

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

2024 – 2026



Message from the Executive Director



Sharon P. Williams

Executive Director

Clarendon County First Steps

It is said that the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. This needs and resources assessment and the information contained herein represents an important steps towards Clarendon County First Steps' efforts on this important journey to ensure that our children, our most vulnerable citizens, receive the tools they need in order to arrive at kindergarten healthy and ready to succeed. Just as with any journey, it takes vision to see the endless possibilities. It takes resources, big and small, to make progress and move from one level to another. It takes unwavering courage and commitment to begin the journey and see it through to the end. Thank you for your vision, resources, courage and commitment. Together, we will get our children, our most vulnerable citizens, ready for success in school and in life!

~Sharon

Needs Assessment Process

CONVENE

Held two community convenings with 27 participants and developed a vision for young children and their families

October 2022 – January 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



A needs assessment means collecting information that provides a complete picture of your community's needs and existing resources. The assessment helps identify and prioritize your community's areas of need, which helps you avoid investing valuable resources into services that may be unnecessary or are not a good fit for your community.

~Together SC

In a survey administered by CCFS as part of the 2024-2026 needs assessment process, 52.63% of respondents indicated that they need some help in order to know what to do to get their children ready for school.

Clarendon County's Assets



Clarendon County's Assets



The need persists!

Getting Ready For Kindergarten



Children are considered “ready for school” if they score “demonstrating readiness on the South Carolina Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA). This developmentally appropriate test is administered to all students entering publicly-funded kindergarten within the first 45 days of the school year. The KRA determines children’s readiness across four domains:

- Language and literacy;
- Mathematics;
- Physical well-being and motor development; and
- Social Foundations.

Priority One: Ready Children

Ready children

- ✓ Have been well-cared for physically, interacts socially with others, has a positive self-perception, has the ability to understand the emotions of others, and can interpret and express feelings.
- ✓ Approach learning with enthusiasm and curiosity; has developed language and listening skills, and has cognition skills and general knowledge; and
- ✓ Are prepared to learn successfully in school.



Results from SC's Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) demonstrate that in the Fall of 2021, only 26.3% of Clarendon County's preschool children entering kindergarten were ready for school!

Priority Two: Ready Families

- ✓ Realize that they are their children's first and best teachers;
- ✓ Learn about and access resources that will support them in their efforts and their children's first and best teachers;
- ✓ Read to their children daily;
- ✓ Support their children in their learning from birth through transition to kindergarten; and
- ✓ Continue to be actively involved in their children's education beyond kindergarten.

According to the Children's Trust of South Carolina's Child Well-Being data for 2020 for Clarendon County,

- 52% of Clarendon County's children live in single parent families;
- 28% of births in Clarendon County were to teens 15-19 years of age;
- 17.3% of Clarendon County's children live in families where the head of household lacks a high school diploma; and
- 24.3% of Clarendon County's children live in concentrated areas of poverty.

Priority Three: Ready Early Care & Education Programs

Ready early care and education programs:

- Are available for, accessible to and affordable for families;
- Employ caregivers and teachers who know how to teach young children and have the resources to do so;
- Use age-appropriate curriculum and best practices in caring for and educating preschool children; and
- Seek and secure opportunities for caregivers and teachers to continuously learn and grow in their role as early educators.

45.5% of census tracts are considered child care deserts in Clarendon County.

- Clarendon County has 16 early care and education providers that, collectively, provide 836 slots. 3 are Head Start Centers, 5 are Family Child Care Homes, 2 are Group Child Care Homes, and 6 are Child Care Centers. 11 facilities participate in the ABC Quality Program (3 are rated as A+, 2 are rated as B, 4 are rated as C, and 2 are rated as Provisional). There are three public schools in the county that provide 4-K and 5-K programs. There is one First Steps-funded 4-K program operating in private child care facility.

South Carolina Department of Social Services, 2023

Priority Four: Ready Communities & Systems

- Learn about school readiness and understand its importance;
- Invest in resources and activities that support the families of preschool children;
- Invest in resources and activities that promote school readiness; and
- Work collectively to ensure that families have access to the resources they need in order to ensure children are ready for school.



Clarendon County's 2018-2028 Comprehensive Plan is organized around three goals:

1. Encourage sustainable and efficient growth that preserves Clarendon County's character and promotes its assets.
2. Support programs and services that enhance the livability of Clarendon County for all residents.
3. Foster economic development and growth throughout the County.

Next Steps

