

MARION COUNTY



**FIRST
STEPS**

Getting children ready for school.



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 Marion 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 Marion County children under 5:
1963

Number of Marion children living in poverty:
3989

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

Our Programs

- Child Care Quality Enhancement
- Child Care Training
- Child Care Scholarships

Our Results

- ✓ Awarded \$136,500 in childcare scholarships to At-Risk children and their families.
- ✓ Over 30 hours of childcare training offered
- ✓ Recognized MCFS Teacher of the Year during Week of the Young Child.

MCFS: Implementing Strategies that works...



Spencer R. Scott
 Executive Director

During FY 15, MCFS, under the direction of Spencer R. Scott and the advisement of the MCFS Board of Directors, implemented programs deemed the most beneficial to childcare providers and impoverished children and their families in the Marion County community. As such, Child care Facility Quality Enhancement, Childcare Training and Childcare Scholarships were the programs implemented this year. Maintaining vital partnerships remained key to the success of MCFS and we are proud and appreciative to have all of them.

Program Success

Facility Quality Enhancement, Childcare Training and Childcare Scholarships were all implemented successfully, as each program met all South Carolina First Steps Standards of enhancing childcare programs through regular technical assistance, affordable monthly trainings and affordable childcare to At-Risk, impoverished children and their families.

Collaborations with childcare providers, knowledgeable instructors, DSS, local churches and businesses made all of the above possible.

Week of the Young Child

This year, for the first time in Marion County, MCFS recognized a childcare provider who goes the extra mile to educate young children. The decision was made to do so during the **Week of the Young Child**. Local Childcare facilities were informed of this Award and given the opportunity to submit their application packets/nominees.

Upon receipt, all application packets were reviewed and ultimately Ms. Diane Raeford, childcare provider at Troy Johnson Learning Korner won the first ever MCFS Teacher of the Year Award. One of the most thankless jobs a person can ever have is being a teacher, but it is also the most rewarding!

Board Chair

Victoria Belin

Executive Director

Spencer R. Scott

415 S. Coit Street

Florence, SC 29501

Scott2omega@yahoo.com

www.marionfirststeps.org

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, Marion County First focuses its investments in Quality Care offering Childcare Training, Childcare Grants and ABC Scholarships.

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	98.2
Number of Children 0-5 Enrolled in Provider Classrooms	23

Congratulations to our QE participants for 2014-15!

Child Care Provider	Pre/Post Improvement
The Flying Goose Daycare	2.75 to 3.01
Phyllis Daycare	3.91 to 3.72
Tender Loving Care	3.34 to 4.03
Eartha's Luv N Care	4.6 to 4.7

This year, our Quality Enhancement program:

- ✓ Improved quality, on average, by .77 based on pre/post Environment Rating Scale assessments
- ✓ Provided 59.5 hours of technical assistance to child care providers
- ✓ Provided \$????? in materials grants to participating child care providers

Thank you to our partners!

The Flying Goose Daycare
 Ms. Lil's
 Tender Loving Care
 Eartha's Luv N Care

Marion County First Steps
 415 South Coit Street
 Florence, SC 29501
 (843) 629-0202

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.

MCFS Trainings are a great way to earn DSS childcare training hours, because they are interesting and affordable!
 Jean Pearson, Childcare Director
 Pleasant Grove Academy

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

Topic:	Sessions:
Childcare Standards	One
Selecting Your Curriculum	One
Nutrition and Physical Fitness Standards	One
Sing & Dance for Fun and Fitness	One
Plan Plan Plan...Lesson Plans	One
Daily Schedules	One
Embracing Differences	One
Communicating As A Leader	One
CPR & First Aid	One
Salad People – Nutrition Activity	One
Communication	One
Brain Rules: Smart Baby	One



Childcare Training at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church on *Valentine's Day*, 2015. Training on *Conscious Discipline*

Training by the Numbers, 2014-15

Total Training Attendance	158
Child Care Teachers and Directors Served	22
Number of Training Sessions Offered	30

This year, our Training program provided:

- ✓ 22 early childhood staff with high quality training
- ✓ 30 hours of certified training and 0 hours of registered training for staff to meet annual re-certification requirements
- ✓ Quality Childcare Trainings were offered at affordable rates to childcare providers in Marion County and the Pee Dee.

Thank you to our partners!

- Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Reverend A.C. Robinson, Pastor
- South Carolina 4K Program
- CCRR
- Childcare Instructors

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Child Care Scholarships

Too many families in Marion 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.

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

- 87% ... live in poverty
- 36% ... TANF Eligibility
- 24% ... Substance Abuse
- 8% ... Domestic Violence
- 7.5% ... Depression
- 5% ... Low Birth Weight & Developmental Delays
And mental illness
- 1% Teenage parent, high school dropout, Free lunch

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.

MCFS supports the Wrap-Around services concept. As such, childcare providers who receive childcare scholarship funding also participate in MCFS sponsored childcare trainings and facilities that receive the same aforementioned funds, also participate in the Facility Quality Enhancement (FQE) program.

“Receiving childcare assistance from MCFS allowed me to place my son, Ethan in a quality childcare facility and continue working. Without their help, I would have had to stop working because daycare is so expensive.

Laurel Bennet
 Childcare Scholarship Recipient



Childcare Director, Loretta McGill along with McGills Bundles of Joy staff and Scholarship recipients. This facility received 20 childcare scholarships in fy15.

Scholarships by the Numbers, 2014-15

Children Served	31
Providers Served	7

This year, our Scholarship program:

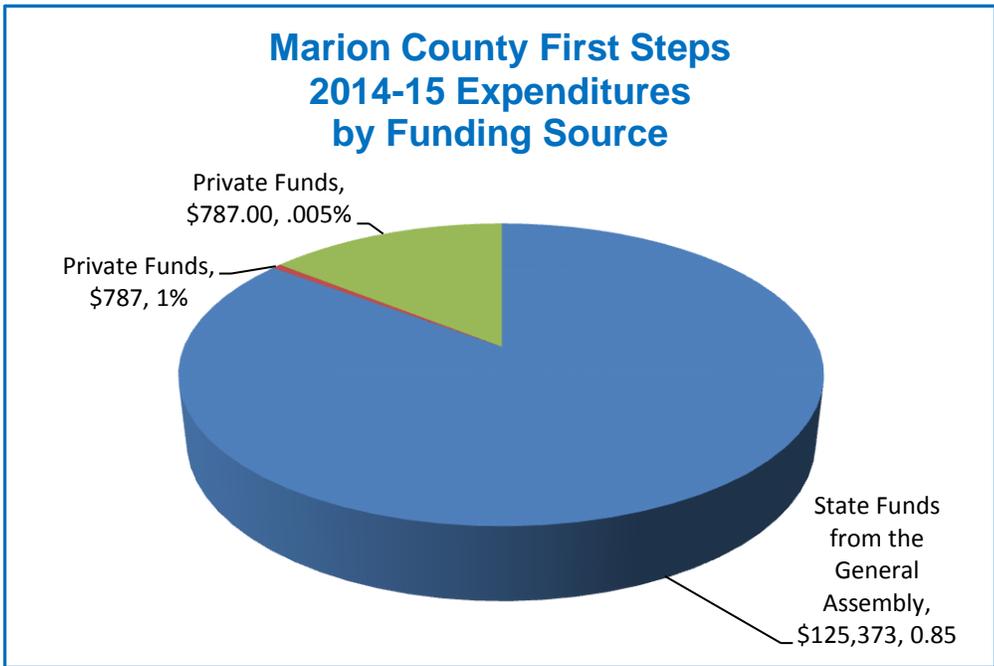
- ✓ Provided 31 children with scholarship assistance so their parents could work or attend school
- ✓ Identified and addressed 4 potential developmental delays among scholarship children
- ✓ Supported 7 small businesses in Marion County by subsidizing child care tuition for families who would not otherwise be able to afford quality care

Thank you to our partners!

- Department of Social Services * Eartha’s Luv N Care * Kids Konnection
- McGills Bundles of Joy * Agapeland Daycare Center
- Pleasant Grove Baptist Church * Sugar Bears Daycare
- Little Promises Daycare * Troy Johnson Learning Korner

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Financial Impact



Total 2014-15 Expenditures: \$147,108

State Funds Leveraged in 2014-15*: 17.36%

*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
Child Care Quality Enhancement	\$18,458	\$0	\$3,139	\$21,597	15%
Child Care Training	\$17,888	\$340	\$3,139	\$21,367	15%
Child Care Scholarships	\$52,500	\$0	\$10,500	\$63,000	43%
Program Support	\$26,196	\$447	\$2,354	\$28,997	20%
Administrative Support	\$10,332	\$0	\$1,815	\$12,147	8%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$125,374	\$787	\$20,947	\$147,108	

Since inception, Marion County First Steps has leveraged \$472,042 from sources outside of state government. That's 12 cents for every state dollar.

Community Impact

McGills Bundles of Joy, Owned and operated by Loretta McGill

A Flourishing 15-year partnership

2000 - Phase I

2002 – Present: Phase II & III



**McGill’s Bundles of Joy – 2000 - One Room - Capacity 22
 608 Dunlop Extension in Marion, SC 29571**

**McGill’s Bundles of Joy –Present – 4 Rooms – Capacity 61
 608 Dunlop Extension in Marion, SC 29571**

COMING SOON...NEW LOCATION!!



**McGill’s Bundles of Joy
 1104 Lombardy Street
 Marion S.C. 29571**

****** Larger Facility *** Greater Capacity to serve more children ******

PLEASE NOTE: During 2014-15, McGill’s Bundles of Joy received 20 Childcare scholarships from MCFS, the equivalence of \$70,000.00. These funds not only aided At-Risk children in Marion County to receive formal, affordable childcare, but these funds also allowed the parents of these children to go to work and/or continue their education, which will ultimately benefit the Marion county community; proving once again that together, we can make a difference in the lives of the children and their families in our community.

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

Marion County First Steps and Troy Johnson Learning Korner

celebrate

Week of the Young Child!!!



Marion County First Steps Executive Director, Spencer R. Scott with newly crowned *Marion County First Steps 2014-15 Childcare Provider of the Year*, Mrs. Diane Raeford, Childcare Provider at Troy Johnson Learning Korner, located in Mullins, South



Mrs. Raeford with her co-workers and students



Mrs. Raeford with members of MCFS Board of Directors.

First Steps Partnership Board

Marion County First Steps celebrates another successful year 2015

Annual Celebration at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church

On December 16, 2014, the Marion County First Steps Board of Directors and staff gathered at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church with local childcare directors, childcare providers, childcare training instructors, parents, and the partnership partners (Zeta Phi Beta, Inc. Sorority, Kaplan, DSS, FCFS, churches, and more) to celebrate another successful year of service to young children in an effort to prepare them to succeed in school.

Spencer R. Scott, MCFS Executive Director, provided an overview of the program expenditures and allocations for the year, then he recognized and formerly thanked everyone for their continuous support of Marion County First Steps. Awards and Recognition were followed by performances from childcare providers in attendance then attendees enjoyed a hearty, but healthy lunch.

At the end of the celebration, children were treated to jumping and bouncing in the giant inflatable that was furnished by Marion County First Steps. There was lots of fun had by all.

Marion County First Steps Partnership Board, 2014-15

Name	Position	Board Category
Victoria Belin	Board Chair	Early Childhood
Howard Blakeney	Board Vice-Chairman	Faith Based Community
Rachel Mason	Board Member	Healthcare Provider
Yolanda Moore	Board Member	Healthcare Provider
Lula Coleman	Board Member	Transportation Provider
Jackie Curry	Board Member	Non-Profit Organization
Julie Graves	Board Member	Parent of Pre-School Children
Betty Hamilton	Board Member	Early Childhood Education
Eleanor Paige	Board Member	Early Childhood Education
Tameka Swinton	Board Member	Early Childhood Education
Alan Smith	Board Member	Marion County Library
Annette Gerald	Board Member	Early Childhood
Bernard Gerald	Board Member	Healthcare Provider

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 Marion County:
843-669-8689

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

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