

Am Emerging Overview of North Carolina's Early Childhood Professional Development System

Over the last two decades there has been increasing interest in learning about the experiences of children in early care and education settings: what settings are good and how early care and education influences later school performance and behavioral patterns. In particular, we have learned a great deal in recent years about the benefits and cost of high-quality early care and education services, and how to improve programs to meet the needs of all children. This has increased the need to shift from scattershot training to intentional forms of professional development to build and retain a high qualified workforce. Today, like other occupations, education is the currency with which the early childhood professional development system is being constructed.

Defining Professional Development

Professional development refers to a combination of education, training and continuing education. Well-designed professional development includes a broad range of activities and audiences:

- it benefits providers in all settings;
- it responds to the needs of Early Educators¹ at all levels, from entry-level assistants to multi-site administrators;
- it spans a continuum of information and format, from short-term workshop-style training to college-level education to continuing education.²
- It is focused on services that are provided to children ages birth to twelve in early care and education and school age settings.

Defining an Early Childhood Professional Development System

An ecpd system is a comprehensive approach to providing professional development opportunities. When an effective ecpd system has been built:

- Vision exists to serve all those working with children in all settings serving children birth to twelve.
- Core knowledge is delineated, a set of information and skills that all providers need to know is developed, and education and training is offered to make sure that this entire body of knowledge is transmitted.
- Requirements and incentives for providers to pursue professional development opportunities are clear.
- A continuum of education and training for all providers, from entry-level to experienced, exists.
- A system is in place to make sure that the education and training are of high quality.
- A process is developed to assess what education and training providers in a community need;
- Information about education and training opportunities is widely available.
- Information about what opportunities providers have already pursued is available for monitoring and planning purposes.
- Education and training opportunities are offered at times, in places and in languages and formats providers can successfully access.
- Increased knowledge and competence are assessed and rewarded by increasing compensation.
- Education and training are well-funded so that providers are able to attend, regardless of personal financial situations.³

In addition, a well-drawn system builds on base education and articulates prior learning (education and training) into the professional development pathway for the individual; supporting forward progress toward personal education goals without redundancy and continuing education is provided by highly qualified staff.

We also know from three studies of high-quality early education programs (from the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s) that early childhood care and education has long lasting outcomes for children, that produce economic benefits – when teachers are educated and compensated.

North Carolina's ECPD System

In NC, the early childhood professional development system is composed of many partners working together to weave a network of services based on identified needs and funding criterion. Four landmark North Carolina

¹ Defined as those working directly with, working on the behalf of or intending to work with children ages birth to twelve.

² Planning for Professional Development in Child Care. NC Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development, www.ncchildcare.org

³ Adapted list from Genser, A. (1999). *Kicking off the Dialogue: Elements of a Career Development System for School-Age Care*, Boston, MA: Center for Career Development in Early Care and Education.

Am Emerging Overview of North Carolina's Early Childhood Professional Development System

publications about the importance of and elements of an ecpd system have led to the NC ecpd regional planning process, which will begin in January 2010.

► In 2001, the NC Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development, NC Partnership for Children and NC Division of Child Development collaborated on the development of a guide to best practices and resources in planning for professional Development in Child Care. This would be one of the first publications in the state to promote dialogue and planning around workforce professional development needs and supports.

Planning for Professional Development in Child Care

<http://www.ncchildcare.org/best.pdf>

► In 2005, a study of the early childhood systems was conducted that created a roadmap for improvements in the professional development and compensation of the early childhood workforce. The report assessed six policy areas:

1. Quality Early Care and Education Settings
2. Professional and Workforce Development
3. Informed Families, Informed Public
4. Governance and Coordination
5. Accountability and Results Orientation
6. Adequate Early Childhood Financing

NC Early Childhood Systems Study

www.childcareservicesassociation.org/_downloads/Systems_Study.2005.pdf

Implications of the study for the early childhood workforce include recommendations to:

- Require business training for all child care center directors.
- Require each center to have an Instructional Leader with a 4-year degree in Early Childhood Education.
- Require center-based teachers to have an Associate's degree in Early Childhood Education.
- Implement a single statewide salary supplement with a local option to enhance the amounts of the supplements.
- Build on the existing child care resource and referral system to cover the entire state with effective services and information for parents, child care programs, and communities.

► In 2007, the Early Childhood Leadership & Policy Network released a policy paper to inform constituents about the role of early childhood professional development (education and training) in enhancing child care quality, to share national and state trends and provide policy recommendations made. This brief supports the creation of a professional development plan for North Carolina that pieces together the many initiatives that support the quality of early learning environments as well as the many efforts made by teachers to improve their practices. Policy and research directions outlined in the paper include:

- Examination of teacher education programs in relation to early learning standards.
- Supportive policies for teachers to access education and training.
- Improved articulation between 2- and 4-year institutions of higher education.
- Supportive work environments as well as salary and benefits tied to teacher qualifications.
- A continued focus on increasing the required level of pre-service education.
- Examination of the measurement of teacher performance.

Early Childhood Professional Development: Creating a

Plan to Support Child Care Quality

<http://www.uncg.edu/hdf/programs/ECLPN%20policy%20paper%20no.%20105.pdf>

► In 2008, the National Association for the Education of Young Children's Workforce Systems Initiative released a policy blueprint for state early childhood professional development systems. The policy paper and support

NAEYC Policy Blueprint Brief

http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/policy/ecwsi/Workforce_Designs_Brief.pdf

Am Emerging Overview of North Carolina's Early Childhood Professional Development System

materials were created because qualified and well-compensated professionals are essential to ensuring high-quality early childhood education programs and state policies and financing of the professional development system have a significant impact on the recruitment, quality, and retention of early childhood professionals.

The essential policy areas include: professional standards, career pathways, articulation, advisory structure, data and financing. The following four principles are recommended for use in reflecting prior to the creation or change of a policy:

- Does this policy increase integration among the sectors?
- Does it include quality assurances?
- Does it support diversity, inclusion, and access?
- Does it increase compensation parity?

Collaboration & Planning

Ongoing and grant-funded efforts are underway in North Carolina at the state level within agencies and organizations as well as efforts focused specifically on professional development, but are not limited to:

NC Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development (www.ncicdp.org) is a non-profit organization that has been connecting partners and sectors and developing strategies since 1993. The Institute works to leverage resources to build a comprehensive early childhood professional development system and implements the NC Early Educator Certification system. Several Task Groups meet regularly and forums are provided throughout the year to share information and gather input. The Institute will utilize the 18 regional action plans to develop a state early childhood professional development plan by October 2010.

NC Early Childhood Regional Planning Project is a time-limited project being funded by the NC Division of Child Development and implemented by the NC Child Care Resource and Referral Council in partnership with the NC Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development. The project is designed to engage stakeholders in developing regional early childhood professional development plans (see www.ncicdp.org, click on research and resources),

North Carolina Head Start Collaboration Office (<http://www.osr.nc.gov/HeadStart/index.asp>) is housed in the NC Office of School Readiness through a grant from the federal Office of Head Start, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Head Start supports collaboration through grants to states to create a visible partnership at the state level to support the development of multi-agency and public/private partnerships that will enhance early childhood services for children and families. The state's Head Start Training and Technical Assistance Plan is managed by STG International (http://www.stginternational.com/STG2/Head_Start-Mission_Synergy.asp) as of August 2009. This work is conducted via a cadre of content and technical assistance specialists in state-based offices and regional Head Start locations across the country. In addition to conducting individual and cluster trainings, STG experts routinely help grantees meet Federal regulations; implement monitoring and self-assessment processes; and foster collaboration between the Office of Head Start, state-based early childhood partners, and other training and technical assistance (T/TA) professionals.

North Carolina Interagency Coordinating Council (<http://www.ncei.org/ei/ncicc.html>) is a state mandated body with members appointed by the governor to advise and guide the NC Departments of Health and Human Services and Public Instruction and other agencies regarding services for children with special needs birth through 5 years old. The NCICC includes a subcommittee which focuses on professional education. This committee created a crosswalk of professional qualifications for personnel working with children birth to 5 which is included in the notebook and can be found at <http://www.ncei.org/ei/pdf/ProfessionalEducationPersonnelDocuments2007-09.pdf>.

National Professional Development Center on Inclusion (NPDCI) is a grant-funded project based at the UNC-Chapel Hill's FPG Institute. Center staff work with states to ensure that early childhood teachers are prepared to educate and care for young children with disabilities in settings with their typically developing peers. North Carolina is being served with these resources through a community of practice model. (<http://community.fpg.unc.edu/npdci/state-cop>).

Am Emerging Overview of North Carolina's Early Childhood Professional Development System

Early Childhood Advisory Councils are being set up across the nation. In North Carolina, the development of the Council is just getting underway. The Councils are required by Section 642B of the *Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007*, which mandates that the Governor of the State shall designate or establish a council to serve as the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care for children from birth to school entry. The Governor may designate an existing entity in the State to serve as the State Advisory Council, and shall appoint representatives to the State Advisory Council at the Governor's discretion. The legislation indicates that the federal government will award grants to support the work of Councils, which would be required to have certain members and work on specific tasks. Under the legislation, it appears that states are required to create Councils regardless of whether the federal government provides funding. For more information visit <http://www.educationcounsel.com/files/Build%20Initiative%20-%20SECAC.pdf>.

North Carolina Center for Afterschool Programs (www.nccap.net) seeks to influence policy and serve as a catalyst, convener, and clearinghouse for afterschool programs through advocacy, professional development, and quality improvement. A professional development workgroup was formed in 2008 to draft competencies and continues to work to grow professional development opportunities and resources for those working with school age children.

The Workforce

Recent economic impact estimates that \$1.77 billion is generated in NC each year from the child care industry; producing 47,000 jobs.⁴ An estimated 35,000 Early Educators work directly with children, another 5,000 administer programs, and between 5,000 and 10,000 provide training, teach and research in colleges and universities, provide support services to Early Educators working in a variety of settings and support early care and education and school age programs. According to CLASP, a total of 1,433 teachers worked in Head Start programs in 2003. The number of Early Educators working with school age children in licensed and unlicensed care is unknown at this time. School age personnel work between 4 and 60 hours each week, based on their role. T.E.A.C.H.® Early Childhood scholarships are used in several states to support increase both education and compensation of the school age workforce. In 2003, a North Carolina child care workforce study reported that most teachers worked only with children ages birth to five (93%), whereas 4% worked with school-agers only and 3% worked with all ages.⁵

Published compensation data show that compensation varies based on role and the setting in which an Early Educator works. According to NACCRRRA⁶, the average salary for child care providers in 2007 was \$19,030. In 2008 the average salary increased only by \$60 to \$19,090, with hourly pay reported at \$9.18; up one cent from 2007. According to CLASP, the average salary for a Head Start teacher was \$23,177 in 2008.⁷ The minimum compensation for a More at Four teacher with 0 to 1 year of experience working in a non-public school program was \$26,260 - \$26,680 and may include salary, salary plus health OR retirement benefits or salary plus health AND retirement benefits (*based on 05-06 NCDPI Teacher Salary Schedule*).⁸ A licensed public school teacher, with 0 to 1 year of experience working in North Carolina is scheduled to earn \$30,430 over a 10-month period.⁹ To view a current directory of early childhood careers and education and compensation levels may be downloaded from http://www.childcareservices.org/_downloads/CareersInEarlyChildhoodGuide_NC.pdf.

Workforce turnover rates for those working directly with young children vary based on program auspice (i.e. center, home, Head Start, etc.) and the types of supports provided. For example, those working in a regulated program and receiving a salary supplement through Child Care WAGES® (<http://www.childcareservices.org/ps/wage.html>) had turnover rate of only 15% in North Carolina; an overall significant improvement compared to the 31% full time teacher turnover rate in our state prior to the implementation of WAGES¹⁰. In 2008, Head Start programs also reported staff turnover at a rate of 15%.¹¹

⁴ <http://www.ncsmartstart.org/econimpact/NCEIR08HiRes.pdf>

⁵ Working in Child Care in North Carolina, Child Care Services Association, 2003. http://www.childcareservices.org/_downloads/NC2003wfreport.pdf, page 6

⁶ <http://www.naccrra.org/randd/child-care-workforce/what-providers-earn>All data obtained from the 2007 and 2008 Occupational Employment Statistics Survey, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U. S. Department of Labor. The BLS defines child care workers as those who "attend to children at schools, businesses, private households, and child care institutions" and "perform a variety of tasks, such as dressing, feeding, bathing, and overseeing play". It is important to note that some family child care providers are excluded in the numbers because they are self-employed and report their income differently. The definition also excludes preschool teachers and teacher assistants.

⁷ <http://www.ncheadstart.org/downloads/headstartdata2008nc.pdf> This average includes all programs in the state, including part-day programs, programs that operate for a short period of time such as Migrant and Seasonal Programs, and programs that may only operate for part of a week. Therefore, the range of teacher salaries may vary greatly throughout the state.

⁸ <http://www.osr.nc.gov/MoreFour/pdf/MAFRequirements2009-10.pdf>, pages 6-4 to 6-6

⁹ <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/fbs/finance/salary/schedules/2009-10schedules.pdf>

¹⁰ Child Care WAGES® Project Statewide Final Report Fiscal Year 2008/2009

¹¹ <http://www.ncheadstart.org/downloads/headstartdata2008nc.pdf>

Am Emerging Overview of North Carolina's Early Childhood Professional Development System

School age staff annual turnover rate varies widely -- estimated at between as low as 30%¹² to as high as 100% for positions that often provide only part-time work. Results from a recent survey found that nearly 80% of youth workers are satisfied with their jobs, but low wages significantly impact the high turn over rate in this field.¹³

Professional Development Requirements

The provision of early care and education and school age services are provided in a variety of settings in North Carolina for both typically and atypically developing children ages birth to twelve. Professional development requirements for staff vary based on where you work and the funding stream that supports your position.

a. Facilities Regulated by the NC Division of Child Development

The NC Division of Child Development seeks to implement quality standards, increase access for families, and collaborate to promote enhanced service delivery of care and education across the state.¹⁴ As of June 2009, 8,767 regulated programs served 267,157 children (shift 1 care only). A total of 87,649 children were supported by subsidy dollars.¹⁵ A total of 76,908 children ages 5 to twelve are included in the total number of children served in 3,068 licensed programs that provide regulated afterschool and out-of-school services. It is also reported that 12% (179,874) of North Carolina's K-12 children participate in afterschool programs, including 24,564¹⁶ children in federally and state supported programs. Education standards for personnel working in regulated programs in North Carolina can be found at:
http://ncchildcare.dhhs.state.nc.us/providers/pv_sn2_hpae.asp#Education Standards.

b. Head Start Programs

Figures from the 2008 PIR Profile of Head Start in North Carolina show that over 23,000 children were served by 1,433 teachers in programs operated by 19 grantees.¹⁷ A total of 56,425 teachers work in Head Start across the nation.¹⁸ Education requirements can be found in the resource notebook. A catalog of distance learning resources is available for Head Start staff through the US Administration of Children & Families' Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center. (<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/>, click on Professional Development).

c. More at Four Pre-K Programs

The NC Office of School Readiness oversees the implementation of the state's public preK program. Staff working in More at Four classrooms must meet certain education criteria, based on the setting in which they are employed and the role they fulfill in the program. See section 6 of this website for details: <http://www.osr.nc.gov/MoreFour/pdf/MAFRequirements2009-10.pdf>.

d. Smart Start PBIS

Local partnership performance is measured in part through the Performance-Based Incentive System (PBIS). PBIS is an annual performance evaluation system designed to ensure an objective evaluation of Smart Start outcomes and to enable the NCPC to report statewide results. Requirements in the area of staff education and training are available in the resource notebook by topic area and results can be viewed at <http://www.smartstart-nc.org/about/teacherresults.htm>, in their 2009 annual report and in county sheets which will be released on a date to be determined in 2010.

e. Early Intervention Services

Early intervention is a term that often is used to describe specific agencies, programs, services, and resources. In North Carolina, early intervention refers to the system of services provided by many different agencies and programs for children birth to five and their families. This comprehensive, interagency system is called Together We Grow¹⁹. There are two parts of Together We Grow - the Infant-Toddler Program for children birth to three and the Preschool Program for children ages three to five. The North Carolina Interagency Coordinating Council is an advisory group to both programs, and focuses on the birth to five age range.

¹² Room to Grow: Tapping the After-School Workforce Potential, 2009 <http://www.tascorp.org/content/document/detail/2818/>

¹³ NIOST <http://www.niost.org/pdf/factsheet2009.pdf>

¹⁴ http://ncchildcare.dhhs.state.nc.us/general/mb_aboutus.asp

¹⁵ http://ncchildcare.dhhs.state.nc.us/general/mb_snapshot.asp, downloaded 1/15/10

¹⁶ NC Center for Afterschool Programs

¹⁷ <http://www.ntheadstart.org/downloads/headstartdata2008nc.pdf>

¹⁸ <http://www.clasp.org/admin/site/publications/files/headstartdata2008us.pdf>

¹⁹ http://www.osr.nc.gov/_pdf/ECInteragencyAgreement.pdf

Am Emerging Overview of North Carolina's Early Childhood Professional Development System

The Infant-Toddler Program (ITP) (<http://www.ncei.org/ei/itp.html>) is a variety of agencies working together to provide early intervention services for children ages birth to three who have special needs and their families. The total number of Early Educators working with children with special needs in this program was not known at the time of publication. An online orientation to early intervention is provided <http://www.ncei.org/ei/onlinetraining/Elonlinetraining.pdf> and the ITP administers a credentialing program²⁰, the Infant-Toddler Personnel Certification.

The Preschool Program or Part B (<http://www.osr.nc.gov/>) includes all 3- and 4- year-old children who have disabilities. Five-year-olds with disabilities that aren't old enough for kindergarten are also included. The needs of these children (because of permanent or temporary disability in the areas of cognitive, communicative, social/emotional and/or adaptive disabilities) are unable to be met in a natural environment without special education and related services. This group includes preschool children who are delayed or whose development is atypical and those who have autism, hearing loss, health impairments, orthopedic impairments, speech-language impairments, visual impairments, or traumatic brain-injury. Preschool children with disabilities who meet these eligibility criteria may receive services upon reaching their third birthday. Early Educators working with children with special needs in this program was not known at the time of publication. Part B Personnel Qualifications are available at <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/ec/policy/policies/2007policies.pdf>; see section NC 1501-12.2.

Professional Development Opportunities

Credit Bearing

Education is coursework taken at a regionally accredited college or university. College courses are available in North Carolina on-campus, off-site and at a distance. All early childhood systems require coursework be taken at a regionally accredited institution of higher education. All public community colleges and universities in North Carolina are regionally accredited. For a list of accredited postsecondary institutions and programs please refer to www.ope.ed.gov/accreditation.

North Carolina boasts one of the largest higher education systems in the country. Both two- and four-year early childhood degrees are available in North Carolina. Two-year early childhood degree programs are offered by all 58 community colleges. The network of community colleges has been designed in a manner that requires a student to drive no more than 1 hour to reach a campus. Community colleges have geographic service delivery areas, which means they are assigned to specific geographic areas and may have authority and responsibility for providing courses in a county other than the one in which the college is located. The number and type of credit-bearing professional development opportunities for Early Educators working with school age children is increasing in North Carolina. A total of 21 community college early childhood programs have filed a School Age Degree course of study with the NC Community College System Office, as of Fall 2009. A total of 22 colleges offer a school age certificate and the school-age credential (5 semester credit hours), is required by the NC Division of Child Development for school age group leaders working in regulated child care facilities. Very few degrees beyond the AAS level are available in North Carolina, as of December 2009. The per semester credit hour tuition for all degree programs, as of fall 2009, was \$50.

Undergraduate Tuition Rate Range from lowest to highest (fees not included):

1-5 credit hours	\$238.06 - \$323.75
6-8 credit hours	\$476.23 - \$647.50
9-11 credit hours	\$714.19 - \$961.88
12 + credit hours	\$952.50 - \$1,295.00

The tuition and fee rate per credit hour for distance learning:
\$76.61 - \$144.22

Child Care Services Association 12/09

Four-year degree programs are offered by North Carolina's public universities and private institutions. The North Carolina Birth-Kindergarten License is available through 22 universities (UNC-Asheville has recently ceased offering the BK program). And a total of 10 universities offer a Master level BK degree program according to data published in 2007-08 by the NC Department of Public Instruction.²¹

²⁰ <http://www.ncei.org/ei/pdf/ITPGuidePersonnelCert.pdf>

²¹ NC Approved Teacher Education Programs. <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/ihe/approved/grid.pdf>

Am Emerging Overview of North Carolina's Early Childhood Professional Development System

College Course Pre-requisites & Co-requisites

Most students in community colleges must take a college placement test. Community colleges require placement testing at different stages of entrance. There are typically two scenarios for the need for placement testing requirements: college admission/program admission requirements or course admission requirements (prerequisites). At whatever point a student is required to take the placement tests, the test scores will determine if the student is performing at a level to enter into college level courses or if the student needs developmental studies courses prior to entering college level courses. In addition, the student's score on the test will determine which type of developmental courses are needed (English, Reading or Math), how many developmental courses are needed and what levels of developmental courses are needed. Nearly all Early Childhood Education courses in the community college system will soon have (as of Fall 2010) pre-requisite requirements to ensure students have the literacy skills to be successful in the coursework and in the field of Early Care and Education.

Professional development providers and potential college students are strongly encouraged to meet with a community college or university early childhood faculty member and/or an advisor prior to referring to or enrolling in courses to determine learning needs, expenses and pre-requisites or co-requisites for the courses or degree sought. Many community college early childhood degree programs require certain competencies and/or coursework to be completed prior to enrollment in curriculum credit courses or programs.

College Preparation

Preliminary results from a recent survey by the NC Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development and the NC Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Council of CCR&R trainers about their qualifications and services they provide reveals that multiple strategies are being provided to support access to college courses – from textbook lending libraries to computer labs to supports for second language learners.

Improving higher education success rates is a critical national priority, particularly in community colleges, where most low-income, first-generation students begin higher education.

Lumina Foundation for Education

NC Learn and Earn Online (<http://www.nclearnandearn.gov/>) is available to connect high school students to college credits online. Qualified students in public high schools can take a variety of online college-credit courses at no cost to them or to their families. Students earn both high school and college credit for completed courses. Qualified nonpublic students can take a variety of online college-credit courses for the low cost of fees and textbooks. For registration dates or to sign up check the North Carolina Community College System. UNCG iSchool is an example of this model (<http://web.uncg.edu/dcl/web/ischool/index.php>).

Local literacy councils, developmental coursework and services provided through local community colleges are also available to increase college readiness.

Course Types

Face-to-Face

Early childhood degree courses are available on campus at all 58 community colleges and in public and private universities.

Distance Learning

Courses in content relating to the field of early care and education are also offered virtually (distance learning). Distance learning options are available through many community colleges and a growing number of universities. Distance learning is available to students, regardless of their physical location (i.e. traditional service delivery boundaries do not apply).

Four types of distance learning courses are typically offered in North Carolina. The difference between each type is the amount of content that is delivered at a distance and what equipment is used to deliver the content.

Common distance learning course categories include:

1. Hybrid or web-enhanced courses²² mix face-to-face classroom learning & distance methods.
2. Online learning includes at least 80% of the course content delivered online.²³

²² NC Community College System Distance Learning. <http://vlc.nccommunitycolleges.edu/>

Am Emerging Overview of North Carolina's Early Childhood Professional Development System

3. Interactive Television (ITV) courses are offered by some colleges via the North Carolina Information Highway on college campuses or in community settings statewide.
4. Telecourses are college credit (or continuing education course) where 100% of the instruction is delivered by video, television or cassette.

Finding Courses

College course credits may be earned while in high school as well as from an accredited institution of higher education.

The NC Community College System (<http://www.ncccs.cc.nc.us/>) The NC Community College System provides an online listing of distance learning courses that are voluntary posted by the distance learning departments at each college. This list can be found at <http://vlc.nccommunitycolleges.edu/students/>. A searchable listing of NC community college degree programs, with contact information, education options, prerequisites, and more is also available on the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® website: <http://www.childcareservices.org/schools/index.php>.

The University of North Carolina (UNC) system offers UNCOline (<http://online.northcarolina.edu/>) which provides access to course listings on its 16 campuses. The listing currently provides an online listing for programs which are designed for individuals interested in becoming K-12 teachers, administrators, counselors, and specialists in areas such as special education, reading, and academically gifted instruction; active teachers who seek add-on licensure; and college graduates who seek to enter the teaching profession via lateral entry. To view a listing of options visit <http://online.northcarolina.edu/detaileddsearch.php?pTerm=Early+Childhood&pscope=full&programlevel=&subject=&institution=&area=programs>.

Articulation

An articulation agreement is an officially approved agreement that matches coursework between schools. These are designed to help students make a smooth transition when transferring from one institution of education to another. For the past several years, North Carolina early childhood partners have studied and sought a statewide articulation agreement between varying levels of education: between high school and credential granting entities, between two- and four-year early childhood degree granting programs, and between national and state providers of Child Development Associate (CDA) certificate.

High School to Credential Articulation

In September 2009 a revised memorandum of agreement (MOA) between the North Carolina Community College System, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Child Development (DCD) was established as a follow-up to the August 2008 revised high school to community college statewide agreement. This agreement allows high schools to teach the recently revised versions of Early Childhood Education I and II courses (7111 ver. 2008 and 7112 ver. 2009) to juniors and seniors and those students then could receive credit at colleges in the NCCCS for *EDU 119 Introduction to Early Childhood Education*. This articulation agreement and related MOA, establishes opportunities for high school students that meet specific criteria to transfer to the community college system and receive college credit, while also ensuring that they are awarded, through the Division of Child Development, their workforce North Carolina Early Childhood Credential equivalency. For more information visit the following websites: http://www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/numbered_memos/docs/MemosFor2008/cc08-162.pdf and http://www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/Numbered_Memos/docs/MemosFor2009/cc09-027.pdf.

Two to Four-Year Degree Transfer

A study²⁴ conducted by the Early Childhood Leadership & Policy Network describes evidence that supports the development of articulation agreements between two- and four-year institutions of higher education in early childhood education / child development. It discounts historical ideas and barriers that have prevented articulation agreements while suggesting that students transferring from 2-year AAS degree programs to 4-year BS or BA degree programs perform at comparable levels to traditional students entering BS or BA programs.

The study notes a few of the benefits of articulation agreements which are outlined below:

²³ Entering the Mainstream: Quality and Extent of Online Education in the United States, 2003 and 2004. The Sloan Center for Online Education at Olin and Babson Colleges. Wellesley, Massachusetts. 2004.

²⁴ <http://www.eclpn.org/ECLPN%20policy%20paper%20no.%20102%20Fall%202007.pdf>

Am Emerging Overview of North Carolina's Early Childhood Professional Development System

- High quality articulation agreements provide benefits to students, universities, the early childhood field, and society at large.
- Articulation agreements between 2- and 4-year institutions of higher education ensure better communication between institutions, an educational process that promotes continued education, and a new and diverse recruiting pool for universities.
- Articulation agreements also support a well educated and diverse early childhood workforce that will serve children and families.
- High quality articulation agreements aim to meet the demand for teachers with 4-year degrees in early childhood education to sustain high quality classroom environments for children.
- Articulation agreements create a workforce with higher education that leads to greater opportunities for teachers and improved salaries.

Professional Development Supports

A variety of professional development supports are available to Early Educators from rewards and bonuses for education earned to comprehensive supports that strive to increase both education and compensation. Funding for these supports tend to be supported by a blend of funding from public and private sectors to address an identified need or specified areas designated by the funder. Supports are not provided to Early Educators in a consistent manner or in the same breadth or depth across the state. Non-profit organizations including Smart Start partnerships, child care resource and referral agencies, professional associations as well as state agencies provide support.

A few strategies that are well known in North Carolina include:

- The College Foundation of North Carolina (http://www.cfnc.org/site/paying/info_paying_start.jsp) provides financial aid information, resources, tools, forms and a searchable scholarship database (http://www.cfnc.org/paying/schol/aid_search.jsp) in a centralized location.

- The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project (<http://www.childcareservices.org/ps/teach.html>) offers educational scholarships to Early Educators. All T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® scholarships link continuing education with increased compensation and require that recipients and their sponsoring child care programs share in the cost.²⁵ As of 2009, educational scholarships were provided in 20 states including the Project's home state, North Carolina.

- Salary Supplements and Bonus Programs rely heavily on local decisions about how funding is allocated. The majority of NC counties participate in a statewide salary supplement program called Child Care WAGE\$® Project (<http://www.childcareservices.org/ps/wage.html>). It provides education-based salary supplements to low-paid teachers, directors and family child care providers working with children between the ages of birth-5. The project is designed to provide preschool children more stable relationships with better educated teachers by rewarding teacher education and continuity of care. The Child Care WAGE\$® Project is offered throughout North Carolina as a funding collaboration between local Smart Start Partnerships and the Division of Child Development. Counties that use Smart Start funding to support the Child Care WAGE\$® Project may participate.

Local salary supplements, education reward and bonus programs are also available in some counties, administered by local or regional agencies/organizations. They tend to vary in design, scope and impact.

²⁵ Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.) Early Childhood® Project, Child Care Services Association, <http://www.childcareservices.org/ps/teach.html>

Am Emerging Overview of North Carolina's Early Childhood Professional Development System

Certification & Licensure

NC Early Educator Certification (EEC (www.nceec.org))

In 2009, the North Carolina Early Educator Certification (EEC) system was launched; taking the next step in professionalizing the field. EEC is an acknowledgement of an individual's verified level of educational achievement, based on a standardized scale. Education or coursework taken at a regionally accredited college or university is the basis for EEC. EEC does not replace teacher licensure issued by NCDPI and is designed to compliment that process. As of January 2010, over 7,500 Early Educators were certified in North Carolina.

MAF Teacher Licensure Unit (TLU)

<http://www.osr.nc.gov/TLU/TLUindexNEW.asp>

A support structure to make it possible for MAF teachers in nonpublic schools (licensed private child care and Head Start programs) to attain and maintain a B-K Standard Professional II License (B-K SP II) as required for teachers in public schools is provided through the Teacher Licensure Unit (TLU). A total of 191 teachers are currently being served by the TLU (as of 12/09). The TLU is located in the Office of School Readiness (OSR), NC Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI). The TLU was established in January of 2007.

EEC Numbers as of January 1, 2010

Total Number

- 3,688 (51%) are certified at gold levels – levels six and above
- All 100 NC counties represented

By Role (at time of application)

- 5,732 teaching (365 indicate some time with school age)
- 513 administrative
- 146 combined teaching/administrative (76 indicate some time with school age)
- 777 small home providers (539 indicate some time with school age)
- 99 on behalf, other, student or not yet employed in child care
- 1,521 More at Four teachers/assistants
- 1,137 Head Start

Infant-Toddler Personnel Certification

This certification is required for specified Children's Developmental Services Agency (CDSA) personnel, public and private providers of special instruction services, and early intervention service coordination to children enrolled in the Infant-Toddler Program. Local oversight and supervision of contracted service personnel must be provided by the CDSA. Statewide administrative oversight is provided by the Early Intervention Branch, Women's and Children's Health Section, Division of Public Health. The classifications of certificates are Infant, Toddler and Family Associate (ITFA) and Infant, Toddler and Family Specialist (ITFS). IT certification remains valid until the individual is no longer employed by the IT Program or contracted provider agencies, or allows the certificate to lapse. Infant Toddler certification (<http://www.ncei.org/ei/pdf/ITPGuidePersonnelCert.pdf>) is not a pre-requisite for employment.

All Individuals pursuing an initial certificate must earn all the required credits within a three (3) year period, including individuals working part-time. Applicants with valid and current NC Birth through Kindergarten (BK) licensure automatically meet competency requirements. However, applicants must submit the "Observation of Applicant's Practice" (Page II-3) and a copy of their valid NC license and transcript with their application to the Reviewer. Registered Nurses with a valid and current NC nursing license, whether they have completed a two-, three-, or four-year educational program, are eligible for the ITFS Certificate.

Continuing Education Framework

An emerging continuing education framework is being developed by NC's ecpd system partners in an effort to define and implement an intentional approach to meet the needs of Early Educators through professional development planning, training, continuing education classes (CEUs), mentoring, coaching, consultation, and resource linking – to both information and individuals. The emerging framework will include a comprehensive array of credit and non-credit bearing education opportunities in support of taking the next step in developing professional development opportunities and in support of recertification continuing education requirements .

"Teachers experience different stages of professional development –the beginning teacher is focused on day-to-day survival in the classroom, and often experiences anxiety about her ability to meet classroom challenges and realities. Such teachers are said to be in the Survival stage, which may last throughout the whole first year of teaching. During this stage, beginning teachers need "support, understanding, encouragement, comfort, and guidance" (Katz, 1977, p. 8). These needs can be met by connecting a beginning teacher, or protégé, with an experienced teacher, or mentor (Bellm, Whitebook, & Hnatiuk, 1997).

The experienced teacher, who might be in either the stage of Renewal or the stage of Maturity is more confident in her skills, but is also tiring of doing "the same old things" (Katz, 1977, p. 9). She is becoming more reflective and is interested in widening the scope of her professional knowledge and skills. Teachers in these stages benefit from opportunities to network with their peers, and to examine problems and issues in the classroom and the field of early childhood education."

Mentoring Early Childhood Professionals. <http://www.questia.com/>

Am Emerging Overview of North Carolina's Early Childhood Professional Development System

CCR&R agencies and Smart Start Partnerships play a prominent role in the continuing education framework, by continuously assessing and providing the bulk of the training and technical assistance opportunities available for early care and education personnel. Independent consultants and training businesses that may or may not be approved by DCD also provide training opportunities.

In addition, North Carolina has a several professional associations serving those working directly with or on the behalf of children ages birth to twelve that provide non-credit bearing professional development opportunities. They include, but are not limited to, the NC Association for the Education of Young Children (NCAEYC), the NC Afterschool Coalition, the NC Early Childhood Association, NC Licensed Child Care Association, NC Development Day Directors Association and others. Each provides an annual conference and/or local or regional training events.

The School Age Quality Improvement Project works through a statewide network of 20 specialists to improve the quality and availability of school age care by increasing the number of licensed programs and by increasing the number of programs that voluntarily operate with a higher star license. School age training is provided by a host of agencies across the state (<http://www.ncforum.org/initiatives/nccap/events.aspx>).

Version