



For Our Future

South Carolina

2022 – 2027

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



South Carolina

State Capitol

For Our Future: South Carolina's Birth through Five Plan is a five-year strategic plan for the state's publicly-funded early childhood programs. This executive summary includes the core elements of the plan, as presented for approval by the South Carolina Early Childhood Advisory Council on October 21, 2021.

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PRINCIPLES

All children and families deserve a fair chance at a good life.

We envision universal access to strategies that work, and in this five-year plan we are starting where there are known disparities: by family income, race, geography, home language, and for adults and children with disabilities.

A focus on equity proactively addresses disparities and levels the playing field.

Addressing disparities ensures all children have the opportunities and resources to be successful.

Parents are a child's first and most important teachers.

Parents, including all adult caregivers in parenting roles, need and want to connect with their infants and young children in positive ways that help children grow, thrive, and achieve their full potential.

Children do better when they are raised in healthy, stable, and attached families.

Our work to improve outcomes for children must also include efforts to help families thrive and prosper.

Policies and programs are more effective when inclusive, developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive, and delivered with excellence and respect.

We must meet children and families where they are, be respectful and compassionate, and deliver the highest quality programs possible.

Policies and programs become more effective when we authentically reflect the voices of families, including their ideas, concerns, and aspirations.

Families understand what they need and want better than anyone else.

South Carolina has an excellent opportunity to build on and reinforce our strong state and local infrastructure to better support and serve children and families.

We get better when we align initiatives, work collaboratively, and focus on the areas that lead to healthy and thriving children, families, and the places where they live.

GOAL 2: South Carolina's youngest children are actively supported by their families and communities.

Objective 2.1 . Parents have the knowledge and skills to be excellent caregivers and are actively engaged in their children's development, health, learning, and transitions.

GOAL 3: South Carolina's children arrive at school ready to reach their highest potential.

Objective 3.1. Early care and education programs operate with demonstrated quality in schools, child care centers, and family child care homes.

3.1.1. Strengthen design and impact of quality improvement investments.

3.1.2. Increase family child care and child care center participation in South Carolina's ABC Quality system and other quality initiatives.

3.1.3. Increase investment in family child care programs and child care centers.

3.1.4 Increase child care center and family child care program enrollment in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

Objective 3.2. Families have choices for reliable, safe, affordable, high-quality early care and education for their children that meets their family's needs in all areas of the state and especially in areas of low child care access.

3.2.1. Increase the number of child care centers and family child care homes to maximize slots available to families.

3.2.2. Increase business supports to child care providers with a focus on new and struggling programs.

3.2.3. Increase access to quality early learning options.

3.2.4. Expand access to Head Start programs.

GOAL 4: South Carolina's early childhood system is aligned, coordinated, and familycentered.

Objective 4.1. Public programs and resources for young children and their families are aligned and easily accessed, holistically address all aspects of children's and families' well-being, and provide choice for parents and caregivers.

4.1.1. Create shared outreach, eligibility, application, and enrollment processes.

4.1.2. Conduct an annual analysis of eligibility versus enrollment of South Carolinians for programs referenced in this document.

4.1.3. Pursue funding to address service gaps, those that impact families with fewer resources, or those that address