



STRATEGIC PLAN

2024 – 2026



Mission

The mission of Berkeley County First Steps is to improve the health and education of Berkeley County's youngest children so they can enter school ready to succeed and eager to learn.

Vision

Every Child in Berkeley County will enter kindergarten safe, healthy, ready to succeed, and eager to learn.

Values

As servant leaders we value families, their inherent strengths, resilience and ability to learn, grow and reach their fullest capacity.

We have a culture of learning that promotes compassion, innovation, best practices and continuous improvement.

We have a culture of progress that celebrates and encourages excellence.

Message from the Executive Director



Adrienne Troy Frazier
Executive Director
Berkeley County First
Steps

Let's get to work!

Families with young children in our community face difficult and inter-related issues of economic security, access to quality childcare, domestic violence, transportation and access to affordable housing. Every day, we work to tackle these complicated, controversial, sometimes life-threatening problems with budget limitations that make it difficult for all young children in Berkeley County to meet their fullest potential. Our FY2024-26 Strategic Plan represents our vision and goals for strengthening Berkeley County so that we can raise healthy and resilient children.

With highest hopes for the future,

Adrienne Troy-Frazier

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 Berkeley County. See our full needs assessment here: <link>.

1. Child Care deserts

Focus group participants expressed the need for both more childcare centers and better quality among those that exist. Subordinate to this was the shortage of personnel in early childcare, the lack of facilities, and the availability of childcare in rural areas. Also included here would be afterschool care and infant- toddler care

2. Affordable Housing

Berkeley County has the lowest median household income in the Tri-County region, resulting in residents paying a higher percentage of their incomes for housing. Rental rates are increasing faster than median household income, resulting in a decline in affordability.

3. Transportation

Once rural and agricultural in nature, Berkeley County is now one of the fastest growing regions in the nation with a booming employment opportunities. We've exceeded the threshold for needing a commuter-oriented transit system that can increase access for all residents, especially low-income families to jobs, health care and other services.

Objective One: Children are healthy and safe.

STRATEGY 1.1

Parenting and Health Programs (PAT, NPP, Healthy Steps)

Build responsive Family Engagement programs; Continue to address the needs of children and families in the context of their communities.

SMART GOALS

1. By the end of FY 2026, we will increase the enrollment of families participating in a voluntary parenting support program proven to reduce parental stress levels, increase connections to community supports, and improve children's cognitive, motor, behavioral and socio-emotional development by 15%.
2. By the end of FY 2026 BCFS will increase the number of Berkeley County children birth through five by 17% who have access to preventive health services, including oral health, behavioral health and immunizations, and other social determinants of health with an annual increase of 5% by 2026.
3. Each year BCFS will increase by the number of hard to reach, pregnant and birthing people receiving education and supports on accessing early and adequate maternal health services, and social service supports by 5 %.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

BCFS will partner with the Berkeley DSS, DHEC/WIC, Nurse Family Partnership Program, BEE Collective, Center For Community Health Alignment, MUSC, and other local community organizations such as the Foster Care Association and Guardian al Litem office, to recruit and provide services to pregnant families, parents and caregivers.

Objective Two: High-Quality Early Education and Care Is Accessible, Equitable and Affordable.

STRATEGY 2.1

Child Care Quality Enhancement

Evolve and strengthen a professional early childhood educator pipeline; share technical expertise through intensive coaching and peer learning protocols; build field competence through coaching and mentoring.

SMART GOALS

1. By the beginning of FY 24 BCFS will hire a second full time QE Coach to support the expansion of its QE program strategy.
2. Annually, BCFS will expand the number of QE classrooms enrolled and served by our Quality Enhancement Program by 20%
3. By the end of FY 2026 our QE centers will see a 5% increase on their Environmental Ratings scores.
4. At the end of each fiscal year, BCFS will increase community awareness and support of the local Early Care Workforce with quarterly media and/or events designed to highlight the needs and importance of a well qualified and compensated early care workforce.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

BCFS will partner with local private and public early education and care programs, including First Steps 4K, to offer quality enhancement, technical assistance and training to childcare centers in the county.

Objective Three: Deepening Early Childhood Policy Knowledge and Forging Partnerships

STRATEGY 3.1

Community Education and Engagement

BCFS will participate as thought partners, contributing expertise on early childhood public policy with a special focus on highlighting critical issues impacting child and family wellbeing, such as affordable housing, transportation childcare workforce compensation, and access to quality programs and services.

SMART GOALS

1. Each year we will identify and engage enlist 8 community leaders, social service providers and legislative partner(s) in childcare policy and advocacy discussions to increase knowledge and address the need for affordable and safe housing and transportation in Berkeley County.
2. Each year we will increase our formal cultural and recreational partnerships to promote equitable access and engagement opportunities for all families and caregivers by 5%.
3. Each year we will provide at least two professional development offerings to parents, childcare workforce, and policy makers designed to advance knowledge of quality childcare and local kindergarten readiness assessment data (KRA) and outcomes.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

BCFS will collaborate with social and family serving organizations, Berkeley County School District, Tri-County Cradle to Career, Tri County Play Collaborative, and the Berkeley County delegation.

Overarching Measures of Success

INCREASE THE REACH OF FIRST STEPS SERVICES

By 2025, the percentage of children in need who are directly served by First Steps will increase from 17% to 20%.

INCREASE THE AVAILABILITY OF HIGH-QUALITY EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY FIRST STEPS

By 2025, the percentage of children under age 6 who benefit from First Steps quality enhancement and training efforts will increase from 12% to 15%.

Acknowledgments

Berkeley County Stakeholders

We thank all Berkeley County First Steps families, staff, Board members, partners and other stakeholders who participated in this collective effort with their survey and community convening responses, feedback, and suggestions that shaped this Strategic Plan.

South Carolina First Steps and Office of Child Care, ACF/HHS

“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.”