



# 2023-2024

## ANNUAL REPORT



# FIRST STEPS IS HERE

Last year, because of Newberry County First Steps:



**1,307 children**

were directly served in Newberry County



**1,009 parents & caregivers**

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



**191 educators**

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

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## 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

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## THE NEED PERSISTS IN NEWBERRY COUNTY

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

**2,264**

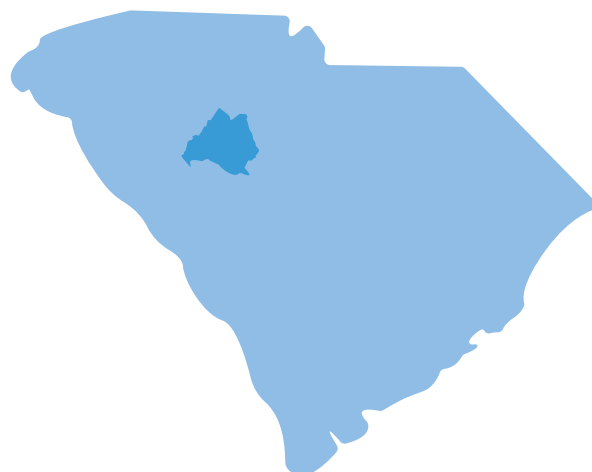
children under 6

**39%**

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

**65%**

of kindergarteners are considered "not ready" for school



# OUR MISSION

Working in collaboration with parents, families, caregivers, educators, and our community, Newberry County First Steps provides opportunities and experiences so that all children enter school ready to reach their highest potential.



## Sarah Eargle

### Executive Director

For 25 years, Newberry County First Steps (NCFS) has championed quality early learning experiences. NCFS consistently focuses on providing the opportunities children need to enter school ready to reach their highest potential and helping families get the support they need to help their children thrive.

Newberry First Steps' expertise in program excellence and resources drives direct impact with positive outcomes for the more than 1,300 children, parents, and caregivers we serve in our programs. We work to ensure that public and private funds are spent effectively, efficiently, and increased to meet the needs of families with young children in Newberry County.

The staff and board of NCFS continue to uphold our mission and look for opportunities to strengthen and expand our services and programs better to serve families and young children in our community. We want to maintain and grow our success for the next 25 years, and with your support, we know this is possible.

As a community-based non-profit, Newberry First Steps collaborates closely with local and state partners and community-based organizations to build a future where all children reach their full potential. As importantly, we partner with parents and caregivers to center their voices, unique needs, and lived experiences to ensure that programs and experiences reflect their needs. We are grateful for the generous support of our many donors, whose investments allow us to continue to grow and strengthen our organization's work. We cannot do this vital work without you! Join us for the next 25 years as we continue championing children and families in our community.

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## Serving Newberry County's children birth through age five.

"I am a single parent, and it's far from an easy job. I had a village behind me who believed in me. This program (Positive Parenting Program) is remarkable! It teaches parents to have patience and understand that we are our children's first teachers, but we are also teaching ourselves while teaching them. Never give up. Always feed yourself with positivity over negativity and you will feel the difference. Everybody makes mistakes, but the idea is to ALWAYS learn from them"

Autumn C.  
Newberry 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.

22

children served

10

group meetings  
and events

388

home visits

### Positive Parenting Program (TripleP)

A parenting and family support system designed to prevent – as well as treat – behavioral and emotional problems in children.

29

children served

25

families served

18

group meetings  
and events

### Library-Based Programs

Connect librarians with child care programs and preschool classrooms, providing books, storytelling, and staff training.

429

children served

20

providers served

## HEALTH

### Reach Out and Read

Free, high-quality books provided by a child's pediatric provider during doctor's visits.

857

children served

1,714

book distributed

## EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

### Quality Counts

Community-based child care quality improvement strategy, designed to build and sustain high quality in early care and education programs.

125

children served

2

providers served

68

technical  
assistance hours

### Training & Professional Development

Certified and registered training hours for the early childhood workforce.

344

children served

13

providers served

24.5

training hours  
offered

## SCHOOL TRANSITIONS

### 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.

57

children served

8

schools served

331

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.

27

children served

162

home visits

# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

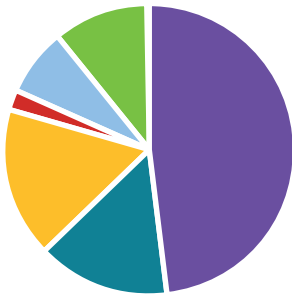


**\$1 = \$1.74**

Newberry County First Steps leveraged \$170,627.71 from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$0.74 for every state dollar invested.

## EXPENDITURES

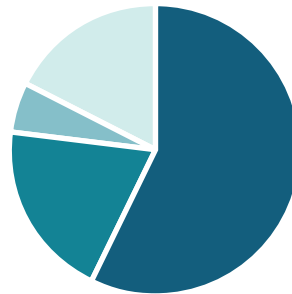
Total: \$384,833.08



- Parenting - \$185,939.24
- Early Care & Education - \$56,321.81
- School Transition - \$64,260.62
- Health - \$8,629.28
- Administrative - \$28,629.77
- Core Functions - \$41,052.36

## FUNDING SOURCES

Total: \$400,188.33



- State Funding - \$229,560.62
- Federal Funding - \$79,154.65
- Private Funding - \$21,566.19
- In-kind Contributions - \$69,906.87

## FUNDING SUPPORT BY SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS

- State Education Improvement Act (EIA) Funding
- State READY Funding\*
- Federal AmeriCorps Service Site
- Federal Preschool Development Grant 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

\*\*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

Federal AmeriCorps funding awarded to SC First Steps from the SC Service Commission at the United Way Association of SC

\*\*\*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.

# Roberta Hall Kinard

## Board Chair



As Chair of the Newberry County First Steps Board, I am proud to reflect on another year of growth, collaboration, and impact. In 2024, we have continued to make strides in ensuring that every child in our community has access to the resources, support, and opportunities they need to thrive from birth through the earliest stages of education.

By working together with local organizations, schools, and families, we've expanded the reach of our services, empowering parents as their children's first and most important teachers. From the expansion of our family literacy initiatives to the growth of our childcare quality programs, we have met families where they are and provided meaningful, accessible support.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to our dedicated staff, partners, fellow board members, and community members who have contributed to these successes. Your commitment to improving the lives of Newberry County's children and families is inspiring, and it is an honor to serve alongside you.

The work of Newberry County First Steps is essential, and together, we will continue to strengthen the foundation for lifelong learning and success for every child in our community.

## Our Local Supporters

School District of Newberry County  
Newberry County Library  
United Way of the Midlands  
SC Endeavors  
Thrivent Financial  
Westview Behavioral  
Newberry Parks and Recreation  
The Newberry Opera House  
Individual Donors and Community Members

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## Board of Directors

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## CONTACT US

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