

STRATEGIC PLAN

2024 – 2026



Mission

Collaborating with other entities, Orangeburg 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.

To invest in our community, to support families and caregivers of children birth to age 5, to improve school readiness, and to ensure children realize their full potential.

Vision

Empower families in Orangeburg County to acquire, demonstrate, and value early childhood knowledge and skills that will improve school readiness and support school success.

Values

- Collaborative advocacy, and diverse perspectives in the development of public policy and programs.
- Individualized services adaptable to meet unique needs of children and families with integrity.
- High-quality, evidence-based early education programs and services.

Message from the Board Chair



James Rickenbacker

Board Chair

Orangeburg County First Steps

It's spectacular to witness the seeds of knowledge being planted every day in our children through the programs provided by the local partnership.

Thank you Orangeburg County First Steps!

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 Orangeburg County. See our full needs assessment here:

<https://rb.gy/vt6zk>

1. Parent Engagement

Provide opportunities for parents and caregivers to develop a positive attitude toward further understanding of their child's healthy development.

Aligns with Every Child Ready Priority 3

2. School Transition

Promote learning in an environment that acknowledges children's diverse backgrounds and supports them in a successful transition from early childhood programs to school.

Aligns with Every Child Ready Priority 1

3. Early Intervention

Provide early intervention screenings and assessments for babies and toddlers to identify and evaluate as early as possible if a child's healthy development is compromised and connect the family with the appropriate intervention services to improve child and family development.

Aligns with Every Child Ready Priority 2

Objectives

1. CHILDREN ARE SAFE AND NURTURED IN THEIR FAMILIES, HOMES, AND COMMUNITIES.

Build resilience within children and families, improve child safety, and intervene to mitigate the harms of adverse childhood experiences.

2. PARENTS ARE ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN THEIR CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT, HEALTH, LEARNING, AND TRANSITIONS.

Increase parent knowledge of early childhood development and enhanced parenting practices, support families access to supports and services they need, engage community partners to assist parents in obtaining the range of services their family needs.

3. CHILDREN AND FAMILIES EXPERIENCE SEAMLESS TRANSITIONS ACROSS EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS AND INTO KINDERGARTEN.

Increase family awareness of kindergarten expectations, create positive home-school relationships, and ensure a smooth transition to school.

4. DISPARITIES IN EDUCATIONAL, DEVELOPMENTAL, AND HEALTH OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN OF DIFFERENT ABILITIES ARE REDUCED.

Provide the added support and nurturing children with developmental delays need to reach milestones, gain confidence, and succeed in school and social settings.

Objective One: Children are safe and nurtured in their families, homes, and communities

STRATEGY 1.1

Parents as Teachers

SMART GOAL

- By the end of FY26, the percentage of children who are directly served by Orangeburg County First Steps will increase from 5% to 7%.
- By the end of FY24, we will increase the proportion of our clients getting an on time well-child visit by 5%.
- By the end of 2025, we will ensure 80% of children enrolled in high-intensity programs, receive consistent medical care and meet recommendations for well-child visits, immunizations, and oral health.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Head Start, Early Head Start, WIC-Orangeburg County Public Health, Orangeburg County Housing Authority, Orangeburg County School District, Orangeburg County Dept. of Social Services, DAZZ Orangeburg, Family Health Centers Inc., Hope Health Inc., CASA Family Systems, Family Solutions of the Low Country

Objective One: Children are safe and nurtured in their families, homes, and communities

STRATEGY 1.2

Home Instruction for Parents of Pre-School Youngsters (HIPPY)

SMART GOAL(S)

- By the end of FY26, the percentage of children who are directly served by Orangeburg County First Steps will increase from 5% to 7%.
- By the end of 2025, we will ensure 90% of children enrolled in high-intensity programs, receive consistent medical care and meet recommendations for well-child visits, immunizations, and oral health.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Head Start, Early Head Start, WIC-Orangeburg County Public Health, Orangeburg County Housing Authority, Orangeburg County School District, Orangeburg County Dept. of Social Services, DAZZ Orangeburg, Family Health Centers Inc., Hope Health Inc., CASA Family Systems, Family Solutions of the Low Country

Objective Two: Families are supported as their child's first and most important teacher.

STRATEGY 2.1

Parents As Teachers

SMART GOAL(S)

- By the end of fiscal year 2026, the percentage of children in need who are directly served by Orangeburg County First Steps will increase from 5% to 10%.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Head Start, Early Head Start, WIC-Orangeburg County Public Health, Orangeburg County Housing Authority, Orangeburg County School District, Orangeburg County Dept. of Social Services, DAZZ Orangeburg, Family Health Centers Inc., Hope Health Inc., CASA Family Systems, Family Solutions of the Low Country

Objective Two: Families are supported as their child's first and most important teacher.

STRATEGY 2.2

Home Instruction for Parents of Pre-school Youngsters (HIPPY)

SMART GOAL(S)

- By the end of fiscal year 2026, the percentage of children in need who are directly served by Orangeburg County First Steps will increase from 5% to 10%.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- First Steps 4K, Head Start, Early Head Start, WIC-Orangeburg County Public Health, Orangeburg County Housing Authority, Orangeburg County School District, Orangeburg County Dept. of Social Services, DAZZ Orangeburg, Family Health Centers Inc., Hope Health Inc., CASA Family Systems, Family Solutions of the Low Country

Objective Three: Children and families experience seamless transitions across early learning programs and into kindergarten.

STRATEGY 2.3

Countdown To 4K

SMART GOAL(S)

1. By the end of fiscal year 2026, the percentage of children who score at the highest level on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment will increase from 25% to 30%

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Orangeburg County School District, SCFS 4K, Head Start/Early Head Start United Way of the Midlands, Rural Accelerator Collective Impact (Claflin University & Save The Children)

STRATEGY 2.4

Countdown To Kindergarten

SMART GOAL(S)

1. By the end of fiscal year 2026, the percentage of children who score at the highest level on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment will increase from 25% to 30%

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Orangeburg County School District, SCFS 4K, Head Start/Early Head Start, United Way of the Midlands, Rural Accelerator Collective Impact (Claflin University & Save The Children)

Objective Four: Children are screened, assessed, identified early, and connected with services that address developmental concerns.

STRATEGY 4.1

Healthy Steps

SMART GOAL(S)

- By the end of 2026, we will expand access to screening, identification of disabilities and referrals for treatment and services by 10%
- By the end of 2026, we will increase well-child visits, immunizations, and oral health recommendations by 10%

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Family Health Centers Inc., The MUSC Community Outreach (formerly The Regional Medical Center), Orangeburg Rehabilitative Services-Orangeburg County Public Health, The Pediatric Clinic, Hope Health Inc., Southern Med Pediatrics, BabyNet, Orangeburg-Calhoun Free Medical Clinic

Overarching Measure(s) of Success

INCREASE THE REACH OF FIRST STEPS SERVICES

By FY26, the percentage of children in need who are directly served by Orangeburg County First Steps will increase from 5% to 7%.

INCREASE THE PERCENTAGE OF INCOMING KINDERGARTNERS WHO ARE READY FOR SCHOOL

By 2026, the percentage of children who score at the highest level on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment will increase by 2% each year to 31%.

Acknowledgments

Orangeburg County First Steps (OCFS) appreciates the extensive input from its staff, the OCFS Board of Directors, the SC First Steps Office of Research & Strategy, and the Early Childhood community in the development of this strategic plan.

“The project described was supported through South Carolina First Steps by the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five Initiative (PDG B-5), Grant Number 90TP0080-02-01 from the Office of Child Care, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.”