

SMART START PERFORMANCE-BASED INCENTIVE SYSTEM (PBIS) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Overview

1. What is the purpose of the Performance-Based Incentive System (PBIS)?

The goal of the Performance-Based Incentive System (PBIS) is to ensure good results for young children and their families through Smart Start in every county in North Carolina. PBIS provides a mechanism whereby local partnerships can be rewarded for excellent results and where local partnerships that are not achieving results will be assisted with more intensive technical assistance.

2. Why was this system developed?

The General Assembly mandated that a system must be developed to measure the performance of local partnerships. Smart Start is now funded in all 100 counties and full funding is within reach. All local partnerships have had funding and enough time to begin the development of a system of early care and education. Now is the time to develop the system that will report results.

3. Is this system approved by the NC General Assembly?

The General Assembly mandated that a system should be developed by the North Carolina Partnership for Children to measure local partnership performance. The authorizing legislation follows.

143B-168.12(a) (7)

“The North Carolina Partnership may adjust its allocation on the basis of local partnerships’ performance assessments. In determining whether to adjust its allocations to local partnerships, the North Carolina Partnership shall consider whether the local partnerships are meeting the outcome goals and objectives of the North Carolina Partnership and the goals and objectives as set forth by the local partnerships in their approved annual program plans.

The North Carolina Partnership may use additional factors to determine whether to adjust the local partnerships’ allocations. These additional factors shall be developed with input from the local partnerships and shall be communicated to the local partnerships when the additional factors are selected. These additional factors may include board involvement, family and community outreach, collaboration among public and private agencies, and family involvement.

On the basis of performance assessments, local partnerships annually shall be rated ‘superior’, ‘satisfactory’, or ‘needs improvement’. Local partnerships rated ‘superior’ may receive, to the extent funds are available, a ten percent (10%) increase in their annual funding allocation. Local partnerships rated ‘needs improvement’ may receive up to ninety percent (90%) of their annual funding allocation.

The North Carolina Partnership may contract with outside firms to conduct the performance assessments of local partnerships.”

In response to this legislation, the North Carolina Partnership for Children developed the Performance-Based Incentive System. The “minimum” and “high-performing” standards equate to “satisfactory” and “superior”, respectively, in the legislation.

4. What are the guiding principles used in designing PBIS?

- Local partnerships must be involved in designing the overall incentive system
- The system must be flexible
- The system should address equity issues
- The system should reward performance as well as impose sanctions
- The system must establish minimum standards of performance
- Data should be objectively collected, valid and reliable

5. Who was on the Design Team for the development of PBIS?

The Design Team was made up of Local Partnership Board Members, NCPC Board Members and Staff, Frank Porter Graham Researchers and Evaluators, Division of Child Development Staff, and National Experts and Researchers.

6. What happens if partnerships do not achieve a minimum level of results?

Since the overall goal of PBIS is to achieve results for children, partnerships that do not achieve a minimum level of results will be provided assistance to improve their performance. The assistance will be progressive beginning with very focused technical assistance. If no progress is made, a formal corrective action plan will be put in place. If no progress is made after this plan is put in place, funding may be decreased as outlined in the legislation. The final response to no results will be a temporary transfer of the administrative responsibilities to the North Carolina Partnership for Children.

7. How do the actual values for these indicators get reported to the public?

A report of the results must be given to the General Assembly on an annual basis and consequently is available to the general public.

8. How is data collected to ensure consistency and equity in evaluation across LPs?

Statewide databases will be used as well as standardization of the survey instruments.

9. How should local partnerships involved in strategic planning use these proposed criteria?

All of the criteria are based on the Smart Start core services and the performance standards. Therefore there should be no inconsistency in a local partnership’s strategic plan and the PBIS criteria.

10. Are these true standards changed or modified?

These standards were created in the Fall of 2000, looking at where North Carolina’s children, families and child care providers were, examining the program goals and

setting achievable high standards. These standards of excellence and minimum standards are re-evaluated every two years and re-established until we have reached all of the NCPC program goals.

11. How will ongoing research and evaluation efforts in and of Smart Start affect the minimum standards and standards of excellence?

As part of our efforts for continuing quality improvement, NCPC is committed to ongoing research, evaluation and development to inform all of our practices. Possible outcomes include refined measures, new measures, new data sources and collection measures and substantiation for promising practices.

12. In the area of family support, why require uniform general indicators of family perceptions and capabilities even though county and family circumstances and needs as well as service programs vary so much?

We have carefully chosen a few core measures that simply represent key aspects of families' needs and experiences with family support activities. These indicators are consistent with commonly accepted family support principles and are intended to give a useful and relevant snapshot of this complex area.

We are developing further plans for systematic research and demonstration to refine our knowledge of measuring family support in concert with states and research organizations from around the nation. Our plans are to develop measures that are useful both at the family and service level as well as for public consumption. In-depth evaluation will always be required to "prove" the effectiveness of individual programs—we are attempting to build a framework for such efforts as well as to connect them to the well-being of children within communities.

13. Why should local partnerships be measured on the extent to which documented needs match up to the percentages of Smart Start funds allocated to different areas, e.g., family support?

Local partnerships are accountable for how their budget priorities address local needs. Although the Smart Start funding cannot support every community effort aimed at particular issues such as family stability or violence, these funds are important investments. The local partnership boards' decisions can leverage other funds for such priorities as well as foster partnerships to address common needs of the community.

This indicator is to highlight the thought process and documentation related to priorities, not to prescribe particular target issues or a numerical formula. This minimum requirement simply asks that local partnerships examine the well being of families using available data and to relate this evidence to their decisions about program priorities. This indicator also includes the specific measures identified in the Health section.

The incentive opportunity for the partnership in this area is to adopt goals for which progress will be measured over time with countywide measures. Smart Start partnerships that accept the challenge to work for measurable community change in

areas such as violence, literacy, abuse, living wages, etc., will be rewarded for success when funds are available.

14. How can partnerships be accountable for changes in the lives of families or health status if most of our money must be spent in child care?

The mission of a local partnership is to design a system of care and education for children 0-5. This plan should be comprehensive and address health needs as well as family support needs related to young children. Smart Start funding primarily addresses the needs of children related to child care but Smart Start funding is only a part of the funding that is needed to meet all the needs of children. Local Partnership Boards are charged with bringing everyone to the table to solve the problems and much more money is available collectively to affect all the needs. Local Boards must be deliberate in identifying the needs and seeking additional funds to meet them.