



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Catholic Diocese of Charleston participating in State's First Steps 4K program**

CHARLESTON, SC – More than a dozen Catholic schools in South Carolina will be participating in the State's First Steps 4K program this fall compared to three last academic year. The program provides funds to Medicaid eligible children in South Carolina to attend 4K programs at private institutions that best fit their individual needs.

Previously, low income residents of 17 public school districts were excluded from accessing this important program. Now, 4K students who could not afford a private school can attend a Catholic institution where they will receive a quality education in a Catholic environment.

To qualify during the 2020-2021 school year, a child must:

- Be 4 years old on or before Sept. 1, 2020
- Be eligible for Medicaid, free- or reduced-price lunch program, SNAP/TANF recipient OR be experiencing homelessness, transiency, or in foster care
- Be a South Carolina Resident

Catholic schools were formed over the last 200 years for direct education of children in impoverished and minority communities. Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Sandra Leatherwood, added, "This expanded program across the diocese continues our work to further justice in our society – especially for our children."

Families interested in their child attending a quality 4K program in our Catholic school system may visit our website at <https://charlestdiocese.org/schools/first-steps> to view a complete list of those schools providing First Steps programming.

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