



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Porlan Cunningham
803-734-0100
pcunningham@scfirststeps.org

Palmetto Pre-K Initiative Hosts FREE Statewide Training for SC's Early Childhood Educators *Nationally-known early childhood education experts share latest techniques and developments*

Columbia, S.C. (June 14, 2019) – Today, hundreds of South Carolina's Pre-K (pre-kindergarten) teachers returned to their classrooms equipped with new strategies and techniques to educate and engage young learners after attending the "Palmetto Pre-K Jamboree", a three-day professional development training for the state's four-year-old teachers from across federal, state and locally-funded Pre-K programs.

The training, held June 11-13, was a coordinated effort among [South Carolina First Steps](#), [Head Start](#), the [South Carolina Department of Education](#) and the [South Carolina Department of Social Services](#) under the newly formed Palmetto Pre-K initiative, created to help families find free and subsidized Pre-K4 programs and to support teachers of four-year-old children in South Carolina.

"It has been a great experience working with our agency partners to bring early childhood educators together to get the training they need to be even more effective in the classroom," said Georgia Mjartan, executive director of South Carolina First Steps, the state's only dedicated early childhood agency. "Through continued collaboration with other agencies under this new Palmetto Pre-K initiative, we aim to connect families throughout South Carolina with quality Pre-K programs for their children."

Nationally-recognized early education experts, Lisa Murphy ([the Ooey Gooey Lady®](#)), Anthony Broughton, Ph.D. ([Mister B](#)) and [Conscious Discipline®](#) certified instructors Heidi Condrey and Mandy Lloyd were called upon to share the latest early childhood education developments and techniques for classroom learning and engagement. In addition, breakout sessions were offered on topics, such Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Awareness and purposeful play, which is used to ignite joy and playfulness in learning.

- more -

Workshop facilitator, Lisa Murphy of Ooey Gooley, Inc. provided attendees of her workshop with ways to make the classroom experience “real, relevant and meaningful” by demonstrating how to turn ordinary household items into fun, educational activities for young learners.

“I hope to help participants reconnect with their joy for teaching and that my presentation will give them a sense of empowerment to speak up for the importance of play in their students’ learning experiences,” said Murphy. “They should reflect on what they’ve learned here and use it as a lens to see their classroom through their student’s eyes.”

Early childhood teachers are among the lowest paid in the education profession with few quality professional development opportunities. The Palmetto Pre-K Jamboree provided four-year-old teachers access to free, top-notch professional development training they would not typically have access to. The Jamboree was held in three locations across the state: Westview Primary School in Goose Creek, Lexington Two Center for Innovation in Cayce, and Laurens District High School in Laurens and was one of many projects made possible through a \$3.5 million federal Preschool Development Grant to the South Carolina Department of Social Services.

#

About Palmetto Pre-K

Palmetto Pre-K is a new initiative derived from the Preschool Development Birth-5 Grant, a \$3.5 million federal grant to the S.C. Department of Social Services. The grant activities are coordinated and administered in partnership with SC First Steps, the South Carolina Department of Education and the Head Start Collaboration Office. Palmetto Pre-K is a collaboration that involves all partners across Pre-K programs statewide serving 4-year-olds.

About ECAC

The South Carolina Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) includes the directors of state agencies and government entities that provide services to young children including the Department of Education, Department of Social Services, Department of Health and Environmental Control, Department of Health and Human Services, Children’s Trust, Head Start Collaboration Office and SC First Steps, which is the connector and convener of all early childhood serving agencies.

This program was made possible by Grant Number 90TP0007 from the Office of Child Care, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.