

# STRATEGIC PLAN

2024 – 2026





## 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. Clarendon County First Steps operates within a culture of accountability.

# Message from the Executive Director



**Sharon P. Williams**

Executive Director  
Clarendon County First Steps

Experts on early childhood education agree! The early years of a child's life matter. It is a time of tremendous brain development and represents a tremendous opportunity for us to establish fertile ground on which all future learning will occur.

This plan outlines the path the Clarendon County First Steps Partnership Board and staff will travel as we journey on to prepare Clarendon County's children, our youngest and most vulnerable citizens, for success in school and in life. Please join us. Together, we can, and we will make a positive difference in the lives of our children!

*~Sharon P. Williams*

# Strategic Plan Process

## CONVENE

Held community convenings to develop a vision for young children and their families

October 2022 – January 2023



## UNDERSTAND

Reviewed local data and map assets to understand the state of young children, their families, and the early childhood system

October 2022 – March 2023



## PRIORITIZE

Organized the insight gathered from the convenings and data to prioritize the concerns, needs, and gaps the partnership wants to address and formalized Needs Assessment

January 2023 – March 2023



## PLAN

Wrote the partnership's three-year Strategic Plan using the Needs Assessment

March 2023 – May 2023



## APPLY

Utilize the Strategic Plan to inform the partnership's Annual Formula Funding Grant Application

May 2023, May 2024, May 2025



## IMPLEMENT

Execute the programs and services outlined in the Strategic Plan

July 2023 – June 2026



## MONITOR

Track the partnership's progress on implementing programs to fidelity and on achieving the Strategic Plan

July 2023 – June 2026



# Priority Needs: Summary

Through our needs assessment and resources assessment process, the following needs were prioritized for Clarendon County. See our full needs and resources assessment here: [www.scfirststeps.org](http://www.scfirststeps.org) .

## 1. Ready Children

All children have the social, emotional, physical and intellectual skills they need in order to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.

## 2. Ready Families

All families have access to the resources they need in order to provide their children with secure and supportive relationships and environments, promote physical and mental health, and foster curiosity and a love of reading and learning.

## 3. Ready Early Care & Education Programs and Professionals

All early care and education professionals have access to the resources they need in order to deliver quality early care and education services that are responsive to cultural values and individual differences, that promote equity and diversity, and support families and essential and respected partners in promoting the optimal development of our children.

## 4. Ready Communities and Systems

Our entire community realizes and acknowledges the importance of school readiness and works with us and other essential community partners to make Clarendon County a place where our preschool children thrive.

# Objectives

- 1. Parents are confident and capable in their role as their children's first and most important teachers.**
- 2. Preschool children have literacy-rich home environments.**
- 3. Parents and their children have access to safe and quality early care and education programs that contribute in a positive way to our preschool children's readiness for school.**
- 4. Parents and their preschool children have access to programs that will help them to seamlessly transition from one level to the next.**
- 5. Resources that promote preschool children's readiness for school will be available and easily accessible to parents, early care and education professionals, and other caregivers.**
- 6. Early care and education professionals have access to the resources and supports they need in order to provide early care and education services that promote preschool children's readiness for school.**
- 7. Our community is enlisted, cultivated and utilized as valuable partners in overall efforts to promote our children's readiness for school.**

## **Objective 1: Parents are confident and capable in their role as their children's first and most important teachers.**

### **STRATEGY 1.1**

Expand, create and foster opportunities for parents to learn more about early childhood development, school readiness and what they can and need to do in order to contribute to the readiness of their children.

### **STRATEGY 1.2**

Expand proven, evidence-based parent education and support programs so that more parents can participate.

### **GOAL(S)**

1. By 2026, CCFS will have increased the number of families with preschool children served in the Parents As Teachers program (and potentially other parent and education and support programs) by 21%.

### **COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)**

- Clarendon County Community Coalition

*\*Clarendon County's Community Coalition is comprised of agencies (such as Clarendon County DHEC and Clarendon County DSS), nonprofit organizations, members of the health care community, members of the business community, members of the faith community, and other organizations that serve Clarendon County's citizens.*

## **Objective 2: Preschool children have literacy-rich home environments.**

### **STRATEGY 2.1**

Expand existing programs and strategies that provide free, quality, and age-appropriate books and other early literacy materials to families with preschool children at no cost to them.

### **STRATEGY 2.2**

Identify and utilize other opportunities to acquire and distribute free, quality, and age-appropriate books to preschool children.

### **SMART GOAL(S)**

1. By 2026, CCFS will have increased the number of Clarendon County's preschool children participating in the Imagination Library and similar early literacy programs by 13%.

### **COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)**

- Child Care Providers
- Clarendon County Community Coalition
- Clarendon County School District
- Dollywood Foundation
- First Book USA
- Head Start



**Objective 3: Parents and their preschool children have access to safe and quality early care and education programs that contribute in a positive way to our preschool children's preparedness for school.**

### **STRATEGY 3.1**

Create and promote opportunities for parents to learn about what quality early care and education programs look like.

#### **SMART GOAL(S)**

1. By 2026, CCFS will have increased the number of childcare scholarships available to assist parents by 10%.

### **STRATEGY 3.2**

Increase investments in early care and education programs to improve their quality.

#### **SMART GOAL(S)**

1. By 2026, 25% of Clarendon County's childcare providers will have successfully completed one or more activities and implemented one or more strategies to enhance the quality of their programs and services.

#### **COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)**

- American Red Cross
- Child Care Providers
- Clarendon County Community Coalition
- Clarendon County School District
- Consultants
- SC Department of Social Services
- South Carolina Endeavors
- South Carolina First Steps

**Objective 4: Parents and their preschool children have access to programs that will help them to seamlessly transition from one level to the next.**

### **STRATEGY 4.1**

Use *SC's Profile of the Ready Kindergartner* and other tools to promote shared understanding among parents and early care and education professionals.

### **STRATEGY 4.2**

Implement and expand research-based programs to help children smoothly and successfully transition from 4-K to 5-K.

### **SMART GOAL(S)**

1. CCFS will increase the number of Clarendon County's children participating in Countdown to Kindergarten by 15%.

### **COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)**

- Child Care Providers
- Clarendon County Community Coalition
- Clarendon County School District
- Head Start
- Private 4-K Providers
- Public Relations Consultants

**Objective 5: Resources that promote preschool children’s readiness for school are available and easily accessible to parents, early care and education professionals, and other caregivers.**

**STRATEGY 5.1**

Develop and/or secure print and other resources about school readiness.

**STRATEGY 5.2**

Partner with organizations within the community to disseminate print and other resources about school readiness.

**SMART GOAL(S)**

1. By 2026, CCFS will have increased parents’ access to information about school readiness by 100%.

**COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)**

- Businesses
- Clarendon County Community Coalition
- Public Relations Consultants

**Objective 6: Early care and education professionals have access to the resources and supports they need in order to provide early care and education services that promote preschool children’s readiness for school.**

### **STRATEGY 6.1**

Engage early care and education programs and providers in training, quality enhancement, technical assistance and coaching to equip them with the skills and resources they need in order to promote positive child development.

### **STRATEGY 6.2**

Assist and support early care and education professionals in establishing an active and ongoing support network/group.

### **SMART GOAL(S)**

1. By 2026, the number of children under age 6 who benefit from CCFS’s work with Clarendon County’s early care and education professionals will increase by 18%.

### **COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)**

- Certified trainers/consultants
- Clarendon County Community Coalition
- Clarendon County’s childcare providers
- SC Endeavors
- Consultants

**Objective 7: Our community is enlisted, cultivated and utilized as valuable partners in overall efforts to promote our children's readiness for school.**

### **STRATEGY 7.1**

Collaborate across agencies to promote awareness about school readiness and secure funding to implement programs and services proven to increase preschool children's readiness for school.

### **STRATEGY 7.2**

Develop and/or build upon existing public awareness and education campaigns to educate the community about school readiness.

### **SMART GOAL(S)**

By 2026, CCFS will have developed and enhanced relationships with agencies and organizations within the community by 100%.

### **COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)**

- Clarendon County Community Coalition
- Public Relations Consultants

# Overarching Measure(s) of Success



## **Increase the reach of Clarendon County First Steps' services.**

- ❖ By FY 2026, the percentage of preschool children directly served by Clarendon County First Steps will have increased to 25%.