

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

2024 – 2026



Acknowledgments

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Message from the Executive Director



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Executive Director
Sumter County First Steps

Sumter County First Steps appreciates all parents, educators, and community organizations for providing input in this Needs and Resource Assessment. 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.

Julia

Needs Assessment Process

CONVENE

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

October 2022 – 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

October 2022 – March 2023

“Income of households and educational levels directly impact the prediction of readiness. We have too many single households.”

-Educational Survey Participant

In a survey administered by SCFS, as part of the 2024-2026 needs and resource assessment process. 62% of the respondents indicated some level of help in parenting is needed.

Asset Map:



Priority One: Children and families are ready for school

- Emphasize reading to children
- Learning through play
- Learning and being aware of children's health needs to ensure they're healthy and ready to learn
- Approach learning with enthusiasm and curiosity; has developed language and listening skills and has cognition skills and general knowledge
- Realize that they are their children's first and best teachers;
- Learn about and access resources that will support them in their efforts and their children's first and best teachers;
- Read to their children daily;
- Support their children in their learning from birth through the transition to kindergarten; and
- Continue to be actively involved in their children's education beyond kindergarten.



Parents as Teachers™



Results from SC's Kindergarten Readiness (KRA) demonstrate that in the Fall of 2021, only 17% of Sumter County's preschool children entering kindergarten were ready for school.

SCFS provided surveys to parents. 803.3% of the parents indicated that single parents need help and 66.7% of parents need parenting skills.

Priority Two: Quality Childcare & Training

- Accessibility to affordable childcare
- Educate parents on Quality Childcare
- Training opportunities for childcare providers
- Introduce age-appropriate curriculum and best practices in the care for and education of preschool children



“Care providers need more training in dealing with children, understand how to put together a curriculum that will be specific to the children in their

Results of SCFS surveys from parents indicate that

- 100% of parents need help with childcare in order to work
- 100% of parents need affordable childcare
- 83.3% of parents need better quality childcare

Kids Count 2020 profile of Sumter County indicates that

- 28.2% of children 0-17 households with incomes below the poverty level
- 49.3% of children live in single-parent homes

Priority Three: Community & Educational Partners

- Establish partnerships with community service providers and educators in Sumter County
- Expand referral opportunities with community organizations
- Support educators
- Encourage Parent engagement with teachers
- Explore resources and activities that promote school readiness

Other interesting concerns expressed via meetings and surveys:

- Concerns about the safety of children due to increased crime
- Additional and strict gun laws needed
- Behavior of children
- Additional assistance and inclusiveness for special needs children and their parents
- Additional recreational opportunities for children

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

