



CCR&R Council
North Carolina Child Care Resource & Referral Council

NC ECPD Regional Planning Project

Facilitator Meeting Guide

Authors: Katura Jackson & Rosemarie Vardell

Purpose of the Guide

This guide is provided to aid facilitators in conducting regional meetings in a like manner across the state, allowing regional teams to complete the action planning process in their own unique way, yet accomplish the intended outcomes and the ultimate goal of creating a 5-year regional action plan for submission by July 31, 2010.

Why is this important?

Qualified and well-compensated professionals are essential to ensuring high-quality early childhood education programs. State policies and financing of the professional development system have a significant impact on the recruitment, quality, and retention of early childhood professionals. Through the development of an integrated early childhood professional development system guided by a state plan, North Carolina will increase its capacity to develop and retain a competent and stable early childhood workforce.

Defining Professional Development (PD)

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 (ecpd) 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

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.nchildcare.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.

1980s) that early childhood care and education has long lasting outcomes for children, that produce economic benefits – when teachers are educated and compensated.

Values

A high quality ecpd system values, at a minimum:

- high quality care and education, as defined by research
- diversity in all aspects for both teachers and children
- equitable and sufficient wages warranted by professionals
- integration of services and resources across sectors
- the engagement of all stakeholders to evaluate and inform the system

Guiding Principles

Does this policy, program or practice (PPP)...

- increase integration among sectors/agencies?
- improve quality?
- support diversity, inclusion and access?
- increase workforce compensation?
- use resources creatively and effectively?
- allow us to assess the impact, both qualitatively and quantitatively?
- require outreach to assure the population to be served is aware of it and resources to support it?

Note: Add to list as needed.

ECPD Regional Action Plan Guiding Questions

The following guiding questions are provided to assist facilitators in fostering dialogue amongst team members

about the key areas to be addressed in the regional SWOT analysis and action plan. Please refer to the resource notebook for definitions and details.

Access

1. In what ways are early childhood professional development (ecpd) opportunities being made accessible (flexible, affordable, inclusive) to Early Educators*?
2. How are barriers (cost, time, transportation, diverse needs, etc.) to accessing ecpd opportunities and increasing workforce education levels being addressed?

Continuing Education

1. What do we need to help Early Educators grow their knowledge and skills?
2. What do we need to do to help people apply their knowledge and skills?
3. What are the areas of specialized knowledge (diversity, infant/toddler, interaction, leadership, inclusive practices, etc.) that Early Educators need to continue to be effective and grow as professionals? How is this need being addressed?
4. What opportunities are available for resource linking, mentoring, coaching and technical assistance?

Professional Standards

1. In what ways are Early Educators being prepared to meet professional standards?
2. In what ways are Early Educators supported in meeting professional standards?

Compensation

1. What do we know about compensation levels and needs?
2. What compensation strategies are being employed?

Planning & Coordination

1. Where is planning occurring now (agency level, county, regional levels)?
2. How is the workforce (teachers, providers, group leaders, directors, etc.) involved in the planning?
3. How are connections between planning efforts being made – county to regional and regional to state?

**Early Educators are defined as those working directly with, working on the behalf of or intending to work with children ages birth to twelve.*

ECPD Regional Project Key Areas

The following topic areas are provided to guide discussions about key areas of the early childhood professional development system. These topics and subtopics serve as the framework for the regional action planning tool and resultant regional action plan.

Access

- Barriers
- Diversity
- Inclusion
- Flexible options
- Affordability
- Articulation

Continuing Education

- Professional development planning
- Technical assistance
- Coaching
- Mentoring
- Resource linking

Professional Standards

- Use of standards
- Awareness of standards
- Understanding by field of the importance of standards in professional role

Compensation

- Salary
- Benefits
- Connection to education
- Connection to turnover and continuity of care

Planning & Coordination

- Cross sector
- Effective use of resources
- Intentionality

**Early Educators are defined as those working directly with, working on the behalf of or intending to work with children ages birth to twelve.*

Meeting 1 Preparation Suggestions

- ❑ Develop participant contact list to share with team
- ❑ Create a calendar of meeting dates and locations
- ❑ Review sample scan and outline current activities by county (as known)
- ❑ Encourage participants to review the project overview, the NC ECPD System Overview, the NAEYC Blueprint and project power point slides

Meeting 1 – Building the Team & Creating a Shared Vision

Objectives:

1. Clarify roles and process
2. Review principals and values
3. Develop a sense of team spirit (team building, agreements about working together, importance of each perspective)
4. Increase awareness of activities in the region
5. Identify strengths/gaps/limitations
6. Provide an overview of PD Planning Regional Process: Project Goals, Process, Definitions, Tools & Principles
 - Alter or expand on goals and principles based on group input
 - Focus discussion on practices, programs and policies (PPP)
7. Map out/chart current PPPs
 - Describe what PPPs are known to team members and create a list of others to explore.
 - What are the successes?
 - What are the gaps?
 - What/who is missing?
 - Is there currently PD planning within or across agencies/sectors.
 - Who is involved in the planning (particularly teachers, providers, program administrators)?
 - Is there cultural/ ethnic/linguistic diversity among the planners and decision-makers?

Activities/Discussions

1. Gather Team Demographics: Who, County, Region, Role on Team and ask quick “getting to know each other” questions
2. Conduct a team building activity that helps get prepared for brainstorming/problem solving
3. Prompt team with questions to promote discussion and gather information:

Example Activity: It's 3 years from now and you are reflecting on the PD system and activities in your region. You feel very good about what is happening and the process for achieving it. What do you see? (The outcome of this discussion can likely be organized around the stated goals or point to one or two goals that this region wants to add.)

4. Transition into creating a vision.
 - We have a sense of the vision, where are we now?
 - How did the PPP come about?
 - Where is PD planning occurring now?
 - Community level?
 - Agency level?
 - Program level?
 - Across sectors?

- Guided by a state group/organization/funder?
- What are examples of groups working together?:
 - Coordinating/sharing of resources?
 - Shared goals/outcomes?
 - Joint programs? Cross sector resource linkage?

5. Use map as a tool to complete the ECPD Regional Current Scan of PPPs to and organize analyze what is known by team members

Example Activity: Working in small groups, participants place PPP from Scan in the most appropriate key area (access, continuing education, professional standards, compensation, planning and coordination) and then fill in the other items (strengths/working well and weaknesses/gaps/needs). After this is completed, the paper is passed to another small group to add their analysis. Post this work and put on wall for whole group to add any final observations.

Tools

- Current Scan Recording Tool – Sample
- Current Scan Recording Tool
- ECPD Regional Project Goal Development Tool
- Team Building Activity
- Collaboration Activity

Materials:

- Copies of Scan Recording Tool and Project Goal Development Tool
- Easels/Paper/Markers, etc.
- Name Cards/Name Tags

Handouts

- Team contact list
- NC ECPD System Overview
- NC ECPD Regional Planning Project Overview
- Guiding Content Principles
- Guiding Questions
- Key Areas
- Current Scan Recording Tool – Sample
- Current Scan Recording Tool
- Meeting Assessment Form

Anticipated Outcomes

- Team members are clear about roles, the goals and process
- Team members are readied to function as a team
- Team members have gathered and shared the relevant information about professional development programs and activities they know of in their communities
- Team members have identified strengths/gaps/limitations

Documentation

- ECPD Regional Project Scan of Current Programs, Policies & Practices
- Online Meeting Notes
- Participant meeting assessments

Homework (what do we need to know more about)

- Each team member will identify and assign responsibility for gathering information about topics/PPPs that the team wants to learn more about.
- Encourage team members to gather voices of those not at the table
- Encourage team members to meet to continue the work

Take Away/Reflection

- Ask team members to reflect on process and principles
- Plan for Meeting 2.

Meeting 2: Setting Goals and Strategies

Objectives:

1. Complete the Regional Scan of PPPs
2. Begin work on developing strategies and goals

*Key Question: What strategies can help us achieve our goals? (existing, new, tweaked)
(This should be based on the work in session 1 and adding any new information that was gained between meetings)*

Example Activity/Discussion: Check-in of members or other team building activities. Could be in small groups - people's reflections between last meeting and now. (i.e. new ideas, new ways of thinking, ah-ha moments, etc.)

3. Review and confirmation of work from last meeting (opportunity for clarifications or revisions)
4. Share ECPD Regional Project Scan of Current Programs, Policies & Practices (typed and distributed)
5. Ask team members to share information updates identified from last meeting (data, resources that were needed)
6. Identify strategies to fill address weaknesses/gaps/needs. Small groups work on key areas. Share with larger group with opportunity to add strategies.
7. Review strategies against content principles. Make adjustments as needed.

Example Collaboration Activity. (Points out need to be clear about everyone understanding the goals and strategies)

Tools:

- Copies of Current Scan Recording Tool
- Goal Development Planning Tool

Materials:

- Easels/Paper/Markers, etc.
- Name Cards/Name Tags

Handouts

- At the Fulcrum (see article in resource notebook)
- Meeting Assessment Form

Anticipated Outcomes

- Strategies are developed for each goal

Documentation

- Completed Strategy Planning Tool

- ❑ Online Meeting Notes
- ❑ Participant meeting assessments

Homework

- ❑ Gather information about resources and funding available in region to address identified strategies
- ❑ Encourage team members to gather voices of those not at the table
- ❑ Encourage team members to meet to continue the work

Take Away/Reflections

- ❑ Each members is asked to make a list of strategies that are occurring now as well as new or replacements strategies they recommend to meet this goal
- ❑ Plan for Meeting 3.

Meeting 3: Action Plan

Objectives

1. Prioritize goals and strategies

2. Compare goals and strategies to principles and values and key areas to check alignment and completeness

Sample Questions:

- ❑ What will it look like in your region? (action plan)
- ❑ Where are the weaknesses/ Gaps
- ❑ What are our Region's Priorities; State Priorities

Example Activity/Discussions

- ❑ Review the Vision and Goals to be sure that there is consensus and alignment with guiding principles
- ❑ Finalize goals and begin work on Goal Development Tool

Example Small Group Work

- ❑ Review Principals and Values Sheet
- ❑ Break into small groups – assign each group a set of goals and strategies. Have the groups compare each goal to determine alignment with principals and values.

Sample Questions for Small Group Work:

- ❑ How do we compare this goal/strategy to the 4 principles?
- ❑ How do we measure?
- ❑ What resources are needed?
- ❑ Does this work across all sectors? School age, special needs, head start, child care centers, family child care homes
- ❑ What are the Threats/Risk? Opportunities?
- ❑ Who is responsible?
- ❑ Where is this on the list of priorities?

Tools

- ❑ Copies of completed regional scan?
- ❑ ECPD Regional Project Goal Development Tool

Materials

- ❑ Easels/Paper/Markers, etc.
- ❑ Name Cards/Name Tags

Handouts

- ❑ Principals and Values
- ❑ Action Planning Goal Development Tools
- ❑ Meeting Assessment Form

Anticipated Outcomes

- ❑ Team will prioritize goals and strategies
- ❑ Team members will complete the goal development tool

Documentation

- ❑ Completed action planning tools
- ❑ Online Meeting Notes
- ❑ Participant meeting assessments

Homework

- ❑ review strategies and timeline of each for next meeting
- ❑ Encourage team members to gather voices of those not at the table
- ❑ Encourage team members to meet to continue the work

Take Away/Reflection

- ❑ Encourage team members to think about the existing structures, what resources will be needed and how goals/strategies will be measured to assess success and effectiveness
- ❑ Ask team members to work in small groups to focus on one goal to bring to the next meeting for team input

Meeting 4: Action at Regional Level

Objectives:

1. Complete Action Plan Document
2. Develop recommendations to be submitted for inclusion in state plan
3. Set date for regional review of final plan document
4. Draft regional recommendations for inclusion in the 5-yr action plan

Example Activity/Discussion: Final Opportunity for Group Discussion of f Action Plan Goals and Strategies. Group will ensure that goals are in correct priority order and that plans have been made for assessing

- ❑ Structure – who's going to guide it, monitor it, continue to give input into it
- ❑ Funding – What do we have now? Should be using our funding the same way/different ways?
- ❑ Data – if we set out these goals, how do we evaluate that we are getting there or not. What do we need to guide our efforts?
- ❑ State recommendations (i.e. policies, changes in approach, use of funds, etc.)

Tools

- ❑ Completed scan tool
- ❑ Goal development tool
- ❑ Action Plan Format

Materials

- ❑ Easels/Paper/Markers, etc.
- ❑ Name Cards/Name Tags

Anticipated Outcomes

- ❑ Ensure that goals address each key area
- ❑ Ensure that goals are specific, measurable, include a timeline and are attainable
- ❑ Ensure agreement about regional priorities
- ❑ Develop a process to work on meeting regional priorities as a next step
- ❑ Provide information and support to the project coordinator in drafting the 5-year action plan with state recommendations
- ❑ Encourage team members to gather voices of those not at the table

Documentation

- ❑ Completed regional goal development tool
- ❑ Online Meeting Notes
- ❑ Participant meeting assessments

Homework

- ❑ Determine strategy by which team members can review the action plan
- ❑ Schedule a state for final plan approval (due to Institute by 7/31)
- ❑ Determine how regional priorities will be addressed going forward