

OCONEE COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.



Nurse-Family Partnership

Parents as Teachers

Child Care Training

Child Care Scholarships

Countdown to Kindergarten

Community Education

Annual Report

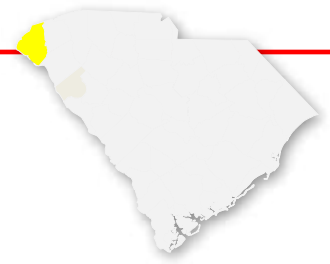
2016-17



OUR VISION:

“All children in Oconee County will have the care they need to grow & develop to their full potential.”

First Steps WORKS for the children of Oconee County!



By The Numbers

Indicator	SC	Oconee County
Children Under Five	293,134	3,916
Children In Poverty	24.4%	25.1%
3 rd Graders Scoring "Does Not Meet" Standard in Reading	22.2%	21.1%
Births to Mothers With Less Than a High School Diploma	15.0%	17.3%

KIDS COUNT data provided by



- Since inception, Oconee County First Steps has leveraged **\$3,605,888** from sources outside state government. **That's \$1.02 for every dollar received.**
- **256 home visits and 256 hours of service** were provided to 25 first time, low income mothers through the Nurse Family Partnership Program.
- **569 home visits; 831 hours of support and guidance; and 273 books** were provided to 19 families with 26 adults and 38 children through the POPS/PAT Program.
- **Childcare professionals received 57 hours** of technical assistance for early care best practices.
- Improved parenting practices **through 36 Group Connection Meetings.**
- **Total Children Served in FY17: 3,744**

Oconee County First Steps

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Seneca, S. C. 29679

Phone: 864-985-4357

Board Chair
 Stacie Powell

Email: dunnamsmith@nctv.com

OCFS Works for our Children, Parents & Taxpayers

Oconee County First Steps remains alive and well as we continue our work toward fulfilling our Vision Statement: "All children in Oconee County will have the care they need to grow & develop to their full potential."

For FY 16-17, we focused much time on our new Community Education & Awareness Strategy and used the **{I CAN}** Theme in conjunction with the **Profile of the Ready Kindergartener** in everything we did. **The following were among our major projects:**

August 2016: "Back Packs/Books /Parent Education Packets" for all 400 SDOC 4K and PIP children.

October-December, 2016: "Warm a Child for the Winter" Project—our most successful one thus far.

February 2017: Collaborated with United Way of Oconee County for its "Read Across America" Project.

April 2017: Parent/Child Health & Education Showcase in Collaboration with Heath's Haven; followed by our sponsorship of the "Pin Wheel Garden" Project, which energized our entire county.

This is my last annual report cover letter, as I am retiring at the end of the calendar year. Thank you for the privilege of serving as a voice for our county's youngest learners since October 1999.

Best regards, Marie M. Dunnam, LISW-CP
Founding CEO/Executive Director



Heathy Start



Family Strengthening



Early Intervention



Quality Child Care



Early Education



School Transition

County Programs

Parents as Teachers

CC Training

CC Scholarships

Countdown to

Kindergarten

Community Education

State Programs

First Steps 4K

Nurse Family Partnerships



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, Oconee County First focuses its investments in Healthy Start, Family Strengthening, Quality Child Care, School Transition, and Community Education & Awareness.

Helping vulnerable first-time mothers empowers them to achieve a better life for themselves and their children.

Program Description

Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) helps transform the lives of vulnerable first-time mothers and their babies. Through ongoing home visits from registered nurses, low-income, first-time moms receive the care and support they need to have a healthy pregnancy, provide responsible and competent care for their children, and become more economically self-sufficient. From pregnancy until the child turns two years old, Nurse-Family Partnership Nurse Home Visitors form a much-needed, trusting relationship with the first-time moms, instilling confidence and empowering them to achieve a better life for their children – and themselves.

In Oconee County, Nurse-Family Partnership is implemented through Greenville Health System.



Oconee County First Steps serves families in greatest need. Among our NFP families:

- 100% ... live in poverty
- 25% ...teenage moms
- 100% --- healthy babies were born

NFP by the Numbers, 2016-17

Moms Served	25
Number of Home Visits	256

As a professional social worker, I have seen major transformation in the lives of many of the first times moms we have referred.” E. Smith

This year, our NFP program:

- ✓ 100% of children with a developmental delay were identified and referred.
- ✓ 4 babies were born, and all were healthy.

Thank you to our partners!

BabyNet
Greenville Health System
“Principles of Partnering Successfully” {POPS}

Oconee County First Steps

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Parents play a critical role in their child's development.

Program Description

The "Principles of Parenting Successfully" (POPS) program is a voluntary holistic, long-term, in-home parenting education prevention program geared toward assisting "high risk" families with children prenatal through age five in preparing their children to arrive at first grade healthy and ready to learn. The program uses two evidenced-based curriculums: Parents as Teachers (PAT), and Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEPS).

POPS is a PAT Affiliate, and services provided 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

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

100% ... live in poverty
42% ... didn't graduate from high school
15% ... were teen parents



PAT by the Numbers 2016-2017

Families Served	19	
Children Served	38	
Total Home Visits	569	
Hours Spent Serving Families	831	
Average gain, <i>Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale</i> (prior to current)	KIPS 59%	ACIRI A: 33% C: 18%

This year, our Parents as Teachers program:

- ✓ Averaged 30 home visits per family
- ✓ Identified and addressed 9 potential developmental delays
- ✓ Improved parenting practices: Gain of 59% (prior to current) on the Keys to Interactive Parenting (KIPS) Assessment.
- ✓ Improved literacy skills: Adult gain of 33% & child gain of 18% (prior to current) on the Adult/Child Interactive Reading Inventory (ACIRI).
- ✓ Held 16 group meetings and provided 48 hours of training on topics such as: Why Immunizations? Reaching My Child's Milestones; Healthy Life Style's; The Benefits of Keeping Fit; Water Safety/Helmet Safety for the Summer, etc.
- ✓ Made 165 connections for families to services such as BabyNet; 3 & 4 year old kindergarten; Early Head Start/Head Start; Mental Health Counseling, domestic violence shelters, and medical homes.

Thank you to our partners!

Oconee County Department of Social Services
Family Friends
Ripple of One

Oconee County First Steps

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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.

“Many thanks to Oconee County First Steps for providing energetic and knowledgeable trainers, who were never boring and kept things moving.”
S. Freeman

Child Care Training Sponsored by Oconee County First Steps, 2016-17

Topic:	Session
Curriculum	4 sessions= 8 hours
Growth & Development	3 sessions= 4.5 hours
Health & Safety	4 sessions= 4 hours
Child Guidance	2 sessions= 4 hours
Program Administration	3 sessions=7.5 hours



Child Care staff after “Experiencing Gardening with Young Children” Training during National Week of the Young Child.

Training by the Numbers, 2016-17

Total Training Attendance	426
Child Care Teachers and Directors Served	134
Number of Training Sessions Offered	16

- This year, our Training program provided:**
- ✓ 134 unduplicated early childhood staff provided with high quality training which touched the lives of 3, 680 children, birth through five.
 - ✓ 26 hours of certified and 2 hour of registered training for staff to meet annual re-certification requirements.
 - ✓ 19 follow-up visits with a total of 57 hours spent with participants to help them put training into practice.

Thank you to our partners!

- Oconee County Department of Social Services
- St. Mark Methodist Church
- SC Child Care Resource & Referral Network
- Think It Through

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Child Care Scholarships

Too many families in Oconee 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.

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

- 100% ... live in poverty
- 86% ... were teen parents
- 75% ...were single parent households

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.

The scholarship program is integrated with our POPS/PAT and Child Care Training strategies.

"Thanks to OCFS for the CC Scholarships that made it possible for me to work; but more importantly, the mandatory Health and Child Development Classes have made me a better parent." J. Bettes



Scholarship Child assists in planting a "Pin Wheel" Garden at one of our scholarship centers.

Scholarships by the Numbers, 2016-17

Children Served	12
Providers Served	3

This year, our Scholarship program:

- ✓ Provided 12 children with scholarship assistance so their parents could work or attend school
- ✓ Supported 3 small businesses in Oconee County by subsidizing child care tuition for families who would not otherwise be able to afford quality care
- ✓ Provided 40 hours of health-related and child development training for scholarship parents on topics such as "Parenting for Stress Relief"; "Becoming the Expert on Your Child"; and "Quality Child Care".

Thank you to our partners!

- Barbara Bryant's Kinderville Learning Center/Cambridge Child Development Center/Pennsylvania Children's Center
- Health's Haven
- "Principles of Parenting Successfully" POPS/PAT
- Family Friends

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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; followed by a graduation ceremony complete with caps & gowns, ice cream and cake.

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 2016

Children Served	10
Families Served	10
Home/School Visits	60

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



**James M. Brown Elementary School
Countdown to Kindergarten Children &
Families Really Enjoyed the Graduation
Cake.**

This year, our Countdown to Kindergarten program:

- ✓ 100% gain, post survey, in parents' knowledge of kindergarten expectations at their child's school.
- ✓ 87.5% gain, post survey, in parents planning to attend parent-teacher conferences, and volunteering in the classroom.
- ✓ 400% gain, post survey, in child knowing and trusting his/her kindergarten teacher.

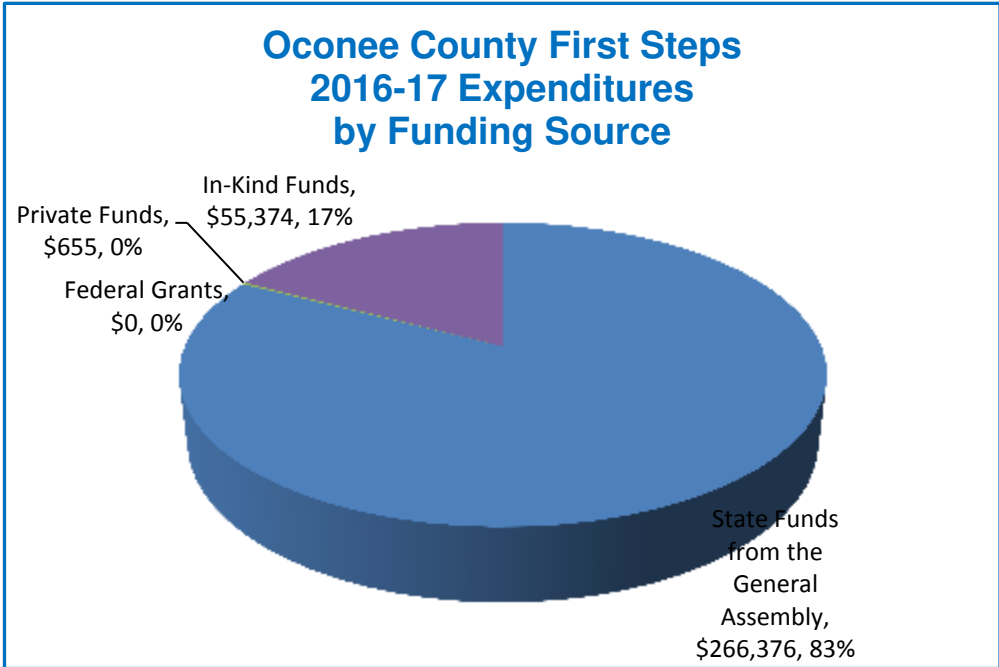
Thank you to our partners!

James M. Brown Elementary School
Kaplan
School District of Oconee County
United Way of Oconee County

Oconee County First Steps

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Financial Impact



Total 2016-17 Expenditures: \$321,750

State Funds Leveraged in 2016-17*: 21%

*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	\$80,222	\$0	\$0	\$49,377	\$129,600	40%
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$1,091	\$0	\$655		\$1,746	1%
Child Care Training	\$7,185	\$0	\$0	\$660	\$7,845	2%
Child Care Scholarships	\$48,437	\$0	\$0	\$660	\$49,097	15%
Community Education	\$52,488	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$52,488	16%
Program Support	\$59,847	\$0	\$0	\$2,381	\$62,228	19%
Administrative Support	\$17,106	\$0	\$0	\$1,640	\$18,746	6%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$266,376	\$0	\$655	\$54,718	\$321,750	

Since inception, Oconee County First Steps has leveraged \$3,605,888 from sources outside of state government. That's \$1.02 for every state dollar.

Thank you supporters!

Through partnerships and collaborations, as well as financial support from grants and contributions, Oconee County First Steps leverages state dollars to enhance and expand services to children and families.

Funding Support

State of South Carolina: \$266,376
(through South Carolina First Steps)
United Way of Oconee County: \$1,600
Other Donations: \$900

In-Kind Support

Oconee County DSS: \$49,377
United Way of Oconee County: \$5,120



Special Projects Support

Thanks to the generosity of the OCFS Board; Borg Warner; the City of Seneca; the Oconee County Democratic Party; OMH/GHS; many, many churches/organizations and individuals, our 2016 "Warm a Child for the Winter" Project (pictured above) was the most successful one ever with over 600 items donated

Please visit www.oconeefirststeps.org for more information about the project.

Save the Date!

November 6th through December 5, 2017: The drop-off site for the 2017 "Warm a Child for the Winter" Project items will be Seneca City Hall, located at 221 E. North 1st Street, Seneca, S. C. 29678.

April 16-20, 2018: Please stay tuned for "National Week of the Young Child" activities.

Kick-Off Event for Prevent Child Abuse Month: April 1, 2017

Oconee County First Steps Hosts Parent/Child Health & Education Showcase in Collaboration with Heath's Haven

The Parent/Child Showcase was a great success with over 250+ in attendance including exhibitors and families with young children birth to eleven years old. Three health/education breakout sessions were offered and 52 exhibitors provided community resources, door prizes, face painting, tours of the Smokehouse, and more. Healthy Snack Bags were provided by the Oconee County Democratic Party and bottled water was provided by Heath's Haven Advisory Board. Not only was the Showcase enjoyed by the families and children in attendance, but all exhibitors agreed it was also a great networking opportunity.

"Oconee County (CAN) Promote Happy and Healthy Childhoods" was the chosen theme for the month.

**** Exhibitors participating in the April 1st Showcase were as follows:** Oconee County First Steps; Heath's Haven, United Way Born Learning Trail Initiative; United Way/Heath's Haven Family Strengthening Program; "Principles of Parenting Successfully" {POPS}; Oconee County DSS; Family Friends; Ripple of One; SDOC Early Intervention & 4K Programs; BabyNet; Early Intervention/Oconee DDSN; Family Connection; Nurse-Family Partnership Program; SC DHEC-WIC; SC DHEC-Baby and Me; Oconee Pediatrics; Mountain Lakes Access Health; Blue Choice/Medicaid; DHHS/Medicaid; Well Care/Medicaid; Foothills Community Care Center; Foothills Pregnancy Center; Foothills YMCA; Recovery Station; Ash House/Christ Central Ministries-Oconee; Oconee County Library: Youth Program; Friends of the Library; Seneca High Teacher Cadets & Educators Rising; SC CCR&R Network; Seneca Presbyterian Church & Presbyterian Service Fund; Pennsylvania Children's Center; Cambridge Child Development Center; St. Mark Child Development Center; Damsel in Defense; SC Volunteer Guardian ad Litem Program; Seneca and Westminster Police Departments; Safe Kids Upstate; The Smokehouse; Safe Harbor; SC Works; Vocational Rehabilitation; The Tutoring Center; It Works; Rivers of Justice; Angels of Hope; YouthLink, Oconee County Democratic Party, and Face Painters from Pendleton High. **{Please visit us on FB at Oconee County First Steps to view the entire Showcase Photo Album.}**



Oconee County First Steps Serves as a Community Convener & Portal for Families.

Community Impact

2017 Prevent Child Abuse Month: OCFS Also Sponsored and Coordinated Countywide “Pin Wheel Garden” Project
Twenty-two events were held this month to include three during the Week of the Young Child (April 21-29, 2017).

Over half of children that enter school not ready to learn have experienced some type of abuse or neglect. Pinwheels for Prevention is a community engagement campaign our partnership chose this year to raise awareness and help promote the everyday things families can do to keep children happy and healthy. **Thus our theme for the month: “Oconee County (CAN) promote Happy and Healthy Childhoods”.** In April 2017, Oconee County planted **11,000** pinwheels at over **75** sites, and distributed over **19,353** informational and educational materials, **to include Profile of the Ready Kindergartener Brochures.** {Please visit us on FB at Oconee County First Steps to view our entire pinwheel garden album, where you will find pictures of all gardens planted in the county.}

“Even in my long career, I have never seen a strategy or project so energize a county. We did indeed “blanket our county” with blue and white pinwheels from Seneca, to Salem, and on through Walhalla, West Union and Westminster.”

Many thanks to all who participated!!



All 10 elementary schools in our county planted “Pin Wheel “Gardens

The Sheriff’s Department & all five local police departments in Seneca, Salem, Walhalla, Westminster and West Union planted “Pin Wheel” Gardens.



25 churches, of all dominations, also planted “Pin Wheel “Gardens across our county.



First Steps Partnership Board

Oconee County First Steps Board Remains Committed and Strong

During FY 16-17 the Oconee County First Steps Board and its partners remained committed and dedicated as evidenced by the 1, 898.50 hours of volunteer service provided in support of & participation in the following activities: “ Back Pack/Books/Parent Education” Project; Annual Health Care Fair at Recovery Station; POPS Back to School Bash; Collaboration with the City of Seneca on transportation grants, and the pursuit of matching dollars; Early Childhood Education Resource & Referral Workshops; Universal Staffing; Child Care Training; Website Design; Annual “Warm a Child for the Winter” Project; “Read Across American” Collaboration with United Way; Parent/Child Health and Education Showcase in Collaboration with Health’s Haven; hosting and sponsoring the countywide “Pin Wheel Garden” Project; and also volunteering many hours to planning and attending various events surrounding our Needs and Resource Assessment Process, i.e. interviews with the consultants; assisting, finding meeting space and participating in town hall style meetings and focus groups.

In addition, 100% of the board members made monetary donations to Oconee County First Steps during FY 16-17 or contributed numerous in-kind items for our events.

Value of Volunteer Time for FY 16-17: 1, 898.50 hours x \$24.14= \$45, 829.79

Oconee County First Steps Partnership Board, 2016-2017

Name	Position	Board Category
Stacie Powell, Chair	Youth Director, Oconee County Library System	Library Designee
Sandra W. Pruitt, Vice Chair	Director, Family Friends	Legislative Appointee
Kathleen Davis, Secretary	Director, Kids Korner	Pre-Kindergarten/Primary Ed.
Kendra Vincent	Former 4K Teacher and Counselor	Early Education
Suzanne Evans	Community Advocate/Former Child Care Director	Child Care/Early Childhood Develop.
Erin Moon	Case Manager, Mountain Lakes Access Health	Health
Heather Goss	Director, Mountain Lakes Access Health	Non-Profit
Judy Metcalf	Director, Community Missions, Grace Baptist Church	Faith
Karen McBryde	Facilitator, “ Parent’s Night Out”, Seneca Presby. Church	Faith
Dineen Schile	Co-Owner-Lake Keowee Marina	Business
Tina Kirby	Code Enforcement Officer, City of Seneca	Government
Molly Tannery	Director, Early Intervention, DDSN	Parent of a Young Child & Legislative Appointee
Sharon Grant	LEAD POPS Worker, Oconee DSS	DSS Designee
George Washington	Parent Advocate, Head Start	Head Start Designee
Misty Lee	SC DHEC, Upstate Region, Community Systems Team	DHEC Designee
Ann Douglas	SDOC Director of Early Learning	SDOC Designee
Annette Burney	Youth Auxiliary of the Seneca River Women’s Auxiliary & Area Coordinator, Youth Dept. of Women’s Baptist E & M Convention of South Carolina	Legislative Appointee



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>



Contact Information for **BABYNET** in Oconee County

(864) 225-6465



[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)