



2023-2024

ANNUAL REPORT



FIRST STEPS IS HERE

Last year, because of Spartanburg County First Steps:



4,745 children

were directly served in Spartanburg County



973 parents & caregivers

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



732 educators

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

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

THE NEED PERSISTS IN SPARTANBURG COUNTY

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

23,601

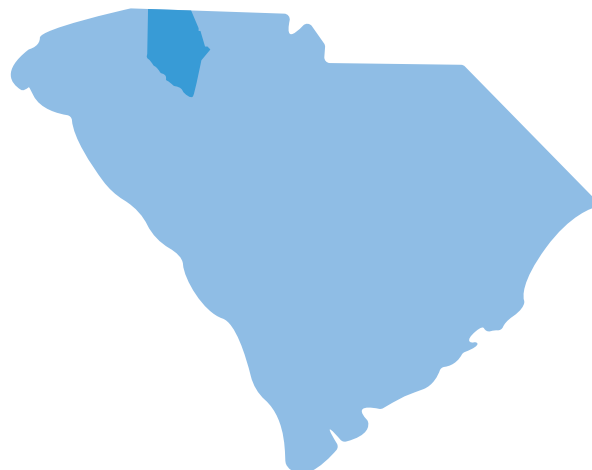
children aged 0-5

41%

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

63%

of kindergarteners are considered "not ready" for school



OUR MISSION

To ensure that all children in Spartanburg County start school ready to reach their highest potential. By leveraging resources, collaborating with community partners, and supporting families and early care providers, we hope to maximize our long-term impact.



Caroline Goins

Executive Director

First, I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to our incredible community. Your dedication and shared vision are what make Spartanburg County genuinely unique. The collaborative spirit you bring to every effort has fueled Spartanburg's remarkable growth in recent years. Together, we have created a network of support that uplifts our families and ensures that our youngest citizens have the foundation they need to thrive.

I would also like to recognize and thank Barbara Manoski, our recently retired Executive Director. Her leadership and passion for this work have left an indelible mark on our organization and community. Barbara's legacy of service and dedication continues to inspire us as we move forward.

To the staff of Spartanburg County First Steps, you are not just commendable, but you are the very heart of this organization. Your hard work and unwavering commitment to the children and families we serve are the driving force behind our success. Your tireless efforts have not gone unnoticed, and it is because of you that we have been able to make such a significant impact. You are the unsung heroes of our success, and we deeply appreciate your dedication.

This past year has been one of growth, resilience, and continued commitment to the young children and families in our community. In partnership with The Upstate Family Resource Center, the number of children receiving developmental screenings has nearly doubled. In collaboration with the local school districts, Countdown to Kindergarten expanded, providing more than 500 children with a memorable summer learning experience. Quality Counts increased its reach to work with more schools and childcare facilities to improve quality as part of Spartanburg Academic Movement's project, Movement 2030, and The Franklin School celebrated its 5th anniversary.

While there is still much to be done, we should take pride in all that we have accomplished together. The road ahead is not just bright, but it is filled with endless possibilities. We look forward to the years to come with great anticipation, as we continue to improve outcomes for young children in Spartanburg County. With your support, I am confident that we can create an even stronger future for the next generation. The future is bright, and we are excited to see what we can achieve together.

Thank you for being part of this incredible journey. Your continued support is invaluable and inspires us to do more for our community's children and families.

Serving Spartanburg County's children birth through age five.

"The First Steps program has been my "village". I'm grateful for the support, encouragement, and the services the program offers. I will never forget how First Steps helped me achieve my goals and helped my family."

Spartanburg County First Steps parent



PROGRAMS

HEALTH

Early Identification & Referral

Providing developmental screenings and referrals to other services.

97

children served

74

families served

Nurse-Family Partnership

Home visitation for first time mothers, from pregnancy until the child turns two.

90

children served

227

families served

2,782

home visits

EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

Early Head Start

A federally funded program that provides family-centered services to infants and toddlers under age 3, pregnant women, and their families.

332

children served

332

families served

1,660

home visits

Quality Counts

Certified and registered training hours for the early childhood workforce.

2,272

children served

48

providers served

1,782

number of technical assistance hours

SCHOOL TRANSITION

Countdown to Kindergarten

Supports transitions into kindergarten by connecting incoming students, their families, and their teachers in a series of one-on-one sessions during the summer.

221

children served

13

schools served

1,319

home visits

Countdown to 4K

Supports transitions into pre-kindergarten by connecting incoming students, their families, and their teachers in a series of one-on-one sessions during the summer.

104

children served

6

schools served

622

home visits

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

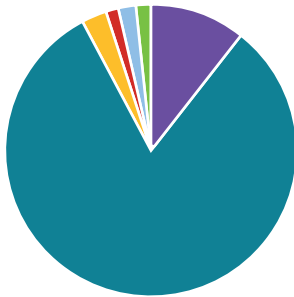


\$1 = \$5.92

Spartanburg County First Steps leveraged \$838,832.01 from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$4.92 for every state dollar invested.

EXPENDITURES

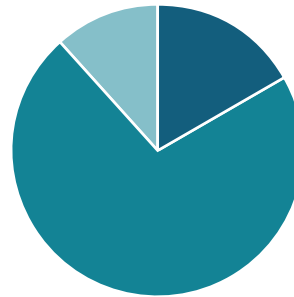
Total: \$5,965,523.33



- Parenting - \$642,949.16
- Early Care & Education - \$4,864,633.97
- School Transition - \$166,730.43
- Health - \$81,686.90
- Administrative - \$111,408.74
- Core Functions - \$98,114.13

FUNDING SOURCES

Total: \$4,964,937.75



- State Funding - \$838,832.01
- Federal Funding - \$3,559,282.04
- Private Funding - \$566,823.70

FUNDING SUPPORT BY SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS

State Education Improvement Act (EIA) Funding

State READY Funding*

Federal ESSER Funding**

State Income Tax Check-off and Private Donations to SC First Steps

*Resources for Early Acceleration and Development in Youth (READY) Proviso 1.105

**American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund, awarded to the South Carolina Department of Education

Note: Revenue amounts may show a difference between allocations and revenue based on penalties imposed by the SC First Steps Board of Trustees for non-compliance with organizational policies. The figures provided are based on unaudited financial statements and, as such, are subject to change.

Carolyn Gibson

Board Chair



As a past employee, board member and the current chair of Spartanburg County First Steps, each year I continue to be impressed by their accomplishments. As partnerships with local organizations and our schools grow, they continuously strive to meet First Steps goals of Getting Children Ready for School. Our collaborations with local organizations are more important than ever before.

As Spartanburg County First Steps continues to move forward, the leadership team remains dedicated to providing quality programs for our youngest learners. There is a strong framework for growth to meet the expanding needs of the community.

Thank you to the board local partners staff and leadership team his work is dedicated to preparing our young children for success in school and life.

Our Local Supporters

Contec
Children's Trust Fund of South Carolina
First Presbyterian Church
Institute for Child Success
Just Giving
Mary Black Foundation
Network for Good
Snyder Transportation
South Carolina DSS
Spartanburg Academic Movement
Spartanburg County Foundation
United Way of the Piedmont

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Spartanburg County First Steps 23/24

Early Head Start Annual Report

Monthly Average Enrollment for PY 23/24
(As a % of Funded Enrollment)

87% EHS	92% EHS-CCP
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(Under-enrollment due to teaching staff shortages and reduced home-based waitlist numbers)
Programs engaged in Under-Enrollment Plans in February 2024. The EHS program achieved full enrollment status as of June 2024.

Percentage of Eligible Children Served

EHS Served 205 CHILDREN	EHS-CCP Served 20 PREGNANT WOMEN	EHS-CCP Served 127 CHILDREN
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Less than 5% of eligible children in the county were served by the program.

Percentage of Enrolled Children who Received Medical & Dental Exams

EHS Served	EHS-CCP Served
56% Health Exam	13% Dental Exam
46% Health Exam	22% Dental Exam

(The age of children impacts the dental exams received & the health & dental information is dependent upon medical records verification received, which is slow)

Parent Involvement Activities Offered

Monthly trainings were offered that cover the following topics: family partnerships, transitions, family cultures, early childhood development, discipline, child nutrition, family literacy, child health, employment readiness, parent/adult education, family well-being risks, child, and family mental health, i.e. separation anxiety and attachment & financial literacy. Socialization activities and parent-child engagement events were held monthly.

Recent Audit Results

The A133 Single Audit of 2022-2023 was completed with no material findings and was filed with the Federal Clearinghouse in March 2024.

Agency's Efforts to Prepare Children for Kindergarten

SCFS supports South Carolina First Steps 3K and 4K classrooms, there are MOAs with school districts and Head Start, the program participates in the preschool development grant (PDG), which is a longitudinal study to assess school readiness and success, the SCFS Quality Counts provides teacher trainings and technical assistance to the 0 to 5 teachers, centers and school districts and all children aging out of EHS have transition plans.