

DILLON COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.



Parents as Teachers

Child Care Training

Raising A Reader

# Annual Report

2017-18



## OUR VISION:

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

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

926 Perry Ave., Dillon, SC 29547 ♦ (843) 774-0061

# Executive Director's Message

## From the Desk of the Executive Director



Dillon County First Steps (DCFS) Partnership Board and Staff are proud to serve Dillon County Youngest Learners through quality early childhood programs. This fiscal year we launched the Raising A Reader (RAR) Program. RAR engages families in a daily routine of “book cuddling” with their children to foster healthy brain development, parent-child bonding, and early literacy skills critical for school readiness.

Parents as Teachers, our home visiting program, continues to provide home visits and group connections for families. DCFS was able to serve an additional 20 families in the Parents As Teachers program through a rural initiative grant received through South Carolina First Steps.

DCFS was able to provide 20 Certified Training hours for child care professionals that met DSS licensing requirements. Trainings focused on curriculum, administration, health, and safety.

Over the next year, it is our goal to continue to provide quality early childhood programs, increase the number of children in the RAR program, and implement Quality Enhancement Services. A special thank you for all the continuous support of our staff, partnership board, participants, partners and donors.

**Shirleen Lewis, MS**  
**Executive Director**  
[shirleenlewis@bellsouth.net](mailto:shirleenlewis@bellsouth.net)

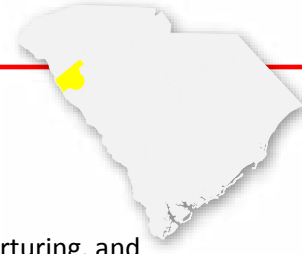
## OUR MISSION:

**“Every child in Dillon County is important and should experience a loving, stimulating, healthy, and safe environment ensured by a supportive family and community”**

**Find Dillon County First Steps:**








# We get children ready.



## THE NEED

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

How are Dillon 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>2,037</b> are under age 5	<b>16</b> attended Early Head Start as infants and toddlers	<b>13</b> licensed child care centers
<b>38.2%</b> live in poverty	<b>126</b> attended free preschool or Head Start as 3-year-olds	<b>19</b> licensed group/family homes
<b>27.8%</b> of babies born in 2016 were to moms without a HS diploma	<b>288</b> 4-year-olds attended free full-day public school 4K or Head Start	<b>13</b> participate in the state's Quality Rating System (ABC Quality)
<b>12.9%</b> Of babies born are born with low birth weight	<b>27</b> 0-5-year old received early intervention or special ed.	<b>47.8%</b> providers are rated B or higher by 
<b>27.80%</b> of last year's kindergartners demonstrated readiness	<b>63</b> were served by 	<b>216</b> families received assistance with affording child care last year
Kids Count data provided by: 	Data provided by: 	

## THE GOALS

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

- 1.** Implement Quality Enhancement to a minimum of two early childhood classrooms in Dillon County.
- 2.** Partner with Lake View and Latta child care facilities to implement Raising A Reader.
- 3.** To recruit at least three Hispanic families to participate in programs through DCFS.
- 4.** Provide transportation for families who participate in the Parents As Teachers Program to attend Parent Meeting.

## THE IMPACT

**In 2017-18, Dillon County First Steps provided:** Services for 62 families in PAT, 50 trainings for child care professionals, and 54 participants in RAR.

- 79 children and 75 adults with intensive support** to equip parents and caregivers with the confidence and competence to be a child's first and best teacher, and strengthen their family's health, economic, and overall well-being (**Parents as Teachers Program**)
- ✓ **50 staff** working in child care providers, Head Start centers and preschool classrooms with training, technical assistance, resources and support, **helping them better meet the needs of 352 children ages 0-5 in their care**
- 1,608 books to spark the love of reading** for 133 children (**Parents as Teachers and Raising A Reader**)
- ✓ a total of **133 children and 125 adults** were impacted by Dillon County First Steps programs, resources, activities and events.

# School Readiness Outcomes

## What is the KRA?

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

Dillon 3 (118 children)			
Domain	Emerging	Approaching	Demonstrating
Social Foundations	21%	26%	53%
Language&Literacy	15%	31%	53%
Mathematics	15%	30%	55%
Physical Dev&WB	19%	19%	61%
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>53%</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>

Dillon 4 (314 children)			
Domain	Emerging	Approaching	Demonstrating
Social Foundations	47%	26%	26%
Language&Literacy	42%	38%	20%
Mathematics	46%	36%	18%
Physical Dev&WB	48%	22%	30%
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>18%</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

## What is Dillon County First Steps doing to improve KRA results (or something similar):

DCFS Partnership understands there is a lot of work to be done in this county regarding getting children prepared for school. In an effort to increase scores for the Kindergarten Readiness Assessments, we plan to start implementing Quality Enhancement Services to increase quality programs using the Infant/Toddler and Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scales. We are also partnering with South Carolina Association of Community Action Programs to implement the Early Head Start Program. Both implementations will help to ensure that children have access to early invention quality education programs through evidence-based assessments. Another factor we want to address is the increasing numbers of children entering early childhood programs with special needs. For that reason, we are taking steps to add trainings to our upcoming training rosters to help child care professional be successful in their teaching strategies and creating classroom environments that meet the learning needs of all students.

**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.

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

100% ... live in poverty  
08% ... didn't graduate from high school  
02% ... were teen parents



Semaj Jackson showing his creativity through finger painting.

*Dillon County First Steps Home Visiting Program has provided a teacher to help Elijah learn major milestones as he is growing through his toddler stage. He is learning his colors, shapes, animals, number, etc.*

## PAT by the Numbers 2017-18

Families Served	62	
Children Served	79	
Total Home Visits	1137	
Hours Spent Serving Families	1138.52	
Average gain, <i>Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale</i> (pre-to-post):	32.1	4.04

## This year, our Parents as Teachers program:

- ✓ Averaged 2.34 home visits per family.
- ✓ Identified and addressed 27 potential developmental delays through the ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE Assessment and made 78 connections for families to services such as Family Events/Activities, Vision Service, BabyNet and Early Education Programs.
- ✓ Improved parenting practices with Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (KIPS) Assessment with an average of 25.86% increase. Families improved their literacy skills with ACIRI pre-to-post gain with Audits 67.88% gain and Children 67.09 gain, and 1368 books were distributed

## Thank you to our PAT partners!

City of Dillon Wellness Center  
Dillon County United Way  
Dillon School District Four  
South Carolina Ports Authority

## Evidence of Effectiveness:

Parents as Teachers 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.

*DCFS has provided exemplary training for the Caregivers in the Daycares and Preschools in our Community for 2018. Thank you for seeking out the very best instructors to lead each training session.*

Cecelia Mescia  
 CeCe's Kids/Preschool

### Trainings Sponsored by Dillon County First Steps, 2017-18

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <u>Topic:</u><br>~Tornadoes, Floods, Storms, Oh My!<br>Is Your Child Care Program Ready?<br>Children | <u>Topic:</u><br>~Reporting incidents/accidents?<br>~Developmental Tasks of Young Children |
| ~Record Keeping, Staff Employment and Evaluation in Childcare<br>are?                                | ~Professionalism in Child Care<br>~Do you know where your children are?                    |
| ~Managing Evaluation and Assessment<br>in Child Care   | ~Physical Activities for<br>~Blood Borne Pathogens   |
| ~From Cradle to 3: Language Development  |  |
| ~From Conception To Birth: What An Experience  |  |



*Child Care Providers posing with books and curriculum materials to be used in their facilities.*

### Training by the Numbers, 2017-18

Total Training Attendance	158
Child Care Teachers and Directors Served	50
Number of Training Sessions Offered	13

- ✓ 97% of providers surveyed indicated that training information is very useful.
- ✓ 21% increase in Pre-/Post-testing results.
- ✓ 100% of providers surveyed enjoy childcare trainings hosted by Dillon County First Steps

### This year, our Training program provided:

- ✓ 50 early childhood staff with high quality training, impacting 12 providers and 352 children.
- ✓ 20 hours of certified training and 1 hour of registered training for staff to meet annual re-certification requirements.
- ✓ 132 Books placed in childcares.

### Thank you to our Training partners!

- Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R)
- City of Dillon Wellness Center
- Dillon School District Four
- SC Center for Child Care Career Development (SC-CCCCD)

Evidence of Effectiveness:

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

**Sharing Books increases brain development and encourages strong parent-child relationships.**

## Program Description

Raising A Reader (RAR) is a proven and research-based family engagement and early literacy program for children ages 0-8 that helps develop, practice, and maintain the home-based literacy routines necessary for school success. The program promotes and fosters healthy brain development, parent-child bonding and develops the early language and literacy skills that are critical for academic and life success by engaging parents in a routine of “book cuddling” with their children.

The goal of RAR is to substantially increase the number of families that share picture books and stories with their children frequently and routinely each week.

Program Components:

1. Weekly red bag rotation.
2. “Book cuddling” time between adult and child.
3. Spring library tour.

*Hamer Canaan Head Start is proud to pilot the RAR program in Dillon County to promote early literacy skills.*

*Mrs. Sharon T. Davis  
 Center Manager*



*RAR Kick Off at Hamer Canaan Head Start.*

## RAR by the Numbers, 2017-18

Children Served	54
Providers Served	1

### This year, our Raising A Reader program:

- ✓ Made it possible for 54 children to engage in “book cuddling” time with an adult.
- ✓ 240 books rotated in 60 red book bags.
- ✓ 54 blue book bags and library cards were distributed.

### Thank you to our Raising A Reader partners!

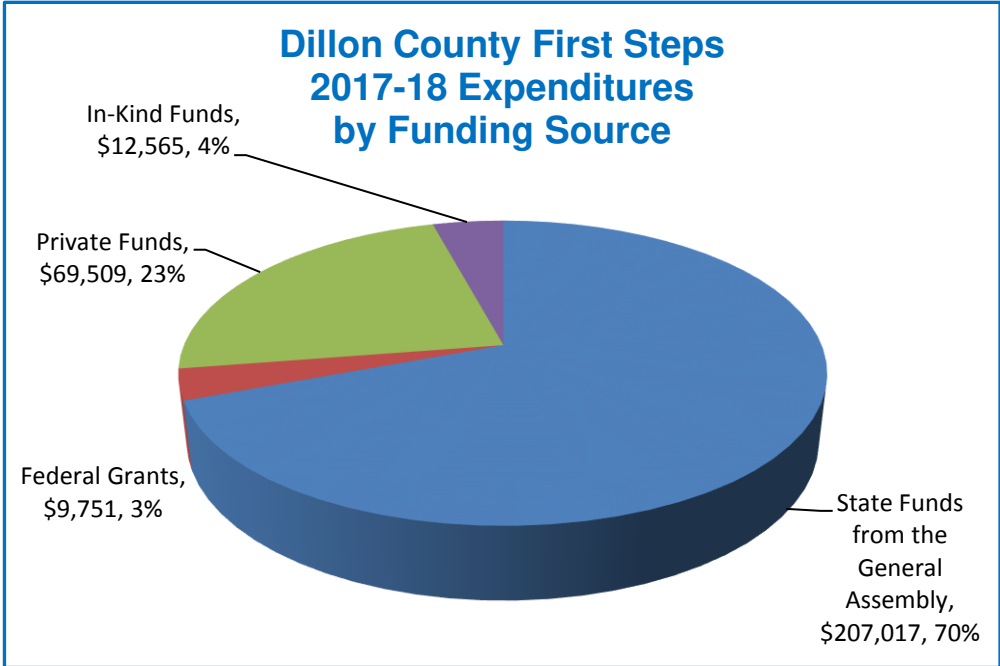
- Dillon County Public Library
- Dollar General Literacy Foundation
- Hamer Canaan Head Start

### Evidence of Effectiveness:

Our partnership’s Early Literacy program meets the First Steps legislation’s definition of an **evidence-informed** program.



# Financial Impact



**Total 2017-18 Expenditures: \$298,842**

**State Funds Leveraged in 2017-18\*: 44%**

\*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	\$81,147	\$0	\$55,626	\$3,220	\$139,993	47%
Other Family Literacy (RAR)	\$4,790	\$0	\$2,162	\$0	\$6,952	2%
Head Start Programming	\$0	\$9,751	\$0	\$1,860	\$11,611	4%
Child Care Training	\$29,766	\$0	\$2,516	\$3,190	\$35,472	12%
Program Support	\$73,037	\$0	\$6,650	\$3,240	\$82,927	28%
Administrative Support	\$18,277	\$0	\$2,555	\$1,055	\$21,887	7%
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$207,017</b>	<b>\$9,751</b>	<b>\$69,509</b>	<b>\$12,565</b>	<b>\$298,842</b>	

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

**Since inception, Dillon County First Steps has leveraged \$1,035,225 from sources outside of state government. That's 22 cents for every state dollar.**



# Thank you, supporters!

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

## Funding Support

- State of South Carolina: \$207,017  
*(through South Carolina First Steps)*
- A.R.S. Marketing
- ALPHA ALPHA Chapter  
 Ann Lee
- Bartell Funeral Home LLC
- Benefit Designs  
 Frank Blue
- Nina Bradley
- CareSouth Carolina  
 Colonial Life  
 Sharon T. Davis
- Dillon Branch No. 5513 NAACP
- Dillon County Boys and Girls Youth Center
- Dillon County Council
- Dillon County Economic Development
- Dillon-Marion Co. Alumnae Delta Sigma Theta
- Dollar General Literacy Foundation
- Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church  
 Elliott Realty
- Family Sports Center
- First Citizens Bank
- Boyce Stephens  
 Joyce K. Foster
- Generations Day Care
- Greene's Funeral Home LLC
- Hazy Grove Missionary Baptist Church
- Herald Multiform, Inc.  
 Perry F. James  
 Crystal Johnson  
 Mavis Jones
- Kaplan Early Learning Company
- Kids Limited Child Development Center LLC
- Latta Family Dentistry
- Lytch's Sign Service

## Funding Support

- Major's Cleaners
- Manning Baptist Church
- Marlboro Development Team  
 Hattie McInnis  
 Norma McInnis
- McLeod Health-Dillon  
 Charles Page  
 Cynthia Pernell  
 Pope's Furniture
- Ja-Novice Greene-Richardson  
 Angela Rogers
- Toyoka & James Rouse  
 Gabriel Salmon, Sr.
- South Carolina Port Authority
- SC-Child Care Career Development  
 Kenneth Smith  
 Boyce Stephens  
 Sparks Toyota
- St. Matthew AME Church  
 The Criterion Club
- United Way – Dillon County  
 Zee Walker
- White's Electrical Services  
 XDOS, Inc.

## In-Kind Support

- Brandi's Banquet Hall
- Child Care Resource and Referral
- City of Dillon Wellness Center
- Dillon School District Four
- Ja-Novice Greene-Richardson



**How your support helps children in Dillon County:**

- ✓ \$110 provides a Raising A Reader book bag for one year!
- ✓ Provide books and curriculum materials for the Parents As Teachers Program

**HOW TO GIVE:** Mail check or money order payable to Dillon County First Steps, P. O. Box 295, Dillon, SC 29536

**Support Dillon County First Steps today through a tax-deductible donation, or volunteer!**

## Parents as Teachers Success Stories

I want to thank First Steps for helping my children get where they need to be and for being understanding on things. They helped a lot. I am grateful for Mrs. Melinda for really taking the time with the kids and not getting frustrated with them when they cry or get upset. She really connects with them and they really like her. She interacts with them and they trust her. They know she is a good person. So, thank you First Steps for bringing her into my family's life. Thank you so much.

### Laura Ann Lee

You all have been a wonderful help to my baby. Thanks, in helping him to learn to count and practice writing. I appreciate everything the First Steps Staff has done.



### Ashley Scott

I love the parent educator my child was placed with. She has her talking so much, drawing shapes, and holding her pencil correctly. If you could see the things this 2-year-old does you would smile. Mrs. Melinda is great with her. I know this is helping. I worked with her also, so just know she is taking off. We have a lot to still work on but overall "A Great Job"!

### Pamela Page

I really enjoyed having Logan in the program. She loves her books and working with Mrs. Melinda. Since we've started the program Logan's vocabulary has increased as well as her learning ability. She's fully potty trained and she's much more social than she has ever been.

### Aaliyah McQueen

Parents as Teachers has been great with all my kids. My boys are doing great in school and my daughter Kalayah really enjoys the books, activities and Mrs. Shantel.

### Kenyatta McLellan

We have always loved First Steps and Mrs. Shantel!

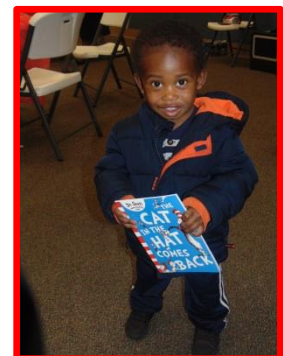
### Angelica McRae

Every week my baby learns something new. I love the program and Ms. Jessica.

### Yasmine Goodson

I've been in the program for four years. Every year it gets better.

### Quashima Townsend



## Parents as Teachers Success Stories

This program has been a blessing to me and my family. My daughter has learned so much. She has really shown a great change this year. I know that is because of Mrs. Shantel and the First Steps family we have both grown from this program.

### Nancy Leach

This program has really helped me and my boys. My oldest got the extra services from BabyNet and now we are learning a lot more words clearer. I love this program.

### Sabrina Lee

Meeting Mrs. Melinda was the best thing that ever happened to me. Her sweetness and kindness just made my pregnancy so much better.

### Kanessa Camp

Since my children Jin’Nari and Tiana have been in this program. They have been more excited about reading, saying nursery rhymes, playing with colors and blocks, putting things together, trying new things, and they can count to 15.

### Quintella Alexandra

Elijah started walking, and Ja’Quan is learning more and became more settled when reading books. He learned how to count a little more. They are both learning very well.

### Dominique Drawhorn

I was referred to the House of Hope by Mrs. Melinda. They are very sweet ladies. I love the talks that we have. I think it is very helpful of them to give pampers and wipes after every visit.

### Shannon Hargrove

My baby is finally off the breast, and she is down to one bottle a day.

### Courtney Almos



# First Steps Partnership Board

Dillon County First Steps (DCFS) Board has worked diligently in governing the progress of Dillon County First Steps. Over the past year, we really worked collectively on how we can make DCFS have a bigger presence in Dillon County to include the expansion of programs and increasing community partnerships. DCFS actively partners with Dillon County Collaborative Council, Hamer Canaan Head Start, Dillon County Chamber of Commerce, Pee Dee Nurse Partnership Program, and Child Care Resource and Referral Program.

DCFS Partnership Board along with child care providers and community agencies gathered for three meetings to come up with a three-year strategic plan to help provide more quality early childhood programs to Dillon County Youngest Learners.

## Partnership Board Highlights

During FY 18, DCFS Board members volunteered 139.50 hours to board meetings and devoted 12 hours to board trainings. DCFS Partnership Board was active in participating in our First Annual Gala Fundraiser and worked collectively to help create goals for our three-year strategic plan.

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

Name	Position	Board Category
Nina Bradley, Chair	Substitute Teacher	School District Representative
Kenneth L. Smith, Vice Chair	Director of Dillon County Boys and Girls Club	Non-Profit Organization that provides services to families and children
Ressie Jones, Secretary	DSS	DSS
Elder Gabriel Salmon, Asst. Secretary	House of Raeford	Faith Community
Crystal Johnson	Head Start	Head Start
Rachelle Lighty	Teacher	Dillon County District Four
Tonny McNeil	Economic Development Director	Dillon County Economic Development
Doretha Page	Retired District Four Employee	Legislative Appointee
Angela Rogers	DHEC	DHEC
Alisha McCall	Book Mobile Librarian	Dillon County Library
Brenda Bucy	District Four Substitute Teacher	Faith Community
Millie Odom	Head Start Director	Head Start
Reverend NeSmith	Pastor	Faith Community
Preston Greene, III	Funeral Director	Business Community

# What is First Steps?

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

## First Steps Goals

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

### First Steps Building Blocks of Quality Early Childhood Programs and Services



Healthy Start



Family Strengthening



Early Intervention



Quality Child Care



Early Education



School Transition

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

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

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

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



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

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

for Dillon County First Steps:

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



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

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