



NORTH CAROLINA
RACE TO THE TOP
EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE

Status Report — October – December 2014

Reform Area A: Successful State Systems

Project 1: Overall Grant Management

Description: This Project involves programmatic and fiscal management of the grant, evaluation, technical assistance, and statewide support for work in the Transformation Zone strategy.

Activity 1.1: Overall Grant Management

Description: This Activity involves programmatic and fiscal management and monitoring of the grant.

Key Accomplishments:

- NC Early Childhood Advisory Council meeting held October 14th.
- NC RTT-ELC Grant Partners Meeting held December 3rd that assembled leaders from all grant projects to share information about progress and to network and plan for continued successful grant implementation.
- Completed the Fall 2014 Spotlight Webinar Series that provides information about grant projects, available at <http://earlylearningchallenge.nc.gov>
- Grant management staff attended the Strategic Communications Peer Learning Exchange sponsored by the ELC TA December 3 – 5 in Kansas City and engaged in planning with TA staff support.
- Held regular grant management staff meetings to coordinate efforts, problem-solve challenges, and support project implementation. Held regular communications committee meetings to continue implementation of communication strategies.
- Held monthly calls to communicate with the federal Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge Grant (ELC) team about progress, challenges, and other issues.
- Conducted monthly monitoring of all projects, and reviewed and enhanced monitoring processes.
- Managed budgets, tracked expenditures and processed payments. Worked with contractors to determine budget revision needs for 2015.
- Engaged in ongoing project evaluation activities continuing to assess and discuss opportunities for process improvements.
- Developed, managed and/or revised contracts and Memorandums of Agreement with participating agencies.
- Revised GRADS to reflect approved updates and corrections to the RTT-ELC Scope of Work.

**Challenges:**

- None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Plan and schedule Spring 2015 Spotlight Webinar Series and continue to provide a monthly e-newsletter.
- Develop and submit the 2014 Annual Performance Report.
- Develop project budget revisions for 2015 and submit amendment requests, including no-extension requests for targeted projects for 2016.

Activity 1.2: Transformation Zone Support and Capacity Building

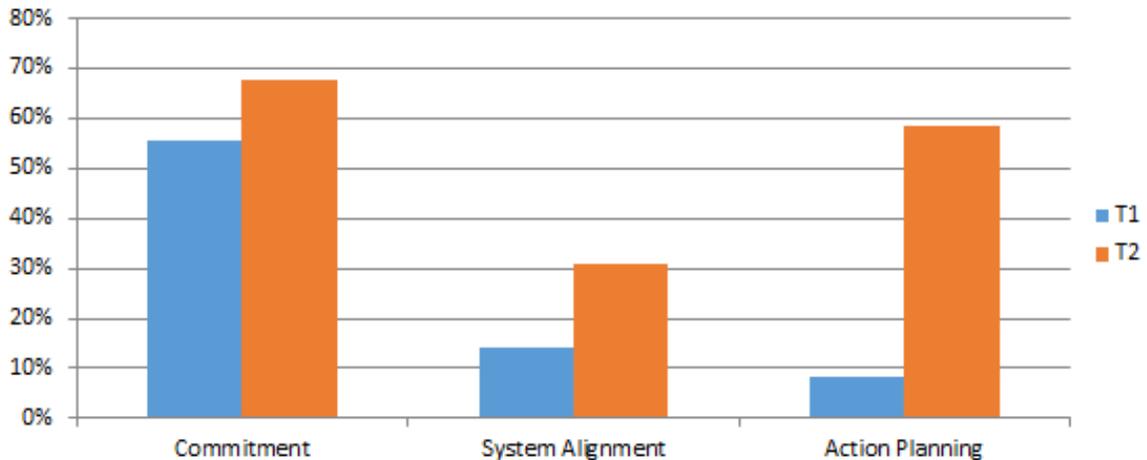
Description: The Transformation Zone is a system building initiative that includes a set of four counties (Beaufort, Chowan, Bertie and Hyde Counties) in Northeastern NC and representation from key human service state agencies working with young children. Working with the local and state teams, the effort emphasizes community infrastructure and capacity building around implementation science to support high quality implementation of selected evidence-based/informed strategies to improve outcomes for young children in the Transformation Zone (TZ).

Key Accomplishments:

- NIRN and State Implementation Specialists continue to actively support development of implementation capacity at the state and local levels. Accomplishments from the previous quarter include:
 - County Leadership Teams, County Implementation Teams, and County coaches' demonstration of increased understanding about and capacity for effective implementation (identified through observation, administration of the County Capacity Assessment, and action planning).



Cumulative TZ County CCA scores Spring (Baseline) 2014 to Winter 2014



- Continued to support the development of sufficient administrative supports for Family Connects.
- Initiated discussions with Triple P and state agency regarding Triple P implementation challenges and the need for additional “on the group” support from the purveyor.
- Continue to promote communication between state and county colleagues:
 - Continue to convene monthly calls between purveyor and county partners to facilitate strategy-specific installation stage implementation.
 - Continue to encourage the clarification of roles and responsibilities of state partners as they relate to the funded child care strategies.
 - Attended state funders meetings and subsequent to continue to develop sustainability statements/plans, engaging county partners in decision-making.

Challenges:

- Sustainability requires data to assess and inform infrastructure and system impacts related to TZ interventions. Regular identification, collection, and synthesis of data are needed for Transformation Zone strategies to inform decision making at all levels. Access to the right kinds of data to support this work has been challenging. NIRN will work to support state and county partners to collect and utilize data for decision-making and improvement.
- Challenges in the co-creation of implementation infrastructure (funder, purveyor, county partners) during exploration and installation have led to a bumpy transition into initial implementation and, at times, a tenuous sense of efficacy for the county partners. The Implementation Teams will be supported to be involved in strengthening the role clarity for



partners. NIRN staff will continue to engage with funders, county partners, and technical assistance providers to develop customized support strategies to meet unique challenges being surfaced in each TZ county.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Co-facilitate quarterly State Implementation Team meetings with evaluation team, first half of meeting – sense-making and problem-solving for the grant. Engage state partners and purveyors in planning and facilitating the “beyond the grant,” second half of the monthly meetings.
- Surface and nurture the state partners’ need for “community,” in service to encouraging an ongoing implementation support network.
- Develop and strengthen connections between state partners (related to Implementation Science) to encourage ongoing implementation support network.
- Build capacity among state partners by creating opportunities to practice applying implementation science to their own work.
- Ongoing discussion with external funders to identify resources.
- Support the onboarding of new Coach Coordinator regarding applying implementation science constructs and in the development of data dashboards to support coaches’ data use efforts.
- Work closely with Triple P content experts to address county-level implementation challenges.
- Work with Statewide Infant-Toddler Specialists to operationalize their model.
- Engage with technical assistance providers to develop customized support strategies to meet unique challenges being surfaced in each TZ county.

Activity 1.3: Evaluation

Description: This Activity provides a comprehensive evaluation of the Transformation Zone (TZ) Activities.

Key Accomplishments:

- Met 11/18/14 with the Evaluation Work Group to update members, discuss team coordination, review evaluation findings and discuss next steps. Group agreed to meet every other month in the next year.
- Conducted a second interview with the exiting TZ coach coordinator, drafted and analyzed notes.
- Finalized a draft of the TZ Theory of Change, shared with Evaluation Work Group.
- Finalized findings brief of interviews with county coaches and focus groups, incorporated feedback from Evaluation Work Group. Emailed document to county coaches and Evaluation Work Group, and posted to AI Hub.
- Finalized findings brief of TZ strategy purveyors’ and service providers’ interviews, incorporated feedback from Evaluation Work Group and emailed final draft to Project Coordinator for review.
- Interviewed TZ administrators from funding agencies. Coded and analyzed data, and drafted findings brief. Emailed to Evaluation Work Group for review.
- Finalized protocol for collecting stakeholder input.
- Reviewed ABLe TZ webinar products.



- Disseminated stakeholder survey via county coaches; collected and analyzed data, and drafted findings brief.
- Interviewed Dr. Pennie Foster-Fishman about ABL e Systems Change work in the TZ counties.
- Participated in TZ and Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge meetings:
 - Funders (11/3/14, 11/21/14, and 12/15/14).
 - Early Learning Challenge-Race to the Top Partners (12/1/14).
 - State Implementation Team (12/9/14)..
- Monitored evaluation email account, filed key information, and responded as needed.
- Continued document review of Implementation Hub, NCPC files, TZ Evaluation Account, NIRN project server files, ABL e drop box and Sakai site (with input from Work Group).

Challenges:

- Scheduling and facilitating the state team’s development of a workable logic model to guide evaluation activities has been a challenge.
- Getting responses to the stakeholder survey was a challenge, brought about by overlapping county activities.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Facilitate TZ Evaluation Work Group meetings.
- Attend county leadership and implementation team county meetings (1/15/15, 1/21/15, and 1/22/15) to listen, observe and evaluate TZ implementation and system processes.
- Finalize and distribute findings’ briefs of stakeholder survey, and purveyors’ and funders’ interviews.
- With NIRN, plan and co-facilitate the State Implementation Team meeting.
- Participate in partners’ meetings (Cross County 1/13/15, State Implementation Team 3/10/15).
- Participate in ABL e meetings and other TZ meetings at all levels when planned.
- Continue monitoring evaluation email account and respond as needed.
- Continue review of NIRN, NCPC, ABL e, AI Hub, Sakai site and other documents.
- Continue to collect, analyze and report evaluation findings to help stakeholders optimize impact of TZ activities at the county and state levels.

Activity 1.4: RTT-ELC Technical Assistance (TA) Reserve

Description: Utilize TA funds to support the successful implementation of NC's RTT-ELC work; TA activities will be determined by mutual agreement between NC and federal team.

Key Accomplishments:

- A Head Start Hubs Technical Assistance meeting was held in October to focus on strategies for training and supporting family engagement in early learning programs.
- A NC leadership team attended the “Making It Work: Implementing a Comprehensive P-3 Approach” Institute in Seattle in October.



- DCDEE leadership attended the 2014 National Workforce Registry Alliance Conference in October.
- Grant management staff attended the Strategic Communications Peer Learning Exchange sponsored by the ELC TA December 3 – 5 in Kansas City and engaged in planning with TA staff support.

Challenges: None to report this quarter.

Project 18: Partnership Initiatives - The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc. (NCPC)

Description: *This Project will support six strategies that will be implemented through the statewide network of local partnerships established by Smart Start.*

Activity 18.1 Leaders Collaborative/Learning Community

Description: This Activity will engage local Smart Start partnerships to implement community-based initiatives that support the state ELC goals.

Key Accomplishments:

- Leaders Collaborative Cohort III completed its final two sessions this quarter.
- Evaluation of the cohort and preparation for the next cohort are currently underway. Both sessions offered opportunities to apply and review learning from throughout the training, including: modeling leadership, inspiring others to take action, demonstrating leadership confidence and effectiveness, and the ability to lead as host vs. hero.
- Participants completed community projects and submitted shared agreements that documented the commitments made by community leaders to work together to reduce disparities for children.
- Equity retreats were held in the five counties: Ashe, Chowan/Perquimans, Hoke, Montgomery, and Transylvania.

Challenges:

- In preparation for the incoming cohort, determining how best to sustain and expand on this work. Working to build a pipeline Collaborative to serve as coaches and mentors for the current cohort members.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Preparation for Cohort IV, to begin February 2015.
- Completion of evaluation report for Cohort III.
- Revise curriculum per feedback from Cohort members.

Activity 18.2: Transformation Zone Implementation Team

Description: This Activity will provide the local community-building and support needed to effectively implement high-quality programs and practices in the Transformation Zone.



Key Accomplishments:

- Establishing and supporting a state implementation team (with key representation from state agencies, purveyor, grant management) for Family Connects to identify and resolve implementation challenges using ongoing and targeted action planning.
- National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) and State Implementation Specialists continue to actively support development of implementation capacity at the state and local levels. Accomplishments from the previous quarter include:
 - County Leadership Teams, County Implementation Teams, and County coaches' demonstration of increased understanding about and capacity for effective implementation (identified through observation, administration of the County Capacity Assessment, and action planning).
 - Work with individual purveyors (Reach Out and Read, Motherread/Fatheread, Family Connects) to use best practices in active implementation to support initial implementation efforts, including continued development of coaching infrastructure, and facilitative administration in addition to increasing the fluency of teams to identify, collect and use data to inform initial implementation efforts.
- Discussion of a policy-practice feedback loop and communication strategies between state and county colleagues:
 - Convened a well-attended cross county and state partner meeting to discuss initial implementation stage implementation challenges and successes.
 - Convened monthly calls between purveyor and county partners to facilitate strategy-specific installation stage implementation.
 - Attended state funders meetings and subsequent to continue to develop a viable policy to practice feedback loop.
 - Continue to encourage the clarification of roles and responsibilities of state partners as they relate to the funded child care strategies.
- Support for purveyors' model development including:
 - Working with Healthy Social Behavior coordinator to further articulate and operationalizing the key components of the model (e.g., similarities and differences with Pyramid Model).

Challenges:

- The development of efficient feedback processes between county and state partners, including a transparent system for sharing data across county, regional and state partners (e.g., sharing available reports, variance in what and how data is collected and/or used across different strategies, etc.).
- Sustainability of discrete strategies is unclear at this point. State partner engagement in this conversation with county partners is preliminary.
 - Finding consensus on the identification a viable administrative "home" for each strategy will become increasingly important for decision making and accountability purposes when considering factors impacting sustainability.



- Telephone support and technical assistance from purveyors/agency partners to county teams, while helpful for general support and problem-solving, is not sufficient to address ongoing adaptive challenges being surfaced as the implementation work moves into initial implementation efforts. Addressing facilitative administrative barriers (e.g., accessing existing funding for purveyor to travel to directly support county teams during this phase) may require sustained and cooperative efforts from all funders.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Completing second administration and using County Capacity Assessment with each County Team for Action Planning in the upcoming quarter.
- Continuing to develop county-level infrastructure to collect and use data to inform action planning as most strategies move into the Initial Implementation stage over the next quarter.
- Collaboration with state partners to collect and use data to inform action planning to support county-level initial implementation efforts and develop implementation drivers within models.
- Convene state implementation team for Triple P to identify and resolve implementation challenges.
- Continue to support state implementation team for Family Connects to identify and resolve implementation challenges.

Activity 18.3: Transformation Zone Early Literacy

Description: This Activity will provide strategies (including Motherhead and Reach Out and Read) to improve early literacy in the Transformation Zone.

Key Accomplishments:

- Counties are continuing staggered initial implementation of Reach Out and Read and Motherhead.
- To support literacy coordinators in their model fidelity observation visits with implementing Motherhead facilitators, NCPC, the TZ County Implementation Coaches, and the Eastern CCHC Coach have developed a draft coaching training presentation which will be presented at the January cross-county early literacy meeting.
- Initial evaluation data is coming in from the counties who have begun implementing Motherhead.
- All four counties report Story Exploring as their greatest training need. A total of 35 Story Exploring facilitators have been identified to support the counties' Story Exploring initial implementation this fall/winter. In response, Motherhead held two Story Exploring trainings in November in Plymouth, NC. Fourteen facilitators were trained on November 1st and November 22nd, 2014.
- Counties have completed first drafts of their logic models and written guidelines. These tools will be utilized by the counties to guide and support staff during implementation, as well as help communicate their theory of change. These documents will be updated annually.



- 2015 early literacy contracts with the counties and literacy purveyors are currently being processed.

Challenges:

- Counties have cited initial participant recruitment and retention difficulties during the initial implementation of Motherread/Fatheread and B.A.B.Y. Strategies continue to be discussed during cross-county calls and individual technical assistance contact with the purveyor. Recruitment and retention will likely be an on-going conversation.
- During the last several Story Exploring facilitator trainings, it was noted that several of the teachers have low literacy levels. It is hoped the support and technical assistance provided through the implementation of Story Exploring will improve teachers' reading confidence, leading to improved teacher-child interaction.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Cross-county early literacy face-to-face quarterly meeting.
- Site visits and interviews by the project evaluator will be held in late winter.

Reform Area B: High-Quality, Accountable Programs

Project 4: Promoting Participation in Revised Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) - Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE)

Description: *This Project has three main goals: revise the TQRIS, provide support to religious and public school ELDS that are currently exempt from TQRIS so that they can participate in TQRIS, and convene a Task Force to discuss the appropriateness and feasibility of licensing and regulating part-day Early Learning and Development (ELD) programs and family child care providers with fewer than three children.*

Activity 4.1: Revising TQRIS

Description: This Activity involves revising NC's Star Rated License, also known as the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System, to include a more rigorous set of standards and to better differentiate among the different star ratings.

Key Accomplishments:

- See Project 7 on page 14 for the TQRIS Validation Study. Validation and testing of a defined possible revised TQRIS model is in progress to support Activity 4.1.
- Continued coordination between the TQRIS Validation Study and the Program Quality Measure, including timeline and sample.

**Challenges:**

- North Carolina does not anticipate implementing significant revisions to its TQRIS during the course of the RTT-ELC grant, but will continue to work toward well-grounded and meaningful recommended revisions that can be implemented following the completion of the TQRIS Validation Study. The TQRIS Validation Study will require additional time into 2016 to complete.

Upcoming Tasks:

- See Project 7 on page 14 for upcoming tasks for the TQRIS Validation Study.
- Regular meetings for coordination between the Validation Study and Program Quality Measure group continue.

Activity 4.2: Professional Development Bonus Program

Description: This Activity will offer Incentives to ELD programs that implement certain policies and practices related to staff professional development.

Key Accomplishments:

- A total of 89 applications for the Professional Development Bonus Award have been submitted. Of these, 61 were complete and have been or are being processed for payment. Fifty nine applications were from child care centers, thirty were from family child care home providers.
- The PD Bonus Award Project Coordinator and the Statewide TA Specialist had correspondence between DCDEE and DPI to determine that certificates from the DPI delivery of NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development are equivalent to the .5 CEU training delivery through the CCR&R system.
- Brochures were delivered to CCR&R Regional Program Managers for further dissemination within their management regions.

Challenges: None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Use the data from the CCR&R quarterly report, received from DCDEE, to contact programs that are new or have recently moved to 4- and 5-star status.
- Continue statewide promotional efforts for the PD Bonus Award activity and process applications.

Activity 4.3: Support to Enter the TQRIS

Description: This Activity provides technical assistance and mini-grants to bring unlicensed public school and faith-based ELD programs into the TQRIS.

Key Accomplishments:

- The project has received 91 applications from public school programs, and 88 of those have been awarded mini-grants.



- 81 of the Public Schools awarded mini-grants have achieved licensure, (Temporary License: 64; 5 Stars: 8; 4 Stars: 9).
- To date, 15 applications from GS 110 programs have been received; 14 grants were awarded; two programs have received licensure (one 3 star and one 5 star).
- One GS 110 program who received \$5,000 grant has closed, returning funding.

Challenges:

- Continued low interest by GS-110 programs and lack of movement by GS-110 programs in the project. Decision made to focus TA on current programs.

Upcoming Tasks:

- A .25 FTE coordinator was hired effective 10/1/2014.
- The coordinator will contact all public preschool programs who were awarded grants, have received temporary licenses, and not yet requested reimbursements as well as follow-up with GS-110's that have not moved into licensure to determine whether they will continue in the project or should withdraw.
- Grant coordinator will also continue to pursue reimbursement from the GS-110 program that was awarded a grant and then closed their ECE program.
- No new recruitment will take place – only close-out of the current programs.

Activity 4.4: Task Force on Licensure

Description: Regional meetings of programs not currently participating in (or required to participate in) NC's Star Rated License. These meetings will bring together part-day preschool and family/ friend/ neighbor care providers across the state, review current licensing requirements, and gather data for a report on the barriers that prevent these programs from participating in the Star Rated License.

Key Accomplishments:

- This project was shifted to the CCR&R Regions in the form of surveys to FFN and part-day preschool programs.
- CCR&R staff reached out to unlicensed providers in their regions, using script developed by DCDEE.
- Results were submitted to DCDEE and compiled in a final report.

Challenges: None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- This project is completed.



Project 5: New Program Quality Measurement Tool - Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE)

Description: *This project will create a new measurement tool that addresses important aspects of quality related to child outcomes and may be used in a TQRIS. NC will lead a consortium of states to develop and pilot-test the new quality assessment tool.*

Activity 5.1: Program Quality Measure Development

Key Accomplishments:

- Met to discuss how to utilize the implementation science framework to organize key practices and items.
- Assign teams to review and discuss guiding principles and key components and input data into the Qualtrics survey.
- Reframing of the conceptual model in terms of drivers and guiding principles. Specifically re-conceptualized program-level areas as drivers.
- Training coordinator and assessor positions created and posted.

Challenges: None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Complete data entry for each guiding principle and key component.
- Consolidate data from the video pilot and use them to inform data entry and discussion.
- Interviews and hiring of training coordinator and assessor.
- Cross coordination meeting with Validation Study team.

Project 6: Increase Access to High Quality Early Learning and Development Programs (ELDs) - Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE)

Description: *This Project includes four activities to increase child access to high quality early learning and development programs.*

Activity 6.1: Support for 3 or More Stars

Description: This Activity will support one and two star programs toward attaining a three star or higher rating.

Key Accomplishments:

- Statewide, 291 programs served through this project have increased stars.
- 107 of the original base-line programs have closed.
- Contractors have designed and implemented various strategies to incentivize and support ELD programs in this project, including mini grant incentives to help programs meet requirements, targeted trainings, and follow-up technical assistance.

**Challenges:**

- ELD programs remaining at less than 3 stars have significant needs in order to move up in NC's QRIS. These needs require more time than is remaining in the grant and/or a greater commitment to improve quality than the program is able to make. Contractors are being advised to discontinue recruitment of new programs and focus instead on moving up or closing out currently active programs.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue to provide technical assistance and professional development support services to Temporary 1- and 2- star programs who are currently being served and can make reasonable progress toward higher stars by the end of the grant period.

Activity 6.2: 4 -5 Star Infant Toddler Slots in the Transformation Zone

Description: This Activity will create more subsidized Infant/Toddler slots in 4 and 5 star programs in the Transformation Zone with support from an Infant-Toddler Specialist.

Key Accomplishments:

- Enhanced payments to 1 TZ county program for 9 children (2 infants and 7 ones) were made for the September service month.
- Enhanced payments to 2 TZ county programs were made for the October service month for a total of 13 children.
- 2 new applications approved for IT Expansion Grant program in Beaufort County
- Completed IT Expansion Grant additional mock assessments for 3 classrooms 2 in one TZ county and 1 in another TZ county to determine progress toward goals/improvements made.

Challenges:

- Even with ongoing TA support from the IT Specialist, progress is not being made in one TZ county program. The IT Specialist has made contact with the County implementation coach and Partnership ED for assistance.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue providing technical assistance based on program improvement plans to expansion grant programs.
- Follow-up with TZ County program to assess progress toward goals identified with the CPSSP staff to determine readiness to remain in the IT Expansion Grant program.

Activity 6.3: Part Day Infant Toddler Program in Transformation Zone (NC Babies First or NCB1)

Description: This Activity will create a high-quality part day program for high need infants and toddlers in the Transformation Zone with support from an Infant-Toddler Specialist.

Key Accomplishments:

- One TZ County: 32 attending at the end of November, 2014.



- Second TZ County: 6 attending at the end of November, 2014.
- The ITPS visited the potential a third TZ County site and has received a partial site application.
- A partial site application has been received from the fourth TZ County site that qualifies for NCB1.

Challenges: None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Provide TA support to current NCB1 sites with a continued focus on supporting family engagement activities.
- ITPS and IT Project Manager meeting with TZ Coach in one county and SS ED early in November.
- Complete 6 month mock ITERS-R assessments and update action plans.

Project 7: TQRIS Validation – Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE)

Description: TQRIS Validation will conduct studies to provide information about how best to revise the TQRIS so that the tiers meaningfully differentiate levels of quality in ELD programs that correspond to changes in children’s progress.

Activity 7.1: TQRIS Validation Study

Key Accomplishments

- Continued to work on selecting the sample and developing the plan to gather additional data with targeted provider interviews.
- Descriptive analyses of the Alternative 4 QRIS model for family child care homes were submitted to DCDEE.
- Additional descriptive analyses for child care centers were conducted and presented to DCDEE to provide more information about staff education and ERS.
- Regular calls with the FPG team, DCDEE, and Child Trends to discuss results of additional mapping for centers, descriptive analyses for family childcare homes, and plans for upcoming project tasks including the targeted data collection.
- Additional mapping analyses of the latest proposed QRIS requirements for child care centers (Alternative 4) using 50% cut-offs in place of 100% and 75% cut-offs were conducted and submitted to DCDEE.

Challenges: None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Finalize the mapping of the FCCH data based on the new standards from DCDEE and using available data to see where programs fall.
- Finalize interview/survey and plan to gather additional data with targeted data collection for mapping additional criteria toward the selection of a sample for the validation study.



- Continued coordination with Measure Development Project.

Project 12: Compensation and Retention – Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE)

Description: This Project will fund the WAGE\$ ® salary supplement in the 17 counties that were eligible to apply for Transformation Zone status, as well as expanded TEACH scholarships in those 17 counties and additional TEACH scholarships statewide.

Activity 12.2.7 – Infant Toddler Specialist in the Transformation Zone

This Activity has been completed.

- A qualified Infant-Toddler Program Specialist has been hired and trained to develop and provide coursework for NC-FITC (Foundations of Infant and Toddler Care) Scholarship.

Project 16: Family Engagement – Department of Public Instruction (DPI)

Description: This Project will assist the Head Start Collaboration Office in working with local Head Start programs to serve as regional hubs for coaching, mentoring, and technical assistance to other child care programs in their service area for the purpose of strengthening family engagement activities.

Activity 16.1: Competitive Selection of Head Start Hubs from Existing 58 Head Start Grantees in North Carolina

Description: This activity involves the competitive selection of Head Start Hubs from existing 58 Head Start Grantees in NC.

This Activity has been completed.

- Twenty-two hubs have been selected.

Activity 16.2: Technical Assistance, Demonstration, And Coaching Regarding Family Engagement Strategies Provided By Head Start Hub Sites To ECE Workforce In Non-Head Start ELD Programs.

Description: This activity provides technical assistance, demonstration, and coaching on family engagement strategies provided by Head Start Hubs to the ECE workforce in non-Head Start ELD programs.

Key Accomplishments:

- As of this reporting period, 18 of the original 22 Training Hubs continue to operate, delivering training and other supports (coaching and follow-up as needed) to licensed child care providers across the state. (To date, four Training Hubs have completed their scopes of work. These Hubs have collectively reached about 30% of the childcare providers in their Hubs, on average).



- Marketing strategies to attract local child care providers to trainings are tweaked on an ongoing basis.
- Ongoing technical assistance support continues to be provided to all Hubs encountering barriers to implementation. This technical assistance support includes the convening of regional Professional Learning Communities on a semi-annual basis.
- The Professional Learning Community meeting (statewide) convened in November 2014.
- To date, all Training Hubs (both active and now inactive) have trained about 22% (or 1768) of all licensed childcare providers in the State.
- Many participating childcare providers are reporting changes in their practice as a result of the family engagement trainings that they are attending.

Challenges:

- Challenges persist with recruiting some local childcare providers for participation, despite receiving marketing assistance from the Child Care Resource & Referral network, Smart Start agencies, the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE), and the NC Head Start State Collaboration Office (NC HSSCO), although, many Hubs have reported that “email blasts” from the NC HSSCO to providers across the State have been quite helpful. Training Hubs continue to employ various strategies to incentivize participation of providers (e.g. providing CEUs, conducting trainings at satellite sites to minimize travel burden, offering trainings on weekends and during evening hours, etc.).

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue to provide training and coaching services.
- Begin to develop an on-line training module for Family Engagement.

Activity 16.3: Formative Evaluation of the Saturation, Intensity, and Impact of the Head Start Hubs.

Description: This activity provides for the formative evaluation of the saturation, intensity, and impact of the Head Start Hubs.

Key Accomplishments:

- Ongoing formative evaluation and information gathering to improve services continue (reported to the NC HSSCO quarterly).
- Project impact is monitored and evaluated in several ways. Hubs are required to track and report the extent to which they are reaching childcare providers in their Hubs on a quarterly basis. Training Hubs are also required to tweak the services they provide based on participant feedback.
- Coaching that goes along with the training provides the opportunity to observe changes.

Challenges: None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Hubs continue to recruit providers, provide training, coaching.



- Evaluation of services continues.

Project 18: Partnership Initiatives – The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc. (NCPC)

Description: This Project will support six strategies that will be implemented through the statewide network of local partnerships established by Smart Start.

Activity 18.4: Faith Summits

Description: This Activity is designed to reach out to faith-based child care programs to discuss and support their possible inclusion in the TQRIS system.

Key Accomplishments:

This Activity has been completed.

- Local faith summits continue to be held in twelve counties as a result of the regional summits provided through this grant. All are funded and implemented by private resources.

Reform Area C: Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children

Project 8: Enhanced Professional Development – Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE)

Description: This Project includes three strategies to enhance NC's professional development.

Activity 8.1: Choosing & Using an Appropriate Curriculum & Instructional Assessment

Description: This Activity will allow a CEU-bearing course on Choosing and Using an Appropriate Curriculum and Instructional Assessment.

Key Accomplishments:

This Activity has been completed.

- This activity concluded in December of 2012, and Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies are now providing the training to child care providers in each of the 14 regions of the state through activity 8.3.

Activity 8.3: Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) Enhancement

Description: This Activity will support the Child Care Resource and Referral system to improve access to and the quality of professional development, coaching, mentoring, and technical assistance services



through multiple strategies, including aligning efforts with the revised ELD standards, delivering new courses, and creating Communities of Practice to support quality improvement.

Key Accomplishments:

- All regions continue to hold communities of practice for their TA/PD staff.
- *Choosing and Using a Curriculum with Formative Assessment Strategies* and *Introduction to NC Foundations of Early Learning and Development* continue to be offered across the state.
- *The Art of Technical Assistance, Coaching and Mentoring* 2.0 CEU continues to be offered across the state to TA/PD staff as needed.

Challenges:

- The demand for both CEU courses has increased greatly with the announcement of the Professional Development Bonus Award. CCR&R's are adding additional learning events where possible to meet the increased demand.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue to offer CEU courses.
- Continue to align existing courses with *NC ELDS*.
- Finalize and test orientation for ELD program staff.
- Prepare for January 2015 roll-out of .5 CEU Course on Cultural Competence.

Project 9: Early Learning and Development Standards – Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE)

Description: This project assists with the revision of NC's *Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS)*, or "*Foundations*", and develops training and professional development for early childhood educators.

Activity 9.1: ELDS Foundations Revised

Description: This Activity will revise and roll-out (including training), new Early Learning and Development Standards.

This Activity has been completed.

- *North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development* has been completed.

Upcoming Task:

- Although this activity is operational, we anticipate an upcoming task in printing 40,000 additional copies of the document to meet high demand.



Activity 9.2: ELDS CEU and Professional Development

Description: This Activity will develop professional development materials and provide train-the-trainer sessions to support the early childhood workforce in its understanding and use of the revised ELD standards.

Key Accomplishments:

- The online Train the Trainer of *NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development* .5 CEU was submitted by the subcontractor to CCRI and is currently in the final design process.
- Successful collaboration with the Community College “Growing Greatness” group (RTT-ELC activity 11.2), resulted in a cross-project meeting in November, 2014.
- Together the groups planned tentative meeting objectives, agendas and dates for the Higher Education/Technical Assistance Institutes.

Challenges: None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Refine and finalize the train the trainer version of the online NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development.
- Continue development and planning for the Higher Education/Technical Assistance Institutes in collaboration with 11.2.

Project 15: K-3 Assessment – Department of Public Instruction (DPI)

Description: *This Project will revise the NC K-3 Assessment to include all school readiness domains and provide information on children’s skills when they enter kindergarten.*

Activity 15.1: Develop/revise K-3 Assessment to include a Kindergarten Entry Assessment and extend through third grade.

Key Accomplishments:

- The K-3 Formative Assessment Consultants have joined efforts with Regional Implementation Team contractors to build stronger technical assistance and supports to LEA District Implementation Teams. The relationships/collaborations provide opportunities for feedback to inform the continued development and implementation of the K-3 Formative Assessment.
- Extensive planning, coordinating, designing, and developing of the first District Implementation Team (DIT’s) meeting were completed this quarter. The meetings will be held in all 8 SBE regions on January 8, 2015.
- Briefs, webinars, wiki’s, newsletters, live binders, and video about NC’s K-3 FA Process are continually developed and revised to support the DIT’s and various stakeholders.
- Platform development meetings continue to be held to develop Teaching Strategies technology into the format required for the NC content.
- Assessment Design Team continue to meet to finalize K-3 construct progressions, tasks and situations for the K-3 Assessment phase II usability testing (Spring 2015).
- The initial component (KEA) of the K-3 FA process was completed for Fall pilot.



- Initial implementation of the K-3 FA (KEA) launched and completed in 8 districts in the Fall (2014).
- Feedback from both phase I and II pilots are designed to inform assessment design and implementation revisions for the statewide K-3 FA (2015-2016).
- The Advisory Committee met to discuss the phase I pilot feedback and to make recommendations for the statewide roll out.
- The Implementation Design Team and Regional Implementation Teams (RIT) worked closely to develop and coordinate RIT support to DIT's.
- Preliminary findings from UNCC indicate that the formative nature of this assessment resonates with kindergarten teachers, but they will need time, training, and support to implement.
- OSBM approved the ELC/EAG Project Coordinator's position, the currently position posted, and interviews will take place in February.
- Three day EAG consortia meeting held in Raleigh. NC's ELC Grant K-3 FA process is the framework for the multi-state assessment work.
- NC attended ELC Grant meeting in Kansas City.
- Current information specific to the KEA pilot may be found on the KEA pilot wiki: <http://keapilot.ncdpi.wikispaces.net/>

Challenges:

- Consistent communications to inform and reach all stakeholders is necessary to ensure effective implementation.
- Contract process timelines are not as rapid as start dates needed to move the work forward.
- Timelines for project development and implementation remain a challenge.
- Additional requirements associated with adding a technology component to the assessment are complex.
- Compilation and analysis of collected data is an ongoing and extensive task.
- Implementation timeline differences within the legislation and Grant require balancing and management.
- Current assessments within LEA's vary and the implementation of a new process will have a new set of challenges. Streamlining existing assessments and a new assessment will require intense PD and TA.
- Ensuring the data from the Formative Assessment process is used as intended will also require PD and TA support.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continued support to LEA District Implementation Teams.
- Continued strengthening of the Regional Implementation Teams.
- Assessment Design Team meetings.
- Implementation Design Team meetings.
- Continue monthly professional development with District Implementation Team's through April.
- Continue revisions to the development and implementation of the K-3 process.
- Continue the development of the technology component of the assessment.



Activity 15.2: Using Data to Improve Classroom Instruction

Key Accomplishments:

- FirstSchool staff communicated information on the benefit of the daily 3-minute classroom walk-through process and how principals might use this approach to improve instructional practices within individual classrooms and the school as a whole.
- FirstSchool staff met with each principal to conduct a one-hour (or more) walk-through of PreK-Grade 3 classroom and collect targeted data. Following the walk-through, data and observational notes were compared and reflected upon. Principals were asked to continue this process daily in preparation for winter semester school visits.
- Staff provided a day of professional development for both districts in one NC County. Participants attended part two of each of the three break-out sessions offered in September – project-based learning; building a classroom community; or cognitively-guided instruction in math. Each group presented their work to the other groups and described how they will share their learning with colleagues at their schools.
- Staff began reassembling the data collection team and identified dates for Snapshot training in January.

Challenges: None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- 2014-2015 classroom coaching, professional development and technical assistance continued.

(Repeated) Project 16: Family Engagement (see pages 16 – 18).

Project 17: Family Strengthening – Division of Public Health (DPH)

Description: This Project will provide Family Strengthening Initiatives in the Transformation Zone.

Activity 17.1: Family Connects

Description: This Activity will provide home visiting, screening, referral, and other services in the Transformation Zone (TZ).

Key Accomplishments:

- Family Connects outreach efforts continue, are documented and reported.
- Outreach to doctors' offices, health department clinics, and birth education groups to introduce the Family Connects program.
- A total of 117 families in the Transformation Zone visited using the Connects model.

Challenges:

- Development of an Agreement Addenda revision with a regional Health Department to be the home of Family Connects (administratively, programmatically and clinically). Local Family Connects budget has been drafted.



- Project Year 2015 contract renewal with Center for Child and Family Health, Inc. This contract will redefine CCFH role as purveyor, plus include support for the evaluation through Center for Child and Family Policy (Duke). Contract to begin February 2015.
- Engaging another County Health Department in the “regional” concept, building on a great relationship. Health Director was presented with options to consider to be more fully engaged in the regional plan.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Execution of agreement addendum with one local Health Department to include programmatic support (local home) for the Family Connects Project.
- Renewal contract with CCFH to begin February 2015.

Activity 17.2: Positive Parenting Program (Triple P)

Description: The Triple P Program, an evidence based family strengthening program, is designed to meet the needs of families with many programs and options available to them. Triple P will be working with the Transformation Zone to develop programming.

Key Accomplishments:

- The local coordinators participated in bi-weekly phone conferences for peer support.
- The local coordinators held a regional meeting to focus on referrals, shared media campaign plans, completing quarterly progress reports, and developing a cloud account for sharing documents.
- All counties have either completed initial training for practitioners or have a training scheduled.
- Project leaders conducted one-on-one calls with each of the sites using the Quality Improvement Checklist to determine technical assistance needs of each site.
- 2014 Triple P Data Report completed.

Challenges

- Establishing local peer-to-peer groups. Reaffirming the MOU’s with agencies regarding peer-to-peer support groups, delivering Triple P, and submitting state data.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Face to Face meeting with all site Triple P coordinators and their supervisors, January 6 & 7, 2015.

Project 18: Partnership Initiatives – The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc. (NCPC)

Description: This Project will support six strategies that will be implemented through the statewide network of local partnerships established by Smart Start.



Activity 18.5: Child Care Health Consultants (CCHC)

Description: Child Care Health Consultants support child care programs in promoting children’s health and development. This Activity will strengthen statewide capacity by establishing a regional health consultant coaching model. It will also provide additional health consultants in the Transformation Zone counties.

Key Accomplishments:

- Transformation Zone (TZ) counties continue to implement CCHC services and have worked with their agencies and stakeholders to identify child care centers and homes prioritized for intensive health and safety consultation.
- The CCHC Model and corresponding Performance Assessment tool is being enhanced based on feedback from three CCHCs and the regional CCHC Coaches.
- The Resource Center at UNC-CH, NCPC, and the new State CCHC Nurse determined a new pilot timeline. The NC Health and Safety Assessment APP will be finalized for use during January – March 2015; identification of pilot counties and invitations sent during March – April; and kick-off pilot meetings in May 2015. The pilot will run through November 2015.
- The Resource Center at UNC-CH and NCPC continue to track general feedback and consultation/coaching contacts with local CCHCs, their supervisors, and local partnership staff.
- Continued conference calls with CCHC Coaches and NCPC to encourage information sharing and ongoing communication.
- The CCHC Coaching evaluation collection is ongoing.
- The Eastern Regional CCHC Coach is supporting the development of a TZ Early Literacy Coaching presentation, based on the CCHC Coaching module and training.

Challenges: None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Beginning May 2015, we will implement a comprehensive CCHC model pilot in select counties, utilizing the CCHC Model in tandem with the Performance Assessment form, NC Health and Safety Assessment Tool APP, standardized tracking tool, and Coaching Model.

Activity 18.6: Assuring Better Child Development (ABCD)

Description: This activity will expand statewide the ABCD program through which young children are screened at pediatric visits.



Key Accomplishments:

- Technical assistance to all ABCD coordinators as needed continues. Coordinators make great use of TA phone calls. Coordinators cite multiple successes and challenges as well as share questions.
 - Coordinators reported many successes around the guidance during the regional advisory committee meetings as well as through the ongoing training and TA to medical practices.
 - Challenges center on electronic health records (EHR) and referral procedures between the medical home to early intervention (EI) agencies and the feedback about eligibility and services from EI back to the medical home.
- Collaboration with a key stakeholder group for the Early Intervention branch at the State Department of Health began and is a significant opportunity to embed efforts of the ABCD project with early intervention system. This stakeholder group focuses on providing input and feedback for early intervention (IDEA part C) infrastructure and services. Recommendations from the group will be used to inform the state's Part C strategic plan submitted in the spring 2015.
- A data request has been made to the Early Intervention branch at the Division of Public Health with the goal of receiving data from the 0-2 early intervention program (IDEA part C) that will support the analysis of our ABCD efforts.
- All four ABCD Partnerships that were leading regional planning processes submitted their deliverables as required and contracts were issued to three partnerships to start ABCD implementation in the remaining four regions.
- Throughout the fall of 2014, project manager attended four Regional ABCD Advisory Committee meetings. All four meetings provided great insight into the implementation of ABCD in various regions, as well as challenges and successes.
 - Project manager was able to contribute to the regional sustainability discussions and provide a statewide update on the ABCD expansion.
 - Intensified regional and county specific collaborations appear to be the most significant positive outcome aside from the primary outcomes of increased screening, referral and treatment.
- The quarterly QI meeting was held in December, 2014 in Greensboro.
 - The evaluator presented the newest data. Overall, outputs have been exceeded and outcomes are on track.
 - A speaker from the Department of Public Health presented about a helpline for families and professionals that helps to connect children with special health care needs to appropriate early intervention programs.
- In the quarterly state level ABCD Advisory Committee, great progress was made working with DPI's Exceptional Children's Program to finalize changes to some of their forms and processes regarding the notification (i.e. referral) process for children from the



medical home. DPI will release this new process in early 2015 and re-train their preschool coordinators to use the new process. It will include use of the Medical Home Feedback form that was developed by the ABCD State Advisory Committee to allow for both DPI and CDSA to provide more consistent feedback to the Medical Home after evaluation/assessment of children referred.

- A data update is planned for the January grantee meeting and to compile an annual report for 2014.
- Sustainability discussions have been emphasized both regionally and at the state level between CCNC and NCPC. Project stakeholders met to plan for sustainability and agreed to several next steps. Sustainability is also discussed at the regional advisory committee meetings and brainstorming about sustainability was facilitated at the quarterly Quality Improvement meeting.

Challenges:

- CCNC continues to work with DHHS on addressing the delays that have been caused by the implementation of the NC Tracks system (Medicaid Management Information System) in mid-2013. At this point, CCNC is receiving data again from Medicaid, and pending further quality control and analysis, we are confident that we will start to receive the screening rates data again in early 2015.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue TA to local partnerships as needed.
- Hold a face-to-face meeting with the lead Smart Start local partnerships (our grantees) in January 2015.
- Assist the final four regions to start full implementation of ABCD.
- Coordinate/facilitate a two day ABCD training in late January, geared to both new and existing ABCD coordinators and other quality improvement staff.
- Continued work with contracted evaluator on data collection and evaluation.
- Continued discussions around sustainability regionally and at the state level.
 - As part of the state-level sustainability efforts, develop an Online Training & Implementation Tool.
 - Employ the assistance of the ABCD state advisory group to actively address plans for 2015 and the post RTT-ELC grant period.

Reform Area D: A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce



Project 3: Professional Development Capacity Building

Description: *This Project will improve the performance of Early Childhood caretakers and educators by improving access to training. The Project will also coordinate the creation of the NC Council on Early Childhood Professional Development with a goal of improving the coordination and alignment of professional development.*

Activity 3.1: NC Early Childhood Professional Development Support

Description: Through this Activity, specific professional development needs in the state will be identified and supported.

Key Accomplishments:

- RTT-ELC Leadership was able to locate alternative funds for BK Project Sustainability.
- Proposal and budget developed to commit funds to extend and support the On-line Master's Degree programs in Early Childhood Leadership and Management.

Challenges: None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Submit for federal approval.
- Amend existing contracts to include this activity.

Activity 3.2: On-Line Master's Degree Program

Description: This Activity will create a new online Master's Degree in Early Childhood Program Leadership and Management through NC's higher education system to offer a next step on our professional development pathway for early childhood educators.

Key Accomplishments:

- All contracts executed.
- Currently, 64 students are enrolled in these programs and an additional 59 applicants have been accepted to begin studies in 2015.
- T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships (Task 12.2.15 in GRADS – Develop and implement outreach plan for Master's Degree in Early Childhood Program Leadership and Management Scholarship) are being offered for coursework that will contribute to the online Master's Degree (see page 33).

Challenges:

- Students entering the program may need support of T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships beyond December 2015. Seeking continued and/or alternative resources.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Complete contract amendment process to extend the timeline and offer continued support for the online Master's Degree.



Project 6: Increase Access to High Quality Early Learning and Development Programs (ELDs) - Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE)

Description: This Project includes four activities to increase child access to high quality early learning and development programs.

Activity 6.4: Workforce Study

Description: This Activity will conduct an annual workforce study of early childhood educators' education, compensation, and retention levels to better identify the strategies needed to improve child access to high quality ELD programs.

Key Accomplishments:

- Achieved at least 70% response rate for family child care providers in all 14 regions.
- Scanned surveys in order to save electronically instead of paying storage costs for upcoming years.
- Began cleaning of family child care data and preparation for analysis.
- Mailed teacher and director surveys to non-responding programs.
- Called directors and finished collecting needed surveys.
- Began report writing.

Challenges: None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Final input for director surveys and begin data cleaning.
- Analysis of all data
- Write draft of final 2014 report.
- Prepare for 2015 study.

Project 8: Enhanced Professional Development – Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE)

Description: This Project includes three strategies to enhance NC's professional development.

Activity 8.2: Course on Mentoring and Technical Assistance

Description: This Activity will allow a Coaching, Mentoring, and Technical Assistance Course to be developed for those providing such services to ELD programs and staff.

Key Accomplishments:

- The project contractor is developing a proposal for a graduate-level three semester credit hour course entitled – The Art and Science of Early Childhood Coaching, Mentoring and Technical Assistance.



- Bids were solicited for graphic design work for Art and Science of Early Childhood Coaching, Mentoring and Technical Assistance PowerPoint and corresponding Trainer’s Manual.

Challenges: None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- DCDEE: finalize and issue amendment for 3 credit graduate course on Technical Assistance, Coaching and Training.

(Repeated) Activity 8.3: Child Care Resource &Referral (CCR&R) Enhancement (see page 19)

Activity 8.4: Healthy, Social Behavior (HSB) Specialist in Transformation Zone

Description: This Activity will provide a Healthy Social Behavior Specialist who will provide technical assistance and training to ELD programs in the Transformation Zone (TZ) to improve program capacity to support the healthy social/emotional development of the children in their care, using the teaching pyramid framework and strategies.

Key Accomplishments:

- Continued working with 3 programs in one TZ county; 4 programs in another TZ county; 3 programs in a third TZ county; and 4 programs in the fourth TZ county.
- Continued work with NIRN team on Practice Profile.
- Visited with each county TZ Implementation or Leadership Team to review project design, answer questions, and report classroom progress to date.

Challenges: None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue building relationships with local TA personnel and agencies.
- Continue classroom observations and technical assistance.
- Continue work on development of HSB practice profile.

Project 10: Certification and Licensure – Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE)

Description: *Certification and Licensure provides coaching and support to teachers working with children with high needs in non-public school, non-NC Pre-K classrooms who are working to earn the full B-K teacher licensure; develops a Technical Assistance Endorsement for professionals who provide technical assistance, coaching, and mentoring to early childhood teachers; and provides support for Early Educator Certification at a reduced cost for the early care and education workforce.*



Activity 10.1: Support for BK Teacher Licensure

Description: This Activity will provide coaching and support to teachers working with children with high needs in non-public school, non-NC Pre-K classrooms who are working to earn the full B-K teacher licensure (SP2).

Key Accomplishments:

- Transition of Early Educator Support, Licensing, and Professional Development (EESLPD) Mentoring/Evaluation Services to two contracted University Hubs: East Carolina University (ECU) and University of North Carolina – Charlotte (UNCC), and hiring of related staff in those hubs.
- Processing of all active teachers and their Mentor and/or Evaluator to establish Unique IDs for the new online evaluation system: True North Logic in Home-Base database, which is used for all teachers under the NC Department of Public Instruction. A total of 222 teachers, identified as RTT, are currently enrolled with the EESLPD Office.
- 10 professional development webinar sessions and 5 on-site sessions were held for newly enrolled teachers, site administrators and Team Members (Mentors/Evaluators/Partners).
- New enrollments and teacher changes are processed in all data systems. A total of 216 teachers, identified as RTT, are currently enrolled with the EESLPD Office (November 14, 2014 data).
- Completed revisions of EESLPD forms and the 2014/'15 Guidelines & Protocol document used by Mentors/Evaluators/Partners for their work with teachers.
- Licensure action requests were processed for submission to the NC Department of Public Instruction (NC DPI): a total of 98 licensure action requests were sent to the NC DPI between September to November 2014, sixteen of which were for BK Project teachers including four conversions from the SPI to SPII License.

Challenges:

- The number of enrolled teachers continuously fluctuates. Nonpublic licensed teachers often move into public school classrooms.
- Partners are challenged by multiple system changes at local and state levels. Making personal contacts with each of them enables us to secure their partnership with the EESLPD Office and assess the supports they need.
- The process of assigning all teachers a Mentor and/or Evaluator is multi-faceted and will require additional time given the recent change in the delivery structure. As of November, there are still a handful of teachers awaiting their final assignments.
- The need for Mentor and Evaluation services to licensed Early Childhood teachers in nonpublic, non-NC Pre-K programs is greater than ongoing (post RTT-ELC) funding. Of the 216 enrolled teachers under the RTT-ELC BK Project we project that we will be able to continue services for 145 teachers after the end of the grant.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Ongoing close coordination between State EESLPD Office and two Universities to ensure implementation of all EESLPD processes.



- All assigned teachers will have a first formal observation completed by December 20th (per prescribed protocol).
- Deliver training to all active teachers, Mentors/Evaluators and partners on the new online evaluation system: True North Logic in Home-Base database - used for all teachers under the NC DPI.

Activity 10.2: Develop and Offer Technical Assistance (TA) Endorsement

Description: This Activity will allow a Technical Assistance Endorsement to be developed for professionals who provide technical assistance, coaching, and mentoring to early childhood teachers.

Key Accomplishments:

- Continued statewide marketing of the availability of the TA Endorsement.
- A total of 87 endorsements have been issued as of November.

Challenges: None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue outreach & recruitment efforts.
- Continue to issue TA Endorsements.
- Hold meetings with state partners to discuss next steps in supporting recruitment efforts and integration of TAE into existing systems.

Activity 10.3: Offer Early Educator Certification at reduced cost

Description: This Activity will provide reduced fees for Certification to encourage full participation in the system.

Key Accomplishments:

- A total of 571 ECE professionals were certified through this grant between September and November.
- This brings the grand total ECE professionals certified to 15,811, which reflects a loss of 8,702 since the beginning of the RTT-ELC grant.
- Staff continue recruitment efforts.

Challenges: Nothing to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Ongoing recruitment of new and renewal applicants.
- Notifying early educators due to renew in upcoming months.
- Processing applications and issuing certifications to early educators who have applied.
- When surveying those who choose not to renew 22% indicated they cannot afford the professional development required; 25% were unable to pay the required fee; 13% left the field how to support them in renewing; 18% indicated their employer does not require EEC; 6%



indicated they aren't interested in completing the required professional development. Will have to work to identify supports for this pool of professionals.

- Surveying those who elect to certify (initial and renewal) to determine why and what supports are needed next.
- Continue to meet with DCDEE and Grant Management Team.

Project 11: Access and Accreditation – Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE)

Description: This Project will work with community colleges to establish Early Childhood Associate Degree Programs accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). It also creates an innovation fund to increase access and student success.

Activity 11.1: NAEYC Accreditation of Community College Early Childhood Programs

Description: This Activity will provide grants to assist community colleges to achieve the National Association for the Education of Young Children’s Early Childhood Associate Degree accreditation.

Key Accomplishments:

- Five colleges received their Phase III Site visits in September and October 2014.
- Five colleges submitted their Phase II Self Studies to NAEYC and anticipate site visits in early 2015.
- Twenty-six community colleges have achieved NAEYC accreditation overall.

Challenges:

- One Community College’s Self Study still needed revision on the deadline date of September 30, 2014. The revisions are being made and the Self Study is expected to be submitted before November 30.
- Two Community Colleges have indicated that submission of a quality self-study will not occur by September 30, 2014. Plans are being developed for both colleges to continue making progress on the project.
- The assigned Subject Matter Expert is working closely with the sub grantees to ensure that documents are ready and appropriate for submission.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Five sub grantees will prepare for Site Visits. Subject Matter Experts are assisting with mock Site Visits.
- Subject Matter Experts and NCCCS staff will assist three remaining sub grantees with Self Study preparation.
- NCCCS staff will attend the NAEYC Annual Professional Development Conference in Dallas, Texas for updates on accreditation efforts.



Activity 11.2: Community College Innovation Fund

Description: This Activity provides a fund that will support innovative strategies that expand access and improve student success in early childhood associate degree programs.

Key Accomplishments:

- Sub grantee colleges continue to implement the “improvements/revisions” designed through their projects and continue to report greater student satisfaction, performance, and persistence than non-cohort students.
- One Community College has presented a plan for a fully online cohort beginning in Fall 2015
- Another Community College early literacy certificate courses have started on Saturday mornings.
- Work continued around embedding *NC Foundations of Early Learning and Development* into community college coursework. The Growing Greatness project kick off was held at the NC ACCESS Fall 2014 meeting on October 3rd.
- The Growing Greatness project team had their first team meeting November 13 & 14, 2014 at Camp Caraway.

Challenges:

- Lower enrollment in some of the courses than anticipated.
- Challenges related to meeting student needs (in terms of advising, technology access & expertise, family challenges, etc.).

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue facilitating study sessions for all ECE students.
- Registration for spring 2015 begins November 4th. Colleges are in the process of recruiting for the next cohort.

Project 12: Compensation and Retention – Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE)

Description: *This Project will fund the WAGE\$ ® salary supplement in the 17 counties that were eligible to apply for Transformation Zone status, as well as expanded TEACH scholarships in those 17 counties and additional TEACH scholarships statewide.*

Activity 12.1 WAGE\$ in the Transformation Zone

Description: This Activity allows WAGE\$ supplements to be offered in the Transformation Zone. WAGE\$ is an education based salary supplement designed to incentivize and reward teacher education and retention.

Key Accomplishments:

Data listed reflects the year to date.

- 587 participants have received RTT-ELC funds for completing commitment periods during the reporting period (January – November).



- Provided Smart Start partnerships in RTT-ELC counties and Transformation Zone coaches with information regarding the number paid in each county year to date.
- Completed a new spending projection for all counties receiving RTT-ELC funds to assess the potential of a waiting list. A new estimate will be required once all hybrid budgets are in place before this can be fully determined.

Challenges: None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Process applications.
- Process increases in education.
- Complete employment confirmations.
- Issue payments.
- Continue recruitment activities.
- Offer and provide requested outreach opportunities.

Activity 12.2 T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships

Description: This Activity will provide enhanced T.E.A.C.H.® Scholarships in the 17 Transformation Zone-eligible counties, as well as new scholarships for other members of the early childhood workforce (e.g., home visitors, TA/PD providers, coaches, etc.) across the state, and a new Infant Toddler program of study and related scholarship (NC-FITC) for teachers working with children birth to 36 months of age.

Key Accomplishments:

- Early Care and Education Community Specialist Scholarship Program
 - 13 Early Care and Education Community Specialist Scholarships had been awarded to date.
 - 9 recipients have submitted enrollment documentation for summer 2014 and stipends have been requested.
 - 5 recipients are employed at a Smart Start partnership agency, 7 are employed at a resource and referral agency, and 1 recipient is employed as a home visitor in a Head Start program.
- NC Foundation of Infant and Toddler Care Mentor Teacher Scholarship (NC-FITC)
 - Started Cohort 3, course 1, with 14 students.
 - Created, collected and tallied surveys of Community College instructors to gather information about interest in a NC-FITC Summer Institute.
- Master's Degree Scholarship
 - UNC-Greensboro
 - 29 scholarships awarded to date
 - Summer 2014 cohort – 15 recipients enrolled in 36 credits
 - Fall 2014 cohort – 5 additional scholarships awarded
 - Summer 2015 cohort – 9 participants
 - UNC-Wilmington
 - Fall 2014 cohort-41 scholarships awarded



- Spring 2015 cohort-19 participants
- Early Care and Education Enhanced Scholarship in the Transformation Zone (TZ).
 - 45 T.E.A.C.H. recipients participating on an enhanced Transformation Zone scholarship
 - 38 Associate Degree recipients
 - 2 Bachelor Degree recipient
 - 5 Birth-Kindergarten Licensure recipients
 - 31 sponsoring programs
 - Participants in 12 of the 17 Transformation Zone eligible counties

Challenges:

- Early Care and Education Community Specialist Scholarship Program.
 - Participation has been low.
- NC Foundation of Infant and Toddler Care Mentor Teacher Scholarship (NC-FITC)
 - Since Cohort 2 is predominantly administrators, learning to focus the content to that population and make appropriate changes has been a challenge.
- Early Care and Education Enhanced Scholarship in the TZ.
 - Although participation in the TZ counties has not significantly increased since the beginning of this activity, there has been some success when comparing TZ participation to the statewide T.E.A.C.H. participation trends. From 2010-2012, the decrease in participation in the TZ counties mirrors the decrease in the general T.E.A.C.H. population. However in 2014, we actually saw an increase in the number of participants in the TZ counties, whereas the statewide trend continued to decline. This seems to suggest that the efforts are making a difference in the TZ counties.
- Master's Degree Scholarship
 - Need to look at time frame for grant end and consider no-cost extension to give final cohort more time to complete program.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Early Care and Education Community Specialist Scholarship Program
 - Collect any outstanding paperwork for recipients enrolled for Fall 2014.
- NC Foundation of Infant and Toddler Care Mentor Teacher Scholarship (NC-FITC).
 - Begin updating information in course 1 to fully incorporate *NC Foundations of Early Learning and Development*.
 - Plan for 1st webinar session for Cohort 3.
 - Survey eligible mentors regarding barriers to participation in the mentoring program.
- Early Care and Education Enhanced Scholarship in the TZ.
 - Continue recruitment in Transformation Zone eligible counties.
 - Process enhanced release time claims and T.E.A.C.H. bonuses for eligible participants.
- Master's Degree Scholarship.
 - Continue accepting and processing applications.
 - Follow up with scholarship participants who have not sent in their Spring 2015 Pre-Authorization Request Forms.
 - Collect grades when Fall 2014 semester concludes.



Project 13: Cultural Competence – Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE)

Description: This Project will work with 100 early care and education teachers/directors and 75 TA providers to develop curriculum (.5 CEU course), training, coaching and assessment tools through an intentional learning process called the Breakthrough Series Collaborative. The goal is to increase the cultural competence of the early childhood workforce who are directly participating in the learning communities, and to extend this learning to the larger ECE workforce through the .5 CEU course that will be delivered through the *CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL* system starting in 2015.

Activity 13.1: Cultural Competence Support

Key Accomplishments:

- Implementation of Learning Session 4 which took place on Thursday and Friday, October 23rd and 24.
- Completed preliminary analysis of Learning Session 4 Evaluations.
- Continued planning for TA & CLF Session 4 scheduled for November 13 and 14.
- Glover and Associates continued adding resources to Introduction to Cultural Competence: Awareness Curriculum.
- Continued TA completion of Early Childhood Education Scans to identify culturally competent practices evident in centers and family child care homes.
- Center and Family Child Care providers completed final organizational assessments on their centers and homes.
- Facilitated final Topical Call #11, *Data and Practice Improvement* on October 10th.
- Completed preliminary analysis of PDSAs and Metrics.

Challenges:

- Two early childhood centers were not able to participate in Learning Session 4 due to various center and substitute issues.
- Wiggiio and other electronic processes continue to be problematic for several participants.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continued practicum observations of TAs and CLFs.
- Leadership Team Meeting, Thursday, November 20th at 10:00 AM on the campus of Winston-Salem State University and via WebEx.
- Next WSSU Virtual Planning Meeting Thursday, December 11th at 9:00 AM.
- Publish the Cultural Competence Awareness Module.
- Continue to develop audio and video content pieces.
- Continue implementation of topical webinars and final affinity calls.
- TAs will complete Early Childhood Cultural Competence Scans of the centers and family child care homes and submit their results to a database for analysis.
- On-going collection and analysis of metrics and PDSA's.



Project 14: ECDL (Early Childhood Director Leadership) – Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE)

Description: *This Project will develop intensive training for child care administrators to improve their leadership and program management skills.*

Activity 14.1: Early Childhood Director Leadership Institute (ECDLI)

Key Accomplishments:

- Developed online training for participants that did not attend Institute Two. The online training consisted of a three-hour webinar and two hours of assignments.
- Received DCDEE approval for .5 CEU/5 contact hours for online training for participants that did not attend Institute Two.
- Creating reports for pre/post PAS assessments with McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership and Branaugh Group.
- Budget revisions for CY14/15.
- Awarded IACET approval for *Program Management Inventory* .5 CEU.
- Contacting participants with post assessment dates and required information needed to complete assessments.
- Conducted online training for participants that did not attend Institute Two. DCDEE/IACET approved three hour webinar and assignments.

Challenges:

- One director left the field of ECE, one director retired from the program and four choose not to continue in ECDLI, as they did not attend Institute Two.
- The online professional development was long, but the interest and participation levels were high throughout the training. Would consider using this format for future trainings.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Begin post-PAS assessments.
- Schedule venue for Institute Spring 2015.
- Continued edits to the Curriculum, *Introduction to Early Childhood Leadership and Management*.



Reform Area E: Measuring Outcomes and Progress

Project 2: Data Systems and Management

Description: These projects aim to establish state data systems capable of collecting and integrating high quality data from multiple state agency partners serving children 0-5. The NC ECIDS will focus on the design, development, and implementation of an early childhood data system capable of integrating early childhood data from state agencies serving young children and will link to and align with the longitudinal P-20W (Pre-K to age 20/ workforce) system.

Activity 2.1: NC Early Childhood Integrated Data System (NC ECIDS).

Description: This Activity is focused on developing and implementing an early childhood data system (NC ECIDS).

Key Accomplishments:

- The Executive Committee of the Governance Council has met and established a governance structure, including selecting a chair, and is scheduled to meet a second time in January.
- The Program Management Committee of the Governance Council met several times and has made recommendations regarding structure, governance, and policies that were sent to the Executive Committee to review.
- The NC ECIDS Governance Council Manual has been reviewed by both the Program Management Committee and Executive Committee, and has been revised based on feedback.
- Two workgroups within the Program Management Committee have been created- one to work on standard reports and another to figure out an expedited process for data requests from the key participating agencies.
- There have been continued meetings with the P20 longitudinal data system group (P20W) to develop workflows and business requirements regarding how the two data systems will connect and be governed when there is a request for data from both systems.
- The Agency MOA, which key participating agencies will sign that establishes data sharing through the system is in the final internal review stage at the secretary's office at DHHS. It has also been sent out to members of the Executive Committee for initial review.
- A Data Use Agreement (DUA) for data requesters to sign before they are able to obtain data from the system, has been approved by the Program Management Committee, and will next be reviewed and approved by the Executive Committee.
- An initial user guide has been drafted for data requesters to use when making a request.
- OITS has set up and held regular meetings with the technology representatives from the participating programs and agencies to discuss the architecture of the system and the next steps in moving forward in terms of roles and responsibilities.
- OITS is currently working with CSDW, the data warehouse at DHHS, to determine the work needed to be done to establish a connection between it and the NC ECIDS application.



- OITS has hired all of its necessary personnel for the project, including java developers and someone who has experience building and designing interactive web portals.
- The team has reviewed and signed off on a number of business requirements packages which will be used to build the system.
- OITS personnel have started attending some of the 18 trainings necessary to build the application.
- We have submitted an application to the federal State Support Team for support in mapping our data elements to CEDS elements.
- Continued work on establishing a contract with eScholar, the UID vendor, to purchase the UIDs and software.

Challenges:

- Getting the MOA in place will take time because so many people have to review it and sign off on it before it is final. So project staff continue to work on it, but know it will be a challenge to move it along as quickly as desired.
- There has been a significant delay in getting a contract in place for eScholar due to the existing policies and procedures within the participating agencies.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Obtain feedback from the Executive Committee on the MOA.
- Get feedback on the Data Use Agreement from the Executive Committee.
- Continue to hold Executive and Program Management Committee meetings to be able to make policy decisions about the system and approve key documents.
- Schedule meetings with the Program Management Committee work groups to develop the first 3-5 standard reports, and draft a process for expedited reviews.
- Continue to work with P20W to ensure that our systems can be aligned once they are built.
- Develop a review process and wireframes for the web portal.
- Start the initial build of the NC ECIDS application.
- Continue to review and approve business requirements packages.
- Continue to work with source system data warehouse personnel on technology needed to connect the warehouses to the NC ECIDS application.
- Establish a contract for the UID software and UIDs from eScholar.
- Load the initial three programs (NC Pre-K, Child Care Subsidy, and Infant-Toddler Part C) into eScholar to start assigning UIDs following trainings and establishing the contract.
- After the programs have been loaded, work on a near-match resolution process for UIDs.

Activity 2.2: Smart Start Data Project

Description: This Activity will enable North Carolina Partnership for Children (NCPC) to provide resources necessary for the 76 local Smart Start partnerships to collect and provide data to a unified system that will ultimately link to ECIDS.

Key Accomplishments:



- Mini Grants.
 - Twenty-six Smart Start partnerships' mini-grant applications were approved for funding and contracts executed.
 - Mini grant projects include software to track program data; software to analyze program data, and the selection of measurement tools and instruments to measure outputs and outcomes.
 - Local partnerships have been submitting invoices for the mini grant work as it is completed and NCPC has been reviewing them and sending reimbursement.
- Outcomes and Measures.
 - The Data Advisory Group met in December and has been working to review and finalize the list of Smart Start outcomes.
 - NCPC hosted a training on Visit Tracker, the software used to track family level data and outcomes for Parents and Teachers, the most commonly funded family support activity in the Smart Start network.
 - NCPC convened a multi-user session with Data Keeper Technology, the developer for Visit Tracker. The discussion identified steps necessary for eventually enabling the linkage of Visit Tracker data with ECIDS.
- NCPC funded a training for w/KIPS author.
- CLASS – information session held w/key partners & CLASS regional director.
- CLASS – information packet developed from CLASS leaders.
- System Development.
 - Outputs submitted to designer & development in process.
 - Outcomes data collection specs in development.
- Outcomes and Measures.
 - Visit Tracker- funded training & convened multi-user session w/developer.
 - KIPS - funded training for w/KIPS author.
 - CLASS – information session held w/key partners & CLASS regional director.
 - CLASS – information packet developed from CLASS leaders.

Challenges: None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Mini grant progress reports due in Feb.
- Develop Mini grants Round 2 process.
- IT software developer system development (ongoing).
- Data governance plan to be developed.
- Technical Assistance plan for new system in development.



Activity 2.3: Workforce Data Project

Description: This Activity will establish an improved early childhood workforce data system that will replace the current system, and, in addition, link to the NC ECIDS.

Key Accomplishments:

- Began conversation with Data Warehouse around future system interface.
- Received preliminary quote from ITS around planned hardware procurement cost.
- Conducted peer-to-peer conference call, moderated by PDW Center, with Colorado.
- Completed final draft of RFP and business requirements, incorporating RFP Committee and stakeholder comments.
- Entered project into Open Windows and submitted to Purchasing Office.
- Began bi-weekly meetings with Reese Edgington at DHHS Project Management Office (PMO).
- Held informational meeting with Department of Commerce around NC TOWER tool.
- Created ad-hoc committee to find way to bypass RFP process by adopting and modifying existing state software system.
- Began demos and exploratory meetings with state agencies and community college system.

Challenges:

- Interagency proposal review process poses difficulty in keeping momentum of project and meeting anticipated deadlines.
- Purchasing Office and DIRM now recommend forgoing RFP process in favor of adoption and modification of existing state system.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue exploratory discussions around and demonstrations of existing state system applications with agencies and stakeholders and determine procurement/development process for WORKS tool.

(Repeated) Activity 15.1: Develop/revise K-3 Assessment to include a Kindergarten Entry Assessment and extend through third grade (see pages 20 -21).

(Repeated) Activity 15.2: Using Data to Improve Classroom Instruction (see page 21).



NORTH CAROLINA RACE TO THE TOP- EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE TRANSFORMATION ZONE

The Transformation Zone is a system building initiative that includes a set of four counties (Beaufort, Chowan, Bertie and Hyde Counties) in Northeastern NC and representation from key human service state agencies working with young children. Working with the local and state teams, the effort emphasizes community infrastructure and capacity building around implementation science to support high quality implementation of selected evidence-based/informed strategies to improve outcomes for young children.

This report extracts the related Transformation Zone projects from the existing quarterly report and consolidates information to present the Transformation Zone as an initiative and provide a more holistic perspective of the Transformation Zone work. The various projects are coupled according to their strategy focus, including: Transformation Zone Support and Capacity Building activities, Child Care Strategies, Family Strengthening Strategies, Early Literacy Strategies, and the Transformation Zone Evaluation. A diagram depicting each strategy by implementation phase is also included to present information using the Applied Implementation Frameworks.

Transformation Zone Support and Capacity Building (Activities 1.2 and 18.2)

Description: These activities emphasize work with the local and state teams to enhance community infrastructure and capacity building around implementation science to support high quality implementation of selected evidence-based/informed strategies to improve outcomes for young children in the Transformation Zone.

Activity 1.2 (National Implementation Research Network)

Activity 1.2: Transformation Zone Support and Capacity Building

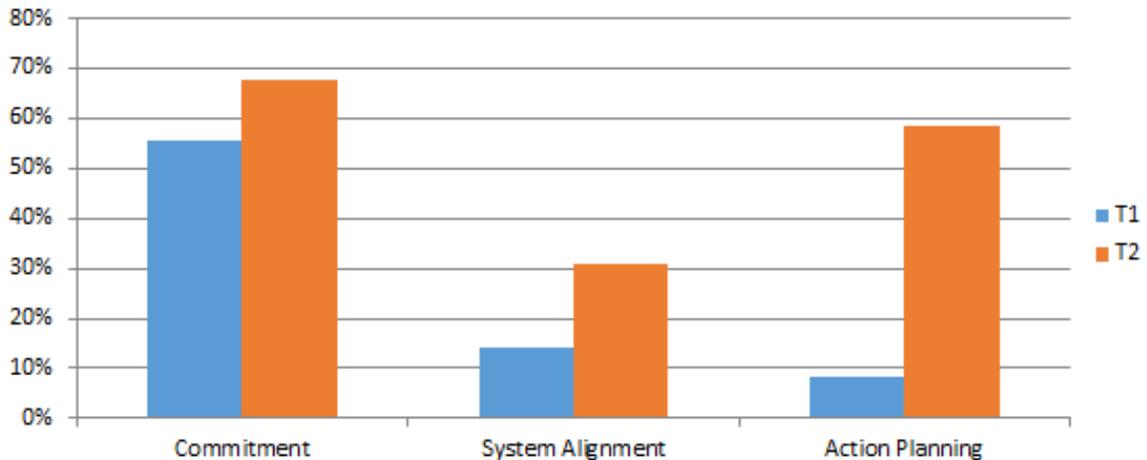
Description: The Transformation Zone is a system building initiative that includes a set of four counties (Beaufort, Chowan, Bertie and Hyde Counties) in Northeastern NC and representation from key human service state agencies working with young children. Working with the local and state teams, the effort emphasizes community infrastructure and capacity building around implementation science to support high quality implementation of selected evidence-based/informed strategies to improve outcomes for young children in the Transformation Zone.

Key Accomplishments:

- NIRN and State Implementation Specialists continue to actively support development of implementation capacity at the state and local levels. Accomplishments from the previous quarter include:
 - County Leadership Teams, County Implementation Teams, and County coaches' demonstration of increased understanding about and capacity for effective implementation (identified through observation, administration of the County Capacity Assessment, and action planning).



Cumulative TZ County CCA scores Spring (Baseline) 2014 to Winter 2014



- Continued to support the development of sufficient administrative supports for Family Connects.
- Initiated discussions with Triple P and state agency regarding Triple P implementation challenges and the need for additional “on the group” support from the purveyor.
- Continue to promote communication between state and county colleagues:
 - Continue to convene monthly calls between purveyor and county partners to facilitate strategy-specific installation stage implementation.
 - Continue to encourage the clarification of roles and responsibilities of state partners as they relate to the funded child care strategies.
 - Attended state funders meetings and subsequent to continue to develop sustainability statements/plans, engaging county partners in decision-making.

Challenges:

- Sustainability requires data to assess and inform infrastructure and system impacts related to TZ interventions. Regular identification, collection, and synthesis of data are needed for Transformation Zone strategies to inform decision making at all levels. Access to the right kinds of data to support this work has been challenging. NIRN will work to support state and county partners to collect and utilize data for decision-making and improvement.



- Challenges in the co-creation of implementation infrastructure (funder, purveyor, county partners) during exploration and installation have led to a bumpy transition into initial implementation and, at times, a tenuous sense of efficacy for the county partners. The Implementation Teams will be supported to be involved in strengthening the role clarity for partners. NIRN staff will continue to engage with funders, county partners, and technical assistance providers to develop customized support strategies to meet unique challenges being surfaced in each TZ county.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Co-facilitate quarterly State Implementation Team meetings with evaluation team, first half of meeting – sense-making and problem-solving for the grant; Engage state partners and purveyors in planning and facilitating the “beyond the grant,” second half of the monthly meetings.
- Surface and nurture the state partners’ need for “community,” in service to encouraging an ongoing implementation support network.
- Develop and strengthen connections between state partners (related to Implementation Science) to encourage ongoing implementation support network.
- Build capacity among state partners by creating opportunities to practice applying implementation science to their own work.
- Ongoing discussion with external funders to identify resources.
- Support the onboarding of new Coach Coordinator regarding applying implementation science constructs and in the development of data dashboards to support coaches’ data use efforts.
- Work closely with Triple P content experts to address county-level implementation challenges.
- Work with Statewide Infant-Toddler Specialists to operationalize their model.
- Engage with technical assistance providers to develop customized support strategies to meet unique challenges being surfaced in each TZ county.

Activity 18.2 (North Carolina Partnership for Children)

Key Accomplishments:

- Establishing and supporting a state implementation team (with key representation from state agencies, purveyor, grant management) for Family Connects to identify and resolve implementation challenges using ongoing and targeted action planning.
- National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) and State Implementation Specialists continue to actively support development of implementation capacity at the state and local levels. Accomplishments from the previous quarter include:



- County Leadership Teams, County Implementation Teams, and County coaches' demonstration of increased understanding about and capacity for effective implementation (identified through observation, administration of the County Capacity Assessment, and action planning).
- Work with individual purveyors (Reach Out and Read, Motherread/Fatheread, Family Connects) to use best practices in active implementation to support initial implementation efforts, including continued development of coaching infrastructure, and facilitative administration in addition to increasing the fluency of teams to identify, collect and use data to inform initial implementation efforts.
- Discussion of a policy-practice feedback loop and communication strategies between state and county colleagues:
 - Convened a well-attended cross county and state partner meeting to discuss initial implementation stage implementation challenges and successes.
 - Convened monthly calls between purveyor and county partners to facilitate strategy-specific installation stage implementation.
 - Attended state funders meetings and subsequent to continue to develop a viable policy to practice feedback loop.
 - Continue to encourage the clarification of roles and responsibilities of state partners as they relate to the funded child care strategies.
- Support for purveyors' model development including:
 - Working with Healthy Social Behavior coordinator to further articulate and operationalizing the key components of the model (e.g., similarities and differences with Pyramid Model).

Challenges:

- The development of efficient feedback processes between county and state partners, including a transparent system for sharing data across county, regional and state partners (e.g., sharing available reports, variance in what and how data is collected and/or used across different strategies, etc.).
- Sustainability of discrete strategies is unclear at this point. State partner engagement in this conversation with county partners is preliminary.
 - Finding consensus on the identification a viable administrative "home" for each strategy will become increasingly important for decision making and accountability purposes when considering factors impacting sustainability.
- Telephone support and technical assistance from purveyors/agency partners to county teams, while helpful for general support and problem-solving, is not sufficient to address ongoing adaptive challenges being surfaced as the implementation work moves into initial implementation efforts. Addressing facilitative administrative barriers (e.g., accessing existing funding for purveyor to travel to directly support county teams during this phase) may require sustained and cooperative efforts from all funders.



Upcoming Tasks:

- Completing second administration and using County Capacity Assessment with each County Team for Action Planning in the upcoming quarter.
- Continuing to develop county-level infrastructure to collect and use data to inform action planning as most strategies move into the Initial Implementation stage over the next quarter.
- Collaboration with state partners to collect and use data to inform action planning to support county-level initial implementation efforts and develop implementation drivers within models.
- Convene state implementation team for Triple P to identify and resolve implementation challenges.
- Continue to support state implementation team for Family Connects to identify and resolve implementation challenges.

Child Care Strategies

4-5 Star Infant Toddler Slots in the Transformation Zone (Activity 6.2)

Description: This Activity will create more subsidized Infant/Toddler slots in 4 and 5 star programs in the Transformation Zone with support from an Infant-Toddler Specialist.

Key Accomplishments:

- Enhanced payments to 1 TZ county program for 9 children (2 infants and 7 ones) were made for the September service month.
- Enhanced payments to 2 TZ county programs were made for the October service month for a total of 13 children.
- 2 new applications approved for IT Expansion Grant program in Beaufort County
- Completed IT Expansion Grant additional mock assessments for 3 classrooms 2 in one TZ county and 1 in another TZ county to determine progress toward goals/improvements made.

Challenges:

- Even with ongoing TA support from the IT Specialist, progress is not being made in one TZ county program. The IT Specialist has made contact with the County implementation coach and Partnership ED for assistance.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue providing technical assistance based on program improvement plans to expansion grant programs.
- Follow-up with TZ County program to assess progress toward goals identified with the CPSSP staff to determine readiness to remain in the IT Expansion Grant program.

Part Day Infant Toddler Program in Transformation Zone (NC Babies First/NCB1 - Activity 6.3)

Description: This Activity will create a high-quality part day program for high need infants and toddlers in the Transformation Zone with support from an Infant-Toddler Specialist.



Key Accomplishments:

- One TZ County: 32 attending at the end of November, 2014.
- Another TZ County: 6 attending at the end of November, 2014.
- The ITPS visited the potential a third TZ County site and has received a partial site application.
- A partial site application has been received from the fourth TZ County site that qualifies for NCB1.

Challenges: None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Provide TA support to current NCB1 sites with a continued focus on supporting family engagement activities.
- ITPS and IT Project Manager meeting with Chowan Co TZ Coach and SS ED early in November.
- Complete 6 month mock ITERS-R assessments and update action plans.

Healthy, Social Behavior (HSB) Specialist in Transformation Zone (Activity 8.4)

Description: This Activity will provide a Healthy Social Behavior Specialist who will provide technical assistance and training to ELD programs in the Transformation Zone (TZ) to improve program capacity to support the healthy social/emotional development of the children in their care, using the teaching pyramid framework and strategies.

Key Accomplishments:

- Continued working with 3 programs in one TZ county; 4 programs in another TZ county; 3 programs in a third TZ county; and 4 programs in the fourth TZ county.
- Continued work with NIRN team on Practice Profile
- Visited with each county TZ Implementation or Leadership Team to review project design, answer questions, and report classroom progress to date

Challenges: None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue building relationships with local TA personnel and agencies.
- Continue classroom observations and technical assistance.
- Continue work on development of HSB practice profile.

Child Care Health Consultants (CCHC - Activity 18.5)

Description: Child Care Health Consultants support child care programs in promoting children’s health and development. This Activity will strengthen statewide capacity by establishing a regional health



consultant coaching model. It will also provide additional health consultants in the Transformation Zone counties.

Key Accomplishments:

- Transformation Zone counties continue to implement CCHC services and have worked with their agencies and stakeholders to identify child care centers and homes prioritized for intensive health and safety consultation.
- The CCHC Model and corresponding Performance Assessment tool is being enhanced based on feedback from three CCHCs and the regional CCHC Coaches.
- The Resource Center at UNC-CH, NCPC, and the new State CCHC Nurse determined a new pilot timeline. The NC Health and Safety Assessment APP will be finalized for use during January – March 2015; identification of pilot counties and invitations sent during March – April; and kick-off pilot meetings in May 2015. The pilot will run through November 2015.
- The Resource Center at UNC-CH and NCPC continue to track general feedback and consultation/coaching contacts with local CCHCs, their supervisors, and local partnership staff.
- Continued conference calls with CCHC Coaches and NCPC to encourage information sharing and ongoing communication.
- The CCHC Coaching evaluation collection is ongoing.
- The Eastern Regional CCHC Coach is supporting the development of a TZ Early Literacy Coaching presentation, based on the CCHC Coaching module and training.

Challenges: None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Beginning May 2015, we will implement a comprehensive CCHC model pilot in select counties, utilizing the CCHC Model in tandem with the Performance Assessment form, NC Health and Safety Assessment Tool APP, standardized tracking tool, and Coaching Model.

Family Strengthening Strategies

Family Connects (Activity 17.1)

Description: This Activity will provide home visiting, screening, referral, and other services in the Transformation Zone.

Key Accomplishments:

- Family Connects outreach efforts continue, are documented and reported.



- Outreach to doctors' offices, health department clinics, and birth education groups to introduce the Family Connects program.
- A total of 117 families in the Transformation Zone visited using the Connects model.

Challenges:

- Agreement Addenda revision with a regional Health Department to be the home of Family Connects (administratively, programmatically and clinically). Local Family Connects budget has been drafted.
- Project Year 2015 contract renewal with Center for Child and Family Health, Inc. This contract will redefine CCFH role as purveyor, plus include support for the evaluation through Center for Child and Family Policy (Duke). Contract to begin February 2015.
- Engaging another County Health Department in the "regional" concept, building on a great relationship. Health Director was presented with options to consider to be more fully engaged in the regional plan.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Execution of agreement addendum with one local Health Department to include programmatic support (local home) for the Family Connects Project.
- Renewal contract with CCFH to begin February 2015.

Activity 17.2: Positive Parenting Program (Triple P)

Description: The Triple P Program, an evidence based family strengthening program, is designed to meet the needs of families with many programs and options available to them. Triple P will be working with the Transformation Zone to develop programming.

Key Accomplishments:

- The local coordinators participated in bi-weekly phone conferences for peer support.
- The local coordinators held a regional meeting to focus on referrals, shared media campaign plans, completing quarterly progress reports, and developing a cloud account for sharing documents.
- All counties have either completed initial training for practitioners or have a training scheduled.
- Project leaders conducted one-on-one calls with each of the sites using the Quality Improvement Checklist to determine technical assistance needs of each site.
- 2014 Triple P Data Report completed.

Challenges

- Establishing local peer-to-peer groups. Reaffirming the MOU's with agencies regarding peer-to-peer support groups, delivering Triple P, and submitting state data.



Upcoming Tasks:

- Face to Face meeting with all site Triple P coordinators and their supervisors, January 6 & 7, 2015.

Early Literacy Strategies

Transformation Zone Early Literacy (Activity 18.3)

Description: This Activity will provide strategies (including Motherread and Reach Out and Read) to improve early literacy in the Transformation Zone.

Key Accomplishments:

- Counties are continuing staggered initial implementation of Reach Out and Read and Motherread.
- To support literacy coordinators in their model fidelity observation visits with implementing Motherread facilitators, NCPC, the TZ County Implementation Coaches, and the Eastern CCHC Coach have developed a draft coaching training presentation which will be presented at the January cross-county early literacy meeting.
- Initial evaluation data is coming in from the counties who have begun implementing Motherread.
- All four counties report Story Exploring as their greatest training need. A total of 35 Story Exploring facilitators have been identified to support the counties' Story Exploring initial implementation this fall/winter. In response, Motherread held two Story Exploring trainings in November in Plymouth, NC. Fourteen facilitators were trained on November 1st and November 22nd, 2014.
- Counties have completed first drafts of their logic models and written guidelines. These tools will be utilized by the counties to guide and support staff during implementation, as well as help communicate their theory of change. These documents will be updated annually.
- 2015 early literacy contracts with the counties and literacy purveyors are currently being processed.

Challenges:

- Counties have cited initial participant recruitment and retention difficulties during the initial implementation of Motherread/Fatheread and B.A.B.Y. Strategies continue to be discussed during cross-county calls and individual technical assistance contact with the purveyor. Recruitment and retention will likely be an on-going conversation.
- During the last several Story Exploring facilitator trainings, it was noted that several of the teachers have low literacy levels. It is hoped the support and technical assistance provided through the implementation of Story Exploring will improve teachers' reading confidence, leading to improved teacher-child interaction.



Upcoming Tasks:

- Cross-county early literacy face-to-face quarterly meeting.
- Site visits and interviews by the project evaluator will be held in late winter.

Transformation Zone Evaluation (Activity 1.3)

Description: This Activity provides a comprehensive evaluation of the Transformation Zone Activities.

Key Accomplishments:

- Met 11/18/14 with the Evaluation Work Group to update members, discuss team coordination, review evaluation findings and discuss next steps. Group agreed to meet every other month in the next year.
- Conducted a second interview with the exiting TZ coach coordinator, drafted and analyzed notes.
- Finalized a draft of the TZ Theory of Change, shared with Evaluation Work Group.
- Finalized findings brief of interviews with county coaches and focus groups, incorporated feedback from Evaluation Work Group. Emailed document to county coaches and Evaluation Work Group, and posted to AI Hub.
- Finalized findings brief of TZ strategy purveyors' and service providers' interviews, incorporated feedback from Evaluation Work Group and emailed final draft to Project Coordinator for review.
- Interviewed TZ administrators from funding agencies. Coded and analyzed data, and drafted findings brief. Emailed to Evaluation Work Group for review.
- Finalized protocol for collecting stakeholder input.
- Reviewed ABLLe TZ webinar products.
- Disseminated stakeholder survey via county coaches; collected and analyzed data, and drafted findings brief.
- Interviewed Pennie Foster-Fishman about ABLLe Systems Change work in the TZ counties.
- Participated in TZ and Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge meetings:
 - Funders (11/3/14, 11/21/14, and 12/15/14)
 - Early Learning Challenge-Race to the Top Partners (12/1/14)
 - State Implementation Team (12/9/14).
- Monitored evaluation email account, filed key information, and responded as needed.
- Continued document review of Implementation Hub, NCPC files, TZ Evaluation Account, NIRN project server files, ABLLe drop box and Sakai site (with input from Work Group).

**Challenges:**

- Scheduling and facilitating the state team's development of a workable logic model to guide evaluation activities has been a challenge.
- Getting responses to the stakeholder survey was a challenge, brought about by overlapping county activities.

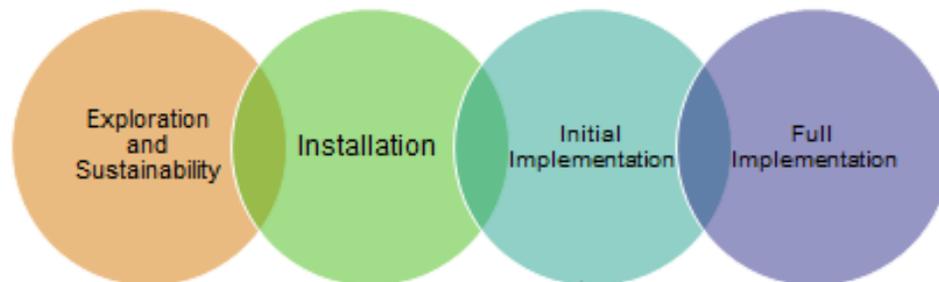
Upcoming Tasks:

- Facilitate TZ Evaluation Work Group meetings.
- Attend county leadership and implementation team county meetings (1/15/15, 1/21/15, and 1/22/15) to listen, observe and evaluate TZ implementation and system processes.
- Finalize and distribute findings' briefs of stakeholder survey, and purveyors' and funders' interviews.
- With NIRN, plan and co-facilitate the State Implementation Team meeting.
- Participate in partners' meetings (Cross County 1/13/15, State Implementation Team 3/10/15).
- Participate in ABL e meetings and other TZ meetings at all levels when planned.
- Continue monitoring evaluation email account and respond as needed.
- Continue review of NIRN, NCPC, ABL e, AI Hub, Sakai site and other documents.
- Continue to collect, analyze and report evaluation findings to help stakeholders optimize impact of TZ activities at the county and state levels.



Transformation Zone Strategy by Implementation Phase

Implementation Continues (Spring 2014)



• County Implementation Coaches

- Weekly individual coaching from Coach Coordinator
- Weekly team meeting/in-service
- Increasing use of active implementation concepts & tools with teams

• County Implementation Teams

- Co-planning and leading regular meetings (between weekly and monthly)
- Supporting community awareness/engagement activities
- Actively supporting installation activities

• County Leadership Teams

- Continue to add key stakeholders to the teams
- Setting priorities for services within each county
- Learning to guide the work of the County Implementation Team





Implementation Continues (Spring 2014)

