



Meeting of the Board of Trustees

Thursday, June 19, 2025, 2:00PM, Virtual

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87091312058?pwd=aWNlyFOFUEjppXTJQWaBMyqUf2G2j5.1>

AGENDA

- I. **Roll Call** Laura Baker, Interim Board Liaison
- II. **Public Comment Period**
The public is invited to provide comments relevant to the South Carolina First Steps and/or SC Early Childhood Advisory Council during this period. Members of the public wishing to speak must sign up before the meeting. Comments should be limited to no more than three minutes per speaker.
- III. **Call to Order and Approve the Agenda** Dave Morley, Board Chairman
Motion: To adopt the agenda as submitted
- IV. **Consent Agenda** Chairman Morley
Motion: To approve the consent agenda as submitted
 - a. To adopt Board of Trustees meeting minutes from April 17, 2025
 - b. To approve local partnerships to receive comprehensive awards for Formula, READY, and Innovation grants for fiscal year 2025-2026 (to be implemented beginning July 1, 2025) as recommended by South Carolina First Steps staff, with the stipulation that Local Partnerships must be in good standing and not on active corrective action at the time of the award as recommended by the Local Partnerships and Grants Committee recommends.
 - c. To approve of the Program Guidelines for the HIPPIY Program as submitted by First Steps staff, for implementation in fiscal year 2025-2026 as recommended by the Local Partnerships and Grants Committee recommends.
 - d. To approve the conflict-of-interest resolution plan as submitted by Saluda County First Steps Board of Directors for implementation for fiscal year 2025-2026 as recommended by the Local Partnerships and Grants Committee recommends.
 - e. To approve the draft 990 Form for SC First Steps for tax year 2023, as submitted by Manley Garvin and recommended by staff, and for the staff to make any necessary grammatical or other minor changes as recommended by the Finance and Administration Committee recommends.
- V. **Executive Committee Update** Chairman Morley

- VI. **Local Partnership Program and Grants Committee Update** Wes Wooten, Committee Chair
- VII. **Proposed 2025-2030 Strategic Plan for SC First Steps** Dr. Amy Williams,
Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee Chair
- VIII. **Finance and Administration Committee Update** Jessica Mackey, Committee Chair
- IX. **Legislative Update** Senator Greg Hembree
- X. **Agency Director Report** Ann Vandervliet
- XI. **Adjournment** Chairman Morley

Motion: To adjourn the meeting of the SC First Steps Board of Trustees

Attachments:

- SC First Steps Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – April 17, 2025
- Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
- Local Partnership Program and Grants Committee Meeting Minutes, Attachments
- Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee Meeting Minutes
- Finance and Administration Committee Meeting Minutes
- Legislative Committee Report
- Proposed 2025-2030 Strategic Plan for SC First Steps



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 17, 2025, 2:00PM

SC ETV, 1041 George Rogers Blvd., Columbia, SC 29201

Trustees Present (15): Representative Terry Alexander, Dr. Robert Bank, Tony Catone, Jacque Curtin, Mary Lynne Diggs, Senator Jason Elliott, Dr. Matthew Ferguson, Senator Greg Hembree, Jack McBride, Eunice Medina, Chairman Dave Morley, Roger Pryor, Dr. Ed Simmer, Wes Wooten, Sue Williams

Trustees Absent (7): Rep. Shannon Erickson, John Hayes, Constance Holloway, Jesica Mackey, Janie Neeley, Mary Anne Scott, Dr. Amy Williams, Vice Chair

Others Present (69): Ann Vandervliet, Caroline Goins, Ivory Mitchell, Avian Jones, Heather Googe, Mikayla Moore, Beth Moore, Tammy Graham, Kristen Motte, Derek Cromwell, Alisha Green, David O'Kelly, Chelsea Richard, Stacy Greenwalt, Janet Parenti, Kaitlyn Richards, Naya Hall, Shayla Pettigrew, Karen Oliver, Rachal Hatton-Moore, Alexis D. Pipkins Sr., Mark Barnes, Kenna Hoover, Pauletta Plowden, Martha Strickland, Amira Hulwe, Dorothy Priester, ARJ, Samantha Ingram, Laura Baker, Kristine Jenkins, Cindy Riley, Lisa C. Bess, Lexi Jones, Kate Roach, Jaiden Branch, Rosaland Kenner, LaMyra Sanders, John Browne, Beth Kienzlen, Cheryl Scales, Caleb Buford, Janice Kilburn, Anna Strickland, Beth Cherry, Tamatha Kohler, Kate Strickland, Kerry Cordan, Kradles2Krayons CDC, Kim Trudell, Annette Davis, David Lisk, Molly Tuck, Sarah Eargle, Margarita, Keely Wikstrom, Maria Earl, Kristen Martocchio, K Wilbur, Kathy Fitzgerald, Emma Matzko, Jennifer Williams, Cindy Galloway, Jenny May, Dana Yow, Betty Gardiner, Joy Mazur, Amber Gillum, Sally McClellan

The meeting was called to order with a quorum present at 2:06 p.m.

Chairman Morley requested a motion to amend the consent agenda by adding the following motion:

Motion: To direct SC First Steps agency director to meet and review expectations with Aiken County First Steps Board, resulting in written recommendation from First Steps agency director as recommended by the Finance and Administration Committee.

A motion was made amend the consent agenda by Jack McBride, seconded by Wes Wooten. All voted in favor. A motion was made to adopt the amended consent agenda by Mr. McBride, seconded by Roger Pryor. All voted in favor. Chairman Morley requested a motion to approve the February 20, 2025 minutes. Motion was made by Mr. Wooten, seconded by Mr. Pryor. All voted in favor.

Chairman Morley welcomed Senator Jason Elliott to the board and Elizabeth Kabalka as the new Richland County First Steps chief executive officer.

Committee Chair Wes Wooten shared Local Partnership Programs and Grants Committee updates on the implementation of the KITS online and case management system, Comprehensive Grant Application, and new learning management system.

Reporting for the Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee, Dr. Chelsea Richard, Chief of Strategy and Research, shared that the focus of the 2026 Child Trends external program evaluation will be on child care technical assistance.

Reporting for the Finance and Administration Committee, Chief of Administration Mark Barnes reported that agency finances are track. A new financial management system is replacing the current system, and SC First Steps is preparing a single audit of its ESSER funding.

Government Liaison Kaitlyn Richards provided a legislative report. The House has passed its budget for next year, and Senate Finance Committee is sending its budget to the floor for a vote next week. Both budget items for First Steps are similar, but the House's version has \$750,000 less for nonrecurring Innovation Investments. Paid extended leave for state employees is being debated.

A special guest from the SC Education Oversight Committee, Dr. Jenny May, provided findings from the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment on four-year-old children participating in CERDEP pre-k. Results showed a dip in demonstrating readiness for all students.

Agency Director Ann Vandervliet shared in her report information on upcoming agency events, an update on First Steps 4K 2025-2026 school year enrollment, and a system-building proposal for a three-county pilot to provide a continuum of services to move the needle on kindergarten readiness.

Dr. Richard provided an overview of the last five years of First Steps as the agency looks to create its strategic plan for the next five years. She shared next steps on public comment and plan approval.

Ms. Williams made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. McBride. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 3:20 p.m. by Chairman Morley.



Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Friday, May 16, 2025

Virtual (via Microsoft Teams)

Members Present (4): David Morley, Jessica Mackey, Dr. Amy Williams, Wes Wooten

Staff Present (4): Ann Vandervliet, Mark Barnes, Samantha Ingram, Kaitlyn Richards

Others Present (10): Karen Martini, Tony Nolan, Ivory Mitchell, Rudell Dubose, Tricia Gordon, Jessica Fluker, Tamatha Kohler, Tyshica McConner, Patti Wilkes, Darnell McPherson

Meeting was called to order at 11:03 a.m.

Jessica Mackey made the following motion to go into executive session to discuss local partnership personnel items which was seconded by Wes Wooten and was approved unanimously.

Motion to enter executive session for the purpose of personnel matters for the local partnerships.

With no action taken in executive session, the following motion was made by Jessica Mackey, seconded by Wes Wooten, and approved unanimously.

Motion to exit executive session.

Upon exiting executive session, the following motions were made by Jessica Mackey, seconded by Wes Wooten and approved:

Motion: To approve the proposed **Abbeville County First Steps** executive director compensation, with revisions, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

Motion: To deny the proposed **Berkeley County First Steps** executive director compensation, and recommend resubmission in October, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

Motion: To approve the proposed **Calhoun County First Steps** executive director compensation, with revisions, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

Motion: To approve the proposed **Chesterfield County First Steps** executive director compensation, with revisions, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

Motion: To approve the proposed **Edgefield County First Steps** executive director compensation, with revisions, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

Motion: To approve the proposed **Fairfield County First Steps** executive director compensation, with revisions, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

Motion: To approve the proposed **Greenville County First Steps** executive director compensation, as submitted by the local partnership board, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

Motion: To approve the proposed **Lee County First Steps** executive director compensation, as submitted by the local partnership board, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

Motion: To deny the proposed **Lexington County First Steps** executive director compensation, and recommend resubmission in October, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

Motion: To approve the proposed **Newberry County First Steps** executive director compensation, with revisions, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

Motion: To approve the proposed **Saluda County First Steps** executive director compensation, with revisions, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

Motion: To approve the proposed **Union County First Steps** executive director compensation, with revisions, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

Motion: To deny the **Darlington County First Steps** executive director stipend, and recommend resubmission in October, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

Motion: To deny the **Dillon County First Steps** executive director stipend, and recommend resubmission in October, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

Motion: To deny the **Bamberg County First Steps** executive director bonus, and recommend resubmission in October, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

Motion: To deny the **Colleton County First Steps** executive director bonus, and recommend resubmission in October, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter.

Ann Vandervliet provided brief updates on other agency matters and stated additional details on these agency matters would be discussed at the next meeting.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Wes Wooten, and seconded by Dave Morley, all were in favor, and the meeting concluded at 12:17 p.m.



Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, June 9, 2025

Virtual (via Zoom)

Members Present (4): David Morley, Jesica Mackey, Dr. Amy Williams, Wes Wooten

Staff Present (6): Ann Vandervliet, Laura Baker, Mark Barnes, Derek Cromwell, Samantha Ingram, Chelsea Richard

Meeting was called to order with a quorum present at 1:33 p.m.

Mr. Morley asked for a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss local partnership personnel matters.

Motion: To enter executive session for the purpose of personnel matters for the local partnerships. Motion made by Amy Williams, seconded by Wes Wooten, all voted in favor.

With no action taken in Executive Session, the following motion was made.

Motion: To exit executive session. Motion made by Wes Wooten, seconded by Amy Williams, all voted in favor.

Upon exiting executive session, actions were taken on the following motions.

Motion: To deny the proposed Abbeville County First Steps executive director salary appeal, as submitted by the local partnership board, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter. Motion made by Wes Wooten, seconded by Amy Williams, all voted in favor.

Motion: To approve the proposed Berkeley County First Steps executive director salary, as submitted by the local partnership board, and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter. Motion made by Amy Williams, seconded by Wes Wooten, all voted in favor.

Motion: To approve the amended salary for Fairfield County First Steps executive director and to take this action on behalf of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina First Steps due to the urgency of the matter. Motion made by Amy Williams, seconded by Wes Wooten, all voted in favor.

Ms. Vandervliet provided brief updates on recent agency events and that news on the budget would be shared at the next full board meeting.

The following motion was made to adjourn the meeting.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting. Motion made by Amy Williams, seconded by Wes Wooten, all voted in favor.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:35 p.m.



Local Partnership Program and Grants Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 10, 2025

Virtual

Members Present (3): Wes Wooten, Roger Pryor, John Hayes

Staff Present (15): Derek Cromwell, Ann Vandervliet, Betty Gardiner, Gina Beebe, Jon Artz, Kerry Cordan, LaMyra Dukes, Jaiden Branch, Jade Wright, Jessica Fluker, Beth Kienzlen, Kate Roach, Cheryl Scales- Chavis, Iris Ballen-Morant, Kathy Fitzgerald

Meeting was called to order by Wes Wooten at 9:02 a.m.

Derek Cromwell gave a brief overview of the meeting agenda and expectations for the meeting.

Kerry Cordan presented the recommendations for 2025-26 Formula Funding.

Betty Gardiner presented the recommendations for 2025-26 READY Funding.

Kerry Cordan presented the recommendations for 2025-26 Innovation Investments.

Motion: To approve the recommendations for the 2025-26 Formula, READY, and Innovation grants, as recommended by South Carolina First Steps staff, with the stipulation that local partnerships must be in good standing and not on active corrective action at the time of the award. The motion was brought by Roger Pryor, seconded by Wes Wooten, and unanimously approved for consent agenda.

Gina Beebe presented the changes to the HIPPY program guidelines, due to the loss of AmeriCorps grant.

Motion: To approve program guidelines for the HIPPY program plan as submitted by First Steps staff, for implementation in fiscal year 2025-2026. The motion was made by Roger Pryor, seconded by John Hayes, and unanimously approved for consent agenda.

Derek Cromwell and Kate Roach presented a conflict-of-interest process request. Saluda County First Steps has applied to participate in First Steps Department of Social Services evidence-based scholarship program. The executive director of Saluda County is also a child care center owner in Saluda County, which could potentially create a conflict of interest. The Saluda County Board of Directors submitted a process plan whereby the executive director would be excluded from the scholarship process and handled by another staff member and local board.

Per Roger Pryor's request, we will notify the SC Department of Social Services of this request.

Motion: To approve the conflict-of-interest resolution plan as submitted by Saluda County First Steps Board of Directors for implementation for fiscal year 2025-2026. The motion was made by Roger Pryor, seconded by John Hayes, and unanimously approved for consent agenda.

A recommendation was made by Derek Cromwell to the committee to change the Program and Grants Committee meeting schedule to align with the 2025-26 SCFS Board of Trustees schedule. The new meeting schedule for fiscal year 2025-26 will be reduced to quarterly, in the month prior to the scheduled Board of Trustees meeting. It was also agreed that the Chair may schedule "called" meetings as needed.

Wes Wooten called for a motion adjourn. Motion made by Roger Pryor, seconded by John Hayes. All were in favor.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:19 a.m.

Attachments:

- Formula and Discretionary Funding Award Recommendations, 2025-26
- FY25-26 Local Partnership Proposed Program Strategies from All Funding Sources
- FY25-26 Proposed HIPPY Guidelines
- FY25-26 Program and Operational Guidelines Revisions Request: HIPPY
- Saluda County FY26 Scholarship Process Letter

FORMULA AND DISCRETIONARY FUNDING AWARD RECOMMENDATIONS, 2025-26

Formula Allocation

READY Funding: Continuing and New Awards

Innovation Investment Funding: New Awards



For Program and Grants Committee Approval, June 2025

Background

Starting with the FY2022-23 fiscal year, SC First Steps has received funding from the General Assembly for targeted and competitive grants to local partnerships. For FY2026, the General Assembly has also approved additional, one-time funding specifically targeting multi-county partnerships and/or with partner agencies that have related funding. These funding opportunities are in addition to the annual formula allocation.

Formula (Annual State Allocation)

The Formula Allocation is the annual amount each partnership receives through the approved allocation model based on the American Community Survey population estimates for each county. Formula allocation submissions were reviewed for compliance to SC State Law, Program and Operational guidelines, Finance Operational guidelines, and minimum qualifications.

READY (Resources for Early Acceleration and Development in Youth)

Recurring funding of \$3 million annually in General Funds, of which at least 97% (\$2.91 million) is to be awarded by the SC First Steps Board of Trustees to local partnerships through competitive and targeted grants. The purpose of these funds is to prioritize evidence-based programs for children birth through age three, who live in rural communities and in communities where kindergarten readiness scores are consistently below the state rate. No more than 10% of appropriated READY funds may be distributed to any one county. Since inception, SC First Steps has issued \$7,804,830 in READY funding to local partnerships to strengthen infrastructure and capacity; establish, sustain, and expand evidence-based programs; and test innovative approaches to serving young children and families.

For FY26, SC First Steps has a total of **\$3,885,170.17** in available READY funding (\$2,910,000 in FY26 funding, \$925,169 in carryforward funding, and \$50,000 in recaptured funding) with which to: a) fund previously approved READY awards; and b) award new READY grants. SC First Steps will be awarding \$1.2 million less READY funding in FY26 than was awarded in FY25, due to having a smaller balance of carryforward funding available.

There are three categories of previous, multi-year READY grants that are entering their final year of funding in FY26: Infrastructure and Capacity, Child Care Technical Assistance

FORMULA AND DISCRETIONARY FUNDING AWARD RECOMMENDATIONS, 2025-26



Formula Allocation

READY Funding: Continuing and New Awards

Innovation Investment Funding: New Awards

Programs, and the Carolina Collaborative for Early Childhood Innovation (CC4ECI). Collectively, these previously awarded READY grants total \$786,825.92, leaving **\$3,098,344.25** available for new READY awards to be approved by the Board of Trustees. Additional information on previous awards is included in Table 1.

Innovation Investment Funding (NEW)

\$2,500,000 in one-time (non-recurring) funding to incentivize counties ready to embrace more formal partnerships through blended funding with one or more other local partnerships and/or with partner agencies that have related funding. Funding will be competitive with no geographic cap and will encourage more advanced collaboration between clusters of counties.

Requests for Innovation Investments must clearly define how partners will share costs, reduce administrative burden and increase reach for at least one evidence based and high intensity program or service. Strategies for this funding must serve a minimum of 50 additional children, parents or families (whatever is the most appropriate unit of measure). The proposed service and/or program must also have strong technical assistance available at the state and/or national level.

Application and Selection Process

Local partnerships applied for FY26 funding via the **Comprehensive Grant Application**, through which they were to request all state funding from SC First Steps: Formula funding, READY funding, and Innovation Investment funding. Each local partnership submitted a narrative and proposed budget that described its local early childhood system, current level of impact, operational capacity, and FY26 funding request. Each application was scored by a three-person reviewer panel comprised of SC First Steps staff from across the organization. Local partnerships were also assigned compliance scores based on their past program and fiscal performance.

Within the grant application local partnerships were to align their request with the following funding priorities:

- Potential to impact demonstrated school readiness on SC's kindergarten readiness assessment
- Potential to impact both child and family in a positive and measurable way
- Capacity for successful implementation.

FORMULA AND DISCRETIONARY FUNDING AWARD RECOMMENDATIONS, 2025-26

Formula Allocation

READY Funding: Continuing and New Awards

Innovation Investment Funding: New Awards



- Potential to reach the highest number of children in the most meaningful way (evidence based, high intensity, focused and collaborative selection and planning).
- Degree to which a particular program and service is likely to be maintained, sustained due to cost and impact over time.
- Intent to contribute to a connected, relationship based, and family focused local and/or regional early care and education system.

Following reviewer and compliance scoring, Program Officers contacted their local partnerships with questions and points of clarification from the review team.

A total of 38 local partnerships requested new READY funding. One READY application was late and deemed ineligible. The 37 eligible applications for new READY funding totaled \$4,183,413 in requests, which is \$1,085,069.26 more than the amount of new READY funding available to award. To make these difficult funding decisions, the staff team prioritized funding to local partnerships whose READY grants ended June 30, 2025 and attempted to fund those partnerships to at least the level of their FY25 funding. Requests to fund Parents as Teachers affiliate support costs were eliminated, as were funding requests that did not have a direct impact on number of clients served. Nearly all local partnerships recommended for READY funding are receiving less than they requested. Four of the five local partnerships not recommended for funding requested small amounts for PAT affiliate fees, and the fifth is postponing their request until next year.

Marion's READY funding request is to be determined, pending requests for additional information.

Ten local partnerships submitted Innovation Investment requests, totaling \$2,190,290. Each Innovation request was reviewed in-depth by both Local Partnership team members and senior staff, followed by individual consultations to refine the project design and budget.

FORMULA AND DISCRETIONARY FUNDING AWARD RECOMMENDATIONS, 2025-26

Formula Allocation

READY Funding: Continuing and New Awards

Innovation Investment Funding: New Awards



Summary of Innovation Investment Proposals

Allendale and Hampton Counties

Program(s): Enhanced Early Education-Onsite Tutoring and Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)

Description: Allendale and Hampton counties will pilot a revised implementation of the HIPPY program, combining administrative costs and supporting new staff to serve at least 50 families in the two counties (HIPPY request: \$272,400).

Allendale is also planning to expand their Enhanced Early Education- Onsite Tutoring program in collaboration with the school district to serve at least 40 additional families (Enhanced Early Ed request: \$55,000).

Greenville and Pickens Counties

Program(s): Nurse Family Partnership (NFP)

Description: Greenville and Pickens will partner with Prisma-Upstate to support the expansion of NFP in Greenville and Pickens Counties. Two nurses will serve an additional 50 families.

Kershaw, Lee, and Sumter Counties

Program(s): Parents as Teachers (PAT) and Strengthening Families

Description: In this Tri-county partnership, parenting programs will be shared across the 3 counties, with Kershaw and Sumter counties supporting additional PAT implementation in Lee County and Lee County supporting implementation of Strengthening Families in Kershaw and Sumter Counties. The partnership will allow for at least 50 additional families to be served with PAT and 30 additional families to be served with Strengthening Families.

Berkeley and Charleston Counties

Program(s): Early Education Program Support, Triple P, and Parents as Teachers (PAT)

Description: Berkeley and Charleston counties will partner on supporting four (4), 3-year-old kindergarten (3K) classrooms (2 in each county) with enhanced teaching strategies, environmental and developmental assessments, and additional supports for children and families (3K enhancement requested amount: \$375,032). They will also offer Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) Level 4 to families with children in the participating classrooms. The collaboration will also include providing PAT to at least 50 additional families, including those with children enrolled in the 3K classroom (PAT request: \$430,000).

**FORMULA AND DISCRETIONARY FUNDING AWARD
RECOMMENDATIONS, 2025-26**



Formula Allocation

READY Funding: Continuing and New Awards

Innovation Investment Funding: New Awards

Table 1 below provides the allocated amounts for formula funding, the READY amounts for continuing grants, the recommended amounts for new READY funding, and the amount requests for Innovation Investment funding.

**FORMULA AND DISCRETIONARY FUNDING AWARD
RECOMMENDATIONS, 2025-26**

Formula Allocation

READY Funding: Continuing and New Awards

Innovation Investment Funding: New Awards

TABLE 1: Formula, READY and Innovation Investment Funding Proposal for FY25-26

	Formula Allocation	Continuing READY	New READY	Innovation Investment Requests	TOTAL
Abbeville	\$222,168.00				\$222,168.00
Aiken	\$435,030.00				\$435,030.00
Allendale	\$222,168.00		\$25,990.00	\$242,200.00	\$490,358.00
Anderson	\$487,328.00	\$20,000.00			\$507,328.00
Bamberg	\$222,168.00	\$20,000.00	\$37,000.00		\$279,168.00
Barnwell	\$222,168.00	\$20,000.00			\$242,168.00
Beaufort	\$433,462.00	\$10,000.00	\$160,993.00		\$604,455.00
Berkeley	\$556,861.00	\$75,475.00	\$97,495.00	\$406,561.00	\$1,289,444.00
Calhoun	\$222,168.00	\$18,770.00			\$240,938.00
Charleston	\$763,074.00		\$30,855.00	\$398,471.00	\$1,359,115.00
Cherokee	\$222,168.00	\$8,400.00	\$63,849.00		\$294,417.00
Chester	\$222,168.00				\$222,168.00
Chesterfield	\$222,168.00	\$10,617.00	\$203,711.00		\$436,496.00
Clarendon	\$222,168.00				\$222,168.00
Colleton	\$222,168.00	\$43,716.00	\$43,141.00		\$309,025.00
Darlington	\$222,168.00	\$10,000.00	\$264,720.00		\$496,888.00
Dillon	\$222,168.00	\$58,160.00	\$227,341.00		\$507,669.00
Dorchester	\$303,856.00	\$56,667.00	\$25,000.00		\$385,523.00
Edgefield	\$222,168.00	\$7,782.00	\$5,000.00		\$234,950.00
Fairfield	\$222,168.00		\$53,758.00		\$275,926.00
Florence	\$432,865.00		\$179,276.00		\$612,141.00
Georgetown	\$222,168.00				\$222,168.00
Greenville	\$1,240,873.00	\$20,000.00	\$75,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$1,435,873.00
Greenwood	\$259,941.00	\$20,000.00	\$50,972.00		\$330,913.00
Hampton	\$222,168.00	\$3,120.00		\$85,200.00	\$310,488.00
Horry	\$718,180.00		\$23,500.00		\$741,680.00
Jasper	\$222,168.00	\$6,100.00			\$228,268.00
Kershaw	\$222,168.00	\$2,600.00		\$192,391.00	\$417,159.00
Lancaster	\$222,168.00		\$256,058.00		\$478,226.00
Laurens	\$222,168.00				\$222,168.00
Lee	\$222,168.00	\$64,300.00	\$100,000.00	\$180,000.00	\$566,468.00
Lexington	\$725,229.00		\$281,225.00		\$1,006,454.00
Marion	\$222,168.00				TBD

**FORMULA AND DISCRETIONARY FUNDING AWARD
RECOMMENDATIONS, 2025-26**

Formula Allocation

READY Funding: Continuing and New Awards

Innovation Investment Funding: New Awards

	Formula Allocation	Continuing READY	New READY	Innovation Investment Requests	TOTAL
Marlboro	\$222,168.00				\$222,168.00
McCormick	\$222,168.00	\$6,330.00	\$88,932.00		\$317,430.00
Newberry	\$222,168.00	\$9,971.00	\$33,775.00		\$265,914.00
Oconee	\$222,168.00		\$22,000.00		\$244,168.00
Orangeburg	\$275,008.00	\$10,000.00	\$42,000.00		\$327,008.00
Pickens	\$225,513.00	\$65,833.00	\$60,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$451,346.00
Richland	\$1,041,409.00	\$17,082.00			\$1,058,491.00
Saluda	\$222,168.00	\$1,707.00	\$5,000.00		\$228,875.00
Spartanburg	\$857,122.00	\$76,669.00	\$71,322.00		\$1,005,113.00
Sumter	\$350,676.00	\$3,278.00	\$95,250.00	\$165,700.00	\$614,904.00
Union	\$222,168.00		\$28,232.00		\$250,400.00
Williamsburg	\$222,168.00	\$10,000.00	\$246,850.00		\$479,018.00
York	\$485,930.00	\$110,250.00	\$99,023.00		\$695,203.00
TOTAL	\$16,035,229.00	\$786,827.00	\$2,997,268.00	\$1,870,523.00	\$21,467,679.00

FY25-26 Local Partnership Proposed Program Strategies from all Funding Sources

Abbeville

Parents as Teachers
Library Based and Other Learning Programs
Child Care Training
Countdown to Kindergarten

Aiken

Parents as Teachers
Imagination Library
Child Care Technical Assistance and Coaching
Child Care Training
Scholarships
Countdown to Kindergarten
Countdown to 4K
Early Identification and Referral

Allendale

Nurturing Parenting
Enhanced Early Education with Onsite Tutoring
HIPPY

Anderson

Raising a Reader
Triple P Level 4
Early Education Program Support
Countdown to Kindergarten
Countdown to 4K
HealthySteps

Bamberg

Parents as Teachers
Child Care Training
Scholarships

Barnwell

Library Based and Other Learning Programs
Triple P Level 2
Imagination Library
Early Education Program Operation
Child Care Technical Assistance and Coaching
Child Care Training
Scholarships
Countdown to Kindergarten
Countdown to 4K

Beaufort

Parents as Teachers
Supporting Care Providers through Visits
Reach Out and Read
Child Care Technical Assistance and Coaching
Child Care Training
Early Identification and Referral (PASOs)

Berkeley

Parents as Teachers
Child Care Technical Assistance and Coaching
Child Care Training
Scholarships
HealthySteps

Calhoun

Parents as Teachers
Imagination Library
Countdown to Kindergarten

Charleston

Parents as Teachers
Connected Families
Motherread/Fatheread
Imagination Library
Quality Counts
Child Care Training
Scholarships

Cherokee

Imagination Library
Triple P Level 4
Lena Home
Child Care Training

Chester

Parents as Teachers
Connected Families
Child Care Training
Child Care Technical Assistance and Coaching
Countdown to Kindergarten
Countdown to 4K

Chesterfield

ParentChild+
Imagination Library
Scholarships
Early Education Program Operation

Clarendon

Parents as Teachers
Imagination Library
Child Care Training
Scholarships
Countdown to Kindergarten

Colleton

Parents as Teachers
Connected Families
Nurturing Parenting
Supporting Care Providers through Visits
Child Care Technical Assistance and Coaching
Child Care Training
Scholarships
Countdown to Kindergarten
Countdown to 4K

Darlington

Parents as Teachers
Motherread/Fatheread
Reach Out and Read
Countdown to Kindergarten
Health Services Coordination and Other Health
Programming

Dillon

Nurturing Parenting
Raising a Reader
Child Care Technical Assistance and Coaching
Child Care Training

Dorchester

Motherread/Fatheread
Reach Out and Read
Child Care Technical Assistance and Coaching
Child Care Training
Scholarships
Early Identification and Referral

Edgefield

Library Based and Other Learning Programs
Imagination Library
Triple P Level 4
Enhanced Early Education with Onsite Tutoring
Early Education Program Support
Child Care Training
Scholarships

Fairfield

Parents as Teachers
Imagination Library
Child Care Training
Scholarships
Countdown to Kindergarten
Countdown to 4K

Florence

ParentChild+
Child Care Technical Assistance and Coaching
Child Care Training
Scholarships

Georgetown

ParentChild+
Early Education Program Support
Child Care Training
Scholarships

Greenville

Nurse Family Partnership
Imagination Library
Reach Out and Read
Triple P Level 2
Nurturing Parenting
Family Connects

Greenwood

Parents as Teachers
Scholarships

Hampton

Parents as Teachers
Imagination Library
Reach Out and Read
Child Care Training
Scholarships
HIPPY

Horry

Enhanced Early Education with Enrichment
Child Care Training
Early Identification and Referral (PASOs)

Jasper

Parents as Teachers
Imagination Library
Reach Out and Read
Child Care Training
Scholarships
Early Identification and Referral

Kershaw

Parents as Teachers
Imagination Library

Lancaster

Incredible Years
Parents as Teachers
Imagination Library
Early Head Start
Early Education Program Support
Countdown to Kindergarten

Laurens

Parents as Teachers
Reach Out and Read
Imagination Library
Child Care Training
Scholarships

Lee

Early Steps to School Success
Strengthening Families
Library Based and Other Learning Programs
Raising a Reader
Motherread/Fatheread
Child Care Training
Scholarships
Countdown to Kindergarten
Countdown to 4K
Health Services Coordination and Other Health
Programming

Lexington

Parents as Teachers
Connected Families
Imagination Library
Countdown to Kindergarten
Child Care Training
Early Identification and Referral (PASOs)

Marion

Library Based and Other Learning Programs
Raising a Reader
Nurturing Parenting
Child Care Technical Assistance and Coaching
Child Care Training
Scholarships

Marlboro

Parents as Teachers
Reach Out and Read
Child Care Training
Scholarships

McCormick

Library Based and Other Learning Programs
Nurturing Parenting
Imagination Library
Early Education Program Support
Scholarships
Countdown to Kindergarten

Newberry

Parents as Teachers
Library Based and Other Learning Programs
Triple P Level 4
Reach Out and Read
Quality Counts
Child Care Training
Countdown to Kindergarten
Countdown to 4K

Oconee

Imagination Library
Nurse Family Partnership
Scholarships

Orangeburg

Parents as Teachers
Imagination Library
Raising a Reader-Enhanced
Countdown to Kindergarten
Countdown to 4K
HealthySteps

Pickens

Parents as Teachers
Connected Families
Reach Out and Read
Nurse Family Partnership
Imagination Library
Countdown to Kindergarten
Family Connects

Richland

Parents as Teachers
Connected Families
Early Head Start

Saluda

Library Based and Other Learning Programs
Triple P Level 4
Enhanced Early Education with Onsite Tutoring
Child Care Training
Scholarships

Spartanburg

Nurse Family Partnership
Early Head Start
Quality Counts
Countdown to Kindergarten
Countdown to 4K
Child Care Training
Early Intervention and Referral

Sumter

Parents as Teachers
Imagination Library
Scholarships

Union

Parents as Teachers
Reach Out and Read
Child Care Training
Scholarships

Williamsburg

Parents as Teachers
Imagination Library
Child Care Training
Countdown to Kindergarten
Scholarships

York

Parents as Teachers
Connected Families
Nurse Family Partnership
Child Care Technical Assistance and Coaching
Child Care Training
Scholarships
Countdown to Kindergarten
Countdown to 4K
HealthySteps

*Subject to change based on funding decisions

Program Name	Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)	Code	225
Program Area	Parenting		

Program Description
<p>HIPPY (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters) is a home visiting program that supports parents in their role as a child's first teacher. Every week for 30 weeks, a trained HIPPY Home Visitor will conduct in person role play visits with families of young children. Visits are guided by curriculum designed to equip parents with the skills and tools necessary to succeed in their role as their child's first teacher.</p> <p>The First Steps HIPPY program is designed for 3- and 4-year-old children. It is beneficial for low-income families, parents and caregivers with limited education, families with a history of child abuse and/or involvement with the child welfare system, and families experiencing language barriers.</p> <p>Local partnerships funding HIPPY shall ensure full compliance with national model guidelines. Fidelity of implementation in SC includes meeting requirement documented in the HIPPY US Manual of Accreditation Standards for Quality HIPPY Programs.</p>

Unit of Service	Evidence Based?	High Intensity?	Expected First Steps' Child-Level Outcomes
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Families <input type="checkbox"/> Children <input type="checkbox"/> Adults <input type="checkbox"/> Providers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Healthy and Safe <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Actively Supported by Their Families and Communities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Arrive at School Ready to Reach Their Highest Potential
Data Collection Requirements			
In KITS: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Client-level <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly outputs If monthly outputs in KITS, is client-level data required by model elsewhere? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, client-level data required by model elsewhere, then name of external data system(s):			

THE CRITERIA OUTLINED BELOW REPRESENT ALL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS. THOSE MARKED WITH AN ASTERISK (*) ARE USED IN THE ONGOING EVALUATION OF LOCAL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM PERFORMANCE.

Targeting Criteria: Who does this program target?	
Age	
Age Criteria	Children that are 3 and 4 years of age.
Risk Factors	
*Risk Factor Criteria 1	100% of families must have at least one First Steps risk factor at the time of enrollment.
*Risk Factor Criteria 2	60% of families must have at least two First Steps risk factors at the time of enrollment.

Service Criteria: How is this program implemented?	
Visits (Home or Site):	
*Visit Criteria 1: Duration	Role play visits will last 60 minutes.
*Visit Criteria 2: Frequency	30 weekly visits.
Visit Criteria 3: Location	Home visitors meet with parents in person, preferably in their home. At a family's discretion, supervisor and Program Coordinator approval visits

	may occur at an alternate location, or occasional virtual visits will also be considered acceptable and count as a home visit.
Visit Criteria 4: Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the curriculum and materials • Meet weekly with each family to role play and document each family's progress throughout the year. • Assist with making referrals for basic needs. • Demonstrate desired behaviors such as organizations skills, positive attitudes, leadership skills and empathy
Group Connections	
*Group Connection Criteria 1: Duration	Group connections should last 2 hours.
*Group Connection Criteria 2: Frequency	6 or more sessions during the program year.
Note: Sessions should begin within 6 – 8 weeks after role play visits have started.	
Group Connection Criteria 3: Group Size	N/A
Group Connection Criteria 4: Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each family completes a Group Meeting Enrichment Survey prior to the first group meeting. • Group meetings offer educational enrichment, information and activities that meet the needs of the parents. • Group meetings must have required documentation provided by HIPPY: Planning Form, Group Meeting Attendance Form and Group Meeting Evaluation. • All families will receive an official announcement of each planned group meeting. • Enrichment activities are provided for children during group meetings.

Retention Criteria: What are this program's goals for client retention?	
Retention Criteria	75% of families must be retained for a minimum of 26 weeks or more of program participation.

Workforce Criteria: Who are the service providers implementing this program?			
Program Role	HIPPY Home Visitor	Maximum Number of Cases	Part-time 8 (minimum)- 12 (maximum) Full-time 15 (minimum) – 18 (maximum)
KITS Related Job Title or Role	Service Provider	Minimum Education Level	High School diploma or GED
*Required Certifications and/or Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each home visitor must attend preservice training. • home visitor receives weekly role play training based on the weekly lesson. • home visitor must be HIPPY parents, former HIPPY parents, or are knowledgeable of the language and culture of the community served. • Home visitors must be recruited from the target community and have a child of HIPPY – appropriate age or have access to a child with whom they can engage in the HIPPY curriculum to practice and master their skills. • home visitor must be able to read, write and speak well in the language of the curriculum they will use with assigned parents. 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A professional development plan based on performance evaluations and career goals must be established for each home visitor• Each home visitor shall complete training in ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE-2.• All training (for both program and individual staff members) must be documented on-site.		
Note: Only home visitors trained in the HIPPY curriculum can deliver home visits.			
Program Role	HIPPY Supervisor/Coordinator	Maximum Number of Cases	180
KITS Related Job Title or Role	Site Supervisor	Minimum Education Level	Bachelors or four-year degree
*Required Certifications and/or Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All supervisors in SC a four-year degree in early childhood education or related field.• A supervisor can be conditionally hired with an associate’s degree and minimum of 5 years home visiting experience, and must obtain their bachelor’s degree in early education or related field within three (3) years.• A supervisor should possess knowledge of early childhood education and development, demonstrate project and time management skills, and be able to lead and develop a team of home visitors so that the team can transfer an understanding of developmental concepts to parents.• The Local Partnership must attend HIPPY preservice training through HIPPY National.• Each supervisor shall complete training in ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE-2.• All training (for both program and individual staff members) must be documented on-site.• Programs with more than 180 families requires a co-coordinator position		

Screening and Assessment Criteria: How are program participants screened and/or assessed?	
*Assessment 1:	
[NAME]Criteria	Children participating in HIPPY will be assessed by their home visitor based on the guidelines of the chosen assessment tool.
*Assessment 2: Retrospective Pre-assessment	
Pre-assessment Criteria	All enrolled HIPPY parents shall complete the SC First Steps HIPPY Parent Involvement Survey at the first role play visit.
*Assessment 3: Post-Assessment	
Post-Assessment Criteria	Post-assessment using the SC First Steps HIPPY Parent Involvement Survey is completed by the enrolled HIPPY parent at the 26th week visit (or sooner if a family leaves the program prior to week 26).

Success Criteria: How is success in this program defined for participants?

Success Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75% of HIPPY families will demonstrate success from pre to post surveys using the SC First Steps HIPPY pre/post parent inventory. • Definition of Outcome: Number of families that show improvement in at least two of the three school readiness domains (language, literacy, math)
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Referral Criteria: What are this program's requirements for client referrals and connections?	
Referral Criteria 1: Referrals	Home Visitors shall seek to ensure that each participating family connects with a pediatric medical home and other community services as appropriate.
Note: HIPPY home visitors shall utilize information shared by families and program surveys to refer/link families to additional interventions as necessary and beneficial.	

Other Criteria: Are there other program criteria that exist?	
Other Criteria 1	<p>Home visitors will monitor records at least twice a month to ensure parents are working with their children five days per week and that the average number of minutes worked per day is reasonable for the age of the child.</p> <p>If the number of minutes is consistently much less or greater than the average 10-15 minutes per day (for 3-year-olds) or 15-20 minutes per day (for 4-year-olds), the home visitor will determine the cause and if a referral, or other intervention, is needed.</p> <p>When monitoring records, a reviewer must target a minimum of 10% of enrolled families' weekly packets randomly selected files. When completing the review: Pull Pages from 10% randomly selected files, and/or a note indicates the reason for each missing page.</p>
Other Criteria 2	Home visitor successfully instructs assigned parents (not children) in the effective utilization of the curriculum by completely role playing each activity packet each week using the 5R format: <u>r</u> apport, <u>r</u> evue, <u>r</u> ole play, <u>r</u> eferrals, and <u>r</u> eminders.
Other Criteria 3	Supervisors shall convene a monthly meeting with program staff to review client recruitment and retention, guideline compliance, and programmatic data reviews.
Other Criteria 4	Supervisors must provide weekly role play training for which all home visitors are responsible to attend. All props and supplies are prepared in advance of each role play training.
Other Criteria 5	Supervisors use the Keys to Successful Role Play and/or Guided Discussion to train the staff as indicated by the HIPPY US curricula.
Other Criteria 6	Supervisor works with home visitors to develop performance goals and a professional development plan at the beginning of the year, reviews progress mid-year and evaluates overall performance before the end of the program year.
Other Criteria 7	Supervisor must conduct role play visit observations. One visit at the beginning of the program year and another before the end of the program year. Proper documentation to meet model fidelity must be completed.
Other Criteria 8	Supervisor must conduct one group meeting observation. Proper documentation to meet model fidelity must be completed.

2025-2026 Program and Operational Guidelines Revisions Request / June 2025

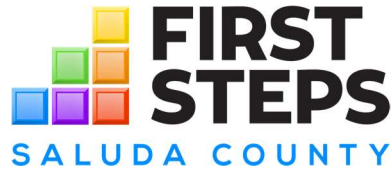
Program Name: Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)
Program Code: 225
Program Area: Parenting

Reason for Changes

The loss of AmeriCorps funding impacts how the HIPPY program is implemented in South Carolina. Multiple aspects of HIPPY oversight and supervision was accomplished through the First Steps State Office. Re-launching HIPPY gives First Steps to function like other evidence-based parenting programs at the Local Partnership level. The revised guidelines reflect the change in service delivery and maintains fidelity to the HIPPY US model. In addition, the changes set HIPPY in South Carolina up for growth and expansion.

Summary of Changes

- The staff position of Parent Educator changed to Home Visitor.
- Language specific to recruiting home visitors implement HIPPY services revised.
- Role of the HIPPY Supervisor/Coordinator revised to meet HIPPY US standards and guidelines at the local level.
- Revised the standardized assessment tool used to measure school readiness due to broadening recruitment beyond First Steps 4K.
 - The standardized assessment tool is yet to be determined. The parenting team is researching the tools recommended by HIPPY US.



June 5, 2025

Saluda County First Steps will be implementing the Childcare Scholarship Program (Code 703) for FY26 and has requested five scholarships for Saluda residents to start this new program.

Saluda County First Steps Executive Director, Kim Chariker, has a personal interest in a provider located in Saluda; therefore, to avoid any conflict of interest, ED Kim Chariker, will not be part of the application process for the scholarships awarded. Saluda First Steps hired Hortencia Acevedo as program administrator to manage all aspects of the Childcare Scholarship application process.

Applicants must have a child age birth through kindergarten entry and have at least one risk factor (two risk factors are required for 60% of the scholarship applicants) at the time of enrollment to be eligible for the program, as required in the FY26 Program and Operational Guidelines of South Carolina First Steps. Also, applicants must enroll in the Saluda County First Steps Positive Parenting Program (Code 222) within the current fiscal year to be eligible to receive childcare scholarships.

Saluda First Steps will provide a Childcare Scholarship application orientation and training on the benefits of high-quality childcare for all applications. As an SC Endeavors Certified Trainer, ED Kim Chariker, may assist Hortencia Acevedo at the orientation and training. Completed applications will be submitted to Hortencia Acevedo who will review the applications, as well as the risk factor forms. Mrs. Acevedo will evaluate applications, categorize applications in the order in which they are received, and maintain a waiting list.

Hortencia Acevedo will forward pre-screened applications to SCDSS for Child Care Scholarship Program approval. The SCDSS-required scholarship application will be completed. SCDSS eligibility determination will be returned to the local partnership to Hortencia Acevedo. Mrs. Acevedo will inform applicant parents of the status of their applications and notify parents of their award once approved by SCDSS. Parents will select the qualified childcare provider of their choice that accepts Child Care Scholarship Program vouchers. Applicants will be directed to the online list of qualified providers.

Hortencia Acevedo will complete the KITS Data System training in order to input data in the KITS Data System for Scholarships (703) and ASQ assessments scoring. She will also be responsible for getting the required screenings to the parents and/or their selected childcare center.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Angela Erhardt".

Angela Erhardt, Board Chair of Saluda County First Steps



Prevalent Program Evaluations

OVERVIEW

Legislatively, South Carolina First Steps is required to evaluate prevalent programs on a five year schedule (SC State Code § 59-152-50). Prevalent programs are defined as >10% of total expenditure of Local Partnership formula funding. The legislation dictates that First Steps before June 30, 2015 shall:

“contract with an external evaluator to develop a schedule for an in-depth and independent performance audit designed to measure the success of each prevalent program in regard to its success in supporting the goals of the State Board and those set forth in Section 59-152-20 and Section 59-152-30. Results of all external performance audits must be published in the First Steps annual report.”

HISTORY

On May 18, 2020, the Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee voted “to adopt a flexible evaluation schedule for the next five years”. This was adopted by the full board at their June 18, 2020 meeting.

Program (years)	Evaluator	Submitted/Deadline
Parents as Teachers (FY17-FY19)	UofSC Institute for Families in Society and Pacific Research & Evaluation	October 29, 2021
Child care technical assistance and training (FY19-FY21)	UofSC Institute for Families in Society	November 1, 2022
Child care scholarships (FY18-FY22)	UofSC Institute for Families in Society	November 1, 2023
5-Year Agency Evaluation: All local partnership programs with child-level data (FY19-FY23)	Child Trends	November 1, 2024
Parents as Teachers (FY20-FY24)	Child Trends	November 1, 2025

FUTURE EVALUATION NEEDS

Program (years)	Deadline
Prevalent program 2	November 1, 2026
Prevalent program 3	November 1, 2027

PROPOSED SUBJECT OF PREVALENT PROGRAM 2

Program	FY22-FY24 Average of State Funding	FY22-FY24 Average % of State Funding
Total State Funding Spent on all Programs	\$12,192,030.90	-
Parents as Teachers	\$3,974,983.66	32.5%
Child Care Quality Enhancement	\$1,839,399.66	15.0%
Child Care Training	\$1,347,860.65	11.1%

Note: FY23 was the first year of READY funds



Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee Meeting Minutes

Friday, May 28, 2025

Virtual (via Zoom)

Members Present (2): David Morley, Dr. Amy Williams

Other Trustees Present (2): Dr. Edward Simmer, Jack McBride

Staff Present (5): Ann Vandervliet, Chelsea Richard, Betty Gardiner, Martha Strickland, Jaiden Branch

Meeting was called to order at 11:02 a.m.

The committee discussed the latest draft of the 2025-30 Strategic Plan. This draft was informed by the public comment period and subsequent meetings with stakeholders. The public comment period was held from May 5 to May 16 and resulted in comments from 24 individuals and organizations. The committee's discussion will result in the next draft of the plan that will be presented to the Executive Committee at their June 9 meeting, ahead of the full Board of Trustees meeting on June 19.

The meeting adjourned at 11:53 a.m.



Finance and Administration Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 7, 2025

Virtual (via Zoom)

Members Present (3): David Morley, Jessica Mackey, Jacque Curtin

Staff Present (4): Ann Vandervliet, Mark Barnes, David O'Kelly, Robin Ebert

Meeting was called to order with a quorum present by Jessica Mackey at 9:00 a.m.

Approval of 2023 990 for SC First Steps

Required Action Item: Approval for the 2023 990 for SC First Steps

Josh Garvin, CPA, Principle for Manley Garvin LLC., presented the draft 990 for SC First Steps. He reviewed the document and discussed several points. He mentioned the 990 reflects the financial information presented in the financial statements already reviewed by the Board for FY 2024. He provided that the format is different but the numbers are the same. After the review, Jacque Curtin motioned to approve the 2023 990 form, which was seconded by Dave Morley and then passed. The motion will be included in the consent agenda for the upcoming board meeting.

Motion: To approve the draft 990 Form for SC First Steps for tax year 2023, as submitted by Manley Garvin and recommended by staff, and for the staff to make any necessary grammatical or other minor changes.

Update on Aiken Corrective Action Plan

Ann was not able to be at the meeting but Mark mentioned that she had scheduled meetings with them over the next few days and would provide an update to the board after that. She will provide written recommendations at that point.

State Office Staff Updates

Financial Report: Mr. Barnes reviewed the monthly financial reports. The agency is in good financial condition. This discussion also included the amount spent to date and he reviewed the donations to date for this year.

ESSER Expenditure Review: Mr. Barnes mentioned that state office staff were working with a number of local partnerships related to concerns identified with allowable expenses with their ESSER Funds. These are federal funds that have very specific restrictions. He talked about actions that have been taken to correct these to ensure that SC First Steps Single Audit, which will take place this year, would

be clean. One local partnership has not been as responsive as they should be to clearing up any deficiencies.

Financial Management System Update: SC First Steps is working to replace the financial management system for the local partnerships. It has been determined that we will need to do an emergency procurement to replace the current system. We have been reviewing options and doing extensive research into the capabilities of three different systems. We have selected the one we believe that best meets our needs and will be proceeding on to working out contractual arrangements with them. We have extended the agreement with Blackbaud to allow for enough transition time to do complete this. We hope to start the new system prior to the new fiscal year, but this will depend on how quickly we can get the agreements signed.

Local Partnership Update

AmeriCorps Grant: Mr. Barnes shared that First Steps had their AmeriCorps grant canceled by the federal government. This was along with most of the grantees in SC for FY 2024-25. The grant was canceled even though we were operating the largest and one of the most successful grants in the state.

KITS: The new data system is planned to go live for the local partnerships the summer, with 4K planned over the next year.

4K Update: The 4K program is on track to increase about 9% in student enrollment this year.

With no further business to discuss for the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Attachments:

- FY2025 Financial Report
- FY2025 Donations

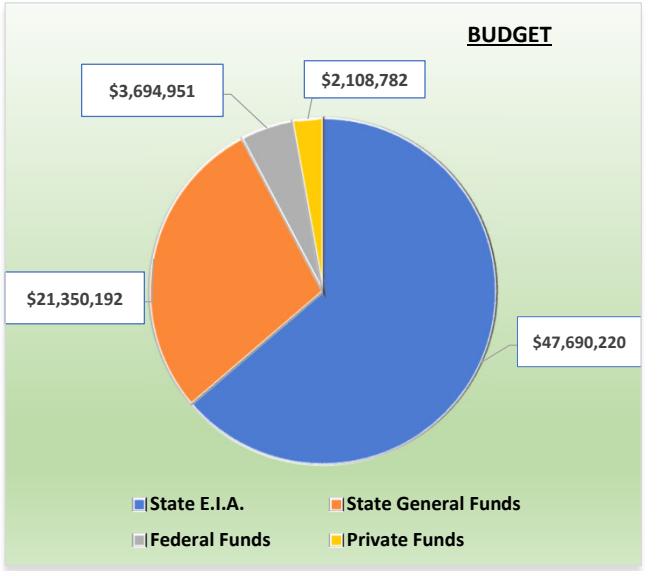
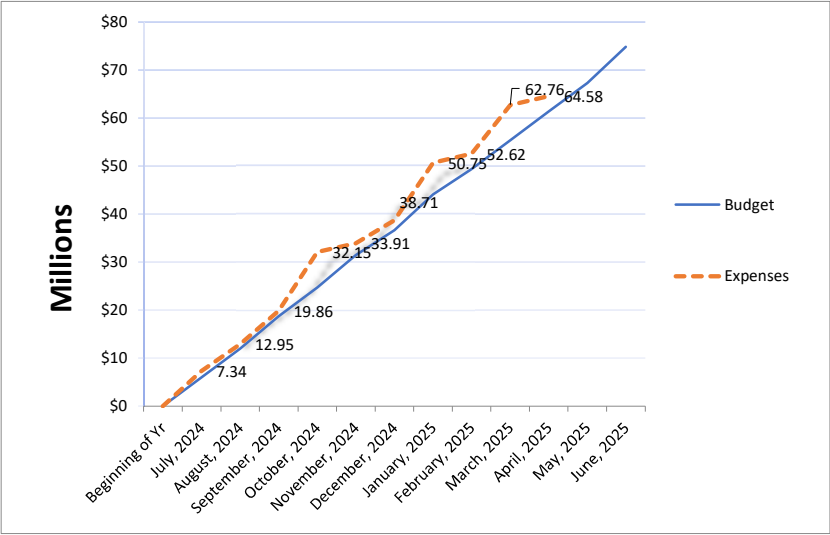


FY 2025

As of
April 30, 2025

Spending Rates

Projected	83%
Actual	86%



PROGRAMS / OPERATIONS	STATE APPROPRIATIONS			FEDERAL GRANTS			PRIVATE FUNDS			GRAND TOTAL		
	Budget	Expended	Balance	Budget	Expended	Balance	Budget	Expended	Balance	Budget	Expended	Balance
LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS	25,064,629	24,054,645	1,009,984	1,207,416	1,776,182	\$ (568,766)	1,339,250	1,146,355	192,895	27,611,294	26,371,086	\$ 634,113
PRIVATE 4-K	39,993,616	34,018,234	5,975,383	1,675,000	739,383	935,617			-	41,668,616	34,757,617	\$ 6,911,000
EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL	1,010,109	374,575	635,534	812,535	416,381	396,154	480,478	209,868	270,609	2,303,121	1,000,824	\$ 1,302,297
ADMINISTRATION	2,972,059	2,189,709	782,350	-		-	289,055	259,886	29,169	3,261,114	2,449,595	\$ 811,519
GRAND TOTAL:	69,040,413	60,637,163	8,403,250	3,694,951	2,931,946	763,005	2,108,782	1,616,109	492,674	74,844,146	64,579,121	\$ 9,658,928

Notes:

1) Local Partnerships:

- Includes funds
- a. Distributed to Local Partnerships
 - b. Cost of Audits, Accounting Svcs, Data Systems, Workmans Comp
 - c. State Office Local Partnership support staff

2) State Appropriations Include

- a. EIA Funds
- b. General Funds
- c. READY Funds
- d. Carry Forward Funds

3) Private Budgets Include

- a. Private Grants
- b. Projected Fundraising
- c. Carry Forward Funds

Report has been updated to reflect new Chart of Accounts and separation from Department of Education

Federal Funds:		Total Fund Breakdown	
VISTA	62,560	47,690,220	State E.I.A.
AmeriCorps:	448,652	21,350,192	State General Funds
SLDS:	43,629	3,694,951	Federal Funds
PDG:	1,157,176	2,108,782	Private Funds
ESSER Funds	1,982,934	74,844,146	
	3,694,951		

Donations

FY 2025

As of May 31, 2025



DATE RECEIVED	Amount	DONOR/PAYOR	FUNDS	PURPOSE / COMMENTS
Jul 1, 2024	25.00	Lyle Jacks	Unrestricted	Pickens County FS
Jul 1, 2024	25.00	Liz Rampy	Unrestricted	General Donation
Jul 3, 2024	10,000.00	Children's Trust of South Carolina	Restricted	2024 Summit Sponsorship
Jul 24, 2024	6,500.00	Giving Foundation (Sylvanmo)	Restricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Jul 24, 2024	1,000.00	Department of Social Services	Restricted	2024 Summit Sponsorship
Jul 24, 2024	25.00	Joe Nation	Restricted	Lexington County FS
Aug 5, 2024	500.00	Kimberly Clark	Unrestricted	General Donation
Aug 7, 2024	350.00	Rick Nobel	Unrestricted	25th Anniversary General Donation
Aug 15, 2024	5,000.00	Department of Public Health	Restricted	2024 Summit Sponsorship
Sep 3, 2024	100.00	Randa Jacobs	Unrestricted	Greenville County FS
Sep 4, 2024	1,250.00	Sisters of Charity Foundation of SC	Unrestricted	General Donation
Sep 19, 2024	25.00	Joe Nation	Unrestricted	Lexington County FS
Sep 19, 2024	42.00	Pace Butler	Unrestricted	4K Program
Sep 19, 2024	15,000.00	Institute for Child Success	Restricted	2024 Summit Sponsorship
Sep 19, 2024	15,500.00	Enterprise Mobility	Unrestricted	General Donation
Sep 23, 2024	25.00	Joe Nation	Unrestricted	Lexington County FS
Sep 23, 2024	25.00	Betty Gardiner	Unrestricted	General Donation
Sep 23, 2024	50.00	Elizabeth Dudek	Unrestricted	General Donation
Oct 10, 2024	25.00	Joe Nation	Restricted	Lexington County FS
Oct 10, 2024	2,500.00	ABS Kids	Restricted	2024 Summit Sponsorship
Oct 22, 2024	250.00	Crystal Lapeyrolerie	Unrestricted	2024 Summit Sponsorship
Oct 28, 2024	25.00	Marian McCray	Unrestricted	General Donation
Oct 28, 2024	50.00	Judith Andrews	Unrestricted	General Donation
Nov 4, 2024	2,500.00	SC ETV	Restricted	2024 Summit Sponsorship
Nov 6, 2024	2,500.00	Lakeshore Learning	Restricted	2024 Summit Sponsorship
Nov 6, 2024	2,500.00	Lakeshore Learning	Restricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Nov 15, 2024	25.00	Joe Nation	Restricted	Lexington County FS
Nov 15, 2024	10,000.00	David & Cheryl Morley	Unrestricted	Greatest Need
Nov 15, 2024	2,500.00	Kaplan Early Learning	Restricted	2024 Summit Sponsorship
Nov 15, 2024	2,000.00	Kaplan Early Learning	Restricted	4K Program
Nov 15, 2024	1,000.00	Kaplan Early Learning	Restricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Nov 25, 2024	2,910.90	Charities Aid Foundation America	Restricted	General Donation
Dec 4, 2024	100.00	Mary Lynn Diggs	Unrestricted	General Donation
Dec 13, 2024	50.00	Jacquelyn & Lois Curtin	Unrestricted	General Donation
Dec 13, 2024	2,500.00	Bank of America	Unrestricted	General Donation
Dec 16, 2024	25.00	Joe Nation	Restricted	Lexington County FS
Dec 26, 2024	1,000.00	Hal Kaplan	Unrestricted	General Donation
Dec 30, 2024	5,000.00	Frances Kumar	Unrestricted	General Donation
Jan 9, 2025	25.00	Joe Nation	Restricted	Lexington County FS
Jan 9, 2025	1,000.00	Hal Kaplan	Unrestricted	General Donation
Jan 9, 2025	2,500.00	Bank of America	Unrestricted	General Donation
Jan 9, 2025	8,000.00	Institute for Child Success	Restricted	2024 Summit Sponsorship
Feb 4, 2025	1,000.00	Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP	Restricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Feb 4, 2025	1,000.00	Molina Healthcare	Restricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Feb 4, 2025	25.00	Joe Nation	Restricted	Lexington County FS
Feb 13, 2025	1,000.00	Pollock	Restricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Feb 13, 2025	1,000.00	Lourie Consulting	Restricted	2025 Night to Celebrate

Feb 26, 2025	25.00	Joe Nation	Restricted	Lexington County FS
Mar 5, 2025	1,000.00	Tutelage School	Restricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Mar 5, 2025	40.00	Joe Nation	Unrestricted	Lexington County FS
Mar 5, 2025	500.00	Charles Cornish	Unrestricted	General Donation
Mar 11, 2025	250.00	SCU	Restricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Mar 12, 2025	185.00	Mark Barnes	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Mar 13, 2025	500.00	Vision Therapy Institute	Restricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Mar 13, 2025	500.00	Blackbaud	Restricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Mar 13, 2025	500.00	Katie Tarver	Unrestricted	General Donation
Mar 17, 2025	103.00	Karen Oliver	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Mar 18, 2025	188.00	Stephen Vandervliet	Unrestricted	General Donation
Mar 18, 2025	194.00	Billy Clinkscales	Unrestricted	General Donation
Mar 24, 2025	194.00	Richland County First Steps	Unrestricted	General Donation
Mar 27, 2025	103.00	Tracy Vandervliet	Unrestricted	General Donation
Mar 31, 2025	103.00	Betty Parker	Unrestricted	General Donation
Apr 7, 2025	25.00	Joe Nation	Restricted	Lexington County FS
Apr 7, 2025	50.00	Coles Lawton	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Apr 7, 2025	185.00	Janice Kilburn	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Apr 7, 2025	100.00	Dorothy Priester	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Apr 7, 2025	100.00	Marie Fadeley	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Apr 8, 2025	185.00	Pamela Hastings	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Apr 11, 2025	5,000.00	Russ & Simmons Purdy Family	Restricted	General Donation
Apr 11, 2025	1,000.00	Amick Farms	Restricted	General Donation
Apr 11, 2025	188.00	Keith Brown	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Apr 11, 2025	103.00	Jennifer McConnell	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Apr 14, 2025	200.00	G3 Advisors	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Apr 14, 2025	2,500.00	Tom Lacas	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Apr 17, 2025	2,500.00	Parker Poe Adams & Bernstein	Restricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Apr 17, 2025	10,000.00	Founders Federal Credit Union	Restricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Apr 17, 2025	10,000.00	Contec	Restricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Apr 21, 2025	185.00	Elizabeth Petit	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Apr 23, 2025	2,500.00	First Citizens Bank	Restricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Apr 24, 2025	188.00	David Lisk	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Apr 24, 2025	373.00	Emily Prillaman	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Apr 24, 2025	50.00	Chelsea Richard	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Apr 25, 2025	3,000.00	Humana	Restricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Apr 25, 2025	185.00	Dennis Wiese	Unrestricted	General Donation
Apr 28, 2025	103.00	Kathy Jenkins	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Apr 28, 2025	100.00	Cheri Shapiro	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Apr 28, 2025	203.00	Beth Kienzlen	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Apr 28, 2025	50.00	Ronald Artz	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Apr 30, 2025	103.00	Kate Roach	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Apr 30, 2025	185.00	Charles Calhoun	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Apr 30, 2025	100.00	Emily Prillaman	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
Apr 30, 2025	103.00	Betty Gardiner	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
May 1, 2025	100.00	Vicki Walker	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
May 1, 2025	206.00	Darlington County First Steps	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
May 1, 2025	603.00	Virginia Owens	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
May 5, 2025	25.00	Raymond Ruth	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
May 5, 2025	2,500.00	Elizabeth Dudek	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
May 5, 2025	110.00	Keih Brown	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
May 5, 2025	53.00	Brian Levy	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate

May 5, 2025	25.00	Darcy Huffman	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
May 5, 2025	25.00	Cheryl Wiese	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
May 5, 2025	150.00	Cheryl Wiese	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
May 5, 2025	25.00	Betty Washington	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
May 5, 2025	100.00	Alexis Jones	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
May 5, 2025	53.00	Ben Gibson	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
May 7, 2025	1,000.00	Optus Bank	Restricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
May 7, 2025	100.00	Janet & Jim Riddle	Restricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
May 7, 2025	140.00	Anonymous	Restricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
May 7, 2025	150.00	Anonymous	Restricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
May 8, 2025	191.00	Betty Gardiner	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
May 12, 2025	25.00	Cynthia Elmore	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
May 14, 2025	60.00	Jennifer McConnell	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
May 15, 2025	1,000.00	Mjartan Family Foundation	Restricted	2025 Night to Celebrate
May 29, 2025	135.00	Cynthia Elmore	Unrestricted	2025 Night to Celebrate

Total

159,177.90



Legislative Committee Report

Senator Greg Hembree

Thursday, June 19, 2025

The Budget Conference Committee approved their recommendation on Wednesday, May 21st. On Wednesday, May 28th, the General Assembly ratified the 2025-2026 General Appropriations Bill and sent it to the Governor's desk. Governor McMaster signed the budget with line-item vetoes on June 4th.

First Steps will receive over \$5.7 million in new state funds this year. The following allocations were included:

- Unfunded Personnel Cost Increases (EIA): \$192,108 recurring
- Recruitment and Retention Costs: \$264,401 recurring
- Innovation Investments: \$2,500,000 non-recurring
- Full Day 4K (CERDEP): \$2,777,120 recurring

Proviso Revision: 4K Updates, First Steps & SDE shall annually share waiting lists.

Proviso Deletion: SDE-First Steps Division



Date: June 19, 2025

To: SC First Steps Board of Trustees

From: Ann Vandervliet

RE: **Agency Director Report**

1. First Steps 4K

- Forty seven new child care providers (including six A+ sites) have been recruited to serve an additional 500 students.
- 3,226 applications have been reviewed and approved for school year 25-26. Last year, we served 4,119 children.
- CLASS observer certification has been completed by our 4K managers and coaches. ABC Quality, Child Care Resource & Referral, and SC Endeavors (31 total). Over the next month, all participants will take the assessor reliability test.
- The SC General Assembly approved an additional investment in 4K (\$2.7M recurring) to support continued expansion.
- 4K leadership has met with the Education Oversight Committee and the SC Department of Education to ensure collaborative implementation of the recently approved Proviso that will require local school districts to share their 4K wait lists with SC First Steps no later than Sept. 1 each year

2. Local Partnerships

- A two day, in person training was provided for Local Partnership Boards and their executive directors June 4-5. Training topics included: introduction to the new financial management system, community needs assessments and strategic planning, systems building and financial planning.
- Ten local partnerships submitted *Innovation Investment* requests, totaling \$1,829,306. Collaboration between two or more counties to reduce administrative burden and increase the number of children served by evidence based AND high intensity services. Criteria included:
 - The collaboration must yield a minimum of 50 new children or families served.
 - Funding is competitive with no geographic cap.
 - **Applicants included:** Allendale and Hampton Counties (\$167,200) for Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) pilot; Greenville and Pickens Counties (\$200,000) for Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) Expansion; Kershaw, Lee, and Sumter Counties (\$496,136) for Parents as Teachers and Strengthening Families Expansion; Berkeley and Charleston Counties (\$1,124,799)

for Program(s): Early Education Program Support, Triple P, and Parents as teachers (PAT).

- The *Innovation Investments* combined have the potential to serve at least 276 new children with an evidence based and high intensity program.

3. Early Childhood Systems Building

- Department of Education's OELL and OSES, DPH WIC, Help Me Grow, SC DDSN, SC Thrive, ParentChild+, and First Steps have signed the addendum for publication of RFA's Palmetto Drive to Five dashboard. The Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) team is currently awaiting the signed final addendums from our partners at Head Start, Children's Trust, DSS Scholarships, and DHHS Medicaid.

4. Staffing Updates

- Kaden Anderson, Internal Technology Intern
- Aubrey Brown, 4K Coach, Upstate
- Anna Peterson, 4K Coach, Upstate
- Peyton Mosher, Data Coordinator
- Lucy Mwenda, Research Assistant
- Anna Torres, Research Assistant
- David O'Kelly, Chief Financial Officer is now leading the Finance and Administration Team
- Molly Tuck, Interim Director of Research and Evaluation
- All staff will meet in Columbia on July 8 to plan for implementation of the new strategic plan.



Meeting of the SC Early Childhood Advisory Council

Thursday, June 19, 2025

Immediately following the SC First Steps Board of Trustees Meeting

Virtual (via Zoom)

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87091312058?pwd=aWNlyFOFUEjppXTJQWaBMyqUf2G2j5.1>

AGENDA

- I. **Call to Order and Approve the Agenda** David Morley, Chairman
Motion: To adopt the agenda as submitted
- II. **Meeting Minutes** Chairman Morley
Motion: To adopt ECAC meeting minutes from April 17, 2025
Attachment: April 17, 2025 minutes
- III. **ECAC Communications Roundtable Report** Beth Moore, SC First Steps
- IV. **Early Childhood System Updates from Agency Leaders**
- V. **Information**
 - a. **ICC Report** Amber Gillum, SC Department of Social Services
 - b. **ECAC Report on Activities** Ann Vandervliet, SC First Steps**Attachments:** ICC Meeting Recap, ECAC June Report
- VI. **Adjournment** Chairman Morley
Motion: To adjourn the meeting of the SC Early Childhood Advisory Council



SC Early Childhood Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 17, 2025

SC ETV, 1041 George Rogers Blvd. Columbia, SC 29201

Council Members Present (17): David Morley (Chairman), Rep. Terry Alexander, Dr. Robert Bank, Tony Catone, Jacque Curtin, Mary Lynne Diggs, Sen. Jason Elliott, Dr. Matthew Ferguson, Sen. Greg Hembree, David Lisk, Jack McBride, Eunice Medina, Dorothy Priester, Roger Pryor, Dr. Ed Simmer, Wes Wooten, Sue Williams

Council Members Absent (7): Rep. Shannon Erickson, John Hayes, Constance Holloway, Jesica Mackey, Janie Neeley, Mary Anne Scott, Dr. Amy Williams (Vice Chair)

Others Present (67): Ann Vandervliet, Caroline Goins, Ivory Mitchell, Avian Jones, Heather Googe, Mikayla Moore, Beth Moore, Tammy Graham, Kristen Motte, Derek Cromwell, Alisha Green, David O'Kelly, Chelsea Richard, Stacy Greenwalt, Janet Parenti, Kaitlyn Richards, Naya Hall, Shayla Pettigrew, Karen Oliver, Rachal Hatton-Moore, Alexis D. Pipkins, Sr, Mark Barnes, Kenna Hoover, Pauletta Plowden, Martha Strickland, Amira Hulwe, Roger Pryor, ARJ, Samantha Ingram, Cindy Riley, Laura Baker, Kristine Jenkins, Kate Roach, Lisa C. Bess, Lexi Jones, LaMyra Sanders, Jaiden Branch, Rosaland Kenner, Cheryl Scales, John Browne, Beth Kienzlen, Anna Strickland, Caleb Buford, Janice Kilburn, Kate Strickland, Beth Cherry, Tamatha Kohler, Kim Trudell, Kerry Cordan, Kradles2Krayons CDC, Molly Tuck, Annette Davis, Margarita, Keely Wikstrom, Sarah Eargle, Kristen Martocchio, K Wilbur, Maria Earl, Emma Matzko, Jennifer Williams, Kathy Fitzgerald, Jenny May, Jennifer Williams, Cindy Galloway, Joy Mazur, Dana Yow, Betty Gardiner, Sally McClellan, Dana Yow

The meeting was called to order at 3:20 p.m.

Mr. Morley asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. McBride provided the motion, seconded by Ms. Williams. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Morley asked for a motion to approve the February 20, 2025, minutes. Mr. Lisk provided the motion, seconded by Mr. Wooten. The motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Vandervliet provided an update on key measures from the SC Birth Through Five Plan.

Updates were shared from ECAC agencies:

Ms. Wingo, Department of Public Health Bureau of Maternal Health Director, shared information on access to vaccines and the agency is renewing its focus on maternal and infant oral health literacy.

Ms. Green, Department of Education Early Learning and Literacy Director, shared that the department is training teachers in CERDEP classrooms in LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling) professional learning course and plans to coach teachers on using the training tools.

Ms. Gillum, Department of Social Services Deputy Director, shared a progress update on measures in the SC Birth Through Five Plan and that licensing goal is on track but asked the Council to consider rewording the child care access goal.

Ms. Vandervliet recommended that the Interagency Collaboration Committee bring suggestions to the ECAC on new ways to make the most of the SC First Steps board and ECAC meetings.

Ms. Vandervliet reported on the activities of the ECAC.

Ms. Priester expressed that the local partnership representatives would like to find ways to better serve on the ECAC. Mr. Lisk shared a series of questions to consider: how can we cast a wider net to reach more children, and how do we inform parents of other options? Ms. Vandervliet suggested that either a Local Perspective item or a topic for deeper discussion be added to future agendas.

Mr. McBride asked about mobile access First Five SC. Ms. Wingo confirmed that parents are saying that First Five SC was useful for WIC clients. Ms. Williams suggested SC Parents as a parent resource.

Mr. Lisk made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Wooten. The motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 4:02 p.m.



Interagency Collaboration Committee Meeting Recap

May 12, 2025, 1:30 PM

Members Present (7): Amber Gillum, Department of Social Services; Eric Bellamy, Children's Trust; Solandra Bowman, SC Educational Television; Jennifer Buster, Department of Health and Human Services; Anita Ellison-Porter, Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities; Jennifer Jaques, Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities; Jacob Myers, Department of Public Health

Members Absent (6): Leesa Aiken, SC State Library; Mary Lynne Diggs, Head Start Collaboration Office; Matthew Ferguson, Department of Education; Berry Kelly, Department of Health; Kristen Shealy, Department of Public Health; Dannielle Wingo, Department of Public Health

Staff Present (6): Ann Vandervliet, Beth Moore, Rachal Hatton-Moore, Karen Oliver, Chelsea Richard, Kaitlyn Richards

Welcome: ICC Chair Amber Gillum convened the meeting at SC First Steps.

SC Birth through Five Plan: 2025 Progress Report: Karen Oliver proposed reviewed agreed upon steps to produce the Birth through Five Plan 2025 Report. ECAC/ICC partners would share early childhood data, 2025-2026 budget and 2024-2025 accountability in September for compilation. ICC and ECAC partners would share reports as they are submitted to the legislature. Amber Gillum proposed that if reports are prepared in phases, the data and information relating to early childhood could be sent in advance. She also proposed that if more detailed information is available through other reports and sources, that information would be useful to share as well. ECAC staff would use data to identify priorities information consultation with ICC. ICC will receive a draft report for review in November. ECAC will receive the report at its December meeting. Contents will include 2024-2025 achievements, and ECAC priorities for 2025-2026.

Discussion/Feedback: First Steps Strategic Plan: Ann Vandervliet reviewed the proposed First Steps 2025 strategic plan with ICC. She asked if important tactics and measures were missing. Feedback from this discussion may inform the final draft of the First Steps Strategic Pla. The group discussed the value of including data relating to:

- Nutritional services and uptake
- The work of the Pediatric Advisory Committee, formerly the Child Well-being Coalition
- Progress of the developmental registry solicited by Department of Public Health
- Service, uptake and open slots for families in home visiting program

Strengthening SC's Early Childhood System: Discussion from the strategic plan led to deeper discussion about the larger, early childhood system. Discussion included:

- Waitlists and the Fast Track program in BabyNet. Jennifer Buster will follow up with additional data about the program.
- Child care access continues to be a challenge.
- SC Infant Mental Health Association (SCIMHA) and SC Inclusion Collaborative attend to coaching and consultation regarding behaviors and special needs in child care settings. There was discussion about value of meeting with these organizations to understand how special needs and behaviors, or lack of resources and training to attend to these needs, impacts workforce and turnover.
- Public awareness about early childhood, services and supports is important. How are partners measuring public awareness? Many partners use newsletter opens, and webpage clicks as proxy as indicators.
 - Second Street quizzes were noted as a resource. Salandra Bowman, ETV, offered to work with partners, perhaps through Communications Roundtable, to support this work.
 - There was general consensus that we could do more to cross promote early childhood work and information.

Next Steps and Follow-up :

- Please update contact information, including address and phone numbers if changed. A number of ECAC partners moved to Otter Drive and are now part of a single organization.
- Please share information, weblinks preferable, to research, reports, strategic plans that are shared/submitted to federal funders. Collecting and synthesizing this information will inform 2026 Birth through Five Plan priorities.

ICC Meeting Dates

- August 6, 1:30 PM at First Steps
- November 4, 1:30 PM at First Steps
- February 9 or 16, 1:30 PM at First Steps
- April 13 or 20, 1:30 PM at First Steps
- For the months the legislature is in session, we agreed to meet on Mondays.



SC Early Childhood Advisory Council: Staff Report

Presented June 19, 2025

1. Increase Utilization of SC's Early Childhood Resources and Services

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

- An automated messaging system was launched June 3. Surveys will be sent to active users to learn more about portal visitors who complete screens and visitors who do not. From June 3- June 10, 100 people received texts or emails. Among those 100 people, only 23 completed the screener. First Five staff will have the opportunity to follow up with both completers and non-completers to learn what supports are needed in completing the screener and the application.
- An internal evaluation of First Five for SC is in development. Listening sessions are planned through August. The listening sessions, surveys delivered through the messaging system, and website use will provide rich data about what parents need and want when they are looking for programs and services.

B. Pre-K Enrollment Day

On April 4, partners shared 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 also shared the message.

C. Ready for Kindergarten

- Ready for Kindergarten Live took place Friday, April 25. More than 130 people participated in the free virtual event to learn more on kindergarten readiness.
- 33,000 Ready for Kindergarten magazines, updated for 2025, were distributed. Magazines were distributed through public school CERDEP programs, First Steps 4K CERDEP classrooms, Head Start centers, PASOs, and members of the statewide Ready for Kindergarten Transitions Committee. The magazines were published in both English and Spanish.

D. Palmetto Pre-K Keep Jammin'

On May 16, more than 160 teachers and supporters of 4-year-olds attended a free, one-hour deeper-look into a selected topic from the Spring Palmetto Pre-K Jamboree held in March. Survey respondents enjoyed the session and appreciated having the resources for their classroom.

2. Support Collaboration within SC's Early Childhood System

A. Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS)

Molly Tuck, Strategic Data Fellow, has begun work on her Strategic Data Project (SDP), a capstone project required of the fellowship. Tuck's proposed capstone will create use case applications that analyze longitudinal data from the SC ECIDS program to answer one of the key questions under the data governance framework: *Are those enrolled in early childhood programs on track to succeed?* Her first use case intends to study how different combinations of early childhood services help to predict student attendance and KRA outcomes. This information will allow policymakers and program leaders to better understand what works for who and in what contexts. Tuck will share findings with the ECAC in the coming months.

Background about SDP: The SDP Fellowship is an intensive capacity-building program that selects and places data strategists in education agencies so they may have an immediate impact on policy decisions that affect student outcomes. Based at the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University, the fellowship includes extensive training in measurement and analysis, leadership and change management, and education policy. The program leverages SDP's extensive network of experts, faculty, and more than 500 fellows across nearly 300 partner organizations.

B. Landscape Analysis

In South Carolina there are a number of initiatives or work groups dedicated to one or more factors impacting young children and their families. These groups, as well as programs within state agencies, produce plans and make reports relating to their spheres of influence. To understand the depth and breadth of this work, Emma Matzko, ECAC VISTA, and Cortni Jones, Health Care Assistant, have undertaken a landscape analysis. The purpose of the analysis is to inventory the work in South Carolina, highlight where services for young children and their families intersect, and identify gaps or opportunities for more collaborative engagement.

A total of 46 plans and reports were identified, with 19 focused on Early Education and Development, four on Family and Community, 17 on Health and Wellbeing, and 6 grouped as another area of interest. Key next steps include reviewing, analyzing, and synthesizing report and initiative data, then sharing findings with ICC and ECAC partners. These findings may inform efforts to improve and enhance a more strategically aligned network.