



NORTH CAROLINA
RACE TO THE TOP
EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE

Status Report — April – June 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 a State plan for a no-cost extension for NC's RTT-ELC grant for selected projects through 2016 and submitted detailed amendments for federal approval, which was granted. Initiated contract amendments for projects according to the plan.
- Completed a review and revision of the NC RTT-ELC website to update the information for each project.
- Began work with the NC Early Childhood Foundation on a communications plan to highlight the impact of NC's RTT-ELC grant on advancing the State's early learning goals and to build support to sustain and advance accomplishments for continued growth of NC's early learning system.
- Grant partners from the NC Division of Child Development and Early Education presented on the panel "*Putting it All Together: A Three State Perspective on How Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant Funds are Supporting Education and Professional Development Initiatives in Quality Rating and Improvement Systems*" at the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood and Child Care WAGES Professional Development Symposium, April 28 – 29.
- Grant partners attended and presented at the Smart Start Conference, May 4 – 7, and at the National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute, May 12 – 14, on NC RTT-ELC activities.
- Grant management staff and grant partners attended an information session with Libby Doggett, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Early Learning, US Department of Education, on May 13 to discuss NC's grant progress.
- Grant management staff and grant partners attended and presented at the ELC TA-sponsored Sustainability Peer Learning Exchange for RTT-ELC Phase I Grantees in Atlanta, May 19 – 20.



- Grant partners from the Department of Public Instruction working with the NC K-3 Formative Assessment Project presented on NC's work at the National Working Meeting on Early Learning Assessment, and at the NCAEYC National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development June 7 – 10.
- Grant management staff and grant partners attended the NAECS-SDE/CEELO 2015 Roundtable in New Orleans, June 3 - 5.
- Initiated meetings of a subcommittee of the NCECAC – the NC Early Childhood Investment Group – to develop recommendations that will be presented to the full NCECAC and to the Governor on how to best invest in early childhood.
- 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.
- 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 and contractors, as needed.
- 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 develop and execute contract amendments to implement NC's approved plan for the no-cost extension year (2016).
- Prepare for annual federal desk monitoring.
- Plan for the NC ECAC meeting scheduled for October 2015.
- Plan for a second RTT-ELC Grant Partners' Meeting scheduled for December 2015. Continue to provide a monthly e-newsletter.

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 partners focused on strategic planning, planning for sustainability, and early childhood system development. As county and state partners collect and examine system scan and initial implementation data, their ability to plan strategically and to assess sustainability options for existing early childhood strategies within early childhood systems grows.
 - NIRN continues to support counties' understanding of sustainability to encompass not only sustaining individual strategies with funding but also sustainability of system improvement efforts, including the sustainability of linked teams to do the work (infrastructure to support implementation).
 - NIRN has been working with NCPC staff to more intentionally create alignment between the ABLLe Systems Change effort and systems scan activities and the ongoing attention to county capacity for effective implementation.
 - NIRN continues to work with strategy purveyors and county teams to develop methods to continuously collect and analyze implementation data.
 - NCPC and NIRN have begun to define NIRN's active role in further developing NCPC's capacity to apply the science and practice of implementation to NCPC's organization and its various efforts.
 - Feedback from County Implementation Coaches reflects their growth as implementation experts and the multifaceted role each plays within their community. This feedback could inform future efforts to develop and sustain implementation capacity and expertise at both county and state levels.
- Continue to promote communication between state and county colleagues.

Challenges:

- Sustainability requires data to assess and inform infrastructure and system impacts related to TZ interventions. Regular identification, collection, and synthesis of data are needed for Transformation Zone strategies to inform decision making at all levels. Access to the right kinds of data to support this work has been challenging. NIRN continues work to support state and county partners to collect and utilize data for decision-making and improvement.
- As NIRN supports state and county partners in the Initial Implementation stage, it is clear that the need for ongoing role clarification and alignment 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.
- RTT ELC funds have supported the development of implementation infrastructure (i.e. coaching) to support implementation of CCHC in North Carolina. There is currently no plan to sustain this infrastructure beyond the grant.
- Complexity of work needed to integrate the two frameworks – ABLLe change and Implementation Science.



Upcoming Tasks:

- Continued work with coaches and Coach Coordinator to focus on developing a data dashboard template to be piloted with counties.
- Continue to meet with NC CCHSRC staff to identify adaptive challenges and develop aligned understanding of work.
- Follow-up meetings to further define NIRN's role in developing NCPC's capacity to apply the science and practice of implementation to its organization and efforts.

Activity 1.3: Evaluation

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

Key Accomplishments:

- Held regular staff meetings to discuss project activities and review data.
- Shared revised Logic Model with Evaluation Work Group.
- Interviewed Implementation Coaches from Beaufort, Hyde and Chowan counties about the role.
- Facilitated Evaluation Work Group meetings with grants management, NIRN and NCPC teams on 4/21/15, 5/19/15 and 6/16/15.
- Worked with NIRN/ABLE to develop and articulate a visual representation of the work to share with counties.
- Presented on TZ Evaluation processes, findings, and recommendations at the 6/15/15 Cross-County meeting in Williamston.
- Attended the 6/17/15 Technical Assistance Provider meeting in Edenton.
- Continued attending coaches' priorities, ELC planning, and ABLe peer to peer conference calls.
- Attended 25 meetings and phone conferences during the quarter.
- Finalized and distributed two evaluation update newsletters to coaches, purveyors, teams, TA providers, and Evaluation Work Group. Posted to AI Hub.
- Provided specific email feedback to NCPC, NIRN and Pennie Foster-Fishman about findings from TZ meetings and phone conferences.
- Reviewed ABLe Change Network Dropbox and other informational documents.
- Reviewed NIRN document files and NC-ELC TZ Sakai site.
- Monitored TZ Evaluation email account and responded as needed.

Challenges:

- None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Distribute third newsletter.
- Conduct interviews with Implementation Coaches from Beaufort (new) and Bertie counties. Transcribe, code, and analyze data.
- Present an update at 7/14/15 State Implementation Team meeting.
- Facilitate Evaluation Work Group meetings on 7/27/15, 8/18/15 and 9/15/15.
- Continue drafting evaluation reports.
- Attend September county meetings and retreat the week of 9/21/15.
- Continue document review of ABLe Change Network materials.
- Continue document review of NIRN materials and NC-ELC TZ Sakai site.



- Continue to monitor TZ Evaluation email and respond as needed.
- Continue to provide timely updates and feedback to TZ Evaluation leadership and stakeholders on findings/ recommendations.

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:

- Grant management staff and grant partners attended and presented at the Sustainability Peer Learning Exchange for RTT-ELC Phase I Grantees in Atlanta, May 19 – 20.
- Grant partners from the Department of Public Instruction working with the NC K-3 Formative Assessment Project presented on NC's work at the National Working Meeting on Early Learning Assessment on June 6 and at the NCAEYC National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development June 7 – 10 in New Orleans.
- Grant management staff and grant partners attended the NAECS-SDE/CEELO 2015 Roundtable in New Orleans, June 3 - 5.
- Grant partners, including B-K Licensure Project staff with TA fund support, participated in the 2015 National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute, May 12-14.
- Received approval for a strategic communications/public awareness initiative for the K-3 Formative Assessment Project that will implemented in the 2015-16 school year through a contract between the NC Department of Public Instruction and The BUILD Initiative.
- Developed and provided a 1.5 day meeting featuring Dr. Bentley Ponder, Research Director with the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, who facilitated a working session of approximately 18-20 DCDEE leadership and staff that have responsibilities for developing and managing contracts funded by the RTT-ELC grant and the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF). The meeting was designed to improve: 1) *performance measures* for North Carolina's DCDEE RTT-ELC and CCDF subgrantees (the same agencies); 2) *impact measures* to be embedded in a revised logic model for North Carolina's RTT-ELC and CCDF goals within the DCDEE; and 3) *sustainability measures* to be implemented after the grant period and developed to measure ongoing success for many of North Carolina's RTT-ELC and CCDF projects.

Challenges: None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Implement K-3 Assessment strategic communications/public awareness project.
- Grant partners will attend and present at the 2015 BUILD QRIS National Meeting in July.

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 members have convened twice (no session in June) for sessions focused on developing Communities of Practice (CoP) and Leading for Equity. The highly interactive CoP session introduced participants to effective strategies for creating agendas, leading meetings and addressing dilemmas to convene stakeholders in thinking through how to tackle disparities that affect young children.
- CoP tools were applied in the Leading for Equity session, an intensive 2-day training that explored the role of structural racism in community-wide disparities. Selected participants will continue this work in their communities as the recipients of Leading for Equity grants.
- Cohort IV members are using Smart Start's new knowledge sharing tools (fabrikOne and fabrikDocs). Two contractors have begun working to complete and rollout phase 2.

Challenges:

- Sustaining and maintaining leaders' engagement (virtually and in-person) after the cohort is completed. Considering alumni retreats, a train-the-facilitator training model and perhaps national partners to use and help fund the online learning community (fabrikONE, etc).

Upcoming Tasks:

- July's training session will be led by trainers from the first three sessions and is designed to allow more time for exploration and application of key concepts and learning. Participants will have completed the second of three leadership competency self-assessments to assist in following their development in relation to anticipated competencies. Participants will use these new tools to inform their leadership and participate in peer coaching, another new feature added for this cohort with the aim of deepening and extending the knowledge and practice of information learned during the group sessions. Participants will work with facilitated, small coaching groups where they will identify leadership goals and share feedback that furthers these goals.
- Completion of the final cohort's training, creation of tools and work products to hold successful community meetings and implementation of Leading for Equity Retreats.
- Final product, rollout and engagement of the new online learning community platform.

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: The new Beaufort Implementation Coach began her orientation process. NCPC, NIRN Implementation Specialist, and the convener agency have continued to work collaboratively to support the coach as she becomes acclimated to her role.
 - Completed visits to Bertie, Chowan, and Hyde counties to observe team structure and practices.



- Mentoring sessions between the new coach and other coaches have been coordinated as part of the orientation process.
 - Individual coaching sessions with the Coach Coordinator, NIRN Implementation Specialist, and ABL e Change experts have occurred and will continue as part of the process.
- Implementation and Systems Level Work: Data has been the focus of a number of team discussions. NIRN Implementation Specialists have facilitated group discussions with the Implementation Coaches on the use of data in relation to program implementation.
 - Implementation Coaches led their teams in the efforts to determine current system conditions.
 - Communities have been engaged at varying levels and through various methods through the systems scan process.
 - Counties continue to be in varying stages of the process; some having usable data as a result of already having engaged in the data sorting.
 - The data findings were incorporated into the June Cross County meeting with Dr. Pennie Foster-Fishman to elicit county group conversations around the significance of the information in association to system alignment and effective sustainable early childhood systems.
 - An effort to build capacity, leadership and implementation team members have continuously been encouraged to participate in monthly county coaching calls with the ABL e Change experts.
 - Implementation Coaches have continued to be instrumental in educating key partners by sharing knowledge and making countless efforts to consistently engage team members in various components of the systems scan process.
 - Collaborative efforts have continued between county stakeholders, Implementation Coaches, and the ABL e Change experts in planning county specific agendas for the September Retreats. In particular, time was designated on the June Cross County agenda to support this collaborative effort.
- County Teams: All county teams have continued in their support of current strategy level work as well as directly engaging in and/or supporting the systems scan work.
 - Due to changing group dynamics and/or current county directions, several leadership teams have placed varying levels of emphasis on reviewing and revising Terms of Reference.
 - NIRN Implementation Specialists have assisted in this process.
- Several practices have continued during this quarter in an effort to maintain a high level of quality and collaboration related to Transformation Zone work.
 - The NCPC Deputy Director and Coach Coordinator, along with the State Implementation Specialists, and Dr. Foster-Fishman continued conversations in an effort to discuss opportunities for effective integration of the Implementation Science and ABL e frameworks.
 - Implementation Coaches and key county stakeholders from each county participated in a panel discussion entitled “The Transformation Zone: Our State, Our Counties, Our Kids” at the 2015 Smart Start Conference. The session which was facilitated by the Implementation Specialist and Coach Coordinator, focused on highlighting successes as well as challenges of the Transformation Zone work.
- Communications:
 - All interviews with site supervisors and county conveners have been conducted.



- All discovery sessions with either Leadership Teams or Implementation Teams have been completed.
- NCPC Communications Specialists attended and presented at the Leadership Team meetings in Beaufort County, Bertie County, Chowan County, and with Hyde County Implementation Team to learn about what is needed, both short term and long term, in regards to communications support.
- NCPC Communications Specialist presented initial findings at the June cross county meeting, highlighting the need for county specific TA in addition to communications strategic planning support.
- A discovery survey has been created and the Communications team is working with counties on mining data that has already been compiled.

Challenges:

- None reported this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continued planning and preparation for the September Retreats with 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.
- ROR Carolinas continues to provide initial orientation and application support for new and potential sites in Beaufort, Bertie, and Hyde counties.
- 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 delivered a coaching presentation at the April cross-county early literacy meeting. We received positive feedback about the coaching module and the group was very engaged. The Literacy Coordinators requested we talk about coaching again at subsequent cross-county early literacy meetings.
- A third round of Motherhead trainings were offered in all three curricula during the months of May and June.
- Initial evaluation data is coming in from the counties who have begun implementing Motherhead and ROR. The project evaluator held on-site interviews with parents, child care facilities, facilitators, and literacy coordinators during the end of 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.
- Literacy coordinators are regularly invited and attend Smart Start ROR Grant technical assistance opportunity including monthly coordinator calls and Spring Sustainability Summits.

Challenges:



- Counties completed an initial implementation check-in report in April where they reflected on current adaptive and technical challenges and successes. Themes are challenges with “fit” of certain strategies and thus issues with site selection; participant recruitment and retention; facilitator/staff turnover; community awareness/understanding of programming & coordination. To support counties in working through these challenges, a reorientation of the early literacy models and evaluation requirements was provided at the June 18th TZ Early Literacy cross-county meeting. ROR Carolinas also presented information on best practice implementation support and Motheread discussed recruitment and retention strategies.

Upcoming Tasks:

- To support Story Exploring facilitators in their knowledge and use of Story Exploring between the spring training session and actual implementation, which will occur in the fall, Motheread will work with literacy coordinators to deliver training reorientations later this summer.

Reform Area B: High-Quality, Accountable Programs

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

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

Activity 4.1: Revising TQRIS

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

Key Accomplishments:

- See Project 7 on page 14 for the TQRIS Validation Study, which is supporting 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: (CCRI)

- This quarter, 57 applications for the Professional Development Bonus Award have been submitted. Of these, 44 were complete and have been paid or are being processed for payment.
- Of the complete applications, 21 were from child care centers and 23 were from family child care home providers.
- To date in Calendar Year 2015, 114 applications have been received for review.

Challenges:

- None reported.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue statewide promotional efforts for the Professional Development Bonus Award and process applications.
- Distribute online survey to all applicants to measure the participants' satisfaction level with staff administering the Professional Development Bonus Award.

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:

- This project has received 91 applications from public school programs, and 88 of those have been awarded mini-grants.
- 85 of the Public Schools awarded mini-grants have achieved licensure, (Temporary License: 2; 5 Stars: 47; 4 Stars: 36).
- Public school grant reimbursements were paid out during May.
- 4 of 8 faith-based programs (GS-110 facilities) have achieved a 3 or greater star license.

Challenges:

- None reported.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue to contact all public preschool programs with outstanding receipts.
- Process receipts for reimbursement as they are received.
- Follow-up with programs who have not submitted receipts.
- Finalize grant payments.
- Follow-up with remaining faith-based programs.



Activity 4.4: Task Force on Licensure

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

Key Accomplishments:

- This project is completed. [Report](#) is posted on NC RTT-ELC website.

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:

- Initial Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for Pilot 4 was obtained.
- The progress report on Pilots 1-3 was completed.
- Observation, interview, and document review sections of the measure are being tested and finalized.
- Advisory committee webinar materials identified and under development.
- Started logistics pilot of document review and site visits.
- Scheduled training for Infant CLASS and Toddler CLASS.
- Developed initial plan and rubrics for collecting photographic evidence for space and materials.
- Added a satisfaction/climate survey component to the measure and began IRB application.

Challenges:

- Timeline for hiring and training assessors.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Logistics pilot of document review and site visits.
- Finalize measure.
- Develop training materials and protocol.
- Hire additional staff in preparation for 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:

- Statewide, 85 of 154 unduplicated Temporary, 1- and 2- star programs currently working with CCCR&R staff to achieve a 3 or higher star rated license have achieved that goal in CY 2015.
- Statewide, 111 temporary, 1- & 2- star programs currently working with CCR&R/Smart Start staff applied for a 3 or higher star rated license (of those 77% achieved that goal).
- 46 participating programs have completed a Quality Improvement Plan and a Technical Assistance evaluation survey.

Challenges:

- In some regions, there is considerable reluctance by ELD programs to move up in stars, and because DCDEE staff is confident that they have reached out to each program less than 3 stars and are working with those that are willing, they have determined to end recruitment efforts at this time.

Upcoming Tasks:

- CCR&R will continue to provide technical assistance and professional development support services to Temporary, 1- and 2- star programs that committed by January, 2015 to achieve 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:

- Enhanced payments were made to 3 Beaufort programs for the following service months:
 - February- 36 children total (13 infants, 23 one year old children)
 - March- 37 children total (15 infants, 22 one year old children)
 - April- 40 children total (16 infants, 24 one year old children)
- 7 Infant Toddler Expansion Grant programs received technical assistance (58 consultations) in 3 Transformation Zone counties.
- Mock ITERS-R (Infant-Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised) assessments were completed in 8 classrooms.
- Enhanced payments were made to 3 programs during April for a total of 40 children.

Challenges:

- Poor director administrative and leadership skills has led to an unexpected need for direct technical assistance and Partnership staff support in order to implement improvement plan steps at some sites.
- Some sites demonstrate a culture of compliance with minimum standards rather than a focus on continuous quality improvement.

Upcoming Tasks:



- Continue providing technical assistance based on improvement plans to expansion grant programs.

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:

- Beaufort County: 35 children attending at month end (3 aged out); all double slot; 5 receiving transportation.
- Bertie County: 6 children attending at month end (all double slot); 4 receiving transportation
- Hyde County: 4 attending at month end (all double slot).
- Began working with existing programs to make improvements in how they gather and report developmental and family engagement information.
- Family Questionnaire distributed.

Challenges:

- Documentation of family engagement activities has been difficult for some providers. During TA visits, the Infant Toddler Specialist has learned that some teachers conduct family engagement activities but aren't aware of them as such and/or do not document them.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Provide support to current NCB1 sites.
- Collect completed family questionnaires and compile information.
- Continue ITERS-R (Infant-Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised) mock assessments of classrooms to ensure ongoing quality of care.

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

- Assessments to be used for the validation study (e.g., CLASS, Director Interview, Family and Teacher Questionnaires) were submitted to DCDEE for review.
- Completed interviews with sampled providers for targeted data collection. 93 out of the 100 interviews were completed (68 Centers, 25 FCCHs).
- Validation study materials were approved by UNC's Institutional Review Board.
- Additional research assistants were hired and trained to recruit programs for the study.
- Study recruitment began in May, in coordination with the Program Quality Measure project.

Challenges:



- Recruitment of programs progressed more slowly due to incorrect contact information for programs and difficulty reaching FCCH providers in particular. Procedures were modified to include email contact as well as phone contact.
- The programs sampled for the telephone survey reported that most of the proposed revised standards were feasible with technical assistance. The survey refusal rate was higher than expected, which may indicate that recruiting for the validation study will be challenging.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Complete study recruitment.
- Finalize director interview to align with test model.
- Post data collector position and begin recruiting.
- Continue to coordinate with Program Quality Measure Development project.

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

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

Activity 12.2.7 – Infant Toddler Specialist in the Transformation Zone

This Activity has been completed.

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

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

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

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

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

This Activity has been completed.

- Twenty-two hubs have been selected.

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



Programs.

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

Key Accomplishments:

- As of this reporting period, 15 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, 7 Training Hubs have completed their scopes of work: Franklin-Vance-Warren, Inc. [#8], Western Carolina Community Action [#3], Blue Ridge Opportunity Commission [#4], Macon Program for Progress [#1], Cumberland Community Action Program [#12], Four Square Comm. Action [#18]. The last Training Hub [WAGES #9] ended all project activities associated with its scope of work due to the untimely death of the project coordinator of this Hub.)
- All Hubs (both active and inactive) have collectively reached about 28% of childcare providers (approximately 1,720 licensed providers). The Hubs are on pace to reach about one third of all providers across the State by the end of this project in December.
- Ongoing technical assistance support continues to be provided to all Hubs encountering barriers to implementation. This technical assistance support includes the convening of regional Professional Learning Communities (PLC) 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.

Challenges:

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

Upcoming Tasks:

- Partnering with the Early Learning Network, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, UNC-CH, to incorporate this content into the development and offering of online *Foundations* training modules for consumers to access after the project comes to an end in December 2015.
- Final PLC meeting in early fall 2015.

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



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

Key Accomplishments:

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

Challenges: None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Hubs continue to recruit providers, provide training, coaching.
- Evaluation of services continues.

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

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

Activity 18.4: Faith Summits

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

Key Accomplishments:

This Activity has been completed.

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

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

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

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



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

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

Key Accomplishments:

This Activity has been completed.

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

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

Description: This Activity will support the Child Care Resource and Referral system to improve access to and the quality of professional development, coaching, mentoring, and technical assistance services through multiple strategies, including aligning efforts with the revised ELD standards, delivering new courses, and creating Communities of Practice to support quality improvement.

Key Accomplishments:

- *NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development* .5 CEU has been offered 69 times in Calendar Year 2015 statewide.
- *Choosing and Using an Approved Curriculum with Formative Strategies* .5 CEU has been offered 36 times in Calendar Year 2015 statewide.
- *Cultural Competence* .5 CEU has been offered 57 times in Calendar Year 2015 statewide.
- A total of 34 CLASS training have been offered statewide in Calendar Year 2015.

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 Foundations for Early Learning and Development*.

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

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

Activity 9.1: ELDS Foundations Revised



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

This Activity has been completed.

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

Upcoming Task:

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

Activity 9.2: ELDS CEU and Professional Development

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

Key Accomplishments:

- The final Higher Education/Technical Assistance Institute was convened on April 28th at Johnston County Community College with 59 attendees.
- The online .5 CEU *Foundations* was reviewed and approved by DCDEE on April 6, 2015.
- The online CEU and Train the Trainer were posted to the Child Care Resources Inc. website.
- Piloting of the two online modules is set for June 2015.

Challenges:

- None

Upcoming Tasks:

- Pilot and revise access to the online *Foundations* CEUs (both Train the Trainer and practitioner modules).
- Launch online *Foundations* CEUs (both Train the Trainer and practitioner modules).
- Develop *Promising Practices* document using input from the Higher Education/Technical Assistance Institutes.
- Finalize new contract with the Early Learning Network, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, UNC-CH, to develop and make available advanced online *Foundations* training modules.

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 and Regional Implementation Team contractors held regular meeting to continue planning technical assistance and professional development for LEA (Lead Education Agency) District Implementation Teams (April-June).
- Platform development meetings continue to be held to develop Teaching Strategies technology into the format required for the NC content.
- Launched statewide practice platform for field testing in June.
- The Implementation Design Team and Regional Implementation Teams continue to work closely to develop and coordinate Regional Implementation Team support to District Implementation Teams.
- 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 professional development and technical assistance.
- Ensuring the data from the formative assessment process is used as intended will also require professional development and technical assistance support.

Upcoming Tasks:

- On- going implementation support to all District Implementation Teams.
- Regional Implementation Team technical assistance throughout the year.
- Continue development and design of the K-3 process and implementation.
- Continue planning for the technology component of the assessment.
- Statewide implementation of the first component (KEA) of the K-3 Formative Assessment will be in the Fall 2015.
- New hire for two field consultants.

Activity 15.2: Using Data to Improve Classroom Instruction

Key Accomplishments:

- First School staff continues to provide on-going support during year 3 to all PK-3 classrooms in Martin and Bertie which include coaching and site visits.
- Regular K-3 team meetings held within schools to review data and plan school/classroom improvement.
- 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:

- Final PD in September 2015.
- Complete project December 2015.

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

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

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

Activity 17.1: Family Connects

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

Key Accomplishments:

- January - June 2015 report received summarizing in-home visits and outreach efforts.
- The Agreement Addenda revision with Albemarle Regional Health Services to be the home of Family Connects (administratively, programmatically and clinically) was executed effective April 1, 2015.
- June 1, 2015 – Renewal agreement addenda with Albemarle Regional Health Services, Beaufort County Health Department and Hyde County Health Department were executed.

Challenges:

- Even though Albemarle Regional Health Services has signed the agreement addenda to be the “home,” they are very concerned about their role in Family Connects. The Division of Public Health (DPH) and the Center for Child and Family Health (CCFH) will have to monitor progress very carefully.
- Data is being requested by many different parties. Albemarle Regional Health Services has designated a 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 Transformation Zone Family Connects fits into this new Family Connects data system.
- Sustainability continues to be a question and will be addressed in two ways—the local Leadership and Implementation Teams will be challenged to address the issue, and CCHF and DPH will talk with local health directors about their thoughts.

Upcoming Tasks:

- DPH and CCFH began monthly calls to address ongoing administrative issues.

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 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 Triple P staff.
- Face-to-face workshops were held March 18, 2015 and April 20, 2015 for all 17 RTT-ECL counties to formalize the plan.
- Each of the local implementing sites has executed their agreement addenda for SFY 15-16. Even though the dates go through May 2016, the deliverables were prorated to December 31, 2015, pending approval of the no-cost extension.
- All sites have developed a sustainability budget to “stretch” their funding through May 31, 2016. At that point, the Division of Public Health plans to pick up Triple P with Title V funding. To stretch the funding, most sites are focusing on refresher training (much less expensive) for previously trained practitioners. This will encourage those practitioners not providing Triple P to become engaged in delivering Triple P, and participating in peer-to-peer support and submitting data.
- Site visits have been completed, as well as meetings with local coordinators, their supervisors and health directors. Purpose: to assure management support for Triple P.

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.
- A strategy to generate bridge funding from January 2016 thru May 2016 has been developed. Sites will stop new training and focus on refresher training, peer-to-peer support, data collection, and Stay Positive Campaign.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Site visits are planned for May 2015 for Martin-Tyrrell-Washington District Health, Hyde and Albemarle Regional Health Services 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:

- The coaching model and training are complete. All Child Care Health Consultants (CCHCs) have been trained in the coaching module. New CCHC's receive the module as part of the CCHC training course to become a qualified in NC to deliver CCHC services.
- CCHCs statewide are working with the support of the CCHC Regional Coaches to incorporate the coaching approach in their technical assistance to early care and education programs.
- The Regional CCHC Coaches continue to provide coaching and technical assistance to CCHCs. Based on information gained from the field, gathered by the Regional CCHC Coaches, several tools have been developed and/or revised including an orientation manual for new CCHCs, a revised CCHC Model, Health and Safety Assessment APP.
- Regional Coaches have been integral to the roll out of the CCHC Model, Coaching Module, and other tools. Beyond that, the CCHC Regional Coaches are the conduit for receiving information related to successes and barriers in the field. They have filled the role of not only coach, but advocate and trainer for new and seasoned CCHCs. They have helped mediate and inform community decisions around CCHC services and provide on-going health and safety related technical assistance to CCHCs.
- The NC Child Care Nurse Consultant also provides ongoing technical assistance to the CCHC network and works collaboratively with the North Carolina Partnership for Children and the Regional Coaches.
- There has been some positive momentum building around CCHCs engaging with other child care technical assistance providers to coordinate services, create efficiencies, and educate each other on roles and services.
- A small group of CCHCs are now utilizing the NC Child Care Health and Safety Assessment APP in the delivery of CCHC coaching and consultation. The NC Child Care Health and Safety Resource Center has been providing training and on-going support for the CCHC APP users. The Resource Center is collecting feedback from users on ease of use of the APP in order to determine needed enhancements and possible future rollout.
- The CCHC Coaching evaluation collection is ongoing, with interviews and focus group held this spring. Early qualitative information gathered from the interviews places value on support offered from the Regional CCHC Coach and CCHC services received by child care facilities.
- Beaufort, Bertie, Chowan, and Hyde counties (in the Transformation Zone) 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.

Challenges:

- Due to several cancellations last minute, the Hiring Agency Orientation Manual workgroup was not able to hold its planned May meeting. A new meeting date is to be determined.
- Questions continue to be discussed as to how to create a statewide plan to sustain the infrastructure created for the CCHC network beyond the grant period.
- CCHC turnover still continues to be a challenge, limiting the opportunity for coaching to be adopted and delivered in some communities. The CCHC Regional Coaches relate when there a new CCHC is hired, it takes time to orient them to the work and build relationships with child care providers before coaching can be utilized. The New CCHC Orientation Guide has assisted the Regional Coaches and communities on providing new CCHC's with a foundational orientation prior to CCHC training completion.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Rescheduling the Hiring Agency Orientation manual workgroup.



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 technical assistance phone calls, sharing successes, discussing challenges, and exchanging information.
- At the May 2015 Smart Start Conference, project manager presented a workshop on ABCD jointly with Dr. Earls from Community Care of North Carolina and Dr. Alderman (pediatrician from Portland, OR with extensive ABCD history).
 - Several ABCD coordinators participated and were able to engage in the Q&A art of the workshop.
 - Project manager had a follow-up meeting with Dr. Alderman to further understand the details of her work in Oregon.
- In June 2015, the quarterly ABCD Quality Improvement (QI) meeting and the ABCD State Advisory Committee meeting took place.
 - The QI meeting was well attended in Greensboro, NC. Dr. Vivian James, the Preschool Exceptional Children's Coordinator for the NC Department of Public Instruction (Office of Early Learning), presented the revised referral and feedback process for physicians' referrals to early intervention, part B. The presentation provided valuable information to the ABCD coordinators with a productive discussion between the various programs.
 - A representative from the Autism Alliance also presented at the QI meeting on the upcoming Autism Learning Collaborative for medical practices.
 - Project manager discussed the data evaluation summary report from ABCD program evaluator with ABCD coordinators to gain their insight and reactions to report.
 - In the quarterly state level ABCD Advisory Committee, the program manager presented on the evaluation information and sustainability plans. A draft outline of the training was shared and ideas were generated for videos, topics, and experts to involve in the sustainability online training materials that will be developed.
Dr. Vivian James provided a similar update to the state meeting as she did at the QI meeting in regards to forms and processes.
- In June 2015, project manager conducted individual calls with each ABCD coordinator to review successes, challenges, and progress over time, as well as to discuss project plans for July-Dec 2015, and sustainability options.
 - Reports are due to NCPC by mid-July and will provide information related to each region's plans for 2016 and beyond.
- A follow-up meeting between NCPC and NC Pediatric Society has been planned for mid-July to discuss the ABCD online training development efforts.

Challenges:

- Community Care of North Carolina continues to work with NC 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 the June QI meeting, Community Care of North Carolina's data analyst attended to provide an updated about available data and challenges with analysis by region. NCPC's contracted project evaluator and Community Care of North Carolina's data analyst will connect to discuss available data that may support the state-wide evaluation of the project.

- The final region, via the NW Community Care network and Forsyth Partnership, has had challenges hiring a coordinator for the additional region they took on the final year. They continue to seek someone to fill this position; in the meantime the existing coordinator is doing extensive work. Once the hiring is finalized, the existing coordinator will provide training and close mentoring and the NCPC project manager will provide resources and training handouts.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue TA to all regions, specifically the ones who have entered into implementation in 2015.
- Plan, prepare and co-facilitate the September ABCD QI meeting in Greensboro.
- Continued work with contracted evaluator on data collection and evaluation.
- Continue to work on the development of an online 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

Project 3: Professional Development Capacity Building

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

Activity 3.1: NC Early Childhood Professional Development Support

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

Key Accomplishments:

- This Activity is completed. NC Early Childhood Professional Development Support funding is being used to support the On-Line Master's Degree Program.



Activity 3.2: On-Line Master's Degree Program

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

Key Accomplishments:

- 140 students currently enrolled at two universities, UNCG and UNCW.
- 20 additional students scheduled to begin classes in Fall 2015.
- T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships (Task 12.2.15 in GRADS – Develop and implement outreach plan for Master's Degree in Early Childhood Program Leadership and Management Scholarship) are being offered for coursework that will contribute to the online Master's Degree (see page 33).
- Admission process and orientation of additional cohort of students completed.

Challenges:

- Some students struggle with the rigor of the coursework, especially in the area of academic writing.
- Two students have withdrawn from the program due to work commitments.
- Staffing/course offerings to accommodate the total number of students is challenging for university staff.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue advising, recruiting and support of current students.
- Monitor waiting list of applicants in case seats become available due to attrition.

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:

- Continued to enter respondents into tracking database.
- Continued data entry and checking.
- Called for missing data where applicable.
- Followed up with non-responding directors.



- Hired and trained new research manager.
- Picked mid-study drawing winners and mailed prizes.

Challenges:

- Resignation of research manager led to difficulty finding new manager for a time-limited position.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue to call non-responding directors.
- Continue to perform data entry.
- Prepare mailing to gather teacher surveys.

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:

- CEU bearing course has been launched and rolled out across the state.
- The syllabus for the three semester credit hour course was developed and submitted to DCDEE for approval.

Challenges:

- None reported.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Course content will be developed and submitted to DCDEE for approval.
- Course will be registered for Fall 2015 at The University of North Carolina at Wilmington.

(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:

- 6 of 11 mid-point Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) assessments performed; scores on all 6 assessments showed improvement. One classroom has already achieved fidelity to the Pyramid Model, scoring 80% on the assessment.



- Provided technical assistance in classrooms and training proceeding in all cohorts.
- The Statewide Project Manager gave a brief presentation with Q&A session to representatives from multiple states at the Pyramid Model National Training Institute 2015 on Transformation Zone project design and accomplishments to date.

Challenges:

- The Transformation Zone Healthy Social Behavior Specialist has resigned due to health issues, and the Statewide Project Manager is working to ensure continued services to current Transformation Zone classrooms through grant end.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Conduct mid-point TPOT on remaining classrooms.
- Finalize transition plan for active classrooms in Transformation Zone so they can continue to receive services.

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:

- Continue to process new enrollments and employment changes in all data systems.
- A total of 237 teachers, identified as RTT, are currently enrolled with the Early Educator Support, Licensure and Professional Development (EESLPD) Office (June 10, 2015 data).
- A total of 134 teachers, identified as RTT-BK Project teachers, have a mentor and/or evaluator assigned based on licensure type (June 10, 2015 data). Evaluators are conducting formal observations.
- Two virtual Regional Meetings were held in May to review all year-end processes with Mentors/Evaluators.
- Proposal for four sustainability activities was developed and submitted for consideration under the no cost extension provision of the RTT -ELC Grant:
 - Recruit, train & support new early childhood professionals as partners to continue services for up to 145 active teachers;
 - Offer training to teacher on the waitlist and their site administrators;
 - Develop & support four nonpublic demonstration sites;



- Revision of the *Resource Manual for Administrators and Principals Supervising and Evaluating Teachers of Young Children*.

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.
- 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. Teachers continue to inquire about the BK Project.
- Developing individual and personal contacts to support and recruit early childhood professionals to partner with the EESLPD Office requires much time of staff who also carry high caseloads.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Ongoing close coordination between State EESLPD Office and two universities to ensure implementation of all EESLPD processes.
- Develop and record a welcome video for new Mentors/Evaluators/Partners.
- Continue planning for future profession development (Fall 2015) with a goal of having independent/online modules of the required training for new teachers and site administrators available in August/September 2015.

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:

- A total of 104 endorsements have been issued as of 4/30/15.

Challenges:

- None to report.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue recruitment efforts.

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:

- 521 Early Childhood Education professionals were certified through this grant during this quarter. (319 initial certifications and 202 renewals).
- Currently a total of 13,296 early educators hold an active certification.
- Ongoing recruitment occurred.
- The Institute provided a national presentation at the Smart Start 2015 National Conference, which included Early Educator Certification content.

Challenges:



- None to report at this time.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Working with the NC Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) on alignment of Early Educator Certification data with DCDEE teacher education data needs for facility licensure.
- Leveraging Institute partnerships to build more Early Educator Certification rewards and benefits.
- Recruiting new and renewal applicants.
- Sending reminders to early educators due to renew in upcoming months.
- Processing applications and issuing certifications to early educators who have applied.
- Seeking funding to support expansion of the Early Educator Certification system.
- Supporting and working with partners to increase CEU opportunities.
- 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 they applied and what is needed to support them remaining certified.

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:

- 9 colleges have been accredited through this grant to date.
- 5 additional colleges are expected to complete the accreditation process this fall.

Challenges:

- None reported.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Colleges are in process of responding to the peer review team reports.

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:

- Continued work on course description revision.
- Script NC Webinar on EDU 131- Child, Family and Community held on May 5th.



- NC Ed2Career 2020: Early Childhood: Sustaining and Growing Investments in a First-Rate Early Learning Workforce, held on May 7th.

Challenges:

- It has taken a large amount of time and energy to intentionally revise course descriptions and develop Student Learning Objectives (SLOs).

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continued work on content around formative assessment for upcoming Script NC webinars.
- Survey will be sent to all faculty in June for all core course descriptions and SLOs and stand-alone certificates.
- Script NC Webinars conducted every second Tuesday of the month at 2:00 pm.
- Continue work on “Live Binder” to make sure all resources are included.

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.
 - 488 did or will receive RTT-ELC funds for completing commitment periods during the reporting period (January-May).
 - 286 did or will receive full RTT -ELC supplements
 - 202 did or will receive Smart Start supplements plus RTT -ELC enhancements.
- WAGE\$ provided an insert with each payment to remind participants that the RTT -ELC funding ends in 2015. This is in addition to the letter itself, which also states the funding dates.
- WAGE\$ recruited individuals with their Early Educator Certification who had not yet applied to WAGE\$.
- WAGE\$ emailed participants at temporary levels to remind them of their temporary status and to encourage education pursuits prior to the deadlines.

Challenges:

- As of January 2016, Smart Start partnerships will need to be prepared to cover payments for individuals eligible for Smart Start but previously paid by the RTT -ELC grant due to funding availability. WAGE\$ will provide strategies to adjust funding needs as applicable.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Process applications.
- Process increases in education.



- Complete employment confirmations.
- Issue payments.
- Continue recruitment activities.
- Offer and provide requested outreach opportunities.
- Remind participants of funding end date.

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:

- 13 Early Care and Education Community Specialist Scholarships were awarded during the reporting period.
 - 7 recipients have submitted enrollment documentation for Summer 2015 and stipends have been requested.
 - 6 recipients are employed at a Smart Start partnership agency.
 - 6 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).
 - Confirmed list of Summer Institute participants for Cohort 1 (June).
 - Completed conference call with Cohort 3.
 - Completed second round of recruitment of Summer Institute participants for Cohort 2 (July).
 - Finalized modules for Summer Institute training.
- Early Care and Education Enhancement Scholarship in the T-Zone.
 - 40 T.E.A.C.H. recipients participating on an enhanced Transformation Zone scholarship.
 - 35 Associate Degree recipients.
 - 1 Bachelor Degree recipient.
 - 4 Birth-Kindergarten recipients.
- Master's Degree Scholarship.
 - UNC-Greensboro
 - 43 scholarships awarded to date.
 - 41 participants have registered for Summer 2015 courses.
 - UNC-Wilmington.
 - 89 scholarships awarded to date.
 - 70 participants have registered for Summer 2015.

Challenges:

- Early Care and Education Community Specialist Program.
 - Increasing scholarship participation.
 - Getting recipients to submit paperwork in a timely manner.
- NC Foundation of Infant and Toddler Care Mentor Teacher Scholarship (NC-FITC).
 - A large number of community college instructors applied for FITC-CC in the first round for the June Institute. A second Institute was added in July to accommodate this larger than expected demand.



- Cohort 3 still doesn't seem to be creating a "community" outside the times that they are meeting face to face.
- The FITC Cohort 3 students have not received their transcripts from course 1 due to a change in personnel in the registrar's office at Meredith College.
- Early Care and Education Enhancement Scholarship in the T-Zone.
 - No significant gains in participation despite the incentives.
 - One Birth-Kindergarten Licensure participant was dropped this reporting period because he changed his major and was no longer eligible for the scholarship.
- Master's Degree Scholarship.
 - None reported.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Early Care and Education Community Specialist Program.
 - Collect grades for Spring 2015 semester.
 - Continue collecting documentation for Summer 2015 semester.
- NC Foundation of Infant and Toddler Care Mentor Teacher Scholarship (NC-FITC).
 - Conducting 5-day Summer Institute for Cohort I of Community College Instructors.
 - Make arrangement for second session of the Summer Institute in July.
 - Make arrangements for the final face to face for Cohort 3, course 2.
- Early Care and Education Enhancement Scholarship in the T-Zone.
 - Continue processing applications and claims for individuals in the Transformation Zone eligible counties.
- Master's Degree Scholarship.
 - Continue requesting grades not received from Spring '15.
 - Renew recipient's contracts for fall semester as needed.
 - Follow-up with recipients who have not submitted Fall '15 Pre-Authorization Request Forms.

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:

- The final curriculum review conference call with technical assistance providers was held on April 1st.
- 41 technical assistance providers are endorsed to deliver the Cultural Competence Curriculum.
- Endorsement certificates were mailed to all technical assistance providers who completed their requirements.



- Technical assistance providers submitted proposals for Cultural Competence presentations at the NAEYC Conference in June 2015.
- The Cultural Competence Awareness training is being offered to professional development staff and early childhood programs that include children with disabilities.
- Significant analysis of quantitative data occurred during the month of April. Of the 175 participants who completed surveys near the beginning of the project, 48 completed the surveys after completion of the study. Preliminary results show that several participants experienced informational concerns about culturally competent practices initially. By the end of the projects, the concerns were lessened.
- WSSU Team has started work on Final Report.

Challenges:

- Difficulty re-scheduling observations for students who have not completed the endorsement process. At this time, two technical assistance providers are still working on completing the requirements.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue to analyze and refine qualitative and quantitative data for the final report.
- Continue to work on Final Report for DCDEE.
- Schedule Leadership Team Meeting when Final Report is complete.

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:

- Institute III was convened with 70 participants and coaches.
- Completed 20 Post-PAS assessments.
- Small Test of Change (STOC) was completed by 97% of participants (one participant did not complete it).
- 98% of participants rated Institute III as Excellent/Good.
- 92% of Coaches were rated as Excellent/Good.
- 98% of Networking and Team Meetings at Institute III were rated as Excellent/Good.
- 97% of the participants of Institute III rated the Leadership Resources to be Excellent/Good.

Challenges:

- 11 participants did not attend Institute III.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue post-PAS assessments.
- Coaches continue support of team members through June 2015.
- Edit curriculum.



- Format curriculum for online delivery.

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).

Activity 2.1: 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 approved and signed by designated parties.
- A Data Use Agreement (DUA) for data requesters to sign before they are able to obtain data from the system has been approved by the Program Management Committee and will be forwarded to the Executive Committee for approval.
- Drafts of the first four standard report templates have been reviewed and approved by the Program Management and Executive Committees.
- The Office of Information Technology Services (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 have developed and signed off on a Statement of Work for Client Services Data Warehouse (CSDW), the data warehouse at DHHS, which outlines the work needed to be done to establish a connection between it and the NC ECIDS application. However, this Statement of Work does not include a specified deadline for this work to be completed and we are still working on establishing this date.
- The NC ECIDS team reviewed and signed off on a number of business requirements packages which will be used to build the system. This phase of development is coming to a close.



- We have developed a mockup of the web portal home page and approximately 12 additional web pages. However, to continue to development of the web portal, OITS has contracted with Atlantic BT, a web development firm, to develop the “look and feel” of the web portal and make it user friendly and state of the art.
- The NC ECIDS team and several program members received training from the federal State Support Team in mapping our data elements to Common Education Data Standards (CEDS) elements. All program data elements have now been mapped to CEDS.
- NC ECIDS staff and several participating agency partners attended an invitational meeting held by the State Support Team for states developing ECIDS on May 12-13 to: (1) complete the self-assessment of the various components in developing an ECIDS using their “ECIDS Toolkit,” and (2) learn more about working with and managing vendors.
- A draft document on quality linkages between early childhood and K-12 data systems has been developed by the Data Quality Campaign after a meeting of a few state representatives to discuss elements of such linkages. NC ECIDS was represented there, and they are requesting to use NC as an example of Governance for oversight of quality linkages.
- Continued work on establishing a contract with eScholar, the UID vendor, to purchase the UIDs and software.

Challenges:

- There continues to be a significant delay in getting a contract in place for eScholar due to the existing policies and procedures within the participating agencies. We are working with the DHHS Contracts Office to try and move this along as fast as possible.
- While we were able to execute a Statement of Work for the CSDW (DHHS data warehouse), we have not been able to reach an agreement on the deadline by which to complete this work. We are working to engage others in this discussion with the hope that it will help reach an agreement soon.

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.
- Attend the 2015 National Center for Education Statistics (NCES-STATS) conference. Team members will be presenting on the NC ECIDS application at this conference.
- 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.
- Obtain Executive Committee approval for 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
 - NCPC continued to work on the Round 2 Data Mini Grant cycle which was launched in March. Extra technical assistance to connect prospective Smart Start local partnership mini grant applicants with people and information from mini grants Round 2 was provided this spring. For instance, assistance to develop ideas for mini grant data systems, such as a meeting with the NC Pre-K software developer and a demonstration webinar of the new Penelope software for Parents as Teachers (PAT) were provided to partnerships. About forty partnerships received technical assistance for Round 2 mini grants. That represents 80% of partnerships that were eligible for funding in Round 2.
 - Five reviewers reviewed the mini grants and twenty three mini grants, from twenty-four applicants, were funded (one applicant was ineligible due to having received a Round 1 mini grant). A total of \$154,896.81 was awarded. No multi-partnership projects were proposed in this round.
 - In Round 2, funding for data collection software was the most common mini grant item requested with KIPS assessments and equipment the next most common. Plans for connecting learning and software development opportunities are ongoing for GEMSLite and iDashboards users.
 - Round 1 mini grant work is well underway. Work on Round 1 is scheduled to be complete in the fall. NCPC continues to maintain frequent contact (monthly or more) with the Cumberland Partnership for Children, a key provider of services for Round 1, to ensure the grant projects are on track.
- Smart Start Outcomes and Measurement Data Reporting System
 - NCPC finalized the online tool for Smart Start local partnerships to use for selecting the outcomes they will measure for each activity. NCPC provided three webinars, extensive instructions, and phone technical assistance to local partnerships to guide their selection of outcomes during the months of April and May.
 - NCPC launched the measures module in June. This includes the online tool for partnerships to indicate the measures they will use for each of their selected programmatic outcomes. Partnerships have until the end of July to review measures and make their selections.
 - NCPC developed the Smart Start Outcomes Measurement Tools Resource Guide to help local partnerships with measures selection. The Measures Guide was finalized and shared in June. It contains guidance and data collection specifications for over thirty measures including both standardized instruments and data summary “worksheets” for calculations.
 - Technical assistance for outcomes and measurement selection has been ongoing.
- Visit Tracker/Penelope
 - Smart Start is the major funder of Parents as Teachers in North Carolina. NCPC is working to link PAT data with ECIDS. This spring PAT announced a switch to Penelope software for managing data on families participating in PAT. NCPC staff participated in PAT sponsored “super user” training for Penelope as well as a subsequent webinar to get started with Penelope.



- NCPC held a conference call with staff from the Privacy Technical Assistance Center (PTAC). This group is reviewing the parent consent and authorization forms proposed by NCPC for parent/guardian permission to store and ultimately share data to ECIDS.
- ECIDS
 - NCPC continues to participate in the ECIDS policy and program management committees. In addition to these meetings, we participated in the ECIDS Strategies Workshop with a focus on vendor management held in Charlotte as well as a Persona Workshop to help inform the development of the ECIDS website.
 - In addition to taking steps to ultimately link Smart Start PAT data with ECIDS, NCPC is also working with the NC Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) to ensure that all Smart Start subsidy data will be included in ECIDS.

Challenges: None reported this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- The creation of customized fields for Smart Start measures data reporting will be built into Fabrik Activities Management.
- Data governance training will be developed.
- NCPC will continue to help provide Penelope training and technical assistance for NCPAT.
- A project for developing leading indicators/measurement metrics for PAT is under discussion.
- A final round of Data Mini Grants is scheduled for the fall.

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:

- Entered project back into project management approval cycle for Gate 1 review.
- Completed new state IT project Exception Request form to seek approval for sole source vendor.
- Received State Chief Information Officer approval for Exception Request form.
- Transitioned project into new state project management tool.
- Held two meetings between new Workforce Project Manager and DCDEE Director.
- Conducted interviews for Business Analyst position.
- Brought new business analyst on board with project.
- Completed approvals for Exception Request form.
- Completed approvals for project Gate 1 review.
- Began work on Technical Architecture Systems Document (TASD).

Challenges:

- Length of RFP review has led Purchasing Office and the Division of Information Resource Management (DIRM) to recommend forgoing RFP process in favor of adoption and modification of existing state system.
- State approval process for IT projects is very cumbersome and time consuming, has already caused the project significant delays.

**Upcoming Tasks:**

- Finalize procurement process decision.
- Finalize business analyst work on requirements document.
- Complete transition to new state project management tool.

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

***(Repeated)* Activity 15.2: Using Data to Improve Classroom Instruction.**

**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: Transformation Zone Support and Capacity Building (National Implementation Research Network)

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 partners focused on strategic planning, planning for sustainability, and early childhood system development. As county and state partners collect and examine system scan and initial implementation data, their ability to plan strategically and to assess sustainability options for existing early childhood strategies within early childhood systems grows.
 - NIRN continues to support counties' understanding of sustainability to encompass not only sustaining individual strategies with funding but also sustainability of system improvement efforts, including the sustainability of linked teams to do the work (infrastructure to support implementation).
 - NIRN has been working with NCPC staff to more intentionally create alignment between the ABLLe Systems Change effort and systems scan activities and the ongoing attention to county capacity for effective implementation.
 - NIRN continues to work with strategy purveyors and county teams to develop methods to continuously collect and analyze implementation data.
 - NCPC and NIRN have begun to define NIRN's active role in further developing NCPC's capacity to apply the science and practice of implementation to NCPC's organization and its various efforts.
 - Feedback from County Implementation Coaches reflects their growth as implementation experts and the multifaceted role each plays within their community. This feedback could inform future efforts to develop and sustain implementation capacity and expertise at both county and state levels.
- Continue to promote communication between state and county colleagues.

Challenges:

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



- As NIRN supports state and county partners in the Initial Implementation stage, it is clear that the need for ongoing role clarification and alignment 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.
- RTT ELC funds have supported the development of implementation infrastructure (i.e. coaching) to support implementation of CCHC in North Carolina. There is currently no plan to sustain this infrastructure beyond the grant.
- Complexity of work needed to integrate the two frameworks – ABLe change and Implementation Science.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continued work with coaches and Coach Coordinator to focus on developing a data dashboard template to be piloted with counties.
- Continue to meet with NC CCHSRC staff to identify adaptive challenges and develop aligned understanding of work.
- Follow-up meetings to further define NIRN's role in developing NCPC's capacity to apply the science and practice of implementation to its organization and efforts.

Activity 18.2 (North Carolina Partnership for Children)

Key Accomplishments:

- Staffing: The new Beaufort Implementation Coach began her orientation process. NCPC, NIRN Implementation Specialist, and the convener agency have continued to work collaboratively to support the coach as she becomes acclimated to her role.
 - Completed visits to Bertie, Chowan, and Hyde counties to observe team structure and practices.
 - Mentoring sessions between the new coach and other coaches have been coordinated as part of the orientation process.
 - Individual coaching sessions with the Coach Coordinator, NIRN Implementation Specialist, and ABLe Change experts have occurred and will continue as part of the process.
- Implementation and Systems Level Work: Data has been the focus of a number of team discussions. NIRN Implementation Specialists have facilitated group discussions with the Implementation Coaches on the use of data in relation to program implementation.
 - Implementation Coaches led their teams in the efforts to determine current system conditions.
 - Communities have been engaged at varying levels and through various methods through the systems scan process.
 - Counties continue to be in varying stages of the process; some having usable data as a result of already having engaged in the data sorting.
 - The data findings were incorporated into the June Cross County meeting with Dr. Pennie Foster-Fishman to elicit county group conversations around the significance of the information in association to system alignment and effective sustainable early childhood systems.



- An effort to build capacity, leadership and implementation team members have continuously been encouraged to participate in monthly county coaching calls with the ABL e Change experts.
- Implementation Coaches have continued to be instrumental in educating key partners by sharing knowledge and making countless efforts to consistently engage team members in various components of the systems scan process.
- Collaborative efforts have continued between county stakeholders, Implementation Coaches, and the ABL e Change experts in planning county specific agendas for the September Retreats. In particular, time was designated on the June Cross County agenda to support this collaborative effort.
- County Teams: All county teams have continued in their support of current strategy level work as well as directly engaging in and/or supporting the systems scan work.
 - Due to changing group dynamics and/or current county directions, several leadership teams have placed varying levels of emphasis on reviewing and revising Terms of Reference.
 - NIRN Implementation Specialists have assisted in this process.
- Several practices have continued during this quarter in an effort to maintain a high level of quality and collaboration related to Transformation Zone work.
 - The NCPC Deputy Director and Coach Coordinator, along with the State Implementation Specialists, and Dr. Foster-Fishman continued conversations in an effort to discuss opportunities for effective integration of the Implementation Science and ABL e frameworks.
 - Implementation Coaches and key county stakeholders from each county participated in a panel discussion entitled “The Transformation Zone: Our State, Our Counties, Our Kids” at the 2015 Smart Start Conference. The session which was facilitated by the Implementation Specialist and Coach Coordinator, focused on highlighting successes as well as challenges of the Transformation Zone work.
- Communications:
 - All interviews with site supervisors and county conveners have been conducted.
 - All discovery sessions with either Leadership Teams or Implementation Teams have been completed.
 - NCPC Communications Specialists attended and presented at the Leadership Team meetings in Beaufort County, Bertie County, Chowan County, and with Hyde County Implementation Team to learn about what is needed, both short term and long term, in regards to communications support.
 - NCPC Communications Specialist presented initial findings at the June cross county meeting, highlighting the need for county specific TA in addition to communications strategic planning support.
 - A discovery survey has been created and the Communications team is working with counties on mining data that has already been compiled.

Challenges:

- None reported this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:



Continued planning and preparation for the September Retreats with 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:

- Enhanced payments were made to 3 Beaufort programs for the following service months:
 - February- 36 children total (13 infants, 23 one year old children)
 - March- 37 children total (15 infants, 22 one year old children)
 - April- 40 children total (16 infants, 24 one year old children)
- 7 Infant Toddler Expansion Grant programs received technical assistance (58 consultations) in 3 Transformation Zone counties.
- Mock ITERS-R (Infant-Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised) assessments were completed in 8 classrooms.
- Enhanced payments were made to 3 programs during April for a total of 40 children.

Challenges:

- Poor director administrative and leadership skills has led to an unexpected need for direct technical assistance and Partnership staff support in order to implement improvement plan steps at some sites.
- Some sites demonstrate a culture of compliance with minimum standards rather than a focus on continuous quality improvement.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue providing technical assistance based on improvement plans to expansion grant programs.

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:

- Beaufort County: 35 children attending at month end (3 aged out); all double slot; 5 receiving transportation.
- Bertie County: 6 children attending at month end (all double slot); 4 receiving transportation
- Hyde County: 4 attending at month end (all double slot).
- Began working with existing programs to make improvements in how they gather and report developmental and family engagement information.
- Family Questionnaire distributed.

**Challenges:**

- Documentation of family engagement activities has been difficult for some providers. During TA visits, the Infant Toddler Specialist has learned that some teachers conduct family engagement activities but aren't aware of them as such and/or do not document them.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Provide support to current NCB1 sites.
- Collect completed family questionnaires and compile information.
- Continue ITERS-R (Infant-Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised) mock assessments of classrooms to ensure ongoing quality of care.

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:

- 6 of 11 mid-point Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) assessments performed; scores on all 6 assessments showed improvement. One classroom has already achieved fidelity to the Pyramid Model, scoring 80% on the assessment.
- Provided technical assistance in classrooms and training proceeding in all cohorts.
- The Statewide Project Manager gave a brief presentation with Q&A session to representatives from multiple states at the Pyramid Model National Training Institute 2015 on Transformation Zone project design and accomplishments to date.

Challenges:

- The Transformation Zone Healthy Social Behavior Specialist has resigned due to health issues, and the Statewide Project Manager is working to ensure continued services to current Transformation Zone classrooms through grant end.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Conduct mid-point TPOT on remaining classrooms.
- Finalize transition plan for active classrooms in Transformation Zone so they can continue to receive services.

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:



- The coaching model and training are complete. All Child Care Health Consultants (CCHCs) have been trained in the coaching module. New CCHC's receive the module as part of the CCHC training course to become a qualified in NC to deliver CCHC services.
- CCHCs statewide are working with the support of the CCHC Regional Coaches to incorporate the coaching approach in their technical assistance to early care and education programs.
- The Regional CCHC Coaches continue to provide coaching and technical assistance to CCHCs. Based on information gained from the field, gathered by the Regional CCHC Coaches, several tools have been developed and/or revised including an orientation manual for new CCHCs, a revised CCHC Model, Health and Safety Assessment APP.
- Regional Coaches have been integral to the roll out of the CCHC Model, Coaching Module, and other tools. Beyond that, the CCHC Regional Coaches are the conduit for receiving information related to successes and barriers in the field. They have filled the role of not only coach, but advocate and trainer for new and seasoned CCHCs. They have helped mediate and inform community decisions around CCHC services and provide on-going health and safety related technical assistance to CCHCs.
- The NC Child Care Nurse Consultant also provides ongoing technical assistance to the CCHC network and works collaboratively with the North Carolina Partnership for Children and the Regional Coaches.
- There has been some positive momentum building around CCHCs engaging with other child care technical assistance providers to coordinate services, create efficiencies, and educate each other on roles and services.
- A small group of CCHCs are now utilizing the NC Child Care Health and Safety Assessment APP in the delivery of CCHC coaching and consultation. The NC Child Care Health and Safety Resource Center has been providing training and on-going support for the CCHC APP users. The Resource Center is collecting feedback from users on ease of use of the APP in order to determine needed enhancements and possible future rollout.
- The CCHC Coaching evaluation collection is ongoing, with interviews and focus group held this spring. Early qualitative information gathered from the interviews places value on support offered from the Regional CCHC Coach and CCHC services received by child care facilities.
- Beaufort, Bertie, Chowan, and Hyde counties (in the Transformation Zone) 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.

Challenges:

- Due to several cancellations last minute, the Hiring Agency Orientation Manual workgroup was not able to hold its planned May meeting. A new meeting date is to be determined.
- Questions continue to be discussed as to how to create a statewide plan to sustain the infrastructure created for the CCHC network beyond the grant period.
- CCHC turnover still continues to be a challenge, limiting the opportunity for coaching to be adopted and delivered in some communities. The CCHC Regional Coaches relate when there a new CCHC is hired, it takes time to orient them to the work and build relationships with child care providers before coaching can be utilized. The New CCHC Orientation Guide has assisted the Regional Coaches and communities on providing new CCHC's with a foundational orientation prior to CCHC training completion.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Rescheduling the Hiring Agency Orientation manual workgroup.



Family Strengthening Strategies

Activity 17.1: Family Connects

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

Key Accomplishments:

- January - June 2015 report received summarizing in-home visits and outreach efforts.
- The Agreement Addenda revision with Albemarle Regional Health Services to be the home of Family Connects (administratively, programmatically and clinically) was executed effective April 1, 2015.
- June 1, 2015 – Renewal agreement addenda with Albemarle Regional Health Services, Beaufort County Health Department and Hyde County Health Department were executed.

Challenges:

- Even though Albemarle Regional Health Services has signed the agreement addenda to be the “home,” they are very concerned about their role in Family Connects. The Division of Public Health (DPH) and the Center for Child and Family Health (CCFH) will have to monitor progress very carefully.
- Data is being requested by many different parties. Albemarle Regional Health Services has designated a 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 Transformation Zone Family Connects fits into this new Family Connects data system.
- Sustainability continues to be a question and will be addressed in two ways—the local Leadership and Implementation Teams will be challenged to address the issue, and CCHF and DPH will talk with local health directors about their thoughts.

Upcoming Tasks:

- DPH and CCFH began monthly calls to address ongoing administrative issues.

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 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 Triple P staff.
- Face-to-face workshops were held March 18, 2015 and April 20, 2015 for all 17 RTT-ECL counties to formalize the plan.



- Each of the local implementing sites has executed their agreement addenda for SFY 15-16. Even though the dates go through May 2016, the deliverables were prorated to December 31, 2015, pending approval of the no-cost extension.
- All sites have developed a sustainability budget to “stretch” their funding through May 31, 2016. At that point, the Division of Public Health plans to pick up Triple P with Title V funding. To stretch the funding, most sites are focusing on refresher training (much less expensive) for previously trained practitioners. This will encourage those practitioners not providing Triple P to become engaged in delivering Triple P, and participating in peer-to-peer support and submitting data.
- Site visits have been completed, as well as meetings with local coordinators, their supervisors and health directors. Purpose: to assure management support for Triple P.

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.
- A strategy to generate bridge funding from January 2016 thru May 2016 has been developed. Sites will stop new training and focus on refresher training, peer-to-peer support, data collection, and Stay Positive Campaign.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Site visits are planned for May 2015 for Martin-Tyrrell-Washington District Health, Hyde and Albemarle Regional Health Services 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 Motherread and Reach Out and Read) to improve early literacy in the Transformation Zone.

Key Accomplishments:

- Counties are continuing staggered initial implementation of Reach Out and Read and Motherread.
- ROR Carolinas continues to provide initial orientation and application support for new and potential sites in Beaufort, Bertie, and Hyde counties.
- To support literacy coordinators in their model fidelity observation visits with implementing Motherread facilitators, NCPC, the TZ County Implementation Coaches, and the Eastern CCHC Coach delivered a coaching presentation at the April cross-county early literacy meeting. We received positive feedback about the coaching module and the group was very engaged. The Literacy Coordinators requested we talk about coaching again at subsequent cross-county early literacy meetings.
- A third round of Motherread trainings were offered in all three curricula during the months of May and June.



- Initial evaluation data is coming in from the counties who have begun implementing Motherhead and ROR. The project evaluator held on-site interviews with parents, child care facilities, facilitators, and literacy coordinators during the end of 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.
- Literacy coordinators are regularly invited and attend Smart Start ROR Grant technical assistance opportunity including monthly coordinator calls and Spring Sustainability Summits.

Challenges:

- Counties completed an initial implementation check-in report in April where they reflected on current adaptive and technical challenges and successes. Themes are challenges with “fit” of certain strategies and thus issues with site selection; participant recruitment and retention; facilitator/staff turnover; community awareness/understanding of programming & coordination. To support counties in working through these challenges, a reorientation of the early literacy models and evaluation requirements was provided at the June 18th TZ Early Literacy cross-county meeting. ROR Carolinas also presented information on best practice implementation support and Motherhead discussed recruitment and retention strategies.

Upcoming Tasks:

- To support Story Exploring facilitators in their knowledge and use of Story Exploring between the spring training session and actual implementation, which will occur in the fall, Motherhead will work with literacy coordinators to deliver training reorientations later this summer.

Transformation Zone Evaluation (Activity 1.3)

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

Key Accomplishments:

- Held regular staff meetings to discuss project activities and review data.
- Shared revised Logic Model with Evaluation Work Group.
- Interviewed Implementation Coaches from Beaufort, Hyde and Chowan counties about the role.
- Facilitated Evaluation Work Group meetings with grants management, NIRN and NCPC teams on 4/21/15, 5/19/15 and 6/16/15.
- Worked with NIRN/ABLE to develop and articulate a visual representation of the work to share with counties.
- Presented on TZ Evaluation processes, findings, and recommendations at the 6/15/15 Cross-County meeting in Williamston.
- Attended the 6/17/15 Technical Assistance Provider meeting in Edenton.
- Continued attending coaches’ priorities, ELC planning, and ABLe peer to peer conference calls.
- Attended 25 meetings and phone conferences during the quarter.
- Finalized and distributed two evaluation update newsletters to coaches, purveyors, teams, TA providers, and Evaluation Work Group. Posted to AI Hub.
- Provided specific email feedback to NCPC, NIRN and Pennie Foster-Fishman about findings from TZ meetings and phone conferences.
- Reviewed ABLe Change Network Dropbox and other informational documents.
- Reviewed NIRN document files and NC-ELC TZ Sakai site.
- Monitored TZ Evaluation email account and responded as needed.

**Challenges:**

- None to report this quarter.

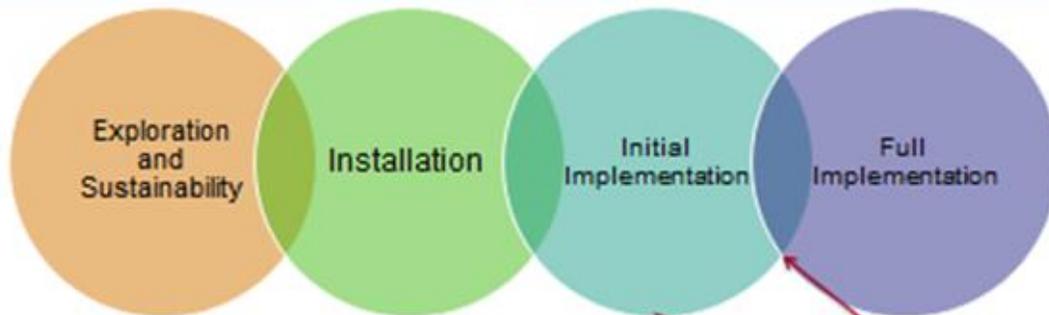
Upcoming Tasks:

- Distribute third newsletter.
- Conduct interviews with Implementation Coaches from Beaufort (new) and Bertie counties. Transcribe, code, and analyze data.
- Present an update at 7/14/15 State Implementation Team meeting.
- Facilitate Evaluation Work Group meetings on 7/27/15, 8/18/15 and 9/15/15.
- Continue drafting evaluation reports.
- Attend September county meetings and retreat the week of 9/21/15.
- Continue document review of ABL e Change Network materials.
- Continue document review of NIRN materials and NC-ELC TZ Sakai site.
- Continue to monitor TZ Evaluation email and respond as needed.
- Continue to provide timely updates and feedback to TZ Evaluation leadership and stakeholders on findings/ recommendations.



Transformation Zone Strategy by Implementation Phase

Implementation Continues (Spring 2015)



- **County Implementation Coaches**

- Relationship development
- Implementation instruction
- Implementation facilitation
- Usable intervention development
- Team development
- Process improvement
- Strategic planning to support organization/system change
- Team-based project management
- Behavioral coaching
- Leadership engagement

- **County Implementation Teams**

- Carry Out implementation and System Building Activities, as directed by CLT
- Communicate Successes and Challenges to County Leadership Team
- Support Collaborative Relationships
- Know the Strategies
- Know Implementation Science
- Know Systems Building and Systems Change

- **County Leadership Teams**

- Provide the Vision
- Provide Direction to Implementation Team
- Provide Visibility to the Effort
- Provide Political Support
- Provide Funding/Allocation of Resources
- Assist with Barrier Removal and Problem-Solving
- Facilitate the Work of the Implementation Team