



# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2024-2025





# FIRST STEPS IS HERE

Last year, because of Edgefield County First Steps:



## 594 children

were directly served in Edgefield County



## 479 parents & caregivers

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



## 69 educators

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

## THE NEED PERSISTS IN EDGEFIELD COUNTY

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

**1,215**

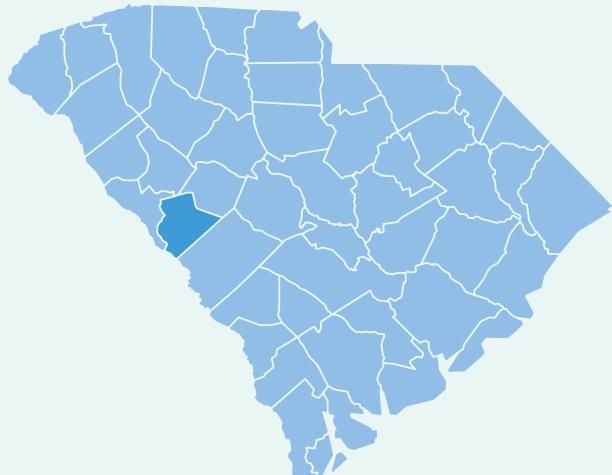
children birth to five

**37%**

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

Empower Edgefield County families and caregivers to prepare children for school success by delivering, enhancing, and expanding high-quality early childhood services.



**Candi Lalonde**  
Executive Director

Henry Ford, founder of the Ford Motor Company, said “Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.” In 1999, a group of more than 100 people came together who were interested in a better future for the youngest members of Edgefield County and Edgefield County First Steps was born.

Through the years, financial cuts came often, eventually reducing our budget to just over a third of what we started with. We fought for every program, made do with what we had, and kept together for the children we served. Eventually, the tide turned, funding began to increase, and we were able to offer more programs and services for our families.

Now, 25 years later, we are a resource for families with young children, but it would not have been possible without all of us working together. The incredible partnerships we have developed through the years within our community and the relationships we have built with the families we serve are keys to our success.



**Gail Jackson**  
Board Chair

Edgefield County First Steps is a local nonprofit that works collaboratively to ensure that all children start school ready to reach their highest potential. We operate as an independent nonprofit with a local board and staff. In 39 years of working in the Edgefield County School District, I have witnessed the benefits of the services that First Steps has provided to better prepare students for success in school. One of our components is to promote literacy through book distribution. Children in our county know our Executive Director as the "Book Lady" and I too share in the joy of watching her as she gifts books to these little people. She not only gives books but is most passionate about helping these preschoolers in any way possible. In the words of Dr. Seuss " You're never too old, too wacky, too wild, to pick up a book and read to a child". Our partnership is blessed to have the opportunity to be a valuable resource for preschool children.

# PROGRAMS

## PARENTING

### Positive Parenting Program (TripleP)

A parenting and family support system designed to prevent – as well as treat – behavioral and emotional problems in children.

**34**

children served

**34**

group meetings and events

### Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

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

**325**

children served

**293**

families served

**3,034**

books distributed

## HEALTH

### Nurse-Family Partnership

Home visitation for first time mothers, from pregnancy until the child turns two.

**3**

children served

**13**

home visits

## EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

### Training & Professional Development

Certified and registered training hours for the early childhood workforce.

**551**

children served

**16**

providers served

**34**

certified training hours

### Early Education Program Support

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

**17**

children served

**31**

group meetings and events

### Enhanced Early Education

Provides important support to students and their families through supplemental materials and book distributions to classrooms

**49**

children served

**635**

parent one-on-ones

### Child Care Scholarships

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

**30**

children served

**26**

families served

**4**

providers served

# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

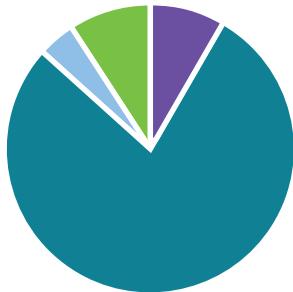


**\$1 = \$1.69**

Edgefield County First Steps leveraged \$422,666.67 from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$0.69 for every state dollar invested.

## EXPENDITURES

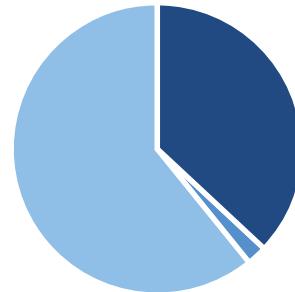
Total: \$668,128.11



- Parenting - \$57,159.11
- Early Care & Education - \$523,585.76
- Administrative - \$27,959.54
- Core Functions - \$59,423.70

## FUNDING SOURCES

Total: \$673,179.54



- State Funding - \$250,512.87
- Private Funding - \$13,751.89
- In-kind Contributions - \$409,175.96

## 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

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As a new mom, the First Steps scholarship has been such a blessing for my family. My child has learned so much socially and academically.

I am able to work part time and go back to school and further my career. I am so grateful.

**Passion M.**



## Board of Directors

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## Donor List

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Town of Trenton  
United Way of Edgefield  
Pendarvis Chevrolet Company, Inc.  
Reel Insurance Agency, Inc.  
100% of Board members and staff  
Over 50 community members

## CONTACT US

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