

NC Pathways to Grade Level Reading Initiative Learning Teams Description and Scope of Work

The North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation, in partnership with NC Child, The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc., and BEST NC, are leading an effort to define whole-child, birth-through-eight measures of success that put all NC children on a pathway to grade-level reading by the end of third grade and align state policy and action around those measures.

Measures of Success

A Data Action Team – comprising 30 experts from North Carolina’s leading universities, research institutes, government agencies, businesses and think tanks – with input from a broader stakeholder group, identified and recommended a set of population-level outcome measures that impact third grade reading success. These measures are whole-child, begin at birth, and align around the following goals:

- Health and Development on Track, Beginning at Birth
- Supported and Supportive Families and Communities
- High Quality Birth-to-Eight Learning and Education

A large group of multi-disciplinary stakeholders from across the state convened to review and endorse the measures of success.

Learning Teams

The next step is to better understand the stories behind the North Carolina data for each measure of success. We are convening three Learning Teams of content experts, data experts and policy thinkers around the three goals (Health, Families/Communities, and Education, as outlined above) to consider the following:

- Assess Trends: How is the state doing on each measure? What are the trends over time? How does NC compare to other states? Where are the largest improvements? Where are things stagnant or getting worse?
- Understand Inequities: Where are the biggest inequities? Where has there been success in reducing inequities? How did that come about?
- Understand Patterns/Connections: What are the patterns in these trends across the indicators that we should pay attention to? Which indicators seem strongly connected to each other?
- Identify Data Gaps: What additional data do we need to understand and track? What measures should be on a data development agenda of measures we do not currently track?

NC data for the Learning Teams’ consideration will be provided by NC Child, North Carolina’s KIDS COUNT agency. Learning Teams will launch with an orientation webinar in mid-July, followed by four working meetings in the fall (September through December).

Next Steps

After the Learning Teams make sense of the trends, inequities, patterns and connections in the NC data and identify data gaps, the broader stakeholder group will be convened in February 2017 to:

- Share what the Learning Teams have discovered and build our data story.
- Use the lessons learned to determine if we begin with the framework as a whole or prioritize specific outcomes.
- Form Design Teams to move to action.

Learning Team Member Characteristics

The Learning Teams will be led by co-chairs and should include representatives from the following categories of stakeholders:

- Families and Communities
- Government agencies
- Advocates
- Direct service providers
- Localities - LEAs, Smart Start partnerships, etc.
- Content experts
- Data experts
- Funders
- Key influencers

The Learning Teams should be nonpartisan groups of experts, thinkers and those with lived experience who will have credibility with policymakers and funders. Overarching characteristics for Learning Team members include:

- A commitment to being data- and research-driven
- An ability to look at early literacy development through a multi-dimensional systems lens and an understanding of how early literacy is impacted by a child's developmental trajectory, within the context of his or her family and community.
- An understanding of the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) in child development and developing reading proficiency
- A commitment to acknowledging and eliminating systemic inequities and racial, ethnic and socioeconomic disparities in early childhood experiences, opportunities and outcomes
- An eagerness to think outside the box of what the state currently does and imagine the possibilities
- A commitment to action, and to finding a good – even if imperfect – starting place for the work.

Learning Team Member Responsibilities

Learning Team members will be asked to commit *to the best of their ability* to:

- An online orientation meeting in mid-July and up to four Learning Team working meetings between September and December
- A statewide summit in February
- Reviewing materials and making recommendations between and during Learning Team meetings

Learning Team Co-Chair Responsibilities

Each Learning Team will be led by two co-chairs, who will be asked to commit to:

- The above Learning Team member responsibilities
- Working with the Learning Team meeting facilitator (NCECF) and data group (NC Child) between and during meetings to prepare for and guide the Learning Team conversations
- One or two meetings (online would be an option) with the co-chairs from the other two Learning Teams during the process to ensure that the work of the three Learning Teams is integrated