

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

2024 – 2026



Message from the Executive Director

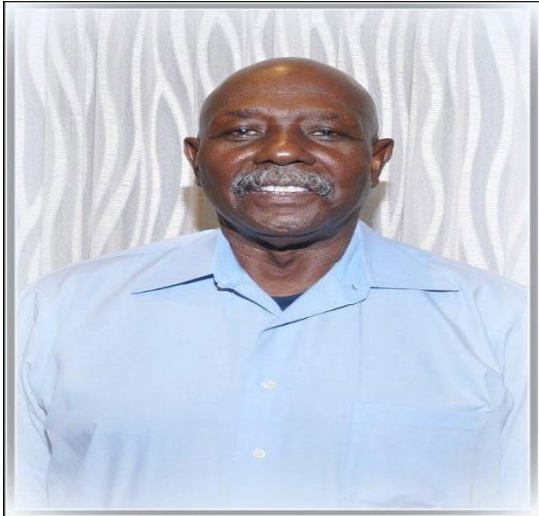


Alexis D. Pipkins, Sr., Ed.S.

Executive Director
Lee County First Steps

Lee County First Steps has taken a comprehensive approach to secure input from various stakeholders in this first phase of the Strategic Planning Process by comprehensively soliciting input from various stakeholders and collaborating partners of our agency and our local community.

Message from the Board Chair



Andrew Moses
Board Chair
Lee County First Steps

Lee County First Steps is working to gain feedback from our parents, partners, and community. Our Board is committed to developing a Strategic Plan that addresses the needs of our community.

Needs Assessment Process

CONVENE

Held 12 community convenings with 198 participants and developed a vision for young children and their families.

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

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

"Micah loves books. We have a routine at bedtime and he always wants to hear one more story. I enjoy reading with him. This program has helped so much with his vocabulary". - M. Hannibal

"This program has helped us in many ways from the books to diapers. Everything has been a great help and relief to me. We do lessons that encourage parents as their child's first teacher and I have gained confidence that I am on the "right" track". - K. Mickel

"Prince is so excited to receive his new books and his love for the illustration of the pictures in the books help him love the books more. His love for reading has enlarged because of the book resources that are given to him". -T. Washington

Asset Map



Asset Map



Priorities: Summary

1. Childcare Desert

44% of Lee County is considered a childcare desert, and there is a need for more Infant and Toddler Childcare in the Lee County Community.

2. Readiness for Kindergarten

Surveys from parents, community service agencies indicate a need for childcare services to ensure children are ready for kindergarten.

3. Parenting and Family Skills

All surveyed including parents indicate a need for parenting skills and family centered childcare counseling included mental health counseling.

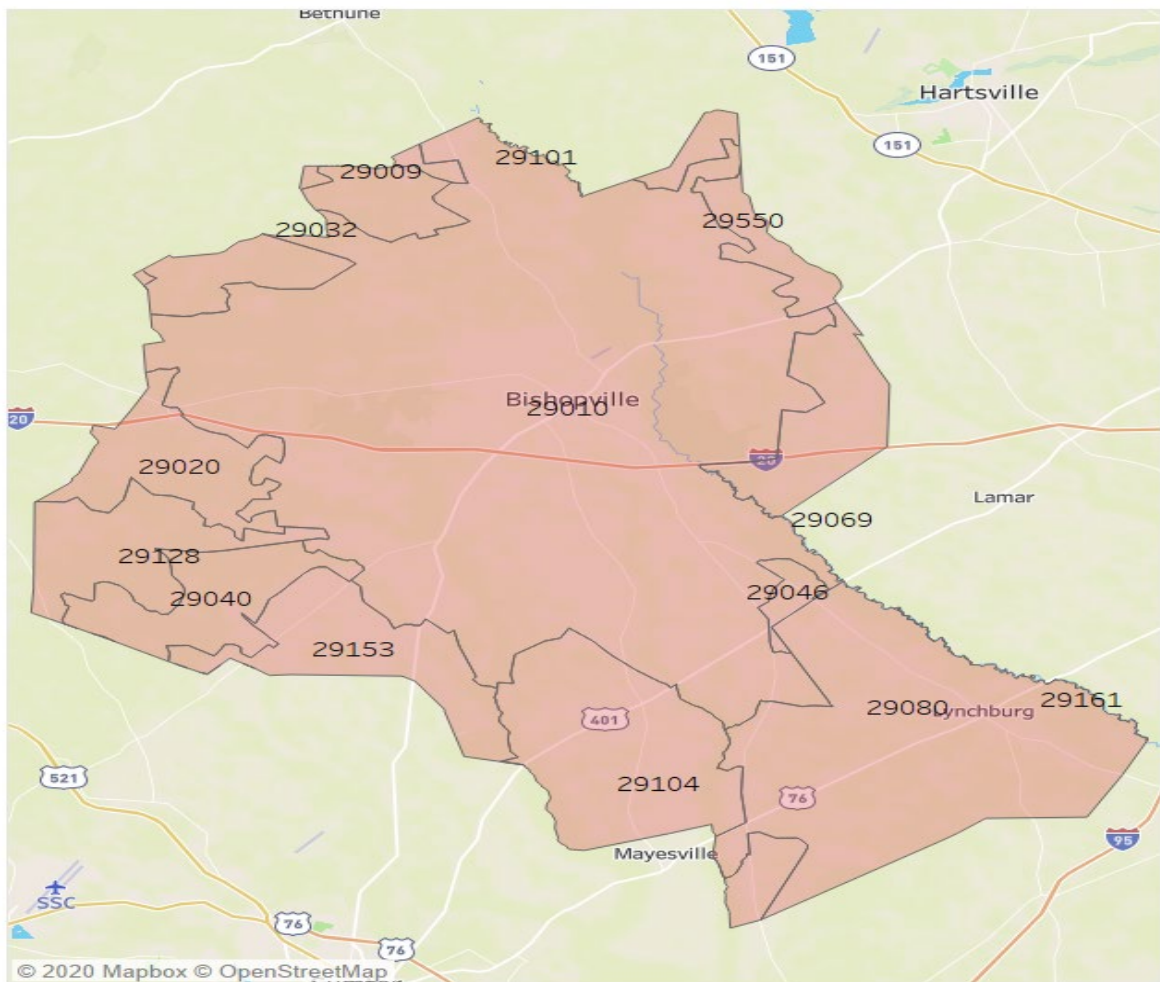
4. Local Community Infrastructure

Community responses from surveyed participants continue to identify Transportation as a priority. Also, more high quality and better jobs continue to be identified as a need of the community.

Priority One: Child care deserts

44% census tracts are considered child care deserts in Lee County.

Provider location and center capacity obtained from sccchildcare.org on October 16, 2022. Definition of a child care desert obtained from the Center for American Progress, "A child care desert is any census tract with more than 50 children under age 5 that contains either no child care providers or so few options that there are more than three times as many children as licensed child care slots" (<https://www.childcaredeserts.org/>). Population under age 5 by census tract obtained from the American Community Survey 2016-2020 Five Year Estimates (Table B01001). US Census Bureau. Calculations done by Chelsea Richard of South Carolina First Steps (October 16, 2022).



Priority Two: Ensuring All Children Are Ready for Kindergarten

Data point

Surveys from Parents, Key Informants, Focus Groups as well as Data from Kids Count, DHEC Community Assessment, and Children's Trust Profiles.

All surveys indicated which included Parents, Key Informants, Focus Groups as well as Community Services agencies a need for more childcare services in Lee County.

Not enough childcare for parents who work was cited by 81% of parents responding to survey. Also indicated in Focus Groups, Community Service survey as well as Key Informant. Data from the SC Children's Trust Fund indicates 2.9% cumulative percent of children failed grades 1, 2 & 3 compared with the State's average of 1.4% and ranking #37 in the State's 43 Counties.

Priority Three: Family Centered Childcare in Lee County

Data point

Data source- Surveys from Parents indicated that 48.4% need Parenting Skills, Focus Groups cited parenting skills as a major barrier to the success of children, Key Informants cited strengthening the family as a need in more than 50% of the responses

A key component of a Family Centered Childcare in Lee County involves parenting skills.

Parent Survey statements include: Parents need to take more time with their children”, “Parents need to teach their kids”, Single parents need more help with their children cited by 77% of the respondents. Family centered childcare includes parenting skills, mental health

Priority Four: Social Emotional Development and Mental Health

Data point

Data Point: Parent Surveys, Focus Group and Key Informant Comments

34% of the parents surveyed indicated they needed help with the social emotional development of their children while Key Informants, Community Service Agencies and Focus Group made comments about family wellness as well as healthy mental development.



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

