

CEMETR-2014-01
FEBRUARY 2014

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Technical Report

The Center for Educational Measurement and Evaluation

An Evaluation of the Early Childhood
Directors Leadership Institute
Interim Report 2013

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A PUBLICATION OF
THE CENTER FOR
EDUCATIONAL
MEASUREMENT
AND EVALUATION

**An Evaluation of the
EARLY CHILDHOOD DIRECTORS LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE**

Interim Report for 2013

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In 2011, states competed for Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grants designed to improve access to high-quality early learning and development programs for young children. Through the RTT-ELC program, states created proposals to compete for funds to improve early learning by coordinating existing services, evaluating and rating program quality and increasing access to high-quality programs. An emphasis was placed on serving children with high needs including those from low-income families, children with disabilities and English learners from birth to age five. The RTT-ELC effort has been jointly administered by the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, working together to expand and improve services for these young children and to date over 1\$ billion in grants have been awarded. In the first year, 37 states submitted applications for RTT-ELC funds and nine states were awarded grants: California, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, North Carolina, Ohio, Rhode Island and Washington. In 2012, five additional states were awarded grants: Colorado, Illinois, New Mexico, Oregon and Wisconsin.

In 2011, North Carolina was home to almost 375,000 children, birth to kindergarten entry age, from low-income families. The state requested and was awarded \$69,991,121 over 4 years from RTT-ELC, leveraging \$1,319,900 in other state funding sources to support the grant effort. The combined funds allowed North Carolina's "NC Ready" reform agenda to build on and take advantage of its considerable early learning and development system's strengths, while advancing carefully selected strategies to dramatically improve outcomes for children, especially those with high needs. The state reform agenda already in place at that time included four major areas of focus:

- Strengthen the State's early childhood system and build its capacity to foster positive results for young children.
- Enhance access to and quality of programs to serve young children and their families.
- Strengthen the early childhood workforce to increase staff and system effectiveness and sustain change.
- Target high-intensity supports and community infrastructure-building efforts to turn around poor outcomes for young children in the highest need counties through the establishment of a Transformation Zone.

In their RTT-ELC grant proposal, the North Carolina governor's office targeted the following seven Focused Investment Areas as drawn from their application: 1.) developing statewide learning standards, 2.) supporting effective uses of comprehensive assessment systems, 3.) improving the school readiness of children with high needs, 4.) engaging and supporting families, 5.) supporting early childhood educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities, 6.) understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry, and 7.) building and enhancing an early learning data systems. Once the RTT-ELC funding was received, the state of North Carolina conducted several competitions through which they sought partners capable of helping them accomplish their goals in each of the seven focal areas. CCRI responded to a call for proposals in the area of supporting early childhood educators. In this strand of activity North Carolina was seeking to enhance their educator professional development system, collect data on the early childhood workforce, and examine the effectiveness of various strategies designed to improve the quality of and access to professional development. Multiple prior workforce studies have provided the state with data on the education, compensation, demographics, workplace supports, professional development needs, and turnover of the early childhood workforce, and have been used to create strategies to promote system-wide improvements. CCRI's proposal to conduct a statewide professional development initiative for early childhood program administrators fit naturally into this area of activity and was selected for funding.

Rationale for the Project

The lead administrator of a child care program is responsible for every aspect of its program operations and is often the gatekeeper to its quality. These leadership responsibilities are multi-faceted, ranging from basic sanitation compliance to complex educational, fiscal, and legal issues. The lead administrator's role requires significant skill in communication and decision-making, with an increasing focus on the performance of child care centers as business enterprises that require skilled resource management and leadership (Nupponen, 2006). Additionally, coaching and mentoring programs help promote desired changes by providing opportunities for administrators to focus on their leadership capabilities (Fleming & Love, 2003).

In research conducted across 560 centers in 25 states, researchers at the McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership (2010) found that the quality of instructional leadership practices and the learning environment for children were stronger when directors were well-educated and had access to leadership and business administration training along with peer support. Unfortunately, further research shows that many child care program administrators assume their positions without the necessary instructional, management, and leadership skills and experience to sustain high quality services and financially viable programs. In addition, opportunities for growth and professional development for these particular leaders in these areas have been scarce. Gaps in the knowledge of early childhood program leaders include knowledge and skills specific to financial management, planning, leadership development, personnel and human resources, and curricular planning and implementation (Boulton, 2008). There is a need for early childcare administrators to have access to formal instructional opportunities that address the complex role of directors and their many areas of responsibility.

As a first round RTT-ELC grant winner, North Carolina was awarded approximately \$70 million to improve their services and programs for young children. One of the mandates in the award was to enhance leadership development in the early childhood education field. \$750,000 of the state's \$70 million award was designated to meet this specific need. Child Care Resources, Incorporated, a private non-profit, 501c (3) child care resource and referral agency, was selected to fulfill this portion of the grant mandate.

Child Care Resources, Inc. (CCRI)

CCRI was established in 1982 through a community planning process initiated and commissioned by the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners to improve and expand the county's child care services. For thirty years, CCRI has successfully advanced the mission of partnering with families, communities, and early care and education and school-age child care professionals and programs to ensure that all children have access to high quality, affordable early learning and school-age opportunities and experiences. CCRI was Mecklenburg County's first partnership to privatize government services and the first nationally-certified Childcare Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agency. They are governed by a 21 member Board of Directors and presently administer \$45.6 million of child care subsidy funds. The extensive work of CCRI is largely credited for 87% of the children in their service area (a five county region in North Carolina) being enrolled in licensed child care settings with 4- and 5- star programs.

Beyond its local and regional footprint, CCRI has a long history of successful collaboration at the state level. In 2004, in collaboration and at the request of the NC Division of Child Development, they co-founded the North Carolina Child Care Resource and Referral Council and have served the state on this Council since its inception. In its role with the Council, CCRI ensures quality CCR&R service delivery statewide, provides competent statewide leadership for one of the Council's special initiatives, Promoting Healthy Social Behaviors in Child Care Centers, and also houses the Council's Consumer Education and Referral and Technical Assistance/Professional Development specialists. Given its strong partnerships with NCDCCDEE and child-focused and child-serving organizations throughout the state, CCRI was well-positioned to develop and lead the effort to enhance leadership development even further throughout the state.

As evidenced by its status as the first CCR&R agency in North Carolina to become IACET-approved for the delivery of Continuing Education Unit (CEU) coursework, CCRI was already developing appropriate curriculum and designing the delivery of effective training to improve the leadership and program management skills of child care administrators in the region. In 2006, CCRI launched a project in Mecklenburg County known as the *Directors Leadership Academy (DLA)*. The goals of this effort were to 1) strengthen child care administrators' planning, and mentoring for the benefit of their programs; 2) promote and support their leadership roles within the field; and 3) nurture a cadre of lead teachers who would be prepared to succeed current leaders as opportunities arose. To date, DLA has engaged more than 157 child care administrators and its services have penetrated 22% of the market of Mecklenburg County licensed child care programs serving children birth to age five.

The success of the *Director's Leadership Academy* captured the attention of the local school system. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) is a large, urban district serving almost 150,000 students K-12. When the *More at Four* initiative was launched in North Carolina (now *NC Pre-K*), CMS called on CCRI for its expertise and proven capacity and contracted with CCRI to customize and implement their project.

The Early Childhood Directors Leadership Institute

The overarching goal of the ECDLI was to design and lead the implementation of a statewide leadership institute for 100 diverse early childhood directors from across the state of North Carolina. As part of the project, curriculum for CEU credits would be developed and piloted with a goal of making this curriculum available for delivery to others beyond the scope of the project in the future. The curriculum designed for this project would be delivered over the course of three 2-day Institutes, during which the 100 director participants would be convened. In addition to delivery of the curriculum, the Institutes would provide for training on other topics including the Program Administration Scale (PAS), the theory and application of Small Tests of Change (STC), and the process of creating a Change Framework for becoming a culturally competent leader at both the program and systems level.

CCRI has developed a detailed implementation plan to insure that the overall goals of the project will be accomplished. This plan includes the following 13 specific goals for the 2013 project year:

- 1) Hire the Project Coordinator
- 2) Recruit a geographically diverse pool of 100 eligible Directors
- 3) Select a diverse pool of 100 Directors to participate in the ECDLI
- 4) Convene the Leadership Faculty
- 5) Develop curricula
- 6) Recruit and select 10 geographically diverse Coaches
- 7) Conduct a two-day institute for Directors
- 8) Obtain Satisfied ratings from at least 80% of the Institute participants
- 9) Ensure that 100 Institute participants attend all training sessions
- 10) Collect PAS pre-assessments for each participating program
- 11) Develop individual actions plans created for each Director
- 12) Implement the Small Tests of Change Process in each participating program
- 13) Coaches provide at least 5 hours of face-to-face contact with each participating Director.

As of December 2013, CCRI exceeded the target performance outcomes for five of these goals (2, 7, 8, 9, and 13). The performance outcomes were met for four of these goals (1, 3, 4, and 6). For three of these goals, all involving ongoing activities that will extend across project years, the performance outcomes were partially met as expected (5, 10, and 11). For the remaining goal (12), the activities were postponed until the 2014 project year.

To address goal 1, a job description with required qualifications was developed and Lisa Shporer was hired as the coordinator of the ECDLI project on January 2, 2013. Lisa holds a Bachelor's of Science in Early Childhood Education as well as an MBA degree. She has experience in Early Childhood Educational administration, served as Executive Director of a children's museum, and has ten years of business and management leadership experience. She was also the project manager of CCRI's Directors Leadership Academy.

To address goals 2 and 3, recruiting and selecting 100 early childhood directors from throughout North Carolina to apply and be accepted to participate in the Early Childhood Directors Leadership Institute, the project coordinator took steps to recruit a cadre of ethnically, culturally, and racially diverse directors from urban and rural regions across the state. North Carolina is divided into 100 counties and childcare programs are rated using a 5 star rating scale with 5 being of highest quality. Only directors from 3- 4- or 5 star programs were invited to apply. The project coordinator took the number of 3 – 5 star programs available per county and selected participants based on a matching percentage. For example, in Alamance County, there were only 56 programs with 3 – 5 star ratings while in Mecklenburg County there were 228. Consequently, a higher percentage of applicants were admitted from larger counties.

Participants also needed to meet additional requirements. They must have been administrators in the early childhood field for at least 3 years and have supervised at least 4 other workers to apply. Additional information on the applications included education level, number of children served in the facility, star ratings, and number of children with subsidies their program served. The directors also needed to have internet access and to supply references. Writing samples were taken from all applicants including a self-reflection on their comfort level in dealing with change. Efforts were made to recruit participants from a diverse setting physically as well as geographically, from large programs and small programs, from urban, suburban and rural. No home centers were recruited to participate. Participants had to be willing to commit to all three of the multi-day Institutes over the 2-year time duration of the project. If too many applicants were accepted from the same county, a lottery system was used to select participants. In total, 172 directors applied for the ECDLI and 109 were selected, thereby exceeding the performance outcomes. These directors represent a geographically diverse cross section of the state as they work in 49 of North Carolina's 100 counties.

To address goal 4, Lisa Shporer convened a leadership advisory group of university faculty and other highly qualified professionals to guide the development and writing of content that would be included in the curriculum of the Institute. The following individuals serve on this faculty: Dr. Richard Lambert (UNC-Charlotte); Dr. Stephen Hancock (UNC-Charlotte); Dr. Rebecca Shore (UNC-Charlotte); Dr. Karen Geiger (Queens University); Dr. Renee Sanders (Johnson C. Smith University); Tammy Hamilton (JCSU); Jennifer Johnson (NCDCEE); and Janet Singerman (CCRI). The leadership faculty met in March, April, May, and August of 2013 to develop the scope

Table 1
Demographic characteristics of ECDLI participants.

| Center STAR Rating | Number of Programs | Number of Teaching Staff | Number of Children Served Birth - 5 |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| 5 | 69 | 1408 | 5,755 |
| 4 | 27 | 403 | 1,832 |
| 3 | 4 | 60 | 308 |

and sequence of the Institute curriculum. The leadership faculty represented a cross section of stakeholders and included among others a NCDCDEE appointee, a NCCCR&R Council representative, and university faculty with expertise in leadership, cultural competency, early childhood programming and evaluation. Members met both in-person at CCRI headquarters in Charlotte, North Carolina, and through call-in to participate in the development of the curriculum. Therefore this performance outcome was met.

As Shporer and the leadership faculty began developing the curricula for the ECDLI, they incorporated effective practices for leadership development focusing on the following criteria and guiding principles.

The ECDLI would:

- Be based on participants' perceived needs;
- Be problem-centered and site specific;
- Focus on the administrator as leader/change agent;
- Meet the needs of the working professional;
- Promote the professional advancement of the participant;
- Promote active learning and instructional leadership;
- Promote collegiality and networking; and
- Include ongoing technical assistance.

Given that the work of this group will be ongoing throughout the project period, and more curricular modules are to be developed, this performance outcome was partially met.

Concomitant to the meetings of the leadership faculty, and to address goal 6, ten coaches were recruited and hired across the state to support the 100 Institute participants throughout the duration of the project. The coaches were experts in early childcare leadership rooted in practice across

diverse geographic regions of North Carolina. Their role would be to work with ECDLI participants in the application of knowledge gained through the Institute including goal-setting, self-reflections, action plans, and all aspects of the curriculum including phases of the PAS and the Small Test of Change process. Applicants for the coaching position were recruited through multiple measures, primarily through electronic messages to experts in the field. Highly qualified coaches were sought statewide. Candidates had to have experience working with young children in North Carolina. Ten successful coaches were selected among 58 applicants to support the 100 participants of ECDLI. Once hired, the coaches were matched to areas of greatest need and geographic location was an additional consideration. A map of territories was created by the project coordinator and one coach was assigned to 10 Institute participants creating ten teams for the duration of the project. The coaches were trained to visit participants face-to-face in their work settings as well as communicate via phone and through electronic communication. Goal 13 was exceeded as these coaches began the process of meeting with and supporting the Directors. Every participating Director received at least 5 hours of contact and many received more.

The individuals participating in ECDLI were connected using manaba, an on-line community software tool. Currently, 94% of the participants are connected through manaba and use it on a weekly basis. Manaba enables:

- Leadership faculty to share information and comments on the curriculum development,
- The project coordinator to connect to the entire cohort, individual team members, coaches, and the leadership faculty,
- Coaches to connect with their team members and other coaches, and
- Participants to connect with their teams and share resources, identify topics of common interest, post resources, and provide information and feedback to address challenges.

To address, Goal 10, conducting pre-assessments for all participating programs and their directors, the project coordinator was trained as a PAS evaluator and began the process of visiting each program. During 2013, 12 pre-assessments were completed. This process continues and the remaining pre-assessments will be completed in early 2014. Therefore this performance goal was partially met. Similarly, the process of developing individual action plans, goal 11, was partially met. The process of development was started and 12 action plans were developed based on the data collected during the completed pre-assessments. Goal 12, the Small Steps of Change process was postponed until all pre-assessments and action plans are completed.

Institute I - October 28-30, 2013

Goal 7 involved conducting a two day Institute for the Directors. This goal was exceeded given that a three day institute was held. Goals 8 and 9 involve attendance at and satisfaction with the Institute. This section of the report provides a detailed account of what took place at the Institute, the engagement and attendance of the participants, and their level of satisfaction with the event. The first Institute took place at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Winston Salem, North Carolina. Between acceptance to the program and the opening activities of Institute I on October 28th, 8 of the 109 participants were not able to attend the Institute and 1 had to depart after the first day so a

total of 100 early childhood leaders attended and completed the first Institute. Learner outcomes were developed and made available to all participants and detailed instructions for all involved were delivered. Resources were ordered and organized and coaches arrived early to participate in a pre-meeting with the program coordinator prior to the opening session. Evaluation personnel from the Center for Educational Management and Evaluation (CEME) were present at all planning meetings and attended all 3 days of Institute I.

Coaches Meeting – 1:00 – 3:30 pm

Prior to the opening session of Institute I, Lisa Shporer conducted a meeting with all ten coaches and personnel from the CEME in a conference room at the Embassy Suites. Coaches were instructed in protocol for working with the 100 participants and accountability measures. They were instructed to record both the questions they were asking the participants and the questions the participants were asking them, as well as rating how engaged each participant was. This would be captured qualitatively through minutes of meetings as well as quantitatively through recording of number and duration of meetings through manaba. Research on measurement properties and evaluation of management climate was shared with the group (Lambert 2002) in addition to other performance information and the evaluation of teachers. Coaches were advised that early childhood administrators have been shown to rate the performance of their teachers higher than their own.

At 6:00 pm on October 28th, 2013, Janet Singerman, President of Child Care Resources, Incorporated took the podium of the Grand Pavillion Ballroom and welcomed the participants, coaches, and support personnel to the opening of the Early Childhood Directors Leadership Institute. She delivered brief, motivational remarks utilizing inspirational quotes from leaders woven between important information regarding leadership in early childhood. Janet Singerman's remarks were followed by a welcome from Lucy Roberts, the Executive Director of the North Carolina Early Childhood Advisory Council.

At 7:25 p.m., Dr. David Rendall, author of *The Four Factors of Effective leadership* delivered the opening keynote address of the Institute. His informative (and humorous) talk summarized research and writing of outstanding scholars on leadership in addition to highlighting the essentials for moving forward in leadership. He provided a framework for assessing the participants' current competence and guiding their improvement in four specific areas of leadership: Influence, integrity, inspiration, and continuous improvement. Dr. Rendall concluded his remarks at 8:55. Lisa Shporer finished with brief "housekeeping" remarks and the opening session ended at 9:00 p.m.

October 29, 2013

All participants reconvened in the Grand Pavillion Ballroom for the opening session of Day 2. Jennifer Johnson, Section Chief for Education and Quality for the North Carolina Division of Child Development and Early Education delivered a welcome to the group. Following the opening welcome, Dr. Stephen Hancock, Associate Professor of Multicultural Education from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte presented Parts I and II of the opening Institute Module. This

Module, developed by the program coordinator and leadership faculty, was titled *Introduction to Early Childhood Leadership and Management*. It included topics:

- Developing as a visionary, culturally competent leader;
- Grounding leadership in values and ethics;
- Understanding the process of change; and
- Using evidence-based practice and program assessment;

Dr. Hancock engaged participants in an opening large group discussion answering the question, “Why do we do what we do?” He then facilitated learning about visionary and culturally competent leadership, grounding leadership in values and ethics, and understanding the process of change. He also discussed the role of assessment strategies for program improvement and addressed differences between leadership and management. Many opportunities for self-reflection were incorporated throughout the Module and numerous opportunities for journal writing were included. Questions posed to participants included, “What do you believe about what you do?” “How are education, security, and judgment reflected in the world around us?” “How does your own perspective on culture affect your definition of leadership?” “When considering your personal stereotypes and biases, do you focus on people that are alike or different from you?” “How does the management of life stresses and challenges affect our world view?” “How does it affect our world view of the families of the children we serve?” Participants addressed each of these questions in their journals and further explored their own values, beliefs and ethics through various activities and small and large group discussions. The group moved to the neighboring ballroom to participate in the Privilege Walk, an activity to further emphasize the wide variety of backgrounds of early childhood leaders and the impact that this variety can have on vision and approach to their work. This portion of the Module was broken into two parts by a buffet lunch in an adjoining room to minimize lost instructional time (11:30 – 12:15) and was completed at 1:45 p.m.

At 1:45 p.m., Tomoka Higuchi McElwain, Vice President of ASAHI Net, Incorporated, gave the participants an orientation to the on-line community software that would be used throughout the duration of the project. During a brief (5 - 10 minute) technical problem with the hotel technology, participants were asked to write down on a piece of paper their “hopes and dreams” for the Institute. By the time participants’ thoughts were written and collected, the technical glitch was solved and this orientation was completed.

Participants then transitioned through a 30 minute break. Participants reconvened in small pre-established teams to meet their coaches and other geographic work group members. These informal meetings took place throughout the hotel and generally ran for two hours from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. One CEME evaluator walked through the hotel and identified all ten groups engaged in discussions getting to know one another, sharing the role of the coach, and plotting the course for the next two years of work together. Following these meetings, participants had a break before dinner and team-building activities conducted by Michael Raines and associates from the YMCA Camp Hanes. Activities which included a variety of physical activities designed to further develop team building and incorporate movement for the participants. Activities were designed to be

enjoyable and based on observations of participants engaged in them, met that objective. It was noteworthy that participants all appeared to be actively engaged. This event concluded at 10:00 p.m.

October 30, 2013

At 8:00 a.m., Dr. Jill Bella, Director of Quality Support from McCormick Center for Early childhood Leadership and co-author of *A Great Place to Work and Zoom* began her presentation introducing the Program Administration Scale. Dr. Bella pointed out that the ECE program director is the gatekeeper to quality for their services and she shared strategies to support efforts to achieve program excellence through the PAS. This instrument provides a framework for measuring and benchmarking quality improvements in ECE programs and will be used as an evaluation tool for the project.

Dr. Bella opened with an activity called “Just Like Me” in which she asked participants to stand up if her questions applied to them. The responses were telling in further showing the overall profile of the participants. The first question was, “How many of you got up early and exercised this morning prior to attending this session?” Only 2 people among all of the participants, coaches, and support personnel stood up, less than 1%. When asked how many had hired a new teacher in the last 6 months, almost half of the participants in the room stood up, supporting research showing high turnover rates for early childhood educators. When asked how many participants had worked in early childhood for 1 – 5 years, only 2 people stood up. 6 – 10 years brought about a dozen more, 11-15 saw about a dozen more, but the approximately a quarter of the participants stood for the experience range of 16 – 20 years. Another dozen stood for 20 – 25, another dozen for 26-30, and four participants have worked in early childhood for 31-35 years. These folks received an enthusiastic round of applause.

Dr. Bella then lead the group through a series of interactive activities targeting problems in their work, big problems and small programs, and lead them to a discussion on formal assessment. She helped show that formal assessment gives feedback to help pinpoint their challenges, strengths, and areas to further explore. She discussed the formal gathering of data through surveys, rating scales, child assessments, teacher evaluations, and documentation of behaviors. The presentation was particularly well-organized and participants appeared fully engaged. The group evaluated 11 other agencies and instruments and found some widely used tools such as the ECERS and the Early Childhood Work Environment Survey, but concluded that there were no tools widely available for evaluation of leadership and management practices. This lead to the development of the Program Administration Scale. She concluded by pointing out that classroom quality cannot be maintained without systems and policies in place at the organizational level.

At 4:15 p.m. in the afternoon, Lisa Shporer delivered closing remarks to an enthusiastic showing of applause by the participants. The engagement and stamina of the participants after Institute I was noteworthy. Overall, the first Institute provided a very content rich, three day experience for the directors. They were heavily engaged throughout all of the activities and each session contained a variety of stimulating and interactive activities.

Evaluation of Institute I

“My Greatest Hope”

While the writing prompt activity in the Grand Pavilion Ballroom in the morning session on October 29th was not a pre-planned activity for evaluating the results of the opening Institute, it does serve as an important source for what participants expressed as a need and provides evidence for the motivation for their carving out the time from their busy jobs to participate in the program. 99 responses to the prompt “My greatest hope for this Institute is...” were collected from participants. These responses were coded into themes. The most prevalent response, 65 participants hoped to improve their leadership skills in some way. Some of these respondents elaborated on specifically which leadership skills they hoped to improve; Staff Relations – 7, Communication – 5, Assertiveness – 4, Avoid Burnout/Inspiration for Me – 4, Get Resources -2, Delegate – 2, and Technology – 2, while most just hoped to improve their leadership abilities. Examples of responses included the following showing themes:

Improve Leadership Skills - “My greatest hope is to improve my leadership skills, to motivate me as a leader at my child care center, and to gain knowledge on how to develop as an effective leader.”

Improve Staff Relations – “My greatest hope is to improve staff relationships and commitment to growing the future of our children. Planting seeds.” “My greatest hope is to improve staff relations.”

Communication – “My greatest hope from this Institute is to improve my ability to communicate with my staff in their ‘language’.” “My greatest hope for the Institute is to improve the communication between everyone.”

An additional theme emerged with 42 of the respondents specifically stating that they hoped to inspire and/or motivate others both at the local, state, and for a small few, at the national level. While it is likely that some coaches’ responses were in this mix, it is still significant that almost half of the participants were seeking ways to help others besides themselves by attending the Institute. Examples of these responses include:

“My greatest hope is to improve my own leadership skills and help others discover ‘the greatness’ in themselves.

“My greatest hope is to inspire my employees.”

“My greatest hope from this Institute is to improve public policy regarding ECE in North Carolina.”

ECDLI Evaluations

Evaluation forms were developed by the program coordinator in collaboration with the Leadership Faculty in the planning months prior to the opening Institute. These forms were

administered and collected at the conclusion of the Institute. Respondents were asked to indicate from a scale of Excellent, Good, Fair, or Poor, how useful the information was for them and to rate the presenter's ability to deliver the information and answer questions. Participants were also invited to write out how they would use the information from each particular session. Table 2 provides an overview of the survey responses.

Session I – The Four Factors of Effective Leadership by Dr. David Rendall

Regarding Dr. David Rendall's presentation of the Four Factors of Effective Leadership, 89% of respondents rated the session as Excellent and 11% found it Good. No respondents responded with Fair or Poor. Also, 91% found Dr. Rendall's delivery and ability to answer questions Excellent and 9% found it Good. Again, no respondents rated the session Fair or Poor.

A total of 96 participants provided written comments regarding how they would use the information shared. The responses were coded and seven themes within the responses were established. The largest category of qualitative responses indicated the participants (35) would use the information from the session for self-evaluation and improvement. Example responses for using the information included "fine tune my leadership skills and become more aware of the impact of my interactions and changes on leadership," and "the change starts with me." Another 28 respondents wrote that the session would improve their leadership skills. "I will use the information to improve my professional and volunteer leadership skills." "Begin with 'why', not 'what'." Eleven participants from this 28 specifically mentioned the 4 leadership factors shared by Rendall on their form. "I will implement the 4 factors of Effective leadership and I will start with myself." "Implement the 4 factors to help me become a better leader." "Can't wait to read the book." Thirteen respondents claimed that they would share the information with their staff and/or children and/or parents and 4 of these believed that the information would help with their staff relations. One claimed that they would take the information to a "staff meeting to inform the staff what I learned." Another wrote, "I will be doing a mini workshop for my Assistant Directors on being an effective leader." Eight respondents reported that they would use the information to inspire others and 7 claimed that it inspired them. "I will use this information in my current role to inspire my colleagues and the directors I am coaching." Twenty-one commented (unsolicited by the form) that this opening session was "fun" and "a great way to start the Institute!" "Especially good for evening presentation since humor kept it interesting and engaging even when tired." "Adding humor helped get the information across." "He was funny." "Great speaker and wonderful start to this event." Finally, 7 specifically wrote that they planned to buy his book and three claimed that they intended to conduct a book study with their staff on *The Four Factors of Effective Leadership*. "Will use this book for book club for my Team." "Book study with my teachers/staff." "Can't wait to read the book."

Table 2
Overview of satisfaction survey results

| Speaker | Question | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|-------|------|------|
| Dave Randall | Information was useful | 88.8% | 11.2% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| | Delivery, Answers to questions | 90.8% | 9.2% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Stephen Hancock | Information was useful | 86.2% | 12.8% | 0.9% | 0.0% |
| | Delivery, Answers to questions | 85.0% | 15.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Michael Raines | Information was useful | 72.6% | 23.6% | 3.8% | 0.0% |
| | Delivery, Answers to questions | 73.6% | 25.5% | 0.9% | 0.0% |
| Jill Belia | Information was useful | 86.8% | 13.2% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| | Delivery, Answers to questions | 86.5% | 9.6% | 3.8% | 0.0% |
| Overall Satisfaction | ECDLI Institute overall | 75.8% | 24.2% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| | Location | 72.6% | 25.5% | 1.9% | 0.0% |
| | Hotel room | 80.0% | 15.2% | 3.8% | 1.0% |
| | Meals, snacks | 81.0% | 14.3% | 4.8% | 0.0% |
| | Books, resources | 93.3% | 6.7% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| | Networking | 81.6% | 14.3% | 3.1% | 1.0% |

Session II – Early Childhood Leadership and Management by Dr. Stephen Hancock

Regarding Dr. Stephen Hancock’s presentation on Early Childhood Leadership and Management, 86% found the usefulness of the information to be Excellent and 13% rated it Good with one participant responding that it was Fair. On the second question regarding delivery, 85% rated the session Excellent and 15% responded Good with no Fair or Poor ratings.

A total of 100 participants provided written comments regarding how they would use the information presented by Dr. Hancock. Six themes were established from these responses. The most prevalent use of knowledge by participants was that they would share the information with staff (34 respondents). Another 22 wrote that they would “start by asking ‘why’” they do what they do, a focal point of Dr. Hancock’s message. Seventeen claimed that the session encouraged them to practice self-reflection. “I will use some of the techniques to evaluate myself, as well as my program. Loved the presentations. Great presenter.” Another 15 wrote that it would help them to implement change. “POWERFUL and CHALLENGING presentation. I really enjoyed it. Definitely will

change how I pursue change and lead my organization. Truly beneficial.” One respondent said they would use the information “to make a change in my program to become better. I really enjoyed the interaction and the information that was delivered to us.” Six responded more generally that they would be able to improve their leadership skills with the information they learned. In this particular session, 14 respondents wrote (unsolicited) that there was so much information shared that they felt somewhat rushed and needed more time to process and engage with the quantity of information delivered. One wrote that the information would “help me organize changes and plan staff experiences, hone my leadership skills. Began and ended very well...Needed more time for group processing and discussion. Privilege walk was insightful.”

Session III – Team Building by Michael Raines & YMCA Staff

Participants were asked to rate the Team Building activity that followed dinner on Tuesday evening presented by Michael Raines and his team from the YMCA. 72% of respondents rated the event as Excellent, 23% as Good, and 3% as Fair. No participants found the event to be Poor, even with the possible influence of an abbreviated night’s sleep due to the fire drill followed by a long day of workshops. 74% rated the delivery of the session as Excellent, 25% Good, and 1 respondent found it Poor.

Eighty-four participants provided written comments regarding the session. Three themes emerged. Forty-five respondents claimed that the session would help them to build stronger teams at their work places. “Great team building ideas for staff. How to build up staff morale.” “Great team building activities to do in my program. Super fun and I don’t usually enjoy those types of events. Our team certainly bonded during this activity.” Another 37 indicated that they would share the activities with their staff, and 28 others wrote (unsolicited) that this session was a lot of fun. “Bring back team building activities to do with staff. Michael was energetic and kept us all on our toes. Even though it was after dinner, he motivated all of us to get up and participate.”

Session IV – Leading the Way to Quality: The Director’s Role – Dr. Jill Bella

Both the morning and afternoon work sessions were devoted to understanding the Program Administration Scale. Ninety-two participants (87%) rated the usefulness of the information presented as Excellent and 14 respondents (13%) rated the session as Good. No participants rated the session either Fair or Poor. Ninety participants (86%) rated Dr. Bella’s ability to deliver the information and answer questions as Excellent and 10% rated this category as Good. Four respondents rated this session as Fair and no participants rated it as Poor.

Qualitative comments were written on evaluation forms by 89 participants. The vast majority of participants (67) reported that they intend to use the PAS at their work sites. “This information will be used to assess my program and start working on things that need improvement.” Another 15 wrote positive remarks about the information but didn’t not state specifically if they intended to use the information. For example, one wrote, “Really helped having the PAS explained.” Another 4 responded that they would use the information to be a better leader but did

not specifically state they were implementing the instrument. Only 4 out of 89 stated that there was too much information included in the session.

Overall Satisfaction

At the conclusion of the first Institute, participants were asked a series of questions regarding their overall satisfaction on a number of different facets (See Table 2). Seventy-three percent found the location Excellent, 25% Good, and 2% Fair. Eighty percent found their hotel rooms Excellent, 15% Good, 4% Fair and 1 found it Poor. Eighty-one percent found the meals and snacks Excellent, 14% Good, and 5% Fair. Ninety-three percent found the books and resources provided at the Institute Excellent and 7% Good. Eighty-two percent found the networking opportunities Excellent, 13% Good, 4% Fair, and one respondent rated networking opportunities Poor.

Participants were asked to choose a “best part of the Institute.” One hundred and six participants responded; clearly coaches commented on this portion of the evaluation. Thirty-five respondents indicated they liked “everything” about the Institute, primarily the information shared and the keynote presenters. A few chose favorites; 11 liked Dr. Hancock’s presentation best, 6 selected Dr. Rendall. A dozen participants thought that the PAS training by Dr. Bella was top. However, 50 respondents claim that the networking opportunities were the most valuable part of the Institute. “Networking with other directors, forming new friendships, learning new ideas. I really enjoyed the institute & I’m excited for all the changes I’m gonna make in my center!”

Lisa Shporer gave participants the opportunity to submit input regarding dates for the second Institute scheduled for summer, 2014, and will investigate best times for scheduling Institute 2. The second Institute will take place at the same site, the Embassy Suites hotel in Winston-Salem. An interview with Shporer revealed extensive consideration and investigation before selecting the site for the Institutes. She visited many sites before deciding on Embassy Suites. In the Grand Pavilion Ballroom, one wall has floor to ceiling windows that open to an enclosed nature area of trees and other greenery. During presentations, participants had their backs to this nature scene, however, during breaks, the view out the windows created a calming, open effect.

Summary Evaluation of Project Activities to Date

The Early Childhood Director Leadership Institute project began with the awarding of the grant to CCRI, Inc. and the hiring of the project coordinator who began work January 2, 2013. All activities have been successfully carried out on schedule throughout the project according to the established project timeline. The leadership faculty was convened and the curriculum design began in the first quarter of 2013. Participants and coaches were identified and recruited during the second and third quarters of 2013 and the first Institute was held in the fourth quarter of 2013. At least one evaluation team member has been present for all leadership faculty meetings and additional planning and development meetings. At least one evaluation team member attended all activities included in the preconference with coaches and the three days of the opening Institute itself. It was verified that all phases of the project have been managed and directed in a timely and exemplary

fashion. Comments from participants on all activities and presenters within the first 3-day Institute were overwhelmingly positive.

Presently, participants are receiving pre-certified PAS assessments. Twelve were conducted in the closing months of 2013 and program action plan goals were set. Coaches have begun quarterly meetings as a group, and are logging at least 5 hours per month of contact time (more than 15 minutes each) with each team member. Types of coach contact include communication over manaba, book studies, and topic discussions. Sixteen learning communities have formed within the group, which include interest topics such as strategic planning, family engagement strategies, and fiscal matters. By the end of 2013, 94% of the directors were actively using manaba. All of the community learning groups and the contact hours, including types of contact by coaches is tracked by the project coordinator at the end of each month and data is already being collected.

Future Evaluation Activities

Over the remaining project period, CEME will:

1. Continue to collect and summarize the participant evaluation evidence from surveys collected at the conclusion of each Institute and will make recommendations to project staff as needed based on participant feedback.
2. Monitor the completion of the Individual Change Plans to be developed by each participating director.
3. Develop a rubric for evaluating, reviewing, and summarizing the Individual Change Plans to determine if they are based on participant needs, problem-focused, and site-specific.
4. Develop a rating scale for the Coaches so that they can rate the level of engagement, participation, and rapport build with every participating director.
5. Collect, analyze, and summarize the Coaches' ratings of the participating directors.
6. Collect, analyze, and summarize documentation of the activities of every Coach, including the nature, frequency, and duration of contacts with each participating director.
7. Analyze the pre and post scores from the project outcome measures, the Program Administration Scale (PAS) and the Program Management Inventory (PMI), and will report the gains made over the duration of the project.
8. Collect feedback regarding project impact from participating directors and Coaches at the end of the project through surveys, focus groups, and interviews.