

Annual Report

2019-2020

GEORGETOWN COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.

THE NEED

IN GEORGETOWN COUNTY:

2,709

children under age 5

31.5%

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

15.2%

of kindergartners are considered "not ready" for school



THREE MOST COMMON RISK FACTORS:

1. TANF Eligibility (50% of Federal Poverty or below)
2. Single parent household and has need of other services.
3. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP – formerly Food Stamps) or Free School Lunches eligibility

OUR MISSION

Collaborating with other entities, Georgetown County First Steps helps Georgetown County 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.

OUR APPROACH



High quality programs and services for children and families



Intensive training, resources and support for childcare providers



Strategic partnerships and community education

OUR IMPACT

2,462

JOIN US

We rely on a community of partners, donors, and volunteers – **people like you** – who believe in a brighter future for children and families in our community.

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Ayesha A. Smith
Executive Director
Georgetown County First Steps

Georgetown County First Steps' (GCFS) mission statement is to collaborate with other entities, Georgetown County First Steps helps Georgetown County 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. It is our job to support the learning efforts and development of every child, with an understanding that each child is unique with different strengths and weaknesses. GCFS continues to provide comprehensive services while addressing the child's holistic needs, the intentional needs of the community, and the entire family unit when it comes to empowering and educating. Our plan is to increase comprehensive services throughout the county while partnering with other community agencies. Any "change" first starts at home.

Ayesha A. Smith
Executive Director



GETTING CHILDREN READY FOR SCHOOL

All children are ready to benefit from a quality kindergarten experience when they are five years old by September 1 of that school year. But kindergarten readiness—the critical stage at which children are prepared for learning and success—is more than a matter of age. For a strong start in school, children need positive relationships and supportive learning environments beginning at birth. At First Steps, we partner with families, caregivers, and communities to ensure that all children are prepared for success.

South Carolina's Profile of the Ready Kindergartner

Developed by SC First Steps and the SC Department of Education, the state's description of school readiness includes 60 developmental milestones across 5 categories:



Approaches to learning & inquiry



Emotional & social development



Physical development, self-help & motor skills



Mathematical thinking



Language & literacy development

In support of the Profile of the Ready Kindergartner, our approach is focused on advancing Georgetown County toward the following strategic goals:

- To increase comprehensive services to children and families in Georgetown County by collaborating with local and state entities.
- To serve as a local portal connecting children and families to high-quality childcare or preschool in the County.
- Serve as a community liaison to address the needs of children, families, and providers so healthy learning environments can flourish and readiness assessments can be reached.



OUR GOALS

PIVOTING FOR COVID-19

When the coronavirus pandemic forced South Carolina to shut down in March 2020, Georgetown County First Steps quickly pivoted to provide much-needed support to young children, their families and child care providers.

Our work has never been more critical. While children are at low risk for the serious health effects of the virus, the crisis is having a profound impact on their wellbeing and development. For children of color and low-income communities, these impacts are expected to be even more damaging. That is why Georgetown County First Steps is enhancing our efforts to provide parents and caregivers with the services and resources they need to weather this storm.

IMPACT ON GEORGETOWN COUNTY

HEALTH

Through June 30, Georgetown County had a total of **1,021** confirmed COVID-19 cases and **11** COVID-19 deaths.

JOB LOSS

3.4%

increase in unemployment, 2019-2020

CHILD CARE

15.2%

children under 5 in Georgetown County lived in a child care desert* before COVID-19

15.2%

children under 5 in Georgetown County lived in a child care desert as of May 28, 2020



*The Center for American Progress defines a child care desert as a ZIP code with at least 30 children under the age of 5 and either no child care centers or so few centers that there are more than three times as many children under age 5 as there are spaces in centers.



PARENTS AS TEACHERS



an evidence-based program

Parents as Teachers (PAT) is a home visiting program designed to build strong communities, thriving families and children who are healthy, safe and ready to succeed. PAT services include:



Personal visits from a parent educator at least twice monthly



Monthly group connections with other PAT families



Screenings and assessments to identify developmental concerns



Connections to outside resources that families may need to succeed

PAT GOES VIRTUAL

Due to COVID-19, Parents as Teachers (PAT) National provided guidance for affiliates to deliver virtual services via interactive video conferencing and phone calls. South Carolina PAT affiliates rose to the occasion by engaging families in creative and meaningful ways while continuing to meet the Essential Requirements of implementing a quality PAT program during the pandemic.

PAT IN GEORGETOWN COUNTY 2019-2020

12

families served

288

total home visits

Did you know ... that children learn best from those they love?



Parents as Teachers®



CHILD CARE TRAINING



an evidence-based program

High-quality child care hinges on high-quality professional development that meets the needs of the local child care workforce. Our training programs are certified through SC Endeavors and include topics in the areas of nutrition, health and safety, curriculum, child guidance, professional development and program administration. Our 2019-2020 trainings included:

Introduction to Early Childcare Advocacy

Grow Outdoors SC

Overview of Inclusion for Admissions

Outdoor Learning

Oral Language

Nutrition CECE Cart Training

TRAINING BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

68

total training attendance

22

child care teachers and
directors served

6

number of training
sessions offered



My child attending GCFS 3K has been a blessing to my family. I was able to return to work, attend college classes, without worrying about the financial obligations of daycare and my child's safety.



Pamela Johnson, Parent of a 3K student



CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIPS



an evidence-based program

For many families in Georgetown County, the cost of quality child care is out of reach. Our scholarship program makes payments to child care providers to care for children from low-income families so their parents can return to school or work.

Georgetown County First County First Steps offers scholarships to families enrolled in our (PAT) Parents As Teachers program, as well as income-eligible children whose parent attends school or works at least 25 hours per week.

SCHOLARSHIPS BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

40

number of children
served

4

number of providers
served

60

number of
developmental
screenings provided

100% the money paid to child care providers goes back into our local economy to benefit the citizens of ABC County.

4K

FOUR-YEAR-OLD KINDERGARTEN



an evidence-based program

South Carolina First Steps provides eligible children with free enrollment in full-day four-year-old kindergarten. In coordination with First Steps local partnerships and more than 230 private, community and faith-based preschool providers, First Steps 4K expands access to quality early education across the state.



ELIGIBILITY

To qualify for enrollment, a child must be:

- ✓ 4 years old on or before September 1
- ✓ Eligible for Medicaid, SNAP or TANF, experiencing homelessness or transiency, or in foster care

FIRST STEPS 4K IN ABC COUNTY 2019-2020

29

children enrolled

5

First Steps 4K providers

PIVOTING FOR COVID-19

When schools closed due to COVID-19, First Steps 4K classroom converted to distance-learning, with teachers creatively supporting their young learners through video chat, take-home materials, and hands-on projects that caregivers could facilitate at home.





PUBLIC AWARENESS

GEORGETOWN COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.

GCFS holds multiple community education programs and public awareness campaigns throughout the fiscal year. We partner with local community agencies and host our own community events during the holidays.

GCFS Coastal Carolina Day and GCFS Christmas Party 2019-2020

2,489

materials
distributed

4

events held

468

total event
attendance





COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Georgetown County First Steps mobilizes partners and community members to ensure all children in Georgetown County begin school ready to succeed. We serve as a:

LOCAL PORTAL

connecting preschool children and their families to services

CONVENER

of community stakeholders to develop an effective and comprehensive early childhood system

CHAMPION

of the importance of school readiness to our children's future

OUR PARTNERSHIPS BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

7

Community
events

17

Community
partners

“ The parents and children of Small Minds have really benefited from Georgetown County First Steps . ”

Lunda Green, Director of Small Minds



OUR SUPPORTERS

Through partnerships and collaborations, as well as financial support from grants and contributions, Georgetown County First Steps leverages state dollars to enhance and expand services to children and families.

FUNDING SUPPORT

The Francis P. Bunnelle Foundation-\$15,000

Precious Blood Church-\$500.00

Wal-Mart Georgetown Store#625 -\$50.00

IN-KIND SUPPORT

Georgetown County School District

The Early Learning Council-Georgetown

The Ellis Foundation

Bojangels, Store #1235-Georgetown

JOIN US

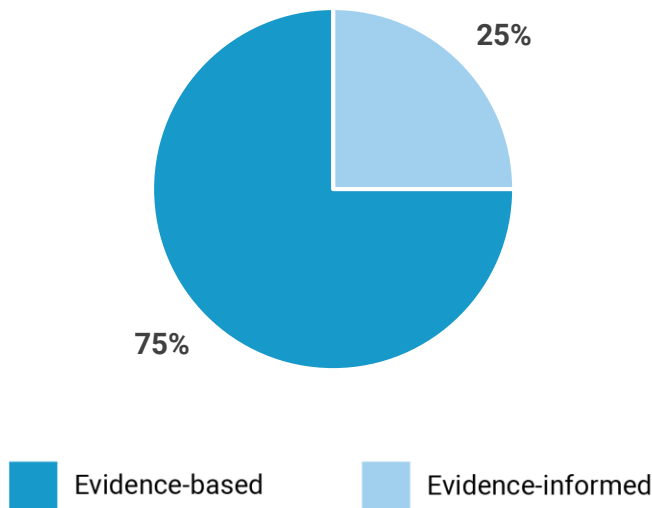
For more information on partnership opportunities, visit our website at
georgetowncountfirststeps.weebly.com



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

OUR INVESTMENT IN QUALITY

Expenditures of State Funds by Program Type



ESTIMATION OF COST SAVINGS

Since inception, Georgetown County First Steps has leveraged **\$3,624,845.38** from sources outside of state government.

That's **\$0.64** for every state dollar.

SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES BY STRATEGY

	State Funding	Federal Funding	Private Funding	In-Kind Contributions	Total
Parents as Teachers	\$60487	\$	\$2895	\$	\$63382
Child Care Training	\$29719	\$	\$842	\$	\$28561
Full Day 3K	\$72147	\$	\$11508	\$	\$83655
Core Functions	\$14727	\$3000		\$1034	\$18761
Administrative Support	\$14184	\$	\$1254	\$	\$15438
Total Expenses	\$191264	\$3000	\$16499	\$1034	\$209797



LEADERSHIP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tiffany Ladson-Jenkins, Board Chair

Yolonda Bradford

Carolyn Ellis, Vice Board Chair

Diane Owens

Anita Floyd, Secretary

Shelia Sullivan

Gwendolyn McNeil

India Bright

Lakeisha Holmes

Kiara Logan

Shannon Hazel

Quentin Lance

STAFF

Ayesha A. Smith, Executive Director

De'Shaud Cox, Administrative Assistant

Dwane Heyward, Marketing Representative/Parent Educator

CONTACT US

2018 Church Street | 843-520-1830 | georgetowncountyfirststeps.weebly.com

