

Risk Factors Affecting School Readiness

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Certain experiences or conditions are associated with educational disadvantage upon entry into kindergarten. The South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees has identified the following risk factors as those most likely to affect school readiness. First Steps utilizes these factors to prioritize services to children and families facing the greatest risks.

Intensive services provided by or supported by local First Steps partnerships require all children served to possess at least one of the following risk factors, with most (either 60%, 80% or 100% depending on the program) possessing 2 or more risk factors.

The child has been abused.
The child has been neglected.
The child is in foster care or kinship care.
The child or family is enrolled in or eligible for Temporary Assistance for Need Families (TANF).
The child or family is enrolled in or eligible for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
The child or family is enrolled in or eligible for Women, Infants, and Children Nutrition Program (WIC).
The child has a disability or developmental delay as documented by a physician or standardized assessment (not a screening tool).
The child is blind or visually impaired.
The child is deaf or hearing impaired.
The child is eligible for IDEA Part B or Part C.
The child's mother or primary caregiver was 20 years old or younger at the time of the child's birth.
The child's mother or primary caregiver did not have a high school diploma or GED at the time of the child's birth.
The child's parent or caregiver has had a substance abuse issue during the child's lifetime.
The child's parent or caregiver has had depression or another mental health condition during the child's lifetime.
The child's parent or caregiver has an intellectual disability.
The child has been exposed to domestic violence within their family.
The child had a low birth weight (under 5.5 lbs) with serious medical complications.
English is not the primary language spoken in the child's home.
The child has a single parent or caregiver.
The child is experiencing homelessness.
The child has experienced numerous family relocations or transiency.
The child has a parent who is currently incarcerated or has been incarcerated within the last 12 months.
The child has experienced the death of a parent, caregiver or sibling.
The child's parent or caregiver is currently serving in the military away from home or has returned home from military duty within the last two years.
The child is an immigrant or refugee.
The child has a parent or caregiver who was born in another country and entered the U.S. within the last five years.
The child has been removed from child care or preschool for behavioral reasons.
The child is enrolled in or eligible for Medicaid.
The child's parent or caregiver is eligible for Medicaid and is either pregnant or within one year after giving birth.