



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Community delegates offer input on state early childhood plan

South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness is gathering input from experts across the state as it builds **VISION 2013**, a strategic plan to serve children and families preparing for school success. **VISION 2013** will be grounded in the voices of more than 500 delegates to seven regional early childhood summits – beginning this week – in communities across the state.

Along with the National Governors Association, the Children’s Trust Fund of South Carolina, S.C. Kids Count, Head Start and other partners, First Steps will host groups of local stakeholders to provide input to **VISION 2013**. Representatives from all 46 counties will gather to showcase local, collaborative successes for young children and their families; take a close look at local and regional factors hindering school readiness; and brainstorm solutions to improve outcomes for children ages birth to 5.

“In the 31 months since Judge Cooper’s equity ruling, policymakers have made significant strides to strengthen early interventions for our youngest children in poverty,” said First Steps Director Susan DeVenny. “We hope the regional early childhood summits will be a forum to harness expertise as we build on these advances.”

VISION 2013 is intended to leverage the best of South Carolina’s public and private partners, build upon national research and the science of early brain development, and be driven by community voices. Regional early childhood summits will be held:

Tuesday, Aug. 26, 2008, in Johnston
Wednesday, Aug. 27, 2008, in McClellanville
Thursday, Aug. 28, 2008, in Florence
Wednesday, Sept. 3, 2008, in Anderson
Thursday, Sept. 4, 2008, in Orangeburg
Friday, Sept. 5, 2008, in Walterboro
Tuesday, Sept. 9, 2008, in Lancaster

Delegates invited to the **VISION 2013** summits include parents, educators, child-care and health professionals, business leaders and elected officials. More information and an opportunity to provide input to the plan are available online at www.scfirststeps.org/vision2013.htm.

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