



2023-2024

ANNUAL REPORT



FIRST STEPS IS HERE

Last year, because of Oconee County First Steps:



4,332 children

were directly served in Oconee County



2,940 parents & caregivers

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



1,221 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 OCONEE COUNTY

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

4,278

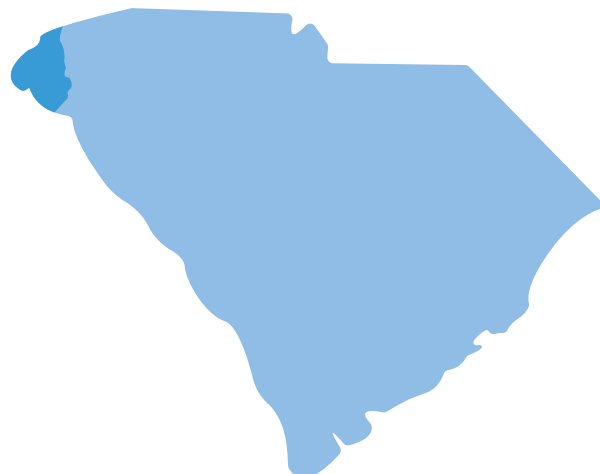
children under 6

51%

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

66%

of kindergarteners are considered "not ready" for school



OUR MISSION

Oconee County First Steps works collaboratively to ensure that all children start school ready to reach their highest potential with engaged support from their parents, caregivers, and communities.



Daby Snipes

Executive Director

Greetings, FY24 has been a year to remember for Oconee County First Steps. Thank you to our wonderful Oconee County Community for your love and dedication to the children of Oconee. Oconee County truly is a special place to live.

In FY24 our Local Partnership awarded Child Care Scholarships to 8 families, Over 25,000 books were distributed through the Dolly Parton Imagination along through The OPLC Summer Bash, Class room sets, 1 Book in every Bookbag given to all 4K students in SDOC, The Starlight Program, Local Daycares, Books and Teddy Bears for Oconee Memorial Hospital, Literacy Events and more. Due to these great partners and other like Trinity Baptist Church we partnered to provide "OH BABY BABY SHOWER" to meet expectant moms and dads and diaper bags with baby items, included diapers, wipes, and of course books. Thanks to the United Way of Oconee County we were able to link hands with so many agencies like our Daily Bread, The Westminster City Recreation Department, Westminster Senior Outreach, Church;s and neighbors to provide over 5,000 meals with Holiday Meals, Hot lunches when children are out of school and donations to local Blessing Boxes. We went from serving 22 children in Countdown to Kindergarten to 61! Without the support of The School District of Oconee Early Childhood director and 18 teachers this never would have happened.

How? Because of you, your gracious spirits and giving hearts make it possible to fund our Core Values where we would never be able to do this ourselves. The opportunity to serve alongside our community is a great blessing. We make a great Team Oconee! The Future is bright for our children because of you.

Serving Oconee County's children birth through age five.

"Oconee County First Steps really cares about our whole family when they have events where we feel safe and happy to come and be a part."

Oconee County First Steps parent



PROGRAMS

PARENTING

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

Free, high-quality books mailed to the home of children from birth until age five.

2,128

children served

20,366

books distributed

EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

Child Care Scholarships

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

8

children served

8

families served

4

providers served

HEALTH

Nurse-Family Partnership

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

18

children served

32

families served

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.

22

children served

2

schools served

132

home/school visits

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

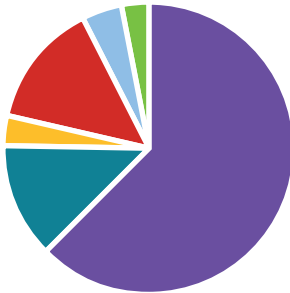


\$1 = \$3.90

Oconee County First Steps leveraged \$524,685.95 from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$2.90 for every state dollar invested.

EXPENDITURES

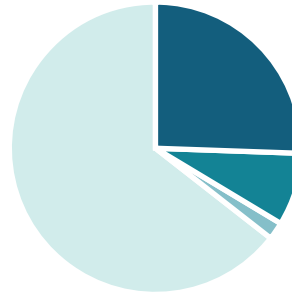
Total: \$718,226.64



- Parenting - \$450,562.31
- Early Care & Education - \$90,752.29
- School Transition - \$24,253.68
- Health - \$100,215.41
- Administrative - \$30,866.74
- Core Functions - \$21,576.21

FUNDING SOURCES

Total: \$705,836.25



- State Funding - \$181,150.30
- Federal Funding - \$57,412.31
- Private Funding - \$13,917.64
- In-kind Contributions - \$453,356

FUNDING SUPPORT BY SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS

State Education Improvement Act (EIA) Funding
 Federal ESSER Funding*
 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*

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.

Vanessa Earle

Board Chair



It is my distinct honor to serve as the Board Chair for Oconee County First Steps and I am very proud of our accomplishments. Being able to address these issues from a board standpoint, makes serving in this role matter. With continued support, OCFS will make sure children are ready for school! As partnerships with local organizations and our school's grow, they continuously strive to meet First Steps' goal of Getting Children Ready for School. Our collaboration with Local organizations are more important than ever before.

Contact our local partnership and inquire how you can help us continue providing school readiness opportunities for children and families. Thank you to the Board, Local Partners, and Daby Snipes our Executive Director for her work and dedication to preparing our young children for success in school and life.

Our Local Supporters

Barrett Trading Company

The Paul Hayne Circle

Trinity Baptist Church

Cliffs at Keowee Falls

United Way of Oconee County

Anonymous Community Donors

IN-KIND DONORS

The City of Westminster

South Carolina DSS Child Care Scholarships

Prisma Health-Upstate Nurse Family Partnership

The Dolly Parton Imagination Library

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