

***More at Four* Pre-Kindergarten Program**  
**Progress Report to the General Assembly**  
**On Section 21.76B**

Submitted by:

***More at Four* Pre-Kindergarten Program**

**Governor's Office**

**December 31, 2001**

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## Progress Report on the *More at Four* Pre-Kindergarten Program

In response to Session Law 2001-424, Section 21.76B.(g), a progress report due January 1, 2002 on the development and implementation of the *More at Four* Pre-Kindergarten Program is submitted to the:

- Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operation.
- Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee.
- Senate Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services, and
- House of Representatives Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services.

The *More at Four* Pre-K program is underway. The Task Force has been appointed effective October 31, 2001 and has held two meetings: November 13, 2001 (where Program Guidelines and Requirements were approved) and December 20, 2001 (where the first round application process and selected sites were endorsed). A Program Director, Dr. Carolyn Cobb, was hired on November 6, 2001. The first round of applications was received and reviewed for quality and geographic distribution, and 12 communities were selected. These selected sites include 857 children and 104 classes, most of which will start in January 2002. The second round of applications is due January 25, 2002. Approximately 1500 children will be served once all sites are selected.

### Status of Legislative Requirements

This report is organized by each sub-section in the legislation (Section 21.76B), with the sub-section and a brief description listed in the left column and the status of implementation in the right column. Attachments, which are referenced as appropriate, contain a fuller explanation of how the requirement has been met.

Sub-Section of Section 21.76B	Status of Implementation
<b>Section 21.76B(a)</b> The Department of Health and Human Services in consultation with the Department of Public Instruction shall develop <i>More at Four</i> .	A "management team" consisting of designees from the Governor's Office, the DHHS, the DPI was formed to oversee the development of the <i>More at Four</i> Program. The management team also consults with the NC Partnership for Children. An Interim Director of the program, Dr. Carolyn Cobb, was hired on November 6, 2001. After the Director of the Program was hired, the management team was asked to continue functioning as an advisory group to the <i>More at Four</i> Office.
<b>Section 21.76B.(b)</b> Establish a <i>More at Four</i> Pre-K Task Force to oversee the development & implementation of the pilot program	The Task Force was jointly established by the DHHS and the DPI and is chaired by the Secretary of DHHS and the Superintendent of DPI. It includes representatives of the groups named in this sub-section: early childhood experts from both departments, state and local Smart Start partnerships, Head Start programs, parents, teachers certified in early childhood, private for-profit and not-for-profit child care, and other early childhood education experts. Membership also includes representatives from the UNC-General Administration, private universities and colleges, and the N. C. Department of Community Colleges. See Attachment A for a list of Task Force members.

<p><b>Section 21.76B.(c)</b> DHHS &amp; DPI, with guidance from Task Force, shall develop/implement program. Pilot shall be distributed geographically. Program shall be consistent with standards &amp; assessments established jointly by above groups.</p> <p><b>Section 21.76B.(c)</b> (continued)</p>	<p><b>Attachment B</b> contains the <i>More at Four</i> Pre-Kindergarten Initiative Program <u>Guidelines and Requirements</u>, which details the requirements to be followed by the local pre-K sites. This document was approved at the November 13, 2001 meeting of the Task Force. An <u>application process and form</u> were developed for the first round of applicants. The first of two rounds of funding were targeted to those who were already in collaboration and ready to move quickly. Twelve communities were selected from 19 applicants based on criteria dealing with a quality program. Additional consideration was given for economic need and geographic distribution; however, these components did not change the results. The 12 applicants chosen on the basis of quality points were well distributed by need and geography. The Task Force endorsed these 12 communities at their meeting on December 20, 2001.</p> <p>Information on these 12 sites, including the number of children to be served and funding are included in <b>Attachment C</b>. The map in <b>Attachment D</b> depicts the geographic location of the 12 sites selected in the first round of applications.</p> <p>Applications for the second round are due January 25, 2002. Consideration for geographic representation also will be given in the selection of those applicants. At this time over 50 communities have indicated an interest in submitting an application.</p>
<p><b>Section 21.76B.(c)(1) and (2)</b> Process for identifying children at risk of academic failure, and children who have never been served...</p>	<p>See <u>Program Guidelines and Requirements</u>, "Defining, Identifying and Recruiting At-Risk Children" (Attachment B, pages 12-16). Also see "Program Standards and Curriculum" Section, page 20, which addresses required health screening of pre-K children, and page 22, which addresses screening in various developmental domains.</p>
<p><b>Section 21.76B.(c)(3)</b> Curricula that are recommended by Task Force.</p>	<p>This requirement is addressed in the <u>Program Guidelines and Requirements</u>, page 19. Research-based curricula that address the developmental domains in the legislation and the five domains listed in the Ready for School Goal Team Panel were considered. Recommended curricula currently include: Bright Beginnings, Creative Curriculum, High Scope, Montessori, and Bank Street Explorations. The <i>More at Four</i> Office can review other research-based curricula. That office has established a committee of curriculum experts to conduct such reviews.</p>
<p><b>Section 21.76B.(c)(4)</b> An emphasis on family involvement</p>	<p>An emphasis on family involvement is included and can be found in the <u>Program Guidelines and Requirements</u>, page 21.</p>
<p><b>Section 21.76B.(c)(5)</b> Evaluation of child progress by pre- and post-assessment and ongoing assessment by teachers</p>	<p>See <u>Program Guidelines and Requirements</u>, "Outcomes, Critical Success Factors and Evaluation Section, pages 25-27. Pre- and Post-assessment of children will be carried out by the outside evaluation starting with the 2002-03 school year. Because children will receive only a partial year of pre-K access this fiscal year, pre-post assessments were not considered to be reliable measures for evaluation purposes or to be cost-effective.</p> <p>Ongoing assessment by teachers is addressed in the <u>Program Guidelines and Requirements</u>, page 23 under "Instructional Assessment."</p>
<p><b>Section 21.76B.(c)(6)</b> Guidelines for reimbursing entities who provide pre-k programs.</p>	<p>A system of reimbursement is currently being finalized in conjunction with the DHHS Controller's Office, with input from DPI and NC Partnership for Children. The existing child care subsidy system has not turned out to be feasible for funding stable pre-kindergarten programs. The system being established will be a blend of per student funding and funding for classrooms. When a pilot site is selected, funding to the site will be based on the number of <b>eligible</b> children served. If a child leaves that site, the money will not automatically stop. The classroom site will have 60-90 days to fill the position with another eligible child before it runs the risk of losing the funding. This system will provide more stability for classrooms and continuity for <b>quality programs</b></p>

<p><b>Section 21.76B.(c)(7)</b> System built upon existing local school, private child care providers, &amp; other entities with ability to establish or expand Pre-K capacity.</p>	<p>The application and selection of <i>More at Four</i> pre-K sites is based on existing service delivery providers. The first 12 communities selected include classes in public pre-kindergartens, Head Start classes, and private for-profit and non-profit child care providers. [See Attachment C, pages 31-34 for classroom sites by community.]</p>
<p><b>Section 21.76B.(c)(8) and (9)</b> <u>Quality control system.</u> Providers meet standards/guidelines as established by DHHS, DPI &amp; Task Force. May use child care rating system. <u>Standards for minimum teacher qualifications</u> (licensure)</p>	<p>Requirements for staff (administrators, teachers, and teacher assistants) and for classroom/center licensing are set at a quality program level: public school licensure for teaching staff, AAS certification for assistants (staff may start with lower credentials but have 4 years to reach these standards), and a minimum of 3-star rating by DCD to be accepted as a participant (must reach 4- or 5-star rating within 3 years). [See pages 17-19 of <u>Program Guidelines and Requirements</u> for requirements for staff and classrooms.] A number of the sites already have teachers who meet the requirements, as specified by this sub-section.</p>
<p><b>Section 21.76B.(c)(10)</b> A local contribution is required</p>	<p>The application sets forth requirements for a local contribution beyond the <i>More at Four</i> funds. Applicants are required to specify what other sources of funding will be used to support the children/classrooms included in the <i>More at Four</i> sites. The intent of this program is to provide, on average, no more than half the costs of a quality program. No site will receive more than \$400 per child per month; most will receive between \$300 and \$350 per child per month. Allocations will be somewhat less in the 2002-03 fiscal year, as less money will be available when spread across the full 10-month school year.</p>
<p><b>Section 21.76B.(c)(11)</b> A system of accountability</p>	<p>The <u>Program Guidelines and Requirements</u> address this need in the "Program Standards and Curriculum" Section on pages 24. The procedures for monitoring and accountability will be developed in early January. The system will include data collection on children served, as well as information about staff, programs, and expenditures. Approval of invoices by the <i>More at Four</i> Office will be required for reimbursement by the DHHS Controller's Office to the local site administrator. This accountability system will be the basis for such approval.</p>
<p><b>Section 21.76B.(c)(12)</b> Collaboration with State agencies and other organizations.</p>	<p>As noted above, there has been ongoing collaboration on the development and implementation of this program prior to and continuing with the establishment of the <i>More at Four</i> office among DHHS, DPI, and the NC Partnership for Children. The original Task Force, comprised of even more groups developed the <u>Program Guidelines and Requirements</u>, and provided preliminary assistance with the funding of sites and application requirements. The Management Team continues to function to help review materials and to make decisions. At the local level, collaboration is required as addressed in the <u>Program Guidelines and Requirements</u>, page 23.</p>
<p><b>Section 21.76B.(c)(13)</b> Consideration of reallocation of existing funds.</p>	<p>To be submitted to the 2003 General Assembly in the second year of the pilot after more experience is obtained and input received from local communities and state agencies.</p>
<p><b>Section 21.76B.(c)(14)</b> Recommendation for long-term placement and administration of the program.</p>	<p>To be included in the 2002-03 report to the 2003 General Assembly.</p>

<b>Section 21.76B.(d)(1)</b> Contract with an independent research organization...for design of evaluation component.	A contract with the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center will be established. FPG is nationally known for its research in early childhood, including pre-K programs. The evaluation design will include child-specific outcomes (starting in 2002-03), long-term follow-up plans, assessment of how well the programs are able to meet quality standards, and the impact on the existing service delivery system.
<b>Section 21.76B.(d)(2)</b> Develop a system to collect & maintain child-specific information for long-term evaluation of pilot	A child-specific database will be part of the ongoing system of accountability. It will facilitate the evaluation of the program, provide the basis for following children into the public school system (interfacing with the Student Information Management System and/or the NC WISE), and provide information on whether the appropriate children are being served. This system will be developed in collaboration with DHHS and DPI. Conversations have begun and the system should be in place in a paper & pencil or spreadsheet form during January 2002. Refinements will be made as necessary, with the goal of moving toward a web-based application.
<b>Section 21.76B.(e)</b> <i>More at Four</i> funds shall not supplant current state or federal expenditures.	The non-supplant provision is emphasized in the local application and is reviewed as part of the budget provided by the applicant in the selection process.
<b>Section 21.76B.(f)</b> Recommendations on the reallocation of funds from existing State and local programs providing pre-K related care and services...	To be submitted to the 2003 General Assembly in the second year of the pilot after more experience is obtained and input received from local communities and state agencies.
<b>Section 21.76B.(g)</b> Required reports due January 1, 2002 and May 1, 2002. Final report due to 2003 General Assembly.	This report constitutes the first of the required reports. A follow-up report will be submitted by the end of February 2002 with a list of the second round applicants selected and their geographic location.

### Other Pending Activities

In order to address the supply of qualified teachers and the level of training and understanding of the curricula required, several strategies are being pursued from the state level to assist local sites.

- Contract with the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Project to provide (1) scholarships for teachers and teacher assistants in selected programs to pursue their B-K License or AAS Certificate respectively and (2) scholarships for juniors and seniors in Early Childhood Development who commit to teach in a *More at Four* or other pre-K classroom for at-risk four-year-olds.
- Issue a contract (probably with a consortium of universities and the Community College system) to provide statewide professional development for staff in the selected sites that will facilitate their knowledge of specific curricula and further their ability to attain the appropriate license and/or certificate. Professional development will include orientations for staff, sessions on curricula being used by programs, and a summer institute that will offer credit-based coursework.

# **Attachment A**

## **“More at Four” Task Force Membership**

**Appointed 10/31/01**

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# **Attachment B**

***More at Four* Pre-Kindergarten Initiative**

**Program Guidelines and Requirements**

**November 20, 2001**

# Defining, Identifying and Recruiting At-Risk Children

## Criteria for identifying at-risk children

The characteristics or factors of children (and their families) that makes them at-risk of academic failure are many; however, there is agreement around some of the most significant characteristics or factors. The following factors should be used as the criteria for identifying at-risk children for More at Four services:

Family income appears to be the leading indicator that a student may be at-risk of academic failure. A family's inability to provide for the basic needs of a child will impact every area (physical, emotional, social) of a child's life.

If a child is identified as having some type of chronic health problem or a special need (mental or physical), a child will be considered at-risk of academic failure. Typically, the Exceptional Children's Program or Title I will serve these students once they enroll in school but the Exceptional Children's Program must work with other programs (particularly public school pre-K programs) to provide inclusive options for children.

The educational level of the mother (or primary caregiver) also impacts the academic achievement of children. The higher the educational level of the mother, the greater a child's chances will be for academic success. Conversely, children of mothers with minimal education are more at-risk of academic failure.

The employment status of the mother (or primary caregiver) has a direct correlation with a child's potential for academic success or failure.

Family composition, such as a single parent household, coupled with compounding factors (i.e. parental substance abuse, victim of abuse/neglect) or unstable housing may result in children being at-risk of academic failure.

In order for a child to be successful in an American school, speaking English is essential. English proficiency is necessary for a child but also important for the parents. Parents and childcare providers must be able to communicate with each other regarding the needs of children.

While minority status alone does not make a child at-risk, when coupled with other factors (i.e. poverty, limited English proficiency), it will cause a child to be at-risk of academic failure. Therefore, it is important to look at minority status as a factor only in connection with other factors.

Finally, a primary stated goal of the *More at Four* program is that priority be given to serving first those at-risk children who have never had the opportunity to participate in a formal early education program such as child care, public or private pre-school, Head Start, Early Start, early

intervention programs, or other such programs. For this reason, at-risk children who have never been served shall receive the highest priority; second priority will be given to children who are eligible for financial assistance for services but are not receiving any assistance; and third priority will be given to children who are currently served in settings that do not meet the high quality More at Four program standards.

## Criteria for Inclusion in *More at Four* Program

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Risk Factors	Level 2 Significant Factor	Level 1 Potential Factor	Level 0 Negligible Impact	Score
1 Family income	Eligible for free lunch.	Eligible for reduced lunch.	Ineligible.	
2 Child's health status	Child is identified as mentally or physically chronically ill or medically fragile.	Child is seen or has been seen by a pediatric specialist for a chronic health concern.	Child has no significant health concerns.	
3 Identified special needs*	Child has a current Individualized Education Program (IEP)	Child had an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) but does not qualify for an Individualized Education Program (IEP).	No special needs identified.	
4 Parent education	Mother (or primary caregiver) does not have a high school diploma.	Mother (or primary caregiver) has a GED.	Mother (or primary caregiver) has a high school diploma.	
5 Parent employment	Mother (or primary caregiver) is unemployed.	Mother (or primary caregiver) has been employed at current job for less than 12 months.	Mother (or primary caregiver) has been employed at current job for 12 months or more.	
6 Family composition	Child lives with a single parent and there are compounding factors such as parental substance abuse or abuse/neglect.	Child lives with a single parent.	Child lives with two parents.	
7 Housing stability	Child has no stable place to live. Child may be homeless.	Child has lived at multiple addresses during the preceding 12-months.	Child has resided at the same address during the preceding 12-months.	
8 English proficiency	Family and child do not speak English.	Family and child speak limited English.	Family and child speak English.	
9 Minority status	Child is a member of a minority group and demonstrates any 4 or more risk factors	Child is member of a minority group and demonstrates up to 3 risk factors	Child is a member of a minority group and does not demonstrate any risk factors	
<b>TOTAL**</b>				<b>/18</b>

\*A provision for use of a developmental screening tool is an option for future consideration.

\*\*

**First priority will be given to children who have never been served.**

**Second priority will be given to children who are eligible for financial assistance for services but are not receiving any assistance.**

**Third priority will be given to children who are currently being served in settings that do not meet *More at Four* program standards.**

## **Recommended strategies for recruiting at-risk children and their families**

1. Produce and disseminate written multilingual information about the program through:
  - Work First
  - WIC
  - Subsidized housing
  - Medicaid
  - SSI
  - Faith based organizations, church/temple bulletins
  - Ethnic/cultural organizations
  - Family resource centers
  - Local public health centers
  - Local mental health centers
  - Pediatricians' offices
  - Child care facilities
  - Child care resource and referral agencies
  - Schools
  - Local interagency coordinating councils
  - Local housing authority agencies
  - Schools
  - Local interagency councils
  - Parks and recreation centers
  - Neighborhood and community centers
2. Create an awareness of the More at Four program with eligibility/intake workers and child welfare social workers in the Department of Social Services so that they can pass information on to families
3. Implement a diverse, multilingual, multimedia public awareness campaign
4. Make better use of the high-risk infant-screening tool developed by the public health system. Make this data more readily available to schools and social service agencies to actively identify those at-risk. Do follow-up telephone calls from this list three years after birth.
5. Domestic violence shelters are effective and efficient locations to find and serve a good portion of our most vulnerable children. Research has demonstrated that children who come to domestic violence shelters are the most at-risk for everything. There are now domestic violence programs in almost 100 counties that receive state funding.
6. Work with children from families with a parent involved in the criminal justice system. These families have many stressors that could make these children at risk. The criminal justice system already has several monitoring systems in place that could be utilized as an intervention opportunity for the children.



7. Work with children who come with their families at emergency rooms. Whether they are a victim, a witness or just accompanying a parent, loved one or friend who has been a victim of violence, these children can be very vulnerable and possibly dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder.
8. Target all children who live in areas assigned to low performing schools.

## Program Standards and Curriculum

All children can learn if given the opportunity. At-risk children have not had the same level of opportunity as other children in North Carolina. Thus we need to ensure that children in the *More at Four* program receive truly high quality services to prepare them for success in school. We propose a set of standards to be required of programs applying for participation. These standards are built on the premise that in order to be successful academically in school that children need to be prepared in all five of the major domains of development outlined by the National Education Goals Panel. Each of these domains is critical to children's well being, in particular for their success in reading and math as they come to school. The five domains are:

- Health and physical development
- Social and emotional development
- Approaches toward learning
- Language development and communication
- Cognition and general knowledge

Below are listed the specific program requirements for all participating programs to enable them to address the full range of needs in preparing at-risk children for success in school. The staff standards are perhaps the most difficult for programs to meet. Thus, in this category of standards we have provided a phase-in period for programs in which teachers will be allowed to hold less than the required teaching certificate for a period of time while the individual teachers complete requirements for certification. Programs would cease to be funded if teachers do not meet the requirement by the end of the phase in period.

### Staff requirements

#### Teacher

- All teachers will hold B-K or preschool add-on licensure (goal)
- Provisional approval teachers will hold AAS degree in early childhood education and be working toward B-K licensure (minimum)
- Progress toward B-K licensure will be 6 documented semester hours per year (minimum)
- Teachers will be paid salaries and provided benefits comparable to teachers in local public schools when requirements of B-K or preschool add-on licensure are met.
- Provisional approval will be given for an absolute maximum of 4 years. After this time the program will have a fully certified teacher in the classroom or funding for that class will not be approved.

### Teacher Assistants

- All assistants will hold either a CDA (Child Development Associate) credential or an ECE/CD associate degree (goal)
- Assistants will hold high school diploma or GED equivalent and be working toward ECE/CD associate degree (minimum)
- Progress toward the associate degree will be 6 documented semester hours per year (minimum)

### Administrators

- All principals/directors will hold BS degree in ECE/CD (Goal)
- Principal's Certification (Goal)
- Child care licensing administrative certification (minimum)
- Administrators in child care should hold at least Level II certification and be working toward Level III.
- Progress toward Level III certification should be 6 documented semester hours per year (minimum)

Programs that serve children and families who do not speak English or have limited English proficiency should hire bilingual staff.

### **Professional Development**

- In the first year of the *More at Four* program, an orientation/ summer institute for teachers, assistants, and administrators should be completed within 6 months of program identification.
- In subsequent years, an orientation/summer institute for teachers, assistants, and administrators to be completed before the school year begins.
- New employees of existing programs will participate within 6 months of their employment.
- On-going staff development will be provided for teachers, assistants, and administrators.
- Staff in programs serving children who do not speak English or have limited English proficiency should participate in initial training and receive ongoing professional development and technical assistance on effective practices to meet the needs of this population.
- Provisionally certified staff would be paid at a lower rate than fully certified staff. The difference in pay and benefits for provisionally certified staff and fully certified staff may only be used to move these teachers, administrators, and teacher assistants to full qualifications and to increase salaries and benefits for staff as they progress toward full certification.

## **Approved curricula**

The Governor's *More at Four* Office will create a committee to review proposed curricula and to establish criteria for approving curricula.

Examples of curricula that should be reviewed by the committee include:

- Bright Beginnings
- Creative Curriculum
- High Scope
- Montessori
- Bank Street Explorations
- Other research based curriculum approved by the *More at Four* office.

## **Licensing requirements**

Each participating *More at Four* program must meet the requirements for a 3, 4, or 5 star license using the NC Division of Child Development licensing standards.

Three star programs must work to attain a rating of at least 4 stars to continue participation in the *More at Four* initiative. A period of 3 years will be granted for programs to move to a 4 or 5 star level.

Consistent with the Memorandum of Understanding, public school programs will be given 3 years to come into compliance with 4 or 5 star licensure. All public school programs can be considered for *More at Four* participation during this time.

NAEYC or other nationally recognized accreditation would be considered in lieu of the 4 or 5 star rating.

No *More at Four* class will be funded in a school or facility with an open child abuse or neglect investigation or pending administrative action which would change its license.

## **Adult to child ratio**

In addition to meeting the star rating requirements, a pre-K program will not exceed a maximum adult to child ratio of 1 to 9 with a maximum class size of 18 children with one teacher and one assistant teacher per classroom.

(Currently, children with disabilities classrooms are required to have an adult to child ratio of 1 to 6. In addition, Migrant Head Start Programs are mandated to have an adult to child ratio of 1 to 6.)

Programs that provide for inclusive settings for children with disabilities may require an adult to child ratio smaller than 1 to 9 depending on the nature and severity of the disabilities of children served. Programs will be expected to show how they are using special education funds to fully

meet the needs of such children in these programs. Programs serving children that do not speak English or have limited English proficiency may also require an adult to child ratio smaller than 1 to 9.

## **Environments**

Requirements shall be based on the NC Child Care requirements and NC Guide to the Early Years regarding:

- \* Facilities
- \* Centers, e.g., blocks, sand & water, etc.
- \* Equipment/furnishings
- \* Educational/learning materials
- \* Indoor/outdoor space

All *More at Four* classrooms will score at least 4.5 on the ECERS-R as completed by *More at Four* the DCD contractor by the beginning of the second year of operation.

## **Transportation**

*More at Four* program applicants will provide a written plan showing how the transportation needs of potential children served will be addressed.

Transportation standards must adhere to NC Child Care requirements for child care settings and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) requirements for public school settings.

Transportation to wrap around services will not be provided by the program. Though transportation may not be provided, wrap around services are critical to the program so that access is not limited in any way.

## **Health**

Health assessments will be required of children entering a *More at Four* classroom. The health assessment will be the same as that required of children entering kindergarten and include:

- \* Physical examination
- \* Up-dated immunizations
- \* Vision screening
- \* Hearing screening
- \* Dental screening

*More at Four* programs will be responsible for appropriate referrals as indicated by the health assessments.

## **Nutrition**

Provision of breakfast and lunch meeting USDA requirements during the 6-hour day at no cost to families of children enrolled in the program. Additional snacks should be provided if wrap around services are offered.

### **Extended day / extended year services (optional)**

A 6-hour day for 180 days a year will be provided at no cost to families of children served. However, those families could incur costs related to wrap around service programs.

### **Transitions**

Transition requirements for *More at Four* sites include:

- Written community transition plans specifying how children transition into the *More at Four* program and transition into school at the end of the program will be developed. These plans will be reviewed and revised as ongoing transition efforts are expanded.
- Ongoing leadership and advocacy for effective transition practices will be accomplished by designating community transition coordinator and representatives of each participating program/group with specific responsibilities for the community's transition plan
- Shared decision making will involve families as active partners in their child's care and education. Careful consideration will be given to families' need, particularly families of children with special needs;
- Transition policies, programs and practices will reflect the diversity and uniqueness of children, families and communities.
- Transition activities, such as site visits, will be planned cooperatively for children by families, *More at Four* staff and other early care and education providers, school teachers, administrators, and community providers
- Coordinated staff development will bring together early care and education providers, *More at Four* staff, and other public school staff.

### **Family Involvement**

The community plan will developed with the inclusion of *More at Four* families.

Programs should provide for family participation including:

- Initial home visits
- Staggered enrollment
- Parent/teacher conferences
- Classroom visits
- Parent education
- Process for family involvement in decision making about their own children
- Opportunities outside of the regular school day
- Parent / provider agreements

## **Children with Disabilities**

*More at Four* programs must strive to be inclusive.

A minimum of ten percent of children served by the *More at Four* initiative at the county level will be children identified with disabilities by the end of the program year.

Public schools are required by federal law to provide special education to eligible 4-year-olds.

*More at Four* programs and public schools will collaborate in the development and implementation of a child's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

## **Screening**

All children entering a *More at Four* program should be screened within the first 3 months of the program to provide teachers information on children's developmental status and the possible need for further evaluation. Early detection is essential to increasing the likelihood that children at risk of developmental delay and those with disabilities receive special services quickly. Screening instruments are not to be used as the major or primary method to determine eligibility for the program (see Criteria for Inclusion in *More at Four* Program).

The following screening instruments should be used. These instruments have been recommended by the NC School Readiness Goal Team, with technical assistance from SERVE, as reported in the School Readiness in North Carolina Report (2000).

(1) The following instruments screen for all 5 developmental domains:

- \* Developmental Indicators of Assessment of Learning-3 (DIAL-3)
- \* Early Screening Inventory-Revised (ESI-R)

(2) The following instruments do not screen for all 5 developmental domains and should be supplemented by one instrument listed below (3) to do so:

- \* Brigance Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills-Revised (CIBS-R)
- \* Kaufman Survey of Early Academic & Language Skills (K-SEAL)

(3) The following are supplemental to the instruments in the above list (2)

- \* Devereux Early Childhood Assessment Program (DECA)
- \* Social Skills Rating System (SSRS)

Children who do not speak English or have limited English proficiency should be screened in their native language, preferably using instruments that are available in the child's native language and by a bilingual / bicultural assessor.

## **Instructional Assessment**

Ongoing assessment for instructional purposes is an integral part of high quality programs and is required for *More at Four* children. Such assessments are to be ongoing and will provide evidence of child growth. Both formal and informal assessments can achieve this goal.

Recommended assessment instruments:

- \* High Scope Child Observation Record (COR)
- \* Work Sampling System (Meisels)
- \* Local option approved by the *More at Four* office

Training in appropriate use of screening and assessment instruments for instructional planning will be part of initial staff development for all teaching staff.

Children who do not speak English or have limited English proficiency should be assessed in their native language, preferably using instruments that are available in the child's native language and by a bilingual / bicultural assessor.

## **Collaboration**

Participating programs will demonstrate the capability to collaborate successfully with other community agencies on a variety of issues including:

- Professional development - programs should offer their professional development services to other early childhood programs in the community and in turn are expected to take advantage of opportunities offered by others.
- Programs must demonstrate that they are accessing resources other than *More at Four*. Resource sharing must be adequately documented.
- Programs must document agreements with other community agencies regarding the provision of services to young children with disabilities.
- Arrangements for transportation should be developed taking advantage of relevant resources in the community. *More at Four* funds cannot be used for purchase of vehicles.
- The community application must document support by the key community agencies with a formal sign off by the *More at Four* Community Task Force, which indicates support by all of the key agencies, including the public school system, the local partnership for children, the county department of human services, the health and mental health departments, the local Head Start agency, the private provider community and other relevant service delivery organizations.



## Monitoring Programs

Because the delivery of pre-kindergarten services in *More at Four* is built on a diverse delivery system of providers including public and private agencies across a wide range of program types, monitoring compliance with the standards becomes particularly important to maintain program integrity. The new *More at Four* office will build on existing structures for monitoring to the extent possible. Technical assistance will be provided to programs as they seek to implement the *More at Four* initiative. Programs will be required to submit regular reports of service provision including enrollment and attendance information; documentation of child eligibility for participation; program descriptive information including qualifications of staff, participation in professional development, efforts to collaborate with other agencies in the community; and financial record keeping. Assurance must be provided in the application that the program will comply with reasonable requests for such information in a form to be established by the *More at Four* office. Regular visits by program specialists will be made to programs to document compliance with the operating regulations and standards. Once a pattern of compliance with the standards has been established, the visits will be reduced substantially. These visits may be in addition to those for compliance with child care licensing requirements and related health and safety issues.

# Outcomes, Critical Success Factors and Evaluation

*More at Four* has the potential of providing more of North Carolina's children with a successful educational experience. To that end, it is critical that the program has clearly stated outcomes and measures of success and that an evaluation plan is designed to help the program learn from its successes to allow for continuous improvement. The outcomes measured and the evaluation procedures utilized must be consistent with and appropriate for the program standards identified for the initiative. Below is a description of the primary outcome and critical success factors for *More at Four*.

## ***More at Four* Program Outcome**

Children at-risk in participating *More at Four* classrooms will demonstrate measurable progress in all five domains of readiness after one school year of participation based on pre and post-test assessments. The five domains include health and physical development, social and emotional development, language and communication, approaches to learning and cognition and general knowledge. Progress will be measured from where each child begins within each domain to what each child accomplishes by the end of the year. Because of the wide variation in children who will be participating, it is recognized that all children will not make equal gains in each area.

## **Critical Success Factors**

Until *More at Four* classrooms are fully in place, progress on these critical success factors may be the evaluation focus.

1. All *More at Four* classrooms will be rated as high quality, using measures that include teacher education, teacher/child ratios, classroom assessments, family partnerships and licensure status.
2. All participating *More at Four* classrooms will have developed and implemented a transition plan for entry into the program, for the summer break following the program year and for entry into kindergarten.
3. 85 % of parents will view their child's *More at Four* experience as positive.
4. At least 90 % of children at-risk entering kindergarten will have had a formal, educational preschool experience as a four-year-old. [Only to be a measure on full implementation of *More at Four*.]

Evaluation measures for *More at Four* must consider a wide array of factors that affect outcomes for children and the environments in which they receive services. Thus, the evaluation of this initiative must be comprehensive and - to the extent feasible - gather data using a variety of approaches, and access information from a variety of sources, including the child, home, classroom, school and community. The evaluation design and tools must actively seek to address issues of diversity. The evaluation must be both formative (program development) and summative (program effectiveness). To the greatest extent possible, evaluation procedures should build on existing protocol and activities in the *More at Four* programs/classrooms. However, existing evaluation protocol and activities must be carefully examined for applicability

to the population and programs involved in the initiative as well as appropriateness for the purpose of evaluation. To these ends, the evaluation goals for *More at Four* are listed below.

### Evaluation Goals and Design

The evaluation plan for *More at Four* should consider both formative (program implementation) and summative (program impact child outcomes). There are three aspects related to these two evaluation areas.

- Monitoring for program standards and quality: While the actual process of monitoring will not be conducted by the evaluators, information obtained from this aspect of program implementation should be related to evaluation goals for assessing implementation.
- Implementation of the *More at Four* program: The evaluation should consider the implementation process and the extent to which new classrooms are implementing standards and curriculum, factors or barriers that impede implementation, and factors that enhance implementation. Other implementation issues include resources available, other resources used to leverage program implementation, development of transition programs, and others to be determined jointly by the More at Four Office and the evaluators. Status of implementation each year should be reported.
- Impact and outcomes: The evaluation will consider child outcomes in the five domains as noted above and attempt to determine the relationship between program elements/quality and children's skills and growth. It will also consider the systemic impact of the program, to include impact on other pre-kindergarten service delivery systems, the ability of university preparation programs to provide trained teachers, staff development programs, and parent satisfaction. Plans for longer-term outcomes following children over time should be developed.

### Additional Evaluation Considerations

1. All child assessments will be developmentally appropriate.
2. During the start-up phase where children participate in *More at Four* for less than one year, critical success factors may be used as measures of success.
3. In selecting the battery of child assessments, consideration should be given to the work of the Ready for School Goal Team and the N.C. School Readiness Assessment.
4. The evaluation of child progress will include a pre and post assessment of children.
5. The evaluation will identify program features that are critical to the measurable progress of children-at-risk. Some of the features to be examined should include teacher education and experience, the availability and impact of resource staff, class size, teacher-child ratio, program auspice, licensure and accreditation status, family involvement and partnerships, overall program quality (physical environment as well as teacher-child interactions), expenditure per child, curriculum choices, retention and compensation of staff, provision of transportation, and proportion of children at-risk in each classroom..
6. The evaluation will examine the systemic impact of *More at Four* on the child care and Head Start delivery system, the higher education system and the public school system. It is

strongly recommended that the N.C. School Readiness Assessment be expanded, as planned, to include a county-by-county assessment of all N.C. counties over a three year period (while continuing the statewide assessment).

7. Parental assessments of satisfaction and impact will include their assessment of the overall program quality in the services that are provided and their involvement in the program.
8. The evaluation design will include an assessment by teachers of the effectiveness of the *More at Four* program, the curriculum used, their own needs for training and support, the adequacy of compensation, and their willingness to maintain a commitment to working in a *More at Four* program.
9. Both qualitative and quantitative assessment measures may be used.
10. The evaluation design may include data gathered from the use of both sampling and universal assessment techniques of children and programs.
11. To the extent feasible, the evaluation will compare children at-risk participating and not participating in *More at Four* programs.

# **Attachment C**

## **Basic Information for 12 Community Plans**

### **Selected in the First Round of Applications**

	<b>Geographic Area</b>	<b># of Children</b>	<b>Classroom Settings</b> <i>(includes combined settings)</i>
<b>Mecklenburg</b>	Piedmont	54	schools, child care
<b>Orange</b>	Piedmont	100	schools, Head Start, child care
<b>Robeson</b>	Southeast	58	schools, child care
<b>Cumberland</b>	Southeast	112	schools, child care, other
<b>Catawba</b>	W. Piedmont	54	schools, other
<b>Ashe</b>	West	15	schools, child care
<b>Buncombe</b>	West	24	Head Start, child care
<b>Wayne</b>	East	54	schools, Head Start, child care
<b>Region A Partnership</b>	West	103	schools, Head Start, child care
<b>Beaufort</b>	East	72	schools, child care
<b>Guilford</b>	Piedmont	100	schools, Head Start, child care
<b>Hoke</b>	Southeast	90	schools, Head Start

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***[Did not make the cut]***

**New Hanover**  
**Jones**  
**Surry**  
**Granville**  
**Madison**  
**Caswell**  
**Burke**

**More at Four State Funding Allocations \*\***

	# Children	Jan 02 - May 02 Operating Funds	Operating Funds per month/ per child	Start-Up Funds (\$700 per child)	TOTAL
Mecklenburg County	54	\$87,700	\$325	\$37,800	\$125,500
Orange County	100	\$170,806	\$342	\$70,000	\$240,806
Robeson County	58	\$101,618	\$350	\$40,600	\$142,218
Cumberland County	112	\$217,449	\$388	\$78,400	\$295,849
Catawba	54	\$94,500	\$350	\$37,800	\$132,300
Ashe	15	\$24,375	\$325	\$10,500	\$34,875
Buncombe	24	\$39,000	\$325	\$16,800	\$55,800
Wayne	54	\$94,500	\$350	\$37,800	\$132,300
Region A Partnership	106	\$170,680	\$322	\$74,200	\$244,880
Beaufort County	72	\$122,658	\$341	\$50,400	\$173,058
Guilford County	118	\$206,500	\$350	\$82,600	\$289,100
Hoke County	90	\$177,750	\$395	\$63,000	\$240,750
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>857</b>	<b>\$1,507,536</b>		<b>\$599,900</b>	<b>\$2,107,436</b>

\*\* Does not include the local contribution

***More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Program Sites***  
**First Round Grant Recipients 12/20/01**

**Ashe County**

**Administered by the Ashe County School System**

Classroom sites:

Even Start Family Literacy Pre-K Program at Ashe Family Central

**Beaufort County**

**Administered by the Beaufort County Partnership for Children**

Classroom sites:

Eastern Elementary

Chocowinity Primary

Care-O-World Enrichment Center

**Buncombe County**

**Administered by the Buncombe County Partnership for Children**

Classroom sites:

Asheville City Schools Preschool

Bell Elementary School Head Start

Williams Elementary School Head Start

Emma Elementary School Head Start

Johnston Elementary School Head Start

Hominy Valley Elementary School Head Start

Community Child Care Center

**Catawba County**

**Administered by the Catawba County Partnership for Children**

Classroom sites:

South Newton Elementary

Oakwood Elementary

Tyndall Center at Sipe's Orchard Home



## Cumberland County

### **Administered by the Partnership for Children of Cumberland County**

#### Classroom sites:

Manchester Elementary School  
Stedman Primary School  
Lake Rim Elementary School  
Ferguson-Easley Elementary School  
Lewis Chapel Day Care Center  
Wonder Years Child Care and Learning Center  
FTCC Early Childhood Educational Center

## Guilford County

### **Administered by the Guilford County Partnership for Children**

#### Classroom sites:

Tomlinson Elementary  
Erwin Elementary  
Falker Elementary  
Poplar Grove Head Start  
Southside Children's Center of Developmental Day Care  
KIDS, Inc

## Hoke County

### **Administered by the Hoke County School System**

#### Classroom sites:

Rockfish Hoke Elementary  
Scurlock Elementary  
South Hoke Elementary  
Hoke County Head Start

## Mecklenburg County

### **Administered by Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools**

#### Classroom sites:

Highland Renaissance Elementary  
Childcare Network

## Orange County

### **Administered by the Orange County Partnership for Young Children**

#### Classroom sites:

Carrboro Elementary  
Seawell Elementary  
Glenwood Elementary  
Chapel Hill High School  
Carr Court  
Second Baptist  
Lincoln Center  
Pathways Elementary Head Start  
Efland Cheeks Elementary Head Start  
New Hope Elementary Head Start  
Central Elementary Head Start  
Community School for People Under Siz

### **Region A (Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Swain, Macon, Jackson, Haywood)**

#### **Administered by the Region A Partnership for Children**

##### Classroom sites:

Ranger Preschool  
Scott's Creek  
Smoky Mountain Elementary  
A Kid's Place  
Bright Adventures  
New Horizon's II Head Start  
Hayesville CDC  
Elf CDC  
Silver Bluff CDC  
Balsam Road CDC  
St. John's CDC  
Cashiers CDC  
Cherokee Methodist Nursery  
Webster Enterprises CDC  
Morningstar CDC  
Murphy Early Care and Education  
Ranger CDC  
Valley River Extension Learning Center  
Hazelwood Early Care and Education Center  
Hampton School  
Jean's Kid's Place  
Little Hands Playskool  
Haywood Community College CDC  
Tri County Community College CDC

## Robeson County

### **Administered by Public Schools of Robeson County**

#### Classroom sites:

Cottonwood Pre-Elementary

Shining Stars – Bryan

Shining Stars – Pembroke

## Wayne County

### **Administered by Wayne County Partnership for Children**

#### Classroom sites:

Brodgen or Fremont Elementary

Chestnut Street Head Start

Small World Child Care Center