



2023-2024

ANNUAL REPORT



FIRST STEPS IS HERE

Last year, because of Jasper County First Steps:



1,598 children

were directly served in Jasper County



1,681 parents & caregivers

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



192 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 JASPER COUNTY

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

1,556

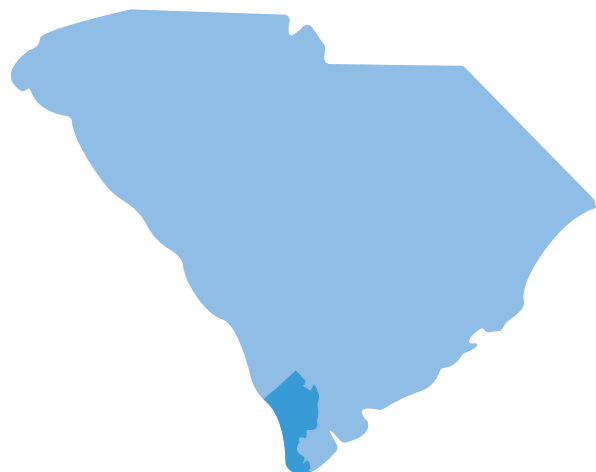
children under 6

59%

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

85%

of kindergarteners are considered "not ready" for school



OUR MISSION

Jasper County First Steps works collaboratively to ensure all Jasper County children will start school ready to reach their highest potential through engaged support from parents, caregivers and our communities.



Duchett Hylton

Executive Director

As Jasper First Steps enter our 25th year of "preparing children for kindergarten", I am enheartened that, as an organization, we are remaining true to our mission while being creative and innovative in our approaches to strive towards our vision for our youngest learners. One way we have been able to both avoid mission-drift without becoming stagnant has been to have a clear understanding of the values that shape the "why" of our work: Children - Community - Equity - Quality - Results. If we start with the end in mind (results) I am sure that our primary value (children) will reap the benefits of our efforts.

In FY24, there were two programmatic goals to which we were working:

- 1) Increased literacy program outreach - realized through increased DPIL capacity and the addition of Reach Out And Read, a strategy which provides literacy education to children during pediatric well-child visits
- 2) Increased father/male participation in services - realized through more male care givers participation in PAT services, community outreach events, and Dads Matter participation

We were able to achieve our intended RESULTS because we were intentional about providing high QUALITY strategies and approaches that were made EQUITABLE and accessible within our COMMUNITY. And Jasper County's CHILDREN will be better because of it. In year 25, we are looking forward to even greater for our future. We invite you to join us on the journey.

Serving Jasper County's children birth through age five.

"Jasper First Steps, thank you for supporting families in our county with respect. Knowing we can come to you for help with diapers, car seats and other information helps us know we are not in this alone."

K. Rivers
Jasper County First Steps parent



PROGRAMS

PARENTING

Parents as Teachers

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

13

children served

15

group meetings
and events

158

home visits

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

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

696

children served

6,496

books distributed

EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

Training & Professional Development

Certified and registered training hours for the early childhood workforce.

1,828

children served

50

providers served

19.5

certified training
hours

Child Care Scholarships

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

10

children served

10

families served

4

providers served

HEALTH

Early Identification & Referral

Providing developmental screenings and referrals to other services.

12

children served

11

families served

Reach Out and Read

Free, high-quality books provided by a child's pediatric provider during doctor's visits.

675

children served

1,428

book distributed

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

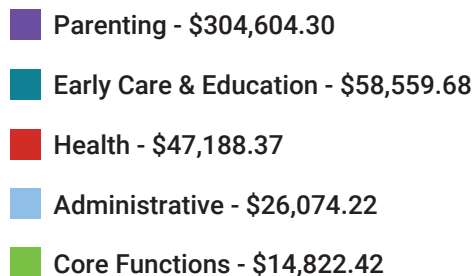
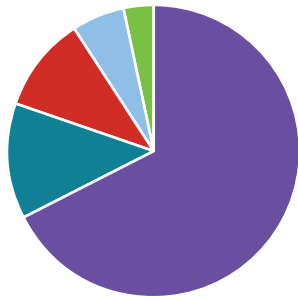


\$1 = \$1.92

Jasper County First Steps leveraged \$204,793.10 from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$0.92 for every state dollar invested.

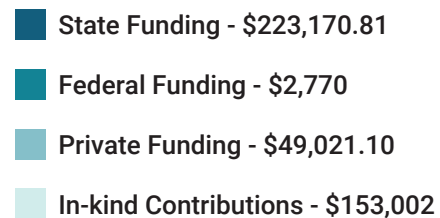
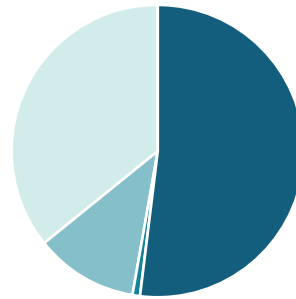
EXPENDITURES

Total: \$451,248.99



FUNDING SOURCES

Total: \$427,963.91



FUNDING SUPPORT BY SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS

State Education Improvement Act (EIA) Funding
State READY 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

**American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund, awarded to the South Carolina Department of Education

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.



Deloris Dunham

Board Chair

As the Chair of the Jasper County First Steps Board, I have the wonderful duty to represent our Partnership in our community, and to hear about our impact from those we serve. I would like to take this opportunity to give space to one such story. This is the "why" we do what we do:

PAT Family Highlight (T. Riley)

"First Steps has been an amazing program for my family and me. Our participation began back in 2015 with my grandson and again with my granddaughter in 2021. Both of my grandchildren have benefited from the different services provided through First Steps. The PAT home visits are a joy to my granddaughter, she gets excited when we tell her Ms. Rose is coming today. The interactions between them are great! She has learned and developed motor skills like crawling and standing through play; and I learn from parent handouts, activity pages and monthly calendars. There are so many new things to learn, such as: community resources, developmental screenings, learning activities, and current events in the community. I really value the advice and support from my Parent Educator.

I like that First Steps is also concerned about the wellbeing of my whole family. We also participate in Imagination Library, educational field trips. I am grateful for all that First Steps has done and continue to do for families in the program. All those things have helped me to maneuver through parenting with my grandchildren."

Our Local Supporters

Jasper County Government \$15,000
Lowcountry Ministries Fund \$22,000
JCFS Board Contributions \$2,140
SC Endeavors &2,500
SC Ports Authority - Giving Fund \$1,000
PAT Angel Tree - Private, Faith & Business Community \$3,030
Dollywood Foundation (In-Kind)
Bundles of Joy - Diaper Bank
CAPA - Cribs for Kids
Safe Kids - Child Passenger Safety Training
The Morris Center - Arts Education and Programming
Blue Heron Nature Center - Conservation Education

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