

H O R R Y C O U N T Y



Getting children ready for school.



Parents as Teachers

Raising A Reader

Child Care Quality
Enhancement

Child Care Training

Child Care Scholarships

Annual Report

2017-18



OUR VISION:

Every child will arrive at
kindergarten
ready to succeed

hcfirststeps.org

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Director Message

Welcome from the Executive Director

Horry County First Steps envisions a county where all children are ready to start kindergarten prepared to learn at their maximum potential.

Investing in early child care and learning pays big dividends for communities and businesses. Scientific research confirms that children's earliest experiences, starting before birth, dramatically affect their ability to succeed. Unfortunately, about half of Horry County's children enter kindergarten not fully prepared to succeed, according to recent studies.

Horry County First Steps, along with other community partners, has made an ambitious commitment to the children and families of Horry County. Our purpose is to support high-quality early care and education for children, from birth to five, while supporting their parents in their important work. We have worked to develop a comprehensive strategic plan to improve outcomes for our youngest citizens.

Grassroots advocacy helps direct our agency's future public policy decisions. If we are concerned about our communities, then we need to make long term investments in our future neighbors, co-workers, and community leaders by nurturing them right from the beginning. Our investments pay off in lower crime rates, less need for public assistance, better public schools, and better lives for families. We all benefit when our youngest citizens thrive.

As we move forward it's imperative that we continue to support high quality services and programs. Along the way we are starting to facilitate the work of becoming a community portal for families in search of services. By having a two pronged approach we look forward to the future.

With warmest regards,

Amy Breault
Executive Director



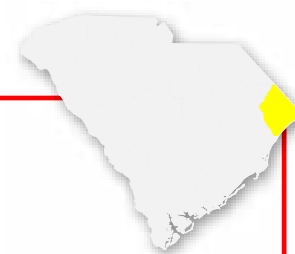
The Horry County First Steps staff

OUR MISSION:

The **mission** of Horry County First Steps is to collaborate with other key stakeholders, and community partners to empower children and families, therefore improving school readiness





Find Horry County First Steps:





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 Horry County.

How are Horry 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?
16,047 are under age 5	Not Available attended Early Head Start as infants and toddlers	72 licensed child care centers
27.6% live in poverty	252 attended free preschool or Head Start as 3-year-olds	15 licensed group/family homes
16% of babies born in 2016 were to moms without a HS diploma	1,071 4-year-olds attended free full-day public school 4K or Head Start	69% participate in the state's Quality Rating System (ABC Quality)
602 Founded cases of abuse and/or neglect	1,008 0-5 year olds received early intervention or special ed.	25 providers are rated B or higher by ABC Quality
43.30% of last year's kindergartners demonstrated readiness	341 were served by 	1,405 families received assistance with affording child care last year
<i>Kids Count data provided by:</i> 	<i>Data provided by:</i> 	

THE GOALS

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

1. Provide parents with access to the support they might seek and want for their families. Goal 2 from Comprehensive Plan
2. Implement and support high-quality preschool programs that promote school readiness skills.
3. Mobilize communities to focus efforts ensuring children are entering school healthy and ready to learn.

THE IMPACT

In 2017-18, Horry County First Steps provided:

- ✓ **39 children and 38 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**)
- ✓ **56 staff** working in **6** child care providers, Head Start centers and preschool classrooms with training, technical assistance, resources and support, **helping them better meet the needs of 361 children ages 0-5 in their care** (**Facility Quality Enhancement and Center Staff Training and Development**)
- ✓ financial assistance to help **62 children 0-5 attend quality child care** so their parents can work or attend school (**Child Care Scholarships**)
- ✓ **4,304 books** to spark the love of reading for **200 children** (**Raising A Reader**)
- ✓ a total of **323 children and 355 adults** were impacted by Horry 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:

Horry (3,204)			
Domain	Emerging	Approaching	Demonstrating
Social Foundations	27%	27%	46%
Language&Literacy	15%	27%	46%
Mathematics	22%	39%	46%
Physical Dev&WB	22%	37%	41%
OVERALL	18%	39%	43%

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%
OVERALL	26%	38%	36%

- 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 Horry County First Steps doing to improve KRA results:

Although children throughout Horry County are showing great results on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment, there is still work to be done. A guiding principle of Horry County First Steps states: *Our communities participation is essential to our success.* No where is this more apparent then when reviewing results of the KRA. By working with Horry County Schools, state/county/local agencies, and other non-profit we can focus on those children with emerging readiness.

Convening work groups to determine what is currently working and what still needs to be done is just the beginning. It will take many individuals from a diverse population to ensure all children enter school healthy and ready to learn.

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

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

100% ... live in poverty
50% ... didn't graduate from high school
25% ... were teen parents



I now have the confidence to be my child's first and best teacher!

My Parent Educator always is supportive and encouraging no matter what I am going through.

PAT by the Numbers 2017-18

Families Served	35	
Children Served	39	
Total Home Visits	464	
Hours Spent Serving Families	465	
Average scores, <i>Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale</i> (pre-to-post):	3.69	4.18

This year, our Parents as Teachers program:

- ✓ Averaged 1.89 home visits per family
- ✓ Identified and addressed 8 potential developmental delays, and made 25 connections for families to services such as BabyNet Evaluations, Employment Resources, Food Banks, and other Basic Needs services

Thank you to our PAT partners!

SC Mentors
Grand Strand Regional Medical Center
Carolina Forest Pediatrics

Evidence of Effectiveness:

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



Child Care Quality Enhancement

In order to thrive, children need nurturing, responsive relationships and a supportive learning environment, both within and outside the home.

Program Description

The quality of care they received by young children is crucial to their healthy development and school readiness. Child care providers strive to provide high quality care, but may lack the resources that are commonly available to publicly-funded early childhood programs, such as educational materials, on-site professional development, and other support.

First Steps' Child Care Quality Enhancement (QE) is intended to produce measurable improvements in the quality of care provided to young children. Participating child care providers must serve a high percentage of at-risk children, and are selected through a competitive process that requires a strong level of commitment to the QE process.

Program Components

1. On-site Technical Assistance (TA) at least twice monthly
2. Equipment and materials funding
3. Integration with locally available training, provided by First Steps and other partners
4. Workforce Development
5. Coordination with community partners
6. Pre/post assessments of the classroom environment and teacher-child interaction, using nationally-recognized observational tools for infant/toddler and preschool settings (ITERS, ECERS, FCCERS)

QE by the Numbers, 2017-18

Child Care Providers Served	6
Number of TA Visits Provided	124
Number of Children 0-5 Enrolled in Provider Classrooms	361

Congratulations to our QE participants for 2017-18!

Child Care Provider	Pre/Post Improvement
The Learning Tree, 4-yr-old room	From 2.78 to 3.29
Conway Daycare, toddler room	From 2.94 to 3.56
The Learning Station, 2-yr-old room	From 4.25 to 5.09
Sea Mountain Academy, 4-yr-old room	From 2.59 to 3.67
Beginners Paradise, 2-yr-old room	From 3.4 to 4.75

This year, our Quality Enhancement program:

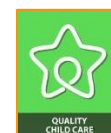
- ✓ Improved quality, on average, by 1.00 point based on pre/post Environment Rating Scale assessments
- ✓ Provided 418 hours of technical assistance to child care providers, contributing to the professional growth of 58 child care teachers and directors
- ✓ Provided \$17,500 in materials grants to participating child care providers

Thank you to our Quality Enhancement partners!

Kaplan Early Learning Company
 Directors and Staff within participating child care facilities

Evidence of Effectiveness:

Child Care Quality Enhancement 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.

I loved all the ideas Ms. Sonya gave us during our training session!
The focus on Infant/Toddler development was meant just for me in my role.

**Training Sponsored by
 Horry County First Steps, 2017-18**

Topic:
 Community Resources
 Health and Safety
 Postive Interactions



Training by the Numbers, 2017-18

Total Training Attendance	58
Child Care Teachers and Directors Served	58
Number of Training Sessions Offered	2

This year, our Training program provided:

- ✓ 58 early childhood staff with high quality training, impacting 5 providers
- ✓ 8 hours of certified training for staff to meet annual re-certification requirements

Thank you to our Training partners!

- SC Child Care Resource and Referral
- SC Child Care Voucher Program
- ABC Quality Child Care

Evidence of Effectiveness:

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

Child Care Scholarships

Too many families in Horry 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.

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

- 100% ... live in poverty
- 63% ... were exposed to maternal depression
- 31% ... were exposed to domestic violence
- 23% ... were exposed to parental substance abuse

With the help from First Steps I am able to finish my education and get a better paying job!

I didn't know what I was going to do before I found help through First Steps.



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

Scholarships by the Numbers, 2017-18

Children Served	66
Providers Served	19

This year, our Scholarship program:

- ✓ Provided 62 children with scholarship assistance so their parents could work or attend school
- ✓ Identified and addressed 22 potential developmental delays among scholarship children
- ✓ Supported 16 small businesses in Horry County by subsidizing child care tuition for families who would not otherwise be able to afford quality care

Thank you to our Scholarship partners!

SC Child Care Voucher Program

Evidence of Effectiveness:

Our partnership's Child Care Scholarship strategy is considered *evidence-informed*.

Raising A Reader

Helping families develop, practice, and maintain home literacy routines.

Program Description

The Raising A Reader (RAR) mission is to foster healthy brain development, parent-child bonding, and early literacy skills critical for school success by engaging parents in a routine of daily “book cuddling” with their children from birth to age five.

Families attend a family event where information regarding the importance of daily book cuddling is presented. After the family event children begin to take home red bags containing four high quality, age-appropriate books. Throughout the school year, children continue to take home books weekly. In the spring all families are invited to attend an event at their local library branch. The children receive blue library bags to encourage book reading throughout the summer.

Program Components:

- ✓ family events at participating child care facilities
- ✓ weekly book bag rotation
- ✓ daily “book cuddling” time between adults and children
- ✓ library events in the spring

Horry County First Steps serves families in greatest need. Among our RAR families:

- 50% ... found reading with their child somewhat to very difficult
- 92% ... were low income
- 100% ... spent less than 20 minutes per day reading together
- 75% ... had no established reading routine

RAR by the Numbers

Children Served	266
Total Bags Rotated	1,064
Total Books Rotated	4,256



This year, our Raising A Reader program:

- ✓ Increased the establishment of a reading routine by 90%
- ✓ Engaged 266 children throughout Parents As Teachers and local child care facilities
- ✓ Hosted 6 “Meet Me At Your Local Library” events where blue bags and library card applications were distributed

Thank you to our RAR partners!

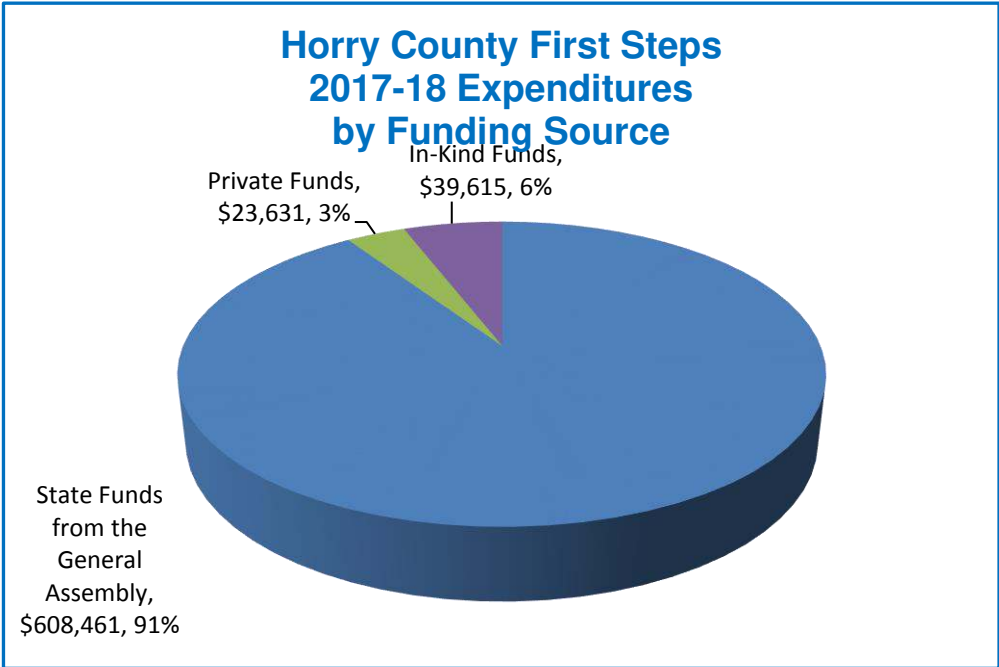
- Horry County Schools
- Horry County Library
- Chapin Library
- United Way of Horry County

Evidence of Effectiveness:

Raising A Reader meets the First Steps legislation’s definition of an *evidence-informed* program.



Financial Impact



Total 2017-18 Expenditures: \$601,706

State Funds Leveraged in 2017-18*: 10%

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

2017-18 Expenditures by Strategy

	State \$	Private \$	In-Kind \$	Total \$	% of 2017-18 Expenditures
Parents as Teachers	\$146,243	\$59	\$143	\$146,445	22%
Child Care Quality Enhancement	\$99,059	\$0	\$9,420	\$108,479	16%
Child Care Training	\$19,387	\$0	\$187	\$19,574	3%
Child Care Scholarships	\$119,000	\$0	\$23,800	\$142,800	21%
Raising A Reader	\$64,142	\$21,700	\$6,065	\$91,907	14%
Program Support	\$105,711	\$1,818	\$0	\$107,529	16%
Administrative Support	\$54,919	\$50	\$0	\$54,969	8%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$608,461	\$23,627	\$39,615	\$671,703	

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

Since inception, Horry County First Steps has leveraged \$4,967,320 from sources outside of state government. That's 50 cents for every state dollar.



Thank you supporters!

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

Funding Support

- State of South Carolina: \$608,461
(through South Carolina First Steps)
- United Way of Horry County: \$10,000
- Reverend Kirk Lawton: \$100

In-Kind Support

- The Learning Station
- The Learning Tree
- Sea Mountain Academy
- Conway Daycare
- Cutie Pies
- Beginners Paradise
- SC Child Care Voucher Program

How your support helps children in Horry County:

- ✓ \$100 provides a young child a 20 books per month for one year!
- ✓ \$10 feeds dinner to low-income families attending a parenting workshop
- ✓ \$1,000 provides support to a low income mom learning to become more self-sufficient

HOW TO GIVE: Contact Amy Breault at (843) 488-3336

Save the Date!

Week of the Young Child 2019, April 8-12

Read In – Columbia SC April 2019

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

PAT makes a difference in the lives of families

The Jones family came into the PAT program via a referral from a community partner. The Parent Educator began working with the family just after Johnny's 1st birthday in December, 2018. In the beginning Jill, Johnny's mom, wasn't sure what to do because Johnny was only crawling using one arm; and he wasn't making any sounds other than crying. Jill had Lupus and dealing with her own illness was overwhelming. Johnny's dad, Jack, was at work most of the time which led to a lack of attachment with Johnny. The family had no support system in place because they had recently relocated to the Myrtle Beach area.



After meeting with Jill and Johnny, the Parent Educator (PE) talked with mom about the areas of development that she felt he needed to improve. Jill's goals for him were two armed crawling, walking, speaking and having him interact during play time. Goals for herself included finding activities to help with his development and to feel good about herself. Mom also wanted dad and Johnny to interact with each other more.

During the initial visits Johnny was very shy and attached to his mom. He held onto her during every meeting. The PE continued to meet with the family and help Johnny's mom create literacy based items to encourage him to recognize the names of common items. Johnny's mom also learned rhymes and movement activities. These were used to help with his motor development. The activities required mom to help Johnny move his arms, fingers and legs for strengthening the muscle and improve development.

As a result of the visits with the family and the completion of the activities Johnny started crawl on both of his knees and other hand. He also began to be more active during the visits. After a trusting relationship was established mom said Johnny would be looking for the PE to show up for the visit, by crawling to the door about time for the PE's arrival.

Johnny's dad become more involved with the PAT program once the visits were scheduled on his day off from work. The entire family took part in the activities.

Within two short months, Johnny began to speak words, and take his first steps.

With each activity Jill began to see improvement and growth. She talked about how he had improved and started doing things on his own. She started visiting their local library and met some children Johnny's age and some parents that she talked with. They set a regular time to visit the library and stayed for story time. Johnny found a friend and so did mom.

Jill and her husband used every activity to help with their child's growth. Johnny is on track with his motor skills and showing improvement in his communication skills.

Jack and Jill are becoming more self-sufficient and hope to be home owners in the future.

This is just one example of how family strengthening strategies are working for families in Horry County.

Building leadership from the inside

Throughout 2017-2018 the Horry County Partnership Board completed a comprehensive self-evaluation with the help of Together SC's Guiding Principles and Best Practices. Time during each board meeting was given to review one of the nine specific focus areas. Each member had the opportunity to examine which indicator was being met and the ones that needed attention. At the end of the process everyone had more understanding of the agency and their role as a board member. Although review of the principles and best practices is an ongoing process, the current board membership has increased their leadership skills and abilities.

Name	Position	Board Category
Susan Jones, Chair	Coordinator, Horry County Schools	School District Representative
Shayla Livingston, Vice Chair	Job Placement and Training Coordinator, Goodwill	Non Profit that Provides Services to Families and Children
Mary Baddela	Owner/Director, Sunshine Children's Academy	Childcare and Early Childhood Development/Education Provider
Bonita McMenamin	Owner/Director, The Learning Tree	Childcare and Early Childhood Development/Education Provider
Wendy Gillespie	BabyNet SPOE Supervisor	Healthcare Provider
Lauren Mears	Childrens Librarian, Horry County Libraries	Local Government
Bradley Todd	Teacher, Horry County Schools	Non Profit that Provides Services to Families and Children
Jennifer Nassar	Director, Chapin Library	Non Profit the Provides Services to Families and Children
Sadhana Tolani	WIC Program Manager, DHEC Pee Dee region	DHEC Representative
Spemcer McKnight	Family Support Coordinator, HeadStart	HeadStart Representative

What is First Steps?

First Steps Goals

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.

- (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

for Horry County First Steps:

hcfirststeps.org



[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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