

NORTH CAROLINA
RACE TO THE TOP
EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE

Status Report—April - June 2014

Reform Area A: Successful State Systems

Project 1: Overall Grant Management

Description: This Project involves programmatic and fiscal management of the grant, evaluation, technical assistance, and statewide support for work in the Transformation Zone strategy.

Activity 1.1: Overall Grant Management

Description: This Activity involves programmatic and fiscal management and monitoring of the grant.

Key Accomplishments:

- Launched the new North Carolina RTT-ELC web site: <http://earlylearningchallenge.nc.gov/>
- Completed first comprehensive Federal Desk Monitoring with the federal Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge Grant (ELC) team.
- Participated in the 2014 RTT-ELC Annual Grantee Meeting.
- Held monthly calls to communicate with the federal Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge Grant (ELC) team about progress, challenges, and other issues.
- Participated in national and cross-state discussions about ELC issues in order to strengthen the quality of NC's work.
- 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 procedures.
- Managed budgets, tracked expenditures and processed payments.
- Continued Communications Committee meetings to plan and implement grant communications activities, including:
 - Conducted a survey of grant partners to inform communications strategies
 - Initiated plans for a fall Grant Partners Meeting, e-newsletter and webinar series.
- Continued creating and utilizing a central document repository of all grant documents.
- Engaged in ongoing project evaluation activities continuing to assess and discuss opportunities for process improvements.
- Developed, managed and/or revised contracts and Memorandums of Agreement with participating agencies.
- Initiated a comprehensive review of the RTT-ELC Scope of Work (SOW) in GRADS with state partners to correct any inaccurate language, ensure GRADS reflects current ELC grant activities, and ensure accurate reporting of progress.
- Developed annual technical assistance plan with the ELC TA State Support Team contact

Challenges:

- None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Launch an e-newsletter and webinar series for sharing information about RTT-ELC grant projects
- Plan a Grant Partners Meeting for October 2014
- Submit Scope of Work revisions for federal approval
- Implement and further develop annual technical assistance plan with ELC TA State Support Team

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.

- NIRN and State Implementation Specialists continue to actively support development of implementation capacity at the state and local levels. Accomplishments from the previous quarter include:
 - County Leadership Teams, County Implementation Teams, and County coaches' demonstration of increased understanding about and capacity for effective implementation (identified through observation, administration of the County Capacity Assessment, and action planning).
 - Work with individual purveyors (ROR, Motherhead, Connects) to use best practices in active implementation to support installation efforts, including use of selection protocols, Memorandum of Agreement, development of coaching infrastructure, and facilitative administration.
- Discussion of a policy-practice feedback loop and communication strategies between state and county colleagues:
 - Convened cross county and state partner meetings to discuss installation stage implementation challenges and successes.
 - Convened monthly calls between purveyor and county partners to facilitate strategy-specific installation stage implementation.
 - Convened a state funders meeting and subsequent State Implementation Team meeting to continue to develop a viable policy to practice feedback loop.
 - Clarification of roles and responsibilities of state partners as they relate to the funded child care strategies.
- Support for purveyors' model development including:
 - CCHC development of a performance assessment and Practice Profile for pilot in Fall 2015.
 - HSB -- ongoing model development, including identifying thought partners to assist in operationalizing the key components of the model (e.g., similarities and differences with Pyramid Model).

Challenges:

- The development of efficient feedback processes between county and state partners, including a transparent system for sharing data across county, regional and state partners (e.g., sharing

available reports, variance in what and how data is collected and/or used across different strategies, etc.).

- Sustainability of discrete strategies is unclear at this point. State partner engagement in this conversation with county partners is preliminary.
 - Finding consensus on the identification a viable administrative “home” for each strategy will become increasingly important for decision making and accountability purposes when considering factors impacting sustainability.
- Telephone support and technical assistance from purveyors/agency partners to county teams, while helpful for general support and problem-solving, may not be sufficient to address ongoing adaptive challenges being surfaced as the implementation work moves into initial installation efforts. Addressing facilitative administrative barriers (e.g., accessing existing funding for purveyor to travel to directly support county teams during this phase) may require sustained and cooperative efforts from all funders.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Second administration of County Capacity Assessments and Action Planning in Summer 2015 (August-September).
- Development of county-level infrastructure to collect and use data to inform action planning as most strategies will be moving into the Initial Implementation stage over the next quarter.
- Collaboration with state partners to collect and use data to inform action planning to support county-level initial implementation efforts and develop implementation drivers within models.
- Convene ongoing State Implementation Team to identify data informed challenges that may require guidance from a State Leadership Team.

Activity 1.3: Evaluation

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

Key Accomplishments:

- Hired and oriented new social research specialist and social research assistant.
- Finalized an evaluation project description which was then shared with various stakeholders.
- Met monthly with the Transformation Zone Evaluation Work Group to review and revisit evaluation questions and design, discuss team coordination, initiate and follow up logic model conversations, identify next steps for data collection, and review evaluation findings.
- Solicited documentation to address evaluation study questions. Planned and initiated document review of Implementation Hub, North Carolina Partnership for Children (NCPC) files, National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) project server files, and Sakai site (with input from Work Group).
- Conducted network mapping activities:
 - Discussed proposed modifications to evaluation design per meeting with the State Leadership Team. Agreed upon mapping project as a first step.
 - Outlined and planned mapping methodology and analysis strategy.
 - Finalized mapping protocol, interview format, and interview protocols; and identified key informants.
 - Created spreadsheet to collect organization and structural data of state and county team members and had key informants complete (template available upon request).
 - Conducted five key informant interviews to obtain mapping and other evaluation data.
 - Transcribed key informant interviews and began analysis of data.
- Arranged and held an introductory meeting with county coaches, developed a protocol for follow up interviews, conducted interviews and documented proceedings.

- Drafted email and developed a flyer that county coaches could send to local Teams and other stakeholders to introduce the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute (FPG) evaluation team in anticipation of future interviews.
- Planned and scheduled interviews with purveyors.
- Discussed scheduling focus groups with county Teams.
- Participated in partners' meetings.
- Attended Funder's Meeting to document discussion and review findings.
- Attended and presented at State Implementation Team to document discussion and review findings.
- Monitored new evaluation email account, filed key information, and responded as needed.

Challenges:

- Scheduling data collection during the summer months is challenging due to limited availability of county Teams, purveyors, and other stakeholders.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue scheduling, conducting, transcribing and reviewing informant interviews.
- Complete mapping analysis and draft report.
- Develop additional interview protocols and focus group guides for purveyors, county Teams, and other stakeholders.
- Continue review of established and new NIRN, NCPC and other files.
- Continue monitoring evaluation email account and respond as needed.

Activity 1.4: RTT-ELC Technical Assistance (TA) Reserve

Description: Utilize TA funds to support the successful implementation of NC's RTT-ELC work; TA activities will be determined by mutual agreement between NC and federal team.

Key Accomplishments:

- Grant leadership attended the 2014 RTT-ELC Annual Grantee Meeting
- Grant leadership and staff attended and presented at the 2014 NAECS-SDE Annual Meeting

Challenges: None to report

Upcoming Tasks:

- Grant staff will attend the 2014 BUILD National QRIS Meeting.

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

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

Activity 18.1 Leaders Collaborative/Learning Community

Description: This Activity will engage local Smart Start partnerships to implement community-based initiatives that support the state ELC goals.

Key Accomplishments:

- Leaders Collaborative Cohort III completed three full sessions this quarter focusing on the following:

- Data-Driven Decision Making
 - Learning how to read disaggregated data and identify trends and disparities.
 - Choosing a disparity for discussion within the participants' own communities; this will become the focal point for engaging community action.
- Racial Equity
 - Developing and connecting an equity framework for understanding structural racism as it relates to developmental outcomes and disparities for young children.
 - Developing the leadership of local Executive Directors so they can confidently and effectively lead racial equity work at the local level.
- Theory of Aligned Contribution
 - Understanding key concepts from the Theory of Aligned Contributions.
 - Practice using collaborative leadership skills and tools that create alignment around results.
 - Reflect on collaborative experiences and how collaborative leadership skills and tools can be used in each leader's work.
- Leaders began outlining a preliminary action plan for engaging their communities around a chosen disparity, creating invitations, survey, agendas and presentation materials for community conversations. Leaders continued building skills using the Smart Start online learning community to establish regular conversations with cohort members between meetings where leaders exchanged relevant findings and realizations.

Challenges: Exploring structural racism is multi-layered and complex. This session raised many important questions and issues that couldn't be addressed in the short time period. Plans are underway to determine times when these conversations can continue while supported by experienced facilitators.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Ongoing cohort sessions meet monthly through October 2014.
- Participants preparing to extend invitations to cross-sector community members for local sessions designed to address specific disparities and identify strategies for increasing the odds for children with high needs.

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:

- 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. Coaches provide facilitation of the Implementation Team meetings with State Implementation Specialists co-facilitating the active implementation content.
 - One County's Implementation Team is seeking to recruit new members. The coach has made some initial outreach to potential members and will seek support from the Leadership Team. Another Transformation Zone county Coach helped provide information to orient new members to the Leadership Team.
 - Coaches create and deliver Implementation Team reports to Leadership Teams and bring back requests and guidance from Leadership Teams to the Implementation Teams.
 - Coaches participate to varying degrees on the agenda planning for Leadership Teams.

- Members of the Grant Management Team attended the June Leadership Team meeting in one of the Transformation Zone counties.
- Coaches also coordinate and facilitate the ongoing implementation team work between the formal monthly meetings.
 - Coaches continue work on learning the models in support of guiding good installation and initial implementation – three coaches have attended one or more Motherhead trainings, and two coaches have audited a portion of a Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) training and one coach attended a full Triple P training.
 - In all four counties the coaches and the implementation teams (or sub-groups of the teams) have been spending time on the Literacy Installation Action Plans, logic models, memoranda of understanding and program guidelines. This work builds upon the four installation checklists (one for Reach Out and Read and one for each of the three Motherhead curricula). In all four counties the hiring of the literacy coordinator and the development of the position job description was a collaborative effort between the hiring agency, the county coaches and implementation teams.
 - Coaches have been working with the Triple P coordinators and members of their Implementation and/or Leadership Team members around selection of participants to attend the Triple P trainings.
 - The coaches, and some team members, participated in a phone call regarding the infant and toddler strategies with representatives from the purveyor, the funder and grants management.
- The Transformation Zone Evaluation team attended a coaches’ team meeting and three of the four coaches have met individually with the evaluators. They are helping to facilitate connections between the Evaluation Team and county teams and local staff implementing the strategies.
- Coordination with strategy purveyors and implementing staff.
 - Planning Cross County meetings with local teams and State Implementation Team
 - Coaches led planning meeting with coach coordinator and State Implementation Specialists for two April cross county meetings. Strategy purveyors attended one of these meetings.
 - Coaches served as hosts for the meetings, as facilitators of conversations between local teams and purveyors, and as recorders.
 - Overall team members were positive about the opportunity to have direct conversations with purveyors.
 - Three coaches participated in the State Implementation Team meeting in Raleigh on June 10th.
 - Coaches, along with Implementation Team members, continue participating in monthly phone calls with purveyors (five calls for the 8 strategies).
- Local coaches participate in community events to provide information about the Transformation Zone work and in support of the early childhood system to spread the word about the strategies to assist with family participation.
 - Coaches participated in a stakeholders meeting hosted by their local County Schools, made presentations to the School Board and County Commissioners, and attended ministerial association meetings and a reception for the new Superintendent of Schools.
 - Two counties coaches co-facilitated the third meeting of the Region One CCR&R TA staff. This group includes TA staff from Smart Start Partnerships, Region One TA staff, CCHCs, Transformation Zone childcare strategy staff, local licensing consultants and childcare health inspectors. The focus of this meeting was collaboration.
- Coaches assisted with the planning for the Pennie Foster-Fishman/ABLE Change training on Engaging Diverse Voices in May.

- Coaches worked with Implementation Teams and Leadership teams to identify training participants. They developed county specific flyers as a recruitment tool and helped identify key informants for pre-training interviews.
- All Transformation Zone counties hosted two-day training trainings in May. There were between 20 and 35 attendees at each of the trainings. Between the four counties 100 individuals attended the trainings. Twenty one of those, including coaches and state level staff, had also attended earlier Motivational Interviewing and/or Adaptive Schools trainings.
- Coaches are beginning to plan task groups to address engaging parents and increased collaboration among community agencies as a result of the initial ABLearning training.
- All of the coaches attended the annual Smart Start Conference in Greensboro the first week of May.

Challenges: None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Begin to convene and support task groups that emerged from the ABLearning training. Individual and peer to peer coaching will be offered to support this work. Initial planning for the second half of the ABLearning Change training/retreat to be held in February will begin.
- Participate in joint meeting of literacy coordinators in support of planning for Motherhead installation and initial implementation.
- Develop combined theory of change with NIRN for the Transformation Zone project.

Activity 18.3: Transformation Zone Early Literacy

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

Key Accomplishments:

- Counties began developing installation plans and site selection criteria utilizing strategy specific installation checklists developed by the purveyors in partnership with NIRN and NCPC.
 - In May, counties submitted their installation plans, which included information on literacy coordinator job description development, individual strategy installation checklists with tasks and timelines, site selection criteria, and planning successes and challenges.
 - NCPC provided feedback on the plans and county revisions were submitted in June 2014. The plans have been shared with the literacy purveyors and evaluators to assist in technical assistance and evaluation planning.
- Literacy Coordinators were hired in all four counties and each county identified supports necessary to ensure their Literacy Coordinator is successful.
- Monthly cross-county literacy purveyor calls, hosted by NIRN continue with Transformation Zone counties to provide additional initial implementation support.
- Transformation zone counties have been invited to attend the Smart Start Reach Out and Read (ROR) Project Coordinator monthly calls, which is an existing network of Smart Start funded Project Coordinators discussing Reach Out and Read implementation successes, challenges, and providing peer-to-peer support.

- The second series of Motherread trainings began with the 3-day Motherread/Fatheread Institute held in Chowan County on May 20-22, 2014. B.A.B.Y. and Story Exploring training will follow in June and July.
- NCPC, the Early Literacy evaluator, and Motherread began developing Transformation Zone specific quality assurance and evaluation pieces, such as logic models, site MOAs, surveys, and tracking forms. These discussions contributed to development of the evaluation plan.

Challenges: None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Counties anticipate initial implementation to begin in a staggered roll-out, based on county readiness, in summer.
- A cross-county Transformation Zone Early Literacy meeting will be held in July with the four Early Literacy Coordinators to discuss successes and challenges to date, explore further opportunity for cross-county work, and review the Motherread quality assurance and evaluation pieces with Motherread staff and the Early Literacy evaluator.

Reform Area B: High-Quality, Accountable Programs

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

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

Activity 4.1: Revising TQRIS

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

Key Accomplishments:

- Convened a subcommittee of the original QRIS Advisory Committee to review results of initial mapping of that committee’s recommendations by the TQRIS Validation Study team.
- Subcommittee advised on elements of the new QRIS model that would reflect the QRIS Advisory Committee’s intent/framework but reduce barriers for programs to maintain or increase star rating.
- Focus groups and provider surveying has begun and will continue over the next several weeks.
- Coordination between the TQRIS Validation Study and the Program Quality Measure continues.

Challenges:

- None to report for this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Refer to Project 7 – TQRIS Validation Study

Activity 4.2: Professional Development Bonus Program

Description: This Activity will offer Incentives to ELD programs that implement certain policies and practices related to staff professional development.

Key Accomplishments:

- A marketing brochure was developed and is in the process of being disseminated to all 4 and 5 star ELD programs as well as to Child Care Resource and Referral agencies for additional marketing and use on their websites. Related materials (FAQ, Application, etc.) are in development and will soon be disseminated and also available on the Child Care Resources, Inc. website.
- Using ELDS enrollment data from DCDEE, bonus funds available for each Child Care Resource and Referral region were determined, but funds will be dispersed statewide on a first come, first served basis. A Project Coordinator was hired and will start in June.

Challenges: None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- It is anticipated that project information will be mailed to 4- and 5- star early learning programs by the end of June.
- Child Care Resources, Inc. will develop an article on the Professional Development Bonus Award that will be distributed statewide to Child Care Resource and Referral Lead Agencies to use in agency newsletter/publications.

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:

- Through May, the project has received 69 applications from public school programs, and 66 of those have been awarded mini-grants.
- All 66 Public Schools awarded mini-grants have achieved temporary licenses, with four achieving a 4-Star License, and six achieving a 5-Star License
- No new GS-110 (faith-based) providers applied for or were awarded mini-grants in the March-May 2014 period, so the total stands at 12 programs operating with a GS 110-106 letter of compliance in eight counties having applied for and been granted a pre-licensing mini-grant.

Challenges:

- Some public schools are not planning to apply for grants. They plan to close their Pre-K programs when licensing is mandatory.
- Six GS-110 programs that have been awarded grants have not claimed any reimbursement.
- Continued low interest by GS-110 programs that have not applied.
- Currently, none of the GS-110 programs that have been awarded grants have achieved a star license.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Project staff and Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) staff will follow-up with participating GS-110 programs to determine their current status and support needed to move into the QRIS.
- CCR&R lead agencies are surveying GS-110 providers that have been awarded grants to determine where the programs are in their process and what support is needed to bring them into the QRIS.
- Hold conversations with staff of the North Carolina Partnership for Children staff regarding the Faith Summits that were supported by the RTT-ELC grant to learn from that effort about working with the faith community to encourage participation in the TQRIS. Provide additional follow-up based on those conversations.
- DCDEE and grant management staff will review the project's plans to recruit GS-110's and move them into the QRIS, then determine the most effective path forward.

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:

- Coordinator hired and began work to convene regional meetings of the Friend and Family Network and part-day preschool programs.

Challenges:

- Recruitment was extensive but failed to secure enough participants to convene a single regional meeting, so DCDEE, in concert with the grant management team, designed an alternative strategy to gather data from these providers and programs not currently required to participate in the QRIS.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Coordinate with Child Care Resource and Referral partners to perform telephone surveys of the target population; develop and disseminate survey script; order educational incentives (children's books) for participants.
- Collect, compile, and review survey results.

Project 5: New Program Quality Measurement Tool - Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE)

Description: *This project will create a new measurement tool that addresses important aspects of quality related to child outcomes and may be used in a TQRIS. NC will lead a consortium of states to develop and pilot-test the new quality assessment tool.*

Activity 5: Program Quality Measure Development**Key Accomplishments:**

- The Measure Development group divided into a working group and a feedback group to continue revising and reorganizing the observation items.
- Teams continue revising and reorganizing the observation items based on the revised structure of key practices and key constructs.

- A draft of the key practices was shared with to the RTT-ELC QRIS Validation Study team for review and feedback.
- A draft of the key practices was shared with the Advisory Committee for review and comment.
- Key Practice 1 (Program Administration) items continue being refined; ideas were brainstormed regarding how to collect data efficiently and effectively.
- Program administration key practice was presented at the Smart Start Conference on May 6th and ideas and examples of sources of evidence were collected from presentation participants.
- Finalizing video footage in preparation for piloting; additional footage will be filmed in an infant classroom and a preschool classroom.
- Additional areas for literature review were identified.
- A one day working meeting was held in conjunction with the National Inclusion Institute in which team members worked to finalize the key practices and key constructs. Items were revised and reorganized into the new framework accordingly in preparation for piloting.
- An overview of the project, highlighting crosswalk of standards and key practices with key constructs, was presented at NAEYC's Professional Development Institute in Minneapolis, MN on June 8th.

Challenges:

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

Upcoming Tasks:

- DCDEE will finalize the amendment adding funds to support additional faculty and staff involvement in the project, in order to address the ongoing challenge of underfunded personnel time.
- Complete additional filming in preparation for video pilot.
- Complete draft of items in preparation for video pilot and self-study
- Conduct video pilot of measure.
- Develop rubrics to evaluate program documents and personnel interview responses
- Reflect on feedback gathered from recent conferences as well as the advisory committee.
- Set up data collection forms to gather feedback on items for in preparation for video piloting and program administration.
- Prepare for further discussions on scoring, including additional discussion with National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) re: implementation science and measures using the implementation framework.
- Coordinate outreach to other states that have expressed interest in the pilot.
- Celebrate Delaware's full return to the project.

Project 6: Increase Access to High Quality Early Learning and Development Programs (ELDs) - Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE)

Description: *This Project includes four activities to increase child access to high quality early learning and development programs.*

Activity 6.1: Support for 3 or More Stars

Description: This Activity will support one and two star programs toward attaining a three star or higher rating.

Key Accomplishments:

- Statewide, 270 programs served through this project have increased stars.
- 52 of the original base-line programs have closed.
- 206 programs are currently being served through this project, and an additional 100 will be added in the coming weeks/months.
- An additional 44 programs are expected to participate in 2015.
- Project staff conducted a survey of remaining 1 & 2 star programs to determine their barriers to moving up in the QRIS.

Challenges:

- The biggest barrier to moving up in the QRIS, as identified in the survey mentioned above, was a simple lack of interest. The second most prevalent barrier was unwillingness to go back to school, do extra work, or prepare for and go through an Environment Rating Scale assessment.
- Several of the 1 and 2 star programs on contract for technical assistance need so much improvement that they may not move up in the QRIS by the end of the grant.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue providing technical assistance and professional development support services to Temporary, 1- and 2-star programs that are committed to achieving higher star ratings.
- Continue to develop specific strategies for working with family child care homes.
- Review the results of the survey of barriers to increasing star ratings, and strategize about outreach and messaging to resistant programs.

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:

- A total of 6 Infant Toddler Expansion Grant programs received technical assistance (24 consultations) in two participating Transformation Zone counties. Window for Environment Rating Scale assessment opened May 28th for one program, and it moved up to 5 stars.
- One new application was approved and pre-assessment completed.
- The project will generate 76 slots if all programs currently involved move up to 4 or 5 stars, but it is expected that not all programs will be able to do so.

Challenges:

- There are no opportunities for this project in one Transformation Zone county.
- The 4 and 5 star programs in the area have no room to add infant toddler slots, so the project has had to solicit participation to programs with less-than-4&5 star programs, those that are willing (with support), to move up in the QRIS. The process for moving an entire program up in the system has taken more time and involvement from project staff, despite enlisting support from other RttT-ELC-funded projects, so progress is slower than we would have liked or anticipated.
- The project has likely tapped all potential programs for this project, and, as mentioned above, a number of the currently participating programs are unlikely to move up to 4 or 5 stars.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue activities with approved Infant Toddler Expansion Grant programs.
- Conduct outreach to potential programs.

- Continue discussions with DCDEE and grant management team re: possible alternate projects to increase the quality of infant/toddler care in the Transformation Zone (or possibly even statewide).

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:

- Both transportation and double-slot options were approved by DCDEE and began being implemented in the second quarter 2014.
- 82 slots have been approved.
- In one Transformation Zone county, there are 21 children attending at month end (two aged out); 8 receiving transportation.
- In another Transformation Zone county, a program recently opened and began serving 6 children; 4 receiving transportation.
- One county with one eligible child care to begin NCB1 application process – anticipates 6 slots at that facility.

Challenges:

- One site had its license summarily suspended by DCDEE, necessitating the project to contact families and work with them to identify alternate placement. All families were placed in other programs. Project staff also removed from the closed site all materials purchased by the grant, for redistribution to participating or soon-to-be-participating programs.
- One of the Transformation Zone counties has had no child applications this calendar year despite project staff contacting potential referral agencies. One facility does not provide transportation which seems to be of some concern. Conversations continue with the local Smart Start Partnership to better understand the county needs and determine additional opportunities for project staff to support recruitment in this county now that double slots are an option.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Work with eligible facilities to complete application and begin NCB1 program.
- Continue to provide TA and support for teachers and administrators in participating counties.
- The infant toddler specialist on this project is scheduled to attend the Program for Infant Toddler Care (PITC) training June 15-21, 2014 to complete required professional development.
- Work with Transformation Zone counties to find and inform families of NCB1.

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

- FPG Child Development Institute & Child Trends conducted a webinar on April 15th to present and discuss variations to Alternative 2 that would produce a more acceptable distribution of star ratings for programs and make the criteria more feasible and attainable for programs. Several tests were run with varying thresholds that DCDEE can potentially use to inform their standards

revision. In addition to findings from the mapping, plans for upcoming project tasks (i.e. focus groups and expert interviews) were also discussed.

- A meeting was held with the QRIS Subcommittee on April 16th to discuss the additional findings and mapping results when model thresholds are varied.
- Provider education data was received from the data warehouse and FPG and Child Trends began the process of organizing and cleaning the data for further analysis.
- A meeting between FPG, DCDEE and Child Trends was held on May 6th to discuss next steps for the validation study based on recommendations from QRIS Subcommittee meeting. In addition, implications for the Alternative Models and plans for upcoming project tasks (i.e. education data mapping, focus groups, and expert interviews), were also discussed.
- FPG & Child Trends continued the process of organizing and cleaning the education data for further analysis and data mapping. Additional clarification regarding how variables from the education data report align with requirements in the proposed alternatives was obtained from DCDEE.
- 3 of the 7 focus groups for centers, family child care homes, and families were conducted in selected counties across North Carolina.
- FPG met with a statistician to discuss sampling plan for larger validation study.

Challenges:

- Identifying other potential variations to current criteria in the model with reliable measures for validation is challenging. Criteria in areas such as specialization, family engagement, curriculum, CLASS, self-assessments, professional development plan, & ELDS are currently being considered.
- The process for implementing and then measuring the proposed new QRIS model will require careful coordination and collaboration across several early childhood educator stakeholders.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Ongoing meetings with Measure Development project.
- Conduct remaining focus groups with providers and families.
- If needed, plan to 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.
- Finalize sampling plan with statistician.
- Begin preliminary analysis of focus group notes.
- Conduct interviews with national experts about alternative models.

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

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

Activity 12.2.7 – Infant Toddler Specialist in the Transformation Zone

This Activity has been completed.

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

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

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

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

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

This Activity has been completed.

- Twenty-two hubs have been selected.

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

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

Key Accomplishments:

- As of this reporting period, 19 of the original 22 Training Hubs continue to operate, delivering training and other supports (coaching and follow-up as needed) to licensed child care providers across the State. (To date, three Training Hubs have completed their scopes of work: Franklin-Vance-Warren, Inc., Western Carolina Community Action, and Blue Ride Opportunity Commission. These Hubs have reached about 30% of the childcare providers in their Hubs, on average).
- 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).
- To date, all Training Hubs (both active and now inactive) have trained about 15% (or 1200) of all licensed childcare providers in the State.
- Many participating childcare providers are reporting changes in their practice as a result of the family engagement trainings that they are attending.

Challenges:

- Challenges persist with recruiting some local childcare providers for participation, even with marketing assistance from the CCR&R network, Smart Start agencies, DCDEE, and the NC Head Start State Collaboration Office. 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.). However, participation has greatly waned due to the fact that the proposed revisions to the QRIS (to include family engagement standards) are not yet required.

Upcoming Tasks:

- The third of 22 Training Hubs will complete its scope of work in September 2014.
- The next set of regional PLC meetings will be convened in or around August 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 Head Start State Collaboration Office on a Quarterly Basis).
- Project impact is Monitored and evaluated in several ways. Hubs are required to track and report the extent to which they are reaching childcare providers in their Hubs on a Quarterly Basis. Training Hubs are also required to tweak the services they provide based on participant feedback.
- Coaching that goes along with the training provides the opportunity to observe changes.

Challenges:

- None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

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

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

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

Activity 18.4: Faith Summits

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

Key Accomplishments:

This Activity has been completed.

- The final Faith Summit Evaluation Report with Executive Summary was completed.
- A new resource *The Faith Community and Early Childhood: Engaging Your Congregation* <http://buildthefoundation.org/the-faith-community-and-early-childhood/> was created by NC Early Childhood Foundation (NCECF) with ideas derived from the regional Faith Summits.
- Local faith summits are continuing to be held in counties across the state, funded by local community groups or local Smart Start Partnerships with NCECF mini-grants in: New Hanover, Chowan-Perquimans, Rockingham, Brunswick, Craven, Yadkin, Davie, Lincoln-Gaston and Onslow.

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

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

(DCDEE)

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

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

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

Key Accomplishments:

This Activity has been completed.

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

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

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

Key Accomplishments:

- Train-the-trainer sessions for *NC Foundations for Early Learning & Development (NC FELD)* and for *The Art and Science of Early Childhood Technical Assistance* have rolled out across the state, and some limited training on *NC FELD* was offered to providers.
- CLASS training continues to be offered throughout the state, and TA providers continue to use the CLASS instrument their observation and quality improvement work with ELD programs.
- Child Care Resource and Referral staff that provide technical assistance are beginning to acquire the Technical Assistance (TA) Endorsement.
- All regions continue to hold communities of practice.
- *Choosing and Using a Curriculum with Formative Assessment Strategies* continues to be offered across the state.
- The field test of the draft 10 hour pre-service online orientation was completed and results shared with DCDEE.
- Completed draft of template to be used to document the 6 hours of center specific orientation.
- Community partners were contacted to contribute to the additional 24 hours of orientation; the topics to be included were finalized; and work toward the development of those modules is underway.
- CEU Course descriptions are being modified to show their alignment with *NC FELD*.
- Child Care Resource and Referral Management Team met and scheduled all RTT-ELC CEU courses (*NC FELD*, *Choosing & Using*, *The Art & Science of Technical Assistance*, *CLASS*) for the rest of 2014.

Challenges:

- Low engagement in the *CLASS & Choosing and Using an Approved Curriculum with Formative Assessment Strategies* learning events. Additional communication strategies are being explored in each region to increase participation.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue to offer CEU courses.
- Continue to align existing courses with *NC FELD*.
- Finalize and test orientation.

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

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

Activity 9.1: ELDS Foundations Revised

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

This Activity has been completed.

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

Activity 9.2: ELDS CEU and Professional Development

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

Key Accomplishments:

- Train-the-Trainer events have been held across the state.
- Planning for the higher education institutes has begun. Tentative dates for the fall have been scheduled, a steering committee has been identified, and content is being developed. Tentative dates are September 29 & 30; October 7 & 8; October 9 & 10; and October 14 & 15

Challenges: None to report at this time.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Develop a proposal for online .5 CEU *North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development*.
- Develop an online train-the-trainer module for .5 CEU for *North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development*.

Project 15: K-3 Assessment – Department of Public Instruction (DPI)

Description: This Project will revise the NC K-3 Assessment to include all school readiness domains and provide information on children's skills when they enter kindergarten.

Activity 15.5: 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:

- Snapshot and CLASS data collectors completed observations on all elementary classrooms (PK-3) in two counties in Northeastern NC.
- Meetings were conducted with teachers on the team and the principal.
- Staff continued to analyze data and prepare materials for professional development.

- First School staff provided professional development (April and June) 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.

Challenges: None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Proposal for on-line professional development module on First School framework. 2014-2015 classroom coaching, professional development and technical assistance scheduled.

(Repeated) Project 16: Family Engagement – see page 14-16

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:

- MOU's and Agreement Addenda with all four Transformation Zone counties signed and executed.
- Contract amendment to add funding for Family Connects evaluation has been executed with Center for Child and Family Health.
- Outreach materials have been printed and ready for distribution.
- The Division of Public Health will house the Family Connects data on a secure HIPAA compliant server.
- Local office space secured in Plymouth, North Carolina through a local adjacent Health Department.
- All positions hired--last two nurse home visitors start July 7th.
- Training for staff is underway to assure a July 1, 2014 start date for service delivery.

Challenges:

- Developing relationships with local OB/GYN's, birthing hospitals, and other referring agencies and programs for referrals into the Family Connects program.
- Moving from local administrative oversight to local ownership of the program.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Conduct community based parent surveys to help vet referral resource lists.
- Finalize Agency Finder resource guide with local groups.
- Conduct physician outreach to educate on program benefits.
- Orientation will continue and arranging "training" visits.

- Set up in-services for the staff with CCFH to cover topics that are part of the family well-being assessment.

Activity 17.2: Positive Parenting Program (Triple P)

Description: The Triple P Program, an evidence based family strengthening program, is designed to meet the needs of families with many programs and options available to them. Triple P will be working with the Transformation Zone to develop programming.

Key Accomplishments:

- Triple P Implementation Specialist hired, via Temporary Solutions, as the Triple P Implementation Specialist as of April 8, 2014 for the 17 Tier One counties in northeastern NC, plus additional support for Pitt and Nash counties which regionally service families in the 17 Tier One counties.
- Local Coordinators have been hired for all the 17 Tier One counties.
- The Triple P Data Reporting System has been deployed. Initial data from the beginning of the program is due by the end of May 2014.
- Trainings of local practitioners began in May 2014. To date, 23 trainings have been scheduled, with 14 trainings completed by the end of June 2014. An additional seven trainings are planned, but no training date set.

Challenges:

- NC Open Enrollment for smaller Tier One counties (State Triple Implementation Specialist and Triple P America will address these issues.)
- Sustainability of the program beyond the grant funding. The Sustainability Workgroup, part of the NC Triple P State Learning Collaborative, is working on recommendations.
- Hiring a part-time data person that will assist local coordinators in the collection and reporting of services and outcome data.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue discussions about Open Enrollment.
- Continue trainings for local providers.

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

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

Activity 18.5: Child Care Health Consultants (CCHC)

Description: Child Care Health Consultants support child care programs in promoting children’s health and development. This Activity will strengthen statewide capacity by establishing a regional health consultant coaching model. It will also provide additional health consultants in the Transformation Zone counties.

Key Accomplishments:

- All Transformation Zone counties are implementing services and have worked with their agencies and stakeholders to identify child care centers and homes prioritized for intensive health and safety consultation.
- Regional CCHC Coaching module training continues and by June 2014, all Eastern region CCHCs were trained in the coaching model.

- Local partnerships continue to review the CCHC Model and assess how they, with support provided by the CCHC Coaches, can align current CCHC services.
 - CCHC Model Webinar hosted by the North Carolina Partnership for Children (NCPC) and the NC Child Care Health and Safety Resource Center (NCCCHSRC) on June 17, 2014 to review model development, components, resource development, and have local partnerships speak to early model usage and adoption.
- NCCCHSRC and NCPC continue to track general feedback and consultation/coaching contacts with local CCHCs, their supervisors, and local partnership staff.
- Continued evaluation meetings held with NCPC, Frank Porter Graham, and staff from the NCCCHSRC to develop the evaluation plan.
 - CCHC Coaching evaluators are currently meeting with NCPC, NCCCHSRC to coordinate the development of a tool that could be used by CCHCs and CCHC Coaches to track information about coaching and consultation contacts.
- Continued conference calls with CCHC Coaches and NCPC to encourage information sharing and ongoing communication.
- Quarterly cross-county call using a community of practice approach to the implementation of additional CCHC services in the transformation zone continue.

Challenges: None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Finalization of a Performance Assessment form that can be utilized by CCHCs, supervisors, and agencies to assess their on-going implementation of the CCHC model.
- The development of a NC Health and Safety Assessment Tool APP.
- Considering piloting, in select counties, the utilization of the CCHC Model in tandem with the Performance Assessment form, NC Health and Safety Assessment Tool, and Coaching model.

Activity 18.6: Assuring Better Child Development (ABCD)

Description: This Activity will expand statewide the ABCD program through which young children are screened at pediatric visits.

Key Accomplishments:

- North Carolina Partnership for Children (NCPC) project manager worked with Dr. Earls of Community Care of North Carolina (CCNC) to plan and facilitate a comprehensive, two-day ABCD training in April. The training was the second training within the grant period. The first training had taken place in September 2013. The April training was attended by all new ABCD coordinators as well as most of the other coordinators who benefited from this opportunity to network, learn and discuss their work.
- Evaluator and project manager finalized a summary report of the survey and follow-up of interviews with the ABCD coordinators conducted earlier this spring. Report was shared with ABCD coordinators, Local ABCD Partnership Leadership and CCNC collaborators.
- First quarter (2014) outcomes and chart review data were collected in April.
- The three new Local Partnerships that have received contracts to implement regional ABCD projects effective 2014 have hired their ABCD coordinators and are well underway now with implementation of the project.

- ABCD planning Partnerships submitted their progress reports at the end of May. Planning continues in the four regions to get ready for implementation in 2015.
- Project manager continues to hold monthly TA phone calls with all ABCD coordinators. Coordinators make great use of these phone calls and multiple successes, challenges and questions are shared and addressed every month.
- The quarterly ABCD Quality Improvement meeting took place in Greensboro, providing an interactive presentation and workshop on screening tools. Same week the State ABCD Advisory Committee met at which various key state partners provided updates.

Challenges:

- Due to NC Tracks problems, CCNC has not received any updated screening data (which is based on Medicaid billing data) since June 2013. Previously, this data was supplied to NCPC as well as to the coordinators on a quarterly basis.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue to provide technical assistance to Local Partnerships, with a particular focus on working with the Planning Partnerships in July and August.
- In July, second quarter data reports will be submitted by the ABCD coordinators.
- Sustainability discussions have begun and NCPC staff will meet with CCNC to actively address this and plan ahead.

Reform Area D: A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

Project 3: Professional Development Capacity Building

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

Activity 3.1: NC Early Childhood Professional Development

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

Key Accomplishments:

- In lieu of convening a Professional Development Council, as proposed in the original Scope of Work, a new approach was proposed by the grants management team and discussed with federal program officers. The new approach uses funds in this Project to target ongoing, priority professional development activity(ies) that need additional support.
- Grant management team has held conversations with grant project leaders and university faculty to explore funding needs and opportunities.

- Revised SOW for this Activity in GRADS submitted for federal program officer approval.

Challenges:

- None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Grant management will develop a revised plan for the professional development support activities and budget for how \$25,000 will be spent and will submit the plan for federal approval.

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:

- Planning meetings with UNC Administration have identified two universities that have much of the coursework and technology in place to be able to initiate the online Master’s Degree in fall of 2014.
- It was determined that a system-wide online Master’s Degree is not feasible at this time and that the online Master’s Degree will be made available with two of the state universities as a next step.
- Proposals have been submitted from the two state universities to offer the online Master’s Degree.
- Plans are in place to initiate two contracts with state universities to develop and offer the online Master’s Degree so it will be available statewide.
- T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships (Task 12.2.15 in GRADS – Develop and implement outreach plan for Master’s Degree in Early Childhood Program Leadership and Management Scholarship) are being offered for coursework that will contribute to the online Master’s Degree. A total of 29 scholarships have been granted in the two universities and 13 additional applications are submitted.

Challenges:

- The multiple steps to creating a cross-university degree program proved to be an obstacle to a system-wide approach. Even though the process of coming to this decision has taken longer than expected, we have a firm plan in place to meet our commitment to having this degree program available to NC early childhood educators by the end of the grant.
- Students entering the program may need support of T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships beyond December 2015.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Establish contracts with two state universities to offer the online Master’s Degree.

Project 6: Increase Access to High Quality Early Learning and Development Programs (ELDs) - Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE)

Description: This Project includes four activities to increase child access to high quality early learning and development programs.

Activity 6.4: Workforce Study

Description: This Activity will conduct an annual workforce study of early childhood educators' education, compensation, and retention levels to better identify the strategies needed to improve child access to high quality ELD programs.

Key Accomplishments:

- The 2013 Workforce Study was approved by DCDEE and DHHS and is now posted in GRADS and on the Child Care Services Association (CCSA) website at: <http://www.childcareservices.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Final-2013-WorkforceReport-dated-6-12-14.pdf>.
- The 2014 study is well underway.
- Data entry sheets were created, color coded, entered; and data entry checking continues.
- Partial survey respondents continue to be followed up for completion.
- 139 Family child care homes and 49 centers were added to the sample in smaller regions in an attempt to secure more accurate findings.
- Mailed surveys to new participants.
- Enlisted the help of Child Care Resource and Referral agencies to reach non-responding programs.
- Current response rate: 50% for directors; 23% for teachers; 39% for Family Child Care Homes.

Challenges:

- In completing the 2013 report, project staff determined that additional data points would provide a more complete picture for the 2014 report. Unfortunately, this added more time than expected in order to ensure that data was being collected and recorded accurately.
- Database changes to accommodate the above-referenced changes are proving more difficult than anticipated.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Reconfigure tracking database to account for additional surveys.
- Continue data entry.
- Continue to log completed surveys into tracking database.
- Continue to follow up with partial survey respondents.
- Prepare and send second round of mailings to non-responding centers.

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

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

Activity 8.2: Course on Mentoring and Technical Assistance

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

Key Accomplishments:

- Thirty-eight individuals from NC Child Care Resource and Referral Lead and Local agencies, and four individuals from outside of the NC Child Care Resource and Referral System participated in the first two "Train the Trainers" events.
- 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 2.0 CEU.

- Certificates of completion were sent to all participants in Train the Trainer sessions for their use in the renewal (and/or receipt) of the Technical Assistance Endorsement.
- A Member hub site was established for Child Care Resource and Referral staff to engage in ongoing dialogue, reflection and sharing about delivery of The Art and Science of Early Childhood Coaching, Mentoring and Technical Assistance.

Challenges: None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- DCDEE is working with contractor to add funds to the contract for the development of a 3 semester credit hour course, to be taught at the graduate level, on the Art and Science of Early Childhood Coaching, Mentoring and Technical Assistance.

(Repeated) Activity 8.3: Child Care Resource &Referral (CCR&R) Enhancement – see page 17

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:

- 14 programs across the four Transformation Zone counties are currently participating in the project.
- The Transformation Zone Behavior Specialist Completed collection of ASQ-SE screenings from teachers on those children s/he has identified as using challenging behaviors in programs in two counties.
- The Transformation Zone Behavior Specialist also conducted pre-TPOT assessments in 3 of 4 participating classrooms in one county prior to summer recess.
- Transformation Zone Behavior Specialist continues to provide TA to participating classrooms.
- Statewide Project Manager has attended/ presented to cross-county Implementation Team Meeting; Participated in State Implementation Team / Child Care Strategies conference call; and continued work with NIRN team on Practice Profile

Challenges:

- Inclement weather (tornadoes) impacted scheduled TA early in the second quarter and slowed accomplishments in classrooms across the Transformation Zone.
- Cohort trainings are surprisingly difficult to schedule (or reschedule). This issue is particularly difficult this spring as it is a busy time for the cohort members both as parents and as teachers/administrators. The meetings are sometimes delayed to ensure that no participant misses the training; since TA is largely focused by training topic, this can delay progress toward completion of classroom Pyramid Model goals.
- One county’s cohort, consisting of 2 NC Pre-K classrooms in an elementary school and 1 Head Start classroom, were not finalized until April. The Head Start classroom closed for the summer in mid-May, before the specialist was able to visit the classroom; the TPOT assessment and ASQ-SE screenings will be done in this classroom this fall. Also, because the NC Pre-K students will be transitioning into Kindergarten, it was decided to wait until fall to have teacher’s complete ASQ-SE screenings in these classrooms as well.

- Implementation and Leadership Teams as well as classroom management personnel expectations of project staff have been varied and complex, largely due to county and system differences. Communication protocols related to these expectations was not initially clarified for all involved.
- In one county, Transformation Zone Specialist notified County Coach about lack of participation in training cohort meetings and in TA by staff & administration of one classroom. Coach will present issue to county Implementation team.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue building relationships with local TA personnel and agencies.
- Obtain and score pre-ASQ-SE screenings by classroom staff on those children in classroom identified by teacher as using challenging behavior.
- Continue classroom observations and technical assistance.
- Statewide Project Manager – continue work on development of HSB practice profile.

Project 10: Certification and Licensure – Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE)

Description: *Certification and Licensure provides coaching and support to teachers working with children with high needs in non-public school, non-NC Pre-K classrooms who are working to earn the full B-K teacher licensure; develops a Technical Assistance Endorsement for professionals who provide technical assistance, coaching, and mentoring to early childhood teachers; and provides support for Early Educator Certification at a reduced cost for the early care and education workforce.*

Activity 10.1: Support for BK Teacher Licensure

Description: This Activity will provide coaching and support to teachers working with children with high needs in non-public school, non-NC Pre-K classrooms who are working to earn the full B-K teacher licensure (SP2).

Key Accomplishments:

- A brief survey was sent to 51 teachers on the wait list to determine eligibility and interest for summer services. To be eligible the teacher must work 12 months and must have completed the required professional development through the Early Educator Support, Licensure and Professional Development Program (EESLPD).
- A year-end EESLPD Program survey was sent to all EESLPD Office Team Members and Partners. Survey reminders were sent to enrolled teachers and their site administrators.
- Completed the review of Common Core and recently published *North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development* alignment.
- Guided Observations in the first established nonpublic Demonstration Site continued. Following the observation, visitors were sent a brief evaluation and teachers did submit plans for implementing something they learned in their own classroom. EESLPD Office is gathering evidence of implementation from the teacher’s mentor before CEUs are provided. Guided observations are targeted to help teachers meet professional goals on their Professional Development Plan.
- Planning for Fall 2014 EESLPD required Professional Development (PD) is in process.
- Teachers with expiring licensure and those recommended for the SPII license were sent notices with action steps and forms required for their individual licensure action.
- All active teachers have been contacted to submit their NC DPI Form E to provide information about their 2013-2014 teaching experiences. This information will be logged into NC DPI’s database.

- Licensure action requests were processed for submission to the NC Department of Public Instruction (NC DPI): a total of 44 licensure action requests were sent to the NC DPI during May 2014, nine of which were for BK Project teachers including one conversion to the SPII License.
- New enrollments are processed in 30-60 days. A total of 213 teachers, identified as RTT, are enrolled with the EESLPD Office (June 11, 2014 data).
- Summative Evaluation Conferences and final review of the Professional Development Plan were completed by Evaluators with actively served teachers (145) according to prescribed timelines.

Challenges:

- Growing number of teachers who are learning about the BK Project are enrolling with the EESLPD Office. These teachers may not have the opportunity to complete the 3-year Beginning Teacher Support Program (BTSP) due to the duration of the Grant.
- The target number for the Activity to serve 100 teachers has been exceeded. We currently have 23 partners as Evaluators serving 92 teachers and 16 partners as Mentors serving 28 teachers.
- Finding additional partners remains challenging given the multiple demands that programs and staff face.
- Securing qualified professionals to mentor and/or evaluate all newly enrolled teachers, especially in rural parts of the state, continues to be a challenge.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Analyze all Year-end EESLPD Program survey responses.
- Based on survey results and available staff, plan for summer services for recently enrolled RTT-ELC teachers who work 12 months and have completed the required professional development.
- Complete and post the on-line EESLPD Office Teacher Manual, Phase 2.
- Plan for increased efficiencies in the service delivery framework with the goal to serve all enrolled teachers.

Activity 10.2: Develop and Offer Technical Assistance (TA) Endorsement

Description: This Activity will allow a Technical Assistance Endorsement to be developed for professionals who provide technical assistance, coaching, and mentoring to early childhood teachers.

Key Accomplishments:

- Continued statewide marketing of the availability of the TA Endorsement.
- A total of 54 TA professionals hold the endorsement as of the end of May.
- Completed updates to the TA Endorsement listing on the Institute’s website: <http://ncicdp.org/certification-licensure/endorsements/>

Challenges:

- No travel dollars to support in –person presentations about new endorsement.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue outreach and recruitment efforts.
- 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 to encourage full participation in the system.

Key Accomplishments:

- A total of 655 ECE professionals have been certified through this grant since January, 2014.
- This brings the grand total ECE professionals certified to 18,238, which reflects a loss of 5,537 since the beginning of the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge.
- Staff continue to make targeted recruitment calls to centers to share the benefits of Early Educator Certification as well as the reduced fee.
- A recruitment postcard was mailed to all licensed child care programs with the exception of home providers who are already certified.
- Individuals whose certificates are expiring between August and December 2014 were contacted via email or US Mail to encourage renewal of their Early Educator Certification.
- Centers were emailed a reminder about the reduced fee. Information was also shared about upcoming professional development opportunities, access to rewards & benefits, and the Administrator Endorsement.
- An article about Early Educator Certification was published in the NCAeYC Milestones publication.
- An informational session was held at a Henderson County child care conference in April.
- A contract amendment was issued, which extended the project through September, 2014.

Challenges:

- There is not consistent interest in Early Educator Certification across the state or across programs, and without a requirement for ECE professionals to be certified, the project's success is uncertain.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Ongoing recruitment of new and renewal applicants.
- Increasing incentives to support application.
- Meeting with systems partners to connect and/or integrate Early Educator Certification 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.
- DCDEE and the grant management team are coordinating an efficiency study to look at the Early Educator Certification process for education evaluation and the DCDEE process for education evaluation, and report findings.

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:

- New program staff was appointed with the NC Community College System Office in March and has proved invaluable in supporting both activities under Project 11.
- 25 NC Community College System colleges currently hold NAEYC accreditation for their Early Childhood Associate Degree programs.
- Five colleges are scheduled to receive their Phase III Site visits in September and October 2014.
- Eight colleges are expected to submit their Phase II Self Studies to NAEYC by September 30, 2014 and anticipate site visits in early 2015.
- If all “in process” colleges are successful, a total of 38 (out of 58) colleges will be accredited by the end of the grant period.

Challenges:

- Across the State, colleges are dealing with adjustments to their State budgets. At least one college has offset budget losses by reducing their 2 fulltime instructor department to a one fulltime instructor (formerly 11-month and now 9 month) department. This college has already advanced one level in the application process; however, it is likely that this reduction in staff is going to affect the colleges continued progress toward accreditation.
- One college has struggled to complete their Self Study and has hired a consultant to provide additional assistance to the staff completing the Self Study. This college is still likely to submit their Self Study in September 2014.
- An additional \$2,500, to cover the additional cost of NAEYC managing Site Visit logistics, will be requested from remaining grant funds. This will require NC State Board of Community Colleges’ approval. This is anticipated for the August 2014 SBCC meeting. NC Achieving Community College Excellence in Services to Students (NCACCESS) has provided a letter supporting this request.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Eight colleges are working with their Subject Matter Experts to prepare their Phase II Self Studies for submission. Colleges are utilizing summer contracts to for these efforts.
- Of the five colleges scheduled for Fall Phase III Site Visits, several have requested technical assistance in preparation for the Site Visit. Subject Matter Experts are working with these colleges to prepare for these activities.
- A request will be made to the State Board of Community Colleges to provide an additional \$2,500, from grant funds to provide enough funding to cover the additional cost of NAEYC handling the Phase III logistics.

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:

- New program staff was appointed with the NC Community College System Office in March and has proved invaluable in supporting both activities under Project 11.
- Subgrantee colleges are implementing the “improvements/revisions” designed through their projects and are anecdotally reporting greater student satisfaction, performance, and persistence than non-cohort students.
- Of particular note are the successful translation of EDU 119 into Spanish and the efforts being made to develop a text, in Spanish, with the publisher, Cengage.

- The efforts of the subgrantee colleges have been noticed across North Carolina. Other community college ECE programs are eager to learn more about these activities, their results, and next steps for expanding implementation beyond the subgrantee colleges.
- NCACCESS has shown their support of these efforts by establishing regular calls with NC Community College System staff to keep up to date with grant activities and to offer their support of these efforts.
- First draft of RFP was developed, for embedding of *NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development* into EDU 119 and throughout ECE coursework.
- At least two presentations from subgrantee colleges will be offered at the North Carolina Community College System Conference in October 2014.

Challenges:

- Gathering reports from the subgrantee colleges has proven difficult. Efforts will be made to ensure that colleges are submitting reports as needed (monthly, in order to populate reports requested by DCDEE).
- Subgrantee colleges are noting difficulty in enrolling enough students for “cohort-only” courses. For example, it is too common that students entering ECE need developmental coursework; however, enrolling enough students with these needs for an individual course section to meet minimum enrollment is challenging. The same holds true when developing cohorts of ESOL ECE students. Efforts in recruiting target populations seeking ECE credentials may be beneficial to these projects.

Upcoming Tasks:

- RFP will be posted in July.
- A new staff appointee will assume the primary responsibility for this grant.
- Several colleges submitted proposals to disseminate information from their projects at the North Carolina Community College System Conference in October 2014.
- Colleges are working to prepare for summer and fall semester activities as planned through their projects.

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:

- 501 participants have received RTT-ELC funds for completing commitment periods during the reporting period (January - May), and there are participants in each of the 17 eligible counties.
- WAGE\$ completed primary recruitment strategies by the end of the first quarter, and continued to ask sites about potential applicants during all April confirmation calls.
- WAGE\$ did a presentation for the Board of Directors for the Martin-Pitt Partnership for Children that included information about the RTT-ELC opportunities available in Martin County.

- In April, WAGES\$ provided Smart Start partnerships in RTT-ELC counties and Transformation Zone coaches with information regarding the number paid in each county during the first quarter.
- WAGES\$ sent applications to individuals in RTT-ELC counties that had lost their WAGES\$ eligibility due to education but have since increased their education levels.
- WAGES\$ sent emails to all individuals at temporary levels encouraging them to continue their coursework and to submit any coursework already completed. A postcard was sent to those without email addresses on file.

Challenges:

- New detailed policies have been necessary to facilitate the integration of Smart Start and RTT-ELC funds in ten of the eligible counties. 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 WAGES\$ can impact the largest number of eligible early educators, but also makes spending projections more difficult.
- Some WAGES\$ 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.
- Due to the combined funding sources, more oversight is needed for RTT-ELC WAGES\$ than anticipated.

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:

- Early Care and Education Community Specialist Scholarship Program.
 - 8 Early Care and Education Community Specialist Scholarships had been awarded to date.
 - 4 recipients have submitted enrollment documentation for spring 2014, 4 have submitted enrollment documentation for summer 2014.
 - 4 recipients are employed at a Smart Start partnership agency, 4 are employed at a resource and referral agency.
- NC Foundation of Infant and Toddler Care Mentor Teacher Scholarship (NC-FITC)
 - Created a discussion board “type” system for cohort 2 students to feel more connected with each other and be able to get more immediate feedback on specific information.

- Conducted second site visit to a mentor's site. Reviewed contact logs, met the student teacher, and provided the student teacher with an evaluation to complete on their mentor.
 - Completed webinar session for Cohort 2, Course 1, Module 8.
 - Finalized details for final face to face meeting for Cohort 2, Course 1.
 - Reviewed all submitted course work for Cohort 2, Course 1 and submitted final grades to Meredith College.
 - Began work for Course 2.
- Master's Degree Scholarship
 - Email recruitment began on April 8, 2014.
 - All T.E.A.C.H. Bachelor degree graduates.
 - WAGES participants with at least Bachelor's Degree.
 - EEC professionals at the appropriate education level.
 - UNC-Greensboro
 - 20 students admitted for either Summer 2014 or Fall 2014.
 - 14 scholarships awarded to student enrolled in Summer 2014.
 - 4 more student slots available for Fall 2014 admission (awaiting admission decisions).
 - 9 scholarship applicants awaiting admission decisions for Fall 2014 enrollment.
 - UNC-Wilmington
 - 15 scholarships awarded to students enrolling in Fall 2014.
 - 4 scholarship applicants awaiting admission decisions for Fall 2014 enrollment.
 - Approximately 30 available student slots for Fall 2014 admission.
 - Early Care and Education Enhancement Scholarship in the T-Zone
 - 57 T.E.A.C.H. recipients participating on an enhanced Transformation Zone scholarship.
 - 51 Associate Degree recipients.
 - 2 Bachelor Degree recipients.
 - 4 Birth-Kindergarten Licensure recipients.
 - 37 sponsoring programs.
 - Participants in 12 of the 17 Transformation Zone eligible counties.

Challenges:

- Early Care and Education Community Specialist Scholarship Program.
 - Participation has been low.
- NC Foundation of Infant and Toddler Care Mentor Teacher Scholarship (NC-FITC).
 - Maintaining on-going contact with cohort 2 students during periods where the modules are not instructor lead.
 - Finding good outreach opportunities to market NC-FITC in order to get applicants for a third cohort (no new applicants in 2014).
 - Getting in contact with students who have been non-responsive in submitting work.
 - Although a student from cohort 1 spoke at the initial face to face meeting to help the students in cohort 2 understand the amount of work that course 1 entailed, it was the case again that some students became overwhelmed with the work and staying on track. Discussions with potential applicants for cohort 3 include discussing the time commitment successful completion requires.
- Early Care and Education Enhancement Scholarship in the Transformation Zone.
 - The enhancements offered through this activity have not significantly enticed new sponsoring programs to participate, however, analysis has suggested an increase in the

number of recipients in Transformation Zone from last year. This would seem to indicate that while we may not have recruited more sponsors, the sponsoring programs we are already working with may be more willing and able to sponsor more scholarship participants.

- Master's Degree Scholarship.
 - Because of the delay with the development of the Master's Degree program in Early Childhood Leadership we expect recruitment efforts related scholarship program to be impacted. As previously reported, participants will have a shorter time frame in which to complete the program and may become unwilling to enroll in coursework or apply for the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship award.
 - The short time frame in which students had to apply for admission and scholarship.
 - The number of scholarships awarded is going to be limited by admission caps at each university. There will be some applicants who will not be awarded a scholarship because they did not get admitted to university.
 - Funding availability for the duration of time scholarship recipients will need to complete degree requirements, especially as some students will need to wait for future semesters to be admitted to university.

Upcoming Tasks:

- DCDEE will review with grant management team the remaining funding and likely expenditures for this activity, and discuss potential reversions and alternative funding ideas.
- Early Care and Education Community Specialist Scholarship Program.
 - Renewing contracts for Fall 2014 and collecting documentation for that semester.
 - Work with DCDEE to consider alternate strategies to reach this population.
- NC Foundation of Infant and Toddler Care Mentor Teacher Scholarship (NC-FITC).
 - Planning the first webinar for Course 2.
 - Setting up training location and dates for the face to face meetings for Course 2.
 - Reviewing community college Infants, Toddlers and Twos' course syllabus to see how to possibly align NC-FITC module materials to support instructors.
 - Discussing alternate strategies with DCDEE, including translation of course into CEU's.
- Early Care and Education Enhancement Scholarship in the Transformation Zone.
 - Continue recruitment in Transformation Zone eligible counties.
 - Process enhanced release time claims and T.E.A.C.H. bonuses for eligible participants.
- Master's Degree Scholarship.
 - Continue awarding scholarships to applicants as they are admitted to each university.
 - Requesting and recording grades for Summer 2014 course at UNC-G.
 - Sending authorizations for fall 2014 tuition to both UNC-G and UNC-W.

Project 13: Cultural Competence – Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE)

Description: *This Project will work with 100 early care and education teachers/directors and 75 TA providers to develop curriculum (.5 CEU course), training, coaching and assessment tools through an intentional learning process called the Breakthrough Series Collaborative. The goal is to increase the cultural competence of the early childhood workforce who are directly participating in the learning communities, and to extend this learning to the larger ECE workforce through the .5 CEU course that will be delivered through the CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL system starting in 2015.*

Activity 13.1: Cultural Competence Support

Key Accomplishments:

- Completed Action Period #2.

- Learning Session # 3 was offered on-line on April 25, 2014. The primary speaker was Dr. Beth Graue (University of Wisconsin) presenting a session on Funds of Knowledge. The on-line session required significant coordination of technology in order to connect all teams and TA's to the session. The benefit of connecting all regions was clear and a decision was made to move forward with Action Period # 3 and Learning Session#4 using this larger collaborative approach.
- Learning Session #3 was videotaped and an edited version will be used as a resource in the final curriculum.
- Mid-Point Consultations were conducted for most teams during the afternoon of April 25th. TAs and Core Learning Facilitators met face-to-face with teams to facilitate team members' review of progress and set goals for the final Action Period. A couple of teams could not meet on April 25th and make-up sessions were offered in May.
- Implementation and completion of Action Period #2 including Affinity Calls and Topical Calls.
- Team metrics, PDSAs and self-assessments were synthesized as a report and sent to teams as part of their midpoint consultation, and used to guide the teams and coaches in setting goals for improvements during the final Action Period of the project.
- Analysis of Qualitative data: UNC-G completed 19 audiotapes from the interviews completed during the Learning Sessions, information de-identified and transcribed by an outside contracted service. Final versions of the transcribed interviews have been returned and the data from these interviews are in the process of being analyzed and coded. A meeting to review and discuss themes present in the data was held in mid-April.
- A proposal submitted to the NAEYC Professional Development Institute to be held in June 2014, titled "*Strengthening Cultural Competence in the Early Childhood Workforce: Learning from a collaborative approach to individual, program and systems level change*" was accepted for presentation by UNCG evaluation team members (Deborah Cassidy and Teresa Sumrall) in collaboration with Glover & Associates. This presentation will focus on the iterative process used by the project to incorporate information gained as part of the on-going implementation and evaluation cycle, as well as highlight the themes emerging from the interview data.
- Launched Action Period 3 on May 19th bringing all three regions together for Topical and Affinity Calls. One call per month will be offered for each affinity; eleven topical calls will be offered with participants asked to choose four calls. Topical Calls are being co-facilitated by teams and TAs who have demonstrated strengths in specific areas related to cultural competence.
- Make-Up Sessions for Learning Session 3 were offered online and in person. The video tape from Learning Session #3 which was edited in April was used for the make-up sessions and will become part of the Cultural Competence Curriculum.
- Glover and Associates met with UNC-G representatives to analyze and compile the interview and assessment data in preparation for their NAEYC Professional Development Institute Presentation in Minneapolis in June. The team identified preliminary themes which emerged from the data analysis.
- Glover and Associates completed the working draft of Cultural Competence Awareness Module.
- Glover and Associates completed working draft of flow chart of Cultural Competence Awareness Module.
- Preparation for Central Region TA Session 3 and introduction of the Curriculum to TAs on June 6th. The focus of the session was to provide specific training and practice opportunities for delivery of the Cultural Competence Awareness Module.
- Continued to hold bi-monthly calls for Core Learning Facilitators. Calls during May focused on reviewing the results from Midpoint Consultations and Summaries and making decisions regarding future content and processes.
- Continued to develop TA skills on the use of the *Early Childhood Cultural Competence Scan* and strategies to use results in coaching and skilled dialogue.

Challenges:

- A number of participants still continue to struggle with the use of technology and the Wiggio platform. Combining the regions into one has helped along with preparing At-a-Glance calendars for participants and facilitators.
- Facilitators continue to identify the best ways to work with families. A plan was put in place to contact family members directly via telephone to ask them how the project could best meet their communication needs and to identify the best ways to involve them in the project.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Face-to-Face Planning Team Meeting on June 26th at 9:00 AM.
- Leadership team meeting on June 26th at 10:00 AM (virtual).
- Preparation for Western TA Session 3 on July 9th.
- Continued planning for Learning Session 4 (combined regions), October 23-24 at Winston Salem State University.
- Preparation for Eastern TA Session 3 scheduled for September 15th.
- Continued refinement of themes from interview data and survey data analysis.
- Continued analysis of evaluation data from learning sessions and TA sessions.
- 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 Central Region to promote cross-sector opportunities for use of curriculum process and competencies.

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:**

- Completed 91 pre-Program Administration Scale (PAS) assessments to date.
- Average score on the PAS assessments is 4.11. The national average score is 3.40.
- Coaches created PAS action plans with directors after the completion of their assessments, and coaches report that participants are making progress toward their action plan goals.
- Use of manaba (the on line learning community software) for Early Childhood Director Leadership Institute 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.
- Selected Institute 2 dates: August 4-6, 2014.
- Interim evaluation of the project was completed for 2013:
<http://ceme.uncc.edu/sites/ceme.uncc.edu/files/media/EARLY%20CHILDHOOD%20DIRECTORS%20LEADERSHIP%20INSTITUTE%20Interim%20Report%20revised%281%29.pdf>.
- Collaborated with the leadership faculty & DCDEE to draft and finalize Part 2 of the curriculum, *Introduction to Early Childhood Leadership and Management*.
- Contact hours for coaches with team members were on average 6.43 per month for first quarter calendar year 2014.
- Collaborated with First 2000 Days on community engagement section of curriculum.

Challenges:

- There has been attrition from the project, which will result in 92 rather than 100 total participants completing the course. Seven directors left previous admin positions. Three do not have new employment but currently seeking new positions in ECE. Three have new positions as administrators. One opening new program no longer wished to participate in Early Childhood Director Leadership Institute.
- Administrators who have completed their PAS assessment have expressed the need for all directors to have access to this resource. The compiled documentation of their program leadership and management has guided their creation of program improvement goals in a systematic manner.
- Programs serve children and families from migrant, military, and all socioeconomic levels resulting in different challenges facing programs.
- Coaches have some participants that are not engaged on manaba.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Complete editing Session 2 of the curriculum with input from the Leadership Faculty.
- Plan next Institute.
- Plan next Institute scheduled date August 4-6, 2014
- Complete 1 remaining pre-PAS assessment- waiting to hear back from the director to schedule the date.

Reform Area E: Measuring Outcomes and Progress

Project 2: NC Early Childhood Integrated Data System (NC 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 NC ECIDS will focus on the design, development, and implementation of an early childhood data system capable of integrating early childhood data from state agencies serving young children and will link to and align with the longitudinal P-20W (Pre-K to age 20/ workforce) system.

Activity 2.1: 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 NC ECIDS.

Key Accomplishments:

- A Governance Council Charter was developed and has been signed by 2 out of the 5 participating agencies. However, all of the agencies have been involved in discussions about the Governance Council and the Charter and have agreed to sign on.
- The outline for the Governance Council Manual has been finalized and now the narrative is being drafted for it.
- A list of key responsibilities and roles for NC ECIDS business staff has been developed. This is to help with outlining the needs for sustainability purposes.
- NC ECIDS team was asked to present to the NC P20W Council to provide them with an overview of NC ECIDS and start a discussion about how it is going to connect eventually with their longitudinal data system.

- The Agency MOA, which key participating agencies will sign that establishes data sharing through the system, has been reviewed by PTAC (Privacy Technical Assistance Center) to address any privacy or FERPA related concerns. It is now on its final review stage and then will be sent out to the participating agencies to be reviewed and signed.
- A Data Use Agreement (DUA) has been drafted that will be for those requesting data to sign before they are able to obtain data from the system. This is also in the final draft stage and then will go to agencies to review and approve.

Challenges: None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Get signatures from all key participating agencies (both division directors and agency heads) for the Governance Council Charter.
- Send out the MOA and DUA to the participating agencies for review.
- Schedule a meeting with the Program Managers for each of the programs whose data will be incorporated into NC ECIDS- date TBD.
- Continue working on the Governance Manual.
- Continue to work with P20W to ensure that our systems can be aligned once they are built.

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

Description: This Activity addresses the technical aspects necessary to develop and use the NC ECIDS system. The business representatives, representing the participating agencies, will develop the system requirements (functionalities) that the NC 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:

- Obtained Gate 2 Approval, which allows NC Information Technology Services to start the process to procure the necessary software and hire additional personnel to build the application
- Completed the business requirements and developed workflows for the system
- Created acceptance criteria for the business requirements, which include additional information for the ITS developers and coders to determine where a specific component should be on the portal and how users can access different things.
- Continuing to finalize the data elements for the programs going into the system. Specific data elements from each participating program have been identified, but now information on all of the values and codes for each data element are being obtained
- IT staff was asked to present on a national webinar put on by the State Support Team regarding the NC ECIDS application architecture.

Challenges:

- As there was a long delay in obtaining approval from the state to move forward with building the architecture for the system, the NC ECIDS team is now working fast to make up any time and

start the process of hiring additional personnel and procuring software. With the approval to move forward, other than a reduced timeline, there are no other anticipated challenges.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Map the NC ECIDS data elements onto Common Education Data Standards (CEDDS).
- Finish determining the values and other key features of the data elements that will be part of the system.
- Work with the IT staff on clarifying any business requirements, workflows, and acceptance criteria.
- Purchase the necessary technology software and platforms and hire additional IT personnel.

Activity 2.3: Implement child unique Identifiers (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:

- Estimated the number of UIDs needed for the system based on estimates of the number of children in each participating program and taking into account potential duplications.
- Had discussions with key participating agencies about the UIDs, and how the UIDs will need to be incorporated into their existing data systems in order for the federated system to operate.
- Established a protocol for how to load the initial three programs into the system (i.e., the order they will be loaded in to assign UIDs).

Challenges:

- Because of the delay in Gate 2 approval, project staff were not able to move forward with establishing a contract with eScholar, which is the vendor for the UID software. With Gate 2 approval, project staff is now moving forward with establishing and negotiating a contract with eScholar.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Establish a contract with eScholar to purchase the software, number of UIDs, trainings, etc. for the UIDs.
- Once the contract is established and trainings have been held, load the initial three programs (NC Pre-K, Child Care Subsidy, and Infant-Toddler Part C) into eScholar to start assigning UIDs.
- After the programs have been loaded, work on a near-match resolution process for UIDs.

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:

- The Data Advisory Group completed its work on developing common outcomes for the Smart Start system in April. The proposed outcomes, measures and plans for local partnerships to report on these common outcomes were shared at the Smart Start conference in May. The session had 71 in attendance. Feedback from the local partnerships was quite positive.
- A comprehensive Request for Application to support Smart Start Local Partnership Data Capacity Building was developed and issued June 23, 2014. These funds will support local partnerships in their efforts to collect, measure, report, and use programmatic data, particularly related to Smart Start common outcomes.
- NCPC developed an online data capacity self-assessment for each partnership to complete. The assessment is loosely based on the Child Outcomes Measurement System rating tool developed by the UNC Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute. The assessment should help partnerships prioritize among their strengths and needs, helping them to determine what to focus on for their mini grant proposal. The self-assessment along with results from the data survey completed earlier will serve to provide baseline information on the data capacity of each partnership.
- NCPC hosted a webinar to 1) outline the Smart Start common outcomes and 2) to review the mini grants RFA. The webinar was offered June 25th and again on June 26th. It was also recorded to be made available to all local partnerships.
- Specifications for a new Smart Start data reporting system for local partnerships to report programmatic outputs and outcomes are in development. NCPC is also working with Data Keeper Technologies to make modifications to the Visit Tracker system. Visit Tracker includes child and family level data for those participating in Parents as Teachers, an initiative widely supported by Smart Start local partnerships.

Challenges: None to report this quarter.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Provide technical assistance to partnerships regarding the mini grant applications.
- Develop an administrative/monitoring system for mini-grant tracking.
- Analyze data capacity self-assessments.
- Develop process to review mini grant proposals.
- Provide specifications to IT software developer (contractor) for Smart Start reporting system and work closely on development.

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 NC ECIDS.

Key Accomplishments:

- Project staff received training on and began entering material into required project management or PPM tool.
- Met with DHHS Purchasing Office to develop plan for RFP submission and vendor evaluation.

- Met with NC Division of Information and Resource Management (DIRM) team to obtain current DCDEE system documentation, hardware setups and diagrams.
- Met with Regulatory unit to discuss inclusion of facility Education Standards forms into proposed system.
- Finalized scope of project.
- Received preliminary quote from ITS around planned hardware procurement cost.

Challenges:

- Project Manager was out in May due to state requirements re: with temporary positions.
- Interagency review and approval process for proposed system and RFP is multi-layered and the time it takes at each step is somewhat unpredictable, which may impact on anticipated deadlines.
- Coordination with internal partners on the specifications of the current system remains challenging.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Complete business requirements and workflow documents.
- Complete first draft of RFP.
- Recruit DCDEE RFP review panel.
- Submit project for DHHS/ITS PMO Gate 1 approval.
- Trouble-shoot throughout approval process to ensure project deadlines are achievable and/or coordinate with grant management to adjust deadlines/timelines as needed.
- Investigate alternate strategies to gain information from internal partners regarding current system to be replaced.

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 K-3 Formative Assessment Consultants continue field presentations within their regions to provide updates on the current status of the Assessment Design Team’s development work on the Formative Assessment process, the Implementation Design Team’s work with implementation, and timeline status.
- The Leadership Team finalized the K-3 constructs which were guided by the Think Tank claims. These constructs guide the Assessment Design Team’s work in developing the remainder of the K-3 Formative Assessment process.
- Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) pilot districts have been selected and will attend Regional PD in July. In addition, feedback from the KEA pilot will inform KEA assessment design revisions. The Assessment Design Team will continue this work as well.

- The April Assessment Design Team meeting was held on April 29th and 30th. The focus of the meeting was to continue developing supports to teachers and the field focusing on authentic situations, tasks and observations.
- The May Assessment Design Team meeting was held on May 29th and 30th. The focus of the meeting was to finalize the Assessment Means used in the KEA pilot. In addition, conversations about next steps in the K-3 Formative Assessment development occurred.
- The June Assessment Design Team meeting was on June 23rd and 24th. The focus of the meeting was to continue the development of the K-3 Formative Assessment design.
- The Advisory Committee met on June 17th. Primary topic was implementation of the KEA pilot.
- The two “live binder” professional development modules were completed. The content areas are The Five Domains of Development and Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP). These live binders will support online professional development to the field.
- The Implementation Design Team met on April 24, 2014 and May 22, 2014. Team members are state, regional and local representatives with a combination of content, professional development, and education expertise. The team established work groups with specific implementation tasks. Workgroups are Regional Implementation Teams, K-3 Formative Assessment Team, KEA Professional Development Team, and the Communications Team.
- Communications to the field about the K-3 development and implementation process continues through webinars, conference presentations, and regional meetings via project consultants. A webinar (5 Domains of Development) was held on April 9th and a webinar (DAP) was held on June 12, 2014.
- A contract was executed to provide additional manpower for the specific purpose of providing logistical support to the Leadership team. An additional consultant, began work April 1, 2014.
- Nineteen family focus group sessions were held across NC. A family focus information report will be drafted by mid-July.

Challenges:

- KEA Pilot District Recruitment requires significant relationship building assuring Districts of the value of the work.
- Consistent and concise communications to inform and reach all stakeholders.
- Contract process timelines not as rapid as start dates needed to move the work forward.
- Timeline for project development and implementation remains a challenge.
- Additional requirements associated with adding a technology component to the assessment is complex.
- 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 Lead Education Agencies vary and the implementation of a new process will have a new set of challenges. Streamlining existing assessments and a new assessment will require intense professional development and technical assistance.
- Ensuring the data from the Formative Assessment process is used as intended will also require professional development and technical assistance support.

Upcoming Tasks:

- July Assessment Design Team meeting.
- July Implementation Design Team meeting.
- Field pilot professional development will be held in all 8 state board regions.
- Continue development and planning of the K-3 process and implementation.
- Continue the investigation of the technology component of the assessment.

Invitational Priority 4: Sustaining Program Effects in the Elementary Grades

(Repeated) Project 9: Early Learning and Development (ELD) Standards

(Repeated) 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.

(Repeated) 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.

Invitational Priority 5: Encouraging Private-Sector Support

(Repeated) Project 17: Family Strengthening

(Repeated) Project 18: Partnership Initiatives

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 and State Implementation Specialists continue to actively support development of implementation capacity at the state and local levels. Accomplishments from the previous quarter include:
 - County Leadership Teams, County Implementation Teams, and County coaches' demonstration of increased understanding about and capacity for effective implementation (identified through observation, administration of the County Capacity Assessment, and action planning).
 - Work with individual purveyors (ROR, Motherhead, Connects) to use best practices in active implementation to support installation efforts, including use of selection protocols, Memorandum of Agreement, development of coaching infrastructure, and facilitative administration.
- Discussion of a policy-practice feedback loop and communication strategies between state and county colleagues:
 - Convened cross county and state partner meetings to discuss installation stage implementation challenges and successes.
 - Convened monthly calls between purveyor and county partners to facilitate strategy-specific installation stage implementation
 - Convened a state funders meeting and subsequent State Implementation Team meeting to continue to develop a viable policy to practice feedback loop
 - Clarification of roles and responsibilities of state partners as they relate to the funded child care strategies
- Support for purveyors' model development including:
 - CCHC development of a performance assessment and Practice Profile for pilot in Fall 2015.

- HSB -- ongoing model development, including identifying thought partners to assist in operationalizing the key components of the model (e.g., similarities and differences with Pyramid Model)

Challenges:

- The development of efficient feedback processes between county and state partners, including a transparent system for sharing data across county, regional and state partners (e.g., sharing available reports, variance in what and how data is collected and/or used across different strategies, etc.)
- Sustainability of discrete strategies is unclear at this point. State partner engagement in this conversation with county partners is preliminary.
 - Finding consensus on the identification a viable administrative “home” for each strategy will become increasingly important for decision making and accountability purposes when considering factors impacting sustainability
- Telephone support and technical assistance from purveyors/agency partners to county teams, while helpful for general support and problem-solving, may not be sufficient to address ongoing adaptive challenges being surfaced as the implementation work moves into initial installation efforts. Addressing facilitative administrative barriers (e.g., accessing existing funding for purveyor to travel to directly support county teams during this phase) may require sustained and cooperative efforts from all funders.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Second administration of County Capacity Assessments and Action Planning in Summer 2015 (August-September)
- Development of county-level infrastructure to collect and use data to inform action planning as most strategies will be moving into the Initial Implementation stage over the next quarter
- Collaboration with state partners to collect and use data to inform action planning to support county-level initial implementation efforts and develop implementation drivers within models.
- Convene ongoing SIT to identify data informed challenges that may require guidance from a SLT

Activity 18.2 (North Carolina Partnership for Children)

Key Accomplishments:

- 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. Coaches provide facilitation of the Implementation Team meetings with State Implementation Specialists co-facilitating the active implementation content.
 - One County’s Implementation Team is seeking to recruit new members. The coach has made some initial outreach to potential members and will seek support from the Leadership Team. Another TZ county Coach helped provide information to orient new members to the Leadership Team.
 - Coaches create and deliver Implementation Team reports to Leadership Teams and bring back requests and guidance from Leadership Teams to the Implementation Teams.
 - Coaches participate to varying degrees on the agenda planning for Leadership Teams.
 - Members of the Grant Management Team attended the June Bertie Leadership Team meeting.
- Coaches also coordinate and facilitate the ongoing implementation team work between the formal monthly meetings.

- Coaches continue work on learning the models in support of guiding good installation and initial implementation – three coaches have attended one or more Motherhead trainings, and two coaches have audited a portion of a Triple P training and one coach attended a full Triple P training.
- In all four counties the coaches and the implementation teams (or sub-groups of the teams) have been spending time on the Literacy Installation Action Plans, logic models, memoranda of understanding and program guidelines. This work builds upon the four installation checklists (one for Reach Out and Read and one for each of the three Motherhead curricula). In all four counties the hiring of the literacy coordinator and the development of the position job description was a collaborative effort between the hiring agency, the county coaches and implementation teams.
- Coaches have been working with the Triple P coordinators and members of their Implementation and/or Leadership Team members around selection of participants to attend the Triple P trainings.
- The coaches, and some team members, participated in a phone call regarding the infant and toddler strategies with representatives from the purveyor, the funder and grants management.
- The Transformation Zone Evaluation team attended a coaches' team meeting and three of the four coaches have met individually with the evaluators. They are helping to facilitate connections between the Evaluation Team and county teams and local staff implementing the strategies.
- Coordination with strategy purveyors and implementing staff.
 - Planning Cross County meetings with local teams and State Implementation Team
 - Coaches led planning meeting with coach coordinator and State Implementation Specialists for two April cross county meetings (one for Bertie/Chowan and one for Beaufort/Hyde – strategy purveyors attended one or the other meeting).
 - Coaches served as hosts for the meetings, as facilitators of conversations between local teams and purveyors, and as recorders.
 - Overall team members were positive about the opportunity to have direct conversations with purveyors.
 - Three coaches participated in the State Implementation Team meeting in Raleigh on June 10th.
 - Coaches, along with Implementation Team members, continue participating in monthly phone calls with purveyors (five calls for the 8 strategies).
- Local coaches participate in community events to provide information about the Transformation Zone work and in support of the early childhood system to spread the word about the strategies to assist with family participation.
 - Coaches participated in a stakeholders meeting hosted by their local County Schools, made presentations to the School Board and County Commissioners, and attended ministerial association meetings and a reception for the new Superintendent of Schools.
 - Two counties coaches co-facilitated the third meeting of the Region One CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL TA staff. This group includes TA staff from Smart Start Partnerships, Region One TA staff, CCHCs, Transformation Zone childcare strategy staff, local licensing consultants and childcare health inspectors. The focus of this meeting was collaboration.
- Coaches assisted with the planning for the Pennie Foster-Fishman/ABLE Change training on Engaging Diverse Voices in May.
 - Coaches worked with Implementation Teams and Leadership teams to identify training participants. They developed county specific flyers as a recruitment tool and helped identify key informants for pre-training interviews.

- All TZ counties hosted two-day training trainings in May. There were between 20 and 35 attendees at each of the trainings. Between the four counties 100 individuals attended the trainings. Twenty one of those, including coaches and state level staff, had also attended earlier Motivational Interviewing and/or Adaptive Schools trainings.
- Coaches are beginning to plan task groups to address engaging parents and increased collaboration among community agencies as a result of the initial ABLLe training.
- All of the coaches attended the annual Smart Start Conference in Greensboro the first week of May.

Challenges: None at this time.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Begin to convene and support task groups that emerged from the ABLLe training. Individual and peer to peer coaching will be offered to support this work. Initial planning for the second half of the ABLLe Change training/retreat to be held in February will begin.
- Participate in joint meeting of literacy coordinators in support of planning for Motherhead installation and initial implementation.
- Develop combined theory of change with NIRN for the Transformation Zone project.

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:

- A total of 6 IT Expansion Grant programs received TA (24 consultations) in two participating Transformation Zone counties. Window for ERS assessment opened May 28th for one program, and it moved up to 5 stars
- 1 new application was approved and pre-assessment completed
- The project will generate 76 slots if all programs currently involved move up to 4 or 5 stars, but it is expected that not all programs will be able to do so.

Challenges:

- There are no opportunities for this project in one TZ county.
- The 4 and 5 star programs in the area have no room to add infant toddler slots, so the project has had to solicit less-than-4&5 star programs to participate, those that are willing (with support), to move up in the QRIS. The process for moving an entire program up in the system has taken more time and involvement from project staff, despite enlisting support from other RttT-ELC-funded projects, so progress is slower than we would have liked or anticipated.
- The project has likely tapped all potential programs for this project, and, as mentioned above, a number of the currently participating programs are unlikely to move up to 4 or 5 stars.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue activities with approved IT Expansion Grant programs.
- Conduct outreach to potential programs.

- Continue discussions with DCDEE and grant management team re: possible alternate projects to increase the quality of infant/toddler care in the Transformation Zone (or possibly even statewide).

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:

- Both transportation and double-slot options were approved by DCDEE and began being implemented in the second quarter 2014.
- 82 slots have been approved.
- In one TZ county, there are 21 children attending at month end (two aged out); 8 receiving transportation.
- In another TZ county, a program recently opened and began serving 6 children; 4 receiving transportation.
- One county with one eligible child care to begin NCB1 application process – anticipate 6 slots at that facility.

Challenges:

- One site had its license summarily suspended by DCDEE, necessitating the project to contact families and work with them to identify alternate placement. All families were placed in other programs. Project staff also removed from the closed site all materials purchased by the grant, for redistribution to participating or soon-to-be-participating program(s).
- One of the TZ counties has had no child applications this calendar year despite project staff contacting potential referral agencies. One facility does not provide transportation which seems to be of some concern. Conversations continue with the local Smart Start Partnership to better understand the county needs and determine additional opportunities for project staff to support recruitment in this county now that double slots are an option.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Work with eligible facilities to complete application and begin NCB1 program
- Continue to provide TA and support for teachers and administrators in participating counties.
- The infant toddler specialist on this project is scheduled to attend PITC June 15-21, 2014 to complete required professional development
- Work with TZ counties to find and inform families of NCB1.

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:

- 14 programs across the four TZ counties are currently participating in the project.
- The TZ Behavior Specialist Completed collection of ASQ-SE screenings from teachers on those children s/he has identified as using challenging behaviors in programs in two counties.
- The TZ Behavior Specialist also conducted pre-TPOT assessments in 3 of 4 participating classrooms in one county prior to summer recess.
- TZ Behavior Specialist continues to provide TA to participating classrooms.

- Statewide Project Manager has attended/ presented to cross-county Implementation Team Meeting; Participated in State Implementation Team / Child Care Strategies conference call; and continued work with NIRN team on Practice Profile

Challenges:

- Inclement weather (tornadoes) impacted scheduled TA early in the second quarter and slowed accomplishments in classrooms across the Transformation Zone.
- Cohort trainings are surprisingly difficult to schedule (or reschedule). This issue is particularly difficult this spring as it is a busy time for the cohort members both as parents and as teachers/administrators. The meetings are sometimes delayed to ensure that no participant misses the training; since T/A is largely focused by training topic, this can delay progress toward completion of classroom Pyramid Model goals.
- One county's cohort, consisting of 2 NC Pre-K classrooms in an elementary school and 1 Head Start classroom, were not finalized until April. The Head Start classroom closed for the summer in mid-May, before the specialist was able to visit the classroom; the TPOT assessment and ASQ-SE screenings will be done in this classroom this fall. Also, because the NC Pre-K students will be transitioning into Kindergarten, it was decided to wait until fall to have teacher's complete ASQ-SE screenings in these classrooms as well.
- Implementation and Leadership Teams as well as classroom management personnel expectations of project staff have been varied and complex, largely due to county and system differences. Communication protocols related to these expectations was not initially clarified for all involved.
- In one county, TZ Specialist notified County Coach about lack of participation in training cohort meetings and in TA by staff & administration of one classroom. Coach will present issue to county Implementation team.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue building relationships with local TA personnel and agencies.
- Obtain and score pre-ASQ-SE screenings by classroom staff on those children in classroom identified by teacher as using challenging behavior.
- Continue classroom observations and technical assistance.
- Statewide Project Manager – continue work on development of HSB practice profile

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:

- All TZ counties are implementing services and have worked with their agencies and stakeholders to identify child care centers and homes prioritized for intensive health and safety consultation.
- Regional CCHC Coaching module training continues and by June 2014, all Eastern region CCHCs were trained in the coaching model.
- Local partnerships continue to review the CCHC Model and assess how they, with support provided by the CCHC Coaches, can align current CCHC services.
 - CCHC Model Webinar hosted by NCPC and NCCCHSRC on June 17, 2014 to review model development, components, resource development, and have local partnerships speak to early model usage and adoption.

- NCCCHSRC and NCPC continue to track general feedback and consultation/coaching contacts with local CCHCs, their supervisors, and local partnership staff.
- Continued evaluation meetings held with NCPC, Frank Porter Graham, and staff from the NCCCHSRC to develop the evaluation plan.
 - CCHC Coaching evaluators are currently meeting with NCPC, NCCCHSRC to coordinate the development of a tool that could be used by CCHCs and CCHC Coaches to track information about coaching and consultation contacts.
- Continued conference calls with CCHC Coaches and NCPC to encourage information sharing and ongoing communication.
- Quarterly cross-county call using a community of practice approach to the implementation of additional CCHC services in the transformation zone continue.

Challenges:

N/A

Upcoming Tasks:

- Finalization of a Performance Assessment form that can be utilized by CCHCs, supervisors, and agencies to assess their on-going implementation of the CCHC model.
- The development of a NC Health and Safety Assessment Tool APP.
- Considering piloting, in select counties, the utilization of the CCHC Model in tandem with the Performance Assessment form, NC Health and Safety Assessment Tool, and Coaching model.

Family Strengthening Strategies

Family Connects (Activity 17.1)

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

Key Accomplishments:

- MOU's and Agreement Addenda with all four TZ counties signed and executed.
- Contract amendment to add funding for Family Connects evaluation has been executed with Center for Child and Family Health.
- Outreach materials have been printed and ready for distribution.
- The Division of Public Health will house the Family Connects data on a secure HIPAA compliant server.
- Local office space secured in Plymouth, North Carolina through a local adjacent Health Department.
- All positions hired--last two nurse home visitors start July 7th.
- Training for staff is underway to assure a July 1, 2014 start date for service delivery.

Challenges:

- Developing relationships with local OB/GYN's, birthing hospitals, and other referring agencies and programs for referrals into the Family Connects program.
- Moving from local administrative oversight to local ownership of the program.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Conduct community based parent surveys to help vet referral resource lists.

- Finalize Agency Finder resource guide with local groups.
- Conduct physician outreach to educate on program benefits.
- Orientation will continue and arranging “training” visits.
- Set up in-services for the staff with CCFH to cover topics that are part of the family well-being assessment.

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

- Triple P Implementation Specialist hired, via Temporary Solutions, as the Triple P Implementation Specialist as of April 8, 2014 for the 17 Tier One counties in northeastern NC, plus additional support for Pitt and Nash counties which regionally service families in the 17 Tier One counties.
- Local Coordinators have been hired for all the 17 Tier One counties.
- The Triple P Data Reporting System has been deployed. Initial data from the beginning of the program is due by the end of May 2014.
- Trainings of local practitioners began in May 2014. To date, 23 trainings have been scheduled, with 14 trainings completed by the end of June 2014. An additional seven trainings are planned, but no training date set.

Challenges:

- NC Open Enrollment for smaller Tier One counties (State Triple Implementation Specialist and Triple P America will address these issues.)
- Sustainability of the program beyond the grant funding. The Sustainability Workgroup, part of the NC Triple P State Learning Collaborative, is working on recommendations.
- Hiring a part-time data person that will assist local coordinators in the collection and reporting of services and outcome data.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue discussions about Open Enrollment.
- Continue trainings for local providers.

Early Literacy Strategies

Transformation Zone Early Literacy (Activity 18.3)

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

Key Accomplishments:

- Counties began developing installation plans and site selection criteria utilizing strategy specific installation checklists developed by the purveyors in partnership with NIRN and NCPC.
 - In May, counties submitted their installation plans, which included information on literacy coordinator job description development, individual strategy installation checklists with tasks and timelines, site selection criteria, and planning successes and challenges.

- NCPC provided feedback on the plans and county revisions were submitted in June 2014. The plans have been shared with the literacy purveyors and evaluators to assist in technical assistance and evaluation planning.
- Literacy Coordinators were hired in all four counties and each county identified supports necessary to ensure their Literacy Coordinator is successful.
- Monthly cross-county literacy purveyor calls, hosted by NIRN continue with Transformation Zone counties to provide additional initial implementation support.
- Transformation zone counties have been invited to attend the Smart Start Reach Out and Read (ROR) Project Coordinator monthly calls, which is an existing network of Smart Start funded Project Coordinators discussing ROR implementation successes, challenges, and providing peer-to-peer support.
- The second series of Motherread trainings began with the 3-day Motherread/Fatheread Institute held in Chowan County on May 20-22, 2014. B.A.B.Y. and Story Exploring training will follow in June and July.
- NCPC, the Early Literacy evaluator, and Motherread began developing Transformation Zone specific quality assurance and evaluation pieces, such as logic models, site MOAs, surveys, and tracking forms. These discussions contributed to development of the evaluation plan.

Challenges:

- None to report at this time.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Counties anticipate initial implementation to begin in a staggered roll-out, based on county readiness, in summer.
- A cross-county TZ Early Literacy meeting will be held in July with the four Early Literacy Coordinators to discuss successes and challenges to date, explore further opportunity for cross-county work, and review the Motherread quality assurance and evaluation pieces with Motherread staff and the Early Literacy evaluator.

Transformation Zone Evaluation (Activity 1.3)

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

Key Accomplishments:

- Hired and oriented new social research specialist and social research assistant.
- Finalized an evaluation project description which was then shared with various stakeholders.
- Met monthly with the TZ Evaluation Work Group to review and revisit evaluation questions and design, discuss team coordination, initiate and follow up logic model conversations, identify next steps for data collection, and review evaluation findings.
- Solicited documentation to address evaluation study questions. Planned and initiated document review of Implementation Hub, NCPC files, NIRN project server files, and Sakai site (with input from Work Group).
- Conducted network mapping activities:
 - Discussed proposed modifications to evaluation design per meeting with the State Leadership Team. Agreed upon mapping project as a first step.
 - Outlined and planned mapping methodology and analysis strategy.

- Finalized mapping protocol, interview format, and interview protocols; and identified key informants.
- Created spreadsheet to collect organization and structural data of state and county team members and had key informants complete (template available upon request).
- Conducted five key informant interviews to obtain mapping and other evaluation data.
- Transcribed key informant interviews and began analysis of data.
- Arranged and held an introductory meeting with county coaches, developed a protocol for follow up interviews, conducted interviews and documented proceedings.
- Drafted email and developed a flyer that county coaches could send to local Teams and other stakeholders to introduce the FPG evaluation team in anticipation of future interviews.
- Planned and scheduled interviews with purveyors.
- Discussed scheduling focus groups with county Teams.
- Participated in partners' meetings:
- Attended Funder's Meeting to document discussion and review findings.
- Attended and presented at State Implementation Team to document discussion and review findings.
- Monitored new evaluation email account, filed key information, and responded as needed.

Challenges:

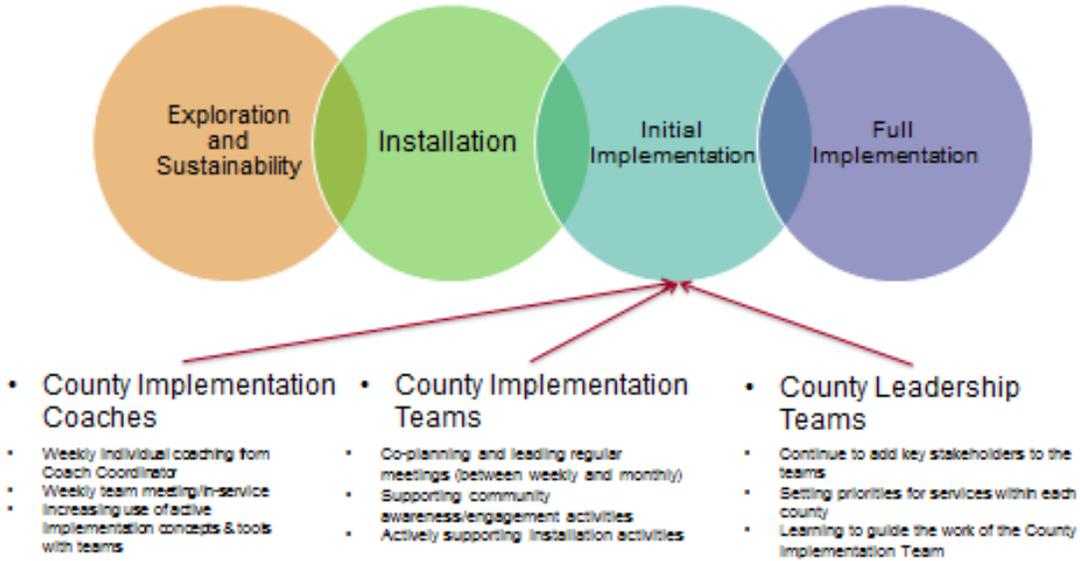
- Scheduling data collection during the summer months is challenging due to limited availability of county Teams, purveyors, and other stakeholders.

Upcoming Tasks:

- Continue scheduling, conducting, transcribing and reviewing informant interviews.
- Complete mapping analysis and draft report.
- Develop additional interview protocols and focus group guides for purveyors, county Teams, and other stakeholders.
- Continue review of established and new NIRN, NCPC and other files.
- Continue monitoring evaluation email account and respond as needed.

Transformation Zone Strategy by Implementation Phase

Implementation Continues (Spring 2014)



Implementation Continues (Spring 2014)

