

# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2021 – 2023





## Mission

First Steps empowers Edgefield County families and caregivers to prepare children for school success by delivering, enhancing, and expanding high-quality early childhood services.

## Vision

Every Edgefield County child will be prepared for success in school.

## Values

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

All children are inherently worthy of receiving the best possible start in life and are the most valuable resource for the future of our community. Responsive, nurturing relationships with consistent caregivers in a safe, stimulating learning environment create the best possible chance for children's healthy development and school readiness.

Families are the single most important influence on the development of 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 - including physical development, approaches to learning and inquiry, social and emotional development, language and literacy development, and mathematical thinking - with each contributing to the child's success.

We value and demonstrate diverse perspectives in the development of programs. Services must be individualized and adaptable to meet the unique needs of children and families and we ensure that all families have the opportunity to be successful.

Services must be high-quality and have evidence of success. First Steps operates within a culture of accountability.

# Message from the Executive Director



I am proud to present the Edgefield County First Steps Comprehensive Plan for 2021-2023.

This plan represents several months of work that involved focus groups, community surveys, and interviews with key community and agency staff across Edgefield County.

Our Partnership Board of Directors examined the current vision, mission, and core values of our organization, and ensured that they reflected what we want to accomplish in Edgefield County.

We renew our commitment to provide high-quality, affordable, and equitable programs for the young children and their families in Edgefield County.

*Candi Lalonde*

**Candi Lalonde**

Executive Director

Edgefield County First Steps

# Overarching Measures of Success

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

For Fiscal Year (FY) 21 (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021), Edgefield County First Steps is projected to directly serve 264 children.

By FY 23, the number of children who are directly served by Edgefield County First Steps will be 304, an increase of 15%.

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

For Fiscal Year (FY) 21, the percentage of children projected to be enrolled in high intensity programs funded by Edgefield County First Steps is estimated to be approximately 11%.

By FY 23, the percentage of children enrolled in high intensity programs funded by Edgefield County First Steps will increase to 15%.

# Objectives

**1. EDUCATE COMMUNITY ABOUT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OFFERED BY EDGEFIELD COUNTY FIRST STEPS**

**2. ENSURE THAT HIGH QUALITY PROGRAMS WILL BE ACCESSIBLE, EQUITABLE, AND AFFORDABLE FOR EDGEFIELD COUNTY FAMILIES**

**3. SUPPORT FAMILIES AS THEIR CHILD'S FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT TEACHERS**

# 1. Educate the community about the programs and services of ECFS

## STRATEGY 1.1

Increase presence at community events and local meetings

### SMART GOAL(S)

- We will participate in at least 4 community events yearly, to include parent education for local elementary schools, Early Head Start, Head Start, and local childcare centers.
- Partnership staff will attend local interagency and community meetings.

### COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will partner with the local community organizations and groups that host meetings and/or events that reach children and families in the county.

## STRATEGY 1.2

Increase use of local signage, brochure distribution, and both social and print media

### SMART GOAL(S)

- There will be three unique posts on our Facebook page weekly.
- There will be an article in our local newspaper three times yearly.
- Brochures and signage will be placed in at least 12 locations throughout the county.

### COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will partner with local agencies and businesses to acquire space for brochures and signage.

# 1. Educate the community about the programs and services of ECFS (cont.'d)

## STRATEGY 1.3

### Imagination Library

#### SMART GOAL(S)

- By FY 23, we will increase our enrollment in the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program by 10%. When receiving enrollment forms by mail from families that we do not serve in other programs, we will send additional information to them to ascertain if they can benefit from any of our other programs.

#### COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will provide enrollment forms for our community providers who serve families with young children (Edgefield County Health Department, Edgefield County Department of Social Services, and Early Head Start) so they can assist us with enrolling more children.

## 2. High quality programs will be accessible, equitable, and affordable for Edgefield County families

### STRATEGY 2.1

#### Early Education for Children Under 4

#### SMART GOAL(S)

- By FY 23, the number of children enrolled in quality early education programs will increase by 20%.

#### COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will work with the Edgefield County School District and provide funding for staffing for the early childhood education classroom.

### STRATEGY 2.2

#### Child Care Scholarships

#### SMART GOAL(S)

- By FY 23, we will increase the value of a childcare scholarship by 10%.
- By FY 23, we will increase the number of childcare scholarships awarded by 10%.

#### COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will work with the licensed childcare providers in Edgefield County to recruit and refer families for childcare scholarships.



## 2. High quality programs will be accessible, equitable, and affordable for Edgefield County families (*continued*)

### STRATEGY 2.3

#### Child Care Quality Enhancement and Training

#### SMART GOAL(S)

- By FY 23, we will increase the number of certified training hours offered each year by 10%.
- By FY 23, the number of licensed childcare, family childcare, and early childhood education staff members who attend at least 10 hours of certified training provided by Edgefield County First Steps will increase by 10%.
- By FY 23, the average number of monthly coaching visits to the centers enrolled in our childcare quality enhancement program by our childcare technical assistant will increase by 10%.

#### COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will work with all licensed childcare providers; group and family home providers; private and church preschool providers; Early Head Start and Head Start; and the Edgefield County School District 4K programs to provide quality trainings that meet their training and professional development needs.

# 3. Families are supported as their child's first and most important teachers

## STRATEGY 3.1

### Nurturing Parenting

#### SMART GOAL(S)

- By FY 23, we will increase the number of families enrolled in Nurturing Parenting by 10%.

#### COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will work with the Edgefield County School District, the Department of Social Services, and Cornerstone to get referrals for our program.

## STRATEGY 3.2

### Nurse Family Partnership

#### SMART GOAL(S)

- By FY 23, we will increase the number of families enrolled in Nurse Family Partnership by 10%.

#### COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will work with the Edgefield County Health Department, the Edgefield County Department of Health and Human Services, the Edgefield County Department of Social Services, and the Edgefield County School District to get referrals for our program.