



South Carolina Institute of
Medicine & Public Health

Foundations for Success Taskforce

*Taskforce Meeting #4
May 21, 2026*

About IMPH



www.imph.org



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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.



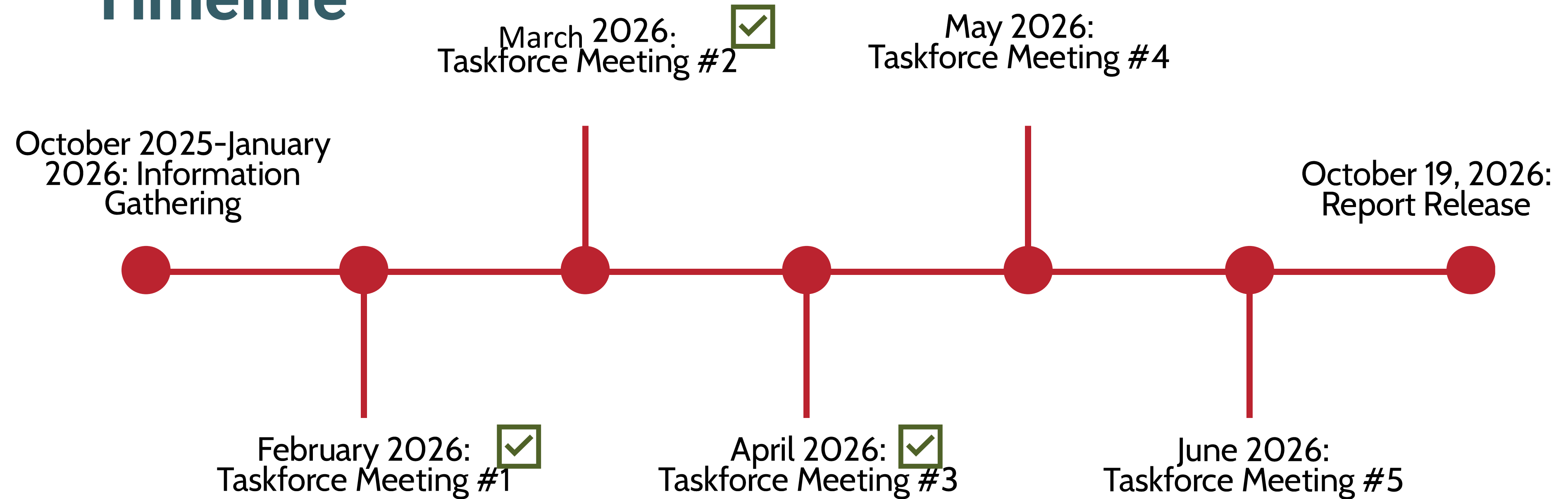
Welcome

Michael Leach, MMFT

Foundations for Success Taskforce Chair



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



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.



The Early Childhood Special Education Landscape

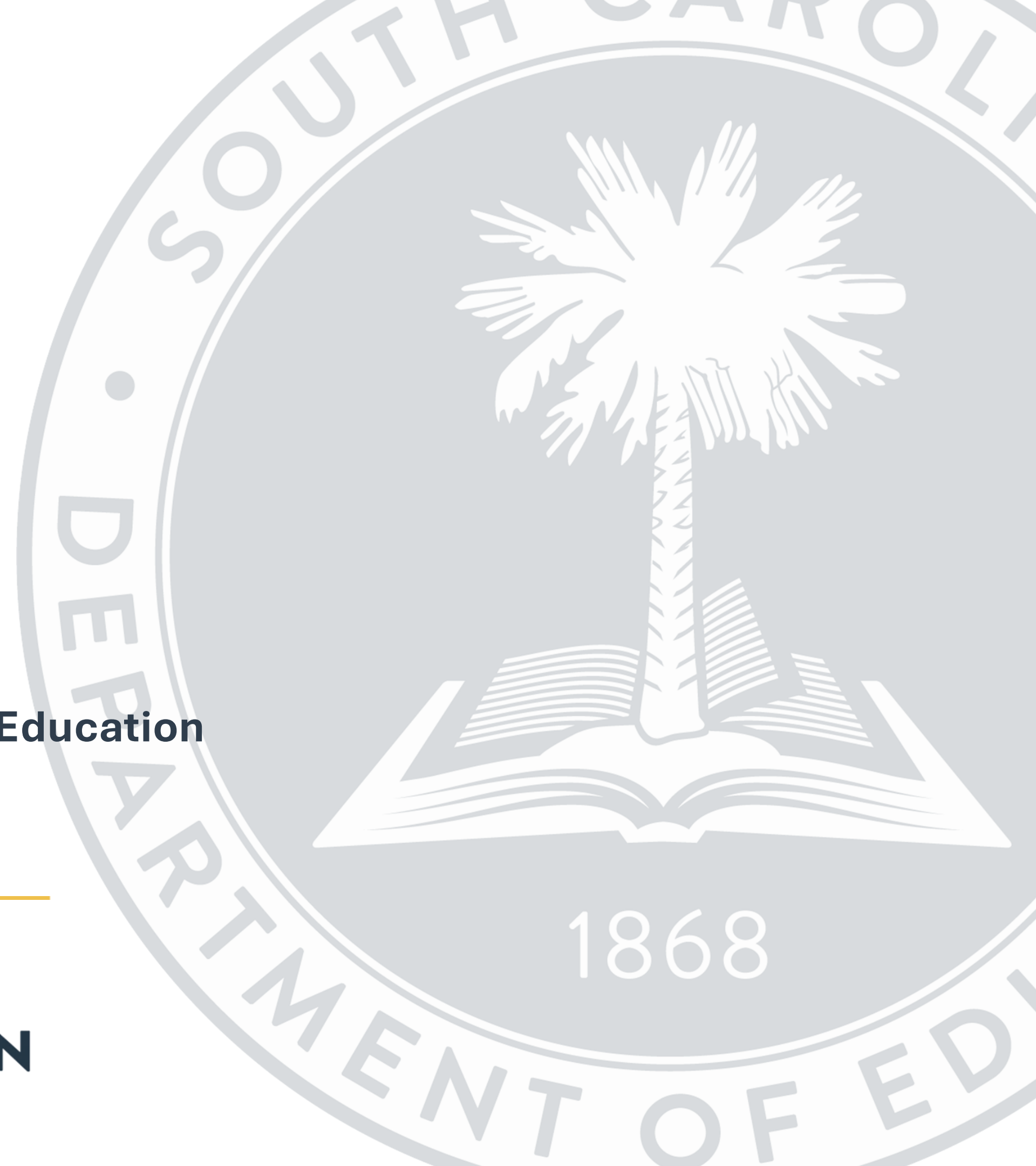
Foundations for Success Taskforce Meeting

**Sherri Evans, State Early Childhood Special Education
Coordinator**

May 21, 2026



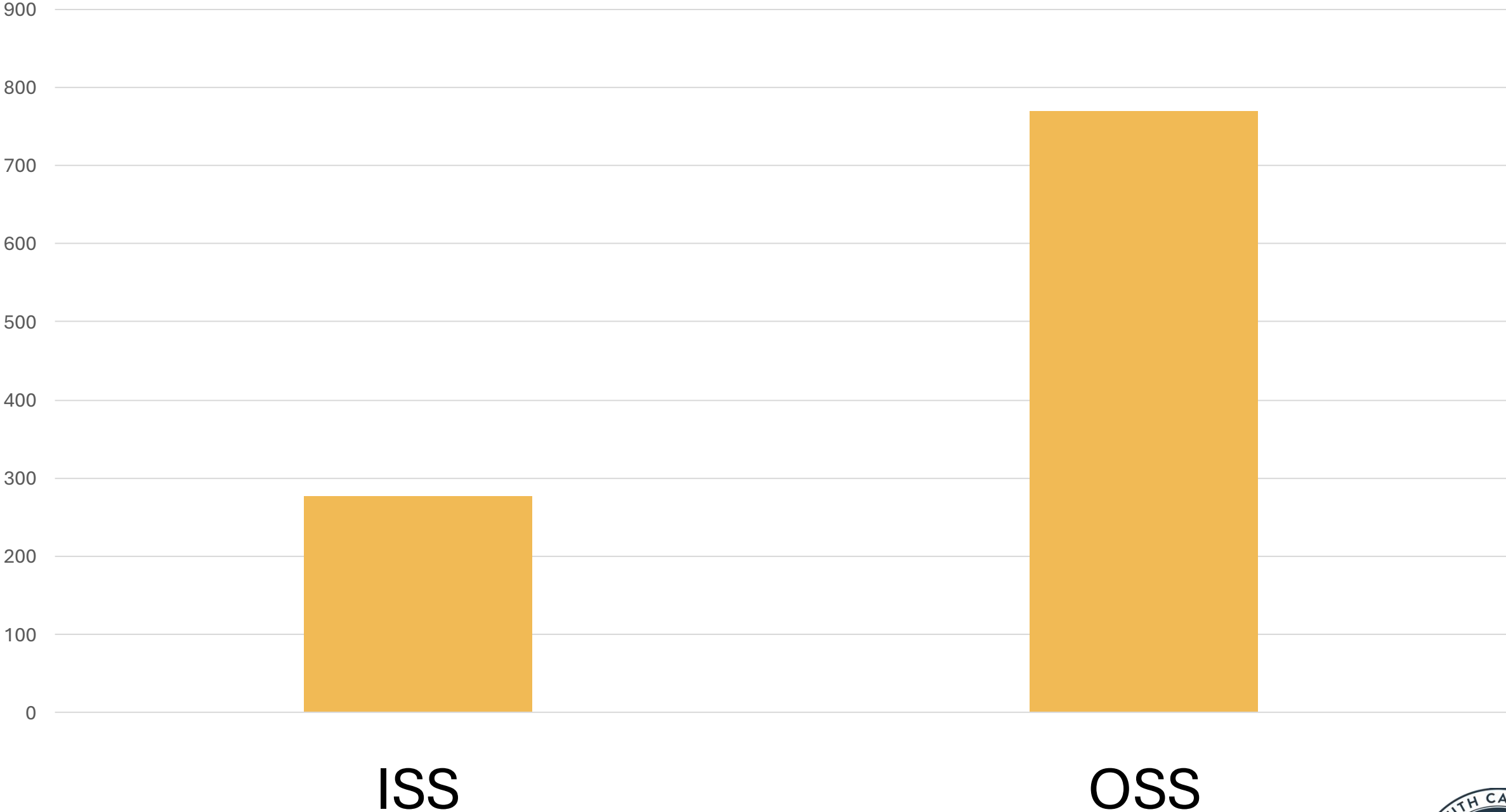
**SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**



Setting the Stage: Suspension of Public Pre-K Students with IEP/504 Plans

2016-17 thru 2023-24

- In-School Suspensions (ISS): 227
- Out-of-School Suspensions (OSS): 770



Data from Joint Citizens and Legislative Committee on Children



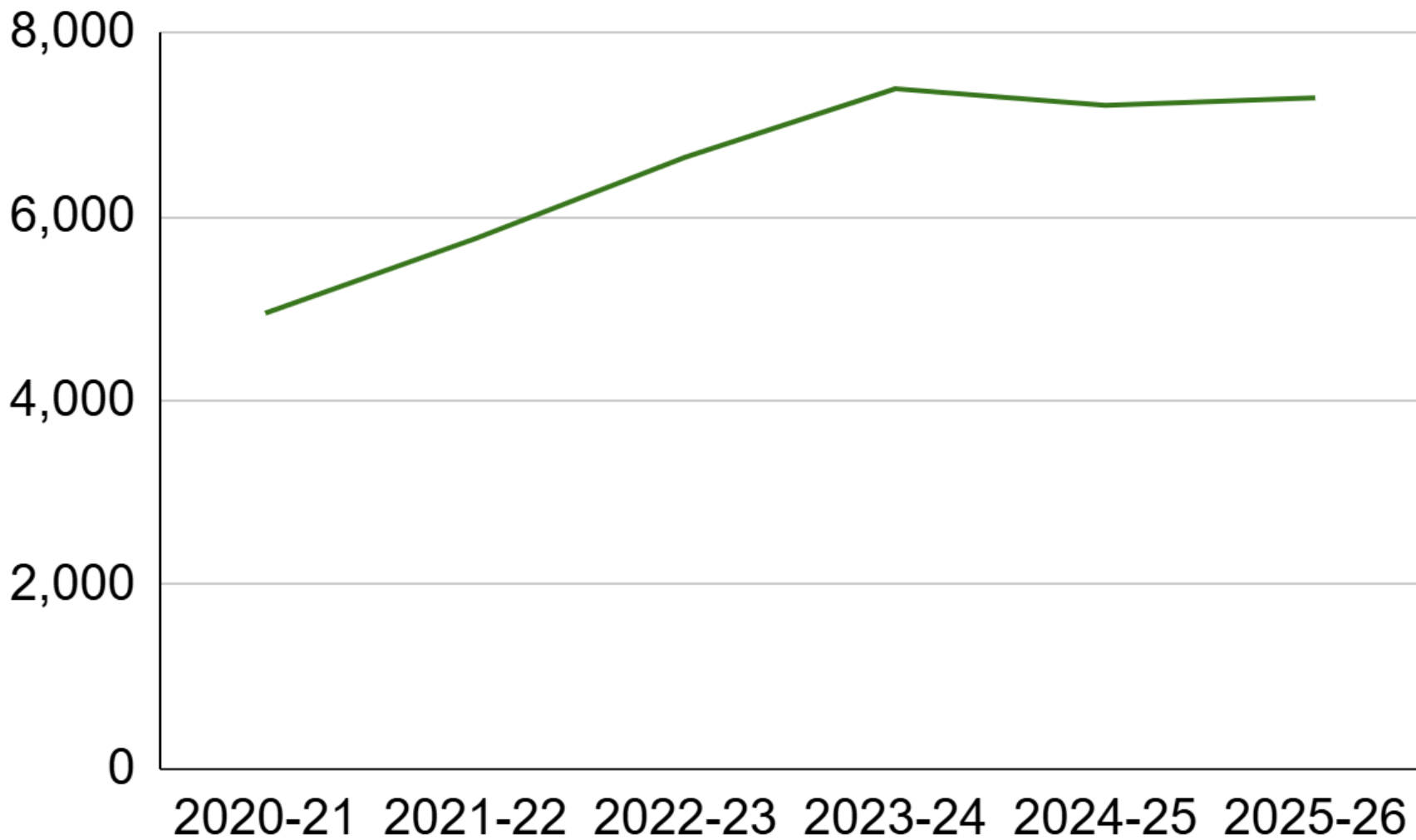
South Carolina's Children Ages 3-5 (not yet kindergarten) Receiving Special Education Services (IEP in place)

Age	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Age 3	1,586	2,150	2,593	2,757	2,599	2,543
Age 4	2,768	2,950	3,405	3,921	3,926	3,967
Age 5 (not yet kindergarten)	596	662	649	710	684	780
Total	4,950	5,762	6,647	7,388	7,209	7,290

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



SC Child Count Comparison with National Child Count



SC Pre-K	% increase/decrease
2021-22	16.40%
2022-23	15.35%
2023-24	11.14%
2024-25	2.42%
2025-26	1.12%

US Pre-K	% increase
2022-23	13.58%
2023-24	9.80%



Three Largest **Primary** Disability Categories for Preschool Children

✓ **Developmental Delay**

✓ **Speech Language Impairment**

✓ **Autism**

2025 Child Count Data

Disability Area	# of Students	Percentage
Developmental Delay	2,641	36.22%
Speech-Language Impairment	2,138	29.32%
Autism	2,135	29.28%

2024 Child Count Data

Disability Area	# of Students	Percentage
Developmental Delay	2,846	39.47%
Speech-Language Impairment	2,193	30.42%
Autism	1,852	25.69%



Agenda

- 1. What is IDEA and Part B 619?**
- 2. What does Child Find look like in Part B 619?**
- 3. What are OSES' priorities specific to early childhood?**





Agenda #1

What is IDEA and Part B 619?



IDEA at a Glance

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is the federal law that guarantees special education and related services to eligible children with disabilities from birth through age 21. It ensures that children receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) tailored to their unique needs.

Purpose of IDEA:

- Promote fair access to education for children with disabilities
- Support early identification and intervention
- Ensure educational services are delivered in the least restrictive environment (LRE)
- Protect the rights of children with disabilities and their families
- Provide states with a structured framework and funding to deliver services



How IDEA is Organized

IDEA is divided into four main parts:

- **Part A** – General provisions
- **Part B** – Special education for children ages **3–21**
 - **Section 611** – Grants to states for children ages **3-21**
 - **Section 619** – *Preschool* grants for children ages **3–5**
 - Funds are appropriated by Congress under IDEA.
 - States distribute funds to **local educational agencies (LEAs)** to support preschool special education services.
- **Part C** – Early intervention for infants and toddlers (**birth–2**)
- **Part D** – National activities, personnel development, and technical assistance



Why Preschool Suspension Matters Under IDEA

- Suspensions often signal unmet disability-related needs.
- Removal from class disrupts access to FAPE and required services.
- Behavior leading to suspension may be directly related to a disability.
 - A Manifestation Determination Review (MDR) for preschool age students follows the same requirements applied to all students with disabilities. (10 cumulative days suspension/pattern of removal)
When a preschool child faces a disciplinary removal that constitutes a change of placement, the team must determine whether the behavior in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to the child's disability, or whether it resulted from the school's failure to implement the IEP. (34 C.F.R. Sec. 300.530 (e))
- IDEA requires proactive, positive behavioral supports; not exclusion.





Agenda #2

What does Child Find look like in Part B 619?



What is Child Find?

Child Find is a **federal requirement under IDEA** that obligates states and local education agencies (LEAs) to **locate, identify, and evaluate** all children with disabilities who may need special education services. **It covers children from birth to age 21.**

Key Purpose

- Make sure **no child falls through the cracks**
- Begin services as early as possible
- Promote fair access to early childhood special education



Child Find Requirements Under IDEA Part B 619

Focus on Preschool-Age Children (3–5)

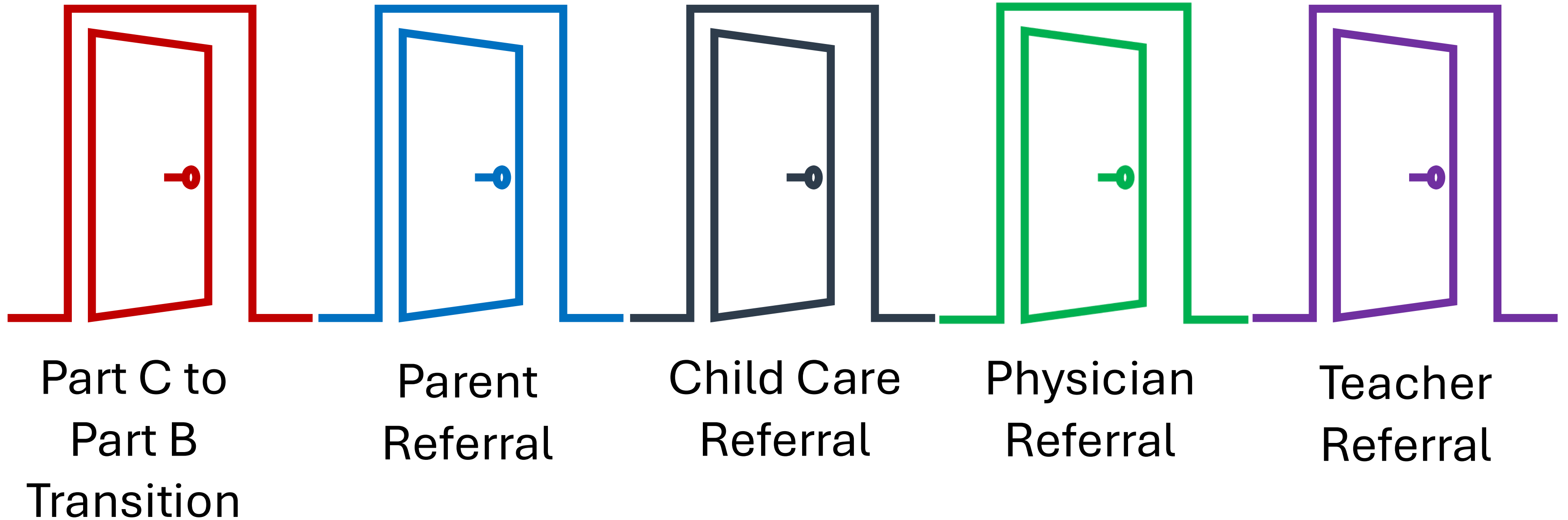
Under Section 619, states must ensure Child Find activities specifically address **preschoolers** who may need special education.

States and LEAs must:

- Actively identify children ages **3–5** who may have developmental delays or disabilities
- Provide **timely, comprehensive evaluations**
- Ensure families understand the process and their rights
- Coordinate with community partners to reach children not yet in school settings



Child Find Pathways Specific to Preschool



Timelines and Evaluation Requirements

- LEAs must complete a **full and individual initial evaluation** within the state-defined timeline (60 days upon receipt of parental consent).
- Evaluations must be **multidisciplinary** and use **multiple sources of data**.
- Families must provide **informed consent** before evaluations begin.

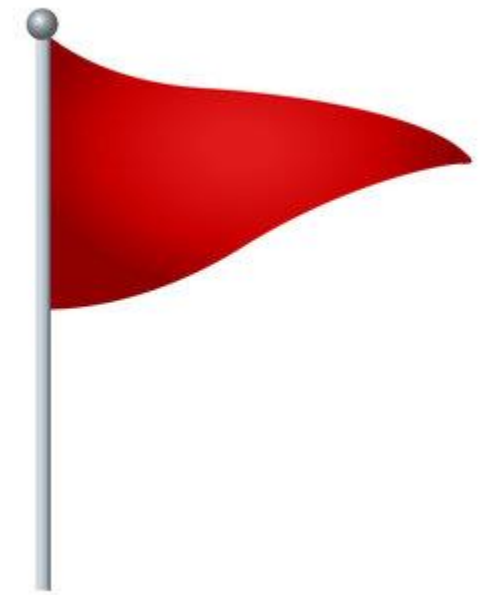


Why Child Find Matters in the Preschool Landscape

Early Identification = Better Outcomes

Child Find is foundational to the success of IDEA Part B 619 because

- Ensures children receive services during a **critical development**
- Reduces the need for more intensive services later
- Strengthens transitions from **Part C (birth–2)** to **Part B (3–5)**
- **Frequent suspensions can be a red flag that children needing evaluations are not being identified**
- Exclusion delays early intervention, when support is most effective
- Behavior-based removals may reflect unidentified developmental or behavioral needs





Agenda #3

What are OSES' priorities specific to early childhood and how does this impact Pre-K suspension?



Serving Children in Their Least Restrictive Environment

- Inclusive settings reduce the likelihood of suspension.
- Suspensions undermine a child's right to be educated in their least restrictive environment.
- High suspension rates can signal that supports are not being implemented effectively.
- Behavior challenges often reflect unmet needs – not a need for a more restrictive placement.
- Exclusion disrupts the services that make LRE work.



Preschool Environments (Indicator 6)

Least Restrictive Environment	Age 3	Age 4	Age 5 (not yet kindergarten)
Home	69	49	12
★ In Regular Education at Least 10 hours per week – EC Program	141	694	171
In Regular Education at Least 10 hours per week – Other Location	509	1,034	210
★ In Regular Education less than 10 hours per week – EC Program	59	142	37
In Regular Education less than 10 hours per week – Other Location	93	226	52
Residential Facility	*	*	*
Separate Class	1,213	1,486	246
Separate School	35	36	*
Service Provider Location	424	299	47

Note: Source of data is IDEA, Part B, Section 618, 2025 Child Count; Cells containing less than ten students are suppressed for confidentiality purposes and denoted with an asterisk.



Child Outcomes Summary (COS)

Outcome 1: Positive Social-Emotional Skills

- Interacting with Peers
- Following Social Norms & Adapting to Changes in Routines
- Participating in Social Games & Communicating with Others
- Expressing Own Emotions & Responding to Emotions of Others

Outcome 2: Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills

- Using Problem Solving
- Engaging in Purposeful Play
- Acquiring Language to Communicate
- Understanding Questions Asked & Directions Given

Outcome 3: Use of Appropriate Behaviors to Meet Needs

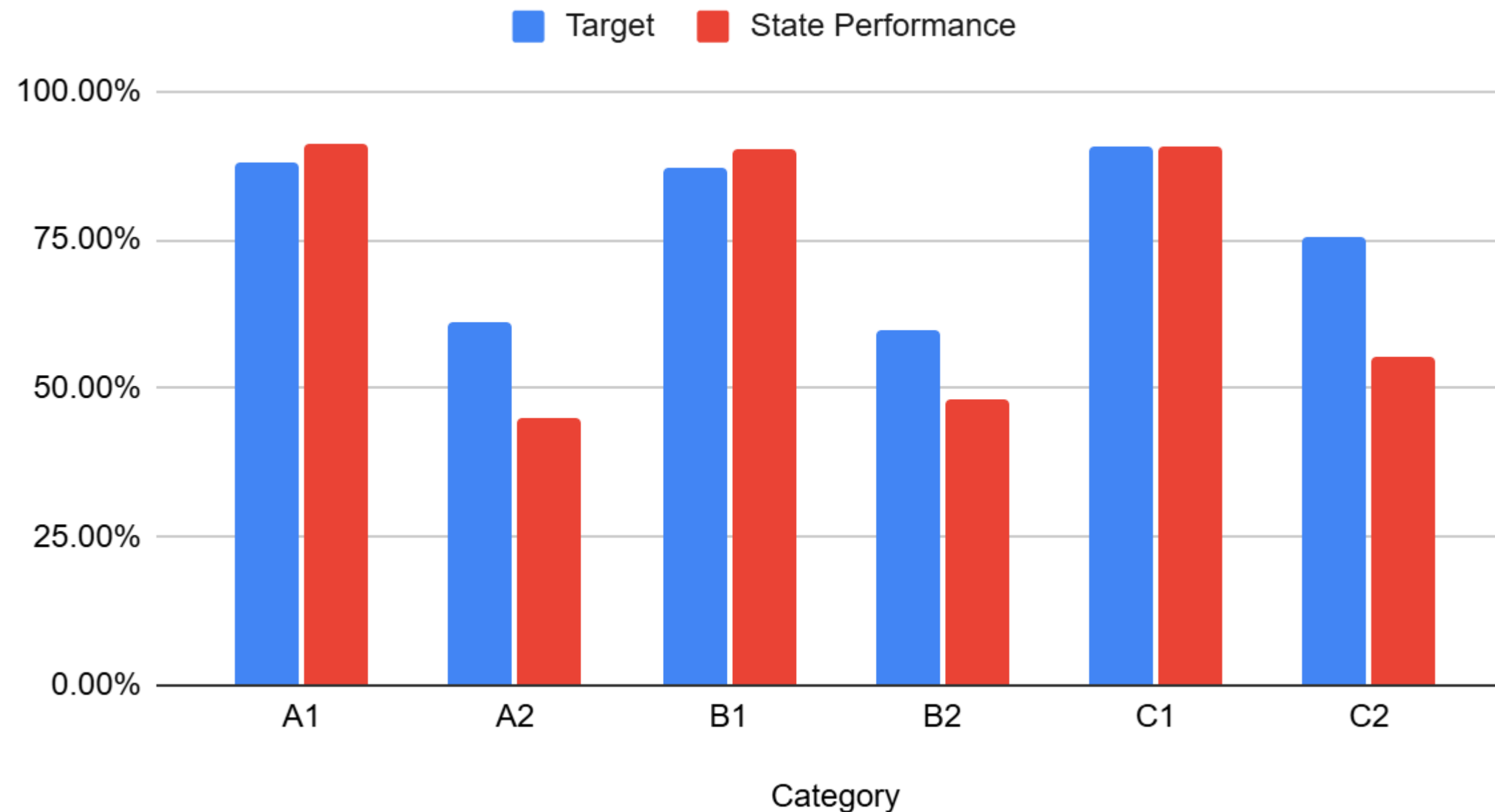
- Communicating Needs
- Showing Safety Awareness
- Moving Around & Manipulating Things to Meet Needs
- Eating/Drinking, Dressing/Undressing, Toileting/Washing with Increasing Independence

- Suspension disrupts the very learning experiences Indicator 7 measures.
- Reducing suspension supports stronger developmental trajectories.



State-Wide Performance on Indicator 7

Target and State Performance



Outcome A: Positive Social-Emotional Skills

Outcome B: Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills

Outcome C: Use of Appropriate Behaviors to Meet Their Needs

Statement 1: Of those children who entered or exited the program below age level expectations who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time of exit.

Statement 2: The percent of preschool children who were functioning within age expectations by the time of exit.



The Importance of Part C to Part B Transition

A Strong Part C → Part B Transition:

- Prevents service gaps that lead to challenging behaviors
- Ensures supports are ready on day one
- Reduces misinterpretation of disability-related behaviors
- Strengthens family–school partnerships
- Protects developmental progress
- Enables proactive behavior planning

Key Acronyms



Part C to Part B Transition Data & State-Wide Performance on Indicator 12

FFY 2024 SPP/APR Data

a. Number of children who have been served in Part C and referred to Part B for Part B eligibility determination.	3,769
b. Number of those referred determined to be NOT eligible and whose eligibility was determined prior to third birthday.	695
c. Number of those found eligible who have an IEP developed and implemented by their third birthdays.	1,874
d. Number for whom parent refusals to provide consent caused delays in evaluation or initial services or to whom exceptions under 34 CFR §300.301(d) applied.	1,069
e. Number of children who were referred to Part C less than 90 days before their third birthdays.	109
f. Number of children whose parents chose to continue early intervention services beyond the child's third birthday through a State's policy under 34 CFR §303.211 or a similar State option.	



Percent of children referred by Part C prior to age 3 who are found eligible for Part B, and who have an IEP developed and implemented by their third birthdays: **98.84%**.

Data from 2024-25 SY



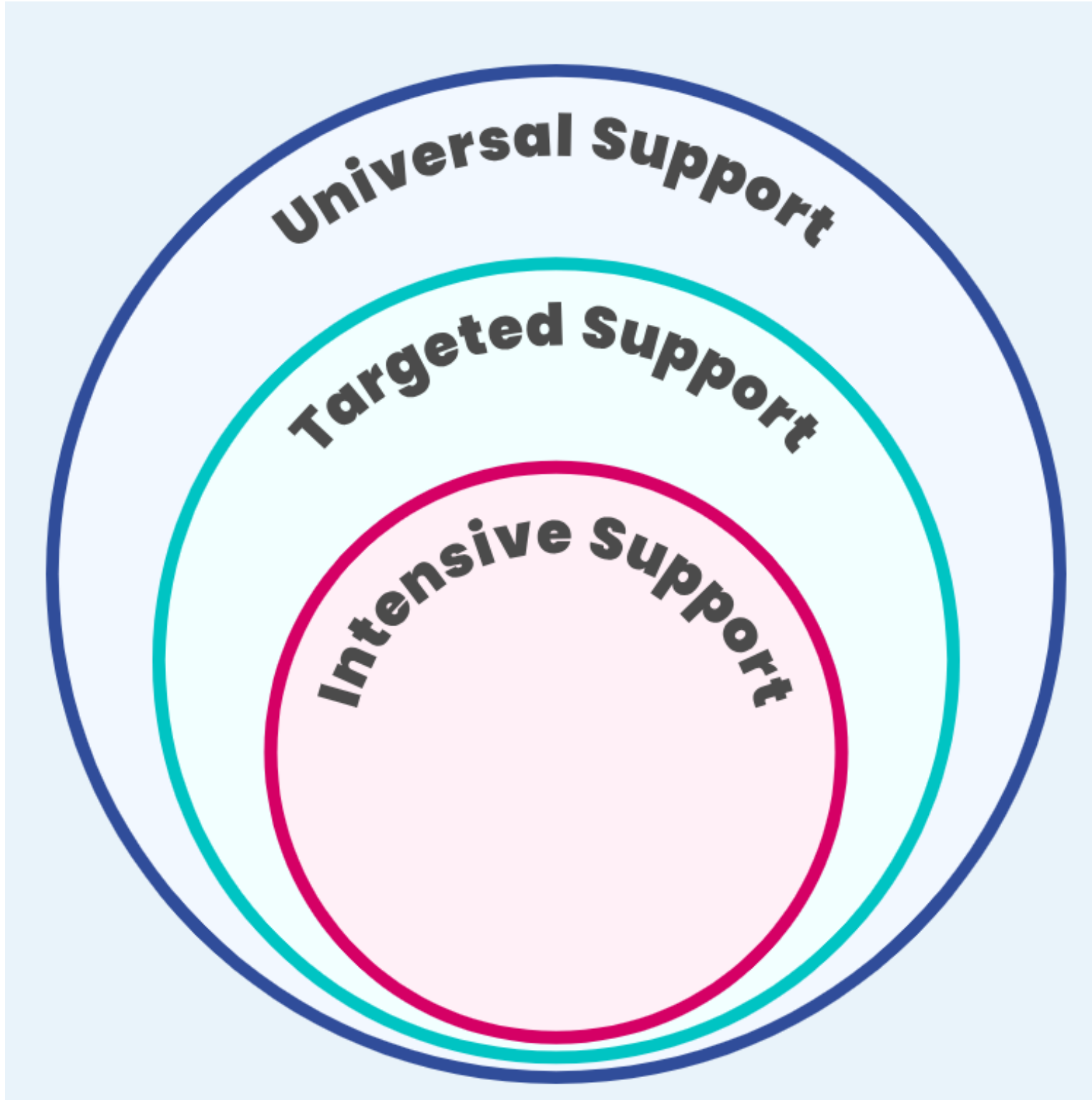
SC TEAMS



SC-TEAMS



Technical Assistance Supports



Early Childhood Technical Assistance Support



- The Special Education Itinerant Teacher (SEIT) Academy
- Targeted and Intensive Supports
- Universal Supports:
 - Conference Presentations (EC Strand at SC CEC, Summer University, United for Every Child, Hopes & Dreams, etc.)
 - Communities of Practice, Book Studies & Professional Learning Communities
 - Recommended Resources: Evidence-based resources to support high-quality inclusive early childhood programming ([searchable database](#))
 - Quarterly electronic newsletter
 - Science from the Sandbox series on social media to unpack the SC Early Learning Standards
- Pyramid Model Program-Wide Support
- Connect on Reframing Expectations (CORE)
- Online Modules: Pyramid Model e-Modules, Reducing Suspension & Expulsion
- Reframing Behavior Series: Volumes I & II
- Quarterly electronic newsletter



Summer University: Registration is Open

Visit our Website



<https://tinyurl.com/2v2vrzwp>



Early Childhood Specific Sessions:

- Collaborative Service Delivery for Inclusion
- Engaging Early Literacy Strategies Based on the Science of Reading
- Supporting Early Mathematics Through Play and Exploration
- TPOT Reliability (by invite only)





2026 United For Every Child: Inclusion and the Pyramid Model in Action



SEPTEMBER
23-25
2026

R2i2 Conference
Center
763 Fashion Dr,
Columbia, SC



Jordyn Zimmerman
*Belonging Begins with Belief:
Rethinking What's Possible
in Inclusive Learning*

**Featuring our
Keynote Speakers!**



Dr. Rosemarie Allen
*Joy Is Not Optional:
Ensuring Full Participation
of Every Child*

[Click Here to Register!](#)



OSSES-Led Trainings and Supports

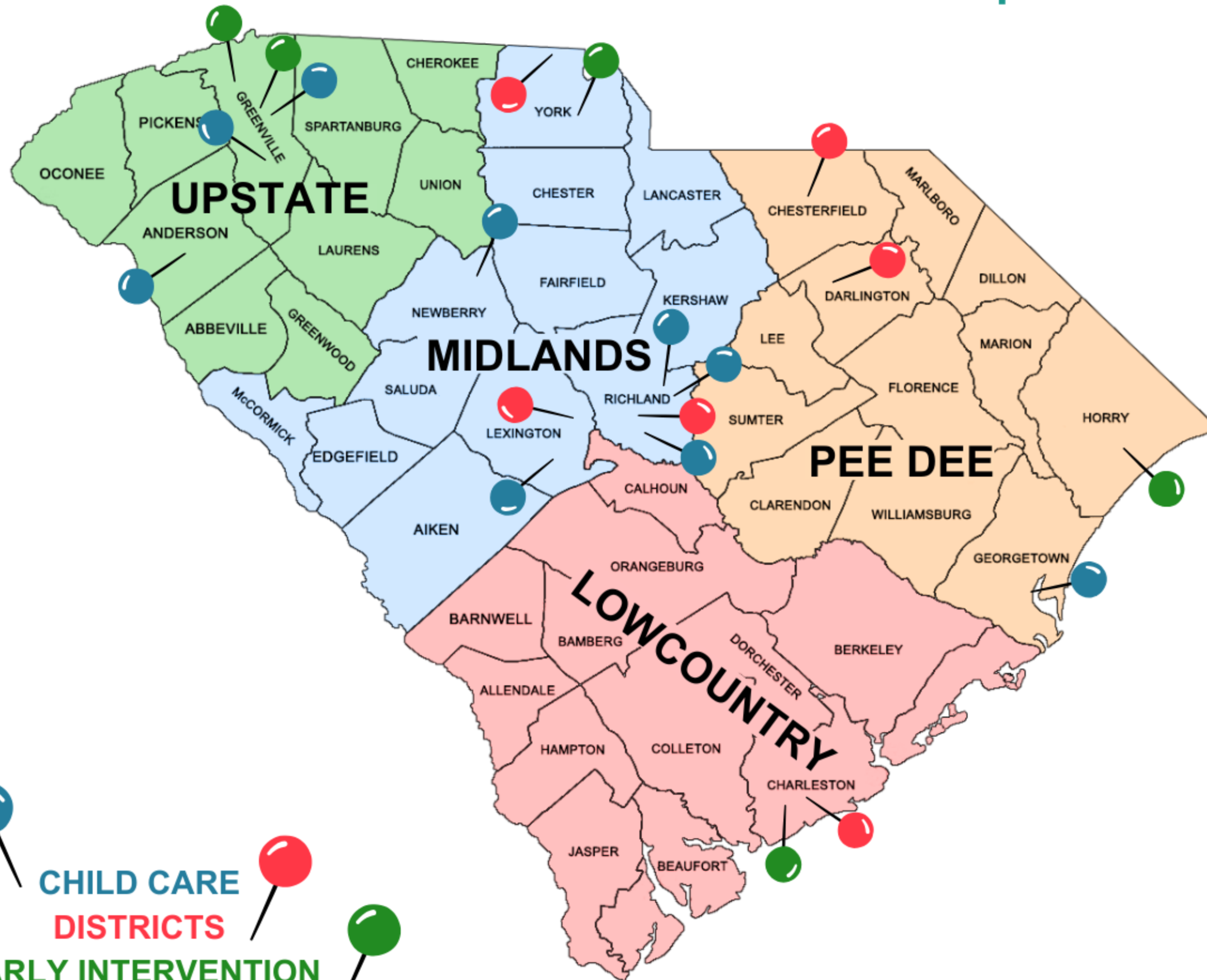
- Aligning IEP Goals with the SC Early Learning Standards
- Compliance with IDEA and the 2024 SEED
- Preschool Environments and the Continuum of Services
- Data Reporting Training for Early Childhood Indicators
- Bridging Supports: Everything You Need to Know about Transition from Part C to Part B
- LMS Course on Child Outcomes Summary





IMPLEMENTATION SITES

UPDATED April 2026



CHILD CARE DISTRICTS
EARLY INTERVENTION

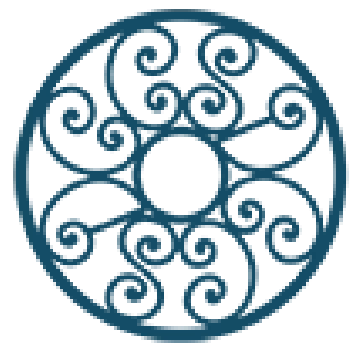
Exploration
Bright New Beginnings
Chesterfield
Darlington
Lexington 2
Little Lamb
Promising Futures

Installation
Clover
Increasing Dimensions
Small Impressions
Success by Steps (Columbia)
The Champions Center (Anderson)
Windsor West Academy

Initial Implementation
A Child's Haven, Inc (Greenville)
Charleston County
Lexington-Richland 5
Newberry CDC

Full Implementation
Easterseals (Charleston)
Easterseals (Horry)
Easterseals (York)
Tiny Feet Early Intervention

Charleston's Implementation Story



Charleston County
SCHOOL DISTRICT





Sherri Evans, M.A, CCC-SLP

*State Early Childhood Special
Education Coordinator*

sqevans@ed.sc.gov



Break



Exploring Policy Pathways to Reduce Exclusionary Discipline in South Carolina

Ryan Bailey, South Carolina Association of School Administrators

Debbie Elmore, South Carolina School Board Association

Patrick Kelly, M.A.T., M.Ed., Palmetto State Teachers Association

Jennifer Rainville, Esq., South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center



Lunch



Recommendation Development Updates

Taryn M. Farrell, MPH

South Carolina Institute of Medicine and Public Health



Recommendation Development

- **16 Recommendation Goal Statements**
- **Consensus Building: Results from Workgroup Development Expert Workgroup Meetings and TF Survey**
- **Goals for Today:**
 - **Finalize Recommendation Goal Statements**
 - **Refine Action Steps**
 - **Build Implementation Timeline (1-Year, 3-Year, 5-Year Benchmarks)**
 - **Identify Implementation Champions and Supporters**



A photograph of four young children sitting on the floor in a classroom, clapping their hands. The children are diverse in age and ethnicity. The background shows a typical classroom setting with shelves and colorful decorations. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark blue filter.

Recommendation Development Discussion *(Small Groups)*



Next Steps

- **Final Meeting**
 - First Choice Community Center
 - June 25th, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
- Please complete the evaluation.
- We will send out meeting and follow up materials next 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

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