

Southside Early Childhood Center

Rising Stars

Our demographics

Preschool Programs Director: Shirnetha Stinson **Began at school:** 2018 **In district:** 1996 **In education:** 1996
Grades served: Pre K **Enrollment:** 203 **Economic status:** 100% free & reduced lunch
Diversity: 12% White, 82% African-American, 5% Hispanic, 1% Other
Number of teachers: 7 **Classified:** 26 **Administrators:** 1 **Counselors:** 0 **Media specialists:** 0
Other: 1 Full-time School Nurse, Head Start Education/Disability Manager, Early Head Start Education/Disability Coordinator, 2 Family Service Coordinators, 2 Parent Educators, 1 Music Teacher, 1 Speech Therapist and Health, Safety and Nutrition Coordinator

Our mission

The mission of Southside Early Childhood Center is to provide quality early childhood education so that every child entering kindergarten is ready to learn.

Our facilities

Date main building was built: 1954 **Date of renovations:** 1999
Square feet: 28,074 **Number of computers:** 34 **Number of classrooms:** 26

Our school programs

- **Four-Year-Old Kindergarten** – Our four-year-old Kindergarten program classrooms (located in Title I elementary schools) operate on a full-day schedule. The program follows the HighScope curriculum and is designed to meet South Carolina’s Early Learning Standards through inquiry. Before the child begins the program, he or she is tested with the readiness screening program called Dial 4. Acceptance into the program is based on age-eligible children qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch or Medicaid. Children with developmental delays documented through state-approved screening assessments or children with medically documented disabilities who do not already qualify for special need services are also considered for enrollment.
- **The Lancaster Early Head Start Program** – The Lancaster Early Head Start Program offers comprehensive child development services to families with children birth to age three. There are two delivery methods offered, center-based and home-based. The center-based program is housed within six separate classrooms, serving a total of 48 children. There is one teacher for every four students. The home-based program serves 24 additional families, eight of whom include prenatal mothers. Both delivery methods are designed to offer comprehensive services to the families, including training in positive child discipline, early child care and development, preventive health services, child and family

mental health issues, children’s dental care needs, and prenatal issues. Quality childcare is provided for the center-based children.

- **Head Start Program** – The Head Start program, also housed at Southside Early Childhood Center, offers comprehensive child development services to families with children three and four years of age. This program is housed in seven separate classrooms, serving a total of 131 children. There is one certified teacher and instructional assistant with an associate degree in each classroom. The program is designed to offer comprehensive services to the families including training in positive child discipline, early childhood development, preventive health services, child and family mental health, dental care by a local dentist and nutritional services from a registered dietitian.

Our co-curriculum, clubs, athletics

The core focus of our school is to provide a learning environment that fosters all areas of child development. A research-based preschool curriculum is used that focuses on critical child development skills, approaches to learning, language and literacy, mathematics, social/emotional development and physical health and development. Our curriculum is aligned with the South Carolina Early Learning Curriculum Standards and the Head Start Learning Outcomes Framework.

Our parents/parent support programs

Parent involvement is a vital part of our program. Parents volunteer in the classroom, attend field trips and participate in family events. Parents also serve on the Policy Council, Parent Committee and Health Advisory.

Our school strengths

- 1) Provides a high-quality early childhood education
- 2) Promotes a positive parent/teacher interaction – teachers complete home visits twice a year and parents are required to attend two conferences at school
- 3) Health and developmental screenings and assessments of students
- 4) Safe and nurturing learning environment
- 5) Concrete and hands-on learning experience

Our improvement/growth areas

- 1) Receive accreditations through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
- 2) Integrate physical education, music, technology and art instruction into the curricula
- 3) Enhance the media center to appeal to visual, auditory and kinesthetic learners

- 4) Enhance Early Head Start playground through partnership with Lancaster County First Steps.
- 5) Enhance Head Start playground through Lancaster County School District capital improvement projects.

Honors & Awards

• **Officers and board members of organizations related to education, the office of Head Start and Community agencies:**

- United Way – Lancaster Area Coalition for the Homeless Committee member
- South Carolina Head Start Association Member
- National Head Start Association Member
- United Way – Community Investment Committee member
- First Steps School Readiness Committee member
- Local Early Intervention System Committee member

• **Grants** – Staff members have received grants to implement programs and/or provide supplemental materials to enrich the curriculum activities in their classrooms.