

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2021 – 2023





Mission

Clarendon County First Steps will partner with organizations within and outside of Clarendon County to leverage and maximize resources to provide quality, research-based programs and services that will prepare Clarendon County's preschool children for success in school and in life.

Vision

Every child in Clarendon County 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



Sharon P. Williams, MPA
Executive Director
Clarendon County First Steps

Research consistently tells us:

- School readiness matters because the early years of a child's life establish the foundation on which all future school success is built.
- Parents are a child's first teacher, and we need to equip them with the tools they need to be their child's first and best teacher.
- Children that are exposed to reading during the first years of life are much more likely to learn to read on schedule.
- Child care quality has a long-term effect on children's cognitive and social-emotional development through kindergarten and beyond.
- Children who enter kindergarten behind their peers academically are more likely to stay or fall behind.

Clarendon County First Steps' Board and I rely heavily upon research to determine what school readiness programs and services work and which ones we should use the funds allocated to us to implement. Your voices, coupled with the research on school readiness, go a long way in helping us to select and implement programs and services that will help us to help our youngest and most vulnerable citizens arrive at first grade healthy and ready to succeed. We thank you!

Overarching Measures of Success

Clarendon County First Steps will:

INCREASE THE REACH OF FIRST STEPS SERVICES

By 2023, the percentage of children in need who are directly served by CCFS will increase from 22% to 27%.

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 enrolled in high intensity programs will increase from 28% to 40%.

INCREASE THE AVAILABILITY OF HIGH-QUALITY EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE IN CLARENDON COUNTY

By 2023, the percentage of children under age 6 who benefit from First Steps quality enhancement and training efforts will increase from 16% to 21%.

Objectives

Clarendon County First Steps will:

1. PARENTS ARE CONFIDENT AND CAPABLE IN THEIR ROLE AS THE FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT TEACHERS OF THEIR CHILDREN.
2. PRESCHOOL CHILDREN HAVE LITERACY-RICH HOME ENVIRONMENTS.
3. CHILDREN SMOOTHLY AND SEAMLESSLY TRANSITION FROM 4-K to 5-K.
4. CHILDREN ARE HEALTHY, SAFE, AND RECEIVE EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION THAT ENABLES THEM TO BE READY FOR SCHOOL.

Parents are confident and capable in their role as the first and most important teachers of their children!

STRATEGY 1.1

Parents As Teachers

SMART GOAL(S)

- Beginning in FY 2022, the number of families served in PAT will increase by 7% annually.
- Beginning in FY 2022, the number of prenatal families will increase by 5%.
- From FY 2021-2023, Clarendon County First Steps will continue to partner with parents and members of Clarendon County's early care and education, social services, and medical communities to deliver parent education and support services to families whose children can most benefit from PAT.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- Clarendon County School Districts;
- Clarendon County DHEC;
- Clarendon County Department of Social Services;
- BabyNet;
- Head Start;
- Early Care & Education Providers (childcare providers & public/private school teachers)
- McLeod Health; and
- Other organizations that work with Clarendon County's families with children pre-birth to five.

Parents are confident and capable in their role as the first and most important teachers of their children!

STRATEGY 1.2

Community Education

SMART GOAL(S)

- From FY 2021-FY 2023, CCFC will provide resources and other opportunities that will enhance parents' confidence and competence as primary nurturers, first teachers, and essential partners in the early care and education of their children.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- Clarendon County School Districts;
- Clarendon County DHEC;
- Clarendon County Department of Social Services;
- BabyNet;
- Head Start;
- Early Care & Education Providers (childcare providers & public/private school teachers)
- McLeod Health; and
- Other organizations that work with Clarendon County's families with children pre-birth to five.

Preschool children have literacy-rich home environments!

STRATEGY 2.1

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL)

SMART GOAL(S)

- From FY 2021 to FY 2023, CCFS will continue to partner with individuals and organizations to provide one free, age-appropriate book every month to Clarendon County's children age birth to five. CCFS will partner to provide free books to at least 200 children annually.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- Clarendon County's School Districts;
- Harvin Clarendon County Library
- Faith Community;
- Business Community;
- Community and Social Organizations;
- Individual citizens (that may be interested in sponsoring 1 or more children); and
- Early Care & Education Providers (childcare providers & public/private school teachers)

Preschool children have literacy-rich home environments!

STRATEGY 2.2

Other Book Distributions

SMART GOAL(S)

- By the end of FY 2021, the number of Clarendon County's preschool children receiving free books through community events, etc. will increase by 20%.
- CCFS will established ongoing partnerships with Clarendon School Districts to distribute free books to at least 200 children from birth to 5 annually.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- Clarendon County's School Districts;
- Harvin Clarendon County Library
- Faith Community;
- Business Community;
- Community and Social Organizations;
- Individual citizens (that may be interested in sponsoring 1 or more children); and
- Early Care & Education Providers (childcare providers & public/private school teachers)

Children smoothly and seamlessly transition from 4-K to 5-K.

STRATEGY 3.1

Countdown to Kindergarten (CTK)

SMART GOAL(S)

- By the end of FY 2023, the number of children served in CTK will increase from 8% to 16%.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Clarendon County's School Districts;
- Head Start; and
- Early Care & Education Providers (childcare providers & public/private school teachers)

STRATEGY 3.2

Communication Education and Awareness

SMART GOAL(S)

- CCFS will establish ongoing partnerships with Head Start, and School Districts, childcare providers, and parents to help children successfully transition from 4K to 5K.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- Clarendon County's School Districts;
- Head Start; and
- Early Care & Education Providers (childcare providers & public/private school teachers)

Children are healthy, safe, and receive early care and education that enables them to be ready for school!

STRATEGY 4.1

Child Care Training & Professional Development

SMART GOAL(S)

- From FY 2021 to FY 2023, CCFS will offer 15-20 hours of free certified training annually to Clarendon County's early care and education providers. Sessions will enable providers to:
 - Effectively advocate for programs and services they need in order to best serve the children in their care;
 - Understand school readiness and early childhood education;
 - Be familiar with curriculum, effective teaching styles, and school readiness expectations;
 - Provide a healthy and safe environment for the children they serve; and
 - Consistently implement best practices in working with preschool children and their families.
- Beginning in FY 2022, CCFS will survey providers to determine what post-training support they need in order to successfully implement strategies learned during training sessions.
- From FY 2022 to FY 2023, CCFS will provide ongoing technical assistance as requested by providers.

Children are healthy, safe, and receive early care and education that enables them to be ready for school!

STRATEGY 4.1

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Early Care & Education Providers (childcare providers & public/private school teachers);
- SC Endeavors;
- SC Department of Social Services Child Care Licensing;
- Certified Trainers/Coaches; and
- Consultants that provide specialized training, such as Infant and Child First Aid & CPR