



ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025





FIRST STEPS IS HERE

Last year, because of Calhoun County First Steps:



664 children

were directly served in Calhoun County



334 parents & caregivers

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



47 educators

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

THE NEED PERSISTS IN CALHOUN COUNTY

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

715

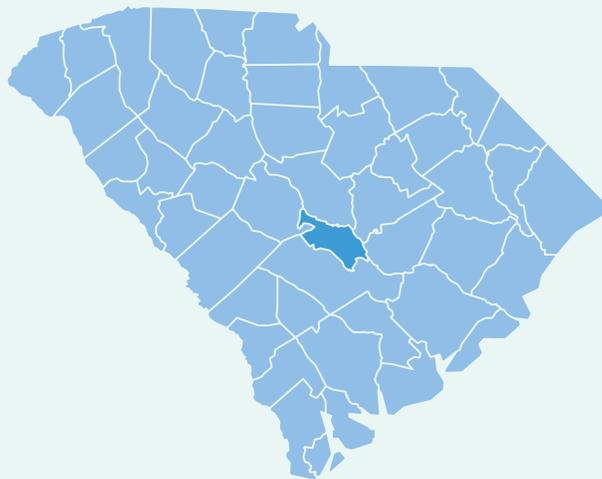
children birth to five

47%

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

59%

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

Collaborating with other entities, Calhoun County 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.



JaVonna Lewis
Executive Director

My name is JaVonna Lewis, and I am honored to serve as Executive Director of Calhoun County First Steps. This is my third year in this role, and the 2024–2025 year has been one of the most rewarding yet. When I look back, I don't just see programs—I see faces: children in awe at the zoo or aquarium, families exploring together, and proud fathers who shared how this program strengthened their role as dads. These moments remind me why our work matters.

This year, our Parents as Teachers families explored learning beyond Calhoun County, and our Countdown to Kindergarten program reached both of our local elementary schools. None of this would have been possible without our Board of Directors, community partners, funders, and staff. Thank you for your commitment, collaboration, and heart. Together, we are making sure every child in Calhoun County arrives at school ready to succeed.



Gary Jones
Board Chair

Building relationships is the key. As Board Chairman, I am proud of how our Parents as Teachers team, board members, community partners, and the broader community have united to strengthen families across Calhoun County. Together, we empower children, support parents, and create brighter futures. Thank you to our funders and to everyone whose dedication makes this possible.

PROGRAMS

PARENTING

Parents as Teachers

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

32

children served

13

group meetings
and events

465

home visits

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

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

244

children served

2,004

books distributed

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.

24

children served

2

schools served

137

home/school
visits

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

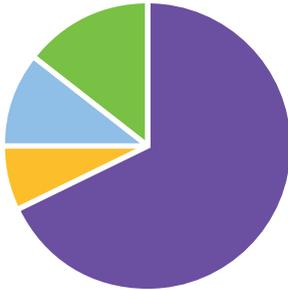


\$1 = \$1.25

Calhoun County First Steps leveraged \$65,562.73 from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$0.25 for every state dollar invested.

EXPENDITURES

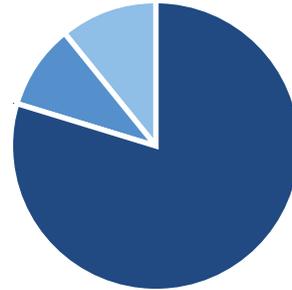
Total: \$314,828.27



- Parenting - \$213,944.74
- School Transition - \$22,279.63
- Administrative - \$33,635.02
- Core Functions - \$44,968.88

FUNDING SOURCES

Total: \$326,012.35



- State Funding - \$260,449.62
- Federal Funding - \$220.62
- Private Funding - \$30,689.76
- In-kind Contributions - \$34,652.35

FUNDING SUPPORT

State Education Improvement Act (EIA) Funding

State READY Funding*

Federal AmeriCorps Service Site

Lipscomb Family Foundation

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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My kids and I have been part of the First Steps program since 2019, and the staff made us feel like family. The program gave my children a strong start in learning, and I hope it continues to help other families as it has helped mine.

L.Z., PAT Participant



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Lipscomb Foundation
Tri- County Electric
Calhoun County School District
Calhoun County Council
Bethlehem United Methodist Church
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Orangeburg Alumnae Chapter Delta
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CONTACT US

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