

NC Pathways to Grade-Level Reading Project
Data Action Team
Meeting Two Summary Report

The NC Pathways to Grade-Level Reading Project Data Action Team met for the second time on February 25th from 10 am-2 pm at RTI International in Research Triangle Park.

All of the materials and presentations shared at the meeting are online at <http://buildthefoundation.org/data-action-team/>.

Purpose of the Data Action Team

The Data Action Team was co-convened by the [North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation](#), [NC Child, The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc.](#), and excelleNCe (an initiative of [BEST NC](#)) to identify and recommend – in collaboration with the larger Stakeholder Group – a set of population-level measures of success that impact third grade reading success. These measures will be whole-child, begin at birth, and align with the goals in Lisbeth Schorr’s [Pathway to Children Ready for School and Succeeding at Third Grade](#).

The Data Action Team will engage in a landscape survey of existing national birth-to-eight indicators and indicators being used by NC state-level organizations and select a limited number of measures of success that best suit NC’s context based on our state’s strengths and needs. The Stakeholder Group will be kept abreast of the Data Action Team’s work, and their feedback will be solicited on a regular basis as the Data Action Team moves through the process of selecting the measures of success.

Data Action Team Membership

As defined by the shared [Data Action Team Description](#), Data Action Team members include early childhood experts from inside and outside state government, academia, service providers and parents, and represented the Health, Family/Community, and Education sectors. It is a phenomenal group! *See Appendix A for a list of the Data Action Team members.*

Data Action Team Meeting Two Summary

Welcome and Reminder of the Data Action Team Goals and Process

Tracy Zimmerman (NC Early Childhood Foundation) started the meeting by welcoming the team and reminding everyone that the goal of the Data Action Team is to engage in a landscape survey of existing national birth-to-eight indicators and those indicators being used by NC state-level organizations and ultimately select a limited number of measures of success that best suit NC’s context based on our state’s strengths and needs.

Tracy then shared an overview of the Data Action Team’s process, highlighting goals for each meeting, leading up to a Stakeholder Summit in May where the final measures of success will be prioritized. The group also reflected on the [Guiding Principles](#) and how they applied to this meeting.

Consideration of Stakeholder Group Feedback

Next, Tracy led the group in an exercise to consider and react to the [feedback](#) provided by the larger stakeholder group to two questions, posed after the first Data Action Team meeting:

- The Data Action Team spent considerable time discussing the term "high-quality" and the need to have a common definition. How do you define "high-quality" in your field/agency?
- What is the appetite in your agency for data sharing? What obstacles have you encountered in the past around data-sharing? What are your concerns? What data from your agency would you like to see shared?

The group noted that "evidence-based" was mentioned several times in the stakeholder feedback around high-quality, and there was a rousing discussion about data-sharing. Comments around data sharing included:

- Everyone wants to share, but there are always security concerns.
- You hear that there are statutes that don't allow data sharing, but when you actually read through the statutes, it's often the interpretation.
- There may be other reasons not to share the data than legal concerns. Privacy is a big issue, and sometimes you have to go slowly and really consider what data is needed.
- We need to think about how to communicate data and how to use data better with parents and service providers. People would use data if they knew how.
- Sharing data also is connected to data quality. There is a growing acknowledgement that many of our data are not good quality, so there is a reluctance to share them.

Meeting Two Plan

Tracy explained that the large Education group has been divided into two groups to make the brainstorming and indicator generation smoother.

Finally, Tracy laid out the plan for the day:

- Brainstorm – What is missing from the lists of indicators brainstormed last meeting?
- Filter – Eliminate indicators that don't meet a team-generated set of data criteria (see next exercise) and start the Data Development Agenda - the list of data indicators that are needed but not currently collected in North Carolina.
- Source – Determine sources for the data indicators and assign responsibility for pulling the NC data for each indicator.

Determining Data Criteria

Laila Bell (NC Child) and Kim McCombs-Thornton (The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc/Smart Start) then led the group through an exercise to create a set of core data criteria through which to filter the brainstormed indicators. The team worked in small groups and together to come up with a list of basic criteria that indicators need to meet in order to be considered. The final list of core criteria is available [here](#).

Small Group Work

Mandy Ableidinger (NC Early Childhood Foundation) explained the resources the group would be working with during the meeting to further brainstorm, filter and assign data sources to their criteria.

After lunch, team members broke up into small groups, based on their area of expertise (Health, Family/Community and Education) and spent the remainder of the meeting working through the process outlined above for the indicators under their goal areas:

- They **brainstormed additional indicators**, where needed.
- They **filtered indicators** through the data criteria established earlier in the meeting and eliminated indicators that didn't meet the criteria or fit better under a different goal area.
- They **moved indicators to the Data Development Agenda** that they determined are needed, but that are not currently tracked in North Carolina.
- They **determined the correct data source** for each indicator and, where possible, **assigned a member of the team to pull the NC data** for each indicator.

Meeting Two Wrap Up

Tracy brought the group back together for a few minutes at the end of the meeting to share Aha! moments and to discuss how the process felt and how much each group was able to work through. Team members shared that it was a lot to get through in one meeting, and that while some groups were ready to start collecting and considering the NC data for their indicators, other groups needed more time to fully understand the indicators, filter them based on the data criteria, and ensure that nothing important was left out.

The Meeting 2 presentation is online [here](#).

Next Steps for the NC Pathways to Grade-Level Reading Initiative

The goal of the NC Pathways to Grade-Level Reading Project is to create partnerships among the state's early learning and education, public agency, policy, philanthropic and business leaders to define a common vision, shared measures of success and coordinated strategies that support children's optimal development beginning at birth.

After the Data Action Team develops a limited list of priority measures of success, next steps for the project include:

- Disaggregating the data for each priority measure of success.
- Understanding the needs of those who shape children's early environments.
- Identifying immediate ways to support alignment and progress on the measures of success.
- Developing a results-based action plan.
- Promoting best practice and policy to advance the measures of success.
- Measuring progress.

Appendix A: Data Action Team Members

Gary Ander, NC Infant Mental Health Association
Laila Bell, NC Child
Jessica Murrell Berryman, Parent Representative and Business Owner, Lango Kids RTP
Brandy Bynum, Rural Forward NC, Foundation for Health Leadership & Innovation
Anna Carter, Child Care Services Association
KC Elander, Department of Public Instruction
Kelly Evans, Duke Center for Child and Family Policy
Paula Henderson, SAS
Brisa Hernandez, Carolinas HealthCare System
Jennifer Johnson, NC Division of Child Development and Early Education
Sandy Johnson, Early Learning Teacher
Mary Jones, Principal, Bailey Elementary, Nash-Rocky Mount Schools
Jennifer Mattie, Parent Representative
Kelly Maxwell, Child Trends
Priscilla Jacobs Maynor, Ph.D., imaginED
Mark McDaniel, UNC Center for Community Capital
Karen Mills, Johnston County Partnership for Children
Tazra Mitchell, Budget and Tax Center, NC Justice Center
Nicole Gardner-Neblett, Ph.D., FPG Child Development Institute, UNC Chapel Hill
Amy Hawn Nelson, Ph.D., UNC Charlotte Urban Institute
Kristin O'Connor, NC Division of Social Services
Chris Payne, Ph.D., Center for Youth, Family, and Community Partnerships, UNC Greensboro
Ellen Peisner-Feinberg, Ph.D., FPG Child Development Institute, UNC Chapel Hill
Olivia Rice, RTI International
Katie Rosanbalm, Ph.D., Duke Center for Child and Family Policy
Meghan Shanahan, Ph.D., UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health
Terry Stoops, Ph.D., John Locke Foundation
Kim McCombs-Thornton, Ph.D., North Carolina Partnership for Children
Kathleen Jones Vessey, NC State Center for Health Statistics
Marvel Andrea Welch, Ph.D. Candidate in Public Health at Walden University