

# Annual Report

## 2019-2020



## THE NEED

### IN WILLIAMSBURG COUNTY:

**1,653**

children under age 5

**64.5%**

of young children live in poverty  
or low-income households

**65%**

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 need of other services
3. Exposure to parental/caregiver depression & TANF Eligibility (50% of Federal Poverty Rate or below)

## OUR MISSION

To collaborate with other entities, First Steps helps Williamsburg County 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

**1,944**

children and adults served by Williamsburg  
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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**Felicia C. Patrick**

Executive Director  
Williamsburg County First Steps

It has been our mission to implement programs that will build relationships in order to serve the children and families in our communities. As a result of COVID-19, we faced many unforeseen challenges including job loss and unemployment, childcare centers and schools closing, and an alarming number of cases and deaths. Within our rural communities, families were also faced with the inability to have access to much needed supplies in order to remain safe. Despite these challenges, Williamsburg County First Steps continued programs and followed CDC guidelines to ensure the safety of staff, children, families, and childcare providers. The positive impacts on the children and families of this area can be measured through the success of our programs. WCFS continues to provide much need services through Parents as Teachers (PAT), Countdown to Kindergarten (CTK), Dolly Parton Imagination Library (DPIL), and Child Care Training & Professional Development (CCT).

The past year has truly been one of challenges and uncertainty, however, we continue to serve our children by providing high quality services and care. We would like to take this opportunity to thank our WCFS Partnership Board, Williamsburg County School District, partnering agencies and community members, and parents for your continued support. Finally, I would like to thank our staff: Geneva Dorsey, Shakira Fulton, Rochelle Gamble, Buetine Pressley, and Carrie White for always putting our families and community first.



*Felicia C. Patrick*

## MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

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**Janice M. Gamble, Ed.D**

Chair

Williamsburg County First Steps Board of Trustees

As Board Chair, I want to take this opportunity to thank each member of the Williamsburg County First Steps Partnership (WCFSP) Board, the staff of the local partnership office, and the highly effective educational Parents As Teachers (PAT) professionals for devoting their time, talent, energy and resources to the development of our most important assets, the children of Williamsburg County. Phil Jackson stated, “The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team.” Our team works with the loving, caring parents of this community, the highly qualified members of the childcare community, along with the Williamsburg County School System to ensure every child in Williamsburg County is ready for school. Williamsburg County First Steps served 481 children in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program and 43 families in its Parents as Teachers program. In addition, the partnership provided quality professional development for 39 Child Care Centers in Williamsburg County and adjoining counties. Our vision is that all children in the state of South Carolina will have the opportunity to succeed in school and graduate from college and/or be career ready.



*Janice M. Gamble*

# 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 Williamsburg County toward the following strategic goals:

- Goal 1- Parents as Teachers (PAT): to increase the support given to families by expanding our partnership base, increasing our network of resources, and offering evidence-based curriculum to address a skill set for parents.
- Goal 2- Countdown to Kindergarten (CTK): to expand program participation to include additional schools, childcare centers and ongoing support to CTK teachers throughout the school year.
- Goal 3 - Dolly Parton Imagination Library (DPIL): to broaden our resource base to raise community program awareness and increase the number of children being served.
- Goal 4 - Child Care Training & Professional Development (CCTPD): to assess our current training practices to find a more effective methodology for providing high quality professional development experiences for childcare center professionals.

# PIVOTING FOR COVID-19

When the coronavirus pandemic forced South Carolina to shut down in March 2020, Williamsburg 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 Williamsburg 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 WILLIAMSBURG COUNTY

### HEALTH

Through June 30, Williamsburg County had a total of **416** confirmed COVID-19 cases and **18** COVID-19 deaths.

### JOB LOSS

**108.8%**

increase in unemployment, 2019-2020

### CHILD CARE

**18.4%**

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

**67.6%**

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



Despite the key role childcare providers are playing in support of other essential industries during the COVID-19 crisis, the childcare system remains at risk of collapse due to the economic impact.

To address this issue, Williamsburg County First Steps is helping to provide PPE supplies to ensure childcare facilities are safe during the corona virus pandemic.

\*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 childcare 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 WILLIAMSBURG COUNTY 2019-2020

**43**

families served

**772**

total home visits

WCFS continues to meet the needs of our families through telephone calls, text messages, face time, messenger, and social media. In order to support families' social, emotional, and mental health challenges and help ensure their well-being, PAT families engaged in virtual group meetings and activities, and were provided with porch drop offs.



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

**481**      **5,769**

children served

books distributed

Books are 100% free to children in Williamsburg County because Williamsburg County First Steps secures the funds to cover the cost of books and shipping fees.

**Sponsor 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

4

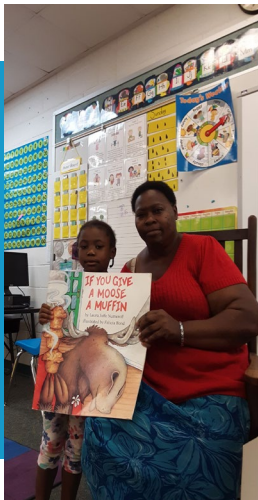
kindergarten teachers  
trained as home visitors

33

children served

192

total home and school  
visits



CTK provides rising kindergartners and their families summer intervention, support, and an easy school transition in order to establish strong student-teacher relationships that will facilitate the home-school transition and enhance classroom learning.

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:

- \*Cognition: Math Development & Scientific Reasoning**
- \*Brain Development**
- \*CLASS: Classroom Organization**
- \*Physical Development: Keep it Moving**
- \*Art & Creativity**
- \*Blood Borne Pathogens**

- \*Infants & Child CPR**
- \*First Aid**
- \*Should I or Shouldn't I Report Understanding Mandated Reporting**
- \*Sing a Transition**
- \*Full Steam Ahead With Infants and Toddlers**

### TRAINING BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

**155**

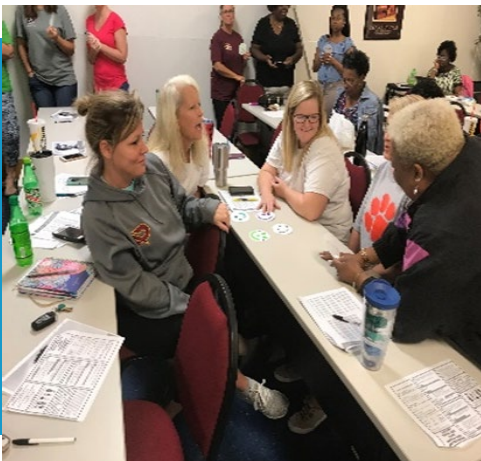
total training attendance

**89**

child care teachers and  
directors served

**16.5**

number of training  
sessions offered



Childcare providers  
engaged in activities  
during training.

# 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 WILLIAMSBURG COUNTY 2019-2020

# 46

children enrolled

# 4

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.





## RAISING A READER



*an evidence-based program*

Raising a Reader (RAR) was designed is to engage families in a routine of daily “book-cuddling” with their children to foster healthy brain development, parent-child bonding, and early literacy skills critical for school success.

### RAISING A READER BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

**38**

families served

**126**

total number of  
group meeting  
participants



WCFS provided 4K students, parents and childcare providers literacy-based lessons and activities along with Raising a Reader book exchange program.





## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

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

**426**

families served

**780**

material distributed



WCFS works with community partners to provide support, supplies and resources to children and families in Williamsburg County.



## OUR SUPPORTERS

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

### FUNDING SUPPORT

Williamsburg County School District Employees:\$282.28	Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.: \$100
Williamsburg County Treasurer: \$125	DSM Nutritional Products: \$200
Williamsburg County First Steps Board Members:\$880	Boykin Parson: \$30
Redmond-Richardson Funeral Home, Inc.: \$125	Greenville Technical College (Cert. Training Incentive Grant): \$2,000
Nan Ya Plastics Corporation, Amer.: \$300	Comprehensive Health Management (COVID-19 Grant): \$500
Ronnie A. Sabb: \$300	Eat Smart Move More South Carolina (Grant): \$750
Councilman Eddie Woods: \$200	United Way Association (Census 2020 Grant): \$3,000
Town of Greeleyville: \$200	
Kaplan Early Learning Company: \$200	
PrimeCare of the Lower Pee Dee: \$25	

### IN-KIND SUPPORT

Williamsburg County School District: \$53,306.27
Williamsburg Technical College: \$3,274

## JOIN US

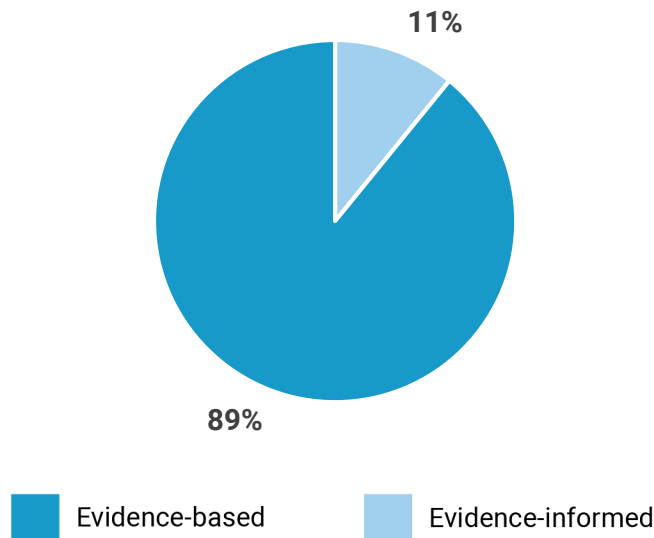
For more information on partnership opportunities, visit our website at  
**[scfirststeps.org/williamsburg](https://scfirststeps.org/williamsburg)**



## FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

### OUR INVESTMENT IN QUALITY

#### Expenditures of State Funds by Program Type



### ESTIMATION OF COST SAVINGS

Since inception, Williamsburg County First Steps has leveraged **\$2,338,760** from sources outside of state government.

That's **\$0.41** for every state dollar.

### SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES BY STRATEGY

	State Funding	Federal Funding	Private Funding	In-Kind Contributions	Total
Parents as Teachers	\$95,846.07	\$1,804.30	\$6,039.88	\$52,443.27	\$156,133.52
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$19,311.40	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$19,311.40
Child Care Training	\$43,081.85	\$0.00	\$3,123.51	\$1,312.00	\$47,517.36
Dolly Parton Imagination Library	\$10,130.28	\$0.00	\$2,872.88	\$0.00	\$13,003.16
Raising a Reader Enhanced E.B.	\$12,377.87	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$12,377.87
Core Functions	\$14,300.80	\$103.00	\$3,208.61	\$2,142.00	\$19,754.41
Administrative Support	\$12,256.35	\$0.00	\$701.32	\$683.00	\$13,640.58
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$207,204</b>	<b>\$1,907</b>	<b>\$15,946</b>	<b>\$56,580</b>	<b>\$281,738</b>





## LEADERSHIP

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Amy Cooper	April Williams
Verney Cumbee	Shainna Williams
Ruby Faison	Ernestine Young
Ella Fulton	

### STAFF

Felicia C. Patrick, Executive Director

Shakira Fulton, Program Assistant

Rochelle Gamble, Lead Parent Educator

Carrie White, Parent Educator

Geneva Dorsey, Parent Educator

Buetine Pressley, Parent Educator

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