



Meeting of the Early Childhood Advisory Council

February 20, 2025, immediately following the SC First Steps Board Meeting

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

AGENDA

- I. **Call to Order and Approve Agenda**
Motion: To adopt the agenda as submitted.
- II. **Meeting Minutes**
Motion: To approve ECAC Minutes of December 4, 2024
Attachment: December 4, 2024, Minutes
- III. **Early Childhood Data Hub** (Molly Tuck)
- IV. **Agency Leaders Provide Updates on Matters Relating to the Early Childhood System**
- V. **Information**
ICC Report on Activities (Amber Gillum)
ECAC Report on Activities (Ann Vandervliet)
Attachment: ICC January Meeting Summary
Attachment: ECAC February 2025 Report
- VI. **Adjourn Motion:** To adjourn the meeting of the Early Childhood Advisory Council



Early Childhood Advisory Council Meeting

December 4, 2024, immediately following the SCFS Board of Trustees Meeting
SC First Steps
Minutes

Council Members Present (17):

Dr. Robert Bank
Jacque Curtin
Mary Lynne Diggs
Constance Holloway
Mike Leach
David Lisk
Jessica Mackey
Jack McBride
Dave Morley, Chairman

Janie Neeley
Dorothy Priestler
Roger Pryor
Mary Anne Scott
Dr. Ed Simmer
Wes Wooten
Sue Williams
Dr. Amy Williams, Vice Chair

Council Members Absent (6):

Rep. Terry Alexander
Rep. Shannon Erickson
Dr. Matthew Ferguson
John Hayes
Sen. Greg Hembree
Eunice Medina

Attendees (56)

Ann Vandervliet
Mark Barnes
Avian Jones
Chelsea Richard
Derek Cromwell
Martha Strickland
Karen Oliver
Kaitlyn Richards
Kristine Jenkins
David O'Kelly
Molly Tuck
Betty Gardiner
Jim Riddle
Laura Baker
Samantha Ingram
Alexis Pipkins
Amira Hulwe
Aubrielle Kituuma
Benjamin Hall
Cheryl Scales
Cindy Galloway
Emma Matzko
Felicia Battle
Gina Beebe
Gloria Goodwin
Jade Wright
Jaiden Branch

Janice Kilburn
Jenny May
Jon Artz
Joy Mazur
Kathy Fitzgerald
Kenna Hoover
Kerry Cordan
Kristen Martocchio
Kristi Richardson
LaMyra Sanders-Dukes
Lawanda Jones
Leila Jacobs
Lis Guimaraes
Mary Laney
Melissa Sander
Michelle Bowers
Pauletta Plowden
Rachal Hatton-Moore
Rhonda Kelsey
Sally McClellan
Sarah Crawford
Senekita Farmer
Shayla Pettigrew
Stacy Greenwalt
Teneshia Slempe
Tiffany Outlaw
Tyshica McConner

Valencia Johnson
Vanessa Earle



The meeting was called to order at 3:01 p.m.

Mr. Lisk provided the motion to adopt the agenda, seconded by Mr. Wooten, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Dr. Williams provided a motion to approve the October 17, 2024 minutes, seconded by Mr. Wooten, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Tuck presented an Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) policy to be approved.

Dr. Williams made a motion to approve the SC ECIDS Sustainability Policy. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lisk and unanimously approved.

Ms. Tuck provided information on her background and her role as the Harvard Strategic Data Fellow.

Ms. Williams shared a shoutout to the First Steps First Five team.

Mr. Leach shared that DSS presented their budget to the Governor's office that included requests for child welfare, adult protective services, domestic violence, and child care. DSS asked for over \$30 million related to child care: \$26 million for the child care wage bonus, \$1 million for a tri-share child care pilot model, and additional funding for vouchers. He shared that DSS has also asked for funding for in-home visiting programs, with a philanthropy partner that will match that for at least up to 10 years. He asked for support in crafting a narrative between DSS, Children's Trust, and SC First Steps. He also shared that there is a report available on the use of covid federal dollars for childcare.

Ms. Diggs shared that Charleston early head start childcare partnership is a new grantee under Skycap. She also shared that the Migrant Head Start Program moved from Charleston to Columbia because there are more migrant children in the Saluda area than any other part of the State. As a result, Richland County First Steps is an early head start grantee. She also shared that there are now new Head Start performance standards.

Dr. Simmer shared information about DPH's pre and postnatal mobile unit, to serve 14 counties that do not have obstetric care. He stated that DPH is requesting for over \$1 million for the Hear Her campaign. He stated that there has been a significant increase in WIC participants and DPH has received \$12 million from the federal government for WIC and DPH has asked the legislature for permission to use the funds.

Ms. Oliver reported on the activities of the ECAC and ICC and shared analytics on Palmetto PreK and First Five SC. She shared information on the Summit on Early Childhood and thanked ECAC agency partners that are sponsors of the summit.

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

The meeting adjourned at 3:24 p.m.



**Interagency Collaboration Committee
Meeting Recap
January 6, 2025, 1:30 PM**

Present: Amber Gillum, Department of Social Services; Leesa Aiken, SC State Library; Solandra Bowman, SC Educational Television; Jennifer Buster, Department of Health and Human Services; Mary Lynne Diggs, Head Start Collaboration Office; Anita Ellison-Porter, Department of Mental Health; Jennifer Jaques, Department of Disabilities and Special Needs; Berry Kelly, Department of Public Health;

Absent: Eric Bellamy, Children’s Trust; Matthew Ferguson, Department of Education; Kristen Shealy, Department of Public Health; Ann Vandervliet, SC First Steps/ECAC

ECAC Staff: Laura Baker, Alissa Durham, Emma Matzko (VISTA), Rachal Hatton-Moore, Karen Oliver

WELCOME

ICC Chair Amber Gillum convened the meeting at SC Department of Disabilities and Special Needs.

BIRTH THROUGH FIVE PLAN

Karen Oliver proposed aligning B5 reporting with state agency reports that are due in September. ECAC/ICC partners would share early childhood data in September for compilation. ICC would receive a draft report for review in late September/early October. ECAC would receive the report at its October meeting. Contents will include 2024-2025 achievements, shared priorities for 2025-2026 (as expressed in 2025-2026 budgets), and updates on B5 Plan measures (the seven measures of progress)

ICC members agreed this timeline worked for them. Many operate on a July-June fiscal year, such that year end data would be available.

ECAC will offer a Birth through Five Plan Progress Brief for February. Contents will include data and reporting related to 2024 priorities. A draft report will be available for ICC review before January 31.

ICC MEETING DATES

Oliver proposed meeting three to four times per year. The ICC will meet in in January and May of this fiscal year, then August or September to discuss the Birth through Five Plan report. ICC members agreed that meeting less frequently would be more efficient but might require longer meetings.

STRENGTHENING SC’S EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM

ICC members agreed to develop an early childhood landscape to better understand the breadth and depth of services available to families with young children. ICC will share data and estimates relating to early childhood programs services and funding. The data generally will be readily available. ICC members agreed that data and funding information from previous years would be sufficient to start. ICC members also noted that it would be important to describe funding and eligibility restrictions for service. ECAC staff will follow up with individual ICC members.

ICC UPDATES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Coordinating Council on Workforce Development (CCWD) identified child care as an issue that impacts workforce. An ad hoc committee which includes Child Care Resource and Referral, First Steps and DSS is meeting to bring better attention to this issue to the CCWD.

Barnwell and Aiken have a new Head Start provider, Acelero.

ICC will meet the May 12, at 1:30 PM. SC First Steps will host the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 PM.



Staff Report on Early Childhood Advisory Council Activities February 2025

Research, Strategy, and Data Governance

The South Carolina Birth Through Five Plan Progress Brief is complete. This brief reports progress on priorities identified in 2024.

The Early Childhood Advisory Council website is being refreshed. Once completed, the updated website will host the ECAC Data Hub, a repository of early childhood data.

Family-Centered Practice

The Family Voice Council is welcoming several new members in 2025. The February meeting will be held with WIC, looking at communications with families and soliciting member feedback on WIC outreach efforts.

Streamlined Access to Services

Palmetto Pre-K (www.PalmettoPrek.org)

Palmetto PreK website:

July 1, 2024 – January 31, 2025

Unique website visitors: 22,826

Total Leads: 1,901

- Head Start eligible: 566
- Public School eligible: 347
- First Steps 4K eligible: 327
- SC DSS Working Families Child Care Scholarship eligible: 369

First Five SC (www.first5sc.org)

First Five SC Website:

July 1, 2024 – January 31, 2025

- Unique website visitors: 58,892
- Families that completed screener: 3,249
- Families eligible for at least one program: 2,498
- All program leads: 4,429

First Five SC Applications:

July 1, 2024 – January 31, 2025

Total Applications Received: 649

By program:

- First Steps Local Partnerships: 288
- SC Child Care Scholarships: 281
- WIC: 50
- First Steps 4K: 30

A First Five Stakeholder Engagement Report was released late December 2024. This report outlines the themes identified from a series of listening sessions and will inform future enhancements that better serve families using the First Five SC portal. The report can be found at:

https://issuu.com/scfirststeps1/docs/first_five_sc_stakeholder_engagement_report_2024_1

Two groups or cohorts integrated their publicly funded programs into the First Five common application by December 31, 2024. These groups represent school districts, Early Head Start and Head Start, and Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECH-V) parenting programs.

The team is onboarding its first of four groups planned for 2025.

Lexington School District 1	Piedmont Head Start
Clear Dot Charter School	GLEAMNS (Head Start)
Abbeville School District	Lancaster Early Head Start/Head Start (Southside)
Waccamaw Head Start	

The First Five SC teams is collecting requirements and agreements to begin a new group in March:

Barnwell School District	Calhoun School District
Chester School District	Saluda School District

Field Building and Professional Development

The Alliance for Early Success, ZERO TO THREE (ZTT) launched a community of practice (CoP) to grantees to elevate family voice and leadership in policymaking processes. Two representatives from SC First Steps / ECAC met their CoP colleagues in person in January, and will meet virtually through August 2025. Twelve states are participating in this project.

First Five SC and WIC will present at the National WIC Association Conference in April. Rachal Hatton-Moore, First Five SC project manager, Berry Kelly, WIC Director, and a Family Voice Council alum will offer a panel presentation to share how First Five offers easy access to critical programs and services.