



**N**orth Carolina revised and enhanced its early learning and development standards, ***North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development***, or *Foundations*, as a resource for teachers and caregivers, parents and other family members, and for professionals who support teachers and caregivers in their work with young children.

To accomplish this task, leaders from the N.C. Division of Child Development and Early Education and the N.C. Department of Public Instruction, Office of Early Learning, convened an interagency leadership team (the N.C. *Foundations* Task Force) to contribute their expertise.

The revised *North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development* describes goals for all children's development and learning, no matter what program they may be served in, what language they speak, what disability they may have, or what family circumstances they are growing up in. The document provides age-appropriate goals and developmental indicators for each age level - infant, toddler, and preschooler. *Foundations* is also intended to be a guide for teaching - not a curriculum or checklist that is used to assess children's development and learning, but a resource to define the skills, and abilities we want to support in the learning experiences we provide for children.

## North Carolina's Early Learning Standards

### PARTNERS



- *Approaches to Play and Learning*
- *Emotional and Social Development*
- *Health and Physical Development*
- *Language Development and Communication*
- *Cognitive Development*

*Professional development to support the understanding of and use of Foundations has been critical for successful implementation.*

The Goals and Developmental Indicators are divided into five domains. Children's development is interrelated across the domains and all domains are equally important.

The N.C. Foundations Task Force's long-term rollout plan was developed to support broad use of *Foundations* by a range of professionals who work with children, including teachers, caregivers, early educators, early interventionists, mental health professionals, home visitors, etc. This included professional development to build awareness and implementation of the revised *Foundations* in early care and education programs.

- *Foundations* was disseminated in print copy and also made available electronically at <http://ncchildcare.dhhs.state.nc.us> and <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/earlylearning>.
- A .5 CEU introductory course was developed and Child Care Resource and Referral staff were trained to offer professional development statewide on *Foundations*.
- An online version of the introductory course was also developed, and is offered through the N.C. Division of Child Development and Early Education's online training platform, Moodle.
- Recognizing the importance of grounding pre-service education in the revised early learning and development standards, N.C. Community

Colleges engaged in a process of incorporating the revised *North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development* into early childhood education coursework.

- Three Early Childhood Higher Education and Technical Assistance Institutes were held to guide the incorporation of the revised *Foundations* into college coursework and technical assistance services. In total, 126 individuals attended the institutes. Feedback was analyzed and incorporated into a guide to promote strategies for embedding *Foundations* into college coursework and technical assistance, and in addition, develop an intermediate level course in *Foundations* as a next step beyond the basic course.
- It was also determined that additional training was needed to target early childhood professionals with more advanced learning needs. An advanced training course was developed by the Early Learning Network at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The advanced course focuses on the emotional/social domain and incorporates the work of Head Start and Early Head Start in the area of family engagement training, as well as the early childhood mental health competencies that were developed and adopted by the North Carolina Infant Mental Health Association.