



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)
 - 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 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."

From the Desk of Shirleen Lewis, Executive Director and Nina Bradley, DCFS Board Chair

Dillon County First Steps (DCFS) Strategic Plan for the early care and education of the county's youngest learners builds on a series of significant steps taken over the last years by South Carolina First Steps to Readiness. This strategic plan was created to support all Dillon County's families to ensure that their children arrive at school healthy and ready to succeed. For 2018-2020, it is DCFS goal to build on the rich array of existing early childhood initiatives and services, while implementing additional programs to create a comprehensive early childhood service system. These efforts will come through building relationships through health services, early care and education, family support, and parent education to ensure the full development of all children.

Dillon County First Steps Partnership Board and staff brought together local child care providers, additional early childhood programs not provided through First Steps, parents, and community leaders over a course of three months to create an outcome-driven plan to serve the unique learning needs of the children. DCFS Comprehensive Plan, approved on January 23, 2018, aligns with the State Office of First Steps Priorities, and is supported through the First Steps Legislative Goals.

In the next three years, the partnership's target is to continue to implement Child Care Trainings and Parents as Teachers (PAT) Program. In addition to expanding services to Raising a Reader (RAR) program and Quality Enhancement for child care facilities. Also, DCFS will be collaborating with the State Office of First Steps to be the provider of the Early Head Start Program in Dillon County. By the year of 2020, DCFS overall goal is to enhance the presence Dillon County First Steps has in the community by providing quality child care programs that foster healthy early learning and providing services to enrich the quality of current child care facilities.

Special thank you to the collaborating partners during this plan to include; Dillon County First Steps Staff, Dillon County First Steps Board Members, Dillon County Boys and Girls Club, Springfield Head Start, Little Treasures, Noah's Ark Learning Center, Moody's Day Care and participants of the Parents As Teacher Programs.

Sincerely,

Shirleen D. Lewis, MS

Nina Bradley, Board Chair

Vision, Mission, and Values

Source: *Guiding Principles and Best Practices for South Carolina Nonprofits, 4th Edition* (Together SC, 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 following mission statement for its 2018-2020 Strategic Plan:

Dillon County First Steps Mission Statement
“Every child in Dillon County is important and should experience a loving, stimulating, healthy, and safe environment ensured by a supportive family and community.”

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.

#	Dillon 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	Provide transportation for families who participate in the Parent as Teachers Program to attend Parent Meetings.	Goals 1 & 4	2A & 4A
2	To recruit at least three Hispanic families to participate in programs through Dillon County First Steps.	Goal 2	1D, 2C, and 2E
3	Implement Quality Enhancement to at least two early childhood classrooms in Dillon County.	Goal 3	3A, 3B, 3C, 3D, 3E, and 3F
4	To secure a location and get licensing to operate Early Head Start Program in Dillon County.	Goals 2 & 3	3A, 3B, 3C, 3D, 3E, and 3F
5	Partner with Lake View and Latta child care facilities to implement Raising a Reader.	Goal 5	1D
6	Build community health related partnerships in the community to ensure a healthy start for children.	Goals 4 & 5	4A & 2B

Dillon 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			
Dillon 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 address 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)
Expand evidence-based home visiting and family health practices to include involving parents as partners in the planning and delivery of all early childhood services.	Goals 1 and 2	Numbers and families tracked in the SC First Steps Database through home visits and PAT Pre-Application Interest Forms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete grants and fundraising to find additional funding for PAT. ▪ Recruit Hispanic families to participate in PAT.
Invest in a more highly skilled and well-supported early childhood workforce	Goal 4	Approval through Federal Guidelines for Head Start Staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partner with SC Works to find qualified early childhood professionals. ▪ Participate in local job fairs with technical colleges with early childhood programs.
Achieve high-quality program improvement through environmental rating scales (ITERS and ECERS)	Goals 3 and 4	Pre and posttests provided through environmental rating scales will show improvement of quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide child care trainings on environmental rating scales. ▪ Provide quality enhancement for early childhood classrooms that want to participate.
Ensure low and moderate-income families have access to child care subsidies to offset the costs of quality early care and education.	Goal 4	Numbers served will be tracked through SC First Steps database and Early Head Start Family Advocate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Help enroll children and families into early head start. ▪ Write grants to try and find funding for child care scholarships in Dillon County.
Strengthen family-centered and preventative care	Goal 5	Track number of referrals and visits made through SC First Steps database. Rosters for attendees of parent meetings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Offer parent meetings and trainings on preventive care by health professionals. ▪ Help with enrolling children and families into state public health programs.

Community Education and Outreach

Dillon County First Steps will increase understanding in the community of school readiness domains and assessments, 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 address 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>Strengthen family, community, and school engagement in early learning.</p>	<p>Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5</p>	<p>Surveys used through Raising A Reader. PAT parent meetings as Focus Group. PAT Pre-assessment and application.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partner with local health care professionals, child care facilities, parents and schools. ▪ Share data with families to assist them in helping their child at home. ▪ Create early childhood communities of practice to support programs serving children.
<p>Mobilize community partnerships and public commitment.</p>	<p>Goals 1, 2, 4, and 5</p>	<p>Track community partnerships that are reported to board of directors during meetings. Sign in sheets of community partners who participate in PAT parent meetings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Broaden community partnerships. ▪ Promote the value of early childhood in the community. ▪ Promote family engagement.

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

Dillon 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 address 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 amount families who have access, resources, and education about the services provided through First Steps.</p>	<p>Goals 1, 2, 4, and 5</p>	<p>Sign in rosters from child care meetings. Tracking document from register of deeds of children's name and address who received information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Share brochures with local churches, child care facilities, libraries, and parks and recreation. ▪ Work with Register of Deeds to send out information for children in the county between the ages of birth-five. ▪ Create quarterly child care meetings.
<p>Incorporate child development, preventive health, and anticipator guidance into primary care.</p>	<p>Goals 2 and 5</p>	<p>Track connections and referrals that have been made in First Steps Database.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Will partner with agencies to connect families to ensure healthy start for school success. ▪ Work with CareSouth as they transition to serve in the capacity of DHEC in Dillon County. ▪ Educate the general public and target communities of immunizations. ▪ Promote the use of outdoor space for family activity.

Raising A Reader

Description: Engage families in a daily routine of “book cuddling” with their children to foster healthy brain development, parent-child bonding, and early literacy skills critical for school success.

Integration: Can integrate with Parents as Teachers and Child Care Trainings.

Collaboration: Collaborate with local head start to implement program.

<p style="text-align: center;">Objective</p> <p>Each objective address 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>Introduce and implement Raising A Reader in 2018, to include serving at least 60 children per year by the end of 2020. At least 75% of clients served will participate in the program for at least 6 months.</p>	<p>Goal 5</p>	<p>Tracking through documents collected from teachers implementing programs and Program Director.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Order materials for RAR program. ▪ Provide training for teachers to implement programs. ▪ Write grants to help support funding for program.
<p>Partner with local child care facilities to ensure that Raising A Reader is in all three towns that make up Dillon County.</p>	<p>Goal 5</p>	<p>Tracking through documents collected from teachers implementing programs and Program Director. Sign in sheets from meetings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Set up child care facility directors’ meetings to give an overview of RAR ▪ Recruit interested child care facilities

Parents As Teachers

Description:

PAT is an early childhood home visitation program designed to help parents learn more about parenting, supporting their child’s development and help with the typical challenges of parenting. Each client receives one visit per week for one hour. The clients are assessed on interacting with their child as well as reading techniques with their child which helps us achieve the desired outcomes for PAT.

Integration: PAT is an in-house program through DCFS

Collaboration: Smiles Dental Center, Dr. Rebecca Craig, Dr. Jachelle Sprataling, and Dillon County Library all collaborate with Dillon County Parents as Teachers Group Connections. The City of Dillon Wellness Center offers meeting space as in-kind for Parents as Teachers Group Connections.

<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 40 families served per year to 60 by the end of 2020. At least 75% of clients served will participate in the program for at least two years.</p>	<p>Goals 1 and 2</p>	<p>PAT evaluations, surveys, parent meetings sign in sheets, and First Steps Database.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Write grant to help match funds of Rural Initiative grant to hire new staff. ▪ Recruit families through local events and agencies
<p>Contract with local transportation services to provide transportation once a month to program meetings</p>	<p>Goal 1</p>	<p>PAT Transportation Rosters</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advertise for transportation services ▪ Create transportation rosters ▪ PAT Commitment letter to guarantee families attend a minimum of six meetings yearly.

Child Care Trainings

Description: Staff development and mentoring provided to assist child care providers in meeting Department of Social Services (DSS) training requirements, increasing the knowledge of childcare workers, and improving the quality of programs offered in participating childcare facilities.

Integration: Training is based on Child Care (CC) provider needs. Local CC providers complete surveys annually, meet face to face through a Director’s Luncheon, and DSS violations are integrated to ensure trainings are geared toward the needs of local providers in Dillon County.

Collaboration: South Carolina – Center for Child Care and Career Development (SC-CCCCD) – Grant award for presenters, advertising, Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) – presenters, City of Dillon Wellness Center – meeting space, Dillon School District Four – copier service and office space.

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 CC providers served per year by 25% by the end of 2020. At least 75% of clients served will participate in the program for at least one year.	Goal 3	Participant roster from trainings, SC First Steps Database tracking documents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Set trainings during times when most providers can attend. ▪ Use providers’ luncheon as a way to collaborate with more facility directors.
Collaborate with a minimum of two child care teachers to incorporate quality enhancement based on needs identified through trainings and classroom observations.	Goal 3	First Steps Classroom Visit Summary Sheets, SC First Steps Database.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have informational meetings on Quality Enhancement. ▪ Use providers’ luncheon as a way to collaborate with more facility directors.