

FAIRFIELD COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2021 – 2023





Mission

Collaborating with other entities, Fairfield County First Steps helps our families and caregivers 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 Fairfield County child will be prepared for success in school.

Values

The years of early childhood are a critical window of development during which much of human potential is shaped.

Families are the single most important influence on the development of their young children.

The work of supporting families and caregivers is a collaborative effort between state and local stakeholders within the public, private and faith sectors.

School readiness is the result of a child's development in many areas, with each contributing to the child's success.

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



Patti Wilkes

Executive Director

Fairfield County First Steps

If there is anything that we have learned in these twenty years of First Steps, it is that you never know what is around the next bend. Due to COVID, we have restructured the way we do almost everything. Parents as Teachers meetings and workshops are all held virtually now. The lack of quality childcare in Fairfield County has become a major need on the radar of most everyone working with children. Our parents are more focused on the needs of their children. We feel this is because they are with them more. Our board meetings and even our work with other agencies and groups has gone virtual. It is more important than ever that we all work together for the greater good of our youngest citizens. Our board continues to evaluate our programs, other local resources, and the needs of the children in our county. The staff and board of Fairfield County First Steps are all focused on making sure that our children are able to attend school, even if virtually, ready to succeed.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patti Wilkes".

Objectives

Objective 1: Increase the knowledge and skills of Fairfield County families regarding First Steps services.

Objective 2: Increase/implement training for childcare providers in efforts across organizations to build integrated early interventions and programs.

Objective 3: Increase the availability in rural areas for high-quality early care and education opportunities .

Increase the knowledge and skills of Fairfield County families regarding First Steps services.

STRATEGY 1.1

Increase enrollment in the Fairfield County First Steps Parents as Teachers program.

SMART GOAL

- By the end of FY23, our clients' KIPS scores will increase by at least 10%.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- Fairfield County Schools
- Fairfield Forward
- All4USC to bring Early Head Start to Fairfield County.

ACTION STEPS

- Recruit for PAT families through local apartments.

STRATEGY 1.2

Increase the number of participants in Community Education

SMART GOAL

- Each year, we will host/participate in a minimum of two countywide health **fairs to spread awareness about First Steps services.**

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- DHEC/WIC
- The Fairfield Post, the school newspaper
- The Voice, local newspaper
- Churches

Increase the knowledge and skills of Fairfield County families regarding First Steps services.

STRATEGY 1.3

Build capacity by training parents /school partners using evidence-based tools that build resilience and improve child outcomes

SMART GOAL

1. By the end of FY23, our KRA scores will demonstrate readiness at or above 45%.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- Fairfield County School District
- Fairfield County Childcare providers
- Fairfield Forward

ACTION STEPS

- Distribute the Profile of a Ready Kindergartner to all families
- Increase the number of Countdown to Kindergarten slots each summer.
- Recruit siblings of all PAT families.

We should make these SMART Goals. They are important to accomplishing Strategy 1.3. We just need 'how much,' and 'when?'

Increase/implement training for childcare providers in efforts across organizations to build integrated early interventions and programs.

STRATEGY 2.1

Increase knowledge and interaction between and among local childcare providers by hosting local trainings.

SMART GOAL

1. By the end of FY23, our local providers attaining Level B will increase by at minimum of two new locales.
2. Offer a minimum of two trainings per year to address needs.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- Fairfield County School District
- Fairfield County DHEC
- Fairfield County Childcare providers
- Fairfield Forward
- ABC
- Midlands Tech

ACTION STEPS

- Identify training needs for childcare providers.
- Offer trainings based on the needs identified in the childcare provider survey. **We should make these SMART Goals.**

Increase the availability in rural areas for high-quality early care and education opportunities

STRATEGY 3.1

Increase the numbers of childcare slots, that are of high-quality in the rural areas of Fairfield County, by 25%, by the end of FY23.

SMART GOAL

1. By the end of FY23, Fairfield County childcare will expand to offer a minimum of two facilities in the outlying areas of the county.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- Local childcare providers
- Fairfield County School District
- ABC
- SCDSS
- GLEAMNS

STRATEGY 3.2

Cultivate a community of advocates for young children and their families.

SMART GOAL(S)

1. Parents will report an increase in the availability of quality childcare provided to their child/ren. **By when?**

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- Local childcare providers
- Fairfield County School District
- Fairfield Forward
- GLEAMNS Early Head Start