

Annual Report

2019-2020



THE NEED

IN BARNWELL COUNTY:

1,392

children under age 5

77.3%

of young children live in poverty
or low-income households

72%

of kindergartners are considered "not
ready" for school



THREE MOST COMMON RISK FACTORS:

1. TANF
2. SNAP
3. Single Parent Household

OUR MISSION

To provide early childhood education programs designed to ensure that Barnwell County children arrive at First Grade healthy and ready to succeed.

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

599

number of children and adults served by
Barnwell 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



Doris Mitchell
Executive Director
Barnwell County First Steps

“Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skillful execution”
- William A. Foster

High-quality early education and child care plays an important part in the success that a child should experience in school and in life. Quality child care goes above and beyond the normal standards and has positive, long term impacts on a child’s development. Quality child care means that a child feels safe and happy in the learning environment. A high-quality early education experience is critically important to a child’s overall success.

Barnwell County First Steps and its early child care partners are serious about providing quality child care to the children and families in Barnwell County. We understand the commitment and dedication that is required to be rated as a high-quality child care center in South Carolina, and the importance in providing excellent services to the children in our care. We believe that every child deserves the opportunity to receive high-quality care, which is why Barnwell County First Steps collaborates with local and state partners to provide services for the children, the families, and the child care center staff in Barnwell County. We partner with organizations such as the James and Miriam Darnell Fund Committee that donates funds for male children to be able to attend a quality child care center. Partners such as Barnwell County School Districts and Greenville Technical College who provide professional development opportunities and funds for our early education staff. Partners such as the Polly Best Center provide mental health resources to our parents. Barnwell County First Steps and our partners understand that the earlier a child is introduced to quality child care, the better chance the child will have to be successful in school and in life.

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

In support of the Profile of the Ready Kindergartner, our approach is focused on advancing Barnwell County toward the following strategic goals:

- To ensure continuity and quality of programs implementation, BCFS will attract and retain qualified staff.
- Train BCFS staff to screen all children participating in BCFS programs for disabilities; and ensure those children are connected to necessary services in the community.
- Increase public awareness of Barnwell County First Steps.
- Improve efforts to support parents/families in advancing life skills₄

PIVOTING FOR COVID-19

When the coronavirus pandemic forced South Carolina to shut down in March 2020, Barnwell 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 Barnwell 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 BARNWELL COUNTY

HEALTH

Through June 30, Barnwell County had a total of **82** confirmed COVID-19 cases and **1** COVID-19 deaths.

JOB LOSS

83.4%

increase in unemployment, 2019-2020

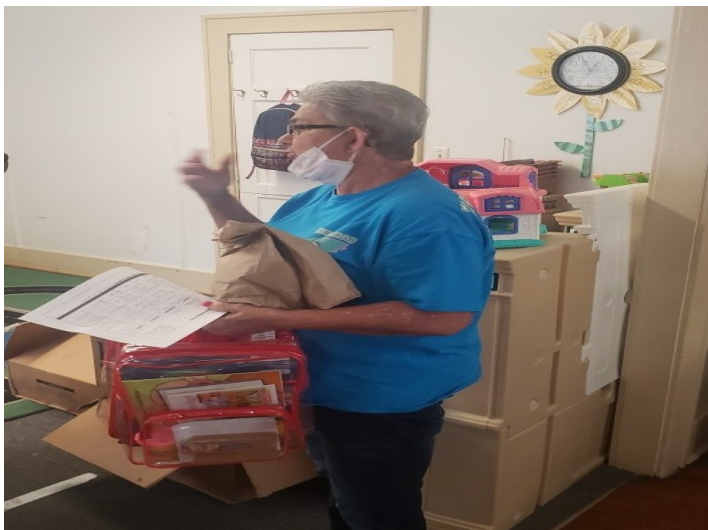
CHILD CARE

56.5%

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

100%

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



Barnwell County First Steps partnered with New Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church Child Development Center to provide backpacks that were filled with fun, learning activities that could be used for at home learning. The parents and children were also provided with a Grab n Go lunch.

*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.



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

5

kindergarten teachers
trained as home visitors

40

children served

240

total home and school
visits



I am so grateful to be a part of this program. It is a great opportunity to get to know the children that will be in my classroom. Mrs. Parker, Kindergarten Teacher

COUNTDOWN to
KINDERGARTEN

SOUTH CAROLINA





CHILD CARE QUALITY ENHANCEMENT



an evidence-based program

Many private child care centers strive to provide high quality care but lack the resources often available to publicly-funded early childhood programs. Our Child Care Quality Enhancement (QE) program aims to produce measurable improvements in the quality of care provided to young children.

Our services include:



Rigorous quality assessments



On-site technical assistance at least twice monthly



Funding for equipment and materials



Training and workforce development



Coordination with community partners

QE BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

3

child care providers served

26

number of TA visits provided

100

number of children 0-5 enrolled in provider classrooms



The Quality Enhancement program helped us improve our level of quality by giving us strategic ways to build on our current skills and knowledge to better serve children enrolled at our facility.



LaTonya Jones, Childcare Center Director



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 SC Endeavors and include topics in the areas of nutrition, health and safety, curriculum, child guidance, professional development and program administration. Our 2019-2020 trainings included:

Learning Center with STEAM

Does It Take a Village- Effective Communication with Parents

No! No! No Biting! Supporting Teachers When a Child Bites

Quality Nevers Goes Out of Style

Challenging Moments

Blood-borne Pathogen

TRAINING BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

24

total training attendance

20

child care teachers and
directors served

5

number of training
sessions offered



We are so appreciative of First Steps for providing us with free training. The trainers are great!



PreK Teacher, Williston



CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIPS



an evidence-based program

For many families in Barnwell County, the cost of quality child care is out of reach. Our scholarship program makes payments to child care providers to care for children from low-income families so their parents can return to school or work.

Barnwell County First Steps offers scholarships to families enrolled in our Early Steps to School Success program, as well as income-eligible children whose parent attends school or works at least 20 hours per week.

SCHOLARSHIPS BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

44

number of children
served

2

number of providers
served

44

number of
developmental
screenings provided

100% the money paid to child care providers goes back into our local economy to benefit the citizens of Barnwell County.



EARLY STEPS TO SCHOOL SUCCESS



an evidence-based program

The Early Steps to School Success program lays a critical foundation of language and literacy skills for children from birth to 5 years old, so they can enter school ready to succeed. Through home visits, book exchange, parenting groups, and an emphasis on transitioning to school, Early Steps helps children with language, social and emotional development and equips parents and caregivers with the skills to successfully support children growth.

EARLY STEPS BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

96

Families served

1,160

number of home visits
provided

106

number of children 0-5
served



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 Barnwell COUNTY 2019-2020

29

children enrolled

1

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.





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, Barnwell County First Steps mobilizes partners and community members to ensure all children in Barnwell 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 2019-2020

23

Collaborative
Events

75

Partners



Thank you for everything that you do, and if you have to throw those flowers away, you can (lol). I'm sure there will be more flowers coming your way for the fabulous job you are doing throughout Barnwell County!!!



Rev. Stephen Butterfield, New Jerusalem Childcare Center



OUR SUPPORTERS

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

FUNDING SUPPORT

Darnell & Miriam Fund: \$134,950

Home Visitor Expansion Grant: \$36,853

Tim Richardson: \$100.00

CCCCD Grant: \$2,000

United Way: \$500

IN-KIND SUPPORT

District 19: \$11,195.71

District 45: \$4,563.46

Save the Children: \$500

Housing Authority: \$300

JOIN US

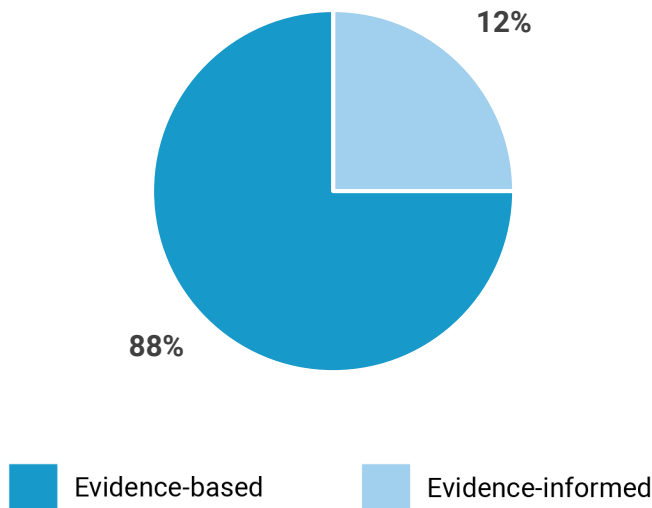
For more information on partnership opportunities, visit our website at
scfirststeps.org/barnwell



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

OUR INVESTMENT IN QUALITY

Expenditures of State Funds by Program Type



ESTIMATION OF COST SAVINGS

Since inception, Barnwell County First Steps has leveraged **\$2,594,304.93** 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
Administrative Support	\$14,120.81	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$4,563.46	\$18,684.27
Child Care Quality Enhancement	\$26,379.87	\$0.00	\$705.19	\$0.00	\$27,085.06
Child Care Training	\$26,055.48	\$0.00	\$2,455.09	\$0.00	\$28,510.57
Core Function	\$10,362.33	\$5,792.90	\$11,992.23	\$0.00	\$28,147.46
Early Steps	\$13,612.40	\$0.00	\$41,177.92	\$11,195.71	\$65,986.03
Raising a Reader Enhanced E.B.	\$10,455.82	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$10,455.82
Countdown To Kindergarten	\$17,389.44	\$0.00	0.00	\$0.00	\$17,389.44
Scholarship Initiatives / Darnell/DSS	\$57,929.25	\$0.00	\$94,812.89	\$0.00	\$152,742.14
Total Expenses	\$176,305.40	\$5,792.90	\$151,143.32	\$15,759.17	\$349,000.00



LEADERSHIP

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Carmen Harvey, Member

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STAFF

Doris Mitchell, Executive Director

JaKera Harley, Program Assistant

Regina Baxley, Parent Educator

Cynthia Middleton, Data Specialist.

CONTACT US

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