

Annual Report

2019-2020

THE NEED

IN SALUDA COUNTY:

1249

children under age 5

49%

of young children live in poverty
or low-income households

86%

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. English is not the primary language spoken in the home
3. Low Maternal Education (less than high school education)/ TANF Eligibility (50% of Poverty or below.)

OUR MISSION

Saluda County First Steps helps families and caregivers prepare children to succeed in school by maximizing public and private community resources to deliver, enhance and expand high quality diverse 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

3693

number of children and adults served by
Saluda 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



Kim Chariker
Executive Director
Saluda County First Steps

I am honored to have served this year as Executive Director of Saluda County First Steps. This year certainly brought new challenges. When we were faced with the COVID-19 pandemic, we immediately responded by finding alternative means to continue to provide our quality services to the young children and their families within Saluda county.

Saluda County First Steps took action, collaborated with other county agencies , focused on virtual learning techniques , provided early learning supplies and books, found alternate ways to provide our services, and made necessary referrals with follow-up to successfully address the needs of our young children and their families.

Our school district focused on community collaboration with their #OneSaluda campaign and brought our entire community together throughout this pandemic.

We are #OneSaluda!

Kim Chariker

“ Undaunted. Despite the huge obstacle presented by the COVID-19 environment, our board and staff have been undaunted in finding innovative ways to maximize public and private resources to help children from all populations reach their highest potential. ”

Hugh Gray, Board Chair

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 Saluda County toward the following strategic goals:

- Goal 1 – Increase the number of children under 5 and their families in Saluda county who benefit from quality early childhood services, throughout the continuum of pre-birth to school entry
- Goal 2 – Improve the safety and well-being of children in Saluda by strengthening families
- Goal 3 – Increase community awareness and support for Saluda County First Steps

PIVOTING FOR COVID-19

When the coronavirus pandemic forced South Carolina to shut down in March 2020, Saluda 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 Saluda 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 SALUDA COUNTY

HEALTH

Through June 30, Saluda County had a total of **215** confirmed COVID-19 cases and **2** COVID-19 deaths.

JOB LOSS

85.8%

increase in unemployment, 2019-2020

CHILD CARE

56.9%

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

100%

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



When COVID-19 caused our Saluda County Schools to close in March of 2020, Saluda County First Steps stepped in and provided needed supplies, books, and family support through our Enhanced Early Education program. 4K and Kindergarten students received these materials to enhance their virtual schooling experiences by continuing to support their educational needs from home.

*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.



NURSE-FAMILY PARTNERSHIP



an evidence-based program

Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) helps transform the lives of first-time mothers and their babies. Through ongoing home visits from registered nurses, moms receive the care and support they need to have a healthy pregnancy, provide responsible and competent care for their children, and become more economically self-sufficient. From pregnancy until the child turns two years old, Nurse-Family Partnership Nurse Home Visitors form a much-needed, trusting relationship with their clients, instilling confidence and empowering them to achieve a better life for their children – and themselves.

BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

9

children served

76

number of home
visits provided



It has been a great experience, you have become like a friend to me. Someone I can talk to and get great advice from. The benefits of this program is to be more aware of my child's health, growth, and development. As well as to what actions that I can take to making sure my child stays safe. -

Samantha's client





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

6

kindergarten teachers
trained as home visitors

24

children served

137

total home and school
visits



Saluda County First Steps CTK students and their parents/guardians enjoyed the end of program visit to Saluda Primary School. During this orientation, they had the opportunity to see their classrooms, meet their Principal and Assistant Principal, and participate in family educational game time.

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:

- Physical Activity: How and Why?
- Communication and Language Development of Young Children
- Look What I Can Do!
- Math Is Everywhere
- Interactions Matter
- Pete The Cat and His Four Groovy Buttons
- I'm Not Eating That!
- Am I A Social Emotional Teacher?
- Healthy Eating Habits Start Early
- Special Needs in Childcare
- Interpreting Play to Parent
- Being A Strength Based Leader
- Doing The Right Thing – Even When It Isn't Easy

TRAINING BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

197

total training attendance

43

child care teachers and
directors served

17

number of training
sessions offered





NURTURING PARENT PROGRAM



an evidence-based program

Saluda County First Steps in collaboration with Saluda County Department of Social Services provides the Nurturing Parent program to DSS identified, family literacy, and EEE families. The purpose of Nurturing Parent program is to provide high-quality parenting support services and needed referrals for families of children 0-5 years of age.

Nurturing Parent Program BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

11

families served

28

total hours
offered





LITERACY PROGRAM



an evidence-informed program

Saluda County First Steps initiated the Literacy-Library Program in FY20. In collaboration with Saluda County Library, Saluda County First Steps provided curriculum materials, books, other materials, summer intern assistance and performers/entertainers to provide high quality educational programs for children 0-5 years of age in Saluda County. As we were faced with the COVID-19 pandemic, Saluda County Library presented their performances with the virtual media outlet, therefore reaching many more children and their families. Our numbers reflect the virtual media response, and our collaboration to reach as many children and families as possible during this time of need.

LITERACY – LIBRARY (SALUDA COUNTY) BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

1379

Children
Served

548

Families Served





EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAM



an evidence-based program

The Saluda County First Steps Enhanced Early Education program collaborated with Saluda Primary School to provide high quality educational services for 4K/5K Latino and English students. The students are identified by their teachers based on assessments as needing additional help to master skills. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these services had to be adapted to virtual learning assistance after March 2020. All students within this program showed improvement in their educational skills and were promoted to their next grade level. Expansion of services to Hollywood Elementary School is expected next year.

ENHANCED EARLY EDUCATION BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

35

children served

1

providers served





PUBLIC AWARENESS



Saluda County First Steps collaborates with other county agencies through county sponsored festivals/events, interagency meetings, health fairs, and any other related opportunities. We promote our programs, distribute books to young children, and provide guidance for referrals and educational needs.

SALUDA COUNTY FIRST STEPS BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

873

materials
distributed

25

events held

1305

total event
attendance





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

3905 **3020**

Materials Distributed

Books Distributed

“Saluda County Schools is extremely fortunate to have a wonderful working relationship with Saluda County First Steps. We are a rural district with limited resources and revenue, but Saluda County First Steps has allowed our district to better serve our early learners through our partnership. The investment that Saluda County First Steps is making in our schools is changing the lives for generations to come.”

Dr. Harvey Livingston, Superintendent Saluda County Schools



OUR SUPPORTERS

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

FUNDING SUPPORT

**State of South Carolina (through South Carolina First Steps):
\$200,000**

South Carolina Endeavors: \$2,000

Midlands Gives Campaign: \$2,003.87

Private Donations: \$140.00

IN-KIND SUPPORT

Saluda County School District One

Saluda County Administration

Saluda County Library

Saluda County Department of Social Services

Scholastic Reading Club

First Books

Kaplan Early Learning Company

Amazon

Lakeshore

JOIN US

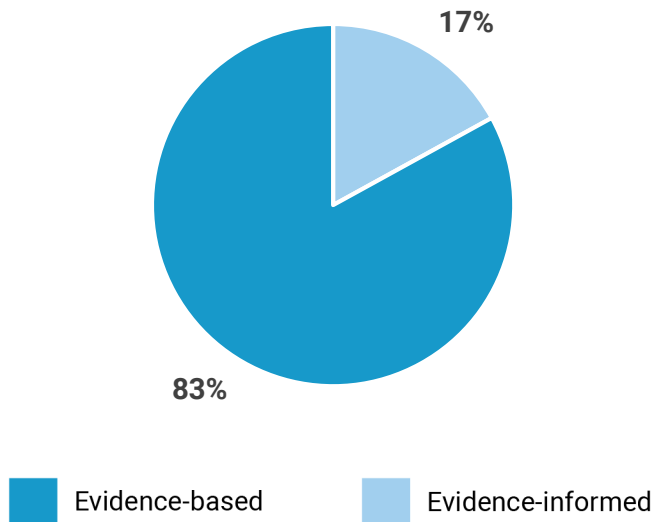
For more information on partnership, contact us at 103 S Rudolph Street Saluda, South Carolina 29138 Phone: (864)321-1441 Email: kim@saludafirststeps.org



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

OUR INVESTMENT IN QUALITY

Expenditures of State Funds by Program Type



ESTIMATION OF COST SAVINGS

Since inception, Saluda County First Steps has leveraged **\$1,768,177** from sources outside of state government.

That's **\$0.46** for every state dollar.

SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES BY STRATEGY

| | State Funding | Federal Funding | Private Funding | In-Kind Contributions | Total |
|---------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Nurse Family Partnership | \$32,979 | \$ | \$ | \$6,932 | \$39,911 |
| Countdown To Kindergarten | \$6,877 | \$ | \$ | \$688 | \$7,565 |
| Child Care Training | \$28,714 | \$550 | \$1,489 | \$2,737 | \$33,490 |
| Nurturing Parenting | \$18,067 | \$550 | \$11 | \$3,305 | \$21,933 |
| Literacy – Library | \$21,128 | \$ | \$ | \$2,617 | \$23,745 |
| Enhanced Early Education | \$57,619 | \$6,618 | \$ | \$11,905 | \$76,142 |
| Total Expenses | \$165,384 | \$7,718 | \$1,500 | \$28,184 | \$202,786 |



LEADERSHIP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| Hugh Gray, Chair | Freda Gantt |
| Dr. Harvey Livingston, Co-Chair | Elizabeth Guevara |
| Lynn Padgett, Secretary | Cynthia Howard |
| Perrin Bryan | Becky Paul |
| Candace Bush | Christy Marshall |
| Jennifer Campbell | Shanna Myers |
| Angela Cunningham | Heath Ward |
| Dr. Abbey Duggins | |

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