

Stronger communities. Brighter futures.

2022-2023 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).

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 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

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.

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).

COACHING SUPPORTS EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES. 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 regard 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 everyone's needs and situations (Bradshaw et al., 2013).

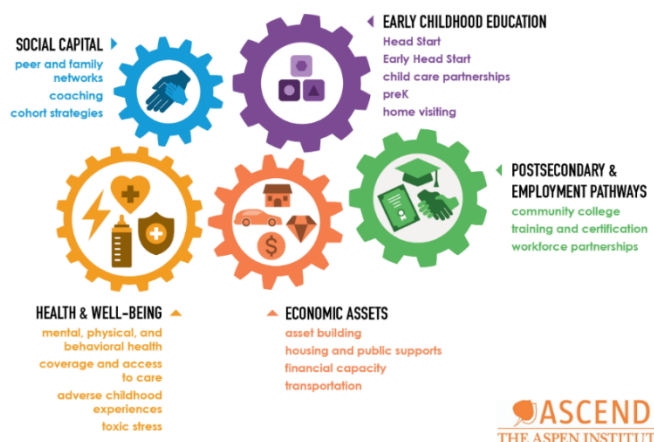
2GEN APPROACH

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 can 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. This program is supported in one district.
- **Extended Learning** provides additional direct instruction for children to prevent summer learning loss and improve their chances of success. Extended Learning programs were supported in four districts and with one community agency.
- **Instructional Coaching** allows teachers the opportunity to work with a district-level coach to reflect on teaching strategies and enhance instructional practices. Instructional coaching was implemented in five districts.

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 provided back to programs in a variety of formats as part of a continuous improvement process to provide feedback on current programming and status and to inform future practice.

Based upon the evaluation questions, multiple methods were used to describe and measure the quality of implementation, nature of programming, and outcomes demonstrated by the programs funded by the Learning Community (LC). The findings 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. How were programs implemented? Was there variation in implementation and if so, what factors contributed to that variation?

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?

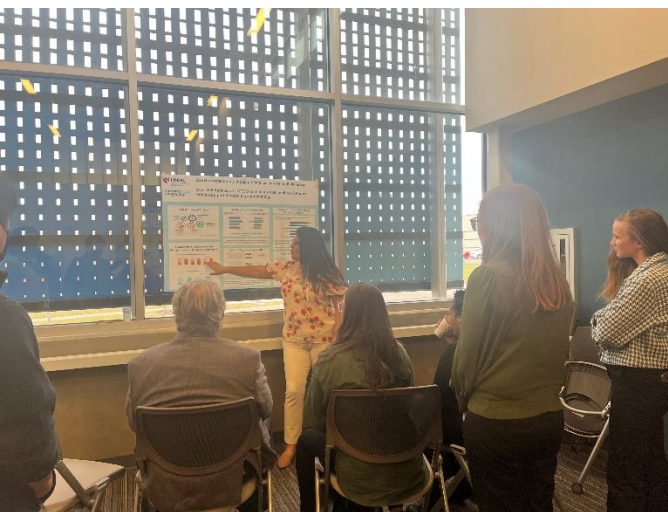
CHILD AND FAMILY OUTCOMES. What were the outcomes related to student academic achievement and school attendance? To what extent were parents engaged in their child's learning? Did parents gain skills and confidence to increase their engagement with school?

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

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. 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. It should be noted that none of these programs occur in isolation – they are either also connected to other community resources and agencies and/or the school districts in which the families reside. Causal inferences should not be made with the data.



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 students and families. 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 two primary programs: intensive early childhood partnership and Parent University. Descriptions of each program and evaluation findings are summarized in this section.



Intensive Early Childhood Partnership

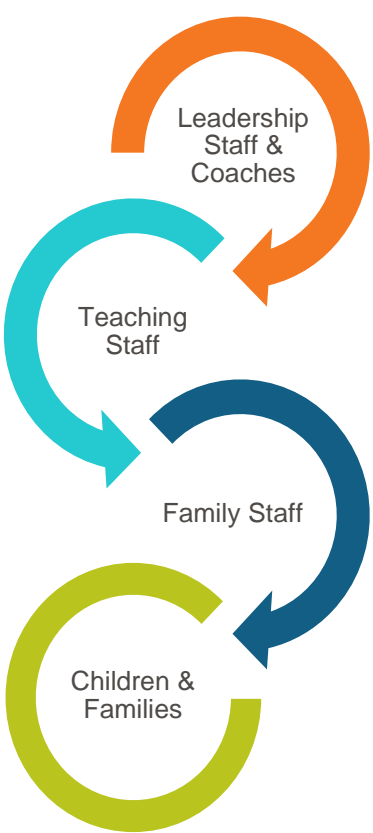
STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

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).

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, 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. Using an inclusive model, these professionals work together to foster a supportive environment that promotes strong relationships among staff, students, and families.

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*. During one-on-one sessions with teachers, helpful coaching tools include classroom videotapes and photographs. Instructional coaches work to build teacher confidence, increase their active problem-solving skills and attain goals set during their reflective sessions. During these one-on-one sessions with teachers, helpful coaching tools included coaching notes guided by the TS Fidelity Tool and the OPS district "look fors" within the buildings they supported.

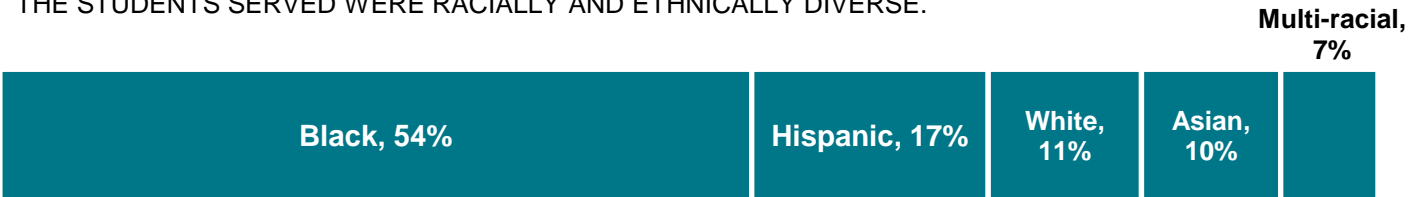
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT. The teaching teams benefit from 11 days of additional professional development (PD) through the school year. Six of those eleven professional development days are facilitated in each school's Early Childhood Professional Learning Community (i.e., PLC). The PLC framework establishes 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 full day sessions that extend knowledge of the curriculum, Creative Curriculum, child development best practices, strategies that benefit all students including special instruction, and how to utilize the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment system. In addition, one PD session focused on how trauma has informed the experiences of the students and how it impacts their performance in school. The PD component is required for teachers at Kellom and Conestoga and elective for teachers at the expanded schools.



DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2022-2023, the Intensive Early Childhood Partnership enrolled 322 Pre-K students across six schools and 20 classrooms who participated in the evaluation. The Intensive Early Childhood Partnership served a racially and ethnically diverse population of children. The majority (54%) of the students are black and 17% identify as Hispanic. The smallest group is Native American, with two students. There were more males (57%) than females (43%) enrolled in the Pre-K classes. **Over one-third (38%) of students were identified for special education services and had an individualized education plan (IEP).** Less than 10% were considered English Learners.

THE STUDENTS SERVED WERE RACIALLY AND ETHNICALLY DIVERSE.



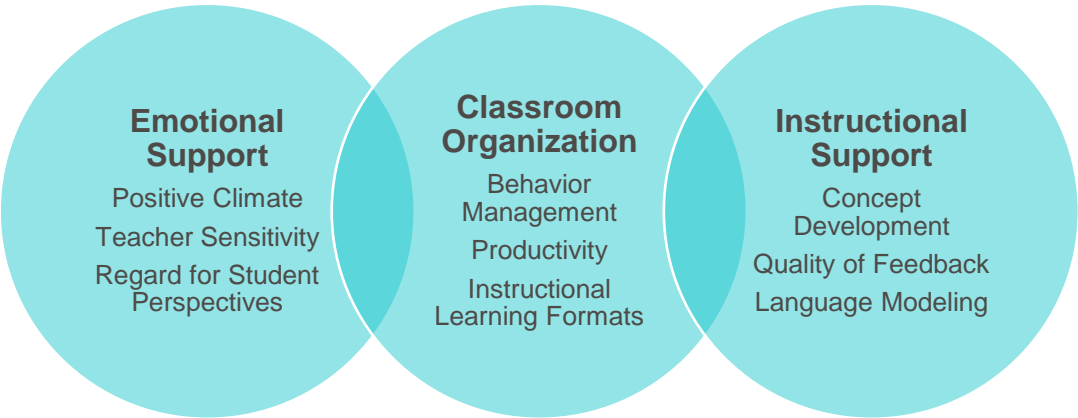
N=304

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

METHOD. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System™ (CLASS) was used to evaluate the quality of 16 intensive early childhood preschool classrooms. Results from this assessment are shared with the individual teacher and her coach to build on his/her strengths and identify strategies to improve instructional practices.

CLASS™ has three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organizational, and Instructional Support. Classrooms are rated on a one to seven scale with one to two indicated low ratings and six to seven indicating high ratings. Nationally, Instructional Support tends to be the domain with the most opportunity for improvement as it challenges teachers to effectively extend language, to model advanced language, and to promote higher-order thinking skills. Research on the CLASS indicates ratings of 5 or higher within the domains of Emotional Support and Classroom Organization, and 3.25 or higher within the domain of Instructional Support, are the minimum threshold necessary to have impacts on student achievement (Burchinal, Vandergrift, Pianta & Mashburn, 2010). Preschoolers in classrooms with higher quality interactions showed greater gains in school readiness, including the areas of executive functioning and early literacy (Vitiello, Bassock, Hamre, Player, & Williford, 2018).

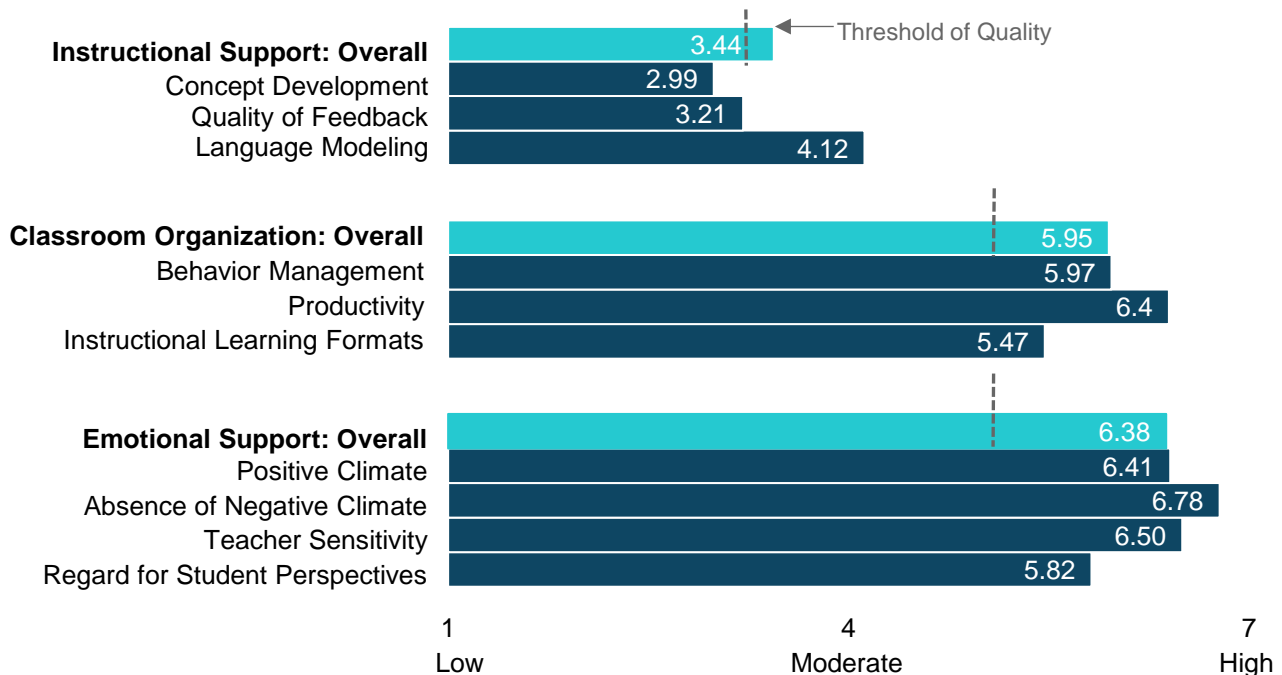


FINDINGS. The scores for the preschool classrooms exceeded research reported thresholds necessary to influence student achievement. The following figure provides the overall scores for each domain and the dimension scores that are related to each overall score. On average, classrooms met the threshold of quality across all three domains. Dimensions that did not meet the threshold to impact student achievement were Concept Development and Quality of Feedback both within the Instructional Support Domain. Classroom Organization and Emotional Support were in the high-quality range. Instructional Support was in the moderate range.

PRE-K CLASSROOMS' STRENGTHS WERE IN THE AREAS OF EMOTIONAL SUPPORT AND CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION.

Language Modeling improved the most from 2021-2022.

n=16



CHILD OUTCOMES

Supporting young children's development in the early years has shown to be important in laying the foundation for later academic skills. Research has shown that high-quality Head Start children had higher cognitive scores than children in low-quality Head Start or center-based care (Lee, 2019). Further, the importance of concept development, particularly for students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, has been demonstrated in numerous research studies (Neuman, 2006; Panter and Bracken, 2009). In recent years the important contributions of executive functioning to school readiness have been highlighted (Blair & Razza, 2007). Researchers correlate a relationship between executive functioning and a preschooler's ability to learn in the classroom (Benson, et. al., 2013).

SCHOOL READINESS SKILLS

METHOD. The following areas were assessed in the fall and spring:

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS [DEVEREUX EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSESSMENT (DECA)]. This teacher-completed questionnaire assesses young students' social-emotional development by identifying total protective factors overall and in the areas of initiative, self-control, attachment, and behavior. The DECA was completed at all schools with a total of 288 students assessed.

VOCABULARY SKILLS [PEABODY PICTURE VOCABULARY TEST–IV (PPVT-IV)].

The PPVT-IV measures students' vocabulary skills. The PPVT-IV, administered by external evaluators, was completed at all six schools with a total of 276 students assessed.

SCHOOL READINESS SKILLS [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. BSRA, administered by external evaluators, was completed at four schools with a total of 199 students assessed.

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 online assessment, administered by external evaluators, was completed with 107 children from two schools.

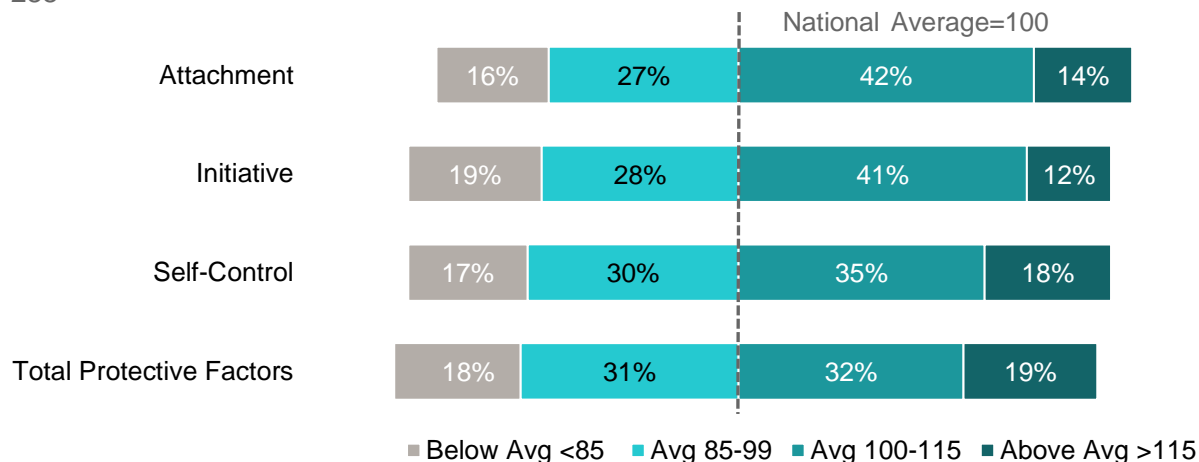
FINDINGS

Social-emotional

The descriptive analyses found that most students scored within the average to above average range across all areas of the social-emotional measure: Total Protective Factors (82%), Attachment (84%), Initiative (81%) and Self-Control (83%). Over half of the students demonstrated social-emotional skills at or above the national average which is a score of 100.

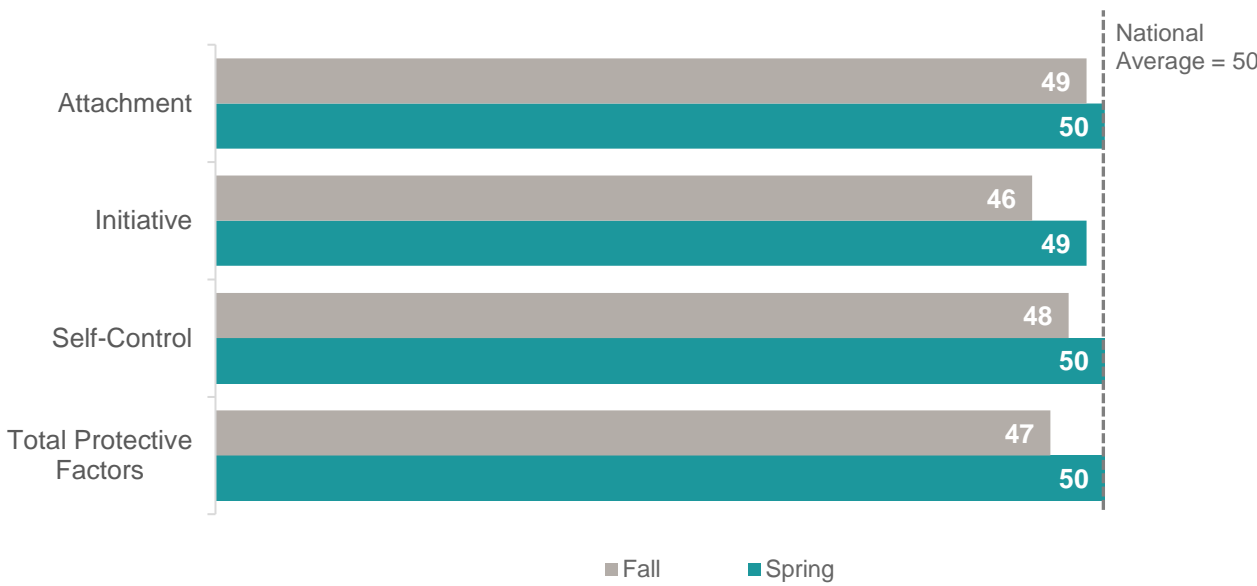
OVERALL, HALF THE STUDENTS SCORED AT THE NATIONAL AVERAGE OR ABOVE ACROSS ALL AREAS BY SPRING.

n=288



A comparison of social-emotional results at fall and spring is reported in the following graph, to show how skills changed over time.

ON AVERAGE, CHILDREN'S SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS INCREASED OVER TIME.
By spring, average scores were at or above the national average across all areas except Initiative. n=281



Paired t-test analyses were completed to determine if there were significant changes over time. Significant increases were found across all areas of the social-emotional assessment.

Attachment: [t(280)= -3.61; $p<.01$, $d=0.209$] with the effect size suggesting small meaningful change.

Initiative: [t(280)= -7.397; $p<.001$, $d=0.412$] with the effect size suggesting medium meaningful change.

Self-Control: [t(280)= -4.153; $p<.001$, $d=0.215$] with the effect size suggesting small meaningful change.

Total Protective Factors: [t(280)= -6.091; $p<.001$, $d=0.330$] with the effect size suggesting small meaningful change.



The social-emotional tool also measures behavioral concerns such as having temper tantrums, having a short attention span, and becoming upset easily. In fall and spring, 21% of the students scored in the “concern” range, indicating child behaviors that were outside what is typical for three to five-year old children. A paired t-test analysis did not find that the change over time was significant.

Did student factors impact social-emotional scores?

GENDER. Of interest was whether there were any gender differences in students’ social-emotional outcomes. Significant differences were found for total protective factors, attachment, initiative, self-control, and behavior concerns.

Total Protective Factors: Girls (m=52.80), Boys (m=47.42)
(t,(286)=4.57; p<.01].

Attachment: Girls (m=53.03), Boys (m=48.32)
[t((286)=4.05; p<.01].

Initiative: Girls (m=51.59), Boys (m=46.87)
(t(286)=4.04, p<.01.

Self-Control: Girls (m=52.37, Boys (m=47.85)
(t(286)=3.57, p<.01.

Behavior Concerns: (m=50.44), Boys (m=53.16)
(t(286)=3.514. p<.01.

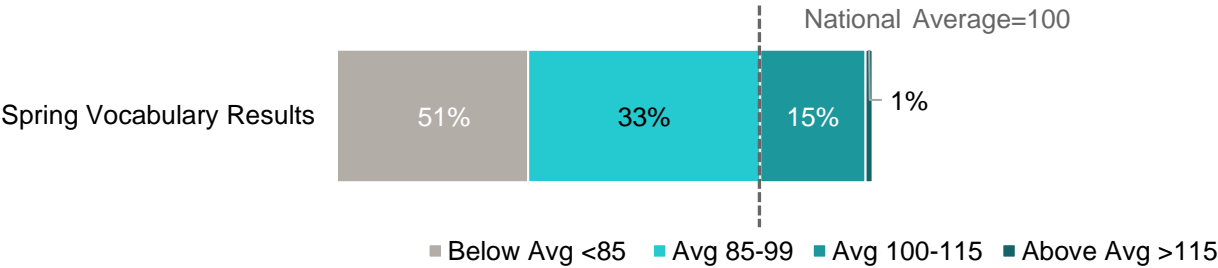
Girls demonstrated stronger social-emotional skills. Boys had significantly more behavior concern scores.

Vocabulary

The descriptive analyses found that most students (51%) scored within the below average range in the spring.

BY SPRING, FEWER THAN 20% OF STUDENTS SCORED AT OR ABOVE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE.

Notably, over half of the students scored in the below average range. n=304

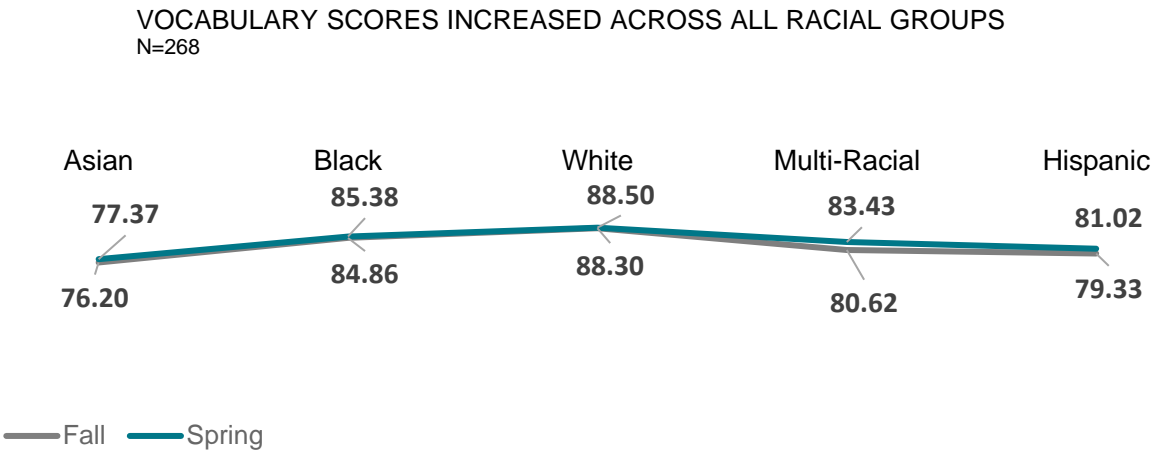


Average standard scores increased from fall (83.48) to spring (84.52). A paired t-test analysis found that the change from fall to spring was significant, $[t(264) = -1.797; p < .05, d = 0.110]$ with the effect size suggesting small change.

Did student factors impact vocabulary scores?

GENDER. Of interest was whether there were any gender differences in students' vocabulary outcomes. An independent sample t-test was conducted and determine that girls ($M = 86.23$) scored significantly higher than boys (82.36) on the spring assessment., $t(274) = 2.145, p < .05$.

RACE/ETHNICITY. Of interest was whether there were any differences between student social-emotional scores over time based on race and/or ethnicity. All racial groups experienced growth from fall to spring. Scores across all groups are in the below average to low average range. This test does not consider if the student's first language is something other than English.

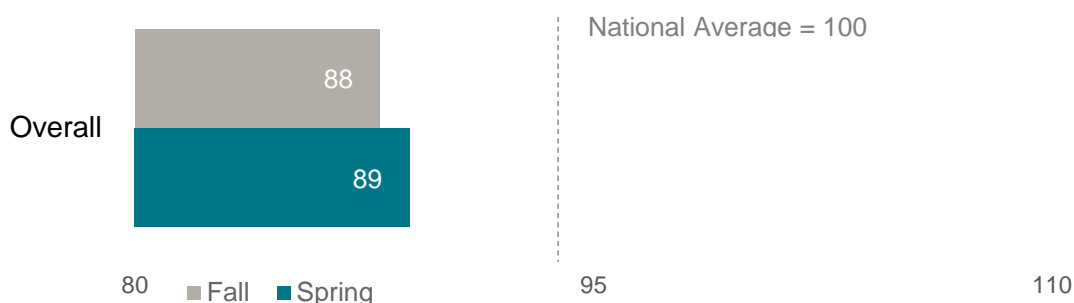


School Readiness Skills

School readiness skills showed modest increases from fall to spring. The overall mean standard scores on the Bracken increased from 88 to 89 remaining in the low end of the average range.

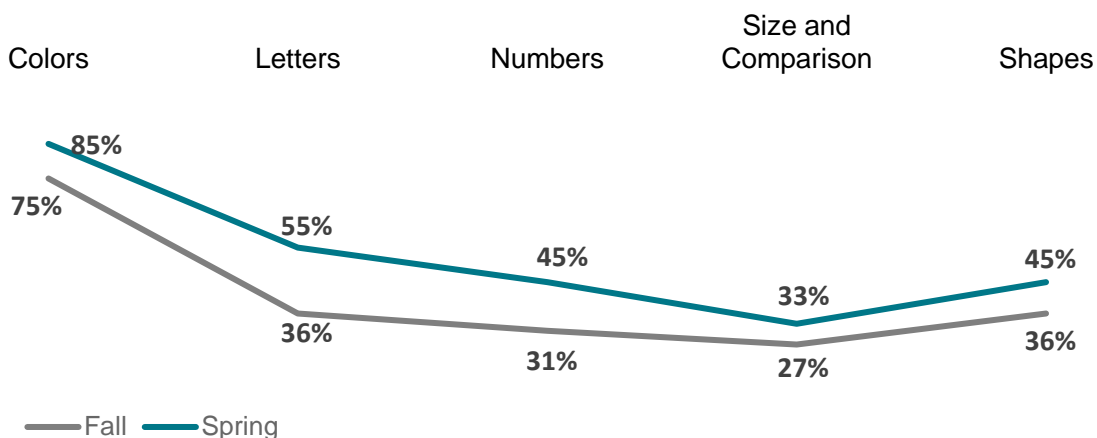
The results of a paired t-test analysis found that the changes were significant $[t(173) = -2.275, p < .05, d = 0.172]$ with the effect size suggesting small meaningful change.

STUDENTS' SCHOOL READINESS SKILLS SHOWED A SMALL INCREASE FROM FALL TO SPRING. N=174



When examining individual subtests, the percentage of mastery increased across all areas. Students started the year with strong mastery of colors and increased that mastery to 85%. The area with the lowest percentage of mastery was Size and Comparison. Students started the year at 27% mastery and ended with 33% mastery. The Size and Comparison subtest assesses students' understanding of location words, comparison concepts, and directional concepts. These are higher order cognitive skills than other areas of the tool.

THE PERCENTAGE OF MASTERY INCREASED IN EACH SUBTEST. N=179



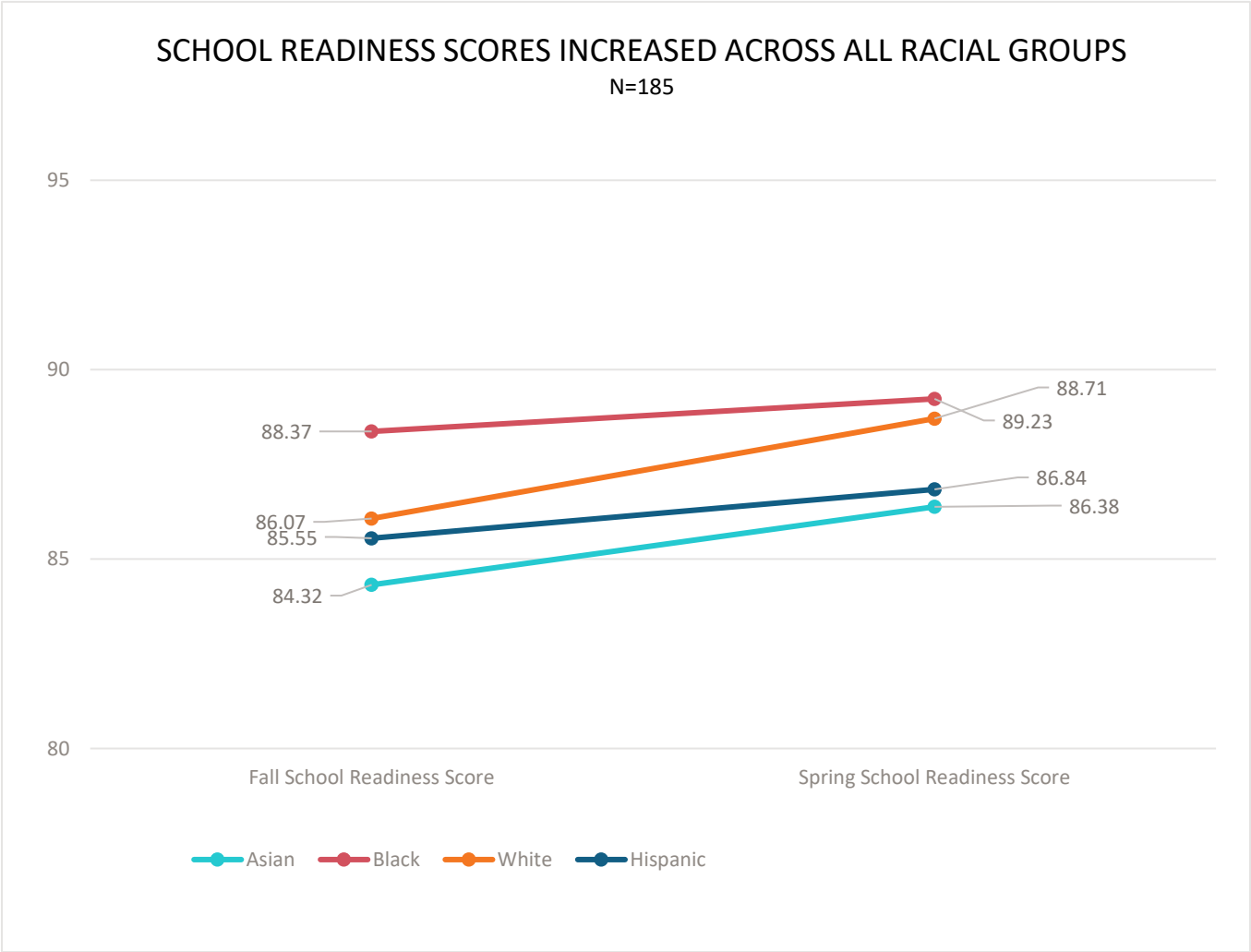
Did student factors impact school readiness scores?

GENDER. Of interest was whether there were any gender differences in students' school readiness outcomes. Independent sample t-tests indicated no significant difference between boys and girls at any time point. While girls had a slightly higher growth score (.30 standard score points) the difference was negligible.

IEP STATUS. Students receiving special education services make up nearly 40% of the students in the IEC classrooms. Therefore, it is important to disaggregate the data to measure the impact

on their development. On the school readiness scale, students with an IEP had a mean score within the average range (M=85) and had an average growth of two standard score points. Independent samples t-tests indicated that while students without an IEP scored significantly higher in the spring $t(183) = 2.04, p < .05$), there was not a significant difference in growth rates.

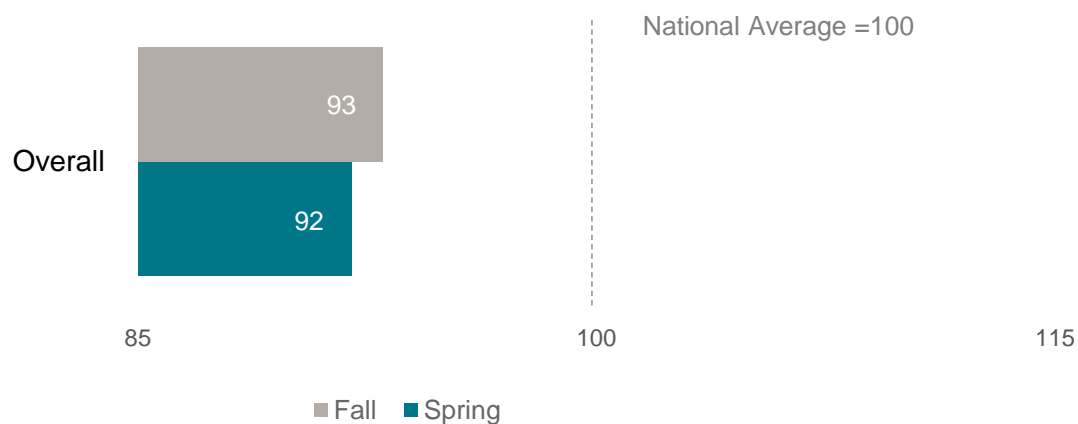
RACE/ETHNICITY. Of interest was whether there were any differences between student school readiness scores over time based on race and/or ethnicity. Only racial groups with at least 10 students are reported in the chart. No significant differences were found between groups.



Executive Functioning Skills

Students’ executive functioning skills showed modest decreases from fall to spring. The overall mean standard scores decreased from 93 to 92. The results of a paired t-test analysis found that the changes were not significant.

STUDENTS' EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS SHOWED MODEST DECREASES FROM FALL TO SPRING.
N=100



Did student factors impact executive functioning scores?

GENDER. Of interest was whether there were any gender differences in students' executive functioning outcomes. No significant differences were found based on gender.



Parent University

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

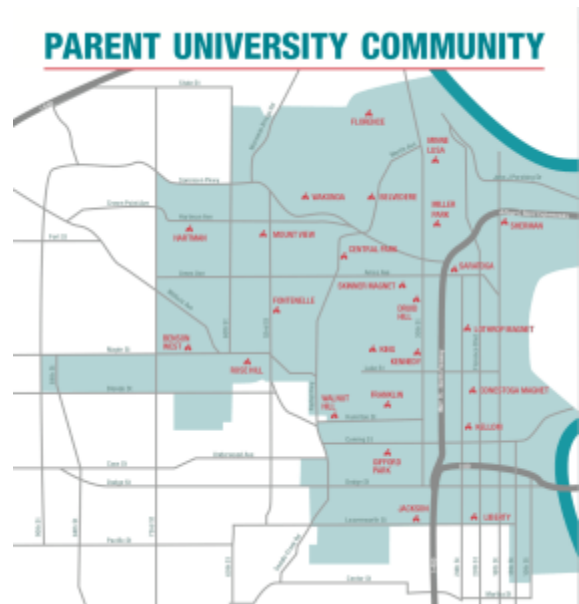
Parent University is a comprehensive, two-generational family engagement program based on research and best practices that began in February 2015 at the Learning Community Center of North Omaha. A two-generational approach allows the program to focus on the whole family while creating opportunities for addressing needs of both children and the adults in their lives simultaneously. In 2019, the partnership expanded to additional (18) schools in North Omaha. 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 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.

EDUCATIONAL NAVIGATORS. Educational Navigators (ENs) serve as personal parent advocates, helping parents gain better understanding of the public school system, community resources, child development, and learning strategies. Navigators build strong relationships with participants to ensure individualized education and support using a research-based home visitation/parenting curriculum. The ENs are the primary point of contact for the participants at Parent University. 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.

Improvements to the program have been made since the last report. Changes included implementing new communication tools such as Remind to facilitate effective communication with our participants and adopting Microsoft Bookings, which allows participants to select their preferred meeting times with Educational Navigators. In preparation for transportation needs, ENs have received training in van driving to ensure safe transportation for participants using a newly acquired van. To better support participants with children on the autism spectrum, ENs have



undergone additional training to deepen their understanding of Autism and provide more informed assistance.

The Educational Navigators have actively contributed to the overall program by organizing and participating in various events. They played a pivotal role in planning and executing the Summer Literacy event, which provided engaging literacy activities for our Parent University participants. Furthermore, the ENs worked closely with the Connections partners to facilitate connections between participants and therapists, ensuring they received the necessary support.

HOME VISITATIONS & GOAL SETTING. 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. 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.

LIBRARY AND LITERACY. The circulation of library materials empowered families as individuals renewed laptops over 75 times, borrowed over 35 books, and explored other resources. The OPL representative aided parents outside of their designated ESL and GED sessions.

Additionally, the OPL representative conducts bi-weekly visits to six North Omaha Schools, to deliver engaging Storytime sessions. Collaborating closely with 2 Early Childhood facilitators and 18 Pre-K teachers, this partnership ensures that each visit is a blend of education and engagement while promoting Parent University's mission.

Finally, the OPL librarian helped facilitate Prime-Time Preschool Program. She assumes the role of a literary conductor, orchestrating Storytime, critical thinking sessions, and center activities for children. The library was involved in the 2022 Literacy Event for 150 participants with bilingual storybook walks and two Storytime sessions.

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. Through courses such as Common Sense Parenting (CSP) for School Success course, parents have gained essential tools to navigate their children's behaviors and build stronger parent-child relationships.

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. A collaboration with Project Harmony, facilitated by a generous grant from the Omaha Community Foundation, has enabled the center to offer mental health services to six families. Through a combination of on-site sessions at LCCNO and the

utilization of Telehealth, crucial support was provided to families, promoting their well-being and resilience.

SCHOOL SUCCESS. To become full partners in their child's education, courses and workshops emphasize the importance of the parents' roles as teachers, responsibilities, and engagement opportunities. Bilingual programming has empowered Spanish-speaking children to develop confidence in their English language abilities, while the Catch Them Being Good courses have reinforced positive behaviors and nurtured a culture of kindness and recognition.

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 free childcare is provided. Parent University offers year-round child learning activities for the children focusing on the domains of early childhood development. Over the course of the past year, the childcare room has undergone significant changes. The environment was transformed into a more secure and positive space by introducing engaging activities that focus on reading, art, music, movement, math, science, and writing. Regular story time sessions with our librarian have been implemented during the day. Child Learning Specialists have been instrumental in teaching math and literacy skills, using fun activities to focus on numbers, letters, and different seasons. While working with the children, our Child Learning Specialists have become integral members of the Parent University team, actively participating in team meetings and family engagement events to strengthen relationships with families and helping EN and programming better understand the needs and development of the children in the program.



DEMOGRAPHICS

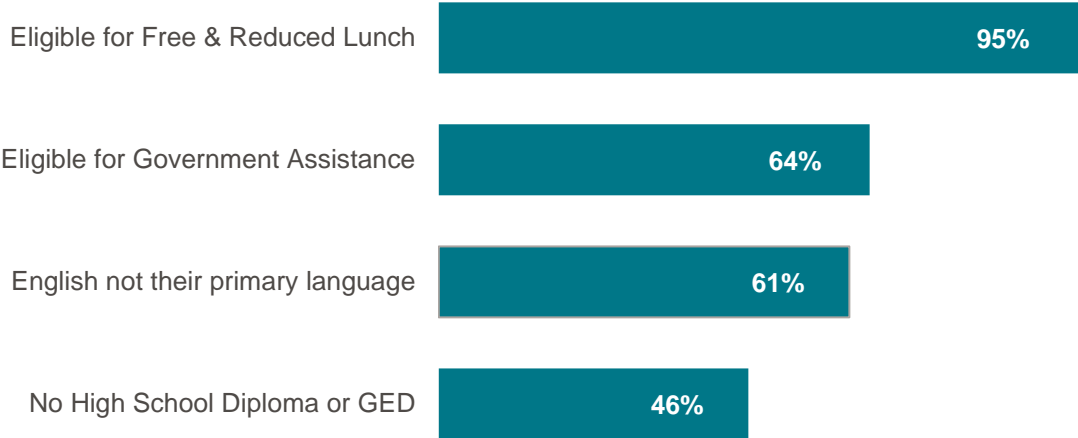
A total 99 families were enrolled in Parent University all of whom participated in the comprehensive program. The families had 259 children of which 135 were within the target age range (birth through Grade 3) for the program. Families represented various languages such as English, Karen, Kirundi, Arabic, Somali, Nepali, and Spanish with 43% indicating that English was their first language and another 39% indicating Spanish. Most of the parents identified as White (47%) or Black (43%) with 44% of the families identifying as Hispanic.

Fifty-four percent of parents completed high school. Of this group, 10% had some college, 4% had an associate's degree, 9% had a bachelor's degree and 2% had a master's degree. Of the parents not completing high school, 23% had some high school, 21% had an 8th grade or less education and 1% had no formal education.

Most parents (95%) have children who qualify for Free and/or Reduced lunch. Sixty-four percent of families received additional government assistance (e.g., SNAP, Medicaid, WIC, TANF, and Title XX).

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 HAVE MULTIPLE OBSTACLES THAT ARE ADDRESSED THROUGH 2GEN PROGRAMMING AND OTHER RESOURCES.
N=99



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.

FAMILY OUTCOMES
FAMILY PROTECTIVE FACTORS

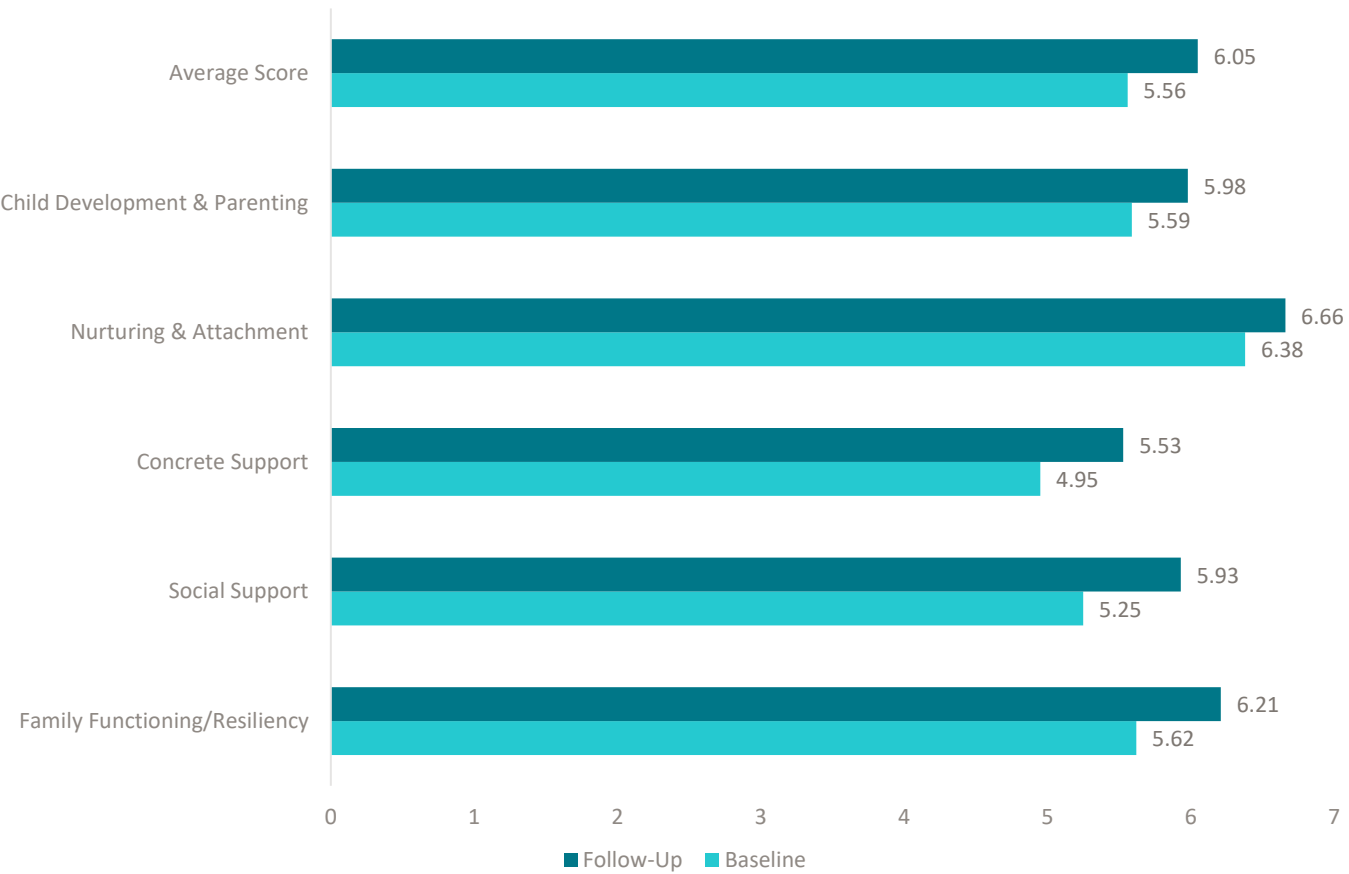
Protective factors are strengths that help buffer and support families who may face challenges. These attributes mitigate risk and promote healthy development and well-being.

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.

FINDINGS. The results found that parents’ nurturing and attachment skills and family functioning and resiliency were the highest rated areas. 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. No significant improvements were found in four of the five protective factors scales:

The following graph shows average scores on the PFS at baseline and follow-up. This graph represents all families at baseline (N=99) and those with a follow-up survey (N=27).

FAMILIES IMPROVED THEIR PROTECTIVE FACTORS AFTER PARTICIPATING IN THE PROGRAM.
Scores indicate families enter the program with a number of strengths.



PARENT SUCCESS STORIES. One participant had a goal of becoming a better parent. Through the guidance and resources provided by our program, particularly the Common-Sense Parenting class, she has gained a new perspective on parenting and has made significant strides in improving her parenting skills.

Another participant, who joined our program in May, has noticed a positive change in her child's behavior. She credited the resources and interventions offered by her Educational Navigator, such as Ready Rosie, Conscious Discipline, and breathing techniques for calming down, her child's behavior has significantly improved.

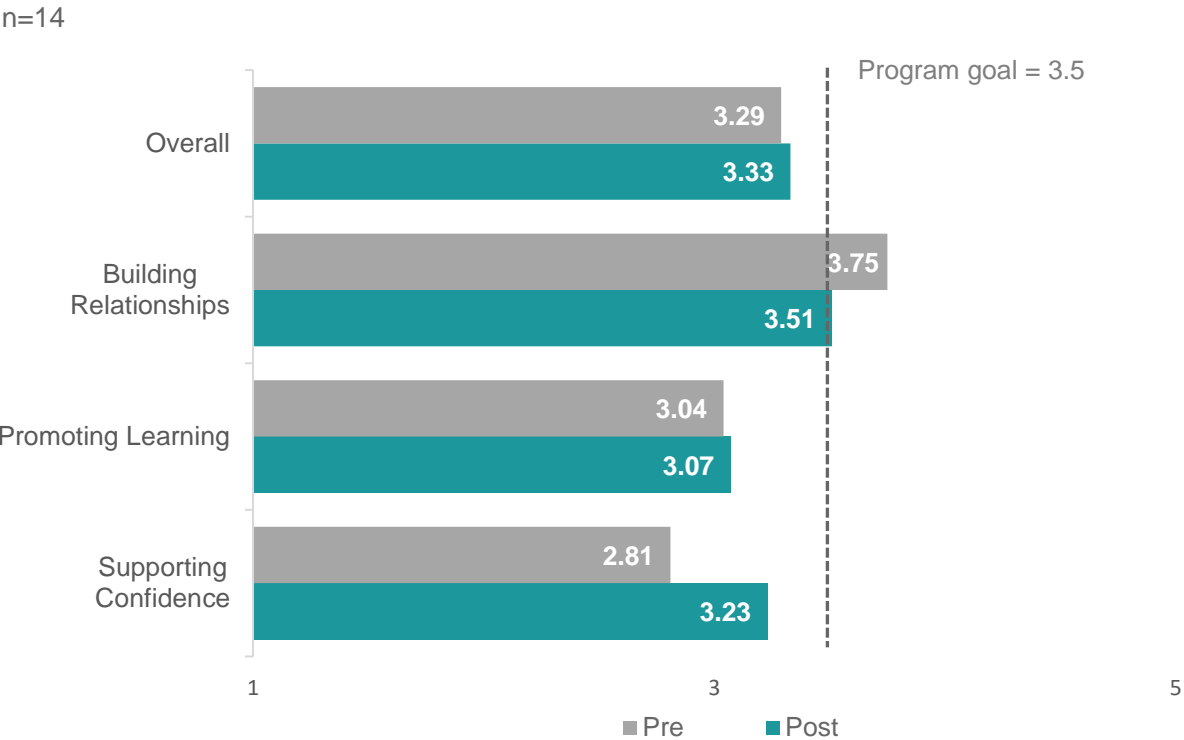
PARENT-CHILD INTERACTION. The Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (KIPS™) measures parenting behaviors across three areas: Building Relationships, Promoting Learning, and Supporting Confidence, based on a videotape of a parent playing with his or her child. Scores are based on a 5-point scale with 5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

FINDINGS. A total of 14 families enrolled in Parent University had the parent-child interaction assessment at least two points in time. By post, over 60% of parents met the program goal in Building Relationships.

- 36% met goal Overall
- 64% met goal in Building Relationships
- 21% met goal in Promoting Learning
- 33% met goal in Supporting Confidence

The following graph shows average KIPS results for Parent University families at pre and post.

ON AVERAGE, PARENT UNIVERSITY PARENTS MET THE PROGRAM GOAL IN BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS.



Results of paired samples t-tests did not show significant change over time in any of the areas, likely due to the small sample size of parents with both pre and post scores. It is anticipated there

will be more data for the next report as an additional 43 families had their initial assessment during year.

COURSE PARTICIPATION

Program staff tracked parents' participation in the 21 opportunities that were offered this past year. Activities aligned with four primary components within Parent University

Across the 21 activities, 255 participants (duplicated count) were enrolled. Other than the one-time parent engagement opportunities, the largest enrollments were for the WCA Family Safety Course (22 participants) and Supporting Your Child's Social-Emotional Development (30 participants).

For activities with more than one session, the completion rate was 97% - much higher than the completion rate for the last year.

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 2022-2023 program year, Metropolitan Community College facilitated ESL and GED classes using their ESL and GED instructors to come to the North Omaha site and teach Parent University participants. A total of 38 parents participated in one of these two options, ESL (30) and GED (9).

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 and the ABEL for GED participants.

In the ESL courses 27 students had the CASAS® assessment and 14 had at least one assessment at two points in time. 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 forms and to work in entry-level jobs that include simple oral and written communication. 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.

In Listening, 29% had a least one level of growth and at the 2nd assessment 12/14 scored at a level 4 or above. In Reading, 36% had a least one level of growth and 10/14 scored at a level 4 or above. In the GED courses, eight students had the ABEL assessment of math and reading skills, with seven having the assessment as two points in time. Three students gained at least one level in mathematics and two students gained at least one level in reading.

SUCCESS STORIES. A success story for the GED track is one participant who successfully completed two of her official GED tests over the past year. This accomplishment demonstrates her commitment to personal growth and educational advancement.

Another participant who joined the program to improve her English language skills, has shown exceptional dedication. Her commitment has not only led to her own progress in learning English but has also motivated other parents to join the program to work on their language skills.

Finally, one more participant has shown remarkable growth in her ESL proficiency. With a 6-point increase in listening and speaking and an impressive 11-point increase in reading and writing, her progress is compelling.

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

Parent University sponsored one session 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 job. 100% of the parents enrolled (10/10) completed the 11-week course.

Two additional financial literacy courses were held at Parent University:

- How Money Works - Gain concepts & principles that participants can apply to obtain a lifestyle of health and financial success. This four-week session had 8/9 participants complete the course.
- Financial Survival During Crisis: A 6-week session to guide participant understanding of ways to lower your monthly expenses through comparison shopping, negotiating prices with vendors, budgeting, identifying needs versus wants and learning to save money by couponing and shopping frugally.

What did parents think about participating in Parent University?

FOCUS GROUPS. Focus groups were conducted in 2022-2023 to allow participants the opportunity to relay their experiences with the program, share success stories and provide input on possible improvements to the program. Questions were asked about the participants' overall experience with the program, satisfaction levels with program components (navigators, parenting classes, resources, English classes), and ideas for improvements to the program. Focus groups were conducted with participants and staff members.

RESULTS. Focus groups sessions gathered input from 21 participants who participated in ESL classes, Parent University courses and the GED classes. At least one session was offered in Spanish to capture the perspective of more families.

Participants noted multiple benefits of attending Parent University. Participants discussed the benefits of the different courses offered, the English classes and relationship with the educational navigators as benefiting themselves and their families. Parent University has helped

with parenting, changing relationships, access to mental health and behavioral supports, English skills, and finding resources.

“This is the ONLY POSITIVE PLACE I had when I was transitioning from street life to where I am now. I don’t know what I would be doing now had I not come here. I couldn’t even write a sentence back then and now because of here I have my GED.”

Navigators have been instrumental in helping families find resources and handle challenging situations. Participants talked about building good relationships with their navigators, how they go above and beyond to provide supports, and how they have been instrumental in finding resources. Several participants mentioned the need to hire an additional Spanish speaking navigator as currently only one navigator is in that role, and it limits the amount of support she can provide.

GED classes are seen as a positive and participants appreciated the support from the staff. *“They always answer our questions, and they always encourage us to keep on going, even though if our tests are not that good, they always give the positive encouragement.”*

English skills have improved. Participants were encouraged by the improvement in their English skills and reported feeling increasingly confident in using them. Some mentioned not needing to depend on interpreters when at the doctors or when speaking to school staff. Having their Pre-K and younger students attend the child care on site has helped their children to develop their English skills and increased their independence levels. Parents stated that both would help their students in entering kindergarten.

“Before, I did not know how to say anything. Now, I do know how to speak because I am coming to class, the teacher helps me. Before, I was not reading, but now I am reading a little bit. It is different now.”

Parents continue to have multiple stressors and challenges to handle. Financial challenges were most frequently mentioned. Participants discussed increased prices and inflation as being incredibly challenging and impacting all parts of their lives including housing, employment, and stress level. Parents of children with special needs and/or challenging behavior faced additional challenges in finding care, working with the school systems, and finding effective parenting tools. However, even with the challenges, many identified their navigator as a source of support for finding potential resources and solutions.

Communication could be improved. Participants expressed disappointment over the lack of communication around classes, turnover of navigators, and tickets to special events. They would like to see increased communication and for the communication to be more in advance of special events and changes to programming. It was particularly stressful when navigators changed, and participants were unclear about who their new navigator would be. At times, participants were unclear about the roles of those associated with the Learning Community, program offerings, and who to contact.

Suggestions for improvements were shared. One suggestion was to deliver class content in Spanish more often, so the classes are more effective. Participants expressed concerns with interpretation at times. Participants would like to have an increased variety of classes and for the classes to be held even if a small number enrolls.

“We need more classes. I know numbers can be small sometimes and they will cancel the class, but for those 3-4 people who do sign up they are signing up because that is something they are needing in their life right then. So, isn’t 3-4 better than zero?”

Ideas for additional classes included: CPR classes, citizenship, housing, a job skills program leading to employment, and a basic living skills class.

Other suggestions included allowing other members of the community the opportunity to take classes even if they were not parents, to provide ESL classes for younger adults, provide afternoon classes, and hire other languages for navigators.

Suggestions have been shared with the Parent University leadership team who have been actively working to incorporate changes based on participant feedback.



STUDENT OUTCOMES

In the 2022-2023 program year, the evaluation of student outcomes for the children whose parents are enrolled in Parent University includes three strategies:

1. English language development and social-emotional outcomes are measured through parent-completed assessments for children ages 4 months to 5 years of age.
2. Pre-K outcomes are measured through in-person assessments completed by MMI evaluators and teacher-completed surveys in the six IEC preschool programs.

PARENTS IN PARENT UNIVERSITY: CHILDREN'S (AGES 4 MONTHS TO 11 YEARS) ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL OUTCOMES

METHOD. Parent University families were invited to complete assessments of their children's language development and social-emotional skills in the spring of 2023. The following tools were used:

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT SKILLS [DEVELOPMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF YOUNG CHILDREN – 2ND EDITION (DAYC-2)]. The DAYC-2 measures children's English language receptive and expressive language skills. Parents completed the assessment for children aged 16 months to 5 years.

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 54 children, ages 4 months to 5 years.

FINDINGS.

English Language Skills

Parents completed English language assessments for children whose home language is English or who are in an English-based childcare environment. The language assessment is normed on a diverse cross section of children, particularly in social-economic status. A total of 48 children had the assessment in the spring of 2023. The descriptive analyses found that 45% of the children were at or above the national average in receptive language and most children (57%) were at or above the national average in expressive language.

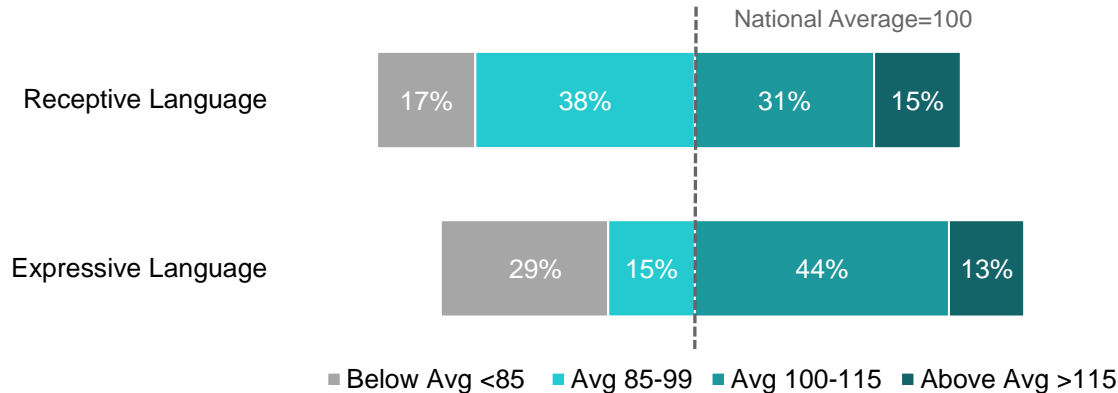
These are strong positive outcomes. By contrast, the children with parents enrolled in Parent University qualify for free & reduced lunch at a much higher rate than the general population, which is an indicator of low income. The fact that approximately half the children score at or above the national average is a compelling finding.

Approximately one quarter (29%) of the children scored in the below average range in expressive language. This indicates that higher percentages than the normed sample are at the below average level. In a typical distribution, approximately 15% of the children would score in the below average range.

Approximately half of the children demonstrate language skills that meet or exceed the national average.

57% OF THE CHILDREN HAD EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE SKILLS AT OR ABOVE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE.

Just under half the children (45%) were at the national average in receptive language. n=48



Social-Emotional

Parents whose primary language was English or Spanish, completed a survey about their children’s social-emotional skills with a total of 54 being completed.

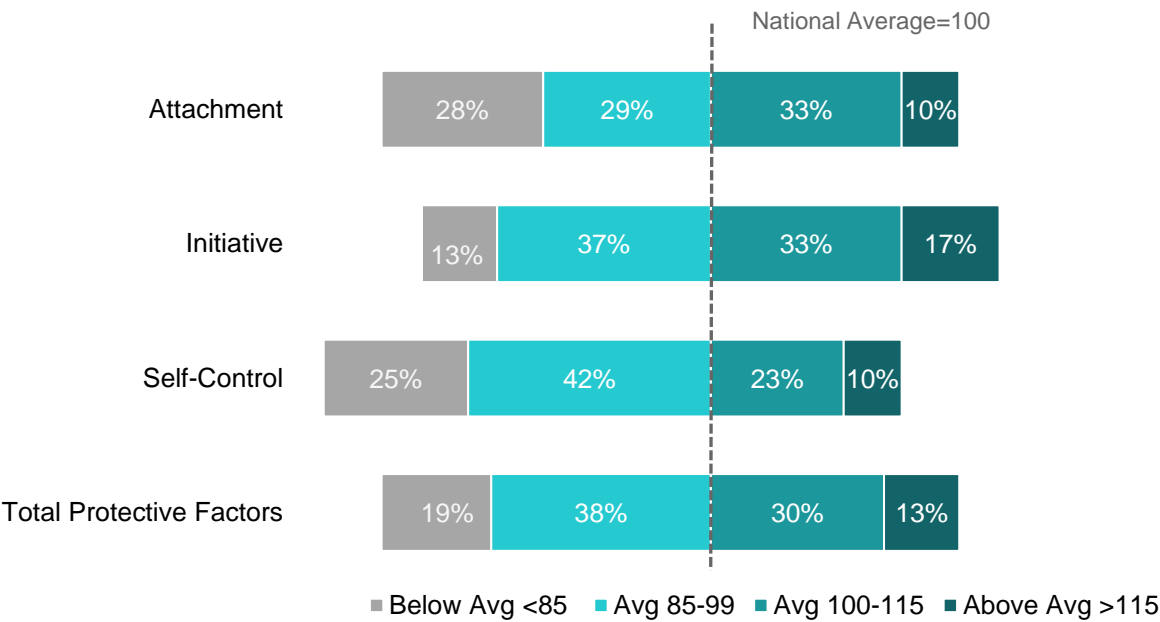
The descriptive analyses found high percentages of children scored within the average to above average range across all areas of the social-emotional measure: total protective factors (78%), attachment (72%), initiative (74%) and self-control (71%). The majority demonstrated social-emotional skills above the national average, which is a score of 100, in the area of initiative (54%).

Like all standardized assessments, the social-emotional assessment is normed on a diverse cross-section of children. The sample of children with parents enrolled in Parent University has high percentages who qualify for free & reduced lunch, which is an indicator of low income. The fact that most of the children scored in the average range or above across all areas is promising.

Majority of students were in the average range across all social-emotional areas.

However, the children scored in the below average range at a rate that is approximately equal to or higher than the national sample. In the area of self-control, 25% scored in the below average range and in attachment 28% scored in the below average range. In the normed sample 15% score in the below average range.

STUDENTS SHOWED THE GREATEST STRENGTH IN INITIATIVE WITH 76% MEETING OR EXCEEDING THE NATIONAL AVERAGE.
n=54



The social-emotional tool also measures behavioral concerns such as having temper tantrums, having a short attention span, and becoming upset easily. At the time of the assessment, 43% of the children scored in the “concern” range, indicating child behaviors that were outside what is typical for three to five-year old children.



Family Learning

learning
community
center
OF SOUTH OMAHA

Learning Community Center of South Omaha

The Learning Community Center of 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 2GEN network partner through Ascend at the Aspen Institute.

Each family in the program has the opportunity to attend 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.

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. In addition to fundamental language skills, an English for Parents class will teach parents how to use computers to access school information, role-play parent/teacher conferences, and utilize children's books as learning tools. Participants also take field trips to the Omaha Public Library (OPL) and take part in OPL's Summer Reading Program.

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 wellbeing at home.

Sample Parent Classes and Workshops
Circle of Security® (program staff)
Pyramid Model for Parents (program staff)
Digital Literacy 101 (Metro Community College)
Baby and Me in Q'anjob'al language (ESU #3 Trainer + LCCSO Navigator)
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. **Social Assistance Navigators** assist families who are in crisis or have challenging social or economic needs. These navigators connect parent participants with many community resources, such as pantries, mental health services, and homeless shelters.

# of personal visits by educational navigator	# of home visits by educational navigator	# of parent/child interactions by educational navigator	Note
1690	1570	879	In-person visits: <u>1570</u> were at the participant's home.

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 service, 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: Thanks to generous private donors, each parent enrolled in the program is loaned a computer. Since 2020, digital literacy was added into all English for Parents classes, and

parents in the program have become proficient in using Zoom, email, search engines, and Burlington English and gained skills such as using a mouse, copying and pasting, and typing. 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), 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.

Since 2021, the Learning Community Center of South Omaha has partnered with home and center-based childcare providers working in the South Omaha community. Culturally appropriate, bilingual trainings are offered at the center throughout the year along with monthly coaching in order to support providers who want to improve childcare quality.

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. Other 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).

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Learning Community Center of South Omaha provided training and/or coaching for 44 South Omaha childcare providers in 2022-2023. After learning about the lack of bilingual trainers and coaches in the field, several members of the LCCSO team trained to become State of Nebraska-certified trainers and coaches in early childhood development. Two free training sessions were held at the center on the Early Learning Guidelines. In partnership with the Nebraska Children and

Family Foundation, Rooted in Relationships provided bimonthly training, monthly coaching, and collaboration opportunities for 15 childcare providers in the program.

GRADUATION

A parent/child graduation celebrating 98 families was held in April 2023. At the graduation ceremony, 59 parents received one- or two- year participation certificates, 32 parents graduated from the ESL track, and 7 graduated from the GED track.

DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2022-2023, the Family Learning Program served 299 parents and 767 children (494 target students, birth to 6). Of the families served, 261 were enrolled in the comprehensive program while 38 families participated in the auxiliary program. Additionally, 31 spouses/partners of primary participants took part in some pieces of the programming. A total of 286 children were served through Child Learning at the center with 89% of families either currently or previously needing childcare.

Ninety-three percent of families reported qualifying for free/reduced lunch with 76% of earning less than \$50,000 annually. While Spanish is primarily the first language of most participants, other languages included English, K'iche', Mam, and Q'anjobal. Forty percent of participants had an education level of 8th grade or less upon program entry.

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 formative in nature. The tools selected for the evaluation often have a dual purpose to provide outcome results and to inform the team as part of a continuous improvement process.

FOCUS GROUP RESULTS. Focus groups were conducted in 2022-2023 to allow participants the opportunity to relay their experiences with the program, share success stories and provide input on possible improvements to the program. Questions were asked about the participants' overall experience with the program, satisfaction levels with program components (navigators, parenting classes, resources, English classes), and ideas for improvements to the program. Focus groups were conducted with participants and staff members.

FOCUS GROUPS

Summary of Annual Spring Focus Groups

The following is a summary of focus group findings conducted at Learning Community South in the spring of 2023. Focus groups explored people's experiences with English language classes, parenting workshops, relationships with Educational Navigators, on-site childcare, and partnerships with connecting agencies. In all, six in-person focus groups were conducted with 67 participants. To participate in the focus groups, participants must meet a minimum of 6 months of enrollment in the program.

Qualitative analysis revealed six overarching strengths of the programs offered, as well as several suggestions for future improvement.

Theme 1: Participants continue to report a high level of satisfaction with English classes.

Across focus groups, participants reported satisfaction with on-site English classes, as well as satisfaction with their teachers. Participants appreciated the ability to converse with one another and enjoyed the interactive experiences, such as games to learn the English language. Teachers were described as patient and supportive. Participants also appreciated the work of their teachers.

Participation in English classes has resulted in increased confidence to speak English outside of the classroom.

Participants felt more comfortable communicating with physicians and teachers in English. One individual noticed personal advancement due to the number of words she now recognizes at the grocery store.

“I love seeing the effort the teacher uses to teach us. They motivate us to keep learning. If our teacher really makes an effort, then I think we should all really try too.”

Suggestions for future instruction included more interaction and dynamic games. Participants shared concerns about rote memorization and preferred more interactive teaching styles. Several participants also requested more time spent on pronunciation of words and grammar. Participants continue to desire more accessibility to classes, such as classes offered in the evenings or on weekends. Some participants felt the program should be offered to families who do not have young children to serve a wider population.

Participants in one focus group agreed there should be additional ways to measure English language skills before assigning classes (e.g., writing, reading, conversation skills, etc.). One individual noted that the ability to read a sentence is different from the ability to comprehend what is being said and felt that classes should also address reading comprehension.

Theme 2: Families have benefited from parenting classes and parenting workshops.

Participants had the opportunity to take the following classes during the past year: Nebraska Circle of Security Parenting, Love and Logic, Domestic Violence, String Sprouts, Cooking, Prime Time, and Puente al Éxito. There was unanimous agreement that all classes were beneficial to parents and children.

Quotes from participants about classes are provided below:

Nebraska Circle of Security Parenting: “The Circle of Security class helped me a lot with my child. For example, on how kids feel comfortable with us and how to take care of them, and when something happens, they feel comfortable to come back to us. Like having an attachment...a beautiful connection can be formed between them and us.”

Love and Logic: “Before, I did not understand how to raise my daughter with love and affection. Because before, I did not know how to give them love and affection. I didn’t think about hugging them. When they get hurt, I can be there to protect them. Before, I didn’t think about that, and being in those classes, I see that it is important to give them 5-10 minutes a day. Give them joy or a hug before leaving the house or coming home.”

String Sprouts: “I have participated in all of the classes, and the violin was my favorite. I recommend it! It helps not just with learning music, but also reading.”

Prime Time Family Reading: One participant wished there were more than six sessions. Another shared, “I attended Prime Time with my three-year-old. It helped my child to like books. Now he sees a book and shows interest. I learned how to use these books with my child, based on his age level.”

Domestic Violence: “I learned to love and respect myself as a woman. To learn that just because I am a woman, does not mean I cannot do certain things.”

Puente al Éxito: “Very good...My son never really talked about what he was going to study, but when we did this program, my son started to say, ‘I want to study this...’ and ‘I want to go to University.’”

It should be noted that a Workforce Development class has also been offered to primary participants. Of the those who attended this class, participants learned the importance of professional dress attire in the workplace. Some participants shared that the class required accessing different web pages, and their lack of experience with computers made the class more challenging.

Theme 3: Computer classes helped novice users learn how to use the computer.

Several participants shared that they did not know how to use a computer prior to attending classes at the center, e.g., “I’ve never had an opportunity to use the computer before in my life...I’m learning little by little, and the center has helped with that.” Participants reported learning new concepts, such as virus protection, computer security, and monitoring children’s devices through parental controls. Basic concepts, such as typing and Microsoft Word, were also taught in classes offered at the center.

Suggestions for future technology skills included how to make posters or advertising media. One participant requested a “Technology Skills 2.0” course, going beyond the basics to more advanced skills. Participants requested more training with scanning, sharing photos, and apps specific to their children’s school, e.g., Dojo, an app used by teachers to monitor student behavior, and Infinite Campus, a portal with students’ grades accessible for parents.

One emerging topic was the concept that the ability to take a laptop home from the center is connected to attendance in classes. There were many participants who were not aware of the attendance requirement and were uncertain about why they did not get a device to take home.

Theme 4: The companionship of the Educational Navigators continues to be a strength of the program.

Among the positive character traits used to describe the educational navigator, the term “friend” was most consistently used. Educational Navigators were also described as attentive, helpful, professional, and respectful. Participants see the Educational Navigator as a valuable resource to help them with concepts varying from scheduling doctor visits to guidance with parenting skills.

One participant explained she has had several Educational Navigators, and all have been excellent. She further shared how they have helped her with mental health, finding resources, providing guidance, and an ear to listen. Participants observed turnover amongst the Educational Navigator team. Many noticed the frequent changes in assignments and described frustration in starting to become familiar with an individual, and then the individual would leave.

Suggestions for the Educational Navigator component include having afternoon visits so that spouses can join the visit. Another participant requested more focus on older children, e.g., “I would like to see more activities that involve both of my children, not just my youngest child.” Participants also prefer home visits to be scheduled in advance rather than being set up on short notice.

“She makes me feel comfortable and the one thing I like is that she observes my child. She would take brochures and explain information about my child’s needs. Any doubts or questions, the navigator would look for information and would help.”

Theme 5: Participants continue to report an increase in confidence in communicating with their child’s school because of ELL classes.

Better communication with teachers and the ability to call the school to report absences were a few of the improvements in communication noted by participants. *“I can understand better when they send home information about what is going on at my child’s school.” “I was very scared to talk to people who only spoke English. Not only in the schools but in the clinics or hospitals, too. Before, I needed a translator, but now I feel more comfortable...” “My children said, ‘Wow, Mom! You don’t need a translator anymore!’”*

Theme 6: Parents reported a high level of satisfaction with skills taught in the early childhood center.

Across focus groups, parents were happy with the instruction provided to their children in the early childhood center. Children are taught school readiness skills, such as letters, numbers, color recognition, and fine motor skills. The early childhood center also helps with behaviors and socialization, e.g., “My eight-month-old did not want to stay with the childcare. Three days a week, she would cry. Teachers encouraged me to continue coming. Now my daughter is almost two, and she walks right in! Very shocking.” Another parent shared, “Prior to the center, my son did not speak. Six months ago, we started attending the center, and in two weeks, he turned into a parrot! He speaks clearly now.”

Suggestions for the center include more supervision with increased teaching staff. Parents would also like more staff supervision during outdoor play. Suggested new skills for the center include teaching music, cooking, and crafting.

The final focus group question centered on the overall well-being of the participants since the pandemic. Some participants reported financial stress due to inflation, but they stated the diapers donated by the Learning Community have helped a great deal. The overall level of stress has improved because of the ability to leave the house. Overall, the increase in socialization has led to decreased stress.

LCCSO STAFF FOCUS GROUPS OUTCOMES

In August of 2023, the Munroe-Meyer evaluation team conducted a focus group assessment with staff at Learning Community Center South. Staff were comprised of ELL teachers, Educational Navigators, childcare professionals, and front desk staff. Staff participated in focus groups to discover their perceptions about the successes and challenges within the program. Two in-person focus groups were conducted, one in Spanish and one in English, with a total of 12 participants.

Key results and findings

Families are the focus of Learning Community South. Participants in both focus groups described the program as community and family-oriented, e.g., “We all have a similar goal of wanting to help families.” One participant shared that the program meets and addresses family needs. Several staff noted lots of support between staff and families.

Leadership’s openness to new programs and partnerships was also appreciated. Additionally, the center was described as a “good work environment” and a “united and helpful team.”

When asked to share challenges in their role at Learning Community Center South, several staff mentioned the lack of physical building space. This sentiment was supported by staff noting the crowded childcare classrooms.

This evaluation period presented more challenges detailed by the Learning Community Center staff. Staff reported feeling tired and overwhelmed. Several staff reported that understaffing has resulted in a higher caseload for Educational Navigators. Educational Navigators reported feeling over capacity and stressed and are often told they need to increase numbers when there are not sufficient staff available to meet the needs of additional families.

Staff expressed a desire to take part in the decision-making process. Communication is present, but staff do not feel encouraged to make suggestions or share their ideas with lead staff.

Suggestions included having a child psychologist to help early childhood teachers support children with undiagnosed behaviors in the classroom. Classroom educators for both adults and young children would like more time for lesson planning. The ability to work from home in the summer was also requested.

When asked to describe the level of support regarding training, resources, and team meetings, staff appreciated regular check-ins with the administration. They also felt supported by attending monthly meetings and various trainings that have been offered.

Staff were asked to identify the most beneficial changes within their department in the past year. Benefits included making diaper donations a long-term monthly program, implementing a therapy program at the center, and updating information for orientation.

Successes from the past year include adding a Community Navigator, e.g., “Adding new navigator roles has been very beneficial. They can focus on helping families outside of the program.”

Additional successes include creating a system to collect student attendance data, as well as offering parenting and workforce classes. Through the workforce classes, parents are learning the needed skills to acquire a job. Educators have also enjoyed seeing the growth in the children that they work with. Continuing to build trust with families also creates strong relationships between staff and families.

Staff were asked to share any participant or child anecdotes from the past year. Participants believe the parenting classes help to give parents a voice. The platform helps build a community to share personal struggles and help one another. Staff also share in the success of adult learners who now have jobs at a bank or as a nurse because of attending the Learning Community program. Further, watching participants graduate with their GED is a great accomplishment to be a part of. One participant who received their GED decided to continue their education and received a scholarship to Metropolitan Community College.

Successes within the childcare were also reported, e.g., “Children who come here the very first day are very scared, and later they don’t want to leave. They learn to sing songs, letters, and colors. It’s very beautiful.” “Returning children who are now starting middle school or high school come back to the center and tell childcare staff, ‘I remember you! You were my teacher!’”

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

SCHOOL & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INCREASED

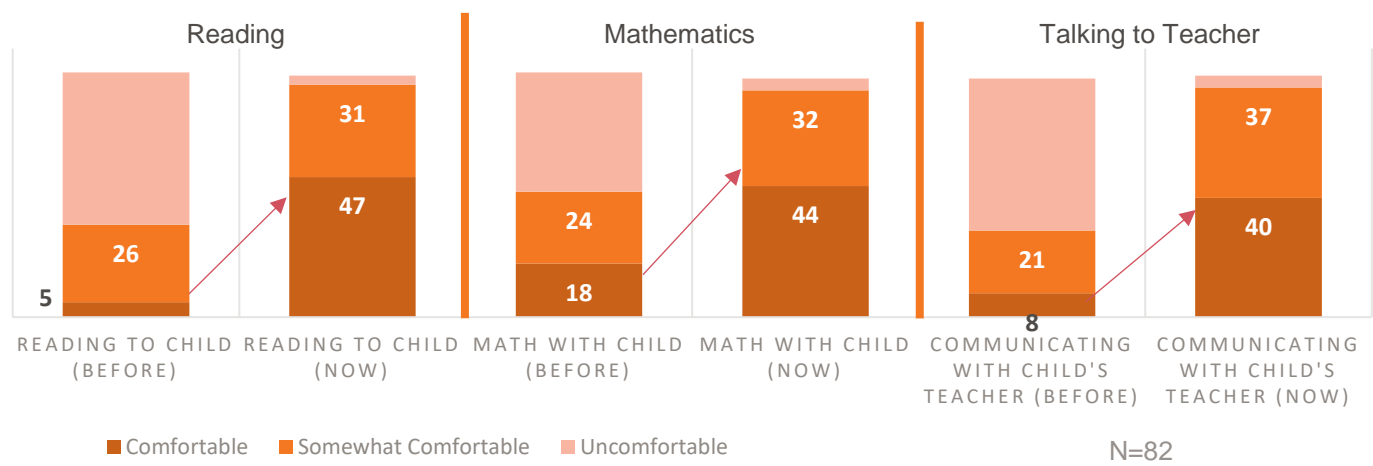
As part of the focus groups, parents reflected on their levels of comfort about engaging with aspects of their children’s education prior to starting the program and how they compared to now after participating in the programming. A total of 82 parents participated in the groups.

The current results are consistent with the past several 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.



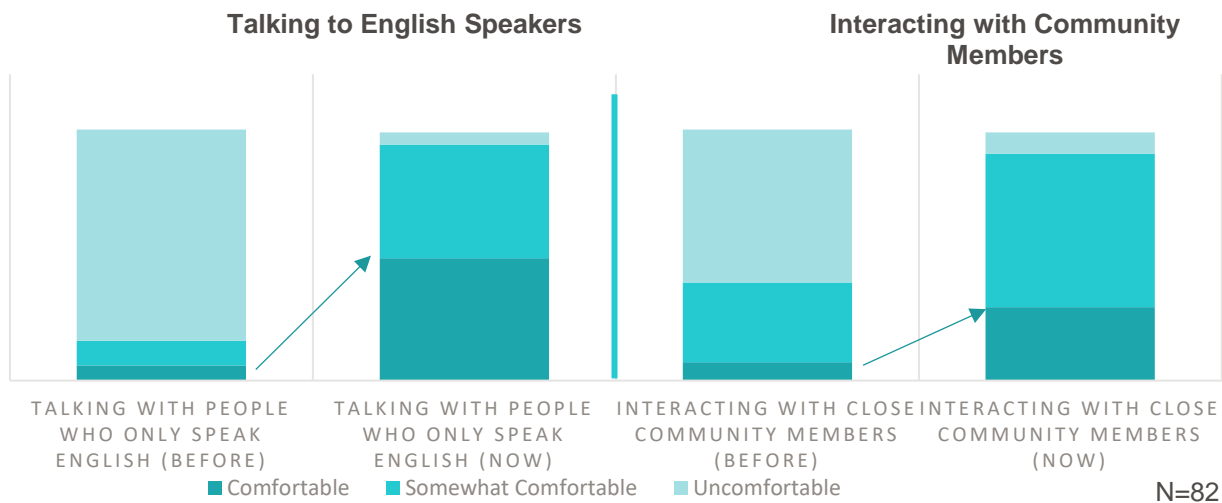
The percent of participants feeling at least somewhat comfortable reading to their child increased from 38% to 95% and from 51% to 93% (+42% increase) for math. Additionally, parents reported feeling more comfortable communicating with their child’s teacher and the school, increasing from 35% to 94% being at least somewhat comfortable.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND CONFIDENCE INCREASED ACROSS ALL SCHOOL AREAS.



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 with over 90% feeling at least somewhat comfortable after being the program for at least six months. 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.

CONFIDENCE IN USING ENGLISH SKILLS INCREASED AFTER ATTENDING PROGRAMMING FOR AT LEAST 6 MONTHS.



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 by Munroe-Meyer Institute's program evaluators.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT RESULTS

FINDINGS. A total of 260 CASAS® assessments were administered in 2022-2023 with 50 participants receiving more than one administration. The assessment is administered after every 60-90 hours of instruction. **Paired samples t-tests revealed significant growth from pre to post test for both Reading, $t(43)=1.803$, $p<.05$, and for Listening, $t(37)=1.76$, $p<.05$.** By the 2nd assessment most participants (75%) were at Level 4 or above for Reading while 12% were at Level 4 or above for Listening.

The levels of the CASAS® indicate increasing level of skills and comfort in being able to listen, understand, and read English. 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 of CASAS® results were provided to the participants and ESL teachers at the centers. Teachers used these scores to group students and 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.

Success Story

Before starting our program, one participant took English as a Second Language classes at Metropolitan Community College, but she had to stop due to a lack of childcare. She learned about our program through another participant. When she arrived at our center, she realized this program was more than English classes and childcare, and she immediately engaged in all the components.

During home visits, the participant learned how to support her daughters' emotions and learned about empathy in children. Her daughters are very kind, and she can tell how they express their sympathy for other people. Despite not knowing English fluently, her daughter tried to help interpret for one of her friends at school.

"I want my daughters to have the opportunity to learn new things since I didn't have the same opportunities. It is also an example for them to see me study and work hard to do the same."

PARENTING PRACTICES

Video observations of parents and their children were submitted 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. As part of the continuous improvement process, educational navigators receive a written report with scores and recommendations to use with families.

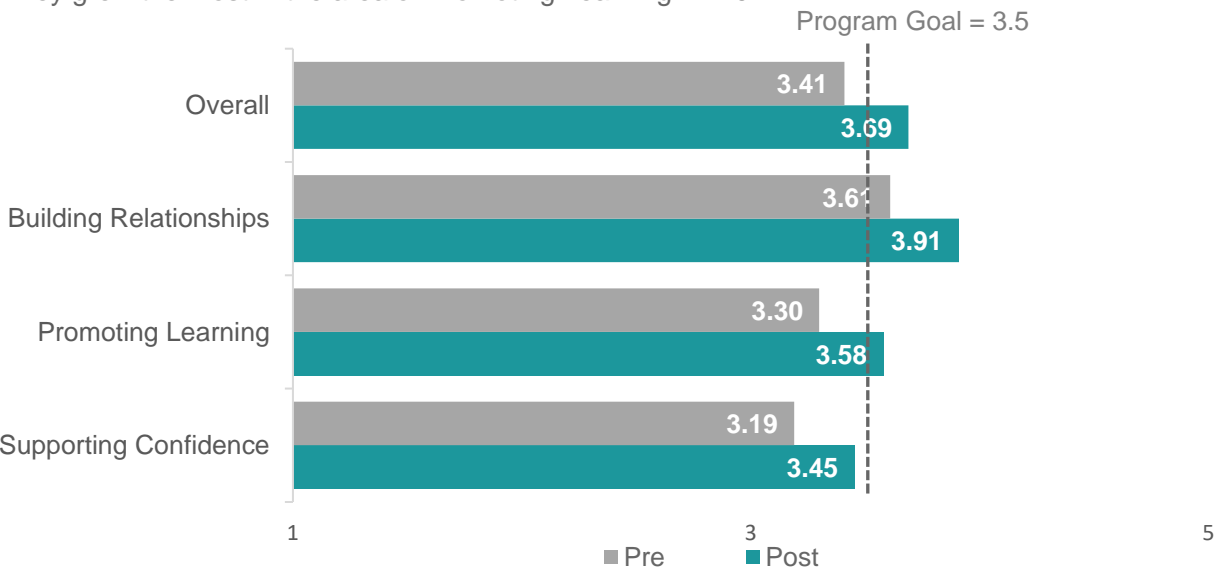
METHOD. The Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (KIPS™) measures parenting behaviors across three areas: Building Relationships, Promoting Learning, and Supporting Confidence, based on a videotape of a parent interacting with his or her child. Scores are based on a 5-point scale with 5 being high-quality. A program goal is scores of 3.5 or above.

FINDINGS. A total of 70 families enrolled in LCCSO had the parent-child interaction assessment at least two points in time with another 120 families having an initial assessment during the same period. By post, most parents met the program goal in three of the four areas.

- 63% met goal Overall
- 73% met goal in Building Relationships
- 57% met goal in Promoting Learning
- 41% met goal in Supporting Confidence

The following graph shows average KIPS results for LCCSO families at pre and post.

ON AVERAGE, LCCSO PARENTS MET THE PROGRAM GOAL IN EVERY AREA EXCEPT SUPPORTING CONFIDENCE.
They grew the most in the area of Promoting Learning. n=70



A paired samples t-test analysis found that parents’ skills increased significantly over time across all subscales and overall.

Overall: [t(69)= -3.339; $p<.001$, $d=0.6845$] with the effect size suggesting medium meaningful change.

Building Relationships: [t(69)= -2.721; $p<.01$, $d=0.7906$] with the effect size suggesting large meaningful change.

Promoting Learning: [t(69)= -2.970; $p<.01$, $d=0.7780$] with the effect size suggesting large meaningful change.

Supporting Confidence: [t(42)= -2.456; $p<.01$, $d=0.7036$] with the effect size suggesting large meaningful change.

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. National Career Readiness (11)
2. Work Ethics Proficiency (17)
3. North Star Computer Readiness Certifications (161)

Additionally, 37 participants enrolled in two GED cohorts in partnership with Metro Community College. **Of those participants, five earned their GED.** Fifty-six percent in cohort 1 and 52% of cohort two demonstrated measurable skills gains (3-4 grade level increase).

Success Story

A recent success includes one participant’s story, who recently graduated from the GED program and wanted to continue his studies at Metropolitan Community College to pursue an Electrical Apprenticeship. Since May of this year, LCCSO began looking for resources to help him pay for his studies. He was recently awarded the True Potential Scholarship, which will help him pay for his tuition and fees at any community college in Nebraska.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE NAVIGATION SERVICES

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.

Simple referrals:

A participant may seek assistance from a social assistance navigator (SAN) when he or she needs help connecting to another agency or filling out paperwork. Once a referral is received, SAN has 48 hours to attempt contact with the participant and assess the level of support the participant may need. Some participants can navigate community resources once directed to the agency. Other participants may encounter other barriers, such as transportation, a language barrier, or feeling insecure about how to proceed. If other barriers are presented, SAN will assist participants with problem-solving strategies and identify the steps to remove barriers. The goal is to empower participants so that they may feel comfortable addressing similar situations in the future.

Complex Referrals:

A complex referral implies a participant has multiple needs to be addressed, for example: seeking financial assistance for rent, utilities, or medical bills, while also needing support to identify a low-cost behavioral health agency. Once a referral is received, SAN has 24 hours to attempt contact with the participant and assess the level of urgency to address the need. Participants under the complex referral will collaborate with SAN to identify the current support group, what the client has attempted in the past when presented with a similar situation and what services may be available in the community to address their needs. Once the goals are established, the participant is empowered to choose which item he or she may want to address first. A complex referral varies in the length of time it will be open. In the process, SAN provides educational resources such as budgeting information and coping skills the participant can attempt as their situation resolves.

FINDINGS. There were **298 family referrals made to the social assistance navigator**. Of those, 220 were simple referrals, 26 were complex referrals, and 52 were preventive assessments. 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.). **Of the simple referrals, 83% were discharged successfully.**

Complex referrals are those requiring longer engagement, additional support, 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, **38% were able to close their case successfully while 19% were still in progress**, 27% disengaged in services, and 12% declined services. The remaining families (4%) deferred engaging with the navigator.

Based on Social Assistance 2022-2023 Report, **there was a 50% increase in number of successfully discharged simple referrals**. An 18% increase of number of successfully completed goals in complex cases. The SAN team doubled the number of preventative assessments completed. Overall, successfully discharged complex cases showed positive trends towards self-sufficiency in all subsections of the Self-Sufficiency Matrix, including subscales of Education/Vocation, Family, Social Supports, Living Situation, Medical, Behavioral Health, Legal and Safety. Additionally, successfully discharged complex cases showed overall positive trends towards lower total difficulties score and higher pro-social score from the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire. Including, lower overall scores in emotional problems, conduct problems and peer problems. Nine out of 10 successfully discharged complex cases showed decreased stress level upon discharge, 1 reported maintaining the same stress level.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL, EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING AND ACADEMIC SKILLS

METHOD. Families were invited to participate in assessments of their children's executive functioning and academic skills in the spring of 2023. The following tools were used:

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.

ACADEMIC SKILLS

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 3 and 4.

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.

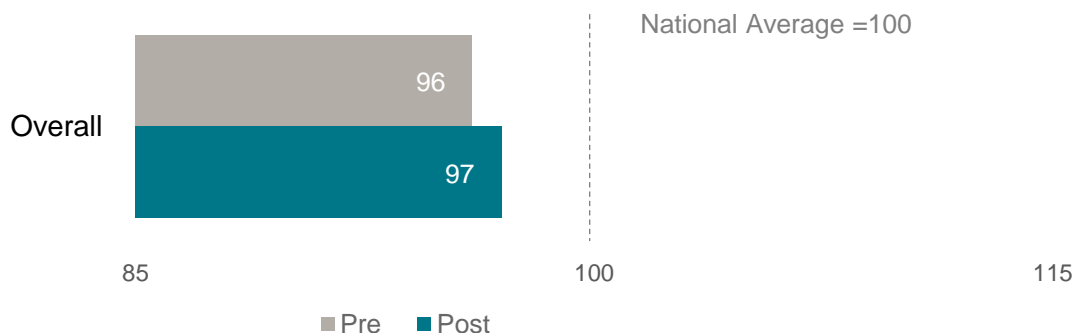
FINDINGS

Executive Functioning

Sixty children were assessed with 48 children having both pre and post assessments. The descriptive analyses found that 96% of the children demonstrated average executive functioning skills. Average scores were 96.36 (pre) and 96.84(post). The national average is a score of 100. A paired samples t-test analysis indicated the growth from pre to post was not significant. However, **96% of the students scored in the average range.**

STUDENTS' EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS DEMONSTRATED SLIGHT IMPROVEMENT FROM PRE TO POST.

96% scored in the average range. N=45



Academic Skills

FOR THIRD YEAR, STUDENTS SCORED THE HIGHEST IN MATH CONCEPTS AND APPLICATIONS.

Two areas are in the average range for the first time in 3 years.. n=26



Twenty-six children were administered math and literacy assessments during the spring of 2023. Scores indicated average skills for one mathematics (SS=91) and one literacy assessment (SS=89). Each of the four subscales average scores were higher than last year as in 2021-2022 none of the subscales were in the average range.

ATTENDANCE OUTCOMES

School Attendance data was obtained from Omaha Public Schools on the school-age students of parents participating in the LCCSO program. Those students attend 25 different schools in the district. For those students with parents attending programming **58% missed fewer than 10 days of school**. For K-5 students (n=114), the average of missed days was slightly higher (M=9.84)

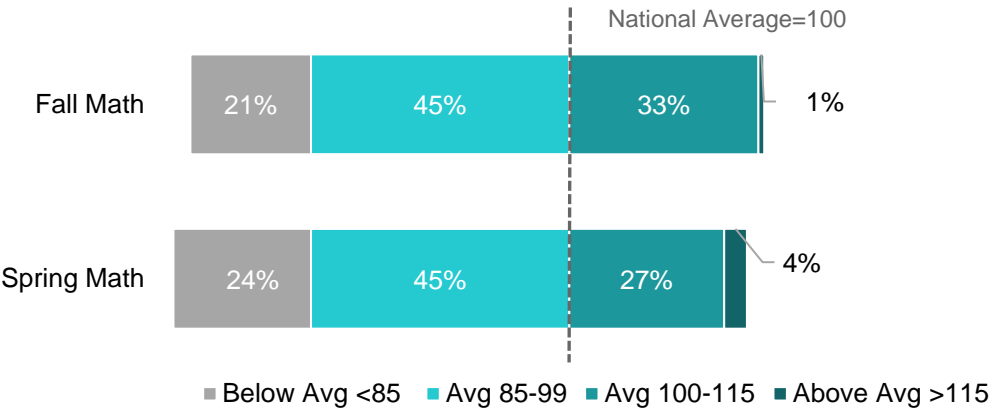
than for students (n=25) in grades 6 and above (M=9.38). The goal for students across the district is to miss fewer than 10 days.

SCHOOL AGE STUDENT OUTCOMES

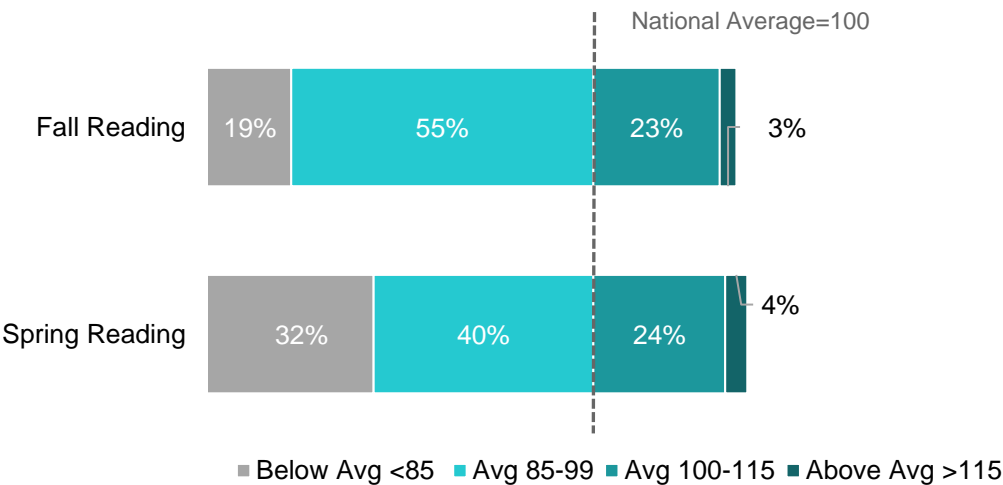
For those students with parents attending the program, academic achievement data were obtained from the district. For purposes of analysis only data for grades K-5 are reported. The sample size for grades 6 and above was too small to be meaningful.

MAP NWEA® data for fall and spring are shown below.

OVER 75% OF STUDENTS SCORED IN THE AVERAGE RANGE IN MATH ACROSS BOTH TIME POINTS.
More students scored above the national average in the spring. n=112

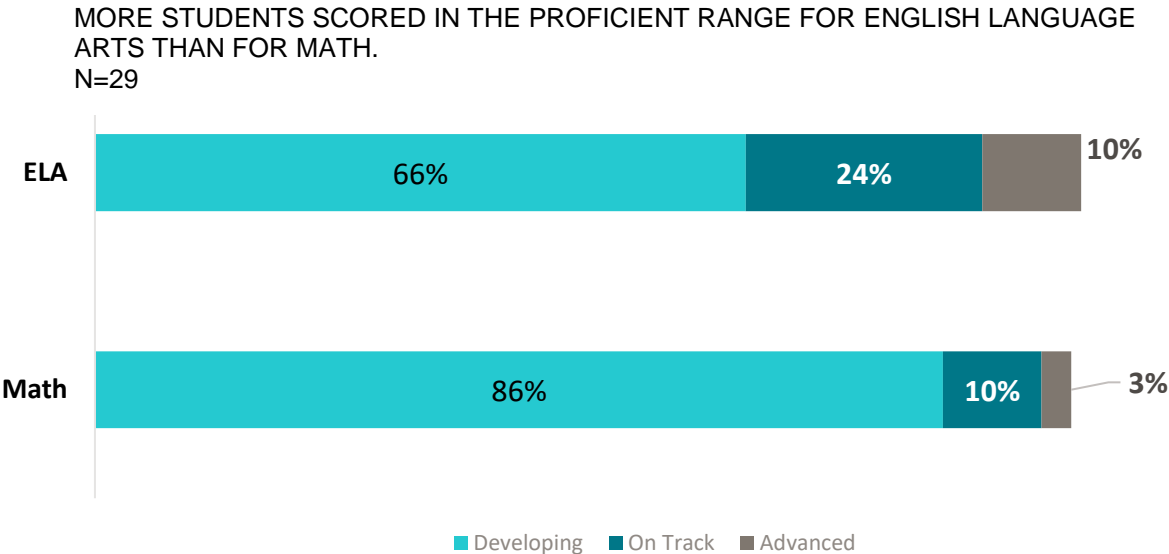


MORE STUDENTS SCORED IN THE AVERAGE RANGE FOR READING IN THE FALL THAN SPRING.
By spring more students scored above the national average. n=112



Students’ scores were stronger in mathematics with 75% of students scoring in the average range at both fall and spring. For reading, more students scored in the below average range in the spring than in the fall. These scores are based on the national averages.

NSCAS proficiency levels were reported for both English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics for 3rd-5th grade students (N=29). Unlike MAP data, more students (34%) scored in the proficient range for ELA than for math (13% proficient). Proficiency rates for Omaha Public Schools for grades 3-5 are slightly higher ranging from 37%-42% proficient for ELA and from 33-39% for mathematics. For English Learner, 3rd-5th grade students, proficiency rates ranged from 25-30% for mathematics and 26-32% for ELA. **Students with parents in the program had higher rates of proficiency in ELA and lower rates in math when compared to district data.**



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. Student data on from the executive function and achievement assessments were shared both with program staff and with families. Focus group reports were shared with the management team to provide additional feedback from both participants and staff. These data aid in program improvements and decisions.

SUMMARY

The LCCSO program has demonstrated a pattern of improved participant and child level outcomes highlighting the impact of a 2GEN approach.

School District Initiatives



District Initiatives

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 the five participating 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 Diane Sweeney's and Jim Knight's coaching frameworks 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 leading building professional learning, observations, modeling, individual student problem solving, data analysis and utilization, teacher feedback, and guidance with new curriculum. Instructional Coaches served 118 teachers and approximately 1,919 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 2022-2023, 28 teachers and 1700 students were part of the coaching model.

MILLARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS. Millard Public Schools implemented instructional coaching at two buildings during 2022-2023. Two instructional coaches served 43 teachers and 838 students across two elementary buildings.

OMAHA PUBLIC SCHOOLS. Instructional literacy coaches focused on literacy instruction, foundational skills, comprehension, and vocabulary in kindergarten through sixth grade classrooms. Coaches received professional development every month on best instructional practices for teaching English Language Arts. Approximately 70 teachers and 1,500 students were impacted during the school year.

WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS. Cognitive coaching served as the base for the Instructional Coaching provided to four 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. Seventy-five classroom teachers (46 non-tenured) and 1,350 students were impacted by Instructional Coaching.

PARTICIPANTS

In 2022-2023, 334 teachers and 7,307 students were impacted by Learning Community funded Instructional Coaches. All 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 and instructional coach surveys 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, not by individual district.

FINDINGS

TEACHER SURVEY

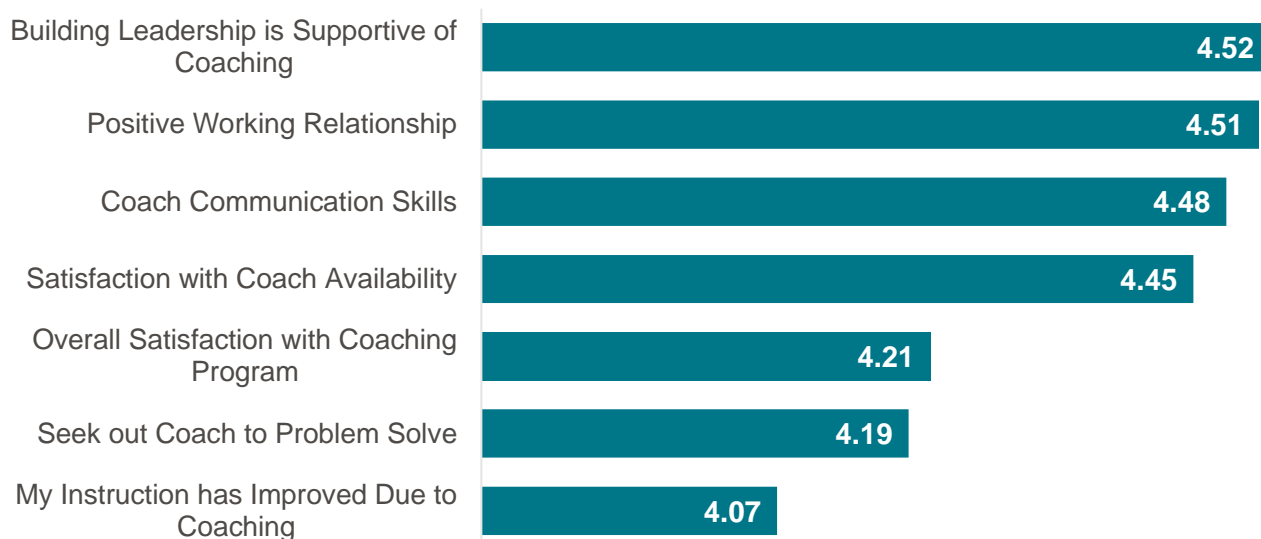
A total of 197 teachers across five districts completed the teacher survey. Most teachers completing the survey had at least 10 years of experience (52%) compared to 29% with 4-10 years of teaching experience and 19% in their first three years of teaching. When asked about the frequency of coaching support, 65% of teachers reported working with a coach at least twice per month.

Teachers rated survey 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. **Overall, 82% of teachers were satisfied with the coaching received from their district's instructional coaches.**



COACHING WAS SUPPORTED BY DISTRICTS AND BUILDING LEADERSHIP.

82% of teachers were satisfied with the coaching program at their site. n=197



Teachers were asked to rate the utility of each coaching strategy.

Coaching Strategy	Not at all useful	Slightly useful	Moderately useful	Very useful	Extremely useful
Coaching/Feedback	6.74%	6.74%	10.67%	21.91%	53.93%
Co-Teaching	19.46%	7.38%	6.71%	22.15%	44.30%
Data Analysis	4.60%	7.47%	13.22%	22.99%	51.72%
Lesson Planning	12.20%	6.71%	13.41%	18.90%	48.78%
Modeling Lesson and/or Strategies	13.61%	4.14%	11.24%	24.26%	46.75%
Observations (Live or Videotaped)	18.88%	6.99%	10.49%	17.48%	46.15%
Professional Development	6.38%	6.38%	12.23%	26.60%	48.40%
Small Group/Differentiated Instruction	9.64%	4.22%	12.05%	19.28%	54.82%

Successes

Teachers felt valued and supported by their coaches. Relationships were key in teachers working with and feeling supported by their coach. Several new teachers commented on how imperative it was to have the guidance and expertise of the coach.

“She has gone above and beyond to help me in any way I've needed help and with any questions I've had. If she did not know the answer off the top of her head, she did her research and found the answer for me.”

“As a 1st year teacher, I don't think I would have been nearly as successful if it was not for the coach.”

Coaches were viewed as a resource and a collaborative partner in helping to improve instructional practices and student achievement.

“We worked together to analyze student data so that we can be very purposeful in our planning and determine if our teaching strategies have been successful. According to our data, our efforts have been successful and student engagement and learning has increased. We have seen reading and math scores improve as a result of our efforts.”

“She is always willing to help me problem-solve, she eagerly worked through the Wilson Reading System, and she supported me through my observation cycle so I could be the strongest teacher possible.”

Teachers viewed coaches as passionate about instruction and students. The teachers found the coaches to be a support system not only for themselves but for the students. They felt their time and interactions were valued by the coach and coaches were as invested in student success as they were. Having a strong teacher-coach relationship allowed them to problem-solve and view student challenges in a positive, collaborative manner.

“Often, the solution involves the coach actually providing a direct intervention which she conducts with professionalism and kindness. The students LOVE their time with her, and the teachers appreciate her desire to strengthen our school.”

“Having the ability to work with, co-teach, and brainstorm with our coach has been a major benefit to staff and students. I'd feel lost without her.”

Challenges

Teachers shared frustrations with the numbers of students in their classrooms and the need for interventionists to work directly with students. Some felt coaches would be better utilized in the capacity of direct support to students than as a coach. Others voiced concerns that the coach was often a substitute administrator and therefore not available as a coach or interventionist.

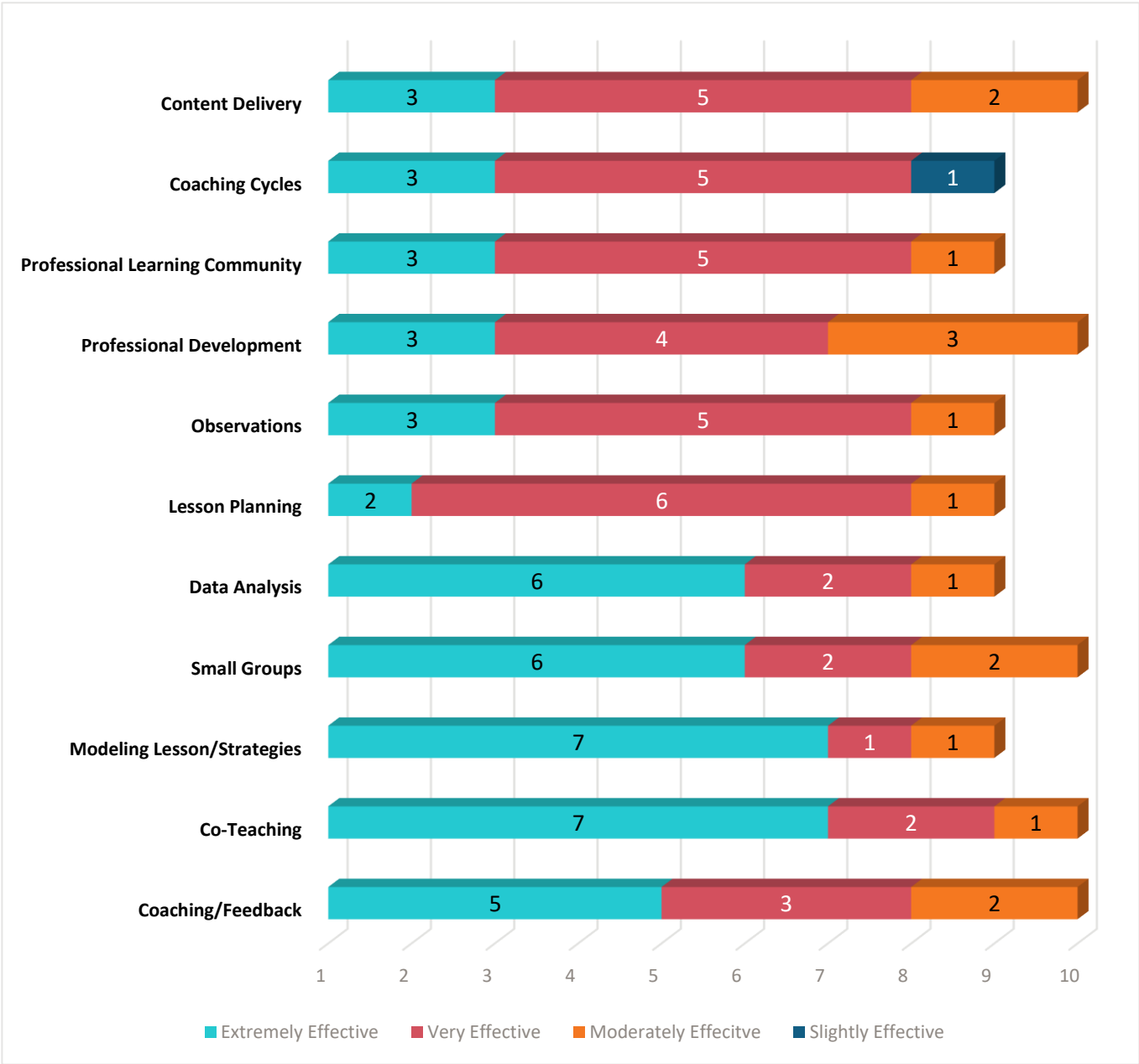
“We need more people working with kids to help them get caught up on skills and learn to read with comprehension. Teachers can only do so much in a day. We need Interventionists for kids!”

“Would like to see her be utilized more as a coach than as an additional admin.”

“When we have 28 kids in a classroom with such wide abilities, the best use of this position and the money spent for it, would be actually working with the students to help with the academic gaps we see.”

Instructional Coach Feedback

Ten coaches representing four districts provided feedback through an online survey. Of the 10 coaches, 9 of them had less than 5 years of experience as a coach and 4 provided supports to more than 20 teachers in a year. Coaches were asked about the effectiveness of several coaching activities. Of the activities, all but one activity (coaching cycles) were rated to be at least moderately effective.



Successes

Coaches were asked to share 2-3 success of their coaching year. Many highlighted the relationships built with teachers as being not only a success of the year but also key to providing effective coaching. Others highlighted working with teacher on implementation of new curricula or pilot materials as a success. Finally, several highlighted the use of data in a collaborative manner with the teachers as a success of the year.

Success Story

“I was able to help three primary educators restructure how they taught small group reading. Together, we utilized multiple coaching strategies to improve the teachers' instructions. I modeled a small group lesson using the LETRs lesson plan template. Then, we lesson-planned together, took a video of the teacher teaching, gathered baseline data, and considered how we could change instruction. Throughout the next two months, we worked together to alter instruction and differentiate for students' needs. Throughout the process, we watched students grow exponentially and reflected on how they could continue to grow their practice. It was exciting to see the educators' and students' growth throughout the process.”

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Nebraska State Assessment Scores are reported by districts participating in the Instructional Coaching program. District averages are the average proficiency rates by grade level across each building in a district receiving instructional coaching. While some schools serve 6th grade not all do, therefore, proficiency rates are reported for 3rd-5th grades only. Free/Reduced price averages are included as the schools with instructional coaching ranged from 44-94% students participating in free/reduced price meals.

District NSCAS scores (3rd – 5th grades)

NSCAS English Language Arts Percent Proficient

Grade 3	2021-2022	2022-2023
All Nebraska Students	50%	62%
Free/Reduced Lunch	33%	48%
District A (52% FRL)	54%	66%
District B (77% FRL)	32%	67%
District C (77% FRL)	41%	56%
District D (59% FRL)	38%	53%
District E (58% FRL)	32%	51%
Grade 4	2021-2022	2022-2023
All Nebraska Students	53%	55%
Free/Reduced Lunch	35%	40%

District A	53%	65%
District B	42%	51%
District C	45%	48%
District D	42%	41%
District E	42%	45%

Grade 5	2021-2022	2022-2023
All Nebraska Students	47%	57%
Free/Reduced Lunch	31%	41%
District A	57%	58%
District B	35%	53%
District C	40%	37%
District D	37%	53%
District E	37%	45%

NSCAS Mathematics Percent Proficient

Grade 3	2021-2022	2022-2023
All Nebraska Students	50%	58%
Free/Reduced Lunch	32%	42%
District A	49%	60%
District B	21%	49%
District C	28%	50%
District D	38%	53%
District E	32%	54%

Grade 4	2021-2022	2022-2023
All Nebraska Students	46%	58%
Free/Reduced Lunch	28%	42%
District A	41%	61%
District B	24%	48%
District C	25%	41%
District D	26%	45%
District E	41%	56%

Grade 5	2021-2022	2022-2023
All Nebraska Students	49%	65%
Free/Reduced Lunch	31%	49%
District A	53%	64%
District B	29%	42%

District C	29%	39%
District D	37%	54%
District E	49%	65%

The statewide assessment scores increased across both English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics for all but two grade levels in two different districts. Students scored indicate higher rates of proficiency than the average proficiency for the FRL state average and are close to the overall state averages.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Instructional Coaches are instrumental in building teacher capacity and supporting teacher instructional growth. To examine more direct effects of coaching, a dosage analysis with ongoing student assessments could be conducted. The statewide assessment is broad and may not capture both the adjustments and growth that occur during a school year.



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 district assessments. Summer programming is designed to prevent learning loss so that students are better prepared for academic success as they enter the next school year. Extended learning programs are funded in three districts and one community agency.

DC WEST COMMUNITY SCHOOLS. The summer extended learning program consisted of 12 days, 3 hours each day. Students scoring below the 25th percentile are provided targeted instruction in the areas of ELA and mathematics. Weekly communication and resources are shared with families 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 school year before and after school program were served at Field Club elementary. Completely KIDS focuses on building the social-emotional and academic skills of the students in our programs. Through hands-on project-based learning curriculum, the students learn while doing and stay engaged in the activities. In 2022, 101 students were served in the before school program and 153 after school, 91% were eligible for free or reduced lunch.

ELKHORN PUBLIC SCHOOLS. Jump Start to Reading provided students at-risk for reading failure 12 days of intense reading intervention. The goal of the program is to reduce summer reading loss. The program pulled from multiple curricula (Wonderworks, SRA, CLOSE readers/text-dependent analysis, 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 43 students participated with 19% qualifying for free reduced lunch. Jump Start to Reading serves students who have completed Kindergarten, First, and Second grades.

SPRINGFIELD-PLATTEVIEW COMMUNITY SCHOOLS. This school year the students verified for this program received 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. All students who need support in all grade levels are considered, but there is a focus on students in the intermediate grade range. This year 15 participants across 2 elementary buildings participated in the intervention.

PARTICIPANTS

Two hundred and three students in Grades K-5 were served through extended learning programming across four sites.

OUTCOMES

PARENT SATISFACTION

METHOD. Sixty-seven parents completed the program satisfaction 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 ($M=4.62$) with the extended learning programs. Parents rated staff as being excellent ($M=4.62$), believed their child would be more successful the following year in school, and felt their child enjoyed the program.

EXTENDED LEARNING PROGRAMS MET EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS.

90% of parents feel their child will be more successful in school.



N=67

Parents were asked to provide one to two examples of things the program could better and 1-2 examples of positives about the programming.

Multiple parents mentioned overall satisfaction with the program. Parents loved the smaller student-teacher ratios, small group instruction and the improvement made by their children. Many parents mentioned they felt their child would be more confident for the next school year. A few improvements were noted by parents including more communication on student progress and different hours.

“AWESOME program. The student-teacher ratios are amazing. My kids really grew as readers. I wish the program was longer! They loved it more than regular summer school.”

“Loved the small groups instruction. It was very successful as my son is deaf and learns better in smaller groups.”

- Parents of Students

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Student data was submitted by the districts and/or programs. All the districts used MAP data to track student progress.

District A students **on average increased their percentile rank by over 3 points** from an average percentile rank of 41 in the spring of 2023 to an average percentile rank of 44 in the fall of 2023. For reference a percentile rank of 50 is equal to a standard score of 100.

District B had **most students meet their growth goal for language arts (62%)** while 31% met their growth goal in math. At the post test, 74% scored in the average range or above for reading and 75% were at or above the average range in mathematics.

District C had **50% of intervention students meet or exceed the district growth goal for mathematics** with 17% scoring at or above the district achievement goal.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXTENDED LEARNING

Continue to examine the impact of targeted intervention programs at the district level.

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.

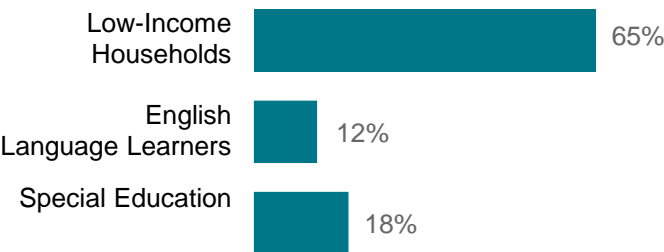
Programming focuses on pre-academic skills, social-emotional-behavioral readiness and orienting students to the processes and procedures of the school. The program includes a strong family engagement component such as home visits. It also utilizes certified teachers for part or all of their staffing.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



DEMOGRAPHICS

In the summer of 2023, Jump Start to Kindergarten was implemented in one district. A total of 89 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.

STUDENTS FROM HIGH RISK POPULATIONS WERE SERVED DURING THE JUMP START PROGRAM.



n=89

Jump Start to Kindergarten served 10 classrooms in 5 schools across the participating district. The program served more females (53%) than males (47%). The majority of children served were five years of age.

SOME RACIALLY AND ETHNICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS WERE SERVED.
There were 21% of students who were Hispanic.



OUTCOMES

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS

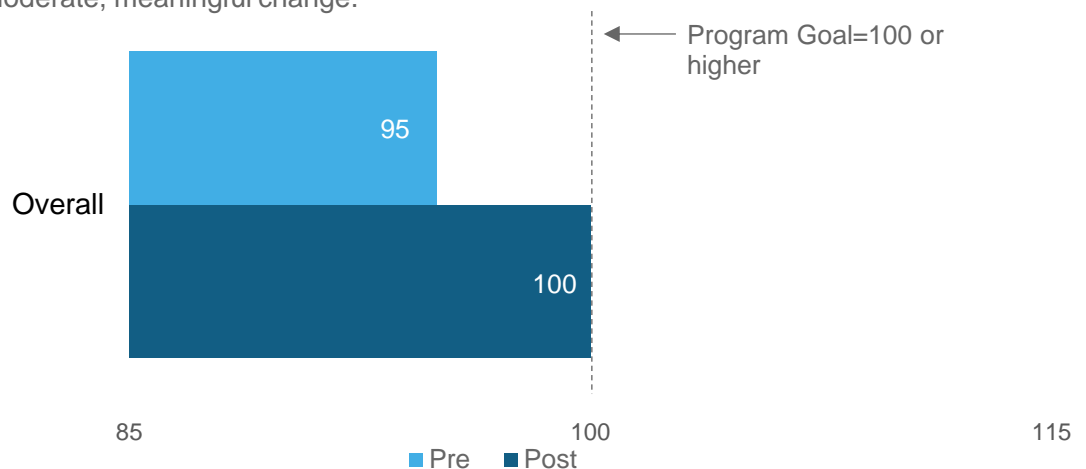
Did the students' executive functioning skills change over time?

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 Function Scale (MEFS), is an online assessment for children two and older.

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING ASSESSMENT RESULTS

For the 2023 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 [$t(68) = -6.368$; $p < .001$, $d = 0.77$] 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 100, moving them to 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?

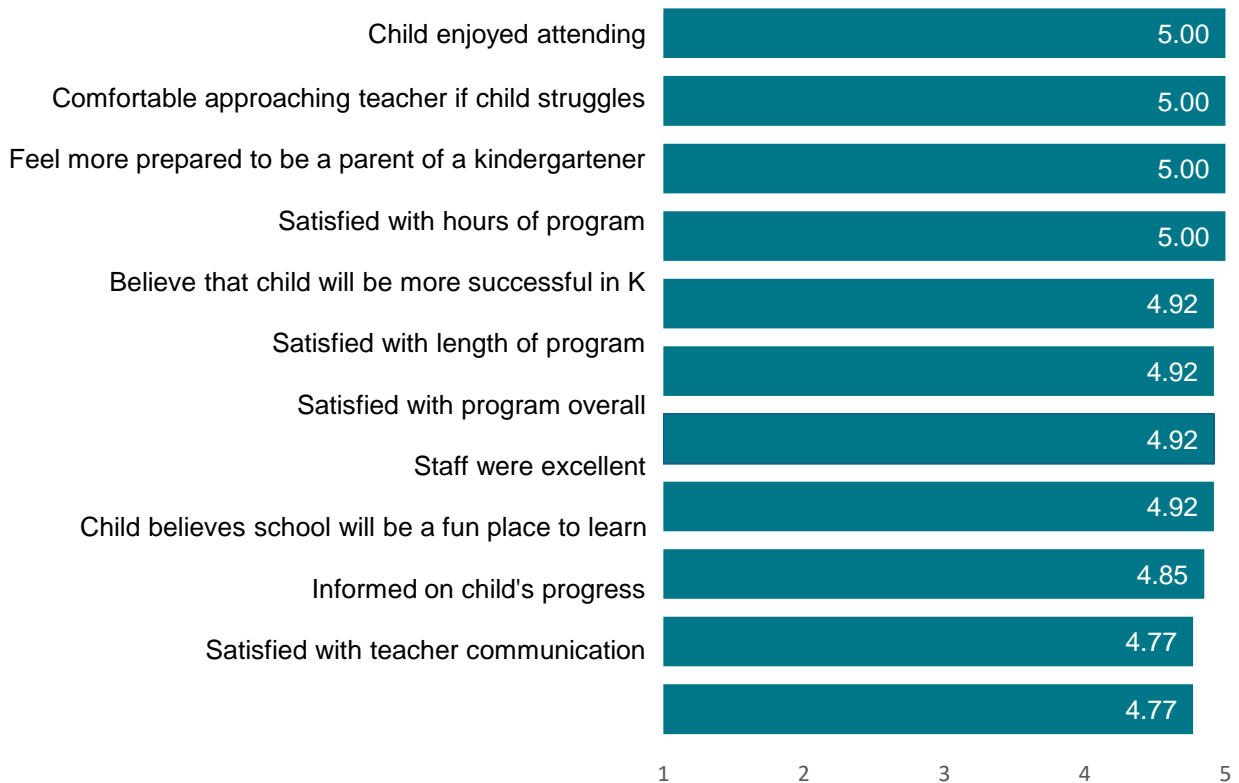
METHOD. Parents provided feedback on the value or usefulness of the Jump Start to Kindergarten Program. Using a collaborative process across all districts and agencies, a master parent survey was developed. Districts or agencies were then able to choose which sections they would use for their program. Parent survey data was received from the participating district. Parent survey results are displayed in the following tables (N=13).

FAMILY SATISFACTION RESULTS

Families reported high overall satisfaction in all areas, including believing that the staff were excellent, the approachability of teachers, and teacher communication. They also reported high levels of satisfaction on such items as their child enjoyed attending the program, parent felt comfortable approaching teacher if child struggles, parent felt more prepared to be a parent of a kindergartener and being satisfied with hours of the program (5.00). The lowest level of satisfaction was for parents feeling informed about child’s progress and satisfied with teacher communication (4.77).



PARENTS REPORTED HIGH LEVELS OF SATISFACTION IN ALL AREAS.



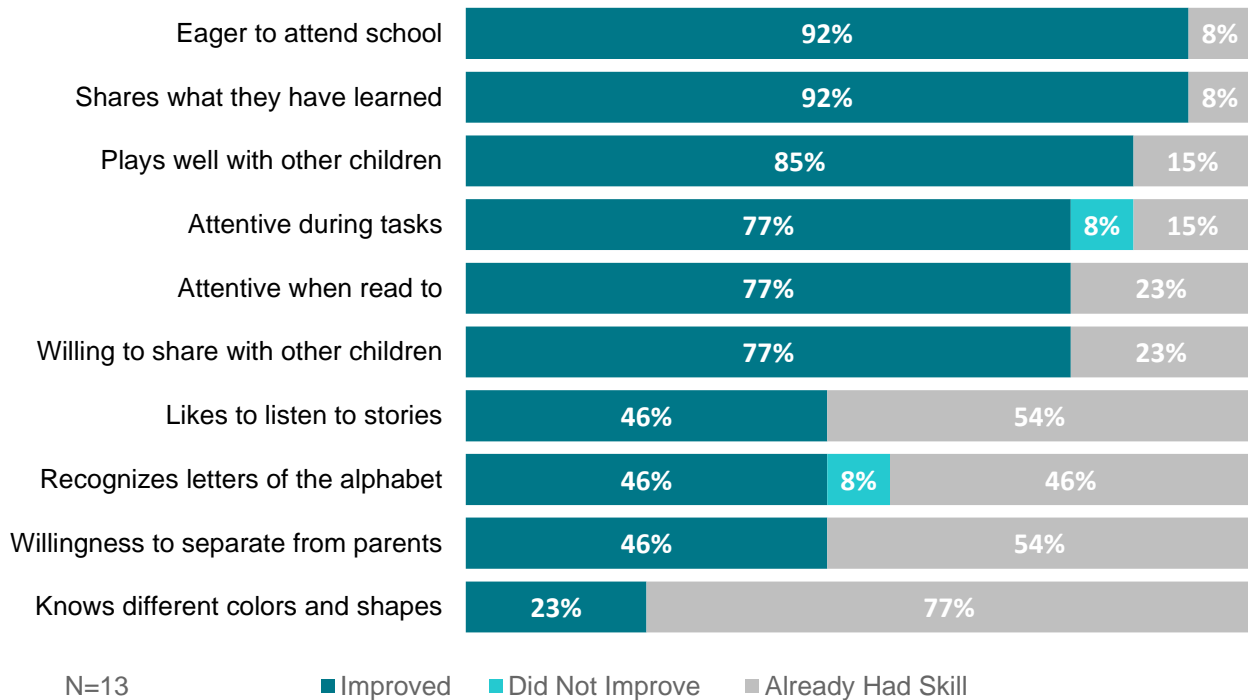
N=13

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: eagerness to attend school, sharing what they learned, plays well with other children, attentiveness during tasks, attentive when read to, and willingness to share with other children. Some areas where the majority of students already possessed the skills included: knows different colors and shapes, likes to listen to stories, and willingness to separate from parents. Attentiveness during tasks and recognizes letters of the alphabet “did not improve” (8%).

PARENTS CONSISTENTLY REPORTED THAT THEIR CHILDREN WERE EAGER TO ATTEND SCHOOL BY THE COMPLETION OF THE JUMP START PROGRAM.



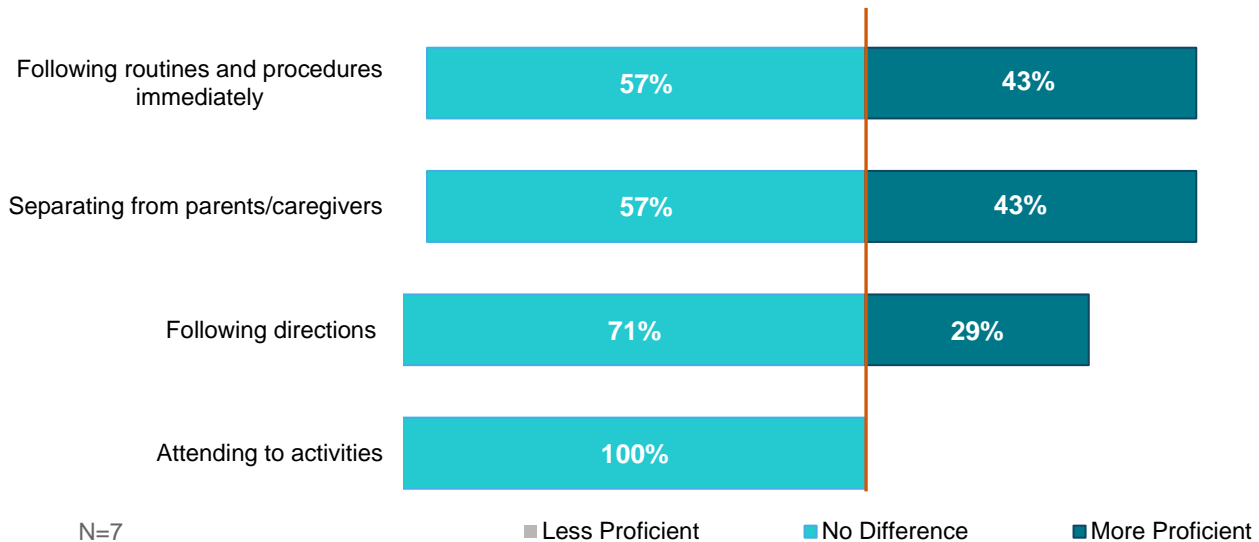
What did teachers report about students who attended the Jump Start to Kindergarten Programs?

METHOD. In the fall of 2023, all kindergarten teachers who had 2023 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 seven teachers that were surveyed, four 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. No teachers reported that students that attended the program were less proficient than their peers. Attending to activities had the lowest percent of more proficient (0%).

NEARLY HALF (43%) OF THE 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 AND SEPARATING FROM PARENTS/CAREGIVERS.



LEARNING COMMUNITY ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY

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

INTENSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

- 322 Pre-K students were enrolled across 6 sites.
- Majority represent diverse racial and ethnic populations.
- 38% were identified for special education services.
n=77
- Classroom quality was above the thresholds of quality and in the top 10% of Head Start programs.
- Over half of the students scored at the national average or above for social-emotional skills by spring.
- Girls demonstrated stronger social-emotional skills than boys.
- Significant improvements from fall to spring occurred for vocabulary, school readiness, and social-emotional skills.

PARENT UNIVERSITY

- 99 families were enrolled with majority representing low income (95% qualify for FRL) & culturally diverse populations with over half indicating a language other than English as their primary/first language.
- Enrolled parents had 259 children of which 135 were within the targeted age range.
- 54% of parents completed high school and 64% of families received additional government assistance.
- Parents participated in 21 different course/activities which focused on parenting, school success, leadership, and life skills with a 97% completion rate.
- Parents entered the program with several strengths.
- 64% of parents met the goal for Building Relationships.
- Participants noted multiple benefits to Parent University participation including improved English, access to necessary resources and increased social capital.
- Approximately half of the children of parents enrolled demonstrated language skills that meet or exceed the national average.
- Majority of children were in the average range across all social-emotional areas with strengths found in initiative.

LEARNING COMMUNITY CENTER OF SOUTH OMAHA: FAMILY LEARNING

FAMILY LEARNING

- 299 parents were enrolled.
- 494 0-6 years old children; 767 total children.
- 93% reported qualifying for FRL, 76% earning less than \$50,000 annually.
- 98 families participated in graduation with 32 participants graduating from ESL and 7 from GED.
- Workforce Development participants earned 189 certificates.
- Over 50% of participants made measurable GED gains.
- 37 participants were enrolled in GED classes.
- Participants demonstrated statistically significant gains in English reading and listening skills.

PARENTING OUTCOMES

- Most parents met the program goals in 3 out of 4 areas on the parenting measure with a strength noted in Building Relationships.
- Parent skills improved significantly over time.
- Parents reported increased levels of school and community engagement.
- For parents working with the social assistance navigator, 220 were simple referrals, 26 were complex and 52 were preventative assessments.
- 38% of parents with complex cases and 83% with simple referrals were able to close their cases with the social assistance navigator.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

- K-5 students were absent from school on average fewer than 10 days (M=9.84).
- Two areas on the Bateria were in the average range for the 1st time.
- 96% of students scored in the average range for executive functioning.
- Over 75% of students scored in the average range on NWEA-MAP™ mathematics assessment.
- Students with parents in the program had higher rates of proficiency in ELA when compared to district data.

SCHOOL DISTRICT INITIATIVES

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING

- Approximately 334 teachers, and 7307 students were served across 5 districts.
- 52% of teachers had at least 10 years of experience; 19% were in their first 3 years.
- 82% of teachers were satisfied with the coaching received.
- Teachers reported that their instruction improved due to coaching.
- Instructional coaches were viewed as passionate about the success of both teachers and students.

JUMP START

- 89 kindergarten eligible students enrolled in Jump Start across one district.
- 65% represented low-income households and 12% were ELL.
- Parents (100%) were satisfied with the program and saw the most improvement in their child's eagerness to attend school.
- Students' 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

- 203 students were enrolled in Extended Learning.
- 3 districts and 1 community agency participated.
- Parents were highly satisfied with the program.
- Overall satisfaction with the program was 4.62 on a 5-point scale.
- District data from all three districts indicated effectiveness of the interventions.
- Parents believed the program was academic benefit to their students.

References & Appendix



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

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