

FAIRFIELD COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.



Parents as Teachers

Imagination Library

Countdown to Kindergarten

Child Care Scholarships

1000 Books before
Kindergarten

Annual Report

2017-18



OUR VISION:

Every Fairfield County
child will be prepared for
success in school.

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Executive Director Message

RELATIONSHIPS, RELATIONSHIPS, RELATIONSHIPS!

Yes, relationships! Relationships are at the heart of Fairfield County First Steps. This is all across the board, and starts with our board. Our local board is comprised of folks who you would not likely pull together for any other organization. Their one common interest is making sure that the youngest citizens of Fairfield County receive every opportunity possible to arrive at school healthy and prepared for success.

This year, we were able to DOUBLE the number of families served in our Parents as Teachers program, thanks to a grant. In serving this added number of families, we found that this increased the number of families we work with who also need help in affording childcare. Our board then decided to allocate more money to that program. A new stipulation for FY2018 is that any family receiving tuition assistance for childcare must also be a participant in the Parents as Teachers program. This allowed us to build true relationships with these families and learn about other needs they may have. Our parent workshops, which are a requirement for families in the Parents as Teachers program, were more diverse in program content this year. We asked for and received ideas from our families as to the topic of programs they most needed. All of these needs corresponded with specific areas in the PAT curriculum, making planning and implementing these programs quite beneficial for all. Our assessments show that working with these families leads to measurable growth in areas of deficiency. Having these assessments allows the Parent Educator to work on specific areas of needs with each individual child and family.

Our community is supportive of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program. Due to the contributions earmarked for this program, we are one of the only counties in the state that offers this program to EVERY child from birth until their fifth birthday. Increased exposure to literacy is constantly on the minds of our staff and board. We added 1000 Books before Kindergarten two years ago. We find that it is a bridge between the reader, teacher, and student. We have been able to give new books to every 4K class in the county, and send several new books to each 4K student throughout the school year.

Countdown to Kindergarten is a great partnership between United Way of the Midlands, Fairfield County First Steps, and Fairfield County First Steps. We hire local K5 teachers and work with the district to be sure that at least 75% of the students will have this teacher during the school year. These teachers make home visits, build relationships with the parent and child, and follow a very specific curriculum for this summer program. Surveys show that the parents who are a part of this program are more involved in the child's classroom during the school year.

I am a very active member of the Fairfield Community Coordinating Council. For the past year, this group has been working towards the implementation of a Duke grant to benefit the children of Fairfield County. Walkabouts is a program that will increase activity for these students.

I remain committed to ensuring that EVERY child in Fairfield County is given the opportunity to arrive at school ready to learn.

OUR MISSION:

Collaborating with other entities, First Steps helps South Carolina families and caregivers prepare their children for school success by maximizing public and private community resources to deliver, enhance and expand high-quality early childhood services.

Patti Wilkes

Executive Director

Find Fairfield County
First Steps:



We get children ready.



THE NEED

School readiness **depends on the capacity of caregivers** to provide children with consistent, nurturing, and responsive relationships in safe, stimulating learning environments, **continuously**, starting at birth. Unfortunately, these quality early childhood experiences happen for too few children in Fairfield County.

How are Fairfield County's children doing?	What early learning programs are available for children in our county? Last year:	Where can families access child care in our county?
1050 are under age 5	N/A attended Early Head Start as infants and toddlers	10 licensed child care centers
32% live in poverty	45 attended free preschool or Head Start as 3-year-olds	6 licensed group/family homes
15.5% of babies born in 2016 were to moms without a HS diploma	83 4-year-olds attended free full-day public school 4K or Head Start	25% participate in the state's Quality Rating System (ABC Quality)
63.6% Live births to single mothers	40 0-5 year olds received early intervention or special ed.	29% providers are rated B or higher by  Quality
48.6% of last year's kindergartners demonstrated readiness	14 were served by 	38 families received assistance with affording child care last year
<i>Kids Count data provided by:</i> 	<i>Data provided by:</i> 	

THE GOALS

Our partnership's work, in collaboration with state and local partners, is focused on advancing Fairfield County towards these strategic goals in support of the **Profile of the Ready Kindergartner**, South Carolina's description of school readiness:

- 1.** Increase the capacity of FCFS staff and board members to deliver and support evidence-based programs and practices.
- 2.** Increase community awareness, engagement in, and support of FCFS programs and services.
- 3.** Convene a committee around early education in the county.
- 4.** Identify FCFS as the portal for early education services.

THE IMPACT

In 2017-18, Fairfield County First Steps provided:

- ✓ **487 children** and **480 adults** with **intensive support** to equip parents and caregivers with the confidence and competence to be a child's first and best teacher, and strengthen their family's health, economic, and overall well-being through our Parents as Teachers, Countdown to Kindergarten, and Imagination Library programs.
- ✓ financial assistance to help **22 children**, 0-5, **attend quality child care** so their parents can work or attend school
- ✓ **6614 books** were distributed in Fairfield County, in an effort to **spark the love of reading**, to **746 children across Fairfield County**. Books were distributed through the Parents as Teachers, Imagination Library, 1000 Books Before Kindergarten, and Countdown to Kindergarten programs. Books are also distributed to families who come in to the First Steps office, inquiring about services.
- ✓ A total of **746 children** and **732 adults** were impacted by Fairfield County First Steps programs, resources, activities, and events.

School Readiness Outcomes

What is the KRA?

In 2017-18, kindergartners across the state were given for the first time South Carolina’s newest assessment of school readiness: the **Kindergarten Readiness Assessment**, or KRA. The KRA provides a snapshot of students’ abilities at the beginning of the school year, in four domains: Social Foundations, Language and Literacy, Mathematics, and Physical Development and Well-Being. Here are the results locally and for the state:

FAIRFIELD – 173 Children			
Domain	Emerging	Approaching	Demonstrating
Social Foundations	16%	26%	58%
Language&Literacy	9%	37%	54%
Mathematics	19%	45%	37%
Physical Dev&WB	17%	19%	65%
OVERALL	10%	40%	49%

SOUTH CAROLINA (54,927 children)			
Domain	Emerging	Approaching	Demonstrating
Social Foundations	28%	27%	45%
Language&Literacy	23%	43%	34%
Mathematics	31%	38%	31%
Physical Dev&WB	28%	24%	48%
OVERALL	26%	38%	36%

- 1. Language and Literacy:** reading, writing, speaking, and listening
- 2. Mathematics:** counting, comparison, and sorting
- 3. Physical Well-Being & Motor Development:** dexterity, muscular coordination, and balance
- 4. Social Foundations:** following rules, asking for help, task persistence and other skills necessary to function within the kindergarten classroom

Demonstrating Readiness: student demonstrates foundational skills and behaviors that prepare him/her for instruction based on kindergarten standards

Approaching Readiness: student demonstrates some foundational skills and behaviors that prepare him/her for instruction based on kindergarten standards

Emerging Readiness: student demonstrates limited foundational skills and behaviors that prepare him/her for instruction based on kindergarten standards

What is Fairfield County doing to improve KRA results:

“Some areas that lead to improving kindergarten readiness are that we start our children in 3K, our 4K classes are CERDEP certified, and we provide continued Professional Development for our Pre-K teachers and principals. We train all of the teachers in Read to Succeed and have a dedicated focus on Math. A partnership with Fairfield County First Steps provides referred students with the Countdown to Kindergarten program. We also offer a kindergarten intervention program. Our improvements start with Dr. J.R. Green, our superintendent. His enthusiasm and commitment filters throughout the entire school district.” -Mrs. Neely Bowden, Elementary Curriculum Coordinator

KRA results show that Fairfield County is one of 13 districts across the state that met or surpassed the state average on every KRA domain.

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

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

95% ... live in poverty
90% ... need additional services for their family
41% ... were teen parents



Playing is often times the best way to teach. We find that activities with our PAT children get them all excited about new tasks.

Helpful tips to help us encourage learning and the monthly information is always helpful. If we only learn one thing from the tips, we count that as a win for the child. The monthly classes are also good. The activities and company are good, and I enjoy attending those. First Steps is very resourceful. I have peace of mind that my child is heading in the right direction, which is all that I need. – Misty

PAT by the Numbers 2017-18

Families Served	41	
Children Served	48	
Total Home Visits	610	
Hours Spent Serving Families	762.3	
Average gain, <i>Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale</i> (pre-to-post):	3.34	3.54

This year, our Parents as Teachers program:

- ✓ Averaged 4.36 home visits per family.
- ✓ Identified and addressed 39 potential developmental delays, and made 84% connections for families to services such as childcare scholarships, BabyNet, Fairfield County School District, housing, and employment.
- ✓ Improved parent involvement in developmental needs of children. ASQ records show that delays went from 24 at the first assessment to 13 for the second assessment, after working with the parent and child for a period of six months. other evidence.
- ✓ KIPS and ACIRI assessments showed an increase from their baseline. We are anxious to get third assessments on many of our clients to watch the growth.

Thank you to our PAT partners!

Fairfield County DSS
Italian Garden

Evidence of Effectiveness:

Parents as Teachers meets the First Steps legislation's definition of an *evidence-based* program.



1000 Books before Kindergarten and DSS Library

1000 Books before Kindergarten

As stated in our mission, we strive to do whatever it takes to be sure, “Every child arrives at school ready to succeed.” With that mission in mind, we started the 1000 Books before Kindergarten program to be certain that we are reaching EVERY child before they reach kindergarten.

Fairfield County First Steps distributed over 2000 books to the CD4 classrooms across Fairfield County in FY 2018. Parents participated by completing the Reading Logs for their children and returning them to the teacher. The teachers participated in scheduling times for us to visit with the students. The students, our most important participants, became active listeners.



Retired teacher, Mrs. Lou Anne Atkerson, gives a report at the First Steps Annual Meeting about the 1000 Books before Kindergarten program. She goes into the classes reading to the students and distributing books to the classrooms and students.

Reading four to five books per visit and making at least nine visits per school year makes 1000 Books Before Kindergarten a highlight for the CD4 students and teachers!

DSS Library

Fairfield County First Steps partnered with Fairfield County DSS providing a Library in the lobby of the local DSS/DHEC office. Books were monitored by the DSS receptionist. An important thing to report is that no books were destroyed while in the lobby! These books were free to anyone who visited the DSS lobby.

Thanks to our Partners!

Fairfield County School District

Fairfield County DSS

1000 Books, By the Numbers

Books distributed to 1000 Books classrooms	1510
Number visits to 1000 Books classroom	70
Number students in 1000 Books program	182
Books distributed through DSS library	105

Imagination Library



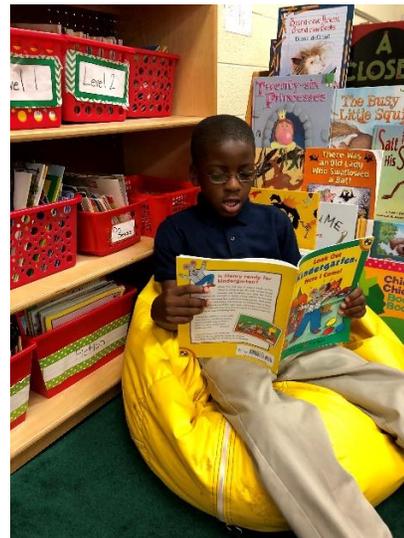
Children’s reading scores improve dramatically when parents are involved in helping them learn to read.

Program Description

According to the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, the peak period for brain development related to language is around **nine months of age**. **One of the easiest and most effective ways to build this capacity in young children’s brains is to read to them.**

Fairfield County First Steps is the local sponsor of Dolly Parton Imagination Library, which provides free, age-appropriate books to children age birth to 5 years. Operated by the Dollywood Foundation, Imagination Library is currently in more than 1,600 communities internationally and mails books to about 700,000 children each month.

Children who register with Fairfield County First Steps receive one book per month by mail through the month of their fifth birthday. Each book is carefully selected by a committee of educational specialists.



Reading leads to success!!

Imagination Library by the Numbers, 2017-18

Children Served	417
Books Given to Children 0-5	4030



This year, our Imagination Library program:

- ✓ Provided one book per month to 417 children who were referred from Fairfield County Library, Fairfield County DSS, Winnsboro Rotary, Dr. Shuba Kudchakar, and other families whose children already receive these books.
- ✓ Other results such as: results from client surveys; connections with other programs such as PAT, Head Start, etc.
- ✓ Received donations from 15 community members and organizations, in support of children’s literacy.

Thank you to our Imagination Library partners!

- Dollywood Foundation
- Fairfield County Library
- Dr. Shuba Kudchakar
- Winnsboro Rotary
- Zusammen Book Club

Evidence of Effectiveness:
 Imagination Library meets the First Steps legislation’s definition of an **evidence-based** program.

Child Care Scholarships

Too many families in Fairfield 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.

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

- 94% ... are single parent families in need of more than two other services
- 91% ... live in poverty
- 38% ... have been exposed to domestic violence
- 31% ... have been exposed to substance abuse

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 family that is a client for Childcare tuition assistance is also a participant in the Parents As Teachers program.



First Steps has helped my family in many different ways. The main way is it has helped provide financial help so I can go to work and provide for my family. First Steps also gives important and helpful tips on

Scholarships by the Numbers, 2017-18

Children Served	22
Providers Served	3

how your child should be progressing and things you can do with them to help them to make progress and reach goals. I highly recommend this program to anyone in need. It not only provides assistance, but also helps with teaching your child many skills. - Porsha

This year, our Scholarship program:

- ✓ Provided 22 children with scholarship assistance so their parents could work or attend school.
- ✓ Identified and addressed 14 potential developmental delays among scholarship children.
- ✓ Made 2 connections for families to BabyNet services.
- ✓ Supported 3 small businesses in Fairfield County by subsidizing child care tuition for families who would not otherwise be able to afford quality care.
- ✓ Provided 16.25 hours of training for scholarship parents in topics such as: Discipline, parents Rights & Responsibilities, choosing a quality childcare provider, dental health, and shopping wisely. Parent Café is used at every other meeting to initiate conversation between the parents who have similar risk factors in their families.

Thank you to our Scholarship partners!

- Little Angels Child Development
- Lotz of Love too
- Majestic Academy
- Fairfield County School District

Evidence of Effectiveness:

Our partnership's Child Care Scholarship strategy is considered **evidence-based** because it is connected to the following evidence-based programs:

PARENTS AS TEACHERS



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.

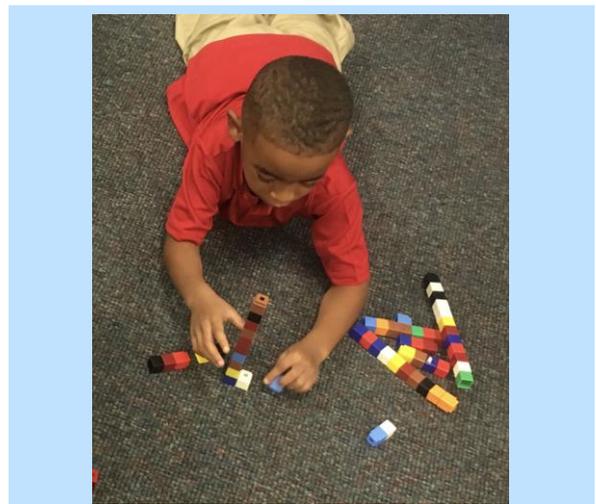
Learning Celebration. The last visit is a “field trip” to the school where the child will attend class in the fall.

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	37
Families Served	36
Home/School Visits	216

**CTK program data is for June-August 2017, whereas CTK fiscal data includes expenditures from July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018.*



Students receive materials during each visit that goes along with the Countdown to Kindergarten curriculum.

This year, our Countdown to Kindergarten program:

- ✓ Increase the number of parents who will attend PTO meetings by 86%.
- ✓ Increased the amount of time parents spent reading to children by 84%
- ✓ According to kindergarten teachers, 812% of CTK children performed as well as, or better than, their fellow students in LIST AREAS FROM THE CTK TEACHER SURVEY during the 2017-18 school year.
- ✓ According to kindergarten teachers, 73% 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 CTK partners!

- Fairfield County School District
- Kaplan Early Learning Company
- SC First Steps

Like us on Facebook!
 Countdown to Kindergarten-South Carolina

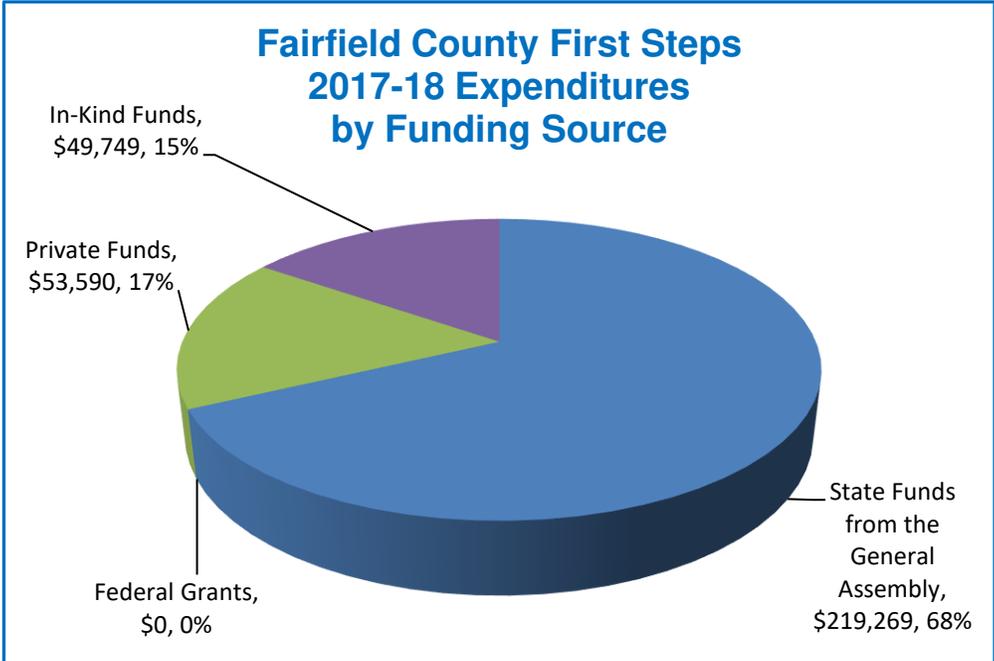


Evidence of Effectiveness:

Our partnership’s Countdown to Kindergarten program meets the First Steps legislation’s definition of an **evidence-informed** program.



Financial Impact



Total 2017-18 Expenditures: \$322,607

State Funds Leveraged in 2017-18*: 47%

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

2017-18 Expenditures by Strategy

	State \$	Federal \$	Private \$	In-Kind \$	Total \$	% of 2017-18 Expenditures
Parents as Teachers	\$69,437	\$0	\$39,427	\$0	\$108,864	34%
Imagination Library	\$1,000	\$0	\$7,787	\$49,749	\$58,536	18%
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$8,984	\$0	\$2,495		\$11,479	4%
1000 Books Before Kindergarten	\$4,347	\$0	\$280	\$0	\$4,627	1%
Child Care Scholarships	\$66,366	\$0	\$3,200	\$0	\$69,566	22%
Program Support	\$48,869	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$48,869	15%
Administrative Support	\$20,266	\$0	\$400	\$0	\$20,666	6%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$219,269	\$0	\$53,589	\$49,749	\$322,607	

Unaudited numbers for the period July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018

Since inception, Fairfield County First Steps has leveraged \$1,245,023 from sources outside of state government. That's 41 cents for every state dollar.

Thank you supporters!

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

Funding Support

State of South Carolina: \$237,500
(through *South Carolina First Steps*)
United Way of the Midlands

In-Kind Support

Fairfield County School District
Dollywood Foundation



How your support helps children in Fairfield County:

- ✓ \$30 provides a young child a book per month for one year!
- ✓ \$8 feeds dinner to low-income families attending a parenting workshop!
- ✓ \$320 helps a low-income family afford quality child care for one month!

HOW TO GIVE: Mail your donation to Fairfield County First Steps, PO Box 215, Winnsboro, SC 29180 or,
Stop in to see us at 101 North Congress Street, Suite 1, Winnsboro, SC 29180

Save the Date!

CRAFT/FUNDRAISER – November 8, 2018
ANNUAL MEETING – February 11, 2019
MIDLANDS GIVES 2019 – May 7, 2019

Support Fairfield County First Steps today through a tax-deductible donation!

Making a difference one child at a time.

Heading to Pre-K

One Parent Educator worked with a mother and child whose Ages & Stages Assessment showed delays in every area. After working intensely with the parent and child, a second ASQ was done six months later. At this time, the child only showed one possible delay. Due to the changes made within this six month period, he was able to enroll in 3K at the local elementary school. A notable change was his ability to sit and listen to a story being read to him. When the Parent Educator first started working with this family, he would not sit to listen to a story but by the time of his second assessment he actually enjoyed being read to.



Reuniting a Family

A client was referred to us through SC DSS. She was a pregnant mother whose children had been removed from her home. Prenatal visits were performed with the parent, and the Parent Educator and parent went over the changes that needed to be made in order to get her children moved back home. After three months, the children were returned to her. This mother of four, now that the baby has arrived, continues to be a client in our Parents as Teachers program.



Each year our board has the opportunity to meet, eat, and talk with our clients at the Annual Meeting. Childcare is provided in a separate location so the parents don't have the distraction of tending to their children. They are able to share with board members their appreciation of the programs offered and discuss with them any areas of concern or need that they might have.

First Steps Partnership Board

Do you know about First Steps?

Fairfield County First Steps is represented on several committees around the county, such as the Fairfield Community Coordinating Council, Fairfield County Chamber, and Winnsboro Rotary, to name a few. However, not everyone knows exactly what we are and what we do. Patti Wilkes, the Executive Director, is known as the person who can sign up a child for Imagination Library or enroll a family in Tuition Assistance, but few know what the agency she works with is named. We are working to get the word out that FAIRFIELD COUNTY FIRST STEPS is the place to go if you have young children. If FCFS can't help your family with your particular area, they can make referrals to the right agency to help. Our representatives have been in attendance at almost every event known in the community for the past year. Let us help you become the very best parent you can be. Contact FCFS or one of our board members for more information.

Fairfield County First Steps Partnership Board, 2017-18

Name	Position	Board Category
Rebecca T. Douglas, Chair	Retired Kindergarten teacher	Legislative Appointee
Allison Lawrence, Vice Chair	Kindergarten teacher	Pre-Kindergarten through Primary educator
Jill Wagers Coleman, Secretary	Speech Therapist	Childcare & Early Development/Education Provider
Dee Mattox	Retired Nurse and Part-time nurse with COA	Healthcare Provider
Darreyl Davis	Isola and Believers & Achievers	NonProfit Organization
T'Sheila Praileau	School District	School District
Eric Robinson	Librarian	Library
Mac Russell	Nutritionist	DHEC
Kay Hensley	Speech Pathologist	Family Education, Training, and Support Provider
Sandi Gratic	School Counselor	Family Education, Training, and Support Provider
Melyssa Shepard	Pre-Kindergarten teacher	Pre-Kindergarten through Primary Educator
Connie Pete	Palmetto Imaging Technology	Business
Jimmy Burroughs	Christ Central	Faith Community
Michelle Taylor	Wife, Mother to two, and Domestic Engineer	Faith Community
Sarah McMaster	Retired Librarian	Legislative Appointee

What is First Steps?

At the state level and in every county, First Steps leverages state funding with other public and private resources to help South Carolina’s children enter kindergarten healthy and ready to succeed. First Steps programs and services support families as their child’s first and most important teacher and are customized to meet the unique needs of local communities, grounded in strong evidence, fueled by stakeholder collaboration, and accountable for results.

First Steps Goals

- (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.

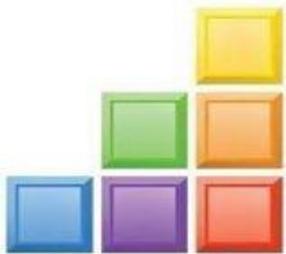
First Steps Building Blocks of Quality Early Childhood Programs and Services

					
Healthy Start	Family Strengthening	Early Intervention	Quality Child Care	Early Education	School Transition

From Greenville to Charleston, Abbeville to York, First Steps local partnerships serve as ...

Local portals connecting preschool children and families to services

Conveners of community stakeholders to address the needs of young children and their families



for South Carolina and to learn about First Steps 4K programs in your area:

scfirststeps.org

for Fairfield County First Steps: please visit us at 101 N. Congress St. Suite 1 (upstairs in Wells Fargo)

[I CAN]
 POWERED BY
FIRST STEPS

[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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