



2023-2024

ANNUAL REPORT



FIRST STEPS IS HERE

Last year, because of Dillon County First Steps:



3,102 children

were directly served in Dillon County



125 parents & caregivers

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



296 educators

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

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

THE NEED PERSISTS IN DILLON COUNTY

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

2,237

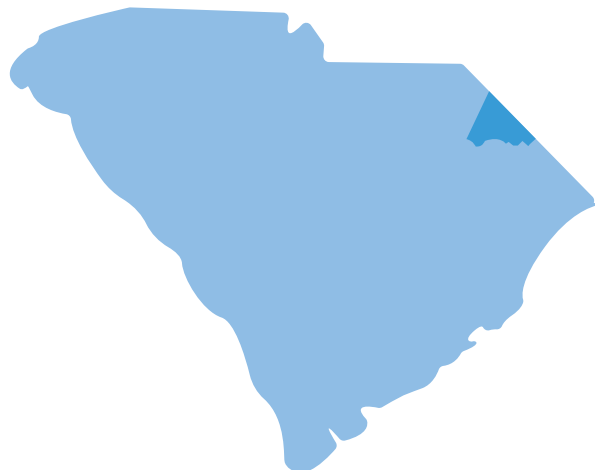
children under 6

69%

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

77%

of kindergarteners are considered "not ready" for school



OUR MISSION

Every child in Dillon County is important and should experience a loving, stimulating, healthy, and safe environment ensured by a supportive family and community.



Shirleen Lewis

Executive Director

The work we do is critical and it takes the support of so many people to make the difference in the lives of the children and families we serve. Gifts of every size add up to collectively add into the success of Dillon County First Steps. You are an essential piece of that plan.

DCFS is well positioned and will continue to build upon its great legacy, working alongside our board members, stellar staff and community partners, and pursuing our major goals. We are even more excited that we were able to extend the services we provide in this fiscal year through our Nurturing Parent Program. We are off to an amazing start of working more directly with families in our weekly Nurturing Parenting Groups and Nurturing Father's Program, and are amazed at how we are seeing family's bond and apply the weekly lessons to their lives.

We will continue to aim to build our capacity and work with our partners to meet the needs of this county. Thank you all for your dedication to this organization, and we look forward to partnering with you in our future endeavors.



Dr. Michael McRae

Board Chair

We are living through an unprecedented moment in time, but what gives me hope is our equally unprecedented commitment to responding to the needs of Dillon County.

While the needs and the incredible potential of our county's residents have never been greater, every day we see the impact of our donors' generosity and investments. The lasting impactful change we want to see will take time, but the Dillon County First Steps Partnership Board and Staff are dedicated to working to see that change here in our county.

To all our donors, nonprofit partners, sponsors and others who have let us share in their generosity, and on behalf of our dedicated and talented Board, I offer my sincere gratitude. Thank you for inspiring us and for joining us in building and impacting lives of children and their families daily.

PROGRAMS

PARENTING

Nurturing Parenting - Home

Designed to build nurturing parenting skills as an alternative to abusive and neglecting parenting and child-rearing practices.

155

children served

115

families served

1,061

home visits

Nurturing Parenting - Group

Designed to build nurturing parenting skills as an alternative to abusive and neglecting parenting and child-rearing practices.

88

children served

54

families served

98

home visits

Raising a Reader

Helps families develop, practice, and maintain home literacy habits.

66

children served

EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

Quality Enhancement

Promotes quality in child care by providing early educators with one-on-one coaching and support.

205

children served

5

providers served

150.5

technical assistance
hours

Training & Professional Development

Certified and registered training hours for the early childhood workforce.

2,676

children served

87

providers served

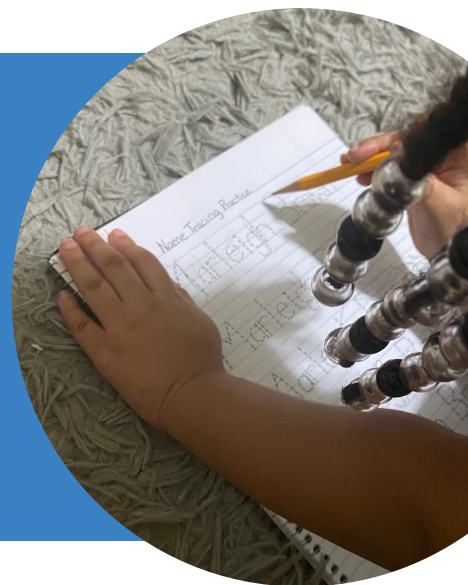
22

certified training
hours

**Serving Dillon
County's children
birth through age five.**

"Marleigh started the First Steps program a little after her second birthday and she is now 4-years old. Since being in the program, I have seen a tremendous growth in Marleigh. Before turning 4, she was able to read, count to 100, recite all of her ABC's just to name a few things. Having the one-one-one time with her teacher (Mrs. Ellis) Marleigh also became better at vocalizing her wants and needs. She was a very quiet little girl who only wanted to interact with her mom (me) and her Ma-Ma (Ms. Evelyn Williams). She is now in 4K at Latta Elementary and she is soaring. I can say that without the assistance of First Steps, Mrs. Ellis, and my mom, Marleigh may not be where she is on her educational journey."

Marleigh Brown
Dillon County First Steps parent



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

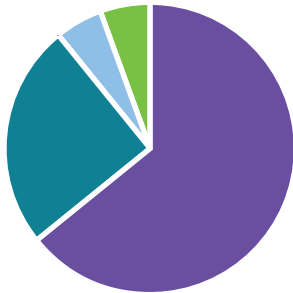


\$1 = \$2.09

Dillon County First Steps leveraged \$314,135.17 from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$1.09 for every state dollar invested.

EXPENDITURES

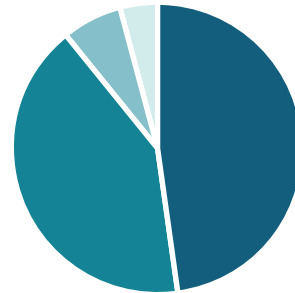
Total: \$584,609.93



Parenting	- \$375,537.31
Early Care & Education	- \$146,836.19
Administrative	- \$30,572.49
Core Functions	- \$31,663.94

FUNDING SOURCES

Total: \$603,088.29



State Funding	- \$288,953.12
Federal Funding	- \$249,585.00
Private Funding	- \$40,603.25
In-kind Contributions	- \$23,946.92

FUNDING SUPPORT BY SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS

State Education Improvement Act (EIA) Funding
State READY Funding*
Federal AmeriCorps Service Site
Federal ESSER Funding**
State Income Tax Check-off and Private Donations to SC First Steps

*Resources for Early Acceleration and Development in Youth (READY) Proviso 1.105

**American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund, awarded to the South Carolina Department of Education

Note: Revenue amounts may show a difference between allocations and revenue based on penalties imposed by the SC First Steps Board of Trustees for non-compliance with organizational policies. The figures provided are based on unaudited financial statements and, as such, are subject to change.

Our Local Supporters

Tabitha James
Millie Odom
Beryl Collington
Lisa Armstrong
Chevella German
Kenneth Smith
Amanda June
Carla Shelley
Dr. Michael McRae
Gabriel Salmon, Sr.
Jennifer Oxendine
Karen English
Dillon County Board of Education
Rev. Dr. W. Franklin Blue
Wright Therapy Group
Dillon Marion County Alumnae Chapter
First Citizens Bank
Bartell Funeral Home
Dawn Arnette
Dillon Internal Medicine
Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church
First Baptist Church
Hope Mullinax
Krystle Ladson- Elite Dance Company
McLeod Health - Dillon
OES Wonder Chapter 377 (Eastern Star)

Wendell Cooper
Chief Judge James E. Lockemy
Dillon County Branch NAACP
Dillon County Council - Dennis Townsend
Dillon County Council - Kenny Cook
Dillon County Council - Robbie Coward
Dillon County Council - Stevie Grice
Dillon County Council - Detrice M. Dawkins
Mamie Legette
Nina Bradley
Eastern Carolina Community Foundation
Women in Philanthropy Fund
Franklin P. & Arthur Perdue Foundation, Inc.
Sisters of Charity Foundation of SC
Greenville Technical College
South Carolina Ports Authority
RALI Dillon County
United Fund of Dillon County
Angela Coward
Rashawn Aaron- The Village Educational Center
Shirleen Davis
Geraldine Ellis
Smilfeccia Bethea
Terry and Shantel McRae
Shannon Hargrove
Cory Wilson- Fitness By Cory

Board of Directors

Tierney Alford
Lisa Armstrong
Beryl Collington
Karen English
Chevella German
Preston Greene, III
Amanda June

Akeesha Leggette
Dr. Michael McRae
Millie Odom
Gabriel Salmon, Sr.
Carla Shelley
Kenneth Smith

CONTACT US

926 Perry Avenue, Dillon, SC 29536 | 843-774-0061| dillonfirststeps.com