

LEXINGTON COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.



**Parents as Teachers**

**Countdown to  
Kindergarten**

**Child Care Quality  
Enhancement**

**Child Care Training**

# Annual Report

2015-16




**OUR VISION:**

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



## By The Numbers

Indicator	SC	Lexington County
Children Under Five	289,990	16,854
Children In Poverty	26.4%	20.1%
3 <sup>rd</sup> Graders Below Standard in Reading	21.1%	18.4%
Births to Mothers With Less Than a High School Diploma	15.7%	14.5%

KIDS COUNT data provided by 

- Since inception, Lexington County First Steps has leveraged \$7,005,829 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 213 children served from 21 schools with 43 teachers** According to Lexington County 5K teachers, 82% felt CTK children outperformed their fellow students and 87.5% had greater parent involvement.
- **Served 128 children** in Parents as Teachers, making gains in parenting skills and interactive literacy skills. Averaged nearly 23 home visits per family in 2015-16.
- **Supported 134 early childhood staff** with 14 sessions of quality training.

### Lexington County First Steps

101 West Columbia Avenue

Batesburg, SC 29006

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Board Chairman: Jennifer Felkel

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## 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 two 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) 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 Intervention

According to recent federal evaluations, outcomes for clients participating in BabyNet early intervention programs are above national averages. BabyNet matches the special needs of infants and toddlers who have disabilities and/or developmental delays with customized, community-based resources.



## School Transition

Each of the corresponding blocks of services leads ultimately to the goal of transitioning children successfully to school. Programs like Countdown to Kindergarten and From Day One to Grade One are ultimately preparing children for school success.

**Based on the needs of our community, Lexington County First Steps focuses its investments in Parents as Teachers, Countdown to Kindergarten, Child Care Quality Enhancement, and Child Care Training.**

**Thank you to our donors:**

**United Way! All 5 Lexington County School Districts in-kind! 100% of Board Members & Staff!**

**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:**

89% ... live in poverty  
 44% ... didn't graduate from high school  
 12% ... were teen parents



**"Play is the beginning of knowledge."  
 -George Dorsey**

*"I would recommend this program to any family that is looking to become a part of a program that can offer different experiences, education, assistance and kindness in every regard."*

Tamara Holmes

## PAT by the Numbers 2015-16

Families Served	105	
Children Served	128	
Total Home Visits	2372	
Hours Spent Serving Families	2397	
Average gain, Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (pre-to-post):	3.51	3.9

### This year, our Parents as Teachers program:

- ✓ Averaged 22.59 home visits per family
- ✓ Identified and addressed 50 potential developmental delays
- ✓ Improved parenting practices with a .39 gain with the KIPS Assessment.
- ✓ Improved literacy skills by delivering 1,979 books to children. Additionally, pre ACIRI prior scores for children were 1.79 and post scores were 2.04 with a .25 increase
- ✓ Made 94 connections for families to services such as Adult Education, Early Education Program, English Language Classes, Family Events and Activities, Library Resources, and Health and Medical

### 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

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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, 2015-16

Child Care Providers Served	2
Number of TA Visits Provided	57
Number of Children 0-5 Enrolled in Provider Classrooms	77

### Congratulations to our QE participants for 2015-16!

Child Care Provider	Pre/Post Improvement
Kids' Stuff, 2 yr-old room	From 2.55 to 3.45



## This year, our Quality Enhancement program:

- ✓ Provided 163.25 hours of technical assistance to child care providers
- ✓ Provided \$5,948 in materials grants to participating child care providers

## Thank you to our partners!

Kids' Stuff Learning Center  
 Big Blue Marble 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, 2015-16

Total Training Attendance	212
Child Care Teachers and Directors Served	134
Number of Training Sessions Offered	13

### Child Care Training Sponsored by Lexington County First Steps, 2015-16

Topic:

Managing Staff and Strengthening Your Team  
 Using Positive Guidance to Enhance Teamwork  
 Understanding the Growth & Development Process

Sessions:

One Session  
 One Session  
 One Session  
 One Session  
 One Session  
 Two Sessions  
 One Session  
 Session One & Two  
 One Session  
 One Session  
 One Session  
 Session One & Two

Using Music & Movement with Children  
 Music & Movement in the High/Scope World  
 Bloodborne Pathogens  
 Why Poverty Matters  
 Planning for the Whole Body  
 The Healthy Brain  
 Positive Child Guidance  
 Conscious Discipline for Program Administrators  
 Science Experiences



“Play is our brain’s favorite way of learning.”

– *Dianne Ackerman*

### This year, our Training program provided:

- ✓ 134 early childhood staff with high quality training
- ✓ 31 hours of certified training and 4 hours of registered training for staff to meet annual re-certification requirements
- ✓ 2 follow-up visits with training participants to help put training into practice

### Thank you to our partners!

Midlands Technical College (MTC)  
 Center for Child Care Career Development (CCCCD)  
 Richland County First Steps

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# Countdown to Kindergarten



**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.

## \*CTK by the Numbers, Summer 2015

Children Served	213
Families Served	210
Home/School Visits	1248

*\*CTK program data is for June-August 2015, whereas CTK fiscal data includes expenditures from July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016.*



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.

**This year, our Countdown to Kindergarten program:**

- ✓ Increased the amount of time parents spent reading to children by 22.2%
- ✓ According to kindergarten teachers, 88% of CTK children performed as well as, or better than, their fellow students in the domains of Approaches to Learning and Inquiry during the 2015-16 school year.
- ✓ According to kindergarten teachers, 96% of CTK parents created a positive relationship between family and the child’s school.

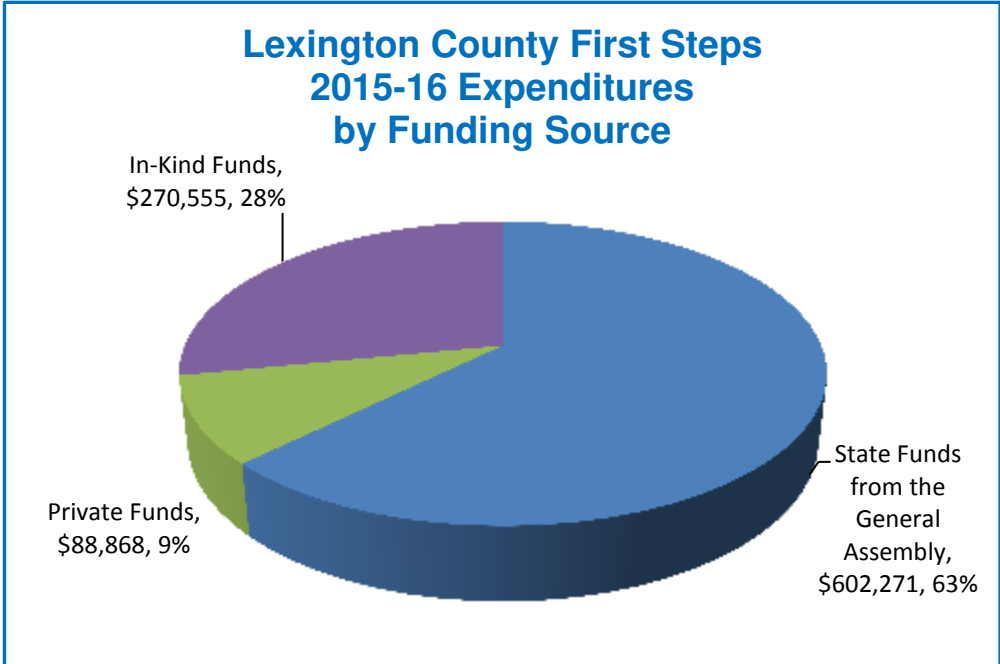
- Thank you to our partners!**
- Lexington County School District One
  - Lexington County School District Two
  - Lexington County School District Three
  - Lexington County School District Four
  - School District Five of Lexington and Richland Counties
  - United Way of the Midlands (UWM)
  - Kaplan Early Learning Center

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# Community Impact



**Total 2015-16 Expenditures: \$961,694**

**State Funds Leveraged in 2015-16\*: 60%**

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

**2015-16 Expenditures by Strategy**

	State \$	Private \$	In-Kind \$	Total \$	% of 2015-16 Expenditures
Parents as Teachers	\$383,368	\$0	\$260,634	<b>\$644,002</b>	<b>67%</b>
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$11,866	\$64,008	\$9,651	<b>\$85,525</b>	<b>9%</b>
Child Care Quality Enhancement	\$34,481	\$0	\$269	<b>\$34,750</b>	<b>4%</b>
Child Care Training	\$15,263	\$24,630	\$0	<b>\$39,893</b>	<b>4%</b>
Other Family Literacy	\$9,956	\$0	\$0	<b>\$9,956</b>	<b>1%</b>
Parent Training	\$5,743	\$0	\$0	<b>\$5,743</b>	<b>1%</b>
Program Support	\$77,589	\$230	\$0	<b>\$77,819</b>	<b>8%</b>
Administrative Support	\$64,005	\$0	\$0	<b>\$64,005</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$602,271</b>	<b>\$88,868</b>	<b>\$270,555</b>	<b>\$961,694</b>	

*Unaudited numbers for the period July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016*

**Since inception, Lexington County First Steps has leveraged \$7,005,829 from sources outside of state government. That's 64 cents for every state dollar.**



## Success Story: Lexington District One Parenting Program

Walaa and her son, Kiroles exemplify all of the aspects of SUCCESS in our Parenting program! Walaa and her family moved into our district from Lexington Two approximately three years ago. Lexington Two had established a good foundation for the family through Parents as Teachers, and when the family moved to Lexington One, our Parent Educator began First Steps/PAT home visitation. The family had located to the United States from Egypt, and their primary language was Arabic. Walaa know very little English, but she carried around a spiral notebook and added words that she picked up through conversation. The older child was referred for Countdown to Kindergarten, and Walaa was learning words with the help of her older son's expanding vocabulary. Walaa and Kiroles loved activities shared at the visits, but it was evident that the family needed to experience more, as they were socially isolated and confined to the home. The father owns a restaurant and works long hours including time on weekends. We began to bring in additional resources, always lots of literacy-based activities and books. In setting the family goals, literacy and reading with her children was always a goal. In addition to print-based materials, we have taken an iPad to the home and loaded it with a few simple games to use as a "reward" at the end of our sessions. Walaa expressed an interest in getting to the library for group events, but transportation was always an issue. She decided she was going to set her goal to get her SC Driver's license. She tried several times, but there was NO help at the DMV for those speaking Arabic. With persistence, this became a reality and Walaa now drives her husband to work and attends English classes through Adult Education at our center. Kiroles is enrolled her in our Childcare and Walaa is thrilled that his vocabulary is growing as he plays with his friends, just like her acquisition of the English language. She and her boys attended our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Roll-and-Read this past Saturday. We coordinated this with a Kid's Day event in our small town and Walaa was so gracious! She had never attended anything like it and was so happy to participate with her children and her new friends. To say that she has accomplished a goal or purpose is an understatement.



Because this is just the beginning.

We are thrilled to have played a small part in the continued success of this family.

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

## Success Story: Lexington District Four 2016

Our success story is about a family from Mexico who has settled in Gaston. The Mother began ESOL classes in the Spring of 2012. She utilized the Lexington 4 Adult Education Child Care for her two young daughters. In the Fall of 2014 the older daughter started school at The Early Childhood Center in Lexington 4. Mom continued to attend ESOL classes and she began receiving First Steps, PAT home visits 2-3 times a month for her younger daughter.

In September of 2015 Lexington 4 began offering Jump Start to Raising A Reader classes for upcoming students and their parents. This same Mom began attending 2 days a week with her daughter for the 8 week Fall session. She requested and is now attending the 8 week Spring session.

The child's mastery of many skills is very apparent! The Mom stated (in English) that her Parent Educator had also been working with them at home and her daughter enjoys the activities.

On Thursday April 28 The Early Childhood Center held an Open House for parents to see their children at work in the classroom. The teacher of this Mom's older child shared that the family arrived with both children. The younger daughter entered the classroom with confidence, rolled out a rug and began working alongside her big sister!

It is a success when everyone works together for the same goal and we are excited to continue watching this family's successes for years to come!

### Countdown to Kindergarten Story

Francine Wright

Teacher, Lexington School District Three

Bryan was a grateful and eager student during CTK Summer Program. He was always prepared and ready to learn. His materials were always kept in great order and in excellent condition.

Bryan started as a no –English speaker but never ever allowed that to hinder his participation. He always kept his eyes and ears on me. He was and is an eager learner. Self Pride! Panther Pride! (School mascot)

His mother and little brother truly supported him and assisted in most of the activities, although mom was suffering from a debilitating health condition. True commitment.

He's a great example for those new to the CTK program, but also for those new to the country USA. He was truly a delight to work with and his transition has been very positive.

# 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!

## Board of Directors 2015 - 2016

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
Crystal 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
Nikki West	South Carolina Department of Education, Retired	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 Pytik	Coordinator of Youth Services	Lexington County Public Library System
Devona Price	Principal Lake Murray Elementary School	Lexington County School District One
Rhonda Wiley	Director of Parenting and Family Services /Early Childhood Coordinator	Lexington County School District Two
Frances Bouknight	Director of Accountability and Director of Adult Education	Lexington County School District Three
Joyce Carter	Administrator Lexington School District One, Retired	Lexington Delegation Appointee
Leon Love	Department of Social Services, South Carolina First Steps, 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 can contact any participating 4K providers to complete an application. To view a list of participating First Steps 4K providers, visit:

<http://scfirststeps.org/4k>



**BabyNet**

South Carolina's Early Intervention System

BabyNet in Lexington County:  
LOCAL SPOE PHONE # - 803-734-0111

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