

Stronger communities. Brighter futures.

2023-2024 EVALUATION REPORT

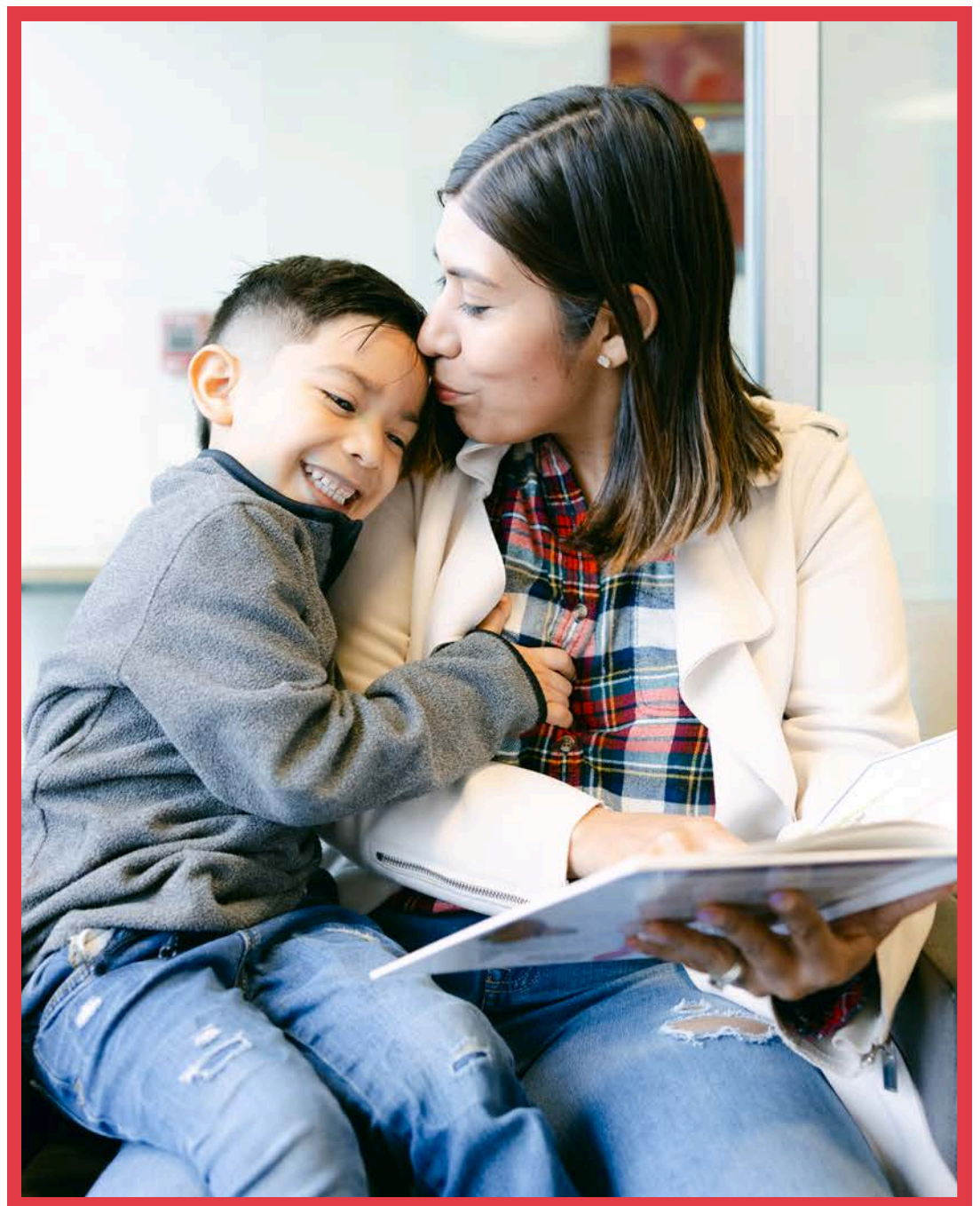




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Introduction

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

Our Mission

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

Our Vision

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

RATIONALE

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

IMPORTANCE OF QUALITY CLASSROOMS

Quality early childhood programs have been linked to immediate, positive developmental outcomes, as well as long-term, positive academic performance (Bustamante et al., 2023; Burchinal, Vandergrift, Pianta & Mashburn, 2010; Barnett, 2008). Research shows that all children benefit from high-quality preschool, with low-income children and English learners benefiting the most (Yoshiwaka, et al., 2013). High teacher involvement, rigor, and exposure to academic content in preschool were linked to children's school readiness (Pianta et al., 2020).

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION IS CRITICAL FOR STUDENTS' SUCCESS

Family engagement with their children and their schools is a key element for student school success (Jeynes, 2022). Partnerships between home and school are especially important for children who are socially and economically disadvantaged (Lang, Jeon & Tebben, 2023). Positive goal-directed relationships between families and program staff are key to engagement and children's school readiness (HHS/ACF/OHS/NCPFCE, 2018).

PRESCHOOL CHILD OUTCOMES PREDICT LATER SCHOOL SUCCESS

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

COACHING SUPPORTS EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

Coaching teachers in instructional practices has proven to be an effective and feasible professional development method for improving teacher instruction. Meta-analysis indicates that coaching early childhood educators creates positive effects on teacher knowledge and instructional competencies and students' language and literacy, social-emotional development, and academic skills (Yang et al., 2022). Successful coaching combines the methods of observation, feedback, goal setting, and reflection (Elek & Page, 2018). Responsiveness, comfort level, and support are critical aspects of the coaching-teacher relationship (Taylor et al., 2022).



2GEN APPROACH

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

The theory of change behind the 2Gen approach suggests aligning services for parents and children yields stronger and lasting results (ASCEND, 2023). Based on community needs, each Learning Community Center developed a comprehensive program to address the opportunity gap for children and families based on the unique characteristics of each community and their needs.

Key elements of the 2Gen approach include:

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



SCHOOL DISTRICT INITIATIVES

The Learning Community supported programs in nine school districts in 2023-2024. Districts customize programs to meet specific needs, but all can benefit from sharing their successes and lessons learned.

Jumpstart to Kindergarten provides targeted students the opportunity to experience a school setting. Most students have little or no experience in classroom environments. This program is supported in one district.

Extended Learning provides additional direct instruction for children to prevent summer learning loss and improve their chances of success. Extended Learning programs were supported in four districts and with one community agency.

Instructional Coaching allows teachers the opportunity to work with a district-level coach to reflect on teaching strategies and enhance instructional practices. Instructional coaching was implemented in six districts.

EVALUATION

A comprehensive evaluation process using a Utilization-Focused evaluation design (Patton, 2012) was conducted to monitor the implementation of the Learning Community programs and assess progress towards identified program outcomes. Data were provided back to programs in a variety of formats as part of a continuous improvement process to provide feedback on current programming and status and to inform future practice. Based upon the evaluation questions, multiple methods were used to describe and measure the quality of implementation, nature of programming, and outcomes demonstrated by the programs funded by the Learning Community (LC). The findings reflect the collective experiences of the child and family through participation in the program as well as other factors (e.g., school district efforts, other community services, and family support). The overarching evaluation questions were:

IMPLEMENTATION. How were programs implemented? Was there variation in implementation and if so, what factors contributed to that variation?

DEMOGRAPHICS. Who accessed and participated in the program or intervention? Are programs serving the intended populations?

QUALITY PRACTICES. To what extent are there quality practices in the center and classroom settings?

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

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

INTERPRETING THE RESULTS

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

The answer to this question can be found by reviewing both the quantitative and qualitative data that are summarized in this report. Where appropriate, statistical analyses provide information to determine if there were significant changes in the outcomes (p value) and if those significant values were meaningful (d value or effect size). The effect size is the most helpful in determining “how well did the intervention work” (Coe, 2002). Qualitative data provide more detailed insight as to how the program is working and outcomes from key informants’ perspectives. It should be noted that none of these programs occur in isolation—they are either also connected to other community resources and agencies and/or the school districts in which the families reside. Causal inferences should not be made with the data.



Early Childhood and Family Engagement





2023-2024

KEY FINDINGS

INTENSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD PARTNERSHIP



PreK students were instructed in high quality classrooms.

CLASS domain scores met the threshold of quality and were in the top 10% of Head Start scores.



PreK students demonstrated significant growth in their social-emotional skills from fall to spring.

Girls demonstrated stronger skills whereas boys had significantly more behavior concerns.



Non-IEP students demonstrated higher skills in vocabulary, social-emotional, school readiness & executive functioning.

However, students with IEPs scored in the average range for executive function skills.



Vocabulary scores indicate a need for improvement.

Girls had significantly higher scores than boys.

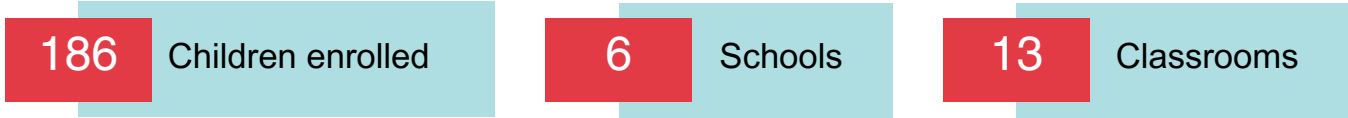


Classrooms served a high percentage of students receiving special education services (40%).

The state average for early childhood is 15-16%.

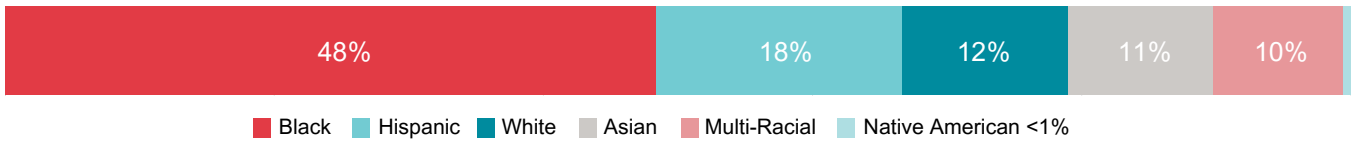
Who We Served

Intensive Early Childhood Partnership

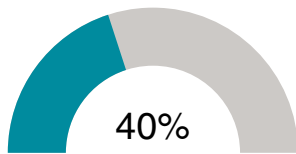


CHILD DEMOGRAPHICS

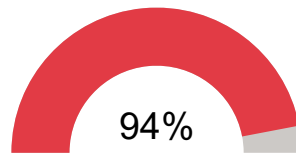
RACE



GENDER

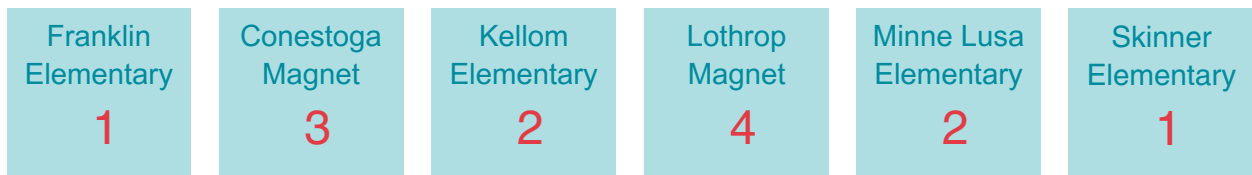


Have an IEP



English is primary language

The IEC partnership supported students in 13 classrooms during the 2023-2024 school year.



The Learning Community Center of North Omaha provides innovative and demonstrative programming to improve educational outcomes for students and families. Leadership and program staff work together to provide a comprehensive mix of research-based programs to the students and their caregivers in North Omaha. The center encompasses two primary programs: Intensive Early Childhood Partnership and Parent University. Descriptions of each program and evaluation findings are summarized in this section.

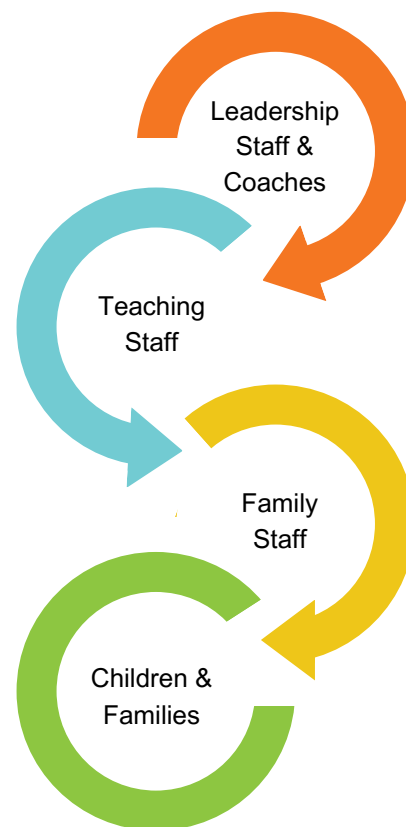


Intensive Early Childhood Partnership

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Intensive Early Childhood (IEC) Partnership, a program that is in collaboration with Omaha Public Schools is based on evidence-based models (Yazejian & Bryant, 2012) that include four key components: intensive teaching teams, reflective coaching, professional development, and family engagement. The model was first introduced to eight inclusive preschool classrooms in Kellom and Conestoga Magnet in 2013. After two consecutive years of positive outcomes based on the model, it was expanded to two additional schools: Lothrop Magnet and Franklin. In 2018, the intensive early childhood partnership expanded to Minne Lusa and Skinner. The IEC partnership supported students in 13 classrooms during the 2023-2024 school year.

INTENSIVE TEACHING TEAMS. Intensive early childhood teams, consisting of teachers, leadership and family support staff, implemented a combination of services and supports. The leadership team included the principal, an early childhood coordinator, and instructional coaches. Each classroom had a lead early childhood teacher, special education teacher, and paraprofessional staff. Using an inclusive model, these professionals worked with all children and discussed effective teaching strategies using data for continuous improvement. Using an inclusive model, these professionals worked together to foster a supportive environment that promotes strong relationships among staff, students, and families.



REFLECTIVE COACHING. Instructional coaches provided reflective consultation to the teaching staff both inside and outside of the classroom. They used a coaching approach adopted by Omaha Public Schools called Teaching Strategies: Coaching to Fidelity. During one-on-one sessions with teachers, helpful coaching tools included recording lessons on iPads, taking pictures, reviewing student data and student and educator interactions. Instructional coaches worked to build teacher confidence, increase their active problem-solving skills, and attain goals set during their reflective sessions. These one-on-one sessions with educators were guided by the TS Fidelity Tool and FAN (Facilitating Attuned Interactions) model of reflective practice within the buildings they supported.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT. The teaching teams benefitted from 11 days of additional professional development (PD) through the school year. Six of those eleven professional development days were facilitated in each school's Early Childhood Professional Learning Community (PLC). The PLC framework establishes a collaborative, problem solving approach in review of child data and in team learning to identify strategies to improve student performance. Five of the eleven PD days were full-day sessions that extended knowledge of the curriculum (Creative Curriculum), child development best practices, strategies that benefit all students including special instruction, and how to utilize the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment system. The PD component was required for teachers at Kellom and Conestoga and elective for teachers at the expanded schools.

Coaching Successes

"I have teachers coming to me and sharing how they had tried something we had talked about and it was working in the classroom or for a particular child."

"The PLCs just run themselves. It is nice for the teachers to come together and collaborate and help each other out. Having that team time and planning."

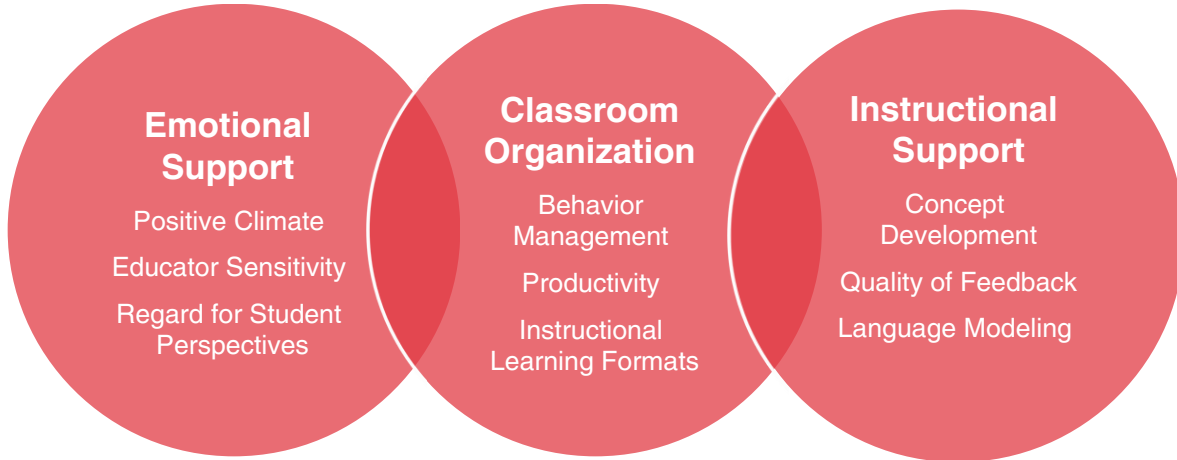


PROGRAM OUTCOMES

QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

METHOD. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System™ (CLASS) was used to evaluate the quality of 13 intensive early childhood preschool classrooms. Results from this assessment are shared with the individual teacher and their coach to build on his/her strengths and identify strategies to improve instructional practices. Classrooms were observed in fall 2023 and spring 2024.

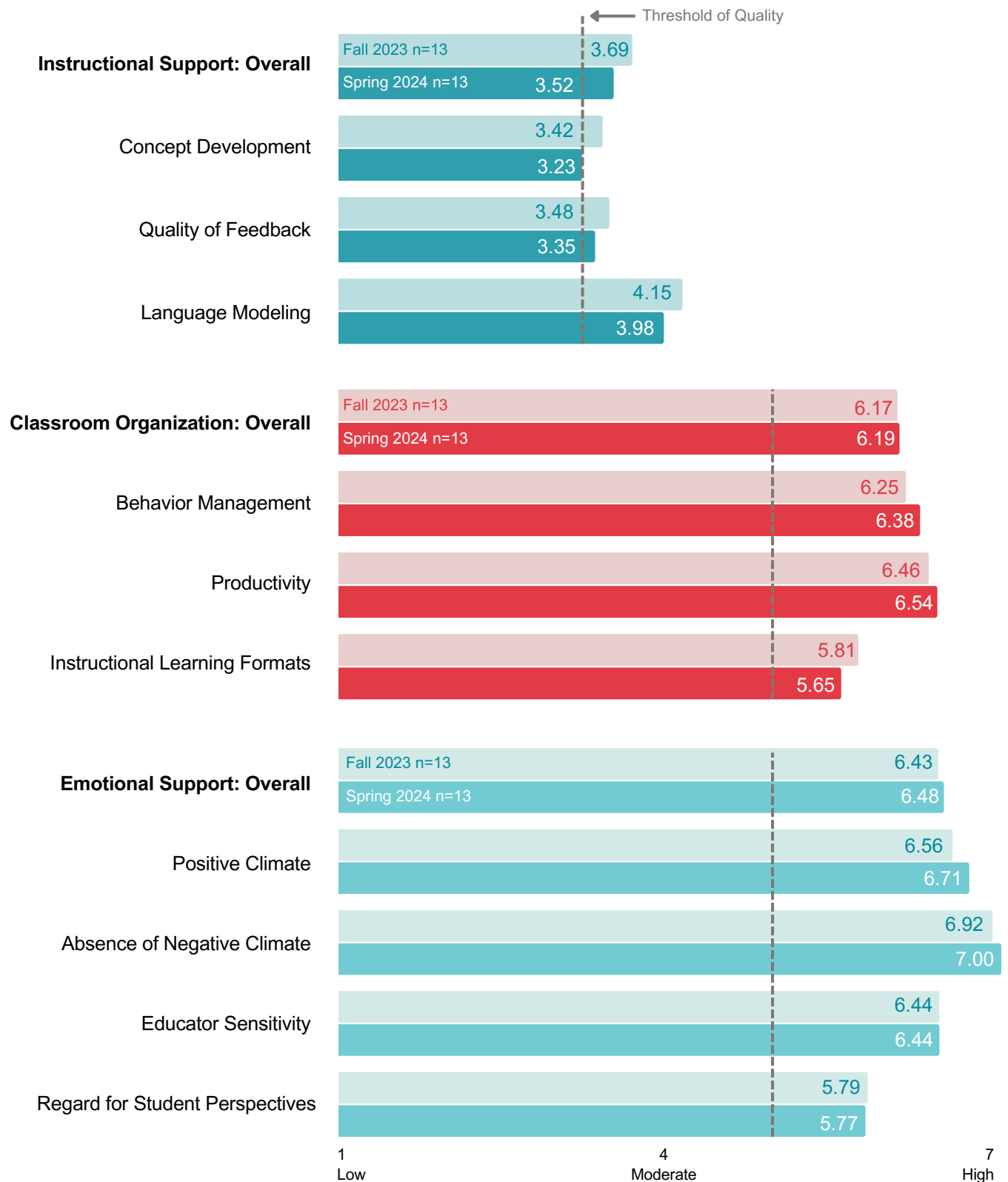
CLASS™ has three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organizational, and Instructional Support. Classrooms are rated on a one to seven scale with one to two indicated low ratings and six to seven indicating high ratings. Nationally, Instructional Support tends to be the domain with the most opportunity for improvement as it challenges teachers to effectively extend language, to model advanced language, and to promote higher-order thinking skills. Research indicates CLASS ratings for Emotional Support and Classroom Organization of 5 or higher and Instructional Support ratings of 3.25 or higher are the minimum threshold necessary to impact student achievement (Burchinal et al., 2010). Preschoolers with teachers who scored higher than average in classroom quality tested higher in language, math, and executive function, indicating that teacher behavior is associated with increased student outcomes (Araujo et al., 2016). In classrooms with consistently high levels of Instructional Support, preschoolers showed significant gains in literacy and language skills compared to those with low-quality Instructional Support (Cash et al., 2019).



FINDINGS. The scores for the preschool classrooms exceeded research reported thresholds necessary to influence student achievement. The following figure provides the overall scores for each domain and the dimension scores that are related to each overall score. On average, classrooms met the threshold of quality across all three domains. All dimensions met the threshold to impact student achievement in fall 2023. Classroom Organization and Emotional Support were in the high-quality range during both observation periods. Instructional Support was in the moderate range. IEC CLASS scores were in the top 10% of Head Start Classrooms (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020).

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

Concept Development improved the most from 2022-2023. n=13



CHILD OUTCOMES

Supporting young children’s development in the early years has shown to be important in laying the foundation for later academic skills. Research has shown that high-quality Head Start children had higher cognitive scores than children in low-quality Head Start or center-based care (Lee, 2019). In recent years, the important contributions of executive functioning to school readiness have been highlighted (Benson et al., 2013; Koruoco, Litkowski & Schmitt, 2020; Meixner & Laubrock, 2024). Researchers correlate a relationship between executive functioning and a preschooler’s ability to learn in the classroom (Devlin et al., 2024; Ruffini et al., 2024).

SCHOOL READINESS SKILLS

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

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS

Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA): This teacher-completed questionnaire assesses young students’ social-emotional development by identifying total protective factors overall and in the areas of initiative, self-control, attachment, and behavior. The DECA was completed at all schools with a total of 174 students assessed.

SCHOOL READINESS SKILLS

Bracken School Readiness Assessment (BSRA): The BSRA measures the academic readiness skills of young students in the areas of colors, letters, numbers/counting, sizes, comparisons, and shapes. BSRA, administered by external evaluators, was completed at four schools with a total of 128 students assessed.

VOCABULARY SKILLS

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, 5th Edition (PPVT-5): The PPVT-5 measures students’ vocabulary skills. The PPVT-5, administered by external evaluators, was completed at all six schools with a total of 176 students assessed.

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS

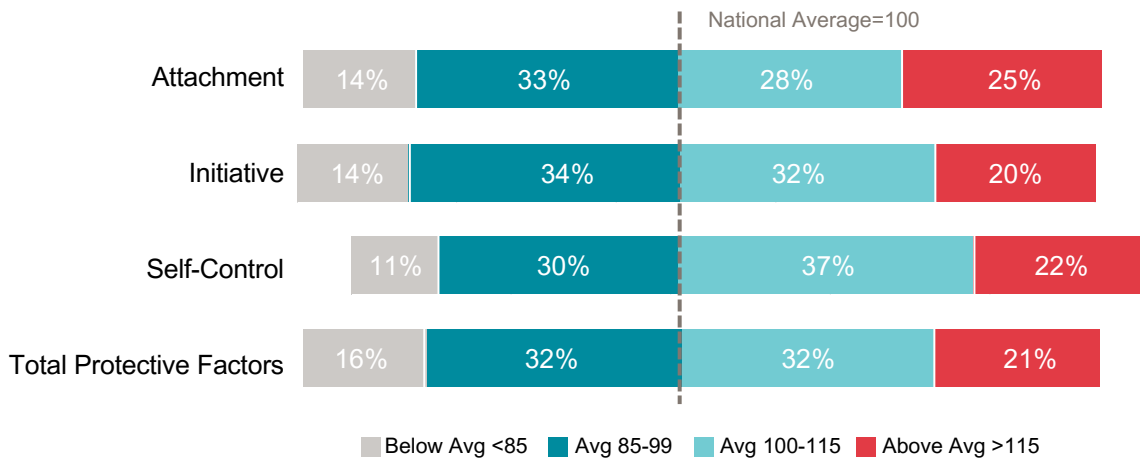
The Minnesota Executive Functioning Scale (MEFS): Executive functioning is defined as a student’s ability to control impulses that then enable them to plan, initiate, and complete activities needed for learning. This digital assessment, administered by external evaluators, was completed with 71 children from two schools.

FINDINGS

Social-emotional

The descriptive analyses found that most students scored within the average to above average range across all areas of the social-emotional measure: Total Protective Factors (85%), Attachment (86%), Initiative (86%) and Self-Control (88%). Over half of the students demonstrated social-emotional skills at or above the national average, which is a score of 100.

OVERALL, HALF THE STUDENTS SCORED AT THE NATIONAL AVERAGE OR ABOVE ACROSS ALL AREAS BY SPRING. n=174



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

ON AVERAGE, CHILDREN'S SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS INCREASED OVER TIME.

By spring, average scores were at or above the national average across all areas. n=173



Paired t-test analyses (n=173) were used to determine if there were significant changes over time. Significant improvements were found across all areas of the social-emotional assessment.

Attachment: [t(173)= 7.63; p<0.01; d=0.58] with the effect size suggesting medium meaningful change.

Initiative: [t(173)= 8.46; p<0.01;d=0.64] with the effect size suggesting medium meaningful change.

Self-control: [t(173)=5.16; p<0.01;d=0.39] with the effect size suggesting small meaningful change.

Total protective factors: [t(173)=8.57; p<0.01;d=0.65] with the effect size suggesting medium meaningful change.

The social-emotional tool also measures behavioral concerns such as having temper tantrums, short attention span, and easily becoming upset. In fall and spring, 22% of the students scored in the “concern” range, indicating child behaviors that were outside what is typical for three-to-five-year-old children.

Did student factors impact social-emotional scores?

GENDER. Of interest was whether there were any gender differences in student's social-emotional outcomes. Significant differences were found for total protective factors, attachment, initiative, self-control, and behavior concerns. **Girls demonstrated stronger social-emotional skills, whereas boys had significantly more behavior concerns.**

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

Total protective factors: Girls (m=53.88), Boys (m=49.16); t(85)=3.29; p≤0.002).

Attachment: Girls (m=54.39), Boys (m=49.98); t(85)=3.19; p≤0.001).

Initiative: Girls (m=52.00), Boys (m=48.98); t(85)=1.95; p=0.05).

Self-control: Girls (m=53.60), Boys (m=48.86); t(85)=3.48; p<0.001).

Behavior concerns: Girls (m=47.80), Boys (m=53.70); t(85)=-4.12; p<0.001).

RACE. Independent t-tests were conducted to determine if there were any differences between student social-emotional outcomes based on race/ethnicity. There were no statistically significant differences between group means as determined by one-way ANOVA at p<=0.05.

IEP STATUS. Students receiving special education services make up nearly 40% of the students in the IEC classrooms. Therefore, it is important to disaggregate the data to measure the impact of their development. Students without IEPs demonstrated stronger social-emotional skills. Students with IEPs had significantly higher behavior concerns.

Total protective factors: No IEP (m=57.67), IEP (m=47.39); $t(69)=7.28$; $p<0.002$).

Attachment: No IEP (m=57.21), IEP(m=48.91); $t(69)=5.69$; $p<0.001$).

Initiative: No IEP (m=57.03), IEP (m=45.93); $t(69)=7.56$; $p<0.001$).

Self-control: No IEP (m=55.66), IEP (m=48.36); $t(69)=5.20$; $p<0.002$).

Behavior concerns: No IEP (m=47.79), IEP (m=53.09); $t(69)=-3.59$; $p<0.001$).

Paired t-tests were conducted to determine if students experienced different changes in social-emotional skills over time based on special education status. There were 70 students with IEPs and 103 without IEPs who had DECA scores in both fall and spring. For standard paired t-test analysis, the number of paired observations is identical, so 70 paired observations from each group were used as the sample size to conduct the analysis.

Total protective factors

No IEP [$t(70)=-5.45$; $p<0.001$; $d=-0.65$] With the effect size suggesting medium meaningful change.

IEP [$t(70)=-5.96$; $p<0.001$; $d=-0.711$] With the effect size suggesting medium meaningful change.

Attachment

No IEP [$t(70)=-54.66$; $p<0.001$; $d=-0.56$] Effect size suggesting medium meaningful change.

IEP [$t(70)=-4.88$; $p<0.001$; $d=-0.58$] Effect size suggesting medium meaningful change.

Initiative

No IEP [$t(70)=-5.54$; $p<0.001$; $d=-0.66$] Effect size suggesting medium meaningful change.

IEP [$t(70)=-5.52$; $p<0.001$; $d=-0.66$] Effect size suggesting medium meaningful change.

Self-control

No IEP: [$t(70)=-3.56$; $p<0.001$; $d=-0.43$] Effect size suggesting small meaningful change.

IEP: [$t(70)=-4.08$; $p<0.001$; $d=-0.49$] Effect size suggesting medium meaningful change.

Behavior concerns

No IEP: No significant changes found.

IEP: [$t(70)=2.77$; $p<0.01$; $d=0.33$] Effect size suggesting small meaningful change.

ON AVERAGE, SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS IN CHILDREN RECEIVING SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES INCREASED OVER TIME. n=70

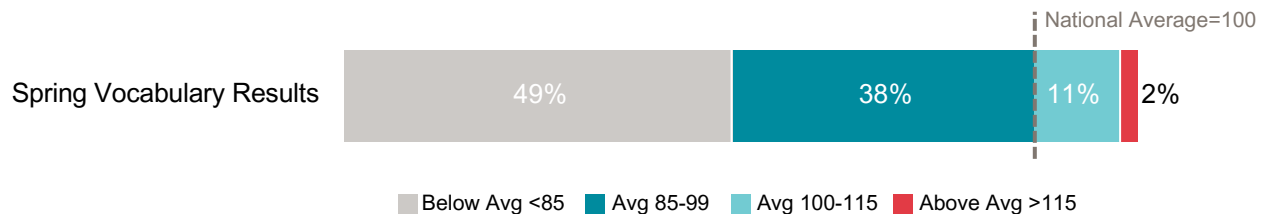


Vocabulary

The descriptive analyses found that half of students scored within the average range in the spring.

BY SPRING, FEWER THAN 15% OF STUDENTS SCORED AT OR ABOVE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE.

Almost half of students (49%) scored in the below average range. n=169



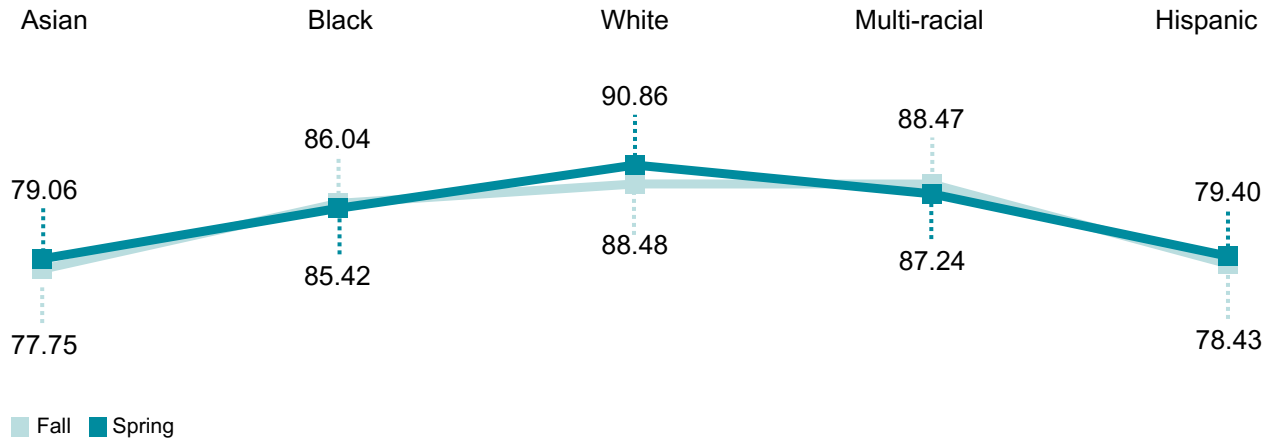
Mean standard scores minimally increased from fall (84.44) to spring (84.77). A paired t-test (n=162) analysis found that the change from fall to spring was not statistically significant.

Did student factors impact vocabulary scores?

GENDER. An independent sample t-test was conducted to determine whether there were any gender differences in students' vocabulary outcomes. Testing determined that girls (m=87.00) scored significantly higher than boys (m=82.18) on the spring assessment [t(79)=2.29, p<0.05].

RACE/ETHNICITY. Scores were analyzed to determine if there were any differences between student vocabulary scores over time based on race and/or ethnicity. Scores for Asian, White, and Hispanic student groups increased, while scores for Black and Multi-racial student groups decreased from fall to spring. Scores across all groups are in the below average to low average range. This test does not consider if the student’s first language is something other than English, and only racial groups with at least 10 students are reported in the chart.

VOCABULARY SCORES INCREASED FOR ASIAN, WHITE, AND HISPANIC RACIAL GROUPS. n=159



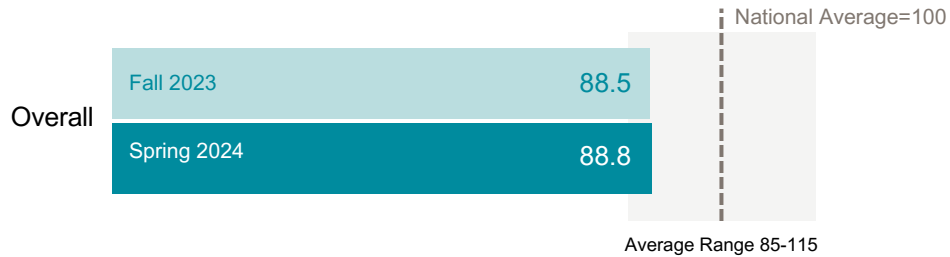
IEP STATUS. Of interest was whether there were any differences in student's vocabulary outcomes based qualification for special education services. An independent sample t-test was conducted and determined that students without IEPs (M=88.05) scored significantly higher than students with IEPs (M=77.46) on the spring assessment [$t(59) = (-) 2.18, p < 0.05$].

Paired t-testing was conducted to see if there were differences in statistical significance based on special education status. On average, vocabulary skills increased for students without an IEP (M_Fall=84.92; M_Spr=87.66) and decreased for students with an IEP (M_Fall=80.03; M_Spr=78.63). No statistical differences over time were found for either group.

School Readiness Skills

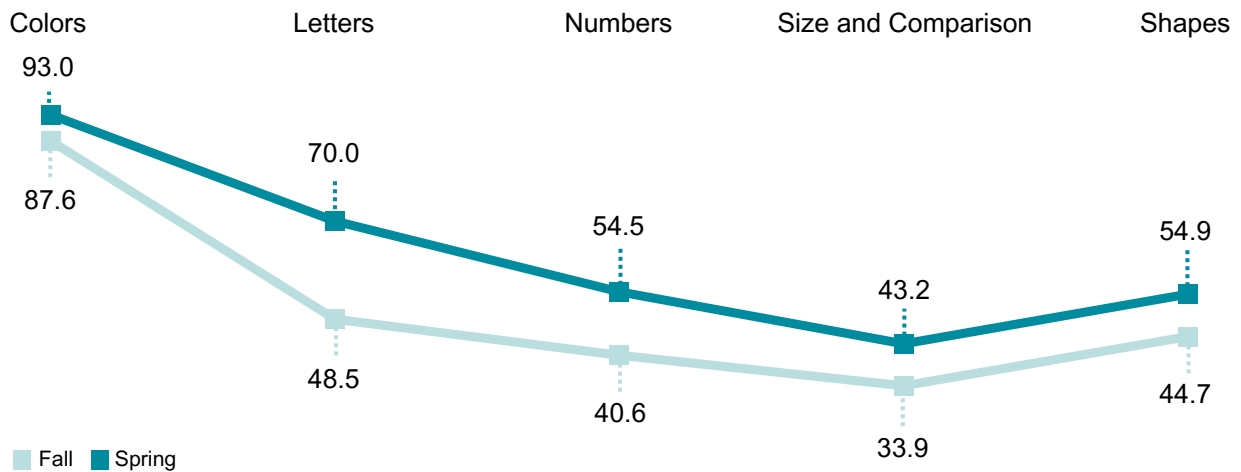
School readiness skills showed slight increases from fall to spring. The overall mean standard scores on the Bracken increased from 88.5 to 88.8, remaining in the low end of the average range. The results from the paired t-test analysis found that the changes were not significant [$t(114)=-0.478$; $p>0.05$].

STUDENTS' SCHOOL READINESS SKILLS SHOWED A SMALL INCREASE FROM FALL TO SPRING. $n=114$



When examining individual subtests, the percentage of mastery increased across all areas. Students started the year with strong mastery of colors and increased that mastery to 93%. The area with the lowest percentage of mastery was Size and Comparison. Students started the year at 34% mastery and ended with 43% mastery. The Size and Comparison subtest assesses students' understanding of location words, comparison concepts, and directional concepts. These are higher order cognitive skills than other areas of the tool.

THE PERCENTAGE OF MASTERY INCREASED IN EACH SUBTEST. $n=114$



Did student factors impact school readiness scores?

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

GENDER. Of interest was whether there were any gender differences in students' school readiness outcomes. Independent sample t-tests indicated no significant differences between boys and girls (n=55). The girls had a higher mean score (90.25) than the boys (87.30) but the difference was not significant.

IEP STATUS. Students receiving special education services make up nearly 40% of the students in the IEC classrooms. On the school readiness scale, students with an IEP (M_Fall=85.23 and M_Spr=85.03), and students without an IEP (M_Fall=91.03 and M_Spr=90.97) scored within the average range. Paired t-testing found no statistically significant changes over time for either group.

Executive Functioning Skills

Students' executive functioning skills showed slight increases from fall to spring. The overall mean standard scores increased from 92.5 to 93.0. The results of a paired t-test analysis found that changes were not significant.

STUDENTS' EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS SHOWED MODEST INCREASES FROM FALL TO SPRING. n=61



Did student factors impact executive functioning scores?

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

IEP STATUS. MEFS data was analyzed to determine if there were any differences in students' executive functioning outcomes based on qualification for special education services. The independent t-test analysis [$t(22) = 3.36, p < 0.01$] showed that students without IEPs (M=96.30) scored significantly higher than students with IEPs (M=88.09) in the spring assessments.

Students with an IEP (M_Fall=86.78 and M_Spr=88.09), and students without an IEP (M_Fall=96.57 and M_Spr=96.30) scored within the average range. Paired t-testing found no statistically significant changes over time for either group.



2023-2024

KEY FINDINGS

PARENT UNIVERSITY



Parent University doubled its enrollment from the previous year.

203 parents participated during the year.



Participation for Parent University courses was strong.

Completion rate was 94% for courses with more than one session.



Participants made gains in English skills and GED courses.

After 40+ hours of instruction, 81% gained at least one level in their reading and/or listening skills.



Children's social-emotional skills were in the average range.

Self-control was a strength with 61% meeting or exceeding the national average.



School and community engagement increased for families who participated at least 6 months.

100% feel at least somewhat comfortable in communicating with their child's teacher.

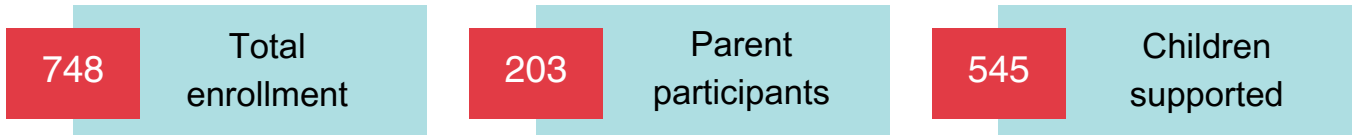


Language skills need to be improved.

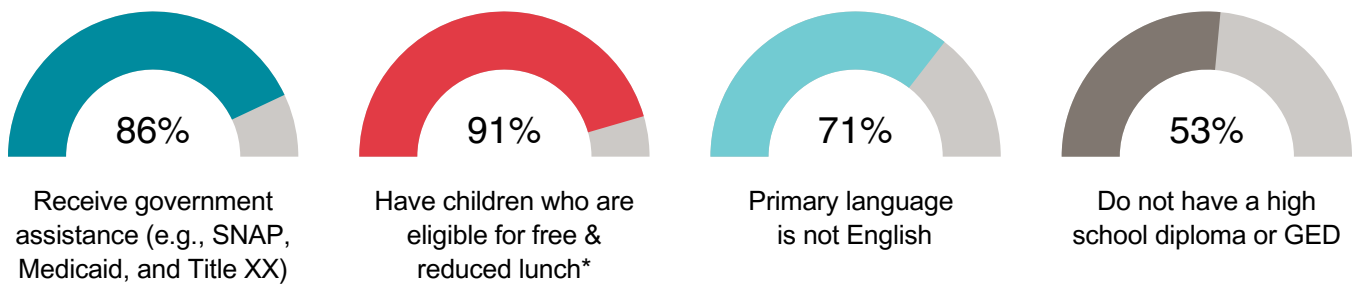
Over 40% of students scored below average on expressive and receptive language skills.

Who We Served

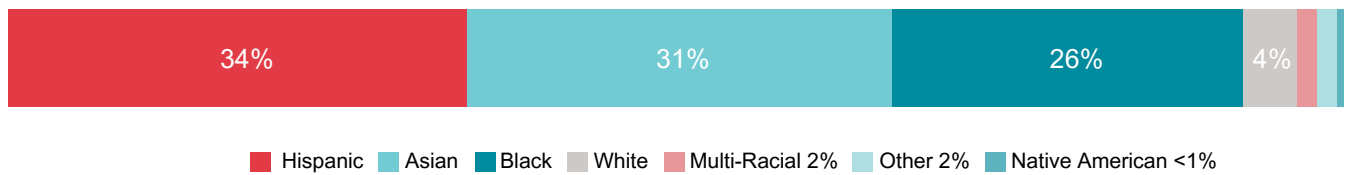
Parent University



PARENT PARTICIPANTS



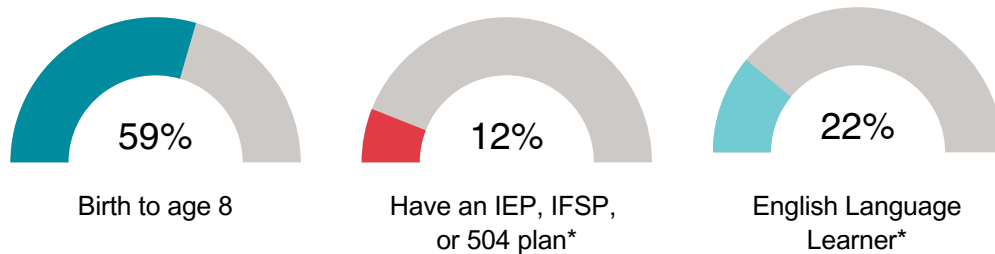
RACE



12 Families reported 12 different primary languages. The most common primary languages were Spanish (35%), English (29%), Karen (26%), and Arabic (2%).

46 Number of parent participants who needed childcare at LCCNO (23%). Six additional participants reported previously using childcare at the center.

CHILD PARTICIPANTS



* Percentages are based on participants who reported data for this category. Students not yet in elementary school do not have an official English Language Learner status.

Parent University

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION



Parent University is a comprehensive, two-generational family engagement program based on research and best practices that began in February 2015 at the Learning Community Center of North Omaha. The program aims to collaborate with school districts and community organizations to measurably improve educational outcomes for children and families in poverty. In 2023-2024, Parent University increased the number of parent participants from 99 to 203, and the number of children of participating parents increased from 259 to 545. In total, enrollment increased by 109% during the 2023-2024 reporting period, for a total of 748 individuals participating in Parent University.

Parent University provides individualized and center-based supports and services to families whose children are eligible to participate in the Intensive Early Childhood Partnership and families with a child six years or younger who reside in school attendance areas of 24 elementary schools in North Omaha.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Parent University underwent changes during the 2023-2024 evaluation period, including restructuring the program's overall operation; adopting the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) model to further strengthen the 2GEN approach; increasing community partnerships with local, statewide, and national organizations to enhance best practices; and strengthening relationships with schools to better support children and families.

The Operations Team ensures that families and stakeholders feel welcome. It focuses on running programs efficiently and removing barriers to participation.

The Family Team provides holistic support for all families within the program and ensures that coaching and services help parents better support their children.

The Education Team focuses on delivering high-quality educational offerings at LCCNO, including parenting information and child development strategies.

During the 2023-2024 evaluation period, Parent University adopted the NCFL (National Center for Families Learning) model to support and align with the Aspen 2GEN model. The NCFL model emphasizes strong community partnerships and structured program delivery. Additionally, it fosters empowerment and sustainability by equipping parents with essential skills, helping them become more self-sufficient and better advocates for their children's education.

The four components of family literacy in the NCFL model are Adult Education, Child Education, Parent Time, and Parent and Child Together Time (PACT).

Success Story

The Parent University team helped a parent experiencing chronic homelessness. With the help of the Educational Navigators, this parent successfully found permanent housing for her family, started taking workforce development classes to advance her career, and is now on a path toward a career in healthcare. Also, she can now better support her children through the parenting classes she has taken through the program.

ADULT EDUCATION. Parent University focuses on supporting parenting adults in achieving their own goals related to adult basic education, English language learning, workforce development, children's growth and development, financial literacy, health and wellness, and empowerment. The program incorporates adult education into its programming by offering courses on adult basic education, English language learning, General Education Diploma (GED), and workforce development, which provide parents with the foundational skills necessary to improve their employment prospects and support their children's educational journeys.



Parent University's adult education programs are linked to children's growth and development, emphasizing the interconnectedness of family well-being. In 2023-2024, the program offered classes on child development, effective parenting strategies, and the importance of early childhood education. Topics such as Common Sense Parenting, Mind in the Making, Circle of Security, Catch Them Being Good, and Leading with Love and Strength focused on enhancing parents' skills in nurturing and guiding their children. These parenting classes were offered via local community partnerships such as Boys Town, University of Nebraska at Omaha, ESU3, and Project Harmony.

Outside of the classroom, adult learning continued with the coaching support of the Educational Navigators (EN). Each family in the program spent time with a navigator to create long-term and short-term goals to support the family. ENs checked in with parents monthly to ensure they were working toward their goals and connected them to resources and support. ENs also helped parents sign up for Parent University's classes. During the 2023-2024 report period, all EN underwent training on the Growing Great Kids (GGK) curriculum, executive functioning, CPR, home visiting, and goal-setting.

CHILD EDUCATION. Children's education programming focuses on programs that support academic growth, social-emotional learning, and physical development. During the 2023-2024 reporting period, an average of 58 unique children were served each month, with the number of children in childcare ranging from 1 to 45 when childcare was provided.

In addition to planning and delivering learning opportunities at the program, the child learning team also worked closely with the Educational Navigator to ensure that learning in the class was transferred to the home, and that learning from the home was accommodated in the classroom.

Parent University leveraged its partnerships to provide programming opportunities. Through Project Harmony, Parent University provided group therapy as well as individualized therapy. The program partnered with the University of Nebraska Omaha to help families explore college planning for their children. Through the Omaha Conservatory of Music’s String Sprouts program, children enrolled in the Parent University program learn violin for free. Parent University also piloted after-school homework help for school-age students during the 2023-2024 reporting period.



PARENT TIME. Parent Time offers parenting adults the chance to learn together, fostering their own growth and development. Parent University provided various classes and opportunities for parents to learn together, aligning with the 2GEN and NCFL models. Examples for 2023-2024 included:

The Women’s Trauma Group brings together parents dealing with trauma to learn from and support each other’s growth.

Leading with Love and Strength enables parents to better understand themselves and discover how their strengths can benefit their children.

Mujeres y Valores gathers Spanish-speaking parents to support their development and empower each other.

Parenting classes, such as Circle of Security, teach parents best practices in attachment, allowing them to support their children while learning together.

Media Literacy classes, in partnership with the Omaha Public Library, guide parents in navigating and locating community and library resources.

By bringing parents together to learn and share experiences, Parent Time created a supportive community where parents could empower one another. Through shared learning experiences, parents developed stronger support networks, gained new perspectives, and acquired practical skills that directly benefitted their families. Parent Time promoted a sense of community and shared responsibility among parents, through which parents learned from the collective strength and wisdom within their community, fostering a culture of mutual support and continuous learning.

PARENT AND CHILD TOGETHER TIME

(PACT). Parent and Children Time at Parent University is multigenerational programming, where parenting adults actively engage in learning alongside their children. By participating in educational activities together, families build stronger connections, improve communication, and create a supportive home environment that encourages lifelong learning. This approach aligns with 2GEN model, which emphasizes addressing the needs of both children and their parents to break the cycle of poverty and achieve lasting family success.



Multigenerational programming models positive learning behaviors for children, demonstrating the value of education and continuous self-improvement. When children see their parents actively engaged in learning, they are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward education and be motivated to pursue their own academic goals. The shared learning experience also allows parents to better understand their children's educational challenges and successes, enabling them to provide more effective support and guidance.

Parent University offered monthly **Family Play Day** and **Family Play Night** events where parents were encouraged to come with their children to learn and play together. Through these events, parents gained insight into their children's experiences in childcare and extended classroom learning to the home. Parent University also provided monthly family engagement activities that invited parents to play and learn with their children. Events in 2023-2024 included:

A movie night that explored social-emotional learning.

A Halloween Boo Bash that promoted literacy and safety.

A Thanksgiving Dinner that taught the science behind agriculture and harvest.

A family picnic that helped parents learn to play with their kids outside.

Events averaged more than 100 participants, offering families opportunities to bond in fun and educational settings. In addition to themed events, participants attended regular Storytime sessions.

Home visitation played a crucial role in supporting parents with PACT. At home visits, Educational Navigators addressed barriers to family stability and provided ongoing coaching to help parents engage with their children's development at home.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Beyond internal programmatic growth, Parent University continues to build partnerships within the community to enhance its ability to support families and children. These collaborations provide comprehensive and holistic support to participants by leveraging the strengths and resources of each partner organization. Partnership examples include:

OMAHA CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC (STRING SPROUTS)

Provides **music education** opportunities for participating children.

BRIDGES OUT OF POVERTY

Provides **financial literacy and support**, helping families achieve economic stability.

NEBRASKA GROWING READERS

Distributes more than **4,000 books**, fostering a love of reading and improving literacy among children and parents.

OMAHA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND PROJECT HARMONY

Offers **health information and mental health support** to families.

KEEP OMAHA BEAUTIFUL

Participating parents learn about **rain barrels** and receive actual rain barrels to help **reduce their water bills**.

OMAHA BETTER BIRTH

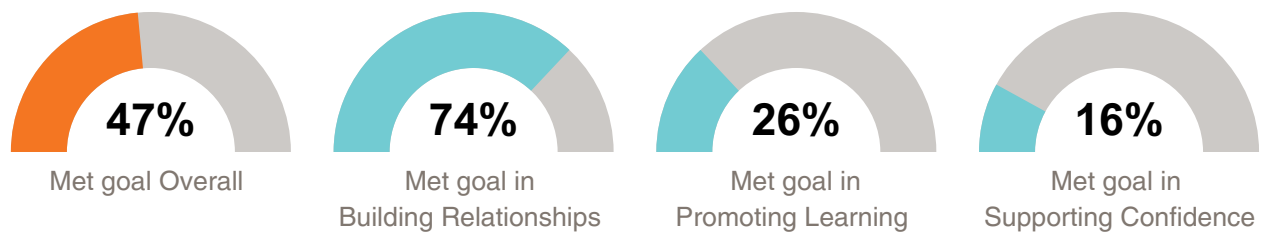
All parents in the program receive **free access to diapers** and informational classes for expectant mothers.

Working with local schools, such as those in the Omaha Public Schools district, allows Parent University to reach more families that can benefit from its programs. As part of its integration efforts, Parent University aligns its educational initiatives with school curricula. Partnerships with organizations like Metropolitan Community College, Heartland Workers Center, and Heartland Workforce Solutions expand capacity to offer ESL, workforce development and GED classes.

Additionally, through its partnership with the Omaha Public Library (OPL), all families are signed up for library cards and participate in Library Literacy Classes twice a month to learn about community resources. Parents also gain direct access to references for their research, printing, and studying needs outside of ESL or GED classes. Parent University also hosted a back-to-school literacy event, which attracted 125 people and facilitated sign-ups for OPL's Summer Reading Program. Through its work with organizations such as NCFL, Parent University has been awarded several grants that will allow it to expand programming.

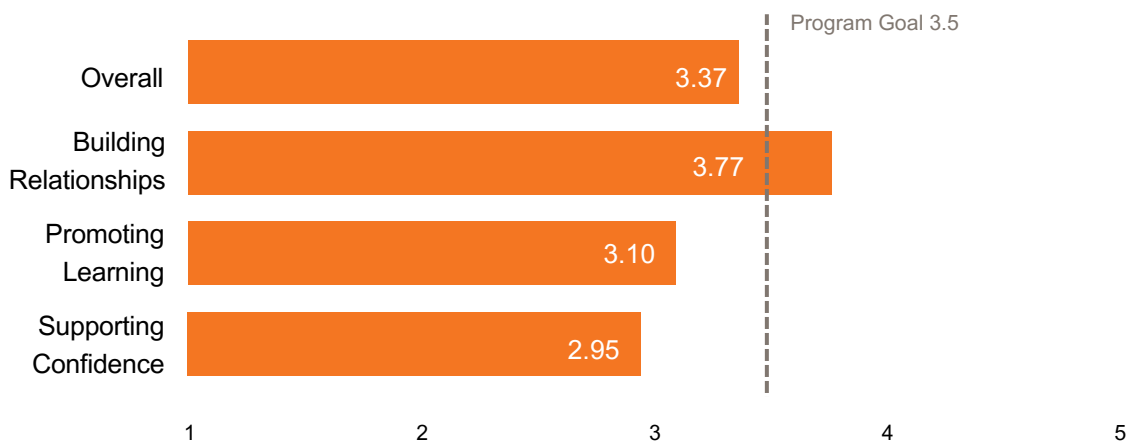
PARENT-CHILD INTERACTION. The Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (KIPS™) measures parenting behaviors across three areas: Building Relationships, Promoting Learning, and Supporting Confidence, based on a videotape of a parent playing with his or her child. Scores are based on a 5-point scale with 5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

FINDINGS. A total of 19 families enrolled in Parent University had the parent-child interaction assessment during the 2023-2024 reporting period. Two families had the assessment at least two times, which was not a large enough sample for pre- and post-analysis. Over 70% of parents met the program goal in Building Relationships during their latest assessment.



The following graph shows average KIPS results for Parent University families during their latest assessments of the 2023-2024 reporting period.

ON AVERAGE, PARENT UNIVERSITY PARENTS MET THE PROGRAM GOAL IN BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS. n=19



COURSE PARTICIPATION

Program staff tracked parents' participation in the 20 opportunities that were offered this past year. Activities aligned with four primary components within Parent University.

# of Activities	Parent University Participants*	Non-Participating Community Members*	Children*	Total Served*
56	705	1714	3308	5727

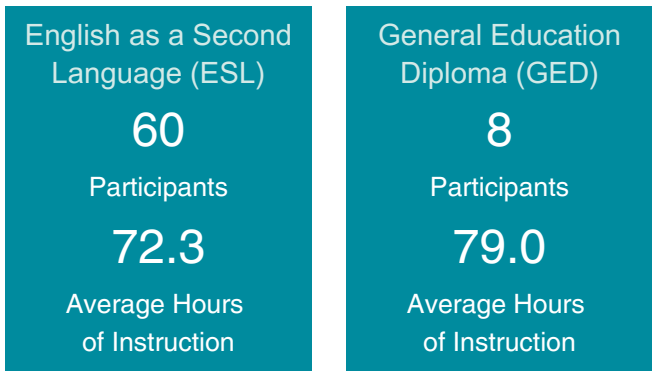
* Duplicated count

Other than the one-time parent engagement opportunities, the largest enrollments were for the Literacy Skills courses (45 total participants) and Rain Barrel Workshop (18 participants). For activities with more than one session, the completion rate was 94%.

How did Parent University benefit parents' own education?

Parent University offers English as a Second Language (ESL) and General Educational Diploma (GED) courses. In the 2023-2024 program year, Metropolitan Community College facilitated ESL and GED classes using their ESL and GED instructors to come to the North Omaha site and teach Parent University participants. A total of 68 parents participated in one of these two options.

In the GED courses, eight students had the ABEL assessment of math and reading skills. Five students (63%) gained at least one level in mathematics and/or reading. Students earned an average of 79.03 course hours.



ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

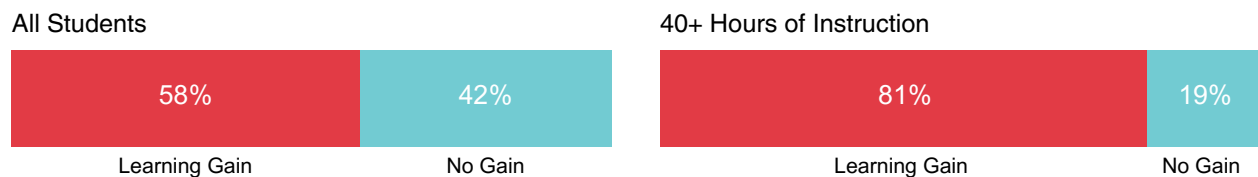
METHOD. English language skills for listening and reading were assessed using the CASAS®. CASAS® was used for multiple reasons; 1) CASAS® is the nationally recognized assessment for English Learners; 2) It is aligned with the English curriculum used at the center; 3) It provides information that informs classroom instruction; and 4) Participants can easily transition to the GED subtests using the same format. This online assessment was administered by Metropolitan Community College.

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

FINDINGS. In the ESL courses, 60 students had the CASAS® assessment. Reading and listening skills ranged from beginning literacy to high intermediate skills. Thirty-five students gained at least one level in reading and/or listening.

MORE THAN HALF OF STUDENTS GAINED AT LEAST ONE LEVEL IN READING AND/OR LISTENING.

Most students who received at least 40 hours of instruction demonstrated gains in reading and/or listening. n=61



PARENT FOCUS GROUPS

FINDINGS. The following is a summary of focus group findings conducted at Learning Community Center of North Omaha in the spring of 2024. Focus groups explored participants' experiences with Parent University as an organization, English language classes, parenting workshops, on-site childcare, classes for children, and relationships with Educational Navigators. Three in-person focus groups were conducted with 23 participants.

Parent University benefits both children and parents.

Participants expressed overall satisfaction with classes and resources offered at Parent University. Many participants highlighted the importance of the ESL classes and how they have learned to communicate better with their community and children. One participant shared, "I'm in a lot of classes – English classes – and they've helped me a lot, so I can help support my kids in school. The other classes help me understand them and educate them."

Multiple participants also commented on the benefits of having access to childcare, help with family activities, and access to necessities such as food, water, and diapers. One participant commented, “Regarding my children, having childcare makes it easier. When we have them with us, we can’t focus. The program helps with family activities too. The children have fun. The activities help them be creative. We also get diapers, it’s a great help. I am very thankful for the program.”

Participants expressed varying levels of satisfaction with English language instruction.

Many participants expressed that they were satisfied or mostly satisfied with their English language instruction. Some participants commented on how the classes have been helpful in deepening their understanding of the English language and aiding in their communication with their friends, their customers, and their families.

My English is increased, and the teacher is nice and does a good job explaining.”

Participants also shared that while they have learned a lot in their classes, they have to spend time practicing outside of class and at home. Many participants stated that they practice their English-language skills for 30 to 120 minutes a day using resources such as books, phones, games, and television. Multiple participants reported that they practice speaking to their children in English and learn with their children. One participant explained how picture books have been helping them learn English, saying, “I’ll practice with shorter books. They have drawings and I read what they have. I’ll do five or six of them.”

Multiple participants made comments that indicate the teacher made a significant impact on how satisfied they have been with the English language instruction, e.g., “We have the best ESL teacher in all of Omaha – patient with us – best teacher!” said one participant. While many participants that expressed that they were highly satisfied with English language instruction, there were some that gave insight as to how they would like to see the program change to better help them. One shared that they would like to have another day for English language classes added each week noting, “More class days. I was told before classes were Monday through Friday and now it’s only two days. I would like to add one more day.” A couple of other participants disagreed and added, “Some people don’t even come for their two days.” Other ideas for improvement with English language instruction consisted of asking for more opportunities to practice English and making sure that the class community remained respectful of others trying to learn.

Parent University positively influences participants’ communication and connections.

Participants reported positive outcomes regarding their communication abilities with their children’s schools due to classes, navigators, and Parent University. One participant commented, “Communication has improved. Sometimes, I need an interpreter, and I speak what I can with the teachers. I’ve noticed the teachers feel more comfortable too. I know I need to learn a lot more, but that’s where the interpreter can help.” “Sometimes we can call our child’s school without having to use an interpreter,” shared another participant.



Multiple participants noted how improving communication skills has allowed them to better connect and communicate with their families. One participant recalled, “With my child in kindergarten, he’s receiving books. He brought home four books with a lot of writing. I asked, ‘Do you read them?’ He said, ‘Yes,’ and as we were reading, I was reading it. He was saying it out loud. I can keep up.”

Participants appreciated opportunities made possible through Parent University, access to different resources, and agency partnerships.

Participants reported participating in classes and activities such as the Summer Picnic, Niños Pequeños, Sanando Traumas, Ready Rosie, and Boys Town Parenting Workshops. Participants stated that these resources, partnerships, and classes have positively impacted their ability to speak, understand, and learn English, e.g., “I am learning to improve my English.”

Participants also expressed that activities have benefitted families, with one noting, “I’ve taken COS-P, the Boys Town Parenting Workshop – like three times, Niños Pequeños, and then the one for older children. I loved it. If they offered it again, I’d take it a million times.” Another participant commented, “The classes where we get together are nice because the kids make friends with each other and communicate with other people – they make friendships.”

“[The books] are in English, but that is what I am here for – to learn English. I wouldn’t check out a book in French.”

Most participants reported that their families have been able to take advantage of the center’s on-site library. Most of these participants stated that they use the library to access books, e.g., “Yes, every month a new book for the kids.” One participant reported that they use the library “to get books to improve our literacy.” Most participants reported that they could not find books in their native languages at the center, with one participant giving insight that they wouldn’t read books in their own language anyway. Other participants explained that they would like to know more about how to use computers so they can use the ones they have access to at the center’s library.

Participants were asked about their overall health and well-being related to health, finance, and levels of stress.

Several participants shared that Parent University has positively impacted their emotions, stress levels, and health, e.g., “My stress levels have improved. In Parenting Time, you gain skills. You learn to understand them (our children) better. You become conscious of what you are doing, and they explain to you, so you say to yourself, ‘I didn’t know how to handle this before.’ We learn we don’t have to scare them. We learn that we are meant to console them, be patient, and talk it out with them.”

While participants reported overall stress levels decreasing, some participants commented on how their financial situations can be hard at times. “Not working so not so much money,” explained one participant. One participant noted that their financial situation was manageable, stating, “We have some resources available in the community such as Open Door Mission and Heart Ministry.”

Navigators positively impact participants' experiences.

Overall, participants were highly satisfied with their Educational Navigators. Participants reported that they had a good relationship with their educational navigators and were very comfortable with them, e.g., “They are really nice to us. We like talking to them and could not stop our conversation even when the class resumed.” Another noted, “They are really helpful to us as we speak the same language.” One participant commented on the benefits of having a navigator that works well with children, stating, “It’s excellent, he’s been there when I need him. He has good communication with children. Whenever or whatever I need, he is there to help me.”

Participants appreciated their educational navigators and liaisons. One participant shared, “They will do almost anything for us. They try to help us with anything: reading a letter for us, translating for us, helping call a clinic or hospital for an appointment. They also have helped us find diapers—they have diaper days here, finding information here about Parent University, finding information about different activities that are available.” One participant expressed that adding more navigators would be helpful.

Participants experience barriers to accessing class content and materials.

Several participants commented that requiring technology use in the classes was a barrier, as several participants lacked computer skills. One participant noted, “Classes are really good, but I want the material hands-on and not electronic. Not good with the computer and have bad eyes, so hands-on would be better.” Participants reported that some classes were less effective because class sizes were too small. Other barriers to attendance were caregiving demands (e.g., caring for sick children or taking children to medical appointments).

One participant reported concerns attending classes not offered in their primary language. The participant went on to explain that there have been issues with the interpreters skipping words or not speaking the languages well enough to properly interpret saying, “The girl interpreting might skip words, and the other interpreter didn’t speak it super well.”

“Maybe some basic computer skills teaching before we begin since everything is electronic. It is hard if you don’t understand the computer.”

Final thoughts and other suggestions.

A few participants said they would like to have more times for classes, e.g., “I would have liked to be in some other classes, but they are always on the days that I’m in GED. Some classes in the afternoons I don’t take because my kids have other activities at school or after school, and I have to pick them up.” All but one of the participants stated they prefer to take classes between 9 a.m. and 12 p.m.

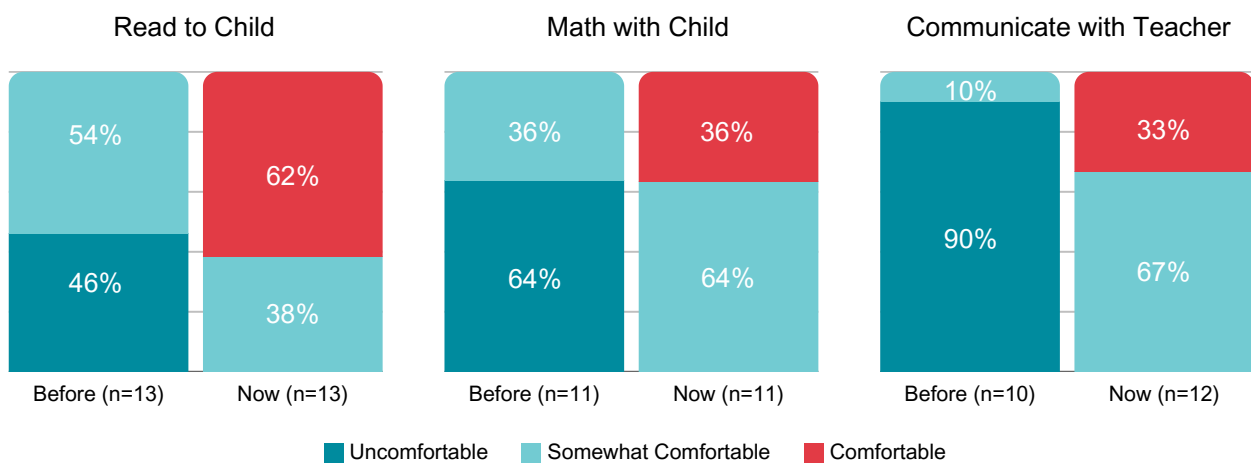
Many of the participants across the focus groups also expressed interest in trying different or new classes, such as First Aid and CPR classes, health classes, parenting classes with an emphasis on appropriate child discipline strategies, CNA classes, basic computer classes taught in home languages, music classes, sewing classes, cooking classes, and beauty classes. Several participants also noted that they would like to have more home visits, help with gaining access to employment agencies, and scholarships for their children.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

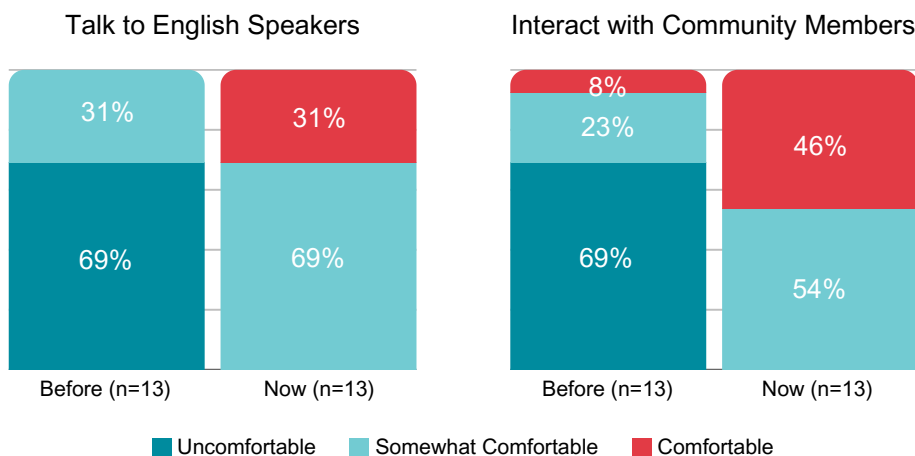
As part of the focus groups, parents reflected on their levels of comfort about engaging with aspects of their children’s education prior to starting the program and how they compared to now after participating in the programming. A total of 13 participants completed the survey.

The percent of participants feeling at least somewhat comfortable reading to their child increased from 54% to 100% and from 36% to 100% for math. Additionally, parents reported feeling more comfortable communicating with their child’s teacher and the school, increasing from 10% to 100% being at least somewhat comfortable.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND CONFIDENCE INCREASED ACROSS ALL SCHOOL AREAS.



In addition to school engagement items, participants were asked about their engagement both with English-only speakers and within the community. In both scenarios, participants indicated increased levels of feeling comfort communicating with English speakers with all respondents feeling at least somewhat comfortable after being the program for at least six months. As participants remain in the program and gain English language skills, comfort levels working on academics, engagement with the school, and community engagement all increase.



STUDENT OUTCOMES

In the 2023-2024 program year, the evaluation of student outcomes for the children whose parents are enrolled in Parent University includes three strategies. **English language development** and **social-emotional outcomes** are measured through parent-completed assessments for children ages four months to five years of age. **Pre-K outcomes** are measured through in-person assessments completed by MMI evaluators and teacher-completed surveys in the six IEC preschool programs.

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

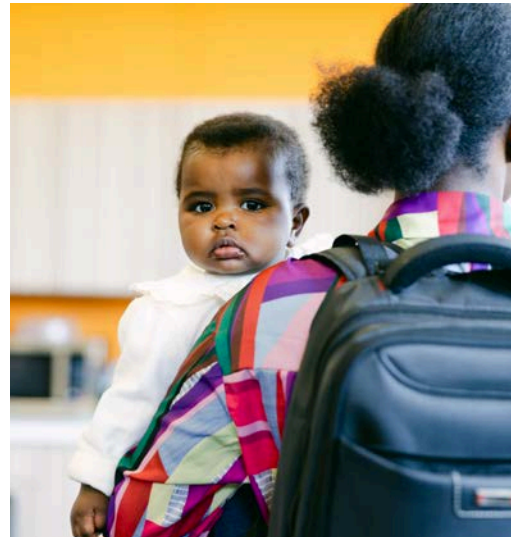
METHOD. Parent University families were invited to complete assessments of their children's language development and social-emotional skills in the spring of 2024. The following tools were used:

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT SKILLS

Developmental Assessment of Young Children – 2nd Edition (DAYC-2): The DAYC-2 measures children's English language receptive and expressive language skills. Parents completed the assessment for children aged 16 months to 5 years.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS

Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA): Parents completed the DECA questionnaire to assess young students' social-emotional development in the areas of initiative, self-control, attachment, and behavior as well as total protective factors overall. The DECA is available in Spanish and English. The DECA was completed for 42 children, ages 4 months to 5 years.



FINDINGS

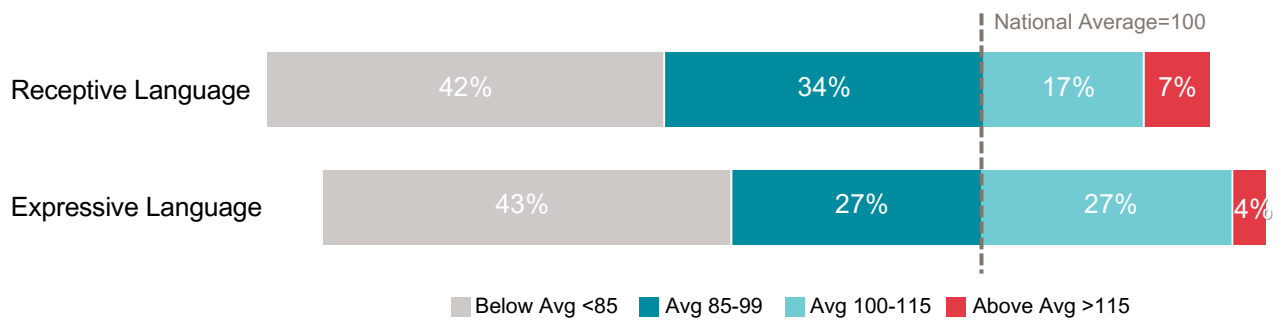
English Language Skills

Parents completed English language assessments for children whose home language is English or who are in an English-based childcare environment. The language assessment is normed on a diverse cross-section of children, particularly in social-economic status. A total of 83 children had the assessment in the spring of 2024. The descriptive analyses found that 24% of the children were at or above the national average in receptive language, and 31% were at or above the national average in expressive language.

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

Forty-two percent of the children scored in the below average range in receptive language, and 43% of children scored in the below average range for expressive language. This indicates that higher percentages than the normed sample are at the below average level. In a typical distribution, approximately 15% of the children would score in the below average range.

31% OF THE CHILDREN HAD EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE SKILLS AT OR ABOVE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE. About a quarter of the children (24%) were at the national average in receptive language. n=83



Social-Emotional

Parents whose primary language was English or Spanish, completed a survey about their children's social-emotional skills with a total of 42 completed.

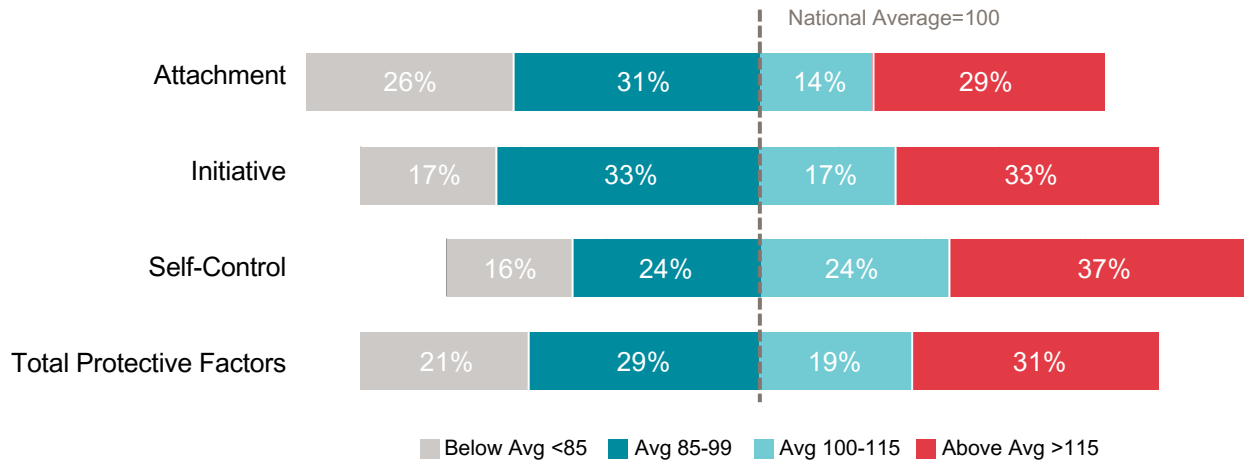
The descriptive analyses found high percentages of children scored within the average to above average range across all areas of the social-emotional measure: total protective factors (79%), attachment (74%), initiative (83%) and self-control (84%). The majority demonstrated social-emotional skills above the national average, which is a score of 100, in the area of self-control (61%).

The majority of students were in or above the average range across all social-emotional areas.

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

However, the children scored in the below average range at a rate that is approximately equal to or higher than the normed sample. In the area of attachment, 26% scored in the below average range, and in total protective factors, 21% scored in the below average range. In the normed sample 15% score in the below average range.

STUDENTS SHOWED THE GREATEST STRENGTH IN SELF-CONTROL WITH 61% MEETING OR EXCEEDING THE NATIONAL AVERAGE. n=42



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

Success Stories

With continuous 1-on-1 support from the child learning specialist working directly with these children, Parent University families were able to see successes such as:

- A child’s DECA scores grew from all typical in the fall to all areas of strength in the spring.
- A child’s DAYC score for receptive language increased, changing from below expectations in the fall to meeting widely held expectations in the spring.

Through classes like Circle of Security and Common Sense Parenting, as well as the direct help and guidance from their educational navigators during home visits, families were able to see successes such as:

- Attachment was an area of concern for a child on the fall DECA. By spring, he scored in the typical range. His score for self-control improved from typical to an area of strength. His DAYC scores also improved in both receptive and expressive language.
- A child’s DECA showed that all social-emotional areas were a concern in the fall. By spring, her DECA showed all areas as strengths. Her DAYC scores also improved from the average range in fall to the above average range in spring.

ATTENDANCE OUTCOMES

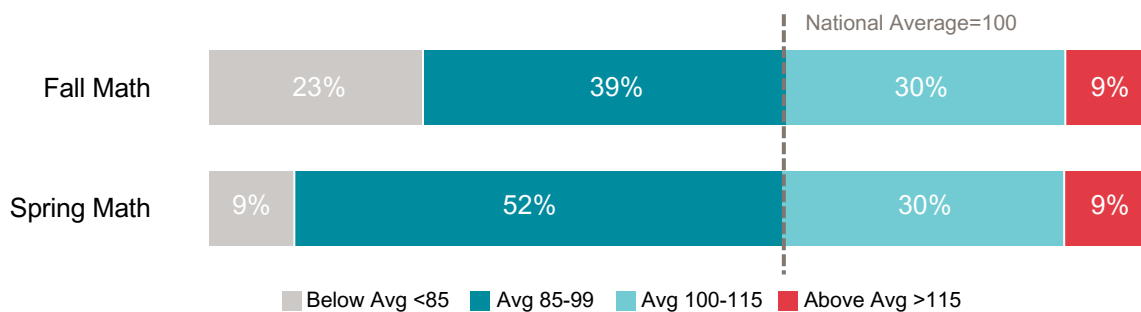
School Attendance data was obtained from Omaha Public Schools on the school-age students of parents participating in Parent University. Those students attend 22 different schools in the district. For those students with parents attending programming, 60% missed fewer than 10 days of school. K-5 students (n=47) missed an average of 14.14 school days. The goal for students across the district is to miss fewer than 10 days.

SCHOOL AGE STUDENT OUTCOMES

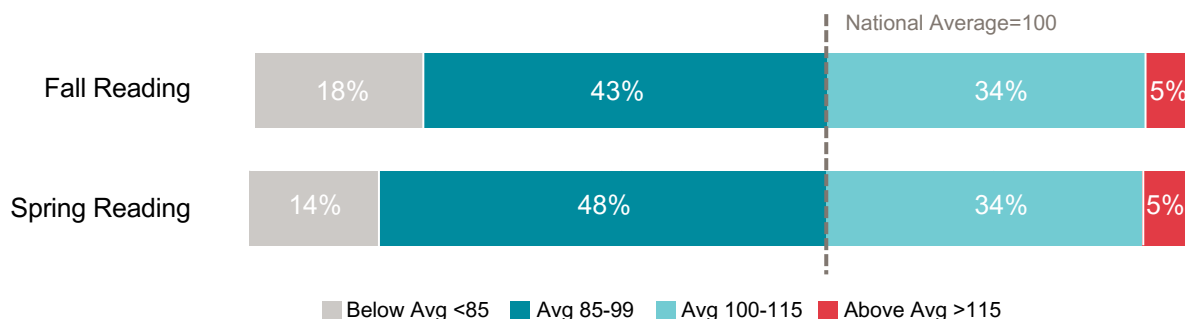
For those students with parents attending the program, academic achievement data were obtained from Omaha Public Schools. To assess the academic outcomes of the school-age children whose parents participated in Parent University, the MAP® Growth™ assessment was used. NWEA-MAP® Growth™ provides data on student academic growth in the areas of Reading and Math and monitors change over time.

Data for grades K-5 are reported in the chart below showing MAP NWEA® data for fall and spring. These scores are based on the national averages.

BY SPRING, MORE THAN 90% OF STUDENTS SCORED IN OR ABOVE THE AVERAGE RANGE FOR MATH. The percentage of students scoring above the national average was the same in fall and spring. n=44



MORE K-5 STUDENTS SCORED IN THE AVERAGE RANGE FOR READING IN THE SPRING THAN FALL. Students scoring in the below average range decreased 4% from fall to spring. n=44



Students' scores were stronger in mathematics, with more than 80% of students scoring in the average range in the spring. Across all subjects and testing periods, 39% of students scored above the national average.

learning
community
center
OF SOUTH OMAHA

Family Learning





2023-2024

KEY FINDINGS



339 parents and 830 children were served.
531 children were birth to age 5 with 229 attending the child learning program on site.



96% of the 224 family referrals made to the social assistance navigator were successfully discharged.

On average, these families reported increased levels of self-sufficiency across all domains.



Participants increased parenting skills and decreased parental stress.

Parent stress was reduced significantly after working with navigators to resolve complex issues.



Children scored in the average range in executive functioning.

Nearly all (96%) scored in the average range.



PreK students scored in the average range on pre math and literacy skills.

Two assessments had mean scores in the average range.

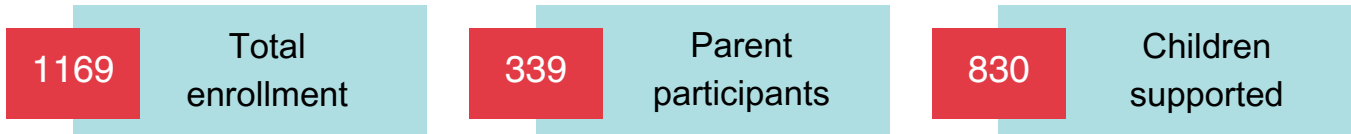


School-age children in grades K-5 scored in the average range in math.

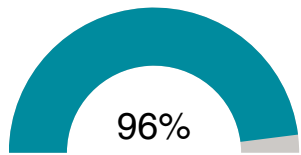
Over 70% of students scored in the average range for math at both the fall and spring checkpoints.

Who We Served

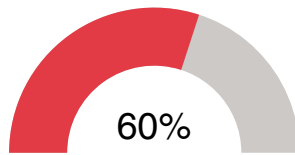
Learning Community Center of South Omaha



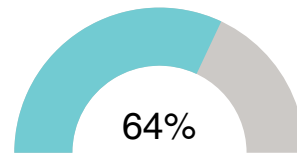
PARENT PARTICIPANTS



Primary language is not English



Do not have a high school diploma or GED



Household income below \$35,000

6 Families reported 6 different primary languages: Spanish (79%), Q'anjob'al (15%), English (4%), K'iche' (2%), Mam (<1%) and Tarasco (<1%).

270 Number of parent participants who needed childcare at LCCSO (80%). Fifteen additional participants reported previously using childcare at the center.

CHILD PARTICIPANTS

531 Number of participating children ages birth to 5 in 2023-2024 (64%).

229 Number of children ages birth to five who attended the Child Learning program in 2023-2024. In addition, 35 school-age children attended.



* Percentages are based on participants who reported data for this category.

Learning Community Center of South Omaha

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

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

Education for Parents of Young Children

Early Childhood Education

Interactive Parent/Child Activities

EDUCATION FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

Since a parent’s level of educational attainment is a strong predictor of a child’s academic success, most parents at the center enroll in an English as a Second Language or a GED cohort for six hours a week. Because many families that enrolled at LCCSO were Q’anjoba’l speakers from Guatemala, the program saw more parents starting classes with little formal education and low literacy rates.

English for Parents: As parents learn English, they become more confident talking to teachers and asking questions about their child’s progress, as well as communicating with the broader community. In addition to fundamental language skills, an English for Parents class will teach parents how to use computers to access school information, role-play parent/teacher conferences, and utilize children’s books as learning tools. Participants also take field trips to the Omaha Public Library (OPL) and take part in OPL’s Summer Reading Program.

GED: In partnership with Metro Community College, the program offers GED classes. The goal of the classes is to help parents increase their educational level and better their family’s economic security through more stable and lucrative jobs or new educational pathways only open to GED graduates. GED classes also help parents guide their children on their academic journey (homework help, role modeling, academic language and concepts, etc.).



Along with ESL or GED, parent participants receive:

Parenting Classes and Workshops: Parenting classes and family-focused workshops strengthen and support parents, who are the first and most important teachers for their children. Parents learn practical strategies to support child development and education. Program staff and community organizations provide a wide variety of offerings, including Circle of Security®, Love and Logic®, domestic violence prevention, financial literacy, and nutritious cooking. All workshops teach skills and techniques to foster learning and wellbeing at home.

Sample Parent Classes and Workshops
Circle of Security® (LCCSO staff) Pyramid Model for Parents (Child Saving Institute) Digital Literacy 101 (Metro Community College) Baby and Me in Q’anjob’al language (LCCSO Navigator) Cooking Matters® (Whispering Roots) Love and Logic® (program staff)

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

# of Personal Visits by Educational Navigator	# of Parent/Child Interactions by Educational Navigator	# of Personal Visits by Social Assistance Navigator
1851	884	879

Workforce Development: Workforce development classes are offered onsite in collaboration with Metropolitan Community College. Parents learn workforce readiness skills such as resume-building, interview skills, and job search methods and receive certificates in customer service, workforce ethics proficiency, and the National Career Readiness Certificate. A Workforce Navigator also offers individual career coaching or assistance connecting to continued education.

Digital Literacy: Parents who exhibit strong engagement in the program are loaned a computer. Digital Literacy is now a part of the English for Parents program through the online ESL curriculum Burlington English. Program participants who do not enter the program with these skills become proficient in using email, search engines, using a mouse, copying and pasting, and typing. Metropolitan Community College offers computer certificates to parents who take onsite courses that include the following topics: Basic Computer Skills, Internet Basics, Using Email, Social Media, and Microsoft Office software.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

While parents attend classes, the Learning Community Center of South Omaha offers year-round learning activities for young children, from newborn to age five. The primary focus is on building social, emotional, and executive functioning skills as well as cognitive concepts to support school readiness. The program partners with many organizations, including:

The Big Garden
Farm to School

Omaha Public Library
Story Time

Opera Omaha
Performing arts sessions

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

INTERACTIVE PARENT/CHILD ACTIVITIES

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



Prime Time Family Reading Time®
Humanities Nebraska

College Prep for Families
UNO Service Learning Academy

String Sprouts®
Omaha Conservatory of Music

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Learning Community Center of South Omaha provided training and/or coaching for 44 South Omaha childcare providers in 2022-2023. After learning about the lack of bilingual trainers and coaches in the field, several members of the LCCSO team trained to become State of Nebraska-certified trainers and coaches in early childhood development. Two training sessions were held at the center on the Early Learning Guidelines. In partnership with the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, Rooted in Relationships provided culturally-relevant, bimonthly training, monthly coaching, and collaboration opportunities for 16 home and center-based childcare providers working in the South Omaha community.

LCCSO partnered with more than 35 organizations in 2023-2024. Some of the partners from the evaluation year include:

OMAHA CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC

Provided **weekly violin lessons** to children from **40 families** through the String Sprouts program.

OMAHA PERFORMING ARTS

Through the Ticket Access Program, **28 families** from the LCCSO attended **4 shows** in 2023-2024.

METRO TRANSIT

Presented to **four groups** at the center about how to use public transportation.

PROJECT HARMONY

Provided onsite **individual and/or group therapy** to parent participants.

NEBRASKA DIAPER BANK

LCCSO distributed diapers to approximately **90 enrolled children** program each month.

HUMANITIES NEBRASKA

Prime Time Family Reading: **Six-week sessions** were offered four times, and **37 families** participated in programming.

OMAHA PUBLIC LIBRARY

Delivered prizes to families who completed the **Summer Reading Program** and provided ice cream and information on where to find **free back-to-school supplies**.

UNO SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Provided a Social Work practicum student for **16 hours a week** from July through early December 2023. The Social Assistance Navigator provided services onsite in 2024 as part of her practicum.

OUTCOMES

QUALITY OF PROGRAMMING

METHOD. Multiple tools were used to measure growth, assess perceptions of the participants, and demonstrate program quality. The evaluation is both summative and formative in nature. The tools selected for the evaluation often have a dual purpose to provide outcome results and to inform the team as part of a continuous improvement process.

PARTICIPANT FOCUS GROUPS

RESULTS. Focus groups were conducted in 2023-2024 to allow participants the opportunity to relay their experiences with the program, share success stories and provide input on possible improvements to the program. Questions were asked about the participants' overall experience with the program, satisfaction levels with program components (navigators, parenting classes, resources, English classes), and ideas for improvements to the program. Focus groups were conducted with participants and staff members.

Summary of ELL Focus Groups

The following is a summary of focus group findings conducted at Learning Community South in the spring of 2024. Focus groups explored people's experiences with English language classes, agency partnerships, parenting workshops, on-site childcare, and relationships with Educational Navigators. Six in-person focus groups were conducted with 65 participants. Participants in the focus group met a minimum requirement of six months of enrollment in the program.

Participants expressed a mixed level of satisfaction with English language instruction.

While several participants reported satisfaction with English classes, there were mixed experiences with the content and method of instruction. Some participants desired more interaction with peers and said they would like to role-play different situations and practice English pronunciation with others. Some participants noted the fast pacing made it challenging to retain information pace. Other participants agreed that they would like to practice conversations in front of others, rather than recording themselves. One preferred less time on a computer, adding, "Maybe just assign the computer work for home." Further suggestions for English classes included longer time in the program and offering evening or weekend options.

Participants continue to see growth in their English-speaking abilities due to their enrollment in English language classes. One participant shared, "The classes have helped me a lot. I work in a restaurant, and I had difficulty speaking with those who only spoke English. They recommended me to come here to learn English, and I am so grateful to them... It has given me the opportunity to help others."

"We are adults, but we need to learn the language like children. I want to learn English like children, with experience, practice, and small tasks such as homework."

Some participants reported the ability to make appointments independently and noted an increased confidence to attend parent-teacher conferences without an interpreter. Other participants shared the surprise and joy in their children for their parent’s newfound ability to communicate in English, e.g., “My child said, ‘Mom, you understand what we are saying?!’ and it feels good to say, ‘Yes!’”

“I also think I have had a better life at home. I’m a better wife and a better mother to my children. I have learned the importance of spending more time with them. I feel like my children are happier, and we have better relationships.”

Parenting Workshops continue to benefit families.

When asked about their experiences with the various parenting workshops offered, one parent summarized, “The workshops are excellent. They teach us to be better parents. I am learning to have more patience with my child and how to talk to her. I have learned to be a better wife and mother.” Participants also honored different parenting styles, e.g., “I have learned that there are no wrong ways of parenting and mistakes help you learn. We don’t think the same way, and we all have different backgrounds. My teacher understands that and helps us carry the weight.”

Classes such as Love and Logic and Circle of Security helped parents understand the importance of giving children space, identifying emotions, understanding brain development, and decreasing screen time to focus on mental health. In cooking class, participants learned the benefits of adding vegetables and protein to meals.

One suggested improvement for the program’s parenting workshops was to group parents according to the age of children in their home.

One participant wished more was offered for parents of adolescents and older youth.

Ideas for future topics of classes include psychology, ways to reduce screen time and boundary setting for technology, more in-depth first-aid, substance use prevention, challenging behaviors, nutrition, and musical instruments for parents.

Workforce Development course prepares individuals for job interviews.

Participants enrolled in the Workforce Development course agreed that it was an effective preparation for future job interviews. They described practicing interviews as “fun and helpful.” Participants learned how to create a résumé and how to dress professionally for a job interview. Strategies for inquiring about salary were also introduced. One participant summarized, “It supported me at my job. I am putting it to practice...I wish the class was longer and I recommend it. In one form or another, it supports you at work and even at home.”

Satisfaction with the method of instruction in the course was mixed. Some participants felt the instruction was more rote, e.g., “I felt alone and asked to just do things on a computer without explanation.” Others felt there should be more support to help individuals learn at different levels. Several participants desired instruction to be offered in both English and Spanish.

Participants continue to show satisfaction and appreciation for unique opportunities made possible through agency partnerships.

Many parents noted high satisfaction with Prime Time Family Reading and learned innovative ways to read books with their children, e.g., “One of my friends did not know how to read in English... so she remembered what the teacher would say during each page and repeated that at home. She did not know what was actually on the page, but she was still able to ‘read’ the book to her children and had fun doing it.” Others reported learning the importance of asking questions during story time.



Participants also shared their child’s successes with reading as a result of the program. Another participant noted that her typically shy child was motivated to interact with others through the activities provided. A few participants were so happy with the content of the class that they wished to attend more than eight sessions.

Satisfaction was also reported with College Prep for Families. Participants explored the University of Nebraska-Omaha campus and learned how to support their children in achieving their dreams. Another participant shared, “It motivated me to support my child. I hope to see my child there one day.”

String Sprouts participants observed positive outcomes from the program, e.g., “I think String Sprouts helped improve communication between me and my daughter. She is very shy, but with this class, she has opened up more. She is more active than before.” Participants were impressed by seeing their children learn to play an instrument at such a young age and recognized the opportunity for younger siblings to watch and learn as well. One participant expressed a desire to enroll in the program but has been on a waitlist for some time.

“My daughter got a medal for reading the most amount of books at school, and she loves it. I think this class has helped show her the importance of reading.”

“Until I came to the center, I did not know that I can access my child’s classes, know more about the school, or use their iPad. They taught me that here. Before, no one made sure I knew how to navigate that.”

Technology classes helped parents to support their children in school.

Many parents believe technology classes support their ability to communicate via email with their child’s teacher. Others acquired a new level of confidence in being able to email the school office to communicate absences. Additional skills learned include using Google, Excel, and Microsoft Word. A few parents needed more fundamental knowledge of how to use a computer and were thankful for the instruction.

When asked for suggestions for future technology skills, a majority of participants requested skills to learn how to block inappropriate apps for their children and how to monitor their children’s interactions online. Other topics include learning how to use GPS, photography, typewriting, cybersecurity, and attachments through email.

Working with Educational Navigators is helpful when the assigned navigator remains consistent.

Participants recognized the importance of having an Educational Navigator and desired a lasting relationship with that individual. Participants continue to describe the navigators as responsive, professional, and compassionate. However, several expressed their disappointment in the frequency of switching Educational Navigators. Some shared that the wait time for a new Educational Navigator was long. Others noticed their children’s difficulty adjusting to a new Educational Navigator.



Overall, the assistance received from the Educational Navigators was beneficial. Participants found help with topics such as obtaining a driver’s license, requesting a birth certificate, assisting through the divorce process, and receiving support for their children. One participant stated, “I feel happy with my navigator. She has helped me with my daughters. When I tell my children that the navigator is coming, they get very excited. My navigator asks me what days and times work. She also asks me where I would like to meet.”

Suggestions for personal visits included opportunities for evening meetings so that spouses can participate. One participant felt that the days off of class should be used to take care of personal responsibilities outside of class.

Center-based early childhood center prepares children for school.

A majority of parents agreed that the program’s early childhood center prepared their children for school. In addition, many parents believe that their children are more advanced than their peers because of time spent in the program. Participants also liked the consistent professional development offered to teachers to provide more learning to their children. Skills such as colors, numbers, reading, and name-writing were mentioned. Parents also noticed the teaching of social-emotional skills with their children and appreciated daily communication from teachers through written notes. One parent commented, “I like the emphasis on emotions. It has taught me and my child so much.”

“My child knew how to read and write and was very advanced when entering school because of the center.”

A common area for improvement was the process of transitioning children to older rooms. Parents wanted more notice about upcoming transitions so they could prepare their children in advance. Others thought transition could be handled more gently for children.

“More staff would make it easier on them. If the childcare providers are good, then the children are good.”

Some participants expressed concerns regarding challenging behaviors in some of the classrooms. More aggressive behaviors among children have been observed. A few parents reported that young children who had recently transitioned to older classrooms were now hesitant to come to school. Parents believed that adding more teaching staff and having extra supervision might alleviate physical behaviors among children. Additionally, parents requested hiring teachers with a background in special education or providing more training for teachers in that area. It should also be noted that parents requested larger classrooms and child-sized bathrooms.

Participants were asked about their overall health and well-being related to health, finance, and levels of stress.

Participants reported positive outcomes for their mental health because of attending the program. One participant shared, “I was depressed before coming to this center. I went to the doctor, and I was pregnant at that time. I know there are a lot of women that feel this way. The doctor told me about this center, and it has helped me so much. I now have a place to come to.”

Participants benefit from having access to diapers and socializing with peers in the program, e.g., “I was nervous to go back to work after having my baby, but now that I’m attending the program, I can get breakfast with my friends, feel more relaxed, and even receive diapers, so it’s one less expense in my home.” Regarding health, one participant noted the high cost of insulin. “I have a child with diabetes. It is hard to find insulin. It is very traumatic and affects my family.”

Final thoughts and suggestions.

Participants continue to express gratitude, increased confidence, and improvement in their home environment due to attending Learning Community South. One participant reflected, e.g., “They always put us into account in their decisions and make us feel welcomed. I love to see the growth and change in this program. I am grateful for the opportunity to be a part of it. Everyone always respects our opinions and supports us.”

Summary of GED Focus Groups

In the spring of 2024, a total of 10 GED participants at Learning Community South participated in focus groups discussing their experiences in the class. A summary of their experiences follows.

Some participants expressed their satisfaction with the GED classes, particularly praising the patience and friendliness of their teachers. They appreciated the new schedule that combined mathematics and literacy classes on the same day, as it reduced the impact of absences on their learning.

Participants want more support with mathematics.

Many participants reported that class time consists of individualized work without a lot of support given. When participants approach teachers with questions, they are often given a book or a YouTube video in response. Participants desired more guidance on how to solve problems, e.g., “Algebraic expressions were difficult, so I sought help. The instructor said she would give more individual help and provided a page to look at, but that was it. The previous instructor showed us step-by-step on the board. We learned quickly, and I still remember it now.”

“We are missing the connection between instructor and student.”

In addition to support with math, participants desire more interaction with their instructor. During class, many students work on different topics according to their varying levels. One participant stated, “Instructors want to teach us as if we are students who have made it through high school or middle school, but that’s not the case for most of us. People with different experiences need different support.”

Participants appreciated technology classes.

Several participants identified Northstar as beneficial, stating that they learned about computer programs like Windows 10 and PowerPoint. One participant reported, “Previously, I could only use social media. But now I have a job and use that computer knowledge. It has helped me so much.”

Overall, the participants expressed a deep appreciation for the opportunity to obtain their GED. They found the classes to be a strong motivator for achieving their future goals as they continue to work towards their diplomas, e.g., “It is a great motivation to have future plans and goals. I want to show my children that if they try, they can achieve anything despite any situation or language barrier. They are able to learn anything they want!”

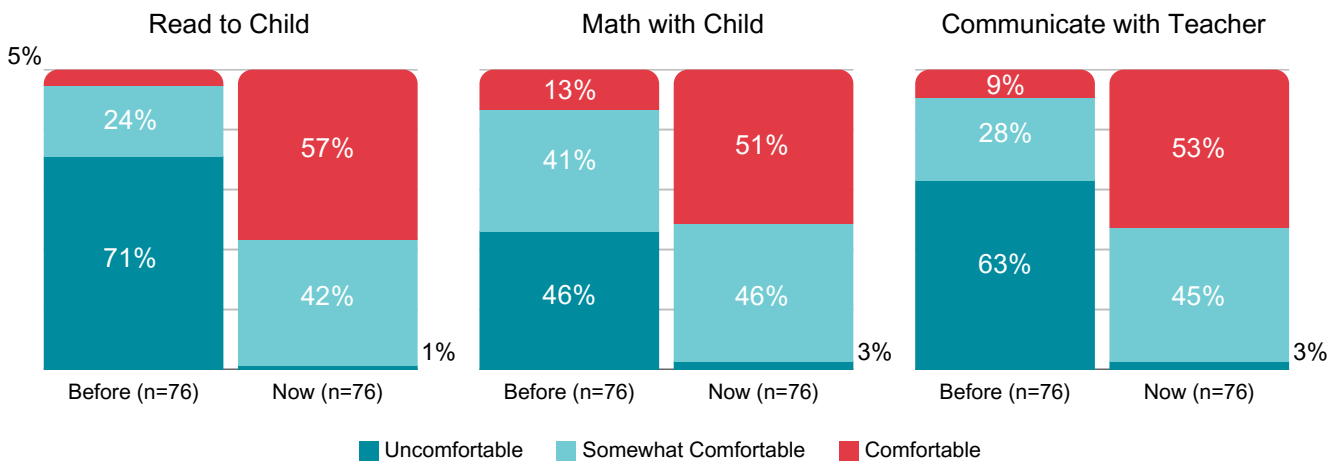


FAMILY ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

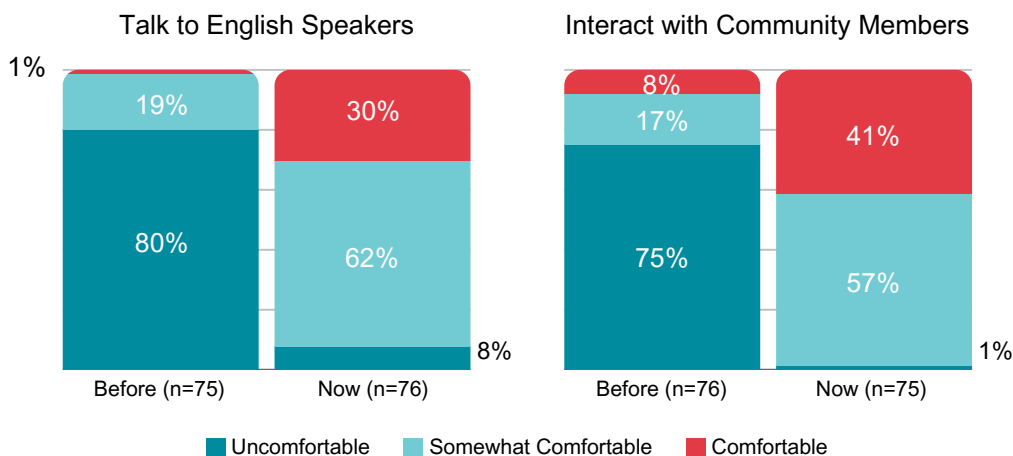
As part of the focus groups, parents reflected on their levels of comfort about engaging with aspects of their children’s education prior to starting the program and how they compared to now after participating in the programming. A total of 76 parents participated in the groups. The current results are consistent with several years of evaluation data. Parents feel increasingly comfortable engaging in school efforts including reading to their child in English, working on mathematics and communicating with the teacher.

The percent of participants feeling at least somewhat comfortable reading to their child increased from 29% to 99% and from 54% to 97% for math. Additionally, parents reported feeling more comfortable communicating with their child’s teacher and the school, increasing from 37% to 98% being at least somewhat comfortable.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND CONFIDENCE INCREASED ACROSS ALL SCHOOL AREAS.



In addition to school engagement items, participants were asked about their engagement both with English-only speakers and within the community. In both scenarios, participants indicated increased levels of feeling comfort communicating with English speakers with more than 90% feeling at least somewhat comfortable after being the program for at least six months.



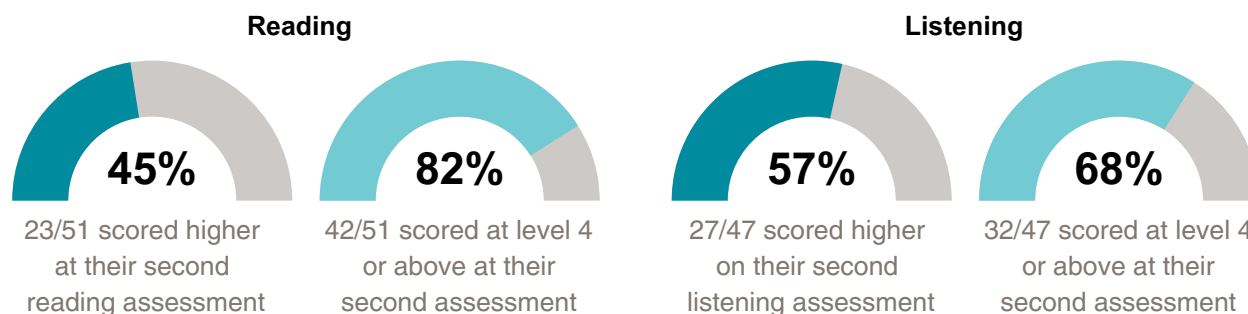
PARENT EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

METHOD. English language skills for listening and reading were assessed using the CASAS®. CASAS® was used for multiple reasons; 1) CASAS® is the nationally recognized assessment for English Learners; 2) It is aligned with the English curriculum used at the center; 3) It provides information that informs classroom instruction; and 4) Participants can easily transition to the GED subtests using the same format. This online assessment was administered by Munroe-Meyer Institute’s program evaluators.

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

FINDINGS. A total of 249 CASAS® assessments were administered in 2023-2024, with 58 participants receiving more than one administration. The assessment is administered after every 60-90 hours of instruction.



Paired samples t-tests revealed significant growth from pre to post test for listening, $t(47) = -2.64, p < 0.05$ and no significant growth for reading . By the 2nd assessment most participants (82%) were at Level 4 or above for Reading while 68% were at Level 4 or above for Listening.

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

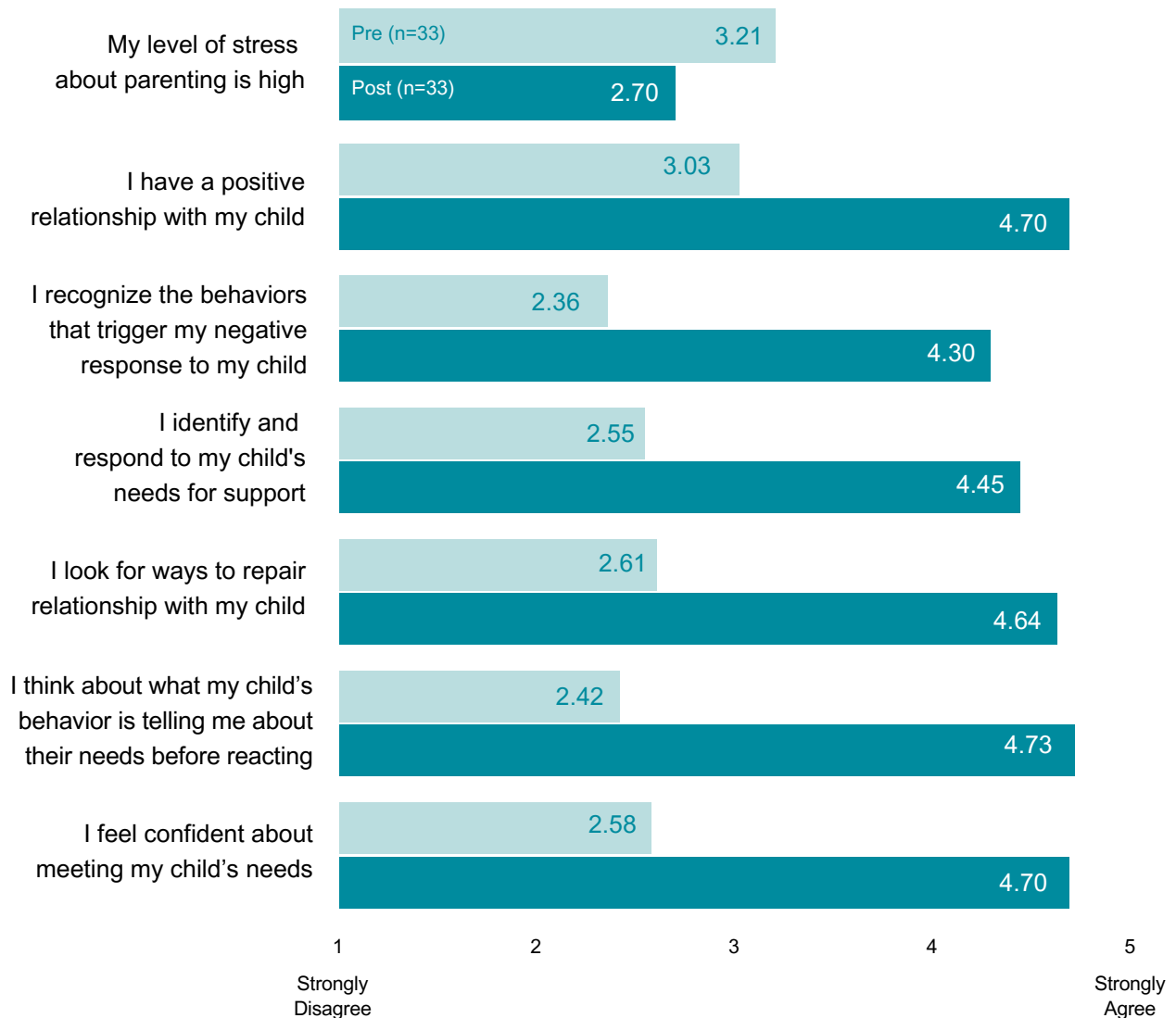
CIRCLE OF SECURITY PARENTING

METHOD. Circle of Security Parenting (COS-P) class participants were asked rate their level of stress and use of supportive parenting practices before and after class participation using a 5-point scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). Thirty-three participants completed the survey.

FINDINGS. On average, participants reported lower levels of parenting stress from pre (3.21) to post (2.70). Mean scores increased in all self-assessments of supportive parenting practices. The largest increases were reported for thinking about the what the child’s behavior is saying about their needs before reacting (+95%), feeling confident about meeting the child’s needs (+82%), and recognizing behaviors that trigger a negative response to the child.

ON AVERAGE, COS-P PARTICIPANTS REPORTED HIGHER RATINGS OF THE THEIR SUPPORTIVE PARENTING PRACTICES FROM PRE TO POST.

Participants reported lower levels of parenting stress after attending the class. n=33



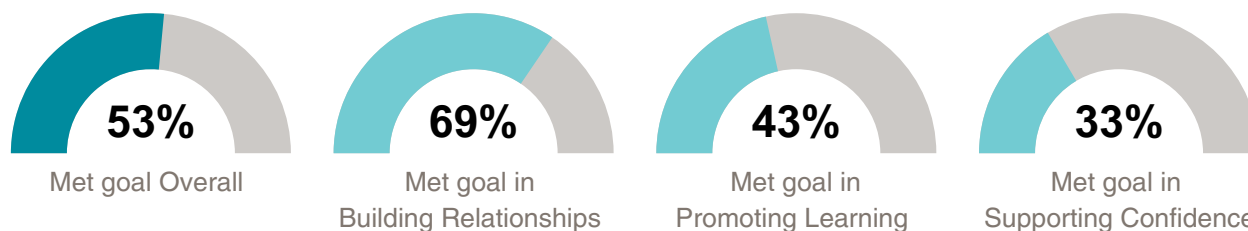
PARENTING PRACTICES

Video observations of parents and their children were submitted to the evaluation team. The Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (KIPS™) was used to provide feedback to parents and help navigators determine which skills to focus on with parents. As part of the continuous improvement process, educational navigators receive a written report with scores and recommendations to use with families.

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

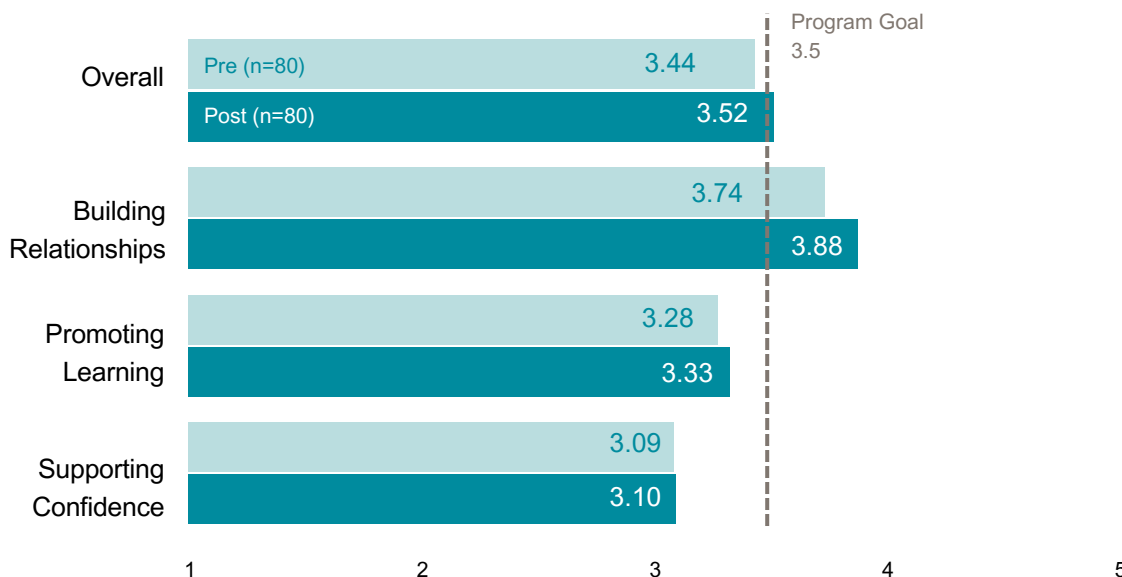
FINDINGS

A total of 80 families enrolled in LCCSO had the parent-child interaction assessment at least two points in time, with another 102 families having an initial assessment during the same period. By post, most parents met the program goal in two of the four areas.



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

ON AVERAGE, LCCSO PARENTS MET THE PROGRAM GOAL IN BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS. n=80



The paired samples t-test analysis found that parents' skills over subscales and overall have had no statistically significant changes.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

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

FINDINGS. The following work certificates were awarded in 2023-2024:



Additionally, 36 participants enrolled in two GED cohorts in partnership with Metro Community College. Of those participants, **four earned their GED**. Seventy-one percent in cohort 1 and 53% of cohort 2 demonstrated measurable skills gains (3-4 grade level increase).

Success Story

A recent success includes one participant who took ESL classes. She gained confidence in using conversational English and read her first ever book ever as part of her classwork. She reports more confidence in speaking with her children in English about complex emotions and in speaking with her children’s healthcare providers. She recently presented her story in English at the National Families Learning Conference and plans to move on to GED classes at the center.



SOCIAL ASSISTANCE NAVIGATION SERVICES

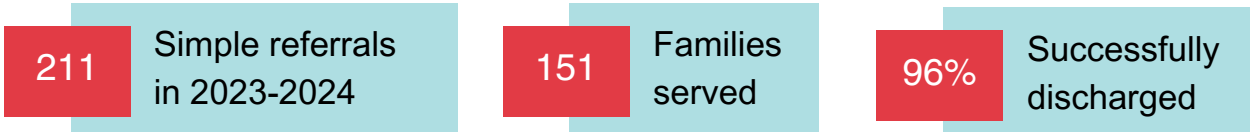
METHOD. Data were collected from parents who received additional services and resources through the social assistance navigator. Pre- and post-service data collection provided information about self-sufficiency, parent stress, and families' progress toward their goals.

FINDINGS

There were **224 family referrals** made to the social assistance navigator. Of those, 211 were simple referrals and 13 were complex referrals.

Simple referrals

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



Complex Referrals

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

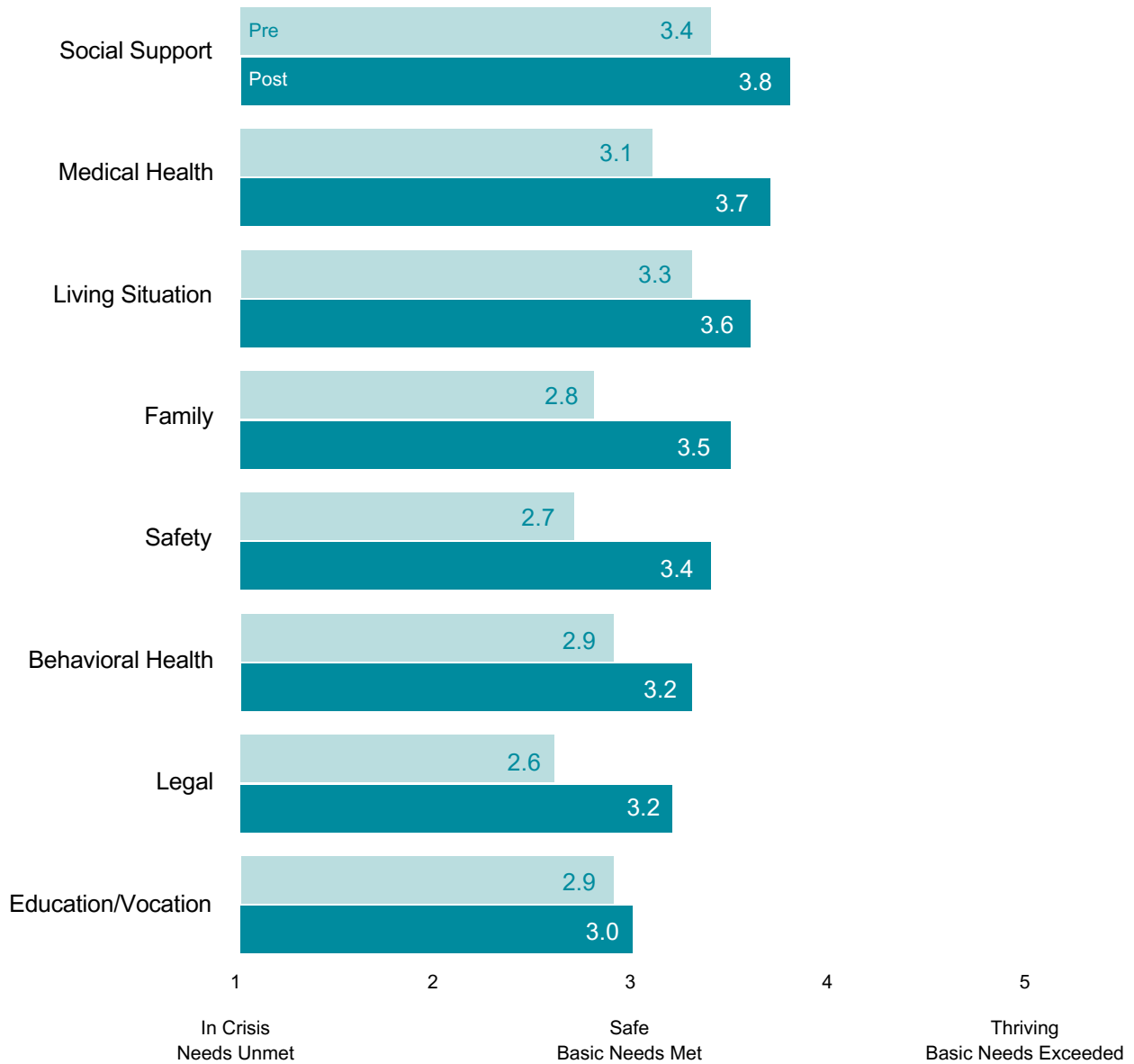


By the end of the year, of the families enrolled, 62% were able to close their case successfully while 15% were still in progress, 15% disengaged in services, and 8% declined services.

Self-Sufficiency

In 2023-2024, the SAN team impacted a total of 212 unique clients. The services in most need were often associated with financial need and identifying free or low cost legal, medical, and educational resources. The SAN team utilized the self-sufficiency matrix to identify any areas of risk and develop additional goals to empower families towards self-sufficiency. Sixty-five families were assessed at least one time using the self-sufficiency matrix, and 56 families completed pre- and post-service assessments in 2023-2024.

ON AVERAGE, SUCCESSFULLY DISCHARGED FAMILIES REPORTED INCREASED LEVELS OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN ALL DOMAINS. n=56



Participant Stress Level

Participants who engaged with SAN for complex cases were asked to rate their levels of stress on a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 equaling the highest level of stress. Ten out of 12 participants rated themselves at least twice during the reporting period, and two participants disengaged with the SAN before completing a rating.

ON AVERAGE, PARTICIPANTS WITH COMPLEX REFERRALS REPORTED DECREASED LEVELS OF STRESS AFTER RECEIVING SERVICES.

Reported stress levels decreased by at least 2 levels for all respondents. n=10



Success Story

A participant reported feeling depressed after separating from her partner. Her Educational Navigator connected her to individual therapy offered through the program. She said the therapy has helped her cope with this situation and build her self-esteem. She asked for help for daughter, who started having behavioral issues at school and home during the separation. The Social Assistance Navigator connected her to the Early Intervention program offered through Omaha Public Schools. The participant reports that she is doing better and is more involved in her daughter's education and development.

She is spending more time with her daughter, and her Educational Navigator also taught her how to get free passes through the Omaha Public Library. Every week, she is taking her daughter to different places, such as the Zoo, Children's Museum, and Durham Museum. The participant shared that her participation in parenting classes, therapy, and home visits at LCCSO taught her more about how parent-child interaction is essential for the child's development. She said she is happy to be part of the program and excited about the new things she will learn.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

METHOD. Children of families were invited to participate in assessments of executive functioning and academic skills in the spring of 2023. The following tools were used:

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS

The Minnesota Executive Functioning Scale (MEFS): Executive functioning is defined as a student’s ability to control impulses that then enable them to plan, initiate, and complete activities needed for learning. This online assessment was administered in English or Spanish by an evaluator from MMI in the fall of 2023 and spring of 2024.

ACADEMIC SKILLS

Batería IV Woodcock-Muñoz: The Batería IV is a Spanish-language assessment that measures cognitive abilities, achievement, and comparative oral language abilities. Four subscales were utilized in the evaluation: Identificación de letras y palabras (Letter-Word Identification), Problemas aplicados (Applied Problems), Comprensión de textos (Passage Comprehension), Cálculo (Calculation). In the spring of 2024, an MMI evaluator administered this assessment in Spanish to children entering Kindergarten in the fall of 2024.

FINDINGS

Executive Functioning

Sixty children were assessed, with 53 children having both pre and post assessments. The descriptive analyses found that 96% of the children demonstrated average executive functioning skills. Average scores were 95.6 (pre) and 96.3 (post). The national average is a score of 100. A paired samples t-test analysis indicated the growth from pre to post was not significant.

STUDENTS' EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS DEMONSTRATED SLIGHT IMPROVEMENT FROM PRE TO POST. 96% scored in the average range. n=53

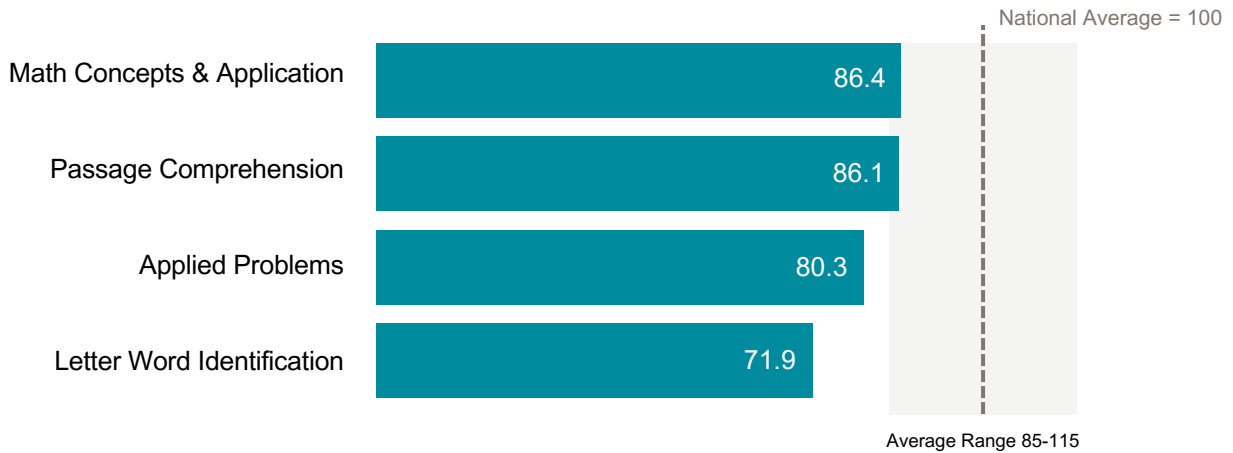


Academic Skills

Eighteen children were administered math and literacy assessments during the spring of 2023. Scores indicated average skills for one mathematics (SS=86.4) and one literacy assessment (SS=86.1).

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

Two areas are in the average range. n=18



ATTENDANCE OUTCOMES

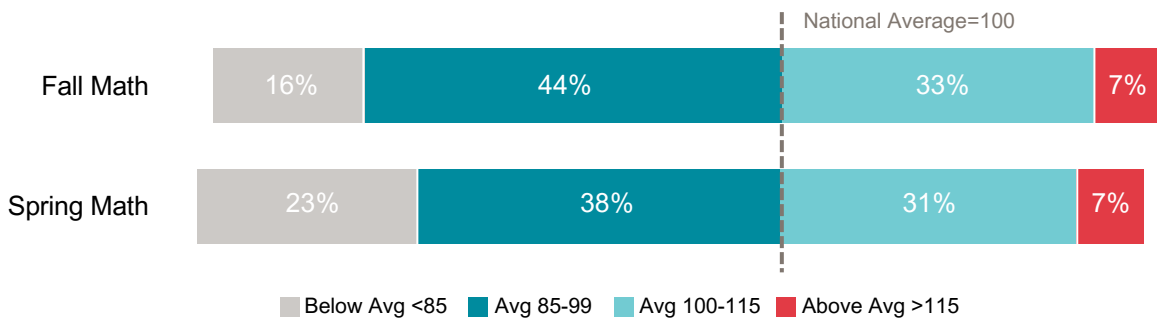
School Attendance data was obtained from Omaha Public Schools on the school-age students of parents participating in the LCCSO program. Those students attend 29 different schools in the district. For K-5 students with parents attending programming (n=102), **53% missed fewer than 10 days of school**. On average, K-5 students were absent 10.46 school days, and the district goal is for students to miss fewer than 10 days.

SCHOOL AGE STUDENT OUTCOMES

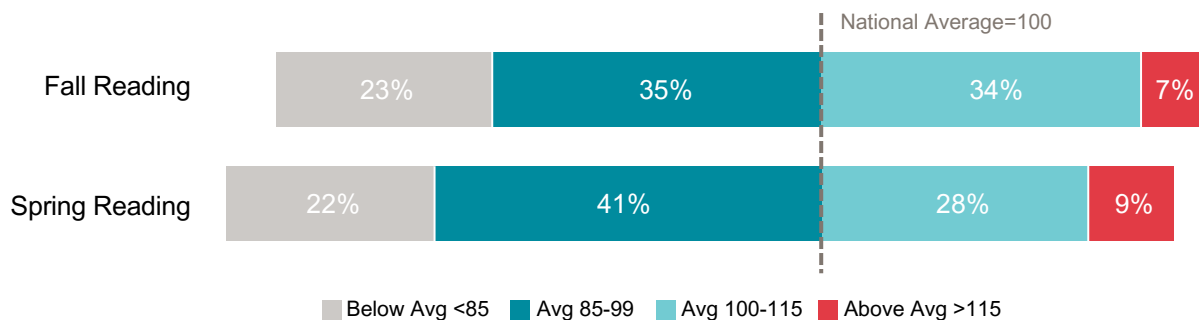
For those students with parents attending the program for at least one year, academic achievement data were obtained from the district. To assess the academic outcomes of the school-age children whose parents participated in programming at LCCSO, the MAP® Growth™ assessment was used. NWEA-MAP® Growth™ provides data on student academic growth in the areas of Reading and Math and monitors change over time.

For purposes of analysis, only data for grades K-5 are reported in the chart below showing MAP NWEA® data for fall and spring.

OVER 65% OF STUDENTS SCORED IN THE AVERAGE RANGE IN MATH ACROSS BOTH TIME POINTS.
Fewer students scored above the national average in the spring. n=94



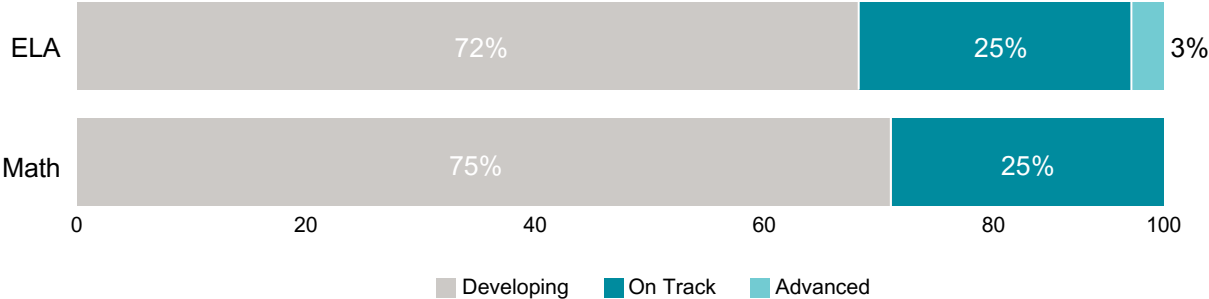
69% of K-5 STUDENTS SCORED IN THE AVERAGE RANGE FOR READING IN FALL AND SPRING.
By spring, fewer students scored above the national average. n=94



Students' scores were similar for mathematics and ELA in the spring, with 69% of students scoring in the average range. More students scored below the national average in ELA in spring. However, more students also scored in the above average range for ELA.

NSCAS proficiency levels were reported for both English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics for 3rd-5th grade students (n=33). Unlike MAP data, more students (28%) scored in the proficient range for ELA than for math (25% proficient). Proficiency rates for Omaha Public Schools for grades 3-5 are slightly higher ranging from 40%-41% proficient for ELA and from 33-38% for mathematics. For English Learner, 3rd-5th grade students, proficiency rates ranged from 29-32% for ELA and 26-29% for mathematics. **Students with parents in the program had lower rates of proficiency in ELA and math when compared to district overall data but the scores are consistent with other English Learners.**

MORE STUDENTS IN GRADES 3-5 SCORED IN THE PROFICIENT RANGE FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS THAN FOR MATH. n=33



COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE: USE OF DATA

CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT. The Learning Community Center of South Omaha focuses on using data gathered for the evaluation on an ongoing basis. The evaluation team from MMI and the management team at LCCSO engage in multiple feedback loops to improve programming and make informed decisions. KIPS™ and CASAS® assessments provide valuable information for the family navigators and English teachers to use in their interactions with families and students. Student data from the executive function and achievement assessments were shared both with program staff and with families. Focus group reports were shared with the management team to provide additional feedback from both participants and staff. These data aid in program improvements and decisions.

SUMMARY

Improvements in participant and child-level outcomes highlight the impacts of LCCSO’s 2Gen approach to supporting families.

School District Initiatives





2023-2024

KEY FINDINGS

1

Instructional Coaching was supported by districts and teachers.

80% of teachers were satisfied with the coaching they received.

2

Extended Learning programs demonstrated positive student outcomes.

Most students showed positive improvement over the course of the intervention or program they were enrolled in.

3

Jump Start to Kindergarten resulted in students being prepared to enter school.

Students made significant gains in executive function.

They were rated as more proficient on two kindergarten readiness skills compared to students not attending the program.

4

District Initiatives served 335 teachers and 8052 students across 10 districts.



Who We Served

Instructional Coaching

6 Learning Community school districts were supported in 2023-2024. Each district uses a different coaching model based on its needs. Learning Community-funded Instructional Coaches impacted 335 teachers and 7,702 students. All schools funded by the Learning Community for Instructional Coaching were elementary buildings.

Bellevue Public Schools 113 Teachers impacted 1896 Students impacted	Gretna Public Schools 4 Teachers impacted 100 Students impacted	Millard Public Schools 54 Teachers impacted 953 Students impacted
Omaha Public Schools 60 Teachers impacted 2500 Students impacted	Ralston Public Schools 32 Teachers impacted 1528 Students impacted	Westside Community Schools 72 Teachers impacted 725 Students impacted

Extended Learning

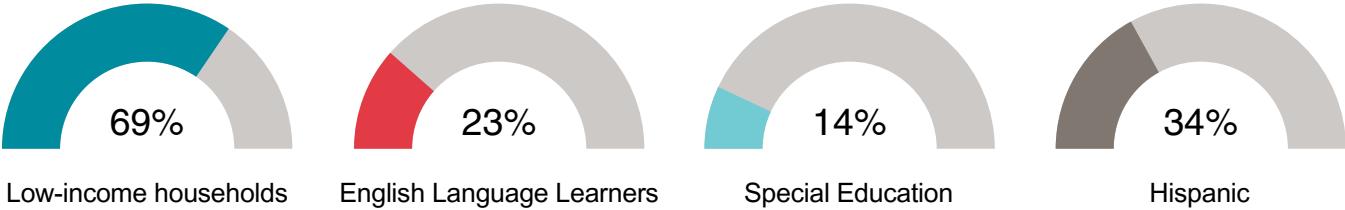
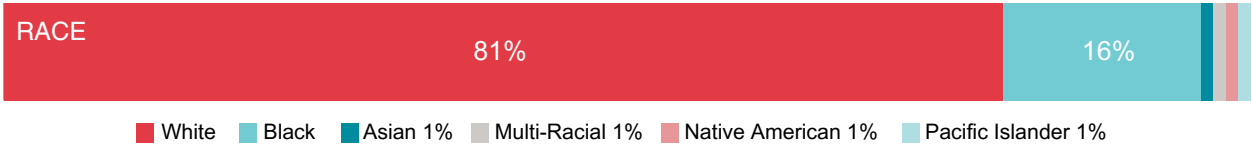
4 The Learning Community funded four Extended Learning programs (three school districts and one community agency). Programs provided interventions to 248 students.

DC West Community Schools 40 Students impacted 12 Days offered K-5 Targeted grade levels	Elkhorn Public Schools 128 Students impacted 12 Days offered 1-3 Targeted grade levels	Springfield Platteview Community Schools 18 Students impacted 70 Days offered 1-3 Targeted grade levels	Completely Kids 62 Students impacted 152 Days offered K-5 Targeted grade levels
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Who We Served

Jump Start to Kindergarten

102 A total of 102 kindergarten students were served at one district in the summer of 2024. The full-day program was implemented in-person and ran for three weeks



10 Jump Start to Kindergarten served 10 classrooms in 5 schools across the participating district. The majority of children served were five years of age.



District Initiatives

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

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING

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

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

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

BELLEVUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS. Bellevue Public Schools combined Diane Sweeney’s and Jim Knight’s coaching framework with Charlotte Danielson’s teacher evaluation model to provide coaching across six elementary buildings using five instructional coaches. Coaching cycles begin as teachers enroll in the coaching process. Coaching activities included leading building professional learning, observations, modeling, individual student problem solving, data analysis and utilization, teacher feedback, and guidance with new curriculum.

GRETNA PUBLIC SCHOOLS. During the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year Gretna Public Schools provided coaching support to its new teaching staff, targeting its support towards teachers in their first year of teaching in the elementary grades. Support began prior to school with a new teacher induction program and curriculum trainings. During the school year, support included observations, follow-up meetings, and check-ins. Mathematics professional learning in using Number Talks as a tool to facilitate discussion in the math classroom was also implemented for both new staff and existing staff.

MILLARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS. Millard Public Schools implemented instructional coaching at three buildings during the 2023–2024 school year. Two of the three coaches were funded by Learning Community funds.

OMAHA PUBLIC SCHOOLS. Instructional literacy coaches focused on literacy instruction, foundational skills, comprehension, and vocabulary in our kindergarten through sixth grade elementary classrooms. Coaches received professional learning on best instructional practices for teaching literacy.

RALSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS. The Instructional Coach supported all elementary schools in the district, with a focus on assisting teachers in their first three years of teaching. Emphasizing classroom management, instructional practices, and onboarding new curriculum, the coach provided personalized coaching cycles tailored to individual teacher needs to positively impact student learning. These cycles could include modeling lessons, co-teaching, data collection, reflection, and collaboratively planning strategies to enhance student engagement and academic success. Additionally, the Instructional Coach played a role in the New Teacher Mentoring Program and supported Professional Learning Communities in each building by fostering reflective practice and collaborative thinking.

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

OUTCOMES

COACH AND TEACHER FEEDBACK ON INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING

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

FINDINGS

Teacher Survey

A total of 105 teachers across six districts completed the teacher survey. Most teachers completing the survey had at least 10 years of experience (52%) compared to 30% with 4-10 years of teaching experience and 17% in their first three years of teaching. When asked about the frequency of coaching support, 50% of teachers reported working with a coach at least twice per month. Teachers rated survey items on a 5-point scale (1=strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree). Teachers reported that they had positive relationships with their coaches and building leadership supported the coaching program. Overall, 80% of teachers were satisfied with the coaching received from their district's instructional coaches.

COACHING WAS SUPPORTED BY DISTRICTS AND BUILDING LEADERSHIP. 80% of teachers were satisfied with the coaching program at their site. n=105

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

Coaching Strategy	Not at all useful	Slightly Useful	Moderately Useful	Very Useful	Extremely Useful
Coaching/Feedback	8.24%	4.71%	9.41%	23.53%	54.12%
Co-Teaching	8.51%	2.13%	4.26%	38.30%	46.81%
Data Analysis	6.02%	8.43%	4.82%	28.92%	51.81%
Lesson Planning	4.23%	8.45%	7.04%	36.62%	43.66%
Modeling Lesson and/or Strategies	6.25%	4.69%	6.25%	26.56%	56.25%
Observations (Live or Videotaped)	8.24%	4.71%	9.41%	23.53%	54.12%
Professional Development	3.16%	6.32%	15.79%	23.16%	51.58%
Small Group/Differentiated Instruction	4.00%	2.67%	9.33%	29.33%	54.67%

Teachers saw their coaches as resources for improving student outcomes and implementing new strategies.

“I feel like my second year in the district has been even more beneficial than the first with my coach. I have been able to identify specific areas to improve and we have been able to work well together to improve those areas. She has been a great support and resource when it comes to working through any issues that have arisen in my class.”

“She is a great sounding board and offers so many detailed ideas for solution and execution of solutions. I felt very supported.”

“She has helped me collect data to inform my instructional decisions and has helped find engaging resources to help my students. My students' reading scores have skyrocketed! They have made so much improvement with their phonics, reading, and comprehension! It is so nice to have an instructional coach to bounce ideas off of!”

Teachers described their coaches as positive, helpful, and supportive.

"[My coach] is the perfect coach in every sense. She listens, cares, shows that she cares through actions. No matter what is going on, I know without a doubt that [she] prioritizes staff members' concerns and she will help/guide/teach/problem solve until the issue is resolved."

"My coach is extremely positive. I'm encouraged by her very presence even after a long day of work. She is magnificent!"

"Our coach is super pleasant and steps in as needed. She is a big support, in particular, with new teachers and staff learning new curriculum. We are glad to have her on staff!"

Teachers appreciated opportunities to collaborate and problem-solve.

"[My coach] was a very great help with helping me find and implement data this year. She was also great with helping working through any issues and talk through different ideas with."

"She helped me with anything that was needed at any time. If there was a problem, she would help me find a solution. As a new teacher to the district, she helped me learn all there is to learn about the district and the new grade I was teaching in. She would always offer to come in at any time to help support, co-teach or teach a lesson in my classroom."

"I have enjoyed collaborating with my instructional coach this year. It was my 1st year teaching my grade level and in a new school. She helped me work through problems, talk about instruction, lesson plan, and be an ear when I needed one. It helped me be a better teacher!"

Teachers shared challenges with instructional coaching.

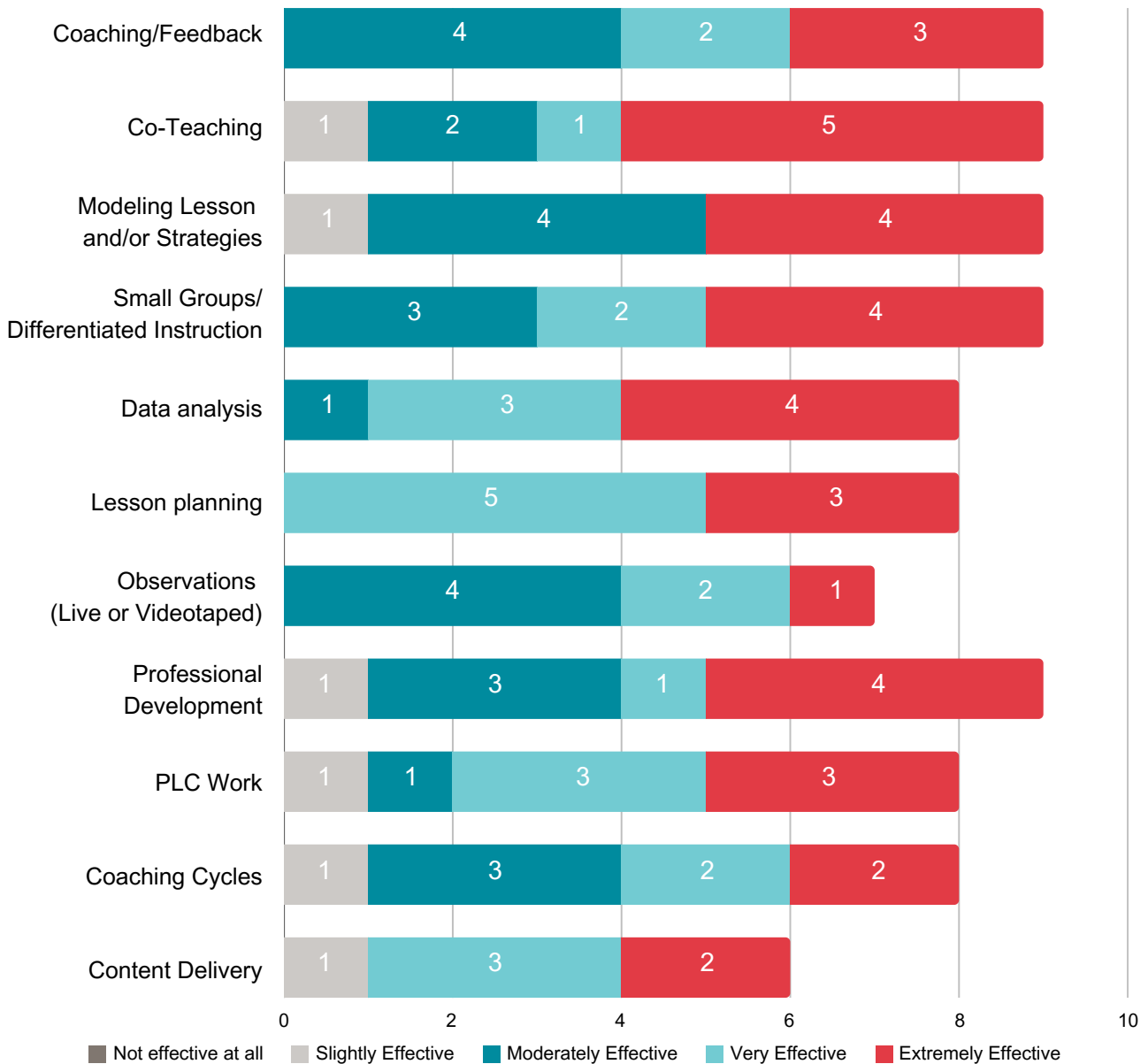
Some teachers felt frustrated with the level of feedback and support they received. Many of these respondents said they had little or no contact with their coaches, partly because of schedule limitations or coaches being used as substitute teachers. Others felt that their colleagues got more support because their coaches favored certain teachers, grade levels, or subjects. Some teachers wanted their coaches to provide more direct support in the classrooms (e.g., co-teaching or working with students and small groups).

"Our coaches do not co-teach or assist with learning in the classroom. The main purpose of our coaches is to look at data. Each of us certified teachers are capable of looking at our own data, and have absolutely no need for a coach. When this program began, I was excited to get a coach, until I realized how useless that position would be."

"My instructional coach works with teachers she prefers. She is only able to talk about one grade level's curriculum because that's the grade level she works on during curriculum writing. She is gone a lot for training, yet she doesn't bring any of it back to the staff. She seems to be gone more than she is here."

Instructional Coach Feedback

Nine coaches representing four districts provided feedback through an online survey. Of the nine coaches, 6 of them had more than 4 years of experience as a coach and 2 provided supports to more than 20 teachers in a year. Coaches were asked about the effectiveness of several coaching activities. Of the activities, four (Coaching/Feedback, Small Groups/Differentiated Instruction, Data Analysis, and Observations) were rated to be at least moderately effective.



Successes

Coaches were asked to share 2-3 success of their coaching year. Many highlighted collaboration with teachers engagement during trainings and team planning times. Others discussed students' academic growth in the subject areas targeted during coaching times. Finally, several coaches highlighted the work they did to build and maintain relationships with school staff.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Nebraska State Assessment Scores are reported by districts participating in the Instructional Coaching program. District averages are the average proficiency rates by grade level across each building in a district receiving instructional coaching. While some schools serve 6th grade, not all do. Therefore, proficiency rates are reported for 3rd-5th grades only. Free and reduced lunch eligibility statistics are not included for 2023-2024, as some districts are 100% qualified through the Community Eligible Provision. One district's NSCAS data is not reported because it joined the Instructional Coaching program later and was not a full-year participant.

DISTRICT NSCAS SCORES (3RD-5TH GRADES)

NSCAS English Language Arts

Percent Proficient

Grade 3	2022-2023	2023-2024
All Nebraska Students	62%	59%
District A	66%	69%
District B	56%	56%
District C	56%	55%
District D	60%	52%
District E	51%	49%

Grade 4	2022-2023	2023-2024
All Nebraska Students	55%	59%
District A	65%	62%
District B	48%	53%
District C	41%	52%
District D	39%	51%
District E	45%	50%

NSCAS Mathematics

Percent Proficient

Grade 3	2022-2023	2023-2024
All Nebraska Students	58%	61%
District A	60%	57%
District B	50%	55%
District C	53%	55%
District D	47%	58%
District E	49%	55%

Grade 4	2022-2023	2023-2024
All Nebraska Students	58%	60%
District A	61%	51%
District B	41%	37%
District C	50%	57%
District D	30%	45%
District E	48%	62%

NSCAS English Language Arts
Percent Proficient

Grade 5	2022-2023	2023-2024
All Nebraska Students	57%	57%
District A	58%	60%
District B	37%	48%
District C	54%	45%
District D	51%	34%
District E	45%	47%

NSCAS Mathematics
Percent Proficient

Grade 5	2022-2023	2023-2024
All Nebraska Students	65%	61%
District A	64%	60%
District B	39%	41%
District C	58%	43%
District D	47%	29%
District E	65%	62%

The statewide assessment scores in English Language Arts (ELA) increased for eight of the 15 student groups reported at the district level (53%) in 2023-2024. Scores decreased for six student groups (40%), and one group’s assessment scores were steady from 2022-2023 to 2023-2024 (7%). Students tended to perform below the state average for ELA, as 12 of 15 student groups (80%) had lower proficiency rates than the Nebraska averages for their grade levels.

NSCAS proficiency rates in mathematics increased for eight of the 15 student groups (53%) and decreased for seven student groups (47%) in 2023-2024. Thirteen of the 15 student groups (80%) had proficiency rates that were lower than the statewide proficiency rates for their grade levels.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Student data was submitted by the districts and/or programs. The districts used benchmark data from MAP, FastBridge, or Acadience to track student progress.

DISTRICT A. Students, on average, increased their percentile rank in early reading skills from a rank of 39 in fall 2023 to 40 in spring 2024. The average percentile rank for math grew four points from 38 in the fall to 42 in the spring. For reference, a percentile rank of 50 is equal to a standard score of 100. The average growth percentiles from fall to spring were 47 for reading and 51 for math. The 50th percentile is considered a reasonable approximation of one year’s growth.

DISTRICT B. Average percentile ranking for early reading skills in Kindergarten and first-grade students increased eight points from fall (42) to spring (50). The average adaptive reading percentile rankings for second-grade students decreased from 38 in fall 2023 to 36 in spring 2023, while adaptive math rankings decreased from 44 to 38. Average scores for the curriculum-based measures (CBM) decreased from fall 2023 to spring 2024 for students in grades 3-5. The ranking for CBM Reading decreased from 48 to 45, while CBM Math decreased from 59 to 56.

DISTRICT C. On average, students demonstrated slight increases in reading and math from fall to spring. The average percentile rank for reading increased from 50 to 51, while math increased from 50 to 52.

DISTRICT D. The percentage of students at or above benchmark in reading increased from 74.8% in fall 2023 to 75.6% in spring 2024. The percentage of students well below benchmark decreased from 12.5% to 10.8%.

DISTRICT E. By spring testing, 64% of students in grades K-3 met their projected growth in reading and 70% met their projected growth in math. The average percentile rank for reading increased five points from a rank of 55 in fall 2023 to a rank of 60 in spring 2024. The average percentile rank for math increased from 56 in fall 2023 to 60 in spring 2024.

DISTRICT F. Student performance, on average, decreased in reading and math from fall 2023 to spring 2024 but remained in the average range. The mean percentile ranks in reading were 52 in the fall and 50 in the spring, and the mean ranks for math decreased from 52 to 49.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue to explore potential methods to target and improve students' literacy skills through coaching and other targeted professional development practices.

Extended Learning

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Extended Learning programs provided additional direct instruction for students with smaller teacher to student ratios and a focus on specific skills identified by district assessments. Summer programming was designed to prevent learning loss so that students are better prepared for academic success as they enter the next school year. Programs were funded in three districts and one community agency.

COMPLETELY KIDS. Students in this before and after school program were served at Field Club elementary. Completely KIDS focused on building the social-emotional and academic skills of the students in our programs. Through hands-on project based learning curriculum, the students learned while doing and stayed engaged in the activities.

DC WEST COMMUNITY SCHOOLS. The summer extended learning program consisted of 12 days, 3 hours each day. Students were provided targeted instruction in the areas of ELA and mathematics. Weekly communication and resources were shared with families about their child's progress. The goal of the program was to help students maintain their academic skills over the summer break.

ELKHORN PUBLIC SCHOOLS. The Jump Start to Reading program served students entering Grades 1-3 in the fall. Students attended an average of 11 of the 12 days of the program.

SPRINGFIELD-PLATTEVIEW COMMUNITY SCHOOLS. Students verified for this program received individual/small group math instruction at two elementary buildings. Students participated one hour per week with intervention lessons developed through collaborative efforts between classroom teachers and the math interventionist. The goal of the program was for at-risk students to meet grade level expectations in math by the end of the school year. The district looked at students who needed support in all grade levels but focused on students in the intermediate grade range.

OUTCOMES

PARENT SATISFACTION

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

FINDINGS. Parents reported high levels of overall satisfaction (M=4.79) with the extended learning programs. Parents rated staff as being excellent (M=4.90), believed their child would be more successful the following year in school, and felt their child enjoyed the program.

EXTENDED LEARNING PROGRAMS MET EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS.

86% of parents feel their child will be more successful in school. n=69

I was satisfied with the program as a whole.



The staff were excellent (caring, reliable, skilled).



My child enjoyed attending the program.



I was satisfied with the hours of the program.



I was satisfied with the length of the program.



I believe that my child will be more successful in school as a result of the program.



I am satisfied with the level of communication I had with the program.



I was informed about my child's progress.



Parents were asked to provide one to two examples of things the program could better and 1-2 examples of positives about the programming. Parents appreciated the staff, engaging activities, socialization opportunities, and program schedules. Parents also loved the improvement made by their children and discussed evidence of growth. A few improvements were noted by parents, including fewer videos or iPad lessons and more communication on student progress and upcoming topics.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

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

DISTRICT A. Students on average increased their percentile rank by over 4 points from an average percentile rank of 40 in the spring of 2024 to an average percentile rank of 44 in the fall of 2024. For reference a percentile rank of 50 is equal to a standard score of 100.

DISTRICT B. About half of students met their growth goal for mathematics (48%), while 29% met their growth goal in reading. At the post test, 52% scored in the average range or above for mathematics and 44% were in or above the average range in reading.

DISTRICT C. By spring testing, 89% of intervention students demonstrated growth (average growth was 16 RIT points) with 18% scoring at or above the district achievement goal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

“The staff were wonderful and my daughter enjoyed going after getting the nerves out.”

“I like that she was proud of herself and how much more confident she appeared to be about reading.”

“I liked the timing of the program in the summer. It was a good space between school getting out for the summer but left some time before school started again.”

- Parents of students

Jump Start to Kindergarten

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

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

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

OUTCOMES

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS

METHOD. In recent years, the important contributions of executive functioning to school readiness have been highlighted (Benson et al., 2013; Koruco, Litkowski & Schmitt, 2020; Meixner & Laubrock, 2024,). Executive functioning is defined as a student’s ability to control impulses that then enable them to plan, initiate, and complete activities needed for learning. Researchers correlate a relationship between executive functioning and a preschooler’s ability to learn in the classroom (Benson, et. al., 2013). The Minnesota Executive Function Scale (MEFS), is an online assessment for children two and older.

RESULTS. For the 2024 summer, pre-post comparisons were made using a paired-samples t-test. The results found that overall, the students made significant gains in the area of executive functioning over the course of the program [$t(81)= 4.032$; $p<.001$], $d=0.34$] suggesting small meaningful change.

STUDENTS' EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED OVERALL.

Effect size suggests moderate, meaningful change. $n=82$



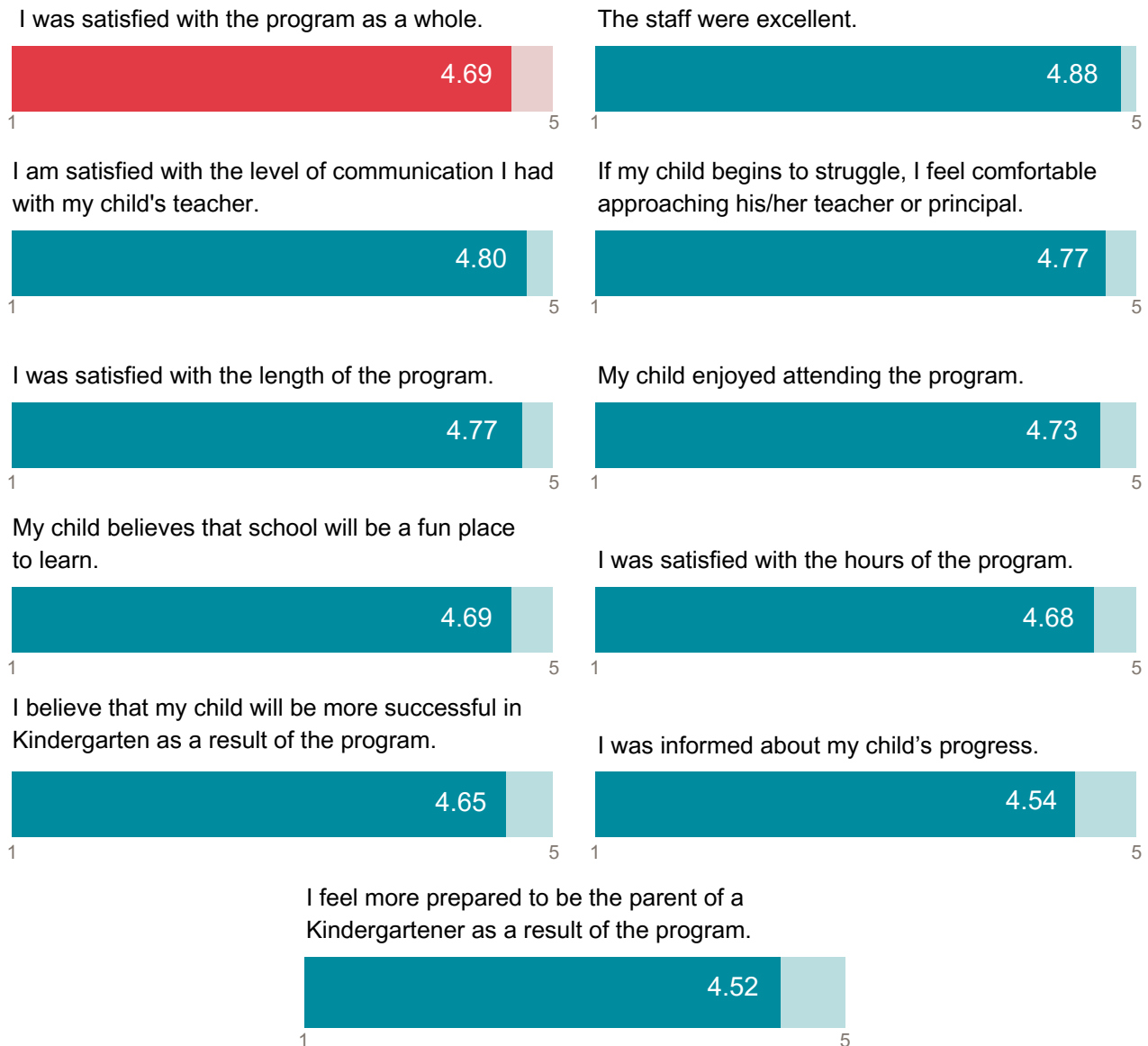
The overall mean standard scores on the MEFS increased from 93.8 to 96.8, moving them to the desired mean of 100. The goal each year is to move the group as close to a mean standard score of 100 or greater as possible.

PARENT SATISFACTION

METHOD. Twenty-seven parents provided feedback on the value or usefulness of the Jump Start to Kindergarten Program. Parents were asked to respond to multiple satisfaction questions using a 5-point scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree).

RESULTS. Families reported high overall satisfaction in all areas, including believing that the staff were excellent, teacher communication, the approachability of teachers, and the length of program. They also reported high levels of satisfaction on such items as their child enjoyed attending the program, their child believes that school will be a fun place to learn, and satisfaction with the hours of the program. The lowest level of satisfaction was parents feeling more prepared to be the parent of a Kindergartener as a result of the program and parents feeling informed about child's progress.

PARENTS REPORTED HIGH LEVELS OF SATISFACTION IN ALL AREAS. n=27

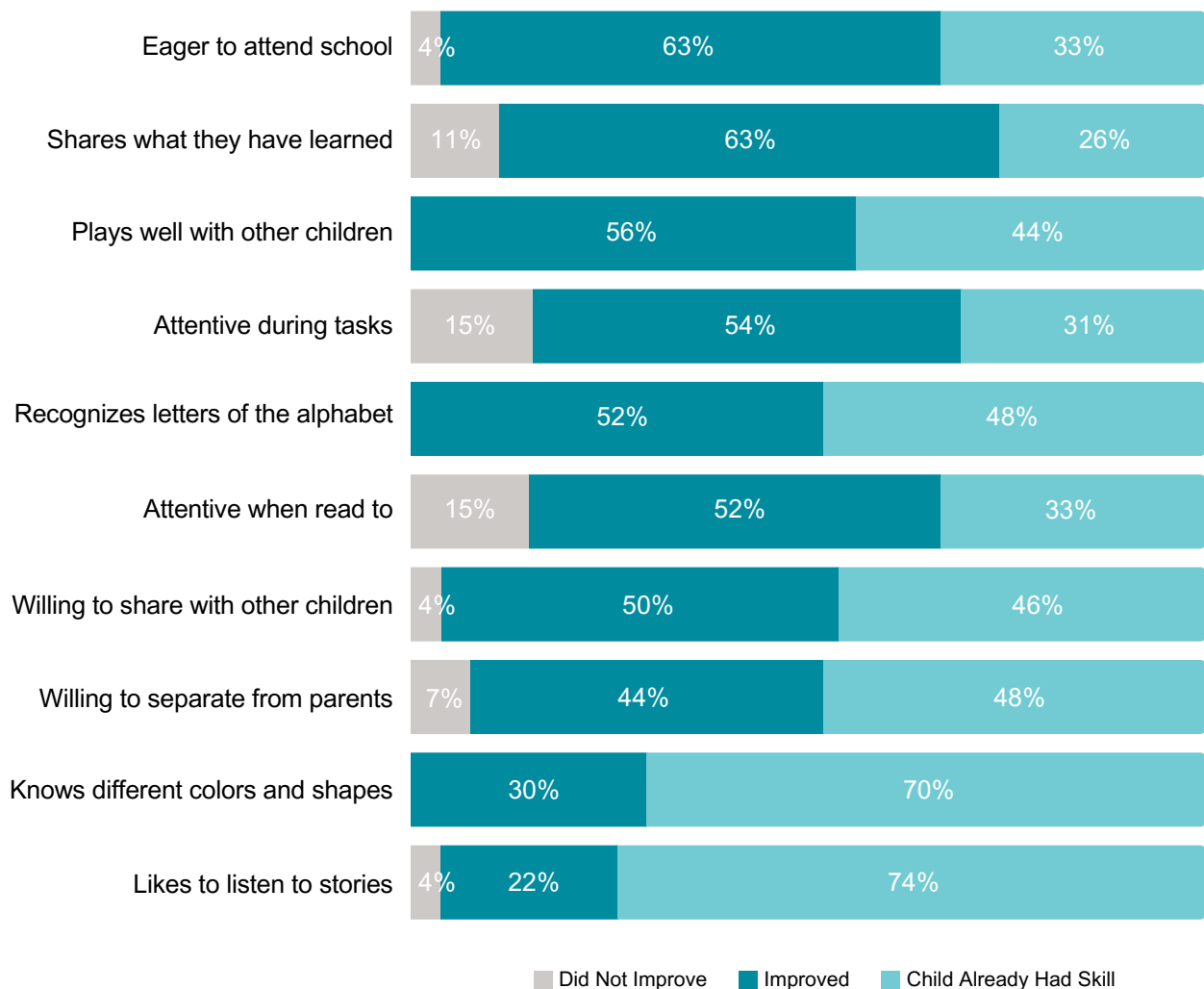


PARENT RATING OF STUDENT PROGRESS

How did parents rate their students' readiness for school?

Parents were also surveyed about their perceptions of how the program impacted their child. Over half of respondents reported that their child improved in the following areas: eagerness to attend school, sharing what they learned, plays well with other children, attentiveness during tasks, recognizes letter of the alphabet, attentive when read to, and willingness to share with other children. Some areas where the majority of students already possessed the skills included: knows different colors and shapes, likes to listen to stories, and willingness to separate from parents.

PARENTS CONSISTENTLY REPORTED THAT THEIR CHILDREN WERE EAGER TO ATTEND SCHOOL BY THE COMPLETION OF THE JUMP START PROGRAM. n=27



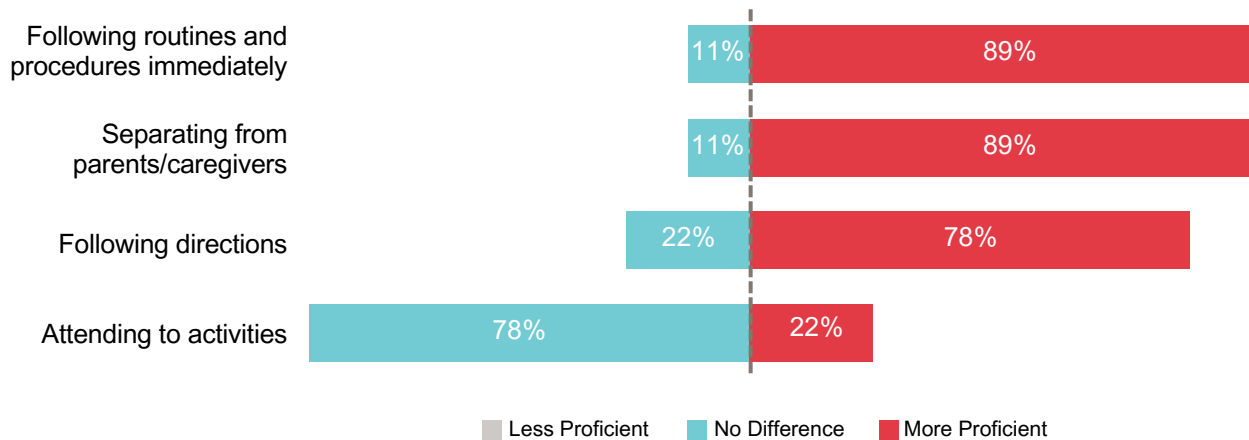
What did teachers report about students who attended the Jump Start to Kindergarten Programs?

METHOD. In the fall of 2024, all kindergarten teachers who had 2024 Jump Start to Kindergarten students in their classroom were asked to fill out a survey about the overall level of proficiency of students who attended the Jump Start to Kindergarten program compared to those that did not. Of the nine teachers that were surveyed, six taught Jump Start to Kindergarten this year.

TEACHER SURVEY RESULTS. Teachers reported high overall proficiency in all areas, including separating from parent/caregivers and following routines and procedures right away. Teachers consistently reported that Jump Start to Kindergarten students were either more proficient, or that there was no difference in skill level, when compared to their peers who did not attend the program. No teachers reported that students that attended the program were less proficient than their peers. Attending to activities had the lowest percent of more proficiency (22%).

JUMP START STUDENTS WERE RATED MORE OR EQUALLY PROFICIENT IN ALL AREAS.

89% of teachers rated the students who attended the Jump Start to Kindergarten program as more proficient than their peers who did not attend the program in the areas of separating from parents/caregivers and following routines and procedures immediately. n=9



Special Projects: Family Engagement





2023-2024

PROGRAMS IMPLEMENTED



Millard Public Schools

MPS expanded PreK-5th grade students' access to literacy materials by providing literacy modeling and 100 books to families enrolled in its home visiting program and offering literacy activities and open library times during the summer. Learning Community funds supported an expansion of the district's Jump Start to Kindergarten program, which added summer experiences for students entering kindergarten in August of 2024.



Ralston Public Schools

Learning Community funds enabled the district to purchase bilingual ReadShare Kits for its elementary schools. The take-home kits, intended for K-3rd grade students, encouraged students and their families to engage in literacy experiences together at home. Kits provided English and Spanish copies of nonfiction books that covered a variety of topics. Each of the district's six elementary schools received kits with nonfiction book sets, at-home activity sheets, and materials to support the activities. The program impacted approximately 350 students from 115 families.



Westside Community Schools

The district adopted and implemented ParentPowered, a family engagement curriculum and digital platform. Learning Community funds purchased the program, which connected families with evidence strategies and information for supporting their students. Funds also provided a stipend for the Learning Liaison, who coordinated and evaluated school-based family learning and engagement at four elementary schools. The district hosted five virtual kick-off events, one for each elementary school.



Douglas County West Community Schools

DC West designed and implemented a program to encourage father-figure involvement for PK-5th grade students. Funds from the Learning Community paid for two certificated staff stipends to research best practices and implement the program, as well as materials and resources to support programming.



Child Saving Institute

CSI provided training for early childhood teachers and parents. Participants learned about children's social-emotional development, including the role of adult-child connection in healthy development. Participants also received materials and strategies to use when teaching young children social-emotional skills like self-regulation.



Collective for Youth

Learning Community funds helped Collective for Youth provide experiences to 354 Omaha Public Schools children in summer 2024. Children learned about caring for school gardens and nutrition with Big Garden, environmental science with Keep Omaha Beautiful, gross motor skills development via sports with Future Fitness and Hoopin' Homies, and social skills through role play with RESPECT.



Metropolitan Community College

MCC launched a pilot program that provided a pathway for educators to earn the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential and college credit toward an AA degree as an Early Childhood Educator. The program targeted 21 early childhood educators from diverse backgrounds. Over two months, participants engaged in 20 workshops, received mentorship, and completed hands-on training aligned with CDA standards. By the end of the pilot, two participants had successfully completed the CDA training and were scheduled for their exam and Professional Development Specialist visit.



OUTCOMES

PARENT SATISFACTION: SCHOOL DISTRICT

METHOD. Parents from Westside Community Schools, Ralston Public Schools, and Millard Public Schools (n=195) provided feedback about the special projects they participated in at their districts. Parents were asked to respond to multiple questions using a 5-point scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). Results for one district were not reported due to the number of responses with agreement ratings (n=1).

RESULTS. Families typically reported satisfaction with their school districts' Learning Community-funded projects. Respondents indicated they had more access to resources and/or staff support as a result of engaging with the activities and/or communication implemented by the districts.

DISTRICT A PARENTS REPORTED HIGH LEVELS OF SATISFACTION IN ALL AREAS. n=92

I feel like I have one or more people I could ask for assistance and/or resources if needed.



I feel more connected to the school community.



I feel more prepared for my child(ren) to start school in the fall.



The activities increased the number of books and/or literacy activities in our home.



DISTRICT B PARENTS REPORTED HIGH SATISFACTION WITH MATERIAL DELIVERY AND RESOURCES. n=111

I found the frequency of the material delivery to be satisfactory.



I feel like I have more resources and tools to engage with my child's education.



Information from ParentPowered was helpful and engaging.



I feel more prepared for my child(ren) to start school in the fall.



I feel more connected to the school community.



PARTICIPANT SATISFACTION: COMMUNITY PARTNER TRAININGS

METHOD. Participants at the community partner trainings completed a post-training survey. Participants were asked to rate their confidence in using the training materials (1=low confidence, 10=high confidence) and to respond to multiple questions using a 5-point scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree).

RESULTS. Class participants (n=97), on average, reported high levels of confidence in using the materials provided at the trainings. Both teachers (n=60) and parents (n=37) indicated that they learned new strategies to help children calm down and left their training with more knowledge and tools to support children’s social-emotional development.

PARTICIPANTS REPORTED HIGH CONFIDENCE IN USING MATERIALS.

Parent and teacher participants gained knowledge and skills as a result of trainings. n=97

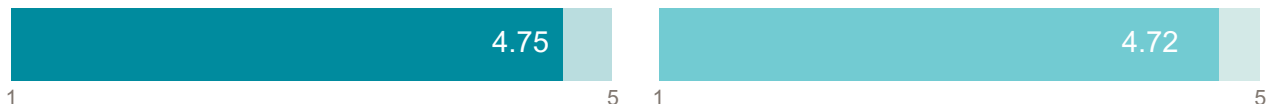
Confidence using the materials provided at the training.



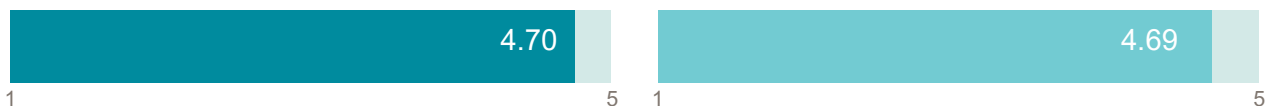
Adult-child connection is an important component for healthy social-emotional development.



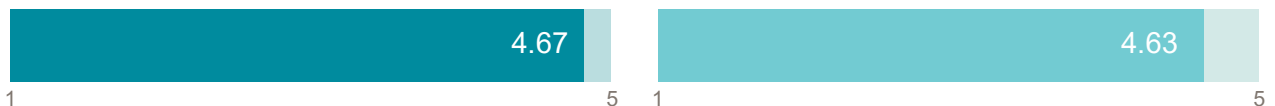
I learned at least one strategy that I will use to help children calm down when they are upset.



I have more knowledge and tools to support children’s social-emotional development.



As a result of this training, I can think of strategies that will help children learn social-emotional skills.



Learning Community Annual Report Summary

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

INTENSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

- 186 Pre-K students were enrolled across 6 sites.
- The majority represent diverse racial and ethnic populations (n=163).
- 40% were identified for special education services.
- Classroom quality was above the thresholds of quality and in the top 10% of Head Start programs.
- Over half of the students scored at the national average or above for social-emotional skills by spring. Girls demonstrated stronger social-emotional skills than boys.
- Significant improvements from fall to spring occurred for vocabulary, school readiness, and social-emotional skills. Vocabulary scores indicated a need for further improvement.

PARENT UNIVERSITY

- 203 parents were enrolled. Most participants represented low-income (91% had children who were eligible for free and reduced lunch) & culturally diverse populations. Families reported 12 different primary languages, and the most common primary language was Spanish (35%).
- Enrolled parents had 545 children, 320 of which were birth to age 8.
- 47% of parents completed high school, and 86% of families received additional government assistance.
- Parents participated in 56 courses/activities, which focused on parenting, literacy, life skills, and school success. The completion rate for activities with multiple sessions was 94%.
- 47% of parents completing the Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (KIPS) assessment met the overall goal for parent-child interactions, and 74% met the goal for Building Relationships.
- Participants noted multiple benefits to Parent University participation including access to resources, reduced stress, and relationships with Educational Navigators.
- Approximately half of the children of enrolled parents demonstrated language skills in the average range.
- The majority of children were in or above the average range across all social-emotional areas. Self-control was an area of strength.

LEARNING COMMUNITY CENTER OF SOUTH OMAHA: FAMILY LEARNING

FAMILY LEARNING

- 339 parents were enrolled, and 270 participants needed child care at LCCSO.
- 830 total children supported, 531 of which were ages birth to 5.
- 64% reported earning less than \$35,000 annually, and 40% had a high school diploma.
- Families participated in 1851 personal visits and 884 parent/child interactions with Educational Navigators during the 2023-2024 reporting period.
- Workforce Development participants earned 215 certificates.
- 36 participants were enrolled in GED classes, with four participants earning their GED.
- 71% of participants in cohort 1 and 53% in cohort 2 made measurable GED gains.
- Participants demonstrated statistically significant gains in English listening skills.

PARENTING OUTCOMES

- Most parents met the program goals in 2 out of 4 areas on the parenting measure. Building Relationships was an area of strength.
- Parents reported increased levels of school and community engagement.
- The social assistance navigator (SAN) assisted families with 211 simple referrals and 13 complex referrals. 96% of parents with simple referrals were successfully discharged.
- 62% of parents with complex referrals were successfully discharged. Parents who engaged with the SAN for complex case, on average, reported a decrease of stress from 9.2 to 3.2 on a 10-point scale.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

- 53% of school-age students with parents attending the program were absent from school fewer than 10 days. K-5 students, on average, missed 10.46 school days in 2023-2024.
- 96% of students scored in the average range for executive functioning.
- Students scored in the average range for the Math Concepts & Application and Passage Comprehension portions of the Bateria.
- Over 70% of students scored in the average range on NWEA-MAP mathematics assessment.

SCHOOL DISTRICT INITIATIVES

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING

- Approximately 335 teachers, and 7,702 students were served across elementary buildings in 6 districts.
- 52% of teachers had at least 10 years of experience; 17% were in their first 3 years.
- 80% of teachers were satisfied with the coaching received.
- Teachers reported that they had positive relationships with coaches and that building administrators supported the Instructional Coaching program.
- 56% of teachers indicated that lesson modeling was an extremely useful strategy for instructional coaching.

JUMP START TO KINDERGARTEN

- 102 kindergarten-eligible students enrolled in Jump Start across 5 schools in 1 district.
- 69% represented low-income households, and 23% were English Language Learners.
- Parents reported high levels of satisfaction with the program. Program staff and communication were strengths.
- Students' executive functioning skills improved significantly from pre to post, with the effect size suggesting moderate meaningful change.
- Kindergarten teachers consistently reported Jump Start students were more proficient than their peers in skills such as following routines and procedures immediately and separating from parents/caregivers.

EXTENDED LEARNING

- 248 students were enrolled in Extended Learning.
- 3 districts and 1 community agency participated.
- Parents' overall satisfaction with the program was 4.62 on a 5-point scale. Parents reported satisfaction with staff (4.90) and program hours (4.79), and they reported that their children enjoyed attending (4.79).
- District data indicated growth for students participating in Extended Learning.
- Some parents wanted more communication on student progress and upcoming topics.

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APPENDIX A. ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Tool	Author	Purpose
Bracken School Readiness Assessment, 3rd Ed.	Bracken, B. (2007)	The Bracken School Readiness Assessment measure school readiness concepts including colors, letters, shapes and concepts and numbers.
Bateria IV Woodcock-Muñoz	Woodcock, Alvarado, Ruef, & Schrank (2017)	The Bateria IV is a Spanish-language assessment that measures cognitive, achievement and oral language abilities.
CASAS®		The CASAS® provides a measure of a participant’s English language skills in reading and listening.
Circle of Security Parenting Survey	Jackson, B. (2014) Unpublished	This survey completed by parents evaluates three areas including parenting strategies, parent-child relationships, and parenting stress. It is based on a 5 point Likert scale.
Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA), Second Edition	LeBuffe, P. & Naglieri, J. (2012)	The DECA assesses young children’s social-emotional protective factors, specifically evaluating, initiative, attachment, behavior concerns, and self-control.
Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (KIPS)	Comfort & Gordon (2008)	Measures parenting behaviors across three areas: Building Relationships, Promoting Learning, and Supporting Confidence, based on a videotape of a parent playing with his or her child. Scores are based on a 5-point scale.
Minnesota Executive Function Scale (MEFS)	Carlson, S.M. & Zelazo, P. (2014)	The MEFS is an digital assessment measuring student’s broad executive function skills.
Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (5th Ed.)	Dunn, D. M. (2019). Pearson	A measure of receptive vocabulary.

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