



Comprehensive Plan

2018-2020

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)



Profile of the Ready Kindergartner brochure

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)
 - Listening, Speaking and Understanding (8)
 - Early Reading (12)
 - Early Writing (4)
- 1E Mathematical Thinking (9)
 - Number Sense (5)
 - 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:
 - Can grow and develop in the absence of fear, stress, danger and hunger.
 - Have access to needed pediatric, dental and mental health resources.
 - Spend their days in nurturing, language-rich, and developmentally supportive environments (whether a loving home, a high-quality early education setting or both).
 - Are cared for by loving adults attentive to their physical, emotional and developmental needs.

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.”



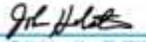
January 29, 2018

On behalf of the Barnwell County First Steps Board of Directors, I am pleased to submit this Comprehensive Plan of Improvement for Barnwell County First Steps. After much time spent discussing the needs of Barnwell County First Steps, and evaluating the resources available to meet those needs, we are confident that this plan demonstrates a true and real plan to help the young children in Barnwell County be prepared and ready to succeed in school by the time they reach first grade. Our time was invested in talking to the families, childcare directors, and community partners to get a true sense of what is needed to help our young children and their families. Because of these conversations, surveys, and meetings, a resource development plan was created, which was the catalyst for this Comprehensive Plan.

Within the next 3 years, Barnwell County First Steps will work tirelessly with our families and local partners to obtain additional funding for programs such as our scholarship program. We will continue to recruit and retain qualified staff for all of our programs, especially Early Steps and Countdown to Kindergarten. Barnwell County First Steps will bolster recruitment efforts to ensure all of our programs are filled to capacity with the use of social media, community conveners, and ensuring our brochures and flyers are in every available office that works closely with young children. In order to ensure our children are receiving quality childcare service, we will work with our childcare centers directors and staff by providing training in the various early childcare domains. We will not only provide workshops, but will provide training that will include coaching and mentoring to the staff. Additionally, Barnwell County First Steps will increase the public awareness of the much-needed programs that we offer.

We are so very grateful for the continue support of the our local partners, such as the Darnell Committee, School Districts 19, 29, and 45, DSS, Axis 1, the Family YMCA, to name a few. We are especially grateful to our board members for the input and experience that was provided in constructing this Comprehensive Plan. Finally, we are eternally grateful to our families for their input, and for allowing their children to be a part of our programs.

This plan was approved January 29, 2018.

| | |
|--|--------------|
|  <small>John D. Holston (Jan 30, 2018)</small> | Jan 30, 2018 |
| Chairmen of the Board | Date |
|  <small>Burns Mitchell (Jan 30, 2018)</small> | Jan 30, 2018 |
| Executive Director | Date |



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

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

Barnwell County First Steps Vision Statement

Every Barnwell County child will be prepared for success in school.

MISSION

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

Barnwell County First Steps 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



VALUES

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

Barnwell 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.

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.



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.

| # | Barnwell County First Steps Strategic Goals, 2018-2020 | FS Legislative Goal(s) Addressed (abbreviate as Goal 1, 2, etc.) | Profile of the Ready Kindergarten Benchmark(s) Addressed (abbreviate as 1A, 2B, etc.) |
|---|--|--|---|
| 1 | To increase the reach of BCFS programs and children/families served, BCFS will research, apply for, and obtain additional sources of funding with support from the state office of First Steps | 3 | 1, 4 |
| 2 | To ensure continuity and quality of program implementation, BCFS attract and retain qualified, quality staff (particularly for some Early Steps and Countdown to Kindergarten programs) | 3 | 3 |
| 3 | To ensure the most possible Barnwell County children/families are served by BCFS programs (in particular Early Steps and Child Care Training), BCFS will bolster recruitments efforts to ensure programs are filled to fullest capacity. | 1,3 | 2 |
| 4 | Train BCFS staff to screen all children participating in BCFS programs for disabilities; and ensure those children who are screened and found to have delays are connected to necessary services in the community. | 2 | 1 |
| 5 | Improve efforts to support parents/families in advancing life skills to better enable them to raise children who are prepared to enter school | 1 | 1,2,3 |
| 6 | Increase public awareness of Barnwell County First Steps | 5 | 4 |



Barnwell 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 | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| Barnwell 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) <small>(abbreviate as 1, 2, etc.)</small> | Success Metrics <small>Evidence for demonstrating progress, or achievement, of this objective (assessments, surveys, evaluations, focus groups, or other documentation)</small> | Action Items <small>Major activities to be initiated in support of the objective (to be operationalized by staff and partners)</small> |
| <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> | 5 | Provide surveys to parent, school district employees, and minutes from meetings with focus groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide parent workshops ▪ Reach out to community partners with expertise in specific areas to work with parents. ▪ Create manual of community partners, and the services they offer. ▪ Meet with school district employees quarterly or semi-annually to receive input about best practices |



Community Education and Outreach

Barnwell 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)

| Objective | In Support of Partnership Strategic Goal(s) (abbreviate as 1, 2, etc.) | Success Metrics | Action Items |
|--|--|---|--|
| <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>Evidence for demonstrating progress, or achievement, of this objective (assessments, surveys, evaluations, focus groups, or other documentation)</p> | <p>Major activities to be initiated in support of the objective (to be operationalized by staff and partners)</p> |
| <p>Increase public awareness of Barnwell County First Steps through community outreach efforts (to include a virtual presence, program literature, and on-the-ground efforts).</p> | 6 | <p>Tracking the narrative of verbal communication, evaluations, and surveys of parents, school district personnel, and local leaders</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase community outreach efforts ▪ Meet with school district employees quarterly or semi-annual to receive input about best practices ▪ Improve program literature ▪ Maintain a virtual presence through multiple mediums (website, social media, etc) ▪ Attend School Districts board meetings |



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

Barnwell 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).

| 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) |
| Bring together local partners and stakeholders to provide insight on the support that they can offer children of Barnwell County. | 6 | Minutes of the meeting and sign in sheets | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Invite local partners to meet ▪ Create a local manual with a description of the services each partner provides ▪ Obtain pledges of commitment from each partner |
| Strengthen Barnwell County First Steps Board to provide a diversity of experiences and perspectives. | 1 | Minutes of meetings, surveys, and sign-in sheets | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recruit board members ▪ Improve attendance and participation ▪ Provide board development/training |



Scholarships

Description: Participating child care providers partner with First Steps to receive funding to provide access to childcare by way of scholarships. Children who meet certain risk factors are able to attend the childcare center full-time during the center’s normal business hours. In order to achieve desired outcome, and to ensure centers are using best practices in the early childcare field, the centers are required to attend at least 15 hours or training per year.

Integration: This strategy is integrated with other strategies of the local partnership in that at 75% of our families who receives scholarships are participants in the Early Steps to School Success strategy. Additionally, parents who receives scholarship may be referred to services provided by DSS, Housing Authority, and Babynet. This strategy is offered in-house

Collaboration:

- The Darnell Initiative provides funding for scholarships.
- Department of Social Services in Barnwell County provides services to scholarship parents such as TANF and Medicaid
- Housing Authority meets the housing needs of our parents.
- Axis 1 provide food and clothing.
- Save the Children provides training to the Home Visitors
- School Districts 19, 29, and 45 provides payroll services for the home visitors, curriculum materials, office space, and furniture.

| Objective 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 | In Support of Partnership Strategic Goal(s) (abbreviate as 1, 2, etc.) | Success Metrics Evidence for demonstrating progress, or achievement, of this objective (assessments, surveys, evaluations, focus groups, or other documentation) | Action Items Major activities to be initiated in support of the objective (to be operationalized by staff and partners) |
|--|--|--|---|
| Improve Service Delivery by revisiting the process of disbursing scholarships with particular attention to improving communication with families. | 1, 3 | Conduct an evaluation of current office procedures, and provide copy of results, surveys from parents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meet with staff to create tracking system for communication ▪ Revisit procedures for disbursing scholarships, including timelines. ▪ Meet with families to receive feedback |
| Increase the reach of BCFS programs and children/families served, BCFS will research, apply for, and obtain additional sources of funding with support from the state office of First Steps. | 1 | Present a financial report of funding and expenses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify a list of potential sponsors ▪ Obtain list of grants for ECC ▪ Coordinate with local organizations for grant opportunities they may have obtained. |
| Improve communication around client workshops to boost attendance | 5 | Surveys, focus groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meet with families to receive feedback ▪ Provide flyers and brochures to community organizations that work with families. ▪ Post announcements on Facebook page, conduct radio visits, and post on school websites. |



Early Steps to School Success

Description: *Early Steps to School Success (ESSS)* provides parent education and support, home visiting and pre-literacy and language development services for families in rural, geographically isolated communities. ESSS is a model designed to be culturally relevant and provide early childhood education services to pregnant women and children from birth to age five, education services to parents, and ongoing staff training to community early childhood educators. It not only recognizes the essential role families have in preparing their children for school, but also reinforces parents' roles as advocates in raising awareness for community-wide efforts that support school readiness. It does this through community collaboration and by creating strong connections between parents and the schools their children will attend.

Integration: This strategy is integrated with the Scholarship strategy in that families who participate in the Early Steps strategy are eligible to participate and receive funds through the scholarship strategy. Parents who participate in the Early Steps strategy also have the opportunity to participate in free trainings offered through our Training/Professional Development Strategy. The Early Steps strategy is contracted through each of the Barnwell County School Districts

Collaboration:

- **The Darnell Initiative** provides funding for scholarships.
- **Department of Social Services in Barnwell County** provides services to scholarship parents such as TANF and Medicaid
- **Housing Authority** meets the housing needs of our parents.
- **Axis 1** provide food and clothing.
- **Save the Children** provides training to the Home Visitors
- **School Districts 19, 29, and 45** provides in-kind such as payroll services for the home visitors, curriculum materials, office space, and furniture.

| <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>Increase the number of children served per year to 130 by the end of 2020. At least 75% of clients served will participate in the program for at least 12 months.</p> | <p>1, 3, 4</p> | <p>Data system reports</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hold recruitment fair in each county ▪ Meet with parents in their homes to talk about program. ▪ Attend community events to promote program |



| | | | |
|---|----------|--|--|
| <p>Create a tracking system for clients by end of 2020. At least 100% of clients will be tracked.</p> | <p>3</p> | <p>Report with names of various systems and cost, focus groups</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research and review a variety of data systems ▪ Create spreadsheet to include data |
| <p>Create at least one coalition of local partners and stakeholders by end of 2019.</p> | <p>6</p> | <p>Copies of invitations, Sign in sheets and minutes from meeting,</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Invite community leaders to participate in a focus group ▪ Meet with coalition once a month |



Childcare Training/Professional Development

Description: High-quality child care hinges on high-quality professional development that meets the needs of the local child care workforce. Barnwell County First Steps-sponsored training is certified through the SC Center for Child Care Career Development and can include topics in the areas of nutrition, health and safety, curriculum, child guidance, professional development and program administration. Best practices in training include not only the training itself, but follow-up in the classroom.

Integration: High quality child care training is provided by certified individuals who are extremely familiar with best practices in the Early Child Care field. At least 15 hours of childcare training will be provided each year, which will include two-five hours training on two Saturdays, and 3 ninety minutes training after hours through the week. Clients will be expected to participate in at least 15 hours of training annually.

Collaboration: The Department of Social Services requires at least 15-20 hours of child care training for all persons who work with children in a child care center. BCFS works with early child care workers and directors who are employed with private centers, Head Start, and the public school system to ensure that the staff receives the required training. All trainings are contracted to outside individuals who are certified in the area of Early Childcare.

| 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) |
| Increase the number of adults served per year to 75 by the end of 2020. At least 75% of clients served will participate in the program for at least 12 months. | 1, 2 | Surveys, assessments, and evaluations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action-Connect with childcare directors and supervisors for referrals ▪ Action-provide workshops based on feedback of staff and directors. |
| Ensure a follow-up procedure is in place for training participants | 2 | Surveys, assessments, and evaluations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action- meet with trainer to develop follow-up procedures. ▪ Action-meet with directors to develop schedule for follow-up ▪ Action- meet with trainer post follow-up to ensure staff needs are being addressed |
| Ensure that training is targeted to the expressed needs of the center staff and directors (ex., special needs) | 2 | Surveys, assessments, and evaluations | Action- Coordinate training efforts with other state and community level entities such as other First Steps partnerships, state agencies (CCR&R, Inclusion Collaborative, etc.), and center directors. |



Countdown to Kindergarten

Description: Countdown to Kindergarten (CTK) is a summer home visitation model connecting rising kindergartners and their families with their future teachers.

Integration: This strategy integrates with Childcare Training in that training is provided to all staff members who participate in this strategy.

Collaboration: Barnwell School District 19, Barnwell School District 29, Barnwell School District 45

| 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) |
| Increase the number of children served per year to 40 by the end of 2020. At least 75% of clients served will participate in the program for at least 6 weeks per year. | 1, 4 | Data system reports | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action-Hold recruitment fair in each region of the county ▪ Action-Meet with parents in their homes to talk about program. ▪ Action-Attend community events to promote program |
| Recruitment - identify barriers and improve efforts to recruit the "hard to reach" populations to meet recruitment goals | 3 | Surveys, assessments, and evaluations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action-Hold recruitment fair in each region of the county ▪ Action-Meet with parents in their homes to talk about program. ▪ Action-Attend community events to promote program |
| Ensure data is entered in a timely manner in accordance with state program requirements | 2, | Data System Reports | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action-Develop a plan of action for staff ▪ Action-Provide training on how to correctly enter data into the data system ▪ Action-Review data system daily |