Collaborating with other entities, Lee County First Steps helps South Carolina families and caregivers prepare their children for school success by maximizing public and private resources to ensure that children arrive at school healthy and ready to learn.

**OUR APPROACH**

- High quality programs and services for children and families
- Intensive training, resources and support for childcare providers
- Strategic partnerships and community education

**OUR IMPACT**

- 948 number of children and adults served by ABC County First Steps in 2018-2019

**JOIN US**

We rely on a community of partners, donors, and volunteers — people like you — who believe in a brighter future for children and families in our community.
The value add and advocacy which Lee County First Steps (LCFS) continues to provide with impact, and visibility for children, parents, and families in Lee County, the Pee Dee and Wateree Regions. Although local resources are limited, LCFS is still passionate about its commitment to help children and their families strengthening collaboration efforts with the Lee County School District, Wateree Community Action Partnership Head Start, private child care, and other collaborative partners to secure additional funding and resources. LCFS has maintained its focus on addressing parenting, home visiting, quality child care with limited child care scholarships, childcare staff training, school readiness, and family strengthening.
MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Fiscal Year 2019 was a highly successful and impactful year for Lee County First Steps (LCFS). The partnership relocated to our permanent headquarters office owned by the LCFS. In addition, the partnership has managed to sustain effective collaborations and partnerships to ensure that children, parents, and families receive high quality, research-based programs and quality services. Although, LCFS receives limited funding from SC First Steps, the partnership board has innovatively and aggressively partnered with state, and national agencies to expand the scope and quality of funding and staff: home visiting programs, child care scholarships and center staff training and professional development to both early care professionals and parents, Kindergarten Readiness, Strengthening Families Program (6-11), and early literacy with the Vroom Curriculum.

OUR GOALS

1. By 2020, increase diversity (age, race/ethnicity, gender, and geographic location) of the board to have 33% of the current county population reflected on the local partnership board.
2. Increase community outreach through more partnerships to include the annual meeting, state of the young child, health and community fair, more partnerships, Blue Print for Lee County Health, Child’s Trust, Prevention Child Abuse and Neglect Awareness Month, Kindergarten Ambassador Program.
3. By 2020, increase board’s funding goal by 100%.
4. Increase the awareness and commitment of state local and state official on the needs of Lee County First Steps.
5. Increase serves to the rural areas outside of the city limits of Bishopville to include the Tri County, Pee Dee and Wateree regions.
6. By 2020, increase the implementation of county programs which are promising practices and/or research-based.

It is about the families and children, and nothing else.

Danielle Boyd, Board Secretary
Parents as Teachers (PAT) is a home visiting program designed to build strong communities, thriving families and children who are healthy, safe and ready to succeed. PAT services include:

- Personal visits from a parent educator at least twice monthly
- Monthly group connections with other PAT families
- Screenings and assessments to identify developmental concerns
- Connections to outside resources that families may need to succeed

PAT recently received the highest rating from the federal Prevention Services Clearinghouse. This recognition validates the effectiveness of Parents as Teachers as a strategy for improving parenting practices, promoting early detection of developmental delays and health issues, preventing child abuse and neglect, and enhancing school readiness and success.

“Families are always asking for more books to read to their children…”

PAT IN THE NEWS in collaboration with KERSHAW COUNTY FIRST STEPS 2018-2019

10 families served
220 total home visits
COUNTDOWN TO KINDERGARTEN

Developed by South Carolina First Steps – and identified as a promising state practice by the National Governor’s Association in 2005 – Countdown to Kindergarten (CTK) is a home visitation program pairing the families of rising kindergartners with their future teachers during the summer before school entry. Teachers complete six visits with each family, establishing strong connections during the summer that facilitate classroom learning throughout the year.

CTK BY THE NUMBERS
2018-2019

3 kindergarten teachers trained as home visitors
20 children served
119 total home and school visits
High-quality child care hinges on high-quality professional development that meets the needs of the local child care workforce. Our training programs are certified through the SC Center for Child Care Career Development and include topics in the areas of nutrition, health and safety, curriculum, child guidance, professional development and program administration. Our 2018-2019 trainings included:

Training Topics Include:

Understanding the Feeding Behavior of Toddlers (Nutrition)

Planning for the Whole Body (Part 1 and 2) (Growth and Development)

Mistaken Behavior: Understanding Conflicts and Aggression (Part 1 and 2) (Guidance)

Block Play Stimulates Learning in All Domains (Curriculum)

TRAINING BY THE NUMBERS
2018-2019

23 total training attendance 89 child care teachers and directors served 23 number of training sessions offered

We like the Saturday trainings! We like the collaboration with people coming from both the child care centers and family homes being able to share and learn from each other.

Jerlene Atkinson, Family Child Care Provider
Affordable, quality child care is a need for many Lee County families, and child care scholarships has continued to be identified as an essential value-add for Lee County families especially with there not being a large amount of subsidy for the child care industry. Our scholarship program makes payments to child care providers to care for children from low-income families so their parents can return to school or work.

Lee County First Steps offers scholarships to families enrolled in our Save the Children Early Steps to School Readiness Program to parents with children birth to age 36 months or in our collaborative partnership with Kershaw County First Steps Parents As Teachers Program to parents with children 3-5 year old children, as well as income-eligible children whose parent attends school or works at least 20 hours per week.

### SCHOLARSHIPS BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>number of children served</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>number of providers served</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>number of developmental screenings provided</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

100% of the money paid to child care providers goes back into our local economy to benefit the citizens of Lee County.
South Carolina First Steps provides eligible children with free enrollment in full-day four-year-old kindergarten programs. In coordination with First Steps local partnerships and more than 200 private, faith- and community-based preschool providers, First Steps 4K expands access to quality child care across the state.

**ELIGIBILITY**

To qualify for enrollment, a child must:

- Be 4 years old on or before September 1
- Qualify for Medicaid or a free or reduced-price lunch program
- Live in one of 64 qualifying school districts

**FIRST STEPS 4K IN LEE COUNTY 2018-2019**

- 20 children enrolled
- 1 participating classrooms

**4K NEWS**

In fiscal year 2019-2020, South Carolina First Steps is launching a pilot program to expand 4K enrollment within underserved communities. Age- and income-eligible children residing in any SC school district may qualify for a slot in a participating center that also serves students from eligible districts.
Early Steps to School Success (ESSS) is a language and pre-literacy development program operated by Save the Children, a leading international nonprofit helping children in need. ESSS is the birth-to-five component of a continuum of Save the Children programs which focus on literacy and language development, physical fitness and nutrition programs for children birth to age 12. ESSS provides early childhood education services to pregnant women and children birth to five years of age, education services to their parents, and ongoing staff training to the community early childhood educators involved with the program. In Lee County, ESSS is implemented in collaboration with Lee County School District.

Our EI&R program:
- Provides early detection of developmental delays and health issues
- Promotes services and activities that promote child development
- Increases children’s school readiness and school success

**Early Steps to School Readiness BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2019**

- 59 families served
- 1018 total home visits
The Strengthening Families Program (SFP) 6-11 is an evidence-based family skills training program designed to strengthen the skills of both parents and their children so that they will be better equipped to deal with life’s challenging situations. The SFP provides 14 weekly sessions of family educational training for both parents and their children age 6–11 in addition to meals, prizes and program incentives.

Here is what our SFP Program provides:
- 14 weekly educational skills training sessions for both parents and their children age 6–11.
- Child care services for non-participating children.
- A delicious family meal during each training session.
- Transportation provided for families, if needed.
- Prizes and program incentives i.e., gift cards, gas cards, household items, etc.
- Incentive for families who successfully complete and graduate from the program by attending 12 or more training sessions.
- Incentive for families for perfect attendance who attend all 14 sessions with Perfect attendance.

Strengthening Families (6-11) BY THE NUMBERS
2018-2019

89 families served
980 total sessions attended
Children’s first five years are when they develop the foundation for all future learning. Every time we connect with a child, it’s not just their eyes that light up – it’s their brain, too. During these moments, half a million neurons fire at once, taking in all the things which adults say and do. Save the Children has established a partnership with Vroom, an initiative of the Bezos Family Foundation, to help turn shared moments into brain building ones. Regardless if it is during mealtime, bath time, or anytime in between, there are many opportunities for parents to nurture a child’s growing mind.

Vroom has five principles – look, chat, follow, stretch, take turns – that Vroom teaches parents helps them understand the science behind their child’s learning.

vRoom BY THE NUMBERS
2018-2019

37
families served
Addressing the needs of young children is a shared endeavor. In addition to providing services to families and support for child care providers, Lee County First Steps mobilizes partners and community members to ensure all children in Lee County begin school ready to succeed. We serve as a:

**LOCAL PORTAL**
connecting preschool children and their families to services

**CONVENER**
of community stakeholders to develop an effective and comprehensive early childhood system

**CHAMPION**
of the importance of school readiness to our children’s future

**OUR PARTNERSHIPS BY THE NUMBERS**
2018-2019

67 Community Events
1530 Total Attendance
OUR SUPPORTERS

FUNDING SUPPORT

State of South Carolina: $202,102.00
(through South Carolina First Steps)

Children’s Trust of South Carolina: $274,458.00

Save The Children (ESSS)$150,656.00

South Carolina Office of Rural Health $20,000

Department of Social Services: $13,300.00

Preschool Development Grant (PDG) $7,1523.00

IN-KIND SUPPORT

Lee County School District
DSS Child Care Scholarships
Save The Children

JOIN US

For more information on partnership opportunities, visit our website at http://scfirststeps.com/lee/
FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

OUR INVESTMENT IN QUALITY
Expenditures of State Funds by Program Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Type</th>
<th>State Funding</th>
<th>Federal Funding</th>
<th>Private Funding</th>
<th>In-Kind Contributions</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Early Steps to School Readiness</td>
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<td>Strengthening Families Program</td>
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<td>$284,194.53</td>
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<td>Countdown to Kindergarten</td>
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<td>Scholarships</td>
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<td>Core Functions</td>
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<td>$22,344.00</td>
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<td>Administrative Support</td>
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<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$3,193.91</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$20,452.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Expenses</td>
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<td>$7,153</td>
<td>$442,090</td>
<td>$23,637</td>
<td>$674,982</td>
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Since inception, Lee County First Steps has leveraged $3,984,005 from sources outside of state government. That’s $0.86 for every state dollar.

SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES BY STRATEGY
## LEADERSHIP

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Board Member</th>
<th>Place of Employment</th>
<th>Board Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Moses, Chair</td>
<td>Lee County School District</td>
<td>Legislative Appointee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beauty Murphy</td>
<td>Lee County School District</td>
<td>Early Childhood Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belinda Butler</td>
<td>Select Health</td>
<td>Business Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bertha Scott</td>
<td>Lee County School District</td>
<td>Family Ed. Training &amp; Support Provider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betty D. Addison</td>
<td>Retired, Lee County School District</td>
<td>Non-profit Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danielle Boyd, Secretary</td>
<td>Wateree Head Start – Bishopville Site</td>
<td>Head Start</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David &quot;Keel&quot; Addison</td>
<td>Addison Barber Shop</td>
<td>Parent of Preschool Children</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diana C. Williams, Assist. Secretary</td>
<td>Retired, Lee County School District</td>
<td>Early Childhood Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eloise W. Witherspoon (deceased August 3, 2018)</td>
<td>Lee County Adult Education(retired)</td>
<td>Family Ed. Training &amp; Support Provider</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jacqueline Josey</td>
<td>Lee County Council</td>
<td>Lee County Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeanette Isaac</td>
<td>Lee County School District</td>
<td>Preschool through Primary Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jerlene Atkinson</td>
<td>Kiddie Land Daycare Center</td>
<td>Early Childhood Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beverly Jackson, DSS representative for Andrea Favor</td>
<td>Lee County School District</td>
<td>Lee County DSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julia Young</td>
<td>Colonial Neurology</td>
<td>HealthCare Provider</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kateisha Simmons</td>
<td>Parent of Preschool</td>
<td>Lee County School District</td>
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<tr>
<td>LaToya Hopkins</td>
<td>Wateree Head Start</td>
<td>Parent of Preschool Children</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lillie M. Patterson</td>
<td>Bishopville Lee Child Development Center</td>
<td>Childcare &amp; Early Childhood Dev. Ed. Provider</td>
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<tr>
<td>M. DeLoris LeGrant</td>
<td>Retired, Sumter County School District</td>
<td>Early Childhood Education</td>
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<td>Mary Lee Arthur</td>
<td>Lee County School District</td>
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<td>Maverick Wilson</td>
<td>Wateree Correctional Inst./ Retired</td>
<td>Legislative Appointee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patricia Toney</td>
<td>Retired, Lee County School District</td>
<td>Faith Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regina Nesmith</td>
<td>DHEC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sandra Holmes</td>
<td>Lee County School District</td>
<td>Health Care Provider</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sandy Jenkins</td>
<td>Wateree Regional Trans. Authority</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sheila Moses, Vice-Chair</td>
<td>Fresenius</td>
<td>Health Care Provider</td>
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<tr>
<td>Victoria McCray</td>
<td>Bishopville Lee Child Dev. Center</td>
<td>Legislative Appointee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LEADERSHIP

STAFF

Full-Time Staff:
Elder Alexis D. Pipkins, Sr., Ed.S., Executive Director
Mrs. Gloria M. Burris, Early Childhood Coordinator, ESSS
Ms. Felicia Evans, Early Childhood Coordinator, ESSS
Ms. LaTonya Hickmon, Early Childhood Coordinator, ESSS

Program Consultants:
Ms. Danielle Boyd, Vroom Coordinator, ESSS
Mrs. Mamie C. Bostic, MBA, Senior Program Manager SFP (6-11)
Mrs. Bessie Sanders-Gordon, MA, Program Manager, SFP (6-11)
Ms. Diana C. Williams, Site Coordinator, SFP (6-11) Lee County
Ms. M. DeLoris LeGrant, Site Coordinator, SFP (6-11) Sumter County
Ms. Debra Judge, Site Coordinator, SFP (6-11) Florence County
Mrs. Lisa Canty, Site Coordinator, SFP (6-11) Sumter County
Ms. Rudine McLeod, Data and Program Support
Mrs. Rosa Bowman, Fiscal Support
Mrs. Earth Wactor, Program Support

CONTACT US
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/AFP