



# Work Cluster Areas and Strengths and Weaknesses of Current System *Birth to Kindergarten*

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NC DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES



**PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA**  
State Board of Education | Department of Public Instruction

# Seven Focus Areas in the Legislation

- Standards and assessments
- Data-driven improvement and outcomes
- Teacher and administrator preparation and effectiveness
- Instruction and environment
- Transitions and continuity
- Family engagement
- Governance and funding



# Standards and Assessment

Using high-quality, developmentally appropriate standards and assessments that:

- 1) address all domains of development and learning
- 2) are aligned from early childhood through early elementary grades
- 3) assess students' strengths
- 4) communicate with families about their children's development and needs
- 5) help teachers, schools, communities and leaders identify the best supports for young children's successful progress

# Standards and Assessment

STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
Well-developed, comprehensive, research-based early learning standards (Foundations for Early Learning and Development) exist	More professional development and coaching needed to support effective implementation of the early learning standards
Kindergarten Entry Assessment domains broadly aligned with Foundations for Early Learning	The alignment is loose and does not connect to professional development across birth through age 8 or shared assessment or instruction practices
NC Pre-K program meet national benchmarks for standards and assessments	Standards and assessments for non-Pre-K programs varies or does not exist
Evaluation of the program has historically shown an impact on outcomes for children enrolled in the program	No formal alignment of standards and assessment or developed data sharing across early childhood settings and K-3

# Data-Driven Improvement and Outcomes

Using quality data to inform effective implementation of strategies to support development and learning, as well as using data to measure progress toward goals for children



- **NC Pathways to Grade-Level Reading** is a public-private partnership that has developed a set of proposed, shared “measures of success” to track how NC is meeting whole-child outcomes that lead to reading proficiency by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade

# Data-Driven Improvement and Outcomes

STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
New Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) can provide data snapshots of how families are using services	Not all program data is currently integrated into ECIDS (ie. Head Start, DPI, vital records, Medicaid)
Significant demographic and eligibility data on children and families is collected through subsidy and NC Pre-K data systems	Data that is collected does not include all children in early childhood programs (i.e. nothing for private-pay children)
Data on early childhood programs' levels of quality is collected	
Evaluation of the program has historically shown an impact on outcomes for children enrolled in the program	No developed data sharing and reporting across early childhood settings and K-3

# Teacher and Administrator Preparation and Effectiveness

Ensuring higher education, continuing education, and other professional development programs and strategies are effectively preparing teachers and administrators to meet the specific developmental and educational needs of birth through 3rd grade children



# Teacher and Administrator Preparation and Effectiveness

STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
<p>Common course catalogue across all 58 community colleges in the early childhood degree program and over half of the schools are nationally accredited</p>	<p>Remaining non-accredited community colleges have barriers to achieve (limited staff to manage, funding, not supported by local administration).</p>
<p>Over 60% of lead teachers have an AAS or higher and 60% of directors have a BS or higher</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum requirements for a teacher is a high school diploma and 1 community college course</li> <li>• Minimum requirements for a director is a high school diploma and 3 community college courses</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average early childhood teacher wage in private setting is \$10.75</li> <li>• Median starting NC Pre-K teacher wage in private settings is \$9.50</li> <li>• Median starting NC Pre-K teacher wage in public schools is \$17.91</li> <li>• Average director wage in private settings is \$16.00</li> </ul>
	<p>20-30% turnover of teachers and directors due to low compensation and benefits</p>



# Instruction and Environment

Ensuring implementation of high-quality, aligned curriculum, instructional practices, and learning environments that support how young children learn and develop, including play, exploration, movement, and positive interactions with teachers and peers



# Instruction and Environment

STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
Requirement to implement state-approved curricula in classrooms serving 4 year-olds in NC Pre-K and 4 and 5 Star centers	No requirement for use of any curricula with children of other ages, or programs with lower star levels
B-Kindergarten Licensed teachers in Pre-K classrooms and Developmental Day programs have coaches who mentor them and evaluate their instructional practices	Supports related to instructional practices in non-NC Pre-K classrooms are inconsistent and based on local funding/capacity

# Transitions and Continuity

Ensuring effective transitions for young children from year to year, including from preschool experiences into kindergarten and through the early grades



# Transitions and Continuity

STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) provides an opportunity for more intentional collaboration and coordination between a local school system and early childhood programs	No consistent transition practices across the state and minimal coordination between early childhood programs and kindergarten classrooms
	No requirements for transition plans/practices across early childhood programs and K-3
	No shared assessment tools or data sharing platform across early childhood programs and K-3

# Family Engagement

Implementing strategies in early learning programs and elementary schools that ensure that families and early educators are true partners in supporting children's learning



# Family Engagement

STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
Federal Head Start standards provide a framework for effective family engagement that could be replicated in other early childhood programs	Non-Head Start programs do not have similar funding structures to support to facilitate the same level of family engagement
NC Pre-K and Developmental Day programs have licensing standards related to meaningful family engagement	All other 2 to 5 Star Rated License programs have minimal family engagement requirements

# Governance and Funding

Establishing state governance that supports a coordinated/integrated birth through 3rd grade system of early education

Securing a level of funding to support the children's development proficiency



# Governance and Funding

STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
Child care licensing, child care subsidy, NC Pre-K, Early Intervention for infants and toddlers, Home Visiting, WIC and SNAP in DHHS with increased collaboration and development of Early Childhood Action Plan	Not all 4 year old classrooms participate in NC Pre-K
B-3 Council established	No developed goals and shared work in any key content areas of B-3 Council
Funding has increased for early learning programs at both the state and federal level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 35,000+ on the waiting list for child care subsidy</li><li>• 62,300 estimated children eligible for Pre-K and funding for slots to serve only 28,612 {46% of eligible children}</li></ul>