



2021-2022

OUR MISSION

to empower Edgefield County families and caregivers to prepare children for school success by delivering, enhancing, and expanding high-quality early childhood services.

OUR OBJECTIVES

Educate community about programs and services offered by Edgefield County First Steps

Ensure that high quality programs will be accessible, equitable, and affordable for Edgefield County families

Support families as their child's first and most important teacher

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

Increase the reach of Edgefield County First Steps services

Increase the number of children enrolled in high intensity programs funded by Edgefield County First Steps

OUR VALUES

The years of early childhood are critical windows of development during which much of human potential is shaped.

All children are inherently worthy of receiving the best possible start in life and are the most valuable resource for the future of our community. Responsive, nurturing relationships with consistent caregivers in a safe, stimulating learning environment create the best possible chance for children's healthy development and school readiness.

Families are the single most important influence on the development of young children.

The work of supporting families and caregivers is a collaborative effort between state and local stakeholders within the public, private, and faith sectors.

School readiness is the result of a child's development in many areas - including physical development, approaches to learning and inquiry, social and emotional development, language and literacy development, and mathematical thinking - with each contributing to the child's success.

We value and demonstrate diverse perspectives in the development of programs. Services must be individualized and adaptable to meet the unique needs of children and families and we ensure that all families have the opportunity to be successful.

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 IS HERE

Last year, because of Edgefield County First Steps:



342 children
directly served
in Edgefield County



307 parents & caregivers

received services and support to be their child's first and most important teacher



37 educators

participated in First Steps training and professional development, benefitting 500+ children



\$1 = \$1.89

Edgefield County First Steps leveraged \$177,557 from sources outside of state government, providing a match of \$0.89 for every state dollar invested

PROVEN RESULTS

A 2019 study found that children who received First Steps local partnership services were:



74% more likely

to score at the highest level on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment



34% less likely

to be chronically absent in kindergarten

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Candi Lalonde

Executive Director
Edgefield County First Steps

“We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It’s easy to say, ‘It’s not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem’. Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes.” These are the words of the wonderful Fred Rogers, the neighbor we all wanted to have. He recognized those who worked to make a difference in the lives of children, those neighbors who he called heroes.

We are so fortunate in Edgefield County that we have state and local leaders, our First Steps family statewide, and our local staff members, vendors, and community partners who step up each and every day to make a difference in the lives of young children and their families. They put in the work not because they have to, but because they want to. These are my neighbors, my heroes, and I thank them for all they do and all they are.

Candi Lalonde

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



Every Edgefield County child will be prepared for success in school.



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 2021-2022

3

child care providers served

95

number of TA visits provided

73

number of children 0-5 enrolled in provider classrooms



The child care TA/Coach is a valuable asset to our center. It is especially helpful when new staff members are hired because they can get that one-on-one coaching from our TA.



TRACY WHITE, CO-DIRECTOR, CREATIVE LEARNING CENTER



CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIPS



an evidence-based program

Access to quality early care and education improves school readiness and long-term academic outcomes, and provides parents with the opportunity to work or attend school. Through First Steps and DSS-funded child care scholarships, eligible children receive tuition-free enrollment at quality child care centers.

For many families in Edgefield County, the cost of quality child care is out of reach. Our scholarship program makes payments to child care providers to care for children from families who have risk factors that might impact their child's success in school. The children in this program receive developmental screenings and are enrolled in our Imagination Library program. The parents of our scholarship children also attend classes through our Nurturing Parenting program.

SCHOLARSHIPS BY THE NUMBERS 2021-2022

21

number of children
served

2

number of providers
served

57

number of
developmental
screenings provided



First Steps helps in many ways for me, especially the voucher for child care. I don't have many sitters for my children and with the voucher, I am able to work. I also have more money for the other things my family needs since the voucher pays for part of my child care bill.



JASMIN, CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT



CHILD CARE TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



an evidence-based program

Child care training programs aim to advance the early care and education profession, creating pathways to success for early childhood educators and the children and families they serve. Our affordable, high-quality professional development offerings are certified through SC Endeavors and include topics in the areas of nutrition, health and safety, curriculum, child guidance, and program administration.

TRAINING AND PD BY THE NUMBERS 2021-2022

163

total training
attendance

19

child care teachers
and directors served

20

number of training
sessions offered

35.5

total training hours

11

total child care
programs served



Staff members from Johnston Learning Center, Little Folks Day Care, and Creative Learning Center work together on an activity identifying community partners during a training on program administration.



IMAGINATION LIBRARY



an evidence-based program

As the local affiliate of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, we provide free, high-quality books to children from birth until age five, no matter their family's income.

Children enrolled in our Imagination Library program receive one book per month by mail. Each title is selected by a panel of early childhood literacy experts, who are responsible for choosing books that meet the age-specific developmental needs of young children.

IMAGINATION LIBRARY BY THE NUMBERS 2021-2022

260

children served

2,391

books distributed



Edgefield County First Steps has partnered with the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library since 2005 and has given out more than 32,000 books since then.

Books are 100% free to children in Edgefield County because Edgefield County First Steps secures the funds to cover the cost of books and shipping fees.

When children receive the books in the mail, they are so excited and cannot wait for someone to read the book to them. Sponsor a child today for just \$27 per year.





NURSE-FAMILY PARTNERSHIP



an evidence-based program

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

8

families served

123

total home visits

“ The program was great! As a first-time mom (also of a preemie) the program helped me have more accountability and learn different ways to handle all kind of situations. Also, when I needed someone to talk to, the staff was always there to listen and encourage! I will definitely miss this now that my daughter has graduated the program! ”

NURSE FAMILY PARTNERSHIP MOTHER





NURTURING PARENTING



an evidence-based program

The Nurturing Parenting Programs are a family-centered trauma-informed initiative designed to build nurturing parenting skills as an alternative to abusive and neglecting parenting and child-rearing practices. Families can attend group-based programs, home-based programs, or a combination of group and home-based sessions.

NURTURING PARENTING BY THE NUMBERS 2021-2022

29

families served

33

total group meetings



This class taught me that there are more ways to discipline a child other than spanking. I learned ways that I can take time for myself so that I can be a better parent for my child. I also learned that I am a model for my child.



LATOYA, NURTURING PARENTING PARTICIPANT





EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



an evidence-based program

The Johnston Learning Center is a high-quality early childhood center that serves the child care desert of the town of Johnston. It consists of two early childhood classrooms enrolling children ages 6 weeks through 5 years old. The classrooms are licensed by DSS, participate in the ABC Quality Program, and receive Environmental Rating Scale reviews and visits from our child care TA/Coach. The children receive developmental screenings, and the parents have opportunities to attend group parenting sessions and receive home visits.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION BY THE NUMBERS 2021-2022

1

child care providers
served

23

number of home
visits provided

19

number of children 0-5
enrolled in provider
classrooms



Staff members and children from the Johnston Learning Center take a field trip to the Bettis Park StoryWalk as one of their classroom enrichment activities.



PUBLIC AWARENESS



EDGEFIELD COUNTY OUTREACH BY THE NUMBERS 2021-2022

2,714

materials distributed

13

events held

1,442

total event attendance

Edgefield County First Steps has developed a community education and outreach plan that includes the following activities:

1. Develop, produce, and/or distribute public education materials to promote our partnership's mission and inform the public of available resources.
2. Sponsor, co-sponsor, and/or participate in community events that reach our target audience, encourage community engagement, and create public awareness.
3. Use effective online and social media to communicate, inform, and activate.
4. Educate and engage local and state policymakers and other community leaders on the local impact of First Steps.
5. Network, coordinate, and convene local stakeholders to collaboratively build a system of care for early childhood.



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



A ribbon cutting, in partnership with the Edgefield County Chamber of Commerce and the family of La'Trice Etheridge.



OUR SUPPORTERS

Through partnerships and collaborations, as well as financial support from grants and contributions, Edgefield County First Steps leverages state dollars to enhance and expand services to children and families. Additional support comes from local businesses, groups, and individuals

FUNDING SUPPORT

South Carolina First Steps: \$200,000

Preschool Development Grant - \$16,300

ESSER Funds - \$8,880

Dominion Energy - \$3,000

SC Endeavors - \$2,000

Women in Rural Electrification (W.I.R.E.) – Aiken Electric Cooperative

Beth McLeod, Fulcher Hagler LLP

Dr. G.L. and Jayne Rainsford

Dr. Buddy and Becky Turner

Dr. Jeffery Gosney

Town of Trenton

Reel Insurance Agency, Inc.

Edgefield Educational Consulting Services, LLC

First Citizens Bank

Amazon

100% of Edgefield County First Steps Board Members

Over 30 additional individual sponsors

IN-KIND SUPPORT

Edgefield County School District

Carolina Health Centers, Inc.

Edgefield County Chamber of Commerce

First Book

Foster Grandparent Program

JOIN US

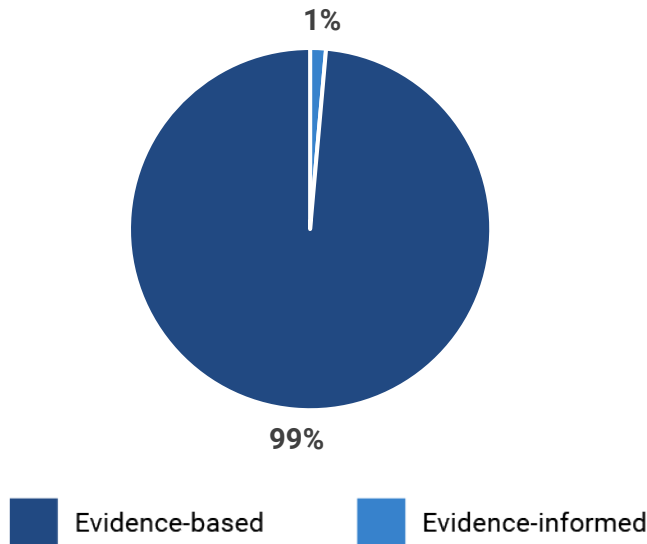
For more information on partnership opportunities, contact 803-275-0800
or go to our website at www.edgefieldfirststeps.org



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

OUR INVESTMENT IN QUALITY

Expenditures of State Funds by Program Type



ESTIMATION OF COST SAVINGS

Since inception, ABC County First Steps has leveraged **\$2,452.994** from sources outside of state government.

That's **\$0.65** for every state dollar.

SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES BY STRATEGY

	State Funding	Federal Funding	Private Funding	In-Kind Contributions	Total
Imagination Library	\$4,846	\$0	\$1,226	\$72	\$6,144
Nurse Family Partnership	\$26,142	\$0	\$0	\$7,004	\$33,146
Nurturing Parenting	\$8,259	\$4,400	\$2,985	\$144	\$15,788
Early Childhood Education	\$43,193	\$0	\$1,499	\$109,378	\$154,070
Countdown to 4K	\$0	\$4,309	\$92	\$0	\$4,401
Childcare Quality Enhancement	\$18,732	\$10,000	\$535	\$288	\$29,555
Childcare Training and Prof Develop	\$11,853	\$0	\$1,083	\$540	\$13,476
Childcare Scholarships	\$49,970	\$0	\$5,595	\$360	\$55,925
Partnerships & Community Education	\$16,874	\$1,000	\$5,638	\$22,608	\$46,121
Administrative Support	\$20,466	\$0	\$206	\$1,260	\$21,932
Total Expenses	\$200,335	\$19,709	\$18,859	\$141,654	\$380,558



LEADERSHIP



Board members attending the StoryWalk ribbon cutting ceremony.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Cynthia Howard	Stephanie Wallace
	Amy Wilhelm

STAFF

Candi Lalonde, Executive Director .
Joy Burge, Child Care Quality Enhancement TA/Coach
Deb Padgett, Nurturing Parenting Instructor

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