



# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2024-2025





# FIRST STEPS IS HERE

Last year, because of Orangeburg County First Steps:



**118 children**

were directly served in Orangeburg County



**287 parents & caregivers**

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

## THE NEED PERSISTS IN ORANGEBURG COUNTY

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

**5,011**

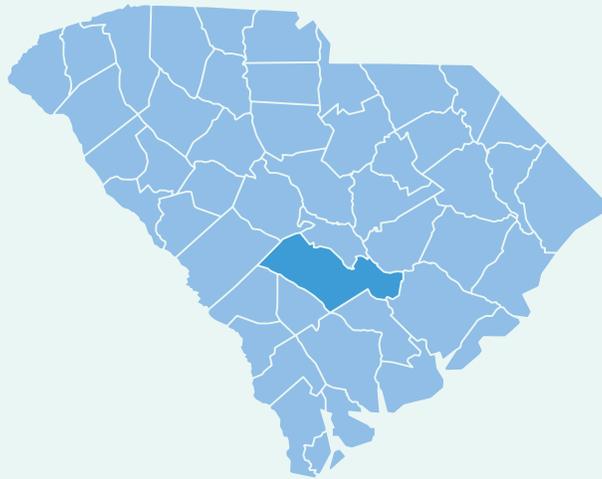
children birth to five

**57%**

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

**60%**

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 invest in our community, to support families and caregivers of children birth to age 5, to improve school readiness, and to ensure children realize their full potential.



**Kathy Jenkins**  
Executive Director

Dear Friends and Partners,

The past year has been one of growth, resilience, and impact. Thanks to your support, we were able to reach more children and families with the vital services they need to thrive. From early learning to family support, our programs have expanded in both reach and depth, making a difference where it matters most.

Our commitment to strong partnerships and careful fiscal stewardship allowed us to surpass expectations in grant funding and resource development. These efforts not only sustained our programs but also opened the door to expanded health initiatives that are helping families access essential screenings and supports.

None of this would be possible without the collaboration of our community partners and the generosity of those who believe in our mission. Together, we are building stronger foundations for families today and brighter futures for tomorrow.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment and belief in our mission.



**Henry Miller**  
Board Chair

What an incredible year it has been! As Board Chair, I've had the privilege of watching firsthand how our programs and staff have touched the lives of families in our community. The stories we hear—from parents finding new confidence to children entering school ready to thrive—are daily reminders of why this work matters so deeply.

This year, we've grown in exciting ways: reaching more families, building stronger partnerships, and creating even more opportunities for parents to feel supported and children to shine. None of this happens without the passion of our staff, the guidance of our Board, and the encouragement we receive from partners and supporters like you.

I want to say a heartfelt thank you to the families who welcome us into their lives, and to every supporter who helps make this journey possible. Your belief in our mission is what fuels us to keep moving forward.

# PROGRAMS

## PARENTING

### Parents as Teachers

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

45

children served

675

home visits

13

group meetings  
and events

### Raising a Reader - Enhanced

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

40

children served

35

families served

718

books distributed

### Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

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

35

children served

159

books distributed

## HEALTH

### HealthySteps

A pediatric primary care program that supports early childhood development and effective parenting.

282

children served

2

clinics 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.

31

children served

3

schools served

180

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.

40

children served

4

schools served

240

home/school  
visits

# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

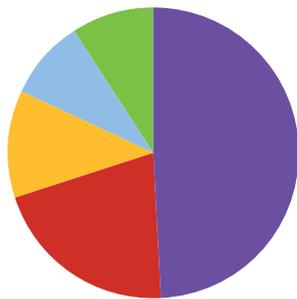


**\$1 = \$1.26**

Orangeburg County First Steps leveraged \$93,245.48 from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$0.26 for every state dollar invested.

## EXPENDITURES

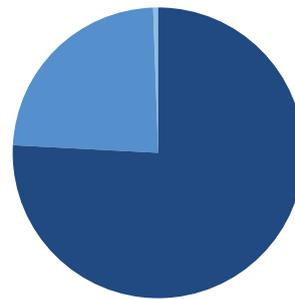
Total: \$492,176.99



- Parenting - \$243,339.15
- Health - \$101,537.02
- School Transition - \$58,503.36
- Administrative - \$44,788.73
- Core Functions - \$44,008.73

## FUNDING SOURCES

Total: \$448,663.41



- State Funding - \$355,417.93
- Private Funding - \$110,803.75
- In-kind Contributions - \$3,369.23

## FUNDING SUPPORT

State Education Improvement Act (EIA) Funding

State READY Funding\*

Federal AmeriCorps Service Site

State Dept. of Social Services and Dept. of Public Health Funding (Healthy Steps Program)

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 1.84

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

“

PAT has taught me so much about what was already in me waiting to come out. My confidence in me and my abilities have grown so much from the beginning up until now. I really love this program and am glad I was introduced to it.

**S. Green**



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