

THE NEED

IN SOUTH CAROLINA:

42%

of people live in a childcare desert, where there are more than three times as many children as licensed child care slots

53%

of children ages 3 and 4 are not enrolled in nursery school or preschool



IN CHEROKEE COUNTY:

3,311

children under age 5

26.9%

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

70%

of kindergartners are considered "not ready" for school

OUR MISSION

Collaborating with other entities, First Steps helps South Carolina families and caregivers prepare their children for school success by maximizing public and private community resources to deliver, enhance and expand high-quality early childhood services.

OUR APPROACH



High quality programs and services for children and families



Intensive training, resources and support for childcare providers



Strategic partnerships and community education

OUR IMPACT

5,514

number of children and adults served by Cherokee County First Steps in 2018-2019

JOIN US

We rely on a community of partners, donors, and volunteers – **people like you** – who believe in a brighter future for children and families in our community.

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dorothy M. Priester
Executive Director
Cherokee County First Steps

Cherokee County First Steps strives to meet the educational needs of local children. During FY19, the organization was able to impact families and children throughout the county as listed.

- 2,418 children served through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
- 282 child care teachers in attendance at training sessions
- 291 home visits with children in the Talk to Me Cherokee Initiative
- 14 outreach events including education fairs and presentations
- 420 total families and individuals informed of the importance of early literacy at events

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude for my Board of Directors and our partners that assist us with donations, outreach, and support. These partners include: SC First Steps, United Way of the Piedmont, SC Center for Child Care Career Development, SC Child Care Resource & Referral Network, Broad River Electric Charities, Cherokee County Community Foundation, Walmart of Gaffney, Allegra Marketing Print Mail, The Gaffney Ledger, Piedmont Community Action, Cherokee County School District, Spartanburg Community College - Cherokee Campus, Midway Baptist Church, Kiser Development Company, Cherokee County Public Library, KNOW(2), SC Education Oversight Committee, Institute for Child Success, and Limestone College.

OUR GOALS

Cherokee County First Steps' work, in collaboration with state and local partners, is focused on advancing Cherokee County toward these strategic goals in support of the Profile of the Ready Kindergartner, South Carolina's description of school readiness:

- Increase public awareness about the important of early language and literacy;
- Increase targeted outreach for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Program to include at-risk children and low-income families, through education fairs and community events;
- Provide training to child care providers to update them on rules and regulations;
- Coordinate with SC First Steps and other partners on grant applications for Talk to Me Cherokee Initiative, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, Child Care Training, and capacity building.

Cherokee County First Steps has been a valuable partner in helping our program increase partnerships with families to support dual language learners, address challenging behaviors in children, and collect and analyze data to improve learning experiences and outcomes for children we serve. The work of the Talk to Me Initiative is important to removing educational, social and economic barriers debilitating families living in poverty in Cherokee County.

Dr. Arthur Brewton, Director
Piedmont Community Action Head Start/Early Head Start Program



IMAGINATION LIBRARY



an evidence-based program

As the local affiliate of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, we provide free, high-quality books to children from birth until age five, no matter their family's income.

Children enrolled in our Imagination Library program receive one book per month by mail. Each title is selected by a panel of early childhood literacy experts, who are responsible for choosing books that meet the age-specific developmental needs of young children.

IMAGINATION LIBRARY BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2019

2,418

children served

23,082

books distributed



- ✓ Children were read to approximately 142,018 hours by parents and caregivers
- ✓ 73% of children within the county are participating in the program
- ✓ 55% of parents reported reading to their child daily
- ✓ 82% of parents reported reading to their child more often than before enrolling
- ✓ 64% of parents have doubled the number of books in the home while in the program





CHILD CARE TRAINING



an evidence-based program

High-quality child care hinges on high-quality professional development that meets the needs of the local child care workforce. Our training programs are certified through the SC Center for Child Care Career Development and include topics in the areas of nutrition, health and safety, curriculum, child guidance, professional development and program administration. Our 2018-2019 trainings included:

Communication & Language Development of Young Children

Connecting the SC Learning Standards to Your Lessons

Business Basics Building a Great Team

Business Marketing Tools & Strategies

Blood Borne Pathogens

What Do I Do When the Children Do That

Social & Emotional Development Within the Context of Relationships

Physical Activity: Brain Smart Moves

Importance of Music With Infant & Toddlers

Brain Power

TRAINING BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2019

282

total training attendance

98

child care teachers and directors served

10

number of training sessions offered



Child care workers participating in an activity during training on March 16, 2019.

Quote from participant regarding the Growth & Development session

“Brain Power” by Susan Kear:

“I will use this information to make my classroom a better environment for me and my kids.”



TALK TO ME CHEROKEE INITIATIVE



an evidence-based program

Talk to Me Cherokee Initiative's mission includes preparing Cherokee County children for success through language and literacy skill development. Talk to Me addresses the problem of children falling behind in vocabulary skills by increasing parent talk and face-to-face interactions. One of the initiative's main goals is increasing interactive talk and conversational turns. As one component of the program, home visits are provided to targeted families utilizing quality early learning experiences through the LENA curriculum. The LENA (Language ENvironment Analysis) System (device) is used to measure language exchanges between the parent and child, track progress, and provide feedback. Talk to Me Cherokee Initiative is a collaboration between Cherokee County First Steps and other agencies including: United Way of the Piedmont, Cherokee County School District, Piedmont Community Action Head Start/Early Head Start Program, Spartanburg Community College - Cherokee Campus, Cherokee County Public Library, KNOW(2), SC Education Oversight Committee, Institute for Child Success, and Limestone College.

TALK TO ME CHEROKEE INITIATIVE BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2019

36

children served

291

total home visits



- ✓ 65% of parents increased words spoken to their child per hour
- ✓ 50% of parents increased conversational turns with their child each day
- ✓ 68% of parents increased the amount of time spent talking with their child

4K

FOUR-YEAR-OLD KINDERGARTEN



an evidence-based program

South Carolina First Steps provides eligible children with free enrollment in full-day four-year-old kindergarten programs. In coordination with First Steps local partnerships and more than 200 private, faith- and community-based preschool providers, First Steps 4K expands access to quality child care across the state.



ELIGIBILITY

To qualify for enrollment, a child must:

- ✓ Be 4 years old on or before September 1
- ✓ Qualify for Medicaid or a free or reduced-price lunch program
- ✓ Live in one of 64 qualifying school districts

FIRST STEPS 4K IN ABC COUNTY 2018-2019

23

children enrolled

2

participating classrooms

4K NEWS

In fiscal year 2019-2020, South Carolina First Steps is launching a pilot program to expand 4K enrollment within underserved communities. Age- and income-eligible children residing in any SC school district may qualify for a slot in a participating center that also serves students from eligible districts.





PUBLIC AWARENESS



an evidence-informed program

Public awareness was increased regarding the importance of early education by conducting presentations at meetings and events in the community. Local learning events included Early Head Start Family Socialization Events, Gaffney Outlet Marketplace Halloween Event, and the City of Gaffney Easter Egg Hunt. There were 14 outreach events, which included education/health fairs, back to school activities, company presentations and picnics. A total of 276 children and families were served by these events. An additional 144 adults were provided with information about the program.

PUBLIC AWARENESS BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2019

581

materials
distributed

14

events held

1,243

total event
attendance



A few members
of the Cherokee
County First
Steps Board and
staff at an event
in August 2018.





COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Addressing the needs of young children is a shared endeavor. In addition to providing services to families and support for child care providers, Cherokee County First Steps mobilizes partners and community members to ensure all children in Cherokee County begin school ready to succeed. We serve

as a:

LOCAL PORTAL

connecting preschool children and their families to services

CONVENER

of community stakeholders to develop an effective and comprehensive early childhood system

CHAMPION

of the importance of school readiness to our children's future

OUR PARTNERSHIPS BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2019

5

Talk to Me Cherokee
Initiative Partner Meetings

3

Cherokee County Child Care
Directors' Association Meetings

Cherokee County First Steps continues to reach people in the community and is willing to meet and discuss critical areas of our program to improve our reach and effectiveness. Cherokee County First Steps is a vital part of early childhood learning in our community.

**HEATHER SWAYNGIM, FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
KNOW(2)**



OUR SUPPORTERS

Through partnerships and collaborations, as well as financial support from grants and contributions, Cherokee County First Steps leverages state dollars to enhance and expand services to children and families.

FUNDING SUPPORT

State of South Carolina \$197,438
(through South Carolina First Steps)

SC Center for Child Care
Career Development \$2,000

Broad River Electric Charities \$1,000

SC State Federal Credit Union \$250

Burns Chevrolet, Inc. \$300

United Way of the Piedmont \$10,285

Cherokee County
Community Foundation \$2,000

Walmart of Gaffney \$1,000

Encounter Church \$300

Larry & Ann Sossamon \$1,000

Limestone Presbyterian Church \$329

Early Childhood
Innovation Grant \$10,000

Remnant Warriors Global, Inc. \$400

Preschool Development Grant \$11,022

Roger Shiflett Ford \$300

Board Fundraisers \$3,526

IN-KIND SUPPORT

Dollywood Foundation

Kiser Development Company

Allegra Marketing Print Mail

Midway Baptist Church

Spartanburg Community College, Cherokee Campus

SC Child Care Resource & Referral Network

JOIN US

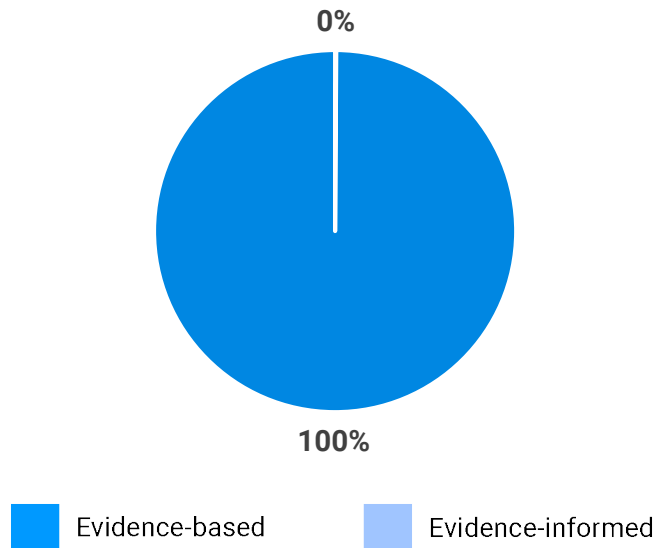
Support Cherokee County First Steps today through a tax-deductible donation or volunteer! For more information, please call our office at 864.487.9466 or email us at cc1ststeps@yahoo.com.



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

OUR INVESTMENT IN QUALITY

Expenditures of State Funds by Program Type



ESTIMATION OF COST SAVINGS

Since inception, Cherokee County First Steps has leveraged **\$2,645,072** from sources outside of state government.

That's **\$0.59** for every state dollar.

SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES BY STRATEGY

| | State Funding | Federal Funding | Private Funding | In-Kind Contributions | Total |
|--|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Dolly Parton's Imagination Library | \$30,415 | \$ | \$16,040 | \$271,557 | \$318,012 |
| LENA-Talk to Me Cherokee Initiative | \$65,328 | \$ | \$6,172 | \$1800 | \$73,300 |
| Countdown to Kindergarten | \$165 | \$5,480 | \$0 | \$0 | \$5,645 |
| Child Care Training & Professional Development | \$66,491 | \$0 | \$3,201 | \$3,600 | \$73,292 |
| Partnerships and Community Education | \$18,969 | \$3,000 | \$ | \$900 | \$22,869 |
| Administrative Support | \$16,070 | \$0 | \$1,213 | \$900 | \$18,183 |
| Total Expenses | \$197,438 | \$8,480 | \$26,626 | \$278,757 | \$511,301 |



LEADERSHIP

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| | |
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STAFF

Dorothy M. Priester, Executive Director

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Maggie Williams, Program Assistant

Mae Frances Sarratt, Outreach Professional; Consultant

Timena Sarratt, Talk to Me Coordinator; Consultant

Corene Potlow, Talk to Me Home Visitor; Consultant

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