

Race to the Top / Early Learning Challenge 2013 – 2015 Final Report

**Child Care Resource and Referral Enhancement
RttT-ELC Activity 8.3
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SWCDC 27708**

Submitted to the:
North Carolina Division of Child Development and Early Education

On behalf of:
Child Care Resources Inc. (CCRI),
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Introduction

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Nationally, North Carolina has been a leader in the early care and education field and it is with much appreciation that the North Carolina Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Council was granted the opportunity to partner with the North Carolina Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) to advance this system. This report provides a summary of the accomplishments of the Race to the Top/Early Learning Challenge Grant (RttT-ELC) Activity 8.3 - CCR&R Enhancement.

In the beginning of the RttT-ELC grant period, the NC CCR&R Council worked collaboratively with DCDEE to define the parameters, procedures, protocol and policies to achieve statewide progress toward the combined goals and outcomes of this initiative. The CCR&R Council provided technical assistance and information to Regional Lead Agencies (RLAs) that led to contract execution through meetings, webinars, newsletters, memos, the Council website, frequently updated timelines, and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) documents.

This report provides a summary of the accomplishments of this initiative during CY13- 15, including subjective information about lessons learned, challenges, successes and any implications for future policy decisions.

Activity 8.3: CCR&R Enhancement

North Carolina has a regional Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) system that provides the core of required trainings for professionals working in licensed child care, Head Start and Pre-K settings and technical assistance to licensed/regulated early care and education programs. North Carolina's Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RttT-ELC) application sought to utilize the strength and state-wideness of its CCR&R system to further enhance the training and technical assistance capacities of the workforce engaged in these activities both within CCR&R and across the early care and education sectors and also to embed the delivery of RttT-ELC funded newly developed CEUs within the CCR&R system to ensure the availability of these learning events for the near term and for the future.

Through this initiative, professional development and technical assistance staff within the CCR&R system were encouraged to become certified and earn endorsements that demonstrate competence in professional development or technical assistance. Communities of Practice for staff providing technical assistance within local and regional CCR&Rs were established to provide a professional learning community that enhanced the quality of practice.

As a result of the professional development that was accessible to selected CCR&R staff, regional CCR&R staff received training on how to deliver new standardized trainings on five key topics: Cultural Competence; Early Learning Standards; Coaching, Mentoring and Technical Assistance; Curriculum and Instructional Assessment and CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System). Once trained, the

following training events were offered to the early care and education workforce through RttT Activity 8.3. Additional information regarding outputs and outcomes will be found later within this report.

- 1. Choosing and Using Curriculum and Instructional Assessment** In 2011, the law changed to require that all 4- and 5- star rated programs use a curriculum from a DCDC (DCDEE?) approved list in their four year old classrooms. This training was developed to assist providers in implementing this new requirement. Train the trainer events occurred in late 2012 to ensure that there were at least two trainers available in each region (42 CCR&R staff members were trained) to train child care professionals on how to choose and use curriculum. Upon completion of the train the trainer courses, each region offered at least four CEU courses annually on Choosing and Using Curriculum & Instructional Assessment to child care professionals. By the end of CY15, 225 (.5) CEU training events were offered.

The learning event provided participants with an opportunity to review guidelines for identifying, selecting and planning to implement developmentally appropriate, evidence based curriculum for children from birth to age five. The CEU provided guidance on understanding and selecting formative and summative assessment tools of learning to measure if children served are developing and learning as intended from the curriculum.

Statewide, approximately 1,549 child care professionals participated in these training events. Some regions noted low interest in this topic as the curriculum requirement was mandated for only 4- and 5- star rated NC child care programs and many programs did not want to spend monies for substitutes and the cost of the CEU. In addition, many 4- and 5- star programs had already chosen a curriculum and didn't see the benefit of attending this training session. Nonetheless, CCR&Rs continued to market the CEU to child care programs that did not previously participate and have expanded marketing efforts to include all licensed programs.

In addition to providing the CEU courses to promote knowledge of the various approved curricula available, most CCR&R agencies have resource libraries. Curriculum materials were purchased and placed in both local and regional resource libraries to ensure that early educators have access to materials for review. Many agencies provided technical assistance to early educators with the curriculum materials located within their libraries. Others have purchased enough materials to allow early educators to review during training events.

- 2. CLASS™** is an observational tool that provides a common lens and language focused on the classroom interactions that boosts student learning. Data from CLASS™ observations are used to support teachers' unique professional development needs, set goals and improve teaching practices. CCR&R trainers improved their knowledge and skills and are now able to provide more standardized trainings for the early childhood workforce as well as use CLASS™ as a tool in assisting early educators improve classroom experiences for young children in their care.

As of December 31, 2015, there were 34 CCR&R affiliate staff trainers that completed the CLASS™ "Train the Trainer" five-day intensive training and completed 10 hours of observation to practice to become reliable trainers. The trainers who achieved CLASS™ reliability became CLASS™ affiliate trainers. These CLASS™ trainers offered 160 introductory training events and 41

observer training events for a total of 201 courses across the state impacting 1,485 early educators.

These courses gave the CCR&R technical assistance (TA) specialists an extra layer of knowledge to use during their visits to child care programs and to inform and enhance program quality improvement plans.

- 3. NC Foundations of Early Learning and Development (NC FELD)** In 2011, the North Carolina Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) launched and funded the project of revising the *Infant-Toddler Foundations* and *Preschool Foundations* to create the *NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development*. This single document, completed in 2013, provides age-appropriate goals and developmental indicators for each age level of children from birth to five.

Because *Foundations* is recognized statewide as the standard that defines the skills and abilities that should be supported in the learning experiences provided for children, a .5 CEU was developed under a separately funded RttT-ELC activity to train early educators in order for them to understand the goals and developmental indicators as well as how to create learning experiences that optimally support the young child's development.

Each CCR&R region was required to send qualified Technical Assistance (TA) and Professional Development (PD) staff to a train the trainer event. Each region was required to maintain at least 2 staff trained to deliver the NC FELD training. There are currently 77 CCR&R staff trained statewide to deliver the .5 CEU for NC FELD. Cumulatively, these trainers offered 248 NC FELD training events across the state to 3,194 participants.

- 4. The Art of Coaching, Mentoring and Technical Assistance** A 2.0 (20 hour) CEU, *The Art and Science of Early Childhood Technical Assistance* (which addresses coaching, mentoring, consultation and technical assistance) was developed under a separate RttT-ELC activity to ensure that early childhood TA practitioners working in NC share a common base of knowledge. This foundational training now serves as a primer for those engaged in technical assistance work within child care resource and referral agencies and across the early childhood system in North Carolina.

From December 2013 through June 2014, train the trainer courses were offered to selected PD/TA staff from each of the fourteen regions so that this training could be offered to all CCR&R PD/TA staff, as well as PD/TA staff in cross-sector agencies such as Early Head Start programs, Pre-K programs, local Smart Start agencies, DCDEE, etc. Each CCR&R region was asked to send 2 to 4 participants to the train the trainer events. As of December 31, 2015, 35 staff across all fourteen regions had been trained to deliver *The Art and Science of Early Childhood Technical Assistance* training.

In CY14-15, CCR&R regions were required to offer this training at least 4 times annually to both PD/TA staff and cross-sector partners. By the end of CY15, 115 training events were offered to a total of 341 participants.

- 5. Cultural Competency** Due to the growing diverse populations that are served in the early education environments in North Carolina, it is important that the cultural competence of the early education workforce be increased to improve cultural awareness in our early education programs. Through a separately funded Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge activity, the *Cultural Competence Breakthrough Series Collaborative* was created in NC, engaging selected CCR&R participants from across the state in this eighteen month project. Two to four qualified staff from each CCR&R region participated in the Collaborative. Out of this intensive project, participants received training to deliver a .5 CEU to the early education workforce.

At the end of CY15, there were 29 CCR&R staff trained to deliver the Cultural Competence training and a total of 104 courses were delivered to 913 participants. Of these 913 participants, 147 were CCR&R TA and/or PD staff.

- 6. Early Educator Certification** Early Educator Certification (EEC) is North Carolina’s certification system for the field of Early Childhood. It is an acknowledgement of an individual’s verified level of educational achievement, based on a standardized scale.

The NC Institute for Child Development Professionals (Institute) is the certifying body for early care and education and school age professionals in North Carolina. Additionally, the Institute offers the Professional Development Endorsement (PDE) and Technical Assistance Endorsement (TAE) designed to reflect specific roles in early care and education. Endorsements are held in conjunction with Early Educator Certification (EEC). These endorsements verify that an individual has met guidelines established by the Institute for education, training and experience that reflect needed qualifications to teach and mentor other early educators.

To ensure that North Carolina has an educated and qualified early education workforce, CCR&R staff who provide professional development and/or technical assistance were encouraged through the RttT-ELC funded CCR&R Enhancement initiative to become certified at the appropriate EEC level and obtain either the PDE or TAE.

Statewide, CCR&R staff members have been extremely proactive in obtaining their EEC. Indicating a steady increase since the beginning of the activity in CY13, 96% of TA and PD practitioners had obtained the EEC by the end of CY15. An unduplicated 182 (85%) PD and TA practitioners who were certified as an Early Educator had obtained their endorsements in either professional development or technical assistance by the end CY15.

Regional Lead CCR&R Agencies will continue to encourage their training and technical assistance staff to further their professional development and higher educational pursuits and to apply for their EEC and endorsements in technical assistance or professional development during CY16 and beyond.

- 7. Communities of Practice** A Community of Practice (CoP) is a mechanism used to *build* a learning community that collaborates to create solutions and stronger understanding of identified areas of interest. A total of 66 CCR&R PD and TA staff attended training provided by

the Statewide Technical Assistance & Professional Development Specialist on developing and facilitating a “Community of Practice.” The Statewide TA & PD Specialist developed and delivered a three-hour training module to provide an introductory overview of Communities of Practice (CoP) for facilitators. This module’s learning objectives were to improve participants’ understanding of 1) what a CoP is and the role of the CoP facilitator; 2) how to implement a CoP; 3) strategies for using participant interests to define a starting point for a CoP; 4) how to guide participants; and 5) resources and strategies for measuring the success of the CoP.

In addition, CoP participants were offered an opportunity to participate in a follow-up online CoP webinar to familiarize them with this mechanism of CoP delivery. Sessions utilized *manaba* software provided by Child Care Resources Inc. Twenty (unduplicated) individuals participated in three webinar sessions during May and June 2013.

After this training, each RLA recruited a group of participants from the technical assistance field to join their regional Community of Practice. Participants came from a variety of agencies across the early care and education field, including CCR&R, community colleges, universities, NC Pre-K, Head Start and Early Head Start, Smart Start, NC DCDEE, etc. These meetings were convened in-person or by conference call. The success of each CoP is grounded in the notion that the team creates its own goals, guides its own activities, and sets its own measure of success. Feedback from participants stated that they valued their collective competence and learned from each other. The facilitator(s) were responsible for providing resources, supportive strategies, and removing barriers that prevented the group from thriving.

128 CoP meetings were held between CY13-15; some of the topics included:

- Professional Development through Online Training
- The Importance of Reading Aloud to Children
- Evidence Based/Evidence Informed Practice
- Coaching vs. Consultation-Technical Assistance Practices

Regions held an average of 3 to 4 meetings per year. Regions have embraced this learning mechanism and many indicate that the Communities of Practice events have contributed to increased knowledge and greater community among the professional development and technical assistance staff. One region reported “participants were pleasantly surprised by how much they enjoyed talking and how everyone engaged in the discussion.”

OUTPUTS

(*shaded areas indicate there was no goal for CY)

| CCR&R Enhancement Outputs | 2013 | 2014 | 2015/Cumulative |
|--|---|---|--|
| Each CCR&R region will maintain at least two professional development, coaching, mentoring or technical assistance staff who received training on how to deliver <i>Choosing and Using Curriculum and Instructional Assessment</i>. | At the end of CY13, thirteen of the fourteen regions had at least two PD/TA staff (42 total) trained to deliver <i>Choosing and Using a Curriculum and Instructional Assessment</i> . | At the end of CY14, all fourteen regions had at least two PD/TA staff trained (67 total) to deliver <i>Choosing and Using a Curriculum and Instructional Assessment</i> . | At the end of CY15, all fourteen regions had at least two PD/TA staff (68 total) trained to deliver <i>Choosing and Using a Curriculum and Instructional Assessment</i> . |
| In each region the .5-CEU course on <i>Choosing/Using a Curriculum & Instructional Assessment</i> will be offered at least four times annually. | At the end of CY13, all fourteen regions offered <i>Choosing/Using a Curriculum & Instructional Assessment</i> at least four times. Statewide, 62 courses were offered. Approximately, 500 child care professionals participated in these events. | At the end of CY14, all fourteen regions offered <i>Choosing/Using a Curriculum & Instructional Assessment</i> at least four times. Statewide, 80 courses were offered. Approximately, 701 child care professionals participated in these events. | At the end of CY15, all fourteen regions offered <i>Choosing/Using a Curriculum & Instructional Assessment</i> at least four times. Statewide, 83 courses were offered. Approximately, 348 child care professionals participated in these events. CY13 -15 Cumulative: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 225 courses offered • 1,549 child care professionals trained |
| Each CCR&R region will maintain at least two professional development, coaching, mentoring or technical assistance staff who are <i>CLASS affiliate trainers</i>. | At the end of CY13, all fourteen regions had at least two PD/TA staff (40 total) designated as CLASS affiliate trainers. | At the end of CY14, eleven of the fourteen regions had at least two PD/TA staff (33 total) designated as CLASS affiliate trainers. All fourteen regions had at least one CLASS affiliate trainer. | At the end of CY15, eleven of the fourteen regions had at least two PD/TA staff (34 total) designated as CLASS affiliate trainers. All fourteen regions had at least one CLASS affiliate trainer. |

| CCR&R Enhancement Outputs | 2013 | 2014 | 2015/Cumulative |
|---|---|---|--|
| <p>In each region either <i>CLASS Introductory</i> or <i>CLASS Observer</i> training will be offered at least four times annually.</p> | <p>At the end of CY13, all fourteen regions offered either <i>CLASS Introductory</i> or <i>CLASS Observer</i> training at least four times. Statewide, 60 courses were offered. Approximately, 413 child care professionals participated in these events.</p> | <p>At the end of CY14, all fourteen regions offered either <i>CLASS Introductory</i> or <i>CLASS Observer</i> training at least four times. Statewide, 69 courses were offered. Approximately, 644 child care professionals participated in these events.</p> | <p>At the end of CY15, all fourteen regions offered either <i>CLASS Introductory</i> or <i>CLASS Observer</i> training at least four times. Statewide, 72 courses were offered. Approximately, 428 child care professionals participated in these events.</p> <p>CY13 -15 Cumulative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 201 courses offered • 1,485 child care professionals trained |
| <p>Each CCR&R region will maintain at least two professional development, coaching, mentoring or technical assistance staff who received training on how to deliver <i>NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development</i>.</p> | <p>*</p> | <p>At the end of CY14, all fourteen regions had at least two PD/TA staff trained (80 total) to deliver <i>NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development</i>.</p> | <p>At the end of CY15, all fourteen regions had at least two PD/TA staff trained (77 total) to deliver <i>NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development</i>.</p> |
| <p>In each region the .5-CEU course on <i>NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development</i> will be offered at least four times annually.</p> | <p>*</p> | <p>At the end of CY14, all fourteen regions had offered <i>NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development</i> at least four times. Statewide, 108 courses were offered. Approximately, 1,760 child care professionals participated in these events.</p> | <p>At the end of CY15, all fourteen regions had offered <i>NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development</i> at least four times. Statewide, 140 courses were offered. Approximately, 1,434 child care professionals participated in these events.</p> <p>CY13 -15 Cumulative:</p> |

| CCR&R Enhancement Outputs | 2013 | 2014 | 2015/Cumulative |
|---|------|---|---|
| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 248 courses offered • 3,194 child care professionals trained |
| <p>In each region, 100% of the CCR&R learning events focused on teacher practice will be aligned with the revised Early Learning Development Standards.</p> | * | <p>At the end of CY14, 95% (ten of fourteen regions) of CCR&R learning events focused on teacher practice were aligned with the revised Early Learning Development Standards. A total of 354 learning events were aligned.</p> | <p>At the end of CY15, all fourteen regions had aligned 100% of CCR&R learning events with the revised Early Learning Development Standards. A total of 758 learning events were aligned.</p> |
| <p>Each CCR&R region will maintain at least two professional development, coaching, mentoring or technical assistance staff who received training on how to deliver <i>The Art of Coaching, Mentoring, and TA</i>.</p> | * | <p>At the end of CY14, thirteen of the fourteen regions had at least two PD/TA staff trained (35 total) to deliver <i>The Art of Coaching, Mentoring, and Technical Assistance</i>. All fourteen regions had at least one PD/TA staff trained to deliver <i>The Art of Coaching, Mentoring, and TA</i>.</p> | <p>At the end of CY15, all fourteen regions had at least two PD/TA staff trained (35 total) to deliver <i>The Art of Coaching, Mentoring, and Technical Assistance</i>.</p> |
| <p>The 2-CEU course on <i>The Art of Coaching, Mentoring, and TA</i> will be offered to professional development, technical assistance, coaching and mentoring staff at least four times per year.</p> | * | <p>At the end of CY14, twelve of the fourteen regions achieved this goal. A total of 53 courses were offered to 255 unduplicated PD/TA staff.</p> | <p>At the end of CY15, thirteen of the fourteen regions achieved this goal. A total of 62 courses were offered. In total, 86 PD/TA staff members were trained.</p> <p>CY14-15 Cumulative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 115 courses offered • 341 CCR&R staff trained |

| CCR&R Enhancement Outputs | 2013 | 2014 | 2015/Cumulative |
|---|------|---|---|
| <p>Each CCR&R region will maintain at least two professional development, coaching, mentoring or technical assistance staff who received training on how to deliver <i>Cultural Competence</i>.</p> | * | * | <p>At the end of CY15, ten of the fourteen regions (71%) had at least two PD/TA staff trained (29 total) to deliver <i>Cultural Competence</i>. All fourteen regions had at least one Cultural Competence trainer.</p> |
| <p>In each region the .5-CEU course on <i>Cultural Competence</i> will be offered at least four times annually.</p> | * | * | <p>At the end of CY15, all fourteen regions offered <i>Cultural Competence</i> at least four times. Statewide, 104 courses were offered. Approximately, 913 child care professionals participated in these events.</p> <p>CY15 Cumulative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 104 courses offered • 913 child care professionals trained |
| <p>50% of the regional CCR&R professional development, coaching, mentoring or technical assistance staff will complete:</p> <p>A. 2-CEU course on “The Art of Coaching, Mentoring and Technical Assistance”</p> | * | <p>A. At the end of CY14, 70% of CCR&R professional development (PD) and technical assistance (TA) staff had completed the 2 CEU course on “The Art of Coaching, Mentoring and Technical Assistance”.</p> | <p>A. At the end of CY15, 84% of CCR&R PD/TA staff had completed the 2 CEU course on “The Art of Coaching, Mentoring and Technical Assistance”.</p> <p>B. At the end of CY15, 82% of CCR&R PD/TA staff had completed the .5 CEU course on “NC Foundations for</p> |

| CCR&R Enhancement Outputs | 2013 | 2014 | 2015/Cumulative |
|---|--|---|---|
| <p>B. .5-CEU course on the revised Early Learning Standards.</p> | | <p>B. At the end of CY14, 55% of CCR&R PD/TA staff had completed the .5 CEU course on “NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development”.</p> | <p>Early Learning and Development”.</p> |
| <p>In 2013, in each region, 50% of specified CCR&R staff will be certified at the appropriate level on the EEC for future endorsement in the AAE or EEE.</p> | <p>At the end of CY13, at least 50% of specified CCR&R staff members in all fourteen regions were certified at a level 9 or above.</p> | <p>*</p> | <p>*</p> |
| <p>In 2014, in each region, 75% of specified CCR&R staff will be certified at the appropriate level on the EEC for future endorsement in the AAE or EEE. 25% of specified CCR&R staff will receive either an AEE or EEE by end of the calendar year.</p> | <p>*</p> | <p>At the end of CY14, 94% of specified CCR&R staff were certified and of those 76% were endorsed. All regions met the certification and endorsement goals.</p> | <p>*</p> |
| <p>In 2015, in each region, 90% of specified CCR&R staff will be certified at the appropriate level on the EEC for future endorsement in the AAE or EEE. 50% of specified CCR&R staff will receive either an AEE or EEE by end of the calendar year.</p> | <p>*</p> | <p>*</p> | <p>At the end of CY15, 96% of specified CCR&R staff were certified and of those 82% were endorsed. Regionally, twelve of the fourteen regions met the certification goal while 100% met the endorsement goal.</p> |

| CCR&R Enhancement Outputs | 2013 | 2014 | 2015/Cumulative |
|---|---|---|---|
| At least two CCR&R staff in each region will complete training on facilitating “Communities of Practice” facilitated by the Statewide Professional Development and TA Specialist. | Statewide, at least 2 staff members from each region (66 CCR&R staff members) were trained on facilitating “Communities of Practice”. | * | * |
| In each region the lead agency will facilitate at a minimum, 1 local or regional “Community of Practice” and will show progress toward meeting goals and accomplishing strategies as defined by the group. | * | At the end of CY14, all 14 regions had facilitated at a minimum, 1 local or regional “Community of Practice” and each showed evidence of progress toward meeting goals. | At the end of CY15, all 14 regions had facilitated at a minimum, 1 local or regional “Community of Practice” and each showed evidence of progress toward meeting goals. |

OUTCOMES

| CCR&R Enhancement RttT/ELC CY2013 -2015 Outcomes | 2015 Actual Accomplishments |
|--|---|
| By the end of calendar year 2015, 85% of participants in courses and other professional development activities will demonstrate increased knowledge through a pre- and post-test evaluation. | Exceeded At the end of CY15, 98% of participants in courses and other professional development activities reported increased knowledge through pre- and post-test evaluations. |
| At the end of calendar year 2015, a representative sample of at least 10% of participants in courses and other professional development activities will be chosen to participate in a pre- and post-self-reporting process. Of those participants, 85% will demonstrate that practices are consistent with the training they have received. | Exceeded At the end of CY15, over 10% of the participants who completed courses were sent a follow-up survey to ascertain whether or not they are using what they learned in their programs. Of those people who responded to this survey, 98% said that their classroom/program practices are consistent with the training they received. |
| By the end of calendar year 2015, 85% of all CCR&R staff who provide professional development, technical assistance, coaching and mentoring will have completed the Adult Educator Endorsement or their Educator Efficacy Endorsement. | Achieved At the end of CY15, of those staff who obtained their EEC (Early Educator Credentials), 85% had obtained their Adult Educator Endorsement (now called Technical Assistance Endorsement) and/or their Educator Efficacy Endorsement (now called Professional Development Endorsement). CCR&R staff members are continuing to work toward becoming endorsed. In fact, applications continue to be processed for new CCR&R staff entering the system. |
| By the end of the calendar year 2015, in regions where the average star rating for children in care as of December 31, 2012 is less than 4 stars, the average star rating for the region will be increased by 3%. In regions where the average star rating for children in care as of December 31, 2012 is 4 stars or more, the average star rating for the region will be increased by 1%. | Partially Achieved At the end of CY15, the average star rating increased from 3.85 in CY12 to 4.02 in CY15. While twelve of the fourteen regions met this goal, star ratings were maintained or increased in all fourteen regions. |

Lessons Learned

- The statewide CCR&R PD/TA practitioners were eager to participate in educational opportunities to improve their knowledge and skills in early care and education through the professional development and technical assistance opportunities offered.
- While RttT-ELC funding has provided tremendous resources for the early education PD/TA workforce, it was challenging for some agencies to provide adequate staffing to meet the outputs and outcomes of this project. Despite this, CCR&R Regional Lead Agencies successfully completed the necessary training to provide RttT-ELC funded CEUs to NC's early care and education workforce during the last three years.
- Due to staff turnover and the associated time and costs for the training of new trainers (specifically CLASS and Cultural Competence), it is, and will continue to be, a challenge for CCR&R agencies to maintain an appropriate number of trainers in each region to meet the demand for training.

Recommendations

- Use the *Art of TA, Coaching, and Mentoring* and *NC Foundations of Early Learning and Development* as a foundation for the development of more training opportunities on the high quality and developmentally appropriate early care and education services for all CCR&R TA/PD staff.
- Seek additional funding to support employment of those TA and PD staff who were previously funded through RttT-ELC funding in order to increase and sustain the level of TA and training that are provided in each region.
- Continue to encourage collaborative learning opportunities through Communities of Practice. These opportunities provided avenues for creative thinking, planning, and team building.
- In order to ensure highly qualified individuals who are providing TA/PD, and in accordance with the recommendations in the IOM's report on *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation*, adopt statewide standards for this workforce across all systems. Ensuring a minimum of a Bachelor's degree, as well as the appropriate endorsement, will provide ongoing consistency for child care programs, regardless of the employing agency.

Regional Success Stories

NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development

"Through the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant, our team has benefited through a number of professional development opportunities. In addition to becoming certified CLASS Observers, all of our staff completed training on the North Carolina Foundations of Early Learning and Development (NC FELD), and the Art and Science of Technical Assistance, and participated in a number of regional Communities of Practice. Taking a fresh look at our work, we began to re-evaluate the delivery of our technical assistance services. First, we saw the need to ground our work and language in NC FELD. This impacts the providers we work with because it gives a common language to child development regardless of the curriculum being used. This, in turn, positively impacts children's learning and

development. To further promote the use of NC FELD in our work, we are now developing a crosswalk between NC FELD and all the assessment tools we currently use. Through this, we can discuss with providers how meeting the goals of the tools will impact child development and understand the why behind the tools. We are also moving away from having a strong focus on the Environment Rating Scales and moving to a targeted focus on teacher practice using coaching. This promotes self-reflection and goal setting with providers, which will lead to increased ownership within the classroom and improved practice. A mission statement was created to guide our work: 'Our promise is to engage in a collaborative process that is continuous, reflective, and individualized which supports the sustainability of developmentally appropriate practices and high quality child care programming.'

Our first attempt at using this new process was with a 4-star program undergoing its 3 year ERS re-assessment. Our staff completed mock assessments in order for the administrator to determine what materials were needed for the classrooms. Instead of focusing on the mock assessment results, the technical assistance staff began working with each teacher on their goals for the classroom and implementing our new focus. Through coaching and modeling, teachers were able to grow in areas and strengthen in others. The administrator reported an increase to staff morale and positive interactions within the classroom. She commented that the teachers seemed refreshed and re-energized to teach. The teachers were also more comfortable and confident going into the ERS assessment. An added bonus is that the facility maintained their star rating, and no classroom scored below a 4.89 on their assessment."

Communities of Practice

Story 1:

"Communities of Practice have been a significant part of the success in our region. In the last year, we have met every other month. It was not until the start of July 2015, that we truly embraced the importance of this group and the purpose of its existence. As regional technical assistance and professional development staff gathered, the "CoP" group began to seriously consider what we needed to improve and build upon to ensure the success of Western North Carolina early education professionals. We have planned our vision for the 2016 year as follows:

- Continue a Regional Training Calendar
 - Ensure that all trainings needed to be delivered in response to Core and Race to the Top are offered at least once a quarter in each local agency
 - Ensure that all trainings offered are marketed region wide
 - Established a regional cost plan of \$5 per credit hour
 - Established collaborative efforts to support online training services offered region wide to reach all early education and school age professionals
 - Created a working Google doc so that each local agency may list trainings scheduled throughout the region to ensure meeting deliverables and regional needs
- Technical Assistance Uniformity and Effectiveness Plan: Creating a Team Approach!

- Review of Art and Science of Early Childhood TA CEU as guide to continue to strive towards a holistic and professional growth plan for each technical assistance staff person in the region
 - Committed to continue to train new staff in Art and Science of Early Childhood TA
 - Goal is 100% commitment -100% of the time
- Review of TA Manual guidelines and best practice
- Created a Moodle site that is private for regional staff to upload all technical assistance documents
- Created a review team of all technical assistance documents to ensure uniformity and team approach to all technical assistance staff region wide
- Committed to creating “Regional Documents” to be used with all early education professionals region wide

Our goal is to stand as a united team within our region. We believe that consistency is the key amongst all CCR&R staff and we have made the commitment to this vision. We aim to work together collaboratively so that we are supporting each other as regional staff while meeting the needs of early educators in our area.”

Story 2:

“Several members of our agency’s technical assistance staff chose to attend the Community of Practice Facilitator Training. By attending this training, core staff members explored the concepts of “Community of Practice” as well as facilitating a Community of Practice in our region. During a staff meeting, the facilitators then shared the format for Community of Practice and asked the staff to offer areas of focus they wished to explore.

Supporting the acceptance of diversity was a common interest and chosen as the focus for our local collective learning. Articles relating to diversity in early childhood environments presented in the *Cultural Competence Breakthrough Series Collaborative* were selected to provide the framework for reading and reflection. A reflective guide was used as an outline to facilitate individual reflections as well as group reflection. Participants met and discussed themes in the articles, the awareness it supported both personally and professionally in addition to how the information or knowledge gained would support their role as TA practitioners. This Race to the Top Grant funding and training supported our *Community of Practice: Supporting the Acceptance of Diversity* which in turn increased both personal and professional knowledge of ten staff members. The ten staff members, in turn, share their knowledge and insight while offering technical assistance to four agencies serving six counties as well as many child care providers in rural eastern North Carolina.

At our last regional meeting, we discussed this Community of Practice event that we had held and there was a lot of discussion about it with our regional partners. They were very interested in it and wanted to know if we could do the same thing for the region. We are going to start a regional Community of Practice in January on this same topic.”

CLASS

Story 1:

“Our Technical Assistance team was trained and certified on a new assessment tool called the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). CLASS measures the quality of teacher-child interactions within the classroom. This is important because the research on interactions show high quality interactions positively impact children’s growth and development and has lasting effects through 3rd grade. I started working at a 4-star child care facility that was eager to implement CLASS into their preschool age classrooms. When I used the CLASS assessment observation in the three year old classroom, the results showed the teacher was in the low range of interactions that promoted cognitive development. I worked closely with her to find ways to improve her interactions. We brainstormed ideas and I did some modeling for her. Every time I visited the classroom to work with her, I noticed improvements. She tried out the suggestions and the quality of her interactions was continuously improving. When I completed the CLASS post assessment, she dramatically improved her scores in the area of interactions that promoted cognitive development. She improved her score from 2 out of 7 to 5 out of 7. Scoring a 5 on cognitive development is incredible since the national trend shows teachers scoring low in this area with a national average of 1.8 out of 7. Not only did the scores improve, but a change in the classroom atmosphere was observed. The children were more engaged and behavior problems diminished. She noted how much the classroom and children had changed once she started interacting more with the children. Her parents and co-workers also noticed changes and complimented her on her hard work and dedication. “

Story 2:

“One of the regional Head Start Executive Directors reached out to their local CCR&R to ask if they could assist in observing some of their sites. Because of the CLASS training received through the RttT Enhanced Services contract, the CCR&R was able to observe and give feedback to 10 classroom teachers. During the summer, another request was made to the CCR&R and they were able to offer the Preschool CLASS Observation training to some of the educational coordinators and administrative teams. In addition, the CCR&R agency who worked with the Head Starts was asked to be a part of their CLASS workgroup to help build strategic goals within all of their Head Start sites and prepare them for monitoring. There is now a great collaborative relationship using the CLASS measurement tool to enhance the language and communication skills and interaction that support children’s learning.”

Cultural Competence Training

Story 1:

“Each training brings different interactions and responses from participants as providers talk about different experiences that they have had and brainstorm better solutions for handling the same experience but now with a more cultural competence. Some participants have shared how differently they view their community and family just from attending the training. The training has been so popular, that some directors made it mandatory for all staff to attend the training. Policies and

procedures are touched upon in an effort to show how some cultures might perceive certain terminology versus another culture.”

Story 2:

“The Cultural Competence Breakthrough Series Collaborative was a Race to the Top grant funded training focusing on self-awareness in addition to an introduction to the journey of becoming culturally competent. As a CCR&R staff member, I was asked to attend this eighteen month training series. I earned North Carolina Early Childhood Cultural Competence Technical Assistance and Trainer Endorsement.

With this endorsement, I can now provide trainings to technical assistance staff, early childhood providers and community members in our region. To date, there have been thirty-four participants including center staff and family child care providers nurturing approximately 845 children and their families. The TA staff member participants offer assistance to facilities in six counties. A co-worker and I were also inspired to submit a grant proposal *“Promoting the Acceptance of Diversity in Early Childhood Programs*, to offer further training for local providers in addition to multi-cultural materials for their classrooms. We were awarded a \$20,000 grant which is directly benefiting local early childhood programs.”

Closing Remarks

It is with great pride that the NC CCR&R Council submits this cumulative report on the status of RttT-ELC Activity 8.3, Child Care Resource and Referral Enhanced Services. The NC CCR&R Council will continue to work diligently to continue the efforts of this project and is grateful for the strong support and partnership of NCDCEE. Through this three year project, the skills and knowledge of the CCR&R professional development and technical assistance workforce has been enriched. Child Care Resources Inc., Child Care Services Association and Southwestern Child Development Commission appreciate the Division’s vote of confidence in the Council’s ability to provide guidance and leadership to the state’s regional CCR&R agencies and are thankful for the opportunity to continue to partner with NCDCEE.