



June 30, 2023

South Carolina General Assembly  
1100 Gervais Street  
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Members of the South Carolina General Assembly:

Last year, the General Assembly appropriated funds to First Steps for the Resources for Early Acceleration and Development in Youth (READY). The South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees awarded these funds to First Steps local partnerships through a competitive and targeted grants process, which prioritized programs for children birth through three, rural communities, and communities where kindergarten readiness scores are consistently below the state average.

State statute currently requires that First Steps and the Early Childhood Advisory Council submit an annual report on the state's investment in early childhood. The [2022 annual report](#) was provided to the General Assembly on December 1, 2022. Additionally, proviso 1.105 of the FY 2022-23 General Appropriations Act, mandated that First Steps provide an annual report on the state's investment in early learning and development by June 30, 2023. After fiscal year 2022-23 closes, and the updated FY 23-24 READY proviso takes effect, we will provide a comprehensive report that will be submitted in December 2023. In our efforts to be responsive to the original FY 22-23 READY proviso, we are hereby submitting this report which outlines the use of READY funds throughout this first year.

We are deeply grateful for the General Assembly's support of our mission to ensure that all children start school ready to reach their highest potential. First Steps is a critical part of the early childhood system in South Carolina, and your continued support will allow us to reach more children directly and indirectly for years to come.

If you have any questions or if we can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Georgia Mjartan".

Georgia Mjartan  
Executive Director  
South Carolina First Steps

# READY

**Resources for Early Acceleration  
and Development in Youth**

**June 30, 2023**



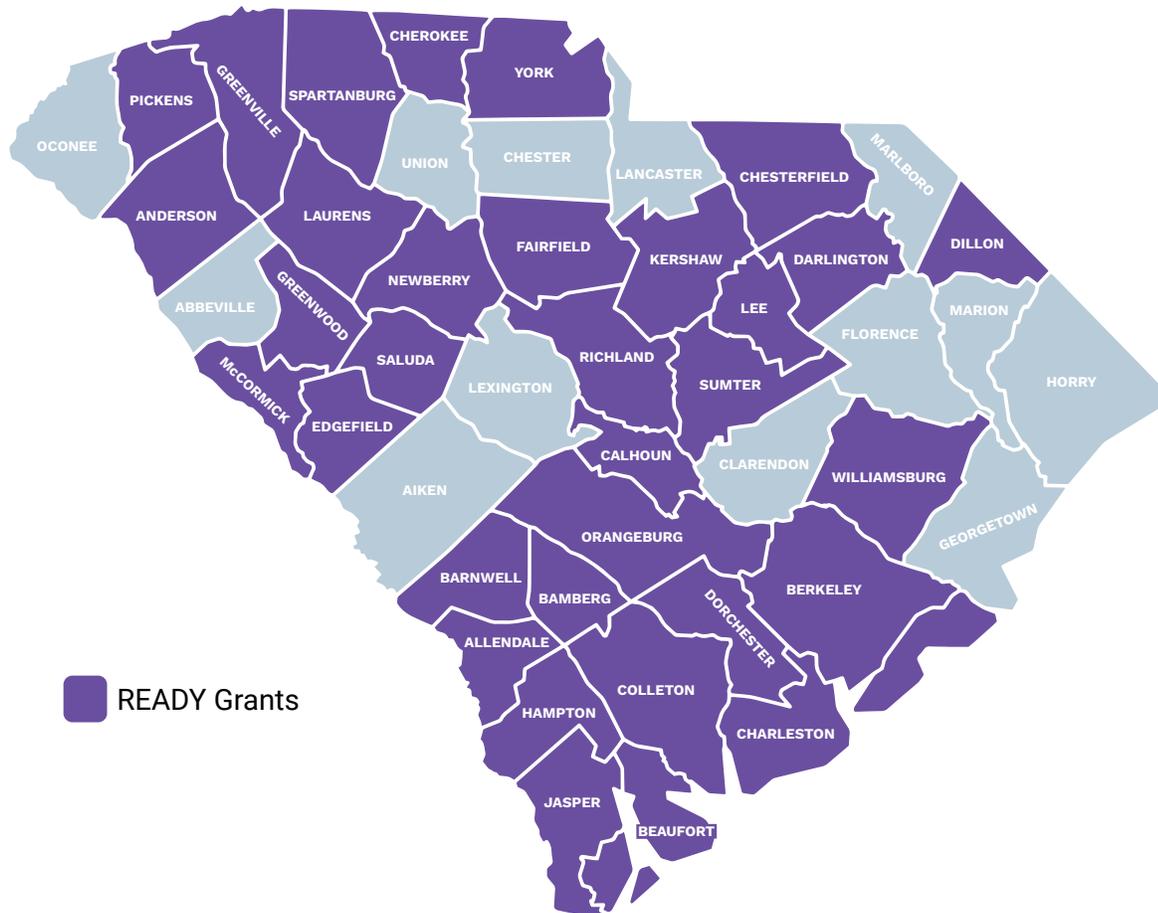
In 2022, the General Assembly made a historic investment in South Carolina's children, allocating \$3 million in recurring funds to be awarded to local First Steps partnerships through a grant-making process.

South Carolina First Steps has since awarded **Resources for Early Acceleration and Development in Youth (READY)** grants across 33 counties, prioritizing programs for children ages 0-3, rural communities, and counties where Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) scores are consistently below the state average.

In its inaugural year, READY funds have enabled First Steps to sustain and expand evidence-based parenting programs, increase the quality of child care, and address pressing workforce and infrastructure challenges.



*In Spartanburg County, where KRA scores are consistently below the state average, Spartanburg County First Steps is using READY funds to improve the quality of child care in underserved areas.*





*Kershaw is a rural county where KRA scores are consistently below the state average. Kershaw County First Steps used a READY grant to establish a presence in a high-need area of public housing, offering improved access to families and needed space for parenting group meetings, child care trainings, and community resources. In May, the local partnership hosted a preschool graduation for a local child care center participating in their quality enhancement program.*

## READY Grants Awarded

*The following amounts indicate the total funding committed for each of the grant program streams.*

### Create or Expand Child Care Technical Assistance Programs

\$1,651,583 over 3 years

Berkeley  
Colleton  
Dillon  
Dorchester  
Richland  
Spartanburg  
York

### Sustain and Expand Effective Programs Serving Children and Families

\$1,592,473 over 2 years

Allendale  
Bamberg  
Charleston  
Darlington  
Dillon  
Greenville

Greenwood  
McCormick  
Orangeburg  
Pickens  
Spartanburg  
York

### Support Family Child Care Providers through Parents as Teachers

\$48,000 for 1 year

Beaufort  
Charleston  
Colleton  
Williamsburg

### Pilot Family Cafés in Underserved Communities

\$71,900 for 1 year

Barnwell  
Darlington  
Fairfield

Greenwood  
Lee  
Williamsburg

### Build Infrastructure and Capacity

\$2,203,034 over 3 years

Anderson  
Bamberg  
Barnwell  
Beaufort  
Berkeley  
Calhoun  
Cherokee  
Chesterfield  
Colleton  
Darlington  
Dillon  
Edgefield  
Greenville  
Greenwood  
Hampton

Jasper  
Kershaw  
Laurens  
Lee  
McCormick  
Newberry  
Orangeburg  
Pickens  
Richland  
Saluda  
Spartanburg  
Sumter  
Williamsburg  
York



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