



Annual Report

2020-2021



OUR MISSION

To provide quality services and support for Greenwood County families with children newborn to five.

OUR VALUES

High Quality, Equity, Results, Children, and Relationships

OUR APPROACH



High quality programs and services for children and families



Intensive training, resources and support for childcare providers



Strategic partnerships and community education



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.

OUR OVERARCHING MEASURES OF SUCCESS

By FY23, the percentage of children in need who are directly served by Greenwood County First Steps will increase by 5%.

By FY23, the percentage of Greenwood County children who arrive in Kindergarten ready for success will increase by 10%.

By FY22, Greenwood County First Steps Full Partnership will expand its services to more broadly reflect a direct County need for children and families.

OUR OBJECTIVES

Nurturing Parenting - Home Visitation

Nurturing Parenting - Parenting Groups

Nurturing Training - Fatherhood Groups

Childcare Training

JOIN US



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.

First Steps successfully gets children ready for school.

South Carolina

341,977
children under age 6

46%
of young children live in poverty
or low-income households

Data Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey

In fall 2020, **27%** of entering
kindergartners were ready.

Data Source: 2020 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Results

Compared to their like peers, children
who received First Steps services
were...

34% less likely to be chronically
absent in kindergarten.

74% more likely to enter
kindergarten ready.

Data Source: 2019 External Evaluation of First Steps

Greenwood County

5,179
children under age 6

67%
of young children live in poverty
or low-income households

Data Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey

In fall 2020, **17%** of entering kindergartners
in Greenwood County were ready.

Data Source: 2020 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Results



3,772
children, adults, and workforce members were served
by Greenwood County First Steps in FY20-21.

Since inception,
Greenwood County First Steps
has leveraged
\$2,442,175.20
from sources outside of
state government.

That is
\$0.48
for every
state dollar.

School District	# of children <6	% of young children living in poverty or low-income households	# entering kindergartners tested	% ready
Greenwood 50	4,203	67%	622	13%
Greenwood 51	662	58%	69	29%
Greenwood 52	509	73%	90	33%

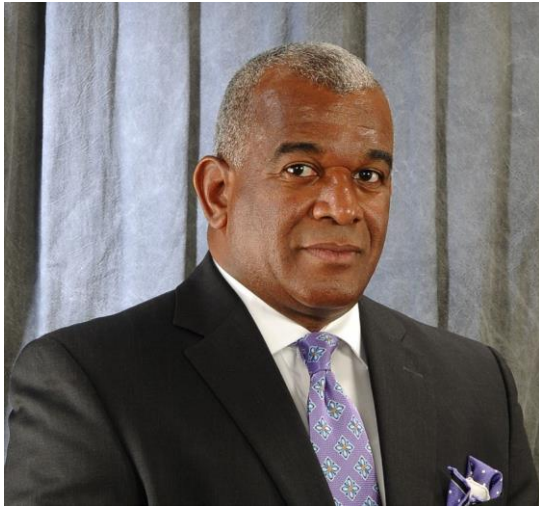


@SCFirstSteps | [SCFirstSteps.org](https://www.scfirststeps.org)

For details about Local Partnerships Programs,
visit: tinyurl.com/FirstStepsLP



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Greenwood County First Steps (GCFS) has endured many challenges over the more than 20 years as a quasi County Partnership. Our accomplishments go unmatched in multiple areas, and evermore, GCFS Full Partnership Board has never wavered from the particular need of getting children ready for school. Unfortunately, the pandemic has caused fear, despair, and increased poverty. Greenwood County and the Partnership Board clearly understands the importance of collaborating "co-laboring" for school readiness and the significant need to commit to the early start endeavor. Therefore, when our County Partnership unites to tackle school readiness, we do not fabricate from the hard work, dedication, and commitment required to get the job done! Our County Board deserves high praise for their years of productiveness; without these dedicated members, GCFS' successes would have been limited. Therefore, we salute and thank these past and present board directors for a "job well done!"

MICHAEL K. GASKIN

Executive Director
Greenwood County First Steps

GCFS uses an innovative and creative approach to ensure every dollar received is used to its maximum potential. Getting children ready to learn is an engagement that requires every agency within this County to understand the importance of being not just stakeholders, but passionate, dedicated and committed stakeholders. The GCFS Full Partnership Board makes "high quality and standards" the keywords in determining why a program should continue to receive First Steps' funding. The service quality of GCFS's programs are made even greater with the addition of great local and state partnerships. The Department of Social Services, Guardian Ad Litem Programs, and the local court systems are also great partners, to reach the most at-risk children in the community and assist with preventing child abuse and neglect. Lander University's Education Department is another great partner that enriches the depth of GCFS childcare training to providers. Professors in the Education Department at Lander University, teach the classes as a part of their community outreach, and their students assist as monitors. These great partnerships are success stories displaying positive impacts in our community. Needless to say, the COVID-19 Pandemic has made our county partnership more proactive in making sure we reach our clients. Through these successful partnerships, GCFS offer children and families comprehensive services for school success. From Jul 2020 to June 2021, GCFS reached out to the children and families during COVID-19 by providing more than 150 Zoom parenting workshops (averaging 16 clients per workshop-duplicated), and distributing more than 107 lesson plans to serve families. More than 426 home visits and drop-offs were conducted to families and we distributed needed household products to families and books to the children. A major highlight was when our Executive Director was selected by WSPA (News Channel 7) as the June 2021 recipient of the Community Service Hero Award! GCFS strategically used its resources to keep its doors open to meet the need of its County's families and children pre and post Pandemic! Despite other concerns, GCFS had a tremendous year getting children ready for school!

Michael K. Gaskin



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

To strengthen parents and teachers with appropriate practices that develop the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive skills of Greenwood County's young children.



NURTURING PARENTING HOME VISITATION



an evidence-based program

The Nurturing Parenting Program is a compilation of evidence-based programs designed to offer long term, more comprehensive parenting education. Parents & Their Infants, Toddlers & Preschoolers participate in a Home Visitation Program that utilizes a parenting curriculum that allows more interactive time between parent and child

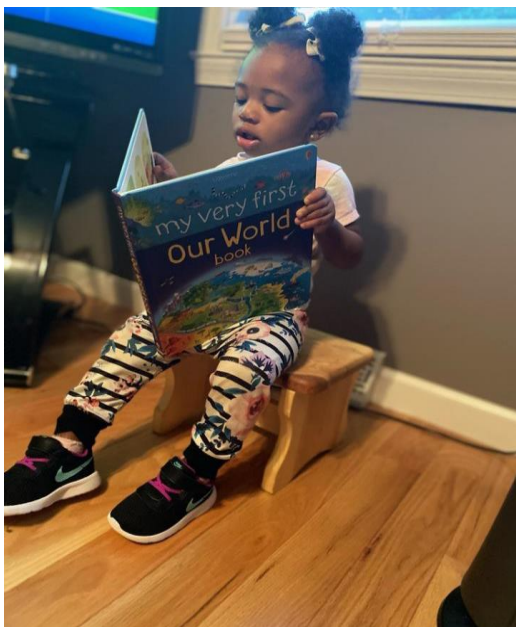
NURTURING PARENTING BY THE NUMBERS 2020-2021

20

families served

462

total home visits



- Open to families in Greenwood County who have children prenatal to five years old.
- Home visits are provided twice a month with books, educational toys, and school readiness materials.
- Home Visitors provide community resource information to all families.



NURTURING PARENTING PARENT TRAINING



an evidence-based program

The Nurturing Parenting, Parent Training Program is a comprehensive group- based parenting program for parents of young children. Sessions are offered weekly and parents learn skills needed for a healthy nurturing parenting lifestyle. Group and individualized sessions are offered through Parent Training. Clients must complete a total of 13 sessions to receive a certificate of program completion. This program is operated in-house and the goal is to increase Parental involvement and reduce abuse and neglect.

NURTURING PARENTING BY THE NUMBERS 2020-2021

35

families served

79

total group
meetings



“So often, children are punished for being human. They are not allowed to have grumpy moods, bad days, disrespectful tones, or bad attitudes. Yet, we adults have them all the time. None of us are perfect. We must stop holding our children to a higher standard of perfection than we can attain ourselves.”

*S. Durant, Parent Training
Graduate*



NURTURING PARENTING NURTURING FATHERS - FATHERHOOD



an evidence-based program

REAL FATHERS ARE DADS!!

Workshops are offered to equip, educate, and empower fathers with the necessary tools to engage positively in their children's quest to be successful. The goal is to increase father involvement and reduce child abuse and neglect.

"Any Man can be a Father, but it takes a REAL MAN to be a DAD"

NURTURING PARENTING BY THE NUMBERS 2020-2021

25

families served

71

total group meetings



"Don't worry that children never listen to you; worry that they are always watching you... Anyone can be a father, but it takes a special man to be a dad."

A. Johnson, Fatherhood Graduate



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 2020-2021 trainings included:

Curriculum Activities and Playdough
 Working with Socialization Disorders: Autism Spectrum
 The Effects of Trauma on Young Children's Development
 Shaken Baby & The Effects on the Family
 Safe Sleep Techniques
 Shaken Baby Syndrome and the Long Term Effects

Safe Sleep and the Environment
 Stress Management for Directors and Staff
 The Effects of COVID on a Young Child
 Calming Activities for Young Children
 Ages and Stages 3
 The Importance of Stress Management and Your Health

TRAINING BY THE NUMBERS 2020-2021

229

total training attendance

112

child care teachers and directors served

15

number of training sessions offered



“Education is an admirable thing, but it is well to remember from time to time that nothing that is worth knowing can be taught... If you trust play, you will not have to control your child’s development as much. Play will raise the child in ways you can never imagine.”



C. Ray, Childcare Center Director



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

44

Adult Family
Members Served

595

Materials
Distributed



Doing something for someone else simply out of the kindness of your heart speaks volumes about who you are as a person. When we assist others, it gives them a chance to shine and you never know just how much that could mean to them when they are feeling low.



D. Howard, Intern



OUR SUPPORTERS

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

FUNDING SUPPORT

South Carolina State Government: \$233, 913

Greenwood County First Steps Staff: \$75

IN-KIND SUPPORT

Lander University

The Social Change Initiative

Mental Health America

Abbeville County First Steps

Guardian ad Litem

Greenwood County Department of Social Services

Greenwood School District # 50

Tabernacle Baptist Church

Little River Baptist Church

Voice of the Children

JOIN US

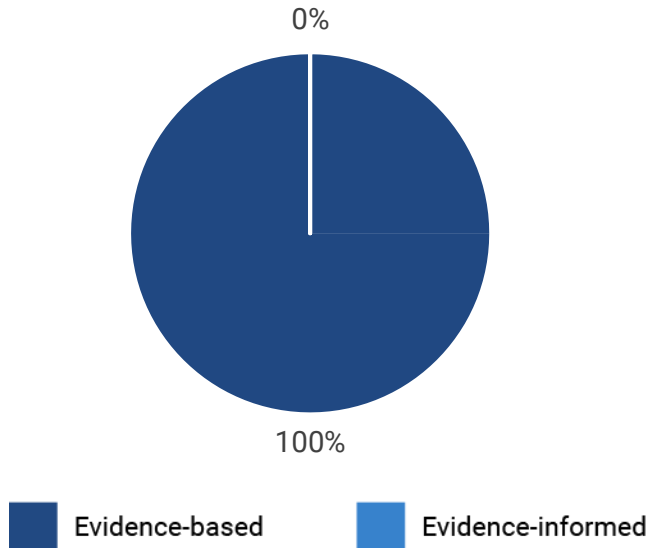
For more information on partnership opportunities, visit our website at
www.gcfirststeps.org



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

OUR INVESTMENT IN QUALITY

Expenditures of State Funds by Program Type



ESTIMATION OF COST SAVINGS

Since inception, Greenwood County First Steps has leveraged **\$2,442,175.20** from sources outside of state government.

That's **\$0.48** for every state dollar.

SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES BY STRATEGY

	State Funding	Federal Funding	Private Funding	In-Kind Contributions	Total
101 – Administrative Functions	\$12,115.69	\$0	\$110.00	\$8,850.00	\$21,075.69
180 – Core Functions	\$9,795.86	\$1,446.70	\$0	\$752.00	\$11,994.56
223 – Nurturing Parenting	\$128,463.13	\$0	\$0	\$51,863.50	\$180,326.63
605 – Childcare Training & Professional Development	\$67,716.33	\$0	\$0	\$2,766.25	\$70,482.58
Total Expenses	\$218,091.01	\$1,446.70	\$110.00	\$64,231.75	\$283,879.46



LEADERSHIP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Lillian Thomas, Board Chair
Reginald White, Vice-Board Chair,
Budget Chair
Vallery Smith, Secretary
Cynthia Aaron, Assistant Secretary
Loretta Parker, Family Strengthening
Chair
Johnny Ledford, Resource Chair

Linda Baylor
Cortney Washington
Doris Louden
April Ouzts
Traci Baldwin
Matthew Scruggs

STAFF

Michael K. Gaskin, Executive Director
Santasha S. Highley, Program Coordinator
Jessica Sinkovics, Home Visitor
Natoya Cartledge, Home Visitor

CONTACT US

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