

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

2024 – 2026



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 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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Saluda County Early Childhood Needs Assessment Data 2023

27.8% of births occur with less than adequate prenatal care

32.9% of births are to mothers with less than high school education

43.3% of births are to mothers on Medicaid

(All the statistics above are sourced from SC DHEC Vital Records in 2020)

Population of children under the age of 6 who live in poverty (less than 185% of poverty level) – 52.3%

Estimated number of children under the age of 6 – 1,306

Estimated number of 3–4-year-olds – 478

Estimated number of 3–4-year-olds enrolled in child care or preschool settings - 162

(All population estimates are sourced from the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2016 – 2020))

Number of licensed child care facilities in Saluda County as of 2022 – 5

Licensed child care capacity – 526 children

(Child care information sourced from SC Department of Social Services)

9.10% of Saluda County Kindergarteners demonstrating Readiness on the Fall 2021 SC Kindergarten Readiness Assessment

Saluda Primary School – 9.10%

Hollywood Elementary School – 7.40%

(KRA data sourced from SC Education Oversight Committee)

From the Preschool Development Grant Survey Data (85.71% from Saluda County Responses):

Finding High Quality child care/early education programs 59%

Understanding child or children’s development 38.5%

Knowing how to play with child/children to promote learning 51.3%

Being in a family friendly community 63.4%

Having enough family time to spend with child/children 51.2%

Knowing what to do for child/children to be ready for school 35.9%

Message from the Executive Director



Kim Chariker
Executive Director
Saluda County First Steps

Interacting with a community that wants to see all of our young children succeed in school and life is what makes Saluda County special. Our #OneSaluda slogan has truly brought our community together to achieve success. The support shown to Saluda County First Steps during this Needs Assessment process has been nothing short of amazing. We all want to see the youth of our county succeed in all aspects of their lives and want a united community of support for families. We have the foundation to establish a Strategic Plan that will guide us in helping our young children be prepared to succeed in school and in life. Community partnerships are key to providing the tools necessary for our young children to reach their goals.

Kim Chariker

Needs Assessment Process

CONVENE

Held two community convenings with 39 participants and developed 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

“We need more of our Saluda services to be open after our working hours. We have to work, but sometimes we need help when offices are closed.” Hispanic Parent Survey Response

“I don’t think we have updated our community resource guide, so we don’t know what services are available to us. An updated Saluda County Resource Guide would benefit everyone.” Shanna Myers, The Potter’s House Saluda

Asset Map



Priorities: Summary

Priorities for Saluda County as identified by parents, caregivers, extended family members, community partners, and stakeholders:

- 1. Need for more Parenting Skills/Parent Education**
- 2. Need for an updated Saluda County Resource Guide for Families**
- 3. Need for increased Tutoring for Saluda County Children in Need**
- 4. Need for Literacy Classes and Resources for All Families (English and Spanish)**



Priority One: Parenting Skills

Parent and Community Partner Surveys

Parent and Community Partner Surveys were distributed throughout Saluda County to determine the greatest needs within our community for the success of our young children. 45 parent surveys were received and 39 community partners, parents of young children, and board members participated in our Needs Assessment convener meetings held on January 17th and January 25th of this year.



“Parenting skills and Early Literacy Training for parents are some of the greatest needs in Saluda County.” Jennifer Thomas, Principal of Hollywood Elementary School

Priority Two: County Resource Guide

Need Updated Resource Guide for Saluda

During our local convenings, it was overwhelmingly determined that Saluda County was in need of an updated resource guide. This resource guide would assist families in need with locating information that would guide them to services within Saluda County. An update resource guide would also provide them with points of contact for services that not available within our county.



“We need support and collaboration among available programs in Saluda to provide the resources that our parents and care givers need.” Saluda County First Steps Board Member

“We really need an updated resource guide for Saluda to identify the services we currently have available and to determine what needs we have by reaching out to other agencies for assistance in the areas that we do not provide within our county.” Saluda FS Board Member

Priority Three: Tutoring for Children

Need for more Enhanced Early Education Services within Saluda County Child Care Centers and Saluda School District One

According to the 2021 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment reports, Saluda County children are only demonstrating kindergarten readiness skills at 9%. (KRA data sourced from SC Education Oversight Committee)



“As a community service provider, our greatest need is more early literacy intervention/tutoring services for our children.”
Sarah Deloach, Principal Saluda Primary School

Priority Four: Literacy for Families

Family Literacy encourages success for children and their families

Saluda County families need literacy programs. Children and their parents need more literacy activities to encourage better education and growth within our community. (Source: FY24-26 Needs Assessment Parent and Community Partner Surveys)



“The parents need education in several areas such as school for higher education, health care, and parenting education.” Veronica Orndoff, PASOs Community Health Worker

“Children can be empowered by teaching their parents. Saluda has a huge need for English classes and other programs for immigrant parents.” Bruce Wright, DHEC Community Health Worker Supervisor

Next Steps

PLAN

Write 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

