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## **Governor Sanford Proclaims Early Education Day National Expert Lauds South Carolina For Its Progress in Delivering Early Learning Services**

**Columbia, SC** – Governor Mark Sanford, who serves on the National Governor’s Association Task Force on School Readiness, addressed 200 early childhood education professionals in Columbia today at the First Annual South Carolina Early Education Summit, recognizing May 25 as Early Education Day in South Carolina.

Governor Mark Sanford spoke of South Carolina’s success in positively impacting the system of quality early learning services to children. Dr. Sharon Lynn Kagan, a national leading expert on child development from Columbia University delivered the keynote address.

“Our challenge is to keep South Carolina home to the best and brightest,” Governor Sanford said. “I’ve said from the beginning that if you’re going to make a difference in that process, you’ve got to do it early. That starts with early childhood development efforts and it starts with building a reliable public-private network of school readiness partners. The questions this summit will ask and the questions this summit ultimately must answer are among the most fundamental to our administration’s top priorities of raising income levels and improving quality of life here in South Carolina.”

“South Carolina is a rising star in early childhood, casting its light far and wide,” said Dr. Sharon Lynn Kagan. “You are to be congratulated for all your accomplishments, via First Steps, ABC Child Care and Head Start on behalf of young children.”

Dr. Sharon Lynn Kagan is the Virginia and Leonard Marx Professor of Early Childhood and Family Policy at Teachers College, Columbia University, and a Professor Adjunct at Yale University’s Child Study Center. Dr. Kagan, recognized nationally and internationally for her work related to the care and education of young children and their families, is a frequent consultant to the White House, Congress, the National Governor’s Association, the U.S. Department of Education and Health and Human Services. She is a prolific author, having written over 120 publications including the authorship or editorship of 12 volumes and the guest editorship of numerous journals. In her writings, Dr. Kagan has investigated issues including the development of policy for children and families, family support, early childhood pedagogy, strategies for collaboration and service integration, and the evaluation of social programs.

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The summit was held in collaboration with SC First Steps to School Readiness, United Way Association of SC, the State Department of Education - Office of Early Childhood Education, Head Start, SC Department of Social Services, Voices for South Carolina's Children and the SC Child Care Association.

The Early Education Day Proclamation is posted on the First Steps web site at [www.scfirststeps.org](http://www.scfirststeps.org).

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