



FIRST STEPS IS HERE

Last year, because of Laurens County First Steps:



1,785 children

were directly served in Laurens County



836 parents & caregivers

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



38 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 LAURENS COUNTY

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

4,657

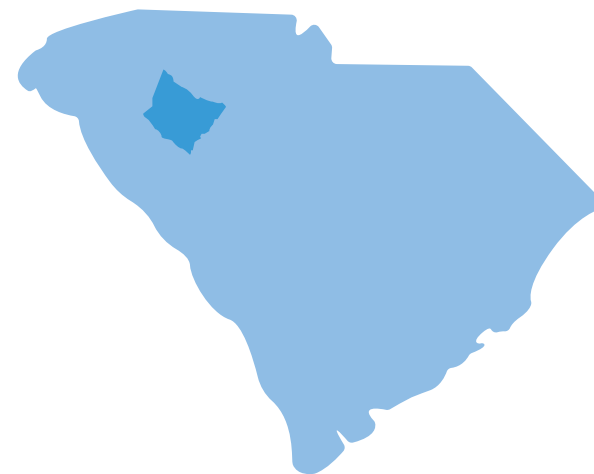
children under age 5

50.7%

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

63%

of kindergarteners are considered "not ready" for school



Our Local Supporters

Laurens School District 55
Lakelands Region YMCA - Laurens
Amazon Smiles
FrontStream
Greenville Technical College
NASCAR Foundation - NASCAR Day Giveathon 2023
Chick-Fil-A of Laurens
South Carolina Department of Social Services
Laurens County Adult Education

Elizabeth Able	Elizabeth Dudek
Toni Able	Betty Gardiner
Donna Aga	Elizabeth Hodges
Mary Beth Kennedy	Ellenor Holland
Amanda Brewington	Janice Kilburn
Johnny Brewington	Ashley Smith
Cynthia Coker	Michelle Stallworth
Laurie Counterman	Nikki Stewart
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CONTACT US

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2022-2023 ANNUAL REPORT

OUR MISSION

In collaboration with other entities, Laurens County First Steps will help local 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.



Toni Able
Executive Director

FY23 was a whirlwind of a year of growth for LCFS. We had growth in the number of families that we served. We had opportunities to connect in-person during several community events. The process of completing the Needs Assessment and Strategic plan reconfirmed the importance of Early Childhood Education for Laurens County to our stakeholders, staff, childcare providers and families.

What is the number one driver of the workforce economy from 15 to 20 years from now?

The answer is early childhood development and education today.

There is no doubt that Laurens County is growing! Laurens County's future depends on the education of our children of today. We know that the foundation for future learning, including a child's overall health and well-being, is built during the early childhood years. Laurens County First Steps is here to be a champion for the education of our youngest population.



Kena Cox
Board Chair

Maria Montessori said "The children of today will make all the discoveries of tomorrow. All the discoveries of mankind will be known to them and they will improve what has been done and make fresh discoveries. They must make all the improvements in houses, cities, communication, methods of production, etc. that are to be made. The future generation must not only know how to do what we can teach them, they must be able to go a step further."

It is an honor to continue to serve as the board chair for Laurens County First Steps. We have a great responsibility to ensure that all of the children in Laurens County are ready to be successful upon entering Kindergarten. Our plan is securely in place to find and empower parents and caregivers to effectively serve as their child's first teacher, increasing their potential to succeed in school and beyond.

PROGRAMS

PARENTING

Parents as Teachers

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

17

children served

18

group meetings and events

234

home visits

Reach Out and Read

Site visits for home child care providers to encourage developmentally appropriate practices.

1,667

children served

3,333

book distributed

EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

Training & Professional Development

Certified and registered training hours for the early childhood workforce.

3,127

children served

8

providers served

19

certified training hours

Serving Laurens County's children birth through age five.

"Family is the most important thing in my life. I am grateful for the Nurturing Parenting classes through Saluda First Steps. I have learned positive ways to help my children. Thank you, Saluda County First Steps!"

Laurens County First Steps parent



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

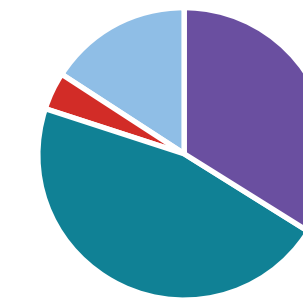


\$1 = \$1.62

Laurens County First Steps leveraged \$124,898.35 from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$0.62 for every state dollar invested.

EXPENDITURES

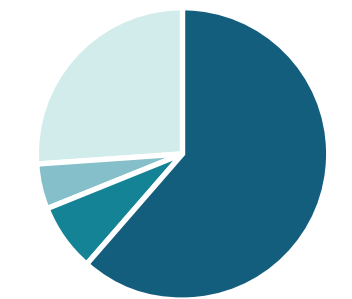
Total: \$271,829.89



- Parenting - \$92,440.1
- Early Care & Education - \$125,383.31
- Health - \$11,374.29
- Administrative - \$42,632.19

FUNDING SOURCES

Total: \$324,898.35



- State Funding - \$200,000
- Federal Funding - \$23,825
- Private Funding - \$16,434.85
- In-kind Contributions - \$84,638.5

FUNDING SUPPORT BY SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS

- State Education Improvement Act (EIA) Funding
- State READY Funding*
- 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