



## FIRST STEPS IS HERE

Last year, because of Darlington County First Steps:



**2,799 children**

were directly served in Darlington County



**1,030 parents & caregivers**

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



## Howard Nettles

Board Chair

This was a great year! The process of developing the strategic plan for Darlington County allowed the board along with its community partners to look deeply into the challenges and issues which impact the families and young children of our county. One of the critical areas of need identified was improving the mental health of our youngest learners. Darlington County has a mandate to reach more young parents to reduce these adverse childhood experiences. The additional funding from the S. C. Legislature will support the expansion of parenting services which is foundational to creating a nurturing home environment in which young children can grow and thrive. We are committed to addressing this issue and the other priority needs and we invite our many partners to join us in accomplishing these goals.

## 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 DARLINGTON COUNTY

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

**4,197**

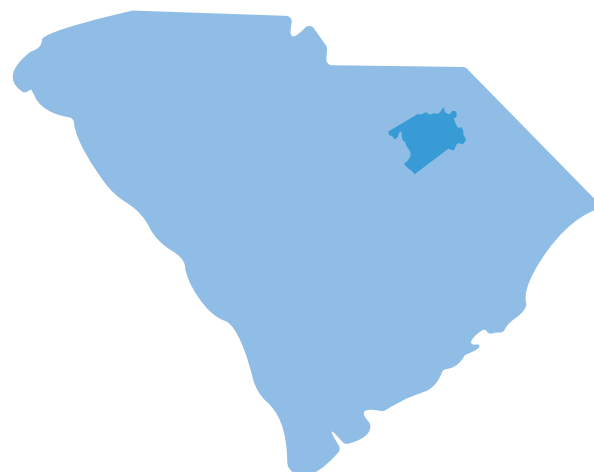
children under age 5

**59.8%**

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

**79%**

of kindergarteners are considered "not ready" for school



## Our Local Supporters

Save the Children Foundation - Gifts in Kind  
Power in Changing - Diaper Bank

## Board of Directors

Lucretia Bellamy	Howard Nettles
Brittney Scott	Thomas "T.C." Sawyer
Shaunya Miller Bright	Robert Stucks
Rudell Dubose	Barbara Carraway
Linda George	Carl Days
Lilkenya Jenkins	Frances Hicks
Lakisa Joye	Diane McIver
Albert Wingate	Thomasena Davis

## CONTACT US

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# 2022-2023 ANNUAL REPORT

# OUR MISSION

To provide programs, services and information to strengthen families and communities in Darlington County.



## Darnell Byrd McPerhson Executive Director

We continued to adjust, reinvent, and strategize on how to best meet the needs of the families and children and communities we serve. Our Board of Directors was fully engaged in crafting the strategic plan which renewed our vision and strengthened our mission. We established a second site. Parents as Teachers team was expanded. Save the Children Foundation's Gifts in Kind program and financial support helped us reach thousands of families through community and church outreach events. Darlington joined the Americorps family and piloted a new program, Family Café. We exhaled, along with the entire state, upon being fully authorized by the S. C. Legislature. We salute Senator Malloy and all who joined in making this a reality. We are grateful to the many volunteers, parents, partners, donors, consultants, and cheerleaders who continue to be engaged and supportive. Forward for children, families and communities!

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

"The partnership I have with First Steps has helped with me speak out and speak up more. Mrs. Bright always encourages me to speak and express my thoughts. She is always interested in my point of view. Mrs. Dargan is always checking in with me and encouraging me to advocate for myself and my son. First Steps has also chosen me to serve on the SC Family Voice Council and I am overjoyed!

Jalisa Byrd  
Darlington 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.

42 children served    33 group meetings and events    268 home visits

### Motherad/Fatheread

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

32 children served    25 families served    16 parent workshops

### Reach Out and Read

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

1,170 children served    2,340 book distributed

### Family Café

Parent discussion groups that promote social connections with other parents, support in times of need, learning about parenting and child development, and emotional awareness.

59 children served    39 families served    1 group meetings and events

## EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

### Health Services

First Steps coordinates with partners to support the health and well-being of families with young children.

1,267 children served    3,278 materials distributed

## SCHOOL TRANSITION

### 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.

1,267 children served    3 schools served    336 home visits

# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

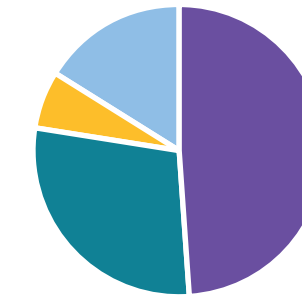


**\$1 = \$2.27**

Darlington County First Steps leveraged \$259,426.7 from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$1.27 for every state dollar invested.

## EXPENDITURES

Total: \$514,840.54



- Parenting - \$252,369.62
- Early Care & Education - \$146,923.28
- School Transition - \$32,607.89
- Administrative - \$82,939.75

## FUNDING SOURCES

Total: \$463,846.7



- State Funding - \$204,420
- Federal Funding - \$135,147.83
- Private Funding - \$124,278.87

## FUNDING SUPPORT BY SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS

- State Education Improvement Act (EIA) Funding
- State READY Funding\*
- 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

\*\*\*American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund, awarded to the South Carolina Department of Education