

**GREENVILLE COUNTY**



**Getting children ready for school.**



**Nurse Family Partnership**

**BabySteps/  
CenteringPregnancy**

**Child Care Training**

**Child Care Scholarships**

**Countdown to Kindergarten**

**Community Education**

# **Annual Report**

**2014-15**



## **OUR VISION:**

**Every South Carolina child  
will arrive at kindergarten  
ready to succeed.**

**First Steps WORKS for the children of Greenville 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 Greenville County children under 5:  
**31,087**

Number of Greenville County children living in poverty:  
**27,135**

Babies born each year in Greenville County to a mother less than a high school diploma:  
**16%**

### Our Programs

Nurse Family Partnership

BabySteps/

CenteringPregnancy

Childcare Training

Childcare Scholarships

Countdown to Kindergarten

Community Education

### Our Results

- ✓ **3,860 books distributed**
- ✓ **482 Childcare staff trained**
- ✓ **90 children received childcare scholarships**
- ✓ **5,942 people attended Greenville First Steps events**

### Story Time

Derek Lewis, Executive Director

I love story time! My wife and I fight for the right to read to our 4 year old son, William, before bedtime. Whenever possible, we let him choose the books we read. Sometimes he is sneaky, and picks the largest book, so it takes a little longer. Other times, he picks the same book for 10 nights in a row. My favorites, though, are when he picks books that I grew up reading.

We have been reading poems from Shel Silverstein's *Where the Side Walk Ends* a lot recently. It is one of my favorites, the illustrations are great and the tales he spins are hysterical—and just as funny now as they were when I was a kid.

There are some great stories in there about children flying in a shoe, children who won't take out the trash, and William's favorite, "I'm writing these lines from inside a lion" about an author who, you guessed it, is in a lion's mouth while writing his tales.

I often think he doesn't "get it". He laughs when I laugh, or when he sees a picture that is funny. But sometimes he surprises me.

We were in the car last week and out of the blue he said, "How big of a rock do you think Joey needed?" "What are you talking about buddy?" I asked. Then I remembered one of the poems: "Joey/Joey/Took a stone/ and knocked down the sun".

"What do you think", I asked him? "Well the sun is pretty far, so I bet he needed to be extra strong or the stone had to be easy to throw". I bet he's right.

There is a lot of emphasis put these days on reading. I know parents who are skeptical. They ask what is it all about? Do kids really need to be read to EVERY night? Can't I just let them watch Sesame Street- it talks about letters?

Quite simply, the answer is EVERYONE should read EVERY DAY. Not just to learn more words, not just to master a skill or subject, but because reading helps us imagine.

It would have never occurred to William to think about the sun, and the physics of rock throwing, without Shel Silverstein's suggestion.

There is a lot of talk about School Readiness- the research and best practices, the assumption that there are experts who are Super-teachers and have some magical superpower that guarantees children enter school ready to learn. There are a lot of early interventions out there- parenting programs, Baby Einstein DVDs, but nothing is more measurably linked to early achievement than exposure to books.

So, I challenge parents to pick one of your favorite books and READ. *It is a superpower everyone can possess.*

**Board Chair**  
Keith Frazier

**Executive Director**  
Derek Lewis

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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.



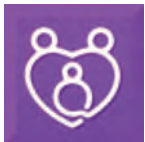
## Healthy Start

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, Greenville First Steps focuses its investments in Healthy Start, Family Strengthening, Quality Childcare, and School Transition.**

**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 Greenville, Oconee, and Pickens Counties, Nurse-Family Partnership is implemented through the Greenville Health System.

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

- 48% ... reduction in child abuse and neglect
- 56% ... reduction in ER visits
- 82% ... increase in maternal employment
- 68% ... increase in father involvement



## NFP by the Numbers, 2014-15

Children Served	253
Number of Home Visits	3,843

*Without the support of my nurse, there is no way I could be close to graduating from Greenville Tech. Her ongoing help has made a huge difference in the life of my child.--Savannah*

### This year, our NFP program:

- ✓ Nurse manager, Elena Houston, hired September 2014. Elena has a Masters degree in Nursing and a Master's degree in Business. The majority of her experience has been in maternal child and public health.
- ✓ 6 NFP nurses became certified Childbirth Educators

### Thank you to our partners!

Greenville Health System  
 Piedmont Women's Center  
 United Way of Greenville County and Pickens County  
 Appalachian Regional Commission

### Greenville First Steps

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# BabySteps/ CenteringPregnancy/

**Parents are their child’s first and best teachers.**

## Program Description

BABYSTEPS is a 7 week summer enrichment program funded by Greenville First Steps and operated by Little Steps.

The program provided educational, social, and community resources to 12 teens who were either pregnant or new mothers. Program participants rotated through classes focusing on educational tutoring, labor and delivery, infant care, nutrition, peer group counseling, and parenting. In addition, teens were provided with the opportunity to go on field trips in Greenville County.

Teens earned Baby Bucks during classes and were able to “shop” in the Little Steps baby boutique to receive essential items such as diapers, baby and maternity clothes, strollers, high chairs, and toys. Throughout the summer and during the following school year, all BABYSTEPS participants who had a child were given a full scholarship to a pre-approved high quality childcare center.

This year, BABYSTEPS provided an opportunity for participants to earn a class credit through Greenville County School District’s Distance Learning option. Through partnerships with the Greenville Health System, Greenville County School District, Greenville Technical College, Small Impressions Child Development Center, the summer BABYSTEP participants added valuable information to their “toolbox” to be better parents, stay in school, graduate, and raise a happy, healthy, and ready to learn child.

CenteringPregnancy is a CenteringPregnancy® is group prenatal care. Greenville First Steps partners with Greenville Health System and the YMCA of Greenville to fund a childcare center on site at the OB/GYN clinic. Too many mothers who already had children were unable to participate in CenteringPregnancy due to lack of childcare. By offering free childcare during sessions, more mothers are able to receive quality, group based prenatal care.



Staff from Greenville First Steps, Greenville Health System, and the YMCA at the ribbon cutting for the new childcare building for CenteringPregnancy

## Parent Training by the numbers 2014-15

Adults Served	29
Children Served	27
Sessions Offered	60
Parenting Education Hours Offered	848

### This year, our Family Literacy program:

- ✓ 100% of participants in BabySteps are one step closer to graduation by fulfilling a high school credit
- ✓ 100% of pregnant participants in BabySteps and CenteringPregnancy are more prepared for the arrival of their baby
- ✓ 100% of participants in BabySteps are more aware of the risks and challenges of subsequent pregnancies
- ✓ 100% of participants in BabySteps are aware of the importance of reading to their child and know how to read to their child

### Thank you to our partners!

- Little Steps
- Greenville County School District
- YMCA of Greenville
- Greenville Health System

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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.

*"I make sure I attend every Director's Forum. Every topic helps me become a better director."*

**Child Care Training Sponsored by Greenville First Steps, 2014-15**

Topic:	Attendance:
GCCA Conference	210
Mandated Reporting	48
Director's Forum	55
Building a Caring Parent Relationships	27



Greenville First Steps Operations Director, Leslie Latimer, was honored with the Time for Children Award at the annual Greenville County Childcare Association Conference

## Training by the Numbers, 2014-15

Total Training Attendance	616
Child Care Teachers and Directors Served	482
Number of Training Sessions Offered	11

**This year, our Training program provided:**

- ✓ 482 early childhood staff with high quality training
- ✓ 21 hours of certified training and 17.5 hours of registered training for staff to meet annual re-certification requirements
- ✓ 38 follow-up visits with training participants to help put training into practice

## Thank you to our partners!

- Greenville County School District's Lifelong Learning
- Greenville County Childcare Association

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# Child Care Scholarships

Too many families in Greenville 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.

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

- 74% ... live in poverty
- 47% ... didn't graduate from high school
- 58% ... were teen parents
- 3% ... had developmental delays

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.

Also, all scholarship recipients are required to attend a monthly parenting training or a home visit from the child's teacher.

*Without the funding Greenville First Steps provides, this family wouldn't be where they are today. –Christi Maholtz*

*Director, Gateway Academy*



Greenville First Steps provides childcare vouchers to teen mothers, Nurse Family Partnership clients, and parents returning to school/work.

### Scholarships by the Numbers, 2014-15

Children Served	90
Providers Served	18

### This year, our Scholarship program:

- ✓ Provided 90 children with scholarship assistance so their parents could work or attend school
- ✓ Supported 18 small businesses in Greenville County by subsidizing child care tuition for families who would not otherwise be able to afford quality care

### Thank you to our partners!

- Gateway Academy
- Small Impressions CDC
- City Kids Child Development Center
- St Anthony of Padua Catholic School

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**Bringing parents and teachers together as partners sets the foundation for success in school.**

## Program Description

Countdown to Kindergarten (CTK) is a summer home visitation model connecting rising kindergartners and their families with their future teachers. The program is designed:

- ✓ to forge strong and lasting home-school relationships,
- ✓ to acquaint children and families with the state and classroom expectations to increase the likelihood of school success,
- ✓ to increase parent involvement in the early grades (particularly in hard-to-reach communities), when children's learning is foundational for life success; and
- ✓ to increase public awareness of the importance of school readiness and provide ways for parents and communities to impact children's early school success.

Countdown to Kindergarten integrates all of the following:

**Home Visitation.** Teachers make six visits over the summer to the homes of participating students and families. Children and families are introduced to actual materials used in kindergarten and are given a Kindergarten Transition Toolkit to keep.

**Learning Celebration.** The last visit is a "field trip" to the school where the child will attend class in the fall.

**Public Awareness.** Throughout the summer, First Steps releases tips to media to help parents and caregivers get children ready for kindergarten.

## \*CTK by the Numbers, Summer 2014

Children Served	20
Families Served	19
Home/School Visits	120

*\*CTK program data is for June-August 2014, whereas CTK fiscal data includes expenditures from July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015.*



*The teacher was so great with my son. Makes me excited for the school year.*

*-Aiesha, mom to rising kindergartener*

## This year, our Countdown to Kindergarten program:

- ✓ Increased the amount of time parents spent reading to children by 27%
- ✓ 100% of clients were placed in their home visitor teacher's classroom
- ✓ 350 people attended the Countdown to Kindergarten Celebration at the Children's Museum of the Upstate

## Thank you to our partners!

Greenville County School District  
 Kaplan Early Learning Company  
 Children's Museum of the Upstate

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# Community Education

**In order to thrive, children need nurturing, responsive relationships and a supportive learning environment, both within and outside the home.**

## Program Description

Project Pinwheel:

As abuse or neglect in the home is the number one risk factor for school failure, Greenville First Steps uses the month of April as a catalyst for creating conversation about the prevention of abuse. During April, Greenville County is “spinning” with blue and silver pinwheels, the national symbol for Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Project Pinwheel is a community wide Child Abuse Prevention effort, coordinated by Greenville First Steps with support from several partner agencies including Children’s Trust of South Carolina, Greenville Health System, Greenville County Department of Social Services, and Primrose School of Greenville.

Read Greenville:

Working off the success of Project Pinwheel, Greenville First Steps launched Read Greenville. Read Greenville serves as an awareness campaign aimed at encouraging everyone in the Greenville County, regardless of age, to read daily.

In 2015, Greenville First Steps provided the opportunity for local nonprofits, childcare centers, neighborhoods and schools to submit proposals for early childhood literacy projects. Eighteen organizations were awarded funds or books to serve over 80,000 children in Greenville County.



## Community Education by the Numbers, 2014-15

Total Number of Materials Distributed	225,800
Events Held	20
Total Attendance	5,942

*With the help of Greenville First Steps, we created a display that featured the new books and highlighted the importance of reading and early literacy. –Greenville Technical College Libraries*

### This year, our Community Education program:

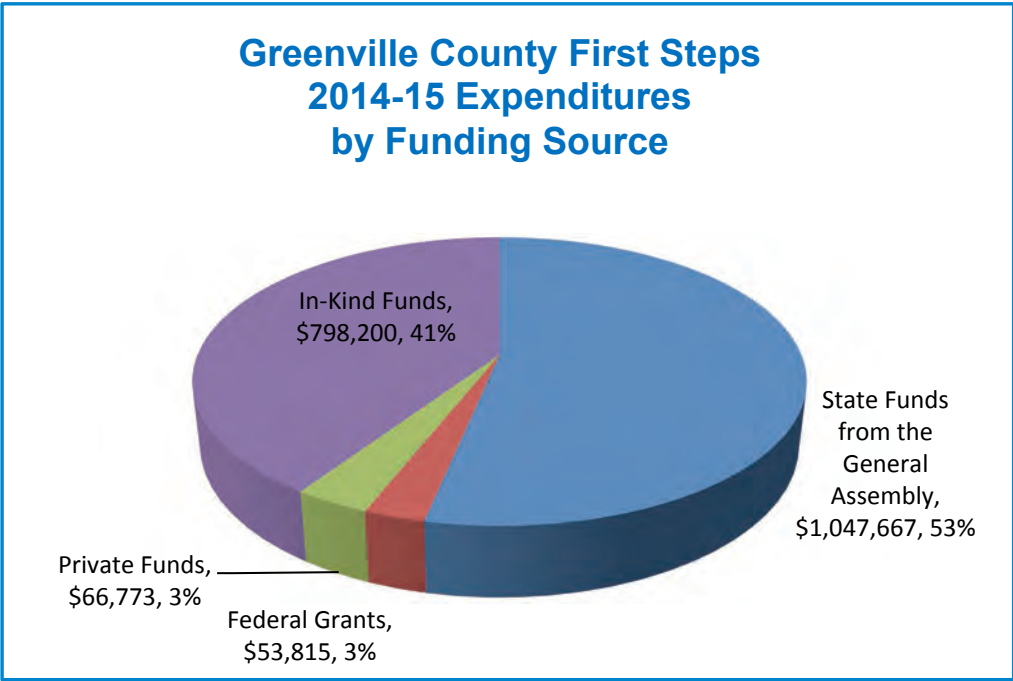
- ✓ Over 49,000 pinwheels were distributed across Greenville, Pickens, and Spartanburg Counties. Funding was raised through sponsorships and donations
- ✓ The Project Pinwheel Resource guide and Read Greenville Resource Guide were distributed to over 40,000 homes and partner agencies
- ✓ 18 organizations were awarded over \$15,000 in grants and books to increase literacy in children 0-5
- ✓ 800 people participated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Walk for Prevention

### Thank you to our partners!

- Greenville Health System
- Primrose School of Greenville
- Greenville Technical College Libraries
- Greenville Literacy Association

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**Total 2014-15 Expenditures: \$1,966,455**

**State Funds Leveraged in 2014-15\*: 88%**

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

### 2014-15 Expenditures by Strategy

	State \$	Federal \$	Private \$	In-Kind \$	Total \$	% of 2014-15 Expenditures
BabySteps/CenteringPregnancy	\$32,490	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$32,490	2%
Nurse Family Partnership	\$125,000	\$53,815	\$48,553	\$698,200	\$925,568	47%
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$8,043	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$8,043	0%
Child Care Training	\$72,809	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$72,809	4%
Child Care Scholarships	\$419,462	\$0	\$1,264	\$100,000	\$520,726	26%
Community Education	\$254,975	\$0	\$16,955	\$0	\$271,930	14%
Program Support	\$88,076	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$88,076	4%
Administrative Support	\$46,811	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$46,811	2%
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$1,047,667</b>	<b>\$53,815</b>	<b>\$66,773</b>	<b>\$798,200</b>	<b>\$1,966,455</b>	

Unaudited

numbers for the period July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015

**Since inception, Greenville County First Steps has leveraged \$10,102,599 from sources outside of state government. That's 54 cents for every state dollar.**

## Quality Childcare

YMCA Judson Community Center

Jayla started attending preschool two years ago at the Judson Community Center with the help of Greenville First Steps scholarship program. She was three years old. Throughout her participation at the Y, Jayla showed impressive gains in language development, such as speaking in complete sentences and using grammar correctly.

Jayla was well prepared emotionally, socially and intellectually to begin school as a kindergarten student. Equally as important, Jayla learned valuable social skills, and views everyone around her as a friend.

Her mother said, "Jayla will talk to anyone, regardless of their race or anything that may be different about them." Her mother is a single parent and when she was between jobs and couldn't afford the program's weekly payments, the Y was able to continue to support Jayla's learning and growth, thanks to Greenville First Steps' scholarships.



Jayla, who has been receiving Greenville First Steps childcare vouchers for 2 years, entered school ready to learn.

## Thank you to our partners!

### Funding Support\*

State of South Carolina: \$1,047,666.85  
*(through South Carolina First Steps)*

United Way of Greenville: \$140,000

Appalachian Regional Council: \$53,815

Greenville Health System: \$10,000

Primrose School of Greenville: \$5,000

Chick-fil-A of Pelham Road: \$2,500

Individual Contributions: \$7,818

Corporate Contributions: \$9,137

### In-Kind Support

Greenville Health System

Greenville County Child Development Centers

Since 2009, for every \$1.00 of state funds, Greenville First Steps has raised \$1.39 of private matches.

## We are all Superheroes for Children

Quick, name one of your child's superheroes. If you said Superman or Batman, great! But, what about the superheroes we see on a daily basis? Our children need heroes.

Our children need people who we can aspire to be.

Our children need leaders who can help us when we are lost, confused or scared.

Heroes like pediatricians, firefighters, teachers, librarians, soccer coaches, and most importantly, heroes like parents.

We know that nearly 75% of a child's brain is developed in the first 3 years. Those critical months are essential in building complex pathways within our brain that will carry decades of knowledge, content, and information.

We also know that there are a few critical things that every family can do to help a child enter school on track. This is where we need families, and community members to help children succeed.

Parents are superheroes when they read daily to their children. Nothing is a better predictor of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading success than early exposure to books.

Pediatricians are superheroes when they screen children for developmental delays at well-baby checks. Early identification of delays can guarantee children receive treatments that often prevent need for remediation and Special Education interventions later in life.

Priests, pastors, and members of the faith community are superheroes when they work to build relationships between families, supporting parents and children who need emotional connections. One of the greatest ways to prevent abuse in the home (a strong predictor of early school failure) is the strengthening of social connections.

Youth Sports coaches are superheroes, not just because of the whistle and 70s era shorts and knee socks. We know that youth sports are essential to building healthy active living, and in instilling the importance of teamwork and community.

Greenville First Steps is committed to promoting the things families can do to help ensure children enter school on track and ready to succeed. And so, on behalf of all of our children who are seeking heroes, Thank You for all you do.



Since 2009, for every \$1.00  
of state funds, Greenville  
First Steps has raised \$1.39  
of private matches.



## Success Starts with the Board

How often do you have a pastor, a professor, a small business owner, and a doctor sitting around a table, all working towards a common goal? Every time the Board of Directors for Greenville First Steps meets, this is exactly what is happening. The Greenville First Steps Board of Directors serve as a convener of public and private early childhood stakeholders all invested in assuring the young children of Greenville County are ready for school. Having many different sectors at the table allows unique view points to guide the work the staff of Greenville First Steps is tasked to accomplish. Our organization prides itself on the diversity of our leadership team and how they respond to school readiness issues that arise in our community.

## Greenville County First Steps Partnership Board, 2014-15

Name	Position	Board Category
Keith Frazier, Chair	Director, Department of Social Services, Greenville Cty	DSS
Grady Patterson, Vice Chair	Legislative Appointee	Legislative Appointee (House)
Karen Allen	Youth Services Manager, Greenville County Library	Library
Gina Blohm	Community Foundation of Greenville	Philanthropic Community
Linda Brees	Director, Children's Advocacy, Greenville Health System	Healthcare Provider
Lauren Briles	Owner, Primrose School of Greenville	Childcare Provider
Stacy Burr	Associate Professor, USC Upstate	Professor, Early Childhood Educ.
Meredith Burton	Director, Child Development Center, Furman Univ.	Childcare Provider
Lillie Hall	Assoc. Director Health Education, SC DHEC-Region 2	DHEC
Julie Hartman	Early Childhood Ed Dept Head, Bob Jones University	Professor, Early Childhood Educ.
Susan Kear	Director, Pelham Road Baptist Church CDC	Faith Community
Stephanie Knobel	Executive Director, YMCA Judson Community Center	Childcare Provider
Sandra Linder	Assistant Professor, Clemson Univ Early Childhood Dept	Professor, Early Childhood Educ.
Stacey Peek	Pastor, Grace Fellowship Baptist Church	Faith Community
Jennifer Powers	CPA, Elliott Davis, LLC	Business Community
Nancy Powers	Developmental Pediatrician, GHS Developmental Peds.	Healthcare Provider
Melissa Roper	CDC Director, Greenville Technical College	Childcare Provider
Cynthia Sosebee	Community Partnership Facilitator, SHARE Head Start	Head Start Provider
Karen Sparkman	Director, Early Childhood Ed, Greenville County Schools	School District
Melissa Starker	Child Care Training Specialist, Lifelong Learning	School District
Tricia Surlles	Finance, Greco Pools	Parent of a Young Child
Wade Kolb	Wyche Law Firm	Legislative Appointee (House)
Daniel Varat	Legislative Appointee	Legislative Appointee (Senate)

# Getting children ready for school.

## The 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

We encourage you to visit our partners, BabyNet by contacting the local office at 864-331-1450.



BabyNet in Greenville County:  
864-331-1450

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

Since 2009, for every \$1.00  
of state funds, Greenville  
First Steps has raised \$1.39  
of private matches.

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