



Pathways to Grade-Level Reading Initiative Children's Social-Emotional Health Data Workgroup Description

Introduction to the North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation

The vision of the [NC Early Childhood Foundation \(NCECF\)](#) is that each child in North Carolina has a strong foundation for lifelong success and reading proficiency, supported by the nation's best birth-to-eight system.

To drive policies and strategies that unleash the potential of each child, NCECF brings together those working to promote NC children's health and development, to support families and communities and to advance high quality birth-to-eight learning. Our work includes:

- Promoting public understanding of and support for policies that promote children's birth-to-eight years for academic and lifelong success.
- Convening and spearheading collaboration to bridge NC's birth-to-five and kindergarten-to-third grade systems.
- Advancing policies that create a stronger NC today and tomorrow by supporting each child's birth-to-eight development.

Pathways to Grade-Level Reading, the NC Early Childhood Action Plan, and Early Childhood Data Development

The [Pathways to Grade-Level Reading Initiative's](#) vision is bold – all North Carolina children, regardless of race, ethnicity or socioeconomic status, are reading on grade-level by the end of third grade, so that they have the greatest opportunity for life success.

Achieving this vision will take long-term commitment. To get there, we need state and local policies and practices aligned around and actively advancing this common vision, shared measures of success and coordinated strategies that support children's optimal development beginning at birth. To accomplish that, Pathways is creating partnerships among the state's public agencies, policy, philanthropic, business & early childhood leaders.

Phase I of Pathways identified shared, whole-child [Measures of Success](#) that put children on a pathway to grade-level reading. Phase II considered the NC data behind the Measures of Success and recommended seven measures to collectively move to action on first. Phase III created the [Pathways Action Framework](#) to advance the Measures of Success for North Carolina.

Pathways has provided a foundation for the work of other statewide early childhood initiatives. In February 2019, the NC Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) and the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) released NC's [Early Childhood Action Plan \(ECAP\)](#), which highlights ten early childhood goals, metrics and targets for improvement by 2025. The ECAP metrics pull from the Pathways Measures of Success. The ECAP will guide the development of the state's birth-to-age-five (B-5) strategic plan as part of the Preschool Development Grant.

Building on this work, NCECF and NCDHHS are co-convening the NC Early Childhood Data Advisory Council to create a strategic plan for improving NC's early childhood data collection, analysis and use, including developing data sources for measures that NC is not currently collecting. The NC Early Childhood Data Advisory Council will support the ECAP, the state's Preschool Development Grant, and the Pathways initiative.



In addition to the NC Early Childhood Data Advisory Council, NCECF is convening two workgroups of data experts to identify or make recommendations to develop population-level data sources for two critical measures of success that are included in both the Pathways Measures of Success Framework and NC Early Childhood Action Plan: 1) children's social and emotional health and 2) children's development at kindergarten entry. Ensuring that NC's social-emotional health system for children and families is accessible and high-quality is one of four expectations promoted in the Pathways Action Framework and is also a goal addressed in the NC ECAP.

Children's Social-Emotional Health Data Workgroup Purpose and Scope of Work:

Measuring children's social-emotional health, particularly at the population level, is a challenge. There is an ongoing national debate about what the best measures might be, and what data sources could be used. At this time, no state has identified any one indicator and data source to measure children's social-emotional health at the population level. As a leader in children's developmental screenings, North Carolina has been and should continue to be a major player in that national conversation.

The Children's Social-Emotional Health data workgroup will review research and best practices to co-create consensus recommendations for what measure – or portfolio of proxy measures – would best track North Carolina young children's social-emotional health at the population level.

The workgroup process will include:

- Three half-day meetings and one full-day (6 hours) meeting between September 2019 and February 2020. Meetings will be held in the Triangle and will include a light lunch. Some time to review materials and provide input may be required between meetings (i.e., one hour or less).
- Reviewing the research on national best practices for measuring children's social-emotional health outcomes on a population level.
- Hearing from state and national experts to inform the work as needed.
- Using a racial equity lens during the group process through collaboration with CounterPart Consulting.
- Documenting the workgroup's process and final recommendations by March 2020.

Data Workgroup Member Characteristics:

Pathways is designed to address racial inequities through disaggregation of data and intentionally choosing strategies to reduce disparities. NCECF and Pathways are committed to engaging the diversity of NC's people, especially the voices of people of color. Overarching characteristics for data workgroup members include:

- A commitment to being data- and research-driven.
- A willingness to engage people with different policy perspectives with an open mind.
- An ability to look at early development through a multi-dimensional systems lens and an understanding of how social-emotional health is impacted by a child's developmental trajectory, within the context of his or her family and community.
- An understanding of the potential policy and practice impacts of developing these health measures.
- Experience with and/or knowledge of the Survey of Well-Being of Young Children, National Survey of Children's Health, and/or other social-emotional health measures is welcome, though not required.
- A commitment to acknowledging and eliminating systemic inequities and racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic disparities in early childhood experiences, opportunities, data and outcomes.

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