



Early Childhood Advisory Council Meeting

August 17, 2023, immediately following the SCFS Board of Trustees Meeting
SC First Steps
Minutes

Council Members Present

(19):

Rep. Terry Alexander
Dr. Robert Bank
Matthew Ferguson
John Hayes
Michael Leach
David Lisk
Jessica Mackey
Jack McBride
Dave Morley, Chairman

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Janie Neeley
Dorothy Priester
Roger Pryor
Mary Anne Scott
Dr. Edward Simmer
Wes Wooten
Dr. Amy Williams
Dr. Brenda Williams

Sue Williams

Council Members Absent (6)

Jacque Curtin
Mary Lynne Diggs
Rep. Shannon Erickson
Sen. Greg Hembree
Constance Holloway
Robert Kerr

Attendees (79)

Georgia Mjartan
Avian Jones
Beth Moore
Laura Baker
Amanda Bailey
Amber Gillum
Betty Gardiner
Brenda Cantey
Buetine Pressley
Candi Lalonde
Carletta Isreal
Caroline Sexton
Cathy Kovacs
Chastine Dickey-Jackson
Chelsea Richard
Cheri Shapiro
Cheryl Scales
Cindy Ellis
Cindy Galloway
Cindy Riley
Clarice Blakenley
Crystal Hill-Chapman
Darcy Huffman
David Lisk
Debora DePaoli

Derek Cromwell
Donna Mason
Dorian Young
Dorothy Priester
Dean Bryant
Dwana Doctor
Elizabeth Dudek
Georgia Beckett
Gina Beebe
Hannah Espeleta
Heather Googe
James Calhoun
Jane Farnell
Janice Kilburn
Javonna Lewis
Jennifer Williams
Jon Artz
Joy Mazur
Kaitlyn Richards
Karen Oliver
Kate Roach
Kathy Fitzgerald
Kenna Hoover
Kenya Johnson
Kerry Cordan

Kim Trudell
Kirsten Chapman
Kristine Jenkins
LaMyra Dukes
Leah Crosby
Lexi Jones
Mark Barnes
Martha Strickland
Michelle Maxberry
Myrelo King
Rachal Hatton-Moore
Rachel Amrhein
Rebecca Harris
Renita Barksdale
Roddrick Dugger
Rosa Linda Contreras
Ryan Shinn
Samantha Ingram
Shayla Pettigrew
Sheila Cornwell
Silvia Landrum
Spence Scott
Stacy Greenwalt
Tekethia Burrell
Teresa Jenkins

Tiffany Outlaw
Tricia Gordon
Tyshica McConner
Veronica Reynolds
Meghan Wood



The meeting began at 3:34 p.m.

Mr. Morley asked for a motion to adopt the agenda. Ms. Mackey provided the motion. Mr. McBride provided a second and the motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Morley asked for a motion to approve the June 15, 2023 minutes. Rep. Alexander provided the motion. Mr. McBride provided the second and the motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Mjartan provided an overview of the elements of Act 81 that impact the Early Childhood Advisory Council. She shared that there is updated language within the law that codifies the activities of the council. Act 81 also included the duties regarding the council's work on the Palmetto PreK and First Five SC portals and the South Carolina Birth through Five Strategic Plan. She provided an ECAC budget update. Ms. Hatton shared information on the 2023 Summit on Early Childhood

Mr. Leach provided an update on the growth of child care scholarships where 71,000 children were approved and served through the COVID child care scholarships. \$912 million dollars have been allocated for the scholarships resulting in DSS evaluating the current median income requirements. 1,798 children are currently enrolled in the 4K plus Siblings program. DSS launched new grants for child care providers. In June 2023 they started to implement startup grants for new providers who want to open a licensed child care center or regulated family child care home. On August 7th they rolled out Materials, Health, and Safety grants to existing providers. 1,200 providers applied and at this time they have paid out 700 providers. In October they will launch a grant that is designed to increase retention for child care employees. DSS's CCDF 2024 plan submission requires providing updates on the process. Instead of doing a market survey, DSS will complete an alternative methodology process that captures and informs of the setting of childcare reimbursement rates. This involves the understanding of cost of care, market rate approach and what families can afford. DSS engaged national experts that have led the process in a few other states and are actively working in 4 states, including South Carolina. Cross-sector work is being done to support the reduction and elimination of preschool suspension and expulsion. The cross-sector group developed definitions in 2016 as a resource to assist childcare providers with children with challenging behaviors. The workgroup reconvened and the definitions were updated this year and will be included in DSS's 2024 state plan. The benefits of the definitions allow for the collection of valid, reliable data. Having shared definitions can also provide a foundation upon which to inform activities and services. The definitions have been shared with SC Early Learning Roundtable, Advisory Council for Education of Students with Disabilities Preschool Committee, and the SC Build State Team, SC Interagency Coordinating Council. This has resulted in the following action steps: 1. implemented a coordinated communication strategy. 2. pulling resources together to map out and ensure process flow there for the creation of a central point of contact to get resources for childcare providers. 3. building on state professional development teams to promote social and emotional development and to prevent suspension and expulsion.

Ms. Gillum provided an update on the Interagency Collaboration Committee and work around the SC Birth through Five Plan.



Ms. Mjartan shared the SC Birth through Five Plan was one of fifteen documents to win a notable document award from the National Conference of State Legislatures and Legislative Research Librarians Staff Association. From May 1st to July 31st the First Five SC portal had 851 completed applications.

Mr. Morley asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Wooten provided the motion, seconded by Mr. Pryor, and unanimously approved. The meeting ended at 4:04 pm.