

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

2024 – 2026



Acknowledgments

Barnwell County First Steps would like to acknowledge the individuals who were involved in the process of drafting this needs assessment. We would be unable to do this work without the support from our Board, our staff, and the greater community of Barnwell County.

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Message from the Executive Director



TRICIA GORDON
Executive Director
Barnwell County First Steps

Barnwell County First Steps is a local nonprofit that works collaboratively to ensure that all children start school ready to reach their highest potential. We achieve this goal by engaging families, caregivers, and community partners in high-quality programs and services that improve early childhood development, from before birth through age five. We also serve as a connector and convener of all early childhood stakeholders in Barnwell County.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tricia Gordon".

Needs Assessment Process

CONVENE

Held a community convening with 20 participants and used a community survey of families with young children, 22 participants, to develop a vision for young children and their families

October 2022 – April 2023



UNDERSTAND

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

January 2023 – 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

“Finding quality, reliable childcare is my biggest hurdle in being able to work.”
-Survey Participant

Asset Map



Priorities: Summary

1. Childcare

Survey participants indicated that Barnwell County has a significant lack of quality, affordable childcare. The town of Williston is a childcare desert.

2. Community Resource Connections for Families

Respondents report that it is difficult for families to locate the appropriate resources when in need.

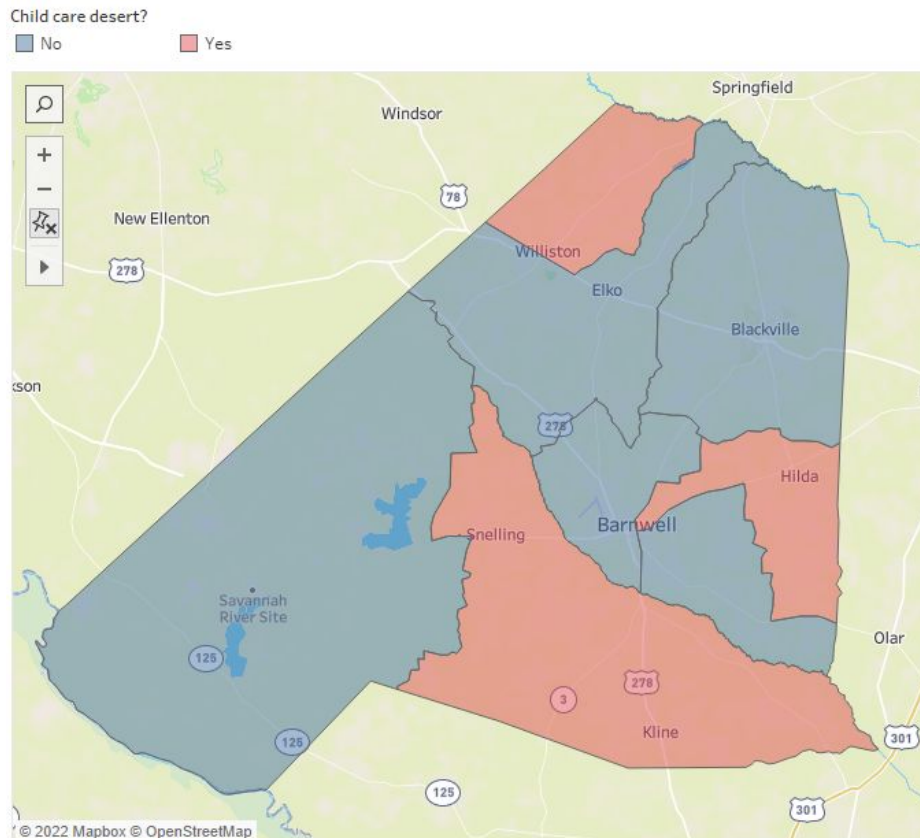
3. Transportation

Survey respondents indicated that transportation is a major hurdle in accessing resources for their families.

Priority One: Childcare

37% of census tracts are considered child care deserts in Barnwell County.

Provider location and center capacity obtained from sccchildcare.org on October 16, 2022. Definition of a child care desert obtained from the Center for American Progress, “A child care desert is any census tract with more than 50 children under age 5 that contains either no child care providers or so few options that there are more than three times as many children as licensed child care slots” (<https://www.childcaredeserts.org/>). Population under age 5 by census tract obtained from the American Community Survey 2016-2020 Five Year Estimates (Table B01001). US Census Bureau. Calculations done by Chelsea Richard of South Carolina First Steps (October 16, 2022).



Our community survey respondents overwhelmingly cited the lack of affordable, quality childcare as their number one issue that is facing them as parents in preparing their children for kindergarten.

63.6% of respondents said that there was a “lack of childcare while I work,” followed by 36.4% of the respondents stating that their main issue was “low quality childcare.”

Priority Two: Community Resource Connections for Families

Survey respondents state that “parents need parenting supports.”

BCFS Community Needs Survey, February 2023

Families across Barnwell County are struggling.

63.6% of respondents said that there was a need for “parenting supports.” The combination of the lack of resources with the limited knowledge by some parents of these resources for parents are two of the most significant reasons that our survey respondents felt that children in Barnwell County are not ready to start kindergarten.

Priority Three: Transportation

54.5% of our survey respondents state that “transportation assistance” is vital to their families in order to prepare their children for kindergarten.

BCFS Community Needs Survey, February 2023

Survey respondents indicated that transportation is a major hurdle in accessing resources for their families.

In nearly every question that we posed to our survey respondents, transportation was listed as one of the top 3-4 issues that faced families in Barnwell County.

When asked what are the “top three most significant reasons some children in Barnwell County are not ready to start kindergarten, 59.1% said that it was due to “poor or no transportation.”

31.8% stated that, again, that a lack of transportation was one of their top three issues facing them in getting their children ready to start kindergarten. The only issue that was greater for the respondents to this question was childcare, whether it was a lack of childcare options or “low quality childcare.”

Next Steps



PLAN

Write 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