



FIRST STEPS IS HERE

Last year, because of Edgefield County First Steps:



360 children

were directly served in Edgefield County



45 parents & caregivers

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



70 educators

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



Gail Jackson

Board Chair

As Board Chair, I am committed to our mission of empowering Edgefield County families and caregivers to prepare children for school success. With Board members and a dynamic director, we are delivering, enhancing, and expanding high-quality early childhood services to children in Edgefield County who face significant challenges. In this rural area, income and housing instability, food insecurity, and disabilities interfere with a child achieving not only in the academic setting but also in developing his/her potential.

We provide many programs to benefit children and their families. Our community participates in sponsoring children for the Dolly Parton Imagination Library.

Having provided speech and language services in the public schools, I witnessed the impact of Edgefield County First Steps and community partners working together to serve the children of Edgefield County. The statement "It Takes a Village" exemplifies Edgefield County First Steps.

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 EDGEFIELD COUNTY

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

1,070

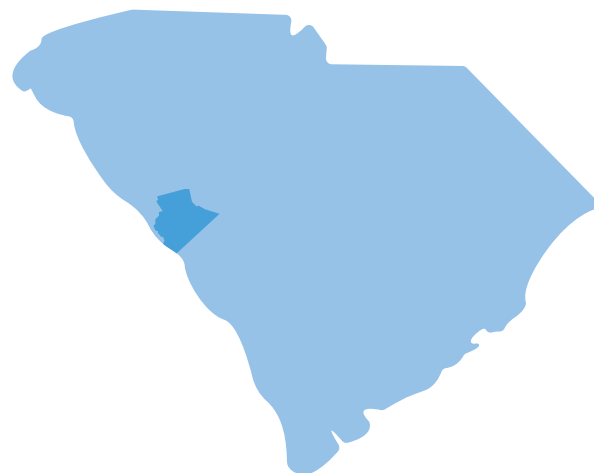
children under age 5

58.7%

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

55%

of kindergarteners are considered "not ready" for school



Our Local Supporters

SC Endeavors - \$2,500
NASCAR Foundation - \$1,059
Beth McLeod, Fulcher Hagler LLP - \$540
Spann U.M. Church
Aiken Electric Cooperative
Town of Trenton
Dr. Jeffery Gosney
Reel Insurance Agency, Inc.
Bela Family Dentistry

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2022-2023 ANNUAL REPORT

CONTACT US

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OUR MISSION

Empower Edgefield County families and caregivers to prepare children for school success by delivering, enhancing, and expanding high-quality early childhood services.



Candi Lalonde
Executive Director

First Steps is Here! Since the creation of South Carolina First Steps in 1999, there have been times when we feared it could all go away and times where funding was so slim that we struggled to provide services to the many families who needed us. Fast forward to 2023, where over 2 decades of hard work and dedication were recognized and South Carolina First Steps was signed into a permanent law. What a time of celebration for families with young children in our state!

Edgefield County First Steps has been so fortunate to have strong leadership from our Partnership Board, consistent support from our state and local leaders, faithful service from our community partners, and unwavering trust from the families with young children that we serve. We share this report with you and are so proud that we were able to expand programs with additional resources and extend our reach throughout Edgefield County during this past year. We look forward to many more years – First Steps is Here To Stay!

Serving Edgefield County's children birth through age five.



"The parenting classes were wonderful and showed me what to do and what not to do when working with my son, and how to teach him to be more patient. I suggest more people sign up - it is a positive support group. It was an amazing experience and I loved the supplies and materials I received. I would love to take more classes."

Edgefield County First Steps parent

PROGRAMS

EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

Quality Enhancement

Promotes quality in child care by providing early educators with one-on-one coaching and support.

76 children served **3** providers served **105** technical assistance hours

Training & Professional Development

Certified and registered training hours for the early childhood workforce.

376 children served **20** providers served **35** certified training hours

Enhanced Early Education

The Enhanced Early Education strategy seeks to enhance education services offered by early childhood classrooms.

49 children served **49** families served **126** tutoring sessions

Child Care Scholarships

Eligible children receive tuition- assistance at quality child care centers.

28 children served **25** families served **3** providers served

Jonston Learning Center

The Johnston Learning Center is a high-quality early childhood center that serves the child care desert of the town of Johnston.

23 children served **19** families served

PARENTING

Nurturing Parenting

Group meetings designed to build nurturing parenting skills as an alternative to abusive and neglecting parenting and child-rearing practices

44 children served **32** group meetings **34** families served

Dolly Parton Imagination Library

One book per month mailed to the home

259 children served **2,379** books distributed

HEALTH

Nurse-Family Partnership

Home visitation for first time mothers, from pregnancy until the child turns two.

7 children served **107** home visits

SCHOOL TRANSITION

Countdown to 4K

Supports transitions into pre-kindergarten by connecting incoming students, their families, and their teachers in a series of one-on-one sessions during the summer.

20 children served **2** schools served **119** home visits

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

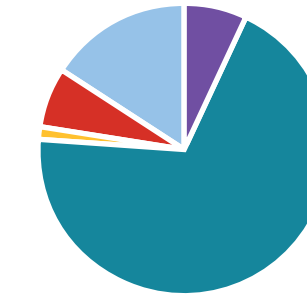


\$1 = \$2.83

Edgefield County First Steps leveraged \$368,863.87 from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$1.83 for every state dollar invested.

EXPENDITURES

Total: \$553,980.13



- Parenting - \$33,479.38
- Early Care & Education - \$332,381.03
- School Transition - \$5,690.88
- Health - \$32,456.32
- Administrative - \$75,271.84

FUNDING SOURCES

Total: \$570,363.87



- State Funding - \$201,500
- Federal Funding - \$17,159
- Private Funding - \$28,241.95
- In-kind Contributions - \$323,462.92

SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS FUNDING SUPPORT

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

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