



ANNUAL REPORT

2018-2019

THE NEED

IN SOUTH CAROLINA:

42%

of people live in a childcare desert, where there are more than three times as many children as licensed child care slots

53%

of children ages 3 and 4 are not enrolled in nursery school or preschool



IN DORCHESTER COUNTY:

9,797

children under age 5

3,863

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

61%

of kindergartners are considered "not ready" for school

OUR MISSION

To help families and caregivers in our county prepare their children for school success by maximizing public and private community resources to deliver, enhance, and expand high quality early childhood services.

OUR APPROACH



High quality programs and services for children and families



Intensive training, resources and support for childcare providers



Strategic partnerships and community education

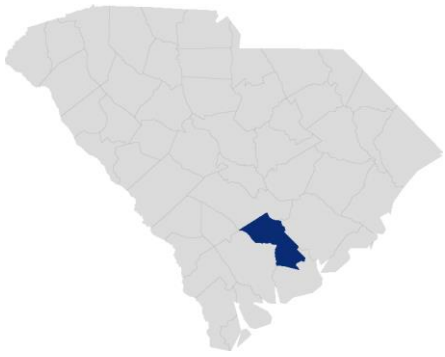
OUR IMPACT

3726

number of children and adults served by DORCHESTER County First Steps in 2018-2019

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.



OUR STORY

Dorchester County is certainly an enigma. The county has two school Districts-2 & 4. District 4 was identified as a CERDEP district according to ACT 284 in 2014 and receives funding to support reading programs for four-year-olds. District 2 is not a CERDEP district and children in DD2 don't currently qualify. District 2 has ample space to provide programs for "at-risk" four-year-olds, but District 4's attendance area does not have space. The two child care facilities in DD4 closed this year and the school district does not have any extra space. DCFS' ED voiced this concern often, wanting to get permission to serve "at-risk" children in DD2 in the DD2 attendance area. Thanks to Georgia Mjartan and the SOFS, a proviso is in place for the FY20 school year to serve all eligible 4- year-olds in both counties. This is a major accomplishment and it allows DCFS to help prepare even more children for school success.

OUR GOALS

Based on a county-wide needs assessment, our partnership's work, in collaboration with state and local partners, is focused on advancing Dorchester County towards the following goals in conjunction with the Profile of a Ready Kindergartener:

- Goal 1- create additional strategies to address the health care of children birth to age 5
- Goal 2- implement training and coaching for child care providers wanting to improve quality
- Goal 3- continue to implement the Parents As Teacher Program and prepare for Blue Ribbon Status
- Goal 4- will increase our visibility with social media
- Goal 5- increase the local Partnership Infrastructure to improve and enhance service and support to families.



We want to express our deep appreciation to Dorchester County First Steps (DCFS) for their investment in our program. There has never been a time we felt like we weren't fully supported by DCFS Staff.

Kathy Jones, Director Riverpointe Christian Academy



EARLY IDENTIFICATION & REFERRAL



an evidence-based program

First Steps' Early Identification and Referral (EI&R) programs serve families with young children with suspected delays in development, acting as a local portal to connect families to community-based services they may need or desire to ensure the school readiness of their children. EI&R services include:



Screenings for children ages 0-5 with suspected delays in development



Referrals, based on screening results, to appropriate resources and support services



Patient information including strategies to monitor growth and development

EI&R BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2019

13

children served

18

materials distributed

4

referrals to BabyNet or other local services



Parents As Teachers Program Director, Alicia Turner, screens every child whose family calls for support and all potential scholarship applicants. She also helps families navigate the process of applying for needful services and provides support for those who may not qualify for services as well.

Our program is blessed to have someone so dedicated.



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 THE NEWS

Dorchester First Steps PAT program celebrates the longevity of the families participating. Most of our families are entering into their second year with the program. Additionally, as children age out of the program they are successfully continuing in other services like Pre-K in the school system.

PAT IN DORCHESTER COUNTY 2018-2019

20

families served

287

total home visits

Families receiving scholarships are strongly encouraged to participate in the Parents As Teachers program which provides a true wrap-around and systemic way of monitoring the effectiveness of the program. This process was implemented in FY19.



Parents as Teachers.



COUNTDOWN TO KINDERGARTEN



an evidence-informed program

Developed by South Carolina First Steps – and identified as a promising state practice by the National Governor’s Association in 2005 – Countdown to Kindergarten (CTK) is a home visitation program pairing the families of rising kindergartners with their future teachers during the summer before school entry. Teachers complete six visits with each family, establishing strong connections during the summer that facilitate classroom learning throughout the year.

CTK BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2019

8

kindergarten teachers
trained as home visitors

79

children served

475

total home and school
visits



What Parents have to say about CTK:

“My son got the chance to meet his teacher before school starts so he will feel more comfortable” C.H.

“**[The best part is] the one on one interaction with the teacher in his home.**” M.R.

“I enjoyed seeing the excitement of my daughter while doing her activities. I enjoyed receiving the Parenting Tip pages to help me get a good start with her. A.V.”





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 the SC Center for Child Care Career Development and include topics in the areas of nutrition, health and safety, curriculum, child guidance, professional development and program administration. Our 2018-2019 trainings included:

- Health & Safety
- Curriculum
- Guidance
- Child Growth & Development
- Language & Literacy
- Physical Development
- Professional Development
- Program Administration

TRAINING BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2019

135

total training attendance

118

child care teachers and
directors served

21.5

number of training
sessions offered





CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIPS



an evidence-based program

For many families in Dorchester County, child care is a financial hardship. Yet, the parent must work and/or go to school. Dorchester First Steps provides as many scholarships as possible based on the budget. We really strive to meet this need. DCFS spent 17,500.00 towards the goal of helping families with child care.

Families must qualify for the scholarships following DSS guidelines. Ivory Mitchell, Program Director 2, identifies, screens and reviews all applications. We have a wrap around system with our Parent As Teachers program. Scholarship recipients must participate in PAT in order to receive the scholarship. If possible recipients will attend centers or family child care facilities that are in the DCFS cohort.

SCHOLARSHIPS BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2019

20

number of children
served

6

number of providers
served

24

number of
developmental
screenings provided

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

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 programs. In coordination with First Steps local partnerships and more than 200 private, faith- and community-based preschool providers, First Steps 4K expands access to quality child care across the state.



ELIGIBILITY

To qualify for enrollment, a child must:

- ✓ Be 4 years old on or before September 1
- ✓ Qualify for Medicaid or a free or reduced-price lunch program
- ✓ Live in one of 64 qualifying school districts

FIRST STEPS 4K IN DORCHESTER COUNTY 2018-2019

3

children enrolled

2

participating classrooms

4K NEWS

In fiscal year 2019-2020, South Carolina First Steps is launching a pilot program to expand 4K enrollment within underserved communities. Age- and income-eligible children residing in Dorchester 2 and 4 school district may qualify for a slot in a participating center that also serves students from eligible districts.





POSITIVE DISCIPLINE FOR PARENTS



an evidence-informed program

Dorchester First Steps strives to reach every parent and child in our county who may have need of our services. DCFS's Executive Director, conducts **Positive Discipline for Parents** sessions twice a year for 6 weeks each at the Department of Juvenile Justice in Ridgeville. This program helps the teen parents, incarcerated at DJJ, to be the best parents they can and hopefully reverse the trends and help their children be ready for school.

POSITIVE DISCIPLINE FOR PARENTS BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2019

60

families served

24

total number of training hours





LITERACY KITS



an evidence-informed program

Dorchester County First Steps' Family Literacy Kit program fosters a love of learning in both children and parents. The Kits provide the Parents with rich literature, activities and toys to enhance the language and literacy skills needed to support their children's early development, and children also gain the foundational literacy skills needed to succeed in school.

LITERACY KITS BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2019

150

Number of Kits

894

Number of times
the Kits have
been circulated





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, Dorchester County First Steps mobilizes partners and community members to ensure all children in Dorchester 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 2018-2019

10

Community and
Similar Agencies
that partner with
DCS

“Thank you Dorchester County First Steps for walking with us
on the journey to becoming the best we can be.”

Kathy Jones, Riverpointe Christian Academy



OUR SUPPORTERS

Dorchester First Steps celebrates every agency and individual who supports us through the year. Through partnerships and collaborations, as well as financial support from grants and contributions, Dorchester County First Steps leverages state dollars to enhance and expand services to children and families.

FUNDING SUPPORT

Child Care Career Development, \$2000.00
Child Care Training through Eventbrite \$1,560.00

IN-KIND SUPPORT

Riverpointe Christian Academy, use of meeting space
Dorchester County Library System, monitoring Literacy Kits
Dorchester District 4, \$58,000.00
Good Shepherd CDC, use of meeting space

JOIN US

For more information on partnership opportunities, visit our website at:

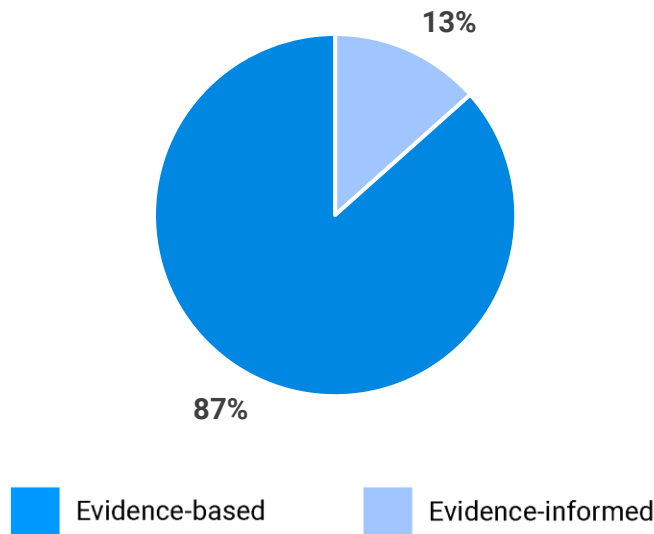
dorchesterfirststeps.org



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

OUR INVESTMENT IN QUALITY

Expenditures of State Funds by Program Type



ESTIMATION OF COST SAVINGS

Since inception, Dorchester County First Steps has leveraged **\$1,686,118.00** from sources outside of state government.

That's **\$0.28** for every state dollar.

SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES BY STRATEGY

	State Funding	Federal Funding	Private Funding	In-Kind Contributions	Total
Parents as Teachers	\$119,628	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$119,628
Parent Child Home	\$29,268	\$0	\$0	\$58,249	\$87,518
Child Care Training	\$38,333	\$0	\$4,446	\$0	\$42,779
Countdown To Kindergarten	\$43,994	\$0	\$0	\$1504	\$45,499
Scholarship Initiative	\$75,963	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$75,963
Core Functions	\$24,175	\$783	\$706	\$0	\$25,665
Partnerships & Community Education	\$18	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$18
Administrative Support	\$20,930	\$0	\$99	\$0	\$21,029
Early Identification Referrals	\$11,395	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$11,395
Total Expenses	\$363,704	\$783	\$4,446	\$59,753	\$429,494



LEADERSHIP

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Alicia Turner, Program Director I

Ivory Mitchell, Program Director II

Kristy Allan, Program Specialist

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