



FIRST STEPS IS HERE

Last year, because of Colleton County First Steps:



1,931 children

were directly served in Colleton County



603 parents & caregivers

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



785 educators

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

THE NEED PERSISTS IN COLLETON COUNTY

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

2,669

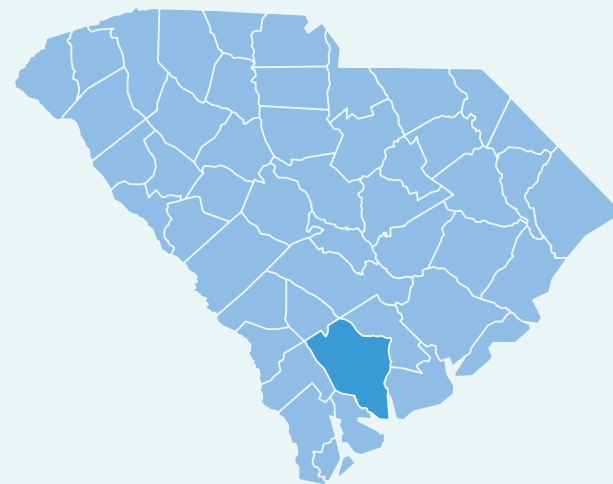
children birth to five

61%

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

72%

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



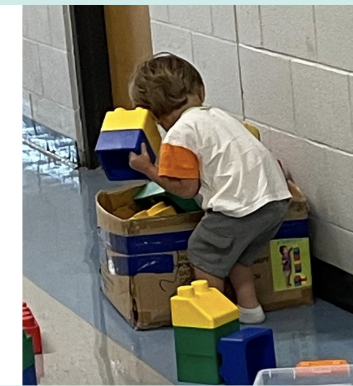
34% less likely

to be chronically absent in kindergarten

“

The activities are for my child but, having a parent educator gives me an adult to talk to for support- emotionally and mentally.

Amy



Board of Directors

Susan Dodd
Catherine Franchette
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Tangela Green
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Donor List

Coastal Community Foundation
Cherokee Plantation Charities
Walterboro Rotary Club
SC Endeavors
Community Members
Colleton County School District - In Kind
SC Department of Social Services - In Kind



ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025



CONTACT US

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OUR MISSION

Collaborating with other entities, Colleton County First Steps helps families and caregivers prepare their children for school success by maximizing public and private community resources to deliver, enhance, and expand high quality early childhood services.



Cindy Riley
Executive Director

Colleton County First Steps' staff and partnership board work throughout the community with other non-profits, faith based organizations, businesses and government entities to implement programs for children and their families. We collaborate with other agencies such as SC Department of Social Services, the Board of Disabilities, Baby Net, DHEC, and Colleton Adult Learning Center. During the 2024-2025 year, our families set goals for themselves and worked diligently to meet these goals. Our staff and board worked hard to ensure that all of our children and their families' needs were met. Our work with our families wouldn't be possible without our tremendous community partners! The Colleton County School District, the Walterboro Rotary Club, the Cherokee Plantation Charities Foundation, and local individuals make our work possible by their very generous support!



Latoyah Lynah
Board Chair

As the Board Chair, I am honored to share the important role this organization plays in our community. Every child deserves the very best start in life, and through our programs, resources, and partnerships, we work alongside families to make that possible.

First Steps is here to support parents as their child’s first and most important teacher. We strive to meet families where they are and walk with them toward success.

As a nonprofit organization, First Steps depends on the generosity of our community and partners to continue this vital work. Every dollar invested is poured back into helping children grow, strengthening families, and creating a healthier, brighter future for Colleton County.

Together, we are not only preparing children for school, but also building stronger families and a stronger community. Thank you for supporting Colleton County First Steps as we continue this mission and continue to do it with love for the children.

PROGRAMS

PARENTING

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

32

children served

13

group meetings and events

484

home visits

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

15

children served

10

families served

166

home visits**Nurturing Parenting**
Designed to build nurturing parenting skills as an alternative to abusive and neglecting parenting and child-rearing practices.

22

children served

18

families served

313

home visits**Supporting Care Providers Through Visits**
Site visits for home child care providers to encourage developmentally appropriate practices.

9

children served

2

providers served

46

provider visits

EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

Quality Counts
Certified and registered training hours for the early childhood workforce.

183

children served

3

providers served

145

training hours provided

Training & Professional Development
Certified and registered training hours for the early childhood workforce.

659

children served

12

providers served

40

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

10

children 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.

27

children served

6

schools served

162

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.

26

children served

6

schools served

156

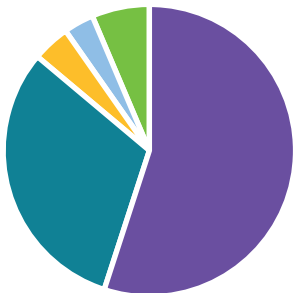
home/school visits

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

\$1 = \$1.39
Colleton County First Steps leveraged \$135,287.52 from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$0.39 for every state dollar invested.

EXPENDITURES

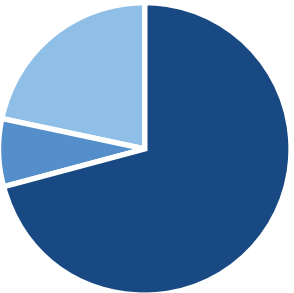
Total: \$486,672.01



- Parenting - \$267,681.86
- Early Care & Education - \$152,000.91
- School Transition - \$20,015.55
- Administrative - \$16,964.58
- Core Functions - \$30,009.12

FUNDING SOURCES

Total: \$480,003.30



- State Funding - \$344,715.78
- Private Funding - \$35,671.96
- In-kind Contributions - \$104,615.32

FUNDING SUPPORT

State Education Improvement Act (EIA) Funding
State READY Funding*
The Duke Endowment & Doris Duke Foundation
State Income Tax Check-off and Private Donations to SC First Steps

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