

Annual Report

2019-2020



THE NEED

IN FAIRFIELD COUNTY:

1046

children under age 5

64.2%

of young children live in poverty
or low-income households

45%

of kindergartners are considered "not
ready" for school



THREE MOST COMMON RISK FACTORS:

1. SNAP or Free Lunch eligibility
2. Single parent household and has need of other services
3. TANF

OUR MISSION

Collaborating with other entities, Fairfield County First Steps helps South Carolina 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

1052

number of children and adults served by
Fairfield 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.

101 N Congress Street, Suite 1, Winnsboro, SC 803-635-1590 OR scfirststeps.org/fairfield

Data provided by:

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Patti Wilkes
Executive Director
Fairfield County First Steps

Well, what a year this has been. July 2019 started with a bang as we were finally able to hire every K5 teacher in our school district to participate in the Countdown to Kindergarten program. We had the extra funds to offer this due to a partnership with the school district, where they purchased all of the toolkits our students would need and a nice grant we received from United Way of the Midlands. In the fall, we were able to add a second Parent Educator for our Parents as Teachers program. As soon as she was trained we would be able to increase the number of families we serve in this program by 75%. Round one of training was held in November so we were able to get her started with the parents of our youngest children, 0 – 3. Our 1000 Books Before Kindergarten program was moving along nicely. The students were excited for us to come read to them each month and doubly excited that we were giving them take-home books every other month. The teachers received 5 – 6 books each month to add to their classroom library. Tuition Assistance slots were full and had a waiting list. We were working with three childcare facilities at the beginning of FY2020. In February, one of the facilities closed her place. The other two facilities were able to take the children who had been placed at the now closed facility. Imagination Library was gaining numbers. All of a sudden, COVID arrived. Our schools closed, our child facilities closed and our parents have new stressors added to their lives. The good that has come from this is that we have improved our relationships with the families that we have been able to maintain as clients. At the time of this writing, we are moving towards gradual re-openings. We continue to make contact with our clients on a weekly basis. We're forging ahead and looking forward to continuing our programs at capacity.

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



Eric Robinson

Chair

Fairfield County First Steps Board of Trustees

As board chair of the Fairfield County First Steps I am proud of our accomplishments. This is a fantastic, eager, energetic board that works hard for the children of Fairfield County. Some of our highlights include working with Chester County to do two joint board trainings, watching our annual fundraiser, Step Into the Holidays, increase in participants as well as funds raised, and utilizing these raised funds to ensure that every child who applies for Dolly's Imagination Library free books receives a book per month. I am honored to serve with Patti Wilkes' amazing staff as well as a board who is passionate about the children of our county and their education and well-being. I look forward to our continued success.

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 Fairfield County toward the following strategic goals:

- Increase the capacity of FCFS staff and board members to deliver and support evidence-based programs and practices.
- Increase community awareness, engagement in, and support of FCFS programs and services.
- Convene committee around early education in the county.
- Identify FCFS as the portal for early education services.

PIVOTING FOR COVID-19

When the coronavirus pandemic forced South Carolina to shut down in March 2020, Fairfield 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 Fairfield 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 FAIRFIELD COUNTY

HEALTH

Through June 30, Fairfield County had a total of 302 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 22 COVID-19 deaths.

JOB LOSS

103%

increase in unemployment, 2019-2020

CHILD CARE

49.9%

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

100.0%

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



DIAPERS DIAPERS DIAPERS!!!

Unless you are a parent who depends on diapers, you wouldn't have noticed how hard they were to find. Our Fairfield County Chamber provided diapers for our clients when none were available in Winnsboro. Along with diapers, they also provided diaper wipes and toiletries for the homes of our families. How did we spell relief? D I A P E R S Thank you!!

*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.



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 FAIRFIELD COUNTY 2019-2020

27

families served

373

total home visits

First Steps helps me keep track of my children's abilities and stages of development so I can provide appropriate activities and challenges for the kids. I am also thankful that they provide resources and keep me informed about local events. First Steps is a great place to learn and grow as a parent! – Ky'Andra, parent



Parents as Teachers®



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 2019-2020

339

children served

3373

books distributed

Imagination Library books are 100% free to all children in Fairfield County because Fairfield County First Steps secures private dollars to cover the cost of books and shipping fees.

You can help 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 2019-2020

7

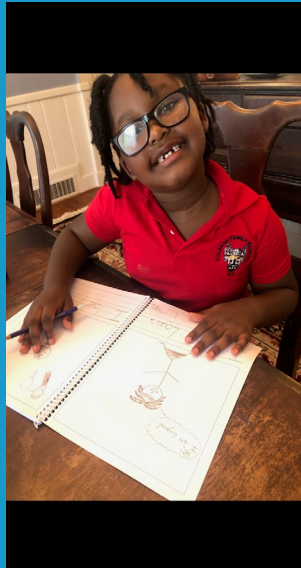
kindergarten teachers
trained as home visitors

61

children served

335

total home and school
visits



Countdown to Kindergarten is a program that is asked for by our teachers and parents. This program eases the transition for young children into school while at the same time developing relationships between the teacher and parent of the young child. In partnership with the Fairfield County School District and United Way of the Midlands, we were able to hire teachers from every elementary public school in the county. The toolkits provided offer a varied curriculum including math, science and language arts. Parents report that they become more aware of what to expect as their child begins school. Teachers report that these parents are much more likely to volunteer in the classrooms. These students arrive prepared for school.

COUNTDOWN to
KINDERGARTEN

SOUTH CAROLINA





CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIPS



an evidence-based program

Fairfield County First Steps offers Tuition Assistance to our families who are also a part of our Parents as Teachers program. Childcare costs are often the determining factor of if a parent can actually afford to work the required minimum of twenty hours per week. Our program pays \$80 per week for one child per family to childcare facilities who have an ABC Quality level of B or better. 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. If parents are high school students, we pay 100% of the childcare tuition so the student does not have to lose instruction time. Eligibility for childcare tuition is based on poverty and risk factors. The families we serve all have a minimum of two risk factors as prescribed by the SC First Steps Board of Trustees. Because these children are also clients in the Parents as Teachers program, the children receive all assessments as are required in that program. .

SCHOLARSHIPS BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

20

number of children
served

3

number of providers
served

127

number of
developmental
screenings provided

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



LITERACY PROGRAM



an evidence-informed program

Fairfield County First Steps offers the 1000 Books before Kindergarten program to all 4K programs in the county. This includes the public schools, the private school, and the 4k program in the local childcare program. We go into the classrooms and read to them each month. We give each class books at each visit and we give the students take home books throughout the year. Getting books into the homes and encouraging a love of reading fosters a love of learning in both children and their families. This also helps the students have literacy skills needed to support their children's early development, and children gain the foundational skills needed to succeed in school.

1000 BOOKS BEFORE KINDERGARTEN BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

181

students served

724

books distributed



1000 Books Before Kindergarten has helped me increase the size and diversity of my classroom library. I am able to provide students with quality and engaging literature, adding new titles once a month. - Mrs. Deese, McCrory
Liston teacher



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

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

31

Average
attendance for
Fairfield Forward
meetings

“First Steps has been an integral partner in the work of Fairfield Forward. First Steps has afforded Fairfield Forward the relationships within this community to reach young children, who are among the most vulnerable populations in Fairfield County. The partnership between these organizations ensures the health and wellbeing of all young children in Fairfield County.”

**Chris Clauson, Fairfield County Community Development
Director and Fairfield Forward Chair**



OUR SUPPORTERS

Through partnerships and collaborations, as well as financial support from grants and contributions, Fairfield County First Steps leverages state dollars to enhance and expand services to children and families. Our Executive Director is on the Fairfield Forward board and our Board Chair is Service Projects Chair of Winnsboro Rotary. These organizations help keep Fairfield County First Steps in the forefront of the minds of Fairfield County citizens.

FUNDING SUPPORT

United Way of the Midlands - \$8987.08

First Steps Board Members - \$465.00

Central Carolina Community Foundation - \$227.30

ZuZammen Second Edition Book Club - \$50.00

Winnsboro Woman's Club – \$100.00

Winnsboro Rotary - \$75.00

Richard Hodges - \$60.00

Gwen Harden - \$30.00

IN-KIND SUPPORT

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

Wells Fargo

Fairfield County Schools

JOIN US

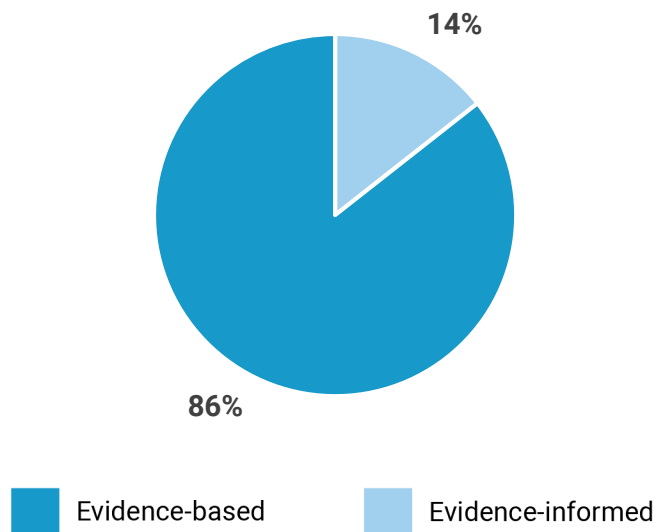
Join us as we make a positive difference in the lives of our youngest citizens. Join our board! Volunteer for a fundraiser! Give your time and talents to make tomorrow a better day. All of these lead to a happy heart and a child who is ready to succeed as they enter school. "The time is always right to do what is right." ~ Martin Luther King, Jr.



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

OUR INVESTMENT IN QUALITY

Expenditures of State Funds by Program Type



ESTIMATION OF COST SAVINGS

Since inception, Fairfield County First Steps has leveraged

\$1,414,938.36
from sources outside of state government.

That's **\$.41** for every state dollar.

SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES BY STRATEGY

	State Funding	Federal Funding	Private Funding	In-Kind Contributions	Total
Parents as Teachers	\$63,946.40		\$30,567.32		\$94,513.72
1000 Books Before Kindergarten	\$4,637.64		\$551.00		\$5,188.64
Imagination Library	\$5,850.42		\$6,024.09	\$40,966.68	\$52,841.19
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$15,872.07	\$6,548.00	\$2,052.00		\$24,472.07
Scholarship Initiative	\$52,072.77				\$52,072.77
Core Functions	\$10,427.33				
Administrative Support	\$16,411.14		\$3,423.62		\$19,834.76
Total Expenses	\$169,217.77	\$6,548.00	\$42,618.03	\$40,966.68	\$259,350.48



LEADERSHIP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Eric Robinson, Chair	Kay Hensley
Darreyl Davis, Vice-chair	Mac Russel
Sandi Gratic, Secretary	Misty Roberts
Connie Pete, Legislative Liaison	T' Sheila Praileau
Jill Coleman	Melyssa Shepard
Sarah McMaster	Michelle Taylor
Jimmy Burroughs	Shameika Sims
Dee Mattox	

STAFF

Patti Wilkes, Executive Director.

Lou Anne Atkerson, Administrative Assistant

Keegan Johnson, Parent Educator

Michelle Beaufort

CONTACT US

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