



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)

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

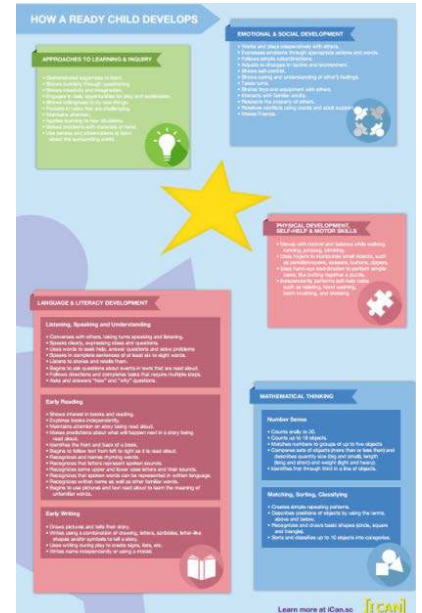
Schools and educators for the Ready Kindergartner:

- 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 brochure

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."

Darlington County

A comprehensive plan can be a great tool for achieving goals but it must be fluid since change is constant. Changes in the plan may be impacted by funding levels, staffing, infrastructure/capacity, and other variables; therefore, the plan must allow for some flexibility while addressing the needs and issues of the community and the organization providing the services.

The process of developing a comprehensive plan for Darlington County First Steps is still evolving as we have not followed the traditional route for plan development. Rather, we have combined the self-assessments which have guided our work focus over the past five years as well as surveyed our partners organizations, worked with an external consultant to address organizational effectiveness and good governance. We accessed and analyzed information from Kids Count, Accelerating Progress: A road map for achieving further reductions in teen pregnancy , The BUILD Initiative: Equity Leaders Action Network resources, as well as our own locally administered and designed self- assessment conducted by Dr. Sarah Kershner. Over the course of the past three (3) years we have also had benefit of capacity building sessions with the Weathers Group which resulted in the revision of our vision statement, mission and core values. These resources, learning events/activities, strategic planning sessions combined to give us the comprehensive plan we are submitting at this time. Our Board of Directors participated in various events and activities associated with the development of this plan.

We do extend our thanks and appreciation to our Board of Directors for their leadership and guidance in carrying out the vision and mission of Darlington County First Steps while embracing and promoting the core values we have adopted as an organization. Our Board consists of a cross section of community leaders as well as child and family advocates. A special thank you to our Board Chair, Dr. Alvin T. Heatley, for his dedication and support of Darlington County First Steps. Dr. Heatley retired at the beginning of the year and it was his dynamic leadership over the course of several years which improved our trajectory as a local community based organization.

As we look to the future, our overall approach to service delivery is embedded in our core values: strategic community engagement, compassion and empathy, and organizational transparency and accountability. We acknowledge and promote families as our greatest natural resource in promoting school readiness and creating a culture which values children!

Respectfully submitted,
Darnell Byrd McPherson

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 adopted the following vision statement for its 2018-2020 Strategic Plan:

Darlington County First Steps Vision Statement

Strong families in healthy communities.

MISSION

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 adopted the following mission statement for its 2018-2020 Strategic Plan:

Darlington County First Steps Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide programs, services and information to strengthen the families and communities in Darlington County.

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 adopted the following core values for its 2018-2020 Strategic Plan:

Darlington County First Steps Core Values

Community Engagement is vital as we aim to create a pathway to success for children and families in Darlington County. Collaborating together, we build long term relationships with funders, individuals, parents, community partners, and other stakeholders, ensuring maximum benefits to the families and communities we serve.

Compassion and Empathy are fundamental to our relationships. As we open our hearts and minds to the needs of others in our community, mutual trust is formed, which is a cornerstone of successful relationships.

Transparency and Accountability are critical components of our relationships with funders, individuals, parents, and community partners and other stakeholders. We achieve maximum impact by working in an ethical environment and having honest dialogue.

Families are our greatest resource. We advocate, educate and demonstrate the importance of engaged families, ready early learners, and healthy, supportive communities.

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.

#	Darlington 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	To establish significant relationships and partnerships which engage our communities and supports building strong families and healthy communities.	Goal 5	2A, 2B, 2C, 2E, 4A and 4B
2	To support parents as the primary educators of their children.	Goals 1, 3, and 4	2A, 2B, and 2C
3	To offer comprehensive programs and services, in partnership with other key community stakeholders, which improve overall health and educational outcomes for young children and their families and the communities we serve.	Goals 1, 2, 4 and 5	4A and 4B

Darlington 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			
Darlington 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)
Increase access to quality early childhood programs and resources – provide age appropriate information and resources to expectant and parenting families	Goals 1,2, and 3	# of baby bags disseminated # of referrals received/ provided # of parents enrolled in PAT and other related programs/services # of community education events # of contacts/touches # of engaged community partners # of participants in childcare # of children serve in CTK Documentation of collaboration surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Disseminate Welcome Baby Bags, Kids Basic ▪ Conduct community education events ▪ Disseminate baby formula, diapers and other needed supplies and materials ▪ Participate in community events (week of the young child, Father-Son and Mother-Daughter events for preschool/elementary parents and children ▪ Host community work group and teen leadership meetings and events ▪ Offer part-day onsite childcare ▪ Enroll pre-K students in CTK ▪ Promote healthy lifestyles ▪ Partner with other agencies and programs which promote health and wellness

Community Education and Outreach

Darlington 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>Create an environment for social change on behalf of young children and their families through education, awareness, and collaboration.</p>	<p>Goals 1, 2 and 3</p>	<p>Focus groups Content and usage of our social media sources Numbers of materials disseminated: books through Reach Out and Read; Motherread/Fatheread, and Literacy Kits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incorporate school readiness in all program activities ▪ Disseminate information which supports early literacy and early learning ▪ Promote early reading in collaboration with other partners (library, Head Start, Hospital, etc.) ▪ Establish Born Learning Trails in other communities ▪ Creatively use social media to support this objective
<p>Work collaboratively with local and state level partners to offer strategic programs and services in our communities which improve outcomes for young children and their families</p>	<p>Goals 1, 2, and 3</p>	<p>Evaluations Focus groups Sign In sheets Reports/Social media posts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Host community work group meetings ▪ Participate in local and state level networking and professional development events ▪ Secure funding to support and enhance the work being done in our communities

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

Darlington 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>Provide an opportunity for community partners, funders, and others to address the needs of at risk families and their children.</p>	<p>Goals 1 and 3</p>	<p>Evaluations Receipt of funding to support programs Impact of board and committee services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Host an early education forum ▪ Promote Palmetto Shared Services ▪ Serve on board and committees which bring attention to the needs of young children and their families. ▪ Secure funding to support program activities ▪ Work with external consultants to increase organizational capacity ▪ Offer and promote professional development opportunities for staff and partners

Parents as Teachers

Description: Home visitation w/ child assessments

Integration: Parents are offered free part-day childcare services

Collaboration: Nurse Family Partnership DCSD (High Schools & Adult Ed)

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<p>Increase the number of parent educators by one (1) by the end of 2020.</p>	<p>Goal 2</p>	<p>Increase in # of parents and children served.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Secure funding to add a PE ▪ Recruiting, hiring, and training PE ▪ Provide services
<p>Increase the number of parents enrolled in PAT by 15 by the end of 2020.</p>	<p>Goal 2</p>	<p>Increase in # of parents and children served</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recruit and enroll parents ▪ Provide program services ▪ Evaluate program operations

Motherread/Fatheread

Description: Program to promote early reading and adult literacy

Integration: Childcare and PAT parents

Collaboration: Head Start and DCSD parents

<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>Increase the number of sites by two (2) where Motherread/Fatheread sessions are offered by the end of 2020.</p>	<p>Goal 2</p>	<p>Documentation # of new sites added</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify unserved schools/sites ▪ Recruit parent participants ▪ Implement and evaluate program
<p>Increase the number of trained Motherread/Fatheread Facilitators by one (1) by the end of 2020.</p>	<p>Goal 2</p>	<p>Documentation of # trained</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Secure funding ▪ Recruit, hire and train ▪ Evaluate program operations

Parent Training

Description: Pregnancy prevention, strengthening families

Integration: Childcare and PAT parents

Collaboration: Health Dept., FQHCs, DCSD

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)
Increase the number of adults served per year by 25% by the end of 2020.	Goal 3	Documentation of # served	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement recruitment and retention plans ▪ Monitor and evaluate plans
Increase the number of AC/DC sites by 40 by the end of 2020	Goal 3	Documentation of #	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify and recruit potential partner sites ▪ Evaluate program activities
Increase the number of community events/linkages by 25% by the end of 2020.	Goal 1	Documentation of # Evaluations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partner with local organizations, including city governments to identify potential events/linkages ▪ Monitor and evaluate plans
Ensure we meet funded enrollment for Strengthening Families by the end of 2018	Goal 2	Documentation of number served	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recruit and retain enrollees ▪ Monitor and evaluate plans ▪
Host eight (8) learning community activities with partner agencies by the end of 2020	Goal 1 and 3	Documentation of events Evaluations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify community learning topics ▪ Identify potential trainers ▪ Implement and evaluate training events

Fatherhood

Description: Parenting and health education services

Integration: PAT, Childcare, and Parent Training

Collaboration: S. C. Center for Fathers and Families Men's Health Affiliate

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)
Increase the number of fathers receiving direct program services by thirty (30) by the end of 2020.	Goals 2 and 3	Documentation of numbers served	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement recruitment and retention plan ▪ Provide services to meet the needs of fathers ▪ Monitor and evaluate plan
Create opportunities for fathers to receive job readiness skills and educational goals by the end of 2020.	Goals 2 and 3	Documentation of training and Evaluations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify fathers who need this service ▪ Conduct job readiness sessions ▪ Assist with access/enrollment ▪ Monitor and evaluate program outcomes
Assist fathers in improving personal health outcomes by the end of 2020.	Goals 2 and 3	Documentation and surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Host health fairs and wellness checks ▪ Provide access to low cost health services ▪ Monitor and evaluate program services
Connect fathers with other identified needed resources (housing, transportation, child support issues, etc.) by the end of 2020.	Goals 2 and 3	Documentation and surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assess needs ▪ Identify and connect to resources ▪ Monitor and evaluate program services and outcomes for fathers

Reach Out and Read

Description: Introduction to early reading by Pediatricians

Integration: Physical and developmental health

Collaboration: Eastern Carolina Pediatrics

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<p>Increase the number of pediatricians who participate in ROAR by one (1) at the end 2020.</p>	<p>Goal 1 and 3</p>	<p>Documentation of participation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify potential pediatricians ▪ Assist ROAR as needed ▪ Provide books ▪ Provide book stands/racks as needed ▪ Monitor and evaluate program activities ▪ Receive reports from ROAR