



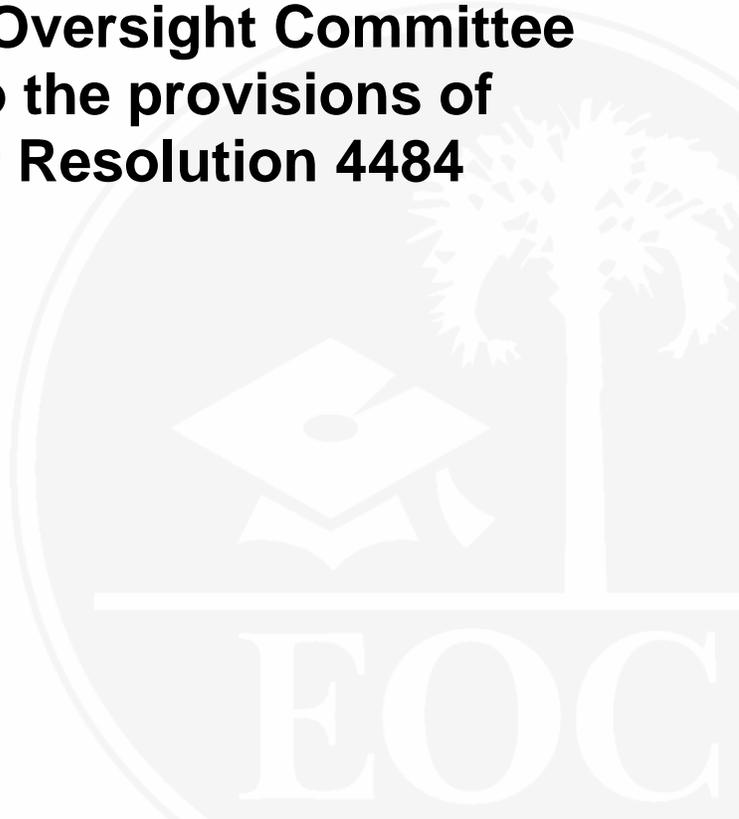
Results and Related Recommendations of the Inventory and Study of Four-Year-Old Kindergarten Programs in South Carolina

**A report from the
Education Oversight Committee
pursuant to the provisions of
Concurrent Resolution 4484**

March 15, 2006

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Results and Related Recommendations of the Inventory and Study of Four-Year-Old Kindergarten Programs in South Carolina

A report from the Education Oversight Committee pursuant to the provisions of Concurrent Resolution 4484 of 2006

March 15, 2006

This report has been prepared at the request of the General Assembly of South Carolina pursuant to the provisions of Concurrent Resolution 4484 of 2006. The work was conducted as a part of the continuing research of the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee. The data used to develop the inventory and as a basis for the recommendations were provided by colleagues serving in district, state and federal programs. Their names and acknowledgements are provided later in this document. The inventory, study and recommendations represent the work of staff of the Education Oversight Committee, most notably David Potter, Melanie Barton and Jo Anne Anderson, and Dr. William Brown, professor, University of South Carolina. The recommendations are the work of this team and do not represent policy statements of the members of the Education Oversight Committee.

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Jo Anne Anderson

March 15, 2006

To: Members, South Carolina General Assembly

I am transmitting this document in response to your request as captured in Concurrent Resolution 4484 of 2006. The Concurrent Resolution required the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) to accomplish the following:

- (1) to inventory and study all four-year-old kindergarten programs in this State funded in whole or in part with federal, state, or local public funds. (a) a determination of the success of each program using evaluative measures determined or developed by the committee; (b) an analysis of the funding mechanisms of each program and their sufficiency, impact, availability, and correlation; (c) other information relative to the provision or operation of four-year-old kindergarten programs as the committee deems appropriate.
- (2) to determine the necessary requirements to implement a full day four-year-old kindergarten program in each of the eight plaintiff school districts in the case of Abbeville County School District, et al., v. State of South Carolina, et. al. for all children who qualify for free- or reduced-price lunch; and
- 3) to determine the necessary requirements to implement a statewide full day four-year-old kindergarten program for all children who qualify for free- or reduced-price lunches.

This report would not have been completed without the support of our colleagues in a number of agencies, most notably the Budget and Control Board, the Department of Education, the Department of Social Services, First Steps, Head Start and the school districts. We also learned from members of the academic communities and policy researchers at the Andrew Young Center for Public Policy of Georgia State University and the Southern Regional Education Board. We appreciate their contributions and their advice. We strove to understand differences

in philosophy, policy and practice and to shape recommendations in the best interests of South Carolina's most vulnerable four-year-olds.

We found strong commitment to serve our youngest children and consensus that serving the children, particularly those at risk of entering school unprepared to succeed, was a state responsibility. We found that each agency was focusing resources on these children and taking those actions its leaders deemed to be in fulfillment of their statutory responsibilities. But we did not find consistent quality at the child level and fear that many of South Carolina's most vulnerable children are not served or are served inadequately.

We express concern that the system, in practice, is not sufficiently rigorous. Too many vulnerable young children are inadequately served either by non-participation, by a half-day program model or by a curriculum that perpetuates achievement gaps rather than ameliorates them. Through our recommendations we ask that you provide incentives for serving the young children most in need, that you guarantee program quality through intensive, technical assistance and relentless monitoring, and that resources are provided to address the social, health and safety needs of these children.

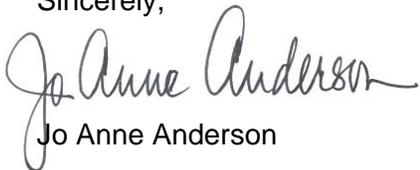
We offer the following recommendations:

1. The State of South Carolina should provide well-targeted and high-quality, center-based early childhood education services in public and private settings for all four-year-old children who are at-risk for school failure, particularly children who are eligible for the free- or reduced-price lunch program.
2. The high-quality, center-based program should incorporate the following:
 - a state-approved, research-based curriculum aligned with school success
 - a 6.5 hour program encompassing education, physical activity, nutrition and health and developmental screenings with linkages to services as necessary
 - a lead teacher with a four year degree in early childhood education or a closely related area (e.g., child development, family studies, early childhood special education) and an aide to provide an adult-child ratio of 1:10 in a class of not less than 16 children nor more than 20 children
3. A single state agency should administer the program to include the following:
 - Establishment and implementation of regulations enforcing program quality
 - Identification, development, and monitoring of eligible providers to ensure the quality of opportunity
 - Provision of technical assistance to all participating personnel (teachers, aides and principals/directors) providing the program for four-year-olds
 - Administration of a grants program for resource coordinators to accomplish linkages to health and social services for the child
 - Participation in an external evaluation program
 - Collaboration with the South Carolina Head Start Collaboration Office to develop strategic partnerships between Head Start programs and the public and private providers who will serve these four-year-olds at risk of school failure to create a seamless system of early childhood education
4. The State should link funding directly to children who receive the early childhood education services and provide funding only when
 - The provider initially meets and continues to meet all state program and facilities standards

- The provider participates in an on-going process of technical assistance, monitoring, assessment and evaluation of services and child outcomes
 - The provider maintains sufficient enrollment of the targeted students (i.e., a class of not less than 16 students nor more than 20 students)
5. The child should be provided, as indicated, an array of well-targeted, high-quality wrap-around services. Efficient and effective use of multiple federal, state and private funding should be undertaken when providing high quality services for four-year-old children and their families.
 6. The role of the family should be supported and nurtured during the child's early childhood experiences. Specifically, the parent should have access to the following:
 - Sufficient and understandable information to determine which provider to use for his/her child
 - Continuing information on the child's progress and the impact of the program on the child's readiness for school success
 7. A state-level interagency data system for children and families served with any public funds should be established and maintained to monitor service provision, quality and impact for four-year-old children who are at risk for school failure. The database should include selected process measures for early childhood education and wrap-around services received (e.g., number of children served, curriculum used, assessments employed, length of school day, type of parent education program, nature of service coordination).
 8. The state should establish and maintain a well-planned collaborative evaluation across five years (i.e., one year of planning and preparing and four years of data collection) which is independent of the providers and regulating agency and which evaluates both process and child outcome measures of state-funded services for four-year-old children who are at risk of school failure.

We thank you for the opportunity to work on this critical issue. If we can provide further detail or clarifications, please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Jo Anne Anderson

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Concurrent Resolution 4484 became official on January 26, 2006. The resolution outlined a request to provide an inventory and study of publicly funded programs serving four-year-old children in the state to include the definition of an effective program model and the resources necessary to serve children living in poverty. At the point of passage the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) had forty-eight (48) days to accomplish the task.

But the EOC staff was not alone. For many years South Carolina has provided funding to serve four-year-olds through a variety of programs and under the leadership of talented South Carolinians. We called upon that talented leadership and asked them for program descriptions, funding records and wisdom they had acquired over the years. We offer their names below and extend our great appreciation for the professionalism and commitment these individuals have demonstrated throughout this process. We apologize in advance to anyone whose name does not appear and we know that there are many individuals who worked “behind the scenes” to prepare documents for us. The information these individuals provided is the result of work above and beyond their normal duties and provided in a very brief time period.

But beyond data and documents, we acknowledge the community of professionals who advocate for and serve young children. We thank you for the contributions you make every day.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Concurrent Resolution 4484 of 2006 requires the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) to accomplish the following:

- (1) to inventory and study all four-year-old kindergarten programs in this State funded in whole or in part with federal, state, or local public funds. (a) a determination of the success of each program using evaluative measures determined or developed by the committee; (b) an analysis of the funding mechanisms of each program and their sufficiency, impact, availability, and correlation; (c) other information relative to the provision or operation of four-year-old kindergarten programs as the committee deems appropriate.
- (2) to determine the necessary requirements to implement a full day four-year-old kindergarten program in each of the eight plaintiff school districts in the case of Abbeville County School District, et al., v. State of South Carolina, et. al. for all children who qualify for free- or reduced-price lunch; and
- 3) to determine the necessary requirements to implement a statewide full day four-year-old kindergarten program for all children who qualify for free- or reduced-price lunches.

Programs vary on almost every program characteristic. A cumulative review of the eight programs is provided in the full report. The federal programs include Head Start, ABC Child Care, Part C of IDEA and Title One; the state programs include Pre-Schoolers with Disabilities, EIA Child Development, Act 135 and First Steps to School Readiness. Based upon studies of the research literature and reviews of programs operating in South Carolina, the EOC identified these core elements of a high-quality center-based pre-kindergarten program:

- a. Lead teacher with a four-year degree in early childhood education or a closely related area (e.g., child development, family studies, early childhood special education)
- b. Assistant Teacher/aide with preservice or inservice training in early childhood education
- c. Classrooms with at least 16 four-year-olds but no more than 20 four-year-olds with an adult to child ratio of 1:10
- d. Full day, center-based programs of 6.5 hours for 180 school days
- e. Implementation and programmatic fidelity to a research-based preschool curriculum that focuses on critical child development skills, especially early literacy, numeracy and social/emotional development
- f. Implementation of health and developmental screenings and assessments and, when indicated, direct referral to community-based services
- g. State-level administrative authority to develop, implement and explicitly monitor four-year-old pre-kindergarten programs
- h. State-level development and regional implementation of a responsive technical assistance system that focuses on professional development related to child development especially early literacy, numeracy and social competence skills and development
- i. Development and implementation of a state evaluation of four-year-old pre-kindergarten services which include research-based formative and summative program evaluation and linkage to child outcomes in early elementary grades.

As a result of the study, the EOC found the following patterns of service and gaps in serving four-year-olds who qualify for free- or reduced-price lunches. Of the state's 56,114 four-year-olds, 29,737 are eligible for the free- or reduced-price lunch program. 8,557 are served by Head Start or the Department of Social Services (DSS) Child Care program, leaving 21,180 to be served by the State. 12,871 are enrolled in public school pre-kindergarten programs (either full or half-day); another 123 are served in private settings and funded by First Steps.

8,186 children, eligible for the free- or reduced-price lunch program are not served by any agency. Another 3,998 Medicaid-eligible (but not eligible for the free- or reduced-price lunch program) four-year-olds are estimated to be served in public schools and considered at risk for school failure.

Based upon the studies reviewed and conducted under the direction of Concurrent Resolution 4484, we recommend that

1. The State of South Carolina should provide well-targeted and high-quality, center-based early childhood education services in public and private settings for all four-year-old children who are at-risk for school failure, particularly children who are eligible for the free- or reduced-price lunch program.
2. The high-quality, center-based program should incorporate the following:
 - a state-approved, research-based curriculum aligned with school success
 - a 6.5 hour program encompassing education, physical activity, nutrition and health and developmental screenings with linkages to services as necessary
 - a lead teacher with a four year degree in early childhood education or a closely related area (e.g., child development, family studies, early childhood special education) and an aide to provide an adult-child ratio of 1:10 in a class of not less than 16 children nor more than 20 children
3. A single state agency should administer the program to include the following:
 - Establishment and implementation of regulations enforcing program quality
 - Identification, development, and monitoring of eligible providers to ensure the quality of opportunity
 - Provision of technical assistance to all participating personnel (teachers, aides and principals/directors) providing the program for four-year-olds
 - Administration of a grants program for resource coordinators to accomplish linkages to health and social services for the child
 - Participation in an external evaluation program
4. The State should link funding directly to children who receive the early childhood education services and provide funding only when
 - The provider initially meets and continues to meet all state program and facilities standards
 - The provider participates in an on-going process of technical assistance, monitoring, assessment and evaluation of services and child outcomes
 - The provider maintains sufficient enrollment of the targeted students (i.e., a class of not less than 16 students nor more than 20 students)
5. The child should be provided, as indicated, an array of well-targeted, high-quality wrap-around services. Efficient and effective use of multiple federal, state and private funding should be undertaken when providing high quality services for four-year-old children and their families.

6. The role of the family should be supported and nurtured during the child's early childhood experiences. Specifically, the parent should have access to the following:
 - Sufficient and understandable information to determine which provider to use for his/her child
 - Continuing information on the child's progress and the impact of the program on the child's readiness for school success
7. A state-level interagency data system for children and families served with any public funds should be established and maintained to monitor service provision, quality and impact for four-year-old children who are at risk for school failure. The database should include selected process measures for early childhood education and wrap-around services received (e.g., number of children served, curriculum used, assessments employed, length of school day, type of parent education program, nature of service coordination).
8. The state should establish and maintain a well-planned collaborative evaluation across five years (i.e., one year of planning and preparing and four years of data collection) which is independent of the providers and regulating agency and which evaluates both process and child outcome measures of state-funded services for four-year-old children who are at risk of school failure.

Because the cost model encompasses child enrollment in either public or private settings, implementation costs of these recommendations will vary accordingly. The state currently appropriates \$25,946,645 in EIA and general fund monies for services to four-year-olds. To serve all 21,180 four-year-olds currently eligible for the free- or reduced-price lunch program and not served currently by Head Start or DSS, the total cost would be between \$72,393,822 and \$97,873,446 or an increase of between \$46,447,177 and \$71,926,801 over current funding levels. If services were limited to the 36 plaintiff districts in Abbeville County School District et. al. v. The State of South Carolina et. al. school districts, the cost would range from \$12,533,824 to \$20,537,483 and if further limited to only the eight trial districts, the cost range would be \$2,392,183 to \$3,919,747. Finally, if services were extended to four-year-olds who were eligible only for Medicaid, the additional costs would be between \$10,052,216 and \$14,861,826.

INTRODUCTION

Through Concurrent Resolution 4484, the South Carolina General Assembly called upon the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) to accomplish the following:

- (1) to inventory and study all four-year-old kindergarten programs in this State funded in whole or in part with federal, state or local public funds: (a) a determination of the success of each program using evaluative measures determined or developed by the committee; (b) an analysis of the funding mechanisms of each program and their sufficiency, impact, availability, and correlation; (c) other information relative to the provision or operation of four-year-old kindergarten programs as the committee deems appropriate.
- (2) to determine the necessary requirements to implement a full day four-year-old kindergarten program in each of the eight plaintiff school districts in the case of Abbeville County School district, et al., v. State of South Carolina, et. al. for all children who qualify for free- or reduced-price lunch; and
- (3) to determine the necessary requirements to implement a statewide full day four-year-old-kindergarten program for all children who qualify for free- or reduced-price lunches.

Our federal and state governments establish clear intent and a framework for services to our youngest and most vulnerable children with the stated goals of enabling them to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in school. Because the services are linked to separate legislation and funding streams, they may fulfill the individual program purpose but not meet the totality of a child's or the State's needs. Young children thrive in stable and supportive home environments, when they have access to both preventive and intervening health care, when they are engaged in developmentally appropriate learning activities and when they are physically and emotionally safe at all times. How does our current framework address these needs and where are there gaps between intent and practice?

The overwhelming majority of federal funds to serve four-year-olds are provided through four core programs: (1) Head Start programs provide education, child care and health and social services to economically disadvantaged children under the age of five years through a system of federal grants to local community partnerships; (2) ABC Child Care vouchers support child care and early education for economically disadvantaged children through 13 years of age (or 19 if disabled); (3) identification and services for young children with disabilities are provided by local school districts through Part C of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and (4) local districts have discretion to use portions of Title One (Elementary and Secondary Education Act) Funds to serve pre-school children residing in economically disadvantaged communities.

Within South Carolina's statutes, there are four principal vehicles outlining services to children aged four and under, each enacted with overlapping or contiguous purposes. These include: (1) Programs to Serve Pre-School Children with Disabilities (Chapter 36 of Title 59). The intent of these statutes is to intervene with young children "ages three, four and five whose developmental progress is delayed to the extent that a program of special education is required to ensure their adequate preparation for school-age experiences" (§59-36-10); (2) the Education Improvement Act (EIA) optional child development program which provides services to four-year-old children who "have predicted significant readiness deficiencies" (§59-5-65); (3) The Early Childhood Development and Academic Assistance Act (Act 135 of 1993) which requires districts and schools to design and implement early child development initiatives to include

“development and implementation of a developmentally appropriate curriculum for early childhood education through grade three” (§ 59-139-10) and (4) First Steps to School Readiness established to “promote high quality preschool programs that provide a healthy environment that will promote growth and development and provide services to ensure all children receive the protection, nutrition and health care needed to thrive in the early years of life so they arrive at school ready to learn” (§59-152-30).

These programs are implemented through local decision-making bodies. Head Start is operated by community action groups who contract with and report directly to the federal agency. The EIA child development and Act 135 programs, while subject to state regulations, are governed by a local school district board of trustees. First Steps priorities are determined and realized through county partnership boards with funding from a state grant. Although Act 135 expenditures are to be made consistent with a state-approved plan, the regulations and guidelines for those plans neither give priority nor compel districts and schools to accomplish the intent of the statute with respect to pre-school children. Within the authorizing legislation for each of these programs is a directive to collaborate with education, child care and health and social service providers. The intent of collaboration is to ensure comprehensive support at the child level; however, the harsh reality is that the cumulative effect of differences among program priorities, client eligibility, program standards, funding mechanisms, administrative responsibility and evaluation criteria creates a labyrinth few can negotiate.

In 1993 forty school districts challenged the state's scheme for funding public schools. Plaintiffs charged that the state's history of funding public schools had resulted in a disparity in the educational opportunities for students throughout the state and that public schools were not funded at the level mandated by the Education Finance Act (EFA) and the Education Improvement Act (EIA). In 1999, the Supreme Court held that the General Assembly is required to meet the constitutional obligation of providing “the opportunity for each child to receive a minimally adequate education” and went on to define minimally adequate “to include providing students adequate and safe facilities in which they have the opportunity to acquire (1) the ability to read, write and speak the English language and knowledge of mathematics and physical science; (2) a fundamental knowledge of economic, social and political systems and of history and governmental processes; and (3) academic and vocational skills” (S.C. Supreme Court, April 1999).

The plaintiffs returned to court using eight (8) districts to establish that the State was failing to meet the constitutional requirements as defined by the Supreme Court. In December 2005, the trial court ruled for the plaintiffs and stated that “the presence or absence of opportunity must be determined against the backdrop of poverty; therefore, the inputs, outcomes and the impact of poverty must be taken into account (Abbeville 2005, page 25). Judge Thomas Cooper wrote that while “factoring out poverty is possible in a statistical analysis, poverty is a reality in the lives of the students. . .which cannot be factored out.” As he stated, “poverty is, in turn, both the parent and the child of poor academic achievement.”

Relevant to the task before the Education Oversight Committee and in this report are several statements from Judge Cooper's ruling:

The Court, therefore, finds that the education clause of the South Carolina Constitution, as defined in Abbeville County, imposed an obligation upon the General Assembly and the State of South Carolina to create an educational system that overcomes, to the extent that it is educationally possible the effects of poverty on the very young, to the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten to enable

them to begin the educational process in a more equal fashion to those born outside of poverty.

The Court further finds that in spite of the educational improvements enabled by the Defendants in recent years and the funding offered in support of these programs, the Defendants have failed in their constitutional responsibility to provide an opportunity for a minimally adequate education to the very youngest and, in doing so, have failed to address the very reality. . .that before school really begins with children of poverty, they are already behind in the abilities that they need to succeed in school.

The child born to poverty, whose cognitive abilities have been largely formed by the age of six in a setting largely devoid of the printed word, the life blood of literacy and other stabilizing influences necessary for normal development is already behind.

Through the research and presentation of information and analyses in this document, the EOC responds to the requests of the General Assembly. The document is organized to present the importance of educating young children and to document the resources currently targeted toward young, economically disadvantaged children and the ways those resources are administered through the program inventory. Following this, a program structure is proposed and its costs projected. Finally, a series of summary recommendations are offered to the General Assembly.

For your understanding, we note that the terms pre-kindergarten and four-year-old kindergarten are used interchangeably to apply to the *educational* program. The educational program does not include custodial child care, parenting/family literacy or adult education. Nothing in this report should be construed to diminish the importance of these. We urge explicit study of how these efforts can enhance the lives of young children and the state's economic well-being. We simply did not have time to accomplish the study of these programs that must precede recommendations and investment.

Within any work there are limitations and we offer advice to our readers: (1) Data for the report, particularly those data outlining program eligibility and participation were drawn from a variety of sources. Both the EIA Child Development Program and First Steps investments in four-year-olds are based on programs and classrooms rather than linked to individual children. This practice confounds accuracy and accountability so we caution readers through a series of notes to data tables; and (2) regrettably too little data are available to determine success of the pre-kindergarten program or related services such as parenting and family literacy and, beyond licensure, child care. In most circumstances programs serving young children shy away from child outcome assessments, noting (and rightly so) the difficulty of determining progress in children at very young ages. But we should make certain that our understanding of the variability in children's development does not shield mediocrity and diminish aspirations for children. In some conversations, we were told that "something is better than nothing." We believe South Carolina cares for her children more than that phrase represents and urge rigorous high quality programming.

PART ONE

The Education of Young Children

The Importance of Educating Young Children

Beginning in the 1960s (Lazar & Darlington, 1982) and continuing to the present (e.g., Odom et al., 2006), educational researchers have repeatedly demonstrated positive effects of high-quality early childhood education for young children and their families. Several decades of research with multiple, replicated studies, mostly within but also outside of the United States, have indicated that high-quality, center-based pre-kindergarten education has meaningful educational benefits for young children's school readiness and transition into kindergarten and early primary grades (e.g., Meisels & Shonkoff, 2000; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000), particularly for children who are growing up in poverty and who are at high risk for school failure (e.g., Barnett, 1998, 2000; Farran, 2000; Reynolds, Temple, Robertson, & Mann, 2001). Specifically, often researchers have linked enhanced cognitive and language competencies (e.g., improved receptive language, pre-literacy and numeracy skills) and improved social competence (e.g., positive peer relations, fewer problem behaviors), which are related to children's subsequent academic success, to high-quality preschool programs. To date, extensive evidence has indicated that high-quality, center-based pre-kindergarten education and high-quality, center-based child care services, which are educative in nature, can increase the likelihood of young children's school readiness and short-term educational success, particularly for preschoolers who live in poverty. Moreover, those positive educational benefits can potentially translate into school and societal cost savings in the short-term with decreased educational retention and remediation costs and in the long-term with diminished societal dependency and in some cases fewer arrests and incarcerations (e.g., Barnett, 1998, 2000; Barnett, Robin, Hustedt, & Schulman, 2004; Reynolds et al., 2001). For example, Barnett (2000) performed a benefit-cost analysis of the major educational and social effects of the Perry Preschool Project, which was conducted in the 1960s with low-income children and their families. The primary findings of the high-quality preschool program included fewer grade retentions, fewer enrollments in special education, increased achievement scores at age 15, increased high school graduation and enrollments in postsecondary education, fewer arrests, and fewer public assistance recipients by age 27. His economic analysis determined that participation in the Perry Preschool Project, which costs \$8,110 per year, yielded an economic return rate of \$75,528 (in 1995 dollars) by age 27.

More recently, pre-kindergarten education has been viewed as an important state-level educational reform and many state legislatures have implemented, sustained, and in some cases expanded, the number of state-funded, preschool programs for four-year-old children and their families (Barnett et al., 2004; Gilliam & Zigler, 2000). Currently in the United States, 41 states, including the 16 states that are in the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) Region, and the District of Columbia make available some type of state-funded and center-based, pre-kindergarten education services to at least some portion of their preschool-age children (Stone, 2006). Indeed, two states, Georgia since 1996 (more than 70,000 children served), and Oklahoma since 1999 (more than 30,000 children served), have implemented and maintained voluntary, universal pre-kindergarten education services for four-year-old children and their families (Southern Regional Education Board, 2005). Recent evaluation information from these two universal pre-kindergarten education programs has replicated the positive and meaningful effects of previous preschool research studies with the children who participated in their state-funded preschool programs (see Henry, Gordon, Henderson, & Ponder, 2003; Henry & Rickman, 2005 for Georgia evaluation results and Gormley & Gayer, 2005; Gormley & Phillips, 2005 for Oklahoma evaluation results). Given that the Georgia and Oklahoma pre-kindergarten education programs have been implemented on a much greater scale than

previous preschool research studies, their positive evaluation findings are noteworthy and very promising.

Education and Child Care

During the last half of the twentieth century, with many more women entering the United States labor force, non-parental child care became a necessity for a significant number of American families. In the last four decades, the number of three-, four-, and five-year-old children who are not enrolled in kindergarten but who are served in center-based preschools, which include child care centers, public and private pre-kindergarten programs, Head Start programs, and early childhood special education programs, has increased dramatically (Kagan & Neuman, 2000). According to the most recent information available, about 65 percent of three-, four-, and five-year-old children who are not attending kindergarten are enrolled in some type of center-based preschool program in the United States (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2006). Participation in center-based preschools has varied by age, with older four- and five-year-old children participating most often, and by family income and education, with more affluent and better educated parents' children enrolling most frequently.

In the mid-1990s, the nature, variable quality, and long-term effects of contemporary child care services were questioned and several national longitudinal studies concerning center-based and home-based non-parental child care were funded by federal agencies (see Gyamfi, Cabrera, & Roth, 2003, and Kagan & Neuman, 2000, for reviews). Researchers associated with these investigations examined the qualitative nature of child care, the associated costs, and the short- and long-term effects of child care (e.g., Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes Study Team [CQCO], 1995, 1999; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Early Child Care Research Network [NICHD ECCRN], 2000 a, b). Although comparisons across studies with different populations, programs, services, and goals have always been difficult at best, the findings of the longitudinal studies of child care have been similar to the previously discussed findings of center-based pre-kindergarten education programs. Specifically, evidence to date has indicated that high-quality, center-based child care, which is educative and not simply custodial in nature, has modest positive effects on young children's cognitive, language, and social development through kindergarten and in some cases until second grade (e.g., Burchinal et al., 2000; Peisner-Feinberg et al., 2000, 2001; NICHD ECCRN, 2000a, b). Early child care investigators have determined positive influences of high-quality, center-based child care across socioeconomic and family circumstances and have noted even more positive affects for young children from higher risk backgrounds. A disappointing result of these national studies, however, was the report that many child care centers provided only poor to mediocre quality services and failed to make available high-quality child care services to many children and families (Gyamfi et al., 2003).

Although at times differences between child care services and preschool education services have been difficult to determine, particularly when linked to child outcomes, some distinctions have been noted. Often times, child care programs have extended and sometimes flexible hours to meet parents' work schedules that are related to their employment. Typically, child care programs have been fee-based and sometimes partially subsidized by public and private funding. In contrast, most center-based pre-kindergarten educational programs have been half-day (e.g., 2.5 to 4 hours) or full-day programs (e.g., 5.5 to 6.5 hours) and many have not been fee-based unless they are private for-profit or not-for-profit community programs. In some cases, center-based pre-kindergarten educational programs have provided before- and after-school child care or transportation to those services to better meet parents' child care needs. Usually, these additional supportive services have been fee-based whether the pre-kindergarten program is public or private. Center-based child care programs and pre-kindergarten programs have had to meet state regulations with respect to children's safety and health (e.g., DSS health

and safety regulations, SLED checks for caregivers, adult-child ratios, fire codes). Beyond basic health and safety regulations, however, standards and licensing practices have varied across states and states with less demanding regulations and licensing standards have appeared to have more poor-quality child care and preschool centers (Gyamfi et al., 2003). Center-based child care and pre-kindergarten education programs have also varied in their quality and either type of preschool program may be of high-quality, low-quality, or somewhere between the two qualitative dimensions. The fundamental questions then have been: (1) "What are the primary purposes of the center-based pre-kindergarten education or child care programs?" and (2) "Are the center-based pre-kindergarten education or child care programs focused on education and educational outcomes?" Administrators and personnel in either type of center-based preschool program can establish, maintain, and evaluate critical programmatic components of a high-quality education program and their educational services may benefit both the young children and families they serve.

Many early childhood education professionals have recommended that the nature of high-quality preschool educational services for children should be judged by: (a) process variables such as frequent developmentally enhancing experiences with materials, peers, and teachers; (b) structural factors such as group size, adult-child ratio, availability of appropriate materials, appropriate activity schedules, space made available, and playground equipment; and (c) teacher characteristics such as specialized preservice or inservice training related to young children's development and learning, educational attainment, and attitudes about children's acquisition and fluent use of critical preschool skills. Unfortunately, most often, these important program variables have been examined in combination to create a single, global composite score of program quality. The aggregation of multiple program factors has made it very difficult to disentangle the effects of separate variables. Moreover, except in the relatively well-funded, pre-kindergarten and child care investigations discussed previously, program quality measures, taken together or individually, have not been linked to well-specified child outcomes for program evaluation purposes. Relatively recent and notable exceptions have been the pre-kindergarten evaluation studies performed in Georgia (e.g., Henry & Rickman, 2005), Oklahoma (e.g., Gormley & Gayer, 2005), and several smaller state evaluations performed by investigators from the National Institute of Early Education Research (Barnett et al., 2004).

It is reasonable to expect a well-planned and carefully performed program evaluation for any major expenditure of government funds. The recent movement to better assess pre-kindergarten education program processes and child outcomes for both formative (i.e., to plan for needed improvements across time) and summative (i.e., to assess cumulative results at well-specified points in time) evaluation reasons, has been part of a larger interest in appraising early education and social services (Henry & Gordon, 2006). Critical program components for the establishment and maintenance of state-funded, high-quality center-based pre-kindergarten education services will include provision of adequate state funding to perform the following fundamental programmatic activities:

- (a) administering, monitoring, and assuring high-quality preschool education (e.g., approved assessment procedures, approved curricula, approved class size, site visits to monitor program quality) and non-education (e.g., health-related screenings, linkage to community-based health and social services as indicated) program standards;
- (b) establishing, equipping, and sustaining pre-kindergarten classes (e.g., equipment, materials, supplies);
- (c) financing salaries and benefits for teachers, assistant teachers, and other appropriate support personnel as needed;

- (d) developing and monitoring personnel standards and credentials for teachers, assistant teachers, and other appropriate support personnel;
- (e) developing and maintaining an on-going and responsive technical assistance program for pre-kindergarten personnel to assure appropriate and effective professional development; and
- (f) developing and implementing a formative and summative program evaluation to assess program processes and child outcome measures and when indicated recommend and evaluate program changes.

PART TWO

Programs Serving Four-Year-Olds in South Carolina

The Program Inventory

The Concurrent Resolution asked the EOC to inventory and study all publicly funded four-year-old kindergarten programs and report the findings to the General Assembly by March 15, 2006. The authors met with representatives from state agencies responsible for early childhood education and social services on February 1, 2006 to discuss the project and to determine available sources of data to complete the inventory. At that time inventory questionnaires were distributed to representatives from each agency. The inventory questions were based on the program quality standards derived from documents from a variety of organizations such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the Association of Christian Schools International, and the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER). The representatives from the state agencies were provided spreadsheets for the collection of enrollment and demographic information and a questionnaire regarding program characteristics for completion and return by February 10. All of the state agencies returned the completed spreadsheets and questionnaires and the information presented in this chapter is based on the agency responses and review and analysis by EOC staff. The federally funded Head Start program elected not to complete the inventory questionnaire but did provide information on the numbers of four-year-olds served in Head Start programs in South Carolina (see Appendix C).

Estimates of the Numbers of Students Enrolled and Numbers of Teachers in Publicly Funded Four-Year-Old Programs

Data were collected on the numbers of students served by various preschool programs both to inventory the current levels of program participation and to provide the basis for estimates of the numbers of additional students who would need to be served if all four-year-olds eligible for the free- or reduced-price lunch program were served. The numbers of students served in Fall 2005 in S.C. Department of Education (SDE) and First Steps public four-year-old kindergarten programs, in First Steps private programs, in DSS child care programs, in Head Start programs, and in programs for children with disabilities are listed in the tables accessible at www.sceoc.org.

The data currently available from the various programs are reported at different levels: public school four-year-old kindergarten program enrollments are available by school district, whereas information on the numbers of four-year-old children living in S.C. and on enrollments of four-year-old children in Head Start, DSS child care, and First Steps private programs are available only at the county level. Seventeen S.C. counties contain more than one school district. Since the data were not available in formats needed to directly calculate the numbers of children served and those not served, a series of estimations were performed. The steps followed to estimate the numbers of four-year-old children eligible for the federal free- or reduced-price lunch program statewide and for the trial and plaintiff school districts to be served in full-day educational programs were:

1. The number of four-year-olds statewide and currently residing in each school district were estimated;
2. The number of four-year-olds in each district eligible for the free- or reduced-price lunch program (e.g., family income 185 percent of poverty level or less – see Appendix F for income limits for different family sizes), statewide and by district were estimated;
3. The number of four-year-olds from families having incomes of 185 percent of poverty or lower who are currently served in preschool developmental programs, statewide and by district were estimated; and

4. The estimated number of children currently served were subtracted from the estimated number eligible for the free- or reduced-price lunch program, statewide and by district to calculate the estimated numbers eligible but not currently served.

The Concurrent Resolution asked for the data to be presented both at the district level for all districts and for plaintiff districts, but, as indicated above, the information was not always available at this level. Data on the number of four-year-old children living in South Carolina in Fall 2005 were not available, and information on services provided to four-year-olds was not available at the district level for many of the programs. These circumstances necessitated that a series of assumptions had to be made regarding sources of data and the methods to employ for estimating information not directly available. The choices made by the authors reflect careful and thoughtful consideration of the issues and triangulation of the data estimates with other comparable data whenever possible. These choices and the methodology used are described below:

The numbers of four-year-olds living in South Carolina who would be eligible to participate in a publicly funded program in Fall 2005 are based on the numbers of children born in South Carolina between September 2, 2000 and September 1, 2001. These children were at the appropriate age to enter a publicly funded four-year-old kindergarten program in Fall 2005 (students must attain the age of four years by September 1, 2005). The live birth data were provided by the Department of Health and Environmental Control, and were reported by the county of the mother's residence. There were 56,114 children born in S.C. between September 2, 2000 and September 1, 2001. Another source of comparable data is based on U.S. Census American Community Survey estimates of the number of four-year-olds living in South Carolina in 2004 provided by the Office of Research and Statistics (ORS) of the S.C. Budget and Control Board; this total was estimated to be 56,054. While the census estimates represent a different cohort of children than the birth data used for this study, the numbers are remarkably similar. The birth data are static numbers at the county level: they represent the numbers of children in the cohort who would be residing in the county if there were no in-migration, out-migration, or deaths experienced during the period between birth and four years of age. The census data reflect estimates based on sampling of the population at the time of the census and thus reflect migration patterns, but census data for the appropriate cohort were not available. The birth data and the census data were compared at the county level and very small differences were found, with some counties experiencing net in-migration and some out-migration. The differences were small so the birth data were used as the basis for the estimates of the four-year-old population in Fall 2005. The populations of four-year-olds by school district were estimated by multiplying the numbers of four-year-old children in the county by the percentage of children attending each school district.

Direct information on the numbers of children in the district population whose family incomes were below the free- or reduced-price lunch criterion was not available. The numbers of four-year-old children eligible for the free- or reduced-price lunch program by district were estimated by multiplying the estimated number of children living in the district by the percentage of students in the district who receive free- or reduced-price lunch. A statewide U.S. Census estimate of the poverty levels of four-year-olds in 2004 provided by the ORS indicated that 50.9 percent of S.C. four-year-olds had family incomes at or below the cut off for the federal lunch program. The percentage of children eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch attending public school is slightly higher than that of the general population. The estimation used in this report resulted in a statewide rate of 53 percent of four-year-olds eligible for the program in Fall 2005.

District-level information on the numbers attending public school four-year-old kindergarten programs was available for this study from the school-level database counts

of enrollments by the 90th day of instruction in the 2005-2006 school year collected by the SDE, but district-level program service data for the other programs had to be estimated for some districts. If a county contained only one school district, the county-level counts for the Head Start program, the DSS child care programs, and the First Steps private programs were used. In counties containing more than one school district, the numbers of children attending the Head Start, DSS child care, and First Steps private programs in the county were estimated for each school district based on the percentage of free- or reduced-price lunch children in the county served by each district.

The current enrollments of four-year-old children in publicly funded programs and the estimations of the numbers of children eligible for the free- or reduced-price lunch program but not currently served for the state, for the 36 plaintiff districts, and for the 8 trial districts are listed in Table One.

Table One
Estimates of Numbers of Four-Year-Olds Eligible for Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch
In Fall 2005, But Not Served

Student Group	All Districts	36 Plaintiff Districts	8 Trial Districts
Estimated total count of 4-year-old children in residence, Fall 2005	56,114	11,381	1,679
Estimated number of 4-year-olds eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch program	29,737	7,764	1,432
Number of 4-year-olds served in public school 4K half- and full-day programs - pay lunch students estimated eligible for Medicaid	3,998	740	64
Number of 4-year-olds served in public school 4K half- and full-day programs - pay lunch students estimated not eligible for Medicaid	4,144	767	65
Number of 4-year-olds served in public school 4K half- and full-day programs - unknown lunch status	132	48	3
Number of 4-year-olds served in public school 4K half- and full-day programs – free- or reduced-price lunch program.	12,871	3,372	660
Estimated Number 4-year-olds served DSS Child Care, Fall 2005	2,498	441	84
Estimated Number 4-year-olds served Head Start, Fall 2005	6,059	1,963	325
Estimated Number 4-year-olds served First Steps Private care program	123	0	0
Estimated total free- or reduced-price lunch 4-year-olds NOT served (Number free-or reduced-price lunch eligible – Number currently served)	8,186	1,988	363

Sources: Department of Health and Environmental Control (birth data); ORS (free- or reduced-price lunch data by district); SDE (public school four-year-old kindergarten data); Head Start; S.C. Department of Social Services; Office of First Steps to School Readiness

Note: The number of 4-year-olds served in public school half- and full-day four-year-old kindergarten programs in Fall 2005 is 21,145 across all districts, 4,927 in the plaintiff districts, and 792 in the trial districts.

The data in Table One reveal:

- The estimated number of four-year-olds in S.C. eligible for the free- or reduced-price lunch program is 29,737, or 53 percent of all four-year-olds in the state;
- Of the number of four-year-olds eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch, an estimated 21,551 are currently served in a publicly funded program, but 8,186 (or 27.5 percent of free- or reduced-price lunch eligible children and 14.6 percent of all four-year-old children) are NOT served;
- Since eligibility is based on low income for the Head Start and DSS child care programs, all of the 8,557 students in these programs are eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch;
- Of the 21,145 students served in the public school four-year-old kindergarten program 8,142 (38.5 percent) were coded on the school databases as not eligible for the free- or reduced-price lunch program (“pay lunch”);
 - ✓ Almost half (3,998) of the “pay lunch” participants attending the public school four-year-old kindergarten program are estimated to be eligible for Medicaid services and have low family incomes which are above 185 percent of poverty but low enough to qualify for social services;
 - ✓ No other information on the criteria under which the “pay lunch” students were chosen to be served is available, but current criteria for serving four-year-olds in the public school program focus on risk factors such as low developmental assessment scores (DIAL-3), disabilities, and family factors such as mother’s education as well as poverty level; and
 - ✓ Data are not available on the number of participants in the public school four-year-old kindergarten program whose parents pay tuition for enrollment or who are supported through local district funds.

The Concurrent Resolution also directs that recommendations be made regarding the implementation of full day programs for all four-year-olds eligible for the free- or reduced-price lunch program. Data on the length of the program day students attended were not available at the student level through the school and SDE databases. However, a survey of district early childhood programs was conducted by the SDE Office of Early Childhood Education in Fall 2005 pursuant to Proviso 1A.66 (the Early Childhood Assets Study) and districts reported information on numbers of students served by length of program day. These data are reported in Table Two for all districts, the thirty-six plaintiff districts, and for the eight trial districts.

Table Two
Numbers of Students and Teachers (Full Time Equivalent – FTE)
In Half- and Full-Day Public School 4K Programs
Fall 2005 (2005-2006 School Year)

SCHOOL DISTRICT GROUP	Number Districts Reporting Half-Day 4K Programs Only	Number Students Attending Half-Day 4K Programs	Number Districts Reporting Full-Day 4K Programs Only	Number Students Attending Full-Day 4K Programs	Number Districts Reporting Both Half- and Full-Day 4K Programs	Total Number Students Attending Half- or Full-Day 4K Programs	Reported Number Teacher FTEs for 3K and 4K Programs for Fall 2005
All Districts	25	8,133	31	9,635	29	17,768	754.9
36 Plaintiff Districts	8	1,675	19	2,606	9	4,281	182.1
8 Trial Districts	0	177	6	658	2	835	29.0

Sources: SDE Early Childhood Assets Study, Fall 2005; Number teacher FTEs provided by SDE from school databases

Thirty-one of the 85 school districts (36.5 percent) reported that all of their four-year-old kindergarten programs are full-day (6.5 hours per day), and an additional twenty-nine districts (34.1 percent) provided a full-day program for at least some students. Twenty-five districts (29.4 percent) provided half-day (2.5 hours) programs only. All of the trial districts provided full-day programming to some students, as did 77.8 percent of the plaintiff districts. Based on the school database information there were almost 755 teacher equivalents (Full Time Equivalents – FTEs) recorded as teaching either three- or four-year-olds in Fall 2005 (the data system does not make it possible to identify the age range taught by each teacher).

Of the 9,635 students reported by the school districts as participating in the full-day program and 8,133 attending the half-day program in Fall 2005, no information is available to estimate the proportion eligible for the free- or reduced-price lunch program so it is not possible to determine the numbers of free- or reduced-price lunch students currently participating in the half-day or the full-day programs. It would be helpful to know the number of students eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch who are currently participating in the half-day program so a projection of the number of additional teachers needed to serve all free- or reduced-price lunch students with full-day services can be made (the number of teachers currently teaching free- or reduced-price lunch students in half-day programs would need to be doubled to serve the same number of students in a full-day program). However, at least 410 new lead teachers would be needed to serve the estimated 8,186 free- or reduced-price lunch students not currently served in any program.

A note on the quality of data regarding publicly funded preschool programs: The data from programs serving four-year-old children provided for this study were not always complete or accurate. The lack of high-quality data seems to be at least in part a function of the funding process for the four-year-old program. Funding is not based on individual student attendance, so there is little incentive to collect and report the data accurately. Reportedly, data on participants in the four-year-old kindergarten program may not be entered or entered accurately in school databases for all students because funding for the program is based on an allocation reflecting the percentage of five-year-old kindergarten students eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch and daily student attendance for four-year-old kindergarten participants is often not kept. A school database with records of daily attendance of participants in the four-year-old kindergarten program is also often not kept because participation in the four-year-old kindergarten program is voluntary. However, accurate and complete data are needed for program accountability and evaluation, and the need for accountability increases as the program expands in size and the expectations for program success grow higher.

Finally, it must be emphasized that the numbers reported are our best estimates, especially at the district level. For example, the number of four-year-olds living in S.C. counties in Fall 2005 is not available, so it has been estimated based on birth cohort data. The county level birth cohort estimates were then estimated at the school district level, as were the program participation counts for Head Start, DSS child care, and First Steps private programs. The program participation data generally are based on cumulative counts of students during Fall 2005; the exact number of students participating on any given day is not available. The reader is cautioned to keep these issues in mind, especially when reviewing the data for a specific school district.

Program Inventory Questionnaire Results

The survey of program characteristics for this study collected information in five areas based on the national study, *The State of Preschool: 2004 State Preschool Yearbook* (NIEER, 2004):

- Access
- Eligibility Requirements
- Program Standards
- Personnel
- Monitoring/Evaluation/Accountability.

The responses from the agencies (DSS child care programs; Office of First Steps private programs; SDE programs for exceptional children; SDE public school four-year-old kindergarten programs), and additional materials provided by the agencies, including attachments to the survey, are accessible at www.sceoc.org.

In general, the inventory survey results are consistent with the positive results from various national studies of South Carolina's preschool programs that indicate that the programs are comprehensive, have standards for quality, and lead the nation in many ways. However, the survey reveals significant differences among the programs and identifies areas which should be improved. The remainder of this section summarizes findings from the program inventory.

Access

Publicly supported programs for four-year-olds are implemented in a wide variety of locations. DSS reports that four-year-olds may be served in both public and private settings with approximately 3,500 regulated child care providers and 1,600 ABC Child Care providers. Some DSS-funded four-year-olds attend public school four-year-old kindergarten programs. First Steps funds public school four-year-old kindergarten classrooms as well as a small number of private providers. The SDE indicates that four-year-old kindergarten programs are in public schools but that public schools may contract with "appropriate groups and/or agencies" to provide a four-year-old kindergarten program; the SDE did not identify any private providers who are currently performing such services for school districts. The SDE Office of Exceptional Children reported that 3,531 four-year-olds with disabilities were served through school districts and Head Start in Fall 2005. Some of the children with disabilities attended public school four-year-old kindergarten programs, while others received special educational services through other models, but the number served in each setting was not available.

All of the programs offered "wrap around" services such as extending the school day to accommodate working parents, although these services were not available in all public school settings. The school day extensions were supported through public funding for students eligible for social or disability services for some students and by parent tuition payments for others.

The public school four-year-old kindergarten programs are either half-day (2.5 hours per day) or full-day (6.5 hours per day) for 180 days. The SDE reported that EIA funding provides half-day programs only and districts use other funding sources for full-day programs. The Office of First Steps indicates that some of their funds are used to supplement public school four-year-old kindergarten programs to increase their length from half-day to full-day. The SDE also reported that twenty-five school districts offered summer programs of four to six weeks for four-year-olds in 2005. Three of the twenty-five school districts responding to an EOC survey in February 2006 reported providing summer program services in 2005 to 3,477 four-year-olds. The DSS child care programs were reported to be operating 30 or more hours per week; these services are apparently operated year around.

The Department of Social Services indicated that only 20 percent of the children eligible for child care vouchers were served due to lack of funding (waiting lists were not maintained by the agency). Both the SDE and the Office of First Steps indicate that the lack of resources (funding, shortages of personnel, available classroom space, and transportation needs) leads to the formation of waiting lists to attend the four-year-old kindergarten programs. The 2003 evaluation of the public school four-year-old kindergarten program conducted for the EOC indicated that average public four-year-old kindergarten waiting list contained names of 50 students in the 33 districts providing the information (Brown & Potter, 2003). The SDE Early Childhood Assets Study found that districts were maintaining waiting lists containing the names of 4,522 four-year-olds in Fall 2005.

Students having special educational needs due to disabilities receive priority for service in DSS child care programs. Such students can be served in public school and First Steps programs, but their priority for receiving services is not clear.

All of the programs indicate that transportation may be provided to four-year-olds attending their programs. Children attending the public school four-year-old kindergarten program who live one or more miles from the preschool center may receive transportation. The number of children using publicly-funded transportation to attend public school four-year-old kindergarten was not available.

Eligibility Requirements

Participants in the public school four-year-old kindergarten program must attain the age of four years by September 1 of the school year of attendance. However, three-year-olds may also be served (2,349 were served in Fall 2005). It is required that students with disabilities receive services beginning at age three years; they may attend the four-year-old kindergarten through their sixth birthday. DSS child care programs serve children from birth through age 12 (age 19 years for children having special needs).

The criteria for enrollment differ among the programs. The DSS reports that the majority of federal funding for child care services must be spent on at-risk children (e.g., children who receive DSS services through Child Protective Services, Foster Care, or TANF programs). Enrollment in the DSS child care programs is thus based on family income, child protective services, or special needs. The SDE Office for Exceptional Children lists an extensive process for identifying at-risk exceptional children for services. The Office of First Steps reports that all potential participants are developmentally screened with DIAL-3, with enrollment based on a set of risk factors with priority given to children exhibiting three or more of nine risk factors. The EIA requires that funds for the half-day four-year-old program must target students who are at highest risk for school readiness deficiencies. Enrollment in the public school four-year-old pre-kindergarten programs is based on DIAL-3 screening results and various risk factors, but the formula for prioritizing student eligibility for service varies among districts and is not uniform across school districts. The SDE reports that a committee is currently working to establish uniform enrollment criteria for the EIA four-year-old kindergarten program for use beginning in 2006-2007.

Program Standards

The S.C. Department of Social Services has extensive health and safety requirements for licensing and regulation and additional standards in the ABC Child Care Program. These regulations and standards are intended to enhance the quality of child care provided. First Steps publicly and privately operated programs must also meet DSS requirements and meet the equivalent of the enhanced standards in the ABC Child Care Program. Public school four-year-old kindergarten programs meet the state health and safety requirements for public schools.

Regarding impediments to meeting health and safety requirements, DSS cites staff turnover and a lack of funds and other resources. The SDE reports that the evaluations of public school four-year-old kindergarten classrooms using the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) revealed that the most common impediments to ensuring health and safety were lack of access to warm water for hand-washing, improper sanitation procedures, inadequate surfacing on playgrounds, and unsafe playground equipment. In the EOC evaluation 53 percent of teachers in the public school four-year-old program responded that they had inadequate classroom and outdoor play facilities and equipment (Brown & Potter, 2003).

The programs also differ in the amount of monitoring of programs conducted. The DSS Licensing office conducts two unannounced monitoring visits to regulated group child care facilities, investigates all complaints (a reported average of 71 per month, with less than half substantiated). Thirty-three percent of ABC Voucher providers are deficient on one or more of the program standards at any point in time. ABC Monitoring staff provide technical assistance to the provider, but if deficiencies are not corrected the provider is removed from ABC system. The Office of First Steps reports that all their providers comply with requirements. The SDE reports that all public school four-year-old kindergarten programs met school accreditation requirements. The SDE reports that 93 schools were visited for ECERS-R evaluations. Because of limited staff resources, the SDE Office of Early Childhood Education reports that certification visits are made to one-third of the classrooms in one-third of the school districts each year.

The programs differ in their requirements regarding standards for the instructional program. The public school four-year-old kindergarten and First Steps programs require adherence to the South Carolina Curriculum Standards for preschool programs in English language arts, mathematics, and visual and performing arts. DSS does not require that specific curriculum or instructional standards be used in their child care programs because such requirements are precluded by state law and federal regulation. However, the DSS licensed programs do need to provide planned developmentally appropriate activities and the ABC Child Care voucher programs may follow a voluntary set of standards. Standards provide goals and a focus for instruction, curriculum, and resource allocation decisions. The draft *Good Start Grow Smart Standards* referred to by the SDE Office of Early Childhood Education is important because the standards address multiple developmental areas including cognitive development. Later success in school depends greatly on the development of language and cognitive skills, but it also depends on children's development of social skills, impulse control, habits, motivation for school success, and appreciation for the human expression of knowledge, art, and social order. However, the draft *Good Start Grow Smart Standards* in its present form appears to set such relatively low goals in the academic areas that students meeting those standards may not be sufficiently prepared for five-year-old kindergarten or first grade.

None of the programs require specific curricula, although there are curricula recommended for the public school and First Steps private four-year-old kindergarten programs. While it may not be necessary to require a specific curriculum, it is important that each program for four-year-olds have a specified set of instructional and curricular goals to follow to maintain focus on fostering the development of children so they will be successful in school. Some of the curricula listed as in use in the public school four-year-old kindergarten programs are not in and of themselves curricula, but are instructional methodologies (such as Project Approach) which provide a useful and effective platform for implementing a curriculum.

Both the First Steps and EIA four-year-old kindergarten programs have guidelines that four parent and teacher conferences be held per year. Parent conferences are not required in the

DSS child care programs, although parents are to be kept informed regarding the program. The focus of the public school and First Steps parent conferences is not specified, although the Office of First Steps describes the use of student assessment portfolios and other measures of child progress. School districts are required to provide reports of student progress to parents of four-year-old kindergarten participants at least twice a year. Teachers in the public school four-year-old kindergarten program are required to conduct on-going assessment of children. The 2003 survey of school district early childhood coordinators for the EOC evaluation of the four-year-old kindergarten program revealed that the majority of coordinators did not report whether or how students were assessed in social competence, literacy and numeracy, or were systematically observed by their teachers when asked to identify the measures used by their teachers in each of these areas (Brown & Potter, 2003).

Personnel

Personnel in the DSS child care programs who care for children are identified by the agency as “caregivers” and not as “teachers.” Caregivers must have a minimum of a high school diploma or a GED and must complete training to receive the S.C. Early Childhood Credential within three years. Teachers in the First Steps and public school four-year-old kindergarten programs must have a baccalaureate degree and may be required to possess state teacher certification in early childhood education. There is some ambiguity regarding the requirement that public school four-year-old kindergarten program hold early childhood certification. The *Guidelines for the Implementation of Regulation 43-264.1, Half-Day Child Development Programs* state:

“There should be a full time appropriately certified teacher employed for each half-day class with a maximum of twenty (20) children per session. Teachers should be certified in early childhood education or hold a Bachelor’s degree in child development or have a Bachelor’s degree with a minimum of six hours in early childhood education.”

The program guidelines from the Office of First Steps state:

“All 4K teachers participating in this program shall possess a current certification in early childhood education in the State of South Carolina. A Bachelor of Early Childhood Education degree for the teacher shall be preferred. In the event the provider is unable to employ a teacher possessing a current early childhood certification, First Steps must be contacted prior to when the hiring offer is made. Once the provider has provided documentation of his/her efforts to hire a certified teacher, First Steps may work with the provider to hire a non-certified teacher. The prospective teacher must agree to a career enhancement plan outlining the steps necessary to receive early childhood certification.”

The *Required Credentials for Professional Staff Members in the Instructional Programs of South Carolina’s Public Schools* (2005) indicate that, for schools to achieve state accreditation, the required credential for teaching Pre-kindergarten is “Acceptable Certification” in Early Childhood Education. Finally, beginning in 2006-2007 teachers of core academic subjects must meet No Child Left Behind “highly qualified” requirements. The extent to which public school four-year-old kindergarten teachers have early childhood certification was not available; 95 percent of the teachers who responded to the 2003 EOC survey of four-year-old kindergarten teachers reported they were certified in early childhood education (Brown & Potter, 2003), although this finding has not been verified by more direct evidence, to our knowledge.

Regarding provision by the programs for professional development, it is noteworthy that DSS child care and First Steps programs require 15 hours per year of professional development for teaching assistants. The *Guidelines* for public school four-year-old kindergarten programs indicate that, “principals, directors, teachers and teaching assistants should participate in training as required by the school/district professional development plan,” but the SDE reports

that not all school districts require teaching assistants to participate in professional development.

Monitoring/Evaluation/Accountability

The goals provided for the public school four-year-old kindergarten programs appear to address the process characteristics of a developmental program, but not the outcomes from the children (better specified child outcomes were provided for First Steps private programs). While it is important to define the characteristics of the program for implementation, it is equally important to clearly delineate the child outcomes expected from the program so the effectiveness of the program can be measured. The 2003 EOC evaluation of the four-year-old kindergarten program revealed that most school district early childhood coordinators listed various student outcomes as goals (Brown & Potter, 2003). If child outcome goals are not stated, a focus on increasing student achievement and development cannot be developed and maintained, and energies and resources may be focused more on program development and less on students' development and preparation for school success.

Funding for Programs Serving Young Children

(1) Head Start

Created in 1965, the federally funded program Head Start targets the improvement of school readiness of preschoolers living in low-income families. According to Section 636 1998 [42 U.S.C. 9831] of the 1998 act reauthorizing Head Start, the program's stated purpose is:

to promote school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of low-income children through the provision, to low-income children and their families, of health, educational, nutritional, social, and other services that are determined, based on family needs assessments, to be necessary.

The Head Start program is administered by the Head Start Bureau, the Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Department of Health and Human Services. Grants are awarded by regional offices of ACF directly to local public agencies, private non-profit and for-profit organizations, Indian Tribes, and school systems. Consequently, because Head Start funding goes directly from the federal government to local providers "states do not have the authority to integrate or align Head Start programs with other early childhood programs provided by the states." (DHHS, 2003) However, states may choose to supplement the federal Head Start program by expanding the number of children served, increasing the income eligibility limits, extending the service day or enhancing the quality of services. At the current time, South Carolina does not provide any additional state funding for Head Start.

According to ACF, in Federal Fiscal Year 2004 (FFY04) total allocations for Head Start totaled \$6,773,909,000. These funds were allocated to 1,604 grantees serving 905,851 children in 48,260 classrooms and 20,050 centers in the United States. Of the total served approximately 52 percent were four-year-olds. The average cost per child was \$7,222.

Annually, Head Start programs in South Carolina serve over twelve thousand preschoolers between the ages of birth and age 5. According to ACF, in FFY04 South Carolina grantees received \$81,718,067 in Head Start funds and enrolled 12,248. According to information provided by the National Center for Children in Poverty, the total number of four-year-olds served was 6,321 in 2004. The spending per slot (which includes part-day and full-day) in South Carolina's Head Start program in FFY 2004 was \$6,772 per slot. And, according to Craig Turner of the ACF, South Carolina grantees in FFY04 expended the \$81.7 million in federal funds for Head Start on the following categories:

Table Three

Administrative Costs	14.8%
Transportation	7.7%
Instruction	44.1%
Occupancy	23.5%
Family Services	2.5%
Health Services	4.0%

According to ACF, administrative costs include the salary and related costs of staff who are not directly engaged in program services such as the Head Start Director, the Fiscal Specialist, etc. Transportation costs include bus driver salaries, and bus purchase and maintenance. Instruction costs are classroom expenses related to teacher and teacher aide salaries and classroom supplies. Occupancy costs are rent, upkeep and utilities at all Head Start facilities. Family services and health services are the salary and related costs of staffs working to provide and coordinate services to children and their families. Turner estimates that around two percent is expended on teacher training. In addition, the South Carolina Head Start Collaboration Office explains that sponsoring programs must acquire a 20 percent local match which often takes the form of a facility.

For FFY05 the South Carolina Head Start Collaboration Office reports that \$81,809,545 in federal funds has been awarded to grant recipients in South Carolina for Head Start programs. The funds were allocated to the following providers and for the following services:

- Fourteen Head Start programs serving children ages 3-5 sponsored by Community Action Agencies (CAAPS);
- Five Migrant Head Start programs serving children ages 0 to 5 sponsored by school districts, CAAPPS and mission agencies;
- Eight Early Head Start programs serving children ages 0 to 3 sponsored by CAAPS, school districts, one local First Steps Board, and a college; and
- One Native American Head Start Program serving children ages 0 to 5.

As of December 15, 2005, the South Carolina Head Start Collaboration Office reported that 12,561 children were enrolled in 200 centers in South Carolina. Of these 12,561, 6,059 were four-year-olds. As of February 27, 2006 there were 62 NAEYC accredited Head Start centers in South Carolina.

(2) Funding for Young Children Administered through the State Department of Education State and federal funds are allocated or appropriated to the South Carolina State Department of Education (SDE) for the provision of services to four-year-olds and their families. The State Board of Education is responsible for promulgating regulations establishing parenting/family literacy programs to parents of preschool children and implementing at least half-day programs for four-year-olds. (§ 59-5-65 and § 59-1-450) Entities responsible for the actual service delivery are the 85 school districts of the state.

Early Childhood Program

Section 59-5-65 (8) requires the State Board of Education to develop and implement regulations “requiring all school districts to provide at least one-half day early childhood development programs for four-year-old children who have predicted significant readiness deficiencies and whose parents voluntarily allow participation.” Historically, the early childhood program has been funded through the Education Improvement Act (EIA). Regulations governing the program require all districts to provide at least half-day early childhood development programs for four-year-olds who are at-risk of school failure. Some districts provide full-day programs. A school

district may also choose to serve three-year-olds if it can demonstrate that such an initiative meets the needs of the district.

According to the *2005-06 Funding Manual* which is an accounting mechanism (as distinct from a program accountability mechanism), funds appropriated for half-day programs for four-year-olds are “based on the number of kindergarten children who are eligible for free and reduced lunch. However, no district shall receive less than 90 percent of the amount it received in the prior fiscal year.” Unlike the Education Finance Act which allocates funds based upon student classifications and services provided to the students, funds for the four-year-old kindergarten program are allocated to districts “based on the number of kindergarten children who are eligible for free and reduced lunch.” Funds are not allocated based on the number of four-year-olds served in classrooms in public schools. Below is the appropriation for early childhood education for Fiscal Year 2003-04 through 2005-06. The impact of mid-year EIA revenue shortfalls is evident in the allocations.

Table Four
EIA Funding for Four-Year-Old Programs
Allocations to School Districts

FY2003-04	FY2004-05	FY2005-06
\$22,870,783	\$21,832,678	\$21,832,678

Sources: Department of Education and 2005-06 General Appropriation Act

The *Funding Manual* allows districts to expend funds for early childhood programs on the following general areas:

- Early Childhood Programs (Salaries, employee benefits, purchase services, supplies, technology and software supplies, energy, equipment, technology equipment and software);
- Parenting/Family Literacy (Salaries, employee benefits, purchased services, supplies, technology and software, energy, equipment, technology equipment and software);
- Improvement of Instruction Curriculum Development (Salaries, employee benefits, purchased services, supplies, technology and software, energy, equipment, technology equipment and software); and
- Improvement of Instruction Inservice and Staff Training.

Within each area funds may be expended on salaries, employee benefits, purchased services, supplies, technology, software supplies, energy, equipment, technology equipment and software. The only disallowed expenditures “include costs of construction and remodeling; noneducational equipment such as air conditioners, kitchen stoves, and minibuses; and the purchase or relocation of mobile structures.”

To assist school districts in providing transportation for four-year-olds, the General Assembly also appropriates EIA funds for school bus drivers’ salaries. The appropriations since FY04 are reflected in the following table.

Table Five
EIA Funding for School Bus Drivers’ Salaries
Allocations to School Districts

FY2003-04	FY2004-05	FY2005-06
\$472,210	\$ 450,776	\$450,776

Sources: Department of Education and 2005-06 General Appropriation Act

Pre-Schoolers with Disabilities Program

For four-year-olds with disabilities additional EIA and EFA funds are provided. The allocation formula for these children is contingent upon the number of children served. Districts receive funds based on the funding amount per child multiplied by the number of children reported multiplied by the index of taxpaying ability factor. The number of children reported is the number at the 135 day count. Eligible students include three and four-year-olds, except those who are visually or hearing impaired. Visually or hearing impaired students receive funding through the Education Finance Act. Visually and hearing impaired students are funded at an EFA weight of 2.57.

Table Six
EIA Funding for Preschool Programs for Children with Disabilities
Allocations to School Districts

FY2003-04	FY2004-05	FY2005-06
\$3,973,584	\$3,973,584	\$3,973,584

Sources: Department of Education and 2005-06 General Appropriation Act

In summary, current state funding through the Department of Education for the implementation of early childhood education programs in public schools is as follows:

Table Seven
State Appropriations for Early Childhood Programs*

	FY2003-04	FY2004-05	FY2005-06
Four-Year-Old Programs	\$22,870,783	\$21,832,678	\$21,832,678
School Bus Driver Salary	\$472,210	\$450,776	\$450,776
SUBTOTAL:	\$23,342,993	\$22,283,454	\$22,283,454
Preschool Children with Disabilities	\$3,973,584	\$3,973,584	\$3,973,584
TOTAL	\$27,316,577	\$26,257,038	\$26,257,038

* Excluded are any EFA funds generated by preschoolers with visual or hearing impairments and funds for parenting and family literacy.

Source: Department of Education and 2005-06 General Appropriation Act

Parenting and Family Literacy

In addition to the appropriation for early childhood programs, school districts receive additional funds to implement parenting/family literacy programs. Section 59-1-450 of the South Carolina Code of Laws requires the State Board of Education to "promulgate regulations for establishing parenting/family literacy programs to support parents in their role as the principal teachers of their preschool children." The law specifically states that the programs must provide parent education to parents who have children ages birth through five years of age with "intensive efforts to recruit parents or guardians whose children are at risk for school failure." Included in the program must be developmental screening for children and literacy/adult education for the parents.

Provisos 1A.26. and 1A.27. of the 2005-06 General Appropriation Act further define how EIA funds appropriated for parenting/family literacy in South Carolina are to be expended. The provisos require that \$425,000 of the funds be allocated to other entities. The remainder is to be allocated to school districts that "provide comprehensive family literacy programs which address intergenerational cycles of poverty through adult education, early childhood education and parenting programs."

Since Fiscal Year 2003-04, the General Assembly has funded parenting/family literacy efforts in a separate line item. After distributing funds for earmarked purposes including the Accelerated Schools Project, the Columbia Urban League and Communities in Schools, school districts received the following allocations.

Table Eight
EIA Funding for Parenting/Family Literacy
Allocations to School Districts

FY2003-04	FY2004-05	FY2005-06
\$6,133,946	\$5,855,526	\$5,855,526

Sources: Department of Education and 2005-06 General Appropriation Act

As reported in the Department of Education’s *2005-06 Funding Manual*, “Act 135 requires each school district or consortium of districts serving more than two thousand K-12 students based on the second preceding year’s ADM (average daily membership) be funded on a base amount of no less than \$40,000 to establish a parenting/family literacy program, with any additional appropriation to be distributed based on the second preceding year’s number of free- and reduced-lunch-eligible students in grades one through three in a district or consortium relative to the total free- and reduced-lunch-eligible students in grades one through three in the State.”

According to the *Funding Manual*, “priority should be given to families whose children participate in the district 4K programs (children most likely to experience school failure). The family literacy services are further defined as these activities:

- Interactive literacy activities between parents and their children,
- Training for parents regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children,
- Parent literacy training that leads to economic self-sufficiency, and
- An age appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences.

Source: 2005-06 Funding Manual, Department of Education

However, when analyzing actual school district expenditures, most school districts spent additional federal, state and local revenues on early childhood education in FY04 and FY05. Based upon information provided by the Department of Education and contained in the appendix, school districts spent the following funds on early childhood education from state, local and federal sources. The following table excludes funding for preschoolers with disabilities and expenditures for parenting/family literacy.

Table Nine
SCHOOL DISTRICT EXPENDITURES
for
Early Childhood Programs
(Includes services to three and four-year-olds but excludes services
for pre-schoolers with disabilities)

Source of Funds	FY2003-04	FY2004-05
State: Non-EIA	\$3,258,992	\$2,430,746
State: EIA	\$25,093,155	\$25,426,613
Local	\$10,261,949	\$11,885,330
Federal: Title I	\$8,292,515	\$8,203,913
Federal: Other	\$3,050,487	\$3,839,110
TOTAL:	\$49,957,098	\$51,785,713

Source: Department of Education

The largest source of federal funding for early childhood programs in South Carolina is Title I. According to Public Law No. 107-110, otherwise known as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the goal of Title I funding is to improve the academic achievement of disadvantaged children. Section 1001 states:

The purpose of this title is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments.

The law specifically allows a local educational agency or school to expend Title I monies on early childhood programs or state-run preschool programs. According to the *2005-06 Funding Manual*, school districts in South Carolina are allocated Title 1 Part A funds based on the number of low-income students residing in the district according to the latest U.S. Census Data.

Regarding the specific expenditures which can be attributed to the classroom, the Department of Education is only able to provide the data shown in the table below. Funding for professional development, administration, etc. cannot be disaggregated and attributed directly to the early childhood education program. The following table does include expenditures for both three and four-year-olds.

Table Ten
Annual Classroom Expenditures for Early Childhood Education

Function	FY2003-04	FY2004-05
Classified Teachers	\$27,221,953	\$31,194,395
Aides	\$1,723,763	\$1,687,985
Curriculum and Materials	\$2,155,116	\$2,036,366
Transportation	\$472,210	\$450,776
TOTAL:	\$31,573,042	\$35,369,52

Source: Department of Education

Finally, on a district level, data reveal wide disparities in expenditures for early childhood education. Excluded from the data were expenditures for IDEA and federal funds for pre-schoolers with disabilities. Analyzing Fiscal Year 2004-05 school district expenditures for three and four-year-old early childhood programs against enrollment in the four-year-old program during school year 2004-05 reveals the following. First, in FY05 total early childhood expenditures ranged from \$971.73 in Florence 2 to \$5,276,087 in Greenville. The statewide per child average was \$2,873 with the range being from \$27 to \$7,121. Clearly, the data reveal problems in the current reporting system. For example, the Darlington school district reported serving six four-year-olds at a total expenditure of over a half million dollars. Again, such analysis points out that school districts do not maintain accurate reporting systems on the number of four-year-olds served because the funding mechanism does not equate services with funds allocated per child. Looking at the per pupil expenditures across the trial and plaintiff districts, the trial districts had a per pupil expenditure that ranged from \$1,457 in Jasper County to \$6,089 in Marion 7. The plaintiff districts ranged in per pupil spending from \$27 in Barnwell 45 and Florence 2 to \$6,891 in Florence 5. It should be pointed out that multiple districts in a county may combine resources to serve four-year-olds. Other districts may rely upon Head Start Programs to serve many of the four-year-olds in these districts. Again, with the existing data there are limitations in analyzing the expenditure patterns.

(3) South Carolina Department of Social Services

The South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) receives the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) monies from the federal government. The Child Care Services division administers the child care voucher program, which is called Advocates for Better Care, or the ABC Program, in South Carolina; the division also includes the Child Care Licensing program.

Federal CCDF regulations state that priority must be given to families who are on welfare and who are attempting to transition off of welfare, and children receiving protective services are also served. Because federal funding for child care is not sufficient to provide services to all eligible families, DSS estimates that only about 20 percent of families eligible in South Carolina actually receive services. This is a nationwide dilemma, in that only 1 in 7 children eligible for federal child care assistance in the United States receives the assistance because of limited funds.

States may not use CCDF funds for education, or to supplant education funding; they receive CCDF funds to provide child care to parents so they may work or attend school or training. In addition, federal eligibility rules for child care vouchers specify that children must be under age 13, or under age 19 if disabled, and the family has to be low income, as defined by the state.

To receive the CCDF funds, the federal government mandates the state child care agency to:

- provide low income families with financial resources to find and afford quality child care for their children;
- provide parents with a broad range of options in addressing their child care needs (parental choice);
- enhance the quality and increase the supply of child care for all families, including those who receive no direct assistance under CCDF (money is allocated for quality activities, often referred to as “earmarks”); and
- improve the quality and coordination among child care programs and early childhood development programs.

DSS is also responsible for administering the federal Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) program, which funds services for children and adults, as well as the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families or TANF (welfare) program. TANF funds are fully obligated for benefits and other TANF-authorized uses in FFY 05 and 06; SSBG funds are limited and, in addition to child care, are used to fund services for abused and neglected children and adults.

DSS estimates that South Carolina will receive the following federal and state funds for child care in FFY04 through FFY06:

Table Eleven
Estimated Funds for Child Care through DSS

Source:	FFY04	FFY05	FFY06
Federal:			
CCDF	\$66,651,915	\$67,278,573	\$70,155,435
TANF	\$1,300,000	0	0
SSBG	\$5,790,930	\$6,543,070	\$7,994,390
State:			
General Fund	\$4,407,963	\$4,407,963	\$4,407,963
Other *	\$5,769,769	\$5,742,235	\$7,424,481
TOTAL	\$83,920,577	\$83,971,841	\$89,982,269

Source: Department of Social Services, February 16, 2006

With the 2006 reauthorization of CCDF, state matching requirements increase in FFY06. Because state appropriations are not sufficient to cover all of the state's matching requirements, DSS is allowed to count certain expenditures at other agencies to be sure that the state draws down its entire share of child care dollars. These include monies spent by the State Department of Education on eligible public pre-kindergarten expenditures, as well as state funds transferred by First Steps county partnerships to DSS for child care vouchers (called "scholarships" by First Steps) for eligible families they are serving, in addition to funds from other sources.

First Steps county partnerships authorized the transfer of state funds to DSS for child care scholarships in the amounts of \$900,693 in SFY04 (state Fiscal Year 2004) and \$1,088,637 in SFY05 (state Fiscal Year 2005) for children of all ages. The Office of First Steps estimates \$774,720 will be authorized by First Steps county partnerships for transfer to DSS for child care scholarships for children of all ages in SFY06.

DSS projects the following use of funds for child care services in FFY04 through FFY06:

Table Twelve
Projected Use of Funds for Child Care Services
Children Ages 0 through 12 (or to 19 if disabled)

Function	FFY04	FFY05	FFY06
Child Care Vouchers, eligibility determination, etc.	\$73,080,848	\$71,774,681	\$76,484,929
Federal CCDF earmarks and set aside for quality services	\$8,542,328	\$10,703,875	\$11,697,690
Administration	\$2,297,401	\$1,493,285	\$1,799,650
TOTAL PROJECTED USE OF FUNDS:	\$83,920,577	\$83,971,841	\$89,982,269
Average annual child care voucher expenditure per child (0 through 12, all care types)	\$3,287	\$3,334	\$3,341

DSS estimates that approximately 10.8 percent of its total expenditures on child care vouchers are for four-year-olds. Regarding only four-year-olds, DSS reported that in FFY05 \$6,813,613 was expended on child care vouchers. The sources of funds were as follows:

Table Thirteen
DSS Expenditures on Child Care Vouchers for Four-Year-Olds
FFY05

Federal CCDF	\$ 5,144,032
State matching funds for CCDF	\$ 827,027
Federal SSBG	\$ 602,554
State funds transferred by First Steps County Partnerships*	<u>\$ 240,000</u>
TOTAL:	\$ 6,813,613

*Based on a memorandum of agreement between DSS and the Office of First Steps, an average of \$240,000 has been transferred to DSS in each SFY from July 2004 through February 2006 representing an average of 80 child care vouchers for 4-year-olds at \$3,000 per child per year.

(4) South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness

First Steps county partnerships expend funds for half-day, extended-day and full-day four-year-old child development programs, provide child care scholarships and offer parenting/family strengthening programs. Funds are provided through many sources including: state general fund and EIA appropriations to South Carolina First Steps; federal grant funds awarded to the South Carolina First Steps and its county partnerships; and local funds generated through private contributions and local revenues to county First Steps partnerships. Following is a summary of the actual expenditures for FY 04 and FY 05 and projections for FY 06.

Table Fourteen
Office of First Steps
Expenditures for FY 04 and FY 05 and Projected Expenditures for FY 06

	FY2003-04	FY2004-05	FY2005-06*
Four-Year-Old Instruction	\$3,074,961	\$2,705,071	\$3,663,191
TO: School District Settings	\$2,137,382	\$1,869,192	\$3,026,435
TO: Private 4K	\$937,579	\$835,879	\$636,756
Parenting/Family Literacy	\$5,871,799	\$8,173,997	\$9,993,333
TO: School District Settings	\$3,534,042	\$4,509,865	\$5,838,478
TO: Non-School District Settings	\$2,337,757	\$3,664,132	\$4,154,855
Child Care Subsidies	\$1,528,201	\$1,408,350	\$1,632,680
TO: S.C. DSS (4K Only)	\$240,000	\$240,000	
TO: S.C. DSS (Not Differentiated by Age Served)	\$679,864	\$795,768	\$774,720
TO: Other (Not Differentiated by Age Served)	\$608,337	\$372,582	\$857,960
TOTAL:	\$10,474,961	\$12,287,418	\$15,289,204

* FY 04 and FY 05 are actual expenditures while FY 06 are projections. Included are federal, local and state funds. Source: South Carolina First Steps, last Revised on February 21, 2006

** Child care scholarships are not differentiated by age groups. In FY 04 and FY 05 the South Carolina Department of Social Services documented an "average" of \$240,000 was expended each year on First Steps child care vouchers/scholarship for 80 four-year-olds at \$3,000 per voucher/scholarship. Annually, the Department of Social Services collects data at a specific point in time. South Carolina First Steps has surveyed First Step county partnerships and determined that in FY 05, an additional 55 four-year-olds were served. The discrepancy in reporting occurs due to inconsistencies in the manner of collecting the data. Similarly, parenting/family literacy services serve more than just parents of four-year-olds.

One goal of First Steps is to "leverage state, local and private resources to increase the quality of, and number of children participating in, developmentally appropriate pre-kindergarten programs in both the public and private sectors. Particular emphasis is placed on fidelity to research-based instructional models and targeting of students at-risk of early school failure" (South Carolina First Steps Annual Report 2005). As noted in the expenditure data, First Steps expends funds for both public and private four-year-old kindergarten. Funds for private four-year-old programs provide early childhood education for four-year-olds in full-day private settings. In the public schools, the funds may be used to provide additional half-day, extended-day or full-day programs as well as summer programs. The following table shows the counties in which First Steps has expended funds to expand four-year-old services in public schools. Counties containing multiple districts that were either plaintiff or plaintiff trial districts are so noted.

Table Fifteen
Counties that Received First Steps Funds to Expand Four-Year-Old Programs in
PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT SETTINGS

COUNTY	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006
Abbeville	Yes	Yes	Yes
Aiken	Yes	Yes	Yes
Allendale	NO	NO	NO
Anderson	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bamberg	Yes	Yes	NO
Barnwell	No	NO	NO
Beaufort	NO	NO	Yes
Berkeley	Yes	Yes	Yes

Calhoun	Yes	Yes	Yes
Charleston	NO	NO	Yes
Cherokee	Yes	Yes	Yes
Chester	Yes	Yes	Yes
Chesterfield	Yes	Yes	NO
Clarendon	Yes	Yes	Yes
Colleton	Yes	Yes	Yes
Darlington	NO	NO	NO
<i>Dillon *</i>	NO	NO	NO
Dorchester	Yes	Yes	Yes
Edgefield	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fairfield	NO	NO	NO
<i>Florence *</i>	NO	NO	Yes
Georgetown	NO	NO	NO
Greenville	NO	NO	NO
Greenwood	NO	NO	NO
<i>Hampton *</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes
Horry	NO	NO	Yes
<i>Jasper</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kershaw	Yes	NO	NO
Lancaster	NO	NO	Yes
Laurens	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lee	NO	NO	Yes
Lexington	NO	NO	NO
<i>Marion *</i>	NO	NO	NO
Marlboro	Yes	Yes	Yes
McCormick	NO	NO	NO
Newberry	NO	NO	NO
Oconee	Yes	Yes	Yes
Orangeburg	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pickens	Yes	Yes	Yes
Richland	NO	NO	NO
Saluda	NO	NO	NO
Spartanburg	Yes	NO	NO
Sumter	NO	NO	NO
Union	Yes	Yes	Yes
Williamsburg	Yes	Yes	Yes
York	NO	NO	NO

Note: Counties that are in bold print had at least one plaintiff district. Counties shaded in bold italic print had at least one trial district. Counties in bold italic print with an asterisk had at least one district that was a plaintiff and another district that was a trial district in the lawsuit.

Table Sixteen
Counties that Received First Steps Funds to Expand Four-Year-Old Programs in
PRIVATE SETTINGS

COUNTY	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006
Charleston	Yes	Yes	NO
Cherokee	Yes	Yes	Yes
Horry	NO	NO	Yes
Georgetown	Yes	Yes	NO
Greenville	Yes	Yes	Yes
Greenwood	Yes	Yes	NO
Lancaster	NO	Yes	Yes
Lexington	Yes	Yes	NO

Orangeburg	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pickens	Yes	Yes	Yes
Richland	Yes	Yes	Yes
Williamsburg	Yes	Yes	NO

Note: Counties in bold had at least one plaintiff district.

The Office of First Steps also expends funds for parenting/family literacy, also referred to as family strengthening strategies. The Office of First Steps in its 2005 annual report documents that in 2005 in 44 counties 18,813 children statewide were “affected by family strengthening programs” (South Carolina First Steps Annual Report 2005). These programs include parent education and early family literacy efforts. Funding supports Parents as Teachers, Parent-Child-Home Program and several reading programs. In 2005, First Steps documented 58,729 home visits that served 10,820 families. It should be noted that “90 percent of the children served through these programs were between the ages of 0 and 3” and not four-year-olds (South Carolina First Steps Annual Report 2005).

Similarly, the majority of child care scholarships are not differentiated by age served. First Steps reported to the EOC that in FY 06, as of December 31, 2005 (end of second quarter), First Steps has awarded 605 total child care scholarships. Of these 605, the local First Steps offices will administer 261 and the S.C. Department of Social Services 344. In FY 05, First Steps reported a total of 574 child care scholarships of which 223 were administered by First Steps and 351 by the S.C. Department of Social Services.

PART THREE

Program Model to Provide Kindergarten for Four-Year-Olds

The goal of the pre-kindergarten/four-year-old kindergarten program must be to provide each young child with the foundation of knowledge and skills necessary to demonstrate proficiency on state academic standards in grades three and beyond. As stated in Judge Thomas Cooper's ruling "pre-kindergarten and kindergarten [must] enable them to begin the educational process in a more equal fashion to those born outside of poverty. . ."

The development of four-year-olds is enhanced and enriched when their parents are engaged in their own learning as well as serving as the child's first teacher and role model, when the child's physical, social and emotional well-being is guaranteed and when children have experienced the learning most supportive of their development from birth through age three.

Because the necessity to ensure opportunity lies with the State, the program model outlined in this report acknowledges and incorporates consideration of the practical limitations of extending four-year-old kindergarten in the public school system. South Carolina public schools do not have the physical space to provide full-day programming to all four-year-olds eligible for the free- or reduced-price lunch program. Her children should not have to wait. The program model outlined in this report uses a public-private partnership model in which parents exercise choice among providers of the four-year-old kindergarten program and the State ensures access and high quality. The responsibility to define, develop and monitor high-quality programming lies with the State and should not be delegated to a school district or a county agency. School districts, schools, other public providers, non-profit and for-profit providers meeting well-defined facilities and program standards should qualify as eligible providers.

Parents should continue to make the decisions about the program in which they enroll their children. Currently parents may choose among Head Start, public school, private for profit, and non-profit programs. South Carolina's extension of opportunity to all economically disadvantaged four-year-olds should affirm and support parental responsibility. That choice should not be restricted by limiting a student's enrollment to the school district or county in which he/she resides. If transportation is available and a qualified program is available in neighboring communities or near the parent's worksite or near a relative's home, then the parent should have the options of placing the child in that program.

The state program should serve all students who are at risk for learning problems and school failure. While the intent of Concurrent Resolution 4484 is to define services and requirements for serving students eligible for the free- or reduced-price lunch program, the State's goals for student achievement can be met only if students falling into other risk categories are served. In these categories, and likely overlapping the economic disadvantage category, are children who were low birth weight babies, students whose parents have less than a high school education, students who do not speak English as their first language, students needing protective services and others.

The educational program should be full-day in nature; that is, a 6.5 hour school day encompassing developmentally appropriate educational activities, physical activity, rest and nutrition. The educational program must be provided in accordance with state-approved, research-based curriculum models aligned with the South Carolina content standards. While there is strong consensus that curriculum models such as High Scope and Creative Curriculum meet this expectation, the approval process should provide for other research-based models that align with S.C. standards through utilization of evidence and alignment criteria. The educational program must be sufficiently robust so that students are provided the competitive

foundation outlined in Judge Cooper's order; that is, that economically disadvantaged students are as ready for school learning as are their economically advantaged peers. The draft *Good Start Grow Smart Standards* should be examined to determine if they are sufficiently robust and directly related to children's future success in school. These standards are written well below the expectations of similarly aged students in districts with strong achievement histories.

Teachers in the program must have a four-year degree in early childhood education or a closely related area (e.g. child development, family studies, early childhood special education). There should be an aide or assistant teacher in each class who has preservice or inservice education in early childhood education.

Facilities and resources in the program must be sufficient to support the well-being of students and their progress. Two studies (Brown & Potter, 2003 and S.C. Department of Education, no date) document the need for improvements in play areas and educational space in the public schools. Strict regulations should be developed and implemented to ensure that students, not cost savings, lie at the center of these decisions.

To be effective the proposed model requires that the responsible state agency and its board implement regulations to guide the system. Regulations carry the force and effect of law, well beyond the impact of best practices guidelines. The administrative agency must also be prepared to exercise authority to approve research-based practices in qualifying public and private providers, to monitor and insist upon adherence to regulations, to participate in external evaluations of the program and, when providers fail or practices do not yield results, to insist upon change.

The current system of funding four-year-old early childhood education in South Carolina allocates funds to school districts based upon the number of kindergarten children who are eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch. Funds are not allocated based on the number of four-year-olds actually served. The only exception is for services provided to four-year-olds with special needs. Consequently, not only do the funds not link directly to services provided, but there is no incentive for districts to maintain accurate data on the number of students served. Simply put, the money is not tied to services. Finally, because allowed expenditures for early childhood education funds are so expansive, it is currently impossible to determine actual expenditures for the program that directly impacts the child.

The model recommended for funding four-year-old early childhood education in public and private settings is based upon the premise that funds should follow the child and be expended on appropriate quality instruction for children. In addition, to promote efficiency in operations and expenditures, a minimum classroom size of sixteen should be maintained. To promote high quality center-based instruction, the maximum adult: child ratios in a four-year-old class should be 1:10 with a teacher and an aide providing services to a maximum of 20 students. Funding for preschoolers with disabilities should continue to be funded through separate line item appropriations. And, finally, funding guidelines should explicitly address the percentage of funds that can or should be expended on administration and on supplies and materials.

In summary, the proposed program model must encompass these nine elements:

Essential Core Elements of the High-Quality Center-Based Pre-Kindergarten Program

1. Lead teacher with a four-year degree in early childhood education or a closely related area (e.g., child development, family studies, early childhood special education)
2. Assistant Teacher/aide with preservice or inservice training in early childhood education

3. Classrooms with at least 16 four-year-olds but no more than 20 four-year-olds with an adult to child ratio of 1:10
4. Full day, center-based programs of 6.5 hours for 180 school days
5. Implementation and programmatic fidelity to a research-based preschool curriculum that focuses on critical child development skills, especially early literacy, numeracy and social/emotional development
6. Implementation of health and developmental screenings and assessments and, when indicated, direct referral to community-based services
7. State-level administrative authority to develop, implement and explicitly monitor four-year-old pre-kindergarten programs
8. State-level development and regional implementation of a responsive technical assistance system that focuses on professional development related to child development especially early literacy, numeracy and social competence skills and development
9. Development and implementation of a state evaluation of four-year-old pre-kindergarten services which include research-based formative and summative program evaluation and linkage to child outcomes in early elementary grades.

Cost of the Model

In costing out the model, the first step is to determine the number of students to be served. The following table, which is based on the information provided in the appendix, documents the total number of four-year-olds in South Carolina as well as the number of four-year-olds who are estimated to be eligible for the free- or reduced-price lunch program and who are currently being served in various programs.

PROJECTED POPULATION TO BE SERVED BY MODEL *	
Total Number of Four-Year-Olds	56,114
Total Number of Four-Year-Olds Eligible for Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch Program	29,737
Less Number of Four-Year-Olds Eligible for Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch Program Served In:	
Head Start	6,059
DSS ABC Child Care	<u>2,498</u>
	8,557
TOTAL Four-Year-Olds Eligible for Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch Program to be Served in State Model:	21,180
Of the 21,180 Four-Year-Olds in the Model Eligible for Free- Or Reduced-Price Lunch Program:	
12,871 Currently Served in Public Schools Full and Half-Day Programs **	
123 Currently Served in Private 4K through First Steps	
<u>8,186</u> Not served	
21,180	
Another 3,998 Medicaid eligible four-year-olds are estimated to be served in public schools and are considered at risk of school failure.	
* Pre-schoolers with disabilities would continue to be funded and served separately from this model pursuant to federal and state laws.	
** This enrollment figures includes children funded by county First Steps partnerships and served in the public schools.	

The data show that an estimated 8,186 four-year-olds who are eligible for the free- or reduced-price lunch program are currently not receiving services. Approximately 8,557 children are enrolled in Head Start Programs or receive services through the DSS ABC program. Attending either full or half-day programs in public schools are 12,871 four-year-olds who are eligible for the free- or reduced-price lunch program. Another 123 children are served in private, full-day programs funded by county First Steps partnerships. Another 3,998 four-year-olds are currently being served in the public schools and are eligible only for Medicaid and not for the free- or reduced-price lunch program. Being Medicaid eligible, these four-year-olds can be assumed to be at risk for school failure.

Next, the model reallocates existing state funds allocated to early childhood education and appropriated to the Department of Education and the Office of First Steps to the new model. Because the model is a state model, local and federal funds currently being expended on these children are not reflected below. And, because pre-schoolers with disabilities are served separately, state and federal funding for these children is also not included.

Table Seventeen
TOTAL STATE FUNDS ALLOCATED FOR FOUR-YEAR-OLDS
In Pre-kindergarten Programs
Fiscal Year 2005-06

EIA Four-Year-Old	\$21,832,678
EIA Bus Driver Salary	\$450,776
First Steps (Public 4K)	\$3,026,435
First Steps (Private 4K)	<u>\$636,756</u>
TOTAL	\$25,946,645

The costs of the model are then projected. The following table describes the components of the model, a rationale for the cost projections used and the annual per child reimbursement rate. This information is compiled to determine the cost per child served in the state program. The key component is that the reimbursement rate is based upon the child served and is proportional to the educational attainment of the lead teacher in the child's classroom. Economies of scale are included to require a minimum class size of 16 students. It is estimated that a minimum of 410 additional lead teachers would be needed to serve the 8,186 four-year-olds currently not being served based on a class size of 20. Teachers who had previously taught two half-day classes serving at-risk children would teach one full-day class of at-risk children. According to the Department of Education, there are 755 full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers in public schools that teach in three or four-year-old classes. However, the current data and reporting system cannot differentiate which of these teachers teach one full-day class or two half-day classes and which teach in three-year-old or four-year-old pre-kindergarten classes.

Table Eighteen
COST PROJECTION
FOUR-YEAR-OLD KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

COMPONENT	Rationale	Annual Per Child Reimbursement *
SERVICES FOR CHILD AT PROVIDER LEVEL:		
Class Size and Staffing	A maximum of 20 students in each class with a minimum of 16. No class having fewer than 16 students would receive funding. Funding is contingent upon certification that the students are	Public School setting of \$3,646.62 per child for a certified teacher and \$3,391.39 per child for a

COMPONENT	Rationale	Annual Per Child Reimbursement *
	<p>enrolled and served. Self-contained classrooms with special needs four-year-olds are excluded from the minimum class size requirements of 16.</p> <p>The provider would be compensated based on the credentials of the teacher.</p> <p>In public schools, the salary of a certified teacher is estimated at \$39,881 and an aide at \$16,160 with fringe benefits at 28 percent. The \$39,881 figure is the mean of average salaries of all classroom teachers in the southeast region as reported in <i>Salaries and Wages Paid Professional and Support Personnel in Public Schools, 2004-2005</i> published by Educational Research Service. The salary for the aide, \$16,160, is the median wage for all preschool teachers in South Carolina using the <i>November 2004 State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates</i> published by U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics for South Carolina. The Department of Education had estimated the aide's salary to be \$15,000. In public schools, the salary of a lead teacher with a college degree in a related field is estimated at \$35,893 or ten percent less than that of a certified teacher.</p> <p>In a private setting, the salary of a teacher certified in early childhood education is estimated to be \$27,720 and an aide at \$16,160 with fringe benefits for both at 20%. The source for the salary figures is the <i>November 2004 State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates</i> published by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics for South Carolina. Used in the estimates are salaries for preschool teachers in South Carolina, excluding special education teachers. The percentage of salaries paid in fringe benefits is based upon information provided by a national child care provider. The salary for the certified lead teacher of \$27,720 is the 90th percentile wage for all preschool teachers in South Carolina. The salary for the lead teacher who has a college degree in a related field is projected at the same absolute cost difference as reflected in the public schools.</p> <p>The allocations would be adjusted annually for inflation and changes in the labor market.</p> <p>It is estimated that a minimum of 410 additional classrooms staffed with lead teachers and aides would be needed to serve the 8,186 four-year-olds currently not being served in a class.</p>	<p>teacher with a bachelor of arts degree in a related field.</p> <p>Private setting of \$2,692.80 per child for a certified teacher and \$2,443.62 for a teacher with a bachelor of arts degree in a related field.</p> <p>Minimum of 410 additional classrooms needed.</p>

COMPONENT	Rationale	Annual Per Child Reimbursement *
Classroom Materials	\$1,200 per year per class. To equip a new classroom, \$10,000 per class would be allocated and available to all providers for initial costs of stocking a classroom.	\$60 per child annually and one-time \$10,000 to equip each new classroom
Transportation	A per pupil transportation reimbursement would be provided for any child eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch who is transported to and from a program. The reimbursement rate would be \$185 per child which is the level recommended by the EOC in its funding model for public schools.	\$185 per child who is eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch program
ACCOUNTABILITY AND INNOVATION AT STATE LEVEL:		TOTAL FUNDS
Monitoring and technical assistance	State would hire pre-K consultants who would work from their homes and provide monitoring and technical assistance services to the providers. A minimum of two visits per year to each provider would be required, one of which would be to evaluate the program. Each consultant would be provided a lap top, printer, phone line and DSL line. Assume initial hiring of 10 pre-K consultants at \$50,000 plus 28 percent for benefits and \$5,000 per consultant for supplies.	\$690,000
Research and Development	Funds would be appropriated to contract with independent entities to evaluate the program. The evaluations would focus on improving program services and on determining the impact of the program on the child.	\$500,000
Parenting and family literacy	No additional funding is recommended until explicit models can be tested and their benefits determined.	\$0
Resource Coordinator Grants	Through a competitive grants application process, providers would see funding for resource coordinators. These coordinators would coordinate with the families of the at-risk four-year-olds to coordinate health services that might address developmental delays, speech, hearing, dental, immunizations, etc., transition activities to assist the child going from 4K to kindergarten, ESOL services, job training, etc. The important focus should be on providing services that meet the specific needs of parents and their children in a specific locale.	\$10,000,000
Professional Development	To provide quality preservice and inservice training in effective early childhood instruction, the state would coordinate the provision of professional development. The cost estimates include \$900 per teacher per year which is the level recommended by the EOC for all teachers in its funding model. An additional \$450 per aide per year is also recommended.	\$1,429,650 to \$1,713,150

COMPONENT	Rationale	Annual Per Child Reimbursement *
	<p>It is projected that the total number of teachers providing instruction to four-year-olds eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch program would be 1059 and the total number of aides, 1059. These projections are based upon serving 21,180 four-year-olds in a class size of 20.</p> <p>If four-year-olds eligible only for Medicaid are also served, an additional 209 teachers and 209 aides would receive professional development services at the same rate.</p>	
Administration of Program:	The agency which would oversee implementation of the program could use existing administration personnel.	\$0
TOTAL STATE LEVEL:		\$12,619,650 to \$12,902,273

Then the cost for providing the program model in only the plaintiff districts or in the trial districts is calculated. Based upon the number of children served in a public or private setting, the maximum and minimum costs reflect the range of potential costs. And, the data show two options: Option A of serving only four-year-olds who are eligible for the free- and reduced-price lunch program, and Option B of extending services to four-year-olds who are also eligible for Medicaid.

Table Nineteen

	Number Children	Maximum Total Cost	Minimum Total Cost
PLAINTIFF DISTRICTS			
Serve Four-Year-Olds:			
A. Eligible for Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch Program	5,360	\$20,537,483	\$12,533,824
B. Eligible for Medicaid Only	740	\$2,835,399	\$1,730,416
TRIAL DISTRICTS			
Serve Four-Year-Olds:			
A. Eligible for Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch Program	1,023	\$3,919,747	\$2,392,183
B. Eligible for Medicaid Only	64	\$245,224	\$149,658

The final step is determining the total cost of providing the program model statewide. Without knowing the number of public and private providers who will participate and serve the four-year-olds, the costs must be analyzed using ranges. The following table shows the range of costs related to the model when implemented and funded statewide.

Table Twenty

	Public Setting		Private Setting	
Lead Teacher Salary:				
Certified	\$39,881		\$27,720	
Four-Year Degree but not Certified		\$35,893		\$23,567
Teacher's Aide Salary	\$16,160	\$16,160	\$16,160	\$16,160
Fringe Benefits of Teacher & Aide:	\$15,691.48	\$14,574.81	\$8,776.00	\$7,945.40
Curriculum and Materials	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200
Total for Instruction:	\$72,932.48	\$67,827.71	\$53,856.00	\$48,872.40
Total Maximum Students	20	20	20	20
Per Child Instruction:	\$3,646.62	\$3,391.39	\$2,692.80	\$2,443.62
Transportation per Child Eligible for Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch	\$185	\$185	\$185	\$185
Reimbursement Rates:				
A. Per Child Eligible for Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch	\$3,831.62	\$3,576.39	\$2,877.80	\$2,628.62
B. Per Child Eligible for Medicaid but not Eligible for Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch	\$3,646.62	\$3,391.39	\$2,692.80	\$2,443.62
A. Serve all Children Eligible for Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch and Not Served in Head Start program or DSS ABC Program				
	Public Setting		Private Setting	
Reimbursement Rate	\$3,831.62	\$3,576.39	\$2,877.80	\$2,628.62
Number to be Served	21,180	21,180	21,180	21,180
Cost Variation:	\$81,153,796	\$75,747,847	\$60,951,804	\$55,674,172
Plus: Statewide Administration	\$12,619,650	\$12,619,650	\$12,619,650	\$12,619,650
Plus: Equipping 410 additional classrooms	\$4,100,000	\$4,100,000	\$4,100,000	\$4,100,000
Total Cost:	\$97,873,446	\$92,467,497	\$77,671,454	\$72,393,822
Less: Current State Appropriations	\$25,946,645	\$25,946,645	\$25,946,645	\$25,946,645
Additional Funds Needed:	\$71,926,801	\$66,520,852	\$51,724,809	\$46,447,177
B. Serve additional Children Eligible for Medicaid ONLY				
	Public Setting		Private Setting	
Reimbursement Rate	\$3,646.62	\$3,391.39	\$2,692.80	\$2,443.62
Number to be Served	3,998	3,998	3,998	3,998
Cost Variation:	\$14,579,203	\$13,558,760	\$10,765,814	\$9,769,593
Plus: Additional Administration Cost	\$282,623	\$282,623	\$282,623	\$282,623
Total Cost:	\$14,861,826	\$13,841,383	\$11,048,437	\$10,052,216

PART FOUR

Summary Recommendations

1. The State of South Carolina should provide well-targeted and high-quality, center-based early childhood education services in public and private settings for all four-year-old children who are at-risk for school failure, particularly children who are eligible for the free- or reduced-price lunch program.
2. The high-quality, center-based program should incorporate the following:
 - a state-approved, research-based curriculum aligned with school success
 - a 6.5 hour program encompassing education, physical activity, nutrition and health and developmental screenings with linkages to services as necessary
 - a lead teacher with a four-year degree in early childhood education or a closely related area (e.g., child development, family studies, early childhood special education) and an aide to provide an adult-child ratio of 1:10 in a class of not less than 16 children nor more than 20 children
3. A single state agency should administer the program to include the following:
 - Establishment and implementation of regulations enforcing program quality
 - Identification, development, and monitoring of eligible providers to ensure the quality of opportunity
 - Provision of technical assistance to all participating personnel (teachers, aides and principals/directors) providing the program for four-year-olds
 - Administration of a grants program for resource coordinators to accomplish linkages to health and social services for the child
 - Participation in an external evaluation program
 - Collaboration with the South Carolina Head Start Collaboration Office to develop strategic partnerships between Head Start programs and the public and private providers who will serve these four-year-olds at risk of school failure to create a seamless system of early childhood education
4. The State should link funding directly to children who receive the early childhood education services and provide funding only when
 - The provider initially meets and continues to meet all state program and facilities standards
 - The provider participates in an on-going process of technical assistance, monitoring, assessment and evaluation of services and child outcomes
 - The provider maintains sufficient enrollment of the targeted students (i.e., a class of not less than 16 students nor more than 20 students)
5. The child should be provided, as indicated, an array of well-targeted, high-quality wrap-around services. Efficient and effective use of multiple federal, state and private funding should be undertaken when providing high quality services for four-year-old children and their families.
6. The role of the family should be supported and nurtured during the child's early childhood experiences. Specifically, the parent should have access to the following:
 - Sufficient and understandable information to determine which provider to use for his/her child
 - Continuing information on the child's progress and the impact of the program on the child's readiness for school success

7. A state-level interagency data system for children and families served with any public funds should be established and maintained to monitor service provision, quality and impact for four-year-old children who are at risk for school failure. The database should include selected process measures for early childhood education and wrap-around services received (e.g., number of children served, curriculum used, assessments employed, length of school day, type of parent education program, nature of service coordination).
8. The state should establish and maintain a well-planned collaborative evaluation across five years (i.e., one year of planning and preparing and four years of data collection) which is independent of the providers and regulating agency and which evaluates both process and child outcome measures of state-funded services for four-year-old children who are at risk of school failure.

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APPENDICES

- A. Concurrent Resolution 4484 of 2006
- B. Agency Program Inventory
- C. Head Start Response
- D. Enrollment Tables
- E. Early Childhood Expenditures by District FY 2004-05
- F. Income Eligibility Guidelines for Free- and Reduced-Price Lunch Program, 2005-06