Early Learning Challenge
Transformation Zone: building a more purposeful, active, and effective approach to implementation

Webinar
May 31, 2012 & June 1, 2012
The Long View

Vision:

● The local community works collaboratively, *sharing responsibility and accountability*, to assure that *every* child comes to kindergarten ready to succeed in school and in life.

● State policies provide optimal support for local efforts.
Where have we been? Where we are going?

North Carolina

- an *impressive history* of progress in building an early childhood system and improving outcomes for young children

- agreement among champions, leaders and practitioners that we *have far to go* to reach our shared goals
Where have we been? Where we are going?

• How do we take the next big leap? How do we build the “next generation” early childhood system?
  • Recent research focusing on effective implementation tells us that committing to using evidence based strategies is not enough
  • We must add to that by building high quality implementation practices
  • Making the next significant leap calls for new skills and approaches and strategies informed by research in the field of implementation science
Agenda

• Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge
• ELC Transformation Zone Overview
  • what, how, and who
• Key Principles
  • Implementation Capacity
  • Active Collaboration
  • Learning Together
• Next Steps
  • Selection Criteria
  • Designating a “county convening agency”
• Questions
Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge

- U.S. Dept. of Education and U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services
- Total federal funding of $500 million
  - $50-$100 million per state
  - NC eligible for $70 million
- Award Period: January 2012 – December 2015
- 37 states & territories applied
- 9 Winners:
  - NC, MA, WA, DE, OH, MD, MN, RI, CA
- NC’s Award: $69,991,121
North Carolina’s Goals

Dramatically improved outcomes for North Carolina’s young children

A stronger and more competitive economy for North Carolina
North Carolina’s Grant
State-level Partners

• Lead Agency: Early Childhood Advisory Council—responsible for overall coordination and specific projects
• Participating State Agencies—responsible for specific projects:
  • Division of Child Development and Early Education
  • Division of Public Health
  • Department of Public Instruction, Office of Early Learning
• Grants and Contracts with other state and local agencies and organizations
Early Learning Challenge Priority Areas

NC ECAC

- Systems Capacity and Child Outcomes
- Program Quality and Access
- Workforce
- Transformation Zone
North Carolina’s Plan:
Early Learning Challenge Priority Areas

- **Systems Capacity and Child Outcomes**
  - Strengthen the state’s early childhood system and build its capacity to foster positive outcomes for young children

- **Program Quality and Access**
  - Enhance the quality of programs to serve young children and their families and improve access to high-quality programs

- **Workforce**
  - Strengthen the early childhood workforce to increase staff and system effectiveness and sustain change

- **Transformation Zone**
  - Target high-intensity supports and community infrastructure-building efforts to turn around poor outcomes for young children in the state’s highest-need counties
In the Transformation Zone, the state will work with selected Tier 1 counties (based on 2012 data) in northeastern North Carolina

- To build purposeful, active, effective implementation practices
- To develop and use new skills and approaches and strategies informed by research in the field of implementation science
ELC Transformation Zone

The T Zone strategy
- Our best opportunity to learn these new skills
  - NIRN – will use their implementation expertise and guide the process
  - The T Zone will allow for in-depth learning in partnership with a small number of communities
  - It will take a number of years to embed the new skills and approaches in how we do business
  - The T Zone will inform efforts to expand statewide
  - The benefits to the community and the state go well beyond the length of the grant and well beyond the specific interventions covered by grant resources
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Scaling up Effectiveness

We want to:

- Make system-wide use of effective early childhood strategies...
- To produce increasingly effective outcomes for children and families...
- For the next 50 years and beyond....

- To make system-wide use of effective early childhood strategies will require full and effective implementation of those strategies.

Effective Implementation

- To successfully implement, scale-up, and sustain effective early childhood strategies, we need to know:
  - **The WHAT** – What strategies will make a difference (e.g. widely available quality early care settings, family strengthening programs, etc.)
  - **The HOW** - Effective implementation and sustainability frameworks (e.g. strategies to change and maintain behavior of adults)
  - **The WHO** – Organized, expert implementation assistance

The “WHAT” in the T Zone

• Support families
  • Visit families with newborn babies and connect them to services
  • Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) family strengthening
    https://childrenandyouth.ncgovconnect.com/p78518123/
  • Help families support early language and literacy (e.g., Motheread, Reach Out and Read)

• Ensure children are healthy
  • Provide one additional Healthy Social Behavior Specialist to programs in the Transformation Zone counties that want assistance in serving children with challenging behaviors
  • Provide two additional Child Care Health Consultants in the Transformation Zone counties to support interested programs

• Strengthen access to high-quality child care
  • Create more slots in high-quality programs for infants and toddlers
  • Create opportunities for part-time services in high-quality centers and homes
  • Offer WAGE$ salary supplements to retain qualified teachers and providers

• Strengthen capacity to implement services well
  • Create state-level and county-level implementation teams to support successful implementation
  • Provide expertise and personnel: NIRN, state-level implementation specialists, county-level coaches
The “HOW” in the T Zone

Implementation is defined as a specified set of activities designed to put into practice an activity or program of known dimensions.

Implementation Gap

Why Focus on Implementation?

“Children and families cannot benefit from interventions they do not experience.”

Implementation Gap

• What is adopted is not used with **fidelity** and good outcomes

• What is used with fidelity is not **sustained** for a useful period of time

• What is used with fidelity is not used on a **scale** sufficient to impact social problems
Insufficient Methods

- Implementation by laws/compliance by itself does not work
- Implementation by “following the money” by itself does not work
- Implementation without changing supporting roles and functions does not work
- Diffusion/dissemination of information by itself does not lead to successful implementation
- Training alone, no matter how well done, does not lead to successful implementation

Successful implementation requires...

- **Effective Intervention**
  - Effective Implementation: Actual Benefits
    - Inconsistent; Not Sustainable; Poor outcomes
  - NOT Effective Implementation: Unpredictable or poor outcomes

- **NOT Effective Intervention**
  - Effective Implementation: Unpredictable or poor outcomes
  - NOT Effective Implementation: Unpredictable or poor outcomes

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From Mark Lipsey’s 2009 Meta-analytic overview of the primary factors that characterize effective juvenile offender interventions – “... in some analyses, the quality with which the intervention is implemented has been as strongly related to recidivism effects as the type of program, so much so that a well-implemented intervention of an inherently less efficacious type can outperform a more efficacious one that is poorly implemented.”
Transformation Zone

- A “vertical slice” of the system
  - Small enough to be manageable
  - Large enough to include nearly all of the relevant aspects of the current system

- Operations in the TZ allow strengths and problems to “rise to the surface”
  - Reality-based, in the moment
  - Coalesce resources – human, financial and technological – for mutual benefit

Transformation Zone

- Make use of the package of innovations in practice (operationalize, fidelity, outcomes)
- Establish implementation supports (develop practical, sustainable implementation infrastructure)
Help to guide leaders to use the right leadership strategies for the situation

Improved outcomes

Well-defined, Effective strategy

Help to develop, improve, and sustain staff’s/supervisor’s ability to implement effective practices to benefit young children and families

Help to create hospitable conditions to ensure sustainability and improvement at the organizational and system levels

© Fixsen & Blase, 2008
Improved outcomes

Well-defined, Effective strategy

Performance Assessment

Coaching

Systems Intervention

Facilitative Administration

Decision Support Data System

Integrated & Compensatory

Competency Drivers

Organization Drivers

Leadership

Training

Selection

Graphics by Steve Goodman, 2009

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Transformation Zone

- Make use of the package of innovations in practice (operationalize, fidelity, outcomes)
- Establish implementation supports (develop practical, sustainable implementation infrastructure)
- Engage leaders in the Policy-Practice improvement process to align system components and functions
Transformation Zone

- Make use of the package of innovations in practice (operationalize, fidelity, outcomes)
- Establish implementation supports (develop practical, sustainable implementation infrastructure)
- Engage leaders in the Policy-Practice improvement process to align system components and functions
- Create capacity and momentum for larger scale changes

The current system is designed “intentionally or unwittingly to achieve precisely the results it gets”*

* Quotation attributed to R. Spencer Darling

The “HOW”

- Develop a sustainable implementation infrastructure
  - “implementation drivers”
- Use stage-matched implementation approach
  - Exploration, Installation, Initial and Full Implementation
- Invest in the development of implementation capacity
  - Linked state and local implementation teams
- Integrate on-going improvement processes
  - Plan-Do-Study-Act
  - Use of TRANSFORMATION ZONE
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Implementation CAPACITY

- To scale up skill-based approaches, we must first scale up implementation capacity.
- Building implementation capacity is essential to maximizing the wide-scale use of effective early childhood practices.

Build capacity through the development of Implementation TEAMS!

The “WHO” in the T Zone

Implementation Team Core Competencies:

• **Know the strategies** very well (formal and practice knowledge)

• **Know implementation** very well (formal and practice knowledge)

• **Know improvement cycles** to make interventions and implementation methods more effective and efficient over time

• **Promote systems change** at multiple levels to create hospitable cultures, policies, and funding streams

The Work of the Implementation Teams

- Focus is on
  - Quality, integration, sustainability of Drivers
  - Data-based Decision-making (e.g. fidelity & outcomes)
  - Alignment (funding and policy)
  - Problem-Solving and Sustainability

- Provide the structure to support system and organizational capacity development to achieve sustainable, high quality, integrated services

The Transformation

- State and (eventually) local implementation teams
  - Collaborative decision-making to develop or enhance the functioning of the early childhood system
  - Careful consideration and intentional selection of “next right steps” based on local context and vision for the future

- Change the system
  - Policy-Practice Feedback Loops to increase policy and practice alignment
  - Investment in the development of capacity for effective implementation and scale-up in support of any “scale-worthy” approach
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Next Steps

• We encourage you to
  • Engage other county partners in the consideration process
  • Learn more about implementation science and purposeful, active, effective approaches to implementation
    • View a web-based implementation course: http://www.4researchers.org/course/description/7438
  • Determine if this is the right opportunity for your county at this time
    • Consider...
      • Reasons not to apply
      • Reasons to apply
      • Conditions for success
      • Selection criteria
Why NOT to apply?

- Our county is already engaged in one or more significant change initiatives; one more initiative would be too much.
- Due to *challenging relationships* across key agencies, it would take significant effort just to develop a functional cross-agency leadership team.
- Our county has *already developed* buy-in and commitment to an effective approach to building or enhancing the early childhood system.
- For key leaders in our county, *developing the early childhood system is not one of the top priorities* at this time.
Why apply?

- **Access to new resources**
  - High-quality professional development
  - Onsite coaching
  - Local staff and project resources to implement strategies
  - Local and state implementation coaches to help community maximize existing resources and collaboration
  - Support developing a sustainability plan and seeking new resources

- **Strengthen community capacity to effectively implement programs**
  - Capacity will last beyond the life of the grant and will extend beyond the services funded by the grant

- **Work with state agency leaders to reduce barriers to local implementation efforts**
  - Participate in policy-practice feedback loop
Conditions for Success

- Willingness to commit to a **Common Agenda** – a shared vision for change that includes a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions.

- Willingness to commit to **Shared Measurements** - ways success will be measured and reported.

- Willingness to engage in **Mutually Reinforcing Activities** – stakeholders working together and coordinating their activities so they have the best impact together.

- Willingness to engage in **Continuous Communication** – developing trust among local and state partners, sharing ideas, concerns, successes.

- Openness and energy for **doing new things and doing old things in new ways** – devoting time and creative effort to the process and being willing to let go of things that may not be working.

*Adapted from “Collective Impact” by John Kania & Mark Kramer*
Selection Criteria

1. **A vision** (hopes and dreams) for the community that aligns with this initiative.

2. **A history of collaboration** across sectors (Public Health, Local Partnership for Children, Head Start, Early Head Start, Public Schools, etc.) and has reached **consensus related to the “convening agency”** for this initiative.

3. **Committed leadership** within each of the critical sectors of this initiative.

4. **Experience of implementing** evidence-based or evidence-informed early childhood strategies.

5. **Willing** and able to hire, re-direct funds, or re-design positions to engage **three to five individuals (a minimum of .25 FTE each)** on the County Implementation Team.

6. Willing to **participate** in and contribute to a **community of practice**.

7. **Willing to collect and use data** related to the implementation, progress, and outcomes of this effort.
Next Steps

• If it is determined that this is the right opportunity for your county at this time

  • Submit the Letter of Intent by June 15, 2012 (one letter per county) to anne.bryan@nc.gov
    • Anne Bryan
    • Early Childhood Advisory Council
    • 20301 Mail Service Center
    • Raleigh, NC  27699-0301

• Applications due August 15, 2012 (one letter per county)

• Site visits to “finalists” in early September

• Announcement of selected counties by September 30, 2012
County Convening Agency Roles and Responsibilities

Prior to submitting an application, each county will need to agree on the organization/agency in your county that will serve as the “convener” agency for this work.

Convener roles and responsibilities:

• Coordinate County Leadership Team
• Coordinate County Implementation Team
• Facilitate communication/problem solving with State-Level implementation team
• Ensure that County Team focus on installing, implementing, improving, and sustaining high quality implementation, as well as delivering services
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Questions

- If you have additional questions related to applying for the opportunity, please contact any of the following individuals:
  - **Deborah Nelson, ELC Grant Management Team**
    - [DNelson52@nc.rr.com](mailto:DNelson52@nc.rr.com)
  - If you have questions for other members of the team, feel free to contact:
    - Kelly Maxwell, FPG
      - [maxwell@unc.edu](mailto:maxwell@unc.edu)
    - Melissa Van Dyke, NIRN
      - [melissa.vandyke@unc.edu](mailto:melissa.vandyke@unc.edu)
    - Susan Perry-Manning, NCPC
      - [sperry-manning@ncsmartstart.org](mailto:sperry-manning@ncsmartstart.org)
Conclusion and Discussion

• If it is determined that this is the right opportunity for your county at this time –
  • Strengthen community capacity to effectively implement programs
  • Work with state agency leaders to reduce barriers to local
  • Access to new resources

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