



# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2024-2025





# FIRST STEPS IS HERE

Last year, because of Lexington County First Steps:



**1,235 children**

were directly served in Lexington County



**969 parents & caregivers**

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



**787 educators**

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

## THE NEED PERSISTS IN LEXINGTON COUNTY

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

**20,436**

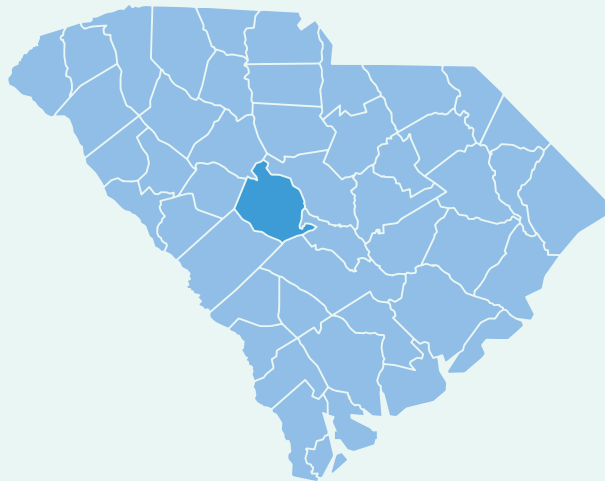
children birth to five

**40%**

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

**62%**

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 support families in Lexington County so that all children enter school ready to learn.



**James Riddle**  
Executive Director

Lexington County First Steps has experienced another year of excellence in parenting programs to include traditional Parents As Teachers (PAT curriculum), Connected Families (also PAT curriculum) serving DSS Referrals, and PASOS assisting new immigrant families to navigate available public services. All programs again exceeded expectations of the projected numbers to serve. In addition, the long-standing Countdown to Kindergarten services for rising 5K since 2004, beginning with 50 students, continues to be a successful program. This summer, 188 students received CTK summer home visitations from their 5K teacher-to-be or a qualified teacher.



**Deborah Poole**  
Board Chair

Undisputed research supports the urgency with which preschool aged children must be surrounded by rich experiences, not only in literacy and numeracy, but also with ample opportunities for motor development and social emotional development in order to be prepared for school.

Lexington County First Steps (LCFS) administers programs such as Parent As Teachers, which provides highly qualified personnel to work with children and families prior to entering school. In addition, the Countdown to Kindergarten summer readiness program for 5K has proven the value of early intervention between the teacher-to-be and the rising kindergartener. LCFS also provides valuable resources to promote school readiness as well as connections to local organizations that help support a child's development and success in school.

Providing group connections across Lexington County in partnership with all 5 School Districts builds community and strengthens protective factors for all our children.

# PROGRAMS

## PARENTING

### Parents as Teachers

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

182

children served

3,112

home visits

129

group meetings  
and events

### Connected Families

Prevents the unnecessary removal of young children from their homes by providing parents and caregivers with voluntary, coordinated services.

56

children served

38

families served

258

home visits

### Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

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

171

children served

2,142

books distributed

## HEALTH

### Early Identification & Referral

Providing developmental screenings and referrals to other services.

98

children served

83

families served

## EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

### Training & Professional Development

Certified and registered training hours for the early childhood workforce.

279

children served

8

providers served

17.5

certified training  
hours

## 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.

336

children served

2,045

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.

136

children served

785

home/school visits

# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

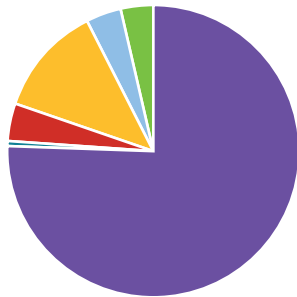


**\$1 = \$1.66**

Lexington County First Steps leveraged \$730,597.52 from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$0.66 for every state dollar invested.

## EXPENDITURES

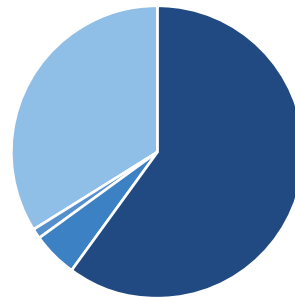
Total: \$1,856,642.21



Parenting	- \$1,403,629.64
Early Care & Education	- \$11,611.74
Health	- \$76,499.67
School Transition	- \$226,055.43
Administrative	- \$75,302.48
Core Functions	- \$63,543.25

## FUNDING SOURCES

Total: \$1,835,253.16



State Funding	- \$1,104,655.64
Federal Funding	- \$93,072.36
Private Funding	- \$17,099.37
In-kind Contributions	- \$620,425.79

## FUNDING SUPPORT

State Education Improvement Act (EIA) Funding

State READY Funding\*

The Duke Endowment & Doris Duke Foundation

Sylvamo

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

\*Resources for Early Acceleration and Development in Youth (READY) Proviso 1.84

“

I did not know what ready for school means. My Parent Educator told things about what ready for school means and now I can do better for my daughter.

**Lexington County First Steps Parent**



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## CONTACT US

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