

Annual Report

2019-2020



THE NEED

IN GREENWOOD COUNTY:

4,379

children under age 5

69.4%

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

69.7%

of kindergartners are considered "not ready" for school



THREE MOST COMMON RISK FACTORS:

1. Single Parent Household
2. Referral for Neglect
3. Receives SNAP/TANF Benefits

OUR MISSION

To provide quality services and support for Greenwood County families with children prenatal to five.

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

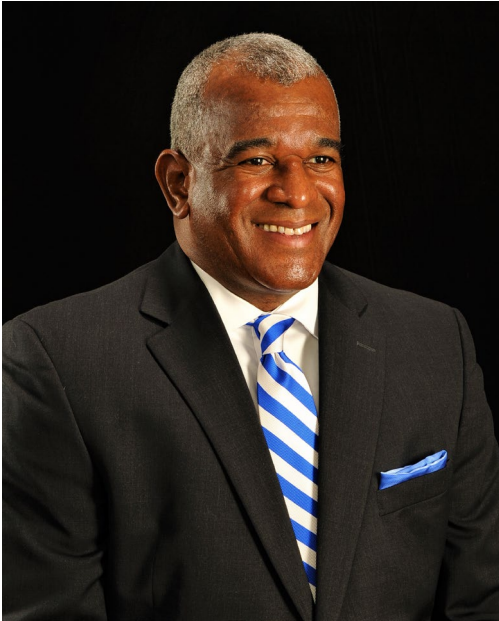
4,022

number of children and adults served by Greenwood 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



Michael K. Gaskin
Executive Director,
Greenwood County First Steps

Greenwood County First Steps uses an innovative and creative approach to ensure every dollar received by the County Partnership is used to its maximum potential. Getting children ready to learn is an engagement that requires every agency within this County to understand the importance of being not just stakeholders, but passionate, dedicated and committed stakeholders. The Greenwood County First Steps Full Partnership Board makes "high quality" the keywords to determine why a program should continue to receive First Steps' funding. The service quality of Greenwood County First Steps' programs grew tremendously with the addition of great local and state partnerships. The Department of Social Services, Guardian Ad Litem Programs, and the local court systems are also great partners, to reach the most at-risk children in the community and assist with preventing child abuse and neglect. Lander University's Education Department is another great partner. Greenwood County First Steps offer childcare training to providers. Professors in the Education Department at Lander University, teach the classes as a part of their community outreach, and their students assist as monitors. These great partnerships are success stories displaying positive impacts in our community. Needless to say, the Corona Virus Pandemic has made our county partnership more proactive in making sure we reach our clients. Through these successful partnerships, Greenwood County First Steps offer children and families comprehensive services for school success. From March to June 2020, Greenwood County First Steps reached out to the children and families during COVID-19 by providing more than 34 Zoom parenting workshops (averaging 11 clients per workshop), a special Easter Zoom Program for families, and distributing more than 90 lesson plans to serve families. In addition, we distributed needed household products to families and books to the children. GCFS strategically used its resources to keep its doors open to meet the need of its County's families and children during Pandemic! Moreover, for the ninth year, the Social Change Initiative has conducted all GCFS Parenting (Individual, Group, and Fatherhood) Workshops at no cost both after hours and on weekends.

Michael K. Gaskin

OUR GOALS

Greenwood County First Steps, in collaboration with state and local partners, we are focused on advancing Greenwood County towards these strategic goals in support of the Profile of the Ready Kindergartner, South Carolina's description of school readiness:

- Goal 1 - Provide high quality comprehensive parenting programs
- Goal 2 – Provide high quality parenting programs that are inclusive of fathers
- Goal 3 – Provide high quality trainings for childcare providers and early childhood educators
- Goal 4 – Serve as a community convener to partner with agencies in the community to promote comprehensive services to families

What a leader- motivated, dedicated, and consistent! The leadership he displayed during this pandemic is something to be admired.

Lillian Thomas, GCFS Board Chair



PIVOTING FOR COVID-19

When the coronavirus pandemic forced South Carolina to shut down in March 2020, Greenwood 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 Greenwood 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 GREENWOOD COUNTY

HEALTH

Through June 30, Greenwood County had a total of **510** confirmed COVID-19 cases and **10** COVID-19 deaths.

JOB LOSS

144.6%

increase in unemployment, 2019-2020

CHILD CARE

27.3%

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

63.3%

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



Greenwood County First Steps Weathering the Storm!

Greenwood County First Steps reached out to the children and families during COVID-19 by providing more than 34 Zoom parenting workshops (averaging 11 clients per workshop), a special Easter Zoom Program for families, and distributing more than 90 lesson plans to serving families. In addition, we distributed needed household products to families and books to the children. GCFS strategically used its resources to keep its doors open to meet the need of its county's families and children during the pandemic!

*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

12

kindergarten teachers
trained as home visitors

61

children served

360

total home and school
visits





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:

- Shaken Baby Syndrome and the Effects on the Family
- Safe Sleep for Infants and Toddlers
- Bloodborne Pathogens
- Stress Can affect Child Development
- What Factors Influence Child Development
- Creative Activities for Children
- Capturing the Power of Storytelling
- Love, Logic and Development
- Child Abuse and Neglect
- Music and Movement
- Guiding Children in the Right Direction Through Nurturing Lifestyles
- What Factors Influence Child Development?
- Encouraging Language Development
- Seasonal Creative Activities
- The Importance of Time Management
- Stress can Affect Brain Development and Behavior in Young Children
- Curriculum Activities to Enhance Developmental Milestones
- Calming Curriculum activities for Children and Teachers
- The Importance of Stress Management and Your Health
- The Effects of Mental Illness on a Child's Language Development
- Stress Management for Directors and Staff
- Curriculum Activities and Playdough
- The Importance of Time Management
- Guiding Children in the Right Direction and Classroom Management
- Stress Management
- Working with Socialization Disorders-Autism Spectrum
- The Effects of Trauma on Young Children's Development
- Seasonal Creative Activities

TRAINING BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

#542

total training attendance

#280

child care teachers and directors served

#36

number of training sessions offered

“Children learn as they play. Most importantly, in play children learn how to learn.”

Thank you Greenwood County First Steps for assisting in the continuing education of Greenwood County’s early childhood teachers and directors.

Cindy Ray, Childcare Director

NURTURING PARENTING

Home Visitation



an evidence-based program

The Nurturing Parenting Program is a compilation of evidence-based programs designed to offer long term, more comprehensive parenting education. Parents & Their Infants, Toddlers & Preschoolers participate in a Home Visitation Program that utilizes a parenting curriculum that allows more interactive time between parent and child.

NURTURING PARENTING BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020



22

families served

277

total home visits

- **Open to families in Greenwood County who have children prenatal to five years old.**
- **Home visits are provided twice a month with books, educational toys, and school readiness materials.**
- **Home Visitors provide community resource information to all families.**

I am the proud mother of a three year old. This program has given me the necessary tools and information needed to assist my child in learning the vital skills to be ready for kindergarten by giving us learning materials and books. Thank you to Greenwood County First Steps for allowing my family to be a part of such a wonderful program.

L. Scott, Nurturing Parenting Participant



Nurturing Parenting®
Established 1983

NURTURING PARENTING

Parent Training



an evidence-based program

The Nurturing Parenting, Parent Training Program is a comprehensive group-based parenting program for parents of young children. Sessions are offered weekly and parents learn skills needed for a healthy nurturing parenting lifestyle. Group and individualized sessions are offered through Parent Training. Clients must complete a total of 15 sessions to receive a certificate of program completion. This program is operated in-house and the goal is to increase Parental involvement and reduce abuse and neglect.

PARENT TRAINING BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

35

families served

56

total group meetings

“Mr. Michael Gaskin has truly change my life. I want to start off by saying Mr. Gaskin is a PHENOMENAL man. He is someone with so much INTEGRITY, PASSION, and DRIVE for helping others and, that's just a very few words that describe him. Mr. Gaskin is one of the Most Powerful Inspirational Leaders in his community when it comes down to his work in my eyes. He also is like a father figure to many of his students including myself. When he teaches, he teaches from life experience, and in some ways he can relate to us. In Mr. Gaskin classes everybody is a family he makes everybody feel welcomed and safe. When I first met Mr. Gaskin I automatically had a connection with him. He reminded me of my father. During my time at First Steps he encouraged me to be a better mother to my child. In times of need of guidance and reassurance he was there for me every time. He supported me in more ways than he know of and to this day I use that support and, his words of wisdom and encouragement to motivate me to keep me on the right path. Because not only do I not want to let my daughter down nor myself I don't want to let Mr. Gaskin down his work will not go down in vein. I'm truly thankful and blessed to have crossed paths with Mr. Gaskin and his staff at First Steps.”

Shawanda Crawford, Parent Training Graduate



Nurturing Parenting®
Established 1983

NURTURING PARENTING

Nurturing Father's - Fatherhood Program



an evidence-based program

REAL FATHERS ARE DADS!!

Workshops are offered to equip, educate, and empower fathers with the necessary tools to engage positively in their children's quest to be successful. The goal is to increase father involvement and reduce child abuse and neglect.

"Any Man can be a Father, but it takes a REAL MAN to be a DAD"

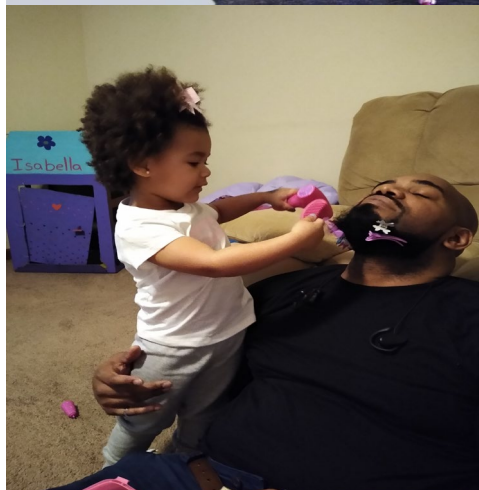
NURTURING FATHER'S BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

29

families served

57

total group meetings



"Being a man is about taking responsibility and using your willpower to become the person that you know you can and should be. It's about using your power as a man to serve others and create positive change...

Mr. Gaskin taught me that!"

D. Scott, Fatherhood Graduate



Nurturing Parenting®
Established 1983



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, Greenwood County First Steps mobilizes partners and community members to ensure all children in Greenwood 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

161

Adult Family Member
Served

717

Materials Distributed

**“When you assist someone, you also assist yourself. Instead of worrying about how much you get in return, you are better off assisting as many people as you can...
Assisting others is a good effort to instill human dignity”**

A. Boulware, Intern



OUR SUPPORTERS

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

FUNDING SUPPORT

South Carolina State Government: \$221,361

Walmart: \$5,000

Greenwood County First Steps Staff: \$75

IN-KIND SUPPORT

Lander University

The Social Change Initiative

Mental Health America

Abbeville County First Steps

Greenwood Children's Center (Nurse Family Partnership)

Guardian ad Litem

Greenwood County Department of Social Services

Greenwood School District #50

Tabernacle Baptist Church

Little River Baptist Church

Voice of the Children

JOIN US

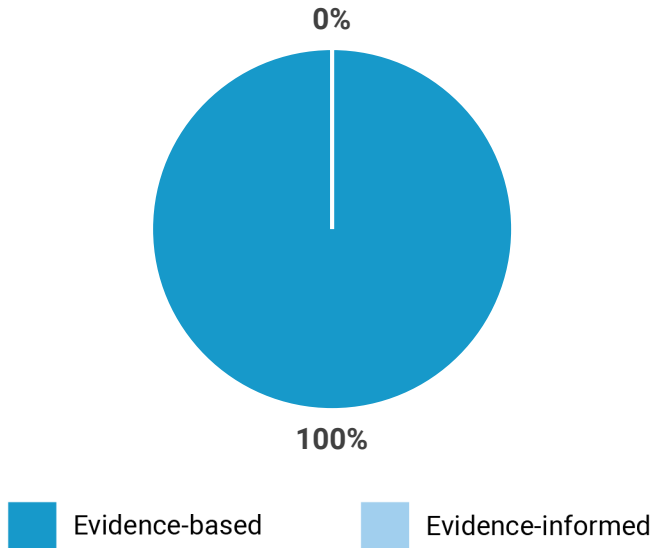
For more information on partnership opportunities, visit our website at
www.gcfirststeps.org



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

OUR INVESTMENT IN QUALITY

Expenditures of State Funds by Program Type



ESTIMATION OF COST SAVINGS

Since inception, Greenwood County First Steps has leveraged **\$2,345,586** from sources outside of state government.

That's **\$0.48** for every state dollar.

SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES BY STRATEGY

	State Funding	Federal Funding	Private Funding	In-Kind Contributions	Total
101 – Administrative Functions	\$10,994	\$0	\$274	\$8,145	\$19,413
180 – Core Functions	\$9,407	\$0	\$70	\$9,408	\$18,885
223 – Nurturing Parenting	\$139,770	\$0	\$4,562	\$3,087	\$147,419
406 – Countdown to Kindergarten	\$0	\$14,119	\$0	\$0	\$14,119
605 – Childcare Training & Prof. Dev.	\$63,028	\$0	\$259	\$21,888	\$85,175
Total Expenses	\$223,199	\$14,119	\$5,165	\$42,528	\$285,011



LEADERSHIP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Lillian Thomas, Board Chair
Reginald White, Vice-Board Chair, Budget Chair
Vallery Smith, Secretary
Cynthia Aaron, Assistant Secretary
Carolyn Robinson, Family Strengthening Chair
Johnny Ledford, Resource Chair

Linda Baylor
Benita Goode
Lillian Lee
Doris Louden
April Ouzts
Kayla Starnes
Jalessa Wideman
Andrea Witt

STAFF

Michael K. Gaskin, Executive Director
Santasha S. Highley, Program Coordinator
Dolores Rucker, Administrative Assistant
Jessica Sinkovics, Home Visitor
Natoya Cartledge, Home Visitor

CONTACT US

1402C Highway 72 West | 864-388-4102 | www.gcfirststeps.org

