

## 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 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."

## Vision, Mission, and Values

Source: *Guiding Principles and Best Practices for South Carolina Nonprofits, 4<sup>th</sup> 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.

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### VISION

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

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

**Kershaw County First Steps Vision Statement**

Every Kershaw County child will be prepared for success in school.

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### MISSION

Describes the purpose that guides everything we do.

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

**Kershaw County First Steps Mission Statement**

Through community collaboration, KCFS will provide access to resources and support for families, enabling children to enter school ready to learn.

## VALUES

- The partnership board adopts the following core values for its 2018-2020 Strategic Plan:

### **Kershaw County First Steps 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.

We operate with a culture of accountability.

## 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.

#	<b>Kershaw County First Steps Strategic Goals, 2018-2020</b>	<b>FS Legislative Goal(s) Addressed</b>	<b>Profile of the Ready Kindergartner Benchmark(s) Addressed</b>
1	<b>Work with community partners at all levels to convene, align, collaborate on, support, and strengthen countywide efforts and initiatives to facilitate the creation of a seamless system of integrated and comprehensive programs and serves to improve outcomes for children, prenatal through age 5 and their families</b>	Goals 5	Benchmarks 1-4
2	<b>Families of young children in all areas of Kershaw County are connected to the services, supports, and early education opportunities they need to strengthen their families.</b>	Goal 1	Benchmarks 1 and 2
3	<b>Increase parents' and community awareness of KCFS services and the importance of high quality early care and education programs for all children.</b>	Goals 1, 2, 3	Benchmarks 2 and 4
4	<b>Strengthen internal capacity of KCFS to realize its mission and achieve greater impact</b>	Goals 1, 2, 3	Benchmark 2



# Strategic Plan

## 2018-2020

# Our plan for the future

Kershaw County First Steps Board of Directors is pleased to share its 2018-2020 Strategic Plan. The roadmap will guide funding decisions in support of the Kershaw County First Steps' mission **"through community collaboration, KCFS will provide access to resources and support for families, enabling children to enter school ready to learn"**.

Over the next three years, Kershaw County First Steps will continue to strive toward its vision that **"every Kershaw County child will be prepared for success in school"** and enforce KCFS values of **"Child & Family, Outcome-Driven, Collaboration, Accountability and Sustainability"**.

### Kershaw County First Steps Board of Directors 2018

Stephen Wilson, Chairman

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Pam Whitehead, Asst. Secretary

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Margaret C. Lawhorn, United Way of KC

Leslie Williams, Central Carolina Technical College

Florence Darby, Retired

Meredith Hines, Montessori School of Camden

Melissa Williams, Parent of Preschooler

Lydia Hall, KC School District

Betty Turner, KC School District

David Roberts, Sandhills Medical Foundation, Inc.

Kimberley Jordan, Executive Director

# Kershaw County First Steps

## Strategic Priorities





**Goal 1:** Work with community partners at all levels to convene, align, collaborate on, support, and strengthen countywide efforts and initiatives to facilitate the creation of a seamless system of integrated and comprehensive programs and serves to improve outcomes for children, prenatal through age 5 and their families.

**Objective:**

- Align, coordinate and integrate the early childhood referral system in collaboration with local partners to improve the status and outcomes for children, prenatal through age 5, and their families

**Activities:**

- Annually, meet and engage with local partners to identify issues and referral system change opportunities.
- Create and implement a masterplan for a birth through age 5 continuum of care. (**Continuum of Care** is a concept involving a system that guides and tracks children over time through a comprehensive array of early care and education services spanning all levels and intensity of care.)
- Co-sponsor countywide events that focus on early childhood



**Goal 2:** Families of young children in all areas of Kershaw County are connected to the services, supports, and early education opportunities they need to strengthen their families.

**Objective:**

- Identify gaps and improve access to the full spectrum of KCFS early care and education services for young children

**Activities:**

- Coordinate with local partners, to host KCFS recruitment events in hard to reach areas in Kershaw County
- Expand KCFS programs in hard to reach areas of Kershaw County (Westville, Mt. Pisgah, and Bethune)
- Board members support client recruitment





**Goal 3:** Increase parents' and community awareness of KCFS services and the importance of high quality early care and education programs for all children.

**Objective:**

- Develop a public awareness campaign to reach all communities of the county.
- Present a clear and consistent message to local and elected officials about the value of high quality early care and education programs.
- Inform local partners of legislation that has/will have a local impact.

**Activities:**

- Create community outreach plan with support documentation (literature, signage, etc)
- Maintain a virtual presence through multiple mediums (website, social media, etc)
- Board members will be KCFS ambassadors
- Maintain resources and links to information on KCFS website
- Monitor current legislation impacting the early care and education field.
- Conduct visits with local and state elected officials as the opportunities arise.



**Goal 4:** Strengthen internal capacity of KCFS to realize its mission and achieve greater impact

**Objective:**

- Attract and retain qualified staff

**Activities:**

- Create competitive benefit package for staff (retirement and health benefits)
- Recruit qualified candidates
- Establish a resume pool of potential candidates