



CHILD DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION PILOT PROGRAM (CDEPP) GUIDELINES



2009-2010



First Steps Child Development Education Pilot Program Guidelines 2009-2010

Introduction: A Letter to South Carolina's Early Childhood Providers

Dear Early Childhood Partner,

On behalf of South Carolina First Steps, allow me to welcome you to the fourth year of the South Carolina Child Development Education Program (CDEPP) - a groundbreaking 4K-expansion pilot within high-quality private for-profit, private non-profit, faith-based and other non-school district settings.

The *Child Development Education Pilot Program (CDEPP) Guidelines* outline the requirements that will guide the pilot's implementation during the upcoming school year. Key program components are listed in the Table of Contents for your easy reference.

Additional 4K resource materials will be made available throughout the year at <http://www.scfirststeps.org/4K.htm>

We invite you to check this site regularly for materials and information that you may find helpful and encourage you to contact South Carolina First Steps toll free at (877) 621-0865 if you have any additional questions.

Thank you for both your interest in serving as an approved provider and the work you do on behalf of South Carolina's young children.

In admiration of your service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Wuori".

Dr. Dan Wuori
Chief Program Officer

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South Carolina First Steps 4K Expansion Guidelines

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SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS TO SCHOOL READINESS is a comprehensive, results-oriented initiative for improving early childhood development...First Steps exists to develop, promote, and assist the efforts of agencies, private providers, and public and private organizations and entities, at the state level and the community level, to collaborate and cooperate in order to focus and intensify services, assure the most efficient use of all available resources and eliminate duplication of efforts to serve the needs of South Carolina's young children and their families.

- Sections 59-152-10, 59-152-20

PURPOSE OF THE FIRST STEPS 4K EXPANSION PROGRAM

Pursuant to Budget Proviso 1.62 (The South Carolina Child Development Education Pilot Program) of the General Appropriations Act (FY09), South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness is partnering with high-quality private for-profit, private non-profit, faith-based, and other eligible providers to expand four-year-old kindergarten programs during the current school year. Programs shall focus on the developmental and learning supports that children must have in order to be ready for school and will incorporate research-based practices, ongoing assessment and parenting education.

PURPOSE OF THE FIRST STEPS CDEPP GUIDELINES

The *First Steps CDEPP Guidelines* provides the standards and expectations for all 4K classrooms participating in the Child Development Expansion Pilot Program. Questions about CDEPP be directed to the Office of South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness toll free at (877) 621-0865.

1.0 PROGRAM OPERATION

Approved programs shall provide high-quality; developmentally appropriate educational services to age-, income-, and geographically-eligible four-year-old children. Educational services are defined to include all domains of development: cognitive, physical, emotional, social, cultural and moral.

1.1 Days of Service

4K programs shall operate educational programs for children five (5) days a week, for 180 instructional days as established in the provider contract.

1.2 Hours of Service

The educational program shall operate for a minimum of six and one-half (6.5) hours daily, including breakfast, lunch, snack, outdoor play and rest.

1.3 Tuition and Fees

Providers may not charge tuition or receive any other form of compensation (i.e. ABC Vouchers) for any portion of the required instructional day, nor may enrollment fees be required.

Tuition and fees may be charged for extended programming and/or wrap around care above and beyond the 6.5 hour instructional day, though participation in the state-funded 4K program may not be contingent upon enrollment in tuition-based services.

Once enrolled, providers may not remove state-funded students to create additional capacity for tuition-based students.

1.4 Transportation

Providers may offer (and will receive reimbursement for) transportation for eligible students. Providers may not charge fees for transportation to eligible students.

All transportation services provided must adhere with the requirements detailed in South Carolina Section 56-5-195 (See Appendix G: Jacob's Law).

Providers offering transportation may specify their own transportation routes and must make parents aware of these routes upon enrollment. Routes may cross school district attendance zones and/or county lines at the discretion of the provider.

If transportation is offered, eligible students living within established provider routes must be afforded an equal opportunity to receive this service. Providers shall not be responsible for the transportation of any student living outside of these established boundaries.

When transporting four-year-old students, providers shall make every effort to transport them with students of similar ages attending the same school.

1.5 Meals and Snacks

All First Steps-funded students shall be offered breakfast, lunch and a snack meeting USDA requirements daily.

1.6 Wrap Around Services

Providers are encouraged to provide before- and after-school care in an effort to accommodate the needs of working families. Tuition may be charged for any wrap-around care that exceeds the required 6.5-hour school day.

Tuition may also be charged for the provision of service on holidays (not included as part of the instructional calendar detailed in your contract), and/or for extended year programming.

A child's enrollment in the state-funded 4K program may not be contingent upon his/her participation in tuition-based services.

2.0 CHILD/FAMILY ELIGIBILITY

2.1 Age Requirements

Children must be four years of age on or before September 1, 2009 based on acceptable documentation to be kept on file by the provider (birth certificates, passports, or official documents from other countries).

Children are eligible to attend the First Steps 4K Program for one year only. A waiver of this requirement may be sought from South Carolina First Steps in the rare event that a child is deemed unable to advance to kindergarten for developmental or other reasons. Waiver requests should be accompanied by documentation from the teacher, parent(s)/guardian(s), and/or medical provider. An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) issued by the local school district and stating that, "an additional year of pre-kindergarten is necessary" shall be deemed an acceptable form of evidence to support the waiver request.

2.2 Family Income Requirements

Eligible providers shall receive reimbursement from South Carolina First Steps for service to students whose documented family incomes qualify them for either the free- and reduced-price lunch program (185% of federal poverty, see Appendix H) or Medicaid.

An income eligibility statement and verification of Medicaid eligibility (for all Medicaid participants) shall be retained in the file of each student.

Proof of income-eligibility must be on file before the child begins attending the 4K program (e.g. acceptable forms of verification include, pay stubs, tax returns and/or documentation of eligibility for food stamps, TANF, SSI).

Providers may continue to enroll – and charge tuition for - students whose family incomes exceed this eligibility threshold, provided that total class size does not exceed 20 students and the instructional program offered *all children* meets the requirements outlined herein. *State funding will ONLY be provided for approved, income-eligible students during the 2009-2010 school year.*

2.3 Residency Requirements

Pursuant to Budget Proviso 1.64, participation in the First Steps 4K program is limited to children residing in school districts acting as plaintiffs in *Abbeville County School District et. al. vs. South Carolina*, with funding priority given to children residing in the eight districts serving as a representative class in the trial itself.

These eight priority "trial districts" are: *Allendale, Dillon 2, Florence 4, Hampton 2, Jasper, Lee, Marion 7 and Orangeburg 3.*

Given sufficient funding, students residing in the 29 remaining plaintiff districts may be deemed eligible for participation on a prioritized basis, beginning with those districts deemed to have the largest populations of

underserved four-year-old children. These plaintiff districts are: *Abbeville, Bamberg 1, Bamberg 2, Barnwell 19, Barnwell 29, Barnwell 45, Berkeley, Chesterfield, Clarendon 1, Clarendon 2, Clarendon 3, Dillon 1, Dillon 3, Florence 1, Florence 2, Florence 3, Florence 5, Hampton 1, Laurens, 55, Laurens 56, Lexington 4, Marion 1, Marion 2, Marlboro, McCormick, Orangeburg 4, Orangeburg 5, Saluda and Williamsburg.* (Note: The preceding list has not been prioritized.)

Providers should note that the First Steps 4K program is designed to expand services to eligible *children* residing in the plaintiff districts. Providers documenting their service to such children may be eligible for participation even if their facilities are not located within a plaintiff district.

Age- and income-eligible children must provide documentation of their legal residency within a plaintiff school district. At least two forms of verification (current tax bills, utility bills, rental agreements, etc.) shall be retained on-site for each child receiving state funds. Proof of geographic eligibility must be on file before the approved program will receive tuition for the child.

2.4 Children with Special Needs and/or Speaking English as a Second Language

Children identified as needing early intervention services and/or related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) shall not be denied access to the First Steps 4K program. Providers shall collaborate with the child's school district of residence in determining whether a child may have special needs that would qualify him/her for special education services. The child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and recommendations from the school district shall determine any appropriate special education placements and/or related services.

When 4K providers refer a child suspected of having disabilities to his/her school district of residence, the referral request must be submitted in writing to the district's special education coordinator. School districts are requested to give priority for testing children in these non-district 4K programs and providing needed services, preferably in the location where the children are receiving 4K services so that disruptions in their 4K program activities are minimized.

In the event that English is not the primary language spoken in the home of an eligible child, the provider (with the assistance of the First Steps 4K Coordinator) shall collaborate with the child's school district of residence to determine what, if any, additional services he/she may be eligible to receive. Eligible students may not be denied enrollment on the basis of linguistic status.

3.0 ENROLLMENT/DISENROLLMENT

3.1 Enrollment

Enrollment for the First Steps 4K program must be open and non-discriminatory. Should the number of age-, income- and geographically-

eligible students seeking enrollment exceed the number of spaces available, acceptances must be prioritized in accordance with developmental risks measured by the DIAL-3 (Appendix D). Providers shall not be required to expand their programs to accommodate all children desiring enrollment.

Prior to billing, each student must be officially approved for enrollment by South Carolina First Steps. No invoice will be considered for services to students not yet approved by SCFS.

3.2 Health Records and Screenings

All providers shall comply with the South Carolina Department of Social Services Licensing Regulations for Private and Public Child Day Care Health, Safety and Sanitation requirements.

The provider shall maintain a health record for each child on site. Each record shall include the following information:

- A statement signed by the parent or guardian regarding the child's health prior to admission to the 4K class;
- A current copy of the child's immunization record signed by a physician or other health official. This record should indicate that all required immunizations are complete as recommended and routinely provided by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, or that the appropriate official has provided written proof that the child meets either medical or religious exemption requirements; and
- Other health information deemed necessary by the program director and/or by the parent(s)/guardian(s).

Providers should coordinate with their local First Steps Partnership, school district, health department and/or a local health care provider to arrange for basic health screenings (vision, hearing and dental) within 90 days of the program's start date. Children should be referred to an appropriate health care provider or the local health department when a health problem is suspected or detected. All health related referrals shall be noted in the child's health file on site and the results of all screenings should be shared with parent(s)/guardian(s).

3.3 Attendance

The First Steps 4K program is educational in nature, providing 6.5 hours of instructional time, five days a week, 180 days per year. All participants are expected to attend regularly and for the full instructional day. Attendance requirements must be explained to parent(s)/guardian(s) during the enrollment process.

Classroom attendance shall be recorded daily, maintained on site, and submitted monthly to SC First Steps. Written absence excuses should be submitted following each absence and maintained on site. Children are

allowed a maximum of ten unexcused (10) absences per 180-day school year.

3.4 Chronic Absenteeism, Tardiness or Early Departure

Students with more than 10 unexcused absences must be reported to South Carolina First Steps and may be considered for disenrollment.

No child may be disenrolled without the express written permission of South Carolina First Steps (see Section 3.6).

Issues regarding children who do not attend on a regular basis, are routinely late or routinely leave early should first be addressed by the Center Director or School Administrator. The child's parent(s)/guardian(s) should be contacted to determine the reasons for the chronic absenteeism, tardiness, or early departure and to identify ways of resolving any underlying factors that might be preventing the child's consistent, routine attendance.

If there are legitimate reasons for the child's absence, tardiness or persistent early departure (illness, death, extreme family hardship, etc.), the child's parent(s)/guardian(s) and/or the 4K provider may seek a waiver of excessive absences from South Carolina First Steps. If no waiver is granted and the child is absent, tardy or leaves early for ten (10) consecutive class days, the provider should notify South Carolina First Steps.

3.5 Suspension or Disenrollment of a Child

Developmentally appropriate behavior management techniques should be utilized at all times. Suspension should be used sparingly and as a last resort. Disenrollment will be considered under extraordinary circumstances and only with thorough documentation of both the circumstances surrounding the request and the provider's sustained and active efforts to resolve these issues in partnership with the child's parent(s) or guardian(s).

The following procedures shall be followed for disenrollment of a child from the 4K class:

- List the reason(s) why disenrollment is being requested;
- List the interventions used to help the child benefit from the class;
- Attach all written correspondence and meeting notes showing the ongoing involvement with the child's parent(s) or guardian(s);
- Attach behavioral and learning environment observations of the child that support the reasons for the requested disenrollment;
- If the child has special needs, attach documentation of consultation with the child's zoned school district's special education personnel, results of applied interventions, and indicate the status of the special education referral (if applicable); and
- Submit all documentation to South Carolina First Steps. No state-funded students may be disenrolled without the express written permission of First Steps.

The program administrator may elect to suspend a child for up to two (2) days at any time the child is causing harm to himself/herself or others. No prior approval from First Steps is needed. First Steps must be notified in writing that such action has been taken immediately upon suspension. Extended suspension (more than two (2) days and/or more than three (3) incidents of immediate suspension) requires prior permission from First Steps. Providers must submit the same information as they would for disenrollments.

4.0 PROVIDER ELIGIBILITY

4.1 Legal Operation, Capacity and Regulatory Violations

Eligible providers must, at minimum:

- Be fully approved, licensed or registered by the South Carolina Department of Social Services (SCDSS). Programs holding “provisional” licensure will not be approved for initial participation or renewal. If a provider’s license lapses to “provisional” status during the contract year, its continuing eligibility/participation shall be determined at the sole and absolute discretion of South Carolina First Steps;
- Have the licensing capacity to serve at least 10 four-year-old children in a classroom setting (unless granted a waiver of the minimum class size by SC First Steps);
- Have the facility capacity to serve at least one eligible student in a class of at least ten, but not more than 20 four-year-old students;
- Comply with all state and local health and safety laws and codes;
- Have been in legal operation for a period of one year or more (or be granted a waiver of this requirement by South Carolina First Steps);
- Have no pending/unresolved regulatory violations relating to child supervision, compliance with ratios, or serious health and safety issues upon approval to participate in the program.

Approved providers must inform South Carolina First Steps, within three business days, of any founded regulatory violations, contacts with law enforcement, the issuance of a provisional license, and/or reports of Out of Home Abuse and Neglect (OHAN) occurring during the contract period. Approved providers must resolve all regulatory violation(s) with SCDSS/Child Care Regulatory to the satisfaction of South Carolina First Steps.

South Carolina First Steps will review both regulatory violations and 4K Monitoring Reports monthly. Providers displaying a pattern of regulatory infractions or who are cited for endangering the safety and/or well being of students may have their eligibility suspended or terminated at the sole and absolute discretion of SC First Steps.

4.2 Anti-Discrimination Requirements

Approved providers must comply with constitutional provisions and all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability or need for special education services (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997), race, color, creed or national origin (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964), gender (Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 and Title II of the Vocational Education Amendments of 1976), and religion.

4.3 Criminal Background Checks

Providers must comply with all applicable state laws regarding criminal background checks for employees and exclude from employment any individual not permitted by state law to work with children.

4.4 General Programmatic Requirements

Approved providers must comply with all programmatic, reporting, and assessment criteria established by South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness, to include:

- Adherence to an approved, research-based preschool curriculum aligned with the South Carolina Good Start, Grow Smart Standards for four-year-olds (see Section 6.6 and Appendix C);
- Employment of qualified staff and the provision of substitute teachers as necessary;
- Maintenance (and data entry as required) of individual student records including (but not limited to):
 - Eligibility verifications (two proofs of residence; proof of income to include W2s or check stubs or letter of eligibility for Food Stamps; Medicaid Card; copy of birth certificate; social security card)
 - Health data
 - Attendance records
 - Dial 3 scores
 - Teacher observations
 - Student Work Sampling portfolios
 - Records of parent/teacher contact and conferences

Providers shall maintain all program records on site for a period of at least two years.

- Assume accountability for meeting the educational needs of each eligible children and report regularly to parents on his/her progress.

5.0 PROGRAM STANDARDS

5.1 Class Size and Adult-to-Child Ratio

Eligible providers must maintain a classroom of at least ten (10) four-year-old children, but not more than 20 four-year-old children with an adult to child ratio not to exceed 1:10. In classrooms of ten children, the 1:10 ratio must be a lead teacher to child ratio. The adult-child ratio must be maintained at all times during the 6.5-hour instructional day. Waivers of the minimum – but not the maximum – class size may be sought from SC First Steps.

Providers should note that not all enrolled students must meet the First Steps 4K eligibility criteria. *Providers will be reimbursed only for eligible students*, but may charge tuition to otherwise ineligible children served in the same classroom, providing the instructional program provided *all children* meets the requirements outlined herein. Once enrolled, First Steps-funded students may not be disenrolled to create additional space for tuition-based students.

5.2 Classroom Environment

The provider shall maintain appropriate classroom space, equipment, materials and supplies. All classrooms will be fully equipped to serve the designated number of children per class. All classrooms will be learning center based and equipped with materials that promote mathematical thinking, reading, writing, listening, fine and gross motor development, scientific inquiry, block play, dramatic play, sand/water play and art. Other centers may be added or taken away based on selected curriculum and topics of study.

5.3 Outdoor Equipment

All outdoor playground equipment must be age appropriate and meet licensing requirements. The playground and equipment must be accessible to any enrolled children with special needs.

6.0 CURRICULUM

6.1 Approved Curricula

Each approved 4K provider shall offer an age-appropriate educational program, *operating with fidelity to an approved, research-based preschool curriculum aligned with the South Carolina Good Start, Grow Smart Standards* for four-year-olds (see Section 6.6).

The program must focus on the developmental and learning supports children need in order to be ready for school. Providers must offer a uniform instructional program to all enrolled students in the 4K classroom(s),

The approved research-based curricula for the current school year are:

- High/Scope
- Creative Curriculum
- Montessori

Providers wishing to use an alternate research-based curriculum shall seek prior approval from South Carolina First Steps. (See Appendix C for details.) Providers seeking to change their curriculum choice during the contract period must seek prior approval from South Carolina First Steps.

Programmatic monitoring visits shall include appropriate measures of curricular fidelity.

6.2 Lesson Plans

Written lesson plans containing specific educational activities are required for a minimum of 5.0 hours per instructional day and should include educational experiences in the areas of language/literacy, math, science, social studies, fine arts (music, art and drama), social and emotional and physical development. The remaining 1.5 hours of the instructional day, consisting of meals, rest time and/or outside play, etc. may be included in the written plans at the teacher's discretion and/or as they relate to instructional objectives.

Lesson plans will be reviewed by First Steps staff during monitoring visits (both announced and unannounced). These plans must be maintained on site and will be reviewed for completeness, alignment with the South Carolina Content Standards and fidelity to the program's selected curriculum model.

Lesson plans should evidence the lead teacher's deliberate and thorough efforts to prepare for the week's instructional activities. Providers with missing or insufficient lesson plans may be required to submit plans directly to South Carolina First Steps for a period to be determined by First Steps staff.

6.3 Instructional Technology and Television

While the use of *active/participatory* instructional technology - such as age appropriate computer software - is permitted at the program's discretion, *television viewing shall be limited to no more than 30 minutes per week and may only be used in support of specific instructional objectives to be detailed in the teacher's weekly lesson plans. The regular viewing of television programming or video materials is prohibited.* Teachers must preview all video materials to ensure their appropriate use, and discuss what is viewed with the children.

Providers shall ensure equal access to active instructional technology for all children.

6.4 Rest Time

Opportunity for a brief rest time shall be incorporated into each instructional day. Rest time may not exceed one hour per day, except as

necessary to address the specific individual needs of children. During rest time, the staff/child ratio shall remain at least 1:10.

Children who do not sleep after a brief rest period shall be allowed to have a quiet activity on their mats or go to a supervised area for quiet activities.

6.5 Discipline

Program providers shall make use developmentally appropriate guidance techniques and may not allow the use of corporal punishment or severe discipline. Corporal punishment is the use of physical force to the body as a discipline measure. Physical force to the body includes, but is not limited to, spanking, slapping, biting and shaking. Severe discipline includes shouting, withholding food, and/or isolation or confinement for long periods of time. All staff members and parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be furnished a copy of the disciplinary policy prohibiting corporal punishment and this policy shall be reviewed with each family upon enrollment. Both staff members and parent(s)/guardian(s) shall sign and date the disciplinary policy statement in recognition of receipt and understanding of the policy. The signed disciplinary policies shall be maintained on file.

6.6 SC's Good Start, Grow Smart Standards

All instructional programming must be designed to support South Carolina's Good Start, Grow Smart Standards for four-year-olds. This uniform set of statewide expectations ensures that:

- Teachers know what is to be taught;
- Children know what is to be learned; and
- Parents know both what is to be learned and how well these concepts are being learned by their child.

6.7 Orientation

An on-site orientation for families must be offered and conducted prior to the first day of instruction. This orientation should be conducted jointly by the classroom teaching staff (4K teacher and instructional assistant) and director/program administrator as possible, and may be held in conjunction with other orientation programs being offered.

During the family orientation, parents should receive written information concerning meal and extended day opportunities, a school calendar noting holidays and closures during the school year, discipline policies and the philosophy of the program.

6.8 Parent Education and Involvement

Parents are a child's first and most important teachers. Their involvement is critical to the success of their children. In an effort to strengthen parental involvement in the learning process, each provider shall be required to submit to South Carolina First Steps a *Parent Education and Involvement Plan*.

This plan must include provisions for:

- A family orientation at the beginning of the school year;
- A home visit within the first 45 days of enrollment (programs may substitute an on-site parent-teacher conference at their discretion);
- At least two parent/teacher conferences during which assessment data on the child's progress must be shared;
- Documentation of the parent(s)/guardian(s) efforts to participate in the parenting programming offered by the Center or local First Steps Partnership, if feasible;
- The provision of parent resources (a parent education resource library, regular newsletters, etc.); and
- Opportunities and written operating policies for ongoing parent involvement (volunteerism, classroom visits, etc.).

In addition to two parent/teacher conferences, the provider shall offer at least two parent education workshops during the school year (in collaboration with the local First Steps County Partnership, as feasible). The first of these workshops may be an initial orientation/open house. At least one of the two workshops shall focus upon interactive literacy. Documentation of these parent workshops, to include agendas and attendance records shall be maintained on-site, as shall documentation of all parent-teacher conferences.

6.9 4K to 5K School Transition Plan

Providers shall be responsible for developing and implementing a 5K transition plan for each eligible 4K student and his/her parent(s) or guardian(s). The transition plan shall include:

Parent Information

- The name, address and phone number of the school the child is zoned to attend
- Pertinent school information (registration dates, enrollment requirements, required materials, etc.)

Child Information

- Plans to provide the school with a portfolio of student work and assessment data (with parent/guardian permission)
- Provision of any child-specific information that will enable the 5K teacher or other school personnel to best support the child's continued developmental and academic progress (with parent/guardian permission)

Visitation and Transition Planning

- Coordination of visits to new school and/or 5K classroom
- Exploration of Countdown to Kindergarten participation through the local First Steps County Partnership

7.0 PERSONNEL AND TRAINING

7.1 Classroom Staffing

Each First Steps 4K classroom (of 11 or more students) shall be staffed *at all times* by a lead teacher and an instructional assistant. Classrooms enrolling ten students (the program's minimum class size) may elect to employ a single adult provided this is a lead teacher.

7.2 Lead Teacher Qualifications

Providers shall employ qualified lead teachers in each First Steps 4K classroom. Teachers holding a four-year-degree or higher in Early Childhood Education are preferred.

Each lead teacher employed in the First Steps 4K program shall possess, at minimum, a two-year degree in early childhood education or a related field. Teachers possessing a two-year degree must be enrolled and demonstrating progress toward the completion of a teacher education program within four years.

A list of acceptable related fields is attached to this Guidelines document. (Appendix B)

Providers unable to locate lead teacher candidates meeting these qualifications may petition for a waiver from South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness. Waiver requests will be considered on an individual basis and will take into account both the provider's documented efforts to employ a lead teacher meeting the qualifications detailed herein and the qualifications of the proposed lead teacher.

Programs electing to use Montessori as their curriculum model must have a Montessori credentialed lead teacher. This credential should come from one of the teacher education affiliations supported by the South Carolina Montessori Alliance: American Montessori Society, American Montessori International, Montessori Educational Programs International or Lander University.

Should an approved lead teacher leave the program's employment during the contract period, providers must notify First Steps within 3 business days. Providers shall be allowed up to four weeks (20 school days) to find a qualified replacement. Providers unable to locate a qualified replacement during this period may be subject to the suspension of their provider eligibility at the discretion of South Carolina First Steps.

7.3 Instructional Assistant Qualifications

Providers shall employ a full-time instructional assistant for each classroom enrolling 11 students or more. Candidates possessing at least a two-year degree with experience and pre-service training in early childhood education are preferred.

Each instructional assistant employed by the First Steps 4K program must, at minimum, have a high school diploma or its equivalent and two years of documented experience working with children under five years of age. Instructional assistants must have completed the Early Childhood Development Credential (ECD) 101 or enroll and complete this course within twelve months of the 4K contract award.

7.4 Days of Service

Teachers and instructional assistants shall be employed for a minimum of one hundred ninety (190 = 180 instructional days + 5 days of pre/post planning and/or staff development), seven and one-half (7 ½) hour days.

Each lead teacher shall be compensated for at least one hour of unencumbered, instructional planning time daily (7.5 hour requirement = 6.5 hour instructional day + 1 hour daily for planning and preparation). During this portion of the day, he or she may not be responsible for any other task, including (but not limited to) the supervision of children.

To ensure quality, teachers should be in attendance each day of the CDEPP program. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Center Director. Vacations should be taken outside of the 190 days of the CDEPP program.

7.5 Substitute Teachers

A substitute teacher and/or substitute teaching assistant shall be present and working in the 4K classroom for each day that a teacher and/or instructional assistant is absent, whether due to illness, required training or personal leave. The provider should attempt to secure a substitute teacher with similar credentials to the regular teacher or assistant.

Long term substitutes acting as lead teachers for a period of four weeks (20 school days) or more must meet lead teacher qualifications.

7.6 Professional Development

All personnel (*both* teachers and instructional assistants) providing instruction and classroom support to students participating in the First Steps 4K program shall participate in at least 15 hours of professional development to include training in:

- Teaching children from poverty
- Curriculum embedded assessment
- Emergent literacy (oral communication, knowledge of print and letters, phonemic and phonological awareness, vocabulary, and comprehension development)

Training hours must be approved through the South Carolina Center for Child Care Career Development (CCCCD). Documentation of each staff member's professional development hours shall also be maintained on-site and is subject to monitoring by First Steps.

8.0 ASSESSMENT

8.1 Instructional Assessment

Providers participating in the First Steps 4K program shall use the Work Sampling System as their primary method of classroom assessment. Teachers will be required to use all three elements of the Work Sampling System:

- Developmental Guidelines and Developmental Checklists
- Portfolios
- Summary Reports

Work Sampling is a performance assessment requiring the ongoing documentation of student progress. Summary reporting shall be monitored by South Carolina First Steps and required at least twice annually (mid-year and year end).

All summary ratings shall be based upon the student's *documented progress*. Student portfolios and the teacher's observation records shall be maintained on-site, shared with parents during conferences, and subject to review by First Steps staff during both announced and unannounced monitoring visits.

8.2 Developmental Screening

Providers are *required* to complete a developmental screening on each First Steps-funded student as part of the enrollment process.

Screenings shall be conducted with the DIAL-3 (Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning, Third Edition) and the results maintained in the child's assessment folder and reported to South Carolina First Steps. South Carolina First Steps shall provide access to training and testing materials for eligible providers.

In the event that demand exceeds the provider's capacity to enroll eligible students, priority shall be given to those eligible students with the lowest total DIAL-3 percentile scores.

Students whose DIAL-3 total scores fall at the 10th percentile or below *must be referred to the Special Education Coordinator within the child's school district of residence for additional diagnostic evaluation*. Children experiencing discomfort, disinterest or refusing to participate shall be re-screened prior to making such a referral.

Additionally, students with significant articulation difficulties should be referred for speech/language evaluations within their school district of residence.

9.0 PROGRAM MONITORING

9.1 Monitoring and Technical Assistance Visits

Approved providers enrolling eligible students shall each be assigned to a First Steps Regional 4K Coordinator. These Regional Coordinators shall make both announced and unannounced monitoring and technical assistance visits to the funded 4K classroom throughout the school year. These technical assistance visits may include *unannounced evaluative monitoring visits using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R) and/or an appropriate measure of curricular fidelity.*

Deficiencies noted during monitoring visits will be reviewed with the program administrator and shall form the basis of a Programmatic Improvement and Technical Assistance Plan.

Monitoring visits documenting significant levels of non-compliance with the program's contractual obligations and/or those documenting the endangerment of enrolled children may result in corrective actions up to and including the termination of provider eligibility.

Note that First Steps 4K Regional Coordinators are considered "mandated reporters." Regulatory deficiencies noted on site will be reported to the SC Department of Social Services as a matter of policy. Failure to permit timely facility access to First Steps monitoring staff during normal business/operating hours may be cause for corrective action, up to and including the termination of provider eligibility.

10.0 FUNDING AND FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS

10.1 Per Student Funding

South Carolina First Steps shall provide funding in the amount of \$4,093 per eligible student served during the 2009-10 school year. Students enrolled for less than 180 school days shall be funded on a pro-rated basis commensurate with the length of their enrollment. Tuition reimbursement is the responsibility of the County First Steps office and is based on the provider's bi-monthly reports and verification of eligible students by the 4K Regional Coordinator.

10.2 Equipment and Materials Grants

Newly approved providers enrolling between one and six eligible children may receive a materials/equipment grant of up to \$1,000 per child. Newly approved providers enrolling seven or more eligible children may receive a material/equipment grant not to exceed \$10,000. Funding of up to \$2,500 may be provided annually for the procurement of consumable and other materials in established classrooms. This grant funding may be used for approved purchases only, with compensation made directly to the vendor from which the equipment is to be obtained (see Appendix E). *All materials*

purchased with grant funds shall be maintained in the First Steps 4K classroom.

10.3 Transportation Funds

Programs providing transportation to eligible students shall be reimbursed for expenses incurred up to \$550 per child.

10.4 Fiscal Procedures

Pending provider approval from South Carolina First Steps and enrollment of eligible children, a Grant Agreement shall be established with the 4K Provider. Provider invoices shall be processed through the local First Steps County Partnership at least every two weeks to ensure timely reimbursement.



**Proviso 1.62:
South Carolina Child Development Education Pilot Program**

1.62. (SDE: Child Development Education Pilot Program) There is created the South Carolina Child Development Education Pilot Program (CDEPP). This program shall be available for the 2009-10 school year on a voluntary basis and shall focus on the developmental and learning support that children must have in order to be ready for school and must incorporate parenting education.

(A) For the 2009-10 school year, with funds appropriated by the General Assembly, the South Carolina Child Development Education Pilot Program shall first be made available to eligible children from the following eight trial districts in Abbeville County School District et. al. vs. South Carolina: Allendale, Dillon 2, Florence 4, Hampton 2, Jasper, Lee, Marion 7, and Orangeburg 3. With any remaining funds available, the pilot shall be expanded to the remaining plaintiff school districts in Abbeville County School District et. al. vs. South Carolina and then expanded to eligible children residing in school districts with a poverty index of 90% or greater. Priority shall be given to implementing the program first in those of the plaintiff districts which participated in the pilot program during the 2006-2007 school year, then in the plaintiff districts having proportionally the largest population of underserved at-risk four-year-old children. During the implementation of the pilot program, no funds appropriated by the General Assembly for this purpose shall be used to fund services to at-risk four-year-old children residing outside of the trial or plaintiff districts.

The Education Oversight Committee shall conduct an evaluation of the pilot program and shall issue a report to the General Assembly by January 1, 2010. The report shall include a comparative evaluation of children served in the pilot program and children not served in the pilot program. Additionally, based on the evaluation of the pilot program, the Education Oversight Committee shall include recommendations for the creation of and an implementation plan for phasing in the delivery of services to all at-risk four-year-old children in the state.

Unexpended funds from the prior fiscal year for this program shall be carried forward and shall remain in the program. In rare instances, students with documented kindergarten readiness barriers may be permitted to enroll for a second year, or at age five, at the discretion of the Department of Education for students being served by a public provider or at the discretion of the Office of South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness for students being served by a private provider.

(B) Each child residing in the pilot districts, who will have attained the age of four years on or before September 1, of the school year, and meets the at-risk criteria is eligible for enrollment in the South Carolina Child Development Education Pilot Program for one year.

The parent of each eligible child may enroll the child in one of the following programs:

- (1) a school-year four-year-old kindergarten program delivered by an approved public provider; or
- (2) a school-year four-year-old kindergarten program delivered by an approved private provider.

The parent enrolling a child must complete and submit an application to the approved provider of choice. The application must be submitted on forms and must be accompanied by a copy of the child's birth certificate, immunization documentation, and documentation of the student's eligibility as evidenced by family income documentation showing an annual family income of 185% or less of the federal poverty guidelines as promulgated annually by

the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services or a statement of Medicaid eligibility.

In submitting an application for enrollment, the parent agrees to comply with provider attendance policies during the school year. The attendance policy must state that the program consists of 6.5 hours of instructional time daily and operates for a period of not less than 180 days per year. Pursuant to program guidelines, noncompliance with attendance policies may result in removal from the program.

No parent is required to pay tuition or fees solely for the purpose of enrolling in or attending the program established under this provision. Nothing in this provision prohibits charging fees for childcare that may be provided outside the times of the instructional day provided in these programs.

(C) Public school providers choosing to participate in the South Carolina Four-Year-Old Child Development Kindergarten Program must submit an application to the Department of Education. Private providers choosing to participate in the South Carolina Four-Year-Old Child Development Kindergarten Program must submit an application to the Office of First Steps. The application must be submitted on the forms prescribed, contain assurances that the provider meets all program criteria set forth in this provision, and will comply with all reporting and assessment requirements.

Providers shall:

- (1) comply with all federal and state laws and constitutional provisions prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion, ancestry, or need for special education services;
- (2) comply with all state and local health and safety laws and codes;
- (3) comply with all state laws that apply regarding criminal background checks for employees and exclude from employment any individual not permitted by state law to work with children;
- (4) be accountable for meeting the education needs of the child and report at least quarterly to the parent/guardian on his progress;
- (5) comply with all program, reporting, and assessment criteria required of providers;
- (6) maintain individual student records for each child enrolled in the program to include, but not be limited to, assessment data, health data, records of teacher observations, and records of parent or guardian and teacher conferences;
- (7) designate whether extended day services will be offered to the parents/guardians of children participating in the program;
- (8) be approved, registered, or licensed by the Department of Social Services; and
- (9) comply with all state and federal laws and requirements specific to program providers.

Providers may limit student enrollment based upon space available. However if enrollment exceeds available space, providers shall enroll children with first priority given to children with the lowest scores on an approved pre-kindergarten readiness assessment.

Private providers shall not be required to expand their programs to accommodate all children desiring enrollment. However, providers are encouraged to keep a waiting list for students they are unable to serve because of space limitations.

(D) The Department of Education and the Office of First Steps to School Readiness shall:

- (1) develop the provider application form;
- (2) develop the child enrollment application form;
- (3) develop a list of approved research-based preschool curricula for use in the program based upon the South Carolina Content Standards, provide training and technical assistance to support its effective use in approved classrooms serving children;
- (4) develop a list of approved pre-kindergarten readiness assessments to be used in conjunction with the program, provide assessments and technical assistance to

- support assessment administration in approved classrooms serving children;
- (5) establish criteria for awarding new classroom equipping grants;
 - (6) establish criteria for the parenting education program providers must offer;
 - (7) establish a list of early childhood related fields that may be used in meeting the lead teacher qualifications;
 - (8) develop a list of data collection needs to be used in implementation and evaluation of the program;
 - (9) identify teacher preparation program options and assist lead teachers in meeting teacher program requirements;
 - (10) establish criteria for granting student retention waivers; and
 - (11) establish criteria for granting classroom size requirements waivers.

(E) Providers of the South Carolina Child Development Education Pilot Program shall offer a complete educational program in accordance with age-appropriate instructional practice and a research based preschool curriculum aligned with school success. The program must focus on the developmental and learning support children must have in order to be ready for school. The provider must also incorporate parenting education that promotes the school readiness of preschool children by strengthening parent involvement in the learning process with an emphasis on interactive literacy.

Providers shall offer high-quality, center-based programs that must include, but shall not be limited to, the following:

- (1) employ a lead teacher with a two-year degree in early childhood education or related field or be granted a waiver of this requirement from the Department of Education or the Office of First Steps to School Readiness;
- (2) employ an education assistant with pre-service or in-service training in early childhood education;
- (3) maintain classrooms with at least 10 four-year-old children, but no more than 20 four-year-old children with an adult to child ratio of 1:10. With classrooms having a minimum of 10 children, the 1:10 ratio must be a lead teacher to child ratio. Waivers of the minimum class size requirement may be granted by the South Carolina Department of Education for public providers or by the Office of First Steps to School Readiness for private providers on a case-by-case basis;
- (4) offer a full day, center-based program with 6.5 hours of instruction daily for 180 school days;
- (5) provide an approved research-based preschool curriculum that focuses on critical child development skills, especially early literacy, numeracy, and social/emotional development;
- (6) engage parents' participation in their child's educational experience that shall include a minimum of two documented conferences per year; and
- (7) adhere to professional development requirements outlined in this article.

(F) Every classroom providing services to four-year-old children established pursuant to this provision must have a lead teacher with at least a two-year degree in early childhood education or related field and who is enrolled and is demonstrating progress toward the completion of a teacher education program within four years. Every classroom must also have at least one education assistant per classroom who shall have the minimum of a high school diploma or the equivalent, and at least two years of experience working with children under five years old. The teaching assistant shall have completed the Early Childhood Development Credential (ECD) 101 or enroll and complete this course within twelve months of hire. Providers may request waivers to the ECD 101 requirement for those assistants who have demonstrated sufficient experience in teaching children 5 years old and younger. The providers must request this waiver in writing to their designated administrative agency (First Steps or the Department of Education) and provide appropriate documentation as to the qualifications of the teaching assistant.

(G) The General Assembly recognizes there is a strong relationship between the

skills and preparation of pre-kindergarten instructors and the educational outcomes of students. To improve these education outcomes, participating providers shall require all personnel providing instruction and classroom support to students participating in the South Carolina Child Development Education Pilot Program to participate annually in a minimum of 15 hours of professional development to include teaching children from poverty.

Professional development should provide instruction in strategies and techniques to address the age-appropriate progress of pre-kindergarten students in developing emergent literacy skills, including but not limited to, oral communication, knowledge of print and letters, phonemic and phonological awareness, and vocabulary and comprehension development.

(H) Both public and private providers shall be eligible for transportation funds for the transportation of children to and from school. Nothing within this provision prohibits providers from contracting with another entity to provide transportation services provided the entities adhere to the requirements of Section 56-5-195. Providers shall not be responsible for transporting students attending programs outside the district lines. Parents choosing program providers located outside of their resident district shall be responsible for transportation. When transporting four-year-old child development students, providers shall make every effort to transport them with students of similar ages attending the same school. Of the amount appropriated for the program, not more than \$185 per student shall be retained by the Department of Education for the purposes of transporting four-year-old students. This amount must be increased annually by the same projected rate of inflation as determined by the Division of Research and Statistics of the Budget and Control Board for the Education Finance Act.

(I) For all private providers approved to offer services pursuant to this provision, the Office of First Steps to School Readiness shall:

- (1) serve as the fiscal agent;
- (2) verify student enrollment eligibility;
- (3) recruit, review, and approve eligible providers. In considering approval of providers, consideration must be given to the provider's availability of permanent space for program service and whether temporary classroom space is necessary to provide services to any children;
- (4) coordinate oversight, monitoring, technical assistance, coordination, and training for classroom providers;
- (5) serve as a clearing house for information and best practices related to four-year-old kindergarten programs;
- (6) receive, review, and approve new classroom grant applications and make recommendations for approval based on approved criteria;
- (7) coordinate activities and promote collaboration with other private and public providers in developing and supporting four-year-old kindergarten programs;
- (8) maintain a database of the children enrolled in the program; and
- (9) promulgate guidelines as necessary for the implementation of the pilot program.

(J) For all public school providers approved to offer services pursuant to this provision, the Department of Education shall:

- (1) serve as the fiscal agent;
- (2) verify student enrollment eligibility;
- (3) recruit, review, and approve eligible providers. In considering approval of providers, consideration must be given to the provider's availability of permanent space for program service and whether temporary classroom space is necessary to provide services to any children;
- (4) coordinate oversight, monitoring, technical assistance, coordination, and training for classroom providers;
- (5) serve as a clearing house for information and best practices related to

four-year-old kindergarten programs;

(6) receive, review, and approve new classroom grant applications and make recommendations for approval based on approved criteria;

(7) coordinate activities and promote collaboration with other private and public providers in developing and supporting four-year-old kindergarten programs;

(8) maintain a database of the children enrolled in the program; and

(9) promulgate guidelines as necessary for the implementation of the pilot program.

(K) The General Assembly shall provide funding for the South Carolina Child Development Education Pilot Program. For the 2009-10 school year, the funded cost per child shall be \$4,093 increased annually by the rate of inflation as determined by the Division of Research and Statistics of the Budget and Control Board for the Education Finance Act. Eligible students enrolling with private providers during the school year shall be funded on a pro-rata basis determined by the length of their enrollment. Private providers transporting eligible children to and from school shall be eligible for a reimbursement of \$550 per eligible child transported. Providers who are reimbursed are required to retain records as required by their fiscal agent. Providers enrolling between one and six eligible children shall be eligible to receive up to \$1,000 per child in materials and equipment grant funding, with providers enrolling seven or more such children eligible for grants not to exceed \$10,000. Providers receiving equipment grants are expected to participate in the program and provide high-quality, center-based programs as defined herein for a minimum of three years. Failure to participate for three years will require the provider to return a portion of the equipment allocation at a level determined by the Department of Education and the Office of First Steps to School Readiness. Funding of up to two thousand five hundred dollars may be provided annually for the procurement of consumable and other materials in established classrooms. Funding to providers is contingent upon receipt of data as requested by the Department of Education and the Office of First Steps.

(L) Pursuant to this provision, the Department of Social Services shall:

(1) maintain a list of all approved public and private providers; and

(2) provide the Department of Education, the Office of First Steps, and the Education Oversight Committee information necessary to carry out the requirements of this provision.

(M) The Education Oversight Committee shall conduct a comparative evaluation of the South Carolina Child Development Education Pilot Program and issue their findings in a report to the General Assembly by January 1, 2010. Based on information, data, and evaluation results, the Education Oversight Committee shall include as part of their report recommendations for the creation and implementation of a statewide four-year-old kindergarten program for at-risk children. The report shall also include information and recommendations on lead teacher qualifications and options for creating comparable salary schedules for certified teachers employed by private providers. In the current fiscal year, the Education Oversight Committee shall use funds appropriated by the General Assembly for four-year-old evaluation to support the annual collection of and continuous evaluation of data. The Office of First Steps will include in its triennial external evaluation pursuant to Section 59-152-160 of the 1976 Code, fiscal and management questions as provided by the Education Oversight Committee.

The report shall also include an assessment, by county, on the availability and use of existing public and private classroom capacity approved for at-risk four-year-old kindergarten students based on data collected triennially. The report shall include, by county, the estimated four-year-old population, the total number of CDEPP approved four-year-old kindergarten spaces available, the number of four-year-old children enrolled in both public and private CDEPP approved facilities, and the number of children on waiting lists for either public or private providers during the reporting period. Where possible, the

report shall also include anticipated four-year-old kindergarten enrollment projections for the two years following the report. The 2010 evaluation will also include the following: (1) a determination of the factors including policy issues, leadership characteristics and community concerns that led to substantial increases in the number of CDEPP participants served in specific districts and counties; (2) a determination of the factors that influence the continuity of CDEPP student enrollment across the full 180-day program and policy or programmatic changes needed to assure that CDEPP participants fully benefit from the program; (3) a determination of how many private childcare center teachers are pursuing a four-year degree and the barriers incurred in obtaining the degree; and (4) a review of any formalized plan or evaluation data to assess the quality and impact of professional development and training provided by the Office of First Steps and the Department of Education to CDEPP teachers.

To aid in this evaluation, the Education Oversight Committee shall determine the data necessary and both public and private providers are required to submit the necessary data as a condition of continued participation in and funding of the program. This data shall include developmentally appropriate measures of student progress. Additionally, the Department of Education shall issue a unique student identifier for each child receiving services from a private provider. The Department of Education shall be responsible for the collection and maintenance of data on the public state funded full day and half-day four-year-old kindergarten programs. The Office of First Steps to School Readiness shall be responsible for the collection and maintenance of data on the state funded programs provided through private providers. The Education Oversight Committee shall use this data and all other collected and maintained data necessary to conduct a research based review of the program's implementation and assessment of student success in the early elementary grades.



Appendix B First Steps CDEPP Lead Teacher Qualifications

Providers shall employ qualified lead teachers in each First Steps 4K classroom. Teachers holding a four-year-degree or higher in Early Childhood Education are preferred.

Proviso 1.64 requires that each lead teacher possess, *at minimum*, a two-year degree in early childhood education or a related field. *All lead teachers must have completed or be enrolled and demonstrating progress toward the completion of a teacher education program within four-years.*

The following credentials shall be deemed acceptable for lead teachers during the 2008-2009 school year:

- A four-year or graduate teacher education degree with an emphasis in early childhood education.
- A four-year or graduate teacher education degree (in a field other than early childhood) with at least six documented credit hours in early childhood education and/or child development.
- A four-year college degree (in any field) with at least six documented credit hours in early childhood education and/or child development *and* evidence of the teacher's current enrollment in a four-year or graduate teacher education program with an emphasis on early childhood education.
- A two-year Associate of Public Service (APS) Degree in Early Care and Education (or its out of state equivalent) *and* evidence of the teacher's current enrollment in a four-year teacher education program with an emphasis on early childhood education.
- A two-year degree in a field other than early childhood education, *plus* a Child Development Associate's (CDA), 27 credit hour Early Childhood Development Certificate, or Montessori diploma *and* evidence of the teacher's current enrollment in a four-year teacher education program with an emphasis on early childhood education.
- A fourth-year student in a teacher education degree with an emphasis in early childhood education in a final year of academic preparation or is co-enrolled in student teaching or an internship with the child care provider.

Providers unable to locate lead teacher candidates meeting these qualifications may request a waiver from South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness. Waiver requests will be considered on an individual basis and will take into account both the provider's documented efforts to employ a lead teacher meeting the qualifications detailed herein and the qualifications of the proposed lead teacher.



Appendix C First Steps CDEPP Approved Curricula

Three research-based preschool curriculum models are approved for use during the 2009-2010 school year. These are:

**HIGH/SCOPE
CREATIVE CURRICULUM
MONTESSORI**

Providers seeking to use another *research-based* preschool curriculum must seek prior approval from South Carolina First Steps. Request submissions shall include:

- A copy of the published curriculum and all supporting resource materials;
- *Published, peer-reviewed research* supporting the efficacy of the curriculum in promoting school success;
- Evidence that the curriculum is child-centered and supports the active learning of young children;
- Goals for the knowledge and skills to be acquired by the children that are consistent with the South Carolina Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards, and focus upon critical developmental and learning supports including, but not limited to:
 - Early literacy
 - Numeracy
 - Social/Emotional Development
 - Physical Development
- A summary of training opportunities available for providers seeking to use this curriculum model.

Requests for curriculum review shall be addressed to:

Dr. Dan Wuori
Chief Program Officer
South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness
1300 Sumter Street, Suite 100
Columbia, SC 29201



**Appendix D
First Steps CDEPP
Approved Readiness Assessments**

Developmental Screening:

***Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning,
Third Edition
(DIAL-3)***

Carol Mardell-Czudnowski and Dorothea Goldenburg
Copyright 1998, American Guidance Service

Student Classroom Assessment:

***The Work Sampling System
Fourth Edition
(WSS)***

Margo Dichtelmiller, Judy Jablon, Dorothea Marsden and Samuel Meisels
Copyright 2004, Pearson Early Learning



Appendix E First Steps CDEPP Classroom Grants Criteria

Newly approved providers enrolling between one and six eligible children may receive a materials/equipment grant of up to \$1,000 per child. Newly approved providers enrolling seven or more eligible children may receive a material/equipment grant not to exceed \$10,000. Funding of up to \$2,500 may be provided annually for the procurement of consumable and other materials in established classrooms. This grant funding shall be used to purchase items identified in consultation with a First Steps Regional 4K Coordinator as necessary to support a high-quality learning environment.

In addition to validating the accuracy of the program's written application, a First Steps Regional 4K Coordinator will complete a baseline *Materials and Equipment Inventory/Needs Assessment* (adapted from the ECERS-R) as part of each program's initial eligibility visit. The equipment and materials needs identified in collaboration with the Center Director shall form the basis of the program's grant funding request.

Providers should note that while the *Materials and Equipment Inventory/Needs Assessment* will be completed as part of the initial eligibility visit, providers must first become approved and then enroll one or more eligible students to trigger *any form* of First Steps funding.

Step 1: In collaboration with the Regional 4K Coordinator, the Center Director will utilize the completed *Materials and Equipment Inventory/Needs Assessment* to identify and prioritize a list of needed materials and equipment. All requested expenditures must promote the research-based practice and contribute to the program's improved environmental quality as measured by the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R).

Step 2: The Regional 4K Coordinator shall assist the center with obtaining the necessary vendor order form.

Step 3: The Regional 4K Coordinator shall assist the Center Director in the completion of the order form and grant his/her approval and signature. (Note: All requested expenditures must reflect needs collaboratively identified on the *Materials and Equipment Inventory/Needs Assessment*.)

Step 4: The Regional 4K Coordinator shall forward approved order forms to the First Steps County Partnership Office for submission to the appropriate vendor(s). County First Steps Offices shall abide by the purchasing guidelines detailed in the First Steps Operations Manual.

Step 5: Materials will be shipped directly to center. Upon receipt, the Center Director will notify Regional 4K Coordinator.

Step 6: Regional Coordinator will contact First Steps County Partnership Office to approve payment to vendors.

Step 7: Follow-up visits by the First Steps Regional 4K Coordinators shall document the presence and use of grant-funded materials within the classroom. Equipment/materials shall remain in the designated 4K classroom for the duration of the 4K Expansion Program grant and may not be rearranged without consent and consultation with the 4K Regional Coordinator.



**Appendix F
Trial and Plaintiff School District Listing**

PLAINTIFF DISTRICTS: Abbeville County School District et. al. vs. South Carolina
Abbeville County School District
Allendale County School District (TRIAL DISTRICT)
Bamberg County School District 1
Bamberg County School District 2
Barnwell County School District 19
Barnwell County School District 29
Barnwell County School District 45
Berkeley County School District
Chesterfield County School District
Clarendon County School District 1
Clarendon County School District 2
Clarendon County School District 3
Dillon County School District 1
Dillon County School District 2 (TRIAL DISTRICT)
Dillon County School District 3
Florence County School District 1
Florence County School District 2
Florence County School District 3
Florence County School District 4 (TRIAL DISTRICT)
Florence County School District 5
Hampton County School District 1
Hampton County School District 2 (TRIAL DISTRICT)
Jasper County School District (TRIAL DISTRICT)
Laurens County School District 55
Laurens County School District 56
Lee County School District (TRIAL DISTRICT)
Lexington County School District 4
Marion County School District 1
Marion County School District 2
Marion County School District 7 (TRIAL DISTRICT)
Marlboro County School District
McCormick County School District
Orangeburg County School District 3 (TRIAL DISTRICT)
Orangeburg County School District 4
Orangeburg County School District 5
Saluda County School District
Williamsburg County School District



Appendix G

Jacob's Law SC SECTION 56-5-195 School Bus Safety Standards

- (A) Effective July 1, 2000, any entity transporting preprimary, primary, or secondary school students to or from school, school-related activities, or child care, and utilizing a vehicle defined as a "school bus" under 49 U.S.C. Section 30125, as defined on April 5, 2000, must transport these students in a vehicle meeting federal school bus safety standards, as contained in 49 U.S.C. Section 30101, et seq., or any successor statutes, and all applicable federal regulations. Nothing in this section prohibits the transportation of children to or from child care in nonconforming vehicles by a State of South Carolina human service provider or public transportation authority as long as each child is accompanied by a parent or legal guardian whose transportation is in connection with his work, education, or training.
- (B) Notwithstanding subsection (A) of this section, any vehicle that is purchased before July 1, 2000, and is utilized to transport preprimary, primary, or secondary students to or from school, school-related activities, or child care is not subject to the requirements contained in subsection (A) of this section until July 1, 2006. A vehicle that is purchased on or after July 1, 2000, and is utilized to transport preprimary, primary, or secondary students to or from school, school-related activities, or child care is subject to the requirements contained in subsection (A) of this section once the vehicle is utilized for those purposes.
- (C) Before July 1, 2006, nothing in this section may be construed to create a duty or other obligation to cease utilizing nonconforming vehicles purchased before the effective date of this act.
- (D) To facilitate compliance with the provisions contained in this section, any entity contained in this section may purchase conforming vehicles under the State of South Carolina contracts for purchase of these vehicles.
- (E) Nothing in the section prohibits the transportation of students by common carriers that are not exclusively engaged in the transportation of school students or by the entities subject to this section which own or operate these vehicles. However, the motor carriage used by the common carrier or entity to transport students must be designed to carry thirty or more passengers.



Appendix H Family Income Eligibility Table

Students eligible for the CDEPP must provide evidence of either Medicaid eligibility or a documented family income at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty definition promulgated annually by the US Department of Health and Human Services.

Persons in Family or Household	100% of Federal Poverty	CDEPP ELIGIBILITY
		185% of Federal Poverty (Free and Reduced Lunch Eligibility)
2	\$14,570	\$26,954
3	\$18,310	\$33,873
4	\$22,050	\$40,792
5	\$25,790	\$47,711
6	\$29,530	\$54,630
7	\$33,270	\$61,549
8	\$37,010	\$68,468

Adapted from the 2009 US Department of Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines (*Federal Register*, Vol. 74, No. 14, January 23, 2009, pp. 4199–4201)