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FootNotes

SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS TO SCHOOL READINESS NEWSLETTER



The goals of First Steps, as set forth in the enabling legislation, are as follows:

- **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;
- **Increase comprehensive services** so children have reduced risk for major physical, developmental, and learning problems;
- **Promote high quality preschool programs** that provide a healthy environment that will promote normal growth and development;
- **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 learn; and
- **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 learn.

Timetable

NOVEMBER 1999 |

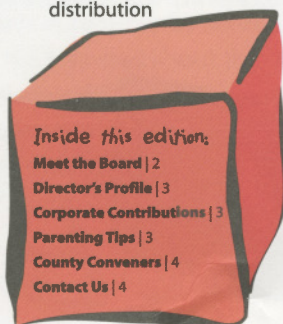
- 15** Level One applications due
Mid-Nov. Level One grant applications reviewed

DECEMBER 1999 |

- 1** Level One grant applications due
Mid-Dec. Announcements of first round of Level One grant awards

JANUARY 2000 |

- 1** Level One grant applications due
Mid-Jan. Announcements of second round of Level One grant awards
Level Two grant application submitted for review by Board of Trustees
25-26 First Steps Training Conference
Level Two grant application ready for distribution



Counties Initiate First Steps Partnership Boards

Counties began the process of creating their First Steps Partnership Boards by holding organizational meetings across the state. County First Steps Partnership Boards are charged with the coordination of a collaborative effort at the county or multi-county level that will bring the community together to identify the area needs and resources, develop a strategic long-term plan, and develop specific results-oriented initiatives to improve school readiness.

While some counties elected their partnership boards at the initial meeting, others used different processes, including an open nominating process or the selection of nominating committees. Those who did not elect their board at the first meeting are holding additional meetings to complete the process.

Governor Jim Hodges praised the overwhelming community response to the initial round of First Steps County meetings.

"Community involvement is the key to First Steps," Hodges said. "The thousands of people who have attended these first organizational meetings should be commended for their interest in improving early childhood education."

As of September 14, initial First Steps county forums had been held in Laurens, Beaufort, Allendale, Edgefield, Horry, Lee, Aiken, Anderson, Sumter, Clarendon, Colleton, Jasper, McCormick, and Pickens counties. Following are highlights of those meetings (meetings held after September 14 will be highlighted in the next issue):

LAURENS | Laurens County took a first step for South Carolina by becoming the first county to start the process of creating a First Steps Partnership Board. A group of 100 people gathered on August 24 on the campus of Presbyterian College. Senator James Bryan facilitated the forum.

BEAUFORT | A crowd of 120 met at the Academy for Career Excellence in Beaufort on August 26, where they elected the members for their First Steps Partnership Board. Rep. Walter Lloyd was present to show his support for the initiative.

ALLENDALE | In Allendale County a standing-room-only crowd of 130 people held a two-hour organizational meeting on August 31 at the James Brandt Building Auditorium. The attendees represented a cross-section of the local community, including Superintendent John Tindal, local representatives of state agencies, and young mothers from the community. Sens. Brad Hutto and McKinley Washington also expressed their support for First Steps.

EDGEFIELD | Life-sized figures of parents, teachers, and community members adorned the room where 115 people attended the meeting on September 2 at the Johnston-Edgefield-Trenton Middle School. The group, which included Sen. Tom Moore and Rep. Bill Clyburn, put together a nominating committee that will put together a slate for voting on by the full group.

HORRY | About 75 people met September 2 at Conway High School to discuss the First Steps initiative. Rep. Billy Witherspoon presided over the meeting.

LEE | More than 50 Lee County residents filled the Colclough building in Bishopville on August 31. Rep. Grady Brown presided over the meeting, which focused on improved delivery of services to families with young children.

(County Forums continued on page 2)

Special thanks to our friends for their help in developing the name of our newsletter.



Governor Jim Hodges spends time with children before signing First Steps into law June 28, 1999. Sens. Linda Short and John Courson and Rep. James Smith look on.



In Allendale County over 130 people turned out at the initial First Steps County Forum.

(County Forums continued from page 1)

AIKEN | The Aiken County First Steps meeting on August 31 was attended by 35 people, and had strong support from the county legislative delegation. Reps. Roland Smith and Bill Clyburn, and Betty Ryberg, wife of Senator Greg Ryberg, were present.

ANDERSON | Approximately 80 community members met on September 7 to begin developing their county partnership board. Sens. Billy O'Dell and Bob Waldrup, and Reps. Ronnie Townsend, Cordell Maddox, Chuck Allen, Harry Stille and Dan Cooper were among the crowd gathered at Homeland Park Elementary School.

SUMTER | About 80 people attended the Sumter County meeting September 9. Sen. Phil Leventis convened the meeting and Rep. Mac McLeod also participated. Discussion regarding services in Sumter County followed the Office of First Steps presentation. Nominations for board members were taken.

CLARENDON | Sen. John Land and Rep. Alex Harvin gave opening remarks before about 115 people at the National Guard Armory in Manning September 9. In electing their county board, the group decided to use a nominating committee process, through which a slate of officers would be chosen and presented to the community for approval at the next meeting.

JASPER | Approximately 115 people, including a large number of parents with young children, turned out for Jasper County's meeting September 9 at the Palmetto Electric Co-op. Sen. McKinley Washington and Rep. Clementa Pinkney made opening remarks. Nominations in each board category were taken from the floor, voted on, and winners were announced as the Jasper County First Steps Partnership Board.

MCCORMICK | Even the rain did not stop approximately 75 people from attending the McCormick County forum on September 9. Rep. Anne Parks delivered the opening remarks. A nomination committee was selected at that meeting to develop a slate for a partnership board to be elected at a later date.

PICKENS | About 110 people representing all areas of Pickens County attended their county forum on September 14, including Reps. Budd Webb, Rex Rice and Al Robinson and Sen. Tom Alexander. Rep. Al Robinson convened the meeting and the Pickens County First Steps Partnership Board was elected following an open process of taking nominations from the floor.

COLLETON | It was standing-room only in Colleton County where over 200 people gathered at the Northside Elementary School September 9 to show their interest and support for the First Steps initiative. Rep. Walter Lloyd convened the meeting and Sen. John Matthews was also present. The meeting lasted over two hours and a partnership board was elected. Twenty-five door prizes, from bike helmets to a watch, added to the excitement of the evening.

First Steps Board of Trustees Named

Governor Hodges, Senate Pro Tempore John Drummond and Speaker of the House David Wilkins have made their appointments to the First Steps Board. The 20 appointed members join the 11 legislatively-designated members on the board as well as the Governor, who is Chair of the Board, and State Superintendent of Education Inez Tenenbaum. The Board met for the first time August 6. At the first board meeting, Governor Hodges appointed Frank Holleman as Vice Chair of the Board.

BOARD MEMBERS

GOVERNOR HODGES' APPOINTEES:

Sen. Linda Short | D-Chester

Rep. James Smith | D-Richland

Terry Richardson | Serves on the board of the Alliance for South Carolina's Children and the South Carolina State Board for Poverty and Deprivation. Attorney from Barnwell.

Frank Holleman | Served as chief of staff to United States Education Secretary Dick Riley from 1994-1997. Attorney and co-chair of Greenville County's Success by 6.

Ruby Jones | Director of Children and Family Development for Head Start in Greenville.

Kay Broxton | Parent Education Coordinator for the Beaufort County School District.

Susan DeVenny | Parent of four young children and a human resources consultant from Lancaster.

Juanita Middleton | Principal of St. James Santee Elementary School in McClellanville.

Dr. Harry Wright | Child psychiatrist; professor at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine and on the national board of Zero to Three.

Tina Polite-Caldwell | Guidance counselor at C.A. Johnson High School in Columbia.

SENATOR DRUMMOND'S APPOINTEES:

Claudia Davant-DeLoach | Attorney with AT&T in Columbia.

Lois Mufuka Martin | Parent of two young children and coordinator of the Children's Advocacy Network, a church-based organization that addresses the needs of children and families in Greenwood County.

Dan Wuori | Kindergarten teacher at Lonnie B. Nelson Elementary School, Richland District 2, and a doctoral candidate in early childhood education at the University of South Carolina.

Dr. Robert Saul | Works at Greenwood Genetic Center; board member of the Greenwood Community Children's Center.

REPRESENTATIVE WILKINS' APPOINTEES:

Lee Cory | Served as a board member for Success by 6 in Greenville from 1994-1998. Retired president of BB&T in South Carolina.

Margaret Galloway | Parent and homemaker from Greenville.

Doris Ballard | Principal of Overbrook Child Development Center in Greenville.

Dr. Vernon Anderson | Practitioner with Christie Pediatric Center in Greenville.

STATUTORILY DESIGNATED MEMBERS:

Governor Jim Hodges

Inez Tenenbaum | State Superintendent of Education

Sen. John Matthews | Designee for Sen. Nikki Setzler, Chair, Senate Education Committee

Rep. Robert Walker | Designee for Rep. Ronald Townsend, Chair of the House Education and Public Works Committee

Libba Patterson | Department of Social Services

Doug Bryant | Department of Health & Environmental Control

Sam Griswold | Department of Health & Human Services

Stephen Soltys | Department of Mental Health

Stan Butkus | Department of Disabilities & Special Needs

Rick Wade | Department of Alcohol & Other Drug Abuse Services

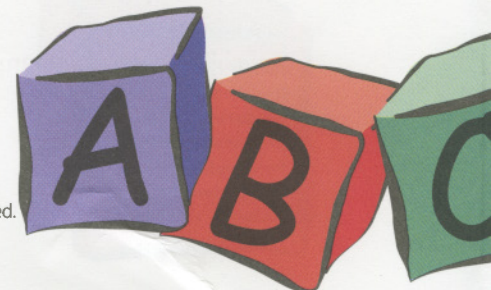
Elizabeth Mabry | Department of Transportation

Bobby Bowers | Budget & Control Board, Office of Research & Statistics

Jim Johnson | SC State Library

Sonia Spivey | SC Transportation Association

State Advisory Committee on Regulation of Child Care to be appointed.





Governor Hodges reads to children in his office each week during the legislative session to encourage reading in the classroom as well as the home.



Marie-Louise Ramsdale Named Director of First Steps

The First Steps Board of Trustees hired Marie-Louise Ramsdale as the first Director of the state Office of First Steps at its board meeting on August 6. Marie-Louise is a 1990 graduate magna cum laude of the University of South Carolina Honors College and a 1993 graduate cum laude of Harvard Law School.

From 1992 to 1996, Marie-Louise was the founder and Executive Director of City Year Columbia, the first expansion site of a national youth service program. She then practiced law from 1996 to 1999. Among her many community activities, Marie-Louise is a member of the South Carolina Commission on National and Community Service and the Board of Visitors of the University of South Carolina. In 1995, Marie-Louise won the Aetna Arthur Ashe Voice of Conscience Aspirant award, given to a young adult on the cusp of a promising career in community service.

"I am excited about the opportunity to make a difference for South Carolina's youngest children and their families," said Marie-Louise. "The enthusiasm I have seen for First Steps as I travel around the state is contagious, and I believe this initiative will work."



Parenting Tips

Read-Aloud

- **Make reading aloud fun.**
Read the story to yourself first. It will make it much easier to read with enthusiasm. Use different voices for characters. Make your voice sometimes loud and sometimes soft to add to the excitement and meaning.
- **Start early!**
The earlier you begin reading to your child the better. Babies and toddlers love picture books. As you show him the pictures, tap or point to the objects in the pictures. Young children also like the sound and rhythm of chanting rhyming books.
- **Choose the best time.**
Find a time when you and your child are relaxed, such as bedtime. Read only as long as your child is interested. Young children may be able to pay attention for only five to ten minutes.
- **Read and cuddle.**
Hold your child on your lap while you read. Reading books together provides an opportunity for emotional growth.
- **Stay with it.**
Although the life of a parent is often hectic, try to make reading aloud a daily activity. "Reading aloud is the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading." (*Becoming a Nation of Readers*; Anderson, et. al)
Source: SC Department of Education

How do I teach my child to Listen and Learn?

- **Allow your child to explore.**
Freedom of movement is important. Give your child the chance to experience with his senses and play with objects and toys.
- **Talk to your child.**
Engage your child in interaction. When children start talking, ask open-ended questions. For example, "What did you like best at the circus?" vs. "Did you like the circus?"
- **Teach problem-solving skills.**
If you are solving all of your child's problems, you take away the opportunity for your child to learn to solve problems.
- **Help your child learn to anticipate consequences.**
This is a key to better development and to doing well in school. You can tell your older toddler: "If you keep throwing your toy on the floor, it will break and you won't be able to play with it anymore."
- **Recognize your child is unique.**
Children have different interests and dispositions—don't use a cookie cutter approach to child rearing.
- **Provide access to reading and writing materials—** even if your child is not reading.
- **Be selective and involved in your child's TV habits.**
Source: "I am Your Child" campaign

In the News

First Steps Receives Over \$2.5 Million from the Business Community

South Carolina businesses see First Steps as a wise investment in our children's future. As of this printing, businesses have contributed over \$2.5 million to support First Steps. Recently Bank of America announced its five year \$1 million commitment and Wachovia Bank announced its five year \$500,000 contribution to First Steps.

Those companies join Duke Energy and Westinghouse Savannah River Company in making a significant investment in First Steps. In September, Duke Energy committed \$550,000 to First Steps over a four year period. This spring, Westinghouse Savannah River Company was the first to announce a major donation to the First Steps initiative with its \$100,000 commitment, since increased to \$500,000 over five years.

"Those contributions will help the cause of early childhood education all across South Carolina," Governor Jim Hodges said. "I commend those corporations for their powerful investment in the future of South Carolina's children."

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 E-mail: 1ststeps@govoepp.state.sc.us



A Big Thank You from First Steps

A big thank you to the First Steps volunteer county conveners who organized initial First Steps meetings in their county, working with the State Office of First Steps and county legislative delegations. The conveners spent countless hours making sure their county got off to a good "first step." We could not have done it without you.

COUNTY CONVENERS

ABBEVILLE | Barbara Bollman
 AIKEN | Peggy Ford, Bernard Robertson
 ALLENDALE | Lee Harley-Fitts, Nick Oxendine
 ANDERSON | Russell Harris
 BAMBERG | Jannie Harriot
 BARNWELL | Ford Eighmy, Glen Nichols
 BEAUFORT | Gene Beverly, Emory Campbell
 BERKELEY | Gerald Fogle
 CALHOUN | Carolyn Sherman
 CHARLESTON | Cathy Joyner, Maxine Martin
 CHEROKEE | Sandra Green, Art Stephenson
 CHESTER | Linda McCorkle, Glenna Mason
 CHESTERFIELD | Freida Ellerbe
 CLARENDON | Anderson B. Thomas

COLLETON | Connie Shuler
 DARLINGTON | Alvin Heatley
 DILLON | Katie Norton
 DORCHESTER | Jan Ogliette
 EDGEFIELD | Jeanne Bass
 FAIRFIELD | George Timms, Linda Daniels
 FLORENCE | Freddy Williams
 GEORGETOWN | Tressa Devlin
 GREENVILLE | Rhonda Corley, Amanda Wilson
 GREENWOOD | Rosemary Wilson, Curtis Miles
 HAMPTON | Peggy Parker
 HORRY | Margene Willis
 JASPER | Diaz Scoggins, Brad Smith
 KERSHAW | Donnie Supplee
 LANCASTER | Paul McKenzie
 LAURENS | Donna Willis
 LEE | Bernice Wright
 LEXINGTON | Angie Redmond
 MARION | Charlene Proctor
 MARLBORO | Trisha Collins
 McCORMICK | Ann Martin, Ann Gunby
 NEWBERRY | Lynn Beasley, Andrea Hawkins
 OCONEE | Ellie Taylor, Sandra Pruitt
 ORANGEBURG | Brenda Williams, Lou Ann Carter
 PICKENS | Mary Gaston
 RICHLAND | Mahalie Davis
 SALUDA | Chrissy Booth, Darron Wilson
 SPARTANBURG | Vince Pulskamp
 SUMTER | Ronald Smith
 UNION | Mary Foster
 WILLIAMSBURG | Stanley Pasley, Regina Nesmith
 YORK | Sylvia Echols

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!
FirstSteps
Training Conference
Jan. 25-26
Palmetto Expo Center
Greenville, SC
 For more information contact
 Rita Paul • Office of First Steps
 (877) 621-0865

Did You Know?

Research shows that every \$1 invested in quality early childhood education yields \$7 in savings to the public from higher graduation rates and reduced costs of remedial education, welfare and crime.

Your tax deductible contribution to First Steps will be invested in early childhood initiatives designed by local partnerships with families to help children enter first grade healthy and ready to succeed.

Remember to check-off a portion of your 1999 income tax refund as a tax-deductible contribution to First Steps.

Contact Us

Please return this form to:
 First Steps/1205 Pendleton Street/Columbia, SC 29201

Or contact us via phone, fax or e-mail:
 Toll Free: (877) 621-0865
 Telephone: (803) 734-0479 • Fax: (803) 734-1431
 E-mail: 1ststeps@govoepp.state.sc.us



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