

A photograph of a woman with large, dark, curly hair holding a baby. The woman is smiling and looking down at the baby. The baby is looking up and smiling, with its mouth open. The baby is wearing a white shirt with blue and red stripes. The background is a solid light gray.

# **Early Head Start Annual Report**

**2019 - 2020**

The logo for First Steps Richland County. It features a stylized graphic of a staircase made of white squares on a red background. To the right of the graphic, the words "FIRST" and "STEPS" are stacked vertically in a bold, white, sans-serif font. Below "STEPS", the words "RICHLAND COUNTY" are written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.

**FIRST  
STEPS**  
RICHLAND COUNTY





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Grant 04CH4789 /04CH011699

Grant 04HP000165



When the story of the last year is written, undoubtedly one of the key words included will be **adaptability**. While regular assessment of programs to better meet family needs is part of the **Richland First Steps (RFS)** organizational DNA, the arrival of COVID-19 in early 2020 brought on a new paradigm for service delivery. Though home visits ceased and classrooms closed for in-person learning on March 13, 2020, the same day local schools and government offices shut down, the RFS Early Head Start (EHS) team shifted into overdrive, quickly developing strategies for how to stay connected with families. Having and using technology for communication proved to be a challenge for many families and even some staff, so RFS EHS responded, providing devices with built in internet hot spots.

Though there is no real replacement for in-person human connection, a commitment to keeping everyone safe from the disease that has disproportionately affected Black and other minority communities, EHS Classroom Caregivers and Family Support Advocates adapted the way they brought content to children and families, using creative solutions to keep families engaged during a time of crisis. Phone calls, Zoom meetings, online play groups, and digital learning resources were all used to support parents in their roles as their children's first and best teachers.

One of the primary functions of First Steps partnerships is to serve as a local portal for communities to connect to services that will help nurture children so they can arrive at school ready to thrive. This is true more than ever in 2020, when many are struggling to meet basic needs. The RFS team gave parents and caregivers information they needed

to access unemployment benefits, rental assistance, food pantries, and other vital services. This has proved to be a lifeline for families that will help them build resilience to make it through this incredibly difficult time.

## Responding to Community Needs During the Pandemic



*Family Support Advocate Barbara Stephenson conducts a virtual family meeting with center-based families*



*"When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.'"*

**- Fred Rogers**

# Goals

In 2009, Richland First Steps (RFS) was awarded a grant from the US Department of Health and Human Services to provide the Early Head Start (EHS) program in Richland County, SC. In 2019, a second grant was awarded to expand the program.

## The four broad goals of EHS are:

- Provide early, continuous, intensive, comprehensive and high-quality services;
- Promote positive parent-child interactions;
- Respond to the needs/circumstances of families in the community; and,
- Establish a recruitment plan to serve children with the most urgent needs.

To achieve these goals, RFS EHS uses four program models: 1) prenatal; 2) home-based; 3) center-based; and 4) a combination of both center- and home-based. Each model is designed to meet the needs of families when they enter the program. As family needs change, they are able to transition from one program model to the other, leading to new expectations and roles for family members.



The program serves Richland County, SC with a focus on the highest need families in ZIP Codes 29203, 29204, and 29210.

## Richland County Snapshot

Rural/urban	756 square miles with 549 persons/sq mile – <i>population growing</i>		
<b>Population:</b>	414,576	<b>Population Under Age 5:</b>	23,898
<b>Poverty:</b>	Total population: 16.7%	<b>Poverty Under Age 5:</b>	<b>22.6%</b>
<b>Race:</b>	Black: 46.4%	White: 44.3%	Asian: 3%
<b>Ethnicity:</b>	Hispanic population:	5.2%	

## Zip Code 29203 Snapshot

Urban	63.3 square miles with 624 persons/sq mile – <i>population declining</i>		
<b>Population:</b>	39,518	<b>Population Under Age 5:</b>	2846
<b>Poverty:</b>	Total population: 33.2%	<b>Poverty Under Age 5:</b>	<b>53.6%</b>
<b>Race:</b>	Black: 81.7%	White: 12.8%	Asian: 1.3%
<b>Ethnicity:</b>	Hispanic population:	3.2%	

## Zip Code 29204 Snapshot

Urban	6.5 square miles with 2878 persons/sq mile – <i>population declining</i>		
<b>Population:</b>	18,709	<b>Population Under Age 5:</b>	718
<b>Poverty:</b>	Total population: 20%	<b>Poverty Under Age 5:</b>	<b>37.5%</b>
<b>Race:</b>	Black: 56.4%	White: 39.4%	Asian: 1.4%
<b>Ethnicity:</b>	Hispanic population:	1.1%	

## Zip Code 29210 Snapshot

Urban	15.96 square miles with 2528 persons/sq mile – <i>population declining</i>		
<b>Population:</b>	40,305	<b>Population Under Age 5:</b>	2439
<b>Poverty:</b>	Total population: 16%	<b>Poverty Under Age 5:</b>	<b>24.8%</b>
<b>Race:</b>	Black: 51.1%	White: 36.2%	Asian: 3.4%
<b>Ethnicity:</b>	Hispanic population:	4%	

## % of Medicaid Births in Target ZIP Codes

<b>29203</b>	<b>  78.7%</b>
<b>29204</b>	<b>  59.4%</b>
<b>29210</b>	<b>  64.6%</b>

# Service Area



# Enrollment

## Total Number of Children and Families Served:

August 1, 2019 - July 31, 2020

Funded Enrollment: 149

Average Percentage of Monthly Funded Enrollment

Grant 04CH4789/ 04CH011699: 100%

All eligible pregnant women and children: 5,342

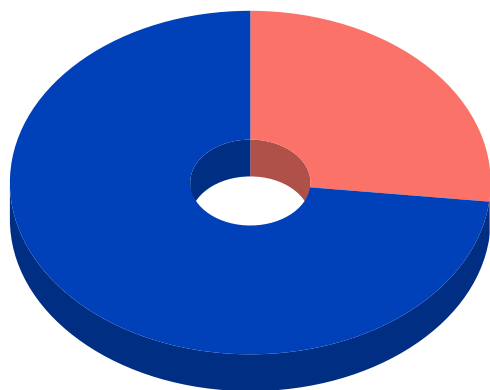
Total number of children/pregnant women served: 127

Total number of families served: 99

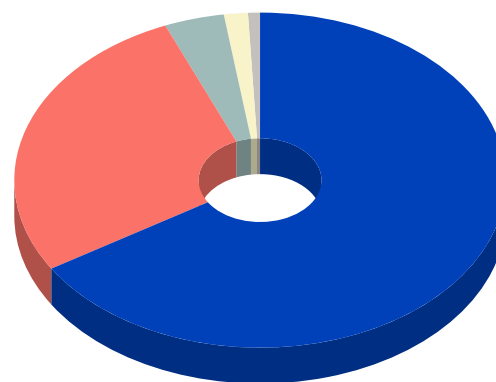
Percentage of  
*eligible*  
pregnant women and  
children served:

2.4%

● Hispanic  
● Non Hispanic



● Black  
● White  
● Asian  
● Biracial  
● Other

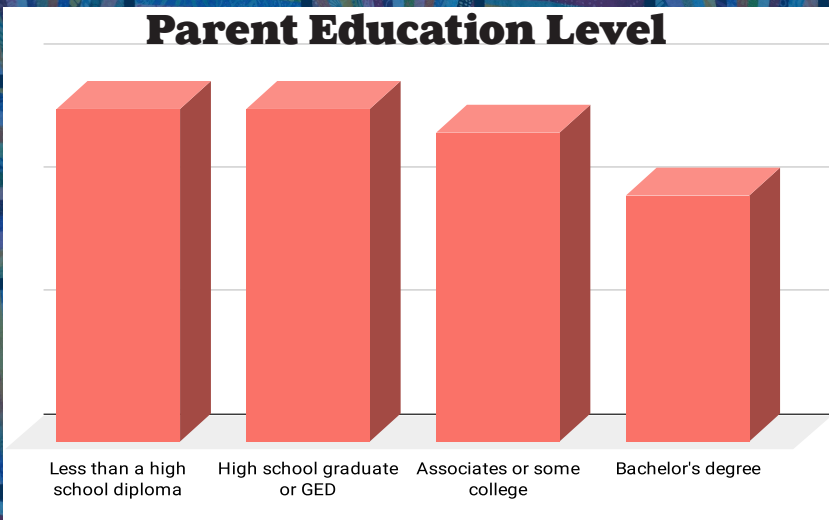


# Our Team

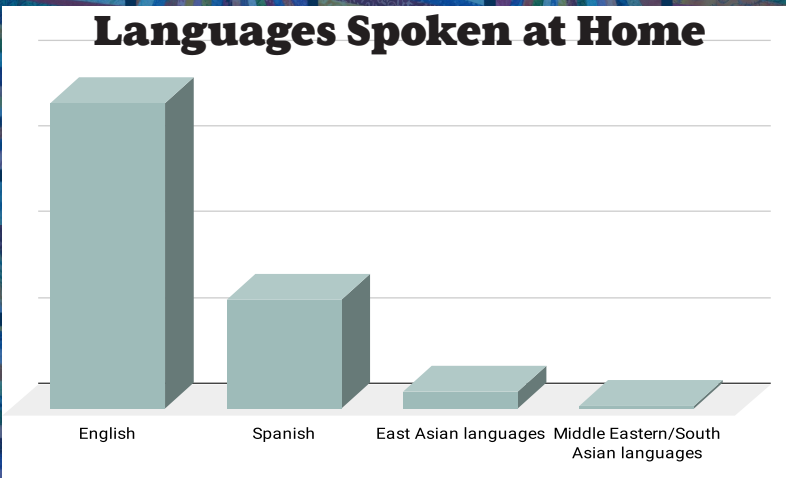
A program is only as strong as its team members, and RFS is proud of the team of caregivers, family support advocates, and administrators that serve the community through Early Head Start.

RFS classroom caregivers and floaters are often more highly qualified than their peers in other early learning environments. **72%** of caregivers have an **Associates or Bachelor's degree**. Retaining staff and assisting in their professional development is a priority. Monthly training sessions are provided for all staff on topics from curriculum to first aid, to the use of Conscious Discipline.

## Parent Education Level



## Languages Spoken at Home



**16% of families experienced homelessness.**



**71% of families are led by a single parent.**



# Enrollment

## Early Head Start Operations

Cari Moyer

*Director, Early Head Start Operations*

Lydia Carnesale

*Education Coordinator*

Renee Eubanks

*Program Support*

Brenda Gaskin

*Education Accountability*

Tonya Harvin-Pack

*ERSEA and Transition Coordinator*

Amy Raynor

*Program Support*

Sammantha Truesdale

*Health Coordinator*

Chevelle Artis

*Director, EHS - Union Street site*

Lindsey Byars

*Director, EHS - Virginia Wingard site*

Gail Harrell

*Director, EHS - Ridgewood site*

Tyra Jefferson

*EHS Policy Council Chair*

## Richland First Steps Leadership

Marcia Bacon

*CEO*

David Caldwell Price

*Board Chair*



It is difficult to assess learning in children too young for testing. That is why EHS uses nationally-recognized assessment tools that focus on observation within children's care environments to gauge progress. The **Hawaii Early Learning Profile (HELP)** is a comprehensive, on-going, family centered curriculum based assessment process

for infants and toddlers and their families. 685 developmental skills and behaviors across multiple domains provide a framework for ongoing assessment, planning and tracking progress.

Though the long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on children's development aren't yet known, between the Fall 2019 (August - November) and Spring 2020 (April - July) HELP checkpoints, some losses were seen.

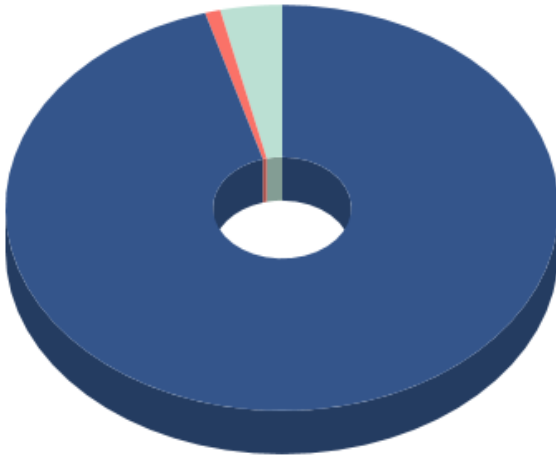
At or above age expected range	Before COVID-19	During COVID-19
▪ Language and Literacy	84.0%	80.2 %
▪ Cognitive and General Knowledge	85.9%	85.2%
▪ Approaches to Learning	92.5%	90.1%
▪ Social and Emotional Development	93.4%	93.1%
▪ Physical Development and Health	92.5%	89.1%

## Child Outcome Data



# Children's Health and Wellness

Ensuring that children get a healthy start in life means helping families get connected to the health care services they need. That's why EHS has made a commitment to securing health insurance coverage and medical homes for all children it serves. The EHS Health Coordinator may also refer families to mental health, nutrition, and nurse consultant services provided through contractual agreement.



## Children's Insurance Coverage By Type

● Medicaid ● Private Insurance ● No Insurance Coverage

**100%**  
of EHS  
children  
have a  
medical  
home.



**83%** of all newly enrolled children received developmental, sensory, and behavioral screenings within their first 45 days in EHS.

This year **34%** of children screened were referred for further screening, assessment, or treatment.

**76%** of children are up to date on all vaccinations for their age.





# Family Support

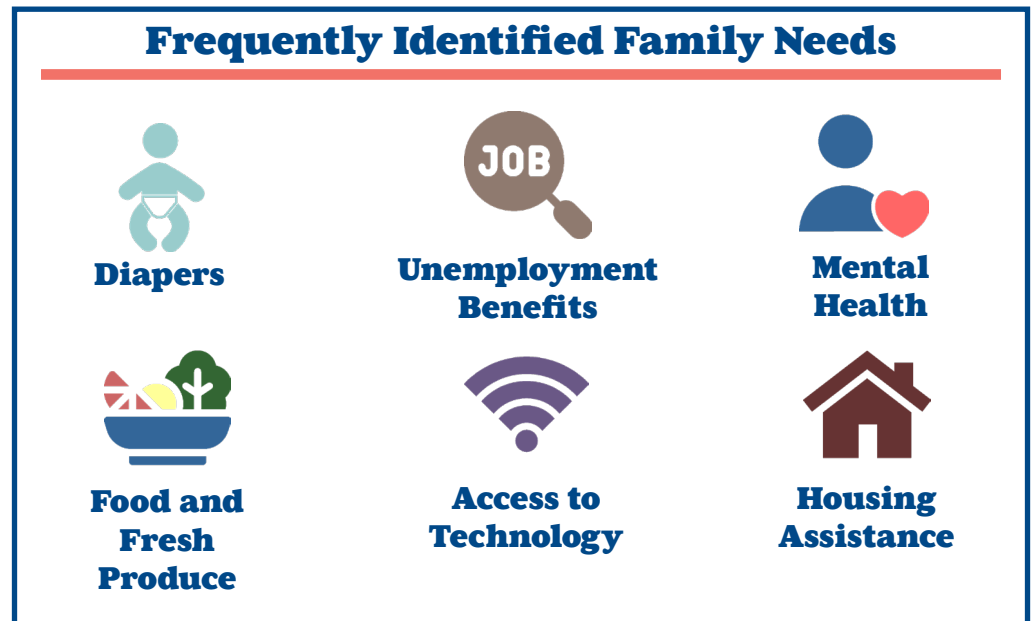
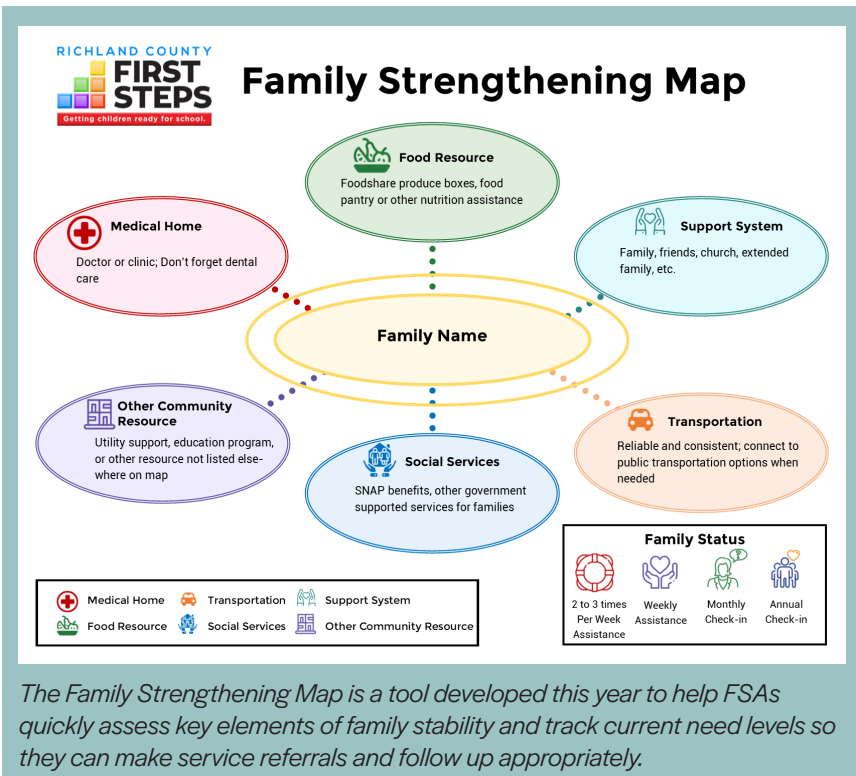
With a team of 9 Family Support Advocates (FSAs), 7 of which are funded through Early Head Start (EHS) grants, and their supervisor, Richland First Steps (RFS) considers home-based services for families an essential function. The COVID-19 pandemic drastically shifted that service delivery model in the first half of 2020, but the FSA team rose to the challenge, finding innovative solutions to help meet family needs.

In addition to creating and delivering curriculum packets for parents to use at home, FSAs conducted virtual home visits, placed frequent check-in calls, and made referrals to community services.

A popular EHS service for parents and staff were the weekly “Coffee Talk” Zoom conversations with mental health consultant Melissa Swartz, PhD, LPC/S. Strong community relationships with food pantries and diaper banks also helped families in need.



*Our team of Family Support Advocates (FSAs) have been an indispensable lifeline for families this year. They have provided encouragement and guidance, while helping connect families to resources they need.*



# Fiscal Information

The COVID-19 pandemic and shift to largely virtual services impacted the overall budget for EHS. For the existing center- and home-based program (Grant# 04CH4789), this created actual totals in categories like supplies much lower than anticipated. The opening of the new site scheduled for this year (Grant# 04HP000165) was delayed, causing significant variances from budgeted costs.


## 04CH4789

Grant Budget to Actual Reporting					Actual Non Federal Share Details			
		Budget	Actuals	Variance		<u>Richland County First Steps</u>		
	Personnel	\$424,864	\$442,877	\$18,013		Staffing	\$72,766	
	Fringe Benefits	\$94,578	\$71,918	\$(22,660)		Office Space	\$19,305	
	Travel	\$3,720	\$-	\$(3,720)				
	Equipment	\$-	\$-	\$-		<u>South Carolina First Steps</u>		
	Supplies	\$28,646	\$7,753	\$(20,893)		Regional Finance Manager, audit	\$3,904	
	Contractual	\$34,866	\$29,871	\$(4,995)				
	Construction	\$-	\$-	\$-		<u>Partnerships</u>		
	Other	\$30,376	\$21,719	\$(8,657)		Ridgewood Baptist Church	\$8,006	
	Indirect Charges	\$-	\$-	\$-		Virginia Wingard	\$9,135	
		\$617,050	\$574,138	\$(42,912)		Reformation Church - Union Street	\$5,808	
						Vendors	\$14,332	
		84.18%	89.66%			Volunteers	\$5,230	
						Other	\$2,175	
						<b>Total</b>	<b>\$140,659</b>	
T/TA is included throughout budget, not just in Travel				\$13,600				



# Fiscal Information

04HP000165

CPA firm Scott and Company conducted a financial audit, including EHS programs, for the years concluding June 30, 2018 and 2019. RFS received a clean fiscal bill of health from the auditor, whose report showed no deficiencies or material weaknesses. The full audit report is **SCOTT  COMPANY** available for review on our website at:

<https://www.richlandfirststeps.org/about-rcfs/financial-information/>

Grant Budget to Actual Reporting					Actual Non Federal Share Details			
		Budget	Actuals	Variance		<u>Richland County First Steps</u>		
	Personnel	\$588,000	\$142,688	\$(445,312)		Staffing	\$58,304	
	Fringe Benefits	\$205,800	\$28,712	\$(177,088)		Office Space	\$-	
	Travel	\$11,593	\$-	\$(11,593)				
	Equipment	\$99,804	\$-	\$(99,804)		<u>South Carolina First Steps</u>		
	Supplies	\$62,636	\$180,141	\$117,505		Regional Finance Manager, audit	\$6,074	
	Contractual	\$61,806	\$30,059	\$(31,747)				
	Construction	\$-	\$-	\$-		<u>Partnerships</u>		
	Other	\$382,778	\$334,025	\$(48,753)		Ridgewood Baptist Church	\$-	
	Indirect Charges	\$-	\$-	\$-		Virginia Wingard	\$65,289	
		\$1,412,417	\$715,626	\$(696,791)		Reformation Church - Union Street	\$-	
						Vendors	\$57,208	
		56.20%	23.95%			Volunteers	\$909	
						Other	\$1,997	
						<b>Total</b>	<b>\$189,780</b>	
T/TA is included throughout budget, not just in Travel				\$23,352				





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