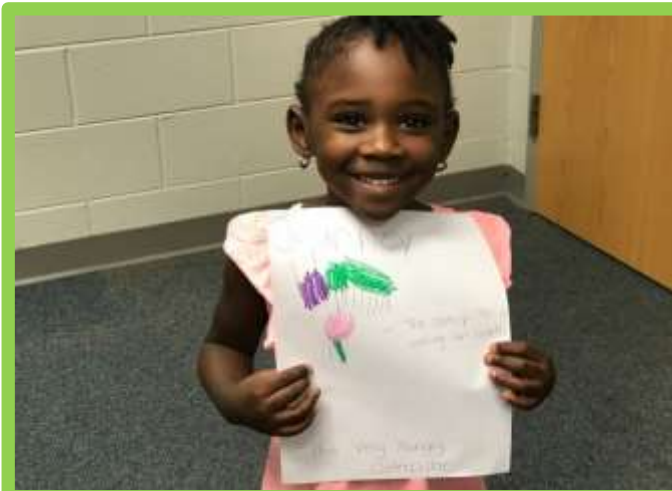


ORANGEBURG COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.



- Imagination Library
- Countdown to Kindergarten
- Child Care Quality Enhancement
- Child Care Training
- Child Care Scholarships
- Early Steps to School Success

Annual Report

2016-2017

"Every child deserves a champion: an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists they become the best they can possibly be."

- Rita Pierson, Educator




OUR VISION:

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

By The Numbers

Indicator	SC	Orangeburg County
Children Under Five	293,134	5,144
Children In Poverty	24.4%	36.8%
3 rd Graders "Does Not Meet" Standard in Reading	22.2%	Orangeburg 3: 44.3% Orangeburg 4: 40.9% Orangeburg 5: 41.6%
Births to Mothers with Less than a High Diploma	15.0%	17.2%

KIDS COUNT data provided by  Children's Trust FOR SOUTH CAROLINA

- Since inception, Orangeburg County First Steps has leveraged \$1,601,162 from sources outside state government. That's \$.25 for every dollar received.
- 365.6 hours of support and guidance were provided to 20 adults and 20 children in our Early Steps to School Success.
- Childcare professionals received 58 Hours of technical assistance for early care best practices.
- Improved parenting practices through 3 Group Connections Parent Workshops.
- Total Served in FY16: 104 Adults and 1017 Children

Orangeburg County First Steps

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Dr. Reginald Williams, Board Chair
 Rwill19@scsu.edu

www.orangeburgfirststeps.org



<https://www.facebook.com/Orangeburg-County-First-Steps>
<https://twitter.com/@FirstStepsOburg>

Orangeburg County First Steps
Dr. Reginald Williams
Board Chair

Early childhood education remains the foundation of the successful student in Orangeburg County, just like in South Carolina, the United States and around the world. Consequently, the Orangeburg County First Steps Partnership Board strives to ensure that each receives developmentally appropriate child care and education.

REMEMBER that Orangeburg County First Steps seeks to ensure consistent quality care for children by supporting early education and fortifying while expanding the good work of center-based programs throughout the county.

REMEMBER that the success of children depends on the community stakeholders, local politicians, school district experts, the faith based organizations, business owners and the entire community. All entities must do their best to provide human and financial scaffolding to supplement the aims and programs of the county partnership.

REMEMBER that advocacy for quality, affordability and accessibility in early education rests with the voice of those most essential to children which are: parents, families and teachers. Orangeburg County First Steps is committed to helping their voices be heard in order to make a difference so that flexibility and funding can continue to guarantee these ideals for proper policy become the standard not only in Orangeburg but throughout the State of South Carolina.

Our Annual Report outlines the good work that Orangeburg County First Steps does in devotion to the youngest of the young.



Healthy Start



Family Strengthening



Early Intervention



Quality Child Care



Early Education



School Transition

County Programs

- Countdown To Kindergarten
- Childcare Training
- Early Steps to School Success
- Imagination Library
- Childcare Scholarship
- Quality Enhancement Program

State Programs

- Early Headstart
- First Steps 4k

What We Do

Each of the six color blocks of the First Steps logo represents a core area of service, outlining our comprehensive strategy to prepare children for long-term school success. With measurable outcomes across each of its six school readiness strategy areas, First Steps is getting results.



Healthy Start

We begin with a focus on providing a healthy start to life. This includes prenatal and post-partum services for both mother and baby. In 2007, First Steps collaborated with key philanthropic and agency partners to bring Nurse-Family Partnership to SC having a significant impact on reducing premature births and Medicaid costs.



Quality Childcare

Quality childcare starts with quality childcare providers. Our quality enhancement and training strategies lead to improved teacher-student interaction, which research shows has a significant impact on a child's development and success in school.



Family Strengthening

Our home visitation strategies, such as Parents as Teachers, Parent-Child Home and Early Steps to School Success, are helping parents understand their responsibilities to care for and be positive models for their children. As a result of First Steps' intervention and parenting support, 66% of clients initially assessed at "low" levels of parenting have achieved moderate or high levels of parenting skill.



Early Education

Private-public partnerships through First Steps 4K have led to significant cost efficiencies in the delivery of publicly funded 4K. One recent analysis suggests First Steps is achieving comparable results, without the need for costly capital construction, for 80 cents on the dollar. Early Head Start expands quality early learning and family support to infants and toddlers.



Early Intervention

Children's school readiness depends on their healthy growth and development. First Steps helps identify potential delays early through developmental screenings and referring children to BabyNet and other early intervention resources.



School Transition

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

Based on the needs of our community, Orangeburg County First focuses its investments in Family Strengthening, Quality Enhancement, and School Transition.

Early Steps to School Success

Parents play a critical role in their child's development.

Program Description

Early Steps to School Success is an evidence-based home visitation program designed to build strong communities, thriving families and children who are healthy, safe and ready to succeed. ESS services include:

1. **Personal Visits** twice monthly
2. **Monthly Group Connections** with other ESS families
3. **Screenings and Assessments** to identify developmental concerns
4. **Connections to Outside Resources** that families may need to succeed



Orangeburg County First Steps serves families in greatest need. Among our Early Steps to School Success families:

- 80% ... Single Parent households in need of other services
- 20% ... Parental or caregiver depression
- 25% ... Were teen parents

Family Literacy by the Numbers 2016-17

Families Served	20
Children Served	20
Total Home Visits	378
Hours Spent Serving Families	365.6
Average gain, Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (pre-to-post):	3.28
Families Served	20

This year, our Early Steps to School Success Program:

Averaged 2.76 home visits per family

Identified and addressed 4 potential developmental delays

Made 88 connections for families to services such as housing resources, DSS, Adult Education, Employment Resources and Early Education Programs

Thank you to our partners!

Orangeburg Consolidated School District 5



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.**

Orangeburg 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 Orangeburg 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.

Imagination Library by the Numbers, 2016-17

Children Served	123
Books Given to Children 0-5	1163

This year, our Imagination Library program:

- Provided one book per month to (123) children who were referred from Early Steps to School Success, Quality Enhancement Program and Child Development Centers
- Received \$1350.00 in donations from Orangeburg Alumnae Chapter Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and community members in support of early childhood literacy.

Thank you to our partners!

Dollywood Foundation
 Orangeburg Alumnae Chapter
 Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.
 Quality Enhancement Centers

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 (intensive)	5
Child Care Providers Served (non-intensive)	1
Number of TA Visits Provided	109
Number of Children 0-5 Enrolled in Provider Classrooms	182

Congratulations to our QE participants for 2016-17!

Child Care Provider	Environment Assessments Scores
Daydreamers	4.1
Good Hope CDC	5.86
Kidz 1	6.13
Trinity United Methodist	6.0
Wright's Day Care	5.44

This year, our Quality Enhancement program:

- ✓ Provided 290 hours of technical assistance to 5 child care providers
- ✓ Provided \$16,306.66 in materials grants to participating child care providers
- ✓ Funded scholarships for 15 children within participating child care providers

Thank you to our partners!

Quality Enhanced Child Development Centers

Department of Social Services

Kaplan Early Learning Company

Discount School Supplies



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.

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

<u>Topic:</u>	<u>Sessions:</u>
The Incredible Pre-School Years	Two Sessions
Kids Learning Environment	One Session
Mathematics in Early Childcare	One Session
Blood Borne Pathogen/CPR	One Session
Code of Conduct	One Session
Food Allergies and Nutrition	One Session
Conscious Discipline (Director's Network)	Two Sessions
Minimizing the Risk (Director's Network)	Two Sessions



Susan Kirby (Building Bridges Consultant) conducting Conscious Discipline training with OCSD5 Counselors and other Early Childhood Professionals

Training by the Numbers 2016-17

Total Training Attendance	193
Child Care Teachers and Directors Served	77
Number of Training Sessions Offered	11



This year, our Training program provided:

38 Early Childhood staff with high quality training

11 follow-up visits with training participants to help put training into practice

Thank you to our partners!

**First Baptist Church
 Total Learning Concepts, LLC
 Building Bridges Through Conscious Discipline
 Childcare Resource and Referral
 Wilfer Educational Resources**

Child Care Scholarships

Too many families in Orangeburg 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.

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

- 100% ... live in poverty
- 100% ... risk factors

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.



Quality Enhancement materials upgrades at Wright's Day Care Center, Santee SC

Scholarships by the Numbers, 2016-17

Children Served	15
Providers Served	4

This year, our Scholarship program:

- Provided 14 children with scholarship assistance so their parents could work or attend school
- Identified and addressed 3 potential developmental delays among scholarship children (ASQ Report)
- Scholarship parents were offered 4 group trainings designed to improve parenting and life skills

Thank you to our partners!
 SC Department of Social Services
 Orangeburg County Childcare Providers



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.

Countdown to Kindergarten integrates all of the following:

Home Visitation. Teachers make six visits over the summer to the homes of participating students and families. Children and families are introduced to actual materials used in kindergarten and are given a Kindergarten Transition Toolkit to keep.

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

Public Awareness. Throughout the summer, First Steps releases tips to media to help parents and caregivers get children ready for kindergarten.

*CTK by the Numbers, Summer 2016

Children Served	41
Families Served	41
Home/School Visits	246

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



This year, our Countdown to Kindergarten program:

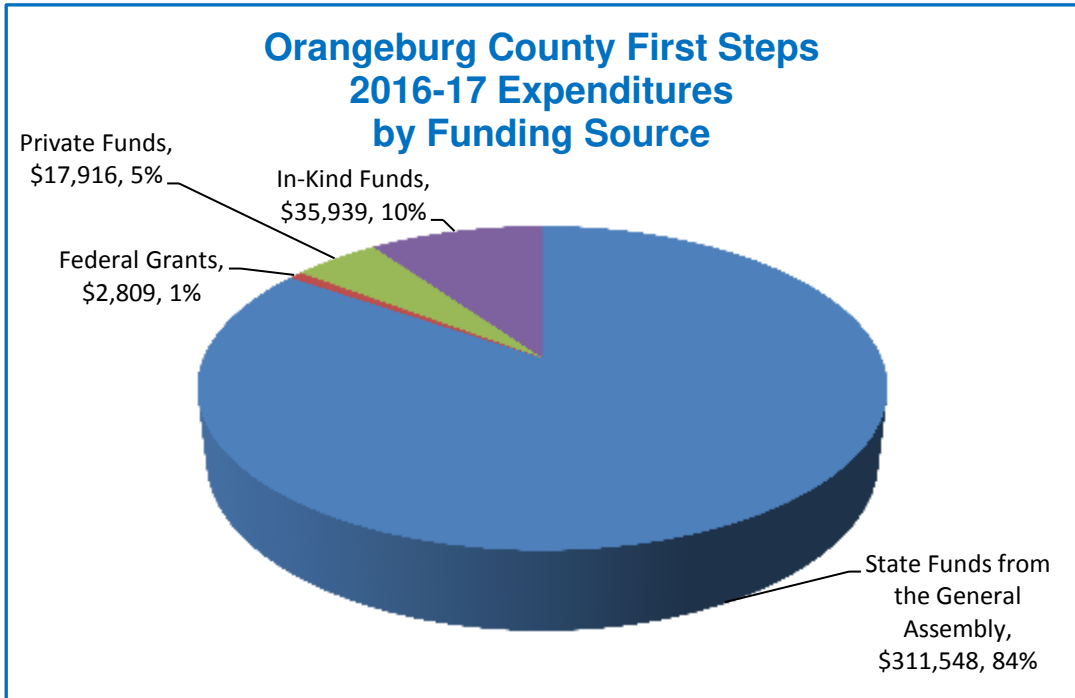
- 23% of children indicated a decrease of anxiety about entering school
- 72% of parents whose children participated in CTK have a greater knowledge of kindergarten expectations at their child’s school
- 63% of parents whose children participated in CTK will actively support their child’s classroom as a volunteer

Thank you to our partners!

Orangeburg County School Districts 4 and 5
 Kaplan Early Learning Company
 United Way of the Midlands
 Citizens of Orangeburg County
 South Carolina First Steps

Like us on Facebook!
 Countdown to Kindergarten-South Carolina

Financial Impact



Total 2016-17 Expenditures: \$368,212.00

State Funds Leveraged in 2016-17*: 18.19%

**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
Imagination Library	\$1,179	\$0	\$1,179	\$0	\$2,358	1%
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$6,564	\$0	\$8,038	\$1,852	\$16,454	4%
Early Head Start	\$0	\$2,809	\$0	\$0	\$2,809	1%
Child Care Quality Enhancement	\$89,448	\$0	\$0	\$5,874	\$95,322	26%
Child Care Training	\$42,502	\$0	\$0	\$1,100	\$43,602	12%
Child Care Scholarships	\$49,000	\$0	\$0	\$7,000	\$56,000	15%
Early Steps To School Success	\$28,531	\$0	\$0	\$19,380	\$47,910	13%
Program Support	\$68,635	\$0	\$6,454	\$0	\$75,089	20%
Administrative Support	\$25,690	\$0	\$2,244	\$734	\$28,668	8%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$311,548	\$2,809	\$17,916	\$35,939	\$368,212	

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

Since inception, Orangeburg County First Steps has leveraged \$1,601,162 from sources outside of state government.

Thank you supporters!

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

Funding Support

- State of South Carolina: \$307,832
(through South Carolina First Steps)
- U.S. Department of Education: \$3,000
- United Way of the Midlands \$6,062

In-Kind Support

- Kaplan Early Learning Co.
- Orangeburg Consolidated School District 5
- Total Learning Concepts, LLC
- SC Department of Social Services



How your support helps children in Orangeburg County:

- \$25 provides a young child a book per month for one year! (Dolly Parton Imagination Library)
- \$270 helps a low-income family afford quality child care for one month (Scholarship)
- \$327 provides 6 home visits in preparation for school transition (Countdown To Kindergarten)

**HOW TO GIVE: Mail your tax deductible donations to
Orangeburg County First Steps at PO Box 451, Orangeburg SC 29116**

Save the Date!

- Read For the Record – October 19, 2017
- OCFS Open House – October 26, 2017
- Early Childhood Professional Development
“Getting LIT for Literacy: Fostering Language and Literacy Development” Series
- November 9, 2017
- December 7, 2017

Support Orangeburg County First Steps today through a tax-deductible donation

Community Impact

Reading Rocks!

Orangeburg County First Steps re-launched the Reading Rocks Program during this fiscal year at Bethune Bowman Elementary School. Three and four year old pre-school children who had not been exposed to the classroom environment were among the qualified participants. Home Visitor and certified teacher, LaCole Raysor provided 10 children with six home visits each. Each child had the wonderful opportunity to experience literacy on another level. The results of pre and post data indicate the following by the conclusion of the program:

- 100% of program participants knew their full name**
- 77% of participants knew their age**
- 44% of participants knew their birthday**
- 56% of participants can identify their shapes**
- 77% of participants can recognize up to 8 colors**
- 33% of participants can identify up to 26 alphabets**



Additionally, these participants were exposed to technology via InoTabs and received school materials in their Kindergarten supply kits. Parents expressed their appreciation for the program and saw it as an opportunity to have a jumpstart on their early childhood education. Moreover, this program was made possible through donations from those who support Orangeburg County First Steps.

Families, Relationships and Trust

“Building relationships with families and building trust are the best ways to support parents in helping their children succeed.”

One family comes to mind in building a great relationship and trust is, Mr. Edmond Stephens. He is a hard working father of 3, humorist, and kindhearted. The Stephen family entered the ESSS program 8 months ago. They live in the rural community of Bowman, SC where everyone knows your name, the town is just that small.



Mr. Stephen is actively engaged in the home visits. He keeps his appointments, does his handouts, and reads daily to A’ yana, his daughter. He is always asking for new books and ideas to keep learning going between visits. Their home library has grown significantly since being in the program. I can find him always saying, “Need new books Ms. Glover, we already read the old ones.” They have applied for a local library card from the Book Mobile which visits the town on Mondays. On a monthly basis, I can depend on Mr. Stephen to be at the Parent Child Group Meeting.



I believe engaging fathers can have a positive impact on a child’s academic achievement. Coaching Mr. Stephen about infant and child development and explaining developmental changes, helps him to better understand and interpret his own child’s behavior cues. With Mr. Stephen’s early involvement in his daughter A’ yana’s life, her future looks bright. I see nothing but excellence for the family as they continue their journey in the Early Step to School Success program here a Bethune-Bowman Elementary School.

Community Impact



Reading to young children is important because it helps them acquire the skills needed to succeed in school and in life. Over the summer, I had the opportunity to work with ten families. Within these families, they all had a child preparing to enter school for the 2017-2018 school year. These students were given the opportunity to experience literacy and math activities to help prepare them for school.

During our sessions, I read books to help teach the names of letters of the alphabet.

One of their favorite book was Chicka Chicka Boom Boom. By using big books, students were able to point out some of the letters in their names. Counting books were used to teach children how to count and to recognize numbers. The students enjoyed being able to help read the repetitious stories such as “Brown Bear, Brown Bear What Do You See?” and “Pete the Cat I Love My White Shoes.”

By the end of the program, the students were eager to hear new stories as well as old ones. They asked and answered questions about the stories read. They also began noticing similarities between the stories. The students were able to use magnetic letters to match letters in their name, spell their names and sort uppercase letters from lowercase letters.

I had a wonderful time working with these students. Reading Rocks!

**LaCole Raysor, Certified Teacher
 Bethune-Bowman Elementary School**



Being a part of the Countdown to Kindergarten family is such a rewarding experience! The students and their families were so involved with the lessons and activities that took place on each visit. The students’ eyes lit up as we took items from their toolkit to work with, because everything was hands-on and the stories kept their attention the entire time. The parents loved this program and was excited about how the program helped with the transition to kindergarten. Once school began, some of those students were in my homeroom class. Parents were delighted because we already had a rapport from the summer. The students are doing well, and we really appreciate the help and support from the CTK family!

**Peggy Davis, Certified Teacher
 Sheridan Elementary School**

First Steps Partnership Board

Partnering With Others for a Better Future

Orangeburg County Board of Directors takes great pride in supporting Orangeburg County First Steps. This Board of Directors actively participates in serving the children of the county by assisting in various activities such as literacy days, annual fundraisers and Community Day 2016-17. It is a continuous goal to strive for excellence through education and service, therefore in collaboration with South Carolina Association for Nonprofit Organizations, the board of Directors received quality board development that shared information on how to fulfill our duties as members of the board. Moreover, our efforts are furthered as we actively fundraise so that children can receive quality care through scholarships, purchasing of books and other materials so that all children regardless of socio-economic status can receive early exposure to the academic environment. We wholeheartedly intend to continue to serve the children of Orangeburg County with passion and excellence.

Orangeburg County First Steps Partnership Board, 2016-17		
Name	Position	Board Category
Gwendolyn Breeland	Human Services Specialist II	County DSS Appointee
Kimberlei Davis	ABC Columbia Digital Content Dir.	Family Education, Training and Support Provider
Deloris Glover	Retired ECE Teacher	Early Childhood Development/Education Provider (Retired)
Matthew Henderson (Vice-Chair)	SCDOT Tradee Specialist II	Senate Appointee
Bertie Howard	OCAB Administrative Mgr.	Head Start
Valerie James-Lawrence	Literacy Coach, Ellore Elementary	House of Representative Appointee
Jacqueline Jamison	OCSD5 Exec. Dir. Of Academics	Orangeburg Consolidated School Dist. 5 Appointee
Audrey McCrary-Quarles	Assoc. Professor of Health Science	Family Education, Training, and Support
Harold Seabrook	Owner/Operator HS Env. Svc.	Business Community
Camesha Tate	Regional Clinical Coordinator	County DHEC Appointee
Tonya Wells (Secretary)	ECE Teacher	Orangeburg Consolidated School District 4 Appointee
Antron Williams	USDA Conservationist	Senate Appointee
Luvenia Williams	Council on Aging, Mgr.	Non-Profit Organization
Reginald Williams (Chairman)	Assoc. Professor of ECE (SCSU)	Early Childhood Education Development
Judy Wright	Crisis Specialist CASA Family Sys.	House of Representative Appointee



Board Training w/ Sharon Thomas (SCFS)

Support Orangeburg County First Steps today by volunteering

Getting children ready for school.

The Goals of First Steps

- (1) provide parents with access to the support they might seek and want** to strengthen their families and to promote the optimal development of their preschool children;
- (2) increase comprehensive services** so children have reduced risk for major physical, developmental, and learning problems;
- (3) promote high-quality preschool programs** that provide a healthy environment that will promote normal growth and development;
- (4) provide services** so all children receive the protection, nutrition, and health care needed to thrive in the early years of life so they arrive at school ready to succeed; and
- (5) mobilize communities** to focus efforts on providing enhanced services to support families and their young children so as to enable every child to reach school healthy and ready to succeed.

-- Section 59-152-30



Interested parents with Medicaid-eligible children who live in eligible school districts can contact any participating provider to complete an application for free, full-day 4K. To view a list of participating First Steps 4K providers, visit:

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



EARLY HEAD START – CHILD CARE PARTNERSHIP

Low income families with children 0-36 months, and families with infants or toddlers with special needs, are invited to apply for this year-round, comprehensive program. Available in the following counties: Allendale, Anderson, Bamberg, Berkeley, Dillon, Georgetown, Laurens, Lexington, Newberry, Orangeburg, Saluda and York, and coming soon to Fairfield and McCormick counties. To apply, visit:

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



[I CAN] is First Steps' public awareness campaign for school readiness, in support of the state's Profile of the Ready Kindergartener. Includes resources for parents, providers and communities to learn what they can do to support school readiness.

Visit: ican.sc

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