

2023-2024

ANNUAL REPORT



FIRST STEPS IS HERE

Last year, because of Saluda County First Steps:



1,273 children

were directly served in Saluda County



1,782 parents & caregivers

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



196 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 SALUDA COUNTY

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

1,251

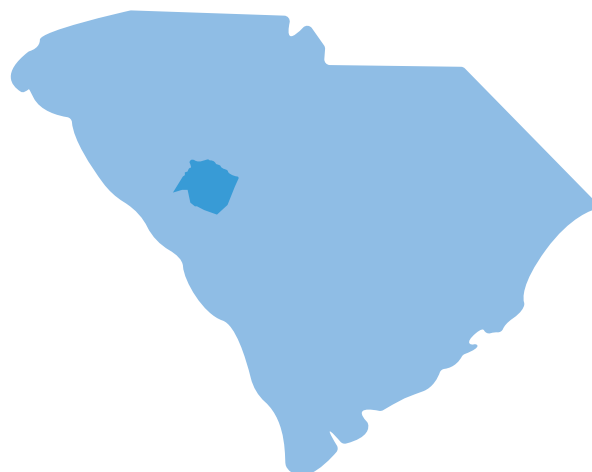
children under 6

50%

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

79%

of kindergarteners are considered "not ready" for school



OUR MISSION

To help families and caregivers prepare children to succeed in school by maximizing public and private community resources to deliver enhanced and expanded high-quality diverse early childhood services.



Kim Chariker

Executive Director

It has been an amazing year for Saluda County First Steps. Working in collaboration with our community partners and sharing resources to ensure we are reaching our youngest children to provide services for school readiness and success has been incredible. We have partnered with the Town of Saluda and Save The Children to provide early educational materials for the community center in town. We work with our Mayor and Town Council to declare April the "Month of the Young Child". Our partnership with our local school district allows us to serve our 3K/4K students with Enhanced Early Educational services. We provide Enhanced Early Education, Triple P, Saluda County Library Programs, Child Care Training, and NFP programs to our community. We ensure that Saluda County First Steps has a presence at all community events to share information regarding our programs. Saluda First Steps Is Here! #OneSaluda

Serving Saluda County's children birth through age five.

"While attending Saluda County First Steps parenting classes, I have learned many fun and educational activities that I can do at home inside and outside with both my kids. We have also started attending the Library programs sponsored by Saluda County First Steps."

Cierra M.
Saluda County First Steps parent



PROGRAMS

PARENTING

Nurturing Parenting

Designed to build nurturing parenting skills as an alternative to abusive and neglecting parenting and child-rearing practices.

29

children served

23

families served

12

group meetings

Library-Based Programs

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

225

children served

1,184

books read

832

literacy kits

EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

Training & Professional Development

Certified and registered training hours for the early childhood workforce.

113

staff trained

17

providers served

23

certified training hours

Enhanced Early Education

Provides important support to students and their families through supplemental materials and book distributions to classrooms

59

children served

59

families served

547

tutoring sessions

HEALTH

Nurse-Family Partnership

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

7

children served

7

families served

77

home visits

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

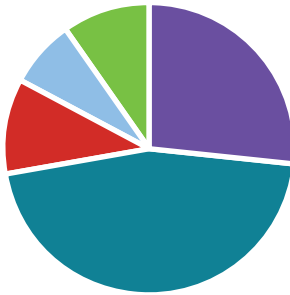


\$1 = \$1.47

Saluda County First Steps leveraged \$96,297.73 from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$0.47 for every state dollar invested.

EXPENDITURES

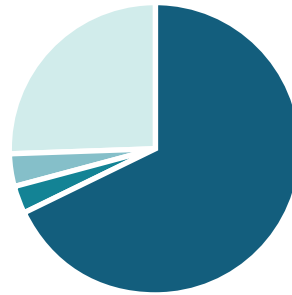
Total: \$300,838.46



- Parenting - \$80,496.05
- Early Care & Education - \$137,205.72
- Health - \$32,070.17
- Administrative - \$21,848.95
- Core Functions - \$29,217.57

FUNDING SOURCES

Total: \$301,419.73



- State Funding - \$205,122
- Federal Funding - \$8,800
- Private Funding - \$10,747.10
- In-kind Contributions - \$76,750.63

FUNDING SUPPORT BY SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS

- 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.

Angela Erhardt

Board Chair



First Step's motto of "First Steps is Here" represents its commitment to support local First Steps partnerships to provide programs that improve outcomes for communities. Saluda First Steps continues to work towards a time when every child is prepared for school with support services needed to be successful! Saluda First Steps' staff and board are dedicated to providing programs and services to all children and families in Saluda County that promote safety, well-being, healthy relationships, ignite excitement for learning, support wellness, and so much more.

Over the past year, Saluda First Steps has increased its presence in Saluda County through participation in community events, sponsored readings at the library, books to all K3, and K4, students throughout the school year, maintaining the Story Walk in the town park, sponsoring Nurse-Family Partnership, parenting classes, involvement in community meetings and projects, and providing all programs and materials in Spanish to respect Saluda's diverse culture.

We are excited to continue the work of the Saluda First Steps' mission and increase awareness to reach more children and families over the next few years. Saluda First Steps, working with our community partners, will continue to serve Saluda children and families with the expectation that one day every child will be prepared as he starts school to succeed to his full potential, first time mothers have the support they need during their pregnancy and first two years of motherhood, and all parents have the skills and supports to be their best. While it may take time to increase awareness to reach all children and families – our mission is equally important to each child and family we currently serve.

Saluda First Steps is proud to serve the young children and families of Saluda County and be a part of a such a supportive community. First Steps is Here! Saluda First Steps is Here!

Our Local Supporters

Cromley's Ford of Saluda SC

Save The Children

The Potter's House of Saluda SC

ABC Academy, LLC

Saluda County Library

Plus 27 Individual Donors, including all 13 Board Members

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