



FIRST STEPS IS HERE

Last year, because of Marion County First Steps:



766 children

were directly served in Marion County



1,810 parents & caregivers

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



182 educators

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



Judge Donald Fling

Board Chair

Marion County First Steps has always maintained that the years of early childhood are a critical window of development during which much human potential is shaped. They continue to live by their values ensuring that families are the single most important influence on the development of their young children.

Being a part of the board and leading my fellow board members has been one of the most rewarding tasks I've undertaken. Working with Spencer and his staff has brought the need of our families to the forefront of our everyday lives, and we continue to work to ensure those needs are met daily, especially when it comes to educating our children.

We extend our thanks to not only the parents, but also the teachers, caregivers and coordinators that work tirelessly towards ensuring the Marion County families and children are prepared for school!

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 MARION COUNTY

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

1,829

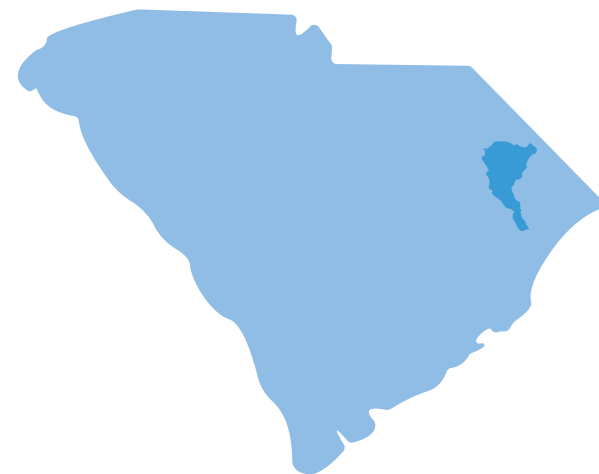
children under age 5

78.5%

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

77%

of kindergarteners are considered "not ready" for school



Our Local Supporters

SCDSS Scholarship \$298,678

Greenville Technical College \$2,500

Koworking Korner \$2,400.02

Kaplan \$2,328.72

Troy Johnson Learning Center \$2,000

Horry Telephone Company \$1,500.01

Bulk Bookstore

Marion Coordinating Council

McGill's Funeral Home

Scot Webster Insurance Agency

Annette Gerald

Beryl Collinton

Emerson Hunt

Evelyn Patterson

Fred Gause

Georgette Washington

Lakeithia Collins

Myeshia Rogers Hughes

Qurita McCowan

Shalah Sweeney

Tracy Wilson

Victoria Berlin

Board of Directors

Donald Fling

Tanya Hodge

Qurita McGown

Shalah Sweeney

Georgette Washington

Farrah Woodberry-Owens

Myesha Hughes-Rogers

Evelyn Grant

Donna Stackhouse

Haley Tucker

Denita Davis

Annette Gerald

Victoria Belin

CONTACT US

609 North Main St. Marion SC 29571 | 843-629-0202 | marionfirststeps.org



2022-2023 ANNUAL REPORT

OUR MISSION

To help Marion County families and caregivers prepare their children for school success by collaborating with other entities to maximize public and private community resources to deliver, enhance, and expand high-quality early childhood services.



Spencer R. Scott
Executive Director

As First Steps continues to grow, so do the programs we have launched within the community. These programs are an integral part of educating our children, as well as providing needed opportunities. We have expanded Nurturing Parenting, adding four parent educators that serve the county. Other programs show unprecedented growth, including Raising a Reader, Countdown to Kindergarten & Countdown to 4K. HIPPY is one of the largest programs. We enhanced Technical Assistant and Quality Enhancement programs and training, while increasing scholarships awarded through the scholarship program.

Hippy served 33 children and 32 families. Nurturing parenting services 72 families and children, and Literacy catered to 482 families & children. QE program served 201 children, had 100 visits and 151 hours of training. CTK helped 45 children and 44 children, while CT4K assisted 39 children and 37 families.

We live by our mission: "Getting children ready for school."

Serving Marion County's children birth through age five.



"The literacy program has helped my child and our center by exposing everyone to assorted literature, while sparking interest in books and storytelling. That spark has expanded beyond the classroom and overflowed into their homes, garnering positive feedback from everyone."

Gary Stagers
Marion County First Steps parent

PROGRAMS

PARENTING

HIPPY

Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) is a home visiting program that supports parents in their role as a child's first and most important teacher.

33 children served
24 group meetings and events
931 home visits

Nurturing Parenting

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

72 children served
28 families served
823 home visits

Raising a Reader - Enhanced

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

61 children served
13,332 books distributed

Library-Based Programs

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

482 children served

EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

Child Care Scholarships

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

34 children served

Quality Enhancement

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

201 children served
6 providers served
151 technical assistance hours

Training & Professional Development

Certified and registered training hours for the early childhood workforce.

1,292 children served
86 providers served
32 certified training hours

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.

45 children served
1 schools served
259 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.

39 children served
3 schools served
234 home visits

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

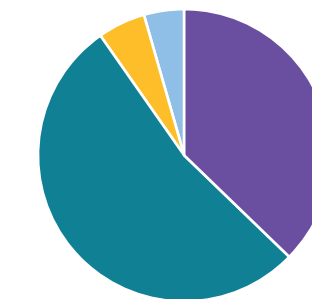


\$1 = \$3.33

Marion County First Steps leveraged \$466,404.11 from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$2.33 for every state dollar invested.

EXPENDITURES

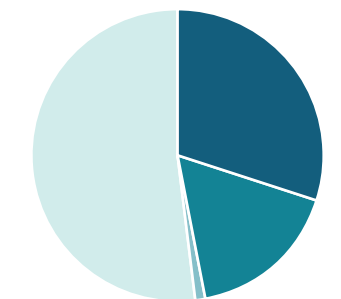
Total: \$710,694.02



- Parenting - \$266,360.81
- Early Care & Education - \$375,755.8
- School Transition - \$38,456.18
- Administrative - \$30,121.23

FUNDING SOURCES

Total: \$666,404.11



- State Funding - \$200,000
- Federal Funding - \$114,106.59
- Private Funding - \$7,203.96
- In-kind Contributions - \$345,093.56

FUNDING SUPPORT BY SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS

- State Education Improvement Act (EIA) Funding
- State READY Funding*
- Federal Preschool Development Grant Funding**
- Federal ESSER Funding***
- The Duke Endowment & Doris Duke Foundation
- Enterprise Holdings Foundation ROAD Forward Grant
- 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