

SUMTER COUNTY



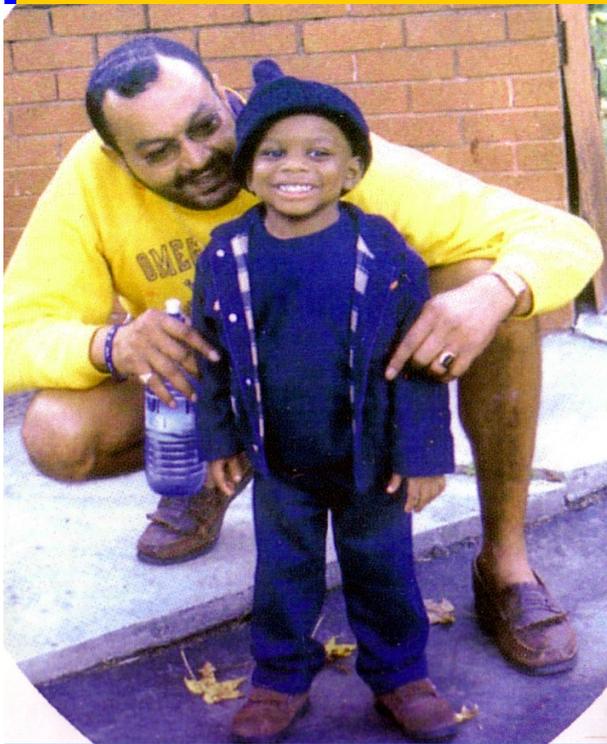
Getting children ready for school.

Parents as Teachers

Childcare Training

Childcare ABC/Scholarship

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library



*Annual Report*  
**2015**



*Our Vision*

*Reaching every child possible to improve  
school readiness in South Carolina*

*In Sumter County, it's all about the  
Children, their Parents and Childcare Providers.*



Getting children ready for school.

# Annual Report

## 2015

### Who We Serve

First Steps serves South Carolina's young children, their families and childcare providers.

Number of Children under 5 in Sumter County  
7,662

Number of Children living in poverty in Sumter County  
33%

Families where household head lacks a high school diploma  
13.8%

### Our Programs

Parents As teachers  
Imagination Library  
Childcare Training  
Childcare ABC/Scholarships

### Our Results

Over 300 children impacted through Parents As teachers; Childcare Scholarships; Dolly Parton Imagination Library

Over 85 childcare providers/directors have benefited from our childcare training program. The number of children in their care, which have been impacted from our training.

*School Readiness by increasing the skills of Children, Their Parents and Childcare Providers...*

Since the inception of South Carolina First Steps in 1999, the importance and awareness of school readiness has increased in our state. Early educators with varying terminology define school readiness as children ready for school. First Steps defines school readiness as children prepared and ready for school success. The Office of Head Start defines school readiness as "children possessing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in school and for later learning and life." Regardless of the terminology it entails setting measurable goals with evidence-based strategies; planning and implementation; and assessment and evaluation.

Sumter County First Steps (SCFS) has concentrated on strategies that will increase the likeliness of children being prepared to successfully enter school ready to learn. This is being accomplished by focusing on strategies, which increase parenting skills and quality childcare.

SCFS is providing a home visitation program to help train parents on how to be their child's first and best teacher. We have chosen Parent As Teachers (PAT) as a strategy to assist with this goal. PAT is a national model, which is an evidence-based early childhood home visitation program. PAT will increase a parent's knowledge of child development and improves parenting practices.

SCFS is also providing childcare training to childcare providers and Scholarships/ABC Vouchers for quality childcare. Quality childcare is a research-based determinant of school readiness. When you think about the number of hours children are with child care providers, you can understand the importance of quality.

We also support our families with Dolly Pardon Imagination Library to develop an environment, which has a love for reading. An age appropriate book is mailed to the child each month up until their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday.

SCFS has established these strategies to improve school readiness in Sumter County. These strategies "will not change substantially from year to year. However, goals for individual children and families will likely change based on needs and progress revealed by ongoing data collection."

SCFS is appreciative for all of its community partners and other agencies involved in school readiness. Together, we are making a difference.

*Julia A. Nelson, MPA*  
Executive Director

# 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.



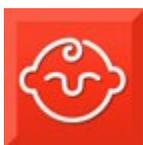
### Family Strengthening

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



### 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, Sumter County First focuses its investments in family strengthening and quality childcare**



# Parents as Teachers & ABC Scholarships



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:

- **Personal Visits** at least twice monthly;
- **Monthly Group Connections** with other PAT families;
- **Screenings and Assessments** to identify developmental concerns; and
- **Connections to Outside Resources** that families may need to succeed.

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

Our PAT program:

- **Increases parent knowledge of child development and improves parenting practices**
- **Provides early detection of developmental delays and health issues**
- **Prevents child abuse and neglect**
- **Increases children’s school readiness and school success**

Sumter County First Steps serves families who most need and want our services. Among our PAT families:

33%..... Live in Poverty  
13.8%.....Head of Household w/o High School Diploma

## Parent As Teachers 2014– 2015 By the Numbers

Families Served	59
Children Served	61
Total Home Visits	1575
# of hours in homes	3181
# of Unsuccessful Visits	58
Scholarships/ABC Vouchers used for PAT Clients	20

*Thank you to Our Partner*  
**Sumter School District**

# 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 children developing neural connections related to language is around **nine months of age. One of the easiest and most effective ways to build the language neural connections in a young child's brain is to read to them.**

Sumter 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 Sumter First Steps receive one book per month by mail through the month of their fifth birthday. All books are quality, age-appropriate books carefully selected for each age group by a committee of educational specialists.

A major benefit of the Imagination Library program is that it requires very little overhead or administrative obligation. Since the Dollywood Foundation in Tennessee administers the operation and book distribution, the cost to local communities is as low as \$25 per child per year.

## Imagination Library by the Numbers, 2014-2015

Children Served	212
Books Given to Children 0-5	1739

*\*Note: Families that are new to the Imagination Library program are given information about the importance of reading to their children and strategies for making the most of their shared reading time.*

### This year, our Imagination Library Program:

**Provided one book per month to 213 children who were referred by parenting programs, DSS, DHEC, and other community partners; and continued to receive financial support from Sumter County Council, which allowed us to serve considerably more children than we could have on our own.**

Sponsor  
 A  
 Child  
 For  
 \$25 per year

### *Thank You to Our Partners*

- Dollywood Foundation
- Sumter County School District
- Child Find
- Early Head Start
- Head Start
- Tuomey Hospital

# Child Care Training

Those who care for young children need high-quality, accessible, affordable professional development.

## Program Description:

Efforts to improve the quality of child care must include providing affordable, high quality training 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, but also follow-up with supported practice in the classroom.

### Training by the Numbers, 2013-14

Total Training Attendance	105
Number of Training Sessions Offered	7
Number of Hours Offered	30
Number of Children Potentially Impacted	350+

### This year, our training program provided:

All trainers are master-level trainers with doctorate degrees in Education and have 30+ years of experience in Early Education.

Incorporated take-home assignments into each session to allow participants to practice the concepts introduced during training sessions; and

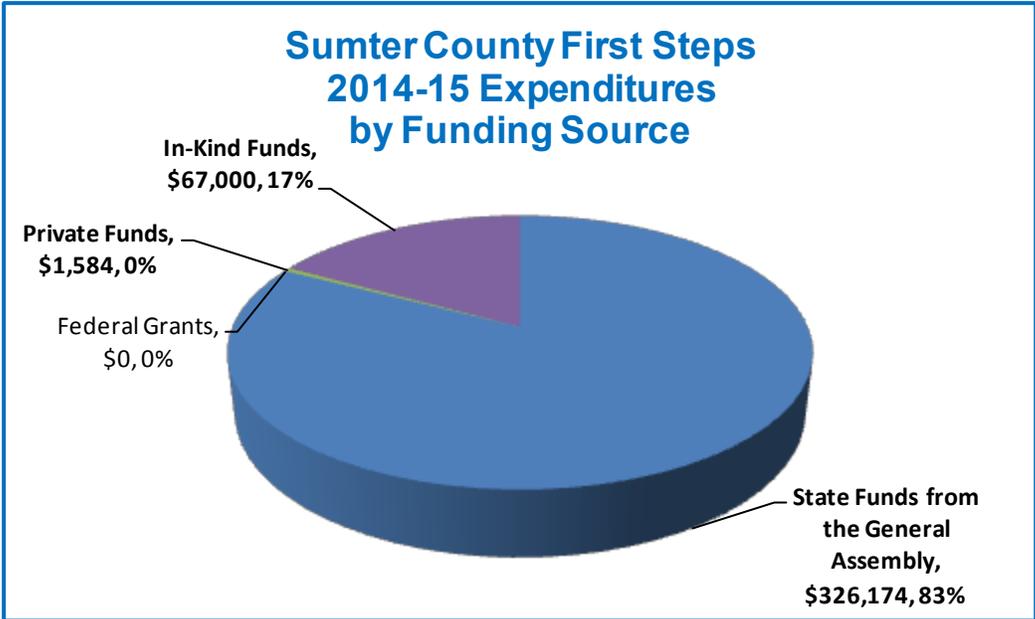
*Thank You to Our Partners*

**Sumter County Child Care Community**

**Earlene Walker-Kelly, Ed. D.**

**Anita Kieslich, Ed. D.**

# Financial Impact



**Total 2014-15 Expenditures: \$202,450**

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

## 2014-15 Expenditures by Strategy

	State \$	Federal \$	Private \$	In-Kind \$
Parents as Teachers	\$185,639	\$0	\$0	\$19,000
Imagination Library	\$4,404	\$0	\$0	\$0
Child Care Training	\$27,323	\$0	\$1,304	\$10,250
Scholarships	\$28,729	\$0	\$0	\$7,000
Program Support	\$55,464	\$0	\$0	\$20,500
Administrative Support	\$24,615	\$0	\$280	\$10,250
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$326,174</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$1,584</b>	<b>\$67,000</b>

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

## Community Leadership in Early Childhood

*Partnering to make a positive difference in the lives of Sumter County's Children, Families and Childcare Providers...*

### Board Members 2014 — 2015

*We are very appreciative of our community members who are willing to improve school readiness in Sumter County.*

Name	Position	Board Category
Walter G. Newman	Board Chairperson	Legislative Delegation Appointee
Earlene Walker, Ed.D.	Board Vice Chairperson	Early childhood education
Paula Durham	Board Secretary	Business Community/Childcare Provider
Artrell Brown	Board Treasurer	Head Start Appointee
Libby Dubose	Legislative Liaison	School District Appointee/Early Head Start
Toni Brew	Board Member	Family Service provider
Rev. Billy Bennet	Board Member	Faith Community
Erica Clark	Board Member	Healthcare/Head Start
Laura Colclough	Board Member	Childcare Provider
Sherreks Frederick	Board Member	Childcare Provider
Jennifer Miles	Board Member	Early Childhood Education
Harrison Brown	Board Member	Legislative Appointee
Lana Odom	Board Member	Legislative Appointee
Austin Floyd	Board Member	Legislative Appointee
Michelle Parker-Davis	Board Member	Transportation
Cynthia Ransom	Board Member	Transportation provider

Contact Information for Sumter County First Steps  
 Mailing Address: POB 2331, Sumter, SC 29151  
 Physical Address: 220 Hasel Street, Sumter, SC 29150  
 Ph: 803.464.1224 Fax: 803.774.5620  
 E-mail: [sumterfirststeps@yahoo.com](mailto:sumterfirststeps@yahoo.com)

## 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 in Clarendon County:  
LOCAL PHONE #: (843) 669-8689

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