

# Annual Report

## 2019-2020

YORK COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.

## THE NEED

IN YORK COUNTY:

# 16,036

children under age 5

# 36.1%

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

# 54.4%

of kindergartners are considered "not ready" for school



## THREE MOST COMMON RISK FACTORS:

1. Child lives in a family struggling with poverty. (TANF and SNAP recipients)
2. Child is born to a mother with low educational attainment. (Less than a high school degree.)
3. Child's family does not speak English as it's primary language.

## OUR MISSION

To assist at risk children, birth to six and their families by supporting collaborative efforts to ensure all children are prepared to succeed in school.

## 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

# 6845

number of children and adults served by York County First Steps in 2019-2020

## 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

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**A Brighter Day is Coming!**

WOW! I am sure that over the last few months you found yourself expressing a number of sentiments and exasperative statements that you would have never imagined you would say. You spent untold hours on a virtual platform and long for a regular face to face meeting. Adapting to navigating in uncharted waters has become a new skill set that we have developed, out of defense in some cases. As chaotic as our world has become and as intrusive as it infringed on our families, we have all worked diligently to meet the needs of our youngest learners. In York, with supportive partners, we have been able to increase our capacity for serving first time mothers through our Nurse-Family Partnership Program, we adapted our Childcare Training to include virtual classes, and we worked closely with our School Districts to explore new options for childcare as school schedules adapted to the pandemic.

We hope that you will appreciate our summary of our programs and activities for this past year. We look forward to continuing helping families support their young children to “reach for the stars”.

*David W. Lisk, Sr.*

**David W. Lisk, Sr.**  
Executive Director  
York County First Steps

# 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**



## OUR GOALS



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

- **Goal 1** Coordinate efforts to profile all 4K Programs offered in York County and provide parents and 4K Providers the coordination and tools to reach more children by casting a wider net within the County.
- **Goal 2** Transition from current Quality Enhancement Program to Quality Counts with our Child Care Partners.
- **Goal 3** Continue to expand our Nurse-Family Partnership Program to reach more at risk first time mothers and their children.

# PIVOTING FOR COVID-19

When the coronavirus pandemic forced South Carolina to shut down in March 2020, York 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 York 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 YORK COUNTY

### HEALTH

Through June 30, York County had a total of **1253** confirmed COVID-19 cases and **15** COVID-19 deaths.

### JOB LOSS

**189.4%**

increase in unemployment, 2019-2020

### CHILD CARE

**39.9%**

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

**57.8%**

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



COVID-19 created new issues and concerns as well as worsen existing conditions in many communities. York County First Steps worked to fill gaps in community services and expanded our reach to meet the increasing needs to include:

- Helping to provide healthy food access to communities hit hard by the Pandemic
- Facilitating conversations and exploring new options for childcare and after school care in response to new school schedules
- Adapting our NFP and PAT programs to virtual visits to maintain services

\*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.



# NURSE-FAMILY PARTNERSHIP



*an evidence-based program*

Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) helps transform the lives of first-time mothers and their babies. Through ongoing home visits from registered nurses, moms receive the care and support they need to have a healthy pregnancy, provide responsible and competent care for their children, and become more economically self-sufficient. From pregnancy until the child turns two years old, Nurse-Family Partnership Nurse Home Visitors form a much-needed, trusting relationship with their clients, instilling confidence and empowering them to achieve a better life for their children – and themselves.

## BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

68

children served

1132

number of home  
visits provided

York County First Steps is the Implementing Agency for the York Regional NFP Program serving Chester, Lancaster, and York Counties. This program is funded through a diverse collection of local and State Partners that have supported our efforts to continue expanding NFP capacity since our launch in 2016.

**Your continued support makes a difference in the lives of the first time mothers we serve.**





## 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 YORK COUNTY 2019-2020

45

families served

734

total home visits

We partner our Childcare Scholarship Program with Parents as Teachers and assist teenage mothers as they seek to complete their high school degree.



Parents as Teachers®





# COUNTDOWN TO KINDERGARTEN



*an evidence-informed program*

Developed by South Carolina First Steps – and identified as a promising state practice by the National Governor’s Association in 2005 – Countdown to Kindergarten (CTK) is a home visitation program pairing the families of rising kindergartners with their future teachers during the summer before school entry. Teachers complete six visits with each family, establishing strong connections during the summer that facilitate classroom learning throughout the year.

## CTK BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

14

kindergarten teachers  
trained as home visitors

94

children served

561

total home and school  
visits



Our Countdown to Kindergarten Program benefits from close partnerships with our School Districts and with the Children’s Museum of York County. Each year we co-host a Celebration for rising Kindergarten children and their families. Families are connected to School District resources and community services for families with young children.

COUNTDOWN to  
KINDERGARTEN

SOUTH CAROLINA







# CHILD CARE QUALITY ENHANCEMENT



*an evidence-based program*

Many private child care centers strive to provide high quality care but lack the resources often available to publicly-funded early childhood programs. Our Child Care Quality Enhancement (QE) program aims to produce measurable improvements in the quality of care provided to young children.

Our services include:



Rigorous quality assessments



On-site technical assistance at least twice monthly



Funding for equipment and materials



Training and workforce development



Coordination with community partners

## QE BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

6

child care providers served

110

number of TA visits provided

282

number of children 0-5 enrolled in provider classrooms



Being a partner with York County First Steps has helped transform our center in ways I couldn't imagine. The support has helped our teachers spend more quality time teaching versus discipline.



**Connie, Childcare Center Owner**



## 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:

### Child Guidance

### Growth and Development

### Program Administration

### Curriculum Activities

### Professional Development

## TRAINING BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

114

total training attendance

97

child care teachers and  
directors served

5

number of training  
sessions offered





## CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIPS



*an evidence-based program*

For many families in York County, the cost of quality childcare is out of reach. Our scholarship program makes payments to childcare providers to care for children from teenage mothers working to complete their high school degree.

All parents are entered into one of Parents as Teachers Programs and receive this evidenced based program as part of their overall services. The teenage parent must continue to attend school while receiving the childcare scholarship. Having the teenage mother complete their degree, removes at least one potential risk factor for the child's eventual education success.

### SCHOLARSHIPS BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

4

number of children  
served

3

number of providers  
served

4

number of  
developmental  
screenings provided

**This program has been able to assist teenage mothers strike the delicate balance between being a nurturing parent and an active high school student. This program has achieved an 85% success rate with our families either being retained from one school year to the next or graduating from high school.**

# 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

# 45

children enrolled

# 3

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



Early Childhood Interventions continue to be a priority topic for community gatherings and initiatives. York County First Steps seeks to increase public awareness of how the community can support existing efforts and expand services to the families in high need. One of the primary messages communicated is the long term economic impact that interventions or the lack of interventions can make in a community. The Pandemic highlighted the essential need for quality childcare for families to enable them to work effectively.

## BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

**1362**

materials  
distributed  
(excluding books)

**137**

events

**2783**

total event  
attendance







## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

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Addressing the needs of young children is a shared endeavor. In addition to providing services to families and support for childcare providers, York County First Steps mobilizes partners and community members to ensure all children in York 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

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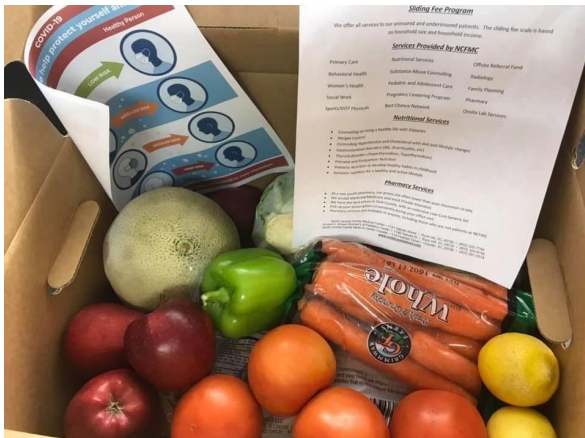
## OUR PARTNERSHIPS BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

**28**

COVID Related  
Community  
Meetings

**590**

Participating  
Individuals



The pandemic negatively impacted families with young children. We partnered with Impact York County to distribute healthy food boxes in neighborhoods where options were limited.





## OUR SUPPORTERS

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Through partnerships and collaborations, as well as financial support from grants and contributions, York County First Steps leverages state dollars to enhance and expand services to children and families. We sincerely thank our partners for their financial support and confidence in our ability to serve our community.

### FUNDING SUPPORT

**Children's Trust (MIECHV): \$166,042**

**National Service Office of NFP: \$91,814**

**Sisters of Mercy NC Foundation: \$50,000**

**Arras Foundation: \$50,000**

**Atrium Health: \$70,000**

**5210 Go! ESMM: \$4,600**

**Kaplan Company: \$800**

**SC Endeavors: \$2,000**

**Individual Donations: \$3,500**

### IN-KIND SUPPORT

York School District #1: \$30,000

Clover School District #2: \$15,119

Rock Hill School District #3: \$22,950

## JOIN US

For more information on how to join York County First Steps for partnership opportunities, visit our website at [www.YCFirstSteps.com](http://www.YCFirstSteps.com) or call us at 803-981-5780.

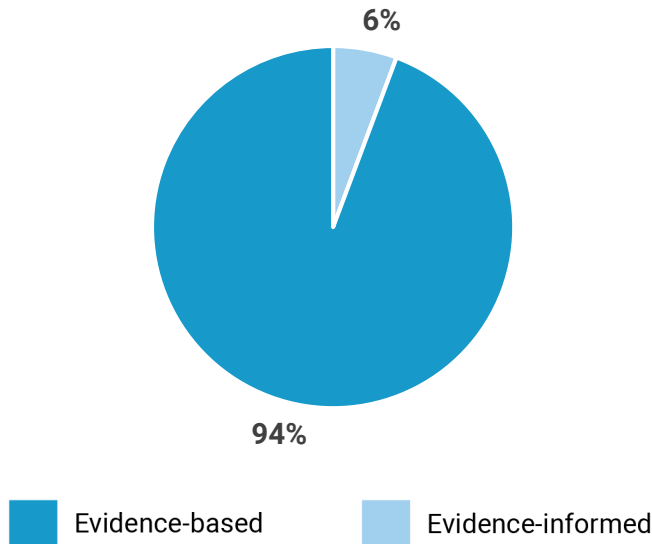




## FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

### OUR INVESTMENT IN QUALITY

#### Expenditures of State Funds by Program Type



### ESTIMATION OF COST SAVINGS

Since inception, ABC County First Steps has leveraged **\$5,941,890** from sources outside of state government.

That's **\$0.68** for every state dollar.

### SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES BY STRATEGY

	State Funding	Federal Funding	Private Funding	In-Kind Contributions	Total
Parents as Teachers	\$130,913	\$0	\$70	\$38,726	\$169,709
Child Care Quality Enhancement	\$86,839	\$0	\$0	\$4,565	\$91,404
Child Care Training	\$40,373	\$0	\$3,977	\$2,194	\$46,543
Nurse Family Partnership	\$139,082	\$0	\$298,690	\$18,000	\$455,772
Scholarship Initiatives	\$21,137	\$0	\$0	\$683	\$21,820
Partnerships & Community Education	\$26,099	\$3000	\$28,575	\$1,219	\$58,894
Administrative Support	\$29,283	\$519	\$407	\$1,463	\$31,672
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$499,074</b>	<b>\$4,237</b>	<b>\$342,618</b>	<b>\$68,069</b>	<b>\$913,997</b>



## LEADERSHIP

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### STAFF

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**Karmen Barrett, NFP HVN**

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**Elizabeth Forbes, NFP HVN**

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**Eusheakia Blakeney, NFP HVN**

## CONTACT US

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