



## 2016 - 2017 Program Strategies

**Parent Child Home**

**Parents as Teachers**

**Child Care Quality  
Enhancement**

**Child Care Training**

**Child Care Scholarships**

# Annual Report

2016-17



## OUR VISION:

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



## By The Numbers

Indicator	SC	Florence County
Children Under Five	293,134	8,699
Children In Poverty	24.4%	28.7%
3 <sup>rd</sup> Graders Scoring "Does Not Meet" Standard in Reading	22.2%	Florence 1: 19.7% Florence 2: 17.9% Florence 3: 35.4% Florence 4: 64.6% Florence 5: 20.2%
Births to Mothers With Less Than a High School Diploma	15.0%	15.1%

KIDS COUNT data provided by



**Florence County First Steps**  
 Spencer R Scott  
 Executive Director

### Unknown Parents Story...

We recently had our first child and she's a beautiful bundle of joy without instructions. We've never been so afraid before in our lives. You see, she was born premature with numerous complications. The day we brought her home, we asked if the nurses could come home with us. Luckily, a friend of ours mentioned a program called Florence County First Steps. She wasn't sure of all the programs but said to give them a call. We did!

We learned that they offer **child care scholarships** which allowed me to go back to college for Nursing and her father to go back to work (*28 children received scholarships*). Not knowing anything about childcare facilities, they explained the different levels A, B, and C Centers versus Family and Groups as well as what's most important to us: location, cost, rating, teacher experience, etc... I didn't know this but they also **Trained the Providers** in the facilities and offer **Technical Assistance with Quality Enhancements Grants** to purchase educational items they may need to improve their ECERS Assessment scores (*130.5 TA hours*). They also contacted Florence School District to get us involved in the **Parenting Classes** (*57 children and families were served*). We learned so much from our Home Visitor. We used an assessment tool called Ages & Stages to evaluate our child development. I felt so empowered! We discovered she was a little delayed and they referred us to a program called **BabyNet**. BabyNet sent a different Home Visitor to assess her and created a development plan to address her needs. We were so thankful and felt blessed to have heard about First Steps. Unfortunately, we fell behind on our rent and utility bills. You know they said not to worry because they collaborate with other agencies to address the needs of our family. They referred us to Lighthouse Ministry and Community Action Agency. They quickly address our needs and everything is current.

With the limited resources First Steps receives, every dollar is used for the betterment of our youngest learners. Although, every experience and needs aren't the same, First Steps strive to give every family the best experience possible.

- Since inception, Florence County First Steps has leveraged \$2,303,408 from sources outside state government. That's \$.24 for every dollar received.
- 64 Children and 64 families were served through Parenting Program. The Home Visitors made 2,997 home visits and spent 1,562 hours serving the families.
- Enhancing the Quality of a Childcare facility: FCFS served 6 childcare providers, 140 children 0 - 5 years old and conducted 142 Technical Assistance (TA) visits.
- Childcare professionals received 130.5 hours of technical assistance for early care best practices, 28 early childhood staff with high quality training, 10 hours of certified training for staff to meet annual re-certification requirements and 259 children had access to teachers that were trained through FCFS
- Provided 28 children with scholarship assistance so their parents could work or attend school, Supported 13 small businesses in Florence County by subsidizing child care tuition for families who would not otherwise be able to afford quality care, Identified and addressed 14 potential developmental delays among scholarship children, Made 10 connections for families to services such as Parenting and Medical services, Provided 2 hours of training for scholarship parents in topics such as High Quality Child Care.
- Total Children Served in FY17:225



Heathy Start



Family Strengthening



Early Interventiv



Quality Child Care



Early Education



School Transition

## Florence County First Steps

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# 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 Head Start expands quality early learning and family support to infants and toddlers.



**Early Intervention**

Children’s school readiness depends on their healthy growth and development. First Steps helps identify potential delays early through developmental screenings and referring children to BabyNet and other early intervention 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 are ultimately preparing children for school success.

**Based on the needs of our community, Florence County First focuses its investments in Family Strengthening, Quality Childcare and Scholarships**

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

## Program Description

Parent Child Home is an evidence-based home visiting program designed to build strong communities, thriving families and children who are healthy, safe and ready to succeed. PCH services include:

1. **Personal Visits** at least six times monthly
2. **Screenings and Assessments** to identify concerns
3. **Service** to the most At-Risk Children and their families
4. **Connections** to Outside Resources that families may need to succeed.

## PCH by the Numbers 2016-17

Families Served	49	
Children Served	49	
Total Home Visits	2,705	
Hours Spent Serving Families	1,257	
Average gain, <i>Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale</i> (pre-to-post):	KIPS-0.33	ACIRI: A:-0.04 C: .009

**Florence First Steps serves families in greatest need. Among our PCH families:**

- 100% ... **Live in poverty**
- 100% ... **Eligible for SNAP assistance**
- 91% ... **single parent households have a need for other services**

### This year, our Parent-Child Home program:

- ✓ Averaged home visits per month 6.8.
- ✓ Served 100% of families with at least one South Carolina First Steps approved Risk Factors.
- ✓ 1,246 hours were spent in homes with families.
- ✓ Average of 44.9% of families participating in PCH attended at least 1 group meeting.

### Thank you to our partners!

- Florence School District Three
- Florence School District Four
- Florence School District Five

**Florence County First Steps**  
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# Parents as Teachers

**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

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

- 100% ... live in poverty
- 46% ... low maternal education
- 33% ... transients/numerous family locations

*It has taught us how to use things around the house to teach my child. The information my home visitor provides teaches me about child development and how to teach my child.*

Brandi

*I wouldn't change anything about this program. We are so happy and impressed with all services provided.*



## PAT by the Numbers 2016-17

Families Served	15	
Children Served	15	
Total Home Visits	292	
Hours Spent Serving Families	305	
Average gain, Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (pre-to-post):	KIPS-0.15	ACIRI: A:1.36 C:1.2

**This year, our Parents as Teachers program:**

- ✓ Averaged 2.01 home visits per family
- ✓ Improved 0.15 parenting practices based on KIPS
- ✓ 93.3% of enrolled families meet the standard of 2 visits per month
- ✓ No children were Identified with any potential developmental delays

**Thank you to our partners!**

**Florence School District One**

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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, 2016-17

Child Care Providers Served	6
Number of TA Visits Provided	142
Number of Children 0-5 Enrolled in Provider Classrooms	140

### *Congratulations to our QE participants for 2016-17!*

Child Care Provider	Pre/Post Improvement
Posh Tots (New)	2.21
Sugar Bear Day Care (New)	2.68
Colonial Child Care (New)	4.18
Precious Ones Learning Center	3.22 to 3.37
Creative Learning Center	3.32 to 3.94
Kids First Learning Center	3.45 to 4.03

## This year, our Quality Enhancement program:

- ✓ Improved quality, on average, by 0.35 based on pre/post Environment Rating Scale assessments
- ✓ Provided 130.5 hours of technical assistance to child care providers
- ✓ Provided \$9,449.93 in materials grants to participating child care providers
- ✓ Funded scholarships for 12 children within participating child care providers

## Thank you to our partners!

- Creative Learning Center
- Colonial Child Care
- Precious Ones Learning Center
- Sugar Bear Day Care
- Posh Tots
- Kids First Learning Center

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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.

*I love the trainings that FCFS host. One of their trainers is Mrs. Nicole Weeks. She is always so upbeat and loves early childhood !*  
 --Mary Hannah

**Child Care Training Sponsored by  
 Florence First Steps, 2016-17**

<u>Topic:</u>	<u>Sessions:</u>
Fun with Sensory and Science	1 session
Arts and Crafts the Kid Way	1 session
Baby Read Aloud Basics	1 session
Bullying Basics	1 session
STAR: Staying on Track and Relaxed	1 session



Child care providers working together during a Saturday morning child care training.

## Training by the Numbers, 2016-17

Total Training Attendance	58
Child Care Teachers and Directors Served	28
Number of Training Sessions Offered	5

**This year, our Training program provided:**

- ✓ 28 early childhood staff with high quality training
- ✓ 10 hours of certified training for staff to meet annual re-certification requirements
- ✓ 259 children had access to teachers that were trained through FCFS

## Thank you to our partners!

- Florence Darlington Technical College
- Florence County Library

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# Child Care Scholarships

**Too many families in Florence 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.

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

- 23 ... live in poverty
- 5 ... low birth weight
- 4 ... parental domestic violence
- 4 ... had developmental delays

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.

With FCFS scholarships we try to partner with families who are participating in Nurse Family Partnership and Parenting through the school district.

*Receiving a scholarship allows a place for my child to go while I work. She is receiving an early start with learning besides what I teach her at home!*  
 --Lakim Shepard



### Scholarships by the Numbers, 2016-17

Children Served	28
Providers Served	13

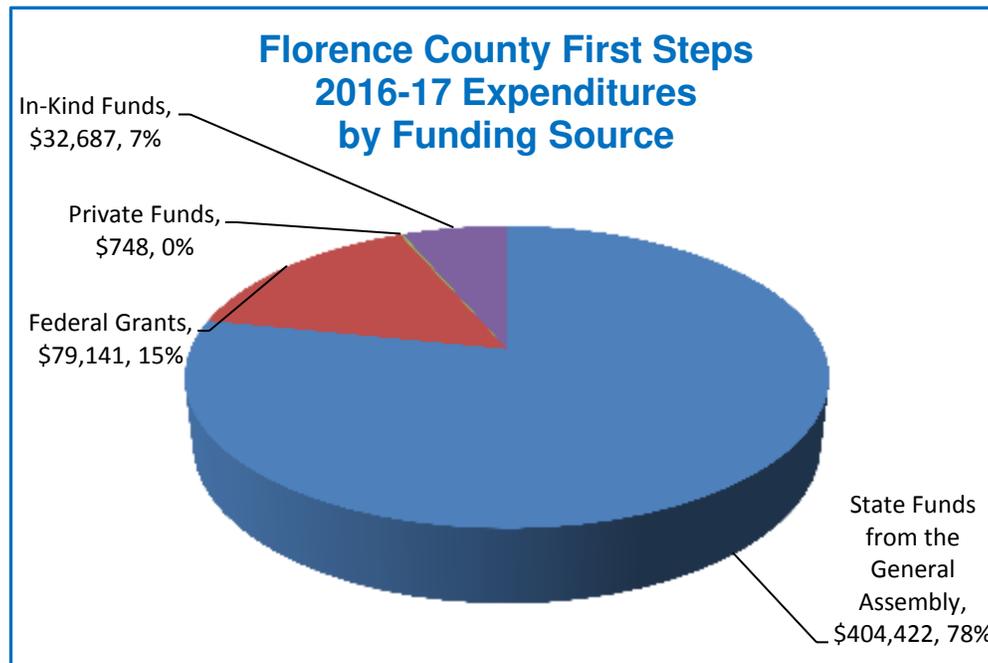
### This year, our Scholarship program:

- ✓ Provided 28 children with scholarship assistance so their parents could work or attend school
- ✓ Identified and addressed 14 potential developmental delays among scholarship children
- ✓ Made 10 connections for families to services such as Parenting and Medical services.
- ✓ Supported 13 small businesses in Florence County by subsidizing child care tuition for families who would not otherwise be able to afford quality care
- ✓ Provided 2 hours of training for scholarship parents in topics such as High Quality Child Care.

### Thank you to our partners!

- SC Department of Social Services
- Florence County Child Care Facilities
- BabyNet
- Nurse Family Partnership

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**Total 2016-17 Expenditures: \$516,998**

**State Funds Leveraged in 2016-17\*: 28%**

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

## 2016-17 Expenditures by Strategy

	State \$	Federal \$	Private \$	In-Kind \$	Total \$	% of 2016-17 Expenditures
Parents as Teachers	\$20,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$20,000	4%
Parent Child Home	\$58,746	\$0	\$0	\$14,700	\$73,446	14%
Child Care Quality Enhancement	\$47,750	\$79,141	\$213	\$402	\$127,507	25%
Child Care Training	\$41,992	\$0	\$61	\$0	\$42,053	8%
Child Care Scholarships	\$80,500	\$0	\$0	\$17,500	\$98,000	19%
Program Support	\$97,536	\$0	\$460	\$0	\$97,996	19%
Administrative Support	\$57,897	\$0	\$13	\$85	\$57,995	11%
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$404,421</b>	<b>\$79,141</b>	<b>\$748</b>	<b>\$32,687</b>	<b>\$516,997</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Unaudited numbers for the period July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017*

**Since inception, Florence County First Steps has leveraged \$2,303,409 from sources outside of state government. That's 24 cents for every state dollar.**

# Thank you supporters!

## 2017 Family & Group Childcare Graduation

Florence County First Steps hosted their Fourth annual Family/Group Child Care Home Graduation on Tuesday, May 23, 2017.

This year 10, four and five year olds graduated from 5 different child care home facilities (**Beverly McClam's FCCH, Echols Family Daycare, Ross Family Child Care, Little Places Learning Center, Thompson Family Daycare**). As the night began, graduates entered the room at Drs. Bruce and Lee Foundation Library, **FCFS gave a special presentation to Gracie McLeod of Little Places Learning Center, who was named 2017 Florence County First Steps Child Care Provider of the Year.**

Mrs. Robin McCants of EdVenture in Columbia gave encouraging words to family, friends and providers in attendance. Graduates were awarded their diplomas and a book bag filled with goodies to take with them to their next school adventure.



Through partnerships and collaborations, as well as financial support from grants and contributions, Florence First Steps leverages state dollars to enhance and expand services to children and families.

### Funding Support

State of South Carolina:\$404,421  
 (through South Carolina First Steps)  
 SC Department of Social Service \$100,375

### In-Kind Support

Florence School District 1  
 Florence School District 3  
 Florence School District 4  
 Florence School District 5  
 Kaplan Early Learning Company

### How your support helps children in Florence County:

- ✓ Kaplan provides discounted items which provides more educational materials for our providers.
- ✓ SC DSS grant provides an additional staff member to serve family and group childcare providers.
- ✓ Support from Florence School Districts #1,3,4,& 5 expands services to 57 additional children and families.

### HOW TO GIVE:

Donations can be donated to Florence County First Steps and mailed to 415 South Coit Street, Florence SC 29501

### Save the Date!

Florence County First Steps Annual Meeting, Thursday, October 26, 2017 at the Florence County Library.

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

## Children Are Our Future

### Child Care Scholarships

Receiving a childcare scholarship has allowed Kameron to make lots of memorable moments. He is able to say several words and communicate more verbally. He enjoys attending Little Places Learning Center where he has developed a love for reading and his caregiver makes him feel right at home. I am truly blessed to know that my son enjoys his childcare experience.

--Jasmine Martin



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The child care scholarship I received from FCFS has helped me in a major way. It has provided me with the much needed assistance to go to work without worry. I know my children are well taken care of and in safe hands while I work to provide for my family.

--Danielle Isaiah





# First Steps Partnership Board

## 2016-17 Florence County First Steps Partnership Board

Name	Position	Board Category
Darren McClam	Pastor	Faith Based Community
Debbie Quesada	Florence County Library	Florence County Library
Mary Brayboy	Pre-K thru Primary Teacher	FSD #4
Ivey Staley	Family Educator Provider	FSD #1
Margaret Echols	Family Child Care Provider	Child Care Provider
JoDeen McAllister	Child Care Provider	Child Care Provider
Valencia Brand	Educator	Business Community
Phoebe Clark	Wukela Law Office	Business Community
Nicole Echols	American Red Cross	Non-Profit Organization
Yolanda McCall	Head Start	Head Start
Sharron Williams	FSD #3	FSD #3
Brenda Hannah	FSD #5	FSD #5
Lulu Marsh	Tax Service	Representative Appointment
Denita Davis	Nurse Family Partnership	Health Care Provider
Orbree Friday	Social Worker	Florence County DSS

## 2017 CHILDCARE PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

When asked, What is a childcare professional? Most would say, a childcare professional cares for the basic needs of a child, caring for them, feeding them and educating them. They also maintain the child's safety and daily schedule. While all of this is true, Florence County First Steps sought individuals that went beyond and demonstrated excellence in childcare.

Florence County First Steps Partnership Board takes pride in working with local childcare professionals to help lay a strong educational foundation for our earliest learners. As such, we know the importance of having dedicated individuals to ensure our children receive quality childcare. These individuals exemplify characteristics that motivate and encourage learning every day.

Florence County First Steps was proud to recognize **Mrs. Gracie McLeod as the FY 17 Florence County First Steps Childcare Professional of the Year** during this year's Family and Group Childcare Graduation Ceremony. Mrs. McLeod is the owner of Little Places Childcare. She has operated her facility for the past 24 years.

Parent, Kayonna Woodberry said, "Mrs. McLeod has truly been a blessing to her daughter, Kayloni. She's prepared and ready to move up to Kindergarten because of Gracie."

## 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 with Medicaid-eligible children who live in eligible school districts can contact any participating provider to complete an application for free, full-day 4K. To view a list of participating First Steps 4K providers, visit:

<http://scfirststeps.org/4k>



### EARLY HEAD START – CHILD CARE PARTNERSHIP

Low income families with children 0-36 months, and families with infants or toddlers with special needs, are invited to apply for this year-round, comprehensive program.

Available in the following counties: Allendale, Anderson, Bamberg, Berkeley, Dillon, Georgetown, Laurens, Lexington, Newberry, Orangeburg, Saluda and York, and coming soon to Fairfield and McCormick counties. To apply, visit:

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



[I CAN] is First Steps' public awareness campaign for school readiness, in support of the state's Profile of the Ready Kindergartener. Includes resources for parents, providers and communities to learn what they can do to support school readiness.

Visit: [ican.sc](http://ican.sc)

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