



# 2023-2024

## ANNUAL REPORT



# FIRST STEPS IS HERE

Last year, because of Charleston County First Steps:



**652 children**

were directly served in Charleston County



**694 parents & caregivers**

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



**117 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 CHARLESTON COUNTY

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

**27,123**

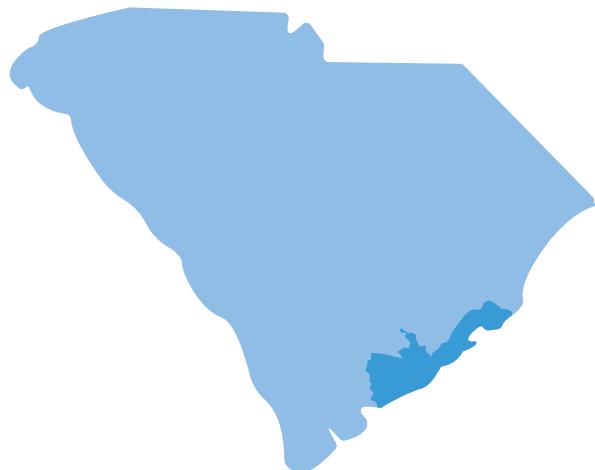
children under 6

**31%**

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

**46%**

of kindergarteners are considered "not ready" for school



# OUR MISSION

To improve the overall well-being of young children. We accomplish this by offering rigorous early childhood programming, providing opportunities for family engagement and support, and fostering community partnerships.



## Tamatha Kohler

### Executive Director

As I reflect on the past year with Charleston County First Steps, I am filled with gratitude and optimism. Despite the challenges we faced, our commitment to ensuring every child has the best start in life has remained unwavering.

This year, we have strengthened our community connections and forged new partnerships with local businesses, schools, and organizations. These collaborations have been instrumental in expanding our services and enhancing our impact.

Looking ahead, I am excited about the future. With your continued support, we will build on our progress and strive to make an even greater difference in the lives of the children and families we serve.

Thank you for your dedication and partnership. Together, we are making a lasting impact.

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

"What I love best about the Motherread/Fatheread class was the enthusiasm that Jeehan provided during the class. There were so many interesting and informative questions about books that I haven't even thought of and the questions they asked, prompted me to be more interested in the story. Also, I found through taking the class there were so many different perspectives. The class really provided a well-rounded way to read & present stories to your child."

S. Eddy  
Motherread/Fatheread Program



## PROGRAMS

### HEALTH

#### Early Identification & Referral

Providing developmental screenings and referrals to other services.

38

children served

38

families served

### SCHOOL TRANSITION

#### Countdown to Kindergarten

Home visitation and group support for families, before birth and through age five.

14

children served

2

schools served

60

home/school visits

## PARENTING

### Parents as Teachers

Early childhood development program that helps families raise children to be healthy, safe, learning, and ready for school.

87

children served

19

parent and caregiver workshops

927

home visits

### Supporting Care Providers Through Visits

Site visits for home child care providers to encourage developmentally appropriate practices.

21

children served

4

providers served

73

provider visits

### Connected Families

Prevents the unnecessary removal of young children from their homes by providing parents and caregivers with voluntary, coordinated services.

64

children served

49

families served

523

home visits

### Motheread/Fatheread

Offers adult literacy classes to parents of young children, with an emphasis on the importance of reading regularly as a family.

14

children served

10

families served

22

parent workshops

### Raising a Reader - Enhanced

Helps families develop, practice, and maintain home literacy habits.

341

children served

341

families served

640

books distributed

## EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

### Quality Enhancement

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

460

children served

9

providers served

225

technical assistance hours

### Training & Professional Development

Certified and registered training hours for the early childhood workforce.

259

children served

7

providers served

11

certified training hours

### Child Care Scholarships

Eligible children receive tuition-free enrollment at quality child care centers.

20

children served

20

families served

# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

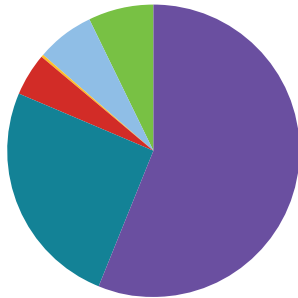


**\$1 = \$1.88**

Charleston County First Steps leveraged \$633,339.04 from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$0.88 for every state dollar invested.

## EXPENDITURES

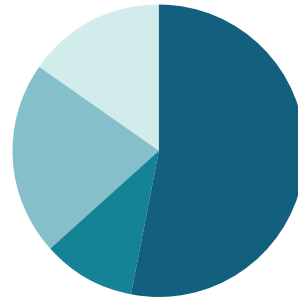
Total: \$1,393,213.26



- Parenting - \$785,260.40
- Early Care & Education - \$352,483.33
- Health - \$62,101.77
- School Transition - \$4,547.72
- Administrative - \$91,777.56
- Core Functions - \$97,042.48

## FUNDING SOURCES

Total: \$1,512,636.58



- State Funding - \$718,864
- Federal Funding - \$140,735.30
- Private Funding - \$287,046.04
- In-kind Contributions - \$205,557.70

## SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS FUNDING SUPPORT

State Education Improvement Act (EIA) Funding  
 State READY Funding\*  
 Federal AmeriCorps Service Site  
 Federal ESSER Funding\*\*  
 The Duke Endowment & Doris Duke Foundation  
 Pritzker Children's Initiative  
 Enterprise Holdings Foundation ROAD Forward Grant  
 State Income Tax Check-off and Private Donations to SC First Steps

*\*American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund, awarded to the South Carolina Department of Education*  
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*Federal AmeriCorps funding awarded to SC First Steps from the SC Service Commission at the United Way Association of SC*

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.



# Kristin Zeaser-Sydow

## Board Chair

As the Chairperson of the Charleston County First Steps Partnership Board, it is both an honor and a privilege to serve an agency that remains steadfast in its mission to prioritize the needs of children and families in Charleston County, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to thrive and reach their fullest potential regardless of background or circumstances. We envision a future where all children enter school ready to succeed, equipped with the skills and foundation necessary for lifelong learning and success. Charleston County First Steps has made significant strides over the year thanks to the unwavering support and dedication of our community partners, stakeholders, and generous supporters for whom we are profoundly grateful. Through collaborative efforts with community agencies and neighboring county First Steps agencies, we have been able to provide essential resources, innovative programs, and vital services that directly benefit our young children and their families. This support has enabled us to create lasting, positive impacts that ripple through our community, fostering a bright future for ALL.

Our journey is far from over. To continue advancing our mission and vision, we seek to strengthen our community partnerships and build new collaborations with agencies that share our commitment to serving children and families. We invite you to join us in this crucial endeavor, whether through financial contributions, community partnerships, or by working alongside us to enhance the support network available to those in need. Your involvement can take many forms: from providing financial support to expand our programs and services, to participating in community events that raise awareness and foster engagement. Each contribution, no matter the size, plays a vital role in helping us achieve our goals and continue our mission.

The collective strength of our community will make a significant difference. I encourage you to consider how you can contribute to our mission and join us in making a lasting impact on the lives of children and families in Charleston County. Please reach out to us for more information on how you can get involved or support our initiatives. We look forward to working together to create a bright and promising future for all the children and families we serve. Thank you and many smiles!

## Our Local Supporters

Charleston County School District  
The Walker Foundation  
Kaplan Early Learning Company  
The Junior League of Charleston

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## Board of Directors

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## CONTACT US

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