



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.