



FIRST STEPS IS HERE

Last year, because of Aiken County First Steps:



547 children

were directly served in Aiken County



41 parents & caregivers

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



130 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 Aiken COUNTY

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

11,247

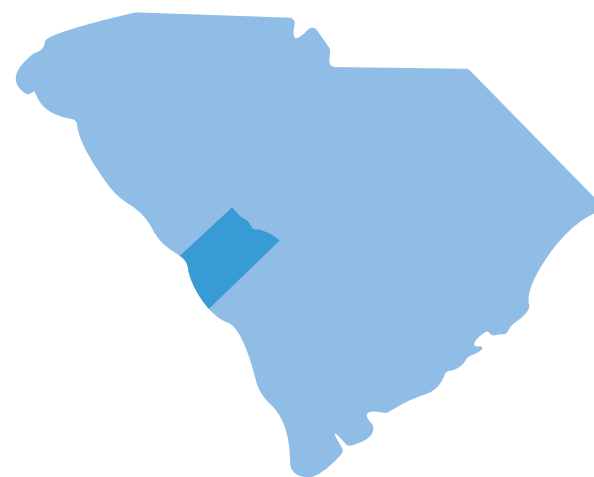
children under age 5

42.2%

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

65%

of kindergarteners are considered "not ready" for school



Maire Davidsohn

Board Chair



Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success!

The impact of the board of directors' commitment of service provided the stability needed to help us grow and succeed. Local community leaders helped the board achieve its goals by accommodating First Steps with use of space and by inviting First Steps to programs aimed at families. In doing so, families became aware of what First Steps offers to support our youngest community members and their caregivers.

By continuing to advocate the importance First Steps plays in our community, the board will be better able to make decisions that will continue to benefit the organization. The collaboration and communication of community leaders can help the board achieve its goals by continuing to offer space for First Steps within their organization to create a family-centered learning environment for all.

Our Supporters

United Way Aiken County \$15,000

Golden Harvest Food Bank \$3,000

South Carolina First Steps \$3,146

Shiloh Baptist Church \$3,000

South Carolina Department of Social Services \$194,790

Kimberly-Clark Cooperation \$2,000

Kimberly Ross

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2022-2023
ANNUAL REPORT

OUR MISSION

Through collaboration, Aiken County First Steps empowers families and caregivers to prepare their children for school success by maximizing public and private community resources to deliver, enhance and expand high-quality early childhood services.



Marcia L. Nash
Executive Director

If a community values its children, it must cherish their parents.

Supporting children means supporting the adults that care for them, calling for and investing in coordinated, quality early childhood programs, and lighting the path to a future where all children are given a well-built foundation and an opportunity to meet their inherent potential.

As we advance the Aiken County First Steps mission of empowering parents and caregivers to prepare children for school success, we continue to see the deep impact our Parents as Teachers program have had and continues to have on all the participating parents and caregivers. Families stay enrolled in the program because of the support and care they receive from their parent educator. 100% of the families have a better understanding of child development and feel supported as their child's first and most important teacher. Without the resources, local supporters, staff, and volunteers, we could not have accomplished these phenomenal goals.

Serving Aiken County's children birth through age five.

"After covid, a layoff, and a separation, First Steps has been a breath of fresh air. It has been an extreme blessing to me and my children. When I thought things would be overwhelming, they stepped right in to help me and my family stay on track."

Aiken County First Steps parent



PROGRAMS

PARENTING

Parents as Teachers

Offers research-based curricula that help families raise children to be healthy, safe, learning, and ready for school.

17 children served 14 group meetings and events 195 home visits

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

Free, high-quality books mailed to the home of children from birth until age five.

741 children served 741 families served 4,173 books distributed

EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

Quality Enhancement

Promotes quality in child care by providing early educators with one-on-one coaching and support.

286 children served 4 providers served 150 technical assistance hours

Training & Professional Development

Certified and registered training hours for the early childhood workforce.

762 children served 61 providers served 43 training hours offered

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.

22 children served 3 schools served 132 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.

9 children served 1 schools served 48 home visits

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

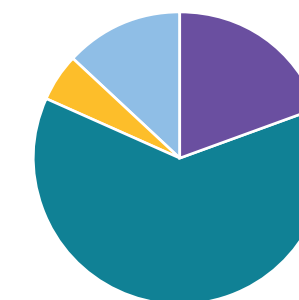


\$1 = \$1.67

Aiken County First Steps leveraged \$203,851.27 from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$0.67 for every state dollar invested.

EXPENDITURES

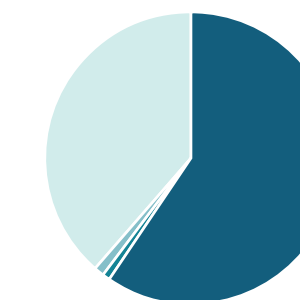
Total: \$567,018.44



- Parenting - \$111,013.65
- Early Care & Education - \$352,085.35
- School Transition - \$30,926.26
- Administrative - \$72,993.18

FUNDING SOURCES

Total: \$505,916.68



- State Funding - \$302,065.41
- Federal Funding - \$3,040
- Private Funding - \$6,021.27
- In-kind Contributions - \$194,790

FUNDING SUPPORT

State Education Improvement Act (EIA) Funding
Federal Preschool Development Grant Funding*
State Income Tax Check-off and Private Donations to SC First Steps

*Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five Initiative (PDG B-5), Grant Number 90TP0080-01-00 from the Office of Child Care, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, awarded to the South Carolina Department of Social Services, Division of Early Care and Education