

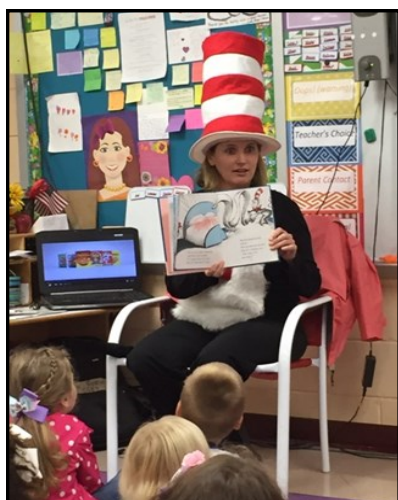
South Carolina First Steps e-Spotlight

Week 6: March 11, 2016



First Steps of Anderson County and Local School Districts Work Together to Implement Family Literacy Program

First Steps of Anderson County (FSAC) has partnered with Anderson School Districts One, Two, Three, Four, and Five to help both parents and children improve their literacy skills through its Family Literacy Program. Since 2008, FSAC's program has helped 90 adults receive GEDs and 99 teenage mothers stay in school to receive their high school diplomas. In 2014-2015 alone, the program served 44 families, including 45 adults and 44 children, and offered an average of 32 hours of early childhood education per week to participating children across all districts. FSAC Executive Director, Paige Wall, credits the success of the partnership to the strong infrastructure of the school districts and to FSAC and the districts taking a very "integrated" approach, where all stakeholders collaborate with one another in order to serve families in need.



Elizabeth Wittbort, FSAC District One Coordinator, reads to children as part of the district's Family Literacy Program.

Partnerships supporting Family Literacy programs ensure that a four component model is delivered to children and their families, including parent education, adult education, early childhood education, and parent/child interaction. These programs promote early education to preschoolers, teach parents how to support their child's literacy and overall development, and support parents in achieving their own educational and career goals. All five of Andersons School Districts' implement the four component model, but each of the programs has a unique focus to meet the specific needs of the district's population. For example, District Four has more of an adult education focus, helping parents receive their GEDs, whereas District Five's focus is directed to supporting teen moms through parent education and their First Steps-funded high quality early education infant/toddler room.

In order to ensure the success of Family Literacy programs, each district has its own First Steps Coordinator to work with participating early education, childcare, and adult education centers, plan parent/child interaction trainings and parenting activities, and serve as a liaison between FSAC and the district. One example of a planned parent/child literacy activity recently took place in Anderson School District One, where First Step Coordinator, Elizabeth Wittebort, organized an 8-week reading challenge for all 4-K classes within the district. Parents were encouraged to read books and complete activities correlated to the SC early learning standards. This challenge gave parents the opportunity to spend quality time with their children while learning how to incorporate important literacy skills that will enhance their child's academic growth. All students who participated in the program received free literacy material and were placed in a drawing to win various games and toys that promote early reading skills.

The goal of a *family literacy program* is to help parents improve both their parenting and literacy skills while providing young children with quality early childhood education experiences. First Steps of Anderson County and Anderson School Districts One, Two, Three, Four, and Five have recognized that it takes purposeful planning, collaboration, and a sharing of resources and efforts in order to achieve this goal in Anderson County.

Upcoming Dates

- March 17: First Steps Board of Trustees Meeting
- March 22: Partnership Webinar
- April 10-16: Week of the Young Child 2016



News: Read Aloud 15 Minutes Releases New Survey

This week, a new survey conducted by YouGov for the non-profit Read Aloud 15 MINUTES shows that despite parents' widespread agreement that reading aloud has an "extremely positive" impact on brain development, most parents aren't reading enough to their children. The survey finds that fewer than half (46%) of parents read aloud to their children every day, and only 34% do so for at least 15 minutes. To view the study and learn more about Read Aloud 15 Minutes' efforts to increase parents reading aloud to their children, click [here](#).

For more information on the Family Literacy Program in Anderson County, please contact FSAC Executive Director Paige Wall at 864-222-0410 or vpwall@bellsouth.net.