

STRATEGIC PLAN

2024 – 2026



Mission

Our mission is to ensure opportunities for young children and their families in Chesterfield County so that every child enters school healthy and ready to learn.

Vision

Every child in Chesterfield County, SC will enter school prepared for success.

Values

1. The years of early childhood are a critical window of development during which much of crucial brain connections are formed.
2. Readiness to learn includes physical, mental, social, emotional, economic, and developmental well-being.
3. We support the role of families as the child's first and best teachers.
4. Community participation is essential to our success.
5. Collaborative partnerships are vital to supporting families and caregivers effectively.
6. First Steps and the community are mutually accountable for the success of all children.
7. Services must be high-quality, grounded in strong evidence, and adaptable to meet the unique needs of children and families.

Message from the Board Chair



Tony Nolan
Board Chair
Chesterfield County First Steps

The Chesterfield County First Steps 2024-2026 Strategic Plan 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.

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 Chesterfield County. See our full needs assessment here: <https://www.scfirststeps.org/media/awpn0nhw/chesterfield-county-fy24-26-needs-assessment.pdf>

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.

Objectives

- 1. Expand families' access to high quality early childhood education that meets the needs of young children and their families.**
- 2. Increase outreach to families of children of color and provide additional support for seeking and accessing services.**
- 3. Increase communication among early childhood agencies to better serve young children and families in Chesterfield County.**

Objective One: Expand families' access to high quality early childhood education that meets the needs of young children and their families.

STRATEGY 1.1

Compass Point Preschool (CPP)

SMART GOALS

- In FY 24, Compass Point Preschool will enroll 10 children in 4K classroom and 8 children in the 3K classroom.
- Each year, there will be a 15% increase in the number of underachieving children who meet or exceed expectations by the end of the year as measured by the Teaching Strategies Gold subscales.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- Northeastern Technical College, Chesterfield County Schools, DSS, the Town of Cheraw, & Chesterfield Chamber of Commerce for recruiting

STRATEGY 1.2

Community Education

SMART GOALS

- Distribute outreach materials describing Compass Point Preschool, CCFS programming, community need and engagement opportunities at 2 community events annually.
- Host 1 annual community open house where at least 12 adults attend as info session to share and showcase information about CPP, what high quality care looks like and how to apply for a childcare voucher.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- Northeastern Technical College and Chesterfield County Schools

Objective Two: Increase outreach to families of children of color and provide additional support for seeking and accessing services.

STRATEGY 2.1

Equity Committee

SMART GOALS

1. By the end of FY24, a board Equity Committee will be created to identify barriers and improve the accessibility of services for families of children of color.
2. The Equity Committee will develop a list of at least 10 key faith-based communities from across Chesterfield County for families of color in order to engage the faith-based community as key stakeholders for targeting outreach to families of color by FY 25.
3. Equity Committee will create a list of at least one specific contact per faith-based community who work with families of young children by the end of FY 25 and at least 50% will participate in an annual faith-based community network meeting to better serve families of color.
4. Equity Committee will develop 1 comprehensive Directory of Resources (*may combine several existing directories if multiple are discovered*) for families of color to refer to when seeking services, including support for addressing discrimination or needs for advocacy by FY 26.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

Board members, Coordinating Council and local churches, Child Care Providers, Head Start, CCR&R, District Director of ELA & Early and Elementary Learning

Objective Three: Increase communication among early childhood agencies to better serve young children and families in Chesterfield County.

STRATEGY 3.1

Chesterfield Early Childhood Network

SMART GOALS

- By the end of FY24, identify at least 10 members of local early childhood education, health and wellbeing services to form a Chesterfield Early Childhood (CEC) Network.
- By the end of FY24, create and host 1 listserv using google groups with members of CEC Network to share agency updates, local, state and federal opportunities and needs throughout the year.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- Child Care Providers, Head Start, DSS ABC Quality, Licensing Consultant, CCR&R, District Director of ELA & Early and Elementary Learning

Overarching Measures of Success

REDUCE THE RACIAL/ETHNIC GAP IN KINDERGARTEN READINESS

South Carolina:

By 2025, the gap in the percentage of children who score at the highest level on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment between White Kindergartners and Black/Hispanic Kindergartners will reduce by 1% each year to 15%.

Chesterfield County:

By 2025, the gap in the percentage of children who score at the highest level on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment between White Kindergartners and Black/Hispanic Kindergartners will reduce by 1% each year to 15%.

MORE CHILDREN ARRIVE AT KINDERGARTEN READY FOR SUCCESS

South Carolina:

By 2025, the percentage of children who score at the highest level on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment will increase by 2% each year to 47%.

Chesterfield County:

By 2025, the percentage of children who score at the highest level on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment will increase by 2% each year from 37%.

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."