



## **BUILD's Pre-Conference and Conference Sessions at the National Smart Start Conference**

### **Building a State and Local Early Childhood System: Lessons Learned from the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge States**

While only twenty states have been awarded federal Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (ELC) grants, children in every state win when we learn from these laboratories of change. This pre-conference day will focus on replicable innovations, challenges, and strategies that are helping states - and communities - turn the curve for the youngest children, especially those with the highest needs. Presentations and discussions will particularly hone in on the approaches supported by the state plans to foster local-level systems development and how leaders from these states and communities are defining and attempting to serve children with high needs.

**Location:** Sheraton Greensboro 3121 High Point Road Greensboro, NC 27407 (336) 292-9161

**Meeting Attire:** Business casual

**Transportation:** The hotel is approximately 10 miles from the Piedmont-Triad (Greensboro) International Airport. A taxi is probably the quickest and easiest way to get you to/from the airport.

#### Meeting Agenda

##### May 4, 2015

8:30 a.m. **Registration and Continental Breakfast - Pick up your meeting packet and nametag outside of Victoria ABC on the 3rd floor of the hotel. (Do NOT go to the Smart Start Conference registration desk unless you have specifically registered for the conference itself.)**

**Location:** Victoria ABC (3rd floor)

9:00 a.m. **Welcoming Remarks - Gerry Cobb, BUILD Initiative**

**Location:** Victoria ABC

**Opening Plenary Session - The Early Learning Challenge to States: A Game Changer**

**Speaker:** Sherri Killins, BUILD Initiative

9:30 a.m. **What's Race, Culture and National Origin Got to Do with It?**

An equitable early childhood system is one where race, culture, and national origin are no longer predictors of young children's healthy development and readiness for school. Learn about the work in Washington State to advance equitable access to early learning and kindergarten readiness and preparation, fair wages for child care workers and parents of young children, and high quality, culturally responsive care and education that fully reflects the needs of Latino, African and Asian children and families.

**Speaker:** Roxana Norouzi, One America

10:30 a.m. Break

10:45 a.m. **Breakout Sessions**

- **Kindergarten Entrance Assessment in the RTT-ELC States: An Overview and Implications for Early Learning for Children from Birth through Eight**

While standards communicate the hopes for what children know and can do, we use assessments to determine which skills children have or are developing. We will explore how Early Learning Challenge states are focusing on their formative assessment work with a special focus on Kindergarten Entrance Assessment (KEA). We will address different perspectives states are bringing to their KEA work and the implications for formative assessment, professional development, and child development approaches in both birth to five and early elementary settings. This session will offer an opportunity for participants to hear recommendations for future work in this critical area as well as share their own perspectives and experiences.

**Speakers:** Kelly Maxwell, Child Trends; Catherine Scott Little, University of North Carolina at Greensboro

**Location:** Tidewater
- **Early Learning and Child Health: State Trends and Opportunities**

The intimate connection between child health and early learning demands cross-sector collaboration to strengthen families and promote children’s healthy development. Learn with state and national leaders how RTT-ELC grantees strengthen child health services in the context of comprehensive systems building. We will explore how collaboration among child health, early care and education, and family support services supports the early detection of children at risk for adverse developmental and behavior outcomes and promotes their successful linkage to community-based programs and services to improve early childhood health and learning outcomes.

**Panelists:** Karmina Barrales, California Department of Education; Paul Dworkin, Connecticut Children’s Medical Center; Dana Hargunani, Oregon Health Authority; Jill Sells, Reach Out and Read Washington State

**Location:** Pebble Beach
- **The Formation of an English Language Development Approach: A Case Study on California**

With the release of the California Preschool Foundations in 2008, California seeded a new approach for serving young dual language learners (DLLs). California’s English language development approach recognizes the benefits to both acquiring English during the preschool years as well as the strategic use and continued development of the home language. Over time, the state has aligned this approach to its curriculum framework, preschool operating guidelines, statewide formative assessment, kindergarten entry assessment, preschool teacher competencies and professional development initiatives. In this session, key state leaders, researchers and advocates that were architects of this approach will reflect on how they moved from research to action regarding DLLs. This will be a fishbowl discussion that will allow for multiple breaks for participants to ask questions and pose comments.

**Panelists:** Miriam Calderon, BUILD Initiative; Linda Espinosa, University of Missouri; Antonia Lopez, National Council of La Raza; Camille Maben, First Five California; Marlene Zepeda, California State University

**Location:** Augusta AB
- **Toward Racial Equity: What Are We Learning?**

Addressing equity is an important issue to early learning systems development. The RTT-ELC brought this issue to state attention with its focus on children with high needs. Participants will hear about work in several states as well as an overview of how racial equity and disparities are being addressed in the context of RTT-ELC workforce initiatives. You will also learn how states

are framing the issues and strategies and how they are working, and future directions. Through conversation between session participants and the panelists, additional ideas will be generated to address racial equity as an issue central to achieving a just, fair early learning system.

**Panelists:** Valerie Alloy, Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services; Harriet Dichter, BUILD Initiative; Denauvo Robinson, Albemarle Smart Start Partnership; Sam Whiting, Thrive Washington; Randi Wolfe, Tikkun Consulting

**Location:** Victoria A

12:00 p.m. **Networking Lunch**

**Location:** Victoria ABC - Pick up your lunch in the area outside of Victoria.

12:45 p.m. **Plenary Session - The Innovation Zone Approach**

This session will highlight the work in 4 states that created or supported innovation zones through the RTT-ELC to improve outcomes for young children and their families. We will discuss their goals, roles and responsibilities, how they are organized to achieve their goals and their achievements so far. The session will also explore the challenges and what states have learned that will assist others in this intense level of work.

**Panelists:** Wendy Baysmore, Maryland Division of Early Childhood Development; Daphne Evans, Delaware Early Childhood Council; Megan Irwin, Oregon Division of Early Learning; Karen Ponder, BUILD Initiative; Donna White, North Carolina Partnership for Children

**Location:** Victoria ABC

2:15 p.m. Break

2:30 p.m. **Breakout Sessions**

- **Beyond Parallel Play: State/Community Alignment and Two-Way Communication between States and Communities**

Many states take a community-based approach in their early childhood systems building efforts but are they maximizing the full potential of such an approach? Are they focused on just one aspect of the system or supporting all components in the development of the comprehensive early childhood system at the local level? Are these community-based initiatives only focused on state priorities or local priorities or are they aligned to support both perspectives? Are they engaging diverse stakeholders and partners? Are community collaboratives or partnerships part of the systems approach in a state? And is there a feedback loop in place so that communities are informing state decision-making and vice versa? Talk with North Carolina state and local leaders about the approach they have taken over the past 20 years, how their approach has evolved, what has worked and what they still need to work on. Share the work in your own state in taking a community-based approach and discuss ideas for strengthening this approach going forward. Let's all learn from each other in creating a statewide approach that emphasizes communities as a critical element in building a comprehensive early childhood system.

**Panelists:** Gerry Cobb and Karen Ponder, BUILD Initiative; Jessica Lowery, Robeson County Partnership for Children; Cindy Watkins, North Carolina Partnership for Children; Henrietta Zalkind, Down East Partnership for Children

**Location:** Pebble Beach

- **QRIS: A Driver for System Reform**

As states work to craft coherent cross-sector system frameworks are the systems working for "all" children and families? How are state leaders keeping their eye on targeting and serving high need providers and children? How are the policies, processes, procedures and service implementation working? What is the data telling us about improving quality and access to services for at risk children? We will hear how RTT-ELC state leaders are grappling with these complex issues, share insights about what they are learning and the challenges that still exist.

**Panelists:** Peggy Ball, BUILD Consultant; Leanne Barrett, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT; Kelly Kreider, Michigan Early Childhood Investment Corporation; Debi Mathias, BUILD Initiative; Reeve Murphy, Vermont Child Development Division; Dawn Woods, Oregon Early Learning Division

**Location:** Victoria ABC

- **RTT-ELC State Leaders - A facilitated discussion for RTT-ELC state leaders only**

Individuals who are involved in leading the work of your state's RTT-ELC grant are invited to join this discussion to talk with your peers about common challenges and successes. Use this chance to talk with those who are dealing with similar issues to you. This discussion will be a closed door one and will take the approach of "what happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas."

**Moderator:** Harriet Dichter, BUILD Initiative

**Location:** Tidewater

- **Focus on Families: States' Local Approaches**

Families are the backbone for children's learning and development. As more attention is placed on early learning in formal programs the importance of supporting families and communities is often not discussed. Many people and systems including health, mental health AND education have an enormous impact on the trajectory of a child's growth and learning, but none is more central than that of family members. They not only provide the strongest relationships, but also shelter, food, nurturing, and social stimulation. They are responsible for a child's wellbeing, which includes helping access early learning experiences, preventive health care, early intervention if necessary, and other supports. What are current efforts to partner with families for children's growth and learning? Are states and informal institutions ensuring they are partnering with families for children's growth and learning?

**Panelists:** Sherri Killins and Jeanna Capito, BUILD Initiative; Stacey Schaff, Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

**Location:** Augusta AB

3:45 p.m. Break

4:00 p.m. **Closing Discussion – Takeaways that Bring the Early Learning Challenge Lessons Home**

**Panelists:** Gerry Cobb, Miriam Calderon, Harriet Dichter and Sherri Killins, BUILD Initiative

**Location:** Victoria ABC

4:45 p.m. Meeting ends

6:00 p.m. **Dinner and a Movie: "Cracking the Codes - The System of Racial Inequity"**

Join us for dinner, a movie and a discussion on racial inequity in the early childhood system. Hear in the movie from racial justice leaders who have experienced the results of structural and institutional racism. Join with your peers for a follow-up discussion on how we change the early childhood system to assure equity for all children. Click [here](#) for a preview of the movie.

**Moderator:** Sherri Killins and Michelle Stover Wright, BUILD Initiative

**Location:** Augusta AB

**May 5, 2015**

8:30 a.m. **601. Dual Language Learners: Closing the Gap between What We Know and What We Do**

The majority of early care and education programs do not have the capacity to offer dual language approaches for children despite research showing the many benefits of dual language development. Participants will learn about an English language development approach that assists ECE professionals in providing instruction and interactions that intentionally support English acquisition in combination with support of home language development.

**Presenters:** Marlene Zepeda, California State University; Linda Espinosa, University of Missouri, Miriam Calderon, BUILD Initiative; Roxana Norouzi, One America

**Location:** Colony AB

3:30 p.m.

**512. State Early Childhood Health Equity Policy Efforts: Two Case Studies**

Learn about the work in two states to support early childhood development by promoting pathways to health and eliminating disparities. Speakers will explore the role of social and institutional inequities on young child health, share state approaches to strengthening community capacity to create healthy environments and discuss how early childhood systems are advancing strategies that assure opportunities for improved outcomes.

**Presenters:** Valerie Alloy, Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services; Maria Castro, Oregon Health Authority; Sherri Killins, BUILD Initiative; Dawn Woods, Oregon Division of Early Learning

**Location:** Colony AB

**May 6, 2015**

8:30 a.m.

**602. The Intersection of Early Childhood and Immigration Policy**

One in four young children have an immigrant parent and, among Latino children, 98% are U.S. citizens. These demographic changes necessitate that early childhood professionals are equipped with knowledge about how mixed status families with U.S. citizen children are impacted by changes in immigration policy. This session will help ECE professional plan for how to increase collaborations with immigrant-serving organizations.

**Presenters:** Miriam Calderon, BUILD Initiative; Yvette Sanchez Fuentes, National Alliance for Hispanic Families; Antonia Lopez, National Council of La Raza

**Location:** Colony AB

1:30 p.m.

**207. Aligning QRIS Standards, Supports and Policies to Teaching and Learning**

Quality Rating Improvement Systems (QRIS) are among the key policy drivers with potential to influence children's learning, especially when public investments lead to the expansion of high quality early learning settings. This session will consider emerging ideas for strengthening the positive impact of QRIS on teaching and learning.

**Presenters:** Debi Mathias and Gerry Cobb, BUILD Initiative

**Location:** Pinehurst

**May 7, 2015**

8:30 a.m.

**603. Deepening Teaching and Learning with an Equity Lens**

It is a responsibility in system building to maximize the opportunity to address racial equity issues. Relationships are a strong force in teaching and understanding the process of learning and development is critical to success. As teachers partner with families to support young children's development, they must understand the community context, family culture and formal and informal learning opportunities.

**Presenters:** Sherri Killins, Debi Mathias and Carey McCann, BUILD Initiative

**Location:** Colony AB