

# Educare of Omaha, Inc.

2020 - 2021 Evaluation Report | February 2022



**Collaborate. Evaluate. Improve.**

Interdisciplinary Center for Program Evaluation

# EDUCARE of OMAHA, Inc.

## 2020-2021 Annual Report

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## ABOUT EDUCARE of OMAHA, INC.

Educare of Omaha, Inc. is comprised of the two Educare Omaha sites (Kellom and Indian Hill) and the Omaha Early Learning Centers (Gateway, Kennedy, and Skinner) and serves the early childhood population in North and South Omaha. While similar, the supports and services provided at OELCs are not identical to those provided at the Educare sites and are explained below. The evaluation report provides a comprehensive and comparative look at the evaluation results across all five sites making up Educare of Omaha, Inc.

## ABOUT EDUCARE OMAHA

Educare Omaha was formed in 2002 as a private, non-profit collaborative effort of the Buffett Early Childhood Fund, Omaha Public Schools, and the local Head Start grantee. Educare Omaha has two sites, buildings adjacent to Kellom Elementary in North Omaha and Indian Hill Elementary in South Omaha.

In order to provide a high-quality early childhood education and care program, Educare braids funds from numerous sources including but not limited to:

- Office of Head Start
- Nebraska Department of Education (including the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program)
- Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Child Care Development Block Grant
- Omaha Public Schools (Education, State Aid, general fund)
- Buffett Early Childhood Fund
- Sixpence grant funds
- Parent fees



## THE EDUCARE MODEL

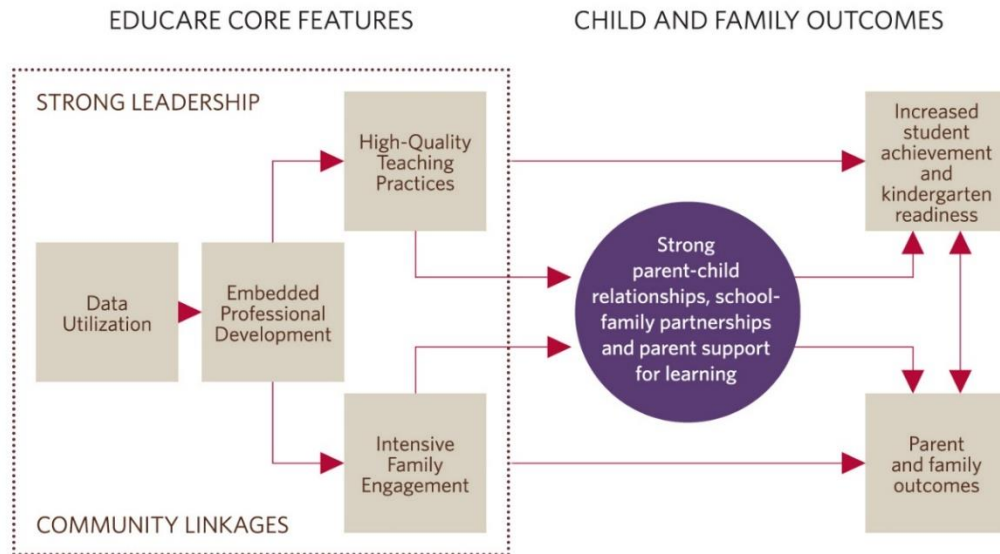
Educare Omaha Indian Hill and Kellom are part of a larger, national network of Educare Schools. The Educare Model is described below; further information is available at [www.educareschools.org](http://www.educareschools.org). The Educare Model's core features include data utilization, embedded professional development, high-quality teaching practices, and intensive family engagement. Through the coordinated implementation of these core features, Educare promotes high-quality early childhood programs that encourage strong family-school partnerships and parental support for children's learning, helping to ensure that children grow up safe, healthy, and eager to learn. In turn, children are better prepared for kindergarten, increasing their chances for long-term academic and life success.

Children and families with multiple risk factors often face unique barriers in developing foundations for academic success. Educare's program model is specifically designed to help these children and their families overcome such barriers. Educare's mission is to ensure that children receive the services they need to arrive at kindergarten ready to learn and participate on par with their more economically advantaged peers.

Educare is:

- a program designed to give children in under-resourced communities an improved chance for success in school and in life by advocating for and providing the highest quality care and education from birth to age five;
- based on research from a variety of relevant disciplines (for example, early childhood development and social work);

- a program that emphasizes social-emotional development in all aspects of its program model through the development of healthy relationships; and
- uses data from the ongoing evaluation to improve their program.



#### Data Utilization

*Data utilization encompasses research-based and data-driven practices.*

#### Embedded Professional Development

*Embedded professional development emphasizes highly qualified staff, intensive staff development, and an interdisciplinary approach that encourages communication and collaboration, and reflective supervision.*

#### High-Quality Teaching Practices

*High-quality teaching practices are integrated into full day, full year care and education for children, small class sizes with high staff-child ratios, and continuity of care to help children develop secure relationships. Moreover, it involves a research-based curriculum with an intentional and specific focus on the development of language and literacy, social-emotional development, early math concepts, problem solving and motor development, as well as using the arts to strengthen and support these skills.*

#### Intensive Family Engagement

*Intensive family engagement supports strong parent-child relationships, family well-being, and ongoing learning and development by providing on-site family support services and emphasizing prenatal and birth-to-five services.*



## Special Initiatives

Educare Indian Hill and Kellom participated in several special initiatives to enhance the services they provided for children and families. These were implemented in partnership with acceleration grants that were funded through the Buffett Early Childhood Fund and other agency partners' initiatives.

**Reflective Practice.** Educare participated in the Mindfulness and Mastery Acceleration grant in partnership with Munroe-Meyer Institute. The Educare leadership staff have participated in training and have received ongoing mentoring and reflective consultation to support their continued use of this relationship-based practice. The early childhood workforce is engaged in work that is both rewarding and challenging, so the purpose of reflective practice is to seek out those internal processes and see how they impact decision making. Reflective practice is a way of studying staff's own experiences to improve the way they work. It helps to provide perspective, increase skills in providing reflective practice, and hopefully prevent burn-out. This guidance comes in the form of one-on-one reflective sessions with a supervisor or consultant who provides support to team members as they maneuver through issues such as trauma, stress, diversity, equity, inclusion, and most recently the COVID-19 pandemic. Having the opportunity to talk through hard conversations in a safe nonjudgmental environment with someone who is there to listen, not fix or change, but instead collaborate solutions and support the integration process is an important piece in this intimate work being done at Educare. This method is increasingly being adopted in child protection and childcare arenas where retention rates are low and work-related stress is high. Reflective practice is an important tool in practice-based professional learning as a method of bringing together formal learning or theory and practice.

**Science.** Educare participated in the third year of the Science Acceleration grant in partnership with the University of Miami. It was supposed to be the final year of this grant but due to COVID-19, was granted an additional year of funding. Training was provided, for Indian Hill Staff in October 2020 and for Kellom staff in January 2021, on an Early Science Framework that focused on integrating science with the classroom activities. The framework supported staff in understanding the foundation of core science ideas: physical science, life science, earth and space science and engineering, technology, and the application of science. They were provided tools that helped them use interactional strategies to help children expand their scientific knowledge. Both sites also participated in periodic science committee meetings and check-in calls.

**Mindfulness and Mastery.** The 2020-2021 year was the third year of the Mindfulness and Mastery Acceleration grant. It was supposed to be the final year of this grant but due to COVID-19, was granted an additional year of funding. In the third year, Indian Hill and Kellom have both continued to implement the Conscious Discipline Model. All staff received additional training from Conscious Discipline certified trainers and utilized the online module trainings. Conscious Discipline is an evidence-based, trauma-informed, social-emotional learning program. The goal of Conscious Discipline is to aid in classroom relationship building and promote social-emotional skills. All teaching staff continued to use the mindfulness strategies learned from the previous year, and during the site closures utilized parent take home bag to help parents learn and use the strategies at home as well. The sites also are involved in combining the efforts of Conscious Discipline with the Touchpoints framework.

**Family Engagement Breakthrough Initiative.** The Family Engagement Breakthrough Initiative articulates a core set of evidence-based family engagement practices that were implemented within an embedded professional development coaching model. The Family Engagement Breakthrough Initiative creates an opportunity for Educare leaders, program staff, researchers, and other national thought leaders to identify, implement and assess the impact of family engagement practices and coaching model with diverse families in different contexts and across a variety of organizational, program, and community settings.

**ReadyRosie.** ReadyRosie is an evidence-informed and research-based family engagement and early learning resource. ReadyRosie builds parents capacity to support their children's learning through viewing modeled videos. Teachers can individualize the videos that are available to parents to match their children's classroom curriculum. In the 2020-2021 school year, both sites used the ReadyRosie program, with Indian Hill registering 65 parents and Kellom registering 139. Number of videos viewed during the year also varied by site, with Indian Hill parents viewing 247 videos and Kellom parents viewing 411.

## ABOUT OMAHA EARLY LEARNING CENTERS

The Omaha Early Learning Centers merged with Educare of Omaha, Inc. in 2020. This merger resulted in the OELCs no longer operating as a separate non-profit organization. While the centers are still called OELCs they are now an entity of Educare of Omaha, Inc. through and Early Head Start Child Care Partnership Grant with NECC being the grantee. The Early Head Start services are delivered through a partnership between the Educare, NECC, and community-based social service providers. The OELCs consist of infant and toddler classrooms, comprehensive family engagement services, and on-site healthcare professionals. Their goal is to provide high-quality comprehensive Early Head Start services to children ages birth through three years old and their families in the Greater Omaha Area. A multitude of resources are available to support children and their families including: Family Engagement Specialists for families, coaches supporting teachers, monthly classroom-parent meetings, provision of nutritious meals, and school readiness goals complimenting social, emotional, language, and cognitive development.

## Special Initiatives

OELC sites participated in several special initiatives to enhance the services they provide for children and families. These were implemented in partnership with Nebraska Early Childhood Collaborative (NECC).

**Reflective Practice.** OELC participated in reflective practice in partnership with Munroe-Meyer Institute. OELC leadership staff participated in training and received ongoing mentoring and reflective consultation to support their continued use of this relationship-based practice. The early childhood workforce is engaged in work that is both rewarding and challenging, so the purpose of reflective practice is to seek out those internal processes and how they impact decision making. Reflective practice is a way of studying staff's own experiences to improve the way they work. Reflective consultation helps to provide perspective, increase skills in providing reflective practice, and hopefully prevent burnout. This guidance comes in the form of one-on-one reflective sessions with a supervisor or consultant who provides support to team members as they maneuver through issues such as trauma, stress, diversity, equity, inclusion, and most recently, COVID-19. Having the opportunity to talk through hard conversations in a safe, nonjudgmental environment with someone who is there to listen, not fix or change, but instead collaborate solutions and support the integration process is an important piece in this intimate work being done at OELC. This method is increasingly being adopted in child protection and childcare arenas where retention rates are low and work-related stress is high. Reflective practice is an important tool in practice-based professional learning as a method of bringing together formal learning or theory and practice.

**Conscious Discipline.** All sites received training from a Conscious Discipline certified trainer and began implementing Conscious Discipline in the spring of 2020. Conscious Discipline is an evidence-based, trauma-informed, social-emotional learning program. The goal of Conscious Discipline is to aid in classroom relationship building and promote social-emotional skills. School directors, coaches, and the infant toddler program specialist use the Conscious Discipline practices to coach teachers in their classrooms.

**Study-Based Learning.** All teachers participated in month-long studies with children to provide deeper development of concepts and language acquisition.

**Brazelton Touchpoints.** OELC participated in Dr. T. Berry Brazelton's Touchpoints, a professional development program for systems of care working with young children and their families, beginning in spring of 2020. The professional development program incorporates principles of adult learning theory, behavior change, and self-care. Topics include: strengths-based family engagement, understanding children's development and behavior, strengthening partnerships with families through relationship-based practices, supporting everyone's mental health, and aligning organizational practices for effective family engagement.

**LENA (Language ENvironment Analysis).** OELC Kennedy and Gateway participated in LENA, a program that uses a small, wearable recording device along with cloud-based software that gives detailed feedback to help adults make sustainable increases in interactive talk with children. This is an objective tool that helps guide coaching and helps teachers understand, measure, and increase conversations with children. Kennedy has been using this tool since fall of 2019, while Gateway started in fall of 2021.

**I Am Moving, I Am Learning.** OELC participated in I Am Moving, I Am Learning (IMIL), an active learning curriculum enhancement that augments what early learning settings already do to promote physical activity and healthier nutrition. The goals of IMIL are to increase the quantity of physical activity and improve the type and quality of physical activity, along with addressing healthy nutrition options.

## PURPOSE OF EVALUATION

A comprehensive evaluation process using a utilization-focused evaluation design (Patton, 2012) was conducted to monitor the implementation of services through Educare of Omaha, Inc. and assess progress towards identified program outcomes. Data were shared with the program throughout the year to support program improvement.

The evaluation employed multiple methods to describe and measure the quality of program implementation, the nature of programming, and to report outcomes. The evaluation report is structured to report in multiple areas: Implementation Strategies, Child and Family Demographics, Child Outcomes, Family Engagement Outcomes, and Quality Instructional Practices.

The overarching evaluation questions were the following:

**Implementation:** What was the nature and quality of implementation? Who accessed and participated in the program?

**Quality Practices:** To what extent did instructional practices and/or professional development improve classroom practices?

**Child Outcomes:** What were the short and long-term outcomes related to academic achievement? Were there child outcome differences related to race, ethnicity, gender, ELL status and/or special education status?

**Family Outcomes:** Did family parenting skills improve? To what extent are parents engaged with their child's program? Did their parenting stress decrease? What was the level of parental well-being?

**Program Comparisons:** What differences, if any, were found between the OELC sites and the Educare sites in terms of classroom quality? Student outcomes? Family outcomes?

## 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. Typically, in this report the quantitative data will include scores between two groups (e.g., children who are English Language Learners compared to children whose native language is English), scores change over time (e.g., children's first language assessment compared to their latest assessment), and if the child's length of time in the program is related to outcomes. Statistical analyses will 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). Qualitative data from key informants' perspectives will provide more detailed insight on how the program is working and resulting outcomes.

## CHILD AND FAMILY DEMOGRAPHICS

Educare of Omaha, Inc. across all five sites served children primarily from the North and South Omaha areas. The majority of children served by Educare met the eligibility requirements for Early Head Start or Head Start and were at 100% of poverty or below. The demographic information collected to describe the population served and to help interpret the evaluation findings included: eligibility for free and reduced lunch, English Language Learners, and enrollment in special education services.

### Educare Omaha

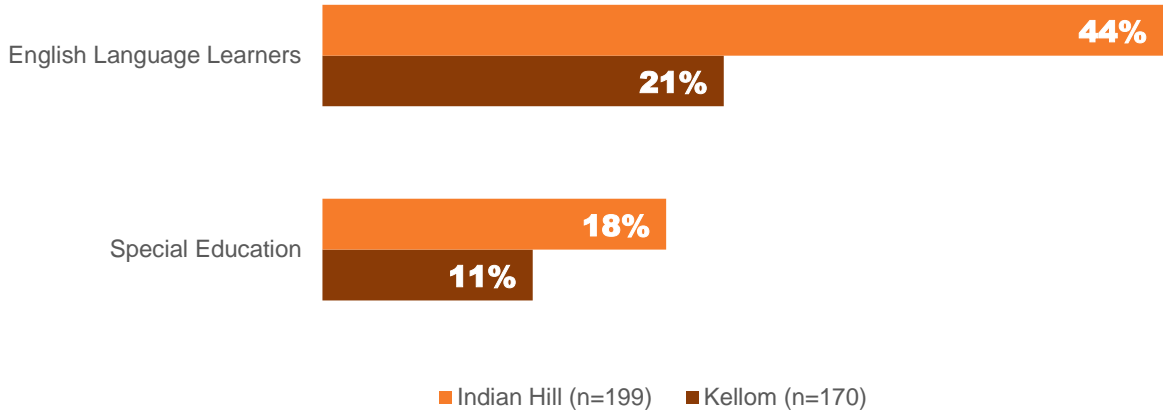
#### Who were the children and families served?

In 2020-2021, Educare Omaha operated 31 classrooms: 20 infant or toddler classrooms, and 11 preschool classrooms. Children were served in one of two locations: Indian Hill or Kellom in the Omaha Public School district. Educare Omaha served 369 children, 170 in Early Head Start and 199 in Head Start. Slightly more boys (53%) were served at both locations. All children served by OELC met the eligibility requirements for Early Head Start and Head Start and were at 100% of poverty or below. Throughout the 2020-21 academic year, children's average percent of days present in the program was 62.61% ( $n=369$ ). 14.6% of children had an IEP/IFSP ( $n=54$ ). The number of students identified as ELL and with an IEP/IFSP was 5% ( $N=19$ ).



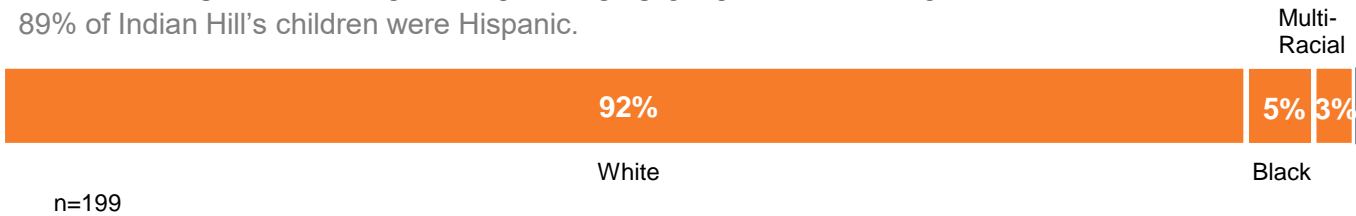


**INDIAN HILL HAD A HIGH PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN WHO WERE ELL.**  
 Indian Hill had more children enrolled in special education services.



**MOST OF THE CHILDREN SERVED AT EDUCARE OMAHA REPRESENTED DIVERSE ETHNIC OR RACIAL POPULATIONS.**

**INDIAN HILL SERVED LARGE PERCENTAGES OF CHILDREN WHO WERE WHITE.**  
 89% of Indian Hill’s children were Hispanic.



**KELLOM SERVED LARGE PERCENTAGES OF CHILDREN WHO WERE BLACK.**  
 22% of Kellom’s children were Hispanic.



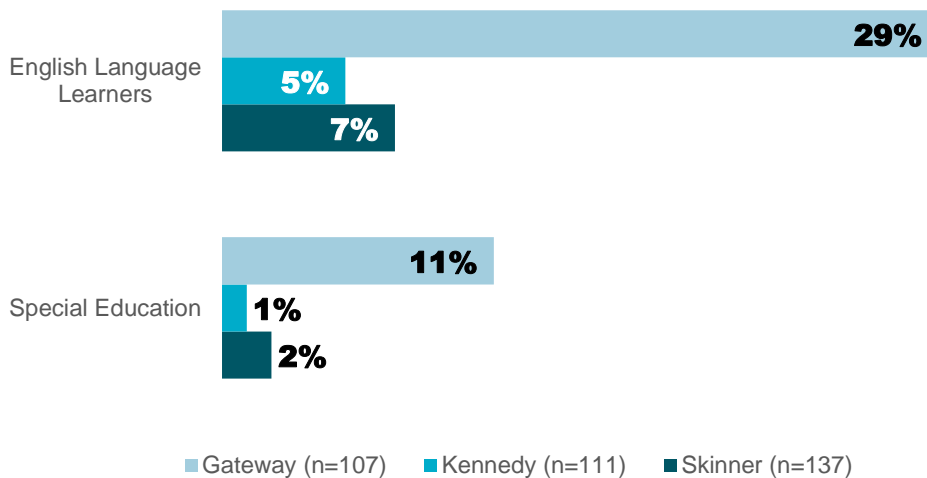
## OELC

### Who were the children and families served?

In 2020-2021, Omaha Early Childhood Centers (OELC) served 355 children in 40 classrooms: 8 infant, and 32 toddler classrooms. OELC programs are located at one of three locations: Gateway, Kennedy, or Skinner in the Omaha Public School district. The majority of children served by OELC met the eligibility requirements for Early Head Start and were at 100% of poverty or below. A small percentage (2%) of the children were on an IFSP (n=7) and only one with receiving special education services and identified as ELL. The majority of children were Black (53%) and Hispanic (38%). A total of 12.7% of the children had Spanish as their primary language. Slightly more girls (51%) were served in the program.

#### **GATEWAY HAD A HIGH PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN WHO WERE ELL.**

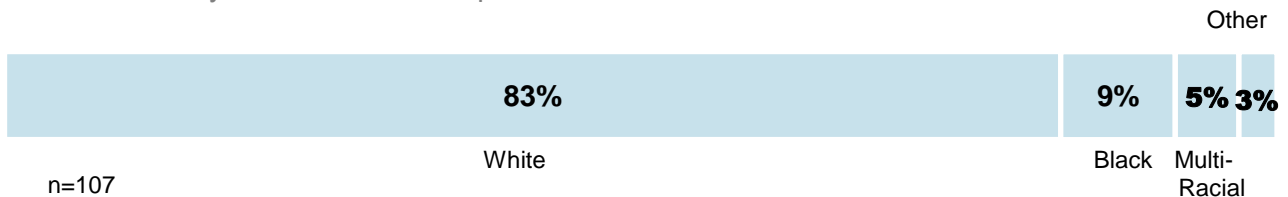
Kennedy and Skinner had lower percentages of children on IFSPs.



### **MOST OF THE CHILDREN SERVED AT OELC REPRESENTED DIVERSE ETHNIC OR RACIAL POPULATIONS.**

#### **GATEWAY SERVED LARGE PERCENTAGES OF CHILDREN WHO WERE WHITE.**

79% of Gateway's children were Hispanic.



SKINNER SERVED LARGE PERCENTAGES OF CHILDREN WHO WERE BLACK.  
22% of Skinner's children were Hispanic.



KENNEDY SERVED LARGE PERCENTAGES OF CHILDREN WHO WERE BLACK.  
14% of Kennedy's children were Hispanic.



## What were the education levels of parents at Educare of Omaha, Inc.?

Across the five Educare of Omaha, Inc. sites, roughly one-third of the parents had a high school diploma or GED (31.33%). There were few parents who had some college but no degree (23.1%), and even fewer parents who had technical training, or a certificate (8.86%). There were very few parents across the five Educare of Omaha, Inc. sites who had a bachelor's degree or higher (6.33%).

## Staff Credentials

### Who were the staff at Educare sites?

Educare strives to employ highly qualified staff. Ninety-six percent of their lead teachers had at least a bachelor's degree (with 28% of these teachers also having a master's degree) and most held degrees in the areas of early childhood, education, or early childhood special education. Lead teachers on average had worked in the field for 15.62 years and worked at Educare for 5.42 years. Associate teachers and aides had either a child development associate's degree (64%) or a bachelor's degree (24%). The majority of their degrees were in early childhood education or education. On average, associate teachers and aides had worked in the field for 10.18 years and worked at Educare for 6.68 years. Over forty percent (43.85%) of the teachers (aides, assistants, and leads) speak a mix of English and Spanish with the children in their classes.

Master teachers and family support staff also play a vital role in supporting children, families, and teachers at Educare Omaha. Typically, one master teacher was assigned to three to four classrooms and was responsible for coaching and reflective supervision. All of the Master teachers have their master's degree. Degrees were in the areas of early childhood education and education. On average, master teachers had worked in the field for 17 years and worked at Educare for 10.28 years.

Family Engagement Specialists (FES) work directly with families and with classroom teaching teams as part of an interdisciplinary approach. Family Engagement Specialist have either a bachelor's degree (60%) or a master's degree (40%). Degrees were in the areas of social work, psychology, early childhood education, or other. FES worked in the field for 16.40 years and worked at Educare for 11.50 years, on average.

## Who were the staff at OELC sites?

Seventy-three percent of lead teachers at OELC sites had at least a bachelor's degree, with 17% of these teachers also having a master's degree. Several lead teachers held degrees in the areas of education, early childhood education, or psychology. Lead teachers on average had worked in the field for 9.56 years and worked at an OELC for 3.59 years. Associate teachers and aides had either a child development associate's degree (54.37%) or a bachelor's degree (4.55%). The majority of the degrees were in early childhood education or education. Associate teachers and aides had worked in the field for an average 4.73 years and worked at OELC for an average of 2.78 years. While 62.5% of teachers (aides, assistants, and leads) speak mostly English with the children in their classes, 36.4% of teachers speak a mix of English and Spanish with the children in their classes.

## QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES OUTCOMES

### What was the quality of center-based services?

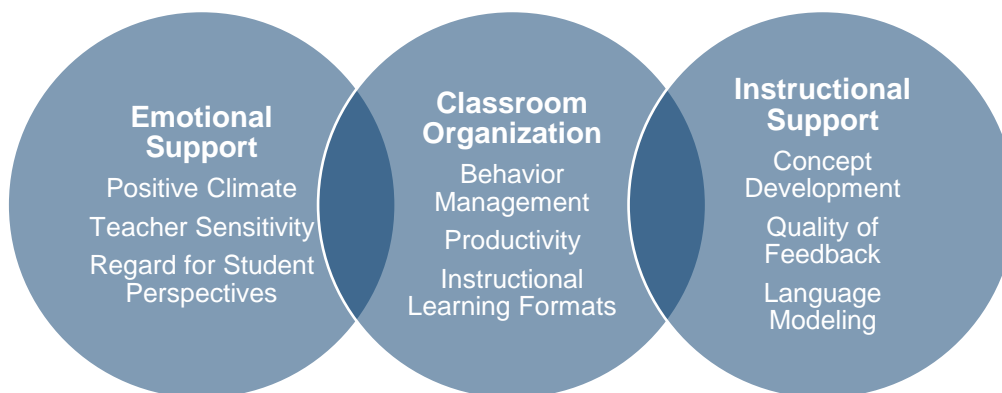
**Need for quality classrooms.** Quality early childhood programs have been linked to immediate, positive developmental outcomes, as well as long-term, positive academic performance (Burchinal, Vandergrift, Pianta, & Mashburn, 2010; Burchinal, Peisner-Feinberg, Bryant, & Clifford, 2000). Although the relationship between classroom environment and motivation is complex, research suggests that, where there are environments that promote child choice in activities, encouragement of collaboration, and more nurturing teacher-child interactions, children are most engaged in achievement (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Preschoolers in classrooms with higher quality interactions showed greater learning gains across school readiness domains, including executive functioning and early literacy (Vitiello, Bassock, Hamre, Player, & Williford, 2018).

### Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)

**Method.** The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) tool was chosen to rate teacher-child relationships based on social-emotional supports and measure the level of language and higher order thinking in the classrooms. The Infant, Toddler, or Pre-K version was used for the observation based on the ages of children in the classroom. Early Head Start classrooms were observed with the Pre-K version when over half of the students are over the age of three. Due to COVID-19, classrooms were observed in the Spring of 2021 rather than the Fall like previous years. As a result, over half the students were over three in many of the EHS classrooms. The Pre-K CLASS results below include 34 classrooms from all Educare Inc. sites.

According to its authors, the CLASS “is a rating tool that provides a common lens and language focused on what matters—the classroom interactions that boost student learning,” (Burchinal, Vandergrift, Pianta & Mashburn, 2010). CLASS ratings were completed through in-person observations of classroom activities across staff members throughout a morning period. These four cycles of 15-20 minute increments were rated by reliable evaluators. Scoring is based on a 7-point scale with 7 indicating highest quality. The Pre-K CLASS has three dimensions. Dimensions include Emotional, Organizational, and Instructional Supports. 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).





## Pre-K CLASS Results

**Findings.** The results of the Pre-K CLASS found that overall, all five Educare Inc. sites met the minimal threshold of quality (score of 5 or higher) to positively impact child outcomes in the domains of Emotional Support and Classroom Organization. All the Classroom Organization and Emotional Support dimension scores were in the mid-high to high-quality range. In Instructional Support, the majority of sites met the minimal threshold of quality (score of 3.25 or higher) to positively impact child outcomes. The Language Modeling dimension was a strength for all the sites. Lower-rated dimensions were Concept Development and Quality of Feedback.

During the 2019-2020 program year, the Office of Head Start (OHS) used the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) during its on-site reviews of grantees. Data from this report, (<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/data-ongoing-monitoring/article/national-overview-grantee-class-scores-2020>), was compared to the results of the Educare Inc. data. Overall, teachers observed with the Pre-K CLASS at OELC and Educare Kellom and Indian Hill demonstrated classroom practices that were above the top 10% of all Head Start (HS) classrooms nationally in Classroom Organization (HS=6.17) and Emotional Support (HS=6.32). They were slightly lower in Instructional Support (HS=3.52).

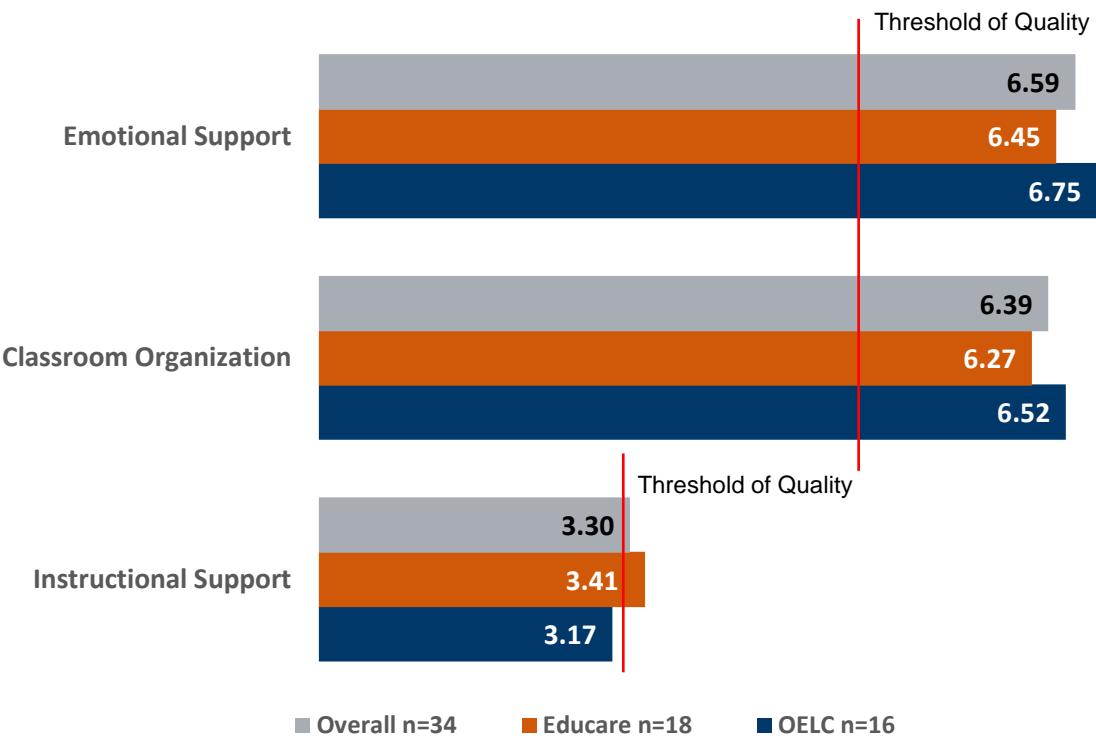
Preschool classrooms demonstrated scores that were at or above the top 10% of all Head Start programs nationally in Classroom Organization and Emotional and Behavioral Support.

At Educare sites, there were 18 CLASS Pre-K observations with a mean of 6.451 for Emotional Support ( $sd=.705$ ). At the OELC sites, there were 16 CLASS Pre-K observations with a mean of 6.750 for Emotional Support ( $sd=.203$ ). An independent samples  $t$ -test indicated Emotional Support results did not differ between Educare and OELC sites,  $t(32)=1.633$ ,  $p=.112$ .

At Educare sites, there were 18 CLASS Pre-K observations with a mean of 6.269 for Classroom Organization ( $sd=.811$ ). At the OELC sites, there were 16 CLASS Pre-K observations with a mean of 6.521 for Classroom Organization ( $sd=.365$ ). An independent samples  $t$ -test indicated Classroom Organization results did not differ between Educare and OELC sites,  $t(32)=1.145$ ,  $p=.261$ .

At Educare sites, there were 18 CLASS Pre-K observations with a mean of 3.412 for Instructional Support ( $sd=.767$ ). At the OELC sites, there were 16 CLASS Pre-K observations with a mean of 3.178 for Instructional Support ( $sd=.381$ ). An independent samples  $t$ -test indicated Instructional Support results did not differ between Educare and OELC sites,  $t(32)=1.109$ ,  $p=.276$ .

OVERALL SCORES WERE SIMILAR ACROSS THE TWO PROGRAMS.  
Highest quality practices were in Emotional Support and Classroom Organization.



### Average scores on the Pre-K CLASS by school

	Overall (n=34)	Site 1 (n=10)	Site 2 (n=8)	Site 3 (n=5)	Site 4 (n=5)	Site 5 (n=6)
<b>Positive Climate</b>	6.66	6.95	5.90	6.85	6.85	6.88
<b>Absence of Negative Climate</b>	6.82	7.00	6.25	7.00	7.00	7.00
<b>Teacher Sensitivity</b>	6.63	6.85	6.00	6.95	6.75	6.75
<b>Regard for Student Perspectives</b>	6.25	6.48	5.81	6.60	6.10	6.29
<b>Emotional Support Overall</b>	6.59	6.82	5.99	6.85	6.68	6.73
<b>Behavior Management</b>	6.44	6.73	5.50	7.00	6.55	6.67
<b>Productivity</b>	6.66	6.83	6.06	6.75	6.85	6.96
<b>Instructional Learning Formats</b>	6.06	6.60	5.56	6.55	5.45	5.92
<b>Classroom Organization Overall</b>	6.39	6.72	5.71	6.77	6.28	6.51
<b>Concept Development</b>	2.89	3.13	2.97	2.90	2.70	2.54
<b>Quality of Feedback</b>	2.76	2.50	3.41	1.95	2.80	3.00
<b>Language Modeling</b>	4.25	4.33	4.22	3.95	4.25	4.42
<b>Instructional Support Overall</b>	3.30	3.32	3.53	2.93	3.25	3.32

## Infant/Toddler CLASS Results

**Infant/Toddler.** Similar to the Pre-K version of the CLASS, both the Infant and Toddler CLASS rate teacher-child relationships based on social-emotional supports and measure the level of language and higher-order thinking in the classrooms. Scoring is the same; however, domains for the Infant and Toddler versions vary slightly from the Pre-K version as well as from each other. The Infant CLASS has only one domain: Responsive Caregiving (made up of four dimensions). The Toddler CLASS has an additional domain, Engaged Support for Learning, which measures how teachers engage the children in discovery, promote critical thinking, and provide rich language experiences. The CLASS results below include 32 classrooms from all five Educare Inc. sites (30 toddler classrooms and 2 infant rooms). Similar to the Pre-K CLASS results, because the CLASS observations were completed in the spring rather than the fall, fewer classrooms were in the Infant CLASS age range than previous years.

**Findings.** The results of the Infant CLASS are limited because only one Infant CLASS was observed at an OELC site and one observed at Educare Kellom or Indian Hill. Due to lack of sample size, the results are not reported.

Across Toddler classrooms, Educare Inc. teachers met the Threshold of Quality in all areas.

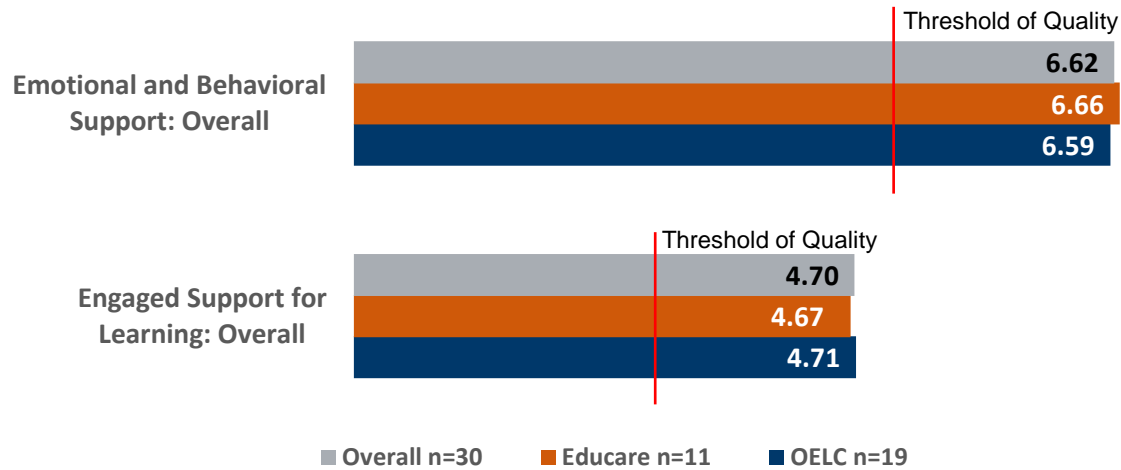
**Findings.** The results of the Toddler CLASS found that overall, all five sites met the minimal threshold of quality to positively impact child outcomes in the domains of Engaged Support for Learning (score of 3.25 or higher), and Emotional and Behavioral Support (score of 5 or higher). The overall score and all the dimensions in Emotional and Behavioral Support were in the high-quality range. The Engaged Support for Learning overall score was 4.70, and all the dimension scores were in the mid to high range of quality. The strength in this area was in Language Modeling. Quality Feedback was the lowest rated area for the toddler classrooms.

At Educare sites, there were 11 CLASS Toddler observations with a mean of 4.674 for Engaged Support for Learning ( $sd=1.047$ ) and a mean of 6.664 for Emotional and Behavioral Support ( $sd=.376$ ). At the OELC sites, there were 19 CLASS Toddler observations with a mean of 4.715 for Engaged Support for Learning ( $sd=.903$ ) and a mean of 6.595 for Emotional and Behavioral Support ( $sd=.389$ ). Comparisons between Educare and OELC sites were not conducted due to too few observations. Without enough observations, any statistical results could be due to chance alone and there may not be enough statistical power to detect effects that are present.





OVERALL SCORES WERE SIMILAR ACROSS THE TWO PROGRAMS.  
Highest quality practices were in Emotional and Behavioral Support.



#### Average scores on the Toddler CLASS by school

	Overall (n=30)	Site 1 (n=4)	Site 2 (n=7)	Site 3 (n=7)	Site 4 (n=7)	Site 5 (n=5)
<b>Positive Climate</b>	6.61	6.56	6.64	6.46	6.50	6.95
<b>Absence of Negative Climate</b>	6.94	7.00	6.93	6.96	6.86	7.00
<b>Teacher Sensitivity</b>	6.68	6.50	6.79	6.50	6.71	6.90
<b>Regard for Child Perspectives</b>	6.46	6.56	6.57	6.25	6.82	6.00
<b>Behavior Guidance</b>	6.41	6.69	6.39	6.54	6.00	6.60
<b>Emotional &amp; Behavioral Support Overall</b>	6.62	6.66	6.66	6.54	6.58	6.69
<b>Facilitation of Learning and Development</b>	5.25	6.19	4.50	5.75	4.89	5.35
<b>Quality of Feedback</b>	3.83	4.13	3.79	3.68	3.75	3.95
<b>Language Modeling</b>	5.03	5.38	4.79	4.82	5.18	5.15
<b>Engaged Support for Learning Overall</b>	4.70	5.23	4.36	4.75	4.61	4.82

## Environment Rating Scales (ERS)

**Method.** Both the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, 3rd Edition (ECERS-3) and Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale, 3rd Edition (ITERS-3) are based on three-hour, in-person observations done by reliable raters. Scoring is based on a 7-point scale with 7 indicating highest quality. Due to a change in network requirements, a 50% sample of classrooms was chosen to be observed. Some planned observations were not completed due to COVID-19 quarantines and staff turnover. Due to COVID-19, classrooms were observed in the spring and summer of 2021 rather than the fall like in previous years.

**ECERS-3.** The following chart illustrates the resulting classroom observation ratings, both by domain and overall score across both Educare schools. Four preschool classrooms were observed and rated using the ECERS-3. No ECERS-3 were completed at the OELC schools, as they are all infant or toddler classrooms.

**Findings.** Classrooms averaged in the moderate range (3-5) with many subscales averaging in the high-quality range (above 5). An overall score of five is the benchmark of quality. Classrooms scored slightly below this benchmark overall. Strengths were in the areas related to Program Structure and Interactions. Areas that could be targeted for improvement are Activities and Personal Care Routines. The greatest differences in programs were in Personal Care Routines and Program Structure. No statistical comparisons were made across scores because only four ECERS-3 were collected.

IN MOST AREAS, THE SITES HAD SIMILAR CLASSROOM QUALITY PRACTICES.  
The greatest differences were in Personal Care Routines and Program Structure.



### Educare average overall scores on the ECERS

	Overall (n=4)
Space & Furnishings	5.29
Personal Care	4.75
Language & Books	5.30
Activities	3.33
Interaction	5.75
Program Structure	5.75
Overall	4.76

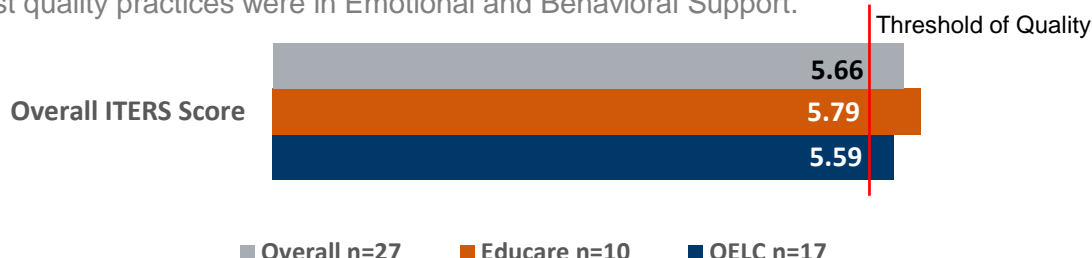
**ITERS-3.** The following graphs show ITERS-3 subscale and overall averages of Educare Inc., each program, and individual schools. Twenty-seven infant and toddler classrooms were observed and rated.

**Findings.** The overall average rating met the authors' benchmark for quality, which is an overall score of 5. Classrooms consistently scored in the moderate (3-5) to high (above 5) range on ITERS-3. Strengths were in the areas of Language and Books and Interactions. An area that could be targeted for improvement is Personal Care Routines. The greatest differences between programs were in Space and Furnishings and Personal Care Routines.

There were 27 ITERS-3 observations that occurred in summer ( $m=5.642$ ,  $sd=.635$ ). All observations took place at EHS sites. At the Educare sites, there were 10 ITERS-3 observations with a mean of 5.744 ( $sd=.539$ ). At the OELC sites, there were 17 ITERS-3 observations with a mean of 5.588 ( $sd=.689$ ). Comparisons between Educare and OELC sites were not conducted due to too few observations. Without enough observations, any statistical results could be due to chance alone and there may not be enough statistical power to detect effects that are present.

### OVERALL SCORES WERE SIMILAR ACROSS THE TWO PROGRAMS.

Highest quality practices were in Emotional and Behavioral Support.



### Average scores on the Infant-Toddler Environment Rating Scale by school

	Space & Furnishings	Personal Care Routines	Language & Books	Activities	Interaction	Program Structure	Overall Average
Overall (n=27)	5.60	4.72	6.20	5.08	6.46	6.02	5.66
Site 1 (n=4)	6.13	5.69	6.37	5.29	6.54	6.58	6.00
Site 2 (n=6)	5.96	4.83	6.31	4.91	6.36	5.78	5.64
Site 3 (n=6)	5.13	5.04	6.25	5.29	6.61	6.14	5.74
Site 4 (n=5)	5.80	4.55	6.00	5.00	6.53	6.00	5.64
Site 5 (n=6)	5.21	3.79	6.08	4.98	6.28	5.78	5.39

## CHILD OUTCOMES

Multiple assessments were used to explore children's development in a variety of areas. Due to COVID-19, only a sample of in-person assessments (ECI, MEFS, and PLS) were collected for Educare Indian Hill and Kellom in the fall of 2020 before the sites closed. No in-person assessments were collected for the OELC sites in the fall of 2020 due to site closure. In-person assessments were collected at all Educare Inc. sites in the spring of 2021. As a result of this limited sample, interpretation of the data should be completed with caution. The result is a snapshot of the development of children enrolled in Educare as compared to a normative sample (by tool) that is representative of the general United States population of children.

### What are the children's vocabulary outcomes?

Children's vocabulary is an important indicator of children's future success in school. Children who have limited vocabularies at a very young age are likely to continue to fall behind their peers in this area over time. The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test–IV (PPVT-IV), a direct child assessment measuring vocabulary, was administered to a randomized sample (50%) of preschool students in the spring of 2021.

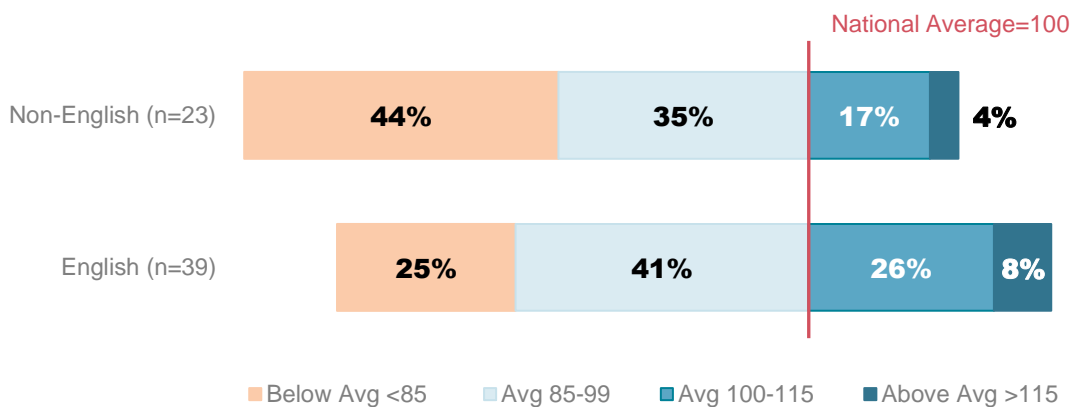
### Head Start (HS) Vocabulary Results

**Method.** Data for the preschool children were analyzed in two ways: 1) to determine if time in program influenced scores, and 2) to find the percentage of children that met the program goal (the national average).

**Program goal.** The results found that 56% of non-English speaking preschool children scored within or above the average range. More English-speaking children were within or above the average range (75%) than their peers (56%) who for the majority their home language was Spanish.

BY SPRING, 75% OF **ENGLISH SPEAKING PRESCHOOLERS** WERE WITHIN THE AVERAGE RANGE OR ABOVE IN THE AREA OF **VOCABULARY**.

More English speaking children were at the national average or above.



**Spring status.** Sixty-two Pre-K students' language was assessed in spring ( $m=90.52$ ,  $sd=15.43$ ). Pre-K students' vocabulary skills were compared across child gender, ELL status, IEP status, race, and ethnicity. An independent samples  $t$ -test compared children who were ELL and their English-speaking peers. **English speaking students had higher PPVT-IV scores at spring, on average, than those who were ELL,  $t(60)=2.155$ ,  $p=.035$ ,  $d=.566$ . When compared across ethnicity, children who are not Hispanic had higher PPVT-IV scores at spring, on average, than those who are Hispanic,  $t(60)=2.131$ ,  $p=.037$ ,  $d=.556$ .** These results suggest there were substantial meaningful differences in children's vocabulary skills.



There were no differences in children's vocabulary skills when results were compared by IEP status and race. When looking at gender, the results indicated there were no differences in Pre-K children's vocabulary skills.

## SPRING VOCABULARY SAMPLE FOR HEAD START CLASSROOMS.

Overall (n=62)

90.52

**Time in program.** A linear regression analysis was completed to determine if the length of time that a child was in Educare Omaha predicted child outcomes. A regression model that included IEP status, home language, and length of time in program accounted for 10.9% of the variability in children's spring PPVT-IV scores. The results found that length of time in Educare Omaha did not predict children's spring vocabulary scores.

Length of time in program did not predict Pre-K children's vocabulary skills.

## What were the children's auditory comprehension skills?

### English and Spanish Auditory Comprehension

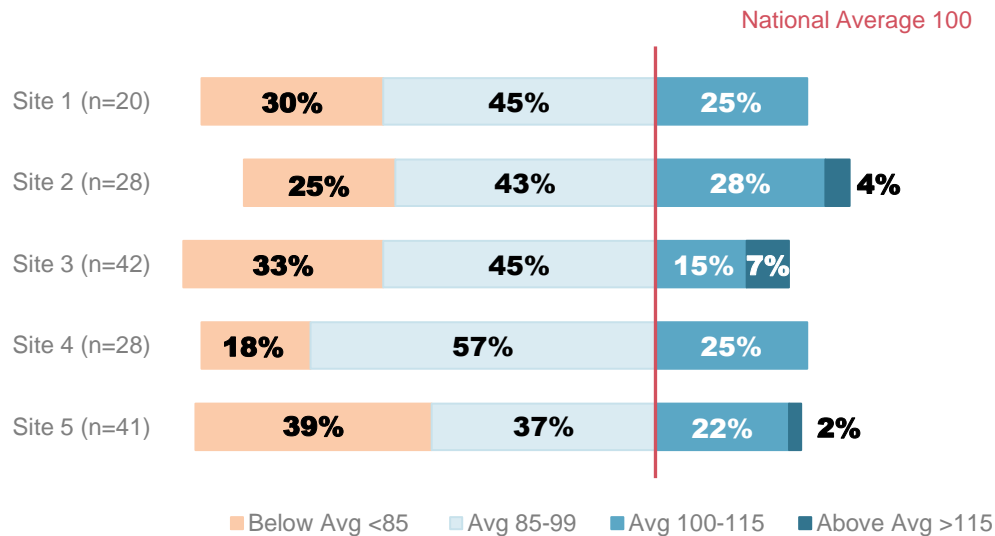
**Method.** Toddler and preschool children's auditory comprehension skills were assessed using the Preschool Language Scales-Fifth Edition (PLS-V). This tool was used to measure children's progress with auditory language comprehension. Children were assessed in English or Spanish at ages two and three. The results are summarized first for English speaking and then for Spanish speaking children.

### EHS English Speaking Children

**Program goal.** Descriptive analyses were completed to determine the percent of children that met the program goal (the national average). Early Head Start children's auditory comprehension skills were not assessed in the fall due to school closures. In the spring, 143 English-speaking, Early Head Start children's auditory comprehension was assessed ( $m=91.37$ ,  $sd=13.216$ ). **Overall, in the spring, 25.1% of children scored at or above the national average in auditory comprehension.**

## IN THE SPRING, THE MAJORITY OF TODDLERS' AUDITORY COMPREHENSION SKILLS WERE WITHIN THE AVERAGE RANGE.

Kellom had the highest percentage of children at or above the national average (32%).

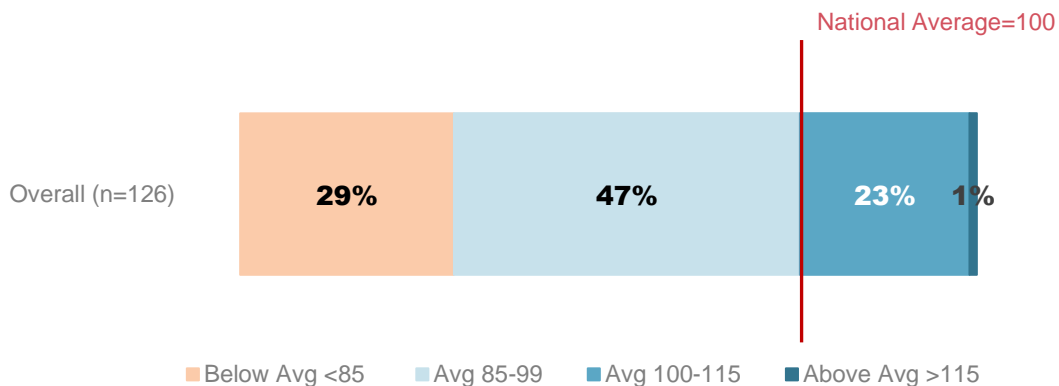


## HS English Speaking Children

**Program goal.** Descriptive analyses were completed to determine the percent of children that met the program goal (the national average). In the fall, 53 English speaking preschool children's auditory comprehension was assessed ( $m=90.40$ ,  $sd=12.082$ ). In the fall, 24.5% of children scored at or above the national average in auditory comprehension. In the spring, 126 English speaking preschool children's auditory comprehension was assessed ( $m=90.75$ ,  $sd=11.399$ ). **In the spring, 23.8% of children scored at or above the national average in auditory comprehension.**

## IN THE SPRING, THE MAJORITY OF PRESCHOOLERS' AUDITORY COMPREHENSION SKILLS WERE WITHIN THE AVERAGE RANGE.

Kellom had a slightly higher percentage of preschoolers at or above the national average.

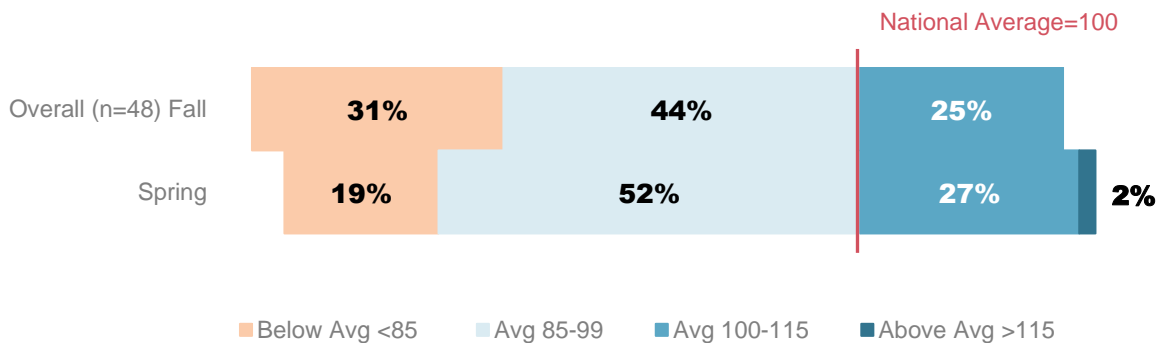


**Change over time.** The results of the paired *t*-test found that **Pre-K students' auditory comprehension skills did significantly improve over time from their fall to spring assessment,  $t(47)=2.933$ ,  $p=.003$ ,  $d=.423$ .** These results suggest that there was moderate meaningful change across time such that spring English auditory comprehension scores were higher than fall scores, on average. When comparing fall to spring English auditory comprehension scores across IEP status, significant results were found for children who did not have an IEP such that children without an IEP had higher English auditory comprehension scores in spring than in the fall,  $t(37)=2.546$ ,  $p=.015$ ,  $d=.413$ . There were no differences in English auditory comprehension scores from fall to spring for children with an IEP. When comparing fall to spring English auditory comprehension scores across gender, significant results were found for girls such that girls had higher English auditory comprehension scores in spring than in the fall,  $t(19)=2.480$ ,  $p=.023$ ,  $d=.555$ . There were no differences in English auditory comprehension scores from fall to spring for boys.

Overall, English auditory comprehension scores were significantly higher in spring than in fall.

**IN THE SPRING, ENGLISH SPEAKING PRESCHOOLERS HAD SLIGHTLY HIGHER PERCENTAGES AT OR ABOVE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE IN AUDITORY COMPREHENSION.**

By spring, there were fewer children below average.



**Time in program.** A linear regression analysis was completed to determine if the length of time that a child was in Educare Omaha predicted child outcomes when child's home language, IEP status, gender, and ethnicity were controlled for. The length of time a child was in the program was measured two ways. The proportion of days a child was in the program as well as the number of months the child was enrolled in the program were both used to separately assess whether length of time in program predicted child auditory comprehension. **The results found that length of time in the program did not predict change in auditory comprehension scores from fall to spring.**

## Spanish Speaking Results: All Children

### EHS Spanish Speaking Children

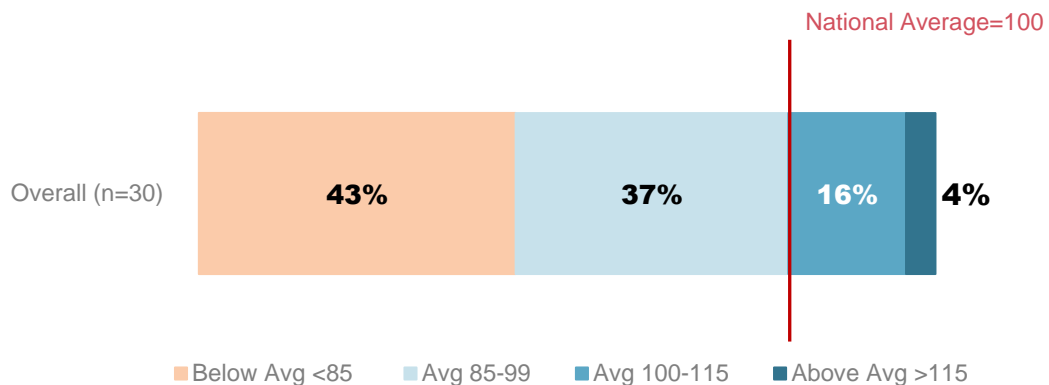
**Program goal.** Due to a limited sample, Early Head Start PLS results for Spanish speaking children could not be shared.

### HS Spanish Speaking Children

**Program goal.** Descriptive analyses were completed to determine the percent of children that met the program goal (the national average). In the fall, 16 Spanish speaking preschool children's auditory comprehension was assessed ( $m=88.56$ ,  $sd=11.911$ ). In the fall, 18.8% of children scored at or above the national average in auditory comprehension. In the spring, 30 Spanish speaking preschool children's auditory comprehension was assessed ( $m=87.37$ ,  $sd=11.343$ ). In the spring, 20% of children scored at or above the national average in auditory comprehension.

**IN THE SPRING, 57% OF SPANISH SPEAKING PRESCHOOLERS' AUDITORY COMPREHENSION SKILLS WERE WITHIN OR ABOVE THE AVERAGE RANGE.**

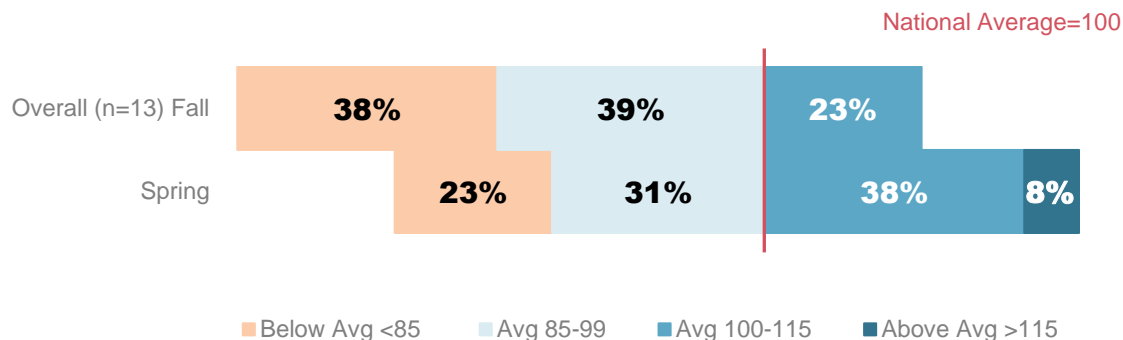
20% of Spanish speaking preschoolers were at or above the national average.



**Change over time.** The results of the paired  $t$ -test found that Pre-K students' auditory comprehension skills did not significantly improve over time from their fall to spring assessment. When comparing fall to spring Spanish auditory comprehension scores separately across children with and without an IEP, results indicated there were no significant differences across IEP status from fall to spring on children's Spanish auditory comprehension scores. There were no differences in Spanish auditory comprehension scores from fall to spring when comparing results across gender.



IN THE SPRING, A HIGHER PERCENTAGE OF SPANISH SPEAKING PRESCHOOLERS WERE AT THE NATIONAL AVERAGE OR ABOVE IN **AUDITORY COMPREHENSION**.  
By spring, there were fewer children below average.



**Time in program.** A linear regression analysis was completed to determine if the length of time that a child was in Educare Omaha predicted child outcomes when child's home language, IEP status, gender, and ethnicity were controlled for. The length of time a child was in the program was measured two ways. The proportion of days a child was in the program as well as the number of months the child was enrolled in the program were both used to separately assess whether length of time in program predicted child auditory comprehension. The results found that length of time in the program did not predict change in auditory comprehension scores from fall to spring.

The length of time that children were in the program did not predict children's auditory comprehension skills.

## What were the children's literacy and language skills?

The increased awareness that literacy development can begin during infancy has highlighted the importance of supporting their skills during these early years (Neuman & Dickenson, 2001). The foundation for these skills is believed to be established in children's early social-communicative interactions during the infant, toddler, and preschool years (Snow, Tabors, & Dickinson, 2001).

**Method.** Teachers completed the Infant Toddler Literacy Assessment (ITLA), a criterion-referenced assessment that measures children's literacy in the areas of social games, print awareness, and communication. Teachers at Educare Omaha completed the assessment in the fall of 2020 and again in the spring of 2021. Because of school closures, OELC teachers had not had enough time with students in fall of 2020 to accurately complete the ITLA and only completed the assessment in spring of 2021.

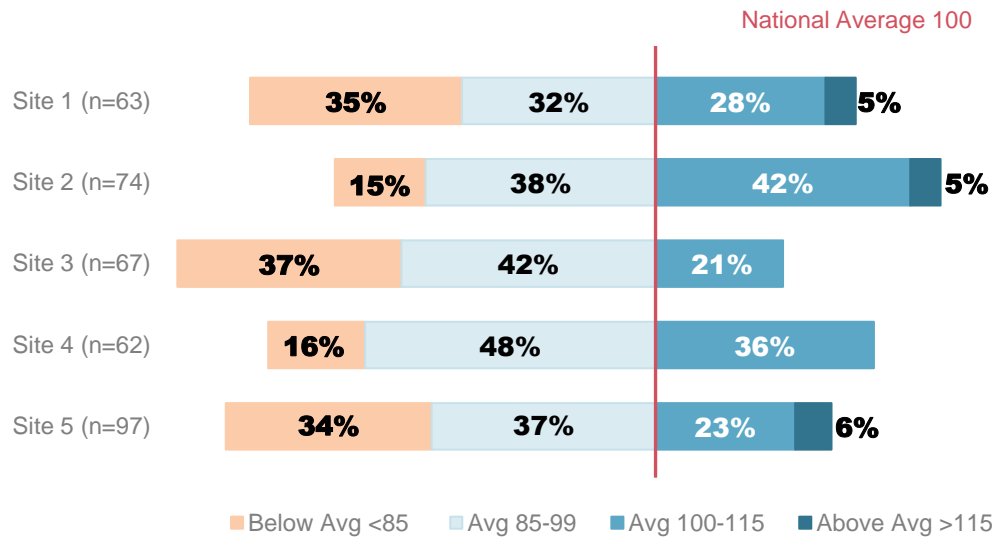
## Literacy and Language Results

**Program goal.** Descriptive analyses were completed to determine the percentage of children that met the program goal (the mid-point of average) in the fall and spring. The results found that high percentages of the toddlers (73%) were within the average range in the spring. Thirty-four percent scored with the mid-point of

average or above. The ITLA has three subscales, Communication, Rhyming and Pretend Play and Print. Descriptive analyses found that children scored consistently on average at a standard score of 100 across each subscale and the total score. These results demonstrated consistent development across each subdomain.

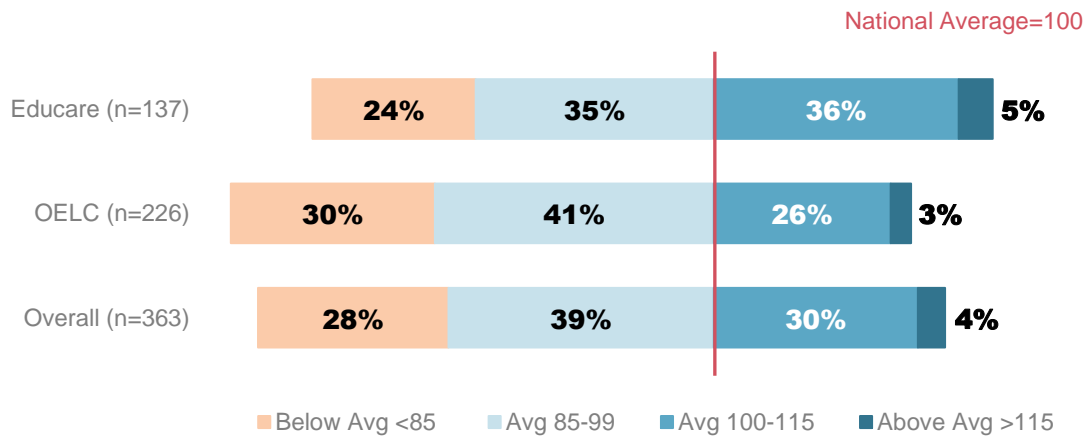
**IN THE SPRING, THE MAJORITY OF INFANTS' AND TODDLERS' LITERACY SKILLS WERE WITHIN THE AVERAGE RANGE.**

At site 2, almost half were scoring at the national average or above.



**BY SPRING, 72% OF ALL INFANTS' AND TODDLERS' LITERACY SKILLS WERE WITHIN OR ABOVE THE AVERAGE RANGE.**

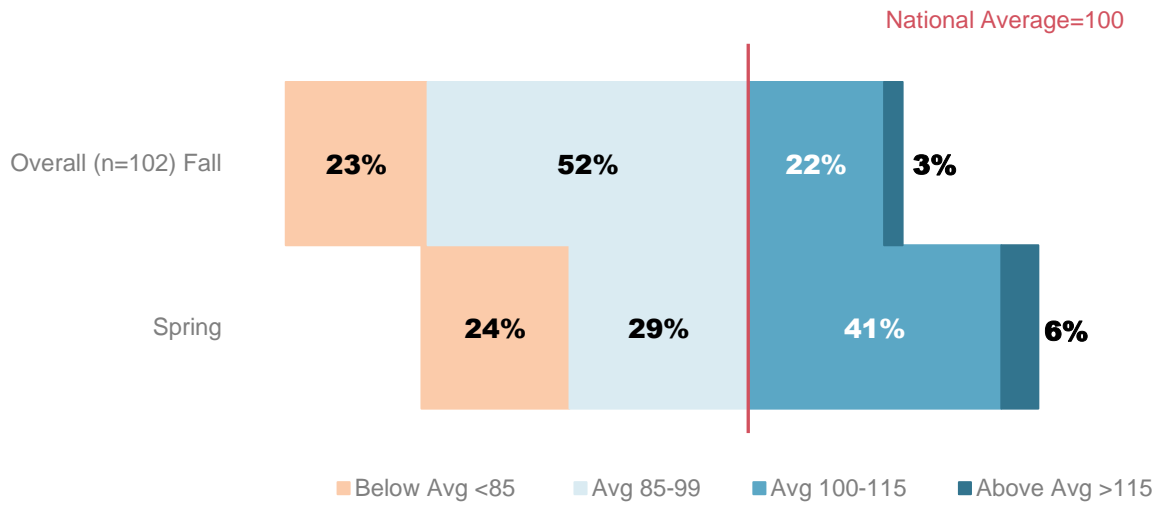
At Educare, 41% were at the national average or above.





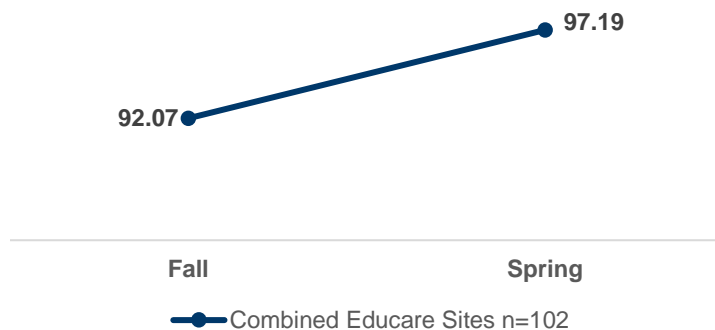
**Change over time.** The results of the paired *t*-test found that **infants' and toddlers' literacy skills did significantly improve over time from their fall to spring assessment,  $t(113)=3.863, p<.001, d=.362$ .** These results indicate there was moderate meaningful change in infants' and toddlers' literacy skills from fall to spring. There were no differences from fall to spring when comparing literacy skills across infants' and toddlers' IEP status, ELL status, race, ethnicity, and gender.

**BY SPRING, ALMOST HALF OF INFANTS AND TODDLERS HAD PERCENTAGES AT OR ABOVE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE IN LITERACY SKILLS.**  
By Spring, 47% were at the national average or above.



The results of the paired *t*-test indicate literacy standard scores were significantly higher in spring than in fall for Educare sites ( $p<.001$ ).

**LITERACY STANDARD SCORES WERE SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER IN SPRING THAN IN FALL.**



**Time in program.** A linear regression analysis was completed to determine if the length of time that a child was in Educare Omaha predicted child outcomes when child's home language, IEP status, gender, and ethnicity were controlled for. The length of time a child was in the program was measured two ways. The proportion of days a child was in the program as well as the number of months the child was enrolled in the program were both used to separately assess whether length of time in program predicted children's literacy scores. The results found that length of time in the program did not predict change in literacy scores from fall to spring.

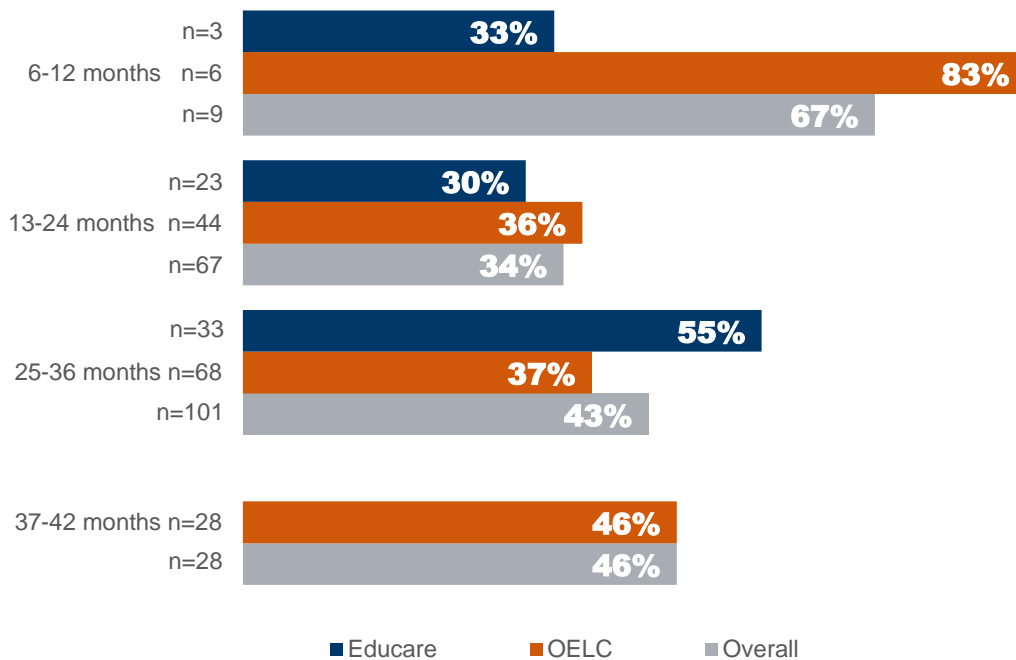
## What were the children's expressive language outcomes?

**Method.** The expressive language development of infants and toddlers was assessed using the Early Communication Indicator (ECI). The ECI is a 6-minute play-based measure of children's growth in expressive communication (e.g., gestures, vocalizations, words, and phrases). This assessment was completed in the summer on 205 children.

**Program goal.** Descriptive analyses were completed to determine the percent of children that met the ECI benchmark. Meeting the benchmark suggests they are on target with respect to their expressive language skills. The descriptive analyses found that the majority of children in the 25-36 months age range met the benchmark for expressive language. Overall, 42% of the children across ages met the benchmark.

### OVER HALF OF THE TODDLERS (25-36 MONTHS) AT EDUCARE SITES MET THE EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE BENCHMARK.

Fewer children met the benchmark for other age groups.



### BY SPRING, ALMOST HALF OF ALL STUDENTS MET THE EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE BENCHMARK.

Results were consistent across programs.



**Spring status.** Chi-square tests for independence assessed whether there were differences in students' spring expressive language development across IEP status, ELL status, race, ethnicity, and gender. The results indicated there were no differences in spring expressive language development.

## What were the children's executive functioning outcomes?

In recent years, the important contributions of executive functioning to school readiness have been highlighted (Blair & Razza, 2007). Executive functioning captures a child's ability to control impulses that then enable them to plan, initiate, and complete activities needed for learning. Researchers have found a relationship between preschool children's executive functioning and their ability to learn in the classroom (Benson, et al., 2013).

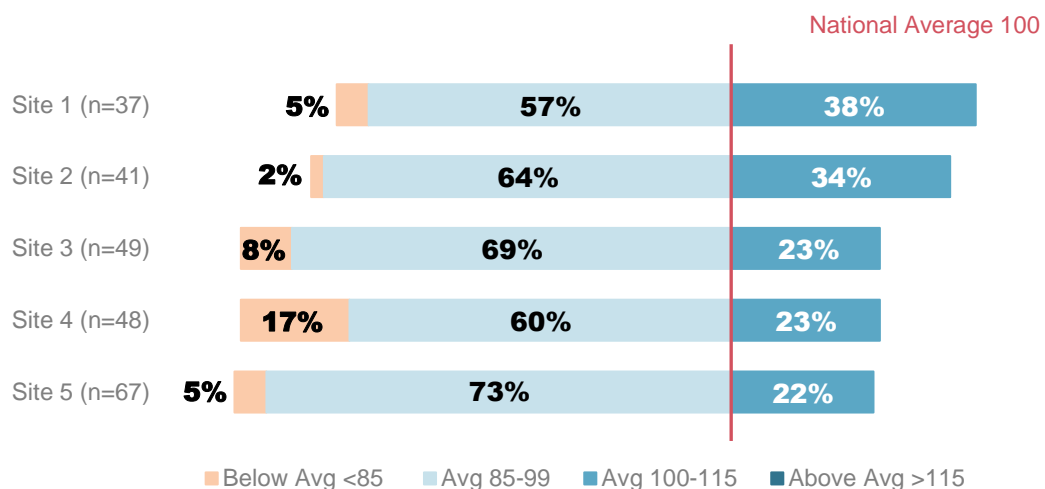
**Method.** Minnesota Executive Functioning Scale (MEFS) was administered to children who were two and older. The MEFS is a computerized assessment designed to measure behaviors that are associated with executive functioning in children and youth age two through adulthood. This assessment was completed with children ages two through five in the fall and spring. Due to COVID-19, limited MEFS data were collected in the fall. As a result, spring 2020 and spring 2021 comparisons were made for EHS and HS. Fall 2020 to spring 2021 within year change was assessed for HS sites.

### EHS Executive Functioning Results (OELC & Educare)

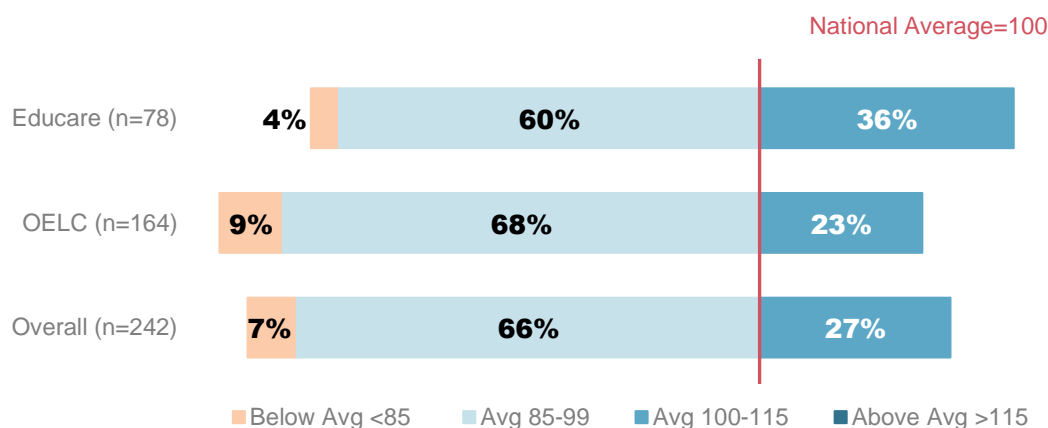
**Program goal.** Descriptive analyses were completed to determine the percent of preschool children that met the program goal (the national average). In fall 2020, 20 toddler children's executive functioning was assessed ( $m=96.15$ ,  $sd=3.031$ ). In spring 2021, 242 toddler children's executive functioning was assessed ( $m=96.13$ ,  $sd=6.592$ ).

#### BY SPRING, THE MAJORITY OF TODDLERS WERE WITHIN THE AVERAGE RANGE IN EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING.

Over 90% of children scored within the average range or higher at all sites but one.



**MORE TODDLERS AT EDUCARE SITES SCORED HIGHER THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE THAN TODDLERS AT OELC SITES.**  
 No toddlers scored in the above average range.



**Spring status.** There were no differences in children’s executive functioning skills in spring when compared across IEP, ELL, gender, race, and ethnicity.

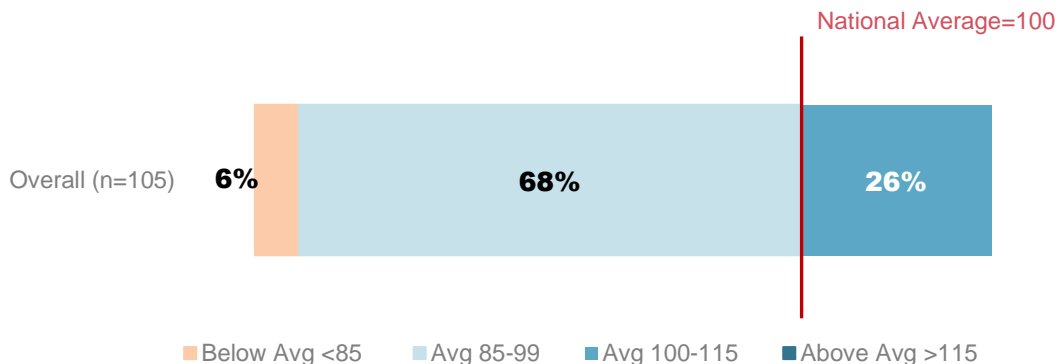
**Change across time.** When looking at executive functioning standard scores for Educare, the results indicate scores were slightly higher in spring than in fall for EHS, although this difference was not significant. When comparing fall to spring EHS executive functioning scores separately across children with and without an IEP, results indicated there were no significant differences across IEP status from fall to spring on children’s executive functioning scores. There was only one child in EHS with an IEP, therefore results are not summarized. In fall 2020, the average executive functioning score for EHS children without an IEP was 96.65, whereas in spring 2021, their average executive functioning was 96.88 (n=17). **There were no differences in EHS executive functioning scores from fall to spring when comparing results across gender.** In fall 2020, the average executive functioning score for boys in EHS was 97.83, whereas in spring 2021, EHS boys’ average executive functioning was 102.33 (n=6). In fall 2020, the average executive functioning score for girls in EHS was 95.33, whereas in spring 2021, EHS girls’ average executive functioning was 93.92 (n=12).

**Time in program.** A linear regression analysis was completed to determine if the length of time that a child was in Educare Omaha predicted children’s executive functioning scores at spring when child’s home language, IEP status, gender, and ethnicity were controlled for. The length of time a child was in the program was measured two ways. The proportion of days a child was in the program as well as the number of months the child was enrolled in the program were both used to separately assess whether length of time in program predicted children’s executive functioning. The results found that length of time in the program did not predict children’s executive functioning scores in spring.

## HS Executive Functioning Results

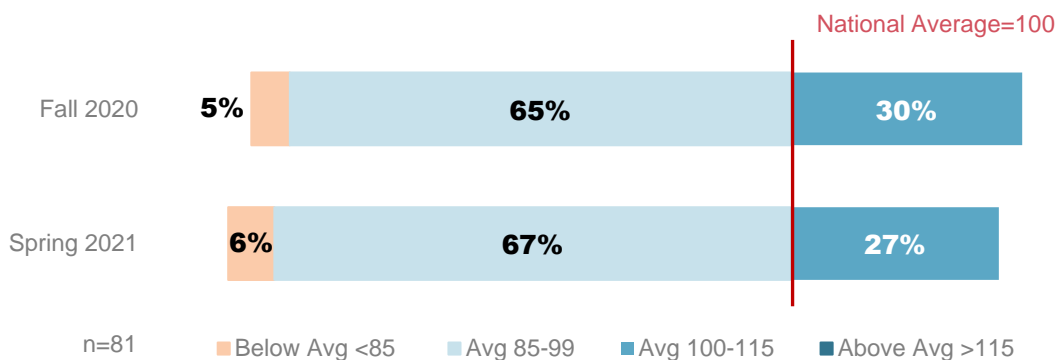
**Program goal.** Descriptive analyses were completed to determine the percent of preschool children that met the program goal (the national average). In fall 2020, 88 preschool children’s executive functioning was assessed ( $m=96.125$ ,  $sd=7.105$ ). In spring 2021, 242 preschool children’s executive functioning was assessed ( $m=94.71$ ,  $sd=7.993$ ).

BY SPRING 2021, THE MAJORITY OF **PRESCHOOLERS** AT EDUCARE SITES WERE WITHIN THE AVERAGE RANGE OR ABOVE IN **EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING**.  
No preschoolers scored in the above average range.



**Change over time.** The results of the paired *t*-test found that Pre-K executive functioning skills did not significantly change from fall 2020 to spring 2021. When looking at the Educare sites, the results indicate executive functioning standard scores were not significantly different from fall to spring, and scores were slightly higher in fall than in spring for HS. When comparing fall to spring HS executive functioning scores separately across children with and without an IEP, results indicated there were no significant differences across IEP status from fall to spring on children's executive functioning scores. In fall 2020, the average executive functioning score for HS children with an IEP was 96.47 whereas in spring 2021, the average executive functioning score for HS children with an IEP was 91.40 (n=15). In fall 2020, the average executive functioning score for HS children without an IEP was 96.00, whereas in spring 2021, their average executive functioning was 96.17 (n=66). There were no differences in HS executive functioning scores from fall to spring when comparing results across gender. In fall 2020, the average executive functioning score for boys in HS was 97.07, whereas in spring 2021, HS boys' average executive functioning was 95.21 (n=42). In fall 2020, the average executive functioning score for girls in HS was 95.03, whereas in spring 2021, HS girls' average executive functioning was 95.36 (n=39).

**EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS OF PRESCHOOLERS DID NOT SIGNIFICANTLY CHANGE FROM FALL 2020 TO SPRING 2021.**



## HS EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING STANDARD SCORES WERE HIGHER IN FALL THAN IN SPRING.

96.09 95.28

Fall

Spring

Combined Educare Sites n=81

**Time in program.** A linear regression analysis was completed to determine if the length of time that a child was in Educare Omaha predicted change in children's executive functioning scores from fall to spring when child's home language, IEP status, gender, and ethnicity were controlled for. The length of time a child was in the program was measured two ways. The proportion of days a child was in the program as well as the number of months the child was enrolled in the program were both used to separately assess whether length of time in program predicted children's executive functioning scores. The results found that length of time in the program did not predict change in children's executive functioning scores from fall to spring.

## What were the children's social-emotional outcomes?

**Method.** The social and emotional development of infant, toddler, and preschool children was assessed using both the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA) and the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment for Infants and Toddlers (DECA-IT). These questionnaires assess young children's social-emotional development by identifying social-emotional protective factors overall and in the areas of initiative, self-control, attachment, and behavior concerns. Children at Educare sites were rated by their teachers in the fall and spring, while children at OELC sites were rated by their parents in the fall and spring. Children at OELC sites were also rated by their teachers in the spring.

## EHS Social-Emotional Parent-Rated Results

**Program goal.** Descriptive analyses were completed to determine the percent of children that met the program goal (the national average). In fall 2020, 269 children's total protective factor scores were assessed ( $m=48.31$ ,  $sd=10.174$ ). In spring 2021, 278 children's total protective factor scores were assessed ( $m=51.21$ ,  $sd=10.528$ ). The results found that similar percentages of preschool children were within the average range in the spring (66%) compared to the fall (66%). **By spring, 66% of the preschool children met the program goal, compared to 43% in the fall.**

**Change over time.** Hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) analyses were completed to determine if there was change in children's scores over time and if any demographic variables predicted social-emotional outcomes. Approximately 20.95% of the variability in Total Protective Factors was due to the classroom, indicating that the scores were different across classrooms. No significant change across time was found in Total Protective Factor scores. Ethnicity, Race, IEP status, home language, and child gender did not predict change in DECA Total Protective Factor scores.

Infants and toddlers had similar social-emotional scores in all areas.

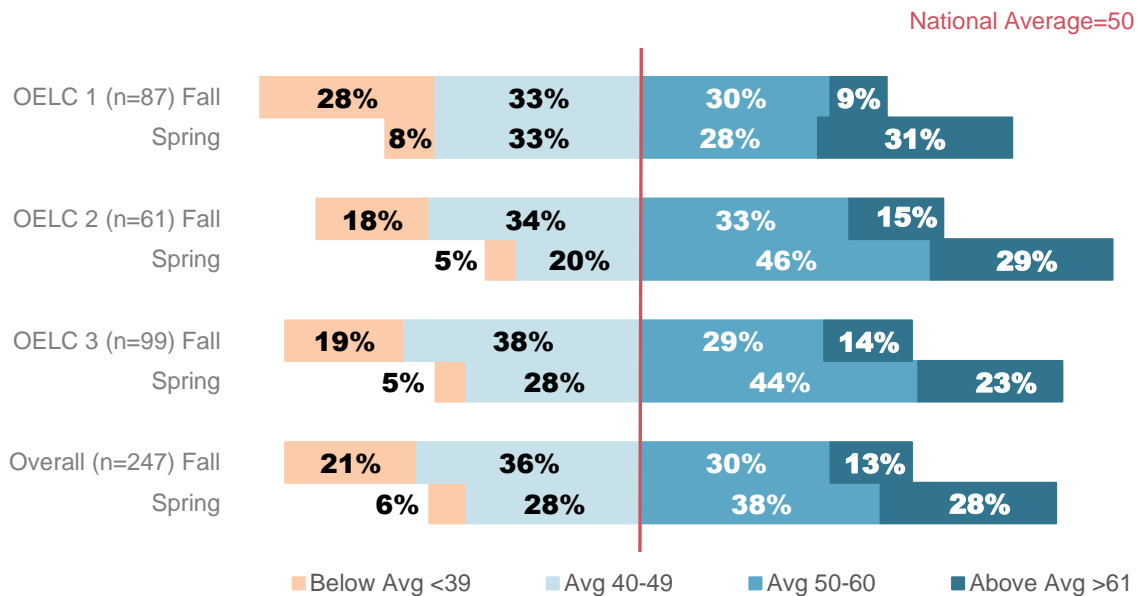


Approximately 20.36% of the variability in Attachment was due to the classroom, indicating that the scores were different across classrooms. No significant change across time was found for Attachment scores. Ethnicity, Race, home language, and child gender were not significant predictors of change in Attachment scores. **On average, children with an IEP scored 13.241 points lower than children without an IEP ( $p<.001$ ).**

Approximately 19.64% of the variability in Initiative was due to classroom, indicating that scores were different across classrooms. No significant change across time was found for Initiative scores. Ethnicity, Race, home language, and child gender were not significant predictors of change in DECA Initiative scores. **On average, children with an IEP scored 10.677 points lower than children without an IEP ( $p<.01$ ).**

Approximately 14.18% of the variability in Self-Regulation scores was due to classroom, indicating some scores were different across classrooms. No significant change across time was found for Self-Regulation scores. On average, children with an IEP scored 10.631 points lower than children without an IEP ( $p<.01$ ). Ethnicity, Race, home language, and child gender were not significant predictors of change in DECA Self-Regulation scores.

**BY SPRING, PARENTS RATED THAT THE MAJORITY OF OELC INFANTS' AND TODDLERS' SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS WERE WITHIN THE AVERAGE RANGE.**  
Fewer children scored below average in the spring.



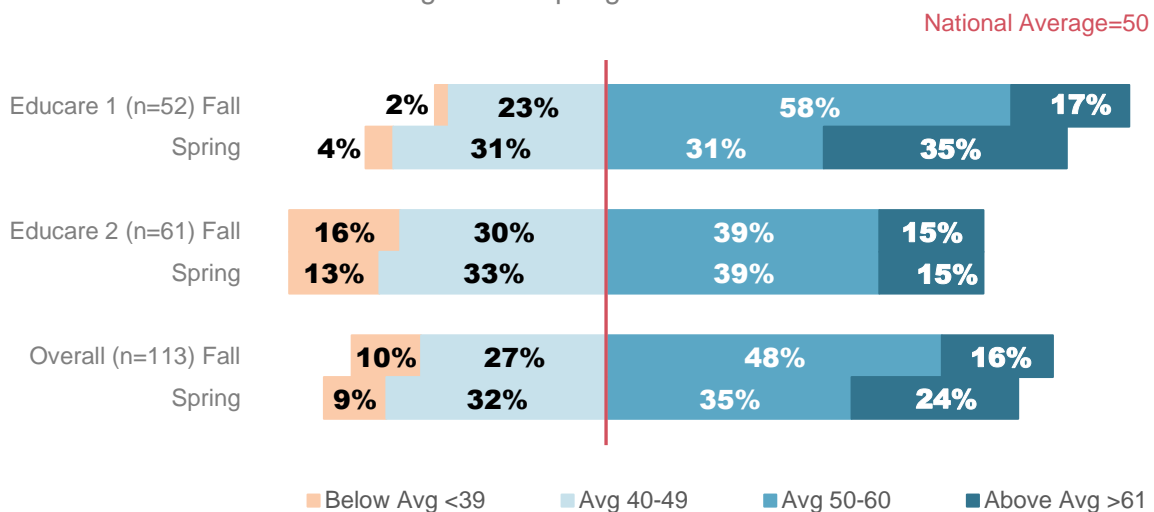
**Time in program.** A hierarchical linear regression analysis was completed to determine if the length of time that a child was in Educare Omaha predicted change in children's social-emotional protective factors overall as well as in the areas of initiative, self-control, attachment, and behavior concerns from fall to spring. Children's home language, gender, IEP status, and ethnicity were controlled for. The number of months the child was enrolled in the program was used to assess whether length of time in program predicted children's social-emotional protective factors. The results found that length of time in the program did not predict social-emotional outcomes.

## EHS Social-Emotional Teacher-Rated Results

**Program goal.** Descriptive analyses were completed to determine the percent of children that met the program goal (the national average). In fall 2020, 121 children's total protective factor scores were assessed at Educare sites ( $m=51.85$ ,  $sd=8.496$ ). In spring 2021, 147 children's total protective factor scores were assessed at Educare sites ( $m=51.44$ ,  $sd=10.089$ ). In spring 2021, 296 children's total protective factor scores were assessed at OELC sites ( $m=53.94$ ,  $sd=10.047$ ). The results found that similar percentages of EHS children were within the average range in the spring (67%) compared to the fall (75%). By spring, 59% of the preschool children met the program goal, slightly less than in the fall (64%).

### BY SPRING, TEACHERS RATED THAT THE MAJORITY OF EDUCARE INFANTS' AND TODDLERS' SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS WERE WITHIN THE AVERAGE RANGE.

Fewer children scored below average in the spring.



**Change over time.** Hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) analyses were completed to determine if there was change in children's scores over time and if any demographic variables predicted social-emotional outcomes. Approximately 39.38% of the variability in Total Protective Factors was due to the classroom, indicating that the scores were different across classrooms. No significant change across time was found for Total Protective Factor scores,  $B=.383$ ,  $p<.01$ . Gender ( $p=.033$ ) and Ethnicity ( $p=.022$ ) were significant predictors of children's Total Protective Factor scores. On average, girls scored 2.729 points higher on DECA TPF than boys. **On average, Hispanic children scored 7.757 points higher than children who are not Hispanic. Home language, race, and IEP were not significant predictors of DECA Total Protective Factor scores.**

Infant and toddler girls were rated significantly higher than boys in Total Protective Factors and Attachment scores.

Approximately 39.40% of the variability in Attachment was due to the classroom, indicating that the scores were different across classrooms. No significant change across time was found for Attachment scores. **Gender was a significant predictor of children's Attachment scores.** On average, girls scored 3.145 points higher on DECA Attachment than boys ( $p=.018$ ). Ethnicity, home language, race, and IEP status were not significant predictors of Attachment scores.

Approximately 25.76% of the variability in Initiative was due to classroom, indicating that scores were different across

classrooms. No significant change across time was found for Initiative scores. Gender and IEP status were found to be significant predictors of children’s Initiative scores. On average, Hispanic children scored 7.184 points higher on Initiative scores than children who are not Hispanic ( $p=.025$ ). Home language, gender, IEP, and race were not significant predictors of DECA Initiative scores.

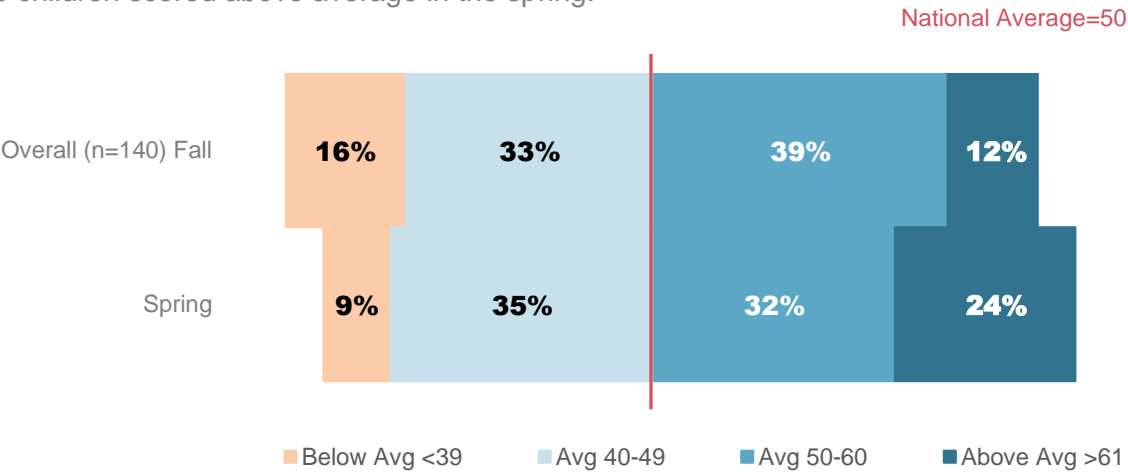
Approximately 26.60% of the variability in Self-Regulation scores was due to classroom, indicating scores were different across classrooms. No significant change across time was found for Self-Regulation scores. Gender, home language, race, ethnicity, and IEP status were not significant predictors of DECA Self-Regulation scores.

**Time in program.** A hierarchical linear regression analysis was completed to determine if the length of time that a child was in Educare Omaha predicted change in children’s social-emotional protective factors overall as well as in the areas of initiative, self-control, attachment, and behavior concerns from fall to spring. Children’s home language, IEP status, gender, and ethnicity were controlled for. The percent of days the child was present in the program was used to assess whether length of time in program predicted children’s social-emotional protective factors. The results found that length of time in the program did not predict social-emotional outcomes.

**HS Social-Emotional Teacher-Rated Results**

**Program goal.** Descriptive analyses were completed to determine the percent of children that met the program goal (the national average). In fall 2020, 147 children’s total protective factor scores were assessed ( $m=49.64$ ,  $sd=8.805$ ). In spring 2021, 167 children’s total protective factor scores were assessed ( $m=52.13$ ,  $sd=10.390$ ). The results found that similar percentages of preschool children were within the average range in the spring (67%) compared to the fall (72%). By spring, 56% of the preschool children met or exceeded the program goal.

BY SPRING, THE MAJORITY OF **PRESCHOOLERS' SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL** SKILLS WERE WITHIN THE AVERAGE RANGE OR ABOVE.  
More children scored above average in the spring.



**Change over time.** Hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) analyses were completed to determine if there was change in children's scores over time and if any demographic variables predicted social-emotional outcomes. Approximately 40.23% of the variability in Total Protective Factors was due to the classroom, indicating scores were different across classrooms. No significant change across time was found in Total Protective Factors scores. Child ethnicity, IEP status, race, home language, and gender were not significant predictors of DECA Total Protective Factors scores.

Approximately 10.88% of the variability in Behavioral Concerns was due to the classroom, indicating some score differences across classrooms. No significant change across time was found in Behavioral Concerns scores. IEP status, race, home language, and child gender were not significant predictors of change in DECA Behavioral Concerns scores. On average, Hispanic children scored 5.47 points lower on Behavioral Concerns than children who were not Hispanic ( $p = .013$ ).

Approximately 43.12% of the variability in Attachment was due to the classroom, indicating scores differed across classrooms. No significant change across time was found for Attachment scores. Ethnicity, Race, and IEP status were not significant predictors of DECA Attachment scores. Gender and home language were significant predictors of children's attachment scores ( $p < .05$ ). Girls scored significantly higher than boys on DECA Attachment. On average, girls scored 3.943 points higher ( $p < .001$ ). Children with a home language that was not English had significantly higher DECA Attachment scores than children whose home language was English. They scored 2.967 points higher on average than children whose primary home language was English ( $p = .023$ ).

Approximately 38.42% of the variability in Initiative was due to classroom, indicating scores differed across classrooms. No significant change across time was found in Initiative scores. Child ethnicity, race, IEP status, home language, and gender were not significant predictors of change in DECA Initiative scores.

Approximately 15.62% of the variability in Self-Regulation scores was due to classroom, indicating some scores differed across classrooms. No significant change across time was found in Self-Regulation scores. Child race and ethnicity were significant predictors of DECA Self-Regulation scores. On average, children who are Black scored 5.274 points higher on Self-Regulation than children who are White ( $p = .027$ ). On average, Hispanic children scored 5.566 points higher ( $p < .01$ ) than children who are not Hispanic on DECA Self-Regulation. IEP status, home language, and child gender were not significant predictors of change in DECA Self-Regulation scores.

**Time in program.** A hierarchical linear regression analysis was completed to determine if the length of time that a child was in Educare Omaha predicted change in children's social-emotional protective factors overall as well as in the areas of initiative, self-control, attachment, and behavior concerns from fall to spring. Children's home language, gender, IEP status, and ethnicity were controlled for. The percent of days the child was present in the program was used to assess whether length of time in program predicted children's social-emotional protective factors. The results found that length of time in the program did not predict social-emotional outcomes.

Hispanic children had significantly higher Self-Regulation scores and significantly fewer Behavioral Concerns.



## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

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).

Educare used a variety of strategies to engage and support families. These strategies included: parenting education activities, activities focusing on developing healthy nutritional and well-being lifestyles; individualized planning to address family needs and promoting leadership.

**Method.** Family Engagement Specialists used the Dimensions of Parenting (DOP) assessment to help identify family strengths and needs in the fall and spring. A total of 516 DOPs were collected across all five Educare Inc. sites. Also as part of the Educare evaluation, all five Educare Inc. sites complete a parent interview with families in the fall and spring. Three hundred and twenty-two (322) Educare network parent interviews surveys were collected in the fall of 2020, and 278 were collected in the spring of 2021. A number of different areas of parent outcomes were measured in this survey. These specific measures will be identified in the results section described in the following.

### How did parents support their child's learning at home?

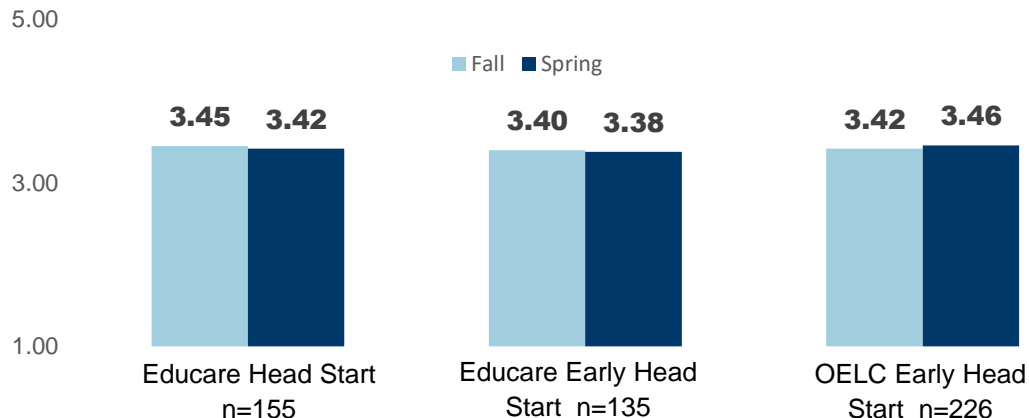
**Method.** Two measures were used to evaluate this area, the Dimensions of Parenting ratings and results of the parent interview on the extent that parents read to their children. This area of the Dimensions of Parenting evaluated parent-child relationships, the degree parents supported their child's learning, and school readiness.

### Family Nurturer and Educator Results

Pre-post comparisons of ratings on the Families as Lifelong Educators scale found that parents' capacity increased slightly in OELC classrooms, and decreased slightly in Educare classrooms. Even with the slight decrease in Educare classrooms, this area was a strength for all families. Scores for all groups were rated within the 'stable' range.

BY SPRING, OELC EARLY HEAD START PARENTS WERE RATED SLIGHTLY HIGHER IN THE AREA OF LIFELONG NURTURER AND EDUCATOR.

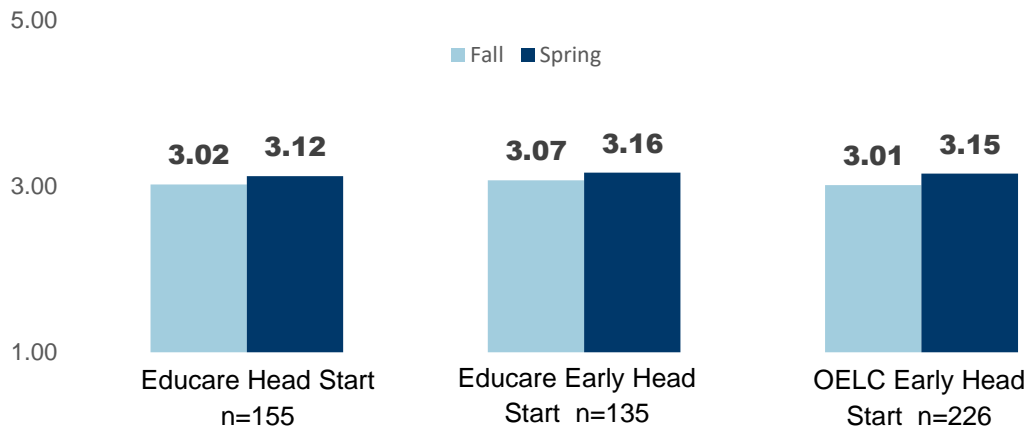
Parents' capacity to educate was a strength.



Pre-post comparisons of ratings on the Families as Learners scale found that parents' capacity increased in this area. This area had similar growth for both Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms, with OELC Early Head Start families having the largest increase. This area showed the greatest increase for OELC Early Head Start parents. Scores for all groups were rated within the "stable" range.

**BY SPRING, ALL PARENTS WERE RATED HIGHER IN THE AREA OF FAMILIES AS LEARNERS.**

OELC Early Head Start parents showed the greatest gains in this area.



**Reading to Children at Home Results**

Educare supported parents through monthly classroom parent meetings, home visits, as well as monthly *Read & Play* activities, which offered parents and other adult caregivers meaningful strategies to support their children's literacy skills. Speech language pathologists at Educare would identify books and developmentally appropriate activities related to the stories for *Read & Play* activities. Children who participated received a free book as well as materials for the home activity. Most families participate in *Read and Play* activities, which are typically offered in the morning and at parent pick up times to suit parents' schedules.

**Method.** The results from the parent interview were used to analyze parents' typical practices at home in singing to their child, teaching them songs or music, or talking with their children while doing everyday tasks and errands like going to the post office, the bank, or the store. Each year parents complete an interview and indicate the frequency that they engage in these language and literacy promoting activities.

92% of parents reported they had confidence in supporting their child's learning at home.

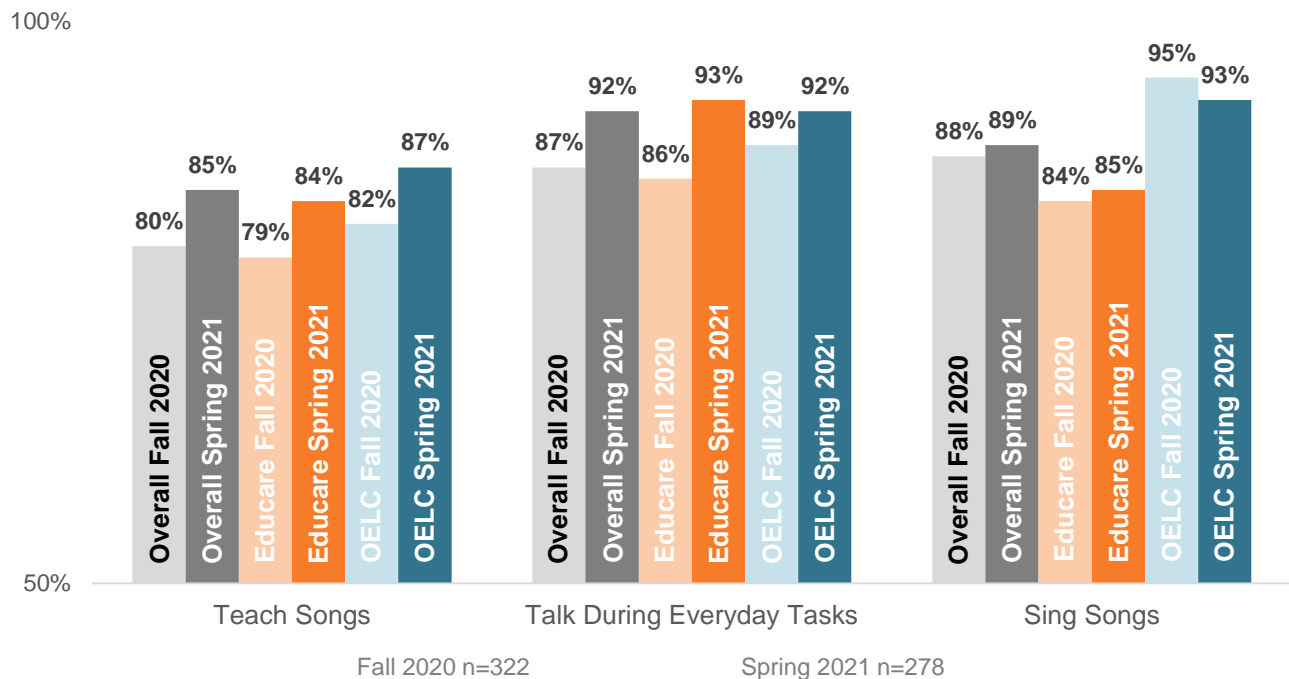
**Results.** Descriptive analyses were completed to determine if the engagement of parents in language and literacy activities at home increased after participation in the program. More parents reported that they engaged in these activities three times or more a week with their children over the course of the year. The areas that increased the most were talking during everyday tasks and teaching songs or music. Talking about everyday tasks was the most prevalent activity overall by spring 2021. OELC parents reported engaging in these activities at a higher rate than Educare Omaha parents in most areas, with the largest difference in singing songs.





## MORE PARENTS ENGAGED IN LANGUAGE AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES WITH THEIR CHILDREN IN THE SPRING OF 2021.

There were some differences across programs.



## What were the Family Connections to Peers, School, and Community?

**Method.** The Dimensions of Parenting assessment and the Family Support Survey were used to assess family connections. This area evaluated parents' social capital and their support systems, connections with their community, and their partnerships with the school and staff. In addition, as part of the parent interview, families were asked specifically how helpful peers, school staff and community members were. These supports were categorized into five areas including: Kinship (e.g., parents and relatives), Spouse/Partner, Professional Services (e.g., teachers, physician), Informal (e.g., friends, church), or Program (e.g., parent groups, social groups). This scale is based on a five-point Likert.

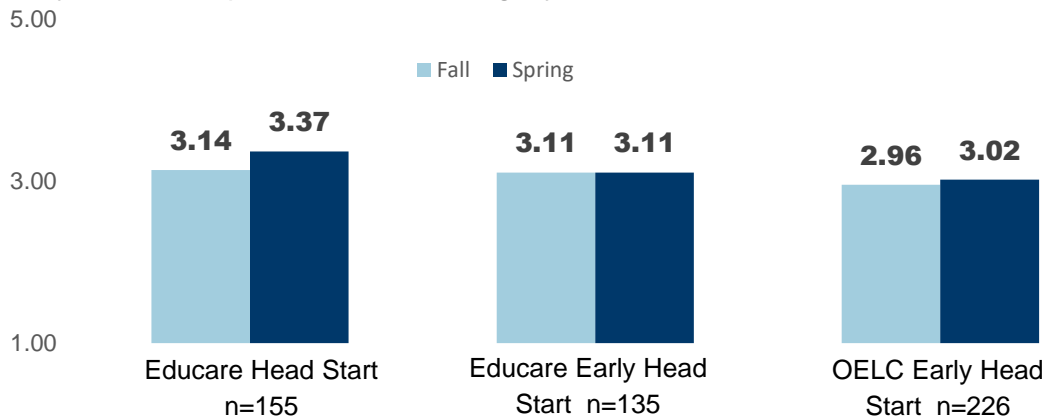


## Family Connection Results

Pre-post comparisons of ratings on the Family Connections scale found that parents' capacity improved in this area for Educare Head Start and OELC Early Head Start families. Educare Early Head start families remained stable over time. Overall scores were rated in the "stable" range.

**BY SPRING, EDUCARE HEAD START PARENTS WERE RATED HIGHER IN THE AREA OF FAMILY CONNECTIONS.**

OELC Early Head Start parents increased slightly.

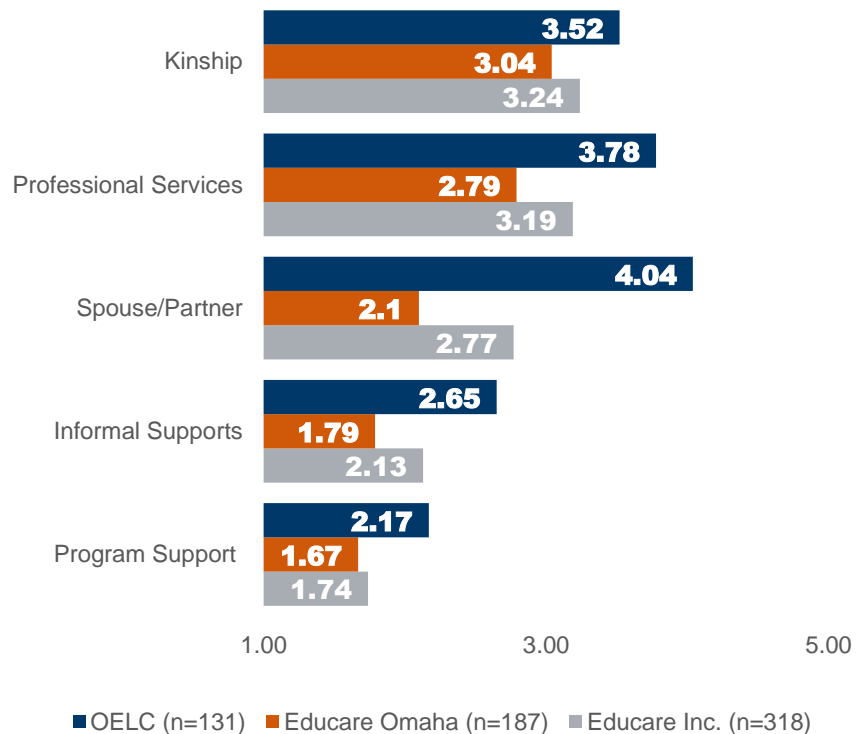


The results of the Family Support Survey found that Educare Inc. parents reported that kinship (e.g., family members) and professional services (e.g., providers and program staff) were the most support to parents. They rated these supports between "somewhat helpful to generally helpful." The groups that were the least available for support were informal and program supports (parent groups) (rated not all to somewhat helpful range). OELC parents rated each area of support higher than Educare Omaha parents.

**FAMILY AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES OFFERED FAMILIES THE MOST SUPPORT.**

On average, OELC parents rated each area higher.

Parents reported having a network of both informal and formal supports.



## What were the Family as Lifelong Advocate and Leader Outcomes?

This area was assessed using the Dimensions of Parenting assessment and information from the parent interview. This area evaluated parents' leadership and advocacy skills, their ability to advocate for high-quality early learning in their community, and make informed decisions.

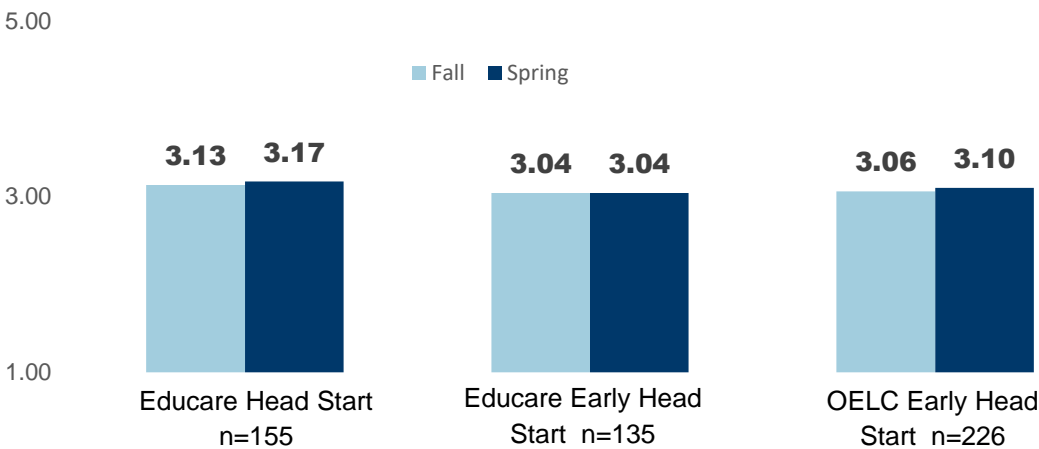
### Lifelong Advocate and Leader Results

Pre-post comparisons of ratings on the Families as Advocates scale found that parents' capacity improved slightly for Educare Head Start and OELC Early Head Start families. Educare Early Head Start parents remained stable. Scores for both groups were within the "stable" range. The parent interview results found that 74% of the parents felt that Educare helped to develop their leadership skills. A higher percentage of parents agreed with this statement at the Educare sites (81%) versus the OELC sites (66%).



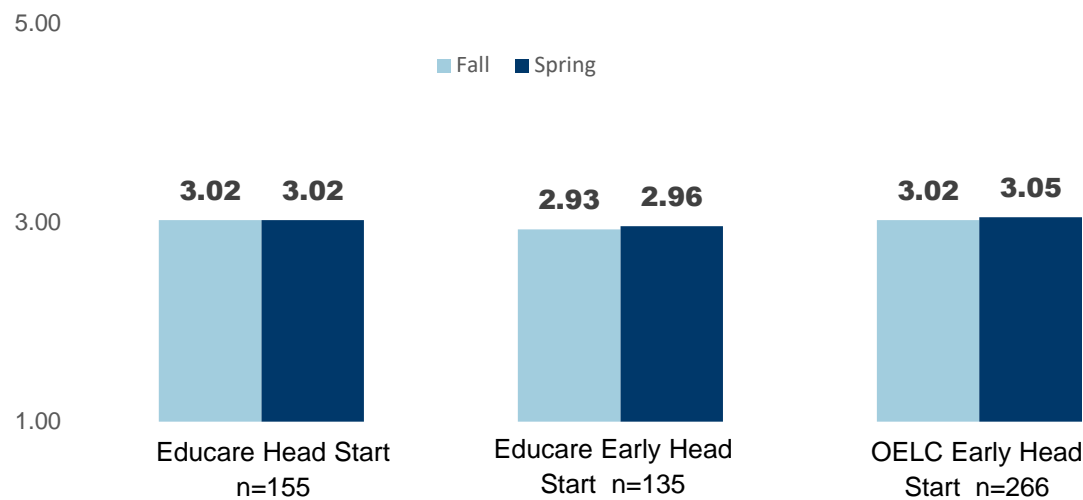
74% of the parents reported that Educare helped to develop their leadership skills.

BY SPRING, EDUCARE HEAD START AND OELC EARLY HEAD START PARENTS WERE RATED SLIGHTLY HIGHER IN THE AREA OF ADVOCACY. Educare Early Head Start parents remained stable in this area.



Pre-post comparisons of ratings on the Families as Leaders scale found that parents' capacity increased for Educare and OELC Early Head Start families. Educare Head Start parents remained stable. Scores for all groups were rated within the "stable" range.

BY SPRING, EDUCARE AND OELC EARLY HEAD START PARENTS WERE RATED HIGHER IN THE AREA OF LEADERSHIP.  
Head Start parents remained stable in this area.



### What were the Family Well-Being and Development Outcomes?

This area was assessed using the Dimensions of Parenting assessment and information from the parent interview. Family well-being area evaluated parents' level of stress, resilience, social-emotional, mental and physical health, and economic and financial stability. Stressful experiences that are frequently encountered by families in poverty can undermine their child's social-emotional competence and well-being (Thompson, 2014). If sufficient in number and frequency, these stressors can serve as barriers to improving parenting and their ability to support their child.

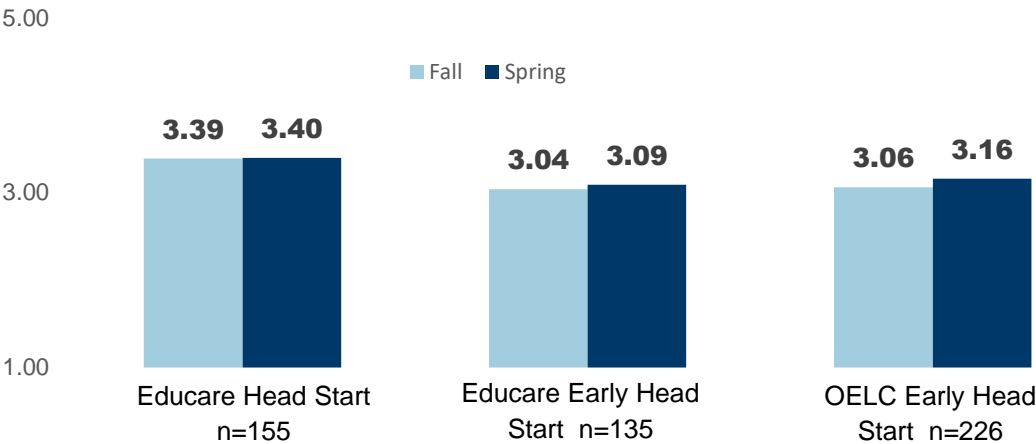


Family Well-Being Results

**Findings.** Pre-post comparisons of ratings on the Emotional Well-Being scale found that parents' capacity improved in this area, with OELC Early Head Start having the largest increase. Head Start families scored higher than Early Head Start families in the spring, but Early Head Start families had a larger increase in scores. Scores for both groups were rated within the "stable" range.

BY SPRING, ALL PARENTS WERE RATED HIGHER IN THE AREA OF EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING.

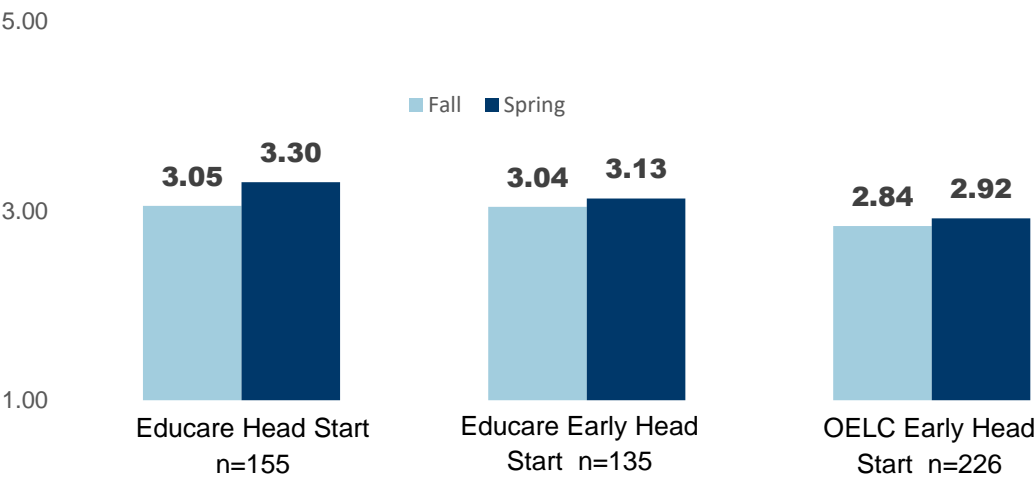
OELC Early Head Start parents showed the greatest gains in this area.



Pre-post comparisons of ratings on the Basic Needs scale found that parents' capacity improved in this area. All groups' scores increased, with Educare Head Start families showing greater gains. This area, and Financial Security, showed the greatest increase for Educare Head Start parents. This area also showed the greatest increase for Educare Early Head Start parents. Scores for both groups were rated within the "stable" range.

BY SPRING, ALL PARENTS WERE RATED HIGHER IN THE AREA OF BASIC NEEDS.

Educare Head Start parents showed the greatest gains in this area.

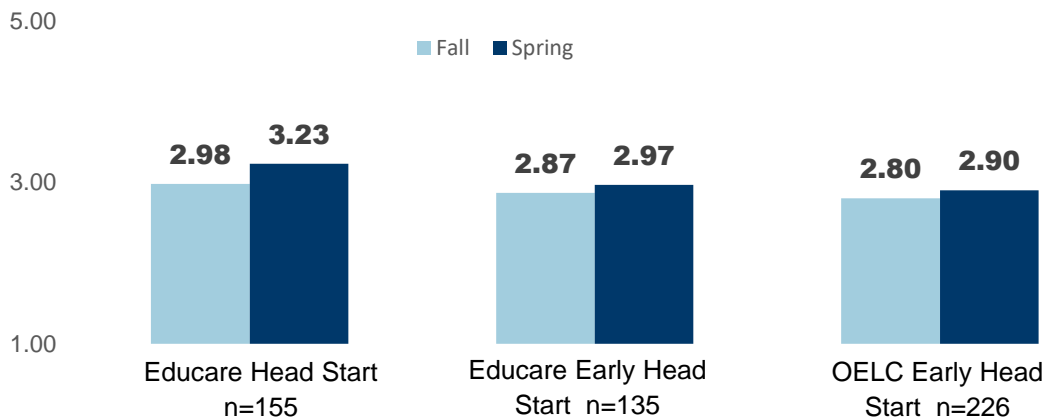




Pre-post comparisons of ratings on the Financial Security scale found that parents' capacity improved in this area. Both groups' scores increased, with Head Start families showing greater gains. This area, and Basic Needs, showed the greatest increase for Head Start parents. Scores for both groups were rated within the "stable" range.

## BY SPRING, ALL PARENTS WERE RATED HIGHER IN THE AREA OF FINANCIAL SECURITY.

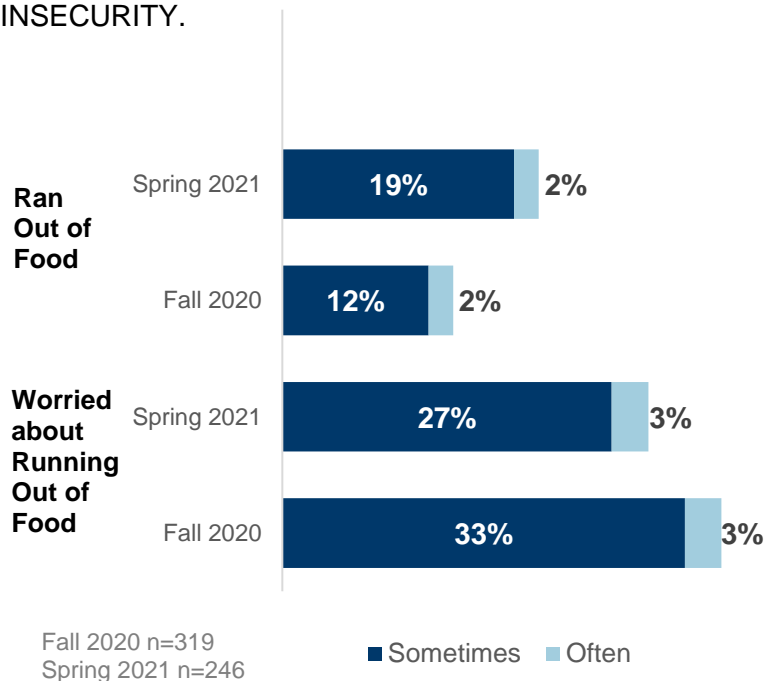
Educare Head Start parents showed the greatest gains in this area.



Another component of well-being is positive mental health. Each year, a mental health screening is completed with parents. This year, 15% of the parents across Educare Inc. screened positive for depression based on the parent interview that was completed in the fall.

Parents were concerned about food insecurities. Many parents (36%) in the fall of 2020 worried about running out of food for their families. This decreased to 30% in spring of 2021. A smaller percentage (14%) experienced going without food in fall of 2020. This increased to 21% in spring of 2021. In fall of 2020, 41% of Educare Omaha parents reported being worried about running out of food versus 28% of OELC parents. More Educare Omaha parents also experienced running out of food (Educare Omaha – 18%; OELC – 9%) in fall of 2020. By spring of 2021, Educare Omaha and OELC parents reported similar results in regards to being worried about running out of food (Educare Omaha – 30%; OELC – 31%) or experiencing going without food (both programs – 21%).

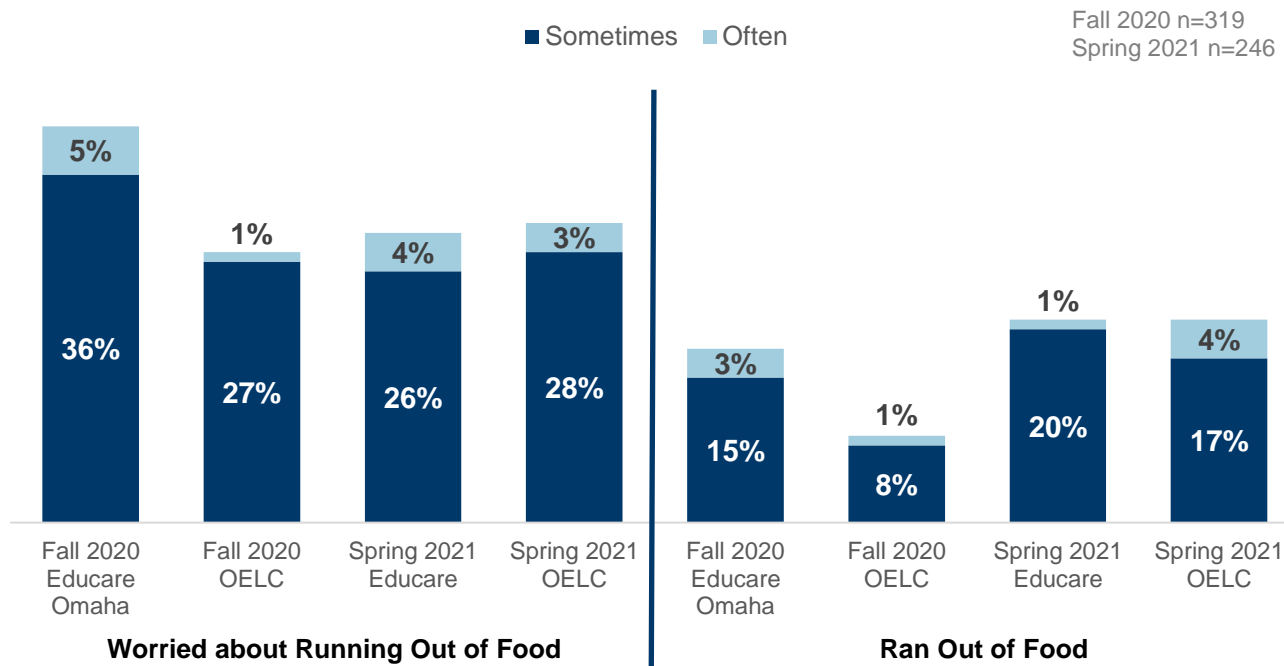
## PARENTS AT EDUCARE INC. WORRY ABOUT FOOD INSECURITY.





## A HIGHER PERCENTAGE OF EDUCARE OF OMAHA INC. PARENTS REPORTED FOOD INSECURITY IN FALL 2020 COMPARED TO OELC PARENTS.

Food security concerns were similar across programs in spring 2021.



As part of the evaluation, parent resilience was measured across all five sites. During the parent interview, parents answered questions based on the Brief Resilience Scale (BRS). The BRS asked questions related to parents' ability to bounce back quickly, if it took them a long time to get over setbacks, etc. A descriptive analysis of the data found that by spring, 99% of parents reported that they bounce back quickly after hard times. Eighty-nine percent responded that they usually get through difficult times with little trouble. Overall, these results indicate that most parents at Educare Inc. are feeling equipped to handle the stresses they encounter in everyday situations.

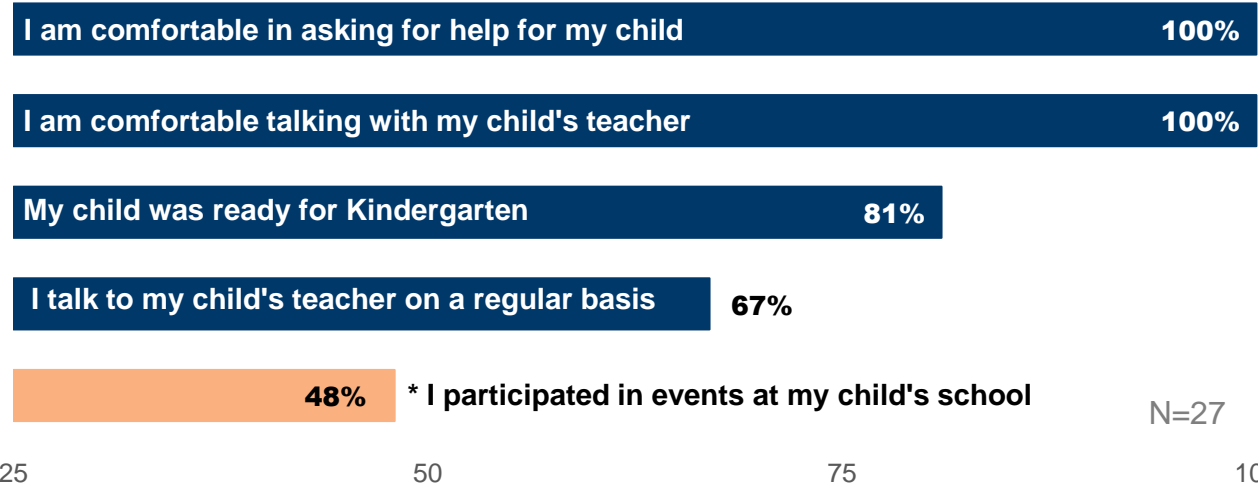
## How engaged were families with their kindergarten teacher and elementary school?

**Method.** Follow-up surveys were conducted with parents of children who graduated from Educare Indian Hill and Kellom the prior year. Those parents were surveyed by phone in the fall following their first scheduled parent-teacher conference. Responses were collected from 27 parents. The purpose of this survey was to evaluate parental perception of the impact Educare had on a child's kindergarten preparation and how engaged they were with their student's new school. The Family Engagement Specialist that had previously worked with each family was the person who surveyed the parents. The survey included information about their child's school, questions regarding the child's strengths, achievements, and level of preparedness for kindergarten, as well as parental communication and interaction with the school. Both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered.

100% of parents attended their child's fall parent-teacher conferences.

# Kindergarten Engagement Results

PARENTS OF KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS FELT ENGAGED WITH THEIR STUDENT'S TEACHER.



Most parents (81%) believed that their child was fully prepared for kindergarten. All parents attended their child's fall parent-teacher conferences (100%). A total of 48% of parents attended events at their child's new school. This was a slight decrease from the previous year, which was reported at 56%. Those who did not attend stated COVID-19 restrictions, no opportunity to participate, and work schedules as the primary reasons for not attending. All parents reported feeling comfortable talking with their child's teacher (100%). Parents reported they talked with teachers at pick-up and drop-off times as well as by telephone, text, or email. The results of the survey found that Omaha Educare was not only preparing children for kindergarten, but the program was also preparing families to advocate for their child's education even after they have left the program.

“  
**Educare was a great foundation. She has adapted and adjusted well to Kindergarten.**  
”

A parent reflects on child's experience in Kindergarten

## Program Outcomes

### How satisfied were the families with Educare?

**Method.** Parents (N=58) were interviewed as part of a spring survey. The purpose was to assess what they valued in their experience with Educare.

### Parent Satisfaction Results

Parents indicated that they had a committed family engagement specialist who understood and respected their culture, values, thoughts, and opinions. Parents felt comfortable sharing information with teachers and

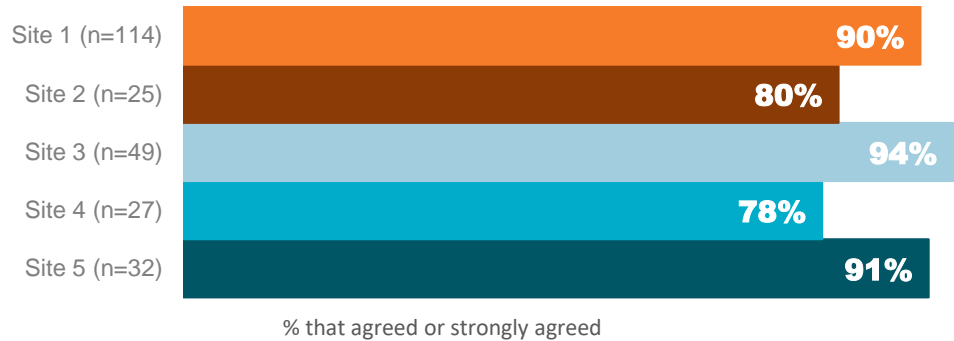


family engagement specialists. Parents reported that family engagement specialists helped develop strategies that can be used in the home to support learning and development. Overall, parents rated themselves as highly engaged in the program (m=6.1). This was based on a seven-point Likert scale with 7=strongly agree.

FELT COMFORTABLE SHARING INFORMATION



HOME SUPPORTS FOR LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROVIDED



CULTURE AND VALUES WERE RESPECTED



## Summary

### WHO WAS SERVED?

- 724 children (birth – age 5)
- 60 infant/toddler classrooms
- 11 Pre-K classrooms

### PROGRAM QUALITY

#### Educare of Omaha, Inc. has high-quality classrooms:

- No significant differences were found between the Educare and OELC sites on any measure of quality.
- Sites demonstrated high levels of quality in both Emotional Support and Classroom Organization (top 10% of all Head Start programs).
- Variability in infant/toddler classrooms was the largest for Space & Furnishings and Personal Care Routines.
- Teachers bring considerable teaching and early childhood experience to the classrooms.
- Approximately 40% of teachers speak a mix of English and Spanish in their classrooms.

**Next Steps.** Consider what components are necessary for quality classrooms given the lack of variability between Educare and OELC sites. Professional development opportunities on providing meaningful feedback may be beneficial on integrating additional opportunities for students to practice their language and other academic skills.

### CHILD OUTCOMES

#### Overall trends

- Time in program was not a significant predictor of scores.
- Limited pre-post outcomes were obtained due to COVID-19 impacting fall data collection.
- By Spring 2021, most students were demonstrating average and above skills in the following areas: early literacy, vocabulary, auditory comprehension, executive functioning, and social-emotional skills.

#### Language Outcomes of Infants and Toddlers after participating in Educare of Omaha, Inc.

- 25% of EHS scored at or above the national average (SS=100).
- 72% of infant/toddler literacy skills were in the average range by spring 2021 and demonstrated significant improvement from fall 2020.

#### Pre-K after participating in Educare of Omaha, Inc.

- 75% of English-speaking students were in the average range for vocabulary.
- 57% of Spanish-speaking Pre-K students had auditory comprehension scores in the average range.
- English speaking students had higher PPVT-IV scores at spring, on average, than those who were ELL.
- Children who are not Hispanic had higher PPVT-IV scores at spring, on average, than those who are Hispanic.

## Social-Emotional Skills of Infants and Toddlers

- Similar percentages of early head start children were within the average range in the spring (67%) compared to the fall (75%).
- By spring, 59% of the preschool children met the program goal, slightly less than in the fall (64%).

## Social-Emotional Skills of Preschool children

- Similar percentages of preschool children were within the average range in the spring (67%) compared to the fall (72%).
- By spring, 56% of the preschool children met or exceeded the program goal.
- Child ethnicity, IEP status, race, home language, and gender were not significant predictors of DECA Total Protective Factors scores.

## Executive Function Outcomes

- 90% of toddlers scored in the average range in the spring.
- 94% of preschool children scored in average range in the spring.
- No differences by gender or IEP status were noted.

**Next Steps.** Continued identification and support of Educare of Omaha, Inc. staff to implement strategies to strengthen children's communication, executive functioning, and social-emotional skills is recommended. Consider how to differentiate supports for students who may have different ways of learning and accessing information. Utilize data from evaluation as well as classroom observations to support student opportunities for growth.

## Family Outcomes

### What were the program outcomes?

#### Families after participating in Educare:

- Demonstrated improved connections, nurturing skills, well-being, and leadership skills.
- Engaged with the school setting.
- Engaged with their child in literacy activities.
- Had a strong network of informal and formal supports.
- Reported resiliency in their lives.
- Demonstrated food insecurities (31%) and food scarcity (21%).

#### Parents reported:

- High levels of engagement in the program.
- Parents felt comfortable sharing information and in accessing home supports for learning.
- They felt less supported around their culture and values.

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## ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Tool	Author	Purpose
Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)	LaParo, Hamre, & Pianta, 2012.	CLASS “is a rating tool that provides a common lens and language focused on what matters—the classroom interactions that boost student learning.”
Devereux Early Childhood Assessments: Infant, Toddler and Preschool	Mackrain, M, LeBuffe, P. & Powell, G., 2007. Devereux Foundation	The DECA is a strength-based assessment that assesses young children’s protective factors including social-emotional competencies and behavior challenges.
Early Communication Indicator (ECI)	Greenwood, Walker & Buzhardt, 2010.	The ECI is a 6-minute play-based measure of children’s growth in expressive communication (e.g., gestures, vocalizations, words, and phrases).
Educare Surveys: Parenting; Kindergarten; and Exit Surveys	Educare Network	The purpose of these surveys is to gather a range of demographic, family outcome and program data. Within the Parent Survey are a number of validated assessment tools.
Environmental Rating Scales: Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales 3 <sup>rd</sup> Edition and Infant/Toddler Environmental Rating Scale 3 <sup>rd</sup> Edition	ECERS: Harms, T., Clifford, R. M., & Cryer, D. ITERS: Harms, T., Cryer, D. Clifford, R. M., & Yazejian, N.	Environmental Rating Scales are observation tools that look at the following areas: Classroom layout, health & safety, play activities, language, teacher-child interactions, & program structure.
Infant Toddler Literacy Assessment (ITLA)	Jackson, B & Marvin, C. 2016	The Infant Toddler Literacy Assessment (ITLA), a criterion-referenced assessment that measures children’s literacy in the areas of social games, print awareness, and communication.
Minnesota Executive Functioning Scale	Reflection Sciences	The MEFS evaluates children’s executive functioning of children beginning at age two.
Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-IV	Dunn, L. M., & Dunn, D. M. 2007 Pearson	The PPVT is a measure of receptive vocabulary.
Preschool Language Scale-5	Pearson, Inc. 2011	PLS is a language tool that evaluates children’s auditory comprehension and expressive communication skills.

## Appendix A: Implementation of Mindfulness and Mastery Grant

As part of the Mindfulness & Mastery grant, data was collected at Educare Indian Hill and Kellom in the 2020-2021 school year. Those data included the Minnesota Executive Function Scale (MEFS; Carlson & Zelazo, 2014), displayed above, as well as the teacher survey. In addition, focus groups were conducted with leadership and teaching staff at both sites.

### Teacher Survey

Teacher surveys included the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI-ES) and the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale short form (SWEMBWBS). The MBI-ES is a 22-item inventory that addresses three scales:

- **Emotional Exhaustion (EE):** measures feelings of being emotionally strained and exhausted by one's work.
- **Depersonalization (DP):** measures unfeeling and impersonal response towards work and children in care.
- **Personal Accomplishment (PA):** measures feelings of competence and achievement in one's work.

#### MBI Results:

##### Emotional Exhaustion

Site	n	Low Emotional Exhaustion	Moderate Emotional Exhaustion	High Emotional Exhaustion
Overall	102	18%	31%	51%
M&M Overall	306	16%	29%	55%

##### Depersonalization

Site	n	Low Depersonalization	Moderate Depersonalization	High Depersonalization
Overall	102	65%	26%	10%
M&M Overall	306	68%	22%	10%

### Personal Accomplishment

Site	n	Low Personal Accomplishment	Moderate Personal Accomplishment	High Personal Accomplishment
Overall	102	3%	5%	92%
M&M Overall	306	2%	7%	91%

The SWEMBWBS is a 7-item inventory that measures mental wellbeing—the positive states of being thinking, behaving, and feeling (min score =7, max score = 35; Putz et al., 2012).

### Well-Being

Site	n	Low Well-Being	Average Well-Being	High Well-Being
Overall	102	6%	65%	29%
M&M Overall	306	8%	63%	29%

## Mindfulness and Mastery Focus Group Findings

In the spring of 2021, Mindfulness and Mastery staff at Indian Hill and Kellom participated in focus groups to review the previous year and look at the effects of COVID-19 on their sites. Leadership and teacher focus groups were conducted at both sites.

### What were the social-emotional curriculum benefits and challenges?

Indian Hill and Kellom both reported continued implementation the Conscious Discipline (CD) curriculum during the 2020-2021 school year. Leadership and teachers reported that the process was going well and that the mindfulness principles were front of mind when planning for the reopening of their sites. Both sites also stated that the mindfulness practices helped children adjust to their classrooms during the first few months of reopening, and that it was helpful to have the online CD videos to go back to.

**“The CD curriculum has been extremely valuable to use with the children. I knew about the tools, but now I have seen the impact it has on the children.”**

Educare Teacher

The majority of teachers reported liking the opportunity, during site closure, to grow their knowledge of the social and emotional curriculum and take a deeper dive than they would have been able to if the sites were open. “We were able to do more deep diving on the strategies and how they worked during the closure. So, when we came back, I was able to roll them out and I felt comfortable using them right away,” one teacher mentioned. It was also reported that teachers felt like the strategies were effective in their classroom, and if a strategy wasn’t effective, they were able to adapt the strategy and individualize for children. As for challenges, leadership mentioned that the

biggest issue was getting new staff trained and up to speed, especially since the sites have reopened. “There is a lot less time for new staff to focus on the CD modules and learn all the aspects of their job while the center is open.”

### **What types of professional development were offered?**

Indian Hill and Kellom both reported implementing a variety of professional development activities related to social-emotional learning. Both sites participated in the Infant Brain Games training, and felt that it was redundant to some other the other trainings they had participated in. Both sites reported in-person and online Conscious Discipline training and were also able to send Early Head Start and Head Start staff from each site to the weeklong Conscious Discipline Institute.

### **Which SE strategies were implemented?**

Staff reported high levels of SE strategy implementation in the classrooms and throughout their sites. Staff were able to implement strategies when they were remote and in-person. While remote, staff reported using social-emotional skills and strategies with families through Zoom and take-away bags that parents picked up. The mindfulness strategies provided by MMI, with breathing balls and other breathing strategies being used most often, were reported being used most frequently. Many teachers reported using I Love You Rituals, safe place, and other CD strategies consistently in their classrooms, via Zoom, and through taped videos.

### **What has been the level of curriculum implementation across the site?**

Both site leadership and staff, at each site, reported using their curriculum at higher levels of fidelity during the 2020-2021 school year. Some attributed the increase in use to the opportunity to dive-in to the training during the site closures, which in turn increased teacher buy-in. One leader stated, “We were able to get a lot more buy-in while we were closed and were able to offer in-depth training to all staff.”

**“It was great to send the activities home during the closure and hear about the children ‘teaching’ their parents how to do them at home.”**

**“For teachers that have been trained in the mindfulness practices, it has become a part of their daily routine.”**

**“Students are helping each other out with emotions. Most children know multiple calm down strategies and will suggest strategies to their peers.”**

Reflections from Educare teachers and leaders

**What has been the impact on students?**

Positive impact on students was reported by staff at both sites, despite closures and virtual learning. Staff mentioned that students were more aware of their emotions and were helping other children regulate their emotions as well. Compared to last year, teachers and directors described that students were much more resilient and able to solve problems on their own.

**What has been the impact on parents?**

Leadership reported that parent engagement had increased during COVID-19, and that most parents were very engaged in virtual lessons and were involved in learning calm down strategies. Teachers also described teaching parents new strategies during the closure and then when the children returned, they had mastered the strategy and were using them in the classroom. As mentioned above, both sites reported that they had supply pick up days where families would pick up supplies for virtual learning, as well as food and other household supplies if needed.







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