

NORTH CAROLINA
RACE TO THE TOP
EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE

Status Report—December 2013 - March 2014

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

- Developed and submitted NC's Annual Performance Report for 2013. Collected and analyzed annual data on all grant performance measures.
- Planned and participated in the first meeting of the newly appointed North Carolina Early Childhood Advisory Council on February 18, 2014. Developed the agenda, materials, and presentations.
- Held monthly calls to communicate with NC's federal Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge Grant (ELC) Project Officers about progress and issues, and to receive federal grant information and guidance.
- Held regular staff meetings to coordinate efforts, problem-solve challenges, and support project implementation.
- Conducted monthly monitoring of all projects, and reviewed and enhanced monitoring processes.
- Developed the Quarterly Status Report.
- Managed project budgets, tracked expenditures and processed payments.
- Developed project budget revision requests for 2014-2015 in coordination with project leaders and fiscal staff, and submitted them for federal approval.
- Developed, managed and/or revised contracts and Memorandums of Agreement with participating agencies, including budget revisions and amendments.
- Developed a State required 2014 ELC grant compliance supplement for audit requirements.
- Continued to implement Communications Plan activities, including:
 - Website development (including content development and direction for web development staff)
 - Planning for a grant partners meeting, including a survey of interest
 - Ongoing Communications Committee meetings
- Continued creating a central document repository of all grant documents.
- Engaged in ongoing project evaluation activities and discussed opportunities for process improvements.

Challenges:

- None to report for this quarter

Upcoming Tasks:

- Release the new NC Early Learning Challenge web site
- Conduct a survey of interest to guide planning for a statewide grant partners meeting and/or other communication strategies and continue planning
- Attend the RTT-ELC Annual Grantee Meeting in Washington, D.C. in April
- Develop proposed revisions to the Scope of Work that updates activity descriptions to reflect their current status most accurately

Activity 1.2: Transformation Zone Support and Capacity Building

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

Key Accomplishments:

- Meetings with strategy purveyors to:
 - finalize Installation and Quality Assurance Checklists. These checklists and plans will inform county installation processes and serve as implementation tools for other rural implementation efforts of these strategies.
 - support practice profile development to further articulate strategies that are not well-defined
 - draft MOA for County Health Departments to support implementation of all elements of the universal home visiting strategy/model with fidelity
 - draft selection criteria for nurses and to consider assessing for coachability during the upcoming interview process.
- All counties have begun the County Capacity Assessment process.
- Weekly planning call with County Coaches, Coach Coordinator, Implementation Specialists, and NIRN
- Co-creation of Implementation Team and Leadership Team agendas for Monthly meetings and shared facilitation responsibilities. Implementation Team meetings have been structured to ensure:
 - County Implementation Team members know and are able to apply Active Implementation Frameworks
 - County Implementation Team members know the strategies and are accountable for implementation.
 - County Implementation Teams are engaged in a policy-practice feedback loop with County Leadership Teams and State Implementation Team.
- NIRN continues to support County Coach meetings/in-service, aligning content with emerging skill needs or implementation-stage based work
- Bi-weekly planning call with County Coaches, Coach Coordinator, Implementation Specialists, and NIRN
- County Coaches and SIS developed plans for a joint county-state partners meeting in April, with a focus on shared learning between county and state partners, as well as provide a platform for shared understanding of implementation challenges and successes in the Transformation Zone.
- Funders are developing contracts to align with high quality implementation processes.

- NCPC has led Transformation Zone’s efforts to develop contracting processes and requirements that support high quality implementation.
- Development and implementation of new monthly phone calls, beginning in March with county and state partners to share lessons learned and discuss implementation challenges relating to the various strategies.
- Drafted ELC Transformation Zone Theory of Change, relating to NIRN’s role.
- Attended orientation meeting with Evaluation Team
- Developing a state-level agenda related to include items, such as:
 - a developing QRIS Center/Teacher practice tool
 - DCDEE Implementation Workshop for regulatory consultants and program managers
 - DCDEE identified need for a tool to support regulatory staff new roles in NC Pre-K

Challenges:

- Balancing regional implementation with individual county interests is challenging and requires large numbers of stakeholders develop communication protocols and shared decision making processes.
- First replications of EBPs, like Family Connects, are always challenging because model developers/purveyors can’t provide ‘tried and true guidance’ for implementation based on repeated replication.
- County partners/agencies are not familiar with all EBP model requirements; for example, for Family Connects, they may understand the model as “a protocol used by nurses” as opposed to a much more complex set of required elements that must be delivered as a program
- Some county health partners would like to be able to proceed with more autonomy than a regional implementation. There isn’t much history of successful cross-county resource sharing.
- Finding an administrative home to support sustainability.
- Integrating strategies/model into existing county maternal home visiting programs.
- Coordination of state and county partner activities is challenging with so many individuals.
- Contracting delays have impacted implementation timelines.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Support strategy installation in counties with the goal of best supporting quality implementation.
- Performance assessment, Installation Checklist development, and Quality Assurance, and Fidelity discussions with purveyors.
- Installation planning in collaboration with NCPC.
- Follow-up with Child Care purveyors about Practice Profile development.
- County Capacity Assessments and Implementation Team assessments.
- Orientation for new State Implementation Specialist.
- NIRN and NCPC are planning a Funders meeting for April to provide an opportunity to celebrate successes and take note of challenges, share what lessons are being learned, and to identify opportunities for state level capacity building and action to improve/adapt their policies and practices to support effective implementation.
- Discuss ‘implementation-informed’ monitoring with Grants Management Team

Activity 1.3: Evaluation

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

Key Accomplishments:

- Transformation Zone Evaluation contract was executed on January 29, 2014, with a start date of February 3, 2014.
- Initial meetings and communications were held with members of the Grant Management team in February and Implementation Support team in March.
- Evaluation team completed and submitted Institutional Review Board (IRB) application; the evaluation was determined not to be “human subjects” research and therefore not subject to continuing IRB review.
- Identified a UNC-CH School of Education student to serve as graduate research assistant.
- Drafted a 1-page description of the project for sharing with stakeholders.
- Drafted a position description for a social research specialist, posted the position, and began reviewing applications to support the project.

Challenges:

- Contracting processes led to a delay in the contract being executed by January 1st as originally planned.

Upcoming Tasks

- Meet with the Early Learning Challenge Project Coordination, NIRN, and NCPC teams to review evaluation design, discuss team coordination, and initiate logic model conversations.
- Hire research staff to support evaluation efforts.
- Finalize the 1-page project description; share with stakeholders.
- Begin development of data collection protocols.

Activity 1.4: RTT-ELC 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:

- TA funds secured to support Activity 10.3, Early Educator Certification, and Project 15, K-3 Assessment

Challenges: None to report

Upcoming Tasks: None to report

Project 2: Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS)

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 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: Establish data system governance structure.

Description: This Activity is focused on designing and implementing an early childhood data system governance structure to support the development of ECIDS.

Key Accomplishments:

- The NC ECIDS Governance Council has been drafted and will include two major committees- NC EDICS Policy Committee and NC ECIDS Data Management Committee. The NC ECIDS Policy Committee will be comprised of the agency heads from each participating agency (i.e., the Secretary of DHHS, the State Superintendent of Education, and the President of NCPC). In addition, the Early Childhood Division Directors for each participating agency will be on the Policy Committee and they will be the ones primarily responsible for the policy decisions and resolutions for the NC ECIDS. The NC ECIDS Data Management Committee will be responsible for determining which data elements will be part of ECIDS, reviewing research requests and informing decisions around data usage, confidentiality and privacy. This Committee will consist of Program and IT Managers of the programs whose data are part of ECIDS, as well as other data stewards (such as additional Business and IT representatives for the agencies). Staff to this Council includes the NC Information Technology Services, who oversees and implements the technology application of the project, as well as addition staff providing management, coordination and support. In addition, there will be an external Research Committee (ideally made up with representatives from the External Stakeholder group) who will be tasked with providing support and feedback on data, reports and analyses when necessary.
- Meetings were held with Division Directors from all key participating agencies (DCDEE, DPI, DSS, DPH, and NCPC) to update them on status of project, introduce the Project Manager, further discuss the governance structure and project, and confirm all of the names and titles of everyone who will serve on the Council.
- A .5 FTE ECIDS Project Manager was hired to manage the business representatives, ITS staff and work closely with the ECIDS Project Director in developing the governance structure and MOAs.
- An agency MOA is being developed with support from NC's DHHS contracts department that will outline the data sharing agreement between agencies and external researchers.
- A Governance Council meeting is being planned for this summer that will bring together members in order to finalize decisions on some specific features of the ECIDS and decide on a process moving forward. Project Director, Manager, and staff attended a 2-day Data Governance meeting put on by state support team in Los Angeles, CA with the goal of drafting a Data Governance Charter and begin work on a Governance Manual. The goal is to complete a draft of the Manual before the Governance Council meeting so that the members will be able to review it and provide feedback.
- Team members attended a State Longitudinal Data Systems National Conference that provided the opportunity to get to know and work more closely with the other projects building data system in NC and also learn about data systems from national partners and other states.
- Drafted a NC ECIDS Charter that establishes the Governance Council, which will be signed by each participating agency.
- Began drafting pieces of an ECIDS Governance Manual.

Challenges:

- Finding time to schedule meetings with all Directors, due to their schedules.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Organize a meeting with representatives from the Governance Council to:
 - Lay out the overall structure and plan so that it is clear for everyone

- Make decisions about the workflow processes for the council; when do decisions need to be escalated up; who makes the final calls on what topics, etc.
- Continue working on the ECIDS Governance Manual.
- Planning the kickoff/initial meeting for the Governance Council, to take place in the summer; Continue to work on governance structure.
- Get Charter signed by division directors at the participating agencies.

Activity 2.2: Build the ECIDS technical architecture and deploy and operationalize the ECIDS system.

Description: This Activity addresses the technical aspects necessary to develop and use the ECIDS. The business representatives, representing the participating agencies, will develop the system requirements (functionalities) that the ECIDS will need and work with the ITS (state information technology services) team to develop the technical requirements necessary for the system to operate and meet the needs of the agencies.

Key Accomplishments:

- Continued to work on developing business requirements and designing workflows for the project with the business representatives from each participating state agency. These business requirements will be used to develop the technology application for the system.
- Additional content including language for the website portal, documents such as user MOAs, codebooks, user guides, etc. have begun to be drafted and will be later posted on the ECIDS portal.
- Finalizing which data elements from the participating programs and obtaining additional information on the elements in order to successfully link them into the system when built.
- Presentation delivered to North Carolina Early Childhood Advisory Council and NC Institute of Medicine Essentials of Child Care Task on ECIDS.
- Developing an outreach plan.
- Drafting the development of the website, including a home page and other tabs for the site for additional information. Some of this content will be used to create an initial “splash page” which will provide updates and information about the project while the system is being built. Office of the Governor’s Senior Policy Advisor called meeting with the ECIDS Project Director, the RTT-ELC Project Director and Manager, the Division Director of DCDEE and ITS to look at sustainability and in developing a sustainability plan for ECIDS.

Challenges:

- Due to new State IT review policies, there has been an extreme delay in obtaining approval for NC ITS to move forward on the project. Until there is approval, ITS is unable to purchase any software or hire any personnel necessary to build the ECIDS application. Because of the delay in this approval, ITS is approximately 6-7 months behind on their work, which is causing huge concern with being able to meet the project deadlines and build a system with all the functionalities that were originally proposed. There are three “Gates” of approval. Gate 1 was recently approved and Gates 2 and 3 approval is anticipated soon.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue to develop business requirements, flesh out the themes and larger topic areas that need to be addressed and make decisions around the workflow processes of the system.
- Make decisions on process of assigning new UIDs, adding in additional programs and children, and deciding on the authoritative sources for data where there is more than one source for the same data/information.
- Create acceptance criteria for the user stories that need further explanations for ITS developers and coders to determine where a specific component should be on the portal and how users can access different things.

Activity 2.3: Implement child UIDs

Description: The foundation of this system is dependent on the development of the UID which will allow information to be linked across agencies for an individual child. In addition this Activity will allow for linking of the ECIDS to the P-20W system.

Key Accomplishments:

- We have determined the initial data load for the UIDs to be created- this will be using 3 sources of data (NC PK, Child Care Subsidy, and Part C). After that, other participating programs will be uploaded into the technology which assigns the UIDs for the children.
- Made decisions around the initial programs and data sources that will be part of the initial load of data into the UID software (meaning that those children will be assigned UIDs (unique identifiers) and then started discussions around the day forward process (which programs/data get assigned UIDs next, what happens when new children enter the system, etc.)
- Decisions were made to collect data on these children in the programs back to the 09/10 year data. This is the same year that the P20W system is starting with, so it will be consistent.

Challenges:

- Because of the delay in the Gate approvals for ITS, we are still waiting to purchase the UID technology/software. This also means that we do not have a representative from the UID software company that will work with us to help answer questions until we have signed the contract. We plan to purchase this software as soon as we have approval to do so.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Purchase the software once we have approval to move forward.

Activity 2.4: 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:

- Developed an interview protocol for Data Advisory Group (DAG) members to use with local partnerships to learn more about the early childhood data they collect, the potential use of the CLASS to measure teacher-child interaction, and child outcome measures they may be using for early care and education. Set up the interview questions in Survey Monkey.

- Members of DAG conducted phone calls with local partnerships, completing 67 phone calls in December. Results discussed at December 17th DAG meeting and used to inform decisions about Smart Start outcomes.
- NCPC explored cost and training options for using CLASS at the local partnerships. Contacted the CCR&R council to learn about their RTT-ELC sponsored CLASS training. Spoke with a CLASS observer for Head Start from Iredell County.
- Developed a draft self-assessment for implementation of an early childhood outcomes measurement system for partnerships to use to prepare for future resources (including mini-grants) to support NCPC system capacity.
- Drafted partial RFP language for data capacity planning mini-grants.
- Four small group virtual DAG meetings were held January 10 & 14.
 - Topics were: a) Measuring Child Outcomes; b) Data capacity building “mini grant” process and system development; c) the CLASS tool (Classroom Assessment Scoring System); d) Smart Start Early Care and Education Data and CCR&R Data
 - The virtual meetings generated information that will be shared across regional DAG members (in a phone call tree) to continue to build a network of representative DAG members and generate decision points for the full DAG group monthly meeting.
 - Pilot approaches to child outcomes measurement (child-level screening and assessment) and implementation of the CLASS tool are potential next steps. The Full DAG group will consider these in their January meeting.
 - For Smart Start ECE & Child Care Resource & Referral common data, a review of data collection efficiencies, consideration of roles in informing outcomes and mapping Smart Start & CCR&R data elements to CEDS were results of the virtual meeting.
 - Two outcomes were realized through the capacity-building discussion (including “mini-grants” and capacity building/system development): 1) developing web-based data collection at NCPC and incorporating data from existing software packages into it as feasible (including ways to link to ECIDS) and 2) educating county partnership about their software and data collection choices and helping them assess their needs for mini-grants
- A fourth DAG meeting was held by conference call on 1/30/2014. Agenda topics included: Pilots for CLASS and Child Outcomes Measurement, Child Care & CCR&R data collection; Capacity-building funding/mini-grants; Family Support Core Services Outcomes.

The DAG finalized pilot approaches to study:

- a) measuring child outcomes for children served through Smart Start early care and education services, and
- b) implementation of the CLASS tool (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) across Smart Start partnerships.

The DAG also outlined a RFA process to distribute mini-grant funding to partnerships to fund different facets of data capacity building (collection, reporting, utilization, etc.).

- Child Care Resource & Referral Data will be an ongoing project in partnership with the CCR&R council.
- Outcomes for family support and the variety of measures for these were discussed across two DAG meeting on February 27 and March 17. Early literacy measures were part of that work.
- Health outcomes and their measures will be finalized at the end of March via conference call.

- Discussion of data system concepts/design considerations/ways to support partnerships reporting outcomes and data capacity building began in February and will continue in a DAG data group in March.
- A request for proposal for a study of how partnerships are implementing the CLASS tool to inform future Smart Start work with the tool was drafted in March.

Challenges:

- Anticipate the cost of implementing the CLASS will be an issue for some local partnerships.
- Leveraging existing system of CLASS™ trainers and observers for Smart Start/NC needs.
- The development of the data collection and reporting “landscape” while making funding priorities decisions (e.g. “mini-grants” & NCPC software development) is a challenge.
- Travel for meetings. Winter weather has interfered with some of the DAG meetings. Meetings are rotated to balance the travel distances. Even with this, those in further out areas still need to drive 3 hours each way.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Hire an IT position to work on the Smart Start data reporting system.
- Further develop the mini-grant process.
- Continue to work on: Smart Start outcomes measurement, meshing CCR&R and Smart Start ECE data, capacity-building funding (including mini-grants) and CLASS and child level pilots development.
- Specify GEMSlite, IMPACT and Visit Tracker outcomes and outcomes-related measurement reporting capabilities.
- Determine Family Support Outcomes.
- Begin to develop ways to share information with Smart Start partnerships about software (i.e. GEMSlite, IMPACT and Visit Tracker)
- April 10 is the next DAG meeting. The outcomes work from the first six months of the DAG and outlining next steps toward developing data reporting for the next six months of are planned.
- The work of the DAG will be shared and discussed in a Smart Start conference session (in May). That session will be planned in April with the DAG and DAG members will assist in delivering the session.

Activity 2.5: Implement web based child care workforce data system

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

Key Accomplishments

- Secured approval for additional license for IBM Workflow Software and added IBM Blueworks on to ECIDS account.
- Hired business systems analyst to support development of business requirements document, RFP and eventual vendor communication.
- Developed timeline for completion of business requirements and RFP submission.
- Continued review of HRMS system and other collaboration discussions with DPI Staff.
- Continued to revise/add workflow diagrams, DCDEE unit business processes and projected budget/cost savings of proposed system.

- Secured additional support and technical assistance from ITS staff
- Completed and received approval from ITGC panel to move forward with RFP.
- Continued conversation around future system interfaces including Learning Management System, NCID, eScholar and CCR&R network applications.

Challenges:

- Initial delay posed by inadequate staffing/ability to meet technical needs of project, though improved through recent staff addition.
- Interagency proposal review process poses difficulty in keeping momentum of project and meeting anticipated deadlines.
- Inclusion of ongoing DCDEE projects still in various phases of development.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Complete business requirements document.
- Complete RFP.
- Meet with eScholar/DPI staff to discuss software subscription and UID process.
- Continuation of ongoing meetings with DCDEE units and research to align work of system with ongoing state and national efforts.

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 Council on Early Childhood Professional Development

Description: Through this Activity, a professional development council will be created to improve the coordination and alignment of early childhood professional development efforts.

Key Accomplishments:

- Another meeting was held on January 13th to continue planning for establishing a Professional Development Council and defining its potential agenda
- Subsequent planning determined that a new approach is needed and the grants management team began discussing how to use funds in this Project to target specific professional development activities that need additional support, in lieu of convening a council.

Challenges:

- Although everyone agrees on the importance of a more coordinated professional development system, it has been difficult to define the work of a new professional development council at this time. We have discussed with our ELC Federal Team the possibility of funding particular professional development activities without convening a separate council. (Funding decisions will involve grants management staff and partner agency leadership.) We also have realized that the re-convened NC Early Childhood Advisory Council could address professional development challenges, if needed. We are moving forward with these plans and will submit a revised SOW and budget in the coming month.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Grant leadership will develop a revised plan for the professional development support activities and budget for how \$25,000 will be spent.
- Send revised SOW and budget plan to Federal ELC Team for review.

Activity 3.2: On-Line Master's Degree in ECE Leadership and Program Management

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:

- Series of planning meetings began with UNC General Administration and a consortium of multiple constituent universities (within the UNC system) to define process to establish the program.
- Process for establishing contract with DCDEE is being explored.
- Advisors have been identified to work with the consortium throughout the process to establish the program.
- Conversation held with an additional partner, UNC-W, to learn more about the on-line master's degree program being developed.
- Advisory group has continued to meet with and serve as a resource to UNC General Administration and consortium members as the process to establish the program is being defined.
- Draft competencies for proposed courses were developed by consortium members and submitted to UNC General Administration.
- Contract documents have been submitted except for SOW which is in development.
- Meeting was held with UNC-W and UNC-G to coordinate moving forward with TEACH scholarships (Task 12.2.15 in GRADS – Develop and implement outreach plan for Master's Degree in Early Childhood Program Leadership and Management Scholarship) for coursework that will contribute to on-line master's degree. UNC-W can include courses to offer full course requirement and can begin fall 2014. This is an interim strategy to allow us to utilize the TEACH Scholarships in another project of the NC ELC Grant.

Challenges:

- Difficult to schedule meetings with UNC General Administration and consortium members who have complex schedules and competing responsibilities.
- The timeline is a challenge as there are multiple steps to creating a cross-university degree program. We have already adjusted our expectations regarding timelines (and will adjust the SOW as needed). Even though it is taking longer, we are committed to having this degree program available to NC early childhood educators by the end of the grant.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Establish contract(s) to move this Activity forward.
- Continue to check in with UNC General Administration about their progress.

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:

- Planning and scheduling for focus groups and provider survey is in progress.
- Coordination between the TQRIS Validation Study and the Program Quality Measure began in October. Overview discussions of each project led to suggestions for ways the projects might collaborate during the final pilot study in year 4.
- The timeline for implementation of TQRIS has been revised to reflect changes to the Validation Study timeline (Project 7).

Challenges:

- Continued uncertainty regarding regulatory environment. It is unclear whether the Child Care Rulemaking Commission will be willing to entertain new rules related to the TQRIS once the new system proposal is in place by the end of 2015.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Regular meetings for coordination between the Validation Study and TQRIS revision group continue quarterly.
- A small subgroup of the original QRIS Advisory Committee will meet in April to review the status of the QRIS revision process and discuss ideas for the way forward.

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)

- The following promotional materials are in the development stage:
 - Professional Development Bonus Project – Q & A Fact Sheet
 - Application for Professional Development Bonus Project
 - Participation Agreement
 - Enrollment Affidavit

Challenges:

- Time - much of the training that providers need in order to be eligible for the bonus program is just rolling out across the state. Accordingly, the hiring of staff and the development of promotional materials and other collateral for this initiative have been delayed and related expenditures will begin to accrue in the first quarter of CY14.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Finalize and roll-out promotional materials.
- CCRI will work closely with Head Start, NC Pre-K, CCR&R, and Smart Start, etc. to inform of project and to encourage these partners to advise 4- and 5- star rated licensed early learning and development programs in their communities of this opportunity.

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:

- Additional schools were approved for grants, bringing the total to 35 schools in 9 counties that have applied for and been granted a pre-licensing mini-grant.
- Two programs that were awarded grants have achieved 5 stars.
- Two programs that were awarded grants have achieved 4 stars.
- The 87 remaining public school sites are expected (and on track) to be licensed by July 2014.
- No GS 110 grants were added this quarter. 12 programs operating with a GS 110-106 letter of compliance in 8 counties have applied for and been granted a pre-licensing mini-grant.

Challenges:

- Many school systems were already in the pre-licensing phase before the contract for the activity was issued.
- After meeting with DCDEE Licensing Supervisors, it was identified that some schools need more than the \$5000 maximum award to meet their needs for licensure, so, in consultation with DCDEE, the mini-grant terms were modified to accommodate larger needs.
- Many GS 110-106 programs do not have the cash flow to enable them to purchase materials and get reimbursed after the fact. They would prefer the money up front, so CCR&R agencies are trying to help GS 110 providers connect to other sources of funding.
- Low interest among GS110 providers for a variety of reasons, including education which can be a lengthy process to enable them to increase stars.
- More communication is needed with the regional lead CCR&R agencies about the GS 110 programs, so a plan is in place to bring them up to speed.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Contractor is in the process of calling all school system contacts for schools that had programs on the original list of unlicensed preschool classrooms that have not applied for a grant.
- Data is being collected across the state by CCR&R's re: barriers that GS 110 programs are experiencing with applying for grants and to determine future interest.

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:

- Multiple conversations with DCDEE's Regulatory Section have been conducted to determine the best approach for the task force.

- Five (5) regional locations throughout the state have been identified in which to hold focus groups.
- Focus questions have been developed. A DCDEE representative met internally with Regulatory management on January 23, 2014 to develop focus questions.
- The facilitator/coordinator was hired on March 26, 2014.

Challenges:

- Timing for this project has been difficult. Many part-day programs operate on an academic year; In order to have enhanced participation from these programs we have had to schedule around times when they would be in session.
- Recruitment of family-friend-neighbor caregivers is a potential challenge, as these populations are not easily identifiable; they are not located within churches or other established organizations.

Upcoming Tasks:

- We will begin to coordinate meeting locations/dates in identified regions with Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Regional Program Managers.
- We anticipate focus groups will occur in April and May.
- CCR&R will assist with identifying part-day programs and sharing recruitment strategies for family/friend/neighbor care.

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: Program Quality Measure Development

Key Accomplishments:

- ELC Cross-Project Coordination meeting was held on December 17th between the Measurement Development Project and the NC Validation Study teams. Key tasks were delineated, including ideas for coordinating the large pilots in both projects, and future meeting dates were set.
- The team held a working meeting on January 8 to focus on and refine the Key Practices.
- Following that meeting, the team split into several groups to expedite the refinement of items using the key practices as organizers.
- One small group has focused on the administrative/ leadership items and possible self-study, and this work continues to be refined.
- The team held a two-day working meeting early in February, and was fortunate to be able to include a representative from the Society for Research in Child Development via telephone on one day. She discussed ideas about the conceptualization and organization of the tool.
- An expert on implementation science from the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) joined the group meeting on February 19th to discuss how implementation science might be woven into the new tool and particularly into the admin/leadership items.
- Smart Start conference proposal accepted for presentation in May.

Challenges:

- Limited input from colleagues at Delaware due to their current inability to fully participate in consortium activities.
- Large scope of project with limited personnel time.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue discussion and development of document review and self-study process.
- Continue review of items within key areas.
- Follow up with NIRN regarding examples of measures that use the implementation framework.
- Share current version of Key Practices with Advisory Committee and seek their feedback and guidance.
- Finalize and disseminate participation guidelines for other states that have expressed interest in being part of the large pilot.

<p style="text-align: center;">Project 6: Increase Access to High Quality Early Learning and Development Programs (ELDs)</p>

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: At the end of December, 2013, 990 (100%) of the Temporary, 1- and 2- star facilities serving children birth to five years of age were identified and recruited, and 392 of those agreed to work toward a higher star rated license. Additional statewide data related to the first quarter of 2014 will be available in the next report.
- Regional: Region 12 is working with 27 programs to improve to a 3 or higher star. Region 8 is working with 5 programs; and Region 6 is working with 25 programs.
- All regions continue to collaborate with DCDEE child care licensing consultants in this work.
- Region 12 has implemented a learning community approach to increasing quality in family child care homes in their area through a Family Child Care Academy. The first cohort graduated in February and the second cohort has just begun to meet.

Challenges:

- In areas where 1 and 2 star programs are operating at capacity (and/or with waiting lists), there is little incentive to increase quality and star ratings. Some 1 and 2 star programs do not want to acquire the education or undergo the Environment Rating Scale assessment needed to achieve higher stars.
- The funds needed to provide the required materials and equipment to achieve a higher star rating is often a challenge for newly operating family child care homes.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continual recruitment of 1 and 2 star programs.
- Ongoing technical assistance to providers currently participating in program improvement plans.
- Collection of data regarding barriers to increasing 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:

- IT Specialist conducted outreach, one-on-one visits and phone contacts to identify child care centers, family child care homes, and GS-110 facilities in Beaufort, Bertie and Chowan Counties for potential participation in this activity.
 - One GS-110 desires star rated licensing. In addition to information about the IT Expansion Grant, information about the GS-110 grants for licensure was provided.
- As of December 31, 2013
 - Programs with the capacity for 42 slots have agreed to participate.
 - 44 on-site TA consultations were provided.
- A total of five programs are now approved to participate in this activity.

Challenges:

- In many of these counties, enrollment is very low, and providers are worried about the impact of moving up in star rating on their ability to attract families and enroll children. It takes time for programs at lower star ratings to fully understand and consider the opportunities in counties before they are ready to commit to quality improvement work.
- Other factors impacting enrollment are the state of the economy, programs offering free services or very low cost services, limited population of children as a result of families relocating due to factory closures.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Revisit potential programs with less than 4 stars to continue building relationships and recruitment for the IT Expansion Grant.
- Continue assessments, improvement planning, requisitions, and technical assistance to 5 approved IT Expansion Grant programs.
- Continue to support professional development by providing T.E.A.C.H. and WAGES information during visitation to 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:

- As of December 31, 2013
 - 62 part-day slots are licensed in 4- or 5-star programs in Transformation Zone Counties with 54 ready for NCB1 children
 - Programs with the capacity for 62 part-day slots had agreed to participate

- 82 on-site TA consultations were provided
- Five sites are currently approved. One site that was previously approved withdrew in February, but another site in that county should be ready for approval in March. Twenty children are currently being served by the program, and they are all located in only one of the four Transformation Zone counties.
- In response to transportation challenges that seemed to be limiting enrollment, DCDEE approved a proposal to allow programs to provide transportation if needed. The Infant Toddler Program Specialist met with all site administrators to share the revised NCB1 guidelines, including transportation support, and distributed the related paperwork.
- Discussion related to recruitment is ongoing at the program level, the county implementation team level, and the state level.
- The Infant Toddler Program Specialist continues to provide technical assistance to all NCB1 classrooms to improve quality of care and support programs as they provide all NCB1 services.

Challenges:

- Challenges to recruitment for NCB1 include:
 - lack of reliable transportation,
 - limited Infant Toddler Program Specialist's time to support referrals,
 - delayed implementation of other RTT-ELC strategies that have the potential to increase awareness/referrals, and the need for more than part-day care.
- Transportation is a multi-faceted undertaking that requires a large resource commitment from programs to provide.
- Each community accepts and embraces change differently so many different methods of communication are required.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Discuss community and program challenges with grant management team, DCDEE, and contractor to determine possible accommodations (including double slot option for full-day) in order to increase community access to the program.
- Make contact with known referral sources in each community to encourage NCB1 referrals;
- Continue to support implementation of full NCB1 program in two Counties including on-going assessment and family engagement activities;
- Support site in one of the TZ Counties to make improvements and begin to enroll children;
- Support three of the TZ Counties in recruiting children of the NCB1 program;
- Provide ongoing TA related to high quality infant-toddler care;
- Make contact with one TZ County to encourage potential recruitment of children for the site in the neighboring county that is closest, and to discuss potential NCB1 program.

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:

- As of December 31, 2013, teacher surveys were received by approximately 43% (goal of 50%) of the teachers in the study programs.
 - Programs received calls and mailings to remind them to get their surveys completed.
 - Work continued on director data, report writing and survey reviews led to minimal changes for 2014 studies.

- The 2013 analysis and draft of the report is close to being finished.
- For the 2014 study, the stratified random sample of child care centers was pulled yielding a sample size of 1007 programs and the sample of family child care providers was pulled for a sample size of 627.
- In February, survey collection began for both child care centers and family child care providers through phone and or online collection.
 - The response rate for directors stood at 14%.
 - For family child care providers, the rate was 13%.
- Materials are being ordered and printed for mailing the surveys in March.
- Applications continue to be accepted for the research manager position.

Challenges:

- The holidays make survey collection challenging.
- Some programs have expressed frustration with being sent surveys so many times and being called about failing to return teacher surveys. These programs expressed that participation is voluntary, but repeated attempts make them feel unfairly pressured.
- No qualified applicants have applied for the research manager position to date.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Edit report drafts.
- Create template for the 2013 Workforce Study Report, complete and submit report.
- Continue online and phone survey collection for the 2014 study.
- Investigate current phone numbers for wrong numbers.
- Log completed surveys into tracking database.
- Follow up with partial survey respondents.
- Mail non respondent surveys.
- Mail teacher surveys to programs with responding directors.

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

- A second meeting with members of the Measurement Development Project was held to further discuss possible coordination of the large-scale pilot for this project with the large-scale project for the new Program Quality Measure (Activity 5.1). Four additional meetings were scheduled throughout 2014.
- A web template with a detailed description and other pertinent information about the project was submitted to DCDEE.
- Preliminary findings of the QRIS alternative model mapping exercise for center-based early care and education programs were presented to DCDEE. Initial results were based on ERS scores and group size/ratios.

- A teleconference between FPG, DCDEE and Child Trends was held to discuss the preliminary findings from the mapping, plans for upcoming project tasks (i.e. focus groups and expert interviews), current status of obtaining education data from DCDEE's data warehouse, and clarification on adjustment of project task timelines.

Challenges:

- There have been delays in extracting education data from the DCDEE data warehouse due to limitations in bandwidth and a move of office location by the agency. The bandwidth challenge appears to have been addressed, so the extraction of data from DCDEE's data warehouse should experience no further delays.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Meet with a sub-group of the original QRIS Advisory Committee to discuss possible alternative QRIS models to test.
- Complete data pull on provider education data from DCDEE's data warehouse.
- Replicate modeling analyses when education data are received.
- Refine the alternative models (e.g., determining cut points) upon completion of the mapping of the data for center-based programs and family child care homes.
- Finalize focus group guide to be tailored to centers, family child care homes, and families.
- Conduct focus groups with providers and interviews with national experts about the alternative models.
- Develop an interview protocol and conduct targeted data collection to map a small, purposive sample of programs representing a full range of quality onto hypothetical new levels defined by the alternative models.

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: Activity Operational

- 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 8.2: Course on Mentoring and Technical Assistance

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

Key Accomplishments:

- The CEU course was developed and approved for pilot by DCDEE.

- One CCR&R specialist from each of the 14 regions of the state participated in the field test of the 2.0 CEU. The course content was well received and participant feedback was extremely positive, with particular enthusiasm on video clips and discussion which differentiated between consultation/coaching and mentoring. Participants highly valued the training’s focus on common definitions of key terms; barriers to effective TA, the role of the TA practitioner as change agent, review of the coaching/consultation model and information about building relationships, effective communication, dealing with difficult people, problem solving and conflict resolution.
- All participants received a feedback survey.
- Course content was updated using feedback from participants in the course pilot. Slight modifications were made to the coaching model, and a few new activities were added. Revisions were submitted to DCDEE for final approval.
- Two scheduled Train the Trainers session for the “Art and Science of Early Childhood Technical Assistance” were convened in Charlotte, NC. Qualified participants from 14 CCR&R Regional Lead Agencies, Head Start and the EESLPD Unit (teacher licensure) were included.

Challenges:

- Although beyond the timeframe of this report, due to the federal government shutdown and its impact on this contract, per NCDCDEE guidance, the October pilot was delayed until December.
- The content of the curriculum is quite rich and it was challenging to cover all of it within the 20 hours available.
- All 14 NC CCR&R Lead Agencies were asked to select at least two qualified participants to attend the Train the Trainer sessions scheduled for March. Some regions struggled with finding participants who met the qualifications to be a trainer for this CEU (employed at least 2 years in CORE services, holding a Level 11 EEC and having the Professional Development Endorsement). Some exceptions were made when individuals proved to have relevant prior experience and education.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Finish the Train the Trainers sessions for the 2.0 CEU Course.
- Add funding and deliverables to CCRI’s contract for a 3 semester credit hour course on the same subject.

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

Description: This Activity will support the CCR&R 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:

- Tools to align trainings to the NC Early Learning Standards are being reviewed and alignment is in progress.
- Course on Choosing and Using Curriculum and Formative Assessments continues to be offered statewide.
- Course on Coaching and Mentoring completed and being offered statewide.
- CCR&R staff trained on Communities of Practice (COP) and COP meetings are being held statewide.

- 40 trainers are certified in CLASS and offer training statewide. A two-day CLASS Observer workshop that was scheduled for January was rescheduled due to weather and was held in March. Shorter CLASS trainings (overview trainings) are being scheduled.
- For standardized online orientation for child care providers,
 - Advisory committee for online orientation has been convened.
 - Outline for pre-service portion of online orientation (first 10 hours) was submitted to DCDEE for approval.
 - Content for 10 pre-service hours of orientation was developed and entered into Moodle format and submitted to DCDEE.
 - Pilot for on-line orientation is underway for providers only. Feedback will be collected separately from other early childhood professionals regarding content, format, etc.
- Trainers are starting to offer the .5 CEU course on the revised ELDS statewide.

Challenges:

- It is difficult to determine which items to include in the online orientation because so many are so critical to a well-informed early childhood employee.
- Increasing engagement of ELD teachers and administrators in the CLASS & Choosing and Using an Approved Curriculum with Formative Assessment Strategies learning events. Additional communication strategies have been implemented to increase participation.
- Ensuring trained trainers when there is turnover
- Weather related cancelations

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continued COP meetings.
- CLASS & Choosing and Using an Approved Curriculum with Formative Assessment Strategies, NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development, and The Art and Science of Early Care and Education Technical Assistance learning events will continue to be offered statewide.

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 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:

- County Implementation and Leadership Teams worked with the TZ Behavior Specialist to select ELD programs from among those who applied to participate.
- A total of eight classrooms in two TZ counties are participating in the project. Each county has formed a cohort and is functioning as a community of practice, convening meetings to delve more deeply into various pyramid model-related topics, and providing coaching across programs.
- The TZ Behavior Specialist has conducted Pyramid Model training in each of the participating programs, (including teachers and administrators); conducted initial TPOT observations; and worked with teachers on ASQ-SE screenings as needed.
- The TZ Behavior Specialist continues to work with the county coach to build relationships in Bertie, in the hopes of signing on a program (or several) in that county in the coming months.

Challenges:

- Roll-out of all TZ projects in counties have been delayed by:
 - illness of key Leadership Team members,
 - inclement weather
 - facility staff turnover
- Key personnel in small counties may impede access to programs; without their buy-in and assistance, access to and acceptance of new projects is severely limited.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue building relationships with local TA personnel and agencies.
- For two participation Transformation Zone counties
 - Continue work on ASQ-SE screenings, classroom observations, and TA
 - Finalize training plans
 - Schedule and complete selection process with county selection committees.
- Conduct final project presentations in one participation Transformation Zone county.

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.

Key Accomplishments: Activity Operational

- ELDS has been revised; Foundations document has been completed and hard copies have been disseminated to ELD programs and system stakeholders. Online version is available on NC DCDEE website at: http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/pdf_forms/NC_foundations.pdf.
- ELDS Leadership Team developed long-term rollout plan to support broad use of “Foundations” in ELD programs across sectors.

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:**January**

- The content of the .5 CEU for NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development was finalized, submitted to DCDEE for review, and approved.
- A pilot for the delivery of the .5 CEU to early care and education classroom teachers and directors was held.
- “Train the Trainers” sessions have begun and will continue to be held.
- Twenty-nine individuals from NC CCR&R Lead and Local agencies, and five individuals from outside of the NC CCR&R System participated in the first two “Train the Trainers” events.

Participants from outside of the CCR&R network represented the EESLPD Unit (teacher licensure), Head Start, and The University of North Carolina.

- All participants indicated satisfaction with the training, and the training materials they received (trainer’s guide, PowerPoint presentation, and handouts), and indicated that they felt prepared to present the 0.5 CEU.

Challenges:

- It was difficult to address the full scope of the ELDS document within a .5 CEU.
- Inclement weather resulted in rescheduling one of the “Train the Trainers” events.
- Participants in the “Train the Trainers” events shared concerns about practitioners having access to the ELDS document, even though it is available for download. Although it is necessary and stipulated that participants bring a copy of the Foundations document with them to training, participants in the “Train the Trainers” sessions felt this would be a challenge for some participants and strongly encourage greater distribution of the Foundations document to ECE practitioners.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Convene final “Train the Trainers” sessions.
- Estimate the number of ELDS documents needed, in order to inform decisions about whether a second printing can be funded.

<p style="text-align: center;">Project 10: Certification and Licensure Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE)</p> <p>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.</p>

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:

- EESLPD Office staff moved to new location the first week of January. Mechanisms were put in place to continue the work with minimum impact on responding to inquiries from the field.
- Selection process for one nonpublic demonstration classroom has been completed through additional observation of teacher practices. We are working with the site’s administrator and teacher to further develop guidelines and procedures for Guided Observations and a site support plan.
- A survey was developed and administered to gather data on average time spent with teachers during the first quarter of the school year (August – December 2013) from 30 Mentors/Partners who are assigned to RtT teachers. Purpose is to determine the time investment required of Mentors to support newly licensed Early Childhood teachers.

SURVEY FINDINGS:

- Received 22 responses (73.3%): 9 partners, 13 employees.

- Mentors serve RTT teachers in 28 counties.
- Most Mentors (19) serve 1-2 teachers; 3 Mentors serve 3 or more teachers
- 21 Mentors (95.4%) report serving teachers in their first year of the Beginning Teacher Support Program (BTSP)/Lateral Entry Teacher Program (LETP);
13 Mentors (59%) report serving teachers in their second year of the BTSP/LETP; 9 Mentors (40.9%) report serving teachers in their third year of the BTSP/LETP.
- 17 Mentors (77.2%) report average weekly contacts with teachers: 3-5 hrs. for teachers in their first year of the BTSP/LETP; 1-2 hrs for teachers in their second year of the BTSP/LETP – during August-December 2013;
6 Mentors (27.2%) report average monthly contacts with teachers of 1-2 hrs. mostly for teachers in their third year of the BTSP/LETP - during August-December 2013.
- 10 Mentors (45.4%) reported additional hours in Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings with groups of teachers: weekly (4) or monthly (6).
- Coaching visits by State Leads to ensure consistency of evaluation processes across the state by all EESLPD Evaluators/Partners.
- Orientation and support provided to new Directors/Partners in Developmental Day Programs.
- New enrollments continue to be received and are processed within 30-60 days.
- Spring EESLPD training has been scheduled and web registration for this required Professional Development is now available for newly enrolled teachers.
- Licensure action requests (12) were processed for submission to the NC Department of Public Instruction (NC DPI).
- A total of 196 teachers, identified as RTT, are enrolled with the EESLPD Office and 145 teachers are receiving Mentor/Evaluator services. Due to incomplete enrollment information, missing professional development or unavailable staff, a total of 51 teachers, do not have assigned staff. No new assignments are made at this time in the school year.
- Teachers (145) who have an assigned Mentor and/or Evaluator have completed a mid-year review of their Professional Development Plan (PDP) based on results from observations and are receiving support from their Mentor (SPI teachers) or their site administrator and evaluator (SPII teachers) to attain their identified professional goals.
- Observations and Summative Evaluations are conducted by assigned Evaluators according to prescribed timelines.

Challenges:

- Securing qualified professionals to mentor and/or evaluate all newly enrolled teachers continues to be a challenge.
- Teachers leave employment, are laid off due to challenges with local program budgets or choose to discontinue participation in the BK Project. Our data on active teachers fluctuates because of that.
- Changes in site administrators may impact services to teachers especially if the site administrator partners with the EESLPD Office to evaluate teachers.
- Center Directors, who partner with the EESLPD Office to evaluate teachers, are challenged by increasing, multiple demands on their time in all aspects of their job often linked to funding streams.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue to recruit nonpublic programs/classrooms in each region of the state with exemplary practices that are willing to become a demonstration site.
- Further analyze data in open-ended question responses from the RTT Mentor survey to determine impact and training/support needs.

- Continue to recruit nonpublic programs/classrooms in each region of the state with exemplary practices that are willing to become a demonstration site.
- Continue to work with EESLPD Office Education Consultant to monitor and coach partner Evaluators in Developmental Day (DD) Programs to ensure consistency in processes and assess training and support needs.
- Plan for summer service options (Summer 2014) for newly enrolled RTT teachers who work 12 months and have completed the required PD.
- Development of an on-line EESLPD Office Teacher Manual.
- Survey Mentors and Evaluators about time spent in delivering services, type of services and cost allocations for these services by EESLPD partners.

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:

- The Institute continues to work on an ongoing basis with system partners to connect and/or integrate the TA Endorsement into existing and emerging systems and processes to increase the quality of the TA workforce.
- The TA Endorsement was finalized, and requirements and information on the TA Endorsement are now posted on the Institute's website. (See <http://ncicdp.org/certification--licensure/endorsements/>).
- Roll-out of the endorsement has begun, including via email blast and presentations at various regional and statewide events.
- A total of 30 TA professionals hold a TA Endorsement.

Challenges:

- The delay in the roll out of the TA course has impacted this project as TA providers are required to successfully complete the 2.0 CEU course on TA (activity 8.2) in order to meet eligibility requirements of the TA endorsement.
- The Institute has asked to carry forward funds to conduct outreach for this project. Outreach will include targeted dissemination of materials, presentations and webinars for TA providers in 2014 to aid potential applicants in understanding the goal of the TAE, access the benefits of it and understand potential uses for the TAE and how they can support the state in reaching the RTT-ELC goal for this strategy.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue to advertise the TA Endorsement.
- Create presentation materials to support outreach to TA providers.
- Continue to work to support the connection/integration of the TA endorsement into existing and emerging systems to support the use of the endorsement in tight fiscal times.

Activity 10.3: Offer Early Educator Certification at reduced cost

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

Key Accomplishments:

- 71 new certifications were issued in December, 2013; 112 in January 2014, and 59 in February 2014.
- The total of early educators holding an active certification as of the end of February, 2014 is 20,547
- Recruitment, including targeted calls to ELD programs, continues.

Challenges:

- Early educators are still trying to understand the benefit of EEC; where it fits in the system; the renewal process; and the impact of not renewing to them personally as well as to their employers.
- Directors are still learning what it means for EEC to be in DCDEE rule and the procedure for using EEC to document education for facility licensure.
- The continued poor economic environment limits resources available for individuals or programs to support application for certification and highlights the need for deep discounts on EEC fees.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Conduct an efficiency study to determine the relative value of the EEC education evaluation process vs. the DCDEE education evaluation process, then make a decision about ongoing contract support for the project.
- Promoting available endorsements and providing incentives to support application.
- Meeting with systems partners to connect and/or integrate EEC and endorsements.
- Notifying early educators due to renew in upcoming months.
- Processing applications and issuing certifications to early educators who have applied.
- Supporting and working with partners to increase CEU supply.
- Surveying those who choose not to renew to determine why and how to support them in renewing.
- Surveying those who elect to certify (initial and renewal) to determine why and what supports are needed next.

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

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

Activity 11.1: NAEYC Accreditation of Community College Early Childhood Programs

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

Key Accomplishments:

- Grants were awarded to 17 colleges seeking accreditation.
- Three exceptional Subject Matter Experts were contracted to provide content expertise for colleges seeking accreditation. Each is faculty at an accredited college, serves as a NAEYC Peer Reviewer, and is used by NAEYC as a trainer for accreditation.
- Five colleges were accepted as candidates for accreditation/Phase One
 - Beaufort County Community College

- Bladen Community College
- Catawba Valley Community College
- Cleveland Community College
- Haywood Community College
- Four colleges achieved new accreditation/Phase Three
 - Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute
 - Robeson Community College
 - Wake Technical Community College
 - Wayne Community College
- Three colleges were reaccredited
 - Blue Ridge Community College
 - Davidson County Community College
 - Sandhills Community College
- A training workshop for colleges seeking accreditation was held in New Bern, North Carolina. The workshop accommodated 70 participants from 20 colleges. NAEYC was the contracted trainer.
- NCCCS presented at the NAEYC National Conference regarding the Accreditation activities at North Carolina Community Colleges. NAEYC requested this presentation.
- Technical assistance visits are occurring as needed.
- All participating colleges report that they are making progress toward accreditation.

Challenges:

- Because one of the primary personnel for this project left NCCS and was only recently replaced, we have no further updates (January – March 2014) to share.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Permission to extend the grant period will be requested.
- Permission to offer a working retreat is proposed for participants.
- Continued support and technical assistance for participating colleges.
- Thirteen colleges are expected to submit Self Studies/Phase II in 2014.
- Five colleges are expected to receive Site Visits/Phase III in 2014.

Activity 11.2: Community College Innovation Fund

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

Key Accomplishments:

- Sub-grants were awarded to eight colleges through this activity. Each college has begun implementation of their projects. All grantees report that they are making progress toward accomplishing project goals. Grantee colleges are:
 - Blue Ridge Community College
 - Craven Community College
 - Durham Technical Community College
 - Gaston College
 - Haywood Community College
 - Stanly Community College
 - Wake Technical Community College
 - Wayne Community College
- Blue Ridge Community College

- Preparing the Hispanic Population in Henderson County and beyond to successfully enter into the Early Childhood Education program by:
 - 1) Having EDU 119, Introduction to Early Childhood Education, available in Spanish in a variety of venues (face-to-face, hybrid, and/or online) on our campus for the Hispanic community in our area.
 - 2) Developing the EDU 119 course in Spanish for the North Carolina VLC (Virtual Learning Community) for an online course to be available to other NC Community Colleges to use as either an online course or a Hybrid course.
 - 3) Developing within the Spanish EDU 119 course a mini-ESOL component that focuses on practicing their English skills by reading children's books to children through the National Jump Start "Read for the Record" Program implemented throughout the ECE program in order to increase the Hispanic students' scores on the reading placement test to place in at least Reading 080.
 - 4) Developing within the EDU 119 Spanish course an introduction to basic computer skills and the Distance Learning Online Platform used at the college in order to show evidence of competence in computers and online learning.
 - 5) Partnering with the ESOL Basic Skills Department to collaborate with the ESOL mini-components and to recruit potential Hispanic students to the ECE program and to refer those who have successfully completed the EDU 119 course to enroll in the ESOL program to assist in preparing students to successfully take the English and Reading placement tests.
- Completing the EDU 119 translation in Spanish.
- Talking with the system office personnel on how to make the EDU 119 online Spanish course available to all NC colleges.
- Obtaining a slot on the agenda for NC Access to present the innovation grant to all NC Early Childhood personnel.
- Met with the instructors for the Spanish course and the translator.
- Craven Community College
 - Collected data on first semester cohort EDU and ACA classes
 - EDU 119 Introduction to Early Childhood Education registered 11, 9 completed and met goal of 70% or higher (grade of C), 2 did not complete
 - EDU 131 Child, Family and Community registered 17, 13 met the standard of 70% or higher, 4 fell below the standard
 - EDU 153 Health, Safety, and Nutrition registered 20, 16 met the standard of 70% or higher, 4 fell below the standard.
 - ACA 111 College Success (this was taught by an EDU instructor and only for EDU students), 7 registered, 5 met the standard of 70% or higher, 2 fell below
 - We made more videos for online lectures and developed EDU 144 into a flipped classroom model
 - Worked with Craven Smart Start agency to provide diapering and sanitation training for EDU 153 students
 - Began video lectures for future classes, EDU 280 Language and Literacy and EDU 184 Early Childhood Practicum (these videos are about observation and assessment practices)
 - Enrolled the highest number of EDU 234A, Infant, Toddlers and Twos Lab, students we have ever had (11). This is not a required course, yet a vital part to infant and toddler training.
 - Worked with lead Developmental Math Instructor to develop 5-week hybrid classes (the first hybrid DME's on campus). First course enrolled 7 students – 5 were in cohort. One has dropped out due to personal challenges (getting home child care accredited and loss of a family member).
- Durham Technical Community College

- Developed new versions of the first year experience (RYE) course ACA 122 as a co-requisite to EDU 119 – Intro to Early Childhood Education. There will be a seated version, a hybrid version, and a version customized with English As A Second Language (ESL) infused. The paired courses are being taught to student's in their first semester of enrollment. The course ACA 122 is being taught the first 8 weeks of the semester and EDU 119 is being taught for 16 weeks.
- Gaston College
 - Three early childhood courses were revised based on the Early Literacy certificate. Those included: EDU 185 Cognitive and Language Activities, EDU 282 Early Childhood Literature, and EDU 286 Issues in Early Childhood Education. The other two courses within the certificate, EDU 119 and EDU 280, already existed and met the learning outcomes for the certificate.
 - The Writing Center coaches created 7 modules for our students' remediation and enhancement of their writing skills. These are presented and will become part of EDU 119 in order to increase the success and completion rate of our Intro to Early Childhood Education course.
 - Writing Center continues to work with our students, especially EDU 119 students, providing additional support for their specific needs as it relates to current assignments in early childhood courses.
 - A tutor was hired for the Learning Center focusing on EDU 119 students. The tutor is a former EDU 119 student that did exceptionally well.
 - Diverse early literacy materials were purchased to enhance the Early Literacy certificate resources.
 - Seven certificates in Early Literacy were awarded.
- Haywood Community College
 - Completed instruction for two sections each of DRE 097 and DRE 098 Integrated Reading and Writing. Began instruction in four additional sections of DRE 097 and DRE 098 (two sections per course type).
 - Completed instruction for one section of ACA 115 with a 100% successful completion rate. Four additional sections in progress with a total of 57 students being enrolled in ACA 115 during fall 2013.
 - Pass rate for EDU 119 with the ACA 115 co-requisite was 95%. This is a 20% increase when compared to the pass rate of previous classes without the co-requisite of ACA 115.
 - Developed an inter-departmental system to check pre-requisites error possibilities for students who did not successful complete DRE 097 and were pre-registered for DRE 098.
 - Expanded the number of developmental seats available to online early childhood students, thus increasing their ability to move through the curriculum more efficiently. Online courses slots for DRE courses have been doubled at our school with the grant funded instructor position.
- Stanly Community College
 - Learning Community for Early Childhood students consisting of EDU 119 (16 week course), two DRE's, a first 8-week and a second-8 week course and an ACA 090 study skills course (16 week). Textbooks are all EDU texts and all assignments are related to EDU and are inter-related between courses.
 - 75% of our students completed all 4 courses successfully during the first semester the Learning Community was offered.
 - All but one student from the first Learning Community has registered for additional courses this semester. The student not registered has financial aid, but had a family issue and is considering registering for last start courses that begin in either February or March.
- Wake Technical Community College

- Thirty-four unduplicated students enrolled in three courses for Spring Semester 2014: EDU 119, EDU 131, and EFL 055.
- In Spring Semester, one additional course (EDU 131) from the certificates was offered.
- Students enrolled in more than one class; student continued from the Fall 2013.
- Students' needs have been addressed through supportive educational environment.
- Students enrolled are employed at eight Early Childhood programs.
- Wayne Community College
 - Wayne Community College's project "Get a CLUE" is designed to provide course work in a blocked format during the weekends to keep offerings current and meet the needs of the community. Course modules are designed to allow early childhood students to take courses in 3 to 4 hour blocks of time on a Friday evening, Saturday morning or Saturday afternoon. By taking modular classes, a student can potentially receive 3 to 10 credits by the end of a 16-week semester.
 - Enrollment for Spring 2014 semester is as follows:
 - EDU 234, 7 students
 - EDU 221, 11 students
 - EDU 162, 14 students
 - Overall enrollment for the Fall 2013 semester was 30, so enrollment has increased by 2 students and is more evenly spread out between the 3 courses
 - Faculty members are working with local child care directors to work with employees to get registered.
 - Faculty members have also identified that prospective students have placement test anxiety. Therefore, at the child care conference on March 1, representatives from WCC's Academic Skills Center will be offering free resources and teaching sessions on how to study for the placement tests. We are also working with the Pre-Curriculum Department to identify students who may need developmental math and English / reading courses so that they may integrate early childhood education topics into these courses for our students.

Challenges:

- One of the primary personnel for this project left NCCCS and a replacement has only recently been appointed, so we lack additional information on project accomplishments for January and February 2014.
- Monthly reporting by participating colleges is challenging due to the fact that most faculty are on less than 12month contracts. The bulk of activities at all participating colleges are occurring during the semester which gives the impression of diminished activity in December and January; however, the colleges have designed their projects with this in mind.
- Some colleges that intended to hire staff to perform grant activities have been restricted by a lack of qualified applicants to fill positions. In those cases, colleges have contracted with existing faculty, in an "overload" capacity, to perform the proposed activities. Additionally, colleges are hesitant to hire staff on a temporary basis.
- State budget challenges are pervasive at many colleges. The result has been increased workload for faculty, especially in Early Childhood Education Departments.
- A clear need to work more closely with Center Directors and their staffs is apparent. The amount of time and trust needed to develop relationships between college programs and providers requires significant staff time. Through this investment of staff time, colleges are receiving valuable input in matching industry needs with college programming for students and training for professionals already in the field.
- Staff changes at NCCCS have slowed the progress in allocating the unobligated funds from this project. When new staff is in place, this will be remedied.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Create and issue RFA for the balance of the funds.

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:

- Recruitment activities were completed in all 17 counties receiving RttT-ELC WAGE\$ funds. This included mailed packets, follow-up emails and/or postcards, phone calls, collaboration with Early Education Certification (EEC) and the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project, contact with previous participants who might resume eligibility with RttT-ELC guidelines and emails to partnerships and resource and referral agencies in eligible counties. Partner emails included brief newsletter entries for local use. Counties were also sent offers for local presentations. Three sessions have already been completed in the Transformation Zone, with attendees from multiple eligible counties.
- Despite late Smart Start allocations from several hybrid counties, WAGE\$ staff have been confirming employment for new applicants with plans to pay as many as possible by the end of the calendar year.
- Smart Start partnerships that receive RTT-ELC funds in their counties were reminded of the WAGE\$ outreach opportunities and were particularly encouraged to consider including WAGE\$ in annual days of training.
- Participants in WAGE\$ are receiving full RTT-ELC supplements and Smart Start supplements plus RTT-ELC enhancements.

Challenges:

- New detailed policies have been necessary to facilitate the integration of Smart Start and RTT-ELC funds in ten of the eligible counties and ensure that supplantation does not occur. These policies and procedures have increased the complexity of the program.
- Participants eligible for Smart Start awards may be fully funded by RTT-ELC if funds are not available, which requires shifting individuals between funding sources. This opportunity is important for ensuring that WAGE\$ can impact the largest number of eligible early educators, but also makes spending projections more difficult. In addition, it increases the staff time and attention needed to ensure appropriate actions are taken.
- Some WAGE\$ counties eligible for RTT-ELC enhancements share a Smart Start Partnership with other counties not receiving these funds. As a result, participants in different counties served by the same partnership may receive different award amounts when historically they have been the same.

Upcoming Tasks:

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

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

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

Key Accomplishments:

- Awards for Early Care and Education Community Specialists (ECECS) Scholarships are in progress for 2014.
 - Recipients are performing the following functions for their sponsoring organization: technical assistance specialist, bilingual early learning specialist, infant toddler specialist, early educator consultant, early learning and family engagement coordinator, professional development specialist and child care resource & referral specialist.
 - Scholarships were being used to support coursework at the associate and bachelor degree levels.
- NC-Foundations for Infant Toddler Care (NCFITC) program:
 - Created final documents for the mentor piece of the FITC Program.
 - Cohort I and Cohort 2 receiving TA /providing mentoring.
 - Conducted first site visit for one mentor. Activities included review of the mentor's log and the action plan developed between the director (mentor) and teacher. Resources to help the mentor complete items on the action plan were provided, and the suggestion was made to contact the IT Specialist in the area to add additional support through the Social Emotional Technical Assistance program.
 - Completed initial review of changes needed for Module 1 of Course 1 to include the new NC Foundations of Early Learning and Development.
 - Completed a webinar session for Community College and University instructors to provide updates on FITC implementation and information on the mentoring component.
- Master's Degree Scholarship
 - Preparation to launch the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Master's Degree Scholarship is underway. Recruitment materials, scholarship applications, award letters and scholarship contract agreements have been developed and are in the approval stage. Once approved, outreach and recruitment will begin through a series of email blasts to targeted individuals.
- Enhanced scholarships in the Transformation Zone:
 - Enhanced T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® scholarships in the transformation zone are being awarded. Awards have been made for recipients from child care facilities from 11 or the 17 counties identified in the transformation zone. Awards included Associate Degree scholarship, Birth-Kindergarten scholarship and Bachelor Degree scholarships.

Challenges:

- Early Care and Education Community Specialists Scholarship Program
 - Ongoing challenges related to recruitment as no driver (i.e., education requirement) exists on a system-wide basis.
- NC Foundations of Infant and Toddler Care Mentor Teacher Scholarship (NC-FITC)
 - Continuing to build relationships with new students from Cohort 2 via email, text and phone.
 - Helping students from Cohort 2 to navigate on their own the Learning Table where the modules for the FITC program are housed.
 - Finding good outreach opportunities to market FITC in order to get applicants for a third cohort.
- Master's Degree Scholarship
 - Delays in the development of the Master's Degree program may impact recruitment, necessitating outreach to students that might be able to complete the program in less time due to existing credit hours.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Early Care and Education Community Specialists Scholarship Program
 - We will continue to recruit new participants for the Early Care and Education Community Specialist Scholarship Program.
- NC Foundations of Infant and Toddler Care Mentor Teacher Scholarship (NC-FITC)
 - Continue brainstorming ways to generate interest in FITC in the West for Cohort 3.
 - Creating ways to stay “in-touch” with current and past students
 - Start to make alterations to Course 2 based on informal feedback from students in Cohort 1.
- Master's Degree Scholarship
 - Recruitment efforts will begin once materials are finalized. Scholarships will be awarded to eligible participants on an on-going basis.
- Early Care and Education Enhanced Scholarships in the T-Zone
 - We will continue to recruit new participants and sponsoring programs in the Transformation Zone eligible counties.

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 CCR&R system starting in 2015.

Activity 13.1: Cultural Competence Support**Key Accomplishments:**

- A new Project Director was hired in December.
- Coordinated with CCR&R Council to keep them informed on the process and progress of the Cultural Competence BSC as related to their deliverables.

- Intentional inclusion of technical assistants from the Smart Start Partnerships in order to promote sustainability of the project outcomes in their professional development work with ECE programs.
- Inclusion of Head Start Technical Assistants in the TA group in the Central Region in order to promote cross-sector opportunities for use of curriculum process and competencies.
- Worked with UNCG and the development of the new state measures.
- Responded positively to requests to present at the Smart Start Conference in May 2014 and at the PD Connections session in March 2014.
- Continued work relating to Teams/Learning Sessions, including:
 - Implementation and facilitation of Learning Session 2 for Western and Eastern Regions with a focus on Dual Language Learners.
 - Completed work with View Finder on creating a video on Dual Language Learners which was used in Learning Session 2.
 - Held Topical Webinars and Role Affinity Meetings via WebEx, focused on: Valuing and Supporting Bi-Culturalism, Bridging the Gap by Leading Change, Supporting Children’s Positive Identity Development and Culture: It’s about Survival. (Sample Facilitator Guide attached.)
 - Started planning for Learning Session 3, which will be an on-line session for all regions.
 - Created and offered an on-line make-up session for participants who could not attend Learning Session 2.
- Continued work with the Learning and Communication Platform:
 - Continued use of Wiggio as communication platform; participants have increased use as they become more confident in using the platform.
 - Continued Smart sheet Development and Use.
 - Posting of Team Collaborative Goals Organizational Assessment Results (DashBoard) – Western and Eastern Regions.
 - Analysis, layout, and posting of first submission of Team and TA Metrics for Western and Easter region.
- Continued work relating to Faculty Coaches (Learning Facilitator) TA Competencies:
 - Held bi-monthly calls for Core Learning Facilitators, focusing on skill development for Affinity and Topical calls.
 - Final Revision of Learning Session 2 Agenda for Western and Eastern Regions.
 - Oriented all TAs on the use of the Early Childhood Cultural Competence Scan.
 - Reviewed Cultural Competence Endorsement process with all TAs.
- Continued work relating to the Curriculum:
 - Revised Facilitator Guides for LS2 on Dual Language Learners.
 - Revised PPT to support content delivery for LS2.
 - Revised small group processes for LS2.
 - Reviewed LS2 evaluations to inform revisions.
- Continued work relating to Project Evaluation:
 - On-going implementation of specific evaluation tools.
 - On-going use of On-Line Session Evaluation Tool.
 - Administered online assessments for Western and Eastern Region.
 - Implemented use of Metrics for TAs and Teams.
 - Development of Western and Eastern CGF visual assessment Results (Dash Board).
 - Facilitated completion of participant interviews by UNCG interview team during LS2 in the Eastern and Western Regions, conducting a total of 19 interviews. Interviews were approximately 45 minutes in length, were audiotaped and are being transcribed.
 - Scheduling interviews with the Central Region participants.

- Data have been collected from participants through on-line self-assessment surveys. The surveys are specifically targeted to the various identity groups participating in the project (i.e. center directors, teachers, family child care home (FCCH) providers, family members, and TA/PD providers) and includes questions regarding their flexibility, their commitment, their attitudes surrounding culture, and their work environments. A total of 120 online surveys have been completed by approximately 150 participants. A similar process of self-assessment will be used at the end of the Learning Sessions for all participants with a focus on changes that have occurred over the course of the project.
- Data from all the surveys has been downloaded and preliminary analysis including sample demographics and frequencies of responses on survey items has begun with the Teacher Self Assessments and Center Directors.

Challenges:

- On-going support of participants with on-line sessions given their varied access and comfort levels.
- Teams not able to attend LS2 at the last minute, related to last minute cancellation by substitutes for classrooms and personal emergencies. (Make-up session created.)
- Participants not receiving travel reimbursements in a timely manner jeopardize their ability to attend future sessions.
- Condensed time frame for interviews due to approvals and revisions needed.
- The death of the Breakthrough Series Collaborative expert occurred while planning for two learning sessions and has been a tremendous loss to the planning team and the project implementation.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Finalize form and process for Curriculum Module based on review of all learning to date and design a process to include on-line options.
- Gather all team evaluation data (metrics, dashboards and PDSAs) for their use at the Mid-Point Team Assessment.
- Gather all TA evaluation data (Saville assessment, PDSAs, participation) for use at the Mid-Point TA Assessment. Conduct Mid-Point Assessment during March and April with all TAs in the project, which includes the Cultural Competence Endorsement criteria.
- Execute topical webinars and affinity calls for the Action Period 2 for all Regions – teams and TAs, based on the needs and interests of the participants.
- Conduct final Planning for LS3 for all regions.
- Analysis of Session Evaluations, Dashboards, Metrics
- Work on implementing and completing Interviews for Central Region.
- Develop video and audio content pieces.
- Coding transcribed interviews and continue analyzing the remaining the self-assessment surveys.
- DCDEE on-site visit and fiscal monitoring of WSSU to ensure that fiscal oversight of the project is adequate (see challenge above re: delayed reimbursement of participants).

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

Key Accomplishments:

- *Program Administration Scale (PAS)* assessments have been conducted statewide.
- Average score on the PAS assessments thru February is 2014 is 4.02. The national average score is 3.40.
- Evaluations from the first Institute were in the excellent/good ratings with 95% or above in the in knowledge gained from each session, networking, overall logistics, accommodations, and meals.
- Collection of PAS assessment data is compiled on the ERS Data System. Aggregate scores by subscale as well as item level are used to determine program gaps. Created PAS action plans with directors after the completion of their assessments.
- Use of manaba (the on line learning community software) for ECDLI participation level continues to increase as additional PAS assessments are completed.
- Coaches uploading resources and communicating via manaba for participants working on action plan goals.
- Development and editing of session two curriculum.
- Commitment of the coaches to connect with their team members providing resources via manaba and visits to programs.
- Networking and developing professional relationships of participants with their teams and other participants.
- Ongoing sharing of resources. The teams have selected one of the resources and have commenced in book studies.

Challenges:

- Attain 100% of all participants in the use of manaba.
- Use manaba to assist participants in gathering resources to complete their Program Improvement Action Plans based on the results of their PAS assessments. Specifically using MY Community in manaba to upload resources. Currently have 16 communities have been created for topics such as Inspired Leadership, Risk Management, and Strategic Planning.
- Four directors are no longer participating in ECDLI.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Complete the *Program Administration Scale (PAS)* pre-assessments.
- Complete editing Session 2 of the curriculum with input from the Leadership Faculty.
- Plan next Institute.

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.

Activities 15.1-15.4: K-3 Assessment

Description: These Activities relate to the revision of the NC K-3 Assessment to include all school readiness domains and provide information on children's skills when they enter kindergarten.

Key Accomplishments:

- The members of the Local Education Advisory Team were selected to provide on -going feedback on the K-3 assessment to ensure development and implementation success.
- The Leadership Team continues reviewing Think Tank claims to finalize constructs to be assessed with the K-3 assessment.
- Assessment Design Team met twice. The January ADT meeting focused on reviewing external feedback on work to date and beginning writing assessment situations, probes, and tasks for constructs and associated learning progressions. The March ADT meeting was held to review final KEA content and teacher reviewer feedback, and to begin working on additional stages of process development, requiring developing supports to teachers and the field focusing on authentic situations, tasks and observations.
- Two “livebinder” professional development modules are under development. Content areas are The Five Domains of Development and Developmentally Appropriate Practices.
- Implementation Design Team participants were identified and confirmed, including state, regional and local representatives with a combination of content, professional development, and education expertise. A first meeting held on March 20, 2014 and established work groups with specific implementation tasks.
- A job description for a Project Coordinator is being developed. This position is intended to be 50% RTT-ELC and 50% EAG (50%), and will be funded accordingly. NCDPI awaits a response to an amendment requesting approval for this position.
- A state-funded contract has been awarded for the IT Project Manager, who began working in January. This position, as well as an IT Business Analyst are required by ITS to support the technological components of the K-3 assessment.
- A state-funded contract was initiated with FPG to conduct a series of family focus groups to gather information about parents’ attitudes and beliefs regarding strategies for obtaining family information relevant to the formative assessment and the type of information they would like to receive from formative assessment reports.
- The Formative Assessment Team presented at the DPI Collaborative Conference for Student Achievement in March; the presentation was an update to the field about the current status of the ADT’s development work on the FA process, the IDT’s work with implementation, and timeline status.
- KEA learning progression development is in its final stages currently undergoing validation. Feedback from the validation process will inform ADT revisions to the progressions. In addition, pilot testing will inform revisions to the learning progressions.
- Communications to the field about the K-3 development and implementation process continues through webinars, conference presentations, and regional meetings via project consultants. The next webinar will be held on April 9th. The content focus is on DAP and FA implementation.
- A contract was executed to provide additional manpower for the specific purpose of providing logistical support to the Leadership team.
- Teacher Focus Groups were completed with the purpose to review the learning progressions with an emphasis on teachers determining if they see their children progressing in a manner similar to the ADT learning progressions
- NC held the kick off meeting for the EAG consortium. The focus of the consortium is on enhancing the NC K-3 FA process.
- RTT ELC OEL staff has consulted with NCDPI consultants from other program areas, including Curriculum & Instruction, Exceptional Children, K-3 Literacy, The Arts, and English as a Second Language, and included them on work groups as content specialists and expert reviewers for learning progressions.

- ELC OEL staff continues to seek input from a variety of stakeholders and is currently making plans to hold focus groups with families of children in Kindergarten through 3rd grade.
- ELC OEL staff is working collaboratively with NC State doctoral students majoring in Cognitive Psychology. These students will contribute to the work of the Assessment Design Team by drafting learning progressions in a number of cognitive processes

Challenges:

- Timeline for project development and implementation remains a challenge.
- Additional requirements associated with adding a technology component to the assessment process remains a challenge.
- Compilation and analysis of collected data is an extensive task.
- Implementation timeline differences within the legislation and Grant require balancing and management.
- Current assessments within LEA's vary and the implementation of a new process will have a new set of challenges. Streamlining existing assessments and a new assessment will require intense PD and TA.
- Ensuring the data from the FA process is used as intended will also require PD and TA support.

Upcoming Tasks:

- April ADT meeting
- April IDT meeting
- June Advisory Team meeting
- Continue development and planning of the K-3 process and implementation
- Continue the investigation of the technology component of the assessment

Activity 15.5: Using Data to Improve Classroom Instruction

Description: This Activity will strengthen the use of assessments to guide instruction in schools, through implementation of FirstSchool, within two counties in Northeastern NC.

Key Accomplishments:

- First School staff provided full-day coaching visits with several schools.
- Meetings were conducted with teachers on the team and the principal.
- Offers of employment were extended to data collectors to complete Snapshot and CLASS data collection in every K-3 grade classroom in both participating counties. The expansion of this work is supported through state funds.
- Staff planned data collector training and worked with schools to schedule observations in January, February, and March. Snapshot and CLASS data collectors conducted observations. Twenty-one scheduled observations had to be rescheduled due to weather-related school closings.
- Staff continued to analyze data and prepare materials for the day of professional development.
- First School staff provided a full day of professional development focusing on developing a culture of excellence with an emphasis on the development of higher order thinking through the delivery of high quality questioning and high quality feedback.
 - All schools had Leadership Teams in attendance, and each district had central office staff present as well.
 - District-wide and school-level data were reviewed and used for action planning on improving practice.
 - At the close of the meeting, teachers also received matching individual data.

- County elementary principals and the Director of Elementary Programs spent a morning visiting the Pre K & Kindergarten demonstration site classrooms to gain a deeper understanding of play-based learning. First School team members were also present and facilitated the debriefing following the classroom visits.
- The next round of coaching visits to each school began. The rest of them will be completed in April.

Challenges:

- Scheduled observations had to be rescheduled due to weather-related closings.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Observations and data collection on remaining classrooms to be completed.
- Data analysis to be completed by staff.
- Schedule meetings with teams and individual schools to discuss data results.

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.

Key Accomplishments: Activity Operational.

- 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:

- Twenty out of 22 of the 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, two Training Hubs have completed their scopes of work – Franklin-Vance-Warren, Inc. & Western Carolina Community Action – collectively reaching about 40% of the childcare providers in their Hubs).
- A third Training Hub (Blue Ridge Opportunity Commission) will complete its scope of work by the end of May 2014.
- Marketing strategies to attract local child care providers to trainings are tweaked on an ongoing basis
- Ongoing TA support continues to be provided to all Hubs encountering barriers to implementation. This TA support includes the convening of regional Professional Learning

Communities on a semi-annual basis. (The most recent PLC meetings were convened in March 2014).

Challenges:

- Challenges persist with recruiting some local child care providers, in spite of receiving marketing assistance from the CCR&R network, Smart Start agencies, and DCDEE. 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:

- The third of 22 Training Hubs will complete its scope of work in mid-May 2014.
- The next set of regional PLC meetings will be convened on or around September 2014.

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 on a Quarterly Basis).
- Monitoring and evaluating impact in several ways. Hubs are required to track and report. Required to revise services based on feedback. Looking at how practices are changing as a result of the training (self-report from the participants).
- Coaching that goes along with the training provides the opportunity to observe changes.

Challenges:

- Some training events have had to be rescheduled or canceled due to persistent weather events over the last several months

Upcoming Tasks:

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

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.

Key Accomplishments:

- Contracts have been executed to support implementation of Family Connects.
- Purveyor and contract staff purchased equipment and supplies, prepared manuals, and posted positions to hire key personnel for implementation (i.e. home visiting (HV) supervisor, program coordinator, data processor, recruiter, and nurse home visitors).

- Nurse recruitment efforts include: Direct mailing to 333 RNs in 6 county zone; ads in Chowan, Bertie, Plymouth newspapers and online; Direct emails to eastern community colleges and nursing schools; Local teams distributed to contacts; posted on Alliance website, employment commission and internally at health departments.
- Worked with NIRN to enhance staff screening and selection.
- A budget revision was approved to repurpose the Northeast Connects coordinator position in the original grant application to support a Triple P coordinator for the northeast 17 Tier One counties.
- NorthEast Connects has changed its name to Family Connects, as a result of conversations with local county teams.
- Negotiations with local health departments have helped to determine the fiscal home and an office space for Family Connects within the region.
- A timeline for implementation activities was developed.
- MOUs with counties were developed and signed and Agreement addenda with 3 of the 4 counties were executed March 1, 2014.
- Launched website, www.familyconnectsnc.org.
- Completed entries into Agency Finder resource database (from which referrals will be made).
- Finalized local provider list (from which correspondence between home visitors and providers).
- Program evaluation budget and plan was submitted to support a contract amendment.
- Attended a Faith Summit to promote TZ activities in Chowan County.

Challenges:

- Working with local health department to integrate Family Connects into existing services.
- The federal shutdown impacted the timeline for budget revision approvals and hence delayed progress towards finding the needed staff to implement projects.
- Finding an administrative home for Family Connects.
- Getting all MOUs and agreement addenda signed.
- Finding highly qualified nursing candidates and Database Analyst candidates.
- Finalizing Plymouth space and IT/communication systems.
- Finalizing parent recruitment strategies for each county/birth hospital

Upcoming Tasks:

- Hire Nurse Director and begin protocol and fidelity training and certification.
- Hire Program coordinator and initiate community outreach and stakeholder efforts in conjunction with local teams.
- Hire Database Manager to establish protected IT links to ARHS server, prep nurse laptops and be trained on running reports and managing field data collection.
- State officials to visit Durham Connects in May for program perspective.
- Program evaluation contract to be revised and signed.
- Equip and establish office space in Plymouth.
- Post and hire county staff nurses.
- Begin training existing .50 nurses from counties, once supervisor is certified.
- Meet with County Implementation and Leadership teams.

Activity 17.2: 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:

- Held biweekly calls with NIRN and TPA.
- Eight county clusters have been determined of the 19 participating counties. A portion of the Triple P allocation per cluster will support a local Triple P Coordinator (Lenoir-Greene-Jones, 1.0 FTE; Halifax-Northampton-Hertford, 1.0 FTE; Granville-Vance, 1.0 FTE; Hyde-Beaufort, 1.0 FTE; Pitt 0.5 FTE, Bertie-Chowan-Camden 0.5 FTE, Nash-Edgecombe 0.5 FTE, Martin-Tyrell-Washington, 1.0 FTE.).
- Prepared and executed agreement addenda to local health departments to support hiring a Triple P coordinator and implementation of Triple P. All clusters hired Triple P coordinators; local coordinators have been through the Triple P Implementation Framework training
- In support of implementation of Triple P in the northeast Tier One counties and across North Carolina, Triple P Stay Positive Campaign:
 - website was purchased using Title V funds. Website was completed and launched.
 - print materials for all implementing sites in North Carolina have been purchased using State Advisory Council ARRA funds. All materials have been received and warehoused in Raleigh.
- Joint webinar held with DSS, NCPC and DPH at state level with about 25 attendees. Audience was local DSS, Smart Start Partnerships, and local health departments.
- Leaders Collaborative meeting was held in February that included an overview of the Triple P Implementation Framework for new NE counties, an update from sites, an overview of the evaluation plan and communications plans.
- Began conversations with a former Triple P America implementation specialist (retired from TPA) interested in working part-time, who brings knowledge of implementation frameworks and can support the work until a permanent hire is in place.
- Local implementation plans being developed.
- Initial training for practitioners scheduled.
- Outreach into the community to inform the community about Triple P underway.
- Budget revision to abolish Triple P Implementation Specialist position has been approved and funds are being redirected to hire a former Triple P America Implementation Specialist to support NC work.

Challenges:

- Keeping up with the amount of information for all counties.
- Agreement addenda were held up by three - four weeks due to the federal shutdown.
- Stay Positive print materials distributed. Sites do not have a large enough transfer van. Multiple trip will be needed to carry materials back to counties.
- NC Open Enrollment for smaller Tier One counties (Rita Bostic and Kat Greene will address these issues.)
- IMOA with DCDEE not executed.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Professor Sanders (model developer) will visit North Carolina at the Triple P State Learning Collaborative May 6.

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 and Leading for Equity sessions for Cohort II have been completed, participants have completed executive summaries, and the Year 2 evaluation has been completed. NCPC is working on technological upgrades to the On-Line Learning using internal staff from the Information Technology department. Small changes are being made within the existing platform for the Online Learning Community and software upgrades are being explored and tested. A primary goal is to clean-up the existing platform to make it more user-friendly. A long-term goal is to create a mobile application of the tool. In addition, both the Online Learning Community Leaders and NCPC's Communications Dept. is exploring ways to better engage professionals in use of the on-line learning community. The analytics have been reviewed, a usability study conducted and reviewed with discussion underway about how to align this tool with other technology used in the Smart Start system for a cohesive interface.

- Leaders Collaborative Cohort III completed its February 2014 session covering foundational aspects of the program: purpose, outcomes and alignment with RTT-ELC goals. Leaders were also introduced to the conceptual and practical concepts of appreciative inquiry and positive leadership. Participants set up their technical tools in order to practice using the on-line learning community.
- The Year 3 evaluation pre-survey is under way and all other tools have been reviewed internally for use throughout the grant year to gather data from past and current participants.

Challenges: None reported

Upcoming Tasks:

- Ongoing collaborative sessions meet monthly through October 2014.
- A gathering of Leaders Collaborative alumni will take place at the 2014 National Smart Start Conference in May 2014. Speakers and participants from the first three cohorts are presenting at the conference. There is a pre-conference session on equity and another session on building a community of practice.
- Completing software upgrades and addressing mobile application of the Online Learning Community. Continued work to upgrade the Online Learning Community platform and explore engagement strategies.

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:

- Completed the second half of Adaptive Skills training December 12th and 13th with 30 participants participating overall. Participant feedback was extremely positive and all Transformation Zone counties were represented in the training.
- Monthly County meetings with Implementation and Leadership Teams are ongoing work for the County Coaches.
 - In support of these meetings the coaches plan the Implementation Team agendas, in collaboration with the State Implementation Specialist, who provides active implementation content.
 - Coaches provide facilitation of the Implementation Team meetings with State Implementation Specialists co-facilitating the active implementation content.
 - Coaches create and deliver Implementation Team reports to Leadership Teams. Three coaches are in the process of refining the report processes and formats. Beaufort is maintaining its current report form.
 - Coaches participate to varying degrees on the agenda planning for Leadership Teams.
 - In some counties, coaches have assisted with the recruitment of and orientation of new Leadership and Implementation team members.
- Coaches also coordinate and facilitate the ongoing implementation team work in counties between the formal monthly meetings. Activities include:
 - spearheading the development of job descriptions and interview protocols for the hiring of county literacy coordinators, in collaboration with the Implementation Teams and implementing agencies (the two local Smart Start Partnerships).
 - working with the implementation teams and/or a task group of those teams to review literacy implementation checklists and developing implementation plans, to be delivered to NCPC.
 - working on an application process to select child care programs to participate in the Story Exploring (Motheread) training.
 - assisting the coordination and hosting literacy trainings and developing a coaching plan for the literacy coordinator to ensure effective installation of the literacy programs.
 - working with Implementation Teams and Leadership Teams to provide direction to the instillation of Triple P, which includes reviewing the Triple P installation checklist and assisting the local coordinator in the identification and recruitment of providers to be trained in Triple P.
 - providing initial feedback to State Team on the installation checklists reviewed to date.
 - providing incidental teaching on implementation science to team members in support of the State Implementation Specialists work at the monthly meetings.
- Pennie Foster-Fishman participated in a web-based meeting with the County Coaches and met remotely with the county on-site supervisors to plan for training on engaging diverse voices in each of the four Transformation Zone Counties to be held in May as part of the community building and systems change work using the ABLLe Change framework.
 - Coaches are working with Implementation Teams and Leadership teams to identify training participants.
- Continuing work with NIRN:
 - NIRN conducted the County Capacity Assessment which will help the County Leadership Teams with action planning in collaboration with the County Implementation Teams.
 - Baseline assessments of the County Implementation Teams have been done.
- Local coaches have been participating in community events to provide information about the Transformation Zone work and in support of the early childhood system. Coaches have:

- attended a community's stakeholder meeting for the development of a county economic development plan.
- presented on the Transformation Zone and invited Communications staff from the North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation to present information on the *First 2000 Days* to a Chamber of Commerce Luncheon.
- worked with the local Implementation and Leadership Teams and a local Partnership for Children to host an early childhood faith summit modeled on the Faith Summits organized by NCPC.
- presented information on the Transformation Zone to a County Resource Connection's monthly meeting.
- supported work relating to Faith Summits. As a result of the Faith Summit held in one county, a local elementary school hosted a Minister's Council meeting and planned a second meeting to have a literacy focus. Plans were underway to establish an annual Faith Summit; a church with a childcare program has made a decision to pursue star rated licensure. Coaches are meeting with the ministerial association to promote strategies and parent participation.
- Coordination with strategy purveyors and implementing staff.
 - Coaches, along with Implementation Team members, have begun participating in monthly phone calls with purveyors (five calls for the 8 strategies).
 - They are modeling note taking for these calls and providing opportunities for team members to make strategy related updates at team meetings. Coaches are in the process of establishing procedures and processes to gather and report on strategies to the Implementation Teams, highlighting work that the team may need to engage in to support the strategies.
 - One coach was requested to, and has reviewed, the Reach Out and Read program manual and provided feedback to the purveyor.
 - The coaches are working with Family Connects to discuss selection of nurses and creating readiness in the community for the program.
 - Coaches have met with the NCB1 staff member to review program updates and provide assistance in engagement of child care programs.
- Planning Cross County meetings with local teams and State Implementation Team
 - Coaches have participated in initial planning meeting for two April cross county meetings (one for Bertie Chowan and one for Beaufort Hyde – strategy purveyors will attend one or the other meeting).

Challenges:

- Weather issues caused the delay or cancelling of some team meetings.

Upcoming Tasks:

- County Implementation Teams will participate in monthly calls with Purveyors and prepare strategy update reports to support team development as members gain deeper understanding of the selected strategy models and program implementation.
- Continue working with partners of the installation of Triple P, Family Connects, Mother Read/Father Read and Reach Out and Read. Completion of the Literacy Installation Plan for Motherread and Reach Out and Read.
- Cross County meeting with local teams and purveyors
- Continued Planning for the ABLe Framework for systems change with Dr. Foster-Fishman.

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:

- Completed calls with individual counties to discuss scale and initial implementation priority areas.
- Drafted a contract template to be used with the TZ counties that incorporates implementation science and supports sustainable implementation. Counties provided an opportunity to review and provide feedback. Contracts were sent to the counties for final review and signature.
- Initial round of Motherhead curricula trainings provided to transformation zone identified facilitators. The trainings were held in Swan Quarter in Hyde County.
- Counties have begun developing installation plans and site selection criteria. All counties have utilized strategy specific installation checklists developed by the purveyors in partnership with NIRN and NCPC.
- Counties have hired or are in the process of hiring a Literacy Coordinator who will support the installation of both Motherhead and Reach Out.
- Monthly cross-county literacy purveyor calls have begun with Transformation Zone counties to provide additional initial implementation support.

Challenges:

- Assisting the counties in scaling back their initial literacy plans to support successful and sustainable implementation.
- Negotiating Motherhead facilitator training that would meet the needs of four counties, all in different stages of installation/implementation work was challenging, but was accomplished. Continuing to work collaboratively to identify a second series of Motherhead training to be offered in June 2014.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Partnering with NIRN to provide technical assistance to counties in their early literacy installation planning and to discuss program specific installation checklists and model fidelity tools and practices the counties could utilize to support good implementation.
- Future Motherhead trainings have been scheduled for May, June, and July 2014.
- Continued planning conversations around evaluation for the two early literacy strategies.

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 is operational.

- A Faith Summit Wrap Up in digital story format and a full-length faith summit from Concord are posted Smart Start's YouTube channel [HERE](#)
- As a result of the regional faith summits, several communities are planning a local summit similar to those held this past fall. For example, the Transformation Zone Implementation team in Chowan County hosted their first faith summit in February. Three other county faith summits have occurred as "off-shoots" from the regional summits.
- One GS-110 child care center from a county summit is exploring moving to star rated licensing.

- A first draft evaluation summary was completed with revisions sent for second draft; final internal review is near completion.

Challenges: None at this time

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continued follow up on requests from commitment cards related to requests for assistance with early childhood programming within congregations or other faith-based organizations. Local Partnerships are being asked to link organizations who indicated an interest to move from GS-110 to star rating system to the GS-110 RTT project with DCDEE administered by Southwestern Child Development Commission.
- Faith Summit final report

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 CCHC coaches received the coaching training module on December 4, 2013 to provide input and revisions. TZ counties were prioritized in regional roll out plan and began in early 2014.
- Initial meeting was held between CCHC Coaches and NCPC to encourage information sharing and ongoing communication. It was decided that continued meetings would be helpful and scheduled as needed.
- The NC Child Care Health and Safety Resource Center (NCCCHSRC) and the assigned CCHC Coach for the Transformation Zone counties met with local CCHCs, other local partnership representatives, and transformation zone coaches to discuss roles, service delivery strategies, and support needed.
- NCCCHSRC and NCPC partnered to roll out the CCHC model to all local partnerships. The model, which provides program guidance, includes:
 - values
 - principles
 - service criteria
 - core components of knowledge, skills, and engagement
 - essential functions
- NCPC and NCCCHSRC invited participation from TZ CCHCs, their supervisors, the CCHC Coach, and other interested parties in a quarterly cross-county call using a community of practice approach to the implementation of additional CCHC services in the transformation zone. The first cross-county call occurred in March 2014 and will continue on a quarterly basis.
- Local partnerships are currently reviewing the CCHC Model and assessing how they, with support provided by the CCHC Coaches, can align current CCHC services with the model.
- Continued evaluation meetings held with NCPC, Frank Porter Graham, and staff from the NCCCHSRC to discuss needed data sets, clarification of how CCHC services are currently delivered, and next steps for the evaluation of the CCHC coaching model.
- Continued conference calls with CCHC Coaches and NCPC to encourage information sharing and ongoing communication.
- Regional coaching model training has begun and will continue through June 2014.

Challenges:

- Communicating project updates and talking through successes and challenges with the many people involved with TZ CCHC work; efforts have been made to develop a plan for this.

Upcoming Tasks:

- A joint webinar between NCPC and NCCCHSRC will be provided in May or June to walk through the new CCHC Model. The audience for this webinar will be all local partnerships.

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:

- Jointly with evaluator, NCPC project manager attended the quarterly ABCD Quality Improvement meeting and presented an update on the RTT ABCD project.
- NCPC project manager attended the Quarterly ABCD state advisory committee meeting and discussed an update of the state-wide expansion of ABCD.
- ABCD coordinators submitted the first data sets for evaluation. They submitted chart review data as well as output data to the project manager at NCPC and the contracted evaluator to track progress and outcomes.
- Local Partnerships submitted their first bi-annual regional progress report. Reports confirm that progress is being made and projects are well underway.
- Newly selected partnerships received information about upcoming training as well as reporting requirements.
- NCPC project manager and contracted evaluator discussed first set of progress reports with the ABCD coordinators to determine challenges with data collection and reporting.
- Local Partnerships were provided with feedback about their progress based on the first bi-annual regional progress report.
- NCPC project manager worked with CCNC to plan the quarterly ABCD Quality Improvement meeting and State ABCD Advisory Committee meetings. The most recent of these meetings included multiple discussions and work with Early Intervention branch State leadership to improve and institutionalize communication between the CDSAs and the medical practices.
- Evaluator, with support from NCPC project manager, developed and released survey for ABCD coordinators to assess multiple variables of ABCD project.
- Project manager held monthly TA phone calls with all ABCD coordinators. Coordinators have made great use of these phone calls and multiple successes, challenges and questions are shared and addressed every month.
- Three new partnerships have started to implement regional ABCD projects, and three other partnerships are leading regional planning processes in their regions. Multiple discussions took place to check on progress and to answer questions.

Challenges:

- Two CCNC regions cover many counties, and one of them – Access Care – includes counties scattered across the state, making these regions challenging for planning to serve with one ABCD Coordinator in each region.

Upcoming Tasks:

- The second ABCD training will take place in mid-April at NCPC.
- Second set of data tracking reports will be submitted by the ABCD coordinators in early April.
- Continue to provide TA to local partnerships as needed/requested.

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

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

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

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

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

Activity 1.2 (National Implementation Research Network)

Key Accomplishments:

- NIRN has conducted meetings with strategy purveyors to:
 - finalize Installation and Quality Assurance Checklists. These checklists and plans will both inform county installation processes and serve as implementation tools for other rural implementation efforts of these strategies.
 - support the development of performance assessments, which will be used statewide to support standardized practice with fidelity.
 - support practice profile development.
 - draft the MOA for County Health Departments to support implementation of all elements of the strategy/model with fidelity
 - draft selection criteria for Nurses and to consider assessing for coachability during interview processes.
- All counties have begun the County Capacity Assessment process.
- Weekly planning calls with County Coaches, Coach Coordinator, Implementation Specialists, and NIRN continue.
- Co-creation of Implementation Team and Leadership Team agendas for Monthly meeting and attendance/facilitation. Implementation Team meetings have been structured to ensure:
 - County Implementation Team members know and are able to apply Active Implementation Frameworks
 - County Implementation Team members know the strategies and are accountable for implementation.
 - County Implementation Teams are engaged in a policy-practice feedback loop with County Leadership Teams and State Implementation Team.

- NIRN continues to support Wednesday County Coach meetings/in-service, aligning content with emerging skill needs or implementation-stage based work
- Bi-weekly planning call with County Coaches, Coach Coordinator, Implementation Specialists, and NIRN
- County Coaches and SIS developed plans for a joint county-state partners meeting in April, with a focus on shared learning between county and state partners, as well as provide a platform for shared understanding of implementation challenges and successes in the Transformation Zone.
- Funders have the ability to support high quality implementation through contracting processes. NCPC has led the Transformation Zone's efforts to develop contracting processes and requirements that support high quality implementation.
- Development and implementation of new monthly phone calls, beginning in March with county and state partners to share lessons learned and discuss implementation challenges relating to the various strategies.
- Drafted ELC Transformation Zone Theory of Change, relating to NIRN's role.
- Attended orientation meeting with Evaluation Team
- State-level work developing related to:
 - a developing QRIS Center/Teacher practice tool
 - DCDEE Implementation Workshop for regulatory consultants and program managers
 - DCDEE identified need for a tool to support regulatory staff in their new role in NC PK

Challenges:

- Balancing regional implementation with individual county interests is challenging, and requires large groups of stakeholders develop communication protocols and shared decision making processes.
- First replications of EBPs, like Family Connects, are always challenging because model developers/purveyors can't provide 'tried and true guidance' for implementation based on repeated replication.
- County partners/agencies are not familiar with all EBP model requirements; for example, for Family Connects, they may understand the model as "a protocol used by nurses" as opposed to a much more complex set of required elements that must be delivered as a program
- Some county health partners would like to be able to proceed with more autonomy than a regional implementation. There isn't much history of successful cross-county resource sharing.
- Finding an administrative home to support sustainability.
- Integrating strategies/model into existing county maternal home visiting programs.
- Coordination of state and county partner activities is challenging with so many individuals.
- Contracting delays have impacted implementation timelines.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Support strategy installation in counties with the goal of best supporting quality implementation.
- Performance assessment, Installation Checklist development, and fidelity discussions with purveyors.
- Installation planning in collaboration with NCPC.
- Follow-up with Child care purveyors about Practice Profile development.
- County Capacity Assessments and Implementation Team assessments.
- Orientation for new State Implementation Specialist.
- NIRN and NCPC are planning a Funders meeting for April to provide an opportunity to celebrate successes and take note of challenges, share what lessons are being learned, and to identify

opportunities for state level capacity building and action to improve/adapt their policies and practices to support effective implementation.

- Discuss ‘implementation-informed’ monitoring with Grants Management Team.

Activity 18.2 (North Carolina Partnership for Children)

Key Accomplishments:

- Completed the second half of Adaptive Skills training December 12th and 13th with 30 participants participating overall. Participant feedback was extremely positive and all Transformation Zone counties were represented in the training.
- Monthly County meetings with Implementation and Leadership Teams are ongoing work for the County Coaches.
 - In support of these meetings the coaches plan the Implementation Team agendas, in collaboration with the State Implementation Specialist, who provides active implementation content.
 - Coaches provide facilitation of the Implementation Team meetings with State Implementation Specialists co-facilitating the active implementation content.
 - Coaches create and deliver Implementation Team reports to Leadership Teams. Three coaches are in the process of refining the report processes and formats. Beaufort is maintaining its current report form.
 - Coaches participate to varying degrees on the agenda planning for Leadership Teams.
 - In some counties, coaches have assisted with the recruitment of and orientation of new Leadership and Implementation team members.
- Coaches also coordinate and facilitate the ongoing implementation team work in counties between the formal monthly meetings. Activities include:
 - spearheading the development of job descriptions and interview protocols for the hiring of county literacy coordinators, in collaboration with the Implementation Teams and implementing agencies (the two local Smart Start Partnerships).
 - working with the implementation teams and/or a task group of those teams to review literacy implementation checklists and developing implementation plans, to be delivered to NCPC.
 - working on an application process to select child care programs to participate in the Story Exploring (Motheread) training.
 - assisting the coordination and hosting literacy trainings and developing a coaching plan for the literacy coordinator to ensure effective installation of the literacy programs.
 - working with Implementation Teams and Leadership Teams to provide direction to the instillation of Triple P, which includes reviewing the Triple P installation checklist and assisting the local coordinator in the identification and recruitment of providers to be trained in Triple P.
 - providing initial feedback to State Team on the installation checklists reviewed to date.
 - providing incidental teaching on implementation science to team members in support of the State Implementation Specialists work at the monthly meetings.
- Pennie Foster-Fishman participated in a web-based meeting with the County Coaches and met remotely with the county on-site supervisors to plan for training on engaging diverse voices in each of the four Transformation Zone Counties to be held in May as part of the community building and systems change work using the ABL Change framework.
 - Coaches are working with Implementation Teams and Leadership teams to identify training participants.
- Continuing work with NIRN:

- NIRN conducted the County Capacity Assessment which will help the County Leadership Teams with action planning in collaboration with the County Implementation Teams.
- Baseline assessments of the County Implementation Teams have been done.
- Local coaches have been participating in community events to provide information about the Transformation Zone work and in support of the early childhood system. Coaches have:
 - attended a community's stakeholder meeting for the development of a county economic development plan.
 - presented on the Transformation Zone and Communications staff from the North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation to present information on the *First 2000 Days* to a Chamber of Commerce Luncheon.
 - worked with the local Implementation and Leadership Teams and local Partnership for Children to host an early childhood faith summit modeled on the Faith Summits organized by NCPC.
 - presented information on the Transformation Zone to a County Resource Connection's monthly meeting.
 - supported work relating to Faith Summits. As a result of the Faith Summit held in one county, a local elementary school hosted a Minister's Council meeting and planned a second meeting to have a literacy focus. Plans were underway to establish an annual Faith Summit; a church with a childcare program has made a decision to pursue star rated licensure. Coaches are meeting with the ministerial association to promote strategies and parent participation.
- Coordination with strategy purveyors and implementing staff.
 - Coaches, along with Implementation Team members, have begun participating in monthly phone calls with purveyors (five calls for the 8 strategies).
 - They are modeling note taking for these calls and providing opportunities for team members to make strategy related updates at team meetings. Coaches are in the process of establishing procedures and processes to gather and report on strategies to the Implementation Teams, highlighting work that the team may need to engage in to support the strategies.
 - One coach was requested to, and has reviewed, the Reach Out and Read program manual and provided feedback to the purveyor.
 - The coaches are working with Family Connects to discuss selection of nurses and creating readiness in the community for the program.
 - Coaches have met with the NCB1 staff member to review program updates and provide assistance in engagement of child care programs.
- Planning Cross County meetings with local teams and State Implementation Team
 - Coaches have participated in initial planning meeting for two April cross county meetings (one for Bertie Chowan and one for Beaufort Hyde – strategy purveyors will attend one or the other meeting).

Challenges:

- Weather issues caused the delay or cancelling of some team meetings.

Upcoming Tasks:

- County Implementation Teams will participate in monthly calls with Purveyors and prepare strategy update reports to support team development as members gain deeper understanding of the selected strategy models and program implementation.

- Continue working with partners of the installation of Triple P, Family Connects, Mother Read/Father Read and Reach Out and Read. Completion of the Literacy Installation Plan for Motherhead and Reach Out and Read.
- Cross County meeting with local teams and purveyors
- Continued Planning for the ABLe Framework for systems change with Dr. Foster-Fishman.

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:

- IT Specialist conducted outreach, one-on-one visits and phone contacts to identify child care centers, family child care homes, and GS-110 facilities in Beaufort, Bertie and Chowan Counties for potential participation in this activity.
 - One GS-110 desires star rated licensing. In addition to information about the IT Expansion Grant, information about the GS-110 grants for licensure was provided.
- As of December 31, 2013
 - Programs with the capacity for 42 slots have agreed to participate.
 - 44 on-site TA consultations were provided.
- A total of five programs are now approved to participate in this activity.

Challenges:

- In many of these counties, enrollment is very low, and providers are worried about the impact of moving up in star rating on their ability to attract families and enroll children. It takes time for programs at lower star ratings to fully understand and consider the opportunities in counties before they are ready to commit to quality improvement work.
- Other factors impacting enrollment are the state of the economy, programs offering free services or very low cost services, limited population of children as a result of families relocating due to factory closures.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Revisit potential programs with less than 4 stars to continue building relationships and recruitment for the IT Expansion Grant.
- Continue assessments, improvement planning, requisitions, and technical assistance to 5 approved IT Expansion Grant programs.
- Continue to support professional development by providing T.E.A.C.H. and WAGES information during visitation to 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:

- As of December 31, 2013

- 62 part-day slots are licensed in 4- or 5-star programs in Transformation Zone Counties with 54 ready for NCB1 children
- Programs with the capacity for 62 part-day slots had agreed to participate
- 82 on-site TA consultations were provided
- Five sites are currently approved. One site that was previously approved withdrew in February, but another site in that county should be ready for approval in March. Twenty children are currently being served by the program, and they are all located in only one of the four Transformation Zone counties.
- In response to transportation challenges that seemed to be limiting enrollment, DCDEE approved a proposal to allow programs to provide transportation if needed. The Infant Toddler Program Specialist met with all site administrators to share the revised NCB1 guidelines, including transportation support, and distributed the related paperwork.
- Discussion related to recruitment is ongoing at the program level, the county implementation team level, and the state level.
- The Infant Toddler Program Specialist continues to provide technical assistance to all NCB1 classrooms to improve quality of care and support programs as they provide all NCB1 services.

Challenges:

- Challenges to recruitment for NCB1 include:
 - lack of reliable transportation,
 - limited Infant Toddler Program Specialist's time to support referrals,
 - delayed implementation of other RTT-ELC strategies that have the potential to increase awareness/referrals, and the need for more than part-day care.
- Transportation is a multi-faceted undertaking that requires a large resource commitment from programs to provide.
- Each community accepts and embraces change differently so many different methods of communication are required.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Discuss community and program challenges with grant management team, DCDEE, and contractor to determine possible accommodations (including double slot option for full-day) in order to increase community access to the program.
- Make contact with known referral sources in each community to encourage NCB1 referrals;
- Continue to support implementation of full NCB1 program in two Counties including on-going assessment and family engagement activities;
- Support site in one of the TZ Counties to make improvements and begin to enroll children;
- Support three of the TZ Counties in recruiting children of the NCB1 program;
- Provide ongoing TA related to high quality infant-toddler care;
- Make contact with one TZ County to encourage potential recruitment of children for the site in the neighboring county that is closest, and to discuss potential NCB1 program.

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 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:

- County Implementation and Leadership Teams worked with the TZ Behavior Specialist to select ELD programs from among those who applied to participate.
- A total of eight classrooms in two TZ counties are participating in the project. Each county has formed a cohort and is functioning as a community of practice, convening meetings to delve more deeply into various pyramid model-related topics, and providing coaching across programs.
- The TZ Behavior Specialist has conducted Pyramid Model training in each of the participating programs, (including teachers and administrators); conducted initial TPOT observations; and worked with teachers on ASQ-SE screenings as needed.
- The TZ Behavior Specialist continues to work with the county coach to build relationships in Bertie, in the hopes of signing on a program (or several) in that county in the coming months.

Challenges:

- Roll-out of all TZ projects in counties have been delayed by:
 - illness of key Leadership Team members,
 - inclement weather
 - facility staff turnover
- Key personnel in small counties may impede access to programs; without their buy-in and assistance, access to and acceptance of new projects is severely limited.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue building relationships with local TA personnel and agencies.
- For two participation Transformation Zone counties
 - Continue work on ASQ-SE screenings, classroom observations, and TA
 - Finalize training plans
 - Schedule and complete selection process with county selection committees.
- Conduct final project presentations in one participation Transformation Zone county.

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 CCHC coaches received the coaching training module on December 4, 2013 to provide input and revisions. TZ counties were prioritized in regional roll out plan and began in early 2014.
- Initial meeting was held between CCHC Coaches and NCPC to encourage information sharing and ongoing communication. It was decided that continued meetings would be helpful and scheduled as needed.
- The NC Child Care Health and Safety Resource Center (NCCCHSRC) and the assigned CCHC Coach for the Transformation Zone counties met with local CCHCs, other local partnership representatives, and transformation zone coaches to discuss roles, service delivery strategies, and support needed.
- NCCCHSRC and NCPC partnered to roll out the CCHC model to all local partnerships. The model, which provides program guidance, includes:
 - values
 - principles
 - service criteria
 - core components of knowledge, skills, and engagement

- essential functions
- NCPC and NCCCHSRC invited participation from TZ CCHCs, their supervisors, the CCHC Coach, and other interested parties in a quarterly cross-county call using a community of practice approach to the implementation of additional CCHC services in the transformation zone. The first cross-county call occurred in March 2014 and will continue on a quarterly basis.
- Local partnerships are currently reviewing the CCHC Model and assessing how they, with support provided by the CCHC Coaches, can align current CCHC services with the model.
- Continued evaluation meetings held with NCPC, Frank Porter Graham, and staff from the NCCCHSRC to discuss needed data sets, clarification of how CCHC services are currently delivered, and next steps for the evaluation of the CCHC coaching model.
- Continued conference calls with CCHC Coaches and NCPC to encourage information sharing and ongoing communication.
- Regional coaching model training has begun and will continue through June 2014.

Challenges:

- Communicating project updates and talking through successes and challenges with the many people involved with TZ CCHC work; efforts have been made to develop a plan for this.

Upcoming Tasks:

- A joint webinar between NCPC and NCCCHSRC will be provided in May or June to walk through the new CCHC Model. The audience for this webinar will be all local partnerships.

Family Strengthening Strategies

Family Connects (Activity 17.1)

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

Key Accomplishments:

- Contracts have been executed to support implementation of Family Connects.
- Purveyor and contract staff purchased equipment and supplies, prepared manuals, and posted positions to hire key personnel for implementation (i.e. home visiting (HV) supervisor, program coordinator, data processor, recruiter, and nurse home visitors).
- Nurse recruitment efforts include: Direct mailing to 333 RNs in 6 county zone; ads in Chowan, Bertie, Plymouth newspapers and online; Direct emails to eastern community colleges and nursing schools; Local teams distributed to contacts; posted on Alliance website, employment commission and internally at health departments.
- Worked with NIRN to enhance staff screening and selection.
- A budget revision was approved to repurpose the Northeast Connects coordinator position in the original grant application to support a Triple P coordinator for the northeast 17 Tier One counties.
- NorthEast Connects has changed its name to Family Connects, as a result of conversations with local county teams.
- Negotiations with local health departments have helped to determine the fiscal home and an office space for Family Connects within the region.
- A timeline for implementation activities was developed.
- MOUs with counties were developed and signed and Agreement addenda with 3 of the 4 counties were executed March 1, 2014.
- Launched website, www.familyconnectsnc.org.

- Completed entries into Agency Finder resource database (from which referrals will be made).
- Finalized local provider list (from which correspondence between home visitors and providers).
- Program evaluation budget and plan was submitted to support a contract amendment.
- Attended a Faith Summit to promote TZ activities in Chowan County.

Challenges:

- Working with local health department to integrate Family Connects into existing services.
- The federal shutdown impacted the timeline for budget revision approvals and hence delayed progress towards finding the needed staff to implement projects.
- Finding an administrative home for Family Connects.
- Getting all MOUs and agreement addenda signed.
- Finding highly qualified nursing candidates and Database Analyst candidates.
- Finalizing Plymouth space and IT/communication systems.
- Finalizing parent recruitment strategies for each county/birth hospital

Upcoming Tasks:

- Hire Nurse Director and begin protocol and fidelity training and certification.
- Hire Program coordinator and initiate community outreach and stakeholder efforts in conjunction with local teams.
- Hire Database Manager to establish protected IT links to ARHS server, prep nurse laptops and be trained on running reports and managing field data collection.
- State officials to visit Durham Connects in May for program perspective.
- Program evaluation contract to be revised and signed.
- Equip and establish office space in Plymouth.
- Post and hire county staff nurses.
- Begin training existing .50 nurses from counties, once supervisor is certified.
- Meet with County Implementation and Leadership teams.

Triple P (Positive Parenting Program - Activity 17.2)

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:

- Held biweekly calls with NIRN and TPA.
- Eight county clusters have been determined of the 19 participating counties. A portion of the Triple P allocation per cluster will support a local Triple P Coordinator (Lenoir-Greene-Jones, 1.0 FTE; Halifax-Northampton-Hertford, 1.0 FTE; Granville-Vance, 1.0 FTE; Hyde-Beaufort, 1.0 FTE; Pitt 0.5 FTE, Bertie-Chowan-Camden 0.5 FTE, Nash-Edgecombe 0.5 FTE, Martin-Tyrell-Washington, 1.0 FTE.).
- Prepared and executed agreement addenda to local health departments to support hiring a Triple P coordinator and implementation of Triple P. All clusters hired Triple P coordinators; local coordinators have been through the Triple P Implementation Framework training
- In support of implementation of Triple P in the northeast Tier One counties and across North Carolina, Triple P Stay Positive Campaign:
 - website was purchased using Title V funds. Website was completed and launched.
 - print materials for all implementing sites in North Carolina have been purchased using State Advisory Council ARRA funds. All materials have been received and warehoused in Raleigh.

- Joint webinar held with DSS, NCPC and DPH at state level with about 25 attendees. Audience was local DSS, Smart Start Partnerships, and local health departments.
- Leaders Collaborative meeting was held in February that included an overview of the Triple P Implementation Framework for new NE counties, an update from sites, an overview of the evaluation plan and communications plans.
- Began conversations with a former Triple P America implementation specialist (retired from TPA) interested in working part-time, who brings knowledge of implementation frameworks and can support the work until a permanent hire is in place.
- Local implementation plans being developed.
- Initial training for practitioners scheduled.
- Outreach into the community to inform the community about Triple P underway.
- Budget revision to abolish Triple P Implementation Specialist position has been approved and funds are being redirected to hire a former Triple P America Implementation Specialist to support NC work.

Challenges:

- Keeping up with the amount of information for all counties.
- Agreement addenda were held up by three - four weeks due to the federal shutdown.
- Stay Positive print materials distributed. Sites do not have a large enough transfer van. Multiple trip will be needed to carry materials back to counties.
- NC Open Enrollment for smaller Tier One counties (Rita Bostic and Kat Greene will address these issues.)
- IMOA with DCDEE not executed.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Professor Sanders (model developer) will visit North Carolina at the Triple P State Learning Collaborative May 6.

Early Literacy Strategies

Transformation Zone Early Literacy (Activity 18.3)

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

Key Accomplishments:

- Completed calls with individual counties to discuss scale and initial implementation priority areas.
- Drafted a contract template to be used with the TZ counties that incorporates implementation science and supports sustainable implementation. Counties provided an opportunity to review and provide feedback. Contracts were sent to the counties for final review and signature.
- Initial round of Motherhead curricula trainings provided to transformation zone identified facilitators. The trainings were held in Swan Quarter in Hyde County.
- Counties have begun developing installation plans and site selection criteria. All counties have utilized strategy specific installation checklists developed by the purveyors in partnership with NIRN and NCPC.
- Counties have hired or are in the process of hiring a Literacy Coordinator who will support the installation of both Motherhead and Reach Out.

- Monthly cross-county literacy purveyor calls have begun with Transformation Zone counties to provide additional initial implementation support.

Challenges:

- Assisting the counties in scaling back their initial literacy plans to support successful and sustainable implementation.
- Negotiating Motherhead facilitator training that would meet the needs of four counties, all in different stages of installation/implementation work was challenging, but was accomplished. Continuing to work collaboratively to identify a second series of Motherhead training to be offered in June 2014.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Partnering with NIRN to provide technical assistance to counties in their early literacy installation planning and to discuss program specific installation checklists and model fidelity tools and practices the counties could utilize to support good implementation.
- Future Motherhead trainings have been scheduled for May, June, and July 2014.
- Continued planning conversations around evaluation for the two early literacy strategies.

Transformation Zone Evaluation (Activity 1.3)

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

Key Accomplishments:

- Transformation Zone Evaluation contract was executed on January 29, 2014, with a start date of February 3, 2014.
- Initial meetings and communications were held with members of the Grant Management team in February and Implementation Support team in March.
- Evaluation team completed and submitted Institutional Review Board (IRB) application; the evaluation was determined to be not human subjects research and therefore not subject to continuing IRB review.
- Identified a UNC-CH School of Education student to serve as graduate research assistant.
- Drafted a 1-page description of the project for sharing with stakeholders.
- Drafted a position description for a social research specialist, posted the position, and began reviewing applications to support the project.

Challenges:

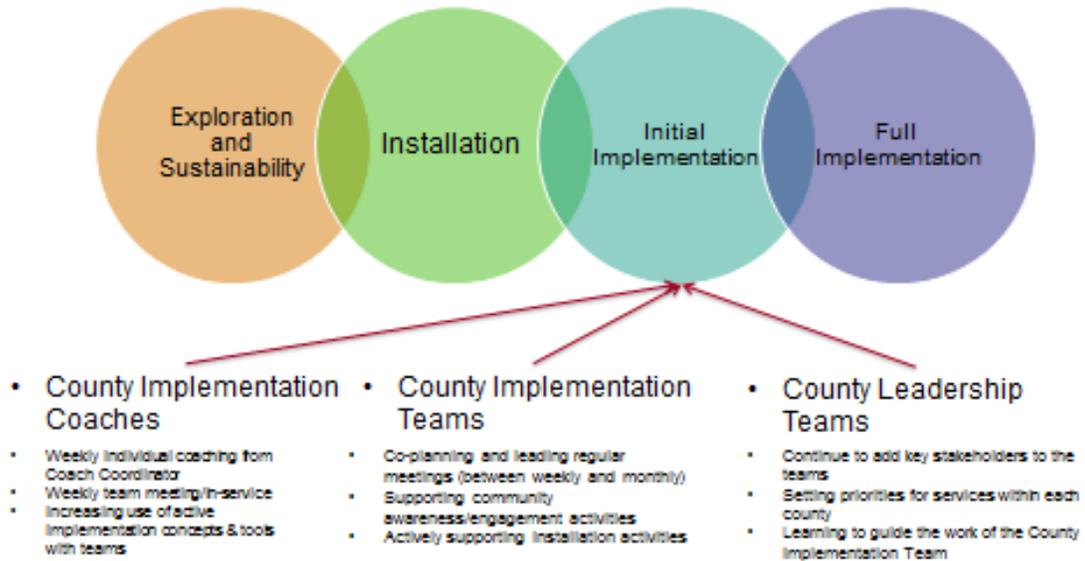
- Slow state contracting processes led to a delay in the contract being executed by January 1st as originally planned.
- Finding times to schedule meetings is challenging with partners' competing demands.

Upcoming Tasks

- Meet with the Early Learning Challenge Project Coordination, NIRN, and NCPC teams to review evaluation design, discuss team coordination, and initiate logic model conversations.
- Hire research staff to support evaluation efforts.
- Finalize the 1-page project description; share with stakeholders.
- Begin development of data collection protocols.

Transformation Zone Strategy by Implementation Phase

Implementation Continues (Spring 2014)



Implementation Continues (Spring 2014)

