

AIKEN COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.



Parents as Teachers

Countdown to Kindergarten

Child Care Quality Enhancement

Child Care Training

Child Care Scholarships

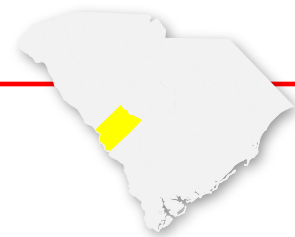
Annual Report

2016-17



OUR VISION:

Every Aiken County child will arrive at kindergarten ready to succeed.



By The Numbers

Indicator	SC	Aiken County
Children Under Five	293,134	9,617
Children In Poverty	24.4%	27.1%
3 rd Graders Scoring "Does Not Meet Standard" in Reading	22.2%	22%
Births to Mothers With Less Than a High School Diploma	15.0%	17.2%

KIDS COUNT data provided by Children's Trust of South Carolina

- Aiken County First Steps **served 109 families and 214 adults.**
- **319 total contacts and 359 service hours** were provided to 20 families and 25 children in our **Parents as Teachers** Program.
- **319 total contacts for 359 service hours** were provided to 20 families and 25 children in our Parents as Teachers Program.
- **199 total contacts for 372 service hours** were provided to 14 child care providers.
- Improved parenting practices through **16 Group Connections.**
- **Total Children Served in FY17: 880**

Aiken County First Steps

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Board Chair

Barbara C. Sanders

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Aiken County First Steps
Barbara C. Sanders
Board Chair

At Aiken County First Steps, it is OUR goal and mission to prepare EVERY eligible enrolled child for Kindergarten! First, we would like say Thank You to our Staff, Parents, Children, Volunteers, Supporters and Board Members for another successful year at First Steps of Aiken County. Aiken County First Steps has had a year of "First's". We began our year with a Board Retreat that was attended by most of our board members with training by First Steps trainers and fun-filled yet engaging activities. We celebrated each other and learned more about how to engage not only as a working Board but a Board with plans and long-range goals to improve the quality of care and learning for each child enrolled in Aiken County First Steps. Our Programs have continued to grow as we have learned how to become more actively engaged within our communities and our partnerships. We have developed new partnerships and expanded our collaboration with the Aiken County School District and Dr. Alford. We are very fortunate to have gained new Board Members and eager staff members to continue with our path forward. We are excited to have our first male Parent Educator, who has already begun providing positive male teaching and influence on the children we serve. We also increased our male presence within our board. Our outreach programs continue to grow as we continue to visit our local hospital to meet with new mothers and Countdown to Kindergarten continues to grow as we expand our programs to more schools within Aiken County. As Board Chair, it continues to be an honor to work with dedicated, committed and goal oriented colleagues who continue to strive to give the Children of Aiken County our finest, so they can become the future of Aiken County. *"Yes, WE Can so THEY Can!"*

Barbara C. Sanders, Board Chair, First Steps, Aiken County, SC



Healthy Start



Family Strengthening



Early Intervention



Quality Child Care



Early Education



School Transition

County Programs

- Parents as Teachers
- Countdown to Kindergarten
- Child Care Quality Enhancement
- 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, Aiken County First focuses its investments in Quality Child Care, Family Strengthening, Early Education, and School Transition.



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

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

100% ... live in poverty

90% ... receive TANF services

65% ... are single parents needing other services.



PAT by the Numbers 2016-17

Families Served	20	
Children Served	25	
Total Home Visits	303	
Hours Spent Serving Families	309	
Average gains, <i>Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale and Adult-Child Interactive Reading Inventory</i> (pre-to-post):	KIPS:	ACIRI:
	Pre: 3.48	A: Pre: 2.17
	Post: 3.79	A: Post: 2.75
		C: Pre: 1.29
		C: Post: 2.19

This year, our Parents as Teachers program:

- ✓ Averaged 1.72 visits per month
- ✓ Identified and addressed 13 potential developmental delays
- ✓ Improved parenting practices with a .31 difference from pre-to post (KIPS)
- ✓ Improved literacy skills with an Adult difference of 0.58 and a Child difference of 0.9 from pre-to post.

Thank you to our partners!

Parents as Teachers National Office

Aiken County School District Early Learning Center (Freedman)

Molina Healthcare

Parents & Community

Aiken County First Steps

1 Willis Circle, Graniteville, 29829

803-663-5604

Email: aiken1stpsed@bellsouth.net

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 they 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, 2016-17

Child Care Providers Served	14
Number of TA Visits Provided	162
Number of Children 0-5 Enrolled in Provider Classrooms	470

Congratulations to our QE participants for 2016-17!

Child Care Provider	Average Pre/Post ERS
Faith Academy	Average Pre: 3.02 Average Post: 4.07
First Providence	Average Pre: 3.37 Average Post: 4.84
Great Creations	Average Pre: 3.54 Average Post: 4.31
Sunshine House 5	Average Pre: 3.45 Average Post: 4.56
Sunshine House 59	Average Pre: 4.03 Average Post: 4.31
Tiny Treasures	Average Pre: 3.8 Average Post: 5.37
Freedman	Average Pre: 4.04 Average Post: 4.48

This year, our Quality Enhancement program:

- ✓ Provided 295 hours of technical assistance to child care providers
- ✓ Funded scholarships for 65 children within participating child care providers

Thank you to our partners!

FQE Quality Matters Initiative Centers:

Faith Academy, First Providence, Great Creations, Sunshine House 5, Sunshine House 59, Tiny Treasures and Freedman

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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.



2016-17 Child Care Training Sponsored by Aiken First Steps & CCCC

50 hours of Certified Training Hours Earned

- Cradling Literacy Series (2 of 2)
- Inclusion Series (2 of 2)
- The Intentional Teacher Series (3 of 3)
- Ages and Stages Questionnaire-3
- Blood Borne Pathogens
- CPR/First Aid

2016-17 Child Care Training/Directors Network Forums Sponsored by Aiken First Steps & CCCC

50 hours of Certified Training Hours Earned

Practical Guide to Quality Child Care Director Series:

- Personnel Policies and Procedures
- Ethics
- Advocacy and Leadership
- Family and Community Relations
- Teacher Quality

Training by the Numbers, 2016-17

Total Training Attendance	376
Child Care Teachers and Directors Served	133
Number of Training Sessions Offered	19

This year, our Training program provided:

- ✓ 383 early childhood staff with high quality training
- ✓ 50 hours of certified training and 2 hours of registered training for staff to meet annual re-certification requirements
- ✓ 5.50 follow-up visits with training participants to help put training into practice

Thank you to our partners!

- SC Center for Child Care Career Development
- Aiken County Public School District
- Child Care Resource and Referral of the Midlands
- ABC Quality
- Children’s Place, Inc.

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Child Care Scholarships

Too many families in Aiken 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.

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

- 100% ... live in poverty
- 10.6% ... didn't graduate from high school
- 25% ... were teen parents
- 16% ... had 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 needed services within the community.

Aiken County First Steps also integrates scholarships with the Parents as Teachers voluntary home visitation program, which has proven to be very effective. We will continue to offer PAT services to scholarship families interested in receiving them.

Scholarships by the Numbers, 2016-17

Children Served	65
Providers Served	7

This year, our Scholarship program:

- ✓ Provided 65 children with scholarship assistance so their parents could work or attend school
- ✓ Made 5 connections for families to services such as Parents as Teachers
- ✓ Supported 7 small businesses in Aiken County by subsidizing child care tuition for families who would not otherwise be able to afford quality care
- ✓ Provided 14 hours of training for scholarship parents

Thank you to our partners!

- Aiken County First Steps FQE Quality Matters Centers
- Aiken County First Steps Families
- HUGS
- ABC Quality

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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 the media to help parents and caregivers get children ready for kindergarten.

*CTK by the Numbers, Summer 2016

Children Served	38
Families Served	36
Home/School Visits	225

**CTK program data is for June-August 2016, whereas CTK fiscal data includes expenditures from July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017.*



Countdown to Kindergarten 2016

This year, our Countdown to Kindergarten program:

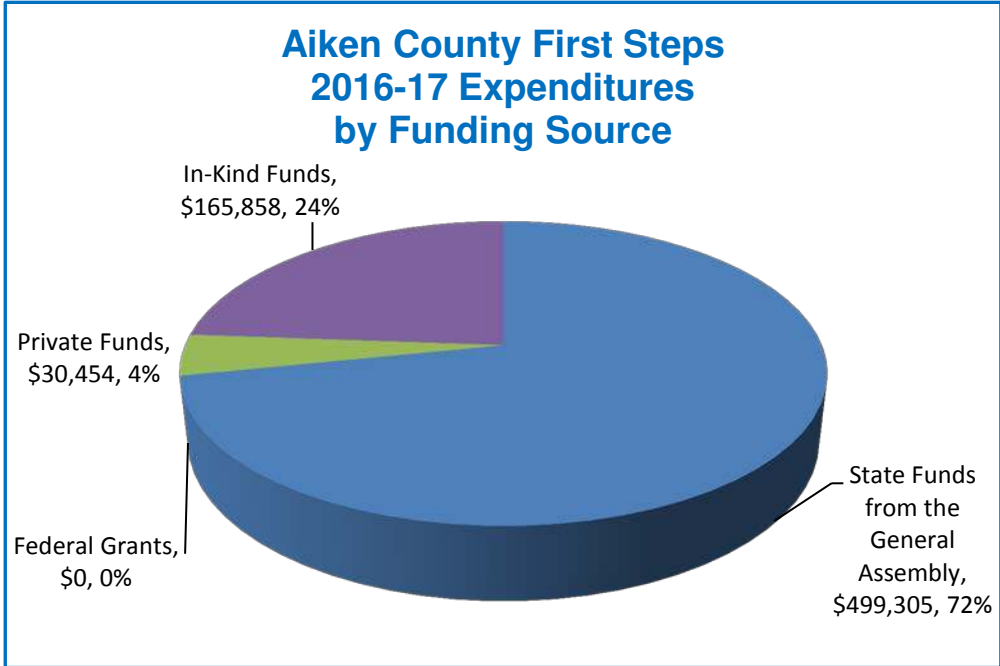
- ✓ 97.37% of the children served were assigned to their CTK 5K classroom
- ✓ 225 home visits were conducted.
- ✓ According to kindergarten teachers, 100% of CTK parents were more involved than other parents in their child’s education in the areas of attending parent/teacher conferences, maintaining contact with the teacher, volunteering in the classroom, and attending open house, school activities, or joining school/parent groups

Thank you to our partners!

- Aiken County Public School District
- Ridge Spring-Monetta Elementary
- JD Lever Elementary
- Oakwood Windsor Elementary
- North Aiken Elementary
- Kaplan Early Learning Company

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Financial Impact



Total 2016-17 Expenditures: \$695,617

State Funds Leveraged in 2016-17*: 39%

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

2016-17 Expenditures by Strategy

	State \$	Federal \$	Private \$	In-Kind \$	Total \$	% of 2016-17 Expenditures
Parents as Teachers	\$94,044	\$0	\$1,078	\$27,500	\$122,622	18%
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$15,436	\$0	\$1,399	\$0	\$16,835	2%
Child Care Quality Enhancement	\$63,299	\$0	\$257	\$27,808	\$91,365	13%
Child Care Training	\$25,281	\$0	\$7,585	\$28,050	\$60,916	9%
Child Care Scholarships	\$184,342	\$0	\$14,682	\$27,500	\$226,523	33%
Program Support	\$76,853	\$0	\$2,952	\$27,500	\$107,306	15%
Administrative Support	\$40,049	\$0	\$2,501	\$27,500	\$70,050	10%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$499,305	\$0	\$30,454	\$165,858	\$695,617	

Unaudited numbers for the period July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017

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

First Steps Partnership Board

Babies First Teacher Initiative Gives Children their First Step toward Literacy

Partners: Aiken County First Steps, Aiken County Public School District, Aiken Regional Hospital, Public Education Partners, Aiken County Association-Retired

To encourage family literacy and promote kindergarten readiness, Aiken County First Steps, Aiken Regional Medical Center, Public Education Partners, the Aiken County Association- Retired, and Aiken County Public Schools partner together to implement the Babies First Teacher Initiative. The purpose of this initiative is to encourage cognitive development and foundational literacy with new mothers and families. The foundational skills that precede reading are developed before entering elementary school and parents, as a child’s first teacher, can play a pivotal role in developing these skills with their children. Children who have trouble with reading and literacy early on often continue to suffer from low literacy and have problems that persist into the school years. Students, who read well, however, tend to do better in all subject areas, including mathematics and science. Based on information from Aiken Regional Medical Center, approximately 100 babies are born each month. Of those, approximately 70% are on Medicaid, and approximately 55-60% are born to teenage mothers. Due to these risk factors alone, it is imperative that efforts are made to share the importance of early literacy with these families (Dr. Sean Alford, Superintendent, ACPD). **Since inception of this initiative in February 2016, 1,477 new mothers and their newborn received a welcome bag with books, manipulatives, information on the importance of brain development, reading and literacy, and additional early childhood follow-up resources they may need.**

Aiken County First Steps Partnership Board, 2016-17

Name	Position	Board Category
Barbara Sanders, Chair	Aiken County Government	Business
Tracy Brown, Vice Chair	Teacher Aide, ACPD	Transportation
Shirley von Beck Treasurer	Training Specialist, CB&I AREVA MOX Services, LLC	Business
David Walker, NP Chair	Retired	Faith Community
Joe Bacote	Supervisor	DSS Representative
Jennie Beck	Children’s Librarian	Library Representative
Kiki Bennett	Early Interventionist	Legislative Appointee
Marlea Bodie	Director of Social Services, Aurora Pavilion	Healthcare
Stephanie Brown	Supervisor	DHEC Representative
Ronald Burton	Director	Head Start
Jamie Creasy	Pre-kindergarten/ School Readiness, ACPD	School District Representative
Margaret Ford	Director, Children’s Place, Inc.	Legislative Appointee
Shadie Hall	Head Start Consultant	Legislative Appointee
William James	Retired	Parent of a First Steps Child
Rebecca Jowers	Store Clerk	Parent of a First Steps Child
Tamisha Lawrence	Supervisor, MOX Services, LLC	Parent of a First Steps Child
Teresa Lilly	Nurse, Aiken Regional Medical Centers	Healthcare
Chalma Lindler	Retired	Pre-Kindergarten-Primary Educator
Rhonda Mitchell	Administrative Manager, Best Friend Express	Transportation (LSCOG)
Charlene Moore-Peterson	Teaches Aide, ACPD	Early Childhood Education
William Price	Retired	Early Childhood Education
Patricia Randolph	Supervisor	Early Childhood Education
Mary Stone	Director, Sunshine House #59	Early Childhood Education

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>



[I CAN] is First Steps' public awareness campaign for school readiness, in support of the state's Profile of the Ready Kindergartener. Includes resources for parents, providers and communities to learn what they can do to support school readiness.

Visit: ican.sc

Like us on Facebook: [icansc](https://www.facebook.com/icansc)

Thank you donors!

Funding Support

State of South Carolina: \$499,305
(through South Carolina First Steps)

Center for Child Care Career Development: \$2,000

Public Education Partners: \$500

United Way Aiken County: \$1,000



In-Kind Support

Aiken County Public School District

Child Care Resource and Referral

SC Inclusion Collaborative

ACFS Board Members and Staff

Sunshine House #5

Sunshine House #59

Children's Place, Inc.

You can help ensure that children are prepared for school by helping to create a home environment that supports important pre-literacy skills.

Support Early Literacy Today!

How your support helps children in Aiken County:

- ✓ \$25 provides a young child a book per month for one year!
- ✓ \$250 feeds dinner to low-income families attending a parenting workshop!
- ✓ \$400 helps a low-income family afford quality child care for one month!

HOW TO GIVE: To submit contributions to Aiken County First Steps

Call (803)-663-5604 or mail your contributions to PO Box 2091, Aiken, SC 29802.

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