

LAURENS COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.



Parents as Teachers

Child Care Training

Child Care Scholarships

Support for Nurse Family Partnership

# Annual Report

2017-18



## OUR VISION:

Every Laurens County child will enter school healthy and ready to succeed.

<http://scfirststeps.com/laurens> SCFS web page

Laurens, SC 29360 ♦ 864-984-8130 ♦ rpatterson@laurens55.org

# Director Message

***“Early Childhood education is the key to the betterment of society.”***

Maria Montessori

***Laurens County First Steps is fortunate to have a dedicated Board of Directors and staff. We continue to examine our program delivery and practices in order to ensure positive outcomes for the children and families we serve. We know that the development of a child emotionally, mentally, and socially is the foundation for success in later life.***

***Our board and staff supports the financial investment as well as the training it takes to deliver high quality educational programs to our community.***

***In FY18, we were able to hire a second Parent Educator in order to increase the number of children and families we serve. Our primary program strategies are our childcare scholarships to provide quality care for children and the Parents as Teachers program for helping parents to realize their role as their child’s first teacher.***

***We continue to focus on the need to always be prepared to change and improve our services.***

Rosemary C. Patterson  
Executive Director



**Parenting Room at LCFS Office**

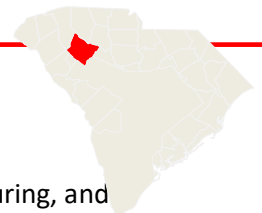
## OUR MISSION:

**Collaborating with other entities, Laurens County First Steps helps local families and caregivers prepare their children for school success by**

**Find Laurens  
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 Laurens County.

How are LAURENS County's children doing?	What early learning programs are available for children in our county? Last year:	Where can families access childcare in our county?
<b>3,814</b> are under age 5	<b>48</b> attended Early Head Start as infants and toddlers	<b>20</b> licensed child care centers
<b>27.8%</b> live in poverty	<b>100</b> attended free preschool or Head Start as 3-year-olds	<b>1</b> licensed group/family homes
<b>21.7%</b> of babies born in 2016 were to moms without a HS diploma	<b>279</b> 4-year-olds attended free full-day public school 4K or Head Start	<b>4%</b> participate in the state's Quality Rating System (ABC Quality)
<b>148</b> # children 0-5 w/ founded investigations for abuse & neglect	<b>332</b> 0-5 year olds received early intervention or special ed.	<b>3</b> providers are rated B or higher by <b>ABC</b> Quality
<b>27.70%</b> of last year's kindergartners demonstrated readiness	<b>87</b> were served by 	<b>229</b> 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 LAURENS County towards these strategic goals in support of the **Profile of the Ready Kindergartner**, South Carolina's description of school readiness:

1. LCFS will form a committee of community leaders across all sections of Laurens County to share resources and work to make those resources readily accessible to pre-school children and their families in Laurens County.
2. LCFS will revise all printed informational materials, up-date social media platforms, and work to develop a website.

## THE IMPACT

In 2017-18, Laurens County First Steps provided:

- ✓ **18 children** and **15 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**
- ✓ **117 staff** working in **18** child care providers, Head Start centers and preschool classrooms with training, technical assistance, resources and support, **helping them better meet the needs of 457 children ages 0-5 in their care** **CHILD CARE PROVIDER TRAINING**
- ✓ financial assistance to help **18 children 0-5 attend quality child care** so their parents can work or attend school **Child Care Scholarships**

# 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:

Laurens County SD 55 (399 children)			
Domain	Emerging	Approaching	Demonstrating
Social Foundations	29%	34%	37%
Language&Literacy	22%	51%	27%
Mathematics	31%	46%	23%
Physical Dev&WB	28%	24%	48%
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>30%</b>

Laurens County SD 56 (218 children)			
Domain	Emerging	Approaching	Demonstrating
Social Foundations	30%	29%	41%
Language&Literacy	28%	49%	23%
Mathematics	40%	43%	17%
Physical Dev&WB	39%	22%	39%
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>23%</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

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>

**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 Laurens County First Steps is doing to improve KRA results:

Laurens County First Steps supports getting children ready and healthy to succeed in school by supporting child care centers with books and quality training for staff, and by opening all of our training sessions to public and private schools. Supporting the adults who influence and teach our children will lead to increased improvement to the KRA scores.

# Countdown to Kindergarten



**Bringing parents and teachers together as partners sets the foundation for success in school.**

## Program Description

Countdown to Kindergarten (CTK) is a summer home visitation model connecting rising kindergartners and their families with their future teachers. The program is designed:

- ✓ to forge strong and lasting home-school relationships,
- ✓ to acquaint children and families with the state and classroom expectations to increase the likelihood of school success,
- ✓ to increase parent involvement in the early grades (particularly in hard-to-reach communities), when children’s learning is foundational for life success; and
- ✓ to increase public awareness of the importance of school readiness and provide ways for parents and communities to impact children’s early school success.

### \*CTK by the Numbers, Summer 2017

Children Served	22
Families Served	22
Home/School Visits	132

*\*CTK program data is for June-August 2017, whereas CTK fiscal data includes expenditures from July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018.*



Countdown to Kindergarten integrates all of the following:

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

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

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

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


- ✓ Over 80% of parents felt like they understood what was expected of them & their child in 5K
- ✓ 100% of parents who answered the survey plan to attend parent/teacher conferences
- ✓ 100% of parents who answered the survey were satisfied with the home visitor, the materials provided, & the curriculum

### Thank you to our CTK partners!

Laurens County School Districts 55 & 56

**Evidence of Effectiveness:**

Our partnership’s Countdown to Kindergarten program meets the First Steps legislation’s definition of an *evidence-informed* program.





# Nurse-Family Partnership

**Helping vulnerable first-time mothers empowers them to achieve a better life for themselves and their children.**

## Program Description

Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) helps transform the lives of vulnerable first-time mothers and their babies. Through ongoing home visits from registered nurses, low-income, first-time moms receive the care and support they need to have a healthy pregnancy, provide responsible and competent care for their children, and become more economically self-sufficient. From pregnancy until the child turns two years old, Nurse-Family Partnership Nurse Home Visitors form a much-needed, trusting relationship with the first-time moms, instilling confidence and empowering them to achieve a better life for their children – and themselves.

In Laurens County, Nurse-Family Partnership is implemented through Greenville Hospital System.

### LAURENS COUNTY

First Steps serves families in greatest need. Among our NFP families:

- 100% ... live in poverty
- 35% ... graduated from high school



## NFP by the Numbers, 2017-18

Children Served	9
Number of Home Visits	373

### This year, Laurens County NFP clients:

- ✓ 82% participated in the Women, Infants, & Children Food & Nutrition Service (WIC)
- ✓ 17 families from 5 zip code areas in Laurens County were served

## Thank you to our NFP partners!

Nurse Family Partnership through the Greenville Hospital System  
 The Bailey Foundation of Clinton for a private donation

### Evidence of Effectiveness:

Nurse-Family Partnership meets the First Steps legislation's definition of an *evidence-based* program.



**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

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

**100%** ... live in poverty  
**87%** ... single head of household in need of other services  
**20%** ... parental depression



Helping many of the youngest at risk families in Laurens County.

**I didn't know how important it is to read aloud to your child until this program.**

**AY**

## PAT by the Numbers 2017-18

Families Served	15	
Children Served	18	
Total Home Visits	252	
Hours Spent Serving Families	284	
Average gain, <i>Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale</i> (pre-to-post):	3.39	4.56

## This year, our Parents as Teachers program:

- ✓ Averaged 2.17 home visits per family for a total of 252 visits
- ✓ Identified and addressed 8 potential developmental delays
- ✓ Improved parenting practices: KIPS scores improved by 1.17 overall
- ✓ Improved literacy skills: ACIRI scores improved by 0.5 for adults and 0.67 for children; # of books distributed (Matrix C20, Cases Visit Summary & PTS Report), or other evidence

**Thank you to our PAT partners!**

Laurens County School Districts 55  
Big Blue Marble Academy  
Stepping Stones Learning Academy  
Tender Loving Child Care

### 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.

The face to face training is so much better than the online courses!  
 CC

**Training Sponsored by  
 LAURENS COUNTY First Steps, 2017-18**

Topic:	Sessions:
Growth & Dev	1
Curriculum	4
Professional Development	4
Health & Safety	4
Program Admin	2
Nutrition	2



CPR Training with the staff of Kellett and Kids Child Care

## Training by the Numbers, 2017-18

Total Training Attendance	215
Child Care Teachers and Directors Served	117
Number of Training Sessions Offered	17

## This year, our Training program provided:

- ✓ 117 early childhood staff with high quality training, impacting 16 providers thus affecting 985 children
- ✓ 29.5 hours of certified training & 6 hours registered training for staff to meet annual re-certification requirements
- ✓ 16 follow-up visits with training participants & center directors to help put training into practice

## Thank you to our Training partners!

Laurens County Family YMCA	Kellett & Kids Childcare
SC Inclusion Collaborative	Big Blue Marble Academy
SC CC R&R Network	Stepping Stone Learning Academy
SCPITC	Tender Loving Child Care
Carrot Stew Childcare	Young World
Hickory Tickory Tots	Thornwell

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 Laurens 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.

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

- 100% ... live in poverty
- 87% ... single head of household in need of other services
- 20% ... parental depression

In addition to regular monitoring of childcare providers that receive First Steps scholarships, First Steps conducts all developmental screening required by PAT each year with scholarship children and connects families to needed services within the community.

ALL of our Child Care Scholarships are connected with our Evidenced Based Parents As Teachers (PAT) program.

I go to work now with my mind at ease because I know my baby's safe!  
 LP



### Scholarships by the Numbers, 2017-18

Children Served	18
Families Served	15
Providers Served	3

### This year, our Scholarship program:

- ✓ Provided 18 children with scholarship assistance so their parents could work or attend school
- ✓ Identified and addressed 5 potential developmental delays among scholarship children
- ✓ Made connections for families to services such as Parents as Teachers & local county activities for families
- ✓ Supported 3 small businesses in LAURENS County by subsidizing child care tuition for families who would not otherwise be able to afford quality care
- ✓ Provided 13 hours of training for scholarship parents in topics such as quality child care

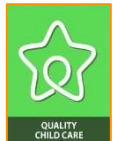
### Thank you to our Scholarship partners!

- Big Blue Marble Academy
- Stepping Stones Learning Academy
- Tender Loving Child Care

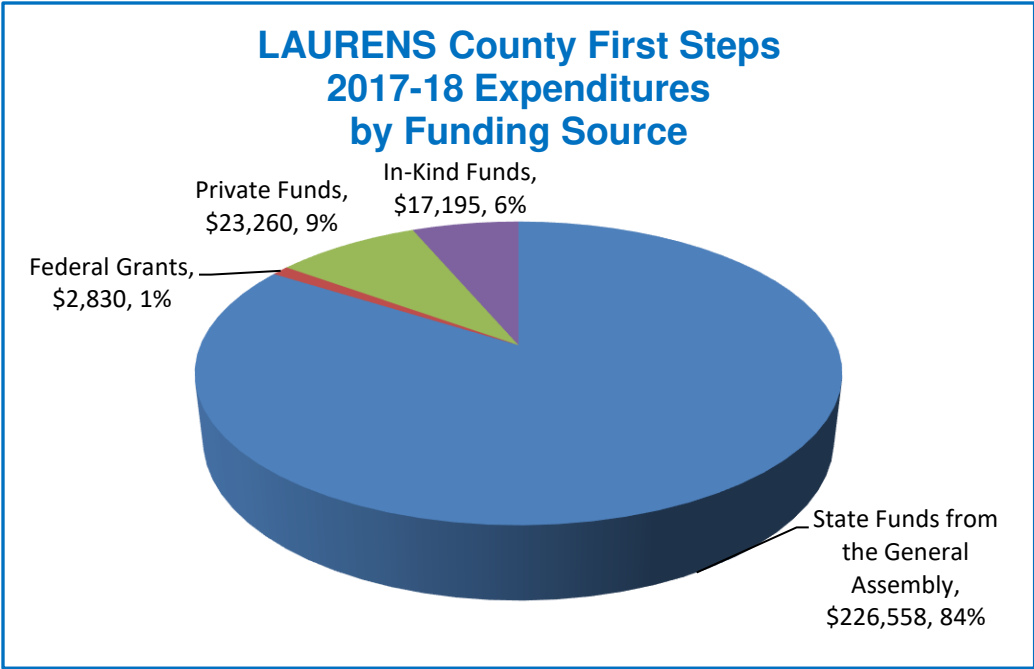
### Evidence of Effectiveness:

Our partnership's Child Care Scholarship strategy is considered *evidence-based* because it is connected to the following evidence-based program:

**Parents As Teachers**



# Financial Impact



**Total 2017-18 Expenditures: \$269,843**

**State Funds Leveraged in 2017-18\*: 19%**

*\*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	\$59,303	\$0	\$8,026	\$0	\$67,329	25%
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$1,422	\$0	\$1,898	\$0	\$3,320	1%
Child Care Training	\$21,106	\$0	\$479	\$8,100	\$29,685	11%
Child Care Scholarships	\$86,784	\$0	\$3,958	\$3,000	\$93,742	35%
EHS support	\$5,948	\$2,829	\$4,301	\$0	\$13,078	5%
Program Support	\$34,395	\$0	\$921	\$4,572	\$39,888	15%
Administrative Support	\$17,600	\$0	\$3,677	\$1,524	\$22,801	8%
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$226,558</b>	<b>\$2,829</b>	<b>\$23,260</b>	<b>\$17,196</b>	<b>\$269,843</b>	

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

**Since inception, Laurens County First Steps has leveraged \$2,458,902 from sources outside of state government. That's 48 cents for every state dollar.**

# Thank you supporters!

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

## In-Kind Support

Laurens County School District 55  
Laurens County Adult Education  
Laurens County Family YMCA

## Funding Support

State of South Carolina: \$209,940  
(through South Carolina First Steps)  
United Way of Laurens County: \$4,000  
Private Donations: \$4,083



## How your support helps children in LAURENS County:

- ✓ \$25 provides a young child a book per month for one year!
- ✓ \$10 feeds dinner to one low-income family attending a parenting workshop
- ✓ \$460 helps a low-income family afford quality child care for one month

**HOW TO GIVE:** MAIL OR CALL TO DONATE: 864-984-8130 or 310 Hillcrest Drive Laurens, SC 29360

## Save the Date!

Oct 5 & 6, 2018 County Festival: "Squealin on the Square"

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

## NEW LOCATION IMPROVES OUTREACH TO COMMUNITY

In July 2017, Laurens County First Steps moved to a new location across town from our previous address. Our former location was difficult to find, had low visibility, and some structural issues.

Laurens County Adult Education worked out a partnership with LCSD 55 to rent the building that had housed the school district office. We were approached by Adult Ed to join them, SC Works, and Vocational Rehabilitation at this new location. The building is now known as “the West Main Center”.

This collaboration of agencies allows us to expand services for our clients. LCFS clients have access to Family Literacy/Ged; resume assistance, building job skills, and opportunities to attend job fairs.

Adult Ed and SC Works can make referrals to us for childcare and parenting.

Our location is now in a prominent area on a well-traveled, main thoroughfare in Laurens. We are visible to the public, easy to locate, have adequate parking, and facilities to accommodate administrative and parent educator offices as well as a parenting room and training room.

This highlights our ability to serve as a portal, act as a community convener, and reach out to the community to share services.



West Main Center



New signage promotes visibility

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

# First Steps Partnership Board

## Excellent Board Participation

Not everyone has a knack for selling things, but the Board of Directors of Laurens County First Steps is enthusiastic when it comes to selling. For our pecan fundraiser in FY18, we had an 80% participation rate and raised just over \$3,400. For other fund raising projects throughout the year, we increased our participation to 100% overall. (We also had 100% participation by our staff.)

It is not an easy task to sell items in a small town with all the competition from service clubs and schools. Many of our board members are well connected and have large families which they use to our benefit each year.

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

Name	Position	Board Category
Linda Wessel, Chair	Technology & ECE School District 55	Pre K Primary Ed
Jervelle Fort	DHEC	Family Ed Training & support Provider
Jennifer Abercrombie	District 55 Vice Principal	Pre K Primary Ed
Kena Cox	District 55 Primary Montessori	Pre K Primary Ed
Shirley Clark	District 55 Transportation	Faith
Elizabeth Franklin	First Baptist Church	Childcare/Early Childhood Development
Shawn Brown	Guardian Ad Litem	Family Education
Brooke Robinette	Thornwell Child Development Center	Non-Profit
Gwen Moore	Case Manager GLEAMNS Head Start	Designated
Ann Szyplski	Director Laurens County Library	Designated
Candee Langford	District 55 Instructional Coach	LSD 55 Designated
Melodie Edwards	Director Student Services District 56	Designated
Christy Coates	Retired Elementary Teacher	Legislative appointee
Phyllis Putman	DHEC	Designated
Avery Martin	DSS Director for Laurens County	Designated
Nancy Roland	Principal MS Bailey Child Development Center	LCSD 56 Designated



# 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 Laurens County First Steps:  
**SCFS county page**



[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](http://ican.sc)

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