



2023-2024

ANNUAL REPORT



FIRST STEPS IS HERE

Last year, because of Edgefield County First Steps:



477 children

were directly served in Edgefield County



416 parents & caregivers

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



90 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 EDGEFIELD COUNTY

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

1,073

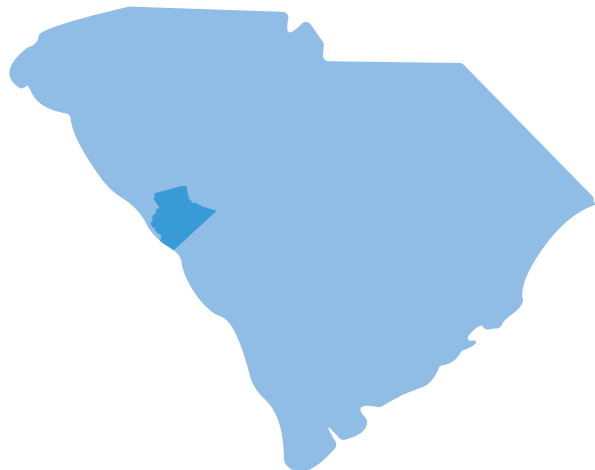
children under 6

49%

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

59%

of kindergarteners are considered "not ready" for school



OUR MISSION

Empower Edgefield County families and caregivers to prepare children for school success by delivering, enhancing, and expanding high-quality early childhood services.



Candi Lalonde

Executive Director

I was working for the Edgefield County Department of Social Services in September of 1999 when my director asked if I would represent the agency at the first community meeting regarding a new statewide initiative called South Carolina First Steps. At that meeting, a group consisting of state and local leaders, community partners, and parents/families came together to make a commitment to work for young children in Edgefield County to ensure they have the best possible start in life to prepare them for school success.

In 2024, we celebrate 25 years of being a vital part of Edgefield County, securing almost 5 million dollars in funding to support programs serving young children in Edgefield County. This annual report highlights our most recent work, and we could not do any of it without the unwavering support from our leaders, partner agencies, and the outstanding people of Edgefield County. We cannot wait to see what the next 25 years will bring!

Serving Edgefield County's children birth through age five.

“Thanks again to the instructor. Your teaching through the parenting program has helped me tremendously. I have a 2-year-old and his tantrums have reduced significantly and I feel like I'm able to effectively communicate with him even without words with the tips you've given me over the course of these classes. I can't thank you enough.”

Edgefield County First Steps parent



PROGRAMS

EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

Quality Enhancement

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

91

children served

3

providers served

102

technical assistance hours

Training & Professional Development

Certified and registered training hours for the early childhood workforce.

197

children served

12

providers served

35

certified training hours

Enhanced Early Education

The Enhanced Early Education strategy seeks to enhance education services offered by early childhood classrooms.

76

children served

76

families served

862

tutoring sessions

Child Care Scholarships

Eligible children receive tuition- assistance at quality child care centers.

30

children served

23

families served

3

providers served

Jonston Learning Center

The Johnston Learning Center is a high-quality early childhood center that serves the child care desert of the town of Johnston.

19

children served

16

families served

40

group meetings

PARENTING

Nurturing Parenting

Group meetings designed to build nurturing parenting skills as an alternative to abusive and neglecting parenting and child-rearing practices

31

families served

25

group meetings

Nurse-Family Partnership

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

6

children served

68

home visits

Dolly Parton Imagination Library

One book per month mailed to the home

294

children served

2,846

books distributed

HEALTH

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

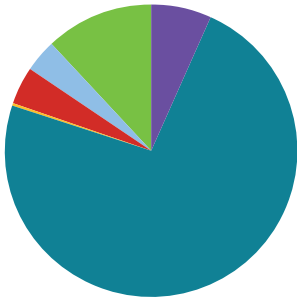


\$1 = \$3.05

Edgefield County First Steps leveraged \$457,649.14 from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$2.05 for every state dollar invested.

EXPENDITURES

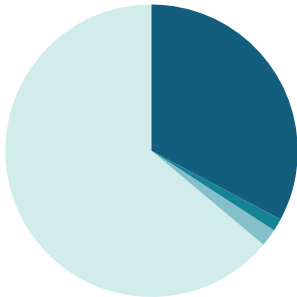
Total: \$690,378.14



- Parenting - \$46,695.17
- Early Care & Education - \$507,012.73
- School Transition - \$1,605.95
- Health - \$29,078.57
- Administrative - \$25,004.69
- Core Functions - \$80,981.03

FUNDING SOURCES

Total: \$680,995.14



- State Funding - \$223,346
- Federal Funding - \$10,944.92
- Private Funding - \$13,042.23
- In-kind Contributions - \$433,661.99

SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS FUNDING SUPPORT

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.

Expenditures include revenue balance from the previous fiscal year.



Gail Jackson

Board Chair

I am a retired educator and have experience working with preschool children who have developmental delays and/or speech impairments. With Edgefield County being rural, high-quality early childhood services are not always easy to access. The Executive Director of our agency is an invaluable resource for families with young children in Edgefield. She works diligently with our Board to deliver, enhance, and expand services in our county. Today's world challenges us to prepare these little people for the future. As Board Chair, I will continue to serve and assist with preschool children, whether I am reading to a class, or helping a child complete a puzzle, or talk to or give a hug to a preschool parent.

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