



# State and Local Collaboration in South Carolina



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**Building Brighter Futures for Our Children**

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# The Challenge to Forge State/Local Collaboration

**“Many states are working to address the comprehensive needs of young children and their families. While coordinating a vision at the state level presents one challenge, communicating and supporting the implementation of that vision at the local level presents another. The lack of communication between state and local efforts is a common barrier to states’ ability to develop a seamless system of care for children and families.”**

# South Carolina First Steps' Approach

- 1. First Steps statewide structure**
  - a. State Board of Trustees**
  - b. Local Boards**
  - c. Program Standards**
  - d. Technical Assistance**
- 2. Regional Children's Summits**
- 3. Children's Budget Summits**

# First Steps' Statewide Structure

**Created by law in 1999, SC First Steps to School Readiness is South Carolina's comprehensive school readiness initiative.**

**Inspired by NC's Smart Start, First Steps meets locally identified school readiness needs via 46 independent non-profit County Partnerships.**

**Also provides state-level 4K programming, transitioning to Lead Agency status for IDEA Part C.**

# First Steps' Statewide Structure

**Governed by a State Board of Trustees:**

**\* Chaired by the sitting Governor**

**Voting membership**

**\* State Superintendent of Education**

**\* 20 members appointed by the Governor, Speaker of the House and President Pro-Tempore of the Senate**

**Non-voting membership**

**\* Directors of each of the state's child-serving agencies**

# First Steps' Statewide Structure

## **46 Local (501c3) County Partnership Boards**

- \* **Early childhood education**
- \* **Family education, training, and support provider;**
- \* **Childcare provider;**
- \* **Healthcare provider;**
- \* **Transportation provider;**
- \* **Nonprofit organizations**
- \* **Faith community**
- \* **Business community.**
- **Parents of pre-school children**

**PLUS: Local school districts, Head Start, Social Services, Dept. of Health, and county library.**

# First Steps' Statewide Structure

## **State to Local Grants:**

- **Adherence to IRS Good Governance Principles**
- **SC Freedom of Information Act**
- **Statewide Program Standards (Fidelity/Targeting)**
- **Common Assessments/Data Collection**
- **Contractual agreements, managed to performance**

**State-level monitoring and  
Technical Assistance**

# Vision 2013: First Steps Strategic Plan

## Statewide Strategic Planning Effort

### THREE STRANDS

#### Local/Regional Input

Programmatic

Mandates

Vision 2013

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# Vision 2013: First Steps Strategic Plan

**VISION 2013**

Featuring the Early Childhood Regional Summits



*7 days. 7 summits.*

*More than 500  
voices focused on  
young children.*

## **7 Facilitated Regional Summits**

- \*8-10 member county delegations**
- \*Data focused**
- \* Visioning**
- \* Asset mapping**
- \* Identification of priority issues and service gaps**

# SC Children Experiencing Early School Failure:

Characteristics of Young Children Subsequently Retained or Scoring "Below Basic" by 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

**Percentage of Children Possessing *This Risk Factor* "Not Succeeding by 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade"**

## **Readiness Risk Factors**

**Percentage (and Estimate) of 0-6 Child Population Possessing *This Risk Factor***

53%	Abused, Neglected, or in Foster Care	3% (10,173)
52%	Very Low Birth Weight (under 1500 grams)	2.11% (7170)
48%	Low Maternal Education (Less than High School)	24.13% (81,852)
45%	Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) (50% of Federal Poverty)	8.4% (28,690)
43%	Low Birth Weight (1500 - 2000 grams)	2.77% (9,390)
43%	Teen Mother (Under 18)	4.6% (15,618)
42%	Food Stamps (130% of Federal Poverty)	20% (67,897)
37%	Mother (age 18 - 20)	8.83% (29,946)
36%	LBW (2000 - 2500 grams)	5.53% (18,780)

# Children's Budget Summits

**Like many states, South Carolina experienced large budget deficits during FY09, resulting in mid-year cuts that eliminated nearly 20% of First Steps annual budget.**

**As a result the SC General Assembly granted school districts unprecedented spending flexibility.**

**Each First Steps Partnership held a Children's Budget Summit during the spring of 2009, providing a real-time needs assessment as they began planning for FY10.**



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