



STRATEGIC PLAN

2024 – 2026





Mission

Anderson County First Steps works collaboratively to ensure that all children start school ready to reach their highest potential with engaged support from their parents, caregivers, and communities.

Vision

We will be successful when all children reach their highest potential.

Values

- **Children**

Our focus and priority from prenatal development through age five are young children and their families and caregivers.

- **Relationships**

We cultivate positive, supportive, respectful, and reinforcing interactions between people that shape development, build community, increase success and productivity, foster learning and growth, and affirm the unique value of individuals, caregivers, parents, and children.

- **Equity**

We ensure all people have the opportunity and resources to be successful and that all voices are solicited and heard.

- **High Quality**

We ensure that our programs and services are culturally responsive, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate and are delivered with fidelity to the model being implemented. Our products, services, and operations are marked by excellence.

- **Results**

We produce meaningful and measurable outcomes.

Message from the Executive Director



Paige Wall
Executive Director
Anderson County First Steps

We would like to thank the hundreds of people who contributed to this process involving regional meetings, surveys, and data gathering sessions. We listened to families, parents, childcare providers, school personnel, and community leaders to help us understand the needs Anderson County First Steps must address.

This plan offers our collective commitments to Anderson County children, their families, and our community. Our work is critically important to the future of our community. We will be successful when all our children reach their highest potential.

Paige Wall

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 Anderson County. See our full needs assessment here:

[Needs Assessment 2024-2026 Anderson](#)

1. According to our Needs Assessment, the federal poverty level (<185 percent), equaling 43% under age 6 in Anderson County (year 2020), is a priority area.

Our county's zip codes with demonstrated needs are 29624, 29625, and 29631. As of 2020, Anderson County had a total birth count of 2152, with a 991 expected Medicaid birth count. The number of babies having less than adequate prenatal care was 353.

2. Low Maternal Education (less than high school graduation) is a priority.

Of the total live births in 2020, with mothers having less than a high school diploma, there were 322 total live births, (202 white, 72 African American, 45 Hispanic, 3 Other).

3. Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) scores are a priority area in Anderson County, with 32% ready in 2021.

The KRA provides a snapshot of students' abilities at the beginning of the school year. It measures a child's school readiness across multiple domains: Social foundations, language/literacy, mathematics, and physical well-being.

Objectives

1. All children have access to high quality early childhood programs and services.

- We will increase our enrollment in state funded First Steps 4-K classes.
- We will expand our reach and increase the number of children from racial and ethnic minority groups.

2. Parents have the support and resources they need to be their child's first and best teacher.

- We will increase the number of families participating in our Triple P Programs.
- We will increase the number of parents in our Enhanced Raising A Reader Programs.
- We will increase the number of children and parents participating in Countdown to 4K and Countdown to Kindergarten.

3. Community partners understand the developmental needs of children and the importance of school readiness.

- We will increase our community education and outreach activities.
- We will increase our distribution of educational materials.

Objective One: All children have access to high-quality early education programs and services.

STRATEGY 1.1

Expand the geographic reach and enrollment in state-funded, full-day 4-year-old Kindergarten available at no cost to eligible children in public schools, private schools, and private childcare centers.

SMART GOAL(S)

1. We will increase the enrollment in state First Steps funded 4-year-old Kindergarten classes in Anderson County by 7.84% from 51 children to 55 children by Fiscal Year 2026.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will partner with Kiddie Land Child Care Center, Welfare Baptist Church Day Care, Grannies Kids, Kiddie University, Saint Joseph Catholic School, and Trinity Christian Educational School.

STRATEGY 1.2

Expand our reach by reducing the racial/ethnic gap in our school readiness programs.

SMART GOAL(S)

1. We will expand our reach and increase our number of participation of Black children from 21% to 25% by Fiscal Year 2026.
2. We will expand our reach and increase our number of participation of Hispanic children from 19% to 22% by Fiscal Year 2026.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will partner with Anderson School District One, Anderson School District Two, Anderson School District Three, and Anderson School District Four as well as Saint Joseph Catholic School.

Objective Two: Parents have the support and resources they need to be their child's first and best teacher.

STRATEGY 2.1

Provide parents with access to the support and resources that strengthen their families.

SMART GOAL(S)

1. We will increase the number of families participating in high-intensity family strengthening programs by 19.05% from 21 to 25 by the end of Fiscal Year 2026.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will partner with our Positive Parenting Programs (Triple P) in Anderson School District Two, Anderson School District Three, and Anderson School District Four.

STRATEGY 2.2

Increase parents' confidence, knowledge, and skills to promote the optimal development of their children.

SMART GOAL(S)

1. We will increase the number of parents participating in evidence-based literacy training to foster healthy brain development, parent-child bonding, and early literacy skills critical for school success by 19.56% from 46 to 55 by the end of Fiscal Year 2026.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will partner with our Enhanced Raising a Reader Programs in Anderson School District One, Anderson School District Two, and Anderson School District Three.

Objective Two Continued: Parents have the support and resources they need to be their child's first and best teacher.

STRATEGY 2.3

Promote parents' knowledge of early childhood milestones and kindergarten readiness to build parents' skills in supporting their children's successful transitions across early learning programs.

SMART GOAL(S)

1. We will increase the number of children and their parents participating in Countdown to 4K by 19.35% from 31 to 37 and Countdown to Kindergarten by 21.05% from 19 to 23 by the end of Fiscal Year 2026.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will partner with Anderson School District One, Anderson School District Two, Anderson School District Three, Anderson School District Four, and Saint Joseph Catholic School.

Objective Three: Community partners understand the developmental needs of children and the importance of school readiness. .

STRATEGY 3.1

Engage in public information and parent outreach efforts to promote childcare and early education, health and safety, special needs and early intervention, food and nutrition, and parent and family support.

SMART GOAL(S)

1. We will increase our community education and outreach activities by 25% from 8 events yearly to 10 events yearly by the end of Fiscal Year 2026.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

We will partner with Anderson School District One, Anderson School District Two, Anderson School District Three, Anderson School District Four, Saint Joseph's Catholic School, Healthy Steps, and The Parenting Place.

STRATEGY 3.2

We will provide parents with information to support and strengthen the development of their preschool children.

SMART GOAL(S)

1. We will increase our distribution of educational materials by 3.61% from 8300 materials to 8600 materials by the end of Fiscal Year 2026.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will partner with Anderson School District One, Anderson School District Two, Anderson School District Three, Anderson School District Four, Healthy Steps, The Parenting Place, and Saint Joseph Catholic School.

Overarching Measure of Success

More children arrive at Kindergarten ready for success.

The percentage of Anderson County children who score at the highest level on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment will increase by 9.37% from 32.00% ready in 2021 to 35.00% ready in Fiscal Year 2026.

Acknowledgments

Our Anderson County First Steps Partnership would like to thank our Board as well as members of our community who participated in this process. We strive to ensure our children reach their highest potential with engaged support from their parents, caregivers, and communities.

Our program coordinators were vital in this extensive process by supporting our children, parents, and communities.

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