

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

2024 – 2026



Acknowledgments

I'm extremely grateful to all stakeholders for the feedback provided for the 2024-2026 Orangeburg County First Steps Needs Assessment . Your contributions to this project will assist in developing a vision to improve school readiness outcomes for the children and families of Orangeburg County.

Special thank you to Orangeburg County School District Primary & Elementary School Focus Group, Vance-Providence Elementary School Community Connections, Orangeburg County Service Providers, Early Care and Education Providers, Results Action Team (Claflin University and Save The Children), Notable Consulting & Instructional Services (Dr. Terri Fludd), and the parents and caregivers who participated in the county-wide assessment survey.

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Message from the Executive Director



Kathy R. Jenkins
Executive Director
Orangeburg County First Steps

On behalf of the Orangeburg County First Steps Partnership, I am pleased to present the 2024-2026 Needs Assessment. The feedback gathered in the first phase of the planning cycle is the foundation of our efforts to ensure that pre-school aged children and their families receive the support they need. The programs and services provided by Orangeburg County First Steps are an asset to the community. Your conversations and survey responses allow us to hear directly from the community, to understand your needs, and to shed light on the disparities that affect early childhood development and school readiness.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kathy Jenkins". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a period at the end.

Needs Assessment Process

CONVENE

To develop a vision for young children and their families, the following convenings were held:

November 28, 2022 – Orangeburg County School District Focus Group (Executive Director for Elementary & Primary Schools, Elementary and Primary School Principals, Teachers, and Curriculum Instructors,)

January 20, 2023 – Community Connections Meeting (Vance-Providence Elementary School Community Members and Parents)

February 13, 2023 – Claflin University Results Action Team (Save The Children, Claflin University, and Orangeburg County School District)

Needs Assessment Surveys – Early Childhood Professionals, Parents of Pre-School Aged Children, and Service Providers
October 2022 – 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

“The ideal community to raise children is positive, provides resources, and educational activities for all children...bring back the village.”

-Early Childhood Provider

Asset Map



Priorities: Summary

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.

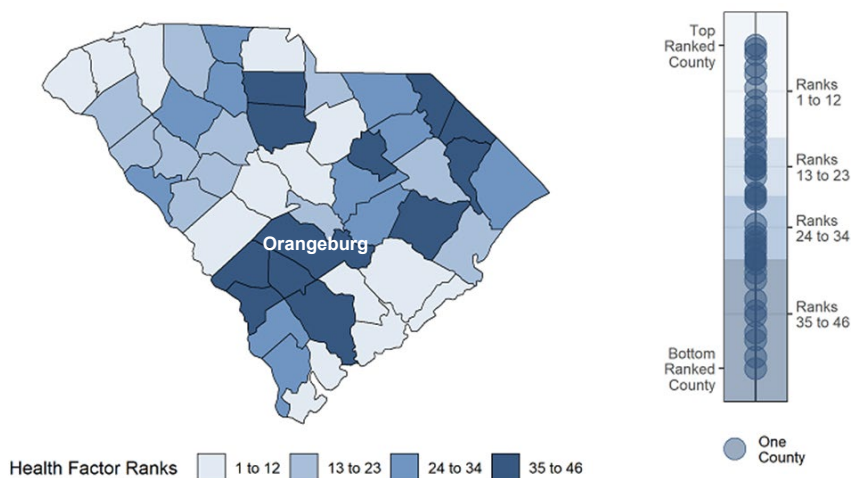
Aligns with Every Child Ready Priority 2

Priority One: Parent Engagement

County Health Rankings 0% - 25%

Social and Economic factors affecting Orangeburg County Health Rankings obtained from countyhealthrankings.org reflect Orangeburg County among the least healthy counties in South Carolina. As of 2021, 42% of children in Orangeburg County live in poverty and 55.4% live in single-parent homes in rural communities. Sixty-nine percent of parents surveyed identify single-parent homes in need of support with parenting skills and finances as a major factor affecting school readiness and 34% of Community Partners identify healthcare as a major factor.

Effectively addressing the impact of social determinants on family well-being will assist in minimizing negative outcomes. Sharing information regarding community resources, early childhood developmental milestones and stages, early education standards, and the like, with parents and community partners will increase knowledge and gain buy-in as it relates to school readiness. With a strong and healthy community, children have an improved likelihood of school success.



<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/southcarolina?year=2022&measure=Health+Factors>

Priority Two: School Transition

25% of children in Orangeburg County Demonstrating Readiness

The modified Kindergarten Readiness Assessment administered in Fall 2020 indicated children in Orangeburg County were 8% below the state average for demonstrating readiness, while the 2021-2022 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment revealed 25% of children assessed were demonstrating readiness. This 6% increase supports a return to pre-pandemic results; however, 64% of parents surveyed indicated children aren't ready for school because of a lack of parenting skills, single parents needing additional support, and emotional problems in children.

*Education Oversight Committee
Orangeburg County School District KRA Data by School*

“Children will reach their highest potential with additional and consistent resources”. Elementary School Principal



Elloree Elementary School Countdown to 4k Parent Meeting
Linda Graham, Teacher

Priority Three: Early Intervention

40.8% of children ages 9-35 months received a developmental screening in 2020-2021

childhealthdata.org

The SC Profile Early Childhood 2020 data indicates 66.5% of children in Orangeburg County under the age of 8, live below the federal poverty level (High Poverty 200% of FPL). More than 2% of cases investigated found maltreatment had occurred and 13% of babies born were preterm and/or low birth weight.

<https://www.scprofile.com/county-profiles/family-health/>

Babies born at low birth weight have a higher probability of experiencing developmental problems and disabilities. Those without healthcare coverage are less likely to receive preventive care services and developmental screenings.

Fifty percent of Early Childhood Professionals surveyed, indicate their main concern for children entering school are for those with learning difficulties or different abilities and 77% of parents surveyed, indicated a need for Counseling Program(s)/Initiatives for Families and Children. The referral to connection time for intervention services is cited by Early Childcare Professionals with extensive delays or inconsistency in providers. Increasing awareness of assessments and resources for families of children 0-5 years old with different abilities will improve their likelihood for school success.

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

