

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

2024 – 2026



Acknowledgments

Beaufort County First Steps staff distributed paper surveys to families, community partners and were engaged in seven face-to-face meetings to collectively gather information for 2024-2026 Needs assessment.

We would like to acknowledge parents and caregivers for their continued support of Beaufort County First Steps in providing valuable feedback needed to complete our Needs Assessment. We would also like to recognize the local partnership board for their time and contributions to the Needs Assessment process.

Staff were engaged in conversation with many community leaders to gain an understanding of the needs in our community and gather sufficient information needed to put together our strategic plan for 2024-2026.

Many thanks to all involved.

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.

Message from the Executive Director



Betty Washington
Executive Director
Beaufort County First Steps

Beaufort County First Steps staff and board continually evaluates program offering to ensure we are meeting the needs of the families and children in our community. Working together with families, community agencies and business leaders has been very insightful. This process has given us the opportunity to get our message out and to meet with different groups to gain their perspective of needs in our community.

As we continue with planning for the future and in putting together our 2024-2026 Strategic Plan, our hope is the information gathered during this process will allow us to continue to reach the population that needs our services and fill gaps as charged by legislation.

Thanks again to everyone who helped in this effort.

Needs Assessment Process

CONVENE

Held two community convenings with 20 participants and developed a vision for young children and their families

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 – February 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 – February 2023

“I have had such a hard time finding someone to care for my 1-year-old. Without care I’m unable to return to work”

-Participant

“We would like to be considered again to receive services through your Quality enhancement Initiative. Finding qualified and committed staff has been a challenge for us”

-Child Care Director

Asset Map: Beaufort County



Asset Map: Beaufort County



Priorities: Summary

1. Quality and Affordable Childcare

Beaufort County lacks the resources necessary for families with infant and toddlers needing quality childcare.

Beaufort County has approximately 48% licensed and/or regulated facilities participating in Quality ABC program (affordability), most with limited or no infant toddler care slots.

2. Parenting Classes & Connection to Community Resources

Surveys were conducted with 75 families of which 73% of respondents expressed interest in parenting programs and resources for single parent households.

Beaufort County encompasses a large amount of rural areas throughout the county, connecting with families in these areas can be challenging.

There are currently three main parenting programs in Beaufort County. Through Universal staffing, organizations work collaboratively to connect families to needed resources.

3. Affordable Housing

The lack of affordable and accessible housing is a concern for low-to-moderate income families; increased rates of homelessness.

Priority One: Quality and Affordable Childcare

Data point: 30.2% of Beaufort County is a child care desert

Data from scchildcare.org as of October 16, 2022.				
County	Number of census tracts in county that are...		Total census tracts	% of county that is a child care desert
	Not a child care desert	A child care desert		
Beaufort	30	13	43	30.2%

There is a lack of infant/toddler care in Beaufort County. Parents have expressed concerns about not being able to find quality care for this age group. This may be due to a number of factors including but not limited to needing more qualified staff, low pay in childcare, lower ratio requirements; meaning the need for additional staff in younger age classrooms, the overall cost to provide care for infant/toddlers, reduced number of ABC slots available. **Noted:** On average it takes approximately 2 ½ weeks to complete paperwork to hire staff, generally leads to lost personnel opportunities.

“We currently have 79 children on the waiting list with 50 of those being under age 1 which speaks to the need for infant toddler care in our community”

CEC, Children’s Director

Priority Two: Parenting Classes & Connection to Community Resources

Data point: Children living in single parent families= 35.9%

South Carolina 40.3%
Beaufort County Ranking 7
Worsened 2014-2018

Source: 2020 South Carolina Child Well-Being Data Profile

Research has shown the enormous impact that positive parenting practices can have on a child's social, emotional, and intellectual development, particularly during the early years (National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine [NASEM], 2016).

Survey results from last Family Engagement Survey:

What is the PAT program good at?

- *"Helping parents in need. For example food, car seats, school supplies, etc."*
- *"Everything. Any questions or concerns I have."*
- *"Helping parent engage with child on different levels."*
- *"Engaging parents and children in learning activities"*
- *"Helping with classes, vouchers, lessons for parenting"*

"As a single mother it's important that I find all the resources I can to make sure my child has a better chance than I did growing up."

PAT parent

Priority 3: Affordable Housing

Data point: Owner-occupied housing where household spends at least 30 percent of their income on housing = 28.8%

South Carolina 20.4%

Beaufort County Ranking 46

Source: 2020 South Carolina Child Well-Being Data Profile

Lower county rankings (e.g. #1) indicates better outcomes. There are 46 counties in South Carolina. The data source for each indicator can be found at datacenter.kidscount.org/data#SC. N.A. = Not Available

During one of the needs assessment meetings that were convened with families it was noted that there is a three-generation family living in a hotel because of recent eviction due to no fault of their own. Rental cost in Beaufort County has drastically increased over the past few years.

“The house we were renting was filled with mold which caused a health and financial crisis for my family. We haven’t been able to find another affordable place to live.”

Next Steps

PLAN

Write 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

