

LEE COUNTY



**FIRST  
STEPS**

Getting children ready for school.



Early Steps to School  
Success (Save the Children)

Parents as Teachers  
(Kershaw)

Countdown to Kindergarten

Child Care Training

Child Care Scholarships

Strengthening Families  
Program

# Annual Report

2016-2017



## OUR VISION:

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

First Steps WORKS for the children of Lee County.



## By The Numbers

Indicator	SC	Lee County
Children Under Five	293,134	893
%Children In Poverty	24.4%	38.6%
3 <sup>rd</sup> Graders Scoring "Does Not Meet" Standard in Reading	22.2%	45.6%
Births to Mothers With Less Than a High School Diploma	11.8%	21.6%

KIDS COUNT data provided by



## Our Results

- ✓ Since inception, Lee County First Steps has leveraged \$2,994,116.70 from sources outside of state government. That's \$.71 cents for every state dollar.
- ✓ 56 children served by parenting
- ✓ 21 children received child care scholarships
- ✓ 30 hours of child care training were provided
- ✓ 30 children in Countdown to Kindergarten (CTK)
- ✓ 86 children ages 0-5 were served in Strengthening Families Program (SFP)
- ✓ 42 families served in the SFP
- ✓ 221 family members served in SFP
- ✓ 90 children impacted by the Book Bag Exchange Program
- ✓ 4K Program implemented in partnerships with the public-private community

### Board Chair:

Rev. Archie S. Temoney, Sr.

### Executive Director:

(ELDER) ALEXIS D. PIPKINS, SR.

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## Lee County First Steps increases the quality of services for children 0-5 and their families

Lee County First Steps  
**Alexis D. Pipkins, Sr.**  
Executive Director

2016-2017 Fiscal Year has been a successful year for Lee County First Steps (LCFS). The board has managed to sustain partnerships which made it possible to continue providing already established services. LCFS provided the following support with limited funding and staff: child care scholarships; and center staff training and professional development to both early care professionals and parents. Also, Lee County has continued to implement parenting programs (Parents as Teachers and Early Steps to School Success). In addition to providing support for the 4K Assessments to include the third edition of the Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning (DIAL-3), and the third edition of the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT-3). Furthermore, LCFS and Rural Leadership Initiative (RLI) -Lee County continued its work through the SC Healthy Initiative Grant from SC DHEC and SC Tobacco Collaboration to focus on the health and well-being of Lee County's children and their families.

LCFS continued to work hard to expand services throughout the community and across county lines, if necessary, to reach families and children who are in dire need of these services. LCFS received funds from SC Children's Trust to expand the Strengthening Families Program to serve families in the Darlington and Florence County areas.

The value adds which LCFS continues to have on the local community is that we serve as a visible advocate for the children and parents in Lee County. Although local resources are limited, LCFS is still passionate about its commitment to helping children and their families, strengthening collaboration efforts with the Lee County School District, Head Start, private child care, and other partners in the local and regional community. LCFS has maintained its focus on addressing parenting, home visiting, quality child care with limited child care scholarships and child care training and professional development opportunities.



Healthy Start



Family Strengthening



Early Intervention



Quality Child Care



Early Education



School Transition

## County Programs

Early Steps to School Success (Save the Children)

Parents as Teachers (Kershaw)

Countdown to Kindergarten

Child Care Training

Child Care Scholarships

Strengthening Families Program

## State Programs

Baby Net

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, Lee County First focuses its investments in Family Strengthening, School Transition, Quality Child Care, and Early Education**

Providing quality home visitation, early literacy support, and book bag exchange program.

## Program Description

Early Steps to School Success (ESSS) is a language and pre-literacy development program operated by Save the Children, a leading international nonprofit helping children in need. ESSS is the birth-to-five component of a continuum of Save the Children programs which focus on literacy and language development, physical fitness and nutrition programs for children birth to age 12. ESSS provides early childhood education services to pregnant women and children birth to five years of age, education services to their parents, and ongoing staff training to the community early childhood educators involved with the program.

In Lee County, ESSS is implemented in collaboration with Lee County School District.



Lee County First Steps serves families in greatest need. Among our ESSS families:

- 23.4% Live in poverty
- 53% Single Parent
- 53% Children in single families
- 47.4% Births to teens (15-19)
- 10.8% Low Birthweight
- 34.2% Babies born with less than adequate Prenatal Care

### ESSS by the Numbers, 2016-2017

Children Served	56
Number of Home Visits	691
Total Hours of Home Visits	724
Number of Group Meetings	41
Number of Families Served	49

## ESSS Expansion on the way...

This year, ESSS Program learned that Save The Children is be present in each of the Lee County School District elementary schools attendance zones, increasing the impact on children and families in the most rural pockets of Lee County.

### Thank you to our partners!

- Save the Children
- Lee County School District
- Bishopville Primary School
- Lower Lee Elementary School
- West Lee Elementary School
- Lee County Adult Education
- Bishopville Lee Adult Education
- Jhane Family Day Care

### Lee County First Steps

310 Roland Street; Bishopville, SC 29010  
803-484-5110  
Lee1ststeps@gmail.com

**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

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

- 100% **live in poverty**
- 91% **Single parents**
- 6% **were teen parents**
- 12% **didn't graduate high school**



I'm a single mother with five children and not much income, so providing the resources my children, and I needed to help them begin reading before school was not looking too promising.

## PAT by the Numbers 2016-2017

Children Served	10
Total Home Visits	196
Hours Spent Serving Families	196
Number of Group Meetings	11
Families Served	10

## This year, our Parents as Teachers program:

- ✓ Averaged 2.23 home visits per family
- ✓ 1142 individuals attended group meetings
- ✓ Identified and addressed potential developmental delays by referring to BabyNet or Child Find
- ✓ Parenting practice on the KIPS is helping parents strengthen their nurturing and parenting skills
- ✓ Improved literacy skills: books given, books lent, and books read to children totaling 1500
- ✓ Made connections for families to services such as referrals

## Thank you to our partners!

Lee County School District  
Save The Children  
Parents As Teachers (ILA)  
Bishopville Lee Child Care Center  
Kershaw County First Steps

### Lee 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 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.

*"We enjoyed each session, and the training was excellent!" Mary Lee Arthur*

**Child Care Training Sponsored by Lee County First Steps, 2016-2017**

**Topic:**  
 Growth and Development  
 Curriculum  
 Program Administration  
 Professional Development  
 Nutrition  
 Special Needs  
 Child Guidance



## Training by the Numbers, 2016-2017

Total Training Attendance	74
Child Care Teachers and Directors Served	32
Number of Training Sessions Offered	13
Number of Training Hours Offered	30

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

- ✓ **32 early childhood staff with high quality training**
- ✓ **30 hours of certified training for staff to meet annual re-certification requirements**
- ✓ **150 hours of TA follow-up with training participants to help put training into practice**

### *Thank you to our partners!*

- Lee County School District
- Save The Children
- Early Steps/Parents As Teachers
- Bishopville Primary School
- Wateree Head Start- Bishopville Site
- Kershaw County First Steps
- Bishopville Lee Child Care Center
- Lee County Adult Education
- Child Care Resource and Referral

**Lee County First Steps**  
 PO Box 344; Bishopville, SC 29010  
 Phone: 803-484-5110



# Child Care Scholarships

Too many families in Lee 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.

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

- 100% ... live in poverty
- 100% ... had at least 1 risk factor
- 23.4% ...Children living in concentrate poverty
- 53% ...Children living in single parent families

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.

Lee County First Steps partners to integrate scholarships h other programs, such as Parents as Teachers, Early Steps to School Success, and Family Literacy with Lee County Adult Education.



“Child care scholarships help me complete my high school diploma requirements and graduate.”

### Scholarships by the Numbers, 2016-2017

Children Served	21
Providers Served	2

## This year, our Scholarship program:

Provided 21 children with scholarship assistance so their parents could work or attend school

- ✓ Identified and addressed no potential developmental delays among scholarship children
- ✓ Supported 2 small businesses in Lee County by subsidizing child care tuition for families who would not otherwise be able to afford quality care
- ✓ Provided training for scholarship parents in topics such as Social and Emotional Development, School Readiness, Child Assessments, Growth and Development, Literacy, Strengthening Families

## Thank you to our partners!

- Lee County Adult Education
- Lee County School District
- DSS ABC Child Care
- Bishopville Lee Child Care Center
- Jhane Family Day Care

**Lee County First Steps**  
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**Bringing parents and teachers together as partners sets the foundation for success in school.**

## Program Description

Countdown to Kindergarten (CTK) is a summer home visitation model connecting rising kindergartners and their families with their future teachers. The program is designed:

- ✓ to forge strong and lasting home-school relationships,
- ✓ to acquaint children and families with the state and classroom expectations to increase the likelihood of school success,
- ✓ to increase parent involvement in the early grades (particularly in hard-to-reach communities), when children's learning is foundational for life success; and
- ✓ to increase public awareness of the importance of school readiness and provide ways for parents and communities to impact children's early school success.

Countdown to Kindergarten integrates all of the following:

**Home Visitation.** Teachers make six visits over the summer to the homes of participating students and families. Children and families are introduced to actual materials used in kindergarten and are given a Kindergarten Transition Toolkit to keep.

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

**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 2017

Children Served	30
Families Served	30
Home/School Visits	180

*\*CTK program data is for June-August 2015 whereas CTK fiscal data includes expenditures from July 1, 2015 through August 31, 2015.*



*"CTK helped my child learn more and understand that Kindergarten will be a new adventure of learning"*

## This year, our Countdown to Kindergarten program:

- ✓ Increased the amount of time parents spent reading to children by 100%
- ✓ According to kindergarten teachers, 100% of CTK children performed as well as, or better than, their fellow students in LIST AREAS FROM THE CTK TEACHER SURVEY during the 2015-2016 School Year.
- ✓ According to 2015-2016 School Year Survey from kindergarten teachers, 100% of CTK parents were more involved than other parents in their child's education in the areas of LIST AREAS FROM THE CTK TEACHER SURVEY.

## Thank you to our partners!

Lee County School District  
Kaplan Early Learning Company  
Bishopville Primary School  
Wateree Head Start- Bishopville Site

**Lee County First Steps**

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# Strengthening Families



## Program Description

The Strengthening Families Program (SFP) 6-11 is an evidence-based family skills training program designed to strengthen the skills of both parents and their children so that they will be better equipped to deal with life's challenging situations. The SFP provides 14 weekly sessions of family educational training for both parents and their children age 6-11 in addition to meals, prizes and program incentives.

Here is what our SFP Program provides:

- 14 weekly educational skills training sessions for both parents and their children age 6 – 11.
- Child care services for non-participating children.
- A delicious family meal during each training session.
- Transportation provided for families, if needed.
- Prizes and program incentives i.e., gift cards, gas cards, household items, etc.
- **Incentive for families who successfully complete and graduate from the program by attending 12 or more training sessions.**
- **Incentive for families for perfect attendance who attend all 14 sessions with Perfect attendance.**



### SFP 6-11 by the Numbers, 2016-2017

Number of Group Meetings	168
Number of Incentives Given	885
Number of Children 0-5 Served	86
Number of Family Members Served	221
Number of Families Served	42
Total Attendance	604

Lee County First Steps provided SFP services in Lee County in collaboration with Lee County School District at Lee Central Middle School. Florence County in collaboration with Pee Dee Region Boys and Girls Club- Lake City Site; Darlington County in collaboration with Darlington County School District at Darlington County Intervention School.

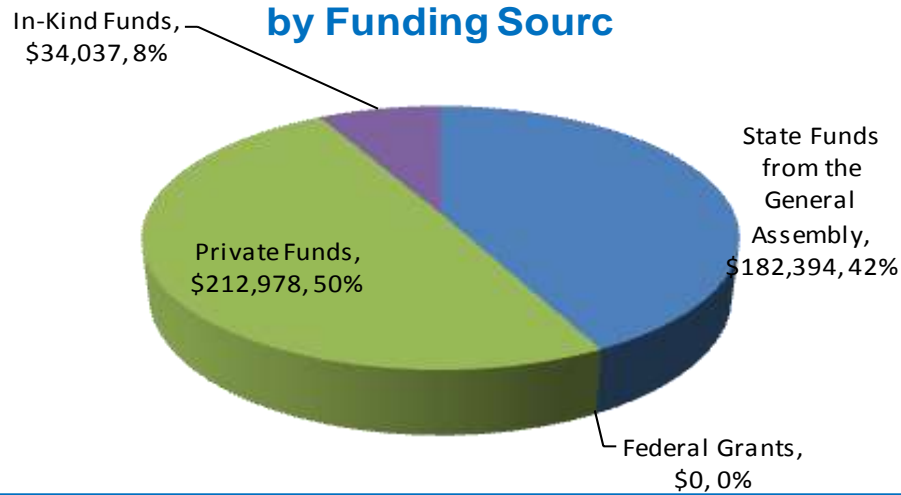
### *Thank you to our partners!*

- Children's Trust of SC
- Lee County School District
- Lee Central Middle School
- Darlington County School District
- Darlington County Intervention School (DCIS)
- Pee Dee Region Boys and Girls Club- Lake City Site

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# Financial Impact

## Lee County First Steps 2016-17 Expenditures



**Total 2016-17 Expenditures: \$429,408**

**State Funds Leveraged in 2016-17\*: 42%**

\*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
Early Steps	\$39,491	\$0	\$73,813	\$13,037	\$126,341	29%
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$3,587	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,587	1%
Child Care Quality Enhancement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0%
Child Care Training	\$23,853	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$23,853	6%
Child Care Scholarships	\$59,500	\$0	\$0	\$21,000	\$80,500	19%
Community Education	\$4,242	\$0	\$136,210	\$0	\$140,452	33%
Program Support	\$25,953	\$0	\$213	\$0	\$26,166	6%
Administrative Support	\$25,767	\$0	\$2,742	\$0	\$28,509	7%
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$182,393</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$212,978</b>	<b>\$34,037</b>	<b>\$429,408</b>	

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

Since inception, Lee County First Steps has leveraged \$2,994,116.70 from sources outside of state government. That's \$.71 cents for every state dollar.

## Parent Speaks Loud: J. Lowery

### Felicia Evans:

9 month old Khari loves to interact with his books and toys. I was surprised because I had never read to him before I began the program. I thought he was too young. When its story time, he sits and pays attention, and then he will get a book and open it. He reads the book in baby talk. Turning the pages and looking at pictures are his favorite. He likes colorful toys that sing and he tries to sing along. When he hears music, he claps his hands. I didn't think that he could stack the rings, but he watched as I did, and then he did it. I am very proud of his successes and really thankful for Ms. Evans' help.



Congratulations to Shakala Boyd, for toilet training her child! For Shakala, it took a lot of work and effort to toilet train her child, but she did it. Shakala, said that she enjoyed and looked forward to the Early Steps to School Success (ESSS) visits of sharing information. It helped her to take on the responsibilities of motherhood and showed good examples for her children.

## Thank you to our partners!

### Funding Support

State of South Carolina: \$182,393  
*(through South Carolina First Steps)*

Children's Trust of South Carolina: \$136,210  
*(Strengthening Families Program 6-11)*

Save the Children: \$73,813

Midland Gives Program

### In-Kind Support

Lee County School District

Lee Central Middle School

Lee County Adult Education

Children's Trust of South Carolina

Save the Children: Early Steps to School Success

DSS ABC Child Care

Representative Grady Brown

Darlington County School District

Darlington County Intervention School

Pee Dee Region Boys and Girls Club- Lake City Site

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

## Community Partnerships:



Lee County First Steps works tirelessly to provide services for our children and families. This includes the Holiday and Christmas Season which is a special time for our program children. Lee County First Steps coordinated a local community effort in partnership with the Angel Tree Giving Program for Lee County Families who needed help during the holiday season. This was a huge success! Also, Lee County First Steps in collaboration with Wateree Head Start- Bishopville Site, West Lee Elementary School, and Bishopville Lee Child Care Center continued the partnership of ensuring Lee County families received toys for Christmas from the Toys for Tot sponsored by the Marine Corp Toys for Tots Foundation. Over 300 children in Lee County received toys because of this collaborative efforts.

## Week of the Young Child (WOYC) 2017 Celebration



WOYC Reading and Art Exhibit at the Lee County Arts Council was a collaboration with Lee County School District, Lee County Arts Council, Lee County Library, Bishopville Lee Child Care Center, and Wateree Head Start- Bishopville Site.

## Tiana Benjamin

My name is Tiana Benjamin and I'm a parent in the Lee County First Steps Program. The program has been a tremendous help in my life for me and my daughter who is now three years old. I meet Mrs. Gloria Burris when I was still in high school and my daughter Trinity was about a year old. She helped me with things that I didn't realize my baby could do at her age. I learned to allow her to take the lead when we played together, let her have choices, and let her do things I thought she couldn't do. The activities and books she brought helped me a lot. We looked forward to Mrs. Gloria's visits because she gave good story books. Her visits also helped me to fine a plan for Trinity to work on that would help her to be successful in life. Working with my daughter, helped me to learn to have more patience with her and encourage her even when she makes mistakes. While I was in school, I got a job and First Steps gave me a scholarship so I could put Trinity in a child care center. So this was an even bigger help, Bishopville-Lee Child Care Center is doing a great job helping Trinity learn and enforce what Mrs. Gloria already started doing with her. Trinity is now three years old. She is out spoken, smart, and intelligent. I thank Mrs. Gloria, Lee County First Steps, Mrs. Patterson and Bishopville-Lee Child Care Center.

Mrs. Gloria enrolled Trinity in the Book Bag Program at the Bishopville-Lee Child Care Center and she is still building her Library of books.

Thank You so Much,  
Lee County First Steps and Save the Children Programs



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



# First Steps Partnership Board

## Lee County First Steps Partnership Board, 2016-17

Name	Position	Board Category
1. (Rev.) Archie Temoney, Board Chair	New Zion AME Church	Faith Community
2. Andrea Favor	Lee County DSS	Lee County DSS
3. Andrew Moses, Vice-Chair	Lee County School District	Legislative Appointee
4. Beauty Murphy	Lee County School District	Early Childhood Education
5. Belinda Butler	Select Health	Business Community
6. Bertha Scott	Lee County School District	Family Ed, Training & Support Provider
7. Betty D. Addison	Retired, Lee County School District	Non-profit Organization
8. Bettye Scott	Retired/ Lee County Transit	Transportation
9. Danielle Boyd, Secretary	Wateree Head Start – Bishopville Site	Head Start
10. David “Keel” Addison	Addison Barber Shop	Parent of Preschool Children
11. Diana Williams, Assist. Secretary	Retired, Lee County School District	Early Childhood Education
12. Eloise W. Witherspoon	Lee County Adult Education	Family Ed, Training & Support Provider
13. Jacqueline Josey	Lee County Council	Lee County Council
14. Jeanette Isaac	Lee County School District	Preschool through Primary Education
15. Jerlene Atkinson	Kiddy Land Daycare Center	Early Childhood Education
16. Beverly Jackson	Lee County School District	Lee County DSS
17. Julia Young	Colonial Neurology	HealthCare Provide
18. Kateisha Simmons	Parent of Preschool	Lee County School District
19. LaToya Hopkins	Wateree Head Start	Parent of Preschool Children
20. Lillie Patterson	Bishopville Lee Child Development Center	Childcare & Early Childhood Dev. Ed. Provider

# First Steps Partnership Board

## Lee County First Steps Partnership Board, 2016-17

Name	Position	Board Category
21. M. DeLoris LeGrant	Sumter County School District	Early Childhood Education
22. Mary Lee Arthur	Lee County School District	Lee County School District
23. Maverick Wilson	Wateree Correctional Inst.	Legislative Appointee
24. Patricia Toney	Retired, Lee County School District	Faith Community
25. Regina Nesmith	DHEC	DHEC
26. Sandra Holmes	Lee County School District	Health Care Provider
27. Sandy Jenkins	Wateree Regional Trans. Authority	Transportation
28. Sheila Moses, Treasurer	Lee County School District	Health Care Provider
29. Taylor Smith	Pee Dee Math Science & Tech. Academy	Childcare & Early Childhood Dev. Ed. Provider
30. Victoria McCray	Bishopville Lee Child Dev. Center	Legislative Appointee



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

# 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>



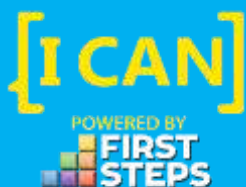
**BabyNet**

South Carolina's Early Intervention System

BabyNet in Sumter County:

Phone: 803-484-5110

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



[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)

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