

STRATEGIC PLAN

2024 – 2026



Mission

Collaborating with other entities, Colleton County First Steps helps 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.

Vision

Every child in Colleton County will be prepared for success in school.

Values

1. Families are the single most important influence on the development of their young children.
2. The work of supporting families and caregivers is a collaborative effort between state and local stakeholders within the public, private and faith sectors.
3. School readiness is the result of a child's development in many areas, with each contributing to the child's success.
4. Services must be individualized and adaptable to meet the unique needs of children and families.
5. We value, and demonstrate in our collaborative work and advocacy, diverse perspectives in the development of public policy and programs.
6. To achieve desired results, services must be high-quality and grounded in strong evidence. First Steps operates within a culture of accountability.

Message from the Executive Director



Cindy S. Riley
Executive Director
Colleton County First
Steps

Colleton County First Steps' staff and entire partnership board work throughout the community with other non-profits, faith-based organizations, businesses and government entities to implement programs for children and their families. We partner with other agencies such as SC Department of Social Services, the Board of Disabilities, Baby Net, DHEC, and Colleton Adult Learning Center.

Our Parents as Teachers program is a nationally recognized Blue Ribbon Affiliate. Our staff works diligently to ensure that all of our children and their families' needs are met. Our work with our families wouldn't be possible without our tremendous community partners! The Colleton County School District, the Walterboro Rotary Club, the Cherokee Plantation Charities foundation, and local individuals make our work easier by their very generous gifts and support!

Cindy S. Riley

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 Colleton County. See our full needs assessment here:

<https://www.scfirststeps.org/media/zxtl3acx/colleton-county-fy24-26-needs-assessment.pdf>

1. Child Care Deserts

63% of children in Colleton County live in or near a child care desert in our community

2. Parenting Programs

59.6% of children in Colleton County have experienced at least one adverse childhood consequence

3. Transportation

There is little to no data about transportation in Colleton County

Objectives

- 1. Families are supported as their child's first and most important teachers.**
- 2. The early childhood system in our county works collaboratively, aligning resources, strategy, and focus across agencies to benefit young children and their families.**
- 3. Families with young children will have knowledge about and be able to access all publicly-funded programs, services and resources for which they and their children are eligible.**

Objective One: Families are supported as their child's first and most important teachers.

STRATEGY 1.1

Parents as Teachers

SMART GOAL(S)

1. By the end of FY26, we will increase the number of children we directly serve in PAT from 10% to 12%.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will partner with the Colleton County School District, Adult Education, current families in our program, and the local childcare centers to recruit families for our Parents as Teachers program.

STRATEGY 1.2

Nurturing Parenting

SMART GOAL(S)

1. By the end of FY26, we will increase the number of families we serve by 2%.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will partner with the Colleton County School District, the local head start agencies, and other community partners to recruit for our Nurturing parenting program.

Objective Two: The early childhood system in our county works collaboratively, aligning resources, strategy, and focus across agencies to benefit young children and their families.

STRATEGY 2.1

Develop and implement an ongoing process for communicating across the early childhood system in our county

SMART GOAL(S)

1. Each year until FY26, we will attend and/or host two meetings with our community partners to collaborate and streamline services for children and their families.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will partner with Head Start, East Coast Migrant Head Start, the Department of Social Services, the early childhood center, faith based entities and community members.

STRATEGY 2.2

By strengthening the outreach of Colleton County First Steps and better communicating its role, position it to be a trusted source of advice for families and other agencies.

SMART GOAL(S)

1. By the end of FY 26, we will increase the number of children we directly serve in high intensity programs from 55% to 57%.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will partner with the Board of Disabilities, the Department of Social Services, the Colleton County School District, and other local agencies.

Objective Three: Families with young children will have knowledge about and be able to access all publicly funded program, services, and resources for which they and their children are eligible.

STRATEGY 3.1

First Five SC

SMART GOAL(S)

- By FY 26, our community's use of First Five SC will increase from 0% to 2%.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will partner with local child care centers, Head Start, East Coast Migrant Head Start, Department of Social Services, and the board of disabilities.

Overarching Measure of Success

By FY 2026, the percentage of children in need who are directly served by First Steps high intensity programs will increase from 10% to 12%.

Acknowledgments

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