



2020-2021

ANNUAL REPORT



South Carolina
**Early Childhood
Advisory Council**



Reaching even *higher*

Raising children is not easy, and this past year has been especially challenging for parents of young children. At South Carolina First Steps, we know that a brighter future is possible. That is why we pivoted, innovated, and extended our reach to ensure that families could weather this storm.

We met families outside and online to provide one-on-one coaching and support. We equipped child care centers with funding, supplies, and training to keep their classrooms open and safe. We launched an AmeriCorps service program to maximize our impact through volunteerism. And, despite the challenges of operating during a pandemic, we directly served 22% more children than the year before.

We could not have achieved this alone. Our accomplishments are shared with state leaders, funders, partners, and most importantly, parents and caregivers of our state's young children. When we work together, we can realize a future in which every child is healthy, nurtured, and ready for success — a brighter future for us all.

OUR MISSION

South Carolina First Steps works collaboratively to ensure that all children start school ready to reach their highest potential with engaged support from their parents, caregivers, and communities.

OUR VISION

We will be successful when all children reach their highest potential.

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The Eason family is part of Parents as Teachers at Beaufort County First Steps. The program was recognized as a Blue Ribbon Affiliate, a prestigious national endorsement, in 2020.

INTRODUCTION



AS PARENTS, WE WANT THE BEST FOR OUR CHILDREN. We imagine their future as an expanse of opportunity. We know how much is riding on their first five years. Ninety percent of a child's brain will be developed by the time they enter kindergarten. The songs we sing, the books we read, the connections we make as we comfort our babies in the middle of the night – this is the work of parenting. It is both physically and emotionally demanding. To do it well requires strength, stamina, and stability.

It also requires support. If this crisis has taught us anything, it's that even the best parents can't do this alone. This is why First Steps was created. For 22 years, we've had the charge to ensure that every parent has the resources and support to be the best parents they can be.

During the pandemic, we heard from families raising little children who said they felt alone and inadequate. One mom said, "It's exhausting to manage child care and the duties of my job. It feels like I'm failing at both sometimes: being a mom and my job." In our survey of over 1000 parents of young children, 83% said they were more stressed and anxious than usual and that they worried about their young children missing out on developmental opportunities.

That's why, last year, more families than ever turned to First Steps for help. They enrolled their children in First Steps 4K, which reopened in-person in the summer of 2020, well before most public schools in the state. They attended parenting workshops, read books to their children found in Little Free Libraries or mailed to them directly in their homes, and they worked with parenting coaches who came to their homes every week to help them make the most of their time with their children.

Because these families voluntarily said, "Yes" to the offer of a helping hand, their children will be better off. Compared to their peers, children who participate in First Steps programs are 74% more likely to score at the highest level of kindergarten readiness.

When our children begin life healthy, thriving, and ready to learn, we all benefit. Building the brightest possible future for our children also means building a bright future for our state. That's why we're here, leveraging the power of community to ensure every child reaches their highest potential.

GEORGIA MJARTAN

Executive Director



“The most impactful investments we can make to develop our future talent are made in the earliest years of an individual’s life.”

DAVID MORLEY
Board Chair



“SC First Steps brings critical early education and resources to the children and families it serves. First Steps opens the door to a better future.”

SHELLEY CANRIGHT, PHD
Board Vice-Chair

LEADERSHIP

SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS THRIVES on the dedication, input, and guidance of our Board of Trustees. The Board represents a statewide group of leaders consisting of legislators, state agency directors, early childhood educators, members of the business community, and parents of young children. All trustees serve concurrently as members of the SC Early Childhood Advisory Council.

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Children's Trust of SC

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JOHN HAYES
Early Childhood Educator

TIMOTHY HOLT
Business Community

JESICA MACKEY
Parent of a Young Child

JENNIFER MCCONNELL
Child Care Provider

JANIE NEELEY
Parent of a Young Child

ALEXIA NEWMAN
Medical/Child Care
Development Provider

ROGER PRYOR JR.
Child Care Provider

DR. AMY WILLIAMS
Medical Provider

NICOLE WYNKOOP
Parent of a Young Child



Our impact:

37,163

BABIES, TODDLERS, & PRESCHOOLERS DIRECTLY SERVED

In the past year, because of First Steps:



7,963

families participated in parent education programs designed to improve parenting practices and promote child health and development.

97%

of Parents as Teachers families said their parent educator always treats them with respect.



2,588

4-year-olds attended high-quality First Steps 4K programs at no cost to their families.

83%

of First Steps 4K parents said the program met their needs very to extremely well.



391

families of rising kindergartners participated in Countdown to Kindergarten, building the relationships, skills, and confidence they need for success in school.

91%

of Countdown to Kindergarten parents said they would recommend the program to a friend or family member.



More than **6,200** early childhood educators participated in First Steps training and professional development, benefitting more than

60,000

CHILDREN IN CHILD CARE SETTINGS & CLASSROOMS



32,091

visitors to Palmetto Pre-K generated 4,911 leads for families seeking free preschool for their 3- and 4-year-olds.

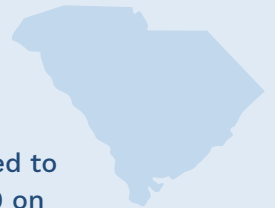
2,400+



children received screenings to detect developmental delays and prevent learning challenges later on.

1,245

parents from 42 of 46 counties responded to our survey about the impact of COVID-19 on young children, their families, and child care.



305,000+

free, quality books and resources were delivered to children in homes, child care centers, and communities across the state.

12,227



families received information and support, through the service of 31 First Steps AmeriCorps members.

\$1=\$2.68

Local First Steps partnerships leveraged \$25 million from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$1.68 for every state dollar invested.

WHY IT *matters*

EARLY CHILDHOOD MATTERS because early experiences shape the architecture of the developing brain, establishing a lifelong foundation for learning, behavior, and health.

Our future as a state depends on the health and wellbeing of 342,000 babies, toddlers, and preschoolers living in South Carolina today. They all deserve the opportunity to reach their highest potential, but too many face disadvantages from the start.

IN SOUTH CAROLINA:

46%

of children 0-5 lived in poverty or a low-income household

9%

of children 0-5 experienced food insufficiency at some point in the year

40%

of children 0-5 lived in a single-parent household

50%

of children ages 0-5 were read to less than 4 days per week

21%

of babies were born to mothers who received less than adequate prenatal care

54%

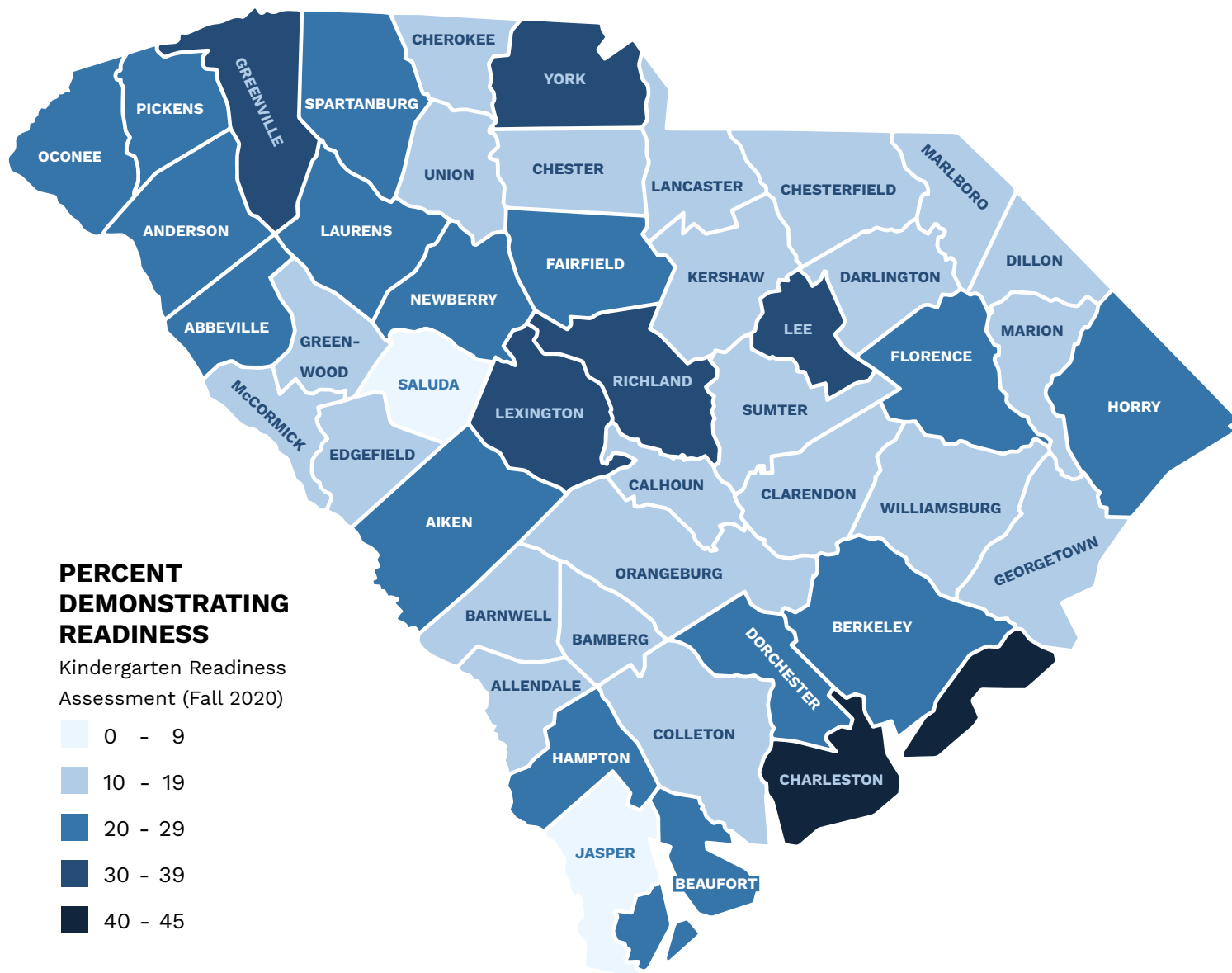
of children ages 3-4 were not enrolled in preschool

10%

of babies were born with low birthweight

73%

of entering kindergartners tested “not ready” for school



THE KINDERGARTEN READINESS ASSESSMENT

Children are considered “ready for school” if they score at the level of “demonstrating readiness” on the South Carolina Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA). This developmentally appropriate test is administered to all students entering publicly funded kindergarten within the first 45 days of the school year. The KRA determines each child’s readiness level across four domains:

1. Language and literacy
2. Mathematics
3. Physical well-being and motor development
4. Social foundations



Learn more at
scfirststeps.org



LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

ACROSS THE STATE IN EVERY COUNTY, First Steps works to ensure that every child has the opportunity to benefit from quality early childhood programs. Through a network of 46 county partnerships, each a local nonprofit, we offer direct services to families and caregivers, share knowledge of community resources, and mobilize partners and volunteers in building a more efficient and effective early childhood system.

Targeted investments

EVERY YEAR, we allocate state funds to 46 First Steps partnerships based on local population and need. We also raise additional public and private resources to make discretionary and targeted grants.

At the local level, First Steps partnerships utilize a set of predisposing risk factors to identify children most at risk for early school failure, ensuring that intensive services are prioritized to the children and families most in need of support.

IN 2020-21:

100%

of children served intensively
had at least one risk factor

91%

had two or more risk factors

44%

had three or more risk factors

For a list of risk factors associated with early school failure, see Appendix A.



Hannah Springs and her son, Josiah, are part of the Nurse-Family Partnership program at York County First Steps. In 2020, South Carolina First Steps invested over \$1 million in competitive grants to expand evidence-based parenting programs like Nurse-Family Partnership, along with family support services and community outreach efforts.

Local impact

STATEWIDE, FIRST STEPS OFFERS A RANGE OF SERVICES that improve children's health, strengthen families, expand access to quality early care and education, and help transition rising kindergartners into school. Because each community is different, each local partnership tailors its offerings based on local determination of needs and resources. On average, each local partnership administers 5 to 6 programs annually.

	CHILDREN	ADULT FAMILY MEMBERS
2018-2019	25,236	40,851
2019-2020	27,531	18,146
2020-2021	34,575	57,642

\$1 million

In 2020, we invested over \$1 million in grant funding to expand local programs and outreach for parents

26% increase

Last year, First Steps partnerships directly served 26% more children than the previous year.

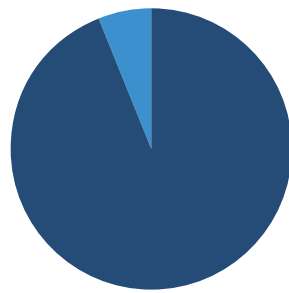
Accountability at all levels

AS A STATEWIDE PUBLIC-PRIVATE INITIATIVE, First Steps is accountable to taxpayers, our funders and, most importantly, to South Carolina’s children. Our partnership structure gives local leaders the ability to operate in a way that best meets the needs of local families. To facilitate their success, First Steps holds local partnerships accountable for meeting performance standards, and provides technical assistance, consultation, and comprehensive support through a team of dedicated program officers.

For more on local partnership performance standards and state office support, see Appendix B.

Commitment to quality

EXPENDITURES OF STATE FUNDS BY PROGRAM TYPE, 2020-21



State law requires at least 75% of state-appropriated funds be used for evidence-based programs. Up to 25% of funding may be used for investments in innovative, evidence-informed practices.

- EVIDENCE-BASED – 94%
- EVIDENCE-INFORMED – 6%

For a comprehensive list of evidence-based and evidence-informed programs offered by local First Steps partnerships, see Appendix C. For programs offered by county, see Appendix D.

PROVEN RESULTS

Children who received First Steps 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.

These results are among the key findings from a 2019 evaluation of local First Steps partnerships by the Institute for Families in Society at the University of South Carolina. View the full report at scfirststeps.org.



The Tri-County Play Collaborative partners with the Children's Museum of the Lowcountry to expand programs and increase access for families with young children.

Support for innovation

PLAY HAS AN ESSENTIAL ROLE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT. This is why playgrounds, cultural centers, and outdoor learning environments are vital community resources for families with young children.

The **Tri-County Play Collaborative**, a joint initiative of First Steps nonprofits in Charleston, Dorchester, and Berkeley counties, works to promote community-based opportunities for learning through play. The group coordinates with libraries, museums, nature centers, and historical sites across the lowcountry to develop accessible, high-quality programming for families with young children.

In 2021, South Carolina First Steps awarded the regional initiative an **Early Childhood Innovation Grant**. This competitive award recognizes and supports creative ideas that have a demonstrated impact on the healthy development and school readiness of young children.





STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

GUIDED BY THE BELIEF that a parent is a child's first and most important teacher, First Steps builds respectful partnerships with families to promote child health and development. Our parenting programs are proven to improve birth outcomes, increase knowledge of early development, foster positive parenting practices, prevent abuse and neglect, promote family literacy, and prepare children for school success. Services are voluntary and provided at levels that meet the family's needs, from community-based peer support to in-home coaching.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, First Steps parenting programs have been a lifeline to families experiencing new or increased challenges like job loss, domestic violence, substance abuse, and mental health concerns. In the 42 counties where First Steps funds evidence-based home visiting programs, parent educators have pivoted to

accommodate new health and safety guidelines, providing their clients with virtual visits and uninterrupted support during a time of heightened need.

PARENTING PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE | 2020-21

34,469

total home visits delivered

71,000+

books distributed

2,806

parent group support hours provided

7,963

families served

For the complete list of parenting programs offered by First Steps local partnerships, see Appendix C.



My’Kiyah Watkins says that her daughter My’Nala is thriving. “She’s amazing.”

Two generations, one future

MY’KIYAH WATKINS was a sophomore in college when she became a mom to a daughter named My’Nala. At first, she says she struggled. But with the help and encouragement of her own mother, she went back to school and reached out to Cherokee County First Steps for parenting support. My’Kiyah says the **Talk to Me** program helped her and her mom create daily routines for My’Nala with a focus on language development. The program uses LENA, a “talk pedometer” that helps adults learn to increase the quantity and quality of adult-child interactions.

The effort has paid off. At fourteen months old, My’Nala is thriving. She is talkative, outgoing, and loves to learn. “I didn’t know she would be this advanced this early,” her mom says.

My’Kiyah has surprised herself too. She is still in school, pursuing career in sports management. She says she now sees a brighter future — for both her daughter and herself.

“I want her to finish strong, to pursue her dreams.”

My’Kiyah Watkins



SUSTAINING CHILD CARE

\$9,490 IS THE AVERAGE ANNUAL COST OF CENTER-BASED INFANT CARE in South Carolina. That's 11% of the state's median income for married couples and 39% of the median income for single parents. For a 4-year-old, the average cost is \$8,541 per year.

Quality child care and early education is only affordable if it costs no more than 7% of a family's income, according to the US Department of Health and Human Services. For most South Carolina families, the cost is out of reach. Our **scholarship programs**—including those administered locally by First Steps partnerships and statewide by First Steps 4K—make payments directly to child care providers to serve families most in need. The funding provides local businesses with valuable support, children with a quality early learning experience, and parents with the opportunity to enter or remain in the workforce.

CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIPS & FIRST STEPS 4K | 2020-21

\$15.6 million

in tuition paid directly to child care providers

282

total providers supported

3,057

total children served

For the complete list of early care and education programs offered by First Steps local partnerships, see Appendix C.



Compass Point 4K, operated by Chesterfield County First Steps and Northeastern Technical College, is a First Steps partner in Cheraw, South Carolina. The program re-opened for full-day, in-person instruction on June 1, 2020.

Keeping classrooms open during COVID-19

SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE PANDEMIC, child care centers have faced enormous challenges. Higher costs, lower ratios, and decreased enrollment have made it difficult—and, in some cases, impossible—for providers to keep their classrooms open. First Steps partnerships across the state have taken bold action to sustain these essential businesses.

In May 2020, more than half of the registered child care centers in Greenville County were closed. To ensure that families would continue to have access to safe, reliable child care, Greenville First Steps partnered with Greenville County Council to invest \$4.2 million in federal emergency relief funds into the local child care sector.

With \$1.7 million in direct financial support, Greenville County child care centers were able to open over the summer. Greenville First Steps distributed PPE, cleaning supplies, and more than 65,000 new children's books. And to help providers accommodate more than 4,900 school-age children, the partnership invested \$2.5 million in arts, fitness, wellness, and tutoring enhancements.

Thanks to these innovative efforts, all but 5 child care providers had re-opened by August 1 and remained open throughout the year.



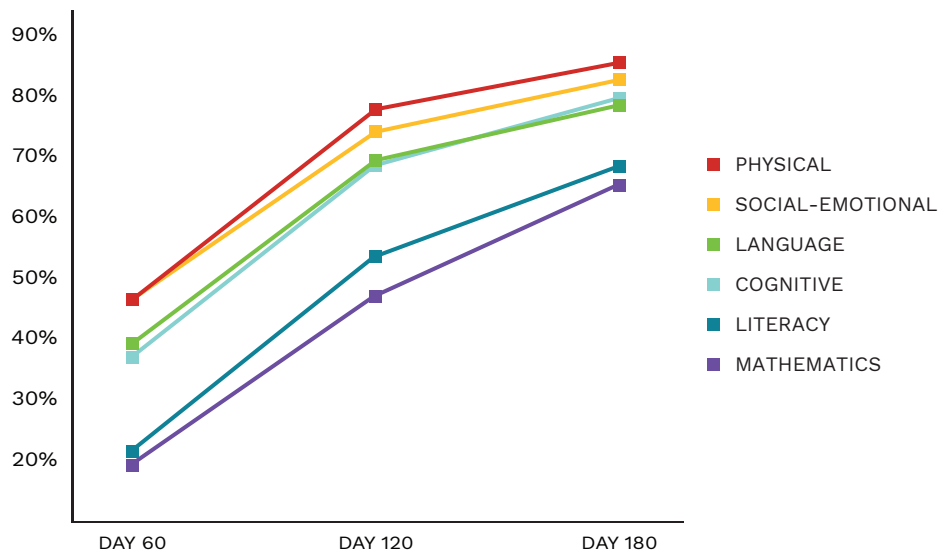
EDUCATING FOUR-YEAR-OLDS

South Carolina First Steps provides families the opportunity to enroll their children in a free, full-day four-year-old kindergarten program of their choice. Part of the state's Child Early Reading and Development Education Program (CERDEP), **First Steps 4K** partners with private, community, and faith-based providers to increase participation in early education across the state.

To ensure the quality of our programs, First Steps 4K providers are required to maintain rigorous program standards, implement evidence-based curriculum, and document student learning throughout the year. The results are clear. When First Steps 4K students were assessed using the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment system, they demonstrated gains in all areas of development and learning.



FIRST STEPS 4K STUDENTS WHO MET KINDERGARTEN READINESS BENCHMARKS BY DEVELOPMENTAL AREA, 2020-21





Jessica Sports says that First Steps 4K supports her daughter's education and her own, because the access to free child care enables her to work and attend college full-time. "I want my daughter to see that it may be hard, but it's achievable."

Support for working families

IN THE SUMMER OF 2020, just two and a half months after statewide school closures, First Steps 4K classrooms re-opened for full-day instruction, five days per week.

As a result, working parents were able to stay on the job, and children were able to learn and grow in safe, nurturing environments.

To keep classrooms clean and healthy, we equipped providers with masks, infrared thermometers, hand sanitizer, and other supplies. To stay connected with teachers in classrooms, First Steps 4K coaches provided one-on-one support using video conferencing technology.

Jessica Sports says that First Steps' commitment to in-person instruction has been invaluable to her and her daughter. As a college student who works two jobs to make ends meet, Jessica depends on the availability of free child care. And, with the quality programming provided by First Steps 4K, Jessica knows that her daughter will be ready for school.

+ SIBLINGS

Any sibling of a student enrolled in First Steps 4K now qualifies for a child care scholarship thanks to a partnership with the SC Department of Social Services. Announced in May, **First Steps 4K + Siblings** provides full-day and after-school care for siblings age 0-12 at any licensed child care center that participates in ABC Quality, the state's voluntary quality rating and improvement system.



IMPROVING QUALITY

MANY PRIVATE CHILD CARE CENTERS STRIVE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES but lack the resources often available to publicly funded early childhood programs. Through rigorous quality assessments and support, our **Child Care Quality Enhancement** (QE) strategies and First Steps 4K program supports produce measurable improvements in the quality of care provided to young children.

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT & FIRST STEPS 4K AT A GLANCE | 2020-21

9,900+

hours of on-site technical assistance provided

99

child care centers participated in QE

211

preschool providers partnered with First Steps 4K

4,000+

children enrolled in QE provider classrooms

For the number of individuals, by county, served by QE, see Appendix E.



LaShondia Wright owns and operates Wright Way Child Development Center in Eutawville, South Carolina.

A stronger foundation

THERE WERE NO CHILD CARE CENTERS IN EUTAWVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA when LaShondia Wright graduated from Claflin University with a degree in early childhood education. She wanted to change that. “It was something I wanted to do for years,” she says.

But running a high-quality child care center is costly and challenging, especially in a rural community with high poverty and low access to transportation. First Steps was able to help. LaShondia partnered with First Steps 4K to enhance her four-year-old kindergarten program and provide free enrollment, curriculum-driven programming, and transportation to children in need.

“We are not just taking care of them and keeping them safe. We’re giving them the foundation they need for their future.”

**LaShondia Wright, Owner and Director
Wright Way Child Development Center, Eutawville**



ADVANCING THE PROFESSION



TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY of early care and education in South Carolina, we offer professional learning experiences that build and strengthen the state's early childhood workforce. Offered locally through First Steps partnerships, our certified **child care trainings** include topics in the areas of nutrition, health and safety, curriculum, child guidance, and program administration. At the state level, we host an annual **two-week academy** for First Steps 4K teachers and directors and coordinate the **Palmetto Pre-K Jamboree** – an bi-annual, statewide learning opportunity for all teachers in publicly funded preschool programs.

Tabatha Rosproy, the first early childhood educator to be named National Teacher of the Year, was a keynote speaker for the Palmetto Pre-K Jamboree on March 5, 2021. The virtual event was attended by over 3,100 educators of 3- and 4-year-olds.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AT A GLANCE | 2020-21

977

hours of certified training offered

6,200+

teachers and directors participated

For the number of individuals, by county, served by local child care training, see Appendix E.



First Steps recognized recipients of the 2021 Aim4Excellence National Director Credential in June.

National recognition

IN JUNE 2021, 9 directors of approved First Steps 4K centers earned the **Aim4Excellence National Director Credential** through the McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership at National Louis University.

As part of our commitment to improving the quality of early care and education statewide, South Carolina First Steps offers funding and support to First Steps 4K directors who choose to participate in this rigorous, nationally recognized professional learning experience.

To date, a total of 28 First Steps 4K directors have earned their national credential. A cohort of 24 directors is currently enrolled and expected to complete the program in February 2022.

“Earning the Director Credential was the best move I could have made if I truly want my child care center to be a part of the solution for our community.”

**Jerlean Holmes, Director
House of Smiles Early Learning
Center, Moncks Corner**



SUPPORTING TRANSITIONS

STARTING KINDERGARTEN CAN BE A STRESSFUL EXPERIENCE for children and families, even in a typical year. In 2020, a global pandemic made the transition even more daunting. In response, we adapted our home-visiting school transition program, **Countdown to Kindergarten**, by offering virtual and socially-distanced services. At the same time, we initiated long-term program enhancements to ensure a strong start for every child in our state, now and in the future.

In 2021, Countdown to Kindergarten is available and accessible to more children than ever before, with expanded services for families in which English is a second language and children with disabilities. We also launched a new public awareness campaign to reach even more families. In a series of short television spots produced in partnership with SCETV, we provided information about school readiness, along with tips and resources for parents and caregivers.



COUNTDOWN TO KINDERGARTEN AT A GLANCE | SUMMER 2020

2,280

total home and school visits

60

kindergarten teachers trained as home visitors

391

children served

For the complete list of school transition programs offered by First Steps local partnerships, see Appendix C.



Stephany Sanchez Perez and her kindergarten teacher Midenna Anderson.

From kindergarten to the top of her class

STEPHANY SANCHEZ PEREZ graduated as the valedictorian of her high school class in Lancaster County this year. But as a child, she needed extra support to be prepared for kindergarten. “I went to preschool not knowing how to speak English at all,” Stephany says.

Countdown to Kindergarten helped. When Stephany got to know her future kindergarten teacher, Midenna Anderson, during the summer before school, she gained the confidence and skills she needed for a strong start in the classroom.

Stephany is now attending Duke University on a full academic scholarship. She plans to study neuroscience and, one day, become a neurologist. Looking back, Stephany credits her family, her faith, and her experience with Countdown to Kindergarten for putting her on a path to success.

91% of Countdown to Kindergarten families said they would recommend the program to a friend or family member



IMPROVING HEALTH



HEALTH AND BRAIN DEVELOPMENT are deeply connected, beginning with a mother's wellbeing in pregnancy.

As part of our commitment to school readiness, we offer programs that enhance food security, prevent chronic health conditions, and address developmental delays. When families can meet their nutritional needs, access comprehensive medical care, and connect with appropriate intervention services, their children are more likely to start school healthy and ready to succeed.

HEALTH PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE | 2020-21

2,400+ children

received screenings to detect developmental delays and prevent learning challenges

13,000+ healthy meals

provided to children at risk for food insecurity

For the complete list of health programs offered by First Steps local partnerships, see Appendix C.

★ BE A HEALTHY HERO ★

Prevention Tips for Preschoolers

The coronavirus is a germ that can make some people sick. But there are ways to protect ourselves and others. We can all be healthy heroes!



We can say hello with a wave.



We can wash our hands.

Scrub with soap and water for 20 seconds. Sing the ABCs to pass the time!



We can give each other space.

Pretend to be an airplane without touching your neighbor.



We can wear a mask.

Kids 2 and older can wear a mask.



We can cough or sneeze into our elbow.



We can ask questions!

For tips on talking with children about COVID-19, visit [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).



“Be a Healthy Hero” encourages children to practice healthy habits that prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses.

Keeping kids and classrooms healthy during COVID-19

THROUGHOUT THE PANDEMIC, when other schools and businesses were closed, many early childhood centers were open to care for children and support working families.

To help child care providers keep their classrooms stayed healthy and safe, we partnered with the Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) and the Department of Social Services (DSS) to launch a public awareness campaign designed especially for the families and educators of preschool-aged children. Called “Be a Healthy Hero,” the campaign delivered age-appropriate messages about how to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses.



MOBILIZING COMMUNITIES

WELL-CONNECTED IN THEIR COMMUNITIES and trusted by families, First Steps partnerships serve as **local hubs** for early childhood programs and services. Every local partnership board comprises leaders and stakeholders from multiple sectors. Working together, they connect families to community resources, convene partners to align and optimize local systems, and mobilize donors and volunteers to address local needs.

In 2020, to boost these efforts, South Carolina First Steps established an **AmeriCorps** service program, deploying thirty-one members across the state. These dedicated volunteers served in roles ranging from trained parent educators to community education and outreach members. Because of their service, First Steps reached an additional 12,227 families in the past year alone.



AmeriCorps

FIRST STEPS AMERICORPS AT A GLANCE | 2020-21

31

AmeriCorps members deployed

11,041

AmeriCorps service hours completed

\$41,340

Segal Education Awards



In 2020, South Carolina First Steps recruited and deployed 31 AmeriCorps members to expand the reach of parenting programs and community outreach initiatives across the state.

“As a teacher, the joy I feel from seeing a student’s eyes light up while learning is something special, I want parents to frequently have the same experience at home.”

Eboni Bryant
First Steps AmeriCorps member

EBONI BRYANT IS A PRESCHOOL TEACHER in rural Orangeburg County. When she’s not in the classroom, she serves as an AmeriCorps parent educator with Orangeburg County First Steps. As part of her service, she meets with families of four-year-olds every week for 30 weeks. Using an evidence-based curriculum, she coaches parents in skill-building activities that are proven to improve school readiness, parent involvement, and future academic achievement.

The program is called **Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters** (HIPPY), and it utilizes a unique peer-to-peer model. Parent educators are recruited from the communities in which they serve, resulting in greater trust with families. The model has also been found to have a positive impact on home visitors, who—like Eboni—gain valuable professional experience in the field of early childhood education.



PROMOTING LITERACY



Several First Steps partnerships have built and maintain Little Free Libraries in their communities.

TO BE READY FOR SCHOOL AND BEYOND, children need a strong foundation in language and literacy. First Steps promotes early reading through partnerships with local libraries, free book distributions, parenting programs that focus on family literacy, and community events that celebrate the joy of reading.

In 2021, Newberry County First Steps partnered with the Newberry Museum and City of Newberry to transform their historic town center into an interactive reading experience. The pages of children's books were displayed on storefronts and along park paths, inviting families to get outdoors and read together. The **Newberry StoryWalk** is a great example of the way local First Steps partnerships mobilize whole communities in support of early learning and school readiness.

In 2020-21, First Steps delivered

305,000+ books

to children in homes, child care centers, and communities across the state.



As part of our 2021 MLK Service event, Lt. Governor Pamela Evette read to First Steps 4K students at First Nazareth Child Development Center in Columbia.

“As a working mom, I know that time is limited, but when you take even just a few minutes each day to read out loud, it can make a huge impact”

Lt. Gov. Pamela Evette

A week of service

IN JANUARY, FIRST STEPS AMERICORPS MEMBERS launched our inaugural **MLK Service Week** event by organizing a virtual, statewide read-aloud and free book distribution for preschoolers.

Among the 65 volunteers who participated were Lt. Governor Pamela Evette, DSS State Director Michael Leach, Mr. South Carolina State University, and the University of South Carolina’s Cocky.

More than 373 children in 25 First Steps 4K classrooms participated. Thanks to the generous support of our event sponsors, Lt. Gov. Pamela & Mr. David Evette and Mr. Dan Adams, our partners at Usborne Books & More, and our generous donors, every child received a brand-new, hardback copy of the book.



WORKING TOGETHER

AS THE CONNECTOR AND CONVENER of all early childhood serving agencies, we operate the **Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC)**, a collaborative body representing the state's early childhood system. Our trustees serve concurrently as ECAC members and our staff coordinates their collaborative efforts to help SC children thrive.



South Carolina
**Early Childhood
Advisory Council**

In 2020-21, the collaborative work of the ECAC was fueled in part by competitive grant funding from federal and private sources, maximizing our state's investment in early childhood. From developing a five-year plan for South Carolina's public investment in young children to creating an integrated data system so we can track the outcomes of these investments, the ECAC is a model of interagency collaboration.

Palmetto Pre-K is a cross-agency initiative to support the early education of 3- and 4-year-old children in South Carolina.

Over the last year, the initiative has grown to increase access for children, professional development for educators, and support for families in the transition to kindergarten.



26,364

visited PalmettoPreK.org, an **online portal** for publicly-funded preschool programs in South Carolina

1,300+

attended the Palmetto Pre-K Jamboree, a **professional development** event for early childhood educators

386

responded to our survey on the most helpful strategies for **supporting transitions** from preschool to kindergarten



Transforming the way families access early childhood programs and services

COMING IN 2022, **First Five SC** will provide families with a single online portal for finding and connecting with the state's programs and services for young children.

Led by the ECAC, ten state agencies participated in the development of the portal in 2021. As a result of this collaborative effort, families will be able to learn about 60 programs and services across ten state agencies. Using a simple online eligibility screener, they can quickly check their eligibility for 44 of those programs.

The work continues in 2022 with development of a common service application, where families can enter their information into a single online form and instantly apply for all participating early childhood services.

60

Sixty programs and services across 10 state agencies joined the development of First Five SC.



Stay up to date on our work in 2022 at earlychildhoodsc.org.



LISTENING TO FAMILIES

HELPING CHILDREN THRIVE means working in partnership with the people we serve: the parents and caregivers of our state's young children. At South Carolina First Steps, we are committed to listening, responding to, and honoring the knowledge and expertise of families. It is a commitment shared by the Early Childhood Advisory Council, which works collaboratively across the state's early childhood system to ensure a unified focus on the needs and aspirations of families.

2020-21 HIGHLIGHTS

In 2020, First Steps was selected to be one of the very first public agency participants in a national cohort of organizations committed to centering client voice. As a **Listen4Good** grantee, we utilize funding and technical assistance from the Fund for Shared Insight to design client surveys, collect responses, interpret data, respond to the results, and “close the loop” by reporting back to those who were surveyed. Part of a new initiative called **Your Voice Matters**, high-quality feedback loops are now integral to the way we evaluate and improve our services.

In 2021, the ECAC established the state's first staff position dedicating to advancing opportunities for children and the adults in their lives together. Housed at SC First Steps and working from the vantage point of the ECAC, the **Two-Generation Coordinator** serves as South Carolina's lead for cross-agency, system-wide adoption of a two-generation, whole-family approach.

State early childhood leaders now have the opportunity to hear directly from parents and caregivers. In 2021, we recruited the first members of the **Family Voice Council** to provide feedback to ECAC members and state agencies on issues, policies, and programs that affect young children.



Makala Smith, mom of three-year-old Abe, was one of 1,245 SC parents and caregivers who told us how the pandemic was impacting their needs, experiences, and attitudes around child care.

Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on young children, families, and child care needs

AT THE HEIGHT OF THE PANDEMIC, we asked parents and caregivers of children ages 0-5 how they were doing. Our statewide survey, conducted in partnership with the United Way Association of South Carolina, garnered responses from 1,245 parents and caregivers from 42 of 46 counties across the state. This report offered policymakers, advocates, and stakeholders timely insights into the status of young children and their families during COVID-19.

75% of parents and caregivers said they were worried about the mental health of their young children



View the full report at
earlychildhoodsc.org.

READY FOR SCHOOL

South Carolina's Profile of the Ready Kindergartner

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 is more than a matter of age. South Carolina's *Profile of the Ready Kindergartner* describes the physical, cognitive, social and emotional signs that a child is prepared for academic success. Developed by SC First Steps and the SC Department of Education, it serves as the state's official description of school readiness.



APPROACHES TO LEARNING & INQUIRY



- Demonstrates eagerness to learn
- Shows curiosity through questioning
- Shows creativity and imagination through pretend play
- Engages in daily opportunities for play and exploration
- Shows willingness to try new things
- Persists in tasks that are challenging
- Maintains attention
- Applies learning to new situations
- Solves problems with materials at hand
- Use senses and observations to learn about the world around them

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT, SELF-HELP & MOTOR SKILLS



- Moves with control and balance while walking, running, jumping and climbing
- Uses fingers to control small objects, such as pencils/crayons, scissors, buttons and zippers
- Uses hand-eye coordination to perform simple tasks, like putting together a puzzle
- Independently performs self-help tasks such as toileting, hand washing, tooth brushing, and dressing



The Profile of the Ready Kindergartner is available as a poster in English and Spanish. For more information, visit scfirststeps.org.

LANGUAGE & LITERACY DEVELOPMENT



Listening, Speaking & Understanding

- Converses with others, taking turns speaking and listening
- Speaks clearly, expressing ideas and questions
- Uses words to seek help, answer questions and solve problems
- Speaks in complete sentences of at least six to eight words
- Listens to stories and retells them
- Begins to ask questions about stories that are read aloud
- Follows directions and completes tasks that require multiple steps
- Asks and answers “how” and “why” questions

Early Reading

- Shows interest in books and reading
- Holds books upright, turning pages one at a time from front to back
- Knows that printed words have meaning
- Uses pictures in a text to tell and retell the story
- Recognizes and names/reads familiar signs and logos
- Listens to a story being read aloud
- Makes predictions about what will happen next in a story being read aloud
- Begins to follow text from left to right as it is read aloud
- Recognizes and names rhyming words
- Recognizes that letters represent spoken sounds
- Recognizes some upper and lower case letters and their sounds
- Recognizes that spoken words can be represented in written language
- Recognizes written name as well as other familiar words
- Begins to use pictures and text read aloud to learn the meaning of unfamiliar words

Early Writing

- Draws pictures and tells their story
- Writes using a combination of letters, letter-like shapes and scribbles
- Uses drawing and writing during play
- Writes name independently or using an example

MATHEMATICAL THINKING



Number Sense

- Counts in sequence up to 20
- Counts up to 10 objects, using one number for each object
- Recognizes up to five objects in a group without counting
- Compares sets of objects (*more than* or *less than*)
- Describes and compares objects by size (*big* and *small*), length (*long* and *short*) and weight (*light* and *heavy*)
- Understands and uses the terms *first*, *second* and *third*

Matching, Sorting, Classifying

- Recognizes and draws basic shapes, such as circle, square and triangle
- Recognizes and repeats simple repeating patterns, such as triangle, square, triangle, square
- Describes positions of objects by using the terms *above* and *below*
- Sorts and classifies up to 10 objects into categories

EMOTIONAL & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

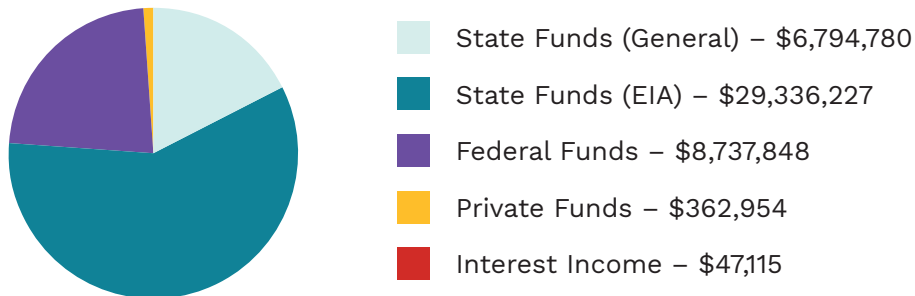


- Shares, takes turns and plays well with others
- Expresses emotions through appropriate actions and words
- Follows simple rules and directions
- Adjusts to changes in routine and environment
- Shows self-control
- Shows caring and understanding of others' feelings
- Interacts with familiar adults
- Respects the property of others
- Resolves conflicts using words and adult support
- Makes friends

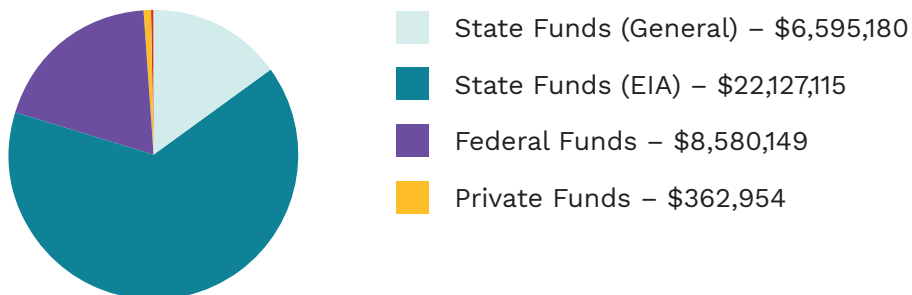
FINANCIALS

SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS IS THE ONLY STATEWIDE FUNDING SOURCE dedicated exclusively to early childhood. As a public-private partnership, we leverage state support with federal and private funds to maximize our investment in early childhood systems and services.

FY 2021 REVENUE – \$45,278,924



FY 2021 EXPENDITURES – \$37,665,398



FY 2021 EXPENDITURES BY PROGRAM – \$37,665,398



EVERY CHILD READY

ADOPTED IN JULY 2020 by the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees, *Every Child Ready* is a five-year road map for achieving our mission and moving toward our vision of success for every child.

This 2020-2025 strategic plan includes a refreshed mission statement, five organizational values, four strategic priorities, 20 objectives, 97 strategies, and 6 overarching measures of success. Collectively, they represent our commitment to South Carolina's children, their families, and our state.

Goals and progress

1. **INCREASE THE REACH OF FIRST STEPS SERVICES.** By 2025, the percentage of children in need who are directly served by First Steps will increase from 17% to 20%. **In FY21, we directly served 24% of children in need.**
2. **INCREASE THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN ENROLLED IN HIGH INTENSITY PROGRAMS FUNDED BY FIRST STEPS.** By 2025, the percentage of children directly served by First Steps enrolled in high intensity programs will increase from 28% to 40%. **In FY21, 18% of the children we served directly were enrolled in high-intensity programs.**
3. **INCREASE THE AVAILABILITY OF HIGH QUALITY EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES.** By 2025, the percentage of children under age 6 who benefit from First Steps quality enhancement and training efforts will increase from 12% to 15%. **In FY21, we reached 18% of children under six through QE and training.**
4. **MORE CHILDREN ARRIVE AT KINDERGARTEN READY FOR SUCCESS.** By 2025, the percentage of children who score at the highest level on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment will increase by 2% each year to 47%. **In 2020, 27% of children scored “demonstrating readiness” on the KRA.**
5. **REDUCE THE RACIAL/ETHNIC GAPS IN KINDERGARTEN READINESS.** By 2025, the gap in the percentage of children who score at the highest level on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment between white kindergartners and Black/Latino kindergartners will reduce by 1% each year to 15%. **In 2020, the racial/ethnic gap in kindergarten readiness was 18%.**
6. **CREATE AN ACCESS PORTAL TO INCREASE SOUTH CAROLINA CHILDREN’S KNOWLEDGE OF AND ACCESS TO SERVICES.** By 2025, First5SC.org will launch and include five categories: child care & early education, health & safety, special needs & early intervention, food & nutrition, and parenting & family support. **In FY21, we completed the procurement process, selected a vendor, and mapped the eligibility criteria for 44 programs and services.**



Access the plan at scfirststeps.org.

EARLY CHILDHOOD CHAMPIONS

WE ARE BOTH A STATE AGENCY AND A 501(C)(3) NONPROFIT. When you make a financial contribution, you build on South Carolina's investment in early childhood and help us extend our reach so that more children have the opportunity to reach their highest potential.

INDIVIDUALS

Anonymous

Dan Adams, The Capital Corporation

Betty Jean and David Addison

Earl and Krishenda Alexander

Marilyn Artz

Jacob and Laura Baker

Cassie Barber

Mark Barnes

Nicole Bentley

Pamela Bradley

Beatrice Brown

Shelley Canright and Michael Medsker

Lynn Catoe

Bethany Counts

Mary Lynne Diggs

Pamela and David Evette

Betty Gardiner

Rachal Hatton-Moore

Julie Hussey, Civic Communications Inc.

Carletta Isreal

Tracy Jackson

Marilyn C. Jenkins

Valencia Johnson

Trimeka Johnson

Angel Johnson-Brebner

Susan Jones

Hal Kaplan

Cindy Kellett

Hope King

Alex Kresovich

Mike Leach

Loraine Fields and Lou Paradis

Jesica Mackey

Mary Anne Mathews

David Mathis

Georgia and Dominik Mjartan

Beth Moore

David and Cheryl Morley

Ginny Owens

Jennifer Phelan-Ninh

Chelsea Richard

Mr. and Mrs. Jim Riddle

Kate Roach

Debbie Robertson

Delores Rock

Ginger Ryall

Sarah and Drew Schiavone

Debra Scott

Marie Scroggins

Bridgett Shealey

Jan and Scott Smoak

Tim Holt, T.S. Holt Company, LLC

Lavinia Tejada

Sharon and James Turner

A.D. and K.E. Washington

Linda Wehrli

Margaret W. Williams

THANK YOU

Every South Carolina taxpayer has the option to contribute to the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness fund when filing their individual income taxes.

Those who contributed in 2021 helped fund \$282,731 in grants to First Steps partnerships, expanding innovative programs that have a demonstrated impact on school readiness.



Become an early childhood champion.
Give today at scfirststeps.org/donate.

ORGANIZATIONS

Alliance for Early Success
BlueCross® BlueShield® of South Carolina
Foundation
Enterprise Holdings Foundation
Fund for Shared Insight
Hampton Early Learning Academy
KRJ Consulting
Richardson, Thomas, Haltiwanger, Moore & Lewis

2021 SUMMIT SPONSORS

Children's Trust of S.C.
Healthy Blue
Institute for Child Success
Kaplan Early Learning Company
Sisters of Charity Foundation
S.C. Department of Disabilities and Special
Needs
S.C. Department of Education
S.C. Department of Health and Human Services
S.C. Department of Social Services
S.C. Educational Television (SCETV)
S.C. Head Start Collaboration Office
Truist Financial Corporation

4K ACADEMY SPONSORS

Kaplan Early Learning Company
Lakeshore Learning
Loving Guidance
School Specialty
Teaching Strategies

PUBLIC FUNDS

State of South Carolina
AmeriCorps State Grant via S.C. Service Commission at
the United Way Association of S.C.
Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES)
Act (Coronavirus Relief Fund)
Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES)
Act (Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund)
S.C. Department of Education
U.S. Department of Education (Statewide Longitudinal
Data Systems Grant) via S.C. Department of Education
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Child
Care Development Block Grant) via S.C. Department of
Social Services
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
(Preschool Development Birth through Five Grant) via S.C.
Department of Social Services

Risk Factors for Early School Failure

A set of predisposing risk factors are associated with high rates of early school failure. South Carolina First Steps utilizes these risk factors to target children most likely to benefit from its evidence-based school readiness programs and to ensure that service is prioritized to the state's most at-risk children. Intensive services provided by or supported by local First Steps partnerships require all children served to possess at least one of the following risk factors, with most (either 60%, 80% or 100% depending on the program) possessing 2 or more risk factors.

TANF Eligibility (50% of Federal Poverty Level or below)
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP - formerly Food Stamps) or Free School Lunches eligibility (130% of Federal Poverty Level or below)
BabyNet (IDEA Part C) or local school district (IDEA Part B) special service eligibility
Referral for abuse
Referral for neglect
Foster child
Teenage mother/primary caregiver at the time of the child's birth
Low maternal education (less than high school graduation) at the time of the child's birth
Exposure to parental/caregiver substance abuse
Exposure to parental/caregiver depression
Exposure to parental/caregiver mental illness
Exposure to parental/caregiver intellectual disability
Domestic violence
Low birth weight (5.5 lbs/2500 grams or less) in association with poverty (130% Federal Poverty Level or below) and/or serious medical complications
Preschool aged child with a documented developmental delay
English is not the primary language spoken in the home
Single parent household and has need of other services
Transient/numerous family relocations and/or homeless
Incarcerated parent
Death in the immediate family
Military deployment (current or within 2 years)
Recent immigrant or refugee family
Child removed from a preschool, Head Start, or child care setting for behavior

Local Partnership Performance

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS FOR STATE GRANT FUNDING

South Carolina First Steps takes seriously its responsibility to ensure that local First Steps partnerships are successfully meeting legislative requirements as a condition of receiving state funds. In 2019 the SC First Steps Board of Trustees adopted a revised formula grant application process in which the governance, operations, accountability, fiscal, resource development, program performance, and core function responsibilities of local partnerships were consolidated into a set of minimum qualifications.

Annually, local partnerships are assessed for compliance with 46 minimum qualifications across four categories: Governance (13), Operations & Accountability (9), Fiscal & Resource Development (11), Program Strategies (10), and Core Functions (3). In addition, partnership boards received feedback on their partnership's performance over the past year relative to the partnership and program standards approved by the state board, assessed as "highly effective," "effective," or an "area for improvement."

Overall, local partnerships have met most minimum qualifications. Only nine percent of First Steps local partnerships (4) received a corrective action plan to address unmet minimum qualifications (as of August 19, 2021). SC First Steps program officers provide ongoing support to local partnerships with corrective action plans and reports progress to the state board of trustees.

A complete list of minimum qualifications for First Steps formula grant funding is available at scfirststeps.org/grants.

Local Partnership Programs

BY PROGRAM TYPE, 2020-21

First Steps local partnership boards determine annually what services to offer based on community needs and assets, opportunities to collaborate with local partners, and the availability of resources in addition to state funding.

	PROGRAM	SERVICES PROVIDED	EVIDENCE-BASED?	CLIENT LEVEL DATA AVAILABLE?	# CHILDREN 0-5 SERVED IN FY20	# FAMILIES SERVED IN FY20	# COUNTIES WITH THIS PROGRAM IN FY20
Programs that support parents as their child's first and best teacher, ranked in order of intensity.	PARENTS AS TEACHERS	Home visitation and group support for families, pre-birth-school entry	Y	Y	1086	940	27
	HOME INSTRUCTION FOR PARENTS OF PRESCHOOL YOUNGSTERS (HIPPO)	Peer parent education and home visitation for families with 4-year-olds	Y	Y	52	49	5
	NURSE-FAMILY PARTNERSHIP	Home visitation for first time mothers, from pregnancy until the child turns 2	Y	Y*	853	1007	8
	EARLY STEPS TO SCHOOL SUCCESS	Home visitation for families pre-birth until 36 months	Y	Y	118	188	2
	HEALTHY FAMILIES	Home visitation for families 0-5 primarily to prevent abuse and neglect	Y	Y	19	14	1
	NURTURING PARENTING	Group support with optional models of home visitation and fatherhood	Y	Y	400	326	11
	INCREDIBLE YEARS	12-week group support for parents for their child's social and emotional development and behavior	Y	Y	8	14	1
	STRENGTHENING FAMILIES	14-session group support program to promote strong and resilient families	Y	Y*	49	64	2
	POSITIVE PARENTING PROGRAM (TRIPLE P)	A system of parent training programs. Triple P levels offered by FS include group support for parents	Y	Y	1479	1037	3

APPENDIX C

	PROGRAM	SERVICES PROVIDED	EVIDENCE-BASED?	CLIENT LEVEL DATA AVAILABLE?	# CHILDREN 0-5 SERVED IN FY20	# FAMILIES SERVED IN FY20	# COUNTIES WITH THIS PROGRAM IN FY20
Programs with a primary focus of promoting language and literacy development, ranked in order of intensity.	PARENTCHILD+	Home visitation for families with 2- and 3-year olds to promote early literacy skills	Y	Y	28	26	1
	FAMILY LITERACY ADULT EDUCATION	Adult education for parents of children 0-5 to pursue HS diploma, GED or English language skills	N	Y	22	17	1
	LENA HOME	10-session home visitation to help families increase positive interactions and language use with young children	Y	Y	22	18	1
	MOTHEREAD/ FATHERREAD	Group support for parents with low literacy levels in reading to their children	Y	Y*	0	0	0
	LIBRARY BASED PROGRAMS	Library staff visit child care and preschool classrooms providing books, storytelling, and staff training.	N	N	487	435	2
	RAISING A READER WITH PARENT SESSIONS – ENHANCED	Weekly take-home bookbags and group support for parents	Y	N	225	73	3
	RAISING A READER	Weekly take-home bookbag exchange	N	N	278	191	3
	DOLLY PARTON'S IMAGINATION LIBRARY	One book per month mailed to the home	Y	N	13343	13015	14
	REACH OUT AND READ	Books and information on reading books to children provided during well-child visits	Y	N	4501	4001	3
	OTHER FAMILY LITERACY	Other services to support language and literacy with parents and children	N	N	507	85	3
Programs that promote physical health, prevent chronic health conditions, and identify and address developmental delays.	HEALTH SERVICES	Supporting children's healthy development	N	N	0	150	1
	EARLY IDENTIFICATION & REFERRAL, including PASOs Connections for Child Development	Providing developmental screenings and referrals to other services, independent of another partnership program	Y	Y	345	281	8
	WEEKEND BACKPACKS	Nutritious food backpacks for low income preschool children	N	N	466	n/a	2

APPENDIX C

	PROGRAM	SERVICES PROVIDED	EVIDENCE-BASED?	CLIENT LEVEL DATA AVAILABLE?	# CHILDREN 0-5 SERVED IN FY20	# FAMILIES SERVED IN FY20	# COUNTIES WITH THIS PROGRAM IN FY20
Programs that increase access to quality early care and education, in order of intensity.	EARLY HEAD START	Federal grant for intensive center-based support for infants and toddlers	Y	Y*	585	493	5
	FULL DAY 4K, HALF-DAY 4K	Operation or support of a four-year-old kindergarten program	Y	Y*	54	54	3
	EARLY EDUCATION UNDER 4	Support for infant, toddler, or 3K classrooms, including during adult education/family literacy programs	Y	Y*	47	17	2
	CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIPS	Subsidize child care costs to providers demonstrating quality	**	Y	469	384	24
	ENHANCED EARLY EDUCATION	Supplemental support to early education programs, such as one-on-one tutoring and parent engagement	Y	Y*	943	943	3
Programs that improve quality and support professional development among early care and education providers.	QUALITY ENHANCEMENT, QUALITY COUNTS	Intensive support to child care centers, Head Start, and preschool classrooms to improve quality	Y	Y Provider and Workforce Data	4071	n/a	17
	TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Certified and registered training hours for the early childhood workforce	Y	Y* Provider and Workforce Data	56449	n/a	36
Programs that support transitions between early childhood settings and from early childhood into kindergarten.	COUNTDOWN TO KINDERGARTEN	Summer program supporting transition into 5K	N	Y	391	378	13
	READING ROCKS	Summer program supporting transition into 4K	N	Y	9	9	1
	OTHER SCHOOL TRANSITION	Summer program supporting transition into 4K	N	Y	9	9	1

† Only includes support of 4K offered by local partnerships; does not include First Steps 4K (CERDEP).

* Client data is captured in a data system outside of those controlled by First Steps.

** Child care scholarships are evidence-based when combined with one or more evidence-based programs.

Local Partnership Programs

BY PROGRAM TYPE, 2020-2021

ABBEVILLE

Child Care Training
Nurturing Parenting

AIKEN

Child Care Scholarships
Child Care Training
Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
Early Head Start
Parents as Teachers
Quality Enhancement

ALLENDALE

Child Care Scholarships
Child Care Training
Nurturing Parenting

ANDERSON

Child Care: Half-day 4K
Countdown to Kindergarten
Nurse-Family Partnership
Raising A Reader
Triple P

BAMBERG

Child Care Scholarships
Child Care Training
Parents as Teachers

BARNWELL

Child Care Scholarships
Child Care Training
Countdown to Kindergarten
HIPPI
Parents as Teachers
Quality Enhancement

BEAUFORT

Child Care Training
Early Identification & Referral
Parents as Teachers
Quality Enhancement

BERKELEY

Child Care Scholarships
Child Care Training
Early Identification & Referral
HIPPI
Nurturing Parenting
Parents as Teachers
Quality Enhancement

CALHOUN

Countdown to Kindergarten
Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
Parents as Teachers

CHARLESTON

Child Care Training
Early Head Start
Early Identification & Referral
Family Literacy
Parents as Teachers
Quality Enhancement

CHEROKEE

Child Care Training
Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
LENA Home

CHESTER

Child Care Training
Nurturing Parenting

CHESTERFIELD

Child Care: Full-day 4K
Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
Nurse-Family Partnership
Weekend Backpacks

CLARENDON

Child Care Training
Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
Parents as Teachers

COLLETON

Child Care Scholarships
Child Care Training
Countdown to Kindergarten
Parents as Teachers

DARLINGTON

Countdown to Kindergarten
Health Services
Parents as Teachers
Reach Out and Read
Strengthening Families

DILLON

Child Care Training
Nurturing Parenting
Quality Enhancement
Raising a Reader

DORCHESTER

Child Care Scholarships
Child Care Training
Early Identification & Referral
Nurturing Parenting
Parents as Teachers
Quality Enhancement

EDGEFIELD

Child Care
Child Care Scholarships
Child Care Training
Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
Family Literacy
Nurse-Family Partnership
Nurturing Parenting
Quality Enhancement

FAIRFIELD

1000 Books Before Kindergarten
Child Care Scholarships
Countdown to Kindergarten
Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
Parents as Teachers
Quality Enhancement

FLORENCE

Child Care Scholarships
Child Care Training
ParentChild+
Quality Enhancement

GEORGETOWN

Child Care Scholarships
Child Care Training
Parents as Teachers

GREENVILLE

Child Care Training
Enhanced Early Education
Nurse-Family Partnership
Nurturing Parenting
Reach Out and Read
Triple P

GREENWOOD

Child Care Training
Nurturing Parenting

HAMPTON

Child Care Scholarships
Child Care Training
Countdown to Kindergarten
Parents as Teachers

HORRY

Child Care Training
Enhanced Early Education
Parents as Teachers
Quality Enhancement

JASPER

Child Care Scholarships
Child Care Training
Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
Early Identification & Referral
Parents as Teachers

KERSHAW

Countdown to Kindergarten
Parents as Teachers
Quality Enhancement
Raising a Reader

LANCASTER

Child Care Scholarships
Countdown to Kindergarten
Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
Early Head Start
Early Identification & Referral
Incredible Years
Weekend Backpacks

LAURENS

Child Care Scholarships
Child Care Training
Parents as Teachers

LEE

Child Care Scholarships
Child Care Training
Countdown to Kindergarten
Early Steps to School Success
Strengthening Families

LEXINGTON

BOOST
Child Care Training
Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
Early Identification & Referral
Parents as Teachers

MARION

Child Care Scholarships
Child Care Training
Family Literacy & Learning
HIPPI
Quality Enhancement
Raising a Reader

MARLBORO

Child Care Scholarships
Child Care Training
Parents as Teachers

MCCORMICK

Child Care
Child Care Scholarships
Library Based Programs
Nurturing Parenting

APPENDIX D

NEWBERRY

Child Care Training
Countdown to Kindergarten
HIPPY
Library Based Programs
Parents as Teachers
Quality Enhancement
Reach Out and Read

OCONEE

Child Care Scholarships
Child Care Training
Healthy Families America
Triple P

ORANGEBURG

Child Care Scholarships
Child Care Training
Countdown to Kindergarten
Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
Early Steps to School Success
HIPPY
Quality Enhancement
Reading Rocks

PICKENS

Child Care Scholarships
Early Identification & Referral
Nurse-Family Partnership
Parents as Teachers
Raising a Reader

RICHLAND

Child Care Training
Early Head Start
HIPPY
Parents as Teachers
Quality Enhancement

SALUDA

Child Care Training
Enhanced Early Education
Library Based Programs
Nurse-Family Partnership
Nurturing Parenting

SPARTANBURG

Early Head Start
Nurse-Family Partnership
Quality Counts
The Franklin School

SUMTER

Child Care Scholarships
Child Care Training
Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
Parents as Teachers

UNION

Child Care Training
Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
Parents as Teachers

WILLIAMSBURG

Child Care Training
Countdown to Kindergarten
Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
Parents as Teachers

YORK

Child Care Scholarships
Child Care Training
Nurse-Family Partnership
Parents as Teachers
Quality Enhancement

Child Care Quality Enhancement (QE) and Child Care Training

INDIVIDUALS SERVED BY FIRST STEPS LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS, 2020-21

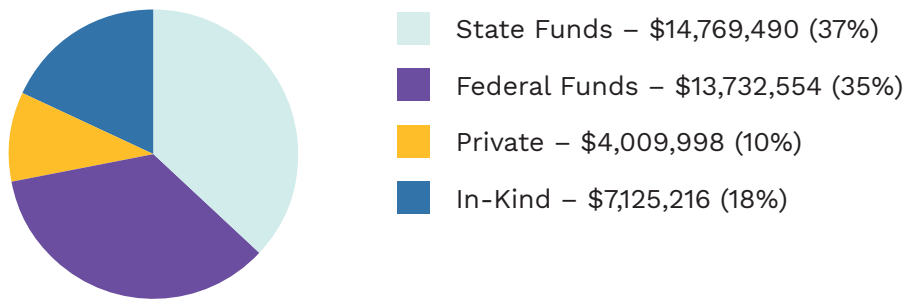
LOCAL PARTNERSHIP	# OF TEACHERS & DIRECTORS SERVED BY QE	# OF TEACHERS & DIRECTORS SERVED BY TRAINING	TOTAL
Abbeville		33	33
Aiken	47	169	216
Allendale		41	41
Bamberg		64	64
Barnwell		40	40
Beaufort	65	258	323
Berkeley	13	61	74
Charleston	24	53	77
Cherokee		47	47
Chester		126	126
Clarendon		512	512
Colleton		171	171
Dillon	9	93	102
Dorchester	25	178	203
Edgefield	16	443	459
Florence	92	91	183
Georgetown		140	140
Greenville		972	972
Greenwood		112	112
Hampton		137	137
Horry	23	44	67
Jasper		103	103
Kershaw	29		29
Laurens		31	31
Lee		257	257
Lexington		345	345
Marion	11	91	102
Marlboro		21	21
Newberry		89	89
Oconee		48	48
Orangeburg	21	162	183
Richland	241	240	481
Saluda		93	93
Spartanburg	497	50	547
Sumter		579	579
Union		60	60
Williamsburg		60	60
York	20	251	271

Local Partnership Finances

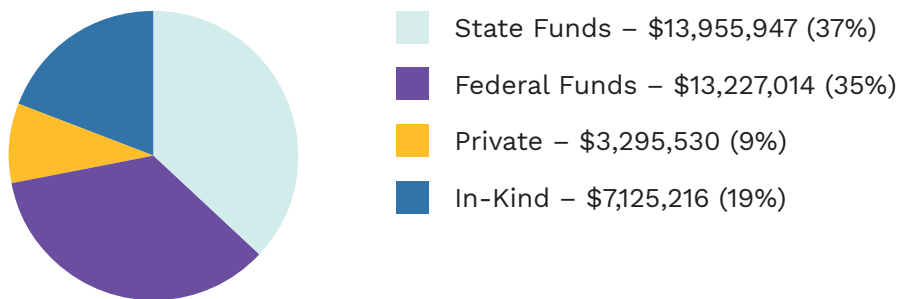
REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES BY FUND TYPE, FY 2021

To maximize our state's investment in early childhood systems and services, each First Steps partnership is required to leverage state funding by at least 15% and keep administrative expenses low – no more than 13% of their total annual expenses.

FY 2021 REVENUE – \$39,637,258



FY 2021 EXPENDITURES – \$37,603,708



LOCAL PARTNERSHIP REVENUE BY COUNTY, FY 2021

COUNTY	STATE	FEDERAL	PRIVATE	IN-KIND	TOTAL
Abbeville	\$200,000	\$22,400	\$15,125	\$25,041	\$262,566
Aiken	\$428,628	\$23,822	\$3,313	\$85,587	\$541,350
Allendale	\$200,000	\$1,000	\$1,470	\$64,460	\$266,930
Anderson	\$459,233	\$3,000	\$10,875	\$86,161	\$559,269
Bamberg	\$200,000	\$74,500	\$12,717	\$154,095	\$441,312
Barnwell	\$215,415	\$99,184	\$160,301	\$3,286	\$478,186
Beaufort	\$443,436	\$62,600	\$24,954	\$10,229	\$541,219
Berkeley	\$474,109	\$152,419	\$64,619	\$86,807	\$777,953
Calhoun	\$207,000	\$3,000	\$17,123	\$21,050	\$248,173
Charleston	\$715,621	\$1,431,070	\$42,006	\$323,570	\$2,512,267
Cherokee	\$210,500	\$50,788	\$17,858	\$303,115	\$582,261
Chester	\$200,000	\$1,000	\$4,606	\$35,734	\$241,340
Chesterfield	\$200,000	\$1,000	\$103,623	\$40,427	\$345,051
Clarendon	\$201,500	\$7,000	\$2,889	\$108,078	\$319,467
Colleton	\$217,500	\$27,756	\$23,844	\$35,110	\$304,210
Darlington	\$231,851	\$50,472	\$150,193	\$0	\$432,517
Dillon	\$211,915	\$41,000	\$7,281	\$9,667	\$269,864
Dorchester	\$314,056	\$51,071	\$27,700	\$0	\$392,827
Edgefield	\$200,000	\$1,000	\$10,389	\$136,221	\$347,609
Fairfield	\$214,000	\$3,000	\$3,363	\$28,833	\$249,197
Florence	\$353,694	\$69,872	\$2,244	\$38,715	\$464,525
Georgetown	\$200,000	\$3,000	\$1,304	\$87,668	\$291,972
Greenville	\$1,048,916	\$4,221,956	\$361,050	\$1,000,000	\$6,631,922
Greenwood	\$233,912	\$30,800	\$1,560	\$64,232	\$330,504
Hampton	\$201,750	\$3,000	\$2,942	\$23,874	\$231,566
Horry	\$647,559	\$17,000	\$2,273	\$79,596	\$746,428
Jasper	\$200,000	\$15,582	\$22,141	\$87,280	\$325,003
Kershaw	\$201,750	\$4,750	\$2,148	\$35,255	\$243,903
Lancaster	\$210,932	\$1,645,804	\$144,067	\$192,334	\$2,193,138
Laurens	\$204,720	\$3,000	\$4,375	\$18,000	\$230,095
Lee	\$203,500	\$20,908	\$586,036	\$2,419,226	\$3,229,670
Lexington	\$656,428	\$59,140	\$3,803	\$418,103	\$1,137,474
McCormick	\$206,773	\$15,000	\$140	\$94,557	\$316,470
Marion	\$200,000	\$3,000	\$10	\$31,209	\$234,219
Marlboro	\$203,500	\$0	\$3,074	\$89,368	\$295,942
Newberry	\$208,750	\$77,075	\$4,608	\$62,956	\$353,389
Oconee	\$200,680	\$1,000	\$5,782	\$388,359	\$595,821
Orangeburg	\$294,617	\$86,000	\$87,137	\$101,317	\$569,072
Pickens	\$250,194	\$81,500	\$30,317	\$36,775	\$398,786
Richland	\$837,288	\$1,588,855	\$32,303	\$23,820	\$2,482,266
Saluda	\$200,000	\$1,000	\$3,443	\$44,594	\$249,037
Spartanburg	\$769,340	\$3,432,329	\$1,546,296	\$0	\$5,747,966
Sumter	\$356,245	\$3,000	\$2,374	\$60,000	\$421,619
Union	\$203,500	\$6,500	\$6,848	\$69,492	\$286,340
Williamsburg	\$214,000	\$3,000	\$6,104	\$60,945	\$284,049
York	\$516,678	\$232,400	\$443,369	\$40,069	\$1,232,516
	\$14,769,490	\$13,732,554	\$4,009,998	\$7,125,216	\$39,637,258

APPENDIX F

LOCAL PARTNERSHIP EXPENDITURES BY COUNTY, FY 2021

COUNTY	STATE	FEDERAL	PRIVATE	IN-KIND	TOTAL
Abbeville	\$172,191	\$0	\$5,089	\$25,041	\$202,321
Aiken	\$351,961	\$22,288	\$2,505	\$85,587	\$462,341
Allendale	\$158,691	\$644	\$141	\$64,460	\$223,936
Anderson	\$440,564	\$2,595	\$18,668	\$86,161	\$547,988
Bamberg	\$186,760	\$72,350	\$4,644	\$154,095	\$417,850
Barnwell	\$225,100	\$89,548	\$116,374	\$3,286	\$434,308
Beaufort	\$361,743	\$43,417	\$55,403	\$10,229	\$470,792
Berkeley	\$451,657	\$65,229	\$52,496	\$86,807	\$656,189
Calhoun	\$205,800	\$3,000	\$18,797	\$21,050	\$248,647
Charleston	\$667,636	\$1,419,480	\$45,901	\$323,570	\$2,456,587
Cherokee	\$196,365	\$10,571	\$19,911	\$303,115	\$529,963
Chester	\$175,746	\$2,306	\$1,641	\$35,734	\$215,427
Chesterfield	\$192,731	\$1,000	\$74,487	\$40,427	\$308,646
Clarendon	\$177,282	\$5,700	\$2,858	\$108,078	\$293,917
Colleton	\$191,514	\$2,603	\$12,221	\$35,110	\$241,449
Darlington	\$217,523	\$5,977	\$131,348	\$0	\$354,848
Dillon	\$194,458	\$40,429	\$21,565	\$9,667	\$266,119
Dorchester	\$314,635	\$37,661	\$24,550	\$0	\$376,846
Edgefield	\$216,653	\$1,000	\$17,734	\$136,221	\$371,607
Fairfield	\$179,387	\$2,000	\$22,209	\$28,833	\$232,429
Florence	\$373,177	\$87,625	\$1,400	\$38,715	\$500,917
Georgetown	\$188,915	\$2,000	\$0	\$87,668	\$278,583
Greenville	\$1,036,662	\$4,060,160	\$147,580	\$1,000,000	\$6,244,402
Greenwood	\$187,291	\$1,447	\$110	\$64,232	\$253,079
Hampton	\$194,392	\$2,953	\$3,014	\$23,874	\$224,233
Horry	\$618,131	\$16,837	\$2,500	\$79,596	\$717,064
Jasper	\$162,341	\$3,119	\$17,336	\$87,280	\$270,076
Kershaw	\$209,455	\$678	\$2,303	\$35,255	\$247,690
Lancaster	\$219,192	\$1,595,897	\$163,677	\$192,334	\$2,171,100
Laurens	\$213,241	\$2,864	\$18,785	\$18,000	\$252,890
Lee	\$197,376	\$165	\$601,091	\$2,419,226	\$3,217,858
Lexington	\$602,066	\$9,834	\$58,344	\$418,103	\$1,088,347
McCormick	\$228,833	\$18,000	\$0	\$94,557	\$341,390
Marion	\$183,060	\$3,090	\$0	\$31,209	\$217,359
Marlboro	\$192,496	\$298	\$1,544	\$89,368	\$283,706
Newberry	\$204,807	\$35,136	\$13,948	\$62,956	\$316,848
Oconee	\$187,879	\$1,000	\$1,671	\$388,359	\$578,908
Orangeburg	\$266,890	\$7,451	\$76,878	\$101,317	\$452,537
Pickens	\$206,303	\$81,994	\$3,828	\$36,775	\$328,901
Richland	\$900,923	\$1,969,852	\$13,643	\$23,820	\$2,908,238
Saluda	\$202,627	\$1,000	\$1,141	\$44,594	\$249,361
Spartanburg	\$690,628	\$3,433,789	\$1,076,011	\$0	\$5,200,428
Sumter	\$340,602	\$913	\$1,259	\$60,000	\$402,774
Union	\$192,250	\$5,698	\$5,153	\$69,492	\$272,592
Williamsburg	\$218,610	\$6,193	\$11,931	\$60,945	\$297,680
York	\$459,400	\$51,225	\$423,842	\$40,069	\$974,536
	\$13,955,947	\$13,227,014	\$3,295,530	\$7,125,216	\$37,603,708

PAGES 11-12

46% of children 0-5 live in poverty or a low-income household. Defined as children under age 6 <185% federal poverty level. Data source: 5-Year Estimates: American Community Survey (2015-2019). Table B17024. US Census Bureau.

40% of children 0-5 lived in a single-parent household. Data source: 1-Year Estimates: American Community Survey (2019). Table C23008. US Census Bureau.

21% of babies were born to mothers who received less than adequate prenatal care. Defined using the Kotelchuck Index (intermediate + inadequate = less than adequate). Data source: Births (2019). Vital Statistics: South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control. Accessed 17 Nov 2020. [Available from: https://apps.dhec.sc.gov/Health/SCAN_BDP/tables/birthtable.aspx].

10% of babies were born with low birthweight. Defined as birthweight <2500 grams. Data source: Births (2019). Vital Statistics: South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control. Accessed 17 Nov 2020. [Available from: https://apps.dhec.sc.gov/Health/SCAN_BDP/tables/birthtable.aspx].

9% of children 0-5 experienced food insufficiency at some point during the past year. Defined as responding, “Sometimes we could not afford enough to eat” or “Often we could not afford enough to eat” to “Which of these statements best describes your household’s ability to afford the food you need during the past 12 months?”. Low sample size, so interpret with caution. Data source: Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative. 2018-2019 National Survey of Children’s Health (NSCH) data query (Indicator 6.26). Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB). Accessed 5 Nov 2021. [Available from: www.childhealthdata.org].

50% of children ages 0-5 were read to less than 4 days per week in the past week. Data source: Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative. 2018-2019 National Survey of Children’s Health (NSCH) data query (Indicator 6.7). Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB). Accessed 5 Nov 2021. [Available from: www.childhealthdata.org].

54% of children ages 3-4 were not enrolled in preschool or nursery school. Data source: 5-Year Estimates: American Community Survey (2015-2019). Table S1401. US Census Bureau.

73% of entering kindergartners tested “not ready” for school and % “demonstrating readiness” map by county. Data source: Analysis of Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) Results: School Year 2020-2021. Accessed 30 Nov 2021. [Available from: <https://eoc.sc.gov/sites/default/files/Documents/KRA/KRAforweb.06152021.pdf>].

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Cost of child care. Data source: 2020 State Fact Sheet: South Carolina. Child Care Aware. Accessed 30 Nov 2021. [Available from: https://info.childcareaware.org/hubfs/2020%20State%20Fact%20Sheets/SouthCarolina-2020StateFactSheet.pdf?utm_campaign=Picking%20Up%20The%20Pieces&utm_source=South%20Carolina%20SFS].

US DHHS definition of affordable child care as quoted in: Malik R. Working Families are Spending Big Money on Child Care. Center for American Progress (Jun 2019). Accessed 30 Nov 2021. [Available from: <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2019/06/20/471141/working-families-spending-big-money-child-care/>].

National Partners

Our national partnerships are valuable assets in advancing our mission. They drive us to expand our reach, enhance our programs, and deepen our impact for the benefit of children and families in South Carolina.

Ascend at the Aspen Institute
Child Trends
Education Commission of the States
First Children's Finance
National Institute for Early Education Research
National Women's Law Center
The Hunt Institute
Zero to Three



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