

UNION COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.



Parents as Teachers

Imagination Library

Countdown to  
Kindergarten

Childcare Training

# Annual Report

2017-18



## OUR VISION:

All children enter school  
with the tools necessary to  
succeed

[www.scfirststeps.com](http://www.scfirststeps.com)

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# Director's Message

## Serving Together in Union County

Union County First Steps partners with other agencies serving children in Union to enhance services throughout our county. The Union County School District is one such partner. They provide office space and support services for the Director and three Parent Educators.

Another important partner is the Union Library System. The Carnegie Library and Union First Steps often work together to provide story times in the community. The Department of Social Services and the Library System partnered with Union First Steps to provide a Kidsfest celebration in the Spring. This event celebrated The Week of the Young Child, Child Abuse Prevention Month, and National Library Week.

The United Way of the Piedmont is very supportive in providing funds for the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, as well as funds to support the delivery of Parents As Teachers.

Through the support of a grant from the Dollar General Literacy Foundation, we implemented the Parents as Teachers Program this year. Currently we have 3 Parent Educators delivering services to children and their families. This provides activities and resources to reinforce learning in the home, as children prepare to enter school.

Working together creates a better Union!



*Laura Wade*

**Laura Wade**  
**Executive Director**

## OUR MISSION:

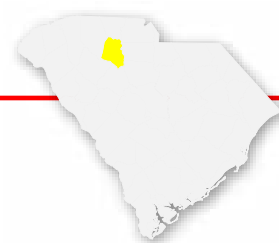
**Connecting families to the resources they need for  
their children to be safe, healthy, and ready for  
school**

**Find Union County First Steps:**









or...

**[www.scfirststeps.com](http://www.scfirststeps.com)**



## THE NEED

School readiness **depends on the capacity of caregivers** to provide children with consistent, nurturing, and responsive relationships in safe, stimulating learning environments, **continuously**, starting at birth. Unfortunately, these quality early childhood experiences happen for too few children in Union County.

How are Union County's children doing?	What early learning programs are available for children in our county? Last year:	Where can families access child care in our county?
<b>1,579</b> are under age 5	<b>58</b> attended Early Head Start as infants and toddlers	<b>7</b> licensed child care centers
<b>34%</b> live in poverty	<b>33</b> attended free preschool or Head Start as 3-year-olds	<b>4</b> licensed group/family homes
<b>26%</b> of babies born in 2016 were to moms without a HS diploma	<b>68</b> 4-year-olds attended free full-day public school 4K or Head Start	<b>36%</b> participate in the state's Quality Rating System (ABC Quality)
<b>56%</b> live in single parent households	<b>144</b> 0-5-year olds received early intervention or special ed.	<b>1</b> provider is rated B or higher by  ABC Quality
<b>25%</b> of last year's kindergartners demonstrated readiness	<b>42</b> were served by 	<b>96</b> families received assistance with affording child care last year
Kids Count data provided by: 	Data provided by:  SC Profile Early Childhood	 SC Profile Early Childhood and  ABC Quality

## THE GOALS

Our partnership's work, in collaboration with state and local partners, is focused on advancing Union County towards these strategic goals in support of the **Profile of the Ready Kindergartner**, South Carolina's description of school readiness:

1. Improve access to quality childcare.
2. Continue to build communication and collaboration with businesses, inter-agencies, and the community.
3. Improve access and delivery of service to Parents as Teachers participants

## THE IMPACT

In 2017-18, Union County First Steps provided:

- \*82 children and 76 adults with **intensive support** to equip parents and caregivers with the confidence and competence to be a child's first and best teacher, and strengthen their family's health, economic, and overall well-being (**Parents as Teachers**)
- \*22 staff working in 7 child care providers, Head Start centers and preschool classrooms with training, technical assistance, resources and support, **helping them better meet the needs of 210 children ages 0-5 in their care** (**Childcare Training**)
- \*12,110 books to spark the love of reading for 1,029 children in Union County (**Parents as Teachers, Community Events, and Dolly Parton Imagination Library**)
- \*a total of 1040 children and 820 adults were impacted by Union County First Steps programs, resources, activities and events.

# School Readiness Outcomes

## What is the KRA?

In 2017-18, kindergartners across the state were given for the first time South Carolina's newest assessment of school readiness: the **Kindergarten Readiness Assessment**, or KRA. The KRA provides a snapshot of students' abilities at the beginning of the school year, in four domains: Social Foundations, Language and Literacy, Mathematics, and Physical Development and Well-Being. Here are the results locally and for the state:

Union County (280 children)			
Domain	Emerging	Approaching	Demonstrating
Social Foundations	30%	22%	48%
Language&Literacy	27%	49%	24%
Mathematics	50%	33%	17%
Physical Dev&WB	22%	29%	49%
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>25%</b>

SOUTH CAROLINA (54,927 children)			
Domain	Emerging	Approaching	Demonstrating
Social Foundations	28%	27%	45%
Language&Literacy	23%	43%	34%
Mathematics	31%	38%	31%
Physical Dev&WB	28%	24%	48%
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>36%</b>

- 1. Language and Literacy:** reading, writing, speaking, and listening
- 2. Mathematics:** counting, comparison, and sorting
- 3. Physical Well-Being & Motor Development:** dexterity, muscular coordination, and balance
- 4. Social Foundations:** following rules, asking for help, task persistence and other skills necessary to function within the kindergarten classroom

**Demonstrating Readiness:** student demonstrates foundational skills and behaviors that prepare him/her for instruction based on kindergarten standards.

**Approaching Readiness:** student demonstrates some foundational skills and behaviors that prepare him/her for instruction based on kindergarten standards

**Emerging Readiness:** student demonstrates limited foundational skills and behaviors that prepare him/her for instruction based on kindergarten standards

## What is Union County First Steps doing to improve KRA results?:

Union County First Steps is continually looking for ways to improve the kindergarten readiness of Union County. We plan to expand the Countdown to Kindergarten program in the upcoming year. This will enable more children to have a better transition to kindergarten. We are also always looking for ways to expand our services to underserved areas of our county (through traveling to homes throughout the county to deliver the Parents as Teachers program; as well as holding Story Times at various locations throughout the county.

**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

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

80% ... live in poverty

21% ... didn't graduate from high school

42% ... are single parent households



**Here is a quote from one of our participants:**

**"This program has encouraged me with different strategies to engage my child. Household items are repurposed for interactive play with my child. My child loves books, and I know it's because of this program."**

## PAT by the Numbers 2017-18

Families Served	68
Children Served	82
Total Home Visits	851
Hours Spent Serving Families	872

## This year, our Parents as Teachers program:

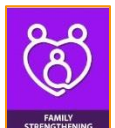
- ✓ Averaged 1.73 home visits per family each month
- ✓ Identified and addressed 20 potential developmental delays, and made 40 connections for families to services such as Speech services, Adult Ed., DSS, DHEC-WIC, Library services, Clothing/household assistance, and Family events
- ✓ Improved literacy skills by providing at-home activities and a new book at each visit

## Thank you to our PAT partners!

Union County School District  
Union County Library System  
Dollar General Literacy Foundation  
United Way of the Piedmont

## Evidence of Effectiveness:

Parents as Teachers meets the First Steps legislation's definition of an **evidence-based** program.





**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.**

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

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



## Imagination Library by the Numbers, 2017-18

Children Served	929
Books Given to Children 0-5	10,989

**Sponsor a child today for just \$30 a year!**

**Thank you to our Imagination Library partners!**

**Dollywood Foundation**

**United Way of the Piedmont**

Evidence of Effectiveness:

Imagination Library meets the First Steps legislation's definition of an **evidence-based** program.



# 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.

### Training Sponsored by Union County First Steps, 2017-18

#### Topics:

- \*More Than A Label (ADD, ADHD, Autism, etc.)
- \*The Mind of a Child
- \*Early Literacy in Childcare
- \*Outdoor Curriculum Activities
- \*Plan and Review for Safety
- \*No "I" in Team



Childcare Directors participating in a training class sponsored by Union County First Steps.

### Training by the Numbers, 2017-18

Total Training Attendance	92
Child Care Teachers and Directors Served	22
Number of Training Sessions Offered	6

### This year, our Training program provided:

- ✓ 22 early childhood staff with high quality training, impacting 7 providers and 210 children
- ✓ 7.5 hours of certified training and 8 hours of registered training for staff to meet annual re-certification requirements

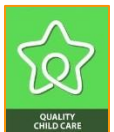
### ***Thanks to our partners!***

The City of Union

Union County School District

### Evidence of Effectiveness:

Child Care Training and Professional Development meets the First Steps legislation's definition of an **evidence-based** program.



**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.

### \*CTK by the Numbers, Summer 2017

Children Served	18
Families Served	18
Home/School Visits	104

*\*CTK program data is for June-August 2017, whereas CTK fiscal data includes expenditures from July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018.*

Countdown to Kindergarten integrates all of the following:

**Home Visitation.** Teachers make six visits over the summer to the homes of participating students and families. Children and families are introduced to actual materials used in kindergarten and are given a Kindergarten Transition Toolkit to keep.

**Learning Celebration.** The last visit is a "field trip" to the school where the child will attend class in the fall.

**Public Awareness.** Throughout the summer, First Steps releases tips to media to help parents and caregivers get children ready for kindergarten.

**Thank you to our CTK partners!**

Union County School District

Title I



Like us on Facebook!  
Countdown to Kindergarten-South Carolina



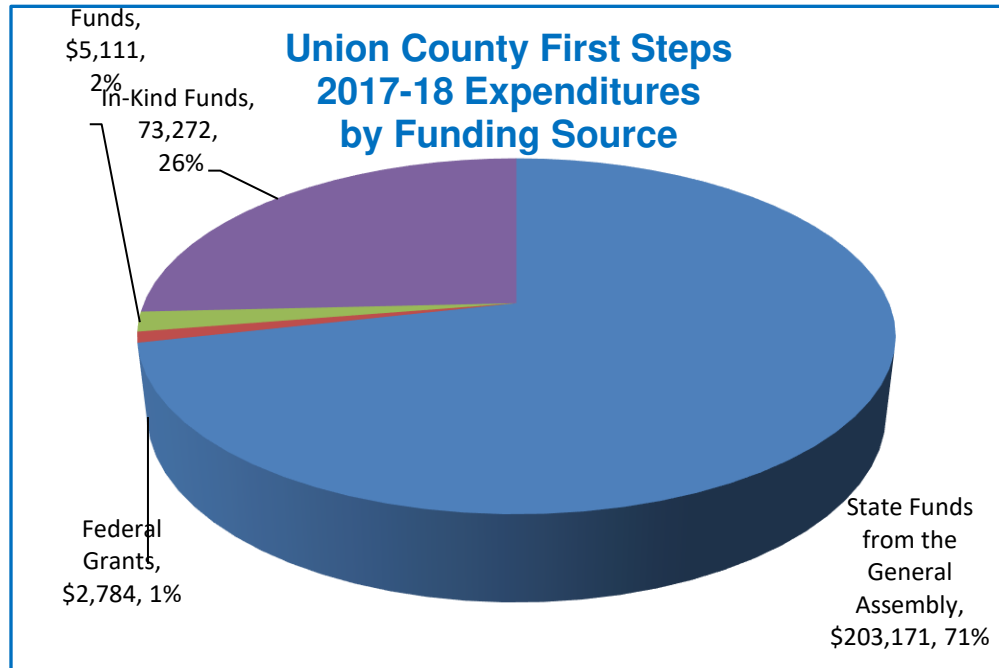
### Evidence of Effectiveness:

Our partnership's Countdown to Kindergarten program meets the First Steps legislation's definition of an **evidence-informed** program.





## Financial Impact



**Total 2017-18 Expenditures: \$284,338**

**State Funds Leveraged in 2017-18\*: 40%**

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

### 2017-18 Expenditures by Strategy

	State \$	Federal \$	Private \$	In-Kind \$	Total \$	% of 2017-18 Expenditures
Parents as Teachers	\$130,332	\$0	\$4,176	\$20,000	\$154,508	54%
Imagination Library	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$28,140	\$28,140	10%
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$2,629	\$2,783	\$0	\$0	\$5,412	2%
Child Care Training	\$17,002	\$0	\$413	\$5,894	\$23,309	8%
Program Support	\$36,312	\$0	\$522	\$13,118	\$49,952	18%
Administrative Support	\$16,896	\$0	\$0	\$6,120	\$23,016	8%
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$203,171</b>	<b>\$2,783</b>	<b>\$5,111</b>	<b>\$73,272</b>	<b>\$284,337</b>	

*Unaudited numbers for the period July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018*

**Since inception, Union County First Steps has leveraged \$1,225,746 from sources outside of state government. That's 39 cents for every state dollar!**

## Kidsfest 2018

Union County First Steps collaborated with several local agencies to sponsor Kidsfest 2018. The event was in celebration of the Week of the Young Child, National Library Week, and Child Abuse Prevention month.

First Steps truly appreciates the co-sponsorship of the Union Library System, the Department of Social Services, and the Union Recreation Department. The various vendors from local agencies truly made the event a day to remember! Families were given information about various agencies serving children and their families in Union County.

First Steps also gave out books, along with free snow cones to children committing to read daily. The Union County Library System had games available for children and their families. Many children also took advantage of the opportunity to enjoy the playground equipment at the park.

Lunch was provided for all attendees by the Union Recreation Dept. There were numerous door prizes!

The day was such a success, that this will hopefully become an annual event!



*The Miracle League's Mascot was one of the highlights of the day!*

# First Steps Partnership Board

## Union County First Steps Partnership Board, 2017-18

Name	Position	Board Category
Connie Springs, Chair	Retired Educator	Legislative Appointee
Margie Boyd, Vice-Chair	Retired Educator	Pre-kindergarten through primary educator
Margie Ruff, Secretary	Teacher—Save the Children	Pre-kindergarten through primary educator
Mickey Connolly	Principal	School District
Rieta Drinkwine	Library Director	County Library
Azalee Glenn	Retired Childcare Center Operator	Childcare and early childhood development/education provider
Barbara Jeter	Director of Head Start	Head Start
Amanda Newton	Teacher (elementary)	Parent of a pre-school aged child
Cathey Parker	Volunteer	Family Education, training, and support provider
Page Rogers	Community Health Educator	DHEC
Jeff Stribble	School District Personnel Director	Business Community
Elizabeth Tisdale	DSS Director	DSS
Tomikia Whitmire	Principal	Pre-Kindergarten through primary educator

Thanks to all who are willing to serve to improve the lives of Union County's most precious resource---our children!

# What is First Steps?

**At the state level and in every county**, First Steps leverages state funding with other public and private resources to help South Carolina's children enter kindergarten healthy and ready to succeed. First Steps programs and services support families as their child's first and most important teacher and are customized to meet the unique needs of local communities, grounded in strong evidence, fueled by stakeholder collaboration, and accountable for results.

## First Steps Goals

- (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.

### First Steps Building Blocks of Quality Early Childhood Programs and Services



Healthy  
Start



Family  
Strengthening



Early  
Intervention



Quality  
Child Care



Early  
Education



School  
Transition

From Greenville to Charleston, Abbeville to York, First Steps local partnerships serve as ...

**Local portals** connecting preschool children and families to services

**Conveners** of community stakeholders to address the needs of young children and their families

**Champions** of the importance of school readiness to our children's future.



*for South Carolina and to learn about First Steps 4K programs in your area:*  
**[scfirststeps.org](http://scfirststeps.org) or call Union County First Steps at 864-766-7647**



[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.

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