

# SOUTH CAROLINA



## Meeting of the Early Childhood Advisory Council

April 26, 2019

11:00 a.m.

EdVenture Children's Museum, Canal Room, Columbia

I. Call to Order and Approve Agenda (Chip Stanley)

**Motion:** To adopt the agenda as submitted.

II. Approve February 2019 Minutes (Chip Stanley)

**Attachments:** February 2019 Minutes

III. Report from the Interagency Collaboration Committee (Dr. David Mathis)

**Attachments:** Interagency Collaboration Committee Report, Interagency Collaboration Minutes

**Action Item:**

\*Motion and second required:

The Early Childhood Advisory Council adopts the following shared goals:

1. South Carolina's children arrive at school ready to reach their highest potential.
2. South Carolina's youngest children are healthy and safe.
3. South Carolina's youngest children are actively supported by their families and communities.

IV. Pre-K 4: Joint Outreach and Coordinated Enrollment (Georgia Mjartan)

**Action Item:**

\*Motion and second required:

The Early Childhood Advisory Council commits to providing an organizational home for "Palmetto Pre-K," the joint outreach and coordinated enrollment effort for subsidized Pre-K 4 programs in South Carolina including hosting and maintaining a single portal for families to learn about and access these programs. This effort shall include CERDEP 4K programs, Head Start programs serving 4-year-olds, DSS-funded 4K slots (i.e. through childcare vouchers) and other subsidized 4-year-old programs including those offered by school districts utilizing EIA, district and Title I funding.

V. Outreach and Communications Committee (Georgia Mjartan)

An Outreach and Communications Committee is being formed with the purpose of supporting the development and ongoing maintenance of joint, interagency, statewide communications about early childhood programs, resources, efforts and the state's birth through five state system.

**Action:** Please sign up now to serve on this committee

VI. Adjourn

1300 Sumter Street • Concord Bldg., Suite 100 • Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
Phone 803-734-0479 • Fax 803-734-1431 • Web site [www.scfirststeps.org](http://www.scfirststeps.org)



**Early Childhood Advisory Council Meeting  
February 21, 2019  
2:00 PM  
IT-ology  
1301 Gervais St #200, Columbia, SC 29201**

**DRAFT MINUTES**

**Members Present (15):**

Chip Stanley, Chair  
Julie Hussey, Vice Chair  
Senator Greg Hembree  
Senator Gerald Malloy  
Representative Jerry Govan  
Josh Baker (Phone)  
Shelley Canright  
Mary Lynne Diggs  
Tim Holt  
David Mathis  
Jennifer McConnell  
Mary Poole  
Roger Pryor (Phone)  
Amy Williams  
Sue Williams

**Members Absent (4):**

Representative Rita Allison  
Angel Johnson-Brebner  
Walter Fleming Jr.  
Joan Meacham  
Alexia Newman

**Others Present:**

Georgia Mjartan  
Zack Catoe  
Bridgett Shealey  
Martha Strickland  
Debbie Robertson  
Mark Barnes  
Betty Gardiner  
Cassie Barber  
Lavinia Tejada

Mary Anne Mathews  
Porlan Cunningham  
Jonathan Artz  
Dorothy Priester  
Jim Riddle  
Lillian Peake



Ms. Julie Hussey called the meeting to order at 2:04 PM and introduced the room to Mr. Chip Stanley who was recently appointed by Governor Henry McMaster to be his designee as the Chairman of the Board. Each board member then introduced themselves to Mr. Stanley while providing a brief summary of their background as it relates to the early childhood field, and a glimpse into the work they may be doing personally or as an organization.

Ms. Georgia Mjartan introduced two new SC First Steps staff members: Ms. Porlan Cunningham, Communications Director, and Ms. Beth Moore, Local Partnership Communications Coordinator. Ms. Mjartan briefly highlighted the previous work and achievements of the new employees and acknowledged how their skill sets will aid the agency in closing the gaps for 4K enrollment, improving communications between local partnerships and community supporters, and provide enhanced public transparency as an organization. Ms. Mjartan also added that these new staff members, along with the organization, Mad Monkey, will be instrumental in the development of a new website that will support the efforts of SC First Steps and the ECAC.

Ms. Hussey stated that a quorum was present and called for a motion to approve the agenda as submitted for the meeting; with a second from Senator Greg Hembree, the agenda was approved unanimously.

The meeting opened for public comment. No members of the public present wished to speak.

Ms. Hussey next called for a motion to approve the minutes from the December 7, 2018 meeting. Mr. Tim Holt made a motion to accept the minutes from the December meeting and Dr. Shelley Canright seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Dr. David Mathis was welcomed to the floor and provided the board with a report from the Interagency Collaboration Committee. Dr. Mathis commented that the group is now formally organized and noted that the committee has chosen to take a collaborative focus on the data housed at each organization and further commented on how this information can strongly advise future decisions.

Ms. Cassie Barber, Program Manager for the Early Childhood Advisory Council, was introduced and provided an update on the \$3.5 million Preschool Development Grant, Birth through Five (PDG), that was awarded to South Carolina. For this grant, the Department of Social Services will be the lead agency and SC First Steps will receive \$1.5 million in funding. A handout was provided to the board which outlined the top ten projected outcomes for the SC Preschool Development Grant by February 2020. Ms. Barber also announced that a one-month extension in grant proceedings is expected due to delays in



the federal process. Ms. Barber also noted that all states receiving a grant were required to amend their budgets in order to account for a 29% reduction in grant funds.

As part of Ms. Barber's presentation, it was reported that there will be a comprehensive needs assessment completed on South Carolina's entire Early Childhood system which will focus on Early Care and Education, Health and Wellbeing, and Family and Community. The Research Evaluation and Measurement (REM) team at the University of South Carolina Education Policy Center has been contracted along with Clemson University, College of Charleston, and Francis Marion University to conduct regional work. SC First Steps Local Partnerships and Head Start are enlisted to provide a local perspective. The goal is to collect comprehensive data from local, regional, and state levels from all who are involved in early childhood service delivery. Regional meetings will be held in March, April, and May and will be based on the Harwood Institute's Community Conversations. There will be guides to do surveys, interviews, and focus groups to attain and develop consistent information across the populations.

The data collected from this needs assessment will be used to develop a comprehensive Birth through Five strategic plan. Ms. Peggy Ball of the Build Early Childhood Initiative will be the point person responsible for assembling this information collected from the regional meetings.

In the next item, Ms. Barber revealed plans to review and renovate the SC First Steps Outcomes and Accountability Database. Ms. Barber further eludes to a recent meeting with information technology professionals at the S.C. Department of Education and discussed plans to acquire a Data Systems Analyst that can design an ideal database to measure desired outcomes for the Local Partnership and 4K teams. This position would be a funded by the Preschool Development Grant.

Ms. Mjartan reiterated the concept that the grant funding is for the analysis and development of the database and funding for implementation will be requested from the state legislature.

Ms. Barber continued her presentation by discussing the integration of the early childhood data system. The goal for the next year would be to develop a scope to include a governance structure and protocols for sharing of data between and among agencies. Through the PDG, the Department of Revenue and Fiscal Affairs is hiring a Business Analyst and a Statistician to help coordinate a needs assessment of network participation.

With the data system in mind; Ms. Hussey, Ms. Mjartan, and Ms. Barber shared some reflective thoughts from their recent trip to the state of Georgia where they enjoyed the opportunity to view a highly effective state-wide portal for early childhood services and discussed collaborative opportunities with South Carolina's Early Childhood stakeholders





participating on the trip. The Georgia web portal will act as inspiration for what the ECAC would like to see implemented in South Carolina.

Ms. Barber next discussed the need for smoother transitions for children. Ms. Barber's discussed examples like transitioning from IDEA Part C to IDEA Part B services and well as encouraging partners to use proven programs such as Pyramid Model or Countdown to Kindergarten among other programs. Ms. Barber elaborated that smoother transitions could provide more training opportunities for instructors, demonstrate the value of Pre-K to schools, and integrate these programs in at least 50% of communities statewide.

Ms. Barber noted that the web presence for SC First Steps and the Early Childhood Advisory Council is currently minimal; however, new websites will be developed along with a web portal to serve as an all-encompassing resource that includes a SC Pre-K portal, a collaborative network of all Pre-K programs statewide. The new website will also contain active links to provide information about all ECAC agencies and their early childhood programs available to help families across the state.

In discussing the subject of best practices, Ms. Barber describes the idea of a summer professional development academy open to all pre-k teachers in the state of South Carolina. Ms. Barber mentioned that during this academy Conscious Discipline would be offered to every practicing pre-k teacher, as well as training by the Children's Trust staff on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Additionally, there would be many opportunities for professional development in the coming months across numerous programs.

Ms. Barber next provided confirmation that the Federal Government administering the grant does not require an evaluation on the first year of the grant; however, SC First Steps has decided to conduct an evaluation. Ms. Barber noted that the evaluation would serve to ensure that the work through the PDG is headed in the right direction now and in the coming years. Only half of the states awarded this grant in 2019 will be funded with a continuation grant and the goal is to be as competitive as possible for these grants in years two through four. An evaluation of the program could immensely improve the chances of qualifying for funding in subsequent years.

Ms. Barber closed her presentation by speaking about the joint Pre-K outreach and collaboration among agencies. She highlighted the need for "System-Navigators" within each stage of the early childhood process to help direct parents and families to the most appropriate and beneficial program for them. Lastly, Ms. Barber applauded the "No Wrong Door" approach the ECAC has adopted and expressed the benefits of working together to provide a mixed-delivery service to the families of the state.

Following the close of Ms. Barber's presentation, Ms. Sue Williams mentioned the upcoming South Carolina Child Well-Being Coalition and stated that most people are confused by all the coalitions and that there needs to be a way to offer information of all services available



to families. Ms. Williams also mentioned that there is a company called “Aunt Bertha” which is a web-based data system that connects people to all services in an area by searching with a zip code. The website, AuntBertha.com, is a free service that is available to the public now and updated on a weekly basis. It was created to help offer services for all families. Ms. Williams stated that it would be wonderful to have a similar program like this available for families in South Carolina.

Ms. Mjartan thanked Ms. Barber for her presentation and stated that as this grant unfolds, she would like to see this Board take ownership of this collective work. Ms. Mjartan shared her feelings of encouragement following the work of the Interagency Collaboration Committee, and she identified that the ECAC is ready to adopt two new sub-committees: an Outreach and Engagement Subcommittee to aid in the creation of web portals and develop the collective identity of the ECAC moving forward and a Data Governance Subcommittee comprised of all agency heads and selected data professionals in order to develop a plan on how data should be shared to support the work of the ECAC.

Dr. David Mathis emphasized the importance of the Data Governance Subcommittee and having personnel who work with data join the subcommittee in order to utilize such information in the best way possible.

Ms. Sue Williams identified the work of SC Kids Count as a similar resource that includes all of the data housed at the state agencies.

Ms. Mjartan elaborated on the topic of data governance and how resources are currently used to provide context on early childhood programs; however, these programs do not have the ability to openly share data as each agency has its own individual agreements and legal requirements. The ECAC Data Governance Subcommittee would serve to structure and govern the data-sharing process while supplementing existing efforts.

Ms. Hussey reflected that the citizens of South Carolina want to see the agencies work together and emphasized the significance of working together in a collaborative effort instead of attempting to create a new cabinet or agency.

The Early Childhood Advisory Council meeting was adjourned at 2:58 PM by Ms. Julie Hussey.



To: Early Childhood Advisory Council  
From: Dr. David Mathis, Chair, Interagency Collaboration Committee  
Date: April 26, 2019

**RE: Report of the Interagency Collaboration Committee**

The Interagency Collaboration Committee held their regular bi-monthly meeting on Monday, March 25, 2019 at the Department of Disabilities and Special Needs. Thanks to Mary Poole for hosting us.

Committee members shared individual agency goals related to children prenatal through age five and discussed ways in which partner agencies can support and assist one another in achieving those goals. Members agreed to focus on developing shared early childhood interagency goals within three focused categories: 1) Early Care and Education, 2) Health and Well-Being, and 3) Family and Community.

The ECAC previously adopted the vision statement, **"We will be successful when all children reach their highest potential."** In keeping with the established vision statement and inclusive of the myriad goals and strategies of the member agencies, the committee proposes the following overarching, shared interagency goals for adoption by the Early Childhood Advisory Council.

**Action Item:**

The Early Childhood Advisory Council adopts the following shared goals:

1. South Carolina's children arrive at school ready to reach their highest potential.
2. South Carolina's youngest children are healthy and safe.
3. South Carolina's youngest children are actively supported by their families and communities.

\*This action requires a motion and a second.



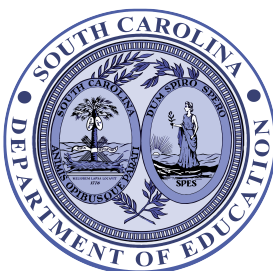
SOUTH CAROLINA

# Early Childhood Advisory Council

“We will be successful when all children reach their highest potential.”

*Vision Statement for South Carolina’s Birth through Five State System,  
adopted by the SC Early Childhood Advisory Council*

The South Carolina Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) includes the directors of state agencies and government entities that provide services to young children including DSS, DHEC, DHHS, the Children’s Trust, the Head Start Collaboration Office and South Carolina First Steps, which is the connector and convener of all early childhood serving agencies.



ECAC legislation available here:

[https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess120\\_2013-2014/bills/3721.htm](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess120_2013-2014/bills/3721.htm)



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## THE PURPOSE OF THE ECAC IS TO CARRY OUT THE FOLLOWING FUNCTIONS:

Conduct a periodic statewide needs assessment concerning the quality and availability of early childhood education and development programs and services for children from birth to the age of school entry, including an assessment of the availability of high-quality prekindergarten services for low income children in the State;

Identify opportunities for, and barriers to, collaboration and coordination among federally funded and state-funded child development, child care, and early childhood education programs and services, including collaboration and coordination among state agencies responsible for administering these programs;

Develop recommendations for increasing the overall participation of children in existing federal, state, and local child care and early childhood education programs, including outreach to underrepresented and special populations;

Develop recommendations regarding the establishment of a unified data collection system for public early childhood education and development programs and services throughout the State;

Develop recommendations regarding statewide professional development and career advancement plans for early childhood educators in the State;

Assess the capacity and effectiveness of two-year and four-year public and private institutions of higher education in the State for supporting the development of early childhood educators, including the extent to which these institutions have in place articulation agreements, professional development and career advancement plans, and practice or internships for students to spend time in a Head Start or prekindergarten program;

Make recommendations for improvements in state early learning standards and undertake efforts to develop high-quality comprehensive early learning standards, as appropriate;

Develop and publish, using available demographic data, an indicators-based measure of school readiness at the state and community level;

Incorporate, within the periodic statewide needs assessments required in 42 U.S.C. Section 9837b, any data related to the capacity and efforts of private sector providers, Head Start providers, and local school districts to serve children from birth to age five, including fiscal, enrollment, and capacity data; and

Perform all other functions, as permitted under federal and state law, to improve coordination and delivery of early childhood education and development to children in this State.