



*State of South Carolina*  
*The Family Court of the First Judicial Circuit*

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November 29, 2022

The Honorable Gilda Cobb-Hunter  
4188 Five Chop Road  
Orangeburg, SC 29115

Re: Safe Babies Court

Dear Gilda,

It is my pleasure to support the Safe Babies Court program in seeking continued funding to work with families and children involved in the child welfare court system in Orangeburg County. In late 2021, I was contacted by national and state representatives from Zero to Three of the National-Infant Toddler Court Program inquiring about me serving as the resident judge for Safe Babies Court in Orangeburg. The SC Infant Mental Health Association received a grant to expand Safe Babies Court to Orangeburg County. This program was already operational in Laurens, Spartanburg, and Richland counties. Earlier this year, we began building our community team for Orangeburg County Safe Babies Court. Our timeline for being operational was delayed due to a change in our community coordinator, but our first Safe Babies Court is scheduled next month.

The training our team members participated in this summer has already assisted me in abuse and neglect cases in the family court. I have gained knowledge about additional questions I should be asking about every child in child welfare court cases including detailed questions about comprehensive physical and mental health assessments, immunizations, hearing/vision/dental screenings, and concerns about overall health and development. I am more attuned to inquiring about resource availability and caregiver's access to services for children.

While I cannot speak to the success of the Safe Babies Court in Orangeburg County yet, I have received encouraging reports from my colleagues in other counties about the success of this program. I am excited about the opportunity for improving child welfare and court processes in Orangeburg County, which will ultimately strengthen families in my community. I fully support efforts to seek funding to continue the Safe Babies Court program in Orangeburg County. I am available to speak with you further regarding any questions you may have about Safe Babies Court. Thank you for your consideration.

Yours very truly,

  
Anne Gue Jones