



# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2024-2025





# FIRST STEPS IS HERE

Last year, because of Fairfield County First Steps:



**556 children**

were directly served in Fairfield County



**326 parents & caregivers**

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



**37 educators**

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

## THE NEED PERSISTS IN FAIRFIELD COUNTY

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

**1,184**

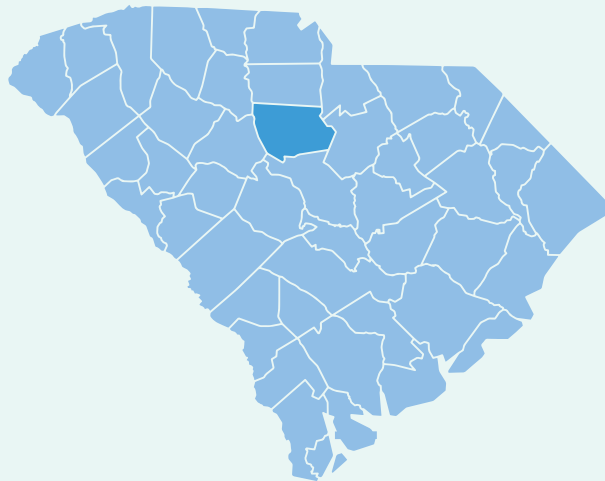
children birth to five

**59%**

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

**51%**

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

The Partnership Board will assist the communities in Fairfield County in collaborating and sharing resources to optimize school readiness for all children by helping those communities to:

1. Recognize the role and responsibilities families have as the first and most important teacher of children.
2. Motivate individuals and communities to help stabilize, strengthen, and empower families. (This will enhance the social skills, emotional well-being, health, communication skills and general knowledge which are essential in promoting readiness of young children to succeed in school.)
3. Enable the communities to successfully accomplish tasks through the coordination of personnel, education, and financial resources.



**Pattie Wilkes**  
Executive Director

I am happy to share some exciting results for our 2024 – 2025 year. Our Fairfield County First Steps programs closed out another year of success! Thanks to the work of our board, employees and community we have:

- Distributed over 4000 books
- Met with 42 families, providing a minimum of two home visits per month, through Parents as Teachers
- Provided childcare training to 32 teachers in six centers
- Read to over 400 children through our 1000 Books before Kindergarten program
- Served 35 families in the Parent Café program
- Made over 140 home visits in our Countdown to Kindergarten program
- Provided First Steps information to over 80 additional families as a part of community events.

Our success is not just about numbers—it's about stories of progress, confidence, and hope. Every step taken is a reminder that lasting change starts with the very first meeting. We are proud to walk this journey alongside our clients.

With your continued support, we will keep expanding the reach.

# PROGRAMS

## PARENTING

### Parents as Teachers

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

42

children served

13

group meetings  
and events

240

home visits

### Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

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

245

children served

2,776

books distributed

### Library-Based Programs

Connect librarians with child care programs and preschool classrooms, providing books, storytelling, and staff training.

156

children served

156

families served

10

providers served

### Family Café

Parent discussion groups that promote social connections with other parents, support in times of need, learning about parenting and child development, and emotional awareness.

39

children served

26

families served

14

group meetings  
and events

## EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

### Training & Professional Development

Certified and registered training hours for the early childhood workforce.

798

children served

6

providers served

15

certified  
training hours

### Child Care Scholarships

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

27

children served

25

families served

6

providers served

## 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

1

schools served

144

home/school  
visits

### Countdown to 4K

Supports transitions into pre-kindergarten by connecting incoming students, their families, and their teachers in a series of one-on-one sessions during the summer.

9

children served

1

schools served

54

home/school  
visits

# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

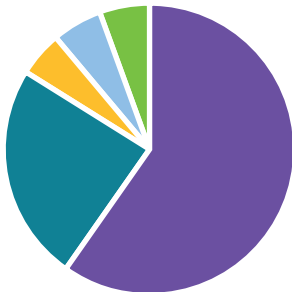


**\$1 = \$1.87**

Fairfield County First Steps leveraged \$241,325.24 from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$0.87 for every state dollar invested.

## EXPENDITURES

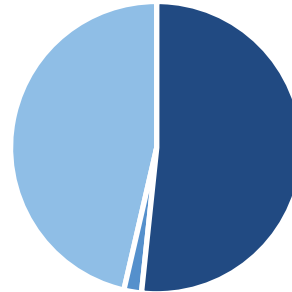
Total: \$519,358.43



- Parenting - \$310,402.70
- Early Care & Education - \$126,054.89
- School Transition - \$26,555.02
- Administrative - \$28,508.13
- Core Functions - \$27,837.69

## FUNDING SOURCES

Total: \$520,086.51



- State Funding - \$278,743.27
- Private Funding - \$11,205.08
- In-kind Contributions - \$248,623.79

## 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



Thank you to all of the wonderful people who helped me to get a new place to live for me and my three children. I appreciate all of you so much.

**Fairfield County First Steps Parent**

## Board of Directors

Darreyl Davis  
Kermisha Golden  
Mac Edwards  
Dee Mattox  
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Jocelyn Sander  
Jennifer Boyd-Holmes  
Kerry Stubbs  
Friends of Fairfield County Library  
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## CONTACT US

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