



# North Carolina Essentials for Childhood

## December 2017 Update

North Carolina Essentials for Childhood is a statewide collaborative initiative to prevent child maltreatment and promote child and family well-being. Using the principles of collective impact, the Essentials for Childhood leadership and working groups are working to implement the [recommendations](#) of the 2014 NCIOM Task Force on Essentials for Childhood. More information about the project can be found [here](#).

***Happy holidays to our partners and supporters!  
Thank you for all you do for North Carolina's children!***

## Investing in Early Childhood: A New Strategic Focus of the Duke Endowment

In October, the Duke Endowment announced a new strategic focus: increasing investments in ensuring nurturing and supportive environments for children in their earliest years (age 0-8). Drawing on research from experts including Jack Shonkoff, head of Harvard University's Center for the Developing Child, the Duke Endowment has identified emerging data on the ways in which toxic stress and other adverse childhood experiences affect early brain development, and the importance of investing in programs that prevent and/or mitigate these effects.

This strategic focus will include special collaborative initiatives, increased investments in early childhood programs across existing program areas, and increased work with communities on programs serving children age 0-8. In addition, the Duke Endowment strategy includes improved alignment and coordination of investments to improve grant making for early childhood programs.

Essentials for Childhood is excited to see this new strategic emphasis and to continue work with the Duke Endowment to ensure safe, stable, and nurturing relationships and environments for North Carolina's children.

Read more [here](#) on the Duke Endowment and their investments in early childhood.

## Strategic Planning & Backbone Activities Update

### CDC Reverse Site Visit

Michelle Ries, Adam Zolotor (NCIOM), Catherine Joyner (Division of Public Health), Kristin O'Connor (Division of Social Services), and Meghan Shanahan (UNC), will attend the Essentials for Childhood Reverse Site Visit, hosted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on January 25-26, 2018. The reverse site visit brings together representatives from Essentials for Childhood collective impact initiatives in several states and provides opportunities for participants to discuss their successes and challenges with the implementation of the Essentials for Childhood collective impact framework.

### CDC Support and TA

The NCIOM team and steering committee members continue to work with our CDC team to assess ongoing strengths and weaknesses of this collective impact initiative. We have participated in webinars on child/family services messaging, collective impact governance and infrastructure, and have received technical assistance from the CDC, as well as feedback and shared learnings from other Essentials funded states.

## Work Group Updates and Additional Activities

### Evidence-based Programs Work Group

Co-chairs: Jeff Quinn (Director of Community Resources, Durham Connects, Duke Center for Child and Family Policy) & Tony Troop (Program Manager, Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program, Division of Public Health, Children & Youth Branch, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services)

The Evidence-based Programs Work Group is working to increase support for aligning evaluation and RFP processes across agencies and organizations, starting with a home visiting program pilot project.

The work group is currently focusing on assisting the Department of Health and Human Services with the development of a plan to implement Medicaid coverage for home visiting programs for pregnant women and families with young children (NCGA SB429 2017). The group plans to convene a group of funders for home visiting programs in spring 2018 to further inform the development of alignment strategies.

### **Trauma-Informed Practices Work Group**

Chair: George (Tripp) Ake, PhD, Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Duke University Medical Center and an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry in the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Medicine

This work group focused on trauma-informed schools and initiatives to support learning about trauma and its impact on children and development within school and early care and education settings. The basic goals of the group are: 1) sharing innovative practices; 2) reaching consensus on language about trauma; 3) producing a comprehensive literature review to inform the conversation; 4) determining next steps for dissemination and development of evaluation process for trauma-informed practices in school and early care and education settings.

Over the course of 2 meetings in Fall 2017, we convened approximately 30 individuals from schools, administration/state agencies, philanthropy, and other related fields.

At the October 5 meeting, Catherine Joyner and Michelle Ries introduced Essentials for Childhood and goals of working group; heard presentations of and discussed ongoing initiatives addressing trauma in school and early education settings; and begun discussion of challenges of shared vocabulary on trauma, adverse childhood experiences, and their impacts.

At the November 9 meeting, the work group reviewed Essentials for Childhood ongoing activities and goals of working group; gained understanding of work underway in early education to address trauma and toxic stress; and developed a shared understanding of issues pertaining to evaluation and dissemination of trauma-informed practices in school and early education settings.

Next steps for the group include connection with the statewide trauma-informed state work group, and informing NCIOM literature review on trauma-informed practices in public school and early education.

### **Pathways Data Gaps Analysis**

NCIOM and Essentials for Childhood partners have been involved with the North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation's Pathways to Grade-Level Reading initiative since its inception. To better understand the current state of data on the Pathways measures, NCIOM will be convening a group to identify gaps in data and identify necessary actions and resources to begin data collection, culminating in recommendations to the Data Advisory Council.

More on NCECF and Pathways to Grade Level Reading here: <http://buildthefoundation.org/pathways/> (additional information in Partner Updates below)

Please visit our [website](#) for additional information about the work groups' mission, vision, and key strategies.

## Partner Updates

### Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina

Cumberland County became the first county in the state to complete a [Child Abuse Prevention Plan](#), endorsed by their county commissioners. The plan was built by SOAR Committee (Strengthening Families, Provide Optimal Child Development and Reduce Child Abuse and Neglect) with facilitation and guidance from Prevent Child Abuse NC.

The plan was developed using a collective impact approach engaging different sectors including parents, DSS, public health, military, faith community, evidence based parenting program practitioners, early childhood educators and more to build a community plan that reduces child maltreatment and creates the safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments required



for families to thrive.

### North Carolina Partnership for Children/Smart Start

#### Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Expands Across NC

Smart Start and Dolly Parton's Imagination Library are working together to bring books to North Carolina's youngest children through funding provided by the North Carolina General Assembly. During the 2017 legislative session, North Carolina state lawmakers included \$3.5 million in the first year of the budget and \$7 million in the second year for the Smart Start network to offer free books through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to children across the state. Imagination Library is a program created to foster a love of reading among children aged birth to five through the gift of a specially selected book delivered right to their home each month.

"I'm thrilled that my Imagination Library is going to be offered to so many children in North Carolina" stated Dolly Parton, the founder of Imagination Library. "Working together we can help children dream more, learn more, care more, and be more."

"Our state leaders clearly understand how important an early love of reading is for each child's success in school and later in life," stated Cindy Watkins, the President of the North Carolina Partnership for Children that oversees the Smart Start network, "Smart Start works in every community to ensure young children have a strong foundation for starting kindergarten - now we can offer this important literacy program to that critical work."

The initial launch will cover 85 percent of NC zip codes, expanding to cover every county by the second year. You can learn more, check availability, and register a child by visiting <http://www.smartstart.org/dolly-partons-imagination-library/>

### **Pathways Gathering Community Input**

14 Smart Start Local Partnerships hosted or co-hosted community conversations across the state in late August and September to provide a formal feedback loop from local providers serving children birth through age eight to inform Pathways state level planning process. They will host a second round of community conversations next spring. Pathways is bringing diverse state and local stakeholders and leaders together to create a common vision, shared measures of success, and coordinated strategies for a whole child approach to support optimal development beginning with a healthy birth. Pathways is an initiative of the NC Early Childhood Foundation in collaboration with NC Child, The North Carolina Partnership for Children, and BEST NC. To learn more about the Pathways Initiative and become a partner, go to: <http://buildthefoundation.org/pathways/>

### **Pathways to Grade-Level Reading**

Through the collective efforts of the partners and communities involved in the initiative, Pathways is building a robust set of tools that organizations, agencies, and communities can use to advance their work:

- Resources regarding key measures of success for Pathways can be found [here](#). Use the Pathways Measures of Success Framework to determine how your organization can align with the Pathways Measures of Success.
- A compilation of working papers addressing the 12 Pathways measures and why they matter for third grade reading can be found [here](#).
- COMING SOON! Local provider input from the 14 community conversations held across the state in August and September, as well as a document entitled "Not About Me, Without Me: Raising Parent Voice to Guide Early Childhood Policy," a meta-analysis of 18 parent surveys, focus groups, and meetings from across the state.

### **Pathways Design Team Update**

The Pathways Design Teams are leading the way, working towards powerful strategies that move the needle on Pathways' prioritized outcomes, reduce disparities and improve equity. Each Design Team has held two meetings to

consider outcomes connected to the measures in the Pathways Framework, review current assets and opportunities for improvement in North Carolina, and participate in a racial equity training to apply an equity lens to the Pathways work. Click [here for more on the Design Teams](#).

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## From the NCIOM:

We are pleased to announce the launch of our new [Interactive County Map](#), which features data on several health and well-being indicators for each North Carolina county. The map can be filtered to show a statewide comparison for four health topics: uninsured adults, poverty, infant mortality, and heart disease.

### Contact

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### Stay Connected

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### North Carolina Essentials for Childhood:

Ensuring a coordinated, comprehensive system to support child and family well-being in North Carolina.