

Annual Report

2019-2020



THE NEED

IN RICHLAND COUNTY:

23,853

children under age 5

43.9%

of young children live in poverty
or low-income households

60.9%

of kindergartners are considered "not
ready" for school



THREE MOST COMMON RISK FACTORS:

1. TANF eligible/SNAP
2. Single parent household
3. English not primary language in the home

OUR MISSION

From Day 1 to Grade 1, Richland First Steps empowers our community to nurture children, so they are ready to thrive in school.

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

3,901

number of children and adults served by
Richland 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



Marcia W. Bacon, M.A., M. Ed.
Executive Director
Richland First Steps

Richland First Steps has had an interesting year! We spent the year getting our newest Early Head Start center completed and licensed at Virginia Wingard Memorial United Methodist Church. We are grateful for the hard work of the church members, helping us on this journey in ways both large and small - for instance, making quilts for the children! The pandemic postponed our opening, but that has not stopped us from serving our families virtually. We are proud that our service to childcare centers and our home visited families have all continued virtually as well.

I am very grateful for our engaged Board of Directors. This year our Board committees really took off, including our newest, the Development Committee. They have created individual and corporate sponsorship levels as well as two videos for RFS. We are hopeful as we look ahead navigating the pandemic as we continue to serve the children and families of Richland County.



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



Rita G. Paul

Chairperson
Richland First Steps Board of Trustees

There is an old saying about things coming full circle in your life. Twenty years ago I was honored to be a part of the original state level staff in the development and start up of the Office of First Steps. And now, twenty years later I am deeply honored to step into the role of Board Chair of Richland First Steps.

In the past two years we have hired only our second-ever CEO, developed an organization with more than 50 staff and expanded our Early Head Start program!

Because of our dedicated and amazing CEO and staff and an unsurpassed committed and caring Board the coming year will be quite a ride!

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 Richland County toward the following strategic goals:

- Children's learning environments will be safe, developmentally appropriate, and contribute to school readiness.
- Parents and guardians will be encouraged and supported as the primary caregivers and teachers of children.
- Richland First Steps will have the organizational capacity needed to fulfil this strategic plan.

PIVOTING FOR COVID-19

When the coronavirus pandemic forced South Carolina to shut down in March 2020, Richland 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 Richland First Steps is enhancing our efforts to provide parents and caregivers with the services and resources they need to weather this storm.

IMPACT ON RICHLAND COUNTY

HEALTH

Through June 30, Richland County had a total of **3,586** confirmed COVID-19 cases and **103** COVID-19 deaths.

JOB LOSS

214.8%

increase in unemployment, 2019-2020

CHILD CARE

45.3%

children under 5 in Richland County lived in a child care desert* before COVID-19

71.1%

children under 5 in Richland County lived in a child care desert as of May 28, 2020



"Whether enrolled in classrooms, family child care, or home-based services, Head Start and Early Head Start children stayed home and programs did their best to continue to provide meaningful services remotely. However, suspending in-person services did not mean programs were closed.

Head Start and Early Head Start programs provided critical support for children and families. They delivered food, educational supplies, and materials, and provided remote teaching and learning experiences. Programs continued to be a lifeline for some of the nation's most vulnerable families. No one can call that closed."

Dr. Deborah Bergeron, Director, Office of Head Start

*The Center for American Progress defines a child care desert as a ZIP code with at least 30 children under the age of 5 and either no child care 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 RICHLAND COUNTY 2019-2020

72

families served

2,428

total home visits





CHILD CARE QUALITY ENHANCEMENT



an evidence-based program

Many private child care centers strive to provide high quality care but lack the resources often available to publicly-funded early childhood programs. Our Child Care Quality Enhancement (QE) program aims to produce measurable improvements in the quality of care provided to young children.

Our services include:



Rigorous quality assessments



On-site technical assistance at least twice monthly



Funding for equipment and materials



Training and workforce development



Coordination with community partners

QE BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

17

child care providers served

469

number of TA visits provided

922

number of children 0-5 enrolled in provider classrooms



Thanks to [our Technical Assistance Provider] Joanna Zaleski [who] took on the task of repairing books, cutting out displays, and laminating them to be used in centers.



Excellence in Care and Early Learning (ExCEL) QE Participating Teacher



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:



TRAINING BY THE NUMBERS 2019-2020

521

total training attendance

396

child care teachers and
directors served

44

number of training
sessions offered

“

The most helpful aspect was learning how to help the kids with their emotions.

”

ExCEL On-site Training Participant

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 RICHLAND COUNTY 2019-2020

464

children enrolled

30

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.





EARLY HEAD START



an evidence-based program

Our Early Head Start program, funded by the [US Department of Health and Human Services](#) (US DHHS), was funded in December 2009 with money through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009. This grant allowed for service to 96 families in the primary zip codes of 29203 and 29204. Over time, the zip code area has expanded to all zip codes in Richland County, north of Blossom Street. These families are served in two different program options – center-based and home-based. Classrooms are located on the campuses of Ridgewood Missionary Baptist Church and Reformation Lutheran Church, and we're about to open our newest center at Virginia Wingard UMC with our newest EHS grant. This program leverages \$1,513,044 in operations, training and match dollars to provide services to families.



Richland First Steps Family Support Advocate Barbara Stephenson works with a family enrolled in the home-based Early Head Start program model.

Early Head Start produces a standalone annual report that is presented to US DHHS after the program year concludes each August. If you would like to view a copy of the 2019-20 Early Head Start Annual Report, please visit <https://issuu.com/richlandfirststeps>



EARLY HEAD START BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2019



1,152

books given to families

119

(46 in centers, 68 PAT)

children served

52

volunteers



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

125

Community children reached

681

Materials distributed at events





OUR SUPPORTERS

FUNDING SUPPORT

Individual Donors through:
Midlands Gives
United Way of the Midlands Campaign

South Carolina First Steps
Base Funding
Innovation Grant- Step Up to School Readiness

University of South Carolina Arnold School of Public Health
LAUNCH- Linking Activity, Nutrition and Child Health

US Department of Agriculture
Child and Adult Care Food Program

US Department of Health and Human Services
Early Head Start

IN-KIND SUPPORT

Ridgewood Missionary Baptist Church
Reformation Lutheran Church
Board and Policy Council Members
Fortis University
ECPI
Kaplan Early Learning
The Perfect Pearls
Midlands Technical College
St. Michaels and All Angels Church

Susanna Watson
SC DSS
ABC Quality
Oaki Wear
Solid Structures
Lakeshore
Resource Associates
PRJ Consulting
SC First Steps



Girls' community service organization The Perfect Pearls redoing the garden at the entry of our new EHS center

JOIN US

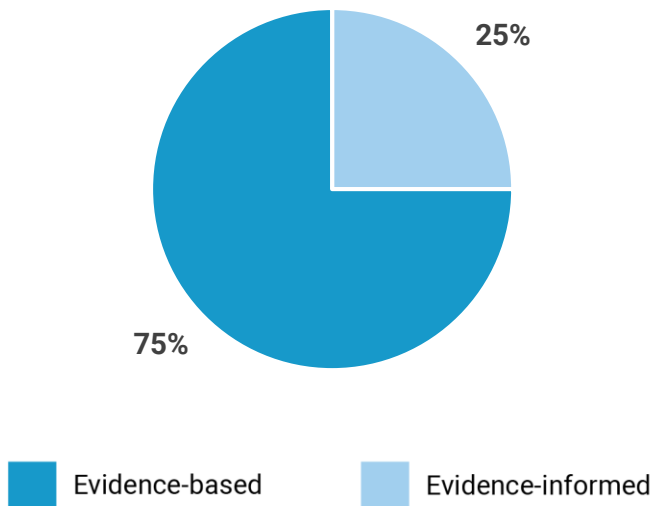
For more information on partnership opportunities, visit our website at
richlandfirststeps.org



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

OUR INVESTMENT IN QUALITY

Expenditures of State Funds by Program Type



ESTIMATION OF COST SAVINGS

Since inception, Richland County First Steps has leveraged **\$19,890,486** from sources outside of state government.

That's **\$1.12** for every state dollar.

SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES BY STRATEGY

	State Funding	Federal Funding	Private Funding	In-Kind Contributions	Total
Parents as Teachers	\$ 163,773.46	\$ -	\$ 75.24	\$ -	\$ 163,848.70
Child Care Quality Enhancement	\$ 246,722.00	\$ 21,538.25	\$ -	\$ 518.18	\$ 268,778.43
Child Care Training	\$ 28,528.82	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 28,528.82
Nurse Family Partnership	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Half Day 4K	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Early Head Start	\$ 203,193.59	\$ 2,065,923.13	\$ 972.78	\$ 143,152.29	\$ 2,413,241.79
Partnerships & Community Education	\$ 51,715.66	\$ -	\$ 1,517.32	\$ -	\$ 53,232.98
Administrative Support	\$ 87,076.46	\$ -	\$ 180.50	\$ 6,856.86	\$ 94,113.82
Total Expenses	\$ 781,009.99	\$ 2,087,461.38	\$ 2,745.84	\$ 150,527.33	\$ 3,021,744.54



LEADERSHIP

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Shawn Suber

Terri Thompson



CONTACT US

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OUR STAFF

Jill Aderholdt
Family Support Advocate

Jasmine Archie
Classroom Caregiver

Chevelle Artis
Center Coach

Marcia Bacon
CEO

Jasmine Bevany
Classroom Caregiver

Kourtney Bouie
Classroom Caregiver

Mary Brown
Classroom Caregiver

Lindsey Byars
Center Director

Robin Capers
Technical Assistance Provider

Lydia Carnesale
Education Coordinator

Jennifer Carter
Classroom Caregiver

Dominique Clark
Classroom Caregiver

Sarah Conrad
Communications Specialist

Buffie Davis
Classroom Caregiver

Anett Espinosa
Family Support Advocate

Imaikop Etim
Classroom Caregiver

Renee Eubanks
Program Support

Megan Fryar
Classroom Caregiver

Shardae Gamble
Classroom Caregiver

Brenda Gaskin
Education Accountability

Taneisha Gibbs
Classroom Caregiver

Shannon Hammond
Director of Finance

Gail Harrell

Center Director

Nicole Harris
Classroom Caregiver

Tonya Harvin-Pack
Intake Coordinator

Shannon Helton
Family Support Advocate

Trista Henderson
Classroom Caregiver

Arianna Holoman
Classroom Caregiver

Kelly Jones
Family Support Advocate

Laran Jones-Gary
Family Support Supervisor

Danaya Kennedy
Custodian/Dishwasher

Courtney LaDuke
Classroom Caregiver

Abbagaile Long
Classroom Caregiver

A'Briana Lykes
Classroom Caregiver

Lautofa Maloa
Classroom Caregiver

Lakeema Maybank
Classroom Caregiver

Teres McDonald
Classroom Caregiver

Charshina McMillian
Director of Care and Early Learning

Ashlyn Monroe
EHS Program Support

Cari Moyer
Early Head Start Director

Marcus Myers
Classroom Caregiver

Catherine Nolan
Senior Technical Assistance Provider

Samantha Oliver
Classroom Caregiver

Cheryl Osborne
Family Support Advocate

Nomaneka Parker
Classroom Caregiver

Doris Patterson
Classroom Caregiver

Shanika Pinkney
Classroom Caregiver

Amy Raynor
EHS Program Support

Ashley Reasor
Classroom Caregiver

Jordyn Reynolds
Classroom Caregiver

Crystal Rice
Training Coordinator

Stephanie Rickenbacker
Classroom Caregiver

Yanira Rivera Navarro
Family Support Advocate

LaQuanisha Robinson
Classroom Caregiver

Oona Romero
Family Support Advocate

Bettye Sanders
Classroom Caregiver

Annie Sears
Classroom Caregiver

Beth Singletary
Director of Administration and Accountability

Megan Smola
Classroom Caregiver

Nikiyah Spearman
Family Support Advocate

Barbara Stephenson
Family Support Advocate

Amber Tanner
Classroom Caregiver

Sammantha Truesdale
Health Coordinator

Theressa Wilson
Classroom Caregiver

Joanna Zaleski
Technical Assistance Provider



SCFS's 20th Anniversary,
Former Gov. Hodges with
some RFS staff



Together SC Conference – 3 Board members,
our consultant and 4 staff attending



Richland First Steps staff



RFS Staff committee meetings – Our committees include
Health and Wellness, Connections, Family Engagement, Step
Up to School Readiness, and Male Engagement (for families)