

STRATEGIC PLAN

2024 – 2026





Mission

Collaborating with other entities, Dorchester County First Steps helps families and caregivers in our county **prepare their children for school success** by maximizing public and private community resources to deliver, enhance and expand high-quality early childhood services.

Vision

Every Child in Dorchester County will have the resources that they need to be prepared for school success.

Values

Children- We believe all children can learn and have potential for academic, social, emotional and physical greatness.

Families-We believe family engagement is the glue to helping families grow and achieve.

Community- We believe collaboration with agencies and other non-profits helps us deliver sustaining care to families and children at-risk for not being successful in school.

State- We believe maintaining compliance with state standards and guidelines will enable us to obtain funding to provide strategies for children's school success.

Message from the Executive Director



Dr. Crystal Y. Campbell

Executive Director
Dorchester County First
Steps

What an eventful time we have had gathering information from the community about the needs of Dorchester County. We (DCFS Staff and Tiffany Outlaw) distributed surveys in paper form, digitally through a link and face-to-face throughout the county.

The results of the surveys and conversations were somewhat of a surprise, but for the most part very doable and in line with what DCFS feels is valuable to our community.

So, the Strategic Plan is complete and will when implemented make a positive impact in the community. Thank you to everyone involved in the implementation.

Dr. Crystal Y. Campbell

Message from the Board Chair



Lisa Moseley Hart

Board Chair
Dorchester County First
Steps

Greetings from Dorchester County First Steps' Board. As the newly elected Board Chair I must say that this needs assessment process has been very thorough and intense. Although we wanted more participation, we are grateful to those in the community who contributed ideas and needs.

The results will propel us into action for the next three years and we look forward to making significant gains for our families and children. Be on the lookout for great things from Dorchester First Steps.

Lisa Moseley Hart

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 DORCHESTER County. See our full needs assessment here: <link>.

1. Parenting Skills & Help for Single Parents

After surveying 80 parents 65% of respondents expressed the need for parenting skills, parenting programs and help for single parents.

2. Affordable Quality Childcare

After surveying 80 parents 37% of respondents expressed the need for more childcare facilities and that those that currently exist need to be more affordable and accessible for varying work hours.

3. Lack of Transportation

After surveying 80 parents 38% indicated the need for transportation within the county especially in the upper part of the county. Even though the percentage for this item was higher than affordable childcare, it is placed third due to the inability of DCFS to effectively meet this need.

4. Lack of Parental/Adult Literacy Skills

After surveying 80 parents, It's interesting that 72 of the respondents collectively, reported that they either could not read, did not finish school and/or wanted better educational opportunities. Additionally, 38 of the respondents wanted better jobs, which connects to the need for literacy skills.

Objectives

EXAMPLE: CHILDREN ARE HEALTHY AND SAFE.

Optional details can be provided underneath if clarity is needed.

1. DCFS will identify and provide parenting skills strategies and language development and communication skills to Parents whose children are 'at-risk' for school success.

Details here.

2. DCFS will provide scholarships to parents and children to help make quality childcare more affordable.

Details here.

3. DCFS will identify and collaborate with agencies and businesses that can help with transportation for our families.

Details here.

4. DCFS will increase participation in family engagement within programming over the next 3 years.

Details here.

Example Objective: Children are healthy and safe.

EXAMPLE STRATEGY 1

Parents as Teachers

EXAMPLE SMART GOAL

- By the end of FY24, DCFS will increase the proportion of our clients getting an on time well-child visit by 5%.

EXAMPLE COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- We will partner with First Steps 4K and the public school 4K program to recruit younger siblings of 4K students into Parents as Teachers.

EXAMPLE STRATEGY 2

Community Education

EXAMPLE SMART GOAL(S)

- Each year, we will host at least two community health fairs, which will include the mobile WIC van.
- By the end of FY25, we will implement a taxicab voucher program for our PAT families to use to get to well-child visits at the local pediatrician's office.

EXAMPLE COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

- We will partner with the local WIC/DHEC office in planning our community health fairs.

Objective One: Effective Parenting Skills

STRATEGY 1.1

Parenting Skills

SMART GOAL(S)

1. Each year (2024-2026) DCFS will identify and provide 3 parenting skills strategy sessions to Parents whose children are 'at-risk' for school success.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Dorchester Adult Education Department
- Trident Literacy Association

STRATEGY 1.2

Mother Read/Father Read

SMART GOAL(S)

1. Each year (2024-2026) DCFS will implement Mother Read/Father Read. There will be 3 (8 week) sessions each year for parents whose children are at-risk for school success and parents who have indicated a desire to learn to read.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Dorchester Adult Education Department
- Trident Literacy

Objective One: Effective Parenting Skills (cont)

STRATEGY 1.3

Parenting Skills

SMART GOAL(S)

1. Each year (2024-2026) DCFS will support families in the Reach Out and Read program in Dorchester County.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Deborah LaRoache
- Emily Bartels
- Sweetgrass Pediatrics

STRATEGY 1.4

SMART GOAL(S)

- 1.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

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Objective Two: Support Transportation Needs

STRATEGY 2.1

Core Function

SMART GOAL(S)

1. DCFS will identify and collaborate with agencies that will support our families with transportation needs to community, programming and organization events.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- School Districts
- Tele-Ride
- Adult Education

STRATEGY 2.2

Core Function

SMART GOAL(S)

1. DCFS will use private funds to support transportation for families who will participate in programming and outreach events.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Coastal Community Foundation
- Walmart
- Volvo

Objective Three: Affordable Quality Child Care

STRATEGY 3.1

Scholarships

SMART GOAL(S)

- DCFS will award a minimum of 4 scholarships each year to families who qualify to support them in obtaining quality childcare.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Legacy Foundation
- Coastal Community Foundation

STRATEGY 3.2

Quality Enhancement

SMART GOAL(S)

- DCFS will provide technical assistance and coaching to childcare facilities who house scholarship recipients twice a month.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Various childcare centers and family providers

Objective Four: Improve Family Engagement

STRATEGY 4.1

Core Function/Family Engagement

SMART GOAL(S)

- **DCFS will provide quarterly meetings for families to inform families of outreach opportunities and developmentally appropriate experiences in the community that can support them and prepare the children for school success**

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- Tri-County PLAY Collaborative
- Health Agencies-Select Health, Healthy Blue & Humana

STRATEGY 4.2

- **DCFS will use social media (Facebook and website) to share videos and resources about character development that parents can use to prepare their children for school success.**

SMART GOAL(S)

- DCFS will conduct Facebook live messages featuring books, STEM activities, and special Holiday activities-monthly.
- Each year, DCFS will create and distribute a newsletter quarterly.
- DCFS will put a You Tube video on the website each month as a resource for teachers and parents.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR(S)

- N/A

Overarching Measure(s) of Success

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

By 2026, the percentage of children in need who are directly served by Dorchester First Steps high intensity programs will increase from by 5%.

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

By 2026, the percentage of children under age 6 who benefit from Dorchester First Steps quality enhancement and training efforts will increase 5% each year.

3. REDUCE THE RACIAL/ETHNIC GAP IN KINDERGARTEN READINESS

By 2026, the gap in the percentage of children who score at the highest level on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment between White Kindergartners and Black/Hispanic Kindergartners will reduce by 1% each year.

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And
Our Parents in Parents As Teacher Programming

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