

# South Carolina First Steps e-Spotlight

April 29, 2016



## New Child Care Facility Coming to Allendale County

Allendale County First Steps (ACFS) has partnered with Allendale County's only child care center, Little New Steps, since the center opened its doors in 2000. Little New Steps is a DSS licensed and Level A rated center on the ABC Quality rating system that offers year-round child care and early education for children aged 0-4. According to Little New Steps Director, Edna Youmans, "Little New Steps implements a comprehensive, intensive, and integrated program that empowers students to succeed." The center is also a recent recipient of the First Steps Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grant, which will allow the center to expand high quality early learning opportunities to even more infants and toddlers in Allendale County.



*A classroom at the new Allendale Early Learning Academy.*

Throughout its partnership with Little New Steps, ACFS has supported the center and the families and children it serves in a variety of ways, including providing needs-based scholarships, training to teachers, developmental screenings and appropriate child assessment, parent education and involvement activities, and on-site mentoring and technical assistance. According to Director Youmans, the partnership with ACFS has been vital to the success of her center, "We have had a part-

nership with Allendale County First Steps from the beginning [of our center]. I believe that is why we excel in all we do to prepare our children for Kindergarten." In broadening their community reach, ACFS has also worked with Little New Steps to support Allendale High School students by offering child care scholarships to the center to expectant teen mothers and teen mothers so that they are able stay in school and graduate.

Despite the ever-growing demand for child care in Allendale County, Little News Steps is currently the only center-based child care facility in the county. Continuing their work together, Little New Steps and ACFS decided to collaborate on the opening of a much-needed new center in Allendale County to ensure that more children in their community have access to high-quality early learning experiences. The new Allendale Early Learning Academy will hold its grand opening in May of 2016. The center will be modeled after Little New Steps and is receiving materials and supplies, as well as support and mentoring on best practices, from Little New Steps. The two centers, with the help of ACFS, will, "...work together to provide mirror services to the children of the community," according to Allendale Learning Academy's Director, Randi Parker. The center will provide service for children aged 6 weeks to ten years in a safe and healthy environment. Like Little New Steps, the new center will utilize "Creative Curriculum", a curriculum that offers hands-on-activities that allow young children to learn through exploration, experimentation, and encourage development of high-order skills. ACFS has worked with the new Allendale Early Learning Academy every step of the way in helping to establish the new center. According to Director Parker, "They [ACFS] have been an invaluable resource through the donation of furniture to set up classrooms, books to help build our libraries, and trainings [for teachers]. Without these two entities [ACFS and Little New Steps], opening up my center would not have been possible."

Allendale Early Learning Academy will be able to offer much-needed early care and education to families in Allendale County through thoughtful collaboration and strong support from ACFS and Little New Steps. With a common goal of serving those children and families who need quality early learning experiences the most, these three entities have truly come together to attempt to provide a strong foundation for Allendale County's children.

### News/Opportunities:

#### New Early Education "Tip Sheets" Available

The U.S. Departments of [Education](#) and [Health and Human Services](#), in partnership with [Too Small to Fail](#), have recently created early education tip sheets for families, caregivers, and early educators. One set of tip sheets focuses on easy ways to incorporate STEM (science, engineering, technology, math) concepts and vocabulary into everyday routines, and suggestions for activities to engage young children in STEM learning. The "Talk, Read, and Sing Together Every Day" tip sheets are also available and aim to help enrich a child's early language experiences by providing research-based tips for talking, reading, and singing with young children.

These resources can be found by [clicking here](#).



*A classroom at the new Allendale Early Learning Academy.*