



Annual Report

2020-2021



OUR MISSION

To collaborate with the community to holistically support all preschool aged children and their families to ensure all preschool aged children are ready to succeed in school.

OUR VALUES

Support

Equity

Innovation

Collaboration

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 availability of high-quality early care and education opportunities offered by First Steps

More children arrive to kindergarten ready for success.

OUR OBJECTIVES

Children Health and Safety

Increase Access

Strengthen Interagency Accountability and Collaboration

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

McCormick County

1,628
children under age 6

57%
of young children live in poverty
or low-income households

Data Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey

In fall 2020, **12%** of entering kindergartners
in McCormick County were ready.

Data Source: 2020 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Results



432
children, adults, and workforce members were served
by McCormick County First Steps in FY20-21.

Since inception,
McCormick County First Steps
has leveraged
\$2,768,374.41
from sources outside of
state government.

That is
\$0.76
for every
state dollar.

| School District | # of children <6 | % of young children living in poverty or low-income households | # entering kindergartners tested | % ready |
|-----------------|------------------|--|----------------------------------|---------|
| McCormick | 366 | 70% | 41 | 12% |
| | | | | |
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@SCFirstSteps | SCFirstSteps.org

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



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



NaToya Cartledge
Executive Director
McCormick County First Steps

It is my pleasure to present the McCormick County First Steps Annual Report for fiscal year 2021.

During fiscal year 2021, MCFS' Board and staff worked collaboratively on solutions to ensure compliance with standards and financial sustainability. I would like to thank our trustees for their dedication and commitment.

One of the core values held at MCFS for fiscal year 2021 was "collaboration". At the start of the global pandemic event, MCFS quickly rallied and moved to a remote working environment. Even though our location was temporarily altered, MCFS collaborated with many of our partners and stakeholders to ensure ongoing services to the families we serve. Our supporters continued to contribute to this organization financially and through goods and services. Together, we will continue to navigate these extraordinary times and strive to fulfill our mission. It is my honor to work for this great organization and county!

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



FREDRICK FULLER, JR

Chair

McCormick County First Steps Board of Trustees

The past fiscal year, 2021, has again been full of challenges however our First Steps Team has again risen to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 epidemic. Now as the children return to the classroom, we are presented with the task that all students and teachers remain safe and healthy so we can continue the business of helping our children and their families prepare for a brighter future of good health and prosperity while achieving a better outcome in their academic endeavors. Why should we continue to support First Steps programs with our hard-earned tax dollars and charitable donations? It's very simple: It makes dollars and sense.

The rate of return for investments in quality early childhood development for disadvantaged children is 7-10% per annum through better outcomes in education, health, sociability, economic productivity and reduced crime. There's growing recognition of the value of investing in quality early childhood programs; it's time to act on the evidence. The sooner we do, the more likely we will be able to put our county and country on the road to greater prosperity that is shared by all.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fredrick Fuller, Jr.", written over a light blue grid background.

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

All preschool aged children in McCormick County will have the opportunity to reach their full potential.



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 2020-2021

110

children served

1024

books distributed

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

Sponsor a child for just \$25 a year.





LIBRARY LITERACY



an evidence-informed program

This program is implemented with a partnership with McCormick County Library. To improve our children's literacy skills, we provide story time twice each month. At each session, each child receives a book to take home and keep. To further increase pre-reading skills, twice each month music, songs, rhymes, art and other special events are also provided.

LIBRARY BASED BY THE NUMBERS 2020-2021

52

families served

2

providers served



Sharon Bordeaux, children's librarian at the McCormick County Library, provided an art lesson to coincide with the story she read about fish. Each child was given a paint set to take home.



NURTURING PARENTING



an evidence-based program

Nurturing Parenting is designed to empower families with new beliefs, skills, and knowledge to make good and healthy lifestyle choices. This program has promotes healthy emotional and physical development and appropriate role and developmental expectations.

A Parent Educator makes a minimum of two one-hour home visits per month. During these visits, the Parent Educator provides the family with age-appropriate child activities as well as parent activities to build nurturing parenting skills. Parents enrolled are strongly encouraged to attend our monthly group sessions where they are given the opportunity to network and collaborate on activities/discussions to foster positive parenting skills.

NURTURING PARENTING BY THE NUMBERS 2020-2021

28

families served

347

total home visits



Nurturing Parenting®
Established 1983



CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIPS



an evidence-based program

For many families in McCormick County, the cost of quality childcare is out of reach. Our scholarship program makes payments to childcare providers to care for children from low-income families so their parents can return to school or work.

All children who receive scholarships are enrolled in McCormick County School of Early Education or Durant Family Daycare. The children also attend our Library Literacy program. McCormick First Steps offers scholarships to families enrolled in our Nurturing Parenting program as well as income-eligible children whose parent attends school or works at least 20 hours per week.

SCHOLARSHIPS BY THE NUMBERS 2020-2021

20

number of children
served

2

number of providers
served

20

number of
developmental
screenings provided

100% the money paid to child care providers goes back into our local economy to benefit the citizens of McCormick County.



EARLY EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN UNDER 4



an evidence-based program

This program provides quality childcare for infants and toddlers. We focus on the most at-risk children, especially those children with multiple risk factors and developmental delays.

We use certified childcare providers, who continually increase their knowledge of early childhood development through training each year.

EARLY EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN UNDER 4 BY THE NUMBERS 2020-2021

25

children served

1

providers served



Annually, children in the early learning center receive holiday gifts from the Lutheran Church by the Lake.



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Addressing the needs of young children is a shared endeavor. In addition to providing services to families and support for childcare providers, McCormick County First Steps mobilizes partners and community members to ensure all children in McCormick 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

229

data point

21

data point



To support families in the midst of the pandemic, McCormick County First Steps held a diaper drive. Free packs of diapers and/or pull-ups were given to eligible families.



OUR SUPPORTERS

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

FUNDING SUPPORT

Good Shepherd Men's Club - \$1,000

Lutheran Church by the Lake - \$313

Little Mill Baptist Church - \$100

Laura Grove Missionary Baptist Church - \$100

Mt. Lebanon Baptist Church - \$100

Mt. Zion AME Church - \$275

Cedar Springs Baptist Church - \$100

Board Members - \$290

IN-KIND SUPPORT

McCormick County School District

McCormick County Lions Club

JOIN US

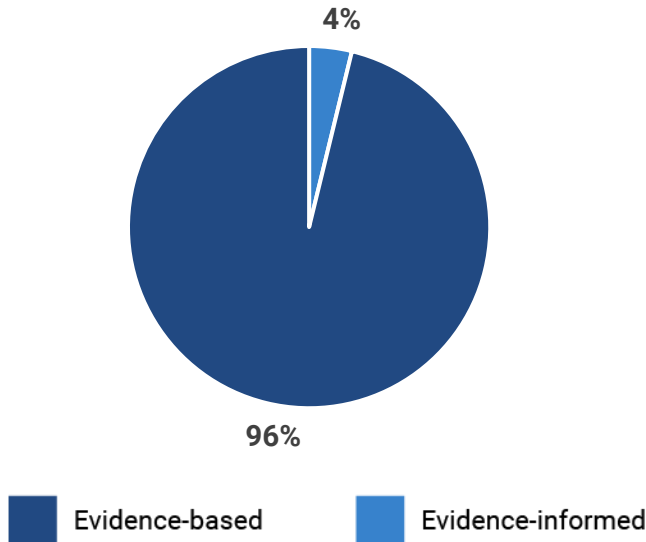
For more information on partnership opportunities, visit our website at
mccormickcountyfirststeps.org



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

OUR INVESTMENT IN QUALITY

Expenditures of State Funds by Program Type



ESTIMATION OF COST SAVINGS

Since inception, McCormick County First Steps has leveraged **\$2,768,374.41** from sources outside of state government.

That's **\$0.76** for every state dollar.

SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES BY STRATEGY

| | State Funding | Federal Funding | Private Funding | In-Kind Contributions | Total |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Nurturing Parenting | \$37,059 | | \$301 | \$20,384 | \$57,744 |
| Core Functions | \$7,761 | \$297 | \$65 | | \$8,125 |
| Library Based Programs | \$3,941 | | | | \$3,941 |
| Imagination Library | \$3,684 | | \$694 | | \$4,379 |
| Early Education for Children Under 4 | \$84,454 | | \$357 | \$68,984 | \$153,796 |
| Countdown to Kindergarten | \$4,639 | | | | \$4,639 |
| Scholarship Initiatives | \$38,829 | | | | \$38,829 |
| Administrative Support | \$12,125 | | \$124 | | \$12,250 |
| Total Expenses | \$192,492 | \$297 | \$1,541 | \$89,638 | \$283,703 |



LEADERSHIP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Pamela Turman, Vice Chair

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Sharon Martin, Secretary

Rev. R.C. Holloway

Mae Phillips Turner, Asst. Secretary

Daniel Lott

Barbara Berton

April Ouzts

Nathan McCasline

Deborah Gunter

STAFF

NaToya Cartledge, Executive Director

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