

Regional Early Childhood Professional Development Plan Summary

A total of 18 planning teams across the state of North Carolina worked together over a period of 6 months or more to develop regional early childhood professional development action plans. Teams submitted their plans electronically to the NC Institute for Child Development Professionals in July 2010. By late summer the plans were posted on the Institute's web site (www.ncicdp.org) under Projects for easy access.

The regional plans each covered key areas that comprise a professional development system including compensation, planning and coordination, higher education, access, continuing education, and professional standards. Within each key area teams identified one or more strategies that could be implemented at the regional and/or state level over the next five years to address the professional development needs of the early care and education and school age workforce.

Teams were not required to include specific strategies in any particular section. For some teams, access issues crossed all other key areas as did standards and outreach strategies. Likewise training/continuing education units showed up across four of the six key areas of the collective plans. The need for systems to work together and share resources was also a common theme and was included throughout the plans and key areas. Higher education strategies were found in almost every key area. And, suggestions to the NC Division of Child Development to raise the floor on workforce education and continuing education requirements were documented in many plans.

The need to continue to build a strong base of low cost, access education and benefits including salary supplements. Calls to increase funding or consider how eligibility/guidelines could be adjusted to serve more individuals were provided by half or more of the teams. Over 60% of the plans also called for the provision of or increase in the types of benefits provided for the workforce.

Additional strategies include data, funding, strategies to address the provision of support staff (mentors/coaches, technical assistance and professional development providers) and distance learning/technology.

Other highlights from the plans included:

- Centralized information sources in the form of web sites, databases, calendars were noted in 14 of 18 plans. The need for regional group to continue to work together on professional development efforts was noted in 8 plans while four plans included the need for a state level team to continue the work.
- Outreach in the form of a public awareness campaign to share the importance of teacher education, professionalism and early care and education services were found in 8 plans.
- The need for observation and/or demo sites was noted in a handful of plans and recommended by 4 plans as practicum sites.

- Articulation was well documented as a strategy that must be addressed – from being educating students and faculty about to creating consistent agreements to mandating articulation be put in place between and among all colleges and universities.
- The use of distance learning and technology as a strategy to increase access and connect the field to education and continuing opportunities peppered many plans.
- Some plans noted the need for a workforce study or needs assessment to collect professional development resources, barriers and tools.
- The majority of teams wrote about the need to require specific training and/or expand the number of support staff providing technical assistance, professional development, mentoring and coaching services. The use of peer-to-peer networking, utilization of regional inclusion specialists and the development of a mentoring system were all included in the plans as possible options for advancing on-site supports for the workforce.
- The development and use of a standardized professional development plan was included in over half the plans.
- Substitutes as a way to increase access to education and continuing education was included in a few plans, two noting that a training program for substitutes was needed.