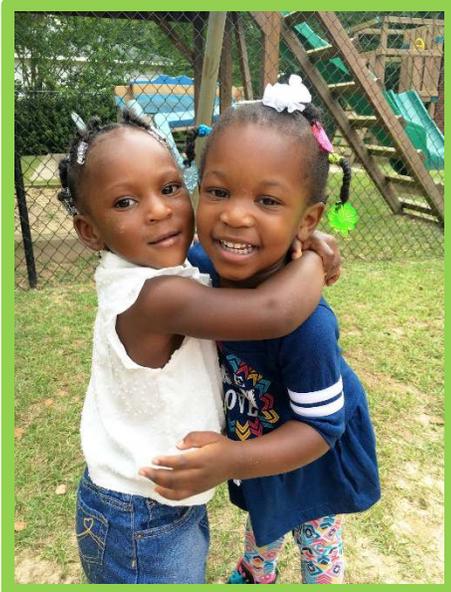


RICHLAND COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.



Parents as Teachers

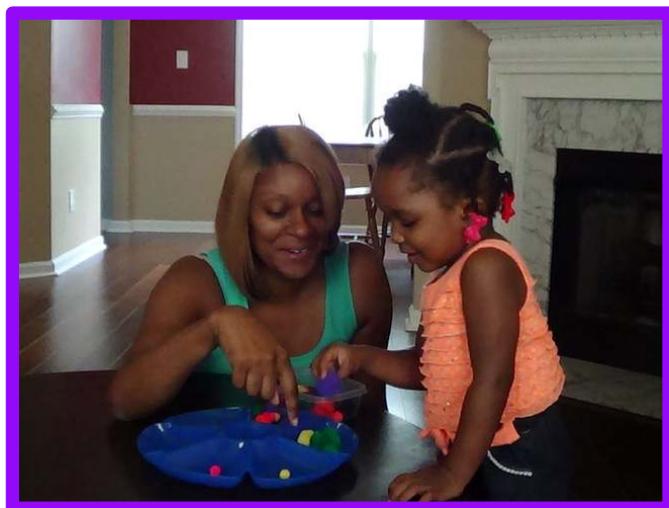
**Child Care Quality
Enhancement**

Child Care Training

Early Head Start

Annual Report

2016-17



OUR MISSION:

**Getting children and
families ready for school**

OUR VISION:

**Every child in Richland
County will arrive at
school healthy and
ready to succeed.**



By The Numbers

Indicator	SC	Richland County
Children Under Five	291,026	23,743
Children In Poverty	24.4%	22.3%
3 rd Graders Below Standard in Reading	22.2%	Richland 1: 31.1% Richland 2: 21.6% Lex/Rich 5: 12.2%
Births to Mothers With Less Than a High School Diploma	15.0%	11.3%

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

- Since inception, Richland County First Steps has leveraged \$15,338,223 from sources outside state government. **That's \$.99 for every dollar received.**
- **3,676.83 hours of support and guidance** were provided to 112 families in our Parents As Teachers Program.
- **Childcare professionals received 2,449 hours** of technical assistance for early care best practices.
- Parenting practices were improved through **59 Group Connections Parent Workshops.**
- **Total Children Served in FY17: 1,161**
- **Books distributed** to families and child care centers: **2,728**

Richland County First Steps

1800 Saint Julian Place, Suite 406
 Columbia, SC 29204

Phone: (803) 256-7237
 Fax: (803) 212-4205

Board Chair
 Penny Dininny

Board@rcfirststeps.org

www.rcfirststeps.org

Richland County First Steps

Rick Noble
Chief Executive Officer

"Well, that's another year in the books."

At Richland County First Steps FY17 it has indeed been another good year.

We continue to benefit from our 17 years of relationship building with local agencies and organizations.

Our network of partners continues to grow and ideas for increased services as well as new services abound.

No surprise that adequate financial resources are the number one constraint.

This year's top highlights, which receive further elaboration in this report, include:

- * A new **Strategic Plan** for 2017-2020 was adopted by the RCFS Board (see below)
- * EXCEL.....we were able to fill a TA vacancy and add another TA **bringing the team to 4** which has enabled us to serve more centers on a weekly basis
- * Home Visitation.....in Lower Richland we bid farewell to long time parent educator, Deloris Flemming, who **retired after 16+ years of dedicated service** on behalf of RCFS
- * Early Head Start.....both of our centers, Ridgewood and Union Street, attained **A+ ratings from ABC Quality.**

As FY17 ended and FY18 began, RCFS moved its offices 2 miles outside of central Columbia to Middleburg Park which is home to a number of community nonprofits and state agencies working on various issues around children and families.

FY18 holds many challenges including RCFS' implementation of a 4K classroom at our Union Street location.

And oh, by the way, RCFS' founding CEO/Executive Director, yours truly, will be retiring just as FY18 ends next summer. Therefore this is my last annual report cover letter.



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, Richland County First focuses its investments in Family Strengthening, Quality Childcare and Early Head Start.

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

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

100% ... live in poverty
 28% ... didn't graduate from high school
 18% ... were teen parents



Good communication is the foundation of our program!

“What I like most about the program is that they come to us, teachers care about our children's education and development.”

~Isabelle's Mom

PAT by the Numbers 2016-17

Families Served	40	
Children Served	50	
Total Home Visits	891	
Hours Spent Serving Families	1,022	
Average gain, <i>Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale</i> (pre-to-post):	KIPS Average Gain: .25	ACIRI Average Gain Adult: .35 Child: .57

This year, our Parents as Teachers program:

- ✓ Averaged 22.28 home visits per family
- ✓ Identified and addressed 13 potential developmental delays, and made 4 connections for families to services such as BabyNet.
- ✓ Improved parenting practices with the highest gains in parents supporting their child's curiosity!
- ✓ 328 books were distributed to families this program year. Access to quality books and tip sheets on why the book is important for the child (social emotional, language, and cognition) make them a hit to parents. The colorful stories and time with mom/dad make them a hit with children!

Thank you to our partners!

Horrell Hill Elementary School
 Eau Claire Cooperative Health Center
 Richland County Parks & Recreation

Richland County First Steps

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 803-256-7237
rick@noblebelfast.com
www.rcfirststeps.org

Child Care Quality Enhancement

Excellence in Care and Early Learning (ExCEL) - School Readiness through high quality child care

ExCEL's Program Description

The quality of care 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.

ExCEL Program Components for our ENHANCEMENT TEAM:

- * On-site Technical Assistance (TA) once a week for 3 hours to one classroom for 6 months, then a second classroom for 6 months.
- * Pre/post assessments of the classroom environment and teacher-child interaction, using nationally recognized tools for infant/toddler and preschool settings, the Environment Rating Scales.
- * Equipment and materials funding based on the Plan of Action developed from the Environment Rating Scale assessment.
- * Conscious Discipline skills demonstrated to teachers in the classrooms.

QE by the Numbers, 2016-17

Child Care Providers Served	20
Number of TA Visits Provided	1,189
Number of Children 0-5 Enrolled in Provider Classrooms	1,024

Congratulations to our most improved ERS score participants for 2016-17!

Child Care Provider	Pre/Post Improvement
Eastminster Dayschool, Nurs 2	From 2.38 to 4.93
Dream Catchers, Infant room	From 2.24 to 4.71
Fantasy Island, Young 2s	From 2.31 to 4.83
Footprints, 2-4 year old class	From 2.18 to 4.36
Hope Academy, Butterflies (4s)	From 3.41 to 5.26

This year, our ExCEL program:

- ✓ Improved quality in ExCEL classrooms, on average, by 1.49 based on pre/post Environment Rating Scale assessments.
- ✓ Provided \$32,372.88 in materials grants to participating child care providers.
- ✓ Took 18 directors and ExCEL staff, as well as the State Director for SC Child Care Resource and Referral, on our second Overnight Directors' Retreat at White Oak Conference Center. SC Center for Child Care Career Development provided the grant to pay for the Conscious Discipline focused retreat.
- ✓ We added two new staff – Tracy Pederson and Kimberly Sowell – to our ExCEL staff as Technical Assistants.
- ✓ Charshina McMillian was promoted to Senior Technical Assistant and helps to train our TAs as well as continue her responsibilities as Training Coordinator and being a TA herself.

Thank you to our partners!

Susanna Watson, Certified Child Care Nurse Consultant

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Child Care Training

Excellence in Care and Early Learning (ExCEL) – High quality child care trainings for our Enhancement Team centers and directors on our Directors’ Team

Child Care Training Sponsored by Richland County First Steps, 2016-17

DIRECTORS’ TEAM TRAININGS.... Our Directors’ Team is open to ANY CHILD CARE DIRECTOR in Richland County. We had 35 directors sign up and around 20-25 attended our monthly trainings regularly. We did a book study of a Conscious Discipline book, *Managing Emotional Mayhem*, with the goal for directors to understand that managing our own emotions is critical to helping children handle theirs. There were 7 trainings plus the Directors’ Retreat.

DIRECTORS’ RETREAT.... We received a grant from SC CCCCD for our Directors’ Retreat – an overnight event at White Oak Conference Center, free for directors who had attended 4 of our CD trainings. We had 18 participants. Susan Kirby, certified CD trainer, led our trainings plus we had relaxing and fun activities to foster and strengthen relationships between staff and directors we serve.

ExCEL CONFERENCE... 74 child care providers participated in a Saturday training to receive 4.5 DSS hours. The Columbia Museum of Art presented the keynote on Visual Literacy. Then participants chose from three 1.5-hour classes that were repeated – all with a literacy focus.

MINI-CONFERENCE.... 52 providers participated in a Saturday training that included these classes:
 “How to Be an Effective Educator and Employee” “Brain States: What State are You In?”
 “Safe Place is Not Time Out” “Strategies for Transitions: Moving From Chaotic to Calm”
 “All About ITERS and ECERS”

We also offered on-site classes on Conscious Discipline to Hope Academy, a center that is focused on implementing Conscious Discipline. We provided classes on NAEYC Accreditation to Benedict College CDC as they work to renew their accreditation.

Training by the Numbers, 2016-17

Total Training Attendance	494
Child Care Teachers and Directors Served (unduplicated)	166
Number of Training Sessions Offered	25



This year, our Excellence in Care and Early Learning (ExCEL) Training program provided:

- ✓ 50 hours of certified training and 4.5 hours of registered training (our conference) offered to staff to meet annual DSS requirements.
- ✓ On-site Health and Safety trainings offered by our certified Child Care Nurse Consultant Susanna Watson.

Thank you to our partners!

- St. Michaels and All Angels Episcopal Church
- Ridgewood Missionary Baptist Church Conference Center
- Susan Kirby, Conscious Discipline Trainer

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Children involved in high-quality preschool are more likely to have better academic outcomes.

Program Description

Early Head Start is a federally funded, community-based program for low income pregnant women and families with infants and toddlers. The four broad goals of EHS are:

- To provide early, continuous, intensive, comprehensive and high-quality services;
- To promote positive parent-child interactions;
- To respond to the needs/circumstances of families in the community; and
- To establish a recruitment plan to serve children with the most urgent needs.

To achieve these goals, the RCFS program offers both center based care and home based services. Each model is designed to meet the needs of the families when they enter the program. As the needs of the family change, they are able to transition from one program to the other, leading to new expectations and roles.

This program has been a blessing to my family. Being part of it has made us feel like we are part of something and supported. Sometimes it is hard for us to obtain information and because of this program we obtain the resource and information needed. I've had 3 kids going through the program and I have learned how to understand my kids overall development.

~ Mrs. Cervantes



Early Education by the Numbers, 2016-17

Children Served	156
Funded Enrollment	96
• Center Based	40
• Home Based	56

Early Head Start made amazing connections this year!

Union Street and Ridgewood (center-based care sites) have been recognized by SC DSS with an A+ rating through the ABC Quality Program.

Program introduced families to **FRESH FOOD BOXES**. Fresh Food Boxes are filled with 12 to 15 varieties of fresh fruits and vegetables. Food boxes cost \$20 or participants can use SNAP (\$10) and have it matched by Healthy Bucks (\$10). More than 200 boxes were delivered!

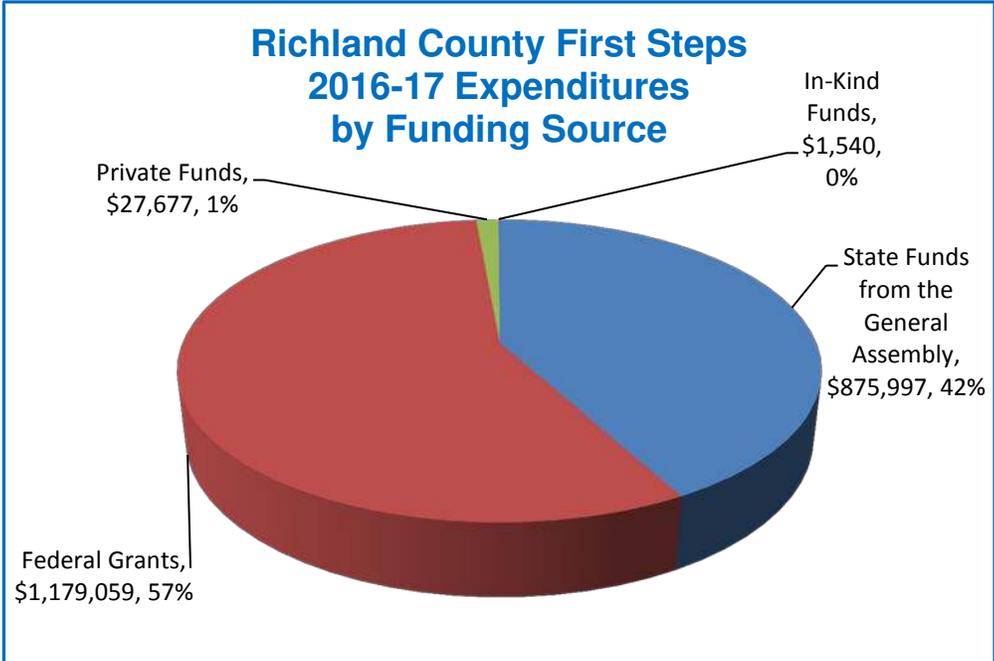
Thank you to our partners!

- Early Head Start Policy Council
- Reformation Lutheran Church
- Richland Library
- Ridgewood Missionary Baptist Church

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Financial Impact



Total 2016-17 Expenditures: \$2,084,273

State Funds Leveraged in 2016-17*: 138%

*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
Parents as Teachers	\$198,173	\$0	\$2,328	\$0	\$200,501	10%
Child Care Quality Enhancement	\$323,975	\$0	\$1,713	\$1,540	\$327,227	16%
Child Care Training	\$46,720	\$0	\$3,912	\$0	\$50,632	2%
Nurse Family Partnership	\$0	\$0	\$598	\$0	\$0	0%
Early Head Start	\$48,518	\$1,170,531	\$16,016	\$0	\$1,235,065	59%
Program Support	\$184,215	\$0	\$878	\$0	\$185,093	9%
Administrative Support	\$74,397	\$8,528	\$2,233	\$0	\$85,158	4%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$875,997	\$1,179,059	\$27,677	\$1,540	\$2,084,273	

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

Since inception, Richland County First Steps has leveraged \$15,337,406 from sources outside of state government. That's 99.4 cents for every state dollar.

Thank you supporters!

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

Funding Support

- State of South Carolina: \$875,997
(through South Carolina First Steps)
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Head Start: \$1,149,171
- United Way of the Midlands, FAST: \$10,000
- SC Center for Child Care Career Development: \$2,900

In-Kind Support

- Columbia College
- Reformation Lutheran Church
- Richland County School District One
- Ridgewood Missionary Baptist Church
- St. Michael's & all Angels Episcopal Church



DJ Baptiste, who speaks on behalf of Conscious Discipline (See YouTube – “Gangleader to Graduate” for his story) with the ExCEL TAs: Tracy Pederson, Catherine Nolan, DJ, Shina McMillian and Kimberly Sowell.

The **ExCEL program** practically doubled in size this year. We added two new Technical Assistants – Tracy Pederson came from Raleigh, NC. She was a preschool teacher, has her Masters in Early Childhood and participated in a week of Conscious Discipline training on her own. Kimberly Sowell, a center director from Columbia, has a Masters in EC as well.

Charshina McMillian, a 10 year employee of RCFS, earned her Masters in Education in Early Childhood in May of 2017. She was a part of the third cohort sponsored by DSS to provide this masters degree to people working in the Early Childhood field in SC. It took her group 3.5 years of night classes together to earn it! Marcia Bacon participated in the first cohort.

Save the Date! 2018 Board Meeting Schedule

Board of Directors Meetings are held at the Richland County First Steps office (1800 Saint Julian Place, Suite 406, Columbia SC 29204) from 5:00pm to 7:00pm, as follows:

September 26, 2017	January 2, 2018	May 1, 2018
November 7, 2017	March 6, 2018	

Support Richland County First Steps today through a tax-deductible donation, or volunteering!

“You’ve Come a Long Way, Baby”

“Bianca” was exposed to smoking, alcohol, and drug use, in utero. She also suffered a stroke which impaired speech and fine/gross motor development. She spent three months in the NICU on oxygen. She continues to have chronic lung issues. She was referred by her pediatrician to BabyNet.

Bianca’s adoptive mother had previously partnered with RCFS, and hoped special focus could be placed on Bianca’s finger manipulation. Particular activities in the PAT curriculum were fun and challenging, and now at 24 months all digits move at her will.

In three consecutive sessions, Bianca has shown mastery in the areas of receptive and expressive language skills to an age appropriate level. But last month, this FSA was especially pleased. As I was leaving the home visit, Bianca asked, in a complete sentence, “Where are you going?”



“I Can Do Bad All By Myself”

“Celeste” grew tired of using her talent for cosmetology to make money for someone else. She had already graduated from school and passed the necessary requirements for board certification. In order to make ends meet for her two children, she had to work 2 part-time jobs for one full-time paycheck. Sometimes, she would do clients’ hair in her home. With her son exiting RCFS this year, she felt confident that he would be ready for Kindergarten in the fall. She realized with her previous experience in accounting, coupled with her skill for hairdressing and nails, she could attempt something that is very rare in her neck of the woods: become an entrepreneur. Celeste and an associate have already found a building in West

Columbia where they plan to “hang their shingle” within the next few months.

“Growing up together”

“Angie” was 14 when she gave birth to “Carlos”. Her grandmother, who had enrolled another grandchild in RCFS about 8 years ago, knew that Angie would benefit from the parenting skills and curriculum that PAT offered. Grandma even promised to “pinch-hit” with the home visits if there was a conflict with Angie’s schedule at school. Angie juggled home visits and home work. She was even able to attend a few Group Meetings with Carlos. One in particular that they attended together was the Family Fun Night at EdVenture. Angie’s family’s military roots run deep, but at their Memorial Day cook-out there was more to celebrate than the country’s freedom.....Angie had graduated from Lower Richland and received her high School diploma.



First Steps Partnership Board

Richland County First Steps Board of Directors adopts new strategic plan

Summary and Goals

- Children’s learning environments will be safe, healthy, developmentally appropriate, and contribute to school readiness.
- Parents and guardians will be encouraged and supported as the primary caregivers and teachers of their children.
- RCFS will have the organizational capacity needed to fulfill this strategic plan.

Therefore:

- Parents and guardians will be the primary caregivers and teachers of their children.
- Children, wherever they are, will have a safe and healthy learning environment.
- Children will enter school mentally and physically healthy and ready to learn.
- Children will develop the social, emotional, cognitive, motor and language skills needed for school readiness.

Richland County First Steps Partnership Board, 2016-17

Name	Board Category	Employer
Patricia Armstrong	Richland County Public Health Department Designee	SC DHEC Midlands Region
Ray Borders Gray	Legislative Appointee	City of Columbia
Jamie Browder	Pre-kindergarten through Primary Educator	Richland County School District One
Gina Carter	Richland County District One Designee	Richland County School District One
Deborah DePaoli	Child Advocate	South Carolina First Steps
Penny Dininny	Local Government	Richland County School District Two
Amanda Glowacki	Family Education, Training and Family Support	Lexington Richland School District Five
Laura Hart	Business Community	Duff & Childs, LLC
Walter McDaniels, MSgt.	Local Government	Richland County Sheriff Department
Marsha Moseley	Richland School District Two Designee	Richland School District Two
Sabina Mosso-Taylor	Legislative Appointee	Richland School District Two
Reese Palmer	Richland County Department of Social Services Designee	Richland County Department of Social Services
Rita Paul	Nonprofit Organization that provides services to children	Retired
Davida Price	Lexington Richland School District Five Designee	Lexington Richland School District Five
Henrietta Robinson	Family Education, Training and Family Support	Lexington Richland School District Five
Barbara Scott	Childcare or early childhood development education	Myers Nursery
Chrishonna Sutton	Parent of Preschool Aged Child	Colonial Life
Janet Tapp	Health Care	Retired
Leslie Tetreault	Richland Library Designee	Richland Library
Jane Wyatt	Legislative Appointee	Caughman Road Elementary School
Vacant	GLEAMNS Head Start	
Vacant	Legislative Appointment	

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)