

STRATEGIC PLAN

2024 – 2026



Mission

The Charleston County First Steps mission is to improve the overall well-being of young children. We accomplish this by offering rigorous early childhood programming, providing opportunities for family engagement and support, and fostering community partnerships.

Vision

All children in Charleston County will be healthy and successful in school.

Values

- Parents are their children's first teachers.
- Children deserve high quality early care and education.
- Teachers require high quality education and professional development for continuous growth.
- Families need and deserve equitable access to quality health care and other community resources.
- We champion and celebrate diversity

Message from the Executive Director



Tamatha Kohler
Executive Director
Charleston County First Steps

As the new Executive Director for Charleston County First Steps, I look forward to navigating and developing relationships with the board of directors, committees, local stakeholders, and the Charleston community.

Charleston County First Steps supports the important roles families, educators, and community organizations play so our youngest children grow, learn and thrive. Working together with our community partners and stakeholders we intend to provide our children and families a variety of early learning experiences and resources. This will result in the healthy development of every child, so they are ready for school.

Tamatha Kohler

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 Charleston County. See our full needs assessment here: [Charleston County First Steps](#).

1. Parents actively engage as their child's first teacher and advocate.

2. Access to high quality child care that include family child care homes, infant/toddler, preschool, and 4K classrooms.

3. Children's social-emotional development is supported through anti-bias practices.

Objectives

- 1. Increase the support and use of First Steps Programs**
- 2. Community Outreach and Education**
- 3. Children's social-emotional development is supported through anti-bias practices.**

Objective One: Increase the support and use of First Steps programs

STRATEGY 1.1

Parents as Teachers

SMART GOAL(S)

1. All full time Parent Educators will reflect a caseload of 18-20 families.
2. Increase average attendance at socializations/group connections by 10% each year.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will partner with Charleston County School District, SC Aquarium, Charleston County Public Library, Charleston County Parks & Recreation, Florence Crittenton, and the community at large.

STRATEGY 1.2

Literacy/Raising A Reader

SMART GOAL(S)

1. Maintain Raising a Reader classrooms.
2. Find funding and implement new Motherread/Fatheread literacy program

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Charleston County School District, Begin with Books, Charleston Public Library, Books in Every Bag,

Objective One: Increase the support and use of First Steps programs

STRATEGY 1.3

Child Care Quality Enhancement

SMART GOAL(S)

1. Five new child care facilities will participate in the program for two years.
2. Promote ABC Quality to increase number of child care providers participating from 40% to 43%.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Child Care providers, ABC Quality program, SC DSS child care licensing

Objective Two: Community Outreach and Education

STRATEGY 2.1

Strengthen Community Collaboration

SMART GOAL(S)

1. Participate in at least two community events each year that provides interactive learning activities for families with young children. Signage, branding, and recruitment materials will be available to advertise First Steps services.
2. Participate in community meetings and disseminate information about programs offered by Charleston County First Steps.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Trident Technical College, Charleston County School District, Charleston United Way, the community at large

STRATEGY 2.2

Enhance grant writing efforts

SMART GOAL(S)

1. Search and apply for at least one grant per year that focuses on Charleston County First Steps mission and services.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- SC First Steps, United Way, Together SC, Charleston First Steps Board members

Objective Three: Children's social-emotional development is supported through anti-bias practices

STRATEGY 3.1

Countdown to Kindergarten

SMART GOAL(S)

- Request funding to implement Countdown to Kindergarten and Countdown to 4K program.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- 4K child care classrooms, Charleston County School District, SC First Steps Office

STRATEGY 3.2

Child Care Professional Development & Training

SMART GOAL(S)

1. Charleston County First Steps will provide 20 certified training hours of professional development a year to child care providers with at least 6 training hours focused on supporting healthy social-emotional development in young children.
2. Create a professional development track for child care directors who have completed the two-year Quality Enhancement Program.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Child Care providers, SC Endeavors

Objective Three: Children's social-emotional development is supported through anti-bias practices

STRATEGY 3.3

Parents as Teachers/Early Head Start PAT/Connected Families

SMART GOAL(S)

- At least one group socialization per year will focus on healthy social-emotional development in young children.
- Increase parent attendance at group socializations by 10% each year.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Charleston County School District, PAT parents, Charleston County DSS

Overarching Measure(s) of Success

INCREASE THE AVAILABILITY OF HIGH-QUALITY EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY CHARLESTON FIRST STEPS

By 2025, the percentage of children under age 6 who benefit from First Steps quality enhancement and training efforts will increase from 1% to 5%.

INCREASE THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN ENROLLED IN HIGH INTENSITY PROGRAMS FUNDED BY CHARLESTON FIRST STEPS

By 2025, the percentage of children in need who are directly served by First Steps high intensity programs will increase from 2% to 5%.

MORE CHILDREN ARRIVE AT KINDERGARTEN READY FOR SUCCESS

By 2025, the percentage of children who score at the highest level on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment will increase by 2% each year to 55%.