

A lifetime of learning

Berkeley County First Steps is a state-based initiative to prepare young children for school and a lifetime of learning beyond. Our mission is to improve the early development of Berkeley County children aged 0-5 by providing resources and leadership to their families, enabling them to prepare their children to reach school healthy and ready to succeed.

HOW WE DO IT:

- Helping to improve child care and early education in our county
- Providing scholarships to child care and preschool to those in need
- Helping to improve healthcare in our county, and expanding access to it
- Strengthening families through parenting skills programs
- Collaborating with community partners



Help us help young children!

[@berkeleycountyfirststeps](https://www.berkeleycountyfirststeps.com) [berkeleyfirststeps.com](https://www.berkeleyfirststeps.com)



Parents As Teachers

Our Parents As Teachers program serves expecting families and families with children up to 5 years old at no cost to them. Our mission is to provide the information, support, and encouragement parents need to help their children develop optimally during the crucial early years of life, building their learning ability and potential for a lifetime of success. Our approach is intimate and relationship-based; we embrace learning experiences that are relevant and customized to each family and child.

WE PROVIDE:

- Child health screenings
- Certified parent educators
- Monthly home visits
- Facilitated access to healthcare, child care, & other resources
- Group connections with other families
- Fun family incentives



Nurturing Parents

Our Nurturing Parents Program emphasizes the raising of children in a warm, trusting, and caring household. It is based on the belief that children who are cared for develop the capacity to trust, care for, and respect themselves, other people, living creatures, and the environment.

This program is perfect for any parent wondering:

- Are my expectations of my child reasonable for his/her age?
- Could I do more to consider my child's feelings?
- Is there another way I could implement discipline?
- Are the responsibilities given to my child age-appropriate?
- How can I encourage my child to be more independent?

WE PROVIDE:

- An evidence-based model
- One-on-one and group sessions
- Flexible meeting schedules
- Options to attend virtually
- Self-care incentives
- Child care and SC First Steps 4K preschool scholarships for those in need



Ready kindergartener

We base each of our programs on a central goal: to ensure Berkeley County's young children enter kindergarten physically, cognitively, socially, and emotionally prepared to learn.

South Carolina First Steps' Profile of the Ready Kindergartener defines the criteria for this. From the ability to share with others, listen to and retell stories, and sort items into categories to demonstrating eagerness to learn, showing willingness to try new things, and using hand-eye coordination to put together a puzzle, the ready kindergartener will enter school prepared in a large number of ways. See the complete list at bit.ly/ready-k.

SCHOOL-READY ACROSS FIVE CATEGORIES:

- Emotional & social development
- Language & literacy development
- Mathematical thinking
- Physical development, self-help, and motor skills
- Approaches to learning and inquiry



Raising quality

We support the child care and early education workforce by providing training and consultation free of charge, striving together to improve the quality of child care and early education.

Besides training in best practices, we work with them to deepen the practice of engaging families and communities, and to remove the barriers that prevent young children from entering kindergarten ready and eager to learn—positioning them to successfully transition up through all phases of their education.

We seek, too, to improve the quality of early education by advocating for equitable compensation, benefits, and award programs that recognize and reward the value that outstanding early educators bring to the lives of young children.

TRAINING TOPICS:

- Stages of early childhood development
- Early learning standards
- Early language
- Socio-emotional learning concepts
- Culturally responsible teaching
- Active & reflective supervision
- Preventing challenging behaviors
- Harnessing interest areas
- And many more



Children's health

As a local portal and convener in Berkeley County, we are experts on engaging families, the early care workforce, and community health partners. We work with child health, welfare, and early childhood developmental partners to deepen health equity by increasing health literacy and providing individual referrals. We also work together to support mental health and wellness in Berkeley County's young families and children by understanding trauma and its impact on children, educators, and families, and by enabling access to affordable wellness, advocacy, and healing modalities that are culturally congruent and affirming.

We support all children, especially those with special needs, by understanding brain science and early learning, and by advocating for the inclusion of children with disabilities in child care. We also offer developmental screenings for all children.

WE OFFER:

- Birthing, childbirth education, and lactation support and referrals
- A bilingual, certified community health worker from PASOs Connections for Child Development
- Monthly Healthy Steps community convenings
- A social inclusion program providing equitable access to child care for children with developmental disabilities
- Support for children with special needs via our equity coaching for caregivers, built on the Pyramid model
- An Emergency Crisis and Immediate Needs Fund

