

# Annual Report

## 2019-2020

MARLBORO COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.

## THE NEED

IN MARLBORO COUNTY:

**1,422**

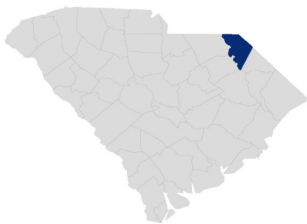
children under age 5

**60.8%**

of young children live in poverty  
or low-income households

**84%**

of kindergartners are considered "not  
ready" for school



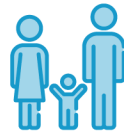
### THREE MOST COMMON RISK FACTORS:

1. SNAP
2. Single Parent Household
3. TANF

## OUR MISSION

Collaborating with other entities, Marlboro County First Steps helps South Carolina families and caregivers prepare their children for school success by maximizing public and private community resources to deliver, enhance and expand high-quality early childhood services.

## OUR APPROACH



High quality programs and services  
for children and families



Intensive training, resources and  
support for childcare providers



Strategic partnerships and  
community education

## OUR IMPACT

**217**

number of children and adults served by  
ABC County First Steps in 2019-2020

## JOIN US

We rely on a community of partners, donors, and volunteers – **people like you** – who believe in a brighter future for children and families in our community.

# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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## Randall Johnson

Executive Director

Marlboro County First Steps

The Marlboro County First Steps Partnership continues to be a quality contributor to the well-being for families with young children in the Marlboro community. This can especially be notice via parenting and childcare. This past fiscal year we worked with 25 families who may not receive other quality services. MCFS also continued to be the lead county agency that works with childcare facilities throughout the community. We stress quality and efficient learning as opposed to the babysitting approach.

The Marlboro County First Steps Partnership works, in collaboration with state and local partners, is focused on advancing Marlboro County towards these strategic goals in support of the Profile of the Ready Kindergartner, South Carolina's description of school readiness:

- Marlboro County First Steps will work to ensure that families understand the importance of their child's well-being as it relates to early development & preschool.
- MCFS will ensure that Early Intervention is key tool to determining what's needed for county eligible families.
- MCFS will support early childhood education in the county through various programs that we provide.
- MCFS will continue being involved with the Marlboro County Coordinating Council and others in community through various levels of collaboration.

*Randall S. Johnson, M.Ed.*



# GETTING CHILDREN READY FOR SCHOOL

All children are ready to benefit from a quality kindergarten experience when they are five years old by September 1 of that school year. But kindergarten readiness—the critical stage at which children are prepared for learning and success—is more than a matter of age. For a strong start in school, children need positive relationships and supportive learning environments beginning at birth. At First Steps, we partner with families, caregivers, and communities to ensure that all children are prepared for success.

## South Carolina's Profile of the Ready Kindergartner

Developed by SC First Steps and the SC Department of Education, the state's description of school readiness includes 60 developmental milestones across 5 categories:



**Approaches to learning & inquiry**



**Emotional & social development**



**Physical development, self-help & motor skills**



**Mathematical thinking**



**Language & literacy development**

In support of the Profile of the Ready Kindergartner, our approach is focused on advancing Marlboro County toward the following strategic goals:

- MCFS will work to ensure that families understand the importance of their child's well-being as it relates to early childhood development.
- MCFS will ensure that Early Intervention is the key tool to determine what's need for families.
- MCFS will support early childhood education in the county through various programs.
- Community collaboration and engagement



## OUR GOALS

# PIVOTING FOR COVID-19

When the coronavirus pandemic forced South Carolina to shut down in March 2020, Marlboro County First Steps quickly pivoted to provide much-needed support to young children, their families and child care providers.

Our work has never been more critical. While children are at low risk for the serious health effects of the virus, the crisis is having a profound impact on their wellbeing and development. For children of color and low-income communities, these impacts are expected to be even more damaging. That is why Marlboro County First Steps is enhancing our efforts to provide parents and caregivers with the services and resources they need to weather this storm.

## IMPACT ON MARLBORO COUNTY

### HEALTH

Through June 30, Marlboro County had a total of **#310** confirmed COVID-19 cases and **#4** COVID-19 deaths.

### JOB LOSS

**176.0%**

increase in unemployment, 2019-2020

### CHILD CARE

**52.5%**

children under 5 in Marlboro County lived in a child care desert\* before COVID-19

**100%**

children under 5 in Marlboro County lived in a child care desert as of May 28, 2020



In the midst of the Covid-19 Pandemic, Marlboro County First Steps gathered diapers, bottle sets and other things for our families who were in need.

\*The Center for American Progress defines a child care desert as a ZIP code with at least 30 children under the age of 5 and either no child care centers or so few centers that there are more than three times as many children under age 5 as there are spaces in centers.



# PARENTS AS TEACHERS



*an evidence-based program*

Parents as Teachers (PAT) is a home visiting program designed to build strong communities, thriving families and children who are healthy, safe and ready to succeed. PAT services include:



Personal visits from a parent educator at least twice monthly



Monthly group connections with other PAT families



Screenings and assessments to identify developmental concerns



Connections to outside resources that families may need to succeed

## PAT GOES VIRTUAL

Due to COVID-19, Parents as Teachers (PAT) National provided guidance for affiliates to deliver virtual services via interactive video conferencing and phone calls. South Carolina PAT affiliates rose to the occasion by engaging families in creative and meaningful ways while continuing to meet the Essential Requirements of implementing a quality PAT program during the pandemic.

## PAT IN Marlboro COUNTY 2019-2020

**26**

families served

**410**

total home visits

Marlboro County First Steps/Marlboro County School District PAT program was recognized for achieving model fidelity for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year in a row.



Parents as Teachers.  
*Model Affiliate*



# CHILD CARE TRAINING



*an evidence-based program*

High-quality child care hinges on high-quality professional development that meets the needs of the local child care workforce. Our training programs are certified through SC Endeavors and include topics in the areas of nutrition, health and safety, curriculum, child guidance, professional development and program administration. Our 2019-2020 trainings included:

**The Incredible Preschool Years; Magical Thinking**

**What Inclusion Means to Me**

**The Incredible Years: Cognitive Development**

**Child Abuse 101**

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## TRAINING BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

**42**

total training attendance

**10**

child care teachers and  
directors served

**5**

number of training  
sessions offered



Once again, Marlboro County First Steps came through to offer quality childcare trainings locally. Also, providing information for zoom trainings during the pandemic”



**Janice Faye Green, Owner of Kids Learning Kastle**



## CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIPS



*an evidence-based program*

- For many families in Marlboro County, the cost of quality child care is out of reach. Our scholarship program makes payments to child care providers to care for children from low-income families so their parents can return to school or work as well as income-eligible children whose parents attends school or works at least 20 hours per week. In addition to regular monitoring of child care providers that receive First Steps scholarships, First Steps conducts at least one developmental screening each year with scholarship children and connects families to needed services within the community.
- Each one of the participants in our program who receives a scholarship must also participate in the Marlboro County First Steps PAT Program.
- Every child who receives a scholarship also receives books.

### SCHOLARSHIPS BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

**21**

number of children  
served

**8**

number of providers  
served

**37**

number of  
developmental  
screenings provided

**100% the money paid to child care providers goes back into our local economy to benefit the citizens of Marlboro County.**



# 4K

## FOUR-YEAR-OLD KINDERGARTEN



an evidence-based program

South Carolina First Steps provides eligible children with free enrollment in full-day four-year-old kindergarten. In coordination with First Steps local partnerships and more than 230 private, community and faith-based preschool providers, First Steps 4K expands access to quality early education across the state.



### ELIGIBILITY

To qualify for enrollment, a child must be:

- ✓ 4 years old on or before September 1
- ✓ Eligible for Medicaid, SNAP or TANF, experiencing homelessness or transiency, or in foster care

### FIRST STEPS 4K IN Marlboro County 2019-2020

# 17

children enrolled

# 1

First Steps 4K providers

### PIVOTING FOR COVID-19

When schools closed due to COVID-19, First Steps 4K classroom converted to distance-learning, with teachers creatively supporting their young learners through video chat, take-home materials, and hands-on projects that caregivers could facilitate at home.





# PUBLIC AWARENESS



an evidence-informed program

Marlboro County First Steps public awareness consist of a lot of collaborations. Being in a community this, small, agencies who work with families must collaborate with each other because we service the same clients in different capacities.

## Awareness Events/Collaborations (Pre-COVID-19) BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

**164**

materials distributed

**2**

events held

**174**

total event attendance





## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

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Addressing the needs of young children is a shared endeavor. In addition to providing services to families and support for child care providers, Marlboro County First Steps mobilizes partners and community members to ensure all children in Marlboro begin school ready to succeed. We serve as a:

### LOCAL PORTAL

connecting preschool children and their families to services

### CONVENER

of community stakeholders to develop an effective and comprehensive early childhood system

### CHAMPION

of the importance of school readiness to our children's future

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## OUR PARTNERSHIPS BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

8

Community Meetings

17

Community Partnerships

“ We continue to support Marlboro County First Steps through our collaborative relationships. Marlboro County School District has been a partner since its inception. ”

MARGARET QUICK, MCSD FAMILY LITERACY COORDINATOR



## OUR SUPPORTERS

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Through partnerships and collaborations, as well as financial support from grants and contributions, Marlboro County First Steps leverages state dollars to enhance and expand services to children and families.

### FUNDING SUPPORT

State of South Carolina: \$200,000  
(through South Carolina First Steps)

Parker's Used Cars: \$250.00

### IN-KIND SUPPORT

Marlboro County School District

S.C. ABC Childcare

S.C. Resource & Referral

## JOIN US

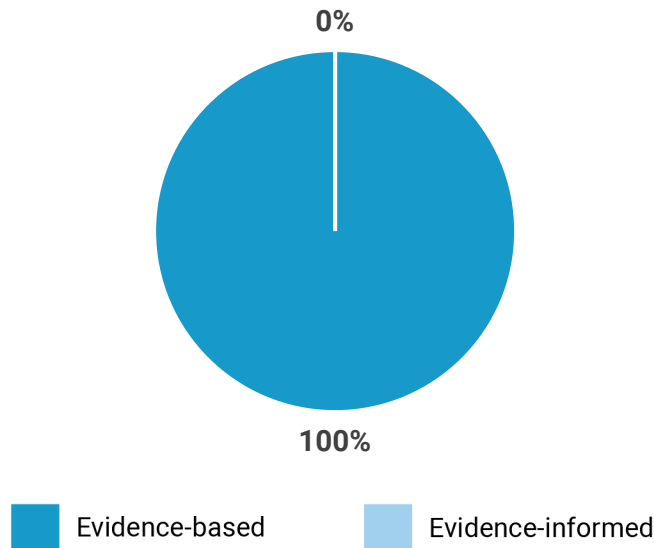
If you would like to give a tax-deductible donation please send to Marlboro County First Steps, P.O. Box 249, Bennettsville, SC 29512



## FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

### OUR INVESTMENT IN QUALITY

Expenditures of State Funds by Program Type



### ESTIMATION OF COST SAVINGS

Since inception, Marlboro County First Steps has leveraged **\$990,818** from sources outside of state government.

That's **\$0.27** for every state dollar.

### SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES BY STRATEGY

|                          | State Funding    | Federal Funding | Private Funding | In-Kind Contributions | Total            |
|--------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Parents as Teachers      | \$76,942         | \$              | \$              | \$24,605              | \$101,547        |
| Scholarship Initiatives  | \$66,207         | \$              | \$              | \$14,000              | \$80,207         |
| Child Care Training      | \$31,709         | \$              | \$              | \$                    | \$31,709         |
| Core Functions           | \$13,863         | \$107           | \$              | \$                    | \$13,970         |
| Administrative Functions | \$6,412          | \$              | \$              | \$                    | \$6,412          |
| <b>Total Expenses</b>    | <b>\$195,133</b> | <b>\$107</b>    | <b>\$</b>       | <b>\$38,605</b>       | <b>\$233,845</b> |



## LEADERSHIP

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### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

|                            |                         |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Shirley Jones, Chair       | Nichelle Nichols        |
| Kennita Graham, Vice-Chair | Denise O'Neal           |
| Linda Sanders, Secretary   | Marlon Prince           |
| Theresa Curtis-Willis      | Elaine Purvis           |
| Nidra Ellison              | Erica Rorie             |
| Bobbie Jo Grooms           | Renata Stubbs           |
| Shasta Loyd                | Bishop Ulysses Sullivan |
| Brenda McRae               | Tamika Thomas           |

### STAFF

Randall S. Johnson, Executive Director

Tamiko Warney, Program Assistant/PE

## CONTACT US

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