WEBINAR

Making Government Work for Families

How States Can Prioritize the Customer Experience for Families Accessing Publicly Funded Services

Thursday, May 18 | 3:00 ET

Alliance *for* Early Success
Every Child. Every State.

Welcome!

Mandy Ableidinger, Senior Policy Director
Alliance for Early Success

- **Q&A**: Use the Q&A function for questions and we'll get to as many as possible.

- **Chat**: Feel free to tell us who you are and comment along in the chat, but put your questions for the panelists in the Q&A box.

- **Recording**: Recording and links/resources will be sent out in the next few days and will be posted at earlysuccess.org/stateactioncalls.

Alliance *for*
Early Success
Every Child. Every State.

Panelists

New Practice Lab at New America

South Carolina First Steps & the SC Early Childhood Advisory Council

Sarah Gilliland
Senior Policy Analyst

Jessica Weeden
Senior Design Lead

Georgia Mjartan
Executive Director

Rachal Hatton-Moore
Two-Generation
Coordinator

Alliance *for*
Early Success
Every Child. Every State.

Lost in the Labyrinth: Complex Navigation of Early Care and Education Programs

May 18, 2023

NEW AMERICA

What is the New Practice Lab?

The Lab works to improve the design and delivery of **policies focused on family economic security and wellbeing** with input from the people they are meant to serve.

We help government earn back trust by making the safety net simpler + more responsive to American families.

We work on

IMPROVING ACCESS TO **EARLY CARE PROGRAMS**

INCREASING **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR FAMILIES**

MEETING THE **NEEDS OF FAMILIES AND CAREGIVERS**

We work on two, mutually reinforcing fronts

IMPROVE POLICY DELIVERY

STRATEGY 01

Improvement partnerships with families + public officials to improve delivery of existing policy

IMPROVE POLICY DESIGN

STRATEGY 02

Research + support for policymakers to put delivery at the center of new policy design

NEW AMERICA

The early care and education system lacks cohesion

NEW AMERICA

Many programs, multiple broken paths

Early care and education programs positively impact long-term social, cognitive, emotional, and physical child development.

➔ 36 federal programs explicitly support child and family well-being.

➔ Access is hampered by chronic underinvestment and fragmentation, and creates real consequences for families with young children.

NEW AMERICA

Understanding complexity in early care and education

We listened to families

The Lab worked with parents and community stakeholders in Minnesota to reduce complexity in ECE programs.

They cited multiple challenges to accessing early care and education programs, specifically understanding eligibility criteria, navigating cumbersome and repetitive applications, and limited options for programs.

We summarized this work in December 2022.

NEW AMERICA

Looking through a broader, national lens
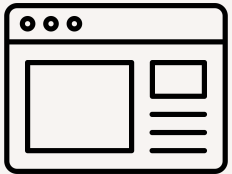
50 STATE + DC SCAN

→ **Program websites**

→ **Family-facing hubs**

→ **Eligibility screeners**

→ **Online applications**

LOOKING FOR

❏ Collocation of programs

❏ Family-centric plain language

❏ Site translation

❏ Readily available contact information

NEW AMERICA

Scan was scoped to four core programs

Number of children served annually by programs in each core area

Program	Children served
Child Care Assistance	1.5M
Head Start & Early Head Start	751.6K
EI & Preschool Special Ed	1.3M
State-funded PreK	1.4M

Individual program totals sum to more than 4 million because a child may be served by multiple programs.

Source: New Practice Lab analysis of multiple data sources. Office of Child Care/HHS, Office of Head Start/HHS, Office of Special Education Programs/ED, and NIEER State Preschool Yearbook 2021

NEW AMERICA

NEW AMERICA

Families face a maze of programs

Most states offer families five or more distinct early care and education programs.

Distribution of number of programs offered by each state
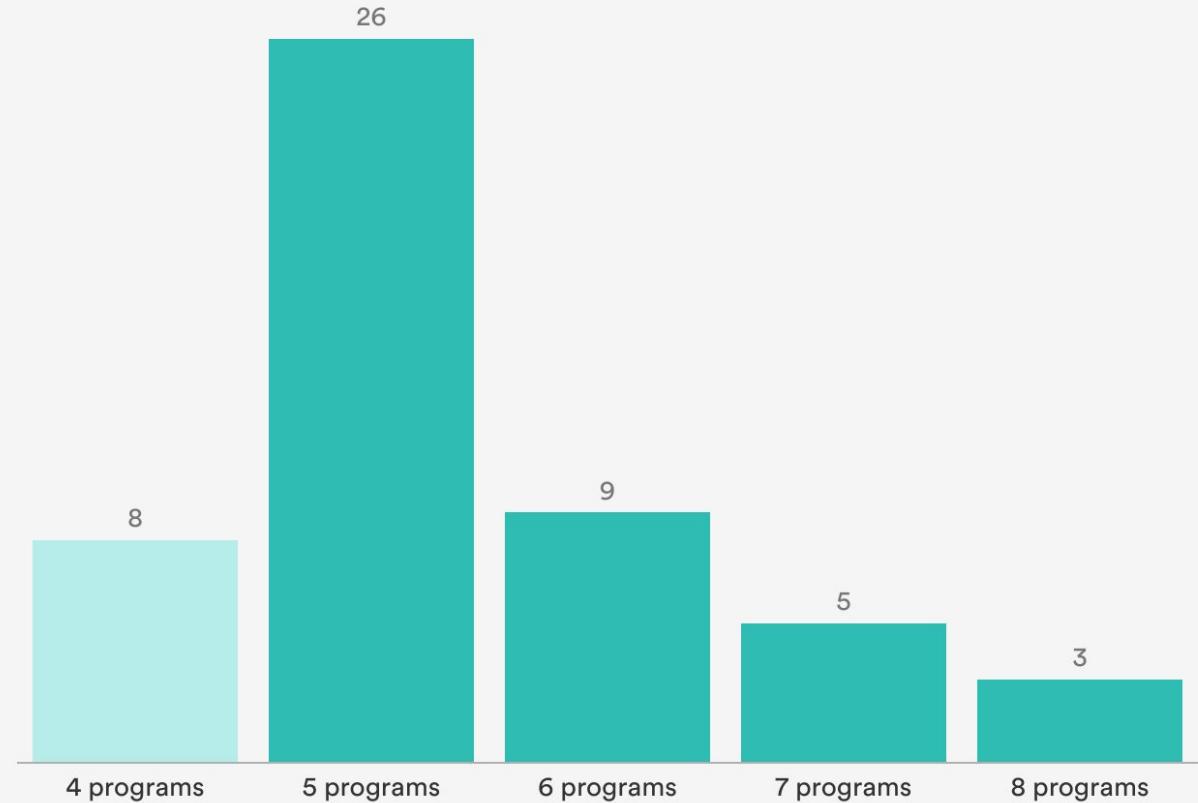
Number of programs offered in 4 core areas: child care assistance, Head Start/Early Head Start, early intervention and preschool special education, and state-funded prekindergarten.

Source: Original New Practice Lab analysis

NEW AMERICA

Programs are fragmented and complexity is widespread

Minnesota is not an outlier.

In a majority of states, information about the four core programs was spread out over three or more separate websites.

While states with consolidated governance structures were more likely to have program information collocated, this was not always the case.

NEW AMERICA

Bright spots

Clear program information and site navigation

Ohio's Bold Beginning website header has clearly labeled sections for families separate from providers. It also links to a translated site to support families who may not be comfortable navigating a site in English.
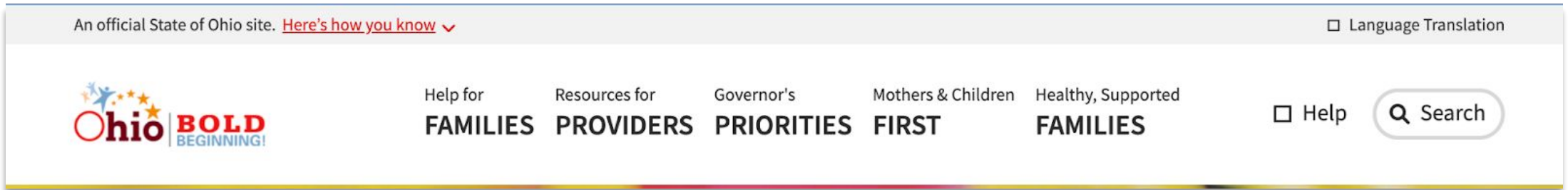
Source: Screenshot of Ohio Early Child Programs, Bold Beginning!, accessed March 27, 2023, https://boldbeginning.ohio.gov/.

Bright spots

Eligibility screeners

New Mexico offers a 5-step eligibility screener that doesn't require login information prior to using it. Results show all benefit programs the user may be eligible for, with links to applications where available and programs they may not qualify for.

Step 1 of 5

Please Tell Us A Little About You and Your Household...

Feel free to use a nickname or initials when completing the information below.

What is your first name? *

What is your age? *

Does the other parent/legal guardian live with you and the children? *

How many children do you have? *

Is anyone in the home an expecting parent? *

In what county do you live? *

How did you hear about us? *

Please select one that best describes your current living situation: *

NEXT

Source; Screenshot of New Mexico's Early Child Education & Care Department, "Am I Eligible?", accessed March 30, 2023

Bright Spots

Eligibility Screeners

First5 South Carolina offers an eligibility screener for over 40 services.

This was an example of a state with a "fragmented" ECE governance system that has collaborated to provide a single "front door" for families with young children.
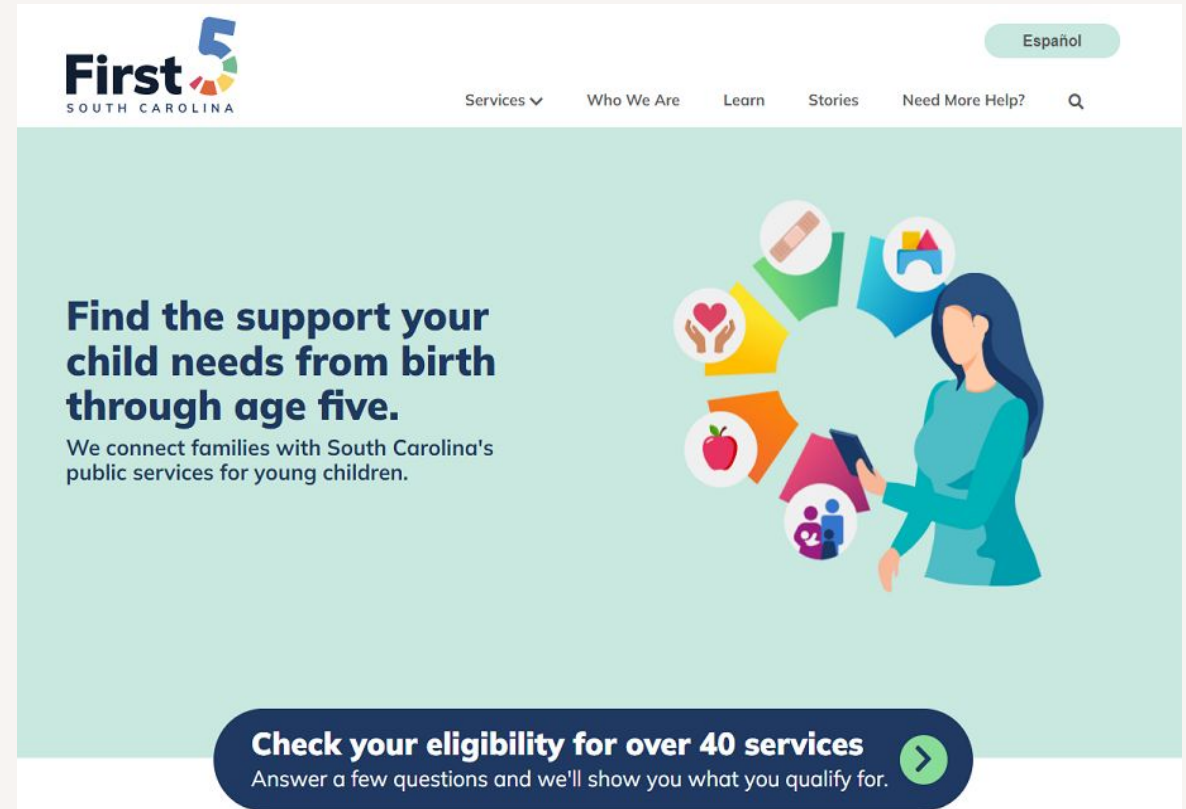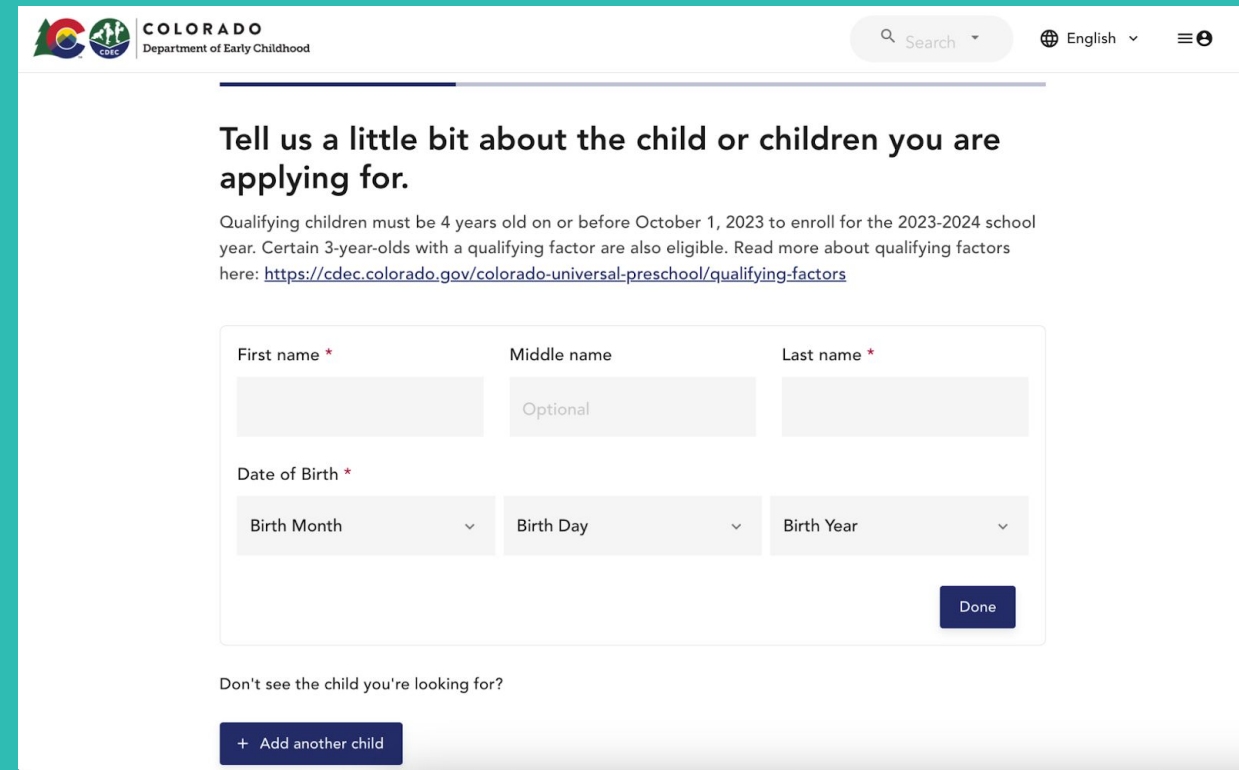
Source: Screenshot of First5 South Carolina eligibility screener, accessed March 30, 2023, https://first5sc.org/.

Bright spots

Improved application experiences

Colorado offers a single online application for all preschool programs, alleviating the burden of having to determine which programs one is eligible for and then completing multiple applications.

Concluding Thoughts

ECE sector is largely **fragmented → impedes families' access**

Deeper **investments necessary** to create a cohesive system

Consolidated ECE state governance structure is not a prerequisite for reducing complexity for families

Streamline and improve accountability in existing delivery systems to stretch existing investments now

Continue federal and state ECE **alignment and coordination efforts**

Federal Coordination and Support

The federal government has recognized the complexity families face in accessing ECE services, as well as the challenges administrators and providers face in delivering them.

- ACF model application
- Customer Experience Executive Order
- Care Executive Order
- ASPE's Early Childhood Systems Collective Impact Project

NEW AMERICA

Contact us

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NEW AMERICA

Flow of state & federal funds into South Carolina's early childhood system

State Funds

Federal Department of Health and Human Services

Federal Department of Agriculture

Federal Department of Education

Administration for Children and Families
- Office of Head Start
- Office of Child Care
  - Child Care Development Fund (CCDF)
  - Preschool Development Grant (PDG)
- Office of Family Assistance
  - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Children's Bureau
  - Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP)

Health Resources and Services Administration
- Maternal and Child Health Bureau
  - Maternal and Child Health Block Grant (MCHBG)
  - Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV)

Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services
- Medicaid
  - Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

Food, Nutrition and Community Services
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
- Part B, Section 619
- Part C

Institute for Education Sciences
- National Center for Education Statistics
  - Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems Grant (SLDS)

Federal Funds Direct to 25 Local Grantees

South Carolina Early Childhood Advisory Council

SC First Steps
- Early Childhood Advisory Council
- Local Partnerships
  - Health
  - Parenting
  - Early Care and Education
  - School Transitions
- First Steps 4K

SC Department of Education
- Division of Data, Technology, and Agency Operations
  - SLDS
- Office of Special Education Services
  - Part B, Section 619 (Ages 3+)
- Office of Early Learning and Literacy
  - State 4K (public school settings; supplemental info 2)

SC Department of Social Services
- SNAP
- TANF
- CACFP
- CCDF
  - SC Voucher
  - Child care licensing
  - ABC Quality
  - Child Care Resource and Referral
- PDG
- Head Start Collaboration Office

SC Department of Health and Human Services
- Medicaid
- CHIP
- Part C (BabyNet Ages 0-30
- Birth Outcomes Initiative

Department of Health and Environmental Control
- Bureau of Community Nutrition Services
  - WIC
- Bureau of Maternal and Child Health
  - MCHBG
- Local Health Departments: Home Visiting

Children's Trust of South Carolina
- MIECHV
  - SC Home Visiting Consortium
- CBCAP

Department of Disabilities and Special Needs
- Early Intervention (Ages 3-5)

Head Start
- Preschool Head Start
- Early Head Start
- Migrant Head Start
- American Indian Head Start
- Early Head Start - Child Care Partnerships

Additional Members of the Interagency Collaboration Committee of the ECAC

Educational Television
- PBS Kids (National Content)
- SCETV Kids (Local Content)
- KnowItAll.org
- Educator Training
- WiFi Hotspots (First Steps, Head Start, After School Alliance)
- Community/Parent Engagement

Department of Mental Health
- Hall Psychiatric Institute – Child and Adolescent Hospital at G. Werber Bryan Psychiatric Hospital
- Community Mental Health Services

State Library

Commission on Higher Education

We listened

to 2500+ parents and caregivers in every county of the state and members of the SC Family Voice Council

"As a parent you have to fill out [applications] several times, and it takes a lot of time."

"Finding support can be difficult."

"It takes forever to wait at offices in-person."

Our vision
All children will be successful

Special Needs & Early Intervention

Health & Safety

Food & Nutrition

Child Care & Early Education

Parenting & Family Support

Get the support your child needs from birth through age five.

We connect families with South Carolina's public services for young children.

Check your eligibility for over 40 services.

Answer a few questions and we'll show you what you qualify for. You can now apply online.

〉

Connect To Services

Contact Info — Child's Birthday — Address — Additional Criteria — Income

Contact Info

Please enter your contact information.

We'll only use this information to contact you regarding enrolling in publicly funded programs. View privacy policy

Pamela Cooper

pcooper@email.com

803-555-5555

How did you hear about First Five SC?

○ Billboard

○ Family/Friend

○ Google Search

○ Radio

○ SC First Steps

○ Sign/Poster

● Social Media

○ Other

Other

☑ Yes, I consent to the collection and/or usage by SC First Steps or our partners of your personal information as referred to or otherwise stated in the Privacy Policy and Terms of Use.

Next

First 5
SOUTH CAROLINA

Connect To Services

Contact Info ——— Child's Birthday ——— Address   Additional Criteria   Income

Child's Birthday

Please enter your child's birthday or your expected due date.

To determine eligibility for multiple children, complete this form and then you will have the opportunity to complete for another child.

August	⇕

20	⇕

2019	⇕

Back   Next

First 5
SOUTH CAROLINA

Services ⌄   Who We Are   Learn   Stories   Need More Help?   🔍

Connect To Services

● ———— ● ———— ● ———— ○ ———— ○

Contact Info   Child's Birthday   Address   Additional Criteria   Income

Address

Please enter your home address.

Eligibility in some programs is dependent on your home address.
Please select address from the dropdown below to proceed.

100 Tarrar Springs Road, Lexington, SC, USA

Apartment Number

Back   Next

Additional Criteria

Select all that may apply:

Household Circumstances

☐ My child/family is experiencing homelessness.

☑ English is not the primary language spoken in our home.

☑ My child lives in a single parent household.

☐ My child has refugee status.

☐ I did not have a high school education when my child was born.

☐ My child has a parent that is currently incarcerated or was incarcerated and released in the last 12 months.

☐ My child has had a death in the immediate family (parent/caregiver or sibling).

☐ The child's parent/caregiver is currently on military deployment or has returned home within the last two years from a military deployment.

☐ I am a first time parent.

Developmental Delays and Special Needs

☑ I am concerned about my child's development.

☐ My child has special needs.

☐ My child is experiencing behavioral issues.

☐ My child is blind or visually impaired.

☐ My child is deaf or hearing impaired.

Are you already eligible or receiving government benefits?

☐ My child/family is enrolled or eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

☐ My child is eligible for and receives Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

☑ My child is eligible for or enrolled in Medicaid.

☑ My child/family is eligible for or enrolled in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

☐ My child is eligible for or receives free or reduced lunch.

☐ My child is eligible for IDEA Part B or Part C (early intervention, special education, and related services).

High Risk Pregnancy

☐ When my child was born, their parent/caregiver was under 20 years old.

☐ My child had low birth weight (under 5.5lbs) with serious medical complications.

Adoption / Foster Care

☐ My child is in foster care (I am my child's foster parent).

☐ My child is adopted.

Abuse / Neglect

☐ My child has been abused (this information is asked to help determine if your child may be eligible for some additional services and is optional to answer).

☐ My child has been neglected (this information is asked to help determine if your child may be eligible for some additional services and is optional to answer).

Back   Next

Connect To Services

Contact Info ——— Child's Birthday ——— Address ——— Additional Criteria ——— Income

Income

Please enter your family's size including yourself, and your family's annual gross income (before taxes are taken out).

Persons in Household

3   ⇕

Annual Income

$24,500.00

Back   Next

Based on the information you entered, your child may be eligible for the following programs that you can apply for on First Five SC:

SC Child Care Scholarships

Parents with income below 300% of the federal poverty level may be eligible for scholarships to pay for child care while they work or attend school.

Learn More ❯

WIC (Women, Infants, and Children Nutrition Program)

Free nutrition education, healthy foods, breastfeeding support and other services for pregnant and postpartum women and children under age 5.

Learn More ❯

Parents as Teachers

Combining personal coaching and group sessions with other families, this program helps parents make the most of their important role in children's development and education.

Learn More ❯

PASOs Connections for Child Development

Focused on supporting Latinx families, PASOs screens infants, toddlers, and children under age 5 for developmental delays.

Learn More ❯

Dolly Parton Imagination Library

Any child up to age 5 can get a free book every month, to promote reading and build their own library.

Learn More ❯

Countdown to 4K

Countdown to 4K supports strong school transitions by connecting children entering preschool, families, and teachers in a series of one-on-one visits during the summer.

Learn More ❯

First Steps 4K+

Choose a free, full-day 4K program in a licensed child care center, charter school or private school. Plus, get child care scholarships for the whole family.

Learn More ❯

Apply Now on First Five SC
Apply now for all the programs above in one place.

❯

Based on the information you entered,
your child may also be eligible for the following programs:

For information on how to apply for these programs click "learn more" under each program.

Head Start

Care, activities, and lunch are provided free to children birth to age 5 who are from families with income at or below the poverty level.

Learn More ❯

Department of Mental Health Child Adolescent and Family Services

This is a starting place for families who need help with mental health, substance use, and behavioral health services, with the ability to connect parents and children to services in their community.

Learn More ❯

SC Department of Disabilities and Special Needs Early Intervention

Find a range of in-home service to help families understand a child's delays and support a child's development.

Learn More ❯

SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)

Known to many as food stamps, SNAP provides low-income households with help to buy food.

Learn More ❯

SC Department of Education - Special Education Services

The Office of Special Education Services can help parents learn about public education access that is guaranteed to children with disabilities.

Learn More ❯

Early Head Start

Free child care and parenting support are provided for eligible children age 3 and under, pregnant women, and their families.

Learn More ❯

Medicaid

Adults and children in low income households may qualify for help paying medical bills.

Learn More ❯

SCDE Public School Pre-K CERDEP

Local school districts offer many options for public school 4K, and eligibility is based on income, Medicaid eligibility, developmental readiness, and other factors based on each district's PreK offerings.

Learn More ❯

EMAIL ME MY RESULTS

COMPLETE FOR ANOTHER CHILD

START OVER

First 5 SOUTH CAROLINA

Common Application

Create a First Five SC account

If you are just getting started, create a First Five SC account to apply for benefits.

With a First Five SC account you can:

- Save your application and finish it later.
- Keep track of programs you are eligible for.
- Securely share uploaded documents with mulitple programs.

Create First Five SC Account

-OR-

Apply as a guest

Continue your application

If you already have a First Five SC account, sign in to finish your application.

Sign In

First Five SC may show information about you or your dependents' possible eligibility to participate in program(s). The programs will make final decisions based on the information you provide. It is your responsibility to give the correct information to programs so they can determine eligibility. If there are programs you are interested in applying for that are not on the First Five SC application, please reach out to them directly.

Common Application

Basic Information

Let's start with some basic information that will be used on your application.

| Pamela | Middle Name | Cooper | Suffix |

pcooper@email.com | 803-555-5555

100 Tarrar Springs Road

Address Line 2

Lexington | South Carolina | 29072

Child 1:   X

| First Name | Middle Name | Last Name | Suffix |

Male

Birthday:

mm/dd/yyyy

Add Another Child

☐ Yes, I consent to the collection and/or usage by SC First Steps or our partners of your personal information as referred to or otherwise stated in the Privacy Policy and Terms of Use.

Next

Common Application

Start a New Application

First Steps 4K+
Choose a free, full-day 4K program in a licensed child care center, charter school or private school. Plus, get child care scholarships for the whole family.

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WIC (Women, Infants, and Children Nutrition Program)
Free nutrition education, healthy foods, breastfeeding support and other services for pregnant and postpartum women and children under age 5.

Lexington County First Steps
Use this form to apply for the following programs:

Parents as Teachers
Combining personal coaching and group sessions with other families, this program helps parents make the most of their important role in children's development and education.

PASOs Connections for Child Development
Focused on supporting Latinx families, PASOs screens infants, toddlers, and children under age 5 for developmental delays.

Dolly Parton Imagination Library
Any child up to age 5 can get a free book every month, to promote reading and build their own library.

Countdown to 4K
Countdown to 4K supports strong school transitions by connecting children entering preschool, families, and teachers in a series of one-on-one visits during the summer.

Looking for more programs?
Check eligibility for each child. Check again if you've moved.

COMPLETE THE ELIGIBILITY SCREENER AGAIN

How to build a family-centered portal

A roadmap for coordinating eligibility and enrollment in the early childhood system

Identify funding needs & sources

Engage stakeholders

Build the portal

Lay the groundwork

Spread the word

"When our two-year-old daughter was diagnosed with an extremely rare syndrome that impacted her hearing, we didn't know where to start. First Five SC connected us to the resources we needed and coached us through the application process. Having all that information in one centralized place was key to getting the right kind of help – fast."

Katie H.
South Carolina parent

Georgia Mjartan
Executive Director

gmjartan@scfirststeps.org

Rachal Hatton-Moore
Two-Generation Coordinator

rhatton@scfirststeps.org

first5sc.org

Family is not an
important thing.
It's everything.

Michael J. Fox

Visit **earlysuccess.org/stateactioncalls** to find:

- Recording of this and past calls
- Links to resources
- Sign up form for invitations to future presentations

Alliance for Early Success
National Issues ▶ State Action