

RICHLAND COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.



**Child Care Quality
Enhancement**

Child Care Training

Early Head Start

Parents as Teachers

Annual Report

2017-18



OUR VISION:

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

<https://rcfirststeps.org>

1800 St Julian Place, Suite 406 Columbia, SC 29204 ♦ (803)256-7237

A New Chapter for Richland County First Steps

On July 2, 2018, Rick Noble, the first CEO of Richland County First Steps (RCFS), reached his goal – to work up until he turned the age of 70. He let the staff and Board know back in 2016 that that date was his goal, and the Board did a great job with a succession plan.

Rick was here when First Steps began in 1999, and he built a great local partnership in Richland County bringing many people, agencies and resources together. He brought many gifted leaders and early childhood professionals/advocates to the staff and Board. We greatly benefited from his network of contacts and his leadership skills.

And now the torch has passed to me, Marcia Bacon. I have been working with RCFS for 12 years as Director of Care and Early Learning over our Excellence in Care and Early Learning program (quality enhancement in child care). I am excited to continue to build on the excellence started by Rick and the amazing staff that we have, as well as the outstanding Board members who lead us.

You will see in this Annual Report the high-quality programs we offer to the children, families, caregivers, teachers, and child care directors of Richland County. We are looking forward to this new chapter in the life of RCFS, and we are excited about the continuing impact we can have to get children ready for success in school!



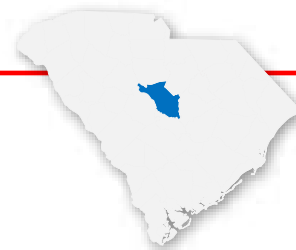
Marcia W. Bacon
CEO

OUR MISSION:

Getting children and families ready for school.





Find Richland County First Steps:
@rcfirststeps





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 Richland County.

How are Richland 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?
24,161 are under age 5	176 attended Early Head Start as infants and toddlers	138 licensed child care centers
22% live in poverty	406 attended free preschool or Head Start as 3-year-olds	118 licensed group/family homes
9.5% of babies born in 2016 were to moms without a HS diploma	1,648 4-year-olds attended free full-day public school 4K or Head Start	28.3% participate in the state's Quality Rating System (ABC Quality)
44.7% Of children living in single parent household	296 0-5 year olds received early intervention or special ed.	58 providers are rated B or higher by ABC Quality
40% of last year's kindergartners demonstrated readiness	288 were served by 	2,267 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 Richland County towards these strategic goals in support of the **Profile of the Ready Kindergartner**, South Carolina's description of school readiness:

1. Children's learning environments will be safe, developmentally appropriate, and contribute to school readiness.
2. Parents and guardians will be encouraged and supported as the primary caregivers and teachers of children.
3. RCFS will have the organizational capacity needed to fulfil this strategic plan.

THE IMPACT

In 2017-18, Richland County First Steps provided:

- ✓ **108 children and 98 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
- ✓ **Four staff** working with **19** child care providers, including our two Early Head Start centers, providing training, technical assistance, resources and support, **helping them better meet the needs of 1,126 children ages 0-5 in their care**
- ✓ **1,350 books** to **spark the love of reading** for **1,234 children**
- ✓ A total of **1,234 children** and **720 adults** were impacted by Richland 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:

RICHLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT #1 (1,881 children)			
Domain	Emerging	Approaching	Demonstrating
Social Foundations	32%	25%	43%
Language&Literacy	27%	40%	33%
Mathematics	37%	36%	27%
Physical Dev&WB	31%	22%	47%
OVERALL	29%	37%	33%

RICHLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT #2 (1,871 children)			
Domain	Emerging	Approaching	Demonstrating
Social Foundations	20%	21%	58%
Language&Literacy	17%	42%	41%
Mathematics	24%	41%	35%
Physical Dev&WB	21%	20%	58%
OVERALL	18%	35%	47%

Meets or exceeds statewide average performance

LEXINGTON RICHLAND DISTRICT #5 (1,052 children)			
Domain	Emerging	Approaching	Demonstrating
Social Foundations	30%	28%	42%
Language&Literacy	20%	45%	36%
Mathematics	27%	40%	33%
Physical Dev&WB	29%	26%	45%
OVERALL	24%	38%	38%

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 Richland County First Steps doing to improve KRA results:

Richland County has a wide and diverse population, from urban communities to suburban to very rural. The school districts in our county reflect the diversity. Richland School District #1 is the largest district serving the most children. Their numbers reflect the struggle to meet the needs of children and families who are more high-risk, but over the years they have greatly improved the number of schools receiving a good or improved "grade."

We know that social-emotional development is the best indicator of school readiness and success. The better a child can handle the upsets and emotional issues that school can bring, the better they can maintain their "cool" in order to learn in school. We focus on the social-emotional initiative Conscious Discipline in our Early Head Start classes and in the training and technical assistance we give the child care centers we serve. By helping teachers model emotional regulation for children, they pass on the skills needed to handle life's struggles.

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 with children who are healthy, safe and ready to succeed. PAT services include:

- Personal Visits: Families are visited weekly for one hour.
- Monthly Group Connections: Twenty-four connection opportunities were available to families.
- Screenings and Assessments: Available to each family to identify developmental concerns.
- Connections are made to outside resources that families may need to succeed. More than 24 connections were made for families this year. Connections include housing, education, and family support.

PAT by the Numbers 2017-18

Families Served	32
Children Served	36
Total Home Visits	1011
Hours Spent Serving Families	1023
Average gain, <i>Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale</i> (pre-to-post):	Gain .15

"What I have found the most helpful about this program is the program is centered around family education. It includes all family members and teaches the family how to interact and teach our children."

* Enrolled Parent



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

100% ... live in poverty
19% ... didn't graduate high school
9% ... were teen parents

Look what we did!

All home visitors participated in 15 hours of training for use of Cara's Kit, which stands for Creating Adaptations for Routines and Activities. This was to help young children who are enrolled in early care and education programs use adaptations to increase children's engagement and participation in activities and routines.

All home visitors participated in 10 hours of training activities for guidance in foundations of school readiness for infants and toddlers. This included guidance on language and literacy, temperament, approaches to learning, cognition and physical development.

Families connected through group connections (24 in total!) to learn about nutrition, children's dental and physical health, recreation and enrichment opportunities, music and movement, and routines and transitions for children.

Thank you to our PAT partners!

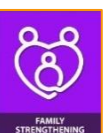
Richland School District One: Horrell Hill Elementary

Eau Claire Cooperative Health Center

Richland County Parks and Recreation

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 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) twice a month for 3 hours to two classrooms at each center.
2. Equipment and materials funding based on the Plan of Action developed from the Environment Rating Scale (ERS) assessment. Each classroom receives up to \$500 towards the purchase of needed materials according to the ERS pre-assessment. If budget allows, and the center meets training requirements, another purchase of up to \$1000 is made based on the ERS pre-assessment.
3. Pre/post assessments of the classroom environment and teacher-child interaction, using nationally-recognized observational tools for infant/toddler (ITERS) and preschool (ECERS) settings.
4. Certified health and safety trainings from a Certified Health Consultant.
5. Implementation of Conscious Discipline® with directors and teachers.

QE by the Numbers, 2017-18

Child Care Providers Served	19
Number of TA Visits Provided	811
Number of Children 0-5 Enrolled in Provider Classrooms	989

Congratulations to our QE participants for 2017-18!

Child Care Provider	Pre/Post Improvement
Eastminster, Toddler II room	From 1.94 to 5.42
Hope Academy, 3-year old room	From 2.47 to 4.50
Washington St. CDC. Toddler room	From 3.31 to 5.34
Eastminster, Toddler III room	From 3.20 to 5.13
RCFS EHS, Blue room	From 4.24 to 5.97

This year, our Quality Enhancement program:

- ✓ Improved quality, on average, by 1.31 in ITERS and 1.13 in ECERS based on pre/post Environment Rating Scale assessments.
- ✓ Provided 2,273.75 hours of technical assistance to child care providers, contributing to the professional growth of 304 child care teachers and directors.
- ✓ Provided \$21,761.38 in materials grants to participating child care providers.

Thank you to our Quality Enhancement partners!

Susanna Watson, Certified Child Care Nurse Consultant
Trenholm Rd United Methodist Preschool & Afterschool

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.

Training sponsored by Richland County First Steps, 2017-18

Monday Night Training | Open to our Enhancement Team. This year the series focus was on each individual subscale of the Environment Rating Scale.

Directors' Team Trainings | Our Directors' Team is open to any child care director in Richland County. We did a book study of *Creating the School Family*, by Conscious Discipline® founder Dr. Becky Bailey. The goal of the book study was for directors to help their teachers implement the visual structures and routines of Conscious Discipline.

ExCEL Conference | 118 child care providers participated in a Saturday training to receive 4.5 certified hours. Susan Kirby from Conscious Discipline presented the keynote, *"Emotional Geography: What State Are You In?"*

On-site Trainings | Trainings tailored to the needs of each individual center. Trainings offered to centers included *Conscious Discipline*, *Health and Safety*, *Biting Sure is a Pain*, and *NAEYC Classroom Portfolios*.

"This training was very helpful. This training gave me so many great ideas to make with boxes." Shanquita Youmans

Overall, teachers and directors indicated on their feedback that they were 99% satisfied with trainings offered.



As seen in the comment above teachers enjoyed creating materials they could use with their students the next day at our Make-it, Take it trainings. This type of training allows individuals to see what is possible with everyday items. The focus is less on "what can we afford?" and more on "what materials can we create to help our children learn in the classroom?"

Training by the Numbers, 2017-18

Total Training Attendance	886
Child Care Teachers and Directors Served	324
Number of Training Sessions Offered	38

This year, our Child Care Training program provided:

- ✓ 324 early childhood staff with high quality training, impacting 34 providers and 1137 children.
- ✓ 65 hours of certified training and 18 hours of registered training for staff to meet annual re-certification requirements.
- ✓ 179 follow-up visits with training participants to help put training into practice.

Thank you to our training partners!

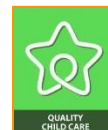
Ridgewood Missionary Baptist Church Conference Center

South Carolina Center for Child Care Career and Development

Susan Kirby, Conscious Discipline® Trainer

Evidence of Effectiveness:

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



Early Head Start

Program Description

Early Head Start is a federally funded, community-based program for low income pregnant women and families with infants and toddlers. The program is funded to serve 96 pregnant women, infants and toddlers in the Richland County zip codes of 29201 (North of Blossom), 29203, 29204, 29206, 29210, 29212, 29016, 29036, 29045, 29063, 29223, and 29229.

In the past program year, Richland County First Steps Early Head Start offered two program options to families: center- and home-based services. Center-based services are offered at two sites – Early Head Start at Ridgewood Missionary Baptist Church and Union Street Early Head Start. These 40 children receive full day care, Monday through Friday.

The remaining 56 children receive home-based services. This means that a Family Support Advocate meets with the parent and the child each week (in their home) for 90 minutes using the Parents as Teachers curriculum.

Supports are offered to families through multiple consultants, contracts, and community collaborations. These include services for nutrition, mental health and health (nurse).

Program Option	Curricula and Tools Used
Center-based Services	Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, and Two's
Home-based Services	Parents as Teachers
Prenatal	Parents as Teachers Partners for A Healthy Baby
Parent	Conscious Discipline
Program-wide	Conscious Discipline

Annual Attendance

Home-based Services 83%
Center-based Services 84.5%

Audit Results

An A133 Single Audit of 2016-2017 was completed with no material findings and was filed with the Federal Audit Clearinghouse in March 2018.

Federal Review

In January 2018, ACF conducted a Focus Area Two Monitoring Review of the RCFS Early Head Start program. An area of noncompliance was found in the performance area of financial management systems, specifically 75.302(b)(2). The timeframe for correction was 120 days. This finding led to multiple events including calls with grantee Program Specialist, virtual training with an assigned Fiscal Technical Assistant, the writing of a corrective action plan, internal training, rewriting of targeted fiscal policies, on-site training for staff by the Fiscal Technical Assistant and plans for a governance and staff training in January 2019.

Community and Family

Participation & Engagement

52 volunteers donated more than
1,500 hours of service!

36 socialization activities offered
*cooking, park visits, museum trips, reading time at library
and zoo day*

4 parent/family training days
Health, Financial, Relationship, Literacy

12 family meetings

Health

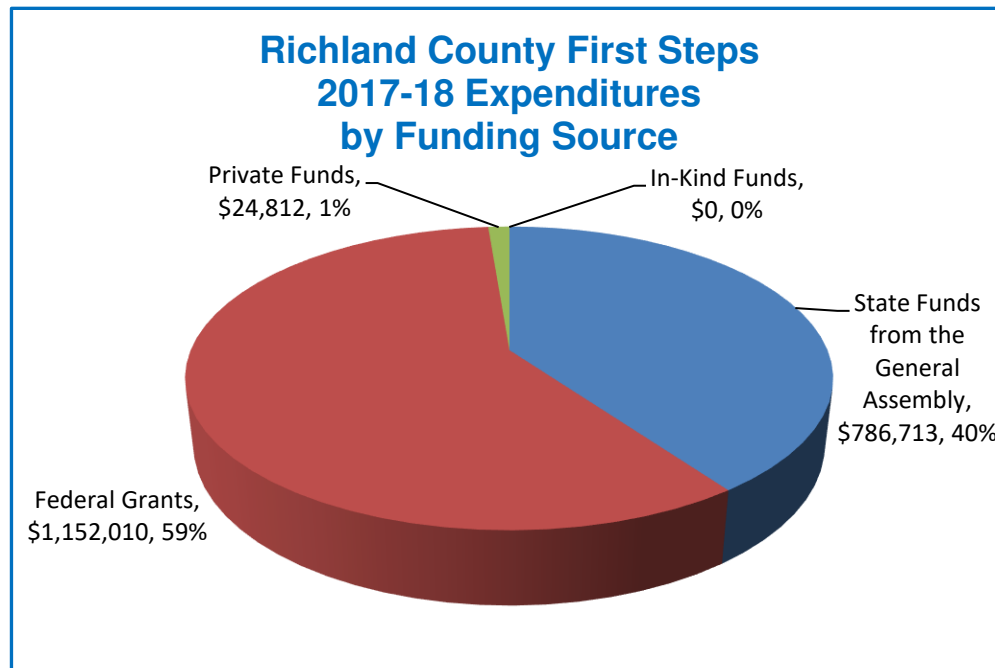
94% of enrolled children have health insurance and report having a source for **continuous, accessible health care**
74% of children are **up-to-date on "well-baby" checks and immunizations**

79% of children have **continuous, accessible dental care**
100% of enrolled children received initial and ongoing screenings for hearing, vision, and development.



For more information regarding this program, such as school readiness activities or how to enroll children and families, visit our website at www.rcfirststeps.org.

Financial Impact



Total 2017-18 Expenditures: \$1,963,536

State Funds Leveraged in 2017-18*: 150%

*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	\$173,611	\$0	\$584	\$0	\$174,195	9%
Child Care Quality Enhancement	\$294,386	\$0	\$9,286	\$0	\$303,671	15%
Child Care Training	\$37,715	\$0	\$2,694	\$0	\$40,409	2%
Nurse Family Partnership	\$0	\$0	\$310	\$0	\$310	0%
Half Day 4K	\$7,711	\$0	\$4,209	\$0	\$11,920	1%
Early Head Start	\$33,000	\$1,146,950	\$495	\$0	\$1,180,446	60%
Program Support	\$172,070	\$0	\$189	\$0	\$172,260	9%
Administrative Support	\$68,220	\$5,060	\$7,045	\$0	\$80,326	4%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$786,713	\$1,152,010	\$24,812	\$0	\$1,963,536	

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

Since inception, Richland County First Steps has leveraged **\$16,525,608** from sources outside of state government. That's **\$1.01** 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: \$786,713
(through South Carolina First Steps)

U.S. Department of Health and Human
Service, Office of Head Start: \$1,152,010

SC Center for Child Care Career Development
\$4,316

Child and Adult Community Food Program
\$51,377.86

In-Kind Support

Columbia College

Reformation Lutheran Church

Richland County School District One

Ridgewood Missionary Baptist Church

St. Michael's and All Angels Episcopal Church



How your support helps children in Richland County:

- ✓ \$25 provides a young child a book per month for one year!
- ✓ \$500 would enhance and refurbish our playgrounds.
- ✓ \$2,500 would sponsor 9 socializations to enhance parenting skills and connect with local resources.

HOW TO GIVE: Go to www.rcfirststeps.org and click on the "Donate Now" button at the top of the page.

Save the Date!

Partnership Board meetings are held at the Richland County First Steps office at 1800 St. Julian Place, Suite 406, Columbia, 29204, at 8:30 AM, as follows: 2018: September 27, November 1; 2019: January 3, March 7, and May 2. Come join us for breakfast!

Midlands Gives Day 2019 is Tuesday, May 7. Give to support RCFS! Past years' contributions have been used to purchase books for families in our Parents as Teachers programs, outdoor play and safety equipment for our center-based Early Head Start children, and Conscious Discipline materials for child care classrooms.

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

CARA's Kit training comes in handy

Assuming the custodial care for three at-risk grandsons, ages ranging from 12 months to 5 years, proved to be a real challenge for this guardian. The siblings' mother abandoned them due to her substance abuse, and their father's attention was sporadic, at best. The guardian, a senior citizen, was conscientious in meeting the children's health and educational needs, but seldom gave her own well-being much thought. After her doctor prescribed a monitor to track her cardiac concerns, our Family Support Advocate (FSA) sought a way that her household tasks could be shared by the children. The FSA first showed the guardian that the boys could be given age-appropriate chores to lighten her housework. Through the adaptations used in CARA's Kit (a kit containing information on how to make adaptations for individuals or children who are experiencing challenges during everyday routines and activities) and HELP goals (HELP = Hawaii Early Learning Profile, an ongoing child assessment tool), during several home visits, the guardian has entrusted laundry sorting, trash detail and putting away toys to the boys. She praises them for their accomplishments, which has been good for their self-esteem and social/emotional growth.



It takes a village: coordination of services

For our home-based program options, families are encouraged to set goals for themselves, their children, and their family. For one parent, this goal was based on family well-being and family as learners. The goal was to finish a two-year degree while also caring for two-year-old twins. While working toward degree completion, Mom shared with the FSA her worries about the twins' development. The FSA was able to help the parent connect with BabyNet, the SC Medicare Part C

organization. After testing, this connection brought services (therapy) to the twins for needs associated with an autism diagnosis. Even with all of this going on, the parent graduated from USC in December with a degree in healthcare.

First Steps Partnership Board

Good succession planning ensures a smooth leadership transition

Rick Noble was the first and only CEO of Richland County First Steps since the time the local partnership was established in October of 2000. In 2016, he gave the Board and the staff a heads up that he planned to retire on July 2 of 2018. The Board had plenty of time to get a succession plan in place.

In the fall of 2017 the Board enlisted the help of longtime RCFS consultant Anne Sinclair in the search for a new CEO. She began meeting with the Succession Committee, they created a job description and a proposal for the search process that was approved by the entire board. At this point a Search Committee began work. They advertised the position through January of 2018. They began going through resumes and interviews, finally having a group of eight Board members interview the finalists in March. A partial group met with the final choice, and Marcia Bacon was hired as the new CEO at the end of March.

Marcia had plenty of time to overlap with Rick since she was already a staff member; she had been the Director of Care and Early Learning working with child care quality enhancement for 12 years at RCFS. It was helpful to her as she learned the ropes of her new position and to the staff and Board members that she was already familiar with RCFS and its programs.

At the end of May the Board sponsored a retirement reception in Rick's honor. It was very representative of the community Rick Noble had spent his 18 years convening. Many long time RCFS partners marked the occasion: agency representatives, early childhood advocates, SCFS staff, local and state political leaders, other First Steps partnership leaders and Rick's many friends.

Richland County First Steps Partnership Board, 2017-18

Name	Organization/Position	Board Category
Patricia Armstrong	SC DHEC Midlands Region	Richland County Public Health Department Designee
Ray Borders Gray	City of Columbia	Legislative Appointee
Gina Carter	Richland County School District One	Richland School District One Designee
Deborah DePaoli	SC First Steps	Childcare or Early Childhood Development/Education
Penny Dininny	Richland County School District Two	Local Government
Amanda Glowacki	Lexington Richland School District Five	Family Education, Training, and Provider Support
Laura Hart	Duff & Childs, LLC	Business Community
Heather McCue	Richland Library	Richland Library Designee
Walter McDaniels, MSgt.	Richland County Sheriff Department	Local Government
Reese Palmer	Palmer Counseling & Consulting, LLC	Legislative Appointee
Reese Palmer	Richland County Department of Social Services	SC DSS Designee
Rita Paul	Retired	Nonprofit that serves families and children
David Price	Lexington Richland School District Five	Lexington Richland School District 5 Designee
Henrietta Robinson	Lexington Richland School District Five	Family Education, Training, and Provider Support
Barbara Scott	Myers Nursery	Childcare or Early Childhood Development/Education
Shawn Suber	Richland County School District Two	Richland School District Two Designee
Chrishonna Sutton	Colonial Life	Parent of preschool children
Jane Wyatt	Retired - Caughman Road Elementary School	Legislative Appointee
Vacant		GLEAMNS Head Start
Vacant		Legislative Appointee

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

for Richland County First Steps:

rcfirststeps.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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