



To: Local First Steps Partnership Executive Directors and Board Members
From: First Steps State Office
Date: June 18, 2018
RE: Guidance regarding Core Functions

In order to implement and budget for Local Partnership Core Functions, the legislative language is included below, along with specific examples of activities. These are not all inclusive and are intended to serve as a guide only.

Local Partnership Core Functions:

- a) service as a local portal connecting families of preschool children to community-based services they may need or desire to ensure the school readiness of their children;

Partner Relationships: Staff and volunteers helping to connect families have the knowledge of and relationships with community service providers

Assessing Child and Family Needs: Partnership uses processes such as developmental screenings and/or family assessment, *Life Skills Progression*, etc. to prioritize service needs

Follow-up and Monitoring: Staff and volunteers follow up on referrals to ensure services get connected; maintain contact with families to assess needs over time

Data Collection: Partnership tracks connections to services for families

Volunteer Management: Partnership uses volunteers in various capacities, manages scheduling and necessary background checks; tracks volunteer time; rewards and recognizes volunteers

Activities may include and are not limited to:

- An accessible office with advertised office hours and staffed to provide direct service
- Prompt response to emails and phone calls
- Online access to resources via website and/or social media
- Access/connection to services/programs not provided by First Steps, i.e., Benefit Bank; Medicaid; parent/family resource center; federal and state emergency aid; disaster assistance
- Developmental screenings and referral to services

- b) service as a community convener around the needs of preschool children and their families; and

Convening of Local First Steps Teams, including local 4K, Early Head Start, Baby Net and other stakeholders serving children 0 to 5 as needed.

Local partnership's support for or promotion of state, regional or local initiatives to improve school readiness, not necessarily connected to First Steps. Examples: Eat Smart Move More, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) Initiative of the Children's Trust, etc.

Activities may include and are not limited to:

- Build/participate in coalitions/collaborations to mobilize community support for early childhood issues
- Participate on local Interagency Council
- Collaborate and share resources with other agencies and partnerships to strengthen and expand services, i.e., conference collaboration/co-sponsoring; grant applications
- Provide networking opportunities to build relationships and foster collaboration

c) support of state-level school readiness priorities as determined by the State Board

South Carolina First Steps Strategic Plan, **Vision 2020** (<http://scfirststeps.com/resources-and-state-reporting/>) – Adopted priorities are:

- Increase access to quality early childhood programs and resources
- Enhance leadership development and capacity building
- Strengthen interagency accountability and public-private collaboration

Local partnership's current involvement in state-level activities, including but not limited to the involvement of the executive director, board members, or staff in state level activities of SC First Steps.

Local partnership's support for state level First Steps programs (4 year old Kindergarten, Early Head Start –Child Care Partnership, etc.) and Baby Net within the local community.

d) mobilizing local communities, agencies and organizations to focus efforts on providing enhanced services to support families and their young children so as to enable every child to reach school healthy and ready to succeed

Raise awareness of First Steps mission, activities, and priorities

Educate the public and targeted constituencies about the importance of early childhood education

Reach out to targeted populations to engage them in First Steps services and activities

Activities may include but are not limited to:

- Public awareness/marketing
- Distribution of education materials
- Sponsorship of and/or participation in community events for targeted populations
- Creation of leadership and volunteer opportunities
- Advocacy for agency mission and on behalf of constituents