

Your Child Matters.

School Readiness Matters.

WELCOME TO First Steps 4K!

We're excited to partner with you during this important year of learning and growth.

What is School Readiness?

Every child develops at their own pace, and readiness looks different for everyone. School readiness isn't just about what children know, it simply means your child is eager to learn and go to school.

Little everyday things at home help kids get ready for school:

- Sharing stories and singing songs
- Reading together often
- Drawing pictures
- Playing games that involve counting or patterns
- Running, jumping, and climbing
- Having regular check-ups at the doctor
- Eating healthy foods
- Washing hands, brushing teeth, and dressing independently
- Keeping a consistent bedtime

Why Does It Matter?

Children who enter school ready to learn are more likely to succeed in kindergarten and beyond. Early experiences lay the foundation for lifelong learning.

In a recent analysis, we learned that 74% of children who achieved "demonstrated readiness" on SC's kindergarten readiness assessment (KRA) also achieve 3rd grade reading and math benchmarks.

When a child actively participates in a high-quality preschool program, they are more likely to exhibit positive behaviors at home.

How First Steps 4K Helps

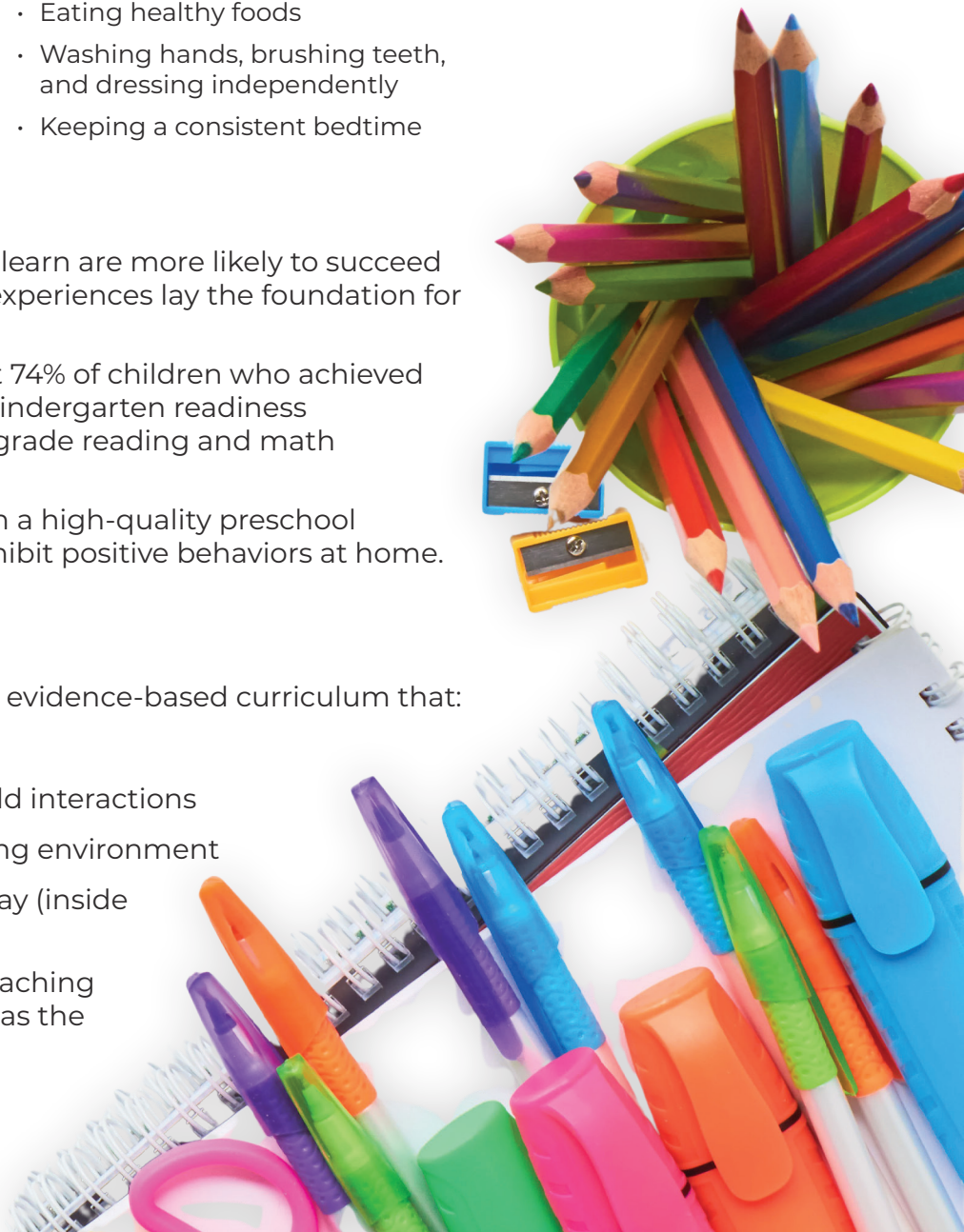
The First Steps 4K program uses an evidence-based curriculum that:

- ✓ Guides daily instruction
- ✓ Promotes nurturing teacher-child interactions
- ✓ Provides a safe, engaging learning environment
- ✓ Encourages learning through play (inside and outside)!

Our 4K sites receive high-quality coaching and training to ensure every child has the best possible learning experience.

How to Use This Handbook

- Refer to routines and expectations regularly.
- Try suggested tips and strategies at home.
- Write notes or questions in the Parent Notes section.



Supporting Your Child At Home

ReadyRosie is Here for You!



Scan the QR code to watch a welcome video and access fun, simple activities to support learning at home.



Once your child begins the year, the teacher will provide an invitation for you to continue with ReadyRosie. (She is fun!)

Other Tips for Enjoying the 4K Experience

- Read books about starting school
- Review and talk about the daily schedule
- Bring a family picture for the family board
- Bring a change of clothing
- Share about your own positive learning experiences

Attendance Matters

Consistent attendance helps your child build routines, relationships, and confidence.

Make sure your child attends school every day and is on time.

First Steps 4K policy states that students who miss more than 10 days of school will lose their First Steps 4K tuition.

The 4K day starts at: _____

The 4K day ends at: _____

My child is considered tardy after: _____

Healthy Routines to Get Ready for the First Day of School

8 AM	Class time usually begins
10 AM	Break and snack
11 AM	Lunch time
12 PM	Rest time
1 PM	Music and movement
1:30 PM	Storytelling
2 PM	Outdoor play time
2:30 PM	Exploring and learning time (lots of play!)
3 PM	Break and snack
3:30 PM	Talk about your day so far and what you've been learning
5 PM	Healthy dinner together
7 PM	Bath and story time (enjoy these moments!)
7:30-8 PM	Bedtime

Children around age 4 typically need 10-12 hours of sleep, which may include a rest of no more than 45 minutes to an hour a day.



Parents Are a Child's First Teacher

TIPS FOR CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS

Give clear, simple directions in a calm and loving tone
(one step at a time)



When we get home, put your backpack away.



Notice and praise positive behavior



I saw you put your backpack away. Great job listening to directions!



Offer choices to build independence



Would you like to read a book or sing a song?



Developmental Milestones

How your child plays, learns, speaks, and acts offers clues about your child's development. Developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age.

One in five children will experience some sort of developmental delay. If you have any concerns, talk with your pediatrician.

To learn more about developmental milestones or to request a screening, visit HelpMeGrowSC.org.

Partnering with Families

Family-Teacher Conferences

Conferences are held three times a year to discuss your child's progress. Two family engagement workshops are hosted each year to support parents, caregivers, and other family members. We truly enjoy getting to know your family!

- I attended the Fall Conference
- I attended the Winter Conference
- I attended the Spring Conference
- I attended the Family Engagement Workshop #1
- I attended the Family Engagement Workshop #2

Additional Supports & Resources

FIRST FIVE SC



First Five SC makes it easy to find local services for your family. First Five SC takes the guesswork out of finding help. Use the QR code to get started.

FIRST STEPS LOCAL PARTNERS

Connect with your First Steps local partnership or SC Children's Trust Family Resource Center for parent education and support programs. Use the QR code to get started.



DOLLY PARTON IMAGINATION LIBRARY



Want a free book delivered to your home every month? Dolly Parton Imagination Library sends a book to your child each month until they are 5 years old. Use the QR code to get started.

Important Information

FIRST STEPS 4K+

If you have a child on Medicaid, you can apply directly for First Steps 4K + and, upon enrollment, may qualify for the SC Child Care Scholarship program. This can help cover extended care for your 4K student and siblings throughout the year.

SITE CHANGES

All First Steps 4K sites operate under contract with SC First Steps. If a contract ends for any reason, your family will be notified and given the opportunity to transfer to another 4K site.

WE ARE HERE FOR YOU!

If you have ideas, suggestions or questions about the First Steps 4K program, email us at Free4KSC@scfirststeps.org.

REPORTING ABUSE & NEGLECT

All First Steps 4K programs are mandated by law to report suspicion of child abuse or neglect.

Parent Notes

Use this space to write questions, reminders, or important information throughout the year.

First Day of School: _____

Last Day of School: _____

Holiday Schedule Notes: _____

Spring Break Dates: _____

Teacher Name: _____

School Phone Number: _____

Attendance Notes / Guidance: _____

Family-Teacher Conference Dates: _____

Family-School Partnership Agreement

Please sign a copy of this Agreement and return to your child's teacher.

The schools that are participating in 4K truly believe families are their child's first, longest lasting, and most important teachers. The selected schools see their role as that of a partner. The Family-School Partnership Agreement symbolizes this partnership. It is a document that outlines how families and teachers can share the responsibility for the success of each child.

Student's Name: _____

As a parent/guardian, I, _____ will strive to:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Believe my child can learn | <input type="checkbox"/> Read to my child daily and allow my child to see me read daily |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrate that I value education and that school is important | <input type="checkbox"/> Provide a home environment that encourages my child to do their best |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Make sure my child attends school every day and is on time. | <input type="checkbox"/> Provide structured sleeping and eating habits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Set aside time each day to talk with my child about their learning | <input type="checkbox"/> Attend conferences |

Signature: _____ Date: _____

As a teacher, I, _____ will strive to:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Believe that each child can learn | <input type="checkbox"/> Seek ways to engage families in the school program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Respect and value the uniqueness of each child and their family | <input type="checkbox"/> Schedule conferences to accommodate families' schedules |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provide a safe environment that promotes active hands-on learning | <input type="checkbox"/> Welcome the participation of families in the classroom and their support in helping their children succeed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provide frequent communication with newsletters, reports, and telephone calls | |

Signature: _____ Date: _____

