



# Comprehensive Plan 2018-2020

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."



Early education has been identified as an important component to enhance students' academic achievement. Allendale County First Steps Board of Directors and staff strive for excellence and pride themselves on providing parents with the support they seek to strengthen their families and promote optimal development of their children. We ensure this happens through having qualified staff to provide mentoring and technical assistance, administer parenting programs, implement research-based curriculum and offer best practices training.

With help from our collaborating partners and support of the community, we have successfully completed Allendale County First Steps Comprehensive Plan. A comprehensive plan developed for early education and designed to ensure that children in Allendale County receive the foundational skills needed to be successful learners. Allendale County First Comprehensive Plan was approved by the Board of Directors on May 8, 2018.

On behalf of Allendale County First Steps Board of Directors and staff, I would like to thank our partners, volunteers, parents and other stakeholders for their participation in completing our Comprehensive Plan. To meet the strategic result of ensuring children in Allendale County receive the foundational skills needed to be successful learners will require a significant commitment and expanded investments to provide quality early learning opportunities to preschool children. We look forward to working with you as we work to make gains on this comprehensive plan in the future.

Sincerely,

Patricia Hall  
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

**Allendale County First Steps Vision Statement**

Every Allendale 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

**Allendale County First Steps Mission Statement**

Collaborating with other entities, First Steps helps Allendale 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
- The partnership board adopts the following core values for its 2018-2020 Strategic Plan:

## 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>Allendale 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	Expand the reach of programs and services of Allendale County First Steps	1, 2, 4	
2	Increase and improve access to early childhood services in the community to ensure children in need are enrolled in quality early education programs	2, 3	
3	Increase public awareness of Allendale County First Steps and mobilize community to work in support of ACFS mission	1, 4, 5	

## Allendale 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).

<b>Local Portal</b>			
Allendale 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)
Develop and implement a protocol for tracking connections to services for families not enrolled in ACFS programs by 2020	1, 3	Connection documentation; evidence of protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collaborate with partners to identify families using their services and not enrolled in our programs</li> <li>▪ Collaborate with partners to create forms</li> </ul>
Develop and implement a protocol for staff and volunteers to follow up on referrals to services and advocate on behalf of Allendale County children and families through the referral process to ensure services get connected.	1, 3	Referral documentation; evidence of protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collaborate with partners to create forms for referral tracking</li> <li>▪ Quarterly meeting for discussion – not duplicating paper work</li> </ul>

## Community Education and Outreach

Allendale 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;"><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>Research and become an active member of a community health organization and involve Parents as Teachers families in events/activities of the organization by 2020.</p>	<p>1,3</p>	<p>Documentation of membership/participation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collaborate with health organization</li> <li>▪ Create calendar of events/ activities</li> <li>▪ Create tracking forms for participation</li> </ul>



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

Allendale 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 number of community convener meetings</p>	<p>1,2,3,</p>	<p>Record of meetings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Quarterly meetings</li> <li>▪ Create resource manual for county</li> <li>▪ Create tracking forms for services provided to families (within policies and procedure)</li> </ul>
<p>Recruit additional community leaders to partner with the community convener team</p>	<p>1, 2, 3,</p>	<p>Connection documentation; evidence of protocol</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Invite agencies that are not yet members</li> <li>▪ Participate in community events/activities</li> </ul>

## Countdown to Kindergarten

**Description:** Countdown to Kindergarten (CTK) is a summer home visitation model connecting rising kindergartners and their families with their future teachers. The program is designed:

- to forge strong and lasting home-school relationships,
- to acquaint children and families with the state and classroom expectations to increase the likelihood of school success,
- to increase parent involvement in the early grades (particularly in hard-to-reach communities), when children’s learning is foundational for life success; and
- to increase public awareness of the importance of school readiness and provide ways for parents and communities to impact children’s early school success.

**Integration:** Children who participate in CTK are attendees of the child care centers that we train and support in Allendale County (Little New Steps and Allendale Early Learning Academy). They often participate in our Parents as Teacher Program. This strategy is operated in-house.

**Collaboration:** As mentioned above, we collaborate with our partner child care centers to select children who may be candidates for the program. We also partner with the school district, whose teachers perform the home visits, and who help identify candidates for the program. We also have a grant from the Winthrop Family Fund for transportation.

<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.	1, 2	Documentation of numbers served.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collaborate with school district (teachers participation/student roster)</li> <li>▪ Create forms that track students’ progress</li> </ul>

## Child Care Training

**Description:** High-quality child care hinges on high-quality professional development that meets the needs of the local child care workforce. First Steps-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 in the classroom.

**Integration:** Child care centers that receive Allendale County First Steps scholarships are required to attend all child care trainings offered by the partnership. PAT families are invited to attend trainings.

**Collaboration:** As mentioned above, we collaborate with our child care facilities. The county and school district provide in-kind space for trainings. Our child care trainers also provide in-kind trainings.

<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 home child care providers and other providers in county served per year by 2 more facilities (currently about 6 facilities served) participating by the end of 2020.</p>	<p>1, 2, 3</p>	<p>Documentation of numbers served</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collaborate with DSS and ABC to identify child care providers not partnered with First Steps</li> <li>▪ Encourage child care providers to register their program with DSS/ABC so they can receive funding</li> </ul>

## Child Care Scholarships

**Description:** Access to quality child care is essential for children while away from their primary caregivers. Yet, of those families income-eligible for child care assistance in South Carolina, only a small fraction receive it due to lack of funds. In the absence of nurturing and consistently available family, friends or neighbors, parents are faced with few - or no – affordable care options. Child Care scholarships give parents the option for their children to attend high-quality child care while they work or attend school.

**Integration:** Children who receive scholarships are enrolled in Parents As Teachers. If not able to be enrolled, families of children who receive child care scholarships are required to attend PAT parent group meetings. Child Care facilities that receive scholarship children are required to attend high-quality Child Care Training delivered by Allendale County First Steps.

**Collaboration:** Collaboration exists between the child care facilities that receive children with scholarships.

<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 served per year from 14 to 18 by the end of 2020.</p>	<p>1, 2</p>	<p>Documentation of numbers served.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recruit and secure qualified teachers</li> <li>▪ Secure funding for additional children</li> </ul>

## Parents as Teachers

**Description:** Parents as Teachers (PAT) is an evidence-based home visiting program designed to build strong communities, thriving families and children who are healthy, safe and ready to succeed. PAT services include:

1. Personal Visits at least twice monthly
2. Monthly Group Connections with other PAT families
3. Screenings and Assessments to identify developmental concerns
4. Connections to Outside Resources that families may need to succeed

**Integration:** All PAT families receive Child Care Scholarships through ACFS. Families attend all ACFS family-orientated events. Occasionally, PAT families receive ACFS Countdown to Kindergarten program as well.

**Collaboration:** Allendale County provides space for parent group meetings and the school district provides door prizes for meetings.

<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 number of families' who complete the full program (First Steps to Kindergarten).	1, 2	Documentation of numbers served.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue explaining the benefits of completing the program</li> <li>▪ Offer Incentives/graduation incentives</li> </ul>
Improve families' connection to needed resources.	1, 2, 3,	Documentation of numbers served.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collaborate with community resources (meetings)</li> <li>▪ Create forms to track and follow-up with families</li> </ul>