

# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2021 – 2023





## Mission

Every child in Dillon County is important and should experience a loving, stimulating, healthy, and safe environment ensured by a supportive family and community.

## Vision

Every Dillon 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



**Shirleen D. Lewis, MS**  
Executive Director  
Dillon County First Steps

Dillon County First Steps Strategic Plan for the early care and education of the county's youngest learners builds on a series of significant steps taken over the last years by South Carolina First Steps to Readiness. This strategic plan was created to support all Dillon County Families to ensure that their children arrive at school healthy and ready to succeed. For 2020-2023 it is DCFS goal to build on the rich array of existing early childhood initiatives and services, while implementing additional programs to create a comprehensive early childhood service system. These efforts will come through building relationships through health services, early care and education, family support, and parent education to ensure the full development of all children. It is our goal to truly help every child in Dillon County be successfully prepared for school.

Sincerely,

*Shirleen D. Lewis*

# Overarching Measure(s) of Success

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

By 2025, the percentage of children directly served by First Steps enrolled in high intensity programs will increase from 28% to 40%.

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

By 2025, the percentage of children under age 6 who benefit from First Steps quality enhancement and training efforts will increase from 12% to 15%.

## **INCREASE THE REACH OF FIRST STEPS SERVICES**

By 2025, the percentage of children in need who are directly served by First Steps will increase from 17% to 20%.

# Objectives

## 1. To recruit at least three Hispanic families to participate in programs through Dillon County First Steps.

The Hispanic population is underserved, and it is the partnerships goal to serve Hispanic families in all programs to include Child Care Training, Raising A Reader, Quality Enhancement, and Nurturing Parenting Program.

## 2. Partner with child care programs in the Latta Community to implement the Early Childcare Quality Enhancement program.

Currently in Dillon County, we are serving child care facilities in Dillon and Lake View to increase scores in environmental rating scales and ABC Quality. In the future, the goal is to add additional classrooms in Latta.

## 3. Decrease waiting list by expanding families served in parenting program.

To expand the services provided by DCFS, staff will continuously recruit and maintain a waiting list so as additional funds become available families in need can be served.

# Recruit Hispanic Families for DCFS Programs.

## STRATEGY 1.1

### Nurturing Parenting Program

#### SMART GOAL(S)

- By the end of FY 23, we will increase enrollment of Hispanic families by at least three each year of the plan.

#### COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- We will partner with local elementary schools, administrators, Head Start, and First Steps 4k program to make connections with Hispanic families to increase enrollment.

## STRATEGY 1.2

### Community Education

#### SMART GOAL(S)

- In FY 21, FY 22, and FY23, we will host at least one community outreach event which will include a Spanish interpreter and dual language information.

#### COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- We will partner with the local school interpreter and Department of Social Services in planning our community outreach event.

# Recruit Hispanic Families for DCFS Programs.

## STRATEGY 1.3

### Child Care Training

#### SMART GOAL(S)

- By the end of FY 22, we will coordinate annual trainings that includes Culturally Responsive Practice for the inclusion of Hispanic families.

#### COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- We will partner with Child Care Referral and Resources (CCR&R) to provide trainings for childcare providers that help to increase population of Hispanic families.

## STRATEGY 1.4

### Raising A Reader

#### SMART GOAL(S)

- By the end of FY 22, we will recruit at least two Hispanic families to participate in Raising A Reader.

#### COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- We will partner with Head Start and First Steps 4K programs to implement Raising A Reader with Hispanic families.

# Quality Enhancement in Latta Child Care Programs.

## STRATEGY 2.1

### Quality Enhancement

#### SMART GOAL(S)

- By the end of FY 22, we will partner with one childcare home or facility to implement our quality enhancement program.

#### COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- Will partner with Day Care Consultants with Department of Social Services to identify and partner with programs in Latta.

## STRATEGY 2.2

### Community Education

#### SMART GOAL(S)

- By FY 21, FY 22, and FY 23, we will host a Quality Enhancement Orientation with all childcare providers to provide an overview and the benefits of participation in the quality enhancement program.

#### COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- We will partner with local early childcare providers and Certified Technical Assistances.



# Quality Enhancement in Latta Child Care Programs.

## STRATEGY 2.3

### Child Care Trainings

#### SMART GOAL(S)

- By the end of FY21, all participants of Quality Enhancement will receive free childcare training locally and with South Carolina Early Childhood Association.

#### COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- We will partner with the Sisters of Charity to cover the training fees of quality enhancement participants.

# Increase the number of families served in Parenting Programs

## STRATEGY 3.1

### Nurturing Parenting Program

#### SMART GOAL(S)

- By the end of FY 22, we will increase the number of clients served by 10 in the Nurturing Parenting program to increase the impact of DCFS.

#### COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- We will partner with SCFS, South Carolina Port, and Duke Energy to secure grants to increase clients served.

## STRATEGY 3.2

### Community Education

#### SMART GOAL(S)

- By FY 21, FY 22, and FY 23, we will continuously advertise in the local newspaper and social media to increase recruitment of eligible families by 10%.
- By FY21, FY 22, and FY 23, we will annually host an event that will allow for us to connect with eligible families.

#### COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- We will partner with Department of Social Services, DHEC, local schools, Dillon Collaborative Council, and United Way to have events and share information with the community.