



ANNUAL REPORT

2018-2019



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 LANCASTER COUNTY:

5,777

children under age 5

42%

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

63%

of kindergartners are considered "not ready" for school

OUR MISSION

Collaborating with other entities, Lancaster County First Steps helps Lancaster County 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

4,683

number of children and adults served by Lancaster 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.

121 S. Wylie St, Lancaster SC 29720 | 803-286-8000 | www.lancastercountyfirststeps.org/

Data provided by:





OUR STORY

Collaborating with other entities, Lancaster County First Steps helps Lancaster County families and prepare their children for school success by maximizing public and private community resources to deliver, enhance and expand high-quality early childhood services. Our vision is that every Lancaster County child will enter school ready to succeed.

Our partnership's work, in collaboration with state and local partners, is focused on advancing Lancaster County towards these strategic goals in support of the **Profile of the Ready Kindergartner**, South Carolina's description of school readiness:

- **Goal 1.** Increase efforts of working with county-wide partners to strengthen the early education initiatives in Lancaster County.
- **Goal 2.** Integrate school readiness information within all Lancaster County partners.
- **Goal 3.** Improve the capacity of staff, board and partners to carry out the mission, deliver and support evidence-based programs.
- **Goal 4.** Increase revenue to build a sustainable and diversified funding stream.
- **Goal 5.** Increase community awareness and support of Lancaster County First Steps' programs and services.

OUR GOALS



Lora Bryson, Executive Director...

Lancaster County First Steps has delivered high quality, early education programs in many diverse settings this year. Serving the greatest at-risk children under the age of 3 is our main focus. Our Early Head Start program that serves 72 children from birth to age 3 received a \$330,000 supplemental grant to create three natural environment playgrounds at the EHS-Child Care Centers. First Steps has provided over 14,809 books to children through our Dolly Parton Imagination Library Program, implemented a Countdown to Kindergarten program with 75 families creating strong relationships with the children and families. Incredible Years Parenting has provided positive parenting that has improved parental self-confidence, increased family communication and problem solving. A collaboration with the Town of Kershaw is being created to provide 4-K to the most vulnerable children in the Kershaw area. Lancaster County First Steps collaborates with the Promise Neighborhood Project, University of South Carolina at Lancaster, Municipalities, Faith-base, School District, United Way, Fatherhood Program, DSS, DHEC, Arts Council, HOPE, Care, Christian Services, Second Harvest Food Bank, and many businesses to make sure all children in Lancaster County enter school ready to learn and succeed. This has been a fabulous year and First Steps has made a tremendous difference in the lives of our youngest learners. Next year will only be better!!



EARLY IDENTIFICATION & REFERRAL



an evidence-based program

First Steps' Early Identification and Referral (EI&R) programs serve families with young children with suspected delays in development, acting as a local portal to connect families to community-based services they may need or desire to ensure the school readiness of their children. EI&R services include:



Screenings for children ages 0-5 with suspected delays in development



Referrals, based on screening results, to appropriate resources and support services



Patient information including strategies to monitor growth and development

EI&R BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2019

142

children served

693

materials distributed

12

referrals to BabyNet or other local services



Our initiative this year was to increase public awareness in the importance of early identification of developmental delays and assist parents in navigating the sometimes complex referral process. We matched the needs of **38** children with appropriate resources using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire as assessment tools. Fourteen (**14**) children were also screened for autism with the MCHAT tool.



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

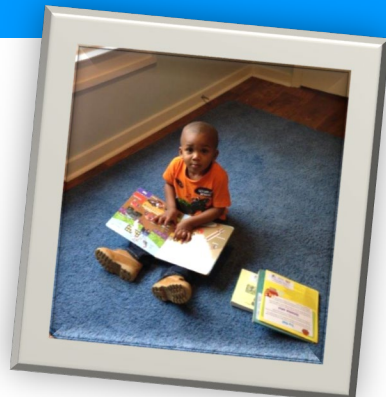
1,601 **14,809**

children served

books distributed

Books are 100% free to children in Lancaster County because Lancaster County First Steps secures the funds to cover the cost of books and shipping fees.

Join us by sponsoring a child for just \$30 a year.





COUNTDOWN TO KINDERGARTEN



an evidence-informed program

Developed by South Carolina First Steps – and identified as a promising state practice by the National Governor’s Association in 2005 – Countdown to Kindergarten (CTK) is a home visitation program pairing the families of rising kindergartners with their future teachers during the summer before school entry. Teachers complete six visits with each family, establishing strong connections during the summer that facilitate classroom learning throughout the year.

CTK BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2019

8

kindergarten teachers
trained as home visitors

75

children served

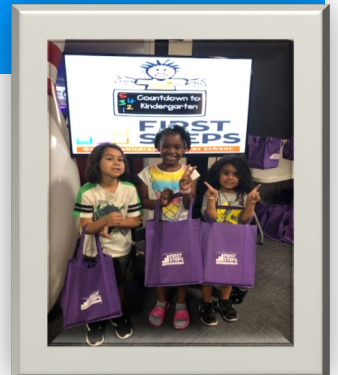
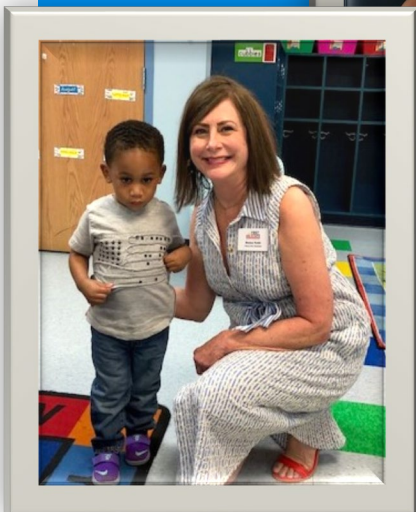
450

total home and school
visits



All teachers that participated in the CTK program reported stronger relationships with the children and their families. While over 90% of parents reported having a better understanding of the expectations of Kindergarten.

Certified CTK Teacher Andrea Jacobs presents the math lesson to Chase Williams, Kindergarten student at North Elementary.





PARENTING PROGRAM



an evidence-based program

In an effort to support positive social and behavioral development in young children, Lancaster County First Steps implemented the Incredible Years Program at Southside Early Childhood Center. Incredible Years has been effective in reducing children's aggression and behavioral problems in early childhood classrooms and at home. The Incredible Years program provides 10 weeks of group training for parents, with an emphasis on positive parenting strategies that promote children's social skills.

The following has been proven:

- Increases in parent positive affect such as praise and reduced use of criticism and negative commands
- Increases in parental use of effective limit-setting by replacing spanking and harsh discipline with non-violent discipline techniques and increased monitoring of children
- Reductions in parental depression and increases in parental self-confidence
- Increases in positive family communication and problem solving
- Reduced conduct problems in children's interactions with parents and increases in their positive affect and compliance to parental commands.

Incredible Years Parenting BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2019

48

Children Served

32

Families Served

18

Training Sessions
Offered





EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAM



an evidence-based program

Lancaster County First Steps Early Head Start Child Care Partnership is a federally funded community based program. We partner with two local child care centers to provide full day, year round care for our families. We serve children from birth through their 3rd year. Our program provides comprehensive service to families and children to include early childhood education and development, individualized services, family support and engagement, health and dental screenings, disabilities, nutrition and community resources.

As a child care partnership grant, we are also tasked with enhancing the local child care programs that we partner with. We provide resources to improve facilities, provide higher training for teachers and staff, provide high quality education materials for the classroom and playgrounds and also funding to improve the salaries of child care staff. A few of our successes include the completion of three (3) naturalized outdoor learning environments with a ribbon cutting at each. We also sponsored a Fatherhood Socialization Bowling Event and completed family training and strengthening sessions.

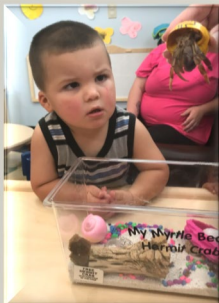
EARLY HEAD START BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2019

92

CHILDREN SERVED

3

PROVIDERS SERVED





NUTRITION PROGRAM



an evidence-informed program

Through our collaboration with Clinton Elementary School and Brooklyn Springs Elementary, it has become apparent to Lancaster County First Steps that many of the children that participate in the free and reduced lunch program have no way for their nutritional needs to be met on the weekends. In response to this need, the Weekend Backpack Feeding Program has been implemented at both schools.

Each week during the school year, Lancaster County First Steps will ensure that at-risk elementary students will receive a Weekend Backpack designed to supplement meals for children, who depend on school breakfasts and lunches, during the week. The Second Harvest Food Bank delivers packs of nutritious, child-friendly, nonperishable, easily consumed and vitamin fortified food packed in backpacks each Thursday.

Several volunteers tag and distribute these backpacks to each classroom on Thursday afternoons.

On Friday, both schools discreetly distribute these bags to children to carry home for the weekend. Lancaster County First Steps also includes newsletters, lists of helpful resources for parents, developmentally appropriate fact sheets, nutrition, health and fitness tips, fun and informational education materials with the backpacks each week. If interested in volunteering to assist with this program, please call the Lancaster County First Steps office at (803) 286-8000

WEEKEND BACKPACK FEEDING PROGRAM BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2019

425

children served

13,095

meals provided

384

volunteer hours

“

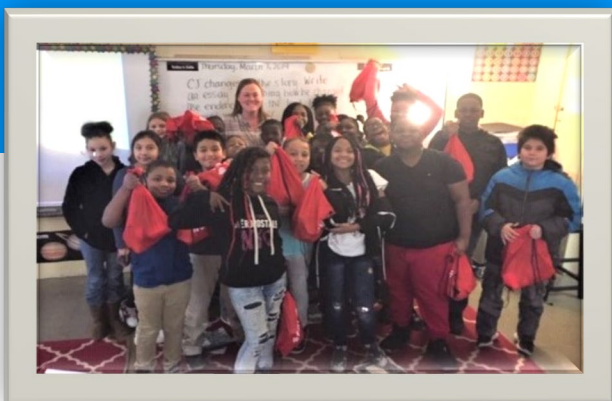
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This is such a beautiful program. Thank you for sending food home each week with Kalashia. I have 5 foster children and the food bag is such a blessing to those kids. Thank you First Steps!

(Parent of Student at Clinton Elementary)



Volunteers deliver bags to students at Clinton Elementary





PUBLIC AWARENESS



The Community Education initiative involves interventions targeted at the entire community to build awareness about the importance of early childhood education through live performances and expert speakers for parents and children. Our organization is reaching out to the families of Lancaster County, community partners and business leaders to increase access to print and electronic resources embracing the value of early childhood education and the needs of the children in our community.

Our presence in the local newspaper has been increased with more articles covering our programs and successes. Since social media is the wave of the future, our Facebook page has been enhanced with new postings an average of three times per week. Attending local festivals is also being used as an additional method to bring the message of early childhood education to the Lancaster community.

Community Education BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2019

13,788

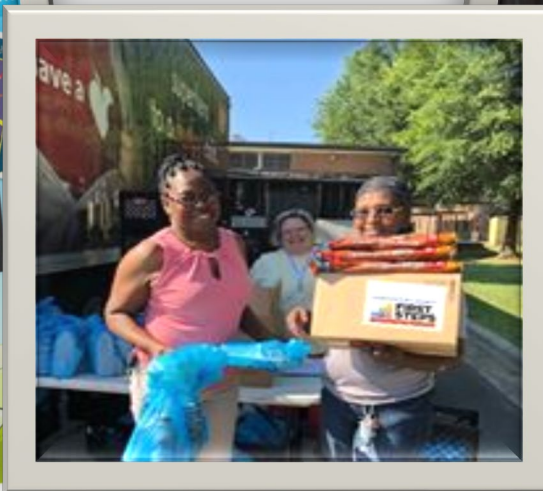
materials distributed

13

events held

3,897

total event
attendance





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, Lancaster County First Steps mobilizes partners and community members to ensure all children in Lancaster 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

4

Grants Received

\$135,200

***Funds Received Beyond State &
Federal Dollars***

The Countdown to Kindergarten Program has been an absolutely amazing experience. Not only is my son ready to start kindergarten, we, his parents are excited and ready for him to begin this new chapter in life. Our minds are at total ease and we have complete confidence in Mrs. Springs and everyone at North Elementary. I feel the relationship that we have built with her over the summer will ensure a successful and smooth school year. Thank you so much Lancaster County First Steps for your hard work and dedication as well to our children.

Absolutely TOP KNOTCH organization!

Josh Wheatly, Father of CTK Student Zylar Wheatly



OUR SUPPORTERS

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

FUNDING SUPPORT

EHS-CCP Grant: \$2,143,715
(To provide EHS-Child Care Partnership Program to Children 0-3)

State of South Carolina: \$216,158
(Through South Carolina First Steps)

The Springs Close Foundation: \$78,720
(For Weekend Backpack Feeding Program)

The Springs Close Foundation: \$18,000
(For Countdown to Kindergarten Summer 2019)

South Carolina Office of Rural Health: \$25,000
(Lancaster Promise Neighborhood Canvassing Training)

South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness: \$6,000
(Countdown to Kindergarten Expansion)

United Way Grant: \$13,500
(Dolly Parton Imagination Library & Countdown to Kindergarten)

IN-KIND SUPPORT

Dollywood Foundation: \$163,016

Kaplan Early Learning Company: \$2,002

Lakeshore Learning Materials \$3,223

Various EHS-CCP Consultants: \$5,735

JOIN US

Thank you to Our Exceptional Community Partners and Collaborators!

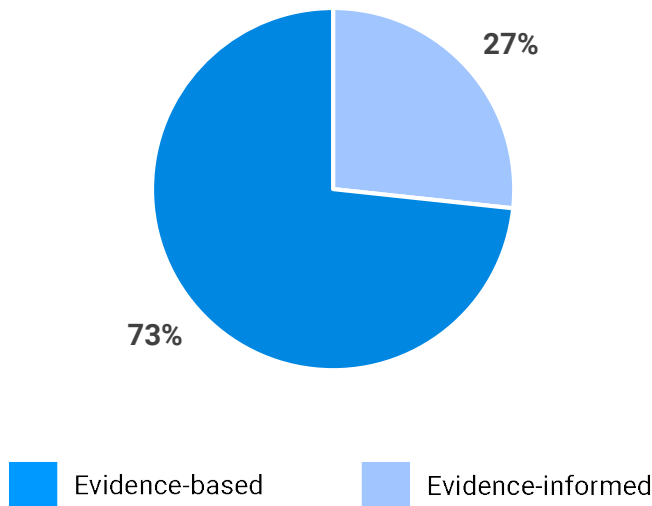
For more information on partnership opportunities, visit our website at
www.lancastercountyfirststeps.org/



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

OUR INVESTMENT IN QUALITY

Expenditures of State Funds by Program Type



ESTIMATION OF COST SAVINGS

Since inception, Lancaster County First Steps has leveraged **\$11,982,995** from sources outside of state government.

That's **\$2.45** for every state dollar.

SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES BY STRATEGY

	State Funding	Federal Funding	Private Funding	In-Kind Contributions	Total
Family Literacy/Parenting	\$50,335	\$0	\$442	\$0	\$50,777
Imagination Library	\$20,902	\$0	\$27,325	\$163,016	\$213,403
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$27,533	\$3,238	\$25,883	\$2,002	\$55,418
EHS-Child Care Partnership Grant	\$3,721	\$2,063,383	\$900	\$11,258	\$2,079,262
Backpack Feeding Program	\$14,569	\$0	\$99,950	\$0	\$114,519
Early Identification & Referral	\$40,672	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$40,672
Program Support	\$18,682	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$18,682
Administrative Support	\$20,365	\$0	\$0	\$0	20,365
Total Expenses	\$196,779	\$2,065,543	\$154,500	\$176,276	\$2,593,098



LEADERSHIP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Sandra Jowers

STAFF

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Kim West, ***Program Assistant***

Patrick Rivera, ***Fiscal Coordinator***

Denise Jowers, ***Heath, Nutrition & Safety Coordinator***

Haven Langley, ***ERSEA & Data Coordinator***

Sherry Bradshaw, ***Early Learning Coordinator***

Nicole Barrino, ***Infant & Toddler Specialist***

CONTACT US

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