

# STRATEGIC PLAN

2024 – 2026





**Mission** Georgetown County First Steps aims to provide every child with the best possible start for school success and life; providing programs and support to help physical, emotional, and intellectual growth. We promote healthy development in children birth to five, regardless of their background or circumstance.

**Vision** Georgetown County First Steps envisions a community where all children have the opportunity to reach their full potential and thrive through access to high-quality early childhood education and care, and where families can get the support to promote healthy child development.

**Values** Georgetown County First Steps is committed to upholding the following values in all aspects:

- **Equity** to ensure everyone is given fair treatment.
- **Collaboration** to work with community agencies that have the common goal.
- **Quality** We ensure that our program/services are evidenced based and culturally diverse, community driven, and developmentally appropriate.
- **Results** to produce outcomes that are proven and factual.
- **Accountability** to ensure that we take responsibility for our work.

# Message from the Executive Director



**Ayesha Smith-Salim**

Executive Director  
Georgetown County First Steps

As the Executive Director of Georgetown County First Steps, I would like to take the opportunity to thank our community for your ongoing support and commitment to the well-being of our youngest residents and contribution in meetings, surveys, and observation in this process.

We believe that investing in early childhood development is one of the most important things we can do for our community's future, and we are proud to work alongside families, caregivers, and community partners to ensure that every child in Georgetown County has the opportunity to thrive. Our Mission statement is what we still believe in and success will be reached once we close the gap in getting every child prepared for school success.

*Dr. Ayesha Smith-Salim*

# 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 convening 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 Georgetown County. See our full needs assessment here:

<https://www.scfirststeps.org/media/oxrp1kc3/georgetown-county-fy24-26-needs-assessment.pdf>

## **1. Prioritize Mental Health Support for families and children.**

We have recognized that the Covid -19 particularly in childcare have disrupted routines causing stress and anxiety.

## **2. Assess to high quality childhood education program.**

Expanding access to Pre-K programs, increasing the number of quality childcare providers, and supporting early childhood educators with professional development opportunities.

## **3. School Readiness/Family support and engagement**

Provision of resources and training to early childhood educators to align their curriculum with Kindergarten standards, and supporting families in preparing children for school. Providing support for basic needs, and developing partnerships with community organizations to address social determinants of health and educational outcomes.

# Objectives

## **1. Increase parent education and engagement**

We strive to promote the physical, emotional, and intellectual, development of children in our community, this may involve providing resources and training for parents.

## **2. Strengthening partnerships with community organizations**

We believe in that our success depends on strong partnerships with other organizations and community stakeholders,.

## **3. Increasing access to high –quality early childhood education programs and care.**

Working with community partners to expand access to high –quality early learning programs.

## **4. Expand access to health and mental health services for young children/families in our community.**

Increase access to preventative care services, developing resources to help families access mental health services.

# Objective One: Increase parent education and engagement

## STRATEGY 1.1

**Host family nights and Parent Education workshops throughout the school year on numerous parenting and mental health topics.**

### SMART GOAL(S)

1. To increase the number of parenting workshops in the community by 25%, adding local experts, to deliver engaging and informative resources to the community.

### COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

Georgetown County School District, Tideland Hospital System(MUSC). National Association of Mental Health

## STRATEGY 1.2

Examine and enhance the potential partnership to act as a central point for not only early childhood services but also for parenting.

### SMART GOAL(S)

1. Each year we will partner with at least 3 agencies and provide a 3-4 hour training session on parenting and other related early childhood topics.

### COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- The Department of Social Services(Georgetown County), Georgetown County School District, Black River United Way

# **Objective Two: Strengthening Partnerships and Community Organizations**

**Coordinate and align services and resources with other agencies that have the same vision to ensure cross strategies and monopolize of funding.**

## **SMART GOAL(S)**

### **COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)**

• Black River United Way, Miss, Ruby's Kids, Strengthening families Georgetown, Georgetown Early Learning Council Georgetown County School District

**STRATEGY 2.2** Establish a community advisory board.

## **SMART GOAL(S)**

1. Develop and implement a shared referral system, go after federal funds together, and communicate to other agencies and families of resources and information obtained.

### **COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)**

• Black River United Way, Miss, Ruby's Kids, Strengthening Families Georgetown, Georgetown Early Learning Council.

# **Objective Three: Increasing access to high quality early childcare education and care.**

## **STRATEGY 3.1**

- Develop and find funding to work with local DSS office in providing more scholarships to families in financial need.

## **SMART GOAL(S)**

- To increase scholarship funding by 25% in the next couple of years through DSS or another source of state funds or an agency locally..

## **COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)**

- Georgetown County Department of Social Services, ABC Licensure, ABC Department of Special Needs Voucher.

## **STRATEGY 3.2**

- Develop and implement a system of communication through community partnerships, childcare providers, and other referral systems such as Help Me Grow, BabyNet, Child Find that will target the most families with the most needs or children with disabilities.

## **SMART GOAL(S)**

- Implement at least 5 special needs vouchers to families of children with a disability.

## **COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)**

- Help Me Grow, BabyNet, Georgetown County School District –Special Services Department. The Department of Social Services Georgetown.

## **Objective Four:** Expand access to health and mental health services for young children and families.

### **STRATEGY 4.1**

Collaborate with other agencies to target grant opportunities or pursue other funding sources on different levels to provide mental health workers to childcare centers and for parenting workshops

### **SMART GOAL(S)**

- To organize at least one yearly mental health event for the community also provide a mental health counselor to service local childcare centers in the community.

### **COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)**

- The National Association of Mental Health, Department of Mental Health Georgetown

### **STRATEGY 4.2**

- Promote First 5 Portal where access to health agencies, mental health services, and early childcare are in the county.

### **SMART GOAL(S)**

- To increase mental health referrals by 10% received through First 5 Portal if received, if not to implement a system that families can receive resources and recommendations as needed. Continued with a follow-up service.

### **COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)**

- Department of Mental Health Georgetown, Georgetown County School District Special Services.

# Overarching Measure(s) of Success

## **MORE CHILDREN ARRIVE AT KINDERGARTEN READY FOR SUCCESS**

By FY25, the percentage of children in need who are directly served by Georgetown County First Steps will increase by 20%.

**Increasing the overall quality of early childhood education programs in the community will increase kindergarten readiness in our county. We will achieve this by implementing Evidence-based programs and services that promote early childhood education and development, increasing parental engagement and involvement in their child's education, and expanding access to high-quality early childhood care and education. We will conduct regular assessments of our program and services to ensure their effectiveness and make adjustments as needed to achieve our goal.**

# Acknowledgments

Georgetown County First Steps is grateful for the support of our community partners, whose collaboration and partnerships are critical to our efforts to promote the healthy development of young children in Georgetown County. Here are some acknowledgements from our community partners:

Georgetown County School District

The Early Learning Council of Georgetown County

Local childcare centers, directors and teachers, and parents in Georgetown County

Women of Choice II

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