

STRATEGIC PLAN

2024 – 2026





Mission

Greenville First Steps will serve as a convener of Early Childhood champions to coordinate services to measurably improve the early childhood development of all children in Greenville County.

Vision

Families, early childhood educators, and community partners are equipped with the tools and resources needed to ensure children enter kindergarten ready to succeed.

Values

- Operational transparency and accountability
- Empower parents for success as child's first teacher
- Support implementation of research-based initiatives
- Leverage Resources to strengthen public-private partnerships

Message from the Executive Director



DEREK LEWIS
Executive Director
Greenville First Steps

What problem do you want to solve today?

My son spends far too much time on YouTube- but he is fascinated by the inventiveness that teens and college students bring to solving problems. Last week we watched a series of stories about a group of college students who designed a new and more humane mouse trap. Rather than a trap that snaps on the mouse, these designers created a trap that is essentially a large 5-gallon bucket with a diving board attached. The mouse walks the board- leaps for food- and falls into the bucket. Once in the bucket, the mouse is unable to climb out. The inventors then collect the buckets and dump the mice in the woods far away from the home.

In one interview segment one of the designers is asked why they built this new trap. He responds “at dinner our neighbors were talking about this problem- and talking about the old traps (with the spring-loaded guillotine design). They wanted to get rid of the mice but thought the traps were cruel. They saw the traps as they were designed – not as they could be designed”.

It is easy to see the world as it is- and not how it could be. Sometimes it’s easier to look at our neighborhoods, our communities, and the challenges our friends and families encounter as systemic, or unchangeable. Thankfully, Greenville is filled with people who have seen the future our community could embrace- and are working on a host of innovative solutions including housing, transit, education, and supports for seniors and veterans. These dreamers are looking at the conditions on the ground, and building better systems to improve outcomes for children, families, and adults in our communities.

Greenville First Steps recently completed a 3-year strategic plan – which was built on a series of community focus groups, planning sessions, and input surveys. Thanks to each person who was able to provide us with input into our community’s challenges, but also provide feedback on what can be done when we collaboratively work together.

Message from the Board Chair

Serving our community by strengthening relationships.

Several months ago, the Greenville First Steps Board held a series of community listening sessions – culminating in a December meeting at the SC Children's Theatre. The community forum included more than 60 stakeholders from across Greenville County – including childcare providers, faith leaders, state and local agency representatives, elected officials, and representatives from local non-profit and community organizations.

As the group talked through our community's needs – and the assets that are available to support families in need – I was touched by this incredibly diverse, thoughtful, and passionate group of stakeholders.

I wondered – how did we build the social capital to get such a great group of people together? As I asked myself the question, I looked around the room and saw that each group of stakeholders was involved in meaningful conversation with a subset of our board. I realized, each of the Greenville First Steps Board Members has built his or her network of partners – and our meetings represent treetop conversations built on the roots of these personal network.

As we look at First Steps reauthorization – and reflect on how our board was intentionally built, I am thankful for these local stakeholders, who take time to serve on the First Steps board – but also serve as a conduit to connect our work with the broader community.



ERIC HASSMAN
Board Chair
Greenville First Steps

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 Greenville County. View our full needs assessment at <https://greenvillefirststeps.org/staff-board/>

1. Parenting Supports

Parenting supports ensure caregivers have access to the resources and tools they need when and where they need them.

2. Childcare Deserts

Access to affordable quality childcare ensures parents/caregivers and their children have a safe and stable environment for learning.

3. Early Literacy

Access to books and other reading materials as well as training about the importance of and the instruction of literacy and language development are critical to kindergarten readiness.

4. Infant Mortality

After years of seeing a decline, Greenville County has seen a rise in infant mortality, especially in non-Hispanic Black infants.

Objectives

- 1. INCREASE PARENT/CAREGIVER PARTICIPATION IN EVIDENCE BASED TRAININGS AND INTERVENTIONS.**
- 2. INCREASE ACCESS TO HIGH QUALITY EARLY LITERACY OPPORTUNITITES.**
- 3. INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD STRENGTHENING SERVICES/OPPORTUNITIES.**
- 4. SEEK OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUND DIVERSIFICATION AND SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECTS.**

Objective One: Increase parent/caregiver participation in evidence-based trainings and interventions.

OBJECTIVE ONE SMART GOAL: Through June 2026, Greenville First Steps supported parenting programs will serve 13,000 parents/caregivers

STRATEGY 1.1

Family Connects

SMART GOAL

1. Through June 2026, Family Connects will serve 10,520 caregivers.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- SC DHEC, PRISMA, Bon Secours, Family Connects International

STRATEGY 1.2

Nurturing Parenting

SMART GOAL

1. Through June 2026, Nurturing Parenting will serve 140 caregivers.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- Partners to be determined after request for proposal process.

Objective One: Increase parent/caregiver participation in evidence-based trainings and interventions.

STRATEGY 1.3

Triple P (Positive Parenting Program)

SMART GOAL

1. Through June 2026, Triple P will serve 1,785 caregivers (Levels 2, 3, 4)

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- Children’s Trust of SC, Greenville County Schools Child Development Centers, Childcare centers, Faith providers

STRATEGY 1.2

Nurse-Family Partnership

SMART GOAL

1. Through June 2026, Nurse-Family Partnership will serve 840 caregivers.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- PRISMA, Reach Out and Read, Cribs for Kids

Objective Two: Increase access to high quality early literacy opportunities.

SMART GOAL: Through June 2026, **16,000 parents** will have participated in a First Steps supported early literacy project and **90,000 books** will be distributed through Greenville community projects.

STRATEGY 2.1

Book Distribution

SMART GOAL

1. Through June 2026, 90,000 children's books will be distributed in Greenville County.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- Reach Out and Read, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, Christ Church Episcopal, Family Connects, Triple P

STRATEGY 2.2

Reach Out and Read

SMART GOAL

1. Through June 2026, 15,000 children will participate in Reach Out and Read.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- Reach Out and Read, Pediatric Clinics, Family Medicine Clinics, Nurse-Family Partnership

Objective Two: Increase access to high quality early literacy opportunities.

STRATEGY 2.3

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

SMART GOAL

1. Through June 2026, 4,550 children will be enrolled in Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- USPS, Cliffs at Glassy Mountain

STRATEGY 2.4

Early Literacy trainings

SMART GOAL

1. Through June 2026, 450 childcare and early care and education professionals will be trained in early literacy best practices

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- Palmetto Shared Services Alliance, Public Education Partners

Objective Three: Increase public awareness of early childhood strengthening services/opportunities

SMART GOAL: Through June 2026, 22,500 individuals will receive First Steps communications linking to community resources/opportunities

STRATEGY 3.1

Newsletters and Online Content

SMART GOAL

- Through June 2026, 22,500 individuals will receive First Steps digital newsletters and online content

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- Smoak PR, Greenville Library System, Palmetto Basics, Triple P

STRATEGY 3.2

Accessing Content

SMART GOAL

- Through June 2026, 6,500 individuals will access additional information through links provided in Greenville First Steps newsletters and digital content.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- Smoak PR, Greenville Library System, Palmetto Basics, Triple P

Objective Four: Seek opportunities for fund diversification and sustainability of projects.

SMART GOAL: Through June 2026, Greenville First Steps will secure \$8 million in private and in-kind supports

STRATEGY 4.1

Matching Dollars

SMART GOAL

- Through June 2026, secure \$8 million in private and in-kind supports

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- Community Foundation of Greenville

STRATEGY 4.2

Endowed Fund

SMART GOAL

- Through June 2026, board and staff will grow Greenville First Steps endowed fund to \$700,000

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- Greenville First Steps Board of Directors, Greater Good Greenville

Objective Four: Seek opportunities for fund diversification and sustainability of projects.

STRATEGY 4.3

Priority Zip Codes

SMART GOAL

- Greenville First Steps will seek opportunities to improve coordinated services with an emphasis on families living in 29611, 29669, and 29690 zip codes.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- Childcare centers, nonprofits, churches, other family-oriented organizations.

Overarching Measure(s) of Success

INCREASE THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN ENROLLED IN HIGH INTENSITY PROGRAMS FUNDED BY FIRST STEPS

By June 2026, the % of children served by Greenville First Steps high intensity programs will increase from 4% to 14% (with emphasis in 29611, 29669, 29690 zip codes)