

Annual Report

2019-2020



THE NEED

IN KERSHAW COUNTY:

3571

children under age 5

39.4

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

68%

of kindergartners are considered "not ready" for school



THREE MOST COMMON RISK FACTORS:

1. Risk factor 1 :Single parent household and has need of other services
2. Risk factor 2: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP- formerly Food Stamps) or Free School Lunches eligibility
3. Risk factor 3: TANF Eligibility (50% of Federal Poverty or below)

OUR MISSION

Through community collaboration, KCFS will provide access to resources and support for families, enabling children to enter school ready to learn

OUR APPROACH



High quality programs and services for children and families



Intensive training, resources and support for childcare providers



Strategic partnerships and community education

OUR IMPACT

866

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

JOIN US

We rely on a community of partners, donors, and volunteers – **people like you** – who believe in a brighter future for children and families in our community.

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Kimberley Jordan
Executive Director
Kershaw County First Steps

The whole world seems to be catching on to the idea that learning starts at birth, and that it takes place, not just in the home, but in the early learning centers that we call “child care.” The science of brain development, coupled with long-term studies that compare children who have received high quality preschool experiences with those who have not, point to the need for public policies that support families in being able to find and afford high quality child care and out-of-school-time programs. Children do better in school and in life if they receive this positive early start. At Kershaw County First Steps, we feel a strong responsibility to educate parents, providers, public policy makers and other members of the community on why school readiness is so important.

In my nineteen years as Executive Director of Kershaw County First Steps, I have never felt more hopeful about the future. Our community partners are incubating some of the best thinking in the country about improving school readiness and I am convinced that, working together, we will all arrive at our vision of getting ALL children ready for school.

Kimberley Jordan



GETTING CHILDREN READY FOR SCHOOL

All children are ready to benefit from a quality kindergarten experience when they are five years old by September 1 of that school year. But kindergarten readiness—the critical stage at which children are prepared for learning and success—is more than a matter of age. For a strong start in school, children need positive relationships and supportive learning environments beginning at birth. At First Steps, we partner with families, caregivers, and communities to ensure that all children are prepared for success.

South Carolina's Profile of the Ready Kindergartner

Developed by SC First Steps and the SC Department of Education, the state's description of school readiness includes 60 developmental milestones across 5 categories:



Approaches to learning & inquiry



Emotional & social development



Physical development, self-help & motor skills



Mathematical thinking



Language & literacy development



OUR GOALS

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

Goal 1: Strengthen countywide efforts and initiatives to facilitate the creation of a seamless system of integrated and comprehensive programs and serves to improve outcomes for children, prenatal through age 5 and their families

Goal 2: Families of young children in all areas of Kershaw County are connected to the services, supports, and early education opportunities they need to strengthen their families.

Goal 3: Increase parents' and community awareness of KCFS services and the importance of high-quality early care and education programs for all children.

Goal 4: Strengthen internal capacity of KCFS to realize its mission and achieve greater impact

PIVOTING FOR COVID-19

When the coronavirus pandemic forced South Carolina to shut down in March 2020, Kershaw County First Steps quickly pivoted to provide much-needed support to young children, their families and child care providers.

Our work has never been more critical. While children are at low risk for the serious health effects of the virus, the crisis is having a profound impact on their wellbeing and development. For children of color and low-income communities, these impacts are expected to be even more damaging. That is why Kershaw County First Steps is enhancing our efforts to provide parents and caregivers with the services and resources they need to weather this storm.

IMPACT ON KERSHAW COUNTY

HEALTH

Through June 30, Kershaw County had a total of **693** confirmed COVID-19 cases and **17** COVID-19 deaths.

JOB LOSS

128.8%

increase in unemployment, 2019-2020

CHILD CARE

49.8%

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

80.7%

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



Thank you to the Power of Change organization for donating over \$800 in diapers and wipes for our First Steps' families in hard to reach areas of Kershaw County. The staff conducted porch "diaper drops" to Kershaw County First Steps.

*The Center for American Progress defines a child care desert as a ZIP code with at least 30 children under the age of 5 and either no child care centers or so few centers that there are more than three times as many children under age 5 as there are spaces in centers.



EARLY IDENTIFICATION & REFERRAL



an evidence-based program

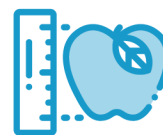
First Steps' Early Identification and Referral (EI&R) programs serve families with young children with suspected delays in development, acting as a local portal to connect families to community-based services they may need or desire to ensure the school readiness of their children. EI&R services include:



Screenings for children ages 0-5 with suspected delays in development



Referrals, based on screening results, to appropriate resources and support services



Patient information including strategies to monitor growth and development

EI&R BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

24

children served

1829

materials distributed

3

referrals to BabyNet or other local services



Parents learning to support and encourage their children in the Early Identification & referral program.



PARENTS AS TEACHERS



an evidence-based program

Parents as Teachers (PAT) is a home visiting program designed to build strong communities, thriving families and children who are healthy, safe and ready to succeed. PAT services include:



Personal visits from a parent educator at least twice monthly



Monthly group connections with other PAT families



Screenings and assessments to identify developmental concerns



Connections to outside resources that families may need to succeed

PAT GOES VIRTUAL

Due to COVID-19, Parents as Teachers (PAT) National provided guidance for affiliates to deliver virtual services via interactive video conferencing and phone calls. South Carolina PAT affiliates rose to the occasion by engaging families in creative and meaningful ways while continuing to meet the Essential Requirements of implementing a quality PAT program during the pandemic.

PAT IN Kershaw COUNTY 2019-2020

26

families served

561

total home visits



Parents as Teachers®



COUNTDOWN TO KINDERGARTEN



an evidence-informed program

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

CTK BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

1

kindergarten teachers
trained as home visitors

3

children served

18

total home and school
visits



My child has a great start with Countdown to Kindergarten.

Tammy Smith, Parent





CHILD CARE QUALITY ENHANCEMENT



an evidence-based program

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

Our services include:



Rigorous quality assessments



On-site technical assistance at least twice monthly



Funding for equipment and materials



Training and workforce development



Coordination with community partners

QE BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

4

child care providers served

99

number of TA visits provided

93

number of children 0-5 enrolled in provider classrooms

Kershaw County First Steps is helping St. John UMC Child Care program to educate our children and to build strong families at the same time.

Lisa Wilson, St. John UMC Director

4K

FOUR-YEAR-OLD KINDERGARTEN



an evidence-based program

South Carolina First Steps provides eligible children with free enrollment in full-day four-year-old kindergarten. In coordination with First Steps local partnerships and more than 230 private, community and faith-based preschool providers, First Steps 4K expands access to quality early education across the state.



ELIGIBILITY

To qualify for enrollment, a child must be:

- ✓ 4 years old on or before September 1
- ✓ Eligible for Medicaid, SNAP or TANF, experiencing homelessness or transiency, or in foster care

FIRST STEPS 4K IN KERSHAW COUNTY 2019-2020

35

children enrolled

3

First Steps 4K providers

PIVOTING FOR COVID-19

When schools closed due to COVID-19, First Steps 4K classroom converted to distance-learning, with teachers creatively supporting their young learners through video chat, take-home materials, and hands-on projects that caregivers could facilitate at home.





COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Addressing the needs of young children is a shared endeavor. In addition to providing services to families and support for child care providers, Kershaw County First Steps mobilizes partners and community members to ensure all children in Kershaw County begin school ready to succeed. We serve

as a:

LOCAL PORTAL

connecting preschool children and their families to services

CONVENER

of community stakeholders to develop an effective and comprehensive early childhood system

CHAMPION

of the importance of school readiness to our children's future

OUR PARTNERSHIPS BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

1381

Books distributed

18

Community events

“ I enthusiastically recommend Kershaw County First Steps as a partner for community events and workshops and the development of early care and education services. I recognize KCFS' commitment to also provide referrals and hands-on assistance...I understand the value that early intervention services bring to the Kershaw community

Margaret Lawhorn, Director -Mentor Program



OUR SUPPORTERS

Through partnerships and collaborations, as well as financial support from grants and contributions, Kershaw County First Steps leverages state dollars to enhance and expand services to children and families.

FUNDING SUPPORT

United Way of Kershaw County \$4800
United Way of Midlands \$900

JOIN US

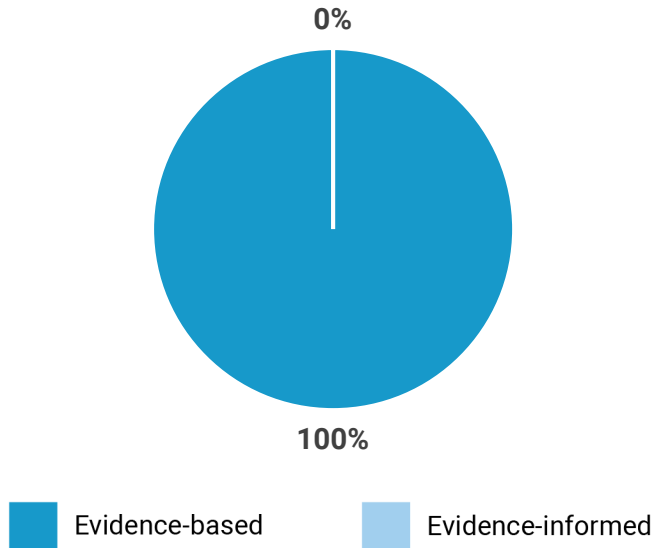
For more information on partnership opportunities, visit our website at
kershawfirststeps.org



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

OUR INVESTMENT IN QUALITY

Expenditures of State Funds by Program Type



ESTIMATION OF COST SAVINGS

Since inception, Kershaw County First Steps has leveraged **\$1,608,466.92** from sources outside of state government.

That's **\$0.38** for every state dollar.

SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES BY STRATEGY

| | State Funding | Federal Funding | Private Funding | In-Kind Contributions | Total |
|------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Parents as Teachers | \$68,229 | \$ | \$98 | \$ | \$68,327 |
| Early Identification Referrals | \$21,404 | \$ | \$18 | \$ | \$21,422 |
| Child Care Quality Enhancement | \$49,875 | \$ | \$99 | \$ | \$49,974 |
| Raising A Reader Enhanced | \$25,726 | \$ | \$4800 | \$ | \$30,526 |
| Countdown to Kindergarten | \$8,504 | \$ | \$854 | \$ | \$9358 |
| Partnerships & Community Education | \$16,005 | \$3000 | \$0 | \$ | \$19,005 |
| Administrative Support | \$14,583 | \$ | \$296 | \$ | \$14,879 |
| Total Expenses | \$204,327 | \$3000 | \$6165 | \$0 | \$213,491 |



LEADERSHIP

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STAFF

Kimberley Jordan, Executive Director

Rudine McLeod, Program Manager

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