

SUMTER COUNTY



**FIRST  
STEPS**

Getting children ready for school.



**Our Programs**

*Parents as Teachers*

*Childcare Training*

*Childcare Quality Enhancement*

*Childcare ABC/Scholarship*

*Dolly Parton's Imagination Library*

## Annual Report 2018



### **Sumter County First Steps**

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Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/SumterCountyFirstSteps/](http://www.facebook.com/SumterCountyFirstSteps/)

Executive Director: Julia A. Nelson, MPA

Board Chair: Artrell Brown

### **Our Vision**

Sumter County First Steps will collaborate with other entities to cultivate and develop, our children and families and prepare children for school success and life.

### **Our Mission**

Sumter County First Steps will cultivate, nurture and develop opportunities for children and families for success in school and life by maximizing public and private community resources to deliver, enhance and expand high quality early childhood services.

# Director's Message

Since the inception of South Carolina First Steps in 1999, the importance and awareness of school readiness has increased in our state. The Office of Head Start defines school readiness as “children possessing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in school and for later learning and life.” Regardless of the terminology, it entails setting measurable goals with evidence-based strategies; planning and implementation; and assessment and evaluation.

Sumter County First Steps (SCFS) has concentrated on strategies that will increase the likeliness of children being prepared to successfully enter school ready to learn. This is being accomplished by focusing on strategies, which increase parenting skills, access to literacy and quality childcare, and enhancing the skills of childcare providers.

SCFS is providing a home visitation program to help train parents on how to be their child's first and best teacher. We have chosen Parents As Teachers (PAT) as a strategy to assist with this goal. PAT is a national model, which is an evidence-based early childhood home visitation program. PAT will increase a parent's knowledge of child development and improves parenting practices.

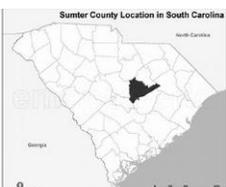
SCFS is also providing childcare training to childcare providers, Early Head Start, CDEPP, and other Early Educations providers. Quality childcare is a research-based determinant of school readiness. This is one of the reason we provide Scholarships/ABC Vouchers for children to have the opportunity for quality childcare. When you think about the number of hours children are with child care providers, you can understand the importance of quality. This year a new strategy was added, Childcare Quality Enhancement.

We also support our families with Dolly Pardon Imagination Library to develop an environment which has a love for reading. An age appropriate book is mailed to the child each month up until their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday.

SCFS has established these strategies to improve school readiness in Sumter County. These strategies will not change substantially from year to year. However, goals for individual children and families will likely change based on needs and progress revealed by ongoing data collection.

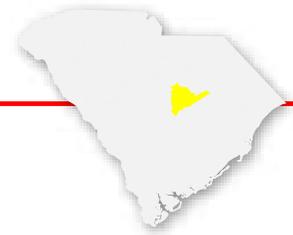
SCFS is appreciative for all of its community partners and other agencies involved in school readiness. Together, we are making a difference.

Julia A. Nelson, MPA  
Executive Director



**In Sumter County, it's all about enhancing the skill levels of the children, their parents, childcare providers and early educators. Those individuals, which surround, nurture and impact our children's best opportunity for school readiness and success in life.**

# 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 Sumter County.

How are Sumter 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?
<b>7,238</b> are under age 5	<b>96</b> attended Early Head Start as infants and toddlers	<b>58</b> licensed child care centers
<b>29.5%</b> live in poverty	<b>183</b> attended free preschool or Head Start as 3-year-olds	<b>21</b> licensed group/family homes
<b>11.7%</b> of babies born in 2016 were to moms without a HS diploma	<b>692</b> 4-year-olds attended free full-day public school 4K or Head Start	<b>42%</b> participate in the state's Quality Rating System (ABC Quality)
<b>2%</b> of live births in 2016 were to mothers under 18	<b>328</b> 0-5 year olds received early intervention or special ed.	<b>16</b> providers are rated B or higher by ABC Quality
<b>19.5%</b> of last year's kindergartners demonstrated readiness	<b>147</b> were served by 	<b>898</b> families received assistance with affording child care last year
<small>Kids Count data provided by: </small>	<small>Data provided by: </small>	<small></small>

## OUR GOALS

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

1. To provide Sumter County early education staff/childcare providers with training, professional development and enhance the quality of childcare centers to expand their comprehension of their significant role in school readiness;
2. To assist parents in being successful in their role to be their child's first and best teacher;
3. To assist parents with affordable and quality childcare to further promote a positive learning environment for their children readiness for school; and
4. To expand Sumter County's citizens comprehension of the significance of school readiness and forge private and public partnerships

## THE IMPACT OF SUMTER COUNTY FIRST STEPS 2017-2018

- Distributed 2109 books to children and families to improve literacy
- Served 75 families and 80 children via Parent As Teachers with 833 home visits
- Issued 21 ABC/Vouchers to children to ensure quality child care
- 100% of our programs/strategies are Evidence-Based
- Expended \$330,671 of state allocation to improve school readiness

Websites: [scfirststeps.org/sumter/](http://scfirststeps.org/sumter/) and [www.facebook.com/SumterCountyFirstSteps/](https://www.facebook.com/SumterCountyFirstSteps/)

◆ Email: [sumterfirststeps@gmail.com](mailto:sumterfirststeps@gmail.com)

Julia A. Nelson, Executive Director ◆ Telephone #: 803.464.1224 ◆ Artrell Brown, Board Chair

# 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:

Sumter County School District (1,281 children)			
Domain	Emerging	Approaching	Demonstrating
Social Foundations	38%	34%	28%
Language & Literacy	30%	47%	23%
Mathematics	40%	39%	22%
Physical Dev & WB	41%	25%	33%
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>20%</b>

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%
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>36%</b>

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

**Sumter County KRA Results and the Work of Sumter County First Steps**

Last year’s KRA results assessed only 19.5% of readiness for our children in Sumter County. It’s the goal of all early educators in Sumter County to ameliorate this percentage. Sumter County First Steps (SCFS) has always believed one key factor in school readiness is to ensure that those who are caring for our children have the skills needed to teach children. Our strategies are chosen to enhance the skills of parents and child care providers and to provide high-quality child care opportunities. Our continued collaborations with other early education entities should prove to be successful as the KRA readiness assessment scores improve.

# Parents as Teachers & Scholarships



Parents as Teachers

Parents play a critical role in their child's development and too many families in Sumter County cannot afford quality care for their children. We integrate our scholarships with our Parent as Teachers program.

## 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 Meetings** with other PAT families
3. **Screenings and Assessments** to identify developmental concerns
4. **Connections to Outside Resources** that families may need to succeed



*We hired and trained new a new lead supervisor:*

- **Arlene McCloud**

*The executive director also received the training as a parent educator and will complete the supervisory training in 2018-2019:*

- **Julia A. Nelson**

## PAT by the Numbers 2017-18

Families Served	75	
Children Served	80	
Total Home Visits	833	
Hours Spent Serving Families	862	
Books Given	439	
Scholarships	21	
Average gain, <i>Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale</i> (pre-to-post):	3.05	3.55

## This year, our Parents as Teachers program:

- ✓ Averaged 11.41 home visits per family;
- ✓ Identified and addressed 31 potential developmental delays; and
- ✓ 57 families connected to necessary services, such as employment services, transportation services, food and/or clothing banks.

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.

**Thank you to our PAT partners!**

Sumter County School District  
Lead Supervisor for PAT and Parent Educators  
Sumter School District Early Head Start

## Evidence of Effectiveness:

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



# Imagination Library



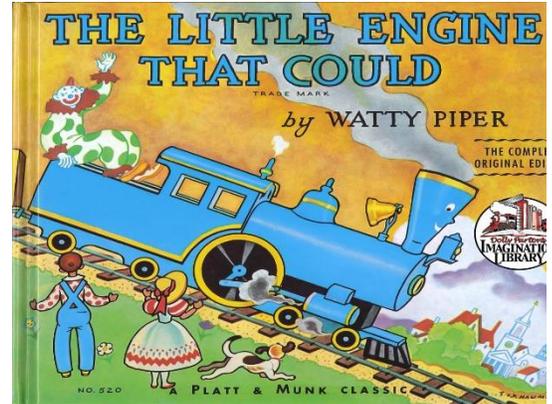
**Children’s reading scores improve dramatically when parents are involved in helping them learn to read.**

## 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.**

Sumter 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 that register with Sumter 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.



The first book participant children receive is a special edition of *The Little Engine That Could*. The book contains a message from Ms. Dolly Parton.

Children Served	156
Books Given to Children 0-5	1,670



- This year, our Imagination Library program:**
- ✓ Provided books to 75% of children enrolled in the PAT and Scholarship programs
  - ✓ Provide books to SC First Steps 4-K Providers in Sumter County
  - ✓ Provide books to other Early Education Providers, Child Find, Babynet, Shaw AFB Families and the general public

## *Thank you to our Imagination Library partners!*

- Dollywood Foundation
- Sumter School District
- Child Find and SC First Steps 4-K participants

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

# 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 Sponsored by Sumter County First Steps, 2017-18

- Marketing Your Child Care Business
- Maintaining High Quality Early Childhood Environments
- Understanding Language Development from Birth to 8 Years
- The Fundamental Causes of Positive and Negative Behavior
- Enriching Professional Development – Life of the Teacher
- Blood Borne Pathogens



### This year, our Training program:

- ✓ Provided 30 certified training hours (10 hours in Curriculum Activities; 5 hours in Professional Development; 5 hours in Health & Safety; 5 hours in Child Guidance; and 5 hours in Program Administration) to Sumter County and regional early care and education providers; and
- ✓ Potentially impacted as many as 2,250 preschool children in Sumter County.
- ✓ Impacted preschool children in neighboring counties (early educators from Richland, Florence, Clarendon and Lee Counties attended one or more training sessions).

### Thank you to our Training partners!

Childcare Providers, Early Educators, CDEEP, and  
 Sumter School District

Dr. Earlene Walker Kelly

SC Center for Child Care Career Development (CCCCD)

Evidence of Effectiveness:

Child Care Training and Professional Development meets the First Steps legislation’s definition of an *evidence-based* program.



# 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, 2017-18**

Child Care Providers Served	1 w/2 classrooms
Number of Classroom Visits Provided	75
Number of Children 0-5 Enrolled in Provider Classrooms	39

This is a new strategy for Sumter County First Steps. The implementation began February 2018.

## Thank you to our Quality Enhancement partners!

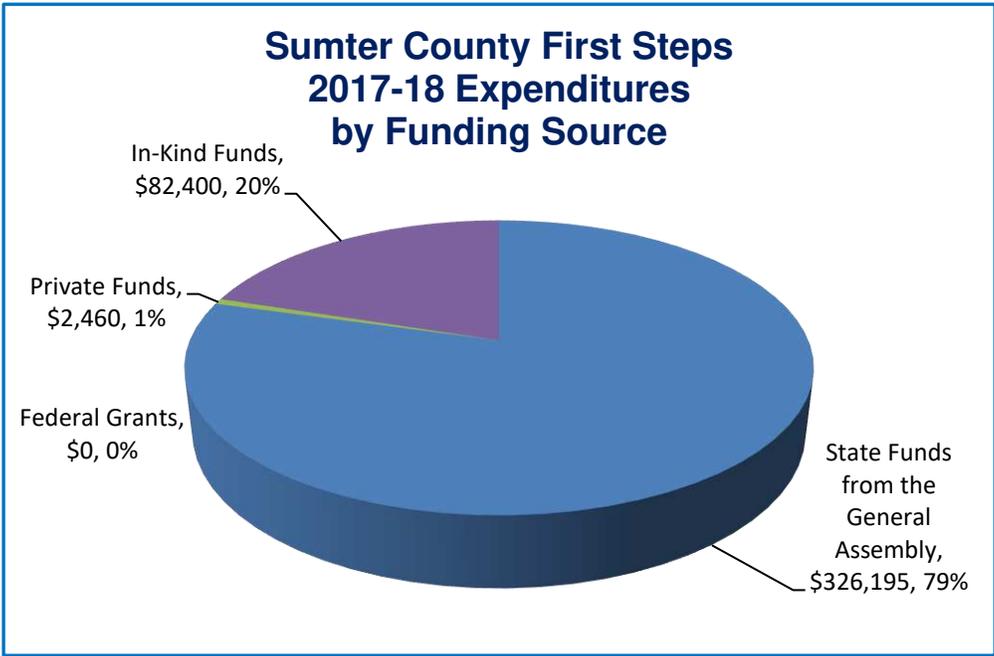
- Vanessa's Playland
- Dr. Earlene Walker Kelly
- DSS ABC Vouchers/Scholarships

**Evidence of Effectiveness:**

Child Care Quality Enhancement meets the First Steps legislation's definition of an *evidence-based* program.



# Financial Impact



**Total 2017-18 Expenditures: \$413,772**

**State Funds Leveraged in 2017-18\*: 27%**

\*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	\$66,270	\$0	\$0	\$60,700	\$126,970	31%
Imagination Library	\$1,524	\$0	\$1,524	\$0	\$3,048	1%
Childcare Quality Enhancement	\$15,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$15,000	4%
Child Care Training	\$32,935	\$0	\$2,016	\$0	\$34,951	8%
Scholarships	\$112,000	\$0	\$0	\$22,400	\$134,400	32%
Program Support	\$67,343	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$67,343	16%
Administrative Support	\$31,123	\$0	\$936	\$0	\$32,059	8%
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$326,195</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$4,476</b>	<b>\$83,100</b>	<b>\$413,772</b>	

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

Since inception, Sumter County First Steps has leveraged \$2,002,285 from sources outside of state government. That's 29 cents for every state dollar.

# We thank our supporters!

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

## Funding Support

- State of South Carolina (through South Carolina First Steps) \$413,772
- South Carolina Department of Social Services \$22,400 (In-Kind)
- Sumter County School District \$60,000 (In-Kind)
- Private Donations from Board Members and Public \$574 for Dolly Parton Imagination Library



## How your support helps children in Sumter County:

- ✓ \$25 annually allows one of Sumter County's preschool children to participate in the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library for one year. This \$25 donation will help a child receive and age appropriate book each month until their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. The book is mailed with their name on it. Children love going to the mailbox and seeing a package with their name on it. Please feel free to invite a representative from Sumter County First Steps to your organization. We will gladly explain how the program works. We can be reached at 803.464.1224. This is truly a worthy charity!

Give the gift of early literacy by sponsoring a child! You may mail your donation to:

Sumter County First Steps

Post Office Box 2331

Sumter, SC 29150

**All donations are tax deductible!!!**



# First Steps Partnership Board

Sumter County First Steps would not be able to efficiently and effectively serve the children and families of Sumter County without our local board of directors. This group of committed volunteers ensure that:

- SCFS staff are operating programs and services in accordance with standards that have been established by the SC First Steps State Office;
- Implementing programs that are research-based and proven effective in improving school readiness in preschool children;
- Ensuring that SCFS' funding is expended in accordance with applicable federal and state laws, as well as best practices in nonprofit management;
- Ensuring that SCFS implements best practices in carrying out the mission of the organization;
- Collaborating with other organizations within Sumter County and outside of the County in meaningful ways; and
- Securing and maximizing resources in order to implement quality early care and education programs and services.

A special thank you to members of the SCFS Partnership Board for all you do to contribute in meaningful ways to ensure that Sumter County's children arrive at first grade healthy and ready to succeed. Your unwavering commitment has made and will continue to make a world of difference in the lives of our children!

## Sumter County First Steps Partnership Board, 2017-18

**The combined equity of knowledge, expertise and experience of our board is immeasurable!!!**

Name	Position	Board Category
Artrell Brown	Board Chairperson	Head Start Appointee
Walter Newman	Vice Chairperson	Legislative Appointee
Toni Brew	Secretary	Community Activist
Dr. Karen Bradford	Board Member	Speech Pathologist
Harrison Brown	Board Member	Legislative Appointee
Austin Floyd	Board Member	Legislative Appointee
Dianne Jeter	Board Member	DSS Appointee
Michael Jonas	Board Member	Transportation Appointee
Jennifer Miles	Board Member	Early Education
Michelle Davis Parker	Board Member	Faith Community
Wanda Ramsey	Board Member	Speech Pathologist
Julia Triplett	Board Member	Transportation Provider

# 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

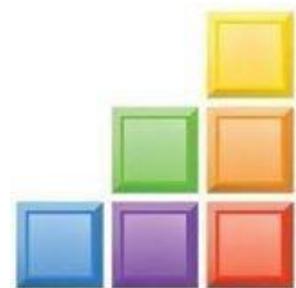
Across the State of South Carolina, First Steps local partnerships serve as

...

**Local portals** connecting preschool children and families to services

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

**Champions** of the importance of school readiness to our children’s future.



For more information about SCFS across the state:

[www.scfirststeps.org](http://www.scfirststeps.org)

For more information about SCFS:

<http://scfirststeps.com/sumter>



[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)