

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



Submitted to
Governor Mark Sanford and the South Carolina General Assembly
Pursuant to Proviso 1.69 (General Appropriations Act of 2007-2008)

February 2008

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INTRODUCTION

South Carolina has long sought to expand preschool access for its young children. From the first federally-funded Head Start and child care programs of the '60s and '70s, to its earliest state-funded child development programs and phase-in of full-day kindergarten during the mid-'80s and '90s, publicly-funded early childhood programs have been provided to hundreds of thousands of South Carolina's youngest learners. In June of 2006, the Child Development Education Pilot Program (CDEPP) was established to expand 4-year-old kindergarten to still more preschoolers for whom taxpayer-subsidized early intervention has been shown to reap substantial dividends.

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

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

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

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

These were the key questions explored by the South Carolina *Task Force on Early Childhood Quality Standards*, seated by legislative proviso in July 2006. Expanding on the group's January 2007 preliminary report, **this final document summarizes the initial findings, presents expanded program quality standards, and provides a series of tangible recommendations to support quality early childhood programs across the state.**

BACKGROUND

South Carolina's early childhood programs are shaped by many factors. While some programs serving young children are defined by statute or regulatory requirements, many also reflect their individual missions and client expectations. Regardless of the early childhood program model or funding source, however, research is clear: More critical brain development occurs during the first three years of a child's life than at any other time, with the overwhelming majority of the brain's neural pathways developed before a child turns 4 years old.³

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

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

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



During this critical window of opportunity, we must work to ensure the optimal development of South Carolina’s young children if we wish for each child to reach school prepared for academic — and lifelong — success.

Respected longitudinal studies now suggest that the positive outcomes derived from high quality preschool are shared not only by the participating children — who reap significant academic and personal benefits — but by **taxpayers**, who realize public savings associated with cost reductions in academic retention/remediation,

social services dependency and incarceration, and long-term rewards associated with a well-educated and prosperous workforce.

The most recent analysis of the 40-year High/Scope Perry Preschool Project suggests a return of more than \$17 in benefits for every \$1 invested in high quality preschool programming.⁴

These studies have found a wide audience amongst policymakers, who — seeking to maximize scarce public resources — have hastened a nationwide conversation on the importance of early childhood standards.

While South Carolina has had public school content standards in place for some time, 2001’s

federal *Good Start, Grow Smart* initiative (the early childhood counterpart to *No Child Left Behind*) ushered in the large-scale expansion of *early learning standards* for 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds.

South Carolina’s early learning standards expand the state’s existing 4K and 5K benchmarks, and are currently required for use in the state’s publicly-funded programs (they are also available

on a voluntary basis to private, faith-, and home-based providers⁵). Many states have built on the

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

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

⁵ South Carolina’s *Good Start, Grow Smart Early Learning Standards* can be downloaded from the SC Department of Social Services website at http://childcare.sc.gov/main/docs/gsgsbookrevised_091007.pdf

foundation of these **student learning standards**, defining early childhood **program (or provider) quality standards** — often in conjunction with financial incentives and/or consumer rating systems that promote quality.

This idea is not new in South Carolina. As the nation's first tiered reimbursement system for child care providers, the South Carolina ABC Child Care Voucher program housed at the S.C. Department of Social Services (DSS) disperses federal Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) dollars to providers at differential rates based on established program quality benchmarks and on-site reviews.⁶ In October 2007, DSS announced the addition of two new ABC bonuses, incorporating new financial incentives to recognize providers' upward movement within the ABC system. Nearly half of all licensed centers currently participate in the voluntary ABC program.



The Task Force recommends the state build upon the strengths of the existing ABC system to formalize a *Quality-Based Incentive System (QBIS)* for South Carolina's early childhood providers. This report elaborates on the QBIS concept, offers the Task Force's proposed standards, and outlines specific recommendations for supports to ensure success.

Proviso 1.69 of the S.C. General Appropriations Act of 2007-2008*:

The First Steps State Office must convene a task force to develop quality standards for programs serving children ages 0 to 4, excluding the 4K Child Development Education Program. Membership must include both public and private providers and is to be chaired by the Director of the First Steps State Office. A report must be issued to members of the General Assembly and the Governor's Office.

*Originally Proviso 1.80 of the SC General Appropriations Act of 2006-2007

PHASE ONE: PRELIMINARY RESEARCH (July 2006-January 2007)

In accordance with Proviso 1.69 (originally Proviso 1.80, General Appropriations Act of 2006-2007), a diverse panel consisting of leaders from public and private early childhood settings, parents, business and advocacy communities, the education policy arena, the Governor's Office and the S.C. General Assembly was seated under co-chairs Susan DeVenny, Executive Director of South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness, and Tim Ervolina, President and CEO of the United Way Association of South Carolina.

Using testimony from state and national experts, stakeholder focus groups, a statewide citizen's survey and a series of regional Early Childhood Town Hall Meetings, the group developed its initial recommendations, submitted to Governor Mark Sanford and the S.C. General Assembly in January 2007.

Over the course of the initial research phase, the Task Force sought to (1) identify the attributes associated with early childhood program quality and (2) explore innovative public policy measures

⁶ For an overview of the DSS Division of Child Care Services and links to additional information on the ABC Voucher Program, visit <http://childcare.sc.gov>.

known to support and sustain quality attainment. Three important themes emerged from this research and undergird the group's final recommendations. Each of the Task Force's preliminary recommendations — foundational to the group's final proposal — is reiterated briefly below.

Themes Emerging from Research

1. Quality Matters. Quality Interactions Matter Most.

While the benefits of investing in early childhood education have been widely touted, research is clear that targeted program investments have the highest returns. ***Put plainly, quality matters.***



At the policy level, two interdependent forces define early childhood program quality: ***structural quality elements*** and ***process quality elements***. In simple terms, structural elements are those most easily regulated. These include things like health and safety provisions, staff-to-child ratios, and maximum classroom group sizes. Process elements relate to more intangible program characteristics in the classroom itself (curricular decision-making, types of materials provided in the classroom and the teacher's ability to use these materials to stimulate learning, for example).

Research suggests that it is the process quality elements — specifically the quality of interpersonal and instructional interactions between young children and their caregivers — that may actually contribute most significantly to both developmental outcomes and later achievement. Perhaps not coincidentally, South Carolina stakeholders overwhelmingly identified these interactions as their own most important determinant of program quality.⁷

Because they are relatively straight-forward, structural quality elements have traditionally been the field's most widely measured *indicators* of (or "proxies" for) quality. It is widely assumed, for example, that a teacher with a degree working with a small group of children will best ensure a developmentally productive learning environment. With growing recognition of the importance of interactional process quality, however, a new generation of assessment tools is helping to redefine "quality" as a trait worthy of measurement in and of itself — and not simply on the basis of these proxy indicators.

The Task Force seeks to emphasize, therefore, that classroom processes and adult-child interactions represent the field's most valuable ***measures*** of quality. The Task Force also acknowledges the importance of structural (proxy) criteria as necessary for establishing such elements as basic health and safety, which are often predictive of this more nuanced definition of quality.

2. Teacher Knowledge Counts.

While adult-child interactions play critical roles throughout the early childhood years, it is important to note that process quality extends far beyond genial, supportive care. ***In order to maximize the benefits of early intervention, preschool teachers must develop specialized***

⁷ The results of the Task Force's South Carolina Citizens' Survey on Early Childhood Quality Standards are summarized in the appendix to this report. Among those surveyed caregiver-child interactions emerged as a critical measure of program quality.

knowledge which fosters strong understanding of early childhood development and translates into effective classroom practice.

What does this mean in practice — particularly for policymakers? Is there an educational threshold for early childhood teachers that is specifically associated with superior child outcomes during the preschool years?

This question is the subject of intense professional debate, with researchers quick to point out that even amongst degreed, certified teachers there exists considerable variation in the outcomes achieved by individual teachers.

On the basis of several recent studies — including a 2007 meta-analysis combining state pre-kindergarten data from seven large-scale programs — a research team working on behalf of the S.C. Education Oversight Committee (EOC) recently cited a “lack of compelling evidence” linking teachers’ degrees to program outcomes as their basis for recommending a two-year degree in early childhood as the preferred credential in state-funded prekindergarten classrooms.⁸

With teacher knowledge valued across virtually all known research, **the question eluding the field is just how this knowledge can and should best be developed.**

SC Task Force on Early Childhood Quality Standards	
Early Childhood Providers	
Reverend Terence Lee, Pastor, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church Mary Teresa Devine, 4K teacher, H.E. Corley Elementary, Lexington/Richland Five Thomas O. Manigo, Child Development Services Manager, Fort Jackson Ida Thompson, Director, Spartanburg Regional Child Development Center Kathryn S. Woods, Director, Pee Dee Community Action Agency Head Start	
South Carolina Legislators	
Senator Mike Fair Senator Linda Short Representative Alan Clemmons Representative Jimmy Neal Representative Shannon Erickson*	
Gubernatorial Appointees	
Kim Aydlette, Chief Operating Officer, S.C. First Steps to School Readiness* Linda Martin, S.C. Department of Social Services* Charmeka Bosket/Rita Allison, Gubernatorial Education Advisors*	
Business Leaders	
Jim Hart, Sr. Vice President, Blue Cross Blue Shield Chair, United Way Association of S.C. Ann Robinson, Sr. Vice President, Bank of America Board Member, Success By 6 of Greenville County	
Parents of Young Children	
Trina Austin Sal Estrada	
Education Policy Leaders	
Susan Marlowe, Educator/Member, S.C. Education Oversight Committee* Danny Varat, Board Member, S.C. Board of Education/Greenville County First Steps*	
Task Force Co-Chairs	
Susan DeVenny, Executive Director, South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Tim Ervolina, President and CEO, United Way Association of South Carolina	
*Over the course of the Task Force’s work a number of members transitioned into professional roles other than those in which they were originally appointed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shannon Erickson, originally appointed as a private child care provider, was elected to the SC House of Representatives in November 2007. • Kim Aydlette, appointed as Director of the SC Department of Social Services, left this position in late 2006 and was replaced as a DSS representative to the Task Force by Linda Martin. Ms. Aydlette joined the staff of SC First Steps in January 2008. • Charmeka Bosket, appointed as Education Advisor to SC Governor Mark Sanford, left the Governor’s staff in late 2007. Ms. Rita Allison completed her term as the Governor’s representative. • Ms. Marlowe and Mr. Varat completed their respective terms on the SC Education Oversight Committee and State Board of Education respectively in 2007. 	

⁸ For a detailed discussion of the research findings surrounding early childhood teacher credentialing in prekindergarten, see the January 2008 *Report on the Implementation and Expansion of the Child Development Education Pilot Program (CDEPP)*, available for download at <http://www.eoc.sc.gov>.

With their primary emphasis on preparing primary and elementary school teachers, four-year teacher education programs may allot less time to the developmental and instructional needs of infants and very young children. Meanwhile, advocates of the two year degree suggest that their own outcomes rival those of a four-year program-- as they are often more focused on preschool pedagogy and child development and less on liberal arts prerequisites and instructional methodologies designed — *even within early childhood degree tracks* — for kindergarten and the primary grades.



An emerging consensus recognizes the specific value of *intensive and ongoing instruction in early childhood development and methods* — ideally coupled with on-site teacher mentoring and feedback.

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

Of all the reasons that high quality early childhood programming remains somewhat elusive, one factor stands head and shoulders above the rest. ***Quality care is expensive-- costly to parents and providers alike.*** In South Carolina, where median per capita income lags behind the national average, many consumers simply cannot bear the costs associated with programs operating at the industry's highest quality standards.

With a median income of \$31,940, the typical South Carolina family pays more than 10 percent of their annual income for *each* child in care – the average cost of which has recently been estimated at \$4,400 per year.⁹

Programs operating at the SC's highest acknowledged level of quality - though few and far between - are typically subsidized (many are Head Start providers), limiting or even eliminating their direct costs to families. Only a handful of the state's 130 nationally accredited preschools rely solely upon parent tuition to sustain their operating costs.¹⁰



For these reasons, the Task Force has focused its findings on the ***specific supports and incentives required to produce widespread quality enhancement amongst the state's early childhood providers.***

⁹ "The Economic Impacts of the Child Care Industry in South Carolina," Dr. Donald Schunk, University of South Carolina, July 2006.

¹⁰ An online search for programs accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) identified 130 such providers on December 7, 2007. These programs are overwhelmingly subsidized (Head Start, public schools, university and hospital programs, etc), with only a small percentage relying solely upon parent tuition to sustain their operational costs. To view a listing of accredited programs in South Carolina, visit http://www.naeyc.org/academy/web_ready/search

Phase One (January 2007) Recommendations

- **Recommendation One:** Create a Quality Based Incentive System (QBIS) for the state's early care and education providers and the South Carolina families who access their services. Begin by implementing incentives that support provider participation and advancement within the state's current three level quality program.
- **Recommendation Two:** Provide consumer tools which allow South Carolina families to locate and access quality early childhood services.
- **Recommendation Three:** Integrate existing resources for providers in order to better promote and support increased quality in early childhood settings.

* From the Preliminary Report of the S.C. Task Force on Early Childhood Quality Standards, January 2007

THE TASK FORCE'S SECOND PHASE: BUILDING RESEARCH-BASED STANDARDS AND MOVING TOWARD A QUALITY BASED INCENTIVE SYSTEM (FEBRUARY 2007-JANUARY 2008)

The Task Force presented its preliminary recommendations (above) to the Governor and S.C. General Assembly on January 9, 2007. The conclusion of the group's Preliminary Report outlined its proposed second phase — during which additional program quality standards would be drafted and details relating to the proposed Quality Based Incentive System explored.

To accomplish these tasks, the Chairs seated a Standards Subcommittee to draft expanded standards and convened an informal finance working group to explore innovative, national best-practice financing and public policy solutions. The Standards Subcommittee was seated in February 2007, co-chaired by business leaders Ann Robinson (Bank of America) and Jim Hart (Blue Cross Blue Shield), with membership comprised of the Task Force's early childhood providers and lawmakers. The Standards Subcommittee adopted the following goal statement to frame its work:

“South Carolina's Quality Based Incentive System is designed to recognize, reward and improve the quality of all early care and education programs; is based on standards grounded in research; and provides mechanisms of accountability to ensure that children have access to programs that offer strong foundations for learning, school success, and life-long positive outcomes.”
(Final amendments, Standards Subcommittee, June 2007)



After reviewing extensive national research on quality-based systems, the Subcommittee agreed to focus any discussion of standards for South Carolina programs on TWO research-based component areas shown to have positive effect on young children:

- (1) Staff Qualifications, and
- (2) Learning Environment.

Proposed Standards Revisions

The subcommittee chose to build upon the strengths and infrastructure found in South Carolina's ABC Child Care Program. Created in 1991 as the state's vehicle for distributing federal block grant dollars, the ABC program distinguished itself as the nation's first tiered reimbursement system for child care providers and enrolls approximately 50 percent of South Carolina providers on a voluntary basis. ABC providers choosing to *exceed* the state's basic child care licensing standards (designed primarily to ensure health and safety) are eligible to receive *higher voucher reimbursements* linked to their service to low-income families. As such, **ABC's longstanding status as a de facto quality measure is little known to the public, but widely understood by providers.**

ABC voucher payments are allocated to participating providers at three payment levels (with the recent addition of two additional bonus levels designed to provide incentives for especially high performance in the top two tiers). The current ABC quality reimbursement levels are described below from lowest to highest.

Level C — The system's entry level mirrors state licensing requirements for basic health and safety.

Level B — As an intermediate step above licensing, Level B incorporates more stringent program standards (including educational requirements for teachers and directors), as well as on-site assessments using the ABC quality assessment instrument. This instrument focuses (amongst other things) on staff-to-child ratios and group size, staff-child interactions, classroom activities and materials, and the indoor and outdoor environments. Highly performing Level B providers may also qualify for additional funds in the form of the "BB Bonus," effective October 2007.

Level A — ABC's highest distinction, Level A, is awarded in part on the basis of on-site Environment Rating Scale (ERS) assessments designed to evaluate the quality of the physical environment and the quality of certain instructional interactions. Level A providers must also incorporate lower staff-to-child ratios, must meet lower group size requirements, show enhanced staff qualifications, parent involvement, and meet certain program administration criteria. As above, highly performing Level A providers may qualify for supplemental "AA Bonuses." Additional detail on the BB and AA Bonuses is included in Appendix B.

Prior to 2007, ABC's top level entailed voluntary accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), an internationally recognized "gold standard." Because this required *substantially* higher standards, a costly self-study/application process and external validation visits, tuition-based child care programs faced barriers (only 4 percent of all ABC participant programs had attained accredited status in 2006, with the majority of these receiving substantial public or private subsidy). In an effort to encourage provider advancement beyond the existing Level B, and increase the number of ABC families benefiting from higher levels of care, DSS replaced accreditation as the system's top tier in January 2007.



The Task Force charged* the Standards Subcommittee to develop recommendations which:

- ***Expand or adapt the state's existing quality levels to create a consumer information system to be enacted in conjunction with systemic provider supports and incentives,***
- ***Reflect current best practices, evidence-based research, and early learning standards for young children,***
- ***Establish clear levels of quality, containing precise, measurable standards, and***
- ***Are respectful of the diversity and philosophical differences marking the state's existing early childhood service providers.***

* From the Preliminary Report of the
S.C. Task Force on Early Childhood Quality Standards, January 2007

The Task Force Standards Subcommittee recommends expanding the existing ABC structure from three levels (and two bonuses) to five formal levels. This five-level system would create an intermediate, fourth level between the existing Levels "B" and "A," as well as a new fifth level that would surpass all existing levels.

The Subcommittee draft standards matrix (Page 10) depicts the major components of the proposed five-level Quality Based Incentive System, which focuses on **staff qualifications and the learning environment**. The columns in blue represent

the proposed expansion standard levels (labeled B+ and A+ to distinguish new levels from the current ABC bonus awards of BB and AA), while the columns in gray (labeled C, B, and A) reflect the three ABC program levels as of January 2008. *Note that the DSS bonus awards criteria for BB and AA status - while not represented in this matrix - are awarded to programs demonstrating high levels of performance within the existing Levels B and A.*

NOTE: Two criteria within the standards matrix (Teacher Qualifications and Environment Rating Scale Scores) are recommended as *Phase One Implementation Priorities*, consistent with the group's research focus on child outcomes.

PROPOSED TASK FORCE ENHANCEMENTS TO THE ABC TIERED QUALITY REIMBURSEMENT LEVELS

CRITERIA:	Existing ABC Participating (Level C)	Existing ABC Enhanced (Level B)	<u>DRAFT</u> LEVEL B+	Existing ABC Level A	<u>DRAFT</u> LEVEL A+
DIRECTOR QUALIFICATIONS	<p>At least 21 years-of-age and possess a high school diploma or its equivalency, with at least three years experience as a caregiver in a licensed or approved child care facility.</p> <p>One of these three years experience must have entailed staff supervision.</p> <p>A director/co-director prevented from getting a HS diploma or GED because of a disability, who is otherwise qualified to perform essential functions, must have at least a Certificate of Completion with the above experience requirements.</p>	<p>Shall be at least 21 years-of-age and possess a high school diploma or its equivalency, with three years experience in a licensed or approved child care facility (one of these three years must entail staff supervision),</p> <p>Must have a plan to complete the Certificate in Child Development - Early Childhood Education or a DSS approved credential, certificate, diploma or degree (from an accredited college or institution) within five years.</p>	<p>Level B requirements, plus completion of at least twelve credit hours in child development, early childhood education, and/or child care management from a Commission on Higher Education (CHE) accredited college or university (to include ECD 101 or an approved equivalent "Introduction to Early Childhood" course).</p> <p><u>OR ATTAINMENT OF THE</u></p> <p>SC DIRECTORS CREDENTIAL*:</p> <p><u>ECD 101:</u> Introduction to Early Childhood (SC Early Childhood Credential)</p> <p><u>ECD 201:</u> Principles of Ethics and Leadership</p> <p><u>ECD 108:</u> Family and Community Relations</p> <p><u>ECD 109:</u> Administration and Supervision</p> <p><small>* Another promising credential for consideration in SC's Career Ladder is the National Administrator's Credential (NAC), issued by the National Child Care Association.</small></p>	<p>At least 21 years-of-age and have 27 credit hours in child development, early childhood education, and/or child care management from a regionally accredited college or institution with two-years experience, including 1 year center management or administration and 1 year in a licensed or approved child care facility with a signed plan to complete an associate's degree in early care and education from an accredited college or institution within three years from enrollment date or date of hire, whichever is later.</p> <p>Effective January 1, 2013, the director must have an associate's degree with at least 27 credit hours in child development, early childhood, childcare management from an accredited college, with 2 years experience including 1 year of center management or administration and 1 year working in a licensed/ approved child care facility.</p>	<p>At least 21 years-of-age and possess an associate's degree with at least 27 credit hrs in child development /early childhood education/child care management from a CHE accredited college or university with 2 yrs. experience including 1 yr. of center management or administration and 1 yr. working with children in a licensed or approved child care facility.</p> <p>The director shall document his/her regular incorporation of the Environment Rating Scales (ERS) in providing classroom feedback and planning staff goals based upon ERS results.</p> <p>In addition to the experience requirements above, effective January 1, 2013, the director must possess a bachelor's degree in early childhood education (or a related field), or a bachelor's degree in an unrelated field with at least 27 credit hours in early childhood education.</p>

PROPOSED TASK FORCE ENHANCEMENTS TO THE ABC TIERED QUALITY REIMBURSEMENT LEVELS

CRITERIA:	Existing ABC Participating (Level C)	Existing ABC Enhanced (Level B)	DRAFT LEVEL B+	Existing ABC Level A	DRAFT LEVEL A+
ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS	RECOMMEND: Directors shall be required to complete DSS training in Child Care Regulations and an orientation to the ABC Child Care Program.	RECOMMEND: Directors shall be required to complete DSS training in Child Care Regulations and an orientation to the ABC Child Care Program.	RECOMMEND: Directors shall be required to complete DSS training in Child Care Regulations and an orientation to the ABC Child Care Program.	RECOMMEND: Directors shall be required to complete DSS training in Child Care Regulations and an orientation to the ABC Child Care Program.	Directors shall be required to complete DSS training in Child Care Regulations and an orientation to the ABC Child Care Program.
PHASE ONE PRIORITY: TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS	At least 18 years-of-age and possess a high school diploma or its equivalency, with at least six months experience as a caregiver in a licensed/approved child care facility. If this experience requirement is not met, this teacher must be directly supervised by a staff member with at least one-year's experience. Within six months of employment the teacher must have completed six clock hours of training in child growth and development or early childhood education, or shall continue under the supervision of a staff member with at least one-year's experience.	At least 18 years-of-age and possess a high school diploma or GED, at least 6 months experience as a caregiver in a licensed/approved child care facility, Must have a plan for completing the SC Early Childhood Credential (ECD 101) within 3 yrs.	At least 18 years-of-age and possess a high school diploma or its equivalency, at least six months experience as a caregiver in a licensed/approved childcare facility, and a plan for completing the SC Early Childhood Credential (ECD 101) within 3 years. (IMMEDIATELY) At least 50% of all lead teachers must possess a SC Early Childhood Credential (ECD 101). By 1/1/2010, 75% of all lead teachers must possess this credential. By 1/1/2012, at least 25% of all lead teachers must have a certificate in early childhood education/child development (minimum of 27 academic credit hours) from a CHE accredited college or university or a current CDA.	At least 18 years-of-age and possess a high school diploma or its equivalency and at least six months experience as a caregiver in a licensed/approved child care facility with a plan for completing the SC Early Childhood Credential (ECD 101) by January 1, 2010. NOTE: By 1/1/2010 all teachers in charge of groups of children under age 6 employed one year must have a high school diploma/GED, at least 6 months experience as a caregiver in a licensed/approved child care facility and a SC Early Childhood Credential (ECD 101), or ABC Child Care Credential (60 clock hours) and by 1/1/2012, 50% of all teachers of children under age 6 must also have a certificate in early childhood education/child development (minimum of 27 academic credit hours) from a CHE accredited college or university or a current CDA.	(IMMEDIATELY) At least 18 years-of-age and possess a high school diploma or its equivalency and at least six months experience as a caregiver in a licensed/approved child care facility. All teachers employed for one year or more possess a SC Early Childhood Credential (ECD 101), (IMMEDIATELY) At least 50% possess a certificate in early childhood education/child development (minimum of 27 academic credit hours) from a CHE accredited college or university or a current CDA. (IMMEDIATELY) At least 25% shall possess an associate's degree in early childhood education or a related field. By 1/1/2012 at least 50% of teachers shall possess an associate's degree in early childhood or a related field, and at least 30% of the remaining staff shall possess a certificate in early childhood education/child development (minimum of 27 academic credit hours) from a CHE accredited college or institution or a current CDA.

PROPOSED TASK FORCE ENHANCEMENTS TO THE ABC TIERED QUALITY REIMBURSEMENT LEVELS

CRITERIA:	Existing ABC Participating (Level C)	Existing ABC Enhanced (Level B)	<u>DRAFT</u> LEVEL B+	Existing ABC Level A	<u>DRAFT</u> LEVEL A+
ASSISTANT TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS	NOTE: DSS Licensing does not distinguish between lead teachers and assistants. The Task Force proposes eliminating this category, creating common expectations for all classroom staff.				
RATIOS	Ages '07 '08 '09 < 1 1:5 1:5 1:5 1-2 1:6 1:6 1:6 2-3 1:9 1:8 1:7 3-4 1:13 1:12 1:11 4-5 1:18 1:17 1:16 5-6 1:21 1:20 1:19	Ages Ratios – (NOT REQUIRED) < 1 1:5 1-2 1:5 (REQUIRED) 2-3 1:7 3-4 1:11 4-5 1:13 5-6 1:15	Ages Ratios- required < 1 1:5 1-2 1:5 2-3 1:7 3-4 1:11 4-5 1:13 5-6 1:15	Ages Ratios (REQUIRED) < 1 1:5 1-2 1:5 2-3 1:7 3-4 1:11 4-5 1:13 5-6 1:15	Ages Ratios (REQUIRED) < 1 1:4 1-2 1:4 2-3 1:6 3-4 1:9 4-5 1:10 5-6 1:10
GROUP SIZE	None	Group Size - Scored for compliance (NOT REQUIRED) < 1 10 1-2 10 2-3 14 3-4 22 4-5 26 5-6 30	Group Size - Scored for compliance < 1 10 1-2 10 2-3 14 3-4 22 4-5 26 5-6 30 <u>OR</u> ERS SCORE at Level A Requirements	Group Size - (REQUIRED) < 1 10 1-2 10 2-3 14 3-4 22 4-5 26 5-6 30	Group Size - (REQUIRED) < 1 8 1-2 8 2-3 12 3-4 18 4-5 20 5-6 20
PHASE ONE PRIORITY: ENVIRONMENT RATING SCALES SCORES	ERS not required	ERS not required	Director and each lead teacher required to complete CCCCD certified introductory training in the Environment Rating Scales (ERS) within 1 year of hiring. Program will document ERS use for program self-assessment and staff planning.	Average ERS scores of at least 4.5 cumulative with 4.0 min. on staff-child interaction. Additionally, 7 standards addressing regulatory requirements, supervision of children, staff qualifications and development, health and safety, nutrition and food service, staff-parent interaction/involvement, and administration must be met.	Average overall ERS scores of at least 5.0 (with no classroom lower than a 4.0), average Interaction sub-scale score of 5.0 (with no classroom lower than 4.0).

PROPOSED TASK FORCE ENHANCEMENTS TO THE ABC TIERED QUALITY REIMBURSEMENT LEVELS

CRITERIA:	Existing ABC Participating (Level C)	Existing ABC Enhanced (Level B)	<u>DRAFT LEVEL B+</u>	Existing ABC Level A	<u>DRAFT LEVEL A+</u>
PROGRAM ASSESSMENT TOOL	Regulatory Monitoring Tool	ABC Monitoring Tool with a required 80% compliance to pass.	Same as Level B, and self-assessment using the ERS.	ERS (Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, Infant-Toddler Environment Rating Scale, Family Day Care Rating Scale, School Age Care Rating Scale) AND ABC monitoring tool for 7 standards	ERS (Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, Infant-Toddler Environment Rating Scale, Family Day Care Rating Scale, School Age Care Rating Scale)

Discussion of the Proposed Standards Revisions

The new levels proposed by the Task Force (above) have been designed to complement those of the S.C. Department of Social Services' ABC program. Level B+ is designed as a reasonable middle level between existing Levels B and A; Level A+ is designed as a logical progression beyond the current Level A. Like DSS' current levels and high performance bonuses (AA and BB), these new tiers emphasize increased teacher credentials from one level to the next and gradually higher Environment Rating Scale scores as centers advance.

While the Task Force considers the existing ABC structure a potential base from which to expand, **the group:**

- 1) **Recommends a review of all existing ABC program criteria to ensure *each criterion is based in research with evidence of positive impact on children*; and**
- 2) **Recommends the addition of incentives and supports to accelerate quality enhancement along research-based criteria.**

The Task Force strongly supports an enhanced focus on ***teacher qualifications*** and ***Environment Rating Scale scores*** as the logical first step in establishing a Quality Based Incentive System in South Carolina. Supports and infrastructure, many already in place, can be aligned to support provider quality advancement in these critical, research-based areas.

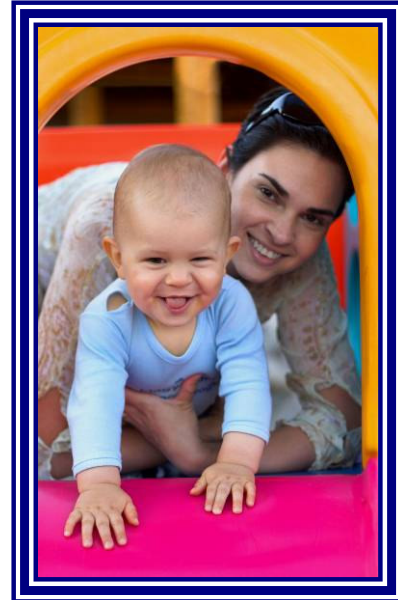


A Quality Based Incentive System for South Carolina: What is it and how is it *different* from a “Quality Rating System?”

South Carolina child advocates have long sought to establish a voluntary Quality Rating System (QRS) capable of providing consumers with information about the quality of the state's early childhood programs. According to the National Child Care Information Center, a Quality Rating System (QRS) is “a systemic approach to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early care and education programs.”¹¹

The Task Force examined QRS programs in states across the country, looking closely at quality criteria and research. During its preliminary phase, the group decided NOT to focus on standards or a QRS in isolation, but instead to align incentives and supports to research-based standards which evidence positive effects on children-- creating a Quality Based Incentive System (QBIS).

While there may be consumer awareness and program improvement benefits associated with public quality ratings, a *stand-alone* quality rating system threatens to trap many *parents and providers* in painfully “no win” situations. Without targeted public investment in support of quality enhancement, providers (struggling to provide quality service within the confines of sparse budgets) are forced to choose between the stigma associated with a poor rating and tuition increases that parents cannot bear. Families — eager to discern the “quality” of their current early childhood providers — may suffer the double disappointment associated with finding their child's center doesn't measure up *and* that they are unable to locate or afford other options.



The goal of South Carolina's QBIS is to advance and sustain early childhood program quality for all children, regardless of geography or family income. The proposed QBIS would add systemic supports and incentives to the state's existing ABC system, while making it more visible to consumers. In an expanded Quality Based Incentive System, ABC levels would serve as more than consumer tools – *becoming levers that enable quality improvements across the broad spectrum of early childhood providers.* The Task Force recommends this approach as optimal to sustain long-term quality enhancement gains for South Carolina's children.

¹¹ NCCIC website, <http://www.nccic.org/pubs/qrs-defsystems.html>: Quality Rating Systems: Definition and Statewide Systems. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration of Children and Families.

A Quality Based Incentive System: How Would it Work?

South Carolina's proposed QBIS would provide:

- **Quality Incentives to Families** -to assist them in choosing quality providers and enable them to afford these programs' higher costs;
- **Quality Incentives to Teachers** -to enable their continued professional development and recognize stable employment within high quality settings; and
- **Quality Incentives to Providers** – to help them afford program upgrades without relying solely on increased tuition rates for parents.

While the state's intervention in the early childhood marketplace will come at a cost (adjustable to the resources available by prioritizing the types and sizes of incentives offered), ***the investment can result in significant savings AND long-term dividends for a state whose goals include: 1) improving educational outcomes, 2) expanding its skilled labor force, and 3) increasing per capita income.***



In the following recommendations section of this report, readers will be introduced to proposed incentives. ***The Task Force's overarching goal is to create the public and private will for improving early childhood quality through targeted investments built on research-based standards.***

It is our hope to establish South Carolina as a leader in the development and implementation of a robust, incentive-based early childhood system that enhances quality, promotes school readiness, and optimizes the development of South Carolina's future workforce.

The Final Recommendations of the S.C. Task Force on Early Childhood Quality Standards

RECOMMENDATION TO S.C. POLICYMAKERS:
**Combine supports and incentives with consumer information to create a
Quality Based Incentive System (QBIS) for South Carolina early care
and education providers and families.**

The goal of the Task Force is *not to label, but aggressively improve* the quality of South Carolina's early childhood programs by offering a set of *research-based standards and well-targeted incentives*.

Investments in early childhood quality present a "double win" for policymakers. Targeted investments in quality can reap substantial savings in education, social services, and criminal justice system costs *and* yield significant dividends in higher per capita incomes associated with an increasingly skilled labor force.

The proposed Quality Based Incentive System (QBIS) builds on the system of supports already in place for early childhood programs in South Carolina. It is designed to provide incentives that promote quality choices among all stakeholders: families, teachers, and providers.

A. PROVIDE INCENTIVES AND OTHER SUPPORTS TO FAMILIES SELECTING QUALITY PROGRAMS

1. Modify South Carolina's child care tax credit, making it differential and tied to quality. By creating specific incentives designed to encourage families' use of high quality programs, the state will simultaneously *increase the demand for quality care and help S.C. families afford quality programs that may otherwise be out of their reach*. Maine's consumers double their tax credit for expenses incurred for "quality child care services" (from 21.5 percent to 43 percent of the allowable federal credit). Vermont's credit is more than doubled for tax-filers using quality care, from 24 percent to 50 percent of the federal credit.¹²

2. Make South Carolina's state child care tax credit larger and refundable. Research shows that quality early childhood programs have *the largest positive impact* on low-income children. Because the state's existing child care tax credit is both small and non-refundable, South Carolina's low-income families may not be able to use the credit to access high quality care. By making the child care tax credit larger and refundable, the state can help its neediest families afford the kind of quality programs associated with both short-term individual returns and long-term public gains. South Carolina's current child care tax credit is 7 percent of the expenses eligible for the federal credit —\$210 maximum per child or \$420 for more than one child.¹³



¹² National Women's Law Center, April 2006, "Making Care Less Taxing – Improving State Child and Dependent Care Tax Provisions."

¹³ Ibid.



3. Create state-funded “Quality Gap Scholarships” to support families choosing higher quality programs.

While the state receives federal dollars each year to provide child care vouchers for very low income families (those at approximately 50% of the federal poverty level and children in the child welfare system), the overwhelming majority of S.C. child care tuition is paid directly by families — and is often among their largest monthly expenses. By creating small, “quality gap scholarships” linked to attendance at centers exceeding a certain quality standard, the state can help low- and middle-income families afford the higher tuition rates associated with higher quality care.

4. Target state scholarship dollars for eligible children to programs exceeding basic licensing standards.

Though federally-funded vouchers are intended primarily to support a parent’s ability to work, research shows that it is high quality early childhood programs that enable children to

develop optimally. State-funded child care scholarships tied to programs that exceed minimum standards makes good investment sense — for the state and its children.

B. PROVIDE INCENTIVES AND OTHER SUPPORTS TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS TO ADVANCE THEIR PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS AND MAINTAIN STABLE EMPLOYMENT IN QUALITY SETTINGS

1. Expand South Carolina’s T.E.A.C.H.® (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) Scholarship Program to encourage professional development and advanced credentialing among early childhood professionals. Established in 2001, the T.E.A.C.H.® Scholarship program has provided 10,431 scholarships, enabling 4,160 individuals to further their educational levels in the early childhood field.

2. Promote and provide incentives for attainment of the *S.C. Directors Credential* and *Infant-Toddler Credential* (approved by South Carolina’s technical colleges and available at all 16 institutions), to build core competencies and recognize the significant contributions of both directors and infant-toddler caregivers.

3. Enable higher professional credentials and stable employment in the early childhood workforce through the *Child Care WAGES® Project* for early childhood teachers. Using successful models in North Carolina, Kansas, and Florida, pilot the use of wage supplements tied to educational advancement for early childhood teachers currently earning low wages. *Higher wages, incentives, and benefits to retain staff* were the answers cited most often by South Carolina providers asked how to immediately improve child care quality in the Task Force’s 2007 “Child Care Expert Questionnaire” (see Appendix F).

4. Extend the *Child Care WAGES®* and *T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Health Insurance Program* for teachers working in private, state-funded 4K classrooms in an effort to stabilize this workforce and maximize the state’s early childhood investment.

5. Establish a program similar to North Carolina’s *T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholars project*, granting scholarships to full-time students enrolled in four-year degree programs in child development or early childhood, who agree to seek full-time employment within high needs areas (infant-toddler care, for example), thus expanding critical early childhood workforce recruitment efforts.

C. PROVIDE INCENTIVES AND OTHER SUPPORTS TO PROVIDERS OPERATING QUALITY PROGRAMS

- 1. Create refundable, business tax credits for child care providers, linked to their enrollment and quality ratings.** Louisiana's recently enacted "School Readiness Tax Credits" includes a refundable tax credit for providers linked to their quality level and number of low-income children being served. With Maine's "Quality Child Care Improvement Tax Credit," providers who have expended at least \$10,000 in one year for quality improvements are offered a \$1,000 tax credit each year for up to 10 years following the investment.¹⁴
- 2. Establish a low-interest *loan-to-grant* program to assist with physical and materials needs associated with enhanced levels of quality.** Upon attainment (and/or the program's sustenance) of a designated level of quality, small loans to providers working to advance their quality can be converted to grants like those offered to candidates seeking National Board Teacher Certification or teacher loan recipients working in high-need settings.
- 3. Implement the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Health Insurance Program,** which helps partially reimburse providers for the cost of basic health insurance in selected child care programs that support the education and compensation of their staff (possibly in conjunction with local partners such as First Steps, the United Way and Child Care Resource and Referral). Consider North Carolina's model requiring participating teachers to ensure coverage of their own children (through their employer, spouse or the S-CHIP program).
- 4. Seek funds to create substitute teacher pools** available to providers whose staffs are taking classes to improve educational credentials, similar to North Carolina's T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Corps program.
- 5. Improve the current state business income tax credit for child care programs (S.C. Code 12-6-3440) in order to encourage investment in designated quality child care settings.** Since 1989 South Carolina employers have been able to claim credits equaling either 50% of the costs incurred in establishing child care programs for their employees (up to \$100,000/yr.) or 50% of payments made to a child care program on behalf of an employee (up to \$3,000/employee/yr.).¹⁵ This tax credit, however, has seen very little use. In 2004 only one SC corporation made use of this credit.

D. BUILD UPON THE STATE'S EXISTING ABC TIERED REIMBURSEMENT SYSTEM TO TRIGGER INCENTIVES TIED TO QUALITY AND PROVIDE CONSUMER INFORMATION.

- 1. Fully expand the ABC system to five levels, incorporating Task Force feedback and other stakeholder input, within two years. Establish a timeline for developing both consumer tools and incentives linked to quality.**

¹⁴ Louise Stoney and Ann Mitchell, "Can Tax Credits Help Promote and Finance High Quality Early Care and Education Services?" *An Idea Paper Submitted to the Partnership for America's Economic Success*, August 2007

¹⁵ <http://www.sctax.org/NR/rdonlyres/60EE4049-D68E-4DD7-A1DC-B4FF7889EE61/0/SCHTC9101106.pdf>

Appendix A: QBIS PHASE-IN

Because public resources are limited and the scope of work is enormous, the Task Force proposes a three-year phase-in of its recommendations. The following table depicts the actions necessary during each phase.

QBIS PHASE ONE

For Families:	For Teachers:	For Providers:
Target state scholarship dollars for eligible children to programs exceeding basic licensing standards.	Expand public and gubernatorial recognition of advancement on the early childhood career ladder for teachers.	Begin working to expand the existing ABC system to five levels, incorporating Task Force feedback by 2010. Complete review of existing ABC indicators to ensure the research basis of each.
Explore the feasibility of creating state-funded "Quality Gap Scholarships."	Expand existing T.E.A.C.H.® and "SMART money" bonuses to include bonuses for achievement of either the <i>S.C. Director's Credential</i> or <i>Infant-Toddler Credential</i> , each approved by S.C.'s Technical Colleges and available at all 16 institutions.	Increase requirements on First Steps training dollars to ensure targeted, age-specific training tied to technical assistance for quality advancement. Use First Steps dollars to pilot enhanced training and education requirements for S.C. child care licensing.
Continue to refine and offer current child care program information on the Child Care Resource and Referral and DSS websites.	Increase the availability of low- or no-cost certified ITERS and ECERS training for providers throughout 2008-2010.	Increase the availability of low- or no-cost certified ITERS and ECERS training for providers throughout 2008-2010.
	Promote and expand the use of South Carolina's T.E.A.C.H.® (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) Scholarship Program to encourage professional development amongst early childhood professionals.	Expand local Child Care Director and Teacher Networks as hosted by First Steps partnerships and/or local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies.
	Explore inclusion of certified, on-site technical assistance as training hours through continuing education credits or some other means (as Pennsylvania does).	Assist child care providers by ensuring coordination and consistency among agencies supporting child care providers, eliminating any duplication of effort and realigning work to research-based quality standards achievement where appropriate.
	Expand instructional offerings, assessment and technical assistance tools which build classroom process quality and teacher:student interactions.	Expand T.E.A.C.H.® bonuses and "SMART money" bonuses (for non-T.E.A.C.H. students) to include achievement of either the <i>S.C. Director's Credential</i> or <i>Infant-Toddler Credential</i> , each approved by S.C.'s Technical Colleges and available at all 16 institutions.
	Develop plan to enable higher professional development credentials and stable employment through the Child Care WAGE\$® supplements and T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Health Insurance benefits for teachers working in the state's private 4K classrooms.	Explore alternative Directors' Credentials for inclusion in the S.C. Early Childhood Career Ladder, such as the NAC.

Appendix A: Continued
QBIS PHASE IN

QBIS: PHASE TWO		
For Families:	For Teachers:	For Providers:
Build a single, coordinated Child Care Resource and Referral system and consumer website (connected to DSS licensing information).	Provide reimbursement or substitute pool for staff pursuing professional development, especially the S.C. Infant Toddler credential. (Example: North Carolina's T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Corps)	Expand public and gubernatorial recognition of participation and advancement within the expanded ABC/QBIS.
	Fund full-time regional Infant/Toddler specialists solely dedicated to support teachers working with these age groups. Provide annual provider/TA conference to ensure best practice professional development opportunities for these populations.	Establish a low-interest <i>loan-to-grant</i> program designed to assist providers in reaching enhanced levels of quality.
	Expand participation in regional child care technical assistance "hubs" to support local TA to child care providers, and ensure support, sharing, and the effective use of all resources dedicated to technical assistance.	Make Infant/Toddler Specialists available to programs for technical assistance and quality improvement.
	Modify the educational requirements within S.C. child care licensing to support "vertical" and age-specific instruction and certified, on-site technical assistance as continuing education credit in order to meet provider professional development needs, support career advancement, and promote industry-wide best practices.	Develop expanded instructional and leadership development support for directors through First Steps, DSS, and T.E.A.C.H.
	Conduct a feasibility study to explore implementation of the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood ® Health Insurance Program, which offers partial (basic medical) benefits reimbursement for teachers working in centers meeting specified educational requirements (possibly in conjunction with local First Steps Partnerships).	Create a mentoring or apprenticeship program in collaboration with the state's technical colleges through which centers benefit from the expertise of peers, perhaps in conjunction with the Director's Credential programs.
	Draft plan to enable higher professional credentials and stable employment in the early childhood workforce through the Child Care WAGE\$® Project for early childhood teachers (possibly in conjunction with local First Steps Partnerships).	Provide reimbursement or substitute pool for staff pursuing S.C. Infant Toddler credential. (Example: North Carolina's T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Corps)
		Expand regional child care technical assistance "hubs" to support local TA to child care providers, and ensure support, sharing, and the effective use of all resources dedicated to technical assistance.

Appendix A: CONTINUED

QBIS PHASE IN

QBIS PHASE THREE		
For Families:	For Teachers:	For Providers:
Establish a <i>differentiated</i> child care tax credit through which families choosing to enroll their children in tuition-based programs meeting the <i>highest quality standards</i> receive the largest credits.	Establish a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood @ Scholars program to grant scholarships to students enrolled in Child Development four-year degree programs who agree to seek full-time employment within high needs areas.	Improve the current state business income tax credit for child care programs (S.C. Code 12-6-3440) in order to encourage investment in designated quality child care settings.
Modify South Carolina's child care tax credit to make it <i>larger and refundable</i> for families seeking care at a high level of quality.	Establish T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood @ Health Insurance Program, which offers partial (basic medical) benefits reimbursement for teachers working in centers meeting specified educational requirements (possibly in conjunction with local First Steps Partnerships).	Create refundable, business tax credits for child care providers, linked to their enrollment and quality ratings.
Post QBIS quality levels for participating providers.	Establish salary supplements tied to educational advancement (via the Child Care WAGE\$@ program) for early childhood professionals attaining advanced professional credentials and maintaining stable employment in a high quality setting.	Use findings of Trial and Plaintiff Centers of Excellence project, along with data from Georgetown County First Steps, to enhance integrated child care investments and increase the appropriate focus on child assessment and individualized instruction in child care programs statewide.
Use the DSS, First Steps and SC CCR&R websites to build public awareness of quality standards, QBIS quality levels and participating providers.		Use findings of First Steps' federally-funded WIA child care enhancement project (2007-2010) to develop, in conjunction with the Technical Colleges, additional targeted workforce development investments to advance teacher credentials in rural settings.

Appendix B: DSS ABC Child Care Center Bonus Program

DSS ABC Child Care Center Bonus Program

(Effective October 2007 - September 2008)



AA Bonus Package for High-Performing Level A



\$20/child/week bonus payment (\$10 for half-time) for all ABC voucher children served if meet and maintain Level A standards Part I (1-7) and score at least 5.0 on Environment Rating Scale assessment tools.

And
One time bonus award (\$4,000)

And
Two ABC bonus slots to be used at the center. Not eligible if already receiving slots through "set-asides". Child must meet ABC eligibility criteria.

And
Immediate rate change for all enrolled ABC children.

Bonus Package for Level A



\$10/child/week bonus payment (\$5 for half-time) for all ABC voucher children served if meet and maintain Level A standards Part I (1-7) and score at least 4.5 on Environment Rating Scale assessment tools.

And
One time bonus award (\$3,500 max.) for scores on the Environment Rating Scales as below:

4.75 - 4.99	-	\$3,500
4.6 - 4.74	-	\$3,000
4.5 - 4.59	-	\$2,500

And
One ABC bonus slot to be used at the center. Not eligible if already receiving slots through "set-asides". Child must meet ABC eligibility criteria.

And
Immediate rate change for all enrolled ABC children.

BB Bonus Package for High-Performing Level B



\$10/child/week bonus payment (\$5 for half-time) for all ABC voucher children served if meet and maintain Level B standards Part I (1-5) and score at least 95% on Level B Part II on-site observation for all enrolled age groups.

And
One time bonus award (\$2,000)

Non-licensed centers eligible for ½ bonus award amount

Or
\$5/child/week bonus payment for all ABC voucher children served and one time bonus award (\$2,000 max.) if meet and maintain Level B standards Part I (1-5) and score as below on Level B Part II on-site observation:

- At least 90% in all age groups - \$2,000
- At least 90% in 2 age groups and at least 85% in 1 age group - \$1,500
- At least 90% in 1 age group and at least 85% in 2 age groups - \$1,000
- At least 85% in all age groups - \$500

Non-licensed centers eligible for ½ bonus award amount

Bonus Package for Level B



\$5/child/week bonus payment for all ABC voucher children served if meet and maintain Level B standards Part I (1-5) and score at least 80% on Level B Part II on-site observation for all enrolled age groups

And
One time bonus award (\$400 max.) if score as below on overall ABC Level B Part II on-site observation:

- At least 90% in 3 age groups - \$400
- At least 90% in 2 age groups - \$300
- At least 90% in 1 age group - \$200
- At least 85% in all age groups - \$100
- Meet all staff qualifications/ no overdue education plans - \$100
- Have all required documentation on-site at ABC visit - \$50

licensed centers eligible for ½ bonus award amount

Pilot Technical Assistance Grants - \$1,000
Only for centers in 14 pilot counties: Anderson, Greenville, Laurens, Oconee, Pickens, Spartanburg, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Kershaw, Lee, Marion, Marlboro, Williamsburg

Recommended by ABC child care program monitor

Agree to work with SC CCCC certified technical assistance provider

Sign agreed upon improvement plan based on performance on ABC Child Care Program standards.

Bonus for Entry at Level B from Level C



Initial one-time grant award up to \$2,500 if enroll as Level B provider and recommended by ABC monitor.

Appendix C:

Early Childhood Policy and Research Experts Contributing Testimony

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

National Experts

“National Trends in Early Childhood Education”

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

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

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

“A New Perspective from the Provider Community”

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

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

Louise Stoney, Alliance for Early Childhood Finance

“Quality Rating Systems”

Desiree Reddick-Head, National Child Care Information Center

South Carolina Experts

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

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

“The Implications of Quality Early Education for Brain Development”

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

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

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

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

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

Appendix D:

South Carolina Stakeholder Input

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

Special thanks to our Focus Group Participants and to SCETV for Providing Meeting Space

Higher Education

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

First Steps Executive Directors

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

Child Care Provider Group A

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

Department of Education

Robin McCants
Nancy Burchins
Norma Jenkins Donaldson

Child Care Provider Group B

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

Department of Social Services

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

Child Care Provider Group C

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

Early Care and Education Advocates

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

Appendix E:

South Carolina Stakeholder Input: Regional Forums

More than 100 citizen stakeholders attended regional meetings held in October 2006. Three or more members of the Task Force attended each of the regional meetings to receive comments from parents, child care providers and others.

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

Special thanks to the technical colleges who provided meeting space:

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

South Carolina Stakeholder Input: Survey

Nearly 1,600 stakeholders responded to a written survey that included both ranking and open-ended questions. Roughly one-third of respondents were parents of children 4 years of age or younger. The second largest group was comprised of early childhood professionals.

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

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

ADDITIONAL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Task Force Co-Chairs extend their special thanks to the following individuals for their support and feedback throughout the group's work:

Ms. Leigh Bolick, Division of Child Care Services, S.C. DSS
Ms. Beverly Hunter, ABC Child Care Program, S.C. DSS
The Staff of the SC Center for Child Care Career Development (CCCCD)
Ms. Laurie Rovin, Success by Six of Greenville County
Ms. Nancy Pryor, Chapin Children's Center
Ms. Marie Darstein, The Sunshine House

Appendix F: 2007 Child Care Expert Questionnaire

Questionnaires distributed November – December 2007

74 Center directors/staff responded statewide

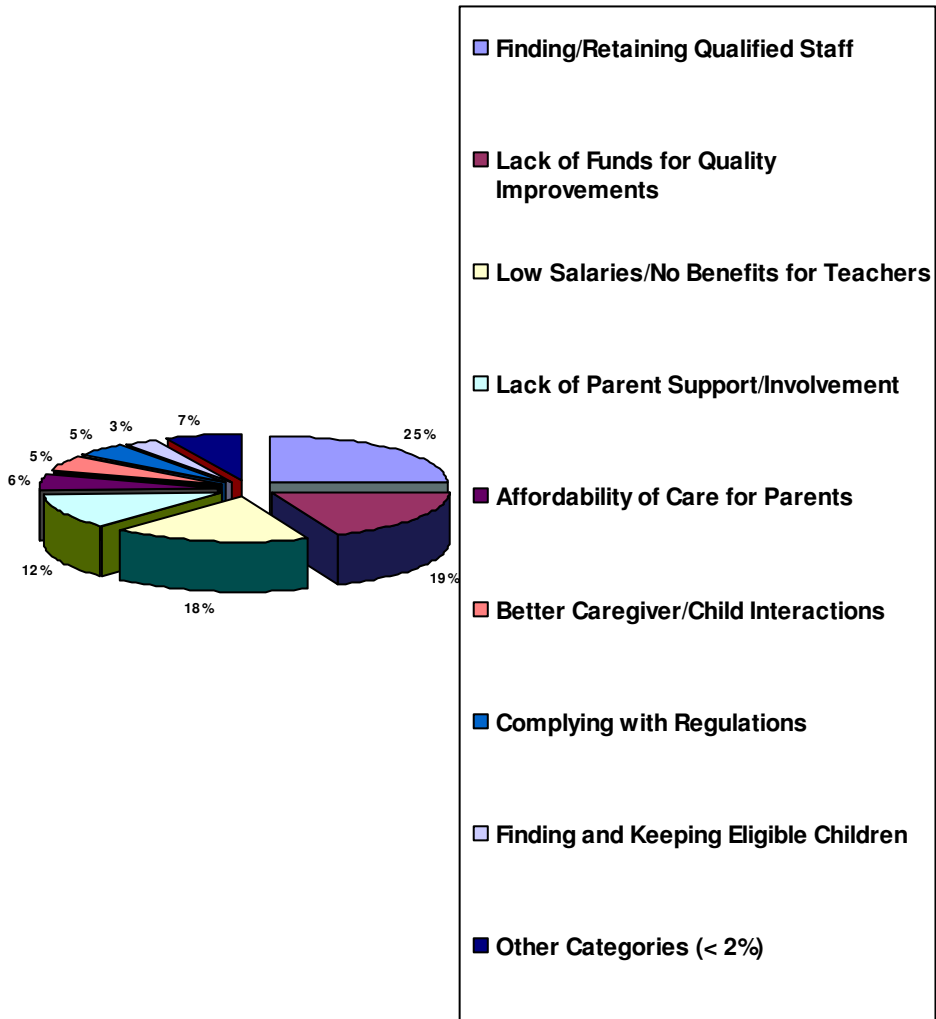
Summary of responses to BIGGEST CHALLENGES faced by providers in offering high quality child care:

Finding and retaining qualified staff	24	25%
Lack of funds	18	19%
Low salaries, lack of benefits	17	18%
Lack of parent support and involvement	12	12%
Affordability of care for parents	6	6%
Better caregiver /child interactions	5	5%
Complying with regulations	5	5%
Finding & keeping eligible children	3	3%
Need for free health screenings	2	2%
Working with local school district	2	2%
Common vision for higher standards	2	2%
Testing young children	1	1%

Summary of responses to RECOMMENDATIONS for the IMMEDIATE IMPROVEMENT of child care programs in South Carolina:

Higher wages, incentives and benefits to retain staff	32	23%
More Training and Professional Development	27	19%
Funding for materials and supplies, more resources	16	12%
More funding (general)	12	9%
Assistance for families to pay for care (more vouchers)	12	9%
Improved parent involvement and awareness	12	9%
Physical improvements to centers (capital costs)	7	5%
Need more teachers	6	4%
Provide transportation for children to care settings	2	1%
More support for DSS licensing	1	1%
Pre-school centers working better with schools	1	1%
Reliable substitutes for staffing	1	1%
“Adopt a Child” programs for community support	1	1%
Drug testing of employees	1	1%
Food programs	1	1%
Mandatory lesson plans	1	1%
Free SLED and FBI checks	1	1%
Inform centers about grants	1	1%

**Appendix F: 2007 Child Care Expert Questionnaire
BIGGEST CHALLENGES FACED BY PROVIDERS**



**Appendix F: 2007 Child Care Expert Questionnaire
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMMEDIATE IMPROVEMENT**

