

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2021 – 2023



Mission

Our mission is to improve the overall well-being of young children. We accomplish this by offering rigorous early childhood programming, providing opportunities for family engagement and support, and fostering community partnerships.

Vision

All children in Charleston County will be healthy and successful in school.

Values

- Parents are their children's first teachers.
- Children deserve high quality early care and education.
- Teachers require high quality education and professional development for continuous growth.
- Families need and deserve equitable access to quality health care and other community resources.
- We champion and celebrate diversity.

Overarching Measures of Success

INCREASE THE REACH OF FIRST STEPS SERVICES

By 2023, the percentage of children in need who are directly served by First Steps will increase from 8% to 12%.

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

By 2023, the percentage of children directly served by First Steps who are enrolled in high intensity programs will increase from 32% to 37%.

Objectives

- 1. Children and families engage in developmentally appropriate learning activities.**
- 2. Children's social-emotional development is supported through anti-bias practices.**
- 3. Parents actively engage as their child's first teachers and advocates.**

1. Children and families engage in developmentally appropriate learning activities.

STRATEGY 1.1

Parents As Teachers, Early Head Start - Parents As Teachers

SMART GOAL(S)

- The average attendance at socializations/group connections will increase by 10% each year.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will partner with Children's Museum of the Lowcountry (CML), SC Aquarium, Charleston County Public Library and Charleston County Parks and Recreation to secure no-cost space for socializations/group connections activities.

STRATEGY 1.2

Community Education

SMART GOAL(S)

- Co-host at least one community event per year that provides interactive learning activities for families with young children. Signage, branding, and recruitment materials will be available to advertise First Steps services.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will partner with Children's Museum of the Low Country (CML) and Magnolia Plantation and Gardens to cohost and participate in at least one scheduled family event per year.

1. Children and families engage in developmentally appropriate learning activities, *continued*

STRATEGY 1.3

Family Literacy

SMART GOAL(S)

- We will increase the number of families actively participating in Raising A Reader, Begin Early and Read with Us, and Begin with Books by 5% each year.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Partnering with Charleston County School District, expand Raising A Reader to additional classrooms.
- Collaborate with Charleston County Public Library to provide all First Steps families easy access to applying for a library card.
- We will partner with Begin with Books to enroll all eligible Charleston County First Steps children.

STRATEGY 1.4

Early Head Start - Child Care Partnerships, Quality Enhancement

SMART GOAL(S)

- Provide opportunities for children and families to participate in developmentally appropriate nature-based learning activities each year.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Partnering with the SC Aquarium and Francis Beidler Forest staff, nature-based activities will be provided at childcare sites.

1. Children and families engage in developmentally appropriate learning activities, *continued*

STRATEGY 1.5

Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships

SMART GOAL(S)

- Provide at least one activity parents can complete with their children in each quarterly health newsletter.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will use resources from local health care agencies (Fetter Health Care Network, MUSC Children’s Health) and the Health Services Advisory Committee to develop informational articles and family activities related to health and nutrition.

2. Children's social-emotional development is supported through anti-bias practices.

STRATEGY 2.1

Child Care Quality Enhancement, Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships, Child Care Training

SMART GOAL(S)

- By September 2021, create a cohort of childcare center directors and staff who will be trained in the Pyramid Model and creating anti-bias environments.
- Cohort members will complete the Racial Equity Institute (REI) by the end of 2021.
- Conduct pre- and post-anti-bias learning environment assessments with participants each year.
- Provide the Pyramid Model and anti-bias training to cohort participants bi-monthly from 2021-2023.
- Engage and support participants in monthly self-reflection activities and in making any needed changes to their environments.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Childcare center directors will be invited to participate based on information from Child Care Resource & Referral and SC Child Care.
- Cohort members will be enrolled in REI training with assistance from the YWCA Greater Charleston.
- All CCFS trainings will be certified through SC Endeavors for professional development credit hours.

3. Parents actively engage as their child's first teachers and advocates.

STRATEGY 3.1

Family Literacy, Parents As Teachers, Early Head Start - Parents As Teachers, Early Head Start - Child Care Partnerships

SMART GOAL(S)

- Increase the number of families actively participating in Raising A Reader, Begin Early and Read with Us, and Begin with Books by 5% each year.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Partnering with Charleston County School District, expand Raising A Reader to additional classrooms.
- Collaborate with Charleston County Public Library to provide all First Steps families easy access to applying for a library card.
- We will partner with Begin with Books to enroll all eligible Charleston County First Steps children.

STRATEGY 3.2

Parents As Teachers, Early Head Start - Parents As Teachers

SMART GOAL(S)

- Increase the average attendance at socializations/group connections by 10% each year.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Partnering with CML and the SC Aquarium, activities will be offered onsite for our families.

3. Parents actively engage as their child's first teachers and advocates.

- We will partner with Charleston County Public Library and Charleston County Parks and Recreation to secure no-cost space for socializations/group connections.

STRATEGY 3.3

Parents As Teachers, Early Head Start - Parents As Teachers,, Early Head Start - Child Care Partnerships, Child Care Training

SMART GOAL(S)

- Conduct at least two parent advocacy trainings per year to provide the tools and support parents need to advocate for their children.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will team with Save the Children Action Network to provide advocacy training and follow-up support to parents.

STRATEGY 3.4

Early Head Start - Child Care Partnerships

SMART GOAL(S)

- Increase parent participation and engagement at parent committee and Policy Council meetings by 10% each year.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will work with childcare center partners and current parents to implement a plan to incentivize active meeting participation.

3. Parents actively engage as their child's first teachers and advocates, *continued*

- Donations for incentives will be solicited from local retailers and service providers.

STRATEGY 3.5

Early Head Start - Child Care Partnerships

SMART GOAL(S)

- Implement a research-based parenting curriculum during monthly parent committee meetings.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Curriculum will be selected and supplemented with support from SC Head Start Directors Affiliate, SC Department of Social Services, and Father to Father, Inc.