



FIRST STEPS IS HERE

Last year, because of Florence County First Steps:



495 children

were directly served in Florence County



274 parents & caregivers

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



168 educators

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

THE NEED PERSISTS IN FLORENCE COUNTY

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

10,077

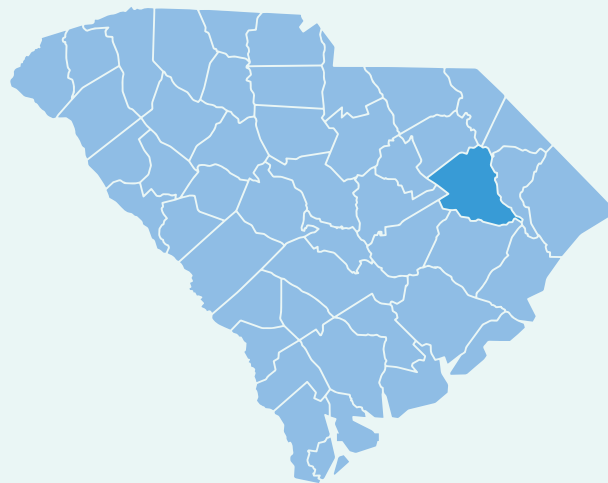
children birth to five

47%

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

“

"A good teacher can inspire hope, ignite the imagination, and instill a love of learning." - Brad Henry. After reading this, we instantly thought of Ms. Allen. We've had a wonderful experience with her as a home visitor for both of our children.

Florence County First Steps Parent

Board of Directors

Kippie Brown
Debbie Jones
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Donor List

South Carolina Department of Social Services
SC Endeavors
Greenville Technical College
Lakeshore Learning
Kaplan Early Learning Company
Florence County School District 3

CONTACT US

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ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025



OUR MISSION

The mission of Florence County First Steps is to ensure that all children start school ready to reach their highest potential. This is achieved by engaging families, caregivers, and community partners in high-quality programs and services that improve early childhood development, from before birth through age five. The organization also serves as a connector and convener of all early childhood stakeholders in Florence County.



Spencer R. Scott
Executive Director

This year has been one of both progress and perseverance for Florence County First Steps. Together with our Board, staff, and community partners, we have continued to expand opportunities for children and families, ensuring that every child enters school ready to succeed.

Through scholarships, we have opened doors for families to access high-quality childcare. These investments not only give children the strong foundation they deserve, but also allow parents to pursue education and steady employment, strengthening both families and our local workforce. Our Center and Family Childcare training and quality enhancement efforts have strengthened providers across Florence County, helping them deliver the highest level of care and education.

I am grateful for the unwavering commitment of our Board of Directors, the tireless work of our staff, and the support of community leaders who share our vision. Together, we are transforming lives and building a stronger Florence County.



Rev. Kippie Brown
Board Chair

It is my honor to serve as Chairman of the Board for Florence County First Steps. Each year, I am reminded of the importance of preparing our youngest children for success. Under the leadership of Executive Director Spencer R. Scott and with the dedication of our staff, we have expanded programs and strengthened partnerships to meet the needs of children and families.

Childcare scholarships, parenting support, and early literacy efforts continue to make a lasting impact, helping children thrive while allowing parents to pursue education and employment. These opportunities also strengthen our workforce and support small businesses.

As a Board, we are committed to guiding and advocating for this mission. I am deeply grateful for the dedication of our staff, Board members, and community partners. Together, we are building a brighter future for Florence County’s youngest learners.

PROGRAMS

PARENTING

ParentChild+

Home visitation for families with 2- and 3-year olds to promote early literacy skills.

90 children served 4,657 home visits

HIPPY

Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) is a home visiting program that supports parents in their role as a child's first and most important teacher.

29 children served 13 group meetings and events 535 home visits

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.

65 children served 4 schools served 388 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.

36 children served 5 schools served 216 home/school visits

HEALTH

Quality Counts

Certified and registered training hours for the early childhood workforce.

511 children served 11 providers served 275 training hours provided

Training & Professional Development

Certified and registered training hours for the early childhood workforce.

521 children served 16 providers served 24.5 certified training hours

Child Care Scholarships

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

80 children served 54 families served 17 providers served

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

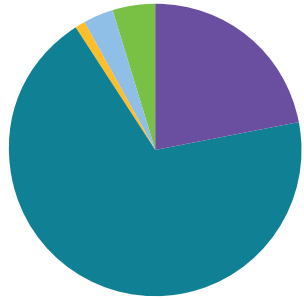


\$1 = \$2.22

Florence County First Steps leveraged \$791,230.83 from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$1.22 for every state dollar invested.

EXPENDITURES

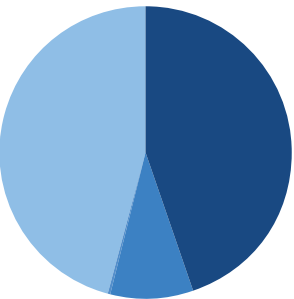
Total: \$1,530,040.25



- Parenting - \$336,366.92
- Early Care & Education - \$1,056,954.76
- School Transition - \$13,710
- Administrative - \$52,542.06
- Core Functions - \$70,475.51

FUNDING SOURCES

Total: \$1,437,651.39



- State Funding - \$646,420.56
- Federal Funding - \$130,592.72
- Private Funding - \$4556.36
- In-kind Contributions - \$656,081.75

FUNDING SUPPORT

State Education Improvement Act (EIA) Funding
State READY Funding*
Federal AmeriCorps Service Site
State Income Tax Check-off and Private Donations to SC First Steps

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