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 LAURENS COUNTY:

3,816
children under age 5

29.3%
of young children live in poverty or low-income households

65%
of kindergartners are considered "not ready" for school

OUR MISSION
In collaborate with other entities, Laurens County First Steps helps local 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
1,750
number of children and adults served by Laurens 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.

1029 West Main Street Laurens, SC 29360 864-984-8130 | scfirststeps.org/laurens
OUR STORY

In April 2019, Laurens County First Steps partnered with the Laurens County City Police Department, the Laurens County Sheriff’s Department, United Community Bank, Laurens County Department of Social Services, the city of Clinton and Palmetto Heritage Real Estate to sponsor a candlelight vigil event for the prevention of child abuse. The event took place on the historic courthouse square in downtown Laurens. The main speaker for the event was Cheryl Fowler, the grandmother of a young boy who was abused and murdered in Laurens County. In his memory she created the Brantley’s Hope Foundation to support county-wide efforts to educate our community about ways we can work together to recognize the signs of child abuse and steps we can take to prevent the children of Laurens County from suffering abuse.

The mayor, sheriff, and city police chief also spoke to address the statistics associated with child abuse in Laurens County and the state.

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

• LCFS will form a committee of community leaders across all sections of Laurens County to share resources and work to make those resources readily accessible to pre-school children and their families in Laurens County.

• LCFS will revise all printed informational materials, update social media platforms, and work to develop a website.

We know what child abuse looks like—death, or foster care. But what does it sound like and look like in the beginning?

Cheryl Fowler
Parents as Teachers (PAT) is a home visiting program designed to build strong communities, thriving families and children who are healthy, safe and ready to succeed. PAT services include:

- Personal visits from a parent educator at least twice monthly
- Monthly group connections with other PAT families
- Screenings and assessments to identify developmental concerns
- Connections to outside resources that families may need to succeed

PAT recently received the highest rating from the federal Prevention Services Clearinghouse. This recognition validates the effectiveness of Parents as Teachers as a strategy for improving parenting practices, promoting early detection of developmental delays and health issues, preventing child abuse and neglect, and enhancing school readiness and success.

**PAT IN LAURENS COUNTY 2018-2019**

19 families served

297 total home visits
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:

- Room Arrangement, Furnishings & Materials
- The Effects of Trauma on a Young Child’s Development
- Developing Friendship Skills
- Business Marketing Strategies, Tools & Plans
- The Effects of Mental Illness on a Young Child’s Development
- Reaching Developmental Milestones
- Emotional & Social Development in Preschoolers
- Connecting the SC Learning Standards to your Lesson Plans
- Building Physical Literacy is Important Too
- Meals with Appeal for Young Children
- Tools for Meaningful Learning & Authentic Assessment
- Physical Development of Young Children
- CPR & First Aid
- Inclusion
- Challenging Behaviors
- Creative Experiences & Activities

**TRAINING BY THE NUMBERS**

**2018-2019**

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>total training attendance</td>
<td>304</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>child care teachers and directors served</td>
<td>131</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>number of training sessions offered</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“We do like and want the training that First Steps provides. I encourage my staff to do the face to face training instead of Online.”

_Gail, CCC Director_
For many families in Laurens County, the cost of quality childcare is out of reach. Laurens County First Steps’ childcare scholarship program enables low income, at risk families to have a healthy, safe, and consistent daily learning environment for their preschool children so parents can work and/or attend school. The parents have a $15 per week co-pay and Laurens County First Steps pays the remainder of the weekly fee. Families qualify for childcare scholarships based on their application which documents income and risk factors based on the State Board approved program standards. All scholarship families participate in the Parents as Teachers program, which is evidenced based and part of the national Parents as Teachers home-visiting program. Children must be between birth and 4 years old to receive a scholarship. When a child reaches age eligibility for 4K, they age out of our scholarship program.

**SCHOLARSHIPS BY THE NUMBERS**

**2018-2019**

- 21 number of children served
- 3 number of providers served
- 92 number of developmental screenings provided

100% the money paid to childcare providers goes back into our local economy to benefit the citizens of Laurens County.
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 LAURENS COUNTY 2018-2019

89 children enrolled

6 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.
NURSE-FAMILY PARTNERSHIP

Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) helps transform the lives of vulnerable first-time mothers and their babies. Through ongoing home visits from registered nurses, moms receive the care and support they need to have a healthy pregnancy, provide responsible and competent care for their children, and become more economically self-sufficient. From pregnancy until the child turns two years old, Nurse-Family Partnership Nurse Home Visitors form a much-needed, trusting relationship with their clients, instilling confidence and empowering them to achieve a better life for their children – and themselves.

BY THE NUMBERS
2018-2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>100</th>
<th>200</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>families attended</td>
<td>meals &amp; totes provided</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community baby shower</td>
<td>by Lauren County First Steps</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Laurens County First Steps does not directly serve families with home visits. We provide financial support and materials for clients and events with private donations or fundraisers.

Your support makes a difference.
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Addressing the needs of young children is a shared endeavor. In addition to providing services to families and support for childcare providers, Laurens County First Steps mobilizes partners and community members to ensure all children in Laurens 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

1,528 Books given to children, families, childcare providers

14 Attendance at first EC Advisory Committee meeting

We thank Laurens County First Steps for initiating the focus on early childhood education in Laurens County. This group can broaden public knowledge on critical needs for preschool children to receive in order for them to succeed in school.

Member of Early Childhood Advisory Council
Through partnerships and collaborations, as well as financial support from grants and contributions, Laurens County First Steps leverages state dollars to enhance and expand services to children and families.

**FUNDING SUPPORT**

State EIA Allocation $236,229  
United Way of Laurens County $4,000  
Center for Child Care Career Development $2,000  
Private Donations/Fundraisers $2,340

**IN-KIND SUPPORT**

Laurens School District 55  
Laurens County Adult Education  
Laurens County Family YMCA.

**JOIN US**

Contact us for more information: 864-984-8130 or rpatterson@laurens55.org  
Facebook & scfirststeps.org/laurens
FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

OUR INVESTMENT IN QUALITY
Expenditures of State Funds by Program Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Type</th>
<th>State Funding</th>
<th>Federal Funding</th>
<th>Private Funding</th>
<th>In-Kind Contributions</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents as Teachers</td>
<td>$75,681</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$438</td>
<td>$3,815</td>
<td>$79,934</td>
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<td>Child Care Scholarships</td>
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<td>$12,366</td>
<td>$1,399</td>
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<td>Child Care Training</td>
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<td>$1,862</td>
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<td>Nurse Family Partnership</td>
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<td>$1,539</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<td>Administrative Support</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>$630</td>
<td>$5,153</td>
<td>$17,510</td>
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<td>Partnerships &amp; Community Education</td>
<td>$8,510</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$528</td>
<td>$691</td>
<td>$9,729</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>$207,797</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td><strong>$17,362</strong></td>
<td><strong>$18,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$243,159</strong></td>
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</table>

ESTIMATION OF COST SAVINGS

Since inception, Laurens County First Steps has leveraged $2,494,265 from sources outside of state government.

That’s $0.47 for every state dollar.

SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES BY STRATEGY
LEADERSHIP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2018-2019

Linda Wessel, Chair
Kena Cox Vice-Chair
Jennifer Abercrombie
Jenn Adams
Shawn Brown
Christy Coates, Interim Secretary
Katelyn Crews

Melodie Edwards
Jervelle Fort
Elizabeth Franklin
Phyllis Putman
Avery Martin
Ann Szypulski

STAFF
Caroline Barker, Parent Educator
Kathryn Meadows, Parent Educator
Sandra Owens, Administrative Assistant
Rosemary Patterson, Executive Director

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