



North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation

Strategic Direction

January 2017 – December 2019

Vision

Each North Carolina child has a strong foundation for lifelong success and reading proficiency, supported by the nation's best birth-to-eight system.

Mission

Marshal North Carolina's great people, ideas and achievements to build a foundation of opportunity and success for every child by the end of third grade.

Principles

We are boldly positive. The best way to make positive change happen is to believe it is possible and achievable, illuminate paths forward, and back it up with real results.

We promote what works. We promote policies and programs grounded in research. We use data and research to pinpoint problems, identify promising solutions and engage in continuous quality improvement. We hold ourselves accountable for making measurable progress and aligning our work with other efforts to improve third grade outcomes.

We support state and local solutions. Progress on third grade achievement takes sustained state and local effort and investment. We help identify and create leverage points and accelerate change.

We are appreciative and inclusive leaders. We believe the best results are achieved when we tap into the potential and positive energy of diverse perspectives and cultures. We value and respect differing opinions and contributions, and actively seek to include them in our work.

We are intentional and grateful partners. North Carolina has a wealth of great leaders and organizations working to improve outcomes for children. We seek to add value by prioritizing communication and creating opportunities for shared learning, problem solving, credit and successes.

Goals, Outcomes & Long-Term Impacts

Goal 1

Increase public understanding of and support for policies that promote the importance of children’s birth-to-eight years for academic and lifelong success.

| OUTCOMES | PROGRESS |
|---|--|
| By 2018, new business, faith, law enforcement and other community leaders are serving as early childhood ambassadors. | <i>In Progress</i> The growth of Campaign for Grade-Level Reading communities in NC has brought new community leaders to champion a culture of early literacy at the local level. |
| By 2019, voter support for early learning remains high. | <i>In Progress</i> Our voter poll in 2018 will determine outcome. |
| By 2019, Republican voter support continues to increase. | <i>In Progress</i> Our voter poll in 2018 will determine outcome. |
| By 2019, voters demonstrate understanding that third grade reading is rooted in birth-to-eight child development, including health and development on track beginning at birth, supported and supportive families and communities, high quality birth-to-eight learning environments and regular attendance in early learning programs and schools. | <i>In Progress</i> Our voter poll in 2018 will determine outcome. |

Long-term Impact

- ✓ Public support for early learning increases investments and policies that improve outcomes for children.
- ✓ Nontraditional supporters leverage their credibility with policymakers to increase investments and policies that improve outcomes for children.
- ✓ The North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation is the state’s resource for how to effectively communicate the importance of birth-to-eight child development and its impact on children, families, communities and the state.

Goal 2

Increase aligned and coordinated birth-to-eight action across government, policy, private, philanthropic, nonprofit and research sectors.

| OUTCOMES | PROGRESS |
|--|--|
| By 2017, state and community decision-makers have accessible, easy-to-understand, actionable data on whole-child, birth-to-eight measures of success that put children on a pathway to grade-level reading by the end of third grade. | <i>In Progress</i> <i>Revised – By 2018</i> Data has been collected. SAS is developing (in-kind) a data portal that will be ready in Summer 2018. |
| By 2018, Campaign for Grade-Level Reading communities demonstrate progress on one identified goal. | <i>In Progress</i> <i>Revised – By 2020</i> Smaller campaigns need additional support to meet goals. NCECF will be expanding its technical assistance. |
| By 2018, state health, family support, early learning and education leaders across government, policy, private, nonprofit, philanthropic and research sectors will develop and endorse a Policy, Procedures and Capacity Agenda based on shared measures of success and community input. | <i>In Progress</i> Will be completed by May 2018. |
| By 2018, state organizations have adopted appropriate measures of success to guide their work, have access to data on Pathways measures, use the information to guide action and are publicly accountable. | <i>In Progress</i> Examples include: the NC Perinatal Health Strategic Plan incorporated Pathways into its recommendations; the Essentials for Child Well-Being is aligning its work with the Pathways measures; the NC Public School Forum’s 2017 study group report, “Expanding Educational Opportunity in North Carolina” called out the Pathways initiative; and Smart Start aligned its accountability system with the Pathways Measures of Success. |

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| By 2018, the number of Campaign for Grade-Level Reading communities has increased to 15 and action plans are aligned with the shared measures of success. | <i>In Progress</i> Currently at 14. |
| By 2019, a legislative task force modeled on the NC Child Fatality Task Force leads the charge to implement state-level policy based on the Design (Action) Team recommendations. | Met The General Assembly created a Birth-3 Interagency Council. |
| By 2019, communities have adopted the measures of success to guide their work and have access to disaggregated, county-level data on Pathways measures and use the information to guide action and be publicly accountable. | <i>In Progress</i> Example: Prevent Child Abuse NC used the measures for the creation of community prevention plans and some Smart Start local partnerships are using the measures for strategic planning. |
| By 2019, foundations that grant in the birth-to-eight space are beginning to align expected outcomes with Pathways measures. | <i>In Progress</i> The Early Learning Funders Collaborative is considering how to align with Pathways. |

Long-term Impact

- ✓ North Carolina government, policy, private, nonprofit, philanthropic and research sectors that work with children birth-to-eight and their families have a common vision, shared measures of success and coordinated strategies.
- ✓ Measurable improvement in key indicators of young child and family well-being.
- ✓ The North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation is the state’s resource for bridging birth-to-five and kindergarten-through-third grade systems.

Goal 3

Advance policies and practices proven to impact shared measures that support children’s optimal birth-to-eight development.

| OUTCOMES | PROGRESS |
|--|-----------------|
| By 2017, early childhood leaders and policymakers have a compendium of policies and practices that are proven to advance the prioritized measures of success. | Met |
| By 2017, the State’s plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) includes a minimum of two birth-to-eight recommendations resulting from NCECF’s convening of stakeholders. | Met |

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| By 2017, state birth-to-eight government and nonprofit leaders craft recommendations for birth-to-eight state governance. | Met |
| By 2017, NCECF has built and supports an online Birth-to-Eight Policy Center to guide alignment around the measures of success and shared strategies. | <i>In Progress</i> <i>Revised - 2018</i> Content has been developed and shared with decision-makers (e.g., AttendaNCe Counts). Website update will be live in the 1 st quarter of 2018. |
| By 2018, state and local leaders have increased understanding of the multiple factors that influence chronic absenteeism and suspensions and expulsions in early learning programs and schools from birth through third grade. | <i>In Progress</i> Through our work, the NC State Board of Education included consideration of chronic absenteeism in the state's Every Student Succeeds Act plan. |
| By 2018, state and local leaders have increased understanding of the policies and practices that improve outcomes for young children on the prioritized measures of success. | <i>In Progress</i> <i>Our working papers on policies that move the measures have been viewed more than 6,00 times in just four months.</i> http://www.buildthefoundation.org/pathways-working-papers |
| By 2018, 33 percent of Local Education Agencies report that they worked with local early learning organizations (e.g., Smart Start Local Partnerships) on their district ESSA plans. | Met <i>65% of Local Education Agencies included Smart Start in their district teams for ESSA planning.</i> |
| By 2018, policymakers, business leaders, philanthropists, early childhood professionals, and community leaders seek expertise and input from the Birth-to-Eight Policy Center to guide policy as measured by meetings, presentations, access to resources. | <i>In Progress</i> <i>To date, our policy papers on the Pathways measures and our report on chronic absenteeism are being used across the state.</i> |
| By 2018, community leaders are trained and understand local (public and private) financing options to increase access to quality early learning programs. | <i>In Progress</i> <i>To date, we have conducted two training for six NC counties.</i> |

Long-term Impact

- ✓ Policymakers, advocates, business leaders and the public make policy, practice and program decisions based on research, data and analysis on what improves outcomes for children birth-to-eight.
- ✓ Measurable improvement in key indicators of young child and family well-being.
- ✓ The North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation is the state's resource for birth-to-eight policy.