



The NC Pathways to Grade-Level Reading initiative was created to address one of the greatest challenges facing the state: the majority of our children are not reading proficiently by the end of third grade.



Improving third grade reading takes **aligned policies and practices** all working toward a **common vision** of optimal child development **beginning at birth** with a focus on:

- Health and development on track beginning at birth.
- Supported and supportive families and communities
- High quality birth-through-eight learning environments with regular attendance.



Pathways is driven by the foundational belief that **together we can realize greater outcomes for young children** than any of us can produce on our own.

Our Vision

North Carolina's people, agencies and organizations work collaboratively towards improving third grade reading proficiency, agreeing on how to measure progress, coordinating strategies that take into account all aspects of children's healthy development, and aligning policies and practices along the developmental continuum, starting at birth, to maximize each child's potential. **All recognize that literacy is rooted in birth-through-eight child development.**



Pathways Partners work across disciplines, sectors, systems, and the political aisle. Pathways is bringing together NC's child-serving public systems (public health, Medicaid, social services, child development & early education, public instruction, early intervention) with philanthropy, business, academia & policy leaders.



Collaborative Leadership

Pathways is an initiative of the **NC Early Childhood Foundation** in collaboration with **NC Child**, **The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc.**, and **BEST NC**.



What Would be Possible if . . .

We adopted shared, whole child, birth-through-age-eight measures that put children on a pathway to grade-level reading?

We aligned policies and practices that were rooted in how children develop?

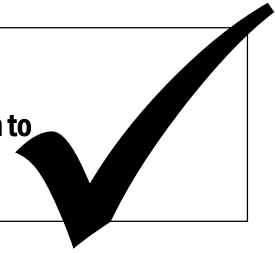
We coordinated strategies to support children's optimal development beginning at birth?



Every phase of Pathways has been based on:

- **Collaborative decision-making.** All decision-making has been based on a shared definition of consensus.
- **Transparency.** Every aspect is proactively shared and publicly available.
- **Equity.** Pathways has focused explicitly, but not exclusively, on racial equity.
- **Parent and Community Voice.** We support parents to serve as equal participants in our work, and we have created a community feedback loop.
- **Process as strategy.** Each phase of Pathways has a defined deliverable and intentional process to achieve it.

Goal 1. Diverse stakeholders working across disciplines, systems, sectors and political identities **support taking a whole-child, birth-through-eight approach to third grade reading.**



Pathways Partners agreed to a common result: All North Carolina children, regardless of race, ethnicity or socioeconomic status, are reading on grade-level by the end of third grade, and all children with disabilities achieve expressive and receptive communication skills commensurate with their developmental ages, so that they have the greatest opportunity for life success.

They agreed to focus on the following goals:

- Health and development on track beginning at birth
- Supported and supportive families and communities
- High quality birth-through-eight learning environments with regular attendance

Goal 2. Diverse stakeholders working across disciplines, systems, sectors and political identities create and endorse shared measures of success



State leaders – working with a Pathways Data Action Team composed of 30 experts from North Carolina’s leading universities, research institutes, government agencies, businesses and think tanks – identified shared birth-through-eight, whole child measures to put children on a pathway to grade-level reading.

In 2016, the Pathways Data Action Team developed and Pathways Partners endorsed the **Measures of Success framework**.

Measures of Success

These research-based measures help to quantify progress toward a Goal and are tied to grade-level reading by the end of third grade.



Community Conditions

These conditions influence, and frequently drive, child outcomes—when these conditions are positive, as shown in the diagram, children are more likely to thrive; when these conditions are negative, children are more likely to struggle.



95%

of stakeholder respondents said they “felt confident that if the state made progress on these measures, we would improve third grade reading outcomes.”

Pathways Literacy Milestones

Language Skills on Track at 24, 36 and 48 Months



Developmentally Ready at Kindergarten Entry



Meeting Expected Growth in Reading (K-3)



Reading at Grade-Level by the End of Third Grade

All children with disabilities achieve expressive and receptive communication skills commensurate with their developmental ages.

Goal 3. Diverse stakeholders working across disciplines, systems, sectors and political identities choose measures of success - based on need and equity - to move to action on first.



70 leaders from state agencies, nonprofit organizations, foundations and the private sector served on Learning Teams and committed to monthly meetings to make sense of the trends, inequities, patterns and connections in the NC data.

In 2017, Learning Teams recommended and Pathways Partners agreed that Pathways should first focus on social-emotional health, parent-child interactions, family supports, early intervention, high quality birth-through-age-eight early care and education, and regular attendance.

Goal 4. Diverse stakeholders working across disciplines, systems, sectors and political identities **craft a policy and practice framework on the prioritized measures of success.**

**Sept
2018**

Three Design Teams are crafting a policy and practice framework on the prioritized measures of success. Their final plan will be called the Pathways Action Framework.



The Pathways model – **measures, data, and policy and practice framework** – has been forged through the thinking of:

- Hundreds of stakeholders across sectors, geography and the political aisle
- Local service provider voices from two rounds of 14 community conversations
- A meta-analysis of parent voices across North Carolina
- National research with a focus on what impacts outcomes for children of color

Communities throughout North Carolina and in other states are using Pathways to:

- Guide organizational strategic planning.
- Create and/or support local collaborative efforts framed around the Pathways Measures of Success and using Pathways data.
- Strengthen collaboration with partners.
- Build community understanding on the importance of taking a whole-child, birth-through-eight approach to supporting children's healthy development.

Increasing third-grade reading proficiency is critical to the future success of North Carolina children and sustained economic growth in our state. The strong coalition of partners the North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation has brought together for the NC Pathways to Grade-Level Reading Initiative will help us put into place the policies and programs necessary to achieve this goal. We support the thoughtful and evidence-based approach led by the Foundation to ensure all North Carolina children are prepared to succeed in school and beyond.

Ann Goodnight, Senior Director, Community Relations, SAS

Pathways in Action

Pathways Partners have already been at work to align policy, funding, and planning processes with Pathways Implementation Goals.

Examples include:

- The Birth to 3rd Grade Interagency Council
- The Early Childhood Advisory Council
- The Department of Health and Human Services
- The Pritzker Children's Initiative investment in NC
- The Institute for Emerging Issues (kidsReadyNC)
- Essentials for Childhood





Promote Understanding

Promote public understanding of and support for policies that promote children's birth-to-eight years for academic and lifelong success.



Spearhead Collaboration

Convene and spearhead collaboration to bridge North Carolina's birth-to-five and kindergarten-to-third grade systems.



Advance Policies

Advance policies that create a stronger NC today and tomorrow by supporting each child's birth-to-eight development.



www.buildthefoundation.org



ncecf@buildthefoundation.org



[/north-carolina-early-childhood-foundation](https://www.linkedin.com/company/north-carolina-early-childhood-foundation)



[@ncecf](https://twitter.com/ncecf)



[/buildthefoundation](https://www.facebook.com/buildthefoundation)



[/buildthefoundation](https://www.youtube.com/buildthefoundation)

