

# Annual Report

## 2019-2020



## THE NEED

### IN JASPER COUNTY:

**1671**

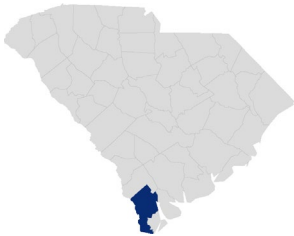
children under age 5

**71.4%**

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. Low Income – TANF/SNAP Eligible
2. Low Maternal Education
3. English not Primary Home Language

## OUR MISSION

Collaborate with other entities to prepare 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

**3095**

number of children and adults served by  
Jasper 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

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**Duchett Polite Hylton**  
Executive Director  
Jasper County First Steps

For Jasper County First Steps, our FY20 theme was “Growth Mindset – The Power of I Can”. It spoke to our commitment to grow beyond our comfort zone and to be an agent of change in our community. We had opportunities to optimize resources and, when faced with crisis, to shift our efforts to address needs in our community. We’ve learned that yes, we can - but that it will take the proverbial village.

I would like to take this time to acknowledge some of our “village” who helped us be the difference we want to see in our county. Thank you, Jasper County Government and School District for always supporting our mission. We also appreciate the support of our community partners, some of them are: CAPA, The Morris Center, Blue Heron Nature Center, KTM Gate Keepers and Bundles of Joy.

We were all in this together. Together we can, we will, and we did!

*Duchett Polite Hylton*

# 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 Jasper County toward the following strategic goals:

- Goal 1 – To increase partnership presence and services in the local community
- Goal 2 – To increase the reach of programs by building capacity within, through the development and strengthening of human, institutional and funding resources
- Goal 3 – To identify and recruit board members who are active, committed participants to JCFS

# PIVOTING FOR COVID-19

When the coronavirus pandemic forced South Carolina to shut down in March 2020, Jasper County First Steps quickly pivoted to provide much-needed support to young children, their families and childcare 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 Jasper 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 JASPER COUNTY

### HEALTH

Through June 30, 2020 Jasper County had a total of **136** confirmed COVID-19 cases and **3** COVID-19 deaths.

### JOB LOSS



**145.7%**

increase in unemployment, 2019-2020

### CHILD CARE

**0.0%**

children under 5 in Jasper County lived in a childcare desert\* before COVID-19

**100%**

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

Concerns for children's health and safety are always important. Jasper County First Steps partnered with a regional diaper bank to provide diapers, wipes and other related items to our PAT and other under resourced families in our county.

**Thank you, "Bundles of Joy",!**

\*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.



## EARLY IDENTIFICATION & REFERRAL



*an evidence-based program*

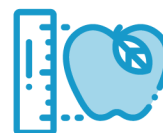
First Steps' Early Identification and Referral (EI&R) programs serve families with young children with suspected delays in development, acting as a local portal to connect families to community-based services they may need or desire to ensure the school readiness of their children. EI&R services include:



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

19

children served

211

materials distributed

8

referrals to BabyNet or other local services



Childhood friendships are crucial to a child's healthy physical, emotional and social well-being. Children's social relationships give them opportunities to practice effective communication, problem solving and cooperation.

- US Nanny Institute, July 2020



# 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 JASPER COUNTY 2019-2020

**24** families served

**495** total home visits

PAT parents showed positive increase of 24% in parent-child interactions as assessed by the Keys to Interactive Parenting Survey.



Parents as Teachers®  
*Model Affiliate*



## 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

**637**      **5808**

children served

books distributed

Books are 100% free to children in Jasper County because Jasper County First Steps secures the funds to cover the cost of books and shipping fees through the generous support of Jasper County Government.

**Sponsor a child for just \$25 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

4

kindergarten teachers  
trained as home visitors

29

children served

174

total home and school  
visits



### Ready for Kindergarten

I'm glad I was your teacher; I've come to love you so.

I can't believe the end is here. I hate to see you go.

Remember all the fun we had in all the things we did,

But most of all remember... You're a very special kid!

COUNTDOWN to  
KINDERGARTEN

SOUTH CAROLINA





## 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:

- **Self Evaluation, Part 1 & 2**
- **Understanding the Theory of Cognitive Development**
- **Early Childhood is a Time of Rapid Physical Development**
- **The Concept of Creativity in the EC Classroom**
- **Movement is a Powerful Communicator**
- **Block Play**
- **Planning for the Mind and Body**
- **Using Effective Assessment Strategies to Transform Teaching & Learning, Part 1**

### TRAINING BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

248

total training attendance

90

child care teachers and  
directors served

9

number of training  
sessions offered



Our professional development courses provide critical and relevant early childhood development training through practical application and knowledge to inspire student's overall improvement in practice.





## CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIPS



*an evidence-based program*

For many families in Jasper 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.

Jasper County First Steps offers scholarships to families enrolled in our Parents As Teachers program, for income-eligible children whose parent attends school or works at least 20 hours per week. We also offer summer transition scholarships to rising kindergarteners who attended SCFS's 4K program.

### SCHOLARSHIPS BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

9

number of children  
served

2

number of providers  
served

9

number of  
developmental  
screenings provided

**100% the money paid to childcare providers goes back into our local economy to benefit the citizens of Jasper 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 JASPER COUNTY 2019-2020

# 18

children enrolled

# 2

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

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

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## OUR PARTNERSHIPS BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

**272**

Material  
Distributed

**13**

# Community  
Events

**1995**

Total event  
attendance

“ We are able to do what we do because of our faithful and generous volunteers and supporters. This community group sponsored our families with Christmas gifts, Easter baskets and Back to School supplies.

**Thank you KTM Gate Keepers!**



## OUR SUPPORTERS

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

### FUNDING SUPPORT

South Carolina First Steps	\$200,000
Jasper County Government	\$15,000
SC Endeavors	\$2,000
SC Ports Authority	\$1,000

### IN-KIND SUPPORT

Dollywood Foundation	\$67,315
Jasper County Government	\$28,800

## JOIN US

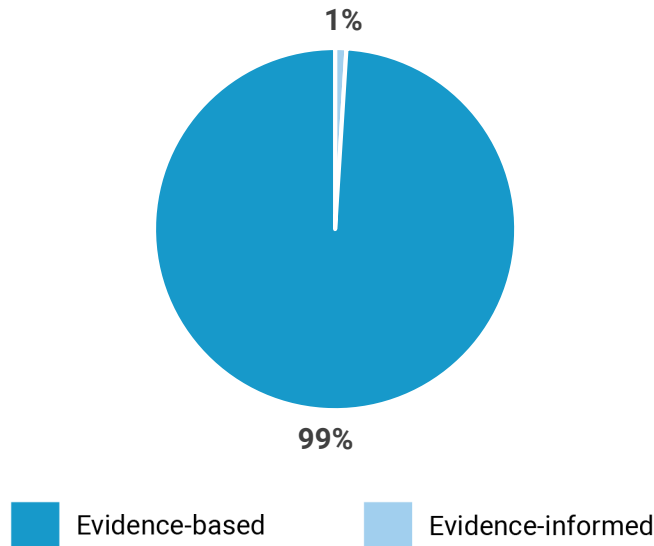
For more information on partnership opportunities, visit our website at [www.jaspercountyfirststeps.org](http://www.jaspercountyfirststeps.org)



## FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

### OUR INVESTMENT IN QUALITY

#### Expenditures of State Funds by Program Type



### ESTIMATION OF COST SAVINGS

Since inception, Jasper County First Steps has leveraged **\$1,434,273** from sources outside of state government.

That's **\$0.42** for every state dollar.

## SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES BY STRATEGY

	State Funding	Federal Funding	Private Funding	In-Kind Contributions	Total
Parents as Teachers	\$124,677	\$0	\$4,746	\$20,606	\$150,029
Imagination Library	\$0	\$0	\$11,598	\$67,315	\$78,913
Child Care Training	\$9,499	\$31	\$2,274	\$1,192	\$12,995
Raising A Reader Enhanced	\$6,398	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$6,398
Countdown To Kindergarten	\$1,695	\$0	\$627	\$0	\$2,322
Child Care Scholarships	\$5602	\$0	\$1	\$302	\$5,905
Early Identification & Referral	\$30,087	\$0	\$208	\$5084	\$35,379
Core Functions	\$8,169	\$0	\$73	\$1,192	\$9,434
Administrative Support	\$11,696	\$0	\$512	\$1,493	\$13,701
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$197,822</b>	<b>\$31</b>	<b>\$20,039</b>	<b>\$97,182</b>	<b>\$315,074</b>



## LEADERSHIP

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### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Ms. Darlene Burroughs

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Ms. Deloris Dunham, Board Chair

Ms. Eleanor Hazel, Vice-Chair

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### STAFF

Duchett Polite Hylton

Executive Director

Pamela Rose

Parenting Supervisor

Cierra Jenkins

Parent Educator

Betty Ford

Raising A Reader Implementer

## CONTACT US

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