

Introduction

Per First Steps legislation (Section 52-152-70 (A)), each First Steps Partnership Board shall bring the community together to identify the area needs related to the goals of First Steps, develop a strategic long-term plan for meeting those needs, and then develop specific initiatives to implement the elements of the plan while integrating service delivery where possible. The partnership board is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the partnership's comprehensive strategic plan, which shall include direct service provision, contracting for service provision, and organization and management of volunteer programs. In addition, each partnership's comprehensive plan shall include the following core functions:

- a) service as a local portal connecting families of preschool children to community-based services they may need or desire to ensure the school readiness of their children;
- b) service as a community convener around the needs of preschool children and their families; and
- c) support of state-level school readiness priorities as determined by the State Board.

Needs and Resources Assessment: Each local First Steps partnership undergoes a community needs and resources assessment process every three years, in consultation with its local board, staff, clients and partners. A description of this process can be found online at <http://scfirststeps.com/fy-17-needs-and-resources-assessment/>.

Alignment to State First Steps Priorities: Each local First Steps partnership is a non-profit organization created in legislation in support of the statewide First Steps initiative, which is governed by a state board of trustees and supported by the State Office of First Steps. Each local plan aligns with the priorities of the South Carolina First Steps Strategic Plan, **Vision 2020** (<http://scfirststeps.com/resources-and-state-reporting/>). These priorities are:

- Increase access to quality early childhood programs and resources
- Enhance leadership development and capacity building
- Strengthen interagency accountability and public-private collaboration

Support for First Steps Legislative Goals: The strategic goals of this comprehensive plan support one or more goals of the First Steps initiative, as defined in state legislation (<http://www.scstatehouse.gov/code/t59c152.php>):

1. "Provide parents with access to the support they might seek and want to strengthen their families and to promote the optimal development of their preschool children;
2. Increase comprehensive services so children have reduced risk for major physical, developmental, and learning problems;
3. Promote high-quality preschool programs that provide a healthy environment that will promote normal growth and development;
4. Provide services so all children receive the protection, nutrition, and health care needed to thrive in the early years of life so they arrive at school ready to succeed; and
5. Mobilize communities to focus efforts on providing enhanced services to support families and their young children so as to enable every child to reach school healthy and ready to succeed."

Promotion of South Carolina's Definition of School Readiness: The goals and objectives of this comprehensive plan promote one or more descriptions of school readiness (Ready Children, Ready Families and Caregivers, Ready Schools and Educators, Ready Communities) as defined in South Carolina's Profile of the Ready Kindergartner (<http://www.ican.sc>), adopted in 2015 by the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees and the South Carolina Board of Education as the state's readiness benchmarks.

South Carolina's School Readiness Description (Profile of the Ready Kindergartner)

1 Ready Children

- 1A Approaches to Learning & Inquiry (10)
- 1B Emotional & Social Development (12)
- 1C Physical Development, Self-Help & Motor Skills (4)
- 1D Language & Literacy Development (24)
 - o Listening, Speaking and Understanding (8)
 - o Early Reading (12)
 - o Early Writing (4)
- 1E Mathematical Thinking (9)
 - o Number Sense (5)
 - o Matching, Sorting, Classifying (4)

2 Ready Families and Caregivers

Ready Kindergartners have the foundation of family and caregivers who:

- 2A Provide safe and loving home environments in which children can grow and develop optimally.
- 2B Ensure that their children's pediatric health and dental needs are regularly addressed.
- 2C Create "language rich" homes in which conversation and written literacy are modeled daily.
- 2D Ensure that their young children receive adequate rest and a healthy diet.
- 2E Expose young children to regular and varied learning experiences in and out of the home.

3 Ready Schools and Educators

Schools and educators for the Ready Kindergartner:

- 3A Understand that each child develops on a unique timeline.
- 3B Are prepared to meet the unique, individual needs of all students.
- 3C Are highly knowledgeable in both child development and the progression of early learning.
- 3D Provide the social, emotional and academic supports needed to advance their students abilities.
- 3E Create emotionally safe and nurturing environments that are free of stress.
- 3F Are equipped to support the needs of their students' parents and caregivers.

4 Ready Communities

Communities that support the Ready Kindergartner:

- 4A Provide access to the resources necessary to ensure good health and optimal physical, social/emotional and cognitive development.
- 4B Create environments in which children:
 - o Can grow and develop in the absence of fear, stress, danger and hunger.
 - o Have access to needed pediatric, dental and mental health resources.
 - o Spend their days in nurturing, language-rich, and developmentally supportive environments (whether a loving home, a high-quality early education setting or both).
 - o Are cared for by loving adults attentive to their physical, emotional and developmental needs.



Profile of the Ready Kindergartner brochure

Profile of the Ready Kindergartner brochures are available from each local First Steps office.

Profile of the Ready Kindergartner resources: <http://www.ican.sc/>

South Carolina's Definition of School Readiness (Section 59-152-25 (G))

"School readiness' means the level of child development necessary to ensure early school success as measured in the following domains: physical health and motor skills; emotional and social competence; language and literacy development; and mathematical thinking and cognitive skills. School readiness is supported by the knowledge and practices of families, caregivers, healthcare providers, educators, and communities."

Vision, Mission, and Values

Source: *Guiding Principles and Best Practices for South Carolina Nonprofits, 4th Edition* (TogetherSC, 2017)
<http://www.togethersc.org/?page=GPBP>

In order to engage in strategic thinking that steers the organization in a **mission-focused direction**, the local partnership board must clearly define its mission, vision and values and use these statements to guide planning and action.

Mission and vision statements capture the essence of your organization's beliefs and values, and define its place in the world. A **vision statement** explains the overall goal of your organization looking into the future, while the **mission statement** outlines the present plan to realize the vision.

VISION

Communicates the desired future we seek for the community we serve.

SC First Steps Vision 2020 Vision Statement

Every South Carolina child will be prepared for success in school.

- The partnership board adopts the following vision statement for its 2018-2020 Strategic Plan:

Abbeville County First Steps Vision Statement

To strengthen parents and teachers with appropriate practices that develop social, emotional, physical, and cognitive skills of Abbeville County's young children.

MISSION

Describes the purpose that guides everything we do.

SC First Steps Vision 2020 Mission Statement

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

- The partnership board adopts the following mission statement for its 2018-2020 Strategic Plan:

Abbeville County First Steps Mission Statement

To provide quality services and support for Abbeville County families with children newborn to six.

VALUES

Core values and beliefs reflect how our people – and the organization itself – behaves.

SC First Steps Vision 2020 Core Values

The years of early childhood are a critical window of development during which much of human potential is shaped.

Families are the single most important influence on the development of their young children.

The work of supporting families and caregivers is a collaborative effort between state and local stakeholders within the public, private and faith sectors.

School readiness is the result of a child's development in many areas, with each contributing to the child's success.

Services must be individualized and adaptable to meet the unique needs of children and families.

We value, and demonstrate in our collaborative work and advocacy, diverse perspectives in the development of public policy and programs.

To achieve desired results, services must be high-quality and grounded in strong evidence. First Steps operates within a culture of accountability.

- The partnership board adopts the SC First Steps Vision 2020 core values for its 2018-2020 Strategic Plan

Abbeville County First Steps Core Values

The years of early childhood are a critical window of development during which much of human potential is shaped.

Families are the single most important influence on the development of their young children.

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STRATEGIC GOALS

Strategic goals set the direction for how the organization intends to implement its mission and address the needs of its focus population(s) for the duration of the plan.

#	Abbeville County First Steps Strategic Goals, 2018-2020	FS Legislative Goal(s) Addressed (abbreviate as Goal 1, 2, etc.)	Profile of the Ready Kindergartner Benchmark(s) Addressed (abbreviate as 1A, 2B, etc.)
1	Provide high comprehensive parenting programs	Goal 1, Goal 2	1A-1E, 2A-2E
2	Provide high quality comprehensive parenting programs that are inclusive of Fathers	Goal 1, Goal 2	1A-1E, 2A-2E
3	Provide high quality trainings for child care providers and early childhood educators	Goal 3	1A-1E, 3A-3F
4	Serve as a local community portal for families to receive high quality services	Goal 4	2A-23, 4A,4B
5	Serve as a community convener to partner with agencies in the community to promote comprehensive services to families	Goal 5	4A, 4B

Abbeville County First Steps Partnership

2018-2020 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Organized by the partnership’s current and proposed programs and services, as well as the core functions common to all First Steps partnerships (serving as a local portal connecting families of preschool children to services; serving as a community convener in support of the needs of preschool children and their families; and supporting state readiness priorities).

Local Portal			
Abbeville County First Steps will connect families of preschool children to services designed to strengthen families and promote optimal child development (State Priority: Core Function).			
Objective	In Support of Partnership Strategic Goal(s) (abbreviate as 1, 2, etc.)	Success Metrics	Action Items
Each objective addresses one or more priorities of the SC First Steps Strategic Plan, <i>Vision 2020</i> : 1) Increase access; 2) Build capacity; 3) Strengthen interagency accountability & collaboration		Evidence for demonstrating progress, or achievement, of this objective (assessments, surveys, evaluations, focus groups, or other documentation)	Major activities to be initiated in support of the objective (to be operationalized by staff and partners)
Abbeville County First Steps will increase access to community services as a local portal.	4	Documentation, assessments, and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partner with The Social Change Initiative to provide Benefits Bank Services for families to access SNAP, Medicaid, and Family Independence Services (FI) ▪ Provide assistance to families with completing the FASFA to go back to school to continue their education. ▪ Provide community resource and referral assistance for food, housing, and employment
Abbeville County First Steps will build capacity of services through establishing new partnerships with community agencies.	4 & 5	Documentation, and Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with Lander University’s Education Department to provide information to upcoming teachers about services in the community ▪ Work with DSS, the Solicitor’s Office, and the Guardian AD Litem Office to build partnerships for the most at risk families and children
Abbeville County First Steps will strengthen interagency accountability and collaboration.	4 & 5	Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attend local DSS Partner Meetings ▪ Attend Foster Care Review Board Meetings

Community Education and Outreach

Abbeville County First Steps will increase understanding in the community of school readiness domains and assessment, and “what works” to help young children succeed and will make information easily accessible in all communities and for all families. (State Priority: SCFS Strategic Plan)

<p style="text-align: center;">Objective</p> <p>Each objective addresses one or more priorities of the SC First Steps Strategic Plan, <i>Vision 2020</i>: 1) Increase access; 2) Build capacity; 3) Strengthen interagency accountability & collaboration</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">In Support of Partnership Strategic Goal(s) (abbreviate as 1, 2, etc.)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Success Metrics</p> <p>Evidence for demonstrating progress, or achievement, of this objective (assessments, surveys, evaluations, focus groups, or other documentation)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Action Items</p> <p>Major activities to be initiated in support of the objective (to be operationalized by staff and partners)</p>
<p>Abbeville County First Steps will increase access and community awareness through local and social media.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1-5</p>	<p>Surveys and community network meetings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Distribute brochures to local businesses, churches, community agencies, and housing areas. ▪ Provide upcoming events on social media such as Facebook, and the FS website shared with Greenwood County First Steps
<p>Abbeville County First Steps will build capacity through community partnerships</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1-5</p>	<p>Surveys and Assessments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Distribute books to local housing areas and child care facilities to build community partnerships. ▪ Partner with agencies to promote family success in the community
<p>Abbeville County First Steps will strengthen interagency accountability and collaboration</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1-5</p>	<p>Documentation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meet with agencies in the community such as DSS, Guardian Ad Litem Program, local businesses, the Solicitor’s Office, and churches to strengthen interagency collaboration to promote community outreach

Mobilizing Communities on Providing Enhanced Services to Support Families and their Young Children

Abbeville County First Steps will serve as a community convener to address the needs of preschool children in the community, in support of state readiness priorities (State Priority: Core Function).

<p style="text-align: center;">Objective</p> <p>Each objective addresses one or more priorities of the SC First Steps Strategic Plan, <i>Vision 2020</i>: 1) Increase access; 2) Build capacity; 3) Strengthen interagency accountability & collaboration</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">In Support of Partnership Strategic Goal(s) (abbreviate as 1, 2, etc.)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Success Metrics</p> <p>Evidence for demonstrating progress, or achievement, of this objective (assessments, surveys, evaluations, focus groups, or other documentation)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Action Items</p> <p>Major activities to be initiated in support of the objective (to be operationalized by staff and partners)</p>
<p>Abbeville County First Steps will increase partnerships at the state level</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">5</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Documentation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Executive Director will continue to serve on State Level Committees ▪ First Steps Board Members will continue to show support for State Level Events
<p>Abbeville County First Steps will build capacity for partnerships and support at the local level</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">5</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Documentation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Executive Director and staff members will direct families to services in the community ▪ Executive Director will partner with agencies in the community to support services for children and families
<p>Abbeville County First Steps will strengthen interagency accountability and collaboration</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">5</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Documentation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Executive Director will continue to attend DSS Partners Meetings and Foster Care Review Board Meetings ▪ Executive Director will continue to serve on the local boards and committees in the community

Parents as Teachers

Description: Families receive two home visits per month, and monthly parent meetings with the Parents as Teachers Curriculum, and this program is currently under review. Parents who have children from birth up to age three are expected to be in the program from the time of enrollment until the child turns three years of age. This will change in year two and three as this strategy will change based on the new curriculum guidelines and families' needs based on the Nurturing Parenting Program.

Integration: This program is operated in-house. This program will continue to be operated in-house.

Collaboration: Greenwood County First Steps is a collaborating partner, and The Social Change Initiative to provide assistance administratively and programmatically.

<p style="text-align: center;">Objective</p> <p>Each objective addresses one or more priorities of the SC First Steps Strategic Plan, <i>Vision 2020</i>: 1) Increase access; 2) Build capacity; 3) Strengthen interagency accountability & collaboration</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">In Support of Partnership Strategic Goal(s) (abbreviate as 1, 2, etc.)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Success Metrics</p> <p>Evidence for demonstrating progress, or achievement, of this objective (assessments, surveys, evaluations, focus groups, or other documentation)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Action Items</p> <p>Major activities to be initiated in support of the objective (to be operationalized by staff and partners)</p>
<p>The program is currently under review but will continue to serve 15 families per Parent Educator, with two Parent Educators, and will operate on a 12-month schedule with the new Curriculum.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1 & 2</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Assessments, surveys, and evaluations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Program is currently under review but will continue services with home visitation and parenting groups under the new curriculum. ▪ Families currently enrolled in the program will continue to receive services.
<p>Abbeville County First Steps will increase access to more comprehensive parenting programs.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1& 2</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Assessments, surveys, and evaluations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comprehensive services will be offered to the entire families. ▪ Comprehensive services will be offered with a diverse group of topics and services.
<p>Abbeville County First Steps will build capacity with community partnerships.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1-5</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Surveys and documentation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Executive Director and staff members will meet with community partners to strengthen the new program services ▪ Executive Director and staff members will meet with community partners to promote comprehensive services.
<p>Abbeville County First Steps will strengthen interagency accountability and collaboration</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1-5</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Documentation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Executive Director and staff members will meet with agencies to promote collaboration for services for families and children.

Childcare Training

Description: Early Childhood Conferences are offered twice each year in partnership with Lander University’s Education Department and Greenwood County First Steps. Additional training hours are offered on weekends throughout the year, based on individualized training needs. Providers can achieve desired outcomes after attending one to two trainings, based on what their needs are, and what outcomes they would like to meet in their facility. Follow-up calls are made to all providers after trainings to determine if they obtained the knowledge and trainings to provide a quality environment in their classrooms.

Integration: Abbeville County First Steps does not have a quality enhancement strategy. However, all classes are certified or registered through the South Carolina Center for Child Care Career Development to provide quality trainings. Professors from Lander University teach the classes, and follow-up is provided to all providers after each training to document their training needs, and if their goals were met.

Collaboration: Collaborating Partners include Lander University, Greenwood County First Steps, and The Social Change Initiative. Professors from Lander University’s Education Department teach classes at the Early Childhood Conferences.

<p style="text-align: center;">Objective</p> <p>Each objective addresses one or more priorities of the SC First Steps Strategic Plan, <i>Vision 2020</i>: 1) Increase access; 2) Build capacity; 3) Strengthen interagency accountability & collaboration</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">In Support of Partnership Strategic Goal(s) (abbreviate as 1, 2, etc.)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Success Metrics</p> <p>Evidence for demonstrating progress, or achievement, of this objective (assessments, surveys, evaluations, focus groups, or other documentation)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Action Items</p> <p>Major activities to be initiated in support of the objective (to be operationalized by staff and partners)</p>
<p>Abbeville County First Steps will continue to provide trainings in partnership with Lander University twice each year, and ongoing trainings to serve at least 20 providers.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Surveys and evaluations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Early Childhood Conferences will be offered twice each year with Lander University ▪ Ongoing trainings will be offered as needed by providers
<p>Abbeville County First Steps will increase access to child care providers on different topics for trainings</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Surveys and evaluations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ First Steps will partner with Lander University, and work with the South Carolina Center for Child Care Career Development to ensure quality trainings are offered ▪ First Steps will work with Lander University, Abbeville EMS, and other agencies to ensure a diverse group of topics are offered to providers.
<p>Abbeville County First Steps will build capacity for additional trainings offered to childcare providers.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Surveys and evaluations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ First Steps will work with Certified Trainers and Lander University Professors to offer additional trainings to providers.
<p>Abbeville County First Steps will strengthen interagency accountability and collaboration</p>	<p>3 & 5</p>	<p>Surveys, evaluations, and documentation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ First Steps will work with Lander University and Erskine College, Child Care Center Directors and staff to promote community partnerships.

Fatherhood Initiative

Description: Group and individualized sessions are offered through the Fatherhood Initiative. Group based sessions are offered twice each month and individualized sessions are offered as needed. Clients must complete a total of 12 sessions to receive a certificate of program completion. The Fatherhood Initiative is based on the National 24/7 Dad Curriculum. Clients also complete individualized goal planning sessions to meet their families' needs.

Integration: This program is operated in-house. This program will continue to be operated in-house.

Collaboration: Greenwood County First Steps is a collaborating Partner, and The Social Change Initiative to provide assistance administratively and programmatically.

<p style="text-align: center;">Objective</p> <p>Each objective addresses one or more priorities of the SC First Steps Strategic Plan, <i>Vision 2020</i>: 1) Increase access; 2) Build capacity; 3) Strengthen interagency accountability & collaboration</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">In Support of Partnership Strategic Goal(s) (abbreviate as 1, 2, etc.)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Success Metrics</p> <p>Evidence for demonstrating progress, or achievement, of this objective (assessments, surveys, evaluations, focus groups, or other documentation)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Action Items</p> <p>Major activities to be initiated in support of the objective (to be operationalized by staff and partners)</p>
<p>Abbeville County First Steps will continue to provide group based and individualized session for fathers with the Evidenced Based, 24/7 Dad Curriculum. At least 10 fathers will be recruited to complete the program services and more participants will be added each year, as the program grows.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1 & 2</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Assessments, evaluations, and surveys</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Group-based and individualized sessions will be offered to fathers and their families ▪ Executive Director and staff members will provide community resource and referral services to families.
<p>Abbeville County First Steps will increase access to services by offering additional groups or sessions as needed during the day.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1& 2</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Assessments, evaluations, and surveys</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Executive Director and staff members will offer additional sessions and groups as needed.
<p>Abbeville County First Steps will build capacity by partnering with community agencies.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1,2,4,5</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Assessments, evaluations, and surveys</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ First Steps will partner with The Social Change Initiative to offer Benefits Bank Services and incentives through the Gifts In-kind Program services for the families ▪ First Steps will partner with DSS, The Guardian Ad Litem Program, and The Solicitor's Office for program referrals and services for families. ▪ First Steps will partner with The Social Change Initiative for anger management services for families.
<p>Abbeville County First Steps will strengthen interagency accountability and collaboration</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1,2,4,5</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Assessments, evaluations, and surveys</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ First Steps will continue to partner with various agencies in the community to promote collaboration.

Parent Training

Description: Group and individualized sessions are offered through Parent Training. Group-based sessions are offered weekly and individualized sessions are offered as needed. Clients must complete a total of 12 sessions to receive a certificate of program completion. The Parent Training Model is currently based on the Strengthening Families Program for families with children 3 years and up, and The Nurturing Parenting Program for children 0-3 years of age.

Integration: This program is operated in-house. This program will continue to be operated in-house.

Collaboration: Greenwood County First Steps is a collaborating Partner, and The Social Change Initiative to provide assistance administratively and programmatically

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<p>Abbeville County First Steps will continue to provide group based and individualized session for parents with the Strengthening Families and Nurturing Parenting Curricula. At least 10 families will be recruited to complete the program services and more participants will be added each year, as the program grows</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1&2</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Assessments, evaluations, and surveys</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Group-based and individualized sessions will be provided to families ▪ Executive Director and staff members will provide community resource and referral services to families.
<p>Abbeville County First Steps will increase access to services by offering additional groups or sessions as needed during the day.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1 & 2</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Assessments, evaluations, and surveys</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Executive Director and staff members will offer additional sessions and groups as needed.
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