



ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025





FIRST STEPS IS HERE

Last year, because of Lexington County First Steps:



1,235 children

were directly served in Lexington County



969 parents & caregivers

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



787 educators

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

THE NEED PERSISTS IN LEXINGTON COUNTY

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

20,436

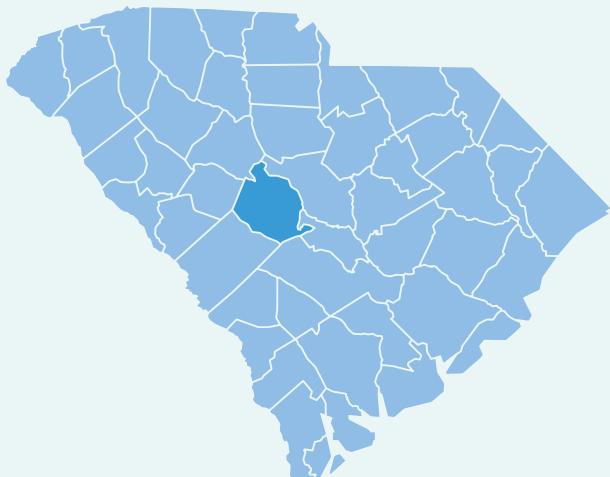
children birth to five

40%

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

62%

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

To support families in Lexington County so that all children enter school ready to learn.



James Riddle
Executive Director

Lexington County First Steps has experienced another year of excellence in parenting programs to include traditional Parents As Teachers (PAT curriculum), Connected Families (also PAT curriculum) serving DSS Referrals, and PASOS assisting new immigrant families to navigate available public services. All programs again exceeded expectations of the projected numbers to serve. In addition, the long-standing Countdown to Kindergarten services for rising 5K since 2004, beginning with 50 students, continues to be a successful program. This summer, 188 students received CTK summer home visitations from their 5K teacher-to-be or a qualified teacher.



Deborah Poole
Board Chair

Undisputed research supports the urgency with which preschool aged children must be surrounded by rich experiences, not only in literacy and numeracy, but also with ample opportunities for motor development and social emotional development in order to be prepared for school.

Lexington County First Steps (LCFS) administers programs such as Parent As Teachers, which provides highly qualified personnel to work with children and families prior to entering school. In addition, the Countdown to Kindergarten summer readiness program for 5K has proven the value of early intervention between the teacher-to-be and the rising kindergartener. LCFS also provides valuable resources to promote school readiness as well as connections to local organizations that help support a child's development and success in school.

Providing group connections across Lexington County in partnership with all 5 School Districts builds community and strengthens protective factors for all our children.

PROGRAMS

PARENTING

Parents as Teachers

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

182 children served	3,112 home visits	129 group meetings and events
-------------------------------	-----------------------------	---

Connected Families

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

56 children served	38 families served	258 home visits
------------------------------	------------------------------	---------------------------

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

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

171 children served	2,142 books distributed
-------------------------------	-----------------------------------

HEALTH

Early Identification & Referral

Providing developmental screenings and referrals to other services.

98 children served	83 families served
------------------------------	------------------------------

EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

Training & Professional Development

Certified and registered training hours for the early childhood workforce.

279 children served	8 providers served	17.5 certified training hours
-------------------------------	------------------------------	---

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.

336 children served	2,045 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.

136 children served	785 home/school visits
-------------------------------	----------------------------------

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

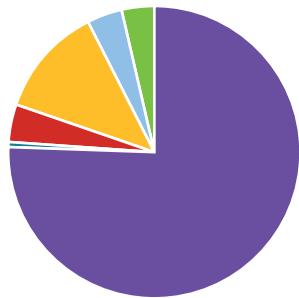


\$1 = \$1.66

Lexington County First Steps leveraged \$730,597.52 from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$0.66 for every state dollar invested.

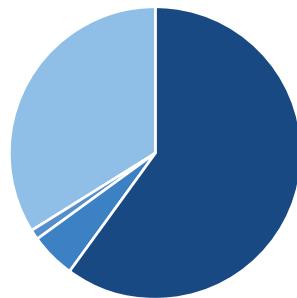
EXPENDITURES

Total: \$1,856,642.21



FUNDING SOURCES

Total: \$1,835,253.16



- Parenting - \$1,403,629.64
- Early Care & Education - \$11,611.74
- Health - \$76,499.67
- School Transition - \$226,055.43
- Administrative - \$75,302.48
- Core Functions - \$63,543.25

- State Funding - \$1,104,655.64
- Federal Funding - \$93,072.36
- Private Funding - \$17,099.37
- In-kind Contributions - \$620,425.79
- Other - \$1,000

FUNDING SUPPORT

State Education Improvement Act (EIA) Funding

State READY Funding*

The Duke Endowment & Doris Duke Foundation

Sylvamo

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

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

“

I did not know what ready for school means. My Parent Educator told things about what ready for school means and now I can do better for my daughter.

Lexington County First Steps Parent



Board of Directors

Chanta Zeigler	Julia Johnson
Amy Bryant	Dan Ashley
Ada Jane Setzler	Debbie Poole
Jessica Buzhardt	Nicole Mitchell
Cambe Rucker	Mary Brooks
Tiffany Birt	Sonya Bryant
Yolanda Boozer	Leslie Hightower
Mary Kennerly	Jennifer Felkel
Jeanette Samuels	Kelly Poole
Robin Jackson	

Donor List

Lexington School District One
Lexington School District Two
Lexington School District Three
Lexington School District Four
Lexington School District Five
Board of Directors
Staff
Mission Lexington Books
Anonymous (requested)

CONTACT US

lexingtonfirststeps.org | (803)399-8288 | jriddle@lexingtonfirststeps.org