



For Immediate Release
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First Steps Releases “Profile of the Ready Kindergartner”

Columbia, SC – On December 3, 2015, South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness unveiled the “Profile of the Ready Kindergartner” – the new description of school readiness for the State of South Carolina and the [I CAN] public awareness campaign to promote it statewide.

Designed in collaboration with the South Carolina Board of Education, the “Profile of the Ready Kindergartner” describes what families and caregivers, communities, and schools can do to help children arrive at kindergarten ready for success.

“Preparing the state’s young children for school is a responsibility we all share,” said Ken Wingate, Chairman of the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees. “The idea that we all have an important role to play is also the cornerstone of our new, public awareness campaign, [I CAN]. Helping our children succeed in kindergarten begins at birth and takes all of us working together.”

“The message of [I CAN] is the message of First Steps,” said Darnell McPherson, executive director of Darlington County First Steps (DCFS). “It takes all of us, each playing a role to ensure our children have the best possible start in life. As a county partnership of South Carolina First Steps, we work collaboratively with families, organizations, and communities to support children’s readiness for school.”

This week, [I CAN] signs began popping up along roadways in every county, courtesy of local First Steps partnerships. “The idea is to spark interest about what [I CAN] is all about,” said McPherson. In the coming weeks, [I CAN] will offer multiple opportunities for people to get involved in their local communities via the [I CAN] web site (<http://ican.sc>), Facebook (icansc), and Twitter (#icansc).

In 2014, the SC General Assembly passed Act 287, which includes the state’s first-ever legal definition of school readiness. The law also charged First Steps with working in collaboration with the State Board of Education to develop a family-friendly description of the ready kindergartner.

“School readiness is about more than academic content,” Wingate added. “Certainly, numbers and letters are important, but it’s also important that families provide for the physical, social and emotional needs of their children and that schools and communities support families.”

The “Profile of the Ready Kindergartner” aligns with both state standards and the “Profile of the South Carolina Graduate” released by TransformSC in September of 2013.

“Where the ‘Profile of the South Carolina Graduate’ highlights skills and characteristics needed for college, career, and citizenship readiness, benchmarks found in the ‘Profile of the Ready Kindergartner’ serve as the building blocks for these traits,” added Susan DeVenny, Director of South Carolina First Steps. “Skills that foster adult success are firmly rooted during a child’s early years.”

Initial Endorsers of the “Profile of the Ready Kindergartner” are:

SC First Steps to School Readiness
SC State Board of Education
SC Council on Competitiveness' TransformSC
SC Chamber of Commerce
The LARCUM Bishops' Education Initiative
SC Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Palmetto State Teachers Association

For more information about the Profile of the Ready Kindergartner and the [I CAN] public awareness campaign, visit <http://ican.sc>.

For more information about Darlington County First Steps, call 843-857-3148, visit www.darlingtoncountyfirststeps.org, or find them on Facebook.

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