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**Region 4**

**Counties included in region:** Bladen, Pender, Columbus, Brunswick, New Hanover

**Five-Year Early Childhood Professional Development Local Action Plan**

**Vision Statement:** By 2015, North Carolina will have revamped its Early Childhood Education Standards and Credentials and funded a statewide Early Childhood Educator salary, compensation and benefits package linked to education and longevity, and there is greater collaboration among North Carolina Early Childhood agencies and services (i.e. – education, regulatory and supportive resources).

Key Area	Goal	Strategy	Partners	Timeline	Estimated Cost
Compensation	1) A statewide salary and comprehensive benefits package, comparable to the public school system, linked to education and longevity will be available in North Carolina for early educators.	<b>State:</b> 1.) Earmark a percentage of the Public Education Lottery, or other dependable funding sources, and dedicate initiatives that increase compensation for early educators, such as the T.E.A.C.H. program, WAGE\$ program or other county level programs.	<b>Partners:</b> T.E.A.C.H., WAGE\$, Department of Child Development	2015	Low Cost
		2.) Make group health insurance available to early educators working in the field through a statewide program such as T.E.A.C.H. or National Association for the Education of Young Children membership.	<b>Partners:</b> Early educators, T.E.A.C.H., National Association for the Education of Young Children	2015	Cost Unknown – depends on model used
		3.) Publicly fund WAGE\$ as a statewide system (similar to the T.E.A.C.H. program) in every	<b>Partners:</b> WAGE\$/Child Care Services Association,	2015	High Cost

		county. Funded at level to eliminate waiting lists and to provide pay-outs quarterly.	Department of Child Development, North Carolina Partnership for Children		
		<b>Local:</b> 1.) Create a county level Early Educators Salary Supplement Program, funded by the local government or Smart Start partnerships, comparable to the public school system. This supplement (in addition to any state funding) would come through WAGE\$ and be available quarterly.	<b>Partners:</b> Child Care Resource & Referral, area Smart Start partnerships, WAGE\$	2015	High Cost
		2.) Designate funding to create and provide scholarships, similar to North Carolina Teaching Fellowships ( <a href="http://teachingfellows.org/">teachingfellows.org/</a> ), for early childhood education majors at two- and four- year colleges, based on a commitment made by the recipient to remain in the field.	<b>Partners:</b> North Carolina Community Colleges and Universities	2015	High Cost
<b>Professional Standards</b>	1.) Professional and educational standards among all early educators will increase.	<b>State:</b> 1.) Develop, implement and monitor a more comprehensive annual staff performance assessment system. Can be captured in annual Department of Child Development evaluation.	<b>Lead:</b> Division of Child Development should take the lead for all state level strategies in the area.  <b>Partners:</b> North Carolina Child Care	2015	Low Cost

			Commission, Office of Early Learning, Head Start, National Association for the Education of Young Children		
		2.) Increase early childhood education and experience requirements for supervisors, coordinators and administrators specific to Birth through 5.		2015	Low Cost
		3.) A minimum of a 3-star rated license must be met by early childhood education practicum sites receiving any state funding.		2015	No Cost
		4.) Increase professionalism by requiring Early Educator Certification for anyone working in licensed early care and education settings.		2015	No Cost
		<b>Local:</b> 1.) Increase instructional planning, knowledge and skills by expanding required training for directors and teachers to include Developmentally Appropriate Practices, Foundations, and Environmental Rating Scales.	<b>Partners:</b> Local partnerships and Child Care Resource & Referral	2015	Low Cost

		2.) Encourage more comprehensive family partnerships in all early care and education settings (example - communication with families about Developmentally Appropriate Practice, home visits, on-site decision making) through methods such as college courses, pre-licensing workshops and trainings.	<b>Partners:</b> Local partnerships and Child Care Resource & Referral	2015	Low Cost
	2.) B-K licensure will be made more attainable for experienced early educators who have a degree and are at level 8 or above.	<b>State:</b> Increase options that add more flexibility to student teaching requirements for B-K licensure for educators with experience in the field.	<b>Partners:</b> B-K Consortium, Department of Public Instruction, Community Colleges, Universities, Department of Child Development	2015	No Cost
		<b>Local:</b> Provide flexible options to attain B-K licensure, such development of portfolio for experienced early educators in lieu of student teaching.		2015	Low Cost
<b>Planning &amp; Coordination</b>	1.) Cohesion will be created between regulatory agencies such as the Division of Child Development, Rated License Assessment Project, Office of Early Learning, Sanitation, Fire, Etc.	<b>State:</b> Create a statewide, unified set of documents that covers all early care and education regulatory requirements for all agencies.	<b>Partners:</b> Department of Child Development, Rated License Project, Office of Early Learning, Children’s Environmental Health Branch	2015	Low Cost
		<b>Local:</b> Increase local level, on-going collaboration between		2015	Low Cost

		agencies (example - some regulations require hanging pictures which is not allowed by some county fire codes) so in-service information given does not conflict with other requirements.			
	2.) One seamless B-K Licensing system in North Carolina will be created that maximizes total funding.	<b>State:</b> 1.) Consolidate all early care and education services and agencies thereby increasing funding for education and compensation.	<b>Partners:</b> Department of Child Development, Office of Early Learning, Governor's Office, North Carolina General Assembly	2015	High Cost
		2.) Consolidate and rename More @ 4 and Child Care Subsidy funds for children birth through 5 years, who meet eligibility guidelines. Include parent choice as a component and require high standards for participating facilities and staff for children of all ages.	<b>Partners:</b> Department of Child Development, Office of Early Learning, Governor's Office, North Carolina General Assembly	2015	High Cost
		3.) Do away with G.S. 110-106 exemption from licensure – all programs must meet minimum licensing requirements ensuring highly qualified staff for all children.	<b>Partners:</b> Department of Child Development and North Carolina General Assembly	2015	No Cost
		4.) Align Division of Child Development rated licensure education points and certification levels.	<b>Partners:</b> Department of Child Development, Institute	2015	Low Cost

		5.) Streamline the education evaluation process by sending all transcripts to the Division of Child Development for screening. Add additional Department of Child Development Early Childhood consultants.	<b>Lead:</b> Department of Child Development  <b>Partners:</b> Institute, Early Educator Certification Office	2015	Low Cost
		6.) Continue efforts to coordinate and align all North Carolina two- and four-year early childhood education certificates and degrees.	<b>Partners:</b> Institute, Community College and University early childhood programs	2015	Low Cost
		<b>Local:</b> Support Professional Development Coordinators, in using local early childhood education facilities information to plan and development trainings that meet current staff development plans.	<b>Partners:</b> Child Care Resource & Referral, Smart Start	2015	No Cost
<b>Education</b>	1.) Statewide early childhood education requirements for pre-service and continuing education will be increased so that all young children and their families have access to professionals who possess knowledge and skills in the use of Developmentally Appropriate Practice.	<b>State:</b> Eliminate North Carolina Credential as a basic requirement and replace with a two year Associate degree minimum for both Assistant and Lead teachers	<b>Partners:</b> Department of Child Development and Child Care Commission	2015	No Cost

	2.) Parents, families, elected officials, school administrators and the community will be educated about Developmentally Appropriate Practice and the long-term impact and benefits of early childhood education.	<p><b>State:</b> Institute a statewide public campaign about Developmentally Appropriate Practice and the importance of Early Childhood Education.</p>	<p><b>Lead:</b> North Carolina Partnership for Children – during the Week of the Young Child, North Carolina Association for the Education of Young Children, Child Care Resource &amp; Referral, Department of Child Development</p>	2015	Low-Medium Cost
		<p><b>Local:</b> Develop a “Welcome Baby” type packet for new parents in the family’s own language with information about Developmentally Appropriate Practice and the benefits of early childhood education. Make efforts to provide the packet to expecting parents before the baby arrives.</p>	<p><b>Partners:</b> Welcome Baby, North Carolina Prevent Child Abuse, Division of Public Health</p>	2015	Low Cost
<b>Access</b>	1.) Options for access to education within North Carolina colleges and universities will be increased.	<p><b>State:</b> Increase the students’ ability to transfer early childhood education courses throughout the North Carolina higher education system by strengthening articulation agreements.</p>	<p><b>Partners:</b> North Carolina Universities and Community Colleges</p>	2015	Low Cost
		<p><b>Local:</b> Partner with Community College Early Childhood Education departments to support programs serving all who take early childhood classes and not just those who are completing a degree.</p>	<p><b>Partners:</b> Community Colleges, Smart Start, Child Care Resource &amp; Referral</p>	2015	No Cost

	2.) Early childhood education coursework will be easily accessible for all professionals working in all early care and education settings.	<b>State:</b> 1.) Invest money in a program (example - T.E.A.C.H.) to help fund extra staff, who work full-time at the facility and meet Lead teacher qualifications, to fill-in for individuals attending college classes in early childhood education.	<b>Partners:</b> Department of Child Development, Office of Early Learning, T.E.A.C.H., Smart Start partnerships	2015	High Cost
		2.) Provide computer work stations for participating early care and education centers and family child care homes.	<b>Partners:</b> T.E.A.C.H., Smart Start, area businesses such as IBM	2015	Low Cost – could probably find source for donations
		<b>Local:</b> 1.) Create a local presence of T.E.A.C.H. so that communication, training, technical assistance and collecting documentation will be improved.	<b>Partners:</b> T.E.A.C.H., Smart Start, Child Care Resource & Referral.	2015	High Cost for financial aid increases
	3.) Funding for WAGE\$ will be increased.	2.) Advocate for financial aid and scholarships for students who are earning an early childhood education degree before entering the field.	<b>Partners:</b> Smart Start, Child Care Resource & Referral	2015	No Cost
		<b>State:</b> Earmark a percentage of the Public Education Lottery to increase compensation for early educators through WAGE\$.	<b>Partners:</b> North Carolina General Assembly, Department of Child Development	2015	No additional cost if lottery money is directed to early childhood funds.



	4.) An early childhood education teaching scholarship will be created for those who haven't yet worked in the field.	<b>State:</b> 1.) Earmark a percentage of the Public Education Lottery to create funding for early childhood education students who are earning a degree before entering the field.	<b>Partners:</b> North Carolina General Assembly, Department of Child Development	2015	No additional cost if lottery money is directed to early childhood funds.
		2.) Designate current Federal funding to early childhood education (example - Pell Grant).		2015	Cost unknown; could Child Care Block grant be used for this purpose or other federal funds?