



STRATEGIC PLAN

2024 – 2026





Mission

Sumter County First Steps will cultivate, nurture and develop opportunities for children and families for success in school and life by maximizing public and private community resources to deliver, enhance and expand high-quality early childhood services.

Vision

Sumter County First Steps will collaborate with other entities to cultivate and develop, our children and families to **prepare children for school success** and life.

Values

CHILDREN: From prenatal development through age five, our focus and priority are young children and their families.

RELATIONSHIPS: We cultivate positive, supportive, respectful, and reinforcing interactions between people that shape development, build community, increase success and productivity, foster learning and growth, and affirm the unique value of individuals, caregivers, parents, and children.

EQUITY: We ensure all people have the opportunity and resources to be successful and that all voices are solicited and heard.

HIGH QUALITY: We ensure that our programs and services are culturally-responsive, inclusive, and developmentally-appropriate and are delivered with fidelity to the model being implemented. Our products, services, and operations are marked by excellence.

RESULTS: We produce meaningful and measurable impacts and outcomes.

Message from the Executive Director



Julia A. Nelson, MPA
Executive Director
Sumter County First Steps

Sumter County First Steps Partnership (SCFS) concentrates on strategies, which will improve school readiness in our county. We realize the significance early educational intervention can make in a child's readiness for school and lifetime success. Our strategies are centered around the children, their families and enhancing the skills and quality of those caring for the children, childcare providers.

For the past couple of months, SCFS Board Members have met and given a great deal of thought to where we are as a partnership to include our strengths, opportunities, strategies, and areas we can further focus on our mission, "Cultivate, nurture and develop opportunities for children and families for success in school and life by maximizing public and private community resources to deliver, enhance and expand high-quality early childhood services".

Our programs, which we implement are Parent As Teachers, Dolly Parton Imagination Library, Childcare Training, and Scholarships/ABC Vouchers.

Priority Needs: Summary

Through a series of community convenings, a needs assessment, and an asset mapping process, the following needs were prioritized for Sumter County.

1. REQUIRED

Ensure children and families are ready for kindergarten.

2. REQUIRED

Ensure quality childcare and professional training gaps through equity

3. REQUIRED

Partner with community and educational partners to provide a family-centered early childhood system

Children and Families are Ready for School

1. Families are supported as their child's first and most important teachers.

2. Families can access and afford high-quality early care and education programs that meet the needs of their children and families.

3. Children are healthy and safe.

.

Children and Families are Ready for School

STRATEGY 1

Parents as Teachers

SMART GOAL

- By the end of FY24, we will increase the number of children and families served from the projected 60 to 85.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will partner with Early Head Start, Head Start, Child Find, WIC, First Steps 4K and the public school 4K program to recruit younger siblings of 4K students into Parents as Teachers.

STRATEGY 2

Dolly Parton Imagination Library

SMART GOAL(S)

- By the end of FY25, we will increase our enrollment of participating children/families from 150 enrollees to 185.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- Early Head Start, Head Start, Child Find, WIC, First Steps 4K and the public school 4K program to recruit younger siblings of 4K students into Parents as Teachers.

Close Gaps Through Equity, A Fair Chance for Every Child

STRATEGY 1.1

Childcare Scholarships

SMART GOAL(S)

1. Children and families can access and afford high-quality programs and services
2. Parents are provided with tools to choose high-quality programs and services
3. Increase the number of available childcare scholarships slots from 55 to 75

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- South Carolina DSS, Early Head Start, Head Start, Child Find, WIC, First Steps 4K and the public school 4K program to recruit younger siblings of 4K students.

STRATEGY 1.2

Childcare Professional Development Training

SMART GOAL(S)

1. Intentionally target childcare providers and workers to provide professional training opportunities.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- SC Endeavors, South Carolina DSS, Early Head Start, Head Start, Child Find, WIC, First Steps 4K and the public school 4K program to recruit younger siblings of 4K students.

Overarching Measure(s) of Success

INCREASE THE REACH OF FIRST STEPS SERVICES

By FY23, the percentage of children in need who are directly served by Sumter County First Steps will increase from 17% to 20%.

SECOND MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Increase the availability of high-quality early care and education opportunities offered by SCFS.

Acknowledgments

Sumter County First Steps appreciates all parents, educators, and community organizations for providing input with our Needs and Resource Assessment for preparation of its 2024-2026 Comprehensive/Strategic Plan. Our goal is to use your input to decide, which programs/strategies are best to address the findings and your concerns. We also need knowledge of available resources in Sumter County to better serve and assist parents.

“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.”