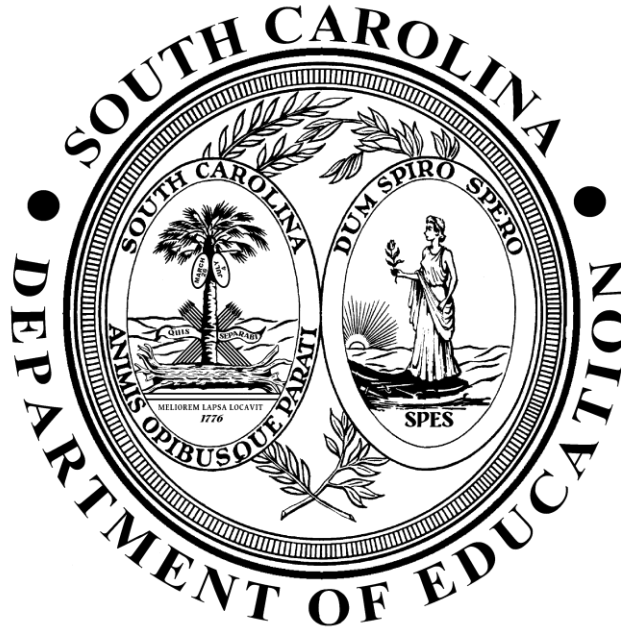


STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MOLLY M. SPEARMAN
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION



Report Summarizing Services Provided Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to Preschool Children with Disabilities 2021–22 School Year

Provided to the Interagency Coordinating Council, the Senate Finance Committee, the House Ways and Means Committee, the Senate Education Committee, and the House Education and Public Works

Pursuant to Act 86, Chapter 36 of Title 59 of the Amended Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976

February 1, 2023

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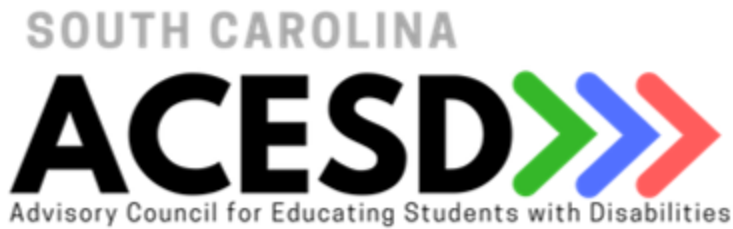
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February 1, 2023

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The preschool committee of the Advisory Council for Educating Students with Disabilities (ACESD) is pleased to present its 2023 Annual Report of services provided to children ages three through five, and corresponding recommendations. The committee is charged with the important responsibility of identifying and studying key issues in special education and early intervention and advising and assisting the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE), Office of Special Education Services (OSES).

The 2023 Annual Report and resulting recommendations are pursuant to Act 86 of 1993, Chapter 36 of Title 59 of the Amended Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976. The recommendations of the preschool committee of the ACESD include the following:

Continue to separate Indicator 6: Preschool Least Restrictive Environment data by age.

The OSES, per a reporting option from the United States Department of Education (USED), Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), separated indicator data by age for the 2021–22 school year. This method allows specific identification of the need for more targeted support and intervention to districts as needed to provide a continuum of placements for preschool children with disabilities.

Continue to provide guidance and training for general education and special education early childhood teachers, administrators, school psychologists, and related service providers on inclusion and least restrictive environment (LRE).

Per Section 1412 (a)(5) of Title 20 of the United States code, preschool children with disabilities are to be educated with children who are not disabled to the maximum extent appropriate. As a result, in accordance with 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.115 and 300.116, each Local Education Agency (LEA) must provide a preschool continuum of alternative placements to meet the needs of children with disabilities.

Create a task force to review, research and provide recommendations to improve teacher recruitment and retention for preschool special education teachers. Teacher recruitment and retention are a significant concern for our state, especially in the field of special education.

The 2021–22 school year had an overall increase of 812 preschool-age children receiving special education services compared to the prior year. Autism, Developmental Delay, and Speech or Language Impairment continue to be the most common disability categories among preschool-age children. It is imperative that preschool programs and educators be supported to ensure that children are able to obtain the support they need. By providing high quality learning experiences for preschool children, the state will see children start school ready to learn and be equipped with the skills, information and supports they need for kindergarten readiness and lifelong success.

Thank you for your consideration of the thoughtful study and recommendations contained in this report.

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Background

Act 86 of 1993 requires LEAs to serve children with disabilities ages three through five. This state mandate represented a downward extension of all the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Public Law 101–476. One of the stipulations of the state mandate is the requirement for the submission of a report to the South Carolina General Assembly by February 1 of each year that includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- the SCDE initiatives related to preschool programs for children with disabilities.
- data and program information from LEAs related to activities involving the Child Find process and LEA services.
- updates of policies and procedures for preschool programs for children with disabilities.
- financial information pertaining to implementation of preschool programs for children with disabilities.
- information collected from other state agencies providing services for preschool children with disabilities, including the Commission for the Blind; the Department of Disabilities and Special Needs; the Department of Health and Environmental Control; the Department of Mental Health; the Division of Continuum of Care for Emotionally Disturbed Children; the Office of the Governor; the School for the Deaf and the Blind; and the State Department of Social Services. Information collected includes the following:
 - pertinent program data,
 - financial information,
 - pertinent policies and procedures related to programs for preschool children with disabilities.

The stipulations are outlined in the legislation for preschool children with disabilities, Act 86, Chapter 36 of Title 59 of the Amended Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976.

Executive Summary

This report summarizes the initiatives by the SCDE’s Office of Special Education Services (OSES) to provide a comprehensive system of service for preschool children with disabilities in the 2021–22 school year. The sections provide data on the number of preschool children with disabilities in South Carolina receiving special education during the school year; who they are and where they received their services; available state and federal funds; and initiatives and services provided on behalf of preschool children with disabilities and their families by LEAs, state agencies, and Head Start programs. Recommendations are included in the report based upon stakeholder feedback collected throughout the year.

Section I: Data for Programs for Preschool Children with Disabilities

Part B of the IDEA requires the SCDE to submit to the USED, OSEP, a certified count, annually, of the number of children with disabilities receiving special education and related services through Individual Education Programs. Children ages three through five are included in this Child Count Report each year, based upon a child’s age as of the data collection date (defined as the fourth Tuesday in October, annually). Preschool children can begin receiving services on

their third birthday, regardless of when it occurs. Therefore, the annual Child Count information does not reflect the total number of students who received services during any entire school year. Data will be presented in each age category where available, as well as a total of all three age categories.

Population and Age

According to the Child Count data collected on October 26, 2021, for the 2021–22 school year, 5,762 children with disabilities ages three through five (not yet kindergarten) received special education services in South Carolina:

- 2,150 three-year-old's,
- 2,950 four-year-old's, and
- 662 five-year-old's (not yet in kindergarten).

Of the total number of three to five-year-old's (not yet in kindergarten), 1,653 were female (28.69 percent) and 4,109 were males (71.31 percent). The four-year-old category is the age at which the largest number of students with disabilities are served.

The USED, OSEP instructed that beginning in the 2020–21 school year, kindergarten students were to be excluded from the count, whereas they had been included in previous years. This gives a true picture of preschool-age children.

Table 1. Five-Year Trend of Children Ages 3–5 (not yet kindergarten) Receiving Special Education Services

	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
Age 3	1,869	2,019	2,209	1,586	2,150
Age 4	3,068	3,095	3,332	2,768	2,950
Age 5 (not yet kindergarten)	4,630	4,678	4,858	596*	662*
<i>Total</i>	9,568	9,792	10,399	4,950	5,762

Note: Source of data is IDEA, Part B, Section 618, 2021 Child Count.

**Beginning in the 2020–21 school year, kindergarten aged children were not included in the Age 5 count per USED, OSEP guidelines.*

Ethnicity or Race

The 2021 Child Count lists eight ethnic categories, with one being “unknown”. Specific numbers are not reported if there are ten or less in a category for confidentiality reasons. No children were in the “unknown” ethnic category; thus, this category is not included below. Data indicates the following for three-to five-year-old's (not yet kindergarten) with disabilities:

- 0.21 percent American Indian,
- 1.35 percent Asian,
- 28.91 percent Black or African American,
- 12.70 percent Hispanic or Latino,

- * Percent Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander,
- 5.41 percent Two or more races,
- 51.37 percent White, and
- Zero percent Unknown.

Of the different ethnicities, 5,140 children, or 89.21 percent do not have Limited English Proficiency and 622 children or 10.79 percent do have Limited English Proficiency.

Primary Disability

Section 300.8 of the IDEA defines categories of disabilities for which a child may be evaluated and provided specialized services.

For 2021–22, data indicates:

- 18.10 percent or 1,043 Autism Spectrum Disorder,
- * Percent or * Deaf-Blindness,
- 42.83 percent or 2,468 Developmental Delay,
- 1.21 percent or 70 Hearing Impairment
- 0.19 percent or 11 Intellectual Disability,
- 0.95 percent or 55 Multiple Disabilities,
- 0.26 percent or 15 Orthopedic Impairment,
- 1.60 percent or 92 Other Health Impairment,
- 34.19 percent or 1,970 Speech or Language Impairment
- * Percent or * Traumatic Brain Injury, and
- 0.56 percent or 32 Visual Impairment.

The percentage of students identified with a Developmental Delay compared to the other categories is due to an IDEA regulation. This regulation allows for the wide definition of the disability and the time allowed for a student to remain in this category before a more specific identification is required.

Table 2. Number of Children Ages 3-5 (not yet kindergarten) Receiving Services by Area of Disability on 2021 Child Count

<i>Primary Disability</i>	<i>Age 3</i>	<i>Age 4</i>	<i>Age 5 (not yet kindergarten)</i>
	<i>Number/%</i>	<i>Number/%</i>	<i>Number/%</i>
Autism Spectrum Disorder	405/18.84%	525/17.80%	113/17.07%
Deaf-Blindness	*	*	*
Developmental Delay	940/47.32%	1259/42.68%	269/40.63%
Hearing Impairment	28/1.30%	33/1.12%	*
Intellectual Disability	*	*	*
Multiple Disabilities	29/1.35%	21/0.71%	*
Orthopedic Impairment	*	*	*
Speech or Language Impairment	689/32.05%	1037/35.15%	244/36.86%
Traumatic Brain Injury	*	*	*
Visual Impairment	13/0.60%	11/0.37%	*

Note: Source of data is IDEA, Part B, Section 618, 2021 Child Count.

Cells containing less than ten students are suppressed for confidentiality purposes and are denoted with an asterisk. Per the data, Developmental Delay, Speech or Language Impairment, and Autism Spectrum Disorder continue to be the categories with the highest numbers.

Educational Environment

The educational environment in which students with disabilities are served in South Carolina includes eight settings. All LEAs must ensure that preschool children with disabilities are educated in the least restrictive environment, regardless of whether the LEA operates public preschool programs for children without disabilities. To accomplish this, an LEA may provide services to a preschool child with a disability in a variety of settings which includes a regular kindergarten class, public or private preschool program, community-based childcare facility, or in the child's home. A child may attend at least 10 hours per week or less than ten hours per week. Should a LEA not have a public preschool program, other alternative programming must be explored to ensure preschool children with disabilities are placed in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

LEAs should consider the following:

- providing services in preschool programs offered by other public agencies,
- enrolling children in private preschool programs for children without disabilities,
- locating classes for preschool children with disabilities in regular elementary schools,
- providing home-based services.

A memorandum ([Educational Environment](#)) was shared with LEAs in September 2019 to describe the continuum of service delivery environments in the early childhood sectors so that children with disabilities are supported appropriately in the LRE. Additional information may be found in the [Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs](#).

The table below denotes the numbers of three, four, and five-year-old's (not yet kindergarten) in each setting for the 2021–22 school year:

Table 3. Children Ages 3–5 (not yet kindergarten) Educational Environments

<i>Least Restrictive Environment</i>	<i>Age 3 Number/%</i>	<i>Age 4 Number/%</i>	<i>Age 5 Number/%</i>
Ages 3–5: Home	28/1.30%	27/0.92%	*
Ages 3–5: In Regular Education at Least 10 hours per week – EC Program	196/9.12%	334/11.32%	68/10.27%
Ages 3–5: In Regular Education at Least 10 hours per week – Other Location	233/10.84%	356/12.07	113/17.07%
Ages 3–5: In Regular Education less than 10 hours per week – EC Program	196/9.12%	334/11.32%	68/10.27%
Ages 3–5: In Regular Education less than 10 hours per week – Other Location	126/5.86%	149/5.05%	37/5.59%
Ages 3–5: Separate Class	920/42.79%	796/26.98%	124/18.73%
Ages 3–5: Separate School	71/3.30%	48/1.63%	*
Ages 3–5: Service Provider Location	419/19.49%	273/9.25%	47/7.10%

Note: Source of data is IDEA, Part B, Section 618, 2021 Child Count.

Of all preschool children receiving special education services, the three largest disability categories are Autism Spectrum Disorder, Developmental Delay and Speech-Language Impairment, representing 95.12 percent of preschool-aged children served in South Carolina. Children with these top three primary disabilities are served in various educational environments across the state. Table 4 shows the top preschool diagnoses by educational environment.

Table 4. Top Preschool Diagnoses by Educational Environment for 2021–22

<i>Educational Environment</i>	<i>Autism Number/%</i>	<i>Developmental Delay Number/%</i>	<i>Speech-Language Impairment Number/%</i>
Ages 3–5: Home	*	11/0.45%	34/1.73%
Ages 3–5: In Regular Education at least 10 hours per week – EC Program	113/10.83%	560/22.69%	667/33.86%
Ages 3–5: In Regular Education at least 10 hours per week – Other Location	67/6.42%	176/7.13%	445/22.59%
Ages 3–5: In Regular Education less than 10 Hours per week – EC Program	143/13.71%	389/15.76%	30/1.52%
Ages 3–5: In Regular Education less than 10 Hours per week – Other Location	130/12.46%	132/5.35%	23/1.17%
Ages 3–5: Separate Class	558/53.50%	1142/46.27%	29/1.47%
Ages 3–5: Separate School	20/1.92%	24/0.97%	42/2.49%

Note: Source of Data is IDEA, Part B, Section 618, Table 1 (Child Count), 2021 Child Count

Section II: Financial Information

During the 2021–22 school year, the federal funds specifically allocated for preschool children with disabilities was \$11,067,150.00 (IDEA Preschool and ARP Preschool), an increase from the

2020–21 allocation of \$7,371,514.00. State funds for 2021–22 totaled 19,801,948.09. The total allocation for 2021–22 was \$30,869,098.09, which is an increase from 2020–21 by \$4,307,633.00.

Federal Funds

For the 2021–22 school year, the OSES received a total of \$11,067,150 in federal funds for preschool, of which \$7,430,431, was received under the IDEA federal preschool grant program and \$3,636,719 was received under the American Rescue Plan (ARP) which represents an increase of \$3,695,636 from the previous year. ARP funds were one-time funds issued to address the global pandemic. Federal regulations allow the SCDE to retain a portion of the funds for administrative costs; however, the agency elected to flow through 100 percent of these funds to LEAs for the provision of direct services to preschool age children.

The IDEA allocations are calculated by means of a three-tiered formula: a base equal to the LEA's allocation for fiscal year 1997, the number of children in the age range from three to twenty-one in the LEA's public and private schools, and the number in that age range who are living in poverty. Consequently, the SCDE cannot readily determine the dollars that preschool children generate for an LEA. The LEA can expend other federal funds on this population.

State Funds

Through the Education Finance Act, the state funds disbursed in the 2021–22 school year for preschool students with disabilities were \$19,801,948.09, which reflects an increase from the 2020–21 school year allocation of \$19,189,951.09. Table 5 shows the state allocation for each EFA category.

Table 5. State Allocation by EFA Category

<i>EFA Category</i>	<i>State Allocation</i>
Educable Mentally Handicapped	\$10,283.06
Learning Disabled*	\$3,604,405.39
Trainable Mentally Handicapped	\$55,729.06
Emotionally Handicapped	\$26,081.42
Orthopedically Handicapped	\$113,400.93
Visually Handicapped	\$311,106.59
Autism	\$3,586,057.47
Hearing Handicapped	\$557,034.68
Speech Handicapped	\$11,537,849.50

**Children with Developmental Delay are included in the Learning Disabled Category.*

Fiscal Monitoring

The IDEA requires that the SCDE monitor LEAs regularly to ensure fiscal compliance with state and federal laws, rules, and regulations that govern the provision of special education and related services to appropriately identified children. The purpose of this monitoring is to focus federal, state, and local resources on improved results for children with disabilities and their families.

The OSES is responsible for conducting IDEA fiscal monitoring activities. The goal of the OSES's Fiscal Monitoring is to ensure that LEAs are meeting the requirements of federal, state and IDEA regulations. The OSES's fiscal monitoring approach is outcome oriented. However, if noncompliance is identified through any of the OSES's monitoring activities, the OSES will require the LEA to correct the noncompliance as soon as possible, but in no case later than one year after the identification of the noncompliance.

Contrary to the perception that monitoring is an annual on-site process, the OSES employs several monitoring activities to ensure compliance with federal and local regulations and improve educational results and functional outcomes for students with disabilities. Monitoring activities include grants accounting processing system (GAPS) reviews, Maintenance of Effort calculator review, on-site fiscal monitoring, virtual fiscal monitoring, desk audits, LEA self-assessments, grant applications, and audit findings reviews.

The OSES has an established risk-based tiered fiscal monitoring protocol where LEA fiscal processes, policies, procedures, budgets, and expenditures are reviewed. The fiscal monitoring process includes three tiers with increasing scrutiny of processes and documentation through the tier progression. A risk assessment rubric has been established to make determinations as to progression from Tier 1 to Tier 2 and from Tier 2 to Tier 3. Scores will be assigned for all monitoring components. Data is collected during the early fall for Tier 1; and Tier 2 monitoring begins in the late fall. The Tier 3 monitoring process begins in January.

Section III: Office of Special Education Services Initiatives and Partnerships

Data Collection and Reporting

To ensure valid and reliable data, OSES staff worked actively with school and preschool staff to ensure data on Preschool LRE, Childhood Outcomes, and Early Childhood Transition were captured and reported appropriately. All LEAs and state-operated programs were provided with materials, training and technical assistance and guidance from OSES to appropriately collect data on the preschool indicators. Additionally, the data team at OSES completed checks of the data before they were made public. OSES staff are available to provide support as data is both collected and reported by the LRE.

The Early Childhood Team has diligently been creating an Early Childhood Guide to offer additional information regarding each of the preschool indicators. The goal is for this guide to be released prior to the 2023–24 school year.

South Carolina Partnerships for Inclusion (SCPI)

South Carolina Partnerships for Inclusion is the early childhood technical assistance provider through the OSES. SCPI's mission is to increase inclusive opportunities and school readiness for preschool children with disabilities to lead to more positive outcomes for children and families. SCPI's goal is for LEAs to be better positioned to increase access to the general education curriculum for preschool students with disabilities. SCPI supports districts across the state and offers tiered technical assistance to assist them in meeting state SPP/APR targets for Early Childhood Indicators.

Together, the OSES and the University of South Carolina implement the SCPI initiative. SCPI's current five-year contract cycle began on October 1, 2021. With this new contract came a significant expansion of SCPI's program and services, including incorporating various supports for Pyramid Model Implementation into the assistance SCPI provides (Pyramid Pieces). In addition, seven staff members have been added to the team as part of the expansion.

Regarding tiered, targeted, and intensive support, SCPI had the opportunity to provide tiered assistance to three districts in the 2021–22 school year. In addition to tiered support, SCPI also offers universal support to all districts which includes professional development opportunities and resource sharing. A virtual community of practice regarding culturally relevant practices in early childhood settings included participants from seven districts, six partner organizations, and five other organizations.

Plans for additional technical assistance support include:

- Addressing Barriers to Inclusion: A Virtual Community of Practice,

- Leadership and Teaming Modules,
- Virtual Preschool Inclusion Leadership Toolkit,
- Special Education Itinerant Coach, and
- First Annual Early Childhood Inclusion Conference.

Section IV: Programs/Services for Preschool Children with Disabilities – Information on Other Offices within the South Carolina Department of Education, Other State Agencies and Head Start Programs

The SCDE is required to work with other state agencies through partnerships and other collaborations to service the three to five-year-old population. Collaborating with partner state agencies creates the continuum of services that provide support, evaluation, education, and resources to the three- to five-year-old population. By continuing to develop and offer a continuum of service delivery environments and services and programs, young children with disabilities have increased access and equity in programming as well as access to typically developing peers and preschool activities while also receiving appropriate specialized services to meet individualized goals. Ongoing collaborative work allows for the continuum of service delivery environments in early childhood years to maintain relevance in terms of need and quality in terms of services. The continuum of services also supports several priorities surrounding IDEA compliance and high-quality early childhood education including inclusion programming and a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS). Many agencies and departments work with OSES to support this continuum of services to the three to five-year-old population. Included below are individual agency reports.

BabyNet

The most recent Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (SCDHHS)/BabyNet and the SCDE was signed in December 2020. This MOA is a five-year agreement outlining the responsibilities for SCDHHS/BabyNet and the South Carolina Department of Education. The identification, location, and evaluation of each child eligible for services under Parts B and C of the IDEA as well as the timely exchange of information ensures a smooth transition for children and their families from Part C to Part B in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

From July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022, a total of 3,540 transition conferences were held in South Carolina. The following table shows the number of timely and untimely transition conferences held.

Table 6. Part C Transition Data

<i>Point of Entry Office</i>	<i>Timely Transition Conferences</i>	<i>Untimely Transition Conferences</i>	<i>Total Number of Transition Conferences</i>
	<i>Number/%</i>	<i>Number/%</i>	<i>Number</i>
Charleston	561/90%	60/10%	621
Anderson	263/95%	15/5%	278
Richland	674/91%	69/9%	743
Colleton	148/98%	3/2%	151
York	232/89%	28/11%	260
Horry	623/93%	45/7%	668
Spartanburg	765/93%	54/7%	819
<i>Total</i>	<i>3,266/92%</i>	<i>274/8%</i>	<i>3,540</i>

Head Start

Head Start programs are available to children ages birth to five from families whose household income is below 100 percent poverty or if the annual income is less than \$27,000 for a family of four. A recent federal allowance gives Head Start the ability to serve SNAP eligible children (below 130%) of poverty if all children in a service area are being served. These programs are made available at no cost to children. Head Start programs encourage school readiness for children ages three to five. The OSES works in partnership with Head Start to ensure child find responsibilities are fulfilled and to ensure that children who qualify for services under Part B of the IDEA are served in their least restrictive environment. Federal guidelines require Head Start's service population be one of at least 10% of students with an identified category of disability under the IDEA.

First Steps

South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness is a comprehensive, results-oriented initiative for improving early childhood development. First Steps 4K partners with high-quality private for-profit, private non-profit, faith-based, and other eligible providers to expand four-year-old kindergarten programs through South Carolina's Child Early Reading and Education Program (CERDEP). Programs focus on the developmental and learning supports that children must have to be ready for school. These programs incorporate research-based practices, ongoing assessment, and parenting education.

Demographics

Seventy-two four-year-old children with disabilities were served in First Steps facilities during the 2021–22 school year. The table below has the number of preschool children served by ethnicity.

Table 7. Number of Preschool Children Served by Ethnicity

	<i>American Indian or Alaskan</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Black or African American</i>	<i>Two or more races</i>	<i>White</i>
Age 4	1	1	42	9	19

Finances

Tuition for children participating in First Steps 4K is covered by CERDEP state funding. The total cost of tuition for 2021–22 was \$345,600.

Agency Information

Information and guidelines about South Carolina First Steps for children may be found on the [website](#).

South Carolina Commission for the Blind (SCCB)

Legally blind children, within the preschool age range (three–five), may receive assistance through the SCCB’s Children’s Services Program. Children’s Services counselors provide direct assistance with adjustment to blindness and vision loss and may also coordinate a variety of other necessary community resources. This program also provides assistance for children ages six–twelve.

Services for children who are blind, or visually impaired, may include:

- counseling and guidance for parents,
- low vision and/or assistive technology assessments (recommended equipment and devices are also provided),
- orientation and mobility training,
- workshops and support groups for families,
- reinforcement of the development of independent living skills,
- consultation and coordination with community resources.

Children’s Services also addresses the unique needs of legally blind children with multiple disabilities. Children’s Services coordinates with community-based early intervention programs to assist families with obtaining services from professionals with specialized training in visual impairments as well as infant, toddler, and child development.

Children's Services counselors coordinate with several agencies and organizations to ensure all issues are appropriately addressed. Some of those referral sources include, but are not limited to, eye care professionals, the SC Department of Social Services, the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control, the SC Department of Disabilities and Special Needs, the SC School for the Deaf and Blind, National Federation of the Blind's Successful Transitions program, and Vision Instructors.

Children's Services counselors also assist with the transition to preschool programs at age three. When the children are in school, counselors attend the annual Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings and provide adaptive material and equipment and other items necessary for adjustment and completing school assignments. The items children use will vary depending on the individual child's specific abilities and needs.

Children's Services counselors may refer children to Low Vision Clinics for periodic low vision evaluations. When low vision devices are provided, the Children's Services counselor will review proper usage techniques during follow up home visits. Most often the children benefit from magnification devices, which range from basic hand-held options to digital units, as well as protective eyewear. In some cases, children are provided with equipment such as a Closed-Circuit Television.

Counselors conduct thorough assessments to identify the specific needs of children and their families. Family input is an integral part of the process which outlines goals and determines services to be provided. The assessments result in the development of Individualized Service Plans (ISP) for the children. Plans are amended, as needed, and updated annually.

Initiatives During the 2021–22 School Year Included:

- Provided early intervention assistance, guidance for families, and necessary learning tools to promote the appropriate adjustment skills development.
- Gave information for parents regarding beneficial resources and promoted parental involvement in their child's development and educational plans.
- Encouraged coordination among programs to address various needs and assisted the children with achieving established goals.
- Participated in conference meetings, community activities, and public awareness events to promote the Children's Services Program.
- Provided resource materials on child development and the impact of blindness on development through presentations to service providers and community organizations.
- Maintained contact and interaction with appropriate referral sources such as eye care professionals, other school districts, community businesses, and families.
- Established service plans, coordinated required assistance, and partnered with school personnel and other service providers regarding the unique needs of each child.

In addition to the services mentioned above, and depending upon the child's needs, Children's Services may provide low vision devices, orientation and mobility assistance and associated equipment, assistive technology, and other adaptive aids and educational supplies.

Demographics

For 2021–22, five three, four and five-year-old (not yet kindergarten) students were served. The tables below show how many children were in each age group and information about ethnicity.

Table 8. Number of Preschool Children with Disabilities Served by Age Group

	<i>Total</i>
Age 3	1
Age 4	2
Age 5 (not yet kindergarten)	2
<i>Total</i>	5

Table 9. Number of Preschool Children Served by Ethnicity

	<i>Black or African American</i>	<i>White</i>
Age 3	0	1
Age 4	0	2
Age 5 (not yet kindergarten)	1	1

Finances

Program expenditures for the preschool children assisted was an average of \$140 per child during the past fiscal year. This amount may vary among cases, due to the child's needs being individualized. State funds are appropriated for the SCCB Children's Services Program.

Agency Information

The guidelines for Children's Services are outlined in the Policies and Procedures Manual. The information includes services provided to eligible consumers, as well as each counselor's responsibilities to the consumers we serve. The Program's services are also highlighted in agency literature and on the agency's website.

South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (DDSN)

DDSN provides Early Intervention services to children ages three through five. Early Intervention is a family-focused, natural environment-based service for children who experience disabilities or delays in their development. Regardless of age, all children are assigned an Early Interventionist (EI). The EI helps families understand their child's development and provides training to the parents/caregivers on ways that they can address their child's development in their

daily routines. The EI also provides service coordination activities on behalf of the child/family. All services are provided according to the child’s individualized plan. The child’s EI is responsible for linking families to these resources and making referrals for other needed services, as appropriate.

DDSN contracts with local Disability and Special Needs Boards and private providers to provide Early Intervention services to over 3,800 children.

Initiatives During 2021–22 School Year Included:

- DDSN in conjunction with the Department of Health and Human Services worked to continue the provision of Early Intervention services to children as the Covid-19 pandemic continued impacting both families and service delivery. The use of telehealth to provide family training remained an option for families impacted by Covid.
- Families received family support funds, summer support funds, and respite. Note: Eligibility criteria applied.
- DDSN administered three waivers Intellectual Disability/Related Disability Waiver, Community Supports Waiver, and the Head and Spinal Cord Injury Waiver. Parents of children, ages three to five, were given the opportunity to apply for waivers at the Intake/Eligibility process and through their Early Intervention provider. Note: Eligibility criteria applied.
- DDSN identified children eligible to receive services from the American Printing House for the Blind and assisted in the application process.
- DDSN provided technical assistance and training to Early Intervention providers regarding DDSN standards and ‘best practices.’

Demographics

DDSN served 3,817 preschool-aged children during the 2021–22 school year. The table below illustrates the number of children served in each age group.

Table 10. Number of Preschool Children with Disabilities Served by Age Group

	<i>Total</i>
Age 3	1,913
Age 4	1,317
Age 5 (not yet kindergarten)	587
<i>Total</i>	<i>3,817</i>

Finances

DDSN is financially responsible for providing Family Training, Service Coordination, Respite, Family Support Funds, and Interpreter Services. Early Intervention services are paid through Medicaid and DDSN’s operational budget (state funds). The following table gives information regarding funding information by age group.

Table 11. Funds Expended by Age Group

	<i>State Funds</i>	<i>Medicaid Funds</i>	<i>Total</i>
Age 3	2,809,108	3,362,622	6,171,730
Age 4	1,933,924	2,314,989	4,248,913
Age 5 (not yet kindergarten)	861,969	1,031,814	1,893,783
<i>Total</i>	<i>5,605,001</i>	<i>6,709,425</i>	<i>12,314,426</i>

Agency Information

Information about DDSN's programs for children ages 3-5 can be found on the website:

<https://ddsn.sc.gov>

South Carolina Department of Social Services (SCDSS)

The SCDSS Division of Early Care and Education offers the following programs and services for preschool children ages three to five.

The SCDSS Division of Early Care and Education provides vouchers as financial assistance to eligible families so parents can work. Special Needs vouchers help to provide childcare for eligible families of children from birth to age 19 who have a documented disability or special need.

The South Carolina Child Care Inclusion Collaborative (Inclusion Collaborative) provides individualized training, coaching, and consultation for childcare providers to support the inclusion of children with disabilities/developmental delays in childcare programs. The Inclusion Specialists collaborate directly with childcare staff and program administrators to increase the use of evidence-based practices that lead to access and meaningful participation for all children. Through active collaboration with partnering agencies and organizations, the Inclusion Collaborative helps childcare providers stay connected with resources and opportunities to increase the quality of care and education provided to children and families in South Carolina. The South Carolina Department of Social Services Division of Early Care and Education supports this program using the federal Child Care Development Fund. The Inclusion Collaborative provides onsite training and coaching to assist childcare teachers and directors to increase the use of evidence-based practices that support inclusion. This includes providing training and coaching on evidence-based practices related to the promotion of social and emotional wellbeing and prevention of challenging behaviors using the Pyramid Model framework.

Mix EC: Multi-Systems Inclusion Expansion in Early Childhood (Preschool Development Grant 0-5 funding) is another group of multiple initiatives supported by the SCDSS Division of Early Care and Education. These initiatives support the inclusion of young children with disabilities into community-based programs.

Initiatives during the 2021–22 School Year Included:

- Special Needs Vouchers: Provided childcare financial assistance for eligible families of children from birth to age nineteen who had a documented disability or special need.
- Developmental Screening: The Inclusion Collaborative provided training and coaching to childcare programs to conduct developmental screening (i.e., Ages and Stages Questionnaires – Third Edition), communicated with parents about results, and made appropriate referrals.
- CARA’s Kit: The Inclusion Collaborative provided intensive training and coaching related to making adaptations and modifications using CARA’s Kit framework.
- Pyramid Model supports:
 - Program-wide Pyramid Model Implementation in Childcare: This provided program coach support for childcare programs to implement the use of Pyramid Model practices and strategies in their programs.
 - Behavior Support Network in Childcare: This initiative supported childcare programs to implement Tier 3 behavior interventions for children with challenging behavior.
- Child Care Ready for All (CRAwl): Provided nurse consultation for childcare providers to support children with chronic health conditions.

Demographics

The SCDSS Division of Early Care and Education served 385 preschool-aged children during the 2021–22 school year. The table below illustrates the number of children served in each age group.

Table 12. Number of Preschool Children with Disabilities Served by Age Group

	<i>Total Students</i>
Age 3	191
Age 4	178
Age 5 (not yet kindergarten)	16
<i>Total</i>	<i>385</i>

Table 13. Number of Preschool Children with Disabilities Served by Ethnicity

	<i>American Indian or Alaskan</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Black or African American</i>	<i>Hawaiian or Pacific Islander</i>	<i>Two or More Races</i>	<i>White</i>
Age 3	0	0	147	0	16	53
Age 4	1	2	135	0	17	57
Age 5 (not yet kindergarten)	1	0	12	0	1	4
<i>Total</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>294</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>114</i>

Finances

The SCDSS Division of Early Care and Education is financially responsible for providing the South Carolina Voucher Program with Special Needs Vouchers for eligible families of children from birth to age nineteen who have a documented disability or special need. The following table gives information regarding funding information by age group.

Table 14. Funds Expended by Age Group

<i>Age</i>	<i>Amount of Funds Expended</i>
Age 3	\$784,522
Age 4	\$791,711
Age 5 (not yet kindergarten)	\$66,796
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$1,571,029</i>

Agency Information

Additional information regarding the South Carolina Voucher Program may be found on the SCDHHS Division of Early Care and Education's [website](#). Information regarding the South Carolina Child Care Inclusion Collaborative may be found on their [website](#).

South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind (SCSDB)

The SCSDB provides a comprehensive preschool special education day (ages three-five) and residential (ages four-five) program for students identified as deaf/hard of hearing and/or blind/visually impaired. Staples of the preschool program include communication support via American Sign Language, current technology including FM systems, sound fields, low vision

aids and Braille resources, extensive related services including Orientation and Mobility, audiology services, and Occupational/Physical Therapy, and low teacher to student ratios.

Initiatives During the 2021–22 School Year Included:

- Increased parental involvement through technology,
- Continued focus on emergent literacy skills, and
- Expanded core curriculum for Vision Impaired and Deaf and Hard of Hearing students.

Demographics

For 2021–22, five children in the three, four and five-year-old (not yet kindergarten) category of students were served. The tables below show how many children were in each age group and information about ethnicity.

Table 15. Number of Preschool Children with Disabilities Served by Age Group

	<i>Total</i>
Age 3	3
Age 4	2
Age 5 (not yet kindergarten)	0
<i>Total</i>	5

Table 16. Number of Preschool Children Served by Ethnicity

	<i>Black or African American</i>	<i>White</i>
Age 3	1	2
Age 4	1	1
Age 5 (not yet kindergarten)	0	0

Finances

The SCSDB is financially responsible for providing the following programs and services for preschool students identified as deaf/hard of hearing and/or blind/visually impaired:

- Full day preschool special education program (3-year-olds; day students only and 4-5-year-olds; day and residential students),
- Audiology services,
- Occupational Therapy,
- Physical Therapy,

- Orientation and Mobility,
- Speech-Language Therapy,
- Nursing Services, and
- Transportation.

Program expenditures for the preschool children served were \$121,005.21 during the past fiscal year. Funding sources include state appropriations, IDEA, and Medicaid.

Agency Information

The agency [website](#) includes additional information regarding program policies, procedures, and services.

Initiatives within the South Carolina Department of Education Office of Early Learning and Literacy (OELL)

Child Early Reading Development and Education Program (CERDEP)

The CERDEP offers many of the state's at-risk four-year-olds the opportunity to attend a full-day education program. CERDEP began as the Child Development Education Pilot Program (CDEPP) in 2006–07 as a pilot program for children residing in the plaintiff districts in the school funding lawsuit Abbeville County School District et al. vs. South Carolina. On June 11, 2014, Governor Nikki Haley signed into law Act 284 (Read to Succeed). Section 2 of that act codified the Child Development Education Program, now CERDEP, for all districts with a poverty index of 75 percent or higher. As of the 2021–22 school year, all districts are now eligible to opt into CERDEP for income-eligible children in high poverty schools.

The CERDEP program is designed to serve 4-year-old children whose families have an annual income of 185 percent or less of the federal poverty guidelines or are Medicaid eligible. Students participate in a full-day, 180-day instructional program to prepare them to enter kindergarten ready to learn and are served for a minimum of six and a half hours a day, five days a week. CERDEP classrooms provide students with the developmental and learning support necessary for later success in school. CERDEP teachers must be certified in early childhood education and participate annually in professional development on instructional strategies in areas such as literacy, math, and social-emotional development. Additionally, all CERDEP programs must offer parenting education programs with an emphasis on literacy and math. The OELL office annually revises the CERDEP Program Guidelines for participating schools and districts. These guidelines may be found on the SCDE's website.

Over the past decade, the South Carolina General Assembly has expanded CERDEP funding to provide greater Pre-K access to students in poverty. Despite initially lower enrollment in August 2021, due to a second COVID-19 surge, enrollment rebounded for the 2021–22 school year. As of March 15, 2022, districts were serving about 12,185 CERDEP students, a 42 percent increase from the previous school year. The SCDE expects enrollment to increase in 2022–23. Approximately eighty-one new classrooms are expected to be added for the 2022–23 school year.

CERDEP districts are required to administer one of three approved assessments: Individual Growth and Development Indicators (myIGDIs), Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS-Pre-K), or Teaching Strategies GOLD (GOLD). Students are assessed within the first 45 days of school and again during the final 45 days of school.

CERDEP Partnerships

Regional Education Laboratory (REL) Southeast Partner Work

The OELL has partnered with the REL Southeast on multiple literacy initiatives over the past few years. This year, the OELL assisted REL Southeast and five partner states to create a resource guide entitled [Professional Learning Community: Emergent Literacy](#). This guide was developed for preschool teachers, who in collaborative learning experiences, apply evidence-based strategies in their instruction. Through this collaborative learning experience, preschool teachers expand their knowledge base as they read, discuss, share, and apply evidence-based key ideas and strategies in their instruction. SC OELL was approved to participate as a partner to REL in a five-year research project on the implementation of the PLC model.

Countdown to Kindergarten

[Countdown to Kindergarten](#) is an evidence-based, in-home visiting strategy that is used to increase school readiness. The SCDE OELL and the Office of First Steps worked jointly to update the Countdown to Kindergarten curriculum and to spread the word among the South Carolina district early childhood coordinators and school administration. During FY (Fiscal Year) 2019–20, First Steps provided this in-home service to students transitioning from 4K into kindergarten.

This program is part of a national kindergarten transition model developed in South Carolina in 2003. The Preschool Development Grant (PDG) provided by federal funding enabled more schools and teachers to support the transition of children entering kindergarten in fall 2021 at no cost to schools. Administered by First Steps Local Partnerships with support from local schools, Countdown to Kindergarten is a home visitation and family engagement program pairing the families of rising kindergartners at risk for school challenges with their future teachers during the summer before school entry. Teachers complete six visits with each family, centered on classroom and content expectations. Use this link for a [short video](#) explaining how the program works.

BUILD

The BUILD Initiative supports states as they build early childhood systems across the many child and family-serving sectors. The BUILD Initiative envisions a time when all children reach their full potential; race, place, and income are no longer predictors of outcomes. BUILD aims for optimal child development and family well-being by partnering with and developing teams of state leaders who share those aims and understand the relationship between research and best practice related to early childhood science and equitable systems change. This focus on cross-sector leadership and equitable systems-building for early childhood that makes BUILD unique. BUILD partners with early childhood leaders focused on family support and engagement, early care and education, health, mental health, nutrition, child welfare, and housing to create the policies and infrastructure necessary for quality and tailored design to increase access and to ensure equity.

South Carolina's BUILD State Leadership Team currently consists of representatives from the state's Departments of Social Services, Mental Health, Health and Environmental Control, Education, Health and Human Services; South Carolina Thrive; South Carolina First Steps; and the University of South Carolina. In addition to serving on the state BUILD Leadership Team, Wendy Burgess, the EL team lead serves on the BUILD State Partner Meeting Advisory Team. This team plans the agenda and work session for the state level meetings.

Palmetto Pre-K Joint Outreach and Marketing Committee and Palmetto Pre-K Website

The Palmetto Pre-K Joint Outreach & Enrollment Committee meets monthly to communicate and implement a statewide joint marketing plan. These marketing strategies include the following items:

- Palmetto Pre-K Website,
- E-Newsletter/Survey,
- Parent survey posted to Facebook,
- Parent/family texting using ETV Bright By Text Messaging System
- Social Media (organic),
- Paid advertisements (Summer Campaigns): Google advertisements, Facebook advertisements, and
- Radio advertisements.

Initiatives for 2021–22 through the Office of Early Learning and Literacy Specific to CERDEP/4K Included:

- Supported CERDEP programs in maintaining high-quality instruction during both school openings.
- Created lesson plans and interactive lessons for grades 4K-3 that are loaded into the instructional hub.
- Supported CERDEP expansion of classrooms, extended day, extended year, and/or summer programs.
- Maintained early learning specialist team to include six full-time employees (FTEs) who focus on classroom monitoring and providing training.
- Added five learning engagement coaches for families and one learning engagement coach for teachers.
- Continued the support of the South Carolina Early Learning Standards (SC-ELS) timeline through the distribution of SC-ELS materials.
- Provided virtual learning opportunities at regional, district, and school levels on various topics such as the SC-ELS, creating literacy-rich environments, promoting literacy in math instruction, supporting writing and book making, and providing early learning leader support.
- Supported social-emotional framework by collaborating with the state level Pyramid Implementation team.
- Promoted improvements in the South Carolina birth to school connections by serving on the BUILD Initiative leadership team and task force and serving on the Preschool Development Grant (PDG) leadership team.

- Collaborated on the Birth through Five Strategic Plan as part of the Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC).
- Continued the Waterford UPSTART program pilot in 17 CERDEP districts.
- Collaborated with other members of the ECAC on the state's third and fourth Palmetto Pre-K Jamboree.
- Collaborated with key early learning stakeholders on the First 5 and Palmetto Pre-K webpages to expand access and information to families statewide.
- Served on the Joint Citizens and Legislative Committee on Children (JCLCC) and the Joint Council on Children and Adolescents (SCJCCA).
- Host regional family sessions to address early learning and literacy needs of South Carolina's youngest learners and disadvantaged learners.
- Host instructional hub trainings regionally and at the district and school levels; • Supported private centers and Head Starts by providing free sessions at various early learning symposiums and conferences across the state.
- Served on the SCDE Family Engagement leadership team to build out local family engagement sessions and statewide Family and Community Engagement Summit.
- Partnered with Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Southeast to create the Emerging Literacy Professional Learning Community (PLC) modules and committed to a study that will grow teachers' knowledge in emerging literacy.
- Served on the REL Governing Board.
- Generated and vetted family transition resources to disseminate across the state for 4K the registration process.
- Connected schools to Countdown to Kindergarten opportunities and assisted in the planning of Countdown to Kindergarten celebrations.

OELL (CERDEP) and OSES Partnerships

Education Commission of the States Technical Assistance Opportunity: Improving Pre-K to Kindergarten Transitions

South Carolina is participating in a multistate, collaborative learning cohort with technical assistance to support students' successful transition from Pre-K to kindergarten during the unique COVID-19 era and beyond. Both the OSES and the OELL within the SCDE are participating in this initiative. Implementing effective transitions for students from Pre-K (i.e., Head Start, state Pre-K, center- and home-based Pre-K and childcare) to kindergarten has always required system coordination and approaches to policy and funding. It is particularly critical that policy supporting student transitions is intentional in ensuring equitable outcomes. To address these challenges and advance equitable outcomes in the current environment, state policymakers need actionable information and support.

- Activity #1: Assist South Carolina by identifying, obtaining, analyzing, and reporting on the federal and state laws and/or policies, procedures, and practices of South Carolina's early childhood programs as it relates specifically to Family Engagement and/or a program's obligations to Families related to children's Pre-K to K Transition.

- Activity #2: Assist South Carolina by identifying, obtaining, analyzing, and reporting on state specific documents, plans and information related to Family Engagement and/or Families on the Transition of children from Pre-K to K.
- Activity #3: Provide support to South Carolina by facilitating or participating in one or more virtual opportunity with South Carolina administrators responsible for various federal and state-funded early childhood programs to review the information collected.
- Activity #4: Support South Carolina's efforts aimed at Family Engagement by identifying, obtaining, and providing resources and resource/PLO opportunities related to Families and/or Family Engagement as it relates to Pre-K to K Transitions.
- Activity #5 (Conditional): Support South Carolina by assisting in the identification of the top ten questions that a family would ask of the various federal and state funded early childhood programs in the system.

Early Childhood Advisory Council

The ECAC is a council comprised of SC early childhood agencies. The ECAC is responsible for the PDG Birth through Five strategic planning process and South Carolina's Birth through Five Strategic Plan. The agencies worked together to secure a second year of funding for the PDG (information here). With funds from the PDG, the Palmetto Pre-K leadership team has joined efforts to determine the needs of South Carolina's youngest learners and their families.

The Birth through Five plan focuses on addressing the needs of South Carolina's most vulnerable children and families. The plan also includes marketing and advertising on transitions from 4K to 5K (see the Palmetto PreK site). The plan also includes a cross-agency approach to supporting families via the First Five website. First Five SC transforms the way families access publicly-funded early childhood programs and services in South Carolina. Through a single, online portal, families and their advocates can find information about childcare, health, early intervention, nutrition, and parenting support programs in their area. A single online application makes it easy to apply for multiple programs in just a few minutes. First Five SC engages parents and caregivers as active partners in making South Carolina's early childhood system work for young children and families. By streamlining the search and application process, First Five SC helps families better understand their options and choose the programs and services that best meet their needs.

An activity of the PDG is to develop and implement an integrated data system for South Carolina. This data system will be able to link individual records of children across multiple agencies for program and outcome evaluation to better understand the impact of a mixed delivery system.

More information about ECAC may be found on the [website](#).

Pyramid Model Partnership: Pyramid PIECES

The OSES, in partnership with the Child Care Administration of the DSS, Head Start, the OELL, the University of South Carolina, The System of Care at the DHHS, the Department of Mental Health, Part C of IDEA, the Medical University of South Carolina, the Education Oversight Committee, the Children's Trust of South Carolina, the DDSN, Help Me Grow South Carolina,

Family Connection of South Carolina, and South Carolina Partnerships for Inclusion is facilitating South Carolina's continuation of the Pyramid Model Implementation.

The Pyramid Model, previously known as the Center for Social-Emotional Foundations of Early Learning model, is an evidence-based and tiered intervention service provision at a statewide level to support young children's social-emotional development, support practitioners in reducing unwanted behavior and increasing desired, providing early intervention specific to behavior and communication, reducing exclusionary discipline practices, and more. This work is aligned with the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports and the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Initiatives throughout the state but is specific to children eighteen months through six years old. This work has fidelity of implementation tools and is best implemented at a state level using the following phases: exploration/planning, installation, implementation, and expansion/scale up. The partners listed above have committed to building infrastructure for this work in the state.

The major structures of the Pyramid Model implementation at a state level include a cross-sector state leadership team, master cadre of training and technical assistance professionals (now called the Professional Development Network or PDN), model/demonstration sites, behavior specialists, data and evaluation systems, and state benchmarks of quality. South Carolina has branded this cross-collaborative work as Pyramid PIECES: Promoting Integrated Early Childhood Emotional & Social supports. The cross-sector Pyramid PIECES state leadership team has developed workgroups in the areas of: Membership, Professional Development, Palmetto Pyramid Police Partnership, and Implementation and Demonstration Sites. The state leadership team is focused on the ongoing process of supporting the implementation of the Pyramid Model and using data-based decision-making process to guide implementation efforts and monitor outcomes.

The Pyramid PIECES team is working on the following activities:

- Annual State Leadership Team Retreat: The purpose of the retreat is to establish common goals, action plans, and a shared language to advance, support, and sustain state-wide, cross-sector implementation of the Pyramid Model.
- Pyramid Pieces Website: The purpose of the website is to raise awareness of the impact of the Pyramid Model and streamline communication across sectors.
- Program-Wide Implementation Application for Districts: Pyramid Model implementation provides Tier 1 readiness supports in development.

Summary

The OSES continues to strive to provide high-level support and collaboration in a continuum for children ages three to five that emphasize access, equity, and quality education. The OSES and its partnering agencies have developed and implemented consistent and flexible means of reaching families of three to five-year-olds, supporting early childhood educators, and creating programming that endeavors to improve early childhood outcomes across South Carolina. It is imperative that preschool programs and educators continue to be supported to ensure that children are able to obtain the support they need from birth so that they may start preschool educational programs with the tools and support they need. Only through these coordinated,

early intervening efforts will children start school ready to learn, progress from grade to grade, and be equipped with the skills, information, and supports they need for kindergarten readiness and lifelong success.

Recommendations

Based on information in the annual report, we, the South Carolina Advisory Council on the Education of Students with Disabilities, make the following recommendations.

The Council acknowledges that data indicates many preschool children with disabilities, especially three-year-olds, continue to be served in the separate classroom, away from non-disabled peers, which affects the social, communication, and academic skills of students with disabilities. The Council recommends that the OSES continue to separate Indicator 6: Preschool Least Restrictive Environment data by age. This allows specific identification of the need for more targeted support and intervention to districts as needed to provide a continuum of placements for preschool children with disabilities. The Council also recommends continued provision of guidance and training for general education early childhood teachers and administrators on inclusion and least restrictive environment (LRE).

Teacher shortages affect the number of classrooms available for preschool aged children, as well as the quality of services provided along the continuum. Retaining and recruiting quality preschool professionals and providing a quality continuum of services in every district in South Carolina can only lead to the improved long-term outcomes of preschool children with disabilities in terms of quality of life, the social emotional behaviors, and the future of the South Carolina workforce. The Council recommends the creation of a task force to review, research and provide recommendations to improve teacher recruitment and retention for preschool special education teachers.

By making significant improvements in preschool specifically regarding preschool LRE and improving teacher recruitment and retention, it is expected that the state will see the impact of such changes throughout the child's school career, leading to increased graduation rates and post-school outcomes.

References

Individual with Disabilities Act (IDEA, U. S. Department of Education. Section 300.8, Child with a Disability.

Website: <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/a/300.8>