

FAIRFIELD COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.



Parents as Teachers

Imagination Library

Countdown to Kindergarten

**Child Care Quality
Enhancement**

Child Care Scholarships

**1000 Books Before
Kindergarten**

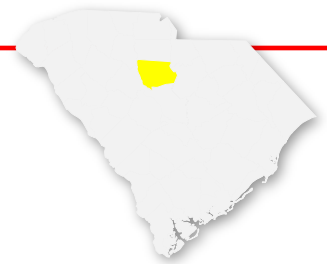
Annual Report

2015-16



OUR VISION:

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



By The Numbers

Indicator	SC	Fairfield County
Children Under Five	290,519	1,096
Children In Poverty	27.3%	34.5%
3 rd Graders Below Standard in Reading	21.1%	27.1%
Births to Mothers With Less Than a High School Diploma	15.7%	16.4%

KIDS COUNT data provided by



- Since inception, Fairfield County First Steps has leveraged \$1,089,046 from sources outside state government. **This equals 41% leveraging.**
- **240 hours of support and guidance** were provided to 11 families in our Parents As Teachers Program.
- **Childcare professionals received 83.5 hours** of technical assistance for early care best practices.
- Improved parenting practices through **12 Group Connections Parent Workshops, including two fun-filled and educational field trips**
- **Distributed over 3400 books** to children ages birth – 5.
- **Total Children Served in FY16: 571**

Fairfield County First Steps

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Board Chair

CONNIE PETE

Executive Director

PATTI WILKES

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Patti Wilkes Executive Director

Our 2015-2016 year has been a busy one. Without cutting any programs, we were able to add the 1000 Books Before Kindergarten program. This program allowed us to visit EVERY CD4 classroom in the county. We read with the children, set goals for the classroom, and then rewarded the classes for reaching their goals. What an exciting way to get children exposed to more and more books!

As a part of our continued collaboration with the Fairfield Community Coordinating Council, we wrote a grant through the USC Masters of Social Work program and had five MSW students come into the community to perform an in-depth Needs and Resource assessment for the community, focusing on First Steps. These students attended the FCCC meetings, Parents Workshops, and First Steps Board meetings. They conducted surveys with all of the FCCC agencies, with all of the parents served through First Steps and with others throughout our community.

Fairfield County First Steps is now partnering with the Palmetto Project in an effort to increase the number of children receiving books through our Imagination Library program. Any child living in Fairfield County is eligible to receive books through this program until their 5th birthday. United Way of the Midlands continues to partner with First Steps for our Countdown to Kindergarten program. We employed five local kindergarten teachers for the Summer 2016 CTK program. An added bonus for this year was the FC School District covering the cost of the toolkits for this program. The 50 identified students have been enrolled in the K5 programs across Fairfield County that began August 2016.

In partnership with the Fairfield County Library, FC First Steps held its First Annual Fun Walk, the Walk for Literacy. This year's walk was led by Sheriff Will Montgomery. The walk encompassed a short path along the walking trail at historic Mt. Zion through town and finished at the library where families were received in the celebration of the library's Summer Reading Kick-off.



Healthy Start



Family Strengthening



Early Intervention



Quality Child Care



Early Education



School Transition

County Programs

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Child Care Tuition Assistance | Imagination Library |
| Child Care Quality Enhancement | Countdown to Kindergarten |
| 1000 Books Before Kindergarten | Parents as Teachers |

State Program

BabyNet

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, Fairfield County First Steps focuses its investments in four of the six areas including: Family Strengthening; School Transition; Early Education; and, Quality Childcare

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

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

- 100% ... live in poverty
- 15.4% ... didn't graduate from high school
- 33.3% ... were teen parents



"This program has really helped me to grow as a parent!"

-Michelle Davis

PAT by the Numbers 2015-16

Families Served	11	
Children Served	13	
Total Home Visits	228	
Hours Spent Serving Families	240	
Average gain, Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (pre-to-post):	3.27	4.51

During our Train Ride, Santa made a visit to all of the families. Erick is straining to see Santa while Jacky is a bit unsure. The parents enjoyed this family time.

This year, our Parents as Teachers program:

- ✓ Averaged 21 home visits per family
- ✓ Identified and addressed 4 potential developmental delays
- ✓ Improved parenting practices with KIPS scores showing an increase of .94 in the adult portion, while ACRI showed an increase of .66
- ✓ Improved literacy skills have been seen in the homes of our families. This year we distributed 117 books to our Parents As Teachers families. As well, each child in the PAT program was dually enrolled in Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and is now receiving a new book mailed directly to them each month until they reach age 5
- ✓ Stressed the importance of parent/child activities. Examples of activities include making a scarecrow together, riding the Train, visiting the Zoo, and participating in the First Steps Walk for Literacy

Thank you to our partners!

Lotz of Love Learning Center, Too
Majestic Academy

Fairfield County First Steps

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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.**

Fairfield County First Steps is the local sponsor of Dolly Parton Imagination Library, which provides free, age-appropriate books to children from 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 Fairfield County First Steps receive one book per month by mail until the month of their fifth birthday. Each book is carefully selected by a committee of educational specialists.



Reading is no laughing matter!! As a matter of fact, reading is a major indicator of school success. Read to those babies, every day!

Imagination Library by the Numbers, 2015-16

Children Served	242
Books Given to Children 0-5	1639

This year, our Imagination Library program:

- ✓ Provided one book per month to 242 registered children who were referred from other First Steps programs, partner agency programs and word of mouth in the community
- ✓ Made connections to other programming such as Parents As Teachers, Tuition Assistance Countdown to Kindergarten, and Head Start
- ✓ Received donations for this program from board and community members, a local book club, the Midlands Gives program and United Way of the Midlands



Thank you to our partners!

- Dollywood Foundation
- Fairfield County Library
- First Steps Board Members
- Fairfield County Community Members

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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) 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, 2015-16

Child Care Providers Served	2
Number of TA Visits Provided	86
Number of Children 0-5 Enrolled in Provider Classrooms	58

Congratulations to our QE participants for 2015-16!

Child Care Provider	Pre/Post Improvement
Lotz of Love – Preschool class	From 3.43 to 4.30
Majestic Academy – Young Preschool (2's & 3's)	From 3.20 to 4.00

Fairfield County First Steps is proud of the effort put forth by the two child care centers, Lotz of Love Learning Center and Majestic Academy. Both are qualified as ABC Level B.

This year, our Quality Enhancement program:

- ✓ Improved quality, on average, by 0.83 based on pre/post Environment Rating Scale assessments
- ✓ Provided 83.5 hours of technical assistance to child care providers
- ✓ Provided \$1597.72 in materials grants to participating child care providers
- ✓ Funded scholarships for 10 children within participating child care providers

Thank you to our partners!

- Lotz of Love Learning Center, Too
- Majestic Academy
- ABC Quality

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Child Care Scholarships

Too many families in Fairfield 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 which are 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.

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

- 100% ... live in poverty
- 14% ... didn't graduate from high school
- 14% ... were teen parents
- 57% ... of the children have documented developmental delays

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 the necessary services within our community.

Our partnership integrates childcare scholarships with several of our other programs, Parents as Teachers, and Imagination Library.

Knowing that Kylia was able to attend a quality child care setting every day took away some of my stress.
 - Blanche



The PAT and Tuition Assistance families joined together to visit the zoo in June. What a great time we had!

Scholarships by the Numbers, 2015-16

Children Served	10
Providers Served	2

This year, our Scholarship program:

- ✓ Provided 12 children with scholarship assistance so their parents could work or attend school
- ✓ Identified and addressed 5 potential developmental delays among scholarship children
- ✓ Made 12 connections for families to services such as Parents As Teachers and Countdown to Kindergarten
- ✓ Supported 2 small businesses in Fairfield County by subsidizing child care tuition for families who would not otherwise be able to afford quality care
- ✓ Provided 12 hours of training for scholarship parents in topics such as discipline, nutrition, and child development

Thank you to our partners!

- Lotz of Love Learning Center, Too
- Majestic Academy
- Fairfield County School District

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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 in order 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
- ✓ 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 via various media outlets in an effort to help parents and caregivers get children prepared 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.*



Fairfield County First Steps held its first Walk for Literacy in conjunction with the Fairfield County Library Kick-off to Summer Reading.

This year, our Countdown to Kindergarten program:

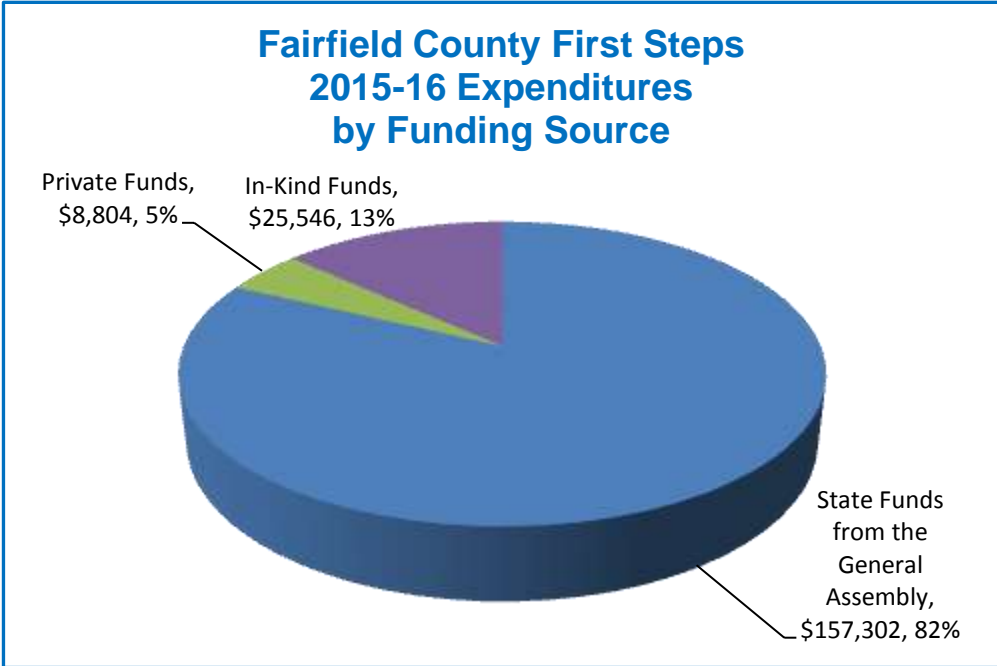
- ✓ Had parents report that they had increased reading time to their children by 50%.
- ✓ Teachers reported that the CTK parents were 80% more involved than the other parents of students in their classrooms.

Thank you to our partners!

- Fairfield County School District
- Kaplan Early Learning Company
- United Way of the Midlands

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Financial Impact



Total 2015-16 Expenditures: \$191,652

State Funds Leveraged in 2015-16*: 22%

**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	\$32,443	\$0	\$1,910	\$2,100	\$36,454	19%
Imagination Library	\$1,000	\$0	\$3,156	\$14,206	\$18,362	10%
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$4,848	\$0	\$0		\$4,848	3%
Child Care Quality Enhancement	\$11,933	\$0	\$0	\$1,320	\$13,253	7%
Child Care Scholarships	\$41,423	\$0	\$400	\$1,320	\$43,143	23%
1000 Books Before Kindergarten	\$5,804	\$0	\$886	\$1,320	\$8,009	4%
Program Support	\$43,576	\$0	\$1,975	\$3,960	\$49,511	26%
Administrative Support	\$16,275	\$0	\$477	\$1,320	\$18,072	9%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$157,302	\$0	\$8,804	\$25,546	\$191,652	

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

Since inception, Fairfield County First Steps has leveraged \$1,089,046 from sources outside of state government. That's leveraging 41% for every state dollar.

1000 Books Before Kindergarten

As stated in our mission, we strive to do whatever it takes to be sure “Every child arrives at school ready to succeed.” We are raising the next generation of leaders, businessmen, teachers, lawyers, doctors, and policemen. These students are our future. At Fairfield County First Steps, we believe that every child is capable and can be whatever he/she decides. It is extremely important to us that each child also carries the same belief in him or herself.

Visiting with and reading with 12 classrooms of four-year olds throughout the school year is a daunting - yet exhilarating - experience. I’m still confused as to who benefits the most; the students or the reader. How thrilling it is to see our youngest learners get excited about reading. Fairfield County First Steps distributed over 1500 books to the CD4 classrooms across Fairfield County in FY 2016. Parents participated by completing the Reading Logs of their children and returning them to the teacher. The teachers participated in scheduling times for us to visit with the students. The students, our most important participants, became active listeners. Students learned that books are special! They also learned that books can teach us about things we’ve never heard of and with the help of a little imagination they can take us to places we might never have dreamt of. The teachers also reminded their students and parents of the goals that are set at the beginning of the year. In the 2015-2016 school year, we had **SIX** of our classes reach the ultimate goal of 1000 Books. That was 50% of them!



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

Every Child Matters



*Oh, the imagination!!
Wouldn't you just love to know what
is going on in that brilliant mind!*



*Parents as Teachers loves it when
parents and children can do things
together as a family unit. Yes, that
includes visiting with Santa!!*



*Families might include parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts and uncles, or
even friends. One family is lucky enough to have a fabulous Aunt Tina!*



First Annual Walk for Literacy

In partnership with the Fairfield County Library

Fundraising is a required component of each county board. This year, a twist was included where we went from “fund” raising to “FUN” raising and still managed to collect some money in the process. Fairfield County First Steps added a Walk for Literacy to the activities that were already planned by the Fairfield County Library as part of their Kickoff to Summer Reading. The Library helped to promote this walk and even provided t-shirts to be worn by the walkers. Leading up to the event, raffle tickets were sold by board members after a board member donated a Yeti® cooler to be raffled off. On the day of the event, families and friends of First Steps met at the walking trail at Mt. Zion greens. Fairfield County Sheriff Will Montgomery led the walkers around the walking trail, beside the historic Town Clock and ended at the library for the Summer Reading event. Free drinks and lunch as well as several other activities were included in the festivities. What a great collaboration!

Fairfield County First Steps Partnership Board, 2015-16

Name	Position	Board Category
Connie Pete, Chair	QA Technician, Shipping/Receiving Clerk, Palmetto Imaging	Business Representative
Mac Russell, Vice Chair	Nutritionist IV – Registered Dietician, WIC SCDHEC	Legislative Liaison
Jill Wagers, Secretary	Speech Therapist, Fairfield County School District	Childcare & Early Development
Jimmy Burroughs	Christ Central Ministries	Faith Community
Dee Mattox	Fairfield County Council on Aging	Healthcare Provider
Sarah McMaster	Director, Fairfield County DSS	Mandated
Yolande Montgomery	Parent Specialist, Fairfield County School District	Mandated
Kay Hensley	Fairfield County School District	Family Education, Training and Support Provider
Sandi Gratic	Social worker, Fairfield County School District	Family Education, Training, and Support Provider
Tiffany Simpson	Assistant Principal, Fairfield Elementary School	Pre-kindergarten through Primary Educator
Mollie Kirkland	K5 Teacher, Kelly Miller Elementary School	Pre-kindergarten through Primary Educator
Javad Wigfall	K5 Teacher, Geiger Elementary School	Pre-kindergarten through Primary Educator
Rebecca Douglas	K5 Teacher, Fairfield Elementary School	Legislative Appointee

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

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 Fairfield County:
803-734-011

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



Our Countdown to Kindergarten was expanded to include all of the elementary schools in the district this summer. Gracie, a K5 student at Fairfield Elementary is pictured here, with her mother. Getting to know Ms. Harwood was an important part of their summer. This program is provided as a partnership with United Way of the Midlands and the Fairfield County School District.

Thank you donors!



Clients of both the Parents as Teachers and the Tuition Assistance Programs come together each month at our Parent Workshop. Parent /child activities are planned for some meetings while at other meetings childcare is provided in order for the parents to have an opportunity for “adult” conversations. Parent Café © is often used as a conversation starter.

Funding Support

- State of South Carolina: \$157,302.00
 (through South Carolina First Steps)
- United Way of the Midlands: \$ 5088.98
- Zuzammen Book Club : \$50.00
- First Steps Board members: \$ 320.00
- Winnsboro Rotary: \$ 340.00

In-Kind Support

- Wells Fargo
- Dollywood Foundation
- Winnsboro Woman’s Club

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

How your support helps children in Fairfield County:

- ✓ \$30 provides a young child a book per month for one year!
- ✓ \$60 feeds dinner to low-income families attending a parenting workshop
- ✓ \$280 helps a low-income family afford quality child care for one month
- ✓ Unless otherwise noted, all donations go to the Imagination Library program.



HOW TO GIVE: Mail donations to Fairfield County First Steps, PO Box 215, Winnsboro, SC 29180

Save the Date!

Please join us for our *Ladies Night Out* event on Thursday, November 10, 2016.
 Watch our Facebook page for the date of our *Second Annual Walk for Literacy* to be held in June 2017.