

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

Fairfield County First Steps Vision Statement

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

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

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.

#	Fairfield 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	Increase the capacity of FCFS staff and board members to deliver and support evidence-based programs and practices.	1, 3, 5	4A
2	Increase community awareness, engagement in, and support of FCFS programs and services.	4, 5	3B, 4A, 4B
3	Convene a stakeholder committee around early education in the county.	1, 5	4A, 4B
4	Identify FCFS as the portal for early education services in Fairfield County.	1, 2, 3, 5	4A, 4B

Fairfield 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			
Fairfield 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)
FCFS will continue to grow and develop state-wide professional development for ED, staff, and board members. ED, Staff, and board members will participate in Professional Development and report to those unable to attend.	1	Attendance at Professional Development classes and conferences. Sharing of professional development with other staff and Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have staff present to other staff things learned that will benefit staff ▪ Have staff present at board meeting information that will benefit and increase knowledge of board members
Increase the awareness of FCFS as the “go to” agency for children’s programs in the county	3, 4	Increase in number of referrals and walk-in clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Active participation in FCCC monthly meetings ▪ Serve on Youth & Families committee for FCCC ▪ Monitor number of referrals and walk-in clients
Include Fairfield County First Steps as the Portal for young children in all conversations with local and state politicians	2, 3, 4	Minutes of FCCC meetings. Minutes of speaking engagements with local politicians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have ED or Board representative speak at School Superintendent quarterly meetings.

Community Education and Outreach

Fairfield 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
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)
Network with local entities to market our local office and to be sure all in Fairfield County know what we offer.	1, 2, 3, 4	Increase in referrals and walk-in clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have booth at local events ▪ Speak at Rotary, etc. ▪ Continue collaboration with FCCC ▪ Provide materials for others to distribute

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

Fairfield 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)
Investigate ways to expand services	2, 3	Sponsor fundraising event. Write grants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have Special Projects/Community Development committee plan and execute a Board fundraising event ▪ ED write grants to expand and complement programs ▪ 100% contributions by staff and board

PARENTS AS TEACHERS

Description: Our PAT program is a year-round, 12-month program. It includes a minimum of two monthly visits with the parent and child. Families who need more intensive services are visited more often. These visits last a minimum of one hour each visit. We try to get the parents involved in this program either prenatally or as soon as we learn about them so they receive services until the child's 5th birthday.

Integration: This is an in-house program. It is a program that our board is very committed to, due to the consistent show of the need for parenting programs in Fairfield County. Any families who are a part of the Child Care Tuition Assistance program must also participate in PAT. All children are registered in Imagination Library.

Collaboration: All clients in this program are also in the Child Care Tuition Assistance program. All children are also enrolled in the DPIL program. DHEC provides trainings such as Dental Health and Cooking Healthy. The local grocery store allows us to come in and do a program on shopping wisely with food stamps and they provide incentives for the clients.

<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 families served per year to 40 by the end of 2020. At least 85% of clients served will participate in the program for at least two years.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2</p>	<p>Data collected for SCFS website, Pre and Post surveys, attendance at monthly parent Workshops.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase referrals from local pediatrician office ▪ Increase referrals from local DHEC office ▪ Visit local childcare providers for referrals

Imagination Library

Description: a book distribution program operated by the Dollywood Foundation that mails one book per month until the child's 5th birthday.

<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 350 by the end of 2020. At least 75% of clients served will participate in the program for at least 2 years</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1, 2</p>	<p>Enrollment records</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action: actively recruit families to enroll their children in this program ▪ Have board actively recruiting for this program in other areas of their life, i.e. church, social organizations, etc. ▪ Actively recruit younger siblings during school reading programs

1000 Books Before Kindergarten

Description: First Steps staff go into each of the 4K preschool classes across the county. We read to the students, distribute books to the students (most months), and always leave several books to add to the classroom’s own library. Visits are made monthly and last approximately 45 minutes per classroom. The goal is to get children motivated to read and to incentivize them enough that they get their families to participate in reading to them on a regular basis.

Integration: This is an in-house program. It is not integrated with any other programs.

Collaboration: The school district, the local childcare facilities, and the private school, Richard Winn, are our partners in this program.

<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 to at least 75% of students who meet the 1000 Books goal prior to entering 5K.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2, 4</p>	<p>Monitor number of books read by families and teachers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enroll all 4K students in Fairfield County into this program. ▪ Visit each 4K classroom and read a minimum of four books each visit ▪ Use incentives to encourage families to read to their children on a regular basis.
<p>Encourage private donations to provide books and incentives for this program.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2</p>	<p>Documentation of all private dollars earmarked for this program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have fundraising committee designate a fundraiser specifically for this program ▪ ED speak at engagements requesting private money specifically for this program
<p>Increase to 80% the number of classrooms achieving the goal of 1000 Books before the end of the school year.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2</p>	<p>Tracking of classroom success rate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Give regular updates to teachers and send these updates home with the students reminding them of the goal to increase the completion rate
<p>Increase knowledge of parents regarding importance of early literacy</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2</p>	<p>Pre- and post- surveys for parents regarding literacy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase First Steps presence at PTA/PTO meetings in order to reach the parents personally

Countdown to Kindergarten

Description: Six in-home visits with rising 5K students following a curriculum that lessens the anxiety of both parent and child for their 5K experience. Clients are expected to participate in all six visits.

Integration: This strategy is recommended for any clients we know who have not attended a 4K class setting. Other than that, we take referrals from child care and the schools. This program is an in-house program and we hire the 5K teachers that are in the local elementary schools.

Collaboration: United Way of the Midlands and Fairfield County School District.

<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 recruited for this program each year. See an increase of three students per year to obtain a total of 46 by the end of 2020. At least 85% of clients served will participate in the program for all 6 sessions of the curriculum.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2, 4</p>	<p>Pre and post surveys of parents, teachers, data entry into the First Steps data system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have principals on board with this program and encourage families of referred students to participate

CHILDCARE TUITION ASSISTANCE

Description: Fairfield First Steps provides payment of \$80 per week for clients of the Parents As Teachers program who need childcare while they are working. Only families who are a part of the PAT program are eligible for the Tuition Assistance program. We try to get our clients started in this quality care as early as possible and keep them in one of our Level B facilities through 4K.

Integration: Only clients of our Parents As Teachers program are eligible to apply for this program. It is an in-house program where the families connect with one of our two local Level B childcare facilities to provide consistent quality child care.

<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 families served per year to 15 by the end of 2020. At least 85% of clients served will participate in the program for at least an entire 12-month period.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2, 4</p>	<p>Parent surveys, KIPS and ACIRI scores through PAT Assessment results both pre and post</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide quality and consistent childcare for children so their parents are able to work or attend school ▪ Perform assessments on children for potential delays ▪ Make referrals as needed
<p>Connect parents to services that will benefit their families.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">4</p>	<p>Percentage of connections made</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Connect parents to GED classes ▪ Connect parents to Job Fairs ▪ Connect parents to family services