

HORRY COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.



Parents as Teachers

Child Care Quality  
Enhancement

Child Care Training

Child Care Scholarships

# Annual Report

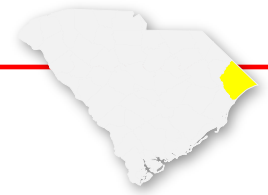
2016-17



**OUR VISION:**

Every child will arrive at  
kindergarten  
ready to succeed.

**First Steps WORKS for the children of Horry County.**



## By The Numbers

Indicator	SC	Horry County
Children Under Five	293,134	15,978
Children In Poverty	24.4%	29.6%
3 <sup>rd</sup> Graders Scoring "Does Not Meet" Standard in Reading	22.2%	16.8%
Births to Mothers With Less Than a High School Diploma	15.0%	16.8%

KIDS COUNT data provided



- Since inception, Horry County First Steps has leveraged \$4,904,074 from sources outside state government. **That's \$.53 for every dollar received.**
- **388 hours of support and guidance** were provided to 37 families in our Parents As Teachers Program.
- **Childcare professionals received 483 hours** of technical assistance for early care best practices.
- Assisted 77 children in accessing child care so their parent could work and/or continue their education.
- **Raising A Reader** implemented in Parents As Teachers and throughout child care facilities in Conway. 121 children rotated 1,622 books.
- **Total Children Served in FY17: 711**

### Horry County First Steps

900-C Main Street  
Suite A  
Conway SC 29526  
Phone: (843) 488-3336  
Fax: (843) 488-3346

**Board Chair**  
Mr. Bradley Todd

Horry County First Steps  
**Amy Breault**  
Executive Director

The Board and Staff of Horry County First Steps are proud to present the accomplishments achieved in another year of successful community impact. Exhibited within this year's annual report are the projects and strategies HCFS supported in 2017 in order to ensure that all children in Horry County enter school on a level playing field, healthy and prepared for success.

This positive impact was achieved by setting a direction, creating alignment and gaining commitment around important early childhood issues within Horry County. This unbridled spirit to serve the needs of children and families was cultivated by a passionate staff, a visioning board of directors, a dedicated team of direct service providers, and a community of committed child care professionals. By being part of this community-centered agency, it is amazing the stories that we hear on a regular basis from parents, child care providers, health professionals and kindergarten teachers regarding the ways in which HCFS projects are making a difference in the lives of children and families. Stories of newly developed parenting strategies, pre-school excitement, successful transition into kindergarten, informative childcare referrals, and renewed excitement in the world of early childhood education.

As HCFS continues to grow, we maintain a focus on collaborating locally so that families' needs are met, overhead is kept low, and quality of services remains high. This forward thinking and big picture approach to service is exciting for all associated with HCFS as it calls for new opportunities to explore, new champions to tell our story and new assets to be mined for the benefit of HCFS and the children and families that it serves.

Thank you, from all of us at Horry County First Steps and from all those whose lives have been touched. As we move towards reaching our mission, we are excited about the future of children and families in Horry County.



Healthy Start



Family Strengthening



Early Intervention



Quality Child Care



Early Education



School Transition

## County Programs

Parents as Teachers  
Child Care Training  
Child Care Quality Enhancement  
Child Care Scholarships

## State Programs

BabyNet  
First Steps 4k

# What We Do

Each of the six color blocks of the First Steps logo represents a core area of service, outlining our comprehensive strategy to prepare children for long-term school success.

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, Horry County First focuses its investments in Healthy Start, Family Strengthening and Quality Childcare.**

# 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

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

- 100% ... live in poverty
- 20% ... parent/caregiver with intellectual disability
- 16% ... parent/caregiver with depression

“We’ve learned a great deal from our parent educator about child development. We haven’t had a child in our home full-time in 20 yrs. She helps me remember a lot.”

Jim, a Grandparent of a 2 year old



## PAT by the Numbers 2016-17

Families Served	37	
Children Served	38	
Total Home Visits	384	
Hours Spent Serving Families	388	
Average scores, <i>Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale and Adult Child Interactive Reading Inventory:</i>	KIPS Avg. 3.8 out of 5	ACIRI C: 2.12 A: 2.33

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

- ✓ Averaged 11 home visits per family
- ✓ Identified and addressed 22 potential developmental delays
- ✓ Reading skills of adults improved  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a point and children improved more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  point; Parents showed an average score of 3.8 out of 5 on the Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale
- ✓ Made 35 referrals for families to services such as food banks, employment services, Benefit Bank, and child care assistance

## Thank you to our partners!

- SC Mentors
- BabyNet
- Community Health Agencies

**Horry County First Steps**

900-C Main Street, Suite A, Conway, 29526  
(843) 488-3336  
abreault@sccoast.net  
www.hcfirststeps.org

# Raising A Reader

**Helping families develop, practice, and maintain home literacy routines.**

## Program Description

The Raising A Reader mission is to foster healthy brain development, parent-child bonding and early literacy skills critical for school success by engaging parents in a routine of daily “book cuddling” with their children from birth to age five.

Families attend a family event where information regarding the importance of daily book cuddling is presented. After the family event children begin to take home red bags containing four high quality, age-appropriate books. Throughout the school year, children continue to take home books weekly. In the spring all families are invited to attend an event at their local library branch. The children receive blue library bags to encourage book reading throughout the summer.

### Program Components

1. Family Events at participating child care facilities
2. Weekly red bag rotation
3. Nightly “book cuddling” time between adults and children
4. Library events in the spring

**Horry County First Steps serves families in greatest need. Among our RAR families:**

25% ... adults lacked a reading routine with their child

1.8 ... average number of times children were taken to the library per month

33% ... parents found it somewhat difficult to share books with their children on a regular basis

“I liked the variety of books that she has brought home each week. She gets excited to see what kind of books are in the bag each week. I like watching her try to read them after we have read them together.”



### RAR by the Numbers, 2016-17

Number of children 0-5 participating	121
Number of Red Bags Rotated	406
Number of Books Rotated	1622

### This year, our Raising A Reader program:

- ✓ Engaged 121 children throughout Parents As Teachers and local child care facilities.
- ✓ Hosted 6 family nights at participating sites
- ✓ Hosted 4 “Meet Me At Your Local Library” events where blue bags and library card applications were distributed

### *Thank you to our partners!*

- United Way of Horry County
- Waccamaw Community Foundation

**Horry County First Steps**

900-C Main Street, Suite A, Conway, 29526  
(843)488-3336  
abreault@sccoast.net  
www.hcfirststeps.org





# 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

On-site Technical Assistance (TA) at least twice monthly

1. Equipment and materials funding
2. Integration with locally available training, provided by First Steps and other partners
3. Workforce Development
4. Coordination with community partners
5. 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	5
Number of TA Visits Provided	121
Number of Children 0-5 Enrolled in Provider Classrooms	484

### *Congratulations to our QE participants for 2015-16!*

Child Care Provider	Pre/Post Improvement
Grissett's CDC, infant room	From 3.96 to 4.92
ATM, 2-yr-old room	From 2.62 to 4.37
Hunter's Ridge, infant room	From 4.35 to 5.39
Hunter's Ridge, 3-yr-old room	From 3.42 to 4.27

## This year, our Quality Enhancement program:

- ✓ Improved quality, based on pre/post Environment Rating Scale assessments.
- ✓ Provided 482.5 hours of technical assistance to child care providers
- ✓ Funded scholarships for 21 children within participating child care providers

## Thank you to our partners!

- SC Child Care Licensing
- ABC Child Care
- Child Care Resource and Referral
- FQE Participating Facilities

**Horry County First Steps**  
 900-C Main Street, Suite A, Conway, 29526  
 (843)488-3336  
 abreault@sccoast.net  
 www.hcfirststeps.org

# Child Care Training

**Those who care for young children need high-quality, accessible, and affordable professional development.**

## Program Description

High-quality child care hinges on high-quality professional development that meets the needs of the local child care workforce.

First Steps-sponsored training is certified through the SC Center for Child Care Career Development and includes topics in the areas of nutrition, health and safety, curriculum, child guidance, professional development and program administration. Best practices in training include not only the training itself, but follow-up in the classroom.



### Child Care Training Sponsored by Horry County First Steps, 2016-17

<u>Topic:</u>	<u>Sessions:</u>
Basic Health and Safety	One Session
Literacy throughout the Center	One Session

### Training by the Numbers, 2016-17

Total Training Attendance	35
Child Care Teachers and Directors Served	35
Number of Training Sessions Offered	2

### Thank you to our partners!

- SC Center for Career Development
- SC Office of First Steps

**Horry County First Steps**  
 900-C Main Street, Suite A, Conway SC 29526  
 (843) 488-3336  
 abreault@sccoast.net

# Child Care Scholarships

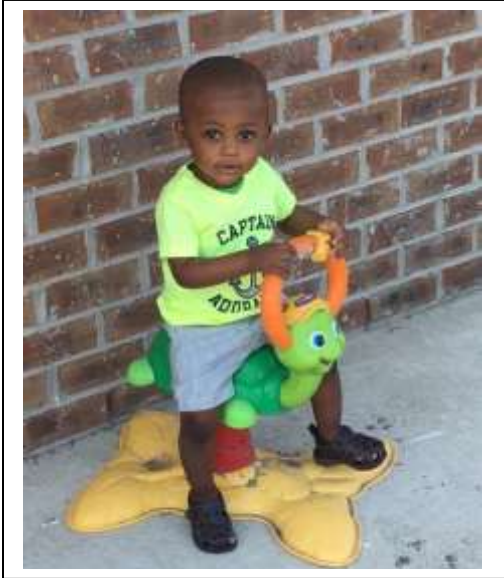
Too many families in Horry County cannot afford quality care for their children.

## 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.

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

- 100% ... live in poverty
- 47% ... parent suffered depression/mental illness
- 21% ... were transient/homeless
- 25% ...exposed to domestic violence



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.

### Scholarships by the Numbers, 2016-17

Children Served	68
Providers Served	15

**This year, our Scholarship program:**

- ✓ Provided 68 children with scholarship assistance so their parents could work or attend school
- ✓ Identified and addressed 50 potential developmental delays among scholarship children
- ✓ Supported 15 small businesses in Horry County by subsidizing child care tuition for families who would not otherwise be able to afford quality care

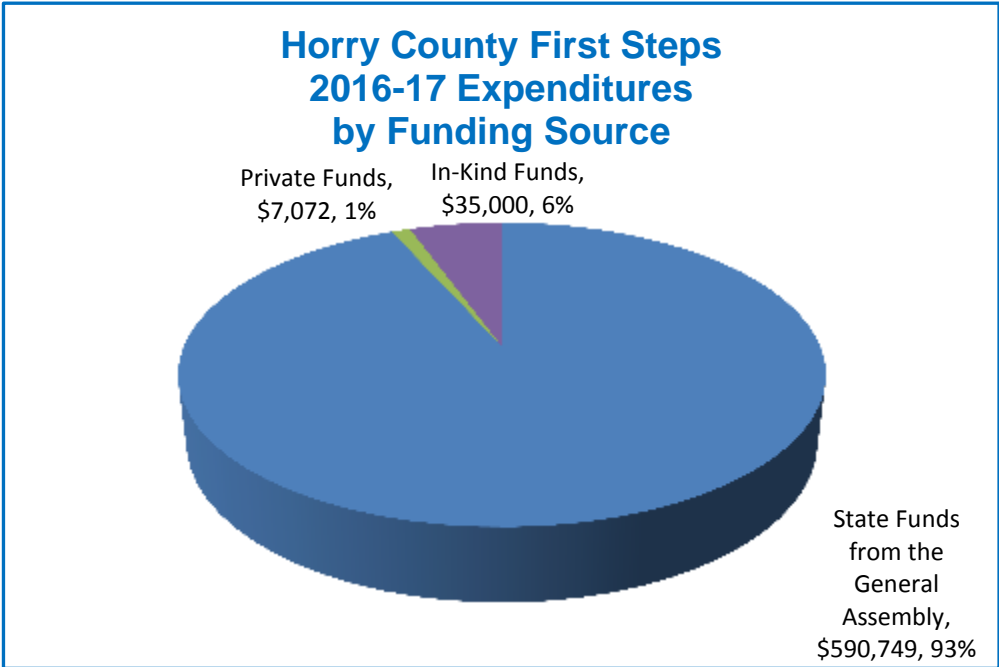
**Thank you to our partners!**

- SC Child Care Voucher program
- Facility Referral Sources
- ABC Child Care

**Horry County First Steps**  
 900-C Main Street, Suite A, Conway, 29526  
 (843) 488-3336  
 abreault@sccoast.net  
 www.hcfirststeps.org



# Financial Impact



**Total 2016-17 Expenditures: \$632,821**

**State Funds Leveraged in 2015-16\*: 7.12%**

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

	State \$	Federal \$	Private \$	In-Kind \$	Total \$	% of 2016-17 Expenditures
Parents as Teachers	\$131,369	\$0	\$21	\$0	\$131,390	21%
Child Care Quality Enhancement	\$63,138	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$63,138	10%
Child Care Training	\$16,834	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$16,834	3%
Child Care Scholarships	\$168,000	\$0	\$0	\$35,000	\$203,000	32%
Nurse Family Partnership	\$0	\$0	\$6,324	\$0	\$6,324	1%
Raising A Reader	\$55,014	\$0	\$340	\$0	\$55,354	9%
Program Support	\$102,230	\$0	\$208	\$0	\$102,438	16%
Administrative Support	\$54,164	\$0	\$179	\$0	\$54,343	9%
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$590,749</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$7,072</b>	<b>\$35,000</b>	<b>\$632,821</b>	

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

**Since inception, Horry County First Steps has leveraged \$4,904,074 from sources outside of state government. That's .53 cents for every state dollar.**



# Community Impact

## Continuing to support a long term partnership

### Nurse Family Partnership and Community Advisory Board

Horry County First Steps has been supporting the Nurse Family Partnership program since its inception in 2010. Along the way the partnership has taken the lead in regards to the Community Advisory Board (CAB). While it has been a pleasure to see the program grow and mature the time came for a new configuration for the Community Advisory Board.

Starting in Fiscal year 2016 the Community Advisory Board joined the Parents on Point community group. It was a natural fit for the CAB as many of the members would be beneficial for the support of the Nurse Family Partnership program.

As a final show of direct support HCFS purchased promotional items for the NFP program. The materials will be used to continue the engagement of community members and build its referral network.

Although HCFS will no longer have a direct link to the NFP program, it will continue to advocate, refer, and connect the program with potential clients and community members.

## Establishing a portal to services

### Community engagement activities

The partnership office location enjoyed its second year located on Main Street in Conway. The location is easy to find and allows for street front signage. Many families have come in to inquire as to the services we provide to families.

In FY17 Horry County First Steps established a website for the partnership. A presence on the Internet will allow easy access to the programs offered by Horry County First Steps and its partners throughout the county.

Along with a presence on the Internet, the agency created pages on several social media sites. Not only can the partnership be found on Facebook, but we are also on Instagram, Twitter, and Snap chat. We use these platforms to communicate pertinent information to families with young children.

Throughout FY17, 47 families gained access to much needed child care vouchers through the SC Homeless Voucher program. The staff at HCFS works with families that qualify under the McKinney-Vento definition of Homelessness to ensure they have access to 52 weeks of childcare. This allows families the time necessary to acquire employment and stable housing.

## Thank you to our partners!

### Funding Support

State of South Carolina: \$590,749  
*(through South Carolina First Steps)*

United Way of Horry County: \$ 5,000.00

Waccamaw Community Foundation: \$2,000.00

**Support Horry County First Steps today through a tax-deductible donation, or volunteer.**



# First Steps Partnership Board

## Reaching for Non-Profit Excellence through governance

Members of the Horry County First Steps Partnership Board have been completing the SCANPO Guiding Principles self-assessment. The Guiding Principles are considered by many to be an excellent tool for organizational self-assessment, board and committee planning, as well as, measuring progress and strategic decision-making among non-profit members, executives and staff. Although it means extra work for members, they have embraced the challenge and are confident that HCFS will be designated as an excellent non-profit.

Name	Employer	Board Category
Bradley Todd, Chair	Horry County Schools	Non-Profit Organization That Provides Services to Families
Shayla Livingston, Vice Chair	Low Country Food Bank	Non-Profit Organization that Provides Services to Families
Heather Dionisio, Secretary	Waccamaw Bowling Center	Parent of a Young Child
Rhonda Johnson	Family Day Care Provider	Pre-Kindergarten through Primary Education
Wendy Gillespie	Office of First Steps – BabyNet	Health Care Provider
Jennifer Nassar	Chapin Library	Non-Profit Organization that Provides Services to Families
Shannon Jordan	Lamar Advertising	Business Community
Sadhani Tolani	SC DHEC – Pee Dee Region	Appointed by County Department of Health and Environmental Control
Susan Jones	Horry County Schools	Appointed by School District in County

# 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 Horry County:  
LOCAL SPOE PHONE # - MAKE SURE IT IS CORRECT!

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