

South Carolina's Birth Through Five Plan 2023 Priorities

Operational Plan

The Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) identified a set of priorities that will significantly impact the lives of young children and their families in 2023. These priorities are both ambitious and essential, requiring the active participation and collaboration of the ECAC and its partners to be fully implemented.

1. Increase participation in publicly funded preschool programs

- Key Drivers:** Palmetto PreK Committee
Department of Education, First Steps, Head Start, Department of Social Services
- Tactics:** Study reasons why eligible families do not participate in preschool programs
Determine where and how participation can be increased

2. Increase availability of quality child care, particularly in high need areas

- Key Driver:** Department of Social Services
- Tactics:** Offer start-up grants for new providers
Offer grants to current providers for quality improvements
Develop substitute teacher pool program

3. Recruit and retain early education professionals

- Key Driver:** Preschool Development Grant Workforce Workgroup
- Tactics:** Provide bonuses, scholarships, credentialing opportunities and other compensation incentives
Expand and update articulation agreements between higher education institutions
Support early educators through training, coaching and consultation

4. Provide families with the ability to apply for publicly funded programs at times and in ways that meet their needs

- Key Drivers:** ECAC Partners
- Tactics:** Increase the breadth of programs available on the common application, including through the addition of Children's Trust partners
Pilot local integration of school district early childhood programs, Head Start, and Early Head Start

5. Collect, integrate, and share data to better understand who is served, where service gaps exist, and where to target resources and services

- Key Drivers:** Early Learning Extension and Palmetto Drive to Five Data Governance Work Groups
- Tactics:** Launch the Palmetto Drive to 5 dashboard
Review Kindergarten Assessment Data presented by the Education Oversight Committee
Define and begin process to collect data that will answer the question "How many children are enrolled in early childhood programs?"