

Annual Report

2019-2020



THE NEED IN BERKELEY COUNTY:

15,852

children under age 5

45%

of young children live in poverty
or low-income households

66%

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. Single parent household and has need of other services.
3. English is not the primary language spoken in the home.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Berkeley County First Steps Partnership Board is to improve the early childhood development of Berkeley County children by providing resources and leadership to assist families in preparing their children to reach school healthy and ready to succeed through community partnerships and collaboration.

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

218

number of children and adults served by
Berkeley 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

Adrienne Troy Frazier

Executive Director



Berkeley County First Steps was founded on the belief that all young children deserve the right to quality health, early education and care. We were founded on the belief that all caregivers deserve the education and supports to help children reach Kindergarten safely and equipped with the tools needed to be successful in school and beyond. We were founded on the expectation that our local boards and child serving agencies have power, and that we can make a difference in the lives of children and caregivers in our communities when we *dare to use that power*.

Times like these require us all to dare to do more to protect basic rights for pregnant women, young families and the early education and care workforce.

In Fiscal Year 2019, we dared to increase our investments in maternal-infant health, trauma-centered supports and race equity/inclusion training in child-care, not just in our county, but in our region. With new investments, we were able to pilot innovative solutions for the most pressing challenges facing the early education community: economic insecurity, lack of access to affordable, quality health and early care that honors diversity and culture.

We were able to do this thanks to a bold, evolving community of child advocates, organizers, service providers and philanthropists who were willing to collaborate, listen, empathize, ideate and test new ideas and solutions. We found adaptive, flexible and future-focused individuals and partners locally and nationally committed to doing more, giving more and to reimagining what authentic power looks like in our field.

It is not enough to say that all children and families deserve to live in just, healthy and safe communities. We must be bold enough to challenge the status quo, and institutions with closed systems. We must embrace courageous conversations about inequities and bias that thrive in those institutions and ultimately harm us all.

Thanks to all who have co-designed, co-led, and co-invested in building open, transformative systems of care that embrace cultural responsiveness and continuous improvement,

With highest hopes,

Adrienne Troy-Frazier

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



Berkeley County First Steps' impact on children and families reflects the support we have received from our funders and community. 2019 marked our 20th year of serving Berkeley children and families and provided us with the opportunity to reflect on our history and envision our future. Thanks to strong leadership in our parenting programs, we were able to help strengthen families. Our work with community partners helped us improve the local and state landscape in early education. We continued to educate and advocate for increased investments for our childcare partners. Our annual report reflects our progress and achievements as well as opportunities for us to grow the initiatives that can further benefit the lives of children and families.

The work we do is important and made possible by the support of South Carolina First Steps, our board of directors, community partners and our staff. While this report will tell you more about the work we're doing, we hope you see it as we see it—as a sincere “Thank You”, from all of us.

Brenda Campbell

Chair

Berkeley County First Steps Board of Trustees

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 Berkeley County toward the following strategic goals:

- Goal 1 Ensure that our county is a community that is educated on the value of early childhood development and care and parent engagement.
- Goal 2 Ensure that the hardest-to reach families have equitable opportunities for healthy early childhood development experiences and activities.
- Goal 3 Increase financial investments, expand professional development and workforces supports to current early childhood programs through quality enhancement and professional development initiatives that represent best practices and honor cultural diversity.

PIVOTING FOR COVID-19

When the coronavirus pandemic forced South Carolina to shut down in March 2020, Berkeley 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 Berkeley 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 BERKELEY COUNTY

HEALTH

Through June 30, Berkeley County had a total of 1225 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 29 COVID-19 deaths.

JOB LOSS

177.8%

increase in unemployment, 2019-2020

CHILD CARE

48.8%

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

74.7%

children under 5 in Berkeley County lived in a childcare desert as of May 28, 2020



Berkeley County First Steps was able to create an emergency relief fund through private donations, and grants from the Trident United Way, and Sisters of Charity SC. Over 140 families have received help with diapers, formula, groceries, and personal & household items. We were also able to provide utility and rent assistance to 10 families.

Berkeley County First Steps continues to mobilize our partners to aid in addressing our families most basic needs., and has successfully connected many parents with other community resources.

*The Center for American Progress defines a childcare 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.



EARLY IDENTIFICATION & REFERRAL



an evidence-based program

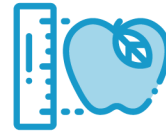
First Steps' Early Identification and Referral (EI&R) programs serve families with young children with suspected delays in development, acting as a local portal to connect families to community-based services they may need or desire to ensure the school readiness of their children. EI&R services include:



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 2019-2020

64

children served

473

materials distributed

10

referrals to BabyNet or other local services



-Our EI&R program is a collaboration with PASOs of South Carolina and Berkeley County First Steps and incorporates the PASOs Community Health Worker (Promotor) model to build trust and best meet the needs of the Latino Community.

-"I don't know where to find help, but someone spoke to me about Abigail. She is very kind and helped me with the services I needed, (which include medical, dental and other service)." - A participant of the program



PARENTS AS TEACHERS



an evidence-based program

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 GOES VIRTUAL

Due to COVID-19, Parents as Teachers (PAT) National provided guidance for affiliates to deliver virtual services via interactive video conferencing and phone calls. South Carolina PAT affiliates rose to the occasion by engaging families in creative and meaningful ways while continuing to meet the Essential Requirements of implementing a quality PAT program during the pandemic.

PAT IN BERKELEY COUNTY 2019-2020

72

families served

1172

total home visits

Based on our parenting, literacy, and developmental screenings, we were able to make approximately 488 connections to community resources for our families and obtained additional interventions for many of our children.



Parents as Teachers®



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

2

home visitors trained

9

children served

53

total home and school
visits



Quotes from families:

"The best part of CTK was seeing what my child knows, and what she needs to learn more of."

"This program helped me identify my child's strengths and weaknesses and get him on the right track for school."

"I hope you will continue to provide this program to more families because it helped my child a lot."





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

2

child care providers served

40

number of TA visits provided

43

number of children 0-5 enrolled in provider classrooms

"The On-site technical assistance offered through Berkeley County First Steps is like no other. This support and training has helped our center grow and evolve over the years. Creative Kids Child Development Center has made great strides towards our goals of providing quality care and instruction, focused awareness of health and safety, and the love and care that all children deserve. Thank you, Berkeley County First Steps!!"

Michelle Aiken-Green, Owner of Creative Kids Child Development Center



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:

Social Emotional Teaching Strategies

Forming and Sustaining Relationships with Children & Families

Approaches to Learning

Approaches to Play & Learning

Screening Instruments - DIAL4

TRAINING BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

77

total training attendance

43

child care teachers and
directors served

7

number of training
sessions offered



The training, Approaches to Play and Learning, was very informative. One thing I took away from the training was that diversity and culture is very important to incorporate in a child's daily routine.

**Camille Robinson, Teacher at Lynn's
Childcare Development Center**



CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIPS



an evidence-based program

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

Berkeley County First Steps offers scholarships to families enrolled in our Parents As Teachers program, or the Nurse-Family Partnership program. To be eligible for a voucher, parents must meet income eligibility guidelines, and be working, or in school.

SCHOLARSHIPS BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

8

number of children
served

2

number of providers
served

8

number of
developmental
screenings provided

100% the money paid to childcare providers goes back into our local economy to benefit the citizens of Berkeley County.

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 BERKELEY COUNTY 2019-2020

50

children enrolled

6

First Steps 4K providers

PIVOTING FOR COVID-19

When schools closed due to COVID-19, First Steps 4K classrooms 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.





PUBLIC AWARENESS

The Berkeley Early Education and Care Collective (BEE Collective) is a community-based network that was formed by Berkeley First Steps to build an integrated mental health framework to improve the social-emotional development outcomes of children, prenatal to 6. The mission of the BEE Collective is to ensure that every child enters kindergarten socially and emotionally ready to learn, that every educator has positive well-being and the tools to handle challenging behaviors, that families are resilient and that our community reduces mental health stigma for all ages. Our vision is to build upon the assets of our hardest to reach children, parents and educators so that we can co-create beloved community in early education where everyone is treated with dignity. The BEE Collective uses a collective impact approach and builds on previous work and best practices that coalition partners and direct services providers have found successful to achieving community change.

Community Conversations BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

175

materials
distributed

6

events held

125

total event
attendance

The BEE Collective offered the Harwood Model of Community Conversations in partnership with the following individuals and organizations:

Children's Museum of The Lowcountry, Transformation Table, Cainhoy Elementary School, The National Alliance for the Mental Illness, Trident Technical College, The Keith School Museum, Stacy Albarran, LPC, Birthing With A Purpose, Janett Tapias, InterMediate, LLC. Thank you to the Yvonne and Schuyler Moore Child Development Research Center, S.C. Dept. of Health & Environmental Control, South Carolina Thrive, S.C. Commission for Minority Affairs, S.C. Department of Social Services, Office of First Steps and Boston Medical Center-Vital Village for sponsoring conversations designed to listen to community stakeholders and provide vital information on pressing topics and trending issues in the early education and care field.





COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Addressing the needs of young children is a shared endeavor. In addition to providing services to families and support for childcare providers, Berkeley County First Steps mobilizes partners through our Tri-County Play Collaborative and BEE-Collective members to ensure all children in Berkeley 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

400

Families engaged

8

Tri-County Play
Collaborative
Convenings

Thank you again for providing a wonderful meal, and atmosphere for cultural exchange and healing. We need more discussions about mental health in our community because our children are struggling. Even the little ones. There was so much welcoming energy in the room and so I felt like I could share my struggles. I felt the community.



OUR SUPPORTERS

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

FUNDING SUPPORT

Center for Child Care Career Development	\$2000
Tri-County Cradle to Career Collaborative	\$5000
Magnolia Plantation Corporation Foundation	\$1000
Finemark Bank	\$300
Walmart	\$1000
Coastal Community Foundation – Ed Kroft/Charles Webb	\$3300
Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority	\$267
New Morning Foundation	\$2500
Trident United Way	\$5000
Sisters of Charity Foundation of SC	\$6000
Private donations	\$2538

IN-KIND SUPPORT

Department of Social Service	\$14,000
Berkeley County School District	\$60,000
The AIO Group	\$4700
MUSC	Clinic space

JOIN US

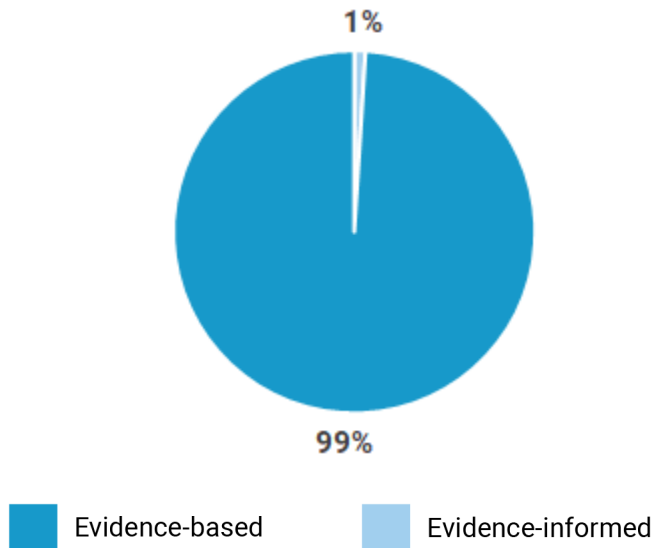
For more information on partnership opportunities, visit our website at www.berkeleyfirststeps.com.



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

OUR INVESTMENT IN QUALITY

Expenditures of State Funds by Program Type



ESTIMATION OF COST SAVINGS

Since inception, Berkeley County First Steps has leveraged **\$2,408,240** from sources outside of state government.

That's **\$0.22** for every state dollar.

SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES BY STRATEGY

	State Funding	Federal Funding	Private Funding	In-Kind Contributions	Total
Parents as Teachers	\$252,814	\$0	\$0	\$60,000	\$312,814
Child Care Quality Enhancement	\$26,429	\$908	\$4810	\$0	\$32,147
Child Care Training	\$18,156	\$309	\$5151	\$0	\$23,616
Scholarship Initiative	\$18,987	\$0	\$0	\$14,000	\$32,987
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$5389	\$1107	\$90	\$0	\$6586
Early Identification and Referral	\$75,688	\$91	\$300	\$0	\$76,079
Partnerships & Community Education	\$43,192	\$10,336	\$37,963	\$4340	\$95,831
Administrative Support	\$47,973	\$0	\$1437	\$0	\$49,410
Total Expenses	\$488,628	\$12,751	\$49,751	\$78,340	\$629,470



LEADERSHIP

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