

PICKENS COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.



Early Identification and Referral

Parents as Teachers

Book Flood

Child Care Scholarships

Community Outreach

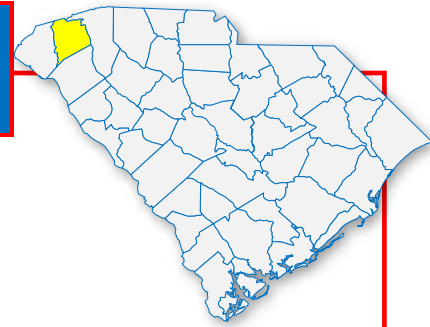
Annual Report

2016-2017



OUR MISSION:

Creating a community where children are ready for school!



By The Numbers

Indicator	SC	Pickens County
Children Under Five	291,026	6,021
Children In Poverty	24.4%	19.4%
3 rd Graders Scoring "Does Not Meet" Standard in Reading	22.2%	18.3%
Births to Mothers With Less Than a High School Diploma	15.0%	15.9%

KIDS COUNT data provided by



Birth to age 5 Children Served 1,467
Families Served 1,540
Books Distributed 2,200






Follow us: @PCFirstSteps

Eighty percent

Why is that so important? Because we know that 80% of brain growth happens in the first three years of life! These early years provide us with opportunity. Each child, from every background, is born with enormous potential to be successful and to enter school ready to learn.

Our goal at First Steps has always been to create a culture of school readiness—a community that values education from the moment a child is born. How exactly do you create that culture? In August of 2016, Pickens County First Steps and Greenville First Steps partnered with other early childhood stakeholders to find the answer. We knew creating this culture wasn't by giving parents and caregivers more brochures about standards and milestones.

After several months of breaking standards down and creating flip charts, the answer became clearer. School readiness is simple, but we have made it complicated. We needed to get back to the basics - the basics of parenting. In May of 2017, the Palmetto Basics was born.

The Palmetto Basics—five fun, simple and powerful ways to give every child a great start in life—provide us with a common early childhood message for our community. The Basics is taking root and will continue to inform all of the work that we do in Pickens County.

We know that we can't do it alone. We need you! Join us and help spread the word about the Palmetto Basics. Who in your life needs to know about the 5 fun, simple and powerful ways to help ALL children become the happiest and most successful they can be? To learn more, visit www.palmettobasics.org.

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

Amity Buckner, Executive Director



Healthy Start



Family Strengthening



Early Intervention



Quality Child Care



Early Education



School Transition

County Programs

- Book Flood
- Child Care Scholarships
- Early Identification and Referral
- Parents as Teachers
- Community Education

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.

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. ESI acts as a local portal to connect families to community-based services they may need or services they may 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 2016-17

Children Served	210
Children Referred to BabyNet, Local School, or Other Services	14

This year, ESI:

- ✓ Screened children for hearing concerns
- ✓ Screened 20 children for developmental delay
- ✓ Made accurate referrals to our IDEA partners

Thank you to our partners!

- | | |
|---|--|
| Ahead Start | Help Me Grow |
| Fundament Communications | 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 | SC Inclusion Collaborative |

Pickens County First Steps

PO Box 1113
 Central, SC 29630
 864-654-3000
www.PickensCountyFirstSteps.org

Parents are a child's 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 2016-17

Families Served	26
Children 0-5 Served	29
Total Home Visits	798
Hours Spent Serving Families	795

This year, our Parents as Teachers program:

- ✓ Averaged 3 home visits per month per family
- ✓ Conducted over 75 developmental screenings
- ✓ Identified and addressed 10 children with potential developmental delays
- ✓ Improved parenting practices scores by an average of 86%
- ✓ Distributed over 300 books to families
- ✓ Made 130 connections for families to community resources

Thank you to our partners!

Children's Services Council of Pickens County

SC Resource and Referral Network

School District of Pickens County

Safe Kids Upstate

Pickens County Library System

Pickens County First Steps

PO Box 1113
Central, SC 29630
864-654-3000

www.PickensCountyFirstSteps.org

Child Care Scholarships

Many families in Pickens County cannot afford quality care for their children.

Program Description

Access to quality childcare is essential for children while they are away from their primary caregivers. Yet due to lack of funds, of those families income-eligible for child care assistance in South Carolina, only a small fraction receive it. In the absence of nurturing and consistently available family, friends, or neighbors, parents are faced with few or no affordable care options.

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

- 100% live in poverty.
- 90% are single parent homes.
- 10% had developmental delays.

In addition to regular monitoring of child care providers that receive First Steps scholarships, First Steps conducts at least two developmental screenings each year with scholarship children and connects families to needed services within the community.

Scholarships by the Numbers, 2016-17

Children Served	14
Providers Served	6

“The PCFS scholarship program allowed me to go back to school! I knew my baby was safe and loved while I was at a school.” -C’s mom



Each scholarship family received quarterly home visits. At visits parents were taught how to read to their children, foster fine motor skills, monitor screen usage and the importance of healthy meals.

This year, our scholarship program:

- Provided 14 children with scholarship assistance so their parents could work or attend school
- Identified and addressed potential developmental delays among scholarship children
- Provided quarterly home visits
- Gave 5 literacy kits to each child
- Provided training on the importance of Quality Child Care to parents

Thank you to our partners!

- United Way of Pickens County
- Clemson Child Development Center
- Geer Memorial CDC
- Kids Stuff Academy
- Little Lights Learning Center
- Pickens Presbyterian CDC
- Small World of Easley

Pickens County First Steps
 PO Box 1113
 Central, SC 29630
 864-654-3000
www.PickensCountyFirstSteps.org

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 and increase shared reading time at home. It also develops, enhances, and increases literacy awareness skills in a home / school collaboration 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, 2016-17

Children Served in Public/Private 4K	623
Hours Reading	30,989
Books Read	63,144
Classrooms Served	43

This year, our Book Flood program:

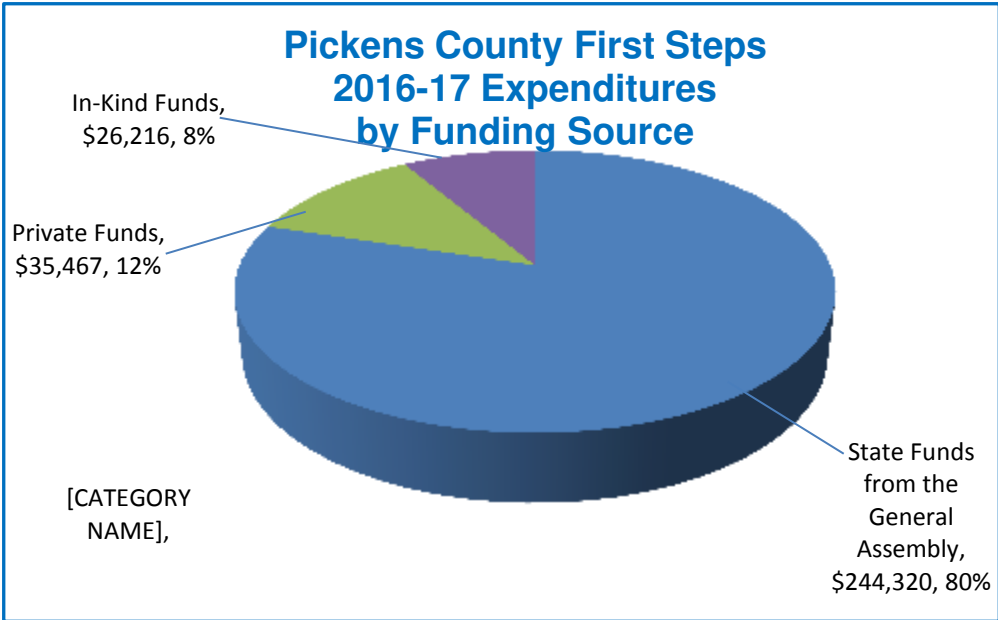
- ✓ Provided each participating child the opportunity to read an average of 20 different books a month
- ✓ Received donations book from multiple community members and organizations in support of children's literacy
- ✓ Provided a literacy rich home-school connection

Thank you to our partners!

- Pickens County Library System
- School District of Pickens County
- United Way of Pickens County

Pickens County First Steps
 PO Box 1113
 Central, SC 29630
 864-654-3000
www.PickensCountyFirstSteps.org

Financial Impact



Total 2016-17 Expenditures: \$244,320.41

State Funds Leveraged in 2016-17*: 25%

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

Parents as Teachers (PAT)	\$104,489		\$0	\$26,216	\$130,705	43%
Book Flood	\$19,811	\$0	\$3,685	\$0	\$23,496	8%
Child Care Scholarships	\$25,344	\$0	\$23,789	\$0	\$49,133	16%
Community Outreach	\$53,505	\$0	\$5,021	\$0	\$58,526	19%
Early Identification and Referral	\$14,017	\$0	\$1,910	\$0	\$15,927	5%
Program Support	\$10,983	\$0	\$725	\$0	\$11,708	4%
Administrative Support	\$16,172	\$0	\$336	\$0	\$16,508	5%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$244,320	\$0	\$35,467	\$26,216	\$306,003	

Since inception, Pickens County First Steps has leveraged \$1,873,787.91 from sources outside of state government. That's 32 cents for every state dollar.

The national Week of the Young Child is celebrated in April of every year. During this week we place particular focus on the importance of early experiences and the important role that those experiences play in the lives of our youngest learners.

This year our theme was "What is YOUR Super Power?"

Each year we partner to open a new Born Learning Trail. This year's trail was sponsored by the Clemson Rotary Club and United Way of Pickens County. The trail was installed at an existing park in Central.



All Week of the Young Child events are in partnership with other agencies. We couldn't do it without these partners: Ahead Start (left), City of Clemson Police (right), Easley Fire Department (bottom) and SafeKids Upstate (middle).



Celebrating Community

In partnership with our county's charter middle school, we installed 4 more little free libraries. The local laundromat also got a library, bringing our county total to 15! Each library is intentionally placed where families naturally gather, focusing on areas with a high vulnerable population.



Community Outreach events all featured book giveaways (left). Supporting our community as we give every baby a fighting chance (March of Dimes walk for Babies, right). Keeping little brains safe is a top priority (bottom)!



We can never do alone what we can do TOGETHER!



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 relationships is our multi-decade partnership with the United Way of Pickens County. We salute the United Way of Pickens County as a Champion for Children in Pickens County!

Pickens County First Steps Board of Directors:

Name	Position	Board Category
Bowling, Mandy		Child Care
Brock, Christinia		Family Educator
Brown, Diane		Legislative Appointment
Clamp, Harriett		Primary Educator
Ducworth, Julie	Secretary	Non-profit
Hays, Erika		Family Training/Support
Hicks, George		Family Training/Support
Hopkins, Sheryl		DHEC
Hunnicut, Patti		Retired
Jacks, Lyle	Chair	Healthcare Provider
Kastner, Susan		Family Educator/Support
Kelley, Tammy		Library Representative
Ley, Edith		Faith
Nichols, Faye		Retired
Vickery, Gail		DSS
Walter, Erica		Clemson University
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 Champion for Children!