



Preliminary Report of the South Carolina Task Force on Early Childhood Quality Standards



**Submitted to
Governor Mark Sanford and the South Carolina General Assembly
Pursuant to Proviso 1.80 (General Appropriations Act of 2006-2007)
January 9, 2007**

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INTRODUCTION

South Carolina has long sought to expand preschool access for its young children. From the seminal Head Start programs of the 1960s, to its earliest child development programs and phase-in of full-day kindergarten during the mid-80's and 90's, the state has afforded publicly-funded experiences to hundreds of thousands of South Carolina's youngest learners. In June of 2006, the Child Development Education Pilot Program (CDEPP) was established to expand 4K to still more preschoolers for whom taxpayer subsidized early intervention is proven to reap substantial dividends.

On top of these publicly-funded efforts, South Carolina is also home to a vast and vital network of private, community, and faith-based early childhood programs. Recent estimates suggest that the state's 2,835 regulated providers enroll 118,000 children, enabling nearly 76,000 South Carolina parents to participate in the work force.¹

Though preschool **access** is one key to overcoming the state's economic and educational challenges, the importance of early childhood program **quality** cannot be overlooked – for just as optimal experiences have been shown to yield positive, long-term outcomes for children, so too may inadequate care be detrimental to a child's development and academic achievement.

As Dr. Craig Ramey, Director of the Georgetown University Center on Health and Education, notes bluntly (of the nation's education reform efforts), *"fix it, remedial, and punitive programs have never been able to correct the dire consequences of poor quality care for young children."*²

What characteristics define high-quality early childhood programs and how should South Carolina policy-makers promote and support these programs for our children?

These are the key questions under investigation by a diverse *Task Force on Early Childhood Quality Standards*, seated by legislative proviso in July 2006. **This preliminary report addresses the group's findings to date, spells out its plans to develop expanded, measurable early childhood program standards, and concludes with tangible short-term recommendations aimed at policy-makers and the state's early childhood stakeholders.**

BACKGROUND

South Carolina's early childhood programs are shaped by many factors. While many are defined (at least to some extent) by statutory and/or regulatory requirements, programs also reflect their individual missions and client expectations. Independent of the various program models, however, brain research is clear: more neural connections are made (or not made) during the first three years of a child's life than at any other time - with the overwhelming majority all synaptic connections made before a child turns four.³ **It is during this critical window of opportunity that we must ensure the optimal development of South Carolina's young children if we wish for each to reach school prepared for academic - and lifelong - success.**

¹ *The Economic Impact of the Child Care Industry in South Carolina* by Dr. Donald L. Schunk, Moore School of Business, University of South Carolina. Available for download at <http://www.rcfirststeps.org/EconomicImpact.pdf>

² *Quality Child Care and Education: Evidence of Lifelong and Intergenerational Benefits* by Drs. Craig Ramey and Sharon L. Ramey. Available for download at <http://www.circ.uab.edu/Childcare/csbnews1.htm>

³ *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development* by the National Research Council, Jack Shonkoff and Deborah Phillips (Eds.). National Academies Press, 2000.

Respected longitudinal studies now suggest that the positive outcomes derived from high quality preschool are shared not only by the participating children - who reap significant academic and personal benefits – but by **taxpayers**, who realize both the long-term savings associated with reductions in academic retention/remediation, social services and incarceration, and the long-term rewards associated with a well educated and prosperous workforce. **The most recent analysis of the High/Scope Perry Preschool Project (a forty-year longitudinal study tracking the outcomes derived by a model preschool program serving low-income three- and four-year-olds in Ypsilanti, MI) suggests a return of more than \$17 in benefits for every \$1 invested in high quality preschool programming.**⁴

Not surprisingly, these studies have found a wide audience amongst policy-makers, who – seeking to maximize scarce public resources – have hastened a nationwide conversation on the importance of early childhood standards.

While South Carolina has had public school content standards in place for some time, 2001's federal *Good Start, Grow Smart*⁵ initiative (the early childhood counterpart to *No Child Left Behind*) ushered in the large-scale expansion of **early learning standards** for three-, four- and five-year-olds. The standards, which encompass and expand upon the state's existing 4K and 5K benchmarks, will – in their final form - be required for use in South Carolina's publicly-funded programs, and made available on a voluntary basis to private, faith-, and home-based providers.⁶

Many states have sought to build on these student learning guidelines by defining early childhood **program quality standards**, often in conjunction with provider incentives and/or consumer rating systems.

Programs providing services to South Carolina's young children 0-4		
EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM	AGES SERVED	LOCATION
FEDERALLY-FUNDED		
Early Head Start	0 - 3	Community Setting
Head Start	3 - 4	Community Setting
Department of Defense Child Development	0 - 12	Military Base
Child Care Development Fund (ABC Vouchers)	0 - 12	Public, Private and Family Settings
IDEA B and C	0 - 5	Public or Private Setting
STATE-FUNDED		
Child Development (EIA)	4	Public Schools
Child Development Education Pilot Program	4	Public or Private Setting
PRIVATELY-FUNDED		
Private (Profit and Not for Profit) Child Care or Child Development	0 - 12	Private Centers Group or Family Homes
Faith-based Child Care or Child Development	Varies	Church or Faith-Based Setting

It should be noted that this idea is not without precedent in South Carolina. As the nation's original tiered reimbursement system for child care providers, the South Carolina Advocates for Better Care (ABC) Child Care Voucher system (housed currently at the SC Department of Social Services, formerly at the SC Department of Health and Human Services) disperses federal Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) dollars to providers at differential rates based upon established program quality benchmarks.⁷ Recent efforts to expand this three-tiered system to include

⁴ *Lifetime Effects: The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40* by Dr. Lawrence Schweinhart. High Scope Press, 2005.

⁵ For more information on the federal *Good Start, Grow Smart* initiative, visit <http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/earlychildhood/toc.html>

⁶ South Carolina's draft *Good Start, Grow Smart Early Learning Standards* can be accessed from the SC Department of Education's website at <http://ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/ece/goodstartgrowsmart.html>

⁷ For information on South Carolina's ABC Voucher System, visit <http://www.state.sc.us/dss/abc/index.html>

additional levels and an associated rating system proved controversial, however, with plans for the proposed *Palmetto Stars* program on hold at present.

Can South Carolina implement uniform and broadly accepted early childhood quality standards - *with the necessary supports and incentives to ensure that widespread excellence becomes a reality in programs across the state?* With the passage of Proviso 1.80, it is clear that South Carolina is ready to take this next step to ensure high quality for its youngest children.

Proviso 1.80 (0 To 4 Year Old Standards): The First Steps State Office must convene a task force to develop quality standards for programs serving children ages 0 to 4. Membership must include both public and private providers and is to be chaired by the Director of the First Steps State Office. A report must be issued to members of the General Assembly and the Governor's Office by January 9, 2007.

PROCESS

In accordance with Proviso 1.80, a diverse and accomplished task force including leaders from public and private early childhood settings, the business and advocacy communities, education policy arena, South Carolina General Assembly, gubernatorial appointees and parents was seated under co-chairs Susan DeVenny, Executive Director of South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness, and Tim Ervolina, President and CEO of the United Way Association of South Carolina.

The Task Force has made use of four methods of data collection in its inquiry process to date:

- 1. Testimony from state and national experts;**
- 2. SC stakeholder focus groups;**
- 3. Regional Early Childhood Town Hall Meetings; and**
- 4. A South Carolina citizens' survey.**

SC Task Force on Early Childhood Quality Standards	
Early Childhood Providers	
Reverend Terence Lee , Pastor, St. Paul's Episcopal Church Mary Teresa Devine , 4K teacher, H.E. Corley Elementary, Lexington/Richland Five Shannon Erickson , President, S.C. Child Care Association; Owner, Hobbit Hill Thomas O. Manigo , Child Development Services Manager, Fort Jackson Ida Thompson , Director, Spartanburg Regional Health Care System Child Care Center Kathryn S. Woods , Director, Pee Dee Community Action Agency Head Start	
South Carolina Legislators	
Senator Mike Fair Senator Linda Short Representative Alan Clemmons Representative Jimmy Neal	
Gubernatorial Appointees	
Kim Aydlette , Director, S.C. Department of Social Services Charmeka Bosket , Gubernatorial Education Advisor	
Business Leaders	
Jim Hart , Sr. Vice President, Blue Cross Blue Shield Chair, United Way Association of S.C. Ann Robinson , Sr. Vice President, Bank of America Board Member, Success By 6 of Greenville County	
Parents of Young Children	
Trina Austin Sal Estrada	
Education Policy Leaders	
Susan Marlowe , Member, Education Oversight Committee Danny Varat , Board Member, S.C. Board of Education and Greenville County First Steps	
Task Force Co-Chairs	
Susan DeVenny , Executive Director, South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Tim Ervolina , President and CEO, United Way Association of South Carolina	

This process was designed to provide an efficient - yet thorough - review of national and state research, trends and opinions, and to ensure that the group's proposals would be realistic, achievable, and evidence-based.

In a series of five, full-day meetings, the Task Force received testimony from an array of well-respected and widely-published authorities in the field of early care and education. Among the areas addressed were current research; best practice trends; brain development; financing opportunities and the experiences of other states, with an emphasis upon the needs and concerns of providers, parents and policy makers. (Note: A list of invited speakers and their presentation materials are included in the appendices to this report.)

The Task Force also provided multiple opportunities for South Carolina parents, early childhood professionals and other interested stakeholders to share their views through: 1) a series of five



widely-publicized regional Town Hall Meetings, 2) a broadly-distributed survey (available both in paper and electronic format), and 3) a series of stakeholder focus groups.

As a result of its preliminary inquiry, the Task Force has identified both the attributes most commonly associated with early childhood program quality and a number of innovative public policy measures designed to support, sustain and incentivize its attainment.

While recognizing that *investments in quality yield substantial public benefits* – and therefore warrant some degree of public funding - the group is equally mindful that the state's resources are finite. The Task Force therefore asserts its pledge to develop and deliver realistic policy solutions for South Carolina and its commitment to developing public-private funding partnerships.

Initial Task Force Findings

Though this report is not intended as a comprehensive summary of the content-rich testimony offered, several notable themes did emerge from the Task Force meetings and inquiry. They are summarized below as the group's initial findings.

1. Quality Matters. Quality Interactions Matter Most.

While the benefits of investing in early childhood education have been widely touted, policy-makers should be mindful that not all such investments are created equally. ***Put plainly, quality matters.***

At the policy level, two interdependent forces define this quality: ***structural*** and ***process elements***. In the simplest of terms, structural elements are those most easily regulated. These include things like health and safety provisions, adult:child ratios, and maximum group size.

Process elements, on the other hand, relate to far more intangible characteristics often determined either on site (curricular choices, materials provided, etc.) or within the classroom

itself. While both structural and process elements contribute greatly to a program's overall quality, research suggests *it is the quality of interaction between caregivers and the children in their care that makes the most profound difference*. Perhaps not coincidentally, South Carolina stakeholders overwhelmingly identified these interactions as their own most important determinant of program quality.⁸

2. Teacher Training Counts.

It is important to note that quality interactions extend far beyond loving care. ***In order to maximize the young child's development, it is critical that teachers receive specialized training in both pedagogy and child development.*** The level of educational attainment



associated with the strongest child development outcomes, however, remains the subject of some controversy. While many researchers and advocates suggest that a bachelor's degree from a formal teacher education program should be required of all early childhood providers, some of the strongest evidence to date remains linked to the Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential.⁹ While this threshold remains somewhat hazy, one thing is certain: at a minimum, South Carolina should be taking steps to ensure more specialized training for its early education workforce.

3. Quality Costs. Financing Solutions Are Key to Promoting Excellence.

Of all the reasons that high quality early childhood programming remains largely elusive, one factor stands head and shoulders above the rest: ***quality care is expensive, costly to parents and providers alike.*** In a state like South Carolina, where median income lags behind other parts of the nation, large portions of the market simply cannot bear the costs associated with programs meeting the field's highest standards. The nation's most widely acknowledged preschool accreditation, for example, is held by only 150 South Carolina programs - with only a tiny handful of these relying solely upon parent tuition to sustain their operating costs.¹⁰

It is for this reason the Task Force recognizes that neither standards nor any proposed rating system can exist in a vacuum. ***Indeed, a rating system enacted independently of provider supports and incentives can serve only to assist affluent parents in identifying niche providers.***

Several states have enacted innovative financing solutions, many of which are included in Recommendation One below.



⁸ The results of the Task Force's South Carolina Citizens' Survey on Early Childhood Quality Standards are summarized in the appendix to this report. Among those surveyed caregiver-child interactions emerged as a critical measure of program quality.

⁹ *Early Childhood Professional Development: What We Know and What We Don't*, June 2006, a fact sheet from the National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC). For this and other resources, visit the NCCIC website at <http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov>

¹⁰ A search for programs accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) identified 150 such providers on January 7, 2007. These programs are overwhelmingly subsidized (Head Start, public schools, university and hospital programs, etc), with only a small percentage relying solely upon parent tuition to sustain their operational costs. To view a listing of accredited programs in South Carolina, visit http://www.naeyc.org/academy/web_ready/search

Next Steps for the South Carolina Task Force on Early Childhood Quality Standards

Armed with a grounding in current research, the Task Force now begins the second – and most critical - phase of its work: developing concrete proposals to operationalize its initial recommendations (detailed in the next section), and **working with diverse stakeholders (across program and agency lines) to develop both expanded quality standards for the state's early childhood programs and widespread support for their implementation.**

To accomplish these latter tasks, a subcommittee of Task Force members will be seated and charged with developing expanded, measurable quality standards for use across programs. The subcommittee will provide regular updates to the full Task Force and present its final recommendations for the group's endorsement by September 1, 2007. The Task Force will present its final report to Governor Sanford and the South Carolina General Assembly by November 1, 2007.

While the Task Force members embrace personal responsibility for the roles assigned to them by the General Assembly (and will ultimately bear the burden of this important task), the group also recognizes that important expertise can be offered by various agency personnel, stakeholder groups and other knowledgeable individuals - both locally and nationally - who are likely to substantially contribute to the quality of their own product. While serving as the driving force behind this work, the sub-committee will actively seek the assistance and involvement of such individuals as they deem necessary and appropriate.

The Task Force has specifically charged the subcommittee with preparing standards recommendations that:

- **expand or adapt the state's existing quality levels to create a voluntary tiered rating system for use by consumers (to be enacted in conjunction with *systemic supports and incentives* as detailed in *Recommendation One* below.),**
- **reflect current best practices, evidence-based research, and early learning standards for young children,**
- **establish clear levels of quality, containing precise, measurable standards, and**
- **are respectful of the diversity and philosophical differences marking the state's existing early childhood service providers.**



Initial Task Force Recommendations

Recommendation One: Create a Quality Based Incentive System (QBIS) for the state's early care and education providers and the South Carolina families who access their services. Begin by implementing incentives that support provider participation and advancement within the state's current three level quality program.

Incentives to Families

- Establish tax incentives (refundable consumer tax credits, deductions or earned income credits) for families choosing to enroll their children in settings that surpass minimum licensing standards - with the size of the incentive linked to the quality of the provider.
- Use state funds to expand childcare scholarships for low-income families. Require, as feasible, the use of these funds in settings that surpass minimum licensing standards.
- Explore funding *supplements* to the state's existing federal vouchers that would enable low income families to access higher quality care.
- Reevaluate the state's existing – but rarely utilized - employer tax incentives linked to childcare (SC Code 12-6-3440), and explore methods of enhancing and/or better publicizing these incentives to encourage their use.

Incentives to Providers

- Establish a low-interest *loan to grant* program designed to assist providers in reaching enhanced levels of quality.
- Establish business tax credits/deductions (property tax discounts, income tax abatement, etc.) linked to program quality.
- Expand focused technical assistance linked to quality enhancement.
- Provide for the elimination of incentives to programs that fail to maintain or improve their quality.

Incentives to Early Childhood Educators

- Utilize South Carolina's T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) Program to encourage professional development amongst entry-level early childhood professionals.
- Establish state-funded salary supplements and/or refundable tax credits/deductions for early childhood professionals linked to their levels of educational attainment.

Recommendation Two: Provide consumer tools which allow South Carolina families to locate and access quality early childhood services.

- Create a user-friendly web-based system to provide consumers with a means to access information and differentiate between provider options.
- Develop a marketing plan to make parents and other interested stakeholders aware of the web-based system and its uses.

Recommendation Three: Integrate existing resources for providers in order to better promote and support increased quality in early childhood settings.

- Expand current licensing and monitoring staff to meet the increased structural demands likely to be associated with the introduction of a Quality Based Incentive System (QBIS) in South Carolina. Modify the state’s technical assistance efforts to support the QBIS.
- Increase the coordination of professional development, training and on-site technical assistance efforts of First Steps, the SC Department of Social Services, the SC Department of Education, the SC Center for Child Care Career Development, Child Care Resource and Referral, Success by 6, and South Carolina’s higher education programs. Work to create a seamless support system for providers.
 - Increase participation in the T.E.A.C.H. program, with an emphasis upon “vertical training” designed to advance teacher credentials and matching incentives tied to their attainment.
 - Increase T.E.A.C.H. enrollment through improved outreach to providers and administrators. Identify barriers to participation and develop strategies to reduce or eliminate these obstacles.
 - Increase participation in college-level early childhood coursework by removing barriers for providers (ex: timing and locations of courses offered, provision of substitutes for early childhood classes while teachers participate in coursework, remedial instruction as needed to enable entry to college level coursework).
 - Reexamine the requirements for annual provider training to reduce the existing emphasis on “clock hours” in favor of training or continuing education designed to advance teacher credentials.
- Target entry-level professionals whose interest in teaching young children can be identified in South Carolina’s high schools.
 - Work to develop articulation agreements between high school early childhood education classes and technical college credential and degree programs.
- Encourage quality in home- and family-based provider settings through a voucher/scholarship program tied to performance-based incentives.
- Work to standardize or consolidate data collection, monitoring and reporting efforts across programs. Include data that will enable long-term outcomes measurement.

Appendix A:

Early Childhood Policy and Research Experts Contributing Testimony

A rich and varied group of top national and state experts made presentations and participated in discussion and exploration of early childhood quality standards concepts in the Task Force work sessions.

National Experts

“National Trends in Early Childhood Education”

Judy Collins, State Technical Assistance Specialist, National Child Care Information Center

“Early Learning: What the Research Says and Implications for Child Care Quality”

Nina Sazer O'Donnell, Director, National Strategies, Success By 6

“A New Perspective from the Provider Community”

Eric J. Karolak, Ph.D., Early Care and Education Consortium

“Quality Care in South Carolina: Financing Options and Opportunities”

Louise Stoney, Alliance for Early Childhood Finance

“Quality Rating Systems”

Desiree Reddick-Head, National Child Care Information Center

South Carolina Experts

“Understanding Child Care: Programs, Parent's Choices and Availability”

Janet Marsh, Ph.D., Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life, Clemson University

“The Implications of Quality Early Education for Brain Development”

Desmond Kelly, M.D., Medical Director for the Division of Developmental Behavioral Pediatrics, Children's Hospital of Greenville Hospital System

“Economic Impacts of the S.C. Child Care Industry”

Don Schunk, Ph.D., Economist, Moore School of Business, University of South Carolina

“Programs, Priorities and Funding of Child Care Vouchers and Initiatives Administered by DSS”

Kim Aydlette (and select senior staff), Director, South Carolina Department of Social Services

Appendix B:

South Carolina Stakeholder Input

Focus groups, a statewide survey and regional public forums created a variety of opportunities for South Carolina stakeholders to share their hopes and concerns with the Task Force Members. More than 1,800 stakeholders representing every county in S.C. shared their views. Special thanks to our Focus Group Participants and to SCETV for Providing Meeting Space

Higher Education

Lynne Steyer Noble, Ed.D., Columbia College
 Kevin J. Swick, Ph.D., University of S.C.
 Millie McDonald, SC Center for Child Care Career Development
 Nancy K. Freeman, Ph.D., University of S.C.
 Pamela H. Dinkins, Central Carolina Technical College
 Sandra Hackley, Midlands Technical College
 Pam Rogers, Aiken Technical College
 Elsbeth Brown, Winthrop University
 Linda Mims, University of S.C. at Sumter

First Steps Executive Directors

Rick Noble, Richland County
 Angela Pruitt, Abbeville County
 Michael Gaskins, Greenwood County
 Kimberley Jordan, Kershaw County
 Mary Anne Matthews, Beaufort County
 Alexis Pipkins, Lee County
 Marilyn Madden, Pickens County
 Marcia Bacon, Richland County
 Carolyn Brooks, Spartanburg County

Child Care Provider Group A

Jean White, Trinity Learning Center
 Patricia Blakney, Bethel AME Child Development Center
 Bea Daves, Shandon United Methodist Pre-School
 Leslie Williams, Bethesda Christian School
 Janet Ironsides, MEGA Preschool
 Marileen Chapman, Kids and Company
 Marie Darstein, Sunshine House

Department of Education

Robin McCants
 Nancy Burchins
 Norma Jenkins Donaldson

Child Care Provider Group B

Huey Mills, Carolina Christian Academy
 Brenda Varcroft, Bob Jones University CDC
 Aline Pennington, Bob Jones University CDC
 Edward Earwood, SC Assoc. of Christian School/Day Care
 Reece Yandle, Church Child Care Network
 Meir Muller, Columbia Jewish Day School
 Felicia Yockel, Washington St. United Methodist CDC

Department of Social Services

Bob Howard, Child Care Regulations
 Leigh Bolick, Child Care Services
 Beverly Hunter, Child Care Services
 Myrna Turner, ABC Child Care Program
 Sharon Johnson, ABC Child Care Program
 Debra Session, DSS
 Rita Paul, Child Care Licensing
 Cynthia Lara, Child Care Licensing

Child Care Provider Group C

Penny Danielson, Vital Connections of the Midlands
 Shondra Morris, Tender Years CDC
 Tammy Mancuso, Columbia Federal CDC
 Janice Bennett, Lexington Medical Hospital CDC
 Harriet Atkinson, The Children's Garden
 Betty Davenport, Benedict College CDC
 Susan Graham, USC Child Development CDC
 Leroy Guillard, Head Start Collaboration Project
 Shadie Hall, SC Head Start Association
 Evelyn Patterson, SC Head Start Association
 Linnie Miller, Carolina CAA Head Start
 Mary Lynn Diggs, SC Head Start Collaboration Office

Early Care and Education Advocates

Lora L. Kline, United Way of Greenwood and Abbeville
 Sue Oliver, Voices for South Carolina's Children
 Rosemary Wilson, DHEC-MCH-WCS
 Becky Airheart, Children's Trust Fund of SC
 Ann Pfeiffer, S.C. Center for Child Care Career Development
 Laurie Rovin, United Way Success By 6 of Greenville
 Michelle Martin, United Way Success By 6 of Sumter
 Bonnie Bella, Trident United Way Success By 6

Appendix C:

South Carolina Stakeholder Input: Regional Forums

More than 100 citizen stakeholders attended regional meetings held in October. Three or more members of the Task Force attended each of the regional meetings to receive comments from parents, child care providers and others.

Meetings were held in the evening to allow all stakeholders to share their views.

Special Thanks to the technical colleges who provided meeting space:

Greenville Technical College
Aiken Technical College
Midlands Technical College
Florence-Darlington Technical College
Trident Technical College

South Carolina Stakeholder Input: Survey

Nearly 1600 stakeholders responded to a written survey that included both ranking and open-ended questions. Roughly one-third of respondents were parents of children four years of age or younger. The second largest group was comprised of early childhood professionals.

Other respondents included business leaders, elected officials, child care providers, community volunteers and teachers.

Respondents were able to use either paper or electronic versions of the survey.

Appendix D:

Policy and Research Presentations Reviewed by the Task Force

The following pages contain materials presented to the Task Force.

October 4 Task Force Meeting:

1. *"The Implications of Quality Early Education for Brain Development"* by Desmond Kelly, M.D., Medical Director for the Division of Developmental Behavioral Pediatrics, Children's Hospital of Greenville Hospital System
2. *"Understanding Child Care: Programs, Parent's Choices and Availability"* by Janet Marsh, Ph.D., Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life, Clemson University
3. *"National Trends in Early Childhood Education"* by Judy Collins, State Technical Assistance Specialist, National Child Care Information Center

October 18 Task Force Meeting:

4. *"Early Learning: What the Research Says and Implications for Child Care Quality"* by Nina Sazer O'Donnell, Director, National Strategies, Success By 6
5. *"A New Perspective from the Provider Community"* by Eric J. Karolak, Ph.D., Early Care and Education Consortium
6. Focus Group Findings conducted and presented by Dawn Huntley, Strategic Innovations
7. Survey Findings conducted and presented by Dawn Huntley, Strategic Innovations

November 1 Task Force Meeting:

8. *"Economic Impacts of the S.C. Child Care Industry"* by Don Schunk, Ph.D., Economist, Moore School of Business, University of South Carolina
9. *"Quality Care in South Carolina: Financing Options and Opportunities"* by Louise Stoney, Alliance for Early Childhood Finance
10. *DSS Financing Overview* by Linda Martin, SC Department of Social Services

November 15 Task Force Meeting:

11. *"Quality Rating Systems"* by Desiree Reddick-Head, National Child Care Information Center
12. *"Programs, Priorities and Funding of Child Care Vouchers and Initiatives Administered by DSS"* by Kim Aydlette (presented by Beverly Hunter), Director, South Carolina Department of Social Services

To access the presentation materials listed above, visit the First Steps website at <http://www.scfirststeps.org/standards.htm>