



Annual Report

2020-2021



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 VALUES

Trust | We will foster trust within the organization and the community.

Love | "Love is the best motivator for learning and growth." *Dr. Becky Bailey, founder of Conscious Discipline*

Respect | We value the feelings, wishes, rights and traditions of others.

Racial Equity | We will work to change the systems that keep families from having the tools and resources to equip their children for success in school and life.

Quality | Quality + Readiness = Success

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 MEASURE OF SUCCESS

INCREASE THE REACH OF FIRST STEPS SERVICES

By the end of FY23, the percentage of children in need who are directly served by Richland County First Steps will increase from 6% to 8%.

MORE CHILDREN ARRIVE AT KINDERGARTEN READY TO THRIVE IN SCHOOL

By 2023, increase the number of children enrolled in high intensity programs funded by First Steps from 73% to 77%.

OUR OBJECTIVES

Young children are ready for school

Early Head Start center-based care
Excellence in Care and Early Learning
Parents as Teachers

Advocacy for caregivers, educators and young children

Community awareness of meaning and importance of school readiness

Fully engage Richland First Steps Board of Directors and staff

Increase board engagement
Improve staff retention rates

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.

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Marcia Winchip Bacon

Executive Director
Richland First Steps

Like everyone else in the world, Richland First Steps has had an interesting year. We faced the COVID pandemic head on, doing our best to keep the children and families we serve, the child care centers we coach, and our staff and the community as safe as possible. We emerged from the shutdown by opening our newest Early Head Start center and expanding our office to accommodate new staff for two new South Carolina First Steps/Preschool Development Grant funded home visitation programs. We are also excited about our new website that will come out this year; it's an updated channel for us to communicate with the community. Keep an eye out!

I am very grateful for our engaged Board of Directors. They have worked hard as we keep up with constant COVID updates and policies. We're also thankful for our donors and supporters. You all have been so generous helping us get Richland's children ready to thrive in school!

Marcia W. Bacon

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



Rita Paul
Chair
Richland First Steps Board of Trustees

This time last year I suggested our upcoming year, now almost behind us, would be quite a ride, and wow it surely has been!

Thanks to our fabulous CEO and the grace and energy of our amazingly dedicated and committed staff, we have added and expanded programs to serve children and families in Richland County. I continue to be amazed and wonder how they pulled off what they did within this more than challenging COVID year. In the year ahead, we are looking forward to rolling out a new website and always looking to better serve our families with the highest quality services.

I am grateful for the team of volunteers who serve with me on the Board of Trustees. While some board members moved on, we have added new members that never cease with their unsurpassed caring and commitment.

Even after my 20 plus years involvement with First Steps, I continue to be amazed, that amidst all the challenges, we're still standing and delivering. I am so honored to be a part of Richland First Steps!

Rita

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

A community committed to ensuring the school readiness of its children.



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 IN RICHLAND COUNTY 2020-2021

22

families served

60

total home visits

A HOME OF THEIR OWN

This year, two families in our program achieved a huge goal – the purchase of their own home. For these first-time home buyers, it wasn't necessarily an easy process, but with the support of their PAT parent educators they were able to get connected with community resources that helped them overcome the obstacles they faced and make their dreams a reality.

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.



AMERICORPS

First Steps AmeriCorps provides part- and full-time service opportunities with Local Partnerships across South Carolina. Participating Local Partnerships, or AmeriCorps Service Sites, are selected through applications submitted as part of South Carolina First Steps' grantmaking process. There were 3 member roles during the 2020-21 program year: Community Education and Outreach, Family Support, and Parent Educator. AmeriCorps member activities ranged from providing one-on-one support for families using the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) International curriculum to hosting events about school readiness and local early childhood services.



Richland County AmeriCorps Members

1

Community Education and Outreach AmeriCorps member

Hours served in the community

390

hours served by Community Education and Outreach AmeriCorps member

Segal Education Award

\$1331.93

total in Segal Education Awards received by all members serving at the Local Partnership

Though the COVID-19 pandemic changed the way "outreach" looks within our organization, our AmeriCorps member was able to adapt and create content for families about ways they could bring monthly school readiness goals to life.



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 2020-2021

16

child care providers served

424

number of TA visits provided

773

number of children 0-5 enrolled in provider classrooms





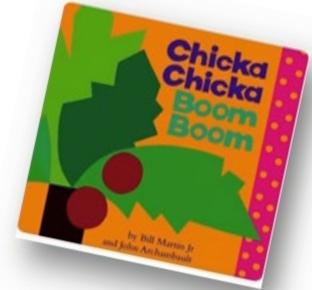
CHILD CARE QUALITY ENHANCEMENT



an evidence-based program

CENTER TO HOME BOOK PROGRAM

This program allowed children to not only enjoy a book in the classroom but also at home. Each month, from February to June, we provided one book to the classroom we were currently providing coaching in and one book to every child enrolled in the classroom. Centers were chosen based on the number of children they served in the at-risk population. For our first year, we were able to serve 5 centers equaling 6 classrooms.



702

books distributed

5

providers served

43

children served

LENA GROW



an evidence-based program

LENA (Language Environment Analysis) Grow is a research-based, evidence-informed program that focuses on talk and staff-child interactions by measuring conversational “turns” in infant, toddler, and pre-K classrooms. Launching LENA Grow in a pandemic was challenging, but we were able to serve 14 children through 2 child care providers and we are excited that we will continue this program in the upcoming year.

21,559

Conversational Turns

100%

Providers reaching goal of 5 or more turns per hour



At first, I was apprehensive about starting LENA. It seemed like a lot to do but as it went on, I felt better. I got excited each week to see the data from each LENA day. I learned a lot about my students from the data and the materials like the posters and coaching helped give me ideas on how to improve. I just really enjoyed seeing myself and the kids improve each week. I would like to do it again if given the chance.



Patricia Wilson, Fantasy Island Childcare Center



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:

Diving Deeper into the Environment Rating Scale

Heading Back to the Workspace, But Before I Do...Self-Regulation

Conscious Discipline® - Creating the School Family: Chapters 1-3

Learning Theories

Using Room Arrangement to Create a Meaningful Learning Environment

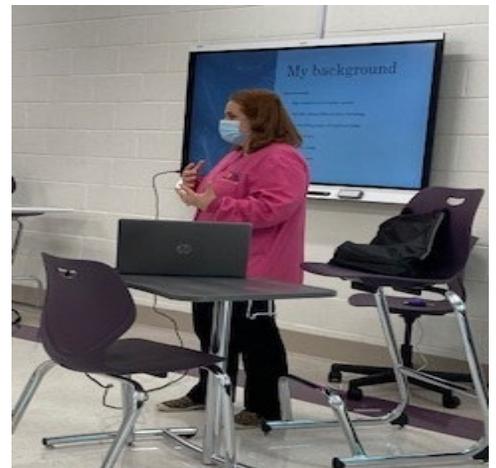
TRAINING BY THE NUMBERS 2020-2021

248

total training attendance

36

number of training
hours offered





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 2020-2021

454

children enrolled

31

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.





EARLY HEAD START



an evidence-based program

Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, our Early Head Start program not only continued to serve families with children prenatal up to age 3, we expanded our program, opening a new center in a part of our community that data showed was in desperate need of high quality child care.



A PARTNERSHIP WORTH READING ABOUT



LITERACY & LETTER SOUNDS

"Before children learn to read print, they need to become aware of how the sounds in words work. They must understand that words are made up of individual speech sounds." -Readingrockets.org

Letters make sounds. Those sounds make words. Your little one starts tuning into these sounds from the moment they are born. The activities you do every day help build your child's ability to hear the smaller sounds in words:

- **READ:** There are 44 sounds in the English language. Reading lots of good books together will ensure that your child hears all of the sounds.
- **SING:** Sing along to the radio. Sing together in the bathtub. Make up your own songs. Singing allows your little one to hear (and sing) those smaller sounds.
- **MOO:** Animal sounds give your child the building blocks of words. A sheep says "Baa." These two sounds can become "Bat" "Bag" "Bad" or "Ball."

Read, Sing, Talk & Play.
You'll grow your reader every day.



DID YOU KNOW?

RICHLAND LIBRARY OFFERS...

LIBRARY OF THINGS

The Library of Things is a collection of equipment that can be reserved and checked out from Richland Library Main.

- Check out tools to help you tackle home improvement projects.
- Whether it's a ring light, projector or vlogging kit, get the equipment you need to take your business (or side hustle) to the next level.
- Start your own garden with a seed bundle and gardening tools.
- Try your hand at a new craft without investing in all the expensive equipment.

The Library of Things aims to reduce barriers for entrepreneurs, creatives, and lifelong learners by providing access to quality equipment.

Find out more at RichlandLibrary.com

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STORYTIMES

Saturday, Pajama or Bilingual storytimes can be shared in the comfort of your own home from Richland Library's Facebook page.

JOB SEEKERS & ENTREPRENEURS

From one-on-one job interview practice to programs specifically for entrepreneurs, Richland Library can help you find your next job or start your own business.

FARMERS MARKET AT MAIN

Starting Wednesday, April 21, pick up fresh, local produce with your fresh books at Richland Library Main! Cash, credit/debit cards and SNAP accepted.



RICHLAND LIBRARY

access freely.

Our long-standing relationship with our local public library allowed us to create a new way to share books with families. By looking at our program's school readiness data, our library partners were able to help us select books that best fit the needs of our Early Head Start children. Each book given to families had an information card with literacy tips for parents and brief descriptions of community resources available through the library.

1,165

books given to families

35

hours of group connections or parent trainings



EARLY HEAD START



an evidence-based program

Being able to provide no-cost, high-quality child care for low-income parents who are working or in school is one of our proudest achievements. Our center-based Early Head Start program also has a strong family support component, with family meetings, literacy training, and a family support advocate who connects families with community resources.

CENTER-BASED PROGRAM BY THE NUMBERS 2020-2021

75

children served

13%

Percentage of children with an IFSP (exceeds goal of 10%)

HOME-BASED PROGRAM BY THE NUMBERS 2020-2021

146

children served

1,082

90 minute home visits completed

Our home-based Early Head Start program brings the Parents as Teachers curriculum directly to families. Though program delivery methods had to be adjusted to protect families, our staff, and our community from COVID-19, our parent educators rose to the challenge, adapting visits and group connections to work in virtual settings and helping families secure the technology needed to fully participate.

A BIG STEP TOWARD FAMILY SUCCESS

An obstacle getting in the way of the success of the Velasquez family was low English language fluency. After RFS parent educator Anett Espinosa connected her to a local school district English program, Mrs. Velasquez was able to complete her course and has plans to continue her studies.





COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Our job is to help make our vision of a community committed to the school readiness of its children a reality, but that doesn't mean we can do it alone.

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

112

Families served beyond our programs

850

Adult family members served through outreach in the community





OUR SUPPORTERS

FUNDING SUPPORT

Individual Donors through:
Our Annual Appeal and Midlands Gives - \$9,202

United Way of the Midlands Campaign

Our Amazing Board of Directors - \$4,465

US Department of Agriculture
Child and Adult Care Food Program

US Department of Health and Human Services
Early Head Start - \$2,216,266

IN-KIND SUPPORT

Ridgewood Missionary Baptist Church
Reformation Lutheran Church
Board and Policy Council Members
Kaplan Early Learning
SC DSS

ABC Quality
Solid Structures
Resource Associates
PRJ Consulting
SC First Steps



JOIN US

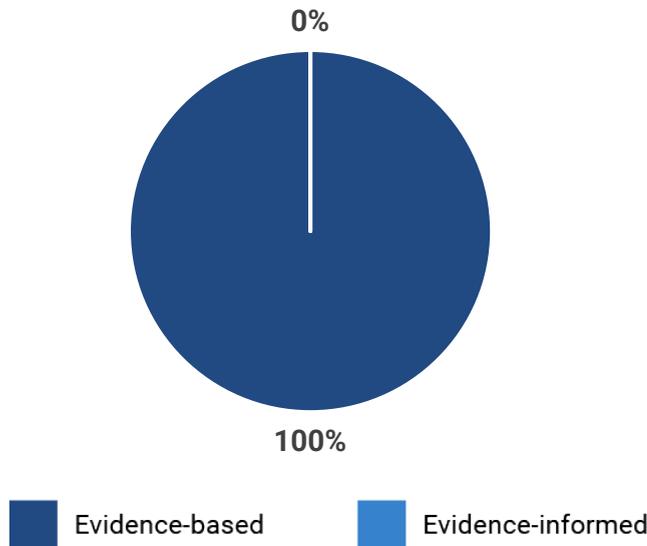
For more information on partnership opportunities, visit our website at
richlandfirststeps.org



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

OUR INVESTMENT IN QUALITY

Expenditures by Program Type



ESTIMATION OF COST SAVINGS

Since inception, Richland First Steps has leveraged **\$21,989,051** from sources outside of state government.

That's **\$1.18** for every state dollar.

SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES BY STRATEGY

	State Funding	Federal Funding	Private Funding	In-Kind Contributions	Total
Parents as Teachers	\$172,772	\$39,637	\$1,160	\$0	\$213,569
Child Care Quality Enhancement	\$220,445	\$38,169	\$5,120	\$0	\$263,734
Child Care Training	\$40,218	\$8,745	\$0	\$0	\$48,963
Early Head Start	\$246,402	\$2,014,090	\$0	\$12,843	\$2,273,134
HIPPY	\$0	\$21,656	\$0	\$0	\$21,656
Partnerships & Community Education	\$46,393	\$13,601	\$0	\$0	\$59,994
Administrative Support	\$107,309	\$8,103	\$0	\$0	\$115,412
Total Expenses	\$833,338	\$2,144,001	\$6,280	\$12,843	\$2,996,462



LEADERSHIP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Lauren Brennan
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Barbara Scott
Brittany Singleton
Scott Smoak
Terri Thompson
Rhonda Wiley



CONTACT US

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richlandfirststeps.org



OUR STAFF

Jill Aderholdt
Family Support Advocate

Jasmine Archie
Classroom Caregiver

Chevelle Artis
Center Coach

Marcia Bacon
CEO

Jasmine Bevany
Classroom Caregiver

Annie Booth
Classroom Caregiver

Kourtney Bouie
Classroom Caregiver

Mary Brown
Classroom Caregiver

Lindsay 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

Shannon Hammond
Director of Finance

Gail Harrell
Center Director

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

Shaniqua Joseph
Classroom Caregiver

Danaya Kennedy
Custodian/Dishwasher

Abbagaille Long
Classroom Caregiver

Lakeema Maybank
Classroom Caregiver

Charshina McMillian
Director of Care and Early Learning

Cari Moyer
Early Head Start Director

Marcus Myers
Classroom Caregiver

Catherine Nolan
Senior Technical Assistance Provider

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

Crystal Rice
Training Coordinator

Yanira Rivera Navarro
Family Support Advocate

Bettye Sanders
Classroom Caregiver

Beth Singletary
Director of Administration and Accountability

Megan Smola
Classroom Caregiver

Nikiyah Spearman
Family Support Advocate

Barbara Stephenson
Family Support Advocate

Sammantha Truesdale
Health Coordinator

Tymeisha Washington
Classroom Caregiver

Theresa Wilson
Classroom Caregiver

Joanna Zaleski
Technical Assistance Provider

