

# NEEDS ASSESSMENT

2024 – 2026



# Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to all those who contributed to the Newberry County First Steps' Needs and Resources Assessment. Many steps went into the completion of this report including the gathering and review of data, community meetings and surveys, along with conversations and idea exchanges. A special thanks goes out to the Newberry First Steps Board of Directors. You all supported and participated in the assessment process and shared valuable insights from your own work and lived experiences.

Many thanks goes out to the childcare staff, parents, and community members who shared and filled out surveys. You are always willing partners in our quest to find the best ways to serve young children and families in Newberry County.

I would also like to acknowledge, with much appreciation, the crucial role community organization representatives, parents and community members played during the community meetings. A group of 19 people spent part of a day reviewing data, sharing ideas, discussing needs and ways to improve, expand, and support young children and families in Newberry County. Only together, in partnership with each other, families, and our community can we provide services and resources so that every child and family in Newberry County reaches their highest potential.

Thank you!

*"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."*

# Message from the Executive Director



**SARAH EARGLE**

Executive Director  
Newberry County First Steps

Every three years the Newberry County First Steps Partnership Board participates in a county Needs and Resources Assessment. During this assessment process our board and staff spend time together and out in the community listening and collaborating with parents, caregivers, community members, partners, and other organizations. It has been inspiring to be in the company of such compassionate and knowledgeable persons and leaders. The energy and enthusiasm of so many individuals and community organizations is encouraging. Together we will learn, grow, improve, and expand our reach and services so that every child in Newberry County can reach their highest potential.

*Sarah Eargle*

# Needs Assessment Process

## SURVEY and CONVENE

Distributed over 300 surveys to parents, caregivers, community members and organizations.

Held community convenings with 22 participants and developed a vision for young children and their families

January 2023 – 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

January 2023 – March 2023

## UNDERSTAND

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

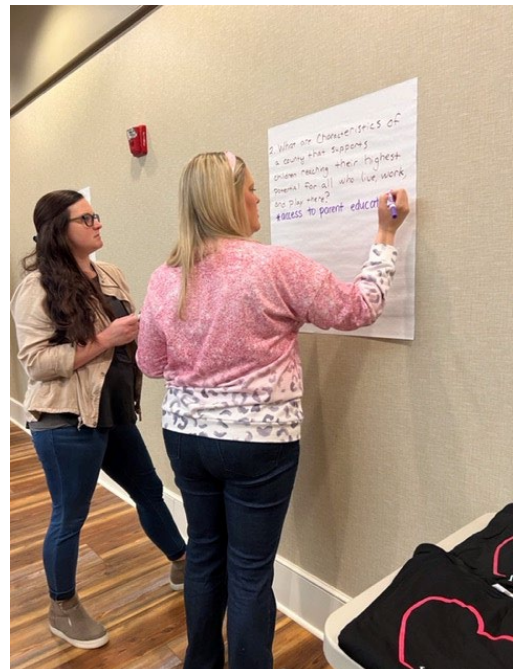
January 2023 – March 2023

**“Today was very eye opening for our community needs. I look forward to continuing this relationship/partnership”**

-Jessica Newton

**“My hope for Newberry is that all children have access to all the things/services they need to be successful in school.”**

-Alison Bowers



# Asset Map





# Priorities: Summary

## **1. Increase Parent Education Opportunities**

Provide more opportunities for parents to participate in parenting sessions, learn about early childhood development, and gain knowledge to help their children prepare for kindergarten.

## **2. Improve Communication and Access to Resources**

Improve networking, communication, and connections for children and families, and between organizations. Make sure communication and access is equitable across race, ethnicity, and socio-economic differences.

## **3. Create a Caring and Equitable Community of Engaged Parents, Children, Community and Educators**

Working within our programs and with community partners, uphold the unique value and dignity of each child and family by providing materials, opportunities and education that celebrate diversity and inclusion for all.

## **4. Provide Supports for Quality Early Childhood Education**

Assist childcare centers with quality training and technical assistance. Provide programs to support early childhood development.

# Priority One: Increase Parent Education Opportunities

## **7% of families with children below age 6 and less than 185% poverty are directly served by one of Newberry County First Steps Evidenced Based Parenting Programs.**

Data Source. Newberry County First Steps Data System and FY22 OM data by county compiled by Chelsea Richards.

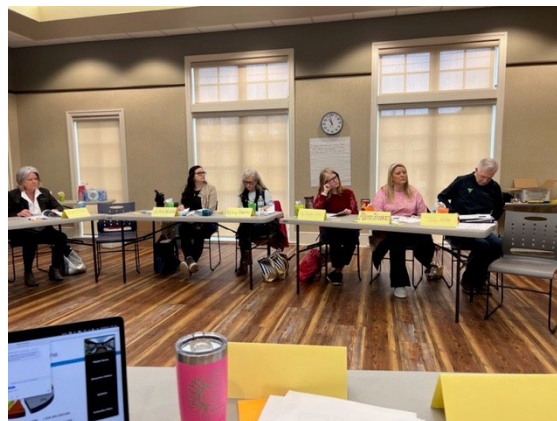
Based on the Newberry First Steps Needs and Resource Survey and meetings (2022), 60% of parents, community members and service organizations, believe the one of the reasons children are not ready for school is the need for additional parenting skills and information on early childhood development. According to the Newberry County data from the SC Parents as Teachers (PAT) Family Engagement Survey (May 2022), 77% of the participants understand their children's development better.

According to John Geldhoff, an Oregon University assistant professor of behavioral and health science, "all parents –high income, low income, mandated and non-mandated-can benefit from evidence based parenting education. Parents that attend classes and learn effective parenting techniques report having children with higher grades, fewer behavior problems, and better mental health and social competence." \*

\*Lundeberg, S. (2017, October 5). *Parenting classes benefit all, especially lower-income families*. Life at OSU. Retrieved March 6, 2023, from <https://today.oregonstate.edu/archives/2016/dec/parenting-classes-benefit-all-especially-lower-income-families>

"My hope is that all children/families have access to services and support to nurture and provide education to all – and to provide these for the family unit."

*Community meeting participant.*





# Priority Two: Improve Communication and Access to Resources

## **30.5% of Parents and Community Members state that Community Resources are hard to locate and access.**

Data source: Newberry County First Steps Needs and Resources Assessment, (2023).

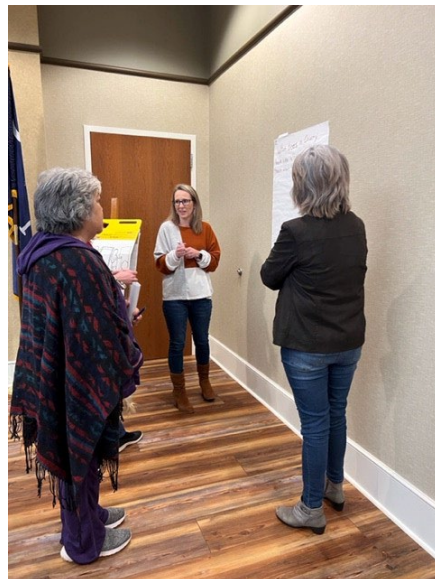
According to the Newberry County Needs Assessment Survey (2023), Hispanic and White(non-Hispanic) persons have the most difficulty locating services, with a little under half (42.86%) of Hispanic persons stating that it is also hard to access services. Half of all respondents said services were somewhat easy to locate and access.

Discussion at the Community Meetings revolved around, not only providing better communication to families, but also better collaboration between agencies/organizations. This can include, but is not limited to, resources provided in multiple languages, signage and invitations reaching all communities, and access to a Newberry County Resource Guide.

“Communication and understanding is key.”

“ It is my hope that every child develop to their potential with the help of all organizations in Newberry County.”

*-Dr. Becky*



**Priority Three:** Create a Caring and Equitable Community of Engaged Parents, Children, Community Members, and Educators.

**25% of all pupils taking the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) in Newberry County demonstrated Readiness.**

**14% Black/Hispanic pupils demonstrated readiness vs. 41% of white non-Hispanic pupils.**

**18.7% in poverty demonstrated Readiness vs 46.6% not in poverty.**

Data Source: 2021 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment; SC Dept of Education; FY22 OM data by county compiled by Chelsea Richards.

The KRA data should be considered just one part of assessing the “readiness” of children to begin Kindergarten. The assessment is given the first 45 days of school when language barriers and new school anxieties affect the outcomes. There is, however, a very clear gap between children in poverty and those not in poverty, as well as, between White pupils and Black/Hispanic pupils.

Working within our program and with community partners, we can build on our combined knowledge and skills, embracing cultural experiences, eliminating language and other barriers and support one another as valued members of the community.

Good characteristics to have: “Take a ‘what else is needed’ approach; do whatever it takes to overcome barriers; be non-judgmental; have the ability to collaborate; and focus on education.”

*-Antionette Alston*



## Priority Four: Provide Supports for Quality Early Childhood Education

**63.7% of children in Newberry County under age 6 are served by Newberry First Steps (NCFS) programs.**

**9% the 1,293 children below age 6 and less than 185% poverty, participate in NCFS high intensity programs.**

Data Source: NCFS data and FY22 OM data by county compiled by Chelsea Richards.

Increasing the number of children and families served in Newberry County is a priority. The ability to assess children for available services and offering various in home and educational services better prepares children for pre-school and kindergarten. Providing supports to educators, caregivers, and parents through equitable and accessible programming is important for strengthening families and growing resilient children. Creating opportunities to work with community partners allows the Newberry County Early Childhood System to thrive and meet more needs, which ultimately creates a strong system of support for families, children, and each other.

My hope, “Ample opportunities for all children of Newberry County that provide firm foundations to be a productive citizen.

–*Susan Dawkins*



# Next Steps



I am honored to be a part of this group of people who love and are committed to helping all students/families reach their full potential and live successful lives.

*-Bethany Counts*

My hope, “that every child/family in Newberry County will have the same opportunities to reach their highest potential no matter the color of their skin, socio-economic environment, etc. “

*-John Swift*