

MARION COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.

OUR VISION:

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



Annual Report

2015-16



Programs:

Child Care Quality Enhancement

Child Care Training

Child Care Scholarships

Literacy Program

First Steps WORKS for the children of Marion County.

By The Numbers

Indicator	SC	Marion County
Children Under Five	289,990	1,960
Children In Poverty	26.4%	48%
3 rd Graders Below Standard in Reading	21.1%	37.1
Births to Mothers With Less Than a High School Diploma	15.7%	19.1%

KIDS COUNT data provided by



- Since inception, Marion County First Steps has leveraged **\$661,178** from sources outside state government. **That's \$.16 for every dollar received.**
- **Implemented a county-wide Literacy Program** that benefits children, their parents and childcare providers in Marion County.
- **Dispersed more than \$150,000 in Childcare Scholarships** to at-risk, underserved children and their families.
- **Participated in the Statewide 25th Anniversary Celebration of the Read-In** at the State House in Columbia, SC
- **Total Children Served in FY16: 795**

Marion County First Steps

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 Florence, SC 29501

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Board Chairperson
 Victoria Belin

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<http://scfirststeps.com/florence>



Spencer R. Scott, MBA
Executive Director

We wake up every day supporting children and families laying the foundations for success in school and in life. Everything we do at Marion County First Steps is about Children. We have a responsibility as the voice of our children and we'll be using that voice again and again to ensure their success.

In June 2015, we outlined a plan to increase literacy and put our children into an educational environment. Although we accomplished our goals, this is a continuous process. As we progress, we seek community and partners to assist us in furthering the work of MCFS.

Program Success

Marion County First Steps continued to assist at-risk children and their families throughout FY16. More than 40 scholarships valuing over \$150,000 were distributed to children and families in need. The goal of scholarship distribution this fiscal year remained the same, allowing impoverished children who would not ordinarily be afforded the opportunity to experience quality childcare.

Building a Strong Literacy Foundation

The Marion County First Steps Literacy Based Program provides a literacy experience for birth to five year old children in public and private centers. The literacy coordinator read aloud to three and four year old children. The coordinator reads an age appropriate book. Each child is given a copy of the book along with a handout with parent-child interaction activities. The 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten is for children birth to five years old. Book baskets are put in businesses (physician offices, barbershops, salons, etc.) so that parents can read to their child while at the business. Parents earn rewards for reading to their child. Through these programs, Marion County First Steps is making an effort to increase literacy in Marion County.

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, Marion County First focuses its investments in Quality Care offering Childcare Training, Childcare Grants and ABC Scholarships.



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	3
Number of TA Visits Provided	56
Number of Children 0-5 Enrolled in Provider Classrooms	31

Congratulations to our QE participants for 2014-15!

Child Care Provider	Pre/Post Improvement
Tender Tots	From 4.66 to 4.74 +.08
Ms. Lil's	From 4.22 to 4.49 +.27
Tender Loving Care	From 3.34 to 3.73 +.34

This year, our Quality Enhancement program:

- ✓ Improved quality, on average, by .23 based on pre/post Environment Rating Scale assessments
- ✓ Provided 56 hours of technical assistance to child care providers
- ✓ Provided \$2,500 in materials grants to participating child care providers

Thank you to our partners!

- Ms. Lil's
- Tender Loving Care
- Tender Tots

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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.

My staff gets childcare training hours from other sources, but we still plan to get additional DSS hours from trainings provided by MCFS.

*Janet Simmons, Director
 Agapeland Childcare Center*



Child Care Training Sponsored by Marion First Steps, 2015-16

Topic:	Hours
Physical Activity: Sing & Dance for Fun and Fitness	2.5
Time for Rhymes	2.5

PLEASE NOTE: Number of training hours provided in FY16 decreased significantly due to availability of DSS credit hours online for FREE.

Obtaining DSS Credit Hours online is helpful, however having face-to-face trainings with MCFS is important, too.

Lillian Hunter, Owner/Director Ms. Lil's

Training by the Numbers, 2015-16

Total Training Attendance	24
Child Care Teachers and Directors Served	24
Number of Training Hours Offered	5

This year, our Training program provided:

- ✓ 24 early childhood staff with high quality training
- ✓ Quality Childcare Trainings were offered at affordable rates to childcare providers in Marion County and the Pee Dee.
- ✓ 5 hours of Certified Training due to the availability of DSS Credit hours offers online at NO CHARGE.

Thank you to our partners!

- Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Reverend A.C. Robinson, Pastor
- Department of Social Services
- CCRR
- Childcare Instructors

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Child Care Scholarships

Too many families in Marion 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.

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

- 100% ... Live in Poverty
- 88% ... TANF Eligibility
- 52% ... Substance Abuse
- 15% ... Domestic Violence
- 54% ... Depression
- 20% ... Low Birth Weight & Developmental Delays and Mental Illness
- 2% ... Teenage Parent, High School Dropout, Free Lunch

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.

MCFS supports the Wrap-Around services concept. As such, childcare providers who receive childcare scholarship funding also participate in MCFS sponsored childcare trainings and facilities that receive the same aforementioned funds, also participate in the Facility Quality Enhancement (FQE) program.

Receiving childcare is a great help being that I am a single parent on a low income job. I work 40hours a week and trying to afford daycare expenses, so help is greatly appreciated.

Appolonia Perkins
Childcare Scholarship Recipient



This childcare scholarship helps me because I am a single mother. The money I save because of help with daycare goes to other bills like groceries, etc.

Brittany Rogers,
Childcare Scholarship Recipient

Scholarships by the Numbers, 2015-16

Children Served	44
Providers Served	7

- This year, our Scholarship program:**
- ✓ Provided 44 children with scholarship assistance so their parents could work or attend school
 - ✓ Provided more than \$150,000 to at-risk, under-served, impoverished children and their families in Marion County.
 - ✓ Supported 7 small businesses in Marion County by subsidizing child care tuition for families who would not otherwise be able to afford quality care.

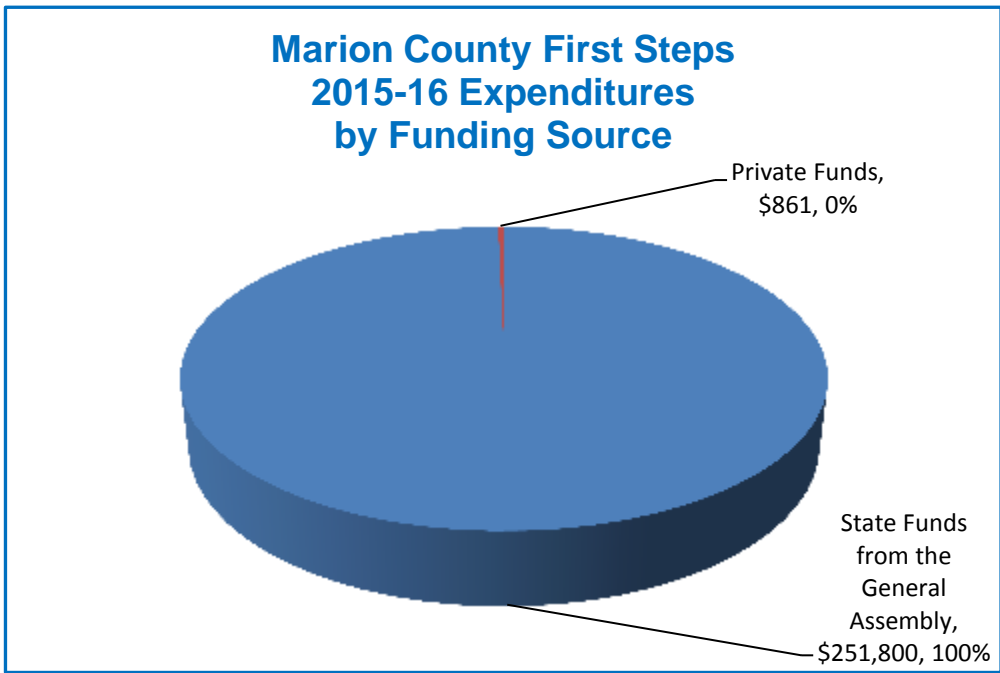
Thank you to our partners!

- McGill's Bundles of Joy * Agapeland Daycare Center
- Pleasant Grove Baptist Church * Sugar Bears Daycare
- Little Promises Daycare * Troy Johnson Learning Korner * Ms. Lil's Daycare

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Financial Impact



Total 2015-16 Expenditures: \$252,662

State Funds Leveraged in 2015-16*: 0.34%

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

2015-16 Expenditures by Strategy

	State \$	Private \$	In-Kind \$	Total \$	% of 2015-16 Expenditures
Child Care Quality Enhancement	\$21,445	\$26	\$0	\$21,472	8%
Literacy Program	\$49,920	\$141	\$0	\$50,062	20%
Child Care Training	\$18,327	\$367	\$0	\$18,694	7%
Child Care Scholarships	\$122,500	\$0	\$0	\$122,500	48%
Program Support	\$27,745	\$327	\$0	\$28,072	11%
Administrative Support	\$11,863	\$0	\$0	\$11,863	5%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$251,800	\$862	\$0	\$252,662	

Since inception, Marion County First Steps has leveraged \$661,178 from sources outside of state government. That's \$.16 cents for every state dollar.

*MCFS attends the 25th Anniversary Celebration of the
South Carolina Read-In
April 14, 2016*

This year, MCFS along with hundreds of other educational institutions (childcare providers, elementary schools, middle schools, and even high schools) attended the 25th Anniversary Celebration of the South Carolina Read-In. This celebration focuses on the importance of reading and encourages children, young and old, to do so.

More than 2,000 children and adults of all ages were in attendance. This year's event started with a parade in the heart of downtown Columbia and ended up on the steps and the lawn of the South Carolina State House. This year's theme was appropriately titled, *The Magic of Books*, and a number of well known, city officials and local characters were in attendance in support of this year's 25th Anniversary Celebration. The Clemson Tiger, USC's Cockey, ETV's Smart Cat, Lady Louise along with her manager, and Karen Petit were all among those who made special appearances and made this year's event even more successful.

Mark your calendars, next year's event is already scheduled to be on April 4, 2017. Like many other organizations and their young readers, MCFS plans to be in attendance.



- (L) Jean Pearson and young readers from Pleasant Grove Academy pose after attending the Read In Celebration
- (M) Thousands of young readers line the steps of the South Carolina State House during the Read In Celebration
- (R) Staff and Students from Troy Johnson's Learning Korner participate in this year's Read In Parade & Celebration

McGill's Bundles of Joy

Received over \$50,000 in childcare scholarships in FY16

New Location NOW OPEN!!

FY15...MCGILL'S BUNDLES OF JOY...COMING SOON...NEW LOCATION!!



**McGill's Bundles of Joy
1104 Lombardy Street
Marion S.C. 29571**

FY16....MCGILL'S Bundles OF JOY.....NOW OPEN!!!



(L) Loretta McGill with local city officials at the Ribbon Cutting for McGill's Bundles of Joy's new location.

(R) McGill staff working with students at the new location of McGills Bundles of Joy.

Literacy Program

Parents are their child's first and best teachers.

Program Description

Family literacy programs offer an integrated and family-friendly approach, helping both parents and children to improve their literacy skills. Family literacy services integrate all of the following:

1. Interactive Parent/Child Activities
2. Training in storytelling techniques

Our family literacy program:

- ✓ Provide literacy experiences for birth to four year old.
- ✓ Provide read aloud sessions for 3 and 4 year old children.

Marion County First Steps serves families in greatest need. Among our literacy program families:

*The number of parents reading to their child for 30 minutes increased by 39 children.

* The number of children asking to be read to at least 6 times a week increased by 12 children.

Literacy by the Numbers 2015-16

Children Served	720
One-on-One Client Visit Hours	240.5



Britton's Neck Elementary student draws a picture of her favorite book.

This year, our Literacy Program:

- ✓ Increased the amount of time parents read to their child(ren)
- ✓ Children increase interest in books and reading



Student from Joyland Child Care Center draws a picture of MCFS Literacy Coordinator, Mrs. B



Thank you to our partners!

- Marion County School District
- Pee Dee Community Action Agency-Head Start
- Local Child Care Facilities



First Steps Partnership Board

Another Successful Year for Marion County First Steps Pleasant Grove Baptist Church Hosts the Year-End Celebration!

On December 8, 2015, the Marion County First Steps Board of Directors and staff gathered at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church with local childcare directors, childcare providers, childcare training instructors, parents, and the partnership partners (Zeta Phi Beta, Inc. Sorority, Kaplan, DSS, FCFS, churches, and more) to celebrate another successful year of service to young children in an effort to prepare them to succeed in school. Executive Director, Spencer R. Scott, provided an overview of the program expenditures and allocations for the year, then he recognized and formerly thanked everyone for their continuous support of Marion County First Steps. Awards and recognition were followed by performances from childcare providers in attendance and then attendees enjoyed a hearty, but healthy lunch provided by Marion County First Steps. Children in attendance were treated to story time, and jumping and bouncing in the giant inflatable that was furnished by Marion County First Steps. Kids of all ages had lots of fun and look forward to doing it again next year!

Marion County First Steps Partnership Board, 2015-16

Name	Position	Board Category
Victoria Belin	Board Chairperson	Early Childhood
Howard Blakeney	Board Vice-Chairman	Faith Based Community
Rachel Mason	Board Member	Healthcare Provider
Yolanda Moore	Board Member	Healthcare Provider
Lula Coleman	Board Member	Transportation Provider
Jackie Curry	Board Member	Non-Profit Organization
Julie Graves	Board Member	Parent of Pre-School Children
Betty Hamilton	Board Member	Early Childhood Education
Eleanor Paige	Board Member	Early Childhood Education
Tameka Swinton	Board Member	Early Childhood Education
Annette Gerald	Board Member	Early Childhood
Bernard Gerald	Board Member	Healthcare Provider

Florence County First Steps 2015-2016 Local Legislature

SC Senate Delegation	SC House Delegation	US Congressional Delegation
Kent M. Williams, District 62	J. Wayne George, District 57	Senator Lindsey Graham
	Roger K. Kirby, District 61	Senator Timothy E. Scott
		Congressman Tom Rice

Florence County First Steps 2015-2016 Staff

Spencer R. Scott, Executive Director
 Reeshemah Harrison, Early Childhood Consultant
 Beryl Collington, Literacy Coordinator

Thank you to all of our local legislatures and board members for a great 2015-2016.

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 Marion County:
843-669-8689

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

Support Marion First Steps today through a tax-deductible donation, or volunteer!