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/](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](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](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 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.”
The Dorchester County First Steps Partnership Board is pleased to submit its Comprehensive Plan for fiscal years 2018 through 2020. This plan was approved by the Board on January 16, 2018.

In an effort to be in compliance with State Office requirements, the board members, with guidance from the Dorchester County First Steps Executive Director, initially completed the self-assessment checklists during the Fall of 2016. The Board conducted another set of self-assessments during the Fall of 2017. The results of these self-assessments led board members in creating the 3-year Comprehensive Plan. The Board compiled the results of the self-assessments during the October 2017 board meeting. In November 2017, the Board met again to review all of the self-assessments and to create a plan for closing the gaps and meeting the unmet goals. The Executive Director then took the suggestions and created the Strategic Goals and Road Map with objectives and metrics for success.

Based on the results of the self-assessments, the Board decided to eliminate two strategies: Quality Enhancement and Nurse Family Partnership. Areas that are clearly in need of improvement were also identified. It was determined that not much is being done in the area of health nor regarding the Board serving as a local portal within the surrounding community. In addition, it was discussed that the Board needs to improve its functionality. The Board quickly decided that a way to partially address both of the latter issues would be to revamp the current website to include information about community resources, and to provide training in an ongoing manner for the Board via webinars and presentations during monthly board meetings. Discussion concerning additional strategies to address the areas in need of improvement took place as well.

During the next three years, the Board plans to expand the number of centers/teachers that are trained and coached in an effort to enhance its system for providing vouchers to qualified applicants. The Board will also enhance its visibility and increase its usage of social media and the website. Each year on evaluation will occur regarding the resuming of the Nurse Family Partnership and/or Quality Enhancement strategies. One of the factors that will contribute to adding these strategies again will be the attitudes and desires of child care providers and clients.

On behalf of the organization, the Executive Director of Dorchester County First Steps and the Chairman of the Dorchester County First Steps Partnership Board would like to thank all board members, staff, child care providers and directors, collaborating agencies, and participating children and families. Without the input, lively participation, financial support, and care of the organization of these individuals and collective entities, Dorchester County First Steps would cease to exist.

Rhonda L. Robinson
Dorchester County First Steps Board Chairman

Crystal Campbell
Dorchester County First Steps Executive Director
### Vision, Mission, and Values


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

- **Dorchester County First Steps Vision Statement**
  Every child in Dorchester County will be prepared for success in school

### 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

- **Dorchester County First Steps Mission Statement**
  Collaborating with other entities, Dorchester County First Steps helps families and caregivers in our county **prepare their children for school success** by maximizing public and private community resources to deliver, enhance and expand high-quality early childhood services.
VALUES

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>The years of early childhood are a critical window of development during which much of human potential is shaped.</td>
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<td>Families are the single most important influence on the development of their young children.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The work of supporting families and caregivers is a collaborative effort between state and local stakeholders within the public, private and faith sectors.</td>
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<td>School readiness is the result of a child’s development in many areas, with each contributing to the child’s success.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Services must be individualized and adaptable to meet the unique needs of children and families.</td>
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<tr>
<td>We value, and demonstrate in our collaborative work and advocacy, diverse perspectives in the development of public policy and programs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>To achieve desired results, services must be high-quality and grounded in strong evidence. First Steps operates within a culture of accountability.</td>
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☒ The partnership board adopts the SC First Steps Vision 2020 core values for its 2018-2020 Strategic Plan

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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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Dorchester County First Steps Strategic Goals, 2018-2020</th>
<th>FS Legislative Goal(s) Addressed (abbreviate as Goal 1, 2, etc.)</th>
<th>Profile of the Ready Kindergartner Benchmark(s) Addressed (abbreviate as 1A, 2B, etc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>DCFS will create additional strategies to address the health care of children birth to age five.</td>
<td>Goal #2 &amp; Goal #4</td>
<td>1B, 1C, 2B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Increase the Local Partnership’s Infrastructure to improve and enhance services and support to families</td>
<td>Goal #5</td>
<td>4A &amp; 4B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>DCFS will implement training and coaching for child care providers</td>
<td>Goal #3</td>
<td>3 A-F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>DCFS will continue to implement the Parents As Teachers Program and prepare for Blue Ribbon Status</td>
<td>Goal #2 &amp; Goal #4</td>
<td>1 A-E &amp; 2A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>DCFS will increase our visibility with social media</td>
<td>#5</td>
<td>4A &amp; 4B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>DCFS will continue to support Parent Child Home in the school Districts</td>
<td>#4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dorchester 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).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>In Support of Partnership Strategic Goal(s) (abbreviate as 1, 2, etc.)</th>
<th>Success Metrics</th>
<th>Action Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dorchester First Steps will connect families of preschool children to services designed to strengthen families and promote optimal child development (State Priority: Core Function).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCFS will strengthen interagency accountability and collaboration by increasing the organization’s visibility with social media- To include the website and Facebook</td>
<td>#5</td>
<td>A more user-friendly website with helpful videos, links to quality early childhood sites and a minimum of 2 posts a month on Facebook</td>
<td>▪ ED will assign someone to host the DCFS Facebook Site ▪ ED will identify a webmaster to improve the site and keep it current and valuable as a resource</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCFS will build capacity by attending and hosting meetings with agencies and non-profits with similar visions and missions within the community.</td>
<td>#2</td>
<td>The addition of a minimum of 2 new agencies a year</td>
<td>▪ ED will continue to attend Chamber of Commerce, Cradle to Career, Kindergarten Readiness and TACT meetings and check charity tracker once a month ▪ ED will host a Tri-County community agency meeting quarterly to include agencies in collaboration with DCFS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Community Education and Outreach

Dorchester 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)

<table>
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<tr>
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</table>
| Each objective addresses one or more priorities of the SC First Steps Strategic Plan, Vision 2020: 1) Increase access; 2) Build capacity; 3) Strengthen interagency accountability & collaboration | #2                                                                      | We will measure success by the number of families we make contact with at the event (number of books or flyers distributed) | ▪ ED will register DCFS as a vendor at the event  
▪ ED will order supplies for distribution  
▪ ED & Staff will bundle items in stacks of 25 for easier accountability when distributing |
| DCFS staff will strengthen interagency accountability & collaboration by joining other agencies and businesses in outreach events (Lowes Fire Safety, Back to School Events, and other community events) | #2                                                                      | We will measure success by the number of families we make contact with at the event (number of books or flyers distributed) | ▪ ED will create 2 outreach events under the DCFS umbrella  
▪ Assigned person will capture the event visually and enter it into social media |
| DCFS staff will host 2 outreach events.                                    | #2                                                                      |                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                         |
# Mobilizing Communities on Providing Enhanced Services to Support Families and their Young Children

Dorchester 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).

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Each objective addresses one or more priorities of the SC First Steps Strategic Plan, Vision 2020: 1) Increase access; 2) Build capacity; 3) Strengthen interagency accountability &amp; collaboration</td>
<td></td>
<td>Evidence for demonstrating progress, or achievement, of this objective (assessments, surveys, evaluations, focus groups, or other documentation)</td>
<td>ED will attend all applicable meetings and make logical contributions. ED will participate in plans created by the organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Director will actively attend and support the Kindergarten Readiness meetings sponsored by Cradle to Career and Trident United Way.</td>
<td>#5</td>
<td>• The agenda for each meeting will be filed. • Minutes of the meeting will be filed.</td>
<td>ED will identify agencies and contacts for businesses with like missions. ED will make plans for establishing meeting times. Participants will sign-in and this will be kept by ED.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Director will build capacity by convening 2 or more meetings each year with agencies with similar missions.</td>
<td>#2</td>
<td>• The convening of two or more meetings within the fiscal year. • A copy of the sign in, agenda and minutes of the meeting will be filed.</td>
<td>ED will collaborate with ED of Teen Center in Dorchester County. ED will secure dates and times to offer the training. ED will conduct the training once a week for two hours at DJJ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCF will provide parenting training and resources to teen parents currently serving time at DJJ</td>
<td>#2 &amp; #3</td>
<td>• Teen parents having completed the 6 weeks Positive Discipline for Parents. • Each Parent will complete an evaluation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: *Table revised to include clearer information and formatting.
## Parents As Teachers

**Description:** Provides an evidence-based home visitation program designed to prepare the young child for school. 
**Integration:** The child care training plan and scholarship vouchers are integrated into the PAT strategy, for clients are encouraged to participate in PAT, and assessments in EI&R help identify children for PAT and scholarships.

**Collaboration:** PAT works closely with Babynet, DSS, and other community agencies like: School Districts 2 and 4, My Sister’s House, DJJ and Teen Center. In FY18 we are adding a collaboration with Help Me Grow as well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Objective</strong></th>
<th><strong>In Support of Partnership Strategic Goal(s)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Success Metrics</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase the number of PAT children served per year to 20% by the end of 2020. At least 90% of clients served will participate in the program for at least 9 months</td>
<td>#4</td>
<td>This objective will be measured by the completion of ASQ3, parent surveys and completed data entry</td>
<td>- Parent Educators will secure 6 additional families within the 3 year period</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| DCFS will prepare and implement the Blue Ribbon procedures within the next 3 years | #4 | Successful completion of the Blue Ribbon process | - Program Director will become familiar with Blue Ribbon standards  
- Program Director and ED will find gaps between the process and what DCFS is currently doing  
- LPB will make and implement needed changes to be in compliance with Blue Ribbon requirements |
**Parent Child Home**

**Description:** Provides a home visitation program designed to prepare the young child for school. Families are visited twice a month and the visit may last 1 to 2 hours. Clients are expected to participate for at least 9 months.

**Integration:** This strategy is contracted with District 2 and District 4.

**Collaboration:** PCH refers families to resources like Babynet, DSS, and other community agencies when necessary.

<table>
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<th><strong>Success Metrics</strong></th>
<th><strong>Action Items</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Each objective addresses one or more priorities of the SC First Steps Strategic Plan, Vision 2020: 1) Increase access; 2) Build capacity; 3) Strengthen interagency accountability & collaboration | #6 | This is objective will be measured by parent evaluation of the program | • Parent Educators will identify families for their case load  
• Parent Educators will create opportunities to share the program with families |
| PCH Parent Educators will maintain current load capacity. | | | |
| DCFS will encourage the school districts to increase the number of Parent Educators by one within the next 3 years | #6 | Addition of a minimum of 2 new parent educators | • DCFS ED will identify ways to increase the budget to add additional personnel  
• Board Members and District personnel will interview and identify perspective candidates |
### Child Care Vouchers

**Description:** Qualified clients receive a full day voucher for each qualified child for one year.

**Integration:** The benefit of this strategy is its’ integration with our home visitation strategies, as of FY18. This strategy is contracted with DSS. The rationale is to have a more able agency identify and award the scholarship.

**Collaboration:** The only agency we are collaborating with is the Department of Social Services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>In Support of Partnership Strategic Goal(s) (abbreviate as 1, 2, etc.)</th>
<th>Success Metrics Evidence for demonstrating progress, or achievement, of this objective (assessments, surveys, evaluations, focus groups, or other documentation)</th>
<th>Action Items Major activities to be initiated in support of the objective (to be operationalized by staff and partners)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| DCFS will offer 5 child care vouchers each year beginning FY19           | #1                                                                     | • Entry into data system  
• Participating clients log  
• Parent survey at the end of the year | ▪ QEC will identify prospective clients  
▪ QEC will monitor and support accepted families  
▪ QEC will enter data into the system |
| The Quality Enhancement Coordinator or other designee will administer the ASQ 3 and hearing tests to every applicant for the child care vouchers. | #1 & #4                                                                | • Evidence measured by results of ASQ3  
• Evidence measured by results of hearing screening | ▪ QEC will administer ASQ3  
▪ Results will be entered into data system  
▪ Based on results families will be directed to the applicable agency |
| Approved voucher recipients will attend 2 group meetings each year.     | #4                                                                     | • Attendance will be logged into the data system  
• A list of attendees will be kept | ▪ QEC, Program Director and ED will create a group meeting agenda  
▪ Flyers and contact information will go out to families via snail mail and social media |
| Approved voucher recipients will be encouraged to participate in PAT or PCH for a minimum of 9 months. | #4 & #6                                                                | • List of participants will be kept  
• Information will be entered into the data system | ▪ Program Director will enter information into data system  
▪ Families will experience all aspects of the PAT program |
## Child Care Training

**Description:** Forty hours of Master Certified Training each year, covering all CCCCD categories

**Integration:** This strategy has a strong technical assistance/training-coaching plan. After training, DCFS Staff will provide coaching and mentoring twice a month until the next training session.

**Collaboration:** The only collaborating partners are the Senior Consultants from OFS who provide ITERS pre and post assessments

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| Each year DCFS will increase participant participation by 50% from the previous year. | • DCFS will keep a log of all participants.  
• Participants will complete an evaluation after each training | • ED will create and implement 40 hours of open training opportunities. These trainings will be listed on CCCCD website and open to anyone.  
• ED will create rosters for training implementation |
| DCFS will host a cohort training in the Fall of each year. | • DCFS will keep a log of all participants.  
• Participants will complete an evaluation after each training | • ED will create and implement 20 hours of specialized training in the Fall each year.  
• ED will create rosters for training implementation  
• Action |
| DCFS will host a quarterly Director’s Forum each year3 | • DCFS will keep a log of all participants.  
• Participants will complete an evaluation after each training | • ED will create 5 hours of specialized training quarterly each year.  
• ED will create rosters for training implementation |
### Early Identification and Referral

**Description:** Children are assessed based on concerns shared by parents

**Integration:** Anyone with a concern can contact the office and have their child assessed.

**Collaboration:** Other agencies may make referrals as well

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| DCFS will assess every child with a concern and who applies for child care vouchers | #1                                        | Assessment results will determine eligibility of programs. Data will be collected and entered into the Data system | Program Director will assess all applicants  
Those who qualify for services will be invited to participated |
| DCFS Staff will meet with prospective parents at the Dorchester Prosperity Center once a month. | #1 & #4                                   | All participants will be entered into the ETO system for Trident United Way and in the SC Data system for those who qualify | Staff will enter information into the various databases  
Staff will keep a record of all screened participants |