NC Pathways to Grade Level Reading Initiative
Families & Communities Learning Team
Meeting One Summary Report

The NC Pathways to Grade Level Reading Families & Communities Learning Team met for the first time on September 8 from 1-4 pm at Parker Poe in Raleigh.

All of the materials and presentations shared at the meeting are online at
http://buildthefoundation.org/learning-teams/

Pathways to Grade Level Reading Initiative Background

The NC Pathways to Grade Level Reading initiative (Pathways) aims to ensure that every child has a clear pathway to an important developmental milestone – reading on grade level by third grade. To accomplish this, diverse partners are working together to make sure that children have everything they need, starting at birth, to reach that early reading milestone on time.

Research tells us that when children have good **health** (starting from birth), high-quality **education** (including early care, pre-kindergarten, and the early grades) and strong and supportive **families and communities**, they have the best opportunity to be on track by third grade.

Pathways has two major goals for all children:

(1) **Children will be reading well by the time school shifts from learning to read to reading to learn**. Research has shown us that reading proficiently by third grade is essential for future school success and life outcomes. In fact, we can predict who is unlikely to finish high school based on third-grade reading scores.

(2) **From the time they are born, children will be healthy, well-educated and living in supportive families and communities.** The three domains that research says are important for early literacy (health, education, and supportive families and communities) are the same things that children and families need for future school and life success.

In order for more children to be successful readers by third grade, partnerships are being created among the state's leaders in early learning and education, public agencies, policy, philanthropy, and business to agree on a common focus, identify key data indicators – measures of success – to track, and outline a set of shared strategies for taking action.

During the first phase of the Pathways work, experts reviewed data about the factors that matter in children's development and created a framework of key measures of success. These measures – things like children's mental health, adults' parenting skills, and neighborhoods where children are safe to play – are the most important building blocks of healthy and well-

educated children and safe and supportive families and communities. Research tells us that if we can ensure more children have these building blocks in place from birth, more children will be reading on grade level by third grade.

Purpose of the Learning Teams

The second phase of the work involves [Learning Teams](#), whose charge is to understand how North Carolina is doing on these measures, including shifts in trends, what groups of children are struggling more than others, and how moving one data point might affect another.

The work of the Learning Teams will lead North Carolina into the third phase of Pathways work – partners, together, choosing which measures of success to begin working on first and outlining strategies for taking action.

Pathways is powered by the NC Early Childhood Foundation in collaboration with NC Child, The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc., and BEST NC.

See Appendix A for a list of the Families & Communities Learning Team members.

Meeting One Summary

Co-Chairs Tamika Williams of The Duke Endowment and Amy Hawn Nelson of UNC Charlotte Urban Institute welcomed the Families & Communities Learning Team members.

Tracy Zimmerman, NCECF Executive Director, shared background on the NC Pathways to Grade Level Reading Initiative, highlighted engaged organizations, and introduced (in-absentia) the co-chairs for all three Learning Teams (Health, Education, and Families & Communities). After the co-chairs asked everyone to introduce themselves, Tracy updated the group on how the Pathways Initiative arrived where it is today, including how the Data Action Team chose the Measures of Success.

The co-chairs then highlighted the characteristics that Learning Team members should embody, such as a commitment to being research- and data-driven, a commitment to acknowledging and eliminating systemic inequities, and an eagerness to think outside the box.

Co-chair Amy Hawn Nelson, who also was a member of the Data Action Team, introduced the group to the Measures of Success Framework. The group then broke up into partners to discuss for a few minutes which parts of the Framework are the most relevant to their work, followed by a full-group conversation about the Framework.

The co-chairs then walked through the Learning Team responsibilities and what to expect at each of the four meetings of the Health Learning Team. They also outlined the goal of the meeting – specifically, to critically review the indicator data to identify inequities that need to be considered when designing strategies for action.

Mandy Ableidinger, Policy and Practice Leader at NCECF, then walked the group through the data they will be considering during the Learning Teams process. The Pathways work is a data- and evidence-driven process. Two types of data are presented:

- **Data regularly tracked in NC**: Where possible, NC data was presented that highlights trends over time; race/ethnic, income and geographic disparities; and comparison with national data. Data comes from national surveys or state and local administrative agencies, and may reflect the experiences of a particular population (i.e., children receiving Medicaid) or all children in the state.

- **Data not regularly tracked in NC**: For those measures that do not have a consistent data source as described above, we identified proxy, supplemental data in order to provide some information for making decisions about those indicators. These data carry caveats – they are often slightly different indicators from the ones in the Framework, they may be for certain subgroups rather than all children across the state, they may come from a one-time data source, and/or they may be national data.

Those indicators that are not regularly tracked in NC will comprise the Pathways Data Development Agenda. One of the goals of the Pathways project is to continue data advocacy around those data development agenda items to encourage NC leaders to begin collecting data systematically around all the measures of success in the framework.

Mandy walked the group through the data book, pointing out the different types of charts, chart features, and how to interpret the data. We noted the importance of disaggregating data to see inequities that would otherwise be masked by statewide numbers.

The Families & Communities Learning Team then spent the rest of the meeting examining the data, specifically considering the question of equity. For each outcome, and each indicator in that outcome, each small group (table) moved through a process that included:
- Individual reflection – What seems important here?
- Small table conversation – What do you see in terms of inequities? Which ones are most important to pay attention to? Which groups seem most disadvantaged?
- Small table equity rating – To what extent does this indicator represent an area where great inequities exist?

Each table graphed its thoughts on the wall, adding sticky notes to columns headed by various subgroup titles (African-American, Hispanic, Other Race, White, Low-Income, Geography), as well as columns for Successes in Reducing Inequities and Data Questions.

The results of the small-group work are included in this report as Appendix B. There was frustration around some aspects of the data, including NC data not being accessible and small sample sizes that led some members to question whether strong conclusions could be drawn from the data. Data source suggestions were made that the facilitators will follow up on before Meeting 2.

After the small group work, there was a full-group discussion around the results of the table conversations. Some of the comments are included below:

- There are inequities everywhere, by race/ethnicity, by income, by age, and by geography. The data showed it over and over.
- The inequities are higher in the poorer parts of the states, which are also those with the largest minority communities.
- At the same time, it is important to pay attention to the data that goes off the assumed narrative (i.e., lower-income families eating more meals together than higher-income families) and tease out the areas of family strength.
- Some of the data makes it clear that it's not about ability or capacity of certain groups, but more about obstacles to success.
- It is important to think carefully about the data, especially the indicators that might have reporter perceptions or biases built in.
- Trend lines were often flat, suggesting that efforts to make change haven't really paid off.
- Even with all the data that was pulled on these indicators, there are still gaps and it's hard to make decisions because of that.

Tracy thanked the group for coming and reminded them that the next meeting is October 11, in the same room.

The powerpoint presentation for the meeting is available online at http://buildthefoundation.org/learning-teams/

Appendix A: Families & Communities Learning Team Members (as of meeting 1)

Amy	**Hawn Nelson**	**UNC Charlotte Urban Institute**
Tamika	**Williams**	**The Duke Endowment**
Linda	Blanton	Partnership for Children of Cumberland county
Richard	Edwards	Benchmarks NC
Kelly	Evans	Duke Center for Child and Family Policy
Anne	Foglia	NC Institute of Medicine
Rachel	Galanter	Exchange Family Center
Brisa	Hernandez	Carolinas HealthCare System
Sharon	Hirsch	Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina
Stephany	Jackson	Partnership for Children of Cumberland County
Sharon	Loza	Children's Places and Spaces/Marbles Kids Museum
Laura	Machlin	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Laura	Marx	United Way of North Carolina
Kim	McCombs-Thornton	The NC Partnership for Children/Smart Start, Inc.
Beth	Messersmith	MomsRising
Tazra	Mitchell	NC Budget and Tax Center
Jane	Morrow	Smart Start of New Hanover County
Nina	Sazer O'Donnell	NSO Associates
Fawn	Pattison	Duke University Environmental Law & Policy Clinic
Danya	Perry	Communities In Schools NC
Libby	Richards	Triangle Community Foundation
Katie	Rosanbalm	Center for Child and Family Policy, Duke University
Harold	Sellars	North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation
Pamela	Shue	NC Division of Child Development and Early Education
Kimberly	Spence	Partnership for Children of Cumberland County
Sarah	Sydney	Parent Representative
Tom	Vitaglione	NC Child
Laurie	Williamson	United Way of the Greater Triangle
Ginger	Young	Book Harvest

Appendix B: Synthesis of Table Work

For this exercise, participants worked at their tables to examine the data for each indicator and answer questions like:
- What inequities seem really important to pay attention to?
- Which groups are most disadvantaged according to this data?
- Which areas of the state are most disadvantaged according to this data?

Tables mapped their conversations on the wall – these notes are included below.

Each table then determined to what extent each indicator represents an area where great inequities exist:
- Great inequities in this indicator area: Data on this indicator highlight significant racial or income inequities.
- Some inequities in this indicator area: Data on this indicator highlight some racial or income inequities.
- Little or no inequities: Data on this indicator reveal few racial or income inequities.
- Equity data not available: Race and income data was not available to evaluate this indicator.

These ratings are included below in the final chart of the report.

Outcome: Safe, Stable, Nurturing Relationships							
Indicator	**Overall Changes in Inequities**	**Low Income**	**Geography**	**African American**	**Hispanic**	**Other Race**	**White**
Child Abuse/ Neglect				Child Abuse- more often reported for African Americans	Child abuse rate is low	Child Abuse- American Indian lowest pop/highest rate	
						Child Abuse- increase in American Indian	
Parent/Child Interactions					Biggest gap in gender and play for Hispanic	Asian Dads talk more than Moms	
Family Meals		Protective - low income have main meal every day			Family Meals- Hispanic high	Family Meals- "other" highest for every day	
		Family Meals- low income eating together a lot			Family Meals- high income lower for everyday		
		Family Meals- Poor are more likely to eat together					

Outcome: Families with the Skills and Supports to Support Children's Optimal Development							
Indicator	Overall Changes in Inequities	Low Income	Geography	African American	Hispanic	Other Race	White
Support for New Mothers	Social Support- greater than 50% in most groups note "excellent"- good to build on	Low income is only category w/no social support for new moms		Support for new mothers- stark disparities by race		Other non-Hispanic is only inverted where more adequate new mom support than excellent	White new Moms perceive more excellent social support than African American/Latina moms
		Support for new mothers- stark disparities by income				Social Support- other non-Hispanic. Lower- only one less than 50%	
		Social Support- WIC vs. non-WIC big disparity					
Summer Learning		Low income clear disparity on summer reading					
		Summer reading- income disparity					
		Summer reading loss- Is more sustained poverty lower growth? (i.e. multiple years free and reduced lunch vs. for one year)					

Parent Skills and Knowledge	no data	no data	no data	no data	no data	no data	no data
Reading with Children	Read- % everyday gone down over time.	Reading w/children- + relationship between reading and income		African-American: less daily reading	Latino lowest daily reading	Protective - Other non-Hispanic highest daily reading	
	Reading with Children- There are changes over time	Low income risk for not daily reading		Reading with children- There are differences in % of families reading everyday by race/ethnicity	Read- Hispanic low. (maybe analyze)		
		Reading- income disparities					

Outcome: Economic Security

Indicator	Overall Changes in Inequities	Low Income	Geography	African American	Hispanic	Other Race	White
Family Poverty	Family Poverty- trend data is flat over time	Family Poverty- Eastern counties are higher and low income	Clusters of counties in NE and SE with poverty: Halifax, Edgecomb, Tyrell	African American poverty double non-Hispanic White	Racial gap w/Latino highest and most increased	Poverty- "other" category? None here	
			Appalachia historically represented as high poverty but eastern NC more represented	Poverty- big racial inequities across the board- Latino, Black, other			
			Coastal/eastern inland higher poverty				
			Poverty- Geo. Inequities- rural vs. urban				
Homelessness	Homelessness - Huge increase over time			African Americans are over represented in shelter in national data			
				Homeless- significant disparities			

Outcome: Toxic-Free, Safe, Viable Communities							
Indicator	Overall Changes in Inequities	Low Income	Geography	African American	Hispanic	Other Race	White
Neighborhood Crime			Durham high violence compared to poverty				
			Major HWY issue? Confluence of SE cluster counties of crime and family poverty: Robeson, Scottland, Columbus				
			NE cluster high poverty not high violence				
			Neighborhood Crime- Geo disparities correlated w/poverty?				
			Neighborhood Crime- dramatic geographic disparities				
Safe to Play Outside	Safe to play outside- little change over time	Low income correlates not safe play		Disparities safe outside by black vs white/other	Disparities outside Latino vs. White/other		Safe- White people feel safe

				Safe to Play Outside- disparities by race			
		Safe- Disparities by income					
		Safe to Play Outside- disparities by income					
Neighborhood Poverty	Neighborhood poverty- dramatic change over time		NE and SE clusters of neighborhood poverty	Neighborhood Poverty- race/ethnicity disparities	Latino disprop neighborhood poverty	AM Indian Disprop. Neighborhood poverty	Neighborhood Poverty- White much better
			Watauga not a lot of poverty but much neighborhood	African American - Disproportionate neighborhood poverty			
Blood Lead Levels	Lead- Going in right direction.	Lead- income disparity	Lead- Geographic Disparity	Neighborhood Poverty- Children of color more likely to live in high poverty neighborhoods			

Team members had questions about the data and made requests for additional data to be pulled. While much of the requested data is not available unfortunately, facilitators will bring what additional data is available to Meeting 2.

Data questions/requests included:

Child Abuse/Neglect
Want child abuse data by income and age of child/children
County by county comparison, broken out by reported, investigated, and substantiated
Bar chart adds up to 111%
Figures for age birth to eight
What socio economic data exists?
Can data be disaggregated on what is being reported
What are substaintiated rates by race/ethnicity
Parent/Child Interactions
No data black men on talk
Don't have data for people who didn't indicate primary activity
NC State-parenting program, Recreation studies, Family and Consumer Sciences - may have data
Easy to stereotype based on inadequate data
Minutes a day parents talk, N is too small for survey, need data source, is child defined as birth to 18
Family Meals
How much do families know about the importance of helping with that?
NC data? Can't tell.
Add something to the chart explaining that the categories aren't cumulative
Need N's, How is question worded?
Support for New Mothers
Where is rest of Latino data for new mom support?
Why is gap between adequate and excellent- is that what the words mean to those populations or actual difference?
Want data on fathers.

Would like wording of question, include "no support" in race/ethnicity breakdown
Summer Learning
For summer reading level ethnicity equals race? Because ethnicity no impact.
Year-rd. vs. traditional calendar reading scores - third grade
Summer reading loss data for NC
Need county level data - data available by race, gender, income; need context of OST provider access by county.
Parent Skills and Knowledge
Pediatrician or kindergarten assessment data for parent skills/knowledge
Is there data on parent education level vs. fam income?
Suff. Knowledge - Parent survey 0-3 (Nina will send)
Reading with Children
Would like most recent data. Good sources: Scholastic (Nina) and First Book
Need N's, Need wording of questions
Does reading daily correlate to child care or supports?
Family Poverty
Good to have by "living wage" also
% of births to mothers on Medicaid below 100% FPL would be interesting
Would like confidence intervals, range ?
Are 0-8 data same as 0-17?
Homelessness
0-8 2006-2016 Homelessness to see trend over decade
Data on homelessness: race, geography, level of poverty
Any data on homeless men w/children or shelter turnaways?
Have Child Trends do a special run for NC?
Want # for K-3, not just %, Also details on M-V data->Homeless at any time during the year?
Need LEA- level data across state by race and breakout large LEA's (to ensure that rates aren't masked by avg.)
Neighborhood Crime

Neighborhood Crime- show by MSA's in NC
How is neighborhood defined: zip code? Census tract? No race data?
Safe to Play Outside
Geography and safe play
More current data?
Neighborhood Poverty
Can no data be represented w/stripes to differentiate from low neighborhood poverty?
Did neighborhood poverty change at same/different rate over longer time span?
Break out high density counties by census track (avg. is masking data), NC map needs more info.
Blood Lead Levels
Want more data.
Should have up to 2014 within the month
Middle chart- no race showing

Indicators were ranked as having "great," "some," or "little or no" inequities, or there was not enough data to say. All three groups were asked to rate each indicator; their responses are noted by the ✓ marks on the chart below.

	Great Inequities	Some Inequities	Little/No Inequities	Not enough Data	Notes
Outcome 1: Safe, Stable, Nurturing Relationships					
Indicator: Child Abuse/Neglect	✓✓✓				Racial inequities; need data by income
Indicator: Parent and Child Interactions				✓✓✓	Only national data, sample sizes very small, no age ranges of children
Family Meals	✓	✓✓			Great by income; less by race/ethnicity
Outcome 2: Families with the Skills and Supports to Support Children's Optimal Development					
Indicator: Support for New Mothers	✓✓	✓			Racial and income inequities
Indicator: Summer Learning	✓✓			✓	In national data, clear disparities by income. Need data for NC.
Indicator: Parent Skills & Knowledge				✓✓✓	No data available on this indicator
Indicator: Reading with Children	✓✓✓				Racial and income inequities
Outcome 3: Economic Security					
Indicator: Family Poverty	✓✓✓				Racial and geographic inequities
Indicator: Homelessness	✓			✓✓	Data unavailable for young children in NC. National data shows great inequities by race, age.
Outcome 4: Toxic-Free, Safe, Viable Communities					
Indicator: Neighborhood Crime	✓✓	✓			Geographic inequities
Indicator: Safe to Play Outside	✓✓✓				Race and income inequities

Indicator: Neighborhood Poverty	✔✔✔			✔ (NC geographic data)	Racial inequities
Indicator: Blood Lead Levels	✔			✔✔	National data shows great inequities; no data available for NC.