



Meeting of the Early Childhood Advisory Council

December 3, 2021, immediately following the SC First Steps Board Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83167970396?pwd=RFRxK3IEZGJacXRLdkR5ckRmT1dWdz09>

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order and Approve Agenda (David Morley)
Motion: To adopt the agenda as submitted.
- II. Meeting Minutes (David Morley)
Motion: To approve ECAC Minutes of October 21, 2021
Attachment: October 21, 2021 Minutes
- III. Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) (Georgia Mjartan)
Motion: To approve the recommended Data Governance Charter for the Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) developed by the Data Governance Work Group
Attachment: Data Governance Charter for the Early Childhood Integrated Data System
- IV. South Carolina's Birth through Five Plan (David Morley)
Motion: to add two key measures of success to the South Carolina Birth through Five
 1. While increasing kindergarten readiness for all students, reduce the disparity between Black and white kindergartners by 25%, from 18% to 13.5%, by 2027.
 2. While increasing kindergarten readiness for all students, reduce the disparity between Latino and white kindergartners by 25%, from 22% to 16.5%, by 2027.(Motion recommended by First Steps Executive Committee)
Attachment: Key Measures of Success Birth through Five Plan Update
- V. Launch of First Five SC (Georgia Mjartan)
First Five SC demonstration
- VI. Information
 - a. Report from the Interagency Collaboration Committee (David Mathis)
Attachment: Interagency Collaboration Committee Recap
 - b. ECAC Report on Activities, including Transitions Plan (Georgia Mjartan)
Attachments: Report on the Activities of the Early Childhood Advisory Council, Transitions Plan Draft
- VII. Adjourn (David Morley)
Motion: To adjourn the meeting of the Early Childhood Advisory Council



Early Childhood Advisory Council Meeting

October 21, 2021, immediately following the SCFS Board of Trustees Meeting
<https://zoom.us/j/92196505922?pwd=WnA4MFlYZWJXWmFJU21xK2YzWndFdz09>
Draft Minutes

Members Present (19):

Dave Morley, Chair
Dr. Shelley Canright
Sen. Gerald Malloy
Rep. Rita Allison
Dr. David Mathis
Robert Kerr
Mary Lynne Diggs
Sue Williams
Michael Leach

Dr. Edward Simmer
Walter Fleming
Tim Holt
Jennifer McConnell
Dr. Amy Williams
Jessica Mackey
John Hayes
Nicole Wynkoop
Alexia Newman

Roger Pryor

Members Absent (4):

Sen. Greg Hembree
Rep. Jerry Govan
Dr. Michelle Fry
Janie Neeley

Attendees (74):

Georgia Mjartan
Abby Thorman
A Brewton
Amanda D. Scott
Amber Gillum
Amy Engle
Avian Jones
Beth Moore
Betty Gardiner
Bett Washington
Bill Potapchuk
Blaine Van Dyne
Brittany Bush
Candi Lalonde
Carletta Isreal
Cassie Barber
Chastine Dickey-Jackson
Dr. Chelsea Richard
Cheryl Scales-Chavis
Christy Stanton
Cindy Ellis
Cindy Galloway
Cindy Kellett
Cindy Riley

Derek Cromwell
Dione Brabham
David Mathis
Dorian Young
Dorina Frase
Dorothy Priester
Eunice Medina
Gina Beebe
Janice Kilburn
Jared Busker
Jasmin Tucker
Jennifer Williams
Jon Artz
Joy Mazur
Joyce Kimrey
Justin Siuba
Karen Oliver
Kate Roach
Kathy Fitzgerald
Dr. Kerry Cordan
Kim Archung
Kim Trudell
Kristen Martocchio
LaMyra Sanders

Laura Baker
Lavinia Tejada
Leah Crosby
Leesa Aiken
Lexi Jones
Lis Guimaraes
Marc Drews
Mark Barnes
Martha Strickland
Marcia Cohens
Peggy Ball
Pierce McNair
Rachal Hatton-Moore
Rogers Pender
Rusty Monohollon
Sally Cauthen
Samantha Ingram
Sarah Crawford
Sarah Eargle
Shayla Pettigrew
Sheila Cornwell
SheKiah Reese
Stacy Greenwalt
Suzanne McGougan

Tiffany Outlaw
Valencia Johnson

Mr. Morley called the ECAC meeting to order at 3:06 p.m.



Dr. Canright asked for a motion to adopt the agenda. Mr. Holt provided the motion. Mr. Kerr provided a second and the motion was unanimously approved.

Dr. Canright asked for a motion to approve the August 19, 2021 minutes. Mr. Morley provided the motion. Ms. Williams provided the second and the motion was unanimously approved.

Bill Potapchuk of Community Building Institute presented the South Carolina Birth through Five plan.

Dr. Canright asked for a motion to approve the principles of the South Carolina Birth through Five Plan. Dr. Williams provided the motion. Ms. McConnell provided the second and the motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Pryor made a motion to accept all of the proposed key measures of success except item number 4. Dr. Simmer provided a second and the motion unanimously approved.

Dr. Canright asked for a motion to approve the objectives and strategies of South Carolina's Birth through Five Plan. Dr. Mathis provided the motion and Dr. Williams seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Mjartan presented on the ECAC report on activities by providing an update on the First5 SC, the Birth through Five Communications Roundtable, and the 2021 Summit on Early Childhood.

Dr. Canright asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Williams provided the motion. Mr. Holt provided a second and the motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned by Dr. Canright at 4:08 p.m.

South Carolina Early Childhood Integrated Data System

Data Governance Charter

SC ECIDS Data Governance Charter

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Definitions

- Agency - organization that houses a program
- Program - early childhood program serving children birth through five
- Member - individuals from the participating program and ancillary support in the Data Governance Work Group
- ECAC - South Carolina Early Childhood Advisory Council as codified in SC Code § 63-11-1725
- ECIDS - South Carolina Early Childhood Integrated Data System Framework
- Initiatives - funded projects with discrete deliverables
- DGWG - Data Governance Work Group

Version Control

Version	Date	Summary of Changes Made

SC ECIDS Data Governance Charter

I. Purpose

The Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) acknowledges that data is a critical asset as it supports evidence-based decision-making and drives informed action. The ECAC is committed to implementing inter-agency data governance structure and processes to support the South Carolina (SC) Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) and its linkage to future longitudinal data systems. Participating programs in the SC ECIDS seek to develop a common understanding of early childhood data that is collected across South Carolina and will work to resolve data issues to achieve higher data quality.

Purpose

To develop recommendations to the South Carolina Early Childhood Advisory Council for data governance and to operationalize the South Carolina Early Childhood Integrated Data System.

Mission

Establish and maintain a comprehensive infrastructure for integrated, accurate, and actionable data to support children, families, and communities in South Carolina.

Vision

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

Goals

1. Create standard definitions and reports for evidence-based decision making.
2. Achieve equity by supporting stakeholders in identifying and resolving disparities.
3. Inform policies and practices to support children, families, and communities.
4. Connect early childhood data into longitudinal data systems.
5. Understand the impacts of investment from Birth through Workforce.
6. Improve the quality of life for all South Carolinians.

The Data Governance Charter operationalizes the DGWG by authorizing the DGWD to establish data governance procedures, processes, and standards and affirms member's commitment to the SC ECIDS.

A. Program Responsibilities

Participating programs will adopt, communicate, and enforce the established data governance policies, procedures, processes, and standards at all levels of their program as data is an inter and intra-agency asset. Participating programs need to assign members to participate in the Data Governance Work Group.

1. Accountability to the ECAC

A participating program is accountable to the ECAC for the following:

- i. maintaining an agreement with the Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office for data sharing and integration into the SC Integrated Data System
- ii. attending regular project meetings, including annual on-site meetings and monthly meetings by member(s) designated by individual programs as their representatives
- iii. collecting and sharing data elements as agreed upon by the programs via the Data Governance Work Group
- iv. timely review of research requests
- v. requiring relevant staff be trained in data quality and system use and hosting trainings for staff and other stakeholders when necessary
- vi. providing accurate technical documentation

SC ECIDS Data Governance Charter

2. How to Participate

To participate, programs are required to:

1. Sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the ECAC to confirm agreement and adherence to the ECIDS Data Governance Charter and selecting members from the program to participate in the DGWG. This MOA is a 5-year agreement that can be amended and terminated.
2. Execute an agreement with the Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office to contribute agreed upon data.

B. Relevant State Legislation

The ECAC established a Data Governance Work Group on April 15, 2021 with responsibility and specific duties as described in the following Charter to accomplish the legislative goals codified in SC State Code (§63-11-1725), particularly goals:

- “(4) develop recommendations regarding the establishment of a unified data collection system for public early childhood education and development programs and services throughout the State;”
- “(8) develop and publish, using available demographic data, an indicators-based measure of school readiness at the state and community level.”

Access to early childhood data helps inform decisions related to early childhood education as outlined in the Education Accountability Act, SC State Code (§59-18-1950), effective June 10, 2017:

“(A) The General Assembly recognizes the importance of having a state longitudinal data system to inform policy and fiscal decisions related to early childhood education, public education, postsecondary preparedness and success, and workforce development.

(B)(1) The Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office, working with the Office of First Steps to School Readiness, the South Carolina Department of Education, the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, the Department of Social Services, the South Carolina Technical College System, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Employment and Workforce, and other state agencies or institutions of higher education, shall develop, implement, and maintain a universal identification system that includes, at a minimum, the following information for measuring the continuous improvement of the state public education system and the college and career readiness and success of its graduates:...”

“(2) All information disseminated will conform to state and federal privacy laws.”

II. Scope

On August 19, 2021, the ECAC adopted the below key questions to be answered by the ECIDS. These questions will be revisited quarterly by the DGWG to ensure continued alignment with the ECIDS mission. The participating programs will agree upon standard data elements (child, family, classroom, and workforce levels) to answer the adopted key questions. The questions will be tailored based on the goals of each initiative.

A. Definitions for the SC ECIDS Key Questions

- Young children is defined as children under age six in South Carolina.
- Early childhood programs is defined broadly, beyond state and federally funded programs.
- Counts seek to identify an unduplicated number.

B. Key Questions for the SC ECIDS

1. What early childhood programs, statewide, are available for eligible young children?
2. How many young children are there?
3. How many young children are eligible for early childhood programs?
4. How many young children are enrolled in early childhood programs?
5. Are those enrolled in early childhood programs on track to succeed?
6. What is the return on investment for early childhood programs?

III. Data Ownership

Programs retain ownership of their data and will ultimately decide the rules for the use of and access to their data.

IV. Current Initiatives

Initiatives of the ECIDS have discrete deliverables, one agency as the technical lead, and a clear funding source. All initiatives that include early childhood data should follow the ECIDS framework as outlined in the Data Governance Charter.

A. SC Early Learning Extension (ELE)

The ELE will be able to answer key questions about children while they were enrolled in early childhood care and education programs and link those experiences with K-12 outcomes. The technical lead on the ELE is the South Carolina Department of Education.

This is funded by the Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems Grant Program, Grant Number R372A200048, from the U.S. Department of Education through February 2024.

B. Enhanced SC Profile

An enhanced SC Profile will be built for early childhood data, including new data inputs into the SC Integrated Data System and leverage existing data inputs for evidence-based decision-making. The technical lead on this initiative is the South Carolina Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office.

This is funded by the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five Initiative (PDG B-5), Grant Number 90TP0080-01-00, from the Office of Child Care, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services through April 2023.

V. Data Governance Roles & Responsibilities

A. Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC)

The ECAC serves as the governing body and venue for collective decision making of the ECIDS Data Governance. A Data Governance Coordinator will be housed at the ECAC to facilitate the Data Governance Work Group for early childhood program data contributions to the ECIDS, including any initiatives and the SC Integrated Data System.

To support ECIDS data governance, the ECAC is responsible for:

- Setting the strategic direction, for the SC ECIDS and ensuring alignment with the best interest of the early childhood system in South Carolina and the ECAC vision
- Reviewing and considering for adoption the recommendations prepared by the Data Governance Work Group regarding policies, procedures, processes, and standards when appropriate
- Voting on recommendations and policies developed by the Data Governance Work Group on topics like data sharing, data access, and reports
- Being a champion for their SC ECIDS within their agencies and promoting program participation

B. Data Governance Work Group (DGWG)

The DGWG will operationalize the ECIDS and develop and present recommendations to the ECAC for their consideration to support South Carolina's early childhood system in being aligned, coordinated, and family-centered. The DGWG promotes data quality, availability, data usage privacy, and security.

SC ECIDS Data Governance Charter

To support ECIDS data governance, the DGWG is responsible for:

- Establishing procedures, processes, and standards for operationalizing the ECIDS, including but not limited to, effective data usage, sharing, access, security, and storage; future data integration; changes to standard reports; changes to data collection
- Selecting data elements to be included in the ECIDS
- Establishing standard definitions and reports
- Defining metadata and data quality standards
- Supporting data literacy and maximizing appropriate data use, including supporting data and research request processes

C. Data Governance Work Group Members

The DGWG can effectively fulfill its purpose only when members collaborate and act under a shared mission and supporting goals. Members who are selected to participate in meetings, discussions, and decisions serve on behalf of their agency/program.

To support ECIDS data governance, the members are responsible for:

- Meeting regularly to operationalize the ECIDS
- Ensuring that their agency leaders and organization are informed and brought into decision-making processes when appropriate
- Assigning an interim DGWG member if out for an extended period of time
- Being a champion for ECIDS within their agencies and programs

Data Governance Work Group Membership

It is the responsibility of programs to select the most appropriate members to serve on the DGWG. It is the member's responsibility to communicate all Data Governance policies, procedures, processes, and standards with their agency/program. The different types of program staff members on the DGWG are outlined below.

1. Early Childhood Program Experts

- Individual(s) from the participating program that have a rich understanding of the early childhood program and agency they are a part of, as well as the early childhood landscape in South Carolina.
- Research staff within or contracted partners of participating programs.
- Typical job titles include: program manager/director/coordinator.

2. Data Stewards

- Individual(s) from the participating program that develop and protect the information resources and ensure the integrity of the data.
- Typical job titles include: data analyst/research and planning administrator.

3. Technical Data Stewards/Technical Experts

- Individual(s) with expertise with the technical aspects of systems and models and ensure data security and governance and that Data Governance decisions are feasible from a technical perspective. Including:
 - Representatives from the Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office, SC Integrated Data System
 - Representatives from the South Carolina Department of Education, Office of Research and Data Analysis and Chief Information Office

VI. Authority

The ECAC will serve as the governing body and venue for collective decision making of the ECIDS Data Governance. The ECAC has the authority to formally adopt high level strategic direction and policies for the ECIDS. The ECAC operates under the Freedom of Information Act guidelines as outlined in SC State Code §30-4-15.

The DGWG is not a formal committee of the ECAC and therefore does not take votes or spend public money. The DGWG is accountable to the ECAC and will escalate and report on data governance matters via appropriate channels. The Data Governance Work Group seeks consensus from participating members on decisions related to procedures, processes, and standards to operationalize the ECIDS and recommendations proposed to the ECAC.

It is the responsibility of the Data Governance Coordinator to facilitate and manage decisions and recommendations of the DGWG, to enable decision-making, and aid in issue resolution.

VII. Frequency and Nature of Meetings

To aid in the successful implementation of the Data Governance Work Group, the following outlines the mode and frequency of meetings:

- Bi-Monthly Meetings: The Data Governance Work Group will initially meet twice a month for an hour and a half and an ad-hoc basis, as required.
- Virtual Meetings: The Data Governance Work Group will meet virtually to ensure all members have an opportunity to participate.
- Periodic Review: Periodically, the Data Governance Work Group will review the frequency and duration of meetings based on current needs.

VIII. Foundational Documents

The following documents will serve as a standing reference to the operations and functions of the ECIDS and Data Governance to support the ECIDS. The documents will be available to participating entities and utilized to support on-boarding of new participating entities. The most current revisions are available at www.earlychildhoodsc.org/what-we-do/sc-early-childhood-integrated-data-system/.

Currently Available:

- Data Governance Charter – Defines the framework for the ECIDS and establishes the foundations by which it operates, including roles and responsibilities and escalation path
- ECIDS Overview Document – Defines the strategic direction for the ECIDS and is a resource for key stakeholders
- Data Governance Decision-Making Process and Procedure – Defines the procedure and process by which the Data Governance Work Group makes decisions and prepares recommendations
- ECIDS Communications Plan – Articulates the what, when, and how ECIDS information should be shared with stakeholders and defines brand identify and collateral

Forthcoming:

- Data Issues Index – Catalogs the issues and outcomes addressed by the Data Governance Work Group
- Data Governance Members List – Identifies participating programs and their members
- ECIDS Data Dictionary – Defines the official set of data elements that the ECIDS collects and reports broken down by initiative
- ECIDS Data Flow Diagram - Maps the flow of information for the ECIDS and its initiatives

B-5 Plan Key Measures of Success: Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Kindergarten Readiness

ECAC October 2021 Meeting

- **APPROVED:** Increase the percentage of incoming kindergartners who are ready for school from 27.0% to 40.0%.
- **NOT APPROVED:** Reduce the racial/ethnic gaps in kindergarten readiness by 4% respectively, from 18% to 14% between white and Black kindergartners and from 22% to 18% between white and Latino kindergartners.

DATA

Table 1. Number of incoming kindergartners who took the KRA by race/ethnicity and by term and year of administration

	Fall 2020*	Fall 2019	Fall 2018	Fall 2017
All	47,699	55,964	54,904	54,927
white	23,330	20,855	27,582	27,253
Black	14,965	13,863	17,565	18,142
Latino	5,371	4,100	5,507	5,466

*Fall 2020 was a modified assessment due to the COVID-19 pandemic and should not be compared to previous years

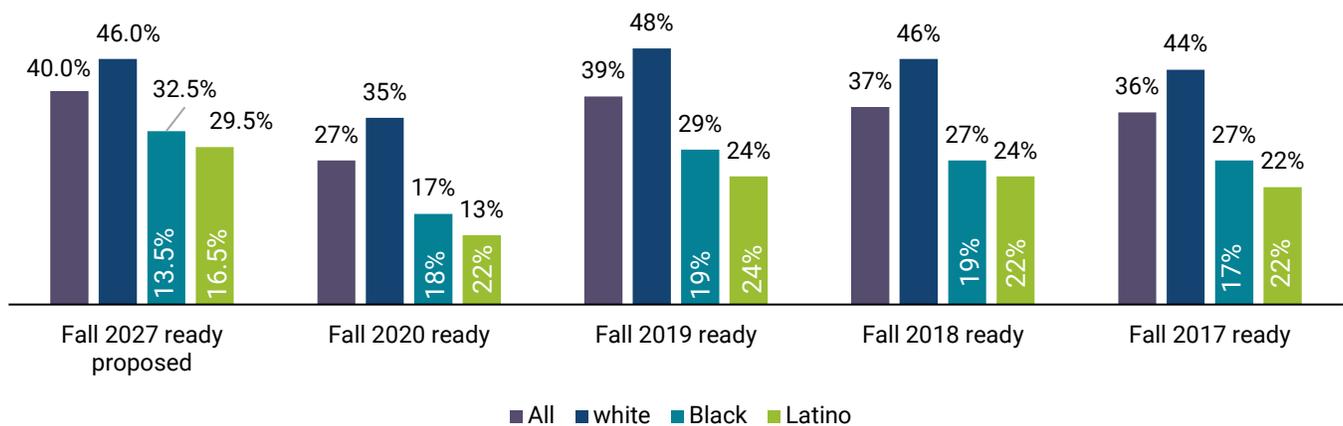


Figure 1. Percentage of incoming kindergartners scoring "demonstrating readiness" on the South Carolina Kindergarten Readiness Assessment by race/ethnicity (black text) and racial (% white ready - % Black ready) and ethnic (% white ready - % Latino ready) percentage point differences (white text) by term and year of administration; Fall 2020 was a modified assessment due to the COVID-19 pandemic and should not be compared to previous years

Table 2. Implications of a 25% reduction in racial and ethnic disparities in kindergarten readiness; due to rounding estimates may not sum to totals; 2027 estimates of children ready are based on fall 2020 numbers

	Today % difference between white & group	Today % ready	Today total children ready	If 25% reduction, resulting % difference	By 2027, % ready	Estimated total children ready	Estimated additional children ready
Black	18%	17%	2,544	13.5%	32.5%	4,864	2,320
Latino	22%	13%	698	16.5%	29.5%	1,584	886
white	-	35%	8,166	-	46%	10,732	2,566
Other	-	36%	1,452	-	46%	1,855	403
All	-	27%	12,879	-	40%	19,035	6,156

PROPOSED MOTION

To add two key measures of success to the South Carolina Birth through Five plan:

- While increasing kindergarten readiness for all students, reduce the disparity between Black and white kindergartners by 25%, from 18% to 13.5%, by 2027
- While increasing kindergarten readiness for all students, reduce the disparity between Latino and white kindergartners by 25%, from 22% to 16.5%, by 2027

B-5 Plan Key Measures of Success: Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Kindergarten Readiness

Table 3. Implications of a 50% reduction in racial and ethnic disparities in kindergarten readiness; due to rounding estimates may not sum to totals; 2027 estimates of children ready are based on fall 2020 numbers

	Today % difference between white & group	Today % ready	Today total children ready	If 50% reduction, resulting % difference	By 2027, % ready	Estimated total children ready	Estimated additional children ready
Black	18%	17%	2,544	9%	35%	5,238	2,694
Latino	22%	13%	698	11%	33%	1,772	1,074
white	-	35%	8,166	-	44%	10,265	2,099
Other	-	36%	1,452	-	44%	1,775	323
All	-	27%	12,879	-	40%	19,050	6,171

Table 4. Implications of a 75% reduction in racial and ethnic disparities in kindergarten readiness; due to rounding estimates may not sum to totals; 2027 estimates of children ready are based on fall 2020 numbers

	Today % difference between white & group	Today % ready	Today total children ready	If 75% reduction, resulting % difference	By 2027, % ready	Estimated total children ready	Estimated additional children ready
Black	18%	17%	2,544	4.5%	37.5%	5,612	3,068
Latino	22%	13%	698	5.5%	36.5%	1,960	1,262
white	-	35%	8,166	-	42%	9,799	1,633
Other	-	36%	1,452	-	42%	1,694	242
All	-	27%	12,879	-	40%	19,065	6,186



**Interagency Collaboration Committee
Meeting Recap
November 9, 2021**

Present: David Mathis, Department of Education, Chair; Solandra Bowman, SC Educational Television; Jennifer Buster, Department of Health and Human Services; Mary Lynne Diggs, Head Start Collaboration Office; Georgia Mjartan, SC First Steps/ECAC; Louise Johnson, Department of Mental Health

Absent: Leesa Aiken, State Library; Eric Bellamy, Children's Trust; Amber Gillum, Department of Social Services; Joyce Kimrey, Department of Disabilities and Special Needs; Rusty Monhollon, Commission on Higher Education; Brannon Traxler, Department of Health and Environmental Control

Guests: Bill Potapchuk, Community Building Institute

Staff: Karen Oliver, Laura Baker, Rachal Hatton-Moore, Chelsea Richard, Justina Siuba, SC First Steps/ECAC

Call to Order and Welcome

David Mathis convened the meeting. He noted that the ICC members are the implementers of the Birth through Five Plan, and together we can revolutionize early childhood.

SC Birth Through Five Plan: Revising measures of Success

Five of six measures of success proposed in the Birth through Five plan were approved by the Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) in October. The sixth measure, relating to improvement of Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) scores for Black and Latinx students, was not approved. The ECAC requested a revised recommendation for the December ECAC meeting.

A meeting of the First Steps Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee and guests from the Department of Education was held November 8. Participants at that meeting discussed how much KRA scores feasibly could be increased in the next five years. This meeting was organized to inform and prepare for the November ICC meeting.

Bill Potapchuk led the discussion for ICC members. Guests from SDE presented data about KRA scores over time. The ICC achieved consensus that:

- Annual and incremental improvements in scores, as presented in the original measure, were not consistent with an overall increase over the plan's implementation period. Any proposed measure should indicate the overall change to be achieved over five years.
- The measure should be framed as the degree to which the gaps between White and Black, and White and Latinx children were decreased.

Mathis noted that to improve KRA scores when children begin Kindergarten, much work needed to be done by ICC partners during the birth through pre-k years.

First Five South Carolina

Rachal Hatton-Moore provided an update on First Five South Carolina. ICC members or reps were invited to “test” the portal to prepare for a “soft” launch in December.

SC Early Childhood Integrated Data System (SC EIDS)

Justina Siuba provided an update on SC EIDS. The workgroup is developing a charter that outlines roles and responsibilities of SC EIDS users. The ECAC should receive recommendation about the charter in December.

ICC Collaboration Opportunities and Updates

Mary Lynne Diggs reported that there are five new directors at Head Start

Salandra Bowman reported that a new show, Rosie’s Rules will be aired on SCETV, and that Stephanie Frazier was promoted to Assistant General Manager.

Jennifer Buster reported that filling positions for PART C services continues to be challenging for Health and Human Services

Georgia Mjartan reported that applications totaling 14.3 million in grant application requests were received by First Steps. These applications were for parenting programs, funded through ESSER. Only 4 million is available for award. The difference between requested and available funds shows the interest of local partnerships in growing their parenting programs.

Mathis closed the meeting. The ICC has homework. ICC members are encouraged to review the Birth through Five Plan with key staff and identify specific areas/objectives where the agency can “plug into” the plan.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 PM



Report on the Activities of the Early Childhood Advisory Council For December 3, 2021

Early Childhood Strategic Plan

1. Principles, objectives and strategies, and five of six key metrics of success were approved by the Board on October 21. The ECAC Board will consider revised metrics at the December meeting.
 - a. The First Steps Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee and the Interagency Collaboration Committee (ICC) discussed revised metrics of success relating to reducing disparities in Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) scores among White, Black and Latinx children.

Integrated Early Childhood Data

1. The Data Governance Work Group is presenting the Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) Data Governance Charter to ECAC in December. The purpose of the charter is to define scope, activities, roles and responsibilities, and goals for the Data Governance Work Group
 - a) The Charter formally establishes data governance (both the structure and the organizing framework) and acknowledges a participating agency's commitment to the data governance of the ECIDS
 - b) The foundation of the Charter comes from actions passed by the ECAC

First Five SC

1. Beta testing of the First Five SC portal took place in November
2. A Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) was issued to solicit system navigators. The navigators will help the small percentage of families that are not able to navigate the system independently.

www.PalmettoPrek.org

1. 78,832 unique website visitors to date (February 1, 2020 – October 31 2021)
 - a. Total leads: 13,122
2. Eligible for at least one program: 10,852
 - a. Head Start eligible: 5,380
 - b. First Steps 4K eligible: 4,164
 - c. Public school eligible: 5,507
 - d. SC DSS voucher eligible: 1,767

Family Voice Council (FVC)

1. 29 total interest forms received
 - a. 14 families met eligibility requirement (parent of child aged birth-5, recipient of public service)
 - b. 11 families completed on-boarding
 - c. 4 families are in on-boarding or consideration process



2. 9 Family Voice Council seats still open, and recruitment is on-going
3. FVC provided input on SC Parent Needs Assessment Data at November meeting and members will attend the Summit on Early Childhood

Transitions

1. The Palmetto Pre-K Transitions Workgroup TA support from the Education Commission of the States ended October 2021.
2. The workgroup has agreed upon the tactics to be included in *South Carolina's Pre-K to K Transitions Plan: Family Engagement* (see attached).
 - a. The final plan document will be produced in January for release in February.
 - b. The workgroup will continue to meet in 2022 to advance the tactics contained in the plan.

2021 Summit on Early Childhood, From the Start: Prenatal to Three

2022 Summit on Early Childhood: Once Upon a Time

Thursday, December 1, 2022

In-person

South Carolina's Pre-K to K Transitions Plan: Family Engagement

South Carolina's Plan Section Revised 11/22/2021

Children from around our state enter Kindergarten from a wide array of possible early care and education settings which have varying degrees of relationships with local schools. We recognize that while these connections are an identified best practice, in our current system it can be difficult to develop and sustain for many reasons. The Early Care and Education system is committed to alignment, guidance, support, and investment in the experiences of our state's young children. We believe that families' involvement in a child's transition to Kindergarten is fundamental to their success in school. From this core value, the strategies, tactics, and practices described in this joint plan are flexible yet specific in recommendations and possible areas for alignment. We also discuss possible future efforts necessary to create a sense of belonging and to support kindergartners and their families through a seamless transition.

The strategies in this plan are matched with The South Carolina Birth Through Five Plan (Objective 2.1) and provide a deeper dive into specific tactics. Many areas of The SC Birth Through Five Plan address areas related to family engagement, and Objective 2.1 states *Parents have the knowledge and skills to be excellent caregivers, and are actively engaged in their children's development, health, learning, and transitions.*

Strategy 2.1.1 Alignment: Expand proven home visiting programs (with transitions components) so more families can participate.

Having a trusted, competent, and knowledgeable home visiting professional allows for families to have individualized attention at a level of intensity that can help connect them to other resources, as well as provide information and deliver programs that build skills and are shown to benefit children entering Kindergarten. Evidence-based home visiting programs, if universally available statewide, regardless of county, would ensure families could access respectful and supportive professionals who can assist in communicating details about the receiving schools and the information families find useful about their child and the kindergarten experience. The variety of home visiting models in SC contain differing levels of included information about school transition. Head Start has home visiting with transitions components, and there are other home visiting models in SC that work with 4 year-olds and have the opportunity to expand upon transitions information: Parents as Teachers (PaT), HIPPY (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters), and Countdown to Kindergarten (CTK).

This strategy includes partnerships and involvement from many entities throughout the state. Alignment opportunities with other objectives and activities include the work of the Preschool Development Grant Birth-Five and creation of professional development tools as well as universal messaging and toolkits available to both parents and early childhood professionals detailed in tactics under Strategy 2.1.2.

Countdown to Kindergarten (evidence-supported) is a home visiting model created specifically to address family engagement in kindergarten transition, by allowing the receiving kindergarten teacher to

visit students over the summer and provide curriculum. CTK begins the relationship between the parent and the teacher, while adding supports to help the child be ready to start at the beginning of the year.

PaT and HIPPY, while not including specific content about kindergarten transition, do work with preschool age children and their parents on activities that support school readiness and the relationship between home visitor and family could provide opportunities to share additional supports and information to families about other transitions-related activities. Implementation of HIPPY is currently through SC First Steps, and specifically for 4-year-olds who are enrolled in First Steps 4K. SC First Steps is the state office for Parents as Teachers, and PaT is funded in SC through state and federal funding through many affiliates.

Of the 46 counties in SC, currently HIPPY is in 13 counties, PaT is in 36 counties, and CTK is in 26 counties. Many counties have all three models, such as Barnwell, Clarendon, and Florence. There are several counties with one of the three models, such as Anderson, Georgetown and Greenwood. There are currently four counties that do not have any of the three models: Allendale, Cherokee, Dillon, and Oconee Counties. Head Start is available to families in SC at or below 100% of the federal poverty level in almost all areas of the state.

Increasing funding opportunities and leveraging public-private partnerships to expand availability, and braiding funding streams to coordinate the flow of funding into high-needs areas are tactics that can have high impact to ensure all areas of SC have programs available to support kindergarten readiness of children. For these changes to occur, targeting areas with a lower density of available parenting programs and with high community needs is important for the widespread expansion of home visiting. In areas where several models currently operate, it is important to increase available openings for enrollment. It's also important to consider the impact of relief funds for increasing availability, and that relief funds are currently expanding the availability of programs across SC into 2023. Long-term sustainable funding and funds for long-term capacity building to support local implementation partners in being able to develop and administer programs is necessary, as well as continued technical assistance.

Home visiting is a model included in Head Start programming, and home visitors work with Head Start programs and local school districts to provide curriculum to parents about supporting their child's learning. As Head Start programs also work with local school districts to develop child-specific transitions plans, home visiting plays an important component in modeling successful wrap-around transitions supports for families, both in policy and in practice. Head Start federal regulations contain robust implementation guidance specifically around these supports for transition and family engagement and is detailed in Appendix A. The Head Start practices around transition are replicable to other entities as well, specifically through the child specific transition plans. In some areas of SC, Head Start also partners with other home visiting models, and in those situations, it is recommended for implementing agencies to make sure these partnerships are clear for families and other providers.

Strategy 2.1.2 Alignment: Expand access to information and resources about transition that strengthen families' ability to participate more fully in the development of their children.

To accelerate a child's readiness for kindergarten, offering community-level education campaigns that build knowledge about child development ensures parents have ways to get answers to questions about their child's health and learning. The dissemination of information about kindergarten transitions is also

important for providers, to educate them about the array of resources available to parents and families, to further support their work.

In the statewide “Transitions from Pre-K to 5K Survey” conducted by the Palmetto Pre-K Transitions Workgroup in May-June 2021 (see Appendix H), families said they want information about the skills their child needs so they can help them be ready. Parents also wanted to know details about the kindergarten experience, their child’s new school, and what was expected of them as partners in their child’s education so they could prepare. Early care and education professionals shared that being able to help parents by giving them this information was vital to successfully sending them off to kindergarten at the end of their term.

There are currently several co-branded and officially adopted documents regarding child development as it specifically relates to entering kindergarten.

Possible Methods

- Expand community-level education campaigns through using currently adopted resources and materials such as *Profile of the Ready Kindergartner*, and *Ready, Set—Kindergarten!*
- Create targeted messaging that answers common questions parents have about the kindergarten experience and share statewide in early care and education settings. These materials will include family childcare providers, children not enrolled in ECE programs for children with or without disabilities, and will consider the needs of dual language learners. A possibility for broadcast messaging could be through Text2Read.
- Offer specific guidance documents that address the answers to questions parents want to know with details about kindergarten such as: how to know if my child is ready, how to share information with the teacher, how and when to request an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), what does a day look like in kindergarten, and how do I know if my child is in a least restrictive environment? (See Appendix H for results of the statewide “Transition from Pre-K to 5K Survey”)
- 4K teachers can create a portfolio of a student’s information that can be share with parents, including the child’s progress reports, that can be given to the child’s 5K teacher.
- Create a universal guidance document or template that can be completed with early care and education providers and parents that reflects a child’s skills, educational needs, and areas for additional growth that can be shared with the kindergarten teacher, such as a “child resume.”
- Learn more as a system about parent’s expectations for Kindergarten and how to continually incorporate their leadership into improving the transition experience and availability of resources to meet their needs and expectations. This can be achieved through ongoing surveying and focus groups, and through existing family voice inclusion efforts.
- Expand upon agreements for further action and strategy implementation at local levels.
- Include information and communications to various providers to inform about other types of early learning settings, as well as the array of available transitions resources available from Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and other sources.
- Create an additional video module for families from the Early Learning Standards parent guide with information targeted specifically to bridging into Kindergarten.
- Regional Learning Engagement Coaches at the SC Department of Education can incorporate information about kindergarten transition into trainings they do to support families and communication between families, teachers, and schools.

- A collection of transitions materials could be given to parents at kindergarten registration. Joint processes could be established for ensuring the timeline for collection, amounts needed, and the logistics for distribution. The existing Kindergarten orientation handbooks offer another opportunity to include information for families to support the transition once the kindergarten school year begins.
- LEAs could expand agreements to include additional activities and efforts with partners.
- Every year there is a study of First Steps 4K curriculum; a future opportunity is to evaluate ways to include additional classroom implementation for teachers to prepare students for new settings if they're not currently in a public 4K setting.
- The continual development and additions of transitions related documents and materials can be added as a navigational overlay to Palmetto Pre-K and First Five SC (www.palmettoprek.org and www.first5sc.org).

Strategy 2.1.3 Alignment: Help parents support successful transitions from home to early childhood programs and to school entry.

Programs and activities that support successful movement from home or early childhood programs to school promotes shared understanding between parents and education professionals. Using jointly adopted state materials such as *Profile of a Ready Kindergartner* and other tools such as CFEC's *Ready, Set—Kindergarten!* to promote shared understanding between parents and education professionals about the kindergarten experience.

Possible Methods

Parents receive information about the kindergarten transition from ECE providers, home visitors, and family engagement professionals and local school districts and have opportunities to build relationships throughout all stages of the transition. Examples of opportunities to build relationships and receive information include:

- Attend events with educators and family support professionals who support whole child development.
- Families are able to build a plan for their child's transition with the early care and education provider as well as the receiving kindergarten and set goals that are tailored to their child's needs. This information can be provided to the child's receiving kindergarten teacher and could include information about their abilities and skills, as well as areas for further development (as a part of the child resume)
- Encourage programs, activities, and resource sharing to include co-parents who do not live in the same household, as well as other important adults in children's lives and in their households, as 50% of pre-K children are from single parent households.
- Expand possibilities and infrastructure for teacher meetings and school tours available to all children entering kindergarten so that it is available at each school.
- Attend meetings with representatives from kindergarten, who are also invited into ECE classrooms before the end of the term, as well as meetings with families for discussions about kindergarten experiences and expectations.
- Attend tours of classrooms, orientation, open houses, and meet and greets with their receiving teachers
- Participate in summer programming aimed at preparation for kindergarten entry.

- Support districts collaborating with ECE programs in their catchment areas to provide information to families that will be enrolling at their school by providing additional information templates and coaching
- Ensure families are invited into the classrooms before enrollment, on the first days, and have opportunities for frequent and amplified communication with the teachers and school during the beginning of the year to build relationships.
- Families have the opportunity to receive inclusive and adapted information to meet their child's specific learning needs that are tiered and address special populations such as children with disabilities and dual language learners. This ensures that each child and family is connected to navigators and existing resources based on their specific needs, beyond transition (such as health and wellness) that also supports their child's ability to flourish. This would also ensure that families are connected with agencies such as SC Family Connection for information on transitioning between IDEA part C and B and connected with appropriate developmental screenings.

Guidance documents with tips and possibilities for how these activities can be integrated into existing programming and activities or implemented in ways that align with other efforts could be created as ongoing work of the Palmetto Pre-K Transitions Workgroup. These state-level templates would be co-created examples of individual child/family transition plans that could then be modified for local use. These templates would be informed by researched best practices and modified to the expressed needs of teachers across the state through focus groups and continual surveying of professionals and families.

Future Alignment Opportunities

Teacher training and professional development is an area that can include additional opportunities to support family engagement and information on supporting successful transition to kindergarten. Below are additional possibilities for aligned initiatives in future work.

- Create a continuum of information and knowledge for professionals, along with aligned expectations for professionals that allows for the continual implementation of kindergarten transitions best practices in transitions programming.
- Build relationships between local education agencies that allow for enhanced opportunities for joint programming, data sharing, and measurement in order to facilitate continual improvement that benefits children and families.
- Create synchronous trainings for 5K teachers about early childhood education and align with the curriculum of Countdown To Kindergarten and light touch information campaigns. This information can be pushed out to early childhood program directors and school administrators. This training curriculum would include information on the different types of Pre-K.
- Develop and expand relationships with SC Association of Colleges and Employers (<https://www.goscace.org/>) and other professional organizations K-3 to ensure teacher education on transitions related issues and integrated professional development opportunities.
- Explore and possibly create an additional micro-credential stack available through UofSC CrED (<https://carolinacred.org/what-we-do/mcred/micro-credentials/>) centered on family engagement and kindergarten transition.

- Expand joint training about purposeful play, lap reading, developmentally appropriate discipline, self-regulation, cognitive and social learning, and transition best practices in ways that are trauma-informed and culturally sensitive, for pre-K teachers. This could be included in current efforts through Palmetto Pre-K Jamboree, OSES supports for districts, and through SC Endeavors.
- Continue to support the alignment of early childhood and early elementary student level data and build ways for teacher and parent data sharing about the child’s educational needs.
- Formalize collaborations and joint programming where possible through agreements, policies, and procedures to avoid disruptions in programming continuity caused by personnel turnover at agencies and programs.
- Continue to offer resources and recommendations to assist with the implementation of a unified student assessment system and include opportunities for observational analysis and routine feedback from families about their experiences and the best ways to connect and review data.
- Encourage and increase the importance and availability of professional development about the specific domains of kindergarten readiness and kindergarten assessment as well as the early learning standards system wide to all early care professionals. These trainings would allow early care and education professionals to become more familiar with expectations so they can prepare students and families (Analysis of KRA Results, Fall 2020). An example of this is the SC Department of Education conducting trainings on the domains of the KRA for Migrant Head Start teachers and administrators.

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