



## FAMILY ACTION LEARNING TEAM

### Meeting Minutes

*Date: December 19, 2016*

Meeting Participants: Keayba, Amber, Melissa, Sean, Jackie, Michael

Ready/Ready Staff: Rachael Burrello, Mary Herbenick

Facilitator: LaMonica Mitchell

<b>SYSTEMS CHANGE TARGET: Engage families as partners and change agents in the community</b>	
<b>A. Agenda Item: Presentation about Approaches to Play &amp; Learning</b>	
<u>Summary of Discussion</u>	<u>Action Items</u>
<p>LaMonica Mitchell delivered a presentation (<b>attached</b>) on the Approaches to Play &amp; Learning domain of kindergarten readiness. See the end of this document for more details.</p> <p>Families shared some of their own observations and tips about play:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents love watching their children develop, observe the world, and put ideas together. Seeing the world through their child’s eyes is a wonderful experience.</li> <li>• The social-emotional domain is the hardest to teach and support, especially when adults have social-emotional issues themselves.</li> <li>• There are lots of different parenting styles in the community, but parents may need guidance to avoid unhealthy behaviors that negatively affect children’s development.</li> <li>• Boxes are great toys for children! Children’s imaginations really “come alive” when they play with boxes, and they learn to develop creativity and curiosity, as well as practice skills like engineering.</li> <li>• Technology can have a place in play, but it needs to be balanced with more hands-on stimulation. Parents can model good use of technology by interacting with other adults face-to-face and taking a break from their phones sometimes.</li> <li>• When parents ask children questions and ask their opinion, it gives them a voice and encourages them to use their imaginations and think. Communicating with children is important.</li> <li>• Parents can learn from each other. Families are already modeling some good play behaviors and seeding ideas with each other. You could be “changing the frame” for someone without even knowing it!</li> </ul>	<p><b>FAMILIES:</b> See the attached presentation to learn more about Approaches to Play &amp; Learning, including helpful tips.</p>
<b>B. Agenda Item: Consultant role – Communications &amp; Outreach</b>	
<u>Summary of Discussion</u>	<u>Action Items</u>
<p>Because families have said they have no central place to go to get information and connect with other parents, Ready/Ready has begun to launch Facebook pages. The pages follow the NC Foundations for Families stages – Incredible Infants, Wonderful Ones, Terrific Twos, Look-At-Me Threes, Fantastic Fours, and Fabulous Fives. The pages will be managed by Ready/Ready to make sure that all the information offered</p>	<p><b>FAMILIES:</b> To find out more about the NC Foundations for Families stages of child development, <a href="#">click here</a>.</p>

<p>is accurate and up-to-date, and to keep the pages a fun environment for everyone. The pages will be Guilford County focused and free of commercial content.</p> <p>64 agencies and organizations work with Ready/Ready to provide content. Guilford Family Connects has agreed to promote this at the hospital when children are born, and with the nurse home visit offered to all families of newborns.</p> <p>Families reviewed the Incredible Infants page and gave feedback on the overall look and feel of the page, as well as suggested content. One parent shared that she found a potty training resource on YouTube that was created by another parent, and it worked well for her. Seeing actual parents living the same experiences makes a bigger impact than seeing an expert try to instruct parents on what to do. See the end of this document for additional details on feedback from families.</p> <p>The Fantastic Fours page will be launched next because there are 550 eligible four-year-olds on the NC Pre-K waiting list, wo will enter kindergarten next year. As a community and a system, we need to take care of them.</p>	<p><b>FAMILIES:</b> To view the Incredible Infants Guilford County Facebook page, <a href="#">click here</a>.</p> <p><b>READY/READY:</b> Reach out to partner organizations like the Ag Extension to get nutrition content for the Facebook pages.</p> <p><b>MELISSA:</b> Share the link to the potty training video with Rachael at <a href="mailto:rachaelb@getreadyguilford.org">rachaelb@getreadyguilford.org</a></p> <p><b>RACHAEL:</b> Share the potty training video with the team.</p>
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**C. Agenda Item: Consultant role – Feedback from ELDT**

<u>Summary of Discussion</u>	<u>Action Items</u>
<p>At the last meeting, families gave interviews to help Ready/Ready’s Early Literacy Design Team (ELDT) understand the early literacy system from a family perspective. The ELDT learned that families are using some similar reading strategies across all situations and cultures, and that families are doing their very best but are very self-critical of the job they are doing.</p> <p>Many families struggle particularly with the fact that young children are often not able to sit still and pay attention to a story when they try to read to them. But there are many other activities parents and caretakers can do with children—such as singing songs, teaching nursery rhymes, pointing out signs and objects, and even just talking to their child—that build early literacy and language skills.</p>	<p>None identified</p>

**D. Agenda Item: Launching a team project**

<u>Summary of Discussion</u>	<u>Action Items</u>
<p>A goal for Family ALT in 2017 is to launch a project based on one or more of Ready/Ready’s 10 Key Priorities (see the end of this document for a list of the priorities).</p> <p>Families feel strongly the importance of Priority 9 (public awareness) and want to do work in Priority 8 (family voice and empowerment). Many families don’t know about children’s brain development and how to best support it. The first 2,000 days of a child’s life—the years before kindergarten entry—are the most important for brain building. Even if a child is not in preschool or childcare settings, parents can still support brain building in everyday life if they have the right information.</p> <p>Instead of looking through a book or having other resources handed out or told to them, families want to see other families having the same struggles and giving tips and responses. Multimedia is a great way to spread information and resources, and the Family ALT is interested in doing a video and pamphlets about how to play with your children, and other subjects.</p>	<p><b>FAMILIES:</b> Bring ideas to the next meeting about the following questions: How would you help a parent teach their child? How do you make people aware of small things they can do? How do you share your ideas that make a difference?</p> <p><b>FAMILIES:</b> <a href="#">Click here</a> to go to the Ready/Ready website and take the pledge to be an early childhood advocate. Encourage other families to do the same.</p>

Knowing who we're trying to reach with messaging is important. For example, we need to consider the male perspective and package information in a way that men will be drawn to it. Age is another consideration, because many grandparents are raising grandchildren.

The Family ALT agreed to consider some further questions over the holiday for discussion at the January meeting. Families agreed to Like and promote the Incredible Infants Facebook page in the meantime. Families can also sign Ready/Ready's pledge to be early childhood advocates.

**Meetings will be the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month. Here's the schedule for 2017:**

- **Monday, January 16, 5:30 to 7:30 pm**

**Location: TBD**

- **Monday, February 20, 5:30 to 7:30 pm**
- **Monday, March 20, 5:30 to 7:30 pm**
- **Monday, April 17, 5:30 to 7:30 pm**
- **Monday, May 15, 5:30 to 7:30 pm**
- **Monday, June 19, 5:30 to 7:30 pm**
- **Monday, July 17, 5:30 to 7:30 pm**
- **NO MEETING IN AUGUST**
- **Monday, September 18, 5:30 to 7:30 pm**
- **Monday, October 16, 5:30 to 7:30 pm**
- **Monday, November 20, 5:30 to 7:30 pm**
- **Monday, December 18, 5:30 to 7:30 pm**

**Location: Martin Dixon Intergenerational Center, Bennett College, 600 Gorrell St. Greensboro**

## **EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEMS CHANGE PRIORITIES – GUILFORD COUNTY**

1. Ensure all new parents are connected to critical early childhood information and community supports/services.
2. Connect more young children and their families to needed services by embedding coordinated developmental screening and referral processes into settings that provide services for families with young children.
3. Improve family access to needed programs through the creation of an effective referral and coordination network for young children and their families.
4. Leverage and expand early literacy resources/services to meet community need by determining and launching priority program and system changes.
5. Leverage and expand parenting resources/services to meet community need by determining and launching priority program and system changes.
6. Improve school readiness by addressing affordability and accessibility of high-quality child care in Guilford County.
7. Create seamless and easy transition experiences for children and their families by aligning Pre-K and kindergarten priorities, curriculum, and transition processes.
8. Ensure the local early childhood system is responsive to and respectful of family needs and voice.
9. Increase public demand for school readiness by implementing a public awareness campaign focused on building community buy-in about the importance of early learning and development (0-8).
10. Embed continuous improvement orientation within the local early childhood system.

## **OTHER WAYS TO GET INVOLVED**

Ways to stay involved in Guilford County once your children reach kindergarten:

- Guilford Parent Academy (through Guilford County Schools) -- visit [http://www.gcsnc.com/pages/gcsnc/Departments/Guilford\\_Parent\\_Academy](http://www.gcsnc.com/pages/gcsnc/Departments/Guilford_Parent_Academy)
- School-based opportunities through PTA and other school focused activities, or to volunteer through GCS.
- The Say Yes Guilford Pre-K to Grade 5 Task Force has three sub-groups that focus on different parts of the Pre-K to Grade 5 pathway. Talk with Amber, Mary or Rachael to get connected.
  - Kindergarten readiness
  - Reading at grade level by the end of Grade 3
  - High stakes proficiency in ELA and Math by the end of Grade 5
- Ready/Ready Design Teams, to work on designing parts of the system around each of the 10 Key Priorities. These teams will not have age limits, and family voice will be critical to their success.

## **Additional Details from Presentation on Approaches to Play & Learning:**

Families learned that:

- Lots of learning and development happens from birth to 1 year. 90% of a child's brain development happens before age 3. So it's important to help a child build skills from an early age.
- Play is the "work" of a child. When children put in time playing every day, they develop through the "work" of play. By giving them time and space to play, we can help them learn.
- Play helps children to learn social-emotional, cognitive, and language and literacy skills, as well as helping them have healthy physical development.
- Children need opportunities to play outside and to use their imaginations, but this can be tough if parents feel the outdoor environment is not safe.
- There are lots of different things you can do to play with your child and to help them play. See the attached presentation for more details.

- It is important for infants to have face to face interaction because they are learning to communicate. Putting a baby on a pallet or blanket on the floor and putting infant-safe toys around them is a great way to let them explore.
- Preschool children need social interaction, and are more capable of participating in group activities.
- Around the age of 5, children are more ready to socialize. It's important for adults to set up social interaction for them and allow them to play with others.

**Additional feedback from families on the Incredible Infants Facebook page:**

- Having positive names for all the stages (Terrific Twos instead of terrible twos) is good because it can positively shape parents' perception of their children.
- The page needs to be more visual and attention-getting. There need to be short headlines and more videos.
- Videos should be practical, fun, and not scripted.
- Posting once or twice a week is best, because it doesn't overwhelm parents' news feeds. Post less often unless there is a special event.
- Allowing parents to interact and contribute to the page can get them more involved – i.e. put up a video of how you read to your child.
- The page needs content on nutrition.
- Asking open questions (like "What are your best tips for new parents?") can be a great way to get good comments and feedback.
- This page will be useful to families that are growing, because having another child is a big shift and parents don't always remember what they learned with their first child.