

STRATEGIC PLAN

2024 – 2026





Mission

Collaborating with other entities, Williamsburg County First Steps helps families and caregivers in our county prepare children for school success by maximizing public and private community resources to deliver, enhance and expand high-quality early childhood services.

Vision

Every child in Williamsburg County will have the resources needed to be prepared for success in school.

Values

Children (prenatal development through age five): Our focus and priority are young children and their families and caregivers.

Relationships: We cultivate positive, supportive, and respectful relationships while reinforcing interactions between people that shape development, build community, increase success and productivity, foster learning and growth, and affirm the unique values of individuals, caregivers, parents and children.

Equity: We ensure all persons have the opportunity and resources to be successful and that all voices are solicited and heard.

High quality: We ensure that our programs and services are culturally-responsive, inclusive, and developmentally-appropriate and are delivered with fidelity to the model being implemented. Our products, services, and operations are marked by excellence.

Results: We produce meaningful and measurable impact and outcomes for all programs as measured by our goals for success.

Message from the Executive Director



Felicia C. Patrick
Executive Director
Williamsburg County First Steps

Non-profit work is an endless job and one that speaks to the heart. My staff and I, along with our board, spent countless hours working on a strategic plan that best fulfilled our vision, where every child in Williamsburg County will have the resources needed to be prepared for success in school.

I am satisfied that the objectives and priorities were well thought through and clearly outlines the strategies Williamsburg County First Steps (WCFS) will use over the next four years. I am greatly impressed by the quality of the ideas put into the strategic plan.

WCFS will continue promoting its programs and focus more in depth on early education preparedness. Our goal is to ensure that every child is kindergarten ready, through working with their parents and guardians, early childhood educators and our school system. We have set goals, defined objectives and set actionable plans in place to achieve this.

I take this opportunity to thank our board chair and the Board of Directors, my staff and the entire Williamsburg community, who have all worked towards identifying our children's greatest need and have committed to working together to combat the issue and provide solutions. Special thanks to our contributors and donors, who have helped us on this journey, and remain committed to working alongside WCFS. Our organization is better from having you as a part of it.

Their commitment clearly aligns with our mission: Collaborating with other entities, Williamsburg County First Steps helps families and caregivers in our county prepare children for school success by maximizing public and private community resources to deliver, enhance and expand high-quality early childhood services.

Felicia C. Patrick

Message from the Board Chair



Pernerva Thomas
Board Chair
Williamsburg County First Steps

As we have learned after experiencing a catastrophic pandemic, education is rapidly changing, and we must adapt to those changes. An effective strategic plan must allow room not only for change, but also growth.

WCFS has had an impactful role in re-establishing connection between parents and children. Their programs have partnered with childcare educators and facilities, as well as parents, to lay the groundwork to ensure children get to kindergarten prepared.

With this in mind, Williamsburg County First Steps (WCFS) strategic plan was put together with the intention to measure its successes and regularly revisit goals to account for emerging opportunities within the educational sector. WCFS will continue to support parents and guardians in preparing their children for school and exploring new ways of learning and teaching in our communities.

We thank the community and our residents for your continued support. We look forward to the next chapter in WCFS book, as we continue to work alongside parents, educators, and of course, learners, as we continue to inspire a love of learning, growth and parent participation.

Pernerva Thomas

Strategic Plan Process

CONVENE

Held community events, starting dialogue on the needs assessment process. The importance of data collection was discussed, and attendees were made aware of initiatives being introduced that would best serve the needs of children and families.

October 2022 – January 2023



PRIORITIZE

Based on data collection, needs were organized and ranked to ensure that those most pressing would be addressed first. Tiered needs were then broken down into levels to create a plan on collectively addressing concerns.

January 2023 – March 2023



APPLY

Parents & Childcare providers will work both independently and collectively with WCFS to ensure children are kindergarten ready. Programs will be implemented with the help of community collaborators that will utilize the objectives outlined. The strategic plan will be used as a guide to apply for funding needed to continuously run the outlined programs.

May 2023, May 2024, May 2025



MONITOR

Programs will be monitored through testing results, evaluation forms and continued participation from parents. Priority will be given to monitoring percentage increase in program participants and number of children served

July 2023 – June 2026



UNDERSTAND

Parents and guardians were asked about their most pressing concerns to determine the top needs of the community. Data collected was used to understand where programs would best be served.

October 2022 – March 2023

PLAN

A strategic plan was created using data and concerns outlined in the Needs Assessment. A plan to run through to FY26 was formulated, with real goals being outlined.

March 2023 – May 2023

IMPLEMENT

Meetings and work sessions will be scheduled with parents to outline feasible plan and at home curriculum that can be used to start early childhood education. WCFS will partner with community collaborators to follow through with commitments.

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 Williamsburg County. See our full needs assessment here: <[WCFS Needs Assessment](#)>.

1. INCREASE HEALTHY LIFESTYLES AND CHOICES

Educate parents and childcare providers at facilities on the importance of healthy eating and healthy lifestyle. Conduct training on healthy meals and snacks, emotional stability and life balance.

2. IMPROVE FAMILY AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

Provide parents with access to support and resources that strengthens their families; build their confidence, knowledge, and skills; and promote the optimal development of their children both on an educational and emotional level.

3. IMPROVE SCHOOL READINESS

Increase the number of families participating in evidence-based and evidence-informed parenting programs. Support parents' knowledge of early childhood milestones, kindergarten readiness, and build parents skills in supporting their children's successful transitions across early learning programs and into kindergarten.

Objectives

GETTING CHILDREN READY FOR SCHOOL.

Williamsburg County First Steps (WCFS) will partner with the DSS, the library, local and business communities, childhood and early education providers and parents to ensure children are prepared to enter kindergarten.

1. PARENTS AND GUARDIANS ARE SUPPORTED AS THEIR CHILD'S FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT TEACHER.

Ensure that parents are educated on providing emotional and educational support to children, by providing access to tools and materials needed. Provide age-appropriate books and learning materials, along with curriculum-based information on starting early education within the household.

2. FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN WILL BE MADE AWARE OF READILY ACCESSIBLE PROGRAMS, SERVICES, AND RESOURCES.

Meet with library coordinators, program directors, and board to ensure information is being dispensed in a timely manner and in a way that it reaches all families within the area, especially those in rural communities where communication may be lacking. Provide no cost training classes for parents and children, focusing on education and school readiness.

3. ENSURE CHILDREN IN WILLIAMSBURG COUNTY ARRIVE AT KINDERGARTEN READY FOR SUCCESS.

Work with educators in both the public and private sectors to ensure detailed expectations are outlined and that childcare providers are working towards that goal. Have information and kindergarten expectations readily available for all households, offering support and training where needed.

Objective One: Parents And Guardians Are Supported As Their Child's First And Most Important Teacher.

STRATEGY 1.1

Educating Parents & Guardian

SMART GOAL(S)

1. Increase enrollment in the PAT program by 10 families per year for a total of 30 families by the end of FY26.
2. Conduct at least 1 monthly group connections for PAT families to receive and share information, resources, and make connections and/or referrals to available resources to increase family engagement, parent education, and emotional growth.
3. Partner with local agencies to provide community outreach services at least twice a year in an effort to recruit families.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Williamsburg County Library Service
- Williamsburg County School District
- Head Start/Early Head Start
- SC First Steps 4K programs.
- Local churches and business community.

Objective Two: Families with young children will be made aware of readily accessible programs, services, and available resources.

STRATEGY 2.1

Providing access to readily available programs through First Steps

SMART GOAL(S)

1. Increase the number of children enrolled annually in the DPIL program from 205 to 300 by end of FY26, a 28% overall increase.
2. Expand resource base to raise community program awareness, increasing the number of children served using social media platforms, flyers and letter campaigns.
3. Multiply the financial base of the program by actively seeking grants, donations, and partnerships in an effort to increase the number of children participants.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Williamsburg County School District
- Williamsburg County Public Libraries
- Department of Social Services
- Eli Collins Foundation
- Williamsburg County Coalition (WC3)

Objective Three: Ensure Children In Williamsburg County Arrive At Kindergarten Ready For Success.

STRATEGY 3.1

Creating learning curriculum geared towards parents.

SMART GOAL(S)

1. Increase family access to healthy and affordable (free) parenting classes and workshops in order to provide parents with additional support networks and resources to include parenting workshops topics such as healthy eating and cooking, budgeting, stress management, school success, brain development, etc. in an effort to grow partnerships with community agencies, non-profits, and community leaders
2. Expand the reach of WCFS programs that have a measurable impact on the health and safety of children, including programs that support healthy, safe and attached families.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- South Carolina certified trainers
- SC Endeavors
- CYC Educational Consulting LLC
- Inspirational Voyages with Mister LLC
- Childcare providers

Overarching Measure(s) of Success

INCREASE THE REACH OF WILLIAMSBURG COUNTY FIRST STEPS SERVICES, BY INCREASING THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN ENROLLED IN HIGH INTENSITY PROGRAMS, ENSURING CHILDREN THAT ARRIVE AT KINDERGARTEN ARE READY FOR SUCCESS.

By FY26, the Williamsburg County First Steps (WCFS) program will increase the percentage of children in need who are directly served by the WCFS programs by 2% yearly, increasing from 48% to 54%.

By FY26, the percentage of children directly served by WCFS and enrolled in high intensity programs will increase by 2% yearly, moving from 14% to 20%.

By FY26, WCFS will ensure that the percentage of children who score at the highest level (Demonstrating Readiness) on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment increases by 2% each year, rising from 20% to 26%.

These goals will be achieved through direct collaboration with Childcare providers and educators, as well as partnership with the local libraries, DSS, interagency departments, churches, local & business communities and one-on-one communication with parents and guardians.

WCFS will collaborate with the local libraries to ensure children have access to age-appropriate books, partner with the school district to ensure early educators have clearly outlined expectations and have resources readily available for parents and guardians through WCFS funded programs.

Acknowledgments

Through partnerships and collaborations, as well as financial support from grants and contributions, Williamsburg County First Steps leverages state dollars to enhance and expand services to children and families.

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IN-KIND SUPPORT

SC First Steps

AmeriCorp

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