



# 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."



January 31, 2018

Georgia Mjartan  
Executive Director  
South Carolina First Steps  
1300 Sumter Street, Suite 100  
Columbia SC 29201

Dear Mrs. Mjartan:

Please accept the enclosed Marion County First Steps (MCFS) Comprehensive Plan 2020.

MCFS board and staff has worked tirelessly to update its current needs and resource assessment within the past year to assist with creating the three year comprehensive plan. Our vision is for every Marion County Child will be prepared for success in school. We envision this to be accomplished by collaborating and fostering meaningful relationships with other agencies, civic and faith-based organizations along with businesses who focus on early childhood education. Our mission has been and continues to be collaborating with other entities, First Steps helps Marion County 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.

We will continue to implement its current programs and seek to raise additional funding to expand the number of children being served throughout Marion County by 2020. Realizing that Marion County is plagued with low poverty, education and limited resources in the community, the board is seeking grants, partnerships with local businesses and ways to fundraise to support the expansion of Scholarships, Facility Quality Enhancement, Literacy, and Childcare Training.

In the spirit of collaborating and working to create this comprehensive plan, we would first like to thank our Executive Director, Spencer R. Scott and his staff along with SCFS TA, Carletta Isreal, Board Members, Nurse Family Partnership, and Marion School District for working together for the betterment of our youngest learners. Without everyone input and commitment to this process, our board could not have successfully completed this Comprehensive Plan. The Board met on two different occasions while individual members worked with staff to gather information to complete the plan. On Thursday, January 18, 2018, the board met to finalize and approve the comprehensive plan collectively.

As we humbly submit the Marion County First Steps Comprehensive Plan 2020, we look forward to working with SC First Steps in making Marion County First Steps vision a reality.

Sincerely,

  
MCFS Board Chairperson

  
MCFS Executive Director

## 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.

#### 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

#### Marion County First Steps Vision Statement

Every Marion County Child will be prepared for success in school.

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### 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

#### Marion County First Steps Mission Statement

Collaborating with other entities, First Steps helps Marion County 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

### Marion County First Steps Core Values

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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.

#	<b>Marion County First Steps Strategic Goals, 2018-2020</b>	<b>FS Legislative Goal(s) Addressed</b> (abbreviate as Goal 1, 2, etc.)	<b>Profile of the Ready Kindergartner Benchmark(s) Addressed</b> (abbreviate as 1A, 2B, etc.)
1	Increase Literacy Program to serve 150 children by one additional coordinator in the faith-based and Head Start communities by 2020.	Goal 1	1D,2C,2E
2	Increase the number of certified trainers in Marion County by 10%.	Goal 3	2E,3E
3	Increase scholarships to 30 and serve children in hard to reach rural areas of Marion County by 2020.	Goals 1 and 4	2B,3A,3B,3E
4	Host Community Meeting concerning Early Education	Goal 5	4A, 4B

## MarionCounty 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).

<b>Local Portal</b>			
Marion County First Steps will connect families of preschool children to services designed to strengthen families and promote optimal child development (State Priority: Core Function).			
<b>Objective</b>	<b>In Support of Partnership Strategic Goal(s)</b> (abbreviate as 1, 2, etc.)	<b>Success Metrics</b>	<b>Action Items</b>
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 children served in the communities through Facilities Quality Enhancement (FQE), Scholarships, Raising a Reader (RAR), and Childcare Training by 2020.	Goals 1 1D, 2C,2E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surveys</li> <li>Focus Groups</li> <li>Assessments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Awareness</li> <li>Increase Funding</li> <li>Recruitment Plan</li> </ul>
Continue hosting Early Education Meetings	Goal 4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus Groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruit Partners</li> </ul>
<b>Community Education and Outreach</b>			
Marion County First Steps will increase understanding in the community of school readiness domains and assessment, and “what works” to help young children succeed, and will make information easily accessible in all communities and for all families. (State Priority: SCFS Strategic Plan)			
<b>Objective</b>	<b>In Support of Partnership Strategic Goal(s)</b> (abbreviate as 1, 2, etc.)	<b>Success Metrics</b>	<b>Action Items</b>
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 certified trainers in Marion County by 10% in the FQE Program to further enhance high quality preschool program by 2020.	Goal 3 2E,3E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documentation of trainers by the state</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey sites to see who is interested</li> <li>Give information to interested persons</li> <li>Provide a mentor to help with the process</li> </ul>

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

Marion 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;"><b>Objective</b></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 &amp; collaboration</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>In Support of Partnership Strategic Goal(s)</b> (abbreviate as 1, 2, etc.)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Success Metrics</b></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;"><b>Action Items</b></p> <p>Major activities to be initiated in support of the objective (to be operationalized by staff and partners)</p>
<p>Increase scholarships to 30 to service children in rural areas of Marion County by 2020.</p>	<p>Goals 1,4 2B,3A,3B,3E</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surveys</li> <li>• Financial support from the state</li> <li>• Evaluating applications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a workshop about scholarships</li> <li>• Meeting about quality day cares</li> </ul>
<p>Host Community Meetings</p>	<p>Goal 4A</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus Group</li> <li>• Surveys</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruit Partners</li> </ul>



## Quality Enhancement Strategy

**Description:** Child care facilities participating in Facilities Quality Enhancement (FQE) are visited twice a monthly by a certified technical assistance provider from the county partnership’s office. Facilities length of participation in the program varies and this is based on each individualized action plan to improve the Environment Rating Scale (ERS) scores.

**Integration:** FAQ is integrated into child care trainings and scholarships.

**Collaboration:** We work diligently with the state and on the community level entities to ensure best possible outcomes.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Objective</b></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 &amp; collaboration</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>In Support of Partnership Strategic Goal(s)</b> (abbreviate as 1, 2, etc.)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Success Metrics</b></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;"><b>Action Items</b></p> <p>Major activities to be initiated in support of the objective (to be operationalized by staff and partners)</p>
<p>Increase access to quality early childhood (day care) programs and resources in rural areas by 50 % in Marion County.</p>	<p>Goals 1, 4 and 2E</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surveys</li> <li>• Financial support from the state</li> <li>• Legislative assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey communities to establish a need for a facility</li> <li>• Write and talk to legislatures about the needs</li> <li>• Provide data from schools and the economic developer to support the need for a facility in the rural area</li> </ul>
<p>Increase scholarships to 30 to serve children in rural areas in Marion County.</p>	<p>Goals 1, 4 and 2E</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surveys</li> <li>• Financial support from the state</li> <li>• Evaluating applications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a workshop about scholarships</li> <li>• Meeting about quality day cares</li> </ul>

## Literacy Strategy

**Description:** The literacy coordinator visits 19 sites each month to provide an age appropriate book and a read aloud session to children in Marion County. In addition, each child receives an activity sheet to extend the story book. The Raising a Reader program runs from September through June and provides storybooks to 150 students at the Academy of Early Learning. Students receive a red bag with 4 age appropriate books to take home each week and return the following week.

**Integration:** Literacy is a focus at each site with a discussion on grade level standards. During the visits, the literacy coordinator demonstrates questioning as well as how to care for the books. The local library, Pee Dee Community Action (Head Start), and Marion School District are involved in making decisions about literacy. The coordinator meets with each stakeholder periodically. The literacy coordinator often speaks at parenting meetings/PTO to encourage parents to be more active in their child's literacy journey.

**Collaboration:** Marion County School District- Academy of Early Learning participates in the Raising A Reader Program and books are stored at this school. Pee Dee Community Action (Head Start) - the literacy coordinator reads to 3 sites, and attends and conducts parenting classes. Marion County Library - the children's librarian and literacy coordinator discuss books read to children. Horry County First Steps - Assist in providing guidance with the Raising A Reader Program. This is the first year Marion County First Steps is using this program.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Objective</b></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 &amp; collaboration</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>In Support of Partnership Strategic Goal(s)</b> (abbreviate as 1, 2, etc.)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Success Metrics</b></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;"><b>Action Items</b></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 participating in the Raising a Reader Program by 50 children.</p>	<p>Goals 1 1D, 2C, and 2E</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surveys</li> <li>• Parenting classes focused on literacy</li> <li>• Introduction to the program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send out surveys at different sites</li> <li>• Present at PTO meetings and parenting meetings</li> <li>• Ask for funding</li> <li>• Write a grant</li> </ul>
<p>Increase the literacy program to serve at least 5 faith-based sites in Marion County. This is contingent on funding.</p>	<p>Goals 1, 1D, and 2E</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surveys</li> <li>• Meeting with faith based sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present to the alliance of ministers</li> <li>• Have a participating faith-based site to share their experience</li> <li>• Funding from the state</li> </ul>
<p>Strengthen parent engagements by 25%.</p>	<p>Goals 1 2C, and 2E</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modeling by parents</li> <li>• Presentations during parenting meetings</li> <li>• Sign in sheets</li> <li>• Surveys are distributed and sent home biannually</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide opportunities for parents to share/network</li> </ul>

### Child Care Training Strategy

**Description:** MCFE provides certified trainings at an affordable price. These trainings are typically offered to childcare providers on Saturdays that are convenient for childcare providers. They are expected to participate in trainings throughout an allotted fiscal year in an effort to achieve desired outcomes, which are improved scores.

**Integration:** Training are geared towards ERS scores of FQE. Participants in FQE are required to attend these trainings.

**Collaboration:** Pleasant Grove Academy is a collaborating partner as they provide approximately \$2,000.00 in in-kind for use of their facility at no charge. The partnership board also collaborates with Childcare Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) regarding childcare trainings.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>In Support of Partnership Strategic Goal(s)</b> (abbreviate as 1, 2, etc.)	<b>Success Metrics</b>	<b>Action Items</b>
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 trainers in Marion County by 10%.	Goals 3 2E, and 3E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation of trainers by the state</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey sites to see who is interested</li> <li>• Give information to interested persons</li> <li>• Provide a mentor to help with the process</li> </ul>

### Child Care Scholarships Strategy

**Description:** Scholarships allow the most at-risk families in Marion County to send their child/children to a child care facility at a reduced rate, paying no more than \$20 per week.

**Integration:** Scholarships are integrated with FQE and CC training.

**Collaboration:** SCDSS-provides a match percentage to scholarships purchased.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>In Support of Partnership Strategic Goal(s)</b> (abbreviate as 1, 2, etc.)	<b>Success Metrics</b>	<b>Action Items</b>
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 children served per year to 30 by the end of 2020. Retain 90% of clients in the program for at least 1 year.	Goal 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Parent Meetings</li> <li>▪ Age Appropriate Assessments</li> <li>▪ Increase of Funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Child Attendance in quality childcare programs</li> <li>▪ Increase funding</li> <li>▪ Create awareness and advertisement</li> </ul>