

Comprehensive Plan

2018-2020

Introduction

Per First Steps legislation (Section 52-152-70 (A)), each First Steps Partnership Board shall bring the community together to identify the area needs related to the goals of First Steps, develop a strategic long-term plan for meeting those needs, and then develop specific initiatives to implement the elements of the plan while integrating service delivery where possible. The partnership board is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the partnership's comprehensive strategic plan, which shall include direct service provision, contracting for service provision, and organization and management of volunteer programs. In addition, each partnership's comprehensive plan shall include the following core functions:

- a) service as a local portal connecting families of preschool children to community-based services they may need or desire to ensure the school readiness of their children;
- b) service as a community convener around the needs of preschool children and their families; and
- c) support of state-level school readiness priorities as determined by the State Board.

Needs and Resources Assessment: Each local First Steps partnership undergoes a community needs and resources assessment process every three years, in consultation with its local board, staff, clients and partners. A description of this process can be found online at <http://scfirststeps.com/fy-17-needs-and-resources-assessment/>.

Alignment to State First Steps Priorities: Each local First Steps partnership is a non-profit organization created in legislation in support of the statewide First Steps initiative, which is governed by a state board of trustees and supported by the State Office of First Steps. Each local plan aligns with the priorities of the South Carolina First Steps Strategic Plan, **Vision 2020** (<http://scfirststeps.com/resources-and-state-reporting/>). These priorities are:

- Increase access to quality early childhood programs and resources
- Enhance leadership development and capacity building
- Strengthen interagency accountability and public-private collaboration

Support for First Steps Legislative Goals: The strategic goals of this comprehensive plan support one or more goals of the First Steps initiative, as defined in state legislation (<http://www.scstatehouse.gov/code/t59c152.php>):

1. "Provide parents with access to the support they might seek and want to strengthen their families and to promote the optimal development of their preschool children;
2. Increase comprehensive services so children have reduced risk for major physical, developmental, and learning problems;
3. Promote high-quality preschool programs that provide a healthy environment that will promote normal growth and development;
4. Provide services so all children receive the protection, nutrition, and health care needed to thrive in the early years of life so they arrive at school ready to succeed; and
5. Mobilize communities to focus efforts on providing enhanced services to support families and their young children so as to enable every child to reach school healthy and ready to succeed."

Promotion of South Carolina's Definition of School Readiness: The goals and objectives of this comprehensive plan promote one or more descriptions of school readiness (Ready Children, Ready Families and Caregivers, Ready Schools and Educators, Ready Communities) as defined in South Carolina's Profile of the Ready Kindergartner (<http://www.ican.sc>), adopted in 2015 by the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees and the South Carolina Board of Education as the state's readiness benchmarks.

South Carolina's School Readiness Description (Profile of the Ready Kindergartner)



Profile of the Ready Kindergartner brochure

1 Ready Children

- 1A Approaches to Learning & Inquiry (10)
- 1B Emotional & Social Development (12)
- 1C Physical Development, Self-Help & Motor Skills (4)
- 1D Language & Literacy Development (24)
 - Listening, Speaking and Understanding (8)
 - Early Reading (12)
 - Early Writing (4)
- 1E Mathematical Thinking (9)
 - Number Sense (5)
 - Matching, Sorting, Classifying (4)

2 Ready Families and Caregivers

Ready Kindergartners have the foundation of family and caregivers who:

- 2A Provide safe and loving home environments in which children can grow and develop optimally.
- 2B Ensure that their children's pediatric health and dental needs are regularly addressed.
- 2C Create "language rich" homes in which conversation and written literacy are modeled daily.
- 2D Ensure that their young children receive adequate rest and a healthy diet.
- 2E Expose young children to regular and varied learning experiences in and out of the home.

3 Ready Schools and Educators

Schools and educators for the Ready Kindergartner:

- 3A Understand that each child develops on a unique timeline.
- 3B Are prepared to meet the unique, individual needs of all students.
- 3C Are highly knowledgeable in both child development and the progression of early learning.
- 3D Provide the social, emotional and academic supports needed to advance their students abilities.
- 3E Create emotionally safe and nurturing environments that are free of stress.
- 3F Are equipped to support the needs of their students' parents and caregivers.

4 Ready Communities

Communities that support the Ready Kindergartner:

- 4A Provide access to the resources necessary to ensure good health and optimal physical, social/emotional and cognitive development.
- 4B Create environments in which children:
 - Can grow and develop in the absence of fear, stress, danger and hunger.
 - Have access to needed pediatric, dental and mental health resources.
 - Spend their days in nurturing, language-rich, and developmentally supportive environments (whether a loving home, a high-quality early education setting or both).
 - Are cared for by loving adults attentive to their physical, emotional and developmental needs.

Profile of the Ready Kindergartner brochures are available from each local First Steps office.

Profile of the Ready Kindergartner resources: <http://www.ican.sc/>

South Carolina's Definition of School Readiness (Section 59-152-25 (G))

"School readiness' means the level of child development necessary to ensure early school success as measured in the following domains: physical health and motor skills; emotional and social competence; language and literacy development; and mathematical thinking and cognitive skills. School readiness is supported by the knowledge and practices of families, caregivers, healthcare providers, educators, and communities."

Vision, Mission, and Values

Source: *Guiding Principles and Best Practices for South Carolina Nonprofits, 4th Edition* (TogetherSC, 2017)
<http://www.togethersc.org/?page=GPBP>

In order to engage in strategic thinking that steers the organization in a **mission-focused direction**, the local partnership board must clearly define its mission, vision and values and use these statements to guide planning and action.

Mission and vision statements capture the essence of your organization's beliefs and values, and define its place in the world. A **vision statement** explains the overall goal of your organization looking into the future, while the **mission statement** outlines the present plan to realize the vision.

VISION

Communicates the desired future we seek for the community we serve.

SC First Steps Vision 2020 Vision Statement
Every South Carolina child will be prepared for success in school.

- The partnership board adopts the SC First Steps Vision 2020 vision statement for its 2018-2020 Strategic Plan

MISSION

Describes the purpose that guides everything we do.

SC First Steps Vision 2020 Mission Statement
Collaborating with other entities, First Steps helps South Carolina families and caregivers prepare their children for school success by maximizing public and private community resources to deliver, enhance and expand high-quality early childhood services.

- The partnership board adopts the SC First Steps Vision 2020 mission statement for its 2018-2020 Strategic Plan

VALUES

Core values and beliefs reflect how our people – and the organization itself – behaves.

SC First Steps Vision 2020 Core Values

The years of early childhood are a critical window of development during which much of human potential is shaped.

Families are the single most important influence on the development of their young children.

The work of supporting families and caregivers is a collaborative effort between state and local stakeholders within the public, private and faith sectors.

School readiness is the result of a child's development in many areas, with each contributing to the child's success.

Services must be individualized and adaptable to meet the unique needs of children and families.

We value, and demonstrate in our collaborative work and advocacy, diverse perspectives in the development of public policy and programs.

To achieve desired results, services must be high-quality and grounded in strong evidence. First Steps operates within a culture of accountability.

- The partnership board adopts the SC First Steps Vision 2020 core values for its 2018-2020 Strategic Plan

STRATEGIC GOALS

Strategic goals set the direction for how the organization intends to implement its mission and address the needs of its focus population(s) for the duration of the plan.

#	Chester County First Steps Strategic Goals, 2018-2020	FS Legislative Goal(s) Addressed (abbreviate as Goal 1, 2, etc.)	Profile of the Ready Kindergartner Benchmark(s) Addressed (abbreviate as 1A, 2B, etc.)
1	Raise funds to support Chester County First Steps programs and/or activities.	3, 4	2E, 4A
2	Increase community collaboration and participation in First Steps programs and services.	1, 2, 3, 4	1A-E, 2A-E, 3A-F, 4A-B
3	Community Collaboration and Action Plan	1, 2, 3, 4	1A-E, 2A-E, 3A-F, 4A-B
4	Explore options for Chester County First Steps employees' benefits/retirement package.	1, 4, 5	1A-E, 2A-E
5	Recruiting board members for continuing to cultivate a strong, active board culture.	1, 2, 3, 4	1A-E, 2A-E, 3A-F, 4A-B
6	Explore expanding parenting program with holistic approach to helping parents enhance skills.	1, 2	1A-E, 2A-E

Chester County First Steps Partnership

2018-2020 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Organized by the partnership’s current and proposed programs and services, as well as the core functions common to all First Steps partnerships (serving as a local portal connecting families of preschool children to services; serving as a community convener in support of the needs of preschool children and their families; and supporting state readiness priorities).

Local Portal			
Chester County First Steps will connect families of preschool children to services designed to strengthen families and promote optimal child development (State Priority: Core Function).			
Objective	In Support of Partnership Strategic Goal(s) (abbreviate as 1, 2, etc.)	Success Metrics	Action Items
Each objective addresses one or more priorities of the SC First Steps Strategic Plan, <i>Vision 2020</i> : 1) Increase access; 2) Build capacity; 3) Strengthen interagency accountability & collaboration		Evidence for demonstrating progress, or achievement, of this objective (assessments, surveys, evaluations, focus groups, or other documentation)	Major activities to be initiated in support of the objective (to be operationalized by staff and partners)
Effectively serve as a local portal for connecting preschool children and their families to services.	1	Agencies represented on Early Childhood Advisory Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action: Continue to receive referrals from council members. ▪ Action: Continue to refer families to services of Council members and other regional service providers. ▪ Action: Connect with new local organizations, professional service groups, and businesses
Network with local law enforcement, fire departments, emergency medical services (EMS), and DHEC as resource for child safety best practices.	2, 6	Meetings held with representatives from all local law enforcement, fire department, and EMS leaders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action: Meet with DHEC regional DHEC representative to devise action plan. ▪ Action: Connect with local law enforcement officials to gauge interest and participation. ▪ Action: Connect with regional fire departments to gauge interest and participation.

Community Education and Outreach

Chester County First Steps will increase understanding in the community of school readiness domains and assessment, and “what works” to help young children succeed, and will make information easily accessible in all communities and for all families. (State Priority: SCFS Strategic Plan)

<p style="text-align: center;">Objective</p> <p>Each objective addresses one or more priorities of the SC First Steps Strategic Plan, <i>Vision 2020</i>: 1) Increase access; 2) Build capacity; 3) Strengthen interagency accountability & collaboration</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">In Support of Partnership Strategic Goal(s) (abbreviate as 1, 2, etc.)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Success Metrics</p> <p>Evidence for demonstrating progress, or achievement, of this objective (assessments, surveys, evaluations, focus groups, or other documentation)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Action Items</p> <p>Major activities to be initiated in support of the objective (to be operationalized by staff and partners)</p>
<p>Network with local agencies, organizations, businesses, school district and faith based groups to disseminate materials, market services.</p>	<p>2,3,5,6</p>	<p>Contact person/liaison for referrals.</p> <p>Presentations or meetings with agency representatives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action: Provide information on County Partnership strategies to local agencies not active with the Chester County Community Coalition. ▪ Action: Collaborate with agencies to identify families for referral. ▪ Action: Continue ongoing outreach to guidance counselors and adult education to access pregnant teens and families of young children.

Mobilizing Communities on Providing Enhanced Services to Support Families and their Young Children

Chester County First Steps will serve as a community convener to address the needs of preschool children in the community, in support of state readiness priorities (State Priority: Core Function).

<p style="text-align: center;">Objective</p> <p>Each objective addresses one or more priorities of the SC First Steps Strategic Plan, <i>Vision 2020</i>: 1) Increase access; 2) Build capacity; 3) Strengthen interagency accountability & collaboration</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">In Support of Partnership Strategic Goal(s) (abbreviate as 1, 2, etc.)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Success Metrics</p> <p>Evidence for demonstrating progress, or achievement, of this objective (assessments, surveys, evaluations, focus groups, or other documentation)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Action Items</p> <p>Major activities to be initiated in support of the objective (to be operationalized by staff and partners)</p>
<p>Collaborate with local sororities, the United Way and county and city government to participate in County Partnership sponsored activities/events.</p>	<p>2,3 5,6</p>	<p>Participation in agency sponsored events and activities. Participation in FS sponsored events and activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action: Meet with sorority representative to market programs, recruit volunteers. ▪ Action: Plan specific volunteer event, activity
<p>Create fundraising activities, events and/or projects. And submit grants to support County Partnership activities.</p>	<p>2,3, 5, 6</p>	<p>FS sponsored fundraising event. Grant to support special project and/or strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action: Meet with County Partnership Board Fundraising Committee. ▪ Action: Assist Board with tasks for fundraising activity. ▪ Action: Develop grant to support a project, strategy or event.

Parents As Teachers

Description: Provides early childhood information, guidance and support to families beginning prenatally, continuing until the child begins kindergarten through a minimum of two monthly home visits, is administered by County Partnership.

Collaboration: School district, county library, Chester DSS, Hazel Pittman Center, Chester Branch-Department of Juvenile Justice, Clemson Extension Services, Chester Health Department, North Chester Head Start, Eta Omega Chapter – Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Chester United Way, Chester YMCA, Chester Housing Authority, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.

Objective	In Support of Partnership Strategic Goal(s) (abbreviate as 1, 2, etc.)	Success Metrics Evidence for demonstrating progress, or achievement, of this objective (assessments, surveys, evaluations, focus groups, or other documentation)	Action Items Major activities to be initiated in support of the objective (to be operationalized by staff and partners)
Each objective addresses one or more priorities of the SC First Steps Strategic Plan, <i>Vision 2020</i> : 1) Increase access; 2) Build capacity; 3) Strengthen interagency accountability & collaboration			
Successfully implement Parents As Teachers according to model standards, First Steps standards, and best practices for early childhood programs and services in order to serve 40 annually by 2020.	1, 6	Referrals received from local and regional sources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action: Recruit families referred by board and community partners. ▪ Continue to network with social workers at Piedmont Medical Center and Lancaster Hospital for referral of new families.
Achieve PAT developmental screening goals for ASQ and ASQ-SE.	6	Evaluating staff performance for assessing families and inputting data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action: Monitor data input monthly for screening outcomes.
Include data from Starling™ device for capturing real time family interactions with infants and toddlers.	6	Evaluate staff performance for assessing families and inputting data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action: Acquire funding to purchase Starling™ tool for 20 families. ▪ Action: Staff training for how to use tool and capture of data.

Child Care Training and Professional Development

Description: Professional development classes forum for early childhood workforce that are approved by SC Child Care Career Development office.

Collaboration: Linkage with local early childhood and childcare professionals, Chester School District, Clemson Extension Services, SC DSS ABC Monitor, Chester County Community Coalition, CCR&R, Rotary Club of Chester.

<p style="text-align: center;">Objective</p> <p>Each objective addresses one or more priorities of the SC First Steps Strategic Plan, <i>Vision 2020</i>: 1) Increase access; 2) Build capacity; 3) Strengthen interagency accountability & collaboration</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">In Support of Partnership Strategic Goal(s) (abbreviate as 1, 2, etc.)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Success Metrics</p> <p>Evidence for demonstrating progress, or achievement, of this objective (assessments, surveys, evaluations, focus groups, or other documentation)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Action Items</p> <p>Major activities to be initiated in support of the objective (to be operationalized by staff and partners)</p>
<p>Collaborate with local partners and the United Way to promote early literacy by conducting two literacy focused events at childcare sites.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2</p>	<p>Conducting two literacy events at childcare sites</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action: Contact early care providers to participate in activity. ▪ Action: Recruit volunteers to read to children. ▪ Action: Purchase books
<p>Conduct training events that feature a certified trainer for providing instruction that meets continuing education requirements for recertification from CCCCD.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2</p>	<p>Training calendar with classes that feature topics required for recertification.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action: Survey childcare professionals for preferred training topics. ▪ Action: Confer with DSS ABC team for topic suggestions and for teaching a class. ▪ Action: Confer with CCR&R for teaching a class. ▪ Action: Contact professionals to teach classes in specific topic category.