

OCONEE COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.



Parents as Teachers

Child Care Training

Child Care Scholarships

Community Education

Annual Report

2017-18



OUR VISION:

All children in Oconee County will have the care they need to grow & develop to their full potential

Oconeefirststeps.org

P.O. Box 1557 Seneca, SC 29679 ♦ 864-985-3342 ♦ ocfdirector@gmail.com

Executive Director Message

A Year of Many Changes with Oconee County First Steps Partnership

Oconee County First Steps (OCFS) experienced several new and exciting changes during the year. First, I was hired as the Interim Director in November 2017 and became the Executive Director in May 2018. Along with that, we have seen many Board members retire from their roles and we have been able to bring in fresh faces to our First Steps team.

The agency completed a Community Needs and Resource Assessment in Fall, 2017 and updated our Comprehensive Plan. We revised our Vision and Mission Statements and developed new Goals. We couldn't have done this without the help of our dedicated community partners and talented Board of Directors.

The biggest challenge this year was to meet the new state requirements to have 75% of our renewal grant with evidence-based programs. Only about 37% of our programming was considered evidence-based by the state for the upcoming year. We were also losing a vendor for one of our two current evidence-based programs. In addition, our Child Care Scholarship program needed to be linked with an evidence-based program to still be offered. We are pleased to announce that 100% of our FY 19 Renewal Grant is supported by evidence-based programs! It took a lot of hard work by the Board and me, but these changes will make OCFS even stronger and provide more needed services to our residents and community!

Throughout the year, we continue with our Community Awareness projects like the annual Pinwheel Gardens for the prevention of child abuse and Warm a Child for the Winter project. Look for our Kick-Off of Palmetto Basics for Oconee County's Sesquicentennial Celebration this fall!



Monica Alles White MS, RD, LD

OCFS Executive Director

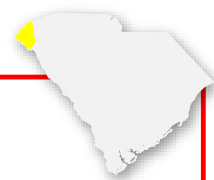
OUR MISSION:

Collaborating with other partners, Oconee County First Steps helps Oconee County families and caregivers prepare their children for school success by maximizing public and private community resources to deliver, enhance and expand high-quality early childhood services

Find Oconee County First Steps:







We get children ready.



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 Oconee County.

How are Oconee 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?
3,949 are under age 5	31 attended Early Head Start as infants and toddlers	20 licensed child care centers
24.3% live in poverty	65 attended free preschool or Head Start as 3-year-olds	12 licensed group/family homes
18.7% of babies born in 2016 were to moms without a HS diploma	111 4-year-olds attended free full-day public school 4K or Head Start	22% participate in the state's Quality Rating System (ABC Quality)
43% of foster care children are 0-5 years of age	322 0-5 year olds received early intervention or special ed.	6 providers are rated B or higher by ABC Quality
26.60% of last year's kindergartners demonstrated readiness	23 were served by 	245 families received assistance with affording child care last year
<i>Kids Count data provided by:</i> 	<i>Data provided by:</i> 	

THE GOALS

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

1. By 2020, Oconee County First Steps will have maintained, if not increased, its current investments and levels of success.
2. By 2020, as resources allow, Oconee County First Steps will have invested in Palmetto Basics.
3. By 2020, as resources allow, Oconee County First Steps will have worked with local child care facilities to improve the existing quality of care available to young children.
4. By 2020, as resources allow, Oconee County First Steps will have worked with local child care facilities to increase the number of high-quality placements available for infants and toddlers.
5. By 2020, as resources allow, Oconee County First Steps will have worked to support informal (or family, friend and neighbor care) child care arrangements.
6. By 2020, as resources allow, Oconee County First Steps will have worked with community partners to improve awareness of or reduce stigma regarding the use of mental health care services or parenting support services.
7. By 2020, as resources allow, Oconee County First Steps will have worked with community partners to encourage Well Child visits (i.e., visits to ensure health and development, not respond to illness).



- 8.** By 2020, as resources allow, Oconee County First Steps will have worked with community partners to encourage routine health and developmental (cognitive, physical and socio-emotional) screenings, starting at birth.
- 9.** By 2020, as resources allow, Oconee County First Steps will have expanded or deepened its community partnerships.

In 2017-18, Oconee County First Steps provided:

- ✓ **23 children and 24 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.
- ✓ **132 staff** working in **25** child care providers, Head Start centers and preschool classrooms with training, technical assistance, resources and support, **helping them better meet the needs of 1710 children ages 0-5 in their care.**
- ✓ financial assistance to help **15 children** (0-5 years of age) **attend quality child care** so their parents can work or attend school.
- ✓ **1016 books** to **spark the love of reading** for **2473 children**
- ✓ **2473 children and 847 adults** were impacted by Oconee County First Steps programs, resources, activities and events.



OCFS Executive Director and Board Members donate "Your Favorite Seuss" collection of books to the Oconee County Public Library and Mobile Van.

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:

Oconee County (777)			
Domain	Emerging	Approaching	Demonstrating
Social Foundations	35%	33%	33%
Language&Literacy	30%	43%	27%
Mathematics	36%	40%	24%
Physical Dev&WB	37%	21%	43%
OVERALL	35%	38%	27%

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%
OVERALL	26%	38%	36%

- 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

Oconee County First Steps is working to improve KRA results:

Oconee County First Steps plans to focus on providing new Child Care Scholarships to families with infants or young children less than 3 years of age to make the biggest impact on their brain development.

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Parents as Teachers

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

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

100% ... live in poverty
 35% ... didn't graduate from high school
 82% ... were eligible for BabyNet

“I learned through my PAT case worker, ways I can effectively manage my child’s discipline.”
 PAT parent



PAT families learn how to care for their infants and young children by creating a nurturing and trusting environment.

PAT by the Numbers 2017-18

Families Served	17
Children Served	23
Total Home Visits	457
Hours Spent Serving Families	779.35
Average gain, <i>Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale</i> (pre-to-post):	21% gain in <i>Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale</i>


This year, our Parents as Teachers program:

- ✓ Averaged 2.86 home visits per family
- ✓ Identified and addressed 19 potential developmental delays (ASQ Report), and made 11 connections for families to services such as BabyNet, Head Start, and 3- and 4-year old kindergarten

Thank you to our PAT partners!

Oconee County Department of Social Services
 Family Friends

Evidence of Effectiveness:
 Parents as Teachers 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.

"I learned about so many resources to support Inclusion in our community."
 CCT Attendee

**Training Sponsored by
 Oconee County First Steps, 2017-18**

Topic:	Sessions:
Curriculum	13
Growth & Development	11
Health & Safety	12
Child Guidance	4
Program Administration	3
Professional Development	4
Nutrition	3
Special Needs	6



Child Care Training using Certified Lessons and Trainers

Training by the Numbers, 2017-18

Total Training Attendance	210
Child Care Teachers and Directors Served	132
Number of Training Sessions Offered	15

This year, our Training program provided:

- ✓ 132 early childhood staff with high quality training impacting 25 providers and 1710 children
- ✓ 29.5 hours of certified training and 0 hours of registered training for staff to meet annual re-certification requirements

Thank you to our Training partners!

- Oconee County Department of Social Services
- St. Mark's United Methodist Church
- SC Child Care Resources & Referral Network
- SC Child Care Inclusion Collaborative
- Dorian Young, Independent Contractor

Evidence of Effectiveness:

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

Child Care Scholarships

Too many families in Oconee County cannot afford quality care for their children.

Program Description

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

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

- 55% ... single parent households
- 44% ... didn't graduate from high school
- 44% ... were exposed to parent/caregiver depression
- 22% ... had an incarcerated parent

"Thank you for being so willing to help us in every way that you did!"
 CCS Family



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

We support our Child Care Providers with high quality educational materials.

Scholarships by the Numbers, 2017-18

Children Served	15
Providers Served	8

This year, our Scholarship program:

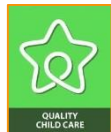
- ✓ Provided 15 children with scholarship assistance so their parents could work or attend school
- ✓ Identified and addressed a potential developmental delay of a scholarship child
- ✓ Made 4 connections for families to services such as: Mental Health; Parenting Home Visitation and 3K/4K
- ✓ Supported 8 small businesses in Oconee County by subsidizing child care tuition for families who would not otherwise be able to afford quality care
- ✓ Provided 40 hours of training for scholarship parents in topics such as: Quality Child Care; Strategies to Help Children Deal with Anger; Dealing with Stealing and Vying With Lying.

Thank you to our Scholarship partners!

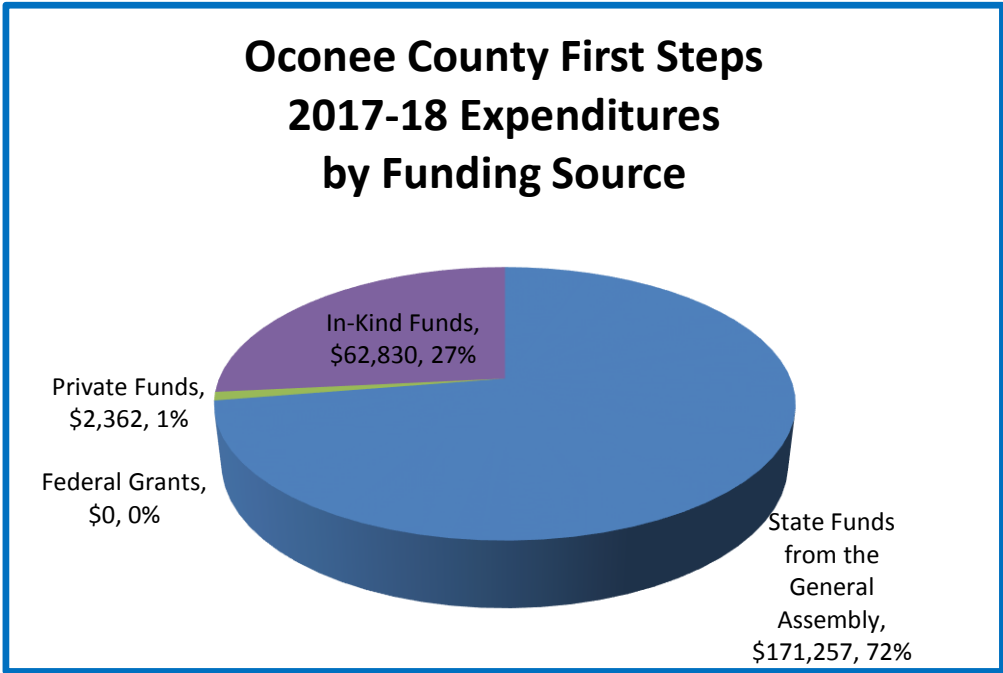
- Barbara Bryant's Kinderville Learning Center
- Foothills Early Learning Center/Our Club House
- Pennsylvania Children's Center/ St. Mark's CDC
- Heath's Haven/Family Friends

Evidence of Effectiveness:

Our partnership's Child Care Scholarship strategy is considered *evidence-based* because it is connected to the following evidence-based programs: Parenting Education.



Financial Impact



Total 2017-18 Expenditures: \$236,450

State Funds Leveraged in 2017-18*: 38 %

*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	\$55,100	\$0	\$0	\$58,840	\$113,940	48%
Child Care Training	\$7,258	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$7,258	3%
Child Care Scholarships	\$49,806	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$49,806	21%
Community Education	\$21,139	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$21,139	9%
Indirect Program Functions	\$19,564	\$0	\$2,362	\$2,465	\$24,391	10%
Administrative Support	\$18,391	\$0	\$0	\$1,525	\$19,916	8%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$171,258	\$0	\$2,362	\$62,830	\$236,450	

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

Since inception, Oconee County First Steps has leveraged \$3,671,080 from sources outside of state government. That's 99 cents for every state dollar.

Thank you, supporters!

Through partnerships and collaborations, as well as financial support from grants and contributions, Oconee County First Steps leverages state dollars to enhance and expand services to children and families.

Funding Support

State of South Carolina: \$171,257
(through South Carolina First Steps)

In-Kind Support

Dept. of Social Services \$58,840
St. Mark's & OCFS Board of Directors \$3,990



Government officials and local partners come out to support our Community Education events.

How your support helps children in Oconee County:

- ✓ \$25 provides a young child a book per month for one year!
- ✓ \$100 provides child care for parents attending a complete (5-class) Parenting Education Session
- ✓ \$400 helps a low-income family afford quality child care for one month

HOW TO GIVE: Contact Monica Alles White at 864-985-3342 to make a contribution to Oconee County First Steps.

Save the Date!

OCFS will be having their Warm a Child for the Winter project coming in Fall 2018.

The Many Faces and Partners in Community Education

Warm a Child for The Winter

Once again, Oconee County First Steps partnered with our Board of Directors; the City of Seneca; the Oconee County Democratic Party and many faith-based organizations and individuals to donate over 230 items for distribution to our local residents in need.

Based on comments from our partners, we will be expanding the items collected in Fall, 2018 to include personal items like hats, gloves/mittens, socks and under garments. These items are in high demand in our community. Our goal has always been to be flexible in our approach to meet the needs of the community.



Monica Alles White works with We Care Ministries to distribute blankets for the needy in Oconee County.

Back-Pack Books Project

We held our Back-Pack Books Project in August for all 440 4K and PIP students with SDOC and collaborated with the United Way in its school supply drive in which we provided supplies for 100 children ages 3-5 who were starting Head Start and/or preschool. Two books were included in each back pack for the reading and enjoyment of both the child and his/her family.



PAT/POPS staff assist with distribution of blankets with our "Warm a Child for the Winter" project.

First Steps Partnership Board

Oconee County First Steps Board Identified a Need and Filled It

Oconee County First Steps Board of Directors filled many of the traditional board committee assignments with their members. When the new Executive Director came on board, they knew that they needed to expand their role and services to assist this position. This was especially true when the Executive Director was awarding Child Care Scholarships-a task not many Directors have past experience providing.

The Board decided that they needed to have a Child Care Scholarship committee to meet regularly with the Director to develop guidelines to assist in making decisions on who and what circumstances warrant a Child Care Scholarship from the agency. This guidance has proved to be invaluable to the new Executive Director and has streamlined the budgeting and operations of Child Care Scholarships for the agency.

Oconee County First Steps Partnership Board, 2017-18

Name	Position	Board Category
Sandra Pruitt, Chair	Director, Family Friends	Legislative Appointee
Suzanne Evans	Community Advocate/Former Child Care Director	Child Care/Early Childhood
Kathleen Davis, Secretary	Director, Kids Korner	Pre-Kindergarten/Primary Ed
Annette Burney	Former Group Home Director	Legislative Appointee
Ann Douglas	SDOC Director of Early Learning	SDOC Designee
Sharon Grant	Lead POPS Worker, Oconee DSS	DSS Designee
Tina Kirby	Transit Assistant, City of Seneca	Government
Misty Lee	SC DHEC, Upstate Region, Community Systems Team	DHEC Designee
Becky Lundsford	Early Intervention with Bright Start, LLC	Family Education, Training and Support Provider
Judy Metcalf	Director, Community Missions, Grace Baptist Church	Faith
Dineen Schile	Co-Owner Lake Keowee Marina	Business
Molly Tannery	Director, Early Intervention, DDSN	Legislative Appointee
Reg Tatum	Realtor, Century 21 Hometown Realtors	Business
Kendra Vincent, Vice Chair	Parent/Former 4K Teacher	Pre-Kindergarten-Primary Educator
Donna Wales	Youth Director, Oconee County Library System	Library Designee
Tony Vincent	Associate Pastor Trinity Baptist	Faith
Alex Whitaker	Clinical Social Worker, Mountain Lakes Health	Health
George Washington	Parent Advocate, Head Start	Head Start Designee

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.

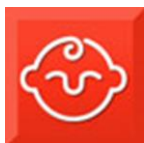
First Steps Building Blocks of Quality Early Childhood Programs and Services



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

for Oconee County First Steps:

oconeefirststeps.org



[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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