

The Early Learning Challenge in North Carolina

Congressional Staff Briefing
January 24, 2012



December, 2012--NC Selected in Early Learning Challenge

- N.C. Snags Pre-K \$70 M—*Raleigh News and Observer*
- State Ranked No. 1 in Early-Education Grant Contest—*Asheville Citizen-Times*
- N.C. Seen as Pre-K Model: Let's Make It So—*Charlotte Observer*
- N.C. One of 9 States to Get Race to the Top Funds—NC News Network



North Carolina's Response

- Saw extraordinary opportunity to build upon history of pioneering and model work in the field
 - Smart Start
 - NC Pre-K
 - Star rating system
 - Pediatric developmental screening
- Envisioned potential to create a transformative system of services to help assure that **every** child has the chance to come to school ready to succeed
- Determined to set forth bold plan for dramatic progress



NC's Agenda: Ready for Success

- Build on achievements
- Overarching goal:
Each and every child ready for success in school and life
- Focus on
 - outcomes
 - shared accountability
- Supported by integrated data system with information that is
 - timely
 - useful for planning
- Using carefully selected tools and strategies to reach desired results



NC's Agenda: Ready for Success (cont.)

- Grounded in research-based knowledge
 - child development
 - effective implementation practices
- Comprehensive system of services
 - early learning and development
 - health care and social-emotional development
 - family strengthening
- Begin at the beginning, assuring infants and toddlers have best possible start
- Provide access to a continuum of appropriate and high-quality services through early years
- Coordinated by Early Childhood Advisory Council



NC's Plan: Four Areas of Focus

- Strengthen the state's early childhood system and build its capacity to foster positive outcomes for young children
- Enhance the quality of programs to serve young children and their families and improve access to high-quality programs
- Strengthen the early childhood workforce to increase staff and system effectiveness and sustain change
- Target high-intensity supports and community infrastructure-building efforts to turn around poor outcomes for young children in the state's highest-need counties



NC's Plan: Transformation Zone Strategy

- Focus intensive effort in selected high-need counties in northeastern North Carolina
- Provide comprehensive set of services and supports offered when and where needed
- Help achieve dramatically improved outcomes for all young children
- Lessons learned through concentrated approach used to
 - hone early childhood strategies
 - improve outcomes for young children across the state



NC's Plan: Major Projects

- Strengthening the system and building capacity to foster positive child outcomes
 - Early Learning and Development (ELD) Standards
 - Integrated data system
 - K-3 assessment
 - Local leadership collaborative
- Enhancing the quality of programs and promoting access to high-quality programs
 - QRIS revision
 - Supports for new QRIS participants
 - Supports for attaining a higher rated license
 - Child care health consultant supports
 - Family engagement
 - Expansion of developmental screening and referral



NC's Plan: Major Projects (cont.)

- Strengthening the early childhood workforce
 - Multiple strategies for education
 - Community College Innovation Fund
 - Online master's degree for leadership and management
 - T.E.A.C.H. scholarships for previously unserved staff (i.e., home visitors)
 - Ongoing professional development
 - Training sessions on standards and assessment
 - Regional support for coaches, mentors, and technical assistance providers
 - Director Leadership Institute



NC's Plan: Major Projects (cont.)

- Targeting high-intensity supports and community infrastructure in high-need counties
 - Screening and referral services
 - Family strengthening programs
 - High-quality ELD programs for infants and toddlers
 - Specialized support for ELD programs for children's health, challenging behaviors, and infant-toddler care and education



NC's Implementation Plan

- Lead Agency: Early Childhood Advisory Council
- Participating State Agencies with responsibility for various projects:
 - Division of Child Development and Early Education
 - Division of Public Health
 - Department of Public Instruction, Office of Early Learning
- Contracts and MOUs with other state and local agencies and organizations



NC's Goals

Dramatically improved
outcomes for North Carolina's
young children

A stronger and more
competitive economy for
North Carolina

