



# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2024-2025





# FIRST STEPS IS HERE

Last year, because of Spartanburg County First Steps:



**1,487 children**

were directly served in Spartanburg County



**1,588 parents & caregivers**

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



**305 educators**

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

## THE NEED PERSISTS IN SPARTANBURG COUNTY

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

**24,407**

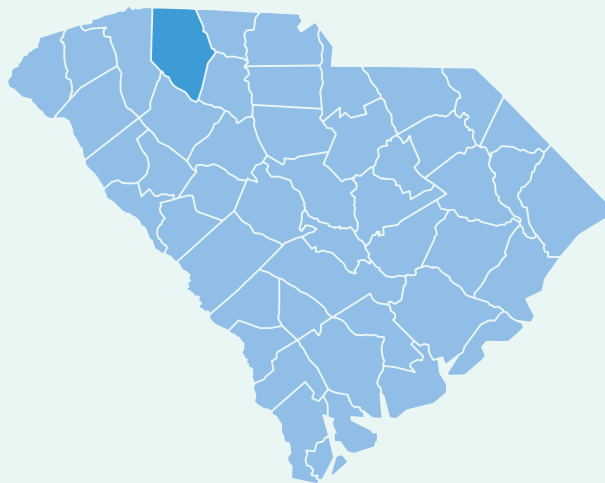
children birth to five

**40%**

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

**63%**

of kindergarteners are considered "not ready" for school



## 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

# OUR MISSION

Spartanburg County First Steps' mission is to help all young children in our county arrive at school ready to learn and prepared for success. To accomplish that we:

- Support evidenced-based programs that are designed to strengthen families and support children's growth and development during the first 5 years of life.
- Build trusting relationships with early learning centers using a model of continuous improvement that helps to build and sustain high-quality learning environments.
- Collaborate with community partners to maximize our efforts and to increase our impact positively on school readiness.



**Caroline Goins**  
Executive Director

As Executive Director, I am pleased to share this annual report, which highlights both the impact of our work and the strength of the partnerships that make it possible. The progress we have achieved reflects the dedication of our staff and board of directors, the trust of families we serve, and the unwavering support of our community. We are especially grateful to Spartanburg Regional Medical Center through Nurse-Family Partnership, the Upstate Family Resource Center for developmental screenings, our state and local partners and the many organizations and funders who invest in this mission.

These accomplishments are more than milestones—they are the foundation for what comes next. Together, we are expanding access to high-quality early learning, strengthening families, and building a foundation for a brighter Spartanburg. These achievements are both a point of pride and a call to action. With continued collaboration, we will ensure that every child has the strong start they deserve.



**Walker Barnes**  
Board Chair

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am proud to reflect on the hard work and accomplishments of Spartanburg County First Steps over the past year. Our programs continue to make a meaningful impact in preparing young children for success in school and in life. From home visiting and parenting support to early literacy and quality childcare initiatives, our dedicated staff and partners work tirelessly to strengthen families and build a brighter future for our community.

The challenges facing families with young children are real, but so is the commitment of First Steps to meet those needs with compassion, innovation, and measurable results. This year's successes are a direct reflection of the passion of our team, the trust of the families we serve, and the support of our community partners. Together, we have the opportunity to transform Spartanburg into a place where every child's potential is nurtured and every family thrives.

# PROGRAMS

## HEALTH

### Nurse-Family Partnership

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

155

children served

201

families served

2,469

home visits

### Early Identification & Referral

Providing developmental screenings and referrals to other services.

69

children served

381

materials distributed

## EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

### Quality Counts

Certified and registered training hours for the early childhood workforce.

61

child care facilities served

2,455

training hours provided

### Early Head Start

A federally funded program that provides family-centered services to infants and toddlers under age 3, pregnant women, and their families.

212

children served

91

families served

49

group meetings

## SCHOOL TRANSITION

### Countdown to Kindergarten

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

423

children served

2,505

home/school visits

### 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.

113

children served

669

home/school visits

# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

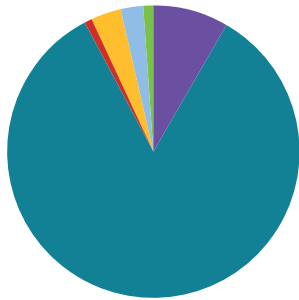


**\$1 = \$7.57**

Spartanburg County First Steps leveraged \$6,709,840.20 from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$6.57 for every state dollar invested.

## EXPENDITURES

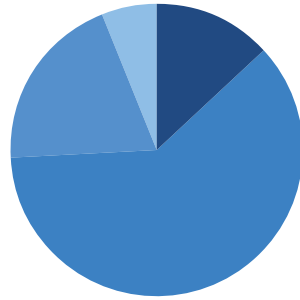
Total: \$7,920,055.20



Parenting	- \$669,387.42
Early Care & Education	- \$6,645,295.97
Health	- \$66,287
School Transition	- \$259,161.27
Administrative	- \$203,271.34
Core Functions	- \$76,652.20

## FUNDING SOURCES

Total: \$7,730,606.40



State Funding	- \$1,020,766.20
Federal Funding	- \$4,717,053.92
Private Funding	- \$1,525,011.27
In-kind Contributions	- \$467,775.01

## FUNDING SUPPORT

State Education Improvement Act (EIA) Funding

State READY Funding\*

State Income Tax Check-off and Private Donations to SC First Steps

\*Resources for Early Acceleration and Development in Youth (READY) Proviso 1.84



First Steps has been life-changing for our family. With their support, my husband found a job, I launched a business, and Timofei blossomed in speech, learning, and friendships. We are forever grateful for the support and new beginnings.

**Liudmilla K.**

## **Board of Directors**

Walker Barnes  
Jessie Schlosser  
Phillip Hagood  
Stephanie Coln  
Eric Baucom  
Holli West  
Brandy McKinney  
Sydetra Payton  
Ida Thompson  
Nur Tanyel  
Tracey Woodard  
April Miller  
Jodi Wright  
Kristen Senn  
Allison Berry  
Casey Dover  
Jean Brewington  
Krishenda Alexander  
Terry Pruitt  
Jessica Lopez

## **Donor List**

Children's Trust Fund of South Carolina  
Eastway Park  
First Presbyterian Church  
Institute for Child Success  
Mary Black Foundation  
OneSpartanburg, Inc.  
Roy R. Oates, Jr  
South Carolina Department of Social Services  
Spartanburg Academic Movement  
Spartanburg County Foundation  
Spartanburg County School District 1  
Spartanburg County School District 2  
Spartanburg County School District 3  
Spartanburg County School District 4  
Spartanburg County School District 5  
Spartanburg County School District 6  
Spartanburg County School District 7  
United Way of the Piedmont

## **CONTACT US**

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