

Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge

NORTH CAROLINA

Application for Initial Funding

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**APPLICATION FOR INITIAL FUNDING UNDER
RACE TO THE TOP – EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE**

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I. INTRODUCTION

“If we raise expectations for every child, and give them the best possible chance at an education, from the day they are born until the last job they take ... By the end of the decade, America will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world.” (President Obama, State of Union Address, January 25, 2011)

A critical focus of the Obama Administration is supporting America’s youngest learners and helping ensure that children, especially young children with high needs, such as those who are low-income, English learners, and children with disabilities or developmental delays, enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and in life. A robust body of research demonstrates that high-quality early learning and development programs and services can improve young children’s health, social emotional and cognitive outcomes, enhance school readiness, and help close the wide school readiness gap^{1 2} that exists between children with high needs and their peers at the time they enter kindergarten.^{3 4}

To address this school readiness gap, the Administration has identified, as high priorities, strengthening the quality of early learning and development programs and increasing access to high-quality early learning programs for all children, including those with high needs. This commitment to early education is reflected in the RTT-ELC competition that we are announcing in the Notice Inviting Applications (the notice).

On May 25, 2011, Secretaries Duncan and Sebelius announced the RTT-ELC, a new \$500 million State-level grant competition to be held in 2011 and authorized under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), as amended by section 1832(b) of the Department of Defense and Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011. The Departments are administering this competition jointly. At its core, RTT-ELC demonstrates a strong commitment by the Administration to stimulate a national effort to make sure all children enter kindergarten ready to succeed. Through the RTT-ELC, the Administration seeks to help close the achievement gap between children with high needs and their peers by supporting State efforts to build strong systems of early learning and development that provide increased access to high-quality programs for the children who need it most. This competition represents an unprecedented opportunity for States to focus deeply on their early learning and development

¹ Camilli, G., Vargas, S., Ryan, S., & Barnett, W. S. (2010). Meta-analysis of the effects of early education interventions on cognitive and social development. Teachers College Record, 112(3), 579-620.

² Reynolds, A.J., Temple, J.A., Ou, S., Arteaga, I.A., & White, B.A.B. (2011). School-based early childhood education and age-28 well-being: effects by timing, dosage, and subgroups. Science, Retrieved from <http://www.sciencemag.org/content/early/2011/06/08/science.1203618.abstract> doi: 10.1126/science.1203618

³ Princiotta, D., Flanagan, K. D., and Germino Hausken, E. (2006). Fifth Grade: Findings From The Fifth-Grade Follow-up of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–99 (ECLS-K). (NCES 2006-038) U.S. Department of Education.

⁴ Halle, T., Forry, N., Hair, E., Perper, K., Wandner, L., Wessel, J., & Vick, J. (2009). Disparities in Early Learning and Development: Lessons from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study – Birth Cohort (ECLS-B). Washington, DC: Child Trends.

systems for children from birth through age five. It is an opportunity to build a more unified approach to supporting young children and their families--an approach that increases access to high-quality early learning and development programs and services, and helps ensure that children enter kindergarten with the skills, knowledge, and dispositions toward learning they need to be successful.

The RTT-ELC competition does not create new early learning and development programs, nor is it a vehicle for maintenance of the status quo. Rather, the RTT-ELC program will support States that demonstrate their commitment to integrating and aligning resources and policies across all of the State agencies that administer public funds related to early learning and development. It will further provide incentives to the States that commit to and implement high-quality early learning and development programs statewide.

As explained more fully in the notice, given the tight timeline for obligating funds and in order to provide States maximum time to prepare their applications for this competition, notice-and-comment rulemaking is being waived for this competition. Specifically, we are waiving rulemaking for the priorities, requirements, definitions, and selection criteria for this new competition under section 437(d)(1) of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA). However, we have solicited public participation in two important ways as we developed an approach to conducting and implementing this competition. First, we invited the public to provide general input on the program from May 25 through June 30 on the ED.gov Blog. In response to this invitation, we received a total of 199 responses, which we considered in our development of the notice. From July 1 to July 11, we posted on ED's Web site a draft Executive Summary of the competition, which included draft competition priorities, requirements, definitions, and selection criteria, and we invited public input on each of these elements of the competition. During this period, we received 349 responses reflecting the viewpoints of a variety of individuals and early childhood, health, and education organizations. These we also considered in our development of the notice.

Current State early learning and development systems

Many early learning and development programs and services co-exist within States, including Head Start/Early Head Start programs, the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program (pursuant to the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9858 et seq.)), State-funded preschool, programs authorized under section 619 of part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and part C of IDEA, and other State and locally supported programs. Each of these programs has its own funding stream and accompanying requirements, standards, expectations, policies, and procedures. Each also has its own unique strengths and makes unique contributions to young children and their families. For States, the challenges to be addressed by RTT-ELC are to sustain and build on the strengths of these programs, acknowledge and appreciate their differences, reduce inefficiency, improve quality, and ultimately deliver a coordinated set of services and experiences that support young children's success in school and beyond.

The RTT-ELC vision for State early learning and development systems

Through the RTT-ELC competition, we intend to fund applications that demonstrate a State's commitment and capacity to building a statewide system that raises the quality of early learning and development programs so that all children receive the support they need to enter kindergarten ready to succeed. Just as career and college readiness were at the heart of ED's Race to the Top Phase 1 and Phase 2 competitions, a commitment to building school readiness for children entering kindergarten is at the heart of this competition.

As was the case with Race to the Top Phase 1 and Phase 2, the bar to receive an RTT-ELC grant will be high. And just as those first two phases of Race to the Top were organized around State commitments to four specific reform assurances articulated in the ARRA, RTT-ELC is organized around five key areas of reform. These five key areas represent the foundation of an effective early learning and development reform agenda that is focused on school readiness and ongoing academic success. They are central to this competition's priorities, requirements, and selection criteria, and are as follows:

- (A) Successful State Systems;
- (B) High-Quality, Accountable Programs;
- (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children;
- (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce; and
- (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress.

The first two of these, (A) and (B), are core areas of focus for this competition. As such, they are referred to throughout the notice as "Core Areas," and applicants are required to respond to all selection criteria under these Core Areas. The reform areas in (C), (D), and (E) are areas where applicants will direct targeted attention to specific activities that are relevant to their State's context. In the notice, we refer to these areas as "Focused Investment Areas," and applicants are required to address each Focused Investment Area but not all of the selection criteria under them. A discussion of the five key areas of reform follows.

A. Successful State Systems

Successful State early learning and development systems are built on broad-based stakeholder participation and effective governance structures. They are guided by clearly articulated goals and strategies designed to deliver a coordinated set of programs, policies, and services that are responsive to the needs of children and families and effectively prepare young children for school success. The RTT-ELC competition will support States that demonstrate a commitment to creating and implementing a successful statewide early learning and development system and that effectively organize and align that system to provide the diversity of services and supports needed by children and families. Such a system can provide continuity and consistent levels of quality across delivery mechanisms and levels of care and education. Thus, under the priorities established for this competition, States must propose and implement

ambitious plans for successful State systems of early learning and development that will have broad impact and can--

- Improve program quality and outcomes for young children;
- Increase the number of children with high needs attending high-quality early learning and development programs; and
- Help close the achievement gap between children with high needs and their peers by supporting efforts to increase kindergarten readiness.

B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

The RTT-ELC competition will support States that develop a common set of program standards used statewide. This will help align programs such as Head Start, CCDF, IDEA, and Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA), and State-funded preschool to create a more unified statewide system of early learning and development. In addition, each State grantee must design and implement a tiered quality rating and improvement system that is based on consistent and demanding statewide program standards and that establishes meaningful program ratings. RTT-ELC promotes broad participation in the State's tiered quality rating and improvement system across a range of programs, active program improvement, and the publication of program ratings so that families can make informed decisions about which programs can best serve the needs of their children.

C. Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children

The RTT-ELC competition is based on the premise that effective programs and services for young children must be built on a set of early learning and development standards that define what children should know and be able to do at different stages of development. These standards provide guidelines, articulate developmental milestones, and set expectations for the healthy growth and development of young children. This competition rewards States that will implement high-quality early learning and development standards and comprehensive systems of assessments aligned with these standards. The implementation of these standards and assessments will ensure that early childhood educators have the information they need to understand and support young children's growth and development across a broad range of domains so that significantly more young children enter kindergarten ready to succeed.

Improving early learning and development outcomes also requires that children are healthy and supported by their families. Services that address health and family supports are thus critical, and health and family engagement are key elements in high-quality early learning and development programs. RTT-ELC is designed to support States that focus on increasing access to quality programs and services that promote health and engage families in the care and education of their young children.

D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

In early learning and development settings, nothing matters more to children's success than the adults caring for and teaching them, and the RTT-ELC competition acknowledges the

importance of a strong early childhood workforce. Ensuring that children are ready for success in kindergarten depends on well-trained adults who have acquired the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to effectively support the learning and development of every child. Thus, the competition will reward States that work closely with postsecondary institutions and other parties to define a set of workforce competencies that are tied to the State's early learning and development standards. Further, the competition encourages States to increase retention and improve educator quality by supporting their workforce with professional development, career advancement opportunities, differentiated compensation, and incentives to improve their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress

Collecting, organizing, and understanding evidence of young children's progress across a range of domains is essential to ensuring that early learning and development programs are of high quality and that they meet the needs of every child. States are therefore encouraged to implement comprehensive data systems and to use the data to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies. In addition, through both a selection criterion and a competitive preference priority, States will be rewarded for implementing kindergarten entry assessments statewide that provide information across all domains of early learning and development, inform efforts to close the school readiness gap, and inform instruction in the early elementary school grades.

By organizing this program around the five key reform areas described in this section, the RTT-ELC competition will help lead the way for States to challenge and rethink the status quo. Not every State will receive an RTT-ELC award through this competition, but every State can use this competition as an opportunity to commit to comprehensively strengthening its early learning and development system and ensuring that more children, including those with high needs, have access to high-quality early learning and development programs and services.

II. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Background Information

Before you begin work on your RTT-ELC application, it may be helpful to understand the parts of the application. Each of these is described below.

- Requirements:
 - *Eligibility requirements* specify what applicants must have in place in order to compete for a grant. Staff from the Education Department (“ED”) and the Department of Health and Human Services (“HHS”) will make the eligibility determination.
 - *Application requirements* list the elements that must be included in a complete application.
 - *Program requirements* specify what applicants must do if they win a grant (*e.g.*, reporting, participating in technical assistance activities, publishing findings).
- *Definitions* set forth the meaning of critical terms in the notice; defined terms are indicated by initial capitalization.
- Priorities:
 - An *absolute priority* is a priority that all applicants must address fully in order to win; these will be assessed by peer reviewers as either “yes” or “no.” If an applicant does not meet the competition’s absolute priority, it will not be awarded a grant.
 - A *competitive preference priority* is one that earns the applicant extra, or “competitive preference,” points.
 - An *invitational priority* is one that will not be scored, but is of interest to the Secretaries. If an applicant addresses an invitational priority, then the applicant may apply funds from the grant, if awarded, to work associated with this priority.
- *Selection criteria* are the focal point of the application and the peer review. Applicants write narrative responses to these criteria, and reviewers judge their responses. Selection criteria in this competition may be supplemented by—
 - *Evidence*, including data tables and additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers; and
 - *Performance measures*, or data-driven indicators that States complete to define the outcomes they expect to deliver under the grant.
- Finally, *scoring rubrics* list the maximum number of points that can be earned for each selection criterion and competitive priority; in addition, they include other instructions that reviewers will follow when judging applications. All rubrics that will be provided to reviewers are included in this application, for the applicant’s information.

About the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Application

The RTT-ELC application asks you to address a variety of areas. There are two *Core Areas* that you must address: (A) Successful State Systems and (B) High-Quality, Accountable Programs. In addition, there are three *Focused Investment Areas* that address: (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children; (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce;

and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress. Within these three *Focused Investment Areas*, you must select and address--

- Two or more selection criteria within Focused Investment Area: (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children; and
- One or more selection criteria within each of the Focused Investment Areas: (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce; and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress.

In addition, the application includes one absolute priority, two competitive preference priorities, and two invitational priorities.

Page Length Recommendations

Within the application, you will notice that there is a recommended page length for your response to each selection criterion; these are indicated in the application narrative box associated with each selection criterion. While you are not required to abide by these page limits, reviewers generally prefer brevity.

We recommend that you limit your total page count (that is, the narrative responses to all selection criteria in section VI) to no more than 150 pages of State-authored text, and that you limit your appendices to no more than an additional 150 pages. For all responses, we request that the following standards be used:

- A “page” is 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides.
- Number each page.
- Set the line spacing for the narratives to 1.5 spacing, and use a 12 point Times New Roman font.

We strongly request that you follow the recommended page limits, although the Secretaries will consider applications of greater length.

Writing Application Responses

The application provides space for you to address the selection criteria and priorities.

Selection Criteria

Each selection criterion may have multiple parts: the narrative, evidence (often including data tables), and performance measures. Not all selection criteria contain all of these pieces.

- **Narrative:** All selection criteria include a narrative section. This is where you write your response to the criterion. Please type your narrative in the text box provided in this application.

- **Evidence:** Some selection criteria ask you to provide specific evidence; this is indicated in the application. You may provide additional evidence for any criterion if you think it will help reviewers evaluate your application. Keep in mind that too much additional information could have the effect of distracting the reviewers from what is critical.

You must provide the evidence as part of your narrative response to the selection criterion, or include it as an attachment in the Appendix. If you put it in an Appendix, you must provide a clear reference to the Appendix within your narrative.

- **Tables:** Many selection criteria ask you to provide specific evidence in data tables; these tables are included in the application immediately following the narrative. The tables provide you with a framework for presenting information and provide reviewers with a consistent way to look at this information. You must complete the tables as part of your response. Feel free to provide additional data, in the form of graphs, tables, or diagrams, if it will help reviewers understand critical facts about your State. You may use the narrative to explain and describe the significance of the data as it relates to your State Plan.
- **Performance measures:** Several selection criteria ask applicants to provide performance measures, generally including baseline data and annual targets for key outcomes the State will deliver over the term of the grant. Tables for the requested performance measures are included in the application immediately following the narrative and data tables (if any). In addition, you may provide additional performance measures, baseline data, and targets for any criteria you choose. Peer reviewers will consider, as part of their evaluation of a State's application, the extent to which the State has set "ambitious yet achievable" annual targets; the State will be held accountable for achieving these targets, should it win a grant.

Note: If your State does not have data that are requested in the data tables or in the baseline performance measures, indicate "not available" in the table. Use your narrative to provide any additional explanation that may be necessary to make your point.

Appendix

Your application will include an Appendix. The Appendix must begin with a complete Table of Contents that provides reviewers with easy access to any attachment they are looking for. Each attachment in the Appendix must be described in the narrative associated with the relevant selection criterion, together with a rationale for how its inclusion supports the State Plan. Please also include in the narrative a cross-reference to the attachment's location in the Appendix.

Competition Priorities

The RTT-ELC competition also includes absolute, competitive, and invitational priorities. You must address the absolute priority throughout the application; you do not write a separate response to this priority. The absolute priority must be met in order for an applicant to receive funding.

A State that chooses to address a competitive preference priority may earn extra points under that priority. Follow the instructions associated with each competitive priority that you choose to address. A State may address either one or both competitive preference priorities.

Invitational priorities extend the scope or reach of the application; applicants are invited to address these and apply funds from this grant to them, but do not earn additional points for doing so.

The competition priorities can be found in section VII of the application. Responding to the competitive and invitational priorities is optional.

Competition Description and Scoring Rubric

For information on the competition review and selection process, see (a) the section entitled, Review and Selection Process, in the notice; and (b) section XIV, Scoring Rubrics in the application (Appendix B in the notice). In addition, point values have been included throughout the application.

Technical Assistance Planning Workshops

To assist States in preparing your applications and to respond to your questions, ED and HHS intend to host a Webinar for potential applicants on September 1, 2011. In this session, the Departments will provide applicants with an orientation to the application.

The Departments also plan to host a Technical Assistance Planning Workshop for potential applicants on September 13, 2011 in Washington, DC. To minimize travel burdens and maximize the number of potential applicants who can participate, this workshop will be conducted via video teleconference – a live, two-way link between the headquarters and the Departments’ regional offices across the country. The purpose of the workshop will be to review the application requirements, selection criteria, and competition priorities in depth, and to answer your questions about the program. Participation in the workshop is strongly encouraged, either in Washington DC or at one of the regional offices. For those who cannot attend, a video recording and transcript of the conference will be available on the RTT-ELC Web site. The Departments may host additional conference calls and/or Webinars to answer applicant questions, if needed. Registration information and additional details for the technical assistance events will be available on the Race RTT-ELC Web site, so check it frequently:
www.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-earlylearningchallenge.

Frequently Asked Questions: The Departments will also prepare answers to frequently asked questions on a rolling basis, in order to assist States as they complete their applications. These questions and answers will be posted on the RTT-ELC Web site at
www.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-earlylearningchallenge.

III. DEFINITIONS

Note: All definitions below are taken from the notice.

Children with High Needs means children from birth through kindergarten entry who are from Low-Income families or otherwise in need of special assistance and support, including children who have disabilities or developmental delays; who are English learners; who reside on “Indian lands” as that term is defined by section 8013(6) of the ESEA; who are migrant, homeless, or in foster care; and other children as identified by the State.

Common Education Data Standards (CEDS) means voluntary, common standards for a key set of education data elements (*e.g.*, demographics, program participation, transition, course information) at the early learning, K-12, and postsecondary levels developed through a national collaborative effort being led by the National Center for Education Statistics. CEDS focus on standard definitions, code sets, and technical specifications of a subset of key data elements and are designed to increase data interoperability, portability, and comparability across Early Learning and Development Programs and agencies, States, local educational agencies, and postsecondary institutions.

Comprehensive Assessment System means a coordinated and comprehensive system of multiple assessments, each of which is valid and reliable for its specified purpose and for the population with which it will be used, that organizes information about the process and context of young children’s learning and development in order to help Early Childhood Educators make informed instructional and programmatic decisions and that conforms to the recommendations of the National Research Council reports on early childhood.

A Comprehensive Assessment System includes, at a minimum--

- (a) Screening Measures;
- (b) Formative Assessments;
- (c) Measures of Environmental Quality; and
- (d) Measures of the Quality of Adult-Child Interactions.

Data System Oversight Requirements means policies for ensuring the quality, privacy, and integrity of data contained in a data system, including--

(a) A data governance policy that identifies the elements that are collected and maintained; provides for training on internal controls to system users; establishes who will have access to the data in the system and how the data may be used; sets appropriate internal controls to restrict access to only authorized users; sets criteria for determining the legitimacy of data requests; establishes processes that verify the accuracy, completeness, and age of the data elements maintained in the system; sets procedures for determining the sensitivity of each inventoried element and the risk of harm if those data were improperly disclosed; and establishes procedures for disclosure review and auditing; and

(b) A transparency policy that informs the public, including families, Early Childhood Educators, and programs, of the existence of data systems that house personally identifiable information, explains what data elements are included in such a system, enables parental consent to disclose personally identifiable information as appropriate, and describes allowable and potential uses of the data.

Early Childhood Educator means any professional working in an Early Learning and Development Program, including but not limited to center-based and family child care providers; infant

and toddler specialists; early intervention specialists and early childhood special educators; home visitors; related services providers; administrators such as directors, supervisors, and other early learning and development leaders; Head Start teachers; Early Head Start teachers; preschool and other teachers; teacher assistants; family service staff; and health coordinators.

Early Learning and Development Program means any (a) State-licensed or State-regulated program or provider, regardless of setting or funding source, that provides early care and education for children from birth to kindergarten entry, including, but not limited to, any program operated by a child care center or in a family child care home; (b) preschool program funded by the Federal Government or State or local educational agencies (including any IDEA-funded program); (c) Early Head Start and Head Start program; and (d) a non-relative child care provider who is not otherwise regulated by the State and who regularly cares for two or more unrelated children for a fee in a provider setting. A State should include in this definition other programs that may deliver early learning and development services in a child's home, such as the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting; Early Head Start; and part C of IDEA⁵.

Early Learning and Development Standards means a set of expectations, guidelines, or developmental milestones that--

- (a) Describe what all children from birth to kindergarten entry should know and be able to do and their disposition toward learning;
- (b) Are appropriate for each age group (*e.g.*, infants, toddlers, and preschoolers); for English learners; and for children with disabilities or developmental delays;
- (c) Cover all Essential Domains of School Readiness; and
- (d) Are universally designed and developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate.

Early Learning Intermediary Organization means a national, statewide, regional, or community-based organization that represents one or more networks of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State and that has influence or authority over them. Such Early Learning Intermediary Organizations include, but are not limited to, Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies; State Head Start Associations; Family Child Care Associations; State affiliates of the National Association for the Education of Young Children; State affiliates of the Council for Exceptional Children's Division of Early Childhood; statewide or regional union affiliates that represent Early Childhood Educators; affiliates of the National Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Association; the National Tribal, American Indian, and Alaskan Native Head Start Association; and the National Indian Child Care Association.

Essential Data Elements means the critical child, program, and workforce data elements of a coordinated early learning data system, including--

- (a) A unique statewide child identifier or another highly accurate, proven method to link data on that child, including Kindergarten Entry Assessment data, to and from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System and the coordinated early learning data system (if applicable);
- (b) A unique statewide Early Childhood Educator identifier;

⁵ Note: Such home-based programs and services will most likely not participate in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System unless the State has developed a set of Tiered Program Standards specifically for home-based programs and services.

- (c) A unique program site identifier;
- (d) Child and family demographic information;
- (e) Early Childhood Educator demographic information, including data on educational attainment and State credential or licenses held, as well as professional development information;
- (f) Program-level data on the program's structure, quality, child suspension and expulsion rates, staff retention, staff compensation, work environment, and all applicable data reported as part of the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; and
- (g) Child-level program participation and attendance data.

Essential Domains of School Readiness means the domains of language and literacy development, cognition and general knowledge (including early mathematics and early scientific development), approaches toward learning, physical well-being and motor development (including adaptive skills), and social and emotional development.

Formative Assessment (also known as a classroom-based or ongoing assessment) means assessment questions, tools, and processes--

- (a) That are--
 - (1) Specifically designed to monitor children's progress in meeting the Early Learning and Development Standards;
 - (2) Valid and reliable for their intended purposes and their target populations;
 - (3) Linked directly to the curriculum; and
- (b) The results of which are used to guide and improve instructional practices.

High-Quality Plan means any plan developed by the State to address a selection criterion or priority in the notice that is feasible and has a high probability of successful implementation and at a minimum includes--

- (a) The key goals;
- (b) The key activities to be undertaken; the rationale for the activities; and, if applicable, where in the State the activities will be initially implemented, and where and how they will be scaled up over time to eventually achieve statewide implementation;
- (c) A realistic timeline, including key milestones, for implementing each key activity;
- (d) The party or parties responsible for implementing each activity and other key personnel assigned to each activity;
- (e) Appropriate financial resources to support successful implementation of the plan;
- (f) The information requested as supporting evidence, if any, together with any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers in judging the credibility of the plan;

- (g) The information requested in the performance measures, where applicable;
- (h) How the State will address the needs of the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs, if applicable; and
- (i) How the State will meet the needs of Children with High Needs, as well as the unique needs of special populations of Children with High Needs.

Kindergarten Entry Assessment means an assessment that--

- (a) Is administered to children during the first few months of their admission into kindergarten;
- (b) Covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness;
- (c) Is used in conformance with the recommendations of the National Research Council⁶ reports on early childhood; and
- (d) Is valid and reliable for its intended purposes and for the target populations and aligned to the Early Learning and Development Standards. Results of the assessment should be used to inform efforts to close the school readiness gap at kindergarten entry and to inform instruction in the early elementary school grades. This assessment should not be used to prevent children's entry into kindergarten.

Lead Agency means the State-level agency designated by the Governor for the administration of the RTT-ELC grant; this agency is the fiscal agent for the grant. The Lead Agency must be one of the Participating State Agencies.

Low-Income means having an income of up to 200 percent of the Federal poverty rate.

Measures of Environmental Quality means valid and reliable indicators of the overall quality of the early learning environment.

Measures of the Quality of Adult-Child Interactions means the measures obtained through valid and reliable processes for observing how teachers and caregivers interact with children, where such processes are designed to promote child learning and to identify strengths and areas for improvement for early learning professionals.

Participating State Agency means a State agency that administers public funds related to early learning and development and is participating in the State Plan. The following State agencies are required Participating State Agencies: the agencies that administer or supervise the administration of CCDF, the section 619 of part B of IDEA and part C of IDEA programs, State-funded preschool, home visiting, Title I of ESEA, the Head Start State Collaboration Grant, and the Title V Maternal and Child Care Block Grant, as well as the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care, the State's Child Care Licensing Agency, and the State Education Agency. Other State agencies, such as the agencies that administer or supervise the administration of Child Welfare, Mental Health, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention, the Child and Adult Care Food

⁶ National Research Council. (2008). Early Childhood Assessment: Why, What, and How. Committee on Developmental Outcomes and Assessments for Young Children, C.E. Snow and S.B. Van Hemel, Editors. Board on Children, Youth, and Families, Board on Testing and Assessment, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.
http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12446

Program, and the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) may be Participating State Agencies if they elect to participate in the State Plan.

Participating Program means an Early Learning and Development Program that elects to carry out activities described in the State Plan.

Program Standards means the standards that serve as the basis for a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System and define differentiated levels of quality for Early Learning and Development Programs. Program Standards are expressed, at a minimum, by the extent to which--

- (a) Early Learning and Development Standards are implemented through evidence-based activities, interventions, or curricula that are appropriate for each age group of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers;
- (b) Comprehensive Assessment Systems are used routinely and appropriately to improve instruction and enhance program quality by providing robust and coherent evidence of--
 - (1) Children's learning and development outcomes; and
 - (2) program performance;
- (c) A qualified workforce improves young children's health, social, emotional, and educational outcomes;
- (d) Strategies are successfully used to engage families in supporting their children's development and learning. These strategies may include, but are not limited to, parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and adult and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development;
- (e) Health promotion practices include health and safety requirements; developmental, behavioral, and sensory screening, referral, and follow up; and the promotion of physical activity, healthy eating habits, oral health and behavioral health, and health literacy among parents; and
- (f) Effective data practices include gathering Essential Data Elements and entering them into the State's Statewide Longitudinal Data System or other early learning data system, using these data to guide instruction and program improvement, and making this information readily available to families.

Screening Measures means age and developmentally appropriate, valid, and reliable instruments that are used to identify children who may need follow-up services to address developmental, learning, or health needs in, at a minimum, the areas of physical health, behavioral health, oral health, child development, vision, and hearing.

State means any of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

State Plan means the plan submitted as part of the State's RTT-ELC application.

Statewide Longitudinal Data System means the State's longitudinal education data system that collects and maintains detailed, high-quality, student- and staff-level data that are linked across entities and that over time provide a complete academic and performance history for each student. The Statewide Longitudinal Data System is typically housed within the State educational agency but includes or can be connected to early childhood, postsecondary, and labor data.

Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System means the system through which the State uses a set of progressively higher Program Standards to evaluate the quality of an Early Learning and Development Program and to support program improvement. A Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System consists of four components: (a) tiered Program Standards with multiple rating categories that clearly and meaningfully differentiate program quality levels; (b) monitoring to evaluate program quality based on the Program Standards; (c) supports to help programs meet progressively higher standards (*e.g.*, through training, technical assistance, financial support); and (d) program quality ratings that are publically available; and includes a process for validating the system.

Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework means a set of expectations that describes what Early Childhood Educators (including those working with children with disabilities and English learners) should know and be able to do. The Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, at a minimum, (a) is evidence-based; (b) incorporates knowledge and application of the State's Early Learning and Development Standards, the Comprehensive Assessment Systems, child development, health, and culturally and linguistically appropriate strategies for working with families; (c) includes knowledge of early mathematics and literacy development and effective instructional practices to support mathematics and literacy development in young children; (d) incorporates effective use of data to guide instruction and program improvement; (e) includes effective behavior management strategies that promote positive social emotional development and reduce challenging behaviors; and (f) incorporates feedback from experts at the State's postsecondary institutions and other early learning and development experts and Early Childhood Educators.

IV. APPLICATION ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS
Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge
(CFDA No. 84.412)

**SEE ORIGINAL HARD COPIES AND SEPARATE PDF OF SIGNED
 APPLICATION ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS
 FOR NORTH CAROLINA.**

Legal Name of Applicant (Office of the Governor):	Applicant's Mailing Address:
Employer Identification Number:	Organizational DUNS:
Lead Agency: Contact Name: <i>(Single point of contact for communication)</i>	Lead Agency Contact Phone: Lead Agency Contact Email Address:
<p>Required Applicant Signatures <i>(Must include signatures from an authorized representative of each Participating State Agency. Insert additional signature blocks as needed below. To simplify the process, signatories may sign on separate Application Assurance forms.):</i></p> <p>To the best of my knowledge and belief, all of the information and data in this application are true and correct. I further certify that I have read the application, am fully committed to it, and will support its implementation:</p>	
Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor (Printed Name):	Telephone:
Signature of Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor:	Date:
Lead Agency Authorized Representative (Printed Name):	Agency Name:
Signature of Lead Agency Authorized Representative:	Date:

Participating State Agency Authorized Representative (Printed Name):	Agency Name:
Signature of Participating State Agency Authorized Representative:	Date:
Participating State Agency Authorized Representative (Printed Name):	Agency Name:
Signature of Participating State Agency Authorized Representative:	Date:
Participating State Agency Authorized Representative (Printed Name):	Agency Name:
Signature of Participating State Agency Authorized Representative:	Date:
Participating State Agency Authorized Representative (Printed Name):	Agency Name:
Signature of Participating State Agency Authorized Representative:	Date:

State Attorney General Certification

State Attorney General or Authorized Representative of the Attorney General Certification

I certify that the State's description of, and statements and conclusions in its application concerning, State law, statute, and regulation are complete and accurate, and constitute a reasonable interpretation of State law, statute, and regulation:

State Attorney General or Authorized Representative of the Attorney General (Printed Name):	Telephone:
Signature of the State Attorney General or Authorized Representative of the Attorney General :	Date:

Accountability, Transparency, and Reporting Assurances

The Governor or his/her authorized representative assures that the State will comply with all applicable assurances in OMB Standard Forms 424B and D (Assurances for Non-Construction and Construction Programs), including the assurances relating to the legal authority to apply for assistance; access to records; conflict of interest; merit systems; nondiscrimination; Hatch Act provisions; labor standards, including Davis-Bacon prevailing wages; flood hazards; historic preservation; protection of human subjects; animal welfare; lead-based paint; Single Audit Act; and the general agreement to comply with all applicable Federal laws, executive orders, and regulations.

- With respect to the certification regarding lobbying in Department Form 80-0013, no Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the making or renewal of Federal grants under this program; the State will complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," when required (34 C.F.R. Part 82, Appendix B); and the State will require the full certification, as set forth in 34 C.F.R. Part 82, Appendix A, in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers.
- The State and other entities will comply with the following provisions of the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), as applicable: 34 CFR Part 74 -- Administration of Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations; 34 CFR Part 76 -- State-Administered Programs, including the construction requirements in section 75.600 through 75.617 that are incorporated by reference in section 76.600; 34 CFR Part 77 -- Definitions that Apply to Department Regulations; 34 CFR Part 80 -- Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments, including the procurement provisions; 34 CFR Part 81 -- General Education Provisions Act—Enforcement; 34 CFR Part 82 -- New Restrictions on Lobbying; 34 CFR Part 85 – Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement).

Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor (Printed Name):	
Signature:	Date:

V. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The State must meet the following requirements to be eligible to compete for funding under this program:

(a) The Lead Agency must have executed with each Participating State Agency a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or other binding agreement that the State must attach to its application, describing the Participating State Agency's level of participation in the grant. (See section XIII.) At a minimum, the MOU or other binding agreement must include an assurance that the Participating State Agency agrees to use, to the extent applicable--

- (1) A set of statewide Early Learning and Development Standards;
- (2) A set of statewide Program Standards;
- (3) A statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; and
- (4) A statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and progression of credentials.

List of Participating State Agencies:

The applicant should list below all Participating State Agencies that administer public funds related to early learning and development, including at a minimum: the agencies that administer or supervise the administration of CCDF, the section 619 of part B of IDEA and part C of IDEA programs, State-funded preschool, home visiting, Title I of ESEA, the Head Start State Collaboration Grant, and the Title V Maternal and Child Care Block Grant, as well as the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care, the State's Child Care Licensing Agency, and the State Education Agency.

For each Participating State Agency, the applicant should provide a cross-reference to the place within the application where the MOU or other binding agreement can be found. Insert additional rows if necessary. The Departments will determine eligibility.

Participating State Agency Name (* for Lead Agency)	MOU Location in Application	Funds/Program(s) administered by the Participating State Agency
Early Childhood Advisory Council, Office of the Governor*	Appendix 9	State Advisory Council
Division of Child Development and Early Education, Department of Health and Human Services	Appendix 9	CCDF, State-funded Preschool (NC Pre-K), State Child Care Licensing Agency
Division of Public Health, Department of Health and Human Services	Appendix 9	Part C of IDEA, Home Visiting, Title V Maternal and Child Care Block Grant
Office of Early Learning, Department of Public	Appendix 9	Department of Public Instruction is NC's State Education Agency

Instruction		Title 1 of ESEA, Section 619 of part B of IDEA, Head Start Collaboration Office,
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(b) The State must have an operational State Advisory Council on Early Care and Education that meets the requirements described in section 642B(b) of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9837b).

The State certifies that it has an operational State Advisory Council that meets the above requirement. The Departments will determine eligibility.

Yes

No

(c) The State must have submitted in FY 2010 an updated MIECHV State plan and FY 2011 Application for formula funding under the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program (see section 511 of Title V of the Social Security Act, as added by section 2951 of the Affordable Care Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-148)).

The State certifies that it submitted in FY 2010 an updated MIECHV State plan and FY 2011 Application for formula funding, consistent with the above requirement. The Departments will determine eligibility.

Yes

No

VI. SELECTION CRITERIA

Selection criteria are the focal point of the application and peer review. A panel of peer reviewers will evaluate the applications based on the extent to which the selection criteria are addressed.

Core Areas -- Sections (A) and (B)

States must address in their application all of the selection criteria in the Core Areas.

A. Successful State Systems

(A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development. (20 points)

The extent to which the State has demonstrated past commitment to and investment in high-quality, accessible Early Learning and Development Programs and services for Children with High Needs, as evidenced by the State's—

- (a) Financial investment, from January 2007 to the present, in Early Learning and Development Programs, including the amount of these investments in relation to the size of the State's population of Children with High Needs during this time period;
- (b) Increasing, from January 2007 to the present, the number of Children with High Needs participating in Early Learning and Development Programs;
- (c) Existing early learning and development legislation, policies, or practices; and
- (d) Current status in key areas that form the building blocks for a high quality early learning and development system, including Early Learning and Development Standards, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, health promotion practices, family engagement strategies, the development of Early Childhood Educators, Kindergarten Entry Assessments, and effective data practices.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

Evidence for (A)(1):

- The completed background data tables providing the State's baseline data for--
 - The number and percentage of children from Low-Income families in the State, by age (see Table (A)(1)-1);
 - The number and percentage of Children with High Needs from special populations in the State (see Table (A)(1)-2); and
 - The number of Children with High Needs in the State who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs, by age (see Table (A)(1)-3).

- Data currently available, if any, on the status of children at kindergarten entry (across Essential Domains of School Readiness, if available), including data on the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers.
- Data currently available, if any, on program quality across different types of Early Learning and Development Programs.
- The completed table that shows the number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program for each of the past 5 years (2007-2011) (see Table (A)(1)-4).
- The completed table that shows the number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program for each of the past 5 years (2007-2011) (see Table (A)(1)-5).
- The completed table that describes the current status of the State's Early Learning and Development Standards for each of the Essential Domains of School Readiness, by age group of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers (see Table (A)(1)-6).
- The completed table that describes the elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System currently required within the State by different types of Early Learning and Development Programs or systems (see Table (A)(1)-7).
- The completed table that describes the elements of high-quality health promotion practices currently required within the State by different types of Early Learning and Development Programs or systems (see Table (A)(1)-8).
- The completed table that describes the elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the State by different types of Early Learning and Development Programs or systems (see Table (A)(1)-9).
- The completed table that describes all early learning and development workforce credentials currently available in the State, including whether credentials are aligned with a State Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who have each type of credential (see Table (A)(1)-10).
- The completed table that describes the current status of postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators (see Table (A)(1)-11).
- The completed table that describes the current status of the State's Kindergarten Entry Assessment (see Table (A)(1)-12).
- The completed table that describes all early learning and development data systems currently used in the State (see Table (A)(1)-13).

(Enter narrative here – recommended maximum of ten pages)

North Carolina has been the nation's early childhood pioneer, establishing a statewide early childhood system and transforming the lives of its young children, especially those with high needs.

- ✓ North Carolina is one of only three states with a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) built into its State's licensing system, and 78% percent of

all Early Learning and Development (ELD) programs participate in the State's TQRIS (i.e., they have a 1- to 5-star rated license; this includes public school programs). Ninety-three percent (93%) of programs regulated by the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) participate in the TQRIS.

- ✓ Sixty-eight (68%) of all young children from low-income families (defined as children whose families receive assistance with paying for early care and education) are in regulated programs attended high-quality ELD programs in 2011 (i.e., 4- or 5-star rated programs; five-star is our highest rated license).
- ✓ Ninety-four percent (94%) of children with special needs whose families received assistance with paying for ELD programs were in high quality care in 2010.
- ✓ More than ninety-nine percent (99%) of all children birth to age 5 whose care is paid for using Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) dollars are in regulated ELD programs.
- ✓ Sixty-one percent (61%) of children birth to age 5 whose care is paid for using CCDF dollars are in high-quality ELD programs (4- or 5-star rated).
- ✓ Thirty-six percent (36%) of teachers/lead teachers working with children from birth to five in licensed child care, Head Start and Pre-K settings have an Associate's degree in *Early Childhood Education* (or its equivalent) or a Bachelor's degree in *Early Childhood Education* alone or with a BK license (or its equivalent).

We have achieved these dramatic results by strategically tapping into three deeply held North Carolinian values—community, entrepreneurial spirit, and education. You will see these themes—particularly community and education—throughout our application. Our RTT-ELC State Plan strengthens our statewide system so that we can support communities and the early childhood workforce to ensure that young children have the early learning and development opportunities they need to be successful in school and life. (See Appendix 1 for a Glossary of North Carolina ELD System Terms.)

Community: Much of our ELD systems development has focused on empowering local communities to be responsible for their children and families by identifying needs; establishing measurable, community-level outcomes; and implementing strategies that demonstrate measurable results.

Entrepreneurial Spirit: We have capitalized upon both public and private expertise and resources to achieve results. Our ELD system engages leaders across the public and private

sectors in innovative initiatives like:

- Smart Start, a systems-building initiative that supports the development of local nonprofit partnerships that improve health, family support, and early education outcomes for children from birth to age 5,
- T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood®, a comprehensive scholarship initiative to improve the education, compensation and retention of the early childhood workforce,
- Child Care Health Consultants, a model for improving health outcomes for children in child care settings; the National Training Institute for Child Care Health Consultants is in NC and was recently named as a partner in the Office of Head Start's National Center on Health.
- Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS-R, ITERS-R, FCCERS-R, SACERS), the most common set of global quality measures of ELD programs used in research and TQRIS across the country (See Appendix 2 for a brief description of the Environmental Rating Scale).
- Natural Learning Initiative, an effort to improve and make use of outdoor learning environments for young children.

Many of these initiatives are being replicated across the country.

Education: The spirit that inspired North Carolina to establish the nation's first public university lives on today in the state's commitment to early learning and development. Our state-funded pre- kindergarten program (NC Pre-K, formerly called More at Four) is ranked as one of the top 10 pre-k programs in the country and continues to be one of only a few state programs that have met all of the quality standards benchmarks established by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER). This belief in the value of education to transform our society has also inspired us to set high goals for the education of our early childhood workforce, as evidenced in Performance Measures Table D.2.d.2.

(a) Financial Investment in Early Learning and Development Programs

The State has made a combined sustained commitment of approximately \$268 million per year in funding for our award-winning Smart Start and NC Pre-K initiatives and leveraged millions for North Carolina's early childhood system in cash and in-kind contributions in the past five years. With budget constraints, the investments have declined somewhat during the last few years but remain substantial. (See Table A.1-4 for past investments.)

(b) Increasing the number of Children with High Needs in Early Learning and

Development Programs

North Carolina has dramatically improved the number of children in high-quality ELD programs. In 2000, when NC implemented its TQRIS, 10% of children (15,775 children) enrolled in regulated care were in high-quality ELD programs (i.e., 4- or 5-star rated license). In 2011, 68% of children (124,096 children) enrolled in regulated ELD programs were in high-quality ELD programs.

While North Carolina's strategy has been to improve the quality of ELD programs for all children, the state has prioritized resources and supports to ensure that young Children with High Needs receive the highest quality care. For example, tiered subsidy reimbursement rates are calibrated to encourage ELD programs to attain higher star ratings and disincentivize the purchase of unregulated care using CCDF funds. As a result, **from 2004 to 2011, the percentage of Children with High Needs enrolled in regulated care who were in high-quality ELD programs has increased dramatically, from 41 percent to 61 percent.** And, **less than 1 percent of CCDF-purchased care is unregulated.** See Tables A.1-5 and Performance Measures B.4.c.2 for additional information about our current success and targets for continued growth.

Smart Start is a key driver of quality for Children with High Needs. It has established a performance goal that holds its local partnerships accountable for ensuring that at least 60 percent of all children in every county receiving subsidy or other assistance are in high-quality ELD programs (i.e., four- or five-star rated). Another Smart Start performance goal sets a standard for the quality of early care and education for subsidized children with special needs – requiring that 75 percent are in high-quality ELD. As a result, **94 percent of subsidized children with identified special needs are in high-quality ELD programs.** In addition, a minimum of 30 percent of all Smart Start funds must be used to support child care subsidies or enhanced subsidy rates in three- to five- star rated care. The state also has provided tiered reimbursement rates tied to the age of children and the star-level, providing an economic incentive to provide better care for poor children.

North Carolina's NC Pre-K program, established in 2001, is a state-funded pre-kindergarten program designed to serve four-year-old children with high needs, defined as those "at risk" of later school difficulties (e.g., in low-income families, have an Individualized Education Plan). To serve children through the NC Pre-K program, a licensed child care facility

must maintain a four- or five-star rated license and meet additional high-quality standards that include, for example, a Birth-Kindergarten licensed teacher compensated like public school teachers, better adult:child ratios and group sizes, and appropriate curriculum and instructional assessment.

(c) Existing ELD Legislation, Policies, or Practices

North Carolina's early learning and development system is established in legislation and policy. Both Smart Start and NC Pre-K were enacted in legislation passed by the North Carolina General Assembly. In addition, Governor Perdue created the North Carolina Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) to add value to all existing early childhood efforts by creating and sustaining a shared vision for young children and a comprehensive, integrated system of high-quality early care and education, family strengthening, and health services that support ready children, families, and communities. The newly-created ECAC, together with Smart Start, provides the "glue" that binds the early childhood system together.

Early Childhood Advisory Council. The ECAC, created in 2010 and housed in the Governor's Office, is responsible for providing broad oversight of the early childhood system to ensure that the state system is strong; setting collective outcomes for children, families, and programs; developing a statewide plan to achieve the collective outcomes, and working to ensure that we sustain our investments in early childhood. They are the designated Lead Agency for North Carolina's application.

Smart Start. Smart Start provides the infrastructure on the ground that is needed to produce efficient and effective results. Smart Start began in 1993 when policymakers recognized that progress would require tapping into the same innovative spirit that inspired private sector advances, and therefore, established Smart Start as a public/private partnership. At the state level, Smart Start is managed by The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc. (NCPC), a nonprofit organization with a legislatively appointed Board of Directors. At the local level, 77 independent nonprofit Local Partnerships provide infrastructure support for all 100 NC counties. Together, these organizations form a system—a network of local organizations governed and supported by a state-level organization (NCPC), ultimately answerable to the North Carolina General Assembly.

Smart Start's goal is to measurably increase the health and well-being of young children

birth to five, building the foundation for all future learning, by: 1) Improving children's early care and education programs so that they are safe, healthy and provide opportunities for children to learn skills they need for success in school; 2) Providing parents with tools that support them in raising healthy, happy, successful children; and 3) Ensuring that children have access to preventive health care.

Through Smart Start, North Carolina is the only state to institute population outcomes for young children in every county. Since 2001, NCPC has established measurable, statewide goals (called the Performance Based Incentive System) for increasing the health, well-being and development of children birth to five. NCPC has used independent data from state and federal sources to understand how North Carolina's children are faring. The snapshot identifies areas in which children are doing well and areas in need of attention. (See Appendix 3 for a state report of Smart Start's Performance-Based Incentive System.)

Local Partnerships then take responsibility for making decisions about how best to address areas of need. Each Local Partnership Board of Directors includes community leaders representing business, early childhood providers, parents, faith leaders, public education, and health care providers. They convene stakeholders; ensure accountability; and leverage private, community, state and federal resources to advance child well-being in their communities.

Since its beginning, Smart Start's vision has been to build strong state and local systems to support the needs of young children in North Carolina. It is a national model for using the strength of local community-based partnerships blended with a strong state system to create good outcomes for children and families.

A Strong System To Achieve Good Outcomes

North Carolina recognizes that producing good outcomes for young children—including ensuring that all children start school ready to succeed and reducing the school readiness gap at kindergarten entry—requires a strong system across the early care and education, family strengthening, and health sectors. This section briefly summarizes our past efforts in each sector.

Early Learning and Development

North Carolina's early learning and development system is guided by three core values that are evident in our ELD policies. First, all young children have a right to safe, healthy, and nurturing early learning and development environments that help them arrive at kindergarten

ready to succeed. Second, all young children have a right to a highly trained and educated, culturally and pedagogically competent, fairly compensated teacher. Third, all families should have access to high quality, affordable, accessible early learning and development programs for their children.

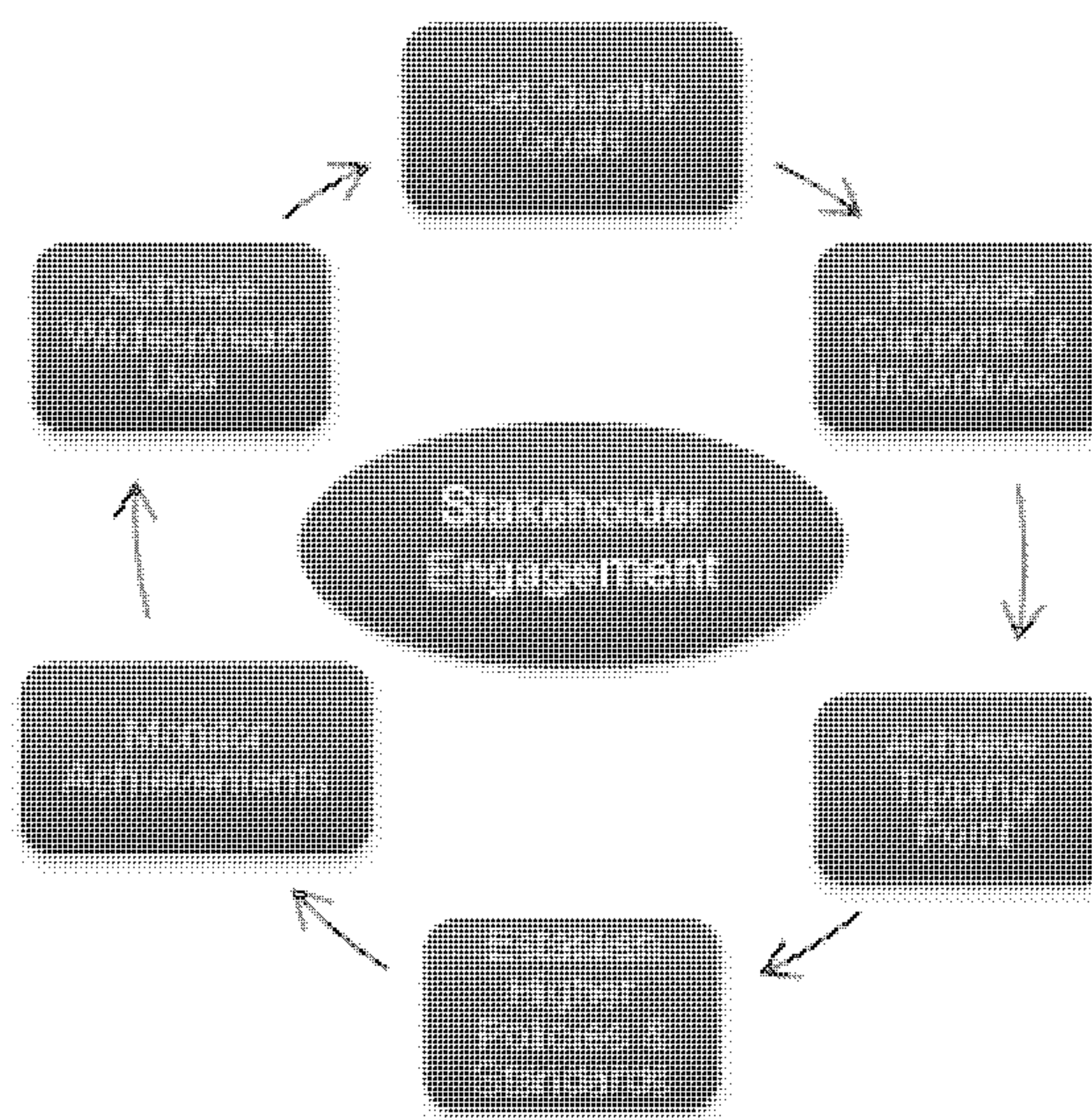
NC leaders have used these values to build its Early Learning and Development system through a continuous, organized

and phased process of quality improvement, with strong stakeholder engagement at the center, as described in the following steps:

1. Set quality performance goals,
2. Provide supports and incentives to help ELD programs meet the quality goals,
3. Work to achieve a tipping point
4. Establish higher standards and policy,
5. Monitor achievement of higher standards and policy,
6. Achieve penetration in achieving higher policies and standards, and then
7. Set higher quality goals. (Figure 1).

North Carolina began with a basic two-tiered license in the mid-1980's, "A" and "AA" that recognized programs for meeting quality standards above basic licensing. From this concept of incentives and standards, we learned that a more comprehensive approach was needed to achieve our goals for young children. Our five-level Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) was created in 1999, using three components--regulatory compliance, staff education and program quality—as measured most significantly by staff-child ratios and group sizes and observational measures of classroom quality. (See Section B.3 for additional information about our TQRIS ratings.) Using lots of incentives during the first six years, we saw

Figure 1: ELD Program Continuous Quality Improvement Strategy



a high proportion of programs achieve higher levels of quality. (See Section B.4 for data about change in quality over time.) In 2005, when we had reached the tipping point, we revised the standards again to measure two, rather than three, components with less emphasis on minimum compliance with regulations and more emphasis on measurable components of quality.

Health

In addition to investments in high quality ELD programs, North Carolina has made significant investments in the health service sector designed to improve developmental outcomes for young children. A critical strategy has been to expand the capacity of primary care physicians to work effectively with children and families—especially those with high needs—to assure optimal early brain and child development. A few key initiatives are highlighted below.

Medical Homes for Children with High Needs through Community Care of North Carolina: Since 1991, there has been an effort in North Carolina to assure that all children have a medical home. At this point, nearly all Children with High Needs are enrolled in medical homes through a network called Community Care of North Carolina. Physicians in the network provide comprehensive medical care according to the standards of Bright Futures/American Academy of Pediatrics.

The family-centered medical home offers many opportunities for physicians to empower families to assure that their infants, toddlers, and preschool children experience optimal early brain and child development. For example, the Assuring Better Child Health and Development (ABCD) increases routine developmental and behavioral screening at well child visits for children birth to 5 so that children with problems that might affect development are identified at the earliest possible point in time and referred for needed services (See Section C.3 for additional information about this project). **North Carolina now has the highest rate of screening of all states** (National Survey of Children's Health) and has provided technical assistance to other states interested in this strategy.

Child Care Health Consultants: NC has supported Child Care Health Consultants, in large part because of the support available to us through the National Training Institute for Child Care Health Consultants (NTI), funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau of USDHHS and housed at the University of North Carolina. Our NC Child Care Health and Safety Resource Center, a national model, trains the CCHCs who are qualified to work with early childhood

educators. CCHCs in NC are directly involved with working with providers, not only in the important areas of injury prevention and infectious disease control, but also in support for children with special needs, social and emotional health, oral health, and importantly, nutrition and physical activity, to name a few.

North Carolina recently received a Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA) Quality Demonstration Grant to implement and test strategies to improve the quality of children's health care. These grant funds support Quality Improvement Coaches in networks throughout the state that care for children to help medical practices improve care as measured by 24 new quality indicators from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

Family Strengthening

North Carolina has long recognized the critical role that families play in improving outcomes for young children. Our goal over the last several years has been to put more powerful tools in the hands of families by investing in proven programs that advance child, family, and community well-being. An example of a NC entrepreneurial effort is the Alliance for Evidence-Based Family Strengthening Programs. This collaborative network of public and private funders and supporters brought together leadership and financial resources to jointly support the implementation of evidence-based practices including Nurse Family Partnership and Incredible Years. It is working toward further replication of programs with strong track records of producing positive results for children, families, and communities. The group has also interwoven public and private financial resources to begin building the needed infrastructure for quality implementation of those programs at a state level. Development of state-level infrastructure has allowed community-based agencies to access the training, consultation, and evaluation supports they need to increase efficiency and model fidelity to ensure that our resources are used effectively to produced strong outcomes for children and their families.

In 2011, the NC Division of Public Health received \$1.6 million in federally-funded grants for the state's implementation of the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program. The Home Visiting Program is a provision of the Affordable Care Act of 2010 and is designed to improve health and development outcomes for young at-risk children through evidence-based home visiting programs. The ECAC is the advisory group for the grant. That same year, Duke Endowment invested \$1.5 million in Nurse Family Partnership home visiting in

North Carolina, demonstrating the power of our public-private partnerships to support high-quality programs for young children.

(d) Current Status of Building Blocks for a High-Quality ELD System

North Carolina was the first state to develop a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) for ELD programs—and is still one of only three states that have integrated a TQRIS into its state child care licensing system. Therefore, in NC, there is no separation between licensing and the TQRIS – all licensed ELD programs are also, by default, part of the state’s TQRIS, called the NC Star Rated License. ELD programs can receive one to five stars. A rating of one star means that an ELD program meets North Carolina’s minimum licensing standards. Programs that choose to meet higher standards can apply for a 2- to 5-star license. Some programs, like NC Pre-K Program, require programs to have a 4- or 5-star license to participate. (See Sections B.1 and B.3 for more information about our TQRIS.)

High Participation Rate across ELD Programs: North Carolina requires that anyone providing care for more than four hours per day for more than two unrelated children obtain a rated license through the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE). Further, because all family child care (FCC) homes and child care centers must be in the TQRIS and many others (e.g., Head Start) also participate in the TQRIS, **78% of all ELD programs in the state are already part of NC’s TQRIS** (Table B.4.c.1).

Supports Drive ELD Programs to Higher Quality Tier Levels: The majority of ELD programs have achieved a 3 star rated license or higher (Table B.4.c.1.) North Carolina has been able to drive ELD programs to higher star ratings by

- providing tiered subsidy reimbursement rates based on an ELD program’s star rating,
- setting community level performance targets through Smart Start,
- working collaboratively with local communities to create a package of statewide and locally developed strategic financial incentives such a grants to improve program quality, technical assistance, professional development, education scholarships, and compensation strategies to help provide incentives and support to ELD to meet higher quality ratings, and
- embedding NC Pre-K classrooms in licensed Head Start, public school and child care settings, with requirement of programs becoming and maintaining 5 stars, and

significantly higher reimbursement rates.

Building a Progression of High-Quality Program Standards: North Carolina's star rated license has evolved over time, with one update since 1999--and another underway—to keep the focus on quality and to incorporate our lessons learned and improved knowledge to support quality. ELD programs earn their star rating based on two components: 1) Staff education, and 2) Program Standards. Program standard points for the TQRIS are based on an evaluation of the daily environment. This includes: a) the program environment; b) sufficient space for activities; c) variety of play materials; d) clean and comfortable play area; e) the number of staff per child; f) the interactions between adults and children; g) children's interactions with other children; and h) children's engagement with activities and materials. Programs applying for the highest level in this component may choose to have an environment rating scale completed.

Staff education requirements start with the minimum requirement that a lead teacher be 18 years old and have either experience or receive in-service training. Once hired, the lead teacher must take community college coursework during the next two years to receive a North Carolina Early Childhood Credential. (There are additional options that are equal to the Credential). To earn higher points in the education component of the rated license child care staff must complete more formal education and have experience working with preschool children. The number of points a center can earn for staff education is based on: a) the education and experience levels of the administrator; b) the number of lead teachers with child care credentials; c) the number of lead teachers with more early childhood education and experience; d) the number of teachers with formal education and/or experience. DCDEE employs child care consultants to ensure child care regulations are being met. The consultants are located throughout the state and are responsible for a caseload of licensed programs in one or more counties. The consultants conduct annual unannounced site visits to evaluate compliance. Appendix 4 provides a complete description of NC's TQRIS Standards and Star Rated License requirements.

Early Learning and Development Standards: North Carolina completed its preschool early learning and development standards in 2004. *Foundations: Early Learning Standards for North Carolina Preschoolers and Strategies for Guiding Their Success* (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2004), describes the characteristics, skills, and knowledge we want children in North Carolina to develop from age 3 to 5 years. There are guidelines for preschoolers in five domains: Approaches to Learning; Emotional and Social Development; Health and Physical Development;

Language Development and Communication; and Cognitive Development. In 2008, the State created *Infant-Toddler Foundations* as a companion piece, focused on children birth to 36 months of age, using the same five developmental domains. These early learning and development standards outline the skills, characteristics, and knowledge we want children to develop from birth to 36 months of age. The publication provides guidelines for the development and learning for all infants and toddlers in North Carolina. Both versions of the *Foundations* are utilized in college courses and professional development opportunities. They are not formally part of the current TQRIS, but the revised TQRIS will include ELD standards. (See Section C.1 for more information and our plans.)

Comprehensive Assessment Systems: Assessment is an area of focus for NC's RTT-ELC application because we have not made as much advancement in this area as in others. Although Head Start and NC Pre-K programs require formative child assessments, our current TQRIS program standards do not. (See Table A.1-7) Our TQRIS does include an observational measure of quality, which includes some aspects of teacher-child interactions. We do not have a common statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment that is included in our State Longitudinal Data System. Section E.1 describes our plans to develop a K-3 Assessment to inform instruction and help reduce the school readiness gap at kindergarten entry. As described in more detail in Section C.2, NC has a High-Quality Plan to strengthen our Comprehensive Assessment System.

Qualified Workforce: North Carolina's TQRIS heavily weights increased education in its points system, and the State has invested significantly in creating a comprehensive support system to enable early childhood educators to achieve higher levels of education. The combination of these efforts have resulted in a **significant portion of NC Early Educators having received at least an Associate's degree or higher, as noted in Table A.1-10, which shows that 50.5% of early childhood educators have an AA or higher, with 25% of them having a Bachelor's degree.**

North Carolina's professional development system has been created and refined in response to deliberate efforts to collect data on the workforce and the effectiveness of various strategies designed to improve the quality of and access to professional development. Multiple workforce studies provided insight on the education, compensation, personal demographics, workplace supports, professional development needs, and turnover of the early childhood workforce. These data have been used to create strategies to promote system-wide

improvements in education, compensation, and retention over time.

In 1990 the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® (T.E.A.C.H.) Project was created to help individuals working in early care and education settings afford college, improve their compensation and encourage retention in the field. In FY11 4,776 individuals working in 1,827 ELD programs across the state had a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship. Most scholarships cover partial costs for tuition, books and travel, mandate and support paid release time, require a bonus or raise upon completion of a minimum number of credit hours, and require the individual remain in her sponsoring ELD program for an additional year.

In 1993 only 28 of the state's 58 community colleges offered the associate degree in early childhood education. By 1998 all 58 colleges offered this degree, making coursework available within a reasonable distance to anyone in the state. Using a combination of scholarships to increase demand for early childhood education coursework, certificates and degrees and one-time expansion grants from local Smart Start partnerships, all colleges were able to have associate degree program and increase the supply of available coursework. North Carolina's community college system has a common course catalog. This means that courses have the same name, course description, and learning goals across the entire system. It is through this system that NC's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework is articulated – embedded in the learning objectives of each course.

Similar growth has taken place in the number of 4-year institutions both offering a bachelor's degree in child development or early childhood education and being approved to offer the state's B-K licensure program. The University of North Carolina-Greensboro was the first four-year university to offer meaningful articulation agreements to every community college in the state in the late 1990's, allowing students who graduated with their associate degree to enter as juniors. Table A.1-11 illustrates the extent to which NC has developed a network of higher education institutions across the state that issue credentials or degrees.

The state has used CCDBG funds to provide incentives to support colleges to complete the NAEYC Early Childhood Associate Degree Accreditation process, with the expectation that all will become accredited. Fourteen colleges are accredited, with another 24 in progress.

As North Carolina has pushed its workforce to become better educated, it has invested millions of dollars annually to support compensation incentives to encourage continuing progress on the education ladder and retention. Individuals working in 59 of North Carolina's counties

are eligible to receive Child Care WAGES® salary supplements tied to the level of their attained education. Supplements are paid every six months as long as the individuals stay in their programs. The education levels of those receiving supplements have continued to rise, with many also taking advantage of T.E.A.C.H. scholarships. The annual turnover rate for WAGES participants is 12%, closely mirroring the rate of turnover for teachers working in public schools.

When the state created its public preK program, it mandated that all teachers who had a B-K License, regardless of work setting, receive comparable compensation to teachers working in public schools. Because about one-half of children receiving NC PreK funding are served in child care or Head Start programs, this requirement has had a substantial impact on compensation practices. For the first time, teachers in regular child care settings with a B-K license have compensation parity with their public school teaching peers.

In 2009, NC started began a system of certification and licensure for the entire early childhood workforce. The North Carolina Institute for Child Development Professionals is the certifying body. Beginning with those who teach young children, there is now an endorsement for those who provide professional development workshops and courses to the early childhood workforce. The system will eventually include both those who administer programs and those who provide coaching, mentoring and technical assistance to those working in classrooms and family child care settings.

Family Engagement: As delineated in Table A.1.-9, Head Start, NC Pre-K, and the TQRIS program standards address family engagement. The TQRIS revision currently underway will include a stronger family engagement component, based on the Head Start family and community engagement framework. (See Section C.4 for more information and our plans.)

Health Promotion Practices: In 2005, as described earlier, the rated license was updated with more rigorous requirements, and a 75 percent compliance history was changed from being part of the rated license points system to a minimum standard for any licensed ELD program. ELD programs must maintain a compliance history of 75% for the past 18 months or the length of time the facility has operated. Many of the required high quality health promotion practices described in Table A.1-8 are embedded in NC's minimum licensing requirements – providing a foundation of basic health and safety standards for all children, upon which additional quality standards are built. Some of the child care licensing requirements that are checked in a program's compliance history are: a) supervision of children; b) condition of equipment and materials; d)

discipline practices; e) minimum acceptable child/staff ratios; d) sanitation practices; and e) required staff education and training development, including health and safety. In addition, centers are required to meet sanitation, building and fire codes as required by other state agencies.

North Carolina also has several initiative designed to improve health promotion practices in ELD programs. These include *Child Care Health Consultants (CCHCs)*, well-trained health professionals who provide education, and technical assistance to center staff and help develop policies and environments to promote children's health and development. Positive impacts have been demonstrated in increased numbers of children with medical homes, up-to-date immunizations and use of preventive health care. Currently, Smart Start Local Partnerships support 56 CCHCs who serve 49 of North Carolina's 100 counties. *Shape NC*, an initiative of Smart Start, is a groundbreaking initiative to tackle childhood obesity. Shape NC is funded by the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina (BCBSNC) Foundation. BSBSNC awarded NCPC a three-year, \$3 million grant to tackle childhood obesity by focusing on young children, from birth through age five. With a focus on the child care setting, Shape NC is increasing knowledge of nutrition and the importance of physical activity practices among young children, their families and teachers, with the goal of increasing the number of young children in child care at a healthy weight.

Effective Data Practices: Families have access to ELD program's star ratings and inspection reports through the DCDEE website and online program search. In addition, NC's CCR&R system provides consumer education and referrals to ELD programs for all 100 counties via phone or online; last year family of 30,266 children from birth to five were provided education on the rated license system in North Carolina and referral to ELD programs.

North Carolina's data system is not as advanced as other aspects of our system infrastructure. As described in more detail in Section E.2, NC has improved its data systems and has completed important foundational work on which to build an integrated data system. We have good agency-specific data systems but need to add important data fields and integrate these systems to address critical early childhood policy questions.

Sustaining Program Effects in the Early Elementary Grades: In 2006, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation Supporting Partnerships to Assure Ready Kids (SPARK) awarded Smart Start a grant to launch the North Carolina Ready Schools Initiative in collaboration with the state's Office of

Early Learning. A Ready School provides a seamless continuum of learning for children ages 3 through 8 between children's early care and educational experiences, elementary schools, families, and communities. To date, the initiative has impacted an estimated 18,535 children (Pre-K through 3rd grade) in the 53 elementary schools and 20 school districts that received Ready Schools technical assistance and implementation grants. Ninety-two percent of the participating elementary schools were Title I schools, which have large concentrations of children from families with low-incomes.

Conclusion

North Carolina has one of the nation's most comprehensive and best-developed early childhood systems. We are proud of our accomplishments to date – especially the breadth and depth of our state and local infrastructure. That infrastructure has allowed us to implement our TQRIS embedded in licensing to full scale, and align resources and actions so that our State's children with the greatest needs are benefiting most from our highest quality care. We are proud of the investment we have made in the human capital that is at the foundation of our system, our early childhood workforce, and of the incredible gains they have made in earning early childhood credentials and degrees. And we are proud that we have not left out the health needs of all our young children and the ongoing supports their families need to be successful.

However, we recognize that we still have a long way to go to eliminate the achievement gap already present at kindergarten entry. Data from the Department of Public Instruction clearly shows the significant disparities between Children with High Needs and their peers at the end of third grade. While we are proud of our achievements, we recognize that far too many of North Carolina's young children are arriving at kindergarten without the basic foundation of physical and social-emotional well-being or cognitive skills necessary to be successful. The Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant will allow us to accelerate the development of promising practices and use innovative new strategies to shift the odds for Children with High Needs. As described in more detail in Section A.2, our RTT-ELC State Plan includes strategies to continue strengthening our statewide system and strategies focused on rural, economically distressed parts of our state with a high proportion of Children with High Needs. Grounded in our North Carolina values—community, entrepreneurial spirit, and education—we have put together a bold plan to significantly shift outcomes for children, particularly Children with High

Needs.

Our State ELD system is maturing within the larger context of developments over the past decade in brain science; advances in our understanding of what types of intervention strategies are proven to lead to better outcomes for children and families; and implementation science, which tells us more about how we need to implement strategies to consistently achieve results. There is also emerging work on how to measure the success of systems-building efforts.

North Carolina is well-positioned to build upon our successes and capitalize upon new developments and innovations happening across early learning and development fields. Our State Plan is both broad (we are addressing all but one of the Focused Investment Areas, Competitive Preference Priorities, and Invitational Priorities) and deep (focusing some strategies intensively in a particular area of our state) to ensure that *each* child in NC enters school prepared to succeed. Our reform agenda demonstrates our capacity to take bold, strategic, and aligned action at the state and local levels to engage collaboratively with our most vulnerable families and make measurable progress in reducing the achievement gap between Children with High Needs and their peers.

Table (A)(1)-1: Children from Low-Income⁷ families, by age

	Number of children from Low-Income families in the State	Children from Low-Income families as a percentage of all children in the State
Infants under age 1	44,915	35.0%
Toddlers ages 1 through 2	120,087	46.2%
Preschoolers ages 3 to kindergarten entry	208,966	56.5%
Total number of children, birth to kindergarten entry, from low-income families	373,968	49.4%

Data source: U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey & State Center for Health Statistics, NC. The total number of children ages 0-5 in North Carolina is 757,646.

⁷ Low-Income is defined as having an income of up to 200% of the Federal poverty rate.

Table (A)(1)-2: Special populations of Children with High Needs		
<i>The State should use these data to guide its thinking about where specific activities may be required to address special populations' unique needs. The State will describe such activities throughout its application.</i>		
Special populations: Children who . . .	Number of children (from birth to kindergarten entry) in the State who...	Percentage of children (from birth to kindergarten entry) in the State who...
Have disabilities or developmental delays^{8, a}	22,205 ^a (9,842 ISFP; 12,363 IEP)	2.9% ^a
Are English learners^{9, b}	72,780 ^b	9.6% ^b
Reside on "Indian Lands"^c	54,003 ^c	7.1% ^c
Are migrant^{10, d}	889 ^d	0.1% ^d
Are homeless^{11, e}	7,811 ^e	1.0% ^e
Are in foster care^f	3,463 ^f	0.5% ^f
Other as identified by the State Describe: Military children	57,100 (52,000 children of active duty families; 5,100 children of Guard and Reserve military families)	7.5%
<p>^a Data source for ISFP and IEP data are from the December 1, 2010 Headcount Data. For the Part C Program, as of Dec. 1 2010 9,842 infants and toddlers with or at established risk for developmental disabilities or delays had an IFSP. Infants and toddlers enter and exit the program at differing times across the fiscal year. During 2009-2010, there were 18,271 children enrolled in the program.</p> <p>^b Data source: American Community Survey (2005-2009) & U.S. Census Bureau.</p> <p>^c Data source: American Community Survey (2005-2009). Note: This number includes all American Indian children <i>under age 5</i> across the state. Of this total, 589 are Cherokee children under age 5 who</p>		

⁸ For purposes of this application, children with disabilities or developmental delays are defined as children birth through kindergarten entry that have an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

⁹ For purposes of this application, children who are English learners are children birth through kindergarten entry who have home languages other than English.

¹⁰ For purposes of this application, children who are migrant are children birth through kindergarten entry who meet the definition of "migratory child" in ESEA section 1309(2).

¹¹ The term "homeless children" has the meaning given the term "homeless children and youths" in section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (425 U.S.C. 11434a(2)).

Table (A)(1)-2: Special populations of Children with High Needs		
<i>The State should use these data to guide its thinking about where specific activities may be required to address special populations' unique needs. The State will describe such activities throughout its application.</i>		
Special populations: Children who . . .	Number of children (from birth to kindergarten entry) in the State who...	Percentage of children (from birth to kindergarten entry) in the State who...
reside on federally designated Indian land.		
^d Data source: Program Monitoring Section, Department of Public Instruction (2009-2010 data).		
^e Data source: http://www.homelesschildrenamerica.org/pdf/report_cards/short/nc_short.pdf This is the most recent report from June 2007, and it is estimated that this number has increased over the last four years.		
^f Data source: Management Assistance for Child Welfare, Work First & Food & Nutrition Services Website- URL: http://ssw.unc.edu/ma/ (July 31, 2011).		

Table (A)(1)-3: Participation of Children with High Needs in different types of Early Learning and Development Programs, by age				
<i>Note: A grand total is not included in this table since some children participate in multiple Early Learning and Development programs.</i>				
Type of Early Learning and Development Program	Number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program, by age			
	Infants under age 1	Toddlers ages 1 through 2	Preschoolers ages 3 until kindergarten entry	Total
State-funded preschool <i>Data Source and Year: (annual census count; e.g., October 1 count) NC Pre-K, 2011</i>	N/A	N/A	24,645	24,645
Early Head Start and Head Start¹² <i>Data Source and Year: Head Start Program Information Report (PIR) 2009-2010</i>	905 (753 regional, 143 migrant/seasonal, 9 tribal)	2584 (2,162 regional, 371 migrant/seasonal, 51 tribal)	20,802 (20,192 regional, 434 migrant/seasonal, 176 tribal)	24,291 (23,107 regional, 948 migrant/seasonal, 236 tribal)

¹² Including children participating in Migrant Head Start Programs and Tribal Head Start Programs.

Table (A)(1)-3: Participation of Children with High Needs in different types of Early Learning and Development Programs, by age				
<i>Note: A grand total is not included in this table since some children participate in multiple Early Learning and Development programs.</i>				
Type of Early Learning and Development Program	Number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program, by age			
	Infants under age 1	Toddlers ages 1 through 2	Preschoolers ages 3 until kindergarten entry	Total
Programs and services funded by IDEA Part C and Part B, section 619 <i>Data Source and Year: December 1 Headcount Part B and Part C of IDEA, for 2010 (12/1/10)</i>	1,249	8,593	12,363	22,205 (9842 Part C; 12,363 Part B)
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA <i>Data Source and Year: Title I Grant Application Projections from LEA's, 2010</i>	N/A	N/A	12,006	12,006
Programs receiving funds from the State's CCDF program ^a <i>Data Source and Year: State Fiscal Year 10-11</i>	Average monthly is 4,864 ^a Year total is 13,269	Average monthly is 21,642 ^a Year total is 52,129	Average monthly is 33,004 ^a Year total is 78,881	Average monthly is 59,495 ^a Year total is 144,279
^a For programs receiving funds from the State's CCDF program, facility payments are a mix of state/federal funds. CCDF and TANF funds transfer into CCDF, and state funds used for CCDF match and MOE are a large portion of these blended funds. The data in the table above are not unduplicated counts as children can be counted in multiple groups. For example one month a child could be captured in the under age 1 group, but the next month could have a birthday and would now be in the toddler group.				

Table (A)(1)-4: Historical data on funding for Early Learning and Development					
Type of investment	Funding for each of the Past 5 Fiscal Years				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Supplemental State spending on Early Head Start and Head Start^{13, a}	N/A ^a	N/A ^a	N/A ^a	N/A ^a	N/A ^a
State-funded preschool^b <i>Specify: NC Pre-K</i>	\$140,645,707 ^b	\$170,471,908 ^b	\$135,450,483 ^b	\$113,810,127 ^b	\$128,567,170 ^b
State contributions to IDEA Part C (Budgeted state appropriations for the fiscal year named, e.g., 2007 is 2007-2008. For 2011-2012, budgeted amount is current as of 8/29/11)	\$45,732,306	\$43,945,080	\$37,342,844	\$34,353,437	\$34,756,653
State contributions for special education and related services for children with disabilities, ages 3 through kindergarten entry	\$44,946,340	\$38,695,971	\$39,110,058	\$43,063,716	\$50,136,492
Total State contributions to CCDF¹⁴	\$65,097,636	\$65,659,704	\$65,982,219	\$66,121,064	\$66,714,075
State match to CCDF <i>Exceeded/Met/Not Met (if exceeded, indicate amount by which match was exceeded)</i>	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met

¹³ Including children participating in Migrant Head Start Programs and Tribal Head Start Programs.

¹⁴ Total State contributions to CCDF must include Maintenance of Effort (MOE), State Match, and any State contributions exceeding State MOE or Match.

Table (A)(1)-4: Historical data on funding for Early Learning and Development					
Type of investment	Funding for each of the Past 5 Fiscal Years				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
TANF spending on Early Learning and Development Programs¹⁵	\$130,732,736	\$136,263,295	\$185,871,622 (\$28,001,161 for preschool, \$157,870,461 for child care subsidies)	\$187,716,345 (\$45,119,262 for preschool, \$142,597,083 for child care subsidies)	\$162,703,098
Other State contributions <i>Specify: Developmental Day(DD), Gov. Morehead School (GMS) and Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH)</i> <i>*Estimated, data not yet available</i>	Not Available (DD) \$3,521,207 (GMS) \$3,346,894 (DHH)	\$15,189,991 (DD) \$3,823,333 (GMS) \$3,842,127 (DHH)	\$15,420,420 (DD) \$4,108,761 (GMS) \$4,065,652 (DHH)	\$13,959,255 (DD) \$4,035,202 (GMS) \$3,756,956 (DHH)	\$13,500,000* (DD) \$3,978,896 (GMS) \$3,853,287 (DHH)
Other State contributions <i>Specify: Smart Start Subsidy through DCD system</i>	\$53,182,487	\$55,015,145	\$50,691,025	\$51,456,082	\$48,196,046
Other State contributions <i>Specify: Dual subsidy expenditures</i>	\$5,495,870	\$5,842,245	\$5,685,559	\$10,707,848	\$11,315,223
Other State contributions <i>Specify: (children not eligible for CCDF – i.e. CPS, child welfare)</i>	\$26,259,118	\$31,388,001	\$24,557,730	\$24,764,290	\$26,859,847
Other State contributions <i>Specify: Additional Smart Start Initiatives^c</i>	\$84,207,841 ^c	\$84,453,126 ^c	\$79,601,980 ^c	\$73,031,816 ^c	\$70,785,241 ^c

¹⁵ Include TANF transfers to CCDF as well as direct TANF spending on Early Learning and Development Programs.

Table (A)(1)-4: Historical data on funding for Early Learning and Development					
Type of investment	Funding for each of the Past 5 Fiscal Years				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Other State contributions <i>Specify: Family Support Services including Home Visiting, Group Parent Education & Literacy Programs^c</i>	\$22,185,804 ^c	\$23,454,384 ^c	\$23,511,492 ^c	\$22,600,520 ^c	\$22,981,570 ^c
Total State contributions:	\$625,353,946	\$678,044,310	\$671,399,845	\$649,376,658	\$644,347,598
<p>^a There is no state supplemental spending for Early Head Start and Head Start, aside for state pre-K funds that are used to enhance standards of pre-K programs located in Head Start classrooms. Those funds are already included in the state-funded preschool funding amounts above.</p> <p>^b North Carolina's state-funded preschool program, NC Pre-K, was formally called More at Four prior to 2011. During the 2009-2010 fiscal years, TANF and ARRA funds were used to in place of some state-funded preschool funds to fund the state-funded preschool program. These TANF and ARRA funds are listed instead in the TANF section of this chart and combined with the TANF dollars for child care subsidies.</p> <p>^c Data source is Smart Start actual expenditures for fiscal year ending June 30. Additional Smart Start Initiatives include: Quality Support and Improvement Services, Childcare Workforce Development including Salary Supplements, Enhanced Early Intervention Services, and Health Services including Health Access and Support, and Prenatal and Newborn Services.</p>					

Table (A)(1)-5: Historical data on the participation of Children with High Needs in Early Learning and Development Programs in the State					
<i>Note: A grand total is not included in this table since some children participate in multiple Early Learning and Development programs.</i>					
Type of Early Learning and Development Program	Total number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program for each of the past 5 years¹⁶				
	2007	2008	2009¹⁷	2010¹⁷	2011¹⁷
State-funded preschool <i>(annual census count; e.g., October 1 count)</i> <i>Specify: NC Pre-K (formally called More at Four)</i>	27,788	31,485	31,197	30,767	24,645
Early Head Start and Head Start¹⁸ <i>(funded enrollment)</i>	20,198 (18,751 regional, 1,201 migrant/seasonal, 246 tribal)	20,183 (18,731 regional, 1,206 migrant/seasonal, 246 tribal)	20,350 (18,903 regional, 1,201 migrant/seasonal, 246 tribal)	21,986 (20,823 regional, 917 migrant/seasonal, 246 tribal)	Not yet available
Programs and services funded by IDEA Part C and Part B, section 619 <i>(annual December 1 count)</i>	8,191 (Part C) 11,859 (Part B)	9,290 (Part C) 11,503 (Part B)	9,971 (Part C) 12,166 (Part B)	9,842 (Part C) 12,363 (Part B)	Not available (Part B & C)
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA <i>(total number of children who receive Title I services annually, as reported in the Consolidated State Performance Report)</i>	7,619	9,220	13,845	12,006	Not Available
Programs receiving CCDF funds <i>(average monthly served)- Ages 0-5.</i> <i>Data source: SFY</i>	66,262	68,422	66,126	67,234	59,495
Other <i>Describe: Family Support Services</i>	42,626 ^a	40,798 ^a	39,731 ^a	38,571 ^a	Not Available

¹⁶ Include all Children with High Needs served with both Federal dollars and State supplemental dollars.

¹⁷ Note to Reviewers: The number of children served reflects a mix of Federal, State, and local spending. Head Start, IDEA, and CCDF all received additional Federal funding under the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which may be reflected in increased numbers of children served in 2009-2011.

¹⁸ Including children participating in Migrant Head Start Programs and Tribal Head Start Programs.

Table (A)(1)-5: Historical data on the participation of Children with High Needs in Early Learning and Development Programs in the State					
<i>Note: A grand total is not included in this table since some children participate in multiple Early Learning and Development programs.</i>					
Type of Early Learning and Development Program	Total number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program for each of the past 5 years¹⁶				
	2007	2008	2009¹⁷	2010¹⁷	2011¹⁷
<i>including Home Visiting, Group Parent Education & Literacy Programs^a</i>					
Other <i>Describe: Dual Subsidy Children served^a</i>	6,289 ^a	6,883 ^a	6,499 ^a	8,022 ^a	8,225 ^a
^a Data source is Smart Start.					

Table (A)(1)-6 : Current status of the State's Early Learning and Development Standards			
<i>Please place an "X" in the boxes to indicate where the State's Early Learning and Development Standards address the different age groups by Essential Domain of School Readiness</i>			
Essential Domains of School Readiness^a	Age Groups		
	Infants	Toddlers	Preschoolers
Language and literacy development	X	X	X
Cognition and general knowledge (including early math and early scientific development)	X	X	X
Approaches toward learning	X	X	X
Physical well-being and motor development	X	X	X
Social and emotional development	X	X	X
^a North Carolina's Infant/Toddler <i>Foundations</i> and Preschool <i>Foundations</i> address all five of the Essential Domains of School Readiness. Published in 2008 and 2005 respectively, the <i>Foundations</i> are currently under revision to ensure alignment with the Common Core Standards for Kindergarten and the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework and to reflect recommendations and reports such as the National Early Literacy Panel and the National Research Council's Committee on Early Childhood Mathematics.			

Table (A)(1)-7: Elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System currently required within the State					
<i>Please place an "X" in the boxes to indicate where an element of a Comprehensive Assessment System is currently required.</i>					
Types of programs or systems	Elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System				
	Screening Measures	Formative Assessments	Measures of Environmental Quality	Measures of the Quality of Adult-Child Interactions	Other
State-funded preschool ^a <i>Specify: NC Pre-K</i>	X	X	X	X	X ^a
Early Head Start and Head Start ^{19,b}	X	X	X	X	X ^b
Programs funded under IDEA Part C ^c		X ^c			
Programs funded under IDEA Part B, section 619 ^d	X ^d	X ^d	X ^d	X ^d	
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA ^e	X ^e	X ^e	X ^e	X ^e	
Programs receiving CCDF funds ^f			X ^f		
Current Quality Rating and Improvement System requirements ^g <i>Specify by tier (add rows if needed):</i>			X ^g	X ^g	
State licensing requirements ^f			X ^f	X ^f	
<p>^a For the state preschool program, other elements include an on-going external evaluation of program quality and child outcomes.</p> <p>^b For Early Head Start and Head Start, all Comprehensive Assessments are required by the federal government, not the State. Another element of the comprehensive assessment system is a Triennial Review which includes a range of factors and services for all Early Head Start and Head Start programs.</p> <p>^c IDEA Part C formative assessments include child outcomes data.</p>					

¹⁹ Including Migrant and Tribal Head Start located in the State.

Table (A)(1)-7: Elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System currently required within the State					
<i>Please place an "X" in the boxes to indicate where an element of a Comprehensive Assessment System is currently required.</i>					
Types of programs or systems	Elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System				
	Screening Measures	Formative Assessments	Measures of Environmental Quality	Measures of the Quality of Adult-Child Interactions	Other
<p>^d In IDEA Part B, 619, children must have screening and comprehensive evaluations to be eligible for the program. Once in the program, certified teachers must conduct on-going assessments in order to complete the Child Outcome Summary Form rating. This rating is completed at least two times (upon program entry and exit) and the child’s overall developmental trajectory is charted and reported in the state performance plan and annual report. Each certified teacher is evaluated via the NC teacher evaluation instrument which targets environmental quality and adult-child interactions.</p> <p>^e For the screening measures elements, eligibility for Title I Pre-K must be determined on the basis of multiple, educationally relevant, objective criteria such as teacher judgment, interviews with parents, and developmentally appropriate measures of child development. Developmentally appropriate measures are those which screen multiple developmental domains. The NC DPI has identified four instruments as appropriate for determining risk. The formative assessments, Measures of Environmental Quality, and Measures of the Quality of Adult-Child Interactions indicate the requirements as Title I programs are required to have certified teachers. These certified teachers utilize the NC Teacher Evaluation Instrument, which addresses these areas.</p> <p>^f As of the 2011 legislative session, only programs that have received 3 or more stars will be eligible to receive CCDF funds. This change is in the process of being implemented. North Carolina’s TQRIS is integrated in to our state licensing system.</p> <p>^g For measures of environmental quality, to earn 3 to 7 points on the 1 to 7 point scale for the program standards component of the NC TQRIS, an Environmental Rating Scale (ERS) is required. For measures of the quality of adult-child interactions, the ERS is used which has some items about adult-child interactions.</p>					

Table (A)(1)-8: Elements of high-quality health promotion practices currently required within the State					
<i>Please place an "X" in the boxes to indicate where the elements of high-quality health promotion practices are currently required.</i>					
Types of Programs or Systems	Elements of high-quality health promotion practices				
	Health and safety requirements	Developmental, behavioral, and sensory screening, referral, and follow-up	Health promotion, including physical activity and healthy eating habits	Health literacy	Other
State-funded preschool <i>Specify: NC Pre-K</i>	X	X	X	X	
Early Head Start and Head Start ^a	X ^a	X ^a	X ^a	X ^a	X ^a
Programs funded under IDEA Part C ^b	X ^b	X ^b	X ^b		
Programs funded under IDEA Part B, section 619 ^c	X ^c	X ^c	X ^c	X ^c	
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA ^d	X ^d	X ^d	X ^d	X ^d	
Programs receiving CCDF funds ^e	X ^e		X ^e		
Current Quality Rating and Improvement System requirements <i>Specify by tier (add rows if needed):</i>	X		X		
State licensing requirements	X		X		

^a For Early Head Start and Head Start, all Comprehensive Assessments are required by the federal government, not the State. Other health promotion practices include oral health, parent engagement, a health advisory committee for every Head Start and Early Head Start, and all programs are required to

Table (A)(1)-8: Elements of high-quality health promotion practices currently required within the State					
<i>Please place an "X" in the boxes to indicate where the elements of high-quality health promotion practices are currently required.</i>					
Types of Programs or Systems	Elements of high-quality health promotion practices				
	Health and safety requirements	Developmental, behavioral, and sensory screening, referral, and follow-up	Health promotion, including physical activity and healthy eating habits	Health literacy	Other
<p>build community partnerships around health.</p> <p>^b IDEA Part C programs have health and safety measures during service provision; service coordination, which is a required Part C service for any child referred to or enrolled in Part C, and includes referral and follow-up. Many children are initially referred due to developmental concerns identified during well child developmental screening. As part of service planning for enrolled children under Part C, families identify family and child routines.</p> <p>^c IDEA Part B, 619 programs follow one of the state board approved comprehensive research based curricula that includes instruction in communication & literacy, cognition, health and safety, and motor development. Each of these curricula align with the NC Early Learning Standards. IDEA Part B, 619 programs require individual child screening, referrals and comprehensive assessments as part of eligibility determination.</p> <p>^d Screening Measures: Eligibility for Title I Pre-K must be determined on the basis of multiple, educationally relevant, objective criteria such as teacher judgment, interviews with parents, and developmentally appropriate measures of child development. Developmentally appropriate measures are those which screen multiple developmental domains. The NC DPI has identified four instruments as appropriate for determining risk. Health and safety requirements, developmental, behavioral, and sensory screening, referral, and follow up, health promotion, including physical activity and healthy eating habits, and health literacy indicate requirements as Title I programs must select one of the curricula from the NC DPI's approved list. Curricula on the approved list is comprehensive, research based, and aligns with NC's Early Learning Standards.</p> <p>^e As of the 2011 legislative session, only programs that have received 3 or more stars will be eligible to receive CCDF funds. This change is in the process of being implemented. North Carolina's TQRIS is integrated in to our state licensing system.</p>					

Table (A)(1)-9: Elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the State	
<i>Please describe the types of high-quality family engagement strategies required in the State. Types of strategies may, for example, include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development.</i>	
Types of Programs or Systems	Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today
State-funded preschool <i>Specify: NC Pre-K</i>	In addition to the TQRIS requirements related to family engagement (see below under <i>Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System requirements</i>) which would be met based on the 4 or 5 star license that the Pre-K classroom would need to maintain, the program requirements for Pre-K also specifies that NC Pre-K classrooms shall provide meaningful opportunities for families to be engaged in their child's education. A log of activities, opportunities, or communications made for family engagement must be on file at the NC Pre-K site. Programs are required to develop Family Engagement plans at the local level to promote active engagement of families in the education of their child. Integration of planning with Title I programs is highly encouraged.
Early Head Start and Head Start	All Head Start and Early Head Start programs are required to provide a range of parent engagement opportunities for participating families based on federal program requirements. These parent engagement opportunities include opportunities for family partnerships that include goal-setting to improve family well-being; opportunities for program governance and program policy-setting; opportunities to access education activities, community services, and resources; opportunities for involvement in child development and education; and opportunities for community advocacy.
Programs funded under IDEA Part C	Family engagement strategies include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) parent access to the program (families may refer their own infant or toddler), 2) ongoing two-way communication with families (through service coordination, which is required for any infant or toddler referred to or enrolled in the program), 3) parent education in child development (discussion of developmental concerns and strategies to address them), 4) outreach to fathers and other family members (the family may include any member of the family in service planning), 5) training and support for families as children move to preschool (transition planning must occur no later than child's age 2 years, 9 months, for enrolled children), 6) social networks of supports (discussion with families of both formal and informal supports as well as service needs), 7) intergenerational activities (see above re service planning inclusion), 8) linkages with community supports and family literacy programs (see above re service coordination and transition planning), 9) parent involvement in decision making (families are members of the

Table (A)(1)-9: Elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the State	
<i>Please describe the types of high-quality family engagement strategies required in the State. Types of strategies may, for example, include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development.</i>	
Types of Programs or Systems	Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today
	service planning team, and may accept or decline any service), 10) parent leadership development (statewide contract to identify, train, and support parent leaders for advisory board and other program/policy/monitoring activities, statewide contract to support local family groups for peer to peer matching and education/support to families who have a newly identified infant or toddler with developmental delays)
Programs funded under IDEA Part B, section 619	IDEA policies include mandates about parent participation in the IEP process. This is measured statewide through a parent sampling procedure. Data are collected by an outside agency and a formal report is issued each year. This information is reported annually in the Annual Performance Report and goals are set in the State Performance Plan. The measurement tool used is the NC SEAM survey.
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA	<p>Title I Pre-K programs are required to involve families in meaningful ways in the education of their child, with a goal of shared decision-making. In fulfilling family involvement requirements, LEA's and schools must provide opportunities for full participation of parents.</p> <p>Families are integrally involved in the learning and development of their child(ren). Therefore, the development of a comprehensive plan for family engagement is critical to the success of children during the pre-kindergarten year and in subsequent years as well. In an effort to support family engagement, programs should develop a plan to implement strategies designed to develop partnerships with families and build reciprocal relationships that promote shared decision-making. Meaningful family engagement occurs when early childhood programs and other community organizations and agencies actively reach out to families in meaningful ways, and when families actively support their child(ren)'s learning and development.</p> <p>Administrators and teachers should provide meaningful opportunities for parents and families that build reciprocal relationships and foster a bond among those involved in the education of the Pre-K child. Relationship-building experiences that promote ongoing, two-way communication and use a variety of methods that reflect the linguistic preferences of the family are encouraged. Following are some examples that are encouraged:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Home visits (initial and ongoing), particularly for purposes of learning about the child, his/her family, and family routines; 2. Multiple opportunities for formal and informal conversations where

Table (A)(1)-9: Elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the State	
<p><i>Please describe the types of high-quality family engagement strategies required in the State. Types of strategies may, for example, include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development.</i></p>	
Types of Programs or Systems	Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today
	<p>both parents and teachers share their knowledge and expertise, (e.g., phone calls, parent/teacher conferences);</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Classroom visits and options for parents and families to participate in classroom activities; 4. Parent education (e.g. development of parent centers, one-on-one learning opportunities, skill development classes, and identification and connections to community resources such as “Parents as Teachers”); 5. Family involvement in decision making about their own child and about their child’s early childhood program in general; 6. Opportunities to engage families outside of the regular school day. <p>*All provisions in section 1118 (No Child Left Behind Act) apply to Title I preschool programs except the requirement in sections 1118 (d)(2)(A) concerning discussion of the school-parent compact at parent-teacher conferences in elementary schools.</p>
Programs receiving CCDF funds^a	Based on the new requirement to maintain a 3 star license or above, the standards listed below under <i>Current Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System requirements</i> would apply. ^a
Current Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System requirements <i>Specify by tier (add rows if needed):</i>	<p>On the 1 to 7 point scale for the program standards component of the NC TQRIS, to earn 2 to 7 points, the following apply –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Each center shall have a plan which will encourage parent participation and inform parents about the program and its services. The plan shall be discussed with parents at the time the child is enrolled and shall be posted in the center or a copy shall be given to parents at the time of enrollment. (b) The plan shall include the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) a procedure for registering a child for child care which involves both parents when possible and which encourages a visit to the center by the child and the child's parents before the child begins attending the center; (2) opportunities for caregiving staff to meet with parents on a regular basis to discuss their child's needs and progress and to exchange information about the program; (3) activities which provide parents opportunities to participate in the center's program on an individual basis

Table (A)(1)-9: Elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the State	
<i>Please describe the types of high-quality family engagement strategies required in the State. Types of strategies may, for example, include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development.</i>	
Types of Programs or Systems	Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today
	and as a group; (4) a procedure for parents who need information or have complaints about the child care program.
State licensing requirements	<p>On the 1 to 7 point scale for the program standards component of the NC TQRIS, to earn 2 to 7 points, the following apply –</p> <p>(a) Each center shall have a plan which will encourage parent participation and inform parents about the program and its services. The plan shall be discussed with parents at the time the child is enrolled and shall be posted in the center or a copy shall be given to parents at the time of enrollment.</p> <p>(b) The plan shall include the following:</p> <p>(1) a procedure for registering a child for child care which involves both parents when possible and which encourages a visit to the center by the child and the child's parents before the child begins attending the center;</p> <p>(2) opportunities for caregiving staff to meet with parents on a regular basis to discuss their child's needs and progress and to exchange information about the program;</p> <p>(3) activities which provide parents opportunities to participate in the center's program on an individual basis and as a group;</p> <p>(4) a procedure for parents who need information or have complaints about the child care program.</p>
^a As of the 2011 legislative session, only programs that have received 3 or more stars will be eligible to receive CCDF funds. This change is in the process of being implemented. North Carolina's TQRIS is integrated in to the state licensing system.	

Table (A)(1)-10: Status of all early learning and development workforce credentials²⁰ currently available in the State				
List the early learning and development workforce credentials in the State	If State has a workforce knowledge and competency framework, is the credential aligned to it? <i>(Yes/No/Not Available)</i>	Number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who have the credential		Notes (if needed)
		#	%	
BA/BS in Child Development or ECE with Birth-Kindergarten License^a	Yes	1,905 ^a	9.1% ^a	
BA/BS in Child Development or ECE	Yes	1,170	5.6%	
BA/BS in non-ECE plus at least 6 ECE courses	Yes	472	2.2%	
AAS in Early Childhood Education	Yes	4,568	21.7%	
BA/BS in non-ECE plus 1-5 courses	Yes	1,255	6.0%	
BA/BS in non-ECE and no ECE courses	Yes	497	2.4%	
AA/AAS in non-ECE plus at least 1 ECE courses	Yes	577	2.7%	
AA/AAS in non-ECE and no ECE courses	Yes	174	.8%	
HS diploma plus at least 6 ECE courses	Yes	5,041	24.0%	

²⁰ Includes both credentials awarded and degrees attained.

Table (A)(1)-10: Status of all early learning and development workforce credentials²⁰ currently available in the State				
List the early learning and development workforce credentials in the State	If State has a workforce knowledge and competency framework, is the credential aligned to it? <i>(Yes/No/Not Available)</i>	Number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who have the credential		Notes (if needed)
		#	%	
HS diploma plus 1-5 ECE courses	Yes	4,680	22.3%	
HS diploma with no ECE coursework	Yes	678	3.2%	
<p>Note: The data in this table reflect teachers working in licensed child care, Head Start and Pre-K sites. They do not include assistant teachers or family child care providers.</p> <p>^a The North Carolina Birth-through-Kindergarten (BK) degree and license, which is obtained upon completion of a BA degree, prepares early educators to work with young children, from birth through age 5 years, with and without disabilities, including those at-risk, and their families. The licensure process requires coursework and student teaching/internships to qualify for a NC Educator's Standard Professional I license issued by the NC State Board of Education.</p>				

Table (A)(1)-11: Summary of current postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators			
List postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators	Number of Early Childhood Educators that received an early learning credential or degree from this entity in the previous year		Does the entity align its programs with the State's current Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and progression of credentials? <i>(Yes/No/Not Available)</i>
	BA Degree	B-K License^a	
4 Year Institutions			
<i>Schools providing BA/BS and B-K licenses</i>			
Appalachian State	42	15	Yes, with B-K license
East Carolina University	109	16	Yes, with B-K license

Table (A)(1)-11: Summary of current postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators			
List postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators	Number of Early Childhood Educators that received an early learning credential or degree from this entity in the previous year		Does the entity align its programs with the State's current Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and progression of credentials? <i>(Yes/No/Not Available)</i>
Meredith College	26	7	Yes, with B-K license
North Carolina Central Univ	88	38	Yes, with B-K license
UNC-Charlotte	22	24	Yes, with B-K license
UNC-Greensboro	86	72	Yes, with B-K license
Western Carolina Univ	24	25	Yes, with B-K license
<i>Schools Providing only BA/BS</i>			
Mount Olive College	72	0	Not Available/Unknown
<i>Schools providing only B-K licenses^a</i>			
Barton College	N/A	2	Yes, with B-K license
Campbell University	N/A	5	Yes, with B-K license
Catawba College	N/A	21	Yes, with B-K license
Elizabeth City State Univ	N/A	9	Yes, with B-K license
Fayetteville State Univ	N/A	11	Yes, with B-K license
Greensboro College	N/A	27	Yes, with B-K license
Lenoir-Rhyne College	N/A	1	Yes, with B-K license
NC A&T University	N/A	24	Yes, with B-K license
Shaw University	N/A	4	Yes, with B-K license
UNC-Chapel Hill	N/A	12	Yes, with B-K license
UNC-Pembroke	N/A	22	Yes, with B-K license
UNC-Wilmington	N/A	11	Yes, with B-K license
Winston Salem State Univ	N/A	4	Yes, with B-K license
Totals for Four Year	469 ECE	350 BK Licenses	

Table (A)(1)-11: Summary of current postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators				
List postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators	Number of Early Childhood Educators that received an early learning credential or degree from this entity in the previous year			Does the entity align its programs with the State's current Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and progression of credentials? <i>(Yes/No/Not Available)</i>
	Institutions	degrees		
Two Year Institutions (Community Colleges)				
	AAS	Diploma	Certificate	
Combined Totals Statewide for Community Colleges^b	1,070 ^b	116 ^b	910 ^b	Yes ^b
<p>Note: There is some overlap between the number of Early Childhood Educators who received a BA degree and BK License in 4-year institutions, although that number is unknown. There is no overlap within community colleges between those that received their AAS, Diploma, or Certificate in Early Childhood, as these credentials need to be received in sequential order.</p> <p>^a The North Carolina Birth-through-Kindergarten (BK) degree and license, which is obtained upon completion of a BA degree, prepares early educators to work with young children, from birth through age 5 years, with and without disabilities, including those at-risk, and their families. The licensure process requires coursework and student teaching/internships to qualify for a NC Educator's Standard Professional I license issued by the NC State Board of Education.</p> <p>^b Fifty-eight Community Colleges across the state provide standard course of study for the receipt of a 2 year AAS degree in Early Childhood. Also offered are a diploma (32-36 hours of coursework) and a certificate (15-18 hours of coursework). Regardless of which community college is attended, the program is aligned with the State's current Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and progression of credentials.</p>				

Table (A)(1)-12: Current status of the State's Kindergarten Entry Assessment					
State's Kindergarten Entry Assessment	Essential Domains of School Readiness				
	Language and literacy	Cognition and general knowledge (including early mathematics and early scientific development)	Approaches toward learning	Physical well-being and motor development	Social and emotional development
Domain covered? <i>(Y/N)</i>					
SRA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
K-2	Y	Y	N	N	N

Table (A)(1)-12: Current status of the State's Kindergarten Entry Assessment					
State's Kindergarten Entry Assessment	Essential Domains of School Readiness				
	Language and literacy	Cognition and general knowledge (including early mathematics and early scientific development)	Approaches toward learning	Physical well-being and motor development	Social and emotional development
Domain aligned to Early Learning and Development Standards? (Y/N)					
SRA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
K-2	Y	Y	N	N	N
Instrument(s) used? (Specify)					
SRA	1.Comprehen. Test of Phono. Processing (CTOPP) 2.PPVT-III 3.Story & Print Concepts 4.Woodcock-Johnson-Rev.	1.Bracken Basic Concepts Scale-Rev. 2.Color Names 3.Woodcock-Johnson-Rev.	Parent Survey	Parent Survey	Social Skills Rating System (SSRS)
K-2	K-2 Assessment	K-2 Assessment	--	--	--
Evidence of validity and reliability? (Y/N)					
SRA	Y	Y	N	N	Y
K-2	N	N	--	--	--
Evidence of validity for English learners? (Y/N)					
SRA	Y *	Y*	N	N	N
K-2	N	N	--	--	--
Evidence of validity for children with disabilities? (Y/N)					
SRA	N	N	N	N	N
K-2	N	N	--	--	--

Table (A)(1)-12: Current status of the State's Kindergarten Entry Assessment					
State's Kindergarten Entry Assessment	Essential Domains of School Readiness				
	Language and literacy	Cognition and general knowledge (including early mathematics and early scientific development)	Approaches toward learning	Physical well-being and motor development	Social and emotional development
How broadly administered? <i>(If not administered statewide, include date for reaching statewide administration)</i>	<p>The SRA was a statewide representative sample of 1034 kindergartners.</p> <p>The K-2 Assessment is available statewide but not required to be completed.</p> <p>Section E.1 includes NC's high-quality plan to develop a new K-3 Assessment that will include an initial assessment of children in the first few months of kindergarten. We plan to begin administering the K-3 Assessment in 2014 and implement it statewide by 2016-17.</p>				
Results included in Statewide Longitudinal Data System? <i>(Y/N)</i>	N	N	N	N	N
K-2	N	N	N	N	N
<p>*Some measures for this domain have established reliability and validity for Spanish-speaking children.</p> <p>Note: North Carolina has two sources of data on children in kindergarten. The first, the School Readiness Assessment (SRA) study was implemented in 2000 to inform efforts to close the school readiness gap at kindergarten entry (see the report in Appendix 27). Results were used as a basis for implementing a state-funded pre-kindergarten program and to strengthen other early development and learning services for low-income children.</p> <p>The second kindergarten assessment is known as the K-2 Assessment (K-2). It is an on-going formative assessment implemented by teachers in kindergarten, first and second grade to collect information on children's knowledge and skills in language/literacy and mathematics. Data are maintained at the classroom level for the purpose of improving instruction in the early elementary grades.</p> <p>Both of these kindergarten assessments have limitations. Section E.1 describes our plans to re-vamping the K-2 Assessment to assess all domains of development and provide data on all children that will be used to inform our efforts to close the achievement gap and to improve instruction in the early elementary grades. Data from the new KEA will be entered into the Statewide Longitudinal Data System.</p>					

List each data system currently in use in NC that includes early learning & development data	Essential Data Elements						
	<i>“X” for each Essential Data Element included in each of the State’s data systems</i>						
	Unique child identifier	Unique Early Childhood Educator identifier	Unique program site identifier	Child and family demographic information	Early Childhood Educator demographic information	Data on program structure and quality	Child-level program participation and attendance
Subsidized Child Care	a		X	X		X	X
Licensed Child Care		X	X		X	X	
Early Intervention, Part C IDEA	X		b	X	X ^b	a	X
Preschool Special Ed Part B 619 IDEA	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
NC Pre-K	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Head Start & Early Head Start^c			c	X	X	X	
Title I and Even Start of ESEA	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Governor Morehead School for the Blind	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
School for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
MIECHV^d Home Visiting Prgm	d	d	d	d	d	d	d
Smart Start, NCPC^e			X ^e				

^a A child unique identifier (UID) is formally planned for the Subsidized Child Care Program in conjunction with the current staged implementation of NC FAST (Families Accessing Services through Technology) in NC DHHS.

^b Part C Early Intervention services are provided in a variety of natural settings, primarily the home, thus program site elements are generally not applicable. The state data system has program site identifiers for its local lead agencies but they are not the site for most service delivery. The state data system has demographic data only for the local lead agency staff, while the majority of EI services are provided by contracted community providers whose demographic information is not included in state data system.

^c Head Start programs are funded directly by the federal government and all program data flow directly from local programs to the federal office. NC Head Start State Collaboration Office has access to the state Program Information Report (PIR) database for the elements indicated. NC Division of Child Development and Early Learning has program site UIDs for Head Start programs that are licensed.

^d The NC Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV) data system (not yet in place) will have a contract and formal plan in place for data system implementation that will include all essential data elements (and includes data for funded Nurse Family Partnership and Healthy Families America Programs grantees).

^e Smart Start, overseen by The NC Partnership for Children, Inc. (NCPC) is a public/private partnership

of 77 local partnerships serving all 100 NC counties. Smart Start has maintained a Performance-Based Incentive System (PBIS) since 2001. PBIS is a comprehensive collection of 24 population-level indicators that track healthy conditions for young children for each county in the state which allows Smart Start to track large-scale changes in factors critical to children's healthy development. Local data are collected regarding number of children, teachers, families and child care centers served; and the numbers are aggregated to produce statewide counts of services. All local partnerships collect program evaluation data in non-standardized formats that are not aggregated at the state level.

(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals. (20 points)

The extent to which the State clearly articulates a comprehensive early learning and development reform agenda that is ambitious yet achievable, builds on the State's progress to date (as demonstrated in selection criterion (A)(1)), is most likely to result in improved school readiness for Children with High Needs, and includes--

(a) Ambitious yet achievable goals for improving program quality, improving outcomes for Children with High Needs statewide, and closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers;

(b) An overall summary of the State Plan that clearly articulates how the High-Quality Plans proposed under each selection criterion, when taken together, constitute an effective reform agenda that establishes a clear and credible path toward achieving these goals; and

(c) A specific rationale that justifies the State's choice to address the selected criteria in each Focused Investment Area (C), (D), and (E), including why these selected criteria will best achieve these goals.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

Evidence for (A)(2)

- The State's goals for improving program quality statewide over the period of this grant.
 - The State's goals for improving child outcomes statewide over the period of this grant.
 - The State's goals for closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers at kindergarten entry.
- Identification of the two or more selection criteria that the State has chosen to address in Focused Investment Area (C).
- Identification of the one or more selection criteria that the State has chosen to address in Focused Investment Area (D).
- Identification of the one or more selection criteria that the State has chosen to address in Focused Investment Area (E).

- For each Focused Investment Area (C), (D), and (E), a description of the State’s rationale for choosing to address the selected criteria in that Focused Investment Area, including how the State’s choices build on its progress to date in each Focused Investment Area (as outlined in Tables (A)(1)6-13 and in the narrative under (A)(1)) and why these selected criteria will best achieve the State’s ambitious yet achievable goals for improving program quality, improving outcomes for Children with High Needs statewide, and closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers.

(Enter narrative here – recommended maximum of ten pages)

NC Ready: We believe every young child in North Carolina deserves the right to be healthy, safe, learning and developing to his or her full potential. This vision supports Governor Perdue’s larger *Career and College: Ready, Set, Go!* education agenda by ensuring that children are “Ready” to succeed, with support from their families, communities and state.

Our *NC Ready* reform agenda builds on and leverages our State’s considerable early learning and development system strengths and resources, while breaking new ground in our efforts to produce great outcomes for all young children, especially those with high needs. We have built a bold agenda that aligns with our K-12 Race to the Top Reform Agenda and Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) FY2012-14 plan, as well as *Career and College: Ready, Set Go* so that our collective force can swing the pendulum toward success, even where success has been hardest to achieve. Please see Appendix 5 for the diagram of our Theory of Change, which describes the actions needed to lead to our ultimate goal of each child prepared for success in school and life.

We will use our Race To the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant to catapult our early learning and development system to a new level. While we are very proud of our efforts to build a high-quality early childhood system, we realize that statewide initiatives are not enough to ensure that *each* child in NC enters kindergarten ready to succeed. We need to work harder (within a region of economically distressed communities) and smarter (using science about both *what* to do and *how* to do it) to “move the needle” for Children with High Needs. At the core of our reform agenda are three overarching strategies:

1. ***Strengthen standards, assessment, and the capacity to collect and use data to drive program quality and continuous improvement.*** North Carolina’s Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) has achieved great statewide, cross-sector

penetration, and already gone through one revision to raise its quality standards. We will use RTT-ELC to accelerate needed improvements to our TQRIS that improve outcomes for children. RTT ELC funds will also be used to implement our revised ELD Standards, strengthen our child assessment system, and improve our collection and utilization of data to improve the quality of our early childhood system and services.

2. ***Invest in people and relationships to increase teacher and system effectiveness and sustain change.*** At the heart of any successful systems reform effort is its ability to change the way the people in the system do their work – individually and with each other. Our reform agenda includes strategies to both raise the knowledge and skills of early childhood educators and leaders as well as build their capacity to establish powerful learning communities that improve practice and collaboration. We will also invest in and empower families with knowledge and resources to select high-quality ELD programs and through family strengthening programs that build parenting skills and confidence.
3. ***Target high-intensity supports and community infrastructure- building efforts to turn around poor outcomes for young children in our highest need counties.*** North Carolina is rural state (85% of our counties are considered rural). According to the National Center for Children in Poverty, slightly more than half (51%) of young children in NC are from low-income families. We also have geographic pockets where a high percentage of young children and their families are persistently exposed to multiple risk factors, including poverty, high unemployment, single parent households, linguistically isolated, low parental education, with 27% of young children across the state are estimated to be exposed to three or more risk factors. We know from research that reducing the achievement gap for these young children requires more than any single intervention strategy.

We will use our existing Early Childhood Advisory Council, local Smart Start infrastructure, and the participation and cooperation of a wide range of state and local stakeholders to create a Transformation Zone made up of a set of rural, distressed counties with high needs in northeastern North Carolina (some of whom are

participating in the K-12 Race to the Top District and School Transformation efforts). We will support Transformation Zone communities through: 1) community-building—identifying existing strengths, relationships, goals and successes; 2) infrastructure development—increasing the capacity of individuals in the community to develop and sustain strategies to improve child outcomes and collect and analyze data to support change; and 3) implementation of evidence-based programs and practices—offering evidenced-based programs and practices from which participating communities will make selections based on community need. Our goal is threefold: to meaningfully impact outcomes for Children with High Needs, to demonstrate the efficacy of an intensive, comprehensive approach to providing the services needed by young children and their families, and to build knowledge and infrastructure needed to scale-up these efforts in other parts of the state. A High-Quality Plan for the Transformation Zone work is provided in Section A.2.b. Plans for the particular programs in the Transformation Zone are described in the Sections B-E.

(A)(2)(a) Ambitious, Achievable Goals

We have 10 goals that we will achieve by December 2015 in order to meet the needs of each child, allow for full-scale implementation of strategies that benefit Children with High Needs, and strengthen the infrastructure that serves as the foundation for our early childhood system. Our goals are ambitious and achievable because they are supported by a clear theory of change (Appendix 5 is our Theory of Change), a track record of success, and our unwavering commitment to the healthy development and school readiness of all our State's young children. Our goals reflect how far we have come (as shown in baseline data provided in Tables A.1-1 through A.1-13), how far we can go in four years (as delineated in the Performance Measures Tables throughout the application), and lays the track for our future progress beyond this grant period:

1. By December 2015, 75% of all children birth to 5 with High Needs who are participating in an Early Learning and Development (ELD) Program will be served in a program that has achieved 4 stars or higher in NC's 5-star rated TQRIS license.
2. By December 2015, 60% of all licensed programs will have achieved four stars or higher in NC's revised five star rated TQRIS license (which will have higher standards at the higher

tiers).

3. By December 2015, 47% of teachers/lead teachers working with children from birth to five in licensed child care, Head Start and Pre-K settings will have an Associate's degree in Early Childhood Education (or its equivalent) or a Bachelor's degree in Child Development alone or with a BK license (or its equivalent).
4. By December 2015, 95% of infants (< 12 months) with High Needs statewide will receive developmental screenings, 85% of toddlers (1-2 year olds) with High Needs statewide will receive developmental screenings, and 75% of preschoolers (3-5 year olds) with High Needs statewide will receive developmental screenings.
5. By December 2015, 85% of Children with High Needs enrolled in ELD programs that are served by Child Care Health Consultants will receive developmental screenings and be referred for additional services, if needed. (See Section C.3 for additional details.)
6. By December 2015, 75% of Children birth to 5 with High Needs statewide will participate in ongoing health care and be up-to-date on well-child visits.
7. By December 2015, North Carolina will have a valid, reliable Kindergarten Entry Assessment that has been piloted extensively, is ready to be implemented on a statewide basis, and is entered into the statewide longitudinal data system.
8. By December 2015, the selected evidence-based or informed intervention activities will produce the intended impacts for participating Children with High Needs and those who care for them (families, teachers) in the Transformation Zone.
9. By December 2015, the ECAC will utilize data in the integrated data system to develop a long-term strategic plan to improve program quality, services, and outcomes for young children birth to five.
10. By December 2014, the NC Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) will have a long-term plan to sustain the efforts in the RTT-ELC grant beyond December 2015. (To ensure that our efforts continue beyond this grant, we need to have a sustainability plan in place a year before the grant ends.)

(A)(2)(b) Summary of State Plan

North Carolina's Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) State Plan includes three overarching strategies: 1) strengthen standards, assessment, and the capacity to

collect and use data to drive program quality and continuous improvement; 2) invest in people and relationships to increase teacher and system effectiveness and sustain change; and 3) target high-intensity supports and community infrastructure-building efforts to turn around poor outcomes for young children in our highest need, rural counties (Transformation Zone). Across all three strategies, the activities are grounded in an understanding of developmental science, which highlights the importance of early brain development, the lasting and negative effects of toxic stress, and the inextricably intertwined aspects of health, cognitive, and social-emotional, development (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child 2007). (See Appendix 6 for a Summary of NC RTT-ELC Projects by Selection Criteria.)

Our Transformation Zone strategy is further grounded in implementation science, which focuses on the infrastructure needed to “scale up” successful practices. Implementation science identifies a specific set of activities necessary to successfully implement an evidence-based program or practice. (The Appendix 7 Overview of Implementation Science Brief provides an overview; a more thorough literature review is provided by Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005). Successful implementation does not just magically happen – there is research to suggest that regardless of what defined program or practice you are trying to implement, there are certain “drivers” (such as high-quality staff selection, training, coaching and evaluation practices) that are required to achieve the desired results. The goal will be to follow defined steps for successful implementation to attain strong outcomes for children and build what is required to effectively scale up and roll out these services and supports to other areas of high need across the state.

Strengthen standards, assessment, and the capacity to collect and use data to drive program quality and continuous improvement. North Carolina’s RTT-ELC State Plan accelerates our efforts to achieve a comprehensive, integrated system of high quality early childhood Program Standards, family strengthening, and health services that support the development of kindergarten-ready children through ready families, schools, and communities. Key statewide efforts will:

- Raise the ceiling and floor of our TQRIS by:
 - Re-visioning our Early Learning and Development Standards to support a cohesive progression for children birth to 8 in the five domains of readiness.

(See Section C.1.)

- Incorporating additional standards that represent best practice and revising the highest tiers of our TQRIS. (See Section B.1.)
- Promoting participation in the TQRIS of exempt programs, and supporting 1- and 2-star programs to attain a 3-star or higher rating. (See Section B.4.)
- Validating the revised TQRIS. (See Section B.5.)
- Create conditions for optimal kindergarten entry skills by addressing young children's health and supporting families by:
 - Expanding the Assuring Better Health and Child Development Expanded (ABCD), to cover the entire state. ABCD is an evidenced-based strategy that increases health and developmental screening and referral rates for all young children within the medical home by integrating routine developmental screening into well-child visits. (See Section C.3.)
 - Building on the statewide infrastructure to support Child Care Health Consultants already working in 49 counties across the state to help connect children to assessments and medical homes and promote healthy eating and physical activity in ELD programs. (See Section C.3.)
 - Leveraging existing family support programs to support Children with High Needs and their families. (See Section C.4.)
- Establish meaningful statewide assessment and data systems to measure progress and improve policy and practice by:
 - Developing and implementing a statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment (See Section E.1.)
 - Developing an integrated early learning data system that connects with K-12 state longitudinal data system (See Section E.2.)
 - Conducting annual workforce studies to measure progress in improving the education, compensation, and retention of early childhood educators. (See Section D.2.)

Investing in people and relationships to increase teacher and system effectiveness and sustain change: Our RTT-ELC plan raises the knowledge and skills of early childhood

educators and leaders statewide, and builds their capacity to establish powerful learning communities that improve practice and collaboration. We will build upon the strengths of our community college and university early childhood programs and our statewide Smart Start system and CCR&R network to offer a continuum of low to high intensity leadership and professional development and learning community opportunities to increase the number of early childhood professionals at all levels receiving training; completing college level coursework; increasing knowledge, skills and collaboration; and achieving higher levels of credentials and degrees. Key statewide efforts will:

- Raise the bar on entry-level teacher quality by:
 - Requiring completion of a new 40-hour standardized online orientation training for all new center-based teachers in all levels of our tiered licensing system. (See Section B.4.)
 - Requiring all center lead teachers to complete a pre-service Early Childhood Credential a four-hour community college course (now in-service requirement). See Section B.4.)
- Increase the availability and scope of high-quality in-person and online training aligned to our Program Standards by:
 - Developing new training and Continuing Education Units (CEUs) to support appropriate use of curriculum and assessment; cultural competence; family engagement; use of our revised ELD Standards; training in use of the CLASS instrument to improve instructional practice. (See Sections B.4, C.1, C.4, D.2.)
 - Expanding the professional development delivery capacity of the NC Child Care Resource and Referral network to offer newly developed training (See Section D.2).
- Increase access to high-quality college-level coursework for early childhood educators by:
 - Incentivizing all NC's community colleges to achieve NAEYC Early Childhood Associate Degree Credential. (See Section D.2.)
 - Providing an Innovation Fund for community colleges to expand access and improve student success. (See Section D.2.)

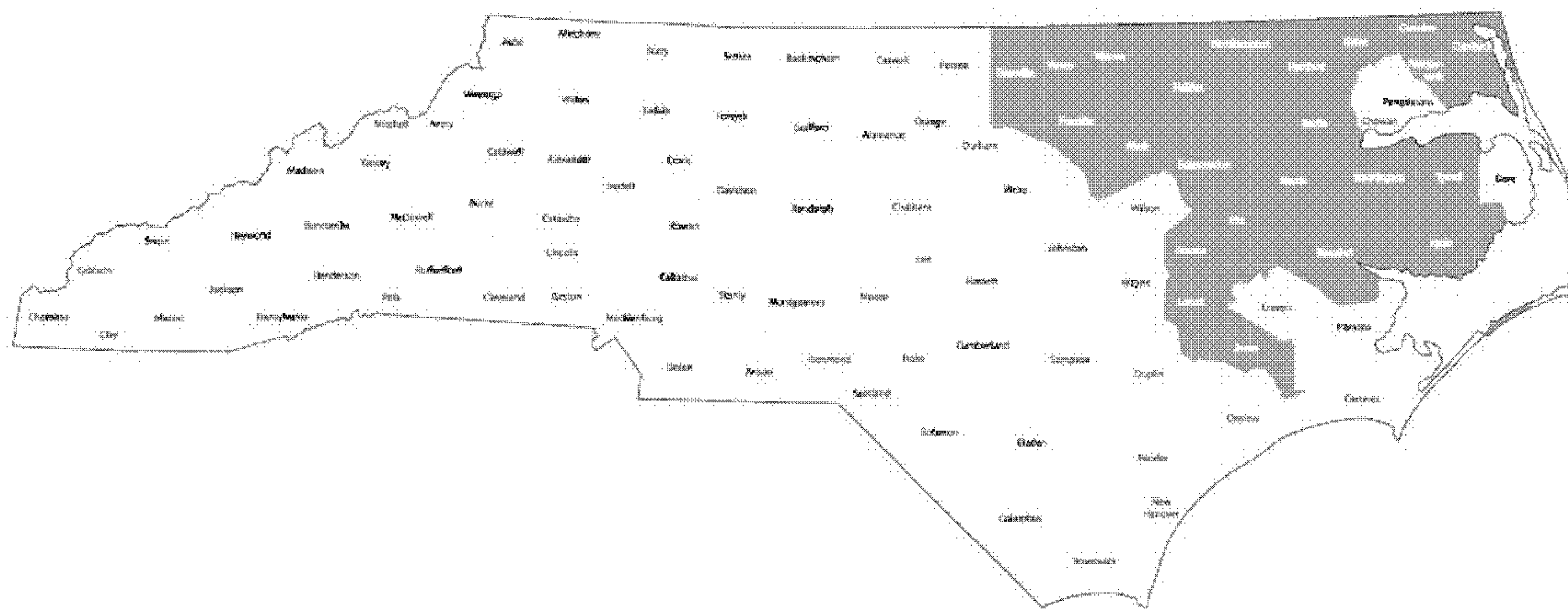
- Build knowledge, competencies and recognition for professional development and technical assistance providers by:
 - Developing and offering a CEU course on coaching, mentoring and technical assistance, and making it a requirement for all technical assistance providers. (See Section D.2.)
 - Supporting local and regional Communities of Practice for technical assistance providers. (See Section D.2.)
 - Creating an Educator Efficacy Endorsement for technical assistance providers to and making it a requirement for professional development and technical assistance providers. (See Section D.2.)
 - Building the statewide infrastructure support for local Child Care Health Consultants (CCHCs) by hiring two state-level coaches to support best practices. (See Section C.3).
- Strengthen coordination and alignment of professional development opportunities by:
 - Establishing a NC Council on Early Childhood Professional Development comprised of diverse stakeholder to create a strategic plan that addresses issues including articulation, access, quality of instruction, and equity of access to professional development and workforce incentives. (See Section D.2.)
 - Convening a Task Force on Child Assessment that will make recommendations for approved formative assessments and develop a coordinated plan for professional development on effective assessment. (See Section C.2.)
- Create a pipeline of leaders with systems-building capacity to ensure that our State continues to support, sustain, and grow its high-quality Early Learning and Development System by:
 - Creating a new online Master's degree in Early Childhood Leadership and Management through NC's higher education system to offer a next step on our professional development pathway for early childhood educators. (See Section D.2.)
 - Building upon an existing leadership program for local Smart Start partnership Executive Directors (Leaders Collaborative) to strengthen local leadership to

implement and sustain the goals of the RTT-ELC reform agenda. (See Section A.3.)

Target high-intensity supports and community infrastructure- building efforts to turn around poor outcomes for young children in our highest need counties. The Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC), working in concert with the Participating State Agencies and local community-based networks serving the needs of young children will create a Transformation Zone made up of a connected set of rural counties with high needs. Smart Star, in particular, has developed a local community infrastructure that brings the parts of the system together at the local level, mobilizes communities to support young children, and develops, funds and supports evidence-based and innovative programs. The ECAC will coordinate the Transformation Zone initiative and will provide state-level staff to build the capacity to support the implementation and scale-up of innovative initiatives like this. Through a contract with a North Carolina organization with established networks of early learning partnership at the local level, community-based Transformation Coaches will work directly with community leaders, local service providers, and families to implement this concept of intensive intervention and sustained support. A Transformation Liaison at the state level will focus attention on the flow of information to and from the Transformation Zone, to assure the most effective implementation at the local level and the learning from the work done there. The Transformation Zone strategy will allow us to implement a stronger and more intense package of supports for young Children with High Needs involving the wide range of programs and services needed to support young children in local communities, build the capacity to sustain the efforts in the communities beyond the life of this grant, and develop the capacity necessary to “roll out” these strategies in other economically distressed areas of our state and, eventually, the entire state.

Counties in NC's Transformation Zone. Eighty-five of North Carolina's 100 counties are considered rural (i.e., no more than 250 per square mile as of the 2000 Census). The northeastern part of our state is rural and has experienced decades of economic distress and disparities in access to high-quality programs. As indicated in the map below, we have identified 20 counties that are ranked by the NC Department of Commerce as among the most economically distressed counties in our state. A significant number of elementary schools in the northeastern region of the state have a high percentage of Children with High Needs as well as low academic performance composite scores. As such, a disproportionate number of schools in the northeastern region have been identified by the Department of Public Instruction to receive state support to improve overall school performance. Seven of the 20 counties are participating in the K-12 Race to the Top District and School Transformation efforts. These 20 counties (or multi-county entities) will be invited to learn more about this opportunity, discuss

NC Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge: Potential Transformation Zone Counties



the idea with their community partners, and complete a simple application process to demonstrate the interest and level of commitment of the critical stakeholders in their communities. Final decisions will be based on the results of site visits to the top rated

applications. Preference will be given to counties that are also participating in the K-12 RTT District and School Transformation efforts. We expect to select about 5 to 10 counties to come together to form this regional Transformation Zone.

High-Quality Plan for the Transformation Zone

(a) Key Goals:

North Carolina's RTT-ELC Transformation Zone strategy will achieve the following results by December 2015:

1. Selected evidence-based or informed intervention activities will produce the intended impacts for participating high-need children and those who care for them (families and/or teachers) in the Transformation Zone.
2. Key stakeholders (families, early childhood educators, funders, community leaders, and others) will demonstrate increased knowledge, commitment, and use of funding, policy and practice changes that contribute to improved outcomes for children with high needs.
3. Communities will have developed a theory of change and begun to implement a strategic plan for improving health, developmental and school readiness outcomes for Children with High Needs.
4. Ultimately, Children with High Needs will start kindergarten with similar school readiness skills as their peers.

(b) Key Activities, Rationale, and Scale-Up Plans

We will use a three-pronged strategy to transform outcomes for young children and families in the participating communities: 1) community-building; 2) infrastructure development; and 3) implementation of evidence-based programs and practices. These strategies will be co-occurring and are integrated and build upon each other. They are grounded in the science of WHAT to do and HOW to do the work. The strategies we have identified have been successfully implemented elsewhere in NC but not in the Transformation Zone. The participating communities will review the programs and make decisions about which programs to implement, based on community need. Key strategies will:

- Strengthen community support and mobilization for high-quality early learning and development by:
 - Supporting communities through a process of identifying their values, goals,

achievements, and vision for their young children's future.

- Facilitate infrastructure development and leadership capacity of individuals living in the participating communities to develop and sustain the supports necessary to change outcomes for their young children by:
 - Hiring local Transformation Coaches and providing intensive training and coaching to enhance the practice of early childhood educators and leaders.
 - Building local capacity to collect and analyze data to improve practice, prioritize use of resources, and track progress.
- Provide high-touch comprehensive interventions to directly impact child outcomes by:
 - Implementing a menu of strategic evidence-based programs and practices selected by local communities. The menu of potential programs and practices (included and described in the appropriate sections of this application) are:
 - Early Learning and Development quality improvement activities
 - Infant-Toddler Specialists (See Section D.2.)
 - Healthy Behavior Specialists (See Section D.2.)
 - Child Care WAGE\$ supplements (See Section D.2.)
 - High-Quality Infant-Toddler slots development (See Section B.4.)
 - Health promotion activities
 - Child Care Health Consultants (See Section C.3.)
 - ABCD program (See Section C.3.)
 - Family strengthening activities
 - Selection of the following family strengthening programs: Positive Parenting Program (Triple P), Strengthening Families, Incredible Years, and Parents as Teachers (See Section C.4.)
 - Universal home visiting with referral
 - NorthEast Connects (See Section C.3)
 - Partnering with a NC organization with expertise in implementation science to engage in a rigorous, scientific process of implementing the evidence-based

activities. (See Appendix 7 for an Overview of Implementation Science Brief.) We will follow the “stages of implementation” defined by the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) as the steps necessary for replicating and sustaining the results of successful evidence-based programs and practices. Our goal is twofold: to meaningfully impact outcomes for Children with High Need and to build the capacity required to effectively scale up and roll out these services and supports to other areas of high need throughout the state.

(c) Timeline and Milestones

TIMELINE	Year One				Year Two				Year Three				Year Four			
	Quarters				Quarters				Quarters				Quarters			
Request for Application and selection process	√	√														
State Level Transformation coach selection; pre-service orientation and training	√	√														
Stage 1 Implementation: Exploration and Adoption to assess the potential match between community needs, resources, and programs			√	√	√	√	√	√								
Stage 2 Implementation: Program Installation to prepare the structural supports necessary to initiate the program are put in place, including funding, human resource strategies, and policy development as well as creating referral mechanisms,																

reporting frameworks, and outcome expectations																	
Stage 3 Implementation: Initial Implementation – beginning to operate the selected programs and practices					√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√					
Stage 4 Implementation: Full Operation – bringing the programs and practices to maturity													√	√	√	√	
Develop plans for Stages 5 and 6 Implementation – Innovation and Sustainability														√	√	√	
Develop plans to scale up Transformation Zone strategy														√	√	√	

(d) Party or Parties Responsible and Key Personnel Assigned

The ECAC will coordinate the Transformation Zone initiative and will provide state-level staff to build the capacity of state agencies to support the implementation and scale-up of innovative initiatives like this. A NC organization with a network of local early childhood partnerships will coordinate the work of the Transformation Coaches in the Transformation Zone. A NC organization with expertise in implementation science will support the ECAC, other Participating State Agencies, and other organizations in the Transformation Zone work.

(e) Financial Resources

Funding for the Transformation Zone Support is one activity in the ECAC’s ELC Management Project. The cost for the Transformation Zone Support activity is \$830,000. Additional funding is included in the Transformation Zone & Capacity Building activity of the ECAC’s Partnership Initiative Project. The cost of the Transformation Zone & Capacity Building Activity in the Partnership Initiative Project is \$2,757,572. In addition to costs and leveraged resources for each of the evidence-based programs and practices described in the appropriate section of this application, RTT-ELC funds will be used to 1) Hire a state-level Transformation Zone Liaison who will work with participating communities to implement all

strategies described in this section and build and document knowledge for successful replication in other communities; 2) Hire five Implementation Coaches from the participating communities; 3) Hire state-level staff at the ECAC to support the overall strategy and the state's capacity to scale-up the Transformation Zone, and 4) Contract with a North Carolina organization with extensive expertise in implementation science.

As described in Section A.4, the ECAC will develop a sustainability plan for the RTT-ELC State Plan during Year 2 and 3 of this grant.

(f) Supporting Evidence

See Appendix 7 for an Overview of Implementation Science Brief

(g) Addressing the Needs of Different Types of ELD Programs

Applicable evidence-based programs and practices will engage all types of ELD programs in the Transformation Zone.

(h) Meeting the Needs of Children with High Needs, as well as the unique needs of special populations of Children with High Needs

The Transformation Zone strategy is specifically designed to improve outcomes for our State's children and families with the highest needs.

(A)(2)(c) Rationale Regarding Focused Investment Area Choices

To reach our goals for young children and their families, we believe that we must address the focused investment areas in C1-C4, D2 and E1-2 as well as the competitive preference and two invitational priorities. The rationale for these decisions is provided below, organized by each area.

(C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children

Sections C.1 and C.2: Standards and Assessment. Standards and assessment must drive our efforts to strengthen children's school readiness skills. They also help align our early childhood efforts with the K-12 education system. North Carolina has started a collaborative effort with early childhood and K-12 leaders to re-vision our early learning and development standards for children birth to 8 by strengthening our birth to 5 standards and augmenting the K-3 standards to include the school readiness domains. Clear, appropriate, aligned standards for children will serve as our roadmap for reaching our goals related to child outcomes, program quality, and reducing the achievement gap.

Standards that do not translate into meaningful guidance for classroom instruction will not alone produce positive results for children. Our reform agenda includes an intentionally broad array of professional development opportunities (pre-service and in-service) designed to reach everyone who engages with young children (i.e., families, early childhood workforce, pediatricians). We will provide specific professional development sessions that build awareness of the new early learning standards and provides an overview of how to use the standards, and then to reinforce basic knowledge of the standards in all other professional development offerings.

We will build upon the assessment foundation we have to develop a Comprehensive Assessment System that is coordinated across ELD programs. We have made extensive use of program quality assessments in our TQRIS and have some child assessments in place. Our state pre-k program has policies for screening young children in coordination with medical providers and for utilizing assessments to guide instruction, but most ELD programs do not. We will build appropriate assessment of young children into our TQRIS and provide the professional development and supports needed to ensure that the early childhood workforce uses the assessment information appropriately to adapt their interactions and instruction with children. We will develop coordinated assessment approaches across various ELD programs, beyond those included in the TQRIS.

C.3 Addressing health, behavioral, and development needs of Children with High Needs. Children must be healthy to start school ready to succeed. NC has been a national leader in implementing effective models to promote the health and development, including the behavioral health, of young children. We will build upon existing standards and evidence-based practices to reach more children with high needs. Our strengths include the robust health and safety standards built into our licensing system as requirements for all ELD programs, many of which meet national standards. We have a large network of Child Care Health Consultants that provide onsite technical assistance to center staff and help develop policies and environments to promote children's health and development. Our State has made significant investments in the nationally recognized Assuring Better Health and Child Development (ABCD) program, which increases health and developmental screening and referral rates for *all* young children within the medical home by integrating routine developmental screening into well-child visits. Our state pre-k program has policies for

screening young children in coordination with medical providers and for utilizing assessments to guide instruction. However, we need to strengthen our approach to assessment. Children screened, for instance, are not always referred for services, and our TQRIS does not include any standards related to assessing young children.

C.4 Family strengthening is part of our vision for a comprehensive system of services for young children, and we want to strengthen our efforts to engage families in ELD programs and offer support to help families with the important responsibility of rearing a healthy, happy child who is prepared to succeed in school and life. Because the home environment is so crucial to healthy development, it will be difficult to close the achievement gap without strongly supporting families of Children with High Needs. As described in Section A.1, we have made public and private investments in home visiting and evidence-based family strengthening programs. We also are working to include family engagement and support in our TQRIS program standards, with plans to align our TQRIS standards with those of Head Start. The RTT-ELC funds will allow us to expand our family strengthening efforts in NC.

(D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

North Carolina has built its comprehensive professional development and workforce supports around education and degrees. We know that improving program quality and outcomes for children requires a great early childhood workforce. It's *people* who make programs high-quality. It's *people* who provide the warm relationships with young children that serve as the context for learning. It's *people* who talk to young children, asking them questions and enriching their vocabulary and thinking. People and the supports we provide them will ensure that we reach our goals. Thus, we must continue bold and incremental strategies to support early childhood educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities. We have chosen to write to Focused Investment Area D.2, because, of the two workforce criteria, it most closely matches our State Plan to support the continued education and professional development of the workforce.

As described in sections A.1 and D.2, North Carolina is home to national workforce development efforts, such as T.E.A.C.H.[®] (Teacher Education And Compensation Helps), which ties scholarships to continued education and retention of early childhood educators. North Carolina's professional development system has been created and refined in response to

deliberate efforts to collect data on the workforce and the effectiveness of various strategies designed to improve the quality of and access to professional development. Multiple workforce studies provided insight on the education, compensation, personal demographics, workplace supports, professional development needs, and turnover of the early childhood workforce. These data have been used to create strategies to promote system-wide improvements in education, compensation, and retention over time.

We have made great strides in moving toward a better-educated early childhood workforce, but we still have far to go to ensure that every child, particularly those with high needs, has a well-qualified early childhood teacher. Many of our RTT-ELC efforts are directed at supporting the early childhood workforce.

(E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress

We are choosing to address both E.1 and E.2 because we want to significantly increase our capacity to have the data needed to make data-driven decisions to inform our policies, programs, and practices to achieve good outcomes for all young children in NC.

E.1: Understanding the status of children's learning at kindergarten entry: To guide kindergarten instruction and inform efforts to reduce the achievement gap at kindergarten entry, we must develop a Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA). Currently, school districts utilize various measures to assess kindergartners, and the data are not included in any local or state database. The RTT-ELC will provide the resources needed to develop a KEA that is reliable, valid, aligned with our ELD standards, and included in the State Longitudinal Data System.

E.2: Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services and policies: Our State's ELD system values and uses data to quantify need and measure success as described in Section A.1, but we still face challenges. To gather data for Table B.2.c, for example, we had to survey public schools to determine how many were in our TQRIS, and we had to estimate the number of Head Start programs participating in the TQRIS. We need more information about programs, teachers, and children—and we need to be able to integrate data across agencies and with the State Longitudinal Data System. We have already completed important initial planning and preparation for an integrated early childhood data system that is linked with the K-12 state longitudinal data system with support from a

previous federal grant from the Office of Special Education Programs. We now have the state-level leadership with the ECAC needed to develop critical policy questions, policies, and procedures for building an integrated data system. The RTT-ELC will provide much-needed funds to design and begin implementing such a system. We will build a data system that includes information about children, the early childhood workforce, and programs and supports data-driven decision-making.

Competitive Preference Priority: Including All ELD Programs in the TQRIS

North Carolina has a licensing/regulation system that covers almost all ELD programs, and we have a TQRIS built into licensing that covers 93% of all regulated programs. We have met an ambitious goal of building a system that covers almost every ELD program in our state—and we describe in this section of the application plans to include even more programs in our rated license system.

Invitational Priority for Public-Private Partnerships

North Carolina has succeeded in building a strong early childhood system because of our long history of combining public and private funds to support our work. Last year, for example, over \$30 million in private funds were raised by Smart Start to support services for young children. Public-private partnership is the way we get things done in North Carolina, and we will continue to utilize that strategy to support our State Plan and sustain the effects of our efforts beyond the life of the RTT-ELC grant. Recognizing the need for champions for children who speak from various perspectives and myriad constituencies, we will continue upon efforts underway by both the Early Childhood Advisory Council and the North Carolina Partnership for Children to build public awareness and commitment.

Invitational Priority for Sustaining Effects into the Early Elementary Grades

We agree with the National Association for the Education of Young Children's definition of "young children"—birth to age 8. We have a long way to go before we have a seamless early childhood system focused on birth to age 8. We have already taken important steps forward, though, by integrating and coordinating efforts across various programs and sectors. We will continue to do so in the work funded by the RTT-ELC, particularly through our work with the ELD standards, comprehensive assessment systems, kindergarten entry assessment, and data systems.

Identification of the two or more selection criteria that the State has chosen to address in Focused Investment Area (C):

Please check the box to indicate which selection criterion or criteria in Focused Investment Area (D) the State is choosing to address

- (C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.
- (C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems.
- (C)(3) Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness.
- (C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.

Identification of the one or more selection criteria that the State has chosen to address in Focused Investment Area (D):

Please check the box to indicate which selection criterion or criteria in Focused Investment Area (D) the State is choosing to address

- (D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.
- (D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Identification of the one or more selection criteria that the State has chosen to address in Focused Investment Area (E):

Please check the box to indicate which selection criterion or criteria in Focused Investment Area (E) the State is choosing to address

- (E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry.
- (E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies.

(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State. (10 points)

The extent to which the State has established, or has a High-Quality Plan to establish, strong participation and commitment in the State Plan by Participating State Agencies and other early learning and development stakeholders by--

(a) Demonstrating how the Participating State Agencies and other partners, if any, will identify a governance structure for working together that will facilitate interagency coordination, streamline decision making, effectively allocate resources, and create long-term sustainability and describing--

(1) The organizational structure for managing the grant and how it builds upon existing interagency governance structures such as children's cabinets, councils, and commissions, if any already exist and are effective;

(2) The governance-related roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency, the State Advisory Council, each Participating State Agency, the State's Interagency Coordinating Council for part C of IDEA, and other partners, if any;

(3) The method and process for making different types of decisions (*e.g.*, policy, operational) and resolving disputes; and

(4) The plan for when and how the State will involve representatives from Participating Programs, Early Childhood Educators or their representatives, parents and families, including parents and families of Children with High Needs, and other key stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the activities carried out under the grant;

(b) Demonstrating that the Participating State Agencies are strongly committed to the State Plan, to the governance structure of the grant, and to effective implementation of the State Plan, by including in the MOU or other binding agreement between the State and each Participating State Agency--

(1) Terms and conditions that reflect a strong commitment to the State Plan by each Participating State Agency, including terms and conditions designed to align and leverage the Participating State Agencies' existing funding to support the State Plan;

(2) "Scope-of-work" descriptions that require each Participating State Agency to implement all applicable portions of the State Plan and a description of efforts to maximize the number of Early Learning and Development Programs that become Participating Programs; and

(3) A signature from an authorized representative of each Participating State Agency; and

(c) Demonstrating commitment to the State Plan from a broad group of stakeholders that will assist the State in reaching the ambitious yet achievable goals outlined in response to selection criterion (A)(2)(a), including by obtaining--

(1) Detailed and persuasive letters of intent or support from Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, and, if applicable, local early learning councils; and

(2) Letters of intent or support from such other stakeholders as Early Childhood Educators or their representatives; the State's legislators; local community leaders; State or local school boards; representatives of private and faith-based early learning programs; other State and local leaders (*e.g.*, business, community, tribal, civil rights, education association leaders); adult education and family literacy State and local leaders; family and community organizations (*e.g.*, parent councils, nonprofit organizations, local

foundations, tribal organizations, and community-based organizations); libraries and children's museums; health providers; and postsecondary institutions.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Evidence for (A)(3)(a) and (b):

- For (A)(3)(a)(1): An organizational chart that shows how the grant will be governed and managed.
- The completed table that lists governance-related roles and responsibilities (see Table (A)(3)-1).
- A copy of all fully executed MOUs or other binding agreements that cover each Participating State Agency. (MOUs or other binding agreements should be referenced in the narrative but must be included in the Appendix to the application).

Evidence for (A)(3)(c)(1):

- The completed table that includes a list of every Early Learning Intermediary Organization and local early learning council (if applicable) in the State and indicates which organizations and councils have submitted letters of intent or support (see Table (A)(3)-2).
- A copy of every letter of intent or support from Early Learning Intermediary Organizations and local early learning councils. (Letters should be referenced in the narrative but must be included in the Appendix with a table.)

Evidence for (A)(3)(c)(2):

- A copy of every letter of intent or support from other stakeholders. (Letters should be referenced in the narrative but must be included in the Appendix with a table.)

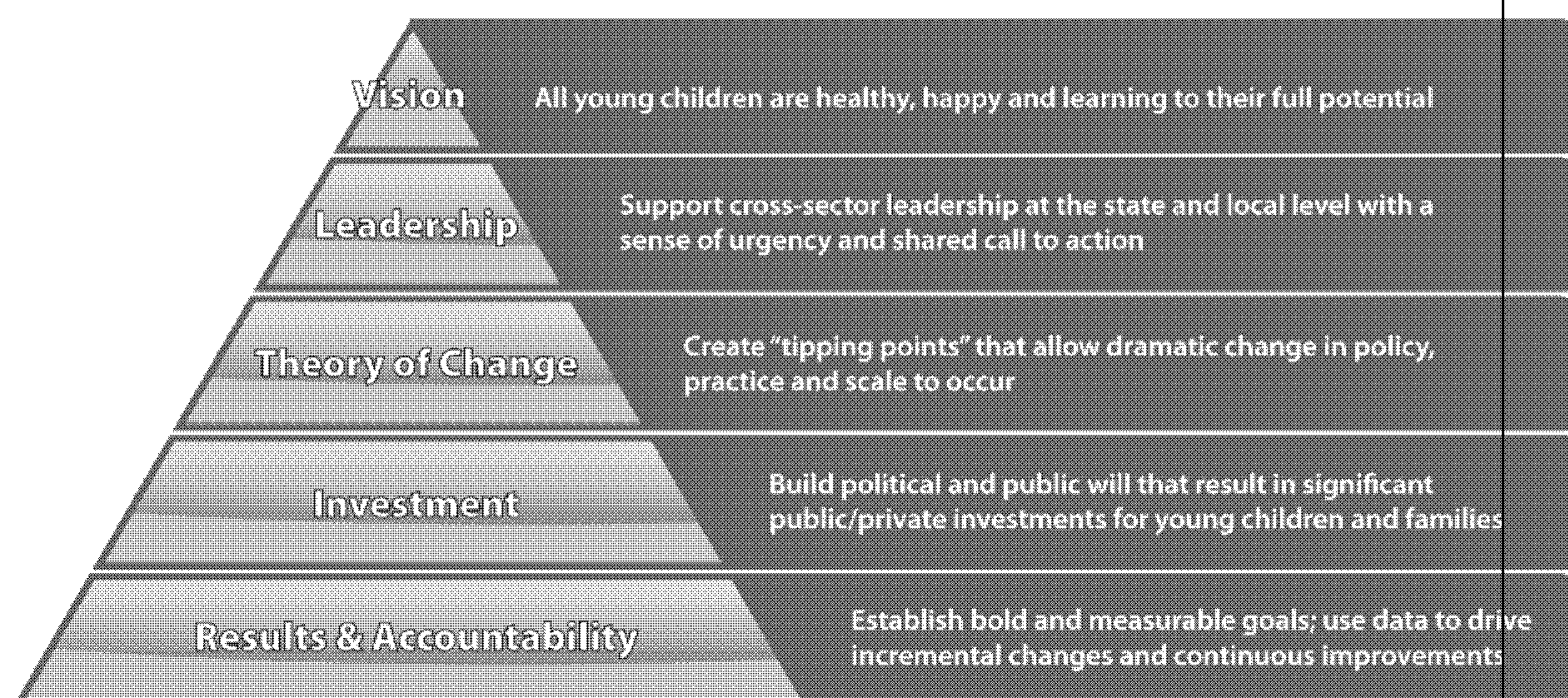
(Enter narrative here, – recommended maximum of five pages)

The strength of North Carolina's Early Learning and Development (ELD) systems governance structure lies in 1) An overarching shared vision and clearly defined and measured outcomes at the state and community levels; 2) Adaptive, resilient, and flexible formal

structures; 3) Sustained collaborative relationships across and throughout organizational hierarchies; 4) A community-based infrastructure with broad stakeholder engagement; and 5) Committed and supportive leadership.

North Carolina's success over time has been rooted in the commitment of leadership at all levels – Executive, Legislative, State Agencies, local government and community organizations, funders, business leaders, and ELD programs – to a common vision and framework for action:

Figure 2: North Carolina Collaborative Governance & Leadership: Framework for Action



This framework for action has been championed by two former Governors, Jim Hunt (1993-2000) and Mike Easley (2001-2008), whose leadership brought a large infusion of state dollars and national attention to North Carolina's efforts to improve outcomes for young children. These efforts have been sustained and built upon through current Governor Bev Perdue's larger *Career and College: Ready, Set, Go!* education agenda and establishment of an Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC). The ECAC includes leaders of all of North Carolina's state and local agencies, organizations, nonprofits and other entities that are stakeholders in creating an ELD system that assures that all children thrive, especially our state's most vulnerable children. However, we recognize that the long-term sustainability and improvement of North Carolina's ELD system is found not in the strength of any one leader, but in the deep, wide network of leadership and knowledge that has been built at all levels. The power of this collective will and capacity is the hallmark of North Carolina's pioneering work. This same collective will and capacity will successfully move our efforts forward and close the

achievement gap, so that all North Carolina's children enter kindergarten ready to succeed.

(a) Governance Structure That Will Facilitate Interagency Coordination, Streamline Decision-Making, Effectively Allocate Resources, and Create Long-Term Sustainability

This section of the application addresses criteria (a)(1) through (a)(4).

(1) Organizational structure for managing the grant and how it builds upon existing interagency governance structures

At the state government level, North Carolina's model of shared governance includes shared decision-making, shared resources, shared accountability and shared outcomes among participating organizations. The success that has been achieved for young children and their families over many years, in spite of changes in governors and other key state and local leadership, demonstrates the success of the model. As improvements are made and outcomes are achieved toward shared goals, data are used to revise strategies as well as roles and responsibilities.

State Level. Components of the ELD system are governed primarily through the Department of Health and Human Services, which houses the *Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE)* and *Division of Public Health (DPH)*, and the Department of Public Instruction, which houses the *Office of Early Learning (OEL)*. All the work is coordinated through the ECAC, which advises and makes recommendations to Governor Perdue and all state government agencies about early childhood issues.

The *North Carolina Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC)* coordinates all existing early childhood efforts by creating and sustaining a statewide shared vision for young children and a comprehensive, integrated system of high quality early care and education, family strengthening, and health services that support ready children, families, and communities and develop, encourage, and support initiatives to strengthen the state's early childhood system and achieve the best possible outcomes for the state's young children. Appointed members of the ECAC include state agency and division heads from DHHS, DPI, along with The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc, the University System, the Community College System, Head Start Collaboration, and local Smart Start partnerships, philanthropy, business, and the medical community. This Council is housed in the Office of Governor Perdue.

DCDEE is responsible for the star rated license and regulatory oversight, subsidy

administration, oversight of CCDF quality dollars, child care workforce standards, and NC's public Pre-K program. DCDEE was established in 1993 in response to the growing importance of early learning and development programs to North Carolina families and the role of the state in ensuring quality standards and access for families to child care services, and to oversee the newly created Smart Start.

OEL was created in 2010 to provide a strategic focus on the Pre-K – Grade 3 learning continuum and its impact on high school graduation. OEL is responsible for IDEA Part B, Title 1 classrooms and the Head Start Collaboration office.

DPH is responsible for North Carolina's maternal and child health infrastructure, IDEA Part C programs, and home-visiting infrastructure, which includes oversight of the federal home visiting grant.

The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc. (NCPC) is the statewide nonprofit organization that oversees Smart Start, a community-based, public-private early childhood initiative, and has close connections with the state government entities that govern various parts of the ELD system. NCPC provides statewide leadership for the early learning and development network; supports the development of local infrastructure and systems; sets standards and ensures accountability for community level outcomes; and builds private sector support for early learning. NCPC's authority comes from The North Carolina General Assembly, which has charged NCPC with ensuring that all children birth to five have access to high-quality early childhood education and development services. NCPC coordinates the 77 local non-profit Smart Start partnerships, covering all 100 counties that are each non-profit organizations with their own Boards of Directors that represent the key government and private sector leaders, service providers, parents, and others in their communities.

Community Level. Local Smart Start partnership boards mirror the NCPC board composition. The local partnerships are, by design, the community conveners that bring together and mobilize community stakeholders from early care and education, health, and family support to create comprehensive supports for young children and their families and achieve community level outcomes. A Local Partnership Advisory Council made up of current local partnership executive directors and current and former local partnership board chairs serve as advisors to the NCPC Board to ensure two-way communication, engagement and partnership for results.

The governance structure planned for North Carolina's Race to the Top Early Learning

Challenge (RTT-ELC) builds upon these existing structures, capitalizing upon the expertise of each and the local reach and public/private partnerships of the Smart Start system. An organizational chart that shows how the RTT ELC grant will be managed is provided in Appendix 8 and described in section (A)(3)(a)(2) below.

(2) Governance Related Roles and Responsibilities

Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Governance Structure: North Carolina's structure will build on the existing governance structures to manage the RTT-ELC grant. The ECAC, within the Office of the Governor, will serve as the Lead Agency for the RTT ELC grant. The ECAC formed a RTT-ELC team that met regularly to develop this application. A coordinating team made up of ECAC members will meet regularly to develop implementation plans, share and solve dilemmas and resolve disputes, identify opportunities for collaboration and new funding, and review progress. The ECAC will meet quarterly and will integrate Race to the Top goals, progress, and learnings into the broader ECAC work.

In addition to the ECAC and RTT-ELC coordinating team, a statewide workgroup will be established and supported by a NC organization with expertise in implementation science. This workgroup will serve as the implementation team for the Transformation Zone work. Implementation of specific initiatives described in this application will be managed by the ECAC as described in this application and its Scope of Work. An overview of governance responsibilities is provided in Table A.3-1.

(3) Methods and Process for Making Policy and Operational Decisions and resolving disputes

North Carolina's ELD system benefits from the strong, informal relationships maintained among cross-sector leaders. The ECAC is the formal policy-making body for the RTT-ELC grant. Operational decisions will be made by the appropriate lead State Agency or contract agencies. Some initiatives will be managed jointly, as described in Table (A)(3)-1. Any disputes will be solved at the RTT Coordinating Council level. Should a dispute remain unresolved, the ECAC, as the Lead Agency, will be responsible for final decision-making. The language in the MOU (in Appendix 9) spells out the process for resolving disputes.

(4) Plan for when and how State will involve representatives from Participating Programs, Early Childhood Educators or their representatives, parents and families and other key stakeholders in the planning and implementation of activities carried

out under the grant

North Carolina's Smart Start system provides the local infrastructure we can build upon to engage a deep and broad range of stakeholders in planning and implementing our RTT-ELC activities. Local Smart Start partnerships already have governance and advisory structures that include ELD program representatives and Early Childhood Educators, families, and representatives from local school districts, departments of social services, and health departments, Child Care Resource & Referrals (CCR&Rs), business leaders, and others. We will use the Smart Start infrastructure to support statewide engagement and Transformation Zone engagement by developing and implementing a RTT-ELC Smart Start Leaders Collaborative for approximately 50 Smart Start local partnership Executive Directors (cohorts of 12 to 15 each year). A high-quality plan for the Leaders Collaborative is provided below.

High Quality Plan for Engaging Local Leaders and Stakeholders**(a) Key Goals**

1. Strengthen local leadership capacity to build broad stakeholder ownership for successful implementation and sustainability of the RTT-ELC reform agenda across the state.
2. Support successful implementation, sustainability, and replication of Transformation Zone strategies.
3. Establish a mechanism for ongoing communication between the state-level RTT-ELC Coordinating Team and community-level RTT-ELC activity implementation.

(b) Key Activities, Rationale and, if applicable, Scale-Up Plans

The ECAC will contract with a NC organization with a network of local early childhood partnership to develop and implement a Smart Start Leaders Collaborative for approximately 50 Smart Start local partnership Executive Directors (cohorts of 12 to 15 each year). The Smart Start Leaders Collaborative is a performance-driven leadership approach in which leaders focus on building their own, and the ELD system's capacity, to achieve and sustain RTT-ELC reform agenda goals by:

- *Driving results-based accountability*—the ability to align partners and resources to improve results for young children and families.
- *Closing the gap on disparities*—the ability to use data to illuminate disparities and develop strategies and actions to address those disparities.

- *Building collaborative leadership*—the ability to listen, ask effective questions, make proposals, use interest-based negotiation, reach consensus, and commit to specific aligned actions.

Each annual cohort of leaders will meet six times for two full days each and participate in a three-day Community of Practice training. Leaders also will be expected to participate in small group work via conference calls, read session materials in advance, and participate in an ongoing online learning community.

Five of the leaders each year (20 total) will also be selected to host Leading for Equity retreats in their local communities. Leading for Equity retreats are three-day, facilitated sessions with a carefully selected group of diverse stakeholders that will include representation from ELD programs, Early Childhood Educators, families, and other relevant community leaders that come together to consider these questions:

1. What are the structural and cultural conditions that ensure equity for individuals and communities?
2. How can I, as a leader, foster dialogue and action that result in increased opportunities for the success of all children – and especially those from vulnerable communities?

Each Smart Start partnership hosting Leading for Equity retreats will develop follow-up action plans in partnership with their community leaders and share their experiences and results with their colleagues in the RTT-ELC Leaders Collaborative. Leaders participating in the Leaders Collaborative will be held accountable for achieving measurable results. Participating leaders will:

- Produce local MOUs that mirror the RTT-ELC state level MOUs with agencies in their local communities that will influence RTT-ELC outcomes, such as local school district leadership, Head Start, Departments of Social Services, CCR&Rs, and others.
- Create, implement, and measure progress on local strategic plans in collaboration with key stakeholders in their communities that are tied to the statewide RTT-ELC goals.
- Actively use data to drive equity in decision-making about funding local programs and services that will impact RTT-ELC outcomes.

(c) Timeline and Milestones for each Key Activity

TIMELINE	Year One Quarters				Year Two Quarters				Year Three Quarters				Year Four Quarters			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Announce and recruit for Leaders' Collaborative, select participants (includes Leading for Equity selection)	√				√				√				√			
Identify and select project resources (evaluators, meeting facilitation, meeting space, materials and learning content)	√	√			√				√				√			
Develop and execute Community of Practice Training (incorporates online learning community tool)		√				√				√				√		
Advertise and hire qualified specialist for online learning community management	√	√														
Provide needed orientation and training for specialist	√	√	√	√	√											
Conduct Leading for Equity training & local retreat activity (includes development of local action plan and MOUs)		√	√			√	√			√	√			√	√	
Execute Leaders' Collaborative meetings, trainings, conference calls, online interaction, etc.		√	√	√		√	√	√		√	√	√		√	√	√
Use ongoing observation and data gathering for evaluation and for continuous project improvement	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

(d) Party or Parties Responsible and Key Personnel Assigned

The ECAC will contract with a NC organization with a network of local early childhood partnership to manage the RTT-ELC Smart Start Leaders Collaborative.

(e) Financial Resources

The cost of the Leaders Collaborative activity in the ECAC's Partnership Initiative Project

is \$2,112,736. NC will leverage existing and new state and private funding to sustain the online learning community and ongoing professional development for the Leaders Collaborative work after the RTT-ELC funding ends.

(g) Performance Measures

N/A

(h) Addressing the Needs of Different Types of ELD Programs

All strategies outlined in this section are applicable to all ELD programs (e.g., child care centers, family child care homes, Head Start, NC Pre-K).

(i) Meeting the Needs of Children with High Needs, as well as the unique needs of special populations of Children with High Needs

The selected strategies are designed to specifically focus on the needs of Children with High Needs and the unique needs of special populations.

(b) Demonstrating that Participating State Agencies are strongly committed to the State Plan, governance structure, and to the effective implementation of the State Plan

We are deeply committed to collaborative governance and aligned, effective, and efficient implementation of the RTT ELC grant – in the broader context of North Carolina’s ongoing commitment to transforming the early learning and development system to improve outcomes for all children, especially our State’s Children with High Needs.

As evidenced from our State’s outcomes and efforts described in Section A.1, we have a strong track record of continuous systems and outcomes improvement to build on, especially for vulnerable children and families. Each State Agency MOU describes in detail the individual work and facilitative leadership that will be required to achieve our RTT ELC goals. MOUs and scopes of work are found in Appendix 9.

Demonstrating commitment to State Plan from a broad group of stakeholders

As delineated in Tables A.3-2, we have strong stakeholder support. We have received 133 letters of support from key state-level stakeholder Intermediary Organizations, all of the 77 local Smart Start partnerships (i.e., local early learning councils) across the state, along with 44 letters from other state, regional, and local stakeholders. The letters demonstrate the breadth and depth

of support for North Carolina's Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge application (see Appendix 10 for copies of the letters of support). A coordinating team of members of the ECAC worked together to complete this application, and there was a period of public input and a stakeholders meeting as part of the application development. If funded, there will be continued opportunities for meaningful involvement of various stakeholders. As described in the sections above, we already have in place a structure with proven results and we are committed to expanding those results through state and community leadership and ownership of the RTT-ELC vision, goals, and implementation plans.

Table (A)(3)-1: Governance-related roles and responsibilities

Participating State Agency	Governance-related roles and responsibilities
Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforce licensing regulations and monitoring all regulated Early Learning and Development Programs in all settings • Make policy and implementation decisions about TQRIS Program Standards and ratings • Oversee NC Pre-K program • Set professional standards for early childhood educators, in conjunction with the NC Child Care Commission • Establishment of Early Learning and Development Standards (jointly with DPI), including the development of infant/toddler standards • Contract for TEACH and WAGES • Contract, set policies and funding for Child Care Resource and Referral • Set policies, funding and oversee child care subsidy system • Revise and implement Early Learning and Development Standards (jointly with OEL)
Division of Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide infrastructure for maternal and child health • Provide infrastructure, make policy, and implementation decisions for home-visiting programs • Oversee IDEA Part C programs • Make policy and implementation decisions about Early Intervention programs
Department of Health and Human Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee Divisions of Child Development and Early Education, and Public Health

Table (A)(3)-1: Governance-related roles and responsibilities	
Participating State Agency	Governance-related roles and responsibilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee the data integration efforts within DHHS and coordinate with DPI to integrate with SLDS • Make policy and implementation decisions about developmental and behavioral screenings and referrals for care reimbursed with public funds
Department of Public Instruction (DPI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee Office of Early Learning • Oversee SLDS and collaborate with DHHS to integrate early childhood data system with SLDS • Make policy and implement decisions for serving children with disabilities through IDEA Part C, Section 619.
Office of Early Learning (OEL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement kindergarten entry assessment and related professional development • Revise and implement Early Learning and Development Standards (jointly with DCDEE) • Oversee Title 1 and IDEA Part B Programs • House Head Start Collaboration Office
Governor's Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide fiscal responsibility and oversight for the RTT-ELC grant
Other Entities	
State Early Childhood Advisory Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide oversight for the early childhood system plan and accountability • Select and support RTT ELC Coordinating Council from its broader membership • Develop and implement a sustainability plan • Strengthen statewide connections to create linkages between programs and services • Coordinate the early childhood integrated data system
State Interagency Coordinating Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise Early Intervention program; support collaboration and interagency agreement
Other <i>Specify:</i> North Carolina Partnership for Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide leadership for statewide ELD network • Support the development of local infrastructure and systems • Support ELD system and program innovation • Set standards and ensure accountability for community-level outcomes in early learning and development • Build private sector support for ELD programs and system • Facilitate local policy and program development

Table (A)(3)-1: Governance-related roles and responsibilities	
Participating State Agency	Governance-related roles and responsibilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and facilitate community-level changes in children and programs
Other <i>Specify:</i> State Board of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and approve kindergarten entry assessment (i.e., K-3 Assessment)
Other <i>Specify:</i> NC Professional Development Institute (expanded)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor early childhood workforce (broadly define) requirements, working in collaboration with various agencies and organizations • Manage early childhood workforce data system

Table (A)(3)-2: Early Learning Intermediary Organizations and local early learning councils (if applicable)	
List every Intermediary Organization and local early learning council (if applicable) in the State	Did this entity provide a letter of intent or support which is included in the Appendix (Y/N)?
Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies	Yes, Janet Singerman, President
Council for Exceptional Children's Division (state affiliate)	Yes, Marge Terhaar-Yonkers, Ph.D., President, NC CEC
East Coast Migrant Head Start Project	Yes, John E. Menditto, Interim Chief Executive Officer
Family Child Care Association (Wake County)	Yes, Michele Miller-Cox
National Indian Child Care Association (state affiliate)	We do not have National Indian Child Care Association
National Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Association (state affiliate)	We do not have a state affiliate of the Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Association. See letter of support from the East Coast Migrant Head Start Project.
National Tribal, American Indian, and Alaska Native Head Start	We do not have a state affiliate of the Tribal, AI and AN Head State Association

Table (A)(3)-2: Early Learning Intermediary Organizations and local early learning councils (if applicable)	
List every Intermediary Organization and local early learning council (if applicable) in the State	Did this entity provide a letter of intent or support which is included in the Appendix (Y/N)?
Association (state affiliate)	
NC Early Childhood Association	Yes, Janice Price, President
NC Institute for Child Development Professionals	Yes, Anna Mercer-McLean
NC Interagency Coordinating Council (NC-ICC)	Yes, LaTonya McIver, Parent Co-Chair and Theresa Flynn, MC, Professional Co-Chair
NC-NAEYC	Yes, Lorie Barnes
State Head Start Association	Yes, Patricia Colon, President
Local Early Learning Councils – list 77 local Smart Start Partnerships here	
Alamance Partnership for Children	Yes, Carrie Theall
Albemarle Smart Start Partnership, Inc.	Yes, Dr. Denauvo M. Robinson, President
Alleghany Partnership for Children, Inc.	Yes, Kim W. Shaw
Alexander County Partnership for Children	Yes, Susan G. Cogdill
Anson County Partnership for Children	Yes, Elaine B. Scarborough
Ashe County Partnership for Children	Yes, Sarah Wolf
Avery County Smart Start: A Partnership for Children	Yes, Sara B. Yackey
Beaufort/Hyde Partnership for Children	Yes, Penny Sermons

Table (A)(3)-2: Early Learning Intermediary Organizations and local early learning councils (if applicable)	
List every Intermediary Organization and local early learning council (if applicable) in the State	Did this entity provide a letter of intent or support which is included in the Appendix (Y/N)?
Bladen Smart Start: A Partnership for Children, Inc	Yes, SS Board of Directors & Staff
Smart Start of Brunswick County, Inc	Yes, Linda Gironda
Buncombe County Partnership for Children, Inc.	Yes, Ronald Bradford
Burke County Smart Start, Inc.	Yes, Joan Rovenstine
Cabarrus County Partnership for Children	Yes, Ann Benfield
Caldwell County Smart Start A Partnership for Young Children	Yes, Jeri Arledge
Carteret County Partnership for Children	Yes, Sherry Peel
Caswell County Partnership for Children	Yes, Sandra Hudspeth
Catawba County Partnership for Children	Yes, Kim Lyke Salyards
Chatham County Partnership for Children	Yes, Genevieve Megginson
The Chowan/Perquimans Smart Start Partnership	Yes, Susan B. Nixon
Cleveland County Partnership for Children, Inc.	Yes, Cathy Taylor
Columbus County Partnership for Children, Incorporated	Yes, Wilbur Smith, Jr.
Craven Smart Start, Inc.	Yes, Kelly Klemmer, Patricia Morrow

Table (A)(3)-2: Early Learning Intermediary Organizations and local early learning councils (if applicable)	
List every Intermediary Organization and local early learning council (if applicable) in the State	Did this entity provide a letter of intent or support which is included in the Appendix (Y/N)?
Partnership for Children of Cumberland County, Inc.	Yes, Eva Hansen
Children & Youth Partnership for Dare County, Inc.	Yes, Loretta Michael
Smart Start of Davidson County, Inc	Yes, Linda Leonard Yes, Warren MacKinstry
Smart Start of Davie County, Inc.	Yes, Mary Beth Scebold & W.G. Potts
Down East Partnership for Children	Yes, Henrietta Zalkind
Duplin County Partnership for Children	Yes, Joan S. Williams
Durham's Partnership for Children	Yes, Laura Benson
Smart Start of Forsyth County	Yes, Charles Kraft
Franklin Granville Vance Smart Start	Yes, Carolyn Paylor
Guilford County Partnership for Children, Inc.	Yes, Jean Goodman
The Halifax - Warren Smart Start Partnership for Children, Inc	Yes, Magda Baligh
Harnett County Partnership for Children, Inc	Yes, Lisa Familo
Smart Start of Henderson County, Inc.	Yes, Sonia Gironda
Hertford-Northampton Smart Start Partnership for Children, Inc.	Yes, Cynthia Brown

Table (A)(3)-2: Early Learning Intermediary Organizations and local early learning councils (if applicable)	
List every Intermediary Organization and local early learning council (if applicable) in the State	Did this entity provide a letter of intent or support which is included in the Appendix (Y/N)?
Hoke County Partnership for Children and Families	Yes, Jean Squier – Another one with Cumberland & Harnett Counties
Iredell County Partnership for Young Children, Inc.	Yes, Marta Koesling
Partnership for Children of Johnston County, Inc.	Yes, Dwight Morris
Jones County Partnership for Children	Yes, Dr. Norma H. Sermon-Boyd
Lee County Partnership for Children	Yes, Lyn Hawkins, and Mikeal Basinger
Lenoir/Greene County Partnership for Children	Yes, Keith Sylvester
Partnership for Children of Lincoln/Gaston Counties, Inc.	Yes, Steve Eaton
Madison County Partnership for Children and Families, Inc.	Yes, Nancy Alenier
Martin/Pitt Partnership for Children, Inc	Yes, Sheila Orth
McDowell County Partnership for Children and Families, Inc.	Yes, Caroline Rodier
Mecklenburg Partnership for Children	Yes, Jane Meyer
The Mitchell-Yancey County Partnership for Children, Inc.	Yes, Jennifer W. Simpson
Montgomery County Partnership for Children	Yes, Deborah S. Musika

Table (A)(3)-2: Early Learning Intermediary Organizations and local early learning councils (if applicable)	
List every Intermediary Organization and local early learning council (if applicable) in the State	Did this entity provide a letter of intent or support which is included in the Appendix (Y/N)?
Partners for Children & Families, of Moore County, Inc.	Yes, Terry Reynolds
Smart Start of New Hanover County	Yes, Janet Nelson
Onslow County Partnership for Children, Inc.	Yes, Dawn Rochelle
Orange County Partnership for Young Children	Yes, Margaret Samuels
Pamlico Partnership for Children, Inc.	Yes, Betty Blythe
Smart Start of Pender County, Inc	Yes, Connie Carr-Costin
Person County Partnership for Children	Yes, Judy Batten
Randolph County Partnership for Children	Yes, Pauline Mckee
Region A Partnership for Children	Yes, Janice M. Edgerton
Richmond County Partnership for Children	Yes, Martha Vance Brown
Robeson County Partnership for Children, Inc.	Yes, Jessica Lowery
Rockingham County Partnership for Children, Inc.	Yes, Heather Kilpatrick
Smart Start Rowan, Inc.	Yes, Jimmy Green & Rev. John Gerstenmier
Rutherford/Polk Smart Start Partnership	Yes, Barry Gold

Table (A)(3)-2: Early Learning Intermediary Organizations and local early learning councils (if applicable)	
List every Intermediary Organization and local early learning council (if applicable) in the State	Did this entity provide a letter of intent or support which is included in the Appendix (Y/N)?
Sampson County Partnership for Children	Yes, Victoria Byrd
Scotland County Partnership for Children and Families, Inc	Yes, Anita Riojas-Mayers
Stanly County Partnership for Children-Smart Start	Yes, Barbara Whitley
Stokes Partnership for Children	Yes, Cindy S. Tuttle
Surry County Early Childhood Partnership	Yes, Marty Westmoreland
Smart Start of Transylvania County	Yes, Joe Castro
Tyrrell-Washington Partnership for Children, Inc.	Yes, Kay Overton
Union Smart Start	Yes, Jack Hargett
Wake County SmartStart	Yes, Q. Shante Martin
Children's Council of Watauga County, Inc.	Yes, Lee Marshall
The Partnership for Children of Wayne County, Inc.	Yes, Sissy Lee-Elmore & Charles C. Ivey
Wilkes Community Partnership for Children	Yes, Laura Welborn
Wilson County Partnership for Children	Yes, Jim Hawley
Smart Start of Yadkin County, Inc	Yes, Carolyn Choplin

Table (A)(3)-2: Early Learning Intermediary Organizations and local early learning councils (if applicable)	
List every Intermediary Organization and local early learning council (if applicable) in the State	Did this entity provide a letter of intent or support which is included in the Appendix (Y/N)?
Additional Non-Required Letters of Support	
Academically Gifted Services of the Guilford County School System	Lee Ann Segalla, Executive Director
Action for Children North Carolina	Barbara Bradley, President and CEO Laila A. Bell, Director, Research & Data
Alexander County Schools	Dr. Jeff Peal
Angela's Home Daycare	Angela Cross, Owner & Operator
Black Child Development Institute – Charlotte Affiliate	Eleanor Toliver, President
Child Care Networks	Amy W. Rabb, Executive Director
Child Care Services Association (CCSA)	Daniel C. Hudgins, Board Chair
Children's Initiatives at the United Way of Greater High Point	Barbara T. Frye, VP Children's Initiatives
Cleveland County Head Start Program	Bonnie Beam
Cumberland County Public Library & Information Center	Jody Risacher, Director
Early Development and Learning Resources, Delaware Department of Education	Jim Lesko, Director
Down East Partnership for Children	Henrietta Zalkind (ECAC Member)
Duplin County Schools	Amanda Rich Bostic, Preschool Coordinator
Durham Technical Community	Ilene Britt, Program Director, Early Childhood Education Associate

Table (A)(3)-2: Early Learning Intermediary Organizations and local early learning councils (if applicable)	
List every Intermediary Organization and local early learning council (if applicable) in the State	Did this entity provide a letter of intent or support which is included in the Appendix (Y/N)?
College	Degree
East Coast Migrant Head Start Project	John E. Menditto, Interim Chief Executive Officer
Fayetteville Technical Community College	J. Larry Keen, President
FPG Child Development Institute	Sam Odom, Director, FPG Child Development Institute
Goldsboro Pediatrics P.A.	David T. Tayloe, Jr., MD, FAAP, President (ECAC Member)
Guildford Child Development	Kathy Harrelson, Board Chair
Guildford Child Development	Ronald L. Wilson
Guilford Education Alliance	Margaret Bourdeaux Arbuckle, Executive Director
Kentucky Partnership for Early Childhood Services (Univ.KY)	Beth Rous, Director
NC Child Care Health and Safety Resource Center	Jacqueline Quirk, RN, BSN, CCHC
NC Department of Health & Human Services	Lanier M. Cansler, Secretary (ECAC Member)
NC Early Childhood Association	Janice Price, President
NC Institute for Child Development Professionals	Anna Mercer McLean, President
NC Rated License Assessment Project (UNC-G)	Linda Hestenes, Ph.D., Co-Director NCRLAP and Sharon Mims, Ph.D., Co-Director NCRLAP
NC State Board of Education	William C. Harrison, Ed.D.
North Carolina Community College System	Scott Ralls, President (ECAC Member)

Table (A)(3)-2: Early Learning Intermediary Organizations and local early learning councils (if applicable)	
List every Intermediary Organization and local early learning council (if applicable) in the State	Did this entity provide a letter of intent or support which is included in the Appendix (Y/N)?
Onslow County Schools	Teresa Alphin, Head Start Director
Page High School Alumni and Friends Association	Susan Tysinger, President
Ponder Early Childhood Consulting	Karen Ponder, Independent Consultant (ECAC Member)
Public Schools of Robeson County	Mary H. Schultz, Director of the Early Years' Programs
Reach Out and Read	Callee K. Boulware, Regional Director & David T. Tayloe, Jr., MD, FAAP, Medical Director
Reading Connections	Jennifer Gore, Executive Director
Regional Consolidated Services – Head Start	Patricia Horan, Director
School Readiness Collaborative of Guilford County	Members
Southern Regional Area Health Education Center	Deborah Teasley, PhD, FACHE, President and CEO
SWaeyc	Janie R. Truesdale
The Duke Endowment	Rhett N. Mabry, VP and Director of Child Care (ECAC Member)
UNC President Tom Ross	Thomas W. Ross, President UNC
United Way of Greater Greensboro	Keith Barsuhn, President/CEO
Wakeaeyc	Staff
Women's and Children's Health Section	Kevin Ryan, MD, MPH (ECAC Member)

(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant. (15 points)

The extent to which the State Plan--

(a) Demonstrates how the State will use existing funds that support early learning and development from Federal, State, private, and local sources (*e.g.*, CCDF; Title I and II of ESEA; IDEA; Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program; State preschool; Head Start Collaboration and State Advisory Council funding; Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program; Title V MCH Block Grant; TANF; Medicaid; child welfare services under Title IV (B) and (E) of the Social Security Act; Statewide Longitudinal Data System; foundation; other private funding sources) for activities and services that help achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, including how the quality set-asides in CCDF will be used;

(b) Describes, in both the budget tables and budget narratives, how the State will effectively and efficiently use funding from this grant to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, in a manner that--

(1) Is adequate to support the activities described in the State Plan;

(2) Includes costs that are reasonable and necessary in relation to the objectives, design, and significance of the activities described in the State Plan and the number of children to be served; and

(3) Details the amount of funds budgeted for Participating State Agencies, localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners, and the specific activities to be implemented with these funds consistent with the State Plan, and demonstrates that a significant amount of funding will be devoted to the local implementation of the State Plan; and

(c) Demonstrates that it can be sustained after the grant period ends to ensure that the number and percentage of Children with High Needs served by Early Learning and Development Programs in the State will be maintained or expanded.

The State's response to (A)(4)(b) will be addressed in the Budget Section (section VIII of the application) and reviewers will evaluate the State's Budget Section response when scoring (A)(4). In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to (A)(4)(a) and (A)(4)(c) and may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

Evidence for (A)(4)(a):

- The completed table listing the existing funds to be used to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan (see Table (A)(4)-1).
- Description of how these existing funds will be used for activities and services that help achieve the outcomes in the State Plan.

Evidence for (A)(4)(b):

- The State's budget (completed in section VIII).
- The narratives that accompany and explain the budget, and describes how it connects to the State Plan (also completed in section VIII).

(Enter narrative here, in particular to address (A)(4)(a) & (A)(4)(c) – recommended maximum of eight pages)

(a) Use of Existing Funds to Support the RTT-ELC State Plan

The goals in our RTT-ELC state plan will be supported by an array of other federal, state, and private funds. This section briefly highlights the use of those other funding sources to support the State Plan. All of these efforts will help North Carolina improve the quality of early learning and development (ELD) programs, provide important health and family strengthening services to young Children with High Needs, and increase access to high-quality ELD programs for Children with High Needs—all of which will support positive outcomes for young children, particularly Children with High Needs. See Table A.4-1 for funding amounts by type and year.

Early Childhood Advisory Council: Provides advice to the Governor about building and sustaining a high-quality system of early care and education services, health services, and family strengthening services to ensure that each child is successful in school and life. As the lead agency for the RTT-ELC grant, the ECAC will provide important oversight for these grant activities to ensure that they produce the intended positive outcomes for programs and young children. The ECAC will also be responsible for bringing together stakeholders for coordination and systems planning.

CCDF: The Child Care Development Fund supports five major quality projects. Project 1: Child Care Resource and Referral, provides a range of services including referral, technical assistance, and professional development. They oversee three special initiatives funded by CCDF: statewide infant-toddler quality enhancement, promoting healthy social behaviors, and school-age care quality improvement. Project 2: Improving salaries and other compensation for the early childhood workforce, Project 3: NC Rated License Assessment Project, which provides the environment rating scale assessments for the TQRIS, Project 4: NC Child Care Health and Safety Resource Center, and Project 5: Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL). Together, all of these projects help support high-quality ELD programs, ensure that Children with High Needs have access to high-quality ELD programs, support the continued improvement in the knowledge and skills of the early childhood workforce, and ultimately strengthen the school readiness skills of children when they enter kindergarten. (Appendix 11 includes CCDF Description, which provides more details on the quality activities that will support our State Plan.)

State-Funded Preschool (NC Pre-K): These funds support the provision of a high-quality ELD program for Children with High Needs the year before they enter kindergarten, designed specifically to strengthen children's skills at kindergarten entry. The funds also support the professional development of Pre-K teachers.

Head Start and Early Head Start: Federal and state funds will continue to support Early Head Start and Head Start services to ensure that Children with High Needs participate in high-quality ELD programs that support their kindergarten entry skills.

Title I of ESEA: Title I funds will be used by the state to ensure all children meet challenging state academic standards. A portion of these funds are expected to be spent on preschool ELD programs.

Part B Section 619 of IDEA: These funds will support a free appropriate education in the least restrictive environment for young children with disabilities.

Early Intervention, Part C of IDEA: These funds will continue to support high-quality services for children Birth to age 3 receiving Early Intervention services through Part C of IDEA.

State Longitudinal Data System: These funds will support the design, development, and implementation of a statewide, longitudinal data system to efficiently and accurately manage, analyze, disaggregate, and use individual data.

Smart Start: Assuming local Smart Start partnerships make similar decisions regarding funding by type of activity, Smart Start's projected contribution would include approximately 49% for helping families access high-quality four- and five-star rated Early Learning and Development (ELD) programs through subsidy; 25% toward supporting quality improvement of ELD programs; 10% for early childhood education workforce development including salary supplements; 1% for enhanced early intervention services; 2% for health services including health access and support as well as prenatal and newborn services; and 13% for family support services including home visiting, group parent education and literacy programs.

Maternal and Child Health Block Grant: Table A.4-1 includes several activities funded through Title V Maternal and Child Health Block Grant and additional federal, state, and private funding sources for prenatal health services; child care coordination for children at-risk for later difficulties; home visiting and other family strengthening programs; child care health consultants; innovative approaches to support systems of care to meet the needs of families of

children with special health care needs; health care for young children, particularly those with special health care needs; and other health support services. All of these resources will promote children's health and family well-being, which will support children's school readiness skills at kindergarten entry. Most of these resources are focused particularly on serving Children with High Needs. (Appendix 12 includes Maternal and Child Health Services Description, which includes more details about these resources.)

Head Start Collaboration Office: Supports partnerships between Early Head Start and Head Start with other ELD programs and state agencies in North Carolina. Collaboration is key to building a strong early childhood system that is high-quality and that successfully supports school readiness of young children.

(b) Effective and Efficient Use of Funds to Achieve Outcomes

Detailed information about the use of RTT-EC funds is provided in the Budget Summary Tables and Budget Narrative (in Section VIII). One of the 18 projects funded by RTT-ELC is the Early Childhood Advisory Council in the Governor's Office (NC's Lead Agency) RTT-ELC Management and Implementation Support (funded at \$6,708,211: \$4,478,211 for grants management; \$1,000,000 for evaluation; \$400,000 required reserve for RTT-ELC technical assistance; and \$830,000 for Transformation Zone Support-described in A.2). The ECAC will utilize these funds to manage the grant and strengthen the state's capacity to apply implementation science (i.e., *how* to successfully implement a strong program in a manner that produces the desired outcomes). Descriptions of the projects are included in the relevant narratives of the Selection Criteria A-E. See Budget Narrative I for a summary of all of our projects organized by Participating State Agency. See Appendix 6 for a list of projects and activities, along with their corresponding selection criteria and cost—organized by Participating State Agency. As noted in Appendix 6, the Early Childhood Advisory Council, the Office of Early Learning, and the Division of Public Health are utilizing a combined \$1,319,900 in other funds for specific support of particular RTT-ELC projects.

(c) Sustainability Plans

North Carolina is deeply committed to ensuring that the number and percentage of Children with High Needs served by Early Learning and Development (ELD) Programs in the State are maintained and expanded. And, we note, this commitment extends to all other children

as well. This is not just the right commitment to make for children, it is critically important to the future economy of our state. This commitment to invest in our people – especially in their youngest years where investment yields great dividends – can be observed in the model programs and approaches that have been built in North Carolina over the past twenty years. This public investment also has leveraged significant private investments through the North Carolina Partnership for Children and the 77 local public-private partnerships that serve all 100 counties in our state.

In today's political and fiscal environment, sustainability is more of a challenge than ever. North Carolina has not been immune from the fiscal challenges facing states across the country, and support for early childhood programs was a major topic of discussion for members of our legislature. Therefore, our sustainability strategy must be calibrated to these new times.

In presenting our sustainability strategy, it is important to note our unique legal context. In 1997, parents from low-wealth counties sued the State of North Carolina, asserting education and funding disparities not allowed under the state Constitution. Ultimately, the State Supreme Court agreed and found that the State's Constitution requires that all children have the opportunity for a sound basic education. Litigation in what is known as the Leandro case continued. In 2004, the Supreme Court found that "to meet the needs of 'at-risk' students in order for such students to avail themselves of their right to the opportunity to obtain a sound basic education," the State must provide services to such children "prior to their enrolling in the public schools." This ruling led to expanded support for our Pre-K program. In 2011, after the General Assembly reduced funding for the state's Pre-K program, the plaintiffs returned to court. A NC Superior Court ruled that all "at-risk" children, generally children who due to sociological circumstances begin school from a disadvantaged standpoint, have a constitutional right to high-quality pre-kindergarten services. While the State is appealing that ruling, the Division of Child Development and Early Education, Department of Health and Human Services is taking steps to implement the ruling within available financial, facility and human resources

North Carolina's sustainability strategy is built upon two underlying assumptions. First, with the ongoing litigation in the Leandro case, the possible reauthorizations of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Child Care Development Block Grant, and early education being a focus of the NC General Assembly, it is likely that the specific nature of the funding

streams for Early Learning and Development will change by 2015. Therefore, building a sustainable funding strategy based on past or current funding streams is not realistic. Second, and most importantly, we believe that if the public continues to learn about the value of early childhood investments, they will insist that the State continue to make strategic investments in the lives of our youngest children.

These assumptions drive our two-track sustainability strategy. The first track – building broader public awareness of the value of early childhood investments – is already underway. Building public awareness is one of the central elements of our federal State Advisory Council grant. We have retained a national communications firm with deep experience in early education to help us develop appropriate messages and a communications strategy to help educate North Carolinians about the value of early childhood investments. Our communications consultants are currently in the research phase and will finalize recommended messages and strategies in early 2012. These recommendations will serve as a foundation for a public-private partnership which engages the state, the North Carolina Partnership for Children, the business and military communities, foundations and others to lead a multi-year strategy to expand public awareness across the state. (See Invitational Priority 5 for more information about our plans for Private Support.)

The second track focuses on the development of a comprehensive sustainability strategy – midway through this grant – which will ensure that the number and percentage of Children with High Needs served by ELD Programs in the State will be maintained or expanded. We will use a framework such as the sustainable planning strategy developed by the Finance Project to guide our work. It is important to note that virtually every sustainability planning framework recommends developing clarity on the vision and what one wants to sustain as an important first steps. The state, through its previous work and the plan articulated in this proposal has largely completed these first steps, although we expect that the early lessons learned from our Transformation Zone will help refine our thinking. We will start this sustainability planning strategy process 18 months into grant and finalized our comprehensive sustainability strategy a year later. This will allow us to focus intensively on implementation for the last one and a half years of the grant.

Table (A)(4) – 1 Existing other Federal, State, private, and local funds to be used to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan.					
Source of Funds	Fiscal Year 2012	Fiscal Year 2013	Fiscal Year 2014	Fiscal Year 2015	Total
CCDF	\$290,512,593	\$290,512,593	\$290,512,593	\$290,512,593	\$1,162,050,372
State funds for DCDEE operations	\$50,383,307	\$50,383,307	\$50,383,307	\$50,383,307	\$201,533,228
State-funded preschool (NC Pre-K)	\$128,147,360	\$128,147,360	\$128,147,360	\$128,147,360	\$512,589,440
Title I of ESEA	\$30,355,241	\$30,355,241	\$30,355,241	\$30,355,241	\$121,420,964
Part B Section 619 of IDEA	\$11,113,496	\$11,113,496	\$11,113,496	\$11,113,496	\$44,453,984
Statewide Longitudinal Data System	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$6,000,000
Head Start-state funds	\$12,868,000	\$12,868,000	\$12,868,000	\$12,868,000	\$51,472,000
Head Start-federal funds	\$150,417,857	\$150,417,857	\$150,417,857	\$150,417,857	\$601,671,428
Early Intervention, Part C of IDEA	\$79,000,000	\$79,000,000	\$79,000,000	\$79,000,000	\$316,000,000
Home Visiting ^a	\$7,300,000 ^a	\$7,300,000 ^a	\$7,300,000 ^a	\$7,300,000 ^a	\$29,200,000 ^a
TANF Subsidized Child Care	\$67,439,721	\$67,439,721	\$67,439,721	\$67,439,721	\$269,758,884
TANF: Work First Family Assistance	\$72,680,370	\$72,680,370	\$72,680,370	\$72,680,370	\$290,721,480
TANF Work First County Block Grants	\$96,831,528	\$96,831,528	\$96,831,528	\$96,831,528	\$387,326,112
Medicaid EPSDT	\$89,626,231	\$89,626,231	\$89,626,231	\$89,626,231	\$358,504,924
Title IV Child Welfare Services: Child Protective Services ^b	\$67,244,104 ^b	\$67,244,104 ^b	\$67,244,104 ^b	\$67,244,104 ^b	\$268,976,416 ^b
Title IV Child Welfare Services:	\$129,480,460 ^b	\$129,480,460 ^b	\$129,480,460 ^b	\$129,480,460 ^b	\$517,921,840 ^b

Table (A)(4) – 1 Existing other Federal, State, private, and local funds to be used to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan.					
Source of Funds	Fiscal Year 2012	Fiscal Year 2013	Fiscal Year 2014	Fiscal Year 2015	Total
Adoption Services ^b					
Title IV Child Welfare Services: Foster Care ^b	\$177,522,990 ^b	\$177,522,990 ^b	\$177,522,990 ^b	\$177,522,990 ^b	\$710,091,960 ^b
State Appropriated fund-Smart Start ^c	\$150,692,835 ^c	\$150,692,835 ^c	\$150,692,835 ^c	\$150,692,835 ^c	\$602,771,340 ^c
Competitive foundation grants & other private funds-Smart Start ^d	\$2,300,000 ^d	\$2,300,000 ^d	\$2,300,000 ^d	\$2,300,000 ^d	\$9,200,000 ^d
Head Start Collaboration Office	\$175,000	\$175,000	\$175,000	\$175,000	\$700,000
Early Childhood Advisory Council	\$1,212,348	\$1,192,772	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$2,905,120
<i>Title V MCH Block Grant</i>					
Care Coordination for Children	\$19,042,411	\$19,042,411	\$19,042,411	\$19,042,411	\$76,169,644
Pregnancy Care Management	\$18,464,778	\$18,464,778	\$18,464,778	\$18,464,778	\$73,859,112
Child Care Health Consultation	\$68,702	\$68,702	\$68,702	\$68,702	\$274,808
Child Care Health & Resource Center	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$500,000
Children with Special Health Care Needs Help Line	\$95,041	\$95,041	\$95,041	\$95,041	\$380,164
Innovative Approaches	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$4,000,000
Linking Actions for	\$850,000	\$850,000	0	0	\$1,700,000

Table (A)(4) – 1 Existing other Federal, State, private, and local funds to be used to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan.					
Source of Funds	Fiscal Year 2012	Fiscal Year 2013	Fiscal Year 2014	Fiscal Year 2015	Total
Unmet Needs in Children's Health (LAUNCH)					
Maltreatment Prevention & Family Strengthening	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$3,000,000
Office on Disability & Health	\$320,316	\$320,316	\$320,316	\$320,316	\$1,281,264
Early Hearing Detection & Intervention Services	\$2,163,900	\$2,163,900	\$2,163,900	\$2,163,900	\$8,655,600
Child Health Care	\$4,178,017	\$4,178,017	\$4,178,017	\$4,178,017	\$16,712,068
Primary Care Consultation	\$394,752	\$394,752	\$394,752	\$394,752	\$1,579,008
Early Childhood comprehensive Systems Grant	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$600,000
Prevent Blindness	\$869,000	\$869,000	\$869,000	\$869,000	\$3,476,000
Behavioral Health	\$56,082	\$56,082	\$56,082	\$56,082	\$224,328
Health Check & Health Choice Outreach	\$634,518	\$634,518	\$634,518	\$634,518	\$2,538,072
<p>^a This is a combination of federal, state, private and receipt funds.</p> <p>^b This includes funding for services for children older than 5 years old, as it cannot be broken out by age.</p> <p>^c This data assumes flat funding from the NC legislature.</p> <p>^d This data assumes continued investment from private funding sources.</p>					

B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. (10 points)

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and adopted, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and adopt, a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System that--

(a) Is based on a statewide set of tiered Program Standards that include--

- (1) Early Learning and Development Standards;
- (2) A Comprehensive Assessment System;
- (3) Early Childhood Educator qualifications;
- (4) Family engagement strategies;
- (5) Health promotion practices; and
- (6) Effective data practices;

(b) Is clear and has standards that are measurable, meaningfully differentiate program quality levels, and reflect high expectations of program excellence commensurate with nationally recognized standards²¹ that lead to improved learning outcomes for children; and

(c) Is linked to the State licensing system for Early Learning and Development Programs.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included

²¹ See such nationally recognized standards as:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2009). Head Start Program Performance Standards. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. PDF retrieved from: 45 CFR Chapter XIII - 1301-1311 http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/Head%20Start%20Program/Program%20Design%20and%20Management/Head%20Start%20Requirements/Head%20Start%20Requirements/45%20CFR%20Chapter%20XIII/45%20CFR%20Chap%20XIII_ENG.pdf

U.S. Department of Defense. DoD Instruction 6060.2, Child Development Programs (CDPs), January 19, 1993, certified as current August 25, 1998 (to be updated Fall 2011). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense. Retrieved from:

http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/portal/page/mhf/MHF/MHF_DETAIL_1?section_id=20.60.500.100.0.0.0.0.0.0¤t_id=20.60.500.100.500.60.60.0.0

American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health association, and National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. (2011) Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and education Programs. Elk Grove Village, IL; American Academy of Pediatrics.

relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Evidence for (B)(1):

- The completed table that lists each set of existing Program Standards currently used in the State and the elements that are included in those Program Standards (Early Learning and Development Standards, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, Qualified Workforce, Family Engagement, Health Promotion, Effective Data Practices, and Other), (see Table (B)(1)-1).
- To the extent the State has developed and adopted a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System based on a common set of tiered Program Standards that meet the elements in criterion (B)(1)(a), submit--
 - A copy of the tiered Program Standards;
 - Documentation that the Program Standards address all areas outlined in the definition of Program Standards, demonstrate high expectations of program excellence commensurate with nationally recognized standards, and are linked to the States licensing system;
 - Documentation of how the tiers meaningfully differentiate levels of quality.

(Enter narrative here – recommended maximum of five pages)

North Carolina led the nation in developing a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. Twenty-five years ago—in 1986—the North Carolina Child Care Commission adopted new rules for a special class of license (known as the AA license) to centers that voluntarily met higher standards for staff/child ratios (i.e., the maximum number of children each adult could care for) and group size, program policies, and space and activities. And so the seed of what is now called a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) was planted in the U.S. Today, North Carolina is still only one of three states that have built a TQRIS into its licensing system (Tout et al., OPRE Compendium, 2010).

In 1995, the need for higher quality care became apparent to NC leaders when the *Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes Study* (Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes Study Team, 1995) reported that only 10% of the child care programs studied in NC offered developmentally appropriate care. The study

prompted a re-examination of the state's licensing system for early learning and development (ELD) programs. Faced with the challenge of improving quality without significantly increasing costs to parents, North Carolina chose to build a new system of progressively higher, voluntary levels of licensure. Our five-star rated license was established in legislation in 1997 and implemented in 1999. We built the model so that it could be improved over the years, consistent with our approach to our entire ELD system. The concept was that all parents wanted the very best for their children and the state could get much better care across the state if we approached it incrementally. It was revised in 2005, dropping the program standard related to licensing compliance because data suggested that there was no variability in that component of the rating.

Currently, the rated licenses for ELD programs reflect quality through star ratings of one to five stars. Mandatory one star licenses are issued to programs that achieve minimum health and safety standards, and staff qualifications. For programs that choose to apply, ratings of two through five stars indicate the degree to which they have exceeded mandatory licensing requirements in the areas of program standards, staff education, and other quality measures. These areas were chosen because of their research-based links to quality in early care and education settings.

Within each of these areas, sequentially higher levels of standards have been established. Programs can earn 1-7 points in program standards and 1-7 points in staff education, depending on the quality indicators they choose to meet. For program standards, more points are earned for meeting standards such as reduced staff/child ratios, more classroom and outdoor space, and scoring well on environment rating scale assessments. In the staff education area, the more early childhood education and experience attained by administrators and teachers, the more points a program earns. A "quality point" can also be earned by meeting an additional higher quality standard from a list of indicators also related to program standards and staff education. The points are then totaled to determine the overall star rating for the facility. (See NC QRIS Program Standards for Centers and Family Child Care Homes in Appendix 4.) As described in more detail in Section B.5, North Carolina has conducted two separate validation studies that document that the tiers in the TQRIS meaningfully differentiate increasing levels of quality.

(a) Program Standards

North Carolina's current TQRIS program standards cover three of the six program standards specified in the RFP and revisions are already underway to address the remaining standards. (See Table B.1.1 for a summary. Appendix 4 also includes a description of the program standards for NC's current

TQRIS.)

(1) Early Learning and Development Standards. The current TQRIS does not include program standards for Early Learning and Development Standards or Effective Data Practices.

(2) A Comprehensive Assessment System. NC's TQRIS includes a classroom observational measure of quality (the Environment Rating Scales, a series of global quality measures of the environment and teacher-child interactions with separate but related measures for infant-toddler classrooms, preschool classrooms, school-age programs, and family child care homes; see Appendix 2 for a brief description of each scale), which is part of the Comprehensive Assessment System standards.

(3) Early Childhood Educator Qualifications. The TQRIS includes requirements for teacher, assistant teacher, director, and family child care provider qualifications.

(4) Family Engagement Strategies. The TQRIS includes a requirement at the higher tiers for a program to have a plan to encourage parent participation in the program (e.g., opportunities for staff to meet with parents, opportunities for parents to participate in the program).

(5) Health Promotion Practices. The basic licensing requirements, required at the first level of our TQRIS, cover health and safety practices. The NC Child Care Commission, a rule-making body, has adopted national recommendations for physical activity standards (i.e., limitations on screen time, 1-hour daily time spent outdoors, and gross motor activity daily) and rules in support of breastfeeding in licensed ELD programs. The Commission has also started rule making related to nutrition standards based on recommendations made by a national obesity task force.

(6) Effective Data Practices. The Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) has recently implemented an electronic data system for monitoring attendance of children whose families receive child care subsidy, but these data are not currently part of an integrated data system linked with the State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS).

The High-Quality Plan later in this section describes the revision process which is almost completed in NC to expand the Program Standards and raise the requirements for the highest quality tier.

(b) Clear, Measurable, and Meaningful Standards

Clear Standards. North Carolina's TQRIS clearly communicates quality to the public by showing on the program's license the number of stars out of five that the program has met (e.g., ★★★★★). The public response to the initial license was overwhelmingly positive; parents across the state quickly understood the star concept and started asking providers about their star ratings. The press was favorable

as well and helped drive child care providers to seek higher star ratings.

Meaningful Standards. The standards were developed in accordance with best practice and reflect high expectations of excellence commensurate with nationally recognized standards. Validation studies have demonstrated that the tiers meaningfully differentiate levels of quality. Findings from a 2010 validation study suggest that the quality among four- and five-star programs is significantly greater than the quality among one-, two- and three-star programs. (NC's validation studies are described in more detail in Section B.5; reports are included in Appendices 13 and 14). The proposed High-Quality Plans for revising our TQRIS (this section) and conducting future validation studies (Section B.5) address this challenge of ensuring that each tier represents a meaningful difference in quality that is related to children's outcomes.

Measurable Standards. All of the standards are measured either through direct observation (e.g., an independent rater completes an observational measure of quality) or through the review of existing documents (e.g., teacher education transcripts). Stringent standards for training and inter-rater agreement checks ensure that the observations of quality are reliable. (See Section B.3. for additional information on rating and monitoring of programs.)

(c) Linked to State Licensing System

As noted above, North Carolina is one of the very few states in the country that have built a TQRIS into its licensing system. At a minimum, programs must meet the requirements for a 1-star rating to be licensed (a few are exempt, primarily religious-affiliated programs). Programs can then voluntarily choose to meet higher levels of quality by earning a 2 through 5 star rated license, which 79% choose to do. We require almost all ELD programs to be licensed, so our TQRIS includes nearly all ELD programs in the state. The following programs must be licensed in NC: centers that operate for more than 4 hours a day, developmental day programs that serve children with disabilities, family child care providers who care for two or more unrelated children, Early Head Start and Head Start programs that operate outside the public schools, and NC Pre-K programs that operate outside the public schools (with plans underway to include school-based NC Pre-K programs in the TQRIS).

Table B.4.c.1 provides baseline information about the distribution of child care centers and family child care homes across the five quality tiers. As described in Section A.1, we have dramatically improved program quality, moving from only 10% of ELD programs in 4- to 5-star rated licenses in 2000 to 51% of ELD programs in 4- to 5-star rated licenses in 2011. For us, our next bold step is to move the

remaining 1- and 2-star programs to the 3-star level of quality (See Section B.4 for the High-Quality Plan related to this effort.)

High-Quality Plan for TQRIS

(a) Key Goals

1. Revise the TQRIS to include a broader set of program standards and to more meaningfully differentiate among the quality tiers so that we can be confident that children participating in the upper quality tiers will have the experiences they need to start school prepared to succeed. The revised TQRIS standards will build on the best program standards across multiple types of ELD programs, in particular Head Start and NC's Pre-K program.
2. Encourage ELD programs to begin immediately meeting some of the key revised TQRIS requirements, by providing incentives for ELD programs to meet some of the new TQRIS requirements before they are officially required.

(b) Key Activities, Rationale and, if applicable, Scale-Up Plans

Activity 1: Revising the TQRIS

The TQRIS drives the quality improvement needed to ensure that each child is ready to succeed when s/he starts school. Thus, revising the TQRIS is critical to meeting our goals for improving the quality of ELD programs, supporting children's school readiness skills, and reducing the school readiness gap at kindergarten entry. Because of the critical importance of revising our TQRIS, the Governor will be actively involved in this process, doing whatever her office can do to accelerate changes in the TQRIS to meet the specific program standards outlined in the RTT-ELC application. Over 18 months ago, the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) convened a NC TQRIS Advisory Committee to review the current system, provide a vision for the future of the QRIS, and make recommendations for short and long-term changes that will lead the state toward that vision. The Advisory Committee is almost complete and the recommendations are consistent with the priorities expressed in the RTT-ELC. Infant/toddler care has been a particular emphasis of the committee because of the research demonstrating that the achievement gap exists at age 3 and possibly as early as 9 months (Halle et al., 2009). We know that we must provide the highest quality ELD programs to Children with High Needs, in particular, if we are going to be successful in reducing the school readiness gap at kindergarten entry. We want the revised TQRIS to have an increased emphasis on the quality of care for infants and toddlers.

The Program Standards Committee has recommended the following revisions related to the six program standard elements specified in the RFP.

- Early Learning and Development Standards: As the ELD standards are revised for children birth to 5, the Committee will include a program requirement related to the use of ELD standards. NC Pre-K programs are already required to use the ELD standards, and this requirement will be extended to all ELD programs in the TQRIS and all classrooms—infants and toddlers as well as preschoolers. (See Section C.1. for more information about our ELD standards.) NC Pre-K programs are also required to use a curriculum that is aligned with NC’s ELD standards, and the Program Standards Committee has recommended that this curriculum requirement be made of all TQRIS programs serving preschoolers.
- Comprehensive Assessment Systems: The Advisory Committee is planning to recommend the addition of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS, Pianta, LaParo, & Hamre, 2008), a measure of teacher-child interactions, to the TQRIS. The revised TQRIS will also strengthen the requirement related to curriculum, which is currently an option for an extra point but isn’t required for all programs. The curricula required in the TQRIS will also have an appropriate assessment of children’s skills to help guide instruction. As described in more detail in Section C.2, we will review instructional assessments for ELD programs and provide an approved list of measures to ELD programs in the TQRIS. As described in Section C.3, we also plan to strengthen relationships between medical providers and the child care community to ensure that children are screened and, if needed, receive the supports and services they need. NC has one of the best developmental screening rates in the country, so we do not want to duplicate screening efforts but instead improve communication among those who conduct the screenings and those who serve the children.
- Early Childhood Educator Qualifications: The current TQRIS includes education qualifications, and the Workforce Committee has recommended strengthening the education and credential requirements for program staff at the upper tiers. (See Section D.2 for more information about how NC plans to support the continued education and support for our early childhood workforce.)
- Family Engagement Strategies: The revised TQRIS will include stronger requirements related to family engagement and support, utilizing the Head Start family engagement standards. (See Section C.4. for additional information about how Head Start Hubs will support the use of family engagement strategies in other, non-Head Start ELD programs participating in TQRIS.
- Health Promotion Practices: State licensing includes health and safety requirements, but the proposed

recommendations in this area focus on nutrition and physical activity. (See Section C.3 for NC's plans to use Child Care Health Consultants to promote health practices in ELD programs.)

- **Effective Data Practices**: DCDEE has recently instituted Subsidized Early Education for Kids (SEEK), an attendance reporting and payment delivery system for the Subsidized Child Care Program in North Carolina. As specified in Section E.2, we plan to include data about subsidized children, ELD programs, and the early childhood workforce in our integrated data system that is linked with the State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). Licensed programs are required to participate in this data system.

Activity 2: Improving the Professional Work Environment

Incentives have been key to helping the early childhood community embrace and work toward newer and better standards. Funding from the Early Learning Challenge (ELC) will allow NC to take major steps in improving its TQRIS. Some of the changes we want to add are standards related to the Early Learning Standards, cultural competence, curriculum and instructional assessment, and improving the early childhood work environment.

To encourage adoption of some of the new policies and practices we are exploring, a bonus program will be created to reward programs that can demonstrate inclusion of these policies and practices in their programs. (This activity also supports Selection Criteria B.4.a.) To be eligible for a bonus, all ELD child care centers must (1) have at least one staff member who has completed the new training on the Revised Early Learning Standards, (2) require all staff to complete an annual professional development plan, and (3) have the administrator of the site complete the .5 CEU training, "Choosing and Using a Curriculum and Instructional Assessment." In addition, each site must choose any two of the following four options: (1) Staff participation in a cultural competence training or coaching, (2) Provision of paid time off for teachers who participate in professional development activities, as demonstrated in written personnel policies, (3) Full teaching and administrator participation in Early Educator Certification and/or (4) Provision and documentation of a program salary schedule that rewards formal education as well as longevity.

To be eligible for a bonus, all family child care providers must (1) have completed the new training on the Revised Early Learning Standards, (2) complete an annual professional development plan, and (3) complete the .5 CEU training, "Choosing and Using a Curriculum and Instructional Assessment." In addition, each site must choose any two of the following three options: (1) Participation in a cultural

competence training or coaching, (2) Participation in Early Educator Certification and/or (3) Completion of a Family Child Care Rating by the Rated License Assessment Project.

Only 4- and 5-star programs who currently serve or have indicated a willingness to and history of serving children receiving child care subsidy, Head Start or NC Pre-K assistance will be eligible to participate. A single bonus payment will be made and tied to a program’s star-rating, satisfactory completion of the requirements of this project, and the number of children in the program. Funding will be available on a first come, first served basis.

(c) Timeline and Milestones for each Key Activity

	Year One				Year Two				Year Three				Year Four			
	Quarters				Quarters				Quarters				Quarters			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Activity 1: Revising TQRIS																
Final report of recommended revisions		√														
NC Child Care Commission rule-making process			√	√	√	√	√	√								
Revised TQRIS implemented									√							
Activity 2: Improving the Professional Work Environment																
Develop information, materials and participation protocols for Project							√									
Identify and disseminate project information and application to 4 & 5 star programs							√	√								
Allocate funding to each region							√									
Award bonuses on a first come, first served basis to programs in each region									√	√	√	√	√	√		

(d) Party or Parties Responsible and Key Personnel Assigned

DCDEE is responsible for recommending revisions of the TQRIS to the NC Child Care Commission. The NC Child Care Commission is responsible for setting rules regarding licensure and TQRIS. The DCDEE Director and the DCDEE Deputy Director are the key personnel assigned to this effort. An organization that coordinates and provides child care resource and referral will develop and

disseminate information on the Improving the Professional Work Environment activity. Grants management staff will fairly allocate dollars available for bonuses to each region of the state and make appropriate bonus payments

(e) Financial Resources

DCDEE will utilize its existing financial resources to develop and implement the revised TQRIS, so no RTT-ELC funds are requested for this activity. Improving the Professional Work Environment is included in the Promoting Participation in Revised TQRIS Project of DCDEE's RTT-ELC budget. The cost of the Improving the Professional Work Environment activity is \$750,000. As described in section A.4, the Early Childhood Advisory Council will develop a sustainability plan for the RTT-ELC State Plan in Years 2 and 3 of the grant.

(f) Supporting Evidence

A copy of North Carolina's TQRIS Program Standards is included in Appendix 4, a 2001 Validation Study of the TQRIS is included in Appendix 13, and a 2010 Validation Study of the current TQRIS is included in Appendix 14 (See Section B.5. for a brief overview of the validation studies and plans for validating the revised TQRIS.)

(g) Performance Measures, where applicable

See Table B.1.1 for the status of program standards included in current TQRIS and Table B.2.c for performance targets related to the percentage of ELD programs participating in NC's TQRIS. For Activity 2, we expect at least 40,000 children will be enrolled in 4- or 5-star facilities that have successfully completed the requirements of the Improving the Professional Work Environment activity.

(h) Addressing the Needs of Different Types of ELD Programs

As mentioned earlier, almost all programs participate in the TQRIS. We have developed the TQRIS and offered incentives and supports that encourage most programs (even programs like school-based Head Start programs that are not legally required to be licensed) to participate in the TQRIS.

(i) Meeting the needs of Children with High Needs, as well as the unique needs of special populations of Children with High Needs

Because almost all ELD programs participate in the TQRIS, programs for all children, including those with high needs, are included. Subsidy policies and financial incentives are used to promote the enrollment of Children with High Needs in high-quality ELD programs (high quality is defined as four- and five-star licensed programs). Programs receive higher subsidy payments if they have a higher star

rated license. This summer the NC Legislature passed a law that limits subsidy participation to ELD programs with a three- to five-star rated license. Local Smart Start partnerships may also further restrict subsidy requirements for Children with High Needs (e.g., children with disabilities served in four- or five-star rated programs.) See B.4. for additional information about participation of children with high needs in programs at the upper tiers of quality.

Table (B)(1)-1: Status of all Program Standards currently used in the State

List each set of existing Program Standards currently used in the State; specify which programs in the State use the standards	Program Standards Elements ²²						
	<i>If the Program Standards address the element, place an "X" in that box</i>						
	Early Learning and Development Standards	Comprehensive Assessment Systems	Qualified workforce	Family engagement	Health promotion	Effective data practices	Other
IDEA Part C (all programs use these standards) ^a	X ^a		X ^a	X ^a	X ^a	X ^a	
State Preschool	X	X	X	X	X	X	
TQRIS/Licensing Standards			X	X	X	X	
Early Head Start & Head Start ^b	X ^b	X ^b	X ^b	X ^b	X ^b	X ^b	X ^b
^a Early learning and development standards include child outcomes. The qualified workforce is a comprehensive system of personnel development, licensing laws, certification for providers and service coordinators. For family engagement, there is a service planning requirement, service coordination requirement. Health promotion standards include a connection to medical home and disability specific							

²² Please refer to the definition of Program Standards for more information on the elements.

Table (B)(1)-1: Status of all Program Standards currently used in the State							
List each set of existing Program Standards currently used in the State; specify which programs in the State use the standards	Program Standards Elements²²						
	<i>If the Program Standards address the element, place an "X" in that box</i>						
	Early Learning and Development Standards	Comprehensive Assessment Systems	Qualified workforce	Family engagement	Health promotion	Effective data practices	Other
<p>guidelines include the same. Effective data practices include data verification and monitoring.</p> <p>^b All Early Head Start and Head Start programs follow the federal Head Start regulations and address all program standards elements. If a Head Start is part of another program that has more stringent program standards than the federal requirements, that program must comply with those standards as well.</p>							

(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.
(15 points)

The extent to which the State has maximized, or has a High-Quality Plan to maximize, program participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Implementing effective policies and practices to reach the goal of having all publicly funded Early Learning and Development Programs participate in such a system, including programs in each of the following categories--

- (1) State-funded preschool programs;
 - (2) Early Head Start and Head Start programs;
 - (3) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under section 619 of part B of IDEA and part C of IDEA;
 - (4) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under Title I of the ESEA;
- and
- (5) Early Learning and Development Programs receiving funds from the State's CCDF program;

(b) Implementing effective policies and practices designed to help more families afford high-quality child care and maintain the supply of high-quality child care in areas with high concentrations of Children with High Needs (e.g., maintaining or increasing subsidy

reimbursement rates, taking actions to ensure affordable co-payments, providing incentives to high-quality providers to participate in the subsidy program); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for the numbers and percentages of Early Learning and Development Programs that will participate in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by type of Early Learning and Development Program (as listed in (B)(2)(a)(1) through (5) above).

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Additionally, the State must provide baseline data and set targets for the performance measure under (B)(2)(c).

(Enter narrative here – recommended maximum of five pages)

While the Early Learning Challenge encourages states to set ambitious goals for including programs in a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS), North Carolina set ambitious goals many years ago for including programs in a TQRIS—and met them. We built our TQRIS into the state's licensing system to maximize participation of various early learning and development (ELD) programs, and we strategically offered financial incentives and supports to encourage license-exempt programs, like Head Start and public preschool programs, to voluntarily participate in the TQRIS. As evident in Table B.2.c, we have achieved the ambitious goal of including almost all ELD programs in our TQRIS. The High-Quality Plan in this section delineates our strategies for attaining an even higher participation rate.

(a) Effective Policies and Practices to Include All Publically Funded ELD Programs in TQRIS

As described in Section B.1., North Carolina's TQRIS is built into its licensing system so

that participation is mandatory for ELD programs that are licensed or regulated by the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE). In addition, many other ELD programs—like Head Start and Early Head Start—voluntarily participate in the TQRIS. (See Table B.2.c for participation rates by program type.) Information about the participation of various types of ELD programs is provided below.

1. State-funded preschool programs. The state-funded pre-kindergarten program for at-risk children was transferred this summer from the NC Department of Public Instruction to DCDEE. With the transfer of the program to DCDEE, all Pre-K programs in public schools (by July 1, 2012) as well as those in community-based child care settings are now required to participate in the TQRIS.
2. Early Head Start and Head Start programs. More than 90% of Early Head Start and Head Start programs voluntarily participate in NC's TQRIS. The very few who do not participate are those operated by public schools, although the majority voluntarily participate. If they receive funds to serve children in the NC Pre-K program, then they will have to participate by July 2012.
3. ELD Programs Funded Under Section 619 of Part B and Part C of IDEA. North Carolina does not fund ELD programs for Part C of IDEA but rather provides funds for support services to be provided in the child's natural setting. Thus, if a young child receiving Part C of IDEA services is enrolled in a licensed child care center or family child care home, then the licensed program would participate in the TQRIS—but there are not separate ELD programs in NC funded under Part C of IDEA. The public schools provide ELD programs to serve children under section 619 of Part B and under Title 1 of ESEA. Public school ELD programs are currently not required to participate in the TQRIS. As the Pre-K classrooms in public schools become licensed over the course of the next year, however, the number of Part B and Title 1 classrooms in the schools participating in TQRIS is also expected to increase.
4. ELD Programs Funded Under Title I of ESEA. The public schools provide ELD programs to serve children under Title 1 of ESEA. Public school ELD programs are currently not required to participate in the TQRIS. As the Pre-K classrooms in public schools become licensed over the course of the next year, however, the number of Title 1 classrooms in the schools participating in TQRIS is expected to increase.

5. ELD Programs Receiving CCDF Funds. All ELD programs receiving CCDF funds are required to participate in the TQRIS.

(b) Policies and Practices to Help More Families Afford High-Quality Child Care and Maintain the Supply of Child Care in Areas with High Concentrations of Children with High Needs

North Carolina has had a tiered reimbursement system for child care subsidies for over 20 years, which pays a higher subsidy reimbursement rate to programs at the higher quality tiers. This subsidy policy has effectively supported quality improvement in ELD programs and encouraged high-quality ELD programs to participate in the subsidy system—all of which is designed to ensure that Children with High Needs are in the highest quality programs that support their learning and development in the five essential school readiness domains. Currently, 61% of the children in our subsidy system are served in 4- and 5-star programs. Other subsidy policies ensure that Children with High Needs participate in high-quality ELD programs even if they do not meet the subsidy income eligibility criteria. For example, children who are at-risk and have a developmental need could be eligible for child care subsidies. Our subsidy policies also include children who are in foster care or to maintain the family unit and prevent foster care (CPS) or child welfare services (CWS). North Carolina has also revised its list of priority children for subsidy to include a specific category for “homeless” children. Our fear has been that some of these children were not captured under the categories of CPS or CWS and were slipping through the cracks in our child care subsidy system. These examples illustrate our strong track record of adjusting policies to ensure that Children with High Needs participate in high-quality ELD programs.

The NC Legislature recently enacted a bold law that prohibits children on subsidy to be served in 1- and 2-star programs, effective July 1, 2012. DCDEE will work during the next year to move 1- and 2-star programs that serve children on subsidy to at least 3 stars in order to provide continuity of care for the children served in these facilities and to increase the supply of high-quality ELD programs for Children with High Needs. (See Section B.4 for additional information.) Effective July 1, 2012 these lower quality facilities will no longer be allowed to enroll children who receive child care subsidy. DCDEE is launching an intensive effort to support existing programs in program improvement that will increase the supply of high-quality slots for Children with High Needs to off-set the loss of slots in low-quality programs.

(c) Setting Ambitious yet Achievable Targets for the Number and Percentages of ELD Programs Participating in the TQRIS

As mentioned earlier, NC set ambitious goals several years ago to maximize participation in a TQRIS—and we have met them. Seventy-eight percent of all ELD programs (including those receiving CCDF funds, Early Head Start, Head Start, and NC Pre-K) currently participate in the TQRIS. Performance measures B.2.c delineate our targets in those areas where there is room for growth.

High-Quality Plan for Increasing Participation in the TQRIS

Following our tradition of providing incentives and supports to encourage voluntary participation (rather than mandates), NC's High-Quality Plan focuses on offering supports and incentives for public-school programs and religiously-affiliated programs that are exempt from licensing (referred to in NC as GS110 exempt programs) interested in voluntarily participating in the TQRIS.

(a) Key Goals

3. Increase the number of ELD programs participating in the TQRIS, particularly school-based and religiously-affiliated ELD programs. As part of this goal, we will review our current licensing regulations about programs currently exempt from licensing regulations (and, therefore, TQRIS).

(b) Key Activities, Rationale and, if applicable, Scale-Up Plans***Activity 1: Support to Enter the TQRIS***

Preschool programs in public schools are not required to participate in the TQRIS. Religiously-affiliated ELD programs (sometimes referred to as GS110 exempt) are required to meet minimum licensing standards for health, safety, supervision, environments, staff/child ratios and group sizes but they do not have to participate in the TQRIS. We believe a number of these programs would choose to be licensed but cannot afford to make the changes in their programs that would be required. Previously, we have successfully increased TQRIS participation to public school preschool programs by offering incentives, small grants, and technical assistance. We will utilize these same strategies to encourage public school ELD programs and religiously-affiliated ELD programs to voluntarily participate in the TQRIS. For the religiously-affiliated ELD programs, we will also reach out to the religious leaders affiliated

with the programs to learn about their interests and concerns regarding TQRIS participation. There are 388 religiously-affiliated ELD programs that currently do not participate in the TQRIS and around 167 public schools with preschool classrooms that currently do not participate in the TQRIS. We believe that efforts over the next 4 years will significantly reduce the number of programs outside the TQRIS.

Technical assistance (TA) specialists working in organizations that coordinate and provides child care resource and referral will be expected to work with public schools and religiously-affiliated programs in their communities interested in becoming licensed. These specialists will work with programs to create a quality improvement plan designed to meet the 3 star-standards at a minimum. Once the plan is in place, these technical assistance staff may apply to the resource and referral organization for mini-grants to support their plan. Funds for this project will be fairly distributed across the state. The TA for this project will be informed and supported by an organization with a network of local early childhood partnerships that will work with local Smart Start Partnerships to reach out to the clergy leaders of the religiously-affiliated programs to learn more about their interests and concerns in participating in the TQRIS.

Activity 2: Task Force on Licensing

North Carolina does not license or regulate part-day ELD programs that serve children for less than 4 hours per day or family child care providers that care for less than three children unrelated to them. As part of this project, DCDEE will convene a task force to consider the appropriateness and feasibility of expanding licensing or regulations for these ELD programs.

(c) Timeline and Milestones for each Key Activity

TIMELINE	Year One				Year Two				Year Three				Year Four			
	Quarters				Quarters				Quarters				Quarters			
Activity 1: Support to enter the TQRIS																
Identify and recruit unlicensed public school Pre-K sites	√	√														
Reach out to clergy leaders of religiously-affiliated programs	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√								

Provide technical assistance and develop quality improvement plans	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√								
Apply for and award mini-grants to schools working on licensure				√	√	√	√										
Provide technical assistance and develop quality improvement plans							√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√			
Apply for and award mini-grants to GS110 working on licensure									√	√	√	√					
Activity 2: Task Force on Licensing		√	√														
Final report of recommendations				√													

(d) Party or Parties Responsible and Key Personnel Assigned

The Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) is responsible for the projects in this High-Quality Plan. The DCDEE Director is the key person responsible for this. The ECAC will contract with a NC organization with a network of local early childhood partnerships will be responsible for providing assistance with reach-out and support to religiously-affiliated ELD programs as part of Activity 1.

(e) Financial Resources

These activities are part of the Promoting Participation in Revised TQRIS Project within DCDEE. The Support to Enter the TQRIS activity cost is \$1,242,266. The Task Force on Licensing activity cost is \$25,000. Additional funds of \$338,588 to support faith-based ELD program engagement is included in the ECAC’s Partnership Initiative Project.

(f) Supporting Evidence

N/A.

(g) Performance Measures, where applicable

See Table B.2-c for baseline information and performance targets related to the percentage of ELD programs participating in NC’s TQRIS.

(h) Addressing the Needs of Different Types of ELD Programs

This plan addresses the few remaining types of ELD programs that do not currently

participate in NC's TQRIS.

(i) Meeting the needs of Children with High Needs, as well as the unique needs of special populations of Children with High Needs

Although most Children with High Needs are served in ELD programs that participate in the TQRIS, some are served in public-school and religiously-affiliated ELD programs. Thus, these activities will help meet the needs of Children with High Needs not currently in the TQRIS. Increasing the number of public-school and religiously-affiliated programs that participate in the TQRIS will increase the quality of ELD programs available to Children with High Needs.

Performance Measures for (B)(2)(c): Increasing the number and percentage of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System

Type of Early Learning and Development Program in the State	Number of programs in the State	Baseline and Annual Targets -- Number and percentage of Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System									
		Baseline (Today)		Target- end of calendar year 2012		Target -end of calendar year 2013		Target- end of calendar year 2014		Target- end of calendar year 2015	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
State-funded preschool ^a <i>Specify: NC Pre-K</i>	1,100 sites ^a	850 ^a	75%	990 ^a	90%	1045 ^a	95%	1078 ^a	98%	1100 ^a	100%
Early Head Start and Head Start ^{23, b}	Approx. 368 ^b	350 ^b	95%	350 ^b	95%	350 ^b	95%	350 ^b	95%	350 ^b	95%
Programs funded by IDEA, Part C ^c	N/A ^c	N/A ^c	N/A ^c	N/A ^c	N/A ^c	N/A ^c	N/A ^c	N/A ^c	N/A ^c	N/A ^c	N/A ^c
Programs funded by IDEA, Part B, section 619 and Title I of ESEA ^d	962	522	54%	539	56%	567	59%	596	62%	616	64%
Programs receiving from CCDF funds ^a	7304 ^a	6467 ^a	88%	6573 ^a	90%	6719 ^a	92%	7012 ^a	96%	7012 ^a	96%

^a Pre-K programs in public schools are currently not required to be licensed. The number of NC Pre-K

²³ Including Migrant and Tribal Head Start located in the State.

Performance Measures for (B)(2)(c): Increasing the number and percentage of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System											
Type of Early Learning and Development Program in the State	Number of programs in the State	<i>Baseline and Annual Targets -- Number and percentage of Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</i>									
		Baseline (Today)		Target- end of calendar year 2012		Target -end of calendar year 2013		Target- end of calendar year 2014		Target- end of calendar year 2015	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<p>sites participating in the TQRIS will increase significantly because a new law requires Pre-K sites in public schools to have a four or five star license by the 2012-2013 school year so 100% of Pre-K programs would be in the top tiers of the TQRIS. Although the law is changing, we expect there to be a transition period. The targets represent our best estimates of the timing of this transition. In addition, there is a court ruling that if upheld, could increase the number of children with high needs served in Pre-K between 2012 and 2015. Because of this uncertainty however, our estimates do not reflect this.</p> <p>^b All Early Head Start and Head Start programs in the state are licensed and participate in the TQRIS, with the exception of two school districts. School districts are not required to be licensed, but all except two voluntarily participate in the TQRIS.</p> <p>^c North Carolina does not fund ELD programs for Part C of IDEA, but rather provides funds for support services to be provided in the child's natural setting. Thus, if a young child receiving Part C of IDEA services is enrolled in a licensed child care center or a registered family child care home, then the licensed/registered program would participate in the TQRIS, but there are not separate ELD programs in NC funded under Part C of IDEA.</p> <p>^d North Carolina has worked to blend different funding streams to create inclusive early childhood settings. Therefore, data for programs funded under IDEA Part B, section 619 and Title I of ESEA are cannot be separated out as they are for blended programs.</p>											

(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs. (15 points)

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for rating and monitoring the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Using a valid and reliable tool for monitoring such programs, having trained monitors whose ratings have an acceptable level of inter-rater reliability, and monitoring and rating the Early Learning and Development Programs with appropriate frequency; and

(b) Providing quality rating and licensing information to parents with children enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs (e.g., displaying quality rating information at the program site) and making program quality rating data, information, and licensing history

(including any health and safety violations) publicly available in formats that are easy to understand and use for decision making by families selecting Early Learning and Development Programs and families whose children are enrolled in such programs.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

(Enter narrative here – recommended maximum of five pages)

North Carolina's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) is rooted in a strong system of monitoring and rating early learning and development (ELD) programs, and we are one of only two states partnering with the federal government to pilot-test strategies for aligning monitoring across ELD programs. We have been a leader in rating the quality of ELD programs, and we will continue to lead the nation in rating programs as part of a TQRIS.

Monitoring and Rating System

Because the NC Five Star Rated License system (our state's TQRIS) is embedded in the state child care licensing system, all licensed facilities must meet all requirements for a 1-star license, which includes basic licensing requirements. Child care facilities are monitored annually through unannounced visits to assess compliance with these requirements. In addition, announced and unannounced routine visits can be conducted at any time to monitor compliance with the child care requirements, as well as to investigate complaints. These visits are conducted by a highly-qualified cadre of DDCDEE licensing consultants; licensing consultants are required to have a Bachelor's degree in early childhood education/child development or a related field with at least 3 years of experience in a child care or a related setting. Regular team meetings for

licensing consultants are held across the state, as well as regional training events, to ensure that consultants consistently apply rules and regulations.

ELD programs may choose to apply for a higher star rated license by submitting a completed application to DCDEE for a voluntary rated license. Tiers two through five of NC's TQRIS currently consist of two broadly defined components—Program Standards and Education Standards—that are implemented and monitored in a very rigorous way. The Program Standards component includes increasingly stringent requirements for the number of children cared for by a teacher/caregiver, the number of children cared for in a group, and the quality of the classroom environment as measured through an observational quality measure. The Education Standards include expectations for the credentials and education levels of the director, lead teachers, assistant teachers, and family child care providers. (A copy of the TQRIS standards and points earned for each quality tier is provided in Appendix 4.)

For most of these standards, the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) child care licensing consultants review documents and conduct a site visit to complete a standardized checklist that determine points earned toward the star rating. If, however, a program would like to earn 3 or more points (out of 7 points) in Program Standards, the Environment Rating Scales (ERS) must be completed on a third of the classrooms including at least one classroom from each age group of children served in the program. (Additional information about the ERS is provided below and in Appendix 2.) The North Carolina Rated License Assessment Project (NCRLAP), which is located at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, conducts the ERS assessments used to determine a program's rating. The next section describes the validity and reliability of these program assessments.

(a) Validity and Reliability of Program Ratings

North Carolina uses a valid classroom quality tool to rate programs in its TQRIS and implements many strategies to ensure that assessments produce reliable ratings. As mentioned above, the ERS is used to measure observed classroom quality as part of points earned for the Program Standards portion of the star rating. ERS is the name for a collection of observational quality measures used extensively in early childhood research and by almost all states that have a TQRIS (Tout, Starr, Soli, Moodie, Kirby, & Boller, 2010). The ERS family of measures—developed at FPG Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel

Hill—includes the Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised, the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised, the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-Revised, and the School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale. (Appendix 2 includes a brief description of each of these scales.) Several research studies have provided evidence of both the validity and reliability of the ERS (see Halle & Vick, 2007 for an overview). Scores on the ECERS-R and FCCERS-R have both been significantly related to other quality measures (e.g., CLASS, Caregiver Interaction Scale) as well as to child outcomes (Burchinal, Kainz, & Cai, 2011; Mashburn et al., 2008).

Procedures for Training and Maintaining High Levels of Inter-Rater Agreement

NCRLAP hires and rigorously trains assessors to conduct the ERS assessments as part of the star rating. The training and inter-rater agreement procedures are briefly described in this section, providing evidence that the ratings in the TQRIS are reliable. For each rating scale, assessors must complete training and satisfy specific requirements aimed at ensuring a deep understanding and proper use of the rating scale. Assessors complete a 7-8 week initial training that typically includes 13-16 classroom observation sessions. To be considered “reliable” and ready to conduct independent assessments, at least 85% of the assessor’s item scores must be the same as the trainer/anchor’s scores.

Once an assessor is allowed to conduct independent assessments, inter-rater agreement checks are routinely conducted to ensure that the assessor maintains high standards for reliably using each of the assessment tools. During these inter-rater agreement checks, the assessor visits a classroom with a trainer/anchor, and each person completes the assessment independently. They then compare their scores to determine inter-rater reliability. The first inter-rater agreement check is conducted on or before the 6th independent assessment. If inter-rater agreement is between 85-89%, then the assessor is “checked” approximately every 10th assessment. If inter-rater agreement is 90% or greater, the assessor is “checked” every 14th assessment. This “frequency based” check system continues for 6-12 months, at which point they may switch to a “time based” system if they have demonstrated high standards for reliability. In the time-based system, an assessor is checked on or before the 20th independent assessment or every 6 months (whichever comes first). If an assessor does not meet the inter-rater reliability standard, s/he must regain an average of 85% across three checks before conducting independent assessments again.

The anchors who conduct reliability checks are supervisors who are required to maintain an inter-rater reliability standard of 90% on average. The NCRLAP has a system to ensure that an assessor is not checked by the same anchor during more than three consecutive checks to prevent inter-rater drift over time based on geographical location, familiarity, or other reasons. The NCRLAP also has a system for answering questions among assessors and communicating these questions and answers to all assessors across the state. Decisions made about questionable issues are also available to the public on the NCRLAP website.

The second component of the star rated license measures the attainment of staff education. Staff must submit education transcripts to DCDEE for review. DCDEE consultants follow specific guidelines for reviewing transcripts and assigning points based on the education qualifications of staff. Licensing consultants also monitor documentation of transcripts in staff files during site visits.

Frequency of Monitoring and Rating ELD Programs

Once a star license is issued, annual compliance visits are completed to ensure that programs meet the minimum licensing requirements as well as the voluntary enhanced standards specific to the level of star license held. A full reassessment, including completion of the ERS observational measures of quality, is completed every three years. A reassessment may be “triggered” sooner than three years if the program director requests a re-assessment (typically because they believe they can earn a higher rating) or if there is a significant change in the program that suggests the rating no longer reflects the current level of quality (e.g., change in owner, large staff turnover).

Alignment of Monitoring Across ELD Programs

In 2011, the NC General Assembly passed a law that transferred the More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Program from our state education agency, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), to DCDEE and renamed it the NC Pre-Kindergarten Program (NC Pre-K). This transfer streamlines program monitoring by having licensing consultants conduct monitoring visits for TQRIS and for NC Pre-K (in the past, each agency monitored pre-k classrooms). North Carolina is also one of two states selected to participate in a collaborative federal initiative entitled, Learning Laboratories (or L2). The purpose of the L2 initiative is to investigate opportunities to align monitoring protocols across federal and state early childhood systems. For NC, this will

include an examination of monitoring systems for child care and the NC TQRIS, NC Pre-K, and Head Start. North Carolina is well-positioned to enhance the alignment of monitoring systems across programs and will continue to develop appropriate, efficient monitoring systems as part of the L2 initiative that can serve as an example to other states.

(b) Providing Program Quality and Licensing Information to Families

North Carolina publically reports information on ELD program quality in several ways that are easy for families to understand and use. First, North Carolina's TQRIS clearly communicates quality to the public by showing on the program's license the number of stars out of five that the program has met (e.g., ★★☆☆☆). The license must legally be posted in a place that is visible to families and other visitors. Second, the DCDEE website includes a special page for parents with information about the star rated license, a checklist to use when considering a program or provider, and frequently asked questions about choosing child care (e.g., "What does it mean if a program is 'nationally accredited'?"). Third, the DCDEE website includes a searchable database of all licensed/registered facilities in the state. The database is available in both English and Spanish. Families can search by a range of program features such as star rating, ages served, location, or participation in the child care subsidy system. Fourth, DCDEE supports child care resource and referral agencies in all communities to help families find child care. These agencies are required to provide the star rating for each program and to explain the star rated license system to parents. Fifth, DCDEE provides to families (and anyone requesting it) publically available information from licensed/registered facilities. This includes documentation of licensing violations, star rating assessment points for Program and Education Standards, as well as complaints or substantiated instances of abuse or neglect.

High-Quality Plan for Developing a Valid, Reliable Program Quality Tool for TQRIS

(a) Key Goal

4. Develop a new program assessment measure designed specifically for the purpose of rating quality in a TQRIS.

(b) Key Activities, Rationale and, if applicable, Scale-Up Plans

Over the last few years, concerns have arisen regarding the use of the ERS in TQRIS. One concern is that the ERS and other measures were not originally designed to be used for a

high-stakes TQRIS purpose (i.e., public ratings that are tied to increased subsidy payments). Another concern is that the ERS, as a global measure of quality, does not measure other, important aspects of quality that are related to children's learning and development (see Zaslow, Martinez-Beck, Tout, & Halle, 2011 for a review of these issues). This concern was highlighted in the recent NC TQRIS validation study that found that classroom quality instruments other than the ERS captured additional aspects of quality that were associated with children's social and cognitive skills. The study authors encouraged NC TQRIS leaders to consider additional measures, and the state TQRIS task force committee on program assessment has reviewed this study as it considers recommended changes to the TQRIS. (The NC TQRIS validation study is described in more detail in Section B.5 and summarized in Appendix 14.) Because of these concerns, NC has a High-Quality Plan, described at the end of this section, to develop a new program quality measure that addresses important aspects of quality related to children's outcomes and is specifically suited for the purpose of TQRIS.

Key Activity: We will lead a consortium of states to develop and pilot-test a new program quality assessment tool designed specifically for use in a TQRIS.

(c) Timeline and Milestones for each Key Activity

January 2012	States invited to participate in the multi-state consortium on program quality assessment
March 2012	Multi-state consortium meets and develops plan for creating a new assessment tool
April 2012-March 2013	Consortium members develop a new program assessment tool
April 2013-June 2013	Preliminary pilot test of new assessment tool in centers and family child care homes
July 2013-September 2013	Assessment tool revised, based on preliminary pilot test
October 2013-January 2014	Preliminary pilot test of revised assessment tool in child care centers and family child care homes
February 2014	Further refinement of assessment tool
March 2014	Train data collectors to reliably use the assessment tool

April 2014-August 2014	Pilot test assessment tool in a sample of child care centers and family child care homes in multiple states, gathering data on its validity and reliability
September 2014-November 2014	Analyze pilot test data to determine validity and reliability of scores from the new assessment tool
December 2014	Final report of pilot test of the new assessment tool
	Multi-state consortium develops plan for utilizing new assessment tool as part of TQIRS
January 2015-December 2015	Implement the plan for using the new assessment tool across multiple state TQRIS and gather data about feasibility issues to continue refining the measure and training procedures

(d) Party or Parties Responsible and Key Personnel Assigned

DCDEE is responsible for this plan, and the Director of DCDEE will lead this effort.

(e) Financial Resources

The total cost for the TQRIS Program Quality Measurement Project at DCDEE is \$982,870. Participating states will be expected to contribute additional resources for this collaborative effort.

(f) Supporting Evidence

Letters of support from Kentucky and Delaware document their interest in participating in a multi-state consortium to develop a new program quality assessment tool. If awarded the RTT-ELC grant, we will also invite other states to join this consortium.

(g) Performance Measures, where applicable

We have a strong process for rating program quality as part of TQRIS, based in large part on a quality assessment tool that provides valid and reliable information.. If we are confident in our program quality rating, then we know that if we a) increase the number of ELD programs in the top tiers of the TQRIS (Performance Measures Table B.4.c.1) and b) increase the number of children with high needs who participate in the programs in the top tiers of the TQRIS (Performance Measures Table B.4.c.2), we will support children's school entry skills (overall NC goals as delineated in Section A.2).

(h) Addressing the Needs of Different Types of ELD Programs

As mentioned earlier, almost all programs participate in the TQRIS. The new program quality assessment tool must be relevant for different types of ELD programs including centers, family child care homes, public school-based programs, development day programs, and Head Start sites.

(i) Meeting the Needs of Children with High Needs, as well as the Unique Needs of Special Populations of Children with High Needs

The program quality assessment to be developed must be appropriate for programs serving all children, including those who are Dual Language Learners and those with disabilities.

(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs. (20 points)

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for improving the quality of the Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Developing and implementing policies and practices that provide support and incentives for Early Learning and Development Programs to continuously improve (*e.g.*, through training, technical assistance, financial rewards or incentives, higher subsidy reimbursement rates, compensation);

(b) Providing supports to help working families who have Children with High Needs access high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs that meet those needs (*e.g.*, providing full-day, full-year programs; transportation; meals; family support services); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for increasing--

(1) The number of Early Learning and Development Programs in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; and

(2) The number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.

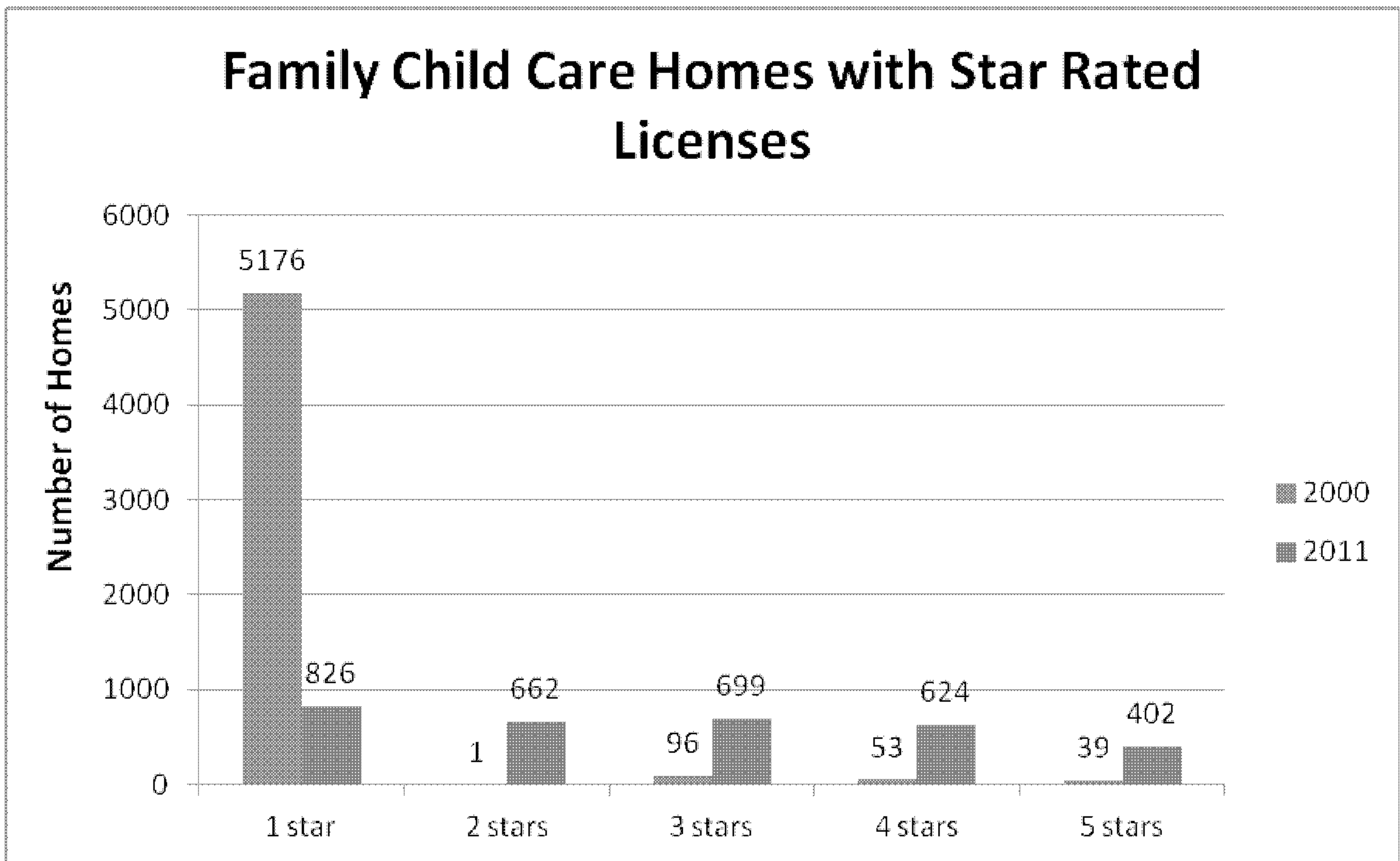
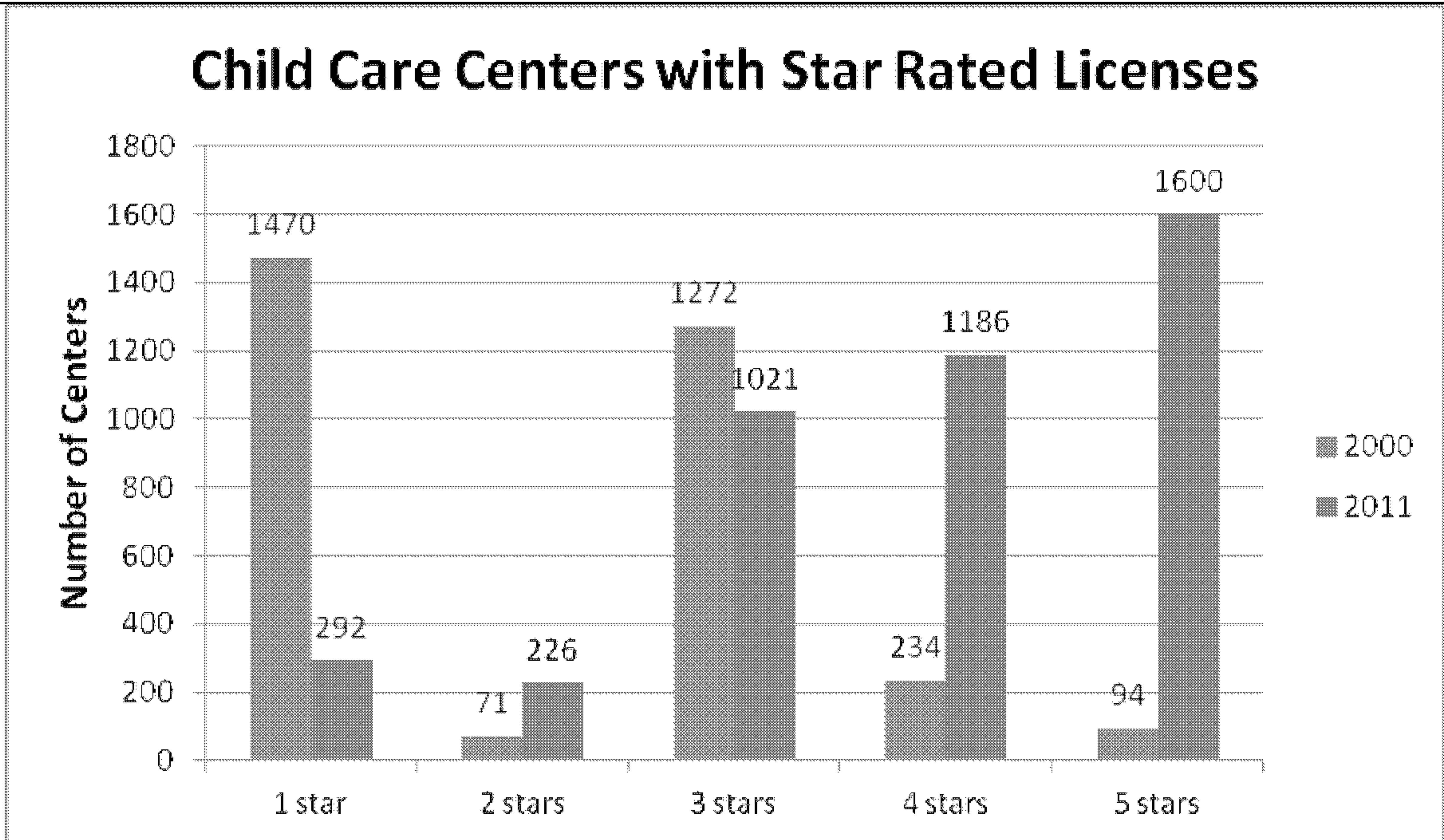
In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Additionally, the State must provide baseline data and set targets for the performance measures under (B)(4)(c)(1) and (B)(4)(c)(2).

*(Enter **narrative** here – recommended maximum of five pages)*

North Carolina has worked tirelessly—and successfully—to promote access to high-quality early learning and development (ELD) programs for Children with High Needs. We have dramatically improved the quality of our ELD programs since 2000. As shown in the charts below, the percentage of high-quality centers (i.e., 4- and 5-star rated) has increased from 10% in 2000 to 51% in 2011. The percentage of high-quality family child care homes (i.e., four- and five-star rated) has increased from 2% in 2000 to 32% in 2011. This major shift in quality at the state level means that every child in NC has better access to high-quality ELD programs. Our policies and incentives ensure that Children with High Needs are given priority access to high-quality ELD programs. Additional information about our success in promoting access to high-quality ELD programs for Children with High Needs—and our plans for the future—are described below.



(a) Policies and Practices to Support Continuous Quality Improvement in ELD Programs

As described in Section A.1, North Carolina has woven together many policy and strategy threads to create a system that promotes quality improvement. Our collective efforts have led to major quality improvements in our ELD programs. The charts in this section show the improvement change in quality for licensed centers and family child care homes from 2000, right after we implemented the five-star rated license, to 2011.

Child care subsidy policies have been an important driver of quality improvement. North Carolina has had a tiered reimbursement system for child care subsidies for over 20 years, which pays a higher subsidy reimbursement rate to programs at the higher quality tiers. Currently, 61% of the children in our subsidy system are served in 4- and 5-star programs. Other policies also encourage programs to meet high quality standards. Our state-funded pre-kindergarten program, for example, requires participating child care centers to have a 4- or 5-star rated license. Finally, we have implemented numerous quality improvement and workforce strategies to support programs in providing high-quality early learning and development experiences for young children. (See Section A.1 for past efforts and Section D.2 for other future plans. (The Improving the Professional Work Environment activity in Section B.1 also supports the criteria in B.4.a.).

(b) Providing Supports to Help Working Families who Have Children with High Needs Access High-Quality ELD Programs

NC helps working families who have Children with High Needs access High-Quality ELD programs by building various types of supports into our overall system.

1. NC's child care subsidy policies prioritize access to high-quality ELD programs for special populations of Children with High Needs, including children with disabilities, children served in child protective services, children in homeless families, and children in the child welfare system. (See Section B.2.b for additional information about our subsidy policies.)
2. As described in Section B.2, NC has a tiered reimbursement rate structure that pays higher child care subsidy payments to higher-quality ELD programs. This helps working families afford high-quality ELD programs for their young children.
3. The 2011 state budget bill included a special provision that limits child care subsidy funding to programs at the 3- to 5- star level. This will create a shift, following a period of transition,

to a child care subsidy system that serves Children with High Needs only in the highest quality settings.

4. We blend multiple funding sources to provide full-day, full year care for many young children and families. Head Start programs, for example, utilize subsidy funding to provide full-day services for working families.
5. We have strong a Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) network across the state to support families, including those who have Children with High Needs, find high-quality ELD programs. Many CCR&Rs have access to/employ bilingual staff to ensure access for families who speak Spanish. CCR&Rs are required to describe the star-rated license system as part of helping families locate care.
6. Many local Smart Start partnerships restrict their funding allocated for child care subsidy services to only 4- and 5-star rated ELD programs.
7. For the last 10 years, we have provided a high-quality ELD experience through our state-funded Pre-K Program (NC Pre-K, formerly called More at Four) for four-year-olds “at-risk” of later school difficulties (i.e., children with family gross income below 75% of the State Median Income, an Individualized Education Plan, or a documented significant and substantial risk of academic failure). A NC Superior Court recently ruled that all “at-risk” children, generally children who due to sociological circumstances begin school from a disadvantaged standpoint, have a constitutional right to high-quality pre-kindergarten services. While the State is appealing that ruling, the Division of Child Development and Early Education, Department of Health and Human Services is taking steps to implement the ruling within available financial, facility and human resources.

Together, all of these efforts have—and continue to—ensure that working families who have Children with High Needs have access to the highest quality ELD programs in our state.

(c) Setting Ambitious, Achievable Targets

As evidenced in the baseline numbers provided in Performance Measure Tables B.4.c.1 and B.4.c.2, North Carolina has already set—and achieved—ambitious goals in improving the quality of ELD and improving access to high-quality ELD programs for Children with High Needs. We have also set targets for driving continued improvements in quality and access through 2015.

High-Quality Plan to Promote Access to High-Quality ELD Programs

Although we are very proud of our accomplishments to promote quality and access statewide, we know that quality and access varies considerably from community to community. As mentioned in Section A.2., we are including strategies that will continue to strengthen our statewide system and strategies designed to bolster outcomes in a particular region of the state that is historically economically distressed. The High-Quality Plan for this section includes statewide efforts as well as strategies focused particularly on improving access to high-quality ELD programs in the Transformation Zone.

(a) Key Goals

We will promote access of Children with High Needs to high-quality ELD Programs by:

1. Supporting 1- and 2-star ELD programs statewide to attain at least a 3-star rated license.
2. Improving the quality of infant/toddler ELD programs in the Transformation Zone.
3. Improving the quantity of high-quality ELD programs serving infants/toddlers in the Transformation Zone.
4. Creating new part-time high-quality ELD programs to meet the needs of some families of young children in the Transformation Zone.

(b) Key Activities, Rationale and, if applicable, Scale-Up Plans

Four key activities will promote access of Children with High Needs to high-quality ELD programs. Three of the activities focus specifically on promoting access of infants and toddlers to high-quality ELD programs because if we are to succeed in reducing the school readiness gap at kindergarten entry, we must provide high-quality early learning experiences and supports for children starting at a very young age.

We are requesting RTT-ELC funds for the activities described below. Without any additional funding from the RTT-ELC, the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) will enact a policy that requires subsidy management agencies to maintain separate waiting lists for infants and toddlers, preschool-aged children and school-aged children, assuring that children are provided equivalent access to subsidy between the three age groups. This is a simple strategy that will enable local subsidy agencies to select infants and toddlers from the wait list in somewhat equal proportions to preschoolers and school-age children. Currently, with the waiting lists so lengthy (over 50,000 eligible children), often a child is of preschool age

before they arrive at the top of a waiting list in many communities. There is not a funding request for this strategy, but it will ensure that infants and toddlers will have equal access to subsidized child care as older children.

Activity 1: Support 1- and 2-Star ELD Programs Attain a 3-Star or Higher Rating

As indicated in Table B.4.c.1, there are 2,011 1- and 2-star ELD programs—centers and family child care homes—currently serving young children in NC. Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) agencies have historically worked with these providers through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (a federally funded program to help defray some program costs associated with providing meals). In addition, child care resource and referral agencies throughout the state have been focused on providing technical assistance to ELD programs to raise their quality by obtaining a higher-rated license. The NC General Assembly has created a law that will limit the participation of 1- and 2-star programs in the child care subsidy system. We want to take utilize this opportunity by “raising the floor” to the extent possible by helping all 1- and 2-star programs attain a 3-star or higher rated license. Intensive efforts are needed to help these programs quickly achieve at least 3-stars. This project will increase funding to organizations that coordinate and provide child care resource and referral services to work with 1-and 2-star programs to improve their star-ratings. Efforts will be made to target those programs serving Children with High Needs, including those receiving child care subsidies.

Activity 2: Infant-Toddler Specialist for ELD Programs in the Transformation Zone

Infants and toddlers in licensed settings in the northeastern part of the state, particularly those with High Needs, are not able to access 4- and 5-star ELD programs. The disparity is great and the need for better quality infant and toddler programs is critical. A full-time infant-toddler specialist will be hired to help improve the quality of settings serving infants and toddlers.

Activity 3: Create More Slots to Serve Infants/Toddlers in High-Quality ELD Programs in the Transformation Zone

Infants and toddlers in licensed settings in this region of the state, particularly those with High Needs, are not able to access 4-and 5-star programs. If we are to succeed in reducing the school readiness gap at kindergarten entry, we must provide high-quality early learning experiences and supports for infants and toddlers. Part of the reason that high quality infant-toddler care is so unavailable in this region is related to a combination of the high poverty rate of

families and the low rates paid to providers of this type of care. For infants and toddlers the maximum payment rates for 4-star programs for infants and toddlers ranges from \$600-\$657 a month; for 5-star programs for infants and toddlers rates range from \$651-\$738. While biennial market rate assessments have been done, rates have not been raised since 2007, making it very difficult for providers to afford to provide the low ratios and the highly qualified staff required in 4- and 5-star settings.

ELD programs in the Transformation Zone with low rates of access to higher quality care for infants and toddlers programs will receive technical assistance and slot development grants from Regional Infant-Toddler Specialists and supplemental rates to increase and sustain higher quality subsidized early education and care for infants and toddlers. The goal is to create 125 new slots for infants and toddlers with high needs in existing 4-5 star programs. Infant-Toddler Specialists will assist programs in developing these high quality slots during the first year of the project and the slots will be available beginning in Year Two. In addition, subsidy rates for the high risk children who are enrolled in these slots will be enhanced. There will be a differential rate for 4- and 5-star programs with an average rate increase of \$250 per child per month.

Activity 4: Create New Part-Day Slots in High-Quality ELD Programs in the Transformation Zone

Because of long waiting lists for child care assistance in the Transformation Zone Counties, as many as 400 infants and toddlers whose parents are working are waiting for assistance. Often these children are cared for by family members, with care arrangements changing two or three times a week. In addition, there are families with Children with High Needs who do not qualify for child care assistance, because family members are not working or in school.

To meet the needs of these very young Children with High Needs, part-day (3-3.5 hours a day) classrooms will be established in high quality (4 or 5 stars) settings. An Infant-Toddler Specialist will assist existing ELD programs across the Transformation Zone in developing 110 infant and toddler half-day slots. The Infant-Toddler Specialist will also work with the State Program Manager to set enrollment eligibility policies and procedures. Our goal will be to intervene at this early age to attempt to mitigate the needs of these young children for services as 4-year olds in our state pre-k program and in other systems.

(c) Timeline and Milestones for each Key Activity

TIMELINE	Year One Quarters				Year Two Quarters				Year Three Quarters				Year Four Quarters			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Activity 1: Support 1- and 2-Star Programs to Attain 3-Stars																
Identify and recruit 1 & 2 star programs interested in earning 3 or more stars	√				√				√				√			
Provide technical assistance and develop quality improvement plans		√	√	√		√	√	√		√	√	√		√	√	√
Track progress of programs moving form 1-2 stars to 3-5 stars				√				√				√				√
Activity 2: Infant-Toddler Specialist in Transformation Zone																
Advertise and hire qualified specialist	√															
Provide needed orientation/training	√	√	√	√	√											
Conduct outreach in transformation counties	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Provide technical assistance and training to I-T providers		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Activity 3: Increase Availability of High-Quality ELD for I/T in Transformation Zone																
Provide funding for start-up grants	√	√	√	√												
Provide enhanced subsidy payments to 125 children with high needs enrolled in new 4 & 5 star infant-toddler slots																
Activity 4: Part-Day Classrooms for I/T in Transformation Zone																
Identify and recruit 4 and 5 star programs willing to participate	√	√	√	√												
Provide mini-grants, technical assistance and support to get slots developed		√	√	√												
Create child/family eligibility policies & procedures and accept applications			√	√			√	√			√	√			√	√
Enroll children with high needs and pay ELD programs					√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

(d) Party or Parties Responsible and Key Personnel Assigned

The Division of Child Development and Early Education will contract with an organization that coordinates and provides child care resource and referral services to manage these activities. Trained technical assistance specialists within those organizations will support child care facilities moving from 1 and 2 stars to 3 to 5 stars. One infant-toddler specialist will be hired to provide technical assistance and help ELD programs serve more infants and toddlers, including through new part-day classrooms.

(e) Financial Resources

Activities 1, 3, and 4 are included in the DCDEE project, Increasing Access to High Quality ELD Programs. The cost for Activity 1: Support 1- and 2-Star Programs Attain Higher Star Ratings is \$1,394,430. Activities 3 and 4 are combined into the Increasing Access to High Quality ELD for Infants/Toddlers and cost \$2,497,422. The cost for Infant/Toddler Specialist, an activity in DCDEE's Enhanced Professional Development project, is \$280,000. As described in section A.4, the Early Childhood Advisory Council will develop a sustainability plan for the RTT-ELC State Plan in Years 2 and 3 of the grant.

(f) Supporting Evidence

Infant-Toddler (I/T) Specialists, who are part of the statewide team, all have at least BA degrees in Early Childhood Education or in Child Development, received PITC certification and are trained on the Infant-Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R), Infant-Toddler ELD Standards and the CSEFEL Pyramid Model for social-emotional development. Most have their Early Educator Certification. Last year the team helped classrooms measurably improve the quality of 1,945 infant toddler spaces, moving classrooms from a pre-technical assistance ITERS-R score of 3.17 to a post-intervention score of 5.04 (on a scale of 1 to 7, with higher scores indicating higher quality).

(g) Performance Measures, where applicable

These activities support the Performance Measures in B.4.c.1 and B.4.c.2. Other targets include (1) At least 50% of infants and one year olds with High Needs in licensed settings will be in programs with 4- to 5-stars within the transformation zone counties by 2015. (2) 125 new infant-toddler slots will be created in 4- or 5-star programs in the Transformation Zone to increase the availability of high quality care for Children with High Needs by 2013. (3) ELD

Programs serving these 125 infants and toddlers with high needs within the Transformation Zone Counties will receive a monthly supplemental subsidy payment of \$250 to ensure the highest quality of early education and care is maintained.

(h) Meeting the needs of Different Types of ELD Programs

These activities will support quality and accessibility in licensed centers and family child care homes.

(i) Meeting the needs of Children with High Needs, as well as the unique needs of special populations of Children with High Needs

All of these strategies are specifically focused on meeting the needs of Children with High Needs, particularly infants and toddlers.

Performance Measure for (B)(4)(c)(1): Increasing the number of Early Learning and Development Programs in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.

	Baseline (Today)	Target- end of calendar year 2012	Target- end of calendar year 2013	Target- end of calendar year 2014	Target- end of calendar year 2015
Total number of regulated programs^a	8,101 (4,864 centers ^a , 3,237 family child care homes)	8,341 (5,104 centers ^a , 3,237 family child care homes)	8,341 (5,104 centers ^a , 3,237 family child care homes)	8,341 (5,104 centers ^a , 3,237 family child care homes)	8,341 (5,104 centers ^a , 3,237 family child care homes)
Number of programs in Tier 1 (lowest)	1,119 (291 centers, 828 family child care homes)	756 (221 centers, 535 family child care homes)	630 (154 centers, 476 family child care homes)	516 (85 centers, 431 family child care homes)	410 (17 centers, 393 family child care homes)
Number of programs in Tier 2	892 (227 centers, 665 family child care homes)	434 (150 centers, 284 family child care homes)	350 (100 centers, 250 family child care homes)	281 (53 centers, 228 family child care homes)	220 (10 centers, 210 family child care homes)

	child care homes)				
Number of programs in Tier 3	1,722 (1021 centers, 701 family child care homes)	2,335 (1094 centers, 1241 family child care homes)	2,512 (1210 centers, 1302 family child care homes)	2,638 (1273 centers, 1365 family child care homes)	2,755 (1336 centers, 1419 family child care homes)
Number of programs in Tier 4	1,811 (1185 centers, 626 family child care homes)	2,035 (1342 centers, 693 family child care homes)	2,065 (1372 centers, 693 family child care homes)	2,114 (1408 centers, 706 family child care homes)	2,155 (1440 centers, 715 family child care homes)
Number of programs in Tier 5 (highest)	2,002 (1600 centers, 402 family child care homes)	2,226 (1757 centers, 469 family child care homes)	2,259 (1785 centers, 474 family child care homes)	2,297 (1813 centers, 484 family child care homes)	2,336 (1845 centers, 491 family child care homes)
Other regulated programs not in Tiers^b	555^b (540 centers, 15 family homes)	555^b (540 centers, 15 family homes)	525^b (510 centers, 15 family homes)	495^b (480 centers, 15 family homes)	465^b (450 centers, 15 family homes)

^a The TQRIS is built into the state's licensing system. Centers in this table include public schools that are licensed.

^b Other regulated programs not in tiers include GS110s which are religious affiliated programs, as well as approximately 250 programs that have temporary licensing and are not eligible to be in the tiered system until they have been in existence for more than six months.

Note: We would anticipate an increase in the number of 3 to 5 stars by the end of calendar year 2012 based on the budget provisions related to subsidy payments to only 3 to 5 star programs. However, NC is in the revision process for our TQRIS which will strengthen the requirements. This revisions could result in changes at all levels of the system.

Performance Measures for (B)(4)(c)(2): Increasing the number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.											
Type of Early Learning and Development Program in the State	Number of Children with High Needs served by programs in the State	<i>Baseline and Annual Targets -- Number and percent of Children with High Needs Participating in Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</i>									
		Baseline (Today)		Target- end of calendar year 2012		Target -end of calendar year 2013		Target- end of calendar year 2014		Target- end of calendar year 2015	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
State-funded preschool ^a <i>Specify: NC Pre-K</i>	24,757 ^a	18,568 ^a	75%	22,281 ^a	90%	23,519 ^a	95%	24,262 ^a	98%	24,757 ^a	100%
Early Head Start and Head Start ²⁴	24,291	22,348	92%	22,348	92%	22,348	92%	22,591	93	23,076	95%
Early Learning and Development Programs funded by IDEA, Part C ^b	9,842 ^b	9,842 ^b	100%	9,940 ^b	100%	10,040 ^b	100%	10,140 ^b	100%	10,242 ^b	100%
Early Learning and Development Programs funded by IDEA, Part B, section 619 and Title I of ESEA ^c	24,369 ^c	13,160 ^c	54%	13,646 ^c	56%	14,377 ^c	59%	15,108 ^c	62%	15,596 ^c	64%
Early Learning and Development Programs receiving funds from the State's CCDF program	98,814	60,178	61%	62,253	63%	64,229	65%	66,205	67%	69,170	70%

Note: The top tiers of NC's TQRIS is defined as having a four or five star license. This data for children in NC's TQRIS is for state fiscal year 2010-2011 and includes children served at any time (as they can go in and

²⁴ Including Migrant and Tribal Head Start located in the State.

Performance Measures for (B)(4)(c)(2): Increasing the number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.											
Type of Early Learning and Development Program in the State	Number of Children with High Needs served by programs in the State	<i>Baseline and Annual Targets -- Number and percent of Children with High Needs Participating in Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</i>									
		Baseline (Today)		Target- end of calendar year 2012		Target -end of calendar year 2013		Target- end of calendar year 2014		Target- end of calendar year 2015	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
out of the system) during that year in a 4 or 5 star program.											
<p>^a Pre-K programs in public schools are currently not required to be licensed. The number of NC Pre-K sites participating in the TQRIS will increase significantly because a new law requires Pre-K sites in public schools to have a four or five star license by the 2012-2013 school year, so 100% of Pre-K programs would be in the top tiers of the TQRIS. Although the law is changing, we expect there to be a transition period. The targets represent our best estimate of the timing of this transition. In addition, there is a court ruling that if upheld, could increase the number of children with high needs served in Pre-K between 2012 and 2015. Because of this uncertainty however, our estimates do not reflect this.</p> <p>^b For Part C programs, baseline and targets are from the December 1, 2010 Headcount Data and assumes a 1% increase per year.</p> <p>^c North Carolina has worked to blend different funding streams to create inclusive early childhood settings. Therefore, data for programs funded under IDEA Part B, section 619 and Title I of ESEA are cannot be separated out as they are for blended programs.</p>											

(B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.
(15 points)

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to design and implement evaluations--working with an independent evaluator and, when warranted, as part of a cross-State evaluation consortium--of the relationship between the ratings generated by the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System and the learning outcomes of children served by the State's Early Learning and Development Programs by--

(a) Validating, using research-based measures, as described in the State Plan (which also describes the criteria that the State used or will use to determine those measures), whether the tiers in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System accurately reflect differential levels of program quality; and

(b) Assessing, using appropriate research designs and measures of progress (as identified in the State Plan), the extent to which changes in quality ratings are related to progress in children's learning, development, and school readiness.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

*(Enter **narrative** here – recommended maximum of five pages)*

North Carolina has conducted two separate validation studies of its Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) that demonstrate that the tiers reflect meaningful differences in quality. This section briefly describes those validation studies and presents a high-quality plan for conducting additional validation studies to ensure that the tiers in the revised TQRIS meaningfully differentiate quality, particularly in the upper tiers, and that there is a significant association between higher quality tiers and greater progress in children's school readiness skills.

(a) Validating that the Tiers in the TQRIS Reflect Different Levels of Program Quality

Shortly after North Carolina implemented its five star rated license, the Smart Start Evaluation Team at the FPG Child Development Institute, UNC-CH, independently gathered data from 84 child care centers to validate the new five star rated license. (See Appendix 13 for the 2001 Validation Study report, *Validating North Carolina's 5-Star Child Care Licensing System*, 2001.) The validation study demonstrated a statistically significant relationship between star ratings and other indicators of quality: observed classroom quality, teacher education, teacher wages, and teacher turnover. Although observed classroom quality was a component of the star rating, these findings are important because the data were collected from independent observers (not official state raters) and from programs with lower star ratings. At the time of the study, a program was not required to have a classroom observation unless they wanted to achieve the top tier rating. Thus, this validation study provided evidence that the observed quality in

preschool classrooms increased in a stair-step fashion as the star rating increased.

In 2010, the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNC-G) conducted another validation study of the TQRIS. (See Appendix 14 for an overview of the 2011 Validation Study report, *Comparisons among Quality Measures in Child Care Settings: Indicators of Quality in Relation to Child Outcomes*, 2011.) The UNC-G team gathered data on toddler, preschool, and school-age classrooms from 101 child care centers at all five star levels. In general, across both toddler and preschool classrooms, four- and five-star programs received significantly higher quality scores on the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS, Pianta, LaParo, & Hamre, 2008; CLASS-Toddler, LaParo, Hamre, & Pianta, 2008) and the Environment Rating Scales (Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 2005; Harms, Cryer, & Clifford, 2006) than classrooms in one-through three-star programs. Additional data were collected for preschool classrooms on measures that are only available for preschool-age classrooms. Centers with a four-star or five-star ratings also had significantly higher ratings of quality on the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale-Extended (ECERS-E, Sylva, Siraj-Blatchford, & Taggart, 2006; a measure of quality that focuses more specifically on curriculum and instruction) and the Preschool Outdoor Environment Measurement Scale (POEMS, DeBord, Hestenes, Moore, Cosco, & McGinnis, 2005), compared to classrooms in centers with one- through three-stars. There were no differences in preschool classroom quality between four- and five-star programs. These findings provide evidence that North Carolina's star ratings meaningfully differentiate between some levels of quality and suggest that revisions of the TQRIS should include efforts to differentiate quality more between each tier, especially in the higher tiers. As described in Section B.1, NC is currently revising its TQRIS to address this issue.

(b) Assessing the Extent to Which Changes in Quality Ratings is Related to Progress in Children's Learning, Development and School Readiness

Two NC studies have provided evidence of the relationship between quality ratings and children's learning. In 2003, the Smart Start Evaluation Team conducted a study that demonstrated a statistically significant association between preschool children's skills and observed classroom quality (using the same measure as used in the TQRIS), providing additional evidence that NC's changes in quality across the five tiers of the star rated license are related to child outcomes (after controlling for other child and family characteristics). (See Appendix 15 for the report, *Smart Start and Preschool Child Care Quality in NC: Change Over Time and*

Relation to Children's Readiness, 2003.)

In 2010, the UNC-G study examined relationships among star ratings, quality measures, and children's social and cognitive skills as well as their emotional experiences (for toddlers and preschoolers). After controlling for star rating, teacher's report of toddler's problem behaviors was predicted by both the ITERS-R, (Harms et al., 2006) and each of the toddler CLASS domains (LaParo et al., 2008). Toddlers were perceived to have fewer problem behaviors in higher quality classrooms. Toddlers also displayed more positive affect and less negative affect in classrooms rated higher in quality on both the ITERS-R and the CLASS domains. Preschool children demonstrated higher levels of conceptual perspective taking (a measure of cognitive skills) in classrooms that scored higher on the ECERS-E (Sylva et al., 2006) and higher in the CLASS Instructional Support domain (Pianta et al., 2008). In addition, preschool children demonstrated higher skills in flexible thinking (a measure of executive function) when their outdoor environments were higher quality, even after accounting for indoor quality effects. Preschool children were also found to have more positive and less negative emotional experiences when they were part of classrooms that rated higher in quality indoors (ECERS-R, CLASS domains) as well as outdoors (POEMS). Children from higher quality centers, as indicated by higher star ratings, viewed themselves as smarter overall and better at numbers, letters, art, and reading than children from lower star centers. Moreover, after controlling for star rating, the ECERS-E measure provided additional information about quality as it relates to children's academic self-perceptions. That is, among children in classrooms with similar star ratings, those in settings with higher ECERS-E scores viewed themselves as more capable than those in lower scoring classrooms. (See Appendix 14 for a copy of the report.) These findings suggest the value of conducting validation studies of the revised TQRIS that focus on a broader range of children's skills. Examining progress over time and further differentiating children's development, learning, and readiness for school at each star level are important next steps for North Carolina.

High-Quality Plan for Increasing Participation in the TQRIS

(a) Key Goals

1. Conduct validation studies to provide critical information regarding how best to revise the TQRIS so that the tiers meaningfully differentiate levels of quality that correspond to

changes in children's progress.

(b) Key Activities, Rationale and, if applicable, Scale-Up Plans

North Carolina has dramatically improved the quality of early learning and development (ELD) programs over the past decade. As described in Section B.4, we expect to move the few remaining programs with one- and two-star ratings to a minimum three-star rating over the next year. Because of this effort to raise the floor of quality, combined with findings from the UNC-G validation study that suggest there are not significant differences in quality between our current four- and five-star rated programs, the next crucial question for North Carolina is how best to revise the upper tiers of our TQRIS to meaningfully differentiate quality. The proposed validation study addresses this crucial question. The validation study will also provide information about family child care (our previous validation studies have focused only on center-based programs) and a broad age range of children (including infants and toddlers). Details about the design will be developed once the independent evaluator has been selected (following state procurement laws), but a general description of the key activities is provided below.

Validation Study of the Upper Tiers of the TQRIS. The validation study will be conducted over four years to a) determine if differences in quality ratings are associated with differences in children's progress, b) document program features most closely associated with differences in child outcomes among Children with High Needs, and c) identify quality features that distinguish between programs at the upper ranges of quality. The study will include a sample of programs with comparable representation of child care centers, family child care homes, and programs with NC Pre-K classrooms. Program-level data will be gathered across classrooms serving children of different ages (infant/toddler, preschool, school age). Child measures will address the five school readiness domains (recognizing limitations in measurement for the approaches toward learning domain). Although details of the validation study will be developed with the to-be-hired independent evaluator, we expect that the study will be conducted in phases. Possible phases are:

Phase 1: Conduct the center-based and Pre-K classroom study to identify quality features that distinguish among the upper tiers of quality and determine the relationship between quality tiers and outcomes for toddlers and preschoolers. Child outcome data from a sample of children in these programs will be gathered at two time points (i.e., fall and spring) so that we

can examine children's progress over time.

Phase 2: Conduct the family child care study to identify quality features that distinguish among the upper tiers of quality and determine the relationship between quality tiers and outcomes for toddlers and preschoolers. Child outcome data from a sample of children in these programs will be gathered at two time points (i.e., fall and spring) so that we can examine children's progress over time.

Phase 3: Extensive data analysis across programs from all settings and children of all ages will be conducted to address more detailed questions raised throughout the TQRIS revision process and inform continued efforts to strengthen NC's TQRIS.

(c) Timeline and Milestones for each Key Activity

March 2012	Independent evaluator selected.
May 2012	Final multi-year validation study design and timeline developed.
June 2012-August 2012	Validation research team hired and trained on various program, classroom, and child assessment tools
September 2012-October 2012	Time 1 child outcome data in center-based and school-based programs completed for Phase 1 of the validation study.
November 2012-February 2013	Program and classroom quality data in center-based and school-based programs completed for Phase I of the validation study.
March 2013-May 2013	Time 2 child outcome data in center-based and school-based programs completed for Phase 1 of the validation study.
June 2013-August 2013	Analyze Phase 1 data. Train data collectors to use any new measures for Phase 2 family child care study.
September 2013-October 2013	Complete final report for Phase 1 study. Time 1 child outcome data in family child care programs completed for Phase 2 of the validation study.
November 2013-February 2014	Program quality data in family child care homes completed for Phase 2 of the validation study.
March 2014-May 2014	Time 2 child outcome data in family child care homes completed for Phase 2 of the validation study.

June 2014-August 2014	Analyze Phase 2 data.
September 2014-October 2014	Complete final report for Phase 2 study.
November 2014-April 2015	Extensive data analysis from Phase 1 and Phase 2 studies to address critical TQRIS issues.
May 2015-July 2015	Complete final report.

(d) Party or Parties Responsible and Key Personnel Assigned

The Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) is responsible for following the state procurement laws to select an independent evaluator to conduct the validation study described in this high-quality plan. The DCDEE Director is the key person responsible for this activity.

(e) Financial Resources

North Carolina has dedicated \$2,393,000 of its RTT-ELC budget for the TQRIS Validation Project at DCDEE.

(f) Supporting Evidence

The appendix (see Appendix 13 and 14) includes copies of the validation reports referenced in this section.

(g) Performance Measures, where applicable

The information in the validation studies will help ensure that the TQRIS is meaningfully related to quality and children's outcomes. If the TQRIS meets these standards, then we can be confident that our efforts a) to improve the quality of ELD programs (Performance Measures B.4.c.1), and b) to increase the numbers of Children with High Needs who participate in the programs with higher ratings (Performance Measures B.4.c.2) will succeed in improving children's school entry skills and in reducing the gap in school entry skills (overall NC goal as delineated in Section A.2).

(h) Addressing the Needs of Different Types of ELD Programs

To ensure that we have data about the validity of the TQRIS ratings from a range of ELD programs, the proposed validation studies will be conducted in community-based ELD programs, public-school Pre-K programs, and family child care programs.

(i) Meeting the needs of Children with High Needs, as well as the unique needs of special populations of Children with High Needs

Data on children's progress will be gathered from Children with High Needs (i.e., children receiving subsidies or participating in NC's Pre-K program) so that we can understand how changes in the quality of programs (across the tiers of the TQRIS) are associated with children's progress in developing school readiness skills. Possible TQRIS quality measures for special populations of Children with High Needs may also be evaluated as part of the validation studies. For example, some of the NC Rated License Assessment Project team, housed at UNC-G and responsible for conducting classroom assessments as part of the TQRIS program ratings, have recently been trained on a measure, the *Inclusive Classroom Profile* (Soukakou, 2007), that is designed to assess the quality of classroom practices that support children with disabilities, focusing on the extent to which practices are adapted or individualized to meet the needs of children. This may be one of the measures included in the validation study for consideration as part of the TQRIS.

Focused Investment Areas -- Sections (C), (D), and (E)

The State must address in its application--

- (1) Two or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (C);*
- (2) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (D); and*
- (3) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (E).*

The total available points for each Focused Investment Area will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address in that area, so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points.

C. Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children

Note: The total available points for (C)(1) through (C)(4) = 60. The 60 available points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address all four selection criteria in the Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 15 points.

The applicant must address two or more selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (C).

(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to put in place high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards that are used statewide by Early Learning and Development Programs and that--

(a) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate across each age group of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, and that they cover all Essential Domains of School Readiness;

(b) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are aligned with the State's K-3 academic standards in, at a minimum, early literacy and mathematics;

(c) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are incorporated in Program Standards, curricula and activities, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and professional development activities; and

(d) The State has supports in place to promote understanding of and commitment to the Early Learning and Development Standards across Early Learning and Development Programs.

If the State chooses to respond to this selection criterion, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Evidence for (C)(1)(a) and (b):

- To the extent the State has implemented Early Learning and Development Standards that meet any of the elements in criteria (C)(1)(a) and (b), submit--
 - Proof of use by the types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State;
 - The State's Early Learning and Development Standards for:
 - Infants and toddlers
 - Preschoolers
 - Documentation that the standards are developmentally, linguistically and culturally appropriate for all children, including children with disabilities and developmental delays and English Learners;
 - Documentation that the standards address all Essential Domains of School Readiness and that they are of high-quality;
 - Documentation of the alignment between the State's Early Learning and Development Standards and the State's K-3 standards; and

*(Enter **narrative** here – recommended maximum of three pages)*

In this section we first describe North Carolina's Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) how they address the C.1. criteria, how they have been implemented over the past eight years, and our efforts to revise the ELDS. The section ends with a description of our high quality plan to implement the revised standards.

(a) Current ELDS are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate

North Carolina has a comprehensive set of ELDS that address all areas of children's development from birth through age five. The ELDS, known as *Foundations*, were published in 2004 for preschool-age children (see Appendix 16) and in 2008 for infants and toddlers (included in Appendix 17). The *Foundations* meet the selection criteria for ELDS: they address all five of the Essential Domains of School Readiness and are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate across each age group. Appendix 18 provides the results of research

validation studies that have been completed on both the infant-toddler and the preschool *Foundations*. Results from these analyses demonstrate that North Carolina's ELDS are developmentally appropriate because the content has been validated with child development and early education research. In addition, the documents themselves provide evidence for how North Carolina has ensured that the ELDS are appropriate for culturally and linguistically diverse children by implementing an inclusive development process that included both committee members/writers and reviewers knowledgeable of Children with High Needs and ensured that the content is appropriate for all children. See the section (f) of our high quality plan for further evidence that the *Foundations* are developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate.

(b) Current ELDS are aligned with North Carolina's K-3 standards

During the development process for the *Foundations*, the committee studied North Carolina's standards for kindergarten carefully and ensured that all ELDS written for the preschool *Foundations* are aligned with the Kindergarten Standard Course of Study. An alignment chart that demonstrates how the *Foundations* aligned with the Kindergarten Standard Course of Study is included in the preschool *Foundations* document provided in Appendix 16. The Common Core has been implemented since the time that *Foundations* were developed and an alignment study (see Appendix 19) has been conducted to demonstrate that the preschool *Foundations* are aligned with the Common Core. Results show good alignment in the English/Language Arts area and adequate alignment in Mathematics. Evidence to demonstrate how the ELDS meet these criteria is presented below in section (f) of our high quality plan for implementing the revised ELDS.

(c) and (d) Current Implementation and Support to Ensure Understanding and Use of ELDS Across Programs

North Carolina has taken steps to implement *Foundations* across multiple programs by incorporating them in Program Standards, in curricula and educational assessments, in our Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and in professional development activities. First, NC Pre-K programs are *required to use the preschool Foundations* to guide instructional planning. Second, *curricula must be aligned with Foundations* to be approved for use in the NC Pre-K program and for use in child care programs that earn a quality point for curricula in the TQRIS. Third, the preschool Foundations have been *aligned to the state's kindergarten*

standards in English/Language Arts and Mathematics (the Common Core). *Foundations* is broadly available to all programs in the state and *professional development resources* (described below) are available to all programs. Finally, *Foundations* has been *fully integrated into our Core Knowledge and Competencies Framework* for the work force (see D2 for further information). Our community college curriculum and core competencies for students, which are shared across all community colleges and are the first component of our Core Knowledge and Competencies Framework, are fully aligned with the ELDS in *Foundations*. Our next step toward full implementation is to incorporate additional requirements related to *Foundations* into the TQRIS (see the plan for this below).

North Carolina has *developed resources and provided extensive professional development* to promote the use of both the infant-toddler and preschool *Foundations* across all programs in the state. For the Preschool *Foundations*, an easily accessible website houses a tool box (with activity ideas, print resources, videos, and web resources), an on-line training module, and other helpful information. Professional development initiatives have been provided across program sectors by the Department of Public Instruction and the state's Child Care Resource and Referral System. The state has used a Train-the-Trainer model. Well over 200 trainers having completed the required professional development to provide professional development on *Foundations*. Over 8,300 teachers and administrators from public school, Head Start, and child care programs have participated in a *Foundations* professional development. Additional training has been developed to help providers "go deeper" in their knowledge of how to use *Foundations*. Continuing Education Credits are offered for participants in this advanced training. Finally, the *Foundations* documents are used as text books in many community colleges. In summary, North Carolina has high quality ELDS that have been implemented broadly.

ELDS Revision Process

The *Foundations* ELDS are being revised to reflect recent improvements in the field's knowledge of children's learning and development. Under the leadership of the Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC), NC is convening a diverse standards revision committee to make revisions that will:

- create a more cohesive set of standards across the birth to 5 age range;
- enhance alignment of the standards across the birth to 5 age range, with the new Head Start

Child Development and Early Learning Framework, and with the kindergarten standards;

- strengthen the emphasis on the appropriateness of the standards for culturally and linguistically diverse children and families; and
- improve guidance for how the ELDS are used with children with disabilities.

The revision process will include reviews and recommendations from national and state-level experts in the areas of cultural competency, second language acquisition, child development, early childhood education, and professional development, along with representation from each of the important stakeholder groups within the state, such as infant-toddler, preschool, and kindergarten teachers. The process will be completed by June 2012, and the revised ELDS will be ready for implementation activities described below.

In addition to revising the *Foundations* ELDS for infant-toddlers and preschoolers, our Common Core State Standards and Essential Standards for Kindergarten will be augmented to reflect all Essential Domains of Development of School Readiness and ensure they are fully aligned with the preschool *Foundations*. This means that North Carolina will be one of just a handful of states will a fully aligned set of standards that extend from birth through kindergarten.

High Quality Plan for Implementation of Revised ELDS

Because our *Foundations* ELDS are being revised, we need a new plan for implementation to ensure broad dissemination and utilization of the revised document. The following is our plan for activities to be carried out through our RTT ELC grant to implement the revised ELDS. Additional professional development activities to support implementation of the Revised ELDS are described in Section D.2.

(a) Key Goals

To ensure full implementation of the revised ELDS across all ELD programs by:

1. Enacting policy changes necessary to ensure standards and requirements in all components of the EDL system are aligned with and address the revised ELDS;
2. Implementing strategies to ensure the revised ELDS are understood and used effectively by professional development providers and ELD service providers.

(b) Key Activities, Rationale and, if applicable, Scale-Up Plans

Implementation at the Policy Level

Our first step will be to infuse the revised ELDS across policy areas within the ELD

system. This means policies and regulations will be reviewed and revised as necessary to ensure that the revised ELDS are incorporated, and that program requirements are consistent/aligned with NC's expectations in the revised *Foundations*. The following are examples of how the revised ELDS can be incorporated into all aspects of NC's ELD system:

- **NC Pre-K:** Teachers must receive training on the revised ELDS and document that they use the ELDS in curriculum planning; curricula and assessments approved for use in the program must be aligned with the revised ELDS.
- **TQRIS:** Providers must document training on the ELDS and provide evidence that they use the ELDS when planning for children's activities; approved **curricula** and assessments must be aligned with the EDLS; program standards address aspects of the classroom environment and teacher-child interactions that promote children's progress on the ELDS; measures selected to evaluate program quality address aspects of the classroom environment and teacher-child interactions that promote children's progress on the ELDS.
- **Work force requirements:** The community college Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework will be revised to reflect the revisions in *Foundations*. The revisions to the Competency Framework will ensure that teachers are knowledgeable of the revised ELDS and able to effectively implement instructional activities that promote children's progress on the ELDS.

Professional Development

Although NC has invested significant resources in professional development to ensure *Foundations* are used effectively, the revised ELDS mean we need a new and even more ambitious professional development plan. First, professional development resources must be developed. This includes an ELDS Training Guide to be used by higher education faculty and professional development providers. The guide will outline content and learning activities for a two-day training on how to teach teachers to use the revised ELDS. This training will also incorporate guidance for teachers on how to use formative assessment to promote children's progress on the skills and knowledge articulated in our revised *Foundations*, thereby promoting an integrated approach to the use of standards and formative assessment (see Section C.2 for further information on our plans related to formative assessments). An on-line training module will also be developed, and a brief promotional video will be produced to provide information on

the ELDS for families.

Next, professional development will be provided (using the Training Guide) to prepare professional development providers to support teachers' use of the revised ELDS and formative assessment. Intensive Faculty Institutes will be provided for faculty from institutions of higher education. These Faculty Institutes will be 2-day sessions to enhance their ability to incorporate the revised ELDS into coursework (for both face-to-face and on-line courses).

The Train the Trainer model has worked well for NC's in-service ELDS professional development. It will be necessary to introduce the revised *Foundations* document to in-service professional development providers. Cross-sector Professional Development Institutes will bring together professional development providers for NC Pre-K, child care, Head Start, Early Head Start, Title I, and IDEA programs to learn together about the revised ELDS, to receive the Training Guide, and to develop plans for coordinated cross-sector professional development. Professional development will then be provided to providers across the state. Standardized training on the state's revised ELDS (a .5 CEU course) will be offered at least 4 times a year in each Child Care Resource and Referral region by 2013 (see D2 for further information on these trainings) and will be available through other professional development providers. In addition to these specified training on the ELDS, North Carolina intends to infuse content related to the ELDS into other professional development that is offered through a NC organization that coordinates and provides child care resource and referral. All trainings offered through this system that focus on teacher practice will be aligned with the state's revised Early Learning Standards and be labeled as such for participants by 2013 (see Section D.2). This approach insures that not only will early educators learn about the ELDS and the expectations for children's learning and development, they will have repeated opportunities to learn about teaching practices that promote children's progress on the standards.

(c) Timeline and Milestones for each Key Activity

June 2012	<i>ELD Foundations</i> revisions completed
June 2012	TQRIS Advisory Committee recommendations for program standards and program quality measures that support implementation of revised <i>Foundations</i>
February 2013	Training Guide, on-line module, and parent video complete; curricula and assessments that are aligned with revised <i>Foundations</i> are approved

March 2013	Faculty Institutes and Cross-sector Professional Development Institutes begin
August 2013	NC-PreK programs required to use the revised <i>Foundations</i> , and approved curricula and assessments
August 2014	All programs participating in the TQRIS required to use revised <i>Foundations</i>

(d) Party or Parties Responsible and Key Personnel Assigned

Policy changes related to the NC Pre-K program, the TQRIS, and the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework fall under the auspices of DCDEE and the Child Care Commission and will be spear-headed by the Director and Deputy Director of DCDEE. DCDEE will also be responsible for developing the training resources, providing professional development to higher education faculty and professional development providers, and coordinating the delivery of professional development on the revised EDLS. Working in collaboration with staff from a NC organization that coordinates and provides child care resource and referral, representatives from the states' higher education consortium (the B-K Consortium), and other professional development providers, DCDEE will develop and implement the professional development strategies described above. The Office of Early Learning (OEL) at the Department of Public Instruction is working collaboratively with DCDEE on the revision of the ELDS and will also update their professional development related to the K-3 standards to reflect changes.

(e) Financial Resources

A total of \$281,000 will be devoted this Early Learning and Development Standards project at DCDEE to cover the development of the training guide, on-line module, family video, faculty institutes, train-the-trainer sessions, and other related professional development activities. Strategies for incorporating the revised ELD standards into ongoing professional development to the early childhood workforce are described in Section D.2.

(f) Supporting Evidence

Research validation reports (see Appendix 18) have been completed on both the infant-toddler and the preschool *Foundations*. Results show the ELDS cover important skills and knowledge within each of the Essential Domains of School Readiness and are age appropriate. NC's ELDS are also culturally and linguistically appropriate for children from diverse backgrounds. The committees that worked on the documents were diverse, including persons

from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds (see the list of committee members included in each document), and the draft documents were subjected to external reviews from experts in cultural competency and second language acquisition (see the documents for further information on the specific reviewers).

Alignment with North Carolina's academic standards for kindergarten has also been documented. Recently an alignment study was completed by the Department of Public Instruction to compare the preschool *Foundations* with the Kindergarten Common Core Standards for English/Language Arts and Mathematics, which has been adopted by NC (see Appendix 19). Results show that alignment in English/Language Arts is particularly strong. Within the Mathematics content standards, *Foundations* indicators are aligned with almost all of the Common Core Standards that have an age-appropriate pre-kindergarten precursor skill.

(g) Addressing the Needs of Different Types of ELD Programs

The revised ELDS will be applicable across all ELD programs. Child care centers, schools, and family child care homes participating in the TQRIS and NC Pre-K program will be required to use them. Because the revised ELDS will be aligned with the new Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, preschool Head Start programs will find them useful in defining NC-specific standards. No federal outcomes framework exists for Early Head Start programs, so the revised EDLS will provide standards for Early Head Start programs. Professional development to support the use of the ELDS will be provided across all types of ELD programs.

(i) Meeting the Needs of Children with High Needs, as well as the unique needs of special populations of Children with High Needs

The ELDS revision process places a high priority on developing ELDS that are appropriate for Children with High Needs. While the state does not advocate different standards for children from different backgrounds, the revised ELDS will be culturally and linguistically appropriate for all children, including Children with High Needs. Furthermore, the professional development provided to support early childhood educators' use of the ELDS will focus considerable attention on how to use the ELDS appropriately with Children with High Needs. For instance, teachers working with English Learners must know how to implement standards-based activities in a manner that provides children with multiple opportunities through different types of learning

experiences to learn concepts and to express what they have learned. The professional development with pre-service and in-service educators will provide specific strategies for using the ELDS with children with high needs.

(C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems.

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to support the effective implementation of developmentally appropriate Comprehensive Assessment Systems by--

(a) Working with Early Learning and Development Programs to select assessment instruments and approaches that are appropriate for the target populations and purposes;

(b) Working with Early Learning and Development Programs to strengthen Early Childhood Educators' understanding of the purposes and uses of each type of assessment included in the Comprehensive Assessment Systems;

(c) Articulating an approach for aligning and integrating assessments and sharing assessment results, as appropriate, in order to avoid duplication of assessments and to coordinate services for Children with High Needs who are served by multiple Early Learning and Development Programs; and

(d) Training Early Childhood Educators to appropriately administer assessments and interpret and use assessment data in order to inform and improve instruction, programs, and services.

If the State chooses to respond to this selection criterion, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

(Enter narrative here – recommended maximum of three pages)

North Carolina believes that appropriate assessment is a major driver for quality improvement and better outcomes for children, particularly those with high needs. Thus, we propose to implement a Comprehensive Assessment System with the four components included in the Early Learning Challenge (ELC) plus a Kindergarten Entry Assessment (see E1 for further information on the KEA). North Carolina has some pieces in place, but this is an area of concentration and growth for us. Our TQRIS has included program quality assessments since its inception, but has not required programs to conduct child assessments. The state's Pre-K program has, however, historically required child assessments for screening and for instructional purposes. Apart from the Pre-K program, other child assessment efforts have focused on screening children through their medical homes. We need better child assessment efforts and better coordination. We also need to augment our program quality assessments to ensure that we have good measures of environmental quality and adult-child interactions. The following high-quality plan describes how we will strengthen our collective ability to conduct and use assessments to improve practices for children by reinforcing areas already addressed and filling in gaps so that we will have a Comprehensive Assessment System by 2014. For each component of our Comprehensive Assessment System, we first describe how the assessment system component has previously been implemented in North Carolina, followed by a plan for ELC activities needed to achieve a coordinated and comprehensive system of multiple assessments.

We first present our high-quality plan for a Comprehensive Assessment System and then summarize how our efforts addresses the C.2 criteria.

High-Quality Plan for Effective Uses of Comprehensive Assessment System

(a) Key Goals

1. To develop or strengthen components of a Comprehensive Assessment System to a) coordinate screening efforts, b) conduct and use formative child assessments, c) work collaboratively with other states to develop a new measure of environmental quality designed specifically for use in a TQRIS, d) use the Classrooms Assessment Scoring System (CLASS, Pianta, LaParo, & Hamre, 2008), a measure of the quality of adult-child interactions, in our TQRIS, and e) develop a Kindergarten Entry Assessment (see Section E.1 for more information about the KEA).

(b) Key Activities, Rationale and Scale-Up Plans***Screening***

North Carolina implemented requirements for programs to screen children for potential disabilities beginning in 2002 when the state-funded Pre-K program was created. Pre-K programs have to use screening instruments that meet specific criteria. In 2009, a criterion for screening Dual Language Learners was added and the criteria for reliability and validity were strengthened. The Pre-K program now requires programs to use one of four approved screening instruments, each of which has proven reliability and validity for Spanish-speaking English Learners. The Pre-K program also encourages coordination of services by accepting screenings completed by other providers. Unfortunately, this coordinated approach is not applicable across other programs. Head Start, Early Head Start, Title I, Part C, and Part B services have different policies and procedures for screening young children, and the TQRIS does not include a program standard for screening in ELD programs (see Table A.1-7).

We propose to create a ***cross-agency Task Force on Child Assessment*** to review the policies and develop plans to coordinate screenings of young children (birth through age five), possibly by creating a single screening policy for all ELD programs. The Task Force will select several screening instruments that will be approved for use across different types of programs. Screening instruments selected will meet rigorous criteria for reliability and validity, assess multiple domains of development and learning, and provide evidence they are appropriate for children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The Task Force will also build on the strength of our medical community's screening of young children by recommending strategies to share screening results across programs so that we reduce duplication. (See Section C.3 for a related project designed to improve coordination between the medical community and ELD programs.) Finally, the cross-agency Task Force will develop a ***comprehensive professional development plan*** to ensure educators have opportunities to learn how to screen children effectively and how to refer children for diagnostic evaluations when needed. The professional development that will be provided will teach early educators what a screening is, how to administer the approved screenings, and what action to take based on results from the screening. Once programs and early childhood educators have a better understanding of and supports for using screenings, new requirements for screening young children will be incorporated into the

TQRIS program standards and included in our Core Knowledge and Competencies framework for teachers. Our NC Pre-K program standards, which already require coordinated screenings, will be revised to reflect recommendations from the Task Force on Child Assessment.

Formative Assessment to Guide Instruction

Similar to requirements for screening, the Pre-K program has required formative assessments of children since the program's inception. Several observation-based assessments were approved in 2002, and the program has continued to require teachers to use one of the approved assessments. Likewise, federally funded pre-K programs implement instructional assessments as required. Beginning in 2011, every 4- and 5-star program in NC's TQRIS must utilize a formal curriculum, many of which have an assessment tool, but teachers/providers have limited experience using these tools.

Therefore, we propose to develop a consistent approach to formative/instructional assessment that will be shared across programs. The *Task Force on Child Assessment* will develop recommendations for approved formative assessments, and a coordinated plan for professional development to promote effective assessment practices. Providers need to improve their understanding of the purpose of different types of assessment, how to administer assessments, and how to use results from the assessment to plan instructional activities and monitor children's progress. A *substantial investment in professional development* will be necessary at both the pre-service and in-service level given that most programs are not currently required to conduct formative assessments. (See Section D.2. for additional professional development related to formative assessments.) As described in Section C.1, we envision providing professional development that promotes an integrated approach to using our Early Learning and Development Standards (*Foundations*) and formative assessment. Therefore the first step will be to develop a Training Guide that will be used to provide pre-service and in-service professional development on the *Foundations* and how to use formative assessment to promote children's progress in areas articulated through our standards. Content related to our ELD Standards and formative assessment will also be incorporated into a CEU course titled "Choosing and Using a Curriculum and Instructional Assessment in an Early Childhood Setting" that will be developed to assist teachers and administrators in selecting appropriate formative assessments (see D2 for further information on this course). Additional professional development

will, however, be needed to ensure that providers are knowledgeable of and can use formative assessment effectively. Professional development will be provided for faculty in institutions of higher education and professional development providers so that they are knowledgeable of the selected assessment tools and how to help early educators learn to use them and for administrators who supervise programs.

After professional development has been provided, we will implement *policy changes to require providers to use formative assessments*. The revised TQRIS will require programs to utilize an appropriate assessment to guide instruction. The Core Knowledge and Workforce Competencies will be revised to include competencies related to conducting and using child assessments, and early childhood Associate's degree and Bachelor's degree programs will address formative assessment in their coursework. We believe these policy changes, coupled with professional development, will significantly improve the early childhood workforce's ability to conduct and utilize assessments to guide their instruction.

TQRIS Environmental Quality Measure

North Carolina has used the Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) measures to assess the quality of the classroom environment as part of our TQRIS Rated License Process from the inception. The ERS measures provide data on a number of different aspects of environmental quality. The ERS, and other measures of classroom quality commonly utilized in TQRIS nationally, were not designed for use in a high-stakes rating (high-stakes because the rating is public and often tied to additional resources). The measures are also quite extensive and resource-intensive in their use. North Carolina proposes to convene a multi-state consortium to develop a new program assessment measure designed specifically for the purpose of rating environmental quality in a TQRIS. Section B.3 provides a high quality plan for the process we propose to use to develop this new measure. The final product from this project would be a measure of environmental quality that is designed specifically for TQRIS program monitoring purposes and has established reliability and validity for use in different types of ELD programs including centers, family child care homes, public school-based programs, developmental day programs, and Head Start sites.

CLASS-Based Teacher-Child Interaction

North Carolina has effectively used the Environmental Rating Scales to measure the

quality of classroom environments, which include some items related to adult-child interactions, but we have not incorporated a separate measure of adult-child interactions in our TQRIS. We recognize this as a significant gap in our Comprehensive Assessment System and the TQRIS Advisory Committee (see Section B.1) is developing a recommendation that the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS; Pianta, LaParo, & Hamre, 2008) be incorporated into our Rated License Process. Before we can make a policy change to require the use of the CLASS to measure the quality of adult-child interactions, an important next step for North Carolina is to improve early childhood educators' awareness of the CLASS and to strengthen the quality of teacher-child interactions in the CLASS domains (i.e., emotional support, classroom organization, instructional support). With the expectation that the CLASS will be included in the revised TQRIS, we will begin professional development efforts related to the CLASS immediately to improve knowledge of the measure and strengthen teacher-child interactions. As described in the Invitational Priority 4, some elementary schools already use the CLASS for professional development, which will provide another avenue for sustaining effects and strengthening ties between the ELD programs and the K-12 education system.

(c) Timeline and Milestones for each Key Activity

Screening and Formative Assessments.

January-Dec 2012	Task Force on Child Assessments develops recommendations on approved instruments, assessment procedures, and coordination of screenings
January-Mar 2013	Task Force Recommendations approved by ECAC, State Board of Education, Child Care Commission, and Interagency Coordinating Council
March-July 2013	Develop coordinated Professional Development Plan
Aug 13-July 2014	Provide professional development on screenings and formative assessments
August 2014	Initiate Pre-K and TQRIS policy changes to require comprehensive assessment system

New TQRIS Environmental Quality Measure: Please see Section B.3 for the timeline and milestones for this project.

CLASS-based Teacher-Child Interaction Project

June 2012	TQRIS Advisory Committee recommends to incorporate the CLASS as a
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	measure of the quality of adult:child interactions into the Rated License Process
July-Oct 2012	Training plan developed to provide training on the CLASS through the Child Care Resource and Referral Network and through community colleges
Nov 12–April 2014	Professional development provided on the CLASS instrument and on high quality adult: child interactions
May – Aug 2014	Train Rated License Observers on the CLASS
August 2014	Begin using the CLASS as a measure within the TQRIS Rated License Process

(d) Party or Parties Responsible and Key Personnel Assigned

The Early Childhood Advisory Council convene the Task Force on Child Assessment and provide staff support. The Task Force will include broad representation from ELD programs and noted experts on early childhood screening and assessments. DCDEE will be responsible for convening the multi-state consortium to develop a new environmental quality measure designed for use in a TQRIS. The NC Council on Early Childhood Professional Development (described in D2) will develop a comprehensive professional development plan that includes professional development related to screening, formative assessments and the CLASS.

(e) Financial Resources

The Task Force on Child Assessment will be funded by the Early Childhood Advisory Council. The budget for the professional development plan (described in D2) includes funds to provide professional development on screenings and assessments. Section B.3 describes the budget that will be needed to convene the multi-state consortium to develop a new measure of environmental quality. DCDEE will provide resources to support training on the CLASS.

(f) Supporting Evidence

Appendix 20 includes the NC Pre-K Program Requirements which specify the state's current requirements regarding screenings and formative assessments for pre-kindergarten children.

(g) Performance Measures, where applicable

Performance Measures are not applicable for this selection criterion.

(h) Addressing the Needs of Different Types of ELD Programs

Although the proposed process is designed to yield a more cohesive and coordinated

assessment system in NC, the system will accommodate unique needs of different types of ELD programs. Each of the different programs in NC will be represented on and considered by the Task Force on Child Assessment. The screening and assessment plan will include assessments that are appropriate for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers in center-based, school-based, and family child care home settings. The professional development plan will include professional development on screenings and formative assessments that is tailored to the needs of providers in each of these types of settings and that addresses the specific age of children to be assessed. Likewise, cross-sector professional development will be provided on the CLASS, but the training will be modified to ensure that it meets the needs of personnel from different types of programs. The new measure of environmental quality that is described in this proposal will be designed to collect data from center-based, school-based and family child care homes and will be an assessment that can be used with all ages of children (infants, toddlers, preschoolers and mixed-age groups).

(i) Meeting the of Children with High Needs, as well as the unique needs of special populations of Children with High Needs

The unique needs of Children with High Needs will be a priority throughout the proposed process for designing and implementing a comprehensive, coordinated assessment system. Screening and formative child assessment tools that are selected must demonstrate evidence that they have been used reliably with Children with High Needs, that they have been normed (the screening instruments) with populations of children who are similar to Children with High Needs in NC, and that they provide useful information for Children with High Needs. Furthermore, professional development will emphasize strategies for assessing children with high needs effectively. Professional development and assessment materials will be provided in Spanish so Spanish speaking providers can develop knowledge and skills needed to conduct assessments effectively and, in turn, Spanish-speaking children can be assessed by qualified personnel who speak their native language. Materials and professional development will be expanded to other languages. Likewise, the new environmental quality measure will be specifically designed to accurately and appropriately collect data on the quality of programs that serve a high percentage of Children with High Needs and will be pilot tested in programs serving Children with High Needs. In short, Children with High Needs will be a high priority throughout the process of building and implementing NC's Comprehensive Assessment System.

Supporting Effective Uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems

The following section describes how North Carolina will meet the selection criteria for Comprehensive Assessment Systems once the proposed activities described above are implemented.

(a) Select Assessment Instruments and Approaches Appropriate for the Target Population and Purposes

As described above in the high-quality plan, North Carolina will implement a developmentally appropriate and coordinated Comprehensive Assessment System that meets the ELC criteria for supporting the effective uses of assessment through the work of the Task Force on Child Assessment. The Task Force will work with representatives from ELD Programs to select assessment instruments and approaches that are appropriate for North Carolina's population of children, particularly Children with High Needs, by ensuring that all instruments (screening and formative assessments) selected for the state meet the highest requirements for reliability, validity and use with children from diverse backgrounds.

(b and d) Strengthen Early Childhood Educators' Understanding and Use of Assessments

The high-quality plan describes our efforts to provide coordinated professional development and supports for both the ELD standards and various assessments. Section D.2 describes in more detail professional development efforts to increase knowledge and use of child assessment before we implement relevant policy changes. DCDEE will also provide some support to increase awareness and understanding of the CLASS. The revised TQRIS will support ELD programs' use of assessments.

(c) Aligning and Integrating Assessments

The Task Force on Child Assessment will make recommendations for how assessment results can be shared across programs to coordinate services and reduce duplication of assessments. Our plans to integrate professional development for assessment and ELD standards, and the projects described in Section C.3 will also strengthen the coordination, alignment, and integration of assessment across multiple sectors. Finally, as described in Invitational Priority 4, the use of the CLASS in ELD programs can provide a similar measurement to bridge conversations about quality practices between the early childhood and K-12 education systems.

(C)(3) Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness.

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to identify and address the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs by--

(a) Establishing a progression of standards for ensuring children's health and safety; ensuring that health and behavioral screening and follow-up occur; and promoting children's physical, social, and emotional development across the levels of its Program Standards;

(b) Increasing the number of Early Childhood Educators who are trained and supported on an on-going basis in meeting the health standards;

(c) Promoting healthy eating habits, improving nutrition, expanding physical activity; and

(d) Leveraging existing resources to meet ambitious yet achievable annual targets to increase the number of Children with High Needs who--

(1) Are screened using Screening Measures that align with the Medicaid Early Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment benefit (see section 1905(r)(5) of the Social Security Act) or the well-baby and well-child services available through the Children's Health Insurance Program (42 CFR 457.520), and that, as appropriate, are consistent with the Child Find provisions in IDEA (see sections 612(a)(3) and 635(a)(5) of IDEA);

(2) Are referred for services based on the results of those screenings, and where appropriate, received follow-up; and

(3) Participate in ongoing health care as part of a schedule of well-child care, including the number of children who are up to date in a schedule of well-child care.

If the State chooses to respond to this selection criterion, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and

addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Additionally, States must provide baseline data and set targets for the performance measures under (C)(3)(d).

Evidence for (C)(3)(a):

- To the extent the State has established a progression of health standards across the levels of Program Standards that meet the elements in criterion (C)(3)(a), submit--
 - The progression of health standards used in the Program Standards and the State's plans for improvement over time, including documentation demonstrating that this progression of standards appropriately addresses health and safety standards; developmental, behavioral, and sensory screening, referral, and follow-up; health promotion including healthy eating habits, improved nutrition, and increased physical activity; oral health; and social and emotional development; and health literacy among parents and children;

Evidence for (C)(3)(b):

- To the extent the State has existing and projected numbers and percentages of Early Childhood Educators who receive training and support in meeting the health standards, the State shall submit documentation of these data. If the State does not have these data, the State shall outline its plan for deriving them.

Evidence for (C)(3)(d):

- Documentation of the State's existing and future resources that are or will be used to address the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs. At a minimum, documentation must address the screening, referral, and follow-up of all Children with High Needs; how the State will promote the participation of Children with High Needs in ongoing health care as part of a schedule of well-child care; how the State will promote healthy eating habits and improved nutrition as well as increased physical activity for Children with High Needs; and how the State will promote health literacy for children and parents.

(Enter narrative here – recommended maximum of three pages)

North Carolina is a national leader in implementing effective models to promote the health and development, including the behavioral health, of young children. We will build upon existing standards and evidence-based practices to reach more Children with High Needs. We will use significant leveraged current and future state and private investments to achieve our goals.

(a) Health and Safety Standards

The North Carolina TQRIS is embedded in the state licensing system, which maintains safeguards to ensure the health, safety and well-being of children in early learning and development programs. All child care facilities comply with State laws, federal laws and local ordinances that pertain to child health, safety, and welfare. Some of these regulations are governed by the Commission for Health Services, and others are governed by the Child Care Commission. Basic health and safety standards include: a) supervision of children; b) condition of equipment and materials; c) discipline practices; d) minimum acceptable child/staff ratios; e) sanitation practices, building and fire safety regulations; and f) required staff education and training development. Appendix 4 provides a complete description of NC's Star Rated License requirements.

In addition, the Child Care Commission has recently adopted recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics for physical activity standards and breastfeeding support (i.e., limitations on screen time, a minimum of 1-hour daily time spent outdoors, and space made available to accommodate breastfeeding needs). As described in our High-Quality Plan below, we will seek to strengthen our health and safety standards by requiring that children in regulated Early Learning and Development (ELD) programs receive annual health assessments.

(b) Support for Early Childhood Educators

Currently, all early educators are required to have 16 hours of on-site pre-service training and orientation on the following topics: first aid and CPR, child abuse and neglect, infant safe sleep practices, and playground safety. In addition, facilities at the 2-5 star level have an option to receive an extra point if they have enhanced policies in place that include the following topics: emergency evacuation plan, field trip policy, staff development plan, medication administration, enhanced discipline policy, and additional health-related rules. This training is required for all educators working in regulated ELD programs. The workforce data system that will be developed as described in Section E.2 will provide our system with the ability to track the number of educators that receive training, as well as the number of teachers that receive training in a given topic in the state each year.

Currently, much of the on-going training is provided through several agencies including Child Care Resource & Referrals (CCR&Rs) that offer training on nutrition, playground safety,

car seat safety, and Back to Sleep; local health departments that provide training on sanitation (food preparation, hand washing, and diapering); and community colleges that also offer early childhood courses in health, safety and nutrition.

In addition, North Carolina has built a network of Child Care Health Consultants (CCHCs) to provide ongoing support for ECE educators. CCHCs are well-trained health professionals who provide education and technical assistance to ELD program staff and help develop policies and environments to promote children's health and development. Positive impacts have been demonstrated in increased numbers of children with medical homes, up-to-date immunizations and use of preventive health care. (Healthy Child Care Consultant Network Support Center, August, 2006). Currently, Smart Start Local Partnerships support 56 CCHCs who serve 49 of North Carolina's 100 counties. As described in our High-Quality Plan below, NC will expand statewide capacity for CCHC and provide more intensive CCHC support in the Transformation Zone.

(c) Promote Healthy Eating Habits, Improve Nutrition, Expand Physical Activity

In addition to nutrition and physical activity requirements built into licensing, The North Carolina Partnership for Children (NCPC) has launched an innovative, three-year statewide initiative, *Shape NC*, to transform young children's earliest experiences with food and physical activity. Supported by Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation with an investment of \$3 million, this model is based on the effective Nutrition and Physical Activity Self Assessment in Child Care (NAP SACC), which has become the basis for First Lady Obama's, Let's Move Child Care initiative. Through Smart Start's local partnerships, *Shape NC* 1) mobilizes communities to develop and implement early childhood obesity prevention action plans; 2) provides training and technical assistance to integrate improvement of physical activity, nutrition, and use of the outdoor learning environment into child care settings; and 3) creates model early learning centers to serve as training sites. *Shape NC* is currently operating in 26 counties and will expand to 15 additional counties in 2012. We will leverage existing resources to bring *Shape NC* to one of the communities in the Transformation Zone. (No RTT-ELC funds are requested for this project.)

(d) Increase the Number of Children with High Needs who are Screened, Referred for Services, and Participate in Ongoing Health Care, with Leverage from Existing Resources

North Carolina has made significant investments in initiatives designed to increase the number of Children with High Needs who are screened, referred for services, receive appropriate follow up and participate in ongoing health care.

NC is using the Assuring Better Health and Child Development (ABCD) model, which is a proven, universal approach to screening young children in primary health care settings. ABCD works to increase health and developmental screening and referral rates for all young children within the medical home by integrating routine developmental screening into well-child visits using either the *Ages and Stages (ASQ)* or the *Parents Evaluation of Developmental Skills (PEDS)* Questionnaires. Medical professionals are also taught to use the *Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (MCHAT)*.

In participating ABCD practices, 99% of children receive recommended developmental screenings. Currently 11 Smart Start local partnerships support ABCD in 16 counties, with eight ABCD Coordinators providing training and on-site technical assistance to medical practices. We plan to leverage those resources to expand statewide by increasing the number of ABCD Coordinators to 15 and linking with the 14 regions of Community Care Network of NC (CCNC). CCNC is an innovative quality assurance network of physicians utilizing Medicaid to provide incentives to improve care based on the American Academy of Pediatrics Bright Futures National Standards.

High-Quality Plan to Identify and Address Health, Behavioral, and Developmental Needs of Children with High Needs

To build on North Carolina's efforts, we are proposing a two-tiered approach to identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness. Tier one includes **statewide** strategies that leverage existing resources to increase the number of Children with High Needs who are screened, referred, receive services and participate in ongoing health care. Tier two involves implementing strategies in the **Transformation Zone** to families of Children with High Needs. As described in Section A.2, the Transformation Zone is a rural and economically disadvantaged geographic region with a very high percentage of Children with High Needs. Both approaches are described

in this section.

(a) Key Goals

1. Improve NC's efforts to ensure that Children with High Needs are screened, referred, and received appropriate services at the earliest possible opportunity.
2. Support the health and behavioral needs of young children and staff in ELD programs.

(b) Key Activities, Rationale and, if applicable, Scale-Up Plans

Statewide

New Health and Safety Requirements: We will enhance our existing requirements by a) requiring that children in regulated ELD programs receive annual health assessments; and b) establishing new nutrition standards based on recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Child Care Health Consultant (CCHC) Model: We plan to build statewide capacity and effectiveness by establishing a regional coaching model for CCHCs targeting promotion of a medical home for ongoing preventive health care and promotion of health literacy. We are selecting a coaching model based on research which shows that coaching is the strongest driver in making sustainable changes in the classroom (Fixen, Naom, Blasé, Friedman, Wallace, 2005). Two regional coaches will receive intensive training and supervision from the NC Child Care Health and Safety Resource Center (NCCCHSRC) in the coaching model using a train-the-trainer approach to impact coaching expertise to CCHCs, who will, in turn, coach child care staff.

ABCD Expansion: We will expand ABCD to cover the entire state by providing funds to hire seven additional ABCD coordinators to local partnerships in areas not covered by existing ABCD coordinators and regionalizing the ABCD services.

Transformation Zone

CCHC: Expand CCHCs in the Transformation Zone counties by adding two additional CCHCs to train and coach center staff to integrate children's connection to a medical home into the center's routines and policies, as well as overall health promotion coaching, including health literacy. Having additional CCHCs for these underserved counties will allow more intensive penetration of CCHC services.

NorthEast Connects: In order to leverage existing resources, e.g., Medicaid, home

visiting and family strengthening, to increase the number of Children with High Needs who are screened, referred, receive services and participate in ongoing health care, we will replicate an evidence-based *Child Find and Triage Initiative* in the Transformation Zone. See Appendix 21 for additional information about this model. The initiative, which we will call NorthEast Connects, is an inexpensive (\$700 per family), short-term, community-based nurse home visiting program designed to ensure that Children with High Needs are enrolled in the services that meet their needs. It provides 4-7 nurse intervention contacts to each enrolled family, beginning with a visit during the birthing hospital stay, followed by 1-3 home visits between 3-8 weeks of infancy as well as contacts with community service providers as needed. The initiative is designed to ensure that resources are optimally matched with family needs. Approximately six hundred families in selected Transformation Zone counties will be served by NorthEast Connects. A contract will be awarded through an RFP process to a community-based agency to provide NorthEast Connects. Principal costs will be for the implementing agency's staffing, primarily home visiting nurses but also supervisory support and operating expenses. Additional costs will include nurse home visitor training through an agency that has implemented the model and project evaluation through an agency that has evaluated the model.

Shape NC: We will leverage existing resources to bring the Shape NC nutrition and physical activity initiative to one of the communities in the Transformation Zone, where we will create a model early learning center with a new outdoor learning environment. No RTT-ELC funds will be used for this effort.

(c)Timeline and Milestones for each Key Activity

Health and Safety Requirements

Year 1: Nutrition Rules will be recommended for incorporation into minimum licensing standards.

Year 2-4: Proposed rules will be introduced that will require children in regulated ELD programs to receive annual health assessments.

ABCD	
Year 1:	<p>New ABCD Coordinators hired and trained</p> <p>New and existing ABCD Coordinators are linked with CCNC regional networks and provide on-site training and TA to medical practices; begin collecting ABCD data for evaluation and quality improvement</p>
Years 2-4:	<p>ABCD Coordinators continue work with existing medical practices and add new practices; continue data collection and reporting; make program adjustments as needed to improve results</p>
CCHC	
Year 1:	<p>Regional CCHC Coaches hired and trained in NCCCHSRC curriculum for coaching and linkage to Medical Home</p> <p>Transformation Zone CCHCs hired and trained</p> <p>CCHC Coaches train local CCHCs in the coaching/mentoring model and ongoing CCHC services and evaluation occur</p>
Years 2-4:	<p>Regional CCHC coaches continue work with CCHCs across the state; continue data collection and reporting; make program adjustments as needed to improve results</p> <p>Transformation Zone CCHCs continue work with local ELD programs</p>
NorthEast Connects	
Year 1:	<p>The Division of Public Health will issue an RFA to implement the triage/child find initiative in the Transformation Zone and a provider will be selected</p> <p>Community partners will be invited to information sessions to learn about the triage/child find initiative</p> <p>Triage/child find services initiated in communities in the Transformation Zone</p> <p>The Division of Public Health and partners will use data and evaluation results to learn and improve as services are delivered in the transformation zone in order to learn what is required to effectively scale up and roll out services and support to other high-need areas of the state</p>
Years 2-4:	<p>Child find/triage staff continue to work with community partners to connect with parents, link families (especially families with high needs) to appropriate community resources providing high quality early care and education, health and mental health care, family strengthening</p>

services and other supports likely to improve child outcomes.

Shape NC
Year 1:

Shape NC grant awarded to local partnership

Model early learning center selected jointly by a NC organization with a network of local early childhood partnerships and the local partnership

Shape NC orientation and training held

Years 2-4:

Local partnership staff begin development of community early childhood obesity prevention plan; begin work with early learning center

Local partnerships complete community early childhood obesity prevention plans and begin implementation of plan

Model early learning center completed and begins to offer tours and training to other ELD programs in area

(d) Party or Parties Responsible and Key Personnel Assigned

DCDEE will work with the Child Care Commission on the rule-making process. The ECAC will contract with a NC organization with a network of local early childhood partnerships to manage the Child Care Health Consultant and ABCD projects, working closely with CCNC to assure an integrated ABCD model and contracting with an organization with expertise in training child care health consultants to hire, train and supervise regional CCHC Coaches. The Division of Public Health will manage NorthEast Connects, working closely with all partners to integrate the project into the larger Transformation Zone effort. DPH will contract with a NC organization with expertise and experience doing work similar to NorthEast Connects.

(e) Financial Resources

The ABCD and CCHC are both activities in the Partnership Initiative project in the ECAC. The cost of the ABCD activity is \$2,665,609. The cost of CCHC is \$2,169,367. A total of \$1,998,750 will support the NorthEast Connects project at the Division of Public Health.

Smart Start local partnerships will continue current investments in ABCD and CCHC totaling an estimated \$15,784,166 over the four years of the project, and NCPC will leverage approximately \$2 million in private funds for Shape NC. To sustain this expanded ABCD capacity beyond the life of this grant, Smart Start will explore options for Medicaid

reimbursement and we will seek to sustain the increased CCHC services by exploring potential state and private resources. The Division of Public Health will explore options for reimbursement through Medicaid and other funders for the triage/child find initiative. Data from a population-level randomized clinical trial for the triage/child find model we are using will be presented to potential funders. See Appendix 21 for references and additional information about this Child Find and Triage model. As described in section A.4, the North Carolina Early Childhood Advisory Council also will develop a sustainability plan for the Early Learning Challenge State Plan in Years 2 and 3 of the grant, which may provide additional sustainability strategies for this work.

(f) Supporting Evidence

Appendix 22 includes the report, Quality Enhancement Program for Infants and Toddlers (2000-07), which demonstrated the effectiveness of Child Care Health Consultation in NC. See Appendix 21 for a description of the child find/triage model that we will implement. Appendix 23 provides supporting evidence for the effectiveness of the ABCD model in North Carolina.

(g) Performance Measures, where applicable

All of these efforts will help us meet our ambitious but achievable performance measure targets specified in Table C.3.d.

(h) Addressing the Needs of Different Types of ELD Programs

All strategies outlined in this section are applicable and accessible to all ELD programs (e.g., child care centers, family child care homes, Head Start, NC Pre-K).

(i) Meeting the Needs of Children with High Needs, as well as the unique needs of special populations of Children with High Needs

The selected strategies are particularly effective in meeting the needs of Children with High Needs and the unique needs of special populations (e.g., children at risk for developmental delays, children with special health care needs) who will benefit from comprehensive screenings, early identification, and referral to appropriate services.

Performance Measures for (C)(3)(d) Leveraging existing resources to meet ambitious yet achievable annual statewide targets.					
	<i>Baseline and annual targets</i>				
	Baseline (Today, if known) <i>If unknown please use narrative to explain plan for defining baseline and setting and meeting annual targets</i>	Target for end of calendar year 2012	Target for end of calendar year 2013	Target for end of calendar year 2014	Target for end of calendar year 2015
Number of Children with High Needs screened ^a	<1: 74,256 (92%) 1-2: 125,043 (80%) 3-5: 114,207 (69%) ^a	< 1: 92% 1-2: 81% 3-5: 70% ^a	< 1: 93% 1-2: 83% 3-5: 72% ^a	< 1: 94% 1-2: 84% 3-5: 74% ^a	< 1: 95% 1-2: 85% 3-5: 75% ^a
Number of Children with High Needs referred for services who received follow-up/treatment	No state level data available				
Number of Children with High Needs who participate in ongoing health care as part of a schedule of well child care ^b	No state level data available ^b				
Of these participating children, the number or percentage of children who are up-to-date in a schedule of well child care ^c	66.7% (230,053) of children with high needs at 15 months old are up-to-date. 70.9% (118,723) of high needs children ages 3-6 years are up-to-date ^c	68% of children with high needs at 15 months, and 72% of 3-6 year olds are up-to-date ^c	70% of children with high needs at 15 months, and 73% of 3-6 year olds are up-to-date ^c	73% of children with high needs at 15 months, and 3-6 years are up-to-date ^c	75% of children with high needs at 15 months, and at 3-6 years are up-to-date ^c
Note: High needs children in this table are defined as children ages 0-5 who are eligible for Medicaid.					
^a Data represent the number of children by years of age who are eligible for Medicaid and received at least one initial or periodic screening during the 2007-2008 year. Data source: CMS HCFA-416 Annual EPSDT Participation Report http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dma/healthcheck/cms416fy0708.pdf					
^b Data are not available on the number of children who participate in ongoing health care as part of a schedule of well child care. However, data are collected on screenings using a Screening Ratio, which					

Performance Measures for (C)(3)(d) Leveraging existing resources to meet ambitious yet achievable annual statewide targets.					
<i>Baseline and annual targets</i>					
	Baseline (Today, if known) <i>If unknown please use narrative to explain plan for defining baseline and setting and meeting annual targets</i>	Target for end of calendar year 2012	Target for end of calendar year 2013	Target for end of calendar year 2014	Target for end of calendar year 2015
<p>indicates the extent to which EPSDT eligibles receive the number of initial and periodic screening services required by the State’s periodicity schedule, adjusted by the proportion of the year for which they are Medicaid eligible (using a CMS formula). For the 2007-2008 year, for children under age 1, the screening ratio was 1.59; the screening ratio for children ages 1-2 years was 1.05; and it was 0.74 for children ages 3-5 years. Because EPSDT allows for additional interperiodic well child checkups and screenings for children when needed, these screening ratios may exceed 1.0 (or 100%).</p> <p>^c Data are only available for those children on Medicaid who were continuously eligible for the year ending March 2011, and looks at children at two time periods, 15 months old and 3-6 years old. Therefore, these numbers do not represent children who participated in ongoing health care, but were not continuously eligible. For a 15 month old to be considered up-to-date, they must have received 6+ visits; while children ages 3-6 years old must have received an annual visit. Data source: Quality Measurement and Feedback Initiative Data (QMAF) Report, 2011.</p>					

(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate information and support to families of Children with High Needs in order to promote school readiness for their children by--

- (a) Establishing a progression of culturally and linguistically appropriate standards for family engagement across the levels of its Program Standards, including activities that enhance the capacity of families to support their children’s education and development;
- (b) Increasing the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators trained and supported on an on-going basis to implement the family engagement strategies included in the Program Standards; and
- (c) Promoting family support and engagement statewide, including by leveraging other existing resources such as through home visiting programs, other family-serving agencies, and through outreach to family, friend, and neighbor caregivers.

If the State chooses to respond to this selection criterion, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Evidence for (C)(4)(a):

- To the extent the State has established a progression of family engagement standards across the levels of Program Standards that meet the elements in criterion (C)(4)(a), submit--
 - The progression of culturally and linguistically appropriate family engagement standards used in the Program Standards that includes strategies successfully used to engage families in supporting their children's development and learning. A State's family engagement standards must address, but need not be limited to: parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and adult and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development;
 - Documentation that this progression of standards includes activities that enhance the capacity of families to support their children's education and development.

Evidence for (C)(4)(b):

- To the extent the State has existing and projected numbers and percentages of Early Childhood Educators who receive training and support on the family engagement strategies included in the Program Standards, the State shall submit documentation of these data. If the State does not have these data, the State shall outline its plan for deriving them.

Evidence for (C)(4)(c):

- Documentation of the State's existing resources that are or will be used to promote family support and engagement statewide, including through home visiting programs and other family-serving agencies and the identification of new resources that will be used to promote family support and engagement statewide.

(Enter narrative here – recommended maximum of three pages)

North Carolina values families as the primary educators of young children and works to support them in preparing their children for school and life. We are proposing a two-tiered approach to engaging and supporting families of young children: tier one focuses on statewide strategies and tier two focuses on Transformation Zone strategies. Statewide strategies include: (1) strengthening the TQRIS program standards for engaging and supporting families and (2) utilizing our Head Start grantees as “hubs” for supporting the workforce in other Early Learning and Development programs as they implement family engagement strategies. The Transformation Zone strategy involves providing a package of evidence based family strengthening services and a universal home visiting, screening and referral program to families of Children with High Needs in the Transformation Zone. The Transformation Zone includes economically depressed and rural communities in North Carolina. Both approaches are described in this section.

Statewide

(a) Family Engagement Program Standards

NC currently has several family engagement program standards. Our licensing rules require each center to have a plan to encourage parent participation and inform parents about the program and its services. The plan includes things like registration, parent-staff meeting, and parent participation opportunities. Facilities that are at the 2-5 star level have an option to receive an extra point if they have evidence of at least two of the following: parent newsletters offered at least quarterly, a parent advisory board, periodic conferences for all children, or parent information meetings offered at least quarterly. Developmental day programs must meet additional family engagement requirements such as parent conferences, parent members of an advisory board, and quarterly parent education sessions. The NC Pre-K program requires classrooms to provide meaningful opportunities for families to be engaged in their child’s education through, for example, home visits, opportunities to participate in the classroom, and involvement in decision-making. Finally, Head Start has its own standards for parent and community engagement.

As described in Section B.1, North Carolina is completing its revisions to the TQRIS and

will provide a unified and stronger set of program standards related to family engagement and support. The new program standards are largely adapted from Head Start Performance Standards, and will require orientation information be provided for parents when they enroll, on-going communication with families, specified parent education materials/information be provided for families, and steps be taken to provide cultural and linguistic appropriate services. This important change to NC's TQRIS will broaden the strong family engagement supports of Head Start to many other sectors of the early childhood system.

(b) Increasing the Number and Percentage of Early Childhood Educators Trained and Supported on an On-Going Basis to Implement the Family Engagement Strategies in the Program Standards

We will leverage the family engagement strengths of our Head Start programs in supporting Early Childhood Educators across the state to strengthen their family engagement and support activities. Serving all 100 counties in NC, Head Start grantees will be utilized as “hubs” for coaching and technical assistance on new TQRIS family engagement standards for ELD programs in their service areas. Head Start Family and Community Partnerships managers and staff will provide guidance, share information, and demonstrate best practice for supporting children's school readiness based on the *Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework* (PCFE). Early childhood partners will be supported in their endeavor to comply with new TQRIS family engagement policies that will strengthen service delivery and lead to positive parent-child relationships, family well-being, and deeper family connections to communities. We believe that the Head Start hubs will foster stronger relationships among the various ELD programs in a region, which will yield results far after this grant has ended.

The workforce data system that will be developed as described in Section E.2 will provide our system with the ability to track the number of educators that receive training, as well as the number of teachers that receive training in a given topic in the state each year.

Transformation Zone

(c) Promoting Family Support and Engagement

The North Carolina Division of Public Health will provide a continuum of options for evidence based family strengthening programs and infrastructure supports to families of Children with High Needs in the Transformation Zone. The final menu of family strengthening options

that are part of the package will be decided as part of the community planning and readiness assessment process described in Section (A)(2). The options that will be available to communities in the Transformation Zone include Positive Parenting Program (Triple P), Strengthening Families, Incredible Years, and Parents as Teachers.

High-Quality Plan for Family Support and Engagement

(a) Key Goals

1. To support the implementation of a common set of TQRIS family engagement program standards in ELD programs, which will foster strong relationship between families and ELD programs to jointly support the school readiness skills of young children.
2. To stimulate and strengthen cross-sector partnerships among ELD programs by leveraging the family engagement strengths of North Carolina's Head Start programs to serve as hubs in their service area for coaching and technical assistance about family engagement.
3. To provide a continuum of well implemented evidence based family strengthening programs to families with high needs in the Transformation Zone.

(b) Key Activities, Rationale and, if applicable, Scale-Up Plans

Statewide

The new Family Engagement standards will be adopted as part of the revisions to the TQRIS standards described in B1. To support the implementation of the new TQRIS family and community engagement standards, Head Start programs will be utilized as regional hubs for coaching, mentoring, and technical assistance to the early childhood partners in their service areas. Twenty NC Head Start grantees across the state will provide guidance, share information, and demonstrate best practices for their early childhood partners that support children's school readiness based on the Head Start (PCFE). Head Start programs in NC serve about 25,000 children birth to 5 and their families in all 100 North Carolina counties.

The coaching and technical assistance content will be delivered in a variety of formats to early childhood partners including site visits to Head Start hubs for observation and shadowing experiences, as well as ongoing, community-based workshops or community of practice groups on family and community engagement theory and strategies. Head Start Family and Community Partnerships managers and staff will provide support in the following ways: a) sharing of processes and strategies for family-goal setting for personal and family sustainability, b) sharing

strategies for parent involvement outreach (including fathers and other caretakers), c) offering shadowing experiences for family home visits, d) modeling parent leadership and program governance, and e) demonstrating effective parent education for self and to support child development and transitions.

Transformation Zone Family Strengthening Strategies

North Carolina recognizes the critical role that families play in school readiness and has made a strong commitment to invest in proven family strengthening programs. Public and private funders have also made a commitment to support the infrastructure necessary for successful implementation of evidence based programs. While there has been a great deal of progress toward expanding evidence based family strengthening programs and building the infrastructure needed to support implementation, these programs are scattered and they may not always have the implementation support needed to deliver the model with fidelity. Families frequently get the services that are available rather than the service that matches the intensity of their needs and they may receive something other than the program as it was designed. These challenges are particularly prevalent in rural and economically disadvantaged communities in the state.

The project that we are proposing here is designed to address these challenges and to answer questions about the best way to align services and provide the needed array of services so that families with different levels of need receive the intensity of support they need at the level and time they need it to ensure that their children can succeed in school and in life. Specifically, we are proposing to test the following in the Transformation Zone as part of the Early Learning Challenge Grant:

- A continuum of evidence based family strengthening services designed to meet the needs of families with different levels of need. It is critical that the community lead the selection process to identify which evidence based programs would best meet the needs of that community. These programs would be delivered with full implementation support, including support for planning, pre-service and in-service training, clinical consultation, coaching, program evaluation and quality assurance. The timeline and milestones for this activity are described below.

Families with high needs will be identified and referred to these family strengthening services through the child find and triage system described in Section C3. Families may also be referred to the high quality partial day early learning option described in Section B4.

(c) Timeline and Milestones for each Key Activity

Head Start Hubs to Provide Statewide Support for Family Engagement Strategies

January 2012- February 2012	Competitive selection of 10 Head Start Hub sites across the state from the existing 58 Head Start grantees in NC
March 2012- December 2012	Technical assistance, demonstration, and coaching regarding family engagement strategies provided by 10 Head Start Hub sites to ECE workforce in non-Head Start ELD programs in the area.
July 2012	Formative evaluation of the saturation, intensity, and impact of the Head Start Hubs
December 2012	Competitive selection of a second round of 10 Head Start Hub sites (for a total of 20 Head Start Hubs)
January 2013- December 2015	Each of the 20 Head Start Hub sites around the state will continue to provide technical assistance, demonstration, and coaching regarding family engagement strategies
July 2013 - July 2014	Formative evaluation of the saturation, intensity, and impact of the Head Start Hubs
January 2015	Sustainability plan to continue Head Start Hubs

Family Strengthening Services in the Transformation Region

January 2012	Division of Public Health will fill their Parenting Position to support this activity provided it position can be unfrozen
March 2012	Rural and economically disadvantaged communities will be invited to participate in a planning and community readiness assessment process prior to applying for funding to participate in the Transformation Zone
August 2012	Planning and community readiness assessments are completed. As part of the process, communities decide on the specific package of family strengthening options that are appropriate for their community
September 2012	Communities submit applications to participate in Transformation Zone
October 2012	Communities are selected for Transformation Zone
October 2012	Division of Public Health will secure contracts for family strengthening programs and infrastructure to support model fidelity and assure quality for each of the family strengthening programs
October 2012 – December 2015	Family strengthening services with full implementation support are delivered to families in the communities in the Transformation Zone

October 2012 – December 2015 The Division of Public Health and partners will use data and evaluation results to learn and improve as services are delivered in the Transformation Zone in order to learn what is required to effectively scale up and roll out these services and supports to other high-need areas of the state.

January 2015 Sustainability plan to continue evidence based family strengthening programs

(d) Party or Parties Responsible and Key Personnel Assigned

The Head Start State Collaboration Office in the Department of Public Instruction will oversee the Head Start Hub project. The Director of the Head Start State Collaboration Office will be primarily responsible for this project.

The Division of Public Health will oversee the family strengthening services provided in the Transformation Zone. The Chief of the Women's and Children's Health Section in the Division of Public Health will be primarily responsible for this project.

(e) Financial Resources

The total cost of the Family Engagement Project within the Head Start Collaboration Office in the Office of Early Learning is \$2,000,000. The Family Strengthening Initiatives activity at the Division of Public Health will cost \$3,969,210. As described in section A.4, the Early Childhood Advisory Council will develop a sustainability plan for this work in Years 2 and 3 of the grant.

(f) Supporting Evidence

The Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework is provided in Appendix 24.

(g) Performance Measures, where applicable

N/A

(h) Addressing the Needs of Different Types of ELD Programs

Early learning and development services are delivered in a range of settings in NC, including private child care centers and family child care homes, publicly-funded settings, and special settings like military and Tribal child care. These services in each of these settings are unified, licensed, and monitored according to a common set of program standards based on a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. The Head Start hub sites will strengthen

existing relationships or stimulate new ones among ELD programs and the ECE workforce to improve family/community engagement services across the system. All early childhood partners will be provided coaching, mentoring, and technical assistance opportunities on family engagement practices that are aligned with their current scope of services and that are built on the already existing networks and alliances among providers in NC.

(i) Meeting the needs of Children with High Needs, as well as the unique needs of special populations of Children with High Needs

The coaching, mentoring, and technical assistance provided by the Head Started hub sites will be based on the unique brand of comprehensive services that are required by the Head Start Performance Standards and that are tailored to meet the needs of children and families at considerable risk of school failure and unhealthy development. Head Start programs are legislatively required to serve children and families of greatest need, including children and families in the Migrant/Seasonal system as well as those who reside on Indian lands. The pool of Head Start hub sites assembled to deliver family/community engagement coaching and technical assistance will be drawn from Head Start grantees with special skills and experience with delivering such services to Children with High Needs, including those of special populations.

Each of the family strengthening options in the Transformation Zone project is based on a fundamental understanding that each family that enrolls in the program comes with a unique set of needs. Families with Children with High Needs, including those in special populations, will participate in a strengths-based assessment process as part of any of the family strengthening programs offered so that their unique needs are addressed and they can enjoy the benefits of these effective programs.

D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

Note: The total available points for (D)(1) and (D)(2) = 40. The 40 available points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (D), each criterion will be worth up to 20 points.

The applicant must address one or more selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (D).

(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to--

(a) Develop a common, statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework designed to promote children's learning and development and improve child outcomes;

(b) Develop a common, statewide progression of credentials and degrees aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework; and

(c) Engage postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in aligning professional development opportunities with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

If the State chooses to respond to this selection criterion, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Evidence for (D)(1):

- To the extent the State has developed a common, statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework that meets the elements in criterion (D)(1), submit:
 - The Workforce Knowledge and Competencies;
 - Documentation that the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework addresses the elements outlined in the definition of Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework in Definitions (section III) and is

designed to promote children's learning and development and improve outcomes.

(Enter narrative here – recommended maximum of five pages)

North Carolina has chosen to write only to the D.2 Selection Criteria.

(D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to improve the effectiveness and retention of Early Childhood Educators who work with Children with High Needs, with the goal of improving child outcomes by--

(a) Providing and expanding access to effective professional development opportunities that are aligned with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework;

(b) Implementing policies and incentives (*e.g.*, scholarships, compensation and wage supplements, tiered reimbursement rates, other financial incentives, management opportunities) that promote professional improvement and career advancement along an articulated career pathway that is aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and that are designed to increase retention;

(c) Publicly reporting aggregated data on Early Childhood Educator development, advancement, and retention; and

(d) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for--

(1) Increasing the number of postsecondary institutions and professional development providers with programs that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and the number of Early Childhood Educators who receive credentials from postsecondary institutions and professional development providers that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework; and

(2) Increasing the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who are progressing to higher levels of credentials that align with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

If the State chooses to respond to this selection criterion, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Additionally, the State must provide baseline data and set targets for the performance measure under (D)(2)(c)(1) and (D)(2)(c)(2).

*(Enter **narrative** here – recommended maximum of five pages)*

As described in Section A.1 and A.2, we have a strong history in investing in our early childhood workforce because we know that *people* ultimately make the difference in the lives of young children. Much of our State Plan is directed towards activities to support the continued education and professional development of NC's early childhood workforce. Because of the larger size of projects funded in this section, we have organized this section differently than the others. Instead of one high-quality plan, multiple high-quality plans are presented for various activities—organized for each of the (a) (b) and (c) criteria. It may be useful to refer to Appendix 6 for a chart of all projects and activities in the NC State Plan. *[Note to reviewers: We apologize for the length of this section, but we believe it is very important to provide a detailed description our plans, and many of our activities fall in the D.2 Selection Criteria.]*

Overview

In 1990, to work in a licensed child care center as a lead teacher in North Carolina, you had to have a high school diploma, be literate and of “good moral turpitude.” Our child care licensing standards were some of the worst in the nation, very few in our workforce had any formal education, most were paid little more than minimum wage and the turnover rate for teachers in programs was around 40% annually. Data from our first early childhood workforce study in 1990 painted a dismal picture of teacher qualifications, compensation and turnover.

Employers were not

supportive of

additional

professional

development for

their teaching staff,

as most program

administrators did

not have a college

degree or even

college coursework.

And there was no

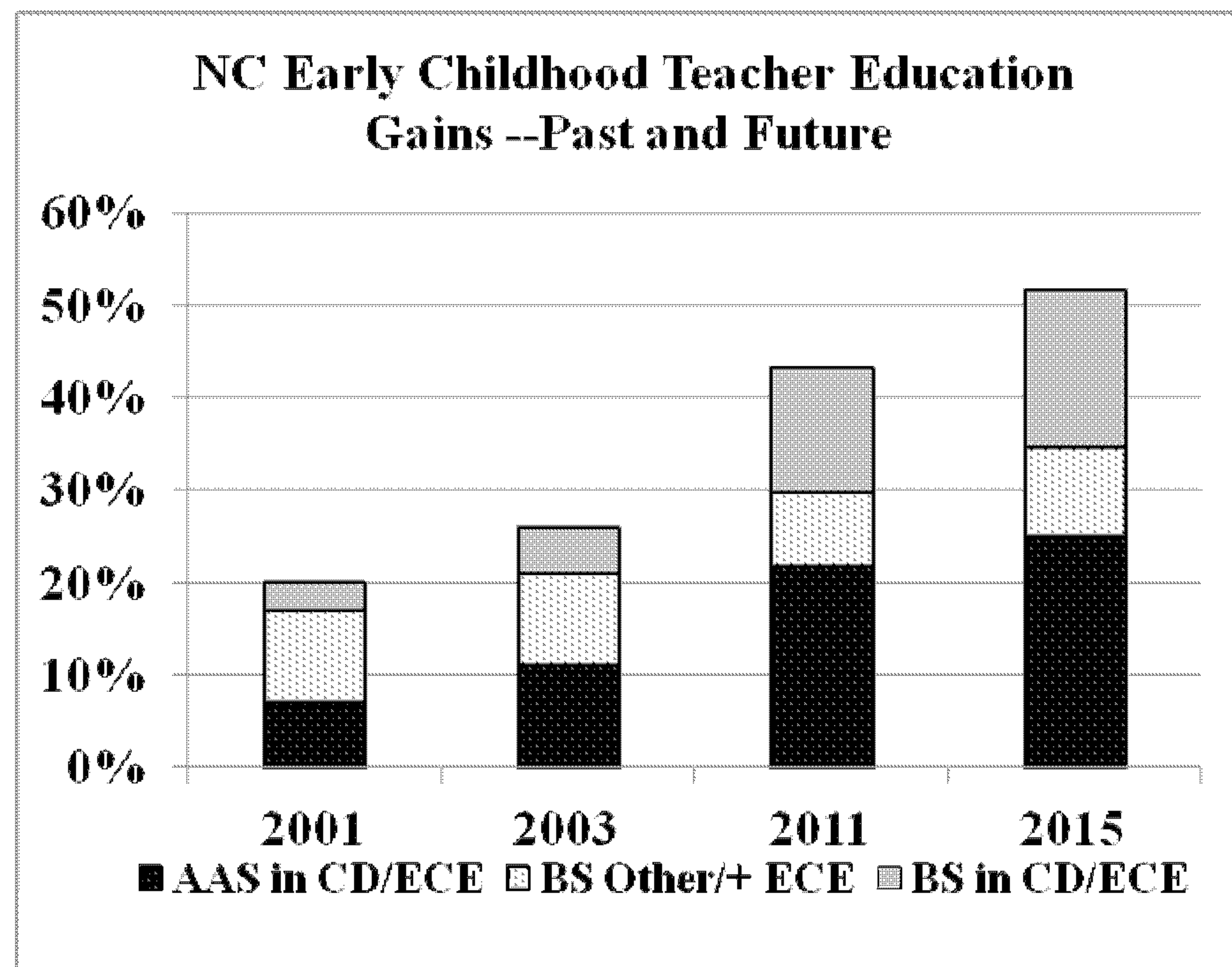
coordinated

professional

development system

in place to help create better career pathways and early care and education jobs.

Twenty-one years later North Carolina can report steady, incremental and remarkable gains in its professional development system, its incentives and standards for the workforce, and in the professional qualifications, compensation and stability of the workforce itself. Through multi-agency collaboration, strategic planning and investments, incentives and mandates, North Carolina can be proud of the gains it has made. In 2011, the state has almost five times the number of teachers working in licensed child care, Head Start and Pre-K settings with a Bachelor’s Degree in Early Childhood Education or Child Development and has tripled the number of teachers with an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education. See the figure in this section for changes over time.)



Since 1990 North Carolina has had data from periodic workforce studies that profile the education, compensation and retention of the workforce. Preliminary data from the latest study, due to be finished in early 2012, provide evidence on the educational progress of the workforce. Through the educational standards embedded in the state's tiered license and the requirement for a B-K license for a lead teacher in an NC Pre-K classroom, as well as the universal availability of T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® scholarships, the limited but strategic availability of T.E.A.C.H. Health Insurance partnerships and the wide, but not universal, dispersion of salary supplements, North Carolina's early childhood workforce has been encouraged, supported and mandated to increase its education.

North Carolina's Core Knowledge and Competency Framework

North Carolina has taken a systemic approach to improving the knowledge and competencies of its early childhood workforce. Using data from early workforce studies and data on the educational levels of our larger workforce, it was clear that North Carolina needed an approach to professional development that focused on raising the level of general education and early childhood specific education. Most in the workforce were not ready for 4-year degrees. Fortunately, however, North Carolina had a great asset in the wide dispersion of its 58 community colleges that served all 100 counties. In the early 1990's 28 of those community colleges had associate degree programs in early childhood education. Using that as a foundation, North Carolina provided the incentives (scholarships) and standards to drive demand, and thus the supply of early childhood associate degree programs expanded, increasing to all 58 by 1998. At a minimum every teacher who does not have an early childhood degree must take at least one core course at a local community college within six months of hire, thus introducing teachers to the community colleges' offerings and opportunities. When the 5-tiered rated license system (TQRIS) was introduced in 1999, the education of teaching and administrative staff made up 33% of a program's score. By 2006, the standards were changed, making education points 50% of the rated-license score. With the help of scholarships and salary supplements, more and more teachers and assistant teachers came to the community college to take courses so their programs could meet higher standards. In that process, teachers who never thought they could attend college began educational journeys that have led to associate, bachelor and master's degrees in early childhood education.

Framed by a common course catalog that allows for complete portability between the state's community colleges, North Carolina's community college system has established learning outcomes for students (Appendix 25). These have been adopted by our state as the first part of our Core Knowledge and Competencies. Each course within the certificates and degrees offered include the appropriate competencies. This makes sense for North Carolina as we have used community college coursework, credentials and degrees as the education standards for our rated license.

All community college early childhood programs just completed a Curriculum Improvement Process in Early Childhood Education. This effort:

- Provided faculty with training and tools to improve their knowledge and practices,
- Redefined and strengthened 65 early childhood courses in the common course catalog,
- Developed or revised course competencies for all of the core courses that must be offered in early childhood statewide,
- Tied these competencies to the states Early Learning and Development Standards for both preschoolers and infants and toddlers,
- Created nine new courses, and
- Set prerequisites for basic reading and writing skills for most of the courses.

This process has greatly improved the quality and consistency of instruction for students within the community colleges' early childhood degree programs.

In the early 1990's only a few of our state's public and private colleges and universities offered a 4-year degree in child development. Then in 1992 the State Board of Education adopted the Birth-Kindergarten Teaching License. To offer this license, universities and colleges had to be approved based on offering a standard course of study to prepare individuals to work with all infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and kindergarteners with and without disabilities, including those at risk, and their families. As standards were raised and scholarships became available, more and more colleges and universities became approved. A Birth-Kindergarten Consortium, a group of faculty from universities offering coursework leading to the B-K license, meet regularly to work on common areas of interest, including adopting B-K teaching standards and addressing articulation.

The B-K standards for teachers in North Carolina were adopted by the State Board of Education and serve as the second half of NC's core knowledge and competencies framework for

teachers. (See Appendix 26.) Combined with the community colleges' competencies for teachers, the two frame what NC wants and can expect for teachers with concomitant levels of education. We have chosen to use these two systems to provide our workforce with the education it needs to meet our state's long-term educational goal. North Carolina looks different than many states because we have based our minimum educational standards for teachers on formal coursework and we have completely aligned them with our higher education system.

High-Quality Plan Section (h): Meeting the Needs of All Early Learning and Development Programs

North Carolina has designed its professional development system to be relevant and available to personnel working in all settings, including child care, Head Start and Pre-K, both center-based and home-based. We have used our licensing structure to frame tiered-standards for all settings and have worked to mandate universal participation in that system. For the purposes of this Section D, the activities described below will be available system wide, unless otherwise noted. *[To minimize the length of this section, we will not duplicate this section for each of the high-quality plans.]*

High-Quality Plan Section (i): Meeting the Needs of Children with High Needs as well as the unique needs of special populations of Children with High Needs

North Carolina's early childhood higher education system has built its curricula on an inclusive framework, with all courses addressing the needs of typically and atypically developing children. In addition, within both the 2-year and 4-year colleges and universities there are courses that speak exclusively to children and families with high and special needs. Within our Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) system, workshops and CEUs are offered routinely on topics related to children with high and unique needs. At least 40% of children in our licensed settings are children with high needs, because they come from families living in poverty or with very low incomes. All goals and strategies described in this section are designed to serve all children, unless specifically targeted to teachers working with special populations of children. *[To minimize the length of this section, we will not duplicate this section for each of the high-quality plans.]*

(a) Providing and Expanding Access to Effective, Professional Development Aligned with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework

As described above, North Carolina has aligned our state's workforce knowledge and competency framework with our well-developed higher education system. This system provides the foundational core of professional development for our early childhood workforce. However, North Carolina has long realized that improved teaching and administrator practices come with ongoing, high quality and intentional professional development, coaching, mentoring and technical assistance. Typically these services have been delivered within our CCR&R and Smart Start systems. It has been the historical combination of the two approaches that has driven the quality of classrooms forward. Below the reader will find both types of strategies that are embedded across all of these systems.

High-Quality Plan for Workforce- Activity 1: B-K Teacher Licensure

(a) Key Goals

The Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) will provide stipends to a group of highly trained coaches to support SP2 B-K teacher licensure for teachers working with Children with High Needs in non-NC Pre-K classrooms.

(b) Key Activities, Rationale and, if applicable, Scale-Up Plans

Teachers in public schools have an induction system (self-assessment, mentoring, evaluation, professional development plan) in place through their local education agencies (LEA) or public schools to support their movement from the initial licensure stage (B-K SP1 License) to a continuing licensure level (B-K SP2 License). In 2001, when our state pre-k program was established, a similar system to support pre-k teachers who worked in non-public schools (private child care and Head Start programs) did not exist. In January 2007, similar services for pre-k teachers who worked in non-public schools were established. A trained mentor was then assigned to a newly B-K licensed teacher until he/she completed the requirements for the BK SP2 license. Beginning teachers worked with their mentor on the development of a professional development plan, peer and evaluator observations and plans/goals to improve practice. All of these supports were offered through the Office of Early Learning (OEL) Teacher Licensure Unit.

With the transition of our state pre-k program from OEL to DCDEE, a new unit has been created, the Early Educator Support, Teacher Licensure and Professional Development Unit (Unit). This Unit now identifies, trains and contracts with appropriate mentors and evaluators to support newly B-K licensed NC Pre-K teachers working in non-public school settings. Yet there

are many teachers who graduate with an initial B-K license who want to work with children younger than 4-year-olds with high needs in non-public school settings. This project will make full B-K teacher licensure (SP2) available to them with the support of highly trained, experienced mentors.

(c) Timeline and Milestones

TIMELINE	Year One Quarters				Year Two Quarters				Year Three Quarters				Year Four Quarters			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Activity 1: B-K License																
Identify and train mentors to work with newly licensed B-K teachers	√				√				√				√			
Recruit newly licensed B-K teachers working in non-public school settings interested in moving to full licensure	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Provide mentoring and support services to newly licensed B-K teachers		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Evaluate teaching practices of newly licensed B-K teachers and provide feedback to inform professional development plans				√				√				√				√

(d) Party or Parties Responsible and Key Personnel Assigned

Staff within DCDEE will contract with appropriately trained mentors and evaluators to work with identified, newly B-K licensed teachers working in licensed, non-public school settings.

(e) Financial Resources

This activity is one of two activities in the Certification and Licensure Project at the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE). The cost for the B-K Licensure

activity is \$800,000.

(f) Supporting Evidence

N/A

(g) Performance Measures, where applicable

This activity supports Performance Measures for D.2.d.1 and D.2.d.2. Ninety-five percent (95%) of teachers receiving mentoring support and working with children with high needs in non-public school, licensed classrooms will achieve their SP2 B-K license by 2015.

High-Quality Plan for Workforce- Activity 2: Educator Efficacy Endorsement and Certification

(a) Key Goals

The NC Institute for Child Development Professionals (Institute) will develop the Educator Efficacy Endorsement and provide at a reduced fee Certification and Endorsement assessments for the workforce to encourage full participation in the system.

(b) Key Activities, Rationale and, if applicable, Scale-Up Plans

In the past four years, the North Carolina Institute for Child Development Professionals has begun the development of a professional recognition system for the entire early childhood and school-age workforce. Early Educator Certification, its first effort focused on teachers, acknowledges an individual's verified level of educational achievement, based on a standardized scale. Two scales are available: Early Care and Education and School-age. The development of these scales was a collaborative process, involving key leaders across all systems, including Head Start, Pre-K and child care, as well as higher education, regulatory and workforce incentives systems. Recertification must occur every three to five years and requires completion of CEUs or college courses, whichever fits best into the individual's professional development pathway. Currently there are almost 21,000 individuals working in NC's early care and education and school-age systems who are certified.

While teachers in public schools, nurses, plumbers, doctors and lawyers all have individual recognition for the credentials that they have earned and the competencies those credentials bestow, typically the early care and education system recognizes early childhood programs. Early Educator Certification is trying to change this frame. Once fully developed, this frame will include all early childhood professionals. Through special Endorsements,

different sectors of the workforce will be recognized. The Adult Educator Endorsement is now available to those who provide professional development and training to the early childhood and school-age workforce. This endorsement offers individuals providing professional development workshops and courses the opportunity to have their education, knowledge and skills as an adult educator recognized. An Administrator Endorsement is also in development.

The Educator Efficacy Endorsement is needed to help provide recognition for the education, knowledge and skills of those who provide technical assistance, coaching and mentoring for teachers and administrators in early childhood settings. Currently there are no standards in place for these professionals, yet in North Carolina hundreds of technical assistance personnel work across our state within various systems, including CCR&R, Smart Start, Head Start and Pre-K. This voluntary system would be the first step toward creating a commonly understood expectation of practice for these professionals and giving them appropriate recognition for meeting those expectations.

(c) Timeline and Milestones

TIMELINE Activity 2: Develop the Educator Efficacy Endorsement and offer Early Educator Certification at reduced cost	Year One Quarters				Year Two Quarters				Year Three Quarters				Year Four Quarters			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Convene statewide committee to develop standards for EE Endorsement	√	√	√	√												
Field test EE Endorsement			√													
Advertise availability of EE Endorsement				√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Review applications and provide EE Endorsement, where appropriate					√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Advertise availability of reduced-fee Early Educator		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

Certification																	
Issue Early Educator Certifications	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

(d) Party or Parties Responsible and Key Personnel Assigned

DCDEE will oversee this project. The Institute’s Director will create a statewide committee of early childhood professionals to develop the requirements for the Educator Efficacy Endorsement. In addition, the Institute will certify early educators teaching in the variety of Early Learning and Development settings in the state and provide both an Administrator Endorsement and the Adult Educator Endorsement for trainers.

(e) Financial Resources

This is one of two activities in the Certification and Licensure Project at DCDEE. The cost for the Educator Efficacy Endorsement and Certification activity is \$625,000.

(f) Supporting Evidence

N/A

(g) Performance Measures, where applicable

This activity will help us meet the targets in the Performance Measures Tables D.2.d.1 and D.2.d.2. We also expect that by 2015, 80% of NC’s early childhood teaching workforce will have Early Educator Certification; 60% of Early Childhood Program Administrators will have Early Educator Certification with an Administrator Endorsement; 90% of professional development, coaching, mentoring or technical assistance staff will have their Early Educator Certification with either the Adult Educator Endorsement or the Educator Efficacy Endorsement.

High-Quality Plan for Workforce- Activity 3: Community College Accreditation

(a) Key Goals

All remaining unaccredited community college early childhood programs that have not received prior funding will be eligible to receive grants to help them work toward Accreditation.

(b) Key Activities, Rationale and, if applicable, Scale-Up Plans

With high stakes like subsidy and NC Pre-K payments tied to the level on the tiered-

license, the quality of education within community colleges must be high. Fourteen of our community colleges have achieved National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Early Childhood Associate Degree Accreditation. About 24 more are in process. The state has used federal Child Care Development Block Grant quality dollars and Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) funds to provide resources to those colleges who are working on the process, as it takes time away from teaching to put together the required portfolio. Funds are needed to help the last 20 community colleges achieve accreditation.

(c) Timeline and Milestones

TIMELINE Activity 3: Community College Accreditation	Year One Quarters				Year Two Quarters				Year Three Quarters				Year Four Quarters			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Create RFP for ECADA grant	√															
Award Year One Grants	√															
Award Year Two Grants					√											
Award Year Three Grants									√							
Award Year Four Grants													√			

(d) Party or Parties Responsible and Key Personnel Assigned

The Division of Child Development and Early Education will manage the grants process with the community colleges.

(e) Financial Resources

This activity is one of two activities in the Access and Articulation Project at DCDEE. The cost for the Community College Accreditation activity is \$200,000.

(f) Supporting Evidence

N/A

(g) Performance Measures, where applicable

This activity supports Performance Measures for D.2.d.1 and D.2.d.2. We expect a 58 of NC's Early Childhood Associate Degree Programs to be accredited by 2015.

High-Quality Plan for Workforce- Activity 4: Innovation Fund to Improve Access to Community Colleges

(a) Key Goals

An innovation fund will be established for Community College Early Childhood Degree Programs to increase access and student success.

(b) Key Activities, Rationale and, if applicable, Scale-Up Plans

North Carolina is using the state's community college to raise the level of knowledge and competencies of its early childhood workforce. This system must be accessible to this working population of students, and it must support their success. These working students often have families as well. So courses must be available during evenings and weekends, online and in different parts of a community. They need to also be available in accelerated formats, allowing students to complete them quickly. With an increasing Hispanic population, introductory courses leading to the Early Childhood Certificate (16-18 credit hours) need to be available in Spanish, while student are on their way to learning English.

Many teachers in our workforce are the first generation in their families to go to college. A high proportion of these students must take at least one remedial course to demonstrate proficiency to complete the required college coursework. For example, 40% of the current population of T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® scholarship recipients have taken one or more remedial courses. Research indicates that students who have to take remedial coursework are more likely to drop out of college without innovative interventions to support their success. For example, Central Piedmont Community College has embedded early childhood content within its remedial courses as a way to support student success.

By establishing this innovation fund, community colleges will be able to apply annually to develop and implement strategies that expand access and improve student success. Each strategy must have clear outcomes and an evaluation plan. Information on the success of these projects will be shared with all 58 Early Childhood Degree Programs in the state.

(c) Timeline and Milestones

TIMELINE	Year One				Year Two				Year Three				Year Four			
	Quarters				Quarters				Quarters				Quarters			
Activity 4: Innovation Fund for Community Colleges																
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Create RFP for grants	√															
Award grants annually	√				√				√				√			
Disseminate annual evaluation reports				√				√				√				√

(d) Party or Parties Responsible and Key Personnel Assigned

DCDEE will provide staff support to issue and monitor these grants.

(e) Financial Resources

This activity is one of two activities in the Access and Articulation Project at DCDEE. The cost of the Community College Innovation Fund is \$393,000.

(f) Supporting Evidence

Child Care Services Association maintains a database on community colleges that provides information on the number of courses offered at nights, on weekends, online, on Saturday and in the summer. This fall data will also be collected on the number of courses offered in accelerated format and whether the college offers remedial coursework to early childhood students with early childhood content. This will serve as the baseline for the project. For example, last year of the 58 community colleges, only three offered any early childhood courses in Spanish. Data will be collected each year to track improvements in the accessibility of coursework to meet the needs of the workforce.

(g) Performance Measures, where applicable

This activity supports Performance Measures for D.2.d.2. By 2015 we also expect there to be a 10% increase in the number of courses offered in flexible formats, times or modalities, in Spanish or with early childhood content embedded in remedial reading, math or writing courses from the baseline set in 2011.

High-Quality Plan for Workforce- Activity 5: Online Master’s Degree Program

(a) Key Goals

An online Master’s Degree in Early Childhood Program Leadership and Management will be developed in North Carolina’s higher education system.

(b) Key Activities, Rationale and, if applicable, Scale-Up Plans

As more and more of our workforce have earned 2 and 4 year degrees, it has become apparent that an additional credential is needed within our higher education system. Child care, Head Start and Pre-K program administrators do not have a next step on our professional development pathway to enhance both their leadership and management skills and knowledge. Individuals wanting this next step are often forced to choose degrees offered by out-of-state institutions that do not have the NC context. In addition, staff leading CCR&R and Smart Start agencies, our on-the-ground network of agencies delivering professional development and coaching services to the workforce, as well as educating families about the importance and components of high quality early childhood programs, also need a next step in their professional development.

The Master’s Degree in Early Childhood Program Leadership and Management will be created as an online degree, making it available to everyone in the state. Coursework will include major topics such as personnel development and support, budgeting and financial management, research in early childhood, early childhood systems, the art of leadership, communication and public engagement and diversity and inclusion.

(c) Timeline and Milestones

TIMELINE	Year One Quarters				Year Two Quarters				Year Three Quarters				Year Four Quarters			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Activity 5: Online Master's Degree																
Create formal collaborative agreement between schools for Master's Degree dev/	√	√														

implementation																
Create advisory panel to help define core components and course goals based on system needs	√	√	√													
Develop course goals, descriptions and outline		√	√	√												
Advertise availability of Degree			√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Begin offering courses					√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

(d) Party or Parties Responsible and Key Personnel Assigned

The Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) will oversee this activity, contracting with a university or multiple universities to develop this online degree.

(e) Financial Resources

This is one of two activities in the Professional Development Capacity Building project at the ECAC. The cost for the Online Master’s Degree activity is \$50,000.

(f) Supporting Evidence

N/A

(g) Performance Measures, where applicable

This activity supports Performance Measurers in D.2.d.1 and D.2.d.2. We expect 150 early childhood program administrators to enroll in the online Master’s Degree in Early Childhood Program Leadership and Management by 2015.

High-Quality Plan for Workforce- Activity 6: Coaching, Mentoring, and Technical Assistance Courses

(a) Key Goals

Two different standardized, high quality CEU courses will be developed to meet the needs of the early childhood workforce. One course, “The Art of Coaching, Mentoring and

Technical Assistance,” will be available and ultimately required of those providing such services in CCR&R and Smart Start agencies. The second course, “Choosing and Using a Curriculum and Instructional Assessment in an Early Childhood Setting,” will be available to teaching and administrative staff in all licensed early childhood settings.

(b) Key Activities, Rationale and, if applicable, Scale-Up Plans

North Carolina has supported the improvement of teaching practices in early childhood classrooms and family child care homes through large-scale provision of technical assistance, coaching and mentoring. Historically provided by local CCR&R or Smart Start agencies, the most common goal has been to improve the child care environment, as measured by an ITERS-R or ECERS-R assessment (See Appendix 2 for a description of the tools). Disparately qualified individuals have offered the coaching, mentoring and/or technical assistance services with no mandatory standards for qualifications or performance. Training on best practices has been sporadically available, not mandated and not standardized to meet the performance needs of either the system or the practitioner. North Carolina needs a standardized training available to all coaches, mentors and technical assistance specialists across all systems. This 2 CEU course, once developed and widely available, will be embedded as part of the requirement for the Educator Efficacy Endorsement.

While the use of approved curricula and formative, instructional assessment are required in both Head Start and NC Pre-K sites, the current star rated license does not require their use. The use of an approved curriculum has been encouraged through the use of a quality point, an extra point programs can get by meeting one of a number of items on a menu of strategies to improve quality. The 2011 NC General Assembly has recently required 4 and 5 star programs to use an approved curriculum, thus adding this requirement to the higher tiers of the license. But many child care programs do not know how to choose and implement a curriculum, or how to appropriately assess children’s progress in the context of a curriculum. Training is needed to help teaching and administrative staff understand (1) the value of the use of curriculum and formative assessment, (2) the various approved options available and (3) steps needed to implement a curriculum and/or instructional assessment into their program. (This supports our efforts in C.2). This .5 CEU will be widely available to the teaching and administrative workforce through the CCR&R system. In addition, staff at DCDEE will be trained on assessing whether the various

curricula are being used with fidelity to its design. This will ensure the effective implementation of curriculum and also give licensing staff the ability to help ELD programs use both curricula and instructional assessment appropriately.

(c) Timeline and Milestones

TIMELINE Activity 6: Develop Coaching, Mentoring, & TA Courses	Year One Quarters				Year Two Quarters				Year Three Quarters				Year Four Quarters			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Contract with consultant to develop a 2 CEU course on “The Art of Coaching, Mentoring and Technical Assistance”	√															
Contract with consultant to develop a .5 CEU course on “Choosing and Using a Curriculum and Instructional Assessment”	√															
Field test both trainings			√													
Make necessary modifications in both trainings				√												
Train the trainers in the 14 CCR&R Lead Agencies to deliver these trainings				√												
Train DCDEE staff in assessing the fidelity of the implementation of various curricula				√	√											

(d) Party or Parties Responsible and Key Personnel Assigned

Staff at DCDEE will work with contractors and their own staff to develop and test the standardized courses and then train. DCDEE will contract with a NC organization that coordinates and provides child care resource and referral to deliver these courses statewide.

(e) Financial Resources

This is one of four activities in the Enhanced Professional Development Project at DCDEE. The cost for the Coaching, Mentoring, and TA Course activity is \$25,000.

(f) Supporting Evidence

N/A

(g) Performance Measures, where applicable

This activity supports Performance Measures D.2.d.2. We expect two different CEU courses to be developed and CCR&R key personnel to be trained on how to deliver these courses.

High-Quality Plan for Workforce- Activity 7: Cultural Competence Support**(a) Key Goals**

Curriculum, training, coaching and assessment tools will be developed to increase the cultural competence of the early childhood workforce.

(b) Key Activities, Rationale and, if applicable, Scale-Up Plans

North Carolina is interested in including a measure on cultural competence in its TQRIS. However, most of the early childhood workforce has had little exposure to the concepts embedded in cultural competence. This activity will provide opportunities for groups of early childhood professionals to learn about and begin to embrace cultural competence. In order to improve the cultural competence of the early childhood workforce, including culturally responsive program policies, culturally responsive teaching practices and culturally appropriate engagement with families, a three-phased strategy will be used. During the first phase, a curriculum designed to improve the cultural competence of the workforce will be developed and piloted. The curriculum content will address the concepts in NAEYC's Pathways to Cultural Competence. The pilot will be a year-long project that includes three two-day Cultural Competence Institutes with 100 participants organized into Collaborative Learning Teams. Cultural competence coaches will work with the teams between Institutes to support them in putting into practice the content of the Cultural Competence Institute. The Collaborative Learning Teams will use the Small Tests of Change (STOC) process to plan, document and assess the changes they are making in culturally responsive practices. Online learning platforms

will be used to share team learning and resources and to engage in on-going dialogue about the process.

Cultural Competence Coaches will engage in learning about cultural competence, change process and culturally responsive coaching strategies in order to provide the most effective and appropriate support for teams. The coaches will use personal communication, team visits, team discussions and webinars to facilitate the work of the teams and to provide additional content knowledge. Coaches are responsible for evaluation documentation and data collection. This concept builds on exploratory projects in North Carolina that used intensive learning opportunities, such as institutes, collaborative learning, coaching and facilitated webinars.

Based on the results of the pilot project described above, during the second phase the cultural competence teaching- learning process and curriculum modules will be finalized. A Cultural Competence Institute will be held for 75 participants including: staff from the CCR&R Lead Agencies and Smart Start partnerships who provide technical assistance and/or professional development. This will be offered in four two-day Cultural Competence Institutes. In addition to the curriculum on cultural competence, training sessions and culturally competent technical assistance will be provided. Participants will be assigned a Cultural Competence Coach to provide support, resources and assessment of participants' competence as trainers and on incorporating culturally competent approaches and content in their technical assistance work. On-line learning platforms will be used to share team-learning and resources and to engage in on-going dialogue about the process. Participants will be selected based on an application process.

In phase three, on-going webinars on cultural competence awareness and culturally responsive classroom practices will be made widely available across the state. Webinars will be offered at sites where learning activities and discussions are facilitated by an experienced cultural competence coach or trained CCR&R staff. These webinars will be introductory or supplement face-to-face learning. This use of facilitated webinars was successfully used in a 4 site pilot project in NC that was connected to NAEYC's Pathways to Cultural Competence Project.

(c) Timeline and Milestones

TIMELINE	Year One Quarters				Year Two Quarters				Year Three Quarters				Year Four Quarters			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Activity 7: Cultural Competence Support																
Develop cultural competence curriculum	√	√	√													
Issue participant invitations and select coaches.			√													
Hold Cultural Competence Institutes, analyze results, finalize curriculum module.				√	√	√										
Work on STOC with support of coaches and compile results				√	√	√	√	√								
Hold Phase 2 Cultural Competence Institutes								√	√		√					
Develop regional training and TA plans.									√	√	√	√				
Finalize on-going cultural competence training and TA plans for regions.													√			
Develop webinars based on need for additional content knowledge and to enhance the training done through the CCR&R regions.					√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√				
Offer webinars as needed to support the learning of participants in Phases 1 and 2.						√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√			

(d) Party or Parties Responsible and Key Personnel Assigned

DCDEE is responsible for this project. A Project Coordinator and a Process Change Manager will lead all activities. Contracts with coaches and content specialists will be developed for specific purposes or time periods.

(e) Financial Resources

This is the only activity in the Cultural Competence Project, and the cost for this project is \$495,760. As described in Section A.4, the ECAC will develop a sustainability plan for the

RTT-ELC State Plan in Years 2 and 3 of this grant.

(f) Supporting Evidence

N/A

(g) Performance Measures, where applicable

North Carolina will increase the number of technical assistance and professional development professionals in the state that: (1) are knowledgeable about culturally competent early childhood policies and practices; (2) can use culturally appropriate technical assistance strategies and (3) can support directors and teachers in improving cultural competence. A Dashboard will be set up for each participant and improvements recorded each quarter based on the outcomes of the Small Tests of Change (STOC). Pre and post measures of cultural competence will also be used.

High-Quality Plan for Workforce- Activity 8: Early Childhood Director Leadership Institute

(a) Key Goals

Intensive training will be available to child care administrators to improve their leadership and program management skills.

(b) Key Activities, Rationale and, if applicable, Scale-Up Plans

One of the best predictors of progress to moving the quality of early childhood programs is the leadership and management skill of its director. They are the program leader, setting a center's vision and goals, allocating and prioritizing resources for quality improvement and professional development and creating an ongoing learning environment for children, families and teachers.

An Early Childhood Director Leadership Institute will be offered to 100 directors across North Carolina. Topics will include: becoming a visionary, culturally competent leader, grounding leadership in values and ethics, understanding the process of change, understanding early childhood systems, evidence-based practice and program assessment, supporting the professional development of teachers, effective family engagement and advocacy. Emphasis will be placed on strengthening the management skills of directors in order for them to successfully operate programs on a daily basis (e.g. budgeting, operating procedures and policies, personnel management) while incorporating the approaches and strategies of leadership.

Assessment tools will include the Program Administration Scale (PAS) developed by Paula Jorde Bloom and Teri Talan. The Early Childhood Director Leadership Institute (ECDLI) will be a year-long process that combines classroom learning, creating a Change Framework for their program, using Small Tests of Change (STOC), which lead to evidence-based changes, and working with a leadership coach to implement changes in leadership approaches and program practices. On-line learning platforms will be used to share team learning and resources and to engage in on-going dialogue about the process. Webinars will be offered to supplement the content knowledge between Institutes. The ECDLI provides a new pathway in professional development for center directors and provides a meaningful alternative for those directors who already have a Master’s Degree or who do not want to embark on a lengthy course of study.

(c) Timeline and Milestones

TIMELINE	Year One Quarters				Year Two Quarters				Year Three Quarters				Year Four Quarters			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Activity 8: Early Childhood Director Leadership Institute	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Design curriculum and arrange for course credit and CEU’s.		√	√													
Issue invitations for participation and select participants.		√	√													
Identify and contract with coaches and content specialists.		√	√													
Hold first ECDL Institute.				√												
Participants create a Change Framework for their program with the support of a coach.				√												
Hold second ECDL Institute.					√											
Based on Change Framework and self-assessment using the PAS, implement series of STOC with support of coaches.					√	√	√	√								
Hold third ECDL Institute.								√								
Evaluate, document and disseminate learnings and changes.									√	√						

Continue to work with coach for additional 12 month period, as options										√	√	√	√	√				
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--

(d) Party or Parties Responsible and Key Personnel Assigned

This activity is part of a project within DCDEE. The Director of DCDEE will oversee this activity. A Project Coordinator and a Process Change Manager will lead all activities. Contracts with coaches and content specialists will be developed for specific purposes or time periods.

(e) Financial Resources

This is the only activity in the Early Learning and Development Program Administrator Support (Director Leadership Institute) Project at DCDEE. The total project costs are \$1,214,340. As described in Section A.4, the ECAC will develop a sustainability plan for the RTT-ELC State Plan in Years 2 and 3 of this grant.

(f) Supporting Evidence

N/A

(g) Performance Measures, where applicable

Improvements in leadership and management will be determined by progress toward goals articulated in each participant’s Change Framework. A Dashboard will be created to document changes based on the outcomes of the STOC. The PAS will also be used to measure changes in program management. Journals will be used as additional data for documenting changes in leadership approaches, strategies and qualities.

High-Quality Plan for Workforce- Activity 9: Child Care Resource & Referral Enhancement

(a) Key Goals

The Child Care Resource & Referral system will improve access to and the quality of professional development, coaching, mentoring and technical assistance services in every region of the state.

(b) Key Activities, Rationale and, if applicable, Scale-Up Plans

North Carolina has a regional Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) system that provides the core of required professional development for licensed ELD programs, Head Start and Pre-K programs. Fourteen Regional Lead CCR&R agencies coordinate and deliver

professional development services to all counties in the state. In 2004 this system was redesigned to function regionally, be funded formulaically and be held to defined performance outputs and outcomes. The larger goal of the system was to ensure that CCR&R provides equity of access and high quality services to families and early care and education providers in every county in the state. Regional Lead CCR&R agencies can be independent not-for-profit agencies or Smart Start partnerships, depending on what works best for the region and the state. In FY11 32,502 early childhood and school-age personnel participated in training offered through this system.

Trainings offered through this system must be evaluated by participants and meet one of nine topic areas, aligned with the state's licensing system. In addition, through its contract with the CCR&R system, the state mandates that early care and education providers in each region be offered certain numbers and types of training. For example, CCR&R Lead Agencies must provide training on inclusion and working with children with special needs. Last year 192 workshops within this topic area were provided statewide. The CCR&R system, in an effort to improve the quality of professional development offered, has begun developing coursework that meets the standards for continuing education units (CEUs). The three CCR&R Lead Agencies that form the governance structure for the CCR&R system have received approval from the International Association of Continuing Education and Training (IACET) to provide CEUs and are developing courses that meet these higher standards for content and quality of instruction and will be at least five hours in length.

While some of the trainings offered in the CCR&R system have been clearly aligned with the five domains of development defined in NC's early learning standards for infants-toddlers and preschoolers, others have not. The next step in our system is to ensure that this happens for all relevant training when the new Early Learning Standards are revised (See Section C.1 for more information). In addition, the workforce will need training on these revised Early Learning Standards. This will be created as a .5 CEU course and offered systematically statewide. The course will introduce participants to the revised Early Learning Standards and present information on how to use formative assessments to guide children's progress toward meeting the standards. In order to facilitate the development of this CEU course and make the content on the Early Learning Standards available more broadly, a Trainers Guide will be developed (see C.1 for details). The Trainers Guide will then be available to higher education faculty, CCR&R

staff and other professional development providers to ensure that content related to the ELDS is presented consistently across multiple types of professional development offerings.

As DCDEE develops standardized CEUs on “The Art of Coaching, Mentoring and Technical Assistance”, “Choosing and Using a Curriculum and Instructional Assessment in an Early Childhood Setting” and “Cultural Competence in Early Childhood Settings,” lead staff within each Regional Lead CCR&R agency will be trained on how to deliver these trainings. Each of these trainings must be offered at least four times a year in each of the 14 regions. The quality of the trainings will be monitored by DCDEE and by the confidential evaluations from participants.

To follow up on the training on coaching, mentoring and technical assistance, each Regional Lead Agency will be expected to invite participants to join either a local or regional Community of Practice for coaches, mentors and/or technical assistance specialist facilitated by a staff member within the Lead Agency. Finally, to standardize the minimum professional standards for the professional development, coaching, mentoring and technical assistance workforce within the CCR&R system, all such staff will be expected to have their Early Educator Certification and either an Adult Educator Endorsement or an Educator Efficacy Endorsement.

(c) Timeline and Milestones

TIMELINE Key Activity 9: Improve Access to and Quality of Professional Development, Coaching, Mentoring and Technical Assistance within CCR&R system	Year One Quarters				Year Two Quarters				Year Three Quarters				Year Four Quarters			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Align all training to revised early learning guidelines							√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Provide newly developed, standardized .5 CEUs on revised Early Learning Standards and Formative							√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

Assessment																	
Provide newly developed, standardized .5 CEUs on Curriculum and Assessment					√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Provide newly developed, standardized 2 CEUs on Coaching, Mentoring and TA					√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Provide standardized .5 CEUs on Cultural Competence					√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Ensure all staff with CCR&R system have AEE or EEE Endorsements	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Create COP for coaching, mentoring and TA staff			√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

(d) Party or Parties Responsible and Key Personnel Assigned

DCDEE will create the contractual expectations for performance for these new standards services within organizations that coordinate and provide child care resource and referral. As described in Section A.4, the ECAC will develop a sustainability plan for the RTT-ELC State Plan in Years 2 and 3 of this grant.

(e) Financial Resources

This activity is one of four activities in the Enhanced Professional Development Project at DCDEE. The total cost for the Child Care Resource and Referral Enhancement activity is \$4,834,340.

(f) Supporting Evidence

N/A

(g) Performance Measures, where applicable

(1) All trainings offered through the CCR&R system focused on teacher practice will be aligned with the state’s revised Early Learning Standards and be labeled as such for participants by 2013. (2) Standardized trainings on the state’s revised Early Learning Standards will be offered at least 4 times a year in each CCR&R region by 2013. (3) The state-developed and

standardized .5 CEU training, “Choosing and Using a Curriculum and Instructional Assessment in an Early Childhood Setting,” will be offered at least 4 times a year in each CCR&R Region by 2013. (4) The state-developed and standardized 2 CEU training, “The Art of Coaching, Mentoring and Technical Assistance” will be offered at least 4 times a year in each CCR&R Region by 2013. (5) The state-developed and standardized CEU course on Cultural Competence in Early Childhood Settings will be offered at least 4 times a year in each CCR&R Region by July 2013. (6) 90% of CCR&R professional development, coaching, mentoring or technical assistance staff will have either their Adult Educator Endorsement or their Educator Efficacy Endorsement by 2015. (7) The 14 Regional Lead CCR&R agencies will facilitate regional and/or local communities of practice for coaches, mentors and technical assistance specialists within their region by 2013.

High-Quality Plan for Workforce- Activity 10: Healthy Social Behavior Specialists in the Transformation Zone

(a) Key Goals

One Healthy Social Behavior Specialist will be hired and trained to join the statewide team and placed to work in the Transformation Zone to provide technical assistance and training to classrooms with children with challenging behaviors.

(b) Key Activities, Rationale and, if applicable, Scale-Up Plans

In 2005, expulsions and suspensions from ELD programs became a serious concern. For a variety of reasons and not unlike other states, North Carolina’s teachers were (and are) not well equipped to handle children with challenging behaviors. Research informed our decision to address this issue:

1. Many early childhood personnel feel unequipped to meet the needs of children who are emotionally delayed or who exhibit social emotional problems. They report that there seems to be an increasing number of children who have these problems and they do not feel effective with these children, which negatively affects their job satisfaction and leads to stress and burnout (Hemmeter, Corso, & Cheatham, 2006; Kaufmann & Wischman, 1999).
2. Early childhood teachers report that children’s disruptive behavior is the single greatest challenge they face (Arnold, McWilliams and Arnold, 1998; Yoshikawa &

Knitzer, 1997).

3. Faculty in higher education early childhood programs report that students are least likely to be prepared upon graduation to work with children with persistent challenging behaviors (Hemmeter, 2004).
4. Thirty percent (30%) of children in group care will likely require intentional teaching strategies and/or individualized interventions to develop the social-emotional competencies to be successful in a group setting and approximately 10-15% of children will display mild to chronic levels of behavior problems (CSEFEL, 2005; Timm and Fox, 2006).
5. An increasing proportion of young children exhibit early signs of serious mental health problems, with some estimates as high as 23% of the general population (Sinclair, et al., 2003).

NC began the Healthy Social Behaviors Project in 2005 and has seen great success in classrooms that participate. High levels of poverty, unemployment and stress often contribute to children’s behavior. An additional Healthy Social Behavior Specialist will support the early childhood workforce as they support the social-emotional development of young children.

(c) Timeline and Milestones

TIMELINE Activity 10: Provide Healthy Social Behavior Specialist in Transformation Zone	Year One Quarters				Year Two Quarters				Year Three Quarters				Year Four Quarters			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Advertise and hire qualified specialist	√															
Provide needed orientation/training	√	√	√	√	√											
Conduct outreach in transformation counties	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Provide technical assistance and training to teachers working with children with challenging		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

behaviors																		
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(d) Party or Parties Responsible and Key Personnel Assigned

DCDEE will contract with a NC organization that coordinates and provides child care resource and referral to hire 1 Healthy Social Behavior Specialist for this activity.

(e) Financial Resources

This is one of four activities within the Enhanced Professional Development Project at DCDEE. The total cost for the Healthy Behavior Specialist activity is \$280,000.

(f) Supporting Evidence

Healthy Social Behavior (HSB) Specialists are Pyramid Model trainers and coaches and have incorporated this model into their technical assistance and training since 2005. HSB Specialists used the CSEFEL Inventory of Practices (IOP), as the primary classroom observation tool to guide technical assistance and measure impact of the technical assistance. In addition, specialists have training in the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA) and the Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social Emotional (ASQ:SE). Through the use of the Pyramid Model, facilitation of nurturing relationships, universal classroom supports and targeted teaching strategies very few children required these individualized interventions (n=22 or <1% of the children in the client classrooms). This subset, most at risk of expulsion, maintained their placement through HSB facilitation of teacher skill development as well as programmatic and personal changes. Also noteworthy are the data collected from teachers at the first on-site visit of the number of children in each classroom with challenging behaviors. Collectively, the teachers reported that they were challenged by the behavior of 1,001 children in the client classrooms. Only 2.2% of these children required child-specific interventions once the lower levels of the Pyramid Model were in place in the classrooms.

(g) Performance Measures, where applicable

(1) 95% of participants in technical assistance (TA) will indicate that they have implemented strategies provided by the Behavior Specialist to increase social-emotional competencies and/or reduce challenging behavior in their classroom. (2) 85% of children requiring targeted behavior support plans will be able to maintain their child care placements.

High-Quality Plan for Workforce- Activity 11: NC Council on Early Childhood Professional Development

(a) Key Goals

The Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) will convene the NC Council on Early Childhood Professional Development (ECPD Council) to work on systemic issues that impede our state's progress in achieving this goal.

(b) Key Activities, Rationale and, if applicable, Scale-Up Plans

Since 1992 North Carolina has had a loosely but consistently organized group of people working on developing an early childhood professional development system. They have come from the higher education system (both two and four year schools), NC Community College System's Office, child care resource and referral agencies, the NC Partnership for Children, local Smart Start partnerships, state government agencies that include our Department of Public Instruction and the NC Division of Child Development and Early Education, NC Inter-Agency Coordinating Council, Head Start Collaboration Office, Child Care Services Association (T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$ workforce initiatives), and child care, Head Start and Pre-K personnel. Together, individuals from these agencies formed the North Carolina Institute for Child Development Professionals (Institute), which has spearheaded a collaborative effort of system planning and development.

For most of its existence, the Institute was funded by either Head Start or CCDF funds through DCDEE. Institute sub-committees worked on system planning and development, education and compensation, public awareness and regulations/standards. The Institute with its collaborative partners has been successful in advancing our state's progress on articulation, the accreditation of community college early childhood programs, collecting and disseminating information on workforce issues, creating professional development and public awareness tools on workforce issues and increasing the cross-system dialogue to advance professional development system-building.

Much progress has been made over the past 20 years based on the good will of collaborative partners. Just recently, for example, a Memorandum of Understanding has been developed between NC's key early childhood agencies and organizations to ensure that the early childhood workforce is prepared to effectively support children with disabilities within inclusive environments and to create a shared commitment among partnering agencies to strengthen and

support a high quality early childhood workforce. The MOU aims to increase accessibility, avoid duplication of efforts, and maximize the professional development resources available to the workforce. All of the Participating State Agencies have signed this MOU, along with the North Carolina Partnership for Children, NC Association for the Education of Young Children, and NC Institute for Child Development Professionals.

Although we have made progress, to achieve our ambitious goals, we believe that North Carolina must pull together a high level of leadership across various systems to work on those issues that impede faster progress. The Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) will convene the NC Council on Early Childhood Professional Development (ECPD Council) to work on systemic issues of coordination and alignment, as well as strategies for overcoming barriers. The Council will meet quarterly and be comprised of key leadership from all of the major public and private professional development, regulatory and workforce support systems. Together the ECPD Council will define system barriers to having a high quality, accessible early childhood professional development system and create and execute a plan to remedy the barriers. It is expected that the ECPD Council will work on such big cross-systems issues such as articulation, developing a cross-system professional development plan with clear roles and responsibilities, access to students with ESL quality of instruction, and statewide equity of access to high quality professional development and workforce incentives.

NC needs a fully articulated system. In 2010 all community college early childhood programs reported having articulation agreements with at least 2-3 universities. Many of these accepted the AAS in Early Childhood Education as a block, and students enter as juniors. But a few require students to repeat courses that they have taken at the community colleges. The Birth-Kindergarten Consortium has laid the groundwork for a system-wide articulation agreement between community colleges and the state universities offering the B-K license. However, not all universities have signed on, impeding clearly defined pathways for our workforce. The ECPD Council will work on this issue as part of its charge.

(c) Timeline and Milestones

TIMELINE	Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Year Four
Activity 11: NC Council on Early Childhood	Quarters	Quarters	Quarters	Quarters

Professional Development	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
Issue invitations for participation	√																
Contract for a facilitator	√																
Hold first meeting		√															
Review ECPD system and barriers		√															
Develop a goals and action plan			√														
Meet quarterly to assess progress on goals		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Create public annual report evaluating progress				√				√				√					√

(d) Party or Parties Responsible and Key Personnel Assigned

The ECAC will provide staff support to the Council, hiring a facilitator and supporting the meetings.

(e) Financial Resources

This is one of two activities in the Professional Development Capacity Building Project at the ECAC. The total cost for the Professional Development Council activity is \$25,000.

(f) Supporting Evidence

N/A

(g) Performance Measures, where applicable

The NC Council on Early Childhood Professional Development will articulate goals and an action plan within the first year of the grant.

(b) Policies and Incentives to Promote Professional Improvement and Career Advancement

As described in Section A.2 and above, NC is home to educational scholarship and wage supplements utilized all across this country (e.g., T.E.A.C.H., WAGES). We build on these strengths with the following three activities in our State Plan to promote professional

improvement and career advancement.

High-Quality Plan for Workforce- Activity 12: Child Care WAGES

(a) Key Goals

Child Care WAGES® supplements will be provided to teachers and family child care providers with two and four year degrees in the Transformation Zone.

(b) Key Activities, Rationale and, if applicable, Scale-Up Plans

One of North Carolina's most effective professional development and retention initiatives, Child Care WAGES®, is an education-based salary supplement program for teachers, administrators and family child care providers working in licensed ELD programs. The education, position and work schedule for each applicant are assessed to determine the annual award. To encourage consistency, installments based on half of the annual award are issued after each six-month period the participant completes in the same ELD program. Because these supplements reward teacher education and continuity of care, children ages birth to five benefit from more stable relationships with better educated teachers.

Thousands of early educators in the state have benefitted from WAGES® supplements, have been encouraged to return to school and have stayed in their classrooms because of better compensation. One of the lessons from years of implementing Child Care WAGES® in both North Carolina and as it has been replicated in other states has been that money really does matter, particularly to those with degrees. For the last five years we have seen significantly lower turnover rates within the population of teachers with two-year degrees in ECE or higher, compared to those without degrees. For these targeted counties, annual WAGES supplements for teachers with 2-year degree in early childhood education will be \$2,000; teachers with a bachelor's degree will receive a \$4,000 annual supplement. This supplement is only available if they remain in their early care and education setting. This is enough to approach parity with public schools and to allow highly educated teachers to continue teaching young children in diverse settings.

The Lumina Foundation reports that 37% of North Carolina's working population has a 2 or 4 year degree. Yet in the vast majority of Transformation Zone counties only 25% of working adults have a two or four year degree. As North Carolina works to have all teachers in all early childhood settings with a two or four year degree, it is going to be critical that early childhood

teachers in these counties, where education is a premium, are compensated well enough to keep them in their classrooms. However, most counties in the Transformation Zone do not have Child Care WAGES®, and those few with the program do not have the funding to adequately supplement teachers with degrees.

(c) Timeline and Milestones

TIMELINE Key Activity 12: Child Care WAGES Supplements in the Transformation Zone	Year One Quarters				Year Two Quarters				Year Three Quarters				Year Four Quarters			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Send applications and program information to all licensed settings in transformation zone counties	√				√				√				√			
Determine initial eligibility and award supplements on a first come first served basis	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Determine continuing eligibility semi-annually		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Create annual report on education and retention				√				√				√				√

(d) Party or Parties Responsible and Key Personnel Assigned

DCDEE is responsible for overseeing this project. Staff from a NC organization that is authorized to provide scholarships and salary supplements will manage the project. Supplemental funding to administer this program will come from Child Care Development Block Grant quality dollars.

(e) Financial Resources

This is one of two activities that are part of the Compensation and Retention Project at DCDEE. The cost for the WAGES activity is \$4,000,000.

(f) Supporting Evidence

The education gains North Carolina has seen in its early childhood workforce, are partly

due to the encouragement, recognition and rewards that WAGE\$ provides. In 1999, only 30% of the WAGE\$ participants were being funded for having an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education, its equivalent or higher based on the WAGE\$ scale. Fifty-nine percent of the active FY11 WAGE\$ participants are currently being funded for the same education. In 1998 the statewide early childhood teacher turnover rate had dropped to 31%, and by 2003 it had dropped to 24%. Last year the turnover rate within the WAGE\$ participants was 12%. Because WAGE\$ participants worked in ¼ of the state's early childhood programs, this helps effect a better overall retention rate. Fifty-two percent of WAGE\$ participants are women of color, often reflecting the children they serve and the communities from which they come.

(g) Performance Measures, where applicable

We expect the turnover rate of teachers receiving WAGE\$ supplements in targeted counties will be less than 20% annually. Fifteen percent of the WAGE\$ population without a BA/BS in Child Development or Early Childhood Education will submit documentation during the funding year that they have moved up a level or 25% will submit documentation that they have taken coursework leading to a higher level. With lower turnover rates, children are better able to build strong relationships with their teachers—which supports their learning and development.

High-Quality Plan for Workforce- Activity 13: TEACH Scholarships

(a) Key Goals

New T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® scholarships and enhancements will be created to support the continuing education of the workforce, including infant-toddler teachers, administrators, home visitors, coaching, mentoring, technical assistance and other professional development staff, and community early childhood organization leadership staff, such as directors of CCR&R and Smart Start local or regional organizations.

(b) Key Activities, Rationale and, if applicable, Scale-Up Plans

North Carolina has found that T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® scholarships have served as a powerful incentive for the early childhood workforce to improve their education, compensation and retention. As we have examined the needs to advance our workforce, it has become apparent that additional professional development opportunities are needed for some special populations: (1) home visitors, coaches, mentors, trainers and technical assistance specialists, (2) teachers

working with infants and toddlers and (3) ELD program administrators and community-based early childhood organization leadership staff.

All T.E.A.C.H. scholarships are based on four components: (1) a scholarship that supports specified continuing education, (2) completion of a required amount of education, (3) the award of a compensation incentive based on completion of the required education and (4) a specified retention period that the scholarship recipient must remain in their program or in the field. In this activity special scholarships will be developed to allow (1) 100 home visitors, coaches, mentors, trainers and technical assistance specialists to take coursework leading to associate degrees in early childhood education or bachelor’s degrees in child development, (2) 100 teachers working with infants and toddlers to complete and gain certification in the Program in Infant and Toddler Caregiving (PITC) and (3) 150 ELD program administrators and community-based early childhood organization leadership staff to take coursework leading to a new state Master’s Degree in Early Childhood Program Leadership and Management. In addition, to provide incentives to early childhood providers in Transformation Zone, 176 sponsoring employers’ share of the compensation incentive will be assumed by T.E.A.C.H. funding. This should encourage increased participation because the costs for employers are significantly reduced, making supporting the professional development of staff more affordable.

(c) Timeline and Milestones

TIMELINE Activity 13: Develop new T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship Options for the Early Childhood Workforce	Year One Quarters				Year Two Quarters				Year Three Quarters				Year Four Quarters			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Develop, advertise, award and manage AAS/BS scholarships for EC support staff	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Develop, advertise, award and manage PITC scholarships for infant-toddler teachers	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

Develop, advertise, award and manage Master's Degree scholarship for program leaders				√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Provide enhance T.E.A.C.H. scholarships in Transformation Zone counties					√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

(d) Party or Parties Responsible and Key Personnel Assigned

DCDEE will oversee this activity. Staff from a NC organization that is authorized to provide scholarships will create, disseminate and implement the new scholarship options to a diverse array of early childhood professionals statewide and provide enhanced scholarship options to teachers and family child care providers in Transformation Zone counties.

(e) Financial Resources

This activity is one of two activities in the Compensation and Retention project at DCDEE. The cost for the T.E.A.C.H. activity is \$3,197,000.

(f) Supporting Evidence

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® scholarships have helped to advance the education and compensation and improve the retention of the early childhood workforce in North Carolina and in 22 other states. Scholarship recipients successfully complete courses leading to credential and degrees. Their compensation increases and they remain in their classrooms. Employers are engaged in the continuing professional development of staff. Over 100,000 scholarships have been awarded nationally, with consistent outcomes from state to state. T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® was created in North Carolina and has been widely available to personnel working in child care, Head Start and Pre-K programs. Scholarships have supported the entry-level NC Early Childhood and Administration Credentials, the Early Childhood, CDA and Infant-Toddler Certificate, the Early Childhood Associate Degree, the Bachelor’s Degree in Child Development and the B-K and Preschool Add-On Licenses.

(g) Performance Measures, where applicable

This activity will help us meet the targets in the Performance Measures Tables D.2.d.1 and D.2.d.2. Additionally, we expect that (1) 90% of administrators and program leadership staff

receiving a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Scholarship for the Master's Degree in Early Childhood Program Leadership and Management will successfully complete at least an average of 12 credits per scholarship year and be retained in the early childhood field. (2) 90% of home visiting, coaching, mentoring, technical assistance and professional development staff receiving a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® scholarship to take coursework leading to either an associate or bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child development will successfully complete at least an average of 12 credits per scholarship year and be retained in the early childhood field. (3) 85% of infant-toddler teachers receiving a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® PITC scholarship will successfully complete their certification with 3 years and be retained in their infant-toddler setting. (4) 90% of teachers and family child care providers working in the Transformation Zone counties and receiving a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® scholarship to take coursework leading to either an associate or bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child development will successfully complete at least an average of 12 credits per scholarship year and be retained in their early childhood settings during their commitment year.

(c) Publicly Reporting Aggregated Data on Early Childhood Educator Development, Advancement, and Retention

North Carolina periodically conducts statewide workforce studies to describe the status of early childhood educators' degrees and retention. Examining trends over time allows us to monitor the workforce's advancement in their educational careers. (See chart at the beginning of this section.) As described in Section E.2, we plan to develop a workforce professional development portal that will maintain data related to the education and professional development of the workforce. Until that system is available, though, we will continue to conduct workforce studies so that we can publically report aggregated data on the early childhood educators' development, advancement, and retention.

High-Quality Plan for Workforce- Activity 14: Early Childhood Educator Statewide Workforce Study

(a) Key Goals

Workforce studies on the center-based teaching and administrative workforce will be conducted annually; workforce studies on the family child care workforce will be conducted biannually.

(b) Key Activities, Rationale and, if applicable, Scale-Up Plans

In order to adequately track the progress of the early childhood workforce in terms of its education, compensation and retention, as well as its other key demographics, workforce studies must be conducted. Using a random sample of licensed centers stratified by the 14 CCR&R Regions, questionnaires will be sent to the administrative and teaching staff in 15% of selected center-based programs annually. Follow-up contact will be made to ensure a high response rate and accurate information. Data will be analyzed and reported in a report made available to the public through a number of websites within the state. Data will also be used to assess progress toward our overall educational goal for the workforce.

Additionally, every two years, using a random sample of licensed family child care programs stratified by the 14 CCR&R Regions, questionnaires will be sent to family child care providers in 15% of selected family child care programs. Follow-up contact will be made to ensure a high response rate and accurate information. Data will be analyzed and reported in a report made available to the public through a number of websites within the state.

The last large scale workforce study was done in 2003 in North Carolina. Since then, because of lack of funding, no assessments have been done. However, in 2011, using funding from a state foundation, Child Care Services Association began a study, using the design described above, of the teaching and administrative personnel working in center-based setting. These preliminary data were used to set the baseline educational benchmarks included in this proposal. Additional data will be available from this study in the next six months. These data will give us information on wages and benefits, turnover rates, demographics, needs and professional development goals. The information will be made available statewide and presented to key stakeholders, including the Council on Early Childhood Professional Development, described herein.

(c) Timeline and Milestones

TIMELINE	Year One				Year Two				Year Three				Year Four			
Activity 14: Conduct Annual Workforce Studies and Report Results	Quarters				Quarters				Quarters				Quarters			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

Construct workforce questionnaires for teachers and administrators (T&A)	√				√				√				√			
Design and select T&A random sample	√				√				√				√			
Send out & collect T&A questionnaires	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Analyze and report on T&A workforce study	√			√	√			√	√			√	√			√
Construct workforce questionnaires for family child care providers (FCC)	√								√							
Design and select FCC random sample	√	√	√						√	√	√					
Send out & collect FCC questionnaires	√	√	√						√	√	√					
Analyze and report on FCC workforce study				√	√							√	√			

(d) Party or Parties Responsible and Key Personnel Assigned

DCDEE will oversee this project. A NC organization with expertise in conducting workforce studies in North Carolina at the county, regional and state level will conduct repeated studies throughout the life of this grant to ensure adequate progress is being made to achieve NC’s goals.

(e) Financial Resources

This is one of four activities in the Increasing Access to High Quality ELD Programs in DCDEE. The cost for the Early Childhood Educator Statewide Workforce Studies activity is \$600,000.

(f) Supporting Evidence

Data from early childhood workforce studies have been informing public policy and workforce planning and initiatives since 1990. Workforce studies have been conducted at the county, regional and state levels during this period to capture data on the needs, demographics and retention of the workforce at a single point in time and to analyze trends in workforce

development. It is these data that have led to the development of incentive strategies like the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project and to the implementation of improved workforce standards.

(g) Performance Measures, where applicable

Reports on the findings from the annual workforce studies will be available on multiple websites within North Carolina each year. Data will be used to track North Carolina’s progress in achieving its goals for the education and retention of the workforce. Reports on the education, compensation and retention outcomes of investments in the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® and Child Care WAGES® projects are also available on public websites annually.

(d) Setting Ambitious Yet Achievable Targets

Performance measures D.2.d.1 and D.2.d.2 provide our ambitious and achievable targets for strengthening the early childhood workforce. More specific performance measures were also provided in each High-Quality Plan. We also have the following bold goals for 2015 and 2020.

1. By 2015 more than 50% of lead teachers working in licensed ELD programs will have a two or four year degree in child development or early childhood education or have a bachelor’s degree in another field with at least 12 credit hours in early childhood education.

By 2020 every lead teacher working in a licensed ELD programs will have an Associate’s Degree in Early Childhood Education or higher; every lead teacher working in a licensed Pre-K or Head Start setting will have a BA/BS in Child Development, with at least 50% having a B-K license.

Performance Measures for (D)(2)(d)(1): Increasing the number of Early Childhood Educators receiving credentials from postsecondary institutions and professional development providers with programs that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework

	Baseline (Today)	Target - end of calendar year 2012	Target - end of calendar year 2013	Target - end of calendar year 2014	Target – end of calendar year 2015
Total number of “aligned” institutions and providers	79	79	79	79	79
Total number of Early Childhood Educators credentialed by an	469 BA ECE; 350 BK License;	481 BA ECE; 359 BK	493 BA ECE; 368 BK	505 BA ECE; 377 BK	518 BA ECE; 386 BK

“aligned” institution or provider	1,070 AAS; 116 Diploma; 910 Certificate	License; 1,097 AAS; 119 Diploma; 933 Certificate	License; 1,124 AAS; 122 Diploma; 956 Certificate	License; 1,152 AAS; 125 Diploma; 980 Certificate	License; 1,180 AAS; 128 Diploma; 1005 Certificate
Total number of accredited community colleges	14	22	30	38	58

Performance Measures for (D)(2)(d)(2): Increasing number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who are progressing to higher levels of credentials that align with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.										
Progression of credentials (Aligned to Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework)	<i>Baseline and Annual Targets -- Number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who have moved up the progression of credentials, aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, in the prior year</i>									
	Baseline (Today)		Target- end of calendar year 2012		Target- end of calendar year 2013		Target- end of calendar year 2014		Target- end of calendar year 2015	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
BA/BS in Child Development or ECE with Birth-Kindergarten License	1,905	9.1%	2,033	9.3%	2,166	9.5%	2,342	9.8%	2,500	10%
BA/BS in Child Development or ECE	1,170	5.6%	1,290	5.9%	1,414	6.2%	1,554	6.5%	1,750	7%
BA/BS in non-ECE plus at least 6 ECE courses	472	2.2%	612	2.8%	798	3.5%	980	4.1%	1,250	5%
AAS in Early Childhood Education	4,568	21.7%	4,919	22.5%	5,312	23.3%	5,808	24.3%	6,250	25%
BA/BS in non-ECE plus 1-5 courses	1,255	6.0%	1,224	5.6%	1,186	5.2%	1,147	4.8%	1,125	4.5%
BA/BS in non-ECE and no ECE courses	497	2.4%	525	2.4%	524	2.3%	526	2.2%	500	2%
AA/AAS in non-ECE plus at least 1	577	2.7%	568	2.6%	524	2.3%	526	2.2%	675	2%

Performance Measures for (D)(2)(d)(2): Increasing number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who are progressing to higher levels of credentials that align with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.										
Progression of credentials (Aligned to Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework)	<i>Baseline and Annual Targets -- Number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who have moved up the progression of credentials, aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, in the prior year</i>									
	Baseline (Today)		Target- end of calendar year 2012		Target- end of calendar year 2013		Target- end of calendar year 2014		Target- end of calendar year 2015	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
ECE courses										
AA/AAS in non-ECE and no ECE courses	174	.8%	175	.8%	160	.7%	143	.6%	125	.5%
HS diploma plus at least 6 ECE courses	5,041	24.0%	5,246	24%	5,472	24%	5,784	24.2%	6,250	25%
HS diploma plus 1-5 ECE courses	4,680	22.3%	4,700	21.5%	4,742	20.8%	4,732	19.8%	4,750	19%
HS diploma with no ECE coursework	678	3.2%	568	2.6%	502	2.2%	359	1.5%	0	0%

E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress

Note: The total available points for (E)(1) and (E)(2) = 40. The 40 available points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (E), each criterion will be worth up to 20 points.

The applicant must address one or more selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (E).

(E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry.

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to implement, independently or as part of a cross-State consortium, a common, statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment that informs instruction and services in the early elementary grades and that--

(a) Is aligned with the State's Early Learning and Development Standards and covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness;

(b) Is valid, reliable, and appropriate for the target population and for the purpose for which it will be used, including for English learners and children with disabilities;

(c) Is administered beginning no later than the start of school year 2014-2015 to children entering a public school kindergarten; States may propose a phased implementation plan that forms the basis for broader statewide implementation;

(d) Is reported to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and to the early learning data system, if it is separate from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, as permitted under and consistent with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws; and

(e) Is funded, in significant part, with Federal or State resources other than those available under this grant, (e.g., with funds available under section 6111 or 6112 of the ESEA).

If the State chooses to respond to this selection criterion, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

(Enter narrative here – recommended maximum of eight pages)

North Carolina has two sources of Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) data: our School Readiness Assessment study and an on-going formative assessment known as the K-2 assessment that is completed by kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers. Together these two assessments have addressed two important purposes— to inform our efforts to close the school readiness gap at kindergarten entry and to improve instruction in the early elementary grades. Unfortunately, each of these assessment strategies has significant weaknesses and, therefore, we are proposing a new direction for North Carolina’s KEA. The RTT-ELC competition provides an opportunity to build on our history and the assessments we have, and create an effective KEA that can both provide data to inform efforts to close the achievement gap and be used to improve instruction in the early grades. In the following section, we provide a description of our previous efforts toward a KEA and our plan for a new approach to developing a KEA that meets the criteria outlined in the RTT-ELC application, is used effectively, and supports North Carolina’s efforts to close the school readiness gap at kindergarten and improve student outcomes in the early elementary grades.

School Readiness Assessment

North Carolina has a deep understanding of the importance of one of the purposes of a KEA—using data collected at kindergarten entry to inform efforts to close the achievement gap. In 1999 a School Readiness Goal team issued a statewide definition of school readiness and recommended that data be collected from children as they enter kindergarten so that the state could better understand the skills and knowledge of our young kindergartners and use the data to improve services for children prior to kindergarten entry. In response to the School Readiness Goal Team’s recommendations, North Carolina implemented a School Readiness Assessment Study to collect data from a statewide representative sample of 1,034 kindergartners. Measures were carefully selected to ensure they were valid and reliable, addressed all domains of children’s development, and were appropriate for Children with High Needs. Data collection was carried out by a highly trained group of assessors. The report from the study was issued in 2001 (see Appendix 27). Results indicated that overall North Carolina’s kindergartners scored about average on measures of the five domains when compared with kindergartners nationally.

Kindergartners from low-income families, however, scored significantly lower than their peers from higher-income families. The School Readiness Assessment study also collected data on schools' readiness to meet the needs of all kindergartners, and found a number of areas for improvement including kindergarten class sizes larger than recommended standards and the need for better transitions for children entering kindergarten.

North Carolina has successfully used the data from the School Readiness Assessment for one of the RTT-ELC purposes of a KEA—to inform efforts to close the achievement gap. Results from the child assessments were used as a basis for implementing our state-funded pre-kindergarten program to serve low-income and other children at risk for later difficulties in school. The data from the School Readiness Assessment study were also used to focus the attention of ELD initiatives such as Smart Start and our health and mental health services to strengthen services for children at risk of poor school outcomes. Data on the status of schools' readiness to serve children lead to our Ready Schools initiative to support effective transition and kindergarten practices. North Carolina successfully implemented a KEA and has used the data in significant and meaningful ways to shape the course of our early development and learning services.

Unfortunately, the North Carolina School Readiness Assessment has its limitations. First, although the sample was completely representative of the state, it was not large enough to shed light on the status of children within specific geographic regions within the state (e.g., counties). Second, it did not provide specific information on individual children to help guide classroom instruction. Third, it did not provide data for the statewide longitudinal data system. In short, North Carolina has implemented a successful assessment for one of the stated purposes of the KEA—to provide data that can be used to close the achievement gap before kindergarten—but needs a new strategy.

K-2 Assessment

State legislation in North Carolina requires that the State Board of Education develop and provide developmentally appropriate individualized assessment instruments for first and second grades in lieu of standardized tests. In response to this legislation, the NC State Board of Education provides a Kindergarten through Second grade (K-2) Assessment of literacy and mathematics and policies that guide its intended use (See Appendix 28 for a copy of the K-2

literacy assessment). This K-2 assessment aligns with the state standards for literacy and mathematics, and has been in existence since 1997. It is administered multiple times by teachers during the kindergarten year and continues to be administered by teachers during first grade and second grade to document children's progress in literacy and mathematics for the purpose of guiding classroom instruction.

Despite the strengths of the current K-2 Assessment, professional development is offered outside of DPI's statewide system of support, creating inconsistencies across local school districts. If professional development is offered at the local level on the utilization of this assessment, it primarily addresses its administration and often does not prepare teachers to use assessment data to make instructional decisions for individuals or groups of children. While the compilation of K-2 assessment data may occur at the local level, K-2 assessment data are not reported to DPI. Therefore, the K-2 assessment addresses the second purpose of the KEA—to inform instruction and services in early elementary school grades—but also has significant weaknesses.

A New Direction that Capitalizes on our Previous Work

The RTT-ELC grant provides an opportunity for North Carolina to build upon the strengths of the previous School Readiness Assessment and the existing K-2 Assessment in order to develop a new assessment to provide information about children at kindergarten entry and support its implementation through DPI's statewide system of support. North Carolina intends to revise DPI's current K-2 Assessment, broadening the domains measured from two (literacy and math) to the five essential domains of school readiness (language and literacy development, cognition and general knowledge, approaches toward learning, physical well-being and motor development, and social and emotional development) and expanding the assessment through third grade. In other words, we intend to develop a KEA in the context of a **K-3 Assessment**. We believe that our efforts to reduce the school readiness gap at kindergarten entry, sustain program effects in the early elementary grades, and ultimately reduce the achievement gap by third grade will be strengthened through this classroom-based assessment and through the supporting professional development to ensure teachers effectively *use* the information—in kindergarten, first, second, and third grade, not just at kindergarten entry. Furthermore, we intend to capitalize on our previous experience and careful attention to scientific criteria for measurement and data

collection gained through our School Readiness Assessment to ensure that the revised K-3 assessment meets the highest standards and provides credible data. Finally, because we have a proven track record for utilizing data from the School Readiness Assessment study, we are confident that data from the new K-3 Assessment will be used to improve services for young children.

In this section of the application, we will address items (a) through (e) of the selection criteria and then provide our High-Quality Plan for implementing our new statewide KEA (NC's K-3 Assessment).

How the K-3 Assessment Will Meet Criteria for a KEA

(a) KEA (NC's K-3 Assessment) is aligned with NC's Early Learning and Development Standards

As described in Section C.1, North Carolina's Early Learning and Development Standards are undergoing revision. Although we will create a K-3 Assessment Task Force to begin considering the various issues in a statewide assessment of kindergartners, we will not finalize content and/or individual items for the K-3 Assessment until the ELD standards revision process is complete. To ensure close alignment with the ELD standards, we will include key leaders from the ELD standards revision process on the K-3 Assessment Task Force. We are fortunate to have one of the nation's experts on ELD standards and assessment at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro who will provide important leadership on both efforts, which will help ensure alignment between the standards and the assessment. We will also include in the K-3 Assessment Task Force leaders from the Office of Early Learning (OEL) and DPI content specialists who will help ensure that the K-3 Assessment is also aligned with the Common Core and Essential Elements for K-3. (See Appendix 29 for copies of the Common Core and Essential Elements.)

(b) KEA (NC's K-3 Assessment) is Valid, Reliable, and Appropriate for the Purpose and Target Population

Based on our expertise, experience, and review of existing kindergarten measures, we do not believe there is an existing measure that meets the criteria for reliability and validity and is aligned with our Early Learning and Development Standards and is appropriate for all children (e.g., Dual Language Learners, child with disabilities) and is appropriate for both of the expressed purposes of the RTT-ELC kindergarten entry: to guide instruction in the early

elementary grades and to inform efforts to close the school readiness gap at kindergarten entry. Thus, we propose to utilize experts in our state and across the nation to create a K-3 Assessment to meet all of these criteria. **We would, however, welcome the opportunity to lead and/or participate in a multi-state consortium to discuss important issues and precautions when assessing young children and work together to collectively design a single assessment tool and approach that would meet all of the criteria above.** (We purposively decided not to identify partners during the application period because we believe it is important to ensure that partners have a similar philosophy and values, and we did not believe that this level of conversation was possible during the short application development period. We propose this consortium as a purpose for the \$400,000 required set-aside from each RTT-ELC winner.)

As described below in the high-quality plan, we intend to develop a K-3 Assessment and conduct systematic studies to assess the validity and inter-rater agreement of the K-3 Assessment completed by teachers. The studies will also determine the appropriateness of its use with Dual Language Learners, children with disabilities, and other populations of children with high needs. We will also conduct a pilot test to determine issues of implementation and feasibility, which will help us develop a measure and approach that will more likely be sustained.

North Carolina has the capacity to carry out a rigorous instrument development process in order to produce an appropriate and effective K-3 Assessment. We are fortunate to have a wealth of individual and institutional resources to support the development and implementation of the K-3 Assessment. North Carolina is home to some of the nation's experts in assessment of young children—including one of the members of the National Research Council's Committee on Developmental Outcomes and Assessments for Young Children that produced a major report on early childhood assessment that is cited in the RTT-ELC RFP. North Carolina is also the home for two partners in the collaborative Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) Center, which provides national leadership in assisting states with the implementation of high-quality outcome systems for early intervention and early childhood special education programs. In addition, North Carolina is also an active State Implementation and Scaling Up of Evidence-Based Practices (SISEP) state in collaboration with the National Implementation Research Network. Finally, North Carolina is home to the Center for Early Care and Education Research-Dual Language Learners (CECER-DLL), which, among other things, is focusing on assessment issues for young DLLs. Our state was also one of the first states to develop a definition of school readiness that is

consistent with the RTT ELC's Essential Domains of School Readiness and has experience collecting state-wide data on children's status at kindergarten entry (Appendix 30 includes a state task force report, *School Readiness in North Carolina*, along with a shorter summary of our work published in the November 2001 issue of *Young Children*. See Appendix 27 for *North Carolina's Kindergartners and Schools*, the 2000 statewide study of school readiness.)

Finally, North Carolina has already established criteria for the K-3 Assessment to ensure that the assessment will be appropriate for the target population and the purposes for which the data will be used. The to-be-developed K-3 Assessment must meet the following criteria, based on recommendations from the National Research Council's 2008 *Early Childhood Assessment: Why, What and How* report. Most of the criteria are adapted from the report, and the appropriate page numbers are provided. These criteria will be reviewed and revised a final time by the ECAC before the statewide K-3 Task Force is established.

1. The K-3 Assessment strategy—which assessments to use, how often to administer them, how long they should be, how the domain of items or children should be sampled—must match the stated purpose and require the minimum amount of time to obtain valid results for that purpose (p.5).
2. Those charged with developing the K-3 Assessment must weigh options carefully, considering the appropriateness of the assessment for the desired purposes and for use with all the subgroups of children to be included. Consideration of all potential purposes is essential, as is careful analysis of the actual content of the assessment instrument (p. 5).
3. The K-3 Assessment must include items that measure all five Essential Domains of School Readiness as specified above and in the RFP.
4. For children with disabilities and special needs, the K-3 Assessment may need to be replaced or supplemented with more functional approaches (p. 6).
5. Decisions about the K-3 Assessment will be made by individuals with the requisite programmatic and technical knowledge and after careful consideration of a variety of factors, including existing research, recommended practice, and available resources. For us, this means that individuals knowledgeable of test development, assessment of children in K-3rd grades, assessment of children in K-3 with High Needs (e.g., Dual Language Learners and children with disabilities), ELD standards, K-3 Standards, K-3 instruction, and cultural diversity must be meaningfully involved in the development of NC's K-3 Assessment.

6. Assessors must be trained to meet a clearly specified level of expertise in administering assessments, must be monitored systematically, and must be reevaluated occasionally. Careful supervision and reliability checks and monitoring must be put into place to ensure teachers adhere to approved administration procedures and practices (p.7).
7. The K-3 Assessment must be constructed in accordance with principles of universal design, so it will be accessible to, valid, and appropriate for the greatest number of children. Children with disabilities may still need accommodations, but this need should be minimized (p. 8).
8. Development of the K-3 Assessment will ensure that young children with special needs, children from language-minority homes, and other Children with High Needs are well represented in pilot studies and validation samples (p. 8).
9. Extreme caution will be exercised when drawing any conclusions about the status and progress of, as well as the effectiveness of programs serving, Children with High Needs.
10. Results from the K-3 Assessment will be used to provide additional support, professional development, or funding for ELD programs and K-3 classrooms (rather than for accountability or high-stakes purposes).
11. The K-3 Assessment will not be used for accountability or high-stakes purposes (e.g., to evaluate teachers or ELD programs)
12. The K-3 Assessment will include procedures for checking, on an ongoing basis, a sample of the assessments for reliability.
13. The K-3 Assessment will include careful safeguards to prevent misuse of the information in decisions made about individual children (adapted from recommendation S-5 on p. 11).

(c) KEA (NC's K-3 Assessment) is Administered by 2014-2015

As described in the Timeline and Milestone section of the high-quality plan, we will implement the K-3 Assessment in the first round of school districts in the fall of the 2014-2015 academic year. We will begin the K-3 Assessment in schools that have a high proportion of children with high needs. To help ensure that the K-3 Assessment will be used by teachers to guide instruction, we are committing a large portion of the RTT-ELC funds for the K-3 Assessment and other DPI resources toward professional development—not only about the assessment tool but also professional development about how to *use* the data generated from its use to guide classroom instruction. Implementation will be phased in so that we can promote

effective use of the instrument and to reach the areas of greatest need first. A major emphasis will be to build local capacity to effectively implement and sustain the K-3 Assessment beyond the life of this grant. We plan to roll out the K-3 Assessment first in the schools participating within the DPI District and School Transformation efforts funded by the existing Race to the Top grant to bolster the support of teachers in using the information from the K-3 Assessment to adapt their instructional practices.

(d) Reported to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System

North Carolina will include the first data entry point of the kindergarten version of the K-3 Assessment in the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS), in accordance with all Data System Oversight Requirements and privacy laws. As described in Section E.2 of this application, we will invest significant resources in an integrated early learning data system that will link to the SLDS.

(e) Funded with Federal and State Resources Other than this Grant

Coupled with existing Federal and State resources, this grant will fund the development of a K-3 Assessment tool, the validation and pilot tests, and some of the professional development needed to ensure that teachers complete the tool appropriately and use the information to inform their instruction. The Office of Early Learning in the Department of Public Instruction will rely on existing Federal and State resources through its statewide system of support to sustain the use of the tool, the continued professional development necessary to ensure that the tool is used appropriately by teachers and administrators to inform instruction, the entry of the data into the SLDS, and any future revisions.

High-Quality Plan for KEA (NC's K-3 Assessment)

Although we are interested in leading or participating in a multi-state consortium to develop a kindergarten entry assessment, for the purposes of the proposal we describe below our own plans to develop a K-3 Assessment.

(a) Key Goals

5. Develop a K-3 Assessment, based in part on DPI's current K-2 Assessment, broadening the domains measured from two (literacy and math) to the five Essential Domains of School Readiness (language and literacy development, cognition and general knowledge, approaches

toward learning, physical well-being and motor development, and social and emotional development) as well as expanding the assessment through third grade.

6. Pilot test the K-3 Assessment to ensure its validity, feasibility, inter-rater reliability, and appropriateness for populations of Children with High Needs.
7. Develop and implement a professional development plan to ensure that teachers know how to complete the K-3 Assessment and use the information to inform their instruction.
8. Implement the K-3 Assessment, in a phased approach beginning 2014-15 that focuses first in low-performing schools that have extra supports provided by DPI's RTT K-12 District and School Transformation Teams.

(b) Key Activities, Rationale and Scale-Up Plans

Several activities will need to be accomplished in the next few years to meet our goals. The major activities are described in this section; the next section provides a timeline of major milestones.

1. Revising the Early Learning and Development Standards. The first step in the process is to revise our existing Early Learning and Development (ELD) Standards (see Section C.1 for additional information) for young children Birth to age 5. We will also review and likely augment the K-3 ELD Standards to include more of the five school readiness domains. These revisions will mean that North Carolina will be one of a handful of states with aligned, comprehensive standards for birth through third grade, and will provide the basis from which the K-3 assessment will be developed.
2. Kindergarten Assessment Task Force. The ECAC will convene a state Task Force to develop specific plans for the K-3 Assessment. The Task Force will include individuals from both early childhood and K-12 communities as well as individuals with various areas of expertise (see section i. below for additional information). Through committees, this Task Force will work with state agency personnel, national experts, and institutional resources to develop the K-3 Assessment that meets the criteria specified above. The Task Force will consider how the K-3 Assessment may be incorporated into DPI's Instructional Improvement System (IIS) being developed under the current Race to the Top grant.
3. Pilot Tests. The K-3 Assessment tool and procedures will need to be pilot-tested before finalized. The pilot tests will gather data on the validity, internal reliability, and inter-rater

agreement of its scores. Pilot tests will also gather information about feasibility and usefulness for teachers, the use of the instrument with special populations of Children with High Needs, and the effectiveness of professional development in preparing teachers to administer the K-3.

4. Training for K-3 Assessment. The OEL will develop professional development materials and provide training to district level implementation teams within the first districts targeted for initial rollout. This training will address the appropriate administration of the K-3 assessment and how to use the data gathered to inform instruction.
5. Professional Development Plan. The OEL will develop a 5-year professional development plan to support teachers and administrators' understanding of appropriate formative and summative assessments and how to use information from the K-3 Assessment to modify classroom instruction for individuals or groups of children. This long term plan will address sustainability by building local district capacity to provide professional development for the successful implementation of the K-3 assessment. This will be accomplished through the use of DPI trainers and coaches, the leveraging of DPI's existing statewide system of support, and the use of existing Kindergarten teacher leaders and Demonstration Classrooms.
6. Implementation of K-3 Assessment. The OEL will implement the K-3 Assessment in phases, focusing first in school districts that a) are located in economically distressed counties with a high proportion of children with High Needs, b) are being served by RTT K-12 District and School Transformation Teams that can help school personnel conduct and use the assessments to improve instruction, c) are being served through DPI's statewide system of support to scale up the use of the K-3 assessment in all elementary schools.

(c) Timeline and Milestones for each Key Activity

January-February 2012	The ECAC reviews and finalizes the criteria to be used to develop the K-3 Assessment. (MOUs and scopes of work may be adjusted accordingly.)
April 2012	K-3 Assessment Task Force is established and receives an orientation from the ECAC of its charge
May 2012-July 2012	Task Force reviews assessments in NC and in other states (e.g., NC K-2 Assessment, California's Desired Results, Washington State's Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills), develops set of guiding principles, develops plan for stakeholder involvement (including teachers and

	families), establishes committee structure for particular tasks, develops recommendations and plans
June 2012	State ELD Standards revised (See Section C.1)
August 2012 – April 2013	Develop/revise K-3 assessment items and draft scoring procedures, conduct alignment analyses to ensure the assessment is aligned with the standards, engage national experts (content experts and experts in special populations) to review draft items, revise items and scoring procedure as necessary
December 2012	ECAC and State Board of Education updated on the Task Force's efforts
May 2013	K-3 Assessment revision/development process completed Implementation Plan completed
June 2013	ECAC and State Board of Education approves assessment recommendations Professional Development Plan completed
August-May 2013	Pilot tests to examine reliability, validity, feasibility, appropriateness for Children with High Needs, and draft professional development/training materials Develop training materials and roll-out plans for K-3 assessment
January-July 2014	Revise assessments and procedures based on findings from the pilot Provide training on K-3 assessment, working first in regions with low-performing schools and a Power of K teacher Prepare for fall assessment
August 2014-May 2015	Conduct K-3 assessment in first round of schools Continue providing training on K-3 assessment to other schools Sustainability plan developed and approved by ECAC and State Board of Education
January-July 2015	Continue providing training on K-3 Assessment Prepare for fall assessment
August-December 2015	Conduct K-3 Assessment in second round of schools ECAC issues a report about the K-3 Assessment, describing work accomplished, sustainability, and recommendations for the future
(d) Party or Parties Responsible and Key Personnel Assigned	
The State Board of Education will have final approval of the K-3 Assessment. The Office of Early Learning (OEL) in the NC Department of Public Instruction will be responsible for	

developing and implementing the K-3 Assessment. The Director of the Office of Early Learning is the key person assigned to this effort. The Early Childhood Advisory Council will provide general oversight and advice.

(e) Financial Resources

We request \$8,769,801 of RTT-ELC funds for the K-3 Assessment activity at the Office of Early Learning. The funds will be used to develop, pilot test, implement the K-3 assessment, and provide professional development to ensure that teachers complete the assessment appropriately and know how to use the information to adapt their classroom instruction. Because professional development is critical to ensuring that the K-3 Assessment is used to inform instruction, a significant portion of the budget is reserved for professional development—and DPI will also utilize their own resources to support professional development.

(f) Supporting Evidence

The current K-2 Assessment is included in Appendix 28. DPI and OEL's MOU also underscore their commitment to developing a K-3 Assessment that meets the specified criteria. The 2000 statewide school readiness assessment report also provides evidence of our ability to conduct a large-scale, statewide assessment project.

(g) Performance Measures, where applicable

We plan to implement in 2014 the K-3 Assessment in the first round of schools and expect the K-3 Assessment to be implemented statewide in the 2016-17 academic year. Data from this statewide assessment at kindergarten entry will help us measure our efforts to reach our overall goals for the state plan related to supporting the kindergarten entry skills of all children, particularly Children with High Needs, and to close the school readiness gap at kindergarten entry.

(h) Addressing the Needs of Different Types of ELD Programs

The KE assessment will provide information to strengthen the ability of different types of ELD programs to support children's early learning and development. The information will also help ELD program administrators and teachers better understand which of the five school readiness domains may need additional emphasis (e.g., if social-emotional development skills are low for most children, then programs may want to bolster their efforts to support social-emotional development).

(i) Meeting the Needs of Children with High Needs, as well as the unique needs of special populations of Children with High Needs

As delineated in the criteria above, the K-3 Assessment will be developed and implemented by a group of individuals with particular areas of expertise, using universal design procedures so that the assessment is appropriate for a range of children and the need for accommodations is minimized. The OEL will develop and implement professional development to assist K-3 teachers to understand how to use the information to adapt classroom instruction for children with High Needs and to assist K-3 administrators understand how to use the information to inform efforts to reduce the achievement gap. Working in concert with DPI's statewide system of support and the RTT K-12 District and School Transformation Teams, the OEL will foster sustainability by building district capacity to train and support teachers to implement the K-3 Assessment to fidelity.

Conclusion

Standards and assessment must drive our efforts to support good outcomes for children. Assessment of children can provide crucial data to inform instruction, improve services, and inform our efforts to reduce the achievement gap. Within this context, we propose to develop the infrastructure needed to *have* the data we need to make good decisions about children, programs, and our system. And, we also propose a strategy to develop the knowledge and skills to *use* the data appropriately and effectively. We understand the challenges in assessing young children and creating an assessment system that helps young children, their families and programs/schools. We do not take lightly our responsibility to enter this new realm (for us) of a longitudinal data system that includes information about young children, teachers, classrooms, and programs/schools. The new K-3 Assessment will meet the criteria of the RTT ELC Application, provide useful data, and improve the quality of instruction in our early elementary grades for many years to come.

(E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies.

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to enhance the State's existing Statewide Longitudinal Data System or to build or enhance a separate, coordinated, early

learning data system that aligns and is interoperable with the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and that either data system--

- (a) Has all of the Essential Data Elements;
- (b) Enables uniform data collection and easy entry of the Essential Data Elements by Participating State Agencies and Participating Programs;
- (c) Facilitates the exchange of data among Participating State Agencies by using standard data structures, data formats, and data definitions such as Common Education Data Standards to ensure interoperability among the various levels and types of data;
- (d) Generates information that is timely, relevant, accessible, and easy for Early Learning and Development Programs and Early Childhood Educators to use for continuous improvement and decision making; and
- (e) Meets the Data System Oversight Requirements and complies with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws.

If the State chooses to respond to this selection criterion, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

*(Enter **narrative** here – recommended maximum of eight pages)*

North Carolina will pioneer the development of a coordinated, integrated 21st century early learning data system that enhances, aligns with, and is interoperable with the existing NC CEDARS Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) and the current NC Race to the Top Initiative. Consistent with the RTT-ELC recommendations, the early childhood data system will be designed to support the comprehensive early childhood system envisioned by the NC Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) by providing timely, relevant, and accessible information

to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies. The ambitious yet achievable high quality data system plan outlined in this proposal will, through a phased approach, undergird North Carolina's comprehensive overall state ELC plan by innovatively supporting the successful implementation of priorities across all Core Areas and Focused Investments with an emphasis on Children with High Needs and enhancing the school readiness of young children.

To ensure feasibility, North Carolina will build on our strong history of collaboration, substantial investments, and our already-implemented infrastructure to incrementally transform our current 'siloes' early childhood data capacity into a comprehensive system. This resulting cohesive system which is required in order to create integrated cross-agency/program data will also provide a broader holistic systems view to identify and meet our early childhood system needs. The comprehensive alignment of existing databases and the incorporation of a Comprehensive Assessment System will enable effective collection, organization, and use of child progress data across all Essential Domains of School Readiness. This statewide integrated system to capture coordinated data is conceptualized as a linked data exchange hub using a data enterprise model. This model will greatly enhance the capacity of policymakers and stakeholders to make informed data-based decisions that will improve program and workforce quality, increase access to high quality programs, and ultimately improve child outcomes while transforming the developmental trajectory of Children with High Needs.

The design and implementation of this early childhood data system will build on the shared vision, resources, and governance structures by engaging a broad cross section of Early Learning Program and data system experts, families and key stakeholders. One key feature of the system includes the initial adoption of a *statewide common* child unique identifier (UID) via the fully implemented K-12 public school identifier technology as the gateway to linking and tracking of essential data elements over time. Another key feature is moving toward the enhanced capacity to link child-, program site-, and workforce-level data across the diverse sectors and disparate programs that comprise NC's comprehensive early childhood data system.

In building this system, North Carolina is already starting from a solid base by having the most important ingredient for success: strong collaborative relationships built on trust established over years of working together toward creating an integrated data system. We share the same goals, speak the same language, and understand the issues we must address together. The importance of these relationships simply cannot be overstated and greatly enhances North

Carolina's capacity to achieve our ambitious joint plan. We also recognize that this plan is not the end-all; rather it is yet one more step (albeit a significant and important one) toward realizing our grander long-range vision. As a state, we intend to implement the early childhood data system plan described here to develop a sound, sensible, and strategically designed infrastructure that substantially enhances the current capacity of North Carolina's early childhood data while simultaneously providing the flexibility for ongoing future expansion. The relatively modest investment proposed for this data system will translate into a respectively more sizable value-added system-wide benefit that is both attainable and sustainable for the state.

Defining the Challenges of the Early Childhood Data System

North Carolina has made great strides in providing a diverse array of high-quality services to support young children's readiness for success in school and life. As is typical nationally, these services are administered by various agencies, funded through different sources, and provided in multiple ways to best meet the continuum of child and family needs. While individual programs in North Carolina have developed adequate, and even exemplary, data systems for compliance reporting and internal purposes, we do not possess the capacity to fully and most effectively connect and use data across the system to gain a complete picture of children's early childhood and school readiness experiences. A striking example is that we cannot yet produce an accurate unduplicated count of children who receive public early learning and development services, nor can we link data about their early experiences and skills with later outcome data (e.g., K-12). In some cases data quality, inaccessibility, and incompatibility further exacerbate the challenge. Experts at Duke's NC Education Research Data Center identify the birth to age 5 years as the "black hole" of accessible data; they have extensive North Carolina pre- and peri-natal data, only to be followed by a gap in data until children enter the K-12 system. It is not that these data don't exist but that the linking mechanisms are currently lacking to capture and use them to fill this critical gap. Coordinated data that can be aligned and tracked longitudinally through the planned integrated system is the challenge we enthusiastically accept with full interagency consensus and a strong commitment to meet.

Integrating Early Childhood Data

The fundamental reason for a comprehensive early childhood data system is to collect, organize and interpret statewide data relating to early learning and development to improve

instruction, practices and policies. A statewide data system is needed to support all elements of North Carolina's High Quality Plan as outlined in this proposal which is focused on Children with High Needs. For example, a Successful State System cannot operate without data systems that are aligned and which reflect the high degree of interoperability allowed by new advances in technology. A High-Quality, Accountable Program, driven by a TQRIS by definition cannot be designed without a comprehensive assessment system and state data collection processes necessary to assess quality (classroom quality, workforce quality, etc.) to hold programs accountable. Early Learning and Development Outcomes for children cannot be supported without information on progress toward early learning and development standards that define what children should know and be able to do at different stages of development and information on health and family supports. A Great Early Childhood Workforce cannot be achieved without a data system that documents workforce competency and professional attainment on the part of the adults who care for and teach children. Lastly, Measuring Outcomes and Progress is not viable without a comprehensive statewide data system which measures children's progress toward school readiness and, as a further enhancement, provides a kindergarten entry assessment that assesses school readiness across all domains of early learning and development and informs instructors in the early elementary school grades. Our integrated early childhood data system plan can transform these possibilities into a reality for North Carolina.

Building on previous commitment

The strong commitment to building a comprehensive integrated data system is evidenced by a significant history of prior and current state efforts of key agencies that administer a range of public programs in the broad early childhood system. Examples of prior foundational efforts are described in the table below as evidence of steps taken in previous commitment, existing capacity, support, and the extent of planning and implementation that has occurred. Each step in North Carolina's path to the goal of a shared data system has strengthened critical consensus while building trust, has built on previous planning while growing the vision, has expanded the array of partners at the table, and has secured the strong likelihood of a successful implementation when funded. With additional partners identified and eager to participate, the state's early childhood collaborative team is ready, willing, and able to implement its plan. (See Appendix 31 for a list of established EC data system partners.)

NC Early Childhood Data System Integration Efforts		
Steps in Path	Supporting Efforts	Credible Evidence of Data System Plan Success
2005-2010 Office of Special Education Programs grant; FPG Child Dev. Institute	Established interagency EC Data System Work Group, representative of EC programs/agencies* and constituencies	Developed joint EC data system integration plan (2008); defined the need, purpose, vision; documented the methods of data collection; aligned the data fields each individual system; outlined short- and long-range goals; compiled priority questions to be addressed
2005 NC DPI created Office of School Readiness 2010 refocused as the Office of Early Learning (OEL)**	Coordinates admin. of a number of EC programs incl. IDEA B 619 Pre-school, Even Start, Title 1 Preschool, Head Start State Collaboration Office	Data for all students under DPI authority are a part of the agency's well-established, fully implemented, and robust SLDS called CEDARS; each assigned UID enabling longitudinal tracking; SLDS and UID have been specific to DPI programs, however new linkages are being formed; committed to integrated data system
2009-current DPI NC P-20+ SLDS initiative; builds on existing K-13 to further link data (a milestone)	Collaborative effort to further expand CEDARS to create a linked system sharing common child/student UID cross-sector; fully engaged partners	Consensus on joint plan to create a continuum from EC — K-13 — post-secondary ed. — employment; one of few states to define "P" as broad B-5 EC ; shared vision to enhance accessibility, interoperability, quality and use of shared data; feasible future source of sustainability and expansion of ELC investments
2011 NC General Assembly transferred Pre-K: from DPI OEL to DHHS	Previous More at Four became NC Pre-K, now administered by the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (DCDEE)	Existing data system design is synched for UID assignment for Pre-K children; potential for enabling reinstatement of DPI UID assignment with the development of necessary mechanisms; leverages prior design and capacity and maintain links
Ongoing –2011 DHHS data system supports for EC programs, strong potential for future links to wide range of social service data***	NC Pre-K, Child Care Subsidy & Licensing in DCDEE, Part C EI in Division of Public Health; all currently use separate data systems and all active partners in planning for integrated EC data system	Houses three programs targeted for initial ELC inclusion in the external DPI UID system for common child UID; precedence in existing Client Services Data Warehouse for adoption of common data elements, linking across programs, external data exchange with DPI; NC FAST technology system being phased in to provide links w/ data e.g., Child Welfare, Medicaid, Food Stamp, Work First (TANF); planning in progress
2009- 2011 NC Office of the Governor	Named a Senior Policy Advisor for Early Childhood; established the NC Early Childhood Advisory Council (NC ECAC) and named it as lead for ELC	Set major goal of supporting development of unified data collection system for public early childhood education and development programs and services throughout the state; provides high-level leadership and priority focus on data system building; hosted statewide stakeholder input on ELC data system plan
<p>*Programs represented by the EC Data Work Group collectively serve over 400,000 children annually through the efforts of 38,800 professionals at 11,500 sites across every county in the state.</p> <p>** OEL programs currently link >50,000 young children to the CEDARS SLDS via DPI UID; initial expansion to common UID by inclusion of first 3 DHHS programs adds approx. 255,000 children; enhancements to Head Start data capacity would enable 23,000 for a total of over 278, 000 for whom data can be linked across programs and over time by just the very initial ECL data system enhancements.</p>		

Note: NC's CEDARS SLDS includes the 12 elements described in the America COMPETES Act.
***Eventual planned linkage to NC FAST system leverages \$58 million state dollars already invested in NC implementation; data enterprise directors at DHHS and DPI have already begun joint planning.

Developing the Early Childhood Data System Plan

As outlined below, the North Carolina Early Childhood Data System Plan meets the requirements to be a high-quality system that improves instruction, practices, services, and policies.

(a) The Data System Plan incorporates all Essential Data Elements

Table (A)(1)-13 indicates the strong current capacity of North Carolina's individual ELD data systems. Our high-quality data system plan that follows below outlines the key goals of a Governance Structure to design and oversee, build, and support an enhanced, comprehensive data system that fills any existing gaps and creates new linkages to connect the Essential Data Elements listed below.

Element a. A unique statewide child identifier will be created by expanding the use of the well-established e-Scholar technology that is already implemented in North Carolina to assign public school child unique identifiers (UIDs) to young children in Department of Public Instruction (DPI) programs. It will also be created by enabling the linkage of data to the NC CEDARS SLDS (see Activity 2.1 in the table below). Thus, we will leverage the \$6.7 million already invested in our SLDS and \$1.8 million in its UID, as well as the annual \$438,000 maintenance cost. *The adoption of a statewide common child UID is the gateway to future linkages across programs and over time to and from the SLDS,* including Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) data described in Section E1. The strength of our long-held commitment to this critical joint agreement powers North Carolina to transform early childhood data into a truly integrated statewide *system*. Adding to DPI's early childhood programs that already implement child UIDs, three additional programs have been strategically targeted for initial expansion: Pre-K, Child Care Subsidy, and Part C. The design plan will build on this first phase to include additional early childhood programs prioritized during the design process as capacity is built. Long-term plans include an even more comprehensive P-20+ data exchange infrastructure to enable linkage longitudinally beyond K-12, providing a source of sustainability.

Element b. A unique statewide Early Childhood Educator (ECE) identifier will be

accomplished in several ways. Our child care workforce represents the biggest gap in lack of unique worker identifiers, thus the enhancement of the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) data system will provide this through a new Child Care Workforce Data System, (See Activity 2.4 in table below), which leverages the cost of an already completed extensive design, with future sustainability being pledged by DCDEE. The Part C Early Intervention Infant-Toddler Program in the Division of Public Health (DPH) also has a gap in use of a unique worker ID as noted in Table (A)(1)-13 The current plan will enable high-level consultation to determine the best way to enhance the current system to enable ECE UID assignment, as well as provide linkages among all NC ECE UIDs to create a common statewide identifier across all programs through the activities outlined in our Data System Plan.

Element c. A unique program site identifier will be accomplished through a similar process as described for Element b. For example, Head Start data are currently accessed via the federal reporting system. However plans have been underway in North Carolina to link state/local data that includes program site UIDs and are budgeted specifically for this purpose. The data system design to be implemented through activities detailed in our data system plan includes this element, as well as the overarching plan to link program site identifiers across all early childhood programs.

Element d. Child and family demographic information is essentially already done as all programs currently collect these data (See Table (A)(1)-13). Our challenge is the next step to establish uniformity and interoperability across programs by adopting common data definitions, standards, and other necessary steps that are included in our data systems plan.

Element e. Early Childhood Educator demographic information is broadly captured in NC, with some gaps existing in Part C and Child Care Subsidy programs. While Part C currently collects some personnel data, the state data system does not contain demographics for contracted community providers who provide the majority of early intervention services. A potential option for filling this gap is using our established e-Scholar technology, which can assign common teacher UIDs (in addition to child UIDs that Part C is slated to use). For the Subsidy program, this gap will be filled by the DCDEE Child Care Workforce System that will serve as the single entry portal for data on educational attainment, State credential or licenses held, and professional development. The system will replace multiple legacy systems that are not currently interoperable.

Element f. Data on the program's structure, quality, QRIS data. As with Element d, all relevant programs report currently collecting this element; however we must take the next step to establish uniformity and interoperability across programs by adopting common data definitions, standards, and other necessary actions that are included in our data systems plan.

Element g. Child-level program participation and attendance data. As evidenced in Table (A)(1)-13, the state has a solid foundation as our programs currently collect this data element. North Carolina can make great strides by addressing the next step that the data aren't necessarily uniform or have the capacity for being linked across programs. We will accomplish this step through the technical specifications for our enhanced data systems design and in this way, will fill any identified gaps and enable cross-program linkage.

(b) Enables uniform data collection and easy entry of the Essential Data

Elements by Participating State Agencies and Participating Programs

As evidenced above, North Carolina already collects the vast majority of the essential data elements. The RTT-ELC can allow us to move the needle by supporting a shift to uniformity of collection and ease of entry. All three goals of our data system plan speak to achievability: our Governance Structure provides the uniformity of policies and procedures by joint agreements; our phased approach Design Plan strategically positions dedicated staff in each agency/program to ensure specific EC data plan focus; and our Professional Development Plan supports uniform collection and easy entry of data with systematic targeted training and technical assistance (see Goal 3 below for detailed plans). Existing proven models and up-front investment in expert PD consultation give us traction to hit the ground running and sustain efforts over time.

(c) Facilitates the exchange of data among Participating State Agencies

North Carolina is fortunate to be the recipient of an in-depth review and mapping of our various early childhood programs' data structures, formats, and definitions to align our systems with the national Common Education Data Standards (CEDDS), which include early childhood elements and standards. The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) has contracted with PCG (Public Consulting Group), an independent company, to conduct this tedious work in conjunction with our ongoing P-20+ initiative. Thus we are able to leverage the cost of consultation, an estimated \$25,000, to meet this requirement using no grant funds. This exciting work provides another jump-start to our system capacity and achievability of our plan.

(d) Generates information that is timely, relevant, accessible, and easy

State-local data interface is crucial for designing a system that builds capacity for early learning and development (ELD) programs and ECEs to use data for continuous improvement and decision making. Our plan addresses this in several ways. First through our ECAC data governance structure, determination of critical policy and practice questions to guide system design will include input from stakeholder forums that involve local programs and providers in the process. We understand that data are more likely to be of high quality and used appropriately when end-users have the opportunity to identify what is needed and relevant to them. In addition we need to learn from, and build capacity for, local data collection and management even as we build our state-level system. Across North Carolina, local Smart Start partnerships provide an established infrastructure for capturing and using community-level data, albeit with a wide range of capacity from very limited to quite sophisticated. Our data system plan includes activities to build capacity by leveraging local investments in public-private partnerships for sustainable innovative models that will be evaluated for scale-up potential based on implementation science principles. Projects will support engagement of community stakeholders, including parents and teachers, and will provide models that ensure the use of Effective Data Practices, including the use of data for instruction and program improvement.

(e) Meets the Data System Oversight Requirements

The early childhood data system meets the oversight requirements and complies with Federal, State, and local privacy laws. The key to our success lies in Goal 1 of our data system plan with the establishment of a high-level Early Childhood Data System Governance Structure in conjunction with the well-established NC ECAC. This body has the representation and authority to develop Data Governance Policy, enforced by an MOU, to ensure compliance with all data system requirements while overseeing and managing data collection and use system-wide. A Data Enterprise Director and staff, with additional dedicated personnel in participating agencies, will further ensure that the plan is coordinated and specific work is accomplished. Supporting this effort is prior written commitment by early childhood partners to the majority of data governance policy requirements; the rest of which will be included through the focused work of expert consultants and agency specialists who will develop the design plan to incorporate all components. We will build on the rigorous data governance policies and controls of our early

childhood partnering agencies.

Our Transparency Policy is a major component of the work ensured by our Governance Structure and supported by expert consultation, dedicated staff, and state and local networks. Indelibly linked to the success of a major system-wide effort, particularly one involving the collection of personally identifiable information, is a comprehensive, systematic, and integrated stakeholder engagement plan. North Carolina will develop a plan that meets requirements of this grant to ensure that all relevant stakeholders, including families, early childhood professionals, and programs, are aware of the existence, purpose, and use of the data system. Our plan includes the design of a multi-tiered stakeholder engagement package that meets diverse agency, state, community, and family needs, specifically targeting families of Children with High Needs. Broad stakeholder involvement will be a hallmark of designing the plan, which will frame a clear and consistent message that is guided by the Transparency Policy. We will partner with our extensive network of state and community early childhood councils and board to provide forums for spreading the message. Examples of venues with statewide coverage include 77 local Smart Start Partnerships, 15 Affiliate Family Support Network programs, and 91 Local Interagency Coordinating Councils that collaborate around services for young children B-5 with special needs.

High Quality Plan for Integrated Early Childhood Data System

(a) Key Goals

1. Establish an Early Childhood Data System Governance Structure
2. Build an Enhanced Early Childhood Data System Design
3. Develop Professional Development to Support the Enhanced Data System & Stakeholder Engagement to Foster Understanding of the Integrated Data System

(b) Key Activities, Rationale and, if applicable, Scale-Up Plans

Activities for Goal 1: Establish an Early Childhood Data System Governance Structure

Define authority, roles, and relationships among the ECAC, data system partners and agency data system leadership; enhance the Early Childhood Data System Design through a series of activity milestones; and oversee management of data collection and use system-wide by instituting ELC-compliant governance and transparency policies. Rationale: North Carolina partners clearly understand that its data system is only as valuable as its governance is

collaborative and its capacity enables decision making to improve child readiness and outcomes. We need an active functional body to provide clarity of leadership vision and have the necessary authority to oversee the system-wide collection and use of data. Previously North Carolina has not had such a structure, however the now well-established NC ECAC provides the authority of the Governor's office, as well as high-level representatives of all key early childhood partners participating in the integrated data system.

Activities for Goal 2: Build Enhanced EC Data System Design

Institute the expansion of a common child UID assignment; ensure data exchange and system interoperability; build local capacity for data collection, integration, use, outcomes improvement, and state interface via innovative models; and implement an integrated Child Care Workforce System. Rationale: We will enhance the NC CEDARS SLDS by designing a system that is responsive to state-identified needs and can answer state-specific critical policy and practice questions developed through the governance structure. The system will provide the technology infrastructure and resources to effectively support data needs of NC's ELC State Plan. Agencies have agreed to a distributed data exchange system that links existing and ELC-prioritized data from each program rather than creating a new central repository, thus building on established capacity and allowing individual programs to maintain data ownership and serve as the authoritative source for their respective data. North Carolina's enhanced system will move our data system focus from compliance-driven to improvement-driven, fragmented to coordinated, and from "snap-shot" to longitudinal.

Activities for Goal 3: Develop Professional Development to Support the Enhanced Data System & Stakeholder Engagement to Foster Understanding of the Integrated Data System

Ensure the use of Effective Data Practices for both high quality data input and effective and appropriate use of the data; and ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the existence, purpose, and use of the data system and its protections. Rationale: North Carolina's early childhood data system is more than just hardware and software enhancements; integrated data will be of little use without a shared and clear understanding of the data system and its protections by all stakeholders. The information must be consistent across a wide multi-level range of 'links in the chain' from local data entry staff to leadership policy decision makers. To enhance usability,

buy-in, and successful outcomes, cross-agency end-users, teachers, and families will participate in the design and evaluation of the training and stakeholder engagement plans and activities.

(c) Timeline and Milestones for each Key Activity

(See Appendix 32 for a complete detailed list of activities)

	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4
Goal 1. Governance Goal 2. Build System Goal 3. Public Awareness & Stakeholder Engagement				
Activities:				
1.1.Create committee process and structure w/ policy and technology functions	√			
1.2 Adopt critical policy /practice questions to drive system development	√			
1.2d.Participate in in-depth technical data systems design consultation	√	√		
1.2f.Develop data system MOU w/ joint policies/procedures; ELC compliant	√	√		
1.3a Imp lement oversight policies: quality, privacy, integrity, transparency	√	√		
1.3b. Master data management; transparent joint decision-making, operations	√	√	√	√
2.1 Identify and implement technology enhancements to agencies' systems	√	√	√	
2.1c Strategic phase in of prioritized programs: Years 1-2 NC Pre-K, Child Care Subsidy, Part C, Head Start; Years 3-4 DSS, DHM/DD, Medicaid	√	√	√	√
2.2 Ensure EC Data System interoperability; Essential Data Elements	√	√	√	
2.3 State coordination and local innovative models; state/local interface	√	√	√	√
2.4.Implement integrated Child Care Workforce Data System	√	√	√	√

and portal				
3.1/3.2 Design, field test, and phase in implement multi-tiered training/ technical assistance and stakeholder engagement support packages to meets multiple cross-agency end-user needs	√			

(d) Party or Parties Responsible and Key Personnel Assigned

The ECAC has general oversight for the data system planning and development and will coordinate development and implementation of Training/TA/Engagement plans and stakeholder forums. The Early Childhood Data Enterprise Director will manage and coordinate the projects, staff Data System Governance Structure and oversee interagency implementation. Senior DPI and Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) data systems personnel will provide leadership in design and implementation with dedicated IT specialists in each participating division. A NC organization with a network of local early childhood partnerships will lead the innovative models. DCDEE will be responsible for Child Care Workforce system.

(c) Financial Resources

This Integrated Data System Project in the ECAC will cost \$8,894,351 and will be invested to govern, design, implement, and support the integrated data system. These funds leverage over \$9 million already invested in our SLD and UID technology, with the future potential to link to valuable social service data through NC FAST, which represents a to-date state investment of \$58 million. **Sustainability:** Primary features of the data system are up-front one-time costs, e.g., licensing expansion, initial design consultation, training materials development, workforce portal implementation, stakeholder engagement activities, local capacity building, and technology investments to modify current data systems. Enhancement of UID assignment capacity and other technology builds on prior investments and ongoing P-20+ SLDS efforts provide a promising future financial resource.

(f) Supporting Evidence

Supporting Evidence is not required for this selection criterion but is included in the narrative above.

(g) Performance Measures, where applicable

Performance Measures are not required for this selection criterion

(h-i) Addressing the Needs of Different Types of ELD Programs and Children with High Needs

Different types of DPI-administered EC programs are already included in UID/SLDS link. All three initial DHHS programs to begin assigning common UIDs and alignment of data standards, as well as those to be phased in later, are very different from each other and from the typical DPI-administered public education focus. The local innovation model projects represent the important element of public-private partnerships and collect data from a diverse range of evidence-based programs. Programs represented by the data governance structure and those targeted for implementation of state and local enhancements serve infants and toddlers, young children with disabilities and developmental delays, those from low income families and otherwise at-risk, and special populations of High Need, such as children of military families.

VII. COMPETITION PRIORITIES

Note about the Absolute Priority: *The absolute priority describes items that a State must address in its application in order to receive a grant. Applicants do not write a separate response to this priority. Rather, they address this priority throughout their responses to the selection criteria. Applications must meet the absolute priority to be considered for funding. A State meets the absolute priority if a majority of reviewers determines that the State has met the absolute priority*

Priority 1: Absolute Priority – Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs.

To meet this priority, the State's application must comprehensively and coherently address how the State will build a system that increases the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs so that they enter kindergarten ready to succeed.

The State's application must demonstrate how it will improve the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs by integrating and aligning resources and policies across Participating State Agencies and by designing and implementing a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. In addition, to achieve the necessary reforms, the State must make strategic improvements in those specific reform areas that will most significantly improve program quality and outcomes for Children with High Needs. Therefore, the State must address those criteria from within each of the Focused Investment Areas (sections (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children, (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce, and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress) that it believes will best prepare its Children with High Needs for kindergarten success.

Note about Competitive Preference Priorities: *Competitive preference priorities can earn the applicant extra or "competitive preference" points.*

Priority 2: Competitive Preference Priority – Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. (10 points)

Competitive Preference Priority 2 is designed to increase the number of children from birth to kindergarten entry who are participating in programs that are governed by the State's licensing system and quality standards, with the goal that all licensed or State-regulated programs will participate. The State will receive points for this priority based on the extent to which the State has in place, or has a High-Quality Plan to implement no later than June 30, 2015--

(a) A licensing and inspection system that covers all programs that are not otherwise regulated by the State and that regularly care for two or more unrelated children for a fee in a provider setting; provided that if the State exempts programs for reasons other than the number of children cared for, the State may exclude those entities and reviewers will score this priority only on the basis of non-excluded entities; and

(b) A Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System in which all licensed or State-regulated Early Learning and Development Programs participate.

If the State chooses to respond to this competitive preference priority, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring this priority, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the priority is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); and the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

*(Enter **narrative** here – recommended maximum of eight pages)*

North Carolina has successfully built its licensing and inspection system and Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) to include almost all early learning and development (ELD) programs. Our system covers a broad range of programs and children—and helps drive quality improvement to ensure that children, particularly Children with High Needs, have strong skills when they enter kindergarten.

(a) Licensing and Inspection System that Covers All Programs

Section (a) of the competitive preference priority states that the State should have in place, or have a High-Quality Plan to implement no later than June 30, 2015—

(a) A licensing and inspection system that covers all programs that are not otherwise regulated by the State and that regularly care for two or more unrelated children for a fee in a provider setting; provided that if the State exempts programs for reasons other than the number of children cared for, the State may exclude those entities and reviewers will score this priority only on the basis of non-excluded entities (p. 71 of RFP).

This section describes North Carolina’s licensing system as it relates to each part of the (a) criteria mentioned above.

“A licensing and inspection system that covers all programs that are not otherwise regulated by the State and that regularly care for two or more unrelated children for a fee in a provider setting.”

North Carolina regulates all child care centers and family child care homes that serve

more than two children for more than four hours a day. This includes developmental day programs and religiously-sponsored programs.

“...provided that if the State exempts programs for reasons other than the number of children cared for, the State may exclude those entities and reviewers will score this priority only on the basis of non-excluded entities”

North Carolina excludes from regulation part-day programs that serve children for less than 4 hours a day and summer camp programs for children. Preschool classrooms in public schools (i.e., Title I, Part C, NC Pre-K) are excluded from regulation, unless they receive CCDF funds for child care subsidy. Even though public schools have been exempt from licensure, many have voluntarily chosen to be licensed. This past summer, however, a law was passed requiring NC Pre-K classrooms in public schools to become licensed by July 2012. Federally-funded Head Start programs operated by public schools are also exempt from licensure unless they access federal funding to support wrap-around care (before/after school care). Most of the NC Head Start programs in public schools, though, have voluntarily chosen to become licensed.

We have described in this proposal our efforts to increase the number of early learning and development (ELD) programs in the licensing/TQRIS system. Specifically, the new law to license NC Pre-K classrooms by 2012 will bring more programs into the licensing system. As indicated in the High-Quality Plan for Section B.2, over the next few years North Carolina will also convene a study panel to consider recommending revisions to the licensing statute for part-day ELD programs (operating less than four hours a day) and family child care providers who care for two or more children who are not related to them.

(b) Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System in which All Licensed or State-Regulated ELD Programs Participate

Because the TQRIS is built into our state licensing system, 93% of NC's regulated ELD programs are in Tiers 1-5 of our TQRIS. The 7% of programs that are regulated but not in our TQRIS include religiously-affiliated programs and programs with either temporary or provisional licenses. Religiously-affiliated programs must be regulated but are exempt from additional licensing/rating requirements. New programs are initially issued temporary licenses and must operate for at least 6 months before becoming eligible to receive a rated license, and a few programs are issued provisional licenses because of changes or licensing violations.

The High-Quality Plan in Section B.2 describes our efforts to provide incentives and support to encourage public school and religiously-affiliated ELD programs to voluntarily apply for a rated license.

In conclusion, North Carolina has a licensing/regulation system that covers almost all ELD programs, and we have a TQRIS built into licensing that covers 93% of all regulated programs. We have met an ambitious goal of building a system that covers almost every ELD program in our state—and we have plans to include even more programs in our rated license system (See Section B.2 for additional details.)

Priority 3: Competitive Preference Priority – Understanding the Status of Children’s Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry. (10 points)

To meet this priority, the State must, in its application--

(a) Demonstrate that it has already implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that meets selection criterion (E)(1) by indicating that all elements in Table (A)(1)-12 are met; or

(b) Address selection criterion (E)(1) and earn a score of at least 70 percent of the maximum points available for that criterion.

For Competitive Preference Priority 3, a State will earn all ten (10) competitive preference priority points if a majority of reviewers determines that the State has met the competitive preference priority. A State earns zero points if a majority of reviewers determines that the applicant has not met the competitive preference priority.

Applicants do not write a separate response to this priority. Rather, applicants address Competitive Preference Priority 3 either in Table (A)(1)-12 or by writing to selection criterion (E)(1).

Under option (a) below, an applicant does not earn competitive preference points if the reviewers determine that the State has not implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that meets selection criterion (E)(1); under option (b) below, an applicant does not earn competitive preference points if the State earns a score of less than 70 percent of the maximum points available for selection criterion (E)(1).

Specify which option the State is taking:

- (a) Applicant has indicated in Table (A)(1)-12 that all of selection criterion (E)(1) elements are met.
- (b) Applicant has written to selection criterion (E)(1).

Note about Invitational Priorities: Invitational priorities signal areas the Departments are particularly interested in; however addressing these priorities will not earn applicants any additional points.

Priority 4: Invitational Priority – Sustaining Program Effects in the Early Elementary Grades.

The Departments are particularly interested in applications that describe the State's High-Quality Plan to sustain and build upon improved early learning outcomes throughout the early elementary school years, including by--

(a) Enhancing the State's current standards for kindergarten through grade 3 to align them with the Early Learning and Development Standards across all Essential Domains of School Readiness;

(b) Ensuring that transition planning occurs for children moving from Early Learning and Development Programs to elementary schools;

(c) Promoting health and family engagement, including in the early grades;

(d) Increasing the percentage of children who are able to read and do mathematics at grade level by the end of the third grade; and

(e) Leveraging existing Federal, State, and local resources, including but not limited to funds received under Title I and Title II of ESEA, as amended, and IDEA.

(Enter narrative here)

In our quest to build a Birth to Age 8 system for young children, this RTT-ELC application has given us an opportunity to better integrate and coordinate our early childhood efforts with the K-12 education efforts.

- As described in Section C.1, we have started revising our Early Learning and Development (ELD) Standards for children Birth to Age 5. As part of that work, the Department of Public Instruction's recent revision and State Board of Education's adoption of Common Core/ Essential Standards, K-12, will be augmented to include a set of standards that addresses the school readiness domains covered in the ELD standards. The standards and curriculum should provide an integrated framework that promotes all areas of development and guides teachers' decision-making regarding the learning experiences offered to children.
- As described in Section E.1, we will work collaboratively with the Office of Early Learning (OEL) in the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to develop a statewide kindergarten entry assessment that is part of a larger K-3 Assessment system in which teachers routinely

gather information about children's skills throughout the early elementary grades. Driven by the augmented standards that address the school readiness domains, the assessment will not only inform instruction and provide information that will help our efforts to reduce the achievement gap but be a catalyst for developmentally appropriate practice in the early elementary grades, including individual and culturally sensitive instruction.

- As described in Section E.2, we have been working with DPI on plans to develop an early childhood integrated data system that would include DPI's unique child identifier and be linked to the State Longitudinal Data System. The RTT-ELC application will allow us to implement our plans and begin building a data system that will eventually connect all young children in ELD programs to K-12 education, postsecondary education, and the workforce so that we can better understand what supports success in school and career.
- In the Transformation Zone, we will work intensively with a small region in NC that includes counties that are economically distressed, including some that are receiving supports from the K-12 Race to the Top District and School Transformation Teams. By working together with these communities, we will be more successful in supporting the school readiness skills of Children with High Needs when they enter kindergarten. At the same time we are strengthening our state system, this regional focus will allow us to build a regional system that supports children birth through age 8—and learn about what is needed at the state level to support a strong system that produces good outcomes for children.
- The Director of the Office Early Learning will actively promote collaboration, integration, and alignment between early childhood programs and agencies and DPI.

Office of Early Learning

The Office of Early Learning (OEL) is a key “lynchpin” in our alignment of early childhood services with K-12 education. The task of the OEL as reported by Superintendent June Atkinson to the State Board of Education upon the formation of the OEL is to focus strategically on Pre-K – Grade 3 reforms to benefit North Carolina's children. Outlined in this Invitational Priority is a framework for the OEL reform effort within the context of ongoing Department of Public Instruction (DPI) work framed by Governor Perdue's *College and Career: Ready Set Go* framework and North Carolina's successful Race to the Top (RttT) K-12 application. The driving rationale behind the OEL framework and one that the Office brings to Race to the Top initiatives

is that the reform and evolution of Pre-K-3 education must be developmentally-appropriate and evidence-based. It is this perspective that adds value to the OEL's collaborative engagements with other divisions within the Department of Public Instruction. Specifically, a developmentally-appropriate PK-3 continuum can answer major policy challenges by capitalizing on learning gains from state pre-kindergarten, narrowing the achievement gap at grade three and beyond, and improving school promotion, graduation and college attendance rates.

Maximizing the effectiveness of high-quality ELD experiences will depend on an improved alignment of standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment that ensures a systematic approach in programs serving children from preschool through Grade 3. Alignment between what children are expected to know and be able to do (standards), what is taught in the classroom (curriculum), the quality of instruction, and what is assessed is critical. This alignment must be both vertical, from grade to grade, and horizontal, across settings and content areas, so that learning experiences are sequential and meaningful. OEL will tackle this task by working across DPI and with other early childhood organizations.

Improvement of the pre-K-3 continuum cannot be accomplished by the efforts of the Office of Early Learning (OEL) alone but will require collaboration with internal and external partners. The unique contribution of the OEL is to bring early child development and education expertise to improvement initiatives by the department. The OEL will bring this added-value to bear on cooperative efforts with other divisions and sections within DPI to support work around the Race to the Top initiative: assist school turnaround efforts; develop great teachers and leaders, support the development and alignment of Pre-K – Grade 3 standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment; and improve data systems to support instruction and leaders. The OEL will also collaborate with other state and local agencies and programs focused on early childhood from birth through age eight and participate in the Early Childhood Advisory Council ensure that we are meeting the needs of North Carolina's young children both effectively and efficiently.

Aligning Standards and Appropriate Assessments

The alignment of North Carolina's standards, including the Common Core/Essential Standards for K-12 and the Early Learning Standards for Pre-K, called *Foundations*, emphasizes

a progression of learning that reflects what research tells us about the developmental level of each age group and grade level within this continuum.

The State Board of Education's adoption of Common Core/ Essential Standards, K-12, will include the revision of Foundations, the state's Early Learning Standards for preschool children, as a part of this process. Alignment of curriculum and instructional practices ensures that what is taught in the classroom is delivered in an individually, culturally, and developmentally appropriate manner. The curriculum should provide an integrated framework that promotes all areas of development and guides teachers' decision-making regarding the learning experiences offered to children.

Just as Pre-K – Grade 3 promotes alignment between what is expected and what is taught at each age/grade level, the ways in which teachers assess what is learned must be aligned as well. Assessment practices must be appropriate for the developmental characteristics of children within this age span and provide meaningful information to support instructional practices in the classroom. Teachers' use of formative assessment has been shown to significantly improve children's achievement. Therefore, the Office of Early Learning will continue to support DPI's formative assessment initiative, NC FALCON, as well as the Statewide Instructional Improvement System (ISS) that is integral to supporting local capacity building and the focus of current K-12 reform efforts.

Reforming Data Systems

The mission of DPI regarding data management is to provide quality data to education leaders to inform outcome based decisions regarding policy, programs and practices aimed at increasing student success. Currently, the development and implementation of the statewide Unique Identifier (UID) is enabling Pre-K – Grade 12 educators to access information at the child level that captures education experiences from the time of entry to the present.

Furthermore, data from all source systems across DPI containing student information across the Pre-K – Grade 12 years is marked for inclusion in the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (NC CEDARS). This will enable access to the enterprise wide data for all educators and decision makers regarding child program involvement and outcomes. Access to this data-rich environment will be an invaluable tool to help inform decision making that targets improved child outcomes.

Administrators and teachers use multiple sources of data to inform effective Pre-K – Grade 3 instruction. Collaboration among the Office of Early Learning, NC DPI’s Data Management Group, and other NC DPI divisions will allow the development of practices and systems for using data to support Pre-K – Grade 3 instruction effectively. To that end, a portion of the funds (\$1 million) from the RTT-ELC will be used to support a pilot project focused upon broadening and improving the use of classroom and child assessment data among administrators and teachers in school districts within the Transformation Zone, an economically distressed area with a high proportion of Children with High Needs.

High-Quality Plan for Using Data to Improve Classroom Instruction

(a) Key Goals

1. Administrators and teachers will demonstrate an improved ability to articulate the value, purposes, and use of assessment and how it informs their instructional practices and knowledge of student learning.
2. Administrators and teachers will learn how to use data that support school and classroom efforts to improve the school experience of under-represented children, including broader use of data such as attendance, retention, and discipline. This includes formative, benchmark, and summative approaches that inform teaching and learning.
3. Administrators and teachers will explore the principles and use of collaborative inquiry to inform instructional practice and knowledge of student learning and progress, with a focus on improving learning of African American, Latino and low-income students.
4. Administrators and teachers will broaden their ability to view quality constructs of instructional practices and student engagement. The Classrooms Assessment Scoring System (CLASS, Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008), which is the same measure recommended for inclusion in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System, will be used to measure instructional practice. The Snapshot (Ritchie, Weiser, Kraft-Sayre, Mason, Crawford, & Howes, 2010) will be used to code student engagement.
5. Administrators and teachers will learn to use the NC Teacher Evaluation to promote the use of data, evidence based practice, and collaborative inquiry in order to improve the school experiences of African American, Latino and low income children (AALLIC).

(b) Key Activities, Rationale and, if applicable, Scale-Up Plans

1. Classroom observations will be collected and will provide data for a single classroom as well as aggregate data across a number of classrooms at a grade level, school level, or district level. Both the Snapshot and CLASS provide important data to teachers and school leaders that form the basis of ongoing capacity building.
2. DPI will provide child-level data on children observed using the Snapshot measure (eg, race, IEP status, free/reduced price lunch, EOG scores).
3. Meet with leadership (principals, teacher leaders from represented grade levels, and central office staff) across all schools selected for participation. Within a two-day academy participants will interpret and share new data, and integrate it with their school data and School Improvement Plan (SIP). Each school will develop plans to address identified needs.
4. Meet with individual schools by grade levels/communities of practice.
5. Work with principals to develop and lead vertical (cross) grade-level PreK-3 discussions about classroom instruction and learning focused on AALLIC.

These activities will be delivered through a series of professional development institutes and individual school support to increase school leaders' effectiveness in addressing the needs of PreK-3 students. In these discussions and ongoing professional development, explicit links will be made to the standards of the Teacher Evaluation instrument, particularly standards 1,2,3,4 and 7.

(c) Timeline and Milestones for each Key Activity

Activities and Tasks	Year 1 (2012-2013)				Year 2 (2013-2014)				Year 3 (2014-2015)				Year 4 (2015-2016)			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Convening of principals and DPI staff	X			X	X			X	X			X	X			X
Recruitment of data collectors	X				X				X				X			
Data collector training	X				X				X				X			
Data collection in classrooms		X	X			X	X			X	X			X	X	
Creation of				X				X				X				X

dataset with data from DPI																	
School visit for support and professional development	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Annual report				X				X				X					X
Final report																	X

(d) Party or Parties Responsible and Key Personnel Assigned

To meet the goals outlined in this plan, the Office of Early Learning (OEL) will contract with an outside entity with expertise in the assessments and providing professional development based on the assessments. The OEL Director will oversee this project, working collaboratively with the contractor.

(e) Financial Resources

This Using Data to Inform Classroom Instruction activity is part of the K-3 Assessment project at OEL. The cost of the Using Data activity is \$1,000,000.

(f) Supporting Evidence

This work proposes to utilize widely used observation measures: Snapshot (Ritchie et.al, 2010) and the CLASS (Pianta et. al, 2008) focused on codifying pedagogy in order to know more about what children experience in their school day. Both measures provide educators and researchers with evidence of teachers’ ability to design and implement effective curriculum and instruction in classrooms for young children. This evidence subsequently translates into teachers knowing more about what they are doing and why they are doing it. Research shows classrooms characterized by teachers’ awareness of the *what* and the *why* of their teaching are most likely to promote learning of academic skills (Bogner, Raphael, & Pressley, 2002; Pianta, 2003). Specifically, the most effective teachers provide more content to students and are more instructionally engaging. They structure their classrooms to allow for responsive instruction, the development of positive teacher-child relationships, ongoing assessment of children’s needs, differentiated and informative feedback, and a repertoire of strategies to advance learning (Burchinal, et al., 2008).

(g) Performance Measures, where applicable

This project measures improvement in teacher effectiveness across eight research-based areas that impact school success for ALLIC: positive relationship with the adults in the classroom; scaffolded instruction and reflection; oral language development and vocabulary development; self-autonomy and executive function; curriculum integration and connection to real world; ability to collaborate and work with peers; culturally responsive practices; positive racial and ethnic identity development.

(i) Meeting the needs of Children with High Needs, as well as the unique needs of special populations of Children with High Needs

This project is based on previous work in schools serving students with high needs in North Carolina and Michigan. A dropout prevention grant (2008-2009) was focused on early prevention of school drop-out. Pre-K to 3rd grade teachers engaged in a year-long process of considering the impact of gender, race, and poverty on the children in their classrooms and particularly thinking about how to improve the school experiences of minority boys. Feedback from data provided teachers the opportunity to broaden their view of classroom practices through a research lens and to propose changes in classroom practices based on the results.

This project is focused on promoting public school efforts to become more responsive to the needs of an increasingly younger, more diverse population. Key features include a focus on improving the school experiences of African American, Latino and low income students; an emphasis on effective use of data to improve instructional practices; collaborative inquiry as central to professional learning communities; and alignment across the Pre-K, kindergarten and primary grades. Connecting these elements is the use of multiple forms of data—school-based assessments, state-mandated achievement tests, and documentation and classroom observations—to inform and monitor the change process.

Conclusion

Sustaining effects into the early grades requires the construction and implementation of an aligned system of standards, curricula, assessments, and instructional practices from Pre-K to Grade 3. More importantly, however, is the ability (skill) of both the administrator and classroom teacher in utilizing these tools to positively impact the success of children in the classroom, particularly those of High Need, as they progress across this important learning

continuum. Utilizing the funds from this grant, North Carolina will accomplish this task by linking the components critical to both the RTT/K-12 and RTT/ELC grants: Great Teachers and Principals; Quality Standards and Assessments; Improving Program Quality; and Data Systems to Improve Instruction.

Priority 5: Invitational Priority – Encouraging Private-Sector Support

The Departments are particularly interested in applications that describe how the private sector will provide financial and other resources to support the State and its Participating State Agencies or Participating Programs in the implementation of the State Plan.

Meeting all aspects of the Early Learning Challenge (ELC) will require an intentional, ongoing effort to build committed, enlightened leadership and support within the private sector at both the state and local levels. This leadership and commitment will be necessary not only to provide private sector funding but also other private sector resources and support needed to successfully reach our vision and goals as described in the ELC State Plan. These essential other resources and activities include advocacy at the state and local levels to influence public policy in order to maintain and expand existing public funding and support for early learning and development; raising public awareness to the profound effect of early learning and development experiences on the success in school and later workforce; and developing leaders within families and the local community at the grass roots level to lift up, value, and champion the educational process that begins in the earliest years as the pathway out of poverty.

Past Commitment

In the past, North Carolina's private sector has demonstrated a strong commitment to Early Learning and Development (ELD) programs in the state through generous investments. For example, cash and in-kind contributions for Smart Start and NC Pre-K initiatives have totaled \$120 million over the past 5 years. Last year, Smart Start raised over \$30 million in private funds. Another recent example of private sector support for early learning and development in NC is the \$15 million investment from foundations made by The Duke Endowment, Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust, Blue Cross/Blue Shield and other private sector funders for the expansion in NC of the Nurse-Family Partnership program which dramatically

improves outcomes (including school readiness) for young children and their first-time mothers with multiple High Needs. (The \$15,000,000.00 leveraged a total investment of \$25,000.00 in NC over seven years for this initiative.)

Likewise, NC has a history of private sector advocacy for early learning and development. The CEO of Bell South, who was Chairman of the national Committee for Economic Development at that time, gave pivotal testimony before the NC General Assembly when the Smart Start program was enacted. He was joined by a chorus of NC business leaders who put their money where their advocacy was with historically large contributions to Smart Start. The business community continues to be a strong advocate for early learning and development in NC at the state and local level.

Key Goals

The key goal of this initiative is to expand support and investment in North Carolina's young children through a multi-pronged strategy to increase public awareness and commitment. At the local level we will engage the business community, the medical community, foundations, policy makers, the United Way, communities of faith, families, grass roots leaders, and other opinion leaders through a strategy that enhances public understanding, builds strong commitments, influences public policy, and encourages investment in early learning and development. Similar efforts at the state level will complement this community-based effort. In short, this strategy will support and sustain all aspects of NC's ELC plan. Among the approaches being considered is the development of a network of Champions for Children across North Carolina, an idea drawn from a report by the Partnership for American's Economic Success, a project of the Pew Center on the States, entitled "Mobilizing Business Champions for Children."

Rationale

The public awareness initiative addresses the need to assure that our communities and state recognize the profound impact early learning and development has upon success in school, workforce development and economic development. The desired galvanizing effect upon the private sector is captured in this quote from J.B. Pritzker, managing partner of The Pritzker Group in Chicago:

"It was blindingly obvious that the most efficient, fiscally responsible way to spend

money is on young children. It's also the most rewarding.” The Pew Center on the States from a report entitled “Mobilizing Champions for Young Children”. (Pew Report for Young Children).

Pritzker became a strong advocate for expansion of the Illinois Childhood Block grant which was enacted and funded infant toddler services and included a commitment for pre-k for three- and four-year olds.

Once the critical role of early learning and development is understood and the exceptional return on investment is appreciated, private sector financing, public policy advocacy and support tend to follow. This scenario is playing out in a number of states, including North Carolina, but needs to be taken to a larger scale. For this paradigm shift to occur, new voices from the business community, the medical community, communities of faith, and other opinion leaders need to champion the cause. Traditional voices (“the usual suspects”) are not enough; nor is the traditional rationale, “It’s the right thing to do.” Happily, nontraditional voices from the private sector and the community at large are beginning to be heard as described below.

Supporting Evidence

Ample supporting evidence exists for the message to be carried boldly. That message is designed to awaken communities across the state to the dramatic effect that early learning and development has upon human capital formation and adult productivity and upon the trajectories for children that are set for success in school and life at a very early age.

Economic and Workforce Development. A study by a distinguished panel, including Nobel Prize-winning economist James T. Heckman, links early enrichment for Children with High Needs to the future success of the US economy:

“The future success of the U.S. economy... is in jeopardy because a growing fraction of the nation’s workforce will consist of adults who were raised in disadvantaged environments... Studies of human capital formation indicate that the quality of the early childhood environment is a strong predictor of adult productivity and that early enrichment for disadvantaged children increases the probability of later economic success.” Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 7/5/2006

In earlier times the U.S. led the world in education. Scores from the 2009 Programme for International Student Assessment ranked the U.S. 14th in reading, 17th in science and 25th in math out of the 34 countries participating according to an article in USA Today. Only 8 of the 34

counties in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development had more dismal high school graduation rates than the U.S. U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan's response to these results as quoted by the Associated Press was: "This is an absolute wake-up call for America."

Poor school performance, school dropout and health issues are creating a crisis for the military as well.

Military also Facing Workforce Emergency

A recent report by Mission: Readiness showed that only 25% of young people ages 17-24 would qualify to serve in the U.S. military. The other 75% could not meet the physical, behavioral or educational standards for service—standards that are similar to those many industries use in hiring. Such a grave lack of military readiness represents a serious failure of the public policies meant to help ensure that children grow to be successful adults, including the ability to lead a strong national defense. If 75% of the transportation sector or the agricultural sector worked poorly, there would be overwhelming public pressure to take action. We need that same sense of urgency for our children (from "Ready, Willing and Unable to Serve," Mission: Readiness: Military Leaders for Kids, 2009, <http://cdn.missionsreadiness.Org/NATEE1109.pdf>. Pew Report on page 7).

The late General John M. Shalikashvili, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff who co-chaired Mission: Readiness, summarized the importance of early childhood development to national security in an editorial in USA Today as follows:

"Sad... but true: Most young adults in the U.S. cannot qualify for military service... From a national security perspective, the situation is so serious that nearly 200 retired generals and admirals are calling on Congress to consider major educational reform, with a special emphasis on increased investments in high-quality early education... Why early education? Because research shows that these high-quality programs are the most cost-effective way to provide children with the skills they need to succeed in school and later in life."

The issue of a poorly prepared workforce in the Information Age reflected in our high dropout rate and achievement gap is exacerbated by an increasing demand for higher-order skills in the workplace as reflected in the chart below from the Pew Report, which states: "An

increasing percentage of jobs require people who solve problems and communicate well, instead of simply performing a rote task”.

Return on Investment

Federal Reserve Chairman Bernanke in a recent speech indicated:

“No economy can succeed without a high-quality workforce, particularly in an age of globalization and technical change... Research increasingly has shown the importance for both individuals and the economy as a whole of both early childhood

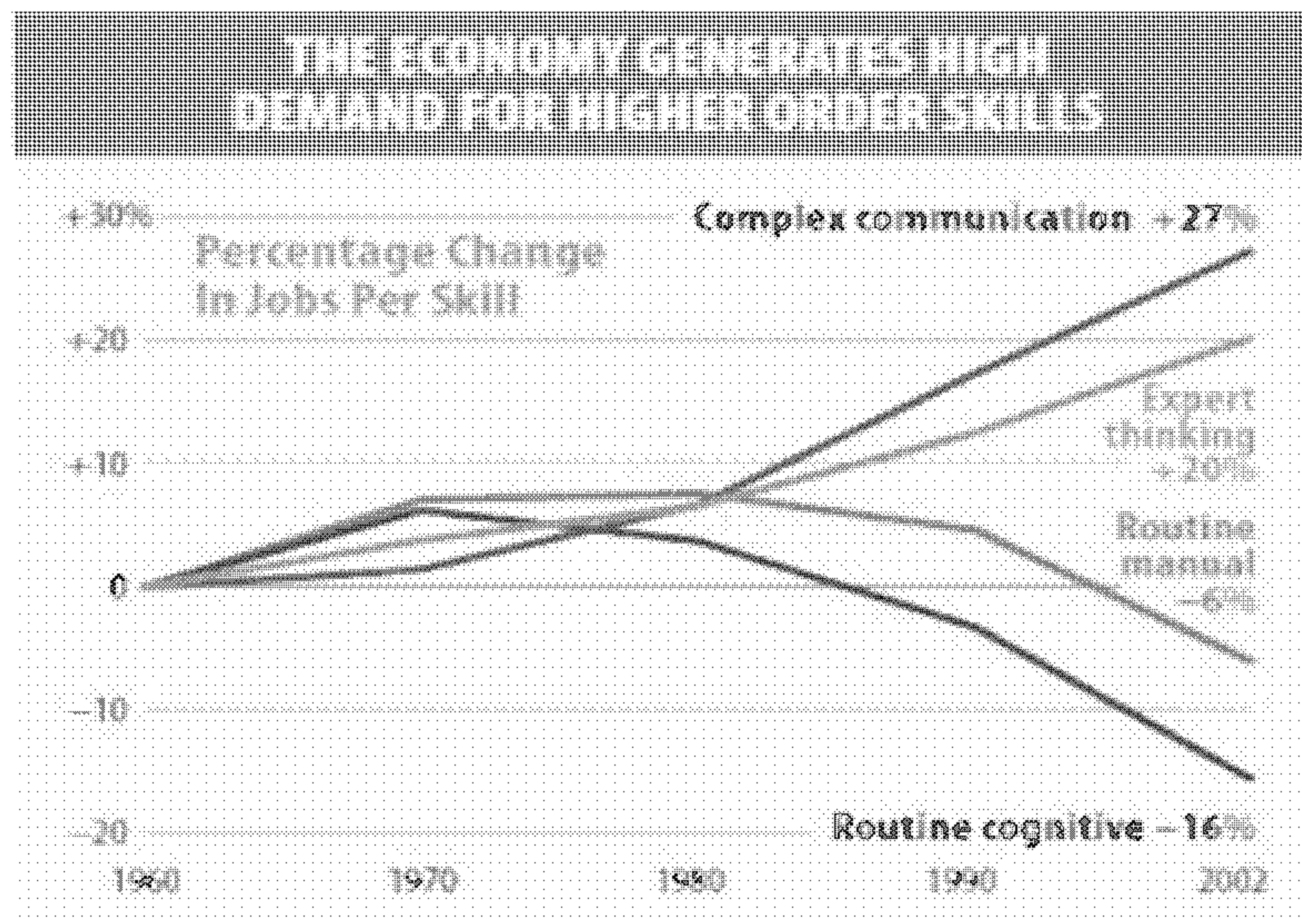
education as well as efforts to promote the lifelong acquisition of skills. The payoffs of early childhood programs can be especially high.” Pew

Report for Young Children, page 3.

Chairman Bernanke’s remarks are supported by the chart below from the Pew Report.

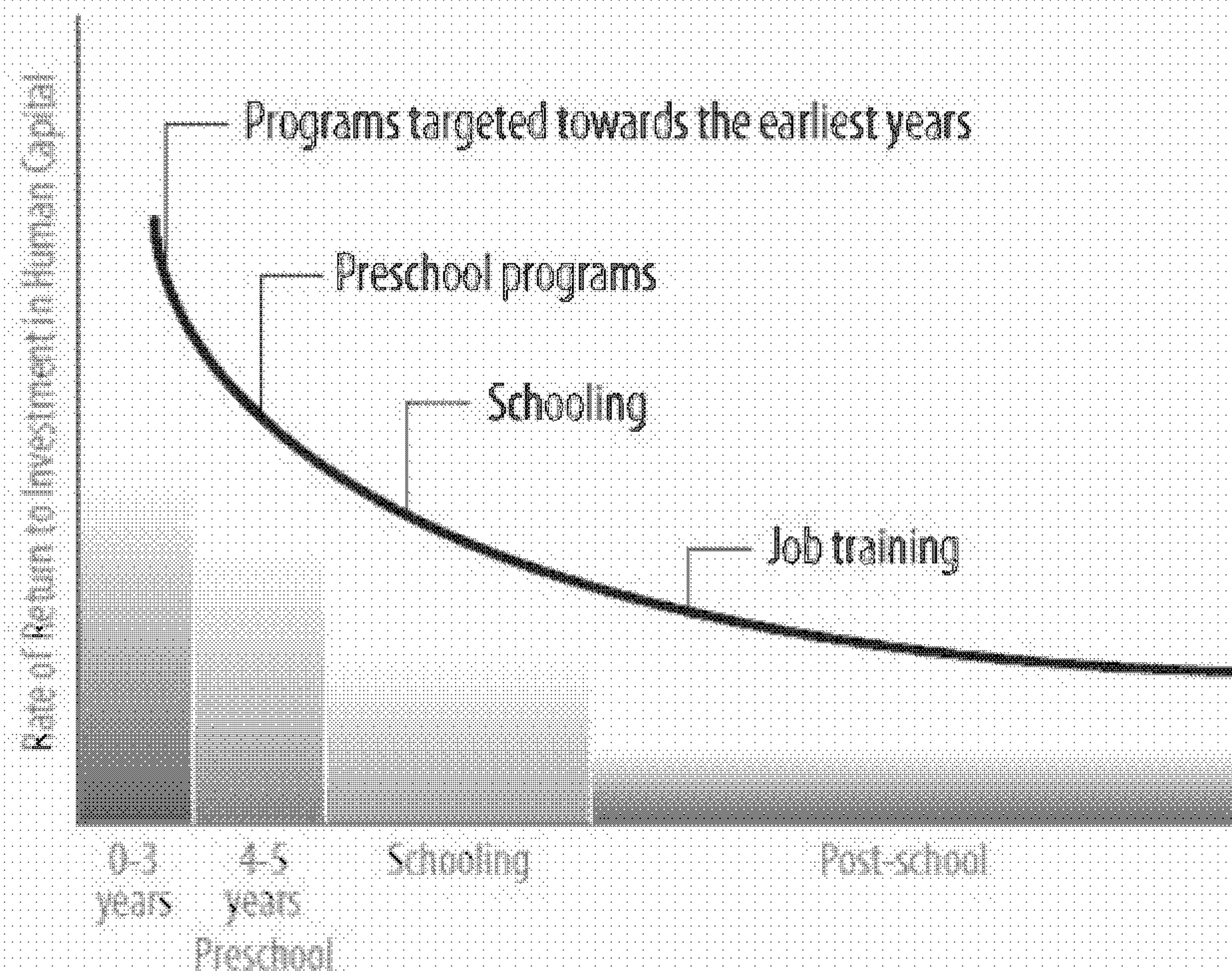
Linking Early Childhood Learning and Development to the Public Schools

Invitational Priority 4 describes the efforts North Carolina will make to



SOURCE: David Autor, Frank Levy and Richard J. Murnane, "The Skill Content of Recent Technical Change: An Empirical Investigation," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 118, 4 (November 2003) pp. 1279-1334. Data updated to 2002 by David Autor.

RATES OF RETURN TO HUMAN CAPITAL INVESTMENT AT DIFFERENT AGES



SOURCE: J.J. Heckman, "Skill formation and the economics of investing in disadvantaged children." *Science*, 312(5782):1900-2, (June 2006).

sustain positive program effects for young children from early learning and development as they enter kindergarten and the early elementary grades. A new understanding is developing as to the necessity of viewing the process of early learning as beginning at birth and moving into the third grade – a 0-8 continuum. Such a view not only makes it easier to grasp the profound impact of early learning and development but melds it in the mind as a critical component of the public school process. Connecting those dots, that is early childhood learning not only as contributing to but as an integral part of public education, is a strong incentive for private sector investment, advocacy and support. The goal would be that corporations considering site locations would begin to ask two questions: 1) What's the quality of the school system? and 2) What's the quality of the early childhood system?

Chronic Health Disorders in Adulthood

New research by a national network of scientists at Harvard headed by Dr. Jack Shonkoff not only validates what we have known for decades about the effect of poverty on children (academic difficulties, high school dropout, achievement gap, lower income, juvenile delinquency, incarceration, etc.) but clearly links early childhood stress (poverty, child maltreatment, severe depression of a parent, etc.) to chronic health disorders in adulthood:

“Those [children] who live in poverty are also at greater risk of developing heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, depression, anxiety disorders, and substance abuse later in life, and they are more likely to die at a younger age.” Harvard Center for the Developing Child.

In addition to the tragic human costs, chronic health disorders adversely affect our volunteer armed services, America's workforce and economic development.

Plan of Action

The Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) has already begun a process of inquiry to determine the level of awareness of issues related to early childhood. The ECAC and its Public Awareness Work Group will continue this process, involving a broad cross-section of constituencies as the planning progresses toward the goal of establishing a broad base of understanding and support for meeting the needs of young children to assure that they are ready for success in school and in life. Foundations, business leaders, the medical community, and local grassroots leaders are among those to be involved. A wide range of groups such as the Rural Economic Development Commission and the Pediatric Society will be invited to join in

this effort. The plan will also build upon the Smart Investing initiative of the North Carolina Partnership for Children, which brought together leaders from all corners of the state to grapple with the major issues for young children and is continuing in its current phase to expand that work.

Once this initial planning phase is completed in January 2012, the timeline, objectives, milestones, and activities will be much clearer. The broad outlines of some of the strategies that appear promising are beginning to emerge. Year 1 activities are expected to include

1) Planning and implementing the public awareness initiative to ensure that targeted audiences and groups across the state are made aware of the importance of early childhood and that various constituencies, such as the business community, foundations, and grassroots leaders are informed about and engaged in thinking about issues related to young children.

2) Tool Kit and Online Education and Action Center. The North Carolina Partnership for Children will develop a Tool Kit, including a template for a local game plan, talking points, a Power Point presentation and carefully selected materials educating the private sector on the importance of early learning and development

Our objectives beginning in Year 1 are to:

- Target organizations which have a stake or interest in the effect of early learning and development upon success in school, the workforce and economic development.
- Target the message and materials to the respective audiences and personalize the story (in addition to documenting the evidence).
- Implement a plan that makes available to the public visits to high-quality ELD programs, participation in home visits and other opportunities to become involved with the early childhood system as part of an ongoing public awareness and commitment-building initiative.
- Design and implement ongoing strategies in collaboration with private sector, grassroots, and other leaders to recruit Champions for Children in business and communities, especially in communities with a high proportion of Children with High Needs. Parents, families and friends of Children with High Needs who come to value education more highly and understand the profound impact that brain development and early childhood learning have on success in school and in life can change outcomes for children.

Year 2 objectives are likely to include carrying out the Governor's Summit on Young Children. The activities of Year 1 to build public awareness and Champions for Children can prepare the way for a Governor's Summit on Young Children to be held during Year 2. Invited speakers would include James Heckman, Nobel-winning economist; Dr. Jack Shonkoff, Director of the Center for Developing Child at Harvard; and General Hugh Shelton, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Co-Chairman of Mission: Readiness and a resident of North Carolina. Invitees will include many of the non-traditional voices likely to have an impact on the private sector and community support in the years ahead.

In Year 3, the stage would be set to take the public awareness and commitment initiative to the next level. Communities that embrace the expectations set for nurturing and supporting their young children might, for example, become Governor's Champions for Children Communities. The seven Economic Development Regional Partnerships might become hubs for business involvement. The medical community might come together for a concerted effort to increase understanding of the importance of good nutrition in the early years. Our Year 1 planning process will finalize the Year 2 and 3 actions.

Responsible Parties

The NC Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) has undertaken public awareness as one of its major initiatives and is responsible for carrying it out. The ECAC has contracted with the nationally-recognized Neimand Collaborative in Washington, DC, as a consultant for raising public awareness and creating commitment to early childhood learning and development at the local and state level using State Advisory Council funds. The ECAC will work closely in this endeavor with The North Carolina Partnership for Children which has, over time, worked diligently to build public support for young children working along with its network of local Smart Start organizations covering every county.

Financial Resources

The Early Childhood Advisory Council has budgeted over \$500,000 from its existing federal State Advisory Council funding for public awareness and commitment efforts for purposes of generating private sector investment and support and to help establish commitment and sustainability. No funds are requested from the RTT-ELC grant application for these purposes.

VIII. BUDGET

AWARD INFORMATION

Budget Requirements: To support States in planning their budgets, the Departments have developed the following budget caps for each State. The Secretaries will not consider for funding an application from a State that proposes a budget that exceeds the applicable cap set for that State. The Departments developed the following categories by ranking every State according to its share of the national population of children ages birth through five years old from Low-Income families and identifying the natural breaks in the rank order. Then, based on population, budget caps were developed for each category²⁵.

Category 1--Up to \$100 million--California, Florida, New York, Texas.

Category 2--Up to \$70 million--Arizona, Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania.

Category 3--Up to \$60 million--Alabama, Colorado, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin.

Category 4--Up to \$50 million--Alaska, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, Wyoming.

In addition to considering other relevant factors (see 34 CFR 75.217(d)(3)), the selection of grantees may consider the need to ensure that early learning and development systems are developed in States with large, high-poverty, rural communities (including States with high percentages of high-poverty populations in rural areas and States with high absolute numbers of high-poverty individuals in rural areas). Awards may be granted to high-quality applications out of rank order to meet this need.

Grant Period: The grant period for this award is December 31, 2011 through December 31, 2015.

²⁵ Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, 2009. American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data.

BUDGET INSTRUCTIONS
(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))

In the following budget section, the State is responding to selection criterion (A)(4)(b). The State should use its budgets and budget narratives to provide a detailed description of how it plans to use Federal RTT-ELC grant funds and funds from other sources (Federal, State, private, and local) to support projects under the State Plan. States' budget tables and narratives, when taken together, should also address the specific elements of selection criterion (A)(4)(b), including by describing how the State will effectively and efficiently use funding from this grant to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan and do so in a manner that

- (1) Is adequate to support the activities described in the State Plan;
- (2) Includes costs that are reasonable and necessary in relation to the objectives, design, and significance of the activities described in the State Plan and the number of children to be served; and
- (3) Details the amount of funds budgeted for Participating State Agencies, localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners, and the specific activities to be implemented with these funds consistent with the State Plan, and demonstrates that a significant amount of funding will be devoted to the local implementation of the State Plan

The budget narratives should be of sufficient scope and detail for the Departments to determine if the costs are necessary, reasonable, and allowable. For further guidance on Federal cost principles, an applicant may wish to consult OMB Circular A-87. (See www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars).

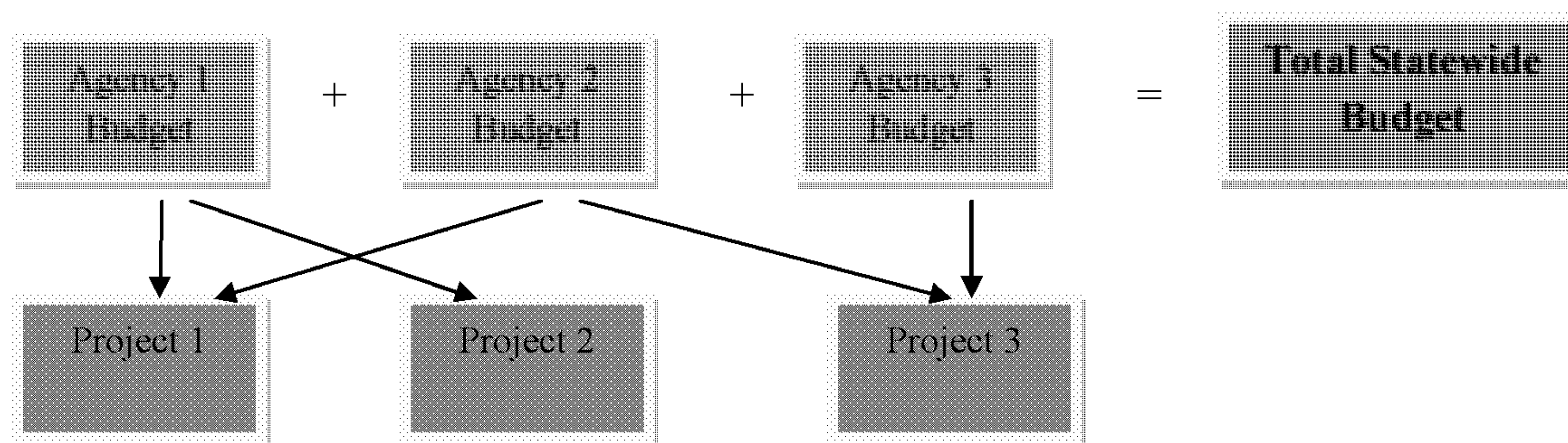
We expect the State to provide a detailed budget by category for each Participating State Agency that rolls up into the total statewide budget. We further expect that the budgets of each Participating State Agency reflect the work associated with fully implementing the High-Quality Plans described under the selection criteria and Competitive Preference Priority 2 and describe each Participating State Agency's budgetary role²⁶ in carrying out the State Plan.

For purposes of the budget, we expect that the State will link its proposed High-Quality Plans to "projects" that the State believes are necessary in order to implement its plans. The State might choose to design some projects that address only one criterion's High-Quality Plan, while other projects might address several similarly-focused criteria as one group. For example, the State might choose to have one "management project" focused on criterion (A)(3), organizing and aligning the early learning and development system to achieve success. It might have another "workforce project" that addresses criteria (D)(1) and (D)(2) under the Great Early Childhood Education Workforce section.

Some projects may be done entirely by one Participating State Agency, while others may be done by multiple agencies in collaboration with one another. The State, together with its

²⁶ Participating State Agency's budgetary roles should be consistent with the scope of work outlined in the Participating State Agency's MOU or other binding agreement.

Participating State Agencies, will define the projects required to implement the State Plan and will determine which Participating State Agencies will be involved in each project, as shown below.



To support the budgeting process, we strongly suggest that applicants use the RTT-ELC budget spreadsheets prepared by the Departments to build their budgets. These spreadsheets must be submitted together with, but in a file separate from, the application.²⁷ These spreadsheets have formulas built into them that are intended to help States produce the budget tables required within this section.

The following information must be included in the State's budget:

- I. **Budget Summaries**: In this section, the State provides overall budget summary information by budget category, Participating State Agency, and project.
 - a. **Budget Summary by Budget Category**. This is the cover sheet for the budget. (See Budget Table I-1.) States should complete this table as the final step in their budgeting process, and include this table as the first page of the State's budget. (Note: Each row in this table is calculated by adding together the corresponding rows in each of the Participating State Agency Budget by Category tables. If the State uses the budget spreadsheets provided, these "roll-up" calculations are done automatically.)
 - b. **Budget Summary by Participating State Agency**. This summary lists the total annual budget for each Participating State Agency. (See Budget Table I-2.) States should complete this table after completing Budget Table II-1 for each Participating State Agency (see Part II: Participating State Agency Budgets). If the State uses the budget spreadsheets provided, these "roll-up" calculations are done automatically for the State.
 - c. **Budget Summary by Project**. This summary lists the total annual budget for each of the projects. (See Budget Table I-3.) States should complete this table after completing Budget Table II-2 for each Participating State Agency (see Part II:

²⁷ See Application Submission Procedures, section XV. Please note that the RTT-ELC budget spreadsheets will not be used by the reviewers to judge or score the State's application. However, these spreadsheets do produce tables that States may use in completing the budget tables that the State submits as part of its application. In addition, the budget spreadsheets will be used by the Departments for budget reviews.

Participating State Agency Budgets). If the State uses the budget spreadsheets provided, these “roll-up” calculations are done automatically for the State.

- d. Budget Summary Narrative. This budget narrative accompanies the three Budget Summary Tables and provides the rationale for the budget. The narrative should include, for example, an overview of each Participating State Agency’s budgetary responsibilities and descriptions of each project that the State has included in its budget.
- II. Budgets for Each Participating State Agency. In this section, the State describes each Participating State Agency’s budgetary responsibilities.²⁸ The State should replicate this section for each Participating State Agency and for each Participating State Agency complete the following:
- a. Participating State Agency By Budget Category. This is the budget for each Participating State Agency by budget category for each year for which funding is requested. (See Budget Table II-1.)
 - b. Participating State Agency By Project. This table lists the Participating State Agency’s proposed budget for each project in which it is involved. (See Budget Table II-2.)
 - c. Participating State Agency Budget Narrative. This budget narrative describes the Participating State Agency’s budget category line items and addresses how the Participating State Agency’s budget will support the implementation of each project in which it is involved.

The State should replicate Budget Part II for each Participating State Agency as follows:

- For Participating State Agency 1: Budget by Category, Budget by Project, Narrative
- For Participating State Agency 2: Budget by Category, Budget by Project, Narrative

²⁸ Participating State Agency’s budgetary roles should be consistent with the scope of work outlined in the Participating State Agency’s MOU or other binding agreement.

BUDGET PART I: SUMMARY**BUDGET PART I-TABLES**

Budget Table I-1: Budget Summary by Budget Category--*The State must include the budget totals for each budget category for each year of the grant. These line items are derived by adding together the corresponding line items from each of the Participating State Agency Budget Tables.*

Budget Table I-1: Budget Summary by Budget Category					
(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))					
Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
1. Personnel	1,672,938	2,265,775	2,385,775	2,385,775	8,710,263
2. Fringe Benefits	487,653	650,365	696,637	712,182	2,546,838
3. Travel	138,000	132,000	133,500	133,500	537,000
4. Equipment	58,500	0	0	0	58,500
5. Supplies	13,500	13,500	14,000	14,000	55,000
6. Contractual	12,706,577	13,503,794	12,898,708	12,344,648	51,453,727
7. Training Stipends	0	0	0	0	0
8. Other	230,276	308,476	462,561	425,561	1,426,875
9. Total Direct Costs (add lines 1-8)	15,307,445	16,873,910	16,591,181	16,015,666	64,788,202
10. Indirect Costs*	151,241	204,130	215,769	216,857	787,997
11. Funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners	1,003,730	1,003,730	1,003,731	1,003,731	4,014,922
12. Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	400,000
13. Total Grant Funds Requested (add lines 9-12)	16,562,416	18,181,770	17,910,681	17,336,254	69,991,121

14. Funds from other sources used to support the State Plan	506,761	428,189	192,475	192,475	1,319,900
15. Total Statewide Budget (add lines 13-14)	17,069,177	18,609,959	18,103,156	17,528,729	71,311,021

Columns (a) through (d): For each grant year for which funding is requested, show the total amount requested for each applicable budget category.

Column (e): Show the total amount requested for all grant years.

Line 6: Show the amount of funds allocated through contracts with vendors for products to be acquired and/or professional services to be provided. A State may apply its indirect cost rate only against the first \$25,000 of each contract included in line 6.

Line 10: If the State plans to request reimbursement for indirect costs, complete the Indirect Cost Information form at the end of this Budget section. Note that indirect costs are not allocated to line 11.

Line 11: Show the amount of funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners through contracts, interagency agreements, MOUs or any other subawards allowable under State procurement law. States are not required to provide budgets for how the localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners will use these funds. However, the Departments expect that, as part of the administration and oversight of the grant, States will monitor and track all expenditures to ensure that localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners spend these funds in accordance with the State Plan.

Line 12: The State must set aside \$400,000 from its grant funds for the purpose of participating in RTT-ELC grantee technical assistance activities facilitated by ED or HHS. This is primarily to be used for travel and may be allocated to Participating State Agencies evenly across the four years of the grant.

Line 13: This is the total funding requested under this grant.

Budget Table I-2: Budget Summary by Participating State Agency--The State must include the budget totals for each Participating State Agency for each year of the grant. These line items should be consistent with the totals of each of the Participating State Agency Budgets provided in Budget Tables II-1.

Budget Table I-2: Budget Summary by Participating State Agency					
(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))					
Agency Name	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
Office of the Governor	6,138,756	6,640,753	6,871,744	6,620,181	26,271,433

Division of Child Development	7,101,017	6,783,602	6,479,088	6,146,720	26,510,427
Division of Public Health	1,569,840	1,569,840	1,569,840	1,569,840	6,279,360
Department of Public Instruction	2,259,564	3,615,764	3,182,484	3,191,989	12,249,801
Total Statewide Budget	17,069,177	18,609,959	18,103,156	17,528,729	71,311,021

Budget Table I-3: Budget Summary by Project--The State must include the proposed budget totals for each project for each year of the grant. These line items are the totals, for each project, across all of the Participating State Agencies' project budgets, as provided in Budget Tables II-2.

Budget Table I-3: Budget Summary by Project					
(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))					
Project	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
ELC Management and Transformation Support	1,902,280	1,826,910	1,761,837	1,767,184	7,258,211
Integrated Data System	1,737,133	2,039,500	2,687,314	2,430,404	8,894,351
Professional Development Capacity Building	50,000	25,000	0	0	75,000
Promoting Participation in TQRIS	1,026,065	444,505	433,050	113,644	2,017,266
TQRIS Program Quality Measurement Development	250,966	243,406	243,951	244,545	982,870
Increasing Access to High Quality ELD Programs	1,325,650	1,021,505	1,022,051	1,122,645	4,491,852

TQRIS Validation	598,250	598,250	598,250	598,250	2,393,000
Enhanced Professional Development	1,367,810	1,346,660	1,350,510	1,354,360	5,419,340
Early Learning & Development Standards	82,000	82,000	117,000	0	281,000
Certification & Licensure	375,000	350,000	350,000	350,000	1,425,000
Access & Articulation	148,250	148,250	148,250	148,250	593,000
Compensation & Retention	1,499,500	2,121,500	1,788,500	1,787,500	7,197,000
Cultural Competence	123,940	123,940	123,940	123,940	495,760
ELD Program Administrator Support	303,585	303,585	303,585	303,585	1,214,340
K-3 Assessment	1,759,564	3,115,764	2,682,484	2,691,989	10,249,801
Family Engagement	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	2,000,000
Family Strengthening	1,569,840	1,569,840	1,569,840	1,569,840	6,279,360
Partnership Initiatives	2,449,343	2,749,343	2,422,593	2,422,593	10,043,872
Total Statewide Budget	17,069,177	18,609,959	18,103,156	17,528,729	71,311,021

BUDGET PART I -NARRATIVE

Describe, in the text box below, the overall structure of the State's budget for implementing the State Plan, including

- *A list of each Participating State Agency, together with a description of its budgetary and project responsibilities;*
- *A list of projects and a description of how these projects taken together will result in full implementation of the State Plan;*
- *For each project:*
 - *The designation of the selection criterion or competitive preference priority the project addresses;*
 - *An explanation of how the project will be organized and managed in order to ensure the implementation of the High-Quality Plans described in the selection criteria or competitive preference priorities; and*
- *Any information pertinent to understanding the proposed budget for each project.*

Enter narrative here – recommended maximum of five pages)

NOTE: WE COULD NOT INSERT OUR RESPONSE IN THE BOX, SO WE HAVE INSERTED IT BELOW.

Budget Part I-Narrative

North Carolina requests **\$69,991,121** from the Early Learning Challenge fund to implement our State Plan. We will utilize \$1,319,900 of other funds to directly support the work, so our total budget for the State Plan is \$71,311,021. As shown in Appendix 6, other funding sources will be used to support the Grants Management activity of the RTT-ELC Management and Implementation Support Project of the Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC), the K-3 Assessment Project at the Office of Early Learning, and the Family Strengthening Project at the Division of Public Health. See Table A.4-1 for additional funding that will more broadly support our plan. Collectively, the 18 projects will achieve our ambitious goals delineated in Section A.2 and in the Performance Measures tables throughout this application. As described in Section A.2, these projects represent major investments in people (e.g., families, early childhood workforce, community leaders) who will positively impact outcomes for children, particularly Children with High Needs. Many of the projects will strengthen our standards (for programs and children) and assessments (for programs and children) and our ability to have and use data to make wise decisions for children. Our projects also represent a combination of many strategies that are across the whole state with some strategies that are focused on rural, distressed counties in a

Transformation Zone. To reach our ultimate outcome of having *each* child ready for success in school and life, we must work statewide, regionally, and locally. Our plan builds on our strengths and attends to gaps in our system. Everything we do—whether in the Transformation Zone or statewide—is planned with an eye toward raising the bar for children across the whole State, particularly those with High Needs.

The table below lists for each Participating State Agency the project name, applicable selection criteria, and project funding amount. The funding amount is the total amount, including funds from RTT-ELC and other sources. The budget tables provide more detailed information. Some projects have multiple activities. See Appendix 6 for a list of activities, the applicable selection criteria, and the activity costs (differentiating between RTT-ELC and other funding sources) organized by each project. More detailed descriptions of the projects are included in the relevant selection criteria.

Early Childhood Advisory Council, Office of the Governor		
Project Name	Selection Criteria	Total Amount
1. ELC Management & Implementation Support	A.2, A.3, Absolute Priority 1	\$7,258,211
2. Integrated Data System	E.2, Absolute Priority 1	\$8,894,351
3. Professional Development Capacity Building	D.2, Absolute Priority 1	\$75,000
18. Partnership Initiatives	A.2, A.3, B.2, C.3, Absolute Priority 1, Invitational Priority 5	\$10,043,872

Division of Child Development and Early Education, Department of Health and Human Services		
Project Name	Selection Criteria	Amount
4. Promoting Participation in Revised TQRIS	B.1, B.2, Absolute Priority 1, Competitive Preference Priority 2,	\$2,017,266
5. TQRIS Program Quality Measurement Development	B.3, Absolute Priority 1	\$982,870
6. Increasing Access to High Quality ELD Programs	B.4, Absolute Priority 1	\$4,491,852
7. TQRIS Validation	B.5, Absolute Priority 1	\$2,393,000
8. Enhanced Professional Development	B.4, D.2, Absolute Priority 1	\$5,419,340
9. Early Learning & Development (ELD) Standards	C.1, Absolute Priority 1, Invitational Priority 4	\$281,000

10. Certification & Licensure	D.2, Absolute Priority 1	\$1,425,000
11. Access & Articulation	D.2, Absolute Priority 1	\$593,000
12. Compensation & Retention	D.2, Absolute Priority 1	\$7,197,000
13. Cultural Competence	D.2, Absolute Priority 1	\$495,760
14. ELD Program Administrator Support	D.2, Absolute Priority 1	\$1,214,340

Office of Early Learning, Department of Public Instruction		
Project Name	Selection Criteria	Amount
15. K-3 Assessment	E.1, Absolute Priority 1, Invitational Priority 4	\$10,249,801
16. Family Engagement	C.4, Absolute Priority 1	\$2,000,000

Division of Public Health, Department of Health and Human Resources		
Project Name	Selection Criteria	Amount
17. Family Strengthening	C.4, Absolute Priority 1, Invitational Priority 5	\$6,279,360

Project Management

Detailed information about the management of each project is provided in the High-Quality Plans embedded across the selection criteria. This section describes general project management for each Participating State Agency.

Early Childhood Advisory Council, Office of the Governor

The Senior Policy Advisor for Early Childhood Education, who is staff director for the ECAC, will manage and oversee the RTT-ELC grant and its staff. A program director will be employed and will be assisted by two project coordinators, each of whom will have responsibility for a portfolio of the grant's projects. A contracts and fiscal officer and an administrative assistant, as well as an internal auditor to be hired within the Office of State Budget and Management, will complete the management staffing.

The ECAC will have specific responsibility for Projects 1, 2, 3, and 18. They will contract with organizations and collaborate with other state agencies to accomplish much of the work in those projects. The ECAC is responsible for supporting implementation capacity-building and state-level systems building. The ECAC will provide both state-level support for the local Transformation Zone (e.g., helping reduce state-level barriers) and help build state-level

capacity to expand/scale-up the Transformation Zone strategy throughout the state over time. Two Transformation Coordinators under the direction of the Senior Policy Advisor will staff this initiative. State-level resources will be augmented and supported through a contract with an organization with expertise in implementation science. The initial planning and development of the Early Childhood Integrated Data System will occur under the auspices of the ECAC. As work on the data system progresses and its direction becomes clearer, the administrative home of the project may shift.

Division of Child Development and Early Education

The Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) in the Department of Health and Human Services will provide oversight to Projects 4-14 in the table above. Dr. Deb Cassidy, Director of DCDEE will rely on a leadership team to manage the work of those projects. DCDEE has a strong history of contracting for statewide implementation of CCDF quality-funded projects and initiatives and proposes to contract for the majority of the activities in these projects. DCDEE has proposed three positions in this grant: two Project Managers and one Business Officer. The positions are needed for oversight and coordination of activities that are proposed to be contracted out, for coordination of workgroups that will be needed for some of the activities, and for collaboration with the other agencies with projects in the grant. DCDEE also will collaborate with other state agencies and organizations, as well as local organizations, to support the work in the Transformation Zone.

Office of Early Learning

The Office of Early Learning (OEL) in the Department of Public Instruction will oversee Projects 15 and 16 (with the Head Start Collaboration Office). The Director of OEL will lead a team of staff and experts to oversee the K-3 Assessment Project 15. The Director of the Head Start Collaboration Office will oversee the Family Engagement Project 16, working with local Head Start grantees. OEL will also collaborate in the implementation of other projects in the plan associated with DPI (e.g., Projects 2 and 9). The role of the OEL since its creation has been to strategically focus on the Pre-K through Grade 3 learning continuum and early grade reform in an effort to maximize the gains made for children in the pre-kindergarten year. Working across divisions in the department, the OEL brings added value to the current projects and initiatives that are part of DPI's current reform agenda. Located within the OEL is the Head Start State

Collaboration Office (HSSCO). Viewed as an integral part of defining the direction of Pre-K in the state, the HSSCO will build upon its successful history of collaboration with Head Start grantees in the state.

Division of Public Health

The Family Strengthening Initiative (Project 17) is housed in Health and Wellness Unit in the Women's and Children's Health Section (WCHS) of the Division of Public Health. The mission of WCHS is to assure, promote and protect the health and development of families with emphasis on women, infants, children and youth. In addition to the Family Strengthening Initiative, the Health and Wellness Unit also houses the HC Home Visiting Program, the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant, the NC Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health (LAUNCH), the Child Care State Nurse Consultant and the Executive Director of the NC Child Fatality Task Force. The Family Strengthening Initiative will be administered by the Family Strengthening Program Manager, an existing and currently vacant position that is provided as in-kind programmatic support for this grant. This position will also serve on the DPH Early Childhood Leadership Team with other Division of Public Health staff to assure strong collaboration among other early childhood programs. In addition, supervision, management and administrative support will also be provided as in-kind to support the work of the ELC grant.

This position works closely with State program personnel from the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), Department of Social Services (DSS), Division of Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities/Substance Abuse Services (MH/DD/SAS), Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE), Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina (PCA NC), NC Smart Start Initiatives and serves on State and National committees as a parenting specialist. In addition, this position will work collaboratively with the Early Learning Challenge Transformation Zone staff to assure that grant projects are implemented successfully and grant deliverables are attained. Toward this end, the position serves as an internal and external liaison with agencies, volunteer organizations and policy-making bodies to facilitate interagency collaboration, and an integrated service delivery system for North Carolina families. This position provides management for evidence-based family strengthening programs, including but

not limited to the Incredible Years, Strengthening Families, evidence-based home visiting programs, and other family strengthening initiatives.

Conclusion

The overall structure of our projects and plan for managing them is strong. As demonstrated in A.1, we have the leadership, organizational, fiscal, and infrastructure capacity to successfully implement our ambitious RTT-ELC State Plan—and make a meaningful difference in the lives of young children, particularly Children with High Needs, in North Carolina. We've made bold moves, and we've managed large initiatives. We're ready to meet the Early Learning Challenge.

BUDGET PART II: PARTICIPATING STATE AGENCY

The State must complete Budget Table II-1, Budget Table II-2, and a narrative for each Participating State Agency with budgetary responsibilities. Therefore, the State should replicate the Budget Part II tables and narrative for each Participating State Agency, and include them in this section as follows:

- *Participating State Agency 1: Budget Table II-1, Budget Table II-2, narrative.*
- *Participating State Agency 2: Budget Table II-1, Budget Table II-2, narrative.*

BUDGET PART II -TABLES

Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency Budget By Budget Category--*The State must include the Participating State Agency's budget totals for each budget category for each year of the grant.*

BUDGET PART II: PARTICIPATING STATE AGENCY**BUDGET PART II – TABLES**

AND

BUDGET PART II-NARRATIVE

In this section, we have organized the budget tables and narrative by each Participating State Agency (instead of organizing all the tables together and all the narratives together).

A narrative budget description follows each budget table for each Participating State Agency.

Office of the Governor					
Participating State Agency-Level Budget Table II-1					
(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))					
Budget Category	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
1. Personnel	722,679	722,679	842,679	842,679	3,130,716
2. Fringe Benefits	191,636	203,975	240,570	245,566	881,747
3. Travel	29,500	29,500	31,000	31,000	121,000
4. Equipment	10,000	0	0	0	10,000
5. Supplies	4,000	4,000	4,500	4,500	17,000
6. Contractual	4,668,976	5,271,343	5,567,407	5,310,497	20,818,223
7. Training Stipends	0	0	0	0	0
8. Other	33,676	8,676	9,761	9,761	61,875
9. Total Direct Costs (add lines 1-8)	5,660,468	6,240,173	6,695,917	6,444,003	25,040,561
10. Indirect Costs*	64,002	64,866	75,827	76,177	280,872
11. Funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners	0	0	0	0	0
12. Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	400,000

13. Total Grant Funds Requested (add lines 9-12)	5,824,470	6,405,039	6,871,744	6,620,181	25,721,433
14. Funds from other sources used to support the State Plan	314,286	235,714	0	0	550,000
15. Total Statewide Budget (add lines 13-14)	6,138,756	6,640,753	6,871,744	6,620,181	26,271,433

Columns (a) through (d): For each grant year for which funding is requested, show the total amount requested for each applicable budget category.

Column (e): Show the total amount requested for all grant years.

Line 6: Show the amount of funds allocated through contracts with vendors for products to be acquired and/or professional services to be provided. A State may apply its indirect cost rate only against the first \$25,000 of each contract included in line 6

Line 10: If the State plans to request reimbursement for indirect costs, complete the Indirect Cost Information form at the end of this Budget section. Note that indirect costs are not allocated to line 11.

Line 11: Show the amount of funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners through contracts, interagency agreements, MOUs or any other subawards allowable under State procurement law. States are not required to provide budgets for how the localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners will use these funds. However, the Departments expect that, as part of the administration and oversight of the grant, States will monitor and track all expenditures to ensure that localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners spend these funds in accordance with the State Plan.

Line 12: The State must set aside \$400,000 from its grant funds for the purpose of participating in RTT-ELC grantee technical assistance activities facilitated by ED or HHS. This is primarily to be used for travel and may be allocated to Participating State Agencies evenly across the four years of the grant.

Line 13: This is the total funding requested under this grant.

Office of the Governor					
(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))					
Project	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
ELC Management and Transformation Support	1,902,280	1,826,910	1,761,837	1,767,184	7,258,211
Integrated Data System	1,737,133	2,039,500	2,687,314	2,430,404	8,894,351
Professional Development Capacity Building	50,000	25,000	0	0	75,000

Promoting Participation in TQRIS	0	0	0	0	0
TQRIS Program Quality Measurement Development	0	0	0	0	0
Increasing Access to High Quality ELD Programs	0	0	0	0	0
TQRIS Validation	0	0	0	0	0
Enhanced Professional Development	0	0	0	0	0
Early Learning & Development Standards	0	0	0	0	0
Certification & Licensure	0	0	0	0	0
Access & Articulation	0	0	0	0	0
Compensation & Retention	0	0	0	0	0
Cultural Competence	0	0	0	0	0
ELD Program Administrator Support	0	0	0	0	0
K-3 Assessment	0	0	0	0	0
Family Engagement					

Family Strengthening					
Partnership Initiatives	2,449,343	2,749,343	2,422,593	2,422,593	10,043,872
Total Statewide Budget	6,138,756	6,640,753	6,871,744	6,620,181	26,271,433

Columns (a) through (d): For each grant year for which funding is requested, show the total amount this Participating State Agency plans to spend for each Project in the State Plan. If this Participating State Agency has no role in a particular Project, leave that row blank.

Column (e): Show the total expenditure, across all grant years, for the Project.

The Total Statewide Budget for this table should match Line 15 for Budget Table II-1.

BUDGET PART II – NARRATIVE

North Carolina’s Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) was established by Governor Perdue within the Office of the Governor to “create and sustain a comprehensive, integrated system of high-quality health services, family strengthening services, and early care and education services that supports ready children, families, and communities . . . [and] develop, encourage, and support initiatives to strengthen the state’s early childhood system and achieve the best possible outcomes for the state’s young children”. As an outgrowth of these responsibilities, the Governor has designated the ECAC as the lead agency for the RTT-ELC grant. The Senior Policy Advisor for Early Childhood Education, who is staff director for the ECAC, will manage and oversee the RTT-ELC grant and its staff. A program director will be employed and will be assisted by two project coordinators, each of whom will have responsibility for a portfolio of the grant’s projects. A contracts and fiscal officer and an administrative assistant, as well as an internal auditor to be hired within the Office of State Budget and Management, will complete the management staffing.

The ECAC is responsible for supporting innovation and state-level systems building. The ECAC will provide both state-level support for the local Transformation Zone (e.g., helping reduce state-level barriers) and help build state-level capacity to expand/scale-up the Transformation Zone strategy throughout the state over time. Two Transformation Coordinators under the direction of the Senior Policy Advisor will staff this initiative. State-level resources will be augmented and supported through a contract with an organization with expertise in implementation science.

The initial planning and development of the Early Childhood Integrated Data System will occur under the auspices of the ECAC. As work on the data system progresses and its direction becomes clearer, the administrative home of the project may shift.

1) Personnel: \$3,130,716

[assumption is that all positions except the Senior Policy Advisor will be filled by January 1, 2012; therefore, personnel cost is calculated for 12 months during Grant Year 1 and each year thereafter for all positions except for the Senior Policy Analyst. That position is budgeted for a start date of January 1, 2014; therefore, personnel cost is calculated for 12 months during Grant Year 3 and 4.]

Personnel: The following position is requested as an employee of the project:	# of Positions	% FTE	Base Salary	Total Annual Cost
1. Project Director: Responsible for overall oversight of RTT-ELC initiatives and ensuring project deliverables are met. Responsible for day-to-day management of the ELC and Transformation Support Unit.	1	100%	\$ 117,406	\$ 117,406
2. Project Coordinators: Each project coordinator will oversee a portfolio of RTT projects. Responsibilities include ensuring portfolio deliverables are being met. They will also serve as liaisons between the Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) and the various projects.	2	100%	\$ 97,279	\$ 194,558
3. Fiscal and Contracts Officer: Responsible for contract oversight, writing RFPs for the projects implemented out of the Governor's Office and coordinating accounting efforts.	1	100%	\$ 101,867	\$ 101,867

4. Administrative and Communications Assistant: Oversees general office coordination, coordinates and directs offices services, interacts with agencies, project leaders, and local partners, and manages communications for the grant.	1	100%	\$ 49,290	\$ 49,290
5. Internal Auditor: Conducts desk reviews and on-site audits of RTT-ELC projects. Reports to lead auditor within NC Office of State Budget and Management.	1	100%	\$ 65,000	\$ 65,000
6. Transformation Support Specialist: Each Transformation support specialist will provide state leadership for the Transformation Zone Strategy and will support the process of expanding the concept.	2	100%	\$ 97,279	\$ 194,558
7. Senior Policy Advisor: This position will lead and direct the RTT-ELC. It is a grant supported position whose funding ceases at the end of calendar year 2013.	1	100%	\$ 120,000	\$ 120,000

2) Fringe Benefits: \$881,747

The State of North Carolina provides the following fringe benefits:

- Social Security: 7.65%;
- Retirement: 13.12% in Grant Year 1; assumes a 9% rate of change in each following year (rate subject to change each year by actions of the General Assembly);
- Medical \$5,192 per person in Grant Year 1 (assumed to increase by 9% each of the following years)

3) Travel: \$121,000

Travel: Travel reimbursement rates in North Carolina are either the IRS business standard mileage rate (55.5 cents as of 7/1/11) if a State owned vehicle is not available to the employee or 30 cents if a State owned vehicle is available and the employee elects to use his/her personal

vehicle. Per diem rates if an overnight stay is necessary are: breakfast \$7.75, lunch \$10.10, dinner \$17.30 and lodging \$65.90.

To estimate travel cost, the NC Office of the Governor has established standard amounts of travel based on the amount of travel anticipated. This rate applies to all participating agencies	Base per yr.	# of Staff/Trips	Total Annual Cost
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light Travel (\$1,500) No meals, no overnight, approximately 400 average miles per month. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This is to support the travel of the senior policy analyst and the program director to engage stakeholders across the state and within the Transformation Zone. 	\$1,500	One staff in years 1 & 2. Two staff in years 3 & 4.	\$1,500 in years 1 & 2. \$3,000 in years 3 & 4.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Travel (\$5,000) 5 overnights per month, subsistence for those 5 days, approximately 1,000 average miles per month <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This is to support the travel of the two program coordinators and two Transformation specialists to facilitate RTT-ELC projects. Also, provides funds for the internal auditor to conduct project review. 	\$5,000	5 Staff	\$25,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy (Out-of-State) Travel: This level of travel is computed as the total number of out-of-state trips multiplied by \$1,500 (includes airfare and subsistence for overnight stays). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This is to support the out-of-state trips that will be required of the senior policy analyst and/or the program director. 	\$1,500	2 Trips	\$3,000

4) Equipment: \$10,000

Equipment: Consistent with State agency policy, equipment is defined as tangible, non-expendable, personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$500 or more			
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per unit.			
Justification	Unit Cost	Item Description	Total
Office Furniture and Equipment: This is a one-time expense to provide office furniture and equipment to ELC staff located within the Office of the Governor.	\$10,000	Office Furniture and Equipment	\$10,000

5) Supplies: \$17,000

The state allocates \$500 per year for each employee. This cost includes office supplies, postage, and printing. Supply costs are only included in years three and four for the Senior Policy Advisor.

6) Contractual: \$20,818,223

Development of Online MA Degree: \$50,000	
Contact with a university to develop and implement an online master's degree-level program for the enhancement of the early childhood workforce.	
Year	Budget
Grant Year 1	\$25,000
Grant Year 2	\$25,000
Grant Year 3	\$0
Grant Year 4	\$0

Transformation Zone: \$830,000	
Contract with a partner with expertise in implementation science to lead the planning, staff development, community involvement, and implementation process for the Transformation Zone strategies.	
Year	Budget
Grant Year 1	\$207,500
Grant Year 2	\$207,500
Grant Year 3	\$207,500
Grant Year 4	\$207,500

Partnership Initiatives: \$10,043,872	
Contract with a partner to deliver various initiatives listed below:	
<p>Leaders Collaborative: The ECAC will contract to develop and implement a Leaders Collaborative for approximately 50 Smart Start local partnership executive directors for the purpose of strengthening local systems building skills and developing capacity to mobilize local stakeholders to implement and sustain the goals of the RTT-ELC. The program is delivered through intensive performance-driven leadership training and through an online learning community, with support from highly-trained staff and subject matter coaches.</p> <p>Transformation Zone Capacity Building and Infrastructure Development: The ECAC will contract for services related to supporting a local Transformation Zone to strengthen the community infrastructure to create an innovative transformation zone that builds upon Smart Start, the community infrastructure that mobilizes communities to support children</p>	

and develops and supports evidence-based and innovative programs. Through the RTT-ELC, this work is taken to a new level of community building, capacity building and service provision based on community needs in the targeted transformation zone communities. This is accomplished through a state transformation coach and funding for five local coaches in the transformation zone.

Assuring Better Child Health and Development Expansion: The ECAC will contract to expand the Assuring Better Health and Child Development (ABCD) Program to cover the entire state. ABCD is an evidenced-based strategy that increases health and developmental screening and referral rates for all young children within the medical home by integrating routine developmental screening into well-child visits. Currently ABCD is supported in 16 counties with eight ABCD coordinators. This initiative will add seven ABCD coordinators and implement regionalized services to cover all 100 counties. Support includes a part time project coordinator.

Child Care Health Consultant (CCHC) Project: The ECAC will contract to improve the statewide network of Child Care Health Consultants (CCHCs) and expand CCHC services in the Transformation Zone. CCHCs are health professionals who provide education and technical assistance to center staff to help them develop policies and environments to promote children's health. The state system is improved by implementing a regional coaching model to promote connection with a medical home and preventive health care. Funding will be provided to counties in the transformation zone to hire three additional CCHCs to provide more intensive and targeted training on health promotion, medical home, and health literacy.

Faith-based Engagement Project: The ECAC will contract to provide one-time grants to local Smart Start partnerships with the highest numbers of N.C.G.S.-110 facilities to engage faith leaders (ministers, clergy) from churches where the N.C.G.S. -110s are housed in focus groups and awareness and engagement activities around the importance of high quality early care and education. The goals of this project will be to 1) move N.C.G.S.-110 facilities into the TQRIS at a 3 star or higher; 2) increase the faith community's awareness of and commitment to high-quality early care and education.

Year	Budget
Grant Year 1	\$2,449,343
Grant Year 2	\$2,749,343
Grant Year 3	\$2,422,593
Grant Year 4	\$2,422,593

Integrated Data System: \$8,894,351	
The ECAC will contract with a vendor to produce an early learning data system that is coordinated among providers of early childhood services and allows for eventual tracking of uniform longitudinal data through a unique identifier to assess impact of early childhood interventions on school success and will gather early childhood workforce data. Essential steps in Early Childhood (EC) data system development and delivery are a collaborative governance structure, definition and collection of early childhood data elements determined critical to school readiness, design and implementation /acquisition of a sustainable infrastructure and software that draws a unique ID from, and links the EC data back to the existing longitudinal P-13 data system. This is accomplished by ensuring project oversight through staffing, assessment of existing data, development of additional needed data elements, system design and development that integrates with existing P-13 longitudinal data system, stakeholder engagement, provider technical assistance, and user training.	
Year	Budget
Grant Year 1	\$1,737,133
Grant Year 2	\$2,039,500
Grant Year 3	\$2,687,314
Grant Year 4	\$2,430,404

Evaluation: \$1,000,000	
The ECAC will contract to evaluate the effectiveness of the ELC projects.	
Year	Budget
Grant Year 1	\$250,000
Grant Year 2	\$250,000
Grant Year 3	\$250,000
Grant Year 4	\$250,000

7) Training Stipends: \$0

8) Other: \$61,875

Within this category, \$25,000 will support the Professional Development Coordination Council in the effort to design and carry out a process to coordinate and develop a comprehensive framework for the myriad of professional development programs for the early childhood workforce.

The remaining budget includes funds for a \$90.38/month per position for ITS charges (computers, computer support, network service and support, email, phones, etc.)

9) Total Direct Costs: \$25,040,561

Budget Category	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
9. Total Direct Costs (add lines 1-8)	5,660,468	6,240,173	6,695,917	6,444,003	25,040,561

10) Indirect Costs: \$280,872

The State is using an indirect cost rate of 7%, which is the lowest approved rate among the participating state agencies.

Budget Category	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
10. Indirect Costs*	64,002	64,866	75,827	76,177	280,872

11) Funds distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws.: \$0

12) Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance: \$400,000

The State's required set aside of \$400,000 for RTT-ELC grantee technical assistance activities is set aside in the Office of the Governor's budget.

Budget Category	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
12. Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	400,000

13) Total Funds Requested: \$25,721,433

Budget Category	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
13. Total Grant Funds Requested (add lines 9-12)	5,824,470	6,405,039	6,871,744	6,620,181	25,721,433

13) Other Funds Allocated to the State Plan: \$550,000

The ECAC and its system-building efforts are supported by the Early Childhood Systems Building grant which totaled \$3,217,338. Approximately \$550,000 out of the total remaining in the grant budget supports the costs of the staff director, additional staff services provided under contract, and the operations of the ECAC. These funds will now contribute directly to the ELC grant. With the ECAC serving as Lead Agency, the state advisory council will assure that there is a seamless and complementary relationship between the two grants so that the total resources of the original grant will be brought to bear on this new and expanded endeavor.

The state also appropriates funding for the Smart Start program, which is managed by local non-profit partnerships. The state will rely on these partnerships in the community-building process for the Transformation Zone. The state did not include these funds in the line 14 budget because 1) these funds are passed through the Division of Child Development and Early Education to the statewide North Carolina Partnership for Children, which then allocates the funds to local non-profit partnerships; and 2) the state is not yet aware of the number of partnerships or additional contributions that will be involved in these efforts.

14) Total Budget: \$26,271,433

Budget Category	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
15. Total Statewide Budget (add lines 13-14)	6,138,756	6,640,753	6,871,744	6,620,181	26,271,433

BUDGET PART II – TABLES

Division of Child Development and Early Education					
Participating State Agency-Level Budget Table II-1					
(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))					
Budget Category	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
1. Personnel	214,809	214,809	214,809	214,809	859,236
2. Fringe Benefits	60,192	64,150	65,678	67,343	257,363
3. Travel	24,000	18,000	18,000	18,000	78,000

4. Equipment	9,000	0	0	0	9,000
5. Supplies	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	6,000
6. Contractual	6,236,736	5,930,086	5,588,936	5,291,786	23,047,544
7. Training Stipends	0	0	0	0	0
8. Other	31,800	31,800	66,800	29,800	160,200
9. Total Direct Costs (add lines 1-8)	6,578,037	6,260,345	5,955,723	5,623,238	24,417,343
10. Indirect Costs*	19,250	19,527	19,634	19,751	78,162
11. Funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners	503,730	503,730	503,731	503,731	2,014,922
12. Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance		0	0	0	0
13. Total Grant Funds Requested (add lines 9-12)	7,101,017	6,783,602	6,479,088	6,146,720	26,510,427
14. Funds from other sources used to support the State Plan	0	0	0	0	0
15. Total Statewide Budget (add lines 13-14)	7,101,017	6,783,602	6,479,088	6,146,720	26,510,427
<u>Columns (a) through (d):</u> For each grant year for which funding is requested, show the total amount requested for each applicable budget category.					
<u>Column (e):</u> Show the total amount requested for all grant years.					

Line 6: Show the amount of funds allocated through contracts with vendors for products to be acquired and/or professional services to be provided. A State may apply its indirect cost rate only against the first \$25,000 of each contract included in line 6

Line 10: If the State plans to request reimbursement for indirect costs, complete the Indirect Cost Information form at the end of this Budget section. Note that indirect costs are not allocated to line 11.

Line 11: Show the amount of funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners through contracts, interagency agreements, MOUs or any other subawards allowable under State procurement law. States are not required to provide budgets for how the localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners will use these funds. However, the Departments expect that, as part of the administration and oversight of the grant, States will monitor and track all expenditures to ensure that localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners spend these funds in accordance with the State Plan.

Line 12: The State must set aside \$400,000 from its grant funds for the purpose of participating in RTT-ELC grantee technical assistance activities facilitated by ED or HHS. This is primarily to be used for travel and may be allocated to Participating State Agencies evenly across the four years of the grant.

Line 13: This is the total funding requested under this grant.

Division of Child Development					
Participating State Agency-Level Budget Table II-2					
(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))					
Project	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
ELC Management and Transformation Support	0	0	0	0	0
Integrated Data System	0	0	0	0	0
Professional Development Capacity Building	0	0	0	0	0
Promoting Participation in TQRIS	1,026,065	444,505	433,050	113,644	2,017,266
TQRIS Program Quality Measurement Development	250,966	243,406	243,951	244,545	982,870
Increasing Access to High Quality ELD Programs	1,325,650	1,021,505	1,022,051	1,122,645	4,491,852
TQRIS Validation	598,250	598,250	598,250	598,250	2,393,000
Enhanced Professional Development	1,367,810	1,346,660	1,350,510	1,354,360	5,419,340

Early Learning & Development Standards	82,000	82,000	117,000	0	281,000
Certification & Licensure	375,000	350,000	350,000	350,000	1,425,000
Access & Articulation	148,250	148,250	148,250	148,250	593,000
Compensation & Retention	1,499,500	2,121,500	1,788,500	1,787,500	7,197,000
Cultural Competence	123,940	123,940	123,940	123,940	495,760
ELD Program Administrator Support	303,585	303,585	303,585	303,585	1,214,340
K-3 Assessment	0	0	0	0	0
Family Engagement	0	0	0	0	0
Family Strengthening	0	0	0	0	0
Partnership Initiatives	0	0	0	0	0
Total Statewide Budget	7,101,017	6,783,602	6,479,088	6,146,720	26,510,427

Columns (a) through (d): For each grant year for which funding is requested, show the total amount this Participating State Agency plans to spend for each Project in the State Plan. If this Participating State Agency has no role in a particular Project, leave that row blank.

Column (e): Show the total expenditure, across all grant years, for the Project.

The Total Statewide Budget for this table should match Line 15 for Budget Table II-1.

BUDGET PART II – NARRATIVE

DCDEE has a strong history of contracting for statewide implementation of CCDF quality-funded projects and initiatives and proposes to contract for the majority of the activities in these projects. DCDEE has proposed three positions in this grant: two Project Managers and one Business Officer. The positions are needed for oversight and coordination of activities that are proposed to be contracted out, for coordination of workgroups that will be needed for some of the activities, and for collaboration with the other agencies with projects in the grant.

DCDEE has considerable responsibilities within the early childhood system, including the following:

- Regulation of child care programs - over 8,000 facilities
- Implementation of NC’s QRIS through evaluation of program and educational standards in licensed child care facilities
- Oversight of NC’s Subsidized Child Care Program
- Administration of NC’s Pre-Kindergarten Program
- Support for the early childhood workforce through funding initiatives such as TEACH Scholarships, TEACH Health Insurance, and WAGE\$ salary supplement administration

These responsibilities provided a framework for building projects on existing services and adding others that complement and strengthen the early childhood system. Project budgets were derived by working with early childhood system partners to identify where the projects align with agency responsibilities and infrastructure. In many cases, DCDEE or partners have experience in the cost of implementing similar projects.

1) Personnel: \$859,236

[assumption is that positions will be filled by January 1, 2012; therefore, personnel cost is calculated for 12 months during Grant Year 1 and each year thereafter]

Personnel: The following position is requested as an employee of the project:	# of Positions	% FTE	Base Salary	Total Annual Cost
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1. Project Coordinator This position will provide project management oversight for Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) Participation.	1	100%	\$73,833	\$73,833
2. Project Coordinator This position will provide project management oversight for QRIS Quality Measurement Development. The position is expected to have travel expenses due to working with other states on the QRIS measurement.	1	100%	\$73,833	\$73,833
3. Business Officer This position will provide oversight for incentives projects and additional contracting	1	100%	\$67,143	\$67,143

2) Fringe Benefits: \$257,363

The State of North Carolina provides the following fringe benefits:

- Social Security: 7.65%;
- Retirement: 13.12% in Grant Year 1; assumes a 9% rate of change in each following year (rate subject to change each year by actions of the General Assembly);
- Medical \$5,192 per person in Grant Year 1 (assumed to increase by 9% each of the following years)

3) Travel: \$78,000

Travel: Travel reimbursement rates in North Carolina are either the IRS business standard mileage rate (55.5 cents as of 7/1/11) if a State owned vehicle is not available to the employee or 30 cents if a State owned vehicle is available and the employee elects to use his/her personal vehicle. Per diem rates if an overnight stay is necessary are: breakfast \$7.75, lunch \$10.10, dinner \$17.30 and lodging \$65.90.

To estimate travel cost, the NC Office of the Governor has established standard amounts of travel based on the amount of travel anticipated. This rate applies to all participating agencies	Base per yr.	# of Staff/Trips	Total Annual Cost
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light Travel (\$1,500) No meals, no overnight, approximately 400 average miles per month. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This will fund travel for the state task force 	\$1,500	2 staff	\$3,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Travel (\$5,000) 5 overnights per month, subsistence for those 5 days, approximately 1,000 average miles per month <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This will fund travel for the 3 RTT-ELC positions to perform curriculum and assessment training 	\$5,000	3 staff	\$15,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy (Out-of-State) Travel: This level of travel is computed as the total number of out-of-state trips multiplied by \$1,500 (includes airfare and subsistence for overnight stays). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Estimated travel for one of the QRIS coordinators to meet with other states partnering on developing the QRIS tool 	\$1,500	4 trips	\$6,000 (1 yr. only)

4) Equipment: \$9,000

Equipment: Consistent with State agency policy, equipment is defined as tangible, non-expendable, personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$500 or more per unit.			
Justification	Unit Cost	Item Description	Total
Laptop and Desktop Computer and printer; also, any furniture that may be needed. The items are necessary in order to perform analysis of data, document assessments, prepare reports, etc.	\$3,000	Computers including monitor & printer & laptop; any furniture	\$9,000

5) Supplies: \$6,000

The state allocates \$500 per year for each employee. This cost includes office supplies, postage and printing.

6) Contractual: \$23,044,044

WAGES: \$4,000,000	
Propose to contract with a vendor for WAGES salary supplements for child care professionals in the Transformation Zone who have achieved levels of early childhood education. This enhances the existing WAGES program in the Transformation Zone and helps support the Compensation & Retention Project.	
Year	Budget
Grant Year 1	\$1,000,000
Grant Year 2	\$1,000,000
Grant Year 3	\$1,000,000
Grant Year 4	\$1,000,000

TEACH: \$3,197,000	
Propose to contract with a vendor to provide/manage TEACH scholarships for child care professionals who are working to increase their levels of early childhood education. This helps to support the Compensation & Retention Project.	
Year	Budget
Grant Year 1	\$499,500
Grant Year 2	\$1,121,500
Grant Year 3	\$788,500
Grant Year 4	\$787,500

Workforce Study: \$600,000	
Propose to contract with a vendor who will provide a study of child care professionals in the areas of compensation and retention. The last workforce study was done in 2003. This helps to support Compensation & Retention.	
Year	Budget
Grant Year 1	\$200,000
Grant Year 2	\$100,000
Grant Year 3	\$100,000
Grant Year 4	\$200,000

Certification/Efficacy Endorsement: \$650,000	
Propose to contract with a vendor for certification of early childhood teachers and educator efficacy endorsement. This helps to support Certification & Licensure and Enhanced Professional Development.	
Year	Budget
Grant Year 1	\$200,000
Grant Year 2	\$150,000

Grant Year 3	\$150,000
Grant Year 4	\$150,000

B-K License support: \$800,000

Propose to contract with various individuals across the state to expand capacity to provide mentoring and evaluation required for NC Pre-K teachers in private settings to obtain B-K licensure. This helps to support Certification & Licensure.

Year	Budget
Grant Year 1	\$200,000
Grant Year 2	\$200,000
Grant Year 3	\$200,000
Grant Year 4	\$200,000

Incentives for Achieving Quality: \$7,257,100

Propose to contract with a vendor to implement incentives and grants for achieving higher star licensure and to provide enhanced professional development. This contract will also include incentives for improving the professional work environment. This helps to support Participation in the TQRIS and Enhanced Professional Development.

Year	Budget
Grant Year 1	\$2,329,275
Grant Year 2	\$1,749,275
Grant Year 3	\$1,749,275
Grant Year 4	\$1,429,275

Expanding Infant-Toddler Capacity: \$762,500

Propose contract with a vendor to expand the existing Childcare Resource and Referral Infant-Toddler Initiative for increasing access to high quality infant-toddler care. This includes infant-toddler specialists to provide technical assistance, start-up grants for infant-toddler slots, and part-day slots in 4-5 star facilities. This helps to support Increasing Access to High Quality Early Learning and Development Programs and Enhanced Professional Development.

Year	Budget
Grant Year 1	\$342,500
Grant Year 2	\$140,000
Grant Year 3	\$140,000
Grant Year 4	\$140,000

Support for Healthy Social Behaviors: \$280,000	
Propose to contract with a vendor for increasing capacity to support healthy social behaviors in early childhood programs. This enhances the efforts of existing Healthy Behavior Specialists – support Increasing Access to High Quality ELD Programs.	
Year	Budget
Grant Year 1	\$70,000
Grant Year 2	\$70,000
Grant Year 3	\$70,000
Grant Year 4	\$70,000

TQRIS Program Quality Measurement Development: \$547,604	
Propose to contract for facilitation and development of a new early childhood program quality measure specifically for TQRIS that could be used for regulatory purposes. This will be done in collaboration with other states such as Delaware and Kentucky.	
Year	Budget
Grant Year 1	\$136,901
Grant Year 2	\$136,901
Grant Year 3	\$136,901
Grant Year 4	\$136,901

TQRIS Validation: \$2,393,000	
Propose to contract with a university for a study to determine the validity of the TQRIS and to determine if the star rating levels in the TQRIS differentiate levels of quality in child care programs.	
Year	Budget
Grant Year 1	\$598,250
Grant Year 2	\$598,250
Grant Year 3	\$598,250
Grant Year 4	\$598,250

Early Learning & Development Standards: \$240,000	
Propose to contract for facilitation and development of updated Early Learning & Development standards for children ages 0-5. This would build on existing early learning standards for infants and toddlers and preschool-age children, to make one set of early learning guidelines.	
Year	Budget
Grant Year 1	\$80,000
Grant Year 2	\$80,000

Grant Year 3	\$80,000
Grant Year 4	\$0

Access & Articulation: \$593,000

Propose to contract with a vendor to support national accreditation of early childhood education programs and improve articulation with 4-year schools – supports Access and Articulation.

Year	Budget
Grant Year 1	\$148,250
Grant Year 2	\$148,250
Grant Year 3	\$148,250
Grant Year 4	\$148,250

Support Cultural Competence: \$525,000

Propose to contract with a university to develop and facilitate Institutes that would provide training and support for early childhood system partners. This would enhance the partners' ability to provide technical assistance that promotes greater cultural competence to early childhood programs – supports Cultural Competence project.

Year	Budget
Grant Year 1	\$120,940
Grant Year 2	\$120,940
Grant Year 3	\$120,940
Grant Year 4	\$120,940

ELD Program Administrator Support: \$1,202,340

Propose to contract for leadership training for directors and principals that would allow them to earn CEU's or course credit. The training would cover areas such as management, supervision, budgeting, and other administration skills that support ELD programs – supports ELD Program Administrator Support.

Year	Budget
Grant Year 1	\$300,585
Grant Year 2	\$300,585
Grant Year 3	\$300,585
Grant Year 4	\$300,585

7) Training Stipends: \$0

8) Other: \$160,200

This budget funds rental costs, additional printing costs and meeting costs for the DCD RTT-ELC employees.

9) Total Direct Costs: \$24,413,843

9. Total Direct Costs (add lines 1-8)	6,577,687	6,259,645	5,954,673	5,621,838	24,413,843
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10) Indirect Costs: \$92,162

The state is using an indirect cost rate of 7%, which is the lowest approved rate amongst the participating state agencies. This rate is only applied to salaries and fringe benefits.

10. Indirect Costs*	19,250	19,527	19,634	19,751	78,162
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11) Funds distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws.: \$2,014,922

Activity	Purpose	Cost	# of Partners/Participants
Increase Access	Payments to providers for new infant-toddler slots in 4-5 star programs	\$ 1,297,500	Est. 433 slots @ \$3000/slot In FY 10-11, there were 3210 4-5 star programs receiving subsidies
Increase Access	Payments to providers for new part-day infant-toddler slots in 4-5 star programs	\$ 717,422	Est. 171 slots @ \$3500/slot In FY 10-11, there were 3210 4-5 star programs receiving subsidies

12) Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance: \$0

The \$400,000 budget for technical assistance is in the Governor’s Office budget.

13) Total Funds Requested: \$26,506,927

13. Total Grant Funds Requested (add lines 9-12)	7,100,667	6,782,902	6,478,038	6,145,320	26,506,927
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14) Other Funds Allocated to the State Plan

DCDEE is using approximately \$410,000,000 in funds in state fiscal year 2011-12 to provide various levels of support to the projects included in the grant application. This funding is composed of state appropriation, CCDF quality funds, and other sources. The funding source and its relation to projects in the Plan are described below:

- \$13.3M in state funds, CCDF (includes 4% quality set aside, Infant-Toddler set aside, Quality Expansion set aside) and receipts (child care licensing fees) are used for DCDEE Regulatory positions that support participation in the QRIS. The QRIS is part of NC's licensing requirements.
- \$4.2M in CCDF quality funds (includes 4% quality set aside, School-age/Resource Referral set aside, Quality Expansion set aside) are currently budgeted for NC's Child Care Resource and Referral Council and Core Services. The CCR&R system provides training, technical assistance, and support to child care programs. It is anticipated that the CCR&R Council and system will carry out some of the activities in the projects.
- \$3.3M in CCDF quality funds (includes Infant-Toddler set aside and Quality Expansion set aside) are currently budgeted for Healthy Social Behavior Specialists and Infant-Toddler Specialists. Both are included in the project to enhance professional development.
- \$3.1M in CCDF quality funds (includes 4% quality set aside) and \$464,600 in NC Pre-K funds are currently budgeted for UNC-G to conduct environment rating scale assessments in child care programs. The assessments are part of NC's QRIS. Activities to support NC's QRIS are included in some of the projects proposed.
- \$3.9M in CCDF quality funds (includes 4% quality set aside and Infant-Toddler set aside) and \$925,000 in NC Pre-K funds are currently budgeted for TEACH Early Childhood Scholarships. TEACH and WAGES support NC's QRIS and are included in projects to support compensation and retention of child care teachers.
- \$1.3M in CCDF quality funds (includes 4% quality set aside) and \$127,150 in NC Pre-K funds are currently budgeted for the administration of WAGES salary supplements. TEACH and WAGES support NC's QRIS and are included in projects to support compensation and retention of child care teachers.
- Over \$380M in CCDF, TANF, state, and Smart Start funds are allocated to counties for NC's Subsidized Child Care Program. Subsidized child care reimbursement rates are tied to NC's QRIS system and some incentives and supplements in the Plan are linked to providers' subsidy payments.
- \$550,000 in NC Pre-K funds are budgeted for teacher mentoring and evaluation to support teachers obtaining NC Birth-Kindergarten licensure, a requirement of NC Pre-K. The Certification and Licensure project includes an activity to build on this effort.
- \$141,242 is budgeted in CCDF quality funds (includes 4% quality set aside) for activities to support and promote cultural competency. This aligns with the Cultural Competence project to develop and facilitate Institutes to provide training for early childhood partners that provide technical assistance to child care programs.

15) Total Budget: \$26,507,327

15. Total Statewide Budget (add lines 13-14)	7,106,017	6,784,752	6,476,388	6,140,170	26,507,327
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BUDGET PART II – TABLES

Division of Public Health					
Participating State Agency-Level Budget Table II-1					
(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))					
Budget Category	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
1. Personnel	0	0	0	0	0
2. Fringe Benefits	0	0	0	0	0
3. Travel	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	20,000
4. Equipment	1,500	0	0	0	1,500
5. Supplies	0	0	0	0	0
6. Contractual	1,490,865	1,492,365	1,492,365	1,492,365	5,967,960
7. Training Stipends	0	0	0	0	0
8. Other	0	0	0	0	0

9. Total Direct Costs (add lines 1-8)	1,497,365	1,497,365	1,497,365	1,497,365	5,989,460
10. Indirect Costs*	0	0	0	0	0
11. Funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners	0	0	0	0	0
12. Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance	0	0	0	0	0
13. Total Grant Funds Requested (add lines 9-12)	1,497,365	1,497,365	1,497,365	1,497,365	5,989,460
14. Funds from other sources used to support the State Plan	72,475	72,475	72,475	72,475	289,900
15. Total Statewide Budget (add lines 13-14)	1,569,840	1,569,840	1,569,840	1,569,840	6,279,360

Columns (a) through (d): For each grant year for which funding is requested, show the total amount requested for each applicable budget category.

Column (e): Show the total amount requested for all grant years.

Line 6: Show the amount of funds allocated through contracts with vendors for products to be acquired and/or professional services to be provided. A State may apply its indirect cost rate only against the first \$25,000 of each contract included in line 6

Line 10: If the State plans to request reimbursement for indirect costs, complete the Indirect Cost Information form at the end of this Budget section. Note that indirect costs are not allocated to line 11.

Line 11: Show the amount of funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners through contracts, interagency agreements, MOUs or any other subawards allowable under State procurement law. States are not required to provide budgets for how the localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners will use these funds. However, the Departments expect that, as part of the administration and oversight of the grant, States will monitor and track all expenditures to ensure that localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners spend these funds in accordance with the State Plan.

Line 12: The State must set aside \$400,000 from its grant funds for the purpose of participating in RTT-ELC grantee technical assistance activities facilitated by ED or HHS. This is primarily to be used for travel and may be allocated to Participating State Agencies evenly across the four years of the grant.

Line 13: This is the total funding requested under this grant.

Division of Public Health					
Participating State Agency-Level Budget Table II-2					
(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))					
Project	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
ELC Management and Transformation Support	0	0	0	0	0
Integrated Data System	0	0	0	0	0
Professional Development Capacity Building	0	0	0	0	0
Promoting Participation in TQRIS	0	0	0	0	0
TQRIS Program Quality Measurement Development	0	0	0	0	0
Increasing Access to High Quality ELD Programs	0	0	0	0	0
TQRIS Validation	0	0	0	0	0
Enhanced Professional Development	0	0	0	0	0
Early Learning & Development Standards	0	0	0	0	0

Certification & Licensure	0	0	0	0	0
Access & Articulation	0	0	0	0	0
Compensation & Retention	0	0	0	0	0
Cultural Competence	0	0	0	0	0
ELD Program Administrator Support	0	0	0	0	0
K-3 Assessment	0	0	0	0	0
Family Engagement	0	0	0	0	0
Family Strengthening	1,569,840	1,569,840	1,569,840	1,569,840	6,279,360
Partnership Initiatives	0	0	0	0	0
Total Statewide Budget	1,569,840	1,569,840	1,569,840	1,569,840	6,279,360

Columns (a) through (d): For each grant year for which funding is requested, show the total amount this Participating State Agency plans to spend for each Project in the State Plan. If this Participating State Agency has no role in a particular Project, leave that row blank.

Column (e): Show the total expenditure, across all grant years, for the Project.

The Total Statewide Budget for this table should match Line 15 for Budget Table II-1.

BUDGET PART II: NARRATIVE

The Family Strengthening Initiative is housed in Health and Wellness Unit in the Women's and Children's Health Section (WCHS) of the Division of Public Health. The mission of WCHS is to assure, promote and protect the health and development of families with emphasis on women, infants, children and youth. In addition to the Family Strengthening Initiative, the Health and Wellness Unit also houses the HC Home Visiting Program, the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant, the NC Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health (LAUNCH), the Child Care State Nurse Consultant and the Executive Director of the NC Child Fatality Task Force. The Family Strengthening Initiative will be administered by the Family Strengthening Program Manager, an existing and currently vacant position that is provided as in-kind programmatic support for this grant. This position will also serve on the DPH Early Childhood Leadership Team with other Division of Public Health staff to assure strong collaboration among other early childhood programs. In addition, supervision, management and administrative support will also be provided as in-kind to support the work of the ELC grant.

This position works closely with State program personnel from the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), Department of Social Services (DSS), Division of Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities/Substance Abuse Services (MH/DD/SAS), Division of Child Development (DCD), Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina (PCA NC), NC Smart Start Initiatives and serves on State and National committees as a parenting specialist. In addition, this position will work collaboratively with the Early Learning Challenge Transformation Zone staff to assure that grant projects are implemented successfully and grant deliverables are attained. Toward this end, the position serves as an internal and external liaison with agencies, volunteer organizations and policy-making bodies to facilitate interagency collaboration, and an integrated service delivery system for North Carolina families. This position provides management for evidence-based family strengthening programs, including but not limited to the Incredible Years, Strengthening Families, evidence-based home visiting programs, and other family strengthening initiatives.

The budget related to the project to be implemented by the Division of Public Health was derived from information associated with similar projects currently implemented by the division. Central to the decisions on funding amounts were the division's knowledge and expertise in a variety of evidence-based family strengthening programs.

1) Personnel: \$0**2) Fringe Benefits: \$0****3) Travel: \$20,000**

Travel: Travel reimbursement rates in North Carolina are either the IRS business standard mileage rate (55.5 cents as of 7/1/11) if a State owned vehicle is not available to the employee or 30 cents if a State owned vehicle is available and the employee elects to use his/her personal vehicle. Per diem rates if an overnight stay is necessary are: breakfast \$7.75, lunch \$10.10, dinner \$17.30 and lodging \$65.90.

Travel for Family Strengthening Project

This includes travel for a Program Manager for Family Strengthening (funded through Maternal and Child Health Block Grant and State appropriation) that will support the RTT-ELC project. This position provides administrative leadership and operational support in evidence-based work to strengthen NC families, prevention of child abuse, and increases positive child family interactions. The position will travel within Transformation Zone to provide leadership in planning, coordinating activities, and evaluation.

To estimate travel cost, the NC Office of the Governor has established standard amounts of travel based on the amount of travel anticipated. This rate applies to all participating agencies	Base per yr.	# of Staff/Trips	Total Annual Cost
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Light Travel (\$1,500) No meals, no overnight, approximately 400 average miles per month. 	\$1,500	0	\$0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium Travel (\$5,000) 5 overnights per month, subsistence for those 5 days, approximately 1,000 average miles per month 	\$5,000	1 staff	\$5,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heavy (Out-of-State) Travel: This level of travel is computed as the total number of out-of-state trips multiplied by \$1,500 (includes airfare and subsistence for overnight stays). 	\$1,500	0	\$0

4) Equipment: \$1,500

Equipment: Consistent with State agency policy, equipment is defined as tangible, non-expendable, personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$500 or more per unit.			
Justification	Unit Cost	Item Description	Total
Laptop and printer: The program manager will be provided a laptop computer and a printer to maintain a mobile workplace within the Transformation Zone. The laptop will also facilitate analysis of data, report preparation reports for the State agency, and completion of other grant related	\$1,500	Laptop and printer	\$1,500

responsibilities.			
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5) Supplies: \$0

6) Contractual: \$5,967,960

NorthEast Connects: \$1,998,750	
<p>As part of the Family Strengthening Project, an RFA will be issued to the Transformation Zone counties to implement Northeast Connects, a replication of the evidence-based Durham Connects (DC) initiative. DC is an inexpensive (\$700 per family), short-term, community-based nurse home visiting program designed to ensure that high need families are enrolled in the services that meet their needs. It provides 4-7 nurse intervention contacts to each enrolled family, beginning with a visit during the birthing hospital stay, followed by 1-3 home visits between 3-8 weeks of infancy as well as contacts with community service providers as needed. The initiative is designed to ensure that resources are optimally matched with family needs. Approximately six hundred families per year in selected Transformation Zone counties will be served by Northeast Connects. A contract will be awarded through an RFP process to a community-based agency to provide Northeast Connects. Principal costs will be for staffing, primarily home visiting nurses and supervisory support and operating expenses. Additional costs will include nurse home visitor training through the agency that is currently implementing DC.</p>	
Year	Budget
Grant Year 1	\$499,125
Grant Year 2	\$499,875
Grant Year 3	\$499,875
Grant Year 4	\$499,875

Family Strengthening Initiatives: \$3,969,210	
<p>As part of the Family Strengthening Project, an RFP will be issued to identify a community-based agency in the Transformation Zone (IZ) that will implement one or more evidence-based family strengthening initiatives (Incredible Years, Strengthening Families, Parents as Teachers, Triple P and/or Reach Out and Read). The RFP process will be preceded by a community-based assessment of needs and analysis of which evidence-based program or combination of programs will best meet the needs of the communities in the IZ. The number of families to be served through this family strengthening contract and specific budget allocations will depend on the mix of models chosen by the community for implementation. General descriptions of each of the evidence-based models is below:</p>	

1. **Positive Parenting Program (Triple P):** Triple P is a family strengthening program that trains staff in local health and human services agencies to serve families more effectively. Triple P programs have been associated with decreased levels of child maltreatment and increased school readiness, among other positive child outcomes. Implementing Triple P for a birth cohort of 2,300 would cost approximately \$250,000 (without the social marketing component). In addition, another \$90,000 would be budgeted for a local coordinator position (salary, fringe and operating), which Triple P strongly recommends for implementation success. Costs for years two through four are significantly lower and applicants may propose that funds be reallocated to another family strengthening initiative(s) that will target different populations.

2. **Incredible Years (IY):** IY is made up of a set of three comprehensive, multi-faceted, and developmentally-based curriculums for parents, teachers, and children designed to promote emotional and social competence and to prevent, reduce, and treat behavior and emotion problems in young children. Parents or teachers meet as a group, with two trained facilitators and are given opportunities to collectively and individually develop new strategies for managing their children. The course includes role plays, homework, setting personal goals, and feedback. Facilitators use videotaped scenes to encourage group discussion, problem-solving, and sharing of ideas. Parents and teachers are given handouts, activities to practice with children, and reminder notes to put on their refrigerator or blackboards. Costs would be approximately \$25,000 per year for each cohort implemented (6 children and 12 parents per cohort), including coaching.

3. **Strengthening Families (SF):** The SF Program is a 14-session, science-based parenting skills, children's life skills, and family life skills training program specifically designed for high-risk families. Parents and children participate in SFP, both separately and together. Group Leader Manuals contain a complete lesson for every session. Parents' and children's handbooks/ handouts are also provided for every session. SF builds on protective factors by improving family relationships and parenting skills. Implementation costs would be approximately \$25,000 per cohort per year (10 families per cohort), including coaching.

Note: Costs to replicate IY or SF with trained staff are significantly lower. Also these estimates are inclusive of all needs in terms of staffing, space, etc. and cost may be significantly reduced with in-kind contributions.

4. **Parents as Teachers (PAT):** PAT provides parents with child development knowledge and parenting support. PAT includes one-on-one home visits, monthly group meetings, developmental screenings, and a resource network for families. PAT may serve families from pregnancy to school entry. Parent educators provide home visits using a PAT curriculum and a model implementation guide; typically 10-12 home visits are conducted annually with additional visits offered to higher need families. The cost of PAT varies with the number of families to be served: for a cohort of 138 families, the cost would be approximately \$361,850 for the first year and \$366,350 for each subsequent year.

5. **Reach Out and Read (ROR):** ROR prepares young children to succeed in school by partnering with doctors to prescribe books and encourage families to read together. Doctors, nurse practitioners, and other medical professionals incorporate ROR's evidence-based model into regular pediatric checkups by advising parents about the importance of reading aloud and giving developmentally-appropriate books to children. The program begins at the 6-month checkup and continues through age 5 with a special emphasis on children growing up in low-income communities. Families served by ROR read together more often and their children enter kindergarten with larger vocabularies and stronger language skills, better prepared to achieve their potential. This is generally a low cost initiative; the cost per practice equals the number of annual well-child visits for children 6 months through 5 years old multiplied by \$2.75 per book. Programs can reduce costs further by using donated books.

	Budget
Grant Year 1	\$991,740
Grant Year 2	\$992,490
Grant Year 3	\$992,490
Grant Year 4	\$992,490

7) Training Stipends: \$0

8) Other: \$0

9) Total Direct Costs: \$5,989,460

Budget Category	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
9. Total Direct Costs (add lines 1-8)	1,497,365	1,497,365	1,497,365	1,497,365	5,989,460

10) Indirect Costs: \$0

The state is using an indirect cost rate of 7%, which is the lowest approved rate among participating state agencies. This rate is only applied to salaries and fringe benefits.

Budget Category	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
10. Indirect Costs*	0	0	0	0	0

11) Funds distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws: \$0

12) Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance: \$0

The State's required set aside of \$400,000 for RTT-ELC grantee technical assistance activities is set aside in the Office of the Governor's budget.

13) Total Funds Requested: \$5,989,460

Budget Category	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
13. Total Grant Funds Requested (add lines 9-12)	1,497,365	1,497,365	1,497,365	1,497,365	5,989,460

14) Other Funds Allocated to the State Plan: \$289,900

The State is using a position funded by State appropriation and the Maternal and Child Health Block grant to support the Family Strengthening project within the Division of Public Health. The annual salary is \$60,011 and its fringe benefits equal \$12,464. This is supported by 56.14% Federal Title V Maternal and Child Health Block Grant funding and 42.86% State Appropriations.

The primary purpose of this position is to provide administrative leadership, planning and coordination of activities, operational support, and evaluation in evidence-based work for the Family Strengthening project. This position works closely with State program personnel from the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), Department of Social Services (DSS), Division of Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities/Substance Abuse Services (MH/DD/SAS), Division of Child Development (DCD), Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina (PCA NC), NC Smart Start Initiatives and serves on State and National committees as a parenting specialist. Toward this end, the position serves as an internal and external liaison with agencies, volunteer organizations and policy-making bodies to facilitate interagency collaboration, and an integrated service delivery system for North Carolina families. This position provides management for evidence-based family strengthening programs, including but not limited to the Incredible Years, Strengthening Families, evidence-based home visiting programs, and other family strengthening initiatives.

15) Total Budget: \$6,279,360

Budget Category	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
15. Total Statewide Budget (add lines 13-14)	1,569,840	1,569,840	1,569,840	1,569,840	6,279,360

BUDGET PART II – TABLES

Department of Public Instruction					
Participating State Agency-Level Budget Table II-1					
(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))					
Budget Category	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
1. Personnel	735,450	1,328,287	1,328,287	1,328,287	4,720,311
2. Fringe Benefits	235,825	382,240	390,390	399,272	1,407,727
3. Travel	79,500	79,500	79,500	79,500	318,000
4. Equipment	38,000	0	0	0	38,000
5. Supplies	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000	32,000
6. Contractual	310,000	810,000	250,000	250,000	1,620,000

7. Training Stipends	0	0	0	0	0
8. Other	164,800	268,000	386,000	386,000	1,204,800
9. Total Direct Costs (add lines 1-8)	1,571,575	2,876,027	2,442,177	2,451,059	9,340,838
10. Indirect Costs*	67,989	119,737	120,307	120,929	428,963
11. Funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	2,000,000
12. Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance	0	0	0	0	0
13. Total Grant Funds Requested (add lines 9-12)	2,139,564	3,495,764	3,062,484	3,071,989	11,769,801
14. Funds from other sources used to support the State Plan	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	480,000
15. Total Statewide Budget (add lines 13-14)	2,259,564	3,615,764	3,182,484	3,191,989	12,249,801

Columns (a) through (d): For each grant year for which funding is requested, show the total amount requested for each applicable budget category.

Column (e): Show the total amount requested for all grant years.

Line 6: Show the amount of funds allocated through contracts with vendors for products to be acquired and/or professional services to be provided. A State may apply its indirect cost rate only against the first \$25,000 of each contract included in line 6

Line 10: If the State plans to request reimbursement for indirect costs, complete the Indirect Cost Information form at the end of this Budget section. Note that indirect costs are not allocated to line 11.

Line 11: Show the amount of funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners through contracts, interagency agreements, MOUs or any other subawards allowable under State procurement law. States are not required to provide budgets for how the localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners will use these funds. However, the Departments expect that, as part of the administration and oversight of the grant, States will monitor and track all expenditures to ensure that localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners spend these funds in accordance with the State Plan.

Line 12: The State must set aside \$400,000 from its grant funds for the purpose of participating in RTT-ELC grantee technical assistance activities facilitated by ED or HHS. This is primarily to be used for travel and may be allocated to Participating State Agencies evenly across the four years of the grant.

Line 13: This is the total funding requested under this grant.

Department of Public Instruction					
Participating State Agency-Level Budget Table II-2					
(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))					
Project	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
ELC Management and Transformation Support	0	0	0	0	0
Integrated Data System	0	0	0	0	0
Professional Development Capacity Building	0	0	0	0	0
Promoting Participation in TQRIS	0	0	0	0	0
TQRIS Program Quality Measurement Development	0	0	0	0	0
Increasing Access to High Quality ELD Programs	0	0	0	0	0

TQRIS Validation	0	0	0	0	0
Enhanced Professional Development	0	0	0	0	0
Early Learning & Development Standards	0	0	0	0	0
Certification & Licensure	0	0	0	0	0
Access & Articulation	0	0	0	0	0
Compensation & Retention	0	0	0	0	0
Cultural Competence	0	0	0	0	0
ELD Program Administrator Support	0	0	0	0	0
K-3 Assessment	1,759,564	3,115,764	2,682,484	2,691,989	10,249,801
Family Engagement	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	2,000,000
Family Strengthening					
Partnership Initiatives					
Total Statewide Budget	2,259,564	3,615,764	3,182,484	3,191,989	12,249,801

Columns (a) through (d): For each grant year for which funding is requested, show the total amount this Participating State Agency plans to spend for each Project in the State Plan. If this Participating State Agency has no role in a particular Project, leave that row blank.

Column (e): Show the total expenditure, across all grant years, for the Project.

The Total Statewide Budget for this table should match Line 15 for Budget Table II-1.

BUDGET PART II - NARRATIVE

The Office of Early Learning (OEL) located within the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) will be central to the implementation of the projects associated within DPI defined in the plan. The role of the OEL since its creation has been to strategically focus on the Pre-K through Grade 3 learning continuum and early grade reform in an effort to maximize the gains made for children in the pre-kindergarten year. Working across divisions in the department, the OEL brings added value to the current projects and initiatives that are part of DPI's current reform agenda. Located within the OEL is the Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO). Viewed as an integral part of defining the direction of Pre-K in the state, the HSSCO will build upon its successful history of collaboration with Head Start grantees in the state.

The budgets related to the projects to be implemented by the OEL were derived from information associated with similar projects in scope implemented by the Department in the past or those currently underway. Central to the decisions on funding amounts and priorities were the Department's deep knowledge and expertise related to Implementation Science and the necessary components of professional development needed to ensure project fidelity and long-term sustainability.

1) Personnel: \$ 4,720,311

Personnel: The following position is requested as an employee of the project:	# of Positions	% FTE	Base Salary	Total Annual Cost
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1. Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA)/K-3 Assessment Program Administrator: This position will direct all activities of the grant including, but not limited to, coordinating the activities of the Task Force, supporting the pilot test, the development and delivery of state-wide professional development and all other project related work carried out by KEA/K-3 Assessment staff.	1	100%	\$97,279	\$97,279
2. KEA/K-3 Assessment Education Consultant: These positions will support all aspects of project planning as directed by the Program Administrator with a primary emphasis on planning and delivering professional development and providing technical assistance and coaching to district-level implementation teams.	14	100%	\$84,691	\$1,037,465
3. Administrative Assistant: This position will provide a variety of administrative support in assisting the KEA/K-3 Assessment Program Administrator and consultants with all aspects of project implementation.	1	100%	\$45,334	\$45,334

2) Fringe Benefits: \$ 1,407,727

The State of North Carolina provides the following fringe benefits:

- Social Security: 7.65%;
- Retirement: 13.12% in Grant Year 1; assumes a 9% rate of change in each following year (rate subject to change each year by actions of the General Assembly);
- Medical \$5,192 per person in Grant Year 1 (assumed to increase by 9% each of the following years)

3) Travel: \$318,000

Travel: Travel reimbursement rates in North Carolina are either the IRS business standard mileage rate (55.5 cents as of 7/1/11) if a State owned vehicle is not available to the employee or 30 cents if a State owned vehicle is available and the employee elects to use his/her personal vehicle. Per diem rates if an overnight stay is necessary are: breakfast \$7.75, lunch \$10.10, dinner \$17.30 and lodging \$65.90.

To estimate travel cost, the NC Office of the Governor has established standard amounts of travel based on the amount of travel anticipated. This rate applies to all participating agencies	Base per yr.	# of Staff/Trips	Total Annual Cost
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light Travel (\$1,500) No meals, no overnight, approximately 400 average miles per month. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This funds light travel for the administrative assistant, who may need to make infrequent visits to the school districts 	\$1,500	1	\$1,500
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Travel (\$5,000) 5 overnights per month, subsistence for those 5 days, approximately 1,000 average miles per month <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This budget will allow the 14 consultants to travel to the districts to conduct professional development activities and to provide technical assistance 	\$5,000	14	\$70,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy (Out-of-State) Travel: This level of travel is computed as the total number of out-of-state trips multiplied by \$1,500 (includes airfare and subsistence for overnight stays). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Estimated travel for possible out-of-state conferences and coordination with national partners 	\$1,500	2	\$3,000

4) Equipment: \$38,000

Equipment: Consistent with State agency policy, equipment is defined as tangible, non-expendable, personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$500 or more per unit.			
Justification	Unit Cost	Item Description	Total
Laptop or desktop computer and printer: Each staff-member listed in the grant (1 Program Administrator, 14 Consultants, and 1 Administrative Assistant) will be provided a laptop or desktop computer and a printer. This is a standard budgetary allocation for a new position set by the State agency. The items are necessary in order to develop and deliver training and materials, perform analysis of data, document assessments, prepare reports for the State agency, the LEA, the schools, the local boards, etc.	\$1,500	Computer including monitor & printer	\$24,000
Digital projector: Each of the 14 Consultant II positions will be provided a digital projector. The items are necessary in order to deliver training as well as to report project related information to the LEA, the schools, the local boards, etc.	\$1,000	Computer including monitor & printer	\$14,000

5) Supplies: \$32,000

The state allocates \$500 per year for each employee. This cost includes office supplies, postage and printing.

6) Contractual: \$1,620,000

Pilot Test the K-3 Assessment: \$500,000	
DPI will contract with an outside entity with expertise in the validation of assessment instruments to conduct the pilot test of the revised K-3 Assessment.	
Year	Budget
Grant Year 1	\$0
Grant Year 2	\$500,000
Grant Year 3	\$0
Grant Year 4	\$0

Outside Consultation/Facilitation: \$120,000	
DPI will contract with an outside consultant(s) with specialized expertise in developmental domains of learning and development to inform the revision of the K-3 Assessment and the design of training materials.	
Year	Budget
Grant Year 1	\$60,000
Grant Year 2	\$60,000
Grant Year 3	\$0
Grant Year 4	\$0

Use Data to Improve School Experiences: \$1,000,000	
DPI will contract with an outside entity to improve pre-k - grade 3 administrator and teacher ability to use data that support school and classroom efforts to improve the school experiences of under-represented children, to use collaborative inquiry to inform instructional practice and knowledge of student learning and progress, and broaden their ability to effectively observe instructional practices and student engagement.	
Year	Budget
Grant Year 1	\$250,000

Grant Year 2	\$250,000
Grant Year 3	\$250,000
Grant Year 4	\$250,000

7) Training Stipends: \$0

8) Other: \$ 1,204,800

Other Costs Include

- \$90.38 per month per position for ITS charges
- Professional Development
 - Space rental
 - Food services
 - Printing of materials, DVDs
- Communications
 - Website development, listserv, etc.

9) Total Direct Costs: \$ 9,340,838

9. Total Direct Costs (add lines 1-8)	1,571,575	2,876,027	2,442,177	2,451,059	9,340,838
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10) Indirect Costs: \$428,963

The state is using an indirect cost rate of 7%, which is the lowest approved rate among participating state agencies. This rate is only applied to salaries and fringe benefits.

10. Indirect Costs*	67,989	119,737	120,307	120,929	428,963
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11) Funds distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws.: \$2,000,000

Activity	Purpose
Create "Family and Community Engagement" coaching and technical assistance support hubs across the State of North Carolina, accessible to all 100 counties.	To increase the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators through coaching and technical assistance with compliance with new TQRIS family engagement program standards.
Cost	# of Partners/Participants
Total project cost is \$2,000,000	Up to 20 "Family and Community Engagement"

<p>to fund up to 20 coaching and technical assistance hubs across North Carolina (\$100,000 each, over 4 years). Funds will support project coaches; training materials and technology resources; and light travel within the regional hub.</p>	<p>coaching and technical assistance hubs will be funded based on the extent to which they provide strong evidence of at least 5 years experience of direct service delivery according to a rigorous set of family and community engagement program standards that minimally address: parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, and linkages with community supports. The North Carolina Head Start-State Collaboration Office will provide administrative support for this project. Local Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies and Division of Child Development and Early Education Child Care Licensing Consultants will work together to provide formative and summative assessments of the project.</p>
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12) Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance: \$0

The \$400,000 budget for technical assistance is in the Governor’s Office budget.

13) Total Funds Requested: \$11,769,801

13. Total Grant Funds Requested (add lines 9-12)	2,139,564	3,495,764	3,062,484	3,071,989	11,769,801
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14) Other Funds Allocated to the State Plan: \$480,000

Title I, IDEA 619, Statewide Longitudinal Data System monies will be used to support the projects funded in this grant. Title I are those used by the state to ensure all children meet challenging state academic standards. Part B, 619 funds support a free appropriate education in the least restrictive environment for children with disabilities. SLDS funds support the design, development, and implementation of a statewide, longitudinal data system to efficiently and accurately manage, analyze, disaggregate, and use individual data.

The main project in this grant associated with DPI (KEA development and implementation) will leverage the aforementioned funds to support critical professional development necessary to maximize fidelity of implementation. Building upon the SLDS project, the addition of information garnered from the KEA will increase the SLDS value and usefulness to teachers and administrators improving LEA progress towards the goal of affording all children success in school.

15) Total Budget: \$12,249,801

15. Total Statewide Budget (add lines 13-14)	2,259,564	3,615,764	3,182,484	3,191,989	12,249,801
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BUDGET PART II - NARRATIVE

Describe, in the text box below, the Participating State Agency's budget, including--

- *How the Participating State Agency plans to organize its operations in order to manage the RTT-ELC funds and accomplish the work set forth in the MOU or other binding agreement and scope of work;*
- *For each project in which the Participating State Agency is involved, and consistent with the MOU or other binding agreement and scope of work:*
 - *An explanation of the Participating State Agency's roles and responsibilities*
 - *An explanation of how the proposed project annual budget was derived*
- *A detailed explanation of each budget category line item, including the information below.*

1) Personnel

Provide:

- The title and role of each position to be compensated under this grant.
- The salary for each position.
- The amount of time, such as hours or percentage of time, to be expended by each position.
- Any additional basis for cost estimates or computations.

Explain:

- The importance of each position to the success of specific. If curriculum vitae, an organizational chart, or other supporting information will be helpful to reviewers, attach in the Appendix and describe its location.

2) Fringe Benefits

Provide:

- The fringe benefit percentages for all personnel.
- The basis for cost estimates or computations.

3) Travel

Provide:

- An estimate of the number of trips.
- An estimate of transportation and/or subsistence costs for each trip.
- Any additional basis for cost estimates or computations.

Explain:

- The purpose of the travel, how it relates to project goals, and how it will contribute to project success.

4) Equipment

Provide:

- The type of equipment to be purchased.

- The estimated unit cost for each item to be purchased.
- The definition of equipment used by the State.
- Any additional basis for cost estimates or computations.

Explain:

- The justification of the need for the items of equipment to be purchased.

5) Supplies

Provide:

- An estimate of materials and supplies needed, by nature of expense or general category (*e.g.*, instructional materials, office supplies).
- The basis for cost estimates or computations.

6) Contractual

Provide:

- The products to be acquired and/or the professional services to be provided.
- The estimated cost per expected procurement.
- For professional services contracts, the amounts of time to be devoted to the project, including the costs to be charged to this proposed grant award.
- A brief statement that the State has followed the procedures for procurement under 34 CFR Parts 74.40 - 74.48 and Part 80.36.
- Any additional basis for cost estimates or computations.

Explain:

- The purpose and relation to the State Plan or specific project.

Note: Because grantees must use appropriate procurement procedures to select contractors, applicants should not include information in their grant applications about specific contractors that may be used to provide services or goods for the proposed project if a grant is awarded.

7) Training Stipends

Note:

- The training stipend line item only pertains to costs associated with long-term training programs and college or university coursework that results in a credential or degree, not workshops or short-term training supported by this program.
- Salary stipends paid to teachers and other early learning personnel for participating in short-term professional development should be reported in Personnel (line 1).

Provide:

- Descriptions of training stipends to be provided, consistent with the “note” above.
- The cost estimates and basis for these estimates.

Explain:

- The purpose of the training.

8) Other

Provide:

- Other items by major type or category.
- The cost per item (printing = \$500, postage = \$750).
- Any additional basis for cost estimates or computations.

Explain:

- The purpose of the expenditures.

9) Total Direct Costs

Provide:

- The sum of expenditures, across all budget categories in lines 1-8, for each year of the budget.

10) Indirect Costs

Provide:

- Identify and apply the indirect cost rate. (See the section that follows, Budget: Indirect Cost Information.)

11) Funds distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws.

Provide:

- The specific activities to be done by localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners.
- The estimated cost of each activity.
- The approximate number of localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners involved in each activity.
- The total cost of each activity (across all localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs and other partners).
- Any additional basis for cost estimates or computations.

Explain:

- The purpose of each activity and its relation to the State Plan or specific project.

Note: States are not required to provide budgets for how the localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners will use these funds. However, the Department expects that, as part of the administration and oversight of the grant, States will monitor and track all expenditures to ensure that localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners spend these funds in accordance with the State Plan.

12) Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance

Provide:

- The amount per year set aside for this Participating State Agency.

Note: The State must set aside \$400,000 from its Total Grant Funds Requested for the purpose of participating in RTT–ELC grantee technical assistance activities facilitated by ED or HHS. This is primarily to be used for travel and may be allocated to Participating State Agencies evenly across the four years of the grant.

13) Total Funds Requested

Provide:

- The sum of expenditures in lines 9-12, for each year of the budget.

13) Other Funds Allocated to the State Plan

Provide:

- A description of the sources of other funds the State is using to support the projects in the State Plan.
- A description of how the quality set-asides in CCDF will be used for activities and services described in the State Plan, if applicable.
- Any financial contributions being made by private entities such as foundations.

Explain:

- Each funding source, the activities being funded and their relation to the State Plan or specific project, and any requirements placed on the use of funds or timing of the activity.

14) Total Budget

Provide:

- The sum of expenditures in lines 13 and 14, for each year of the budget

(Enter narrative here – recommended maximum of five pages)

SEE ABOVE. WE HAVE ORGANIZED OUR BUDGET TABLES AND NARRATIVE BY PARTICIPATING STATE AGENCY.

BUDGET: INDIRECT COST INFORMATION

To request reimbursement for indirect costs, please answer the following questions:

Does the State have an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement approved by the Federal government?	
YES	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
NO	<input type="radio"/>
If yes to question 1, please provide the following information:	
Period Covered by the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (mm/dd/yyyy):	
From: 07/ 01/ 2011	To: 06/ 30/ 2012
Approving Federal agency: ___ED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HHS ___Other	
<i>(Please specify agency):</i> The Division of Public Health in NC's Department of Health and Human Services has an approved indirect cost rate agreement of 7%.	

Directions for this form:

1. Indicate whether or not the State has an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement that was approved by the Federal government.
2. If "No" is checked, the Departments generally will authorize grantees to use a temporary rate of 10 percent of budgeted salaries and wages subject to the following limitations:
 - (a) The grantee must submit an indirect cost proposal to its cognizant agency within 90 days after the grant award notification is issued; and
 - (b) If after the 90-day period, the grantee has not submitted an indirect cost proposal to its cognizant agency, the grantee may not charge its grant for indirect costs until it has negotiated an indirect cost rate agreement with its cognizant agency.

If "Yes" is checked, indicate the beginning and ending dates covered by the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement. In addition, indicate whether ED, HHS, or another Federal agency (Other) issued the approved agreement. If "Other" was checked, specify the name of the agency that issued the approved agreement.

IX. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

(a) The State's application must be signed by the Governor or an authorized representative; an authorized representative from the Lead Agency; and an authorized representative from each Participating State Agency. The State must provide the required signatures in section IV, Application Assurances and Certifications of the application.

(b) The State must submit a certification from the State Attorney General or an authorized representative that the State's description of, and statements and conclusions in its application concerning, State law, statute, and regulation are complete and accurate and constitute a reasonable interpretation of State law, statute, and regulation. The State must provide this certification in section IV, Application Assurances and Certifications of the application.

(c) The State must complete the budget spreadsheets that are provided in the application package and submit the completed spreadsheet as part of its application. These spreadsheets should be included on the CD or DVD that the State submits as its application.

Note: The budget spreadsheets will be used by the Departments for budget reviews. However, the reviewers will not judge or score these budget spreadsheets. Reviewers will limit their evaluation of the State's response to (A)(4)(b) to the information provided by the State in the budget section of the application (see section VIII, Budget).

(d) The State must submit preliminary scopes of work for each Participating State Agency as part of the executed MOU or other binding agreement. (See section XIII in this application.) Each preliminary scope of work must describe the portions of the State's proposed plans that the Participating State Agency is agreeing to implement. If a State is awarded an RTT-ELC grant, the State will have up to 90 days to complete final scopes of work for each Participating State Agency. (See section (k) of the Program Requirements, section XI in this application.)

(e) The State must include a budget that details how it will use grant funds awarded under this competition, and funds from other Federal, State, private, and local sources to achieve the outcomes of the State Plan (as described in selection criterion (A)(4)(a)), and how the State will use funds awarded under this program to--

(1) Achieve its targets for increasing the number and percentage of Early Learning and Development Programs that are participating in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (as described in selection criterion (B)(2)(c)); and

(2) Achieve its targets for increasing the number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (as described in selection criterion (B)(4)(c)).

(f) The State must provide an overall summary for the State Plan and a rationale for why it has chosen to address the selected criteria in each Focused Investment Area, including—

- How the State's choices build on its progress to date in each Focused Investment Area (as outlined in Tables (A)(1)6-13 and in the narrative under (A)(1)); and
- Why these selected criteria will best achieve the State's ambitious yet achievable goals for improving program quality, improving outcomes for Children with High Needs statewide, and closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers.

(g) The State, within each Focused Investment Area, must select and address--

- Two or more selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children; and
- One or more selection criteria within Focused Investment Areas (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress.

(h) Where the State is submitting a High-Quality Plan, the State must include in its application a detailed plan that is feasible and has a high probability of successful implementation and includes, but need not be limited to--

(1) The key goals;

(2) The key activities to be undertaken; the rationale for the activities; and, if applicable, where in the State the activities will be initially implemented, and where and how they will be scaled up over time to eventually achieve statewide implementation;

(3) A realistic timeline, including key milestones, for implementing each key activity;

(4) The party or parties responsible for implementing each activity and other key personnel assigned to each activity;

(5) Appropriate financial resources to support successful implementation of the plan;

(6) The information requested as supporting evidence, if any, together with any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers in judging the credibility of the plan;

(7) The information requested in the performance measures, where applicable;

(8) How the State will address the needs of the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs, if applicable; and

(9) How the State will meet the needs of Children with High Needs, as well as the unique needs of special populations of Children with High Needs.

X. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

A State receiving funds under an RTT-ELC grant must submit an annual report that must include, in addition to the standard elements, a description of the State's progress to date on its goals, timelines, and budgets, as well as actual performance compared to the annual targets the State established in its application with respect to each performance measure. Further, a State receiving funds under this program is accountable for meeting the goals, timelines, budget, and annual targets established in the application; adhering to an annual fund drawdown schedule that is tied to meeting these goals, timelines, budget, and annual targets; and fulfilling and maintaining all other conditions for the conduct of the project. The Departments will monitor a State's progress in meeting the State's goals, timelines, budget, and annual targets and in fulfilling other applicable requirements. In addition, we may collect additional data as part of a State's annual reporting requirements.

To support a collaborative process with the State, we may require that applicants who are selected to receive an award enter into a written performance or cooperative agreement. If we determine that a State is not meeting its goals, timelines, budget, or annual targets or is not fulfilling other applicable requirements, we will take appropriate action, which could include establishing a collaborative process or taking enforcement measures with respect to this grant, such as placing the State in high-risk status, putting the State on reimbursement payment status, or delaying or withholding funds.

XI. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

A State that receives a grant must meet the following requirements:

(a) The State must continue to participate in the programs authorized under section 619 of part B of IDEA and part C of IDEA; in the CCDF program; and in the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program (pursuant to section 511 of Title V of the Social Security Act, as added by section 2951 of the Affordable Care Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-148)) for the duration of the grant.

(b) The State is prohibited from spending funds from the grant on the direct delivery of health services.

(c) The State must participate in RTT-ELC grantee technical assistance activities facilitated by ED or HHS, individually or in collaboration with other State grantees in order to share effective program practices and solutions and collaboratively solve problems, and must set aside at least \$400,000 from its grant funds for this purpose.

(d) The State must--

(1) Comply with the requirements of any evaluation sponsored by ED or HHS of any of the State's activities carried out with the grant;

(2) Comply with the requirements of any cross-State evaluation--as part of a consortium of States--of any of the State's proposed reforms, if that evaluation is coordinated or funded by ED or HHS, including by using common measures and data collection instruments and collecting data necessary to the evaluation;

(3) Together with its independent evaluator, if any, cooperate with any technical assistance regarding evaluations provided by ED or HHS. The purpose of this technical assistance will be to ensure that the validation of the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System and any other evaluations conducted by States or their independent evaluators, if any, are of the highest quality and to encourage commonality in approaches where such commonality is feasible and useful;

(4) Submit to ED and HHS for review and comment its design for the validation of its Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (as described in selection criteria (B)(5)) and any other evaluations of activities included in the State Plan, including any activities that are part of the State's Focused Investment Areas, as applicable; and

(5) Make widely available through formal (*e.g.*, peer-reviewed journals) or informal (*e.g.*, newsletters) mechanisms, and in print or electronically, the results of any evaluations it conducts of its funded activities.

(e) The State must have a longitudinal data system that includes the 12 elements described in section 6401(e)(2)(D) of the America COMPETES Act by the date required under the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) grant and in accordance with Indicator (b)(1) of its approved SFSF plan.

(f) The State must comply with the requirements of all applicable Federal, State, and local privacy laws, including the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, the Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act, and the privacy requirements in IDEA, and their applicable regulations.

(g) The State must ensure that the grant activities are implemented in accordance with all applicable Federal, State, and local laws.

(h) The State must provide researchers with access, consistent with the requirements of all applicable Federal State, and local privacy laws, to data from its Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System and from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System and the State's coordinated early learning data system (if applicable) so that they can analyze the State's quality improvement efforts and answer key policy and practice questions.

(i) Unless otherwise protected as proprietary information by Federal or State law or a specific written agreement, the State must make any work (*e.g.*, materials, tools, processes, systems) developed under its grant freely available to the public, including by posting the work on a Web site identified or sponsored by ED or HHS. Any Web sites developed under this grant must meet government or industry-recognized standards for accessibility.

(j) Funds made available under an RTT-ELC grant must be used to supplement, not supplant, any Federal, State, or local funds that, in the absence of the funds awarded under this grant, would be available for increasing access to and improving the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs.

(k) For a State that is awarded an RTT-ELC grant, the State will have up to 90 days from the grant award notification date to complete final scopes of work for each Participating State Agency. These final scopes of work must contain detailed work plans that are consistent with their corresponding preliminary scopes of work and with the State's grant application, and must include the Participating State Agency's specific goals, activities, timelines, budgets, key personnel, and annual targets for key performance measures for the portions of the State's proposed plans that the Participating State Agency is agreeing to implement.

XII. CONTRACTING FOR SERVICES

Generally, all procurement transactions by State or local educational agencies made with RTT-ELC grant funds must be conducted in a manner providing full and open competition, consistent with the standards in section 80.36 of the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR). This section requires that grantees use their own procurement procedures (which reflect State and local laws and regulations) to select contractors, provided that those procedures meet certain standards described in EDGAR.

Because grantees must use appropriate procurement procedures to select contractors, applicants should not include information in their grant applications about specific contractors that may be used to provide services or goods for the proposed project if a grant is awarded.

XIII. PARTICIPATING STATE AGENCY MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**RACE TO THE TOP-EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE
PARTICIPATING STATE AGENCY
MODEL MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING****(Appendix C of the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge
Notice Inviting Applications)****Background for Memorandum of Understanding**

Each Participating State Agency identified in a State's Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) State Plan is required to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or other binding agreement with the State's Lead Agency that specifies the scope of the work that will be implemented by the Participating State Agency. The purpose of the MOU or other binding agreement is to define a relationship between the Lead Agency and the Participating State Agency that is specific to the RTT-ELC competition; the MOU or other binding agreement is not meant to detail all typical aspects of grant coordination or administration.

To support States in working efficiently with their Participating State Agencies to affirm each Participating State Agency's participation in the State Plan, ED and HHS have produced a model MOU, which is attached. This model MOU may serve as a template for States; however, States are not required to use it. States may use a document other than the model MOU, as long as it includes the key features noted below and in the model MOU. States should consult with their State attorneys on what is most appropriate. States may allow multiple Participating State Agencies to sign a single MOU or other binding agreement, with customized exhibits for each Participating State Agency, if the State so chooses.

At a minimum, an RTT-ELC MOU or other binding agreement should include the following key features, each of which is described in detail below and exemplified in the attached model MOU: (i) terms and conditions; (ii) a scope of work; and, (iii) authorized signatures.

(i) Terms and conditions: Each Participating State Agency must sign a standard set of terms and conditions that includes, at a minimum, key roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency and the Participating State Agency; State recourse for non-performance by the Participating State Agency; and assurances that make clear what the Participating State Agency is agreeing to do.

(ii) Scope of work: RTT-ELC MOUs or other binding agreements must include a preliminary scope of work (included in the model RTT-ELC MOU as Exhibit I) that is completed by each Participating State Agency. The scope of work must be signed and dated by an authorized Participating State Agency official and an authorized Lead Agency official. In the interest of time and in consideration of the effort it will take for the Lead Agency and Participating State Agencies to develop detailed work plans for RTT-ELC, the scope of work submitted by Participating State Agencies and Lead Agencies as part of a State's application may be preliminary. Preliminary scopes of work must, at a minimum, identify all applicable

portions of the State Plan that the Participating State Agency is agreeing to implement and include the required assurances. (Note that in order for a State to be eligible for the RTT-ELC competition, the Lead Agency must have executed with each Participating State Agency an MOU or other binding agreement, which the State must attach to its application and which must describe the Participating State Agency's level of participation in the grant and must include the required assurances.)

If a State is awarded an RTT-ELC grant, Participating State Agencies will have up to 90 days to complete final scopes of work, which must contain detailed work plans that are consistent with each Participating State Agency's preliminary scope of work and with the State's grant application, and must include the Participating State Agencies' specific goals, activities, timelines, budgets, and key personnel.

(iii) Authorized Signatures: The signatures on the MOU or other binding agreement demonstrate an acknowledgement of the relationship between the Participating State Agency and the Lead Agency. With respect to the relationship between the Participating State Agency and the Lead Agency, the Lead Agency's counter-signature on the MOU or other binding agreement indicates that the Participating State Agency's commitment is consistent with the requirement that a Participating State Agency implement all applicable portions of the State Plan.

MODEL PARTICIPATING STATE AGENCY MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

This Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) is entered into by and between _____ (“Lead Agency”) and _____ (“Participating State Agency”). The purpose of this agreement is to establish a framework of collaboration, as well as articulate specific roles and responsibilities in support of the State in its implementation of an approved Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant project.

I. ASSURANCES

The Participating State Agency hereby certifies and represents that it:

- 1) Agrees to be a Participating State Agency and will implement those portions of the State Plan indicated in Exhibit I, if the State application is funded;
- 2) Agrees to use, to the extent applicable and consistent with the State Plan and Exhibit I:
 - (a) A set of statewide Early Learning and Development Standards;
 - (b) A set of statewide Program Standards;
 - (c) A statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; and
 - (d) A statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and progression of credentials.

(Please note that Participating State Agencies must provide these assurances in order for the State to be eligible for a Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant.)

- 3) Has all requisite power and authority to execute and fulfill the terms of this MOU;
- 4) Is familiar with the State’s Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant application and is supportive of and committed to working on all applicable portions of the State Plan;
- 5) Will provide a Final Scope of Work only if the State’s application is funded and will do so in a timely fashion but no later than 90 days after a grant is awarded; and will describe the Participating State Agency’s specific goals, activities, timelines, budgets, and key personnel (“Participating State Agency Plan”) in a manner that is consistent with the Preliminary Scope of Work (Exhibit I), with the Budget included in section VIII of the State Plan (including existing funds, if any, that the Participating State Agency is using for activities and services that help achieve the outcomes of the State Plan; and
- 6) Will comply with all of the terms of the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant, this agreement, and all applicable Federal and State laws and regulations, including laws and regulations applicable to the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge program, and the applicable provisions of EDGAR (34 CFR Parts 75, 77, 79, 80, 82, 84, 85, 86, 97, 98 and 99).

II. PROJECT ADMINISTRATION

A. PARTICIPATING STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

In assisting the Lead Agency in implementing the tasks and activities described in the State’s Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant application, the Participating State Agency will:

- 1) Implement the Participating State Agency Scope of Work as identified in the Exhibit I of this agreement;
- 2) Abide by the governance structure outlined in the State Plan;

- 3) Abide by the Participating State Agency's Budget included in section VIII of the State Plan (including the existing funds from Federal, State, private and local sources, if any, that the Participating State Agency is using to achieve the outcomes in the RTT-ELC State Plan);
- 4) Actively participate in all relevant meetings or other events that are organized or sponsored by the State, by the U.S. Department of Education ("ED"), or by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services ("HHS");
- 5) Post to any Web site specified by the State, ED, or HHS, in a timely manner, all non-proprietary products and lessons learned developed using Federal funds awarded under the RTT-ELC grant;
- 6) Participate, as requested, in any evaluations of this grant conducted by the State, ED, or HHS;
- 7) Be responsive to State, ED, or HHS requests for project information including on the status of the project, project implementation, outcomes, and any problems anticipated or encountered, consistent with applicable local, State and Federal privacy laws.

B. LEAD AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

In assisting the Participating State Agencies in implementing their tasks and activities described in the State's Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge application, the Lead Agency will:

- 1) Work collaboratively with, and support the Participating State Agency in carrying out the Participating State Agency Scope of Work, as identified in Exhibit I of this agreement;
- 2) Timely award the portion of Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant funds designated for the Participating State Agency in the State Plan during the course of the project period and in accordance with the Participating State Agency's Scope of Work, as identified in Exhibit I, and in accordance with the Participating State Agency's Budget, as identified in section VIII of the State's application;
- 3) Provide feedback on the Participating State Agency's status updates, any interim reports, and project plans and products;
- 4) Keep the Participating State Agency informed of the status of the State's Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant project and seek input from the Participating State Agency, where applicable, through the governance structure outlined in the State Plan;
- 5) Facilitate coordination across Participating State Agencies necessary to implement the State Plan; and
- 6) Identify sources of technical assistance for the project.

C. JOINT RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1) The Lead Agency and the Participating State Agency will each appoint a key contact person for the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant.
- 2) These key contacts from the Lead Agency and the Participating State Agency will maintain frequent communication to facilitate cooperation under this MOU, consistent with the State Plan and governance structure.
- 3) Lead Agency and Participating State Agency personnel will work together to determine appropriate timelines for project updates and status reports throughout the grant period.
- 4) Lead Agency and Participating State Agency personnel will negotiate in good faith toward achieving the overall goals of the State's Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant, including when the State Plan requires modifications that affect the Participating State Agency, or when the Participating State Agency's Scope of Work requires modifications.

D. STATE RECOURSE IN THE EVENT OF PARTICIPATING STATE AGENCY'S FAILURE TO PERFORM

If the Lead Agency determines that the Participating State Agency is not meeting its goals, timelines, budget, or annual targets, or is in some other way not fulfilling applicable requirements, the Lead Agency will take appropriate enforcement action, which could include initiating a collaborative process by which to attempt to resolve the disagreements between the Lead Agency and the Participating State Agency, or

initiating such enforcement measures as are available to the Lead Agency, under applicable State or Federal law.

III. MODIFICATIONS

This Memorandum of Understanding may be amended only by written agreement signed by each of the parties involved, in consultation with ED.

IV. DURATION

This Memorandum of Understanding shall be effective, beginning with the date of the last signature hereon and, if a Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge grant is received by the State, ending upon the expiration of the Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge grant project period.

V. SIGNATURES

Authorized Representative of Lead Agency:

Signature Date

Print Name Title

Authorized Representative of Participating State Agency:

Signature Date

Print Name Title

EXHIBIT I – PARTICIPATING STATE AGENCY SCOPE OF WORK

The Participating State Agency hereby agrees to participate in the State Plan, as described in the State’s application, and more specifically commits to undertake the tasks and activities described in detail below.

Selection Criterion	Participating Party	Type of Participation
<i>Example Row— shows an example of criterion (B)(1) for the State agency that oversees state-funded preschool, IDEA, and Head Start Collab Office</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>State-funded preschool</i> • <i>IDEA preschool special ed</i> • <i>Head Start Collab Office</i> 	<i>Representatives from each program are sitting on the state committee to define statewide TQRIS program standards</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Head Start Collab Office</i> 	<i>Responsible for cross-walking Head Start performance standards with the new Program Standards</i>
(B)(1)		
(B)(2)		
(B)(3)		
(B)(4)		
(B)(5)		
(C)(1)		
(C)(2)		
(C)(3)		
(C)(4)		
(D)(1)		
(D)(2)		
(E)(1)		
(E)(2)		

 Signature (*Authorized Representative of Lead Agency*) Date

 Signature (*Authorized Representative of Participating State Agency*) Date

XIV. SCORING RUBRIC

I. Introduction

To help ensure inter-reviewer reliability and transparency for the RTT-ELC applicants, ED and HHS have created and are publishing a rubric for scoring State applications. The pages that follow detail the rubric and allocation of point values that reviewers will be using. The rubric will be used by reviewers to ensure consistency across and within review panels.

The rubric allocates points to each criterion. In all, the RTT-ELC scoring rubric includes 17 selection criteria and two competitive preference priorities. These collectively add up to 300 points. The selection criteria are divided into two sections: Core Areas and Focused Investment Areas.

- Applicants must respond to all of the selection criteria within each of the two Core Areas: (A) Successful State Systems and (B) High-Quality, Accountable Programs.
- Applicants have more flexibility within each of the Focused Investment Areas: (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children; (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce; and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress. In these sections, applicants may select which selection criteria to address, focusing on those that the State believes will have the most impact on school readiness for its Children with High Needs, given that State's context and the current status of its early learning and development activities. The Focused Investment Areas must be addressed as follows.

Focused Investment Areas

- The applicant must select and address--
 - At least two selection criteria from Focused Investment Area (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children; and
 - At least one selection criterion each from Focused Investment Areas (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress.
- Each Focused Investment Area (C), (D), and (E) is worth a specific number of points; these points will be evenly divided across the selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address in that section.

Priorities

Applicants address the absolute priority throughout their applications; they do not write separately to this priority. The absolute priority must be met in order for an applicant to receive funding.

Applications that choose to address a competitive preference priority will earn extra points under that priority if the reviewers determine that the response is of high quality. Applicants may choose to write to invitational priorities to extend the scope of the application; applicants are invited to address these and may apply funds from this grant to implement activities under them, but do not earn additional points for doing so.

Reviewers will be required to make thoughtful judgments about the quality of the State's application and will be assessing, based on the criteria, the comprehensiveness, feasibility, and likely impact of the State's application. Reviewers will also be asked to evaluate, for example, the extent to which the State has set ambitious but achievable annual targets in its application. Reviewers will also need to make informed judgments about the State's goals, the rationales for the Focused Investment Areas, the activities the State has chosen to undertake, and the timelines and credibility of the State's plans.

This appendix includes information about the point values for each criterion and priority, guidance on scoring, and the rubric that we will provide to reviewers.

II. Points Overview

The chart below shows the maximum number of points that are assigned to each criterion.

	Points Available	Percent
Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge: Points Overview		
A. Successful State Systems		
(A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development.	20	
(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.	20	
(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating work across the State	10	
(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work	15	
Core Area A Subtotal	65	23
B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs		
(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	
(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	15	
(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs	15	
(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs	20	
(B)(5) Validating the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	15	
Core Area B Subtotal	75	27
C. Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children		
(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards	60 (divided evenly across the criteria addressed)	
(C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems		
(C)(3) Identifying and addressing health, behavioral, and developmental needs		
(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families		

	Points Available	Percent
Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge: Points Overview		
Focused Investment Area C Subtotal	60	21
D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce		
(D)(1) Developing Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials	40 (divided evenly across the criteria addressed)	
(D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators		
Focused Investment Area D Subtotal	40	14
E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress		
(E)(1) Understanding the status of children at kindergarten entry	40 (divided evenly across the criteria addressed)	
(E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system		
Focused Investment Area E Subtotal	40	14
Total Points Available for Selection Criteria	280	
Competitive Priority 2: Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the TQRIS	10	
Competitive Priority 3: Understanding status of learning and development at Kindergarten Entry	10	
Grand Total	300	

III. About Scoring

General Notes about Scoring

There are two terms that we use repeatedly in the notice: High-Quality Plan and “ambitious yet achievable” goals or targets. These are anchor terms for both applicants to understand and reviewers to use in guiding their scoring. We discuss each below.

- *A High-Quality Plan.* In determining the quality of a State’s plan for a given selection criterion or competitive preference priority, reviewers will assess the extent to which the plan meets the definition (as provided in the notice) of a High-Quality Plan, including whether it is feasible and has a high probability of successful implementation and contains the following components--
 - (a) The key goals;
 - (b) The key activities to be undertaken; the rationale for the activities; and, if applicable, where in the State the activities will be initially implemented, and where and how they will be scaled up to achieve statewide implementation;

- (c) A realistic timeline, including key milestones, for implementing each key activity;
- (d) The party or parties responsible for implementing each activity and other key personnel assigned to each activity;
- (e) Appropriate financial resources to support successful implementation of the plan;
- (f) The information requested as supporting evidence, if any, together with any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers in judging the credibility of the plan;
- (g) The information requested in the performance measures, where applicable;
- (h) How the State will address the needs of the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs, if applicable; and
- (i) How the State will meet the needs of Children with High Needs, as well as the unique needs of special populations of Children with High Needs.

Using the information provided to them in the application, reviewers will assess the extent to which the proposed plan in a specific selection criterion is a High-Quality Plan that is credible, feasible to implement, and likely to result in the outcomes the State has put forward.

- *Ambitious yet achievable.* In determining whether a State has ambitious yet achievable goals or targets for a given selection criterion, reviewers will examine the State's goals or targets in the context of the State's plan and the evidence submitted (if any) in support of the plan. Reviewers will not be looking for any specific targets nor will they necessarily reward higher targets above lower ones with higher scores. Rather, reviewers will reward States for developing goals and targets that, in light of each State's plan and the current context and status of the work in that State, are shown to be "ambitious yet achievable."

About Assigning Points

Reviewers will assign points to an application for each selection criterion in Core Areas (A) and (B) and for each selection criterion that the State has chosen to address within Focused Investment Areas (C), (D), and (E). Reviewers will also assign points to the competitive preference priorities. Points for a selection criterion or priority (e.g., (B)(4) or Priority 2) are assigned by reviewers for the totality of the applicant's response; that is, reviewers need not divide the total available points equally across the sub-criteria.

There are two scoring rubrics to guide reviewers when awarding points:

- The Quality Rubric, which provides guidance on how to allocate points for high-, medium-, and low-quality responses to specified selection criteria; and
- The Quality and Implementation Rubric, which provides guidance on how to allocate points for selection criteria and competitive preference priority two where reviewers are assessing the quality of both plans and existing implementation.

The chart below indicates which rubric the State will use for each criterion or competitive preference priority.

Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge: Rubric Table	Points Available	Type of Rubric Used
A. Successful State Systems		
(A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development.	20	Quality
(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.	20	Quality
(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating work across the State	10	Quality and Implementation
(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work	15	Quality
Core Area A Subtotal	65	
B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs		
(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	Quality and Implementation
(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	15	Quality and Implementation
(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs	15	Quality and Implementation
(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs	20	Quality and Implementation
(B)(5) Validating the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	15	Quality
Core Area B Subtotal	75	
C. Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children		
(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards	60 (divided evenly across criteria addressed)	Quality and Implementation
(C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems		
(C)(3) Identifying and addressing health, behavioral, and developmental needs		
(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families		
Focused Investment Area C Subtotal	60	
D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce		
(D)(1) Developing Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials	40 (divided evenly across criteria addressed)	Quality and Implementation
(D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators		
Focused Investment Area D Subtotal	40	
E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress		
(E)(1) Understanding the status of children at kindergarten entry	40 (divided evenly across criteria addressed)	Quality and Implementation
(E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system		
Focused Investment Area E Subtotal	40	
Total Points Available for Selection Criteria	280	

Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge: Rubric Table	Points Available	Type of Rubric Used
Competitive Priority 2: Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the TQRIS	10	Quality and Implementation
Competitive Priority 3: Understanding the status of children at kindergarten entry	10	Addressed in Table (A)(1)-12 or in selection criterion (E)(1)
Grand Total	300	

Quality Rubric

The following scoring rubric will be used to guide the reviewers in scoring selection criteria governed by the Quality Rubric. (See “General Notes about Scoring” for more information about how reviewers will assess High-Quality Plans and “ambitious yet achievable” targets and goals.)

	Percentage of Available Points Awarded
High-quality response	80-100%
Medium/high-quality response	50-80%
Medium/low-quality response	20-50%
Low-quality response	0-20%

Quality and Implementation Rubric

This scoring rubric provides guidance on how to allocate points for selection criteria and Competitive Preference Priority 2 where reviewers are assessing both plans and existing implementations. In reviewing the elements for each selection criterion, reviewers will need to consider the degree of implementation; more points are awarded for implementation efforts in the implementation phase than those that are in the planning stages, and more points are awarded for efforts where implementation is complete or closer to completion. When evaluating the degree of implementation, reviewers will consider:

- The extent to which each element in the selection criterion is implemented in the State;
- The extent to which the State has implemented each element across different types of Early Learning and Development Programs, if applicable; and
- The extent to which the State has implemented each element across the State’s special populations of Children with High Needs, if applicable.

The reviewers will also need to make a determination about the quality of the response to each element. High-quality responses are rewarded over low-quality responses. Therefore, elements that are fully implemented with high quality are rewarded over plans that are of fully implemented but of lower quality. (See “General Notes About Scoring” for more information about how reviewers will assess High-Quality Plans and “ambitious yet achievable” targets and goals.) The chart below shows how points will be awarded.

	Not or Minimally Implemented	Partially Implemented	Substantially or Fully Implemented
High-quality response	40-60%	60-80%	80-100%
Medium-quality response	1-40%	10-60%	20-80%
Low-quality response	0%	0-10%	0-20%

About Priorities

There are three types of priorities in the RTT-ELC competition.

- Applicants should address the absolute priority across the entire application and should not address it separately. It will be assessed by reviewers after they have fully reviewed and evaluated the entire application, to ensure that the application has met the priority. If an application has not met the priority, it will be eliminated from the competition. A State meets the absolute priority if a majority of reviewers determines that the State has met the absolute priority.
- The competitive preference priorities earn points in a manner similar to selection criteria.
 - Competitive Preference Priority 2 is worth up to 10 points and will be assessed using the Quality and Implementation Rubric.
 - Competitive Preference Priority 3 is worth 10 points; all 10 points are earned if the competitive preference priority is met. A State will earn competitive preference priority points if a majority of reviewers determines that the State has met the competitive preference priority. No points are earned if a majority of reviewers determine that the applicant has not met the competitive preference priority.
A State meets the competitive preference priority for—
 - Demonstrating , by verifying that all elements in Table (A)(1)-12 have been met, that the State has already implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that meets selection criterion (E)(1); or
 - Writing to selection criterion (E)(1) and earning a score of at least 70 percent of the maximum points available for that criterion.
- The invitational priorities are addressed in their own separate sections. While applicants are invited to write to the invitational priorities, these will not earn points.

In the Event of a Tie

If two or more applications have the same score and there is not sufficient funding to support all of the tied applicants, the applicants' overall scores on Core Area (B) will be used to break the tie

XV. APPLICATION SUBMISSION PROCEDURES

Please note that you must follow the Application Procedures as described in the Federal Register notice announcing the grant competition.

Submission Information and Deadline.

Applications for grants under this competition must be submitted by mail or hand delivery. The Departments strongly recommends the use of overnight mail. Applications postmarked on the deadline date but arriving late will not be read.

The deadline for submission of applications is October 19, 2011.

Application Submission Format.

The Secretaries strongly request the applicant to limit the application text narrative to no more than 150 pages and limit appendices to no more than 150 pages. A "page" is 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides. Line spacing for the narratives is set to 1.5 spacing, and the font used is 12 point Times New Roman. Each page in the application should have a page number. The Secretaries strongly requests that applicants follow the recommended page limits, although the Secretaries will consider applications of greater length.

Applications for grants under this competition must be submitted in electronic format on a CD or DVD, with CD-ROM or DVD-ROM preferred. In addition, applicants must submit a signed paper original of section IV of the application and one copy of that signed original. Autopen, copies, .PDFs (Adobe Portable Document Format), and faxed copies of signature pages are not acceptable originals. Section IV of the application includes the Application Assurances and Certifications.

We strongly request the applicant to submit a CD or DVD of its application that includes the following files:

1. A single file that contains the body of the application, including required budget tables, that has been converted into a .PDF (Portable Document) format so that the .PDF is searchable. Note that a .PDF created from a scanned document will not be searchable.

2. A single file in a .PDF format that contains all of the required signature pages. The signature pages may be scanned and turned into a PDF.

3. Copies of the completed electronic budget spreadsheets with the required budget tables, which should be in a separate file from the body of the application. The spreadsheets will not be reviewed by peer reviewers but will be used by the Departments for budget reviews.

Each of these items must be clearly labeled with the State's name and any other relevant identifying information. States must not password-protect these files.

We must receive all grant applications by 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. ***We will not accept an application for this competition after 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date.*** Therefore, we strongly recommend that applicants arrange for mailing or hand delivery of their application in advance of the application deadline date.

Submission of Applications by Mail.

States choosing to submit their application (*i.e.*, the CD or DVD, the signed paper original of section IV of the application, and the copy of that original) by mail (either through the U.S. Postal Service or a commercial carrier) should use the following mailing address:

U.S. Department of Education
Application Control Center
Attention: (CFDA Number 84.412)
LBJ Basement Level 1
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20202-4260

We must receive applications on or before the application deadline date. Therefore, to avoid delays, we strongly recommend sending applications via overnight mail. ***If we receive an application after the application deadline, we will not consider that application.***

Submission of Applications by Hand Delivery.

States choosing to submit their application (*i.e.*, the CD or DVD, the signed paper original of section IV of the application, and the copy of that original) by hand delivery (including via a courier service) should use the following address:

U.S. Department of Education
Application Control Center
Attention: (CFDA Number 84.412)
550 12th Street, SW.
Room 7041, Potomac Center Plaza
Washington, DC 20202-4260

The Application Control Center accepts hand deliveries daily between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, except Saturdays, Sundays, and Federal holidays.

If we receive an application after the application deadline, we will not consider that application.

Envelope Requirements and Receipt.

When an applicant submits its application, whether by mail or hand delivery--

(1) It must indicate on the envelope that the CFDA number of the competition under which it is submitting its application is 84.412; and

(2) The Application Control Center will mail to the applicant a notification of receipt of the grant application. If the applicant does not receive this notification, it should call the Application Control Center at (202) 245-6288.

In accordance with 34 CFR 75.216(b) and (c), an application will not be evaluated for funding if the applicant does not comply with all of the procedural rules that govern the submission of the application or the application does not contain the information required under the program.

XVI. APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Please use the following checklist to ensure that your application is complete:

Formatting Recommendations (page 11)

- Are all the pages 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides?
- Are all pages numbered?
- Is the line spacing for the narratives set to 1.5 spacing, and the font to 12 point Times New Roman?

Application Assurances and Certifications (page 20)

- Is all of the requested information included on the Race to the Top–Early Learning Challenge Application Assurances and Certifications page?
- SIGNATURE REQUIRED** – Has the Governor or his/her authorized representative signed and dated the Application Assurances and Certifications?
- SIGNATURE REQUIRED** – Has an authorized representative from the Lead Agency signed the Application Assurances and Certifications?
SIGNATURE REQUIRED -- Has an authorized representative from each Participating State Agency signed the Application Assurances and Certifications? (Note: all Participating State Agencies must sign the application. See definition of Participating State Agency, page 17)

State Attorney General Certification (page 22)

- SIGNATURE REQUIRED** – Has the State Attorney General or his/her authorized representative signed the Certifications?

Accountability, Transparency, Reporting, and Other Assurances and Certifications (page 23)

- SIGNATURE REQUIRED** – Has the Governor or his/her authorized representative signed the other Assurances and Certifications?

Eligibility Requirements (page 24)

- Has the State Provided a list of the Participating State Agencies?
- Has the State completed an MOU with each Participating State Agency?
- Does each MOU include the necessary assurances?
- SIGNATURE REQUIRED** – Has every Participating State Agency signed an MOU that includes a preliminary Scope of Work, using Exhibit I or an equivalent model?
- SIGNATURE REQUIRED** – Has the Lead Agency counter-signed every MOU and preliminary Scope of Work?
- Has the State certified that it has an operational State advisory council that meets the necessary requirements?

- Has the State certified that it is participating in the home visiting program, consistent with the requirement on page 25?

Selection Criteria

Core Areas (page 26)

(A) Successful State Systems and (B) High-Quality, Accountable Programs

- Has the State responded to each of the selection criteria in Core Areas (A) and (B)?

Focused Investment Areas

(C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children (page 56)

- Has the State responded to at least two of the selection criteria in section (C)?

(D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce (page 64)

- Has the State responded to at least one of the selection criteria in (D)?

(E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress (page 68)

- Has the State responded to at least one of the selection criteria in (E)?

OPTIONAL: Competition Priorities (page 71)

- Competitive Preference Priority 2: Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System, if the State has chosen to respond.
- Competitive Preference Priority 3: Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry, if the State has chosen to respond.
 - If yes, has the State provided the necessary information in Table (A)(1)-12 or written to (E)(1)?
- Invitational Priority 4: Sustaining Program Effects in the Early Elementary Grades
- Invitational Priority 5: Encouraging Private-Sector Support

Budget (page 75)

- Has the State completed the following elements of the Budget?
 - Budget Part I: Summary Tables and Narratives
 - Budget Part II: Participating State Agency Budget Tables and Narratives, for each Participating State Agency
 - Indirect Costs form
- Has the State created its budget spreadsheets?

Appendix (page 117)

- Has the State created a table of contents for its appendix?
- Has the State included all required documents per the instructions in the application?
- OPTIONAL: Has the State included supporting information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers?

Application Requirements (page 92)

- Has the State fulfilled all of the application requirements?

Application Submission Procedures (page 111)

- Has the State complied with the submission format requirements, including the application deadline for submission?
- Has the State submitted a single .PDF file of the entire application that was created in a format that is searchable? Note that a .PDF created from a scanned document will not be searchable.
- Has the State submitted originals of all the required Signature pages?
- Has the State submitted its budget spreadsheets?

XVII. APPENDIX TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Appendix must include a complete Table of Contents, which includes the page number or attachment number, attachment title, and relevant selection criterion. A sample table of contents form is included below. Each attachment in the Appendix must be described in the narrative text of the relevant selection criterion, with a rationale for how its inclusion supports the narrative and the location of the attachment in the Appendix.

#	Attachment Title	Relevant Selection Criterion

XVII. Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs (Executive Order 12372)

This program falls under the rubric of Executive Order 12372 (Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs) and the regulations in 34 CFR Part 79. One of the objectives of the Executive order is to strengthen federalism--or the distribution of responsibility between localities, States, and the Federal government--by fostering intergovernmental partnerships. This idea includes supporting processes that State or local governments have devised for coordinating and reviewing proposed Federal financial grant applications.

The process for doing this requires grant applicants to contact State Single Points of Contact for information on how this works.

Further information about the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) process and a list of names by State can be found at: www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc

Absent specific State review programs, applicants may submit comments directly to the Department. All recommendations and comments must be mailed or hand-delivered by the date indicated in the actual application notice to the following address: The Secretary, EO 12372--CFDA# 84.412, U.S. Department of Education, room 7E200. 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20202.

Proof of mailing will be determined on the same basis as applications (see 34 CFR §75.102). Recommendations or comments may be hand-delivered until 4:30 p.m. (eastern time) on the closing date indicated in the notice.

Important note: The above address is not the same address as the one to which the applicant submits its completed applications. **Do not send applications to the above address.**

Not all States have chosen to participate in the intergovernmental review process, and therefore do not have a SPOC. If you are located in a State that does not have a SPOC, you may send application materials directly to the Department as described in the *Federal Register* notice.