



# ACS Data

Driving Needs Assessments, Strategic Planning, and Funding Allocations for Early Childhood Programs in South Carolina

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2023 ACS Data Users Conference



# The Need

South Carolina's long-term prosperity depends on the health and well-being of our state's 342,000 babies, toddlers, and preschoolers. Every one of them deserves a chance to reach their highest potential, but too few are getting what they need from the start.

**Last year in South Carolina:**

**45%**

of children ages 0-5  
lived in poverty or  
low-income households

**55%**

of children ages 3-4  
were not enrolled in  
preschool

**10%**

of babies were born  
with low birthweight

**50%**

of children ages 0-5  
were read to less  
than 4 days per week

**64%**

of rising kindergartners  
tested "not ready" for  
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# Getting Children Ready For School



Established in 1999 as a public-private partnership, South Carolina First Steps is the state's only dedicated, comprehensive early childhood initiative focused on getting children ready for school and life success. As both a state agency and a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, we work with families, early educators, and partners statewide to support children from birth through age five.

# Our Approach



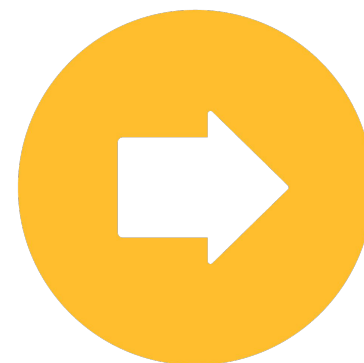
**HEALTH**



**PARENTING**



**EARLY CARE &  
EDUCATION**



**SCHOOL  
TRANSITION**

We take a holistic approach to accomplishing our mission, offering services that improve children's health, strengthen families, expand access to quality child care, increase participation in four-year-old kindergarten, and help transition rising kindergartners into school.

# What We Do



Through a network of 46 **local partnerships**, we provide direct services and serve as local hubs for early childhood resources and referrals.



First Steps 4K provides free **four-year-old kindergarten** to qualifying children in licensed child care centers and private schools across the state.



We convene and operate the **Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC)**, a collaborative body representing the state's early childhood system.

# Using ACS Data

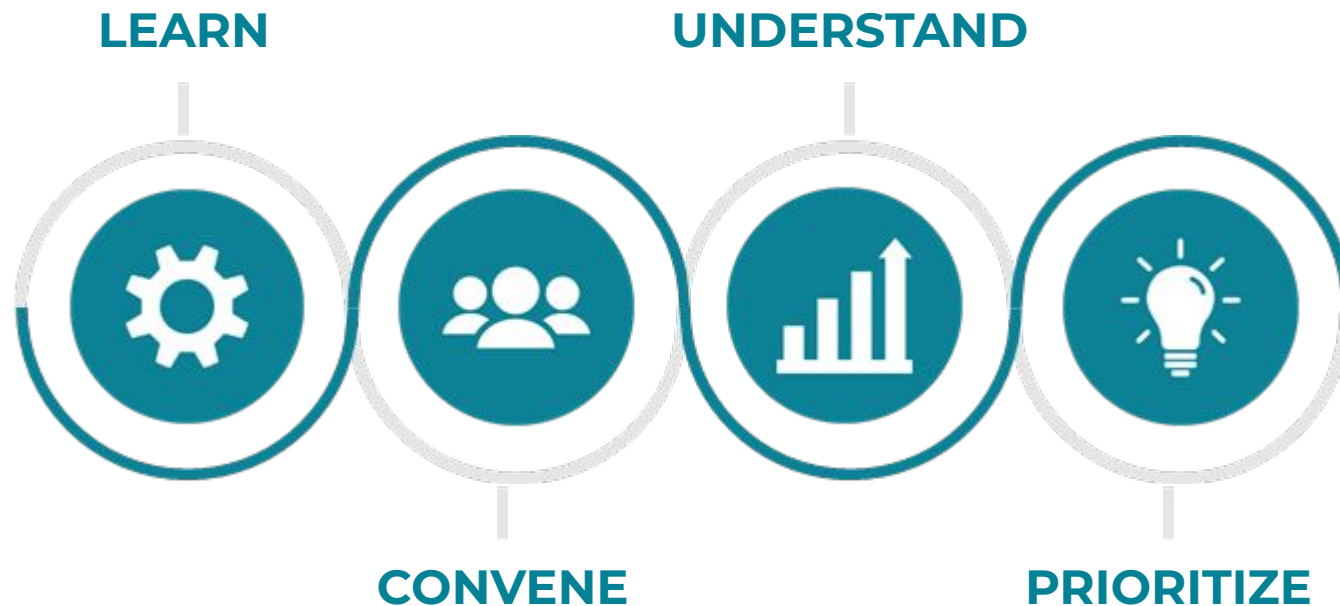
## First Steps Local Partnerships

Every Three Years	Annually
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Needs Assessments</li><li>● Strategic Planning</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Formula Funding Allocation</li><li>● Overarching Measures of Success</li></ul>

State developed and supported

- Templates
- Data Dashboards
- Infographics

# Assessing and Prioritizing Needs





# Dynamic Tableau Dashboards

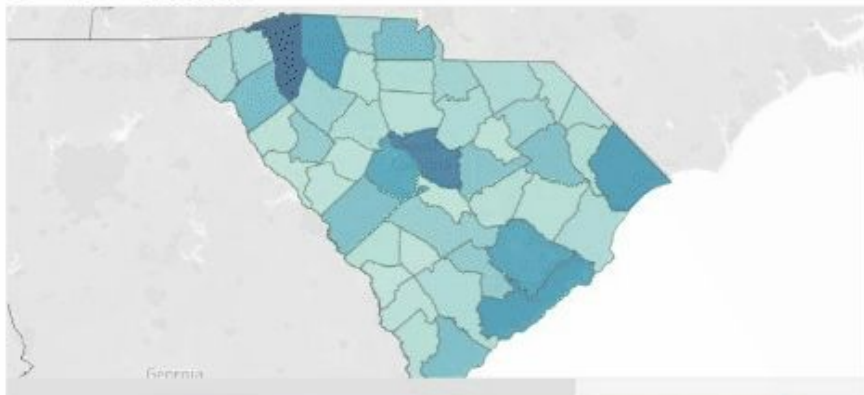
## At the County Level

### SC B-5 Early Childhood Needs Assessment

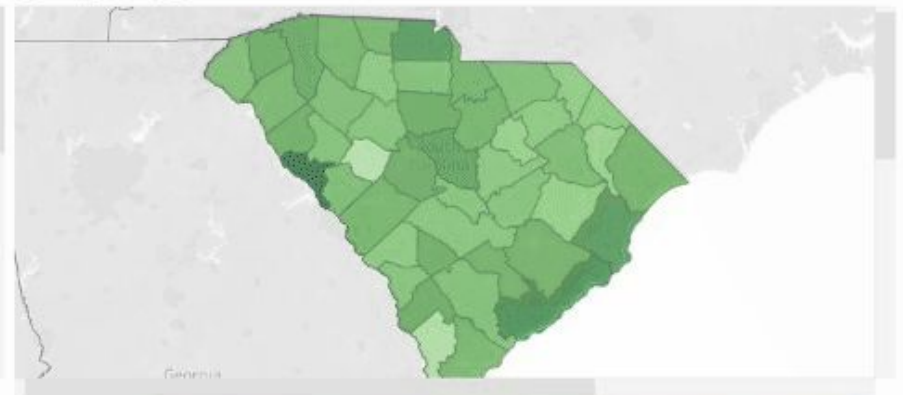
Navigation tabs:

- MAPS: Compare county distribution of two measures
- BARS: Compare distribution of two measures
- MAPS: Explore census tracts in a county or counties
- MAP: Explore child care access in a county or counties
- MAP & BARS: Kindergarten readiness by school

Select a Measure: Population Under Age 6 <185% FPL (Count) | Select a Year: 2020 | Select a Detail: Overall | Select a Measure: Kindergarten Ready (Rate) | Select a Year: 2021 | Select a Detail: Overall



Value: 210.00 | 15,394.00



Value: 0.09 | 0.66

Dashboard developed by South Carolina First Steps. Last updated October 19, 2022. Note: Kindergarten Readiness Assessment from 2020 was modified due to the COVID-19 pandemic and should not be compared to other years.

Tableau

Details

# Dynamic Tableau Dashboards

## At the Census Tract Level

SC B-5 Early Childhood Needs Assessment Data by [Chelsea Richard](#)



### SC B-5 Early Childhood Needs Assessment



Select a Co... Richland

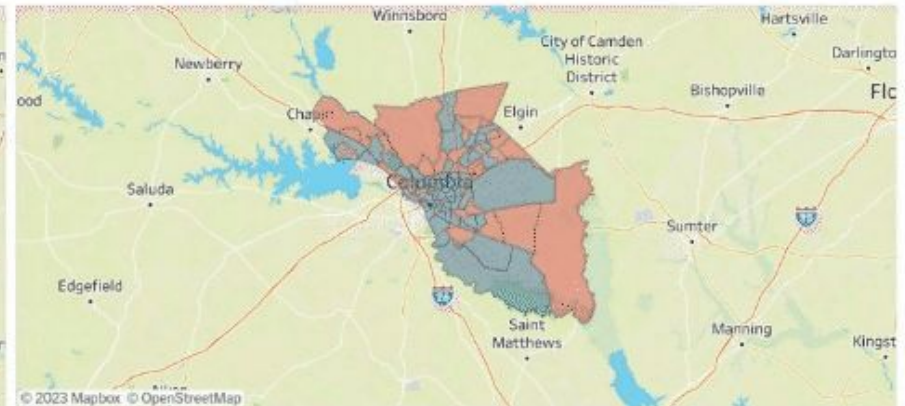
Population... 0.0%

100.0%

Child care ...

No

Yes



Provider location and center capacity obtained from [sccildcare.org](#) on October 16, 2022. Definition of a child care desert obtained from the Center for American Progress, "A child care desert is any census tract with more than 50 children under age 5 that contains either no child care providers or so few entities that there are more than three times as many children as licensed child care slots" (<https://www.childcaredeserts.org/>). Population under age 5 by census tract obtained from the American Community Survey.

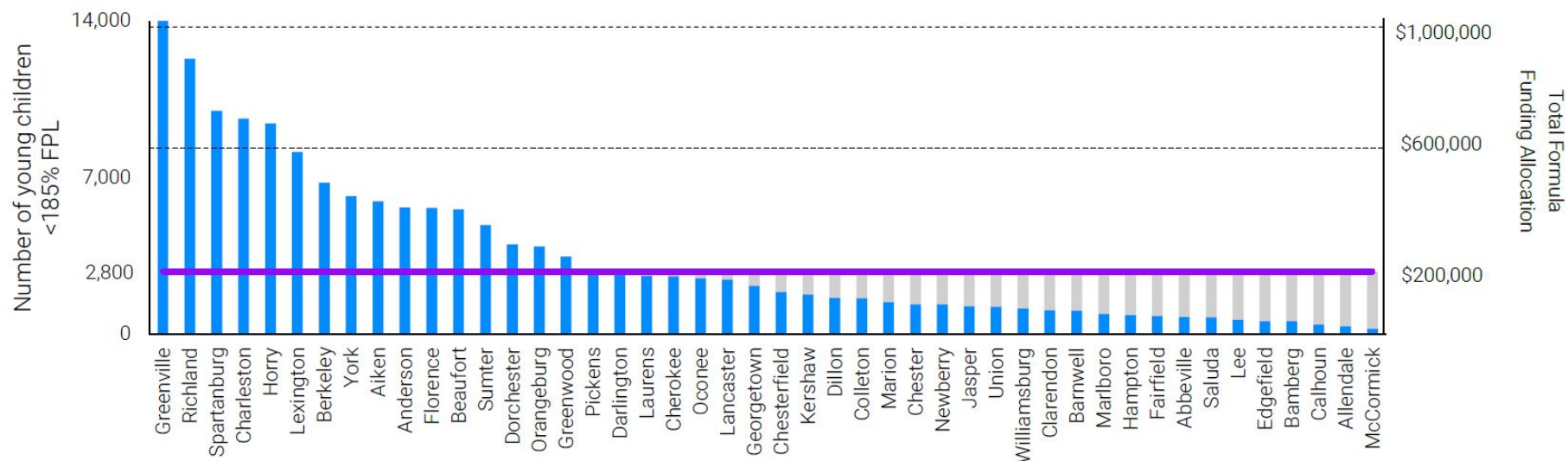
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# Strategic Planning → Taking Action



# Allocating resources annually

A child-centered, data-driven funding model



# Allocating resources annually

Responding to annual swings in population counts

## Base Allocation

Every county receives a base allocation of \$200,000



## Supplemental Allocation

Counties with 2,800+ young children living in poverty or low-income households



## Year-to-Year Change 3% Cap

The maximum change in population count year-to-year capped at 3%.

## Formula Funding is The Minimum Each County Can Receive

Additional funding available through targeted and competitive grants to county partnerships that meet or exceed performance standards

# Overarching Measures of Success 1-3

## **1. INCREASE THE REACH OF FIRST STEPS SERVICES**

By 2025, the percentage of children in need who are directly served by First Steps will increase from 17% to 20%.

## **2. INCREASE THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN ENROLLED IN HIGH INTENSITY PROGRAMS FUNDED BY FIRST STEPS**

By 2025, the percentage of children in need who are directly served by First Steps high intensity programs will increase from 5% to 8%.

## **3. INCREASE THE AVAILABILITY OF HIGH QUALITY EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY FIRST STEPS**

By 2025, the percentage of children under age 6 who benefit from First Steps quality enhancement and training efforts will increase from 12% to 15%.

# Questions?



**Connect with me!**

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