

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)

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)
 - o Listening, Speaking and Understanding (8)
 - o Early Reading (12)
 - o Early Writing (4)
- 1E Mathematical Thinking (9)
 - o Number Sense (5)
 - o 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:
 - o Can grow and develop in the absence of fear, stress, danger and hunger.
 - o Have access to needed pediatric, dental and mental health resources.
 - o Spend their days in nurturing, language-rich, and developmentally supportive environments (whether a loving home, a high-quality early education setting or both).
 - o 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/>



Profile of the Ready Kindergartner brochure

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.”



Thank you to Clarendon County First Steps' (CCFS) Partnership Board, staff, vendors, volunteers, and others for your input in developing this plan!

CCFS' Comprehensive Plan reflects months of information gathering from various sources that include Clarendon School Districts One, Two and Three, Wateree Head Start, the Santee Lynches Regional Council of Government, and members of Clarendon County's child care community, among others.

CCFS plans to continue to maximize limited resources by partnering with existing organizations to expand and/or implement research-based programs and services that are likely to improve preschool children's readiness for school. Data Banks, such as Child Trends, have been beneficial in helping the Partnership to determine direct and indirect interventions that have been successfully implemented to address school readiness in young children.

While we believe we are doing a good job in implementing quality school readiness programs and services, CCFS plans to expand partnerships to include organizations such as United Way, the local hospital, pediatric offices, churches, civic organizations, etc. so that we can impact as many of Clarendon County's preschool children as we can. It is not going to be an easy job, but together, pooling all of our limited resources, we can do it!

Again, thank you to all who contributed to the development of CCFS's Comprehensive Plan!

CCFS' Comprehensive Plan was approved on January 25, 2018 by:

1. Tamara Alston-Hunter
2. Mary Cooper
3. Kathleen Gibson
4. Priscilla Green
5. Jennifer Jean
6. Michael Jonas
7. Robin Layton
8. Darla Lee
9. Wanda Nelson
10. Dr. Myra Pearson
11. Tonia M. Smith

Tonia M. Smith, GPC, Board Chairperson:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tonia M. Smith", is written over a horizontal line.

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

SC First Steps Vision 2020 Vision Statement

Every South Carolina child will be prepared for success in school.

- The partnership board adopts the following vision statement for its 2018-2020 Strategic Plan:

Clarendon County First Steps Vision Statement

Every child in Clarendon County will be prepared for success in school!

MISSION

South Carolina's First Steps' 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 following mission statement for its 2018-2020 Strategic Plan:

Clarendon County First Steps Mission Statement

Clarendon County First Steps will partner with organizations within and outside of Clarendon County to leverage and maximize resources to provide quality, research-based programs and services that will prepare Clarendon County's preschool children for success in school and in life.

VALUES

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.

#	Clarendon County First Steps (CCFS) Strategic Goals, 2018-2020	FS Legislative Goal(s) Addressed (abbreviate as Goal 1, 2, etc.)	Profile of the Ready Kindergarten Benchmark(s) Addressed (abbreviate as 1A, 2B, etc.)
1	CCFS will work, in partnership with other organizations, to help Clarendon County's citizens understand school readiness, best practices in school readiness, and how, together, we can implement quality programs and services to ensure Clarendon County's preschool children arrive at first grade healthy and ready to succeed.	Goals 1 and 5	4A-4B
2	CCFS will work, in partnership with other organizations, to develop infrastructure that promotes, sufficiently funds, and holds accountable its efforts to promote school readiness in Clarendon County.	Goals 1, 2 and 5	2A-4B
3	CCFS will work, in partnership with other organizations, to help parents of children birth to five succeed in their role as their child's first and best teacher.	Goals 1 and 2	2A-2E
4	CCFS will work, in partnership with other organizations, to expand evidence-based early literacy programs for preschool children.	Goal 1	2C, 4A-4B
5	CCFS will work, in partnership with other organizations, to provide children birth to five with access to quality early care and education programs that meet the needs of families and children.	Goals 1, 3, and 5	2A-4B
6	CCFS will work, in partnerships with other organizations, to provide Clarendon County's early care and education staff with training and professional development opportunities that will help them understand their role as early care and education providers so that they can provide quality early care and education experiences that will promote school readiness in the young children they serve.	Goal 3	3A-3F

Clarendon 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			
Clarendon County First Steps will work in partnership with other organizations to 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, and/or other documentation)	Major activities to be initiated in support of the objective (to be operationalized by staff and partners)
Improve coordination and communication between agencies and community stakeholders to improve efficiency and strengthen impact	Goal 5	Common priorities and outcomes established; funders invest in research-based programs and services;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with organizations and funders to establish and fund programs that are research-based and address priority needs that impact preschool children’s readiness for school.
Improve coordination and communication between agencies and community stakeholders to improve efficiency and strengthen impact	Goal 5	Data and research repository created; providers are linked to resources that will enable them to implement evidence-based practices;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop (or develop in coordination with other organizations), provide access to, and/or distribute information on “what works in preparing young children for success in school.
Engage and foster better communication and collaboration with experts in the field of early care and education; assist early care and education providers implement what they have learned (best practices) in their work with children.	Goals 3 and 5	Efficient and effective network of providers that include parenting programs, early care and education providers, and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contract with experts in the field of early care and education to provide training and on-site technical assistance to private and/or public providers that support the coordination and implementation of

		early literacy programs; documentation of the existence and work of the network of providers	research-based school readiness programs and services.
Collaborate with physicians that serve preschool-age children	Goal 5	Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide literature pediatricians and/or other health care workers can distribute to families during the course of providing health care to preschool children.

Community Education and Outreach

Clarendon County First Steps will work to 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.

<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>Create and/or utilize current public awareness campaigns around school readiness.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">5</p>	<p>Public and/or private funding for children’s issues that reflects community needs</p>	<p>Include school readiness information in pamphlets that can be shared with parents via community service organizations, faith-based organizations, etc.</p>
<p>Create and/or utilize current public awareness campaigns around school readiness.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">5</p>	<p>Coordination of efforts in the community</p>	<p>Work in partnership with SCFS and other organizations that focus on the health and well-being of preschool children to develop and implement a public awareness strategy (i.e. “I Can”) focused on school readiness and its relationship to quality early care and education, early literacy, parent education, etc.</p>

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

Clarendon 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>Participate in community meetings/events that provide opportunities for CCFS staff, Board Members, partner organizations, etc. information and/or resources parents can utilize to help their children at home.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2 and 3</p>	<p>Other documentation (to be determined)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff and/or Board Members will actively participate with organizations (i.e., Head Start Advisory Committees, Early Childhood School Improvement Councils, etc.) that serve preschool children and their families. ▪ Either staff or partner organizations will provide books and information to families with preschool children at major events, such as Clarendon County’s annual Striped Bass Festival.

Parents As Teachers

Description: The Parents as Teachers Curriculum is a relationship-based and parenting-focused curriculum for home visiting programs. The curriculum is evidence-based and is rooted in child development and early learning research for supporting parents in their interactions with their children. The curriculum includes four components for parent education and family: personal visits, research networks, group connections, and screening. Within these components three areas of emphasis are identified for supporting families; parent child interactions, development centered parenting, and family well-being.

Integration: Families with children birth to five years old will be invited to participate in the Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library.

Collaboration: Clarendon County First Steps partners with Clarendon School Districts One, Two and Three to serve families with preschool children.

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			
Conduct outreach to and education of parents about school readiness proactive steps they can take to increase their preschool children’s readiness for school.	1	Documentation of parenting classes being offered; attendance records; surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Secure sufficient funding to offer “parenting classes” for parents of children under the age of five
	3	SCFS’ Database will reflect an increase in the number of families CCFS and its partners are serving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Secure sufficient funding to continue to provide and expand parent education services for parents using a nationally accredited curriculum such as Parents As Teachers
	3	Documentation of the conference and attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Secure funding to host parent conferences
	3	Documentation of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support and educate parents on the

		literature/information provided to parents	selection of high-quality child care and early care programs
	3	Documentation of literature/information provided to parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage parents to be advocates for their children
	3	Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create and/or expand a “Parent Network” so that parents can network, share information, and learn from each other

Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library

Description: Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library is an early literacy program through which Clarendon County’s children birth to age five receive free books delivered via USPS mail to their home. Every child enrolled in the program receives one free, quality, age-appropriate book each month from the time of enrollment until they turn five-years-old or no longer reside in Clarendon County.

Integration All children from families enrolled in Parents As Teachers participate in the program.

Collaboration: CCFS partners with Clarendon School Districts One, Two and Three’s Parents As Teachers programs to enroll children in the program. CCFS will also seek to secure funding from areas churches, businesses, and other organizations to expand the program in Clarendon County. Clarendon County Council, private citizens, and other community service organizations have supported the program over the years.

<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>Support and expand early literacy efforts in children’s homes.</p>	<p>1, 2 and 3</p>	<p>Documentation of an increase in funding to support an increase in the number of participants enrolled in the DPIL; increase in the number of participants enrolled in the DPIL; increase in the number of books distributed; survey parents (pre and post) to determine if there is an increase in early literacy efforts in the home environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seek and secure additional funding to support and expand early literacy efforts in preschool children’s homes.

Countdown to Kindergarten

Description: Parents of young children will succeed in their role as their child’s first and best teacher.

Integration: Parents As Teachers

Collaboration: Clarendon County School Districts One, Two and Three, Fleming-Felder Head Start, Paxville Head Start, Private CDEPP programs, and other early education programs in Clarendon County that have children transitioning to five-year-old kindergarten

<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>Conduct outreach and education to parents about school readiness and the actions they can take to ensure their children are ready for school.</p>	1	<p>Increase in the number of children being served in the Countdown to Kindergarten Program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seek and secure additional funding to expand the Countdown to Kindergarten program
	3	<p>Attendance records of meetings/presentations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Invite parents of rising kindergartners to one or more presentations on school expectations and the skills and knowledge their children need in order to be successful in kindergarten.
	3	<p>Number of print materials distributed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make available print material, such as a calendar with activities and strategies parents can refer to in order to help their children to be successful in kindergarten.

Child Care Training and Professional Development

Description: All early care and education staff will be appropriately trained on promoting and understanding school readiness.

Integration: N/A

Collaboration: SC Department of Social Services' Child Care Division, SC Center for Child Care Career Development, Central Carolina Technical College's Allied Health Division, SC Center for Child Care Career Development-certified trainers

<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>Work to ensure that early care and education providers adhere to state mandates and regulations.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2 and 3</p>	<p>Attendance records of providers that attended meetings; surveys</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Host, in partnership with SC DSS Child Care Division, one or more orientation meetings for prospective and/or current child care providers.
<p>Create and/or expand opportunities for continuing education, credentialing, and professional development for early care and education providers to improve the quality of early care and education; Make available and encourage the use of evidence-based early education curriculum practices</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1, 2 and 3</p>	<p>Memorandum of Agreement with organization, such as United Way's Success By 6, to administer a quality enhancement program that incorporates training and technical assistance; attendance records of providers that attended training sessions; grant applications; award letters; agreements with providers; records of technical assistance visits, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work to enhance the quality of early care and education programs in the Clarendon County through training, and technical assistance, and mini-grants (to help providers purchase the necessary supplies and materials for their classrooms).
	<p style="text-align: center;">3</p>	<p>Documentation from either</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work to provide early care and education

		model schools and/or providers	providers (specifically private and faith-based providers) opportunities for site visits to classrooms of model schools to observe students and talk with teachers
	3	Attendance records; surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide training for early care and education providers on school readiness and the domains of early childhood development
	3	Planning and implantation documentation; attendance records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partner with other Partnerships and/or other community organizations to host an annual conference for early care and education providers
	3	Agenda; attendance records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct roundtables for early care and education providers that address school readiness
	3	Documentation of communication by CCFS board, staff members, early care and education providers, parents, and other interested parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advocate for maintaining and increasing public funding for early care and education programs in Clarendon County and across the state of SC