

GREENVILLE COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.



Nurse-Family Partnership

Childcare Scholarships

Community Education

**Palmetto Shared
Services Alliance**

Childcare Training

BabySteps

Countdown to Kindergarten

Annual Report

2016-17



OUR VISION:

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



By The Numbers

Indicator	SC	Greenville County
Children Under Five	293,134	31,891
Children In Poverty	24.4%	17.7%
3 rd Graders Scoring "Does Not Meet" Standard in Reading	22.2%	17.7%
Births to Mothers With Less Than a High School Diploma	15.0%	14.7%

KIDS COUNT data provided by



- Over the past 10 years, **Greenville First Steps has leveraged \$9,436,651** in grants, local funds, and matches to \$10,280,257 in state funds. This is a match of **91%** (5 times greater than the amount required by SC First Steps enabling legislation).
- 5,420 home visits** were provided to **420 families** in our Nurse Family Partnership Program
- Ove 100,000 books** were distributed to children and families in Greenville County, increasing access to books
- 107 children** received access to subsidized, high quality childcare through our scholarship program.
- Total Children Served in FY17: 1,527**

Greenville First Steps

2101 Laurens Road
 Greenville, SC 29607

Phone: 864-248-4757

Board Chair
 Grady Patterson

www.greenvillefirststeps.org

*Let's get together, yeah yeah yeah
 Why don't you and I combi-ine
 Let's get together, what do you say
 We can have a swingin' ti-ime
 We'd be a cra-a-azy team
 Why don't we ma-a-ake a scene
 Together, oh oh oh oh
 - Haley Mills, The Parent Trap*

Greenville First Steps has built its network of partners across Greenville County with the fundamental principle that there is far too much need among our youngest learners and their families for one organization to try and tackle it alone.

Every project we undertake is either co-funded, or coordinated by multiple stakeholders- whether that be the joint funding of childcare vouchers through the United Way matching funds, the partnership with the Duke Endowment and Blue Cross Blue Shield to co-fund Nurse Family Partnership or the Palmetto Basics, a county-wide school readiness messaging program.

In 2016 we launched another strategic partnership with Christ Church Episcopal Greenville: Read Greenville. The case was simple, First Steps would provide the know-how to help parents and caregivers learn how to effectively use books in their homes, and secure funding for books if our Christ Church partners would sort and distribute the books. This county-wide reading initiative paired evidenced based training for childcare providers, parents and caregivers with a book warehouse where over 100,000 books were distributed to high poverty homes in less than 10 months.

Christ Church Episcopal Greenville, under the leadership of Frances Poe and John and Kerry Rathbun, has been a dedicated partner, providing warehouse space to store and distribute the books, and providing a loyal volunteer base where nearly 1,500 hours were contributed to sorting and sharing these books.

More than 100 community partners arrived at the book warehouse, astounded at the tens of thousands of books to choose from, and returned to their centers, schools, churches, and neighborhoods armed with children's books to share with their families.

We are so thankful to Frances, John, Kerry, and the volunteers from Christ Church who spent countless hours to help us make this year's book distribution plan a success! We know that on our own, this effort would have taken several fulltime employees an entire year to sort and distribute these books, let alone helping link the books to evidenced based literacy instruction. But because we were able to "get together" we accomplished the unthinkable.

Derek Lewis, Executive Director



Healthy Start



Family Strengthening



Early Intervention



Quality Child Care



Early Education



School Transition

County Programs

Nurse-Family Partnership, Childcare Scholarships, Community Education (Read Greenville and Palmetto Basics), Palmetto Shared Services Alliance, Childcare Training, BabySteps, Countdown to Kindergarten



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, Greenville First Steps focuses its investments in Health Start, Family Strengthening, Quality Childcare, and School Transition.

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

Program Description

Greenville First Steps brought Nurse Family Partnership to Greenville as an initiative to help Greenville families improve birth outcomes and school readiness indicators for first time, Medicaid eligible mothers and their families. Initially launched as a partnership between Greenville First Steps and the Greenville Health System, Nurse Family Partnership, the program's initial phase launched in 2009 with a 4-nurse team, serving 100 moms from Greenville County.

Through the financial support of the Duke Endowment, the United Way of Greenville and Pickens Counties, the Hollingsworth Funds, the Community Foundation, the Appalachian Regional Commission, Greenville First Steps was able to leverage these private and federal funds to grow NFP from a 4-nurse team to an 11-nurse team in 6 short years. NFP now has the capacity to serve families in Greenville, Pickens, Oconee, and Laurens Counties.

In 2016, Governor Haley announced a Pay for Success model that will allow the GHS NFP site to grow even larger, and will use these private funds to leverage stable Medicaid dollars. The Pay for Success model, the first of its kind in the US, quantifies Medicaid savings (in this case, NICU visits that are not needed when a child is born at a healthy birth weight) and uses a portion of those savings



to repay private investment in programs contributing to this outcome. Thanks to Gov. Haley's investment, NFP will be able to grow to a 20-nurse team over the next few years.

Greenville First Steps is proud to join the Duke Endowment, the Boeing Co., and the Blue Cross Blue Shield of South Carolina Foundation in investing in Pay For Success.

NFP by the Numbers, 2016-17

Children Served	420
Number of Home Visits	5420

We don't judge. We nudge. - Trish Dillard, Nurse Family Partnership Nurse Home Visitor

This year, our NFP program:

- ✓ Hosted a successful Community baby shower featuring Grammy Award Winner Ruben Studdard
- ✓ Completed 5,420 home visits
- ✓ Premature birth rate dropped from 4% to 2.8%
- ✓ Graduated 50 families

Thank you to our partners!

Greenville Health System
 United Way of Greenville County

Greenville First Steps

2101 Laurens Road, Greenville, SC 29607
 864-248-4757
www.greenvillefirststeps.org

Child Care Scholarships

Too many families in Greenville 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.

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

- 68% ... live in poverty
- 44% ... lack a high school diploma
- 34% ... were teen parents
- 15% ... had developmental delays

In addition to regular quality 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.

Also, all Greenville First Steps scholarship recipients are required to attend a monthly parenting training or a home visit from the child's teacher.

As a single mother, completing a graduate degree with a low to moderate income, Greenville First Steps has made it possible for Gabriella to attend the K4 program.

Kala, Gabriella's mother



Gabriella and her teachers, Ms Brownlee and Ms McKenzie.

Scholarships by the Numbers, 2016-17

Children Served	107
Providers Served	18

This year, our Scholarship program:

- ✓ Provided 107 children with scholarship assistance so their parents could work or attend school
- ✓ Supported 18 small businesses in Greenville County by subsidizing child care tuition for families who would not otherwise be able to afford quality care

Thank you to our partners!

- YMCA Judson Community Center
- Big Blue Marble Academy
- StarShine Child Enrichment Center

Greenville First Steps

2101 Laurens Road, Greenville, SC 29607
 864-248-4757
www.greenvillefirststeps.org

In order to thrive, children need nurturing, responsive relationships and a supportive learning environment, both within and outside the home.

Program Description

Read Greenville:

Working off the success of Child Abuse Prevention Month, Greenville First Steps launched Read Greenville in 2014. Read Greenville serves as an awareness campaign aimed at encouraging everyone in Greenville County, regardless of age, to read daily.

In 2016-2017, Greenville First Steps increased access to books in Greenville County by distributing over **100,000** FREE children's books. Books were given out to local nonprofits, churches, and schools to spread amongst their families as well as given out at community events, like a Swamp Rabbit Hockey game.

Read Greenville partnered with Christ Church Episcopal to create a book warehouse to house thousands of books to distribute to organizations that serve children in Greenville County. Using research from a book "asset map," Read Greenville targets families in Greenville County who have less access to books than other areas of the county. This will allow us to better serve children and ensure positive literacy outcomes for children 0-5.

For more information, visit www.ReadGreenville.com

Community Education by the Numbers 2016-17

Materials Distributed	130000
Events Held	30
Attendance at Events	15000

Palmetto Basics:

Greenville First Steps understand how hard being a parent can be. There is a lot of pressure to know exactly what you are supposed to do to help your child be successful. Greenville First Steps, together with over 50 community partners, began to explore a way to create a unified message around what parents can do to help their children be better prepared for school. After months of research, community-wide meetings, and collaborative work, Greenville First Steps helped launch the Palmetto Basics.

The Palmetto Basics are five fun, simple, and powerful ways to help all our children become the happiest and most successful they can be. The Palmetto Basics include

1. Maximize Love, Manage Stress
2. Talk, Sing, and Point
3. Count, Group, and Compare
4. Explore Through Movement and Play
5. Read and Discuss Stories

These five basics simplify all of the existing messaging families hear regularly. By taking a collaborative approach, encouraging local businesses, nonprofits, churches, childcare centers and schools to use the Palmetto Basics as they talk to families with young children, the message is quickly and easily spread to families by those they trust.

Modeled after the Boston Basics, the Palmetto Basics are part of a multi-city network spreading the message about the Basics. For more information, visit www.PalmettoBasics.org

This year, our Community Education program:

- ✓ 130,000 materials were distributed throughout the year to increase the awareness of school readiness
- ✓ Over 100,000 free children's books were distributed through events and partners
- ✓ Over 30 events throughout the year allowed Greenville First Steps to spread the message about the importance of reading daily, protecting our children, and what it means to be ready for school

Thank you to our partners!

Christ Church Episcopal
Greenville County Schools
Greenville Health System

Greenville First Steps

2101 Laurens Road, Greenville, SC 29607
864-248-4757
www.greenvillefirststeps.org

Parents are their child's first and best teachers.

Program Description

Palmetto Shared Services Alliance is a system of online and onsite supports designed to save time, money, and improve over-all quality of childcare and afterschool programs. The Palmetto Shared Services Alliance is being developed by Greenville First Steps, with support from SC Department of Social Services and Institute for Child Success.

In 2015, Greenville First Steps began exploring shared services models that exist in other areas of the country. The research developed over 50 possible supports that could be embedded into an online network including:

- Shared buying power
- Downloadable HR resources
- Access to online trainings

In late 2015, input was collected statewide from over 250 leaders from the childcare and afterschool sectors through focus groups, face-to-face surveys and online surveys. This input, paired with national data, outcome evidence, and technical support from the Opportunities Exchange (a national Shared Services clearinghouse) led to a summary report published by the SC institute for Child Success suggesting the following Palmetto Shared Services Alliance priorities:

- Access to shared buying power
- Access to current DHEC/DSS/USDA compliance and requirements
- Access to subject matter experts (HR, IT, Legal, Insurance)
- A development pipeline to build a pool of qualified leadership staff candidates
- A better coordinated "handoff" of 4K students to school district 5K programs



Nationally, shared services networks are shown to have three specific impacts:

1. **Help providers save money:** Childcare providers, through shared buying power and access to industry relevant prepared resources can cut expenses
2. **Help providers save time:** Childcare providers, like any other small business owners, are typically not professionally trained accountants, HR specialists, Legal experts, or tax specialists. Access to subject matter experts and free downloadable resources will allow providers to focus on their area of expertise – Childcare quality improvement
3. **Improve Access to High Quality Childcare:** Shared services providers are asked to sign an MOA that commits they will reinvest all saved time and resources into quality improvement measures in their center (e.g., more training, more staff supervision, more age appropriate resources)

This year, our Palmetto Shared Services Alliance:

- ✓ Enrolled 40 centers, serving over 4,000 children, in Palmetto Shared Services Alliance statewide
- ✓ Greenville First Steps supported the establishment of a new 501(c)3 organization to govern Palmetto Shared Services Alliance

Thank you to our partners!

South Carolina Institute for Child Success
Greenville County Childcare Association
South Carolina Department of Social Services

Greenville First Steps

2101 Laurens Road, Greenville, SC 29607
864-248-4757
www.greenvillefirststeps.org

Childcare 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.

In Partnership with the Greenville County Childcare Association, Greenville County School District, and Greenville Health System:

Topic:

- Mandated Reporting Series
- GCCA Fall Conference
- Dynamic Teams Series
- GCCA Spring Conference
- Achieving High Quality in Childcare
- Read Greenville Early Literacy Trainings

I value the Greenville County Childcare Association's annual conference. I can get a bunch of hours while meeting new people who work in different centers.

Sarah



Training by the Numbers, 2016-17

Total Training Attendance	772
Child Care Teachers and Directors Served	436
Number of Training Sessions Offered	72

This year, our Training program provided:

- ✓ 436 early childhood staff with high quality training
- ✓ 68 hours of certified training and 49 hours of registered training for staff to meet annual re-certification requirements
- ✓ 100 follow-up visits with training participants to help put training into practice

Thank you to our partners!

- Greenville County Childcare Association
- Greenville County School District
- Greenville Health System

Greenville First Steps
 2101 Laurens Road, Greenville, SC 29607
 864-248-4757
www.greenvillefirststeps.org

Family Literacy: BabySteps

Parents are their child’s first and best teachers.

Program Description

BABYSTEPS is a 7-week summer enrichment program funded by Greenville First Steps and operated by Little Steps.

The program provided educational, social, and community resources to 12 teens that were either pregnant or new mothers. Program participants rotated through classes focusing on educational tutoring, labor and delivery, infant care, nutrition, peer group counseling, and parenting. In addition, teens were provided with the opportunity to go on field trips in Greenville County.

This year, BABYSTEPS provided an opportunity for participants to earn a class credit through Greenville County School District’s Distance Learning option. Through partnerships with the Greenville Health System, Greenville County School District, Greenville Technical College, Small Impressions Child Development Center, the summer BABYSTEPS participants added valuable information to their “toolbox” to be better parents, stay in school, graduate, and raise a happy, healthy, and ready to learn child.

Teens earned Baby Bucks during classes and were able to “shop” in the Little Steps baby boutique to receive essential items such as diapers, baby and maternity clothes, strollers, high chairs, and toys. Throughout the summer and during the following school year, all BABYSTEPS participants who had a child were given a full scholarship to a pre-approved high quality childcare center



Babysteps participants take a tour of Unique kidz at Davis Academy and learn what quality childcare looks like.

Family Literacy by the Numbers 2016-17

Adults Served	24
Children Served	24
Adult Education Hours Offered	96
Parenting Education Hours Offered	48

This year, our Family Literacy program:

- ✓ 100% of participants in BabySteps are one step closer to high school graduation
- ✓ 100% of participants learned about choosing quality childcare and were offered access to childcare scholarships
- ✓ 89% of clients have an increased knowledge about developmental milestones for their child

Thank you to our partners!

Little Steps
 Greenville County School District

Greenville First Steps
 2101 Laurens Road, Greenville, SC 29607
 864-248-4757
www.greenvillefirststeps.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.

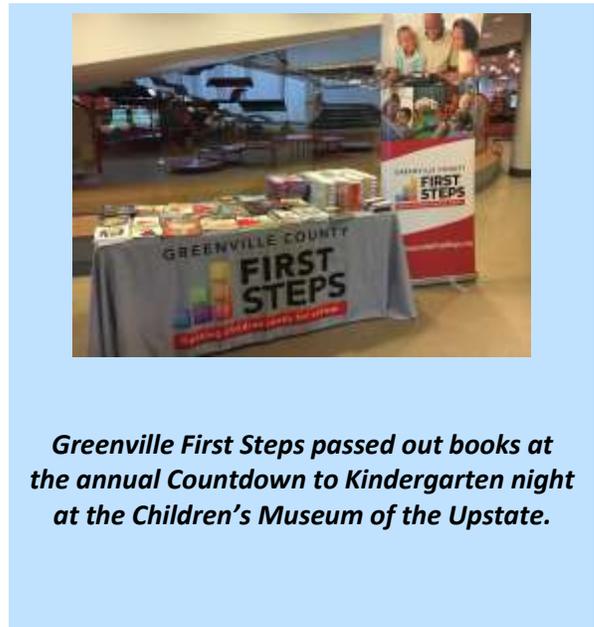
Learning Celebration. The last visit is a “field trip” to the school where the child will attend class in the fall.

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 2016

Children Served	10
Families Served	10
Home/School Visits	50

**CTK program data is for June-August 2016, whereas CTK fiscal data includes expenditures from July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017.*



Greenville First Steps passed out books at the annual Countdown to Kindergarten night at the Children’s Museum of the Upstate.

This year, our Countdown to Kindergarten program:

- ✓ According to kindergarten teachers, CTK parents have reported a strong home – school bond.
- ✓ According to kindergarten teachers, CTK parents reported that knowing their child’s teacher and expectations of the school was helpful in transition to kindergarten.

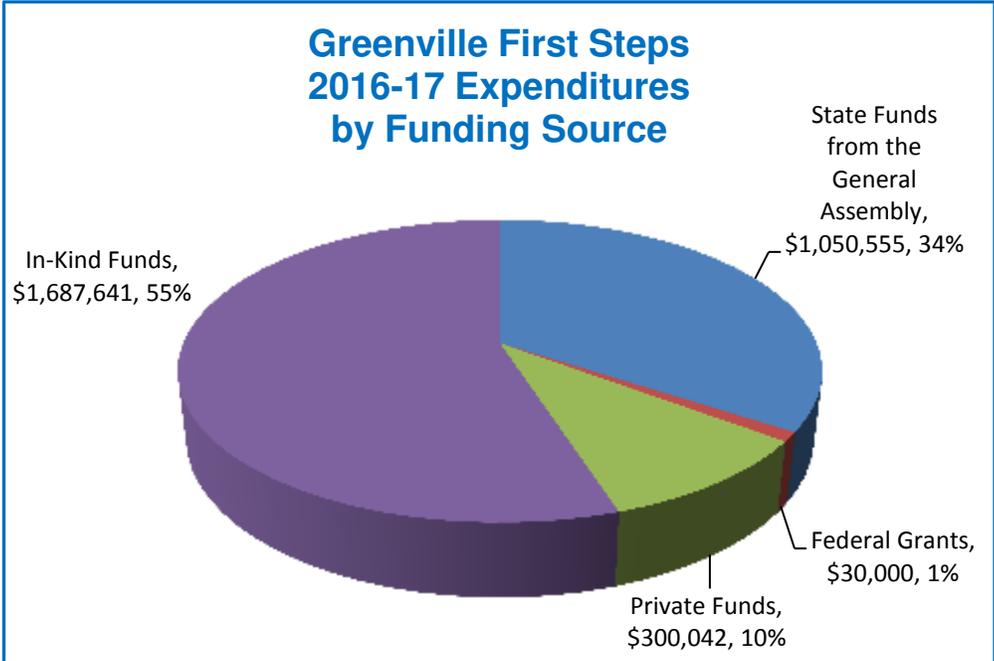
Thank you to our partners!

- Greenville County School District
- Kaplan Early Learning Company
- The Children’s Museum of the Upstate

Like us on Facebook!
 Countdown to Kindergarten-South Carolina:

Greenville First Steps
 2101 Laurens Road, Greenville, SC 29607
 864-248-4757
 www.greenvillefirststeps.org

Financial Impact



Total 2016-17 Expenditures: \$3,068,238

State Funds Leveraged in 2016-17*: 192%

*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 2017 Expenditure
Nurse-Family Partnership	\$136,250	\$30,000	\$54,725	\$1,537,641	\$1,758,616	57%
Palmetto Shared Services	\$0	\$0	\$144,071	\$0	\$144,071	5%
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$4,620	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,620	0%
Community Education	\$261,439	\$0	\$12,000	\$0	\$273,439	9%
Child Care Training	\$102,494	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$102,494	3%
Child Care Scholarships	\$348,824	\$0	\$66,849	\$150,000	\$565,673	18%
Family Literacy	\$37,750	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$37,750	1%
Program Support	\$88,069	\$0	\$22,398	\$0	\$110,467	4%
Administrative Support	\$71,109	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$71,109	2%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$1,050,555	\$30,000	\$300,042	\$1,687,641	\$3,068,238	

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

Over the past 10 years, Greenville First Steps has leveraged \$9,436,651 in grants, local funds, and matches to \$10,280,257 in state funds. This is a match of 91% (5 times greater than the amount required by SC First Steps enabling legislation).

Thank you supporters!

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

SC Legislature Approved Allocation:

State of South Carolina: \$1,050,555
(through South Carolina First Steps)

Grants

United Way of Greenville: \$140,000

Organizations

Bon Secours St Francis Health System: \$12,500
Greenville Health System: \$10,000
Lewis Auctions: \$3,000
Corley Plumbing: \$1,500
Primrose School of Greenville: \$1,000
Pelham Road Baptist Church: \$1,000
SCAAYC: \$500
The PS Group: \$500

Individual Gifts

Other Businesses and Individuals: \$6,834.61

In-Kind Support

Nurse-Family Partnership
SC Pay for Success collaborative including support from Greenville Health System, the Duke Endowment, Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation, Boeing, SC First Steps, and the Children's Trust of SC:
\$1,537,641

Local childcare centers: \$150,000

Many donations
this year
supported an
increased access
to books and
other literacy
materials.



How your support helps children in Greenville County:

- ✓ \$25 helps fill a classroom bookshelf
- ✓ \$360 helps a low-income family afford quality child care for one month
- ✓ \$15,000 pays for a truckload of 40,000 books that could be distributed to children in Greenville County

HOW TO GIVE: Visit www.GreenvilleFirstSteps.org and click Give Today.

Save the Date!

October 23, 2017: Palmetto Basics Champion Workshop featuring national speaker, Dr Laura Jana, author of the Toddler Brain

December 8, 2017: Annual Meeting

April 7, 2018: iMagine Upstate's STEAMfest: a wonderful opportunity to see the Palmetto Basics in action

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

From Concept to Reality

Palmetto Shared Services Alliance

“I love it when a plan comes together.” – John “Hannibal” Smith, The A-Team

Nearly 5 years ago, the Greenville Chamber of Commerce, South Carolina Child Care Resource and Referral, and Greenville First Steps convened a group of childcare owners and directors. The question: what can the business sector do to help you improve business practices.

The answer was shocking, many of the childcare center owners didn't think of themselves as a business, and when asked about specific business practices (e.g., cost allocations, profit margins) were unsure how those practices could impact their bottom line.

Through a partnership with the Institute for Child Success, Greenville First Steps embarked on a mission to find best practices in the business of childcare. Pouring through research driven best practices, meeting with industry leaders across the country, and collecting feedback from childcare owners from across the state, we saw the need to establish a shared services network, where providers could learn from one another and save money and time through shared resources. In other states, similar networks have demonstrated an annual cost/time savings of nearly \$10,000 per center- allowing providers to reinvest these resources into equipment, materials, professional development, and increased teacher pay.

In Fall of 2016, a new standalone non-profit: The Palmetto Shared Services Alliance was launched, and Leslie Latimer and Shelley Summer left Greenville First Steps to become the directors of this work. Palmetto Shared Services Alliance includes a blending of online resources (downloadable manuals, policies, procedures), shared buying power (imagine the cost savings from a statewide network of buyers) and onsite focus groups (where owners can identify shared burdens/challenges and work to address them). Palmetto Shared Services Alliance was piloted in Fall 2016 with a group of 20 upstate childcare centers, family home providers, and afterschool providers. By 2019, we plan to grow to a statewide system with over 100 enrolled providers.



Currently, Greenville First Steps is contributing \$160,000/year for the development and expansion of this statewide effort. As we see the Palmetto Shared Services Alliance gaining traction across the state, we will be able to reduce our funding as their finances become more stable. In the meantime, we are proud that this community, our local First Steps board, and the SC First Steps staff and board allowed us the opportunity to take a leap of faith in launching this impactful resources for providers.

Support Greenville First Steps today through a tax-deductible donation, or volunteer.

A Visionary in the Early Childhood and Child Welfare communities

Remembering Keith Frazier

Earlier this year, the Greenville First Steps board and staff were saddened by the loss of Keith Frazier, deputy DSS Director, and former First Steps board chair. To say that Keith was a "leader in the community" or that "he will be missed" is a serious understatement. Keith was a visionary in the Early Childhood and Child Welfare communities.

Keith joined our board in 2011, when he was appointed to serve as the DSS Director for Greenville County. Within no time, Keith demonstrated his passion to ensure the foster care system was linked with community organizations like First Steps. One effort that weighed on Keith's heart was his desire to ensure children in foster care remained connected with their siblings to help strengthen family resiliency.

In 2015, Keith, working with David White of Fostering Great Ideas, helped launch SibLink, a project that provides siblings who have been separated by foster care assignments have regular interactions with one another. When we met to propose it, Keith succinctly argued "these kids, our kids, were separated from their siblings due to no fault of their own. We owe it to these kids to ensure this happens."

Siblink serves as a model across the state of how a community can come together to support the needs of our most vulnerable. Keith is missed by family and friends daily, but his impact on our community will last for generations.

Greenville County First Steps Partnership Board, 2016-17

Name	Position	Board Category
Grady Patterson – Chair	Techincial Director, Verus Research	Legislative Appointee
Lauren Briles – Vice Chair	Owner, Primrose School of Greenville	Childcare
Karen Allen	Youth Services Manager, Greenville County Library	Library
Gina Blohm	Dir of Development, Community Foundation of Greenville	Philanthropy
Stacey Burr	Associate Professor, USC Upstate	Professor, Early Childhood Education
Meredith Burton	Child Development Center Director, Furman University	Childcare
Kelly Byers	Council Member, Travelers Rest City Council	Local Government
Jonathan Cote	Attourney, Womble Carlyle	Legislative Appointee
Michelle Greco	Manager, Child Abuse Prevention Program, GHS	Healthcare
Anna Hall	Assistant Professor, Anna Hall	Professor, Early Childhood Education
Jessica McDowell	Upstate WIC Program Director, SC DHEC-Region 2	DHEC
Stacey Peek	Pastor, Grace Baptist Fellowship Church	Faith
Jennifer Powers	CPA, Elliott Davis, LLC	Business
Nancy Powers	Developmental Pediatrician, GHS Developmental Pediatrics	Healthcare
Melissa Roper	Program Instructor-Early Care and Education, Greenville Technical College	Professor, Early Childhood Education
Cynthia Sosebee	Community Partnership Facilitator, SHARE Head Start	Head Start
Karen Sparkman, PhD	Director Early Intervention and Support Services, Greenville County Schools	School District
Tricia Surles	Finance, Envirocare Landscape Management	Parent
Dr Daniel Varat	Chief of Staff, Lieutenant Govenor's Office	Legislative Appointee
Jeremy Watts	Teacher Education Division Chair, Bob Jones University	Professor, Early Childhood Education
Tiffany Whitney	Pregnant and Parenting Specialist, Greenville County Schools	School District

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



[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

Like us on Facebook: [icansc](https://www.facebook.com/icansc)