



2023-2024

ANNUAL REPORT



FIRST STEPS IS HERE

Last year, because of Lexington County First Steps:



905 children

were directly served in Lexington County



747 parents & caregivers

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



116 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 LEXINGTON COUNTY

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

19,950

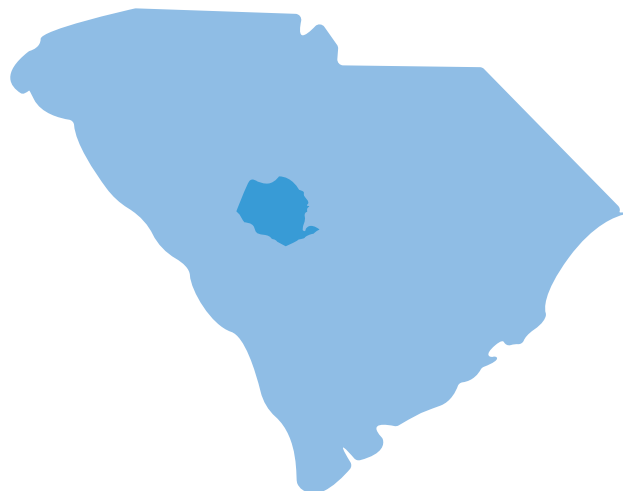
children aged 0-5

42%

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

57%

of kindergarteners are considered "not ready" for school



OUR MISSION

Support families in Lexington County so that all children enter school ready to learn.



James "Jim" Riddle

Executive Director

Once again, Lexington County First Steps is pleased to have experienced another year of excellence in parenting programs to include traditional Parents As Teachers (PAT curriculum), Connected Families (also PAT curriculum) serving DSS Referrals and PASOS assisting new immigrant families to navigate available public services.

All of these services have exceeded expectations of required numbers to serve due to the dedication of staff who "own" their positions with much pride in what they are employed to accomplish. In addition, the long-standing Countdown to Kindergarten services for rising 5K since 2004 beginning with 50 students, continues to grow every year, particularly with federal funding from ESSER dollars (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief). The addition of Countdown to Kindergarten for 4K has also added additional students to numbers served.

New federal ESSER funding has allowed additional PAT staff and/or increased hours in the five school districts for the first time ever with new funding of \$529,000 over 3 years, 2022-2024.

Lexington County First Steps would like to partner one day with neighboring Newberry County First Steps to grow into a Quality Counts Program to serve Childcare Providers with improved quality services.

Serving Lexington County's children birth through age five.

"Mi educador de padres me brinda mucho apoyo y conecta con recursos para la comunidad muy utiles. Me trae al hogar actividades de aprendizaje para mis niños para ponerlos listos para la escuela y durante las actividades grupales mi niño aprende a compartir y hacer nuevos amigos."

"My parent educator is very supportive and always helpful by connecting me to community resources. She brings learning activities to my home for my children to do and to get them ready for school. Also, during group connections my child learns how to interact, share and make new friends with other children."

Lexington 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.

178

children served

137

group meetings
and events

2,762

home visits

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

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

134

children served

788

books distributed

Connected Families

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

63

children served

8

group meetings
and events

328

home visits

HEALTH

Early Identification & Referral

Providing developmental screenings and referrals to other services.

109

children served

83

families served

EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

Training & Professional Development

Certified and registered training hours for the early childhood workforce.

1,191

children served

3

providers served

20

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.

300

children served

27

schools served

1,831

home/school
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.

105

children served

9

schools served

614

home/school
visits

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

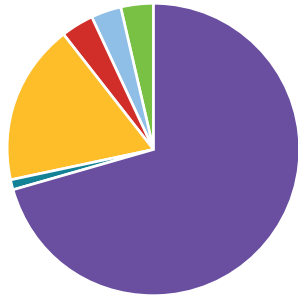


\$1 = \$2.86

Lexington County First Steps leveraged \$620,468 from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$1.86 for every state dollar invested.

EXPENDITURES

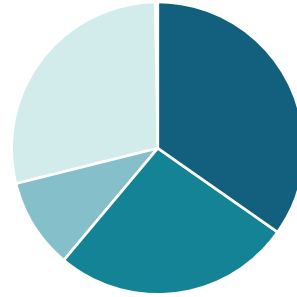
Total: \$1,762,768.99



- Parenting - \$1,245,311.32
- Early Care & Education - \$19,723.11
- School Transition - \$313,448.56
- Health - \$62,851.88
- Administrative - \$60,821.43
- Core Functions - \$60,612.69

FUNDING SOURCES

Total: \$1,776,412.47



- State Funding - \$620,468
- Federal Funding - \$469,988.80
- Private Funding - \$174,758.39
- In-kind Contributions - \$511,197.28

FUNDING SUPPORT BY SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS

State Education Improvement Act (EIA) Funding
 Federal ESSER Funding*
 The Duke Endowment & Doris Duke Foundation
 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.



Debbie Poole

Board Chair

Undisputed research supports the urgency with which preschool aged children must be surrounded by rich experiences, not only in literacy and numeracy, but also with ample opportunities for motor development and social emotional development in order to be prepared for school.

Lexington County First Steps (LCFS) administers programs such as Parent As Teachers, which provides highly qualified personnel to work with children and families prior to entering school. In addition, the Countdown to Kindergarten summer readiness program for both 4K and 5K have proven the value of early intervention between the teacher-to-be and the rising kindergartener. LCFS also provide valuable resources to promote school readiness as well as connections to local organizations that help support a child's development and success in school.

Providing group connections across Lexington County in partnership with all 5 School Districts builds community and strengthens protective factors for all our children and their parents.

Our Local Supporters

- Lexington School District One
- Lexilngon School District Two
- Lexington School District Three
- Lexington School District Four
- Lexington Richland District Five
- United Way

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CONTACT US

101 West Columbia Ave., Batesburg-Leesville, SC 29006 | 803-532-6861
<http://lexingtonfirststeps.org>