



FIRST STEPS IS HERE

Last year, because of Charleston County First Steps:



274 children

were directly served in Charleston County



173 parents & caregivers

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



357 educators

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

THE NEED PERSISTS IN CHARLESTON COUNTY

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

27,901

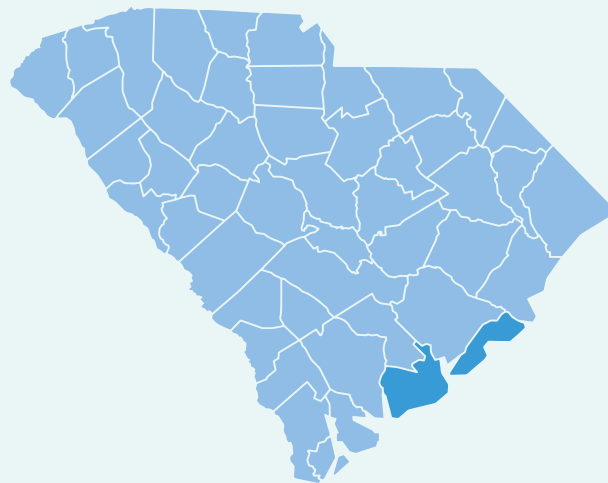
children birth to five

29%

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

47%

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

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The PAT program has helped me be a better parent to my little "bunny". I wouldn't know what to do without this program. I want to thank you all from the bottom of my heart. I really appreciate it and look forward to the days to come.

PAT Participant



Board of Directors

Vernisa Bodison
Lisa Hart
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Latosha Jenkins-Fludd
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Donor List

Charleston County School District
The Walker Foundation
Kaplan Early Learning Company
The Charleston Public Library

CONTACT US

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ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025



OUR MISSION

The Charleston County First Steps mission is to improve the overall well-being of young children. We accomplish this by offering rigorous early childhood programming, providing opportunities for family engagement and support, and fostering community partnerships.



Tamatha Kohler
Executive Director

As Executive Director of Charleston County First Steps, I am proud to share our 2025 Annual Report. This year, we saw an increase in the number of families, children and childcare providers served from the previous year. With a focus on school readiness, our team worked tirelessly to expand access to childcare, promote early literacy, and support families during their child’s most critical developmental years. Through our expanded home visiting services, we provided personalized guidance, encouragement, and essential resources that empower parents as their child’s first and most important teacher. Your support has allowed us to deepen our impact, strengthen families, and ensure more children enter kindergarten prepared to thrive. Together, we are laying the foundation for a brighter, more equitable future. Thank you for standing with us and believing in our mission.



Kristin Zeaser-Sydow
Board Chair

As Chair of the Charleston County First Steps Partnership Board, I am honored to support an organization whose mission enhances children’s well-being. Our values drive programming that nurtures children, families, childcare providers, and the community.

In addition to carefully created programming that aligns with our community needs we are excited to have been awarded innovation grants that fund several 3K classrooms and expand Parents as Teachers which advance early intervention, family strengthening, child health, and early education quality. Our rigorous programming, family engagement, and strong partnerships are passions shared by all board members. We are proud of our executive director and the staff who provide excellence, ensuring families have equitable access to resources.

We invite you to partner with us on initiatives, engage in programs, volunteer your time, or donate to sustain and grow services. Together, we create a brighter future with strong families and children.

PROGRAMS

PARENTING

Parents as Teachers

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

104 children served 23 group meetings and events 995 home visits

Connected Families

Prevents the unnecessary removal of young children from their homes by providing parents and caregivers with voluntary, coordinated services.

40 children served 30 families served 206 home visits

Motheread/Fatheread

Offers adult literacy classes to parents of young children, with an emphasis on the importance of reading regularly as a family.

25 children served 21 families served 24 parent workshops

Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library

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

40 children served 40 families served 40 books distributed

HEALTH

Early Identification & Referral

Providing developmental screenings and referrals to other services.

20 children served 15 families served

EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

Training & Professional Development

Certified and registered training hours for the early childhood workforce.

123 children served 15 providers served 19 certified training hours

Child Care Scholarships

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

30 children served

Quality Counts

Certified and registered training hours for the early childhood workforce.

958 children served 14 providers served 485 training hours provided

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

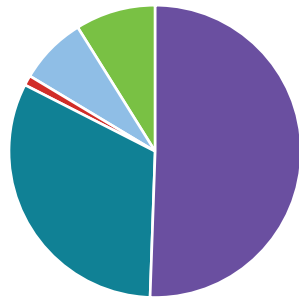


\$1 = \$1.61

Charleston County First Steps leveraged \$518,197.05 from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$0.61 for every state dollar invested.

EXPENDITURES

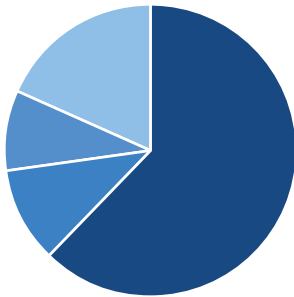
Total: \$1,364,149.26



- Parenting - \$691,236
- Early Care & Education - \$434,621.48
- Health - \$18,176.46
- Administrative - \$102,295.16
- Core Functions - \$117,820.16

FUNDING SOURCES

Total: \$1,372,253.87



- State Funding - \$854,056.82
- Federal Funding - \$146,661.97
- Private Funding - \$122,642.73
- In-kind Contributions - \$248,892.35

FUNDING SUPPORT

State Education Improvement Act (EIA) Funding

State READY Funding*

Federal AmeriCorps Service Site

The Duke Endowment & Doris Duke Foundation

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

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