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## **COUNTDOWN TO KINDERGARTEN KICKS OFF AT EDVENTURE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM**

**Eighth Annual Educational Event Offers Free Admission**

COLUMBIA, SC— July 13, 2011—EdVenture Children's Museum and The United Way of the Midlands invite all South Carolina rising kindergartners and their families to the eighth annual Countdown to Kindergarten Celebration from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 12. The celebration will provide parents with a helpful school readiness checklist of things children need to know before starting kindergarten such as knowing their name, address and phone number; tying their shoes; washing their hands; waiting their turn; and sharing with others. Families can connect with representatives from school districts, state agencies and community organizations to learn about educational, health and community resources available to them, while health personnel will be on hand to provide free dental and vision screenings.

The evening will feature FREE admission to the museum, costumed characters, games, face painting, karaoke, information booths and resources for parents on keeping kids safe and healthy. In addition, rising kindergartners can practice boarding a school bus and carrying a lunch tray.

“This annual event is EdVenture's way of helping parents help their children make the transition from a home or child care center environment to the classroom a little easier, said Nikki Manning, director of education at EdVenture. When children begin kindergarten healthy and ready to learn, their future opportunities for success are much greater.”

Additional support for Countdown to Kindergarten is provided by the South Carolina Dental Association, AARP-SC, Wal-Mart, the Kroger Foundation and WLTX News 19.

### **About EdVenture**

The mission of EdVenture is to inspire children to experience the joy of learning. EdVenture is dedicated to lifelong learning through its 92,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor interactive exhibit space and in its educational outreach programs and after school programs. The museum has welcomed visitors from all 50 states and 18 foreign countries, creating shared experiences and memories for families learning together. For more information about EdVenture, visit [www.edventure.org](http://www.edventure.org) or call (803) 779-3100.

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