

South Carolina First Steps e-Spotlight

February 19, 2016



Florence and Marion County First Steps Partner with SC Department of Social Services to Support Child Care Home Providers

Since November 2009, the SC Department of Social Services (SCDSS) has partnered with Florence and Marion County First Steps to provide Technical Assistance, child care trainings, and develop a network association for family and group child care home providers. By definition these family and group child care providers care for children, typically in mixed aged groups, in their own homes. Florence and Marion counties have a significant number of family and group child care home providers, so the purpose of the partnership is to engage in a coordinated effort to provide them resources, support, and connection to other child care professionals.

Since its formation, the partnership has given Florence County First Steps (FCFS) and Marion County First Steps (MCFS) the opportunity to provide 76 training courses as well as over 200 hours of training for home child care providers in various types of relevant child assessment, including the Ages and Stages developmental and social-emotional screening tools. All trainings have been delivered based off the assessed needs from Technical Assistance visits, which are available at no cost to all family child care home (FCCH) and group child care home (GCCH) providers in Florence and Marion counties. These Technical Assistance visits are tailored to the specific needs of the individual providers as reflected in their Pre-FCCERS screenings. In addition to Technical Assistance, participating providers receive materials to help improve their facility and enhance the quality of services that they deliver to children and families.

Another component of the partnership is the Florence-Marion Network Association (FMCNA) of family and group child care homes, which has grown to 57 members over the past 5 years. Membership is entirely free to all FCCH/GCCH providers in Florence and Marion counties. Providers are invited to attend quarterly association meetings where they receive DSS credit, important updates in the field of early childhood education, and opportunities to attend state/national family and group child care conferences. FMCNA was created in hopes that FCCH/GCCH providers would come together to learn best-practices from one another, continue to enhance the quality of service they provide, and give Florence and Marion County First Steps feedback on their needs.

"...I am grateful for the knowledge Florence County First Steps FCCH/GCCH grant has provided to me as I work to enhance and provide quality child care."

- Denise Scott, participating family child care home provider

Florence and Marion County First Steps (FCFS and MCFS) and SCDSS recognize that often times, small family facilities are over-looked when compared to larger facilities. The goal of their partnership has been to elevate these important home child care providers by providing them training, assistance, and recognition. As Denise Scott, a participating FCCH provider stated, "I am entering my third year as a Family Provider and I am grateful for the knowledge Florence County First Steps FCCH/GCCH grant has provided to me as I work to enhance and provide quality child

care." The partnership has also helped to increase public awareness of these providers' vital role as a community service. To help garner attention for FCCH/GCCH facilities, FCFS and MCFS began recognizing a "Provider of the Year" in 2015 and hosting an annual graduation ceremony for participating children.

Florence and Marion County First Steps and SCDSS have taken the time to connect with these providers to encourage them to participate in events, take advantage of the opportunities they are offered through the partnership, and assure them that their voices do matter in early care and education. As word spreads in the community and providers share with their colleagues the opportunities available through this partnership, SCFS and MCFS anticipate the number of children and families served to continue to increase in the coming years.

The next Florence-Marion Network Association meeting will take place on Weds., March 16th at 6pm at the Florence County Library.

News/Reminders: [I Can] Update

Please continue to inform members of your communities to support the [I Can] campaign on Facebook ([icansc](#)) and Twitter ([#icansc](#)). [Click here](#) to check out how Pickens County is highlighting the [I Can] campaign through their blog postings!

We are still asking partnerships to submit [I Can] statements and images from community leaders. These graphics, like the one seen on the right from Newberry City Council, can be used to spread the [I Can] message in your community through use in presentations, print media, and social networking.

To submit, please email Betty Gardiner at:

bgardiner@scfirststeps.org.



Upcoming Dates



• March 9-11: SCANPO – South Carolina's Non-profit Summit
(registration in advance is required)

• March 17: First Steps Board of Trustees Meeting

• April 10-16: Week of the Young Child 2016

• April 14: SC READ IN at the Statehouse

Newberry City Council members say...

[I CAN]

support a safe
and healthy community
for young children.

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www.iCan.sc



Newberry City Council

(l. to r.): Councilman Zibbie Goodlock, Councilman LeMont Glasgow, Mayor Foster Sene, Councilman Edwin Wickes, Councilman David Force, Councilman Thomas Louis Boyd, Councilman David Duke