



FIRST STEPS IS HERE

Last year, because of Jasper County First Steps:



1,493 children

were directly served in Jasper County



1,517 parents & caregivers

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



410 educators

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

THE NEED PERSISTS IN JASPER COUNTY

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

1,626

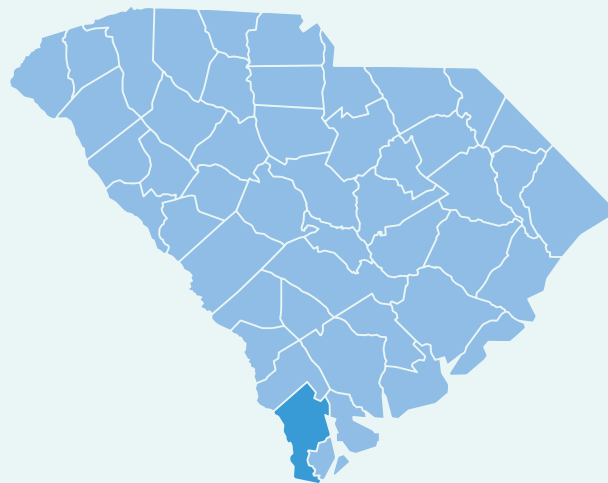
children birth to five

61%

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

85%

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

“

My sister introduced me to this program. I was amazed by all the resources and help they provide to new parents!

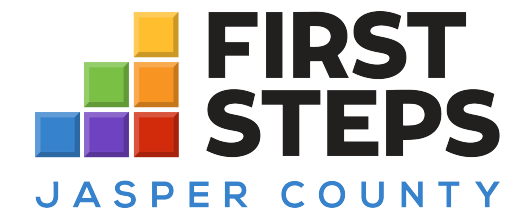
Parents As Teacher Participant

Board of Directors

Kenneth Bell
Gail Blackshear
Kelvin Bostick
Darlene Burroughs
Cheryle Dopson
Deloris Dunham
Constance Martin-Witter
Wanda McAllister
Pamela Sims

Donor List

Jasper County Government
Dollywood Foundation
JCFS Board Contributions
SC Endeavors
Palmetto Project
PAT Angel Tree - Private, Faith, & Business Community



ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025



CONTACT US

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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 community.



Duchett Polite
Executive Director

I'm honored to share with you our continued commitment to a cause that shapes futures, strengthens families, and uplifts communities: early childhood education.

The early years of a child's life are a time of great growth and potential. Research consistently shows that high-quality early education lays the foundation for lifelong success in academics, as well as in social-emotional development, critical thinking, and resilience. These are building blocks of not only strong students, but of compassionate citizens and capable leaders.

At Jasper County First Steps, we don't take this responsibility lightly. Each day, we work hand in hand with families to support nurturing, engaging, and inclusive learning environments. In the face of ongoing challenges we have remained steadfast because we believe every child deserves the opportunity to thrive from the very beginning.

Thank you for believing in our work as we invest in children at a time when it matters most.

PROGRAMS

PARENTING

Parents as Teachers

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



Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

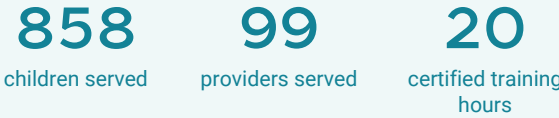
Free, high-quality books mailed to the home of children from birth until age five.



EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

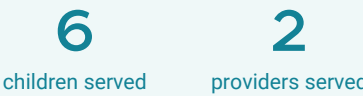
Training & Professional Development

Certified and registered training hours for the early childhood workforce.



Child Care Scholarships

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



HEALTH

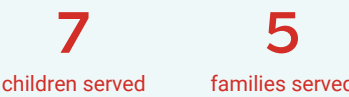
Reach Out and Read

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



Early Identification & Referral

Providing developmental screenings and referrals to other services.



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

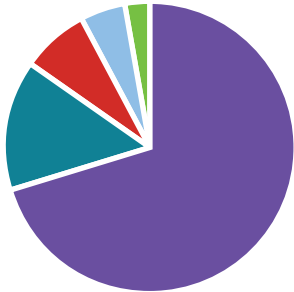


\$1 = \$1.88

Jasper County First Steps leveraged \$222,621.86 from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$0.88 for every state dollar invested.

EXPENDITURES

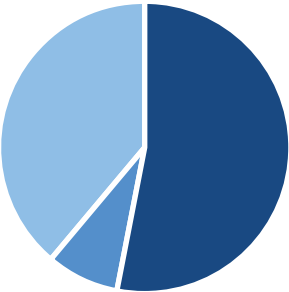
Total: \$464,875.51



- Parenting - \$326,779.89
- Early Care & Education - \$68,130.22
- Health - \$34,759.62
- Administrative - \$22,876.36
- Core Functions - \$12,329.42

FUNDING SOURCES

Total: \$475,479.86



- State Funding - \$252,858
- Private Funding - \$38,410.17
- In-kind Contributions - \$184,211.69

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