

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2021 – 2023





Mission

To help families and caregivers in Beaufort County prepare their 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 Beaufort County will have the resources needed to be prepared for success in school.

Values---family, support, collaboration, advocacy, diversity, inclusion

- School readiness is the result of a child's development in many areas, with each contributing to the child's success.; early childhood is a critical window of development.
- Families are the single most important influence on the development of their young children.
- Supporting families and caregivers is a collaborative effort between state and local stakeholders within the public, private and faith sectors.
- Services must be individualized and adaptable to meet the unique needs of children and families.
- We value, and demonstrate in our collaborative work and advocacy, diverse perspectives in the development of public policy and programs.
- To achieve desired results, services must be high-quality and grounded in strong evidence. First Steps operates within a culture of accountability.

Message from the Executive Director



Betty Washington
Executive Director
Beaufort County First Steps

Beaufort County First Steps continues to thrive and expand its reach to parents and young children in Beaufort County. We are excited about our future; this comprehensive plan reflects only a portion of the partnership' goals for FY21-FY23 as there are many discussions to be had about how to make the most of our identified opportunities to deepen and broaden our work.

We understand that this is an ongoing process and changes are likely to occur especially during the current state of emergency. Never-the-less, we will not waver in our commitment to provide the best possible service for children and families in Beaufort County.

We would like to thank everyone who helped develop this plan, including the many parents, community stakeholders, board members and staff who contributed and provided feedback of the needs assessment, surveys and interviews conducted by the local partnership.

This plan is just the beginning of the next steps to overall improvement to ensure we remain steadfast in providing access to equitable, family-centered, high-quality programs to ensure children in Beaufort County are connected to resources to achieve optimum success.

Message from the Board Chair



Anita Lynn Singleton

Board Chair

Beaufort County First Steps

The single most important component to K-12 education is school readiness. Beaufort County First Steps has taken a thorough look at our environment and resources in order to create a comprehensive plan to support high-quality early childhood development and education services for families in Beaufort County. We are consistently looking for ways to improve this process. This is a collaborative effort thanks to the partnerships we have with individuals and agencies across the county.

We must all continue to work together to ensure that we set students on a trajectory to success throughout their school years and beyond.

Thank you for your continued support.

Overarching Measure(s) of Success

INCREASE THE REACH OF FIRST STEPS SERVICES

By 2023, the percentage of children in need of services and or directly served by programs funded by Beaufort County First Steps will increase by 5%.

INCREASE THE AVAILABILITY OF HIGH-QUALITY EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY FIRST STEPS

By 2023, the percentage of high-quality early care programs in Beaufort County will increase from by 2%.

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

By 2023, the percentage of children 0-5 years enrolled in high intensity programs funded by Beaufort County First Steps will increase by 2%.

Objectives

1. CHILDREN ARE HEALTHY, SAFE & READY FOR SCHOOL

Support and expand the reach of programs that have a measurable impact on children's health, safety and school readiness.

2. INCREASE ACCESS TO QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

Support programs that focus on and measure the quality of early education programs in the community and provide parents with access and support to community resources.

3. BUILD PROGRAM CAPACITY BY INCREASING NUMBERS SERVED

Continued promotion of the services offered by partnership in its recruitment efforts to include increased presence i.e. community events, social media outlets.

4. STRENGTHEN INTERAGENCY ACCOUNTABILITY & COLLABORATION

Actively engage in community events, professional development, and sharing resources in collaboration with the community agencies to educate community of services offered through First Steps.

5. INCREASE FUNDING FOR EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Develop and implement a resource development plan that supports partnerships' efforts to raise funds to expand evidence-based quality programs for families and children.

1. Children are healthy, safe and ready for school.

STRATEGY 1.1

Increase the number of families & children enrolled in quality programs

SMART GOAL(S)

- By the end of FY23, we will increase the number of children and adults served in PAT program by 5%.
- Increase access to developmental screenings by 15% by end FY23 and make referrals for all children birth through five with suspected developmental delays.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Partner with The Universal Staffing Team to recruit new families, collaborate with BabyNet, School District and others to make referrals for early intervention services for children birth through five with suspected delays.

STRATEGY 1.2

Provide additional community education activities

SMART GOAL(S)

- Each year, we will participate in at least two community health fairs to share resources about child development.
- Host an annual event to connect families and strengthen relations to First Steps programs.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- Partner with the local WIC/DHEC office in planning our community health fairs to provide resources and bring awareness to child's health and school readiness.

2. Increase access to quality early childhood programs.

STRATEGY 2.1

Expand our Child Care Quality Enhancement presence

SMART GOAL(S)

- Recruit and partner with three additional childcare facilities to encourage participation in Quality Enhancement program by end of FY23.
- Promote ABC Quality program to increase the number of childcare facilities participating by 2% by end 2023.
- Increase Environmental Rating scores by 1 point each year for at least 80% of participating program.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Childcare facilities, ABC Quality program, SC DSS Childcare Licensing

STRATEGY 2.2

Provide more Quality Child Care Training

SMART GOAL(S)

- By end of FY23 Increase access to quality, certified professional development opportunities by 15% for childcare professionals of children birth – five years.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Technical College of Lowcountry, SC Childcare and Referral, The Baptist Church of Beaufort, SC certified trainers

3. Build program capacity by increasing numbers served.

STRATEGY 3.1

Educate the community about programs and services offered to increase numbers served.

SMART GOAL(S)

- Participate in at least two community events each year.
- Program staff will attend quarterly local interagency and community meetings and disseminate information about programs offered by First Steps.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Partner with local community organizations and groups focused on early education.

STRATEGY 3.2

Develop a recruitment campaign to serve more families of children.

SMART GOAL(S)

- Update social media outlets quarterly as part of the recruitment efforts.
- Create recruitment flyers & post around the community; track number of families inquiring about program & solicit feedback to gain insight about experience.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Community business leaders, Early child professionals, Universal Staffing Team, parents of PAT program

4. Strengthen Interagency Accountability & Collaboration

STRATEGY 4.1

Serve as community conveyer partnering with agencies in the community to promote comprehensive services for families.

SMART GOAL(S)

- Plan and/or attend quarterly meeting with community agencies to promote community outreach.
- Distribute brochures, information on local events to businesses, churches, housing and such. Information updated at least twice a year.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Beaufort County Housing, Early Child Coalition, Pediatricians, DHEC, DSS, local libraries, School District, Head Start

STRATEGY 4.2

Solicit additional support for the Beaufort County First Steps board.

SMART GOAL(S)

- Advertise, at minimum, twice a year to recruit board members to add one new member per year to address term limits.
- Solicit support from two community partners to offer two training and team building sessions for the board and staff.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Community Foundation of Lowcountry, Together SC, Coastal Community Foundation, SC First Steps

5. Increase Funding for Early Education Programs.

STRATEGY 5.1

Develop a Fundraising Plan.

SMART GOAL(S)

- Develop an annual online giving campaign on social media sites.
- Identify and invite two potential funders each year to learn more about partnership needs and to encourage giving.
- Collaborate with community partners to develop an annual fundraising project by end of FY23.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- First Steps staff, board members, childcare directors, business leaders

STRATEGY 5.2

Seek support to enhance grant writing efforts.

SMART GOAL(S)

- To search for and apply for at least one grant per year that focuses on First Steps' mission and service offering.
- Solicit help and feedback from at least two community partners on grant writing over the next three years.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Community Foundation of Lowcountry, Coastal Community Foundation, United Way, University of South Carolina, SC First Steps