Building a Connected Early Childhood System (Together) So Each Child Succeeds

Mary Herbenick, Executive Director
Ready for School, Ready for Life
Guilford County

Working Effectively Across Organizations
Our Mission

Build a responsive, innovative early childhood system so each Guilford County child enters Kindergarten ready for school and life success.

Pathway for Success

Supportive and Supported Families

Responsive and Innovative Early Childhood System
The Problem

- Almost 50% of children entering kindergarten in Guilford County in 2017-18 were not on track for language/communication skills
- One in four needs significant remediation to catch up with peers

Trend: Getting worse
New Approach Required

*Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.*

- Attributed to Albert Einstein

Photo by Arthur Sasse, 1951
Current State of Early Childhood “System”

- Excellent programs
- Fragmented
- Little navigation help for families
- Focused on individual outcomes
- Family responsibility

Foster-Fishman, et al., 2007
Our Charge

- **Address** the multifaceted nature of kindergarten readiness
- **Make decisions using data**
- **Take a systems approach** to address barriers
- **Promote equity**
- **Engage* authentic family voice**

“Not business as usual”
Timeline: Guilford’s System-Building Work

Ongoing: Launch & support design teams around priorities

Summer 2016: Set & test 10 key priorities

Feb–May 2016: Launch & support 100-Day Challenge Teams

Sept 2015 – Feb 2016: Build, test & promote community vision

June – Sept 2015: Collect local data

May 2015: Train 120 providers on systems change framework

January 2015: Launch backbone organization & plan
# Key Priorities for Guilford’s Systems

**Change Work**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tbody>
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Theory of Change

Offer all families ...the right resources ...
at the right time ...within an informed community ...
...and a sustainable system.

Improved outcomes for individuals

Improved outcomes for the population
Turning Theory into Action

- Families' needs are identified through universal assessment
- Programs improve service delivery and outcomes
- Families are offered targeted referrals with timely data sharing
- Public increases knowledge about healthy child development
- Public will is built to support early childhood priorities
Get Ready
Guilford Initiative

• Long-term partnership with The Duke Endowment
• Continuum of care built in medical homes
  • Integration of three evidence-based programs (Nurse-Family Partnership, Family Connects, HealthySteps)
  • Supported by continuous improvement coaching
  • Rigorous evaluation and sustainability planning
  • Feasibility study for integrated data system
Get Ready Guilford Pilot

All pregnant women screened & connected to needed services early

Home visit for all new moms/babies

Child development specialist at every well-child check up; universal assessment at 18 & 36 months

Families connected to services they need—when they need it:
- Prenatally, Nurse-Family Partnership and/or other local programs
- Basic needs (food, safe housing, etc.)
- Mental health/substance use services
- Early education and care resources
- Early intervention for children with developmental delays
# What We’ll Measure

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Outcome Areas</th>
<th>Indicators Defining the Outcome Areas</th>
<th>Other Related Indicators</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Planned and Well-Timed Births</td>
<td>1. Pregnancies are planned</td>
<td>13. Avoidance of child abuse and neglect</td>
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<td>2. Subsequent births occur no sooner than 24 months</td>
<td>14. Mothers initiate breastfeeding</td>
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<td>3. Fewer teen births</td>
<td>15. Mothers avoid depression</td>
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<td>B. Healthy Births</td>
<td>4. Babies born at healthy weight</td>
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<td>5. Children born after 37 weeks gestation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Emotional and social development</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Emerging literacy skills</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Physical well-being and motor development</td>
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<tr>
<td>D. School Readiness at Kindergarten</td>
<td>9. Children demonstrate competence in 5 domains</td>
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<tr>
<td>E. Success in Third Grade</td>
<td>10 – 12. Children read, perform math, and have age-appropriate social-emotional skills by end of third grade</td>
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Connect New Parents With Supports

Build Public Will for Early Childhood Priorities

Drive Continuous Improvement Across the System

Improve Developmental Screening Process

Improve Coordination and Referrals

Leverage and Expand Early Literacy Resources

Improve Preschool to Kindergarten Transition

Leverage and Expand Parenting Education Resources

Ensure Responsiveness to Family Voice

Make High-Quality Early Care and Education Accessible and Affordable

Continued Ready/Ready Workgroups Linked to Continuum
Build a System Responsive to and Respectful of Family Voice

**PROBLEM:** Connecting families with services is difficult because we assume:

- What families want/need to support their child’s development
- How, where and when families would like services delivered
- How to best reach families

**SYSTEMIC SOLUTIONS:**

- Engage families in design, delivery & communication of services/supports
- Build family capacity & agency to support positive child development
- Build organizational capacity to engage family voice system-wide
Family Voice: Past & Ongoing Work

• Conducted family meetings
• Implemented Family Photovoice Project
• Engaged families in the Early Childhood Summit
• Launched 100-Day Challenge Teams (led by families)
• Facilitate Family Action Learning Team meetings
• Leverage human-centered design practices
• Build capacity with interested agencies/organizations
Leverage and Expand Early Literacy Resources

**PROBLEM:** Almost 50% of Guilford’s children start Kindergarten without needed pre-literacy skills

**SYSTEMIC SOLUTIONS:**
Three-year Early Literacy Strategic Plan:

- Developed by 25 team members from 20 organizations
- Strategies focused on 6 indicators aligned with NC’s Kindergarten readiness standards
High-Quality ECE
Affordable & Accessible to All Families

PROBLEM:
Not all early childhood programs can attract, engage and retain well-educated, experienced professionals

SYSTEMIC SOLUTIONS:
Plan developed over next six months
- 24 disruptive thinkers, early childhood experts, business leaders
- Strong focus on compensation

WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN HIGH QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS?

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<th>IN OUR REGION (GUILFORD, ROCKINGHAM, AND RANDOLPH COUNTIES):</th>
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<td>$10.97 Median ECE teacher wage</td>
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<td>18% Turnover rate of teachers in Child Care settings</td>
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<td>20% ECE teachers saying they are leaving the field in the next three years</td>
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<td>41% ECE teachers that need public assistance (Medicaid, TANF, Food Stamps, etc.)</td>
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Source: Child Care Services Association, 2015
Develop Processes/Policies to Support Seamless Transition to Kindergarten

PROBLEM: Too many children, families, teachers and school administrators report challenges as children transition into formal school settings.

SYSTEMIC SOLUTIONS:
- Increase data sharing: NC PreK & GCS
- Increase number of preschoolers who have high-quality classroom experiences
- Embed K readiness education with families into system early & help them prepare for transition
Build Public Will to Increase Demand for Kindergarten Readiness

- Engaging key stakeholders
- Communicating broadly
- Developing advocacy agenda