



South Carolina Institute of  
Medicine & Public Health

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# Foundations for Success Taskforce

*Taskforce Meeting #1  
February 26, 2026*

# About IMPH



[www.imph.org](http://www.imph.org)



[@SC\\_IMPH](https://twitter.com/SC_IMPH)



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[@South Carolina Institute of Medicine  
and Public Health](https://www.linkedin.com/company/south-carolina-institute-of-medicine-and-public-health)

## Our Mission

Our mission is to collectively inform policy to improve health and health care.

We serve as an independent, nonprofit organization working to collectively inform policy to improve health and health care in South Carolina. IMPH provides nonpartisan, evidence-based information to guide policymakers in making impactful health policy decisions.

We strive to be the leading and trusted nonpartisan resource for evidence-based information on South Carolina's most critical population health issues.



# Introductions

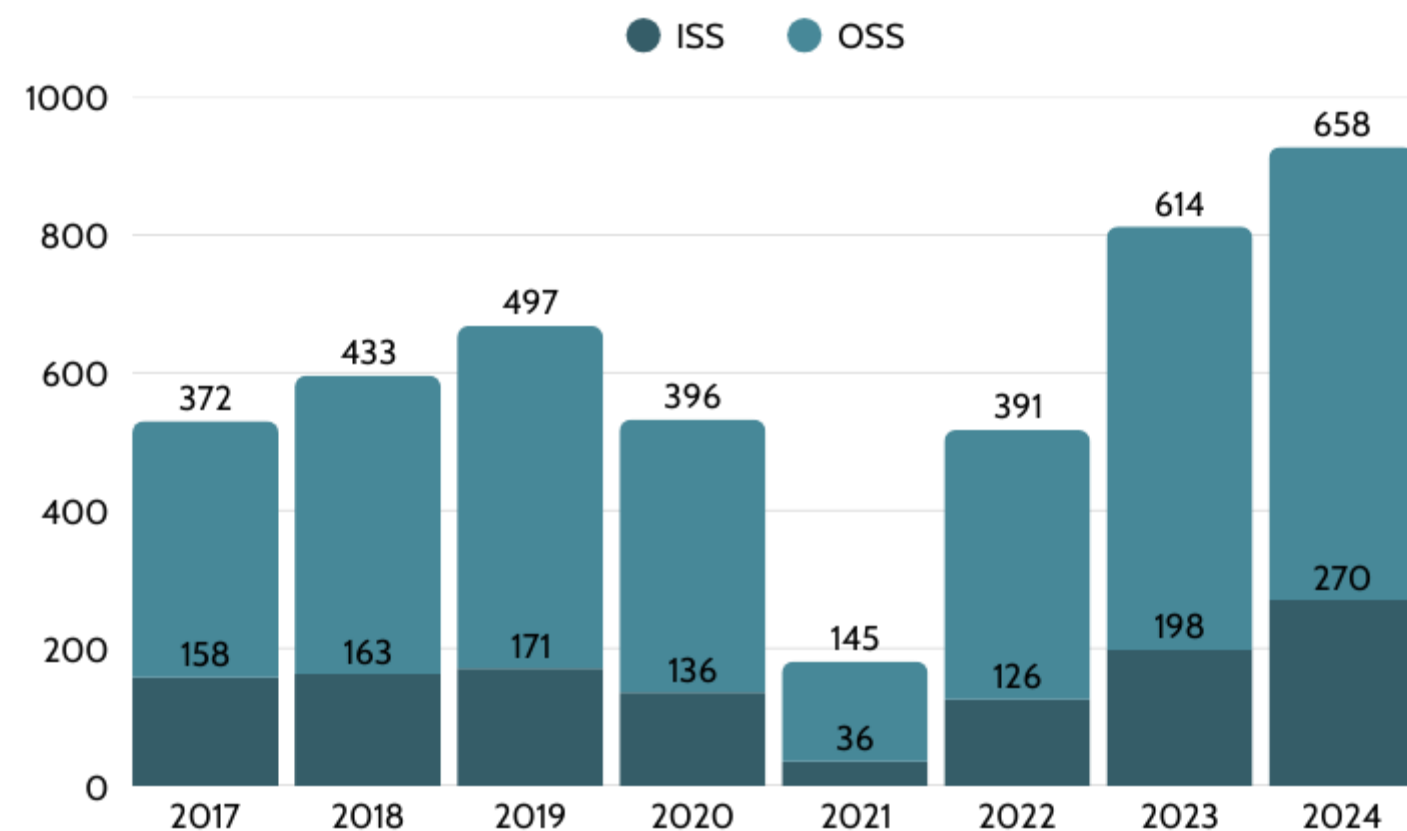
## *IMPH Team*



# The Why



## Public Pre-K Students Suspended in South Carolina 2016/2017 - 2023/2024



Suspensions and expulsions are associated with:

- Lower rates of on-time graduations<sup>1,3,4</sup>
- Poor educational outcomes<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>
- Increased absenteeism<sup>1,4</sup>
- Heightened risk of absorption into the school-to-prison pipeline<sup>1,2,3,4,6</sup>
- Adverse developmental, mental, and physical health outcomes<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>
- Strain on the education system<sup>4,5,7,8</sup>

1. Geduld, A. (2025, June 24). SC suspends students with disabilities at a higher rate than any other state, investigation finds. Post and Courier. [https://www.postandcourier.com/news/sc-special-education-disabilities-students-suspension-idea-data/article\\_474bea01-72f3-458d-a190-fb96b0d368d8.html](https://www.postandcourier.com/news/sc-special-education-disabilities-students-suspension-idea-data/article_474bea01-72f3-458d-a190-fb96b0d368d8.html)

2. Giordano, K., Oh, Y., Stolovitz, R. et al. Expulsion from Community Childcare: Predictors and Patterns Across Time. *Early Childhood Educ J* (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-025-01933-8>

3. American Academy of Pediatrics examines the impact of school expulsion and recommends ways to create supportive learning environments for all students. (2024, October 1). <https://www.aap.org/en/news-room/news-releases/aap/2024/american-academy-of-pediatrics-examines-the-impact-of-school-expulsion-and-recommends-ways-to-create-supportive-learning-environments-for-all-students/>

4. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services & U.S. Department of Education. (2020). Policy statement on expulsion and suspension policies in early childhood settings [Policy statement]. Retrieved June 27, 2025, from <https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/2020/07/policy-statement-ecce-expulsions-suspensions.pdf>

5. Georgia Family Connection Partnership. (2023). The Impact of Early Suspension and Expulsion on Long-Term Child Outcomes. Retrieved from <https://gafcp.org/2023/04/11/the-impact-of-early-suspension-and-expulsion-on-long-term-child-outcomes/>

6. Camera, L. (2021, July 27). Study confirms School-to-Prison pipeline. *US News & World Report*. <https://www.usnews.com/news/education-news/articles/2021-07-27/study-confirms-school-to-prison-pipeline>

7. Child Welfare League of America. (n.d.). The Effect of Exclusionary Discipline on Students. <https://www.cwla.org/the-effect-of-exclusionary-discipline-on-students/>

8. Magro, S. W., Mondri, C. F., Rihal, T. K., & Carlson, E. A. (2025). Site and Provider Characteristics Associated with the Use of Exclusionary Discipline in Minnesota Early Care and Education Sites. *Early education and development*, 36(1), 129–144. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2024.2360880>



# The South Carolina Landscape

- Reported in 2024, “South Carolina leads the nation in the number of preschool children, ages 2½ to 5 years old, who are suspended from school one or more times.”<sup>1</sup>
- A recent article in the Post and Courier noted, “no state removes students with disabilities from school for 10 days or fewer at a higher rate than South Carolina [at 15%].”<sup>2</sup>
- Special education students in South Carolina are suspended at a rate nearly twice the national average.<sup>2</sup>
- There are reports of schools in South Carolina suspending students “off-the-book,” leaving those students ineligible for protections and resources provided to disabled students after 10 total days out of the classroom.<sup>2,3</sup>

1. Frazier, H. (2024, March 21). South Carolina leads the nation in preschool suspensions. Charleston City Paper. <https://charlestoncitypaper.com/2024/03/15/south-carolina-leads-the-nation-in-preschool-suspensions/>

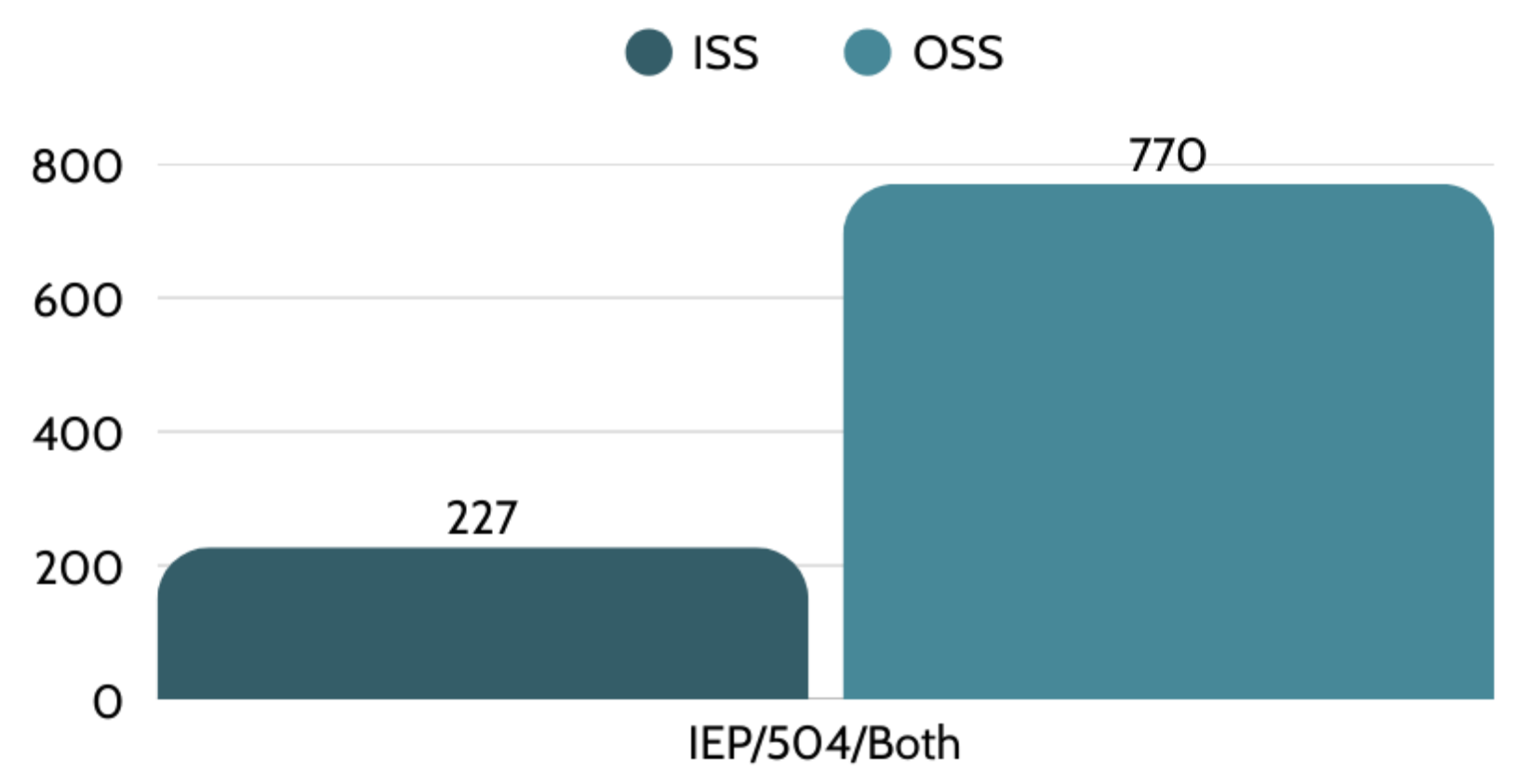
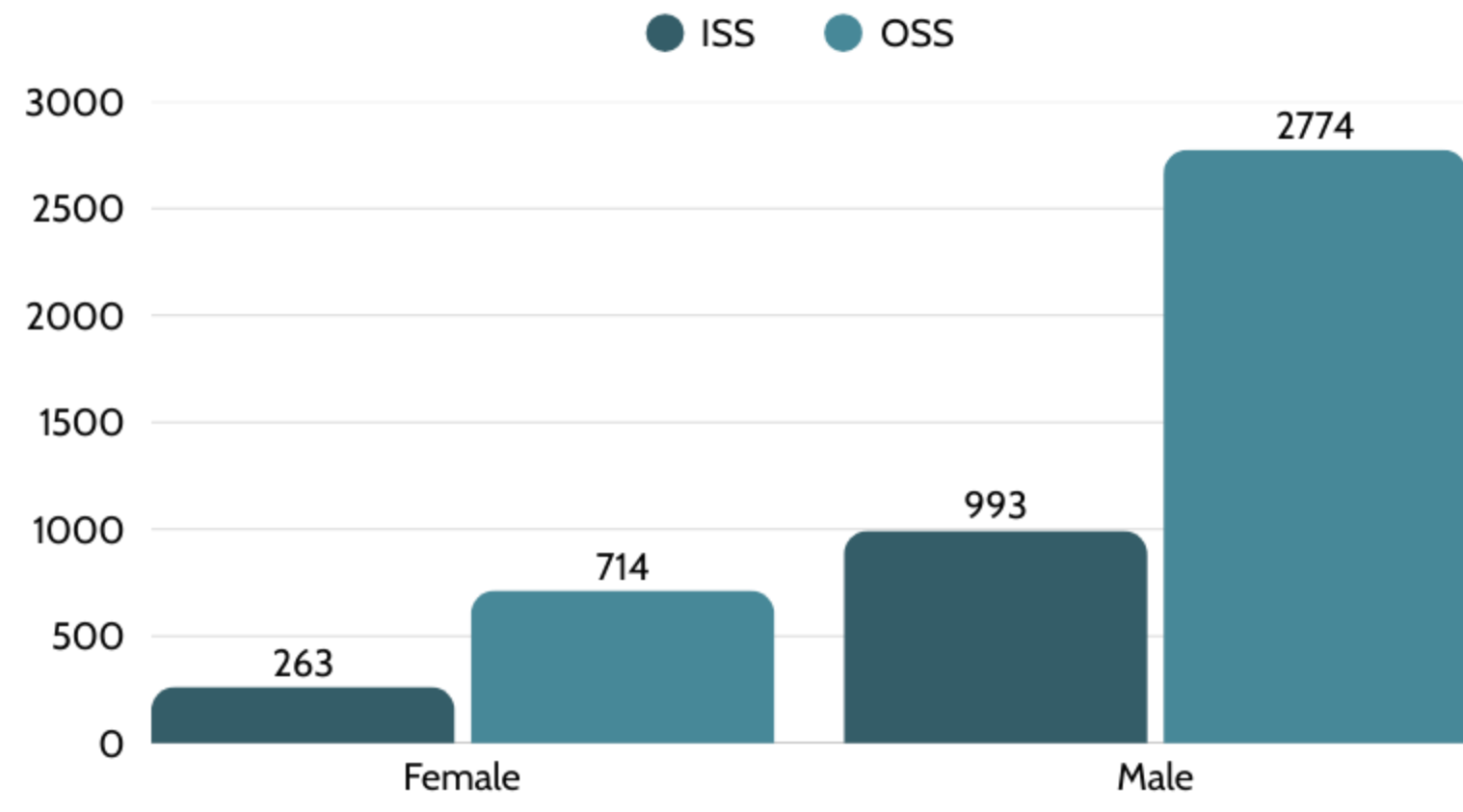
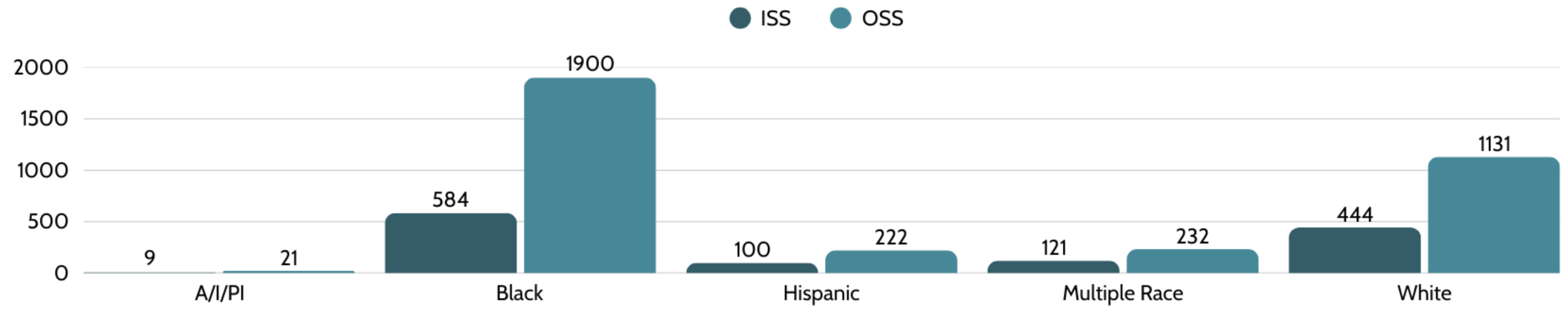
2. Geduld, A. (2025, June 24). SC suspends students with disabilities at a higher rate than any other state, investigation finds. Post and Courier. [https://www.postandcourier.com/news/sc-special-education-disabilities-students-suspension-idea-data/article\\_474bea01-72f3-458d-a190-fb96b0d368d8.html](https://www.postandcourier.com/news/sc-special-education-disabilities-students-suspension-idea-data/article_474bea01-72f3-458d-a190-fb96b0d368d8.html)

3. Rainville, J. (2025, November 24). Why Suspensions are Not the Answer (Especially in Preschool). South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center. <https://www.scjustice.org/why-suspensions-are-not-the-answer/>.



# Public Pre-K Students Suspended in South Carolina

2016/2017 - 2023/2024



Source: Joint Citizens and Legislative Committee on Children (JCLCC). (2024). Statewide Suspension Data for 3K/4K, 2016 -17 to 2023-24. Retrieved from <https://www.sccommitteeonchildren.org/data>.



**Welcome**

***Michael Leach, MMFT***

***Foundations for Success Taskforce Chair***



# Taskforce Guiding Principles

**Consensus:** Even though the decision may not be the first choice, everyone can live with and support the decision. Consensus does not mean unanimous agreement.

**Inclusivity:** Effective collaboration requires transparency and inclusiveness, equality among all participants and active participation from all partners.

**Impact:** Effective collaboration requires acknowledging capacity and scaling interventions to realistic goals.

**Strategic Alignment:** Effective collaboration requires all participants to disclose when our own interests are in conflict with those of the taskforce.

**Respect:** Effective collaboration requires mutual trust and respect for organizational boundaries, continuity in communication and interaction and a distinction between policy analysis and political commentary.



# Taskforce Process Overview

*Taryn Farrell, MPH*

*Research & Policy Manager, IMPH*



# Taskforce Process



*Identify a Public Health Issue*



*Conduct Assessments*



*Convene Stakeholders &  
Subject Matter Experts*



*Gather Evidence*



*Translate Data*



*Develop Consensus  
Action Plan*



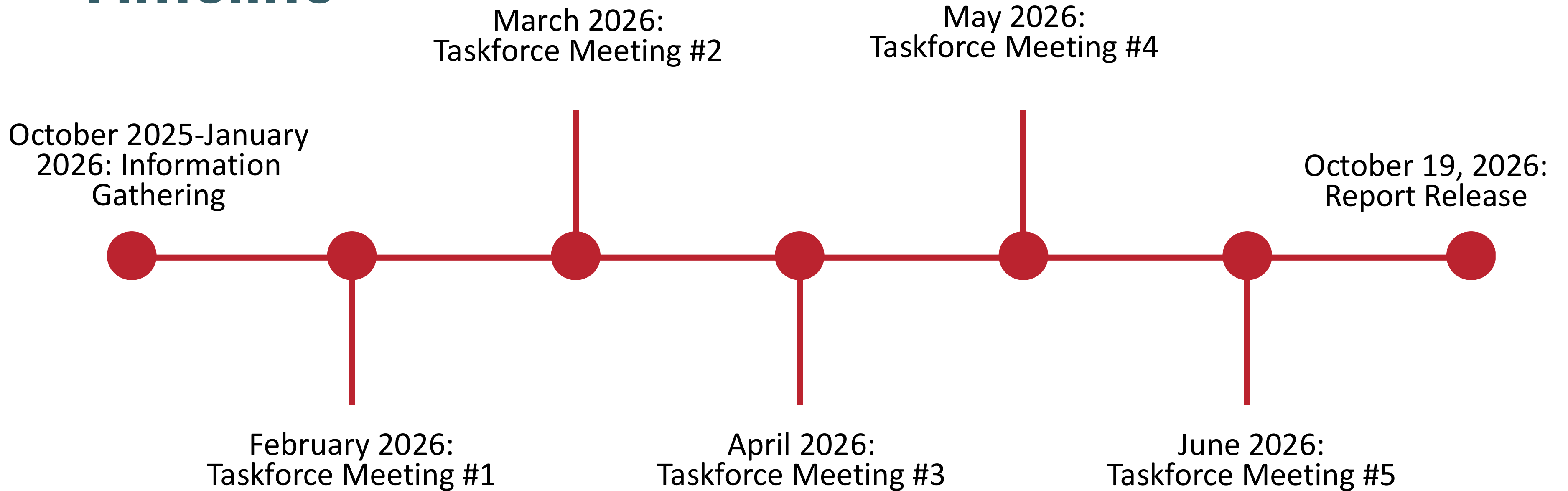
*Write and Disseminate  
Reports*



*Track Implementation*



# Timeline



# Goals of Taskforce

- The Taskforce process will produce an action plan including:
  1. Detailed recommendations comprised of action steps across 1-year, 3-year, and 5-year implementation timelines;
  2. Identified facilitators and support for successful implementation; and
  3. Key champions for implementation
- IMPH will serve as a facilitator of this process
- All decisions regarding the action plan and its contents will be made by the Taskforce members



# Research Questions

- What is the current landscape of exclusionary among early learners (3K-1st Grade) in South Carolina?
- What are the economic impacts to the state relative to early age suspensions and expulsions?
- What are the economic impacts to South Carolina families relative to early age suspensions and expulsions?
- What are the health and social impacts associated with delayed intervention for early learners and their families?
- What are the health and social impacts associated with exclusionary discipline for educators and early childcare providers?
- What policies and programs have had the most significant impact on reducing exclusionary disciplinary practices and what are the barriers and facilitators to successful implementation?
- What policies and programs have been most effective in supporting children impacted by exclusionary disciplinary practices and their families and what are the barriers and facilitators to successful implementation?
- What policies and programs have been most effective in supporting educators and early childcare providers and what are the barriers and facilitators to successful implementation?



# **Early Childhood Education in South Carolina: Findings from a Landscape Analysis**

*Tammy Graham, Ed.D.*

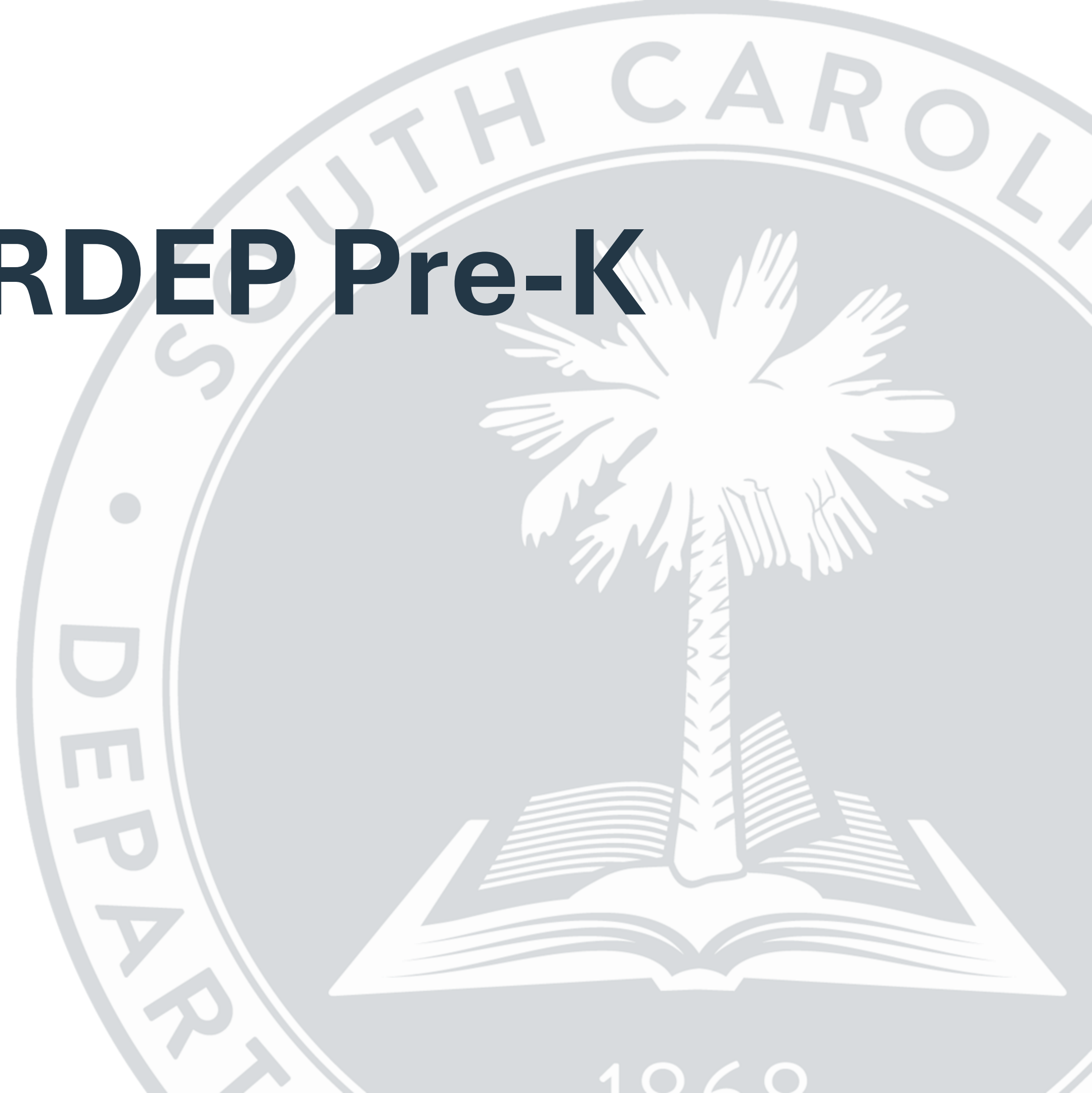
*South Carolina Department of Education*



# SC Public CERDEP Pre-K Background

Information presented to the South Carolina  
Institute of Medicine & Public Health Task Force

February 26, 2026



# SCDE Mission & Vision

## SCDE'S **Mission:**

The mission of the South Carolina Department of Education is to serve students, support teachers, empower parents, and engage the community so that every student graduates prepared to reach their full potential.

## SCDE'S **Vision:**

Every South Carolina student graduates college-, career-, or military-ready. By 2030, at least 75% of students perform at or above grade level.

## SCDE'S **Tagline:**

An excellent education for every child.

## We will accomplish our Mission and Vision by:

- Increasing student achievement (at least 75% or more of students at or above grade level in reading and math by 2030).
- Recruiting and retaining the highest quality teachers in the profession and investing in teacher knowledge.
- Ensuring a safe learning environment in all classrooms and campuses across our state.
- Preparing students with the leadership and life skills that will build productive citizens who are workforce and/or military ready.
- Engaging the community in creative, sustainable partnerships to serve and support our state's public schools.





# Milestones in SC Public Pre-K

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# Education Improvement Act (EIA): 1984

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- Introduced a one-cent state sales tax to fund various education programs and policies
- As part of the EIA, SC began offering some funding for districts to offer **half-day 4K and 5K**
- Public 4K and 5K options differed district-to-district; funding and implementation mainly focused on low-income students
- Parents can opt out of 5K



# 4K and 5K Expansion in 1990s

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- In the early to mid-90s, the General Assembly passed legislation requiring the **study and development of early childhood initiatives**, including extending the school day for five-year-olds and expanding access to half-day 4K.
- In the late 90's, SC then required all school districts to offer "extended-day" 5K to all requesting parents— aka, **full day 5K** (as funding and space allowed)
- Parents could still choose for their child to attend half-day 5K, or opt out of 5K
- No substantial changes to 4K requirements
- Also in the 90s
  - Expansions to public school offerings and services for 3-5 year olds with disabilities
  - Codified **First Steps** (key goal: improving access to high-quality private care)



# 2014: Child Early Reading Development and Education Program

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- Expanded **full-day 4K** for at-risk children in both public and private settings
- Eight initial priority districts (Allendale, Dillon 2, Florence 4, Hampton 2, Jasper, Lee, Marion 7, and Orangeburg 3), followed by the remaining Abbeville v. SC trial districts, followed by districts with a high poverty index
- Codified minimum requirements for a high-quality 4K experience, including:
  - Small classroom ratios
  - Minimum education requirements for both lead and assistant teachers
  - Use of an approved, evidence-based curriculum
  - Parent education component



# Enrollment Trends

School Year	Total 3K/4K Students	Total Public CERDEP Students
2016-17	27998	9838
2017-18	28223	8640
2018-19	28456	9812
2019-20	29165	11070
2020-21	22434	8539
2021-22	26389	11825
2022-23	28321	13023
2023-24	28357	14905

- Over the last ~10 years, the average number of students enrolled annually in public 4K has remained consistent
- 50% increase in the number of 4K students who are now in CERDEP classrooms
- **Big takeaways:**
  - **Many districts have offered some level of 4K for decades**
  - **In the last decade or so, significant increase in the number of students enrolled in full-day, high-quality (instructionally-focused) 4K**



# Office of Instructional Supports

OIS oversees the [CERDEP program](#) for school districts.

OIS provides resources and [professional development](#) to support high-quality teaching and learning.

EC LETRS Foundational  
Skills Training

4K PLO's at request of  
a district

Pyramid Pieces

OIS works with districts to ensure all CERDEP 4K students are prepared for 5K.



# Early Learning Team

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Anna Williams



Jennifer Stock



Jennifer Stark



Kim Spigener



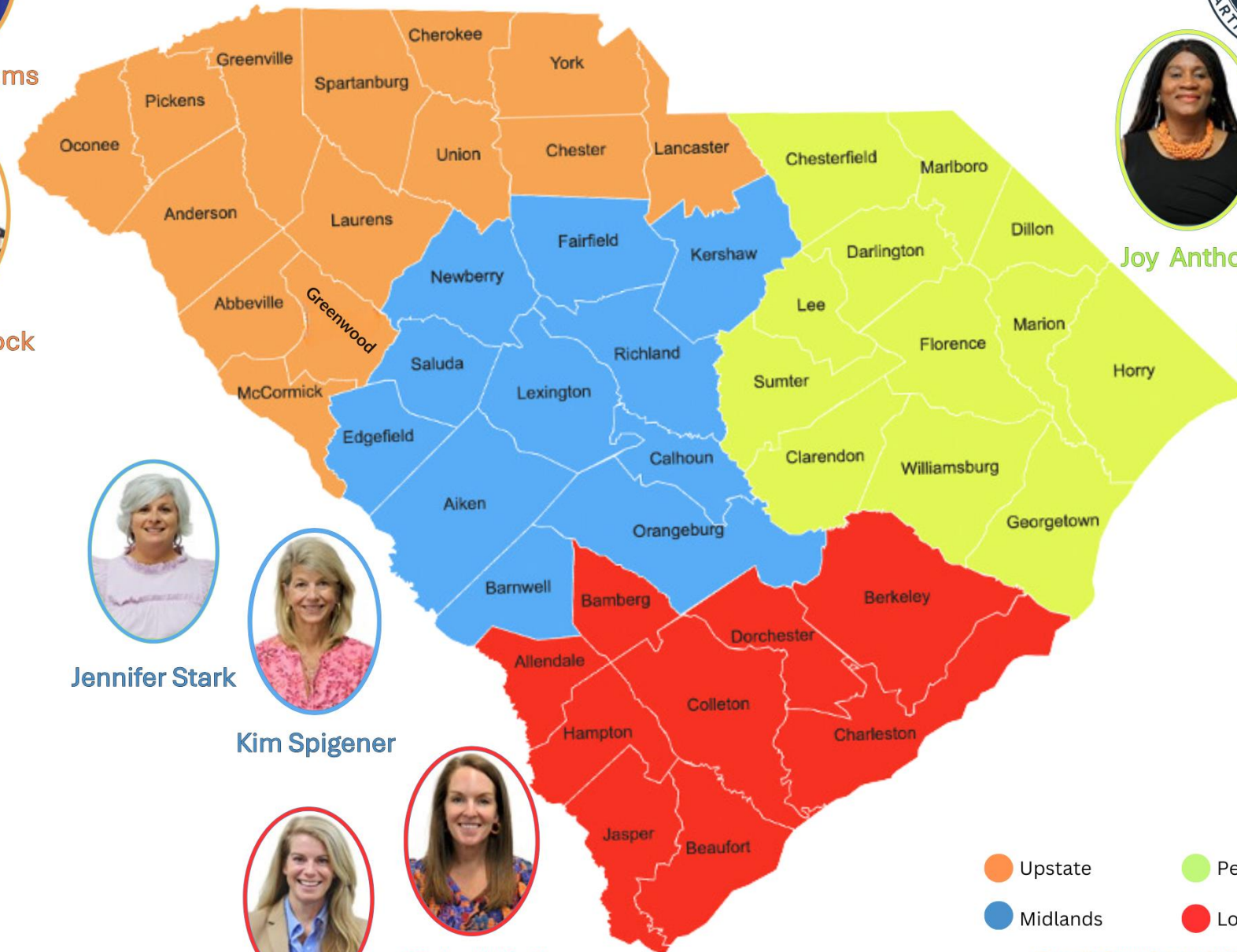
Christine Zamboki



Kinloch Bell

## Office of Instructional Supports

Early Learning Literacy Support by Region



Joy Anthony



Amy Smith

- Upstate
- Midlands
- Pee Dee
- Low Country

(Greenville County Schools: NonCERDEP)



# SCDE - Early Learning Specialist Team

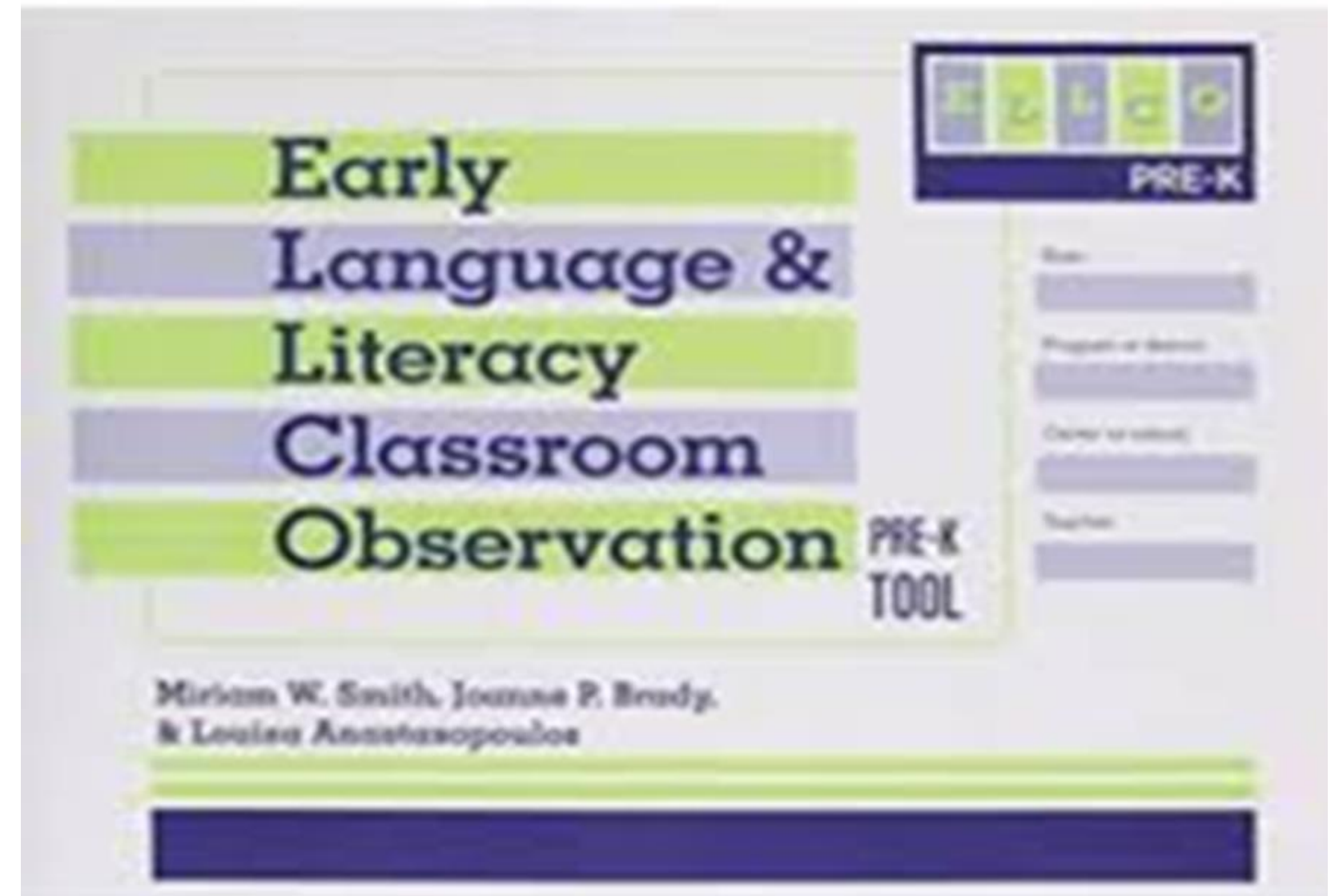
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- Provides statewide support (in person and/or virtual) for all CERDEP classrooms in school districts
- Coaching, PD, observations and PLC facilitation
- EL Team focuses on ensuring high-quality, developmentally appropriate 4K instruction in all CERDEP classrooms



# CERDEP Monitoring and Support

- Monitors complete classroom visits, debriefing, and goal setting conferences to highlight areas of strengths and areas of growth.
- Monitors provide specific strategies that teachers and administrators can implement to address areas of growth.
- Follow-up visits may be scheduled as needed for additional for support.



# ELLCO Observation Tool

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Required by state legislation.

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Used to support and monitor  
CERDEP classrooms statewide.

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Provides internal data for coaching  
and quality improvement.



# South Carolina Profiles



**THE READY KINDERGARTNER**, with engaged support from parents, caregivers and community, has developed the skills and abilities necessary for achievement at age-appropriate levels. He/she is physically, socially and emotionally prepared to benefit from a quality kindergarten experience.

**What does it mean to be READY FOR SCHOOL?**

All children are ready for kindergarten when they are five years old by September 1 of that school year. But kindergarten readiness is more than a matter of age. For a strong start in school, children need positive relationships and supportive learning environments beginning at birth. It is our responsibility as families, caregivers and communities to nurture the health and development necessary for school success.

South Carolina's Profile of the Ready Kindergartner describes the physical, cognitive, social and emotional signs of school readiness. Because each child develops differently, each child will be ready in different ways. That is why schools and educators must also be ready: prepared to meet the individual needs of students at all levels of readiness and providing whatever support and services are needed for a quality kindergarten experience.

For more information, visit [SCFIRSTSTEPS.ORG](http://SCFIRSTSTEPS.ORG)


Resources are available to help parents and caregivers foster school readiness from birth through age five.

## PROFILE OF THE South Carolina Graduate

**WORLD-CLASS KNOWLEDGE**

Rigorous standards in language arts and math for career and college readiness

Multiple languages, science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), arts and social sciences



**WORLD-CLASS SKILLS**

Creativity and innovation

Critical thinking and problem solving

Collaboration and teamwork

Communication, information, media and technology

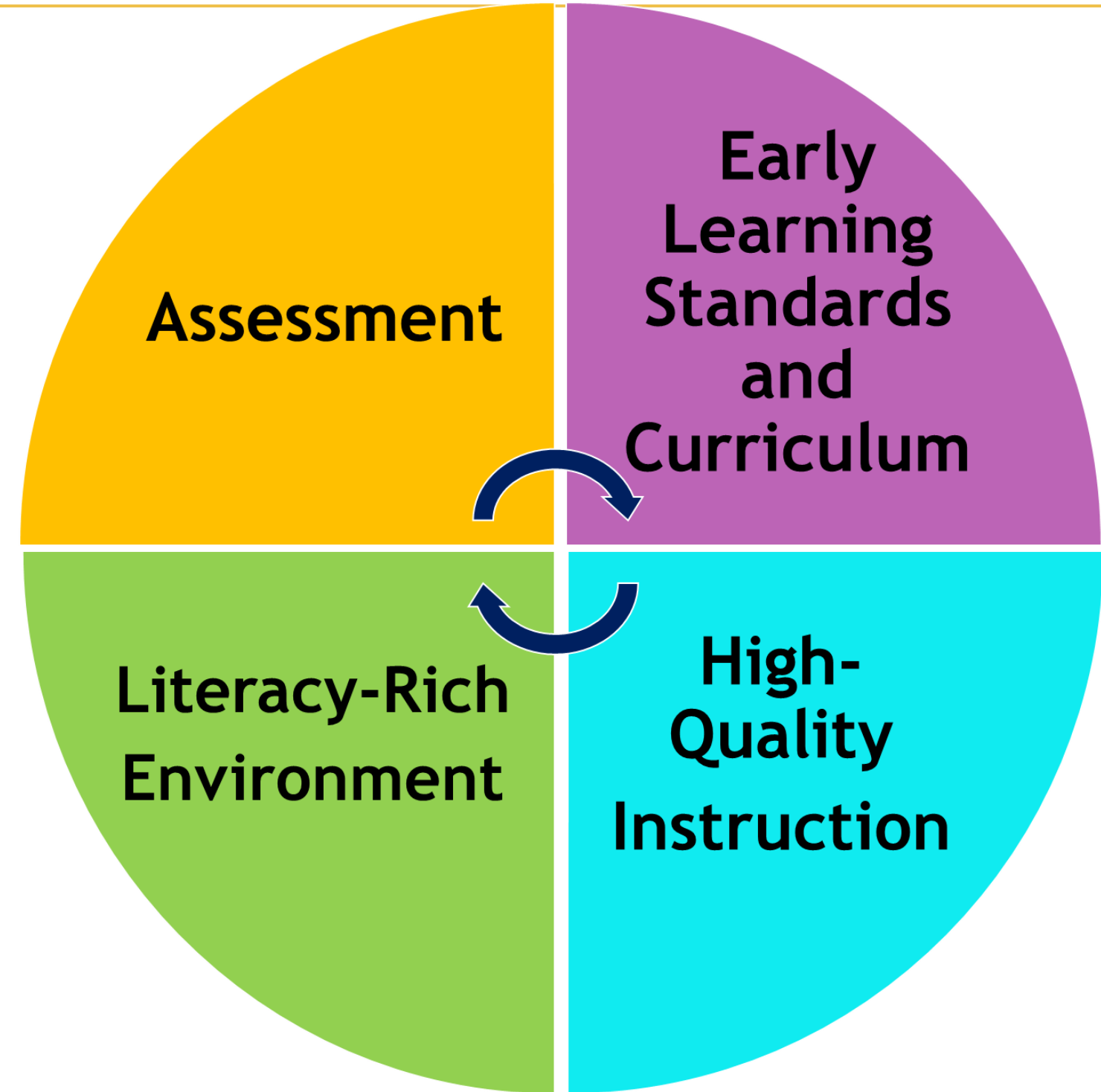
Knowing how to learn

**LIFE AND CAREER CHARACTERISTICS**

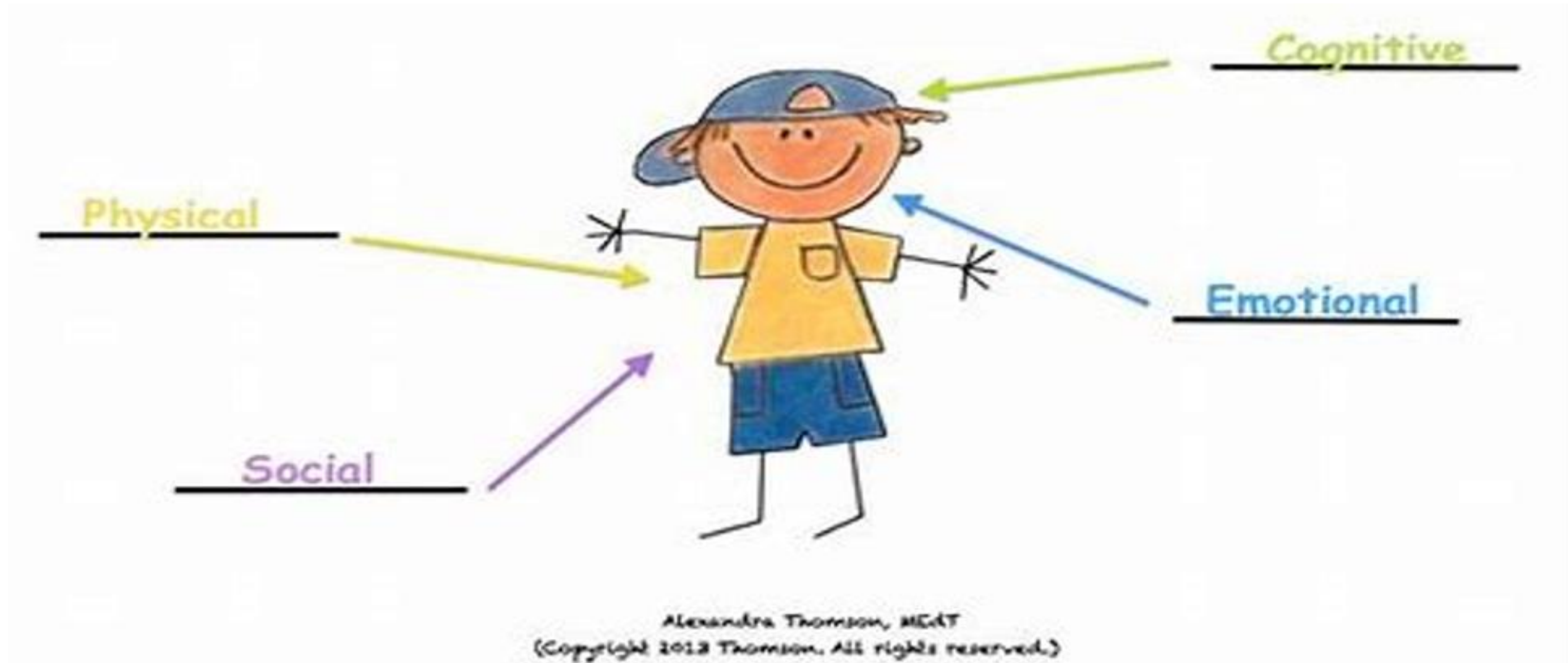
Integrity • Self-direction • Global perspective • Perseverance • Work ethic • Interpersonal skills

© SCASA Superintendents' Roundtable  
 Adopted by: SC State Board of Education, SC Department of Education, SC Education Oversight Committee, SC Arts Alliance, SC Arts in Basic Curriculum Steering Committee, SCASCD, SC Chamber of Commerce, SC Council on Competitiveness, SC School Boards Association, TransformSC Schools and Districts.

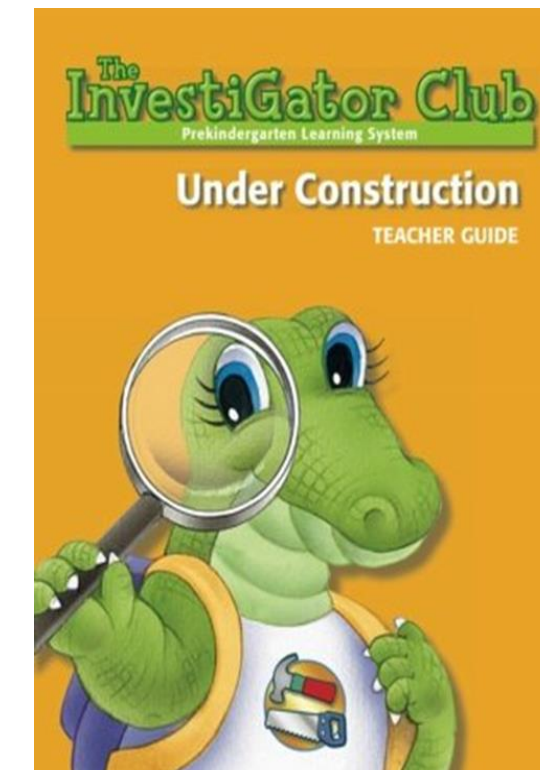
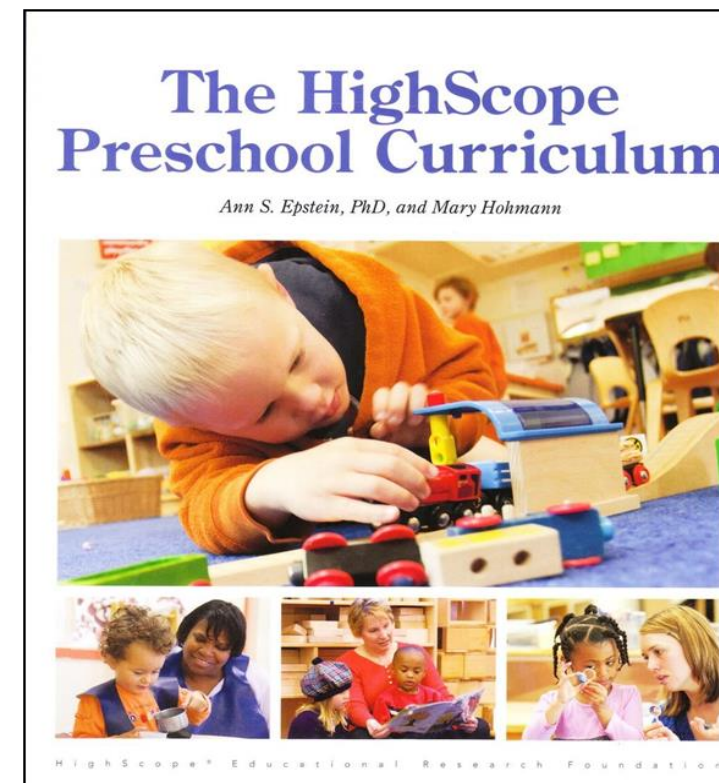
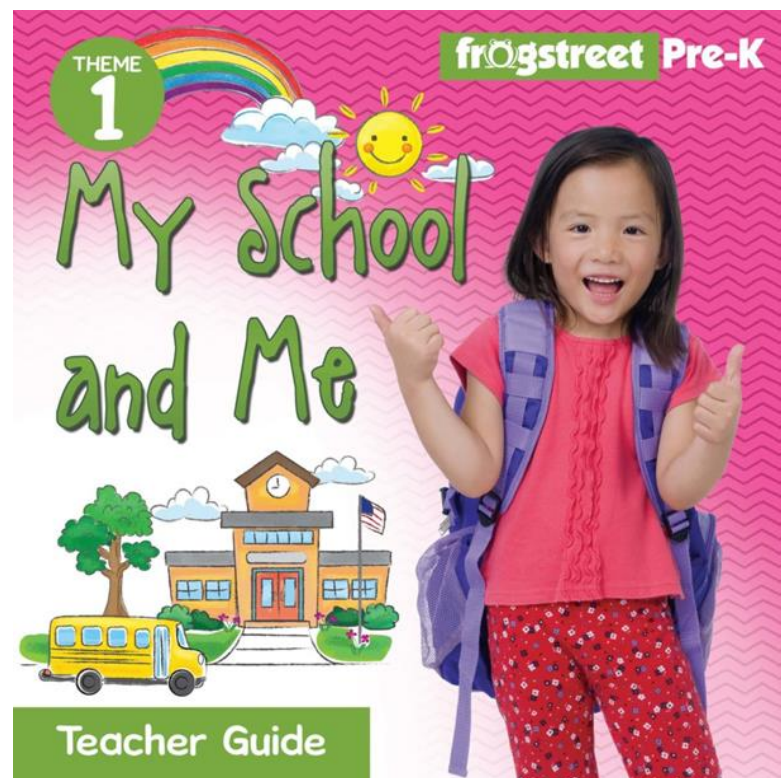




# Where do we get our information? Ensuring School Readiness Across All Learning Domains:



# Curriculum



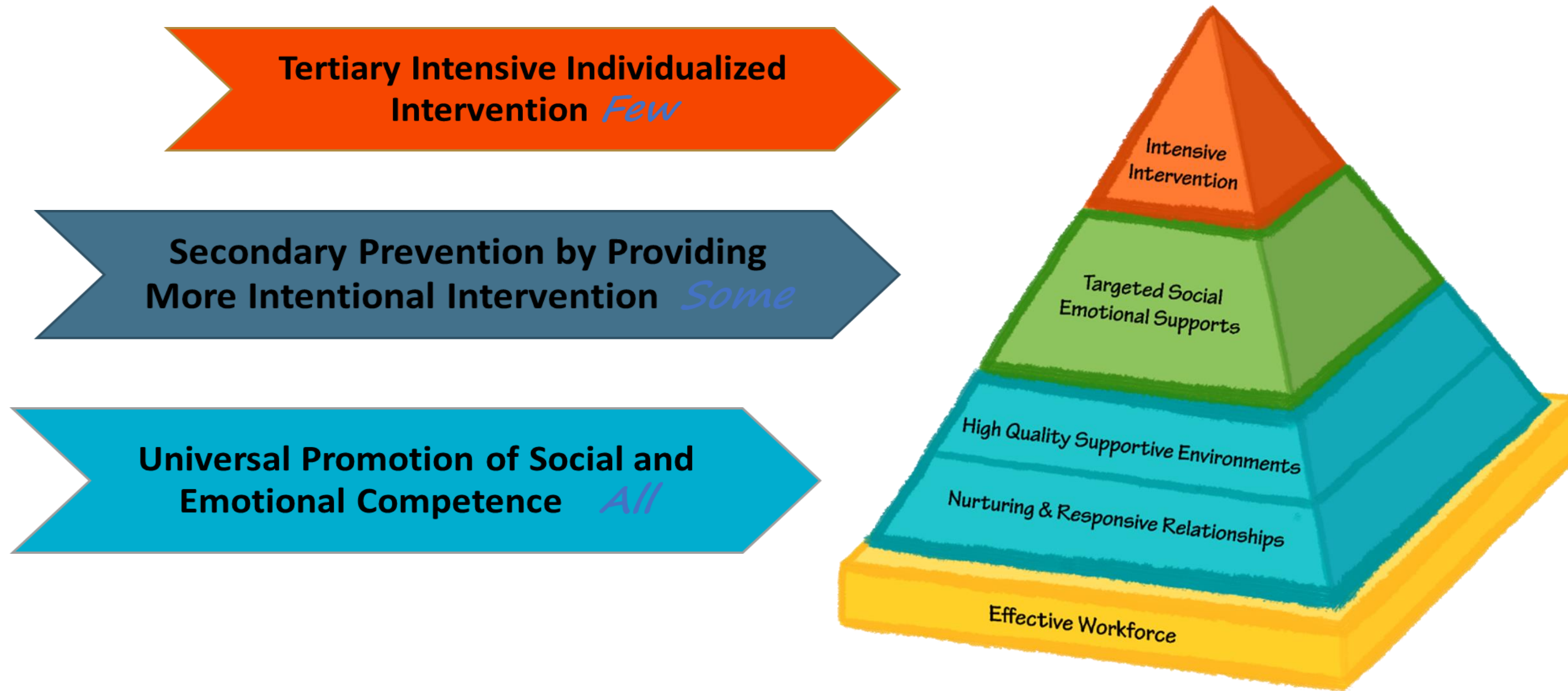
# The Pyramid Model

## Excerpt from the [2025-26 CERDEP Guidelines](#)

- “In accordance with nonregulatory federal guidance, exclusionary practices should not be used to reduce unwanted behavior. Resources on appropriate strategies to reduce unwanted, and teach desired, behavior can be found here: [The Pyramid Model](#)”
- The [South Carolina Pyramid PIECES](#) provides a Pyramid framework with other related promotion, prevention, intervention, and treatment efforts in the state to promote executive function of infants, young children, and their families beginning at birth to foster lifelong success.
- Should a child engage in behavior that is harmful to him/herself or others and the learning environment, appropriate data will be collected to support reducing unwanted behavior and teaching desired.



# SC EC-MTSS for Promoting Executive Function Skills in Young Children



## Connecting the Pyramid Model to Mental Health

Use of Pyramid Model practices can do more than teach foundational pre-academic skills to children. Learn more about the connection of the Pyramid Model to teacher retention and mental health.

[Establishing the Pyramid Model as an Evidence-Based Practice Webinar](#)

[Promoting Teacher Retention Through Pyramid Model Practices](#)

[Pyramid Model Implementation and Mental Health Consultation](#)

[All Hands on Deck: Partnering with IECMHC to Implement the Pyramid Model](#)

[Crosswalk of Early Childhood Mental Health Services](#)

[Trauma Informed Care and the Pyramid Model](#)

[Pyramid Model and IECMHC Endorsement Crosswalk](#)

## FREE Pyramid Model eModules

- [Pyramid Model and Birth to Five\\*](#)
  - Includes 18 hours of training content
  - 1.80 CEUs
  - Certificate of Completion
  - Early Childhood training approval
- [Increasing Fair Practices in Early Childhood Settings\\*](#)
  - Includes 2 hours of training content
  - 0.20 CEUs
  - Certificate of completion
  - Early Childhood training approval
- [Trauma-Informed Care\\*](#)
  - Includes 5 hours of training content
  - 0.50 CEUs
  - Certificate of completion
  - Early Childhood training approval
- [Pyramid Model Implementation Exploration and Readiness](#)

# High Quality Instructional PreK Materials

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## What High-Quality Materials Support

- Ensure developmentally appropriate, engaging instruction for all CERDEP 4K classrooms.
- Promote kindergarten readiness by targeting essential early learning skills.
- Provide consistent, research-based resources aligned with South Carolina's early learning expectations.

## Why It Matters

- Equips teachers with tools that foster language, literacy, math, and social-emotional development.
- Ensures equitable access to quality instruction for all CERDEP 4K students across South Carolina.



# Purposeful Play

**60 minutes of uninterrupted Purposeful Play** in Learning Areas (Centers/ Interest Areas/ Choice Time)

- \*Blocks (enclosed on 3 sides)
- \*Art
- \*Sand/Water Table (filled with sand)
- \*Dramatic Play
- \*Library Area / Listening Center (close by)
- \*Toys & Games Shelf
- \*Science/ or Discovery Area
- \*Music/Movement

*-Writing, Reading, and Math should be included in each area.*





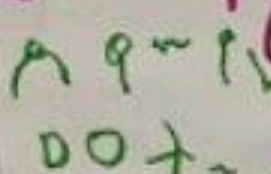








Can you name a rule we have in our Classroom?

 - Quiet when you are eating  
 W - Voices Quiet, Body is Calm  
 W - eyes watching  
 I - walking feet  
 R - Body calm  
 P - Pointed to eyes (eyes watching)  
 P - eyes watching  
 A - Keep your body safe  
 K - safe foot

Points to paper Anthony  
 Lynn  
 Pharah  
 Anmani  
 Karter



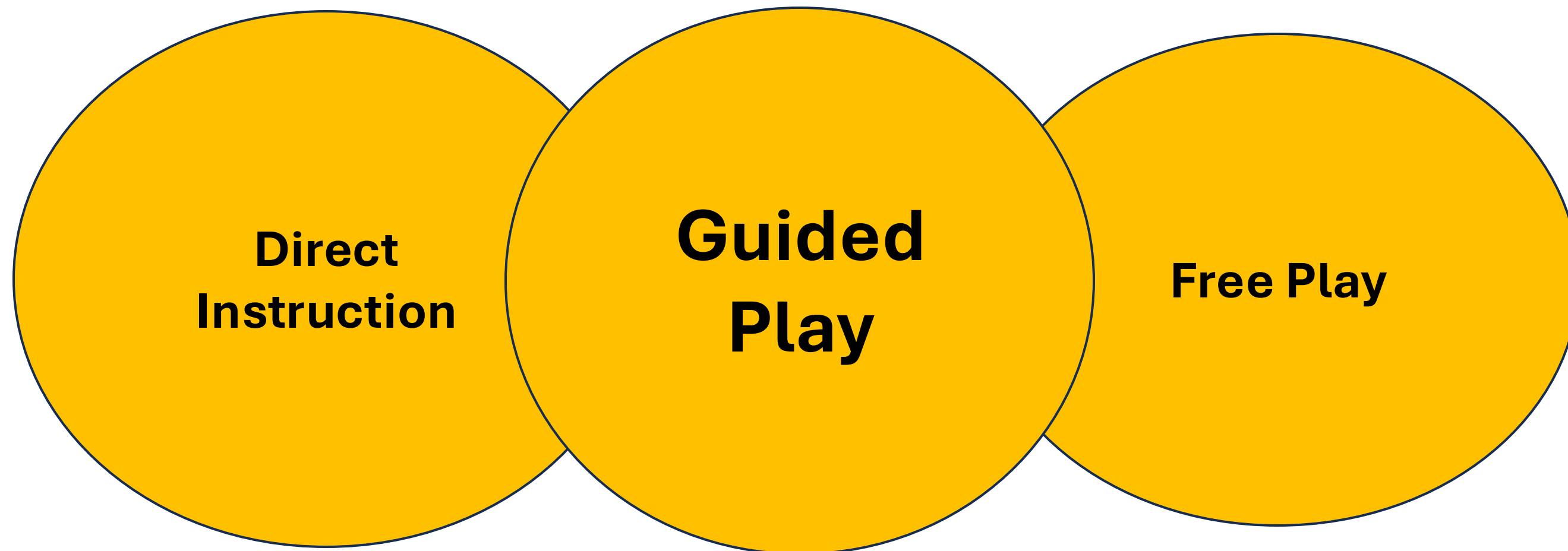




# Effective, Engaging Practices

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**A perfect day for our children includes playful learning!**



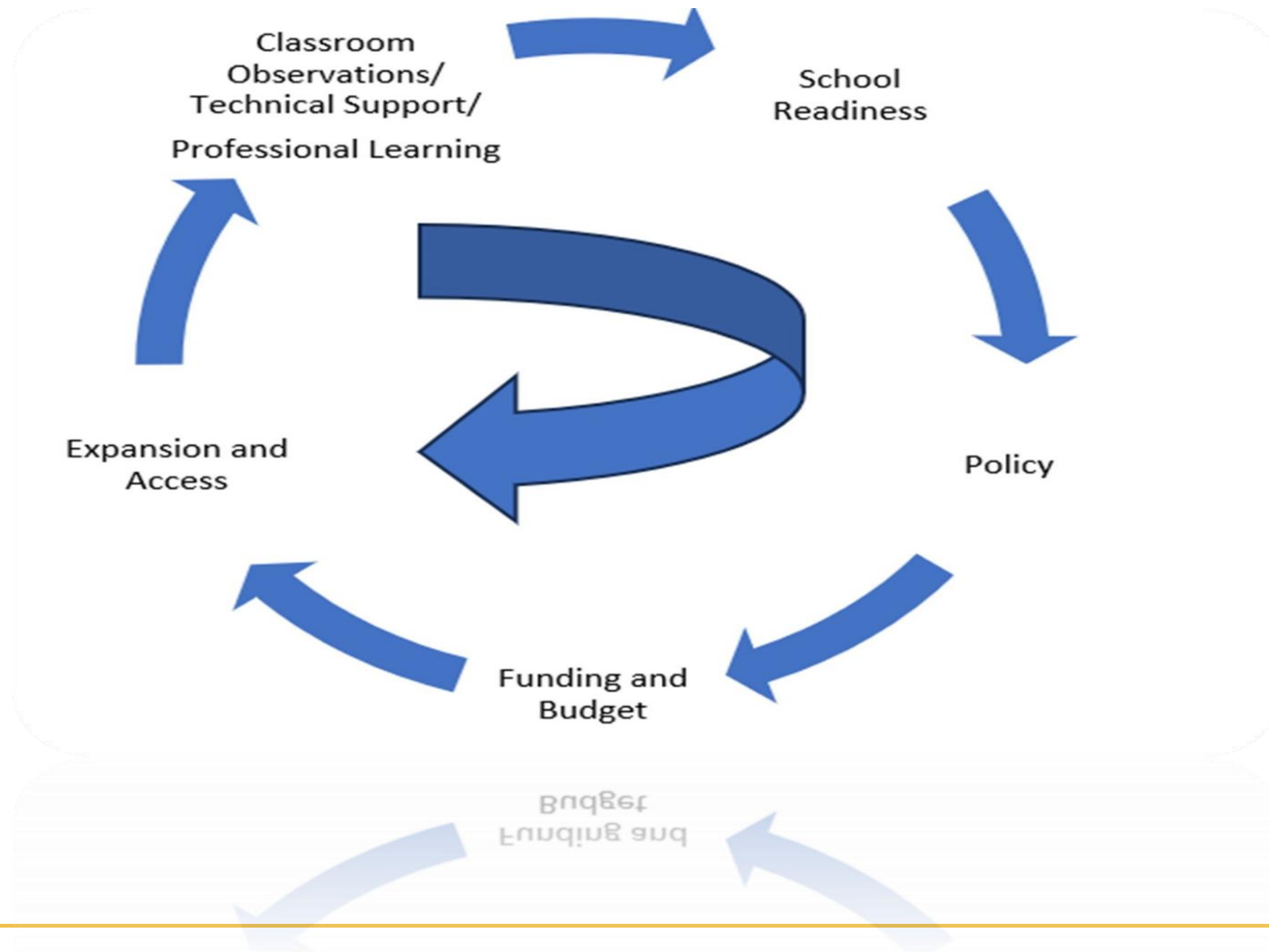
# Teachers plan for high level (intentional) play by:

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- Organizing the environment and changing materials as needed.
- Allowing for plenty of time in the daily schedule for high level play to develop.
- Planning for play with learning goals in mind.
- Facilitating play experiences.



# What Drives Our Work?





# CERDEP Guidelines – 4K Suspension

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Excerpt from the [2025-26 CERDEP Guidelines](#)

**In accordance with nonregulatory federal guidance, exclusionary practices should not be used to reduce unwanted behavior. Resources on appropriate strategies to reduce unwanted, and teach desired, behavior can be found here.**

**CERDEP programs should provide appropriate interventions working towards eliminating suspension and expulsion practices. Developmentally appropriate guidance and behavior management techniques should be utilized at all times.**





# CERDEP Guidelines – Revocation of Enrollment

Excerpt from the [2025-26 CERDEP Guidelines](#)

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**Revocation of Enrollment Developmentally appropriate guidance and behavior management techniques should be utilized at all times.**

**In accordance with *Policy Statement on Expulsion and Suspension Policies In Early Childhood Settings* (ed.gov) CERDEP programs should ensure all students' social skills, emotional development, and behavioral health are nurtured in high quality programs working towards eliminating expulsion and suspension practices**

**(U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Education, Policy Statement on Expulsion and Suspension Policies in Early Childhood Settings)**



# CERDEP Guidelines – Revocation of Enrollment

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## Excerpt from the 2025-26 CERDEP Guidelines

“Documentation of both the circumstances surrounding the request for revocation and the provider’s sustained and active efforts to resolve these issues in partnership with the child’s parent(s)/guardian(s) CERDEP Guidelines July 2025 Page 15 are required before revocation can occur.

The school administrator shall contact the district Early Childhood/CERDEP Coordinator who shall request permission from the SCDE to revoke a student. The request must be presented in writing with appropriate documentation, and before revocation, the SCDE may provide technical assistance or referrals for additional support.”

- *Provide the reason(s) why disenrollment is being requested;*
- *Provide the progress monitoring data, timeline(s), and interventions used to help the child benefit from the class;*
- *Provide written correspondences and meeting notes showing the ongoing involvement with the child’s support team and parent(s) or guardian(s);*
- *Provide behavioral and learning environment observations of the child that support the reasons for the requested disenrollment;*
- *If the child has special needs, provide recommendation(s) and consultation notes from the district’s Director of Special Services and documentation of the most recent IEP team meeting recommendation(s); and*
- *Submit all documentation to the director or team lead of the OIS. No state-funded students may be disenrolled without the express written permission of the OIS.*



# THANK YOU



**SOUTH CAROLINA  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

1868



**Panel Discussion: Early Care and  
Education in South Carolina**

***South Carolina Department of Education  
South Carolina Department of Social Services  
South Carolina First Steps***



# Recommendation Development Discussion

*Taryn Farrell, MPH*

*Research & Policy Manager, IMPH*



# Recommendation Development

Please keep the following criteria in mind when developing recommendations for the 5-yr Action Plan.

**Specific:** Who is responsible, and for what? Name a lead entity if possible.

**Measurable:** How will we know if we have achieved success?

**Achievable:** There needs to be a chance it can happen.

**Results-oriented:** What does the outcome look like?

**Time-Bound:** When should/will the activities and actions occur?

**Clearly written:** Easy to understand.

*Include an estimate of resources that will be required, when possible.*



# Recommendation Development Cont.

- What ideas/recommendations do you have to reduce exclusionary discipline of early learners (3k-1<sup>st</sup> Grade) in our state?
- How will this recommendation impact health and social outcomes for early learners and their families in South Carolina?
- What system and process level pieces need additional support?
- What is a realistic timeline to implement this?
- Who are the key players or champions to support this idea and recommendation?



# Recommendation Share Out



**Next Steps**  
*Taryn Farrell, MPH*  
*Research & Policy Manager, IMPH*



# Next Steps

## Next Meeting

First Choice Community Center

March 26<sup>th</sup>, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Please complete the evaluation.

We will send out minutes and the recommendation development link in a week.





South Carolina Institute of  
Medicine & Public Health

*For more information and to  
sign up for our newsletter:*

# Thank You!

Taryn Farrell, MPH  
Research & Policy Manager

*taryn@imph.org*



[www.imph.org](http://www.imph.org)

