



- Parents as Teachers**
- Countdown to Kindergarten**
- Child Care Training**
- Child Care Scholarships**
- Early Head Start**
- Nurse Family Partnership**

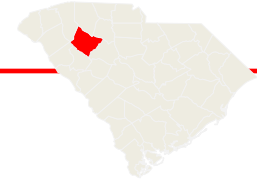
# Annual Report

2016-17



**OUR VISION:**

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



## By The Numbers

Indicator	SC	Laurens County
Children Under Five	293,134	3,744
Children In Poverty	24.4%	30.7%
3 <sup>rd</sup> Graders Scoring "Does Not Meet" Standard in Reading	22.2%	Laurens 55: 29.8% Laurens 56: 31.3%
Births to Mothers With Less Than a High School Diploma	15.0%	23.9%

KIDS COUNT data provided by



- Since inception, Laurens County First Steps has leveraged **\$2,415,195** from sources outside state government. **That's \$.49 for every dollar received.**
- **275 home visits & 24 hours of support and guidance through group connections** were provided to 12 families in our Parents As Teachers Program.
- **Childcare professionals received 36 hours** of training in early care best practices.
- Improved parenting practices through **12 Group Connections Parent Workshops.**
- **Total Children Served in FY17: 17 PAT & CCS; 61 EHS; 39 CTK; 23 NFP**

**Laurens County First Steps**

**1029 West Main Street**

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Phone: (864)-984-8130

**Board Chair**

**Linda Wessel**

**lwessel@laurens55.org**

**Laurens County First Steps**  
 Rosemary C. Patterson  
 Executive Director

**100% of the families that we serve in Laurens County have 2 or more risk factors as defined by the First Steps standards. Our in-house child care scholarships match at risk children with child care centers that participate in our Child Care Training and Professional Development program. All of our scholarships are connected to our Parents As Teachers program. The families work with a Parent Educator a minimum of twice monthly and meet with other parents in Group Connections a minimum of four times annually. Every family receives age appropriate books to help them build a home library with quality children's literature. Even though LCFS does not directly fund the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, we register all of our clients so that all families receive the books.**

**In order to support quality child care at centers in our county, we provide center staff with professional development hours required by DSS. All of our training is based on a needs survey and is provided free to all staff who work in Laurens County. We provide follow-up visits and feedback to teachers after training sessions. We also help to train public school 4K teachers from both county school districts.**



Healthy Start



Family Strengthening



Early Intervention



Quality Child Care



Early Education



School Transition

### County Programs

- Parents as Teachers
- Child Care Training
- Child Care Scholarships
- Countdown to Kindergarten

### State Programs

- Early Head Start
- First Steps 4k
- Nurse Family Partnership



# 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. Because 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, Laurens County First Steps focuses its investments in Family Strengthening, Quality Childcare, Healthy Start, Early Education, and School Transition.**

# Early Head Start (EHS)

**Children involved in high-quality preschool are more likely to have better academic outcomes.**

## Program Description

Laurens County First Steps provides financial support for the Early Head Start Program at Thornwell Home for Children. LCFS does not provide the services to children and families. Services are provided on the Thornwell campus.

The EHS program was made possible through a grant that the State Office of First Steps was awarded to expand quality services to pre-school children in Laurens County and other high need areas in our state.

EHS operates year round with the new year starting in August and ending the following August. The program closes for 3 days to prepare for a new year.

The EHS program is designed to serve the most at risk children from birth to 36 months.

A father and children read a book at the Spring Fling Festival for EHS at Thornwell.



### Early Education by the Numbers, 2016-17

Children Served	61
Providers Served	1

### This year, Early Head Start program at Thornwell:

- ✓ Made it possible for 61 children to attend quality preschool
- ✓ Served families/children qualifying for one or more of the following: Medicaid, TANF, diagnosed disabilities, in Foster Care, homeless, SC Vouchers, and low income/poverty

### Thank you to our partners!

- Thornwell Home for Children
- South Carolina First Steps

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# Nurse-Family Partnership

**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 Laurens County, Nurse-Family Partnership is implemented through The Greenville Hospital System. LCFS can refer clients as appropriate.



**Among our NFP families in Laurens County:**

- 100% ... live in poverty
- 80% ... graduate from high school
- 0% ... had developmental delays

## NFP by the Numbers, 2016-17

Children Served	23
Number of Home Visits	604

### This year, our NFP program:

- ✓ 95% client satisfaction rate
- ✓ No premature births
- ✓ 60% quit or reduced smoking during pregnancy

### Thank you to our partners!

- Nurse Family Partnership through the Greenville Hospital System
- The Bailey Foundation of Clinton for a private donation

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

**Our Parenting Program is connected to every Child Care Scholarship.**

## 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

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

100% ... live in poverty  
33% ... didn't graduate from high school  
58% ... were teen parents



A's newborn brother joined us in March! She is so excited to have him go to "school" with her!

When I found out I was having twins I didn't know what I would do! I had one child already in the parenting/scholarship program, and I didn't know if there would be slots open. LCFS came through for me and my kids! Now all 3 have scholarships and have parenting visits.

ST

## PAT by the Numbers 2016-17

Families Served	12	
Children Served	17	
Total Home Visits	275	
Hours Spent Serving Families	309	
Average gain, <i>Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale</i> (pre-to-post):	3.45 Baseline	4.4 Current

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

- ✓ Averaged 2.41 home visits per family
- ✓ Identified and addressed 1 potential developmental delays
- ✓ Improved parenting practices: KIPS showed a 0.95 improvement; ACIRI for adults went from 1.96 to 2.6 & children went from 2.14 to 2.76
- ✓ Improved literacy skills: home libraries were extended- 402 books were given to PAT clients
- ✓ Made connections for families to services such as child care scholarships, BabyNet, & community resources/events

### Thank you to our partners!

Laurens County School Districts 55 & 56  
Big Blue Marble Academy  
Stepping Stones Learning Academy  
Tender Loving Child Care

### Laurens County First Steps

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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 childcare hinges on high-quality professional development that meets the needs of the local childcare 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 also follow-up in the classroom.

It's so nice to get with people from other centers and share problems and solutions!!

KM

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

<u>Topic:</u>	<u>Sessions:</u>
The Pyramid Model	1
Classroom Rules	1
Toys & Play Materials for Special needs	1
Safe Sleep & Blood Borne Pathogens	1
Cara's Kit	3
Incredible Years	1
Program Administration	1
Nutrition Education	1
CPR Health & Safety	6



Having fun in CPR training!

### Training by the Numbers, 2016-17

Total Training Attendance	234
Child Care Teachers and Directors Served	100
Number of Training Sessions Offered	16

### This year, our Training program provided:

- ✓ 100 early childhood staff with high quality training
- ✓ 27 hours of certified training and 9 hours of registered training for staff to meet annual re-certification

### Thank you to our partners!

- Big Blue Marble Academy
- Carrot Stew
- Hickory Tickory Tots
- Stepping Stones Learning Academy
- Tender Loving Child Care
- Young World
- YMCA at First Baptist

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# Child Care Scholarships

**Too many families in Laurens 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.

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

- 100% ... live in poverty
- 33% ... didn't graduate from high school
- 58% ... were teen parents
- 67% ... single parent Head of Household

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.

**Every Laurens County First Steps Child Care Scholarship is connected to our Parents As Teachers program.**

I could never afford to buy all the books and materials provided by LCFS PAT program. Also, I would not be able to work if not for the scholarship program.

AY



These twins entered our program in August 2016; joining their big sis who came to us at birth and will age out in June 2018.

### Scholarships by the Numbers, 2016-17

Children Served	17
Providers Served	3

### This year, our Scholarship program:

- ✓ Provided 17 children (12 families) with scholarship assistance so their parents could work or attend school
- ✓ Supported 3 small businesses in Laurens County by subsidizing child care tuition for families who would not otherwise be able to afford quality care
- ✓ Provided 24 hours of training for scholarship parents in topics such as Quality Childcare, Importance of Reading Aloud, & Safety as well as 285 hours of parenting (PAT)

### Thank you to our partners!

- Big Blue Marble Academy
- Stepping Stones Learning Academy
- Tender Loving Child Care

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# Countdown to Kindergarten



**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	39
Families Served	37
Home/School Visits	234

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



**This year, our Countdown to Kindergarten program:**

- ✓ Increased the amount of time parents spent reading to children from 32.43% of parents who read 3-4 times per week to their child to 51.28% of parents who read 3-4 times a week to their child

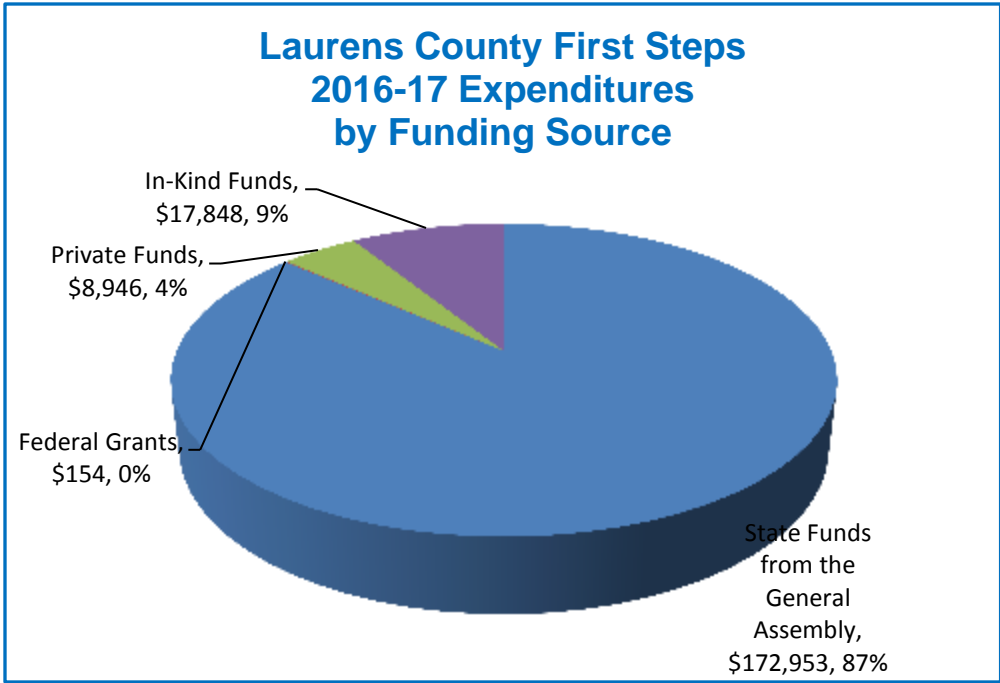
## Thank you to our partners!

- United Way of Laurens County
- Laurens County School Districts 55 & 56

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

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# Financial Impact



**Total 2016-17 Expenditures: \$199,901**

**State Funds Leveraged in 2016-17\*: 16%**

\*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	\$34,003	\$0	\$39	\$6,000	<b>\$40,042</b>	<b>20%</b>
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$3,898	\$0	\$5,874		<b>\$9,772</b>	<b>5%</b>
Child Care Training	\$17,221	\$0	\$602	\$4,412	<b>\$22,235</b>	<b>11%</b>
Child Care Scholarships	\$76,979	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$76,979</b>	<b>39%</b>
Early Head Start	\$0	\$154	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>	<b>0%</b>
Nurse Family Partnership	\$0	\$0	\$131	\$0	<b>\$0</b>	<b>0%</b>
Program Support	\$25,477	\$0	\$2,187	\$788	<b>\$28,452</b>	<b>14%</b>
Administrative Support	\$15,375	\$0	\$113	\$6,648	<b>\$22,136</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$172,953</b>	<b>\$154</b>	<b>\$8,946</b>	<b>\$17,848</b>	<b>\$199,901</b>	

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

**Since inception, Laurens County First Steps has leveraged \$2,415,195 from sources outside of state government. That's \$.49 cents for every state dollar.**

# Thank You Supporters!

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

## Funding Support

State of South Carolina: \$209,940  
(through South Carolina First Steps)

United Way of Laurens \$4,500

Private Donations \$1,223

Fundraisers \$3,412

LCSD 55 for CTK \$3,564

## In-Kind Support

Laurens County School District 55

Laurens Family YMCA



## How your support helps children in Laurens County:

- \$85-\$115 pays for one week at a child care center
- \$25 provides snacks for Group Connections (meetings) for the scholarship & parenting families and/or the teen mom meetings at Laurens District 55 High school

### HOW TO GIVE:

Participate in fundraising activities or visit our online store <https://laurencsfs30.terrilynncares.com>

Mail Private Donations to

301 Hillcrest Dr

Laurens, SC 29360

## Save the Date!

October 7, 2017 Squealin on the Square

October 9, 2017 Annual Meeting at Clinton Elementary School LCSD 56

Fundraiser to be announced end of October 2017

## Financial Impact for Small Business

Laurens County First Steps contributes to the financial health of 3 child care centers in Laurens County. In FY17 we paid for 17 scholarships at these centers. The value of these scholarships is \$74,891. The centers are guaranteed to receive payment in a timely manner and also receive free staff training required by DSS and materials for the classrooms through our Child Care Training Program. We administer developmental assessments to all our clients to assist in identifying possible delays. We make connections for other services available in our county such as vision screenings at no costs to the centers or parents.

For FY18 we hope to be able to hire another Parent Educator and serve more scholarship families.

Because of our scholarships more families can hold their place in the economics of the county through gainful employment. 98% of our parents work within the county.

LCFS scholarships have helped several teen moms to finish high school, pursue higher education, and find employment in the community.

*Both of these young ladies have been with our scholarship and parenting programs since birth.*



# First Steps Partnership Board

## Small and Effective

The Laurens County First Steps Board has always supported the vision of First Steps. They know the great things that can happen in Laurens County because of the sharing of their time, talents and resources. Their voluntary service to the board shows commitment to the noble cause of early education of young children and the support of their families to ensure they are ready for kindergarten. The partnership board participates in First Steps efforts of advocacy for young children & early education. The varied backgrounds and perspectives of the board bring strength to decisions on how to serve our community effectively.

The size of our group is generally small and our budget is small but we use our funds and resources very effectively. Through our childcare scholarships over the last four years, our scholarships have enabled several teen moms to graduate from high school and pursue higher education as well as join the workforce in Laurens County.

### Laurens County First Steps Partnership Board 2016-17

Name	Position	Board Category
Linda Wessel, Chair	Technology & ECE School District 55	Pre K Primary Ed
Connie Parker, Secretary	USC Union Laurens Campus	Family Education
Jennifer Abercrombie	District 55 Vice Principal	Pre K Primary Ed
Kena Cox	District 55 Primary Montessori	Pre K Primary
Shirley Clark	District 55 Transportation	Faith
Elizabeth Franklin	First Baptist Church	Childcare/Early Childhood Development
Shawn Brown	Guardian Ad Litem	Family Education
Brooke Robinette	Thornwell Child Development Center	Non-Profit
Gwen Moore	Case Manager GLEAMNS Head Start	Designated
Ann Szypulski	Director Laurens County Library	Designated
Candee Langford	District 55 Instructional Coach	Designated
Melodie Edwards	Director Student Services District 56	Designated
Christy Coates	Retired Elementary Teacher	Legislative appointee
Phyllis Putman	DHEC	Designated
Byron Dendy	Foster Parent Program	Family Education
Michelle Ellis	Nurse	Legislative appointee
April Kingsborough	Teacher Assistant	Faith

# 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 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)