



Meeting of the Early Childhood Advisory Council

April 17, 2025, immediately following the SC First Steps Board Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83722694987?pwd=dDhVLzIMYkRPMHIPYktkb0NwbFgzUT09>

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order and Approve Agenda**
Motion: To adopt the agenda as submitted.

- II. Meeting Minutes**
Motion: To approve ECAC Minutes of February 20, 2025
Attachment: February 20, 2025, Minutes

- III. Discussion: Birth through Five Plan Report for 2025**
Attachment: Birth through Five Plan Measures of Progress Update

- IV. Early Childhood System Updates from Agency Leaders**

- V. Information**
ECAC Report on Activities (Ann Vandervliet)
Attachment: ECAC February 2025 Report

- VI. Adjourn Motion:** To adjourn the meeting of the Early Childhood Advisory Council



Early Childhood Advisory Council Meeting

February 20, 2025, immediately following the SCFS Board of Trustees Meeting
SC First Steps
Minutes

Council Members Present (12):

Tony Catone
Jacque Curtin
Mary Lynne Diggs
John Hayes
David Lisk
Jessica Mackey
Dave Morley, Chairman
Dorothy Priester
Roger Pryor

Dr. Ed Simmer
Wes Wooten
Dr. Amy Williams, Vice Chair

Council Members Absent (11)

Rep. Terry Alexander
Dr. Robert Bank
Rep. Shannon Erickson

Dr. Matthew Ferguson
Sen. Greg Hembree
Constance Holloway
Jack McBride
Eunice Medina
Janie Neeley
Mary Anne Scott
Sue Williams

Attendees (51)

Ann Vandervliet
Mark Barnes
Avian Jones
Chelsea Richard
Derek Cromwell
Martha Strickland
Karen Oliver
Kaitlyn Richards
Beth Moore
Betty Gardiner
David O'Kelly
Amber Gillum
Molly Tuck
Amira Hulwe
Anna Gray
Annie Maertens
Brenda Faulk
Carrie Trivedi
Cindy Galloway
Charshina McMillian
Crystal Campbell
Emma Matzko
Jade Wright
Jon Artz
Julie Londergan
Kathy Fitzgerald

Kristine Jenkins
Kerry Cordan
Kim Trudell
Kristen Martocchio
LaKisha Bowman
LaMyra Sanders
Laura Baker
Lexi Jones
Naya Hall
Rachal Hatton Moore
Sally McClellan
Samantha Ingram
Shayla Pettigrew
SheKiah Reese
Spence Scott
Stacy Greenwalt
Stephen Gilchrist
Stephen Hickey
Susan Jones
Tamatha Kohler
Taylor Kane Tate
Teneshia Slempe
Tricia Gordon
Tyshica McConner
Vaudrien Ray



The meeting was called to order at 3:47 p.m.

Dr. Williams provided a motion to adopt the agenda, seconded by Ms. Mackey, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Lisk provided a motion to approve the December 4, 2024 minutes, seconded by Dr. Williams, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Tuck presented on the Early Childhood Data Hub where she showed how data will be available on the dashboard.

Mr. Catone shared that DSS made a request for \$32 million in recurring funds for early care and education. Included in that request was \$3.1 million is for CCDF, \$2.9 million for ABC community scholarships, \$1 million for a trial share pilot, and \$26 million to continue SC Boost.

Ms. Gillum reported on the activities of the ICC.

Ms. Vandervliet reported on the activities of the ECAC.

Ms. Mackey made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Dr. Williams, and approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 3:59 p.m.

South Carolina Birth Through Five Plan Key Measures of Progress

The following key measures of progress were initially approved in 2022. The following chart shows progress to date.

1. Increase the percentage of children, ages 0-35 months, who have full immunization coverage from 68.0% to 78.0%.

Birth Year	Percent of young children in South Carolina receiving full vaccine coverage between 0 and 35 months				
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Percentage	67.5%	73.5%	74.7%	77.2%	66.9%

2. Increase the percentage of children, ages 1-5, who have received at least one preventive dental visit in the past year from 60.8% to 65.8%.

Year	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Percentage	60.8%	57.2%	53.7%	53.2%	57.3%

3. Increase the percentage of incoming kindergartners who are ready for school from 27.0% to 40.0%.

Year	Fall 2020 (modified)	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024
Percentage	27%	36%	38%	41%	39%

4. While increasing kindergarten readiness for all students, reduce the disparity between Black and white kindergartners by 25%, from 18% to 13.5%.

Year	Fall 2020 (modified)	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024
Percentage	18%	21%	18%	10%	17%

5. While increasing kindergarten readiness for all students, reduce the disparity between Latino and white kindergartners by 25%, from 22% to 16.5%.

Year	Fall 2020 (modified)	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024
Percentage	22%	25%	22%	18%	25%

6. Reduce the percentage of children in counties with low child care access from 40% to 35%.

Baseline (July 2021): 40.0%

Current: (Data pending)

7. Increase the percentage of child care providers participating in ABC Quality from 45.4% to 55.0%.

Baseline: July 2021: 45.4%

Current: March 2025 50.9%

8. Next steps:

A. Add an overview of the agencies that are funded to achieve these goals.

B. Other?



Staff Report on Early Childhood Advisory Council Activities
Presented April 17, 2025

1. Increase utilization of SC’s Early Childhood Resources and Services

A. First Five SC (on-line screener for 40+ publicly funded programs)

First Five SC was recommended by Preschool Development B-5 to be part of a capstone project at University of Maryland School of Public Policy. The Office of Early Childhood Development and the PDG B-5 initiative have partnered with the University of Maryland School of Public Policy’s Capstone course. This project allows a student to analyze a topic chosen by PDG B-5 staff. This year PDG B-5 staff proposed reviewing analysis on the progress of states’ efforts to develop and implement systems for Coordinated Application, Eligibility and Enrollment (CAEE). Recognition by PDG B-5 staff is important as South Carolina continues work on this important grant.

First Five Website	FY 22-23	FY 23-24	July 1, 2024 - current
Unique visitors	122,300	155,881	77,533
Families completing screening	12,903	12,838	4,076
Program leads (families eligible for at least one program)	10,023	9,888	3,133
Applications received	581	2,383	839

Applications *by Program* (July 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025):

- First Steps Local Partnerships = 293
- SC Child Care Scholarships= 344
- First Steps 4K = 85
- WIC =117

Next steps include:

- Social media and Google marketing campaigns are underway.
- Three listening sessions are planned (for non-users and users) for June- August.
- An automated messaging system will be launched next month. Surveys will be sent to active users.
- An internal evaluation of First Five for SC is underway. Results

B. Palmetto PreK website

Palmetto PreK Website Analytics	February 2020 - June 2023	FY 23-24	July 1, 2024 - current
Unique visitors	186,222	61,411	39,297
Leads Across All Programs	24,255	7,836	4,300
Program leads (families eligible for at least one program)	19,771	7,056	3,757

Leads *by type* (July 1, 2024-current):

- Head Start eligible = 401
- Public School eligible = 371
- First Steps 4K eligible = 1,402
- SC DSS Working Families Child Care Scholarship eligible = 2,117

C. The early childhood system and its partners united to make April 4, **Pre-K Enrollment Day**, a success. A widely shared social media blitz featured a single graphic and message encouraging parents of 4-year-olds to check eligibility and enroll their child in no-cost preschool. The message was posted by four school districts, 13 First Steps 4K centers, ABC Quality, SC Child Care Resource and Referral, and SC Department of Social Services. Additionally, several ECAC agency partners, Children’s Trust of SC, SC Department of Health and Human Services, SC Department of Public Health reshared the message.

D. Ready for Kindergarten Live will take place on Friday, April 25 from 12-1. The ECAC and SC First Steps will host a free, hour-long, virtual learning opportunity for families, educators, and advocates, Ready for Kindergarten Live. Speakers Cara Tyrell, a parenting coach, early childhood expert, and mom, and Tomeka Love, Red Bank Elementary’s Assistant Principal and South Carolina’s Assistant Principal of the Year, will offer practical tips on how schools and families can work together to help children be successful in kindergarten.

2. Support Collaboration within SC's Early Childhood System

The South Carolina Institute of Medicine and Public Health (IMPH), an independent, nonprofit organization working to collectively inform policy to improve health and health care in South Carolina, facilitated a Taskforce of state experts and rural community members focused on access to care for rural South Carolina mothers and infants, led by Taskforce Chair Dr. Lisa Waddell.

According to the South Carolina Department of Public Health (SCDPH), South Carolina's maternal mortality rates have risen to double the national average. The state continues to have poor maternal and infant health outcomes, currently ranking eighth highest for maternal mortality and fifth highest for infant mortality compared to other states.

ECAC was invited to formally support the recommendation. A supporting organization is not required to take action to execute the recommendation, but the designation means that if the recommendation is implemented, the organization may be able to provide some support, whether advising, participating in, or contributing to implementation in some other way.

3. National Collaboration through First Five for All

SC First Steps provides limited technical assistance to other states for the First Five model. This work is funded by solely by the Pritzker Foundation and David and Lucille Packard Foundation. In line with funder expectations, three proposals were submitted and selected to present at the following conferences: National WIC Association Education and Training Conference; Child Care Aware Symposium; and American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) Summit.

Nevada has adopted the model. Colorado has received some support. Texas and Hawaii continue to request technical assistance.