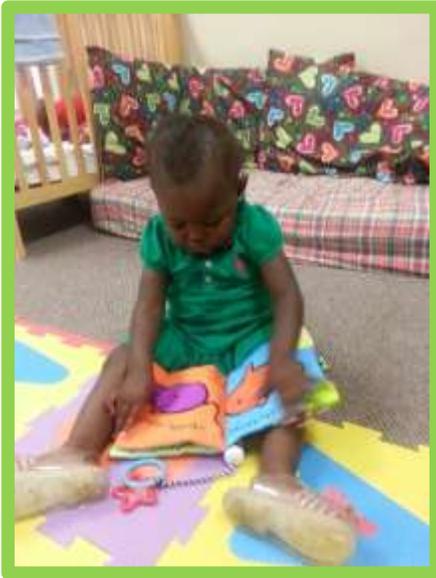


HORRY COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.



**Nurse Family Partnership**

**Parents as Teachers**

**Child Care Quality  
Enhancement**

**Child Care Training**

**Child Care Scholarships**

# Annual Report

2015-16



**OUR VISION:**

**Every child will arrive at  
Kindergarten  
ready to succeed.**

**First Steps WORKS for the children of Horry County.**



## By The Numbers

Indicator	SC	Horry County
Children Under Five	290,519	15,730
Children In Poverty	27.3%	29.9%
3 <sup>rd</sup> Graders Below Standard in Reading	21.1%	16.5%
Births to Mothers With Less Than a High School Diploma	15.7%	16.9%

KIDS COUNT data provided by



- Since inception, Horry County First Steps has leveraged \$4,862,003.79 from sources outside state government. **That's \$.57 for every dollar received.**
- **602 hours of support and guidance** were provided to 45 families in our Parents As Teachers Program.
- **Childcare professionals received 859 hours** of technical assistance for early care best practices.
- Assisted 55 children in accessing child care so their parent could work and/or continue their education.
- **Total Children Served in FY16: 105**

### Horry County First Steps

900-C Main Street  
Suite A  
Conway SC 29526

Phone: (843) 488-3336  
Fax: (843) 488-3346

#### Board Chair

Mr. Bradley Todd

[Btodd002@yahoo.com](mailto:Btodd002@yahoo.com)

Horry County First Steps

**Amy Breault**

**Executive Director**

The Board and Staff of Horry County First Steps are proud to present the accomplishments achieved in another year of successful community impact. Exhibited within this year's annual report are the projects and strategies HCFS supported in 2016 in order to ensure all children in Horry County enter school on a level playing field, healthy and prepared for success.

This positive impact was achieved by setting a direction, creating alignment and gaining commitment around important early childhood issues within Horry County. This unbridled spirit to serve the needs of children and families was cultivated by a passionate staff, a visioning board of directors, a dedicated team of direct service providers, and a community of committed child care professionals. By being a part of this community-centered agency, it is amazing the stories we hear on a regular basis from parents, child care providers, health professionals and Kindergarten teachers regarding the ways in which HCFS projects are making a difference in the lives of children and families -- stories of newly developed parenting strategies, pre-school excitement, successful transition into Kindergarten, informative childcare referrals, and renewed excitement in the world of early childhood education.

As HCFS continues to grow, we maintain a focus on collaborating locally so families' needs are met, overhead is kept low, and quality of services remains high. This forward thinking and big picture approach to service is exciting for all associated with HCFS, as it calls for new opportunities to explore, new champions to tell our story, and new assets to be mined for the benefit of HCFS and the children and families it serves.

Thank you, from all of us at Horry County First Steps and from all those whose lives have been touched. As we move towards reaching our mission, we are excited about the future of children and families in Horry County.



Healthy Start



Family Strengthening



Early Intervention



Quality Child Care



Early Education



School Transition

## County Programs

Parents as Teachers  
Child Care Training  
Child Care Quality Enhancement  
Child Care Scholarships

## State Programs

BabyNet  
First Steps 4k

# 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.

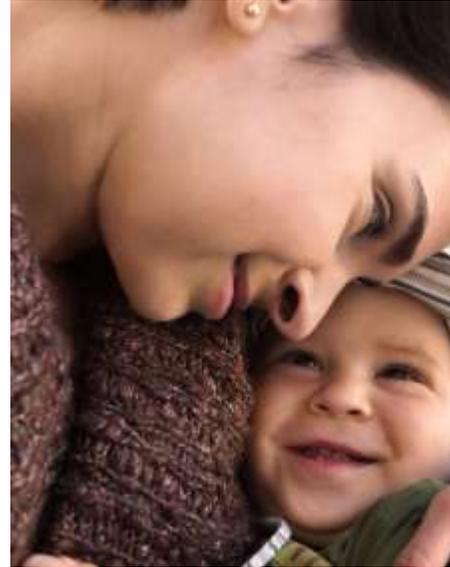
**Based on the needs of our community, Horry County First focuses its investments in Healthy Start, Family Strengthening and Quality Childcare.**

**Helping vulnerable first-time mothers empowers them to achieve a better life for themselves and their children.**

## Program Description

Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) helps transform the lives of vulnerable first-time mothers and their babies. Through ongoing home visits from registered nurses, low-income, first-time moms receive the care and support they need to have a healthy pregnancy, provide responsible and competent care for their children, and become more economically self-sufficient. From pregnancy until the child turns two years old, Nurse-Family Partnership Nurse Home Visitors form a much-needed, trusting relationship with the first-time moms, instilling confidence and empowering them to achieve a better life for their children – and themselves.

In Horry County, Nurse-Family Partnership is implemented through SC Department of Health and Environmental Control.



## NFP by the Numbers, 2015-16

Families Served	123
Number of Home Visits	8407

### This year, in our NFP program:

- ✓ 82% of NFP mothers initiated breastfeeding at birth, and 36% continue to breastfeed at 6 months
- ✓ 93% of NFP infants were born full term
- ✓ 70 clients graduated
- ✓ 100% of NFP infants were up to date on immunizations at 1 year
- ✓ 100% of NFP infants were on target developmentally
- ✓ 90% of mothers with no subsequent pregnancy at 24 months

### *Thank you to our partners!*

Bunnelle Foundation

Blue Cross/Blue Shield of SC Foundation

### Horry County First Steps

900-C Main Street, Suite A Conway SC 29526  
(843) 488-3336  
abreault@sccoast.net  
www.hcfirststeps.org

**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:

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

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

100% ... live in poverty  
50% ... didn't graduate from high school  
25% ... were teen parents



"We've learned a great deal from our parent educator about child development. We haven't had a child in our home full-time in 20 yrs. She helps me remember a lot."

Jim, a Grandparent of a 2 year old

## PAT by the Numbers 2015-16

Families Served	45	
Children Served	50	
Total Home Visits	596	
Hours Spent Serving Families	602	
Average scores, <i>Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale and Adult Child Interactive Reading Inventory:</i>	KIPS Avg. 4 out of 5	ACIRI C: .48 A: .42

## This year, our Parents as Teachers program:

- ✓ Averaged 13 home visits per family
- ✓ Identified and addressed 11 potential developmental delays
- ✓ Reading skills of children improved almost ½ of a point; Parents showed an average score of 4 out of 5 on the Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale
- ✓ Made 37 referrals for families to services such as food banks, employment services, Benefit Bank, and child care assistance

## Thank you to our partners!

SC Mentors  
BabyNet  
Community Health Agencies

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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, 2015-16

Child Care Providers Served	8
Number of TA Visits Provided	270
Number of Children 0-5 Enrolled in Provider Classrooms	660

### *Congratulations to our QE participants for 2015-16!*

Child Care Provider	Pre/Post Improvement
Grissett's CDC, infant room	From 2.75 to 3.96
ATM, 3-yr-old room	From 3.37 to 4.91
Hunter's Ridge, 1-yr-old room	From 3.65 to 4.21
Cutie Pies, 3-yr-old room	From 3.40 to 4.32

## This year, our Quality Enhancement program:

- ✓ Improved quality, based on pre/post Environment Rating Scale assessments.
- ✓ Provided 859 hours of technical assistance to child care providers
- ✓ Provided \$21,675 in materials grants to participating child care providers
- ✓ Funded scholarships for 19 children within participating child care providers

## Thank you to our partners!

- SC Child Care Licensing
- ABC Child Care
- Child Care Resource and Referral
- FQE Participating Facilities

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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.

### Leadership Connections Conference

The 16th annual Leadership Connections™ national conference brought together more than 600 early childhood leaders, who heard inspiring keynote speakers, took part in an engaging public policy forum, attended 80+ skill-building sessions, and networked with other leaders in the field.

HCFS staff travelled with Child Care Leaders from the facilities participating in the Facility Quality Enhancement program.

The participants brought back a wealth of ideas relating to increasing their skills as leaders in Early Care and Education. Many were making plans for changes to implement before leaving the conference.

Everyone was appreciative of this once in a lifetime opportunity.

*I left the training in Chicago feeling inspired and more than ready to head back to my center to implement so many new things and ideas. The speakers were all great in their field so it was very educational.*

Anna Dixon  
Cutie Pies



### Thank you to our partners!

McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership  
SC Office of First Steps

### Horry County First Steps

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# Child Care Scholarships

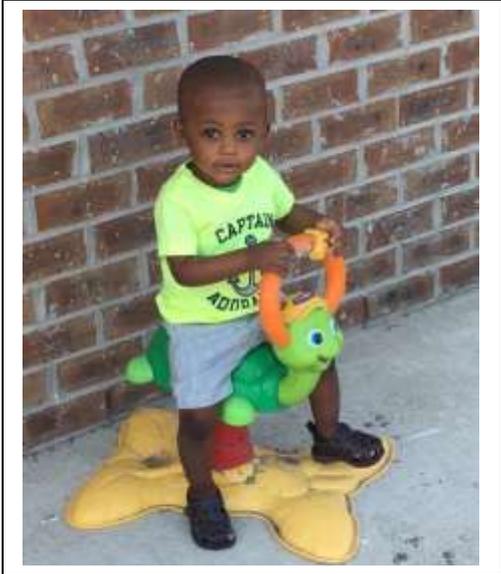
Too many families in Horry County cannot afford quality care for their children.

## 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.

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

- 100% ... live in poverty
- 33% ... parent suffered depression/mental illness
- 26% ... were transient/homeless
- 22% ... had low maternal education



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.

### Scholarships by the Numbers, 2015-16

Children Served	55
Providers Served	15

**This year, our Scholarship program:**

- ✓ Provided 55 children with scholarship assistance so their parents could work or attend school
- ✓ Identified and addressed 35 potential developmental delays among scholarship children
- ✓ Supported 15 small businesses in Horry County by subsidizing child care tuition for families who would not otherwise be able to afford quality care

**Thank you to our partners!**

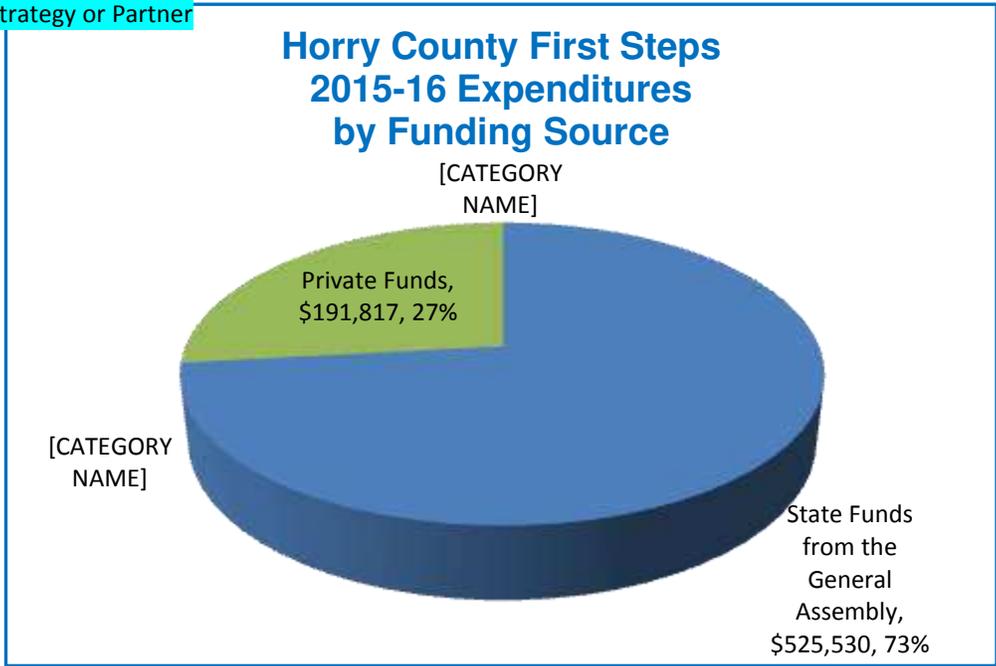
- SC Child Care Voucher program
- Facility Referral Sources
- ABC Child Care

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# Community Impact

## Make a Title for your Success Story

Subtitle/Name of Strategy or Partner



**Total 2015-16 Expenditures: \$717,348**

**State Funds Leveraged in 2015-16\*: 36.5%**

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

	State \$	Federal \$	Private \$	In-Kind \$	Total \$	% of 2015-16 Expenditures
Parents as Teachers	\$114,609	\$0	\$1,337	\$0	\$115,946	16%
Child Care Quality Enhancement	\$100,773	\$0	\$37	\$0	\$100,810	14%
Child Care Training	\$16,977	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$16,977	2%
Child Care Scholarships	\$87,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$87,500	12%
Nurse Family Partnership	\$23,824	\$0	\$190,284	\$0	\$214,108	30%
Program Support	\$128,295	\$0	\$51	\$0	\$128,346	18%
Administrative Support	\$53,553	\$0	\$108	\$0	\$53,661	7%
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$525,531</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$191,817</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$717,348</b>	

**Since inception, Horry County First Steps has leveraged \$4,070,931 from sources outside of state government. That's .47 cents for every state dollar.**

## Greetings to a new partnership

### Welcome Linh Nguyen and BabyNet

Horry County First Steps had the exciting opportunity to facilitate a new phase of collaboration with the local BabyNet office. Although the two offices have a history of working closely together a new phase of collaboration took place in FY16.

#### Families have quicker and easier access to BabyNet services

In FY16 the BabyNet office was able to hire additional staff to complete intake evaluations, ensuring families a shorter wait period once a referral is made to the SPOE office.

In an effort to strengthen existing collaborations between HCFS and BabyNet an offer of space was extended to ensure a BabyNet intake coordinator would be housed with the HCFS office.

Linh Nguyen joined the BabyNet staff in the spring of 2016. She works within our office space four days a week. Everyone in the HCFS office has enjoyed getting to know and work with Linh.



Not only are our initiatives working closely within the office we are also able to join forces within the community. Anytime HCFS participates in community events Linh is able to join in and promote the services offered by BabyNet.



## Thank you to our partners!

### Funding Support

State of South Carolina: \$525,531  
(through South Carolina First Steps)

Blue Cross/Blue Shield Foundation of SC: \$ 190,284

PAT National: \$1,337

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

# Getting children ready for school.

## Reaching for Non-Profit Excellence through governance

Members of the Horry County First Steps Partnership Board have been completing the SCANPO Guiding Principles self-assessment. The Guiding Principles are considered by many to be an excellent tool for organizational self-assessment, board and committee planning, as well as, measuring progress and strategic decision-making among non-profit members, executives and staff. Although it means extra work for members, they have embraced the challenge and are confident that HCFS will be designated as an excellent non-profit.

Name	Employer	Board Category
Bradley Todd, Chair	Horry County Schools	Non-Profit Organization That Provides Services to Families
Shayla Livingston, Vice Chair	Low Country Food Bank	Non-Profit Organization that Provides Services to Families
Heather Dionisio, Secretary	Waccamaw Bowling Center	Parent of a Young Child
Rhonda Johnson	Family Day Care Provider	Pre-Kindergarten through Primary Education
Wendy Gillespie	Office of First Steps – BabyNet	Health Care Provider
Jennifer Nassar	Chapin Library	Non-Profit Organization that Provides Services to Families
Dr. Sienna Alford, DO	Rivertown Family Medicine	Health Care Provider
Dale Helms	Carolina Forest Child Development and Care Center	Childcare and Early Childhood Development/Education Provider
Shannon Jordan	Lamar Advertising	Business Community
Rosa Knox	Retired – Waccamaw EOC Head Start	Persons from Early Childhood
Beth Tindall	Horry County Schools	Persons from Early Childhood
Jeanna Allen	Horry County Schools	Persons from Early Childhood
Sadhani Tolani	SC DHEC – Pee Dee Region	Appointed by County Department of Health and Environmental Control
Susan Jones	Horry County Schools	Appointed by School District in County

## 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 Horry County:  
LOCAL SPOE PHONE # - MAKE SURE IT IS CORRECT!

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