

ORANGEBURG COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.



Early Steps to School Success

Imagination Library

Countdown to Kindergarten

Child Care Quality Enhancement

Child Care Training

Child Care Scholarships

Annual Report

2014-15



OUR VISION:

To provide access and awareness of early childhood development to the families of all children through community partnerships, program funding and fostering parental involvement.

First Steps WORKS for the children of Orangeburg 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 Orangeburg County children under 5:
5,831

Number of Orangeburg County children living in poverty:
1,691

Our Programs

Early Steps to School Success

Imagination Library

Countdown to Kindergarten

Child Care Quality Enhancement

Child Care Training

Child Care Scholarships

Our Results

- ✓ More than 1400 children participated in Read for the Record and Drop Everything and Read.
- ✓ Home Visitors served 45 families in Early Steps to School Success.

New and Innovative Ways to Impact Orangeburg County

LaMyra Sanders, Executive Director

Orangeburg County First Steps is very proud of the impact that we have made throughout Orangeburg County for program year 2014-15. We are very proud of the number of community partners we have collaborated with as a result of trying to provide greater services to the children and families of Orangeburg County. We have been very fortunate to serve with the following agencies throughout Orangeburg County: Orangeburg Office of the Mayor, Orangeburg County Sherriff's Department, Orangeburg Department of Public Safety, CASA Family Systems, South Carolina Highway Patrol, Orangeburg County Emergency Medical Services, Blue Choice Health Plan, Nurse Family Partnership, Family Solutions of the Low Country, Baby Net, The Regional Medical Center, South Carolina Regional Housing Authority, Sonic, and Chick-Fil-A. All of these partners are invested in providing services that assist children with becoming ready learners as they enter the public school system of Orangeburg County.

As we continue to convene and collaborate, several new initiatives have emerged because of our desire to reach as many children as possible. Orangeburg County First Steps facilitated two literacy days (Read for the Record and Drop Everything And Read), The Reading Rocks Program and Community Day. Read For the Record and Drop Everything and Read were hosted in Elementary Schools and Child Development Centers throughout Orangeburg County as well as Orangeburg Consolidated School Districts 3, 4 and 5. Volunteers read to more than 1400 students who participated on both literacy days. Reading Rocks was a special opportunity to provide direct literacy services to children ages 3-4 years of age. According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), "Learning to read and write is critical to a child's success in school and later in life. One of the best predictors of whether a child will function competently in school and go on to contribute actively in our increasingly literate society is the level to which the child progresses in reading and writing." Consequently, Reading Rocks served a total of 10 children with six one on one tutorials. Program participants were immersed in lessons that incorporated the following literacy strategies specifically designed for children ages 0-5: read-alouds, exposure to concepts about print, alphabetic principles, phonemic awareness, vocabulary development, & letter and word recognition. We are also very proud to say that in partnership with Family Solutions of the Low Country and Nurse Family Partnership, Orangeburg County First Steps hosted its first Community Day on July 21, 2015. Children and parents were exposed to a day of education, fun and nutrition while enjoying Community Day. Our special guests were Dora and Diego from *Dora the Explorer*, the Tooth Fairy, friends from the animal kingdom, public servants and many, many more.

Our year has been a year of continued growth and development as we continue to prepare our children for school. We are happy to share that many children have been impacted by our work but we are looking forward to preparing more children throughout Orangeburg County. This office looks forward to reaching more of the rural areas that are not favored with very many opportunities. We are prepared for the journey of this great challenge; the journey of our hard work is rewarded with changing lives one child and one family at the time.

Board Chair
Matthew Henderson
Executive Director
LaMyra Sanders

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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, Orangeburg County First focuses its investments in family strengthening, school transition, and quality care.

Early Steps to School Success

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

Program Description

Early Steps to School Success is an evidence-based home visiting program designed to build strong communities, thriving families and children who are healthy, safe and ready to succeed. ESSS services include:

1. **Personal Visits** at least twice monthly
2. **Monthly Group Connections** with other Early Steps families
3. **Screenings and Assessments** to identify developmental concerns
4. **Connections to Outside Resources** that families may need to succeed

Orangeburg County First Steps serves families in greatest need.

Among our Early Steps to School Steps families:

- 99% ... live in poverty
- 34% ... didn't graduate from high school
- 25% ... were teen parents

I am grateful for all I have learned through the Early Steps to School Success Program. I am a better parent because of it.
 T. Bowen



ESSS by the Numbers 2014-15

Families Served	45	
Children Served	50	
Total Home Visits	997	
Hours Spent Serving Families	1003.2	
Average gain, <i>Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale</i> (pre-to-post):	2.54	3.46

This year, our Early Steps to School Success program:

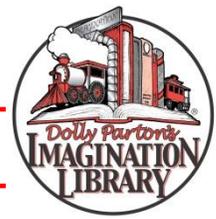
- ✓ Averaged 2.13% home visits per family
- ✓ Identified and addressed 8 potential developmental delays
- ✓ Made 31 connections for families to services such as Baby Net, local pediatricians, and GED Services

Thank you to our partners!

Orangeburg Consolidated School District 5
 Save the Children

Orangeburg County First Steps
 P.O. Box 451
 Orangeburg, South Carolina 29116
www.orangeburgfirststeps.org

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.**

Orangeburg County 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 Orangeburg County 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.



Board Chair, Matthew Henderson is reading to children from Lockett Elementary in Branchville, South Carolina.

Imagination Library by the Numbers, 2014-15

Children Served	140
Books Given to Children 0-5	2,198

This year, our Imagination Library program:

- ✓ Provided one book per month to 140 children who were referred from Quality Enhanced Centers and Early Steps To School Success.
- ✓ Received donations from OCFS Board Members and Greater Orangeburg Community Partners.

Thank you to our partners!

- Dollywood Foundation
- Greater Orangeburg Community
- Orangeburg County First Steps Board of Directors

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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	5
Number of TA Visits Provided	112
Number of Children 0-5 Enrolled in Provider Classrooms	174

Congratulations to our QE participants for 2014-15!

Child Care Provider	Pre/Post Improvement
Good Hope Child Development Center	From 4.88 to 5.37
Kidz 1 Child Development Center	From 5.94 to 5.73
Trinity Child Development Center	From 5.27 to 5.68
Wright's Day Care Center	From 4.57 to 5.04
Wright Way Child Development Center	From 5.1 to 5.57

This year, our Quality Enhancement program:

- ✓ Improved quality, on average, by .29 based on pre/post Environment Rating Scale assessments.
- ✓ Provided 60 hours of technical assistance to child care providers
- ✓ Provided \$12,395.37 in materials grants to participating child care providers
- ✓ Funded scholarships for 16 children within participating child care providers

Thank you to our partners!

KAPLAN Early Learning Company
 Quality Enhanced Centers
 Board of Directors for Orangeburg County First Steps

Orangeburg County First Steps

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 Orangeburg, South Carolina 29116
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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.



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

Topic:	Sessions:
Get to Know Me: I'm a Young Child	Multi-Session
Let's Move & My Plate	Multi-Session
Blood-Borne Pathogens	One Session
Operating an Early Childhood Program	One Session
Health and Safety from Inside Out	One Session
Mathematics in the Preschool Classroom	One Session

Participants of training hosted by Orangeburg County First Steps.

Training by the Numbers, 2014-15

Total Training Attendance	78
Child Care Teachers and Directors Served	32
Number of Training Sessions Offered	9

This year, our Training program provided:

- ✓ 32 early childhood staff with high quality training
- ✓ 20 hours of certified training and 2 hours of registered training for 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!

South Carolina Department of Social Services
 Center for Child Care Training Development

Orangeburg County First Steps

P.O. Box 451
 Orangeburg, South Carolina 29116
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Child Care Scholarships

Too many families in Orangeburg 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.

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

- 100% ... live in poverty
- 19% ... didn't graduate from high school
- 13% ... were teen parents
- 25% ... had developmental delays

In addition to regular monitoring of child care providers that receive First Steps scholarships, First Steps conducts at least one developmental screening each year with scholarship children and connects families to needed services within the community.



The Tooth Fairy shared information with the children about dental health.

Scholarships by the Numbers, 2014-15

Children Served	16
Providers Served	5

This year, our Scholarship program:

- ✓ Provided 16 children with scholarship assistance so their parents could work or attend school
- ✓ Identified and addressed 1 potential developmental delays among scholarship children
- ✓ Made 3 connections for families to services such as speech therapy
- ✓ Supported 5 small businesses in Orangeburg County by subsidizing child care tuition for families who would not otherwise be able to afford quality care
- ✓ Provided 4 hours of training for scholarship parents in topics such as High Quality Child Care

Thank you to our partners!

- South Carolina Department of Social Services
- Quality Enhanced Child Development Centers

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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	40
Families Served	40
Home/School Visits	230

**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.

CTK helped my child turn things around and the teacher wants to continue to work with him during the school year.

J. Bryant

This year, our Countdown to Kindergarten program:

- ✓ Increased the amount of time parents spent reading to children by 24%
- ✓ According to kindergarten teachers, 26% 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 surveys 86.2% of parents said they are likely to participate in their child’s classroom as a volunteer or by attending regular meetings.

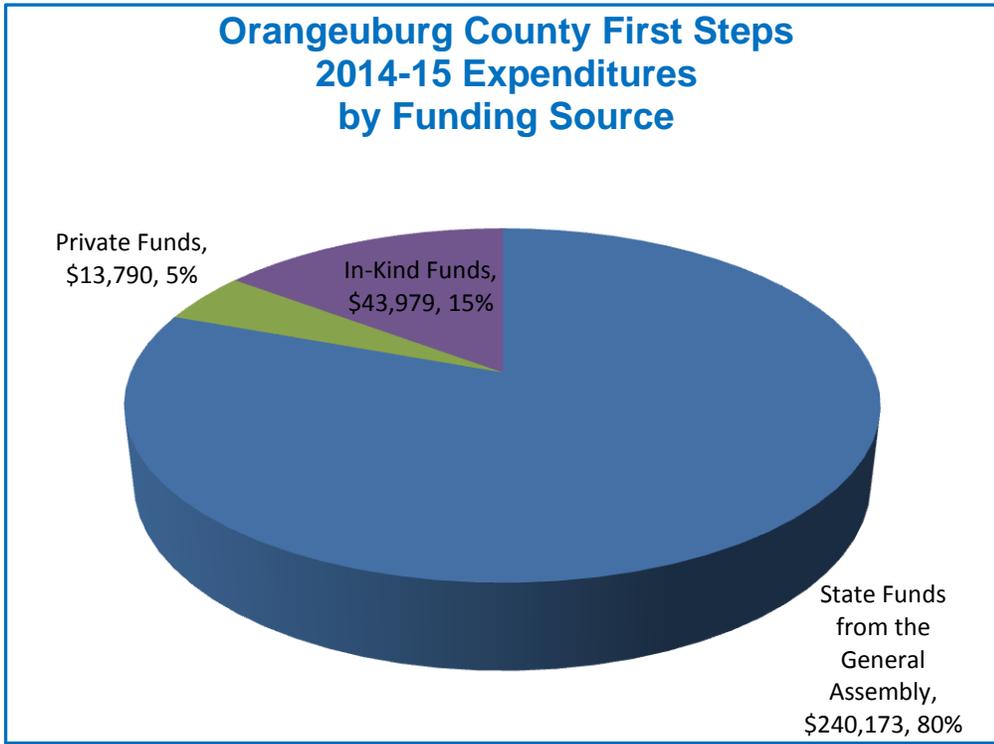
Thank you to our partners!

- Orangeburg Consolidated School Districts 3, 4, and 5
- United Way of the Midlands
- South Carolina First Steps
- KAPLAN Early Learning Company

Orangeburg County First Steps

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Financial Impact



Total 2014-15 Expenditures: \$ 297,942

State Funds Leveraged in 2014-15*: 27.78%

**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
Early Steps to School Success	\$42,825	\$0	\$0	\$3,756	\$46,581	16%
Imagination Library	\$2,003	\$0	\$2,416	\$0	\$4,419	1%
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$2,496	\$0	\$6,624	\$3,382	\$12,502	4%
Child Care Quality Enhancement	\$83,748	\$0	\$870	\$17,112	\$101,730	34%
Child Care Training	\$40,522	\$0	\$251	\$6,171	\$46,944	16%
Child Care Scholarships	\$45,260	\$0	\$240	\$10,500	\$56,000	19%
Other Program	\$0	\$0	\$3,221	\$0	\$3,221	1%
Program Support	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0%
Administrative Support	\$23,319	\$0	\$168	\$3,058	\$26,545	9%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$240,173	\$0	\$13,790	\$43,979	\$297,942	

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

Since inception, Orangeburg County First Steps has leveraged \$236,033.64 from sources outside of state government. That's 24 cents for every state dollar.

T. Davis

Scholarship Recipient

I am the mother of I'laya and Jacion. My experience with Orangeburg County First Steps has been very helpful. This is my first time receiving assistance and free books. This program has made it easier for me to afford education and daycare and still provide for my children. Overall, I had the best experience ever.

T. Brown

Scholarship Recipient

I appreciate the assistance provided through your scholarships. I can send my child to Wright Way Child Development Center where she learns so much from the staff. My daughter speaks well and is grasping a lot of information. Without this assistance she would not be able to learn as much as she has.



Children participating in Community Day hosted by Orangeburg County First Steps.

Thank you to our partners!

Funding Support

State of South Carolina: \$298,541
(through South Carolina First Steps)

United Way of the Midlands: \$ 5,000

Central Carolina Community Foundation:
\$3,580

Albermarle Foundation: \$5,000

Greater Orangeburg Community: \$ 10,789.56

Toyota of Orangeburg: \$300.00

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.: \$500.00

In-Kind Support

Orangeburg Consolidated School District #5

KAPLAN Early Learning Company

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

Cissy Gleaton, Kidz 1 Child Development Center

Orangeburg County First Steps has been an asset to my child development center. The children have fun learning while they are playing. This program also provides adequate training for our employees that I could not provide for them as well as scholarships for families that are unable to afford childcare. My experience with Orangeburg County First Steps has been wonderful.

Lillie Wright, Wright's Day Care

Wright's Day Care really appreciates the assistance and guidance of Orangeburg County First Steps. The staff is very kind and understanding. This program has truly been a blessing to the children and their families.

LaShondia Wright, Wright Way Child Development Center

The technical assistance and much needed help with age appropriate materials and supplies have helped Wright Way Child Development Center to become a High Quality Center. Our goals for success have been set and we are striving to become an "A" center with your continuous help and support.



Children from QE Centers learning about health and safety

Bessie Cleckley, Good Hope Child Development Center

Through the help of Orangeburg County First Steps, more of the children here in the rural town of Cope, South Carolina will have an opportunity to enter school ready to learning. This program is really making a difference in our child care program and community by leading and guiding. Through their efforts, we have increased our vision, enrollment and provided additional training for our staff.



Marilyn Williams, Trinity United Methodist Child Care Center

The commitment on behalf of Orangeburg County First Steps is incredibly helpful and allowed us to reach our goals with the ABC standards and the Department of Social Services. We appreciate your generosity and support of our children and their parents.

First Steps Partnership Board

New Ideas and New Success

The Board of Directors for Orangeburg County First Steps is excited about the new ideas implemented in fiscal year 2014-15. We have very pleased with every opportunity that has presented itself to better serve the children and their families. We have increased the number of community partners and connections made in Orangeburg, South Carolina. Additionally, board members continue to work tirelessly in their fundraising efforts to provide services to an underserved population. Special thanks to the entire board and the Orangeburg Community for another successful year and many more to come.



Orangeburg County First Steps Partnership Board, 2014-15

Name	Position	Board Category
Arthur, Faith	College Access (2013-14 Principal at Brookdale Elementary School)	Early Childhood Education
Davis, Kimberlei	Reporter	Family Education, Training and Support Provider
Ditolla, Amy	Managing Librarian	Orangeburg County Library Appointee
Dibble Wells, Tonya	Pre-K Teacher	OCSD 4 Appointee
Hailey, Edna	Retired Pre-K Teacher	Pre-K Educator
Henderson, Matthew	Trade Specialist	Senate Appointee
Howard, Bertie	Administrative Manager	Head Start
James, Tonya	Human Services Specialist II	Orangeburg County DSS
James-Lawrence, Valerie	Literacy Coach	House of Representative Appointee
Jamison, Jacequiline	Director Academics	OCSD 5 Appointee
McCrary-Quarles, Audrey	Assistant Professor	Family Education, Training and Support Provider
Ray, Clay Sandra	Mortician	Business Community
Seabrook, Harold	Owner/Operator	Business Community
Williams, Antron	Soil Conservationist	Senate Appointee
Williams, Luvenia	Manager	Non-Profit Organization
Williams, Reginald	Professor Early Childhood Education	Early Childhood Education
Wright, Judy	Crisis Specialist	House of Representative 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 Orangeburg County:
803-533-5446

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

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