



MEETING AGENDA

Thursday, December 4, 2025

Immediately following the SC First Steps Board of Trustees Meeting

- I. **Call to Order and Approve the Agenda** David Morley, Chair
Motion: To adopt the agenda as submitted
- II. **Meeting Minutes**
Motion: To adopt ECAC meeting minutes from September 18, 2025
- III. **Economic Impact of Child Abuse and Neglect** Sue Williams
Chief Executive Officer, Children's Trust of SC
- IV. **Collaborative Communications Roundtable** Bett Williams
Chief Communications Officer, Children's Trust of SC
- V. **Interagency Collaboration Committee Update** Ann Vandervliet, Agency Director
- VI. **Adjournment** Chairman Morley
Motion: To adjourn the meeting of the SC Early Childhood Advisory Council

Attachments: ECAC Meeting Minutes for September 18, 2025; ICC Meeting Minutes for November 4, 2025



Minutes from the September 18, 2025 Meeting

Council Members Present (16): Rep. Terry Alexander, Frances Anderson, Tony Cantone, Jacque Curtin, Mary Lynne Diggs, Dr. James Durant, John Hayes, Sen. Greg Hembree, David Lisk, Dorothy Priester, Jack McBride, Roger Pryor, Dr. Edward Simmer, Wes Wooten, Dr. Amy Williams (Vice Chair), Sue Williams

Council Members Absent (9): Dr. Robert Bank, Sen. Jason Elliott, Rep. Shannon Erickson, Constance Holloway, Jesica Mackey, Eunice Medina, Dave Morley (Chairman), Janie Neeley, Mary Anne Scott

Others Present (31): Austin Reed, Beth Moore, Betty Washington, Bradley Harris, Candi Lalonde, Cheryl Scales, Crystal Campbell, Delores Rock, Emily Prillaman, Gina Beebe, Haymee Guiliani, Iris Ballen-Morant, Jabari Bodrick, Jenny May, Jessica Fluker, Jon Artz, Karen Oliver, Kate Roach, Katrina Valliere, Kenna Hoover, Kerry Cordan, Kim Chariker, Kim Trudell, Kristen Martocchio, LaMyra Sanders-Dukes, Laura Baker, Lexi Jones, Marietta Melton Burch, Rachal Hatton-Moore, Samantha Ingram, Sarah Eargle

The meeting was called to order at 2:58 p.m.

Vice Chair Dr. Amy Williams asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Ms. Dorothy Priester made the motion, seconded by Mr. David Lisk. The motion was unanimously approved.

Dr. Williams asked for a motion to approve the June 19, 2025, minutes. Ms. Priester made the motion, seconded by Mr. Lisk. The motion was unanimously approved.

Kerrie Schnake, SC Infant Mental Health Association, CEO, gave an update on the Partners for Early Attuned Relationships (PEAR) Program. She shared that the PEAR program decreased both program- and child-level expulsion and suspension risk, reduced challenging behaviors, and minimized exclusionary discipline.

ECAC agencies provided the following updates:

SC Department of Education Director of Office of Instructional Supports, Alisha Green, Ed.D., shared that the SC General Assembly approved a Proviso last year requiring school districts to share 4K wait lists with First Steps 4K. A pilot is underway in Aiken and Lexington 1 to refine the process for sharing referral.

Ann Vandervliet, agency director, reported on the activities of the Interagency Collaboration Committee. Roughly 12 significant planning documents were found across five broad categories: Early Care and Education, Food and Nutrition, Health and Safety, Parenting and Family Support, and Special Needs and Early Intervention. She shared how the working groups contribute to the Strategic Plan.

Amber Gillum, SCDSS Deputy State Director Economic Services, shared results from Untapped Potential. The report found that disruptions in childcare costs South Carolina's economy approximately \$997 million dollars annually.

Sue Williams, Children's Trust CEO, shared that this year's Home Visiting Summit was successful. Next year's summit will occur in Columbia in August. She also shared that Triple P will be expanded but the budget was smaller than anticipated.

Dr. Edward Simmer, Department of Public Health Agency Director, shared that mobile health units are now providing services. The department is working with HealthySC to create a dashboard of accessible data on their website.

Mary Lynn Diggs, SC Head Start Director, made the reminder that the ECAC is in the Head Start Act, so it may be helpful to include Head Start in the early childhood systems updates. She also shared that South Carolina belongs to a new Head Start region with North Carolina, Virginia, Florida, Maryland, Delaware, West Virginia, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, so services may differ.

Dr. Williams asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Lisk made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Priester. The motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 3:24 p.m.



**Interagency Collaboration Committee
Meeting Minutes
November 4, 2025, 1:30 PM**

Present:; Eric Bellamy, Children's Trust; Michele Bowers, SC Department of Social Services; Bryan Day, SC ETV; Mary Lynne Diggs, Stephanie Donald, Department of Health and Human Services (BabyNet); Anita Ellison-Porter, Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (Mental Health)Head Start Collaboration Office; Heather Googe, SC Child Care Inclusion Collaborative; Tammy Graham, SC Department of Education; Jennifer Jaques, Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (Disabilities); Berry Kelly, Department of Health; David Lisk, York County First Steps; Dorothy Priester, Cherokee County First Steps; Kristen Shealy, Department of Public Health; Ann Vandervliet, SC First Steps

Absent: Leesa Aiken, SC State Library; Solandra Bowman, SC Educational Television; Susan Callahan, Help Me Grow/ SC Infant Mental Health Association (SCIMHA); Amber Gillum, Department of Social Services; Erin Laughter, Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (Mental Health); Kerrie Schnake, SCIMHA;

Staff: Cortni Jones, Beth Moore, Karen Oliver, Martha Strickland, Molly Tuck

WELCOME

Ann Vandervliet welcomed participants. Children's Trust was thanked for hosting the meeting.

Early Childhood Landscape

Assessments of the early childhood landscape were shared with the group. Three documents were created to identify cross cutting themes and keywords across the range of plans and reports offered by ECAC partners. Artificial Intelligence (AI) was used to create two documents. A third document, a keyword per strategy list, was created by staff; AI completed a frequency count of the keywords.

ICC members reviewed the documents and offered additional resources to consider, ECAC staff will follow up with ICC partners to discuss findings, add funding information where possible, and begin the process of identifying priorities for the next Birth through Five Plan. Guidelines for adopting priorities should include that the goal or strategy

- Is measurable
- requires at least two (preferably three or more) partners' collaboration to effect change
- has (known) funding

Birth through Five Plan

ICC members briefly discussed the timeline for completing a new Brith through Five Strategic Plan. Consensus was that the plan should be ready for implementation July 1, 2026. Soliciting public feedback is imperative, and ECAC staff were encouraged not only to post the draft plan for public

comments but also include feedback from Joint Citizens and Legislative Committee on Children hearings, Head Start Policy Councils, and Family Resource Center families.

ICC Updates and Opportunities

Each ICC member provided brief updates about work of their organizations or workgroups in which they are involved. Updates included:

- Child Care Resource and Referral is helping parents find care if their Head Start programs are closed
- Many ICC members acknowledged the challenges of retaining staff. Recent needs assessments completed by First Steps local partnerships similarly reflect the challenges of retaining workforce.
- The SC Inclusion Collaborative continues to work with interested parties to assure smooth transitions of children from BabyNet (Part C) to Education Part B programs
 - o Community meetings provide an opportunity for ICC partners to collaborate in outreach and information sharing about early intervention.
- BabyNet and HHS are working to find ways to engage (process) children faster.
- A coalition to address child care access has been organized by SC DSS and the SC Chamber of Commerce.
- The B5 Communications Roundtable, a group comprised of ECAC/ICC staff, meets later in November. They will work to organize a shared content calendar and amplify messages relating to young children and their families.

ICC Meeting Dates

- Monday, February 9, 2026, 1:30 PM
- Monday, April 13, 2026, 1:30 PM
- Monday, June 1, 2026 1:30 PM