

# NEEDS ASSESSMENT

2024 – 2026



# Acknowledgments

**Spartanburg County First Steps** is grateful to all who participated in our Community Needs Assessment to help influence the outcomes of our 24-26 FY Strategic Plan. We worked to be as inclusive as possible as we explored the gaps in needed services and service delivery to our young children and their families. Your thoughts, ideas and opinions were priceless to this process. We value every voice, whether they attended in person, sent an email, or called. Special thanks to Kaitlin Watts, our facilitator for the Community Needs Assessment.

With gratitude,

Barbara Manoski, Executive Director

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*"The project described was supported through South Carolina First Steps by the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five Initiative (PDG B-5), Grant Number 90TP0080-02-01 from the Office of Child Care, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services."*

# Needs Assessment Process

## CONVENE

Held a community convenings with 30 participants and developed a vision for young children and their families

February 2023



## UNDERSTAND

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

February 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

March 2023



**“I’ve been in this field for over 40 years and today I learned things I’ve never known.”**

- Ida Thompson  
*Early Childhood Liaison  
Spartanburg Academic Movement*

**“This information was so helpful. We need to do this more often!”**

- Charlene Doctor  
*Early Childhood Director  
Spartanburg School District 7*

# Asset Map



# Priorities: Summary

## **1. Supporting parents of young children**

Our community voiced overwhelming concern that parents are overwhelmed and need support for hands-on opportunities to engage in developmentally appropriate activities that support success in life and school for their young children. Programs like Palmetto Basics offer easy to understand tenets for parents.

## **2. Provide high-quality early care and education programs**

Every voice in our process brought forward the concern of needing more high quality early care and education programs in our communities. Research supports that young children who attend high quality early care and education programs will most likely be prepared for success in school. Our community has a need for more high quality programs to support school readiness.

## **3. Expand early learning network partnerships**

Many of our partners and stakeholders believed there are opportunities for new ways of supporting each others work in a collaborative manner. Our communities want to provide high quality early care and education programs for their youngest learners, especially those who live in poverty. By expanding our partnerships and creating new ones we will be able to reach more children in need.

# Priority One: Parenting supports

## Data point: Increase the number of opportunities for families to receive parenting supports

While Spartanburg has various parent supports, our needs assessment identified that we need to communicate these tools to parents more effectively. Parents need to be met where they are, at local schools, the libraries, or at community events.

SCFS will continue to study low KRA data and increase the number of opportunities for parents to participate in programs like Palmetto Basics to help ensure our young children are ready for school.

Additionally, we need to expand parent tool availability in other languages such as Russian and Ukrainian and to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing populations.



## Priority Two: High quality early care and education programs

### **Data point: Increase the number of participating providers in Quality Counts**

Spartanburg County is experiencing rapid growth resulting in fewer opportunities for parents to access high quality early care and education for their young children. Research shows there is a direct link to success in school and life when children have access to high quality early care and education.



# Priority Three: Community partnerships supporting success in school and life for our young children

## Data point: Increase the number of early childhood network partnerships

Spartanburg County First Steps has many community partners who are vested in improving early care and education programs. One initiative, led by Spartanburg Academic Movement is known as Movement 2030. The \$100 million dollar plan is meant to improve education outcomes. First Steps' role will be to expand the services of Quality Counts to more programs and to partner with public schools who offer 3K and 4k programs.

Our Needs Assessment revealed that all communities want to provide more services for families of young children living in poverty. The most recent Census revealed there are 45 census tracts that are identified as Childcare deserts.





# 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

