Early Learning Challenge
Transformation Zone

Supports to Families
Support to Early Learning and Development Programs

SAY YES
North Carolina’s Future is in Their Hands
TO EARLY CHILDHOOD!
ELC Transformation Zone
Strategies

• Support to Families
  o Northeast Connects
  o Triple P
  o Community-based Literacy Program

• Supports to ELD programs
  o Supports for young children with challenging behaviors in ELD programs
  o Supports for ELD program administrators and teachers related to the health and development of young children in their programs

• Other Resources
  o Additional high quality ELD program slots for infants and toddlers
  o New part-time high quality ELD program services
  o WAGE$ supplements to retain teachers/providers who have two- or four-year degrees.
Strategy Description

• Infant-Toddler 4- and 5-star Expansion
  o Goal: Add 125 new infant-toddler slots in 4- and 5-star programs
  o Strategies
    • Highly trained and supported Infant-Toddler Specialist
      o Recruits interested 3, 4 or 5-star programs
      o Provides individualized and ongoing technical assistance and professional development
    • Mini-grants to support infant-toddler classroom development and/or improvements
    • Subsidy rate supplements to support high quality classrooms
Strategy Description

- NC Babies First Part-Day Program
  - Goal: Develop 110 part-day infant-toddler slots in 4- and 5-star programs
  - Strategies
    - Highly trained and supported Infant-Toddler Specialist
      - Recruits interested 4 and 5-star programs
      - Designs eligibility policies and engages community agencies to support recruitment of eligible families
      - Provides individualized and ongoing technical assistance and professional development
    - Mini-grants to support infant-toddler classroom development
    - Monthly payments to participating programs to support high quality classrooms
Theoretical Foundation

• High quality early learning and development (ELD) programs support very young children with high needs to have experiences that build a strong foundation for future learning, including healthy brain development and emotional and social competence.

• Families that include infants and toddlers with high needs face challenges to accessing high quality ELD programs and the supports they can provide.

• ELD programs need support to provide and maintain high quality infant toddler programming.
Core Components

- Financial support for programs to implement and maintain high quality infant-toddler care and education
  - Timely payment to programs
- On-site technical assistance provided by a highly qualified infant-toddler specialist to develop and maintain high quality infant-toddler slots
  - Ongoing assessment of quality with improvement planning and support provided as needed to maintain high quality
Fidelity

- Infant-toddler specialists are highly qualified and participate in ongoing professional development.
  - Program for Infant Toddler Care (PITC)
  - Pyramid Model for Promoting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children (CSEFEL)
  - ITERS-R
  - NC’s early learning standards

- Infant-toddler specialist activities are documented and reported quarterly to the NC I-T Enhancement Project Manager who conducts monitoring and provides support to the statewide team.

- The work of Infant-toddler specialists has been highly successful in improving classroom quality, as evidenced by end-of-year quantitative and qualitative evaluations.

- Quantitative & qualitative measures are used to report impact of services.
Training

• Infant-Toddler Specialists
  o Required professional development
    • Program for Infant Toddler Care (PITC) Trainer Certification
    • Pyramid Model for Promoting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children (CSEFEL)
    • ITERS-R, ITS-SIDS
  o Train-the-trainer on standardized I-T trainings developed by the statewide team

• Infant-Toddler Teachers
  o Needs assessed by teachers and program administrators themselves and by I-T specialists
  o Training provided by the I-T specialist working with the program or another member of the statewide I-T specialist team
  o CEU learning events provided by an I-T education specialist
  o Coursework provided by local community colleges and universities
  o Support for higher education provided by T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® scholarships
  o Increased compensation available through WAGE$®
Coaching

• **Infant-Toddler Specialists**
  - Phone calls, emails and site visits by Project Manager
  - Statewide team meetings that occur throughout the year
  - Transformation Zone community of practice for specialists providing services in the T-Zone counties
  - Coach training (including Pyramid Model)

• **Infant-Toddler Teachers and Program Administrators**
  - Onsite, phone and email technical assistance
  - Specialists use a variety of tools that support successful implementation:
    - Site visit summaries
    - ITERS-R or Pyramid Model Inventory of Practices
    - Improvement plans
    - Professional development plans
“Staff” Selection

• Infant-Toddler Specialists
  o Meet current education and experience requirements of the Infant-Toddler Enhancement Project
  o Have the disposition, knowledge and skills required to support programs serving children with high needs and their families to implement high quality programming for infants and toddlers
  o Live in the Transformation Zone

• Infant-Toddler Programs and Staff
  o Programs hold 4- or 5-star rating (or have a 3-star rating and capacity to increase star rating)
    • Recruitment process coordinated by the I-T Specialists in collaboration with local and regional CCR&R staff and DCDEE consultants
    • Joint selection process with signed agreements includes program staff and I-T Specialists
  o Directors/owners must
    • Be willing to commit to maintain added infant-toddler slots and terms of the signed agreements through 2015
    • Participate in and provide support for ongoing improvement activities through 2015
  o Infant-Toddler Teachers must
    • Be willing to accept coaching (“coach-ability”)
    • Commit to ongoing improvement activities through 2015 to implement and maintain high quality infant-toddler care
Data to inform Decision-Making

- **Infant-Toddler 4- and 5-star Expansion**
  - # infant-toddler slots added in 4- and 5-star programs
  - % of infant-toddler slots in programs maintaining 4- or 5-stars
  - % of programs documenting increased knowledge of high quality infant-toddler programming as a result of TA received

- **NC Babies First Part-Day Program**
  - # part-day infant-toddler slots added in 4- and 5-star programs
  - % of part-day infant-toddler slots in programs maintaining 4- or 5-stars
  - % of infants and toddlers in part-day programs making significant developmental progress
  - % of families participating in family engagement activities provided by part-day programs

- All participating programs will receive periodic program assessment feedback and comprehensive improvement plans, as well as ongoing access to current infant-toddler resources provided by their infant-toddler specialist to support their work. Part-day programs will also have child assessment data.
Organizational Supports

- **Regional CCR&R’s**
  - Support and house I-T Specialists
  - Coordinate with all local CCR&Rs

- **Local CCR&R’s and SS QI and QM Projects**
  - Recruit programs for participation in T-Zone activities
  - Provide technical assistance and professional development on preschool and school-age care and education to support ELD programs to maintain 4- or 5-star ratings

- **Programs**
  - Provide leadership for quality improvement/maintenance activities
  - Have experience supporting children with high needs and family engagement
  - Have capacity to add infant-toddler slots, including part-day
  - Have policies that support staff to participate in technical assistance and professional development activities
  - Utilize and/or refer families to other T-Zone activities/resources
System Intervention

- The infant-toddler activities enhance current initiatives in support of increased access to 4- and 5-star programs for all children.
- Infant-Toddler Specialists involved in these activities will collaborate with other local and regional consultants working with programs to increase or maintain high quality in licensed child care programs and seek out new partners involved in Transformation Zone activities.
- The NC Infant-Toddler Enhancement Project has a history of developing relationships with community partners and participating in collaboration activities statewide since 2004.
Summary

• The NC Infant-Toddler Enhancement Project
  o has a well-documented history of improving the quality of care for infants and toddlers statewide, and
  o is prepared to make a significant difference for infants and toddlers with high needs and their families in the Transformation Zone with the addition of infant-toddler specialists and funding to support their work.