

MARION COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.



**Child Care Quality
Enhancement**

Child Care Training

Child Care Scholarships

Literacy Program

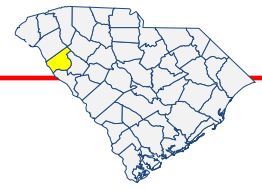
Annual Report

2016-17



OUR VISION:

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



By The Numbers

Indicator	SC	Marion County
Children Under Five	293,134	1,999
Children In Poverty	25%	41%
3 rd Graders Scoring "Does Not Meet" Standard in Reading	22.2%	48.1%
Births to Mothers With Less Than a High School Diploma	15.3%	20.5%

KIDS COUNT data provided by Children's Trust

- Since inception, Marion County First Steps has leveraged \$692,415.87 from sources outside of state government. That's \$.16 for every dollar received.
- Budget: MCFS received \$200,000 from SC First Steps, raised \$4,100 and In-kind match of \$30,388 for a total of \$234,388.
- 27 children received Scholarships and attended 6 different facilities. We identified and addressed 9 potential developmental delays among scholarship children and Made 24 connections for families to services such as BabyNet
- Two new facilities joined the Literacy program and increase total number of children served to 733 along with 7 parenting meetings.
- MCFS doubled the number of training hours provided to childcare providers and significantly increased the number of childcare providers in attendance at childcare trainings.
- Assisted local childcare facility, Ms. Lil's Daycare with in-depth TA along with materials and supplies after her childcare facility was destroyed during Hurricane Matthew.
- Total Children Served in FY17: 782



Marion County First Steps
 Spencer R. Scott, Executive Director

Program Summary

Facility Quality Enhancement, Childcare Training Childcare Scholarships and our newly added Literacy program were all implemented successfully, as each program met all South Carolina First Steps Standards of enhancing childcare programs through regular technical assistance, affordable monthly training, affordable childcare to At-risk, impoverished children and their families and improving Literacy in Marion County.

Collaborations with childcare providers, knowledgeable instructors, DSS, local churches and businesses made all of the above possible.

Annual Celebration

Our Annual Celebration proved to be successful again this year with more than 400 people in attendance which included the MCFS Board Members, the children we serve, childcare providers, vendors, county and state partners and last, but not least, parents, grandparents and guardians.

This year, we even had a special appearance from the one and only Christmas Mickey! Both children and adults laughed, danced and took memorable photos with the world famous Mouse.

All persons and organizations who were instrumental in our success were recognized, including Reverend A. C. Robinson, Pastor of Pleasant Grove Missionary Baptist and Center Director, Ms. Jean Pearson. They allowed us to use their fellowship Hall for the Annual Celebration at no charge again this year.

Marion County First Steps

415 South Coit Street
 Florence SC 29501
 843-629-0202

Board Chairman

Victoria Belin



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, Marion County First focuses its investments in Quality Childcare as well as offering Scholarships and Literacy.



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	60
Number of Children 0-5 Enrolled in Provider Classrooms	22

Congratulations to our QE participants for 2016-17!

Child Care Provider	Pre/Post Improvement
Tender Tots	From 4.66 to 2.97 -1.97
Ms Lil's	From 4.22 to 4.52 +.30
Tender Loving Care	From 3.34 to 3.46 +.12

This year, our Facility Quality Enhancement (FQE) program:

- ✓ Provided 67.65 hours of technical assistance to child care providers
- ✓ Provided \$3,230.15 in materials grants to participating child care providers.
- ✓ 100% of participating FQE childcare providers participated in MCFS childcare trainings and found the trainings to be very beneficial.
- ✓ Environmental Rating Scales scores for two of the three FQE childcare providers improved an average of +21. The third facility, Tender Tots showed a decline in improvement due to ongoing staff issues. They are currently resolving those issues in addition to receiving materials and supplies for to improve her facility. As such, their ERS scores should improve for FY18.

Thank you to our partners!

- Ms. Lil's
- Tender Loving Care
- Tender Tots

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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.

This was by far the best training we've ever had. Nicole Weeks is an excellent trainer.
 Cynthia Edge
 100% of childcare providers enjoyed the trainings conducted by Nicole Weeks.

Child Care Training Sponsored by Marion First Steps, 2016-17

<u>Topic:</u>	<u>Hours</u>
Fun with Science & Sensory	2.50
Arts & Crafts The Kids Way	2.50
STAR: STAYING ON TRACK & RELAXED	1.50
BULYING BASICS 101	1.50
BABY READ ALOUD BASICS	2.00



Training by the Numbers, 2016-17

Total Training Attendance	42
Child Care Teachers and Directors Served	42
Number of Training Sessions Offered	5

This year, our Training program provided:

- ✓ 42 early childhood staff with high quality training.
- ✓ 26 follow-up visits with training participants to help put training into practice.
- ✓ 10 hours of certified training for staff to meet annual re-certification requirements

Thank you to our partners!

- Pleasant Grove Academy, Reverend AC Robinson, Pastor
- Childcare Resource & Referral
- Childcare Instructors
- Childcare Providers

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Child Care Scholarships

Too many families in Marion 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.

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

- 100% ... live in poverty
- 30% ... Parental Depression
- 26% ... were teen parents
- 37% ... had developmental delays

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.

In FY17 MCFS successfully provided wrap-around services with child care scholarships, Facility Quality Enhancement and childcare trainings.

Childcare Scholarships are very helpful to my parents because they help them to pay for quality childcare.

*Jean Pearson,
 Pleasant Grove Academy, Childcare Director*



Pleasant Grove Academy, Childcare Director, Jean Pearson with her FY17 Scholarship Recipients.

Scholarships by the Numbers, 2016-17

Children Served	27
Providers Served	6

This year, our Scholarship program:

- ✓ Provided 27 children with scholarship assistance so their parents could work or attend school
- ✓ Identified and addressed 9 potential developmental delays among scholarship children
- ✓ Made 24 connections for families to services such as BabyNet
- ✓ Supported 6 small businesses in Marion County by subsidizing child care tuition for families who would not otherwise be able to afford quality care
- ✓ Provided 1 hour of training for scholarship parents in topics such as Quality Childcare

Thank you to our partners!

Little Promises Learning Center * Bundles of Joy * Pleasant Grove Academy * Sugar Bears Daycare * Troy Johnson Learning Korner * Agapeland Childcare

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Literacy Program

Parents are their child's first and best teachers.

Program Description

Our Literacy programs offer an integrated and family-friendly approach, helping both parents and children to improve their literacy skills. Our literacy services integrate all of the following:

1. Distribute books to children/parents
2. Interactive Parent/Child Activities
3. Training in storytelling techniques
4. Parenting classes



Literacy Program by the Numbers 2016-17

Children Served	733
Books Distributed	5,847
Early Childhood Education Hours Offered	238.5
Parenting Classes	7

Our Literacy program:

- ✓ Provide literacy experiences for birth to four year old.
- ✓ Provide read aloud sessions for 3 and 4 year old children.
- ✓ Provides activities for parents to reinforce reading at home.

This year, our Family Literacy program:

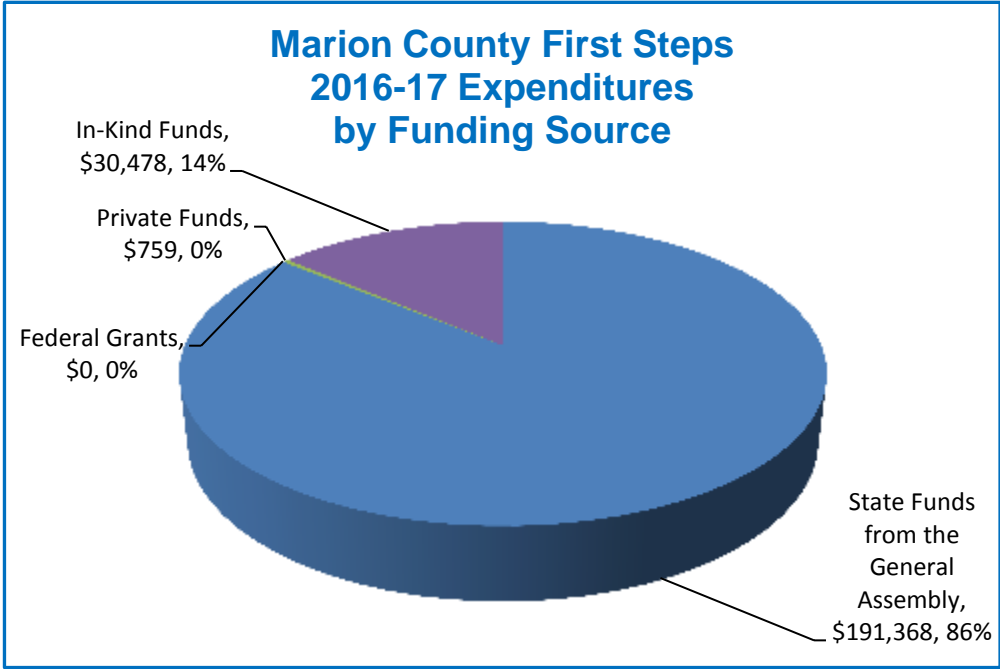
- ✓ Children increase the times they play involving books
- ✓ 24 facilities participated in Marion County First Steps Literacy Program
- ✓ Increased the amount of minutes and times parents read to their child(ren)
- ✓ After 10 months of implementation, a total of 6,387 children (duplicated count) were served.

Thank you to our partners!

- Marion County School District
- Pee Dee Community Action Agency-Head Start
- Local Child Care Facilities

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Financial Impact



Total 2016-17 Expenditures: \$222,605

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
Child Care Training	\$18,416	\$0	\$52	\$4,417	\$22,886	10%
Child Care Quality Enhancement	\$28,693	\$0	\$52	\$6,731	\$35,476	16%
Child Care Scholarships	\$66,500	\$0	\$0	\$14,000	\$80,500	36%
Other Program	\$40,790	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$40,790	18%
Program Support	\$26,753	\$0	\$241	\$3,313	\$30,307	14%
Administrative Support	\$10,215	\$0	\$414	\$2,016	\$12,646	6%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$191,368	\$0	\$759	\$30,478	\$222,605	100%

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

Since inception, Marion County First Steps has leveraged \$692,415.87 from sources outside of state government. That's .16 cents for every state dollar.



Thank you supporters!

2017 MCFS Childcare Provider of the Year

Marion County First Steps Partnership Board takes pride in working with local childcare providers to help lay a strong educational foundation for our earliest learners. As such, we know the importance of having dedicated individuals to ensure our children receive quality childcare. This individuals exemplify characteristics that motivates and encourage learning every day.

Marion County First Steps was proud to recognize **Mrs. Ethel Ford as the FY17 Marion County First Steps Provider of the Year** during this year's Week of the Young Child held in April 2017. Mrs. Ford works in the infant classroom at Troy Johnson Learning Korner and continues to go above and beyond her call of duty to help her students succeed in school and in life. Congratulations, **Mrs. Ethel Ford!**

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

Funding Support

State of South Carolina: \$191,368
(through South Carolina First Steps)
SC Department of Social Service \$100,375

In-Kind Support

Marion County School District
Pleasant Grove Baptist Church
Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.
Party Characters
Kaplan Learning Company

How your support helps children in Marion County:

- ✓ \$25 helps provide materials for early childhood education
- ✓ \$50 feeds dinner to low-income families attending a parenting workshop
- ✓ \$110 provides a young child a book per month for one year!
- ✓ \$250 helps cover the cost of the Annual Community Meeting.

HOW TO GIVE:

Checks can be made payable to Marion County First Steps and mailed to 415 South Coit Street, Florence SC 29501

Save the Date!

ANNUAL COMMUNITY MEETING:

The event will be held on Tuesday, October 24, 2017 at the A.C. Robinson Resource Center (Pleasant Grove Baptist Church) located at 1333 Penderboro Road Marion, South Carolina 29571

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

Ms. Lil's Daycare

Aftermath of Hurricane Matthew - The Road to Recovery



The impact Hurricane Matthew had on the Pee Dee in the fall of 2017, specifically Marion County, has been enormous! After the storm, Mrs. Lil and her husband assessed the damages. Their discovery was devastating! Nearly all the daycare materials, supplies and furniture she collected over the past 30 years was ruined and there was major water damage due to the flood that would require the entire foundation of her childcare facility to be re-built. Mrs. Hunter could not afford flood insurance, therefore, all expenses they would incur to rebuild would be paid out of pocket. The structural damage was nearly \$10,000 to rebuild and replacing childcare furniture, materials and supplies would be nearly the same.

Mrs. Hunter's childcare facility, Ms. Lil's, has worked with MCFS Facility Quality Enhancement Program for nearly a decade. She has always strived to provide quality childcare to the children in Marion County. In light of her misfortune, Spencer R. Scott, MCFS Executive Director, worked with SCFS to provide assistance. In April 2017, Mrs. Hunter received nearly \$7,000.00 in childcare furniture and carpeting along with indoor and outdoor materials and supplies. With assistance from MCFS, Ms. Lil's Childcare facility has now re-opened and she is excited to be serving the children of Marion County, once again.



Photos of the damage Ms. Lil's Daycare experienced from Hurricane Matthew.



After nearly a year of re-building, Ms. Lil's re-opened her doors and she's operational once again.

First Steps Partnership Board

2016-17 Marion County First Steps Partnership Board

Name	Position	Board Category
Victoria Belin	Board Chair	Early Childhood
Howard Blakeney	Board Vice-Chairman	Faith Based Community
Rachel Mason	Board Member	Healthcare Provider
Yolanda Moore	Board Member	Healthcare Provider
Lula Coleman	Board Member	Transportation Provider
Jackie Curry	Board Member	Non-Profit Organization
Julie Graves	Board Member	Parent of Pre-School Children
Betty Hamilton	Board Member	Early Childhood Education
Eleanor Paige	Board Member	Early Childhood Education
Tameka Swinton	Board Member	Early Childhood Education
Annette Gerald	Board Member	Early Childhood
Bernard Gerald	Board Member	Healthcare Provider

First Steps Board Members ensures Community Annual Meeting is Successful!

Board Members work with Pleasant Grove to celebrate another successful year!

Marion County First Steps Board Chairperson, Ms. Victoria Belin wanted to ensure her last Community Annual Meeting was the largest in attendance as well the most fun it has every been during her term as Chair. That was a tall order if you have ever attended Marion County First Steps Annual Meetings. Over the years, it has moved from the Opera House downtown, outside in the park and currently at Pleasant Grove Academy. And each year it gets bigger and better. Ms. Belin and members of the board worked with MCFS, Executive Director, Spencer R. Scott and his staff to organize the yearly celebration to highlight the children and childcare accomplishments. The celebration took place at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church costing the Partnership nothing, as Reverend A. C. Robinson, Pastor donated the building. This year, the board added the cartoon character, Mickey Mouse which turned out to be the highlight of the celebration. Not only did the children enjoy Mickey Mouse but the adults dance, sang and took numerous photos. According to Ms. Belin, this was the biggest and best community event ever with over 325 in attendance! During the Annual Celebration, Spencer R. Scott honored Board Members for their hard work and dedication while Reeshemah Harrison recognized the contributions of partnering agencies and organizations throughout Marion County, some of which included childcare providers, Zeta Phi Beta sorority, Inc., Kaplan Learning Company, faith-based organizations, civic organizations, locally owned businesses, vendors, Marion County School District and others.



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>

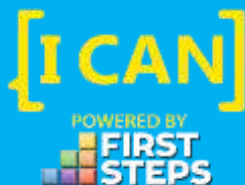


EARLY HEAD START – CHILD CARE PARTNERSHIP

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.

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