

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."

December 7, 2017

We are pleased to submit this comprehensive plan for 2018 to 2020, for Oconee County First Steps. We would like to provide an overview of how the plan was developed. In brief:

- The partnership completed a comprehensive needs assessment in spring-summer 2017 (facilitated by Compass Evaluation and Research of Durham North Carolina). The needs assessment included multiple data collections and sources, including: parent surveys, focus groups with stakeholders (including child care providers, parents participating in early intervention, representatives from the Community of Faith, and community partners), and stakeholder interviews (including past and present members of the partnership's Board of Directors, elected representatives, partner agencies, and others). The needs assessment also drew upon archived data housed within the partnership (for example, parent and teacher surveys collected in 2014-2015 and 2015-2016) and publicly available data such as American Community Survey 2015 data for Oconee County and its townships.
- Once data collections were completed, the study team compiled and analyzed data, searching for patterns and common themes. The overarching goals were to (a) identify the current awareness of Oconee County First Steps programs as well as other community resources and services; (b) compile feedback on the accessibility and quality of services; and (c) identify needs (among Oconee County parents, families, and young children) not currently addressed or insufficiently addressed.
- Findings from the needs assessment were summarized by the contractor (Compass Evaluation and Research) and presented first to the Executive Director (Marie Dunnam), and then to the Board of Directors. There were two Board meetings in which findings were discussed as well as five webinars, which were provided as a means of walking through findings in greater detail.
- The Executive Director and contractor identified opportunities for the partnership, which are considered responses to the needs identified in the assessment. These opportunities also were provided to the Board of Directors for review and consideration, and informed the creation of this comprehensive plan.

We expect that, over the next three years, we will see Oconee County First Steps continue to thrive and expand its reach for the parents and young children of Oconee County. This is a period of transition for the partnership, with long-time Executive Director Marie Dunnam retiring in December 2017 and an interim Executive Director assuming responsibilities in January 2018. We are excited to use the remainder of this 2017-2018 fiscal year to complete our discussions of how to make the most of our identified opportunities to deepen and broaden the work of the partnership. We anticipate many updates as new leadership comes on board.

We would like to thank everyone who helped make this plan possible, including the many parents and community stakeholders who contributed their feedback during the needs assessment. We also want to thank our Board of Directors and committee members for their participation in the needs assessment, as well as the review of findings and consideration of opportunities and next steps.

{The Plan was approved by the Oconee County First Steps Board at its December 7, 2017 Board/Annual Meeting.}

Sincerely,

Sandra W. Pruitt, Board Chair
Oconee County First Steps

Sincerely,

Marie M. Dunnam, Executive Director
Oconee County First Steps

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.

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

Oconee County First Steps Vision Statement

All children in Oconee County will have the care they need to grow & develop to their full potential.

MISSION

Describes the purpose that guides everything we do.

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

Oconee County First Steps Mission Statement

Collaborating with other partners, Oconee County First Steps helps Oconee 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.

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

Oconee County First Steps Core Values

The years of early childhood (the prenatal period through age 5) 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.

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.

#	Oconee County First Steps Strategic Goals, 2018-2020	FS Legislative Goal(s) Addressed (abbreviate as Goal 1, 2, etc.)	Profile of the Ready Kindergarten Benchmark(s) Addressed (abbreviate as 1A, 2B, etc.)
1	By 2020, Oconee County First Steps will have maintained, if not increased, its current investments and levels of success.	1-5	1-4
2	By 2020, as resources allow, Oconee County First Steps will have invested in Palmetto Basics.	2	1D, 2C
3	By 2020, as resources allow, Oconee County First Steps will have worked with local child care facilities to improve the existing quality of care available to young children.	3	1A-1E
4	By 2020, as resources allow, Oconee County First Steps will have worked with local child care facilities to increase the number of high quality placements available for infants and toddlers.	3	1A-1E
5	By 2020, as resources allow, Oconee County First Steps will have worked to support informal (or, Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care) child care arrangements.	4	2A-2E
6	By 2020, as resources allow, Oconee County First Steps will have worked with community partners to improve awareness of or reduce stigma regarding the use of mental health care services or parenting support services.	1	2A
7	By 2020, as resources allow, Oconee County First Steps will have worked with community partners to encourage Well Child visits (i.e., visits to ensure health and development, not respond to illness).	4	2B
8	By 2020, as resources allow, Oconee County First Steps will have worked with community partners to encourage routine health and developmental (cognitive, physical, and socio-emotional) screenings, starting at birth.	1	1A-1E
9	By 2020, as resources allow, Oconee County First Steps will have expanded or deepened its community partnerships.	5	3A-3F 4A-4B

Oconee County First Steps Partnership

2018-2020 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Organized by the partnership’s current and proposed programs and services, as well as the core functions common to all First Steps partnerships (serving as a local portal connecting families of preschool children to services; serving as a community convener in support of the needs of preschool children and their families; and supporting state readiness priorities).

Local Portal			
Oconee County First Steps will connect families of preschool children to services designed to strengthen families and promote optimal child development (State Priority: Core Function).			
Objective	In Support of Partnership Strategic Goal(s) (abbreviate as 1, 2, etc.)	Success Metrics	Action Items
Each objective 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 to services: Increase by 5% each year, the number of parents of young children who will contact the partnership for assistance in finding and connecting to programs suitable for their needs.	1, 2, 9	OCFS will maintain statistics on the number of families that it connects with annually, including follow-up to determine the results of contacts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase radio and hard copy messaging and marketing campaign, especially in harder-to-reach areas of the county. Provide residents with information on how to find and access services—or connect to OCFS for a referral. ▪ Develop a social media campaign to reach families throughout the county. Provide regularly updated information about community events and resources.

Community Education and Outreach

Oconee 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)

<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: Each year, OCFS will provide at least 3 trainings, seminars, or workshops for community partners.</p>	<p>1, 6-9</p>	<p>OCFS will maintain statistics on the number of trainings, seminars, and workshops conducted.</p> <p>OCFS will survey participants to ascertain satisfaction, outcomes, and general feedback.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify training, seminar, and workshops needs. ▪ Develop a calendar of events. ▪ Promote events among community stakeholders.

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

Oconee County First Steps will serve as a community convener to address the needs of preschool children in the community, in support of state readiness priorities (State Priority: Core Function).

<p style="text-align: center;">Objective</p> <p>Each objective 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>(1) Increase access: Each year, OCFS will provide at least 2 roundtable discussions for community partners. For example, in 2018-2019, OCFS may provide roundtable discussions on Palmetto Basics.</p>	<p>1, 6-9</p>	<p>OCFS will maintain statistics on the number of roundtable discussions conducted.</p> <p>OCFS will survey participants to ascertain satisfaction, outcomes, and general feedback.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify roundtable topics and discussion needs. ▪ Develop a calendar of roundtable events. ▪ Promote roundtable events among community stakeholders.
<p>(2) Build capacity: Each year, OCFS will maintain Board and Committee meetings.</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>OCFS will maintain meeting minutes and attendance logs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review and update, as necessary, the OCFS committee structure and committee scope of work. ▪ Create a calendar of meetings. ▪ Encourage attendance at meetings.
<p>(3) Strengthen interagency accountability & collaboration: Each year, as the opportunity presents, OCFS will respond to grant or funding announcements from varied funders or sponsors.</p>	<p>1-5</p>	<p>OCFS will maintain records of funding or grant opportunities, including OCFS responses to opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a Resource Development or Fundraising Committee. ▪ Regularly scan for funding or grant opportunities. ▪ Bring opportunities to the OCFS Board for consideration, and respond as appropriate.
<p>(4) Strengthen interagency accountability & collaboration: Each year, OCFS will participate in 2 “universal staffing” events. In these events, staff from parenting programs present cases, identify strengths and weaknesses, and solicit suggestions.</p>	<p>1, 6-8</p>	<p>OCFS will maintain meeting minutes and attendance logs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify dates for universal staffing events. ▪ Prepare agendas and staff presentations. ▪ Follow-up as needed, on a programmatic level.

Child Care Trainings

Description: High-Quality child care hinges on high-quality professional development that meets the needs of the local child-care workforce. OCFS sponsored training is certified through the SC Center for Child Care Career Development, and includes topics in the areas of nutrition, health and safety, curriculum, child guidance, professional development and program administration. Best practices in training include not only the training itself, but follow-up site visits in the classroom. Our training is multi-session training with one training building on top of the next and so forth throughout the fiscal year- as opposed to isolated, stand-alone workshops. We also prioritize trainings linked to infant-toddler care and staff-child interactions.

Our child care training strategy offers free training to anyone working in a child care center, church center, group home or family care home in the Tri County Area of Anderson, Oconee and Pickens counties in order for staff to receive their required 15 to 20 hours of recertification required by DSS. Beginning in September of each year, at least one 2 hours of certified training is offered monthly with some 5 hours of training offered on Saturdays. For FY 16-17, We provided 16 training sessions equaling 26 hours of certified and 2 hours of register training for staff to meet annual re-certification requirements.

The sessions and hours were: 4 session= 8 hours of curriculum; 3 sessions=4.5 hours of Growth & Development; 4 sessions= 4 hours of Health & Safety; 2 sessions= 4 hours of Child Guidance; and 3 sessions= 7.5 hours of program administration. In addition, 19 follow-up visits with a total of 57 hours were spent with participants to help them put training in practice. Total Training Attendance was 426; with 134 unduplicated Child Care Teachers and Directors served that touched the lives of 3, 680 children birth through age five.

Since 2010, in-kind training space has been provided by Oconee County DSS through October 20 16, when it was moved to the Commons Room at St. Mark Methodist Church, who provides the space free of charge - as a church, they do not provide invoices for in-kind.

Integration: Our child care training strategy is integrated with the PAT/POPS Program as their program staff only recommends our participating centers to their clients. And, it is also integrated with our Child Care Scholarship Program as PAT/POPS clients are given first choice when allocating our scholarships.

Collaboration: Our Child Care Training Committee, made up of approximately 1/3 of child care centers directors, church centers, group and family care homes, with input already received from other centers, group and family care homes, met in June 2016 to plan the FY 16-17 Child Care Training Schedule. This meeting was held with our collaborative partners: Child Care Resource and Referral Network of SC, and Dori Young, a CCCCD certified trainer. The goals and objectives achieved during the prior year were considered; along with surveys distributed one month after each of the prior trainings, along with evaluations from each segment of training; the results of the onsite visits to child care centers, and what was working and had not worked. In addition, we discussed how well our partnerships had worked with prior certified trainers; state and local DHEC staff; the SC DSS Child Care Licensing Division, CCCCD, etc. The committee then reviewed the available CCCCD training reports located on the Share Point Intranet Site; SC-PITC; local DHEC/School District of Oconee County, and local library training calendars. Once the calendar was decided on, it was sent to CCCCD for posting on their website; was posted on our website, was sent to all child care center, group and family care homes in the Tri-County area of Anderson, Oconee and Pickens Counties. Trainings were offered monthly from September through June; covered all required topic areas and we continued to provide the training free of charge.

Our Child Care Training is unique as we partner with the SC Child Care Resource & Referral Network for the majority of our training, and then fill in with other trainers recommended by CCCCD. (CCR& R is supposed to do training in our area anyway, so we decided to form a partnership to avoid duplication of effort, and all of our centers are better off for us having done so. {This may change for FY 18-19 and FY 19-20 as additional options may be available. }

<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>
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<p>(2) Build capacity: Maintain the 2017 number of trainings offered to child care providers and early educators.</p>	<p>1, 3, 4</p>	<p>OCFS will maintain statistics on the number of trainings conducted, along with details about training topics.</p> <p>OCFS will maintain training materials and attendance logs.</p> <p>OCFS will survey participants to ascertain satisfaction, outcomes, and general feedback.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regularly track service statistics related to child care trainings. ▪ Increase or maintain trainings to meet projections.
<p>(2) Build capacity: Research new trainers or trainings to provide to child care providers and early educators.</p>	<p>1, 3, 4</p>	<p>OCFS will maintain survey records that document child care provider and early educator training needs and interests.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Routinely survey child care providers and early educators to determine training needs and interests. ▪ Use survey findings to develop new trainings.

Parents as Teachers

Description: The Parents As Teachers {PAT} & “Principles of Parenting Successfully {POPS} Program is a voluntary, holistic, long-term in-home parenting education prevention program geared toward assisting “high risk” families with children birth through age five in preparing their children for first grade. The program uses two evidenced-based curriculums: Parent As Teachers {PAT} and Systematic Training g for Effective Parenting [STEPS]. The PAT curriculum is used with all families, but STEPS is used in combination with PAT with some families. POPS is also a PAT Affiliate, and services provided include: (1) Personal Visits are designed to meet the needs of each individual family with intensity ranging anywhere from twice monthly to daily in some situations, (2) Group connections are provided monthly to ensure families build social connections with each other and learn new ways to support their child’s development, (3) Screenings and Assessment to identify developmental concerns, and (4) Resource and referral network connect families to needed resources, strengthening protective factors and fostering positive changes.

Integration: PAT/POPS is integrated with our Child Care Trailing and Child Care Scholarship Programs; in addition to the Early Intervention Program provided by the Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (DDSN), and Family Connection as Early Intervention, Family Connection and PAT/POPS home visitors coordinate their services on mutual clients and readily made referrals to one another. PAT/POPS is also a “Cribs for Kids” Satellite Site for Upstate Safe Kids. PAT/POPS families are included in the Back to School Program sponsored by Family Friends and United Way of Oconee county. In addition, United Way of Oconee County and Family Friends offer free diapers once per month for any PAT/POPS children on Medicaid. And, finally PAT/POPS has at time collaborated with the Oconee County Library System Youth Director who has provided training for many of their monthly group meetings

The program is operated through a contract with the South Carolina Department of Social Services for the Oconee County PAT/POPS Program.

Collaboration: OCFS Child Care Training Program, and the OCFS Child Care Scholarship Program. (PAT/POPS) only refers clients to child care centers, group and/family care home who attend the OCFS Child Care Training; and PAT/POPS clients receive preference for the OCFS Scholarship Program. Early Intervention Program provided by the Department of Social Services, and Special Needs (DDSN) and Family Connection as Early Intervention, Family Connection and PAT/POPS home visitors coordinate their services on mutual clients.

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<p>(1) Increase access: Maintain a program with at least two full-time employees, with one employee serving a full case-load of Oconee County families and the second employee providing supervision and a reduced case load.</p>	<p>1, 6-8</p>	<p>OCFS will maintain all program records, as required by SCFS and National Parents as Teachers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain program funding and oversight.

Scholarships

Description: The OCFS Child Care Scholarship Program will continue to be available to eligible families who need child care for a child birth through 5 in order to work at least (20) hours per week, and or continue high school/Tri County Technical College of college, and who possess at least two of the SC First Steps to School Readiness BOT’s risk factors. The scholarship program is only available at ABC (B) and above centers, and approved centers that have staff who attend the OCFS sponsored Child Care Training. All I child care scholarship families are required to attend a monthly two-hour-health or –child development training through our collaboration with Health’s Haven. This training is provided free of charge during the months of August, September, October, November, January, February, march, April, May and June. There is no co-pay for parents, but rather attendance at the monthly training is mandatory. The scholarships are provided for as long as the scholarship family is meeting all the requirements of the program.

Integration: The Child Care Scholarship Program in integrated with the POPS/PAT strategy as PAT/POPS clients are given scholarship preference. And, all scholarship children are required to be screened by training PATPOPS staff using the ASQ-3 and the SQ-SE, the results of which are shared with the parents; delays are identified and appropriate referrals are made. The OCFS Board had always wanted to be able to fund a child care scholarship strategy, and when funds became available and a needs assessment had been completed that confirmed the need for the program with a combined health/child development component, the board chose to provide the service in-house to ensure the most “at risk” families could either continue to work or to complete their education plus become better parents by attending the mandatory monthly trainings.

Collaboration: Kinderville Learning Center, Cambridge Child Development Center, and Pennsylvania Children’s Center are our three B and above centers with which we have signed MOU’s, and Health’s Haven provides the monthly health-related/child-development training for our scholarship families. Each of the centers have reduced their weekly rates in order to accept our families into their centers., In addition Health’s Haven provides a six week life skills course for families who believe they need more assistance in becoming better parents. These classes are provided at a reduced rate.

<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>(1) Increase access: Increase the number of families who are able to access Oconee County First Steps scholarships.</p>	<p>1, 4</p>	<p>OCFS will maintain service statistics to include number of applicants, number of families found eligible, number of families awarded a Scholarship, and the number of families placed on a waiting list. OCFS will maintain records of the child care or early education sites at which child care families use their Scholarships, as well as attendance records, as required.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a plan that increases the OCFS budget for Scholarships. ▪ Present plan to the Board for consideration.

