

LAURENS COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.



Parents as Teachers

Countdown to Kindergarten

Child Care Training

Child Care Scholarships

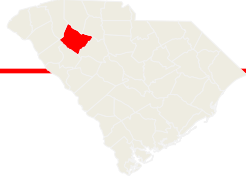
Annual Report

2015-16



OUR VISION:

Every South Carolina child will arrive at kindergarten ready to succeed.



Rosemary c. Patterson
 Executive Director

In FY16 Laurens County First Steps collaborated with partner agencies to improve and enhance the quality of life for families with children ages birth to 5 years old.

Our parenting work with pre-natal and teen moms who attend Laurens District 55 High School and Clinton High School in District 56 continued to expand. We held monthly group connections with these groups of young women on topics from pre-natal care, best parenting practices, health resources, literacy for pre-school children, job preparation and quality child care. We served 3 high school moms with Child Care Scholarships and intensive Parents As Teachers.

18 Families and 21 children participated in our intense Parents As Teachers program. Families are referred to us through word of mouth, doctors' offices, and child care centers.

We collaborated with the Laurens County Library to provide books and information for parents through the 1000 Books Before Kindergarten program.

As a partner agency with the United Way of Laurens County, I spoke on behalf of agencies who receive UW funding at two business workplace campaign events.

LCFS continues to partner with the Family YMCA of Laurens to provide training sessions for child care providers in Laurens County. We provided 34 hours of training which touched 107 staff and directors and approximately 478 children ages birth to 5 years old.

34 rising 5K students were served in summer 2015 with the Countdown to Kindergarten program. The students were identified by school districts 55 & 56, one child care center, and GLEAMNS Head Start. One child had never attended a 4K program.

Our collaboration and support for the FS grant for Early Head Start at Thornwell has begun and will continue in FY17.



By The Numbers

Indicator	SC	Laurens County
Children Under Five	289,990	3,778
Children In Poverty	26.4%	30.5%
3 rd Graders Below Standard in Reading	21.1%	28.7%
Births to Mothers With Less Than a High School Diploma	15.7%	23.5%



- Since inception, Laurens County First Steps has leveraged \$2,388,669.59 from sources outside state government. **That's \$.51 for every dollar received.**
- **399 hours and 380 visits of support and guidance** were provided to 18 families in our Parents As Teachers Program.
- **Childcare professionals received 34 hours** of technical assistance for early care best practices.
- Improved parenting practices through **30 Group Connections Parent Workshops.**
- **Total Children Served in FY16:**
 18 child care scholarships
 34 CTK

Laurens County First Steps

301 Hillcrest Drive
 Laurens, SC 29360
 Phone: 864-984-8130
 Fax: 864-984-8131
Board Chair
 Linda S. Wessel
 lwessel@laurens55.org

County Programs

- Parents as Teachers
- Child Care Training
- Childcare Scholarships
- School Transition

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.



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, Laurens County First Steps focuses its investments in Quality Childcare, Family Strengthening, Early Education, and School Transition.

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

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

- 18 ... live in poverty
- 5 ... didn't graduate from high school
- 12 ... were teen parents
- 14 ... were single parent households



I was 16 when my son was born, I didn't know what to do. My parent educator was like a mama to me. She showed me what to do.

Keisha

PAT by the Numbers 2015-16

Families Served	18	
Children Served	21	
Total Home Visits	380	
Hours Spent Serving Families	399.37	
Average gain, <i>Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale</i> (pre-to-post):	3.36	3.85

This year, our Parents as Teachers program:

- ✓ Averaged 2.5 home visits per family
- ✓ Identified and addressed 2 potential developmental delays
- ✓ Improved parenting practices: KIPS showed a 0.49 improvement; ACIRI for adults went from 1.88 to 2.11 & children went from 1.97 to 2.17
- ✓ Improved literacy skills: home libraries were extended- 582 books were given to PAT clients
- ✓ Made 60 connections for families to services such as child care scholarships, BabyNet, & community resources/events

Thank you to our partners!

Laurens County School Districts 55 & 56
Big Blue Marble Academy
Stepping Stones Learning Academy
Tender Loving Child Care

Laurens County First Steps

301 Hillcrest Drive
Laurens, SC 29360
864-984-8130

rpatterson@laurens55.org

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.

The training I receive to help me in my classroom, also helps me with my toddler at home!

Kelly

**Child Care Training Sponsored by
 Laurens County First Steps in 2015-16**

<u>Topic:</u>	<u>Sessions:</u>
Child Guidance	5 hours
Growth & Development	6 hours
Curriculum	6 hours
Professional Development	2 hours
Health & Safety	2 hours
Program Administration	5 hours
Special Needs	2 hours



Before a training session: participants outside the Laurens Y “planting” pinwheels during the Week of the Young Child 2016

Training by the Numbers, 2015-16

Total Training Attendance	288
Child Care Teachers and Directors Served <small>unduplicated</small>	107
Number of Training Sessions Offered	14 [34 hours]

This year, our Training program provided:

- ✓ 107 early childhood staff with high quality training
- ✓ 31 hours of certified training and 3 hours of registered training for staff to meet annual re-certification requirements
- ✓ 20 follow-up visits with training participants to help put training into practice

Thank you to our partners!

- The Family YMCA of Laurens
- SC Inclusion Collaborative
- SC Child Care Resource & Referral Network
- Big Blue Marble Academy
- Carrot Stew
- Hickory Tickory Tots
- MS Bailey Child Development Center
- Stepping Stones Learning Academy
- Tender Loving Child Care
- Young World

Laurens County First Steps

301 Hillcrest Drive
 Laurens, SC 29360
 864-984-8130
rpatterson@laurens55.org

Child Care Scholarships

Too many families in Laurens 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 receives 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.

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

- 17 ... live in poverty
- 5 ... didn't graduate from high school
- 12 ... were teen parents
- 1 ... had developmental delays at entry

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.

We integrate 100% of our Child Care Scholarships with the Parents As Teachers strategy.

My grandma and aunt were so tired trying to keep up with her all day! Now I know she can go to the same place every day.

Brittnie



Scholarships by the Numbers, 2015-16

Children Served	20 (17 families)
Providers Served	3

This year, our Scholarship program:

- ✓ Provided 20 children with scholarship assistance so their parents could work and/or attend school
- ✓ Identified and addressed 2 potential developmental delays among scholarship children thru developmental screenings
- ✓ Made 60 connections for families to services such as BabyNet, community resources & events
- ✓ Supported 3 small businesses in Laurens County by subsidizing child care tuition for families who would not otherwise be able to afford quality care
- ✓ Provided 20 hours of training for scholarship parents in topics such as community resources & quality childcare

Thank you to our partners!

- Big Blue Marble
- Stepping Stones Learning Academy
- Tender Loving Child Care

Laurens County First Steps
 301 Hillcrest Drive
 Laurens, SC 29360
 864-984-8130
rpatterson@laurens55.org



Bringing parents and teachers together as partners sets the foundation for success in school.

Program Description

Countdown to Kindergarten (CTK) is a summer home visitation model connecting rising kindergartners and their families with their future teachers. The program is designed:

- ✓ to forge strong and lasting home-school relationships,
- ✓ to acquaint children and families with the state and classroom expectations to increase the likelihood of school success,
- ✓ to increase parent involvement in the early grades (particularly in hard-to-reach communities), when children’s learning is foundational for life success; and
- ✓ to increase public awareness of the importance of school readiness and provide ways for parents and communities to impact children’s early school success.

Countdown to Kindergarten integrates all of the following:

Home Visitation. Teachers make six visits over the summer to the homes of participating students and families. Children and families are introduced to actual materials used in kindergarten and are given a Kindergarten Transition Toolkit to keep.

Learning Celebration. The last visit is a “field trip” to the school where the child will attend class in the fall.

Public Awareness. Throughout the summer, First Steps releases tips to media to help parents and caregivers get children ready for kindergarten.

*CTK by the Numbers, Summer 2015

Children Served	34
Families Served	33
Home/School Visits	204

**CTK program data is for June-August 2015, whereas CTK fiscal data includes expenditures from July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016.*



It's really hard to know what to do for school especially with a first child. This was a wonderful help to me!

Alana

This year, our Countdown to Kindergarten program:

- ✓ Increased the amount of time parents spent reading to children by 58%
- ✓ According to the results of the parent pre & post surveys, children’s feelings (from anxious to excited) about going to 5K increased 24%
- ✓ According to the results of the parent pre & post surveys, parents’ knowledge of what to expect in 5K increased 19%

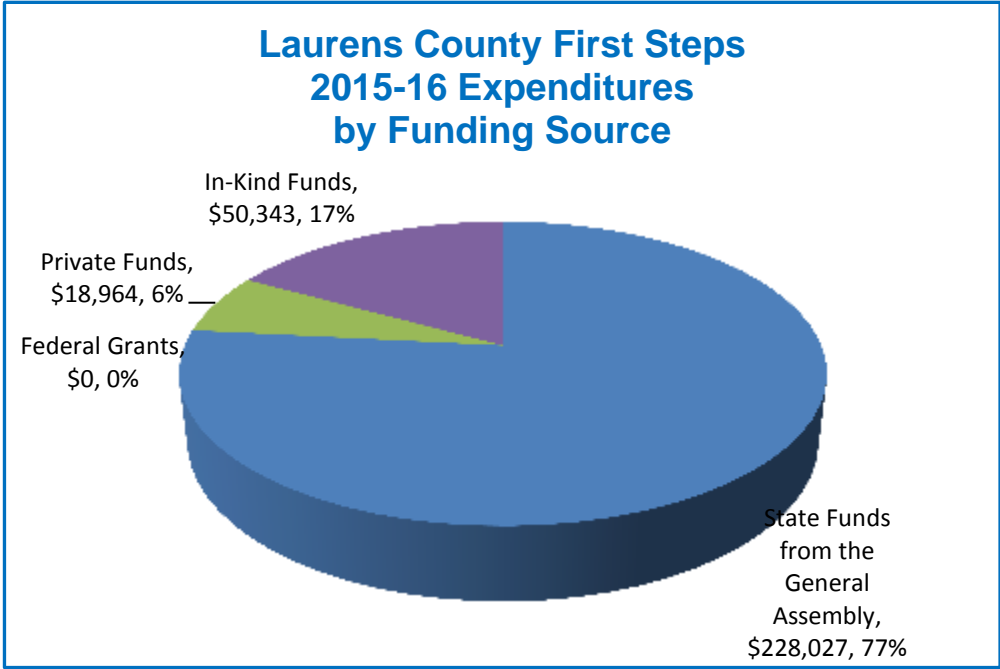
Thank you to our partners!

- Laurens County School Districts 55 & 56
- GLEAMNS Head Start
- Big Blue Marble
- MS Bailey Child Development Center
- Stepping Stones Learning Academy
- Tender Loving child Care
- Young World
- Kaplan Early Learning Company

Laurens County First Steps

301 Hillcrest Drive
 Laurens, SC 29360
 864-984-8130
rpatterson@laurens55.org

Financial Impact



Total 2015-16 Expenditures: \$297,332

State Funds Leveraged in 2015-16*: 31%

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

2015-16 Expenditures by Strategy

	State \$	Federal \$	Private \$	In-Kind \$	Total \$	% of 2015-16 Expenditures
Parents as Teachers	\$57,427	\$0	\$591	\$33,306	\$91,324	31%
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$3,189	\$0	\$8,368	\$1,232	\$12,789	4%
Child Care Training	\$42,465	\$0	\$3,416	\$6,760	\$52,641	18%
Child Care Scholarships	\$75,786	\$0	\$6,104	\$0	\$81,890	28%
Program Support	\$31,724	\$0	\$242	\$4,834	\$36,800	12%
Administrative Support	\$17,435	\$0	\$243	\$4,211	\$4,211	1%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$228,026	\$0	\$18,964	\$50,343	\$297,332	

Unaudited numbers for the period July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016

Since inception, Laurens County First Steps has leveraged \$2,338,669.59 from sources outside of state government. That's 51 cents for every state dollar.

Community Impact

In 2015, we learned from our child care partners of the new requirement by DSS licensing for a 26 hour online Health & Safety course for all staff at centers participating in the ABC Quality program. The 26 hour course would cover the yearly 15 hour requirement until 2017. In past years we have worked with 10 centers in Laurens County who send staff to our child care provider training sessions. Only one of these centers was not a participant in ABC Quality. This presented the prospect of having only one center to serve with training.

We had just hired a new director for the training program in August of 2015. The Board did not want to suspend the program so we devised a plan to continue to provide free quality training that would appeal to providers regardless of the hours. We enhanced follow-up visits to the training sessions and provided extra incentives for participants. We met with providers to discuss their needs and interests. This guided the process of choosing topics and trainers.

By the end of the program year we had a total attendance for 14 sessions of 288 staff and directors (unduplicated # 107). The trainings touched 487 children ages 0-5. We provided 34 hours of credit (31 certified, 3 registered) on a variety of DSS topic areas including CPR and first aid.

The program was successful in providing a service for the centers and their staff.



A'Riah loves driving like mommy!

Ethan knows his colors and ABC's!!



Thank you to our partners!

Funding Support

State of South Carolina: \$210,457
(through South Carolina First Steps)

United Way \$4,800 for CTK

LC School District 55 \$3,114 for CTK

In-Kind Support

Laurens County School Districts 55 & 56

Laurens Family YMCA

First Steps Partnership Board

Laurens County First Steps Board Supports Special Circumstances

In August of 2015 the director of Big Blue Marble Academy in Clinton, one of our partners, called to ask for assistance for a mom who had twins that had been at her center since birth. The mom had been laid off her job, but had gotten another job that paid much less. She was not going to be able to take the job without assistance with child care. She had no family to help with the care of the children. The children would turn 4 on 9-2-15 which means they just missed the birthday requirement for entering/being funded FS 4K at the center.

Although the twins were 47 months at the time, and we usually do not fund scholarships at that age, I presented the situation to the Board and asked for approval to fund scholarships for the children until the end of June 2016. After discussion, the Board approved the funding for the two scholarships.

I am very fortunate to work with and have the support of a Board that places the needs of families ahead of following precedent from past years.

Laurens County First Steps Partnership Board 2015-2016

Name	Position	Board Category
Linda Wessel, Chair	Technology & ECE School District 55	Pre K Primary Ed
Connie Parker, Secretary	USC Union Laurens Campus	Family Education
Jennifer Abercrombie	District 55 Vice Principal	Pre K Primary Ed
Kena Cox	District 55 Primary Montessori	Pre K Primary
Shirley Clark	District 55 Transportation	Faith
April Kingsborough	District 56 Student Shadow CHS	Faith
Elizabeth Frankin	First Baptist Church	Childcare/Early Childhood Development
Crissy Roach	Laurens Family YMCA	Childcare/Early Childhood Development
Shawn Brown	Guardian Ad Litem	Family Education
Brooke Robinette	Thornwell Child Development Center	Non-Profit
Kelsey Allen	Laurens County Health Dept	designated
Byron Dendy	Dept of Social Services	designated
Gwen Moore	Case Manager GLEAMNS Head Start	designated
Ann Szypulski	Director Laurens County Library	designated
Candee Langford District 55 Instructional Coach	District 55 Instructional Coach	designated
Melodie Edwards	Director Student Services District 56	designated
Christy Coates	Retired Elementary Teacher	Legislative appointee
Michelle Ellis	Nurse	Legislative appointee

The Goals of First Steps

- (1) To 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) To increase comprehensive services** so children have reduced risk for major physical, developmental, and learning problems;
- (3) To promote high quality preschool programs** that provide a healthy environment that will promote normal growth and development;
- (4) To 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) To 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 Laurens County:
864-225-6465 Regional Office

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

Save the Date!

Squealin on the Square [community BBQ festival]

Friday & Saturday, September 30 & October 1, 2016

Belk Charity Day

Saturday November 5, 2016

Annual Meeting

Monday, October 10, 2016 at Thornwell Home for Children