



NORTH CAROLINA
RACE TO THE TOP
EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE

Status Report — January – March 2015

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:

- Coordinated with participating agencies to develop and submit NC's 2014 Annual Performance Report.
- Planned and facilitated the NC Early Childhood Advisory Council meeting held March 3rd. Initiated a project to compile information about NC's early childhood services, children served, and budgets to inform NCECAC work. Worked with agency leaders to develop the meeting agenda that provided detailed information about services provided by each of NC's State agencies serving young children, in response to the NCECAC member survey conducted in the previous quarter.
- Distributed monthly e-newsletters to grant stakeholders and maintained the NC RTT-ELC website to provide information about grant projects.
- 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 agencies and 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:

- Continue to provide a monthly e-newsletter and update the NC RTT-ELC website.
- Partner with the NC Early Childhood Foundation to initiate a communications planning process and development of strategies to highlight the impact of NC's RTT-ELC grant and to build support for continuing NC's early learning systems building work.
- Attend the ELC TA Peer Learning Exchange on Sustainability.
- Develop project budget revisions for 2015 and submit federal budget amendment requests, including no-cost extension requests for targeted projects for 2016. Develop contract amendments for projects that are being extended.

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).
 - NIRN and grants management have been supporting a functional Implementation Team for Connects through regular phone calls and meetings. This team was able to successfully address challenges in Connects' installation, and continues to address challenges related to data collection and use, and to ensure role clarity and collaboration with county colleagues.
 - NIRN has worked closely with Triple P content experts to address county-level implementation challenges. NIRN staff will continue to engage with technical assistance providers to develop customized support strategies to meet unique challenges being surfaced in each TZ county.



- NIRN has worked to transition “leadership” for monthly calls between purveyor and county partners (to facilitate strategy-specific installation stage implementation) to the purveyors or funders

Challenges:

- Increased focus on System Scan work (led by consultant, Pennie Foster-Fishman) has surfaced some challenges related to local “buy-in” for the system scan work, lack of awareness of the purpose of the work, limited local capacity for additional tasks, and increased demands on local implementation coaches.
- Emerging opportunities to support Connects, as the “clinical intervention” is fully implemented, but the community connection component of Connects must still be installed.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue to support the new Coach Coordinator as she becomes familiar with 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.
- Continue to support Statewide Infant-Toddler Specialists to operationalize their model
- Engage with technical assistance providers to develop customized support strategies to meet
- Support planning and facilitation of next Cross County Implementation Team meeting in June, with the evaluation team as co-facilitators and presenters. Planning for the next meeting includes ABLLe Systems Change

Activity 1.3: Evaluation

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

Key Accomplishments:

- Gathered data at Cross-County meeting (1/13/15), and presented findings and gathered additional data at State Implementation Team meeting (3/10/15).
- Gathered feedback on evaluation activities and products at Evaluation Work Group meetings (1/20/15, 3/17/15).
- Finalized findings briefs of purveyors’ interviews, distributed to counties, purveyors and Evaluation Work Group and posted to AI Hub.
- Finalized findings briefs of funders’ interviews, distributed to Evaluation Work Group and posted to AI Hub.
- Finalized findings brief of online stakeholder survey, distributed to counties and Evaluation Work Group, posted to AI Hub, and awarded participant incentive.



- Participated in and completed analysis of data from 14 meetings and phone conference between 12/9/14 and 2/10/15. Drafted newsletter, consulted with two UNC design groups on formatting, finalized newsletter, distributed to counties and Evaluation Work Group and posted to AI Hub.
- Finalized Logic Model and shared with Evaluation Work Group and ABLe.
- Interviewed implementation coach coordinator about work in the TZ.
- Participated in 16 TZ meetings and phone conferences between 2/11/15 and 3/31/15. Transcribed 14 and coded seven contacts.
- Provided specific email feedback to NCPC, NIRN and ABLe about findings from TZ meetings and phone calls by request.
- Reviewed ABLe Change Network Dropbox and other informational documents and NIRN document files and NC-ELC TZ Sakai site for contextual data for the evaluation.
- Monitored TZ Evaluation email account and responded as needed.
- Provided updates to TZ Evaluation leadership and stakeholders on evaluation findings.

Challenges:

- None to report.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Facilitate Evaluation Work Group meetings.
- Complete transcription, coding and analysis of data, finalize and distribute second newsletter.
- Attend and present data at Cross-County meeting (TBD).
- Continue participation in TZ meetings and phone conferences in April and May.
- Review ABLe Change Network Dropbox and other informational documents.
- Review NIRN document files and NC-ELC TZ Sakai site.
- Monitor TZ Evaluation email account and responded as needed.
- Provide updates to TZ Evaluation leadership and stakeholders on findings.

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: None to report this quarter.

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 IV was launched in March. The February session was postponed until March due to heavy snow, allowing the opportunity to develop an extended initial session that integrated foundational learning components: appreciative leadership skills, understanding and application of the theory of aligned contribution (TOAC), and the hows and whys of using data to identify a community disparity that members will focus on throughout their Leaders Collaborative experience.
- In preparation for the first session, participants completed the first of three leadership competency self-assessments that will assist them in following their development in relation to the Collaborative anticipated competencies. Participants will use these new tools to inform their leadership and peer coaching, another new feature added for this cohort that will begin in the July session with the aim of deepening and extending the knowledge and practice of information learned during the group sessions.
- Cohort IV members will be the first cohort to use Smart Start’s new Online Learning Community (FabrikOne and FabrikDocs) via our system-wide Fabrik system.
- Evaluation for Leaders Collaborative III was completed with findings that indicate continued progress and opportunities for change reflected in the curriculum and structure of Cohort IV.

Challenges:

- Program sustainability after the grant period ends continues. Seeking additional funding opportunities.
- Maintaining leaders’ engagement after the cohort is completed. Exploration for improvement and considering Alumni Retreats.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Exploring Leaders Collaborative Alumni Retreats and perhaps a more early childhood system focused Equity Retreat for a targeted audience, in addition to regular collaborative and equity activities within the final grant year.

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:

- Staffing: During this quarter, the NCPC Transformation Zone team experienced another staff transition. In February, the Beaufort Implementation Coach position became vacant. However, through a highly collaborative process between NCPC, Beaufort/Hyde Partnership for Children, and NIRN, the hiring process began immediately resulting in a candidate being selected and offered the position. The new coach is scheduled to start in late April. Plans for orientation with NCPC, NIRN State Implementation Specialist, and the convener agency are currently being developed to support the new hire’s transition into the role of coach. In addition, during this quarter, the Hyde Implementation Coach completed the portion of her orientation process that included visits to Beaufort, Bertie, and Chowan counties to observe County Leadership Team and



County Implementation Team practices. Individual coaching sessions with the Coach Coordinator, NIRN State Implementation, and ABLe Change staff continued as part of the coach's orientation process as well.

- ABLe Change: The four Implementation Coaches continued active involvement in family and community engagement efforts with the support of Dr. Pennie Foster-Fishman and Dr. Erin Watson. This included methods such as webinar participation, peer to peer sessions, individual and county coaching sessions where coaches were exposed to information around the benefits of community engagement, options for engaging the community, methods and tools for organizing, gathering, and analyzing the findings, as well as methods for determining and documenting next steps (including but not limited to exposure to the Gantt chart).
 - During this quarter, all four Implementation Coaches in collaboration with County Implementation Teams and/or subgroups engaged in collecting information through family surveys and/or family and community focus groups in an effort to complete System Scan work. Counties are in varying stages of the process; some actively collecting and some even in the beginning stages of data analysis. A shared knowledge approach has remained consistent in these efforts. In particular though Implementation Coaches are more directly engaged in the coaching sessions with the experts, they have been instrumental in attempting to build county capacity around this work by educating key partners by way of providing brief explanation of the work to county teams, engaging team members in the development and distribution of tools, and in some cases engaging county team members in the actual coaching sessions along side them with the experts. The extent of the shared knowledge and county capacity building around the work has varied by county.
 - The spirit of collaboration continued during this quarter, as Implementation Coaches worked collaboratively with the Coach Coordinator to engage county partners in the beginning stages of planning for the September Retreat where the primary focus will be sustainability and strategic planning based on the data results from the System Scan process.
- County Teams: Implementation Coaches and Implementation and Leadership Teams continued to work collaboratively in the counties with varying ranges of support from the State Implementation Specialists from NIRN. This included support in development of meeting agendas, assisting with meeting facilitation to ensure the Implementation Science process is carried out as effectively as possible, demonstration and modeling of best practices, and supporting Implementation Coaches and/or teams in identifying and addressing both technical and adaptive challenges encountered during the work.
 - County Implementation Teams - Implementation Coaches have continued supporting these teams. The County Implementation Teams have also continued to provide support around strategy implementation including but not limited to contributing to the planning



process associated with the hiring process for vacant positions where appropriate.

Advertising, hiring, and orientation of a Child Care Health Consultant in one county and an Early Literacy Coordinator in another county occurred with varying degrees of support from the Implementation Coach and County Implementation Teams.

- County Leadership Teams - The County Leadership Teams continued to remain open to and in some counties actively involved in efforts to grow in cross-sector representation and diversity within the teams. Three of the county teams have added and begun the orientation process for several new team members. In addition, the concept of sustainability of programs and system practices is underway in several counties; broaching of the topic amongst the team and other county partners in one county, initial presentation to county commissioners in another county, and continuation of active strategic planning in another county.
- Other Efforts: Several practices have either developed or continued during this quarter in an effort to maintain a high level of quality and collaboration related to Transformation Zone work.
 - This team continued supporting local and state efforts by attending a Cross County Meeting as well as a State Implementation Team meeting this quarter. Participation in these meetings has been vital in maintaining effectiveness in feedback loops and PDSA cycles associated with the work.
 - The NCPC Deputy Director and Coach Coordinator, along with the State Implementation Specialists, and Dr. Foster-Fishman intentionally coordinated conversations to assure alignment of work. This has included highlighting barriers and developing solutions when possible associated with Implementation Science, the ABLe Framework, and sustainability work alignment.
 - The Implementation Coaches and Coach Coordinator have continued to be instrumental in collaborating with the State Evaluation Team in their efforts to visit as many County Leadership and County Implementation Team meetings as possible. Several visits have occurred this quarter.
- Communications: The Transformation Zone Communications Project had a successful launch at the January cross-county meeting. NCPC Communications Director Heather Strickland had the opportunity to overview the project, goals, and timeline for engaging community partners and providing resources. The Communications team has conducted discovery interviews with all Transformation Zone Coaches and Site Supervisors. The discovery interviews include a list of standard questions about the work being done in the Transformation Zones. Interviews include broad vision questions. For example, “It is 10 years from now – what is the single biggest accomplishment of the Transformation Zone?” The discovery process for this project continues over the next few months with interviews scheduled with county leaders for late March and early April. There is also a survey currently being finalized that will be issued in April alongside discovery sessions with Leadership and Implementation Teams in each county.



Challenges:

- None to report.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Orientation and training for the new Beaufort Implementation Coach is a high priority task in April.
- New members of the Coach Team staff (Beaufort Implementation Coach and Coach Coordinator) will attend an in-state ABL e Change training in April.
- In collaboration with the Eastern Region Child Care Health Consultant Coach and the Early Care and Education Program Officer, the Implementation Coaches continue preparation to co-present a coaching model at the April Early Literacy Cross County meeting in an effort to support the work of the Early Literacy Coordinators.
- Hosting a County Convener meeting in April where particular emphasis will be placed on System Scan work.
- Plans for the next Cross County Meeting are under way, with some emphasis around System Scan work.
- Implementation Coaches and identified county partners in collaboration with the Coach Coordinator and State Implementation Specialist are planning for a Transformation Zone Panel discussion to occur during the May Smart Start Conference.
- Planning and preparation for the September Retreat with community engagement experts Dr. Foster-Fishman and Dr. Watson will remain a high priority task.

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 April cross-county early literacy meeting.
- Initial evaluation data is coming in from counties who have begun implementing Motherhead. Counties have been encouraged to utilize their observation data with their local leadership and implementation teams.
- To support the continued growth of Motherhead, especially Story Exploring, curricula trainings will be held in May and June. A total of 65 early childhood educators and administrators are expected to be trained in Story Exploring in June.



- Counties have been asked to complete an initial implementation check-in report in April. This report will have counties reflect on initial implementation successes and adaptive challenges experienced to date.
- 2015 early literacy contracts with the counties and literacy purveyors are complete.
- Reach Out and Read Carolinas has completed several orientation visits with new Reach Out and Read clinics in the Transformation Zone. A new Beaufort County Reach Out and Read site started in March.
- In an effort to incorporate parent voice in continuous quality improvement efforts, several of the counties have started parent committees or invited parents to be a part of their planning meetings.
- To support the counties in Reach Out and Read implementation and sustainability planning, the literacy coordinators were invited to attend the NCPC and ROR Carolina's Sustainability Summit in Johnston County on March 12th. The Sustainability Summit is targeted to Smart Start state grantees, but open to all implementers or others interested in learning more about Reach Out and Read. The Beaufort, Hyde, and Chowan literacy coordinators attended.
- TZ Coaches, Purveyors, and NCPC also discussed sustainability approaches during the last State Implementation Team meeting.

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.

Upcoming Tasks:

- 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, TQRIS Validation Study, on page 14. The TQRIS Validation Study is in process to support this activity.

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:

- None to report.

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 were submitted in December. Of these, 61 were complete and have been or being processed for payment.
- 59 applications were from child care centers, 30 were from family child care home providers.
- To date in CY15, 66 applications have been received for review.
- Of these, 44 were complete and have been or being processed for payment.

Challenges:

- After being contacted, many applicants do not follow-through with submitting the required documents to be eligible for the PD Bonus Award. These applicants remain in “pending” status.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue statewide promotional efforts for the PD Bonus Award activity and process applications.
- Implement a method to survey 85% of applicants who received the bonus award regarding their satisfaction level.

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:

- At the time of this report, a total of 91 Pre-K grant applications were received. 88 grant applications were accepted.
- Through February 2015, reimbursement for at least partial amount of full grant awards has been paid to 78 out of 88 programs.
- To date, 15 applications from GS 110 programs have been received; 14 grants were awarded; 4 programs have received licensure
- 5 of the GS 110 programs whose grant applications were accepted have not fulfilled any terms of the contract agreement. (They have not received any grant funds). These contracts are considered expired.

Challenges:

- 16 public pre-k programs have moved from temporary to 4 or 5 star licenses during the month of January and early February. The wait time between temporary licensure and assessments has been long in some areas.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Contact all public preschool programs with outstanding receipts.
- Process receipts for reimbursement as they are received.
- Contact the 4 remaining GS 110's who were awarded grants, submitted receipts within the 6 months' time frame, reimbursed for their expenses, but have not yet increased licensure. Follow-up with the programs will continue.

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 agreed to reach out to unlicensed providers in their regions, a script was developed and disseminated, and results should come in next month.

Challenges:

- None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Collect, compile, & review survey results.



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:

- Hired training coordinator.
- Mapped out tasks in the areas of measure content and scoring, logistics, training, technology, coordination with validation study, as well as communication with advisory committee.
- Assigned team to work on pilot study design and budget revision to align sample with validation study.
- Research design team developed plans for data collection across phases.
- Document review team finalized consent forms and other documents for IRB application.
- Scoring team developed initial scoring proposal.
- Data collection in process for Document Review Phase 1; initial plan for evaluating documents was developed.
- Budget revision was completed and submitted to DCDEE.

Challenges:

- Increasing sample size and broadening the geographic area for the sample in order to align with the Validation study will require additional funds and personnel and require extensive cross-collaboration between the two projects.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Complete Document Review Phase 1, and prepare for Phase 2.
- Continue work on item alignment and scoring.
- Continue with training on ITERS-R and other comparison measures.
- Develop plan and timeline for cross-site training

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:



- In one region, provided support to 25 Temporary, 1- and 2-star programs committed to achieving higher star ratings effective January 2015.
- 8 programs have applied for higher star ratings and three have increased their star ratings to a 3-star or above in the new CY.
- Continued to reach out to new Temporary and 1-star programs to offer supports and follow-up with those who express interest in FCCH pre-licensing and other learning events offered regionally.
- Collaborated with DCDEE child care licensing consultants to target programs interested in increasing star ratings.

Challenges:

- None reported.

Upcoming Tasks:

- CCRI will continue to recruit and provide technical assistance and professional development support services to Temporary, 1- and 2- star programs who are committed to achieving higher star ratings.

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:

- 16 IT Expansion Grant programs received TA (47 consultations) in 3 TZ counties.
- Completed assessments in 2 classrooms, one as a pre-assessment for improvement planning in a new IT Expansion Grant program and one as an assessment of progress made to date in another program.
- Enhanced payments to 2 programs were made for the January Service month for a total of 17 children.

Challenges:

- Some program improvements depend on the program's ability to manage the details required to get approval, oversee the completion of the work, and provide documentation required for reimbursement. This is a challenge for many in child care administrative roles due to poor organizational/management/leadership skills that impact their ability to make the most of a grant opportunity.

Upcoming Tasks:

- One center received a 4-star license and will begin receiving enhanced payments for the February service month.
- Two IT Expansion Grant sites that have achieved their goals have been approved as NCB1 sites and are scheduled to serve NCB1 children in March.



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:

- Participation in two counties: 36 attending at month end (2 single slot; 34 double slot; 10 receiving transportation)
- Completed applications received from two other TZ counties. Work in progress prior to approval to enroll children.
- Met with one County's Leaders and discussed how NCB1 could be better supportive of the county's needs.

Challenges:

- Waiting lists exist in all 3 sites in one County. Additional spaces could be utilized if available in the county.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Provide TA support to current NCB1 sites.
- Provide TA support to potential NCB1 sites that have submitted applications.
- Develop family questionnaire to assess benefits of NCB1 from the family's perspective.

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

- Conducted mock interviews with a Center Director and Family Child Care Home Owner to identify any items that needed further clarification.
- Finalized the survey, completed sampling and programming, and trained interviewers for the targeted data collection.
- Received most recent data available for centers and family child care homes and began to code to use for sampling for the validation study.
- Continued interviews with sampled providers for targeted data collection. 55 of the 100 interviews have been completed (47 Centers, 8 FCCHs).
- Began development and training on the assessments to be used for validation study (ex. CLASS, Director Interview, Family and Teacher Questionnaires)

Challenges:



- Due to 2 weeks of adverse weather and subsequent program closings/delays, the timeline for the phone interviews will have to be extended.
- FCCH Owners/Directors have been especially difficult to reach and require more attempts to recruit. We will take this into account when developing the timeline and recruitment strategy for the larger validation study.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Submit validation study materials for IRB approval.
- Finalize interviews and questionnaires for validation study.
- Select sample for validation study.

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

Description: This Project will fund the WAGES® 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, 16 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, six Training Hubs have completed their scopes of work: Franklin-Vance-Warren, Inc., Western Carolina Community Action, Blue Ride Opportunity Commission, Macon Program for Progress, and now Cumberland Community Action Program and Four Square Comm. Action. All Hubs (both active and inactive) have collectively reached about 21.5% of childcare providers (approximately 1,720 licensed providers). The Hubs are on pace to reach about 33% of all providers across the State by the end of this project.
- Marketing strategies to attract local child care providers to trainings are tweaked on an ongoing basis
- Ongoing TA support continues to be provided to all Hubs encountering barriers to implementation. This TA support includes the convening of regional Professional Learning Communities on a semi-annual basis. (The last PLC meeting was convened in November 2014 in Greensboro as a statewide meeting of all Hubs.)
- Many participating childcare providers are reporting changes in their practice as a result of the family engagement trainings that they are attending. In 2014, the following changes in practice were reported by providers as a result of training/coaching:

Hub 1 (Macon)

- Reports providers creating strategic plans for Parent Engagement
- One provider reported utilizing lending library along with increased parental reading to children at home

Hub 2 (Verner)

- The majority of participants identified at least one strategy they planned to implement as a result of the workshop
- One Yancey County provider has made improvements in their Parent Handbook to state more clearly partnership type expectations and planned an orientation for the beginning of the program year for the first time

HUB 4 (BROC)

Hub #4 reported the following from providers...

- Improved relationships with parents that were previously “hard to communicate with”
- Have become more knowledgeable about community resources, as to where to go when parents need help”
- Assisting families better to make child transitions to Kindergarten easier for them
- We make a point to speak to each parent on a daily basis either by way of school bus or car transport



- We have worked on the center’s appearance and atmosphere to make it more inviting to parents and children
- I have shared my personal cell phone number with parents so they are free to communicate with me, and have been given permission to also call me over the summer break with any educational issues or concerns

HUB 12 (CCAP)

- Directors report now understanding the difference between “involvement” and “engagement” of parents
- Some providers report developing Parent Engagement Opportunities Surveys
- Some providers reported developing parent committees
- Some providers reported developing methods of 2-way comm with families (specifically email and newsletters)
- 80% of participating providers have included parent engagement statements or similar information in their Parent and Employee Handbooks
- Some providers reported implementing “family engagement” practices as a means to gain a quality point in the NC TQRIS

HUB 13 (EIC)

- Providers reported implementing a newsletter in the center.
- Providers reported teaching parents how to get involved in their children’s development in the home environment (e.g. Having their children write down positive learning things that they have done at home and at school)
- Providers reported using parent goals and achievements as well as children progress in Center to instruct parents that they are their child’s primary teacher.
- Providers reported using a Parent Curriculum Suggestion Form to be sent out monthly
- Providers reported implementing transition by contacting the elementary schools to set up transitioning contacts with those in charge to prepare when Kindergarten sessions begin
- Providers reported working with bi-lingual families and so now creating dual language signs in the classroom for families

HUB 17 (Cleveland)

- The majority of participants reported they were implementing family engagement activities through an increase in parent conferences.
- Other activities mentioned were home visits, center activities, a parent suggestion box, and parent input into curriculum.
- When asked whether or not they had implemented the 6 principles of partnership within in their practice 50 % said they had.
- 54% of participants stated they had implemented new practices within their work since the training.



Challenges:

- Challenges persist with recruiting some local childcare providers for participation, despite receiving marketing assistance from the CCR&R network, Smart Start agencies, DCDEE, and the 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:

- Partnering with UNC to create online modules for consumers to access project content after it comes to an end in December.
- Final PLC meeting in early fall.

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).

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.

Upcoming Tasks:

- This project is operational with final evaluation deliverable at the end of 2015.

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:

- NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development .5 CEU was delivered in Union County and attended by 24 participants; in Mecklenburg and attended by 166 participants; and in Rowan County and attended by 8 participants.
- *Choosing and Using an Approved Curriculum with Formative Assessment Strategies* .5 CEU was delivered in Union County for 16 participants and in Mecklenburg County for 9 participants.
- *Cultural Competence* .5 CEU was offered in Stanly County and attended by 17 participants; and in Cabarrus county and attended by 7 participants.

Challenges:



- Regional staff and partners have received requests from early childhood practitioners to assist in the development of professional development plans (an eligibility requirement for the Professional Development Bonus Award).

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue to offer CEU courses.
- Continue to align existing courses with *NC ELDS*.

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.

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 *Foundations for Early Learning and Development* was reviewed and finalized by CCRI.
- Conducted two Train the Trainer *Foundations for Early Learning and Development* events:
 - NC ACCESS/Growing Greatness at Davidson Community College on January 29, 2015
 - Birth-Kindergarten Consortium, at NC A&T State University, on January 30, 2015.
- CCRI executed a contract with Dr. Susan Catapano, of UNC-W for the development of an asynchronous, self-paced, online .5 (five-hour) CEU course, using the approved course syllabus for early care and education practitioners that orients the workforce to *North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development*.

Challenges:

- Cancelled the Higher Education/Technical Assistance Institutes to be held on February 24th and February 26th due to inclement weather and business/college closures.



Upcoming Tasks:

- Submit the completed version of the online *NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development* for practitioners to DCDEE for review and approval.
- Plan for, register participants and convene the two upcoming Higher Education/Technical Assistance Institutes to be held in March.

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 Teams. The K-3 Formative Assessment Consultants and Regional Implementation Team contractors held regular meetings to continue planning technical assistance and PD for LEA District Implementation Teams (January-March).
- Platform development meetings continue to be held to develop Teaching Strategies technology into the format required for the NC content.
- Assessment Design Team finalized all K-3 construct progressions, tasks and situations for the K-3 Assessment Usability testing (2015-2016). Usability testing will be in 13 LEA's. LEA's were selected in March 2015.
- The Implementation Design Team (IDT) and Regional Implementation Teams (RIT) continue to work closely to develop and coordinate RIT support to DIT's.
- Statewide District Implementation Team PD meetings held across the state January –March.
- ELC/EAG Project Coordinator's position filled.
- Current information specific to the KEA pilot may be found on the KEA pilot wiki: <http://keapilot.ncdpi.wikispaces.net/>
- 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:

- Timelines for project development and implementation remain a challenge.
- Additional requirements associated with adding a technology component to the assessment are complex.



- 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 FA process is used as intended will also require PD and TA support.

Upcoming Tasks:

- On- going implementation support to all DIT's.
- Regional Implementation Team TA and PD scheduled through April.
- Continue development and design of the K-3 process and implementation.
- Continue planning for the technology component of the assessment.
- First phase of the K-3 FA Process (KEA) DIT PD remaining dates in all SBE regions: April 16, 2015.
- Statewide implementation of the first component (KEA) of the K-3 FA will be in the Fall 2015.

Activity 15.2: Using Data to Improve Classroom Instruction

Key Accomplishments:

- First School staff continues to provide on- going year 3 support to all PK-3 classrooms in two counties which include coaching and site visits.
- Regular K-3 team meetings held within schools to review data and plan school/classroom improvement.
- Planning dates for professional development, data collection, and coaching completed in February and March.
- The focus for one County was on using in-house teacher expertise to promote quality instructional practices, and the emphasis for other County was developing high quality math units and a FirstSchool orientation for teachers new to PreK-3 and the mentors who support them.
- In keeping with efforts to build capacity within districts, plans are designed in a way that gives district staff a greater role in supporting PreK-3 teachers and leaders

Challenges: None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continued PD for both counties in February and March.
- Continued data collection for 2015.
- Data collectors will continue collecting Snapshot data in classrooms.

(Repeated) Project 16: Family Engagement (see pages 15 – 19).



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 provides home visiting, screening, referral, and other services in the Transformation Zone (TZ).

Key Accomplishments:

- The Center for Child and Family Health determined the Family Connects-Transformation Zone is in full implementation according to the Family Connects model elements. At the beginning of the grant, there was a consensus on steps and 12 goals Family Connects needed to do in order to be fully implemented. After reviewing these, the FC-TZ has successfully completed all 12 goals! Family Connects is at FULL implementation and successfully serving families in all 4 counties.
- FC continues to get daily reports on infants born in the four counties in the TZ. In addition, community referrals continue to be made to Family Connects TZ.
- Outreach continues to doctors' offices, health department clinics, and birth education groups to introduce the Family Connects program.
- A total of 131 families in the Transformation Zone visited using the Connects model.

Challenges:

- Even though local Health Department has signed the agreement addenda to be the administrative "home," they are very concerned about their role in Family Connects. DPH and Center for Child and Family Health (CCFH) will monitor progress very carefully.
- Data is being requested by many different parties. ARHS has determined that the Clinical Nurse Director will be the primary contact for Family Connects data. CCFH and DPH will be coordinating this effort. CCFH will be migrating to an Intranet data system for Family Connects—no date set for rollout or how TZ Family Connects fits into this new FC data system.

Upcoming Tasks:

- DPH and CCFH will be having monthly calls beginning May 2015 to coordinate reporting and monitoring to assure that the project continues to stay on track.
- State and local conversations continue around sustainability. The four counties in the Transformation Zone indicated that Family Connects is a project they would like to see continue. The local leadership and implementation teams will be involved in exploring the continuation of the project after the grant period ends.

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:

- Each of the implementing sites completed a SWOT analysis at the November 2014 State Collaborative. A two-day workshop was held January 5 and 6, 2015 with an action plan to address SWOT opportunities for improvement. The action plan was fine-tuned at the State Learning Collaborative, Feb 5-7, 2015.
- Each of the Triple P implementing sites has submitted a budget plan that accounts for targeted work with practitioners who have already been trained to assure that they are delivering the intervention, submitting data, and participating in peer-to-peer support groups. This will involve previously trained practitioners attending a refresher course. The plan was predicated on the analysis of the sites by Rita Bostick and Sara van Driel (see Attachment 1). A face-to-face workshop was held March 18, 2015 for all 17 RTT-ECL counties to formalize their action plan.
- Rita Bostick has submitted her resignation effective end of February 2015. Zita Roberts and Marshall Tyson will provide additional TA to the TZ and RTT-ELC Triple P implementing sites.

Challenges:

- Establishing local peer-to-peer support groups.
- Re-affirming the MOU's with agencies regarding peer-to-peer support groups, delivering Triple P, and submitting state data.
- Setting up refresher seminars for trained providers who are hesitant to provide the service, or who are not engaged in peer-to-peer support networks.

Upcoming Tasks:

- A second face-to-face meeting is planned for April 2015 to check in on action plans, accomplishments, and budget expenditures.
- Site visits are planned for May 2015 for several health departments to discuss implementation of Triple P and support of Triple P Coordinators by their direct supervisors.

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:

- 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 currently being re-reviewed for possible enhancements based on feedback from the CCHC Regional Coaches, local CCHCs, local health departments, and local smart start agencies.
- 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 developed and finalized for initial testing during January – May 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 Eastern Regional CCHC Coach is supporting the development of a TZ Early Literacy Coaching presentation, based on the CCHC Coaching module and training.
- A CCHC orientation manual to assist CCHCs in their first year of employment is complete. The final version was distributed via email and to CCHCs attending the 2015 CCHC Annual Conference. A hiring agency manual to support hiring agencies in the selection and retention of qualified CCHCs will be drafted in May 2015.
- Several CCHCs spoke to their success using the coaching approach at CCHC Association Annual Conference in March 2015.
- The CCHC Coaching evaluation collection is ongoing, with interviews and focus group meetings with regional coaches, CCHCs, parents, and child care facilities scheduled for Spring 2015.

Challenges:

- The Western Region has experienced high turnover. As a result, the Western Regional CCHC Coach requested that a team work on the development of a CCHC orientation manual and a hiring agency manual, discussed above.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Beginning May 2015, a comprehensive CCHC model pilot in select counties will be implemented, 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:

- All regional projects are now in implementation mode as we have entered the final year of the grant period.
- Technical assistance to ABCD coordinators continues as needed. Coordinators make great use of the monthly TA phone calls, sharing successes, discussing challenges, and exchanging information.
- The data manager at the Early Intervention branch at the Division of Public Health is working to complete the data analysis we requested to support the analysis of our ABCD efforts.



- In January 2015, NCPC coordinated a Lead Local Partnership grantee meeting in Raleigh. The meeting was very well attended and the agenda tackled the following issues:
 - Discussion of sustainability efforts – regional & state-level
 - Data/evaluation update by our contract evaluator (shared highlights as well as the in-depth 2nd year report).
- At the end of January 2015, a third two-day ABCD training took place in Raleigh. Many of the existing coordinators and all new ones attended the training. Training evaluations showed the training was effective and well received. New coordinators were able to benefit from our veteran coordinators and all benefitted from networking and sharing as part of the training. Highlight was the QI portion of the training, led by CCNC's QI director and co-facilitated by four ABCD coordinators.
- In March 2015, the quarterly ABCD Quality Improvement (QI) meeting and the ABCD State Advisory Committee meetings took place.
 - The QI meeting was well attended with a few folks joining via conference call. The group discussed the new process for referral and feedback between medical practices and the school districts' preschool programs. In addition, the evaluator and the project manager provided a state-wide ABCD expansion and evaluation update. Finally, we had a presentation and discussion about use of Electronic Health Records (EHRs) and the challenges (and opportunities) they create for screening and referral (and billing).
 - 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.
- In late March, project manager facilitated a conference call with all lead partnerships about sustainability and budget planning for 2015.
- Project manager and CCNC will work with the NC Pediatric Society to plan for ABCD beyond the RTT grant. The NC Pediatric Society has agreed to play an active part in the planning for sustainability of our ABCD efforts and offered to host information and training materials on their website. Planning will continue as training materials and space needs are identified. We are also exploring a similar commitment with the Academy of Family Physicians who is also represented on our state-level ABCD Advisory Committee.

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.



- Snow delays and weather related closings have impacted the hiring process for our final region with the new staff expected to come on board soon. New hire will be closely mentored and trained by the NW Community Care network, and the NCPC project Manager will provide resources, training handouts, and will meet with new staff to discuss overview of the project.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continued TA to all regions, specifically the ones who have entered into implementation in 2015.
- Plan, prepare and co-facilitate the June ABCD QI meeting in Greensboro.
- Continued work with contracted evaluator on data collection and evaluation.
- Work with Dr. Earls and Dr. Alderman (pediatrician from Portland, OR) to develop the ABCD workshop for the upcoming Smart Start conference.
- Continue to work on the development of a training and implementation manual that will serve as the guide to develop an online training for ABCD.
- 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

Activity 3.1: 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:

- 22 students in the first cohort are currently enrolled in three spring 2015 courses—SES 602, HDF 602, and HDF 650
- The second cohort of 24 students (for a total of 46 students in two cohorts) will begin the program in summer 2015. The admission process for these students was completed during this quarter.
- Assessment materials were ordered and received that will be used in SES 603.

Challenges:

- Two students from Cohort 1 have withdrawn from the program due to work commitments.



Upcoming Tasks:

- Monitor the waiting list of 5 additional applicants in case seats become available due to attrition.
- Students will continue to be advised for courses for summer 2015 and Fall 2015.
- Students in both cohorts will enroll in HDF 634 in the first summer session. This will be the first course for students in Cohort 2.

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:

- Finished 2014 workforce report and submitted for approval.
- Downloaded DCDEE licensing data.
- Selected sample for 2015 workforce study.
- Uploaded sample into tracking data base.
- Mailed survey packets to directors who have not responded.
- Entered respondents into tracking database.
- Began data entry.

Challenges: None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue to enter respondents into tracking database.
- Continue data entry.
- Call for missing data where applicable.
- Follow up with non-responding directors-particularly in Head Start and school settings.

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:

- A Request for Activity bid was received by CCRI for the planning of a graduate-level three semester credit hour course entitled – The Art and Science of Early Childhood Coaching, Mentoring and Technical Assistance.
- CCRI executed a contract with Dr. Susan Catapano of UNC-W, for the development of an online graduate-level three semester credit hour course based on and extending the content of The Art and Science of Early Childhood Coaching, Mentoring and Technical Assistance (2.0 CEU).

Challenges:

- None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Provide the updated version of The Art and Science of Early Childhood Coaching, Mentoring and Technical Assistance to trainers that are delivering this training.
- Complete the tasks related to the development of an online graduate-level three semester credit hour course.

(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:

- Provided technical assistance (TA) in classrooms and training proceeding the TA in all cohorts
- Initial visit and technical assistance was initiated in newly identified County NC PreK classroom.
- Conducted annual on-site monitoring visit with TZ Behavior Specialist and local manager
- Began mid-point TPOT assessments.
- Attended cross-county Implementation Team Meeting.

Challenges:

- One county classroom confirmed their withdrawal from project participation. At this date the project is serving 12 classrooms across the 3 TZ counties.
- Specialist on extended medical leave since late January; hopes to resume work by mid-March. Sent explanatory email to coaches, asking them to communicate scheduling delays to project facility staff.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Conduct mid-project TPOT on remaining classrooms.
- Continue classroom observation, technical assistance, and cohort training.
- Provide calendar of planned technical assistance and cohort trainings to each county coach.



- Preparation of presentation on Transformation Zone and accomplishments to date at National Training Institute 2015.

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:

- Assignments of Mentors and/or Evaluators, based on teacher license level, are complete.
- Processing new enrollments and employment changes in all data systems is ongoing. **A total of 230 teachers, identified as RTT, are currently enrolled** with the EESLPD Office (March 17, 2015 data). Fewer teachers enroll since the grant will be ending and a few have left the nonpublic site.
- A total of 138 teachers, identified as RTT-BK Project teachers, have a mentor and/or evaluator assigned – based on licensure type (February 17, 2015 data). Evaluators are conducting formal observations.
- Training on the North Carolina HomeBase - True North Logic – online evaluation system for Staff and Partners whom mentor/evaluate teachers is in process.
- Implementation of our Sustainability Plan is beginning:
 - Current data and need are shared with various groups
 - Existing strategies for partnering are shared with various groups
 - Sustainability work-group is being established
 - Exploratory meetings are scheduled with community partners in various counties

Challenges:

- Licensed teachers in nonpublic settings often move into public schools and therefore our numbers continuously fluctuate. Higher salaries & benefits draw teachers into public school settings.
- Partners are challenged by multiple system changes at local and state levels.
- The need for Mentor and Evaluation services to licensed Early Childhood teachers in nonpublic, non-NC Pre-K programs is greater than available staff/funding. Inquiries continue to come in.

Upcoming Tasks:

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



- Planning for future Professional Development (Spring and Fall of 2015) continues with a goal of having independent/online methods of delivering the required training for new teachers and site administrators available in August 2015
- Continue support for non-public Demonstration classroom Pilot where teachers can go for guided observations of high quality classroom practices with their Mentor. Plan for expansion of Demonstration classrooms.

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 10 endorsements were issued between Dec-Feb.

Challenges:

- None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue outreach & recruitment efforts.
- 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:

- Close to 300 ECE professionals were certified through this grant between December and February, though during that same time the grant lost 2500 providers.
- Staff continue recruitment efforts.
- The Institute submitted a funding proposal in support of a Child Care Health Consultant certification system to be implemented by the Institute.

Challenges:

- There is not consistent interest in EEC across the state or across programs, and without a requirement for ECE professionals to be certified, the project's success is uncertain.
- Limited partner capacity to build accessible, affordable continuing education units (CEUs) is creating challenges for early educators who are interested in renewing their certification and may not be interested only in college credits as the type of renewal credit.

Upcoming Tasks:

- This grant will end in July of this year.
- 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.
- Surveying those who choose not to renew to determine why and how to support them in renewing.
- Surveying those who elect to certify (initial and renewal) to determine why and what supports are needed next.

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:

- An additional Community College submitted their Self Study. Site visit is expected in October 2015.
- Five colleges submitted their Phase II Self Studies to NAEYC and anticipate site visits in early 2015.
- Site Visits are scheduled for 5 subgrantees in Spring 2015.
- NCCCS received approval, from DCDEE, to extend grant activities. All grantees were notified and are progressing.

Challenges:

- None to report at this time.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Five subgrantees will prepare for Site Visits. Subject Matter Experts are assisting with mock Site Visits.
- Subject Matter Experts and NCCCS staff will assist three remaining subgrantees with Self Study preparation.

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:

- Utilized email and google docs to continue compiling strategies, resources, and activities for courses.
- Continued work on course description revision.
- Revised current course on assessment (EDU 162).
- Webinar on EDU 119 (included info on Foundations).



- Group 2 participants continued to work on the formative assessment webinar materials.
- Survey sent out in February for suggestions on POS update.
- Worked with Institute for Child Development Professionals to implement a state-wide meeting with state representatives.

Challenges:

- First two regional meetings Feb. 24th at Craven CC and Feb 26th at Sandhills CC were cancelled due to inclement weather. NCCCR&R rescheduling.
- Feb 26-27 meeting at Caraway postponed to March 26-27 due to inclement weather.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Mentor faculty through process of submitting CCP program to state office.
- Continued work on content around formative assessment for upcoming Script-NC webinars.
- Advertise Regional Foundations Meetings.

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.

- 636 participants have received RTT-ELC funds for completing commitment periods during the reporting year (January – December 2014).
- 143 participants did or will receive RTT-ELC funds for completing commitment periods during the reporting period (January – February 2015).*
- WAGE\$ emailed recruitment information to resource and referral agencies and community colleges serving counties receiving RTT-ELC funds
- WAGE\$ completed final spending updates for the Smart Start partnerships in hybrid counties.

Challenges:

- New detailed policies have been necessary to facilitate the integration of Smart Start and RTT-ELC funds in ten of the eligible counties and ensure that supplementation does not occur. These policies and procedures have increased the complexity of the program.
- The final payment through the RTT-ELC grant ends in the middle of a Smart Start fiscal year. For partnerships in counties currently receiving WAGE\$ fully through the RTT-ELC grant, they will need to decide if they want to cover the second payment and complete the fiscal year.



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:

- 11 Early Care and Education Community Specialist Scholarships had been awarded during the reporting period
 - 8 recipients have submitted enrollment documentation for Spring 2015 and stipends have been requested
 - 5 recipients are employed at a Smart Start partnership agency
 - 5 recipients are employed at a resource and referral agency
 - 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)
 - Summer Institute applications were sent out
 - Student notebooks were graded and grades submitted to Meredith College
 - Received 30+ applications for NC FITC Summer Institute for Community College Instructors
- Master's Degree Scholarship
 - UNC-Greensboro
 - 36 scholarships awarded to date
 - 20 participants in Spring 2015 cohort
 - 18 participants have registered for Summer 2015 courses
 - UNC-Wilmington
 - 73 scholarships awarded to date
 - 67 participants in Spring 2015 cohort
 - 2 participants will start Summer 2015
- Early Care and Education Enhancement Scholarship in the T-Zone
 - 41 T.E.A.C.H. recipients participating on an enhanced Transformation Zone scholarship
 - 35 Associate Degree recipients
 - 2 Bachelor Degree recipient
 - 4 Birth-Kindergarten Licensure recipients

Challenges:



- Early Care and Education Community Specialist Scholarship Program
 - Increasing scholarship participation
 - Recipients submitting paperwork in a timely manner
- NC Foundation of Infant and Toddler Care Mentor Teacher Scholarship (NC-FITC)
 - Students who come with a wide range of prior education and experiences need varying levels of support to understand that they are being required to function at a college level to successfully complete NC-FITC courses.
- Early Care and Education Enhancement Scholarship in the T-Zone
 - Slight decrease in number of participants, sponsoring programs and number of counties served.
- 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
 - Continue collecting documentation for Spring 2015 semester
- NC Foundation of Infant and Toddler Care Mentor Teacher Scholarship (NC-FITC)
 - Determining final cohort groups for Summer Institutes
 - Planning for first week-long event
 - Continue retooling FITC materials to fit new format for Summer Intensive
- Early Care and Education Enhancement Scholarship in the T-Zone
 - Process claims for recipients in Transformation Zone eligible counties
- Master's Degree Scholarship
 - Continue accepting and processing applications for scholarship
 - Follow-up with recipients to see how courses are going this Spring 15.

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:

- Final format was developed for the participant interview component of the evaluation.
- Work continues to compile and analyze other evaluation data.
- Planning Team met January 15th to discuss outline of Final Report.
- Continued revision and editing of curriculum as part of the feedback loop from observations and participant feedback.
- Approximately 105 participants have participated in practicum sessions to date.



- Two additional practicum observations were completed in February. Approximately 50 individuals participated in the two February observations.
- Four TAs are preparing to conduct the Cultural Awareness session at the CCR&R Institute in March.

Challenges:

- A few practicum observations had to be re-scheduled due to inclement weather in February.
- Practicum observations also had to be re-scheduled for TAs who did not successfully complete their practicum.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue completing practicum observations of TAs and CLFs seeking endorsement. Observations are scheduled through April.
- Continue working with UNCG on analysis of Interviews and online assessments for participants in all affinities and all regions.
- Continue to provide support to TAs and CLFs as they prepare for their practicum observations.
- Continue deep analysis of previous evaluations.
- Complete final analysis of PDSAs and Metrics.
- Begin writing the final report for the project.
- Mail endorsement certificates to TAs who have completed requirements.
- Finalize video and audio content pieces.
- Use learning from practicum sessions and participant feedback to inform the final curriculum.

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:

- Project Manager presented a session at the RtT-ELC Partners Meeting.
- Collaborated with Mc Cormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership and the Branaugh Group by sharing data and reports from the EDCLI project post-PAS reports.
- Held a virtual meeting with the coaching team for updates in ECDLI and coach-directed discussion on team engagement strategies.
- Developed Small Test of Change (Plan-Do-Study-Act) Model electronic survey for use by participants.
- Sent out “Save the Date” cards to all participants for Institute III.
- Distributed information for participation in the development of the new program quality measure.
- Collaborated with Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute on the validation study.

Challenges:

- Maintaining continued participation from directors.



- Directors need strategic planning training.
- Resignation of one coach.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Completion of data collecting of the PMI.
- Continue to post-PAS assessments.
- Institute Three planning- speakers/curriculum.
- Registration for Institute Three.
- Document important findings on comparison reports from pre- and post-PAS assessments.

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 and the Program Management Committee of the Governance Council continues to meet on a bimonthly schedule.
- The NC ECIDS Governance Council Manual has been approved by the Executive Committee.
- The Agency MOA, which key participating agencies will sign that establishes data sharing through the system has been reviewed by all members of the Executive Committee and by the legal staff at the participating agencies.
- A Data Use Agreement (DUA) for data requesters to sign before they are able to obtain data from the system has been initially reviewed by the Executive Committee.
- We have created several drafts and revisions of the first four standard reports that have been reviewed by the Program Management and Executive Committees.
- OITS continues to hold 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.



- We are currently working with CSDW, the data warehouse at DHHS, on developing a statement of work that outlines the work needed to be done to establish a connection between it and the NC ECIDS application.
- The NC ECIDS team continues to review and sign off on a number of business requirements packages which will be used to build the system.
- We have developed a mockup of the web portal home page and approximately 12 additional web pages.
- OITS personnel have attended all of the 18 trainings necessary to build the application.
- We have been accepted by the federal State Support Team to receive 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:

- 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:

- Continue to hold Executive and Program Management Committee meetings to be able to make policy decisions about the system and approve key documents.
- Continue to work with P20W to ensure that our systems can be aligned once they are built.
- 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.
- Sign the MOA.
- Approve the Data Use Agreement for researchers who make data requests.

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:

- Data Mini Grants
 - An RFA for the Round 2 of the data mini grants was released on March 20. May 15 is the deadline for Round 2 applications to NCPC. Extra supports/information were included in the Round 2 RFA to encourage strong participation. Several potential collective projects are developing with technical assistance from the Data Project Manager.
 - One collective project in development is the investigation of the potential to collect Smart Start data in the NC PreK App (originally developed by Smart Start in Wake County and Durham's Partnership for Children) for applicants to several types of pre-kindergarten



- programs, including NC PreK. DCDEE's NC PreK Program Officer, Rachel Kaplan, has been the touchstone for this developing idea.
- A webinar for Mini Grants Round 2 has been recorded to share with local partnerships interested in applying.
 - Technical assistance for mini grant support has been extended to a total of 15 partnerships this quarter.
 - One hundred percent of the 18 mini grant project leads (supporting 26 local partnerships) submitted progress reports for Round 1 mini grants. A knowledge base from these reports, to inform Round 2 mini grant seekers, has been developed & shared in the RFA and webinar.
 - **Smart Start Outcomes and Data Reporting System**
 - Smart Start Outputs and Outcomes are in production and training webinars have begun.
 - The Smart Start data system's standard mandatory outputs (and additional optional partnership-chosen outputs) have been successfully vetted by the beta test group and are now incorporated in the Activity Management System which partnerships are using throughout the month of April to submit their activities to fund in the coming fiscal year.
 - The new Smart Start common outcomes, chosen by partnerships (with oversight and technical assistance provided by the QA team) are also in production as part of the Activities Management System.
 - Over thirty measures for outcomes, based on both standardized instruments and data summary "worksheets" for calculations (for example, reduction in child care staff turnover rate) have been specified for outcomes reporting in the new system.
 - Review of the thirty-plus measurement instruments' specifications and operationalizing the partnerships' means for obtaining and summarizing the measures is ongoing with input from the Data Advisory Group.
 - Work on the "CLASS Project" is taking shape. The NCPC Programs Department is now leading this effort which will include an emphasis on Teachstone's coaching proficiency training. Teachstone's Sedra Spano met with NCPC Programs Department and the Data Project manager to discuss the Teachstone's array of communication, assessment and coaching tools and will inform next steps toward building familiarity with and use of the CLASS in NC for the CCR&R and Smart Start systems, together.
 - Discussions continue regarding data governance and data "stewardship" especially around client information at the local level
 - **ECIDS**
 - We have participated in several ECIDS meetings including the Policy Committee, Program Management Committee, and standardized reporting work group.

Challenges:

- None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Round 2 applications due to NCPC May 15 (review team & procedures and internal systems for grants awards & processing are in development)
- Measurement specifications for new Outcomes including a Measures Guide are in development
- Technical assistance to partnerships for mini grants is ongoing
- Data governance assistance plan for Smart Start partnerships is 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:

- Created ad-hoc committee to find way to bypass RFP process by adopting and modifying existing state software system.
- Worked with DIRM around job specifications for Business Systems Analyst contract to cross walk WORKS business requirements with desired state system specifications.
- Continued meetings with ad-hoc committee to find way to bypass RFP process by adopting and modifying existing state software system.
- Held meetings with NCSU, NC Community College system and NC DHSR to explore credentialing applications currently in use.
- Held follow up meeting with EMS Performance Improvement Center at UNC, who developed and maintains DHSR system.
- Continued meeting with ad-hoc committee around justification for sole source IT proposal.
- Received high-level proposal for WORKS from EMS PIC, which came in under budget and within timeline of grant period.
- Presented new project direction and received approval from ITGC to move forward with project as “enhancement request” to DHSR CIS software.
- Began working with new PM around transition plan for responsibilities and next steps.

Challenges:

- Balancing workload and priorities of stakeholders, along with inclusion of legacy systems and DCDEE projects still in various phases of development.
- Length of RFP review has led Purchasing Office and DIRM to recommend forgoing RFP process in favor of adoption and modification of existing state system.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Edit PPM tool and send project back through for Gate 1 review.
- Draft enhancement request justification and meet with Procurement Office.
- Develop contract with EMS PIC.

(Repeated) Activity 15.1: Develop/revise K-3 Assessment to include a Kindergarten Entry Assessment and extend through third grade (see page 21-22).

(Repeated) Activity 15.2: Using Data to Improve Classroom Instruction (see page 22).



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).

- NIRN and grants management have been supporting a functional Implementation Team for Connects through regular phone calls and meetings. This team was able to successfully address challenges in Connects’ installation, and continues to address challenges related to data collection and use, and to ensure role clarity and collaboration with county colleagues.
- NIRN has worked closely with Triple P content experts to address county-level implementation challenges. NIRN staff will continue to engage with technical assistance providers to develop customized support strategies to meet unique challenges being surfaced in each TZ county.
- NIRN has worked to transition “leadership” for monthly calls between purveyor and county partners (to facilitate strategy-specific installation stage implementation) to the purveyors or funders

Challenges:

- Increased focus on System Scan work (led by consultant, Pennie Foster-Fishman) has surfaced some challenges related to local “buy-in” for the system scan work, lack of awareness of the purpose of the work, limited local capacity for additional tasks, and increased demands on local implementation coaches.
- Emerging opportunities to support Connects, as the “clinical intervention” is fully implemented, but the community connection component of Connects must still be installed.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue to support the new Coach Coordinator as she becomes familiar with 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.
- Continue to support Statewide Infant-Toddler Specialists to operationalize their model
- Engage with technical assistance providers to develop customized support strategies to meet
- Support planning and facilitation of next Cross County Implementation Team meeting in June, with the evaluation team as co-facilitators and presenters. Planning for the next meeting includes ABL e Systems Change



Lessons Learned about Building Implementation Capacity:

1. Support to counties in planning for early childhood systems change and sustainability

- a. **Themes:** County partners are focused on planning for sustainability and early childhood system development. These conversations are prompted by multiple factors: grant timing (entering last year), no-cost extension requests, County Capacity Assessment work and the ABLLe Systems Change work led by Pennie Foster Fishman. As county and state partners begin to collect and examine initial implementation data, their ability to assess sustainability options and plan strategically to support strategies' position within early childhood systems grows.
 - i. NIRN continues to support counties' understanding of sustainability to encompass not only sustaining individual strategies with funding but also including sustainability of system improvement efforts, including the sustainability of linked teams to do the work (infrastructure to support implementation).
 - ii. Sustainability requires data to assess and inform infrastructure and system impacts related to TZ interventions. Regular identification, collection and synthesis of data is needed for Transformation Zone strategies to inform decision making at all levels. NIRN supports state and county partners to collect and utilize data for decision-making and improvement.
 - iii. Regular identification, collection and synthesis of data related to both implementation infrastructure and Transformation Zone strategies are needed to inform sustainability decision making at all levels. NIRN supports state and county partners to collect and utilize data for decision-making and improvement.

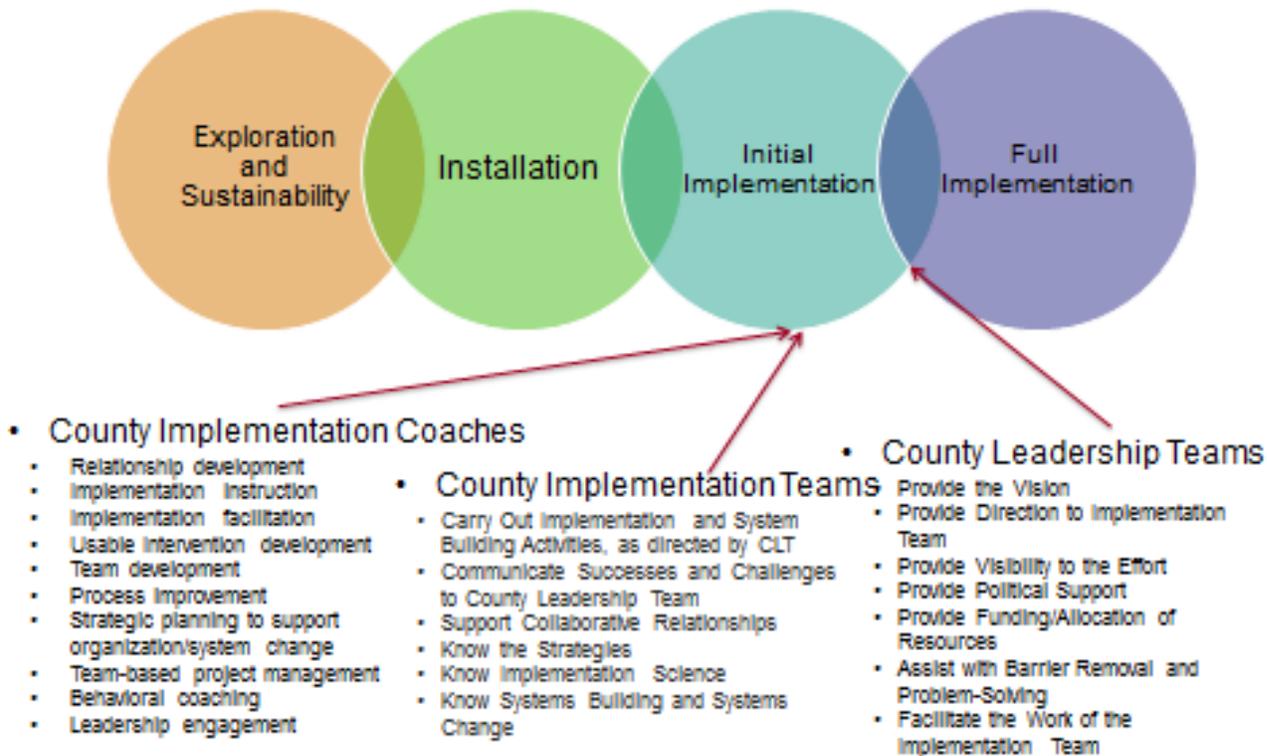
2. Functional Implementation Teams & Role Clarification

- a. **Themes:** Co-creation of implementation infrastructure (funders, purveyors, county partners) during exploration and installation leads to a smoother transition into initial implementation, shared accountability among all partners and a sense of efficacy for the county partners. This co-development can occur in the context of an Implementation Team, who may use this opportunity to clarify role's clarity for partners.
 - i. All strategies are now in Initial Implementation. Improvement processes and data use are an essential part of successful Initial Implementation. As NIRN supports state and county partners in this stage, it is clear that the need for ongoing role clarification *across purveyors and teams* continues



to present itself as an adaptive challenge *across strategies* and is an obstacle to successful use of data or improvement cycles.

Implementation Continues (Spring 2015)



Activity 18.2 (North Carolina Partnership for Children)

Key Accomplishments:

- **Staffing:** During this quarter, the NCPC Transformation Zone team experienced another staff transition. In February, the Beaufort Implementation Coach position became vacant. However, through a highly collaborative process between NCPC, Beaufort/Hyde Partnership for Children, and NIRN, the hiring process began immediately resulting in a candidate being selected and offered the position. The new coach is scheduled to start in late April. Plans for orientation with NCPC, NIRN State Implementation Specialist, and the convener agency are currently being developed to support the new hire's transition into the role of coach. In addition, during this quarter, the Hyde Implementation Coach completed the portion of her orientation process that included visits to Beaufort, Bertie, and Chowan counties to observe County Leadership Team and County Implementation Team practices. Individual coaching sessions with the Coach



Coordinator, NIRN State Implementation, and ABLe Change staff continued as part of the coach's orientation process as well.

- ABLe Change: The four Implementation Coaches continued active involvement in family and community engagement efforts with the support of Dr. Pennie Foster-Fishman and Dr. Erin Watson. This included methods such as webinar participation, peer to peer sessions, individual and county coaching sessions where coaches were exposed to information around the benefits of community engagement, options for engaging the community, methods and tools for organizing, gathering, and analyzing the findings, as well as methods for determining and documenting next steps (including but not limited to exposure to the Gantt chart).
 - During this quarter, all four Implementation Coaches in collaboration with County Implementation Teams and/or subgroups engaged in collecting information through family surveys and/or family and community focus groups in an effort to complete System Scan work. Counties are in varying stages of the process; some actively collecting and some even in the beginning stages of data analysis. A shared knowledge approach has remained consistent in these efforts. In particular though Implementation Coaches are more directly engaged in the coaching sessions with the experts, they have been instrumental in attempting to build county capacity around this work by educating key partners by way of providing brief explanation of the work to county teams, engaging team members in the development and distribution of tools, and in some cases engaging county team members in the actual coaching sessions along side them with the experts. The extent of the shared knowledge and county capacity building around the work has varied by county.
 - The spirit of collaboration continued during this quarter, as Implementation Coaches worked collaboratively with the Coach Coordinator to engage county partners in the beginning stages of planning for the September Retreat where the primary focus will be sustainability and strategic planning based on the data results from the System Scan process.
- County Teams: Implementation Coaches and Implementation and Leadership Teams continued to work collaboratively in the counties with varying ranges of support from the State Implementation Specialists from NIRN. This included support in development of meeting agendas, assisting with meeting facilitation to ensure the Implementation Science process is carried out as effectively as possible, demonstration and modeling of best practices, and supporting Implementation Coaches and/or teams in identifying and addressing both technical and adaptive challenges encountered during the work.
 - County Implementation Teams - Implementation Coaches have continued supporting these teams. The County Implementation Teams have also continued to provide support around strategy implementation including but not limited to contributing to the planning process associated with the hiring process for vacant positions where appropriate.



Advertising, hiring, and orientation of a Child Care Health Consultant in one county and an Early Literacy Coordinator in another county occurred with varying degrees of support from the Implementation Coach and County Implementation Teams.

- County Leadership Teams - The County Leadership Teams continued to remain open to and in some counties actively involved in efforts to grow in cross-sector representation and diversity within the teams. Three of the county teams have added and begun the orientation process for several new team members. In addition, the concept of sustainability of programs and system practices is underway in several counties; broaching of the topic amongst the team and other county partners in one county, initial presentation to county commissioners in another county, and continuation of active strategic planning in another county.
- Other Efforts: Several practices have either developed or continued during this quarter in an effort to maintain a high level of quality and collaboration related to Transformation Zone work.
 - This team continued supporting local and state efforts by attending a Cross County Meeting as well as a State Implementation Team meeting this quarter. Participation in these meetings has been vital in maintaining effectiveness in feedback loops and PDSA cycles associated with the work.
 - The NCPC Deputy Director and Coach Coordinator, along with the State Implementation Specialists, and Dr. Foster-Fishman intentionally coordinated conversations to assure alignment of work. This has included highlighting barriers and developing solutions when possible associated with Implementation Science, the ABLe Framework, and sustainability work alignment.
 - The Implementation Coaches and Coach Coordinator have continued to be instrumental in collaborating with the State Evaluation Team in their efforts to visit as many County Leadership and County Implementation Team meetings as possible. Several visits have occurred this quarter.
- Communications: The Transformation Zone Communications Project had a successful launch at the January cross-county meeting. NCPC Communications Director Heather Strickland had the opportunity to overview the project, goals, and timeline for engaging community partners and providing resources. The Communications team has conducted discovery interviews with all Transformation Zone Coaches and Site Supervisors. The discovery interviews include a list of standard questions about the work being done in the Transformation Zones. Interviews include broad vision questions. For example, “It is 10 years from now – what is the single biggest accomplishment of the Transformation Zone?” The discovery process for this project continues over the next few months with interviews scheduled with county leaders for late March and early April. There is also a survey currently being finalized that will be issued in April alongside discovery sessions with Leadership and Implementation Teams in each county.



Challenges:

- None to report.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Orientation and training for the new Beaufort Implementation Coach is a high priority task in April.
- New members of the Coach Team staff (Beaufort Implementation Coach and Coach Coordinator) will attend an in-state ABLLe Change training in April.
- In collaboration with the Eastern Region Child Care Health Consultant Coach and the Early Care and Education Program Officer, the Implementation Coaches continue preparation to co-present a coaching model at the April Early Literacy Cross County meeting in an effort to support the work of the Early Literacy Coordinators.
- Hosting a County Convener meeting in April where particular emphasis will be placed on System Scan work.
- Plans for the next Cross County Meeting are under way, with some emphasis around System Scan work.
- Implementation Coaches and identified county partners in collaboration with the Coach Coordinator and State Implementation Specialist are planning for a Transformation Zone Panel discussion to occur during the May Smart Start Conference.
- Planning and preparation for the September Retreat with community engagement experts Dr. Foster-Fishman and Dr. Watson will remain a high priority task.

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:

- 16 IT Expansion Grant programs received TA (47 consultations) in 3 TZ counties.
- Completed assessments in 2 classrooms, one as a pre-assessment for improvement planning in a new IT Expansion Grant program and one as an assessment of progress made to date in another program.
- Enhanced payments to 2 programs were made for the January Service month for a total of 17 children.

Challenges:

- Some program improvements depend on the program's ability to manage the details required to get approval, oversee the completion of the work, and provide documentation required for reimbursement. This is a challenge for many in child care administrative roles due to poor organizational/management/leadership skills that impact their ability to make the most of a grant opportunity.



Upcoming Tasks:

- One center received a 4-star license and will begin receiving enhanced payments for the February service month.
- Two IT Expansion Grant sites that have achieved their goals have been approved as NCB1 sites and are scheduled to serve NCB1 children in March.

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: 30 attending at month end (2 single slot; 28 double slot; 7 receiving transportation)
- Another TZ County: 6 attending at month end (all double slot); 3 receiving transportation
- Completed applications received from two counties. Work in progress prior to approval to enroll children.
- Met with County Leaders and discussed how NCB1 could be better supportive of the county's needs.

Challenges:

- Waiting lists exist in all 3 sites in one County. Additional spaces could be utilized if available in the county.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Provide TA support to current NCB1 sites.
- Provide TA support to potential NCB1 sites that have submitted applications.
- Develop family questionnaire to assess benefits of NCB1 from the family's perspective.

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:

- Provided technical assistance (TA) in classrooms and training proceeding the TA in all cohorts.
- Initial visit and technical assistance was initiated in newly identified County NC PreK classroom.
- Conducted annual on-site monitoring visit with TZ Behavior Specialist and local manager.
- Began mid-point TPOT assessments.
- Attended cross-county Implementation Team Meeting.



Challenges:

- One TZ County classroom confirmed their withdrawal from project participation. At this date the project is serving 12 classrooms.
- Specialist on extended medical leave since late January; hopes to resume work by mid-March. Sent explanatory email to coaches, asking them to communicate scheduling delays to project facility staff.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Conduct mid-project TPOT on remaining classrooms.
- Continue classroom observation, technical assistance, and cohort training.
- Provide calendar of planned technical assistance and cohort trainings to each county coach.
- Preparation of presentation on Transformation Zone and accomplishments to date at National Training Institute 2015.

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:

- 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 currently being re-reviewed for possible enhancements based on feedback from the CCHC Regional Coaches, local CCHCs, local health departments, and local smart start agencies.
- 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 developed and finalized for initial testing during January – May 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 Eastern Regional CCHC Coach is supporting the development of a TZ Early Literacy Coaching presentation, based on the CCHC Coaching module and training.
- A CCHC orientation manual to assist CCHCs in their first year of employment is complete. The final version was distributed via email and to CCHCs attending the 2015 CCHC Annual Conference. A hiring agency manual to support hiring agencies in the selection and retention of qualified CCHCs will be drafted in May 2015.



- Several CCHCs spoke to their success using the coaching approach at CCHC Association Annual Conference in March 2015.
- The CCHC Coaching evaluation collection is ongoing, with interviews and focus group meetings with regional coaches, CCHCs, parents, and child care facilities scheduled for Spring 2015.

Challenges:

- The Western Region has experienced high turnover. As a result, the Western Regional CCHC Coach requested that a team work on the development of a CCHC orientation manual and a hiring agency manual, discussed above.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Beginning May 2015, a comprehensive CCHC model pilot in select counties will be implemented, 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:

- The Center for Child and Family Health determined the Family Connects-Transformation Zone is in full implementation according to the Family Connects model elements. At the beginning of the grant, there was a consensus on steps and 12 goals Family Connects needed to do in order to be fully implemented. After reviewing these, the FC-TZ has successfully completed all 12 goals! Family Connects is at FULL implementation and successfully serving families in all 4 counties.
- FC continues to get daily reports on infants born in the four counties in the TZ. In addition, community referrals continue to be made to Family Connects TZ.
- Outreach continues to doctors' offices, health department clinics, and birth education groups to introduce the Family Connects program.
- A total of 131 families in the Transformation Zone visited using the Connects model.

Challenges:

- Even though local Health Department has signed the agreement addenda to be the administrative "home," they are very concerned about their role in Family Connects. DPH and Center for Child and Family Health (CCFH) will monitor progress very carefully.
- Data is being requested by many different parties. ARHS has determined that the Clinical Nurse Director will be the primary contact for Family Connects data. CCFH and DPH will be coordinating this effort. CCFH will be migrating to an Intranet data system for Family Connects—no date set for rollout or how TZ Family Connects fits into this new FC data system.



Upcoming Tasks:

- DPH and CCFH will be having monthly calls beginning May 2015 to coordinate reporting and monitoring to assure that the project continues to stay on track.
- State and local conversations continue around sustainability. The four counties in the Transformation Zone indicated that Family Connects is a project they would like to see continue. The local leadership and implementation teams will be involved in exploring the continuation of the project after the grant period ends.

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 (completed tasks and noteworthy progress toward particular goals or outcomes):

- Each of the implementing sites completed a SWOT analysis at the November 2014 State Collaborative. A two-day workshop was held January 5 and 6, 2015 with an action plan to address SWOT opportunities for improvement. The action plan was fine-tuned at the State Learning Collaborative, Feb 5-7, 2015.
- Each of the Triple P implementing sites has submitted a budget plan that accounts for targeted work with practitioners who have already been trained to assure that they are delivering the intervention, submitting data, and participating in peer-to-peer support groups. This will involve previously trained practitioners attending a refresher course. The plan was predicated on the analysis of the sites by Rita Bostick and Sara van Driel (see Attachment 1). A face-to-face workshop was held March 18, 2015 for all 17 RTT-ECL counties to formalize their action plan.
- Rita Bostick has submitted her resignation effective end of February 2015. Zita Roberts and Marshall Tyson will provide additional TA to the TZ and RTT-ELC Triple P implementing sites.

Challenges (any significant impediments to progress):

- Establishing local peer-to-peer support groups.
- Re-affirming the MOU's with agencies regarding peer-to-peer support groups, delivering Triple P, and submitting state data.
- Setting up refresher seminars for trained providers who are hesitant to provide the service, or who are not engaged in peer-to-peer support networks.

Upcoming Tasks (expectations for the upcoming month):

- A second face-to-face meeting is planned for April 2015 to check in on action plans, accomplishments, and budget expenditures.
- Site visits are planned for May 2015 for several health departments to discuss implementation of Triple P and support of Triple P Coordinators by their direct supervisors.



Early Literacy Strategies

Transformation Zone Early Literacy (Activity 18.3)

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 April cross-county early literacy meeting.
- Initial evaluation data is coming in from counties who have begun implementing Motherhead. Counties have been encouraged to utilize their observation data with their local leadership and implementation teams.
- To support the continued growth of Motherhead, especially Story Exploring, curricula trainings will be held in May and June. A total of 65 early childhood educators and administrators are expected to be trained in Story Exploring in June.
- Counties have been asked to complete an initial implementation check-in report in April. This report will have counties reflect on initial implementation successes and adaptive challenges experienced to date.
- 2015 early literacy contracts with the counties and literacy purveyors are complete.
- Reach Out and Read Carolinas has completed several orientation visits with new Reach Out and Read clinics in the Transformation Zone. A new Beaufort County Reach Out and Read site started in March.
- In an effort to incorporate parent voice in continuous quality improvement efforts, several of the counties have started parent committees or invited parents to be a part of their planning meetings.
- To support the counties in Reach Out and Read implementation and sustainability planning, the literacy coordinators were invited to attend the NCPC and ROR Carolina's Sustainability Summit in Johnston County on March 12th. The Sustainability Summit is targeted to Smart Start state grantees, but open to all implementers or others interested in learning more about Reach Out and Read. The Beaufort, Hyde, and Chowan literacy coordinators attended.
- TZ Coaches, Purveyors, and NCPC also discussed sustainability approaches during the last State Implementation Team meeting.

Challenges:

- Counties have cited initial participant recruitment and retention difficulties during the initial implementation of Motherhead/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.

Upcoming Tasks:

- 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:

- Gathered data at Cross-County meeting (1/13/15), and presented findings and gathered additional data at State Implementation Team meeting (3/10/15).
- Gathered feedback on evaluation activities and products at Evaluation Work Group meetings (1/20/15, 3/17/15).
- Finalized findings briefs of purveyors' interviews, distributed to counties, purveyors and Evaluation Work Group and posted to AI Hub.
- Finalized findings briefs of funders' interviews, distributed to Evaluation Work Group and posted to AI Hub.
- Finalized findings brief of online stakeholder survey, distributed to counties and Evaluation Work Group, posted to AI Hub, and awarded participant incentive.
- Participated in and completed analysis of data from 14 meetings and phone conference between 12/9/14 and 2/10/15. Drafted newsletter, consulted with two UNC design groups on formatting, finalized newsletter, distributed to counties and Evaluation Work Group and posted to AI Hub.
- Finalized Logic Model and shared with Evaluation Work Group and ABLe.
- Interviewed implementation coach coordinator about work in the TZ.
- Participated in 16 TZ meetings and phone conferences between 2/11/15 and 3/31/15. Transcribed 14 and coded seven contacts.
- Provided specific email feedback to NCPC, NIRN and ABLe about findings from TZ meetings and phone calls by request.
- Reviewed ABLe Change Network Dropbox and other informational documents and NIRN document files and NC-ELC TZ Sakai site for contextual data for the evaluation.
- Monitored TZ Evaluation email account and responded as needed.
- Provided updates to TZ Evaluation leadership and stakeholders on evaluation findings.

Challenges:

- None to report.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Facilitate Evaluation Work Group meetings.
- Complete transcription, coding and analysis of data, finalize and distribute second newsletter.
- Attend and present data at Cross-County meeting (TBD).
- Continue participation in TZ meetings and phone conferences in April and May.
- Review ABLe Change Network Dropbox and other informational documents.



- Review NIRN document files and NC-ELC TZ Sakai site.
- Monitor TZ Evaluation email account and responded as needed.
- Provide updates to TZ Evaluation leadership and stakeholders on findings.