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 MEASURE OF SUCCESS

More children arrive at kindergarten ready for success.

OUR OBJECTIVES

Greenville First Steps will invest in proven early literacy best practices.

Greenville First Steps will invest in social and emotional supports for children and families.

Greenville First Steps will seek opportunities to increase local, regional, and national investments in evidence-based early childhood strategies within Greenville County priority areas.

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.
MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

"It takes a village" That phrase was never more true than in 2020 and 2021. The global pandemic has impacted everyone – and while some communities shut down and became insular, the Greenville County childcare, business, faith, and philanthropy communities united to help tackle the big problems facing our neighbors.

In the summer of 2020- Greenville First Steps, in partnership with Greenville County- launched a $4.2 million effort to invest federal CARES funds into our childcare sector.

Reopening childcare centers: Greenville First Steps partnered with 132 childcare providers to provide training, materials, and supports to help them remain open. In May 2020, 120 of Greenville County's 220 registered childcare providers were closed- most due to lack of staff, and inability to pay operation costs. Thanks to $1.7 million in direct pass through funds- all but 5 of these providers re-opened by August 1 and remained open throughout the year

Providing supports and materials: Greenville First Steps provided resources and materials to help our centers with COVID related expenses. Thanks to a partnership with Christ Church Episcopal Greenville, 65,000 children’s books, 430,000 gloves, 195 gallons of disinfectant were distributed to our providers.

Expanding access to School Age care: Greenville First Steps invested $2.5m in CARES funds to help 120 childcare centers adjust to serve 4,900 school age children- including investments in arts, fitness, wellness and tutoring enhancements to help our providers adapt to this older age group.

I am so thankful for our friends at Greenville County Council, the 120 childcare providers, Christ Church, and our countless community partners who rolled up their sleeves to support our families and childcare providers when they most needed our help.

Derek
MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Greenville First Steps continues to do inspiring work in serving the Greenville Community. I would argue collaborations and partnerships with child care centers, educational entities, and non-profits, just to name a few, are stronger than ever. I hardly go anywhere in these arenas where folks do not stop to express a special sense of gratitude for the contribution of Greenville First Steps, specifically during these unprecedented times since early 2020. Greenville First Steps is an organization that has a team of staff that is proficient, resourceful, and always ready to serve the community in new ways. As chair of the board of directors, I continue to count it an honor to serve alongside many who continue to strive to make each day better for a specific group at risk in our community—our young children.

Jeremy

JEREMY WATTS
Chair
Greenville County First Steps Board of Trustees
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.
Addressing the needs of young children is a shared endeavor. In addition to providing services to families and support for child care 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

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**OUR PARTNERSHIPS BY THE NUMBERS**
2020-2021

85,442 books distributed

430,000 PPE items distributed

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In partnership with the YMCA of Greenville, Greenville County Schools and Greenville County Council, Greenville First Steps distributed $4.2 million in CARES funding to 169 childcare providers. That support ensured families had access to stable and reliable childcare during COVID. Thanks to this public-private partnership, Greenville First Steps was able to provide childcare vouchers, operational support, PPE, books, and access to enrichment activities.
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**

283 children served
379 number of home visits provided

Nurse-Family Partnership not only helped me navigate motherhood, but also showed me how to navigate my life. And now, I have a happy, healthy 8 year old, and I am a certified nurse home visitor in the Nurse-Family Partnership program.

K Brown, Former NFP client and current Home Visitor
Reach Out and Read prepares young children to succeed in school by partnering with pediatricians and medical providers to prescribe books and encourage families to read together. According to child development research, 80% of a child’s brain is formed between birth and age three. Reach Out and Read begins at the 6 month check up and continues through age 5. Families who participate in Reach Out and Read read together more often and their children enter kindergarten with larger vocabularies, stronger language skills, and are better prepared to achieve their potential.

REACH OUT AND READ BY THE NUMBERS
2020-2021

2,000 children served
19 clinics

With your investment, you helped make positive relationships a reality for children in Greenville County by giving medical providers a tool and an opportunity to model and share with families the importance of spending time together reading, telling stories, and engaging with each other. Children who experience Reach Out and Read, thanks to funders like you, are bolstered by strengthened relationships, cognitive growth, and enhanced resilience.

EMILY BARTELS, STATE DIRECTOR
REACH OUT AND READ SOUTH CAROLINA
TRIPLE P: POSITIVE PARENTING PROGRAM

Triple P – The Positive Parenting Program – is one of the most effective evidence-based parenting programs in the world, backed up by more than 35 years of ongoing research. Triple P gives parents simple and practical strategies to help them build strong, healthy relationships, confidently manage their children’s behavior, and prevent problems developing.

Greenville First Steps was selected by the Children’s Trust of SC and the Duke Endowment as the Activating Agency for the planned expansion of Triple P across Greenville County.

TRIPLE P BY THE NUMBERS
2020-2021

1,003 practitioners serving parents
326 parenting classes and 1-on-1 sessions offered

The biggest lessons I learned from Triple P are the best ways to use appropriate discipline. I’ve also learned that just by using positive words and focusing more on the positive of what my kids are doing, they will be more likely to continue to do the positive behaviors.

PARENT WHO PARTICIPATED IN TRIPLE P PRIMARY CARE
Nurturing Parenting is a family centered trauma informed program designed to build nurturing parenting skills as an alternative to abusive and neglecting parenting and child rearing practices. Our partner, Little Steps, works with teen and young parents to ensure they have access to the supports they need to be better parents.

NURTURING PARENTING BY THE NUMBERS
2020-2021

45 parents served 86 group parenting classes held

My time at Little Steps (and with Nurturing Parenting) was always fun and yet at the same time, always learned something new. My favorite parts were learning the concept of personal power, ways to develop empathy, and FREE DIAPERS!!

LITTLE STEPS CLIENT
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
2020-2021

898 children served
948 parents served

We have enjoyed working with Greenville First Steps. Thanks to their ongoing support we have been able to include arts enrichment, Triple P programming, and early literacy efforts within our 3K and 4K classrooms and parenting support services.

AMANDA LACAROZ, PRINCIPAL, GREENVILLE COUNTY SCHOOLS CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTERS
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 GREENVILLE COUNTY 2020-2021**

59 children enrolled

4 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.
The family childcare home training collection that was presented by Palmetto Shared Services Alliance, the Greenville Chamber of Commerce, the Kellie Rynn Academy and Greenville First Steps offered existing and new family childcare providers the opportunity to join a network of support and complete specialized trainings designed specifically for them in order to complete their required yearly training hours.

LESLE LATIMER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PALMETTO SHARED SERVICES ALLIANCE
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 find out more information on how to use the Basics in their home and access parenting supports.

PUBLIC AWARENESS BY THE NUMBERS
2020-2021

18,705 visits to websites
32,141 social media impressions

LEVEL UP YOUR PARENTING GAME!
Get winning ideas to level up your parenting from:
www.GreenvilleParents.com
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**

- Children’s Trust of South Carolina: $76,422
- Appalachian Regional Commission: $90,000
- United Way of Greenville County: $19,143
- Individual Donors: $12,000

**IN-KIND SUPPORT**

- Prisma: $1,000,000

**JOIN US**

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

OUR INVESTMENT IN QUALITY
Expenditures of State Funds by Program Type

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<th>Federal Funding</th>
<th>Private Funding</th>
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8% Evidence-based
92% Evidence-informed

ESTIMATION OF COST SAVINGS

Since inception, Greenville County First Steps has leveraged $24,379,369.67 from sources outside of state government.

That’s $0.98 for every state dollar.

SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES BY STRATEGY
LEADERSHIP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jeremy Watts, Chair
Eric Hassman, Vice Chair & Secretary
Karen Andrews
Gina Blohm
Stacy Burr
Jonathan Cote
Tommy Flinn
Rhonda Hipp
Cal Hurst
Jennifer James

Corey McDowell
Grady Patterson
Cara Puntch
JoKeitha Seabrook
Ashley Snelgrove
Cynthia Sosebee
Stacie Stegall
DeeDee Washington
Tiffany Whitney

STAFF

Derek Lewis, Executive Director
Beth Jamieson, Operations Director
Nicole Sheppard, Program Director

CONTACT US