



FIRST STEPS IS HERE

Last year, because of Chesterfield County First Steps:



232 children

were directly served in Chesterfield County



178 parents & caregivers

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



72 educators

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

THE NEED PERSISTS IN CHESTERFIELD COUNTY

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

2,837

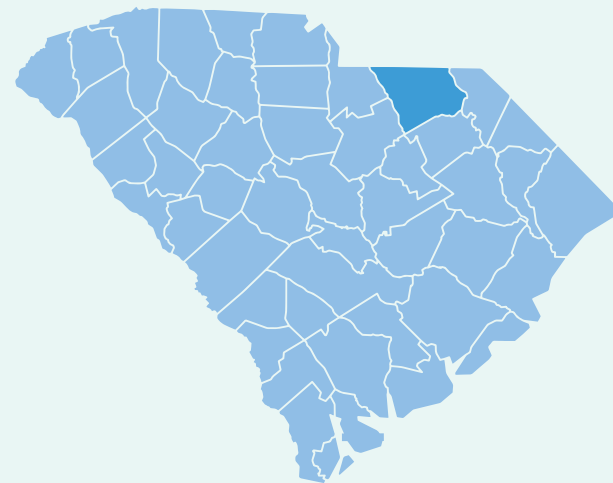
children birth to five

57%

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

66%

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

“

We LOVE, LOVE, LOVE Compass Point. I am completely comfortable with all the staff and their ability to teach and care for my children. This is hands down the best 3k-4k program in Cheraw & Chesterfield.

Chesterfield County First Steps Parent



Board of Directors

Tony Nolan
Chandar Anderson
Kathryn Cress

Donor List

The Malloy Foundation
Duke Energy
SC ABC Quality Grant
Mary B. Redfearn
Omicron Delta Kappa Gamma
Chesterfield County Library System
Northeastern Technical College
South Carolina First Steps private funds



ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025



CONTACT US

chesterfieldfirststeps.org | (843)703-9533 | karen@chesterfieldfirststeps.org

OUR MISSION

The mission of Chesterfield County First Steps is to ensure opportunities for young children and their families, so every child enters school healthy and ready to learn



Karen Martini-Waller
Executive Director

From birth, children embark on a continuous journey of learning, with early experiences playing a pivotal role in shaping their long-term development. Research indicates that children experiencing poverty may enter kindergarten up to a full academic year behind their peers, a disparity that can expand as they advance through school. High-quality early education has the potential to bridge this gap, profoundly influencing a child’s trajectory both immediately and over a lifetime. CCFS serves as a local portal connecting families of preschool children to community-based services they may need or desire to ensure the school readiness of their children. We act as a community convener serving the needs of our youngest citizens and their families. A county-wide needs assessment is conducted every three years to assure that our goals are meeting the needs of the most at-risk families in Chesterfield County. We thank our dedicated board, staff and volunteers for their service to young children.



Tony Nolan
Board Chair

Chesterfield County First Steps to School Readiness Partnership (CCFS) was created in 1999 as an independent nonprofit organization. CCFS is one of 46 County Partnerships charged by the General Assembly with improving the school readiness of South Carolina’s young children.

Since its inception, Chesterfield County First Steps has relied on local data, strong partnerships, and evidence-based practices for decision making. Chesterfield County First Steps remains dedicated to improving school readiness, early childcare quality, and family support.

We have established a 24-year history of working with local agencies and organizations. Our network of partners is expanding, and there are ongoing discussions regarding both enhanced and additional services. However, financial resources remain the primary limitation.

Our team evaluates success not only through quantitative metrics, but also by observing positive student engagement upon entry.

PROGRAMS

PARENTING

ParentChild+
Home visitation for families with 2- and 3-year olds to promote early literacy skills.

30

children served

1,502

home visits

Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library
Free, high-quality books mailed to the home of children from birth until age five.

177

children served

1,739

books distributed

EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

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

10

children served

Early Education Program Support
Providing families with early care and education by supporting center-based child care programs.

10

children served

2

group meetings and events

HEALTH

Early Identification & Referral
Providing developmental screenings and referrals to other services.

24

children served

432

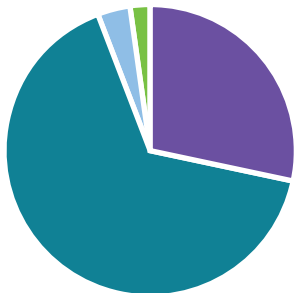
materials distributed

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

\$1 = \$1.58
Chesterfield County First Steps leveraged \$311,130.88 from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$0.58 for every state dollar invested.

EXPENDITURES

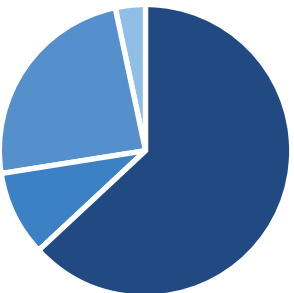
Total: \$786,364.25



- Parenting - \$224,284.82
- Early Care & Education - \$517,116.63
- Administrative - \$27,498.73
- Core Functions - \$17,463.97

FUNDING SOURCES

Total: \$843,493.92



- State Funding - \$532,363.04
- Federal Funding - \$79,909.86
- Private Funding - \$204,571.03
- In-kind Contributions - \$26,650

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