most effective ways to build this capacity in young children’s brains is to read to them.**

Jasper 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 Jasper 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	397
Books Given to Children 0-5	3036

DPI Reading Nights
 Featured Book: The Very Hungry Caterpillar
 Hardeeville & Ridgeland Libraries

This year, our Imagination Library program:

- ✓ Fully funded by our local county government!
- ✓ Provided one book per month to **397** children, **210** children were newly enrolled this year!
- ✓ Enrolled **88** children referred from Jasper County School District Child Find Event.
- ✓ Facilitated four (4) community-wide **Reading Nights** at local libraries to promote family literacy around read-aloud activities and story extension through arts, crafts, music, etc.



The Hardeeville Community Library extends a bountiful "Thank You" to the board of JCFS to our library. It was a beautiful act of selflessness that will be forever remembered.

Ms. DaShon Ellis-Campbell
 Hardeeville Community Library, Manager

Thank you to our partners!

- Jasper County Government
- Dollywood Foundation
- Hardeeville Community Library, Hardeeville
- Pratt Memorial Library, Ridgeland

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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.

Jasper County First Steps is the greatest. They are on the cutting edge of educating children.

Ida Spitz Swindell, M.Ed Master Certified DSS Trainer for SC



Cradling Literacy Training
 Palmetto Electric, Ridgeland

Child Care Training Sponsored by JASPER First Steps, 2014-15

<u>Topic:</u>	<u>Sessions:</u>
PCAN Training	Units 7 & 8
Cradling Literacy Series	Units 5 & 6
Guiding Children's Emotions	Guidance
Adventuresome Twos	Curriculum
Play in the EC Classroom	Growth & Development
Encouraging Literacy in Infant/Toddlers	Curriculum
Attachment & Child Health	Growth & Development

Training by the Numbers, 2014-15

Total Training Attendance	187
Child Care Teachers and Directors Served	68
Number of Training Sessions Offered	16

This year, our Training program provided:

- ✓ 68 early childhood staff with high quality training
- ✓ 35.5 hours of certified training and 15 hours of registered training for staff to meet annual re-certification requirements throughout Jasper County

Thank you to our partners!

Jasper County School District
 TEAM Lowcountry
 Hampton & Allendale County First Steps

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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.



Countdown to Kindergarten! Gracias First Steps, Now We are Ready!!!

Norma G., mother of Enrique

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	30
Families Served	30
Home/School Visits	180

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

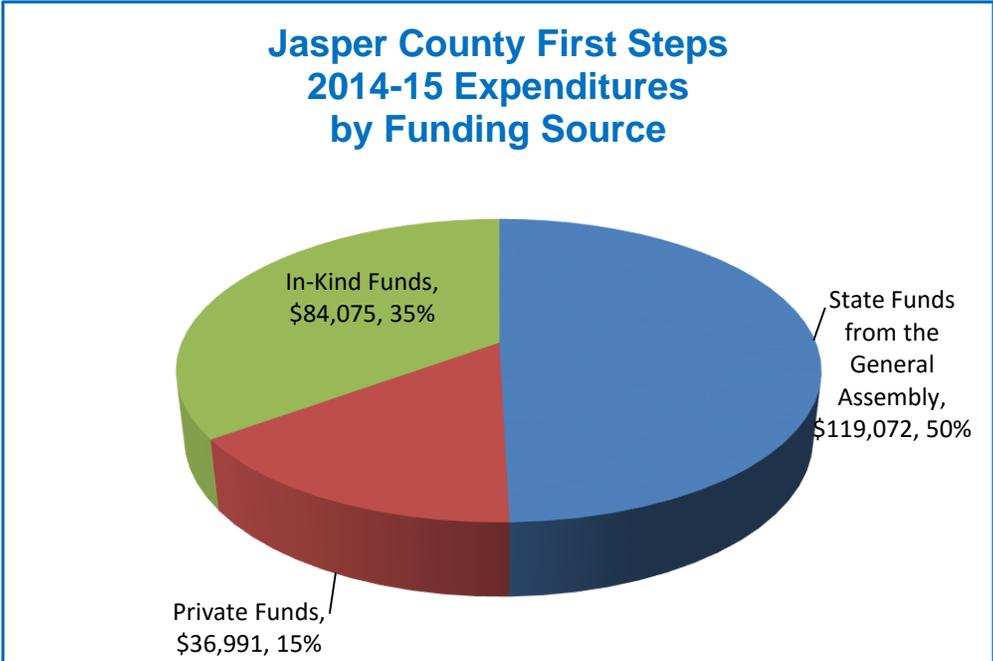
This year, our Countdown to Kindergarten program:

- ✓ **100%** of enrolled student successfully completed program
- ✓ Increased the amount of time parents spent reading to children by **33%**

Thank you to our partners!

JASPER County School District
 Kaplan Early Learning Company
 Ms. Deloris Dunham, Board Chair

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Total 2014-15 Expenditures: \$240,141

State Funds Leveraged in 2014-15*: 101%

*Percentage of state dollars matched by additional federal, private, and/or in-kind funds

2014-15 Expenditures by Strategy

	State \$	Private \$	In-Kind \$	Total \$	% of 2014-15 Expenditures
Parents as Teachers	\$53,146	\$3,702	\$14,400	\$71,248	30%
Imagination Library	\$0	\$7,207	\$38,803	\$46,010	19%
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$6,537	\$3,521	\$0	\$10,058	4%
Child Care Training	\$9,585	\$3,213	\$14,400	\$27,198	11%
Early Identification & Referral	\$8,982	\$2,108	\$11,520	\$22,610	9%
Program Support	\$25,893	\$12,960	\$2,587	\$41,440	17%
Administrative Support	\$14,929	\$4,280	\$2,365	\$21,574	9%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$119,072	\$36,991	\$84,075	\$240,138	

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

Since inception, Jasper County First Steps has leveraged \$990,151 from sources outside of state government. That's 37 cents for every state dollar.

Community Impact

Community Support Matters in Jasper County – Thank You!!!

Inaugural Cathy B. Gardner Memorial Walk-a-thon, 5/30/15

Jasper County First Steps would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for the encouragement and support received as we celebrated the life, legacy and leadership of our former Executive Director, Ms. Cathy B. Gardner.

The Walk-a-thon and Community Fun Day was a great success for JCFS with 200+ participants and agency vendors attending on a beautiful Saturday morning. Yes, the rain came (like buckets), but only after we'd had the chance to complete the walk and take part in the great information provided by our more than 15 agency vendors.

Some of the highlights of the day were a visit by Ronald McDonald; fun and games provided by Beaufort Co. First Steps and Technical College of the Lowcountry; and the much sort after "Ice Cream in a Bag" activity with Ms. Rose. In addition, the Book Mobile was on site for the day; general health, dental and nutrition screenings were provided; and Safe Kids of the Lowcountry conducted child seat checks.



Ms. Pamela Rose, PAT Parent Educator
 Holding her 1st First Steps Baby!



Countdown to Kindergarten Celebration
 "Oh the Places You Will Go..."

Our agency vendors were:

- AHJ Libraries – Book Mobile
- Beaufort County First Steps
- BJ Comprehensive Health (Dental Department)
- BJ-EOC – Roberville Head Start
- Coastal Carolina Hospital (Dietary Services)
- Fresh Start Healing Heart
- Gullah Nurses of the Lowcountry
- Healthlink for Children
- Jasper County Health Department
- PASOs of the Lowcountry
- Pregnancy Center & Clinic of the Lowcountry
- Safe Kids of the Lowcountry
- Select Health / First Choice
- Technical College of the Lowcountry (Early Ed Dept)
- The Big Red Shoe
- Wright Direction Family Services

Cathy B. Gardner Walk-A-Thon 2015



Growing Healthy Families

Thank you to our partners!

Funding Support

State of South Carolina: \$138,000
(through South Carolina First Steps)
 Jasper County Government: \$20,000

In-Kind Support

Jasper County School District
 Dollywood Imagination Library

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

Parenting Matters in Jasper County

Start Early – Finish Strong

First Steps has helped me a lot as a new mother. I joined First Steps in March when I had no idea of what to do or even how to be a mother. I have learned do many things with Ms. Rose. If I had any questions, I knew I could call and they would give me the best reference.

Having the support of my parent educator has given me the confidence to know I can be the best parent to my child.

Kenia M., mother of Raymundo (4 months)

Teen parent, still enrolled in school



As a member of the Jasper County First Steps Program, I am proud of its success. First Steps offers helpful resources to parents in order to get their young ones ready for school. With the help of my parent educator, my son has been able to excel in his developmental stages.

Latoya H., mother of Jabari (3 years)

"Ms. Harris brought the program (CTK) to life for my energetic 5 yr. old. He was very excited to enter school."

Takelya D., mother of Kenneth

I became a part of the Jasper County First Steps family for over five years ago when I enrolled in the PAT program with my newborn son. My parent educator was Ms. Polite and with her support I saw the impact of my parenting in a whole new light. We joined the Imagination Library received a full library of wonderful books that my son and I continue to enjoy! One of his favorites is Fluffy & Baron, a story about the friendship between a dog and a duck.

I have also served on the First Steps Board as a parent. That experience helped me understand the great work and dedication that First Steps does on behalf of children throughout our community. I am glad I had the chance to give back to a program that gave so much to me. When my son was finally five years old and ready to leave out of the PAT program, we also participated in Countdown to Kindergarten. I can truly say the end was as good as the beginning. Ms. Harris brought the program to life for my energetic 5 yr old. He was very excited to enter school. Thank you First Steps for all you have done for me and my family!



Takelya D. mother of Kenneth (PAT, DPIL, CTK) now in 1st grade

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



First Steps Partnership Board

Partnering Matters in Jasper County

Parents As Teachers & Cribs for Kids – Working Toward a Healthy Start for Children and Families

The Jasper County First Steps, PAT Program collaborates with “Cribs for Kids” to promote safe sleep education to our families. The program focuses on comprehensive safe-sleep education that includes the intervention of a safety-approved crib if the family cannot otherwise afford one. The overall goal is to decrease the number of infants dying from SIDS and accidental suffocation and to reduce the disparity between Caucasian and African-American infant mortality. Every parent that participates in the training has to demonstrate their knowledge of best practices surrounding safe sleep and assemble the pack n play prior to completion of the training. Upon completion, they receive their own Pack n Play crib to take home with them.

The program has educated and provided 8 cribs to PAT parents thus far. We are excited about maintaining such an important and needed collaboration with Cribs for Kids, and CAPA, Child Abuse Prevention Association. Ms. Charmain Hedrick is the instructor for this training and she does an outstanding job with facilitating. All children should be able to grow up in a safe, loving and stable family and working together as partners and collaborators with community agencies is the beginning of awareness.

Jasper County First Steps Partnership Board, 2014-15

Name	Position	Board Category
Deloris Dunham, Chair	Jasper County School District, Transportation Director	Family Education & Support
Eleanor Hazel, Vice-Chair	Jasper County School District, Parent Liaison	School District Representative
Dr. Tom Balliet	Educator, Retired	Non-profit
LaSheena Burton-Moss	Child Care Provider	Early Child Educator
DaShon Ellis-Campbell	Hardeeville Community Library, Manager	Library Representative
Constance Martin-Witter	Local Food Bank, Executive Director	Non-profit
Rev. Dave Mitchell, III	Pastor	Faith Community
LaDenier Mitchell	Jasper County DSS	DSS Representative
Sharon Murdock	Jasper County School District, Pre-K	Pre-K/Primary Educator
Kelvin Peoples	Be Green Packaging, Administrator	Business Community
LaKeisha Pinckney	Parent	Parent of a Pre-school Child
Denise Smith	Jasper County Government	Local Government
La'Toya Thomas Dixon (resigned)	Jasper County School District, Early Educ Director	School District Representative
Nicole Wardlaw	BJ Comprehensive Health, nurse	Health Care Provider
Sheila White	Jasper County School District, Pre-K Coach	Pre-K/Primary Educator
Margaret Williams	Educator, Retired	Early Child Educator
Mary Wrighten	DSS, Retired	Family Education & Support

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 Jasper County:
LOCAL SPOE PHONE # - 843-782-3404

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



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