

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

2024 – 2026



Acknowledgments

We wish to acknowledge all the individuals who were involved in our Needs Assessment process, specifically in our Community Forum, including our Board, staff, and other generous community members who volunteered their time on behalf of the young children in our community.

This report incorporates knowledge gained from surveys and the forum, bringing together the voices of community members to learn what young children in Chesterfield County need to thrive.

The process involved convening key stakeholders, including parents and local experts, in a Community Forum to review local data and explore assets mapping to understand the current circumstances of our county's young children's & their families, and the early childhood system overall. Then, we organized the information gathered from the stakeholders' Forum to prioritize the concerns, needs and gaps the partnership wants to address into a formalized report.

In addition to the in-person stakeholders sessions, we contracted the services of Justine Can Do It, LLC to guide our process. This would not have been possible without the Preschool Development Grant:

"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."

Message from the Executive Director



Karen Martini-Waller

Executive Director
Chesterfield County First Steps

To better understand the needs of families and caregivers of children 0-5 in Chesterfield County, engaged Justine Can Do It, LLC to conduct a participatory community needs assessment, gathering input from nonprofit and community leaders, childcare providers, and parents of young children. This report summarizes learnings from surveys, interviews, and group sessions, bringing together the voices of community members to learn what young children in Chesterfield County need to thrive. Participants offered insights into the needs of children 0-5 and their families, gaps in services, and barriers to full inclusion in and access. It is our hope that the data gathered here will inform First Steps' program planning and decision-making and also provide insight to others seeking to support young children in their early years to build a strong foundation for the future of Chesterfield County.

Karen Martini-Waller

Message from the Board Chair



Tony Nolan
Board Chair
Chesterfield County First Steps

The Chesterfield County First Steps 2024-2026 Needs Assessment reflects our organization's continued commitment to our community's youngest members and their families. Our January 2023 Community Forum was a meaningful collaboration with numerous community stakeholders and was invaluable to guiding Chesterfield County First Steps in developing our Strategic Plan to help ensure that all our children arrive at first grade ready to learn and succeed.

We sincerely appreciate the participation of dedicated professionals from the education, health care, childcare, business and faith communities to help us help get all our children ready for school.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Nolan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "T" and "N".

Needs Assessment Process

CONVENE

Held a community convenings with 25 participants and developed a vision for young children and their families

January 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

UNDERSTAND

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

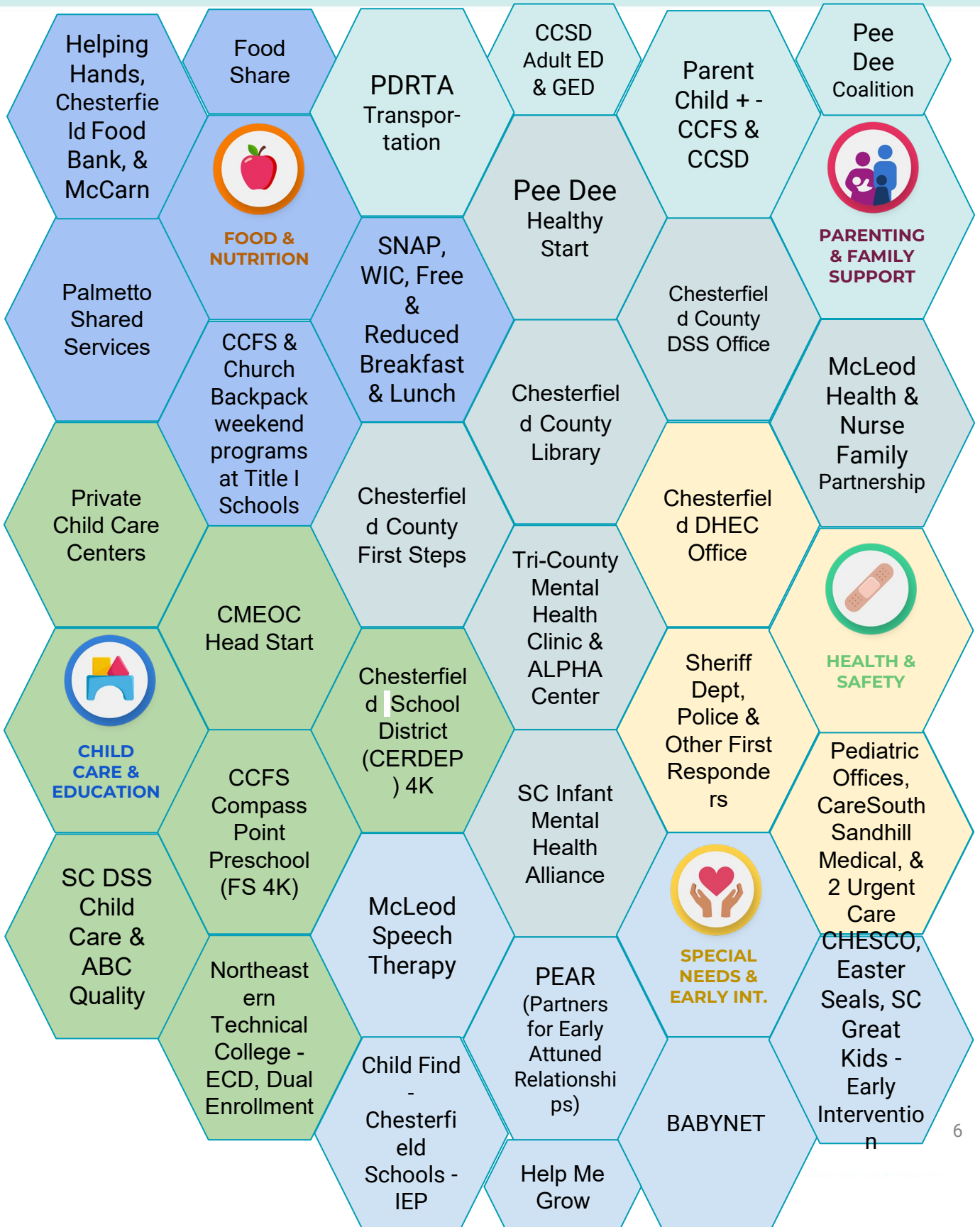
October 2022 – March 2023

“We have to keep whatever momentum was developed here, going....”

**“If early childhood education becomes a priority, in any community and ever country – in a generation.... every community, we can change
If every can child reaches 1st grade knowing how to learn, they will succeed – they have the opportunity to succeed.”**

- Tony Nolan

Asset Map: CHESTERFIELD COUNTY



Priorities: Summary

1. ENSURE CHILDREN ARE READY FOR KINDERGARTEN

Parent Education & Support in combination with Early Childhood Education is needed

2. ADDRESS EQUITY: A FAIR CHANCE FOR EVERY CHILD

Children of color are arriving at Kindergarten unprepared at a disproportionate level

3. DEVELOP A COUNTY-WIDE, COORDINATED EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM

Early childhood education, health and wellbeing services are available from multiple agencies; however, a collaborative and seamless system is needed.

Priority One:

ENSURE CHILDREN ARE READY FOR KINDERGARTEN

72% are “not ready” to start kindergarten (n = 462)

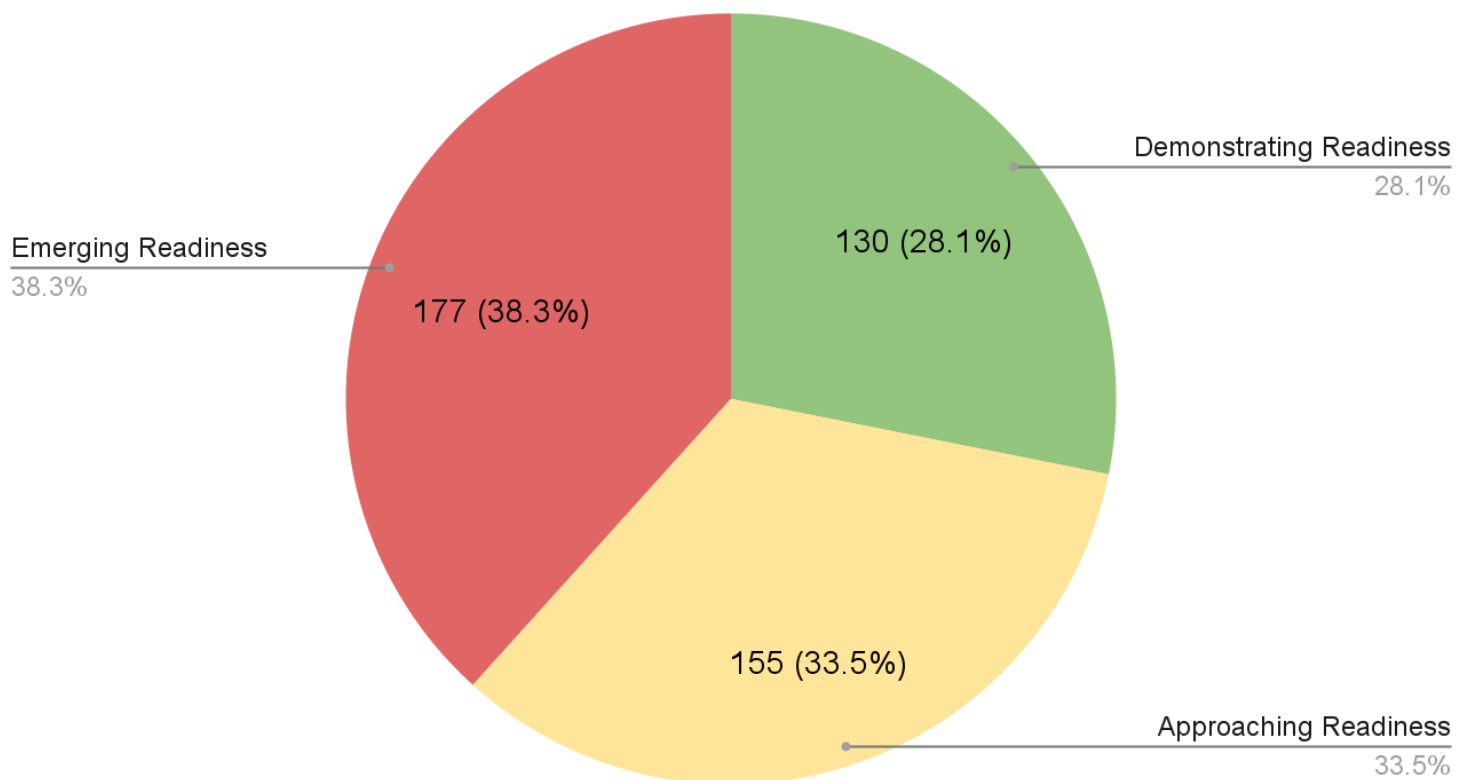
Data Source: [SC Education Data Dashboard](#) for 4k-5k Students

The KRA determines each child’s readiness level from an evaluation of four domains: Social Foundations, Language/Literacy, Mathematics, and Physical Well-Being.

- **Demonstrating Readiness:** The child consistently demonstrates the foundational skills and behaviors that enable a child to fully participate in the kindergarten curriculum.
- **Approaching Readiness:** The child exhibits some of the foundational skills and behaviors that are needed to participate in the kindergarten curriculum.
- **Emerging Readiness:** The child displays minimal foundational skills and behaviors, which are needed to successfully meet kindergarten expectations.

Children whose readiness skills are “approaching” and/or “emerging” require differentiated instruction, targeted supports, or interventions to be successful in kindergarten.

2021 Chesterfield Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA)



Priority Two:

ADDRESS EQUITY: A FAIR CHANCE FOR EVERY CHILD

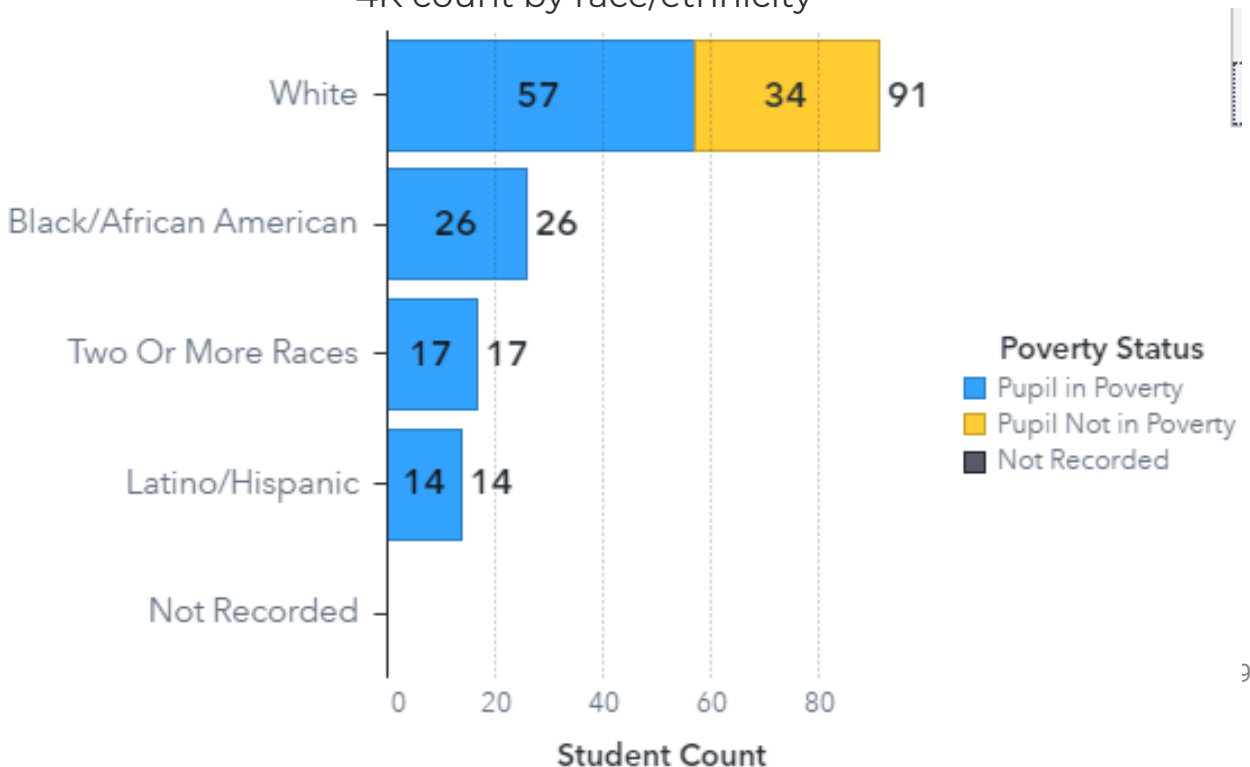
49% of Black children and 41% of Hispanic children live in Poverty vs. 24% of White children in Chesterfield County

Data source: [Annie E. Casey Kids Count Data Center](#)

Disaggregated by Race	Value
% Children in Poverty	25%
Black	49%
Hispanic	41%
White	24%

This is reflected in only white students administered the KRA being recorded as NOT in poverty.

164 Students Administered 4k Readiness Assessment (2020)
4K count by race/ethnicity



Priority Three:

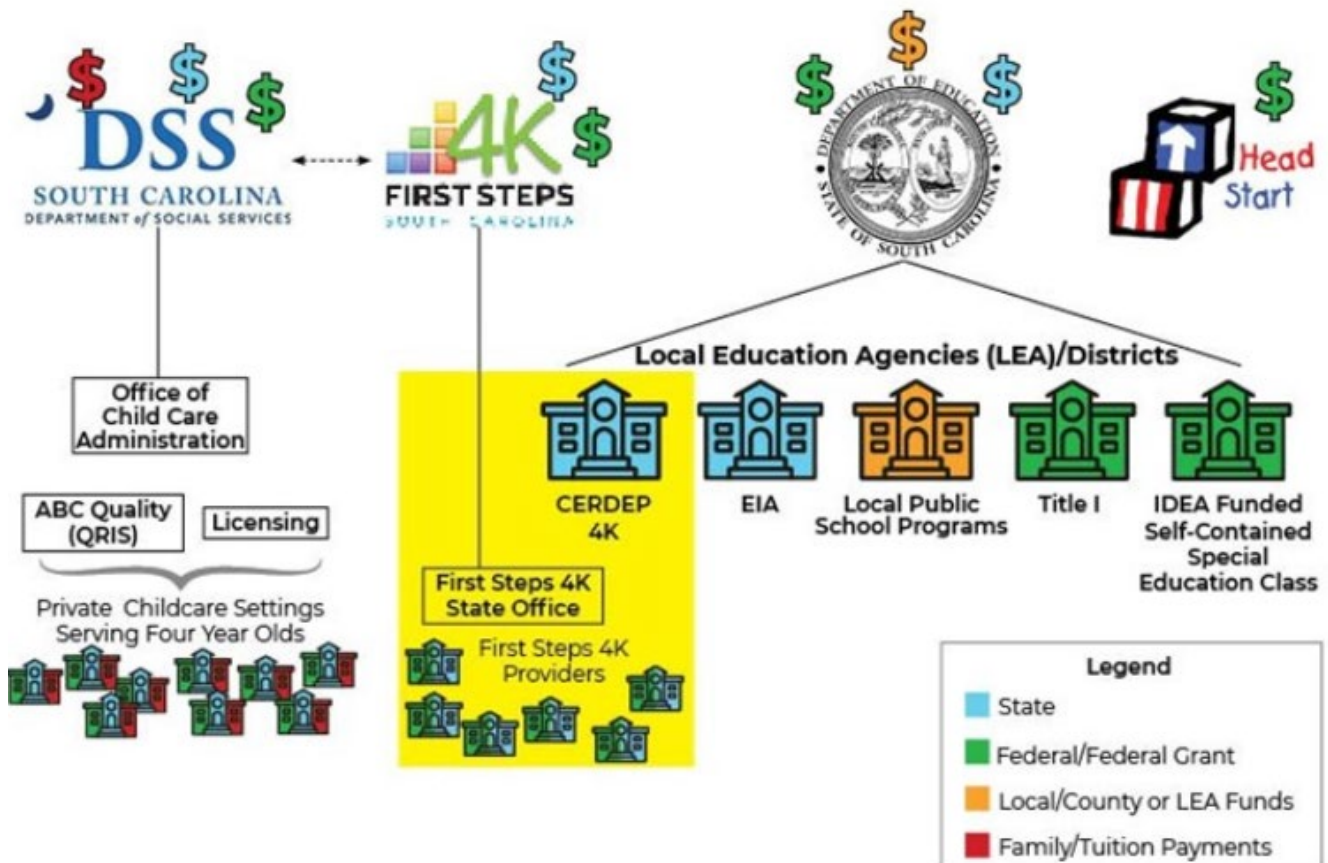
DEVELOP A COUNTY-WIDE, COORDINATED EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM

Parents (61%) & Community (62%) both agreed the MOST important thing related to the early learning & development for young children is “Finding high-quality child care/early education programs (including child care, Head Start, 4K)”

Data source: Chesterfield Preschool Development Survey

There isn't currently a network of child care directors and principals association - there's a need for a network to share ideas, support and learn of resources and improve transition from early care to kindergarten.

Funding Streams for 4K



Next Steps



Other Recommended Next Steps

- Share findings with community partners and seek their collaboration in building solutions.
- Continue to engage parents and early educators in conversations about what is needed and how communitywide problems can be solved.
- Integrate learning from Needs Assessment process and findings into Chesterfield County First Steps' strategic planning in the Spring of 2023.
- Continue to analyze systems, patterns, and themes in this data to inform planning and action.