



November 30, 2022

South Carolina General Assembly
1100 Gervais Street
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Members of the South Carolina General Assembly:

Thanks to the support of the General Assembly, we are proud to report that First Steps is reaching more children than ever before. In 2021-22, First Steps directly served 54,435 infants, toddlers, and preschoolers – double the number of children served just five years ago. Another 50,000+ children were impacted by child care quality enhancement and teacher training. First Steps is a critical part of the early childhood system in South Carolina, and your continued support will allow us to reach more children directly and indirectly for years to come.

Pursuant to S.C. Code Section 59-152-50, please find enclosed the 2021-2022 Annual Report for South Carolina First Steps and the South Carolina Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC). The report summarizes our impact from Fiscal Year 2021-22, presents the activities of both the First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees and the South Carolina Early Childhood Advisory Council, as required by S.C. Code Sections 63-11-1720 and 63-11-1725, and shares many important stories from the families we serve.

In addition, Proviso 1.105 of the General Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 mandates that First Steps shall provide an annual report on the state's investment in early learning and development. This information can be found within the enclosed 2021-2022 Annual Report.

As the Director of the ECAC, one of our roles is to provide recommendations and advice about early childhood matters to state leaders. It would be my and my team's honor to support you in your service to young children and their families in South Carolina. If we can ever be of assistance, please contact me via email, gmjartan@scfirststeps.org, or phone (501-690-3043).

Sincerely,

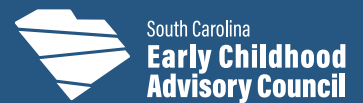
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Georgia Mjartan
Executive Director
South Carolina First Steps



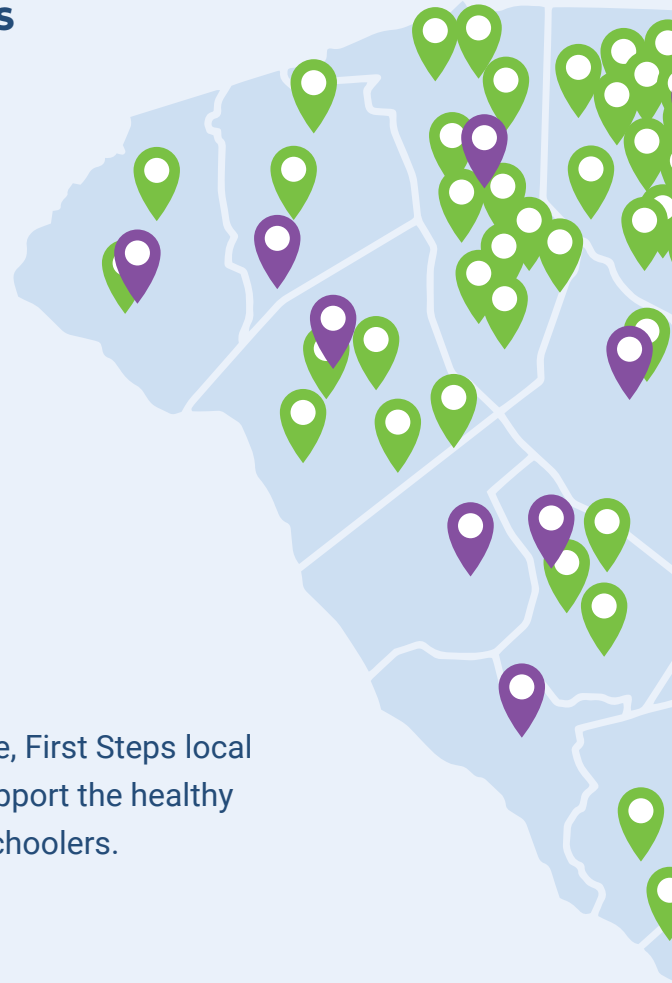
ANNUAL REPORT

2021-2022



FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES

First Steps is Here



Local Partnerships

With a presence in every county of the state, First Steps local partnerships deliver direct services that support the healthy development of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

First Steps 4K

First Steps 4K provides free, full-day four-year-old kindergarten to qualifying children in licensed child care centers and private schools.

Early Childhood Advisory Council

The Early Childhood Advisory Council coordinates public investments in early childhood, building a cohesive and efficient system so that young children are healthy and safe, ready for school, and actively supported by their families and communities.



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.



Rebeca Araya (left), a bilingual parent educator at York County First Steps, with her clients: Alaya (20 months), mom Angelina, and grandmother Antonia.

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Joey's family joined a parenting program at Pickens County First Steps, through a new initiative called Connected Families.

57,435 children.
That's how many
infants, toddlers
and preschoolers
are healthier, safer,
and better prepared
for school thanks
to First Steps.

That's double the number of children directly served just five years ago — more than ever before in the history of the organization.

Counted in the 57,435 is a newborn baby, held by her mom, a woman who faced homelessness as she approached delivery. This is a mother who was supported by a doula, who helped her get housing and medical care, develop a birth plan, and successfully nurse her newborn. This is a doula, herself a mother, a trained parent educator, and a member of the community, who serves families through Berkeley County First Steps.

Because of First Steps, this is a baby whose mother had a healthy and safe delivery, who had a home to return to where she is fed, nourished, and connected to her parent, where neural pathways are being made that will pave the way for a life of thriving.

In this year's report, you'll see photographs, that like data, are just a snapshot. They capture a single moment on a life-long journey of parenting, of growing up, of becoming the best we can be.

INTRODUCTION

You'll see Joey, who is loved by his grandmother and mother, who have done their best to take good care of him. You'll see his grandmother, who reached out to First Steps for help after child protective services got involved. And you'll see the Pickens County First Steps home visitor who shows up week after week to coach this family through their journey of healing so that little Joey can start kindergarten ready to reach his highest potential, with the weight of early trauma lifted from his shoulders.

First Steps is here for children, for parents, and for communities. In child care centers and schools, in homes and clinics, in libraries and parks, First Steps is actively serving children in every county of the state.

This was the year that First Steps 4K expanded statewide, giving parents like Nyjel's the choice to enroll their son in an educational, full-day pre-K program at Saint John Catholic School in North Charleston. And moms like Jaqueta the ability to return to work knowing her two girls were learning and growing

in high-quality child care – one participating in First Steps 4K while the other received a child care voucher through First Steps 4K + Siblings.

This year, leaders from every state agency serving young children came together to make accessing public programs easier by creating and launching First Five SC, a first-in-the-nation innovation.

While her son explored a children's museum in downtown Columbia, Yemi scrolled through the site on her cell phone. Within three minutes, she found all of the public programs her toddler was eligible for.

It's why we are here – for families. To become the best that we can be so that every child has the chance to do the same.



GEORGIA MJARTAN
Executive Director



FISCAL YEAR 2022

Our Impact



57,435

children directly served

First Steps is here for South Carolina's children during the most critical stage of their development, from birth through age five.

With a presence in every county of the state, we are serving more children and families than ever before.

Diamond Johnson and her son, Akeem, a First Steps 4K student.

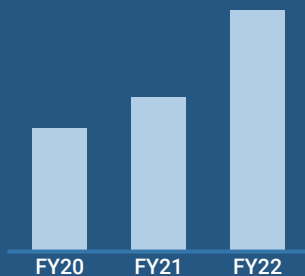
BY THE NUMBERS

In the last year, because of First Steps:



30,543 parents & caregivers of young children received direct services from a First Steps local partnership

314,000+ books were delivered to families and child care providers



54,092 children were directly served by First Steps local partnerships – 57% more than the previous year



3,343 4-year-olds attended full-day First Steps 4K programs at no cost to their families



6,600+ educators participated in First Steps training and professional development, benefitting 50,000+ children



\$1 = \$2.49

First Steps local partnerships leveraged \$21.5 million from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$1.49 for every state dollar invested

PROVEN RESULTS

A 2019 study found that children who received First Steps local partnership services were:



74% more likely to score at the highest level on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment



34% less likely to be chronically absent in kindergarten

WHY WE START EARLY

The Need

Early childhood experiences shape the architecture of the developing brain, establishing a foundation for all future learning, behavior, and health.

Every child deserves a chance to thrive, but too many face disadvantages that can negatively impact their development and school readiness. In South Carolina last year:

45%

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

50%

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

40%

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

55%

of children ages 3-4 were not enrolled in preschool

22%

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

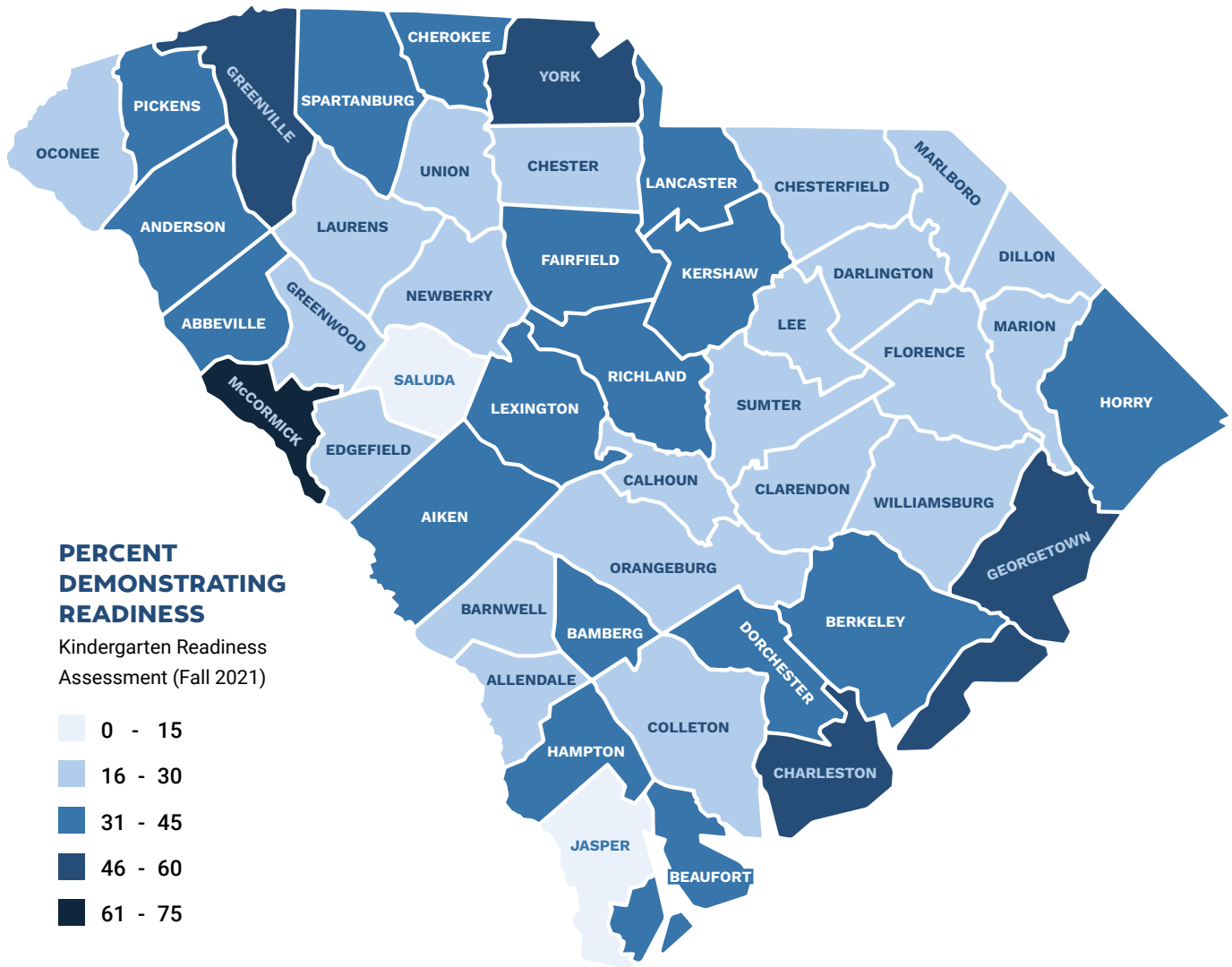
64%

of entering kindergartners tested "not ready" for school

10%

of babies were born with low birthweight

Kindergarten Readiness in South Carolina



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**

Nurturing Families and Communities

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 local partnerships, each a community-led nonprofit, we deliver direct services to families, share knowledge of available resources, and mobilize partners to build a more efficient and effective early childhood system.

Our state-local partnership model means that our investments are guided by the communities we serve, aligned with existing community services, leveraged with private philanthropy and grassroots support, and strategically directed to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and families.

With a presence in every county, we are reaching more children than ever before. Last year, First Steps local partnerships directly served 54,092 children – 57% more than the previous year.

Our Local Impact, 2021-2022

	CHILDREN	ADULT FAMILY MEMBERS
2019-2020	27,531	18,146
2020-2021	34,575	57,642
2021-2022	54,092	30,543



Taneisha Watkins (left) joined First Steps' Parents as Teachers program, because she wanted to be sure that her two-year-old son, Grayson, would be ready for school. She says that she also found a friend in Melody DeLisa (right), lead parent educator at Charleston County First Steps. "She's loving, she's kind," Taneisha says. "She's great with Grayson, and with me."

A Targeted Approach

Parents and communities rely on their local First Steps to provide young children with what they need to thrive: a nurturing and safe home, opportunities to learn and grow, quality care and education, and when necessary, early intervention and mental health services.

Because each community is different, each local partnership tailors its services based on a local determination of needs and resources. All local partnerships utilize a common set of predisposing risk factors to identify children most at risk of early school failure, ensuring that intensive services are prioritized to the children and families most in need of support.

IN 2021-22:

100%

of children served intensively had at least one risk factor

90%

had two or more risk factors

38%

had three or more risk factors

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

LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

Accountability at All Levels

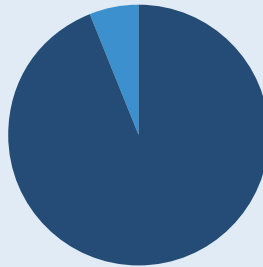
As a statewide public-private initiative, First Steps is accountable to taxpayers, our funders and, most importantly, to South Carolina’s children. That is why each local partnership is required to meet rigorous programmatic, operational, financial, and administrative standards. To facilitate their success, we provide each partnership with technical assistance, consultation, professional development opportunities, and comprehensive support through a team of dedicated program officers.

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



Commitment to quality

EXPENDITURES OF STATE FUNDS BY PROGRAM TYPE, 2021-22



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 D.
For programs offered by county, see Appendix E.

\$18.8 million

In FY22, South Carolina First Steps invested \$18,809,690 to expand local partnership programs and services that have a demonstrated impact on the school readiness of young children. These funds included state, federal, and private investments.

Driving Innovation

Last year, we awarded **Early Childhood Innovation Grants** totaling \$282,731 to seven local partnerships. Established in 2018, this competitive funding opportunity recognizes and supports innovative practices that help prepare children for kindergarten. The grants also help maximize the public’s investment in early childhood: more than \$100,000 came from private philanthropy and individual donors.



Maria Bush (left) has worked hard to provide a stable, nurturing home for her four-year-old grandson, Joey. When child protective services got involved, she turned to Pickens County First Steps. Maria and her daughter, Caroline (right), who share custody of Joey, say that working with parent educator Christina Brock (center) has been “like a light in a dark tunnel.”

Leveraging Private Dollars

In cases of suspected child abuse or neglect, the hope is that families get the support they need so that their children can remain safely in their homes. In April, we launched **Connected Families** to help parents and caregivers end their involvement with child welfare and strengthen their parenting practices.

The first-of-its-kind state initiative is a partnership between First Steps, the Department of Social Services, and the Department of Mental Health – made possible by three-year grants totaling \$3.8 million from The Duke Endowment and the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

“It’s taught me the importance of working with Joey on the skills he needs for school.”

– Maria Bush, grandmother and Connected Families participant, Pickens County First Steps



For local partnership financials, see Appendices H & I.

LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

Parenting



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.

Last year, 11,922 families participated in First Steps parent education programs — 50% more than the previous year.

PARENTING PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE | 2021-22

32,218

total home visits delivered

2,223

parent group support hours provided

11,922

families served

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



In Dillon County, fathers of young children are leading a movement to make their families stronger and community safer.

Nurturing Fathers

Shamaree Aaron is a father in rural Dillon County, which has the highest rate of violent crime in the state. He was determined to change that. Shamaree knew that a loving and nurturing father can improve outcomes for his children, family, and community. His determination landed him at Dillon County First Steps, where he enlisted other fathers to help create the positive influence he felt his community needed.

The group of young men joined **Nurturing Parenting**, an 18-week parenting program offered by the local partnership. After weeks of building one another up with open and honest group discussions, fishing trips, and celebrations, the fathers are now leading an effort to expand the program next year.

Shamaree says each father in the group has committed to recruiting at least one additional dad to join the program.

“We’re excited for what’s next,” he says.

“We’re blessed to have leadership in our community that offers services like Nurturing Fathers. We’re thankful for First Steps’ efforts to make this program a success.”

— Shamaree Aaron, parent and Nurturing Fathers participant Dillon County First Steps

LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

Early Care & Education

To improve the quality of care and education provided to young children in South Carolina, we offer on-site quality enhancement services and professional development solutions tailored to the needs of local providers.

Our **Child Care Quality Enhancement** (QE) strategies and **child care trainings** produce measurable improvements in program quality. That means greater access to safe, reliable child care for families and better outcomes for young children.

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT & CHILD CARE TRAINING AT A GLANCE | 2021-22

27,900+

hours of on-site technical assistance provided

125

child care centers participated in QE

5,000+

children enrolled in QE provider classrooms

791

hours of certified training offered

For the number of individuals, by county, served by QE and child care training, see Appendix G



Lisa McFadden owns and operates a licensed child care from her home in Lake City, South Carolina.

Enhancing the Quality of Home-Based Child Care

Lisa McFadden knew that opening a child care in her Lake City home would be a challenge. She needed furniture, materials, and training. And to be licensed, she would need to meet rigorous health and safety requirements.

But she was determined to succeed. As a mother and grandmother, she was passionate about caring for children. She also recognized the need in her community for safe, reliable child care. Lisa says that Florence County First Steps helped her every step of the way, providing the coaching and support she needed to grow her business and serve her community.

Across the state, First Steps provides Child Care

Quality Enhancement services that help providers like Lisa build and sustain high-quality programs for infants, toddlers, and preschool children.

Last year, First Steps Quality Enhancement supported 125 child care centers, benefitting over 5,000 children across the state.

“I’m where I am today because of First Steps.”

— Lisa McFadden, owner and director
McFadden Toddler Day Care, Lake City

LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

School Transition

The transition from early childhood to elementary school is a critical window of opportunity for young children and their families.

In the best case, the initial weeks of kindergarten set the stage for strong and lasting relationships between home, school, and community that will serve students throughout their academic careers.

Responding to a need articulated by our local partnerships statewide, we collaborated with state and local partners to develop and launch **Countdown to Kindergarten** in 2004.

The centerpiece of the initiative is a family engagement program that connects families of rising 4K and 5K students with their future teachers during the summer before school.

Using an evidence-informed curriculum, teachers complete six sessions with

each family, five in the home and a final visit in the kindergarten classroom.

In the summer of 2021, Countdown to Kindergarten served more children than ever before, with expanded services for families in which English is a second language and for children with disabilities.



COUNTDOWN TO KINDERGARTEN AT A GLANCE | SUMMER 2021

8,325

home and school visits provided

287

kindergarten teachers deployed

1,415

children served

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



In the summer of 2022, we launched Countdown to 4K, a school transition program for children entering four-year-old kindergarten.

What Parents are Saying

Last summer, we asked families participating in Countdown to Kindergarten to tell us about their experiences.

Through an anonymous online survey, parents and caregivers told us that Countdown to Kindergarten builds positive relationships and helps their children feel comfortable and prepared for kindergarten.

Among those who responded, 91% told us they would recommend Countdown to Kindergarten to a friend or family member.

The survey was part of a listening initiative called **Your Voice Matters**. Read more on page 31.

“I loved the bond we were able to create with our kindergarten teacher. I fully believe this bond helped our daughter transition into kindergarten without any separation anxiety.”

— Parent and participant
Countdown to Kindergarten

LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

Health



Allendale County First Steps administers developmental screenings in a familiar, community-based setting.

Health and brain development are deeply connected, beginning with a mother's well-being in pregnancy.

As part of our commitment to school readiness, we offer programs that promote maternal health, 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 and mental health services, their children are more likely to start school healthy and ready to succeed.

13,000+

Last year, First Steps' Weekend Backpack programs provided preschoolers at risk of food insecurity with more than 13,000 nutritious, kid-friendly meals on weekends and holidays when school meals were not available.

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



Dr. Amy Williams meets with HealthySteps clients at MUSC Children's Health University Pediatrics - Northwoods in North Charleston, SC

Transforming the Promise of Pediatric Primary Care

HealthySteps is an evidence-based program that provides early childhood development support to families in pediatric primary care practices. A child development expert, the HealthySteps Specialist, is integrated into the pediatric health care team to improve outcomes for children and families in areas where there are persistent inequities.

Children ages 0-3 and their families receive a tiered model of services, including developmental screenings, care coordination, and onsite intervention. HealthySteps practices serve as trusted and valuable partners as families foster their children's healthy development.

Last year, First Steps partnered with the SC Office of Rural Health and the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) to expand Healthy Steps' footprint in the state. Now with three participating clinics and four Healthy Steps specialists on staff, we have the capacity to serve over 4,200+ children per year.



LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

Literacy



To be ready to thrive in 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.

Last year, 1,212 preschoolers in nine counties participated in **Raising a Reader**, an early literacy and parent engagement program administered by First Steps local partnerships.

Each week, the children received a red book bag filled with award-winning books to take home and share, rotating an average of 100 books into their homes throughout the year.

314,000+ books

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

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



In South Carolina, Reach Out and Read is growing quickly. Last year, First Steps local partnerships provided the service to 7,260 children — 61% more than the previous year.

Integrating Reading into Well Visits

In pediatric clinics across the state, primary care physicians implementing **Reach Out and Read** are connecting health and literacy. They use a book, provided to every child from 6 months to 5 years old, as a tool to track and monitor developmental milestones. At the same time, they educate and equip parents and caregivers to do the same.

Research shows that Reach Out and Read works. Families participating in Read Out and Read are twice as likely to read with their children, and children participating in the program score three to six months ahead of their peers on vocabulary tests, providing a strong foundation for success in school.

“Reading is one of the most impactful tools we have to promote children’s development. We are so grateful to be able to provide this tool to patients and their families at their office visits.”

— Beth Alexander, pediatric nurse practitioner, Prisma Health Developmental Pediatrics, and provider of Reach Out and Read, Greenville County First Steps

Educating Four-Year-Olds

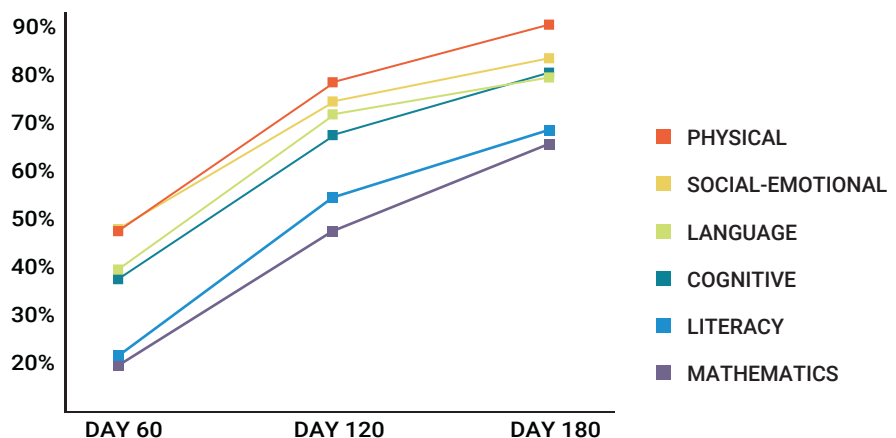
First Steps 4K offers free, full-day preschool education to qualifying children in South Carolina.

As part of the state's Child Early Reading Development and Education Program (CERDEP), **First Steps 4K** helps families access high-quality early learning. Last year, we partnered with 245 licensed child care centers and private schools to educate 3,343 children.

To ensure program quality, First Steps 4K providers follow 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, 2021-22





As the administrative assistant to Governor Henry McMaster, Sheila Jones (left) learned about First Steps 4K during a state house press conference. She says it has made a big difference for her family: providing a preschool education for her granddaughter Karmani (4); child care for Karmani's sister, Karmiah (3); and the ability for her daughter-in-law, Jacqueta Davis, to work full-time.

Supporting the Whole Family

Jaqueta Davis once faced an impossible decision: work to support her family or care for her two young children. Now, thanks to **First Steps 4K + Siblings**, an innovative partnership between SC First Steps and the SC Department of Social Services, parents like Jacqueta don't have to choose.

Beginning last year, any sibling age 0-12 of a First Steps 4K student qualifies for subsidized child care through SC Voucher. The vouchers can be applied towards enrollment at any licensed child care center or after-school program participating in ABC Quality, the state's voluntary quality rating and improvement system. First Steps 4K + also provides the 4K student with extended care -- before and after school.

In its first year, the initiative provided scholarships for 1,723 First Steps 4K students and their siblings.

"It was tough. If this program did not exist, I probably would have had to quit my job and then I'd have to worry about putting food on the table."

**— Jaqueta Davis, parent
First Steps 4K**

FIRST STEPS 4K

Expanding Opportunity

In 2021, the General Assembly allocated \$34 million to expand access to four-year-old kindergarten statewide.

Prior to this historic investment, 41% of South Carolina children in poverty lived in a zip code that disqualified them from needs-based preschool.

To address this gap, First Steps 4K moved quickly to expand our geographic reach for the 2021-22 school year. We recruited 50 new providers to serve newly eligible children in 21 schools districts.

We also invested in the development of our state's child care infrastructure. In 2022, we awarded grants totaling \$100,000 for construction, renovations, and licensing requirements to open new First Steps 4K classrooms in underserved communities.

Nyjel Lawton chose a First Steps 4K program at Saint John Catholic School for his son, Nyjel Jr. Located in North Charleston, the school opened a First Steps 4K classroom in the fall of 2021, thanks to legislation expanding needs-based 4K to all school districts in the state.



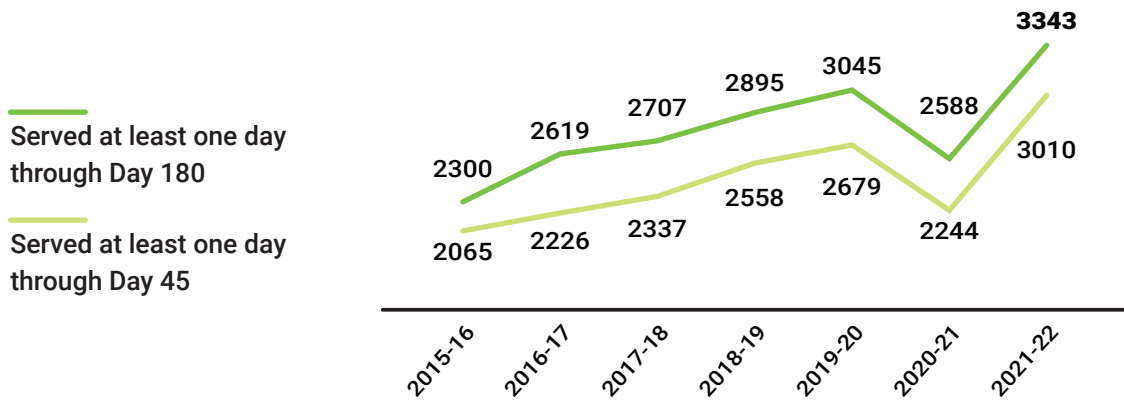
In November 2021, we joined Spartanburg's Highland community for the opening of the Highland Early Learning Center. In 2020, we awarded a \$300,000 grant to revitalize an underutilized, city-owned building and establish a First Steps 4K program.



First Steps 4K students at The Learning Station in Myrtle Beach, SC created a book to proudly display their favorite memories from the school year. Students drew pictures and wrote about playing with their friends and taking field trips.

Educating More Children Than Ever

Enrollment in First Steps 4K has rebounded and continues to grow after the pandemic. During the 2021-22 school year, we increased our enrollment by 29% over the previous year.



EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL

Leading for Children



At South Carolina First Steps, we envision a future in which all young children are healthy and safe, nurtured by their families and communities, and ready for school by age five.

To help realize this vision, we convene and operate the **SC Early Childhood Advisory Council**, a collaborative body representing the state's early childhood system. Members include elected officials, agency directors, early childhood providers, business leaders, and parents of young children.

In 2022, the ECAC launched its first-ever strategic plan.

Developed with input from thousands of families, providers, and cross-sector leaders, **For Our Future: South Carolina's Birth through Five Plan** lays out our shared priorities for system change statewide. It builds on our current strengths and previous investments, while setting a course for the next five years, through 2027.

Implementation of the plan is underway, and thanks to the vision and leadership of the Early Childhood Advisory Council, South Carolina's early childhood system is more aligned, coordinated, and family-centered than ever.



South Carolina
**Early Childhood
Advisory Council**

Drew Walker and 3-year-old Jayne



Introducing First Five SC

To be effective, programs and services available to young children must be understood and accessed easily by their parents and caregivers.

That is why we built **First Five SC**, a mobile-friendly portal where families can find information and check their eligibility for public early childhood programs and services.

First Five SC launched on February 17, 2022, including 60 programs across 10 state agencies. Coming in 2023, a common service application will allow families to complete a single online form and instantly apply for all participating early childhood services.



Visit first5sc.org

FIRST FIVE AT A GLANCE February - June 2022

26,626

unique visitors

69,003

page views

2,514

families completed the eligibility screener

83%

were eligible for at least one program

Engaging Whole Families



In a 2021 survey, First Steps 4K parents identified parent-teacher communication as an area for improvement. We responded. First Steps 4K teachers now offer quarterly parent-teacher conferences.

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 their knowledge and expertise. 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.

Last year, to advance our commitment to listening and feedback practices, we participated in Listen4Good, a national capacity-building initiative of the Fund for Shared Insight. As a grantee, we utilized funding and technical assistance to design client surveys, collect responses, interpret data, respond to the results, and “close the loop” by reporting back to those we surveyed.

Now part of an ongoing initiative we call **Your Voice Matters**, high-quality feedback practices are integral to the way we evaluate and improve our services. To date, 10 feedback loops have been completed across four program areas, with 2,368 responses from families, child care directors, and teachers.

YOUR VOICE MATTERS 



Samirah Sawyer, a member of the ECAC's Family Voice Council, and her family joined Governor Henry McMaster and agency directors for a state house press conference launching First Five SC.

A Year of Family Voice

In 2021, the ECAC created a **Family Voice Council** to provide feedback to state agencies and other partners on issues, policies, and public practices that affect young children and their families. Eight founding members met for the first time in August 2021, and twelve additional members joined by June 2022.

The Family Voice Council members represent all regions of the state and a wide range of experiences, family compositions, household incomes, professional backgrounds, and viewpoints. They are true representatives of the array of family experiences in South Carolina.



View the report, "A Year of Family Voice," at earlychildhoodsc.org.

"I feel as a South Carolina Family Voice Council member I was helping to peel back and discard layers of confusion, mistrust, and misunderstanding, and to create a pathway built instead of knowledge."

— Corina Esaw, founding member Family Voice Council

Connecting the Field



In 2022, we partnered with South Carolina Educational Television (SCETV) to produce a 30-minute episode of Carolina Classrooms. The show featured five families who participate in programs offered through First Five SC.

“I’ve been wanting to get him involved in pre-K, but I didn’t know where to start. This is a great resource.”

— Jessie Evans, parent,
on learning about palmettoprek.org

South Carolina’s early childhood programs form a system that improves health, strengthens families, and prepares children for success in school.

To maximize the impact and reach of these investments, we facilitate collaboration among state-level partners. Working together, we connect the field for the benefit of children and families.

In 2019, we launched the **Palmetto Pre-K** initiative to align public early learning investments, maximize parental choice, and drive program excellence. We convened stakeholders from the state’s publicly-funded preschool programs, including leaders and providers from First Steps 4K, Head Start, the SC Department of Education, and the SC Department of Social Services.

Together, we offer palmettoprek.org, a single access point for all four programs, deliver best-in-class professional development for preschool educators, and develop solutions for supporting children and families in the transition to kindergarten.



Visit palmettoprek.org



Tykeah Oliver is one of 1,484 early childhood educators who participated in Palmetto Pre-K professional development opportunities last year.

Advancing the Profession

Tykeah Oliver is a First Steps 4K teacher at Watch Me Sprout Learning and Afterschool Center in Columbia.

Last year, Tykeah and thousands of other preschool teachers, support staff, and administrators participated in the **Palmetto Pre-K Jamboree**, a virtual training offered bi-annually by the state's providers of publicly funded preschool.

This year's theme, "Rooted in Nature," emphasized how educators can utilize outdoor experiences to promote child well-being and learning.

PALMETTO PRE-K AT A GLANCE | 2021-22

61,163

unique visitors to PalmettoPreK.org

7,855

families checked their eligibility and were eligible for at least one program

1,484

educators participated in Palmetto Pre-K Jamboree

AMERICORPS

Mobilizing Communities



Chris Juhn, First Steps AmeriCorps
Member Experience Leader

In 2020, we launched an AmeriCorps service program, deploying 31 members across the state. Last year, our statewide corps of volunteers grew even more.

At First Steps, AmeriCorps members serve in roles ranging from trained parent educators to community education and outreach members. Because of their service, First Steps directly served an additional 447 families last year.



AmeriCorps

FIRST STEPS AMERICORPS AT A GLANCE | 2021-22

35

AmeriCorps members deployed

17,782

service hours completed

\$76,242

in Segal Education Awards



First Steps AmeriCorps member Veronica Owens helped deliver 3,600 books to children in First Steps 4K classrooms. The book distribution was part of our 2022 MLK Week of Service.

A Week of Service

In January 2022, First Steps AmeriCorps members coordinated our second-annual **MLK Week of Service**, a giving opportunity and volunteer experience honoring the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Ninety volunteers supported the service project, visiting 198 First Steps 4K classrooms to read aloud with young children. Thanks to the generous support of our event sponsors, Tom Branthover and the Toys for Tots Literacy Program, our partners at Usborne Books & More, and individual donors, every participating child received a brand-new, hardback copy of the book.



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 printable resource 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



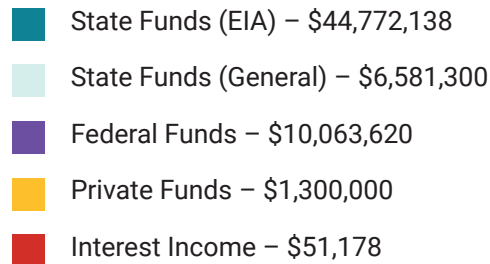
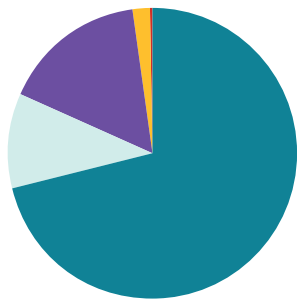
- Shares, takes turns and plays well with others
- Expresses emotions through appropriate actions and words
- Follows simple rules and directions
- Adjusts to changes in routine and environment
- Shows self-control
- Shows caring and understanding of others' feelings
- Interacts with familiar adults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

FISCAL YEAR 2022

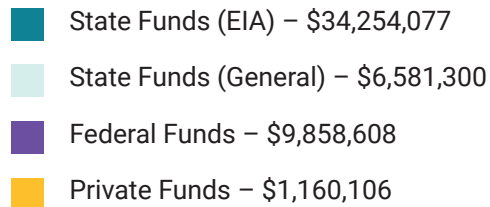
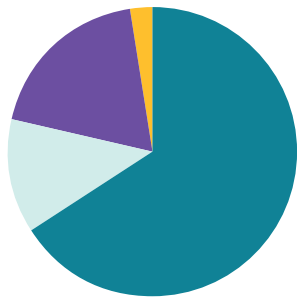
Financials

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.

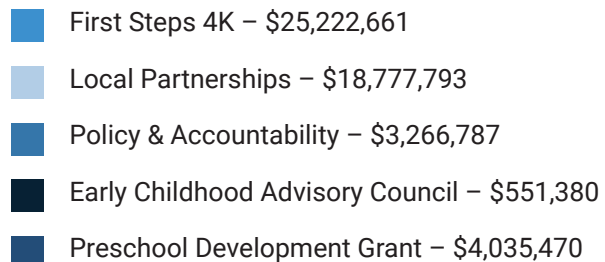
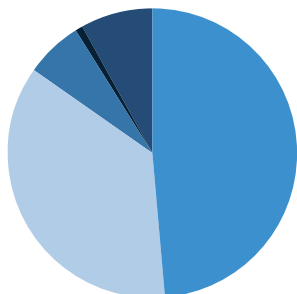
FY 2022 REVENUE – \$62,768,236



FY 2022 EXPENDITURES – \$51,854,091



FY 2022 EXPENDITURES BY PROGRAM – \$51,854,091



Leadership

DAVID MORLEY
CHAIR
Governor's Designee

DR. SHELLEY CANRIGHT
VICE CHAIR
Early Childhood Educator

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SC House of Representatives

REP. JERRY N. GOVAN
SC House of Representatives

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SC Senate

SEN. GERALD MALLOY
SC Senate

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Director, SC Head Start
Collaboration Office

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Director, SC Department of
Disabilities and Special Needs

ROBERT KERR
Director, SC Department of
Health and Human Services

MICHAEL LEACH
Director, SC Department of
Social Services

DR. DAVID MATHIS
Deputy Superintendent,
SC Department of Education;
Superintendent's Designee

DR. EDWARD SIMMER
Director, SC Department of
Health and Environmental Control

SUE WILLIAMS
Chief Executive Officer,
Children's Trust of SC

JACQUE CURTIN
Business Community

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

“When we invest in young children, in their health and safety, the families and communities in which they live, and the environments in which they learn, we produce meaningful and measurable results, now and in the future.”

— David Morley, Chair
SC First Steps Board of Trustees
SC Early Childhood Advisory Council



FISCAL YEAR 2022 SUPPORTERS

Early Childhood Champions

Individuals

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Dominique Taylor
Craig Teller
Brady Thomas
Chris Vanderford
Audrey Whetsell
Calvin Whitmire
Amy Williams
Emily Winston
Jennifer Wright
Nicole and Aaron Wynkoop

Thank you, taxpayers

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 2022 helped fund \$282,731 in grants made directly to First Steps local partnerships.

South Carolina First Steps is both a state agency and a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

When you give to First Steps, you build on South Carolina's proven investment in early childhood. Your support expands our reach and increases our impact so that more children have the opportunity to reach their highest potential. **Thank you.**



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

Corporations

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Enterprise Holdings Foundation
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Fluor Enterprise
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Lakeshore Learning Materials
Little Promise Learning Center
Lourie Life and Health
Manley Garvin
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South Carolina Automobile Dealers Association
Synovus Bank
Teaching Strategies
The House of Smiles
West Diversified Consultant Services

Foundations

Alliance for Early Success
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BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina Foundation
Doris Duke Charitable Foundation
Fund for Shared Insight
Sunshine Foundation
The Duke Endowment

2022 Summit Sponsors

Children's Trust of SC
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Kaplan Early Learning Company
Lakeshore Learning Materials
Sisters of Charity Foundation of SC
SC Educational Television (SCETV)
SC Department of Disabilities and Special Needs
SC Department of Education
SC Department of Health and Environmental Control
SC Department of Health and Human Services
SC Department of Social Services
SC Head Start Collaboration Office
SC State Library
Truist Financial Corporation

4K Academy Sponsors

Kaplan Early Learning Company
Lakeshore Learning Materials
Teaching Strategies

Public Funds

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

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 FY22, we directly served 48% 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 FY22, 10% of the children we served directly were enrolled in high-intensity programs.**

REVISED IN APRIL 2022: By 2025, the percentage of children in need who are directly served by First Steps high intensity programs will increase from 5% to 8%. **In FY22, 5% of children in need participated in high intensity programs funded by First Steps.**
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 FY22, we reached 15% 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 2021, 36% 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 2021, the racial/ethnic gap in kindergarten readiness was 24%.**
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. **First5SC.org launched in February 2022 with information about 60 programs and services and an eligibility screener for 44 of them. Development for a common service application was initiated.**



Access the plan at scfirststeps.org.

Risk Factors for Early School Failure

A set of predisposing risk factors are associated with high rates of early school failure. In fiscal year 2022, South Carolina First Steps utilized 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. Last year, 5 of 46 local partnerships received a corrective action plan to address unmet minimum qualifications. SC First Steps program officers provide ongoing support to local partnerships with corrective action plans and report 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, 2021-22

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 FY22	# FAMILIES SERVED IN FY22	# COUNTIES WITH THIS PROGRAM IN FY22
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	1130	960	27
	HOME INSTRUCTION FOR PARENTS OF PRESCHOOL YOUNGSTERS (HIPPIY)	Peer parent education and home visitation for families with 4-year-olds	Y	Y	54	86	5
	NURSE-FAMILY PARTNERSHIP	Home visitation for first time mothers, from pregnancy until the child turns 2	Y	Y*	517	768	7
	EARLY STEPS TO SCHOOL SUCCESS	Home visitation for families pre-birth until 36 months	Y	Y	112	111	1
	NURTURING PARENTING	Group support with optional models of home visitation and fatherhood	Y	Y	483	415	14
	INCREDIBLE YEARS	12-week group support for parents for their child's social and emotional development and behavior	Y	Y	49	32	1
	STRENGTHENING FAMILIES	14-session group support program to promote strong and resilient families	Y	Y*	-	13	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	561	509	6
	OTHER PARENT TRAINING	Group support for parents, not tied to a specific program model	N	N	309	309	1
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*	576	482	5
	FULL DAY 4K, HALF-DAY 4K	Operation or support of a four-year-old kindergarten program	Y	Y*	39	39	1
	EARLY EDUCATION UNDER 4	Support for infant, toddler, or 3K classrooms, including during adult education/family literacy programs	Y	Y*	91	87	3
	CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIPS	Subsidize child care costs to providers demonstrating quality	**	Y	304	236	22
	ENHANCED EARLY EDUCATION	Supplemental support to early education programs, such as one-on-one tutoring and parent engagement	Y	Y*	1219	872	4
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	5202	n/a	18
	TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Certified and registered training hours for the early childhood workforce	Y	Y* Provider and Workforce Data	44462	n/a	36

APPENDIX D

	PROGRAM	SERVICES PROVIDED	EVIDENCE-BASED?	CLIENT LEVEL DATA AVAILABLE?	# CHILDREN 0-5 SERVED IN FY22	# FAMILIES SERVED IN FY22	# COUNTIES WITH THIS PROGRAM IN FY22
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	61	61	2
	LENA HOME	10-session home visitation to help families increase positive interactions and language use with young children	Y	Y	23	22	1
	LIBRARY BASED PROGRAMS	Library staff visit child care and preschool classrooms providing books, storytelling, and staff training	N	N	4807	1058	4
	RAISING A READER WITH PARENT SESSIONS – ENHANCED	Weekly take-home bookbags and group support for parents	Y	N	813	595	6
	RAISING A READER	Weekly take-home bookbag exchange	N	N	399	230	3
	DOLLY PARTON'S IMAGINATION LIBRARY	One book per month mailed to the home	Y	N	8813	7516	15
	REACH OUT AND READ	Books and information on reading books to children provided during well-child visits	Y	N	7260	7260	6
	OTHER FAMILY LITERACY	Other services to support language and literacy with parents and children	N	N	3115	559	4
Programs that promote physical health, prevent chronic health conditions, and identify and address developmental delays.	HEALTH SERVICES	Supporting children's healthy development	N	N	4559	2599	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	471	402	10
	WEEKEND BACKPACKS	Nutritious food backpacks for low income preschool children	N	N	473	-	2
	WIC COLLABORATION	Outreach to increase enrollment and retention in Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)	N	N	888	-	8
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	1415	1373	26
	READING ROCKS	Summer program supporting transition into 4K	N	Y	14	14	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, 2021-22

ABBEVILLE

Child Care Training
Nurturing Parenting

AIKEN

Child Care Scholarships
Child Care Training
Countdown to Kindergarten
Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
Early Head Start
Parents as Teachers
Quality Enhancement
Supporting Care Providers through Visits

ALLENDALE

Early Identification and Referral
Enhanced Early Education
Nurturing Parenting

ANDERSON

Child Care: Half-day 4K
Countdown to Kindergarten
Parent Training: ReadyRosie
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
Early Head Start
HIPPIY
Parents as Teachers
Quality Enhancement

BEAUFORT

Child Care Training
Countdown to Kindergarten
Early Identification & Referral (PASOs)
Parents as Teachers
Supporting Care Providers through Visits
Quality Enhancement
WIC Collaboration

BERKELEY

Child Care Scholarships
Child Care Training
Connected Families
Early Identification & Referral (PASOs)
HIPPIY
Nurturing Parenting
Parents as Teachers
Quality Counts
Quality Enhancement
Supporting Care Providers through Visits

CALHOUN

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

CHARLESTON

Child Care Scholarships
Child Care Training
Connected Families
Early Head Start
Early Identification & Referral (PASOs)
Family Literacy
Parents as Teachers
Quality Enhancement
Raising a Reader
Supporting Care Providers through Visits

CHEROKEE

Child Care Training
Countdown to Kindergarten
Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
LENA Home
Triple P

CHESTER

Child Care Training
Nurturing Parenting

CHESTERFIELD

Child Care: Full-day 4K
Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
Nurturing Parenting
ParentChild+
Weekend Backpacks

CLARENDON

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

COLLETON

Child Care Scholarships
Child Care Training
Connected Families
Countdown to Kindergarten
Parents as Teachers
Supporting Care Providers through Visits

DARLINGTON

Health Services
Motherread/Fatherread
Parents as Teachers
Reach Out and Read
Strengthening Families

DILLON

Child Care Training
Nurturing Parenting
Quality Enhancement
Raising a Reader

APPENDIX E

DORCHESTER

Child Care Scholarships
Child Care Training
Countdown to Kindergarten
Early Identification & Referral
Nurturing Parenting
Parents as Teachers
Quality Counts
Quality Enhancement
Supporting Care Providers through Visits
WIC Collaboration

EDGEFIELD

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

FAIRFIELD

Child Care Scholarships
Countdown to Kindergarten
Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
Family Literacy
Parents as Teachers
Quality Enhancement

FLORENCE

Child Care Scholarships
Child Care Training
Countdown to Kindergarten
HIPPI
ParentChild+
Quality Enhancement
Raising a Reader

GEORGETOWN

Child Care Scholarships
Child Care Training
ParentChild+
Triple P

GREENVILLE

Child Care Training
Countdown to Kindergarten
Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
Enhanced Early Education
Nurse-Family Partnership
Nurturing Parenting
Reach Out and Read
Triple P

GREENWOOD

Child Care Scholarships
Child Care Training
Nurturing Parenting

HAMPTON

Child Care Scholarships
Child Care Training
Countdown to Kindergarten
Parents as Teachers
Supporting Care Providers through Visits

HORRY

Child Care Training
Early Identification and Referral (PASOs)
Enhanced Early Education
Parents as Teachers
Quality Enhancement
Supporting Care Providers through Visits
Raising a Reader
Ready4K!
WIC Collaboration

JASPER

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

KERSHAW

Countdown to Kindergarten
Parents as Teachers
Quality Counts
Raising a Reader

LANCASTER

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

LAURENS

Child Care Scholarships
Child Care Training
Parents as Teachers
Reach Out and Read

LEE

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

LEXINGTON

Child Care Training
Connected Families
Countdown to Kindergarten
Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
Early Identification & Referral (PASOs)
Parents as Teachers

MARION

Child Care Scholarships
Child Care Training
Countdown to Kindergarten
Literacy Program
HIPPI
Nurturing Parenting
Quality Enhancement
Raising a Reader

APPENDIX E

MARLBORO

Child Care Scholarships
Child Care Training
HIPPY
Nurturing Parenting
Parents as Teachers
Reach Out and Read
Supporting Care Providers through Visits

MCCORMICK

Child Care
Child Care Scholarships
Countdown to Kindergarten
Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
Library Based Program
Nurturing Parenting

NEWBERRY

Child Care Training
Countdown to Kindergarten
Library Based Program
Parents as Teachers
Quality Counts
Reach Out and Read
Triple P

OCONEE

Child Care Scholarships
Child Care Training
Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
Nurse-Family Partnership
WIC Collaboration

ORANGEBURG

Child Care Training
Countdown to Kindergarten
HIPPY
Parents as Teachers
Quality Counts
Raising a Reader
Reading Rocks

PICKENS

Connected Families
Countdown to Kindergarten
Early Identification & Referral
Family Literacy
Nurse-Family Partnership
Parents as Teachers
Raising a Reader

RICHLAND

Child Care Training
Connected Families
Early Head Start
Parents as Teachers
Quality Enhancement
WIC Collaboration

SALUDA

Child Care Training
Library Based Program
Nurse-Family Partnership
Nurturing Parenting
Quality Enhancement

SPARTANBURG

Early Head Start
Hello Family
Countdown to Kindergarten
Nurse-Family Partnership
Quality Counts
The Franklin School
WIC Collaboration

SUMTER

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

UNION

Child Care Training
Countdown to Kindergarten
Library Based Program
Parents as Teachers
Reach Out and Read

WILLIAMSBURG

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

YORK

Child Care Scholarships
Child Care Training
Connected Families
Countdown to Kindergarten
HealthySteps
Nurse-Family Partnership
Parents as Teachers
Quality Enhancement
WIC Collaboration

External Evaluation of Parents as Teachers

FY2016 - FY2019

As the state office for Parents as Teachers (PAT), South Carolina First Steps coordinates implementation of the parent education and family support program statewide. We also directly fund the program through 27 of 46 local partnerships, making PAT our single largest investment in parenting. In 2021, we commissioned a study by the Institute for Families in Society at the University of South Carolina and Pacific Research & Evaluation, LLC to evaluate the program's effectiveness, focusing on the period of July 2016 to June 2019.

KEY FINDINGS

Program Reach

- 2,150 families served from 34 counties
 - Average family was served for 1.7 years and had 3+ risk factors
 - 81.3% made <\$15,000 per year
 - 64.9% were single-parent families
 - Children averaged 1.25 years old at enrollment
- 61,969 total home visits
- 68,954 total home visit hours
- 12,633 referrals to other resources
- 6,131 developmental screenings
- 1,000 group parenting sessions
- 704 linked to child care scholarships

Program Impact

- For those enrolled in PAT:
 - Interactive reading scores were as much as 30% higher at the final assessment
 - Parenting quality scores were 9% higher at the final assessment
- Compared to their like-peers who were not enrolled in PAT, those enrolled in PAT...
 - Missed 6% less school days
 - Attended well-child visits at a significantly higher rate
 - Ages 0-<1: 8% higher
 - Ages 1-<3: 18% higher
 - Ages 3-5: 13% higher
 - No difference in kindergarten readiness scores or number of child maltreatment reports

Child Care Quality Enhancement (QE) and Child Care Training

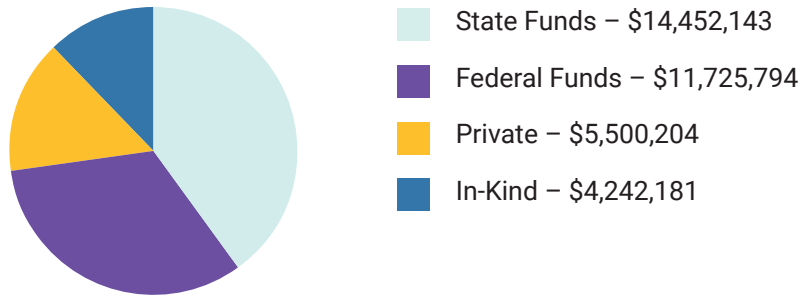
INDIVIDUALS SERVED BY FIRST STEPS LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS, 2021-22

LOCAL PARTNERSHIP	# OF TEACHERS & DIRECTORS SERVED BY QE	# OF TEACHERS & DIRECTORS SERVED BY TRAINING	TOTAL
Abbeville	0	34	34
Aiken	49	243	292
Bamberg	0	50	50
Barnwell	182	0	182
Beaufort	63	300	363
Berkeley	27	170	197
Charleston	35	28	63
Cherokee	0	21	21
Chester	0	112	112
Clarendon	0	52	52
Colleton	0	144	144
Dillon	32	17	49
Dorchester	31	28	59
Edgefield	18	19	37
Fairfield	7	0	7
Florence	92	59	151
Georgetown	0	24	24
Greenville	0	959	959
Greenwood	0	97	97
Hampton	0	120	120
Horry	82	191	273
Jasper	0	143	143
Kershaw	50	0	50
Laurens	0	36	36
Lee	0	316	316
Lexington	0	374	374
Marion	48	11	59
Marlboro	0	7	7
Newberry	28	45	73
Oconee	0	107	107
Orangeburg	17	134	151
Richland	132	121	253
Saluda	0	37	37
Spartanburg	525	747	1,272
Sumter	0	135	135
Union	0	14	14
Williamsburg	0	41	41
York	49	213	262

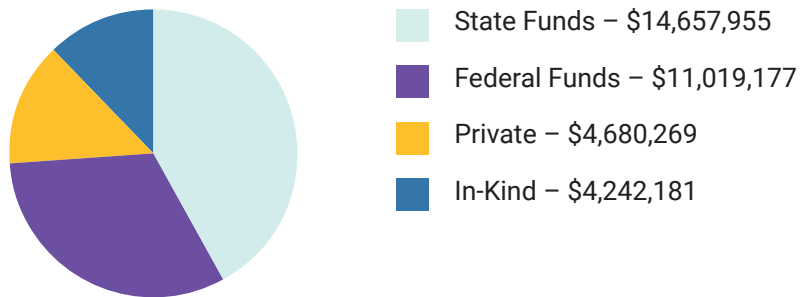
Local Partnership Finances

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES BY FUND TYPE, FY 2022

FY 2022 REVENUE – \$35,920,322



FY 2022 EXPENDITURES – \$34,599,581



APPENDIX I

LOCAL PARTNERSHIP REVENUE BY COUNTY, FY 2022

COUNTY	STATE	FEDERAL	PRIVATE	IN-KIND	TOTAL
Abbeville	\$200,000.00	(\$1,777.00)	\$3,757.78	\$30,240.16	\$232,220.94
Aiken	\$408,070.87	\$9,921.38	\$3,005.02	\$95,675.00	\$516,672.27
Allendale	\$200,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$13,747.99	\$71,186.55	\$285,934.54
Anderson	\$411,436.00	\$7,798.50	\$15,223.78	\$89,273.80	\$523,732.08
Bamberg	\$200,000.00	\$73,950.00	\$9,300.86	\$162,717.00	\$445,967.86
Barnwell	\$200,935.00	\$195,114.31	\$150,791.21	\$0.00	\$546,840.52
Beaufort	\$405,176.00	\$84,366.00	\$78,577.13	\$14,157.30	\$582,276.43
Berkeley	\$492,400.00	\$292,729.40	\$209,374.66	\$63,025.66	\$1,057,529.72
Calhoun	\$201,844.00	\$9,927.00	\$29,202.76	\$23,230.00	\$264,203.76
Charleston	\$703,984.00	\$1,605,866.28	\$284,346.30	\$357,808.45	\$2,952,005.03
Cherokee	\$197,738.00	\$76,056.00	\$29,546.48	\$271,946.70	\$575,287.18
Chester	\$200,000.00	\$3,750.00	\$15,694.29	\$34,200.00	\$253,644.29
Chesterfield	\$199,998.00	\$353,929.00	\$154,308.66	\$40,730.59	\$748,966.25
Clarendon	\$203,740.00	\$5,300.00	\$17,301.06	\$38,200.00	\$264,541.06
Colleton	\$200,000.00	\$44,325.00	\$104,169.18	\$35,110.00	\$383,604.18
Darlington	\$206,290.00	\$102,646.50	\$115,772.09	\$0.00	\$424,708.59
Dillon	\$200,000.00	\$174,285.00	\$10,919.43	\$13,757.09	\$398,961.52
Dorchester	\$294,208.00	\$109,251.00	\$50,966.58	\$55,717.00	\$510,142.58
Edgefield	\$200,000.00	\$20,740.00	\$15,162.55	\$141,654.40	\$377,556.95
Fairfield	\$201,870.00	\$55,555.50	\$11,415.51	\$56,524.82	\$325,365.83
Florence	\$410,112.00	\$105,685.00	\$2,894.70	\$11,319.81	\$530,011.51
Georgetown	\$200,000.00	\$44,014.00	\$16,966.61	\$98,889.10	\$359,869.71
Greenville	\$1,029,244.00	\$272,278.00	\$298,019.63	\$500,000.00	\$2,099,541.63
Greenwood	\$250,538.00	(\$5,895.00)	\$11,772.07	\$19,595.62	\$276,010.69
Hampton	\$200,000.00	\$3,400.00	\$11,516.58	\$21,118.59	\$236,035.17
Horry	\$687,924.00	\$43,288.00	\$2,016.05	\$141,276.47	\$874,504.52
Jasper	\$200,000.00	(\$2,147.00)	\$20,076.76	\$88,145.55	\$306,075.31
Kershaw	\$200,935.00	\$20,748.00	\$35.03	\$21,600.00	\$243,318.03
Lancaster	\$203,740.00	\$1,810,104.83	\$125,590.97	\$0.00	\$2,139,435.80
Laurens	\$200,000.00	\$3,400.00	\$2,587.29	\$19,700.00	\$225,687.29
Lee	\$203,740.00	\$182,404.50	\$688,816.51	\$482,441.16	\$1,557,402.17
Lexington	\$596,626.00	\$277,073.50	\$178,250.29	\$490,622.93	\$1,542,572.72
McCormick	\$200,000.00	\$157,084.50	\$150.80	\$59,993.48	\$417,228.78
Marion	\$200,000.00	\$33,518.00	\$175.22	\$31,638.00	\$265,331.22
Marlboro	\$200,000.00	\$14,298.50	\$4,196.18	\$92,231.36	\$310,726.04
Newberry	\$203,740.00	\$69,380.01	\$3,671.80	\$53,394.16	\$330,185.97
Oconee	\$200,000.00	\$25,500.00	\$5,458.39	\$152,087.16	\$383,045.55
Orangeburg	\$286,438.00	\$19,775.00	\$20,506.09	\$6,277.99	\$332,997.08
Pickens	\$207,516.00	\$111,970.00	\$93,543.31	\$125,333.00	\$538,362.31
Richland	\$901,424.00	\$2,550,746.28	\$288,443.90	\$20,585.00	\$3,761,199.18
Saluda	\$200,000.00	\$4,125.00	\$8,427.57	\$67,325.67	\$279,878.24
Spartanburg	\$729,917.00	\$2,406,722.31	\$1,680,050.69	\$0.00	\$4,816,690.00
Sumter	\$353,308.00	\$52,450.00	\$17,175.61	\$55,500.00	\$478,433.61
Union	\$203,204.46	\$31,551.50	\$5,718.87	\$45,132.00	\$285,606.83
Williamsburg	\$203,740.00	\$86,377.50	\$13,164.32	\$0.00	\$303,281.82
York	\$452,307.00	\$183,207.32	\$678,395.42	\$42,819.00	\$1,356,728.74
	\$14,452,143.33	\$11,725,793.62	\$5,500,203.98	\$4,242,180.57	\$35,920,321.50

APPENDIX I

LOCAL PARTNERSHIP EXPENDITURES BY COUNTY, FY 2022

COUNTY	STATE	FEDERAL	PRIVATE	IN-KIND	TOTAL
Abbeville	\$186,860.21	\$2,408.72	\$1,772.82	\$30,240.16	\$221,281.91
Aiken	\$316,692.43	\$12,601.53	\$2,500.00	\$95,675.00	\$427,468.96
Allendale	\$207,463.70	\$1,259.75	\$11,154.03	\$71,186.55	\$291,064.03
Anderson	\$411,722.01	\$711.75	\$11,110.86	\$89,273.80	\$512,818.42
Bamberg	\$185,467.36	\$63,089.33	\$2,369.47	\$162,717.00	\$413,643.16
Barnwell	\$217,070.16	\$157,555.57	\$129,407.22	\$0.00	\$504,032.95
Beaufort	\$428,911.86	\$108,261.57	\$79,844.99	\$14,157.30	\$631,175.72
Berkeley	\$532,989.38	\$177,703.06	\$131,968.91	\$63,025.66	\$905,687.01
Calhoun	\$191,702.42	\$9,352.93	\$38,558.62	\$23,230.00	\$262,843.97
Charleston	\$690,540.33	\$1,568,453.32	\$194,550.20	\$357,808.45	\$2,811,352.30
Cherokee	\$210,792.47	\$64,946.24	\$20,739.78	\$271,946.70	\$568,425.19
Chester	\$206,131.47	\$5,672.00	\$951.76	\$34,200.00	\$246,955.23
Chesterfield	\$204,705.76	\$190,575.95	\$110,553.10	\$40,730.59	\$546,565.40
Clarendon	\$191,769.10	\$8,430.00	\$5,187.75	\$38,200.00	\$243,586.85
Colleton	\$198,890.06	\$49,228.13	\$61,446.62	\$35,110.00	\$344,674.81
Darlington	\$217,814.10	\$111,464.07	\$203,437.16	\$0.00	\$532,715.33
Dillon	\$219,034.53	\$178,031.45	\$15,134.16	\$13,757.09	\$425,957.23
Dorchester	\$290,521.70	\$94,529.49	\$26,163.05	\$55,717.00	\$466,931.24
Edgefield	\$200,334.86	\$19,709.75	\$18,859.80	\$141,654.40	\$380,558.81
Fairfield	\$202,268.73	\$44,886.66	\$13,180.99	\$56,524.82	\$316,861.20
Florence	\$433,257.65	\$119,009.61	\$662.45	\$11,319.81	\$564,249.52
Georgetown	\$202,574.10	\$2,000.19	\$14,916.02	\$98,889.10	\$318,379.41
Greenville	\$1,058,287.32	\$261,074.87	\$100,800.20	\$500,000.00	\$1,920,162.39
Greenwood	\$290,533.87	\$631.00	\$12,627.95	\$19,595.62	\$323,388.44
Hampton	\$180,164.18	\$4,008.47	\$10,241.62	\$21,118.59	\$215,532.86
Horry	\$628,197.00	\$47,599.03	\$2,308.52	\$141,276.47	\$819,381.02
Jasper	\$211,862.40	\$5,624.68	\$19,698.51	\$88,145.55	\$325,331.14
Kershaw	\$198,668.30	\$19,100.09	\$17.58	\$21,600.00	\$239,385.97
Lancaster	\$202,874.11	\$1,766,539.54	\$137,761.72	\$0.00	\$2,107,175.37
Laurens	\$183,459.40	\$4,680.60	\$22,620.30	\$19,700.00	\$230,460.30
Lee	\$202,857.19	\$106,779.24	\$674,080.74	\$482,441.16	\$1,466,158.33
Lexington	\$551,592.38	\$169,056.44	\$123,603.21	\$490,622.93	\$1,334,874.96
McCormick	\$222,161.67	\$58,805.63	\$841.69	\$59,993.48	\$341,802.47
Marion	\$180,826.18	\$8,582.73	\$0.00	\$31,638.00	\$221,046.91
Marlboro	\$202,506.96	\$10,921.48	\$5,131.56	\$92,231.36	\$310,791.36
Newberry	\$219,682.09	\$110,349.16	\$7,218.25	\$53,394.16	\$390,643.66
Oconee	\$209,171.02	\$17,895.22	\$4,383.59	\$152,087.16	\$383,536.99
Orangeburg	\$296,639.39	\$76,595.80	\$13,645.02	\$6,277.99	\$393,158.20
Pickens	\$249,795.66	\$107,716.02	\$90,062.95	\$125,333.00	\$572,907.63
Richland	\$957,168.98	\$2,026,197.38	\$167,688.45	\$20,585.00	\$3,171,639.81
Saluda	\$197,795.02	\$4,125.00	\$2,547.85	\$67,325.67	\$271,793.54
Spartanburg	\$766,757.17	\$2,921,686.20	\$1,533,286.18	\$0.00	\$5,221,729.55
Sumter	\$389,893.55	\$44,428.09	\$4,895.09	\$55,500.00	\$494,716.73
Union	\$229,141.83	\$29,833.82	\$2,556.81	\$45,132.00	\$306,664.46
Williamsburg	\$202,984.14	\$79,264.09	\$4,669.79	\$0.00	\$286,918.02
York	\$477,420.70	\$147,801.42	\$645,111.49	\$42,819.00	\$1,313,152.61
	\$14,657,954.90	\$11,019,177.07	\$4,680,268.83	\$4,242,180.57	\$34,599,581.37

PAGES 9-10

45% 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 (2016-2020). Table B17024. US Census Bureau.

40% of children 0-5 lived in a single-parent household. Data source: 1-Year Estimates: American Community Survey (2021). Table C23008. US Census Bureau.

22% 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 (2020). Vital Statistics: South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control. Accessed 3 Oct 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 (2020). Vital Statistics: South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control. Accessed 3 Oct 2022. [Available from: https://apps.dhec.sc.gov/Health/SCAN_BDP/tables/birthtable.aspx].

7% 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. 2019-2020 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 3 Oct 2022. [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. 2019-2020 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].

55% of children ages 3-4 were not enrolled in school. Data source: 5-Year Estimates: American Community Survey (2016-2020). Table S1401. US Census Bureau.

64% 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>].

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.

Alliance for Early Success
Ascend at the Aspen Institute
Child Trends
Education Commission of the States
First Children's Finance
National Institute for Early Education Research
National Technical Assistance Center for Preschool Development Grants Birth Through Five
National Women's Law Center
The Hunt Institute
Zero to Three

Cover photo: Samirah Sawyer (center) is a member of the Early Childhood Advisory Council's Family Voice Council.



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