

PICKENS COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.



Parents as Teachers

Family Literacy

Child Care Quality
Enhancement

Child Care Training

Nurse Family Partnership

Book Flood

Healthy Families

Early Identification and
Referral

Annual Report

2013-14



OUR VISION:

Every South Carolina child
arrives at kindergarten
ready to learn.

First Steps WORKS for the children of Pickens County.

Who We Serve

First Steps serves children pre-birth to 5 years old and their families who are at risk of not being ready for school.

Number of Pickens County children under 5:
5,999

Number of Pickens County children (under the age of 18) living in poverty:
4,882

Babies born each year in Pickens County to a mother without a high school diploma:
21%

Our Programs

Parents as Teachers

Family Literacy

Child Care Quality Enhancement

Child Care Training

Nurse Family Partnership

Book Flood

Healthy Families

Early Identification and Referral

Our Results

- ✓ Over 1330 books distributed county wide
- ✓ Approximately 750 birth to age 5 children served

Early Experiences Matter

Amity R. Buckner, Executive Director

As I reflect on the last 15 years in the life of Pickens County First Steps (PCFS), I am inspired by the extent of shared alliances we have been blessed to forge for the cause of improved early childhood care and education. Years of collaborative partnerships with the United Way of Pickens County, the School District of Pickens County, Prevent Child Abuse Pickens County, DSS, DHEC, Pickens County Library System, Tri-County Tech, Clemson University, and countless childcare centers are the value of Pickens County First Steps. Our alliance of sharing funding, research, service delivery, and best practice strategies has created the success stories. Pickens County First Steps continues to shine the spotlight on the gaps in services to children and together these partnerships have worked tirelessly to improve school readiness for our county's youngest learners.

We continue to improve quality of care in childcare centers countywide, increase literacy for thousands of at-risk four-year-olds, and increase parenting skills and interaction with numerous at-risk children and families. Our youngest programs, Early Steps Identification and Nurse Family Partnerships, continue to show strong outcomes and collaboration in our county. These programs coupled with our veteran programs are working—one child, one family at a time. Our committed focus remains on those of early experiences that affect the brain for decades to come.

I invite you to join Pickens County First Steps in advocacy for those whose voice is not always heard, those who don't get the opportunity to choose their family—our youngest learners, our future. Read a book, ask questions, listen, speak the truth, volunteer...show them they are valued. **Early Experiences Matter!**

Thank you for the privilege of serving as a voice for the least of these,

Amity



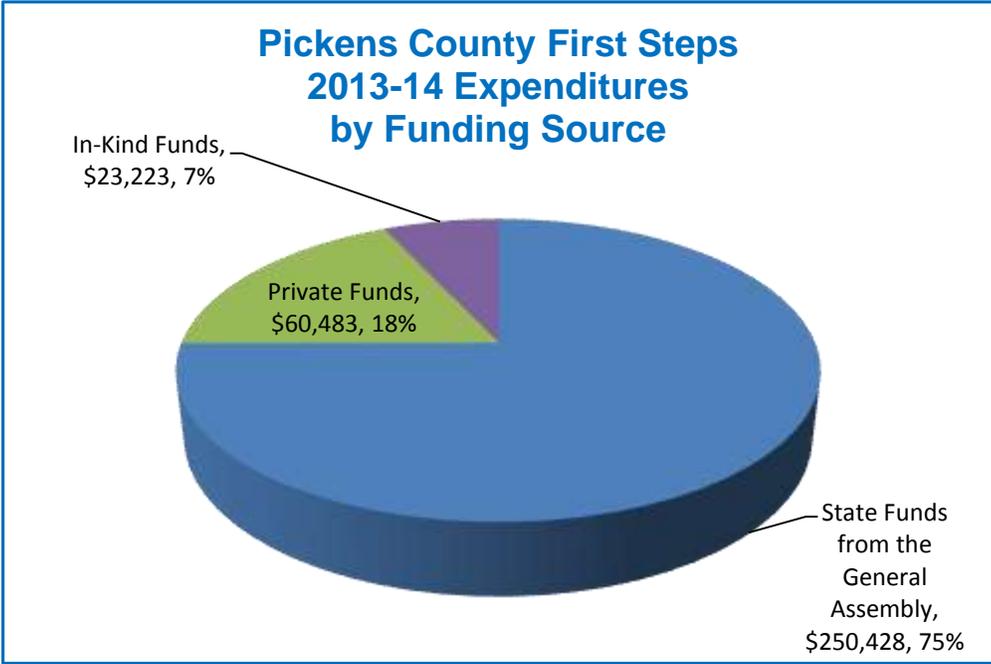
Board Chair
 Edith Ley

Executive Director
 Amity Buckner

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 Central, SC 29631

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Financial Impact



Total 2013-14 Expenditures: \$334,134

State Funds Leveraged in 2013-14*: 31%

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

2013-14 Expenditures by Strategy

	State \$	Federal \$	Private \$	In-Kind \$	Total \$	% of 2013-14 Expenditures
Parents as Teachers	\$93,131	\$0	\$0	\$16,374	\$109,505	33%
Family Literacy	\$3,369	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,369	1%
Book Flood	\$23,105	\$0	\$1,800	\$0	\$25,655	8%
Child Care Quality Enhancement	\$33,612	\$0	\$1,500	\$0	\$51,982	16%
Healthy Families	\$40,123	\$0	\$0	\$6,849	\$46,972	14%
Early Identification and Referral	\$22,855	\$0	\$26,683	\$0	\$50,288	15%
Nurse Family Partnership	\$0	\$0	\$25,000	\$0	\$25,000	7%
Program Support	\$19,691	\$0	\$5,500	\$0	\$25,191	8%
Administrative Support	\$14,542	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$14,542	4%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$250,428	\$0	\$60,483	\$23,223	\$334,134	

Unaudited numbers for the period July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014

Support Pickens County First Steps today through a tax-deductible donation!

Play: Where Learning Begins

Week of the Young Child 2014

This year our county adopted the theme "Play: Where Learning Begins" for our Week of the Young Child! Child development research shows that play is important to all aspects of a child's development, including the development of language and literacy. It is through play that children discover language and learn to communicate.

Play is a freely chosen process that children engage in based on their prior knowledge, values and skills. It a natural process that promotes lifelong physical, socio-emotional and cognitive skills. Play is child chosen, spontaneous and creative! It can stop as unexpectedly as it began. Adults may come up with ideas of play but a child will only accept what will meet his/her needs or passions.



Even babies can engage in play! Allowing babies to interact with their environment allows them the opportunity to find out details about the smell, taste, feel and weight of a certain material. This type of play fosters further development in decision making, concentration and mobility.

"Ring around the Rosy" is a great musical game to play. Music supports important brain connections. It naturally provides opportunities to practice patterns, math concepts and symbolic thinking skills.

Play is a child's work!

Thank you to our partners!

Funding Support

State of South Carolina: \$250, 428
(through South Carolina First Steps)

United Way of Pickens County: \$41,083.93
for

Early Steps Identification
Nurse Family Partnerships

In-Kind Support

School District of Pickens County
Prevent Child Abuse Pickens County
Pickens County First Steps Board Members
Children's Services Council of Pickens County
SafeKids Upstate
Family Connections
Child Care Resource and Referral
Pickens County Library System

Writing in a New Chapter!

Asia's story, Parenting and Family Literacy

Meet Asia. She has overcome many obstacles in her lifetime. She first came to the Parenting and Family Literacy program at the School District of Pickens County as an infant with her own young mother. She returned 18 years later as young mother with a myriad of obstacles in her way to achieving her goals. Her son spent his first 6 months of life in the NICU; even during this time Asia attended classes and completed home visits. Asia followed through with her home visits by completing her parent/child activities with Jayden in the NICU. Jayden came home from the NICU with the support of multiple therapy interventions as well as a continuous feed G-tube. Asia ensured that Jayden received all his therapies and met all his therapy goals, all the while serving as the primary caregiver for her own mother. Amidst all these responsibilities, Asia held down a job. She graduated within six months of entering the Family and Parenting Program in December of 2013.



During her time at the Family and Parenting Program, Asia also earned her National Readiness Certificate and participated in the Palmetto Youth Connections. Upon graduation, she entered the CNA program at Tri-County Technical College and received her CNA certification. Asia is now working part-time as a CNA and taking classes to become a Registered Nurse!

Asia needed someone to meet her where she was, someone to love her, someone to support and someone to encourage her along the way. She needed someone to be proud of her. She wanted to change the patterns of the past, to turn the page on her family's history of struggle. She found all she needed at the Parenting and Family Literacy Program.

Asia is currently experiencing the fruits of her hard work, dedication and persistence. She embodies the goals of the Parenting and Family Literacy Program as well as those of Pickens County First Steps. Watching Asia realize her hopes and dreams was a proud moment for all of us in Pickens County. Because of your support, the day Asia graduated, she began a new chapter in her family's history.

Parents play an irreplaceable role in their child's development.

Program Description

The Parents as Teachers (PAT) model is an evidence-based early childhood home visiting framework for families with children prenatal through kindergarten entry that builds strong communities, thriving families and children who are healthy, safe and ready to learn. PAT services include:

1. **Personal Visits** minimum twice monthly in the client's home
2. **Group Connections** with other PAT families at least monthly
3. **Screenings and Assessments** to identify issues early
4. **Resource and Referral Network** connecting families to needed resources



Our PAT program:

- ✓ Increases parent knowledge of child development and improves parenting practices
- ✓ Provides early detection of developmental delays and health issues
- ✓ Prevents child abuse and neglect
- ✓ Increases children's school readiness and school success

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

93% ... live in poverty

100% ... didn't graduate high school

40% ... were teen parents

PAT by the Numbers 2013-14

Families Served	35
Children Served	39
Total Home Visits	758
Hours Spent Serving Families	768

This year, our Parents as Teachers program:

- ✓ Averaged 2.5 monthly home visits per family
- ✓ Identified and addressed 4 potential developmental delays
- ✓ Improved parenting practices by an average of 41%
- ✓ Improved literacy skills an average of 98% in children served, 79% in adults served
- ✓ Connected 100% of families served to community resources through appropriate referrals

Thank you to our partners!

School District of Pickens County Family Literacy

Prevent Child Abuse Pickens County

UW Childcare Resource and Referral

SafeKids Upstate

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Parents are their child's first teachers.

Program Description

Comprehensive family literacy services provide a holistic, fully integrated, family-focused approach, providing parents and children most in need of improving their literacy skills with intensive, frequent and long-term educational and non-educational services. Family literacy services integrate all of the following:

1. Adult Education
2. Child Education
3. Parent Education
4. Interactive Parent/Child Activities



Our family literacy program:

- ✓ Helps parents of young children increase their education levels
- ✓ Provides English language instruction for parents
- ✓ Teaches parents how to support their child's literacy and overall development
- ✓ Provides quality early learning experiences for children 0-5 while their parents attend adult education

Pickens County First Steps serves families in greatest need. Among our family literacy program families:

93% ... live in poverty
100% ... didn't graduate high school
32% ... enrolled in our program with less than an eighth grade education

Family Literacy by the Numbers 2013-14

Adults Served	35
Children Served	39
Adult Education Hours Offered	642
Early Childhood Education Hours Offered	1400
Parenting Education Hours Offered	1800
Number of adults that achieved their HS diploma or GED	8

This year, our Family Literacy program:

- ✓ Increased the education levels of participating parents by an average of 4.1 grade levels in reading
- ✓ Increased the education levels of participating parents by an average of 3 grade levels in math
- ✓ ESL parents achieved an average gain of 81% in their English language skills
- ✓ Connected families to other community resources

Thank you to our partners!

School District of Pickens County Family Literacy
Prevent Child Abuse Pickens County
United Way of Pickens County

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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

For infants, toddlers and preschoolers, the quality of care they receive is crucial to their healthy development and eventual readiness for school. Child care providers strive to provide that type of quality care, but often 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 significant 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)

So many things we didn't know, but now we do! Thanks Betsy!
 -Redell

QE by the Numbers, 2013-14

Child Care Providers Served	2
Number of TA Visits Provided	430
Number of Children 0-5 Enrolled in Provider Classrooms	112



This year, our Quality Enhancement program:

- ✓ Provided 338 hours of technical assistance to child care providers
- ✓ Provided \$3,000 in materials grants to participating child care providers
- ✓ Improved quality of care in two county childcare centers

Thank you to our partners!

Playhouse Pals
 Little Lights CDC
 United Way of Pickens County

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Child Care Training

Those who care for young children need high-quality, accessible, affordable professional development.

Program Description

Efforts to improve the quality of child care must include providing affordable, high quality training 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, but also follow-up with supported practice in the classroom.

Amity's trainings are always relevant to my classroom needs. We love her prizes!
 -Marie

Training by the Numbers, 2013-14

Total Training Attendance	167
Child Care Teachers and Directors Served	59
Number of Training Hours Offered	25

**Child Care Training Sponsored by
 Pickens County First Steps, 2013-14**

<u>Topic:</u>	<u>Sessions:</u>
Curriculum	5
Growth and Development	5
Child Guidance	2



This year, our Training program provided:

- ✓ 59 early childhood staff attended high quality trainings
- ✓ 19 hours of certified training and 6 hours of registered training
- ✓ 100% of contracted center's staff met annual re-certification requirements
- ✓ 435 follow-up visits with training participants to help put training into practice

Thank you to our partners!

- Pickens County childcare centers
- United Way of Pickens County
- Pickens County Library System

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

Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) helps transform the lives of vulnerable first-time moms 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 Pickens County, Nurse-Family Partnership is implemented through Greenville Health System in partnership with Greenville and Oconee County First Steps.

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

- 88% ...**Medicaid clients**
- 55% ...**under age 20**
- 55% ...**no high school diploma at intake**

My nurse helped me set goals and see that I could do so many other things.

-Vanessa

NFP by the Numbers, 2013-14

Children Served	18
First Time Moms Enrolled	31

This year, our NFP program:

- ✓ **94.5% of our clients delivered healthy, typical (6lbs. or higher) birth weight babies**
- ✓ **100% of children participating have been regularly screened for developmental delay**
- ✓ **100% of children participating are growing developing and being immunized regularly**
- ✓ **85% of mothers enrolled reported employment or enrollment in job training programs**

Thank you to our partners!

School District of Pickens County
Prevent Child Abuse Pickens County
United Way of Pickens County
Pickens County DSS
Pickens County DHEC

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Book Flood

"When I say to a parent, "Read to a child", I don't want it to sound like medicine. I want it to sound like chocolate. " - Mem Fox

Program Description

Book Flood is a literacy model designed to enhance book exposure, increase shared reading time at home as well as develop, enhance and increase literacy awareness skills in a home/school collaboration all the while fostering a love of reading. It is implemented in the public 4K classrooms in the School District of Pickens County.

Age-appropriate books are distributed by rotation among 4K teachers/providers in the county. Students take home a different book each school night to read with a family member.

Pickens First Steps serves families in greatest need. Among our 4K families:

- 100% ... live in at risk situations
- 60% ... have limited literacy exposure
- 10% ... had developmental delays

I love getting a new book every day and reading with Mommy!
-Christian, age 4

Book Flood by the Numbers, 2013-14

Children Served	435
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This year, our Book Flood program:

- ✓ 95% of families reported increased reading aloud time-average increase of 24 hours per month
- ✓ 85% of teachers reported increased reading skills
- ✓ 93% of families observed reading skills

Thank you to our partners!

School District of Pickens County
United Way of Pickens County

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Healthy Families

Parents can be supported by Programs to Ensure the Path to School Readiness.

Program Description

Healthy Families is an evidence-based early childhood home visitation framework for families with children prenatal through kindergarten. By design it builds strong communities, thriving families and children who are healthy, safe and ready to learn.

Healthy Families is based on 12 critical elements derived from more than 30 years of research. To ensure program effectiveness when working with families. These critical elements are operationalized through a series of best practice standards that provide a solid structure for quality yet offer program flexibility to design services to specifically meet the needs of their families and communities.

Our Healthy Families program includes:

1. **Personal Visits** minimum twice monthly in the client's home
2. **Group Connections** with other HF clients
3. **Screenings and Assessments** to identify concerns early
4. **Resource and Referral Network** connecting families to needed resources

Healthy Families by the Numbers, 2013-14

Children Served	25
Families Served	26
Home Visits	298

Pickens First Steps serves families in greatest need. Among our 26 families:

- 92% ... live in poverty
- 74% ... didn't graduate high school
- 75% ...teen mothers

This year, our Healthy Families program:

- ✓ Increased parent knowledge of child development by an average of 65%
- ✓ Identified and addressed 4 potential developmental delays
- ✓ Improved parenting practices by an average of 35%
- ✓ Connected 100% of families served to community resources through appropriate referrals

Thank you to our partners!

- Pickens County DSS
- SafeKids Upstate
- United Way of Pickens County
- Help Me Grow

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Early Identification and Referral

Program Description

Early Identification and Referral's goal is to find children early, accurately and to refer them for services to BabyNet (IDEA Part C) or the School District of Pickens County (IDEA Part B) determined by age of the child. Service delivery is primarily through childcare centers in the county where 60% of the children under age five play and learn each weekday.

Seventeen percent of children under the age of 18 are affected by developmental, behavioral or learning disability. Birth to age three is the most critical time in a child's development. Early detection of developmental delay is imperative to achieving school readiness.

Our Early Identification and Referral program, Early Steps Identification (ESI) includes:

1. On-site observation and screening of children of concern in all childcare centers in our county.
2. Refer children who screen positive for potential delay to either BabyNet or the School District of Pickens County
3. Provide technical assistance when needed to families and childcare center professionals
4. Provide direct service to children non-eligible for BabyNet services through the Children's Services Council of Pickens County (CSCPC)
5. Refer families to appropriate community resources to enhance their capacity to care for their child(ren)



ESI by the Numbers, 2013-14

Children Served	50
Children Referred	12
Materials Distributed	1104

This year, our ESI program:

- ✓ 100% of children screened were appropriately referred
- ✓ 5 children have received early intervention therapy services through the CSCPC
- ✓ 100% of children served have shown improved development

Thank you to our partners!

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| BabyNet | Meyer Center |
| Ahead Start | Pickens BDSN |
| Aging with Flair | Help Me Grow |
| United Way of Pickens County | Family Connection |
| School District of Pickens County | |
| Pickens County childcare centers | |

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Community Leadership in Early Childhood

Children's Services Council of Pickens County

An intentional alliance of county agencies serving children prenatal to age 5 and their families

Half a decade ago PCFS and its board embarked on an early childhood collaborative, partnering with United Way of Pickens County and Prevent Child Abuse Pickens County, mobilizing countless advocates for early childhood. This collaborative partnership has blossomed into an alliance that is effectively reaching families, connecting them to community resources, eliminating gaps in services and empowering. The Children's Services Council of Pickens County has worked to disseminate information and educate local community resources about the needs our county's youngest learners. Young families have received guidance to appropriate, necessary resources for their children through this significant alliance. Most notable is our Early Intervention grant, made possible by United Way Community Impact dollars, that provides early intervention services (family training, speech/language) needed for school success to 10 non-BabyNet, non-Medicaid eligible children. The impact of these early connections will continue to impact our county for years to come as these young learners enter school ready to learn!

Pickens County First Steps Partnership Board, 2013-14

Name	Position	Board Category
Bowling, Mandy	Childcare Director	Childcare
Brock, Christinia	Parent Educator, School District of Pickens County	Family Education
Brown, Diane	Retired Educator/Administrator	Legislative Appointment
Childers, Susan	Teacher, School District of Pickens County	Pre-K Educator
Clamp, Harriett	Retired Educator/Administrator	Early Childhood
Ducworth, Julie	Renewal Committee	Non-profit
Harrison, Nikita	Director DSS/Renewal Committee	DSS Representative
Hays, Erika	Guidance Counselor, School District of Pickens County	Family
Hicks, George	Family Advocate, SHARE Head Start	Head Start Representative
Hopkins, Sheryl	DHEC site manager	DHEC Representative
Howard, Lisa	Teacher, School District of Pickens County	Pre-K Educator
Jacks, Lyle	Pediatric TEAM Center/Renewal Committee	Healthcare Provider
Kastner, Susan	Parent & Family Partner, Family Connection	Healthcare Provider
Kelley, Tammy	Children's Librarian, PC Library System	Library Representative
Ley, Edith	Retired Librarian/Chair	Faith
Morris, Gloria	Director, The Parenting Place	Non-profit
Steadham, Cheryl	Director Parenting & Family Literacy, SCPC	School District Representative
Snipes, Daby	SafeKids Upstate	Early Childhood
Weinmueller, Teresa	Teacher, School District of Pickens County	Non-Profit
Wiley, Carol	Retired Educator	Legislative Appointment

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



Getting children ready for school.

What is First Steps?

South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness was created in 1999 by the South Carolina General Assembly for the purpose of **having every child in South Carolina arrive at kindergarten ready to learn**. Sadly, many South Carolina children possess one or more risk factors that put them at **high risk** (greater than a 1 in 3 chance) for **“early school failure”** – either being retained or scoring below grade level in reading or math – by third grade.

First Steps works to accomplish its mission through a state coordinating office and a network of county partnerships (46), each a private non-profit organization led by a board of early childhood stakeholders. With a modest recurring appropriation of state funding, First Steps leverages cash and in-kind resources at the federal, state and local level to improve services for young children in five strategy areas:



Family Strengthening

A parent is a child’s first and best teacher.

Healthy Start

Children’s development and ability to learn are profoundly impacted by their health.

Quality Child Care

Access to high-quality care is a critical component of a child’s healthy development.

Early Education

Quality preschool opportunities set the stage for success in school.

School Transition

Preparing children and parents for a successful transition into kindergarten.

Each First Steps county partnership determines how to spend its funds based on a needs and resources assessment and collaboration with community partners to **fill gaps in local services** for young children and their families. First Steps has proven its impact through strong program and fiscal accountability and independent evaluations - a requirement of its enabling legislation.

All programs that receive First Steps funding must adhere to program standards that require programs to be research-based and operated with fidelity; staff who have appropriate qualifications, training, and supervision; services to be comprehensive and coordinated with available community resources; standard assessment instruments that document client outcomes; and programs that **target services to children most at risk** for not being developmentally ready for school.

Other First Steps Services in Pickens County:



BabyNet

South Carolina’s Early Intervention System

First Steps is the lead agency for BabyNet, South Carolina’s early intervention system for children under 3. Parents of children 0-2 years old with disabilities or suspected developmental delays should contact their local BabyNet office to schedule an evaluation.

BabyNet in Greenville/Pickens County:
864-331-1453

<http://scfirststeps.org/babynet/>

First Steps Works for the Children, Parents, and Taxpayers of South Carolina:

First Steps works with community partners to reduce first grade retention. **From 2001 to 2012, first grade retention dropped by 51% statewide, saving taxpayers \$23 million annually.**

First Steps leverages resources for families of young children through public-private partnerships. **Since 1999, local partnerships have leveraged an additional 47 cents for every state dollar invested.**

First Steps has increased the quality of services available to young children and families, using research and data to improve programs.

First Steps is a national leader in state-local collaboration to benefit families and communities.

www.scfirststeps.org

Pickens County First Steps

Board Chair
Edith Ley

Executive Director
Amity Buckner

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