The overarching goal of the Early Childhood Directors Leadership Institute (ECDLI) was to design and administer the implementation of a statewide leadership institute for diverse early childhood center directors from across North Carolina. As part of the project, curriculum for CEU credits were developed and delivered over the course of each of the three three-day institutes. In addition to delivery of the curriculum, the Institutes provided for training on other topics including the Program Administration Scale (PAS), the theory and application of Small Tests of Change (STOC), and the process of creating a Change Framework for becoming a culturally competent leader at both the program and systems level. The Program Administration Scale was used to assess the leadership and management practices and capacities of each of the participants in their respective early childhood programs.

The directors participated in a curriculum developed by ECDLI: Introduction to Leadership and Management (1.0 CEU), and as well as Leading the Way to Quality-The Director’s Role (0.5 CEU), preparation for the Program Administration Scale (PAS) and Strategies for Leadership and Management (0.5 CEU), rolled out through the three three-day professional development institutes. In total, 70 directors attended all three institutes.

The lead administrator of a child care program is responsible for every aspect of its program operations and is often the gatekeeper to its quality. These leadership responsibilities are multi-faceted, ranging from basic sanitation compliance to complex educational, fiscal and legal issues. The lead administrator’s role requires significant skill in communication and decision-making, with an increasing focus on the performance of child care centers as business enterprises that require skilled resource management, and leadership (Nupponen, 2006).

Additionally, coaching and mentoring programs help promote desired changes by providing opportunities for administrators to focus on their leadership capabilities (Fleming & Love, 2003).
The Early Childhood Directors Leadership Institute worked to create a network of uniquely trained administrators in child care programs across the state. In addition, this project is creating a cadre of well-trained supports for administrators through the training of Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) staff on issues of administration, management and leadership that will then be made available broadly to child care center administrators in North Carolina through both training and technical assistance.

The Early Childhood Directors Leadership Institute is being further developed to offer an online 0.5 CEU through the NC Division of Child Development and Early Education’s online platform, Moodle, as well as three face-to-face 0.5 CEUs on similar topics to ensure that content is available statewide beyond the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant funding that supported this project.