



# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2024-2025





# FIRST STEPS IS HERE

Last year, because of Lancaster County First Steps:



**3,408 children**

were directly served in Lancaster County



**3,024 parents & caregivers**

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



**576 educators**

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

## THE NEED PERSISTS IN LANCASTER COUNTY

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

**6,915**

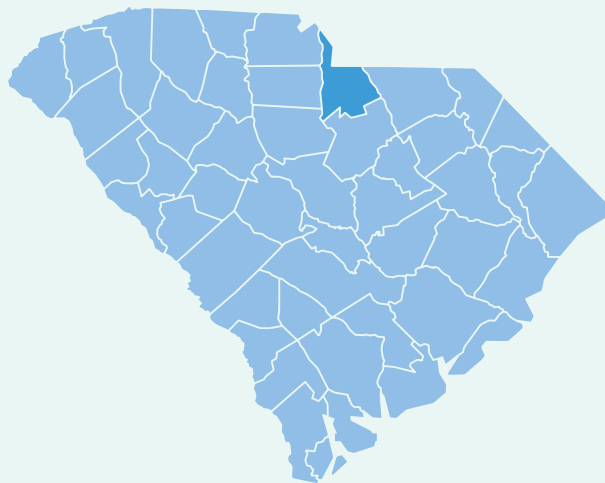
children birth to five

**35%**

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

**60%**

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

Lancaster County First Steps is a non-profit organization that collaborates with the community and other organizations to ensure that children are prepared for success in school and beyond.



**Tomeiko Wright**  
Executive Director

"We Are Lancaster" is more than a slogan it's a reflection of our shared commitment to building a stronger, more connected community. As someone born, raised, and educated in this county, I'm honored to serve as Executive Director and give back to the place that shaped me.

This year, Lancaster County First Steps made meaningful progress by expanding access to early childhood resources, deepening partnerships, and empowering families to reach their full potential. We remain dedicated to helping every child enter school ready to succeed, and every parent feel supported and equipped.

Our work is rooted in service, collaboration, and the belief that lasting change begins with strong foundations. I'm proud of what we've accomplished and even more excited for what's ahead.

As Nelson Mandela once said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

Together, we are creating that change. Together, We Are Lancaster."



**Paul McKenzie**  
Board Chair

Lancaster County First Steps continues to make meaningful progress in preparing children for school and supporting families across our community. We believe in the power of partnerships, data-driven decisions, and evidence-based programs. Our board is committed to expanding this work to ensure every child enters school ready to succeed, backed by strong families and a network of community support.

# PROGRAMS

## PARENTING

### Parents as Teachers

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

63

children served

532

home visits

15

group meetings  
and events

### Incredible Years

12-week group support for parents for their child's social and emotional development and behavior.

37

children served

74

group meetings  
and events

### Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

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

1,696

children served

15,233

books distributed

## EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

### Training & Professional Development

Certified and registered training hours for the early childhood workforce.

828

children served

62

providers served

35

certified training  
hours

### Early Education Program Support

Providing families with early care and education by supporting center-based child care programs.

17

children served

4

group meetings  
and events

### Early Head Start

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

71

children served

60

group meetings  
and events

## 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.

102

children served

6

schools served

643

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.

103

children served

6

schools served

638

home/school  
visits

## HEALTH

### Early Identification & Referral

Providing developmental screenings and referrals to other services.

450

children served

12,600

materials distributed

# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

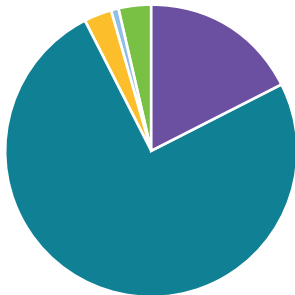


**\$1 = \$7.55**

Lancaster County First Steps leveraged \$3,660,137.95 from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$6.55 for every state dollar invested.

## EXPENDITURES

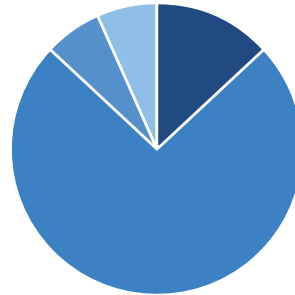
Total: \$4,032,390.33



|                        |                  |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Parenting              | - \$713,688.67   |
| Early Care & Education | - \$3,022,534.18 |
| School Transition      | - \$123,569.29   |
| Administrative         | - \$34,759.62    |
| Core Functions         | - \$142,099.78   |

## FUNDING SOURCES

Total: \$4,219,164.46



|                       |                  |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| State Funding         | - \$599,026.51   |
| Federal Funding       | - \$3,117,401.11 |
| Private Funding       | - \$264,838.72   |
| In-kind Contributions | - \$277,898.12   |

## 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



When we started with Parents as Teachers, we were homeless, moving between family homes and a motel. With help, we got food, shelter, and eventually a home. Now I have a job, a car, and my kids are thriving in the LCFS Early Head Start while I work.

**Parent**

## **Board of Directors**

Kimberly Funderburk  
Felice Austin  
Wardell Carter  
Paul McKenzie  
Mitch Lucas  
Celeste Graham  
Stephen Andrews  
Traci Shigley  
Susannah Baker  
Jackie Harris  
Carlton Rucker  
Nathan Cooper

## **Donor List**

Lancaster Promise Neighborhood  
Springs Close Foundation  
United Way of Lancaster  
USC-Lancaster  
Town of Kershaw  
Arras Foundation

## **CONTACT US**

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