

LEXINGTON COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.



Parents as Teachers

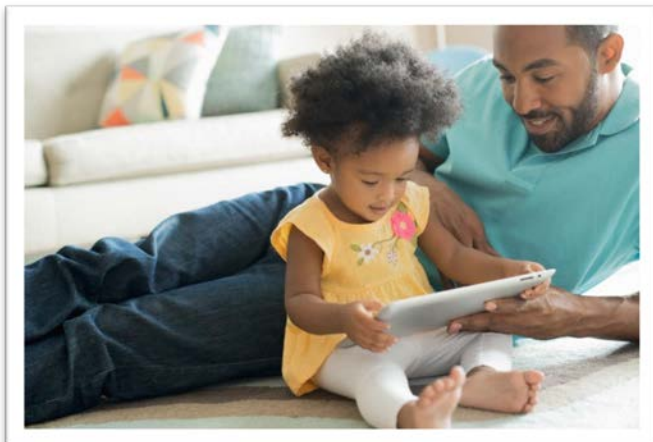
**Countdown to
Kindergarten**

**Child Care Quality
Enhancement**

Child Care Training

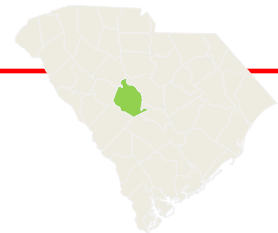
Annual Report

2016-17



OUR VISION:

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



By The Numbers

Indicator	SC	Lexington County
Children Under Five	293,134	17,047
Children In Poverty	24.4%	19.1%
3 rd Graders Below Standard in Reading	22.2%	Lexington 1 – 14.0% Lexington 2 – 29.8% Lexington 3 – 25.8% Lexington 4 – 47.2% LexRich 5 - 12.2%
Births to Mothers With Less Than a High School Diploma	15.0%	13.7%

KIDS COUNT data provided by



- Since inception, Lexington County First Steps has leveraged \$8,946,464 from sources outside of state government. **That's \$.64 for every state dollar received.**
- Implemented the largest Countdown to Kindergarten program in the state, **with 215 children served from 24 schools with 40 teachers.**
- **Served 158 children** in Parents as Teachers, making gains in parenting skills and interactive literacy skills..
- **Supported 114 early childhood staff** with 13 sessions of quality training.

Lexington County First Steps

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www.lexingtoncountyfirststeps.org

Lexington County First Steps Program

James H. Riddle, Jr.
Executive Director

Since 2001, Lexington County First Steps has been defined as filling gaps, enhancing and enlarging services and serving the most at-risk children through the collective wisdom of collaborations and partnerships across Lexington County. Parents as Teachers (PAT), is an evidenced-based home visitation model used by Lexington County since inception of First Steps. It is the flagship of our county services and is the largest PAT program in South Carolina partnering with each of the five school districts' Parent Centers. (CTK), an in-home summer visitation program serves as transition for children entering 5K who often have had little, if any, prior preschool experience. Lexington County has the largest CTK program in South Carolina. Child Care Quality Enhancement Grants were awarded to three Centers in Lexington County with monitoring provided by a credentialed Technical Assistant and grants for equipment and supplies. Child Care Provider Training continues to be a hallmark service coordinating with Midlands TEC (MTC), Childcare Resource & Referral (CCR&R), Richland County First Steps and the Center for Child Care Career Development (CCCCD). With minimal hourly rates, this service continues to be financially self-supporting.



Healthy Start



Family Strengthening



Early Intervention



Quality Child Care



Early Education



School Transition

County Programs

- Parents as Teachers
- Countdown to Kindergarten Child Care
- Quality Enhancement
- Child Care Training

State Programs

- BabyNet
- First Steps 4K
- Early Head Start



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, Lexington County First Steps focuses its investments in Parents as Teachers, Countdown to Kindergarten, Child Care Quality Enhancement, and Child Care Training.

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

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

86% ... live in poverty

40% ... didn't graduate from high school

12.5% ... were teen parents



Most smiles are started by another smile.

-Frank A. Clark

"The STAR Program is excellent! It has helped me to educate my children, involve them in more age appropriate activities, interact with other children, apart from being a very large support for their development."

Luz Ortega

PAT by the Numbers 2016-17

Families Served	127	
Children Served	158	
Total Home Visits	2,431	
Hours Spent Serving Families	2,308	
Average gain, <i>Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale</i> (pre-to-post):	3.45	3.88

This year, our Parents as Teachers program:

- ✓ Averaged 19.14 home visits per family
- ✓ Identified and addressed 39 potential developmental delays, and made 96 connections for families to services such as Adult Education, Early Education Program, English Language Classes, Family Events and Activities, Library Resources, Health and Medical, and Food Assistance.
- ✓ Improved literacy skills by delivering 1,911 books. Additionally, pre ACIRI scores for Adults was 2.14 and the post ACIRI scores were 2.26 with a .12 increase

Thank you to our partners!

Lexington School District One Parenting Center
 Lexington School District Two Star Program
 Lexington School District Three Family Learning Center
 Lexington School District Four Early Childhood Center
 School District Five of Lexington and Richland Ready By Five

Lexington County First Steps

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Child Care Quality Enhancement

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

Program Description

The quality of care they received by young children is crucial to their healthy development and school readiness. Child care providers strive to provide high quality care, but may lack the resources that are commonly available to publicly-funded early childhood programs, such as educational materials, on-site professional development, and other support.

First Steps' Child Care Quality Enhancement (QE) is intended to produce measurable improvements in the quality of care provided to young children. Participating child care providers must serve a high percentage of at-risk children, and are selected through a competitive process that requires a strong level of commitment to the QE process.

Program Components

1. On-site Technical Assistance (TA) at least twice monthly
2. Equipment and materials funding
3. Integration with locally available training, provided by First Steps and other partners
4. Workforce Development
5. Coordination with community partners
6. Pre/post assessments of the classroom environment and teacher-child interaction, using nationally-recognized observational tools for infant/toddler and preschool settings (ITERS, ECERS, FCCERS)

QE by the Numbers, 2016-17

Child Care Providers Served	3
Number of TA Visits Provided	59
Number of Children 0-5 Enrolled in Provider Classrooms	336

Congratulations to our QE participants for 2016-17!

Child Care Provider	Pre/Post Improvement
5 Star Academy, 3-yr-old room	From 1.62
Hartman Hall CDC, 3-yr-old room	From 1.59 to 2.68
Irmo Academy, 3-yr-old room	From 3.8 to 4.14



This year, our Quality Enhancement program:

- ✓ Improved quality, on average, by 1.09 based on pre/post Environment Rating Scale assessments.
- ✓ Provided 201.75 hours of technical assistance to child care providers
- ✓ Provided \$5,000 in materials grants to participating child care providers

Thank you to our partners!

- 5 Star Academy
- Hartman Hall Child Development Center
- Irmo Academy

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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.

Training by the Numbers, 2016-17

Total Training Attendance	161
Child Care Teachers and Directors Served	114
Number of Training Sessions Offered	13

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

<u>Topic:</u>	<u>Sessions:</u>
Building Positive Relationships Through Positive Communication	Part 1 & 2
Promote Your Childcare Center and Professionalize the Field Through Advocacy	1 Session
Building Your Language and Literacy Promotion Competencies	1 Session
Growing Your Core Competencies: Creating Your Environment	1 Session
Fostering Family and Community Relationships	1 Session
Blood-Borne Pathogens	2 Sessions
Promoting Cognitive Development through Play	1 Session
Math is all Around	1 Session
Management of Injuries and Acute illness	1 Session
Enhancing the Need for Nutrients that Regulate Body Functions in the Early Childcare Setting	1 Session
Strengthening Developmental Needs in Young Children	1 Session



A child's life is like a piece of paper on which every person leaves a mark.

This year, our Training program provided:

- ✓ 114 early childhood staff with high quality training
- ✓ 29 hours of certified training and 2 hours of registered training for staff to meet annual re-certification requirements

Thank you to our partners!

- Midlands Technical College (MTC)
- Center for Child Care Career Development (CCCCD)
- Richland 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 2016

Children Served	215
Families Served	213
Home/School Visits	1,268

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



The experience has been amazing, I don't see anything that needs to be improved.

-Chanta Zeigler

This year, our Countdown to Kindergarten program:

- ✓ Increased the amount of time parents spent reading to children by 13%
- ✓ According to kindergarten teachers, 100% of CTK children performed as well as, or better than, their fellow students in Approaches to Learning and Inquiry during the 2016-17 school year.
- ✓ According to kindergarten teachers, 83.33% of CTK parents created a positive relationship between the family and the child's school.

Thank you to our partners!

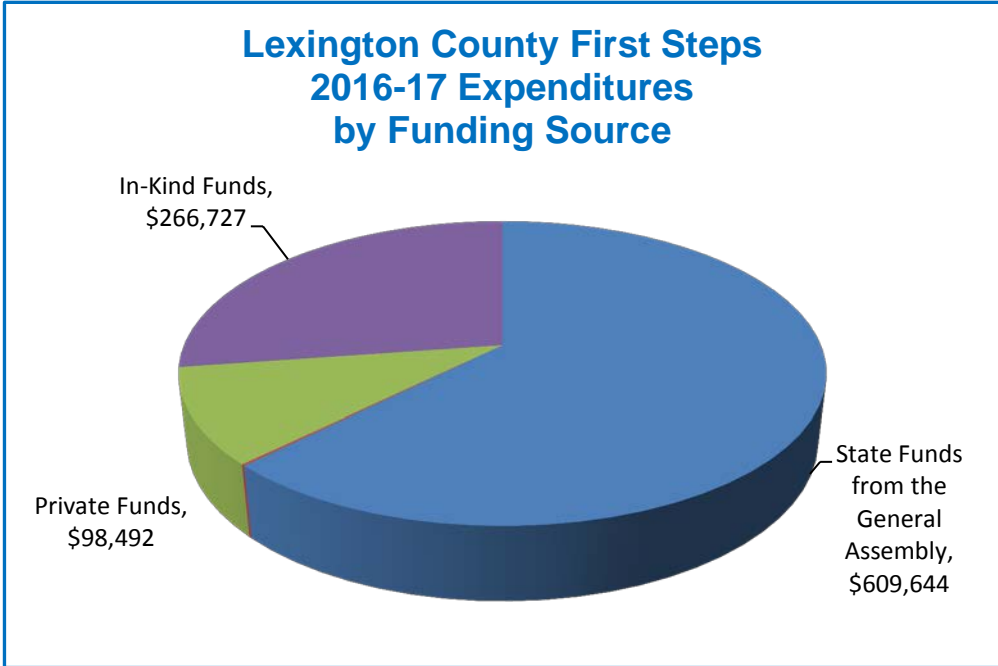
- Lexington County School District One
- Lexington County School District Two
- Lexington County School District Three
- Lexington County School District Four
- School District Five of Lexington and Richland Counties
- United Way of the Midlands (UWM)
- Kaplan Early Learning Center

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Financial Impact



Total 2016-17 Expenditures: \$1,020,500

State Funds Leveraged in 2016-17*: 60%

**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	\$398,002	\$0	\$0	\$266,724	\$664,726	65%
Parents as Teachers Countywide	\$22,750	\$0	\$6,248	\$0	\$28,998	
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$11,865	\$0	\$57,953	\$411	\$70,229	7%
Child Care Quality Enhancement	\$60,353	\$0	\$0	\$43	\$60,397	6%
Child Care Training	\$21,104	\$0	\$26,793	\$0	\$47,897	5%
Program Support	\$64,915	\$0	\$7,499	\$0	\$72,414	7%
Administrative Support	\$75,840	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$75,840	7%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$654,829	\$0	\$98,493	\$267,178	\$1,020,500	

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

Since inception, Lexington County First Steps has leveraged \$7,371,049 from sources outside of state government. That's .63 cents for every state dollar.

Thank you supporters!

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

Funding Support

- State of South Carolina: \$621,868
(through South Carolina First Steps)
- Palmetto Project Partnership: \$1,500
- United Way of the Midlands: \$20,000
- SC Center for Childcare Career Development:
\$2,000
- United Way Contributions Designated to
Lexington County First Steps

Countdown to Kindergarten

- Lexington One: \$9,372
- Lexington Two: \$16,806
- Lexington Three: \$799
- Lexington Four: \$2,336
- Lexington Five: \$8,084

100% giving from Board of Directors & Staff

In-Kind Support

Lexington County School Districts

- Lexington One: \$90,266
- Lexington Two: \$50,000
- Lexington Three: \$24,000
- Lexington Four: \$13,810
- Lexington Five: \$86,750



How your support helps children in Lexington County:

- ✓ Provides a book per month per child through Dolly Parton Imagination Library to PAT Participants
- ✓ Develops relationships among teacher, parent, and child in summer prior to beginning 5K through CTK
- ✓ United Way funds 65 students in Countdown to Kindergarten
- ✓ United Way contributions designated specifically to Lexington County First Steps

HOW TO GIVE: Lexington County First Steps 101 West Columbia Ave. Batesburg-Leesville, SC 29006

Save the Date!

- Dates to be determined- call office for specific details**
- Board of Directors Meetings open to public
 - Countywide Annual trip to Riverbanks Zoo
 - Countywide Edventure trip
 - Annual Countdown to Kindergarten Celebration at Edventure

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

Lexington School District One

As we reflect on our successes within the Parenting Center of Lexington One, one mother's dedication and love for her son shines brightly as she continues to make huge strides. Her Parent Educator and the entire Family Literacy staff has worked diligently with this mom and her son since August of 2016. Her goals seemed unsurmountable at first. This mom has faced tremendous challenges but has proven with hard work and the right supportive resources in place, the goals that seemed impossible, were within her grasp.

She seemed apprehensive when she first dropped off her son at our Family Literacy childcare; she had decided to pursue her GED. Unfortunately, she struggled with the language and was quickly discouraged with the daunting task of attaining her GED. Like so many, she left after a few weeks. Understanding the frustrations she faced, her bilingual parent educator continued to encourage her to return, Mom returned, and it appeared that she was on her way to reaching her goal.

As her son participated in the program, it became evident that he had some developmental delays that were a result of his premature birth. Mom was hesitant, at first, and in a bit of denial, but the behaviors in childcare, personal visits and screening results were clear. With perseverance the staff worked patiently and professionally to refer her to the district for extensive screening. Mom agreed but was scared. The District Special Services team referred him to a 3K program, and helped her to understand the challenges he was facing.

Her Parent Educator has continued Parents as Teachers visits with the mom and son regularly. We observed tremendous progress in both as they continue to meet goals and became more confident. Her son continues to make strides in his language skills. Both have participated in all group activities including those at the local library. Mam and son applied for their first library card and now attend and check out books regularly! Mom completed her GED testing, scoring Silver, and will graduate in Spring 2018. She will also be eligible for scholarships with the Adult Education program and plans to pursue a future as a dental assistant immediately.

This Mom exemplifies the perfect example of her son's the most influential teacher; however, without the family support and services, I doubt she would've returned. The confidence and incredible smile on her face tell the story that has emerged over the past year. We are so proud of her.

Lexington School District Two Star Program

By Merv McCrimmon
Spring, 2017

Working with the “F” family for the past three years has been a rewarding experience. Mom and Dad began the star program as teen parents, and both attended scheduled home sessions and group connections together with additional family members. While working with this family, a speech concern arose, and mom and dad were very receptive to receiving referral information about services for children with speech delays. While attending daycare, their son received two years of speech services, and his language skills have improved tremendously. Mom has been using the PAT resources and ideas that have been shared with her and dad during the home visit sessions from the Lexington 2 Star Program.

Their son is now transitioning from daycare to 4K for the upcoming school year. His daycare teacher has praised the Lexington 2 Star Program for their support of and services provided to the “F” family that have contributed to his positive development and successful performance at the daycare.

Lydia Mayo- STAR Parenting Program of Lexington School District Two

I began visiting the “C” Family in August of 2016. They are a family from Turkey, and they are living here while the father finishes school. Their biggest concerns were the child’s language development and his extreme shyness. On the first visit, they explained to me that they did not feel that he talked as much as other children his age. They also told me how he would cry in public if anyone would try to talk to him.

We used the ASQ-3 to screen him. In the area of communication, he scored lower than I was hoping but not enough to refer to another source, so I decided to provide language activities during our visits and rescreen him in a few months. I also recommended that he join our weekly play group for socialization. I rescreened him in February of 2017, and in the area of communication he scored right where he needs to be. Mom and Dad are glad that he is talking and understand that he will learn more English as he hears it. Mom is working with him daily to learn more words in both languages. They attend our playgroup regularly where he participates, and he has even brought a friend along. Mom often tells me that they feel very lucky that they found our program.



*“Tell me and I forget.
Teach me and I remember.
Involve me and I learn.”*

-Benjamin Franklin

Countdown to Kindergarten

Success Story by Sheri Stewart

I had the opportunity to visit a young mother and her only daughter during my Countdown to Kindergarten experience this summer. The mom was single and gave birth to her daughter as a teenager. They both recently moved from another town to live with the mother's parents in Lexington School District Two. Mom shared her concerns about her daughter's lack of interest in reading and academic activities. Mom struggled in school as a student and did not complete high school, but she did earn her GED. She was concerned that her daughter would experience the same struggles that she did. Mom was new to the area and was not familiar with the school district.

During our visits, we discussed her concerns. I shared the Kindergarten Learning Standards and strategies for promoting positive development in all areas. We discussed ways to make reading and learning fun and identified strategies that mom was already using to encourage her daughter to explore and learn. We discovered her daughter's love of science, and I encouraged mom to use this interest to encourage her daughter to explore and learn. We also shared this information with her 5K teacher. I shared information about the school and local library to help mom become more familiar with the area. Mom and her daughter attended the school visit and met her 5K teacher, and they were able to spend time in a personal conversation with her.

As our visits concluded, mom expressed her great appreciation for the time we spent together stating that visits were very helpful because they made her and her daughter feel more comfortable about beginning school, allowed her to understand how she can help prepare her daughter for school, and helped her understand what her daughter would be learning in school. Mom gained confidence as she recognized the important role she plays in her child's development and success, became aware of how she is already helping her child, and learned new strategies for supporting her daughter's growth and development at home and at school.

First Steps Partnership Board

Board Member Attendance at Meetings

The Board of Directors meets five times during the year, traditionally between September and May, at one of the ten public libraries or at the Lexington County Health Department. With the exception of one meeting with an excused absence just prior to the meeting, **the Board has always had a quorum at every Board meeting since the inception of Lexington County First Steps in 2001.** This is an extraordinary testimony of the ownership that Board members feel and a statement of support of the programming. Thank you Board Members for your dedication and determination as a team to insure the success of Lexington County First Steps!

Lexington County First Steps Partnership Board, 2016-17

Name	Position	Board Category
Jennifer Felkel, Chair	Parenting and Family Services Director/Social Services Coordinator	School District Five of Lexington and Richland Counties
Ada Jane Setzler, Secretary	Former Public Education Teacher, Community Volunteer	Legislative Delegation Appointee
Chrystal Grimes	Pre-Kindergarten through Primary Educator	Richland County School District One
Marla Hamilton	Lead Parent Educator Lexington School District One	Family Education, Training & Support Services
Janice Albert	Emmanuel Wee Care Swansea	Childcare/Early Education Development/Education Provider
Julia Johnson	Occupational Therapist, Lexington One, Retired	Healthcare Provider
David Weissman	Director of Transportation, School District Five of Lexington and Richland Counties	Transportation Provider
Linda O'Neill	Lexington County DHEC Community Outreach	Department of Health and Environmental Control
Melissa Pityk	Coordinator of Youth Services	Lexington County Public Library System
Beth Houck	Principal at Saxe Gotha	Lexington County School District One
Rhonda Wiley	Director of Parent and Family Services /Early Childhood Coordinator	Lexington County School District Two
Angie Rye	Chief Academic Officer	Lexington County School District Three
Joyce Carter	Administrator Lexington School District One, Retired	Lexington Delegation Appointee
Nancy Busbee, Ph.D.	Coordinator of Parenting Services	Lexington School District Four
Robin Jackson	Art in Action, Owner	Business
Cindy Parrish	Retired School Administrator Lexington District One	Pre K/Primary Educator, Retired
Mike Taylor	Batesburg Leesville Chamber of Commerce Executive Director	Business

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

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