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NC Early Literacy Development Data Action Team
Description and Scope of Work

Overview

The North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation, 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 children on a pathway to grade-level reading by the end of third grade. The process is the first step in aligning state policy and action around this critical goal.

Measures of Success

A Data Action Team of early childhood researchers and experts will identify and recommend a set of outcome measures that impact third grade reading success. These measures will be whole-child, beginning at birth, and align with the goals in Lisbeth Schorr's *Pathway to Children Ready for School and Succeeding at Third Grade,* including:

- Health and Development on Track, Starting at Birth
- Supported and Supportive Families and Communities
- High Quality Early Care and Education
- Effective Teaching and Learning in K-3 Classrooms

The Data Action Team will engage in an analysis of existing national birth-to-eight indicators and those indicators being used by NC state-level organizations. The goal of the review will be to select a limited number of indicators that best suit NC's context based on our state's strengths and needs. In addition, our partner NC Child will assess data needs.

Before the Data Action Team begins meeting, a large group of multi-disciplinary stakeholders from across the state will be convened to outline results and guiding principles for the work. That stakeholder group will be kept abreast of the Data Action Team's work, and their feedback will be solicited on a regular basis as the Data Action Team moves through the process of selecting indicators.

Once the Data Action Team has its recommendations, NCECF, NC Child, The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc., and BEST NC will re-convene the larger stakeholder group of state public, business, philanthropic and nonprofit leaders. Stakeholders will engage in a collaborative process to review, prioritize and endorse the measures of success.

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Data Action Team Member Characteristics

The Data Action Team should be a group of early childhood researchers and experts that will have credibility with advocates, policymakers and funders. Overarching characteristics for Action 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
- 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

The Data Action Team should comprise representatives from the following stakeholder groups:

- Early childhood academic researchers who deeply understand the data around children's early development and literacy and who conceive of the work to move the needle on early literacy as a multi-dimensional, multi-systemic effort. These leaders will be asked to help the group conceptualize the connections among the many domains of child well-being and how outcomes in those areas impact early literacy, as well as think outside the box of the current data collection to what the ideal set of indicators might look like.

- Early childhood experts outside of state government who think on a systems-level, have an understanding of North Carolina's early childhood history and are eager to move the state forward, building on that knowledge. These leaders will be asked to help the group get a feel for what is possible in NC around data collection on these issues, what has been tried before, and why prior attempts at setting up new data systems or tracking new indicators were or were not successful.

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- Early childhood experts inside state government who understand the big picture and are committed to "getting to yes." These leaders will be asked to help the group better
- understand the constraints and limitations the state struggles with and play an inside role in carrying the work forward beyond the planning phase and into implementation.

- Early childhood direct service providers who are also able to look at the work to improve early literacy through a systems lens. These leaders will be asked to share their nuts-and-bolts experience working with children and families with the group and translate that experience into relevant advice on the most appropriate indicators to track to get a full picture of what drives early literacy.

- Families with children eight and younger who will use their experiences as customers of the system to help identify gaps in data collection, suggest new data points, and contextualize existing data. These leaders will be asked to help data team members understand the challenges, inequities, and barriers facing families, the benefits they receive as customers of early childhood programs, and recommended improvements to the overall system.

The Data Action Team should include experts from the following content areas, with an early childhood lens:
- Health, both physical and mental
- Child development, including social-emotional development
- Safe and supported families and communities (i.e., child welfare, economic security)
- Early care and education
- School readiness/transition to kindergarten
- Quality teaching in early education/Pre-K and elementary schools
- School attendance in elementary school
- Children with special needs

Data Action Team Member Responsibilities
Data Action Team members will be asked to commit to:
- At least four Data Action Team meetings and one statewide Summit between January and May;
- Reviewing materials and making recommendations between and during Data Action Team meetings; and
- Participation on Data Action Team workgroups if/as needed.