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# For Our Future

South Carolina's Birth through Five Plan

PRINCIPLES, GOALS, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES



South Carolina  
**Early Childhood  
Advisory Council**

## PRINCIPLES

*The following principles are fundamental to this plan and are critically important to supporting and serving the children and families of South Carolina. The principles are woven into the goals, objectives, and strategies.*

### **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, and for adults and children with disabilities.

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

Parents, including all adult caregivers in parenting roles, need to connect with their infants and young children in positive ways that help children grow, thrive, and achieve their fullest 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, 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 in their lives each day 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.

## GOALS, OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES



**GOAL 1:** South Carolina's youngest children are healthy and safe.

**Objective 1.1: Mothers and infants are healthy, safe, and supported before, during, and after birth.**

*Strategies*

- 1.1.1. Expand access to health care before, during, and after the birth of a child.
- 1.1.2. Improve the quality of health care before, during, and after the birth of a child.

**Objective 1.2: Young children receive consistent, coordinated medical care, and meet recommendations for well-child visits, immunizations, and oral health.**

*Strategies*

- 1.2.1. Expand access to consistent, coordinated pediatric medical care.
- 1.2.2. Improve the quality of pediatric care and ancillary services.

**Objective 1.3: Young children are screened, assessed, identified early, and connected with services that address developmental, intellectual, chronic, or acute health concerns.**

*Strategies*

- 1.3.1. Expand access to screening, identification of special needs, and referrals for treatment and services.
- 1.3.2. Ensure young children receive timely, appropriate early intervention services for special needs.
- 1.3.3. Improve efficiency and responsiveness of early intervention services through better data collection and reporting.

**Objective 1.4: The behavioral and mental health of young children and their families is promoted and supported through: nurturing, responsive and caregiver relationships; supportive environments; targeted social-emotional supports; and intensive interactions including, when appropriate, intervention and treatment.**

*Strategies*

- 1.4.1. Promote and support personal and social-skill building.
- 1.4.2. Expand access to behavioral and mental health care.
- 1.4.3. Improve the quality of behavioral and mental health care.

**Objective 1.5: Young children are safe in their families, homes, and communities.**

*Strategies*

- 1.5.1. Improve child safety.
- 1.5.2. Reduce child abuse and neglect.
- 1.5.3. Build resilience within children and families through policies and practices.

**Objective 1.6: Families are food secure and utilize education and resources that address nutrition and physical activity.**

*Strategies*

- 1.6.1. Improve food security. Increase uptake and utilization of public nutrition benefits.
- 1.6.2. Increase opportunities for physical activity.
- 1.6.3. Connect families to nutrition and physical activity resources.



**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.**

*Strategies*

- 2.1.1. Expand proven home visiting programs so more families can participate.
- 2.1.2. Expand access to information and resources that strengthen families' ability to participate more fully in the development of their children.
- 2.1.3. Help parents support successful transitions from home to early childhood programs and to school entry.

**Objective 2.2: Parents have the time, ability, and resources to attach to their infants and care for their children.**

*Strategies*

- 2.2.1. Streamline family access to services that meet their needs.
- 2.2.2. Expand support to help families access the services and supports they need.
- 2.2.3. Recognize and increase family-friendly workplace policies.

**Objective 2.3. Parents have skills, training, and education to obtain good jobs and achieve financial stability.**

*Strategies*

- 2.3.1. Increase opportunities for parents of young children to participate in training and education programs to ensure more parents of young children have jobs with family-sustaining wages.
- 2.3.2. Support parents to grow small businesses and build good jobs that work for families with young children.

**Objective 2.4. South Carolina's communities provide children with healthy environments and community resources like libraries, schools, child care, community centers, and museums.**

*Strategies*

- 2.4.1. Provide training and materials grants to library staff for specific 0-3 and pre-K programs and activities.
- 2.4.2. Increase the prevalence of natural outdoor learning environments for use by children and their families.
- 2.4.3. Increase participation in a community's cultural resources.
- 2.4.4. Provide training to local parks, recreation, and other community services staff about ways to deliver recreational programs and activities to families with young children.



**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.**

*Strategies*

- 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 child care deserts.**

*Strategies*

- 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 and Early Head Start programs.

**Objective 3.4: Families have support to afford reliable, safe, high-quality early care and education for their children that meets their family's needs.**

*Strategies*

- 3.4.1. Expand access to 4K for more four-year-olds to participate.
- 3.4.2. Increase supply of infant and toddler care.
- 3.4.3. Increase the number of family child care homes and child care centers that accept subsidy.
- 3.4.4. Create tax credits to help more families use and pay for quality care.
- 3.4.5. Reduce hurdles and increase supports to make it easier for families to apply for and enroll in care and services.

**Objective 3.5: The early care and education workforce is prepared, skilled, and supported in their work.**

*Strategies*

- 3.5.1. Increase funding for programs to support quality improvements and benefit the early childhood workforce.
- 3.5.2. Create accessible career pathways that reward achievement.
- 3.5.3. Recruit and retain a well-prepared early childhood workforce.
- 3.5.4. Expand professional learning opportunities for the early care and education workforce to support their practice in family child care homes, child care centers, and schools.



**GOAL 4:** South Carolina's early childhood system is aligned, coordinated, and family-centered.

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**Objective 4.1. Families are at the center of system and service design, programming, and implementation – their voices solicited, heard, and amplified – to ensure services are available, accessible, and acceptable.**

*Strategies*

- 4.1.1. Utilize existing infrastructure to deepen and expand local parent leadership.
- 4.1.2. Increase family input to statewide plans.
- 4.1.3. Ensure the needs of families inform state-level decision making.

**Objective 4.2: Early childhood program data are connected across agencies, funding streams, and programs to enhance service delivery, to build an effective early childhood system, to report on outcomes and investments, and to reduce redundancies to benefit young children, their families, their communities, service providers, and policymakers.**

*Strategies*

- 4.2.1. Establish an Early Childhood Integrated Data System.
- 4.2.2. Implement and foster sound data governance policies and practices for an Early Childhood Integrated Data System that is flexible and sustainable.
- 4.2.3. Build and sustain web-based data visualization tools that incorporate child, family, program, outcome, and population data.

**Objective 4.3. 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.**

*Strategies*

- 4.3.1. Create shared outreach, eligibility, application, and enrollment processes.
- 4.3.2. Conduct an annual analysis of eligibility versus enrollment of South Carolinians for programs referenced in this document.
- 4.3.3. Pursue funding to address service gaps, those that impact families with fewer resources, or those that address the lack of comprehensive support for young children and their families.
- 4.3.4. Connect early childhood system efforts with other public systems like housing, transportation, higher education, workforce training and technical education to ensure the concurrent and interconnected success of children and their parents.

**Objective 4.4: South Carolina's early childhood system governance structure ensures coordination, accountability, and effective and efficient use of public resources.**

*Strategies*

- 4.4.1. Strengthen and align local service delivery systems.
- 4.4.2. Strengthen and expand the Early Childhood Advisory Council.

**Objective 4.5: Create innovative public-private partnerships that maximize the skills, knowledge, and assets of business, philanthropy, and state and local government.**

*Strategies*

- 4.5.1. Expand public-private partnerships on behalf of young children and their families.
- 4.5.2. Engage business and civic leaders to serve as early childhood champions and to promote the economic value of early care and education in the state.