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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **COUNTDOWN TO KINDERGARTEN KICKS OFF AT EDVENTURE**

### **Fourteenth annual educational event offers free admission to rising kindergarteners**

**COLUMBIA, SC**—EdVenture invites all rising kindergartners and their families to its annual Countdown to Kindergarten celebration from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Friday, August 4. The celebration will give rising kindergartners’ their first chance to conquer the skills necessary to succeed at school. Students can practice getting on and off a school bus, holding lunch trays, tasting nutritious snacks and enjoying hands-on learning activities at the museum. Adult caregivers 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 are on hand to provide free dental and vision screenings for their children. There will be Free hotdogs, chips and water for the first 200 people, free screenings and haircuts and performances from local artists such as L. Kobie Da Wiz.

As one of the most visible resources for children and families in South Carolina, EdVenture collaborates with community organizations like yours to support children’s transition to kindergarten — a significant educational and developmental milestone in a child’s life. In the past, Countdown to Kindergarten has attracted over 1,500 individuals from across South Carolina and is expected to attract approximately 1,500 individuals again in 2017. Countdown to Kindergarten is presented by Molina Healthcare, McDonald’s, Lexington County First Steps, City of Columbia, Richland County and WLTX News 19.

“For fourteen years, we have hosted the Countdown to Kindergarten event to the community with one goal in mind — helping families become more comfortable with the start of school,” shared Karen Coltrane, Edventure’s president and CEO. “We do this by bringing together our partners to share with children and their families to help them prepare for this milestone.”

EdVenture’s community partners make this event one of the premiere back to school events in South Carolina.

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Partners participating in this year's Countdown to Kindergarten are:

- Ben Lippen School
- Colgate Great Smiles Great Futures Van
- Educational Wonderland
- Family Connections of S.C.
- Green Charter School
- Kaplan Early Learning Company
- L. Kobie Da Wiz
- Lexington County Public Library
- Macaroni Kid
- Midlands Kid Directory
- Palmetto Animal Assisted Life Services
- Richland School District 1 Early Childhood Office
- Richland School District 1 Transportation
- Richland School District 2
- S.C. Child Care Resource & Referral Network
- S.C. Dental Association
- S.C. DHEC - Richland
- S.C. First Steps
- S.C. First Steps - 4K
- S.C. First Steps - Countdown to Kindergarten
- S.C. First Steps - Early Head Start Program
- S.C. Optometric Physicians Association
- S.C. PASOS
- S.C. State Fire Marshal - City of Columbia Office
- S.C. State Library
- Snip-Its Kids Hair Salon
- STAR Parenting
- United Way of the Midlands Reading Consortium
- USC Speech and Hearing Center

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#### **About EdVenture**

The mission of EdVenture is to inspire children to experience the joy of learning. EdVenture is a locally-managed, not-for-profit informal educational institution dedicated to lifelong learning through its 92,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor interactive exhibit space and in its educational outreach programs and afterschool 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.