



2023-2024

ANNUAL REPORT



FIRST STEPS IS HERE

Last year, because of Barnwell County First Steps:



225 children

were directly served in Barnwell County



310 parents & caregivers

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



168 educators

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

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 BARNWELL COUNTY

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

1,573

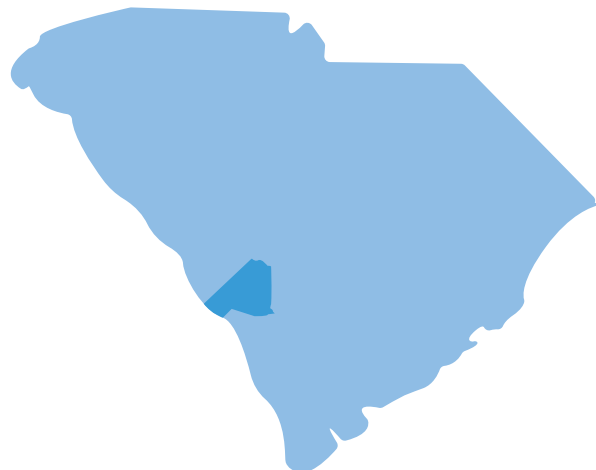
children under 6

80%

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

64%

of kindergarteners are considered "not ready" for school



OUR MISSION

To provide high-quality early education programs designed to meet the needs of the time that will ensure children in Barnwell County will arrive at first grade with the foundational knowledge and skills needed to succeed.



Tricia Gordon

Executive Director

Barnwell County First Steps provides a full spectrum of programs and services to support the families of young children across Barnwell County – to help provide the foundation for all future learning, behavior, and health. We focus our work on the many collaborations and partnerships across the county to ensure that our families are supported and that all children start school ready to reach their highest potential.

Our greatest achievement this year was officially opening the doors to our new child care center – the Williston Child Development Center. This was one of our biggest strategic goals for the current three-year cycle. We could not have done this work without the support of the Barnwell Consolidated School District and the James & Miriam Darnell Committee.

Our partnership strives to increase the partnerships with organizations and agencies to bring the strongest programs and services to our families across the County. We are supported by local entities like the Darnell Fund Committee, as well as statewide and national partners like the SC Department of Social Services and the AmeriCorps program.

We also work to support all of the individuals that have a role in serving the children of Barnwell County. We instituted a new annual award this spring, the Barnwell County Children's Champion, and recognized these individuals for their ongoing service: Kate Roach, SC First Steps; Lil Stoltzfus, Blackville Branch Library; Donna Selvey, Barnwell Primary School; and Melinda Wilson, Early Childhood Educator.

As we look forward to the future of our partnership, we encourage you to reach out and join us in providing a better future for our children and their families.



Rosaland Kenner

Board Chair

It gives me great pleasure to be a small piece of the puzzle with Barnwell County First Steps, as I serve as the chair of the Barnwell County First Steps Board, I look forward to serving and nurturing the children and citizens of Barnwell County and throughout the state of South Carolina.

As an advocate for young children for over thirty years, I have provided knowledge, care, and support to young children in Barnwell County. The work and service that Barnwell County First Steps delivers in the county are beyond measure. The lives that we touch by sharing educational supplies and funding to childcare centers, parental classes to families, daily basic life materials to children and their parents, and outreach projects to the entire communities within the County which includes three different Cities.

As children's lives that the board touches every single day reveal a small reminder of how much work is really needed for today's families and children. The Barnwell County First Steps employees work hard and strive daily to make a difference within our community. I am very proud to say that the hard work is paying off. Families, children, childcare teachers, directors, and higher education faculty are very thankful for the services they receive from this agency. We are very grateful to be able to serve and advocate for all of the children in our county and one day we know the work will receive its reward when the children we serve today will give back as adults the way we are giving to them now.

Barnwell County is a very blessed County to have First Steps within the arena showering love, support, and advocacy for every little child in the county.

PROGRAMS

PARENTING

Parents as Teachers

Offers research-based curricula that help families raise children to be healthy, safe, learning, and ready for school.

50

children served

13

group meetings
and events

514

home visits

HIPPY

Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) is a home visiting program that supports parents in their role as a child's first and most important teacher.

6

children served

2

group meetings
and events

61

home visits

Family Café

Parent discussion groups that promote social connections with other parents, support in times of need, learning about parenting and child development, and emotional awareness.

13

children served

13

families served

14

group meetings
and events

Library-Based Programs

Connect librarians with child care programs and preschool classrooms, providing books, storytelling, and staff training.

30

children served

33

families served

6

parent and caregiver
workshops

EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

Quality Enhancement

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

140

children served

3

providers served

78

technical assistance
hours

Training & Professional Development

Certified and registered training hours for the early childhood workforce.

3,302

children served

3

providers served

10

certified training
hours

Early Head Start

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

16

children served

Child Care Scholarships

Eligible children receive tuition-free enrollment at quality child care centers.

40

children served

40

families served

5

providers served

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.

9

children served

2

schools served

54

home 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.

5

children served

2

schools served

30

home visits

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

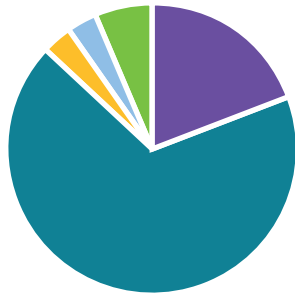


\$1 = \$3.70

Barnwell County First Steps leveraged \$654,524.54 from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$2.70 for every state dollar invested.

EXPENDITURES

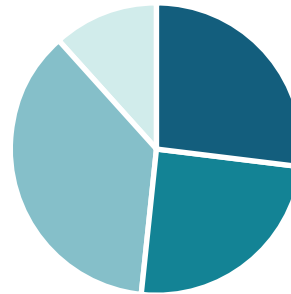
Total: \$814,173.12



Parenting	- \$145,805.28
Early Care & Education	- \$570,321.05
School Transition	- \$26,048.06
Administrative	- \$25,878.23
Core Functions	- \$46,120.50

FUNDING SOURCES

Total: \$896,524.54



State Funding	- \$242,000
Federal Funding	- \$221,484.18
Private Funding	- \$330,918.36
In-kind Contributions	- \$102,122.00

FUNDING SUPPORT BY SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS

State Education Improvement Act (EIA) Funding
State READY Funding*
Federal AmeriCorps Service Site
Federal Preschool Development Grant Funding**
Federal ESSER Funding***
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
Federal AmeriCorps funding awarded to SC First Steps from the SC Service Commission at the United Way Association of SC

Note: Revenue amounts may show a difference between allocations and revenue based on penalties imposed by the SC First Steps Board of Trustees for non-compliance with organizational policies. The figures provided are based on unaudited financial statements and, as such, are subject to change.

Our Local Supporters

James and Miriam Darnell Fund Committee
Barnwell County Consolidated School District
Barnwell 45
SC DSS
AmeriCorps
Tri County Community Foundation
United Way of Allendale, Bamberg & Barnwell
Counties
Accelerator Coffee
Discount Diaper World

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