Annual Report
2021-2022
OUR MISSION
To serve as a convener of early childhood champions to coordinate services to measurably improve the early childhood development of all children in Greenville County.

OUR VALUES
Operational accountability and transparency
Delivering research-based initiatives
Convening collaborative public-private partnerships

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
More children arrive at kindergarten ready for success.

OUR OBJECTIVES
1. More students enter kindergarten demonstrating readiness in language and literacy.
2. More students enter kindergarten demonstrating readiness in social foundations.
3. Greenville First Steps will leverage public and private supports as a match to state funds provided to increase community investments in evidence-based early childhood strategies.

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.

700 N Pleasantburg Dr Greenville, SC 29607 | 864-248-4757 | greenvillefirststeps.org
MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Convening the Community

When the SC General Assembly founded First Steps in 1999- it was clear that the intent of our Legislators was to build a network of local partners embedded in the communities we serve, and focused on not just running high quality programs, but also strengthening the network of service providers already working to improve early childhood outcomes in our neighborhoods.

Since its inception, Greenville First Steps has contributed more than $35 million into the Greenville Community- aimed at measurably improving early childhood outcomes- and nowhere is this more evident than in our investments in strengthening the Early Childcare sector.

Through investments in services like Palmetto Shared Services Alliance (providing back office supports to childcare providers- ensuring they are profitable and sustainable), the In-home childcare provider network (ensuring those providing home based childcare have connections with high quality best practices), and the Christ Church Book Warehouse (which was distributed more than 100,000 new children’s books to childcare providers across the county), as well as supporting the expansion of Free4KSC.org a statewide effort to ensure families have access to free 4 year old kindergarten, we have helped to ensure that our more than 220 childcare providers have the resources and supports needed to serve countless children and families throughout Greenville County.

This year, we convened our community childcare providers, local funders, and policy makers to discuss the challenges our providers have faced since Covid, and what can be done to better support them. Without question- staff recruitment and retention arose as the most significant issues. Where do we find staff? How do we afford to pay them enough to stay? What can we do when we can’t afford to pay them more to make them feel valued?

Working with Childcare providers we identified their greatest needs and began to brainstorm policy changes that may be needed – including expanding subsidies provided by SCFS and DSS, increasing access to state benefits programs, working with DSS to reduce regulations that are impacting operational costs, and working with local municipalities to reduce licensing and operational regulations that impact home-based providers.

Greenville First Steps will continue to support our community of childcare providers, not just as a funder of their work, but as a voice to policy makers to help make the work of these essential employees easier- so they can continue to provide safe, nurturing, and reliable childcare options for working families across the county.

DEREK LEWIS
Executive Director
Greenville First Steps

Derek
The great work of Greenville First Steps continues to impact the community in significant ways. I continue to see and hear about this work not just in my role as Chair of the Board of Directors, but in my role as a community member, and as a family with a young child. I will point out two areas of excitement. First, the Board of Directors continues to use school-based data to choose which zip codes in Greenville County should be prioritized for improving life and learning for young children. Second, the launch of the Greenville First Steps endowed fund has created greater financial stability and opportunity to continue investing in the lives of children and families in our county. It was invigorating to see the participation of giving from board members, past board members, and friends of Greenville First Steps! I continue to laude the Greenville First Steps staff who desire to continuously improve their practice in making lives better for young children in our community.

Jeremy
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

Families, early childhood educators, and community partners are equipped with the tools and resources needed to ensure children enter kindergarten ready to succeed.
CHILD CARE TRAINING

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 2021-2022 trainings included:

- Parents Are Part of the Job
- Strengthening Business Practices
- Routines, Rituals, Traditions
- Read Alouds Are Key
- Reading Foundations
- Marketing Your Program

TRAINING BY THE NUMBERS
2021-2022

1,871 total training attendance
959 child care teachers and directors served
793 number of training sessions offered

"The training was very useful. The trainer was professional and kept everyone engaged. I appreciate the variety of certified trainings offered in Greenville."

GREENVILLE COUNTY CHILDCARE TEACHER
COUNTDOWN TO KINDERGARTEN

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
2021-2022

3 10 30 180
schools served kindergarten teachers trained as home visitors children served total home and school visits

I love how she comes weekly to work with my daughter to get her comfortable. Me and my daughter loved the whole program. Because of the Countdown program, I now am better prepared to support my child with kindergarten academic and behavioral skills.

PARENT OF RISING 5K STUDENT
ENHANCED EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAM

In partnership with Greenville County Schools, Greenville First Steps provides funds to supplement the preschool experiences for children throughout the Greenville County School District. Enhancements include access to Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) training, Palmetto Basics, parenting supports, and access to community resources to enhance the great work already being done throughout the district.

ENHANCED EARLY EDUCATION BY THE NUMBERS
2021-2022

815 children served
983 parents served

Having the support of First Steps has made a HUGE difference in my 4K classroom. From the additional books and resources, to the parenting workshops provided by the Triple P program, to the great ongoing arts enrichment programming provided by the SC Children's Theatre, our relationship with our students and their families is stronger because of First Steps.

HEDRICK LEWIS, 4K TEACHER, GREENVIIEW CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER, GREENVILLE COUNTY SCHOOLS
Our favorite day of the month is the day our book arrives in the mail. Our daughter is so excited every month to see what the book will be about. Thank you for bringing this program to Travelers Rest!

PARENT OF 4-YEAR-OLD
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.

NURSE-FAMILY PARTNERSHIP BY THE NUMBERS 2021-2022

223 families served
1,346 total home visits

“It was really exciting to have Dwan visit because I never knew what having a baby entailed. I learned a lot from Nurse-Family Partnership and I had a lot of support from Dwan (nurse).”

JENNIFER – GREENVILLE NFP MOM
The biggest lesson I have learned is that patience is key in parenting, especially when trying to teach my son something new.

NURTURING PARENTING YOUNG PARENT
The Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) is a parenting and family support system designed to prevent – as well as treat – behavioral and emotional problems in children up to age 12. Triple P is a multi-level system of support including five levels of increasing intensity. Offerings include a self-help program, one-on-one consultations, small group sessions, and in-home support. Specialist programs are available for parents of children with a disability; parents of children with health or weight concerns; parents going through divorce or separation; and for Indigenous families.

TRIPLE P BY THE NUMBERS
2021-2022

56 families served
249 total parent trainings

The Triple P patience and consistency tools I received from attending the groups have helped tremendously to stay calm and implement what I learned.

PARENT WHO ATTENDED LEVEL 4 GROUP
The Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) is a parenting and family support system designed to prevent – as well as treat – behavioral and emotional problems in children up to age 12. Triple P is a multi-level system of support including give levels of increasing intensity. Offerings include a communications campaign, small to large group sessions and one-on-one support.

**TRIPLE P LIGHT TO MODERATE BY THE NUMBERS**

2021-2022

411 families served

165 total home visits

“I learned to allow my child to continue expressing their feelings in appropriate ways and without judgement.”

PARENT WHO ATTENDED LEVEL 2 SEMINAR
Reach Out and Read integrates books into pediatric practices and promotes reading as a catalyst for healthy childhood development. Reach Out and Read Partners with pediatric medical providers to serve children and families through well-child visits, beginning at birth.

Primsa Health-Upstate’s Developmental Pediatric clinic was thrilled to join Reach Out and Read’s program earlier this year. The process to apply was straightforward and implementing the program has been simple. Reading is one of the most impactful tools we have to promote children’s development. A book gives us the opportunity to begin discussion about the importance of reading and benefits we see. We are so grateful to be able to provide this tool to patients and their families at their office visits. Reach Out and Read also provided additional parent resources to improve reading in special need patient populations.

BETH ALEXANDER – PEDIATRIC NURSE PRACTITIONER, DEVELOPMENTAL PEDIATRICS
PUBLIC AWARENESS

Greenville First Steps believes parents are their child’s first and most important teacher. We help parents understand their role through The Palmetto Basics and Triple P’s Level Up Your Parenting Game campaign. The Palmetto Basics are five fun, simple, and powerful ways that every family can give every child a great start in life. Level Up Your Parenting Game helps parents understand everyone benefits from a parenting class and parenting supports. Parents can visit www.GreenvilleParents.com to access parenting supports and PalmettoBasics.org to find out how to use the Basics. Additionally, Greenville First Steps has continued its partnership with Christ Church to provide high quality books to child serving organizations.

PUBLIC AWARENESS BY THE NUMBERS
2021-2022

3,400 1,255,971
podcast downloads social media impressions

Get winning ideas to level up your parenting from: www.GreenvilleParents.com
First Steps 4K provides eligible children with free enrollment in full-day four-year-old kindergarten. In coordination with First Steps local partnerships and more than 250 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
- Be a South Carolina resident

With First Steps 4K, families are in the driver’s seat. They choose the school that best meets their needs. Families can enroll in any participating private, non-profit, or faith-based preschool provider. The majority of First Steps 4K providers offer an 8 hour instructional day with a year-round calendar, including summers, Through a partnership with SC Voucher, First Steps 4K families can also enroll in the First Steps 4K + Siblings scholarship program which provides whole care and education for all children, ages 0-12, in the household.
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Addressing the needs of young children is a shared endeavor. In addition to providing services to families and support for childcare providers, Greenville County First Steps mobilizes partners and community members to ensure all children in Greenville 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 2021-2022

46,130 books distributed from book warehouse

30,000 PPE materials distributed

We are so thankful for the books. We are going to pass them out to children who completed our summer reading challenge. It is amazing to be able to reward our kids with new books.

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

**FUNDING SUPPORT**

SC Children’s Trust: $100,000  
United Way of Greenville County: $50,000  
Little Steps: $35,000  
Individual Gifts: $23,652  
Total: $208,652

**IN-KIND SUPPORT**

Prisma Health System (Match for Nurse Family Partnership): $500,000

**JOIN US**

For more information on partnership opportunities, visit our website at greenvillefirststeps.org
### FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

**Our Investment in Quality**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditures by Program Type</th>
<th>Evidence-based</th>
<th>Evidence-informed</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Childcare Training</td>
<td>$226,765</td>
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<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
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**Estimation of Cost Savings**

Since inception, Greenville First Steps has leveraged $25,241,242.70 from sources outside of state government.

That's $0.98 for every state dollar.

### SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES BY STRATEGY

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LEADERSHIP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jeremy Watts, Chair
Eric Hassman, Vice Chair
Gina Blohm
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Amy Fowlkes
Jennifer James
Corey McDowell

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Travis Wharton
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Beth Jamieson, Operations Director
Nicole Sheppard, Program Director
Jamaal Rashad, Program Director

CONTACT US

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