

OCONEE COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.



Parenting Education

Child Care Training

Child Care Scholarships

Countdown to Kindergarten

Nurse-Family Partnership Collaboration

Annual Report

2014-15



OUR VISION:

“All Children in Oconee County will have the care they need to grow & develop to their full potential.”

First Steps WORKS for the children of Oconee 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 Oconee County children under 5:
4,171

Number of Oconee County children living in poverty:
1,076

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

Our Programs

Parenting Education

Child Care Training

Child Care Scholarships

Countdown to Kindergarten

Nurse-Family Partnership Collaboration

Our Results

- ✓ Served 33 adults/48 children in our Parenting Education Program through 797 home visits.
- ✓ Implemented a "Pilot" Child Care Scholarship program during the months of April-June.
- ✓ Trained 200 child care providers
- ✓ Distributed 208 books

OCFS Works for Our Children, Parents and Taxpayers

Greeting from Marie M. Dunnam, LISW-CP, Executive Director

Oconee County First Steps and its partners continue to work diligently toward fulfilling our Vision Statement "All children in Oconee County will have the care they need to grow & develop to their full potential."

We have an energetic and engaged board, whose members work well together in completing a countywide needs assessment every three years, and reaching out to partners to assist with it. Through this process, we continue to take stock of assets and gaps in services; and then come together to decide on "best practice" strategies that have excellent chances in assisting our children to reach first grade healthy and ready to learn. We don't do anything in "silo"—so for FY 14-15, we chose the following strategies, all provided through various collaborative partnerships:

Principles of Parenting Successfully {POPS}, a long-term holistic in-home parenting education program, with matching funds by the South Carolina Department of Social Services.

Free high-quality early education training for staff working in child care centers, group & family care homes, provided through collaboration with SC Resource & Referral Network and Heath's Haven.

Child Care Scholarship Program provided through contracts with B and above licensed centers. Scholarship families are required to attend monthly health-related training provided in collaboration with Heath's Haven.

Countdown to Kindergarten, a school transition program for "at risk" children in the James M. Brown Elementary School attendance area, with matching funds from United Way of Oconee County.

Nurse-Family Partnership {NPF}, an evidence-based, home visitation program for first time pregnant women and their families; provided through collaboration with Greenville County First Steps with implementation through the Greenville Health Care System.



More Collaboration: Family Literacy
Moms and their children celebrate the Oconee County First Steps /United Way of Oconee County "Born Learning" Trail.

Board Chair
Sandra W. Pruitt

Executive Director
Marie M. Dunnam

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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, Oconee County First focuses its investments in Family Strengthening, Healthy Start, Quality Child Care, and School Transition.

Parents play a critical role in their child’s development.

Program Description

The “Principles of Parenting Successfully” {POPS} program is a voluntary holistic, long-term, in-home parenting education prevention program geared toward assisting “high risk” families with children prenatal through age five in preparing their children to arrive at first grade healthy and ready to learn. The program uses two evidenced-based curriculums: Parents as Teacher {PAT}, and Systematic Training for Effective Parenting {STEPS}.

POPS is a PAT Affiliate, and services provided include:

1. **Personal Visits** designed to meet the needs of individual families with intensity ranging from anywhere from twice monthly to daily.
2. **Monthly Group Connections** with other POPS/PAT families.
3. **Screenings and Assessments** to identify developmental concerns
4. **Connections to Outside Resources** that families may need to succeed

Oconee County First Steps serves families in greatest need. Among our POPS/PAT families:

- 100% ... live in poverty
- 61% ... didn’t graduate from high school
- 85% ... were recipients of BabyNet

“Our family is more stable and trusting of the system because of the POPS Program. We can now see a brighter future on the horizon.” T. Clark

PAT by the Numbers 2014-15

| | | |
|---|-------------|---------------------------|
| Families Served | 20 | |
| Children Served | 48 | |
| Total Home Visits | 797 | |
| Hours Spent Serving Families | 1,385 | |
| Average gain, <i>Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale</i> (pre-to-post): | KIPS 78% | ACIRI A: 48% C: 55% |

This year, our Parents as Teachers program:

- ✓ Averaged 4.33 home visits per family
- ✓ Identified and addressed 9 actual delays, and 6 potential delays.
- ✓ Improved parenting practices: Gain of 78% {Pre to Post} on the Keys to Interactive Parenting (KIPS) assessment; and adult gain of 48% & child gain of 55% {Pre to Post} on the Adult/Child Interactive Reading Inventory {ACIRI}.
- ✓ Improved literacy skills through the distribution of 178 books.
- ✓ Made 103 connections for families to BabyNet; 3 & 4 year old kindergarten; Head Start; Mental Health Counseling; etc.

Thank you to our partners!

- Oconee County Department of Social Services
- Family Friends
- Ripple of One

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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.

“Darlene Faucette from CCR&R makes all her training sessions’ applicable for the classroom, and at the same time, makes learning fun.”

D. Owens

| Child Care Training Sponsored by Oconee County First Steps, 2014-15 | Topic: | Hours: |
|---|--|--------|
| | SC Infant/Toddler Training: Certified & taught by CCR&R: | 14 |
| | SC Infant/Toddler Training: Certified & taught by Lisa Fields: | 4 |
| | Director Only Training, Certified & taught by CCR&R | 5 |
| | Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect: {Certified} | 2 |
| | Blood-Borne Pathogens: 1 hr. Reg. & 2 hrs. Certified | 3 |
| | Staff-Child Interaction (Certified) | 2 |



Child Care staff “role playing” at the “Blood Borne Pathogens” Training on June 11, 2015.

Training by the Numbers, 2014-15

| | |
|--|-----|
| Total Training Attendance | 429 |
| Child Care Teachers and Directors Served | 200 |
| Number of Training Sessions Offered | 14 |

This year, our Training program provided:

- ✓ 200 early childhood staff with high quality training
- ✓ 29 hours of certified training, and 1 hour of registered training for 200 staff to meet annual re-certification requirements
- ✓ 20 follow-up visits with training participants to help put training into practice

Thank you to our partners!

- Oconee County Department of Social Services
- SC Child Care Resource & Referral Network
- Heath’s Haven
- Trinity Baptist Church

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Child Care Scholarships

Too many families in Oconee 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

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

- 100% ... live in poverty
- 33% ... didn't graduate from high school
- 33% ... were teen parents

OCFS operated a "Pilot" Scholarship Program from April 1-June 30, 2015, and the program was integrated with both the Parenting Education and Child Care Training Strategies.

In addition to regular monitoring of child care providers that received First Steps scholarships during the "pilot" stage, First Steps conducted one developmental screening with each scholarship child, connected families to needed services within the community, and required that each scholarship family attend a monthly two-hour, health-related training in order for their child to continue in the program.

"The scholarship program has been a blessing to the two families who chose our center as they would not have been able to continue working had it not been for the assistance provided by the program." Janis Y.



Children enjoying their time at one of the scholarship centers.

Scholarships by the Numbers, 2014-15

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Children Served | 4 |
| Providers Served | 2 |

This year, our Scholarship program:

- ✓ Provided 4 children with scholarship assistance so their parents could work or attend school.
- ✓ Identified and addressed 2 actual and 1 potential developmental delays among scholarship children.
- ✓ Integrated with the "Principles of Parenting Successfully" program; ASQ's were conducted; and 2 actual, and 1 potential developmental delays were identified and addressed.
- ✓ Supported three small businesses in Oconee County by subsidizing child care tuition for families who would not otherwise be able to afford quality care.
- ✓ Provided 8 hours of training for scholarship parents on topics such as Stress Management; Nutrition & Fitness.

Thank you to our partners!

- Kreative Kids
- Pennsylvania Children's Center
- Heath's Haven
- "Principles of Parenting Successfully" {POPS}

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Bringing parents and teachers together as partners sets the foundation for success in school.

Program Description

Countdown to Kindergarten (CTK) is a summer home visitation model connecting rising kindergartners and their families with their future teachers. The program is designed:

- ✓ to forge strong and lasting home-school relationships,
- ✓ to acquaint children and families with the state and classroom expectations to increase the likelihood of school success,
- ✓ to increase parent involvement in the early grades (particularly in hard-to-reach communities), when children's learning is foundational for life success; and
- ✓ to increase public awareness of the importance of school readiness and provide ways for parents and communities to impact children's early school success.

Countdown to Kindergarten integrates all of the following:

Home Visitation. Teacher made 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, followed by a graduation ceremony complete with caps & gowns, ice cream and cake.

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 | 10 |
| Families Served | 10 |
| Home/School Visits | 60 |

**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 Graduation

"We don't celebrate birthdays in our family, but do celebrate educational milestones in our children's lives- such as this one."

A. Martinez

This year, our Countdown to Kindergarten program:

- ✓ Increased the amount of time parents spent reading to children by 40%
- ✓ According to kindergarten teachers, 96% of CTK children performed as well as, or better than, their fellow students in letter names, and 86% in letter sounds during the 2014-2015 school year.
- ✓ According to kindergarten teachers, 62% of CTK parents were more involved than other parents in their child's education in parent-teacher conferences; participating in field trips and volunteering in the classroom.

Thank you to our partners!

School District of Oconee County

James M. Brown Elementary School

United Way of Oconee County

"Principles of Parenting Successfully" Program

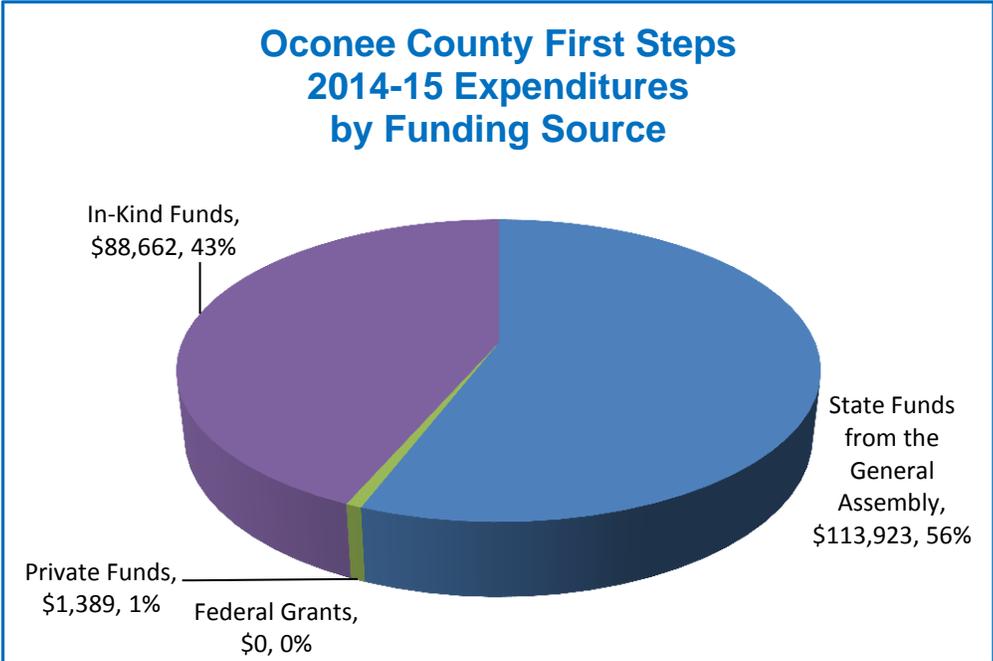
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Financial Impact



Total 2014-15 Expenditures: \$203,974

State Funds Leveraged in 2014-15*: 79%

*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 |
|---------------------------|------------------|------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Parenting Education | \$51,000 | \$0 | \$0 | \$79,205 | \$130,205 | 64% |
| Countdown to Kindergarten | \$2,291 | \$0 | \$1,019 | \$3,038 | \$6,348 | 3% |
| Child Care Training | \$12,050 | \$0 | \$0 | \$1,720 | \$13,770 | 7% |
| Child Care Scholarships | \$10,694 | \$0 | \$0 | \$420 | \$11,114 | 5% |
| Program Support | \$22,679 | \$0 | \$370 | \$2,520 | \$25,569 | 13% |
| Administrative Support | \$15,209 | \$0 | \$0 | \$1,760 | \$16,969 | 8% |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURES | \$113,923 | \$0 | \$1,389 | \$88,662 | \$203,974 | |

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

Since inception, Oconee County First Steps has leveraged \$3,451,435.84 from sources outside of state government. That's \$1.11 for every state dollar.

Young Mother: POPS Success Story

Tamika Clark & Son, Jeremy

The Clark family has been involved with the POPS Program for 2 1/2 years, and were referred by OMH because of Jeremy's behavioral problems. The family was looking for help with parenting skills, child development (age appropriate educational and social stimulations); connections with community resources and a medical home for Jeremy.

POPS staff has worked with Jeremy meeting his milestones through daily reading, working with his workbooks and assignments from his online K12 SC Online Virtual School—numbers, letters, colors and shapes. Jeremy now has a medical home, and is receiving speech therapy. Ms. Clark is doing an excellent job in homeschooling Jeremy.



Jeremy with his Easter Basket

Ms. Clark is also working on her Bachelors of Science in Business , online with the University of Phoenix. Jeremy is presently in the 1st grade in the 95 percentile online 1st grade program. Ms. Clark has a 95 grade average in all subjects. The journey for Jeremy and his mom has not been easy, but Ms. Clark recently related they now see a brighter future on the horizon. The case was closed in June. The POPS family wishes them well!

Teenage Mom Makes It!: Marie, Savanna and Phillip

Marie was a teenage mother with a baby girl , Savanna , who requested to be in the POPS program. {The biological father was not involved.} She was later engaged to Phillip Gilliam, and he accepted Savanna as his own child. POPS Staff provided parenting information and age appropriate activities for Savanna, and assisted Marie in getting Food Stamps; Medicaid and WIC. Marie's goals were to get married, get her driver's license, find a part-time job and get her GED. {Marie and Phillip are now married.}

With the support of the POPS staff, the Gilliam's have stuck together through thick and thin, and it is now paying off. Mr. Gilliam is currently working full-time at Davis Brothers Lumber Company. Marie got her driver's license, and is going to Tri-County Tech through the Bridge Program to earn her high school diploma. West-Oak High School is sponsoring her. The family has just purchased a newer car, and are staying with Mr. Gilliam's grandfather who lost his wife a few months back. They are helping to

take care of him as he is having health issues; but if they can find a place close by that they can afford, they may even try that.

The family appreciates the support of the POPS staff through the past two years but now believes they can make it on their own. The case was closed in June. The POPS Family Wishes Them Well!



The picture to the left depicts the Gilliam Family at West-Oak High School when Marie learned she was being sponsored for the Bridge Program .

Community Impact

National Week of the Young Child

Oconee County First Steps/Nurse-Family Partnership Program Collaborate for Community Baby Shower

Oconee County First Steps and Nurse-Family Partnership of Greenville County collaborated for a “Community Baby Shower” held from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Shaver Center in Seneca on Saturday, April 18, 2015-- the last day of National Week of the Young Child.

Nurse-Family Partnership expanded into Oconee County in early 2014, through a partnership with Oconee County First Steps and the two agencies joined forces for the “Community Baby Shower” to reach women pregnant with their first child.

The goal for the “Community Baby Shower” was to supply potential clients and their families with information on all available resources in the Oconee County area, and to give other community program vendors and opportunity to showcase their role in the community in an effort to meet the needs of potential NFP clients.



First Time Mom wins door prize from Oconee County First Steps

Free pregnancy testing; free diaper bags for the first 50 pregnant

moms, on-site community program vendors, food, giveaways and a drawing for special prizes were also featured.



The event was a major success; and 16 first time moms from early pregnancy to 28 weeks signed up for the program; and 10 are currently being served.

Community Baby Shower Held During National Week of the Young Child

Thank you to our partners!

Funding Support

State of South Carolina: \$113,923
 (through South Carolina First Steps)
 United Way of Oconee County: \$1,600
 Other donations: \$300

In-Kind Support

Oconee County DSS: \$80,925
 United Way of Oconee County: \$5,120

Oconee County First Steps Board and Partnership Remain Committed

During FY 14-15, the Oconee County First Steps Board and its partners remained committed and dedicated as evidenced by the 1,347 hours of volunteer service provided in support of & participation in our countywide needs assessment, which resulted in our “Pilot” Child Care Scholarship Program with mandatory health-related training for the participating child care scholarship families. Board Members and partners were likewise supportive of our Child Care Training, wherein many board members served on our Child Care Training Committee; and were also supportive of the following: our Early Childhood Resource & Referral Workshops, Universal Staffing; our Annual “Warm a Child for the Winter” Project; and the Oconee County First Steps/GHS Nurse-Family Partnership Community Baby Shower held at the Shaven Center on Saturday, April 18, 2015- during National Week of the Young Child.

In addition, 100% of the board members made monetary donations to Oconee County First Steps during FY 14-15.

Value of Volunteer Time for FY 14-15: 1,347 hours x \$23.07 per hour= \$31,064.

Oconee County First Steps Partnership Board, 2014-15

| Name | Position | Board Category |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| Sandra W. Pruitt, Chair | Director, Family Friends, a Volunteer Mentoring Program | Legislative Appointee |
| Sharon Grant, Vice Chair | Lead Worker, “Principles of Parenting Successfully” | DSS Representative |
| Kathleen Davis, Secretary | Director, Kids Korner | Early Childhood Education |
| Annette Burney | County Advisor, Youth Auxiliary, Baptist A & M Convention | Legislative Appointee |
| Suzanne Evans | Director, CCDC | Child Care/Early Education Provider |
| Regina Gambrell | Director, Kreative Kids | Pre-K/Primary Education Provider |
| Heather Goss | Director, Mountain Lakes Access Health | Non-Profit |
| Ed Halbig | Director, Planning & Development, City of Seneca | Government |
| Demetria Hall | Director, Family Literacy Center, SDOC | Family Ed/Train./Support Provider |
| Tina Kirby | Code Enforcement Officer, City of Seneca | Government |
| Misty Lee | Region I, Community Educator, DHEC | DHEC Appointee |
| Karen McBryde | Facilitator, “Parents Night Out”, Seneca Presby. Church | Early Childhood Education |
| Charlotte McDonald | Director, Seneca Baptist Child Care | Child Care/Early Childhood Provider |
| Judy Metcalf | Director, Community Missions, Grace Baptist Church | Faith |
| Erin Moon | Case Manager, Mountain Lakes Access Health | Health |
| Stacie Powell | Youth Director, Oconee County Library System | Library Appointee |
| Dineen Schille | Co-Owner, Lake Keowee Marina | Business |
| Molly Tannery | Director, Early Intervention, DDSN | Legislative Appointee/Parent of a Young Child |
| Kendra Vincent | Former 4K Teacher & Counselor | Early Childhood Education |
| George Washington | Parent Advocate, HEAD START | Head Start Appointee |
| J. Daniel Whitehurst, Jr. | Retired Director, Oconee County DSS | Legislative Appointee |

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 Oconee County:

{864} 225-6465

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

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