

PICKENS COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.



- Nurse Family Partnership
- Early Identification and Referral
- Parents as Teachers with Family Literacy
- Book Flood
- Child Care Quality Enhancement
- Child Care Training

Annual Report

2014-2015



OUR MISSION:

Creating a community where children are ready for school!

First Steps WORKS for the children of Pickens County.

Who We Serve

First Steps serves South Carolina's young children and their families, with the goal of ensuring each is prepared for school success.

Number of Pickens children under 5:
5,999

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

Babies born each year in Pickens County to a mother less than a high school diploma:
1 in 5

Our Programs

- Nurse Family Partnerships
- Early Identification and Referral
- Parents as Teachers with Family Literacy
- Book Flood
- Child Care Quality Enhancement
- Child Care Training
- Project Pinwheel
- Children's Services Council of Pickens County

Are you a Super Hero?

Amity R. Buckner, Executive Director

Over the last sixteen years, Pickens County First Steps has seen many changes. Changes in funding, changes in programs and changes in personnel. One thing has remained the same, at the heart of our work, the reason that each of us gets up in the morning—the children of Pickens County! Our committed focus remains on those of early experiences that affect the brain for decades to come.

This year we adopted the theme "be a super hero for our youngest learners." We launched our first ever website, began making weekly child-focused blogs posts and intentionally sharing stories about the good work going in our county for our youngest citizens. Stories on Facebook and twitter focus on the everyday super heroes in our community—teachers, child care providers, librarians, parents, and health care providers. We have found that this increased social media presence has served as a powerful vehicle to disseminate information.

I invite you to join Pickens County First Steps in being a super hero 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 a child that they are valued. Early Experiences Matter!

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

Amity



Follow us: @PCFirstSteps

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Lyle H. Jacks

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What We Do

Each of the six color blocks of the First Steps logo represents a core area of service, outlining our comprehensive strategy to prepare children for long-term school success.

With **measurable outcomes across each of its six school readiness strategy areas**, First Steps is getting results.



Healthy Start

We begin with a focus on providing a healthy start to life. This includes prenatal and post-partum services for both mother and baby. In 2007, First Steps collaborated with key philanthropic and agency partners to bring Nurse-Family Partnership to SC having a significant impact on reducing premature births and Medicaid costs.



Quality Childcare

Quality childcare starts with quality childcare providers. Our quality enhancement and training strategies lead to improved teacher-student interaction, which research shows has a significant impact on a child's development and success in school.



Family Strengthening

Our home visitation strategies, such as Parents as Teachers, Parent-Child Home and Early Steps to School Success, are helping parents understand their responsibilities to care for and be positive models for their children. As a result of First Steps' intervention and parenting support, 66% of clients initially assessed at "low" levels of parenting have achieved moderate or high levels of parenting skill.



Early Education

Private-public partnerships through First Steps 4K have led to significant cost efficiencies in the delivery of publicly funded 4K. One recent analysis suggests First Steps is achieving comparable results, without the need for costly capital construction, for 80 cents on the dollar.



Early Intervention

According to recent federal evaluations, outcomes for clients participating in BabyNet early intervention programs are above national averages. BabyNet matches the special needs of infants and toddlers who have disabilities and/or developmental delays with customized, community-based resources.



School Transition

Each of the corresponding blocks of services leads ultimately to the goal of transitioning children successfully to school. Programs like Countdown to Kindergarten and From Day One to Grade One are ultimately preparing children for school success.

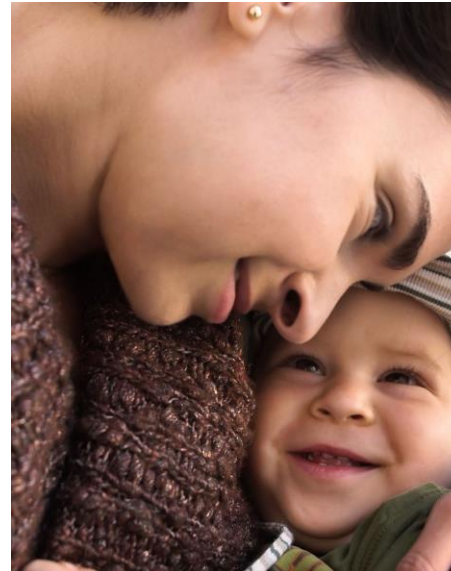
Based on the needs of our community, Pickens County First focuses its investments in...Quality Childcare, Family Strengthening, Early Education, Early Intervention and Community Engagement.

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 Pickens County, Nurse-Family Partnership is implemented through the Greenville Hospital System.



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

- 100% ... clients live in poverty
- 47% ... teen Moms
- 93% ...delivered full term, healthy babies

NFP by the Numbers, 2014-15

Moms Served	32
Number of Home Visits	562

A new baby is like the beginning of all things—wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities!

This year, our NFP program:

- ✓ 100% of children with a developmental delay were identified and referred.
- ✓ 14 healthy babies were delivered

Thank you to our partners!

- BabyNet
- School District of Pickens County
- Greenville Hospital System
- Pickens County DSS

Pickens County First Steps
 PO Box 1113
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www.PickensCountyFirstStep.org

Early Identification and Referral

Identifying and referring children with possible developmental delays can help assure school readiness.

Program Description

Early Steps Identification (ESI) serves families with young children with suspected delays in development and coordinates public awareness for BabyNet services, acting as a local portal to connect families to community-based services they may need or desire to ensure the school readiness of their children

EI&R services include:

1. **Screenings** (developmental, vision, hearing) for children ages birth to 5 years with suspected delays in development
2. **Referrals**, based up the screening results, to appropriate community resources. This could include the local BabyNet System Point of Entry Office, the local school district, and/or support services such as speech therapy, physical therapy, and programs in libraries and other community resources.
3. **Parent information** including strategies to monitor growth and development.

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**



Research tells us that the time between birth and 36 months is a critical developmental period in a child's life. These months offer a window of opportunity that will not be available later.

EI&R by the Numbers 2014-15

Children Served	521
Materials Distributed	1,333
Children Referred to BabyNet, Local School, or Other Services	12

This year, ESI:

- ✓ Screened 168 children for hearing
- ✓ Screened 18 children using Ages and Stages Questionnaire
- ✓ Referred 91 families to community resources after screening indicated need

Thank you to our partners!

Ahead Start	Help Me Grow
Aging with Flair	Pickens County Board of Disabilities and Special Needs
Family Connection of SC	Pickens YMCA
Children's Services Council of Pickens County	School District of Pickens County
United Way of Pickens County	

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Parents are their first and best teachers.

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

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

100% ... live in poverty
 48% ...were teen parents
 42%are single-parent homes



"The first 5 years have so much to do with next 80."

--Bill Gates

PAT by the Numbers 2014-15

Families Served	31
Children 0-5 Served	37
Total Home Visits	748
Hours Spent Serving Families	773

This year, our Parents as Teachers program:

- ✓ Averaged 3 home visits per month per family
- ✓ Conducted over 90 developmental screenings
- ✓ Identified and addressed 11 children with potential developmental delays
- ✓ Improved parenting practices scores by an average of 86%
- ✓ Distributed over 200 books to families
- ✓ Made 89 connections for families to community resources

Thank you to our partners!

Children's Service Council of Pickens County
 School District of Pickens County
 Safe Kids Upstate
 Pickens County Library System

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Book Flood

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.

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 family literacy program families:

- 95% ...live in at risk situations
- 70% ...come from literacy deficient homes
- 10% ...have a documented developmental delay



"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

Book Flood by the Numbers, 2014-15

Children Served in Public 4K	498
Children Served in Private 4K	110

This year, our Book Flood program:

- ✓ Provided each participating child the opportunity to read an average of 20 different books a month
- ✓ Received donations book from multiple community members and organizations in support of children's literacy
- ✓ Provided a literacy rich home-school connection

Thank you to our partners!

- School District of Pickens County
- United Way of Pickens County
- Rotary Club of Pickens
- 1 Million Books Project

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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

The quality of care they received by young children is crucial to their healthy development and school readiness. Child care providers strive to provide high quality care, but may lack the resources that are commonly available to publicly-funded early childhood programs, such as educational materials, on-site professional development, and other support.

First Steps' Child Care Quality Enhancement (QE) is intended to produce measurable improvements in the quality of care provided to young children. Participating child care providers must serve a high percentage of at-risk children, and are selected through a competitive process that requires a strong level of commitment to the QE process.

Program Components

1. On-site Technical Assistance (TA) at least twice monthly
2. Equipment and materials funding
3. Integration with locally available training, provided by First Steps and other partners
4. Workforce Development
5. Coordination with community partners
6. Pre/post assessments of the classroom environment and teacher-child interaction, using nationally-recognized observational tools for infant/toddler and preschool settings (ITERS, ECERS, FCCERS)

QE by the Numbers, 2014-15

Child Care Providers Served	2
Number of TA Hours Provided	262
Number of Children 0-5 Enrolled in Provider Classrooms	148

Congratulations to our QE participants for 2014-15!

Child Care Provider	Pre/Post Improvement
Clemson Child Development Center, Toddler Room	3.0 to 3.1
Clemson Child Development Center, 4 K classroom	4.5 to 5.26

This year, our Quality Enhancement program:

- ✓ Improved quality based on pre/post Environment Rating Scale assessments.
- ✓ Provided 54 technical assistance visits to child care providers
- ✓ Provided \$2,500 in materials grants to participating child care providers

Thank you to our partners!

- ABC Quality Care
- Clemson Child Development Center
- Little Lights Learning Center
- SC Inclusion Collaborative
- SC Child Care Resource and Referral

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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.

*"Intentional Teachers are Playful, Purposeful and Thoughtful! I'm learning how to apply that in my classroom."
 -Robbie*



Training by the Numbers, 2014-15

Total Training Attendance	30
Child Care Teachers and Directors Served	75
Number of Training Sessions Offered	17

This year's theme for child care trainings was intentional teaching. Teresa and Meagan are developing a slogan for their classroom that lets parents know they are intentional teachers.

This year, our Training program provided:

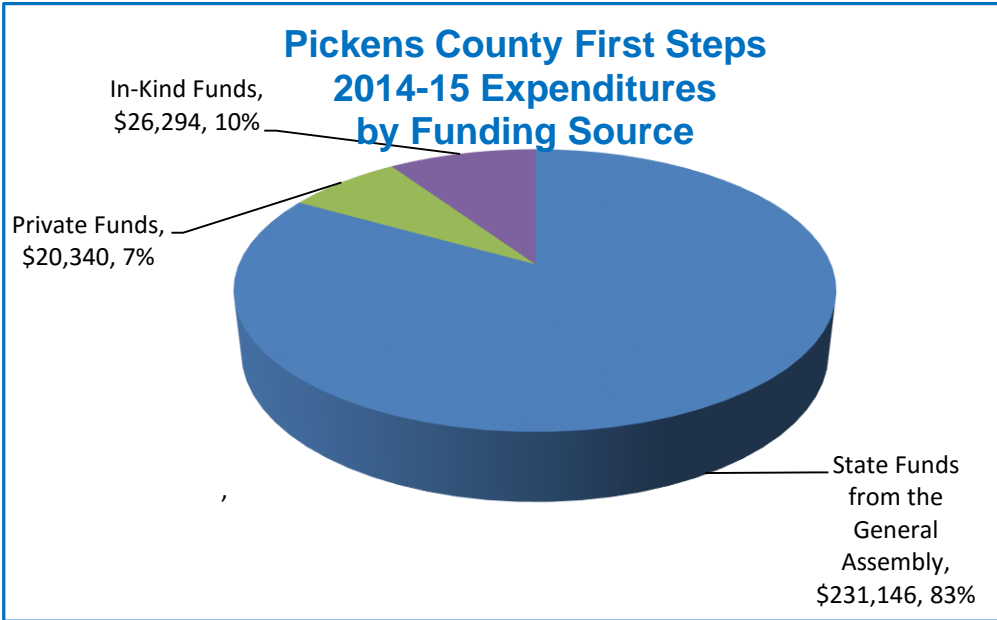
- ✓ 30 early childhood staff with high quality training
- ✓ 15 hours of certified training and 2 hours of registered training for staff to meet annual requirements
- ✓ 45 follow-up visits with training participants to help put training into practice

Thank you to our partners!

- Pickens County Library System
- SC Child Care Resource and Referral
- Zero to Three
- SC Center for Child Care Career and Development

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Financial Impact



Total 2014-15 Expenditures: \$266,701

State Funds Leveraged in 2014-15*: 20%

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

Parents as Teachers (PAT)	\$94,990		\$0	\$16,374	\$111,364	100%
PAT/Family Literacy	\$2,510	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,510	1%
Book Flood	\$21,333	\$0	\$8,940	\$7,320	\$37,593	14%
Child Care Quality Enhancement	\$25,247	\$0	\$200	\$0	\$25,447	9%
Child Care Training	\$13,753	\$0	\$0		\$13,753	5%
Early Identification and Referral	\$35,252	\$0	\$11,200	\$0	\$42,198	15%
Program Support	\$21,795	\$0	\$0	\$2,600	\$24,395	9%
Administrative Support	\$16,266	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$16,266	6%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$231,147	\$0	\$20,340	\$26,294	\$277,781	

Since inception, Pickens County First Steps has leveraged \$1,760.153 from sources outside of state government. That's 35 cents for every state dollar.

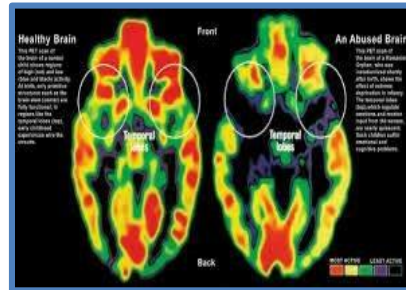
Project Pinwheel

Over half of children that enter school not ready to learn have experienced some type of abuse or neglect. Project Pinwheel is a community engagement campaign to raise awareness and help promote the everyday things families can do to keep children happy and healthy. Last year, Pickens County planted over 6,000 pinwheels, one for every child birth to age 5, at 65 sites around the county.



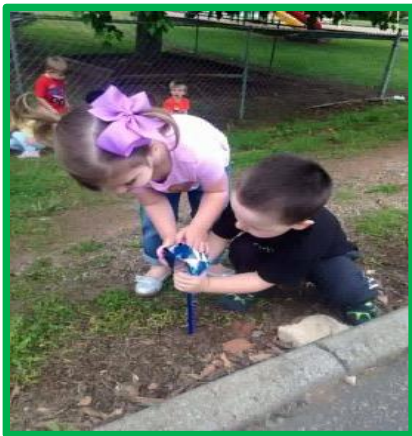
Every elementary school in the county planted pinwheels for prevention!

Early Experiences Matter!



Have you ever wondered the impact abuse and neglect has on a child's brain? The brain on the left represents a child who has had meaningful early experiences. The one on the right represents a child that has experienced extreme abuse and neglect. The black areas represent brain inactivity!

Project Pinwheels by Numbers for 2014-2015:



Number of Sites	64
Materials Distributed	700
Pinwheels planted	6,010

All pinwheel proceeds go to support our new child care scholarship program!

Children's Services Council of Pickens County

The vision of the Children's Services Council of Pickens County (CSCPC) is to see that all Pickens County children are valued, supported, education, safe and healthy. This collaborative partnership works to effectively disseminate information and educate local community resources about the needs our county's youngest learners.



An alliance of agencies in our county that serve children birth to age 5 in our county.

- ✓ 655 children reached
- ✓ 1100 materials distributed
- ✓ 3 visits to the Pickens Flea Market
- ✓ 1 Born Learning Trial built in partnership with the United Way of Pickens County and Junior Leadership Pickens County

Week of the Young Child

Week of the Young Child is a national celebration that takes place in April of each year that celebrates our youngest citizens. This year we choose the theme

"Be a Super Hero for our Youngest Learners."



Early Experiences Matter!



What is Readiness?

A child's readiness is determined by many critical components including good health, nurturing parenting, and positive learning environments. High quality early experiences at home, in child care and in school allow children to thrive at a time when their brains are most formative.

The goal of our board of directors is to encourage and support families in these early experiences through each of our programs. Partnering with other agencies in the county is one of the best ways that we can support families. One of our strongest is our decade old partnership with the United Way of Pickens County. Our partnership has fruited the construction of 2 new Born Learning Trials, 15 "everyday learning" billboards, establishment of an annual Day of Reading in July where community volunteers read to children in the child care setting, as well as hundreds of books being distributed to vulnerable families in our county. We salute the United Way of Pickens County for being Super Heroes for our county's youngest learners!

Pickens County First Steps Board of Directors:

Name	Position	Board Category
Bowling, Mandy		Child Care
Brock, Christinia		Family Educator
Brown, Diane		Legislative Appointment
Childers, Susan		ECE provider
Clamp, Harriett		Primary Educator
Ducworth, Julie	Secretary	Non-profit
Harrison, Nikita		DSS representative
Hays, Erika		Family Training/Support
Hicks, George		Family Training/Support
Hopkins, Sheryl		Healthcare Provider
Howard, Lisa		Pre-K educator
Jacks, Lyle	Chair	Healthcare Provider
Kastner, Susan		Family Educator/Support
Kelley, Tammy		Library Representative
Ley, Edith		Faith
Steadham, Cheryl		ECE provider
Snipes, Daby		Healthcare
Weinmueller, Teresa		Primary educator
Wiley, Carol		Legislative Appointment
Young, Greta		Non-Profit

Getting children ready for school.

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>



BabyNet

South Carolina's Early Intervention System

BabyNet in Greenville/Pickens County:
1-864-331-1450

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

Be a Super Hero for Our Youngest Learners!