



ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025





FIRST STEPS IS HERE

Last year, because of Kershaw County First Steps:



83 children

were directly served in Kershaw County



2,329 parents & caregivers

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

THE NEED PERSISTS IN KERSHAW COUNTY

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

4,379

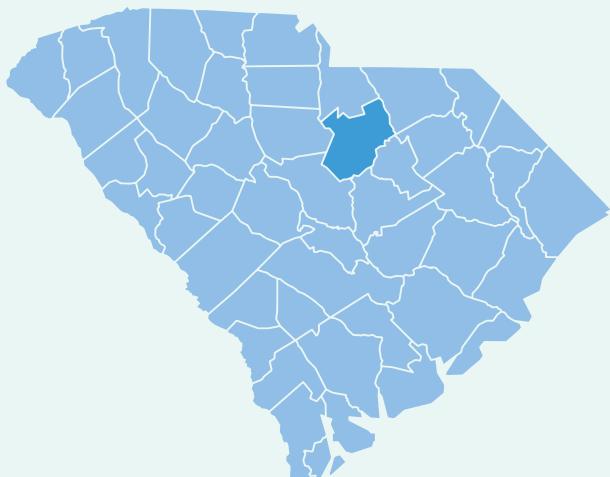
children birth to five

41%

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

66%

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

Through community collaboration, Kershaw County First Steps will provide access to resources and support for families, enabling children to enter school ready to learn.



Katie Nichols
Executive Director

I'm honored to share our progress in building a strong foundation for young learners. This year, we expanded high-quality early childhood programs, strengthened caregiver support, and fostered cross-sector collaboration. Through literacy initiatives, parenting workshops, developmental screenings, and child care support, we've reached countless families, each a story of resilience and hope. Guided by research and compassion, we focus on equity, innovation, and community engagement to ensure every child thrives. Thank you to our staff, board, partners, and supporters for fueling our mission. The journey continues, and the best is yet to come.



Jennifer Kelley
Board Chair

This past year has been one of change and opportunity. We've welcomed our new executive director, Katie Nichols, and she has hit the ground running. I see a reinvigorated staff eager for new opportunities and increased community engagement. I'm excited about the new opportunities First Steps is bringing to our community and look forward to continuing to make an impact for the children and families of Kershaw County.

PROGRAMS

PARENTING

Parents as Teachers

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

27

children served

294

home visits

16

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.

8

children served

3

schools served

48

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.

23

children served

5

schools served

138

home/school
visits

“

Kershaw County First Steps gave us the opportunity to be the parents we want to be, and they do everything they can to make that possible.

Kayla & Anthony



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

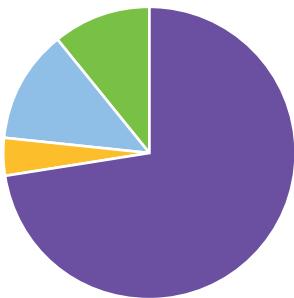


\$1 = \$1.19

Kershaw County First Steps leveraged \$44,894.75 from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$0.19 for every state dollar invested.

EXPENDITURES

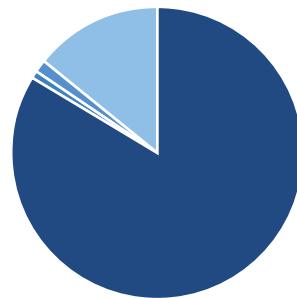
Total: \$285,150.84



- Parenting - \$207,212.34
- School Transition - \$11,883.53
- Administrative - \$35,546.45
- Core Functions - \$30,508.52

FUNDING SOURCES

Total: \$277,511.75



- State Funding - \$232,617
- Federal Funding - \$2,093.04
- Private Funding - \$3,731.83
- In-kind Contributions - \$39,069.88

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

Board of Directors

Kathy Sanders
Carrie Prioleau
Carolyn Lyles
Betty Turner
Leslie Williams
Ginger Catoe
Jennifer Kelley

Donor List

Absolute Total Care | Access Kershaw | AgFirst Farm Credit Bank | Betty Gardiner | Blue Pineapple Trophy's and Gifts | Camden Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc | Camden First United Methodist Church | Camden First United Methodist Women of Faith | Carolyn Jones | Carolyn Lyles | Chi Chi Chapter Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc. | City of Camden | Epsilon Delta Sigma Alumnae Chapter of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. | Food Lion (Camden) | Ginger Catoe | Girl Scouts of America (Midlands) | Healthy Blue | Humana | Jennifer Kelley | Julie Putnam | Kathy Sanders | Kershaw County | Kershaw County Head Start | Kershaw County Library | Kershaw County Parks & Recreation | Kershaw County School District | Live Well Coalition | Lugoff-Elgin Men's Basketball Team | Midlands Give | Mt. Pisgah Community Center | Nature as Teacher Preserve | PayPal Giving Fund | R&S Inflatables | Sarah Eargle | SC Nkiruka Grad Chapter of Swing Phi Social Fellowship, Inc. | Sisley Herrera | St. Paul United Methodist Church | Stephen & William James | Trinity Apartments | United Way of Kershaw County

CONTACT US

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