

# NEEDS ASSESSMENT

2024 – 2026



# Acknowledgments

Oconee County First Steps Board of Directors truly appreciates the many partnering agencies, community members and parents for their participation in our Needs Assessment project. Our participants included representatives from: Oconee County School District, DSS of Oconee County Early Learning, DHEC of Oconee County, Nurse Family Partnership (Prisma Health-Upstate), Carolina Engagement Center, Faith Community, The Hispanic Alliance, Share-Head Start, Cities of Seneca, Walhalla and Westminster.

We are thankful for the support of our South Carolina State First Steps team in completing this project. Through training, templates, comprehensive data resources and guidance we were able to bring accurate, up to date, and vital information to this process.

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# Message from the Executive Director



**DABY SNIPES**

Executive Director  
Oconee County First Steps

As a local partnership, Oconee County First Steps, from prenatal development through age five, our focus and priority are young children, their families and caregivers. We work together with our partnering agencies, community organizations and community members to produce meaningful and measurable impact and outcomes for children in Oconee County. Together we can make a difference.

A handwritten signature in grey ink that reads "Daby Snipes".

# Needs Assessment Process

## CONVENE

Held three community convenings with 25 participants and developed 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

**“Great discussions”**

-Participant

**“I’m proud to live in a county that care so deeply about their children and families.”**

-Participant

# Asset Map





# Priorities: Summary

## 1. Kindergarten Readiness

Increase the number of children ready to learn the day they begin Kindergarten.

## 2. Early Intervention

Expand access and availability of early screenings as well as the importance of knowing how their child is developing.

## 3. Strengthen Early Childhood Network

Work to strengthen our Early Childhood Network in Oconee County. As Conveners in the community, we can play a significant role in bringing other to the table.

# Priority One: Kindergarten Readiness

## **Data point**

Oconee County Kindergarten Readiness rate Overall 29%  
Education Oversight Committee Year 2021

We want to increase the number of children ready for Kindergarten in Oconee County.

“We have to work together as a community to find ways to help families become aware of what their child needs to know as they enter Kindergarten and help families with the transition.”



## Priority Two: Early Screening

### **Data point**

Population 3-4 Years olds enrolled in school    36%  
American Community Survey

We want to expand access and availability of screenings for children in Oconee County before they are screened by the School District at age 4 by partnering with physicians and other health professionals to encourage routine health and developmental screenings starting at birth and offering multiple screening opportunities in rural as well as urban areas in Oconee County. Educating our parents in what is developmentally appropriate at different ages is also vital.

Consider including an image to accompany this priority page

# Priority Three: Strengthen Early Childhood Network

## Data point

By looking at multiple Data Points in the Dashboard, we can't find a specific data point where this issue is addressed solely. We know there are gaps where referrals are made, but not followed through to a conclusion. But there is a significant difference between the number of children being served to the census tract count.

“ Our families need a place to go to where they can be given guidance and choices to make healthy decisions. Trust needs to be gained. Patience is important because of the many stressors our families are experiencing.”

# 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

