

# Annual Report

## 2019-2020

ANDERSON COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.

## THE NEED

### IN ANDERSON COUNTY:

**11,521**

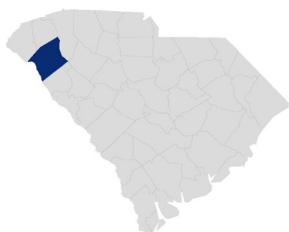
children under age 5

**47.1%**

of young children live in poverty  
or low-income households

**56.6%**

of kindergartners are considered "not  
ready" for school



### THREE MOST COMMON RISK FACTORS:

#1 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance  
Program (SNAP -formerly Food Stamps) or  
Free School Lunches eligibility

#2 Low maternal education (less than  
high school graduation

#3 Teenage custodial parents

## OUR MISSION

Collaborating with other entities, Anderson County First Steps helps 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

**1,368**

number of children and adults served by  
Anderson County First Steps in 2019-  
2020

## 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



*Liz Wittebort, ASD1, Receives Award for Program Excellence from Executive Director Paige Wall at our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary annual meeting.*

This year, SC First Steps and Anderson County First Steps celebrated 20 years of providing school readiness support and resources to children ages 0-5 and their families. During the past 20 years, the Anderson County First Steps Partnership has distributed **\$12,743,218** to area providers for parent and family strengthening programs and services, school transition programs and early education classes for at-risk children.

**During 2019-2020, the Partnership provided:**

- 221 children and 243 adults with family strengthening skills through Positive Parenting Programs and Family Literacy programs, Early Education Half-day 4-K classes, and Nurse-Family Partnership program assistance;
- 78 children and 77 parents with school transition support to 5-K kindergarten assisted by 25 teacher/home visitors through the Countdown to Kindergarten program;
- 1645 books for 156 children through Family Literacy and Positive Parenting, Early Education, and Countdown to Kindergarten programs; and 289 children and 770 adults with 10,663 child development and school readiness materials through our community education and outreach events and activities.

**In total, 1368 children, adults and families participated in high-quality programs, received referrals and resources, and attended community education and outreach events.**

Anderson County First Steps Partnership is proud of achieving these important milestones. Our mission could not have been accomplished without the passion, dedication, and support of our community partners.

*Paige Wall*

Executive Director



# GETTING CHILDREN READY FOR SCHOOL

All children are ready to benefit from a quality kindergarten experience when they are five years old by September 1 of that school year. But kindergarten readiness—the critical stage at which children are prepared for learning and success—is more than a matter of age. For a strong start in school, children need positive relationships and supportive learning environments beginning at birth. At First Steps, we partner with families, caregivers, and communities to ensure that all children are prepared for success.

## South Carolina's Profile of the Ready Kindergartner

Developed by SC First Steps and the SC Department of Education, the state's description of school readiness includes 60 developmental milestones across 5 categories:



**Approaches to learning & inquiry**



**Emotional & social development**



**Physical development, self-help & motor skills**



**Mathematical thinking**



**Language & literacy development**

## : OUR GOALS

- Goal 1: Support school readiness by serving as a local portal for connecting at-risk families of Anderson County preschool children to services designed to strengthen families and promote optimal child development utilizing a two-generational approach.
- Goal 2: Increase enrollment and expand accessibility in all Anderson County First Steps Partnership programs utilizing the partnership's integrated community approach.
- Goal 3: Increase understanding in the community of school readiness domains and assessment and make information easily accessible in all communities and for all Anderson County families through implementation of the partnership's Community Education and Outreach Plan.
- Goal 4: Serve as a community convener to address the needs of all Anderson County preschool children in the community in support of state readiness priorities and mobilize communities to provide enhanced services to support all Anderson County families through implementation of Palmetto Basics.

# PIVOTING FOR COVID-19

When the coronavirus pandemic forced South Carolina to shut down in March 2020, Anderson County First Steps quickly pivoted to provide much-needed support to young children, their families and child care providers.

Our work has never been more critical. While children are at low risk for the serious health effects of the virus, the crisis is having a profound impact on their wellbeing and development. For children of color and low-income communities, these impacts are expected to be even more damaging. That is why Anderson County First Steps is enhancing our efforts to provide parents and caregivers with the services and resources they need to weather this storm.

## IMPACT ON ANDERSON COUNTY

### HEALTH

Through June 30, Anderson County had a total of **656** confirmed COVID-19 cases and **21** COVID-19 deaths.

### JOB LOSS

**202.1%**

increase in unemployment, 2019-2020

### CHILD CARE

**48.9%**

children under 5 in Anderson County lived in a child care desert\* before COVID-19

**74.9%**

children under 5 in Anderson County lived in a child care desert as of May 28, 2020

Students at Welfare Baptist Child Development Center follow CDC guidelines to ensure school experiences are safe and healthy for all.



\*The Center for American Progress defines a child care desert as a ZIP code with at least 30 children under the age of 5 and either no child care centers or so few centers that there are more than three times as many children under age 5 as there are spaces in centers.



# NURSE-FAMILY PARTNERSHIP



an evidence-based program

Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) helps transform the lives of 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 2019-2020

# 143

children served

# 2381

number of home  
visits provided



“NFP’s client-driven, strengths-based approach...helps mothers advocate for themselves and their families, thereby increasing women’s power and autonomy.”

Urban Institute (UI), in concert with the US Partnership on *Mobility from Poverty*





# 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 2019-2020

**25**

kindergarten teachers  
trained as home visitors

**78**

children served

**466**

total home and school  
visits



“The best part of our Countdown to Kindergarten experience was to have the teacher personally come to our house and work one-on-one with my daughter, K.”  
CTK Parent post survey.

**COUNTDOWN to  
KINDERGARTEN**

SOUTH CAROLINA



# 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. In coordination with First Steps local partnerships and more than 230 private, community and faith-based preschool providers, First Steps 4K expands access to quality early education across the state.



### ELIGIBILITY

To qualify for enrollment, a child must be:



4 years old on or before September 1



Eligible for Medicaid, SNAP or TANF, experiencing homelessness or transiency, or in foster care

### FIRST STEPS 4K IN ANDERSON COUNTY 2019-2020

# 41

children enrolled

# 5

First Steps 4K providers

### PIVOTING FOR COVID-19

When schools closed due to COVID-19, First Steps 4K classroom converted to distance-learning, with teachers creatively supporting their young learners through video chat, take-home materials, and hands-on projects that caregivers could facilitate at home.





# POSITIVE PARENTING PROGRAM WITH FAMILY LITERACY



*an evidence-based program*

The Positive Parenting Program linked to Family Literacy offers an intergenerational approach, helping both parents and children 0-5 to improve their literacy skills. Family Literacy services integrate four components: Adult Education; Early Childhood Education; Positive Parenting, and Parent/Child Activities.

**ANDERSON SCHOOL DISTRICT ONE, ANDERSON SCHOOL DISTRICT TWO, ANDERSON SCHOOL DISTRICT THREE, AND ANDERSON SCHOOL DISTRICT FOUR** operated four programs throughout Anderson County in Pelzer-Piedmont-Williamston; Belton-Honea Path; Starr-Iva; and Pendleton-Townville.

## TRIPLE P WITH FAMILY LITERACY BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

38

Children served

34

Families served

14

High School  
Diplomas/GEDs Earned

"From support to reaching out,  
this program is amazing.  
Getting positive messages and  
books has been most helpful  
along with information about  
reading with kids,"  
Satisfaction Survey





## EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAM



*an evidence-based program*

**ANDERSON SCHOOL DISTRICT ONE** provides eligible children with high-quality early education opportunities through two 4-year-old Kindergarten half-day classes. The goals of the 4-K program are to increase the number of at-risk children served and prepare them for school readiness. The classes are located at Spearman Elementary School.

### ANDERSON SCHOOL DISTRICT ONE 4K CLASSES BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

40

children served

1

providers served



"I am so grateful that these families were afforded the opportunity to attend K4 and that we could be a part of assisting them. I know that it will have a huge impact in their education for years to come."

Lisa Spence, 4K Teacher



## PUBLIC AWARENESS



an evidence-informed program

Our partnership raises awareness of what it takes to be “school-ready” through community education and outreach activities in collaboration with Anderson School District One, Anderson School District Two, Anderson School District Three, and Anderson School District Four. Activities include Positive Parenting/Family Literacy group meetings for parent education and Parent and Child Together open to the public; Raising a Reader meetings, Born Learning Walking Trail, and Preschool Club.

Our partnership also collaborated with Anderson School District One and 8 other community organizations to sponsor the Spring into Healthy Habits community event. Other planned events were cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND OUTREACH BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

10,663

materials  
distributed

187

events held

689

total event  
attendance



Dianne Mizzell, former Board Chair, greets visitors at the Anderson First Steps display at the Spring into Healthy Habits event on March 12.



## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

This year, Anderson County First Steps Partnership expanded Palmetto Basics activities and convened 10 community workshops in collaboration with **Anderson School District One, Anderson School District Two, Anderson School District Three, and Anderson School District Four.** Additionally, 617 family referrals were made to other community organizations.

**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

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## OUR PARTNERSHIPS BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

# 153

Children

# 184

Adults

# 617

Community Referrals



Charity Walker, ASD4, left, speaks to the community about the importance of family literacy. Tammy Vaughn and Susan Brown, ASD3, right, discuss the 5 Palmetto Basics principles.





## OUR SUPPORTERS

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

### FUNDING SUPPORT

**South Carolina First Steps: \$453,318**  
**For Family Strengthening, Early Education, and School Transition Programs**

**Stevenson Charitable Trusts: \$6,000**  
**for Nurse-Family Partnership**

**United Way of Anderson County: \$7,500**  
**for Countdown to Kindergarten**

**US Department of Education Preschool Development Grant: \$10,020**  
**for Countdown to Kindergarten**

**All in One Foundation: \$3,000**  
**For Nurse-Family Partnership**

### IN-KIND SUPPORT

**Anderson School District One: \$36,710**

**Anderson School District Two: \$10,916**

**Anderson School District Three: \$24,936**

**Anderson School District Four: \$12,445**

**People's Bank of Iva: \$5,000**

## JOIN US

**For more information on partnership opportunities, visit our website at**  
**[andersonfirststeps.org](http://andersonfirststeps.org)**

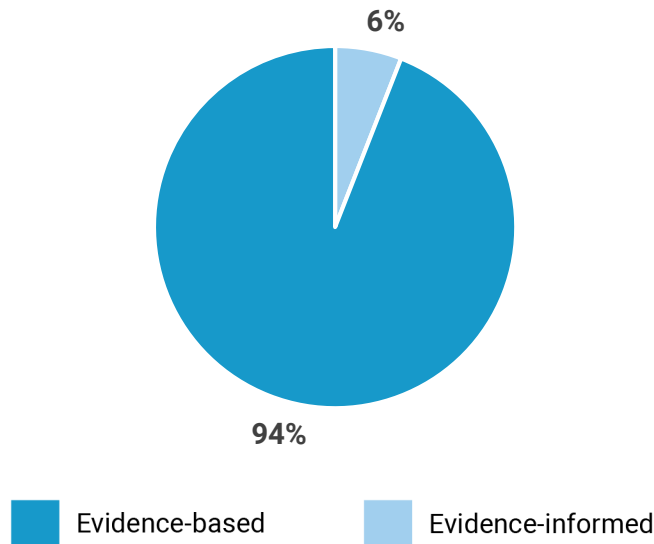




## FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

### OUR INVESTMENT IN QUALITY

#### Expenditures of State Funds by Program Type



### ESTIMATION OF COST SAVINGS

Since inception, ABC County First Steps has leveraged **\$5,004,977.42** from sources outside of state government.

That's **\$0.49** for every state dollar.

## SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES BY STRATEGY

	State Funding	Federal Funding	Private Funding	In-Kind Contributions	Total
Triple P Level 4	\$299,238	\$	\$	\$48,208	\$347,446
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$14,156	\$5,954	\$10,247	\$	\$30,357
Early Education for Children under 4	\$1,848	\$	\$	\$	\$1,848
Nurse Family Partnership	\$18,252	\$	\$6,539	\$	\$24,791
Half Day 4K	\$68,905	\$	\$	\$36,710	\$105,615
Early Head Start	\$	\$935	\$	\$	\$935
Core Functions	\$13,835	\$2,021	\$	\$	\$15,856
Administrative Support	\$26,934	\$	\$877	\$	\$27,811
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$443,168</b>	<b>\$8,910</b>	<b>\$17,663</b>	<b>\$84,918</b>	<b>\$554,659</b>



## LEADERSHIP

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### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

<b>Sherry Adger, Kiddie University</b>	<b>Marlee Pepper, Parent</b>
<b>Mari Birchmore, NFP, Board Secretary</b>	<b>Nicole Schmidt, Anderson Interfaith Ministries</b>
<b>Elaine Blango, Kid's Stuff</b>	<b>Dianne Smiley, Anderson County Library</b>
<b>Jackie Blakley, Tri-County Tech</b>	<b>Audrey Shaw, Anderson Pregnancy Center</b>
<b>April Brown, Welfare Baptist Church</b>	<b>Allison Strickland, ASD Two</b>
<b>Wendy Burgess, ASD One School Board</b>	<b>Maria Torres-Green, Foothills Alliance</b>
<b>Betty Carson, Head Start-retired</b>	<b>Shannon Vaughn, SHARE Head Start,</b>
<b>Rhonda Gregory, ASD Two</b>	<b>Board Chair</b>
<b>Brenda Kelley, ASD Five</b>	<b>Tammy Vaughn, ASD Three</b>
<b>Kenneth McBride, Director, Regional DSS</b>	<b>Charity Walker, ASD Four</b>
<b>Jackie McCall, Safe Kids</b>	<b>Liz Wittebort, ASD One</b>
<b>Sheryl McCollum, Bank of Iva</b>	<b>Greta Young, The Parenting Place</b>

### STAFF

**Paige Wall, Executive Director**  
**Deborah Sanders, Program Coordinator/Evaluator**

### CONTACT US

**605 N. Main St., Anderson SC | 864-222-0410 | [andersonfirststeps.org](http://andersonfirststeps.org)**

