OUR MISSION

To ensure that all children in Spartanburg County start school ready to reach their highest potential. By leveraging resources, collaborating with community partners, and supporting families and early care providers, we hope to maximize our long-term impact.

OUR VALUES

Children and Families
Equity
Relationships
High-quality
Positive Impact

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 OVERARCHING MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- Increase the reach of First Steps services
  By 2025, the number of children served by Spartanburg County First Steps will increase by 20%.

- Increase the availability of high-quality early care and education opportunities offered by First Steps
  By 2025, the number of children under age 6 who benefit from Spartanburg County First Steps quality enhancement and training efforts will increase by 15%.
  By 2025, the number of dual language learners served by Spartanburg County First Steps will increase by 20%.

OUR OBJECTIVES

In support of the Profile of the Ready Kindergartner, our approach is focused on advancing Spartanburg First Steps strategic goals:

1. Children are healthy and safe.
2. Early care and education teachers are supported to increase education and skills.
3. Families are valued, engaged, and supported.

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.

Gain valuable experience and give back to your community through service with First Steps AmeriCorps. Our AmeriCorps members engage directly with families and communities, helping to ensure that all children start school ready to reach their highest potential. Apply at scfirststeps.org/AmeriCorps.

900 South Pine Street, Spartanburg, SC 29302 | 864-327-4900 | scfirststeps.org/spartanburg
MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we share our successes from this past year, we are reminded how fortunate we are to have the support of many local and state partners as well as our committed Spartanburg County First Steps Board of Directors. Year to year our goal remains the same – supporting Spartanburg’s youngest learners and their families and caregivers on their journey to finding success in school and in life. It means meeting our families and children where they are and being intentional to close new gaps that arise along the way. It means searching for funding and building partnerships that can provide needed supports, even when COVID places stumbling blocks in our way. It means supporting the workforce in early care and education programs so they can provide the best opportunity for learning for each child, every day. All of these pieces work together to help boost a child’s brain development and to build a strong, happy, and healthy child.

We are tremendously grateful for all of the funding, opportunities, and support we have received this past year to support our efforts. Success for all of our young children is success for us all. Together, we continue the journey to ensure all of Spartanburg County’s youngest children are thriving, and are supported to reach their highest potential.

Barbara Manoski

“What matters is that you remember we are stronger together, and taking a hand is just as important as offering one.”

Paul Boynton, Author of Begin with Yes
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 VISION

We envision a community that has the knowledge and will to support all children in reaching their full potential.
FOUR-YEAR OLD KINDERGARTEN

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 SPARTANBURG COUNTY 2020-2021

186 children enrolled

19 First Steps 4K providers

PREPARING FOR STATEWIDE EXPANSION

With First Steps 4K, families are in the driver’s seat. They choose the program that best meets their needs. Families can enroll their child in any of the 244 private, nonprofit, or faith-based child care centers or schools participating in the program. The majority of First Steps 4K providers offer 8-hour day and year-round instruction, including summers, which is at no cost to parents.
NURSE-FAMILY PARTNERSHIP

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
2020-2021

273 children served

6234 number of home visits provided

I like having an NFP nurse to answer all my questions during this stressful time of pregnancy and trying to work and go to school.

ALEXIS HAYWOOD, PARENT
Early Head Start is an evidence-based program that promotes school readiness through implementation of the Parent, Family & Community Engagement (PFCE) framework, Curriculum Fidelity, T.S. GOLD Assessment, and an evidence-based parenting curriculum.

This year we were excited to offer our parents an educational opportunity through Ready Rosie. We have 241 parents participate and they watched a total of 1,484 parenting videos.

**EARLY HEAD START BY THE NUMBERS 2020-2021**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>219</th>
<th>132</th>
<th>351</th>
<th>4%</th>
<th>98%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Head Start</td>
<td>Early Head Start served 219 pregnant</td>
<td>EHS - Child Care Partnership served 132</td>
<td>total children/pregnant women were served, representing 266 families</td>
<td>based on the Community Assessment, 4% of eligible children were served</td>
<td>average monthly enrollment for both EHS and EHS-CCP program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>women and children, representing 160</td>
<td>children, representing 105</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>families</td>
<td>families</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“The program really cares about the kids and their well-being.”

**PARENT, EARLY HEAD START**
Receipt of Medical & Dental Care:
EHS children: 94% had health insurance, 73% were up to date on well-baby check-ups
EHS-CCP children: 98% had health insurance, 80% were up to date on well-baby check-ups
Baby Net children served: EHS – 20 (17% of funded enrollment) and EHS-CCP: 8 (10% of funded enrollment)
Screenings conducted: 325 ASQ and ASQ-SE’s were conducted
Alcohol and Drug Questionnaire: 265 families completed a questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EARLY HEAD START BY THE NUMBERS</th>
<th>2020-2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>home visits were provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>843</td>
<td>of children served, met or exceeded their developmental expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>555</td>
<td>referrals to community resources were made for EHS families</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The EHS and EHS-CCP programs received the following grants: American Rescue Plan, COVID, COLA, annual EHS and EHS-CCP. Participated in the PDG study.

Program Goals:
1. Strengthen a culture of timely data measurement
2. Hire, train and retain qualified Teachers and build employee capacity
3. Improve access to family literacy and educational support services for EHS families
4. Implement strategies to identify challenges/barriers that prevent families from accessing medical and dental services
5. Strengthen the collaboration of housing services and resources to increase access to safe and affordable housing for EHS families
Before Quality Counts I felt like a spinning top. I was moving but going nowhere. I was almost at the point of burnout because I did know what to do, nor did I have any idea who to ask for help. But since I have been a part of Quality Counts, not only has our center’s quality improved, but I feel empowered to succeed as a director and center owner.

MIA GENTRY, DIRECTOR/OWNER OF GROWING MINDS LEARNING CENTER
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:

**ABC Nutrition & Physical Activity**
- Advocacy for Early Care & Education
- Cultural Diversity

**Brain Development**
- Conscious Discipline
- Creative Curriculum

**Early Language & Literacy**
- Early Math Skills
- Early Science Exploration
- Environment Rating Scales

**Health & Safety**
- Importance of Relationships
- Inquiry Based Learning
- Pyramid Model
- Responsive Caregiving
- Schedule & Routines
- Self Regulation
- Social & Emotional Development
- The Basics

**TRAINING BY THE NUMBERS**

- **1553** total training attendance
- **489** child care teachers and directors served
- **53** number of training sessions offered

Training with Quality Counts allows our teachers hands on, interactive instruction. Quality Counts has been able to introduce our teachers to new ways of thinking when working with children in the classroom. The instructors for Quality Counts are always willing to answer any questions in and out of the training. Quality Counts allows the teachers to feel comfortable in a nonjudgmental environment when asking for help with issues in classrooms. They are also wonderful about providing extra resources to further our teachers education.

**AUDREY SELBY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MISS TAMMY'S LITTLE LEARNING CENTER**
While Spartanburg County First Steps operates and administrates The Franklin School, seven community partners collaborate to govern and address the early learning gaps in the Northside of Spartanburg.

We were excited to celebrate with families as over 40 4K students graduated from our program this year. With three 4K classrooms supported by District 7 and one by First Steps 4K, these children headed to Kindergarten ready to succeed!

The Franklin School is an amazing place where they treat my baby like he is their own. As full-time working parents it is comforting to know that his needs are being met. As an early learning center I know his developmental milestones are being met and he will be prepared when the time comes to transition to 5K.

CATHY VOELKER, THE FRANKLIN SCHOOL

THE FRANKLIN SCHOOL BY THE NUMBERS 2020-2021

117 children served 65% Of enrolled children come from economically challenged homes
PUBLIC AWARENESS

Our Family Engagement initiatives engage families of young children to ensure everyone has the knowledge needed to help children be successful and ready for Kindergarten. Community partners play a key role in promoting developmental screening and The Palmetto Basics.

Everyday interactions between children, their parents, and other caregivers provide abundant opportunities to give children from every background a more equal start in life. The Basics are five evidence-based parenting and caregiving principles that encompass much of what experts find is important for children from birth to age three.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE
2020-2021

951 children screened using ASQ3
1080 families served through Basics

The Basics was designed to help parents understand how important the first 3 years of life are in terms of brain growth and development. Parents are their child’s most important teacher. Better educating our children is so critical to our future.

CHRISTINA LOWE, BASICS CHAMPION
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, Spartanburg County First Steps mobilizes partners and community members to ensure all children in ABC 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
2020-2021

64
Community partners

49
More than 49 million dollars leveraged outside of government sources since inception

“Spartanburg Country First Steps is a tremendous resource for the community and a wonderful partner for The Children’s Museum of the Upstate. As we share common goals of engaging and preparing our community’s youngest learners for successful school years, the expertise and insights First Steps have shared with us are invaluable. We have enjoyed parental programming collaborations like Basics Days and educational events like Countdown To Kindergarten designed to reach Spartanburg’s youngest learners and their families. We are so grateful for First Steps and the many ways they support TCMU and our community.”

LAUREN LUNECKAS, CEO OF THE CHILDREN’S MUSEUM
Through partnerships and collaborations, as well as financial support from grants and contributions, Spartanburg First Steps leverages state dollars to enhance and expand services to children and families.

**FUNDING SUPPORT**

- Children’s Trust of SC, $297,360
  (Nurse Family Partnership)
- Contec, $40,116
  (Family Engagement and The Basics)
- Early Head Start Federal Grants, $2,395,042
- Mary Black Foundation, $127,840
  (Quality Counts)
- Northside Development Group, $759,775
  (The Franklin School)
- Preschool Development Grant, $5,000
- South Carolina First Steps, $709,840
  (Partnership Grant)
- Spartanburg Academic Movement, $250,000
  (Equitable COVID Recovery)
- United Way of the Piedmont, $17,550
  (Nurse Family Partnership)

**JOIN US**

For more information on partnership opportunities, visit our website at spartanburgfirststeps.org
Through partnerships and collaborations, as well as financial support from grants and contributions, Spartanburg First Steps leverages state dollars to enhance and expand services to children and families.

**IN-KIND SUPPORT**

Hope Center for Children  
Inman First Baptist  
Lakeshore Early Learning  
Limestone University  
Piedmont Community Action  
Mary Black Foundation  
SC Department of Social Services  
Spartanburg County First Steps Board  
Spartanburg Interfaith Hospitality Network  
Spartanburg School Districts 1,2,3,4,5, 6 & 7  
Spartanburg School District 7, Early Learning Center  
The Children’s Museum of the Upstate, Spartanburg  
United Way of the Piedmont  
USC, Columbia  
USC Upstate  
Winthrop University

**JOIN US**

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

OUR INVESTMENT IN QUALITY
Expenditures of State Funds by Program Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Type</th>
<th>State Funding</th>
<th>Federal Funding</th>
<th>Private Funding</th>
<th>In-Kind Contributions</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>$86,026</td>
<td></td>
<td>$1218</td>
<td></td>
<td>$87,244</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child Care Partnership</td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,238,431</td>
<td></td>
<td>$328,996</td>
<td>$1,567,427</td>
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<tr>
<td>Core Functions</td>
<td>$62,542</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$134,192</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early Head Start</td>
<td>$92,029</td>
<td>$1,722,897</td>
<td>2140</td>
<td>$415,477</td>
<td>$2,232,543</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Franklin School</td>
<td></td>
<td>$2,808</td>
<td></td>
<td>$857,177</td>
<td>$859,985</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nurse Family Partnership</td>
<td></td>
<td>$336,804</td>
<td></td>
<td>$20,372</td>
<td>$357,176</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality Counts</td>
<td>$484,277</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>$192,519</td>
<td>$680,796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>$724,873</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3,304,941</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,145,076</strong></td>
<td><strong>$744,473</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,919,363.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ESTIMATION OF COST SAVINGS

Since inception, Spartanburg County First Steps has leveraged $49,794,771.12 from sources outside of state government.

That’s $3.06 for every state dollar.

SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES BY STRATEGY

100% Evidence-based
16% Evidence-informed

100%
LEADERSHIP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Krishenda Alexander
Jill Brady
Olga Campos
Payton Davis
Casey Dover
Lorea Dylgjeri
Carolyn Gibson, Vice-Chair
Kimberly Gist
Ava Hughes, Secretary

Dr. Susan Little
Sarah Love, Chair
Leverne McBeth
April Miller
Dr. Terry Pruitt
Anna Strom, Treasurer
Deana Watson
Jodi Wright

First Steps Leadership Team

Shawna Bynum, The Franklin School Director
Tammy Compton, Quality Counts Director
Jeri Ross Hayes, Early Head Start Director
Pamela Jones, Director of Operations

Jennie Lamm, Operations Support Specialist
Barbara Manoski, Executive Director
Anna Marchuk, Fiscal Administrator
Kaitlin Watts, Family Engagement Coordinator

Quality Counts

Courtney Cancer, Technical Assistance Provider
Maddison Cash, Support Specialist
Tammy Compton, Quality Counts Director

Cathleen Cullen, TA Provider/Rater
Teresa Phillip, Technical Assistance Provider
LEADERSHIP

Early Head Start Administration

Alisa Britt, ECE Program Specialist
Natasha Doster, Program Support Specialist
Jeri Ross-Hayes, Early Head Start Director
Jodie Martin, Family Services Program Specialist
Karen Parham
ERSEA & Transition Program Specialist

Desiree’ Rivers
Behavioral Health Case Manager
Rosalyn Splawn
Health/Nutrition Program Specialist
Laresa Tate, Center Quality Specialist

Early Head Start Staff

Diana Gomez-Lopez, Family Service Specialist
Tamara Manning, Family Service Specialist
Vanessa McNally, Family Service Specialist
Wonza Mercer, Family Service Specialist

Nikki Moton, Family Service Specialist
Ana Rodriquez, Family Service Specialist
Eugenia Young, Family Service Specialist

Early Head Start Center Staff

Tanya Blanco, Classroom Teacher
Geraldine Broadus, Classroom Teacher
Kayla Edge, Center Director
Danielle Foster, Classroom Teacher
Jasmine Fowler, Classroom Teacher
Mia Gentry, Center Director
Joye Guyton, Center Director

Debra Hughes, Director
Markesha Jackson, Center Director
Erica Jefferson, Assistant Teacher
Dorothy Lassiter, Classroom Teacher
Linda Mease, Kitchen Operator
Abina Robinson, Center Director
Kesha Williams, Center Director
LEADERSHIP

The Franklin School Administration

Shawna Bynum, Director
Jaleesa Drummond, Assistant Director
Mitch Hines, District 7 4K Director
Temithy Singfield, Head Start Director
Virginia Evans, Administrative Assistant

The Franklin School Teachers & Staff

Rebecca Adams, Kitchen Operator
Martha Alvarez, Teacher
Kioni Anderson, Teacher
Miriam Benjamin, D7 4K Teacher
Gerene Dawkins, D7 4K Teacher
Janice Degraffinreid, Head Start Teacher
Lisa Frazier, D7 4K Teacher
Darlene Gaffney, Teacher
Dana Holland, D7 4K Teacher
Henry Jackson, Custodian
Shirley Jeter, D7 4K Teacher
LaChanta Kennedy, Teacher
Eugene Lyles, Custodian
Paula Marlin, Teacher
Markeisha Morgan, Teacher
Luz Rivera, Head Start Teacher
Fallon Thomason, Teacher
Jelah Tunstull, Custodian
Salena Williams, Teacher
Tiesha Wood, Head Start Teacher

CONTACT US

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