

OCONEE COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.



Nurse-Family Partnership

Parents as Teachers

Child Care Training

Child Care Scholarships

Countdown to Kindergarten

# Annual Report

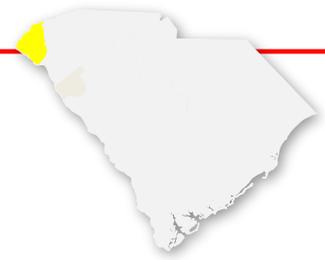
2015-16



## OUR VISION:

“All children in Oconee County will have the care they need to grow & develop to their full potential.”

First Steps WORKS for the children of Oconee County!



## By The Numbers

Indicator	SC	Oconee County
Children Under Five	289,990	3,971
Children In Poverty	26.4%	23.7%
3 <sup>rd</sup> Graders Below Standard in Reading	21.1%	19.6%
Births to Mothers With Less Than a High School Diploma	15.7%	16.0 %

KIDS COUNT data provided by



- Since inception, Oconee County First Steps has leveraged **\$3,550,514.07** from sources outside state government. **That's \$1.08 for every dollar received.**
- **194 home visits and 194 hours of service** were provided to 16 first time, low income mothers through the Nurse Family Partnership Program.
- **519 home visits and 710 hours of support and guidance** were provided to 18 families with 27 adults and 35 children through the POPS/PAT Program.
- **Childcare professionals received 39.50 hours** of technical assistance for early care best practices.
- Improved parenting practices **through 32 Group Connection Meetings.**
- **Total Children Served in FY16: 1,041**

### Oconee County First Steps

409 E. North 1st St, Suite C, Seneca, SC 29678

Phone: 864-985-4357

**Board Chair**  
 Stacie Powell

Email: [dunnamsmith@nctv.com](mailto:dunnamsmith@nctv.com)

[www.oconeefirststeps.org](http://www.oconeefirststeps.org)

### OCFS Works for our Children, Parents and Taxpayers

Greetings from Marie M. Dunnam, LISW-CP, Executive Director

Oconee County First Steps is alive and well as we continue our work toward fulfilling our Vision Statement: "All children in Oconee County will have the care they need to grow and develop to their full potential".

We are aware that nothing happens in a vacuum, but rather through nurturing our relationships with others, and cultivating new ones through collaboration and partnership.

As a result, we started our **{I CAN}** Campaign in early December 2015, and as usual invited not only our partners, but parents, educators and the entire community to join us.

We were thrilled to have Senator Thomas Alexander; Sheriff Mike Crenshaw; Oconee County Council Chair, Paul Cain; City of Seneca Mayor Dan Alexander; and Oconee County School District Superintendent Michael Thorsland to be the first to join us in making their **{I Can}** statements which were posted on our Facebook page and displayed on digital billboards in April and May.

Everyone has a part to play, and it is true, everyone **{CAN}** do something to assist in preparing our children to arrive at first grade healthy and ready to learn. Please let us know what **{YOU CAN}** do by visiting our website: [www.oconeefirststeps.org](http://www.oconeefirststeps.org) and by **liking Oconee County First Steps on FB.**

The board and I hope you enjoy reading our FY 15-16 Annual Report as it truly represents your success as well.



Healthy Start



Family Strengthening



Early Intervention



Quality Child Care



Early Education



School Transition

### County Programs

**NFP**

**Parents as Teachers**

**CC Training**

**CC Scholarships**

**Countdown to**

**Kindergarten**

### State Programs

**BabyNet**

**First Steps 4K**

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, Oconee County First focuses its investments in Healthy Start, Family Strengthening, Quality Child Care, and School Transition.**

**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 Oconee County, Nurse-Family Partnership is implemented through Greenville Health System.



Oconee County First Steps serves families in greatest need. Among our NFP families:

- 100% ... live in poverty
- 56% ...teenage moms
- 91% ...delivered full term, healthy babies

## NFP by the Numbers, 2015-16

Moms Served	16
Number of Home Visits	194

*"Our family is thrilled with the NFP program! We always look forward to our nurse's visits as she has taught us so much." Victoria Dagostaro*

### This year, our NFP program:

- ✓ 100% of children with a developmental delay were identified and referred.
- ✓ 10 healthy babies were delivered

### Thank you to our partners!

BabyNet  
 Greenville Health System  
 "Principles of Partnering Successfully" {POPS}

### Oconee County First Steps

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**Parents play a critical role in their child's development.**

## Program Description

The "Principles of Parenting Successfully" (POPS) program is a voluntary holistic, long-term, in-home parenting education prevention program geared toward assisting "high risk" families with children prenatal through age five in preparing their children to arrive at first grade healthy and ready to learn. The program uses two evidenced-based curriculums: Parents as Teachers (PAT), and Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEPS).

POPS is a PAT Affiliate, and services provided 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

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

100% ... live in poverty  
61% ... didn't graduate from high school  
22% ... were teen parents

*"Year after year I have seen the impact the POPS program has had on the families and children of our county, and I remain grateful for its continuing impact".*

*L. Sanders, Community Member*

## PAT by the Numbers 2015-16

Families Served	18	
Children Served	35	
Total Home Visits	519	
Hours Spent Serving Families	710	
Average gain, Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (prior to current)	KIPS 43%	ACIRI A: 1.37% C: 55%

## This year, our Parents as Teachers program:

- ✓ Averaged 29 home visits per family
- ✓ Identified and addressed 16 potential developmental delays
- ✓ Improved parenting practices: Gain of 43% (prior to current) on the Keys to Interactive Parenting (KIPS) Assessment.
- ✓ Improved literacy skills: Adult gain of 1.37% & child gain of 88% (prior to current) on the Adult/Child Interactive Reading Inventory (ACIRI).
- ✓ Held 15 group meetings and provided 45 hours of training on topics such as: Library Resources; Safe Sleep; Grocery Shopping on a Budget, etc.
- ✓ Made 184 connections for families to services such as BabyNet; 3 & 4 year old kindergarten; Early Head Start/Head Start; Mental Health Counseling, domestic violence shelters, and medical homes.

## Thank you to our partners!

Oconee County Department of Social Services  
Family Friends  
Ripple of One

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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.

*“Many thanks to Oconee County First Steps for providing the free child care training. As a child care worker, I would not otherwise be able to obtain my required recertification hours in order to continue my job”.*  
 C. Hawkins

Topic:	Session
Curriculum	6 sessions= 11 hours
Growth & Development	3 sessions= 7 hours
Health & Safety	3 sessions= 4 hours
Professional Development	2 sessions= 3 hours



Child care staff working in small groups with trainer.

## Training by the Numbers, 2015-16

Total Training Attendance	358
Child Care Teachers and Directors Served	209
Number of Training Sessions Offered	14

## This year, our Training program provided:

- ✓ 209 early childhood staff with high quality training which touched the lives of 972 children, birth through five.
- ✓ 24 hours of certified and 1 hour of registered training for staff to meet annual re-certification requirements.
- ✓ 17 follow-up visits with a total of 39.50 hours spent with training participants to help put training into practice.

## Thank you to our partners!

- Oconee County Department of Social Services
- SC Child Care Resource & Referral Network
- Heath’s Haven

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# Child Care Scholarships

Too many families in Oconee 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.

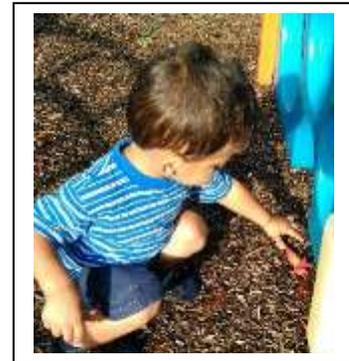
Oconee County First Steps serves families in greatest need. Among our scholarship families:

- 100% ... live in poverty
- 49% ... were teen parents
- 88% ...were single parent households

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.

The scholarship program is integrated with our POPS/PAT and Child Care Training strategies.

*"Thanks to Oconee County First Steps for the CC Scholarships for my children that enabled me to find a job and continue to support my family". A. Alexander*



## Scholarships by the Numbers, 2015-16

Children Served	8
Providers Served	5

## This year, our Scholarship program:

- ✓ Provided 8 children with scholarship assistance so their parents could work or attend school
- ✓ Identified and addressed 2 potential developmental delays among scholarship children
- ✓ Two moms were referred for scholarships by Family Friends and the POPS/PAT Program.
- ✓ Supported 5 small businesses in Oconee County by subsidizing child care tuition for families who would not otherwise be able to afford quality care
- ✓ Provided 40 hours of health-related training for scholarship parents on topics such as "Building a Healthy Brain; Stress Management; "Help Me Eat Healthy", & Developing Gross Motor Skills".

## Thank you to our partners!

- Barbara Bryant's Kinderville Learning Center/Cambridge Child Development Center/Kreative Kids/Pennsylvania Children's Center
- Health's Haven
- "Principles of Parenting Successfully" POPS/PAT
- Family Friends

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**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; followed by a graduation ceremony complete with caps & gowns, ice cream and cake.

**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	10
Families Served	10
Home/School Visits	60

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



**Countdown to Kindergarten Graduation at James M. Brown Elementary School - complete with caps, gowns and certificates.**

## This year, our Countdown to Kindergarten program:

- ✓ 100% gain in parents' knowledge of kindergarten expectations at their child's school.
- ✓ 233% gain in parent knowing and trusting the child's kindergarten teacher.
- ✓ 400% gain in child knowing and trusting his/her kindergarten teacher.

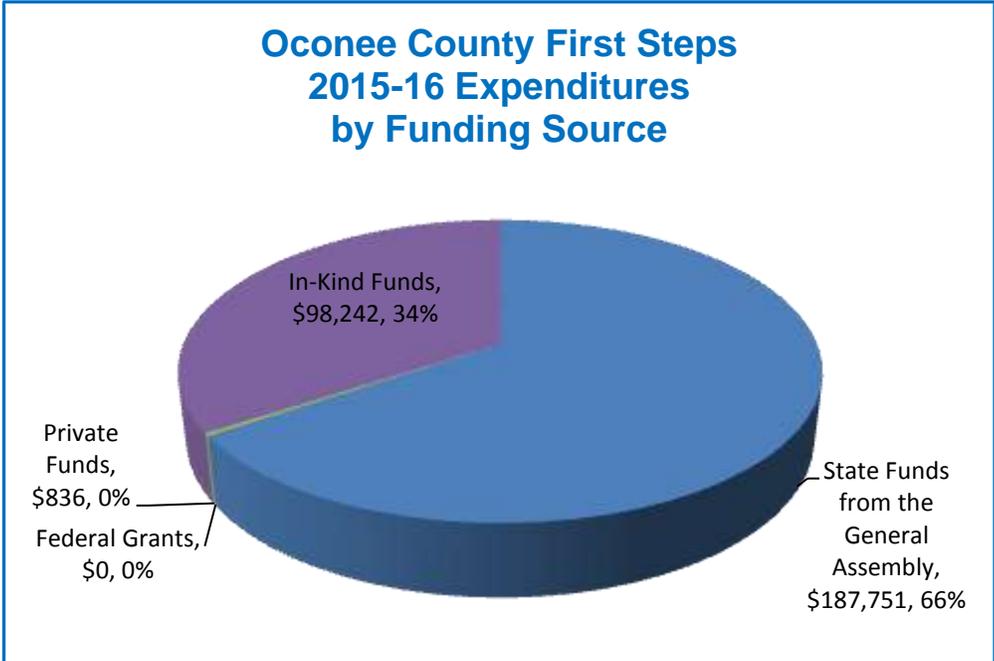
## Thank you to our partners!

James M. Brown Elementary School  
Kaplan  
School District of Oconee County  
United Way of Oconee County

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# Financial Impact



**Total 2015-16 Expenditures: \$286,829**

**State Funds Leveraged in 2015-16\*: 53%**

*\*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	\$52,000	\$0	\$0	\$90,301	\$142,301	50%
Nurse-Family Partnership	\$35,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$35,000	12%
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$1,733	\$0	\$836	\$821	\$3,390	1%
Child Care Training	\$12,004	\$0	\$0	\$1,770	\$13,774	5%
Child Care Scholarships	\$29,160	\$0	\$0	\$420	\$29,580	10%
Program Support	\$42,235	\$0	\$0	\$3,170	\$45,405	16%
Administrative Support	\$15,618	\$0	\$0	\$1,760	\$17,378	6%
						0%
						0%
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$187,751</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$836</b>	<b>\$98,242</b>	<b>\$286,829</b>	

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

**Since inception, Oconee County First Steps has leveraged \$3,550,514 from sources outside of state government. That's \$1.08 for every state dollar.**

## Mother Makes It!

### Sherry Barker and her two children Adanna, and A'Brianna

Sherry Barker, a 38 year-old single mother of two daughters began the 'Principles of Parenting' {POPS/PAT} program in July 2015. Her oldest daughter, Adanna was almost 3 years old and her youngest daughter A'Brianna was four months old. They lived in a single wide mobile home with two bedrooms, and two baths.

The mother and children were receiving assistance from SNAP and Medicaid; however, the biological father of the two girls was providing diapers and some clothing.

The mother was attending Tri County Technical College and was in need of childcare. She was referred to the OCFS Child Care Scholarship Program, and the oldest child was accepted at Kinderville Learning Center. This much needed service enabled Ms. Barker to continue her education.

The mother and children have been very attentive at every home visit. The mother is very interactive with both girls. POPS staff has worked with Ms. Barker on milestones and discipline. There has been some sibling rivalry for attention, but the staff and Ms. Barker are finding and developing ways for the children to interact with each other. The biological father and Ms. Barker became engaged in May 2016, and he has demonstrated he is a good role model, very creative and hands on. He loves playing and making things with the girls for the different holidays and birthdays.

This single mother, while attending college, has managed to provide required "sweat equity hours" on her soon to be Habitat home, graduate from college (May 2016), and secure a job. She has overcome a lot of obstacles to achieve her goals of becoming a loving, caring, dedicated and mature mother; a graduate of a two year college; and a soon to be homeowner.



**Oconee County First Steps Programs are Community-Based, Customized and Comprehensive.**

**NATIONAL WEEK OF THE YOUNG CHILD**

**OCFS/NFP Kick-Off National Week of the Young Child with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Community Baby Shower**

The event was a success with 25 community agencies/organizations and medical providers participating with each supplying information and special give-a-ways to the many first time mothers and their families attending. In addition, there were free diaper bags for the first time 50 pregnant moms, food provided by the Nurse-Family Partnership program, and numerous drawings for special prizes. Five eligible pregnant women signed up for the NFP Program, and if chosen for the program, will receive a free car seat two weeks prior to their delivery date.

The event exemplified how local First Steps partnerships serve as community conveners and portals for early childhood education and care. It also created a way for funders and other stakeholders in the Oconee County area to connect to children and families living in various areas of the county who may not have been aware of the many available resources. Not only did OCFS engage the community in yet another fun event, but it also succeeded in promoting good health and wellbeing for potential NFP clients and other young families; and in connecting families to other organizations who can provide them affordable programming for their health needs.



*While listening to WSNW, 94.1, a first time mom heard about the shower, and came right over to sign up for NFP.*



*One of our participating NFP moms shows off her door prize.*

## Thank you to our partners!

### Funding Support

- State of South Carolina: \$187,751  
(through South Carolina First Steps)
- United Way of Oconee County: \$1,600
- Other Donation: \$300

### In-Kind Support

- Oconee County DSS: \$91,601
- United Way of Oconee County: \$5,120
- Kaplan: \$420
- InSite Media: \$650



# First Steps Partnership Board

## Oconee County First Steps Board Remains Committed and Strong

During FY 15-16, the Oconee County First Steps Board and its partners remained committed and dedicated as evidenced by the 1, 947 hours of volunteer service provided in support of & participation in the following activities: State Office Site Visit & Attendance at 2015 Chairmen’s Early Education Submit; Development of Priority Goals & Objectives; Follow-Up Health-Related Needs Assessment; Early Childhood Education Resource & Referral Workshops; Universal Staffing; Child Care Training; Website Design; our Annual “Warm a Child for the Winter” Project, and the planning and participating in the Oconee County First Steps/GHS Nurse-Family Community Baby Shower during National Week of the Young Child.

In addition, 100% of the board members made monetary donations to Oconee County First Steps during FY 15-16.

**Value of volunteer Time for FY 15-16: 1,947 hours x \$23.54=\$45,832.38.**

### Oconee County First Steps Partnership Board, 2015-2016

Name	Position	Board Category
Stacie Powell, Chair	Youth Director, Oconee County Library System	Library Appointee
Sandra W. Pruitt, Vice Chair	Director, Family Friends	Legislative Appointee
Kathleen Davis, Secretary	Director, Kids Korner	Pre-Kindergarten/Primary Ed.
Regina Gambrell	Owner/Director, Kreative Kids	Pre-Kindergarten-Primary Ed.
Kendra Vincent	Former 4K Teacher and Counselor	Pre-Kindergarten-Primary Ed.
Suzanne Evans	Community Advocate/Former Child Care Director	Child Care/Early Childhood Develop.
Erin Moon	Case Manager, Mountain Lakes Access Health	Health
Heather Goss	Director, Mountain Lakes Access Health	Non-Profit
Judy Metcalf	Director, Community Missions, Grace Baptist Church	Faith
Karen McBryde	Facilitator,” Parent’s Night Out”, Seneca Presby. Church	Faith
Dineen Schile	Co-Owner-Lake Keowee Marina	Business
Tina Kirby	Code Enforcement Officer, City of Seneca	Government
Molly Tannery	Director, Early Intervention, DDSN	Parent of a Young Child & Legislative Appointee
Sharon Grant	LEAD POPS Worker, Oconee DSS	DSS Appointee
George Washington	Parent Advocate, Head Start	Head Start Appointee
Misty Lee	SC DHEC, Upstate Region, Community Systems Team	DHEC Appointee
Ann Douglas	SDOC Director of Early Learning	SDOC Appointee
Annette Burney	Youth Auxiliary of the Seneca River Women’s Auxiliary & Area Coordinator, Youth Dept. of Women’s Baptist E & M Convention of South Carolina	Legislative Appointee
J. Daniel Whitehurst, Jr.	Retired Oconee County DSS Director	Legislative Appointee

# Getting children ready for school.

## 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 Oconee County:  
864-225-6465

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