



THEIR FUTURE. OUR FUTURE.

2020-2021
EVALUATION
REPORT

learning
community
 DOUGLAS
SARPY

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Introduction

The Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties is an educational subdivision focused on outcomes and opportunities for children and families. Impact grows through a collaborative network of metropolitan area school districts and community organizations. Independent evaluations demonstrate consistently strong results in the implementation of quality early childhood education and family engagement programs. Improvements in teaching practices are embedded in programs.

RATIONALE

The Learning Community implements strategies built on research based on one or more of the following principles: 1) students benefit from high-quality classrooms, 2) reflective coaching adds value to the classroom, 3) family engagement is critical for a child's success in school, and 4) students' early childhood outcomes predict later school success.

NEED FOR QUALITY CLASSROOMS. Quality early childhood programs have been linked to immediate, positive developmental outcomes, as well as long-term, positive academic performance (Burchinal, et al., 2010; Barnett, 2008). Research shows that all children benefit from high-quality preschool, with low-income children and English learners benefiting the most (Yoshiwaka, et al., 2013). High-quality classroom organization is related to fewer student behavior problems and increased social competence (Rimm-Karufman, 2009).

COACHING ADDS VALUE TO THE CLASSROOM. Coaching teachers in instructional practices is proving to be an effective and feasible professional development method in improving teacher instruction. Meta-analysis of coaching studies indicated medium to large effect sizes on teacher instruction & small to medium effect sizes on student achievement (Kraft, Blazar, & Hogan, 2018). Coaching methods that combine the elements of modeling, observation, and direct feedback have been found to increase teacher implementation of proactive strategies, particularly in regards to classroom management (Reinke et al., 2014, Kamps et al., 2015). The coaching relationship continues to be paramount in instructional coaching as research indicates that the most effective coaching models are those adapted to each individual's needs and situations (Bradshaw et al., 2013). The differentiation and individualization of coaching are effective for both new and veteran teachers alike (Reddy et al., 2013).

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION IS CRITICAL FOR STUDENTS' SUCCESS. Family engagement with their children and their schools is a key element for student school success (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Partnerships between home and school are especially important for children who are socially and economically disadvantaged (Jeynes, 2005). Positive goal-directed

Our Mission

Together with school districts and community organizations as partners, we demonstrate, share, and implement more effective practices to measurably improve educational outcomes for children and families in poverty.

Our Vision

That all children within the Learning Community achieve academic success without regard to social or economic circumstance.

relationships between families and program staff are key to engagement and children's school readiness (HHS/ACF/OHS/NCPFCE, 2018).

PRESCHOOL CHILD OUTCOMES PREDICT LATER SCHOOL SUCCESS. School readiness is an essential concern for students entering the educational system. Preparation to perform in an educational setting is a significant benefit for students, especially those who are from diverse backgrounds, with a greater number of risk factors. These students typically have poorer school performance compared to their economically advantaged counterparts (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Students enrolled earlier and for a longer duration demonstrate better short and long-term results (Barnett, 2008). In studies of the longer term effects of preschool programs, the importance of quality teaching in early elementary grades is also important. Research found that investments in elementary schools influence the strength of ongoing preschool effects, researchers have found that the level of challenge provided by kindergarten teachers matters for later outcomes (Johnson & Jackson, 2017).

2GEN APPROACH

The Learning Community uses a two-generation (2Gen) approach in designing early childhood and family engagement programs at each of the centers, Family Learning at the Learning Community Center of South Omaha and Parent University at Learning Community Center of North Omaha. This creates opportunities for and addresses the needs of both children and adults. Using the whole-family approach, programs focus equally and intentionally on children and parents.

The theory of change behind the 2Gen approach suggests aligning services for parents and children yields stronger and lasting results (ASCEND, 2018). Based on community needs, each Learning Community Center developed a comprehensive program to address the opportunity gap for children and families based on the unique characteristics of each community and their needs.

Key elements of the 2Gen approach include:

- Early Childhood Development
- Health & Well-being
- Post-secondary & Employment Pathways
- Economic Assets
- Social Capital



SCHOOL DISTRICT INITIATIVES

The Learning Community also supports programs in nine school districts. School districts customize programs to meet specific needs, but all have the opportunity to benefit from sharing their successes and lessons learned.

- **Jumpstart to Kindergarten** provides low-income students the opportunity to experience a school setting. Most students have little or no experience in classroom environments.
- **Extended Learning** provides additional direct instruction for children to prevent summer learning loss and improve their chances of success.
- **Instructional Coaching** allows teachers to reflect on strategies and enhances instructional practice.

EVALUATION

A comprehensive evaluation process using a Utilization-Focused evaluation design (Patton, 2012) was conducted to monitor the implementation of the Learning Community programs and assess progress towards identified program outcomes. Data were used as a teaching tool throughout the year to support program improvement.

Based upon the evaluation plan, the evaluation employed multiple methods to describe and measure the quality of implementation, the nature of programming, and to report outcomes demonstrated by the programs funded by the Learning Community (LC). The findings will reflect the collective experiences of the child and family through participation in the program as well as other factors (e.g., school district efforts, other community services, and family support). The overarching evaluation questions were:

IMPLEMENTATION. What was the nature of the implementation strategies? Was there variation in implementation and if so, what factors contributed to that variation? What was the impact of COVID-19 on the program and/or evaluation practices?

DEMOGRAPHICS. Who accessed and participated in the program or intervention?

QUALITY PRACTICES. To what extent are there quality practices in the center and classroom settings? Typically, classroom observations are completed to examine quality. However, as school districts had to implement COVID-19 protocols, observations were not feasible.

CHILD AND FAMILY OUTCOMES. What were the outcomes related to academic achievement? Did family parenting skills improve? To what extent were parents engaged in their child's learning? Did parents gain skills that would improve their ability to support their child in school?

COMMUNITY PRACTICES AND USE OF DATA. How did programs use their data? What changes occurred as a result of this continuous improvement process?

In addition, this year's evaluation plan adjusted in accordance with program changes, school district policies and the COVID-19 situation. New evaluation data were collected at both centers while less data was able to be collected directly from school district students and staff. For

programs such as the Childcare Director Project and the MCC Teacher program, evaluation was dependent upon participation and with decreased participation few if any measures were able to be implemented.

INTERPRETING THE RESULTS

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF A STRATEGY IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE?

The answer to this question can be found by reviewing both the quantitative and qualitative data that are summarized in this report. Due to the pandemic, data comparisons are more difficult to make given the adaptations schools and programs made last year and impacted the context of results. Where appropriate, statistical analyses provide information to determine if there were significant changes in the outcomes (p value) and if those significant values were meaningful (d value or effect size). The effect size is the most helpful in determining “how well did the intervention work” (Coe, 2002). Qualitative data provide more detailed insight as to how the program is working and outcomes from key informants’ perspectives.



COVID-19

**IMPACT &
RESPONSE**



COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to alter the programming, services, education, and evaluation of the Learning Community in 2020-2021. Much of the programming continued to be done virtually at the LCCSO and LCCNO. Staff continued to support families and students as they navigated the changes with schools and in the community. However, the Metro Community College Teacher Prep program and the Early Childhood provider training were significantly impacted by the pandemic. Each of these components had reduced participation and needed to strategically plan on how best to move forward.

Learning Community Center of South Omaha

COVID-19 Response

The LCCSO spent much of the past year both moving the program to the Zoom platform while simultaneously preparing for the shift back to in-person learning.

In order to offer online classes during the pandemic, the program spent the year focused on teaching digital literacy. This was a difficult year for many LCCSO families (due to COVID-19, loss of employment, etc.), and for this reason, they were given the option to either be a part of the comprehensive program or choose the “home visit only” if they could not attend classes.

Before opening the center for in-person programming in June 2021, a vaccine event was held onsite for the participants and their families. The center added a new classroom to allow for less crowding in the childcare rooms. The outdoor play space was also expanded, and an expert at Nebraska Extension helped redesign the outdoor area with new play equipment and toys. OneWorld purchased an HVAC upgrade to improve air quality.

ESL/GED

The 2020-2021 school year looked vastly different for adult learners at the Learning Community Center of South Omaha than previous school years. As was true for learners around the world, it was a challenging and stressful time, but LCCSO parent participants were able to acquire myriad skills as a result of virtual learning.

Because the center was not able to host the usual family camp for participants in July of 2020, the program created a virtual version, hosting a variety of online academic and enrichment activities that families could participate in from home via Zoom. Topics included math, origami, fitness, fun facts, cooking, and music, and sessions were held daily. These sessions provided a context in which children and parents could help each other navigate technology.

Beginning in August of 2020, ESL and GED programs were implemented via Zoom. Donations from private donors allowed the program to loan each participant a Chromebook and provide

internet hotspots to those participants who did not have internet at home. From August 2020 to May 2021, all of the adult education (ESL/GED) courses took place online. However, gaps in participants' digital knowledge became apparent and teachers spent time in each class working on technology skills in addition to traditional English and GED instruction. ESL participants became proficient in using Zoom, email, search engines, and Google Classroom and gained skills such as using a mouse, copying and pasting, and typing, to name a few. In some cases, small in-person sessions were conducted in order to facilitate participants learning technology concepts that were difficult to learn remotely. GED students, who take classes in a partnership between the LCCSO and Metro Community College, received certificates from NorthStar Online Learning in Basic Computer Skills, Internet, Email, and Windows.



While technology learning and support took time away from traditional English and GED instruction, teachers were still able to use online curriculum to continue instruction in language, math, social studies, and science. During the 2020-2021 school year, five students graduated with their GEDs.

Educational Navigators

Educational Navigators increased their number of personal visits during the past year as they worked from home from 1,994 during the 2019-2020 evaluation year to 2,338 during the 2020-2021 evaluation year.

While some parents were unable to attend ESL or GED classes, most opted to continue with home visits during the pandemic. Until June, 2021, when in-home visits resumed, these visits were conducted either virtually or in-person and outdoors.

Interactive Parent/Child Classes

The program continued with interactive parent/child classes, including:

- “Bridges to Success” program – UNO School of Education (both semesters)
- Prime Time Family Reading Time program – Humanities Nebraska (both semesters)
- String Sprouts parent/child violin classes– Omaha Conservatory of Music (both semesters)

Child Learning

The Child Learning team was the most versatile team during the evaluation year. In July 2020, they held preschool graduations in the front yard of each child who was moving onto Kindergarten.



The team also made phone calls to parents on the wait list and recruited new parents to the program. They planned “drive-by” distribution events (including monthly diapers from the LC Foundation donations, books, computers, art supplies, and treats on special occasions such as Day of the Young Child). The Child Learning team became “Zoom Producers”, each assigned to certain ESL classes to assist with technology and other barriers. They assisted with in-person computer onboarding classes, teaching the basics to parents before they went home with a computer: how to use a mouse, how to log onto computer, how to log onto Zoom, etc. All members of the team completed Metro’s Child Development Associate certificate program and trained in Creative Curriculum. Finally, they held interactive Zoom classes once or twice a day for children in the program.

During June 2021, child learning classes resumed in-person, so the team began working directly with children all day.

SUMMER ACADEMY 2021

A new program for the Learning Community this year was the Summer Academy hosted at both the North Omaha and South Omaha sites.

LEARNING COMMUNITY CENTER OF SOUTH OMAHA

This summer was the first where both centers piloted a Summer Academy, which focused on remedying the COVID-19 slide and building Kindergarten skills.

At the South Center, classes were held Monday – Thursday, with a morning and afternoon session. Parents studied English while their children were in Summer Academy. The month of June had good attendance, but the rate lowered significantly during the month of July after Omaha Public Schools limited the number of students accepted into July summer school. Some

children enrolled during July attended only occasionally. Many families had older children at home who could not participate in the program this summer due to space and staffing concerns. After it was clear there was capacity for more children in July, seven additional five- and six-year-olds were allowed to attend after the first week of July.

June:	July:
Newborn to age 1: 5 children	Newborn to age 1: 6 children
Age 1: 8 children	Age 1: 6 children
Age 2: 9 children	Age 2: 9 children
Age 3: 9 children	Age 3: 5 children
Age 4: 10 children	Age 4: 8 children
Age 5: 3 children	Age 5: 5 children
Age 6: 0 children	Age 6: 5 children

The center partnered with Opera Omaha's Community Fellowship program, which visited the center multiple times with two opera singers to engage the children with activities related to literacy and the performing arts. The Salvation Army also operated a food truck on-site called the Kids Cruisin' Kitchen, which provided daily free meals for the children in the program.

Munroe-Meyer Institute conducted the Minnesota Executive Functioning Scale (MEFS) with preschool-aged children at the beginning of June and the end of July. Twenty-two children were pre-tested in June, and ten were post-tested in July.

LEARNING COMMUNITY CENTER OF NORTH OMAHA

At the North Center, classes were held Monday - Friday 7:30am to 8:00am breakfast was provided, and instruction began at 8:00am and ended each day at 12:00pm. A light lunch was also sent home daily with each child. Summer Academy was held starting June 2nd to June 30th and July 6th through July 23rd a total of 35 instruction days. There were six children who attend from June to July. The children were dropped off at the North Center and greeted and temperatures were checked daily. The children remained onsite daily without their parents' presence. Summer Academy began with eight total children ages 3- and 4-year-old. It was a multi-cultural group of Black, Hispanic, Somali, and Russian children. By the end of the second term there were 6 (5 boys and 1 girl) remaining that could commit to daily attendance.

The North Center partnered with KidSquad to provide the Summer Academy. The North Center is usually very slow during the summer months, and pre-COVID-19, planned literacy activities for families to use during this time. This year the summer was focused on providing language and literacy for the children as well as social-emotional skills in preparation for starting school soon. The staff spent time working with the children to expand their vocabulary by using specific words for people, places, things, and actions. They also used descriptive words while the children participated in routines and play and then encouraged children to further develop thinking skills by asking them questions. Staff read books and the librarian did a weekly story-time that would include some physical activities such as singing and dancing. Staff promoted use of both fine and gross motor skills through play with blocks and drawings using paint. Social skills were

encouraged and when conflicts happened the staff would assist the children with resolving them. The staff taught the children about personal care routines and safety practices.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Student Outcome: By the end of summer programming **100% of students (N=15) were in the average range on an executive functioning measure (Minnesota Executive Function Scale) with a mean SS =97.**



EARLY CHILDHOOD AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

LEARNING
COMMUNITY
CENTER OF
NORTH OMAHA



The Learning Community Center of North Omaha provides innovative and demonstrative programming to improve educational outcomes for young students. Leadership and program staff work together to provide a comprehensive mix of research-based programs to the students and their caregivers in North Omaha. The center encompasses four primary programs: intensive early childhood partnership, Parent University, child care director training, and future teacher clinical training. Descriptions of each program and evaluation findings are summarized in this section.



Intensive Early Childhood Partnership

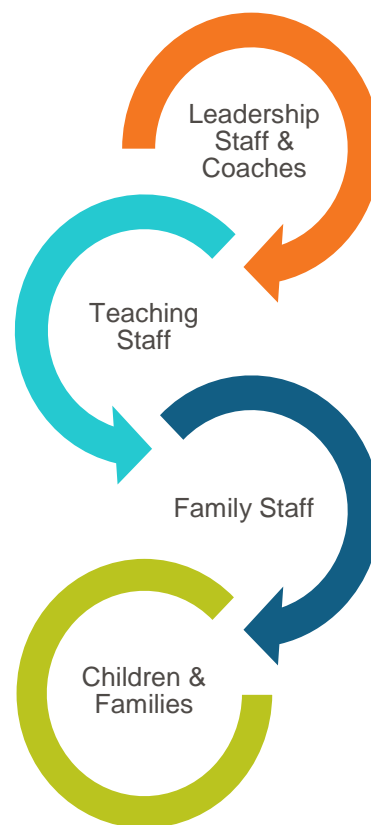
STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Intensive Early Childhood (IEC) Partnership, a program that is in collaboration with Omaha Public Schools is based on evidence-based models (Yazejian & Bryant, 2012) that include four key components: intensive teaching teams, reflective coaching, professional development, and family engagement. The model was first introduced to eight inclusive preschool classrooms in Kellom and Conestoga Magnet in 2013. After two consecutive years of positive outcomes based on the model, it was expanded to two additional schools: Lothrop Magnet (3 classrooms) and Franklin (2 classrooms). In 2018, the intensive early childhood partnership expanded to Minne Lusa (3 classrooms) and Skinner (4 classrooms).

During the 2020-2021 school year, outside evaluators were not permitted to visit schools to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. As a result, evaluators were unable to conduct classroom observations or in-person assessments with the children. The only student data collected were social-emotional assessments completed by the classroom teachers or I.E.C coaches.

INTENSIVE TEACHING TEAMS. Intensive early childhood teams, consisting of teachers, leadership and family support staff, implement a combination of services and supports. The leadership team includes the principal, an early childhood coordinator, early childhood specialist, and instructional coaches. Each classroom has a lead early childhood teacher, special education teacher, and paraprofessional staff. Using an inclusive model, these professionals work with all children and discuss effective teaching strategies using data for continuous improvement.

REFLECTIVE COACHING. Instructional coaches provide reflective consultation to the teaching staff both inside and outside of the classroom. They use a coaching approach adopted by Omaha Public Schools (i.e., *Teaching Strategies: Coaching With Fidelity*). A national consultant also provides ongoing reflective consultation to the coaches. Instructional coaches work to build teacher confidence and increase their active problem-solving skills. During one-on-one sessions with teachers, helpful coaching tools include classroom videotapes and photographs. Long-term positive student outcomes are predicted with the continuity of coaching now occurring in PreK through first grade in two schools. Coaching continued to play an important role during COVID-19, brainstorming with the team on meaningful ways to reach families and supporting the team to find applications that families could use with their young children. The coach-teacher relationships in some ways were enhanced during this unique time.



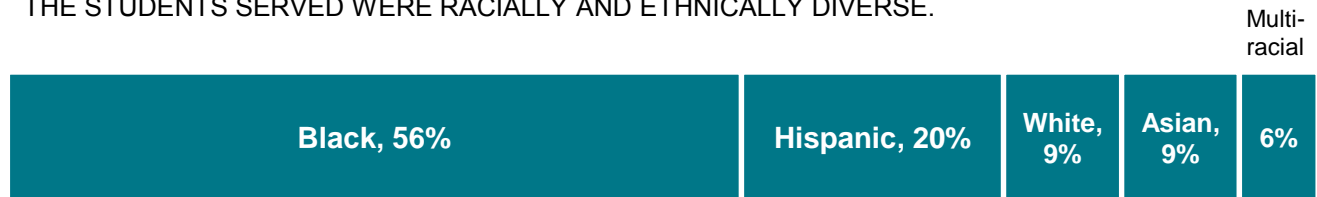
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT. The teaching teams benefit from 11 days of additional professional development (PD) through the school year. Six of those eleven professional development days are facilitated in each school's Early Childhood Professional Learning Community (i.e., PLC). The PLC framework establishes a collaborative, problem solving approach in review of child data and in team learning to identify strategies to improve student performance. Five of the eleven PD days are in full day sessions that extend knowledge of the PLC process and of specific interventions to enhance knowledge and skills in using the Creative Curriculum. These full day PD sessions focus on the implementation of social skill development, resilience, and reflection as a teacher educating high needs students as well as on content knowledge in literacy and language strategies and math instruction to build the skills of teaching staff. PD component is required for teachers at Kellom and Conestoga and elective for teachers at the expanded schools.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT. During the pandemic Family Liaisons were no longer able to be officed in the schools and provide in-person support to families due to COVID-19 restrictions. However, Family Liaisons and other members of Parent University continued supporting families by creating virtual family engagement activities to promote reading and literacy. Family Liaisons promote school engagement using zoom, phone calls, or email to connect families to staff in the schools and help families access needed services. Classroom teachers and IEC coaches engaged families via virtual meetings during the school day and during scheduled Parent Teacher Meetings both to check on family wellness and to provide updates on lessons and student performance. IEC coaches produced recorded weekly lessons for families to view with their children when they were unable to attend school in-person. Communication applications such as Dojo or See-saw were also used as a tool for family engagement to offer activities, websites, and audio-recorded books to enhance their children's development.

DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2020-2021, the Intensive Early Childhood Partnership served 297 PreK students across six schools and 20 classrooms. A total of 286 students participated in the evaluation. The Intensive Early Childhood Partnership served a racially and ethnically diverse population of children. There were more males (57%) than females (43%) enrolled in the PreK classes.

THE STUDENTS SERVED WERE RACIALLY AND ETHNICALLY DIVERSE.



N=297

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

During the 2020-2021 program year, OPS implemented COVID-19 safety protocols that restricted outside visitors. The evaluation team was unable to do in-person classroom observations to assess quality instructional practices.

CHILD OUTCOMES

COVID-19 safety protocols also impacted the ability to assess preschool developmental skills. External evaluators were unable to conduct in-person child assessments to assess vocabulary development, school-readiness, or executive functioning skills.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS

METHOD. Limited analyses could be performed as only spring data were collected. Data could not be collected in the fall because school did not resume for full-time in-person instruction until the second semester.

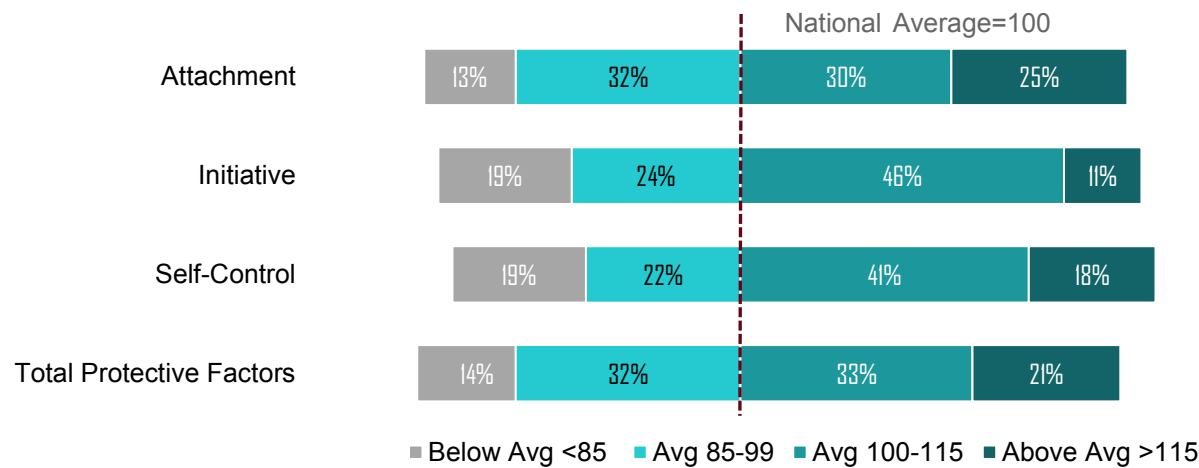
SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS [DEVEREUX EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSESSMENT

(DECA)]. This questionnaire assesses young students' social-emotional development by identifying total protective factors overall and in the areas of initiative, self-control, attachment, and behavior concerns. Teachers or the instructional coach at all six schools completed the DECA with a total of 286 students assessed.

FINDINGS. The descriptive analyses found that high percentages of students scored within the average to above average range across all areas of the social-emotional measure: total protective factors (86%), attachment (87%), initiative (81%) and self-control (81%). The majority of students

(ranging from 55% to 59%) demonstrated social-emotional skills above the national average which is a score of 100.

OVERALL, STUDENTS SHOWED THE GREATEST STRENGTH IN SELF-CONTROL WITH 59% MEETING OR EXCEEDING THE NATIONAL AVERAGE.
19% of the children scored in the below average range in Initiative and Self-Control. n=286



The social-emotional tool also measures behavioral concerns such as having temper tantrums, having a short attention span, and becoming upset easily. Twenty-one percent of the children scored in the “concern” range, indicating child behaviors that were outside what is typical for three to five-year old children.

Did student factors impact social-emotional scores?

GENDER. Of interest was whether there were any gender differences in students’ social-emotional outcomes. The results of an ANOVA analyses found that girls scored significantly higher across all social-emotional areas with the exception of behavioral concerns. Note the means (m) are reported as t-scores with 50 being the mid-point of average.
Total Protective Factors: Girls m=54, Boys m=48 [F(1,284)=27.953; p<.001].
Attachment: Girls m=56, Boys m=50 [F(1,284)=23.315; p<.001].
Initiative: Girls m=53, Boys m=48 [F(1,284)=22.581; p<.001].
Self-Control: Girls m=53, Boys m=48 [F(1,284)=14,499; p<.001].

Girls demonstrated stronger social-emotional skills. Boys had significantly higher behavior concern scores.

Boys scored significantly higher on behavioral concerns (m=53) compared to girls (m=47) [F(1,284)=19.210; p=001].

PREVIOUS PREK EXPERIENCE. Of interest was whether there were any differences between students who had been enrolled in IEC programs when they were three, differ from those who were newly enrolled in PreK. Because of the disruptions to in-person learning in the 2019 and 2020 school years, this analysis was not completed in for the 2020-2021 annual report.

RACE/ETHNICITY. Of interest was whether there were any differences between student social-emotional scores based on race and/or ethnicity. The results of the ANOVA analyses found there were significant differences at the $p=.009$ level for self-control and at the $p=.004$ level for behavior concerns.

In the Post Hoc test:

Asian students ($m=55.62$) had significantly higher self-control scores than white students ($m=45.93$) $p=.009$

Asian students ($m=44.96$) had significantly lower behavior concern scores than black students ($m=51.60$) $p=.02$ and white students ($m=54.74$) $p=.005$. Note that in the behavior concern construct, higher scores indicate more behavior concerns. In the analysis, white students had higher behavior concern scores on average than black or Asian students.

PARENT PARTICIPATION IN PARENT UNIVERSITY. Parents from all 6 schools had the opportunity to participate in Parent University. Five percent of the students enrolled in IEC classrooms ($n=15$) had a parent who was also enrolled in Parent University courses and activities. The sample size is too small to do an analysis to determine if children whose parents participated in Parent University had significantly different social-emotional outcomes than children whose parents did not.

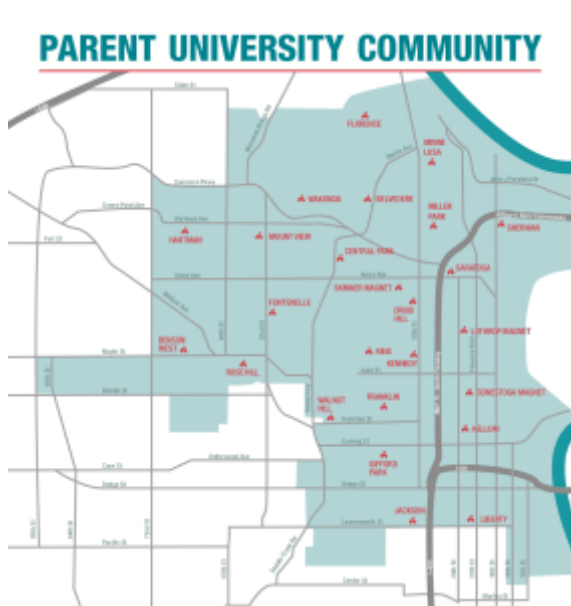
USING FEEDBACK FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

The evaluation team conducted nine focus groups in May of 2021 to collect feedback on the IEC program. Participants included four coaches, four family support workers, two principals, and 22 teachers. Each group reflected on the school year and how the IEC program impacted their school and the families and students they serve. Participants noted positive aspects of the program and offered suggestions for improving communication and services. The focus group data were analyzed and formal reports were shared with the IEC program leadership team.

Parent University

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Parent University is a comprehensive, two-generational family engagement program based on research and best practices that began in February 2015 at the Learning Community Center of North Omaha. A two-generational approach allows the program to focus on the whole family while creating opportunities for addressing needs of both children and the adults in their lives simultaneously. In 2019, the partnership expanded to additional schools in North Omaha. As a result of the recommendation, a request for proposal (RFP) was made public. Project Harmony Child Advocacy Center successfully obtained the contract to assist with managing the day-to-day operations of Parent University. Therefore, all personnel fulfilling the mission of Parent University are employees of Project Harmony Child Advocacy Center. Parent University provides individualized and center-based supports and services to families whose children are eligible to participate in the Intensive Early Childhood Partnership and families with a child six years or younger who reside in school attendance areas of the 24 elementary schools reflected (see map).



KEY COMPONENTS

INDIVIDUALIZED SERVICES. Every parent who participates in Parent University goes through a thorough intake and assessment process and is assigned his or her own personal coach; an Educational Navigator or Family Liaison, to assist in personalizing the program to best achieve the family's identified goals and needs. The following individualized services are implemented based on need of the family.

NAVIGATOR AND LIAISON SERVICES. Educational Navigators and Family Liaisons serve as personal parent advocates, helping parents gain better understanding of the public school system, community resources, child development, and learning strategies. Navigators and Liaisons build strong relationships with participants to ensure individualized education and support using a research-based home visitation/parenting curriculum. In addition to monthly home visits, the navigators and liaisons attend courses with parents to be able to assist them in transitioning the concepts learned during center-based virtual learning to opportunities in the home.

Some families may need more than monthly home visitation due to multiple risk factors such as, but not limited to, homelessness, history of trauma, lack of support system, and knowledge of community resources. Navigators and Liaisons offer additional case management to families and serve as a liaison between Parent University, the child's school, and the family. Navigators and Liaisons have the capacity to meet with families weekly until the immediate needs are met.

HOME VISITATIONS & GOAL SETTING. During the pandemic, Navigators and Liaisons visited with participants virtually, outside in their front yard, and even outdoors in parks. One hundred percent of staff are vaccinated for COVID-19. Navigators and liaisons communicate with parents, conduct formal and informal needs assessments, connect parents with resources, model supportive learning activities, coach parenting skills, and attend to specific needs. Growing Great Kids® curriculum is utilized during home visitations as appropriate. Each participant works with their designated staff member to set personal and familial goals. All goals have strategies and are S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound). Goals and strategies are reviewed during home visitations to ensure they remain relevant to the families' needs.

CENTER-BASED LEARNING. Parents have access to an onsite Parent Resource Room with access to library services through a partnership with the Omaha Public Library. During the COVID-19 lockdown parents were still able to check out library materials by simply contacting the onsite librarian and picking up materials from their assigned worker or from the front desk at the center. Many families had opportunity to check out laptop computers and learning kits to engage their children in learning. Parents select to attend a variety of Parent University courses in the center or virtually based on the family needs. Courses fit into four primary majors which were developed based on identified family needs.

PARENTING. Parents learn effective ways to parent their child(ren) and ways to support child development and learning through a series of courses designed to strengthen the parent-child bond and interactions. Family engagement events such as Family Bingo assist staff with promoting positive interactions between parent and child.

LIFE SKILLS AND WELLNESS. Parent University partner organizations provide courses to strengthen family self-sufficiency in areas like adult basic education, English as a Second Language (ESL), and employment skills. These majors contribute to stability so

that families can support their students. New this year is a pilot program with Metropolitan Community College whereby parents receive training in facilities management with a guaranteed interview in this field upon successful completion for jobs with a starting wage ranging from \$17.00-23.00/hr.

SCHOOL SUCCESS. To become full partners in their child's education, courses and workshops emphasize the importance of the parents' roles, responsibilities, and engagement opportunities.

LEADERSHIP. Courses empower parents to take on more active roles in their child's school and their community. Courses teach parents their leadership styles and helped them identify their strengths.

While parents attend courses at the center or virtually, Parent University offers year-round child learning activities for the children focusing on the domains of early childhood development. Virtual story time activities provided literacy and vocabulary enrichment. During the summer, Parent University, in partnership with KidsSquad and the Child Saving Institute, piloted a Kindergarten Readiness program called Summer Academy. Children ages three and four years-old attended classes daily onsite from June 2 to June 30th and July 6th to the 23rd. Learning activities were created to assist with supporting social-emotional development as well as language and literacy skills.



Based on feedback from parents in 2019, Parent University began offering more courses in Spanish and implemented online courses prior to the pandemic. Therefore, courses were able to fully transition to a remote learning platform beginning March 2020 and will continue to be utilized as an option for program learning.

DEMOGRAPHICS

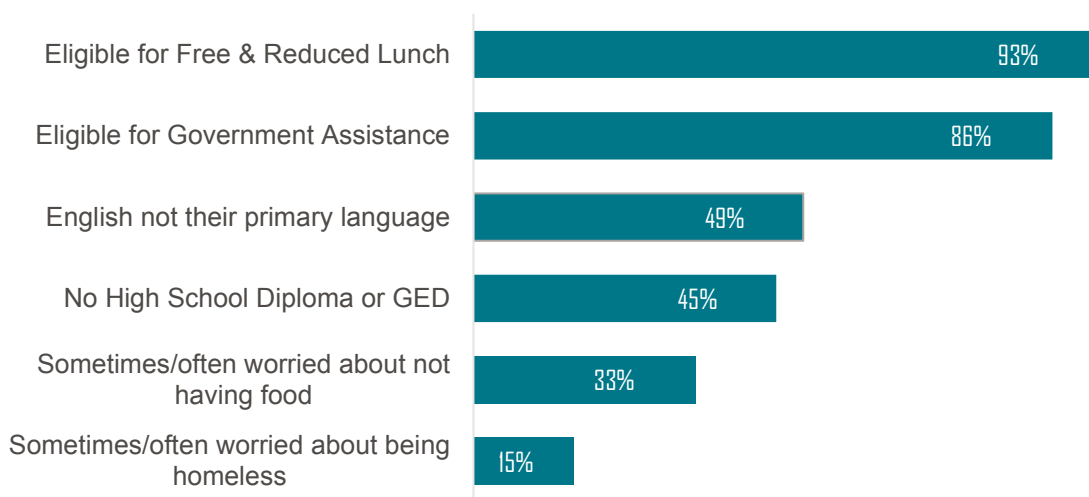
A total of 200 parents were enrolled in Parent University. There were more females (72%) than males (28%). Most of the parents were Black (50%) or Hispanic (35%). Most of the parents (61%) were employed either part (11%) or full time (50%). Nearly half (48%) of the parents had not completed high school. Nearly a quarter (23%) had graduated high school. Twelve percent of the parents had completed some college coursework. Eleven percent had completed a college degree and 3% had completed a master's degree. The families had 380 children of which 264 were within the target age range (birth through Grade 3) for the program. Fifteen children were enrolled in one of the Intensive Early Childhood preschool programs.

THE PARENTS SERVED WERE RACIALLY AND ETHNICALLY DIVERSE.



Of the 200 active parents, nearly half (93) participated in a family interview that collected information about the stressors in their lives. Most respondents experience a number of challenges. Nearly all parents (93%) have children who qualify for Free and/or Reduced lunch. Most (86%) families received additional government assistance (e.g., SNAP, Medicaid, WIC, TANF, and Title XX). A third of the families reported that they worry about having enough food and 26% ran out of food at some point during the prior 12 months. A small percentage of families (15%) worry about losing their housing and 22% indicated that they had experienced homelessness during the past year. Nearly half (49%) of the parents' home language was not English. Many (45%) did not have a high school diploma. The challenges that many families face point to the complexity of the lives of the parents in Parent University and provide a context for interpreting the results of this report.

PARENTS FACE MANY CHALLENGES.



N=93

How did Parent University support families facing a number of challenges?

Families wanting additional support were provided more frequent home visitation meetings. The family works with their educational navigator or family liaisons to set goals and determine how best to achieve them. A total of 129 parents received this support and developed a service plan to

help the family gain stability while supporting their child's academic success. The 337 goals reflected on service plans were related to the majors within Parent University: Life Skills and Wellness (45%), School Success (36%), Parenting (15%), and Leadership (4%). Most parents are making strong progress in achieving their goals: 40% of the goals are still progressing. Nearly a quarter (24%) have been achieved. Parents have deferred 21% of the goals. Only 7% have not been achieved and 4% are regressing.

FAMILY OUTCOMES

FAMILY PROTECTIVE FACTORS

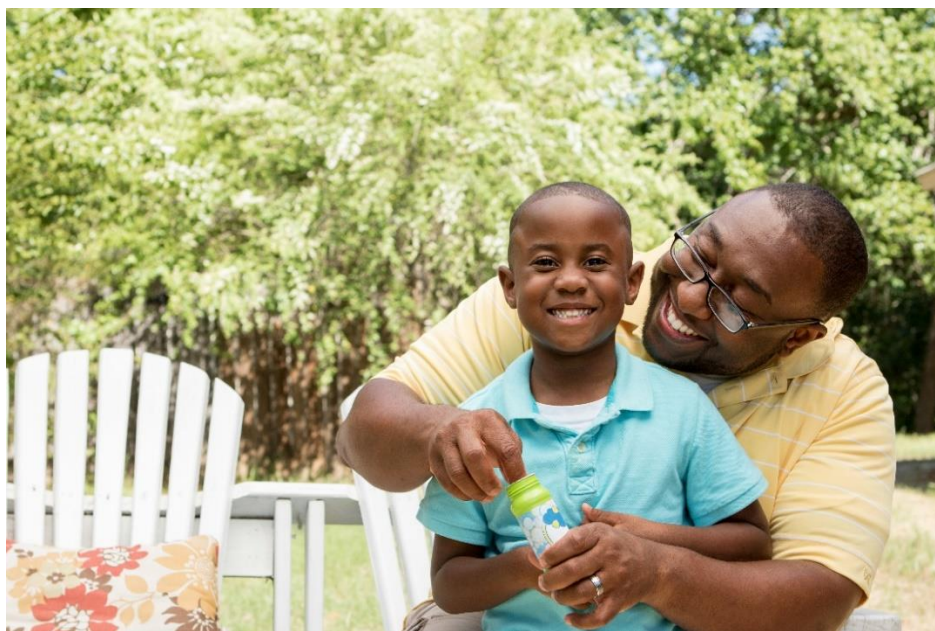
Protective factors are strengths that help buffer and support families who may face challenges. These attributes mitigate risk and promote healthy development and well-being.

METHOD. The adoption of a strengths-based prevention model embracing protective factors is considered an important approach to prevent child abuse (Langford, J., & Harper-Browne, C., in press). In order to assess family protective factors, participants completed the FRIENDS Protective Factors Survey (PFS), a broad measure of family well-being, at intake and every six months thereafter during home visits with assigned navigators and liaisons. The survey assesses five areas: Family Resiliency, Social Supports, Concrete Supports, Child Development Knowledge, and Nurturing and Attachment. The PFS is based on a 7-point scale with 7 indicating strong protective factors. In the 20-21 program year, 96 families completed the PFS at two points in time.

FINDINGS. The results found that parents' nurturing and attachment skills and parents' child development knowledge were the highest rated areas. However, protective factors scores across all areas of the tool were in the strong range. Paired t-test analyses were completed to determine if there were significant changes over time. Significant improvements were found in four of the five protective factors scales:

Child Development Knowledge: $[t(95) = -4.487; p < .001, d = 0.458]$ with the effect size suggesting medium meaningful change.

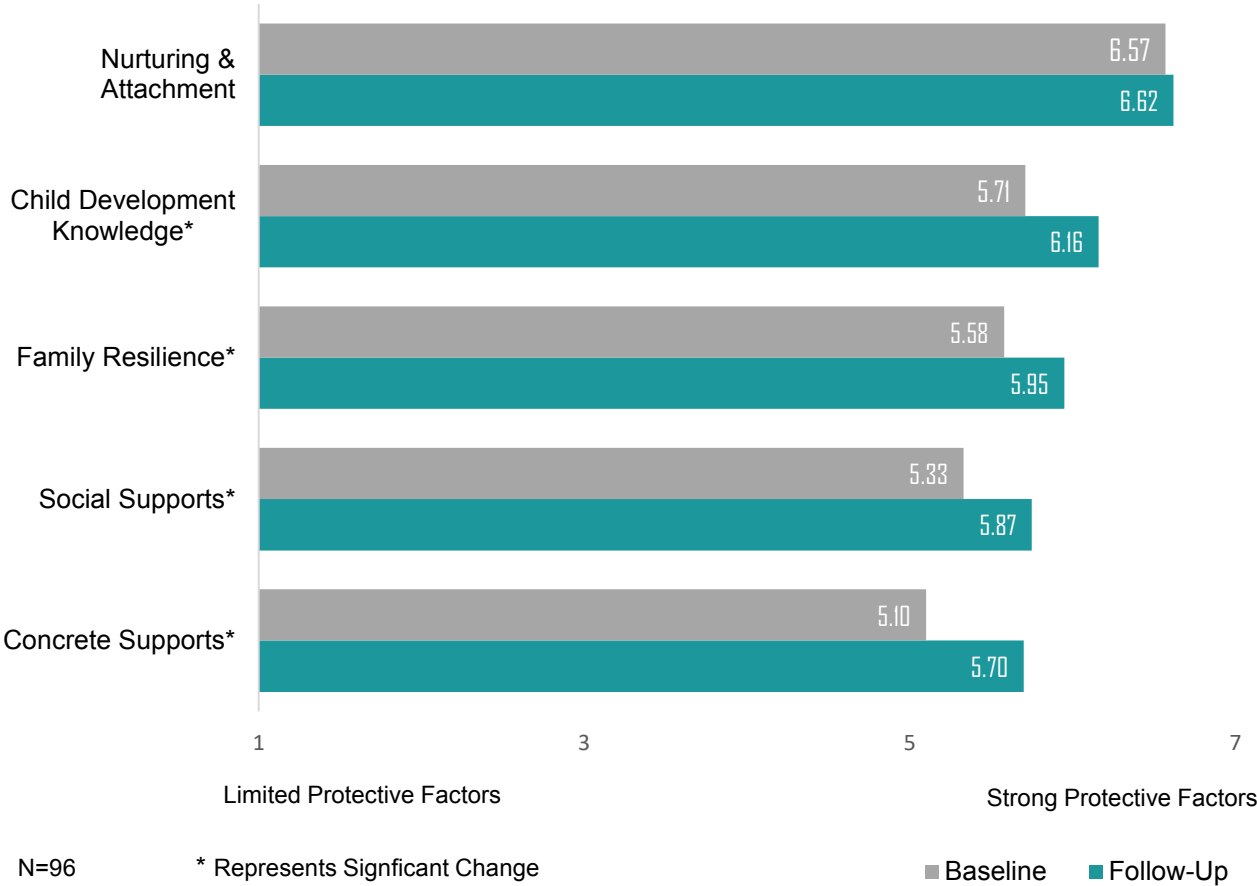
Concrete Supports: $[t(95) = -2.717; p = .008, d = 0.277]$ with the effect size suggesting small meaningful change.



Family Resilience: [t(95)= -2.879; p=.0005), d=0.294)] with the effect size suggesting small meaningful change.

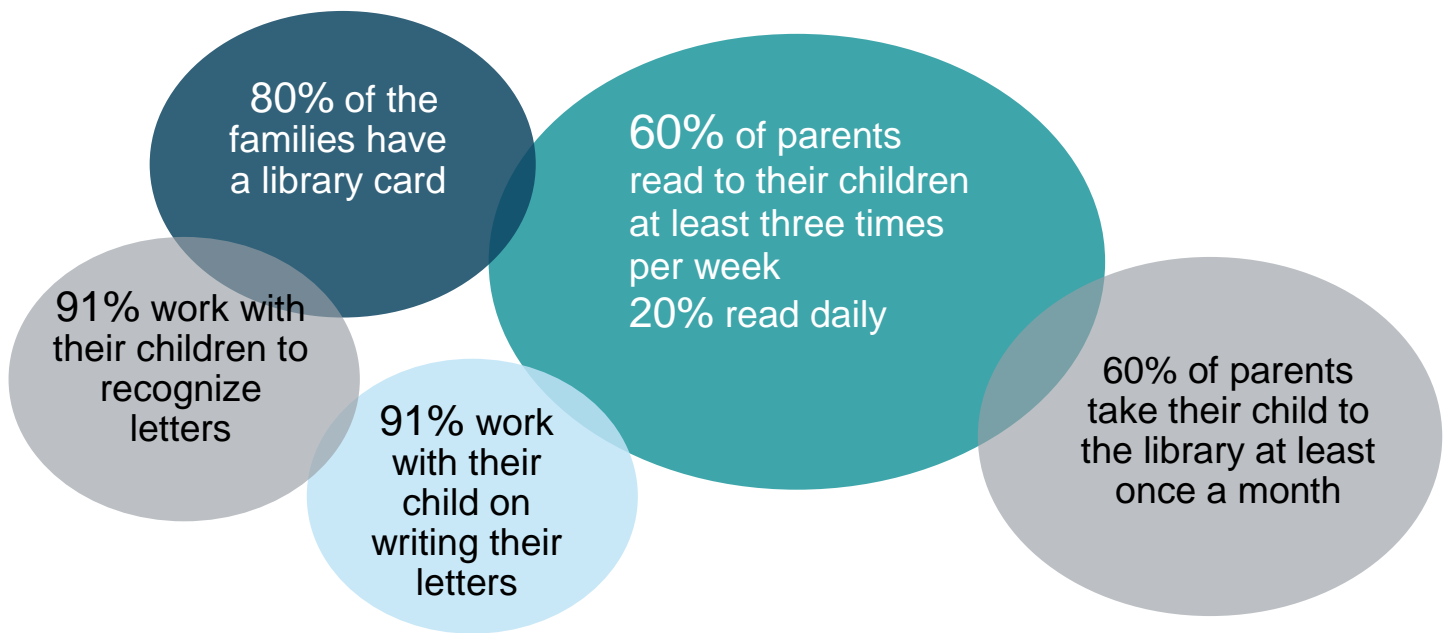
Social Supports: [t(95)= -2.679; p=.009), d=0.273)] with the effect size suggesting small meaningful change.

PARENTS DEMONSTRATED STRONG PROTECTIVE FACTORS ACROSS ALL AREAS.
Protective factors increased significantly in every area except Nurturing & Attachment which was already quite high.



How did parents support their child's literacy skills?

DAILY LITERACY ACTIVITIES. Parents (n=114) reported many positive ways that they interacted with their child to support learning. Sixty percent of parents read to their children at least three times a week and 20% read daily. Data were analyzed by comparing baseline to at least six months of service. Parents showed the most improvements in use of the library. The percentage of families with a library card went from 58% to 80%; the percentage visiting the library at least once a month went from 35% to 60%.



READYROSIE. ReadyRosie, a comprehensive family engagement resource, uses video modeling to build school family partnerships to promote school readiness. The ReadyRosie Active Family Engagement System is built on the premise that *“every child can be ready to learn when schools and families work together.”* ReadyRosie’s Modeled Moment videos are the core of the ReadyRosie program and provide resources to support programs. Parent University families enrolled in ReadyRosie received a weekly video playlist via text or e-mail. Parent University staff supported the families’ use of these video learning opportunities, focusing on health and well-being, language and literacy, math and reasoning, and social-emotional learning for children from birth to age eight. Videos were available in English and Spanish. This resource was very useful to parents during the pandemic. Parents could check out Ready Rosie learning activity kits, which include designated videos paired with tools for learning, from the onsite library.

A total of 86 children had at least one Parent University caregiver enrolled in the ReadyRosie program. Parents viewed 335 videos over the course of the 2020-2021 year.

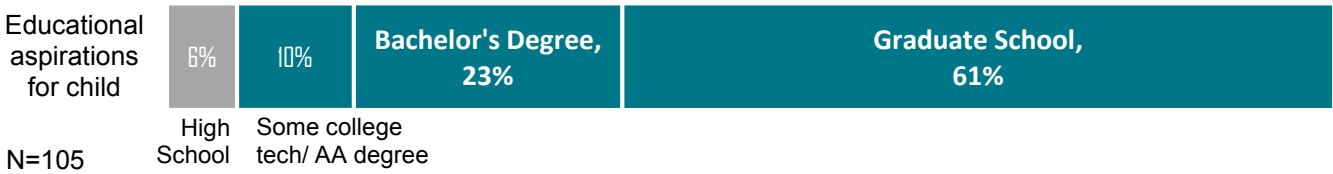
PARENT-CHILD INTERACTION. The Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (KIPS™) measures parenting behaviors across three areas: Building Relationships, Promoting Learning, and Supporting Confidence, based on a videotape of a parent playing with his or her child. Scores are based on a 5-point scale with 5 being high-quality. A program goal is scores of 3.5 or above. Scores for the parents participating at LCCNO are included in the Shared Program Outcomes section of the report.

FAMILY EDUCATION

What are the educational hopes for their children?

Parents were interviewed to determine their hopes for their child’s future education. At the follow-up assessment, most (84%) of the parents reported that they expected their child to obtain a bachelor’s or graduate degree. Only six percent expect that their child will end their education after high school.

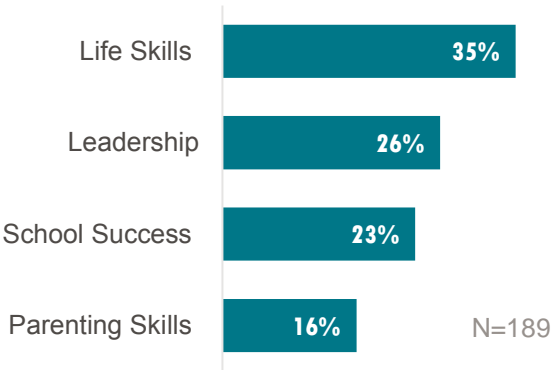
MOST PARENTS HOPE THEIR CHILD WILL COMPLETE A BACHELOR'S OR GRADUATE DEGREE.
Only six percent of parents expect their children's education to stop after high school.



COURSE PARTICIPATION

Program staff tracked parents’ participation in the 16 courses that were offered this past year. Several were offered more than once. Course topics aligned with four primary “majors” within Parent University. Life Skills and Wellness courses had the highest enrollment. Throughout the year, many parents enrolled in more than one course. Across the 16 courses, 189 participants (duplicated count) were enrolled. The largest course enrollments were in Reading Success and the GED and ELL classes. Completion status was completed for 106 course enrollments. Of these participants, 43% either withdrew or cancelled their enrollment. Of the 60 that completed courses, 85% were reported as meeting course requirements at the “satisfactory” level.

COURSES RELATED TO LIFE SKILLS AND LEADERSHIP HAD THE HIGHEST ENROLLMENTS.



Due to COVID-19, most classes were offered online and there was no system in place to collect participant feedback. In February of 2021, the evaluation team created an online survey to use

with all PU courses. Because the survey was deployed towards the end of the program year, only nine participants completed it. The majority (67%) felt they learned something new that was relevant to their lives and would recommend the course to a friend.

CIRCLE OF SECURITY™-PARENTING (COS-P)



Circle of Security™-Parenting is an 8-week parenting program based on years of research about how to build strong attachment relationships between parent and child. It is designed to help parents learn how to respond to child needs in a way that enhances the attachment between parent and child. It is important to note this course is personalized to meet the needs of participating families.

COS-P was another core parenting course provided at Parent University. A total of 16 participants enrolled across the three COS-P courses. Two of the three courses were offered in Spanish.

METHOD. Participants were asked to rate a series of questions about caregiver stress, their relationship with their children, and confidence in their parenting skills. Three individuals completed the survey. The sample size is too small to analyze the results.

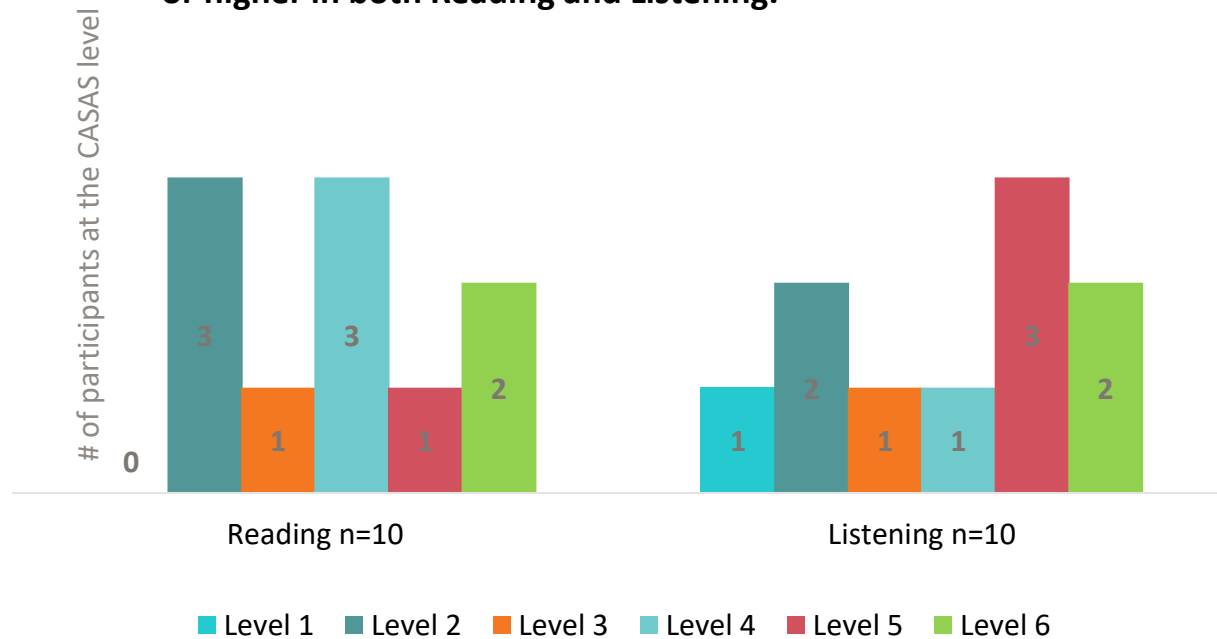
How did Parent University benefit parents' own education?

Parent University offers English as a Second Language (ESL) and General Educational Diploma (GED) courses. In the 2020-2021 program year, 52 parents participated in one of these two options, ESL (29) and GED (23).

Participant outcomes for ESL and GED courses offered to English language learners are measured using the CASAS® which is a nationally recognized assessment for English Learners that is aligned with the curriculum used at LCCNO. A total of 14 participants had the CASAS® assessment. Only two participants have results at two points in time which is too small of a sample to report.

In the ESL courses, 10 students had the CASAS® assessment. Reading and listening skills ranged from beginning literacy indicating the limited ability to express immediate needs and to understand basic learned phrases to high intermediate skills that include the ability to fill out basic

Sixty percent of the Parent University participants are at Level 4 or higher in both Reading and Listening.



forms and to work in entry-level jobs that include simple oral and written communication. The following graph shows the distribution across the levels of the assessment.

In the GED courses, four students had the CASAS® assessment of math and reading skills. Students scored at the beginning to intermediate levels.

How did participation in Parent University support parents' financial literacy?

Parent Univesity sponsored two sessions of the Omaha Bridges Out of Poverty, Getting Ahead in a Just-Getting-By World. This course helps enhance participants' financial, emotional, and social resources by exploring the impact of poverty on their lives. The goal is to support parents in strengthening valuable relationships and securing living-wage jobs.

FINDINGS. A total of 25 parents participated in one of two cohorts in the 10-week course offered at Parent University. All participants completed the full course. Twelve months after graduation from the course, 16% of the 25 graduate parents completed a follow-up survey and the following outcomes were reported:

Parents' participation in the Bridges Out of Poverty course improved their financial stability.

- An average 66.5% decrease in debt-to-income ratio
- An average increase in income of \$1681.50
- An average decrease in bill reduction of \$980 per month
- An average increase in assets of \$660

At least half the survey respondents reported increased stability in the following areas: income, managing bills, employment, parenting, wages, lowered stress, transportation, health, social connections and housing.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Parent University piloted a workforce development initiative in partnership with Metropolitan Community College (Metro). Program staff identified employment opportunities in Omaha where employers have struggled to find staff for the positions. They then surveyed Parent University participants to determine which of these opportunities were most attractive to them. Survey results indicated high interest in the field of Facilities Maintenance. Parent University then worked with Metro to develop a training program to prepare students for work in Facilities Maintenance. The ten-week program had two tracks: technical training across multiple disciplines such as carpentry, HVAC, and EPA regulations plus work readiness training that included resume preparation, customer service skills, and communication skills. The first cohort included six parents.

FINDINGS. Most of the parents completed the course successfully and at least two found work in the field.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

In a typical school year, the evaluation of student outcomes for the children whose parents are enrolled in Parent University includes two strategies:

1. Pre-K outcomes are measured through in-person assessments completed by MMI evaluators and teacher-completed surveys in the six IEC preschool programs.
2. Grades K-5th grade academic outcomes are measured through analyses of the MAP® Growth™ which is a standardized assessment the school district administers three times a year.

During the 2020-2021 program year, school district efforts to mitigate COVID-19 resulted in multiple disruptions to in-person school. These disruptions impacted the normal assessment schedule that is used to monitor student progress. The program and evaluation teams developed alternative strategies to measure the social-emotional and academic skills for these children. Parents were invited to have their children ages two to third grade participate in in-person assessments at the Learning Community Center of North Omaha in the fall and spring. The results of those assessments are reported in the following section.

In addition, as the school district resumed consistent in-person instruction, the state tests were administered and the evaluation team was able to access the math and reading results for

analysis in this report. The results are reported in the Shared Program Outcomes section in this report.

PARENTS IN PARENT UNIVERSITY: CHILDREN'S (AGES 4 MONTHS TO 11 YEARS) SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL, EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING AND ACADEMIC SKILLS

METHOD. Parent University families were invited to participate in assessments of their children's social-emotional, executive functioning, and academic skills in the fall and spring. A total of 77 children had at least one assessment. The following tools were used:

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS [DEVEREUX EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSESSMENT (DECA)]. Parents completed the DECA questionnaire to assess young students' social-emotional development in the areas of initiative, self-control, attachment, and behavior as well as total protective factors overall. The DECA is available in Spanish and English. The DECA was completed for 36 children, ages 4 months to 5 years, at fall and spring.

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS [THE MINNESOTA EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SCALE (MEFS)]. Executive functioning is defined as a student's ability to control impulses that then enable them to plan, initiate, and complete activities needed for learning. This an online assessment was administered in English or Spanish by an evaluator from MMI. This assessment was completed with 29 children, ages 2 years to 9 years, at fall and spring.

ACADEMIC SKILLS

KAUFMAN TEST OF EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT, 3RD EDITION (KTEA-3). The KTEA-3 measures academic skills for ages 4 years to 25 years. Four subscales were utilized in the evaluation: Math Concepts & Application (MCA), Math Computation (MA), Letter & Word Recognition (LWR), and Reading Comprehension (RC). The KTEA-3 was administered in English by an evaluator from MMI to 15 children, ages 6 years to 11 years, at fall and spring.

PICTURE PEABODY VOCABULARY TEST-IV (PPVT-IV). The PPVT-IV measures English receptive vocabulary. An evaluator from MMI conducted this assessment with five children, ages 3 years to 5 years, at fall and spring. The sample size is too small to analyze so results are not reported.

BATERÍA IV WOODCOCK-MUÑOZ. The Bateria IV is a Spanish-language assessment that measure cognitive abilities, achievement, and comparative oral language abilities. Four subscales were utilized in the evaluation: Test 1 Identificación de letras y palabras (Letter-Word Identification), Test 2 Problemas aplicados (Applied Problems), Test 4 Comprensión de textos (Passage Comprehension), Test 5 Cálculo (Calculation). This assessment was administered in Spanish by an evaluator from MMI to three children, ages

3 years and 4 years, at fall and spring. The sample size is too small to analyze so results are not reported.

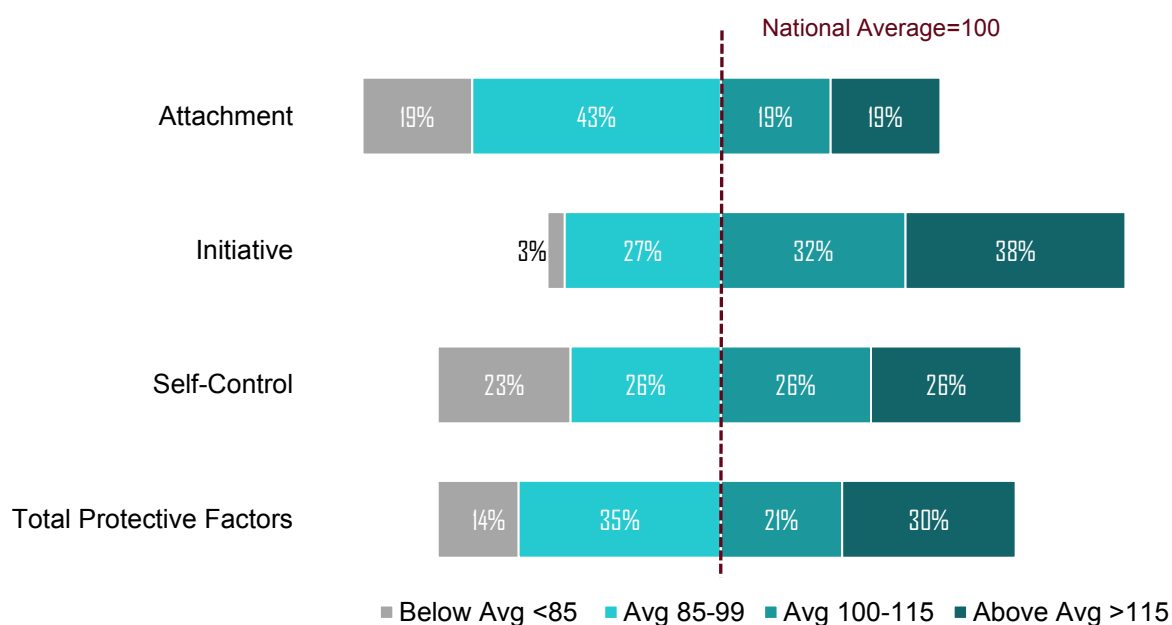
FINDINGS.

Social-Emotional

The descriptive analyses found that by spring, high percentages of students scored within the average to above average range across all areas of the social-emotional measure: total protective factors (86%), attachment (81%), initiative (97%) and self-control (78%). The majority of students demonstrated social-emotional skills above the national average, which is a score of 100, in the areas of total protective factors (51%), initiative (70%) and self-control (52%).

BY SPRING STUDENTS SHOWED THE GREATEST STRENGTH IN INITIATIVE WITH 70% MEETING OR EXCEEDING THE NATIONAL AVERAGE.

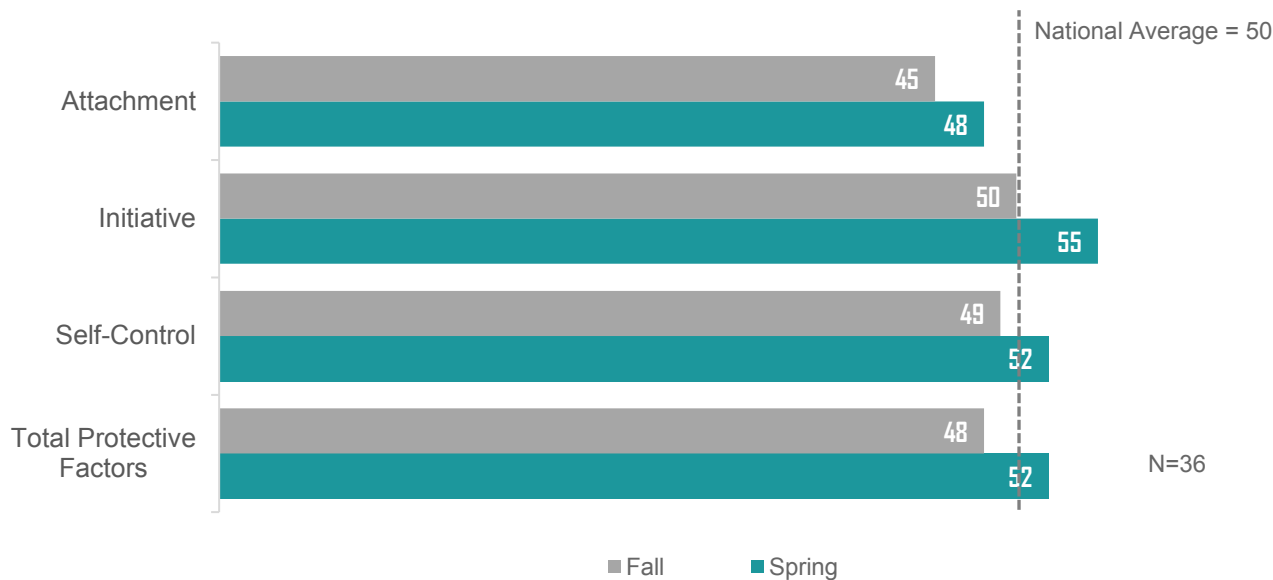
Less than half the children (38%) were at the national average in attachment. n=36



The social-emotional tool also measures behavioral concerns such as having temper tantrums, having a short attention span, and becoming upset easily. Thirteen percent of the children scored in the “concern” range, indicating child behaviors that were outside what is typical for three to five-year old children.

A comparison of social-emotional results at fall and spring is reported in the following graph.

ON AVERAGE, CHILDREN IMPROVED ACROSS ALL AREAS FROM FALL TO SPRING.
The most growth was in the area of initiative.



Children demonstrated improved social-emotional skills across all areas. By spring they exceeded the national average in every area except for attachment. The most gains were made in initiative (5 point increase on average). A paired t-test analysis found that there were significant increases in initiative ($t=-3.190$, $p<.01$), and in total protective factors ($t=-2.219$, $p<.05$). The effect sizes, initiative ($d=.532$) and total protective factors ($d=.370$), indicate medium to small change across time. The analysis did not find significant changes in attachment or self-control suggesting these areas remained stable over time.

Executive Functioning

Twenty-nine children were assessed. The descriptive analyses found that 90% of the children demonstrated average executive functioning skills in fall and 97% in spring. Average scores were 95.69 in the fall and 96.93 in the spring. The national average is a score of 100. In fall, 41% of the children met

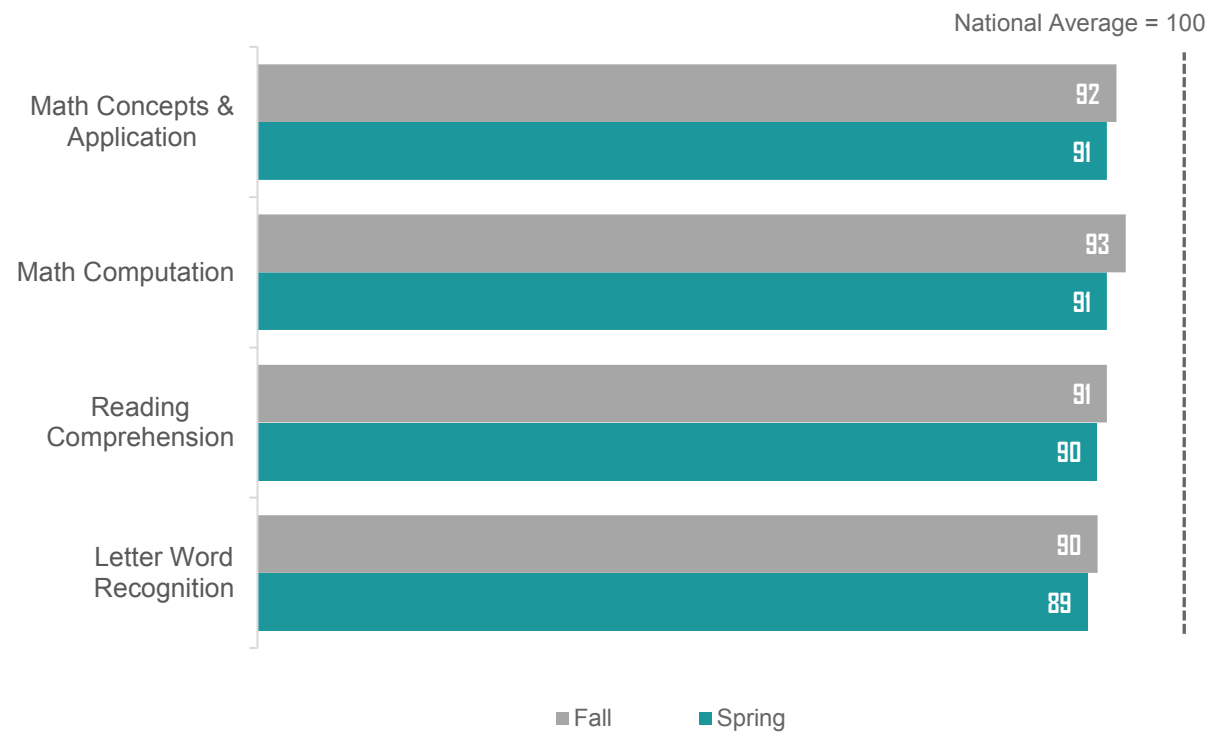


this benchmark. In spring, 30% scored at this level. A paired t-test analysis did not find significant changes from fall to spring in executive functioning scores, indicating that children’s skills remained stable over time.

Academic Skills

Fifteen children had math and reading assessments. The descriptive analyses found that in spring, high percentages of children (73% in math concepts & application, 87% in math computation) scored in the average range and above in math. Reading outcomes were not as strong with fewer children scoring in the average range and above (53% in reading comprehension and 47% in letter word recognition). A paired t-test analysis did not find significant changes from fall to spring in academic scores across the four assessments, indicating that skills remained stable over time.

ON AVERAGE, ACADEMIC SKILLS REMAINED STABLE OVER TIME WITH MINIMAL CHANGE FROM FALL TO SPRING.
Average scores were below the national average. n=15



Childcare Director Training

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

In partnership with the Nebraska Early Childhood Collaborative, the Learning Community Center of North Omaha offers training and coaching services to center directors. The initial goal of the Child Care Director Training program was to work closely with home- and center-based childcare directors to enhance their skills, provide a sustainable professional development system for staff and ultimately improve the quality of care and education for the children. The program was created using a relationship- and strength-based approach which uses reflective practices based on the National Center of Quality Teaching and Learning Model. However, the COVID-19 pandemic created additional challenges in recruitment and support of directors and programs.

The intensive training was also designed to support directors through the first two phases of Step Up to Quality (SU2Q), the state of Nebraska initiative which promotes improvements in the quality of early childhood education. Participating providers could then receive additional coaching services and incentives to strengthen their businesses. Given the challenges presented by the pandemic the initial goals and program focus shifted away from supporting director through the phases of SU2Q and toward general program support.

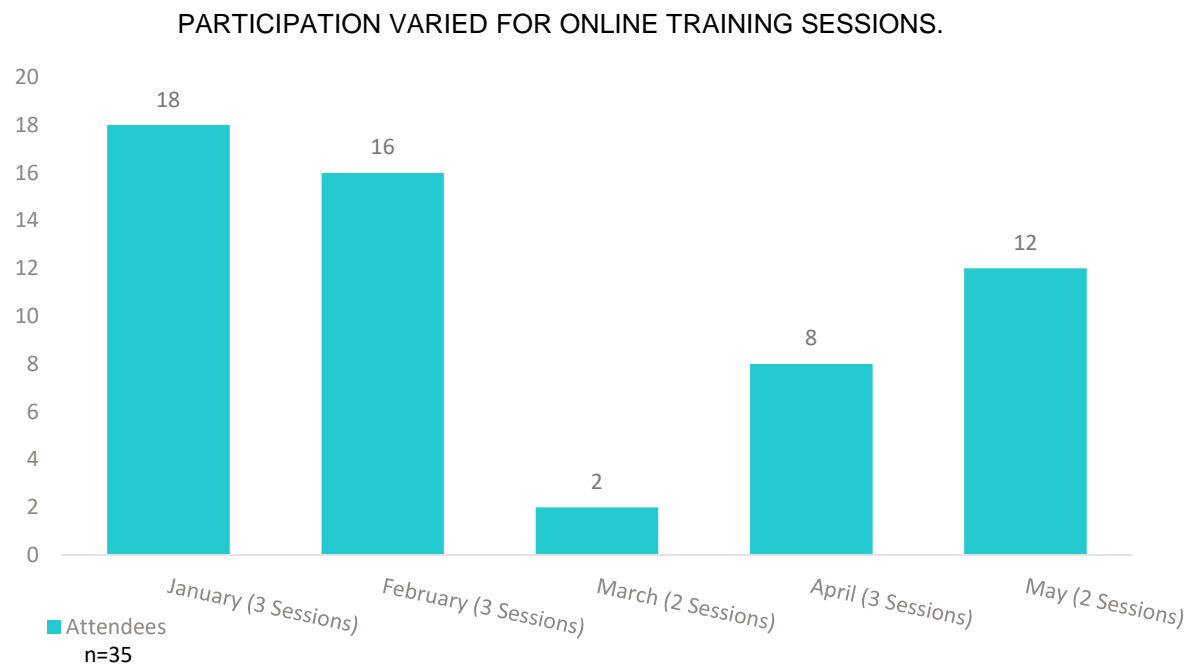
The second cohort of directors completed the Childcare Director Training Program in May of 2020. A third cohort of directors was not recruited for the 2020-2021 program year and a focus group was held with North Omaha childcare providers both center-based and homebased providers in the fall of 2021 to determine community needs and wants in terms of training and support. Two focus groups were held and a total of 18 childcare providers (center based=8, home based=8, other=2) attended. Attendees completed a short online demographic survey and were compensated with a \$20 gift card for their time. Following the focus groups it was determined that trainings would be held via Zoom and open to any childcare provider in North Omaha area for support and assistance. Focus group data revealed that childcare providers were interested in having a group that allows providers to meet and discuss interests and issues with others in similar positions. In addition, gaining more information about available grants and information on topics such as trauma, managing children's behaviors, and building children's social-emotional skills.

The 2020-2021 online director training program provided an opportunity for directors to meet virtually a few times a month through the end of the school year. Beginning in January of 2021, multiple virtual training and support sessions were offered at different times (to best meet the needs of the community.)

DEMOGRAPHICS

Following the initial focus group sessions which included 18 participants, subsequent training sessions included a total 56 participants from January-May 2021. Zip codes represented at trainings included 68104, 68134, 68110, 68111, 68122, 68117, and 68505. The majority of

attendees were from center based childcares (89%), but a small percentage of home-based providers (11%) also attend the trainings.

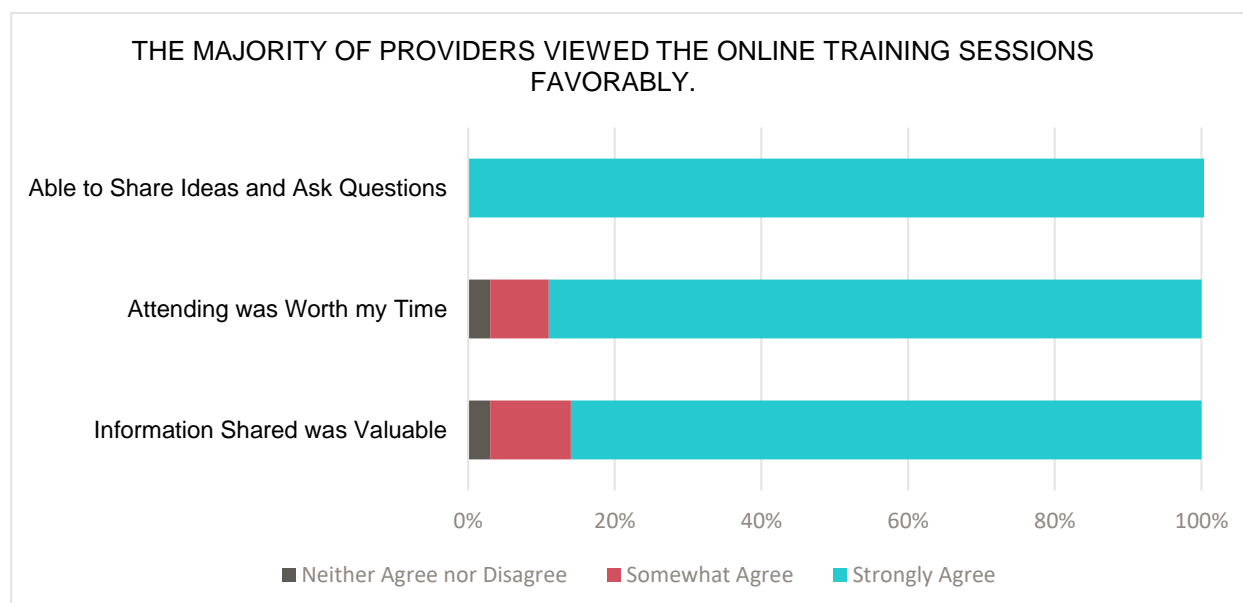


OUTCOMES

PARTICIPANT PERCEPTIONS OF ONLINE TRAINING PROGRAM

METHOD. Following each of the training sessions in April and May, an online feedback survey was provided to help in determining program effectiveness and future directions of training sessions. Each participant (n=35) who completed the feedback survey was given a \$20 gift card for their attendance and time.

The majority (88%) of online training attendees indicated that the length of the training sessions were appropriate (1 hour), attending the session was worth their time, and that they would attend future online sessions. All attendees strongly agreed that they were able to share their ideas and ask questions during the sessions. As the goal of the previous childcare director trainings were to provide coaching to increase center quality, participant were asked if they would like a coach to contact them with any other questions about the topic that they may have. The majority of training attendees (89%) indicated that they did not want a coach to contact them about topics that were discussed.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The overall recommendation was to increase the leadership opportunities for North Omaha childcare directors to guide support and training for the North Omaha childcare community. Expanding on training and support that is specific to community needs and driven by the childcare community could increase provider buy-in and lead to a stronger North Omaha childcare network. Given that the majority of training attendees (89%) indicated that they did not want a coach to contact them about topics that were discussed it may be beneficial to shift the training program away from a coaching model and to a community-directed model.

Prior training cohorts have indicated that expanding topics to include more information surrounding topics on trauma, diversity, and needs unique to the community would be beneficial. A community-led advisory council would allow for training topics to be tailored to the needs of the community and centered on the goals and values of the North Omaha childcare community members.



Future Teacher Clinical Training

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Metropolitan Community College (MCC) in partnership with the Learning Community and Educare developed a new approach to pre-service education to better prepare college students to teach in high poverty early childhood and preschool classrooms. With guidance from experienced faculty, college students work directly with teaching teams at Educare, Kellom, and Conestoga. The Educare classroom is linked to the MCC classroom at the Learning Community Center of North Omaha (LCCNO) via robotic cameras and audio, giving students a unique opportunity to learn while receiving real-time feedback from their instructors and classmates. These strategies resulted in students receiving immediate feedback from instructors as they employed newly learned teaching techniques.

A primary goal of the program is to increase the number of early childhood teachers to address the shortage in the field. An additional goal is to provide a curriculum that supports teachers to gain skills in working with diverse populations of children and families.

A partnership between MCC, the Learning Community, and Creighton University is providing an opportunity for students (called A + B) to obtain a cost-effective path to a teaching degree with an Early Childhood endorsement. Qualifying MCC early childhood students can enter Creighton as full-fledged juniors and graduate in two years.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Due to a change in faculty leadership, demographic information was not available prior to this report. Data for the 2020-2021 year will be reported in the 2021-2022 evaluation.

OUTCOMES

METHOD. Evaluation of this strategy included tracking graduates' short- and long-term education outcomes and a Qualtrics survey with students enrolled in the MCC Early Childhood program who have attended at least one early childhood class at LCCNO.

FINDINGS

A goal of the program is to increase the number of early childhood teachers to address the shortage in the field. An additional goal is to provide a curriculum that supports teachers to gain skills in working with diverse populations of children and families. MCC Early Childhood program addressed the shortage of teachers by graduating 14 students with Early Childhood associate degrees and 1 student with an Early Childhood Certificate. Of these graduates, six students had all attended at least one early childhood class at LCCNO during their program.

MCC tracks the students who graduate from the Early Childhood associate degree program to determine the number that continue their education at a 4-year institution. There were 6 students graduating in 2020-2021 that have transferred and enrolled in a 4-year institution. The majority of those have enrolled at University of Nebraska at Kearney (33%) and Omaha (33%), followed by Bellevue University (17%) and Midland (17%).

Students enrolled in MCC Early Childhood classes connected with LCCNO were invited to participate in an online survey to capture their experience with the technology and instruction at LCCNO. Students were emailed the survey by their course instructor.

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic MCC Early Childhood classes were not held on site at LCCNO during the 2020-2021 school year. In addition, there were no responses to the online survey sent to students by their MCC instructor. The survey from the previous evaluation year had very limited responses (n=3), so it was not surprising that there were no responses for the current year given the lack of on-site programming and general challenges surrounding the pandemic.

RECOMMENDATIONS

MCC and LCCNO have implemented an innovative clinical approach for students, however, long-term outcomes are needed to determine if these experiences influence student preparedness and confidence in working with children and families in poverty, and whether students are continuing to work in early childhood settings in the areas surrounding LCCNO and LCCSO after graduation.

The move to online learning and MCC classes not being held at LCCNO may require a shift in goals and experiences within the MCC and LCCNO partnership to continue to benefit students and build the early childhood workforce.



FAMILY LEARNING

LEARNING
COMMUNITY
CENTER OF
SOUTH OMAHA



Learning Community Center of South Omaha

The family learning program in South Omaha is a comprehensive, center-based initiative created using national models and best practices from the two-generational approach. The program originated in 2012 as a collaborative effort between the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties and OneWorld Community Health Centers. The Learning Community Center of South Omaha was nationally recognized by the White House as a Bright Spot in Hispanic Education and is a 2-GEN network partner through Ascend at the Aspen Institute.

Each family in the program attends classes or programming an average of seven hours per week during the academic school year and throughout the summer. Families participate in all three of the program's primary components:

- Education for Parents of Young Children
- Early Childhood Education
- Interactive Parent/Child Activities

EDUCATION FOR PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

Since a parent's level of educational attainment is a strong predictor of a child's academic success, all parents at the center enroll in an English as a Second Language or a GED cohort for six hours a week. During most of the 2020-2021 year, parent classes were held virtually. During Spring 2021, classes gradually returned to in-person learning, and by June 2021, most classes were held in-person.

ENGLISH FOR PARENTS. As parents learn English, they become more confident talking to teachers and asking questions about their child's progress, as well as communicating with the broader community. An English for Parents class might teach parents how to use computers to access school information, role-play parent/teacher conferences, or utilize children's books as learning tools.

GED. In partnership with Metro Community College, the program offers GED classes and a bilingual ESL instructor provides in-class language supports to parents as needed. The goal of the classes is to help parents increase their educational level and better their family's economic security through more stable and lucrative jobs or new educational pathways only open to GED graduates. GED classes also help parents guide their children on their academic journey (homework help, role modeling, academic language and concepts, etc.)

Along with ESL or GED, parent participants receive:

PARENTING CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS. Parenting classes and family-focused workshops strengthen and support parents, who are the first and most important teachers for their children.

Parents learn practical strategies to support child development and education. Program staff and community organizations provide a wide variety of offerings, including Circle of Security®, Love and Logic®, domestic violence prevention, financial literacy, and nutritious cooking. All workshops teach skills and techniques to foster learning and well-being at home.

Sample Parent Classes and Workshops
Circle of Security® (Child Saving Institute & Project Harmony)
Budgeting 101 (Lending Link)
How To Help Your Struggling Child Succeed (PTI Nebraska)
Setting Boundaries (Women’s Center for Advancement)
Cooking Matters® (Whispering Roots)
Love and Logic® (program staff)

EDUCATIONAL & SOCIAL ASSISTANCE NAVIGATION SERVICES. The center employs navigators who develop authentic relationships with parent participants and serve as their advocates. Every parent in the program is assigned an **Educational Navigator**, who conducts home visits with family at least once a month to help connect them with the public school system and provide new insights into child development and learning strategies. Navigators use a research-based home visiting/parenting curriculum, Growing Great Kids®, which ensures effective individualized education and support. A **Social Assistance Navigator** assists families who are in crisis or have challenging social or economic needs. This navigator connects parent participants with many community resources, such as pantries, mental health services, and homeless shelters.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT. Since research shows children whose parents have higher-wage jobs have better educational outcomes, workforce development classes are offered onsite in collaboration with Metropolitan Community College. Parents learn workforce readiness skills such as resume-building, interview skills, and job search methods and receive certificates in customer services, workforce ethics proficiency, and the National Career



Readiness Certificate. A Career Skills Coach also offers individual career coaching or assistance connecting to continued education.

DIGITAL LITERACY. Due to COVID-19 and private donors, each parent enrolled in the program is loaned a computer. Since 2020, digital literacy was included in all English for Parents classes, and parents in the program have become proficient in using Zoom, email, search engines, and Google Classroom and gained skills such as using a mouse, copying and pasting, and typing. Throughout the year, small in-person sessions were conducted at the center in order to facilitate participants understanding technology concepts that were difficult to learn remotely. Additionally, Metropolitan Community College offers computer certificates to parents who take onsite courses that include the following topics: Basic Computer Skills, Internet Basics, Using Email, and Windows.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

While parents attend classes, the Learning Community Center of South Omaha offers year-round learning activities for young children, from newborn to age five. The primary focus is on building social, emotional, and executive functioning skills as well as cognitive concepts to support school readiness. The program partners with many organizations, including Farm to School (The Big Garden), Story Time (Omaha Public Library), nutrition classes for children (UNMC's Center for Reducing Health Disparities), and performing arts sessions (Opera Omaha).

When staff or parents identify children with delayed development or challenging behaviors, the program connects these children and their families to programs such as Omaha Public Schools Early Intervention or KidSquad at Child Saving Institute. That way, young children receive interventions before they enter the public school system. The program also encourages families to enroll children who qualify in early childhood programs through Omaha Public Schools.

During the 2020-2021 year, adjustments were made to continue the program during the pandemic. A virtual "summer camp" in July 2020, included classes in math, origami, fitness, fun facts, cooking, virtual adventures, and music. Each preschool child heading to Kindergarten received a visit from the "graduation bus", where their early childhood teachers set up a mini graduation ceremony in each child's front yard. Young children had the opportunity to join daily Zoom sessions with other children from the center to engage with their teachers who read books, sang songs, and did science experiments. Art and craft activities were sent home with parents, and special events, like the Week of the Young Child, were celebrated with drive-through events. In June 2021, the center piloted a Summer Academy, a daily in-person program for young children.

INTERACTIVE PARENT/CHILD ACTIVITIES

Interactive parent/child activities are offered to families enrolled in the program to promote supportive and responsive parent/child relationships and interactions, which are the building blocks for healthy brain development. Interactive parent/child activities allow parents opportunities to practice new parenting strategies while learning together with their children. Examples of interactive parent/child activities include field trips, special events, or family summer camps with themes such as STEM learning, music, art, or literacy. Outside partners bring enrichment

programs to the center, including Prime Time Family Reading Time® (Humanities Nebraska), College Prep for Families (UNO Service Learning Academy) and String Sprouts® (Omaha Conservatory of Music).

DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2020-2021, the Family Learning Program served 298 families and 824 children (532 target students, birth to 8). Of the families served, 216 were enrolled in the comprehensive program while 82 families participated in the auxiliary program. Of the families attending the Family Learning Program, 74% needed childcare to attend programming, 85% reported that their students qualified for free-reduced lunch.

OUTCOMES

QUALITY OF PROGRAMMING

METHOD. Multiple tools were used to measure growth, assess perceptions of the participants, and demonstrate program quality. The evaluation is both summative and developmental in nature. The tools selected for the evaluation provided outcome information as well as informed the implementers about what is working and what needs improvement.

FOCUS GROUP RESULTS. Multiple focus groups were conducted in 2020-2021 to allow participants the opportunity to voice their experiences and thoughts. Questions were broad in nature and asked about the participants' overall experience with the program, satisfaction levels with multiple facets of the program (navigators, parenting classes, resources, English classes) and ideas for improvements to the program. Additional focus groups conducted in December 2020 and summer of 2021 focused specifically on the digital programming providing by LCCSO.

FOCUS GROUPS. In the spring of 2021, seven focus groups were conducted with adults enrolled in the ESL classes at the Learning Community of South Omaha. In order to be a part of the focus groups, a participant must have participated in the center programming for at least six months. A total of 76 participants attended. Focus group questions centered on participants' experiences with the center during the past year. Below are the summarized results of those discussions.

Participants reported a high level of satisfaction with English classes. Along with a high sentiment of gratitude, participants stated, "I feel satisfied. I love the English classes. I like the conversations we have during class so we can practice speaking." The English classes also led to an increased level of understanding, e.g., "They have helped me a lot. When I go to the store, I can ask for things that I am looking for. I feel more confident. I understand more than I did."

Many participants also shared an increased ability to help their children with homework because of taking classes at the center. One participant shared, "The classes have been very helpful. I can help my child with her homework and read books to her in English. The teacher is very good, and it has helped me in my work." Other participants reported that the English classes helped them to understand what their children were learning in school.

The word “patient” was frequently used to describe the nature of the English teachers. In addition, participants noted satisfaction with the curriculum, stating, “I think they have a great curriculum. I like how they split us up by levels and not just throw us in one group together.”

Participants shared a desire to return to in-person classes. A shared understanding of the need for online classes was expressed, but many participants are ready to return to in-person learning, e.g., “I am happy, but the only thing I have to say is that it is a bit more difficult to learn through Zoom compared to in-person classes due to being distracted with watching my kids.” Other participants agreed that in-person classes can support more personal interactions with one another.

Specific suggestions for the content of English classes include more writing time in English, more reading time in class, more opportunities to converse and practice English during class, and basic math courses to help participants understand what their children are learning in school. Other suggestions include adding classes at additional times, such as evenings or weekends for those who work during the day. Participants were thankful for the computer courses offered during the past year and expressed a need for on-going computer classes.

A high level of satisfaction was reported by participants enrolled in the GED classes. Out of the focus group participants, 11 reported enrollments in GED classes, while 36 reported a willingness to enroll in the program in the future. One GED participant stated, “Personally, this is when I improved my English. I had to use it more and use new words that I did not learn in the English classes.” Others agreed that the courses were challenging, but “excellent.” Several GED participants reported having started the GED program elsewhere, but then found more success with the program offered through the Learning Community. Other participants were surprised to

report that the program had helped them with the subject of math stating, “The math part has been so helpful. Math was like another world for me. I have children in first and fourth grade. This is nice for me because I can now help them with their homework. When I am practicing something, they also help me. It is more than learning. It is a life goal. There are always things to learn.”



Participants benefitted from a variety of classes offered by the center. Classes such as Love and Logic, Prime Time, Workforce, Circle of Security, Puente al Exito (Bridge to Success), and Violin were discussed during the focus group sessions. An active participant of these opportunities shared, “I think each of these offered me more knowledge and strength to use with my family. Each of these classes offers security for the future.” Other participants shared that classes such as Prime Time helped their children to improve their ability to communicate, and the finance classes helped others learn how to purchase a home. Participants also shared satisfaction and appreciation of violin classes offered for their children. Additional quotations about personal experiences with various classes are shared below:

Circle of Security: “Circle of Security was very helpful to me in my life. We don’t always have the understanding of how to be parents, and there was so much information in this program. I feel that it helped me to be a better mother. It also reminded me that no parent is perfect.”

Workforce: “I am happy with workforce because it motivated me to apply for a job, and to know that I could do it. Now I have a job and will have worked there for two years come this September.”

Puente al Exito (Bridge to Success): “Puente al Exito with UNO really helped open the doors for my daughter to attend UNL.”

Love and Logic: “I am taking Love and Logic. It has really opened and changed the way I think. It makes you reflect on yourself. It has helped me to better reflect on my emotions.”

To summarize the classes offered, participants shared that the parenting classes helped them to apply new skills within their own families that were different from what they had learned in their native countries.

Participants unanimously benefitted from the support of the educational navigators. There was a shared sentiment of satisfaction with the educational navigator staff among the focus group participants. Participants shared, “Navigators do not only help us with our classes, but they help us at home as well. I feel like they are even more focused on us during this time of the pandemic. They have been there for us.” Participants echoed the opinion that navigators were a great resource during the pandemic, e.g., “When we had the virus, my husband had it very hard, and my children were here, and I did not have food to cook or diapers for my six-month-old. I talked with my navigator, and she brought me diapers and food. She helped me so much.” Other participants shared that navigators assisted them with enrollment in classes at Metro Community College to continue their education.

Many valued character traits were used to describe the educational navigators. The adjacent word cloud shares commonly used words expressed by participants to describe the educational navigator staff.

Suggestions for the educational navigators were minimal, but participants remarked that this year felt different than other years due to the fact that they could no longer speak with their navigator in-person. Home visits with the educational navigators were missed. One participant suggested having outdoor visits with the navigators at the Learning Community site, which began in the spring of 2021.



Participants saw improved communication with their child’s school. The impact of communication between the family and school was two-fold: resulting from increased English-speaking skills as well as newly acquired technology skills opening doors to communicate electronically. One participant shared, “Before my daughter would communicate with the school for me. I could not speak with anyone at school, and the hours of my job made it complicated for me to communicate with the school. Because I did not know how to communicate with the school, I was not motivated to speak with them. Now after taking English classes, I can ask questions by myself. I communicate with the teacher. I can speak with the people in the office. I am more comfortable now. I know that my English is not perfect, but I can express myself well enough that we understand one another. They tell me that I speak well in English. It is a great support. I no longer feel embarrassed, and I am grateful.” Participants also shared how computer classes have helped them to understand how to access online portals for their children at school, and they can now view their grades online. Improved communication with teachers at conferences was also noted.

Participants also shared a high level of satisfaction with the early learning classes offered for young children at the center. Participants reported the classes allowed their children to be more social with their peers. Many noted an increased confidence in their children; whereas prior to attending classes their children were timid and less talkative, and after taking classes at the center children were more at ease. Participants also reported satisfaction with the early childhood teachers, e.g., “The teachers are so good and patient. They work so hard with our children. They sing and teach them their letters. They are very motivating and nice.”

Students who needed extra support also received additional resources. A few participants spoke of receiving increased services for their children with disabilities, e.g., “The center has helped me a lot with my children. They have some delays in speech, so they have a lot of support. They have had opportunities to socialize and to be with other children.” Another participant explained, “My child is diagnosed with ADHD. Because of the center, I am now able to communicate better with the psychologists and therapists that work with my child so that he can continue to grow and develop.”

Many participants agreed that the pandemic created stress for their family. Stress was a result of fear of the virus, and for some participants loss of a job. Participants mentioned taking in less income while spending more on utilities since family members were staying home.

While stress was a common theme among many participants, there was also a common notion of hope, e.g., “We can see the light at the end of the tunnel because we have the vaccine. This last year was very difficult and stressful. My husband was on furlough. He went to the doctor because of his stress. It was also hard for the kids to be stuck in the house all day long. But the strength was that we had more family time. My husband spent more time with the kids. Thank God things are starting to get back to normal. We just kept moving forward, and here we are.” Additional participants agreed the pandemic helped their family to unite more closely and created more appreciation for life’s simple things, such as going to the park or the ability to hug loved ones

DIGITAL LEARNING OUTCOMES

In December of 2020, six focus groups were conducted with parents who attended Computer Literacy classes at Learning Community Center of South Omaha. The following is a summary of statements and common beliefs that were analyzed from approximately 30 parents who participated in those focus groups.

COMPUTER LITERACY CLASSES WERE GREATLY NEEDED FOR PARENTS

“Now that the pandemic is here, it is an obligation to know this.”

In the spring of 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic forced families into isolation, the use of technology was a necessity for a variety of reasons. ESL instruction pivoted to online instruction through Zoom. Younger children of participants also attended early childhood instruction through Zoom. In addition, school age children began remote learning on tablets received from schools. A majority of parents stated that they had minimal previous experience with computers prior to the pandemic. A few participants needed assistance with basic keyboarding skills, as well as assistance turning the devices on.

Fear was a commonly expressed emotion by parents as their children transitioned to full remote learning, e.g., “When the children started with their tablets, I did not know how to use it. Sometimes I would ask my son, ‘Mijo, what is this application?’ And he would answer, ‘I don’t know.’ ...**I was afraid to move the tablet. I knew if I could learn this, I could help him with his homework.**”

A commonly needed skill was the ability to communicate through email. One participant shared, “For me, it was very helpful to learn email. I did not know a lot about it. When I started all of this, everything with the school was through email...I learned how to write, receive, and send emails. It was so much help.”

“It was difficult to send emails to my teacher. I would try to send him one and I could not, so I would just call him. I have a hard time trying to write a new email.”

One participant was happy to learn more advanced skills with email, stating “I have also learned how to send emails that look more presentable. The meaning and structure of the email, how to

navigate the website and the icons, and the star that means your favorites; things like that were helpful.”

Many participants in the focus group also reported an unfamiliarity with the Zoom platform prior to the pandemic. A few individuals shared their initial confusion of getting a Zoom link in their email and using a code to enter the early childhood virtual session for their children, e.g., “At first, my daughter’s classes, I did not know how to do them! It was very difficult. I did not understand. Everything was in English, right? But the teacher showed me where to find the link and enter the password and everything.”

Participants expressed a growing confidence with Zoom. Some participants stated that they are now using the platform to connect with friends outside of class. One participant shared that she can attend training for work through Zoom in the evenings. Another participant shared that she is looking forward to using Zoom to communicate with her family in Mexico.

Some participants benefited from assistance in navigating search engines such as Google. Others stated they needed help toggling back and forth between multiple tabs and other multi-tasking techniques. The use of Microsoft Word was also included in instruction.

Overall, a large number of parents believed the computer literacy classes assisted them in supporting their children with online learning, e.g., “I never thought my child would be doing school like this. At the beginning, it was difficult, and I did not know if my child was really ‘in her class’ doing what she was supposed to. Now with what I have learned in these classes, I can see that she is connected. It was really helpful.”

“Nowadays, you have to use technology for everything. Before I did not feel comfortable with it, but after COVID and having to be quarantined, everything had to be done virtually. That was hard for me. My son is in eighth grade and his parent/teacher conferences and other meetings are through Zoom. Thanks to this class, it has helped me a lot, and I am a lot better with technology.”

Due to the patience and clear explanations of the classroom teachers, a transformation from fear to confidence occurred for many. Participants reported feeling frustrated at first, but the patience of the teachers contributed to learning new strategies. Teachers also made classes interesting and fun.

“When we did not understand something, they explained it to us. Or sometimes they explained it to us separately and took the time to make sure we understood it.”

“They helped us so much. For me it helped me so much with my son to comprehend and understand how to use his tablet. I felt comfortable with the way they taught us.”

“The teacher is patient, helpful, and encouraging... I can tell they love their job.”

Beyond helping their children with school, parents also felt the computer classes will improve their lives on a personal level. Participants noted feeling more comfortable scheduling appointments electronically with doctors, hospitals, and attorneys. One participant shared that possessing computer skills will make her more marketable in the workforce, e.g., “I think what I

am learning can help me in the future. If I were to work, I can say, 'I know a little about computers...and well, I can speak English too!'

Suggestions for future computer classes included adding computer time to each ESL class. Other suggestions mentioned were a need for leveled computer classes according to ability, e.g., "It is difficult to follow when we are all trying and working at a different pace." There was a range of responses of those individuals who needed basic keyboarding skills (e.g., reviewing parts of the computer) to others with a more advanced skill set who were ready to work on email presentation and multi-tasking.

Many participants continue to request additional options for classes during the week, as well as longer class times or Saturday options.

In conclusion, the computer literacy classes provided a much needed skill set for parents new to technology, who were suddenly forced to enter an uncharted world of communication for the sake of their children.

"It has helped me so much because before we really did not need to know a lot about technology. Now, it is a necessity. It has helped me and my children so much."

"It has helped me a lot with my child's learning. I can check and see my child's grades and homework assignments. I can help my daughter get connected."

It is also worth noting the gratitude expressed by many parents for receiving a computer from the center.

Digital learning focus groups were conducted for a second time in June 2021. Participants shared similar feedback to what was collected in December with one difference being the increased use and generalization of skills beyond the classrooms.

Participants reported that learning Zoom, how to maneuver in Google and use email were the most helpful pieces of technology to learn. Zoom was mentioned across participants as most useful as it impacted access to programming, communication with their student(s) school, and telehealth appointments. Security and email were also mentioned as being helpful to learn as participants learned to navigate an increasingly digital world.



“When I decided to study online, everything was new. Zoom was very helpful. When I called the center, they told me I had to take three classes. It has been very good-a great experience. They taught me the basics of Zoom.”

Participants reported gaining multiple skills and wanted additional classes to continue learning and using the new skills both to help their children and for themselves personally.

One participant stated, “Overall, it was always difficult for me to use a computer; I knew nothing about computers. Now, it is a lot easier for me to use.” Several mentioned the patience of the teachers in teaching the apps and technology as a reason for improvement and sticking with learning. They also appreciated being able to learn in chunks and mastering concepts before moving to the next topic. Participants want to learn more, particularly the specific apps and programs used by school district and how to better use tablets. Other suggestions include having more online classes, learning additional security features and having more practice using Google apps.

“I would like to learn more about how to manipulate the computer because it is very necessary. All the things I have learned have been helpful for school and my personal life.”

Participants agreed that helping their students with remote learning was easier due to the classes provided at the center and they wanted to learn more. Understanding Zoom allowed parents to connect with teachers about their students’ learning. In addition, parents reported increased confidence in downloading/using app and helping their children with the pieces taught at the center. However, several mentioned the need to learn more programs and navigate tablets to take their skills to the next level.

“The teacher taught us how to use several applications/programs to practice and study our English. I can also help my children practice/study. When they are on their tablets and if an issue comes up, I can now help them.”

Digital learning benefited families with young children as well as those with school age students. Parents mentioned how the technology not only allowed them to help their children but it allowed them to continue in their own learning while staying home as caregivers.

One parent shared “At LCCSO, my daughter entered a program called Prime Time for children 3 years of age. Everything was virtual, and it was six weeks of literacy. My daughter has completed two programs. She is excited to see her teachers virtually. Because of the computer skills I learned, my daughter was able to adapt and learn online as well.”

Another parent discussed how it helped them personally, “These classes were a big blessing for me because my younger children are here at home with me. It was a great benefit because I can stay at home and learn at the same time...I am so thankful to everyone at the center. Thank you to everyone, because we are all learning.”

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

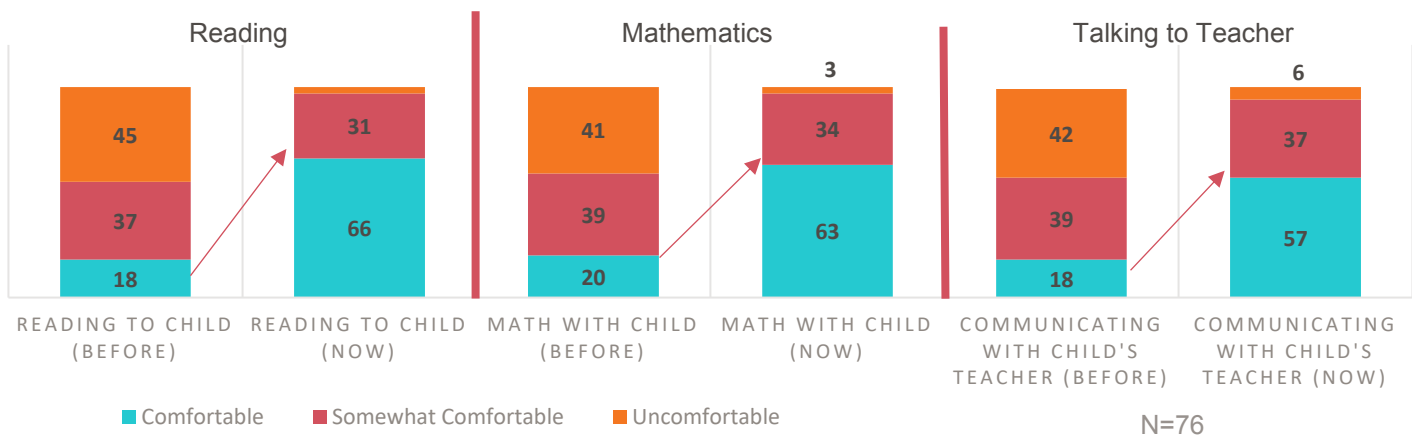
SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT RESULTS

As part of the focus groups, parents reflected on their levels of comfort about engaging with the school prior to starting the program and how they compared to now after participating in the programming. A total of 76 parents completed the items and of those, 9% had participated for at least 6 months, 26% had been in the program for one year, 36% for at least two years and 29% for three years or longer.

The current results align with the past five years of evaluation data. Parents feel increasingly comfortable engaging in school efforts including reading to their child in English, working on mathematics and communicating with the teacher.

The percent of participants feeling comfortable reading to their child increased from 18% to 66% (+48% increase) and from 20% to 63% (+43% increase) for math. Additionally, parents reported feeling more comfortable communicating with their child's teacher and the school, from 18% comfortable to 57% comfortable (+39% increase).

PROGRAMMING INCREASES PARENT ENGAGEMENT ACROSS ALL EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES.
PARENTS REPORT INCREASED LEVELS OF CONFIDENCE.

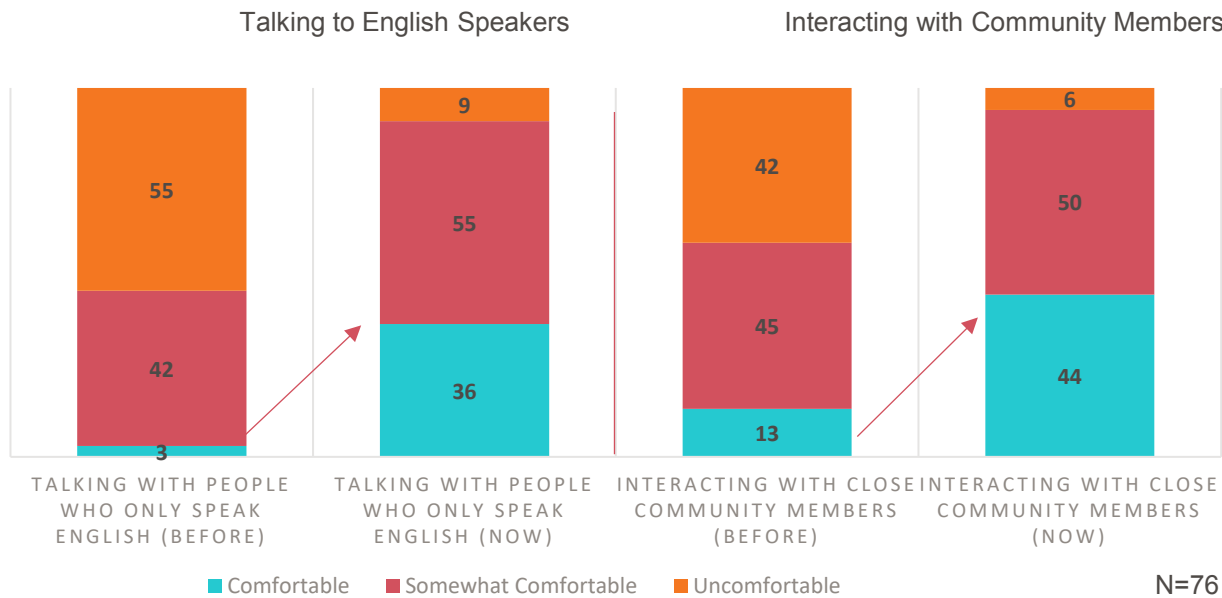


In addition to school engagement items, participants were asked about their engagement both with English-only speakers and within the community. In both scenarios, participants indicated increased levels of feeling comfortable communicating with English speakers. The percent of participants feeling comfortable talking with people who only speak English increased from 3% to 36% while the percentage of participants who felt uncomfortable interacting with community members decreased from 13% to 6%.

The pattern of responses is consistent with those reported in the previous four years. As participants remain in the program and gain English language skills, comfort levels working on academics, engagement with the school, and community engagement all increase. These data are supported by the qualitative feedback provided by participants in the focus groups. Both the

English classes and the digital learning opportunities were recognized by participants as contributors to increased levels of confidence and comfort.

LEVELS OF COMFORT USING ENGLISH SKILLS INCREASED AFTER ATTENDING PROGRAMMING FOR AT LEAST 6 MONTHS.



Suggestions for Future Programming

As part of all focus groups, participants provided suggestions on all aspects of the programming: English classes, Educational Navigators, parenting, activities, online classes, home visiting practices, and challenges.

Suggestions for future classes to be offered by the center include classes on how to start a business, cooking or crafts, guitar, domestic violence, and human sexuality or LGBTQ topics.

A current requirement of the Learning Community is that participants must have children to enroll in the program. A few participants spoke of peers in the community who would also like to improve their English, but do not have children. In addition, a few participants mentioned a need for a Learning Community site in West Omaha, where there is a high Spanish speaking population, but no such programs are offered.

PARENT EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

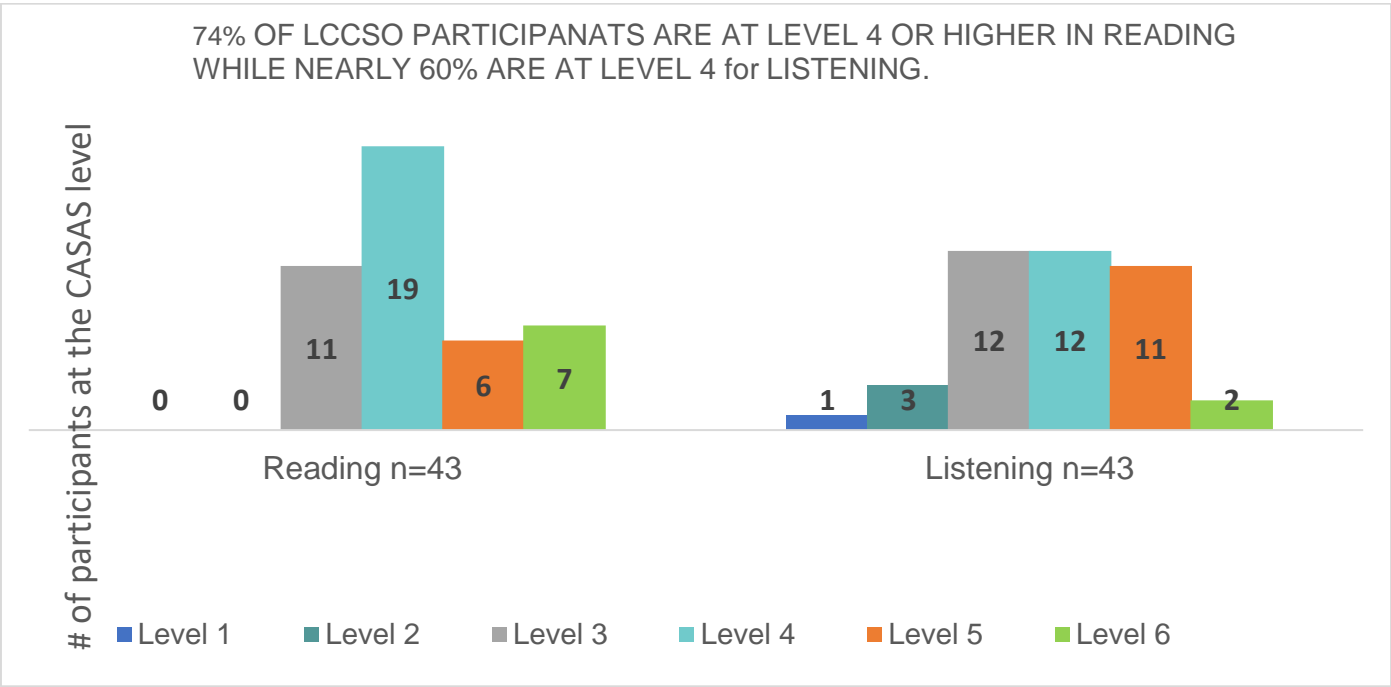
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

METHOD. English language skills for listening and reading were assessed using the CASAS®. CASAS® was used for multiple reasons; 1) CASAS® is the nationally recognized assessment for

English Learners; 2) It is aligned with the English curriculum used at the center; 3) It provides information that informs classroom instruction; and 4) Participants can easily transition to the GED subtests using the same format. This online assessment was administered jointly by Munroe-Meyer Institute’s program evaluators and staff from the center.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT RESULTS

FINDINGS. Using a paired-samples t-tests participants demonstrated a significant increase in their English language scores from pre to post testing for both listening $t(42)=2.35$, $p<.05$) and reading $t(42)=1.998$, $p=.05$). By the end of the reporting period, 74% of participants were scoring at a Level 4 for reading and nearly 60% at a Level 4 for listening.



The levels of the CASAS® indicate increasing level of skills and comfort in being able to listen, understand, and read English. For example, at ESL Level 2 a participant understands basic greetings, simple phrases and simple questions but may require the speaker to speak slowly and repeat the items. A person at this level would have difficulty with any direct communication even when simplified. At ESL Level 4, participants can understand simple everyday conversations and have basic routine social interactions. They can follow simple directions are recognizing new words and phrases. Upon reaching an ESL Level 5, a participant understands common vocabulary across familiar subjects. At this point the person can find information in text, follow simple written directions, and understands the language on basic computer applications.

Individual reports were provided to the participants and ESL teachers at the centers. Teachers used these scores to group students and to inform instruction. The CASAS® is aligned with the current curriculum used so the teachers have found the information to be useful for planning instruction and monitoring the progress of the students.

PARENTING PRACTICES

METHOD. Navigators provided video observations of parents and their children to the evaluation team. The Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (KIPS™) was used to provide feedback to parents and help navigators determine which skills to focus on with parents. Educational Navigators receive a written report with scores and recommendations to use with families.

PARENT-CHILD INTERACTION RESULTS FINDINGS. The Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (KIPS™) measures parenting behaviors across three areas: Building Relationships, Promoting Learning, and Supporting Confidence, based on a videotape of a parent playing with his or her child. Scores are based on a 5-point scale with 5 being high-quality. A program goal is scores of 3.5 or above. Scores for the parents participating at LCCSO are included in the Shared Outcomes section of the report.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

A partnership was established with Metro Community College to provide work readiness classes for participants at LCCSO. Several work certification program opportunities were offered during the past year with multiple participants earning certificates.

FINDINGS. The following is a list of additional work certificates and the numbers of certificates awarded in each category.

1. Customer Service (29)
2. National Career Readiness (5)
3. Work Ethics Proficiency (15)
4. Career Skills Consultations (10)
5. North Star Computer Readiness Certifications (236)

Additionally, 39 participants enrolled in two GED cohorts in partnership with Metro Community College. **Of those participants, five earned their GED.** Sixty percent in cohort 1 and 63% of cohort two demonstrated measurable skills gains (3-4 grade level increase).

SUCCESS STORY. A participant began working with the Workforce Innovation Department in June 2019. She was referred by the Learning Community Center of South Omaha, as part of their Workforce Development Program. While attending the Workforce Development classes, she received her Customer Service Certificate, Work Ethic Certification, National Career Readiness Certification (NCRC), and an updated resume.

In November 2020 discussions began, with the Learning Community Center of Omaha, to create a Workforce Development Program Level 3. This new program would work individually with participants to determine Career/Education Goals and create a path to achieve those goals. She was the initial student for the Level 3 program. While completing career exploration Pharmacy Technician was her choice. It was truly a team effort to successfully submit the necessary

paperwork to obtain GAP Funding. While in the program, Medical Terminology was difficult for the participant due to English not being her first language. However, she arranged a meeting with her instructor to develop strategies to learn the new material. The strategies worked and she successfully completed her Medical Terminology Course.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE NAVIGATOR

METHOD. Data were collected from parents who received additional services and resources through the social assistance navigator. Data were collected from families pre and post services on selected measures and on their goals. It should be noted that this position was impacted by turnover during the evaluation year.

FINDINGS. A total of 164 families were referred to participate in services with the social assistance navigator. Of those families, 146 were simple referrals and the remaining 18 were complex referrals. Simple referrals are those in which families may need short-term assistance such as help with paperwork, referrals to other resources (food bank, energy assistance, etc.).

Complex referrals are those requiring longer engagement and additional supports and involve goal setting with families. Service plans were developed with families who chose to engage to establish goals. By the end of the year, of the families enrolled, 33% were able to close their case successfully while 11% were still active and 11% disengaged in services. The remaining families chose to not participate or deferred engaging with the navigator.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

PARENTS IN LCCSO: STUDENTS (GRADES K-5) READING AND MATH SKILLS

ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

METHOD. During the 2020-2021 program year, school district efforts to mitigate COVID-19 resulted in multiple disruptions to in-person school. These disruptions impacted the normal assessment schedule that is used to monitor student progress. The program and evaluation teams developed alternative strategies to measure the social-emotional and academic skills for these children. Parents were invited to have their children ages two to kindergarten participate in in-person assessments at the Learning Community Center of South Omaha in the fall and spring. The results of those assessments are reported in the following section.

In addition, as the school district resumed consistent in-person instruction, the MAP-NWEA assessments were administered, and the evaluation team was able to access the math and reading results for analysis in this report. The results are reported in the Shared Program Outcomes section in this report.

PARENTS IN LCCSO: CHILDREN'S SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL, EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING AND ACADEMIC SKILLS

METHOD. Families were invited to participate in assessments of their children's social-emotional, executive functioning, and academic skills in the fall and spring. The following tools were used:

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS [DEVEREUX EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSESSMENT (DECA)].

Parents completed the DECA questionnaire to assess young students' social-emotional development in the areas of initiative, self-control, attachment, and behavior as well as total protective factors overall. The DECA is available in Spanish and English. The DECA was completed for 57 children total with 33 having assessments in both fall and spring.

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS [THE MINNESOTA EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SCALE (MEFS)].

Executive functioning is defined as a student's ability to control impulses that then enable them to plan, initiate, and complete activities needed for learning. This an online assessment was administered in English or Spanish by an evaluator from MMI. This assessment was completed with 56 children at fall and spring.

ACADEMIC SKILLS

PICTURE PEABODY VOCABULARY TEST-IV (PPVT-IV). The PPVT-IV measures English receptive vocabulary. An evaluator from MMI conducted this assessment with five children, ages three years to five years, at fall and spring. The sample size is too small to analyze so results are not reported.

BATERÍA IV WOODCOCK-MUÑOZ. The Bateria IV is a Spanish-language assessment that measure cognitive abilities, achievement, and comparative oral language abilities. Four subscales were utilized in the evaluation: Test 1 Identificación de letras y palabras (Letter-Word Identification), Test 2 Problemas aplicados (Applied Problems), Test 4 Comprensión de textos (Passage Comprehension), Test 5 Cálculo (Calculation). This assessment was administered in Spanish by an evaluator from MMI on children, ages three years and four years, at fall and spring. This was completed with 38 children.

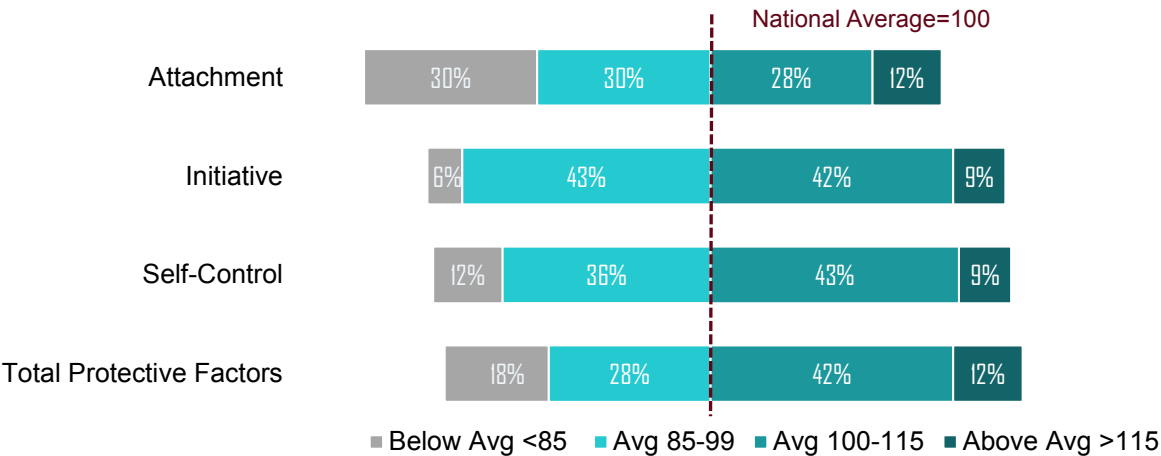
In order to assess the academic outcomes of the school-age children whose parents participated in programming at LCCSO, the MAP® Growth™ was used. The NWEA-MAP® Growth™ assessment provides data on student academic growth in the areas of Reading and Math and monitors change over time. **The results are reported in the Shared Program Outcomes section in this report.**

FINDINGS

Social-Emotional

The descriptive analyses found that by spring, high percentages of students scored within the average to above average range across all areas of the social-emotional measure: total protective factors (82%), attachment (70%), initiative (94%) and self-control (88%). The majority of students

BY SPRING STUDENTS SHOWED THE GREATEST STRENGTH IN SELF-CONTROL.
Less than half the children (%) were at the national average in attachment. n=33



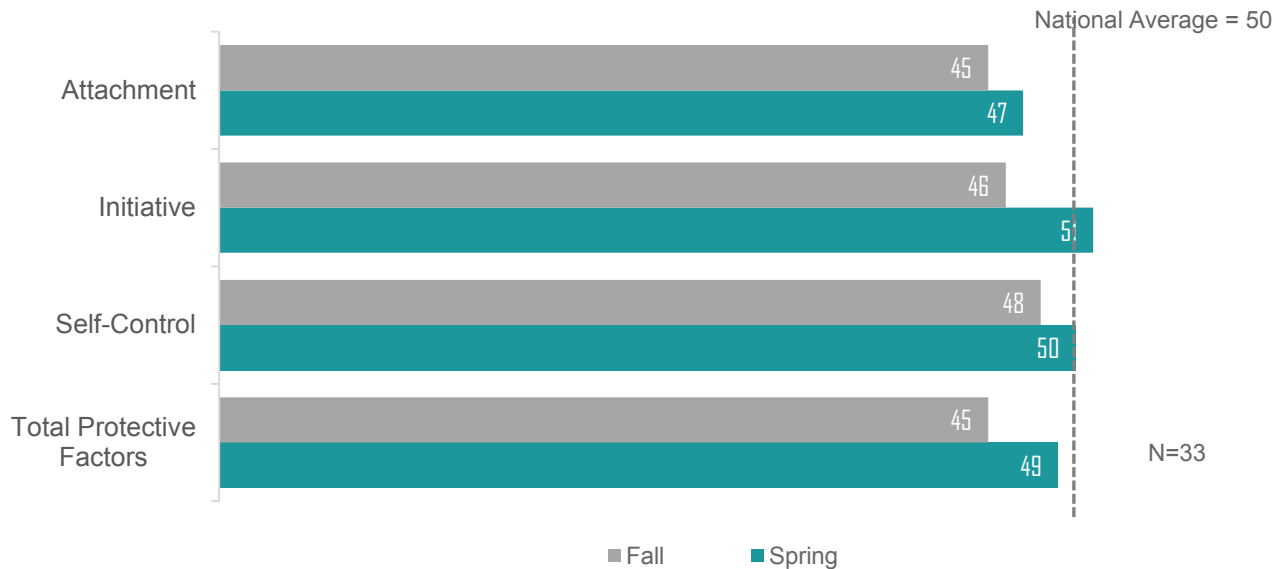
demonstrated social-emotional skills above the national average, which is a score of 100, in the areas of total protective factors (54%), initiative (51%) and self-control (51%).

The social-emotional tool also measures behavioral concerns such as having temper tantrums, having a short attention span, and becoming upset easily. Twenty-eight percent of the children scored in the “concern” range, indicating child behaviors that were outside what is typical for three to five-year old children.



A comparison of social-emotional results at fall and spring is reported in the following graph.

ON AVERAGE, CHILDREN IMPROVED ACROSS ALL AREAS FROM FALL TO SPRING.
The most growth was in the area of initiative.



Children demonstrated improved social-emotional skills across all areas. By spring they were approaching or exceeding the national average. The most gains were made in initiative (5 point increase on average) followed by total protective factors (4 point average increase). A paired t-test analysis found that there were significant increases in initiative ($t=-3.183$, $p<.01$), and in total protective factors ($t=-3.463$, $p<.01$). The analysis did not find significant changes in attachment or self-control suggesting these areas remained stable over time.

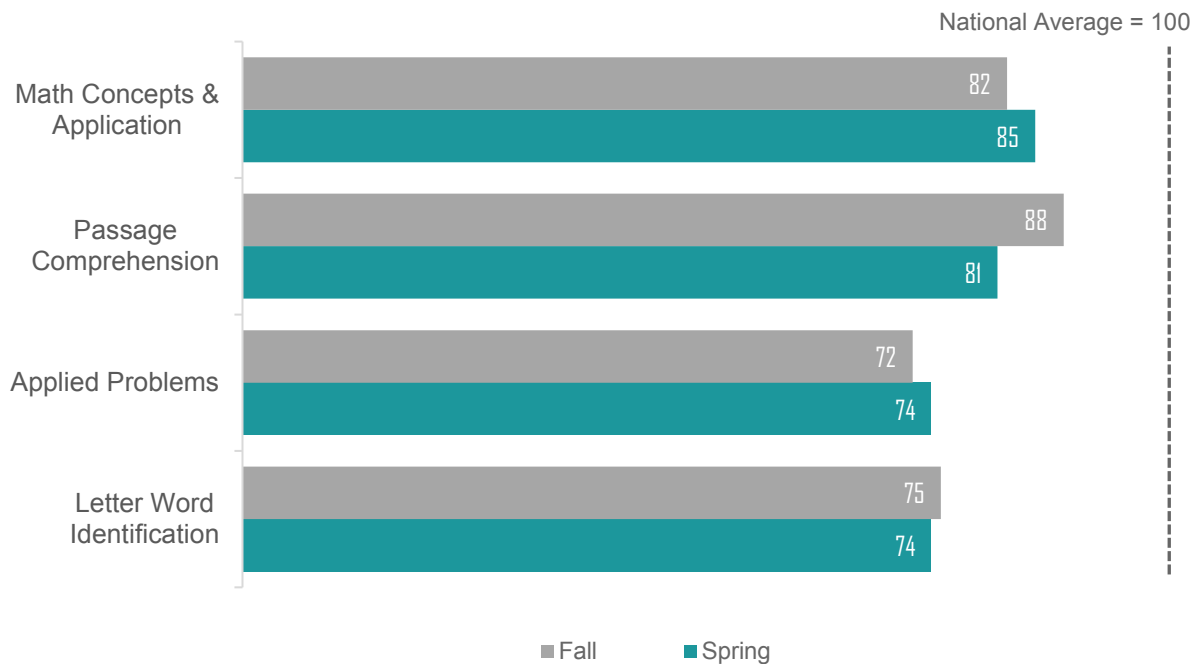
Executive Functioning.

Fifty-six children were assessed with 30 children having both pre and post assessments. The descriptive analyses found that 84% of the children demonstrated average executive functioning skills in fall and 97% in spring. Average scores were 94.47 in the fall and 96.10 in the spring. The national average is a score of 100. In fall, 25% of the children met this benchmark. In spring, 37% scored at this level. A paired t-test analysis did not find a significant change indicating skills had remained stable over time.

Academic Skills

Thirty-eight children had math and reading assessments with 22 of those students having pre and post assessments. Spring assessments found that 50% of children scored in the average or above range for Passage Comprehension while less than 50% scored in that range for Applied Problems (46%), Letter Word Identification (32%) and Math Concepts and Applications (27%). A paired t-test analysis indicated a significant decrease in Passage Comprehension ($t(21)=-1.944$, $p=.03$). No other significant differences were found.

ON AVERAGE, MATHEMATICS SCORES REMAINED STABLE FROM FALL TO SPRING.
Average scores were below the national average. n=22



ATTENDANCE OUTCOMES

School Attendance data was collected on school-age students of parents participating in the LCCSO program. For those students with parents attending programming **73% missed fewer than 10 days of school**. The attendance data are consistent with data from previous years as LCCSO students typically miss fewer days than their peers.

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE: USE OF DATA

CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT. The Learning Community Center of South Omaha focuses on using data gathered for the evaluation on an ongoing basis. The evaluation team from MMI and the management team at LCCSO engage in multiple feedback loops to improve programming and make informed decisions. KIPS and CASAS assessments provide valuable information for the family navigators and English teachers to use in their interactions with families and students. Information from the December digital learning focus groups helped inform programming and teaching for the spring semester.

SUMMARY

Even while in a pandemic families and students participating in the LCCSO program demonstrated improved outcomes across English language outcomes, workforce development, GED achievement, social-emotional learning and executive functioning. School-age students, on average, missed fewer days of schools and many maintained academic skills within the broad

average range. Families continue to view the center as a necessary resource within the community and value the services and opportunities provided. It speaks well of the staff and leadership to have been able to pivot and provide digital learning and needed COVID-19 resources for families while continuing to provide the core services of the center.

One recommendation would be to conduct a longitudinal follow-up to families who have graduated and have been out of the program for a time to examine both the student-level academic outcomes and the family level outcomes.



Shared Outcomes across Learning Community Programs

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: RESULTS ACROSS LEARNING COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

It was important to evaluate student's academic outcomes across multiple Learning Community programs including: 1) students Grades K-5 whose parents were enrolled in Learning Community Center of North Omaha (LCCNO: Parent University) and Learning Community Center of South Omaha (LCCSO) and 2) students in Grades K-1 in schools participating in the Intensive Early Childhood Partnership. The Northwest Evaluation Association's Measures of Academic Progress Growth (NWEA-MAP®) was used to assess students' academic achievement and growth. MAP Growth is a norm-referenced assessment that measures student proficiency and growth in the areas of Reading and Mathematics. In 2020-2021, this assessment was administered by the Omaha Public Schools (OPS) in the fall and spring. The purpose of these data was to provide information to the program on how well the students were doing in these two academic areas and to plan future supports to parents to engage and support their student's learning.

Demographics

PARENT UNIVERSITY. Data was received on 157 students whose parents were participating in Parent University. There were equal numbers of females (50%) versus males (50%). The primary race/ethnicity represented were students who were Black (47%) or Hispanic (38%). A majority of the students were native English speakers (50%) followed by English Language Learners (ELL) (40%) and Exited ELL students (10%). The students who were ELL represented both Spanish-speaking children and children from a refugee population with a variety of languages represented. The students ranged across Grades PK through Grade 5, with the majority of the students in Grades K through 3 (76%).

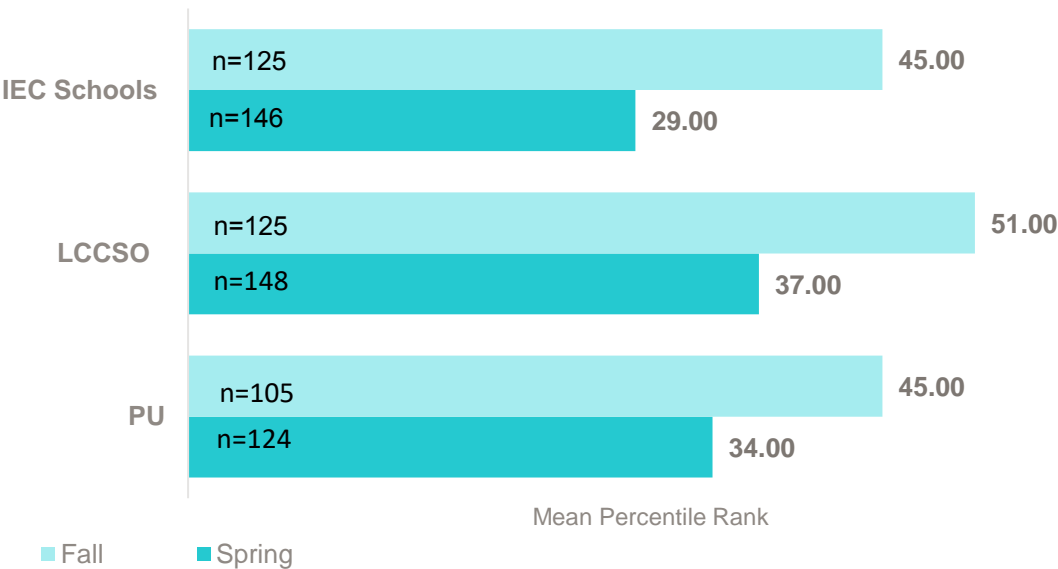
LEARNING COMMUNITY CENTER OF SOUTH OMAHA. Data was received on 157 students whose parents were participating in LCCSO. There were slightly more females (52%) than males (48%). The primary race/ethnicity represented were students who were Hispanic (98%). A majority of the students were English Language Learners (ELL) (67%) and Exited ELL students (27%). The students who were ELL represented mainly Spanish-speaking children and some children from a refugee population with a variety of languages represented. The students ranged across Grades K through 3 and fairly equally split across the four grade levels.

SCHOOLS IN THE INTENSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD PARTNERSHIP. Data was received on 164 students whose parents were participating in the two schools participating in the IEC partnership. There were fewer females (44%) than males (56%). The primary race/ethnicity represented were students who were Black (56%), followed by Hispanic (17%) and Asian (14%). A majority of the students were native English speakers (84%), followed by English Language Learners (ELL) (16%). The students who were ELL represented both Spanish-speaking children and children from a refugee population with a variety of language represented. The students ranged across Grades K through 1, with the majority of the students in Kindergarten (52%).

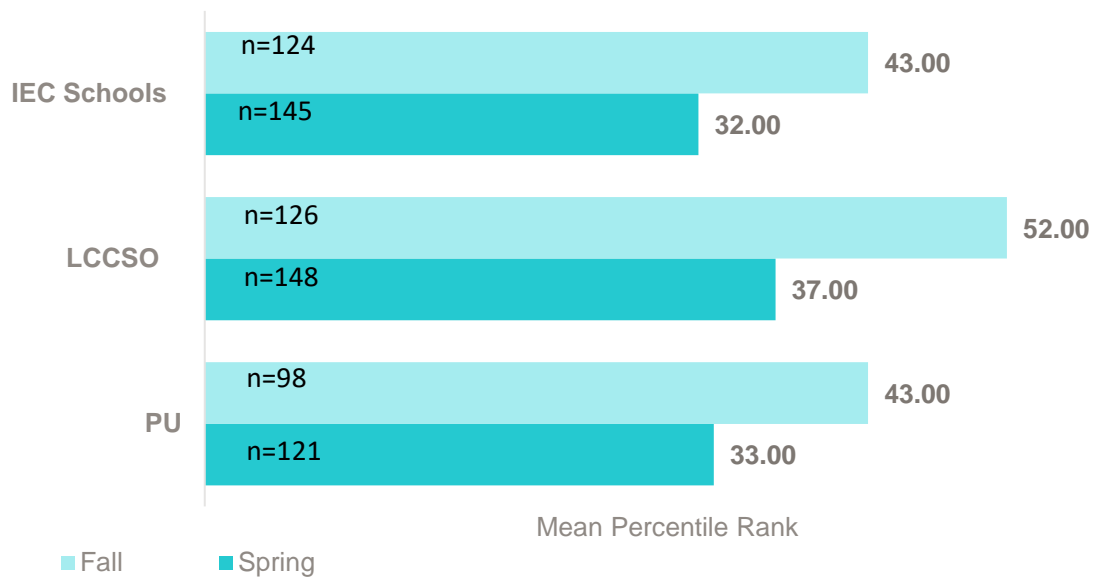
Student Achievement Status Results

ACHIEVEMENT STATUS BY PROGRAM. The NWEA-MAP® Growth™ assessment provides data on student academic growth in the areas of Reading and Math and monitors change over time. For this report, fall and spring mean percentile scores were used to evaluate the status of Reading and Mathematics achievement of students across time. For interpretation purposes, a percentile of 50 indicates a student performed at the mid-point of similar students across the United States. The following section provides a descriptive analyses of the findings. The figures below summarize the Reading and Math mean percentile rank for each of the three Learning Community programs for fall and spring. At the fall assessment students whose parents participated in LCCSO were performing at the mid-point for both reading and math. While not at the mid-point students enrolled in IEC schools and those with parents attending Parent University were close to performing at the mid-point. However, at the spring assessment, Reading and Mathematics achievement status declined in all programs.

READING PERCENTILE RANKS DECREASED FROM FALL TO SPRING ACROSS ALL PROGRAMS.



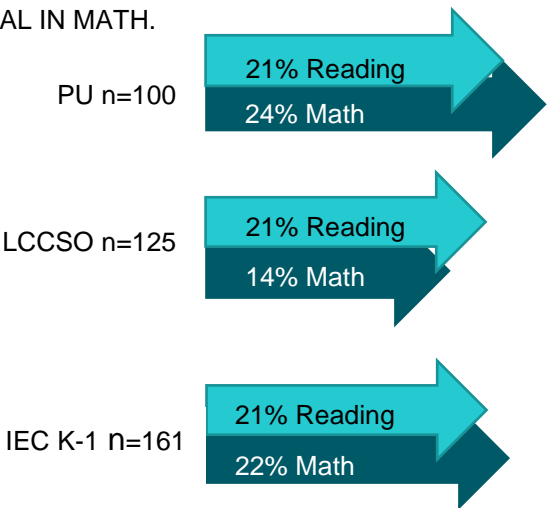
MATH PERCENTILE RANKS DECREASED ACROSS ALL PROGRAMS FROM FALL TO SPRING.



Student Projected Growth to Observed Growth Comparisons

PERCENTAGE THAT MET GROWTH GOAL. In addition to monitoring a student’s achievement status, it is equally important to assess a student’s growth in skills. NWEA-MAP® calculates a projected growth score that allow schools to compare to the students’ observed growth. Programs did not vary in the percentage of students meeting their growth goals in reading. However, there were differences across programs in mathematics.

IN SPRING 2021, PARENT UNIVERSITY STUDENTS HAD THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS MEETING THEIR GROWTH GOAL IN MATH.



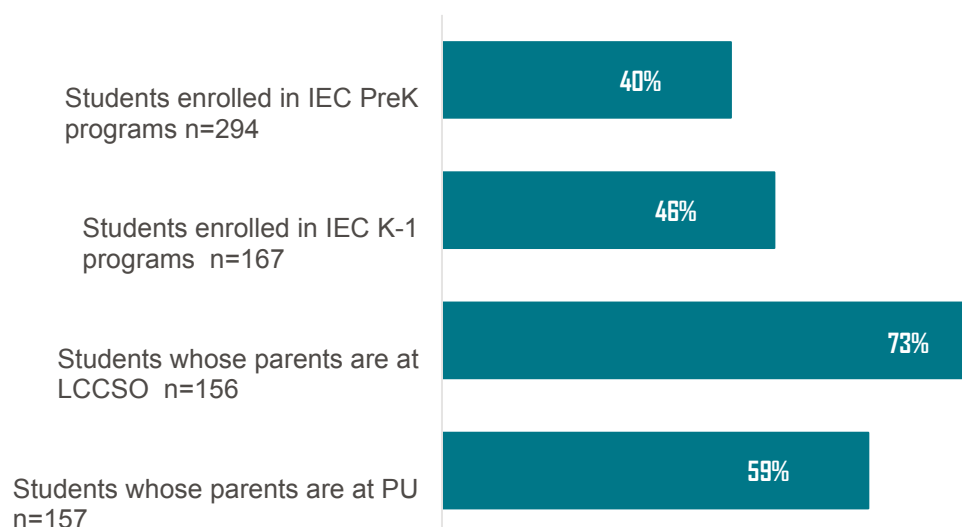
Given the varied nature of the 2020-2021 school year it is unsurprising that students did not maintain their gains in academic achievement. Students and teachers alike were tasked with new systems of teaching and learning in addition to the stressors and anxiety from dealing with COVID19. For students in K-1, they have had two years of disrupted learning with kindergarten students learning in a virtual manner for the entire first half of the year. These data should be examined through that context and seen as almost a new baseline to compare to the 2021-2022 data.

Student Attendance

STUDENTS WHO MET THE OPS ATTENDANCE GOAL. Research has found that students who were chronically absent in early grades demonstrated weaker reading skills, with Latino children suffering the worst effects (Chang & Romero, 2008). This points to the importance of attendance in schools especially for those children living below the poverty line and students who are Latino. Omaha Public Schools has recognized the importance of attendance and established “Strive for 95”, a program that promotes reducing students’ absenteeism. They are promoting that students should have less than 10 absences per year or a 95% attendance rate. Overall students in these programs met the attendance goal with 53% missed 10 or fewer days. **Students with parents attending LCCSO had the highest rate of attendance with 73% of students missing 10 days or fewer** compared to 59% of students with parents participating in Parent University and 42% of students attending an IEC school.

LCCSO STUDENTS HAD THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGES MISSED FEWER THAN 10 DAYS OF SCHOOL.

On average, students in other programs were absent approximately 13 days.



PARENTING: RESULTS ACROSS LEARNING COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONS

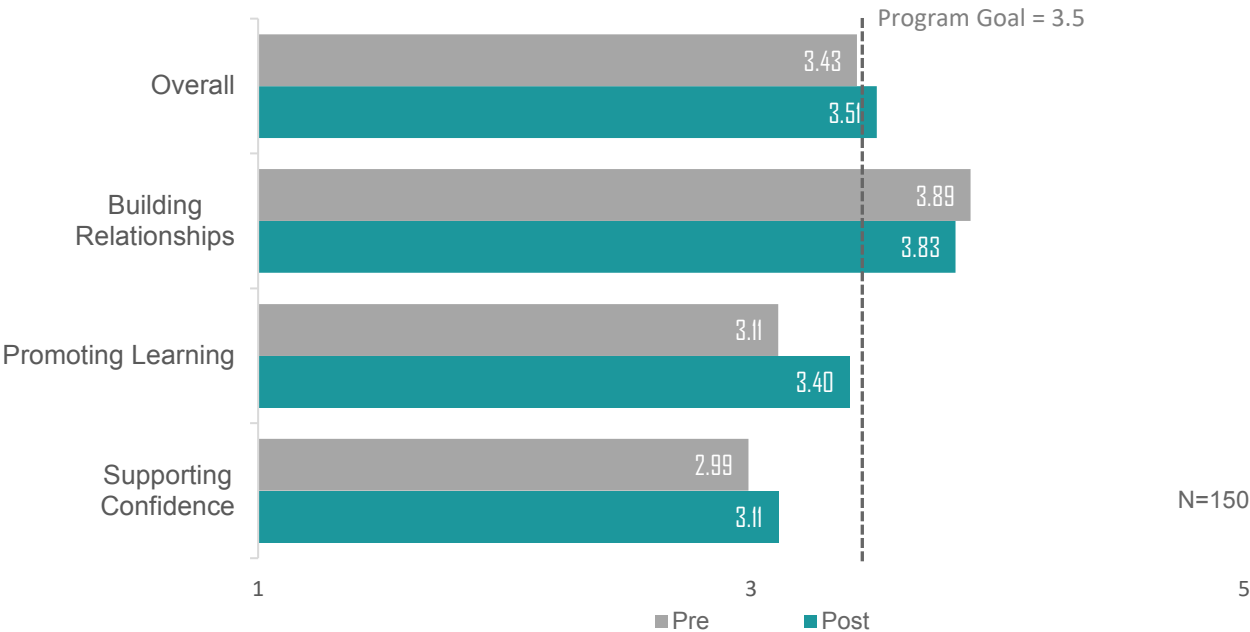
Positive day-to-day interactions between parents and children lay the foundation for better social and academic skills. Both LCCSO and Parent University programs strive to enhance participants' parenting skills. Educational Navigators assist and encourage parents to have high-quality interactions with their children.

METHOD. The Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (KIPS) measures parenting behaviors overall and across three areas: Building Relationships, Promoting Learning, and Supporting Confidence, based on a videotape of a parent playing with his or her child. Scores are reported on a 5-point scale with 5 being high-quality. In 2020-2021, 150 parents enrolled across the two programs had at least two KIPS evaluations. This is a 50% increase over the previous year when 99 parents had KIPS at two points in time.

FINDINGS. The program and evaluation team set a score of 3.5 as the program goal. By post, families, on average, met the program goal in Building Relationships (3.83) and on the Overall scale (3.51). They came close to meeting the goal in Promoting Learning (3.40). Parents showed the greatest strengths in Building Relationships with their children. At pre, 49% of parents met the program goal. By post, 54% met the goal.

The following graph shows average KIPS scores across both programs at pre and post.

PARENTS DEMONSTRATED THE GREATEST STRENGTH IN BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS.
The most growth was in the area of Promoting Learning.



A paired samples t-test analysis found that parents’ skills in Promoting Learning increased significantly over time ($t=-3.905$, $p<.001$). The effect size was $d=.319$, which is in the modest range.

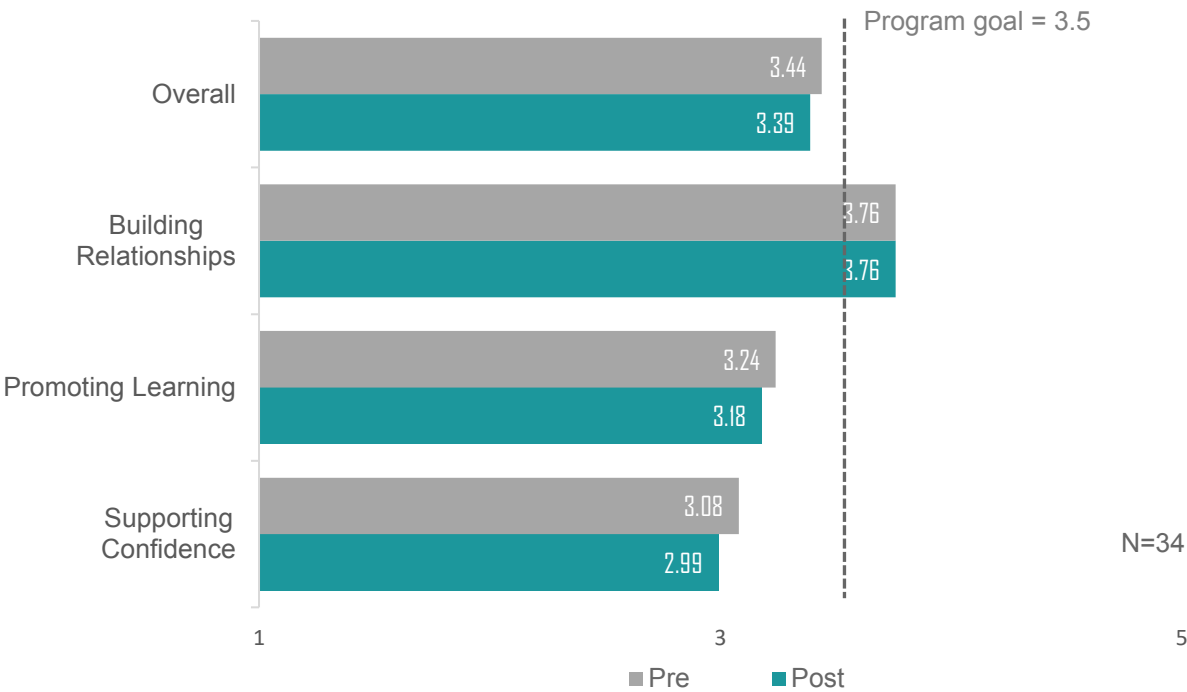
The analysis found that there were not significant changes over time in the other three areas: Building Relationships, Supporting Confidence, or Overall, suggesting that these interactional skills remained stable over time.

PARENT UNIVERSITY

FINDINGS. On average, families met or exceeded the program goal in Building Relationships (3.76). They came close to meeting the goal Overall (3.39). A paired t-test analysis found that there were not significant changes in interactional skills, suggesting skills remained stable over time.

At pre and post, 44% of parents met the program goal for parent-child interactions. The following graph shows parent-child interaction results for Parent University.

PARENT UNIVERSITY PARENTS MET THE PROGRAM GOAL IN BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS. They nearly met the goal Overall.

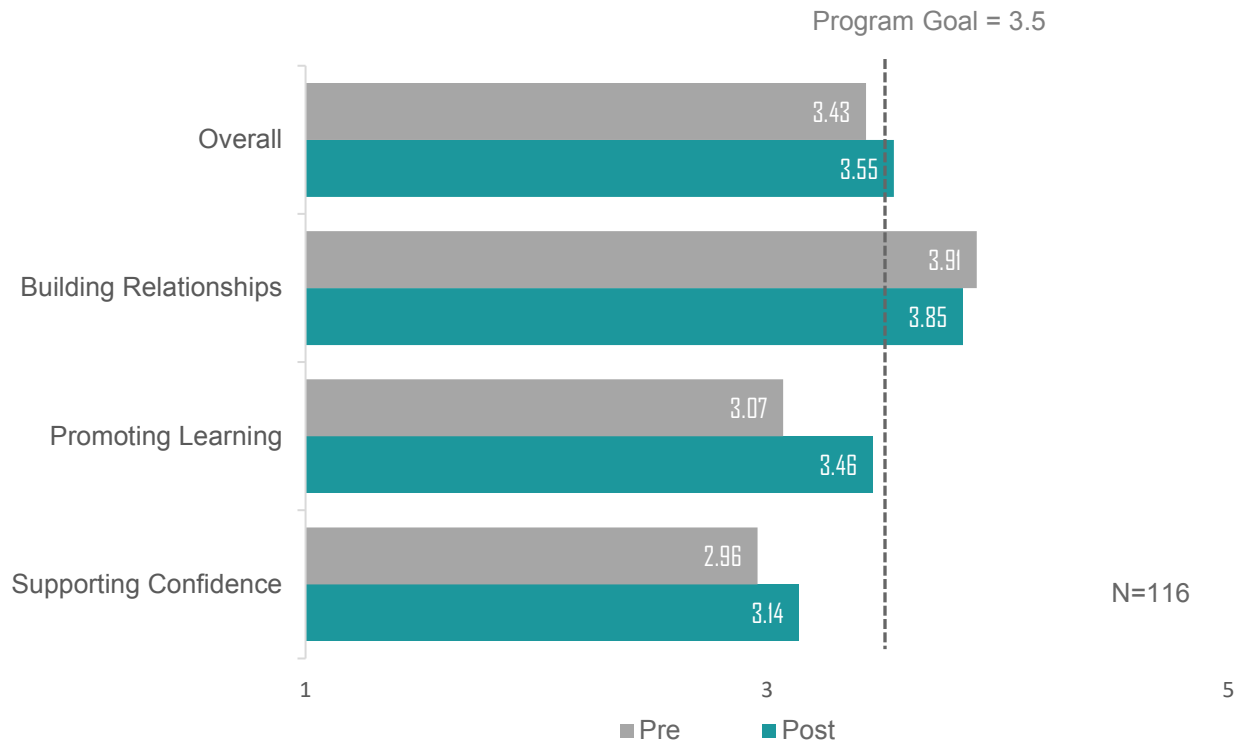


LCCSO

FINDINGS. On average, families met or exceeded the program goal in Building Relationships (3.85) and Overall (3.55). They nearly met the goal in Promoting Learning (3.46). The most gains were made in Promoting Learning (.14 increase on average). A paired t-test analysis found that there were significant increases in Promoting Learning ($t=-4.74$, $p<.001$), and in Supporting Confidence ($t=-1.98$, $p=.05$). The analysis did not find significant changes in Building Relationships or Overall suggesting these areas remained stable over time.

A slight majority (51%) of parents met the program goal at baseline. After participating in LCCSO activities, 57% met the goal. The following graph shows parent-child interaction results for LCCSO.

LCCSO PARENTS MET THE PROGRAM GOAL IN BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND OVERALL. They grew the most in the area of Promoting Learning.



SCHOOL DISTRICT INITIATIVES



Instructional Coaching

The Learning Community supported three school district initiatives: Instructional Coaching, Extended Learning, and Jump Start to Kindergarten. The descriptions of each program and a summary of their evaluation data are found in this section.

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING

Instructional Coaching has been an ongoing district initiative since 2012-2013 and has grown to include five Learning Community school districts (Bellevue Public Schools, Millard Public Schools, Omaha Public Schools, Ralston Public Schools, and Westside Community Schools). Each district uses a different coaching model, and the focus for that model varies.

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

While each district has different implementation models of Instructional Coaching, some of the components are consistent across all four districts. Coaches work with teachers to provide consultation, modeling, data analysis, co-teaching, and lesson planning support. All districts emphasize supporting new teachers and helping teachers implement new curricula.

BELLEVUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS. Bellevue Public Schools combined Jim Knight's coaching framework with Charlotte Danielson's teacher evaluation model to provide coaching across seven elementary buildings using six instructional coaches. Coaching cycles were used once teachers enrolled in the coaching process. Coaching activities included observations, modeling, individual student problem solving, data analysis and utilization, teacher feedback, and guidance with new curriculum. Instructional Coaches served 113 teachers and approximately 1,907 students.

RALSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS. The Instructional Coach serves all elementary schools in the district, focusing on teachers that are in their first three years of teaching. A focus on supporting teachers with classroom management, instructional practice, and onboarding of new curriculum is emphasized during collaboration. The instructional coach also assists with the New Teacher Mentoring Program. During 2020-2021, 32 teachers and 1700 students were part of the coaching model.

MILLARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS. Millard Public Schools implemented instructional coaching at two buildings during 2020-2021. Two instructional coaches served 43 teachers and 838 students across two elementary buildings.

OMAHA PUBLIC SCHOOLS. Coaches received multiple professional development days designed to hone skills in teaching and coaching reading instruction. The focus for the OPS instructional coaches was reading instruction (both large and small group). Approximately 150 teachers and 3,100 students were impacted in 2020-2021.

WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS. Cognitive coaching served as the base for the Instructional Coaching provided to two buildings in Westside. Coaches provided multiple opportunities for K-6 staff with coaching cycles required for new teachers (those within their first three years). Coaching activities included modeling, co-teaching, planning, videotaped observations with feedback, grade level planning and training in large groups. Coaches also provided guidance in lesson planning and support to Professional Learning Communities at the building level. Forty-five teachers and 820 students were impacted by Instructional Coaching.

DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2020-2021, approximately 383 teachers and potentially 8365 students were impacted by Learning Community funded Instructional Coaches. Each of the schools funded by the Learning Community for Instructional Coaching were elementary buildings.

OUTCOMES

COACH AND TEACHER FEEDBACK ON INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING

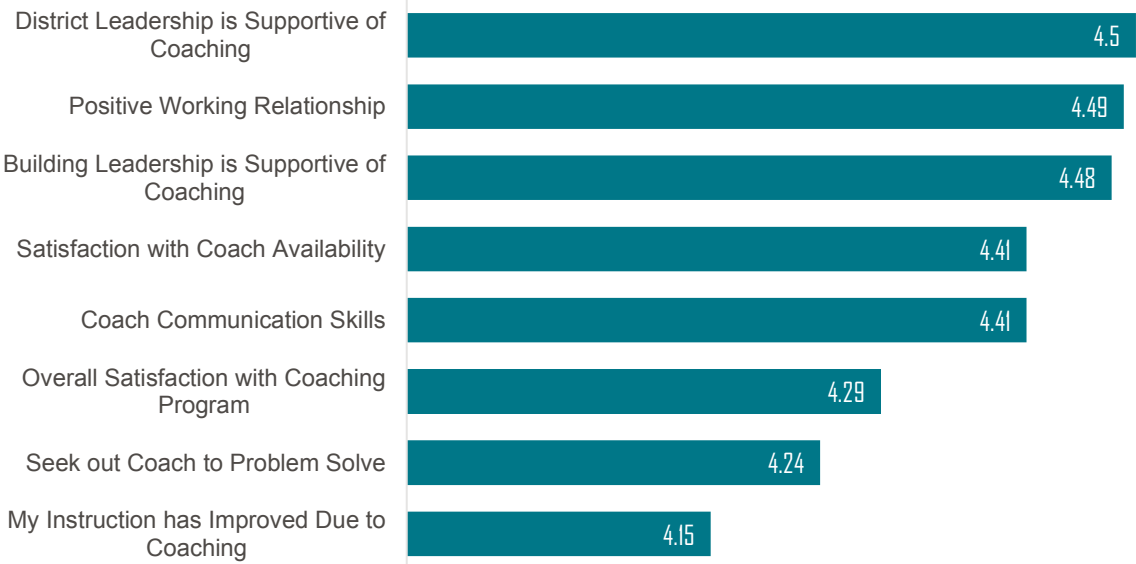
METHOD. A combination of teacher surveys, instructional coach surveys and instructional coach interviews were used to gather information on how both teachers and coaches perceived the instructional coaching programs across the five districts. Data are reported in aggregate and not by district.

FINDINGS

TEACHER SURVEY

A total of 195 teachers across five districts completed the teacher survey. Unlike the previous year, most teacher completing the survey has at least 10 years of experience as a teacher (50%) compared to 29% with 4-10 years of teaching experience and 21% in their first three years of teaching.

COACHING WAS VIEWED POSTIIVELY ACROSS FOUR DISTRICTS.
77% of teachers reported that their instruction has improved due to coaching.



Teachers rated their items on a 5-point scale (1=*strongly disagree* to 5= *strongly agree*). Teachers valued the relationship with their coach, felt supported by their district and had strong overall satisfaction with the coaching program. **Additionally, 77% of the teachers “somewhat or strongly agreed” that coaching had improved their instructional practices.**

“My teaching and content understanding have drastically improved thanks to my instructional coach. I would not be even close to the teacher I am today without her help. Our instructional coach is one of the few people in our building that I feel comfortable going to when I need help or advice in any content area.”

Not only did teachers rate the district and building level support for coaching very positively, they saw strong support in other areas. Sixty-five percent of teachers “*strongly agreed*” with the statement, “I had the support in my building to improve my instruction” and 63% “*strongly agreed*” with the statement, “I had resources/opportunities from the district/building available to me to improve my instruction.”

Analysis of the responses from the open-ended item asking about success and challenges revealed the following themes.

Successes.

Teachers felt supported and challenged to grow by their instructional coaches. Approachability, follow-through, and expertise were valued by the teachers who believed the feedback and support led to changes in instruction. Teachers valued multiple components of coaching including professional development, grade level work and one on one coaching interactions.

“I was able to fine-tune my content to ensure that my students were getting exactly what they needed”.

“I could not do my job as effectively as a Reading Specialist without the Instructional Coach. She has been an integral part of introducing and implementing curriculum. This is especially helpful with new teachers and or programs.”

Coaches were viewed as a resource and a collaborative partner in understanding curricula, planning and problem-solving. Coaches were noted for expertise and knowledge with curricula, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), behavior management and data utilization. Teachers mentioned specific instances of help with individual students, co-teaching, co-planning and answering questions about the curriculum and assessments.

“She took the time to help us problem-solve and pinpoint exactly what we would like to fix with our teaching”

“Weekly planning with our instructional coach has greatly helped and improved delivering effective content this year through discussion and sharing of ideas, strategies and planning reading and writing together.”

Teachers responded well to coaches deemed passionate about coaching and aspects of teaching. They valued the collaborative aspect of working with coaches to improve not only large group instruction but small group and individualized instruction as well. Several teachers

mentioned how the coach was able to help them see things in a different way or to approach content in a new way that would better serve students.

“My instruction in reading has improved and my students' test scores improved considerably!”

“She is always so helpful, kind and full of innovative ideas to use in both whole group and small group instructional time. I am so happy we have her as a resource. It makes things easier to develop when there are multiple minds discussing it and looking at it.”

Challenges. While most of the responses mentioned only successes a few challenges were noted. The most frequent being a perceived lack of consistency for roles/expectations for coaches within a district with teachers commenting on how some coaches “went above and beyond” while others struggled to connect with their teachers.

Instructional Coach Feedback

Coaches could provide feedback in two ways either by completing a survey or participating in an interview. A total of 7 coaches representing 3 districts provided feedback. Of the seven coaches, five of them had less than 5 years of experience as a coach and all of them provided support to more than 20 teachers in a year.

Coaches were asked about the effectiveness of several coaching activities. Of the activities, all were rated to be at least moderately effective with four of the activities (**Small groups/Differentiated Instruction, Data Analysis, Professional Development and Coaching Cycles** being rated the most effective with 100% of the coaches rating them to be “very to extremely effective”). Observations were rated to be the least effective method of coaching.

Impact of COVID-19 on Coaching

Teachers were more reluctant to add additional learning to their plates. They had less time to devote to planning and reflection with a coach. They requested more support in areas that took things off their 'to do' lists. Much of the coaching and professional development was done over zoom. Zoom was both a change and a benefit to coaches as they could meet with teachers across buildings without the drive time. Some coaches felt they were able to connect more often and also more informally with teachers. Coaches also played a significant role in supporting teachers' well-being and covering classes for their respective building due to the challenges of the pandemic.

In addition, coaching was more informal and focused around just supporting teachers in whatever they needed to keep them and their students afloat. At the beginning of the year, coaching was focused on helping teachers become more confident with technology and on-line instruction. Training sessions on various apps/technology tools were held to help teachers feel more confident.

Successes

“The largest success was that I had every single teacher that I was supposed to work with, worked with me in some form or fashion without resistance.”

Many of the coaching successes mentioned highlighted relationships built with teachers and with administration. Relationships built with veteran teachers and teachers who had been previously resistant to coaching were mentioned more than once as evidence of success. Some pointed out the importance of coaching cycles while others focused on their support of teachers throughout the year doing whatever was needed. Additionally, coaches reported success using data and aligning instructional practices with content area best practices.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Data on student outcomes was reported by individual districts and as there was no state required assessment last year the assessments varied.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Instructional coaching continues to be viewed as a valued resource by districts and teachers. Coaches are instrumental building teacher capacity and supporting teacher growth. One recommendation is to conduct individualized evaluation studies to further examine impact on student growth related to improved teacher skills.



Extended Learning

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Extended Learning programs provide additional direct instruction for students with smaller teacher to student ratios and a focus on specific skills identified by spring assessments. These opportunities provide engaging interactions that can motivate young learners. Summer programming, in particular, is designed to prevent learning loss so that students are better prepared for academic success as they enter into the next school year. Due to COVID-19 some programs had to shift delivery of services while others pushed back their time frame to allow in-person attendance.

DC WEST COMMUNITY SCHOOLS. Our summer extended learning program consists of 12 days, 3 hours each day. Students are provided targeted instruction in the areas of reading, writing, and math. Weekly newsletters, resources, and communication are sent home to parents about their child's progress. The goal of the program is to help students maintain their academic skills over the summer break

COMPLETELY KIDS. Students in this before and after school program are served at Field Club elementary. The strongest focus in the before school program is on academic enrichment (successful KIDS). Completely KIDS focused on STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Math), IXL (website with targeted math and language arts games and activities), site word and literacy games (one day/week is completely dedicated to literacy activity reinforcement), journaling, and homework help to help the kids to finish their grade level learning on time. Fifty-one participated in programming with 86% participating in free reduced lunch.

ELKHORN PUBLIC SCHOOLS. Jump Start to Reading provided students at-risk for reading failure three weeks of intense reading intervention. The goal of the program is to reduce summer reading loss. The program pulled from multiple curricula (Reading Street's My Sidewalks, Read Naturally, Guided Reading and/or Guided Writing) and was taught by district teachers. The goal of the program is to reduce summer reading loss. A total of forty-three students participated with 19% qualifying for free reduced lunch.

SPRINGFIELD-PLATTEVIEW COMMUNITY SCHOOLS. Students targeted for this school year program receive individual/small group math instruction at two elementary buildings. Students participate one hour per week with intervention lessons that are developed as a result of a collaborative effort between the classroom teacher and the math interventionist. The goal of the program is for at-risk students to be meeting grade level expectations in math by the end of the school year. Fifth grade is the level targeted for this intervention with fifteen students participating across two elementary buildings.

DEMOGRAPHICS

One hundred sixty-nine students in Grades K-5 were served through extended learning programming across five sites.

OUTCOMES

PARENT SATISFACTION

METHOD. Twenty-nine parents completed the survey. The survey was provided to programs in both Spanish and English. Parents were asked to respond to multiple satisfaction questions using a 1 to 5 scale (*1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree*). Parents had the opportunity to provide specific comments on the successes and possible improvements for programming.

FINDINGS. Parents reported high levels of overall satisfaction ($M=4.59$) with the extended learning programs. Parents rated staff as being excellent ($M=4.69$) and were satisfied with the length and hours of the program. Communication continues to be area for improvement as both communication items were the lowest rated for satisfaction with 35% of parents reporting they had no communication from the child's teacher on academic progress.

PARENTS FELT STAFF WERE EXCELLENT.

Overall satisfaction with the program was high.



N=29

Parents were asked to provide 1-2 examples of things the program could better and 1-2 examples of positives about the programming. The majority of comments surrounding improvement were centered on communication. Parents wanted increased communication on student progress, objectives met and additional activities for the remainder of the summer. Other ideas for improvement included additional time and longer programming.

Frequent comments from parents mentioned the academic benefit(s) they noticed in their student due to the extended learning program. They mentioned that teachers were caring and made the program enjoyable and engaging for students. Additionally, several parents commented on how they liked the hours of the programming and that students had Fridays off.

“My child enjoyed going and never complained which a win for me when it comes to school.”

“She was immediately getting better at reading fluency following the program”

- Parents of Students

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXTENDED LEARNING

Continue to investigate which programs demonstrate improvement for student achievement and learning. Use the state assessment scores when possible from spring to fall to see if the programs are useful in reducing summer loss.

Jump Start to Kindergarten

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

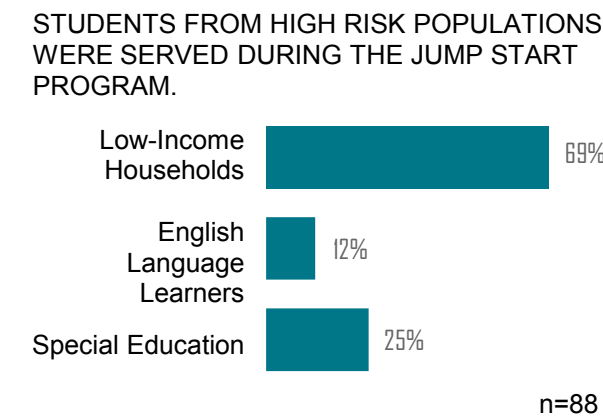
Jump Start to Kindergarten began in 2011. Programming is designed for low-income students who have limited or no previous educational experience. The opportunity to participate in a kindergarten setting and daily routines prior to the first day of school is a significant contributor to school readiness.

Programming focuses on pre-academic skills, social-emotional-behavioral readiness and orienting students to the processes and procedures of the school. The program includes a strong family engagement component such as home visits. It also utilizes certified teachers for part or all of their staffing. The program ran for three weeks and was a full-day program.

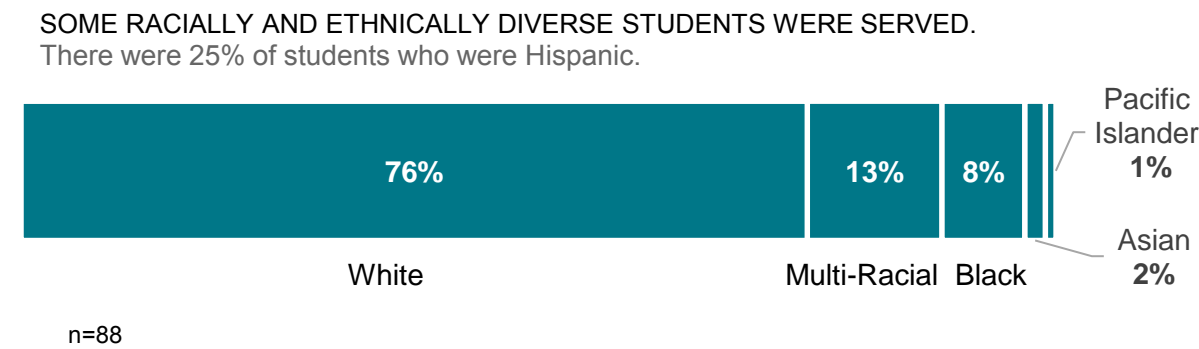
DEMOGRAPHICS

In the summer of 2021, Jump Start to Kindergarten was implemented in one district due to COVID-19. A total of 88 Kindergarten students were served. The program was implemented in-person and individual child assessments were collected. Demographic information including

eligibility for free and reduced lunch, race, ethnicity, and/or enrollment in special education services was collected to help interpret the evaluation findings.



Jump Start to Kindergarten served nine classrooms in five schools across the participating district. The program served more males (58%) than females (42%). The majority of children served were five years of age.



OUTCOMES

SCHOOL READINESS SKILLS

Did the students’ school readiness change over time?

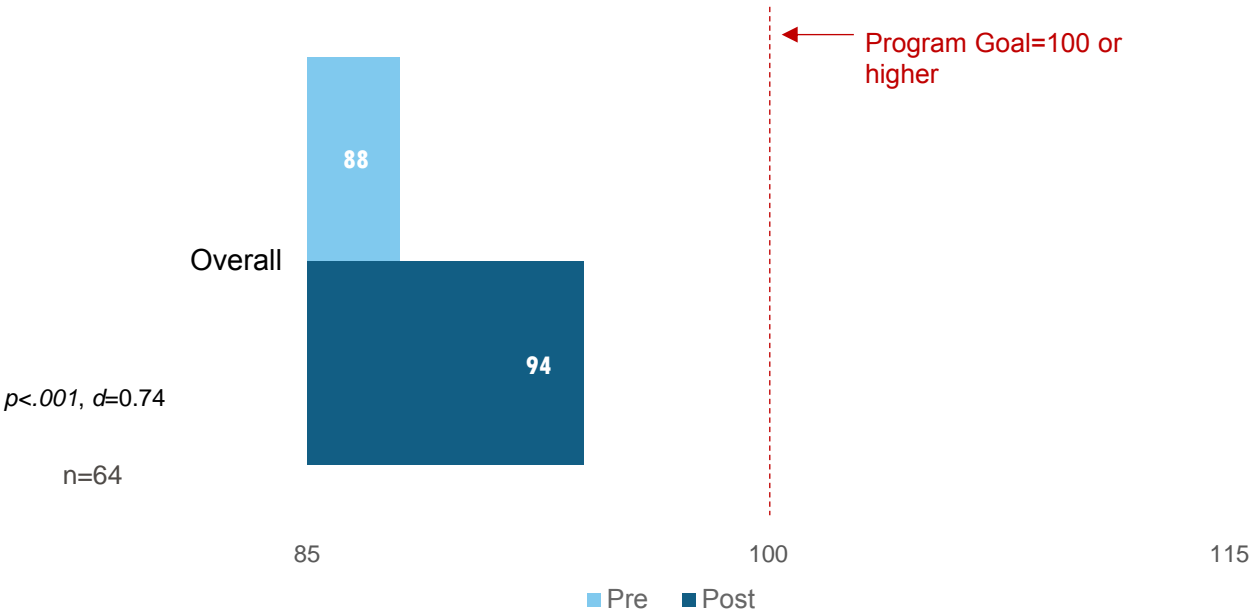
METHOD. The importance of concept development, particularly for students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, has been demonstrated in numerous research articles (Neuman, 2006; Panter & Bracken, 2009). Some researchers have found that children need a thorough understanding of basic concepts to make comparisons, classify, problem solve, and sequence. Children who do not understand basic concepts will most likely struggle not only with day-to-day academic activities such as reading and math, but with extra-curricular activities such as playing sports (Boehm, 2013). The norm-referenced assessment selected to measure Kindergarten students’ school readiness was the Bracken School Readiness Assessment (BSRA). The BSRA

measures the academic readiness skills of young students in the areas of colors, letters, numbers/counting, sizes, comparisons, and shapes. The mean of the BSRA is 100, with 85 to 115 falling within the average range (one standard deviation above and below the mean).

SCHOOL READINESS ASSESSMENT RESULTS

For the 2021 summer, pre-post comparisons were made using a paired-samples t-test. The results found that overall, the students made significant gains in the area of school readiness over the course of the program ($t=-5.934$, $p<.001$, $d=0.74$) suggesting substantial, meaningful change.

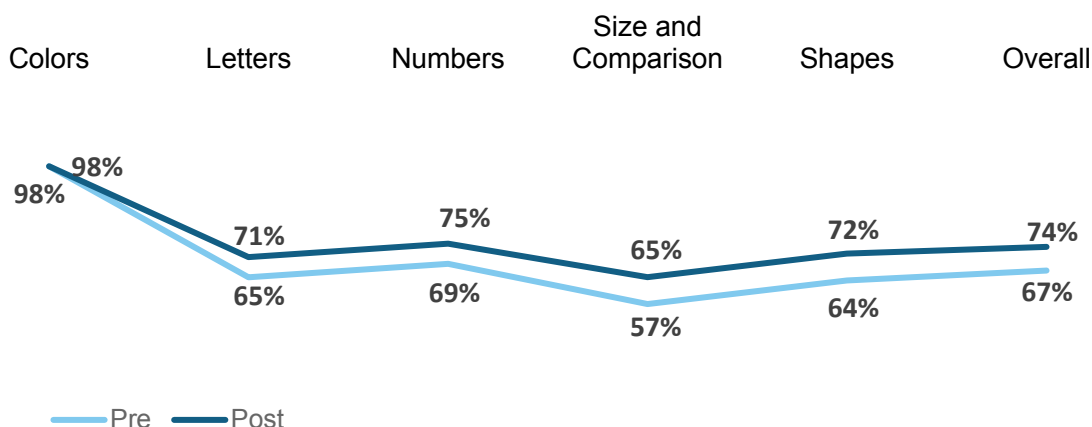
STUDENTS' SCHOOL READINESS SKILLS SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED OVERALL.
EFFECT SIZE SUGGESTS SUBSTANTIAL, MEANINGFUL CHANGE.



The overall mean standard scores on the Bracken increased from 88 to 94, moving them closer to the desired mean of 100. The goal each year is to move the group as close to mean scores of 100 or greater as possible.

When examining individual subtests, the percentage of mastery increased in most areas with colors staying the same. Overall, there was an increase of seven percentage points. An area of strength for these students was color naming (98% mastery). An area for improvement would be Sizes/Comparisons (65% mastery). Sizes/Comparison may be a higher cognitive level skill for students as this subtest assesses their understanding of location words, comparison concepts, and understanding directional concepts.

PERCENT OF MASTERY INCREASED IN EACH SUBTEST.



EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS

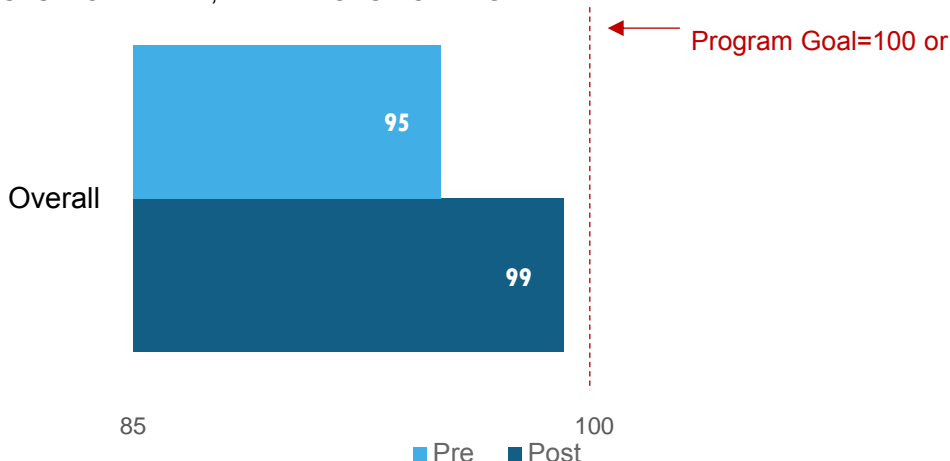
Did the students' executive functioning skills change over time?

METHOD. In recent years the important contributions of executive functioning to school readiness have been highlighted (Blair & Razza, 2007). Executive functioning is defined as a student's ability to control impulses that then enable them to plan, initiate, and complete activities needed for learning. Researchers correlate a relationship between executive functioning and a preschooler's ability to learn in the classroom (Benson, et. al., 2013). The Minnesota Executive Functioning Scale (MEFS), is an online assessment for children two and older.

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING ASSESSMENT RESULTS

For the 2021 summer, pre-post comparisons were made using a paired-samples t-test. The results found that overall, the students made significant gains in the area of executive functioning over the course of the program ($t=-4.571$, $p<.001$, $d=0.57$) suggesting moderate, meaningful change.

STUDENTS' EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED OVERALL.
EFFECT SIZE SUGGESTS MODERATE, MEANINGFUL CHANGE.



The overall mean standard scores on the MEFS increased from 95 to 99, moving them within one standard score point of the desired mean of 100. The goal each year is to move the group as close to a mean standard score of 100 or greater as possible.

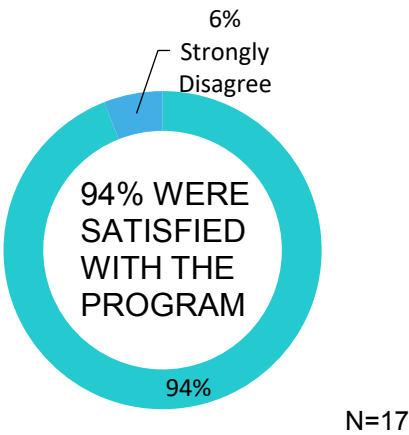
PARENT SATISFACTION

What did parents report about the Jump Start to Kindergarten Program?

METHOD. Parents provided feedback on the value or usefulness of the Jump Start to Kindergarten Program. Using a collaborative process across all districts and agencies, a master parent survey was developed. Districts or agencies were then able to choose which sections they would use for their program. Parent survey data was received from the participating district. Parent survey results are displayed in the following tables (N=17).

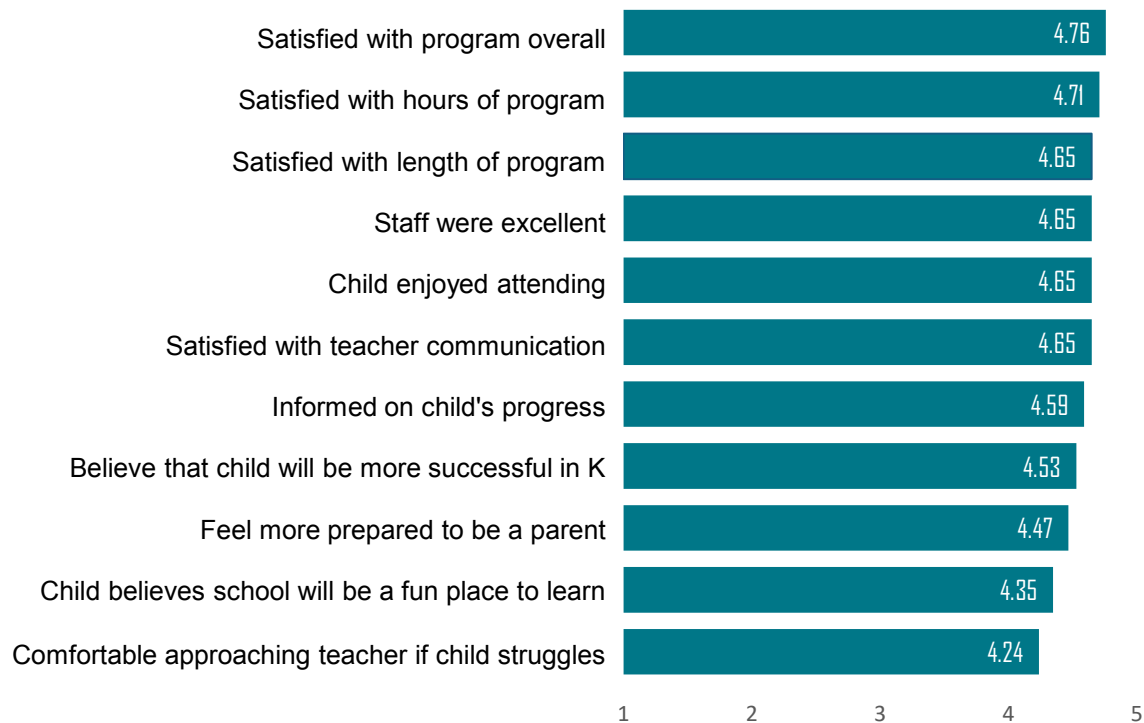


FAMILY SATISFACTION RESULTS



Families reported high overall satisfaction in all areas, including the structure and environment of the program. They also reported high levels of satisfaction on such items as believing the program staff were excellent and feeling that their child enjoyed attending the program. The lowest level of satisfaction was for being informed about their child’s progress.

PARENTS REPORTED HIGH LEVELS OF SATISFACTION IN ALL AREAS.



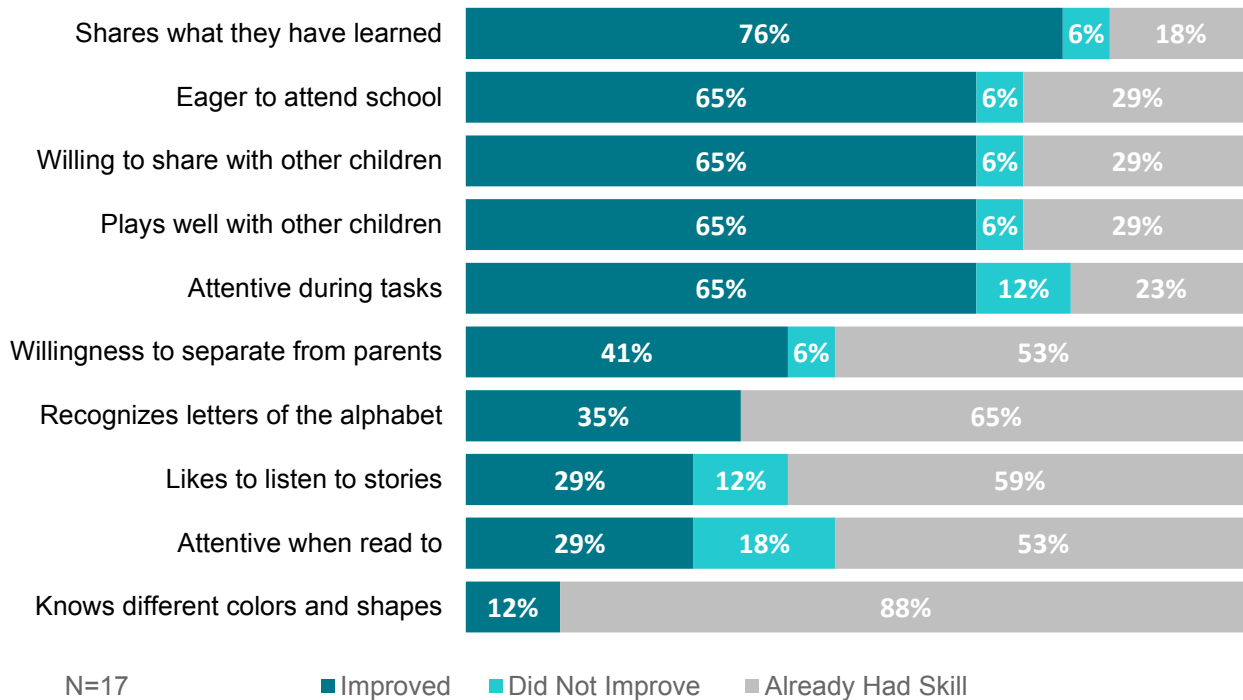
N=17

PARENT RATING OF STUDENT PROGRESS

How did parents rate their students' readiness for school?

Parents were also surveyed about their perceptions of how the program impacted their child. Over half of respondents reported that their child improved in the following areas: sharing what they learned, eagerness to attend school, willingness to share with other children, playing well with other children and attentiveness to task. Some areas where the majority of students already possessed the skills included: knows different shapes and numbers, recognizes letters of the alphabet, and likes to listen to stories. Attentiveness when read to had the highest percentage of "did not improve" (18%).

PARENTS CONSISTENTLY REPORTED THAT THEIR CHILDREN WERE SHARING MORE OF WHAT THEY LEARNED BY THE COMPLETION OF THE JUMP START PROGRAM.



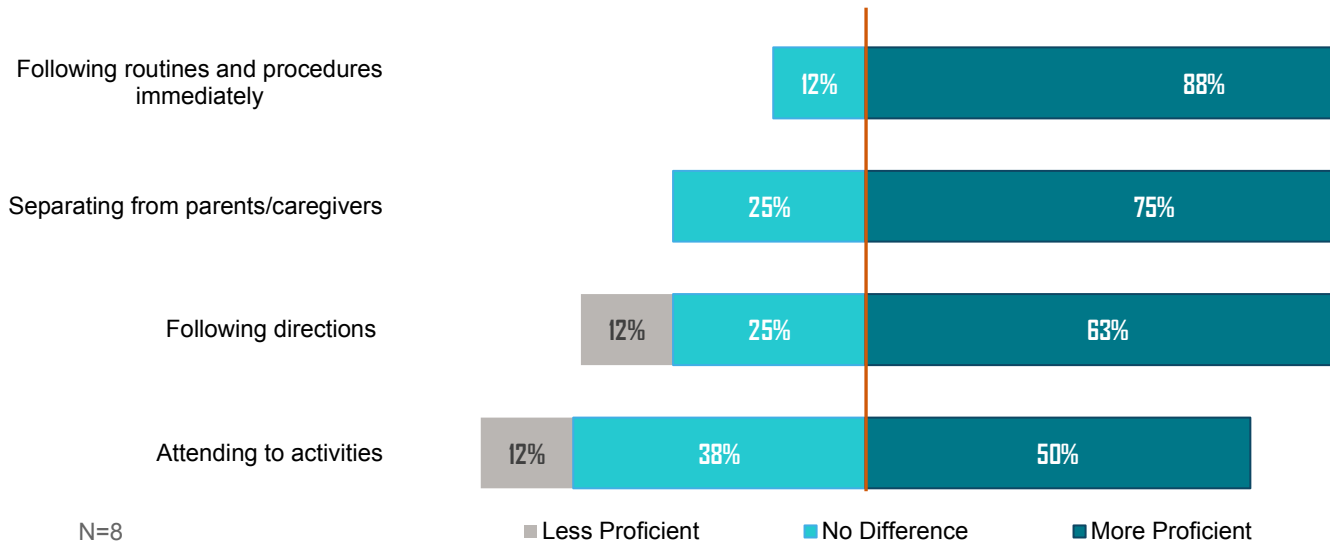
What did teachers report about students who attended the Jump Start to Kindergarten Programs?

METHOD. In the fall of 2021, all kindergarten teachers who had 2021 Jump Start to Kindergarten students in their classroom were asked to fill out a survey about the overall level of proficiency of students who attended the Jump Start to Kindergarten program compared to those that did not. Of the eight teachers that were surveyed, 50% taught Jump Start to Kindergarten this year.

TEACHER SURVEY RESULTS

Teachers reported high overall proficiency in all areas, including separating from parent/caregivers and following routines and procedures right away. Teachers consistently reported that Jump Start to Kindergarten students were either more proficient or that there was no difference in skill level, when compared to their peers who did not attend the program.

THE MAJORITY OF STUDENTS WHO ATTENDED THE JUMP START TO KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM WERE RATED MORE PROFICIENT THAN THEIR PEERS WHO DID NOT ATTEND THE PROGRAM IN THE AREA OF FOLLOWING ROUTINES AND PROCEDURES IMMEDIATELY.



LEARNING COMMUNITY ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY

LEARNING COMMUNITY CENTER OF NORTH OMAHA: EARLY CHILDHOOD AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

INTENSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION	PARENT UNIVERSITY	FUTURE TEACHER CLINICAL TRAINING	CHILD CARE DIRECTOR TRAINING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 294 and 184 Grade K-1 students were enrolled Majority are low income & represent diverse populations Girls outperformed boys in Social-Emotional skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 200 parents were enrolled with majority representing low income & culturally diverse populations Enrolled parents had 380 children of which 264 were within the targeted age range Parents participated in 16 different courses which focused on parenting, school success, leadership, and life skills Parents demonstrated gains in Protective Factors Parents learned new parenting strategies, and improved their financial stability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 students graduated and enrolled in 4 year institution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13 online training sessions provided 56 participants across the sessions Feedback on the sessions was largely positive 89% did NOT want further coaching

LEARNING COMMUNITY CENTER OF SOUTH OMAHA:

FAMILY LEARNING

- 298 families were enrolled
- 532 0-8 year old children; 824 total children
- Two generation programming yielded positive effects Workforce Development with 295 certificates being earned
- 5 participants earned their GED
- 39 participants were enrolled in GED classes
- For the sixth year in a row, parents reported increased levels of school and community engagement
- Participants demonstrated statistically significant gains in English reading and listening skills

PARENTING OUTCOMES

- Parents reported gaining multiple digital skills and that it helped with remote learning
- Parents met the overall program goal in parent-child interaction and in building relationships
- For parents working with the social assistance navigator, 146 were simple referrals and 18 were complex
- 33% of parents were able to close their cases with the social assistance navigator

STUDENT OUTCOMES

- 73% of students missed fewer than 10 days
- Students demonstrated improved social emotional skills from fall to spring
- 97% of students were in the average range for executive functioning by spring
- NWEA-MAP™ mathematics mean percentile rank remained in the average range.

SCHOOL DISTRICT INITIATIVES

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING

- Approximately 383 teachers, and potentially 8365 students were served across 5 districts
- 50% of teachers had at least 10 years of experience
- 77% of teachers reported that their instruction improved due to coaching
- Instructional coaches were viewed a resource and collaborative partner

JUMP START

- 88 kindergarten eligible students enrolled in Jump Start across one district
- 69% represented low-income households and 12% were ELL
- The majority of the parents (94%) were satisfied with the programs
- Students' school readiness and executive functioning skills improved significantly from pre to post
- Kindergarten teachers consistently reported JS students had skills equal to or more proficient than peers not attending the program

EXTENDED LEARNING

- 169 students were enrolled in Extended Learning
- 4 districts and 1 community agency participated
- Parents were highly satisfied with the program
- Overall satisfaction with the program was 4.59 on a 5-point scale
- Parents believed the program would be an academic benefit to students

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APPENDIX A. ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Tool	Author	Purpose
Bracken School Readiness Assessment, 3 rd Ed.	Bracken, B. (2007)	The Bracken School Readiness Assessment measure school readiness concepts including colors, letters, shapes and concepts and numbers.
Bateria IV Woodcock-Munoz	Woodcock, Alvarado, Ruef, & Schrank (2017)	The Bateria IV is a Spanish-language assessment that measures cognitive, achievement and oral language abilities.
CASAS®		THE CASAS® provides a measure of a participant's English language skills in reading and listening.
Circle of Security Parenting Survey	Jackson, B. (2014) Unpublished	This survey completed by parents evaluates three areas including parenting strategies, parent-child relationships, and parenting stress. It is based on a 5 point Likert scale.
Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA), Second Edition	LeBuffe, P. & Naglieri, J. (2012).	The DECA assesses young children's social-emotional protective factors, specifically evaluating, initiative, attachment, behavior concerns, and self-control.
FRIENDS Protective Factors Survey (PFS)	FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (2011)	The PFS is a broad measure of family well-being that examines five factors including: family resiliency, social supports, concrete supports, child development knowledge and nurturing and attachment. It is scored on a 7 point Likert scale.
Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement – 3 rd Edition (KTEA-3)	Kaufman, A.S. & Kaufman, N.L. (2014)	The KTEA-3 measure academic skills for ages 4 to 25 years.
Minnesota Executive Function Scale (MEFS)	Carlson, S.M. & Zelazo, P. (2014)	The MEFS is a digital assessment measuring student's broad executive function skills.
Parenting Children and Adolescents Scale (PARCA)	Hair, E., Anderson, K., Garrett, S., Kinukawa, A., Lippman, I., & Michelson, E. 2005	This is a parent completed assessment that evaluates three areas including: supporting good behavior, setting limits and being proactive in their parenting. It is based on a 7 point Likert scale.
Parenting Stress Scale (PSS)	Berry and Jones (1995) Unpublished	The PSS is completed by the parent to assess parental stress. It is based on a 5 point Likert scale with higher scores reflecting greater stress.
Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-IV	Dunn, L. M., & Dunn, D. M. 2007 Pearson	A measure of receptive vocabulary.

Tool	Author	Purpose
Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire	Goodman et al., 2000	The SDQ is 25 item parent assessment on a child's behavioral strengths and difficulties.

Directors of the Learning Community Evaluation

Jolene Johnson, Ed.D.
Assistant Professor, Munroe-Meyer Institute
jolene.johnson@unmc.edu
Rosie Zweiback, M.A.
Project Director

Munroe-Meyer Institute
University of Nebraska Medical Center
985605 Nebraska Medical Center
Omaha, NE 68198-5605

Evaluation Team

Amy Encinger	Jennifer Rodriguez
Sarah Baird	Abbey Siebler
Nicole Buchholz	Becky Skoglund
Kate Dietrich	Kelsey Tourek
Jennifer Harmon	Cynthia Villanueva
Amanda Mills	Becky Zessin
Kari Price	Yaritza Estrada

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Evaluation Report prepared by
Jolene Johnson, Ed.D,
Amy Encinger, PhD, Abbey Siebler, M.A.
Rosie Zweiback, M.A
Interdisciplinary Center of Program Evaluation
The University of Nebraska Medical Center's
Munroe-Meyer Institute: A University Center of Excellence for
Developmental Disabilities

