

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

2027 – 2029



Acknowledgments

Greenville First Steps is deeply grateful to everyone who contributed to this Needs and Resource Assessment. This effort reflects the collective wisdom and collaboration of so many across our community. We are especially thankful to these partners who contributed to our needs assessment, including:

- Greenville First Steps Board of Directors
- Childcare Needs Assessment Task Force
- Hollingsworth Funds
- United Way of Greenville County
- Greenville Chamber of Commerce
- Searchlight
- Catalyst Consulting
- Parenting Landscape Analysis Planning Committee
- Openfields
- Tealhaus Strategies
- Furman University's Community Engaged Medicine
- 90 community organizations and childcare providers

Your voices shaped this assessment and continue to inspire our shared vision for a stronger start for every child.

Message from the Executive Director



DEREK LEWIS

Executive Director
Greenville County First
Steps

As we embarked on this needs assessment – tracking challenges and opportunities throughout Greenville, I am struck by the incredible needs within our community:

- 3,800 Medicaid eligible Greenville children born annually
- 4,500 childcare slots needed
- 2,225 5K children test below grade level in Literacy development

But, as significant as these needs may be, so too are the supports available:

- 220 childcare providers caring for nearly 17,000 Greenville children
- 1,400 families of newborns receiving home visits from a nurse
- \$8 million invested in early childhood interventions

The opportunities for better coordination of services, framed by a robust community-wide needs assessment, could ensure all children enter school on track and ready to succeed.

Derek Lewis

Needs Assessment Process

CONVENE

Held multiple community convenings with 120 participants and developed a vision for young children and their families

July 2025 – November 2025



UNDERSTAND

Reviewed local data and map assets to understand the state of young children, their families, and the early childhood system

July 2025 – November 2025



PRIORITIZE

Organize the insight gathered from the convenings and data to prioritize the concerns, needs, and gaps the partnership wants to address, and formalize the Needs Assessment

July 2025 – November 2025



“I loved being able to communicate with different organizations brainstorming on how we can resolve the childcare crisis ”

- Childcare Director

“I appreciated the diverse group of participants coming together to ensure our community is doing the best thing for young children.”

-Childcare Center Owner

Priority Area One: Improve Access to Childcare

4500 – Number of infant and toddler childcare spaces currently needed in Greenville County

Data source: ACS 2019-2023 5-year estimates, and childcare center data from SCChildcare.org and data collected from childcare provider surveys

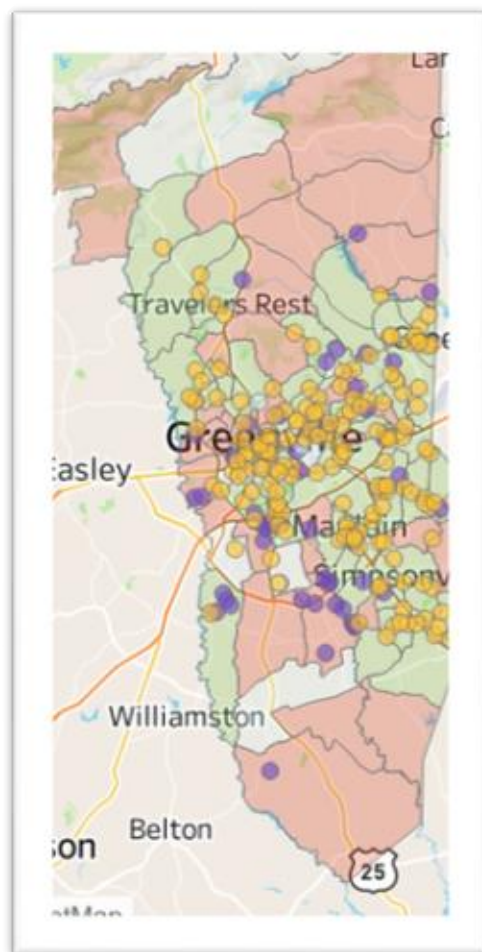
According to the Greenville Chamber of Commerce, access to childcare is one of the top barriers for employers seeking to fill their workforce needs.

The childcare sector reports that two thirds of childcare centers could expand capacity if they had employees to fill vacancies.

A coalition of funders and policy makers recognizes three significant needs to help the sector address the childcare shortage:

1. Support of the BOOST wages program to increase childcare employee subsidies.
2. One-time dollars to help fund facility expansion and renovation costs.
3. Support passage of S.47 – this bill would provide tax credits for childcare workers and for childcare providers

41% of Greenville County is a childcare desert



Priority Area Two: Improve Access to Parenting Supports

40 – Number of organizations who called for coordination of parenting supports in Greenville County.

Data Source: Tealhaus Strategies –
Greenville Parenting Coalition
Findings and Recommendations

Based on an external assessment conducted by Openfields and research from Tealhaus Strategies, we identified the following parent support services needs for Greenville County:

1. Greater awareness of program availability, particularly on the part of service providers and those tasked with or in a position to provide referrals;
2. Greater access to services in outlying areas of the county (particularly in the far north and far south).
3. Reduced cost for those programs that charge fees.
4. Longer operating hours to meet the needs of working parents;
5. In areas with low access, or low program utilization, there is a need to build trust and knowledge between service providers and communities by having service providers partner with trusted community leaders and by having service providers show up in communities.



Priority Area Three: Improve Early Literacy and Language Development

41% of Kindergarteners test ready on the Language and Literacy domain on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment

Data source: SCReportCards.com

Strengthening the early literacy ecosystem requires not only increasing access to high-quality books but also ensuring that families and early educators have the tools to build strong language-rich environments. Key needs identified through this assessment include:

1. Continued expansion of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to reach more families with free, developmentally appropriate books
2. Scaling the Greenville First Steps Book Bank to equip childcare centers, schools, and community partners with diverse, high-quality reading materials
3. Sustained support for childcare providers as they embed early literacy practices into their daily routines and classroom environments



Next Steps

