

LEXINGTON COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.



Parents as Teachers

Nurse Family Partnership

**Countdown to
Kindergarten**

**Child Care Quality
Enhancement**

Child Care Training

New Moms Hospital Bags

Annual Report

2014-15



OUR VISION:

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

First Steps WORKS for the children of Lexington 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 Lexington County children under 5:
17,199

Number of Lexington County children living in poverty:
13,732

Babies born each year in Lexington County to a mother less than a high school diploma:
1 in 6

Our Programs

Parents as Teachers

Nurse Family Partnership

Countdown to Kindergarten

New Moms Hospital Bags

Child Care Quality Enhancement

Child Care Training

Our Results

- ✓ 134 Children served with Parents As Teachers
- ✓ 213 Children participated in Countdown to Kindergarten
- ✓ 146 Teachers and Directors received additional training

MESSAGE - BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Since 2001, Lexington County First Steps has been defined as filling gaps, enhancing and enlarging services and serving the most at-risk children through the collective wisdom of collaborations and partnerships across Lexington County.

PARENT AND FAMILY STRENGTHENING SERVICES

Parents as Teachers (PAT), is an evidenced-based home visitation model used by Lexington County since inception of First Steps. It is the flagship of our county services and is the largest PAT program in South Carolina partnering with each of the five school districts' Parent Centers. It is our largest service and it is one of the larger programs in South Carolina.

Nurse Family Partnership (NFP), also an evidenced based home visitation model, is offered through collaboration with Richland County. DHEC is the implementing agency serving 100 first-time low-income mothers in the two-county area, with 34 clients from Lexington County.

Countdown to Kindergarten (CTK), an in-home summer visitation program serves as transition for children entering 5K who often have had little, if any, prior preschool experience. Participation is determined by each school district in the Spring for 5k students entering 5K in August. Lexington County has the largest CTK program in South Carolina.

New Moms Hospital Bags are distributed at Lexington Medical Center and reflect a community effort of 100% of all materials and labor from partnering agencies.

CHILD CARE SERVICES

Child Care Quality Enhancement Grants were awarded to two Centers in Lexington County with monitoring provided by a credentialed Technical Assistant, and also included is some money for equipment and supplies. Without adequate materials, children do not have opportunity to develop the necessary skills to prepare them for success in school.

Child Care Provider Training continues to be a hallmark service coordinating with Midlands TEC (MTC), Childcare Resource & Referral (CCR&R) and the Center for Child Care Career Development (CCCCD) contracting with qualified instructors certified through CCCCC. With minimal hourly rates, this service continues to be financially self-supporting.



Board Chair
Jennifer Felkel

Executive Director
James H. Riddle, Jr.

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Getting children ready for school.

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, Lexington County First Steps focuses its investments in Parents as Teachers, Nurse Family Partnership, New Moms Hospital Bags, Countdown to Kindergarten, Child Care Quality Enhancement, and Child Care Training.

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

Program Description

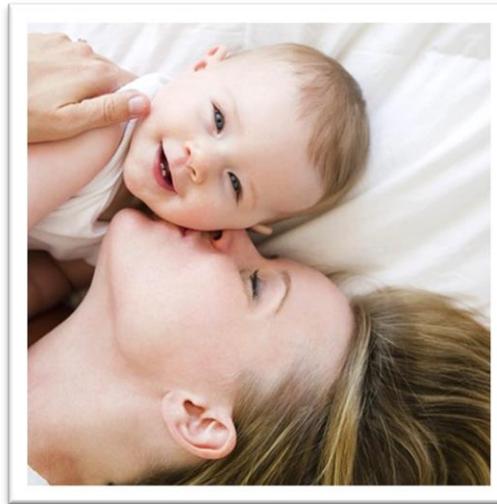
Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) helps transform the lives of vulnerable first-time moms and their babies. Through ongoing home visits from registered nurses, low-income, first-time moms receive the care and support they need to have a healthy pregnancy, provide responsible and competent care for their 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.

Lexington-Richland County Nurse-Family Partnership is implemented through the Richland County Health Department (DHEC Region 3). Lexington and Richland Counties are in the fifth year of a seven year grant from the Duke Endowment, funded at \$500,000 per year for a total of \$3.5 million. The on-going fiscal responsibility is administered through Richland County First Steps. The program reports to a Community Advisory Board co-chaired by the Executive Directors of the two counties. Our program strategies include the following:

- ✓ Improve pregnancy outcomes by increasing pre-natal care and health services.
- ✓ Improve child health and development by helping parents provide responsible and competent care.
- ✓ Improve economic self-sufficiency by helping parents plan for the future, plan future pregnancies, continue education and find work.

Lexington-Richland First Steps serves families in greatest need. Among our NFP families:

- 100% ... live in poverty
- 45.4% ... graduate from high school
- 6.6% ... had developmental delays



NFP by the Numbers, 2014-15

Children Served	100
Number of Home Visits	34

This chart reflects the entire model for the dual county program designed to serve 100 new first time low-income mothers for 24 months. Lexington County was projected to comprise 33% of the clients and has always met this goal each year since inception in 2008.

Thank you to our partners!

- The Duke Endowment
- Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation of SC
- DHEC Region 3
- Richland County First Steps

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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

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

93% ... live in poverty

52% ... didn't graduate from high school

19% ... were teen parents

Lexington Three
 Family Learning Center
 Riverbanks Zoo
 Family Trip



"I would recommend this program to any family that is looking to become a part of a program that can offer different experiences, education, assistance and kindness in every regard."

Tamara Holmes

PAT by the Numbers 2014-15

Families Served	113	
Children Served	134	
Total Home Visits	2,236	
Hours Spent Serving Families	2,279.90	
Average gain, <i>Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale</i> (pre-to-post):	3.57	3.89

This year, our Parents as Teachers program:

- ✓ Averaged 19.79 home visits per family
- ✓ Identified and addressed 36 potential developmental delays
- ✓ Improved parenting practices with a .32 gain with the KIPS Assessment.
- ✓ Improved literacy skills by delivering 2,049 books to children. Additionally, pre ACIRI scores for children were 1.32 and post scores were 1.65 this shows a 25% increase in interactive literacy skills.
- ✓ Made 406 connections for families to services such as Adult Education, Early Education Programs, English Language Classes, Family Events and Activities, Library Resources, and Health and Medical

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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	82
Number of Children 0-5 Enrolled in Provider Classrooms	117

Congratulations to our QE Participant for 2014-15!

Child Care Provider	Pre/Post Improvement
Kids' Stuff, 3-yr-old room	From 2.17 to 3.67

The second Center served has not made the progress expected with a score reflecting no improvement. We are continuing to serve this Center with Technical Assistance.

This year, our Quality Enhancement program:

- ✓ Improved quality by 1.5 based on pre/post Environment Rating Scale assessment for Kid's Stuff.
- ✓ Provided 132.75 hours of technical assistance to child care providers.
- ✓ Provided 10,000 in materials grants to participating child care providers.

Thank you to our partners!

Kids' Stuff Learning Center
Big Blue Marble 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.

Training by the Numbers, 2014-15

Total Training Attendance	292
Child Care Teachers and Directors Served	146
Number of Training Sessions Offered	11

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

Topic:	Sessions:
Managing Childhood Illnesses	One Session
Planning to Effectively Develop the Physical Growth of the Young Child	One Session
Writing Lesson Plans	One Session
Bloodborne Pathogens	Two Sessions
It's All About Resources	One Session
Being Intentional	One Session
Art, Cooking, Science & Nature in The Early Childhood Classroom	One Session
Nutri-Eating Fruits & Vegetables	One Session
Preventing Methods To Ensure A Healthy Environment Part 1 & 2	One Session
Addressing Behavior & Building A Positive Foundation	One Session



This year, our Training program provided:

- ✓ 146 early childhood staff with high quality training
- ✓ 29.5 hours of certified training; & 2 hours of registered training for staff to meet annual re-certification requirements
- ✓ 15 follow-up visits from the Technical Assistant to help providers to use training in actual practice

Thank you to our partners!

- Midlands Technical College (MTC)
- Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R)
- Center for Child Care Career Development (CCCCD)
- Richland 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.

*CTK by the Numbers, Summer 2014

Children Served	213
Families Served	210
Home/School Visits	1,248

*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.

*“The program is wonderful!
I love the relationship my daughter formed with her teacher. She loved all of the books and activities at each lesson. I wish each child had this amazing opportunity! I was so impressed with the program”
Parent of a Countdown Student*

This year, our Countdown to Kindergarten program:

- ✓ Increased the amount of time parents spent reading to children by 72%
- ✓ According to kindergarten teachers, 82% of CTK children performed as well as, or better than, their fellow students in LIST AREAS FROM THE CTK TEACHER SURVEY during the 2014-15 school year.
- ✓ According to kindergarten teachers, 87.5% of CTK parents were more involved than other parents in their child’s education in the areas of “LIST AREAS FROM THE CTK TEACHER SURVEY”.

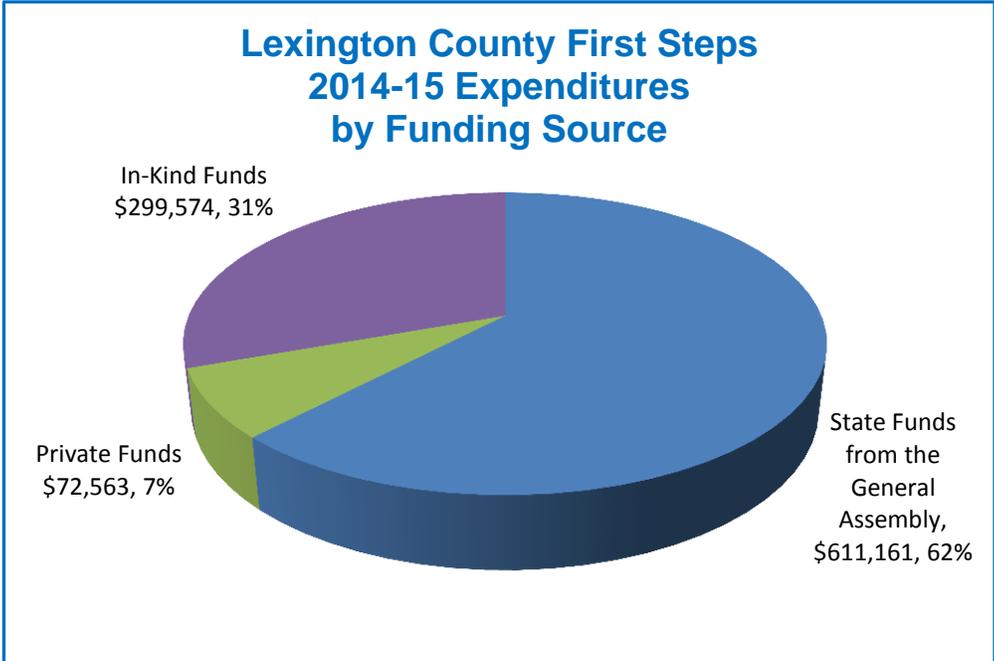
Thank you to our partners!

- Lexington County School District One
- Lexington County School District Two
- Lexington County School District Three
- Lexington County School District Four
- School District Five of Lexington and Richland Counties
- Kaplan Early Learning Company
- United Way of the Midlands (UWM)

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Financial Impact



Total 2014-15 Expenditures: \$983,299

State Funds Leveraged in 2014-15*: 61%

*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	\$370,950	\$0	\$266,131	\$637,081	65%
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$10,102	\$58,515	\$30,981	\$99,598	10%
Child Care Quality Enhancement	\$49,989	\$0	\$2,463	\$52,452	5%
Child Care Training	\$25,599	\$9,163		\$34,762	4%
New Moms Bags	\$9,476	\$0	\$0	\$9,476	1%
Program Support	\$82,124	\$4,885	\$0	\$87,009	9%
Administrative Support	\$62,921	\$0	\$0	\$62,921	6%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$611,161	\$72,563	\$299,575	\$983,299	

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

Since inception, Lexington County First Steps has leveraged \$6,646,406 from sources outside of state government. That's 64 cents for every state dollar.

Lexington Two STAR Parenting Program Success Story

In January, 2013, Suleni, who was referred to the STAR Program by a friend, enrolled for visits in the STAR Parenting Program of Lexington Two Schools. Maria, her first child, was 16 months old. Sheri Stewart conducted home visits with the family from January, 2011, through December, 2014. During this time the family faithfully participated in home visits and attended various group connections including some playgroups. They also participated in the PAT IAL Grant, and as a result, they built a home library, improved their reading interactions with Maria, and began visiting the library. Early in the visits, mom expressed concern about Maria's language skills. As visits continued, Mom and Sheri observed Maria, completed ASQ-3 questionnaires and did activities to promote language development. They noticed that Maria understood language but had difficulty expressing herself. Sheri shared information about Babynet and encouraged Mom and Dad to contact them. Mom and Dad were hopeful that Maria's language would develop without intervention and were not quite ready to confront the possibility that she might have a delay that required intervention. Therefore, they did not request Babynet services. In the fall of 2014, Maria's parents were still concerned about Maria's language development and were finally ready to pursue special services, so with Sheri's help, they began the process of screening in Lexington Two Schools. During this time, Paola Atehortua joined the STAR team. She joined Sheri as visits continued with Maria and provided support for Mom as the Special Services Screening process continued. Paola's ability to speak Spanish allowed her to provide Mom with the help and support she needed through this process. Maria did qualify for the PDD class for 3 year old children and began attending the class daily in January, 2015. Paola began conducting home visits with Mom and Maria in January as well. She continued to offer support by collaborating with Maria's teacher at the school in order to continue work on language development during the home visits. Maria adjusted well to the school environment, and Paola quickly noticed improvement in Maria's language skills. At the end of the 2014-2015 school year Maria and her family graduated from the STAR Program. Mom and Dad continued to support Maria's positive development by allowing Maria to participate in the Summer School PDD classes.

“What First Steps Means to My Family and I”

By: Tamara Holmes

Lexington School District Three Family Learning Center

My family enrolled in first steps in 2005 when I was pregnant with my first child. During this time I met with Mrs. Baston who helped me with information that was relevant to my pregnancy and the growth of my child. Once he was born she came out to make sure that I knew how to do things regarding the start of his early education and information for myself and my husband on how to care for our new child. As our son grew she began to read to him, sing to him and even play with him during our visits. This was a great relief because it also helped my son with socialization because we do not have a much family here.

Over the years as we were presented with new home activities I was as my son flourished. He loved when Mrs. Baston would come to our home especially when she would have new books or a new project to try out. When my first child Anthony Aged out of the program we were pregnant with the twins and therefore we remained a part of the First Steps Program. This was a completely different type of pregnancy. With the help of my parent educator I was well informed of all the changes that I would go through and she found information pertinent to the health of me and my babies. Once they were here we all recognized that one of my children was delayed. He was then tested and found to have Autism. My parent educator focused on Tremayne and it has helped him to learn to color, cut and listen to short stories. Tyrese has enjoyed all of the time with Mrs. Baston. He refers to her as "his therapy". This is because his twin receives services that he does not and with our parent educator coming out it is helpful so that he does not feel left out. It is also great to do the projects with her. The children love creating different things that Mrs. Baston brings for them to try.

Because of first steps I have taken all of my sons to many more activities and it encouraged me to get out and learn the community that I am in. First Steps has played an important part of raising up our young family. We have been a part of the program since 2005 and have never had to raise our children without the knowledge of the workers. If ever there was a question, or a need for information it was and has been always available to us. To me one of the best parts of being a part of this program is having someone available to help you to understand things that you may not comprehend. I would recommend this program to any family that is looking to become a part of a program that can offer different experiences, education, assistance and kindness in every regard.



First Steps Partnership Board

Board Member Attendance at Meetings

The Board of Directors meets five times during the year, traditionally between September and May, at one of the ten public libraries or at the Lexington County Health Department. With the exception of one meeting with an excused absence just prior to the meeting, **the Board has always had a quorum at every Board meeting since the inception of Lexington County First Steps in 2001.** This is an extraordinary testimony of the ownership that Board members feel and a statement of support of the programming. Thank you Board Members for your dedication and determination as a team to insure the success of Lexington County First Steps!

Lexington County First Steps Partnership Board, 2014-15

Name	Position	Board Category
Jennifer Felkel, Chair	Parenting and Family Services Director/Social Services Coordinator	School District Five of Lexington and Richland Counties
Ada Jane Setzler, Secretary	Former Public Education Teacher, Community Volunteer	Legislative Delegation Appointee
Crystal Grimes	Pre-Kindergarten through Primary Educator	Richland County School District One
Marla Hamilton	Lead Parent Educator Lexington School District One	Family Education, Training & Support Services
Nikki West	South Carolina Department of Education, Retired	Family Education, Training & Support Services
Janice Albert	Emmanuel Wee Care Swansea	Childcare/Early Education Development/Education Provider
Julia Johnson	Occupational Therapist, Lexington School District One	Healthcare Provider
David Weissman	Director of Transportation, School District Five of Lexington and Richland Counties	Transportation Provider
Linda O'Neill	Lexington County DHEC Community Outreach	Department of Health and Environmental Control
Melissa Pytik	Coordinator of Youth Services	Lexington County Public Library System
Devona Price	Principal Lake Murray Elementary School	Lexington County School District One
Rhonda Wiley	Director of Parenting and Family Services /Early Childhood Coordinator	Lexington County School District Two
Frances Bouknight	Director of Accountability and Director of Adult Education	Lexington County School District Three
Joyce Carter	Administrator Lexington School District One, Retired	Lexington Delegation Appointee
Leon Love	Department of Social Services, South Carolina First Steps, Retired	Lexington Delegation Appointee
Nancy Busbee, Ph.D.	Coordinator of Parenting Services	Lexington School District Four

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 Lexington County:
803 734-0232 734-0111

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

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