



ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025





FIRST STEPS IS HERE

Last year, because of Clarendon County First Steps:



383 children

were directly served in Clarendon County



383 parents & caregivers

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



41 educators

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

THE NEED PERSISTS IN CLARENDON COUNTY

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

1,649

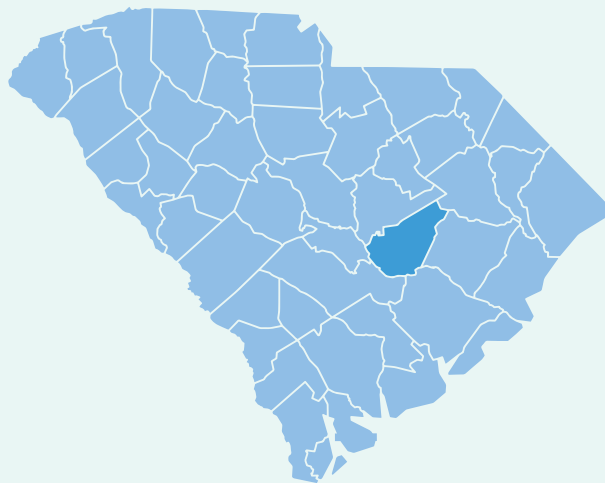
children birth to five

51%

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

OUR MISSION

To partner with organizations within and outside of Clarendon County to leverage and maximize resources to provide quality, research-based programs and services that will prepare Clarendon County's children for success in school and in life.



Sharon P. Williams
Executive Director

Clarendon County First Steps, like other First Steps across the state of South Carolina, provides programs and services research consistently show are best and/or promising practices in helping preschool children arrive at kindergarten healthy and ready to succeed. For us, those programs have included Countdown to Kindergarten, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, Parents As Teachers, efforts to improve child care in Clarendon County via mini-grants (to eligible child care providers), training and technical assistance to members of Clarendon County's child care community, and vouchers that help parents cover the cost of child care for their children.

Through our partnerships with others dedicated to this important work and investments in quality programs, my Board and I stand confident that we will be able to one day say with absolute certainty that all of our children have arrived at kindergarten healthy and ready to succeed!



Dr. Myra Pearson
Board Chair

The scriptures tell us to "raise up a child in the way he/she should go". The work of Clarendon County First Steps Board, staff, partners and families to get Clarendon County's children ready for school represent our collective efforts to do just that. Alone, we have precious few resources with which to work towards and achieve this lofty, but tremendously important goal. Together, however, we are making progress.

The programs we support are backed by the research on school readiness, and we do all we can to make sure programs and services are implemented with fidelity. Armed with the necessary ingredients, I am confident that we will raise our children up in the way they should go so that they will arrive at kindergarten healthy and ready to succeed.

PROGRAMS

PARENTING

Parents as Teachers

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

48

children served

34

group meetings
and events

979

home visits

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

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

363

children served

3,776

books distributed

EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

Training & Professional Development

Certified and registered training hours for the early childhood workforce.

1,940

children served

13

providers served

11.5

certified training
hours

Quality Enhancement

Intensive support to child care centers and preschool classrooms to improve quality.

88

children served

2

providers served

60

training hours
provided

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.

20

children served

120

home/school
visits

Child Care Scholarships

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

8

children served

3

providers served

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

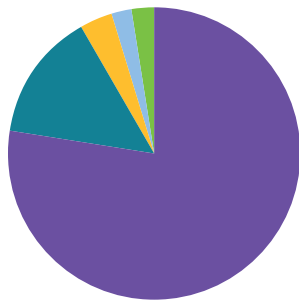


\$1 = \$1.99

Clarendon County First Steps leveraged \$342,400.97 from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$0.99 for every state dollar invested.

EXPENDITURES

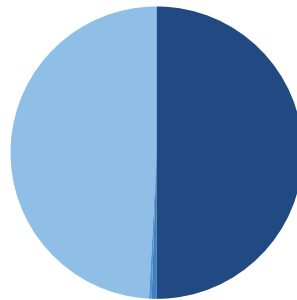
Total: \$662,695.76



Parenting	- \$513,855.47
Early Care & Education	- \$94,703.07
School Transition	- \$23,736.18
Administrative	- \$15,484.63
Core Functions	- \$14,916.41

FUNDING SOURCES

Total: \$687,064.28



State Funding	- \$344,663.31
Federal Funding	- \$2,834
Private Funding	- \$1,931.97
In-kind Contributions	- \$337,635

FUNDING SUPPORT

State Education Improvement Act (EIA) Funding

State READY Funding*

State Income Tax Check-off and Private Donations to SC First Steps

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Thank you so much for handling such a great program! My babies love to read and enjoy getting new books each month.

Sonya S.



Board of Directors

Dr. Myra Pearson, Board Chairperson

Darla Lee, Board Vice-Chairperson

Mary Cooper, Secretary

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