



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CONTACT: Lisa Michals
(803) 734-0867

South Carolina's Rising Kindergartners Invited to EdVenture Friday

Columbia, S.C. – The first day of kindergarten is right around the corner! To celebrate this milestone, South Carolina First Steps and EdVenture Children's Museum invite all South Carolina rising kindergartners and their families to the fifth annual Countdown to Kindergarten Celebration from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Friday, Aug. 8, 2008, at EdVenture. The museum is located at 301 Gervais St. in Columbia.

The evening will feature free admission to the museum, local mascots and celebrities, games and information booths, a steel drum band and other entertainers. In addition, rising kindergartners can practice boarding a school bus and walking through a mock school cafeteria.

This summer, 1,042 South Carolina children and their families participated in First Steps' nationally-recognized Countdown to Kindergarten program, aimed at helping young learners successfully transition into school.

"Research shows a smooth transition into school helps children succeed in the primary years," said First Steps Director Susan DeVenny. "Our teachers tell us that these young students arrive at school excited about the kindergarten experience, and that families who have participated in Countdown to Kindergarten are more engaged in their child's learning all year. Connecting families and schools benefits all students. The earlier we build a successful learning partnership for these children, the better."

Children from 27 South Carolina counties participated in the Countdown to Kindergarten home visitation this summer, and will be making the trip to Columbia for the celebration. During the summer, Countdown teachers worked to familiarize children with South Carolina's kindergarten standards. They also helped parents build learning strategies to use with their children to support their kindergarten experience, and the teachers introduced families to other educational resources in their communities, such as helping them sign up for public library cards.

Friday's Countdown to Kindergarten Celebration is sponsored by South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness, EdVenture Children's Museum, Kaplan, WLTX and the South Carolina Department of Education.

Tips for all South Carolina parents of rising kindergartners are available online at www.scfirststeps.org/countdowntok.htm.

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South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness is a comprehensive, results-oriented statewide education initiative to help prepare children to reach school healthy and ready to succeed. Public and private support is combined through county partnerships to enable individual communities to address the unmet needs of young children and their families.

1300 Sumter Street • Concord Building, Suite 100 • Columbia, South Carolina 29201
Phone: 803-734-0479 • Fax: 803-734-1431 • Web site: www.scfirststeps.org