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 convenor 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)
      o Listening, Speaking and Understanding (8)
      o Early Reading (12)
      o Early Writing (4)
   1E Mathematical Thinking (9)
      o Number Sense (5)
      o 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:
      o Can grow and develop in the absence of fear, stress, danger and hunger.
      o Have access to needed pediatric, dental and mental health resources.
      o Spend their days in nurturing, language-rich, and developmentally supportive environments (whether a loving home, a high-quality early education setting or both).
      o 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.”
Union County First Steps has a vision that all children in our county will enter school with the tools necessary to succeed. In order to meet this goal, our mission is to connect families to the resources necessary for safety, health, and school readiness. As we look to the future, we have outlined goals and strategies that will be our focus.

One of our main goals will be to improve access to quality childcare for families in Union County. We commit to survey the needs of families in our county regarding childcare, and then work with local childcare providers in an attempt to meet these needs when possible. We will also continue to offer on-going training and support for local childcare workers.

Another goal of our partnership is to continue to build communication and collaboration with businesses and other agencies in our community. This will involve active participation in various community events---providing information about what First Steps has to offer to the families of Union County.

As we branch out into various areas of the county, we hope to make all citizens aware of the services we have to offer. In particular, we want to make sure that all children and families who are eligible for the Parents as Teachers program have the opportunity to participate in this wonderful home visitation program. This program is designed to strengthen families and help prepare children for success as they enter school.

The Union County First Steps partnership appreciates the support of our many other community partners as we work together to invest in the lives of children and families in Union County!
Vision, Mission, and Values

http://www.togethersc.org/?page=GPBP

In order to engage in strategic thinking that steers the organization in a mission-focused direction, the local partnership board must clearly define its mission, vision and values and use these statements to guide planning and action.

Mission and vision statements capture the essence of your organization’s beliefs and values, and define its place in the world. A vision statement explains the overall goal of your organization looking into the future, while the mission statement outlines the present plan to realize the vision.

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

SC First Steps Vision 2020 Vision Statement
Every South Carolina child will be prepared for success in school.

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

Union County First Steps Vision Statement
All children enter school with the tools necessary 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:

Union County First Steps Mission Statement
Connecting families to the resources they need for their children to be safe, healthy and ready for school.
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:

Union County First Steps Core Values

Trusts: In practice, we will demonstrate the character and competency consistent with the positions we hold, ensuring that our words and deeds are trustworthy and grounded in integrity.

Accountability: Duty and responsibility to residents of Union County, staff, and each other. In practice, we are willing and obligated to accept responsibility for our words, actions, programs, policies and the subsequent outcomes. Internally we will set and meet performance expectations that prove our accountability.

Inclusion: We will develop highly engaged and inclusive partnerships, alliances, and collaborative relationships with families and other stakeholders in the community to maximize resources, reach, and impact.

Compassion: Genuine concern and feeling for others. In practice, will treat people with dignity and not judge, ostracize, or criticize them for their plight, their choices, or their circumstances.
**STRATEGIC GOALS**

Strategic goals set the direction for how the organization intends to implement its mission and address the needs of its focus population(s) for the duration of the plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Union County First Steps Strategic Goals, 2018-2020</th>
<th>FS Legislative Goal(s) Addressed (abbreviate as Goal 1, 2, etc.)</th>
<th>Profile of the Ready Kindergartner Benchmark(s) Addressed (abbreviate as 1A, 2B, etc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Improve access to quality childcare</td>
<td>Goal 3</td>
<td>2E, 4A, 4B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Continue to build communication and collaboration with businesses, inter-agencies, and the community</td>
<td>Goal 5</td>
<td>4A, 4B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Improve access and delivery of service to Parents as Teachers participants</td>
<td>Goal 1</td>
<td>1 (A-E), 2(A-E)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Union 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

Union County First Steps will connect families of preschool children to services designed to strengthen families and promote optimal child development (State Priority: Core Function).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>In Support of Partnership Strategic Goal(s) (abbreviate as 1, 2, etc.)</th>
<th>Success Metrics</th>
<th>Action Items</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop a needs assessment of various types of child care available</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>*surveys</td>
<td>Action: Survey parents at various locations (employment agencies, childcare centers, schools, etc.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Community Education and Outreach

Union 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]

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<td>Each objective addresses one or more priorities of the SC First Steps Strategic Plan, <em>Vision 2020</em>: 1) Increase access; 2) Build capacity; 3) Strengthen interagency accountability &amp; collaboration</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>documentation of participation in community events</em></td>
<td>Major activities to be initiated in support of the objective (to be operationalized by staff and partners)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Steps representatives will increase attendance at community events (especially focusing on school events) to recruit families with younger children</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Action:</strong> Set up display tables at various school and community events serving families/children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Increase presence of First Steps in rural areas | 2 | *documentation of events in rural areas of Union County* | **Action:** Offer Story Time activities at Carlisle Community Center  
**Action:** Read with 4K classes at Jonesville and Lockhart Elementary |
**Mobilizing Communities on Providing Enhanced Services to Support Families and their Young Children**

Union 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).

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<td>(abbreviate as 1, 2, etc.)</td>
<td>Evidence for demonstrating progress, or achievement, of this objective (assessments, surveys, evaluations, focus groups, or other documentation)</td>
<td>Major activities to be initiated in support of the objective (to be operationalized by staff and partners)</td>
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<td>Strengthen interagency collaboration</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Community Event to celebrate Week of the Young Child</td>
<td>Action: Collaborate with other agencies to plan a community wide event to celebrate the Week of the Young Child, Child Abuse Prevention Month, and National Library Week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Parents as Teachers

**Description:** Promotes parent/child interaction; development-centered parenting; and family well-being. Parent Educators make 2 one-hour home visits monthly to participating families. Monthly Group Connection events are also promoted.

**Integration:** Parent Educators also enroll each child in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. We also partner with the Union County Carnegie Library for various reading events.

**Collaboration:** The Union County School District provides in-kind building space and equipment for the staff.

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<th><strong>Action Items</strong> Major activities to be initiated in support of the objective (to be operationalized by staff and partners)</th>
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| Increase participation in Group Connection meetings | 3 | *documentation [via First Steps data] | - **Action:** Offer varied meeting times  
- **Action:** Offer incentives for participation |
| Continue recruitment of families (especially those with greatest needs) | 3 | *documentation of recruitment efforts  
*First Steps data | - **Action:** Place flyers in various community locations  
- **Action:** Recruit at community events |
| Increase referrals from other agencies | 3 | *documentation of referrals | - **Action:** Continue participation in Eat Smart/Move More; Literacy Council; and Education Task force  
- **Action:** Provide flyers to various community agencies |
### Imagination Library

**Description:** One book delivered to homes each month from birth to age 5

**Integration:** UCFS promotes registration at community events and for all PAT participants. Forms mailed to United Way of the Piedmont

**Collaboration:** United Way of the Piedmont

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| Increase access to Imagination Library services | 3 | Documentation received from United Way of the Piedmont | - Action: Continue to refer all PAT participants  
- Action: Continue to make registration forms available at community events |
### Countdown to Kindergarten

**Description:** During summer prior to kindergarten, children are provided 5 home visits and 1 visit with the teacher at the school (visits are 1 hour in length)

**Integration:** Operated in-house in collaboration with Union County School District. Local principals assist in identifying teachers to participate, and the teachers assist in identifying children to participate.

**Collaboration:** Union County School District

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| Increase the number of children served to 25 by the 2019-20 school year | 2 | Documentation of participation | - Action: Request funding to support increased enrollment  
- Action: Recruit teachers |
## Child Care Training

**Description:** 15 hours of childcare training for local childcare workers; 5 hours of classes for administrators

**Integration:** Annual meeting with local child care center directors for planning

**Collaboration:** Regional First Steps 4K; SC Program for Infant and Toddler Care

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</table>
| Verify application of information taught in child care trainings | 1 | *surveys  
*bi-annual meetings with center directors | Action: Send post-surveys to all class participants/center directors  
Action: Meet with center directors to review strategies and share what is working |