



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)



Profile of the Ready Kindergartner brochure

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 Laurens County First Steps Board examined the data on children in October through December 2016 to identify the needs and resources in Laurens County. The board went through the document template and answered the questions after discussions. The Needs and Resources Assessment was sent to the state office of First Steps by the end of December 2016.

In the fall of 2017, the board adopted our mission, vision, and values statements. The board examined the Comprehensive Plan Template and divided into groups to address each section. We used the power point slides provided by the state office. The plan was part of the agendas for the October, November, and December 2017 board meetings. Our Technical Assistant from the state office, Janice Kilburn, met with the board in October and December 2017 to provide guidance with creating our plan. The board could not meet in January 2018, so the final document was examined by board members through google docs so all had a chance to ask questions and give feedback. The board approved the plan at the Board meeting on Monday, February 12, 2018.

The board agreed that LCFS would like to increase our number of children and their families to 20 by the year 2020. This increase would be in our scholarship and parenting strategies. We hope to increase the number of adult childcare providers to 100 through our training strategy.

We appreciate our county partners who work with us to make our programs possible. Laurens School District 55 serves as a fiscal manager for the Parent Educators' salaries as well as in-kind for our rent and utilities. The Laurens Family YMCA provides a meeting space for our Childcare Provider training program as an in-kind also. Big Blue Marble Academy, Stepping Stones Learning Academy, and Tender Loving Childcare are the centers who accept our scholarship children. These centers work closely with us to communicate with parents and make available space in the center for meetings with scholarship children and their families when necessary.

Linda S. Wessel, Board Chair

Rosemary C. Patterson, Executive Director

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

LAURENS County First Steps Vision Statement

Every Laurens County child will enter school healthy and ready to succeed.

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

LAURENS County First Steps Mission Statement

Collaborating with other entities, Laurens County First Steps helps local 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.

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

LAURENS County 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. Laurens County First Steps operates within 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.

| # | Laurens 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 | LCFS will form a committee of community leaders across all sections of Laurens County to share resources and work to make those resources readily accessible to pre-school children and their families in Laurens County. | 5 | 4A 4B |
| 2 | LCFS will revise all printed informational materials, up-date social media platforms, and work to develop a website. | 1 | 4A |

Laurens County First Steps Partnership

2018-2020 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Organized by the partnership’s current and proposed programs (strategies) 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 | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| Laurens 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) |
| 1 Increase Access LCFS will work with community leaders to publicize resources that affect pre-school children and their families. | 1 & 2 | Parent, teachers, care givers, stakeholders surveys, focus groups/committees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify community leaders to convene ▪ Participation in community events, school events, etc. ▪ Create publications to share with community |

Community Education and Outreach

Laurens 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>3 Interagency accountability & collaboration LCFS will share information with the committee resources for enhancing school readiness.</p> | <p>1 & 2</p> | <p>Documentation of group meetings: meeting minutes, attendance, agendas Surveys to stakeholders</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Share with the community leaders the Readiness document, the Early Learning Standards, and information from the iCan website |

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

Laurens 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>2 Build Capacity The community committee will identify and prioritize the needs of pre-school children and families.</p> | <p>1 & 2</p> | <p>Attendance & topics for training child care providers, topics for discussion in PAT group meetings, minutes from community meetings</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reach out to local businesses to display information about resources for families & pre-school children ▪ Continue with the CCTr strategy |

Parents As Teachers (PAT)

Description: PAT is connected to every childcare scholarship family/child.

We follow the SCFS & National PAT Standards: 24 visits per family annually for at least one hour each.

Clients can be served from initial enrollment until the child is age eligible for 4K in a private or public classroom.

Every effort is made to enroll children as soon after birth as possible.

Integration: PAT is connected to every childcare scholarship child/family.

The PAT & the scholarships strategies are operated in-house.

Collaboration: We work with 3 childcare centers in Laurens County and the local high school. LCSD 55 is our partner who serves as fiscal manager for PE's salaries.

LCSD 55 provides in-kind across all our programs for rent and utilities.

| <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 families served per year to 20 by the end of 2020. At least 90% of clients served will participate in the program for at least 12 months.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">1</p> | <p>SCFS Data system in-house records</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publicize dates for accepting new scholarship applications in the local paper and with childcare centers and community stakeholders ▪ Provide information about the parenting program requirements |

Child Care Provider Training & Professional Development

Description: LCFS provides up to 30 DSS approved hours each year for training for all childcare providers in Laurens County. We have a program director who contacts trainers to set up the training sessions. The training sessions are provided at no charge to participants or centers.

Integration: Childcare Training provided to the child care staffs directly affects the children we serve with scholarships and PAT.

Collaboration: We work with 7 childcare centers in Laurens County and any interested out of county participants.

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|--|--|---|--|
| <p>Increase the number of adults served per year to 100 by the end of 2020.</p> | <p>1 & 2</p> | <p>Records from the FS data system and in-house records of each training session offered.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide at least one training session per month |

Child Care Scholarships

Description: Child Care Scholarships are administered in-house and connected to the Parents As Teachers strategy. Eligible children/families receive a scholarship for one year with the opportunity to renew each year until the child is age eligible for 4K. Parents must be working and/or going to school and meet the risk factors and income requirements. Parents have a weekly co-pay and LCFS pays the remainder of the weekly fee.

Integration: Each scholarship is connected to the Parents As Teachers strategy.

Collaboration: LCFS places scholarships at 3 childcare centers in Laurens County. They recommend our program to potential clients. We regularly consult with the county high schools to determine if there are teen moms we could serve. We work with the Family Literacy program to identify potential clients and with SC Works to help parents find employment when they are laid off.

| <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 children served per year to 20 by the end of 2020. At least 90% of the children/families will remain on scholarship at least 2 years.</p> | <p>1 & 2</p> | <p>SCFS Data system & in-house records</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publicize dates for accepting new scholarship applications in the local paper and with childcare centers and community stakeholders ▪ Provide information about the parenting program requirements |