

STRATEGIC PLAN

2024 – 2026



Mission

To find and empower parents and caregivers to effectively serve as their child's first teacher, increasing their potential to succeed in school and beyond.

Vision

Every Laurens County child will enter school healthy and ready to succeed.

Values

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

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.

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.

Message from the Executive Director



Toni Able
Executive Director
Laurens County First Steps

What is the number one driver of the workforce economy 15 to 20 years from now? The answer is **early childhood development and education today.**

Laurens Country's future depends on our children today. We know that the foundation for future learning, including a child's overall health and well-being, is built during early childhood. The lack of access to affordable, high-quality child care, makes it harder for parents to work, as well as creates an achievement gap that becomes apparent as early as kindergarten. When we commit to giving every child a strong foundation from birth to five, we create healthy and vibrant communities for all of us.

Toni Able

Message from the Board Chair



Kena Cox
Board Chair
Laurens County First Steps

As soon as a baby takes its first breath he or she begins learning, using their senses taking in sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touch. Parents are the first teacher of a young child; this time of development is critical in the development of the brain. LCFS works with parents to train them to be the best parent they can be and to help get the child ready for kindergarten. Experiences during this time have a lasting impact on later learning, health, and success.

Our programs include parent education and support, child development screenings, child care training and professional development, access to high-quality early childhood education through scholarships, and a pediatric well-child visit reading program. With these evidence-based programs, we are working to achieve our vision of every Laurens County child entering school healthy and ready to succeed.

I am proud of the work that our LCFS executive director, employees, and board are doing to support the young learning in Laurens County and cannot wait to see the impact it will have in Laurens County.

Kena Cox

Strategic Plan Process

CONVENE

Held community convenings to develop a vision for young children and their families

October 2022 – January 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



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



PLAN

Wrote 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



Priority Needs: Summary

Through a series of community convenings, a needs assessment and asset mapping process, the following needs were prioritized for Laurens County. See our full needs assessment here:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1wo0BMWHDm8dzu5bLun534Hz7T2y0YXbd/edit?usp=sharing&oid=102710173421497950691&rtpof=true&sd=true>.

1. Increase the Capacity of Quality Early Childhood Education Providers

Families in Laurens County struggle with finding space in quality early childhood education centers. Early childhood education centers struggle with capacity issues either with staffing or physical space.

2. Community Resource Connections and Awareness

Families and caregivers need more advocacy of resources, access, and support to help them navigate the challenges of raising young children.

3. Early Childhood Education and Engagement for Parents and Families

We need to do more to engage with and serve families with young children. It is a common thread that many families and community members are unaware of Early Childhood development and its impact on readiness for kindergarten.

Objective Summary

Primary Objective: Increase community awareness of and commitment to early childhood education in Laurens County.

Objective 1 - Increase the capacity of quality early childhood education providers.

Objective 2 - Provide community resource connections.

Objective 3 - Educate parents and caregivers about their role in their child's early learning.

Objective 1

1. Increase the Capacity of Quality Early Childhood Education Providers.

1.1 Strategically advocate for support of child care center capital facility needs.

1.2 Strategically assist and advocate for retention of professionally trained child care provider employees.

1.3 Increase provider utilization of our training offerings that meet their licensure criteria.

Objective 2

2. Provide community resource connections.

2.1 Enhance LCFS digital and social media presence.

2.2 Continue to increase and document community resource referrals to Parents as Teachers families.

Objective 3

3. Educate parents and caregivers about their role in their child's early learning.

3.1 Continue to provide the Parents as Teachers program.

3.2 Expand Dolly Parton Imagination Library to Laurens School District 56.

3.3 Continue the Reach Out and Read program.

3.4 Install a STORYWALK® in partnership with Laurens School District 55 and 56.

Objective One: Increase the Capacity of Quality Early Childhood Education Providers.

STRATEGY 1.1

Strategically advocate for support of child care center capital facility needs by:

- A. Supporting providers with connection to potential grant opportunities and supplementary data and public support for grant applications.
- B. Make public case for economic development role in supporting early child care capital needs.

SMART GOAL(S)

1A - By the end of each fiscal year, our organization will assist 3 child care providers with grant applications that support additional child care resources for their centers.

1B - LCFS will compile and share supplementary data and information pertaining to the specific needs of the childcare centers on a tri-annual basis with community partners and stakeholders.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Child care centers, Grantmakers, United Way, Chamber of Commerce, Business partners, Industry, parents.

STRATEGY 1.2

Strategically assist and advocate for retention and employment of professionally trained child care provider employees.

SMART GOAL(S)

1. Over the next 12 months, our partner childcare centers will experience 10% increase in employee retention rate.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Child care centers directors and employees, Workforce Development, Presbyterian College, Piedmont Technical College, School districts.

Objective One: Increase the Capacity of Quality Early Childhood Education Providers.

STRATEGY 1.3

Increase provider utilization of our training offerings that meet their licensure criteria.

SMART GOAL(S)

1. By the end of FY24, LCFS will increase the utilization rate of the CCPT trainings that meet the licensure criteria of child care providers by 10% by implementing a targeted marketing and outreach campaign and gathering feedback to continually improve the relevance and effectiveness of our training programs.
2. Collaborate with Laurens 55 and 56 school districts to create a summer workshop for childcare providers to implement Early Childhood Education benchmarks in the providers classrooms by August 31, 2024.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Child care providers, SC Endeavor, Colleges/Universities/Technical Schools, School districts, home child care providers, churches

Objective Two: Provide Community Resource Connections

STRATEGY 2.1

Enhance LCFS digital and social media presence.

SMART GOAL(S)

1. Boost social media traffic post viewing by 25% each year.
2. Improve Facebook post engagement rates by 12% each year.
3. Create quarterly digital newsletters by the second quarter of FY24 to share with families of children 5 and younger in Laurens County.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- School districts, churches, businesses, United Way, Chamber of Commerce, Local Government, advertising company, pediatrician offices, child care centers

Objective Two: Provide Community Resource Connections

STRATEGY 2.2

Continue to increase and document community resource referrals to Parents as Teachers families and families of children 5 and under.

SMART GOAL(S)

By the end of each year, LCFS will increase the number of documented community resource referrals to Parents as Teachers families and families of children 5 and under by 15% compared to the previous year.

1. Conducting a needs assessment survey annually among Parents as Teachers families and families of children 5 and under to identify their specific needs and preferences for community resources.
2. Developing partnerships with at least three new community organizations by FY25 that provide resources and services relevant to the needs and preferences of Parents as Teachers families and families of children 5 and under.
3. Implement a tracking system by December 2023 to document all community resource referrals made by Parents as Teachers staff and volunteers, and quarterly reviewing and analyzing the data to identify areas for improvement.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Parents/caregivers, United Way, Chamber of Commerce, Non-Profit Roundtable

Objective Three: Educate Parents and Caregivers About Their Role in Their Child's Early Learning.

STRATEGY 3.1

Continue to provide the Parent as Teachers program with the direct connection to the Child Care Scholarship program to provide families with support and resources in best practices for early childhood.

SMART GOAL(S)

1. LCFS will retain 75% of families enrolled in childcare scholarships and Parent as Teachers for at least 9 months each year, 2024-2026.
2. LCFS will maintain its Blue Ribbon Status with Parents as Teachers National through continued model fidelity, each year.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Parents, child care centers

STRATEGY 3.2

LCFS will collaborate with Laurens School District 56 (Clinton, SC) to provide the Dolly Parton Imagination Library to children 5 and under.

SMART GOAL(S)

1. LCFS will secure a least one new funding partners each year, to sustain the Dolly Parton Imagination Library in Clinton, SC.
2. LCFS will implement the DPIL in Laurens School District 56 by end of the Spring semester 2024.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Community Funders, Laurens School district 56

Objective Three: Educate Parents and Caregivers About Their Role in Their Child's Early Learning.

STRATEGY 3.3

LCFS will collaborate with Reach Out and Read to provide books for children during their well-child pediatrician visit.

SMART GOAL(S)

1. Through Reach Out and Read LCFS will provide books to 2,500 children during well-child visits ages 6 months - 5 each year.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Pediatrician's offices, Reach Out and Read

STRATEGY 3.4

LCFS will collaborate with other organizations/businesses to install 2 StoryWalk® in Laurens County.

SMART GOAL(S)

1. By the end of 2023 LCFS will secure two funding entities for sustainability of the StoryWalk®.
2. By the end of 2023 LCFS will install one StoryWalk® in Laurens County.
3. By the end of of 2024 LCFS will install the second StoryWalk® in Laurens County.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Laurens School district 55 & 56, The Joe Adair Center, Laurens County Library

Overarching Measure of Success

By FY26, the percentage of children in need who are directly served by Laurens County First Steps will increase from 52% to 55%.

Acknowledgments

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