

JASPER COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.



Parents as Teachers

Imagination Library

Countdown to Kindergarten

Early Identification & Referral

Child Care Training

Child Care Scholarships

Annual Report

2015-16



OUR VISION:

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



By The Numbers

Indicator	SC	Jasper County
Children Under Five	289,990	1,644
Children In Poverty	26.4%	41.2%
3 rd Graders Below Standard in Reading	21.1%	49.0%
Births to Mothers With Less Than a High School Diploma	15.7%	24.8%

KIDS COUNT data provided by



- Since inception, Jasper County First Steps has leveraged **\$1,092,921** from sources outside state government. **That's \$.39 for every dollar received.**
- **477 hours of support and guidance** were provided to 34 families in our Parents As Teachers Program.
- **Childcare professionals received 37 hours** of training hours for early care best practices.
- Improved parenting practices through **12 Group Connections Parent Workshops.**
- **Total Children Served in FY16: 531**

Jasper County First Steps

456 Grays Hwy., PO Box 776
 Ridgeland, SC 29936

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Board Chair

Deloris Dunham

loiszeke@hargray.com

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"I Can" Foster an Environment of Readiness in Jasper County

"I Can" is more than just a clever slogan when it comes to the education and school readiness for our youngest citizens. In Jasper County, we know that there a wealth of possibilities in our communities to address the needs of young children and we are committed to convening these resources to affect positive changes within our county.

"I Can" speaks to the individual assent that each person can play a role in helping children attain success through early, meaningful experiences that will build health for a child in all areas: physical, relational, and cognitive well-being.

"I Can" advocate for the cause of our youngest learners to have diverse, creative outlets to explore their interests. I believe that sitting in a child care center in my county is the next great engineer, doctor, artist, and philosopher. However, for that dream to become reality, children need opportunities to experience new and varied mediums of expression so they can find that thing for which they are uniquely gifted.

"I Can" support families, caregivers and educators of our youngest learners to build capacity for change. It will take families and schools together to propel children to their fullest potential. But they also need the undergirding support of our businesses and government to help them move from good intentions to excelling results.

Yes, "I Can" do my part to foster an environment of readiness in Jasper County, and I invite you to consider what your "I Can" will be as well.

Jasper County First Steps
Duchett Polite
 Executive Director



Healthy Start



Family Strengthening



Early Intervention



Quality Child Care



Early Education



School Transition

County Programs

- Parents as Teachers
- Imagination Library
- Countdown to Kindergarten
- Early Identification & Referral
- Child Care Training
- Child Care Scholarships

State Programs

- BabyNet
- First Steps 4k

What We Do

Each of the six color blocks of the First Steps logo represents a core area of service, outlining our comprehensive strategy to prepare children for long-term school success.

With **measurable outcomes across each of its six school readiness strategy areas**, First Steps is getting results.



Healthy Start

We begin with a focus on providing a healthy start to life. This includes prenatal and post-partum services for both mother and baby. In 2007, First Steps collaborated with key philanthropic and agency partners to bring Nurse-Family Partnership to SC having a significant impact on reducing premature births and Medicaid costs.



Quality Childcare

Quality childcare starts with quality childcare providers. Our quality enhancement and training strategies lead to improved teacher-student interaction, which research shows has a significant impact on a child's development and success in school.



Family Strengthening

Our home visitation strategies, such as Parents as Teachers, Parent-Child Home and Early Steps to School Success, are helping parents understand their responsibilities to care for and be positive models for their children. As a result of First Steps' intervention and parenting support, 66% of clients initially assessed at "low" levels of parenting have achieved moderate or high levels of parenting skill.



Early Education

Private-public partnerships through First Steps 4K have led to significant cost efficiencies in the delivery of publicly funded 4K. One recent analysis suggests First Steps is achieving comparable results, without the need for costly capital construction, for 80 cents on the dollar.



Early Intervention

According to recent federal evaluations, outcomes for clients participating in BabyNet early intervention programs are above national averages. BabyNet matches the special needs of infants and toddlers who have disabilities and/or developmental delays with customized, community-based resources.



School Transition

Each of the corresponding blocks of services leads ultimately to the goal of transitioning children successfully to school. Programs like Countdown to Kindergarten and From Day One to Grade One are ultimately preparing children for school success.

Based on the needs of our community, Jasper County First Steps focuses its investments in...

Family Strengthening, Early Intervention, Quality Child Care, and School Transition.

Early Identification and Referral

Identifying and referring children with possible developmental delays can help assure school readiness.

Program Description

First Steps' Early Identification and Referral (EI&R) programs serve families with young children with suspected delays in development and coordinates public awareness for BabyNet services, acting as a local portal to connect families to community-based services they may need or desire to ensure the school readiness of their children

EI&R services include:

1. **Screenings** (developmental, vision, hearing) for children ages birth to 5 years with suspected delays in development
2. **Referrals**, based up the screening results, to appropriate community resources. This could include the local BabyNet System Point of Entry Office, the local school district, and/or support services such as speech therapy, physical therapy, and programs in libraries and other community resources.
3. **Parent information** including strategies to monitor growth and development.

Our EI&R program:

- ✓ Provides early detection of developmental delays and health issues
- ✓ Promotes services and activities that promote child development
- ✓ Increases children's school readiness and school success

Jasper County First Steps serves families in greatest need. Among our EI&R families:

- 91% ... live in poverty
- 37% ... didn't graduate high school
- 16% ... were teen parents
- 51% ... were referred for abuse or neglect

Thank you for screening my grandchild and connecting him to BabyNet!

Chrissy D., grandmother of an EIR child



Early Identification & Referral Screenings connects families with other services such as our Parents As Teachers program.

EI&R by the Numbers 2015-16

Children Served	43
Materials Distributed	266
Children Referred to BabyNet, Local School, or Other Services	15

This year, our Early Identification and Referral program:

- ✓ Screened 8 children for hearing, referred 6 for follow-up care
- ✓ Screened 43 number of children using Ages and Stages Questionnaire
- ✓ Referred 23 number of families to community resources after screening indicated need
- ✓ Provided child passenger safety trainings and 15 car seat replacements

Thank you to our partners!

SC Ports Authority (grant for car seats)
 Jasper County Department of Social Services

Jasper County First Steps

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www.jaspercountyfirststeps.org

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

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

94% ... live in poverty
50% ... didn't graduate from high school
18% ... were teen parents



PAT Easter Celebration Group Meeting, with author, Vasilisa Hamilton, Dakota's Easter Wish.

My son gets so excited when Ms. Rose comes in with her blue box! He couldn't wait to show her his school supplies.

Deanna C., PAT Parent

PAT by the Numbers 2015-16

Families Served	34	
Children Served	41	
Total Home Visits	439	
Hours Spent Serving Families	477	
Average gain, <i>Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale</i> (pre-to-post):	KIPS 63% +.6	ACIRI 33% +.37

This year, our Parents as Teachers program:

- ✓ Averaged 2.35 home visits per family per month
- ✓ Identified and addressed 37 potential developmental delays
- ✓ Improved literacy skills among families as evidenced through interactive reading during home visits, most clients were not age eligible for ACIRI assessment
- ✓ Made 29 connections for families to services such as child passenger safety training, Adult Education/ESOL, Cribs for Kids, Storks Nest

Thank you to our partners!

Jasper County School District
Jasper County Health Department
All Children's Pediatric, Ridgeland, SC

Jasper County First Steps

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Imagination Library



Children’s reading scores improve dramatically when parents are involved in helping them learn to read.

Program Description

According to the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, the peak period for brain development related to language is around **nine months of age**. **One of the easiest and most effective ways to build this capacity in young children’s brains is to read to them.**

Jasper County First Steps is the local sponsor of Dolly Parton Imagination Library, which provides free, age-appropriate books to children age birth to 5 years. Operated by the Dollywood Foundation, Imagination Library is currently in more than 1,600 communities internationally and mails books to about 700,000 children each month.

Children who register with Jasper County First Steps receive one book per month by mail through the month of their fifth birthday. Each book is carefully selected by a committee of educational specialists.



Amy Cheslak, parent educator, reading Nibbles: A Green Tale during DPIL Reading Night at the Hardeeville Community Library.

Imagination Library by the Numbers, 2015-16

Children Served	414
Books Given to Children 0-5	3620



This year, our Imagination Library program:

- ✓ Provided one book per month to 414 children
- ✓ Provided 4 community Reading Nights at local libraries to bring interactive literacy education into communities
- ✓ In Jasper County, our Imagination Library is fully funded by support of our local county government. They have joined us to champion the need to provide a literacy rich environment in every child’s home!

Thank you to our partners!

- Dollywood Foundation
- Jasper County Government
- Pratt Memorial Library
- Hardeeville Community Library
- Jasper County Health Department

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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.

“Our greatest natural resource is the minds of our children.”
 - Walter Elias Disney

Child Care Training Sponsored by Jasper County First Steps, 2015-16

<u>Topic:</u>	<u>Sessions:</u>
Cradling Literacy	9 & 10
I Am An Individual	
The Incredible Preschool Years	
STEM for Young Children	
A Caring Classroom	



Training by the Numbers, 2015-16

Total Training Attendance	54
Child Care Teachers and Directors Served	27
Number of Training Sessions Offered	6

STEM for Young Children
 Leslie Terry, trainer, CCR&R

This year, our Training program provided:

- ✓ 27 early childhood staff with high quality training
- ✓ 14 hours of certified training for staff to meet annual re-certification requirements
- ✓ 23 hours of registered training for staff to meet annual re-certification requirements
- ✓ TEAM Lowcountry Regional Child Care Training Partner

Thank you to our partners!

- TEAM Lowcountry Regional Conference
- CCR&R
- CCCCD

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Child Care Scholarships

Too many families in Jasper 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.

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

- 100% ... live in poverty
- 100% ... didn't graduate from high school
- 66% ... were teen parents

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.

Jasper County First Steps incorporates its Scholarship program with its Parents As Teachers home visitation program. All scholarship recipients are currently enrolled PAT clients therefore are served through family strengthening services that enhance their child's school readiness through intention home interactions.

This scholarship, and my parent educator, has made it possible for me to stay in high school.
Tiara W., PAT Teen parent



Community children planting seedlings

Nibbles: A Green Tale

Scholarships by the Numbers, 2015-16

Children Served	3
Providers Served	1

This year, our Scholarship program:

- ✓ Provided 3 children with scholarship assistance so their parents could work or attend school
- ✓ Identified and addressed 1 potential developmental delays among scholarship children (ASQ Report)
- ✓ Made 12 connections for families to services such as Parents As Teachers, Cribs for Kids, Child Passenger Seats replacements

Thank you to our partners!

- Jasper County School District
- Beacon of Light Child Development Center

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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.

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.

*CTK by the Numbers, Summer 2015

Children Served	30
Families Served	30
Home/School Visits	180

**CTK program data is for June-August 2015, whereas CTK fiscal data includes expenditures from July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016.*



"Children must be taught how to think not what to think."

- Margaret Meade

This year, our Countdown to Kindergarten program:

- ✓ Increased the amount of time parents spent reading to children by 64%
- ✓ According to kindergarten teachers, 66% of CTK children performed as well as, or better than, their fellow during the 2015-16 school year.
- ✓ According to kindergarten teachers, 66% of CTK parents were more involved than other parents in their child's education.

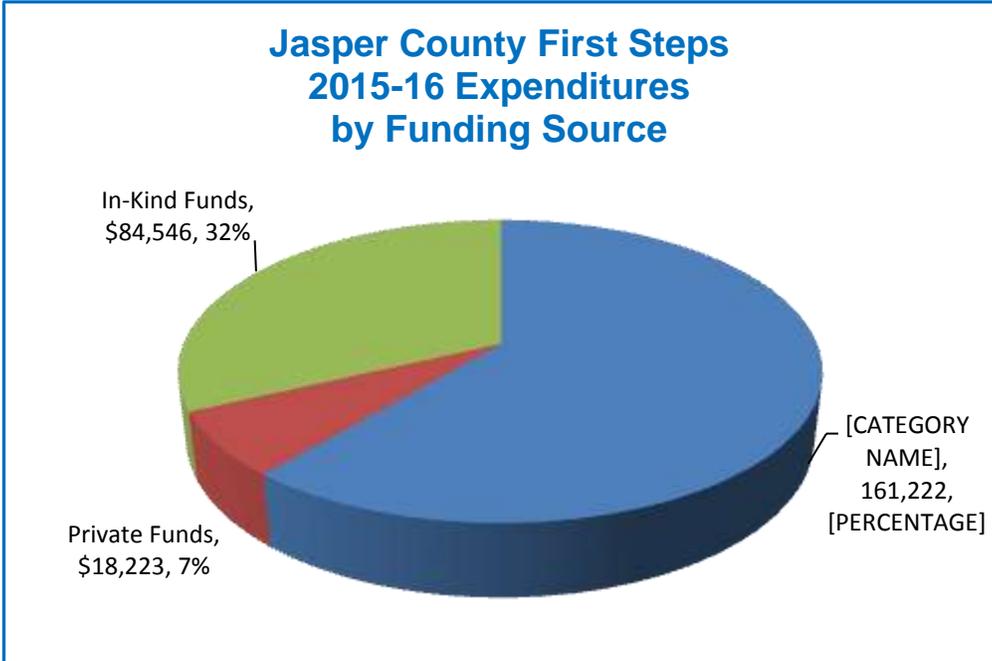
Thank you to our partners!

Jasper County School District
Kaplan Early Learning Company
Town of Ridgeland, Turpin Park

Jasper County First Steps

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Financial Impact



Total 2015-16 Expenditures: \$263,992

State Funds Leveraged in 2015-16*: 64%

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

2015-16 Expenditures by Strategy

	State \$	Federal \$	Private \$	In-Kind \$	Total \$	% of 2015-16 Expenditures
Parents as Teachers	\$73,563	\$0	\$2,340	\$9,600	\$85,503	32%
Imagination Library	\$0	\$0	\$7,631	\$46,147	\$53,778	20%
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$6,197	\$0	\$2,769	\$0	\$8,966	3%
Child Care Training	\$11,653	\$0	\$340	\$9,600	\$21,593	8%
Child Care Scholarships	\$10,500	\$0	\$3,500	\$0	\$14,000	5%
Early Identification & Referral	\$14,217	\$0	\$535	\$7,680	\$22,432	8%
Program Support	\$27,511	\$0	\$0	\$8,640	\$36,151	14%
Administrative Support	\$17,580	\$0	\$1,109	\$2,880	\$21,569	8%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$161,221	\$0	\$18,224	\$84,547	\$263,992	

Unaudited numbers for the period July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016

Since inception, Jasper County First Steps has leveraged \$1,092,921 from sources outside of state government. That's 39 cents for every state dollar.

Cultural Diversity Within Our Community and How It Impacts the Families We Serve

By Amy Cheslak, PAT Parent Educator

One of the most important skills we need as Parent Educators is the ability to build on the knowledge that children bring to home visits and will eventually bring into classrooms. In particular, this will include the knowledge shaped by their family, community, and cultural beliefs. Many Jasper County families reside in high-poverty communities or rural areas and have limited access to resources and less opportunities to be exposed to diverse experiences. Diversity and multicultural education is an everyday continuous approach used at Jasper County First Steps with children, parents, families and colleagues. We incorporate cultural diversity into our group meetings, home visits and activities using different approaches. These approaches focus on teaching parents how to openly talk with their children about diversity. We provide opportunities and exposure to beautiful traditions, music, different languages, instruments, celebrations, books, people, homes and art.

This means that children who participate in the Parents as Teachers program will learn about their own backgrounds as well as that of people who are different from themselves. Our children are continually exposed to activities and experiences that destroy stereotypes and learn to enjoy, appreciate and seek out differences.



Community children planting seeds for Spring
 “Watch Me Grow” – [What A Seed Needs](#)
 DPIL Reading Night, Pratt Memorial Library, Ridgeland

Thank you to our partners!

Funding Support

State of South Carolina: \$135,000
(through South Carolina First Steps)

Jasper County Government: \$15,000

SC Ports Authority: \$1,000

In-Kind Support

Jasper County School District

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

Community Impact

A Glimpse of JCFS PAT Program 2016 – Building a Strong Advisory Committee

By Pamela Rose, PAT Parent Educator

Building a Strong Advisory Committee is essential for PAT program and participants to observe the approaches and successes of the PAT program in our community. The Jasper County First Steps has designed a committee that involves several community partners that provides a holistic consortium of services to families in our area.

The “**Parenting Consortium Meeting**” purpose is to identify service gaps, and increase collaborative service referrals between each community partner. The committee meets twice a year and at each meeting discusses any changes that were made throughout the year to modifications in delivery of services to families that are served in the community, as well as any calendars of events by each agencies to keep the committee abreast of the services, and focus of each program. This fiscal year, we have incorporated a true story of impact by inviting a PAT participant to share the impact and experiences of the program as it relates to their child’s early childhood development and school readiness and to voice



concerns and suggestions of what will enhance services provided to parents in programs.

PAT Families on the Move!
 Field trip: SC Aquarium & Festival of Lights
 Charleston, SC
 December 2015

The committee has expressed how essential and important the meetings are as it adds an awareness of how quickly changes can occur within agencies. The benefits of the committee has bridged partnerships, awareness, and linkages to community partners and resources.



Our Parents Tell Our Story Best!

By Danielle R., PAT Parent

The First Steps program has helped me as a parent to find ways to interact with my kids. I have learned new activities to do with them that expands their motor skills and imagination. Both of my boys have made major improvements!

FY16 Annual Meeting
 Musical Entertainment
 Ridgeland Elementary Kindergarten Students

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



First Steps Partnership Board

When “I Can” Becomes “I Do” in Jasper County

Jasper County First Steps Board Puts Action to Their Words

The Jasper County First Steps Board has always embraced the “I Can” spirit of First Steps. They do not doubt the great things that can happen in Jasper County because of the sharing of their time, talents and resources. Their voluntary service to the board, shows commitment to the noble cause of early education of young children and the support of their families to ensure they are ready for kindergarten. However, the JCFS board has also taken that “I Can” spirit and put it to work through “I Do” actions. The partnership board participates in First Steps efforts of advocacy for young children & early education. The varied backgrounds and perspectives bring needed depth to discussion on how to best serve our community.

However, the board also gives tangible support to families through their annual participation in our PAT Angel Tree Christmas drive. In FY16, we had 100% board contribution and support in this undertaking to provide Christmas gifts for children whose families are enrolled in our Parents As Teachers program. The board serves as an example of the protective factor with which we want to surround families, “concrete support in time of need”. The Jasper County First Steps Board understands the “I Can” call – and they model it best through their “I Do” actions.

Jasper County First Steps Partnership Board, 2015-16

Name	Position		Board Category
Deloris Dunham	Board Chair	Jasper County School District	Family Education Support
Eleanor Hazel	Board Vice-Chair	Jasper County School District	School District Representative
Ladenier Mitchell	Board Secretary	Jasper County DSS	DSS Representative
Denise Smith	Board Treasurer	Jasper County Government	Local Government
Dr. Tom Balliet	Member	Retired	Philanthropic Community
DaShon Ellis-Campbell	Member	AHJ Library System	Library Representative
Constance Martin-Witter	Member	Bluffton Self Help	Non-Profit Community
Rev. Dave A. Mitchell, III	Member	Mt. Carmel Bapt Association	Faith Community
Sharon Murdock	Member	Jasper County School District	Pre-K/Primary Educator
Kelvin Peoples	Member	Be Green Packaging	Business Community
Sheila White	Member	Jasper County School District	Early Childhood Educator
Margaret Williams	Member	Retired	Early Childhood Educator
Mary Wrighten	Member	Retired	Family Education Support

Getting children ready for school.

The Goals of First Steps

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

-- Section 59-152-30



Interested parents can contact any participating 4K providers to complete an application. To view a list of participating First Steps 4K providers, visit:

<http://scfirststeps.org/4k>



BabyNet in Jasper County:
LOCAL SPOE PHONE # - 843-379-7882

<http://scfirststeps.org/babynet>

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