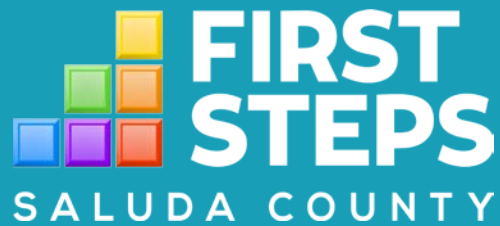


COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2021 – 2023





Mission

Saluda County First Steps will help families and caregivers prepare their children to succeed in school by maximizing public and private community resources to deliver, enhance, and expand high-quality diverse early care and education services.

Vision

Every Saluda County child will be prepared to succeed 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 throughout all of our diverse cultural identities.

The work of supporting families and caregivers is a collaborative effort between state and local stakeholders within the public, private, and faith-based 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 our diverse racial/ethnic 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



It has been an amazing journey of learning and understanding my community in a whole new perspective as I worked with our board to complete the Saluda County First Steps 2020-2023 Comprehensive Plan. We are truly #OneSaluda!

With the COVID-19 pandemic, we stepped up to find alternative measures to continue to provide Saluda County First Steps services. We collaborated as a community to identify needs of our youngest children through diverse focus groups, interviews of stakeholders, and surveys from our early educators.

Our goal is to see all young children reach their highest potential for success.

Kim Chariker

Kim Chariker
Executive Director
Saluda County First Steps

Message from the Board Chair

Saluda First Steps foresees a time when every child will be prepared to succeed in school. As an active, dynamic group of change agents, the staff and board of Saluda First Steps work diligently on this mission and toward this vision. The flexibility required to respond to the current pandemic give testimony to this fact.

Over the next few years, our efforts will focus on three major objectives. We will increase the number of children impacted by high-quality services, improve the safety and well-being of children, and increase the community awareness and support of Saluda County First Steps. These ambitious goals demand dedication and commitment, but there is no shortage of those qualities in the Saluda County First Steps board and staff.

While we are working toward a community in which every child will be prepared to succeed in school, we know this change will not happen overnight. It will only happen through long-term, dedicated effort of the Saluda County First Steps team—the board, the staff, and community partners. We truly are #OneSaluda!

Hugh B. Gray, Jr.

Hugh Gray

Board Chair

Saluda County First Steps

Overarching Measure(s) of Success

INCREASE THE REACH OF FIRST STEPS SERVICES

By 2023, the percentage of children 0-5 years in need who are directly served by Saluda County First Steps will increase from 19% to 22%.

REDUCE THE RACIAL/ETHNIC GAP IN KINDERGARTEN READINESS

By 2023, the gap in the percentage of children who score at the highest level on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment between White Kindergarteners and Black/Hispanic Kindergarteners will reduce to 9%.

Objectives

Objective #1 - INCREASE THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN 0-5 AND THEIR FAMILIES SERVED BY HIGH QUALITY EARLY EDUCATIONAL SERVICES.

Objective #2 - IMPROVE THE SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN IN SALUDA COUNTY BY STRENGTHENING FAMILIES.

Objective #3 - INCREASE COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND SUPPORT OF SALUDA COUNTY FIRST STEPS PROGRAMS.

1. INCREASE THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN 0-5 AND THEIR FAMILIES SERVED BY HIGH QUALITY EARLY EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

STRATEGY 1.1

Enhanced Early Education

SMART GOAL(S)

- By the end of FY23, we will increase the number of EEE students receiving services by 10%.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will partner with the local school district to include both Saluda Primary School and Hollywood Elementary School, and private 4K providers for EEE services.

STRATEGY 1.2

Child Care Training

SMART GOAL(S)

- By the end of FY23, we will increase the number of children and families served through our childcare training sessions by 10%.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will collaborate with Saluda County early care and education providers both public and private and neighboring counties to provide high quality childcare training.

1. INCREASE THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN 0-5 AND THEIR FAMILIES SERVED IN HIGH QUALITY EARLY EDUCATIONAL SERVICES. (CONTINUED)

STRATEGY 1.3

Literacy - Library

SMART GOAL(S)

- By the end of 2023, we will establish a library virtual program that presents performances/presentations through social media to increase then number of children 0-5 and their families that have access to services by 15%.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will collaborate with Saluda County Library, storytellers, presenters, and performers to develop a series of virtual performances available throughout the year.

STRATEGY 1.4

Nurturing Parent

SMART GOAL(S)

- By the end of 2023, we will increase the number of children and families served through our Nurturing Parent program by 10%.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will collaborate with Saluda DSS, Saluda School District One, Nurse Family Partnership, and Saluda Adult Education to identify families with young children.

2. IMPROVE THE SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN BY STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

STRATEGY 2.1

Enhanced Early Education

SMART GOAL(S)

- By the end 2023, we will increase the number of dual-language learners served by 20%.
- By the end of 2020, we will collaborate with Saluda School District One to ensure a Bi-Lingual Specialist is on staff for EEE services.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will partner with Saluda County School District One to identify and recruit dual-language learners in need of enhanced early educational services.
- We will partner with Saluda School District One to ensure that a Bi-Lingual Specialist is on staff.

STRATEGY 2.2

Nurse Family Partnership

SMART GOAL(S)

- By the end of 2023, we will increase the number of first-time mothers receiving NFP services by 20%.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will partner with Carolina Health Centers, Inc., Saluda School District One, DHEC, DSS, Local Physicians/Clinics, and Churches for recruitment.

3. INCREASE COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND SUPPORT OF SCFS PROGRAMS

STRATEGY 3.1

Community Awareness

SMART GOAL(S)

- We will participate in at least 4 community festivals/events annually.
- We will attend local community network service meetings to provide information on SCFS services and needs.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will partner with Saluda Service Network, Chamber of Commerce, and other local service agencies that host meetings/events/festivals/workshops to reach our children and families.

STRATEGY 3.2

Family Support

SMART GOAL(S)

- We will use our Family Support AmeriCorps staff member to create and provided dual language literature to local businesses and organizations.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will partner with our diverse local businesses, and organizations to provide Saluda FS literature in dual languages.

3. INCREASE COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND SUPPORT OF SCFS PROGRAMS (CONTINUED)

STRATEGY 3.3

Increase Print Media using Dual Language when possible

SMART GOAL(S)

- Submit articles to the local newspaper for publishing regarding Saluda FS information, events, successes at least twice per year.
- Signage will be placed throughout Saluda County to inform of Saluda FS programs.
- Brochures will be developed to inform community of all Saluda FS programs in English and Spanish.
- Social media updates will be done weekly.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will partner with local agencies, businesses, and Housing Authorities to create and post signage and brochures in English and Spanish.