



FIRST STEPS IS HERE

Last year, because of Cherokee County First Steps:



2,394 children

were directly served in Cherokee County



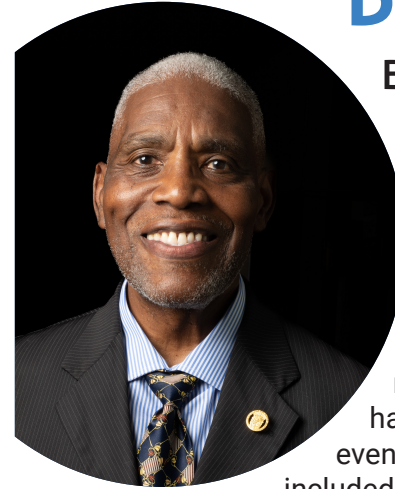
2,477 parents & caregivers

received services and support to be their child's first and most important teacher



31 educators

participated in First Steps training and professional development, benefitting 500+ children



Dr. Author Brewton

Board Chair

The Cherokee County First Steps Partnership Board strives to overcome barriers to school readiness and promote early education. During this fiscal year, community engagement and determining priority concerns for the Strategic Plan were of primary importance. As part of our efforts several Board Members attended focus groups and planning sessions. The information gleaned during this process helped the Board define the areas on which to focus, and the direction that must be taken to meet the needs of families within the county. The community engagement component has allowed us to build better relationships with families and partners through outreach events. Several local partners were instrumental in participating in the events, which included education/health fairs, Story Patrol, World Read Aloud Day, Reading Across America, and Cooking with Confidence. I encourage families and partners to assist in our ongoing efforts to provide a better quality of life for families in Cherokee County.

PROVEN RESULTS

A 2019 study found that children who received First Steps local partnership services were:



74% more likely

to score at the highest level on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment



34% less likely

to be chronically absent in kindergarten

THE NEED PERSISTS IN CHEROKEE COUNTY

First Steps works but we need to expand our reach to ensure that all children are ready.

3,980

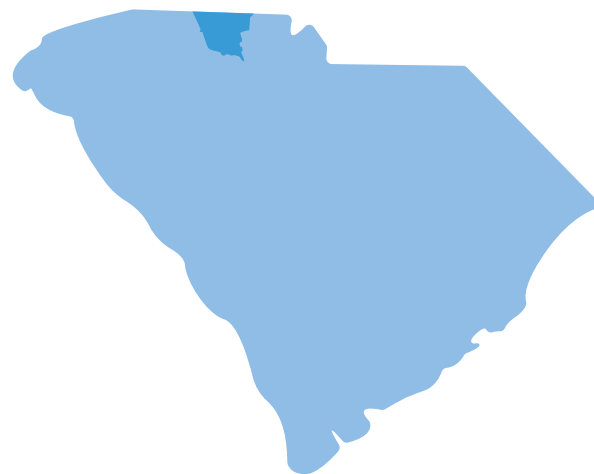
children under age 5

58.2%

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

81%

of kindergarteners are considered "not ready" for school



Our Local Supporters

City of Gaffney - ARPA Funds

City of Gaffney - ARPA Funds \$35,000

SC Endeavors \$2,500

Katherine Dukes

Ashby and Debbie Blakely

Limestone Presbyterian Church

Board Member Contributions

Cherokee County First Steps Staff

Dollywood Foundaiton \$386,662

Board of Directors

Lisa Blanton

Arthur Brewton

Cliffietta Cochran

Lydia Cooper

Sigourney Davidson

Lyman Dawkins

Monita Dawkins

Verlene Eaker

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CONTACT US

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2022-2023 ANNUAL REPORT

OUR MISSION

Collaborating with other entities, First Steps helps South Carolina 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



Dorothy Priester
Executive Director

We are grateful for another successful year. Goals included strategic outreach and strengthening relationships with families and partners. Families were provided: 21,208 books for 2,281 children through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library; 20.5 hours of training for childcare teachers; Talk to Me provided 141 visits; Triple P held 138 sessions; and we participated in 68 outreach events. We informed 6,864 children, families, and individuals of the importance of early education. We are excited about two new grants we received. One is the READY Infrastructure/Capacity Grant for equipment, staff training and social media consulting. The second was through the City of Gaffney with their ARPA funds, which provided \$25K for Imagination Library and board/staff development. I convey my deepest appreciation to participants, partners, and Board Members. You are invited to join our journey to prepare the children of Cherokee County for their greatest success!

Serving Cherokee County's children birth through age five.



"Talk to Me brought me closer to my sons because I was more intentional about talking to them more."

Marina Shimanski
Cherokee County First Steps parent

PROGRAMS

PARENTING

Positive Parenting Program (TripleP)

A parenting and family support system designed to prevent – as well as treat – behavioral and emotional problems in children.

30 children served **21** families served **138** group meetings and events

LENA Home

Uses innovative technology to assess a family's home language environment and boost positive interactions between parents and children ages 0-3.

17 children served **16** families served **141** home visits

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

Free, high-quality books mailed to the home of children from birth until age five.

2,281 children served **1,900** families served **21,208** books distributed

EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

Training & Professional Development

Certified and registered training hours for the early childhood workforce.

1,174 children served **31** providers served **20.5** certified training hours

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

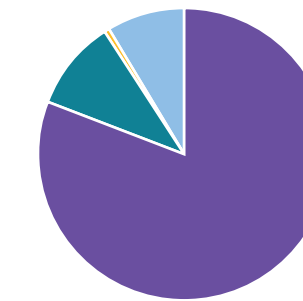


\$1 = \$3.53

Cherokee County First Steps leveraged \$505,574.55 from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$2.53 for every state dollar invested.

EXPENDITURES

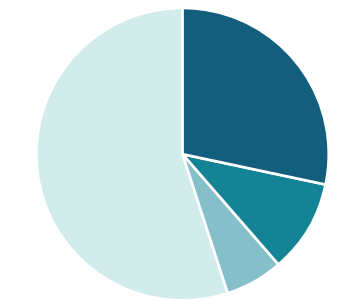
Total: \$712,868.09



- Parenting - \$577,771.34
- Early Care & Education - \$71,192.08
- School Transition - \$3,999.42
- Administrative - \$386,621.84

FUNDING SOURCES

Total: \$705,574.55



- State Funding - \$200,000
- Federal Funding - \$73,901.80
- Private Funding - \$45,050.91
- In-kind Contributions - \$386,621.84

FUNDING SUPPORT BY SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS

- State Education Improvement Act (EIA) Funding
- State READY Funding*
- Federal Preschool Development Grant Funding**
- Federal ESSER Funding***
- Enterprise Holdings Foundation ROAD Forward Grant
- State Income Tax Check-off and Private Donations to SC First Steps

*Resources for Early Acceleration and Development in Youth (READY) Proviso 1.105

**Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five Initiative (PDG B-5), Grant Number 90TP0080-01-00 from the Office of Child Care, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, awarded to the South Carolina Department of Social Services, Division of Early Care and Education

***American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund, awarded to the South Carolina Department of Education