**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**[DATE]**

Contact: [NAME]

 [TITLE]

 [PHONE NUMBER]

 [EMAIL ADDRESS]

**[YOUR COUNTY] FIRST STEPS PROVIDES FREE MASKS DURING PANDEMIC**

**[LOCATION], S.C.–** [YOUR COUNTY] First Steps is helping to ensure that young learners stay healthy this holiday season. The local nonprofit will distribute [TOTAL NUMBER OF MASKS] reusable masks for adults and children as part of a nationwide effort to support safe schooling during COVID-19.

 [EDIT/INSERT QUOTE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HERE] “Health is the foundation of school readiness,” said Executive Director [NAME]. “By providing these masks to parents and child care providers, we can help support healthy learning environments for every child in [YOUR COUNTY].”

[DESCRIBE IN DETAIL HOW AND WHERE YOU HAVE OR PLAN TO DISTRIBUTE THE MASKS (specific child care centers, community partners that work with families, care packages, etc.)] Ex. On Saturday, December 19, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., First Steps staff and volunteers will distribute packages of adult- and youth-sized cloth masks free to anyone in the community. The event will be drive-thru only at [ADDRESS] in [CITY/TOWN]. Each package contains 5 reusable and washable cloth masks.

[YOUR COUNTY] First Steps received the masks from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services through a statewide distribution effort by SC DHEC, the SC Department of Education, and South Carolina First Steps.

[OPTIONAL QUOTE FROM COMMUNITY MEMBER/ORGANIZATION RECEIVING MASKS]

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**ABOUT [YOUR COUNTY] FIRST STEPS**

[YOUR COUNTY] First Steps is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and a local partnership of South Carolina First Steps, the state’s only dedicated early childhood initiative focused on getting children ready for school and life success. First Steps partners with families, early educators, and communities statewide to support children from birth through age five.

Learn more about [YOUR COUNTY] First Steps at [**WEBSITE**]. For more on South Carolina First Steps and its local partnerships, visit **SCFIRSTSTEPS.ORG.**