

STRATEGIC PLAN

2024 – 2026





Mission

Saluda County First Steps will help families and caregivers prepare their children to succeed in school by maximizing public and private community resources to deliver, enhance, and expand high-quality diverse early care and educational services.

Vision

Every Saluda County child will be prepared to succeed in school.

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 throughout all of our diverse cultural identities.

The work of supporting families and caregivers is a collaborative effort between state and local stakeholders within the public, private, and faith-based sectors.

To achieve desired results, services must be high-quality and grounded in strong evidence. Services must be individualized and adaptable to meet the unique needs of our diverse racial/ethnic children/families. First Steps operates within a culture of accountability.

Message from the Executive Director



Kim Chariker
Executive Director
Saluda County First Steps

The process of working as a complete team to develop the FY24-26 Strategic Plan for Saluda County First Steps has been an eye-opening experience. From the creation of our Needs Assessment through collaborative community meetings to the completion of our current Strategic Plan shows the dedication of our community providers to addressing the needs of the young children and their families within our diverse county. No idea was too small or too large to address and develop a plan of action to follow through for our leaders of tomorrow.

The surveys were essential in developing our plan of action based on the stated needs of our parents and children. Every voice from our community brought information to the table to guide the development of our Strategic Plan.

Working together for the good of young children and their families is truly #OneSaluda!

Kim Chariker

Strategic Plan Process

CONVENE

Held community convenings to develop a vision for young children and their families

October 2022 – January 2023



UNDERSTAND

Reviewed local data and map assets to understand the state of young children, their families, and the early childhood system

October 2022 – March 2023



PRIORITIZE

Organized the insight gathered from the convenings and data to prioritize the concerns, needs, and gaps the partnership wants to address and formalized Needs Assessment

January 2023 – March 2023



PLAN

Wrote the partnership's three-year Strategic Plan using the Needs Assessment

March 2023 – May 2023



APPLY

Utilize the Strategic Plan to inform the partnership's Annual Formula Funding Grant Application

May 2023, May 2024, May 2025



IMPLEMENT

Execute the programs and services outlined in the Strategic Plan

July 2023 – June 2026



MONITOR

Track the partnership's progress on implementing programs to fidelity and on achieving the Strategic Plan

July 2023 – June 2026



Priority Needs: Summary

Through a series of community convenings, a needs assessment and asset mapping process, the following needs were prioritized for Saluda County. See our full needs assessment here:

www.saludafirststeps.org

1. Need for more Parenting Skills/Parent Education

Surveys distributed within Saluda County to parents and community partners asking for their assessment of the needs for our children and their families, determined that the number one priority was the need for more Parenting Skills/Parent Education.

2. Need for an updated Saluda County Resource Guide for Families

It was overwhelmingly determined that Saluda County needed an updated resource guide to assist families with locating information to guide them to the services needed within Saluda County.

3. Need for increased Tutoring for Saluda County Children in Need

Saluda County children are only demonstrating kindergarten readiness at 9%. (KRA data sourced from SC Education Oversight Committee) There is a need for increased Enhanced Early Education (tutoring) for Saluda County children identified through testing.

4. Need for Literacy Resources for All Families (English/Spanish)

Our Needs Assessment surveys determined that Saluda County children and their parents need more literacy activities to encourage better education and growth within our community.

Objectives

- 1. Increase the Number of Children and Families Enrolled in High Intensity Programs Funded by Saluda County First Steps**
- 2. Improve the Safety and Well-Being of Children by Strengthening Families.**
- 3. Increase Community Awareness and Support of Saluda County First Steps Programs.**
- 4. Create a Coordinated and Family-Centered Early Childhood Resource Guide for Saluda County Families.**

Objective One: Increase the Number of Children and Families Enrolled in High Intensity Programs Funded by Saluda County First Steps

STRATEGY 1.1

Nurturing Parenting

SMART GOAL(S)

1. By the end of FY26, we will increase the number of families served through our Nurturing Parenting Program by 10%.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will collaborate with Saluda DSS, Saluda School District One, NFP (Carolina Health Center, Inc.), Westview Behavioral Services, local attorneys, PASOs, Hispanic Alliance, local physician's offices to identify families of young children in need of parenting services.

STRATEGY 1.2

Enhanced Early Education

SMART GOAL(S)

1. By the end of FY26, we will increase the number of children served through our Enhanced Early Education Program by 10%.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will partner with the local school district (Saluda Primary School and Hollywood Elementary), and private 3K/4K centers to identify children and provide EEE services.

Objective One: Increase the Number of Children and Families Enrolled in High Intensity Programs Funded by Saluda County First Steps

STRATEGY 1.3

Nurse Family Partnership

SMART GOAL(S)

1. By the end of FY26, we will increase the number of families served through out Nurse Family Partnership program by 5%.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will partner with Carolina Health Centers, Inc., local physicians' offices, PASOs, DHEC, DSS, Westview Behavioral Services, Hispanic Alliance, and local churches to identify and provide NFP services to new mothers.

Objective Two: Improve the Safety and Well-Being of Children by Strengthening Families

STRATEGY 2.1

Nurturing Parenting

SMART GOAL(S)

1. By the end of FY26, we will increase the number of families served through our Nurturing Parenting program by 10%.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will collaborate with Saluda DSS, Saluda School District One, NFP (Carolina Health Center, Inc.), Westview Behavioral Services, local attorneys, PASOs, Hispanic Alliance, local physician's offices to identify families of young children in need of parenting services.

STRATEGY 2.2

Enhanced Early Education

SMART GOAL(S)

1. By the end of FY26, we will increase the number of children served through our Enhanced Early Education program by 10%.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will partner with Saluda School District One and our local licensed child care centers to increase the number of children served in our EEE program.

Objective Three: Increase Community Awareness and Support of Saluda County First Steps Programs

STRATEGY 3.1

Community Awareness

SMART GOAL(S)

1. We will participate in at least 4 community festivals/events annually.
2. We will attend and present information at our local community service network meetings (Saluda Service Network) to provide information on the services and needs of Saluda County First Steps at least every other month as scheduled.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will collaborate with SSD One, Saluda Chamber of Commerce, Saluda County Library, Local Governmental Agencies, Local Businesses, Local Non-Profits, and Local Health and Mental Health Agencies to gather and share service information.

STRATEGY 3.2

Family Support

SMART GOAL(S)

1. We will distribute dual language literature to local businesses and organizations related to our current programs.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will partner with local Translators, PASOs, and Hispanic Alliance to provide our program literature in English and Spanish.

Objective Four: Create a Coordinated and Family-Centered Early Childhood Resource Guide for Saluda County Families

STRATEGY 4.1

Collaborate with other local agencies and organizations to create an updated Saluda County Resource Guide for Families with young children

SMART GOAL(S)

- By the end of FY26, we will collaborate with local agencies to create an Updated Resource Guide for Families of Saluda County documenting local services for families with young children in Saluda County, publish, and distribute this guide to Saluda County Families.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will collaborate with Saluda School District One, Saluda Chamber of Commerce, Local Governmental Agencies, Local Businesses, Saluda County Library, Saluda DSS, Saluda DHEC, Westview Behavioral, and Local Physicians' Offices to gather and share service information.

Overarching Measure of Success

INCREASE THE NUMBER OF SALUDA COUNTY CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ENROLLED IN HIGH INTENSITY PROGRAMS FUNDED BY FIRST STEPS

By FY26, the percentage of children and families enrolled in high intensity programs funded by Saluda County First Steps will increase from **3%** to **15%**.

Acknowledgments

Saluda County First Steps would like to acknowledge the support we received in successfully developing our Needs Assessment from input through our Saluda County Community Partners: Saluda County First Steps Board Members, Saluda School District One Administration and Staff Members, Saluda County DSS, Westview Behavioral Staff, Piedmont Agency on Aging (Foster Grandparents) Staff, Saluda Learning Center (EHS/HS GLEAMNS), The Potter's House Saluda (Non-Profit), PASOs Community Health Worker and Administration, Saluda County Library, Saluda County DHEC and South Carolina DHEC Staff, Saluda County DJJ Staff, Saluda Police Department, Victim's Advocate for the Town of Saluda, Saluda Mayor (Milliken Matthews), Saluda Chamber of Commerce, and the Town of Saluda Staff.

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