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CENTER FOR CHILDREN
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



Getting Ready for School: Palm Beach County's Early Childhood Cluster Initiative

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INTRODUCTION

Increasingly, policymakers and funders are recognizing what educators and psychologists have long known about the importance of early childhood experiences for later development. Of particular interest is the potential value of high-quality early childhood experiences in improving the school readiness of low-income children who traditionally start school behind their more advantaged peers. Prevention and early intervention programs, such as the High/Scope Perry Preschool Project (Schweinhart et al., 2005), that enrich early childhood environments have been shown to produce more successful youth and adults by raising both cognitive and noncognitive skills (also, Heckman, 2006; Heckman & Masterov, 2004; Reynolds, Ou, & Topitzes, 2004; Temple & Reynolds, 2006). Although early childhood experiences are not the only factors in children's future success, evidence indicates that from an economic standpoint, educational interventions for disadvantaged children in the first 5 years of life have much higher returns in terms of future education and employment than later interventions (Heckman, 2006; Heckman & Masterov, 2004).

Questions remain about the best way to structure new preschool programs at the policy level, however, given available resources. One issue, which is characteristic of other social programs, is that of targeting; that is, whether prekindergarten programs should be universally available or directed to children with greater need. Some policy-makers believe that Head Start and other publicly funded programs should target children in low-income families who might not otherwise have access to preschool, with the assumption that such programs have the best chance of closing early learning gaps (Loeb et al., 2006). Others advocate for "universal" programs believing that, despite their cost, they are more effective at reaching and improving the school readiness of all children (Barnett, Brown, & Shore, 2004). A growing number of states have weighed in on this issue during the last decade by establishing universal or voluntary prekindergarten programs in an effort to improve children's readiness for school.¹ Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Program, which began during the 2005-2006 school year and provides 540 hours of free preschool education a day for all 4-year-olds in school- and community-based settings during the school year, or 300 hours during the summer, is just one recent example. Early research on such state-funded programs indicates promising impacts on children (Clifford et al., 2005; Gillam & Zigler, 2000; Gormely et al., 2005).

There are also many uncertainties about how to structure programs to maximize their impact on school readiness and other developmental goals. When looking at particular elements of programs, research suggests that full-day programs (rather than half-day), smaller class sizes, smaller teacher-child ratios, and appropriate professional development are good programmatic features. Less agreement exists about other structural aspects of programs, such as the effects of teacher education (e.g., bachelor degree), program location (e.g., schools,

¹ As of April 2006, only six states did not provide any state funding for preschool programs. In several states, the prekindergarten program is a state supplement to Head Start. In some states, it is a combination of a state supplement to Head Start and other funds specifically for providing prekindergarten (National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC]: <http://www.naeyc.org>). Despite the overall expansion in funding, recent shortfalls have led to declining enrollments and lower per-child expenditure (adjusted for inflation) in some states (National Institute for Early Education Research [NIEER]: <http://nieer.org>).

community centers) and age of the child served (Early, Maxwell, Burchinall et al., 2007; Kelley & Camilli, 2007). For any given budget, there are competing notions about how to best combine programmatic attributes; there is little high-quality comparative research on different program models. Many also worry that, in practice, the budgets actually allotted for state prekindergarten initiatives—including that of Florida’s VPK program—are not sufficient to provide the high quality of experiences needed to effectively prepare children for school.² More generally, the lack of resources directed to the early childhood field has made it difficult for providers to retain qualified staff; typical qualifications of early childhood staff in community-based child-care centers (as opposed to public schools) have been declining over the past two decades (Herzenberg, Price, & Bradley, 2005).³

Beyond these structural measures of programs, an extensive body of research is coalescing on the idea that classroom dynamics, such as the nature of social interactions and instructional experiences in these programs, are critical (e.g., Brooks-Gunn, 2003; Burchinal, Cryer et al., 2002; Burchinal, Roberts et al., 2002; Frede & Barnett, 1992; Howes, 1997; Howes & Smith, 1995; NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 2000, 2001; Pianta et al., 2002; LaParo, Pianta, & Stuhlman, 2004). There is general consensus that the effects of early childhood programs on children’s development and learning depend, in large part, on the *quality* of their experiences in these programs. Accordingly, any effort to provide high quality care must take into consideration both the structural elements of good programming and the quality of interactions between adults and children.

The Early Childhood Cluster Initiative

Recognizing the importance of quality in children’s early childhood experiences, the Children’s Services Council (CSC) of Palm Beach County, the United Way of Palm Beach County, the School District of Palm Beach County, and Palm Beach Community College (PBCC) launched the Early Childhood Cluster Initiative (ECCI) in the fall of 2005, modeled upon the 1960s “Perry Preschool Project,” which is distinguished in the field for its documented impact upon disadvantaged children (Hohmann & Weikart, 2002; Schweinhart et al., 2005).⁴ The central feature of ECCI is a full-day prekindergarten program for 3- and 4-year-old children in low-income communities. The name “cluster initiative” refers to the initiative’s intentions to support and link the agencies and individuals that provide care for children in the 5 years prior

² For example, see the editorial “Half Empty” in the *Orlando Sentinel* (August 2, 2006) and the article “Verdict is still out on Pre-K Program” (Solocheck, *St. Petersburg Times*, August 20, 2007), which capture the feelings of many observers that the state has failed to deliver on its promises of a high quality program, for example, by approving only enough funds for half-day classes and not requiring day-care centers to hire certified teachers.

³ Since the early 1980s, according to Herzenberg, Price, and Bradley (2005), there has been a large decline in the qualifications of the center-based early childhood workforce nationwide. Thirty percent of child care teachers and directors now have a high school diploma or less. With respect to state prekindergarten programs, thirty currently require teachers to have a B.A. degree and, in most of these states, specialized training in early childhood education (NAEYC: <http://www.naeyc.org>).

⁴ The findings from the long-term evaluation of the Perry Preschool Project (Schweinhart, Montie, Xiang, Barnett, Belfield, & Nores, 2005) showed that participants of the program performed better through the years on achievement, literacy, cognitive, and language tests than those that did not participate. Moreover, participants were more likely to be high school graduates, be employed and earn higher incomes than non-participants. The results of the program suggest that children who participate in high quality early care and education programs have better outcomes than children of comparable backgrounds who do not.

to entering kindergarten. All of the first-year ECCI classrooms were located in schools that house Beacon Centers, programs managed by community-based organizations in school space during the after-school hours—afternoons, evenings, and weekends—to provide social, recreational, and educational activities for children and families in the community. ECCI stakeholders anticipate that relationships formed between Beacon Centers and families during the preschool years will continue and be a source of support for children who remain in the school for kindergarten. ECCI classrooms are also supported by the Comprehensive Services program, which provides early identification of developmental delays and social-emotional problems and service referrals. Initial plans for ECCI also included gradually implementing the program in community child-care centers and homes.

The ECCI program is a recent component of an infrastructure of community services and supports put in place to promote the healthy development and school readiness of children ages 0 to 8 in Palm Beach County. The programs and systems that make up the infrastructure of services for families and children in Palm Beach County are intended to function collaboratively and support families and children at different stages of their development. Currently, these programs and systems are focused on serving families in four targeted geographic areas (TGAs)—the Glades, Lake Worth/Lantana, Riviera Beach/Lake Park, and West Palm Beach—that have high levels of risk for poverty, teen pregnancy, crime, and child abuse and neglect.⁵

As described in our first-year report (Spielberger & Goyette, 2006), several key programmatic components were implemented during the first year, including the High/Scope curriculum. High/Scope’s “active learning” approach to early childhood education is based on developmental theory and educational practice that indicate that children learn best from concrete experiences in which they personally plan, carry out, and reflect on their activities with appropriate support and guidance from adults (Hohmann & Weikart, 2002). Teachers are to give children a sense of control by planning a consistent daily routine that allows them to anticipate what will happen next and an environment containing a wide variety of materials arranged to encourage self-directed use by children. The core of the daily routine is the “plan-do-review” sequence in which children make choices about what they will do, carry out their ideas, and then think and talk about their activities with adults and peers. Other important elements of the routine are regular times for small- and large-group activities, cleanup, snacks and meals, and outdoor time. Throughout the day, teachers participate in activities with children and extend their learning by listening, asking open-ended questions, engaging in meaningful conversations with them, and providing a variety of materials and experiences for exploration. Thus, the curriculum places special emphasis on the learning environment, the daily routine and the nature of adult-child interactions. High/Scope is also committed to a broad conception of assessment, including daily anecdotal note-taking by teachers as part of the planning process (Hohmann & Weikart, 2002). Additional information about High/Scope can be found in Appendix A.

⁵ For example, according to the 2003 *State of the Child in Palm Beach County*, 75 to 93 percent of children in the TGAs receive free or reduced lunch; the rate of child abuse and neglect in the TGAs is between 4.1 and 6.6 times the county average; and crime rates in the TGAs range from 14 to 93 percent above the county rate.

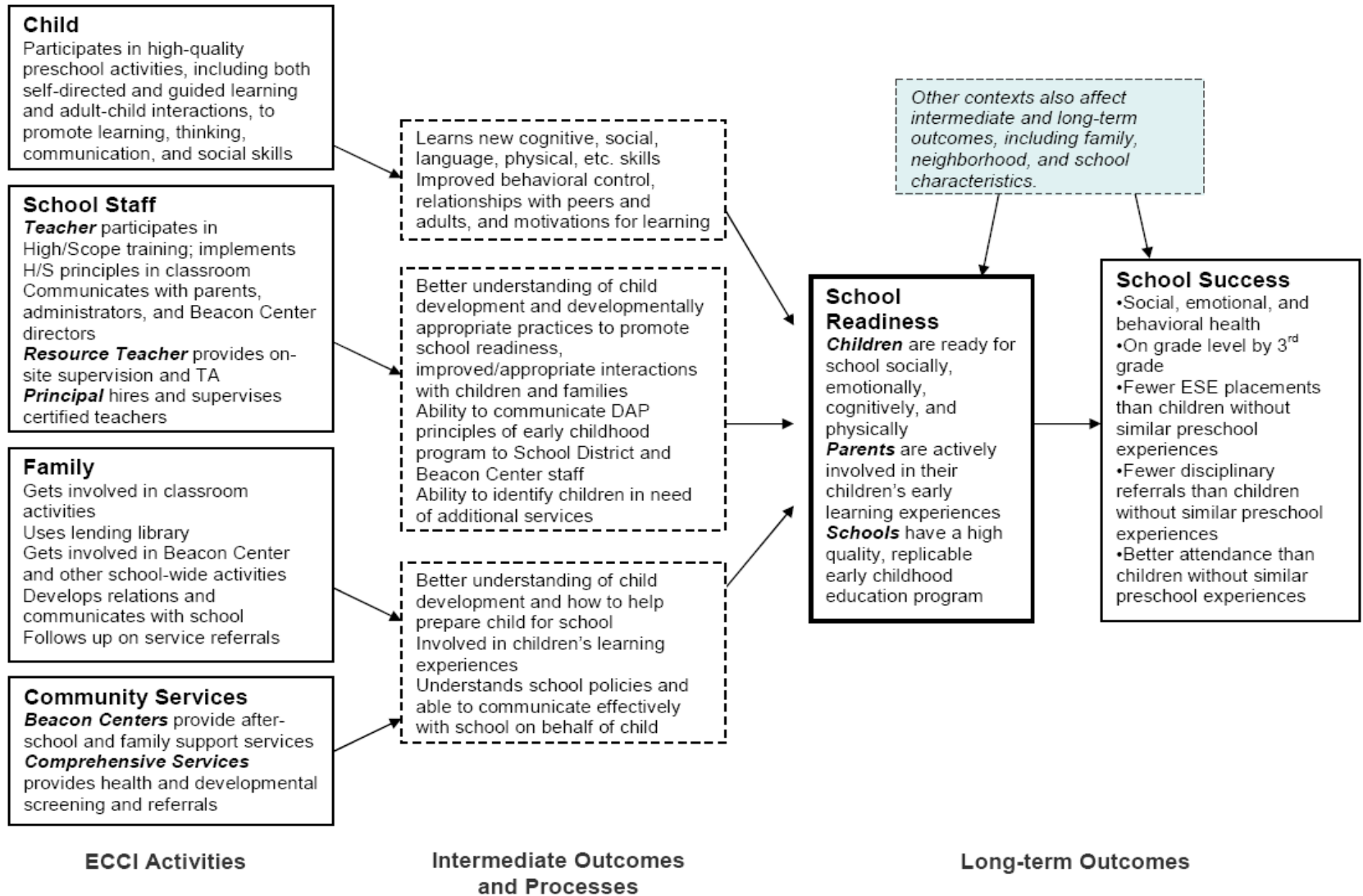
In addition, each ECCI classroom had a 1:6 adult-child ratio and was staffed by a lead teacher with a bachelor's degree and early childhood certification who received intensive training in the High/Scope method, as well as two assistant teachers called Early Learning Associates (ELAs). ELAs must have a minimum of a Child Development Associate credential (CDA)⁶ and at least an introductory course in High/Scope and have agreed to continue their education in order to attain an associate's degree. Resource Teachers experienced in the application of High/Scope provided ongoing supervision, training, and support for teachers. During the second year, these activities continued along with several new developments. These included the addition of a community-based child-care center serving infants and toddlers as well as preschool children; the piloting of an intensive program of activities to strengthen parent involvement at one school site and the community center; and additional training for teachers in the use of the Child Observation Record (COR) for planning and assessing children's progress.

Thus, as depicted in Figure 1, the ECCI program involves and is intended to affect a variety of participants, including children, families, teachers and other school staff, and Beacon Centers. The framework for the program, which is based on the Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation (PIE) document developed collaboratively by program and research staff at CSC and the school district, is built on the belief that well-trained and experienced teachers will provide developmentally appropriate learning environments and activities to children.⁷ These activities, in turn, will foster their cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and language and literacy development and thus better prepare them for kindergarten. Because children's learning experiences at home also influence their preparation for school, teachers are to help improve parents' knowledge and understanding of their children's learning and how parents can best support their children in school.

⁶ The CDA is a performance-based credential conferred by the Council for Professional Recognition (<http://www.cdacouncil.org>). In addition to holding a high school diploma, CDAs must have 480 hours of experience working with children and 120 hours of formal child-care education, both within the past 5 years, and pass an assessment by the Council for Professional Recognition. The assessment includes a written and oral assessment by a Council representative, the development of a professional resource file, collection of parent questionnaires, and documented observations of work with children and families by a CDA advisor/trainer.

⁷ *Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation (PIE) for Early Childhood Cluster Initiative*, Children's Services Council document, February 21, 2006.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework for Early Childhood Cluster Initiative



ECCI Implementation and Evaluability Study

Chapin Hall Center for Children has been conducting an implementation and evaluability study of the ECCI project since the midway point of its first year. As described in the first-year report (Spielberger & Goyette, 2006), the initiative accomplished a lot during that initial year, particularly in implementing the High/Scope curriculum in the classroom, training and mentoring teachers, and developing relationships with families. However, not all components of the initiative could be fully implemented the first year, including the use of the COR and a program of activities to promote parent involvement. In addition, findings indicated that more time was needed to integrate the ECCI program into the school setting and build foundational relationships with school administrators and Beacon Center staff, and other service providers.

Thus, the goals for the second year of the evaluation were four-fold: to carry out a fuller study of implementation; to review available administrative data on the children participating in ECCI; to continue work with local stakeholders to examine the initiative's goals, activities, expected outcomes, and theory of change; and to determine the feasibility of an outcome evaluation.⁸ The study collected information on several different components of program implementation in both the school-based sites and the community child care center, including children's experiences, parent involvement, teacher knowledge and practices, and connections with Beacon Center directors and school administrators. Primary research questions for the second year of the ECCI implementation study were the following:

- What are the initiative's primary goals, strategies, activities, and expected outcomes from the perspectives of different stakeholders? Have they changed since the beginning of the initiative and, if so, how?
- What is the quality and consistency of implementation? Is ECCI operating as planned? Is the initiative sufficiently implemented to have the intended effects on children, families, and schools?
- What is the level of program quality as indicated by observational assessments of the program? Are teachers using High/Scope with fidelity? What is the quality of teacher training and supervision (e.g., Resource Teacher technical assistance)? Do PQA scores indicate increases in teacher knowledge and ability to put High/Scope into practice? Is progress being made from one year to the next? Which programmatic areas are easier or more difficult to improve?
- What are expectations, experiences and satisfaction of the certified teachers and ELAs with ECCI? Are there differences among teachers (e.g., as a function of their teaching experience, level of training, or program quality as measured by the PQA)?
- What are expectations, experiences, and satisfaction of other school-based staff—especially school administrators, kindergarten teachers, and Beacon Center staff—with the ECCI

⁸ Given the history of research on High/Scope, one question at the start of ECCI was whether a formal child outcome study was warranted. That is, if the model is well-articulated and well-implemented in the targeted schools, previous research suggests it will have positive effects. On the other hand, the High/Scope model was first evaluated 40 years ago with a small sample of ethnically similar (African-American) low-income families. It has not been previously implemented in Palm Beach County, which is characterized by considerable ethnic, linguistic, and economic diversity and family mobility. Thus, additional evidence about outcomes would be valuable to understand program effects in a current and much more diverse community.

program? Has understanding and support of school principals and other staff grown over time? How prepared do administrators and kindergarten teachers believe children are for kindergarten?

- What is the quality of communication and relationships within ECCI? What progress is being made in teamwork in the classroom?
- What are the experiences of children and parents with the ECCI program? Does the program meet parents' expectations? How satisfied are they with the program and their children's progress (e.g., readiness for school)? What is the level of parent involvement in classroom, school, and Beacon Center activities?
- What percentage of children who graduated from the first year of ECCI was deemed ready for kindergarten as measured by the state's kindergarten readiness assessments?
- What factors have facilitated or hindered program implementation (e.g., school policies and administrative support, space and facilities, children's needs and characteristics, staffing and staff qualifications, and staff and parents' attitudes about school readiness and how to prepare children for kindergarten)? What aspects of the initiative should be modified to increase the likelihood that intended outcomes will be met?

Methods

To address these questions, the second year of the ECCI evaluation used a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods. As shown in Table 1 at the end of this chapter, these included surveys, interviews, site visits, focus groups, observational assessments of classrooms using the High/Scope Program Quality Assessment (PQA) and Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS-R) instruments, review of program documents, and analysis of administrative data. Additional information on these research activities follows:

- ***Surveys of Administrators and Teachers:*** We administered structured paper-and-pencil surveys to principals, assistant principals, certified teachers and ELAs, and kindergarten teachers at the school-based sites and teachers and assistant teachers at the child care center in the spring of 2007. In addition, we surveyed administrators and the preschool and kindergarten teaching staff at fourteen other elementary schools implementing voluntary prekindergarten programs to gain a broader perspective on the context for the initiative, specifically, the values and attitudes of school staff on school readiness and how to adequately prepare children for school. Copies of the survey instruments can be found in Appendix C.
- ***Parent Group Interviews:*** Because fostering relationships between parents and schools and increasing parents' involvement with their children and their children's education are important goals of ECCI, we also sought information from parents about their perceptions of their children's experiences and their relationships with teachers and other school staff. We conducted focus groups in different parts of the county during spring 2007 with parents from eight of the ten ECCI schools and the community child care center. When possible, we conducted focus group interviews with parents of 3-year-old children and parents of 4-year-old children separately; we also conducted separate groups in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole. A total of ninety-nine parents participated in the focus groups and

completed a brief questionnaire of background questions. Appendix E includes a copy of the focus group protocol and questionnaire for parents.

- **Individual Interviews:** We conducted in-person and telephone interviews with selected school district personnel, including a small number of school principals and Beacon Center directors, resource teachers, and High/Scope trainers to clarify their understanding of the program goals and practices, and obtain their perspectives on the quality of implementation. These interviews, along with additional interviews with ECCI program staff and members of the ECCI management committee provided additional perspectives on the goals for the initiative, implementation challenges and successes, and questions to address in designing an outcome study that would be both feasible and useful to stakeholders in Palm Beach County.
- **Observations of ECCI Meetings and Teacher Trainings:** Other important players in the implementation of ECCI include the ECCI program manager, the ECCI management team, High/Scope trainers, and on-site teacher trainers. The management team is made up of the ECCI program manager, selected members of the school district's Early Childhood Department, the director of the community child care center, and representatives from the Early Learning Coalition, Beacon Centers, CSC, Palm Beach Community College, and the Comprehensive Services program. We observed a small number of staff training sessions, meetings of certified teachers and resource teachers, and participated either in person or by telephone in the monthly meetings of the ECCI management team.
- **Site Visits and Program Observations:** Throughout the year we conducted periodic site visits, which included opportunities to observe the environments and interactions between children and staff in the ECCI school-based classrooms and the community child care center, attend parent meetings, and talk informally with staff about program goals, activities, and administration.
- **Analysis of Classroom Observations and Assessments:** As mentioned above, PQA assessments were done in the fall of 2005, the spring of 2006, and spring of 2007 by a High/Scope assessor in all classrooms. Additional baseline assessments were collected from all new teachers to the initiative as well, that is, four child care center teachers and eight of nine new teachers hired for the 2006-2007 school year.⁹ We analyzed the quantitative ratings and narrative comments in terms of progress in implementing the High/Scope curriculum and improving program quality over time. Although we also obtained the results of ECERS-R assessments conducted in the ECCI sites during the 2006-2007 year, we were unable to analyze these data or compare them to PQA ratings because not all classrooms were formally assessed with the ECERS-R.
- **Review of Program Documents:** We examined available documents pertinent to the implementation of ECCI, including the PIE planning document, the policies and procedures manual, parent participation materials, program descriptions prepared for parents, informational materials or memoranda of agreement between school staff and Beacon Centers, and meeting agenda and minutes.
- **Analysis of Child Characteristics, Assessments, and Service Referrals:** The ECCI program design includes the use of several common assessment instruments, including the

⁹ One of the new certified teachers was not available at the time of the fall assessment.

High/Scope Child Observation Record (COR), which is completed by teachers, and the Ages & Stages Questionnaire, which is completed by parents, to assess children's progress and plan program activities. In the first year of the evaluation, neither the COR nor the ASQ were sufficiently implemented, so an analysis of data from them was not possible. However, in the second year, we made an effort to collect and analyze any available data from these instruments in the second year to understand how teachers used them; to assess children's progress; and to determine their suitability for a future child outcome study.

In addition, we attempted to collect available administrative data from the Health Care District and School District on two cohorts of children, those participating in ECCI in 2006-2007 and those who participated in 2005-2006 and remained in the School District for kindergarten in 2006-2007. Although only limited data on prekindergarten children were available for this report, we were able to describe the demographic characteristics of children participating in ECCI in 2006-2007. We also were able to describe for children who were in ECCI the previous year their results on two school readiness screens as well as their records of absences and disciplinary referrals during the kindergarten year.

Organization of this Report

We turn now to the second year findings. We begin in Chapter 2 with an overview of the implementation, organization, and management of the program, and then discuss the results of the assessments of program quality. We then describe the experiences and perspectives of preschool and kindergarten teachers and administrators at the ECCI schools and parents of ECCI children. In the last section, we discuss implementation findings for the community child care center. In Chapter 3, we consider an important aspect of the context for the ECCI program, which are the views of prekindergarten teachers, kindergarten teachers, and school administrators about children's school readiness and their knowledge of perceptions of the preschool curriculum. In the final chapter, Chapter 4, we summarize the findings and discuss their implications for future program development and evaluation.

Table 1. Summary of Measures for ECCI Year 2 Implementation Study

Construct	Measure	Source
I. CHILDREN		
<i>Preschool: Current ECCI students</i>		
Child development ^a	Ages and Stages (ASQ)	ASQ: Parent (Obtained from Welligent data system)
Demographic characteristics	Ethnic group, lunch status, gender	School District administrative data
<i>Kindergarten: Former ECCI students</i>		
School readiness	FLKRS (ECHOS and DIBELS)	Kindergarten Teacher (recorded in School District administrative data)
Socio-emotional well-being	Teacher-Child Rating Scale (T-CRS)	Teachers (recorded in admin data)
School behavior	Attendance; disciplinary referrals	Administrative data
II. TEACHERS		
<i>Preschool: ECCI Certified Teachers and ELAs</i>		
Program quality	Program Quality Assessment (PQA)	Trained High/Scope assessor
Program quality	Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS-R)	Trained assessors from Family Central
Staff ECE Knowledge, beliefs and practices	Survey/Interview/	Self-report (Teacher)
Staff attitudes and satisfaction	Survey/Interview	Self-report (Teacher)
Staff education and experience	Survey/Interview	Self-report (Teacher) QIS records
<i>Kindergarten</i>		
Staff ECE Knowledge, beliefs and practices	Survey/Interview/	Self-report (Teacher)
Staff attitudes and satisfaction	Survey/Interview	Self-report (Teacher)
Staff education and experience	Survey/Interview	Self-report (Teacher)
III. ADMINISTRATORS (Principals and Assistant Principals)		
ECE Knowledge, beliefs and practices	Survey/Interview	Self-report
Attitudes and satisfaction	Survey/Interview	Self-report
Education and experience	Survey/Interview	Self-report
IV. FAMILIES^c		
Parent ECE Knowledge, beliefs and practices	Focus group	Self-report (Parent)
Parent experience, attitudes, satisfaction	Focus group	Self-report (Parent)
Parent involvement in classroom	Teacher and project records of parent participation activities	ECCI quarterly reports

^a We initially planned to use data from the Child Observation Record (COR) as another assessment of children's development, but not all teachers implemented this activity in Year 2.

IMPLEMENTATION STUDY FINDINGS

In this chapter, we describe the status of implementation and identify implementation challenges and programmatic responses. Because of the many differences between the school sites and the community-based site added in the summer of 2006, we discuss the experience and outcomes of the community center as a separate case study in a later section of this report. As described in the PIE planning document from February 2006, ECCI has the following broad goals:

- To provide a high-quality, developmentally appropriate early childhood experience to 3- and 4-year-old children in targeted geographic areas in both school-based and community-based sites;
- To train teachers in the principles and practices of the High/Scope curriculum and provide ongoing support and supervision in the application of their training;
- To develop relationships with children's families, involve them in classroom activities, and develop and encourage the use of a family lending library;
- To develop relationships between school district staff and staff of Beacon Centers; and Comprehensive Services, and the Behavioral Health Program to ensure support for the early childhood curriculum and provide supportive services for children and families

In the second year of the initiative, interviews with ECCI stakeholders and a review of ECCI documents indicate that understanding of and support for these goals and strategies remained high overall, and were consistent with those articulated in the first year. Understanding and support for these goals was not uniform across sites and participants, however, and one of the key tasks undertaken by ECCI program administrators during the second year was to identify and address specific challenges to implementation quality. In some cases this meant working to improve existing processes, and in other cases it led administrators to eliminate elements of the program. Financial constraints, declines in demand, and existing contractual obligations also shaped implementation decisions.

ECCI School-Based Program Implementation: The Second Year

During its second year, the ECCI program continued to operate in ten Title I schools located in the four TGAs of Palm Beach County. Children eligible to enroll in the program were 3- and 4-year-olds residing in the school attendance areas, with two-thirds of the slots reserved for 4-year-old children. Classrooms continued to operate very close to or at capacity, with approximately 98 percent of the prekindergarten slots filled during the year. As in the first year, individual schools had primary responsibility for recruiting families, although Family Central (the local child-care resource and referral agency that determines eligibility and administers subsidized child-care funds) and the ECCI office at the School District provided informational fliers and recruitment logs.

During the fall 2006, parents at the school-based sites were required to pay a daily fee of \$1.30 to attend the program unless they were eligible for a child-care subsidy and/or Voluntary Prekindergarten funding. In this case, they were required to apply separately to Family Central. Fees were discontinued in January 2007 except for camp days, in part, because

it was difficult for teachers to manage the fee collection process in addition to other responsibilities.

Characteristics of Children at School-Based Sites

In its second year, the ECCI program continued to serve its intended population, which was characterized by a higher proportion of demographic risk factors than other elementary school children in the Palm Beach County School District. Table 2 presents demographic characteristics—race/ethnicity and levels of poverty—for the children who were active in the ECCI school-based program at the end of the year. Nearly all (98%) of the ECCI children at the ten schools were from minority ethnic backgrounds, and a large majority (88%) were eligible for free or reduced lunch. Although data on primary home language was not available for children in the preschool program, data on kindergarten and first grade children at ECCI schools indicate that more than a third (35%) of children attending ECCI schools in these grades come from homes where English is not the first language.

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Children at ECCI Schools, 2006-2007 School Year^a

School	N Students (PreK-1)	Race/Ethnicity				% Non- primary English ^b	% Free/Reduced Lunch
		% White	% Black	% Hispanic	% Other		
Barton	248	5.2	63.3	28.2	3.2	67.8	95.6
Forest Park	202	6.4	62.9	23.8	6.9	68.7	90.1
Lantana	181	23.8	31.5	35.4	9.4	51.5	81.8
Northmore	238	1.7	86.1	9.7	2.5	14.9	93.3
Pahokee	211	2.8	67.3	27	2.8	28.1	91.9
Pioneer Park	184	1.1	74.5	23.9	0.5	30.4	98.4
Pleasant City	148	0.7	93.2	4.7	1.4	4.4	96.0
Village Academy	164	0	82.3	13.4	4.3	51.4	95.7
Washington	191	0	92.2	3.1	4.7	12.3	93.9
West Riviera	273	0	92.3	4.4	3.3	13.5	93.8
All Children (Prekindergarten to 1 st) at ECCI Schools	2040	4.0	74.8	17.3	3.9	34.9 ^b	93.1
Pre-K Children in ECCI^c	354	2.3	76.3	16.4	5.1	<i>n/a</i>	93.8
All PBC Elementary Schools Pre-K to 1 st	30,589	36.3	29.1	25.5	9.1	28.8 ^b	51.0

^a Source: School District database for 2006-2007, as of May 2007 and August 2007. These numbers only reflect the children active at the end of the 2006-07 school year.

^b Data on the percentage of children whose primary home language is not English were available for kindergarten and first grade children only, but are presented based on the assumption that they would be similar to that for the ECCI sample.

^c The capacity of twenty ECCI programs at ten schools was 360 children, 240 4-year-olds and 120 3-year-olds.

As indicated in Table 3, children attending prekindergarten programs at ECCI schools appeared to be developmentally comparable to their peers in Palm Beach County, according to the Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) (Squires, Potter, & Bricker, 1999). The ASQ is a paper-and-pencil assessment completed by parents of their child's development in communication, gross and fine motor skills, problem-solving and personal-social domains, with

assessments beginning at 36 months (Bricker & Squires, 1999). For each domain, a “typical” score is indicated; children scoring below this ASQ cutoff are considered to be “not developing typically.” The “average” score represents the mean scores of all the prekindergarten children who were screened with the ASQ, including those attending community-based child care centers and school-based and community VPK programs. Although data were not available for all children in ECCI, results of the analysis of data that were available are presented in Tables 2 and 3. In general, 3- to 5-year-old children screened on the ASQ in Palm Beach County received higher scores than “typical.” As shown in Table 3, the results for children in the ECCI program are similar to those for other children in Palm Beach County screened with this instrument.

Table 3. ASQ Scores of Children in ECCI School-Based Program, 2005-2007

Developmental Domain		Test				
		ASQ36	ASQ42	ASQ48	ASQ54	ASQ60
Communication	Typical^a	38.7	35.0	39.1	35.0	31.7
	Average for PBC^b	51.0	51.0	52.0	52.0	49.0
	ECCI 2005-06^c	52.0	55.0	53.0	53.0	51.0
	ECCI 2006-07^d	56.0	53.0	53.0	52.0	50.0
Gross Motor	Typical	35.7	25.0	32.9	25.0	32.7
	Average for PBC	55.0	54.0	54.0	54.0	53.0
	ECCI 2005-06	52.0	54.0	54.0	53.0	54.0
	ECCI 2006-07	57.0	54.0	52.0	52.0	52.0
Fine Motor	Typical	30.7	25.0	30.0	25.0	30.5
	Average for PBC	45.0	46.0	44.0	46.0	47.0
	ECCI 2005-06	40.0	43.0	46.0	45.0	49.0
	ECCI 2006-07	50.0	48.0	44.0	43.0	49.0
Problem Solving	Typical	38.6	25.0	35.0	25.0	30.1
	Average for PBC	50.0	50.0	51.0	49.0	50.0
	ECCI 2005-06	46.0	51.0	52.0	51.0	54.0
	ECCI 2006-07	55.0	49.0	52.0	48.0	52.0
Personal-Social	Typical	38.7	25.0	23.4	25.0	39.5
	Average for PBC	53.0	53.0	54.0	55.0	55.0
	ECCI 2005-06		55.0	56.0	56.0	55.0
	ECCI 2006-07	56.0	56.0	53.0	55.0	56.0

^aSource: ASQ User’s Guide, Second Edition (Squires, et al., 1999).

^bBased on an analysis of 10,347 ASQ tests administered to children ages 36 to 60 months between August 2005-June 2007.

^cBased on an analysis of 182 (54%) of 339 3- and 4-year-old children enrolled in ECCI in 2005-06.

^dBased on an analysis of 245 (69%) of 354 3- and 4-year-old children enrolled in ECCI in 2006-07.

Based on results presented in Table 4, no clear patterns seem to distinguish ECCI children from those in the general population.¹⁰ The percentages of children in the ECCI program who were identified as below “typical” varies across developmental domain, school years, and the age cohort screened.¹¹

Table 4. Percentage of Children in ECCI School-Based Program Scoring Below “Typical” on ASQ

Developmental Domain		% Below Typical				
		ASQ36	ASQ42	ASQ48	ASQ54	ASQ60
Communication	General Population ^a	10	8	9	6	7
	ECCI 2005-06 ^b	5	3	7	3	6
	ECCI 2006-07 ^c	5	2	5	6	6
Gross Motor	General Population ^a	4	1	4	1	4
	ECCI 2005-06 ^b	10	0	0	2	3
	ECCI 2006-07 ^c	5	0	2	1	8
Fine Motor	General Population ^a	20	8	15	7	16
	ECCI 2005-06 ^b	33	9	15	7	13
	ECCI 2006-07 ^c	14	6	17	10	11
Problem Solving	General Population ^a	13	5	8	3	9
	ECCI 2005-06 ^b	10	6	5	3	1
	ECCI 2006-07 ^c	0	2	5	3	8
Personal-Social	General Population ^a	5	2	1	1	3
	ECCI 2005-06 ^b	0	0	0	0	4
	ECCI 2006-07 ^c	0	2	1	0	3

^a Based on an analysis of 10,347 ASQ tests administered to children ages 36 to 60 months between August 2005-June 2007.

^b Based on an analysis of 182 (54%) of 339 3- and 4-year-old children enrolled in ECCI in 2005-06.

^c Based on an analysis of 245 (69%) of 354 3- and 4-year-old children enrolled in ECCI in 2006-07.

Children in ECCI programs can be referred to outside resources for behavioral problems, and are screened by Family Central for developmental issues. Based upon numbers provided in ECCI quarterly reports, the number of children referred to outside services because of behavioral problems was between 1 and 3 percent of enrolled children during the second year. The number of referrals for developmental services varied more widely across schools. Looking at the data from the fall 2006 quarter, almost half of all students received

¹⁰ Almost half of children participating in the ECCI or other programs are represented in this data. We understand from site staff that most of the children in the ECCI program were screened in the first two years, and that response rates in community-based centers was lower. Because of differences in how children are identified in the ASQ and School District databases, we were able to link ASQ data to known ECCI participants in only half (48%) of the cases from the 2005-2006 school year, and two-thirds (69%) of the cases from the 2006-2007 school year.

¹¹ Overall, fewer than ten children participating in ECCI at any one time were specifically identified through developmental screens as special needs. Three of these children were at the community-based site.

developmental screenings and 5 percent of students were subsequently referred to services. More than 22 percent of students at one school were referred for services, while five schools referred no students. During the spring 2007 quarter (as part of what ECCI staff described as an improved screening process), one-fourth of students were screened, and 23 percent were referred for services. Variation among schools was also reduced, and only three schools referred none of the screened students for services.

ECCI Management, Structure, and Implementation

At its core, ECCI is a partnership of the Children’s Services Council, the School District of Palm Beach County, the United Way of Palm Beach County and Beacon Centers operating at ECCI schools. The term “Cluster” in the Early Childhood Cluster Initiative refers to the intention of the program to create a cluster of high quality services that would be available to children between the ages of 0 and 5, supporting and linking community-based services for infants and toddlers to high quality programs for 3- and 4-year-old children in schools and community-based centers. The Children’s Services Council provides program funding and conducts fiscal and program monitoring. The School District oversees the implementation of the program, which includes identifying and coordinating work with other partner agencies. The United Way serves as grantee and administrator of program funds, and also has provided additional funding to support additional outreach work with parents. Beacon Centers are open to school families and community residents, and provide services and links to outside resources.

The School District’s Early Childhood Education (ECE) Department manages the ECCI program. This department has no direct authority over the principals in the schools where the ECCI program is implemented, although ECE staff members often work closely with school district senior administrators when interacting with principals. One administrator at an ECCI partner agency described the Early Childhood Education department as an “auxiliary infrastructure” for the schools where ECCI operates. Principals are responsible for (and given the authority to decide) such basic things as the “culture” of the school and the curriculum to be used. As such, the ECCI program represents an effort to introduce a specific prekindergarten curriculum into a school setting with existing practices, high-profile standardized testing demands and relatively high levels of principal autonomy.

In initiating ECCI, the relationship between the School District and implementing schools during the first year was based upon formal expectations that all eligible program sites (i.e., all elementary schools with a local Beacon Center and with existing prekindergarten programs) would participate.¹² This expectation was set out by School District administrators. The results of this arrangement were uneven; not all principals and teachers were receptive to ECCI and High/Scope and worked to support each of its elements. During the second year (as we discuss in more detail below), a process was put in place to change the nature of that relationship to a more voluntary and contractual one.¹³ In making this change, ECCI program

¹² Village Academy also volunteered to participate in the program.

¹³ As a contractual arrangement with all funding for the program coming from the CSC (rather than an admixture of VPK and CSC funds), the ECCI program retains greatest control over the implementation of the program in

staff hoped that participating schools would be more supportive of ECCI practices and more likely to achieve program aims.

The ECCI Management Committee is the primary formal mechanism for communicating and coordinating work among initiative participants. The Committee is led by School District staff and membership is comprised of representatives from all funding and partnering stakeholders. Member organizations include the School District, CSC, Palm Beach Community College, the Early Learning Coalition, the Health Care District of Palm Beach County, representatives of community-based organizations running Beacon Centers (e.g., the Housing Partnership), and United Way. The Committee was also set up to include school principal participation, although scheduling conflicts have contributed to making principal involvement very difficult to achieve.

During the past year, ECCI Management Committee meetings included presentations and discussions on key implementation challenges and progress. The character of ECCI Management Committee meetings during this year evolved from collaborative and problem-solving sessions toward formal sessions where agenda items were reported, often with limited discussion. This change likely reflected several influences, including the maturation of the project and routinization of the work, changes in leadership and leadership styles, and the extent to which important decisions were made outside of this formal setting. Consistent with these changes, in the spring of 2006 CSC requested that meetings be reduced from monthly to every other month.

Below we discuss key implementation activities identified and acted upon during the past year, including changes in the structure of the ECCI program.

Changes in Scope of ECCI and Relationship with Schools

In January 2007, ECCI notified participating schools that they would need to submit an application for the upcoming year of implementation. School selection was to be based upon several factors, and was decided upon by a committee of school district, CSC and other staff. Program staff and outside consultants rated schools in several areas (e.g., how close a classroom was to High/Scope certification, how well the teachers were working with the Beacon Center). The application also included questions to principals about the way they would support the program in general and in specific ways (e.g., participate in organizational meetings about ECCI programs). The application included very specific questions about practices that had been identified earlier by resource teachers and others as barriers to successful implementation, including transferring teachers trained in High/Scope to other classrooms; pulling ECCI staff out of the classroom to support standardized testing in other grades or other school activities; imposing or allowing school practices that conflicted with High/Scope principles (e.g., “behavior modification charts, dittos, formal graduations”); and arranging field trips without consulting the classroom resource teacher.¹⁴ Overall, the

participating schools. If VPK funds were used for implementation, the ECCI program would have less control over how those resources were allocated within schools.

¹⁴ We discuss several such issues between the ECCI program and principals and existing school policies in our first year implementation report.

reapplication process was described by ECCI administrators as a formal way to identify the programs most likely to achieve High/Scope certification. Staff expected that the reapplication process would reduce the number of participating schools, based upon earlier observations and conversations with staff at schools that were struggling to implement the program as designed.

The results of this reapplication process, which were announced in March 2007, reduced the program for the 2007–2008 school year to 12 classrooms in 7 schools. Nine of the ten ECCI schools applied for continued funding; one did not. The principal of the school that did not reapply explained that she and her staff were satisfied with a “balanced literacy” curriculum in place in the upper grades and not inclined to change that curriculum to accommodate the ECCI model. She also expressed her belief and that of her teachers that the ECCI High/Scope model was not as effective as the prekindergarten curriculum previously used at the school prior to ECCI and that the program was not a good match for the students at her school. The certified teacher was on maternity leave, and there were ongoing concerns about the stability of her replacements. Two other schools applied but were not approved for funding in 2007-2008. One had experience considerable instability in staffing during the year, having lost both of its certified teachers at the beginning of the year, and the classrooms were run at different points throughout the year by ELAs or by interim teachers with no early childhood background. Finally, the number of ECCI classrooms at one other school was cut from four to two.

Initially, ECCI management raised concerns about whether the program should continue to be offered at one other school during the 2007–2008 year, because the school was moving to a temporary school site (an old high school) while its campus was rebuilt beginning in the summer of 2007. Staff members were not eager to repeat the experiences at another school, which had been operating at a temporary location with a challenging physical infrastructure and one to which children had to be bussed—a process described by one participant as a “nightmare.”¹⁵ This temporary site, however, was later determined to be acceptable.

Administrators of ECCI also sought to eliminate the summer program in the summer of 2007. The summer program had been poorly attended in 2006 and was therefore expensive to staff and operate. In addition, changes in how the ECCI program was funded meant that parents no longer needed to use their VPK certificates during the ECCI year to offset program costs; families could hold these certificates and use them to provide full-day VPK care during the summer. However, cutting the program for the summer of 2007 would have required the agreement of the certified teachers who would be staffing it, since their work during the summer had already been contracted, but few teachers were interested in not working during the summer session. Thus, the summer program was held through the first week of July 2007,

¹⁵ The design of ECCI called for children to live in the immediate neighborhoods of the schools to make it easier for parents to walk them to school and communicate with the teaching staff on a regular basis. The bussing also meant that a bus driver had to be hired; because a driver was not found immediately, the individual hired as the new Parent Volunteer Coordinator had to spend some of her time driving the bus until a driver was hired.

although, as expected, summer enrollment was low.¹⁶ Summer camps have been eliminated under the new contract for the 2007–2008 year.

The ECCI program also eliminated “camp” periods, which provide program services during part of the summer and other breaks in the school calendar. During the first year of operation, these winter and spring camps had been poorly attended. That pattern continued during the winter of 2006, with only seventy-eight children participating across ECCI sites. ELAS rather than certified teachers staffed camp periods, since they took place during periods when school was out of session. As such, the schedule for these camps was not bound by certified teachers’ contracts and ECCI canceled the Spring 2007 camp. In its place, ELAs received additional training on High/Scope and team-building.

A plan to change the hours of program operation for the third year was discussed and agreed to in principle, but not implemented. The change would have reduced the hours of ECCI programming so that it ended at 2:00 rather than 5:30, and was presented as a response to the number of children being picked up from their ECCI classrooms in the early afternoon (when parents picked up older siblings at school). The plan was to pilot an afternoon program that would also use the High/Scope curriculum and would be available at no cost to working parents. In at least some schools, the Beacon Center would be involved in the afternoon programming. This proposed change was not implemented, according to staff, because of concerns about additional funds it would require, complications in finding additional staff to run the program, and the perception that the new costs to parents who did not work were not fair. Some school principals expressed reservations about this change as well.

Changes in Staff and Roles

A key staff position added in the second year was the Parent Volunteer Coordinator, partly in light of the barriers to implementing an earlier plan for teachers to visit families in their homes. Accordingly, ECCI sought other ways to strengthen the connections between parents, teachers and classrooms. Given the importance of parent participation, we discuss the experiences of parents and the role of the Parent Volunteer Coordinator in a separate section of this report.

In early April, within a few weeks of announcing the schools and classrooms for the 2007 – 2008 year, the school district announced that three staff positions—the ECCI manager and two resource teachers—would be eliminated at the end of the school year. The announcement was timed to meet union contractual requirements regarding the lead time for notification when releasing or reassigning employees. According to School District staff, this reduction was based upon an internal assessment of the “return on investment” of the program based upon its cost per pupil. Reductions in administrative and support costs were also described as appropriate given disparities in funding between ECCI and other projects. More generally, the expenses of the ECCI program were characterized as crowding out other promising educational efforts that might operate in the school district. Reducing expenses for ECCI was also consistent with internal school district concerns about the equity of operating a more expensive ECCI program in parallel with VPK programs that have less support.

¹⁶ Because of the school reconstruction schedule, summer camps could not be offered at two schools, although space was made available at other schools in the county.

This staffing change was a surprise to staff and other ECCI partners, and contradicted the ECCI manager's earlier assumptions and assertions that staff would be retained when the number of classrooms was reduced. The two resource teachers affected by this change worked through the end of their contract, while the ECCI manager chose not to complete her contract year. A Team Leader within the Early Childhood Department who had an extensive background in High/Scope took over the management of the ECCI program. Although as a Team Leader, she had supported the resource teachers within ECCI and the Early Learning Coaches working with school and community-based VPK programs, she had limited prior relationships with ECCI schools or principals and partner agencies such as the Beacon Centers. One observer expressed concern at the time that the changes in leadership and staffing would mean that, practically, the program probably "wouldn't get a lot done" during the rest of the spring. ECCI staff in their reports also acknowledged the challenge of sudden leadership change.

Plans were also announced during the spring of this second year to expand work with parents during the 2007-2008 school year. Two of the ELAs who were to be laid off as part of the cut in program sites would be retained as "parent educators" to implement the Parents As Teachers "Born to Learn" program in up to four classrooms in two schools.¹⁷

Changes in Classroom Activities

In addition to the elimination of daily fees mid-year, in January 2007, other changes in classroom activities were proposed and made during this second year of operation. The scope of allowable field trips -- which were described in general as inconsistent with High/Scope practice -- was formally narrowed after December 2006 when teachers at one participating school scheduled a field trip to a local shopping mall for a visit with Santa Claus without consulting the classroom resource teacher. The proposed field trip raised additional concerns about religious bias, and school officials also cited safety concerns in canceling the trip.

During the second year, the ECCI program also worked to improve the response to children in ECCI experiencing behavioral problems. Though the proportion of children requiring outside intervention was believed to be low and concentrated in a few schools, staff cited difficulties in getting Comprehensive Services to respond to these important requests quickly. At the most extreme, it was reported that school principals were violating ECCI guidelines and removing children from prekindergarten because of behavioral problems. One response was to identify an outside agency that could work with children in their classroom, instead of removing them. Working with children in the classroom was seen as necessary to be consistent with High/Scope principles. Comprehensive Services staff acknowledged their difficulties in responding quickly to requests and suggested engaging the Parent Child Center (PCC), an agency that would provide services at no additional cost to the project. PCC proposed a three-pronged response to the behavioral problems: working with children in the

¹⁷ Born to Learn is a home visitation program that provides information to parents, and includes developmental, hearing and vision screenings for early identification of problems. As proposed, parents would have participated in the program voluntarily, though the age range of children to be targeted had not been specified. For budget reasons, however, it was later decided not to implement this program.

classroom; modeling and providing in-class training of teachers; and offering in-home support to parents. PCC rolled out its work in the three schools that were identified as having more than one child with behavioral issues.

Several challenges, however, limited the scope and depth of impact of this new arrangement during the first few months of its implementation. These included limitations in the types of insurance that PCC would accept and an intake process that was described as “scaring parents” because of questions asked about payment for services (even though services were ultimately available at no cost for qualified families). In addition, the early implementation of services focused on working with individual children, including limited modeling and guidance for classroom teachers and no in-home support for parents. This was rectified after prompting from one of the resource teachers.

A second element of ECCI’s response to this problem was to provide targeted training on behavioral problems as a part of regular meetings among VPK coaches and resource teachers. This training identified ways for teachers to respond to this specific problem (e.g., finding a place in the room where children cannot hurt themselves or others) and to reinforce the ways that core High/Scope principles such as conflict resolution, child-directed play and opportunities for child self-expression could prevent behavioral problems from arising or limit their impact. This kind of training was frequent during the second year, and reflected the continuing need to educate practitioners (and those supporting them) on the ways in which the core elements of High/Scope could be applied to a range of situations arising in the classroom. We discuss this and training and support activities in more detail below.

Classroom Support, Training, and Professional Development

Resource Teachers and Teacher Support

As with the first year of implementation, ECCI classrooms during the second year each had a resource teacher assigned to provide in-class support of High/Scope implementation, and to help teachers with other classroom management issues. Each classroom was regularly visited by a resource teacher once a week. The five resource teachers in ECCI during 2006-2007 had varying degrees of direct early childhood classroom experience and had all completed advanced High/Scope training. During the second year, resource teachers received additional formal training in areas such as Solution Focused practice and the Growing Readers component of High/Scope. Some resource teachers were able to attend a NAEYC meeting and attend High/Scope’s Infant/Toddler training.

Resource teachers supported teachers in classrooms in a variety of ways. They provided written feedback through “Teacher Support Activity” (TSA) forms, which record their resource teachers’ anecdotal observations, classroom strengths and “modifiable issues” (terms like “concerns” are discouraged). They then connected this assessment to particular items on the Program Quality Assessment instrument. Resource teachers expressed satisfaction at having such an “impersonal” instrument for making suggestions to classroom teachers, since they believed it supported a continuing productive relationship. Resource teachers also

modeled behavior in classrooms for teachers, and used techniques such as repeating back teacher's comments to children and asking for reflection on the language.

During the first year of ECCI implementation, an educator and High/Scope trainer at PBCC had supported the resource teachers directly in the classroom by. Her role in the classroom mirrored the work resource teachers did with teachers – modeling, referring to High/Scope principles and providing informal feedback. Beginning in the fall of 2006, the formal arrangement for supporting and training resource teachers transitioned to monthly group training sessions. Several resource teachers expressed disappointment with this change, citing the value of having a trainer on-site who could provide feedback in the classrooms. This change also required existing resource teachers to take on new training and leadership roles for two new resource teachers who joined ECCI during the second year, a process that divided these lead resource teachers' attention. Overall, however, resource teachers expressed satisfaction with the new training and support process, which included the regular discussions mentioned above, co-facilitated by the new Team Leader managing the ECCI program and the PBCC staff member, which brought together ECCI resource teachers and Early Learning Coaches working in VPK settings.

Several informants identified a factor that complicated the ability of the resource teachers to provide good feedback to classroom teachers, however. That is, ECCI classrooms are also part of the QIS system and are thereby accountable to two separate, often overlapping but sometimes conflicting sets of standards. In our conversations with staff, the crux of the conflict for classroom teachers between QIS and ECCI was in reconciling the expectations of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) and the High/Scope Program Quality Assessment (PQA).¹⁸ The incentives to meet expectations of each of these assessments are high, and include financial subsidies for sites that get high QIS ratings.¹⁹

Specific conflicts cited by participants included such things as whether or not a room had a “theme” and whether computer use could be limited to certain numbers of children or limited in duration. The nature of this conflict varied. The challenges were greatest for new teachers, who were trying to internalize the High/Scope curriculum at the same time they were preparing their room for their ECERS assessment. (In at least one case, this proved to be so challenging that the classroom resource teacher delayed teaching High/Scope until the ECERS assessment had been completed.) Not surprisingly, tensions increased when ECERS and PQA assessments happened around the same time, and lessened when teachers could respond to the expectations of each assessment separately.

The way resource teachers were assigned to classrooms exacerbated the conflict between ECERS and High/Scope implementation. Rather than making individual resource teachers responsible for helping classrooms with both High/Scope curriculum and preparing for the ECERS assessment, one resource teacher was given the responsibility to help all classrooms

¹⁸ These conflicts were present in the community-based setting as well, and were further complicated by licensing standards that were not applied to school-based settings.

¹⁹ These systems, as one participant noted, are conflicting but also symbiotic since extra funds coming through successful QIS participation can be used to support High/Scope goals, too, through such things as the purchase of classroom materials.

to comply with ECERS. The designated “ECERS” resource teacher also participated in High/Scope training, though some raised concerns that she did not grasp High/Scope concepts as completely as other resource teachers. The remaining resource teachers were responsible for helping classrooms learn and implement the High/Scope protocol. Some “High/Scope” resource teachers reported that classroom teachers resisted suggestions that would improve their High/Scope implementation because they reported that they had been told that doing so would lower their ECERS scores. Some confusion and misunderstanding among teachers about what High/Scope actually allowed likely contributed to anxiety about conflicts between the protocols—in effect, creating a sense of conflict where none actually existed. From the official perspective of the ECCI manager, the High/Scope implementation was always to come first, and ECERS was to come second. In practice, however, the ways that any compromises were to be made were not clearly specified. As a result, teachers felt the responsibility rested with them to reconfigure their classrooms, sometimes on the fly, to meet different expectations.

Certified Teachers and ELAs

Much of the training that ECCI teachers received happens in the classroom, as resource teachers use the PQA standards and TSAs to provide feedback on classroom operations. New certified teachers complete four weeks of the Preschool Curriculum Course (PCC), which is offered one week at a time over a 4-month period. During the second year, all teachers also received training in a High/Scope literacy curriculum called Growing Readers, the VPK standards, and a class on art in the prekindergarten classroom.

ELAs during the second year completed additional training in a variety of areas, which included the Doors to Discovery literacy curriculum,²⁰ stress management, team building, and literacy and mathematics. Some of this training was made available when the spring camp was canceled, which both helped to narrow the gap between the amount of training offered certified teachers and ELAs and also narrowed the differences between ELA and certified teacher work schedules. Tension between ELAs and certified teachers were reported to be much lower in the second year than they were in the first, and it seems likely that reducing periods when ELAs are working without certified teachers and offering ELAs more training opportunities are complimentary strategies. As one resource teacher noted, training certified teachers increases their knowledge but may strain teamwork when they return to classrooms that the ELAs have been running in their absence:

[The certified teacher] steps back in, she’s full of all this new knowledge, you know, and she’s going to implement it and “Hey, we ran this room for a whole week without you, you know. We’re going to do it when you’re down in the Keys for your Christmas break and we’re in here with the kids until 5:30 every day.” That’s the way that the program was set up, that the lead teacher follows the school district’s schedule and the ELAs didn’t.”

²⁰ According to its website (www.wrightgroup.com), Doors to Discovery is a preschool program to build a foundation of oral language, phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, and concepts of print and a love of books, which includes information activities for children, teachers, and families.

Increasing ELA training beyond current expectations is likely to be difficult, however. As a condition of their employment, ELAs lacking an Associates degree were expected to obtain an associate's or bachelor's degree within five years. ECCI management retreated from those expectations during the second year, and substituted a "process" measure that all but one of the ELAs were meeting: ELAs had to be working toward their degree. Several reasons were offered for this change. ELAs were finding it difficult to take more than one class per semester, given other family and work demands. There also was a concern that if ELAs did take more than one class, they would burn out quickly. Some of the challenges were also related to arrangements at PBCC, which was providing courses on High/Scope. An associate's degree at PBCC that included High/Scope classes and a certificate did not "articulate" into a bachelor's degree program elsewhere, so was a "dead end" for ELAs taking this route. Also, courses at PBCC had to be taken in a certain order, and were not offered each semester. ECCI explored the options to create either online or weekend classes for ELAs, but PBCC was unable to accommodate those requests. Staff at PBCC did realize that many ELAs were struggling to complete the preparatory work required to be accepted in the degree program, especially the math courses. In the spring of 2007 PBCC staff proposed additional summer classes, which would prepare ELAs for the fall math preparation course and could be taken in cohorts.

Relationships with Other Partner Agencies

During the second year of implementation, ECCI renegotiated its relationship with the schools, moving from a mandated expectation of involvement toward a contractual and voluntary one with specific expectations. As described above, a decision had already been made by leaders of the initiative—CSC, United Way, and the School District of Palm Beach County—to reduce the number of schools and classrooms in the third year. All principals at the ECCI schools were given an opportunity to apply to have the program at their schools the following year and indicate their willingness to comply with a series of requirements regarding space and resources for implementing the program and communication with ECCI management at the school district. It was assumed that some principals would decide not to apply for the program again either because of facility limitations (e.g., one school was being renovated in the second year, and another was slated for renovation in the third year) or philosophical differences with the ECCI curriculum.

Beacon Centers

There were changes, too, in the way ECCI worked with the Beacon Centers, which are partnerships between schools, community-based organizations, and community advisory councils funded through CSC. As with other partners, the role of Beacon Centers in the initiative has evolved over time. When the project was conceived, the school selection criteria included Beacon Centers in part because program funding might need to be routed through them.²¹ Later, when it became clear that they would not be required for this purpose, ECCI

²¹ Having Beacon Centers as a possible fiscal agent was important in the early planning of ECCI, when it appeared that state funding of school-based pre-K programs through the VPK program would not be available to the school district. For a few key months in 2005, VPK funding was expected to be linked to school district agreements to implement class size reductions with no additional funding. School districts were unwilling to agree to those terms, and it appeared that VPK programs would not be operating in Palm Beach County or elsewhere. The state

partners continued to explore the ways in which Beacon Centers could contribute to the multiple aims of the initiative, for example, helping parents build relationships with their children's schools.

An early expectation in the planning of the ECCI program was that the Beacon Centers would support the program because both would follow the same calendar and be open on days when schools were closed because of holidays or other breaks in their usual schedules. Coordinating and approving calendars, however, required extensive preparation and lead time and was challenged by ongoing implementation changes. In the first year of operation, hosting schools were closed for many school holidays, and Beacon Centers and ECCI programs operated. During the fall of the second year, however, Beacon Centers at five sites turned over school-based programming to the School District to be run as a part of their School-Age Child Care program. As a result, some Beacon Centers operated programs during breaks in the school calendar, while other Beacon Centers did not offer services when the school was closed. Concerns about safety (in being the only program at a school when it was closed) and low attendance prompted ECCI to cancel ECCI operation on days when a Beacon Center was not also operating at that location. This change also meant that the connection between ECCI and Beacon Centers was weakened during the second year.

During the winter of the second year, ECCI management and Beacon Center staff directly addressed conflicts that arose in the first year around logistical issues in coordinating work (e.g., arranging for food during periods when the school was not open but both Beacon Centers and ECCI were in operation, planning for field trips, purchasing supplies). At the root of these problems was an assumption on the part of ECCI and Beacon Center management that broad guidelines for collaboration were sufficient for each Beacon Center and ECCI site to work out mutually beneficial arrangements. In practice, ECCI programs—assuming that Beacon Centers had greater flexibility to spend money and get reimbursed—came to assume that Beacon Centers would take the lead on such things as providing the upfront money for food for camp participants or help in arranging field trips. Coordination was also hampered by the absence of the lead certified teacher on the actual “camp” days, since they did not work during these breaks.

By the second year of operation, Beacon Center staff expressed frustration that ECCI staff were still relying on them to shoulder the burden of these camp days. ECCI staff continued to mistakenly believe that the Beacon Centers had easy access to funds to pay for activities, and could be reimbursed later through the school district at no real inconvenience, though in some cases it took more than a year for ECCI to reimburse Beacon Centers for these advances. By the middle of the second year, after meeting with Beacon Center management, ECCI had set up a process and guidelines for ECCI staff to use their own money for these events. At that point, the assumption was that the Beacon Centers and ECCI programs could collaborate on these operational areas, but it wasn't assumed that they would be linked.

The relationship between Beacon Centers and ECCI families was also redefined. In the second year, the Planning, Implementation and Evaluation document for ECCI was refined to

legislature later rescinded this expectation, freeing up the School District to accept money for, and operate, VPK programs in schools.

include specific expectations that Beacon Center directors make contact with ECCI families. In practice, the goal of introducing parents of ECCI children to Beacon Center programs was unevenly implemented. Some Beacon Centers reported high rates of prekindergarten children enrolling in the Beacon Center program when they entered kindergarten, while others reported more modest numbers.²² Modest numbers reflected the fact that Beacon Centers predated the ECCI program, and many parents of ECCI children had older children who were already involved with Beacon Centers; these parents did not need to be linked.

Beacon Centers also varied in the number of programs they offered, raising frustrations among ECCI staff that families had few opportunities to get involved. More generally, although Beacon Center staff reported positive relationships with ECCI programs, they described uneven ongoing outreach to the classroom, children or parents. Several different community-based organizations operated the Beacon Centers in the ECCI schools and made different decisions about how to work with ECCI. A common arrangement, however, included having a community or family liaison at the Beacon Center make their calendar known to ECCI staff, perhaps attend a meeting of ECCI parents, and invite parents to attend a Beacon Center meeting for parents. The number of Beacon Center activities offered to ECCI families varied widely among sites. In the winter quarter, for example, ECCI reported that Beacon Centers at different locations offered between one and fifteen activities to families. During the fall quarter, four families were reportedly referred to Beacon Centers for services, and seven were referred in the winter quarter.

Summary of School-Based Program Implementation

During the second year of ECCI, the program continued to evolve in critical ways. An initial effort was made to fulfill its intended function as a support for the “cluster” of child care and developmental services used by children between the ages of 0 and 5, and then retreated from. The effort to implement school-based ECCI programs by fiat with principals was reconsidered and refashioned as a specific, but voluntary contract with a smaller set of schools and classrooms. A new relationship with another local organization supplemented the efforts to use Comprehensive Services to provide key supports to children with behavioral problems. The effort to build stronger relationships with parents was reconfigured and staffed with a Parent Volunteer Coordinator who worked intensively with a few pilot schools, and more broadly with parents at other ECCI schools. The program trimmed staff and activities such as winter camp, concentrating its effort and resources on more visibly successful activities.

Many more ideas for how ECCI would evolve as it entered its third year were seriously considered, but rejected during the second year. For example, a plan to reduce the hours of the program was floated, but dismissed as too costly and complicated. A plan to cut summer camp during the second year was rejected by teachers who had a contract to work during those weeks. In all, these changes point to continuing efforts during the second year to streamline the program and focus on strategies that appear to be the most productive, while also initiating new

²² Data on the specific number of children who made the transition from ECCI to Beacon Centers are limited in part by the ways in which data on families are collected and linked. ECCI reported that among a subset of 64 ECCI children who graduated the program, 27 percent were participating in a Beacon Center after-school program the next fall.

efforts, such as the Parent Volunteer Coordinator position, to meet basic program goals. As the program enters its third year it operates as a simpler, less ambitious and more targeted effort.

Assessments of Program Quality

In this section, we report findings from observational assessments of program quality using the High/Scope PQA. As noted in the first chapter, a large body of research demonstrates that the extent to which early childhood programs positively impact children's development depends largely on program quality (Burchinal, Roberts, Riggins, Zeisel, Neebe, & Bryant, 2002; Howes, 1997; Howes & Smith, 1995; NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 2000, 2007; Pianta, LaParo, Payne, Cox, & Bradley, 2002). This is particularly true for young children from families with limited economic resources or other challenges (Karp, 2006).

Program quality includes both structural characteristics and dynamics such as the quality of social and instructional interactions between staff and children (Burchinal, Cryer, Clifford, & Howes, 2002; NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 2000; Pianta, LaParo, & Payne et al., 2002). A recent synthesis of seven major studies of early care and education, for example, found an ambiguous relationship between preschool teacher educational background and classroom quality or children's academic progress. Thus, Early, Maxwell, and Burchinal et al. (2007) suggest that policies focused only on increasing teachers' education are not enough to improve classroom quality or optimize the potential effects of programs on children. Instead, improving program quality and outcomes for children likely requires a broad range of professional development activities and supports focused on teachers' interactions with children (Kowalski, Brown, & Pretti-Frontczak, 2004; Pianta, 2006).

Two observational instruments are being used to assess the quality of the ECCI classrooms and identify staff training needs—the High/Scope Program Quality Assessment (PQA) and the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R). The PQA, which has established reliability and validity for a variety of early childhood settings, is based on the High/Scope curriculum. The assessment includes two Forms (A and B), which cover sixty-three dimensions in seven domains or subscales, ranging from the characteristics of the physical environment and daily routine to adult-child interactions, curriculum planning, and program staffing and management (Epstein, 2003; High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 1998, 2003). Form A of the PQA, which was used in the ECCI evaluation, includes four subscales that represent the core principles of the High/Scope curriculum: Learning Environment, Daily Routine, Adult-Child Interaction, and Curriculum Planning and Assessment.²³ Each subscale contains between five and thirteen items, which are scored on a scale from 1 to 5 and then totaled and averaged to create a rating for the subscale. The PQA Form A has now been administered at three points in time in the twenty school-based classrooms—at the beginning of the first year (September 2005), near the end of the first year (May 2006), and again near the end of the second year (April and May 2007). Additional baseline assessments were conducted in October and November of 2006 and follow-up assessments in May 2007 in eight school classrooms with new certified teachers and in the four rooms of the community child care center.²⁴

²³ Form B is not used in the ECCI evaluation since it includes three subscales used to assess agencies rather than individual classrooms. The Form B subscales are: Parent Involvement and Family Services, Staff Qualifications and Staff Development, and Program Management.

²⁴ There actually was more staff turnover between the first and second year, but only eight of the new school-based certified teachers were assessed in both the fall 2006 and spring 2007.

All of the ECCI classrooms participate in the Palm Beach County Early Childhood Quality Improvement System (QIS), which uses the ECERS-R assessment tool (Harms et al., 2005). Also a highly valid and reliable measure, the ECERS-R has been widely used and covers many of the same domains as the PQA. It is considered to be a key component of the QIS, which is made up of six “pathways to quality” that are assessed every 13 months in participating programs by a trained assessor from Family Central and used to determine a “star” rating and eligibility for quality enhancement funding.²⁵ All of the ECCI classrooms were formally or informally assessed with the ECERS-R in the 2005-2006 school year and most were assessed again in the 2006-2007 year. However, the ECERS-R is done on a rolling basis throughout the year, normally once every 13th month in each classroom, so the month of assessment varies. For example, in the first year, four schools were assessed in the fall between October and December, and six schools were assessed in the spring, between March and May. In the second year, three classrooms were assessed between November and February, five between April and June, and two classrooms were not assessed.

Our analysis of program quality in ECCI is based primarily on the PQA scores for two reasons. First, it is the most appropriate measurement tool for assessing progress in applying the High/Scope model. Although the application of the PQA is not limited to High/Scope programs, it is based on the same program and quality elements that make up the High/Scope curriculum, making it the instrument that is most closely aligned with the principles and practices of High/Scope. In addition, the PQA has now been administered at three points in time in all twenty of the school-based classrooms, which allows us to look for change in the overall quality of classrooms during the first two years of the initiative.

PQA Results

The PQA assessments were conducted by a trained High/Scope assessor who spent a half-day observing each classroom. She rated the classrooms and wrote anecdotal notes of her observations as supporting evidence for her numerical ratings. Tables 4 through 8 show the quantitative results of the ratings for the twenty school-based classrooms for the three time periods. As these tables indicate, on average, the ECCI classrooms together demonstrated high quality or nearly high quality on the four subscales of the PQA at the time of the spring 2007 assessment. The average ratings for the twenty classrooms on three of the four subscales—Learning Environment, Daily Routine, and Curriculum Planning, and Assessment—were at least 4.0, the benchmark for high quality established in the ECCI PIE, indicating that teachers “demonstrate best practices in early childhood.” The mean rating of 3.8 in the fourth domain, Adult-Child Interaction, approached this standard. These results are positive and suggest that as a result of training, on-site support to teachers, and other factors, the High/Scope curriculum is being implemented with an overall measure of success.²⁶

²⁵ One star rating is given to each center or school participating on the QIS. Although all classrooms are assessed, one is randomly selected to determine the rating for that center or school.

²⁶ Resource teachers use the PQA to guide their on-site training of teachers, a use that is supported by a study by Kowalski, Brown, and Pretti-Frontczak (2004) that found that using a formal assessment instrument can alter preschool teachers’ beliefs about which skills are important for children to learn.

On three of the four subscales, more progress was observed in the first year than in the second. Results in Table 4 indicate a marked increase in almost every category of the PQA, for almost every classroom, from Time 1 (Fall 2005) to Time 2 (Spring 2006). The level of quality achieved at the end of the first year was maintained through the second year in all areas of the PQA. The area of Curriculum Planning and Assessment was the only domain to show a substantial increase in measured quality in the second year, although it should be noted that this area also had the lowest rating at the end of the first year and thus had the most room for growth compared to the other three areas.

At the same time, the progress of individual classrooms toward the goal of establishing a high-quality model of early childhood education still varied considerably. The range of scores and the standard deviation reflect the degree of variability, or how widespread or limited a change. As shown in Table 5, the distribution of scores was quite narrow for the Learning Environment subscale across all three time periods. In the Daily Routine and Adult-Child Interaction subscales, the variability in scores tended to decrease across the three time periods, suggesting more consistency in or solidification of the quality of these areas across the classrooms. In the case of the fourth subscale, Curriculum Planning and Assessment, although the mean change showed more growth in the second year, the distribution of scores was somewhat wider than in the other areas, suggesting more inconsistency among the classrooms.

Table 5. Fall 2005, Spring 2006, and Spring 2007 Mean PQA Ratings for Twenty ECCI Classrooms

PQA Subscale	Time	Mean Rating ^a			Standard Deviation
		Minimum	Maximum	Mean*	
I. Learning Environment	Fall '05	2.3	3.9	3.1	0.39
	Spring '06	3.2	4.6	3.8	0.37
	Spring '07	3.3	4.7	4.0	0.39
II. Daily Routine	Fall '05	1.8	4.3	2.8	0.67
	Spring '06	3.0	4.9	4.0	0.58
	Spring '07	3.0	4.8	4.0	0.49
III. Adult-Child Interaction	Fall '05	1.3	4.7	2.5	0.95
	Spring '06	2.5	4.8	3.7	0.67
	Spring '07	2.9	4.8	3.8	0.60
IV. Curriculum Planning and Assessment	Fall '05	2.4	3.4	2.6	0.34
	Spring '06	3.0	4.6	3.4	0.36
	Spring '07	3.0	5.0	4.3	0.74

^aThe PQA rating scale ranges from 1 to 5.

*All changes in mean scores from fall 2005 to spring 2006 were statistically significant using a *t*-test for paired samples ($p < .001$). The difference between the spring 2006 and spring 2007 mean scores in the Curriculum Planning and Assessment domain was also statistically significant; however, because of staff turnover, we cannot attribute this improvement solely to changes in individual teachers.

In interpreting these changes, it is important to note the considerable staff turnover between the first year and the second year. Only eight (40%) of the twenty teachers who were present at the start of the initiative in fall 2005 were still with the initiative at the end of the

second year. Nine (45%) of the certified teachers at the start of the second year were new.²⁷ Snapshot data from the second year does not distinguish between teachers who remained with ECCI and teachers who were new to ECCI in the second year.

To help explain the changes, we looked at changes in PQA scores for two groups of teachers—(1) the eight teachers who were part of the initiative for both the first and second years and who were assessed at all three time periods (fall 2005, spring 2006, and spring 2007) and (2) eight of nine new teachers in the second year who were assessed in both the fall 2006 and spring 2007. These results, which are presented in Tables B-1 and B-2 in Appendix B, support the conclusion of greater growth in the first year of the initiative than in the second. That is, with the exception of the Curriculum subscale, teachers who were present for both years of the initiative showed the more change in PQAs from fall 2005 to spring 2006 than they did from spring 2006 to spring 2007. Teachers who were new in the second year also showed significant positive change in their spring 2007 PQA scores compared to their fall 2006 scores.

These findings suggest that one reason for the greater growth in the first year is that teachers received more intensive training, that is, both training and on-site technical assistance, in the first year. Another reason might be that assessed improvements in teaching practice can be substantial in the first year, especially when both coursework and on-site technical assistance are provided. A third reason is that some teachers, without the classroom instruction, were less engaged in High/Scope or lost ground in the second year.

Learning Environment

An examination of ratings of teachers on individual items in the PQA subscales provides additional information about areas of strength and progress and areas in which further training and development are needed, as well as areas in which the ECCI teachers vary more (or less). As shown in Table 6, in the Learning Environment domain, one of the strongest areas in the spring 2007 assessment was the location of interest areas to allow children easy access (item I-C). Another strong area was the display of child-initiated work (item I-I), which showed the most improvement of any indicator in this domain in both the first and second year of the initiative, although there also was quite a bit of variability in the quality of this area among the twenty classrooms.

Some domains showed more improvements in the first year than in the second year. These areas included the health and safety of the environment, the arrangement of space and materials, and the availability of varied and open-ended classroom materials. At the same time, mean scores ranging from 3.0 to 5.0 reflect continued to be variability in the ratings of these domains. In nine classrooms, the High/Scope assessor noted that interest areas and classroom materials were not well organized and that there were too many plastic toys in the room, as opposed to realistic materials and materials that appeal to multiple senses. One area that showed little change across the two years was the adequacy of the outdoor space, equipment, and materials for supporting a variety of play activities. As in the first year, six classrooms were cited as having “safety issues on the playground;” in two cases, the playground area was

²⁷ In addition, because of staff vacancies at different points during the second year, some new teachers were not assessed in both the fall and spring of the second year.

not close by. Again, teachers may have less ability to change this area, but it may also be that teachers need additional ideas about how to make better use of the facilities that are available.²⁸

Table 6. Fall 2005, Spring 2006, and Spring 2007 Mean PQA Ratings on Learning Environment Subscale

Items	Time	Rating ^a			Standard Deviation
		Min.	Max.	Mean ^b	
I. Learning Environment (overall)	Fall '05	2.3	3.9	3.1	0.39
	Spring '06	3.2	4.6	3.8	0.37
	Spring '07	3.3	4.7	4.0	0.39
I-A. The classroom provides a safe and healthy environment for children.	Fall '05	2	4	3.6	0.82
	Spring '06	2	5	4.4	0.75
	Spring '07	3	5	4.2	0.49
I-B. The space is divided into interest areas that address basic aspects of children's play and development.	Fall '05	2	4	3.3	0.55
	Spring '06	3	5	4.3	0.64
	Spring '07	3	5	4.1	0.76
I-C. Location of interest areas is carefully planned to provide adequate space in each area, easy access between areas, and compatible activities in adjacent areas.	Fall '05	3	5	3.8	0.70
	Spring '06	3	5	4.1	0.91
	Spring '07	3	5	4.4	0.82
I-D. An outdoor play area has adequate space, equipment, and materials to support various types of play. ^b	Fall '05	2	4	3.5	0.70
	Spring '06	2	5	3.5	1.15
	Spring '07	2	5	3.6	0.76
I-E. Classroom areas and materials are systematically arranged, labeled, and accessible to children	Fall '05	2	5	3.1	0.69
	Spring '06	2	5	3.8	1.01
	Spring '07	3	5	3.8	0.70
I-F. Classroom materials are varied, manipulative, open-ended, authentic and appeal to multiple senses.	Fall '05	1	4	2.6	0.68
	Spring '06	3	5	3.7	0.59
	Spring '07	3	5	3.6	0.61
I-G. Materials are plentiful.	Fall '05	1	4	3.6	0.82
	Spring '06	3	4	3.9	0.31
	Spring '07	3	4	4.0	0.22
I-H. Materials reflect human diversity and the positive aspects of children's homes and the community cultures.	Fall '05	1	3	2.3	0.79
	Spring '06	2	4	3.4	0.59
	Spring '07	3	5	3.7	0.73
I-I. Child-initiated work is on display.	Fall '05	1	4	2.4	0.99
	Spring '06	3	5	3.6	0.75
	Spring '07	2	5	4.3	0.92

^a The PQA rating scale ranges from 1 to 5.

^b N=20. Not all classrooms were rated on every item if the assessor was not able to observe a particular item during her visit. Nineteen of the twenty classrooms were rated on item I-D in the fall 2005 assessment.

²⁸ A few schools where the ECCI program was located have been involved in building renovations during the past year, which might have adversely affected the availability of outdoor space.

Daily Routine

In the Daily Routine subscale, the following three items were rated particularly highly (see Table 7 on the following page):

- II-A. Adults establish a consistent daily routine. Children are aware of the routine.
- II-B. The parts of the daily routine include time for children to plan; carry out their plans; recall and discuss their activities; engage in large group activities; have snacks or meals; cleanup, transition to other activities; and nap or rest.
- II-E. The program has time each day during which children initiate activities and carry out their intentions.

We consider these three items, which were also strong in the spring 2006 assessment, to be basic to the implementation of High/Scope as well as the foundation for other items in the Daily Routine subscale. They suggest that teachers have clearly established a daily routine of developmentally appropriate activities. Progress was also made in opportunities for children's self-initiated activities, small group activities, and large group times.

However, the lower mean ratings, the variability among the ratings of other items in this domain, and the general lack of change from spring 2006 to spring 2007 all indicate there is still room for improving the quality of the daily schedule. In some classrooms, for example, planning and recall times, which are central to the High/Scope curriculum, were done superficially in large groups with little time for reflection and representation. The assessor observed a recall time in which children did not review their activities but talked about other topics. In another classroom, she noted that teachers did not encourage children to recall in ways consistent with their developmental levels but to recall very quickly with only verbal responses allowed.

Finally, item "II-I. During transition time, children have reasonable choices about activities and timing as they move from one activity to the next," continued to be rated the lowest of any item in this subscale (3.3). In this regard, the assessor noted that in a few classrooms, "transitions were not always easy, especially at the beginning of the day," children were kept too long in group activities, children were not given enough choices in their activities, or children were directed to an activity without knowing what was going to happen next.

Adult-Child Interactions

In the first year, from the fall to the spring, the most dramatic increase in scores was seen in the Adult-Child Interaction subscale. Although the overall mean scores changed little from spring 2006 to spring 2007, it is reassuring that the level of quality in this area remained constant (see Table 8). Many early childhood educators and researchers consider this dimension the most important measure of quality in an early childhood program. Moreover, unlike some of the other categories measured by the PQA, this subscale largely reflects internalized behaviors on the part of teachers and may be less amenable to change than other areas.

Table 7. Fall 2005, Spring 2006, and Spring 2007 Mean PQA Ratings on Daily Routine Subscale

Indicators	Time	Rating ^a			Standard Deviation
		Min.	Max.	Mean ^b	
II. Daily Routine (overall)	Fall '05	1.8	4.3	2.8	0.67
	Spring '06	3.0	4.9	4.0	0.58
	Spring '07	3.0	4.8	4.0	0.49
II-A. Adults establish a consistent daily routine. Children are aware of the routine.	Fall '05	2	5	3.3	0.72
	Spring '06	3	5	4.8	0.55
	Spring '07	3	5	4.7	0.66
II-B. The daily routine includes time for children to plan; carry out their plans; recall and discuss their activities; engage in large-group activities; have snacks or meals; clean up; transition to other activities; and nap or rest.	Fall '05	2	5	4.1	1.02
	Spring '06	5	5	5.0	0.00
	Spring '07	5	5	5.0	0.00
II-C. An appropriate amount of time is allotted for each part of the daily routine.	Fall '05	1	5	3.3	1.08
	Spring '06	3	5	4.1	0.91
	Spring '07	3	5	3.9	0.88
II-D. The program has time each day during which children make plans and indicate their plans to adults.	Fall '05	1	4	2.7	1.03
	Spring '06	3	5	4.1	0.76
	Spring '07	1	5	3.7	1.15
II-E. The program has time each day during which children initiate activities and carry out their intentions.	Fall '05	1	5	3.5	1.23
	Spring '06	3	5	4.1	0.72
	Spring '07	3	5	4.5	0.61
II-F. The program has time each day during which children remember and review their activities and share with adults and peers what they have done. ^b	Fall '05	1	4	2.6	1.15
	Spring '06	2	5	3.7	1.11
	Spring '07	2	5	3.7	0.81
II-G. The program has a time each day for small-group activities that reflect and extend children's interests and development. ^b	Fall '05	1	5	2.5	1.02
	Spring '06	2	5	3.6	1.26
	Spring '07	2	5	4.1	1.00
II-H. The program has a time each day for large-group activities that reflect and extend children's interests and development. ^b	Fall '05	1	5	2.2	1.18
	Spring '06	2	5	3.6	1.05
	Spring '07	2	5	3.9	0.88
II-I. During transition time, children have reasonable choices about activities and timing as they move from one activity to the next.	Fall '05	1	5	2.0	1.17
	Spring '06	2	5	3.5	0.89
	Spring '07	2	5	3.3	0.92
II-J. The program has a set cleanup time with reasonable expectations and choices for children. ^b	Fall '05	1	4	2.4	0.88
	Spring '06	2	5	3.6	0.98
	Spring '07	3	5	3.8	0.89
II-K. The program has a time each day for snacks or meals that encourages social interaction.	Fall '05	1	3	2.3	0.66
	Spring '06	2	5	3.9	0.81
	Spring '07	2	5	3.4	1.23
II-L. The program has an outside time each day during which children engage in a variety of physical activities. ^b	Fall '05	1	4	2.9	0.81
	Spring '06	2	5	3.6	0.77
	Spring '07	2	5	3.7	1.05

^aThe PQA rating scale ranges from 1 to 5.

^bN=20. Not all classrooms were rated on every item if the assessor was not able to observe a particular item during her visit. Nineteen classrooms were rated on items II-F, II-G, II-H, and II-L in the fall 2006 and/or spring 2006; and eighteen classrooms were rated on item II-J in the spring 2006 assessment. In the spring 2007 assessment, nineteen classrooms were rated on items II-D and II-H and seventeen on item II-L.

areas.²⁹ According to the High/Scope assessor, it often takes as much as 3 years of training and development for interaction behaviors to fully internalized, especially for veteran teachers who may have learned styles of interacting with children that are incompatible with High/Scope.

The following items in the Adult-Child Interaction domain received the highest mean ratings—between 4.0 and 4.2 on a 5-point scale—in the spring 2007 assessment:

- III-F. Adults participate as partners in children’s play.
- III-C. Adults create a warm and caring atmosphere for children.
- III-G. Adults encourage children’s learning initiatives throughout the day.
- III-L. Adults acknowledge individual children’s accomplishments.
- III-G. Adults encourage children’s learning initiatives throughout the day.

Supporting these ratings, the assessor commented about a majority of classrooms that teachers “show positive attention to children” and “are warm, caring, and involved with children.” The assessor also observed that in more than half of the classrooms that teachers “listen attentively to children” and “use lots of encouragement.”

Although the overall score for this subscale increased from 3.7 to 3.8 between spring 2006 and spring 2007, ratings of some individual items showed somewhat larger increases including teachers’ participation in children’s play (from 3.9 to 4.2) and in opportunities children have to solve problems with materials and do things for themselves (from 3.7 to 4.1). Acknowledgement of individual children’s accomplishments increased as well (from 3.2 to 4.0). Teachers also handled children’s transition to the program sensitively and respectfully (from 3.6 to 3.9).

On the other hand, areas that were rated less favorably overall, or indicated slight drops in ratings, were those related to developing children’s cognitive and language skills (i.e., supporting communication with children whose primary language is not English, encouraging learning throughout the day, and providing children opportunities to explore at their own pace) and fostering social interaction and problem solving in interactions with other children (from 3.5 to 3.3). In this regard, the assessor observed in eight classrooms that teachers “problem solve too much” or “force children to share” instead of teaching them how to resolve peer conflicts on their own. In other words, it is easier for teachers to foster children’s problem-solving with materials than solving problems with other children. In six classrooms, the assessor observed that teachers do not eat with children at meal times, thus missing a chance to foster communication and language. In six classrooms she also commented, “Teachers yell or strongly voice their displeasure to children too often.” Teachers continued to meet children’s basic physical needs for nutritious food, toileting, and prompt attention to illnesses and injuries (from 4.0 to 3.9), though no teacher received a level of 5 on this item.

²⁹ Akiva (2005) notes in reference to after-school programs, it is easier to change physical environments than social, interactional environments, and suggests this is also an issue in improving the quality of early childhood programs.

Table 8. Fall 2005, Spring 2006, and Spring 2007 Mean PQA Ratings on Adult-Child Interaction Subscale

Indicators	Time	Rating ^a			Standard Deviation
		Min.	Max.	Mean ^b	
III. Adult-Child Interaction (overall)	Fall '05	1.3	4.7	2.5	0.95
	Spring '06	2.5	4.8	3.7	0.67
	Spring '07	2.9	4.8	3.8	0.60
III-A. Children's basic physical needs are met.	Fall '05	2	5	3.5	1.36
	Spring '06	2	5	4.0	0.60
	Spring '07	3	4	3.9	0.37
III-B. Children's separation from home and daily entry to the program are handled with sensitivity and respect. ^b	Fall '05	1	4	1.8	0.99
	Spring '06	2	5	3.6	1.03
	Spring '07	3	5	3.9	0.90
III-C. Adults create a warm and caring atmosphere for children.	Fall '05	1	5	3.3	1.21
	Spring '06	2	5	4.1	0.89
	Spring '07	3	5	4.1	0.55
III-D. Adults use a variety of strategies to encourage and support child language and communication.	Fall '05	1	5	2.0	1.45
	Spring '06	2	5	3.7	0.92
	Spring '07	1	5	3.8	1.15
III-E. Adults use a variety of strategies to support classroom communication with children whose primary language is not English. ^b	Fall '05	1	5	2.4	1.39
	Spring '06	2	5	3.5	1.03
	Spring '07	1	4	3.3	1.11
III-F. Adults participate as partners in children's play.	Fall '05	1	5	3.1	1.17
	Spring '06	2	5	3.9	0.97
	Spring '07	3	5	4.2	0.93
III-G. Adults encourage children's learning initiatives throughout the day.	Fall '05	1	5	2.6	1.23
	Spring '06	3	5	4.2	0.83
	Spring '07	2	5	4.0	1.00
III-H. Adults support and extend children's ideas and learning during group times. ^b	Fall '05	1	5	1.9	1.24
	Spring '06	2	5	3.7	1.17
	Spring '07	2	5	3.7	0.87
III-I. Adults provide opportunities for children to explore and use materials at their own developmental level and pace.	Fall '05	1	5	2.5	1.28
	Spring '06	3	5	3.8	0.79
	Spring '07	3	5	3.7	0.80
III-J. Adults acknowledge individual children's accomplishments.	Fall '05	1	5	2.2	1.09
	Spring '06	2	5	3.2	0.75
	Spring '07	3	5	4.0	0.76
III-K. Adults encourage children to interact with and turn to one another for assistance throughout the day.	Fall '05	1	4	2.4	1.04
	Spring '06	2	5	3.4	0.81
	Spring '07	1	5	3.5	0.95
III-L. Children have opportunities to solve problems with materials and do things for themselves.	Fall '05	2	5	3.0	0.76
	Spring '06	3	5	3.7	0.81
	Spring '07	3	5	4.1	0.83
III-M. Adults involve children in resolving conflicts.	Fall '05	1	4	1.7	0.99
	Spring '06	1	5	3.5	1.10
	Spring '07	2	5	3.3	0.98

^a The PQA rating scale ranges from 1 to 5.

^b $N=20$. Not all classrooms were rated on every item if the assessor was not able to observe it during her visit. Only thirteen classrooms were rated on item III-B in fall 2005, eleven classrooms in spring 2006, and twelve classrooms in spring 2007. Fourteen classrooms were rated on item III-E in fall 2005, sixteen in spring 2006, and only seven in spring 2007. Nineteen classrooms were rated on item III-H in fall 2005.

Curriculum Planning and Assessment

Finally, as noted earlier, the domain of Curriculum Planning and Assessment showed the greatest increase from the end of the first year to the end of the second year (see Table 9). Moreover, with an average rating of 4.3 across the twenty classrooms, it was the domain rated most highly in the spring 2007 assessment. At the end of the first year, there was some concern about teachers' progress in implementing the High/Scope curriculum based on the overall rating of 3.4 in this domain. Ratings of two items, "IV-D, the ability to record and discuss anecdotal notes as the basis for planning for individual children," and "IV-E, the use a child observation measure of proven reliability and validity to assess children's developmental progress" were particularly low in the spring 2006 assessment. However, both of these items rely on the Child Observation Record (COR), which was not implemented well in the first year. Mean ratings on both of these items suggest considerable progress in the implementation of the COR in the second year.

Table 9. Fall 2005, Spring 2006, and Spring 2007 Mean PQA Ratings on Curriculum Planning and Assessment Subscale

Indicators	Time	Rating ^a			Standard Deviation
		Min.	Max.	Mean	
IV. Curriculum Planning and Assessment (overall)	Fall '05	2.4	3.4	2.6	0.34
	Spring '06	3.0	4.6	3.4	0.36
	Spring '07	3.0	5.0	4.3	0.74
IV-A. Staff use a comprehensive and documented curriculum model or educational approach to guide teaching practices.	Fall '05	2	4	2.1	0.45
	Spring '06	2	5	4.7	0.92
	Spring '07	2	5	4.4	1.23
IV-B. Staff use a team teaching model and share responsibilities for planning and implementing program activities. ^b	Fall '05	1	5	1.7	1.08
	Spring '06	2	5	4.0	1.00
	Spring '07	3	5	4.4	0.82
IV-C. Staff maintain records on children and families.	Fall '05	5	5	5.0	0.00
	Spring '06	5	5	5.0	0.00
	Spring '07	5	5	5.0	0.00
IV-D. Staff record and discuss anecdotal notes as the basis for planning for individual children.	Fall '05	1	4	1.4	0.75
	Spring '06	2	4	2.1	0.45
	Spring '07	2	5	3.8	0.72
IV-E. Staff regularly use a child observation measure of proven reliability and validity to assess children's developmental progress.	Fall '05	3	3	3.0	0.00
	Spring '06	1	5	1.2	0.89
	Spring '07	1	5	3.7	1.84

^a The PQA rating scale ranges from 1 to 5.

^b Not all classrooms were rated on every item if the assessor was not able to observe a particular item during her visit. Item IV-B was rated for nineteen of the twenty classrooms.

Among the twenty ECCI teachers, five were cited in the spring assessment for not using the COR consistently to plan, assess children's developmental progress, and communicate with parents about their progress. Of some concern is the fact that three of the five were teachers who had been part of ECCI in the first year, which suggests that they had more difficulty than other teachers in learning and implementing this aspect of High/Scope. As described

previously, classroom training in anecdotal note-taking and the use of the COR began late in the first year. In addition, because most resource teachers were not familiar with the COR the first year, they could not provide as much on-site support to teachers in implementing this tool in the first year as they could in the second. As a result, this training might not have been sufficient for some of the original teachers to carry over into the second year. In the second year, resource teachers increased their knowledge of the COR and more emphasis was placed on its use throughout the project, although only teachers who were new to the initiative participated in classroom training. Thus, it appears that some teachers from the first year may have needed both additional instruction and on-site support in the second year to implement the COR fully.³⁰

High/Scope Certification

One of the goals of ECCI is that teachers become certified as High/Scope teachers. Such certification requires that teachers complete the Preschool Curriculum Course (PCC)—which all certified teachers did in their first year in the ECCI program; demonstrate high quality program implementation as indicated by an average rating of at least 4.5 on the PQA; and present evidence of knowledge and use of the COR, as indicated by completed COR assessments for two children over a period of three months. In addition, as part of the certification process, teachers must also demonstrate use of daily team planning based on children's interest and development and the High/Scope key experiences, and they must provide a professional development narrative.

A notable accomplishment of the second year of ECCI was that four lead teachers received their certification as High/Scope teachers in spring 2007. Two additional teaching staff members were also evaluated very highly by the High/Scope assessor. These were a lead teacher whose PQA scores were very close to qualifying her for certification, and an ELA who received a high enough PQA score for certification had she completed the other requirements. This certification, which is valid for three years, recognizes teachers who demonstrate a high degree of knowledge about child development and skill in implementing the High/Scope educational approach and curriculum.

ECERS-R Results

As participants in the early childhood QIS, all ECCI classrooms were assessed formally or informally on the ECERS-R during its first two years. In 2005-2006, all but one of the ten ECCI schools achieved overall mean scores on the ECERS-R that corresponded to four stars, the highest possible rating in the QIS; the other school received a three-star rating. In 2006-2007, nine of the ten schools again achieved overall mean scores that resulted in a four-star rating; the other school received a three-star rating. Full information about the individual ratings on the subscales in the ECERS-R instrument for the ECCI classrooms was not available to Chapin Hall as we completed this report, so we are unable to provide any interpretation of the ECERS-R scores; nor can we look at changes over time.

³⁰ According to the ECCI manager, teachers' anecdotal note-taking and use of notes for planning and implementation of the COR to assess children's progress will be strong priorities in the third year of ECCI. Additional training of ELAs in the third year should also strengthen the skills of all teachers in using the COR.

Examining the relationship between PQA and ECERS-R scores would be interesting, though limited because not all classrooms had formal assessments both years and assessments are not done at the same point in time. For an initiative that is showing substantial improvements in some areas during the course of one year, such differences in the assessment window would complicate data analysis.³¹

Summary of Program Quality Assessments

Despite considerable turnover in staff from the first year, the High/Scope curriculum model became more established in the ten school-based sites in the second year. This accomplishment appeared to be the result of classroom training provided for new teachers to the program, greater experience, understanding, and practice among staff, and on-site technical assistance provided by resource teachers. Although the classrooms varied in their quality, the overall mean scores on the PQA assessments in the four subscales either increased or were maintained. Particularly strong areas on the PQA included the establishment of a consistent daily routine with a variety of individual, small group, and large group activities, a room arrangement and schedule that gives children opportunities to initiate their own activities, and teamwork among teachers in the classroom. Teachers were viewed as warm and caring and engaged with children in their activities.

The domain of Curriculum Planning and Assessment, which included anecdotal note-taking and the use of the COR for observing and planning for children, showed substantial improvement. There was some variability across the ECCI classrooms in this area, however, as a small number of teachers continued to evidence difficulty implementing this component. Other areas in which the PQA results indicated need for improvement included facilities and equipment for outdoor play and providing children more choices during transition times. Both of these areas may be difficult to change, however, because of the facilities, structures, and schedules of the schools in which the ECCI program operates.

Finally, a notable accomplishment was that four teachers received High/Scope certification. In addition, most ECCI classrooms again received high scores on the ECERS-R, the instrument used in the Palm Beach County QIS to measure the use of developmentally appropriate practices.

³¹ Both instruments are considered valid and reliable measures of early childhood program quality and as such, should reflect similar findings. The PQA assessor and other teacher educators familiar with both the ECERS-R and the PQA believe that the two assessments are compatible measures of developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs.

The Views and Experiences of Teachers and Administrators

Our primary source of data on the perceptions of teachers and administrators about the ECCI program was a paper-and-pencil survey sent to principals, assistant principals, kindergarten teachers, prekindergarten teachers and ELAs at the school-based sites and teachers and assistant teachers at the child care center. Teaching staff were provided with a \$5 incentive for participating in the survey. We first distributed the surveys in late March 2007, and then followed-up with non-respondents by sending reminders via mail, e-mail, and telephone and two more survey mailings between April and June. The surveys covered a wide range of topics related to the implementation of the ECCI program, including views of its goals, activities, curriculum, and impacts; communication and relationships with parents; and beliefs about school readiness. (See Appendix D for copies of the surveys.)

These surveys were distributed to 132 respondents at the ten ECCI schools, and a total of 100 (76%) were returned. The response rates for each respondent group were as follows: prekindergarten teachers (76%), principal and assistant principals (95%), and kindergarten teachers (67%), and community child care center teaching staff (100%).³² Our analysis of survey responses was supplemented with additional information drawn from meeting minutes, training notes, and other documents, and from interviews or informal conversations with the ECCI program manager, resource teachers, teacher trainers and assessors, principals, and a small number of teachers.

Views of ECCI Prekindergarten Staff

Of the forty-seven ECCI prekindergarten staff who responded to the survey, eleven (24%) were certified teachers, and thirty-six (76%) were ELAs. These respondents were an ethnically diverse group, with 47 percent identifying themselves as black/African American, 23 percent White, 15 percent Hispanic/Latino, and 15 percent other ethnic backgrounds. In terms of education, all of the certified teachers had bachelor's degrees, and four of the eleven respondents had a master's degree. Among ELAs, all but one said they had attended college, although less than a third had completed a degree program. Seven (19%) said they had an associate's degree, and three (8%), a bachelor's degree; thirty-one (86%) also had a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. On average, the ECCI prekindergarten staff had 10 years of experience teaching at the preschool level and had been at their current school 7 or 8 years. Certified teachers had between 1 and 11 years of experience teaching preschool. Seven of the certified teachers had previously taught kindergarten, and some had experience teaching in higher elementary grades. Most of the ELAs reported having previous experience teaching preschool, with lengths of time ranging from 1 to 25 years. (Sample characteristics are also presented in tables in Appendix D.)

³² In addition, we also surveyed administrators and the preschool and kindergarten teaching staff at fourteen other elementary schools implementing the state voluntary prekindergarten (VPK) program to provide a broader perspective on the values and attitudes of school staff on school readiness and how to adequately prepare children for school. These topics will be discussed in a later section of this report.

ECCI Program Goals and Activities

ECCI implementation included key elements such as intensive training of teachers, assessments of program quality, parent involvement, and connections to extracurricular supports and services through Beacon Centers and the Comprehensive Services program. Pre-k teachers were most directly informed and involved in the implementation of these elements, and in this section, we report their views of the program; in the next section, we compare the experiences of pre-k teachers to administrators and kindergarten teachers.

The ECCI prekindergarten teachers³³ in this sample expressed satisfaction with many elements of the ECCI program, particularly the availability of social services, their knowledge and training on the High/Scope curriculum, the cultural sensitivity of the program, and the ECCI program goals and philosophy (see Table 10). According to one respondent, “The preschool program is one of the best programs that I have worked with.” Another wrote, “I feel that our preschool program is very supportive and the curriculum is great. It takes a lot of hard work.” And a third argued, “We need to expand this program throughout Palm Beach County and Florida. The funding for pre-k in the state does not include certified (degreed) teachers and day care (full day) if needed.”

Table 10. ECCI Pre-K Teachers’ Satisfaction with Pre-K Program Goals and Activities^a

Program Aspect	% “Very Satisfied”	% “Satisfied”	Mean Satisfaction (<i>sd</i>)^b
Availability of social services for families	32	49	3.3 (.63)
Your [teacher’s] knowledge and training on the curriculum	26	60	3.2 (.58)
Cultural sensitivity of program	23	68	3.2 (.58)
The goals and philosophy of the program	28	51	3.1 (.72)
Resources to help manage behavior problems	21	49	3.0 (.69)
How your [teacher’s] performance is evaluated	19	57	3.0 (.73)
The curriculum	21	53	3.0 (.81)
Classroom volunteers	11	70	3.0 (.57)
The way children are assessed	17	57	2.9 (.73)
The PQA assessment process	11	53	2.9 (.69)
Management of the program	17	57	2.9 (.85)
The ECERS assessment process	6	53	2.7 (.68)

^a *N*=47

^b A 4-point rating scale was used, with responses ranging from 1 (“very dissatisfied”) to 4 (“very satisfied”).

Teachers expressed lower satisfaction, on average, with the way children are assessed, the PQA and ECERS assessment process, and the overall management of the program. Some teachers also expressed concern about whether the High/Scope curriculum allows for sufficient

³³ In the discussion of the survey results, the term “teachers” means both the certified teachers and the ELAs if not otherwise indicated. Also, unless described in the text, there were no noteworthy or statistically significant differences between the responses of the two groups.

teacher direction and academic preparation, a topic that will be addressed separately below. In general, these results parallel the results of the first year survey (Spielberger & Goyette, 2006).³⁴

Teachers' open-ended comments about the items that they rated lower indicated that some teachers still see conflicts between the High/Scope PQA and the ECERS assessments—though the PQA assessor and other teacher educators familiar with both assessments believe they are compatible measures of developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs. Some teachers found the assessments, particularly the ECERS, stressful. They also were bothered by what they view as conflicts in the requirements of the two instruments in such areas as hand washing, storage of cleaning agents and other equipment, clean-up time, and children's use of materials from one area (e.g., dramatic play) in another area (e.g., block area).

In the area of program management, three of the certified teachers indicated a need for more support from either the school principal or from the other teachers in the classroom, or for more timely and open communication—especially about program changes—between teachers and the central program office. A few teachers also complained that there were not enough opportunities for training, especially during the work-day, or for certified teachers and ELAs to attend meetings or trainings together. In the words of one survey respondent,

The program administration needs to have better communication with teachers. This year there were many abrupt changes throughout the year. Parents as well as staff need consistency in the program. I believe having staff meetings with both teachers and ELAs would strengthen the program as well as build morale. This program has many positive aspects to it but we need to evaluate the needs of our children, and whether or not we are meeting their needs.

Both of these suggestions—one for better communication with the ECCI program and the other for more opportunities for certified teachers and ELAs to meet, plan, and train together to reinforce their work as a teamwork—were similar to concerns identified in the first year survey.

High/Scope Curriculum

As noted in the first chapter, the cornerstone of the ECCI program is the High/Scope curriculum, which assumes that preschool children learn best from interactions with real objects, ideas, and people and opportunities to personally plan, carry out, and reflect on their activities with appropriate support and guidance from adults (Hohmann & Weikart, 2002; see also Appendix A). As indicated in Table 9 above, almost three-fourths of the teachers said they were *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with the ECCI curriculum. Responses to additional questions about High/Scope indicate that three-fourths of the teachers also believe they have the resources and support they need to implement the High/Scope curriculum, and that resource teachers have been very effective in helping them implement the curriculum. Almost two-

³⁴ Because of sample differences resulting from staff turnover and a low response rate in the first year, we do not make detailed comparisons between the year 1 and year 2 survey responses. Low response rates makes it difficult to conclude whether differences in mean ratings reflect a real difference in satisfaction levels and perceptions or differences in the composition of the first and second year samples.

thirds of the sample also agreed that the curriculum has improved their teaching, that it has been easy to implement, and, importantly, that their administrators understand the curriculum (see Table 11).

At the same time, teachers were more variable and, on average, less positive in their views about how compatible the curriculum is with—and how well it prepares children for—the kindergarten curriculum. Fewer than half of the teachers agreed with the following statements: “The High/Scope curriculum prepares children well for kindergarten” and “The High/Scope curriculum fits well with the kindergarten curriculum at my school.” In general, responses to these two items were highly correlated; teachers either agreed or disagreed with both statements.

In addition, less than half of the respondents agreed with other statements about the curriculum: “The High/Scope curriculum is similar to other training I have in early childhood education” and “Parents of children in the program understand the High/Scope curriculum.” Responses to these two items were also correlated. These results help quantify the scope of differences between the High/Scope curriculum and what teachers have been trained to do in the past, and shed light on parents’ circumstances in being asked to use High/Scope ideas to support what teachers do in the classroom. One teacher captured the implications of uninformed parents on their classroom practices: “Nobody understands the curriculum, and parents want their child to be taught and ready for kindergarten.” If teachers do not understand the curriculum, this will necessarily complicate their efforts to explain it to parents and describe connections between the curriculum and school readiness.

Table 11. ECCI Teachers’ Agreement with Statements about High/Scope Curriculum^a

	% “Strongly Agree”	% “Agree”	Mean Agreement ^b
My resource teacher or coach has been very effective in helping me implement High/Scope	32	49	3.1 (.79)
I have the resources and support I need to fully implement High/Scope	30	51	3.1 (.74)
The High/Scope curriculum has made me a better teacher	23	40	2.8 (.88)
The High/Scope curriculum is easy for me to implement	17	49	2.8 (.78)
My school administrators understand the High/Scope curriculum	15	51	2.8 (.80)
The High/Scope curriculum is appropriate for all students in my class	15	40	2.7 (.79)
The High/Scope curriculum prepares children well for kindergarten	9	38	2.5 (.73)
The High/Scope curriculum is similar to other training I have in early childhood education	4	45	2.5 (.69)
Parents of children in the program understand the High/Scope curriculum	2	36	2.3 (.67)
The High/Scope curriculum fits well with the kindergarten curriculum at my school	9	26	2.2 (.91)

^a *N*=47

^b A 4-point rating scale was used, with responses ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 4 (“strongly agree”).

Teachers’ open-ended comments about the High/Scope curriculum indicate few concerns about the content of the High/Scope curriculum, but do reveal larger contextual concerns about how compatible the curriculum is with children’s subsequent experiences in kindergarten or elsewhere. Only two teachers specifically mentioned a need for more math and literacy activities in the curriculum. As one stated, “I would implement more small group time for math and reading, especially for kids going to kindergarten. There needs to be a bridge from the High/Scope curriculum to the kindergarten curriculum.”

As indicated in Table 12, respondents suggested most often that children should have more teacher-directed activities. They viewed a more teacher-directed approach as better preparation for children’s kindergarten experience and a way to compensate for a lack of structure or support from their parents. As one teacher explained, “To me, High/Scope does not prepare the children for kindergarten, because in kindergarten they won’t get all the choices. High/Scope is good for some children, but for some children it is not.” Another stated, “I would have more teacher direction. These children don’t get enough help at home so they need more direction in the classroom to prepare for kindergarten.”

Table 12. Main Themes in ECCI Teachers’ Suggestions for Improving High/Scope

Theme	Number of teachers^a
Incorporate more teacher-directed activities (e.g., during small group time) to prepare children for kindergarten	8
Provide additional time for teacher planning as a team	3
Do not have mixed-age groups or do not include 3-year-olds	3
Provide more training for parents	3
Include more academic preparation (e.g., math and writing) for kindergarten	2

^a Just twenty-five of the forty-seven teachers responding to the survey made suggestions for improving the curriculum; those mentioned by two or more respondents are included in this table.

Most teachers expressed satisfaction with their level of training and knowledge of High/Scope. Only four teachers, two certified teachers and two ELAs, volunteered reservations about their knowledge of High/Scope and ability to implement it. In addition, two certified teachers noted that ELAs had not been offered enough training in High/Scope. One respondent’s comments summarized these themes:

I would like more training about 3-year-olds’ development and strategies for them. I would like strategies for behavior problems (conflict resolution); training provided does not work for all children. Most of all, I would like training for assistants; I cannot implement High/Scope by myself.

Other topics for additional training, each suggested by a few teachers, were guidance and discipline, classroom management, science and math, and parent involvement.

Relationships

The structure and goals of the ECCI program, including its primary setting within elementary schools, presents opportunities and challenges for building connections to other school staff who can support their work. We were therefore interested in understanding how prekindergarten teachers view their relationships with other key participants. As shown in Table 13, the average rating of ten different relationships all fell within the *satisfied* to *very satisfied* response categories. Teachers reported the highest levels of satisfaction with the children in their classrooms (96%), other teachers in their schools (92%), their school principal (89%), and other teachers in the classroom (81%). In comparison, these teachers were, on average, slightly less satisfied with their other colleagues -- classroom volunteers, Beacon Center staff, and their resource teacher or coach.

Table 13. ECCI Pre-K Teachers' Satisfaction with Relationships at School^a

Aspect of ECCI	% "Very Satisfied" ^c	% "Satisfied"	Mean Satisfaction (<i>sd</i>) ^b
The children in your classroom	64	32	3.7 (.48)
The school principal	53	36	3.6 (.55)
Other teachers in the school	49	43	3.5 (.55)
Other teachers in the room	51	30	3.4 (.73)
Comprehensive Services program staff	34	43	3.3 (.62)
School nurse	30	55	3.3 (.55)
Parents	32	55	3.3 (.59)
Your resource teacher or coach	36	47	3.2 (.77)
Beacon Center Staff	34	45	3.2 (.68)
Classroom volunteers	30	53	3.2 (.61)

^a *N*=47

^b A 4-point rating scale was used, with responses ranging from 1 ("very dissatisfied") to 4 ("very satisfied").

These favorable views of relationships within the ECCI program are generally consistent with the first year survey findings. At the same time, it is noteworthy that ratings of satisfaction with relationships with "other teachers in the room" were higher in the second year. Only two respondents expressed concerns about relationships within the classroom team in the second year survey. In one case, an ELA was concerned with the certified teacher's lack of knowledge and interest in High/Scope; in the other case, a certified teacher complained about her ELAs' lack of willingness and ability to learn about High/Scope and implement it in the classroom. These positive results, in conjunction with other information from the PQA assessments and key informant interviews, suggest that teachers made progress during the second year in working as a team.

Parent Involvement and Communication

As indicated in Table 12, teachers expressed general satisfaction with their relationships with children’s parents. To learn more about the challenges and successes in these relationships, we asked teachers specific questions about any problems they had in communicating with parents and what activities they considered most effective for involving parents in their children’s school activities.

Communication with Parents. Teachers reported that they most often experienced communication problems because parents did not read or respond to written notices, because parents did not speak English well, or because it was difficult to contact them by telephone (see Table 14). Between 37 and 44 percent of the teachers said each of these problems occurred at least once a month. Teachers were much less likely to report problems related to the content of communication with parents, such as parents not informing teachers when a child has a problem or misunderstanding teachers’ concern about a child.

Table 14. ECCI Pre-K Teachers’ Frequency of Problems in Communicating with Parents or Guardians^a

	% At least once/week	% At least once/month	Mean Frequency (sd)^b
Parents do not speak English well	30	6	2.5 (1.11)
Parents do not read or respond to written notices or classroom displays	21	21	2.5 (1.04)
It is difficult to contact parents by telephone	19	17	2.4 (1.02)
Parents do not attend school events	9	21	2.3 (0.79)
When a child has a problem, parents do not tell the teachers	9	13	2.0 (0.92)
Teachers do not have time to contact parents	11	15	1.8 (1.10)
Parents misunderstand your concerns about their children	9	4	1.8 (0.90)

^a N=47

^b A 4-point rating scale was used, with the following responses: 1 (“Never”), 2 (“A few times during the year”), 3 (“At least once a month”), and 4 (“At least once a week”).

These results suggest that any one form of communication has important limitations. Written notices, whether posted in the classroom or sent to parents directly, often do not generate meaningful exchanges between teachers and parents. A little more than a third of the respondents cited contacting parents by telephone as a difficulty. These limitations in the methods of communication are compounded when parents have difficulty speaking English. It is promising, however, that relatively few teachers report not having time to contact parents.

When teachers were asked for their views about the most effective means for communicating with parents, their responses identified aspects of good communication that were structural and relational. In their view, effective communication happens when parents are given multiple opportunities to participate in the life of the classroom (e.g., parent-child activities, inviting parents to share culture, visiting for breakfast or lunch) or to otherwise learn about or contribute to the effective functioning of the classroom or how to work with children in the home (e.g., parent workshops). But effectiveness also relies upon the relationships

teachers work to create with parents – having a “friendly open door policy,” explaining any information being sent home with the child, or calling the parent at home. One of the most effective ways to communicate with parents, according to teachers, is to make sure that a conversation happens during the morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up time.

Many teachers across the ECCI schools stressed the value of “one-on-one” communication. Relationships can be developed as a part of any of the parent involvement events that happen during the year, of course, but teachers describing the most effective ways to involve parents also emphasize the “hows” of working with parents. “Verbal communication is the most effective,” wrote one teacher. “Building a relationship with parents helps them feel invited in the classroom. I call each of my parents by their first names and I can say I make it MY obligation to know at least one thing about my parents.” Another teacher stated, “The best way I have found to communicate with the parents I work with is to pull them aside and talk to them openly person to person. I found with this way that the parents were more open to talking about concerns they had.”

Other suggestions teachers made emphasized the importance of being honest and respectful in communicating with families, recognizing their strengths, treating them as resources (for example, asking them to share something from their culture), or, when staff do not speak the language of parent, providing an interpreter.

Parent Involvement. A list of possible parent involvement activities was developed for the survey, based on the first year survey, ECCI documents, and information from the ECCI program staff. Teachers were asked, first, to indicate how many children had parents or guardians who participated in a selection of activities considered to occur most frequently.³⁵ Although there was considerable variability across the classrooms, on average, teachers reported that more than half of the children in their classrooms had parents who participated in each of these activities.

As shown in Table 15, the most frequent parent activities were: participating in parent-teacher conferences, using the lending library at least once during the year, and attending open houses or parties at school. Ninety-five percent of teachers (or more) reported that parents participated in these activities. Parents were least likely to attend class field trips or visit the classroom to read to their child. Although a majority of teachers reported that some parents took advantage of other opportunities for parent involvement—volunteering to help, visiting the classroom to eat a meal with a child or read to the child, or attending field trips—the number of children in their classrooms whose parents participated in any of these activities represented fewer than half of the class.³⁶

³⁵ Teachers were asked to report the number of *children* whose parent(s) or guardian(s) participated in each activity in order to control for differences in the number of parents per child across classrooms.

³⁶ Additional information about parent participation from the ECCI program’s quarterly reports is presented in a separate section.

Table 15. Percent of ECCI Pre-K Teachers Reporting Selected Parent Involvement Activities, and Number of Children Involved^a

Parent Involvement Activity	Percentage of Teachers ^b	Number of Children	
		Mean (<i>sd</i>)	Range
Participated in parent-teacher conferences	98	12 (6.15)	3-18
Used lending library	95	11 (5.16)	1-18
Attended open houses or parties	95	10 (5.13)	3-18
Volunteered to help in your class or in the school	86	5 (5.23)	0-18
Visited classroom to eat breakfast/lunch with child	82	7 (6.15)	0-18
Attended class field trips	68	4 (3.93)	0-18
Visited classroom to read to child	57	2 (3.79)	0-18

^a Results are based on 44 respondents (both certified teachers and ELAs) reporting that parents or guardians of children in their classroom participated in each activity at least once during the school year. We excluded from the analysis three “floaters” who did not respond to the question.

^b Percentage of teachers reporting that at least one parent participated in activity.

Teachers were also asked to choose three activities from a longer list of events and services they considered the most *effective* in involving parents with their children’s schools. These activities varied from those aimed at supporting the teacher or the material needs of the classroom to those focused on increasing parents’ knowledge of the curriculum, child development, and how to work with their children. As shown in Table 16, teachers considered the following activities to be most effective: open houses, parent-child activities in the classroom, and class newsletters. About two-thirds or more of the respondents mentioned each of these activities. The next group of activities that were considered most effective—recommended by a third or more of the teachers—included the following: formal parent-teacher conferences, parent meetings, parent workshops, and inviting parents to share their culture. Interestingly, only about a fourth of teachers suggested “volunteer opportunities for parents” as an especially effective way of involving them.

The advantages of the most popular strategies perceived by ECCI teachers are summarized in Table 16. Although some activities were more popular than others, teachers were able to identify benefits of very different activities. The effective activities ranged from group activities such as open houses, parent meetings, and parent workshops to individual meetings between teachers and parents, written newsletters distributed to all parents, and inviting parents to share their cultures with the children. These activities also offered parents a variety of participation opportunities. That is, in addition to activities that occur during the school day, teachers also suggested open houses held in the evening. Another preferred medium was the class newsletter, which was viewed as one potentially efficient way to contact a large group of parents, especially those who cannot come into the school or who are difficult to reach by telephone. Nonetheless, fewer than two-thirds of teachers cited this as one of the top three most effective ways to reach parents, which is consistent with the view that it is difficult to communicate with parents through written media (see Table 13).

Table 16. ECCI Pre-K Teachers Views on Effectiveness of Parent Involvement Strategies

Parent Involvement Activity	% Teachers^a
Open houses	83
Parent-child activities in the classroom	66
Class newsletters	64
Formal parent-teacher conferences	49
Parent meetings	40
Parent workshops	38
Inviting parents to share their culture	34
Classroom visits to eat breakfast or lunch with children	26
Volunteer opportunities for parents	23
Lending library	21
School-sponsored or Beacon Center family “fun” activities	15
Class field trips	13
Written notes to individual parents	13
Monthly parent-child activity	9
Providing child care to increase parent involvement	6
Home visits by teachers ^b	4
Classroom visits to read to children	4
White message boards	4
Kindergarten transition activities	2

^a Percentage of forty-seven teachers who mentioned activity as one of three most effective ways to involve parents.

^b Home visits by teachers were not allowed under the union policies at the School District.

In teachers’ explanations of the value of various activities, several themes emerged. Teachers, in general, expressed sensitivity to the fact that parents are busy and have different schedules for work and school. Teachers therefore believed it important to provide varied times and places for families to contribute or be involved—evening as well as day time, out-of-school as well as in-school. As one respondent explained,

I well realize the busy schedules of most parents who have full-time jobs in our class and many who are single parents. I try not to criticize or judge parents when they do not attend our activities. Even if they leave our program with just the understanding that parent involvement is necessary for their child’s success then I have achieved one of my intentions

Teachers mentioned in their comments that some parents are more comfortable talking one-on-one with teachers and, hence, that parent-teacher conferences or informal chats at arrival and departure times help to build relationships with parents. They also noted the value of activities that encouraged interactions between parents and their children or helped them understand the kinds of experiences their children have in the classroom. Teachers viewed activities such as parent meetings, volunteer opportunities, and invitations to parents to share their culture with the class as opportunities to learn from parents. However, teachers rarely mentioned the chance to learn from parents as one of the benefits of other parent involvement activities such as open houses, parent workshops, or parent-teacher conferences. Although these activities can be opportunities for parents to share their knowledge of their children and

their expectations for the program with teachers, teachers were more often described as ways for parents to learn about the curriculum, the expectations of the program, and their children’s progress.

Table 17. Relative Advantages of Top Ten Parent Involvement Strategies Favored by ECCI Pre-K Teachers

Strategy/Activity	Summary of Perceived Advantages
Open house	The primary benefit is to inform parents about the program, and, secondly, to meet teachers and learn about program expectations and how they can help. An open house is also an opportunity to meet other parents, see what children are experiencing and learning, and share concerns.
Parent-child activities in classroom	One benefit is the increase in parent knowledge. Parents need to directly share children’s experiences, and they like to see and participate in what their child is doing. There are also affective and emotional benefits; parents have fun with their child, become comfortable in the classroom, and feel special and a part of their child’s education, thereby increasing the parent-child bond. Parent-child activities in the classroom can also be a source of support to the teacher.
Class newsletters	Newsletters are an efficient way to communicate information to parents, especially those who work or are “busy.” They also do not involve getting parents to assist or contribute to the classroom.
Formal parent-teacher conference	Advantages include both the content that is discussed in this setting (e.g., check progress, tell parent about child) and the nature of the interaction (e.g., “you can get parents one-on-one”). Parents and teachers communicate/share information, including child’s progress; what child is or isn’t doing in school; and plans for the child. Parents may feel more comfortable talking to a teacher in a conference meeting and may be more likely to come to this kind of parent involvement activity.
Parent meeting	Unlike an open house, which is primarily a venue for teachers to convey information and expectations, parent meetings provide an opportunity for parents to express opinions and interests and have more two-way communication with teachers. Other comments were that parents tend to get involved when other adults are involved, and meetings provide information to parents about program, can increase parent involvement in their child’s education, or inform parents to reinforce at home what is happening in class.
Parent workshops	A parent workshop allows teaching to be “hands on “ with parents and can focus on activities that they can easily take home—educational games that parents can play with children, for example, without spending a lot of money—and that helps them feel successful as parents. Being able to provide food appears to be another advantage of a parent workshop as a mechanism for attracting participation.
Inviting parents to share their culture	Opportunities to share their culture provide emotional benefits for children and parents; children feel better when they believe they have something to share; families feel welcome, comfortable, and proud of their culture. This can also make children more sensitive to others. It also is an exchange of information and knowledge; e.g., parents and children can learn through others, and knowing a child’s culture provides information to the teacher about his or her needs and culture.
Classroom visits to eat breakfast/lunch	Although these visits were not seen as a way to inform or instruct parents, they were valued as an activity that allows parents to feel “close to their children.” Breakfast may be more convenient for some parents because they are available early in the day.
Volunteer opportunities for parents	Benefits of volunteer opportunities include flexible scheduling, the chance for parents to share in their child’s learning experience, and opportunities for parents to provide resources to the classroom. Volunteering also increases communication (e.g., parents can see the daily routine); builds relationships and parent self-esteem; occurs at convenient times for parents; exposes parents to different cultures or enables them to share their culture through reading stories and other activities.
Lending library	A lending library encourages parents to do something with their child, i.e., read. It also includes the children directly in seeking their parents’ involvement. Children ask parents to check out material from the library, providing another way to connect parents to their child’s educational experiences.

When asked about their satisfaction with the level of parent involvement in their classrooms, more than two-thirds of the teachers reported being either *satisfied* (57%) or *very satisfied* (13%) with this aspect of the program. Teachers' level of satisfaction with involvement depended both on their assessments of the *levels* of parent participation and on teachers' *empathy* with parents' schedules and competing demands for their time. Teachers who were satisfied with parent involvement reported trying to accommodate parents' schedules and creating a variety of opportunities for parents to be involved as best they can; for example, by providing child care so parents could attend meetings in the evening, providing information through newsletters, holding fun events like parties and open houses, and asking parents to donate food or materials for projects.

Teachers who were not satisfied—or who said that they were satisfied but would like to increase the level of parent involvement—noted that the same few parents tended to participate in the various activities provided to them. “It seems no matter what is offered or going on you always have the same few parents attending,” one teacher wrote in the survey. “Usually the parents that do attend aren't the ones whose child needs it the most.” At the same time, some teachers also acknowledged that schools can do more to involve parents and make them feel welcome:

More effort should have been put forth to get the parents involved in their children's learning experience. I feel the parents are the key to the success of the program so they have to be brought on board from the beginning of the school year, and this year that did not happen, which left a lot of dissatisfied parents.

In addition, one respondent commented that it can be difficult for parents to “register” at the school because so many work during the day. It is not clear, however, whether difficulty in registering as a volunteer is a larger problem for ECCI parents.

Program Impact and Children's Progress

To assess teachers' views about the progress of children in their classrooms and the impact of the program on their development, we asked them for their general views about the impact of the program and then how well-prepared they thought the children in their classroom would be when they entered kindergarten the following fall. According to Table 18, a majority of teachers responding to the survey were *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with the impact of the ECCI program, particularly in the area of children's social skills and relations between parents and teachers. Almost three-fourths of the teachers responded that they were *satisfied* with the impact of the program on children's school readiness. More than two-thirds were, on average, *satisfied* with the impact of the program parents' involvement at school and with their children at home.

With regard to their assessments of their students' readiness for school, the ECCI prekindergarten teachers were generally optimistic: they felt that their students would rate at least *mostly prepared* on sixteen of the eighteen items they were asked about (see Table 19). The teachers were most positive about their students' ability to “communicate needs, wants, and thoughts verbally;” 89 percent of the respondents reported that their students would be

either *mostly prepared* or *fully prepared* by the time they started school. More than four-fifths of the sample also felt that their students would be either *mostly prepared* or *fully prepared* in their ability “to use pencils and paint brushes” (85%) and their capacity to “read or pretend to read storybooks” (87%). Teachers were somewhat less confident about the progress of their children in behaviors that support learning. These included the item “finishes tasks” and the item, “sits still and pays attention,” which only 66 percent of the respondents expected their students would be *mostly prepared* or *fully prepared* to do.

Table 18. ECCI Pre-K Teachers’ Satisfaction with Impact of Program on Children and Parents^a

Area of Program Impact	% “Very Satisfied”	% “Satisfied”	Mean Satisfaction (<i>sd</i>) ^b
Children’s social skills	28	68	3.2 (.57)
Parent-teacher relations	23	68	3.2 (.51)
Children’s school readiness	21	53	2.9 (.77)
Parents ability to help their children at home	11	68	2.9 (.54)
Parent involvement at school	15	55	2.9 (.64)

^a *N*=47

^b A 4-point rating scale was used, with responses ranging from 1 (“very dissatisfied”) to 4 (“very satisfied”).

Table 19. ECCI Pre-K Teachers’ Assessments of Their Students’ Preparedness for Kindergarten^a

Child Characteristic	% “Fully prepared”	% “Mostly prepared”	Mean Level of Preparedness ^b
Communicates needs, wants, and thoughts verbally	64	26	3.6 (.57)
Is able to use pencils and paint brushes	57	28	3.6 (.63)
Reads or pretends to read storybooks	57	30	3.5 (.66)
Knows the English language	53	34	3.5 (.63)
Is beginning write letters	49	36	3.4 (.70)
Identifies primary colors and shapes	49	36	3.4 (.69)
Writes own name	45	40	3.3 (.74)
Follows through with planned activities	43	38	3.3 (.78)
Can describe completed activities	40	43	3.3 (.75)
Is sensitive to other children’s feelings	28	60	3.3 (.54)
Can follow directions	38	49	3.2 (.80)
Has good problem-solving skills	36	47	3.2 (.68)
Takes turns and shares	28	57	3.2 (.66)
Knows most of the letters of the alphabet	32	49	3.2 (.74)
Can count to 20 or more	34	43	3.1 (.87)
Is not disruptive of the class	26	57	3.1 (.78)
Finishes tasks	19	57	3.0 (.73)
Sits still and pays attention	13	53	2.8 (.74)

^a *N*=47; however, not all teachers responded to each item therefore percentages may not add to 100.

^b A 4-point rating scale was used, with responses ranging from 1 (“very unprepared”) to 4 (“fully prepared”).

In sum, nearly all of the prekindergarten teachers believed that the children in their classrooms would develop a solid foundation for learning by the time they entered kindergarten. About a third of the teachers were less certain, however, that the children would possess specific self-regulation skills by school entry.

Job Satisfaction and Efficacy

Finally, to help us interpret teachers’ perceptions of the ECCI program, we collected data on how teachers felt about their positions as certified teachers or ELAs and their sense of efficacy or belief in their ability to implement the curriculum, motivate and manage children, and work with parents to help their children learn. As Table 20 indicates, the ECCI teachers’ average overall job satisfaction (3.2) was slightly higher than *satisfied* on a four-point rating scale. The teachers reported higher levels of satisfaction with the training they receive, their administrative responsibilities, and the supervision and support they receive. These results are comparable to those of the first year survey, in which overall job satisfaction was rated 3.1.

Teachers were more variable in their responses and, on average, relatively less satisfied in the following three areas: “salary and benefits, “being valued for [their] work,” and “[their] influence on the program.” About a third of the respondents were dissatisfied with each of these areas.

Table 20. Job Satisfaction of ECCI Prekindergarten Teachers^a

Aspect of Job	% “Very Satisfied”	% “Satisfied”	Mean Satisfaction ^b
The training you receive	36	49	3.3 (.63)
Administrative responsibilities	26	60	3.2 (.58)
Supervision you receive	23	68	3.2 (.58)
The support you receive	26	60	3.2 (.65)
Cultural sensitivity in your school	23	66	3.2 (.65)
Opportunities for professional development	28	55	3.2 (.64)
Responsibilities for working with parents	23	64	3.2 (.56)
Your workload	23	60	3.1 (.59)
Physical working conditions	21	64	3.1 (.57)
Your influence on the program	30	36	3.1 (.79)
Being valued for your work	21	49	2.9 (.87)
Salary and benefits	13	53	2.8 (.74)
Overall job satisfaction	28	62	3.2 (.63)

^a N=47

^b A 4-point rating scale was used, with responses ranging from 1 (“very dissatisfied”) to 4 (“very satisfied”).

Although the differences between the responses of certified teachers and ELAs to the survey questions were few, the area of job satisfaction revealed several differences of note. In particular, a higher percentage of ELAs than certified teachers expressed satisfaction with each of the following items: the “supervision [they] receive” ($\chi^2 = 7.33, p < .01$), the “support [they] receive” ($\chi^2 = 6.85, p < .01$), “opportunities for professional development” ($\chi^2 = 7.91, p < .01$),

and “physical working conditions” ($\chi^2 = 4.65, p < .05$). These results as well as the overall pattern of differences in mean ratings for the two groups presented in Table 21 suggest that the two groups of teachers experience their work differently.

Table 21. Job Satisfaction of Certified Teachers and ELAs

Aspect of Job	Mean Satisfaction (<i>sd</i>) ^a		
	Certified Teachers ^b	ELAs ^b	All Teachers
The training you receive	2.9 (.74)	3.4 (.56)	3.3 (.63)
Administrative responsibilities	3.0 (.47)	3.2 (.61)	3.2 (.58)
Supervision you receive	2.9 (.88)	3.3 (.44)	3.2 (.58)
The support you receive	2.7 (.82)	3.3 (.52)	3.2 (.65)
Cultural sensitivity in your school	3.0 (.82)	3.2 (.59)	3.2 (.65)
Opportunities for professional development	2.6 (.52)	3.3 (.58)	3.2 (.64)
Responsibilities for working with parents	3.1 (.32)	3.2 (.62)	3.2 (.56)
Your workload	2.9 (.57)	3.2 (.59)	3.1 (.59)
Physical working conditions	2.9 (.74)	3.2 (.51)	3.1 (.57)
Your influence on the program	2.8 (.79)	3.1 (.78)	3.1 (.79)
Being valued for your work	2.4 (.84)	3.1 (.83)	2.9 (.87)
Salary and benefits	3.0 (.67)	2.8 (.70)	2.8 (.74)
Overall job satisfaction	3.0 (.82)	3.3 (.56)	3.2 (.63)

^a A 4-point rating scale was used, with responses ranging from 1 (“very dissatisfied”) to 4 (“very satisfied”).

^b Ten of 11 certified teachers and 35 of 36 ELAs responded to this question.

The survey also asked teachers a series of questions to assess their feelings about teaching and perceptions of their effectiveness as teachers. As presented in Table 22, the average response to all but three statements fell into the *agree* to *strongly agree* range with the highest level of agreement being in regard to “I am making a difference in the lives of children I teach” (92%), “if I could start over, I would choose teaching again as my career” (89%), and “the children in my classroom are motivated to learn” (92%). At the other end of the spectrum, teachers were less likely to agree with the following statements: “I have a lot of control over the curriculum and the way I teach” (51%), “children’s readiness for school depends more on what happens at home than at school” (51%), and “I have a lot of influence on how parents help their children so they do well in school” (66%).

With these items, there were again a couple of noteworthy differences between ELAs and certified teachers. A larger percentage of ELAs (97%) than certified teachers (73%) responded affirmatively to the item, “I really enjoy my present teaching job” ($\chi^2 = 5.66, p < .05$). A larger percentage of ELAs (83%) than certified teachers (55%) also tended to believe that they “have a lot of influence on how parents help their children so they do well in school” ($\chi^2 = 3.62, p < .10$).

Table 22. ECCI Prekindergarten Teachers' Feelings about Teaching^a

Efficacy Statement	%	%	Mean
	“Strongly Agree”	“Agree”	Agreement ^b
I am making a difference in the lives of children I teach	55	36	3.6 (.50)
If I could start over, I would choose teaching again as my career	1	38	3.5 (.59)
The children in my classroom are motivated to learn	47	45	3.5 (.63)
I really enjoy my present teaching job	49	34	3.4 (.67)
I have a lot of influence on how children behave in my classroom	23	60	3.3 (.49)
The parents of children in my classroom are motivated to help their children learn	30	47	3.1 (.70)
I have a lot of influence on how parents help their children so they do well in school	17	49	2.9 (.72)
Children’s readiness for school depends more on what happens at home than at school	9	43	2.7 (.74)
I have a lot of control over the curriculum and the way I teach	19	32	2.7 (.89)

^a *N*=47^b A 4-point rating scale was used, with responses ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 4 (“strongly agree”).

The comparison of means for the two groups presented in Table 23 also reflect these differences. Although neither the certified teachers nor the ELAs believe they have “a lot of control over the curriculum” and the way they teach, ELAs were more likely to agree that they enjoy their jobs and could influence how parents work with their children at home.

Table 23. Certified Teachers' and ELAs' Feelings about Teaching^a

Efficacy Statement	Mean Agreement (<i>sd</i>) ^b		
	Certified Teachers ^b	ELA ^b	All Staff
I am making a difference in the lives of children I teach	3.6 (0.52)	3.6 (0.49)	3.6 (0.50)
If I could start over, I would choose teaching again as my career	3.5 (0.69)	3.5 (0.57)	3.5 (0.59)
The children in my classroom are motivated to learn	3.5 (0.52)	3.5 (0.67)	3.5 (0.63)
I really enjoy my present teaching job	3.0 (0.78)	3.6 (0.56)	3.4 (0.67)
I have a lot of influence on how children behave in my classroom	3.3 (0.48)	3.2 (0.50)	3.3 (0.49)
The parents of children in my classroom are motivated to help their children learn	3.1 (0.70)	3.2 (0.71)	3.1 (0.70)
I have a lot of influence on how parents help their children so they do well in school	2.6 (0.52)	3.1 (0.74)	2.9 (0.72)
Children’s readiness for school depends more on what happens at home than at school	2.6 (0.67)	2.7 (0.77)	2.7 (0.74)
I have a lot of control over the curriculum and the way I teach	2.7 (1.01)	2.8 (0.82)	2.7 (0.89)

^a A four-point rating scale was used, with responses ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 4 (“strongly agree”).^b All eleven certified teachers and thirty-three of thirty-six ELAs responded to this question

In sum, teachers expressed confidence that they had made the right decision in choosing teaching as a career and felt that they were able to enjoy their work and be effective in teaching

children. They were less confident, however, about their ability to influence the preschool curriculum or how parents work with their children outside the classroom. They also were divided in their opinions about whether children's readiness for school depends more on what happens at home than at school. On average, ELAs expressed more positive views than certified teachers about their teaching positions and their efficacy as teachers.

Views of Administrators and Kindergarten Teachers

Two other school staff members are key participants in the ECCI implementation. School administrators—principals and assistant principals— have critical influence over the schools they operate and the extent to which they embrace and support the ECCI program operating there. Kindergarten teachers are, in one sense, a primary “consumer” of what ECCI is producing, given the centrality of school readiness to the ECCI effort. Thus, in addition to the perspectives of the prekindergarten staff about the program, we also were interested in learning about the views of administrators and kindergarten teachers at the ten ECCI schools.

Virtually all (95%) of the principals and assistant principals at the ECCI schools responded to the survey.³⁷ Each administrator had a minimum of a master's degree, and about a third (35%) had additional master's degrees or credentials as an Education Specialist; two administrators had a doctorate. They had a range of previous teaching experiences at the elementary level. All had experience teaching second grade and higher, with an average of 8 years of experience. Nine administrators had additional experience teaching preschool, kindergarten, and/or first grade, although only four had ever taught preschool. The responding administrators reported having worked in their current schools for an average of 5 years.

Among the group of kindergarten teachers responding to the survey, most (94%) were female. Three-fourths (76%) reported having elementary education certification and almost half (49%) reported having early childhood certification. With regard to ethnicity, a majority (58%) identified themselves as “white,” and a third (33%) identified themselves as “black.” Most (97%) reported having a minimum of a bachelor's degree, and 18 percent reported having a master's degree or additional graduate work towards a higher degree. In terms of experience, the responding kindergarten teachers at the ECCI schools had an average of 5 years of experience as kindergarten teachers. Fifteen (45%) of them also had, on average, a year's experience teaching pre-school. All of the responding kindergarten teachers had been in their current schools for an average of 5 years.

ECCI Program Goals and Activities

When asked about their familiarity and contact with the prekindergarten program, 70 percent of the administrators reported having contact either *daily* or *several times a week*. Most (90%) of the principals also indicated that they were familiar with the goals and philosophy of the preschool program. In contrast, kindergarten teachers reported less frequent contact with the program, on average, about *once a week*. Just over a third (36%) of them reported having more

³⁷ Although there were only ten schools implementing the ECCI program, twenty-one principals and assistant principals received surveys because there was turnover in administrators at one of the schools during the survey process. Twenty of these twenty-one administrators responded.

frequent contact with the preschool program or staff. A majority of the kindergarten teachers said they were *somewhat familiar* with the preschool program's goals and philosophy, curriculum, and daily routine, but less than a fourth of them felt *very familiar* with these aspects of the program.

These differences in contact and familiarity with the prekindergarten program may be one reason for differences in the opinions about ECCI goals and activities. As shown in Table 24, administrators were more positive than kindergarten teachers in their views of the ECCI goals, philosophy, and curriculum—though neither group was as favorable in its views as the prekindergarten teachers. Three-quarters of the administrators appreciated the links to social services provided through the ECCI program; and between 60 and 70 percent also reported being *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with other ECCI resources to help manage behavior problems, ECCI program management, and the way children are assessed. Furthermore, when asked about their satisfaction with their relationships with the prekindergarten staff, nearly all of the administrators indicated they were *satisfied* (45%) or *very satisfied* (40%) with these relationships. In the words of one administrator, “the teachers and ELAs...are wonderful.”

When asked for recommendations of how to improve the ECCI program, administrators offered few suggestions. Among the seven who responded, three asked for a more academically rigorous curriculum to meet the needs of children low socioeconomic households. Two suggested more training for staff, although one noted that training should occur during the summer not during the school year. One respondent mentioned a need for training of parent volunteers.

When asked about their perspectives on the the program, kindergarten teachers gave their highest ratings to the “availability of social services for families”; two-thirds of the kindergarten teachers were *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with this component, though it is not a core focus of the program. In contrast, they were divided in their views of the goals, philosophy, and curriculum of the program. Only a third or a little more of this group of staff expressed satisfaction with these aspects of the program. One of the satisfied kindergarten teachers commented happily on the links between ECCI children and her own students: “It has been wonderful interacting with them more this year. We have shared a garden, performed for each other, share butterfly experiences, etc. I look forward to another year. Those children come ready!” Another satisfied teacher wrote, “A great program, keep it up!”

However, almost two-thirds of the kindergarten teachers described themselves as *dissatisfied* with the prekindergarten's goals, philosophy, and curriculum. In explaining their dissatisfaction, most emphasized the discontinuity between the preschool experience and kindergarten and the difficulty children have making the transition from a High/Scope preschool program to kindergarten. In their view, this discontinuity was apparent in expectations for children's behavior as well as in instructional methods: “I think if the students come to kindergarten knowing how to write their names and the letters of the alphabet would be a great help, but the most important would have the kids to understand the importance of paying attention to the teacher and following directions.”

Table 24. Satisfaction of Staff at ECCI Schools with Selected Aspects of Pre-K Program

Program Aspect	Pre-K Teachers (N=47)			Administrators (n=20) ^a			Kindergarten Teachers (N=33) ^a		
	% “Very Satisfied”	% “Satisfied”	Mean Satisfaction (sd) ^a	% “Very Satisfied”	% “Satisfied”	Mean Satisfaction (sd) ^a	% “Very Satisfied”	% “Satisfied”	Mean Satisfaction (sd) ^a
Availability of social services for families	32	49	3.3 (.63)	20	55	3.0 (.77)	27	39	3.2 (.76)
The goals and philosophy of the program	28	51	3.1 (.72)	20	40	2.8 (.94)	12	27	2.6 (.88)
Resources to help manage behavior problems	21	49	3.0 (.69)	15	55	3.0 (.78)	n/a ^b	n/a	n/a
The curriculum	21	53	3.0 (.81)	15	45	2.8 (.90)	15	18	2.5 (1.04)
Management of the program ^c	17	57	2.9 (.85)	20	50	2.9 (.90)	n/a	n/a	n/a
The way children are assessed	17	57	2.9 (.73)	15	45	2.8 (.81)	n/a	n/a	n/a

^a A 4-point rating scale was used, with responses ranging from 1 (“very dissatisfied”) to 4 (“very satisfied”).

^b “N/a” means item was not asked in the survey for this respondent group.

^c For this item, prekindergarten teachers were asked to respond to the item “Management of the program,” administrators, “School District management of the Pre-K program.”

Table 25. Satisfaction of Staff at ECCI Schools with Impact of Pre-K Program

Program Aspect	Pre-K Teachers (N=47)			Administrators (n=20) ^a			Kindergarten Teachers (N=33) ^a		
	% “Very Satisfied”	% “Satisfied”	Mean Satisfaction (sd) ^a	% “Very Satisfied”	% “Satisfied”	Mean Satisfaction (sd) ^a	% “Very Satisfied”	% “Satisfied”	Mean Satisfaction (sd) ^a
Impact of program on children’s social skills	28	68	3.2 (.57)	35	50	3.2 (.90)	24	36	3.0 (.89)
Impact of program on parent-teacher relations	23	68	3.2 (.51)	30	45	3.1 (.83)	21	39	3.1 (.78)
Impact of program on children’s school readiness	21	53	2.9 (.77)	40	30	3.1 (.94)	21	21	2.7 (1.07)
Impact of program on parent involvement at school	15	55	2.9 (.64)	25	40	2.9 (.88)	12	39	2.9 (.67)
Impact of program on parents ability to help their children at home	11	68	2.9 (.54)	n/a ^b	n/a	n/a	9	30	2.8 (.79)

^a A 4-point rating scale was used, with responses ranging from 1 (“very dissatisfied”) to 4 (“very satisfied”).

^b “N/a” means item was not asked in the survey for this respondent group.

Similarly, another teacher talked about the difficulty of changing behaviors when children from the prekindergarten program entered her classroom:

Four year olds should be taught to sit still and pay attention. We have an intensive reading and writing program and my students who came from High/Scope believed they could “move freely between areas and activities.” While I was teaching whole and small groups, I wasted valuable teaching time trying to break them from doing whatever they wanted, whenever they wanted.

In addition, a third kindergarten teacher commented that “*any* child-based curriculum does not prepare the student for kindergarten. It is very difficult for students to switch from child-directed to teacher-directed. And *all* they want to do is play. The students that come from High/Scope are not ready for kindergarten.” Yet another teacher did not favor High/Scope because the teacher has to “reshape a child's thinking from High/Scope philosophy to a classroom where they have to do as they are directed and must finish the task.”

In light of these concerns, it is not surprising that when asked for suggestions for improving the ECCI program, kindergarten teachers were somewhat more likely to suggest that children needed more behavioral, social, and emotional preparation than academic—although most asked for both. An underlying theme in some of the suggestions was that the preschool curriculum should be designed to preview what the child will be expected to do in the future rather than observing and building on the child’s current level of development. Some teachers expressed frustration that children coming from prekindergarten were not more prepared: “If pre-k teachers could prepare pre-k for kindergarten, then most of kindergartens wouldn't fall behind in their learning. Kindergarten teachers will have more time to prepare kindergartners for first grade.”

There were very few other suggestions for improving the prekindergarten program. Two teachers suggested the need for more opportunities for preschool and kindergarten teachers to communicate and interact. One teacher stressed the importance of screening at the preschool level. Indeed, in the view of this individual, “prescreening is the most important part of pre-k...Students should be screened at the pre-k level. If a teacher observes a problem, she should deal with it immediately not simply pass the student on.”

Program Impact and Children’s Progress

Notwithstanding concerns about the curriculum, both administrators and kindergarten teachers were more positive than negative in their assessments of the impact of the program. Among the various areas touched by the program, they indicated most satisfaction with its impact on children’s social skills and on parent-teacher relations (see Table 25). They were somewhat less satisfied with the impact of the ECCI program on school readiness and parent involvement.

An administrator at one ECCI school, however, described the program as achieving desired social and academic readiness goals:

Yes, we look at FLKRS scores and we look at are they ready to be part of a kindergarten class. Not just academically but do they sit there and do they know how to open up a book and turn it from this way to this way and follow words with their fingers. I watch for things

like that. Do they have the social skills? Are they learning how to share with each other? And that has been phenomenal growth in that classroom because some of them are three year olds and come in almost as babies. And to see them walking down to the cafeteria now and even my three year olds look like they are ready for kindergarten. Not just the four year olds but the three year olds look like they are ready for kindergarten. It has far exceeded my expectations and my expectations were very high for it.

Kindergarten teachers also were asked to indicate how well-prepared the children in their classrooms were when they first entered kindergarten, using the same eighteen developmental characteristics rated by ECCI prekindergarten teachers.³⁸ As shown in Table 26, on average, kindergarten teacher responses fell between *somewhat prepared* and *mostly prepared* categories. Only a small percentage of kindergarten teachers regarded their students as *fully prepared* in any area at the beginning of school.

Table 26. Views of Kindergarten Teachers at ECCI Schools about School Readiness of Students Last Fall^a

Child Characteristic	% “Fully prepared”	% “Mostly prepared”	Mean Level of Preparedness (<i>sd</i>) ^b
Knows the English language	21	49	2.8 (.88)
Identifies primary colors and shapes	9	58	2.7 (.73)
Communicates needs, wants, and thoughts verbally	6	61	2.7 (.64)
Is able to use pencils and paint brushes	9	58	2.6 (.82)
Can follow directions	3	55	2.6 (.67)
Takes turns and shares	6	49	2.5 (.76)
Finishes tasks	3	49	2.5 (.67)
Reads or pretends to read storybooks	6	52	2.4 (.93)
Is sensitive to other children’s feelings	0	52	2.4 (.70)
Follows through with planned activities	3	42	2.4 (.70)
Sits still and pays attention	3	36	2.3 (.70)
Is beginning write letters	3	46	2.3 (.82)
Knows most of the letters of the alphabet	6	40	2.3 (.88)
Writes own name	6	36	2.3 (.85)
Can describe completed activities	3	39	2.3 (.80)
Is not disruptive of the class	3	39	2.3 (.86)
Can count to 20 or more	3	36	2.1 (.89)
Has good problem-solving skills	0	33	2.1 (.81)

^aN=33

^bA 4-point rating scale was used, with the following response categories 1 (“very unprepared”), 2 (“somewhat prepared”), 3 (“mostly prepared”), and 4 (“fully prepared”).

³⁸ All but two of these items were drawn from a questionnaire used in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS) to assess the beliefs of parents and teachers about the important characteristics for school readiness. Two items, “follows through with planned activities and “can describe completed activities” were based on the High/Scope “plan, do, and review” activities and added to the original ECLS list.

In general, kindergarten teachers were more likely to rate their entering kindergartners more highly on items related to communication skills than academic or self-regulation skills. About two-thirds of the kindergarten teachers rated their students at least *mostly prepared* with respect to the following characteristics: “knows the English language,” ability to “communicate needs, wants, and thoughts verbally,” and ability to “identify primary colors and shapes.” In contrast, only a third or a little more than a third of the responding kindergarten teachers felt that, on average, the students in their classrooms were *mostly prepared* in the following areas: “has good problem-solving skills” (33%), “can count to 20 or more” (39%), and “is not disruptive of the class” (42%). Although their responses were not as favorable, they rated children’s readiness in terms of social skills higher than several of the academic items, which tended to be consistent with the responses of the prekindergarten teachers (see Table 18).

Integration of ECCI Program in School

In addition to asking about satisfaction with different elements and impacts of the ECCI program, we were also interested in understanding administrators’ experiences with program implementation. When asked about their satisfaction with School District policies and management of the prekindergarten program, about two-thirds of the administrators at the ECCI schools identified themselves as *satisfied* and only three of the twenty administrators at the ECCI schools described the implementation as *very difficult* or *somewhat difficult*. The remaining seventeen respondents reported that implementation of the program had been either *somewhat easy* (twelve respondents) or *very easy* (five respondents).

Administrators identified two types of difficulties most often. One-fourth of them mentioned problems incorporating some of the policies and requirements of the prekindergarten program such as naptime and meals into the school schedule. For example, one administrator listed the following issues: “preschool students going to the cafeteria which we solved by bringing lunches to them; pre-k parents in hallways during school hours; and being quiet--no fire drills, etc. when pre-k children nap.” One-fourth of the principals mentioned staffing as another type of problem--for example, “finding the appropriate staff” or “building a consistent collaborative team.” The curriculum or lack of understanding of the curriculum was the next most frequent issue, noted by three administrators. Two respondents commented that they did not understand the curriculum well enough to know how to evaluate the program or know how it would impact children’s learning. A third administrator stated, “The most difficult aspect of the implementation is the lack of a rigorous academic curriculum to prepare children for kindergarten.”

When asked what had been the easiest aspects of implementation, responses overwhelmingly focused on the high quality of the prekindergarten staff, who were described by different respondents as “knowledgeable,” “self-sufficient,” and “professional.” One administrator stated the following: “A knowledgeable staff has allowed the implementation of the program to be exceedingly easy.” A small number of administrators also spoke highly about the support provided by the school district resource teachers and other staff and about their interactions with the children and their families and children’s receptivity to the program.

Table 27. Perspectives of Administrators and Kindergarten Teachers on Integration of ECCI Program in School

Statement about Pre-K	Administrators (n=20) ^a			Kindergarten Teachers (n=33) ^a		
	% “Strongly Agree”	% “Agree”	Mean Agreement (<i>sd</i>) ^b	% “Strongly Agree”	% “Agree”	Mean Agreement (<i>sd</i>) ^b
Certified teachers in pre-k are treated as equals by teachers in other grades	45	45	3.4 (.61)	36	42	3.4 (.62)
I feel prepared to oversee the pre-k program in my school	45	35	3.3 (.75)	<i>n/a</i> ^b	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>
The pre-k program supports the overall goals of my school.	35	35	3.1 (.91)	15	42	2.7 (.97)
The pre-k program is consistent with the goals of a Single School Culture	35	40	3.1 (.88)	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>
The pre-k program at my school prepares children well for kindergarten.	30	45	3.1 (.85)	15	36	2.6 (.93)
My support of the pre-k program has increased in the past year.	25	50	3.1 (.80)	12	36	2.6 (.91)
My understanding of the goals and practices of the pre-k program has increased during the past year	25	50	3.1 (.68)	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>
The physical layout of this school supports a developmentally appropriate pre-k program	25	35	3.0 (.79)	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>
The pre-k program supports the Accelerated Academic Achievement (AAA) plan	25	40	2.9 (.96)	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>
The pre-k program here has influenced how I do my work	30	30	2.9 (.94)	6	33	2.3 (.88)
The pre-k program here is integrated with the rest of the school.	15	45	2.7 (.81)	6	36	2.3 (.87)
The pre-k program has influenced the kindergarten curriculum at my school.	20	30	2.6 (.96)	9	24	2.3 (.91)

^a A 4-point rating scale was used, with responses ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 4 (“strongly agree”).

^b “*N/a*” means item was not asked in the survey for this respondent group.

Administrators and kindergarten teachers also were asked to assess the integration of the ECCI program into the school and its influence on their work. As shown in Table 27, a majority of both groups of staff agreed that “certified teachers in pre-K are treated as equals by teachers in other grades.” More than two-thirds of the administrators also agreed that the program supports the overall goals of their schools and prepares children well for kindergarten. Three-quarters of the administrators also felt equipped to oversee the implementation of the program and expressed the belief that their knowledge of and support for the program had grown stronger during the past year. On the other hand, a smaller percentage of administrators *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that the program was integrated with the rest of the school (60%) or had influenced the kindergarten curriculum (50%).

When we divide administrators into those at schools that are continuing in the third year, and those that were either not selected or chose not to apply for the third year, their responses are generally similar. Although the small sample size of the two groups makes it difficult to be confident about differences between them, in three items, chi-square analysis suggests that administrators in these two groups appear to have distinct views. Administrators

at the three schools *not* participating in ECCI during the third year were less likely to say that their “support of the program has increased in the past year” ($p=.066$), that they “feel prepared to oversee the pre-k program in my school” ($p=.06$) or that “the pre-k program is consistent with the goals of the Single School Culture” ($p=.046$) than administrators at schools that will be participating. These differences provide some support for the decisions made about the schools that would continue the program in the third year, and they suggest that the schools remaining after the second year of implementation may be somewhat more prepared to support and implement the initiative.

Kindergarten teachers, overall, were more critical and less supportive of the program. Less than half believed that the program was integrated into the school or that it had influence their curriculum. Just over half (57%) of the teachers were of the opinion that the program supported the overall goals of the school. At the same time, three-fourths of the kindergarten teachers did believe that other teachers at the school treated the certified teachers in prekindergarten as equals.

Summary of School Staff Views

The three groups of staff surveyed in the second year expressed satisfaction with several elements of the ECCI program, particularly its connections to social services, but also its overall goals and philosophy. Nonetheless, there was considerable dissatisfaction, especially among kindergarten teachers, with elements of the curriculum. Two-thirds (67%) of the kindergarten teachers, 40 percent of the administrators, and 26 percent of the prekindergarten teachers said they were *dissatisfied* or *very dissatisfied* overall with the curriculum. Similar percentages were skeptical about the impact of the program on children’s school readiness. Although only a quarter of the prekindergarten staff was dissatisfied with the High/Scope curriculum, over half (53%) did not think it prepared children well for kindergarten. Based on explanatory comments from some of these teachers, we interpret these responses to mean that they do not believe the curriculum prepares children well for the kind of kindergarten curriculum they were likely to experience at their schools. Moreover, 62 percent did not think parents understood the curriculum and 34 percent did not think their administrators understood it.

These results suggest that despite the progress in implementing High/Scope evidenced in the PQA results, considerable variability still exists in the quality of implementation and in support for the curriculum at the end of the second year. This variability in implementation is not surprising, given the ambitions of the program and turnover in staff between the first and second years. Teachers are still learning the High/Scope approach, which, for at least half of the sample, is viewed as different from their previous training. Indeed, High/Scope trainers emphasize that it can take between 3 and 5 years for teachers to fully understand and be able to consistently practice the principles of High/Scope. At the same time, it is important to recognize that the level of teachers’ knowledge of the curriculum and their ability to explain and interpret it to parents and administrators may, in turn, influence the level of their knowledge of and support for the curriculum. Thus, it is critical that efforts continue to strengthen teacher training and program implementation and to help parents and other school staff understand how the curriculum prepares children for school.

The Experiences and Views of Parents

Because parents play a critical role in children’s development, the ECCI model includes multiple opportunities to draw upon and shape parent’s experiences with the program and their children. Parents are expected to provide support to ECCI and become more involved in children’s learning experiences, inform the operation of ECCI and—in turn—be educated by ECCI and influenced in how to interact with their children. In their role as supporters, parents are approached to do such things as volunteer in the classroom, participate in field trips, and contribute material resources. In their role as advisors, parents are asked to provide feedback and opinions about their experiences and how to improve the program. Because ECCI is intended to affect parents as well as children, ECCI includes mechanisms such as meetings, special events, and written materials to educate parents and encourage them to adopt practices that reinforce the developmental goals underlying children’s ECCI classroom experiences.³⁹

Given the multifaceted relationship that ECCI seeks to nurture with parents, it is critical to understand what parents understand about the initiative, how they interact with it, how they view it, and how the implementation of efforts to involve parents are faring. In our first year implementation report, we prefaced our observations about ECCI’s activities by noting that all ECCI sites were highly-rated participants in the QIS, where parent involvement is one of the six identified “pathways” to quality. As such, all ECCI schools have baseline expectations, practices and infrastructures for nurturing parent involvement. In our conversations with staff and a small group of parents about the ECCI project last year, we noted that parents were pleased, overall, with their experiences with ECCI and enjoyed the opportunities afforded them to participate in classrooms. Several operational concerns also surfaced, including being called by teachers during the day about problems, receiving conflicting feedback from teachers about their children, dissatisfaction with the logistics of picking up children (e.g., timing and penalties for tardiness), and skepticism about school determinations regarding whether a child was sick or not. More generally, parents frequently displayed a lack of understanding about ECCI, including its curriculum, teacher training and requirements, and its intended integration with community services.

During the second year, we followed up on these issues in several ways. We expanded our surveys to capture both broader and more targeted information about parent involvement. We also reviewed ECCI’s expanded and refined documentation that tracked of parent and other activities during the second year. We convened a series of focus groups with parents actively recruited from all ECCI schools and the community-based center. In addition, the ECCI program expanded its work with parents during the second year by adding a dedicated staff member, the Parent Volunteer Coordinator, who was charged with piloting more targeted parent outreach efforts at a few of the ECCI program sites and providing new opportunities for engagement to all sites. Accordingly, we reviewed documentation on those specific efforts and talked with the Parent Volunteer Coordinator and other partners closely connected to these activities. These activities all point to a commitment by the ECCI program to expand, monitor

³⁹ As we noted last year, and elsewhere in this report, the ECCI mechanisms for connecting to parents was originally envisioned to include teacher visits to the homes of parents. The school district was unable to implement this part of the program. A discussion of how it was implemented in the community-based center is discussed elsewhere in this report.

and improve connections to parents (Interview and focus group protocols are attached as Appendix E.)

Levels and Variety of Parent Participation

A review of ECCI documents during the 2006-2007 school year suggest broad efforts to involve parents, a rich variety of events, and uneven participation across program sites and over time. Although this documentation indicates that more activities involving parents happened in the second year than the first, we do not have an adequately informed assessment of the scope of these changes. Documents from the first year provide modest baseline information about parent involvement. Documentation in the second year is more detailed, but was refined over time (e.g., providing classroom-level data only later in the year), making comparisons even within the second year difficult. The data that are available do not suggest consistent or steadily-increasing levels of parent involvement during the second year. Instead, involvement varies within the year, and different measures of activities suggest varying levels of parent involvement.⁴⁰ For example, ECCI data on the use of the lending library for parents suggests that the number of parents using this resource rose to 156 users in the fall quarter, dropped to 132 unique users in the winter quarter (though the total number of duplicated uses of the library increased slightly), and dropped in the spring quarter to 92. ECCI reports provide data that allow median use per classroom to be calculated for the winter and spring quarters, indicating that the median number of unique lending library users per classroom dropped from five to four during this period.

Though trends are sometimes difficult to discern, a high level of interest and attention to parent involvement was apparent during the second year. Parent Partnership meetings, which offered parents opportunities to learn about the ECCI program and to raise concerns and make suggestions about how the program might be improved, were held frequently during the second year. Parent efficacy training was provided at each of the schools in the fall of 2006. Although data are not available for making accurate comparisons of the numbers of parents participating in events at the ten ECCI schools during this period, ECCI classrooms and schools each sponsored multiple events per quarter. At the school level, these included an average of three or four events per quarter, such as School Advisory Council meetings, FCAT pep rallies, report card nights, fashion shows, talent shows, NCLB information meetings, and meetings on buying a home. Obviously, the contribution of these meetings to core ECCI goals varied. At the least, however, they provided relevant opportunities for parents to become more involved in the school their child would likely attend after graduating from the ECCI program, an important goal of ECCI. Individual classrooms reported activities more directly connected to goals of informing parents about the ECCI curriculum, drawing upon parents as resources, and celebrating parent involvement. These include such activities as a multicultural feast or lunches or breakfasts; end-of-year parties with pizza, ice cream or teddy bears; workshops on effective parenting, events to strengthen connections between children and important men in

⁴⁰ Expecting increases over the course of the year for some activities may not be a reasonable expectation. It may be that the rhythm of the typical school year, for example, encourages larger numbers of events and participation in the fall (e.g., for orientation) with lower expectations for involvement during other quarters of the school year.

their lives, and events to prepare children and parents for the transition to kindergarten.⁴¹ Over the three school-year quarters captured in local reports, the number of events per classroom ranged between zero and ten per quarter (with a median of about four events per classroom). Duplicated counts of parent participation dropped from 451 in the fall to 162 in the winter and rose to 264 in the spring.

By themselves, these numbers are difficult to interpret, since the nature of the events varied widely over time and across schools and classrooms. We discuss the particular work of the Parent Volunteer Coordinator in a section below, but we note here that the involvement of the Parent Volunteer Coordinator (as measured by involvement in parent events, the only comparable data provided across all school sites) did not uniquely predict the level of parent involvement. For example, the school where the Parent Volunteer Coordinator concentrated her time had higher numbers of events in the spring quarter compared to other sites, but the total number of parents participating in all events during the quarter was similar to several other schools. Such simple numerical comparisons over the course of a year, or across schools with very different contexts, however, provide a limited window into the issues and accomplishments in ECCI efforts with parents.

The Role of the Parent Volunteer Coordinator

For the second year of implementation, ECCI added a Parent Volunteer Coordinator position to supplement existing efforts to increase and sustain parent involvement. In general, the Parent Volunteer Coordinator was to help “develop and provide opportunities for parent involvement in children’s learning experiences.” In practice, this meant that the Parent Volunteer Coordinator sought to define and support additional ways for parents to become involved in the classroom, expand opportunities for parents to shape the initiative, and increase parent knowledge of ECCI and child development. The specific goals and activities for this position were loosely defined at the outset, refined during course of the year, and further articulated in a logic model in the summer of 2007 to guide implementation during the third year.

The individual hired as Parent Volunteer Coordinator had a background that included many years as a prekindergarten CDA in schools that joined the ECCI. In hiring this individual, ECCI made an explicit decision to hire someone with “paraprofessional” experiences similar to those of the parents she would be working with, rather than to fill the position with a degreed, certified teacher. The United Way funded the Parent Volunteer Coordinator position and provided additional oversight and support through informal supervision and the provision of mentoring support from staff of its Volunteer Management Program. The Parent Volunteer Coordinator reported directly to the ECCI manager, but also received support informally from a school-based volunteer coordinator and participated in school district volunteer coordinator meetings.

The initial plan for piloting the work of the Parent Volunteer Coordinator was to progress through the second year by building connections with parents and teachers in one

⁴¹ Not all of these events were seen by ECCI staff as supporting ECCI goals. For example, one school held a graduation ceremony for children in the ECCI program, which was seen as conflicting with High/Scope guidelines.

school, linking parents to other individuals and institutions at that school (e.g., Beacon Center, school volunteer coordinators) turning over primary ongoing responsibility to teachers and others at the site, and then shifting attention to another ECCI location. In addition, the Parent Volunteer Coordinator was to offer events and opportunities to parents at all schools. No timetable was specified for rolling out the Parent Volunteer Coordinator's work to schools during the year.

Multiple specific activities happened with the leadership or support of the Parent Volunteer Coordinator during the year, and included printing parent handbooks (in English, Spanish, and Creole); arranging special events such as "thank-you" breakfasts for volunteers; and recruiting parents to support classrooms. Parent efficacy training meetings were held at each school and included parenting advice (e.g., how not to compare your children to each other, or give them derogatory nicknames). Parents from all schools were also recruited to participate in "Parent Partnership Committee" meetings, which were held monthly during the fall and quarterly beginning in January. The Parent Partnership Committee meetings provided opportunities for parents to shape the program (e.g., changing the language of the Parent Agreement, developing a "communication binder" that could be used by parents and teachers to improve communication) and opportunities for parents to learn about the High/Scope curriculum, parenting techniques (e.g., handling conflict) and child development. In the spring of 2007 the Parent Volunteer Coordinator and others prepared a brochure for the May 2007 ECCI registration event, where parents enrolling for the 2007 – 2008 school year learned about the program and its expectations.

Three individual sites received specific attention from the Parent Volunteer Coordinator, although she spent the vast majority of her time and attention at one school in the south part of the county. Work at this school started with conversations with the school principal. At fall orientation, the Parent Volunteer Coordinator informed parents that involvement was an expected part of the program and asked them to sign a contract to that effect. The Volunteer Coordinator continued to work regularly at this school throughout the year. The Parent Volunteer Coordinator visited each of the two classrooms there regularly, and worked with teachers and parents to define an extensive set of formalized volunteer roles. These included morning assistant (e.g., small group time), breakfast assistant, afternoon assistant, field trip chaperone, assistant for special events, language facilitation, classroom repairs (e.g., furniture and books), recording stories on tape, and material donations. To encourage participation, the Parent Volunteer Coordinator obtained donations from local businesses to use as incentives and thank-you gifts for volunteers. A dinner cruise was offered as the grand prize to the volunteer who gave the most hours during the fall and winter was a dinner cruise, and each volunteer's updated hours were posted on a graphic display in the classroom. The Parent Volunteer Coordinator met weekly with teachers and provided weekly training support sessions with parents.

As measured in volunteer hours and participation, parents at this school were increasingly involved during the late fall and winter.⁴² Between October 1 and December 2006, the Parent Volunteer Coordinator reported that eighteen parent volunteered. This number

⁴² Valid data from the fall period up to October 1, 2006 is not available. According to local records, parents were not familiar with the tracking system used by the school and were not signing in consistently.

increased to twenty-five in the January to March winter quarter, with volunteers logging 250 total hours. Volunteer participation dropped during the April through June spring quarter, with eight volunteers credited with 200 hours. Taken as a whole, during the course of the second year thirty of the thirty-eight identified parents in the classrooms participated as volunteers, donating an estimated 648 hours.⁴³ In May 2007, as this primarily pilot site was preparing to close its campus for rebuilding, the Parent Volunteer Coordinator participated in a breakfast to link parents to the school's kindergarten volunteer coordinator.

The parents who volunteered in the classroom provided specific support in the areas defined by their jobs, but other benefits of their involvement were reported. For example, having parents come in and share stories or elements of their culture with the class led to more cultural sharing among parents and families. Parents with limited English skills reportedly improved their comfort and facility with English. The Parent Volunteer Coordinator also reported that volunteers said they were now more often asking their children at home what their "plans" were. Exposure to the classroom put parents "under the curriculum a little more."⁴⁴

The expected transition of the Parent Volunteer Coordinator to other ECCI sites did not happen as expected. Implementation was slowed when she was required to serve for many weeks during the fall as a bus driver for children at an ECCI school housed at a temporary location, consuming four hours of her workday. This curtailed the time she could spend at other schools, developing new connections or implementation strategies. Moreover, parents at a second school piloted in the fall were not as receptive to the encouragement offered by the Parent Volunteer Coordinator, or able to sustain their involvement without her regular oversight. Parents reportedly promised they would come to the school to participate, but were "not showing up." These parents were described as culturally quite different from the immigrant parents that populated the neighborhood around the first school, and they were less engaged. For the last two months of her contract during the second year, starting in May 2007, the Parent Volunteer Coordinator focused attention on parents at the community-based center.⁴⁵

Additional challenges to implementing the parent involvement program emerged. The Parent Volunteer Coordinator's background and interests meant she was more prepared to connect with parents and encourage them, but less prepared for categorizing, tracking and reporting program accomplishments. According to some administrators, the Parent Volunteer Coordinator's enthusiasm did not consistently translate into organized work. As a result, those overseeing the program had difficulty at times understanding and conveying to others what the program was doing, and how it was progressing. More than one resource teacher noted that the Parent Volunteer Coordinator role itself is potentially disruptive; as one observed, it places new demands on teachers that may conflict with their immediate attention to "providing a good day in the classroom." And as some teachers noted in our survey data, increased parent involvement was not always welcomed. The changes in ECCI management and leadership in

⁴³ It is not clear where this includes hours counted as participants in Chapin Hall research for which parents were compensated.

⁴⁴ Because our emphasis in the second year study was to understand the implementation of the program, rather than its outcomes, our research did not concentrate on capturing effects of the program on parenting behaviors. This is something will be targeted more directly in the third year.

⁴⁵ The PVC learned in the spring of 2007 that her contract would no longer be year round, and would include a break during July and part of August.

the spring of 2007 also disrupted this work and created a period of uncertainty about the connection of the Parent Volunteer Coordinator to the rest of the ECCI. Surveys of parents that the Parent Volunteer Coordinator had been developing were put on hold. The Parent Volunteer Coordinator was not invited to continue attending some of the meetings she had been regularly having with other partners. Especially early in the transition, it was difficult for the new staff leadership to find time to provide the regular guidance the Parent Volunteer Coordinator had been receiving.

At the end of the second year, attention turned to focusing and structuring the Parent Volunteer Coordinators work and the parent outreach program for the 2007 – 2008 school year. This reorganization centered upon the development and articulation of a logic model that linked activities to specific outcomes. The scope of the school-based work for the third year was specified as six classrooms in four schools. The Parent Partnership Committee was to continue (with separate groups for schools in the north, south and west parts of the county). The logic model described three basic roles for parents, which were consistent with the second-year implementation: parents as volunteers in classrooms, parents as participants in training, and parents as participants in the Parent Partnership Committee. The parental outcomes identified for the third year included greater understanding of the importance of volunteering, sustained changes in volunteer behavior, increased understanding of appropriate child development, behavioral changes in the home that lead to better school readiness, increased long-term involvement in the child's education, and parental decision-making habits that lead to greater advocacy by parents on behalf of their children.

Parents' Perspectives on the ECCI Program⁴⁶

To understand in more depth the nature of the connection between parents, teachers, schools and the ECCI program and to understand parents experiences, we collected basic survey data and conducted a total of twelve focus groups with parents from ECCI sites in each of the TGAs. We conducted focus groups at three schools (in the south, north, and west of the county) and the community-based center. We recruited parents from all twenty classrooms in ten ECCI schools and the community-based child care center with fliers and sign-up sheets in multiple languages, and supported by resource teachers, the Parent Volunteer Coordinator, and individual classroom teachers. We called parents who had signed up and provided phone numbers to confirm their participation and answer any questions ahead of time.

Parents from the community center and eight of the schools attended.⁴⁷ They received dinner, child care, and a \$10 cash gift for their participation. When possible, we held separate focus groups with parents of 3-year-old and 4-year-old children; as well as separate focus groups with English-, Spanish-, and Haitian Creole-speaking parents. In total, ninety-nine parents participated in focus groups and completed a brief questionnaire immediately

⁴⁶ These focus group findings draw from the experiences of parents with children in school-based sites. Information from parents with children at the community-based site is included in the community center case study chapter.

⁴⁷ The largest number of parents came from Forest Park (21), followed by Pahokee (19), Lantana (15), West Riviera (14) and Barton (11). Parents from Northmore and Pioneer Park did not participate.

afterwards.⁴⁸ We used a semi-structured instrument that was applied with high levels of uniformity across the groups. While the nature of focus group research is not optimized to link specific comments with specific individuals or schools, where possible we explored comparisons across different focus groups (e.g., parents of 3- or 4-year-olds, or Spanish-speaking or Haitian Creole-speaking groups). We coded and analyzed transcripts of the focus group interviews with the qualitative software Atlas.ti.

Parent Characteristics

According to responses to the brief questionnaire, approximately two-thirds of the respondents were female. One-third of participants chose to speak with us either in Spanish or Creole. Although two-thirds chose to speak with us in English, we estimate that one-half or more of all the parents we spoke with were not native English speakers. Slightly more than one-half of participants reported their ethnicity as black or African-American, and almost 30 percent identified themselves as Hispanic. The parents of 3- and 4-year old children were almost equally represented.

Parent survey responses indicate generally high levels of “overall satisfaction” with their preschools. On a three point scale (*not very satisfied*, *somewhat satisfied* and *very satisfied*) almost two-thirds of parents described themselves as *very satisfied*. Only four parents said they were *not very satisfied*. Satisfaction ratings of teachers were similar, and three-fourths of parents also said that they were *very satisfied* with the volunteer opportunities available to them at their prekindergarten program. Slightly more than three-quarters of parents also said that getting to and from school was *very easy*, suggesting that the distance and ease of travel from home to school were not barriers in connecting to their child’s classroom.

The least positive findings concerned issues of communication between schools and parents. When asked about the quantity of information given to them by their school, almost 20 percent of parents said the information was *not enough*, while 13 percent said it was *too much*. Two-thirds of parents said the amount of information they got from the school was *just right*.

Findings from Parent Focus Groups

Our multiple focus groups provided a rich discussion of the experiences and preferences of ECCI parents. Consistent with findings from the brief survey, most parents expressed high levels of overall satisfaction with their ECCI experiences. Below we review some details of these overall positive findings and also identify specific concerns raised by parents in five key areas: views of the High/Scope curriculum and its relationship to school readiness; views of ECCI and classroom rules and structure; relationships with teachers and schools; parent participation; and the nature of the relationship between children and teachers.

Program Curriculum and School Readiness

⁴⁸ Two other parents arrived too late to participate in focus groups, but did complete the questionnaire.

Parents were able to identify a wide range of skills their children have gained through participation in ECCI, but many also identified concerns with the curriculum. Overall, as with our conversations with parents last year, many of the parents we talked with had incomplete information about the High/Scope curriculum. As such, they sometimes based their concerns on a misunderstanding of what the High/Scope curriculum is trying to accomplish, and how it works toward those goals. Some parents, however, reported conversations with teachers that suggest that teachers may be one source of incomplete or incorrect information. For example, parents reported that teachers told them that the curriculum did not allow them to teach children letters or words beyond a certain level, irrespective of the child's capabilities.

With regard to the their children gained in the ECCI program, they identified ones that fell into categories such as early literacy, knowledge of colors, basic math, animals and science, sequencing and classification, organization and decision making, social behavior, problem-solving, and computer skills. Among these skills, the most commonly cited were literacy, math and socialization skills. Two Spanish-language focus groups also expressed satisfaction with their children's acquisition of English language skills, citing personal communication, counting, and English literacy specifically. Learning English therefore appears to be a benefit especially valued by Spanish-speaking parents.

Although parents could specify what they believed their children learned from the program, they had less specific information about actual classroom activities and the ideas behind them.⁴⁹ There appeared to be many possible reasons for this limited understanding. For example, parents cited lack of communication from schools, the need to work during the day, and other barriers to direct participation in the classroom. Parents most frequently identified reading, writing, and art activities as things their children had done or learned in the program. They also mentioned activities such as tracing, cooking, field trips, reading groups and the lending library, performing, play-time, using the computer, planning and scheduling and hands-on activities. Some parents expressed support for the learning environment and different content areas in the classroom.

Most of the parents we talked to felt their child would be prepared for kindergarten, but parents in several focus groups were critical of the High/Scope curriculum as a contributor to school readiness. These concerns came from perceptions of both *what* was taught, and *how* it was taught. Parents expressed an interest in having the program be more "academically" focused on activities such as reviewing numbers, teaching the alphabet, and working on reading and spelling. Some wanted children to have homework; others wanted them to bring home things such as "worksheets showing what they did throughout the day." Procedurally, many parents argued for less student control or choice, more teacher-led learning, and more "structure."

I know that a child should be well-rounded. They should play and they should get an education. I wouldn't change that. I know they should get both sides but I think curriculum is very important. I think they should have a more structured curriculum. If the elementary schools should have a curriculum, a teacher should have to have

⁴⁹ One clear exception was a parent who was also an ELA at a classroom, and who chose to use part of the focus group to directly address parent misunderstandings of the curriculum and answer questions.

lesson plans—I think it should be the same with pre K. If we walk into a classroom we should know what our child is learning that day or what they should be. I think a curriculum would be great so you know where your child should be.

In the absence of a structure that is clear to parents, the curriculum sometimes looked like “nothing”:

My son went to school round about 8:00, they had breakfast, they did something, he said, then they went to sleep, then they went to play around about 11:00 or something like that. [I picked him up at 12:00.] And that is like five hours of nothing. I could have did more than that in two minutes with him. It is just a matter of you doing a repetition of the work and having a curriculum that you stick by.

Parents expressed concern about classroom activities in which it appeared that teachers did not direct or have control over children’s activities, for example, when children did things like “only paint with black” “only play with animals” or “only [play] in the house area.” Others worried that teachers were not able to discipline children who were disruptive, but for example, were restricted to “[sitting] there and talking to him about his feelings... [with] no consequences.” Some expressed concern that too much time was spent on playing in general, and were skeptical of its value: “What does the playing do? What is that for? They play enough when they are at home, breaking stuff and what not. I mean what is that for?”

Most parents’ descriptions of school readiness identified areas of traditional cognitive or academic preparation. Parents talked less often about the social preparation they believed their child had gained, including making friends, feeling comfortable enough in school not to cry when dropped off, or general socialization skills. Parents who did discuss social learning at school also often talked about the *routines* of school that would be important, such as signing their names, standing in lines, knowing that lunch happens at a particular time, that the school day is divided into different parts when you “do different things.” Thus, parents discussed even the non-cognitive elements of school readiness were often talked about in terms of familiarizing children with institutional norms, rather than developing other social and emotional competence.

Among parents who were concerned that the curriculum did not emphasize academic preparation sufficiently, several described how they engaged their children in cognitive learning activities at home. These include curriculum such as Hooked on Phonics, or tracing letters, teaching letter sounds, and spelling their child’s name. One parent described making copies of worksheets from a first grade classroom for her daughter to work on. Some parents described working closely with teachers in order to identify other things that would prepare their child for kindergarten or support their learning more generally.

Program Structure

In addition to noting concerns about the curriculum in ECCI, parents also identified related structural elements of the program that they valued and were concerned about. There was much that parents said they liked about the program, starting with the staffing ratios, space, and that children can get attention when they need it. Though some parents worried about the

extent to which the program was “child-directed,” several parents also noted with satisfaction that children were independently able to do things like pick their own lunch, take their own lunch trays, and throw away their own garbage. They praised the ECCI program for having a good schedule (e.g., long hours and available even when the public school was closed), being nearby (or providing a bus to pick up children), maintaining a clean environment, providing a regular structure for children (e.g., washing hands and writing names when first arriving in the morning), offering varied learning opportunities (e.g., field trips, outside play) and doing all this at no or minimal cost to the parent.

Parents raised specific complaints about aspects of program structure that they hoped could be changed. In addition to concerns that the curriculum allows children to have “too much choice” and that children need to “learn to follow directions more,” many parents argued for dividing the 3- and 4-year-old children into different classrooms. For parents of a 3-year-old, such a division so would allow their child to get attention that was being diverted to 4-year-olds working on kindergarten readiness. For the parent of a 4-year-old, it would allow their child to focus more on kindergarten readiness activities instead of doing “play stuff” with 3-year-olds. Other concerns were that children who “mastered” activities at three years of age were simply repeating them in the second year, or that the social or academic skills of 4-year-olds may regress when they are around younger children. Underlying these comments appeared to be a basic belief that what is appropriate for a three-year-old is not appropriate for a 4-year-old:

I would like to get more understanding of them learning through play—why do [you] feel that this is the right way for a four-year-old to learn through play to get ready for kindergarten? Like I said—that is fine for a 3-year-old cause they are just entering school into a different environment—but for a 5-year-old to enter to kindergarten? That child is going to be left behind. That is what is happening. If the parents is not teaching the kids at home, I don’t know. I think this setting is just daycare and I appreciate as far as financially. Yes that is the only help that I think that I have received is financial but as far as the child really learning? No.

Parents raised other concerns. Many parents complained about the existence or length of naptime, either because “children don’t sleep in kindergarten” and so they should “get ready” by not napping in prekindergarten; because the nap caused their child to sleep poorly at night; or because parents felt it was a waste of time to be napping. Other concerns identified by multiple parents included the amount of space in the portable units used in some locations, the pick-up and drop-off routine (e.g., too few teachers in the morning, teachers not checking IDs of adults picking up children, or—conversely—the extensive security required when checking in through the office). Several parents at schools where the program would not be offered in 2007-2008 worried about its termination and what their options would be.

Parent Participation

Parent comments about the factors that affect their involvement in school activities suggest that barriers to some kinds of involvement are not superficial, and not easily resolved. Key among these is parents’ work schedules (which appeared to be a larger barrier among Spanish-speaking parents) and the amount of unclaimed time available to parents. Nonetheless, parents

identified changes they believed might help them participate more in the classroom or in activities, including targeting activities or requests to parents' skills or interests and making sure that flyers get directly to parents (rather than being routed through children). One parent noted that the school had to approve her proposed presentation to children in the classroom, and that this took too much time. In general, providing more advanced notice was cited as an area for improvement.

Parents credited schools for inviting them to participate, and for having an open-door policy. They pointed out that some teachers are better than others at how they invite participation, and that sustained involvement from parents comes from sustained satisfaction in the volunteer or other experiences in the classroom. This includes the presence of other parents:

When I bring my daughter in the morning there is a lot of hanging around with the parents coming in, like helping out and the kids helping other students getting their hands washed and getting activities cleaned out. Because it is a real good environment when the parents come in you don't have to rush in and rush out.

Another parent pointed out that his child's enjoyment of the classroom is "what draws me more to want to engage" and help out. This suggests that classroom quality—or at least child assessments of it—are important for making volunteering opportunities appealing to parents.

Home-School Communication

Communication between parents and schools affects parent participation and parent satisfaction, and much of the contact between parents and the schools happens through classroom teachers. We therefore felt it was important to understand parents' beliefs about what supports good relationships with teachers. According to parents, these include things such as teachers who remember their name, teachers who allow parents to "pop in" at any time, teachers who reassure them about their child's development (and providing advice about what he or she might do at home to support it), and teachers who otherwise engage parents when they come to the classroom. While most comments about parent/teacher relationships focused on teacher choices and behaviors, a few parents acknowledged that "this is a two-way street" and that parents can help to build the relationship by taking an active role.

Parents identified interactions that degraded their satisfaction with the relationship as well. They complained about teachers who were "rude" or "talked ugly" to a parent in front of children and other parents, and teachers who insisted, unsympathetically, that parents come to school immediately to pick up a sick child. One father reported being late to work on two occasions because a teacher was not available to open the classroom as scheduled at 7:30, and he expressed frustration when the teacher responded to his concern that "maybe this is not the right place for your child. You should take him somewhere else."

Some of these concerns reflect structural elements in the parent-teacher relationship. Parents who work may be put in a difficult position when told they need to leave work and come to the school immediately, so they may more likely perceive any such call as demanding.

Staffing at ECCI schools also relies upon staggered staff hours, which means that, as one parent complained, the teacher at pick-up is not the same one as at drop-off and may not know what happened earlier in the day. Language differences complicate and restrict the relationship further. Some parents with limited English skills worried that they would not be able to explain accidents at home that caused injuries, and they reported keeping their children at home in order to avoid such an uncomfortable conversation. Non-English-speaking parents who wanted to interact with teachers with any degree of nuance noted that they would typically have to request a translator. Thus, ordinary exchanges between these parents and teachers tend to be simple—“mostly ‘hi’ and ‘bye’” according to one Spanish-speaking parent.

The communication between teachers and parents happens in many forms, of course, both informal and formal. (We review these forms in more detail in our analysis of teacher survey data.) Teachers post notices in the room, leave notes for parents, send home information, mail information, and call parents with information about their child (e.g., an injury). Parents come to classrooms and ask questions. And children, in their recalling of the day's events or in their demonstrated mastery of a skill (e.g., counting to fifty), also convey information about the school to the parent.

Teachers' Relationships with Children

Teacher interactions with children are a critical aspect of classroom quality. Because we have limited direct measures of teacher interactions with children, we were interested in parents' assessments of their child's relationship with their teacher. At least from the perspective of parents, children's views of their teachers are overwhelmingly positive. Parents often used the word “love” to label this relationship, and described children who thought about their teachers outside of school, repeated to their parents what teachers had told them, and asked their parents to do things such as buy flowers or cookies for teachers. While perhaps not surprising, this is one helpful measure of the quality of ECCI classrooms and the nature of teacher-child interactions.

Parents who mentioned concerns or difficulties with the teacher-child relationship identified a lack of respect for teachers (reportedly held, in one case, by “all students” in the classroom), passive teachers who had no active connection to the children, and a teacher who “clashed” with a child. Not surprisingly, a parent who worried about the extent to which the curriculum seemed like “play” rather than “learning” had a critical interpretation of the teacher/child relationships when her child informed her that she did not view her teacher as a teacher, but as someone who “plays with me.”

Summary of Parents' Experiences and Views

Parents are assigned a key role in ECCI, and implementation during the second year expanded to support their greater understanding and involvement. With increased support from a Parent Volunteer Coordinator, new roles and levels of involvement were developed for parents at a pilot site. The goal was to implement this program of enhanced parent involvement at two new sites, the community child care center and a second school-based site. However, the model created at the first site was not easily applied to the community-based site. And activity was limited at another school site in a different part of the county because parents were unable to

follow through on their initial interest and the support from the Parent Volunteer Coordinator was not sufficient to engage them. Thus, at the end of the second year, ECCI refocused on refining the right mix of intensive support with the promise of sustainability."

Overall, parents expressed satisfaction with the ECCI program, though some identified specific concerns and articulated a general view of preschool that might be thought of as "mini" rather than "pre" kindergarten. Such a view assumes that in order to prepare for kindergarten, children should engage in activities that mimic the next stage of education. As one parent suggested along these lines, "Once a week, give them something to do. Say 'this is your homework.' 'Cause in kindergarten they have homework. It will get them ready." This conception of prekindergarten de-emphasizes the developmental nature of learning, and characterizes preschool as a chance to practice (perhaps repetitively) what children may experience in a kindergarten class, rather than the content that may best prepare them to handle the content of kindergarten in the future. Thus, some parents saw "play" as separate from learning, rather than part of it, or simply something that children "do" without beneficial consequences.

Of course, parents also have various ideas about what is important for school readiness and different levels of knowledge about what the school expects for children to be ready. Several Spanish-speaking parents, in particular, noted that they had a hard time understanding what they should focus upon since they didn't know what would be expected. Thus, it appears that parents need more information about the specific High/Scope curriculum central to ECCI, but also about developmentally appropriate practice and how play and self-directed activities under the guidance of adults can contribute to children's development, learning, and readiness for kindergarten. The key tasks for ECCI at the end of the second year require finding ways to continue to increase parent involvement and education.

COMMUNITY CHILD CARE CENTER CASE STUDY: WEST PALM CENTER

The Early Childhood Cluster Initiative was named for its focus on the cluster of providers in communities and schools that serve children from infancy through the age of 5 years. During its first year of operation, ECCI operated school-based programs for prekindergarten children. In the second year, ECCI expanded to include a program for infants, toddlers and prekindergarten children at a community-based center. This addition was one part of a planned expansion to four community-based sites, with the goal of establishing high quality care for infants and toddlers based on the High/Scope Infant/Toddler curriculum.

In this section we discuss the implementation of this effort to expand ECCI beyond school-based prekindergarten programs, focusing on the community-based child care center that we refer to here as “West Palm Center (WPC).”⁵⁰ We treat this work as a separate case study because many of the circumstances and challenges in implementing this expansion were markedly different from those faced in the school-based programs. The selected community-based center served a much broader age range of children, hired from a different pool of employees, and was accountable to different agencies and influences. Though WPC was linked to a Beacon Center in a nearby school, the distance between these agencies and the fact that some children at the center would not attend the elementary school where the Beacon Center is located shaped the dynamics between the site and the Beacon Center. . Parent involvement presented different issues when explored in a setting where many parents are paying market rates for child care rather than (as in school-based ECCI programs) getting the program at no or little cost. Parent outreach was also conducted differently in this setting.

In this case study, we review the process that brought this child care facility into the ECCI program, its activities and accomplishments, and connections to other agencies.⁵¹ We also identify key challenges in the areas of training, staffing, funding, physical infrastructure and support. We conclude with a review of the plans for the center in its third year as it seeks to become a High/Scope “demonstration” site. Data for the case study were drawn from interviews and surveys with all staff at West Palm Center, observations at several points during the year, focus groups with parents, Program Quality Assessment (PQA) data and interviews with the PQA assessor, and conversations with ECCI management and CSC staff.

Background: Site Selection

The search for ECCI community sites began during the first year of ECCI operation, but the effects of hurricane Wilma in October 2005 delayed their inclusion in the initiative. Prospective sites were identified and judged on standards such as each center’s QIS ratings (to identify a program that was already operating at high quality), proximity to the school the majority of children would attend (to maximize the link between the center and a particular school), and whether the center was located in a community not already served by an ECCI school. West Palm Center met these criteria and had the additional advantage of being close to

⁵⁰ In order to protect confidentiality as much as possible, we do not use the actual names of the center or staff.

⁵¹ We do not include detailed data from the FLKRS assessments of children who attended West Palm Center, since it is not yet available for children who attended the program when it was a part of ECCI.

the Beacon Center at a nearby school that was otherwise eligible for a school-based ECCI program, but lacked the physical space to add one.

West Palm Center was an established center at the time it was recruited, and one of three centers under a single owner. Its director had been at West Palm Center for more than 15 years in total, and served as its on-site director for 11 years. At the time it was approached, West Palm Center had been a part of the QIS system for nearly one year, was supported by QIS coaches, and had received a “Gold Seal” designation by the state Department of Children and Families.⁵² The center served, on average, fewer than fifty children, divided into classrooms for infants, 2- and 3-year-olds, and pre-school children (some of whom were supported through VPK funding). The program was housed in a building created by joining two manufactured homes and included a play area in the back with a fence to separate older and younger children.

When approached about joining the Early Childhood Cluster Initiative, WPC’s director had limited knowledge about High/Scope but viewed it positively. Her guided tour of an implementation of the High/Scope curriculum at Tallahassee Community College confirmed her personal and professional interest. She described being impressed and excited about the hands-on nature of the children’s activities and how children worked according to their own interests, rather than being guided by adult-selected “themes.” She also valued what new ECCI resources could bring to WPC. Though the center already had relatively low child-to-teacher ratios, for example, she was interested in how involvement in ECCI would allow her to reduce those ratios further. The individual who served as the resource teacher for WPC during the second year was a part of the group of staff involved in selecting sites and also encouraged the center to join the initiative.

Only two eligible sites were identified by the end of the first year, and only WPC agreed to participate.⁵³ A formal contract between its owner and CSC was signed, officially beginning in July 2006. This contract included provisions for professional development support and expectations of intensive training in High/Scope, funds for additional staff, and funds for classroom materials. Funds were also provided to pay for a new assistant director, which allowed the director to remain as the lead teacher in the pre-school/VPK) classroom. The contract laid out expectations for the center as a whole, and it specifically targeted funds to the infant/toddler rooms.

An assistant director was hired in August 2006, and given primary responsibility for managing office responsibilities and High/Scope training. She had been the owner and director at another QIS center in Palm Beach County, and had an extensive background in High/Scope Infant/Toddler training. Implementation of the program at WPC proceeded slowly in the late summer and early fall, as new staff were identified and hired for the infant/toddler rooms. This pace also reflected a belief by those implementing the ECCI program that it was important not

⁵² In addition, although a flawed measure, the state’s FLKRS scores for children who attended WPC in 2005, released in the spring of 2006, placed WPC prekindergarten graduates at the top of the list of all ECCI sites. Even before their involvement in ECCI, WPC was therefore running a program that rated highly in the state’s assessment of VPK programs.

⁵³ For example, a site in the Glades had enrollment that was too low to justify a program and too few of the children would move into an elementary school that was connected to a Beacon Center.

to push changes too quickly on classrooms new to the program or to make suggestions without the benefit of the results from the baseline PQA conducted in the fall. As one ECCI staff member told us: “You cannot come in like a tiger. You will have mutiny on the bounty if you come in like a raging bull [to a center] that has done very well without us for many years.”

Our description below of activities at West Palm Center during the second year is organized around key goals and activities, including the program and curriculum, staff training and support, parent involvement, links to outside agencies, program management and measures of program quality and children’s experiences.

Program Implementation

Curriculum and Program Quality

Front-line staff at West Palm Center had limited prior exposure to High/Scope, so implementing this program called for key changes in the environment, the daily schedule, the interactions between adults and children and how participating children were assessed. As is typical in implementing High/Scope in new settings, these changes were facilitated in stages, with most attention initially directed toward improving the environment, and subsequently upon adult/child interactions and using anecdotes and evaluation to support program planning. At WPC, implementation happened across multiple classrooms with different age groups, with different attention given to each room. In part, this was a by-product of funding and program design. Contractually, funding was targeted to staffing the infant room and the director and assistant director paid extra attention to that room. The resource teacher initially focused attention there as well, though her usual schedule throughout the year was to rotate among rooms each day of the week.

At the same time, the assistant director also paid additional attention to the prekindergarten room, where the director remained as the lead teacher. In general, focusing on this room was described as a better approach than introducing “pieces” of the curriculum throughout the other “unfunded” parts of WPC. Strategically, supporting the director’s mastery of the curriculum increased the likelihood of successful implementation throughout the center. Staff also perceived an added value and urgency in focusing upon the children who would soon make the transition to kindergarten and take the state’s school readiness tests. Less attention was paid to the rooms serving two- and three-year olds, and less progress was registered there. We discuss progress in each of the rooms in more detail below.

Overall, WPC administrators reported “huge”—though uneven—gains in their staff’s understanding and implementation of the High/Scope curriculum during the year, despite initial staff reactions to the curriculum that was not uniformly positive. At the beginning of the year, teachers were concerned that the curriculum would lead to “chaos” or result in a messy classroom. By the end of the year, even though they were not sure they always understood the curriculum, teachers expressed fewer reservations about it. They expressed broad support, for example, for the greater role allowed children in decisions about their activities and in resolving conflicts. West Palm Center leadership referred to “a-ha” moments as staff came to

understand the meaning and expectations of the High/Scope curriculum, especially later in the spring of 2007.

In the infant room, the teachers reported that they did not do “any activities” at the beginning of the year. Outside observers also raised concerns about the limited English proficiency of the two teachers, and their tendency at times to communicate to each other in Spanish, rather than speaking with the children. As staff came to understand the curriculum better, however, they shifted to a program of using new materials to “teach children with natural things—what they can feel, what is real for them.” Inspired by watching children play with the Velcro on their shoes, for example, teachers brought in strips of Velcro for all children to play with. These changes reportedly extended to changes in interactions with infants as well, with outside observers noting that teachers moved toward sustained interactions with the infants and used “lots of language” in the exchanges.

In addition to the changes in curriculum, WPC implemented a program for providing meals to children, replacing an expectation that children bring their own lunches. Staff were generally happy with this change. The food “tasted better than expected” and children were described as surprisingly willing to try new things. The assistant director took on this new responsibility, a change that prompted one observer to question whether this was the best use of her time. (Several parents in the Spanish-speaking focus group we conducted were not as supportive of this change, noting that their children did not eat the food at WPC, since it was not familiar or “nutritious”).

The rooms for 2- and 3-year-olds received less focused attention from WPC staff, and showed limited progress. The environment of the 3-year-olds’ room was changed to allow for the addition of a water table, but progress beyond environmental changes was more difficult. This reflected limitations of the small physical setting, located between other classrooms, and staff difficulties in implementing High/Scope principles effectively.

Implementation difficulties in May 2007 included specific concerns (e.g., how to implement conflict resolution or how to “control” children) and general uncertainty about how to meet program expectations. One staff member reported extensive personal struggles in applying what had seemed clearer to her during training. Another, when asked about the High/Scope curriculum, felt she knew too little to even assess her own level of knowledge. A third staff member echoed these limitations, noting that she needed to learn “much more about the program because I have just started learning... I need someone that could explain to me more about the High/Scope program.” In comparison, staff in the prekindergarten room expressed less uncertainty about High/Scope expectations and how to meet them.

These self-assessments by teachers were not inconsistent with the observations of an administrator at WPC, who noted both improvements during the year and gaps between current practice and goals, observing that “we are not where we need to be, but we are not ‘Low/Scope.’ We are in-between.” PQAs completed by an outside assessor in May 2007 also confirmed a pattern of uneven implementation. Quality ratings were highest in the

prekindergarten classroom, with an overall score of 3.86 for the lead teacher.⁵⁴ The lead teacher for the three-year-old room was scored at 3.07. The lead teachers for the two-year-old room and the infant/toddler room scored 2.84 and 2.42, respectively.

Parent Involvement

Visiting parents in their homes was an important element of the original Perry Preschool model, and the ECCI program was originally designed with the expectation that staff at each program site would engage parents this way. West Palm Center was the only ECCI site during the second year where staff arranged off-site visits with parents. As we have noted elsewhere, this did not happen at school-based sites because it was not allowed under the union contract. West Palm Center staff and ownership also hesitated to take on this component of the program, citing concerns about increases in violent crime in the neighborhood. These arguments were rendered moot when WPC's insurance company ruled that it would not cover staff during home visits in any case. As the program's funder, however, CSC remained very interested in finding a way to connect to parents outside of the center.

As an alternative, in October 2006 the assistant director began meeting with parents of infants at "neutral" locations (e.g., a local restaurant). In retrospect, some at WPC viewed this change as a net gain from the original plan, since parents may have felt more "at ease" than if the meeting occurred in their home. Although there were accepted benefits of having the teacher participate in these meetings directly, the assistant director took them on for several reasons. The ratio of teachers to children in the classrooms was seen as already too low, and it was difficult to ask teachers to take time in the evening, given their own family obligations and the additional program expectations that they attend classes and work toward a degree.

The assistant director described this parental outreach effort as a good way to reach out and work with parents, especially those who did not come to the school to drop off or pick up their child. These meetings often had a leisurely pace; the shortest lasted an hour and 15 minutes and others lasted well over two hours. The conversation centered on questions to parents and discussions about High/Scope and conflict resolution. Parents were described as "leery" at first, perhaps believing that the meeting was intended to uncover something "wrong." According to the associate director, all parents eventually became engaged in the conversation. Copies of notes from the conversations were shared with parents and also with the classroom teachers, who reported finding this information useful. WPC staff, in retrospect, viewed this process as unexpectedly helpful. In part, this was because when the meetings were first discussed, WPC staff had not yet participated in "Touchpoints" training, but this later training underscored the benefits of discussing child development with parents.⁵⁵ These conversations also revealed some of the particular challenges parents experienced, providing WPC staff an opportunity to rethink how to work with families to the benefit of children. For example, staff discovered that a parent who had not returned the ASQ form was illiterate, not uncooperative.

⁵⁴ For purposes of reference, a score of 4.5 is required for a teacher to be certified as running a High/Scope classroom.

⁵⁵ Touchpoints training is intended to help early child care providers establish collaborative relationships with parents by increasing provider understanding of child development, emphasizing a strengths-based view of parents, and facilitating communication.

Likewise, other parents who did not read English and expressed shame that they could not read to their children at school were reassured that they could come to the classroom and read to the children in Spanish.

In addition to reaching out through these meetings with parents in the infant room, WPC staff regularly sought to involve parents in this and other classrooms in other ways. West Palm Center offered workshops for parents, held special meals (e.g., Valentines breakfast, or a Thanksgiving feast), and opened the classroom so parents could stop by and read. Fliers inviting parents to come and visit were posted in every classroom at WPC (and the parents we spoke to mentioned this openness as an important factor in their decision to bring their children to WPC), although participation tended to be concentrated among a few parents and in the prekindergarten classroom. In the classroom for 2- and 3-year olds, according to one teacher, parents “always promise me they will come in and sit in the class.... They never show up.”

The ECCI Parent Volunteer Coordinator joined in this effort at the end of the year by the. Working under a compressed two-month schedule starting at the end of May 2007, the coordinator sought additional ways for parents to get involved. Implementing this work at the center was delayed because the blueprint for parent involvement proposed by the Parent Volunteer Coordinator was originally drawn for parents at a school-based program. At the school-based program, the coordinator had informed parents early in the fall that they were expected to sign a pledge to volunteer as a condition of enrolling their children in the program, and in collaboration with teachers had devised a specific list of “jobs” for parents to sign up for (e.g., “breakfast volunteer”). Rejecting this model as too “job-like” for parents, the WPC administrators encouraged the coordinator to rethink what would be appropriate for their site by first spending some time at the center, being present during pick-up and drop-off, and meeting parents. As one administrator described it, they had to revisit the basic question: “What really meets our parents’ needs” and makes them “feel successful and part of the center?”

The process put in place at West Palm Center by the Parent Volunteer Coordinator concentrated on finding multiple ways for parents to contribute to the classroom. Some strategies required parents to be at the school (e.g., reading books in person) and others asked parents to prepare activities or contributions at home that could be used during the day (e.g., recording a story for children to listen to). Parents were also encouraged to donate items that might be used for play during the day (e.g., old clothes). To encourage higher rates of participation, the Parent Volunteer Coordinator promised a boat cruise as a prize to the parent that contributed the most to the center. Three parents volunteered during this period.

Connections to Outside Agencies

West Palm Center’s connection to a Beacon Center at a nearby elementary school is less direct than the link between Beacon Centers and school-based ECCI programs. Not all children who attend WPC live in the neighborhood or attend the local school (though estimates varied among the staff we talked to) and the school is more than a mile away from WPC. Nonetheless, staff reported a productive, if limited, working relationship. Given the very limited physical facilities at WPC, the neighborhood school provided welcome space for collaborative parent meetings (e.g., a joint Parent Involvement meeting in September 2006). Some children at WPC

also participate in Saturday activities at the school. While this weekend program at the school is not formally part of ECCI, this link allows children who will attend the local elementary school to become familiar with it, according to staff, “so it isn’t a strange place.” In this sense, ECCI’s link to the Beacon Center may facilitate a helpful secondary link to the school, and mirrors some of the advantages children in school-based ECCI programs have in becoming acclimated to schools, and connecting parents to schools and Beacon programs.

West Palm Center’s connection to other outside agencies included connections to Comprehensive Services and to other social service agencies. Connecting children who need specialized services was described as a long-standing and passionate interest of the director at WPC. Comprehensive Services, which assesses developmental issues, was not as available as staff had hoped. Speech and language issues were the primary problems identified by staff, as well as behavioral problems. But as one administrator described the referral process, “I will refer a child in August and if he gets serviced by January, I am literally doing cartwheels. Why does it take so long?” This process was described as even more unwieldy for families with limited or no English skills.

To mitigate these limitations in securing services, WPC used additional resources from the program “Focus on Promise.” This program includes a weekly visit from a social worker who runs a group activity as a screening mechanism, and is able to return to target specific issues (e.g., emotional issues for children whose parents are getting divorced) with small groups work or one-on-one with children. Social workers also meet with parents to provide services to them. This program, unfortunately, was described as having high turnover among staff and also—at least initially—as using methods (e.g., trinkets as rewards) that conflict with High/Scope principles. Faced with the choice of no services, or services that were not entirely compatible with High/Scope, staff at WPC felt they had no choice but to accept needed services where they could.

Training and Support

Staff training

In deciding to expand ECCI, partner organizations recognized that for the program to be successful during its first year, WPC staff would have to participate in extensive training and be able to incorporate that training quickly into their work. As with school-based sites, teachers at WPC were expected to work toward an associate’s or bachelor’s degree. Over the course of the second year, some training was completed, but by all accounts the amount of training received lagged behind initial expectations. As of March 2007, for example, only one of the eight staff members had completed the 4-week Preschool Curriculum Course (PCC), and five of the eight staff had completed the “Introduction to High/Scope” course by January 2007. Staff in the infant room who had limited English language skills were not able to begin this training until late in the year. West Palm Center administrators did complete additional training on the COR and training in Touchpoints. The training offered to staff was not always accurately targeted. The teachers in the infant room, for example, received the training for pre-school children rather than the specific High/Scope curriculum on infants and toddlers. Both the trainer and staff recognized that such training did not match staff needs.

The reasons for these lower-than-expected levels of training varied by individual, and were complicated by the structure of some training, which made it impossible, for example, to miss a week of PCC training and pick up the subsequent training sessions offered in the following months. As noted earlier, even when staff participated in training, they often expressed uncertainty and difficulty in translating that training into their work with children.

Resource Teacher and Other On-site Support

From the beginning of implementation at the site, WPC administrators recognized that staff quality was uneven and that they needed to spend a lot of energy making sure that staff were “on the same page,” had their “buy-in,” and understood what they were to be learning. This limited understanding and acceptance among staff made on-site efforts to increase their learning difficult. An administrator at WPC concluded that, overall, staff were unprepared to accept the guidance provided by the resource teacher throughout the fall of 2006. In fact, the resource teacher spent more time than expected in providing direct help to staff at WPC, and less time in her evaluative role during the fall.

ECCI partners had differing views about the proper nature of the relationship between the resource teacher and the program site. Some believed that the resource teacher could have been more active in encouraging WPC to improve. The resource teacher, describing herself as a “people person,” expressed caution about being too direct in her comments or criticisms. As did other resource teachers, she preferred to use formal assessments (e.g., the PQA) as tools for identifying issues that needed attention, rather than depending upon the site to respond to her ideas about improvement. This approach was at least partially consistent with the ECCI manager’s decision to have resource teachers not use the “Teacher Support Activity” form (which identified specific gaps between High/Scope goals and implementation) until October. Compromising personal tensions in the resource teachers’ work at WPC may have arisen as well, since she had been in the position of “selling” the center on the idea of joining ECCI—including the expectation that additional staff would be provided to accomplish the work—even as her position called for her to be critical of gaps between implementation and High/Scope standards.

Staff noted some limitations in the qualifications and working style of the resource teacher as she began her work with WPC. She had not completed the Infant/Toddler training for High/Scope, which she recognized would be necessary to provide the center with the best support. She also lacked a background in licensing, Infant Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ITERS), ECERS, and QIS – each of which held the center accountable to its own standards.⁵⁶ She acknowledged this limitation, but nonetheless proposed changes the program could not implement. According to one informant, such suggestions “were great for High/Scope,” but would have “violate[d] three different licensing standards—and QIS would have a heart

⁵⁶ We discuss the basic issue of conflicts between ECCI and ECERS elsewhere in this report, and those conflicts were also in place here. Licensing standards introduced additional considerations (e.g., limits on using a “water table” with multiple children).

attack.”⁵⁷ Finally, the staff in the infant room were native Spanish speakers with limited English skills and the resource teacher lacked Spanish-language skills, which created another challenge in communication and learning.

Staff also characterized the resource teacher as speaking to them on a “higher level” than they were prepared for. According to an administrator, child-care staff would sit and nod while the resource teacher talked, but later say to the administrators: “I don’t get it.” Teachers reportedly agreed with changes proposed by the resource teacher that they knew did not meet licensing or other requirements because they did not want to appear uncooperative. Administrators later learned about these proposed changes and had to search for acceptable compromises. In an effort to improve the productivity of these trainings, the assistant director started participating to make sure that licensing issues were addressed early and that teachers understood the content of the training and identified any questions they had. ECCI staff members resisted the assistant director’s participation, since they wanted teachers to feel comfortable raising any concerns about the WPC administrators. The WPC administrators insisted, however, and the procedure continued

Staff Levels and Funding

The number of staff working at WPC, and the ratio of children to staff arose as a troubling issue for WPC administrators. Prior to ECCI involvement, West Palm Center maintained ratios that qualified it for “Gold Seal” status. A typical 2-year-old room would have a 1:11 ratio, but WPC had voluntarily capped that at 1:9. A typical 3-year-old room would have a 1:15 ratio, but WPC’s cap was 1:12. Likewise, West Palm Center capped the prekindergarten ratio at 1:10, though licensing allows a ratio as high as 1:25. School-based ECCI classrooms, in contrast, have a staff-to-child ratio of 1:6.

The contract between West Palm Center and CSC called for several additions to the staff, including staff with higher qualifications. The prekindergarten room was to increase to three staff members, with two teachers in the other classrooms and new teachers were to have at least an associate’s degree. In the late winter, CSC clarified to WPC staff that the contract allowed for these additional staff “when funding becomes available,” but that funding was not available beyond money for hiring a new teacher in the infant room. According to staff, this meant that only the infant room had sufficiently low ratios to be considered for High/Scope certification.

The exact source of the funding limits identified by CSC was not revealed to WPC staff, but in our conversations with participants several issues surfaced as factors. First, by the middle of the implementation year, there had developed what one ECCI staff member referred to as a “chicken and egg” problem. Existing WPC staff had been slower to attend training than anticipated, and were inconsistent in translating training and resources into observable and effective improvements in the classroom. As a result, the quality of care at WPC remained below the levels expected and hoped for by outside High/Scope assessors, CSC, and WPC

⁵⁷ School sites also do not have to meet licensing standards, so no ECCI staff had regular experience in that area either. For reasons that are not clear, the resource teacher who provided ECERS support to all the other ECCI sites also did not visit WPC to provide guidance and updates on evolving ECERS standards.

administrators. When poor communication between CSC and WPC about the status of additional funding for staff contributed to an expectation that an increase in staff might be imminent, West Palm Center administrators reported difficulty in knowing how to plan their work. Poor communication was exacerbated by the absence of shared indicators of progress that might trigger additional funds for staff.

From the perspective of WPC administrators, some of the limitations in program quality resulted from insufficient staff and could be addressed most directly by expanding staff numbers. This seemed especially logical as the implementation shifted focus from changes in environment and routine to things such as adult-child interaction and conflict resolution. As noted by WPC staff, for example, conflict resolution requires being able to focus upon two children, while the other children in the room continue to need to be engaged and supervised. Likewise, small group time with a 1:10 ratio is qualitatively different from small group time with a 1:6 ratio. From the perspective of CSC and others outside the program, however, program quality could have been higher whether or not additional staff were available. The period of uncertainty about staff levels lasted for many weeks until it became clear that CSC would not provide additional funds without evidence of improvements in quality. At this point, WPC staff described themselves as being resigned to making as much progress as possible with their current staff levels, knowing that increases were not likely.

More generally, the costs associated with the WPC program may have been higher than CSC originally assumed, with implications for implementation. Some confusion arose about the hourly rate that was to be offered to the assistant director, and this led to reducing her hours from the original plan. To remove any incentive for staff trained at WPC to leave and seek employment in a parallel position in the school-based ECCI programs (where salaries were much higher), staff salaries were increased, and even doubled in some instances.⁵⁸ The decision to raise salaries of front-line staff, however, was reportedly made after the original agreement was completed. The cost of materials for the classroom was also high. Overall, several observers outside the center described the program at WPC as a very expensive program to operate, at times unexpectedly so.

Views of Program Impact and Children's Progress

Though the program struggled to meet expectations, staff at West Palm Center did link changes in curriculum to specific changes in children's behavior, including fewer behavioral problems. More generally, children were described as more involved in problem-solving. These changes were described as substantial: "I can see a huge difference in how children think, how they are acting, and how they are treating others. I mean, some of my kids have had huge breakthroughs." Teachers believed that their classrooms were operating more often on the principles of shared control. According to one teacher, conflict resolution had shifted from explaining to kids that "fighting is not a good idea" to engaging children in problem-solving.

⁵⁸ To prepare for the possibility that these additional wages – which doubled salaries in some instances – might be removed if WPC did not continue to get funding in later years, it was suggested that these additional wages be referred to as "stipends" and treated separately from 'wages.'

Parents who had been bringing their children to WPC for more than a year also reported a range of improvements in the way the classrooms functioned. They saw teachers as better organized, and providing more structure to the children's day, whereas "they used to just go with the flow." They described children as planning more of what they do and being more aware of their options. One parent described how her son carried over this behavior beyond the classroom, encouraging her at home to "make a plan" for what to do. Although the parent acknowledged that it was a new concept to her, she also said "it's been working."

Summary of Community-Based Program Implementation

Adding a community-based program to ECCI was an elemental part of the original ECCI design. In practice, however, it revealed and produced sufficient tensions that by the end of the second year of implementation the West Palm Center had been released from ECCI. The plan to expand to three other community-based child care settings had been put on hold by November and formally shelved in the spring of 2007, as the scope of the work required and its expense became clearer. CSC proposed to return the West Palm Center to the Quality Improvement System, while retaining the goal of achieving High/Scope certification. The guiding idea was that West Palm Center would be able to serve as a real example of how High/Scope can be implemented, even with lower staffing levels and other limitations.

One of the tensions in implementing ECCI in a community-based center was the disconnection between the oversight and experiences of the School District and staff and the requirements for supporting a community-based center serving a wider range of ages. In addition, ECCI staff assigned to the WPC had no programmatic expertise in overseeing programs that meet outside licensing requirements. The training curriculum established to serve teachers and administrators of prekindergarten did not appropriately serve the staff responsible for infants and toddlers. Resource teacher experiences were also grounded in kindergarten or prekindergarten settings.

Beyond these evident structural tensions, lapses in communication increased dissatisfaction and uncertainty among staff already uncertain about the program and future support. In April, the resource teacher assigned to the West Palm Center was notified that her contract would not be renewed after the summer, and that another resource teacher would be assigned to the center. More than two weeks after hearing this directly from the resource teacher, WPC administrators had not been informed of this change from either CSC or School District staff. Likewise, WPC staff expressed frustration at the length of time it took before learning that they would not be allotted additional staff, the reasons for the delay in getting staff, or the standards that needed to be met to obtain funds for additional staff. The contract contained few specific measures of what was expected, lending a frustrating vagueness to the exchanges between WPC staff and others.

In some ways, the inefficiencies in translating the idea, training and on-site support for ECCI into high quality work might have been expected. At least two factors influenced the WPC staff's decision to implement the High/Scope curriculum. First, whatever else they may have thought about High/Scope, some WPC staff had a substantial financial interest in agreeing to join ECCI and use this curriculum. Second, staff could not have understood what it really

meant to agree to implement High/Scope. An incomplete understanding of a new curriculum is par when implementing new programs, but the challenges presented are deepest when implementing a model like this one. High/Scope trainers estimate that it requires several years for staff to master the curriculum, and conversations with WPC staff made it clear that their early reactions to it were negative based upon two kinds of misunderstandings or lack of mastery. They misunderstood the extent to which the curriculum demands that they change the nature of their interactions with children and their beliefs about such things as a “messy” room. Second, they miscalculated the ways in which this curriculum could actually be helpful to them, allowing them to work in a new, rewarding and creative way with children.

SCHOOL READINESS: THE BELIEFS OF TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

There is growing acceptance on the part of policy-makers and educators that preschool can play an important role in preparing children to enter kindergarten—especially if it is of high quality and offers children opportunities they would not otherwise have—but views vary about what kinds of instructional experiences are most beneficial and appropriate for preschool children. The High/Scope curriculum and the ECCI program, for example, are based on particular views of how 3- and 4-year-old children learn, what kinds of learning experiences are most appropriate, and the roles of parents and teachers in preparing children for school. The curriculum advocates using self-directed activities and hands-on experiences with real objects, people, and concepts to match the developmental needs of preschool children. At the same time, the early childhood development field is still characterized by disparate opinions about what young children should know or be capable of doing to be ready for kindergarten, and how to assess their readiness (Duncan, Claessens, Huston et al., 2007; Lin, Lawrence, & Gorrell, 2003; Scott-Little, Kagan, & Frelow, 2006; Pianta & Cox, 1999; U.S. Department of Education NCES, 2001; West, Jausken, & Collins, 1993). Some advocate for greater emphasis on developing literacy or pre-literacy skills that directly relate to what is taught in kindergarten, while others take a broader developmental view that includes social and emotional competencies that can facilitate classroom learning.

Given the diversity of views about the relative value of different potential contributors to school readiness and the consequences of sharing common or divergent views about it, we wanted to understand the perspectives of prekindergarten teachers, school administrators and kindergarten teachers. Where these individuals hold similar beliefs, there is a greater opportunity for consistency between the skills that parents and preschool teachers foster in children before kindergarten and the skills kindergarten teachers and administrators expect as children enter kindergarten. The degree of this consistency is likely to have an effect on parent-teacher relations, children's adjustment to school, and the success of children's early school experience (e.g., Hadley, Wilcox, & Rice, 1994; Pianta & Cox, 1999; Rimm-Kaufman, 2004).

In addition, the beliefs of administrators and kindergarten teachers are likely to influence the support they provide to the ECCI program, the expectations they communicate to prekindergarten teachers about the characteristics children will need when they enter kindergarten, and their evaluation of the program's impact on children's development. Thus, part of the data collection effort for the second year study of the ECCI program included surveys of prekindergarten teachers, school administrators, and kindergarten teachers about their beliefs about school readiness; specifically, what children should learn and how they should be taught to be ready for kindergarten. To broaden our inquiry, we distributed surveys not only to staff at the ten schools implementing ECCI but also staff at the community child care center and at fourteen other Title I schools implementing the state VPK program.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Following the passage of a constitutional amendment by Florida voters, the legislature created a voluntary, free prekindergarten program for all 4-year-old children that began in fall 2005. Public, private, and faith-based providers are eligible to deliver the program if they meet the minimum standards required by law. Each private provider must be a licensed child care facility, a licensed family day care home (registered homes are not eligible), a licensed large family child care home, or a nonpublic school or faith-based child care provider that is exempt from

Survey Sample Characteristics

Surveys were distributed to a total of 297 respondents, and 222 (75%) were returned. Across all sites, the response rates for each respondent group were as follows: prekindergarten teachers (84%), principal and assistant principals (83%), kindergarten teachers (63%), and community child care center teaching staff (100%). (Copies of the surveys for all staff can be found in Appendix C.) Below we briefly describe the characteristics of these survey groups. Additional information on their characteristics can be found in Appendix D.

Prekindergarten Staff

Among the prekindergarten teachers responding to the survey, ninety-two were staff from school-based programs—forty-seven (51%) were ECCI staff members and forty-five (49%) were VPK staff members—and seven were from the community child care center. All were female. Just over half (52%) of all prekindergarten respondents identified themselves as black; 17 percent as white; and 16 percent as Hispanic. Some staff identified themselves as “other” or did not identify race or ethnicity. As expected, given differences in the requirements for teachers in the different programs, staff at the ECCI and VPK school sites and the community child care staff differed in their educational backgrounds (e.g., ECCI programs have teachers with bachelor degrees and early childhood certification). There were no statistically significant differences between ECCI ELAs and VPK CDAs. At the community child care center, four of the seven teachers had education beyond high school, including, in one case, a Master’s degree. All of the child care staff had either an early childhood certificate or a CDA, and four of the seven had both types of certifications. Prekindergarten teachers differ in the years of experience that teachers have at the pre-school level. In ECCI schools, prekindergarten teachers had an average of 10 years of teaching experience while prekindergarten teachers in VPK schools had almost 13 years of experience. All prekindergarten teachers, regardless of program type, had been working in their current school for an average of 7 years.

Kindergarten Staff

A total of eighty-four kindergarten teachers responded to the survey; thirty-three (39%) were teachers at the ten ECCI schools and fifty (60%) were teachers at the fourteen VPK schools. (The school of one kindergarten teacher could not be identified.) Most (95%) of the respondents in this group were female. Eighty percent reported having an elementary education certification, and 49 percent reported having an early childhood certification. With regard to ethnicity, the majority (68%) of all kindergarten teachers identified themselves as white, and 22 percent as black. The only significant difference in ethnicity between the VPK and ECCI population was among kindergarten teachers who self-identified as being black. Thirty-three percent of the responding kindergarten teachers at the ECCI schools identified themselves as “Black/African

licensure. Children who are 4 years of age before September 1 the year before kindergarten entry may participate in either a school-year program consisting of 540 instructional hours or a summer program consisting of 300 instructional hours. Staffing in the school year VPK program differs from the ECCI program in that most programs have a ratio of two teachers for eighteen children; VPK staff are required to have a CDA I or CDA II credential but are not required to have teacher certification, although teachers in the summer VPK program are certified. Like ECCI, the school-based VPK programs in this sample use the High/Scope curriculum.

American” compared to fourteen percent of those at the VPK schools ($\chi^2=4.375, p < 0.05$). The majority (75%) of all teachers reported having a bachelor’s degree with another 19 percent reporting having a master’s degree. With respect to experience, the responding kindergarten teachers averaged 6 years of experience as kindergarten teachers. There was a significant difference between ECCI and VPK kindergarten teachers experience in pre-school classrooms. The ECCI kindergarten teachers had, on average just under two years of pre-school experience while the VPK teachers had almost five years of experience ($F=5.673, p < 0.05$). All of the responding teachers had been in their current schools, on average, for just under six years.

Administrators

Thirty-nine principals and assistant principals responded to the administrator survey; twenty-four (62%) were principals and fifteen (39%) were assistant principals. All of the administrators reported having at least a master’s degree; and fifteen percent had a doctoral degree. These administrators had a range of previous teaching experiences at the elementary level, with the most experience teaching second through fifth grade. On average, administrators at ECCI schools had more years of experience teaching kindergarten than VPK administrators (2 years vs. less than one year) ($F=5.470, p < 0.05$) as well as more years of experience teaching first grade (5 years vs. 2 years). The responding administrators reported having worked in their current schools, on average, for 5 years.

Important Characteristics for School Readiness

We asked all survey respondents to rate eighteen items about characteristics that are important to a child’s readiness for school. We used sixteen items from surveys administered by the U.S. Department of Educational National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), including a survey of teacher and parent beliefs conducted in 1993 and parent surveys used in the ECLS-K study and added two items adapted from the High/Scope curriculum. These items are clustered into two main groups: (1) academic or more traditional school-related items and (2) social and emotional behaviors related to learning, which includes communication skills. Respondents were asked to rate each item on a four-point scale from 1 (*not important*) to 4 (*very important*).

As shown in Table 28, when listed in order of mean importance, the top six items for all respondents combined were those that can be categorized as social and emotional competencies. These include characteristics such as “communicates needs, wants, and thoughts verbally,” “follows directions,” “is not being disruptive of the class,” and “takes turns and shares.”⁶⁰

⁶⁰ ECCI and VPK participants (e.g., ECCI and VPK pre-K teachers) were not statistically significantly different on most of the school readiness measures, even using generous probability standards. Moreover, these few differences did not suggest clear patterns in their views. For example, VPK Kindergarten teachers were somewhat more likely than ECCI Kindergarten teachers to say that “not being disruptive” (a social skill) was important, but were also more likely to say that being “able to use pencils and brushes” was important. Among pre-K teachers, ECCI staff were slightly more likely to value “taking turns” and “problem solving”, but were also more heterogeneous in their responses than VPK teachers. For example, a higher proportion of ECCI teachers said that learning “primary colors and shapes” was *very important* but also *not important* and *a little important*; VPK teachers clustered their responses more uniformly around the category *important*. VPK administrators were, however, more likely than ECCI administrators to say that “knowing most of the letters of the alphabet” was *very important*.

Table 28. Respondents' Beliefs about Important Characteristics for School Readiness

Child Characteristic	All Respondents (N=222) ^a			Prekindergarten Teachers (n=99) ^a			Kindergarten Teachers (n=84)			Administrators (n=39)		
	% "Very Important"	% "Important"	Mean Importance ^b	% "Very Important"	% "Important"	Mean Importance ^b	% "Very Important"	% "Important"	Mean Importance ^b	% "Very Important"	% "Important"	Mean Importance ^b
Can follow directions**	63	34	3.6 (.53)	54	43	3.5 (.52)	69	30	3.7 (.50)	72	21	3.7 (.63)
Communicates needs, wants, and thoughts verbally	66	31	3.6 (.52)	65	31	3.6 (.52)	64	32	3.6 (.56)	72	28	3.7 (.46)
Is not disruptive of the class	56	36	3.5 (.65)	48	38	3.4 (.74)	64	33	3.6 (.52)	59	36	3.5 (.60)
Takes turns and shares	53	40	3.5 (.61)	48	40	3.4 (.67)	56	43	3.6 (.59)	59	33	3.6 (.60)
Is sensitive to other children's feelings	40	52	3.3 (.61)	47	43	3.4 (.65)	30	61	3.2 (.59)	44	54	3.4 (.55)
Identifies primary colors and shapes	38	43	3.2 (.77)	44	43	3.3 (.71)	33	42	3.1 (.78)	33	46	3.1 (.84)
Has good problem-solving skills***	41	43	3.3 (.73)	57	32	3.5 (.66)	26	52	3.1 (.71)	31	51	3.1 (.175)
Follows through with planned activities	31	53	3.2 (.68)	37	46	3.2 (.71)	23	63	3.0 (.61)	31	49	3.1 (.76)
Sits still and pays attention**	32	46	3.1 (.77)	28	38	2.9 (.86)	38	54	3.3 (.62)	26	49	3.0 (.73)
Is beginning to write letters*	32	45	3.1 (.81)	34	53	3.2 (.71)	36	35	3.0 (.88)	21	49	2.9 (.81)
Knows most of the letters of the alphabet*	34	43	3.1 (.81)	32	52	3.1 (.76)	38	31	3.0 (.75)	28	49	3.1 (.77)
Writes own name	33	47	3.1 (.81)	38	47	3.2 (.76)	31	45	3.0 (.83)	23	51	2.9 (.85)
Reads or pretends to read storybooks	32	48	3.1 (.77)	40	42	3.2 (.79)	25	51	3.0 (.75)	26	56	3.1 (.72)
Is able to use pencils and paint brushes*	31	45	3.0 (.81)	34	49	3.2 (.80)	27	42	2.9 (.81)	28	41	3.0 (.83)
Finishes tasks*	27	48	3.0 (.79)	31	38	3.0 (.90)	23	62	3.1 (.61)	26	44	3.0 (.85)
Can describe completed activities	19	60	3.0 (.69)	25	54	3.1 (.67)	13	66	2.9 (.69)	15	62	2.9 (.73)
Can count to 20 or more	23	37	2.7 (.93)	25	46	2.9 (.87)	20	27	2.6 (.98)	21	40	2.7 (.89)
Knows the English language	19	41	2.7 (.95)	24	43	2.8 (.95)	16	35	2.5 (.96)	13	51	2.6 (.87)

^a Sample includes seven teachers from the community child care center.

^b A 4-point rating scale was used, with responses ranging from 1 ("not important") to 4 ("very important").

Chi-square tests indicate that differences in response patterns of the three groups are statistically significant at * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, or *** $p < .001$ ($df = 6$).

Characteristics such as “identifies primary colors and shapes,” “writes own name,” “knows most of the letters of the alphabet,” “is beginning to write letters,” and “reads or pretends to read storybooks” were not rated as important as these characteristics but were still considered important by a majority of respondents. These findings of an emphasis on the social and emotional aspects of learning are consistent with previous reports of teachers’ beliefs (Lin, Lawrence & Gorrell, 2003; U.S. Department of Education NCES, 2001; West, Jausken, & Collins, 1993).

We also looked at similarities and differences in beliefs among the three groups of respondents. First, Table 28 indicates that they share comparable beliefs on the importance of most items rated very highly; that is, all three respondent groups were in general agreement about the importance of the top five or six characteristics. More than half of each group considered the two characteristics “communicates needs, wants, and thoughts verbally,” and “follows directions” to be *very important*. The three groups also tended to agree that the following two characteristics were, on average, of lesser importance than other characteristics: “can count to 20 or more” and “knows the English language.”

On the other hand, a number of differences can be seen in response patterns to the characteristics listed in Table 28. In the area of social and emotional dispositions, a significantly larger percentage of prekindergarten teachers than administrators or kindergarten teachers considered the trait “has good problem solving skills” important. This characteristic was rated *very important* by more than half (57%) of the prekindergarten teachers but by only 26 percent of the kindergarten teachers and 31 percent of the administrators. One reason for the variations in responses to this item may be the emphasis High/Scope places on problem-solving behaviors. On the other hand, prekindergarten teachers were less likely than administrators or kindergarten teachers to rate “follows directions” as *very important*. In addition, kindergarten teachers were much more likely than either prekindergarten teachers or administrators to rate the item “sits still and pays attention” as *very important* and the item “finishes tasks” as *important* or *very important*.

There were fewer variations among the three groups of respondents in the importance of academic or pre-academic characteristics. Interestingly, prekindergarten teachers tended to rate the importance of “is beginning to write letters” and “is able to use pencils and paint brushes” more highly than kindergarten teachers and administrators. One reason for the difference may be that prekindergarten teachers recognize the role of fine motor development in children’s pre-academic skills. Prekindergarten teachers, on average, also put somewhat more weight on the importance of “knows most of the letters of the alphabet” than kindergarten teachers and administrators.

Appropriate Preschool Curriculum and Educational Methods

In general, the differences in beliefs about the relative importance of various characteristics for children to be ready for school were modest. Differences were more pronounced among the three respondents groups, however, in their views of appropriate curriculum and instructional methods for preschool children. We developed a list of fifteen statements based on the High/Scope curriculum (Hohmann & Weikart, 2002) and other literature on developmentally

appropriate practice in early childhood education (e.g., Hart, Burts, & Charlesworth, 1997; NAEYC [<http://www.naeyc.org>]) and asked survey respondents to indicate the level of their agreement with each statement.

As shown in Table 29, all three groups generally agreed with the statement that “play should be a central part of the preschool curriculum.” Moreover, they agreed that teachers should be involved in children’s play. That is, 95 percent of the administrators responded *agree* or *strongly agree* that “teachers should actively participate in children’s play.” In turn, most teachers at both the prekindergarten and kindergarten level responded *disagree* or *strongly disagree* to the opposite statement that “teachers should *not* participate in children’s play.

A majority of each group also agreed that “preschool classrooms should be organized for children to move freely between areas and activities,” although preschool staff endorsed this statement more strongly than kindergarten teachers or administrators. However, kindergarten teachers and administrators were less likely to agree that “preschool children should initiate and direct their own play activities.” Forty-one percent of the preschool teachers *strongly agreed* with this statement whereas only 16 percent of the kindergarten teachers and none of the administrators strongly agreed with the statement. Similarly, prekindergarten teachers were more likely than kindergarten teachers or administrators to *strongly agree* with the following statements:

- Children in preschool should learn at their own rates.
- Children in preschool should use materials in their own way.
- Children in preschool should choose their own learning activities.

Many of these statements reflect the precepts of High/Scope that children should have choices in their activities as well as opportunities to move independently between interest areas and activities.

Interestingly, prekindergarten teachers were less likely than kindergarten teachers or administrators to agree with the statement that “children in preschool should do most of their playing and learning in small groups.” We are uncertain how to interpret this finding. The intent of the item was to compare small group and large group settings, but preschool teachers may be comparing small groups to more independent, self-selected activities. The responses may also reflect some difficulties preschool staff may have implementing the small group portion of the High/Scope curriculum. As we noted in Chapter 4, some prekindergarten teachers said they believed the small group curriculum should be more teacher-directed.

Other differences in the patterns of responses to these survey items suggest that kindergarten teachers and administrators have different perspectives on the experiences and instruction children should have in preschool. Specifically, as indicated by their agreement with the statements below, they were more likely than the prekindergarten staff to favor the use of praise and rewards to motivate children, and more formal literacy and math instruction in preschool. These ideas are inconsistent with the principles of High/Scope, and this finding indicates that prekindergarten teachers are more supportive of some key High/Scope principles than kindergarten teachers and administrators.

Table 29. Respondents' Beliefs about Appropriate Curriculum and Educational Methods for Preschool Children

Statement	All Respondents (N=215)			Prekindergarten Teachers (n=92)			Kindergarten Teachers (n=84)			Administrators (n=39)		
	% "Strongly Agree"	% "Agree"	Mean Agreement ^a	% "Strongly Agree"	% "Agree"	Mean Agreement ^b	% "Strongly Agree"	% "Agree"	Mean Agreement ^a	% "Strongly Agree"	% "Agree"	Mean Agreement ^b
Generally, it is better for 4-year-old children to be in school-based pre-K than in community-based child care	44	50	3.4 (0.60)	n/a ^b	n/a	n/a	47	48	3.5 (0.57)	36	51	3.3 (0.64)
Preschool classrooms should be organized for children to move freely between areas and activities ***	45	41	3.3 (0.75)	69	23	3.6 (0.70)	26	54	3.1 (0.75)	31	59	3.2 (0.62)
Teachers should actively participate in children's play ^c	26	69	3.2 (0.52)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	26	69	3.2 (0.52)
Children in preschool should learn at their own rates*	28	60	3.2 (0.64)	41	46	3.3 (0.68)	19	69	3.1 (0.60)	18	72	3.1 (0.53)
Play should be a central part of the preschool curriculum	31	47	3.1 (0.75)	35	41	3.2 (0.77)	31	51	3.1 (0.76)	23	54	3.1 (0.66)
Preschool children should initiate and direct their own play activities***	24	48	3.0 (0.75)	41	40	3.3 (0.73)	16	51	2.8 (0.75)	0	62	2.6 (0.49)
Generally, it is better for 3-year-old children to be in school-based pre-K than in community-base child care	28	43	3.0 (0.81)	n/a	n/a	n/a	26	39	2.9 (0.84)	26	44	3.0 (0.75)
Children in preschool should do most playing and learning in small groups***	23	46	2.9 (0.81)	23	25	2.6 (0.96)	24	60	3.1 (0.64)	23	64	3.1 (0.58)
Children's readiness for kindergarten depends more on what happens at home than at preschool**	14	48	2.8 (0.68)	9	43	2.7 (.74)	23	56	3.0 (0.66)	8	41	2.6 (0.64)
Children will do better in school if they begin formal reading and math instruction in preschool*	23	35	2.8 (0.94)	22	26	2.6 (1.01)	26	35	2.8 (0.95)	21	59	3.0 (0.65)
Children in preschool should use materials in their own way***	21	43	2.8 (0.80)	37	47	3.2 (0.76)	10	39	2.5 (0.76)	5	44	2.6 (0.60)
Praise and rewards are the best way to motivate preschool children***	20	40	2.7 (0.92)	4	16	2.0 (0.79)	32	58	3.2 (0.64)	31	56	3.2 (0.62)
Children in preschool should choose their own learning activities**	13	44	2.7 (0.77)	22	47	2.9 (0.78)	6	42	2.5 (0.76)	5	44	2.6 (0.60)
Parents understand their role in preparing children for kindergarten**	18	30	2.6 (0.94)	12	44	2.6 (0.79)	25	18	2.5 (1.09)	18	23	2.5 (0.92)
Teachers should tell preschool children what to do***	3	41	2.4 (0.77)	1	23	2.0 (0.73)	7	57	2.7 (0.74)	0	51	2.5 (0.56)
Teachers should not participate in children's play ^c	1	5	1.6 (0.61)	0	2	1.5 (0.55)	1	7	1.7 (0.65)	n/a	n/a	n/a

^a A 4-point rating scale was used, with responses ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 4 ("strongly agree").

^b N/a means item was not included in survey for this respondent group.

^c The administrator survey stated "Teachers should actively participate in children's play," while the teacher surveys stated "Teachers should not participate in children's play."

Chi-square tests indicate differences in response patterns of the three groups are statistically significant at * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, or *** $p < .001$.

In addition, larger proportions of administrators and kindergarten teachers supported teacher-directed activities than prekindergarten teachers. That is, they were more likely than the preschool staff to agree that “teachers should tell preschool children what to do,” although there was variability in the responses within the three groups to this item. The responses to this item are generally consistent with the patterns of responses in the three groups of respondents to items such as “children in preschool should learn at their own rates” and “children in preschool should use materials in their own way.” The percentages of preschool teachers responding *agree* or *strongly agree* to these items were larger than the percentages of administrators and kindergarten teachers who did so.

Finally, one other difference concerned perspectives on the role of parents in children’s school readiness and school success. Table 29 also shows that all three groups were mixed in their opinions about whether parents understand their role in preparing children for kindergarten. A little more than half (56%) of the prekindergarten teachers, 43 percent of the kindergarten teachers, and 41 percent of the administrators agreed with this view. With respect to the relative influence of home and school on children’s readiness for kindergarten, kindergarten teachers were more likely than either the prekindergarten staff or administrators to agree that the home environment has more effect. In the next section, we explore this topic further.

Role of Home and School in School Readiness

Children learn at home and at school, and ECCI devotes special attention to finding ways to involve parents in the program and shape parenting activities outside the home. As such, it is important to understand the extent to which teachers and administrators see the role of parents in similar ways. Thus, we also surveyed teachers and administrators about whether parents or teachers have greater responsibility for nurturing children in different areas of development. Teachers and administrators were presented a series of care-giving and educational activities to which they were to assign responsibility using a four point scale ranging from 1 (*mostly parents*) to 4 (*mostly teachers*).⁶¹

Results presented in Table 30 show that with the exception of “making sure children are physically healthy,” the distribution of responses for many of the items was quite variable. Despite these differences, respondents overall tended to believe teachers have more responsibility for preparing children academically, while parents have more responsibility for children’s physical, social, and emotional health. All three groups of respondents identified “teaching children pre-math skills,” “teaching children to recognize and say the letters of the alphabet,” and “teaching children how to write their names” as primarily the responsibility of *teachers*. All three groups also identified “playing with children regularly” and “making sure children are physically healthy” as primarily *parents’* responsibility.

⁶¹ The scale used in this survey did not have a middle category for “equal responsibility,” but a number of respondents checked two items symmetrically (e.g., “mostly parents” and “mostly teachers”), which suggests to us that they believed parents and teachers were equally responsible. The four items that were most often modified in this way concerned reading to children regularly (29 respondents), teaching children to make choices (23), and teaching children to pay attention (22) and teaching children to get along with others (22).

Table 30. Respondents' Beliefs about Roles and Responsibilities of Parents and Teachers in Preparing Children for School

Statement	All Respondents (N=215)		Prekindergarten Teachers (n=92)		Kindergarten Teachers (n=84)		Administrators (n=39)	
	% Parents	% Teachers	% Parents	% Teachers	% Parents	% Teachers	% Parents	% Teachers
Making sure children are physically healthy	97	3	94	7	100	0	97	3
Playing with children regularly***	88	12	75	25	94	6	97	3
Caring for children's social and emotional needs**	82	18	69	31	88	12	94	6
Teaching children to get along with others**	77	23	64	36	87	13	83	17
Reading to children regularly**	69	32	53	47	80	21	76	24
Teaching children to pay attention**	63	37	48	52	70	30	78	22
Teaching children to make choices***	62	38	39	61	83	17	n/a ^b	n/a
Teaching children to follow directions***	58	43	42	58	72	28	n/a	n/a
Teaching children how to write their names	34	67	30	70	37	63	33	67
Teaching children to recognize and say the letters of the alphabet ^c	28	72	21	79	32	68	32	68
Teaching children pre-math skills**	26	75	13	87	35	65	28	72

^a A 4-point rating scale was used, in which 1= *mostly parents*, 2=*more parents than teachers*, 3=*more teachers than parents*, and 4=*mostly teachers' responsibility*. In this table, "parents" combines the two responses, "mostly parents" and "more parents than teachers," and "teachers" combines the two responses, "more teachers than parents" and "mostly teachers."

^b Administrators were not asked: "Teaching children to make choices" or "Teaching children to follow directions."

^c Administrators' survey used the phrase "Teaching children the alphabet" instead.

Chi-square tests: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, or *** $p < .001$.

Generally, respondents also believed responsibilities for “caring for children’s social and emotional needs” and “teaching children to get along with others” lay more with parents than with teachers. However, in these areas and other areas of social and emotional development, prekindergarten teachers were more likely to believe parents and teachers were jointly responsible for children’s development, while administrators and kindergarten teachers were more likely to believe they were the responsibility of parents.

In addition, kindergarten and prekindergarten teachers differed sharply in their views of responsibility for “teaching children to make choices” and “teaching children to follow directions” (two items that were not asked of administrators). Whereas kindergarten teachers regarded these traits to be the responsibility of parents, prekindergarten teachers considered them the responsibility of both teachers and parents.

Summary of Beliefs about School Readiness

The results presented in this chapter and the previous section on the views of parents of ECCI children indicate that the people involved in the implementation of prekindergarten programs—both ECCI and VPK—in Palm Beach County have a range of beliefs about children’s school readiness and appropriate learning experiences for young children. A majority of respondents acknowledged the importance of social and emotional competencies related to learning. However, kindergarten teachers and parents, in particular, placed more emphasis on traditional school-related activities and academic preparation than on the value of preschool for developing social interaction skills, verbal abilities, and behaviors such as self-control and attention that would support their learning in school.⁶² They conveyed that in order to prepare children for school, the preschool curriculum should mirror what children would experience later in kindergarten rather than what would be appropriate to their current levels of development and ways of learning. Thus, they doubted that the High/Scope curriculum, to the extent they understood it, would adequately prepare their children for kindergarten. Although administrators were less critical of the curriculum overall, some agreed with kindergarten teachers and parents that children needed to experience more teacher-directed activities and have fewer choices in their play and learning experiences. Most of the prekindergarten staff supported the curriculum they were using and thought their children would be prepared for kindergarten. Still, some expressed concern that it would be a difficult transition for children because of the discontinuities between their preschool and kindergarten experiences.

The more parents, teachers, and administrators share common understanding of the characteristics and dispositions children will need when they enter school, the more likely they will be to foster similar kinds of characteristics and behaviors. Common understandings of school readiness and appropriate curriculum can help to build strong relationships between parents and school staff and make children’s transition to school a positive experience for both children and families. In addition, the beliefs of administrators and kindergarten teachers are likely to influence the support provided to the prekindergarten program and staff.

⁶² Survey results reported by West et al. (1993) also indicated that parents were more likely than kindergarten teachers to stress the importance of traditional school activities over social and emotional competencies.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FIRST ECCI GRADUATES: SCHOOL READINESS AND BEHAVIOR

Though the primary objective in the second year of the ECCI evaluation was to examine the implementation of the ECCI program, we also conducted an initial analysis of outcomes for children who were enrolled in ECCI in 2005-2006 and remained in the School District of Palm Beach County for kindergarten in 2006-2007. In addition to demographic information, available data included the results of two rating scales completed by kindergarten teachers in the fall of the kindergarten year, the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screen (FLKRS) and the Teacher-Child Rating Scale (T-CRS) for social and emotional competencies. Also available were behavioral data from the School District administrative records of school absences and referrals for disciplinary action during the kindergarten year. For each of these measures, we compared the results of children who completed ECCI prekindergarten in the spring of 2006 (its first year) and enrolled in that school's kindergarten in the fall of 2006 with other kindergarten children in the same schools and in other schools in the school district. Our findings are necessarily limited, since without comparable baseline measures for these groups of children we cannot conclude that any differences between the groups are indicators of program effects.

Mobility and Demographic Characteristics

A total of 310 (91%) of the 339 ECCI students from 2005-2006 school year were located in the school district's database for 2006-2007. Of the 310 children, 104 were still in preschool and 206 were in kindergarten. Among the kindergartners, 154 (75%) remained in the same schools for kindergarten, 5 (2%) moved to another ECCI school in the district, and the remaining 47 (23%) moved to another, non-ECCI school.⁶³

As indicated in Table 31, children who completed the first year of the ECCI program were similar in their demographic characteristics to the current group of kindergarten children in the ECCI school-based sites (see Tables 2 and 31) but different from kindergarten children in other schools in the School District. Most (97%) of the kindergartners in the ECCI cohort were from minority ethnic backgrounds, in contrast to 61% of kindergartners at other schools in the district. Nearly all of the ECCI kindergartners (94%) were eligible for free or reduced-cost lunch, whereas only half of the kindergartners at other schools in the District were eligible. Just over half (51%) of the children in the ECCI cohort were male.

⁶³ Among the 104 preschool children who were still in Palm Beach County, 101 (97%) remained in the same ECCI school, and 1 (1%) moved to another ECCI school, and 2 (2%) moved to another non-ECCI school in the district.

Table 31. Demographic Characteristics of Kindergarten Children at ECCI Schools, 2006-2007 School Year^a

School	N	Race/Ethnicity				% Free/Reduced Lunch	Gender	
		% White	% Black	% Hispanic	% Other		% Female	% Male
Barton	90	10	53	33	3	96	41	59
Forest Park	60	8	60	25	7	90	57	43
Lantana	61	26	34	30	10	69	41	59
Northmore	95	3	78	16	3	93	49	50
Pahokee	47	2	78	21	-	93	43	57
Pioneer Park	52	2	79	19	-	100	55	45
Pleasant City	47	2	91	4	2	96	45	55
Village Academy	65	-	82	17	2	97	52	48
Washington	68	-	89	3	8	91	44	56
West Riviera	100	-	94	5	1	92	47	53
ECCI Schools (excluding ECCI population)	686	5	74	17	4	92	47	53
ECCI Schools (including ECCI population)	845	5	74	18	3	92	48	52
ECCI Graduates at ECCI Schools	159	4	72	21	4	95	50	50
All ECCI Graduates ^b	206	3	73	19	4	94	49	51
Kindergartners at All Other Schools in PBC ^c	12,113	39	25	27	9	50	48	52
All Kindergarten Children in PBC School District	12,958	37	28	26	9	53	48	52

^a Source: School District database for 2006-2007, as of May 2007 and August 2007. These numbers only reflect the children active at the end of the 2006-07 school year.

^b The number of children enrolled in ECCI in 2005-2006 who could be located in the school district database in 2006-2007; this includes ECCI graduates in any school in the School District (forty-seven children moved from ECCI to non-ECCI schools).

^c Includes children who moved from ECCI to non-ECCI schools.

School Readiness Measures

Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screen (FLKRS)

The FLKRS is administered within the first 30 days of kindergarten and covers seven developmental domains—language and literacy, mathematics, social and personal skills, science, social studies, physical health and fitness, and creative arts—that align with the VPK Education Standards. It includes two sets of measures. The first is a subset of the Early Childhood Observation System (ECHOS), an observational instrument that is used to monitor the skills, knowledge, and behaviors a student demonstrates or needs to develop. Children’s total scores on the ECHOS fall into one of three readiness categories—*not yet demonstrating*, *emerging/progressing*, or *consistently demonstrating*—with the latter two indicative of readiness. The other measure is made up of two measures from the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills

(DIBELS), Letter Naming Fluency (LNF) and Initial Sound Fluency (ISF). The LNF and ISF each use a four-point rating scale, on which readiness is determined to be either *above average* or *low risk* (on grade level) as opposed to *moderate risk* or *high risk*.⁶⁴

ECHOS results were available for 158 of the 206 ECCI graduates who entered kindergarten in the District in 2006. As shown in Table 32 a large majority (89%) of the children were considered “ready” for kindergarten as determined by a rating of either *consistently demonstrating* or *emerging/progressing*. These results are similar to those for the state of Florida as a whole (86%) and somewhat better than those of other kindergarten children at these ECCI schools (83%). On the highest measure (*consistently demonstrating*), 41 percent of the children who had been in ECCI and 36 percent of other kindergarten children scored *consistently demonstrating* on the ECHOS. These results compare to 43 percent for all other kindergartners in the School District of Palm Beach County.

Table 32. Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screen ECHOS Results, Fall 2006

Sample Group ^a	N	ECHOS Overall Score		
		% Consistently Demonstrating	% Emerging/ Progressing	% Not Yet Demonstrating
Kindergartners at ECCI Schools Who Attended ECCI Pre-K	158	41	48	11
Other Kindergartners at ECCI Schools	603	36	50	15
Kindergartners at All Other PBC Schools ^b	10,437	44	39	17
All Kindergartners in PBC	11,198	43	40	17
State of Florida ^c	184,124	42	44	14

^aECHOS results could not be found for one of the 159 children remaining in the ECCI schools.

^bIncludes 47 ECCI children who moved to other, non-ECCI schools in the School District

^cFlorida Department of Education Memorandum dated December 8, 2006

On the two DIBELS measures, a larger proportion of children who were in the ECCI program in 2005-2006 scored *above average* than other kindergartners at the same ECCI school. For the DIBELS Letter Naming Fluency measure, the proportion was 52 percent vs. 45 percent. For the DIBELS-Initial Sound Fluency, it was 43 percent vs. 29 percent. As with the ECHOS subset, on average, the results for ECCI children were a little lower than the results for other kindergartners in the School District of Palm Beach County. (See Figures 2 and 3 and Table 33.)

⁶⁴ Florida Department of Education Memorandum from John L. Winn to District School Superintendents, December 8, 2006. Fall 2006 was the first year the ECHOS was administered, and the third year that the DIBELS was given as part of Florida’s kindergarten screening.

Figure 2. Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screen ECHOS Results, Fall 2006

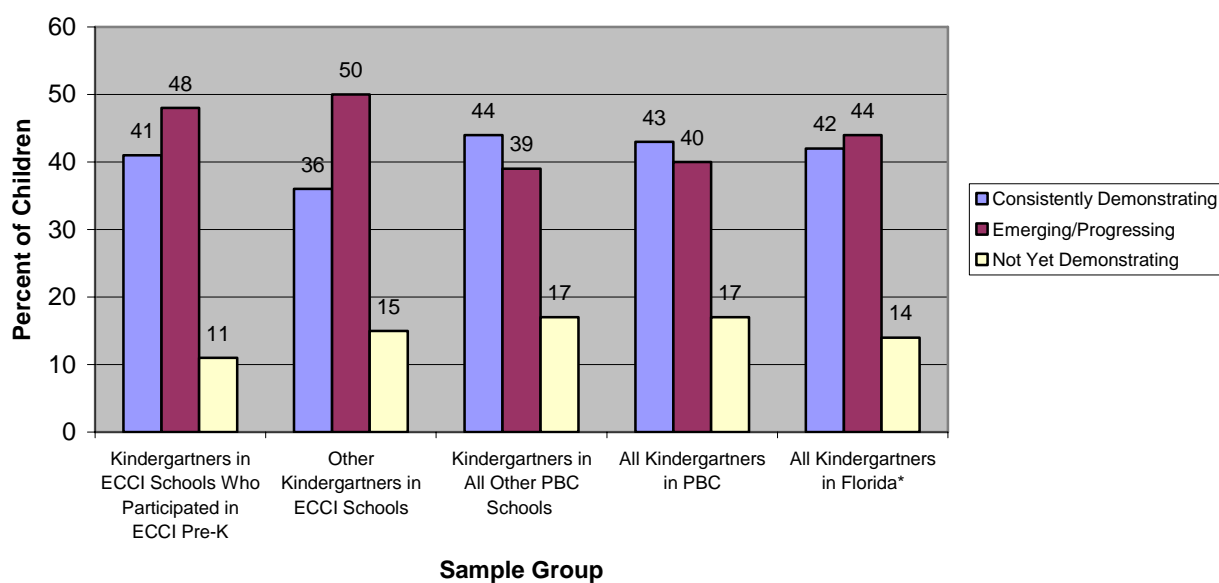


Table 33. Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screen DIBELS Results, Fall 2006

Sample Group ^a	DIBELS-Letter Naming Fluency				
	N	% Above Average	% Low Risk	% Moderate Risk	% High Risk
Kindergartners at ECCI Schools Who Attended ECCI Pre-K	157	52	15	18	15
Other Kindergartners at ECCI Schools	601	45	14	17	25
Kindergartners at All Other PBC Schools ^b	20,253	61	12	12	15
All Kindergartners in PBC	11,011	64	13	13	17
State of Florida ^c	182,278	56	14	14	16

Sample Group	DIBELS-Initial Sound Fluency				
	N	% Above Average	% Low Risk	% Moderate Risk	% High Risk
Kindergartners at ECCI Schools Who Attended ECCI Pre-K	155	43	21	17	19
Other Kindergartners at ECCI Schools	592	29	19	21	31
Kindergartners at All Other PBC Schools ^b	9,900	47	19	17	17
All Kindergartners in PBC	10,647	50	20	18	19
State of Florida ^c	176,957	44	19	19	18

^a Of the 159 children remaining in the ECCI schools, DIBELS LNF results were available for 157 children, and ISF results for 155.

^b Includes 47 ECCI children who moved to other, non-ECCI schools in the School District

^c Florida Department of Education Memorandum dated December 8, 2006

Figure 3. Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screen DIBELS Letter Naming Fluency Results, Fall 2006

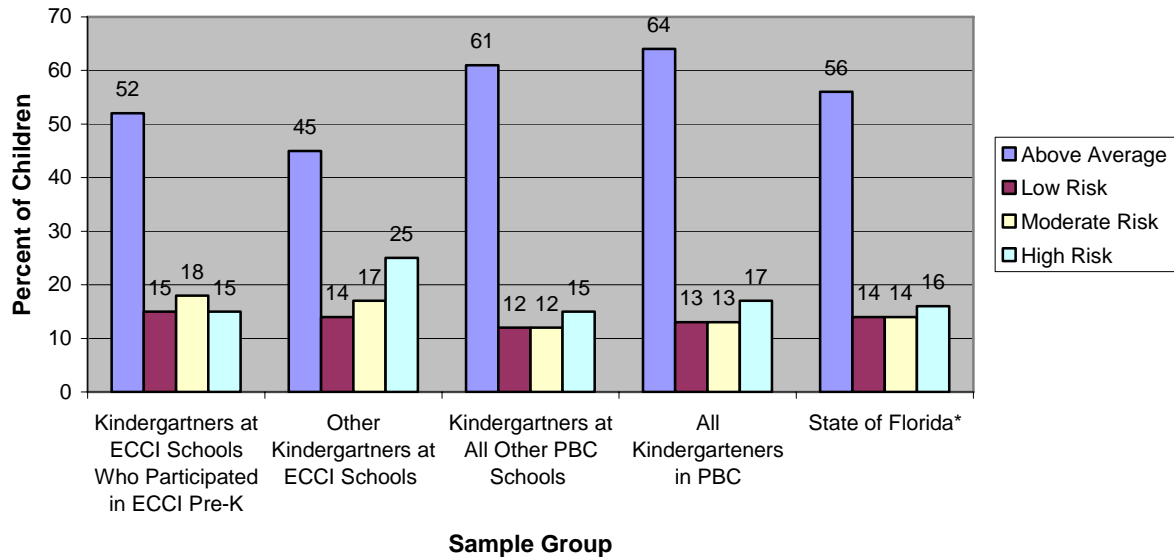
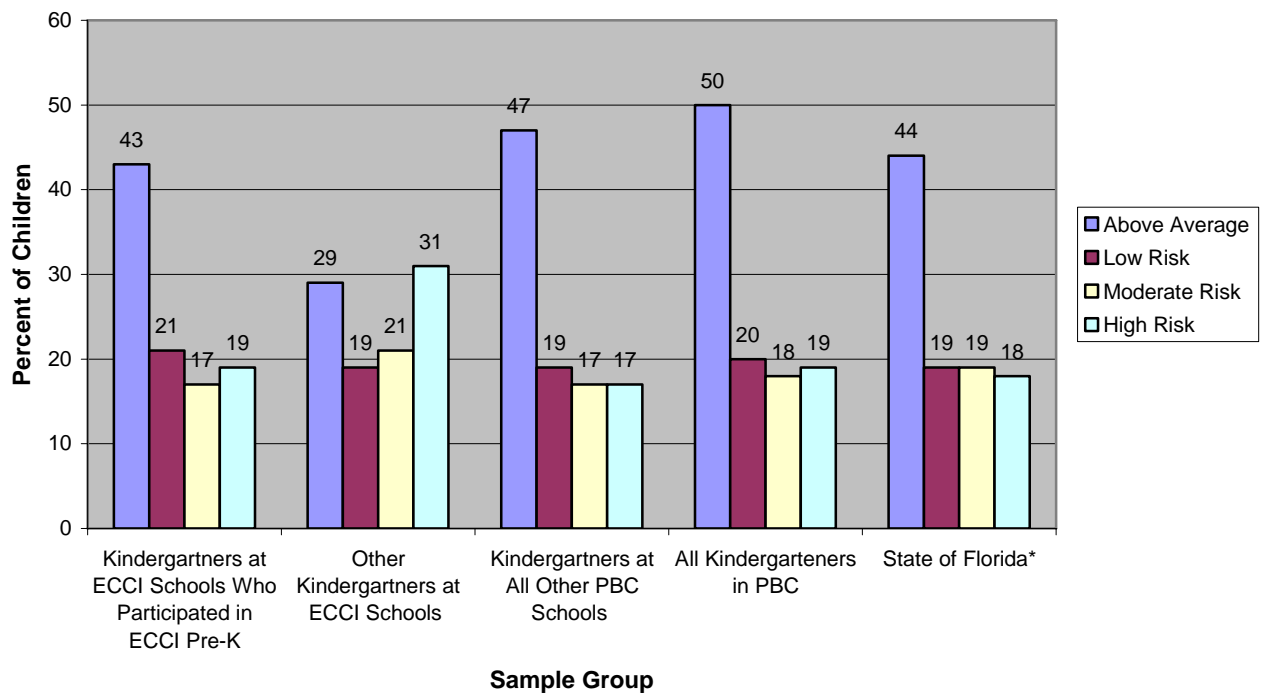


Figure 4. Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screen DIBELS Initial Sound Fluency Results, Fall 2006



T-CRS Results

The Teacher-Child Rating Scale (T-CRS), developed by the Children’s Institute in Rochester, New York (Perkins & Hightower, 2001), is one of the tools used by the Behavioral Health Program to screen, identify, and refer children who may have social, emotional, and behavioral problems. The Behavioral Health Program is currently implemented in forty-six elementary schools in Palm Beach County, including the ten ECCI school-based sites. Most of these schools are in the TGAs. The T-CRS observational rating scale was designed specifically for teachers to assess children’s school-related competencies and problem behaviors soon after they enter kindergarten and at the beginning of first grade.

The T-CRS assesses four domains relevant to a child’s socioemotional adjustment. *Assertiveness* measures interpersonal functioning and confidence in dealing with peers. *Behavior control* assesses skill in tolerating and adapting to limits existing in the school environment. *Peer socialization* measures how well the child interacts with peers as well as the child’s likeability and popularity among peers. *Task orientation* assesses a child’s ability to focus on school-related tasks. The observation ratings provided by teachers are converted to a percentile score for each domain. A child can be categorized as in need of supportive services if T-CRS percentile scores are 30 or below in any of the four domains. A high score on a T-CRS domain can indicate a child’s competency or strength. Children with T-CRS scores at the 50th percentile or above are considered to have above-average social, emotional, or academic competencies and to be less likely to need supportive services. Percentile scoring provided by the Children’s Institute is based on norms from a nationally representative sample and shows where a particular child ranks in comparison to similar children (Perkins & Hightower, 2001)

Results of the fall 2006 screening of kindergartners are presented in Table 34. Teachers gave children who attended ECCI in 2005-2006 and remained in ECCI schools the highest ratings, on average, in the area of *assertiveness* and the lowest ratings in the area of *behavior control* in the fall 2006 screening. The mean ratings for ECCI graduates were higher in three of the four domains than those of their peers at the ECCI schools and equivalent in the fourth domain.

Table 34. T-CRS Results for Kindergarten Children, Fall 2006

Sample Group ^a	N	% Low T-CRS (≤ 30)	Mean T-CRS Score (sd)			
			Assertiveness	Behavior Control	Peer Socialization	Task Orientation
Kindergartners at ECCI Schools Who Attended ECCI Pre-K ^b	144	44	63.0 (22.3)	50.6 (29.9)	58.9 (28.5)	58.1 (28.8)
Other Kindergartners at ECCI Schools	564	47	60.5 (30.4)	50.7 (30.7)	56.8 (30.3)	54.9 (30.7)
Kindergartners at All Other PBC Schools ^c	4,186	48	59.8 (30.6)	54.8 (32.0)	59.2 (30.9)	55.2 (29.5)
All Kindergartners in PBC	4,897	47	59.9 (30.5)	54.2 (31.8)	58.9 (30.8)	55.2 (29.6)

^a Not all of the ECCI cohort was screened with the T-CRS; results were available for 144 (91%) of the 159 children who remained at ECCI schools for kindergarten.

^b May include ECCI children who moved to other, non-ECCI schools in the School District

Forty-four percent of the ECCI graduates received a low T-CRS score of 30 or below on at least one behavioral domain in the fall screening. As shown in Table 34, this percentage was slightly lower than the percentage of other kindergartners screened (47-48%).⁶⁵

The relationship between the various measures of school readiness represented by the FLKRS and T-CRS screening instruments is also of interest. Appendix F presents the results of an analysis of the ECHOS, DIBELS, and T-CRS results for children who were enrolled in ECCI in 2005-2006 and other kindergartners who were screened with the T-CRS. These results suggest that children who were screened as ready for school on the ECHOS with ratings of either *consistently demonstrating* or *emerging/progressing* were less likely to have a low-T-CRS score than children rated *not yet demonstrating* on the ECHOS. Children who were screened as *above average* or *low risk* on the two DIBELS scales were also less likely to have a low-T-CRS score than children screened as *moderate risk* or *high risk*.

School District Behavioral Data

Absence Data

School attendance is one indicator of children's connection to school. Although research on the effects of repeated absences on elementary school children is limited, it is generally recognized that chronic absenteeism from school in middle and high school students is associated with poorer school behavior and educational outcomes (Romero & Lee, 2007). A recent brief, based on an analysis of data from parent surveys in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study Kindergarten cohort study, reports a significant level of absenteeism in the early school years particularly among low-income children. On average, children in kindergarten missed 5 days of school, but the average among children from families who were below 100 percent of the federal poverty level was 6.7 days. Furthermore, greater absenteeism in kindergarten was associated with lower achievement at the end of first grade (Romero & Lee, 2007).

We analyzed administrative data on school attendance from the school district administrative database to compare the attendance of kindergarten children who participated in ECCI during 2005-2006 with the attendance of other kindergarten children in the District. As presented in Table 35 and Figure 5, the rates of absenteeism because of illness among children who attended the ECCI program were comparable to that of other kindergartners at the same schools. However, when compared to all kindergarten children in the Palm Beach County School District, children who had been in the ECCI program were, on average, less likely to be absent for reasons of illness.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ These results are comparable to the T-CRS screening of kindergartners at schools implementing the Behavior al Health program in 2003-2004 (Spielberger, Haywood, Schuerman *et. al*, 2005). Mean scores for all schools ranged from 51.3 to 62.4 across the four domains, with higher mean scores in the areas of assertiveness and peer socialization. In addition, a somewhat higher percentage (50%) of the children who were screened in 2003 had low T-CRS scores in at least one domain than the percentage (44%) kindergartners who had been enrolled in ECCI.

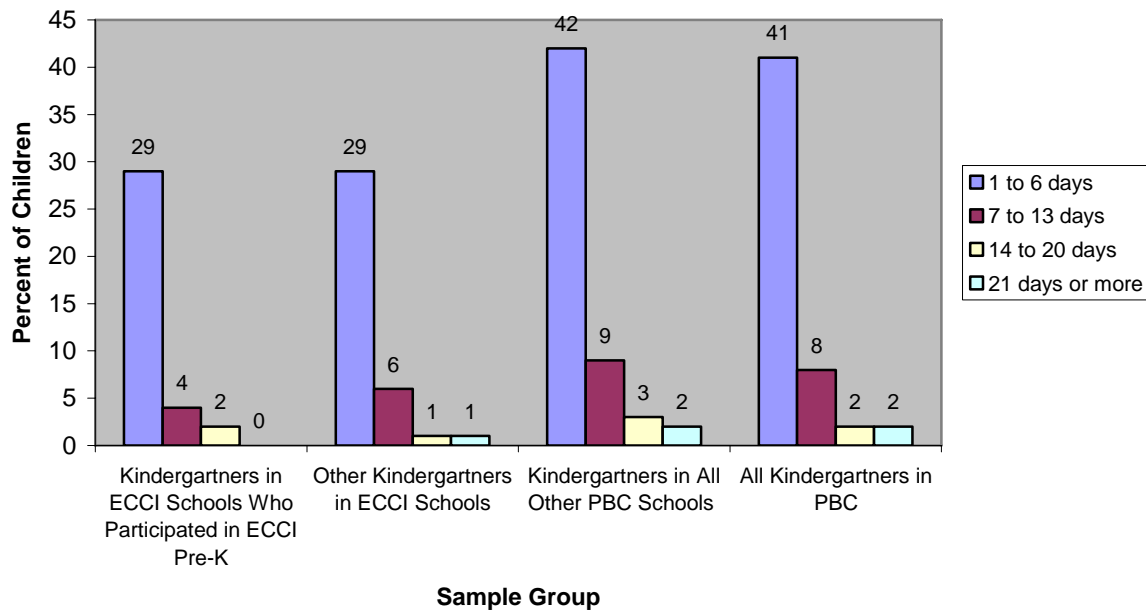
⁶⁶ We also attempted to analyze data on absences for reasons other than illness, but were unable to verify the accuracy of these data so do not present them here.

Table 35. Days Absent Because of Illness for Kindergarten Children, 2006-2007^a

Sample Group	N	1 to 6 days	7 to 13 days	14 to 20 days	21 days or more	Mean (sd)
Kindergartners in ECCI Schools Who Attended ECCI Pre-K	159	28	4	2	0	1.4 (3.0)
Other Kindergartners in ECCI Schools	686	29	6	1	1	1.6 (4.0)
Kindergartners in All Other PBC Schools	12,113	42	9	3	2	2.9(5.6)
All Kindergartners in PBC	12,958	41	8	2	2	2.8(5.5)

^a Excludes days absent for other reasons (administrative, suspension, other, and unknown)

Figure 5. Days Absent Because of Illness for Kindergarten Children, 2006-2007



Disciplinary Referrals

Disciplinary referrals are another measure of children’s adjustment to the school setting, and children in the ECCI program compare favorably with their kindergarten peers. In the School District of Palm Beach County, disciplinary referrals are categorized in levels ranging from 1 to 4, where 1 represents the least serious referral. In general, only a small number of kindergarten children receive any disciplinary referrals, and most were categorized as levels 1 and 2, which includes such incidents as habitual tardiness, disruptive behavior, and repeated insubordination. When comparing the proportion of children who had *any* disciplinary referrals in kindergarten, Table 36 indicates that ECCI children were referred less often than their ECCI kindergarten peers (5% vs. 9%). Likewise, the *rate* of disciplinary referrals among ECCI children (including

multiple referrals for individual children) was lower than that of other kindergartners at ECCI schools (7% vs. 20%).

In addition, the rate of disciplinary referrals among kindergarten children who had been in the ECCI program (7%) was slightly less than the rate for kindergartners at other schools in the school district (9%). The percentage of children with disciplinary referrals in the group of ECCI graduates (5%) was comparable to the percentage for kindergarten children at other schools in the District (4%).

Table 36. Disciplinary Referrals for Kindergarten Children, 2006-2007

Sample Group	<i>N</i>	Total Number/ Percent of Children with Referrals ^a	Total Number/ Percent of Referrals ^b
Kindergartners in ECCI Schools Who Attended ECCI Pre-K	159	8 (5%)	12 (7%)
Other Kindergartners in ECCI Schools	686	63 (9%)	160 (20%)
Kindergartners in All Other PBC Schools	12,113	487 (4%)	1,093 (9%)
All Kindergartners in PBC	12,958	558 (4%)	1,265 (9%)

^a The total number of children with one or more disciplinary actions.

^b The number of total disciplinary actions, which includes children who received more than one referral.

Summary of Characteristics of the First ECCI Graduates

The results presented in this chapter describe the sample of kindergarten children who attended the first year of the ECCI school-based program in 2005-2006. Although demographically different, kindergarten children who were enrolled in the ECCI program the previous year were, overall, similar to other kindergartners in the School District of Palm Beach County in terms of their school readiness. On some measures of school readiness scores, ECCI children were rated more highly than other kindergartners at the same schools, although without comparable baseline measures for these groups of children, we cannot attribute differences among them to the effects of the ECCI program. In addition, there is some indication that ECCI children who remained in the ECCI schools had somewhat lower rates of disciplinary referrals than other kindergartners at the same schools. They also had somewhat lower rates of absenteeism because of illness than kindergarten children at other schools in Palm Beach County.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

During 2006-2007, the ECCI program continued in twenty classrooms in ten Title I schools. In addition, the program was newly implemented in a community-based child care center serving infants, toddlers, and older preschool children. All of the schools also housed Beacon Centers, in an effort to foster families' relationships with their children's schools and link them to supports (e.g., after-school activities) that would continue after children entered kindergarten. The community center was also located close to a school with a Beacon Center. Additional supports, including health and developmental screening and service referrals, were provided to children and families through the Health Care District's Comprehensive Services program.

At each of the school-based sites, program activities were conducted by a team consisting of a certified teacher and two Early Learning Associates with at least a CDA credential. Each classroom had no more than eighteen children, resulting in a low teacher-child ratio of 1:6. Three- and 4-year-old children residing in the school attendance area were eligible to enroll in the program, with two-thirds of the slots reserved for 4-year-old children. Along with their work with children, teachers also provided lending libraries, parent-child activities in the classroom, meetings, and workshops for parents. At the community center, the teacher-child ratios were somewhat higher. In addition, a full-time Parent Volunteer Coordinator came on board during the second year to work intensely with a few sites to increase parent participation in the program.

The primary goals for the second year were to more firmly establish the High/Scope curriculum at the ECCI sites with ongoing training and on-site technical assistance provided by resource teachers—especially because of considerable turnover in staff from the first to the second year. Other goals were to continue to build relationships with children's families and increase their involvement in classroom and school activities, and to strengthen relationships and communication between ECCI managers and staff and school administrators, Beacon Center directors, and other support staff.

Interviews and surveys with a range of ECCI stakeholders and a review of ECCI documents revealed that understanding of and support for these goals as well as the strategies of the initiative remained high overall in the second year. This understanding and support was not uniform across sites and participants, however. Thus, during the second year, ECCI program administrators took on as a key task to identify and address specific challenges to implementation quality. In some cases this meant working to improve existing processes, and in other cases it led administrators to eliminate elements of the program. Financial constraints, declines in demand, and existing contractual obligations also shaped implementation decisions.

Program Implementation: School-Based Sites

The ECCI program at the School District continued to evolve in critical ways during the second year. Although initial plans called for the ECCI program to support a "cluster" of child care and developmental services used by children between the ages of 0 and 5, this plan was modified during the second year. The effort to implement school-based ECCI programs by fiat

with principals was reconsidered and refashioned as a specific, but voluntary contract with a smaller set of schools and classrooms. A new relationship with another local organization supplemented the use of the Comprehensive Services program to provide key supports to children with behavioral problems. The effort to build stronger relationships with parents was reconfigured and staffed with a Parent Volunteer Coordinator who worked with a few pilot schools intensively and more broadly with parents at other ECCI schools. The program trimmed staff and activities such as winter camp, concentrating its effort and resources on more visibly successful activities.

Many more ideas were considered for how ECCI would evolve as it entered its third year, but then rejected during the second year. For example, a plan to reduce the hours of the program was floated, but dismissed as too costly and complicated. Teachers who had a contract to work during the summer rejected a plan to cut summer camp during the second year was rejected by teachers who had a contract to work during those weeks. A Parents as Teachers home visiting program that would have added staff to serve as parent educators was considered for the third year but not pursued. In all, these changes point to continuing efforts during the second year to streamline the program and focus on strategies that appear to be the most productive, while also initiating new efforts, such as the Parent Volunteer Coordinator position, to meet basic program goals. As the program enters its third year, it operates as a simpler and more targeted effort.

Program Quality

Despite considerable turnover in staff from the first to second year, the High/Scope curriculum model became more established in the ten school-based sites in the second year. This accomplishment appeared to be the result of classroom training provided for teachers new to the program, greater experience, understanding and practice among staff, and on-site technical assistance provided by resource teachers to all teachers. Although classrooms varied in their quality, the mean scores on the PQA assessments in the four subscales either increased or were maintained. Particularly strong areas on the PQA included the establishment of a consistent daily routine with a variety of individual, small group, and large group activities, a room arrangement and schedule that gives children opportunities to initiate their own activities, and teamwork among teachers in the classroom. Teachers were viewed as warm and caring and engaged with children in their activities.

The domain of Curriculum Planning and Assessment showed substantial improvement, including anecdotal note-taking and the use of the COR for observing and planning for children. There was some variability across the ECCI classrooms in this area, however, as a small number of teachers continued to evidence difficulty in implementing this component. Other areas in which the PQA results indicated need for improvement included facilities and equipment for outdoor play and providing children more choices during transition times. Both of these areas may be difficult to change, however, because of the facilities, structures, and schedules of the schools where the ECCI program operates.

Finally, a notable accomplishment was that four teachers received High/Scope certification. In addition, most ECCI classrooms again received high scores on the ECERS-R,

the instrument used in the Palm Beach County QIS to measure the use of developmentally appropriate practices.

School Staff Views

The three groups of staff surveyed in the second year expressed satisfaction with several elements of the ECCI program, particularly the connections to social services, but also the overall goals and philosophy of the ECCI program. Nonetheless, there was dissatisfaction, especially among kindergarten teachers, with several elements of the program. Two-thirds (67%) of the kindergarten teachers, 40 percent of the administrators, and 26 percent of the prekindergarten teachers said they were *dissatisfied* or *very dissatisfied* overall with the curriculum. Similar percentages were skeptical about the impact of the program on children's school readiness. Although only a quarter of the prekindergarten staff were dissatisfied with the High/Scope curriculum, a little more than half (53%) did not think it prepared children well for kindergarten. Based on explanatory comments from some of these teachers, we interpret these responses to mean that they do not believe the curriculum prepares children well for the kind of kindergarten curriculum they were likely to experience at their schools. Moreover, 62 percent did not think parents understood the curriculum and 34 percent did not think their administrators understood it.

These results suggest that despite the progress in implementing High/Scope evidenced in aggregate PQA results, considerable variability still exists in the quality of implementation and in support for the curriculum at the end of the second year. This variability in implementation is not surprising, given the ambitions of the program and turnover in staff between the first and second years. Teachers were still learning the High/Scope approach, which, for at least half of the sample, is viewed as different from their previous training. Indeed, High/Scope trainers emphasize that it can take between 3 and 5 years for teachers to fully understand and be able to consistently practice the principles of High/Scope. At the same time, it is important to recognize that the level of teachers' knowledge of the curriculum and their ability to explain and interpret it to parents, administrators, and kindergarten teachers may, in turn, influence the level of their knowledge of and support for the curriculum. Thus, it is critical that efforts continue to strengthen teacher training and program implementation and to help parents and other school staff understand how the curriculum prepares children for school.

Parent Involvement and Perspectives

Parents are an important component of ECCI, and implementation during the second year expanded to support their greater understanding and involvement. With increased support from a Parent Volunteer Coordinator, new roles were generated for parents at a pilot site, and new levels of parent involvement were reached. At the same time, the model created in one site was not easily applied to a second site, and at a third site the absence of active support translated into limited activity. At the end of the second year, ECCI refocused on refining the right mix of intensive support with the promise of sustainability.

In focus groups, parents expressed overall satisfaction with the ECCI program, though some identified specific concerns and articulated a general view of preschool that might be

thought of as “mini” rather than “pre” kindergarten. Such a view assumes that in order to prepare for kindergarten, children should engage in activities that mimic the next stage of education. As one parent suggested, preschool children should get homework periodically to “get them ready” for kindergarten. This concept of prekindergarten de-emphasizes the developmental nature of learning, and characterizes preschool as a chance to practice what children may experience in a kindergarten class, rather than pursue the content that may best prepare them to handle the content of kindergarten in the future. Thus, some parents saw “play” as separate from learning, rather than part of it, or simply something that children “do” without beneficial consequences.

Of course, parents also have various ideas about what is important for school readiness, and they have different levels of knowledge about what schools expect for children to be considered ready. Several Spanish-speaking parents, in particular, noted that they had a hard time understanding what they should focus upon since they didn’t know what would be expected. Thus, it appears that parents need more information about the specific High/Scope curriculum that is central to ECCI, but also about developmentally appropriate practice and how play and self-directed activities under the guidance of adults can contribute to children’s development, learning, and readiness for kindergarten. This suggests that an ongoing task for ECCI will be finding ways to increase parent involvement and education.

Program Implementation: Community-Based Site

Adding a community-based child care center to ECCI that served infants and toddlers was an important part of the original program design. The process of selecting the site, which we call the West Palm Center in this report, began in the first year. Site selection took some time since the ECCI funders and management recognized that it was important to select a site with stable staffing and funding, a baseline of quality, and a location in close proximity to a school with a Beacon Center. West Palm Center met these criteria, which included participating in the Quality Improvement System (QIS), and was a Department of Children and Families “Gold Seal” quality child care center.

Despite the careful selection process, there were a number of unforeseen challenges in implementing ECCI in the community child care center. These included the difficulty of communication between school-based staff and center staff, the lack of training and support for implementing the High/Scope at curriculum in the infant and toddler classrooms, and insufficient funding for the same staffing levels as the school-based sites. Although progress was made in implementing High/Scope at the center, it was slower than the ECCI leadership had hoped for. As a result, a decision was made at the end of the second year to move the center from the ECCI program but continue to support its implementation of the High/Scope curriculum and its participation in the QIS.

School Readiness and Behavioral Data of ECCI Graduates

Though the primary objective in the second year of the ECCI evaluation was to examine the implementation of the ECCI program, we also conducted an initial analysis of outcomes for children who were enrolled in ECCI in 2005-2006 and remained in the School District of Palm

Beach County for kindergarten in 2006-2007. Available data included demographic information, the results of the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screen (FLKRS), the results of the Teacher-Child Rating Scale (T-CRS), which is used by the Behavioral Health Program to assess social and emotional competencies, and School District administrative data on school absences and disciplinary referrals. For each of these measures, we compared the results of children who completed ECCI prekindergarten in the spring of 2006 (its first year) and enrolled in that school's kindergarten in the fall of 2006 with other kindergarten children in the same schools and in other schools in the school district.

The FLKRS scores of children who graduated from the ECCI program and entered kindergarten in the School District in 2006 indicated that a large majority (89%) were "ready" for kindergarten based on the ECHOS portion of the state screen. Their results were similar to those for the state of Florida as a whole (86%) and somewhat better than other kindergarten children at these ECCI schools (83%). On the DIBELS letter naming and letter sound measures, their average scores of the ECCI graduates were above those of other kindergarten children at the ECCI schools, and a little lower than the results for other kindergartners at other schools in the district.

In addition, forty-four percent of the ECCI graduates received a low T-CRS score of 30 or below on at least one behavioral domain in the fall screening. This percentage was slightly lower than the percentage of other kindergartners screened (47-48%). Although only a small percentage of kindergarten children received disciplinary referrals, ECCI children were referred less often than their peers at the ECCI schools. Likewise, the *rate* of disciplinary referrals among ECCI children (including multiple referrals for individual children) was lower than that of other kindergartners at ECCI schools. The disciplinary referral results for children who had been in the ECCI program were comparable to the results for kindergarten children at other schools in the District.

These results suggest that kindergarten children who were enrolled in the ECCI program the previous year were, using available measures, comparable to other kindergartners in the school district in terms of their school readiness screen results and behavior in kindergarten—even though demographic information indicated a higher proportion of low-income children and ethnic minorities in the ECCI sample. On one of the school readiness measures, ECCI children scored higher than other kindergartners at the same schools. However, it must be emphasized that we do not have necessary baseline measures for any of these groups of children. Therefore, we cannot conclude that any differences or lack thereof between the groups are indicators of program effects.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In our 2006 report on the first year of ECCI implementation, we identified a range of accomplishments and specific challenges for the project as it moved into its second year. The accomplishments included generally high levels of support for the goals and ECCI activities among stakeholders, high levels of student enrollment, and progress in implementing the High/Scope curriculum in classrooms. The challenges we identified included the complexity of the curriculum and the likelihood that teachers would require several years to master it,

including the use the Child Observation Record as a tool for assessment and planning; teacher turnover; lack of communication, clarity or agreement between the ECCI program and key partners such as schools, Beacon Centers, and parents; struggles to build teacher teamwork; and the incomplete implementation of components such as support for parent involvement, implementation of the program in a community-based setting, and referrals to Comprehensive Services for child and family supports.

In the second year, ECCI actively worked to improve its operation in many areas, and our research expanded to capture the increased breadth of ECCI and explore implementation in greater depth. Among these programmatic changes in the second year were the implementation of a staff position to support parent involvement in schools, the addition of a community-based center as a site for program implementation, and the renegotiation of the working relationship between ECCI classrooms and Beacon Centers. Furthermore, in an effort to continue the program schools that were most likely to succeed in meeting High/Scope certification, an application process was put in place to specify expectations for schools and obtain input from principals about their interest in continuing the program at their schools. ECCI continued to provide training and support to teachers and the resource teachers who, in turn, support them.

By the end of its second year, the program had sharpened its focus and limited its ambitions. ECCI had backed away from its initial vision to work with a “cluster” of providers providing child care and education to children from infancy through 5 years, preferring to concentrate upon a smaller number of school-based sites. Camp sessions that had been set up to provide opportunities for children during breaks in the school calendar (including summer) had either been cut or would be cut in the third year. The position of ECCI program manager was eliminated and responsibilities for overseeing the project put in the hands of an existing School District staff member. At the same time, attention to the effects of the program increased in the second year, prompted in part by the new and public presentation of school readiness scores for each of the ECCI (and VPK) programs. The program experienced greater calls for accountability from within and without.

In this new context, where the scope of the work has contracted but its stakes raised, we believe paying special attention to several particular areas during the third year of implementation will help improve the quality of operation, align the work with the stated goals of ECCI, and increase the likelihood that ECCI will benefit the children and families it serves. A primary need is to foster greater understanding and agreement among key participants, primarily parents, kindergarten teachers and administrators, about the High/Scope curriculum and the way it can meet school readiness expectations. Common understandings of school readiness and appropriate curriculum can help to build strong relationships between parents and school staff and make children’s transition to school a positive experience for both children and families. In addition, the beliefs of administrators and kindergarten teachers are likely to influence the support provided to the prekindergarten program and staff.

In practice, this may mean talking more frequently and more specifically about the issue of school readiness in existing ECCI forums (e.g., parent partnership meetings and school staff meetings) than in the past. It also may mean searching for other ways and venues to talk about this issue. Prekindergarten teachers, for example, may want to emphasize the importance of

social skills as preparation for kindergarten when they talk with parents even as they also explain how the curriculum links to gains in skills such as counting, learning the alphabet and other cognitive skills. Teachers may also need additional training and support in ways to communicate with parents about how the High/Scope curriculum prepares their children for kindergarten. Moreover, parents who are recent immigrants, in particular, may need additional information not only about the preschool curriculum but also about the expectations for their children when they enter kindergarten.

Second, ECCI should continue to find ways to expand training for ELAs in the classroom, a need identified by several teachers, and to increase opportunities for all classroom teachers to participate in meetings together. The High/Scope curriculum expects teamwork in a classroom and places high levels of responsibility on all the teachers present, whatever their formal titles. Third, individual resource teachers should each be able to provide good guidance on both ECERS and High/Scope PQA requirements, helping teachers to negotiate differences or conflicts where they arise, rather than dividing responsibilities among resource teachers.

The second year of ECCI implementation was a critical period of change; we expect the third year of ECCI to be a period of refinement, with a continuing emphasis on improving the quality of work. We expect that budgetary and other pressures will continue to push ECCI to be as effective and efficient as possible. At the same time, the evaluation of ECCI during the third year of implementation should concentrate on the ways key stakeholders understand and support school readiness and how participating children become ready for school. Given the critical role of parents, we will pay special attention to the implementation and influences of efforts to involve parents as supporters, adopters, and beneficiaries of ECCI principles and practices. Second, we will seek multiple data sources to indicate the progress of children participating in the program and potential program effects. These include using administrative data already being collected, teacher records, and other classroom-based assessments that may be conducted.

APPENDIX A

Overview of the High/Scope Curriculum

The High/Scope Approach

High/Scope's "active learning" approach to early childhood education is based on developmental theory and educational practice that indicate that children learn best from concrete experiences in which they personally plan, carry out, and reflect on their activities with appropriate support and guidance from adults (Hohmann & Weikart 2002). Teachers give children a sense of control by planning a consistent daily routine that allows children to anticipate what will happen next and establishing an environment where a wide variety of materials are arranged and identified to promote self-directed use by children.

The core of the daily routine is the "plan-do-review" sequence in which children make choices about what they will do, carry out their ideas, and then think and talk about their activities with adults and peers. Other important elements of the routine are regular times for both small- and large-group activities, cleanup, snacks and meals, and outdoor time. Throughout the day, teachers participate in activities with children and extend their learning by listening, asking open-ended questions, engaging in meaningful conversations with children, and providing a variety of materials and experiences for exploration. Thus, the curriculum places special emphasis on the nature of adult-child interactions, the learning environment, and the daily routine. High/Scope is also committed to a broad conception of assessment, including daily anecdotal note taking by teachers as part of the planning process (Hohmann & Weikart 2002).

The High/Scope philosophy of active learning assumes that adults as well as children learn through a process of constructing their own knowledge based on "hands-on" experience. This means that people build on their previous experiences and learn at different paces and in different ways. Moreover, understanding and integration of learning builds over time. One must have some knowledge that can be put into practice, and with practice comes new learning and understanding. Thus, the month-long training in the High/Scope curriculum—known as the Preschool Curriculum Course (PCC)—is offered throughout the year in four separate week-long sessions, with about a month in between each session, to give teachers time to apply, practice, and reflect on what they are learning. The multiple sessions provide opportunities for teachers to discuss with their trainer issues that come up as they put their new knowledge into practice. Educators interviewed for the evaluation who are responsible for training teachers and/or conducting assessments of classroom quality emphasize that learning and internalizing a new curriculum such as High/Scope takes time, typically a minimum of 2 or 3 years.

The following curriculum statement, which was posted in every ECCI classroom for parents and visitors during the 2005–2006 school year, provides additional information about High/Scope. Participants in the High/Scope Advanced Training compiled this statement with guidance provided by Moya Fewson, senior High/Scope consultant. A simpler version was developed for the 2006–2007 school year.

High/Scope

Dr. David Weikart founded the High/Scope Educational and Research Foundation over 40 years ago in Ypsilanti, Michigan. The High/Scope curriculum is validated by research, specifically the Perry Preschool Project. This longitudinal study shows that children who attend quality preschool programs have, as adults, enhanced social responsibility, higher income and greater academic success. Additional research proves that children who attend quality High/Scope programs significantly outperform children in non-High/Scope programs in assessments of cognitive abilities, initiative, social relations, and motor skills and in overall development.

Active learning is the cornerstone of the High/Scope approach. Active Learning means that children and adults are partners in the learning process. Play is the way children learn. In an active learning setting children choose activities and materials that interest them, manipulate materials in their own ways, use language to describe their intentions and actions, and receive adult support during their play. Children make observations, reflect on their actions and solve problems encountered in play.

The High/Scope Key Experiences are 58 statements related to children's development that provide a framework for understanding active learning. Key Experiences cover social, emotional, cognitive and physical domains. They focus on Creative Representation, Initiative and Social Relations, Language and Literacy, Music, Movement, Classification, Seriation, Number, Space and Time. Each key experience is essential for the development of the abilities that emerge during early childhood. Key Experiences occur naturally during play.

In High/Scope classrooms, the learning environment promotes active learning. The classroom space is safe and inviting to children. It is divided into well-defined interest areas with places for group and individual activities. The classroom is filled with materials that support a wide range of play experiences and reflect the children's family lives. There are many real and natural materials in the classroom. The classroom is labeled so that children can find, use, and return materials and relate the printed word to materials that interest them. Open-ended materials expand cognitive skills as children develop their imagination.

In High/Scope classrooms, there is a consistent daily routine, which supports active learning and provides children with a sense of security and control. The High/Scope daily routine includes time for the children to plan what they will do, carry out their plans in purposeful play and reflect on what they have done. This is referred to as the "Plan Do Review" process. There is a balance between "child-initiated" and "adult-initiated" activities. Children engage in large group experiences, which have a focus on movement and music. They also engage in adult initiated small group experiences, which have a focus on language and literacy, math, and science. All parts of the daily routine stimulate brain development by offering children choices and by allowing them to pursue their interests. Through a consistent daily routine, focused around opportunities for active learning, children and adults build a sense of community.

Research shows that nurturing adult child interactions help children achieve higher levels of academic achievement. Children who experience positive adult-child interactions also develop enhanced pro-social skills and increased self-esteem. In the High/Scope curriculum the role of the teacher is to support and extend the children's learning by observing and listening, asking appropriate question and by scaffolding learning experiences.

Adults in a High/Scope classroom share control with the children. Children are encouraged to make "child sized" decisions. Adults use a variety of strategies such as partnering in children's play, encouraging initiative and independence, supporting the exploration of materials and assisting with problem solving to support children's social, emotional and cognitive growth. Adults believe that children learn best when they are intrinsically motivated. This love of learning is encouraged and supported in a High/Scope classroom.

High/Scope has validated methods of assessing programs. In High/Scope programs teachers work together as a team to support children. They plan their program based on the children's interests, using the Key Experiences as a focus. They also recognize the need of the programs to achieve state learning outcomes; Key Experiences and VPK standards are closely related. The COR (Child Observation Record) is use to observe and assess children strengths. The PQA (Program Quality Assessment tool) is used to assess the classroom and program. Programs that meet the criteria can be certified as examples of excellence in implementing the High/Scope methods.

For more information on High/Scope please ask your child's teacher, or go to www.highscope.org.

APPENDIX B

Additional PQA Results

Table B-1. Fall 2005, Spring 2006, and Spring 2007 Mean PQA Ratings for Eight Certified Teachers in ECCI Classrooms^a

PQA Subscale	Time	Mean Rating ^b			Standard Deviation
		Minimum	Maximum	Mean*	
I. Learning Environment	Fall '05	2.3	3.9	3.1	0.39
	Spring '06	3.2	4.6	3.8	0.37
	Spring '07	3.3	4.7	4.0	0.39
II. Daily Routine	Fall '05	1.8	4.3	2.8	0.67
	Spring '06	3.0	4.9	4.0	0.58
	Spring '07	3.0	4.8	4.0	0.49
III. Adult-Child Interaction	Fall '05	1.3	4.7	2.5	0.95
	Spring '06	2.5	4.8	3.7	0.67
	Spring '07	2.9	4.8	3.8	0.60
IV. Curriculum Planning and Assessment	Fall '05	2.4	3.4	2.6	0.34
	Spring '06	3.0	4.6	3.4	0.36
	Spring '07	3.0	5.0	4.3	0.74

^a Only eight of twenty certified teachers who participated in the first year of ECCI remained in the initiative during the second year. One of the eight moved to a different school in the second year.

^b The PQA rating scale ranges from 1 to 5.

*All changes in mean scores from fall 2005 to spring 2006 were statistically significant using a *t*-test for paired samples ($p < .001$). The change from spring 2006 to spring 2007 in the mean score for the Curriculum domain was also statistically significant.

Table B-2. Fall 2006 and Spring 2007 Mean PQA Ratings for Eight New Certified Teachers in ECCI Classrooms in Year 2^a

PQA Subscale	Time	Mean Rating ^b			Standard Deviation
		Minimum	Maximum	Mean*	
I. Learning Environment	Fall '06	3.0	3.7	3.3	0.21
	Spring '07	3.3	4.6	3.9	0.34
II. Daily Routine	Fall '06	2.4	3.6	3.2	0.42
	Spring '07	3.7	4.5	4.0	0.27
III. Adult-Child Interaction	Fall '06	2.6	3.8	3.0	0.41
	Spring '07	3.2	4.6	3.6	0.49
IV. Curriculum Planning and Assessment	Fall '06	3.2	3.4	3.3	0.10
	Spring '07	4.0	5.0	4.5	0.32

^a There were nine new teachers in the second year, but only eight were assessed in both the fall 2006 and spring 2007.

^b The PQA rating scale ranges from 1 to 5.

*All changes in mean scores from fall 2006 to spring 2007 were statistically significant using a *t*-test for paired samples ($p < .01$).

APPENDIX C
Spring 2007 Surveys



March 26, 2007

Dear Administrator,

I am writing to ask for your help in an important study of preschool programs in the School District of Palm Beach County.

In collaboration with the School District, the United Way of Palm Beach County, and the Children's Services Council (CSC) we are examining the implementation of pre-K programs using the High/Scope curriculum. The study is being funded by the United Way and CSC, and conducted independently by the Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago, a research center that focuses on improving programs for children and youth. At the conclusion of this study, we will provide a written report.

Our study of preschool programs will include surveys of administrators, kindergarten and preschool teachers, and assistant teachers at 24 schools with a pre-K program. The attached survey is for principals and assistant principals. Let me tell you a bit about the survey:

- We want to know about your experiences as an administrator, the needs of children in your school, and your views about the preschool program and its curriculum.
- The survey should take no more than 30 minutes. Doing the survey is voluntary, and there is no penalty for not completing it. You may skip any question in the survey or stop at any point.
- If you are uncomfortable with any question, you don't have to answer it. Your answers are completely confidential and will be part of summaries in which no individual school or person is identified.
- Identification numbers on the survey are confidential, but are necessary for us to know who has responded to the survey. Only research staff will have access to your individual survey answers, and your name and school will not be connected to your answers in any way. Chapin Hall data files are password protected. Any information that identifies you will be destroyed two years after the end of the study.

It is very important to have responses from all staff, so we understand everyone's point of view. To participate, please send your completed survey directly to Chapin Hall in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope. If you prefer to fax your response, you may send it directly to me at 773-256-5387.

If you have any questions or comments about this study, we would be happy to talk with you. Our toll-free number is 1-800-508-6023. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study or feel you were not treated fairly, you may also contact the University of Chicago's Institutional Review Board Coordinator at 773-834-0402 or irb@ssa.uchicago.edu.

Thank you for helping with this important study.

Sincerely,

Julie Spielberger, Principal Investigator



Survey of Principals and Assistant Principals

1. The following areas sometimes concern teachers and administrators. Please number from 1 to 3 the areas you feel are the **three** most important concerns for you as a principal/administrator.

- Children’s social and emotional problems
- Children’s behavior problems
- Children’s language differences
- Classroom management
- Children’s learning difficulties
- Children’s physical health
- Parents’ involvement in school
- Communication with parents
- Parents’ access to community services
- Other – please specify:

2. How much contact do you have with the preschool program or preschool staff at your school?

- Daily**
 Several times a week
 About once a week
 About once a month
 Less than once a month

3. Overall, how difficult or easy has it been to implement the pre-kindergarten program in your school?

- Very difficult**
 Somewhat difficult
 Somewhat easy
 Very easy

3a. What have been the most difficult aspects of this implementation?

3b. What have been the easiest aspects of this implementation?



4. Educators have different beliefs about what children need to be ready for kindergarten. How important do you believe the following characteristics are for a child to be ready for kindergarten?

	<i>Not important</i>	<i>A little important</i>	<i>Important</i>	<i>Very important</i>
a. Finishes tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Can count to 20 or more	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Takes turns and shares	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Has good problem-solving skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Is able to use pencils and paint brushes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Is not disruptive of the class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Knows the English language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Is sensitive to other children's feelings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Sits still and pays attention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Knows most of the letters of the alphabet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Is beginning to write letters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. Can follow directions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. Identifies primary colors and shapes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. Communicates needs, wants, and thoughts verbally	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o. Writes own name	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
p. Reads or pretends to read storybooks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
q. Follows through with planned activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
r. Can describe completed activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Which 3 characteristics from the list above do you think are most important for a child to be ready for kindergarten, and why? (Please identify using the letter from the list)

(Letter: _____) Why? _____

(Letter: _____) Why? _____

(Letter: _____) Why? _____

6. In general, how satisfied are you with the level of parent involvement in your school?

Very Dissatisfied **Dissatisfied** **Satisfied** **Very Satisfied**

Please explain:

7. In general, how easy is it to communicate with parents at your school?

Very difficult **Somewhat difficult** **Somewhat easy** **Very easy**



8. Children learn at home and at school. Please indicate the extent to which you think the following activities for preschool children are the responsibility of parents or teachers.

	<i>Mostly Parents' Responsibility</i>	<i>More parents' responsibility than teachers'</i>	<i>More teachers' responsibility than parents'</i>	<i>Mostly Teachers' Responsibility</i>
a. Teaching children the alphabet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Teaching children how to write their names	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Playing with children regularly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Reading to children regularly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Teaching children pre-math skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Teaching children to pay attention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Teaching children to get along with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Making sure children are physically healthy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Caring for children's social and emotional needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements about children in preschool:

	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
a. Preschool children should initiate and direct their own play activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Classrooms should be organized to allow children to move freely between areas and activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Teachers should actively participate in children's play	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Children will do better in school if they begin formal reading and math instruction in preschool	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Children in preschool should learn at their own rates.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Children should do most of their playing and learning in small groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Praise and rewards are the best way to motivate children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Children should use materials in their own way	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Children should choose their own learning activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Teachers should tell preschool children what to do	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Parents understand their role in preparing children for kindergarten	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Play should be a central part of the preschool curriculum.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



10. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements:

	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
a. Children's readiness for kindergarten depends more on what happens at home than at preschool.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Generally, it is better for three year old children to be in school-based pre-K than in community-based child care centers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Generally, it is better for four year old children to be in school-based pre-K than in community-based child care centers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. I am familiar with the goals and philosophy of my school's preschool program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. I feel prepared to oversee the pre-K program in my school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. The pre-K program here has influenced how I do my work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. My understanding of the goals and practices of the pre-K program has increased during the past year.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. The pre-K program here is integrated with the rest of the school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. My support of the pre-K program has increased in the past year.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Certified teachers in pre-K are treated as equals by teachers in other grades	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. The pre-K program supports the overall goals of my school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. The pre-K program has influenced the kindergarten curriculum at my school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. The physical layout of this school supports a developmentally appropriate pre-K program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. The pre-K program is consistent with the goals of a Single School Culture.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o. The pre-K program supports the Accelerated Academic Achievement (AAA) plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
p. The pre-K program at my school prepares children well for kindergarten.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. How satisfied are you with these aspects of your school this year?

	<i>Very Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Satisfied</i>	<i>Very Satisfied</i>
a. Academic progress of children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Social and emotional progress of children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Behavioral progress of children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Relationships between teachers and parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Impact of program on parents' ability to help their children at home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Relationships between teachers and administrators	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Teachers' impact on children's academic skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Teachers' impact on child social and emotional behaviors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



12. Thinking about the preschool program, how satisfied are you with these aspects of it?

	<i>Very Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Satisfied</i>	<i>Very Satisfied</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
a. The curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. The goals and philosophy of the program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. The way children are assessed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Impact of program on children's social skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Impact of program on children's school readiness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Impact of program on parent-teacher relations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Impact of program on parent involvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Your relations with pre-K teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Availability of social services for families	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Resources to help manage behavior problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Your relationship with social service agencies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. School district policies about the pre-K program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. School district management of the pre-K program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. Educators have different ideas about the most important elements in a high quality preschool program. Please number from 1 to 3 the areas you believe are the **three** most important elements:

- ___ Curriculum emphasizing academic skills
- ___ Curriculum emphasizing social and emotional development
- ___ Full day program (vs. a half-day program)
- ___ Home visiting by teachers
- ___ Low classroom staff-child ratio (at least 1 staff per 6 children)
- ___ Ongoing training and mentoring of teachers
- ___ Parent education
- ___ Parent involvement in the classroom or school
- ___ Small class size (no more than 18 children)
- ___ Teacher with a bachelor's degree and certified in early childhood education
- ___ Warm and caring relationships between children and staff
- ___ Other _____

Please explain why you think these are the three most important elements below:



14. What changes, if any, would you make to improve the pre-K program at your school?

15. What is your role in this school?

- Principal
- Assistant Principal
- Other: _____

16. Which of the following pre-kindergarten programs are offered at your school?

- School-year program only
- School-year and summer program

17. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Bachelor's degree
- Masters degree
- Doctoral degree

Other – please specify: _____

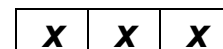
18. How many years, if any, did you teach each of the following grades?

- Preschool: _____
- Kindergarten: _____
- First grade: _____
- Second through fifth grades: _____
- Sixth grade or higher: _____

19. Counting this school year, how many years have you been at your current school? _____

20. Counting this school year, how many years have you served in your current position? _____

Thank you for your time and help!





March 26, 2007

Dear Pre-K Teacher, ELA, or CDA,

I am writing to ask for your help in an important study of preschool programs in the School District of Palm Beach County.

In collaboration with the School District, the United Way of Palm Beach County, and the Children's Services Council (CSC) we are examining the implementation of pre-K programs using the High/Scope curriculum. The study is being funded by the United Way and CSC, and conducted independently by the Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago, a research center that focuses on improving programs for children and youth. At the conclusion of this study, we will provide a written report.

Our study of preschool programs will include surveys of administrators, kindergarten and preschool teachers, and assistant teachers at 24 schools with a pre-K program. The attached survey is for pre-K teachers, ELAs, and CDAs. Let me tell you a bit about the survey:

- We want to know about your experiences and challenges as a teacher, the needs of children in your classroom, your views about the curriculum, and your communication with parents.
- The survey should take no more than 30 minutes. Doing the survey is voluntary, and there is no penalty for not completing it. You also may skip any question in the survey or stop at any point.
- If you are uncomfortable with any question, you don't have to answer it. Your answers are completely confidential and will be part of summaries in which no individual school or person is identified.
- Identification numbers on the survey are confidential, but are necessary for us to know who has responded to the survey. Only research staff will have access to your individual survey answers, and your name and school will not be connected to your answers in any way. Chapin Hall data files are password protected. Any information that identifies you will be destroyed two years after the end of the study.

It is very important to have responses from all staff, so we understand everyone's point of view. To participate, please send your completed survey directly to Chapin Hall in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope. If you prefer to fax your response, you may send it directly to me at 773-256-5387.

If you have any questions or comments about this study, we would be happy to talk with you. Our toll-free number is 1-800-508-6023. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study or feel you were not treated fairly, you may also contact the University of Chicago's Institutional Review Board Coordinator at 773-834-0402 or irb@ssa.uchicago.edu.

Thank you for helping with this important study.

Sincerely,

Julie Spielberger, Principal Investigator



Survey of Prekindergarten Teachers, ELAs and CDAs

1. The following areas sometimes concern teachers and administrators. Please number from 1 to 3 the areas you feel are the **three** most important concerns for you as a pre-K teacher.

- ___ Children's social and emotional development
- ___ Children's behavior
- ___ Children's language development
- ___ Classroom management
- ___ Children's learning and academic progress
- ___ Children's physical health
- ___ Parents' involvement in school
- ___ Communication with parents
- ___ Parents' access to community services
- ___ Other – please specify: _____

2. Educators have different beliefs about what children need to be ready for kindergarten. How important do you believe the following characteristics are for a child to be ready for kindergarten?

	<i>Not important</i>	<i>A little important</i>	<i>Important</i>	<i>Very important</i>
a. Finishes tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Can count to 20 or more	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Takes turns and shares	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Has good problem-solving skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Is able to use pencils and paint brushes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Is not disruptive of the class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Knows the English language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Is sensitive to other children's feelings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Sits still and pays attention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Knows most of the letters of the alphabet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Is beginning to write letters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. Can follow directions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. Identifies primary colors and shapes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. Communicates needs, wants, and thoughts verbally	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o. Writes own name	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
p. Reads or pretends to read storybooks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
q. Follows through with planned activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
r. Can describe completed activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Which 3 characteristics from the list above do you think are most important for a child to be ready for kindergarten, and why? (Please identify using the letter from the list)

(Letter: _____) Why? _____

(Letter: _____) Why? _____

(Letter: _____) Why? _____



4. Some children are more ready for kindergarten than others, for a variety of reasons. For each of the following areas, please indicate how well prepared you believe the children in your preschool class will be *when they enter kindergarten* in the fall. Check one response for each item:

	Very Unprepared	Somewhat Unprepared	Mostly Prepared	Fully Prepared
a. Finishes tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Can count to 20 or more	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Takes turns and shares	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Has good problem-solving skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Is able to use pencils and paint brushes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Is not disruptive of the class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Knows the English language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Is sensitive to other children's feelings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Sits still and pays attention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Knows most of the letters of the alphabet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Is beginning to write letters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. Can follow directions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. Identifies primary colors and shapes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. Communicates needs, wants, and thoughts verbally	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o. Writes own name	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
p. Reads or pretends to read storybooks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
q. Follows through with planned activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
r. Can describe completed activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. How many children are in your class? _____

6. How many children in your class have parents or guardians who did the following at least once during the current school year?

Number of children whose parents/guardians did the following at least once this year

- Participated in parent-teacher conferences?
- Volunteered to help in your class or in the school?
- Attended open houses or parties?
- Visited classroom to read to child?.....
- Visited classroom to eat breakfast/lunch with child?
- Used lending library?
- Attended class field trips?



7. Below is a list of events and services that might happen to involve parents with their children’s school. Which 3 activities from this list do you think are the most effective ways to involve parents, and why?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Open houses b. Formal parent-teacher conferences c. Parent meetings d. School-sponsored or Beacon Center family “fun” activities e. Parent-child activities in the classroom f. Class field trips g. Home visits by teachers h. Providing child care to increase parent involvement i. Volunteer opportunities for parents j. Class newsletters k. Parent Council (SAC) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> l. Monthly parent-child activity m. Lending library n. Inviting parents to share their culture o. Kindergarten transition activities p. Parent workshops q. Classroom visits to read to children r. Classroom visits to eat breakfast or lunch with children s. Written notes to individual parents t. White message boards u. Other: _____ |
|--|--|

Three most effective ways to involve parents (please identify using the letter from the list above):

(Letter:) Why? _____

(Letter:) Why? _____

(Letter:) Why? _____

8. How satisfied are you with the level of parent involvement in your classroom?

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Very Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Satisfied | Very Satisfied |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Please explain your level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction:



9. How often do you encounter the following problems in communicating with parents or guardians?

	<i>Never</i>	<i>A few times during the year</i>	<i>At least once a month</i>	<i>At least once a week</i>
a. Parents do not speak English well.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Parents do not attend school events.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Teachers do not have time to contact parents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Parents do not read or respond to written notices or classroom displays	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. It is difficult to contact parents by telephone.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Parents misunderstand your concerns about their children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. When a child has a problem, parents do not tell the teachers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other problems in communicating with parents that occur at least once a week (please specify):

10. In your classroom, what have you found to be the most effective way to communicate with parents/guardians?



11. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements:

	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
a. Preschool children should initiate and direct their own play activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Preschool classrooms should be organized to allow children to move freely between areas and activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Teachers should not participate in preschool children's play	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Children will do better in school if they begin formal reading and math instruction in preschool	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Children in preschool should learn at their own rates.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Children in preschool should do most of their playing and learning in small groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Praise and rewards are the best way to motivate preschool children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Children in preschool should use materials in their own way	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Children in preschool should choose their own learning activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Teachers should tell preschool children what to do	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Parents understand their role in preparing children for kindergarten	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Play should be a central part of the preschool curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12. Children learn at home and at school. Please indicate the extent to which you think the following activities for preschool children are the responsibility of parents or teachers.

	<i>Mostly Parents' Responsibility</i>	<i>More parents' responsibility than teachers'</i>	<i>More teachers' responsibility than parents'</i>	<i>Mostly Teachers' Responsibility</i>
a. Teaching children to recognize and say the letters of the alphabet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Teaching children how to write their names	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Playing with children regularly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Reading to children regularly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Teaching children pre-math skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Teaching children to pay attention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Teaching children to get along with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Making sure children are physically healthy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Caring for children's social and emotional needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Teaching children to make choices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Teaching children to follow directions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



13. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements about the High/Scope curriculum:

	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
a. The High/Scope curriculum has made me a better teacher.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. The High/Scope curriculum is easy for me to implement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. The High/Scope curriculum prepares children well for kindergarten.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. The High/Scope curriculum is appropriate for all students in my class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. The High/Scope curriculum is similar to other training I have in early childhood education.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. I have the resources and support I need to fully implement High/Scope.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. My resource teacher or coach has been very effective in helping me implement High/Scope.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. The High/Scope curriculum fits well with the kindergarten curriculum at my school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Parents of children in the program understand the High/Scope curriculum.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. My school administrators understand the High/Scope curriculum.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

14. If you could make changes, what changes, if any, would you make to the High/Scope curriculum and why?

15. During the past two years, have you received training or technical assistance in any of the following areas? Check all that apply:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Development of children | <input type="checkbox"/> Math and science for preschool children |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Early literacy development | <input type="checkbox"/> Art experiences for preschool children |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guiding and disciplining children | <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent involvement | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical development activities | _____ |

16. In what area(s), if any, would you like additional training? _____



17. How satisfied are you with these aspects of the preschool program?

	<i>Very Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Satisfied</i>	<i>Very Satisfied</i>
a. The curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. The goals and philosophy of the program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. The way children are assessed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Your knowledge and training on the curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Management of the program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Cultural sensitivity of the program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. How your performance is evaluated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Classroom volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Availability of social services for families	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Resources to help manage behavior problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. The ECERS assessment process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. The PQA assessment process [N/A: <input type="checkbox"/>]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

18. How satisfied are you with the following effects of the preschool program?

	<i>Very Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Satisfied</i>	<i>Very Satisfied</i>
a. Impact of program on children's social skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Impact of program on children's school readiness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Impact of program on parent-teacher relations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Impact of program on parent involvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Impact of program on parents' ability to help their children at home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

19. How satisfied are you with your relationship with the following people?

	<i>Very Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Satisfied</i>	<i>Very Satisfied</i>	<i>N/A</i>
a. Your resource teacher or coach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Other classroom staff (teachers, ELAs, CDAs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Other teachers in the school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. The school principal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. The children in your classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Classroom volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Beacon Center staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. School nurse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Comprehensive Services program staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



20. Educators have different ideas about the most important elements in a high quality preschool program. Please number from 1 to 3 the areas you believe are the **three** most important elements:

- ___ Curriculum emphasizing academic skills
- ___ Curriculum emphasizing social and emotional development
- ___ Full day program (vs. a half-day program)
- ___ Home visiting by teachers
- ___ Low classroom staff-child ratio (at least 1 staff per 6 children)
- ___ Ongoing training and mentoring of teachers
- ___ Parent education
- ___ Parent involvement in the classroom or school
- ___ Small class size (no more than 18 children)
- ___ Teacher with a bachelor's degree and certified in early childhood education
- ___ Warm and caring relationships between children and staff
- ___ Other _____

Please explain why you think these are the three most important elements below:

21. Please rate how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with the various aspects of your job.

	<i>Very Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Satisfied</i>	<i>Very Satisfied</i>
a. Your workload	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. The supervision you receive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. The support you receive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. The training you receive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Opportunities for professional development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Being valued for your work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Cultural sensitivity in your school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Physical working conditions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Salary and benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Your influence on the program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Responsibilities for working with parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. Administrative responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. Overall job satisfaction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



22. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following:

	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
a. I have a lot of control over the curriculum and the way I teach.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. I really enjoy my present teaching job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. I am making a difference in the lives of children I teach.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. If I could start over, I would choose teaching again as my career.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Children's readiness for school depends more on what happens at home than at school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. I have a lot of influence on how children behave in my classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. I have a lot of influence on how parents help their children so they do well in school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. The children in my classroom are motivated to learn.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. The parents of children in my classroom are motivated to help their children learn.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

23. What is your gender? **Male** **Female**

24. What is your position?

Teacher **Early Learning Associate** **CDA-I** **CDA-II**

25. Which best describes your race? (Please check all that apply)

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black/African American
- Hispanic/Latino
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- White
- Multiracial
- Other – please specify: _____

26. Counting this school year, how many years have you taught each of the following?

Preschool: _____
 Kindergarten: _____
 First grade: _____
 Second through fifth grades: _____
 Sixth grade or higher: _____



27. Counting this school year, how many years have you been at your current school? _____

28. How many years of experience do you have with the High/Scope curriculum? _____

29. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- High School
- Some college
- Associates degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Masters degree
- Other – please specify: _____

30. What kind of certifications do you have? (please check all that apply)

- Early childhood teacher certification
- Elementary education teacher certification
- CDA
- Other – please specify: _____

31. Please add other comments and suggestions for improving the preschool program at your school below:

Thank you for your time and help!

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Confidential Chapin Hall tracking number



March 26, 2007

Dear Kindergarten Teacher:

I am writing to ask for your help in an important study of preschool programs in the School District of Palm Beach County.

In collaboration with the School District, the United Way of Palm Beach County, and the Children's Services Council (CSC) we are examining the implementation of pre-K programs using the High/Scope curriculum. The study is being funded by the United Way and CSC, and conducted independently by the Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago, a research center that focuses on improving programs for children and youth. At the conclusion of this study, we will provide a written report.

Our study of preschool programs will include surveys of administrators, kindergarten and preschool teachers, and assistant teachers at 24 schools with a pre-K program. The attached survey is for kindergarten teachers. Let me tell you a bit about the survey:

- We want to know about your experiences and challenges as a teacher, the needs of children in your classroom, your communication with parents, and your views about the preschool curriculum.
- Completion of this survey is voluntary, and should take no more than 30 minutes. There is no penalty for not completing the survey. You may skip any question in the survey or stop at any point.
- If you are uncomfortable with any question, you don't have to answer it. Your answers are completely confidential and will be part of summaries in which no individual school or person is identified.
- Identification numbers on the survey are confidential, but are necessary for us to know who has responded to the survey. Only research staff will have access to your individual survey answers, and your name and school will not be connected to your answers in any way. Chapin Hall data files are password protected. Any information that identifies you will be destroyed two years after the end of the study.

It is very important to have responses from all staff, so we understand everyone's point of view. To participate, please send your completed survey directly to Chapin Hall in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope. If you prefer to fax your response, you may send it directly to me at 773-256-5387.

If you have any questions or comments about this study, we would be happy to talk with you. Our toll-free number is 1-800-508-6023. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study or feel you were not treated fairly, you may also contact the University of Chicago's Institutional Review Board Coordinator at 773-834-0402 or irb@ssa.uchicago.edu.

Thank you for helping with this important study.

Sincerely,

Julie Spielberger, Principal Investigator



Survey of Kindergarten Teachers

1. The following areas sometimes concern teachers and administrators. Please number from 1 to 3 the areas you feel are the **three** most important concerns for you as a kindergarten teacher.

- ___ Children’s social and emotional problems
- ___ Children’s behavior problems
- ___ Children’s language differences
- ___ Classroom management
- ___ Children’s learning difficulties
- ___ Children’s physical health
- ___ Parents’ involvement in school
- ___ Communication with parents
- ___ Parents’ access to community services
- ___ Other – please specify: _____

2. Educators have different beliefs about what children need to be ready for kindergarten. How important do you believe the following characteristics are for a child to be ready for kindergarten?

	<i>Not important</i>	<i>A little important</i>	<i>Important</i>	<i>Very important</i>
a. Finishes tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Can count to 20 or more	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Takes turns and shares	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Has good problem-solving skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Is able to use pencils and paint brushes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Is not disruptive of the class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Knows the English language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Is sensitive to other children’s feelings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Sits still and pays attention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Knows most of the letters of the alphabet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Is beginning to write letters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. Can follow directions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. Identifies primary colors and shapes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. Communicates needs, wants, and thoughts verbally	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o. Writes own name	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
p. Reads or pretends to read storybooks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
q. Follows through with planned activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
r. Can describe completed activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Which 3 characteristics from the list above do you think are most important for a child to be ready for kindergarten, and why? (Please identify using the letter from the list)

(Letter:) Why? _____

(Letter:) Why? _____

(Letter:) Why? _____



4. Some children are more ready for kindergarten than others, for a variety of reasons. For each of the following areas, how well prepared for kindergarten were the children in your class when they entered school in the fall? Check one response for each item:

	Very Unprepared	Somewhat Unprepared	Mostly Prepared	Fully Prepared
a. Finishes tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Can count to 20 or more	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Takes turns and shares	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Has good problem-solving skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Is able to use pencils and paint brushes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Is not disruptive of the class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Knows the English language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Is sensitive to other children's feelings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Sits still and pays attention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Knows most of the letters of the alphabet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Is beginning to write letters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. Can follow directions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. Identifies primary colors and shapes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. Communicates needs, wants, and thoughts verbally	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o. Writes own name	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
p. Reads or pretends to read storybooks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
q. Follows through with planned activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
r. Can describe completed activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. How satisfied are you with the level of parent involvement in your classroom?

Very Dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Satisfied

Very Satisfied

Please explain your level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction:



6. How often do you encounter the following problems in communicating with parents or guardians?

	<i>Never</i>	<i>A few times during the year</i>	<i>At least once a month</i>	<i>At least once a week</i>
a. Parents do not speak English well.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Parents do not attend school events.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Teachers do not have time to contact parents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Parents do not read or respond to written notices or classroom displays	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. It is difficult to contact parents by telephone.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Parents misunderstand your concerns about their children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. When a child has a problem, parents do not tell the teachers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other problems that occur at least once a week (please specify): _____

7. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements:

	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
a. Preschool children should initiate and direct their own play activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Preschool classrooms should be organized to allow children to move freely between areas and activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Teachers should not participate in preschool children's play	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Children will do better in school if they begin formal reading and math instruction in preschool	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Children in preschool should learn at their own rates.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Children in preschool should do most of their playing and learning in small groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Praise and rewards are the best way to motivate preschool children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Children in preschool should use materials in their own way	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Children in preschool should choose their own learning activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Teachers should tell preschool children what to do	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Parents understand their role in preparing children for kindergarten	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Play should be a central part of the preschool curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



8. Children learn at home and at school. Please indicate the extent to which you think the following activities for preschool children are the responsibility of parents or teachers.

For preschool children....

	<i>Mostly parents' Responsibility</i>	<i>More parents' responsibility than teachers'</i>	<i>More teachers' responsibility than parents'</i>	<i>Mostly teachers' Responsibility</i>
a. Teaching children to recognize and say the letters of the alphabet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Teaching children how to write their names	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Playing with children regularly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Reading to children regularly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Teaching children pre-math skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Teaching children to pay attention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Teaching children to get along with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Making sure children are physically healthy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Caring for children's social and emotional needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Teaching children to make choices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Teaching children to follow directions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. How much contact do you have with the preschool program or preschool staff at your school?

- Daily** **Several times a week** **About once a week** **About once a month** **Less than once a month**

10. How familiar are you with these aspects of the preschool program at your school?

	<i>Not Very Familiar</i>	<i>Somewhat Familiar</i>	<i>Very Familiar</i>
a. The curriculum used in the program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. The goals and philosophy of the program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. The daily routine of the program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. How satisfied are you with these aspects of the preschool program at your school?

	<i>Very Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Satisfied</i>	<i>Very Satisfied</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
a. The curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. The goals and philosophy of the program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Availability of social services for families	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Impact of program on children's social skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Impact of program on children's school readiness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Impact of program on parent-teacher relations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Impact of program on parent involvement at school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Impact of program on parents' ability to help their children at home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



12. Educators have different ideas about the most important elements in a high quality preschool program. Please number from 1 to 3 the areas you believe are the **three** most important elements:

- ___ Curriculum emphasizing academic skills
- ___ Curriculum emphasizing social and emotional development
- ___ Full day program (vs. a half-day program)
- ___ Home visiting by teachers
- ___ Low classroom staff-child ratio (at least 1 staff per 6 children)
- ___ Ongoing training and mentoring of teachers
- ___ Parent education
- ___ Parent involvement in the classroom or school
- ___ Small class size (no more than 18 children)
- ___ Teacher with a bachelor's degree and certified in early childhood education
- ___ Warm and caring relationships between children and staff
- ___ Other _____

Please explain why you think these are the three most important elements below:

13. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements:

	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
a. Children's readiness for school depends more on what happens at home than at school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Generally, it is better for three year old children to be in school-based pre-K than in community-based child care centers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Generally, it is better for four year old children to be in school-based pre-K than in community-based child care centers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. I am familiar with the goals and philosophy of my school's preschool program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. The pre-K program has influenced the kindergarten curriculum at my school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. The pre-K program here has influenced me as a kindergarten teacher or changed how I teach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. The pre-K program here is integrated with the rest of the school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. My support of the pre-K program is stronger this year than it was last year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Certified teachers in pre-K are treated as equals by teachers in other grades	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. The pre-K program supports the overall goals of my school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. The pre-K program at my school prepares children well for kindergarten.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



14. What is your gender? **Male** **Female**

15. Which best describes your race? (Please check all that apply)
 American Indian or Alaska Native
 Asian
 Black/African American
 Hispanic/Latino
 Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
 White
 Multiracial
 Other – please specify: _____

16. Counting this school year, how many years have you taught each of the following?
 Preschool: _____
 Kindergarten: _____
 First grade: _____
 Second through fifth grades: _____
 Sixth grade or higher: _____

17. Counting this school year, how many years have you been at your current school? _____

18. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
 Associates degree
 Bachelor’s degree
 Masters degree
 Other – please specify: _____

19. What kind of certifications do you have? (please check all that apply)
 Early childhood certification
 Elementary education certification
 CDA
 Other – please specify: _____

20. Please add other comments and suggestions to improve the preschool program at your school:

Thank you for your time and help!

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April 15, 2007

Dear Tiny Tikes pre-K and infant and toddler teacher,

I am writing to ask for your help in an important study of preschool programs in Palm Beach County.

In collaboration with the School District, the United Way of Palm Beach County, and the Children's Services Council (CSC) we are examining the implementation of pre-K programs using the High/Scope curriculum. The study is being funded by the United Way and CSC, and conducted independently by the Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago, a research center that focuses on improving programs for children and youth. At the conclusion of this study, we will provide a written report.

Our study of preschool programs will include surveys of administrators, kindergarten and preschool teachers, and assistant teachers at 24 schools with a pre-K program. The attached survey is for pre-K teachers, ELAs, and CDAs. Let me tell you a bit about the survey:

- We want to know about your experiences and challenges as a teacher, the needs of children in your classroom, your views about the curriculum, and your communication with parents.
- The survey should take no more than 30 minutes. Doing the survey is voluntary, and there is no penalty for not completing it. You also may skip any question in the survey or stop at any point.
- If you are uncomfortable with any question, you don't have to answer it. Your answers are completely confidential and will be part of summaries in which no individual school or person is identified.
- Identification numbers on the survey are confidential, but are necessary for us to know who has responded to the survey. Only research staff will have access to your individual survey answers, and your name and school will not be connected to your answers in any way. Chapin Hall data files are password protected. Any information that identifies you will be destroyed two years after the end of the study.

It is very important to have responses from all staff, so we understand everyone's point of view. To participate, please send your completed survey directly to Chapin Hall in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope. If you prefer to fax your response, you may send it directly to me at 773-256-5387.

If you have any questions or comments about this study, we would be happy to talk with you. Our toll-free number is 1-800-508-6023. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study or feel you were not treated fairly, you may also contact the University of Chicago's Institutional Review Board Coordinator at 773-834-0402 or irb@ssa.uchicago.edu.

Thank you for helping with this important study.

Sincerely,

Julie Spielberger, Principal Investigator



Survey items for interviews with Tiny Tikes Teachers

1. The following areas sometimes concern teachers and administrators. Please number from 1 to 3 the areas you feel are the **three** most important concerns for you as a pre-K teacher.

- ___ Children’s social and emotional development
- ___ Children’s behavior
- ___ Children’s language development
- ___ Classroom management
- ___ Children’s learning and academic progress
- ___ Children’s physical health
- ___ Parents’ involvement in school
- ___ Communication with parents
- ___ Parents’ access to community services
- ___ Other – please specify: _____

2. Educators have different beliefs about what children need to be ready for kindergarten. How important do you believe the following characteristics are for a child to be ready for kindergarten?

	<i>Not important</i>	<i>A little important</i>	<i>Important</i>	<i>Very important</i>
a. Finishes tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Can count to 20 or more	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Takes turns and shares	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Has good problem-solving skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Is able to use pencils and paint brushes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Is not disruptive of the class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Knows the English language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Is sensitive to other children’s feelings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Sits still and pays attention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Knows most of the letters of the alphabet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Is beginning to write letters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. Can follow directions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. Identifies primary colors and shapes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. Communicates needs, wants, and thoughts verbally	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o. Writes own name	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
p. Reads or pretends to read storybooks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
q. Follows through with planned activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
r. Can describe completed activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Which 3 characteristics from the list above do you think are most important for a child to be ready for kindergarten, and why? (Please identify using the letter from the list)

(Letter: _____) Why? _____

(Letter: _____) Why? _____

(Letter: _____) Why? _____



4. Some children are more ready for kindergarten than others, for a variety of reasons. For each of the following areas, please indicate how well prepared you believe the children in your preschool class will be *when they enter kindergarten* in the fall. Check one response for each item:

	Very Unprepared	Somewhat Unprepared	Mostly Prepared	Fully Prepared
a. Finishes tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Can count to 20 or more	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Takes turns and shares	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Has good problem-solving skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Is able to use pencils and paint brushes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Is not disruptive of the class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Knows the English language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Is sensitive to other children's feelings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Sits still and pays attention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Knows most of the letters of the alphabet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Is beginning to write letters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. Can follow directions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. Identifies primary colors and shapes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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o. Writes own name	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
p. Reads or pretends to read storybooks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
q. Follows through with planned activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
r. Can describe completed activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. How many children are in your class? _____

6. How many children in your class have parents or guardians who did the following at least once during the current school year?

Number of children whose parents/guardians did the following at least once this year

- Participated in parent-teacher conferences?
- Volunteered to help in your class or in the school?
- Attended open houses or parties?
- Visited classroom to read to child?.....
- Visited classroom to eat breakfast/lunch with child?
- Used lending library?
- Attended class field trips?



7. Below is a list of events and services that might happen to involve parents with their children’s school. Which 3 activities from this list do you think are the most effective ways to involve parents, and why?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Open houses b. Formal parent-teacher conferences c. Parent meetings d. School-sponsored or Beacon Center family “fun” activities e. Parent-child activities in the classroom f. Class field trips g. Home visits by teachers h. Providing child care to increase parent involvement i. Volunteer opportunities for parents j. Class newsletters k. Parent Council (SAC) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> l. Monthly parent-child activity m. Lending library n. Inviting parents to share their culture o. Kindergarten transition activities p. Parent workshops q. Classroom visits to read to children r. Classroom visits to eat breakfast or lunch with children s. Written notes to individual parents t. White message boards u. Other: _____ |
|--|--|

Three most effective ways to involve parents (please identify using the letter from the list above):

(Letter:) Why? _____

(Letter:) Why? _____

(Letter:) Why? _____

8. How satisfied are you with the level of parent involvement in your classroom?

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Very Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Satisfied | Very Satisfied |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Please explain your level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction:



9. How often do you encounter the following problems in communicating with parents or guardians?

	<i>Never</i>	<i>A few times during the year</i>	<i>At least once a month</i>	<i>At least once a week</i>
a. Parents do not speak English well.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Parents do not attend school events.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Teachers do not have time to contact parents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Parents do not read or respond to written notices or classroom displays	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. It is difficult to contact parents by telephone.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Parents misunderstand your concerns about their children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. When a child has a problem, parents do not tell the teachers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other problems in communicating with parents that occur at least once a week (please specify):

10. In your classroom, what have you found to be the most effective way to communicate with parents/guardians?



11. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements:

	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
a. Preschool children should initiate and direct their own play activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Preschool classrooms should be organized to allow children to move freely between areas and activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Teachers should not participate in preschool children's play	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Children will do better in school if they begin formal reading and math instruction in preschool	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Children in preschool should learn at their own rates.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Children in preschool should do most of their playing and learning in small groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Praise and rewards are the best way to motivate preschool children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Children in preschool should use materials in their own way	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Children in preschool should choose their own learning activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Teachers should tell preschool children what to do	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Parents understand their role in preparing children for kindergarten	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Play should be a central part of the preschool curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12. Children learn at home and at school. Please indicate the extent to which you think the following activities for preschool children are the responsibility of parents or teachers.

	<i>Mostly Parents' Responsibility</i>	<i>More parents' responsibility than teachers'</i>	<i>More teachers' responsibility than parents'</i>	<i>Mostly Teachers' Responsibility</i>
a. Teaching children to recognize and say the letters of the alphabet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Teaching children how to write their names	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Playing with children regularly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Reading to children regularly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Teaching children pre-math skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Teaching children to pay attention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Teaching children to get along with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Making sure children are physically healthy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Caring for children's social and emotional needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Teaching children to make choices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Teaching children to follow directions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



13. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements about the High/Scope curriculum:

	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
a. The High/Scope curriculum has made me a better teacher.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. The High/Scope curriculum is easy for me to implement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. The High/Scope curriculum prepares children well for kindergarten.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. The High/Scope curriculum is appropriate for all students in my class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. The High/Scope curriculum is similar to other training I have in early childhood education.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. I have the resources and support I need to fully implement High/Scope.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. My resource teacher or coach has been very effective in helping me implement High/Scope.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. The High/Scope curriculum fits well with the kindergarten curriculum at my school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Parents of children in the program understand the High/Scope curriculum.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. My school administrators understand the High/Scope curriculum.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

14. If you could make changes, what changes, if any, would you make to the High/Scope curriculum and why?

15. During the past two years, have you received training or technical assistance in any of the following areas? Check all that apply:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Development of children | <input type="checkbox"/> Math and science for preschool children |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Early literacy development | <input type="checkbox"/> Art experiences for preschool children |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guiding and disciplining children | <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent involvement | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical development activities | _____ |

16. In what area(s), if any, would you like additional training? _____



17. How satisfied are you with these aspects of the preschool program?

	<i>Very Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Satisfied</i>	<i>Very Satisfied</i>
a. The curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. The goals and philosophy of the program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. The way children are assessed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Your knowledge and training on the curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Management of the program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Cultural sensitivity of the program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. How your performance is evaluated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Classroom volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Availability of social services for families	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Resources to help manage behavior problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. The ECERS assessment process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. The PQA assessment process [N/A: <input type="checkbox"/>]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

18. How satisfied are you with the following effects of the preschool program?

	<i>Very Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Satisfied</i>	<i>Very Satisfied</i>
a. Impact of program on children's social skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Impact of program on children's school readiness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Impact of program on parent-teacher relations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Impact of program on parent involvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Impact of program on parents' ability to help their children at home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

19. How satisfied are you with your relationship with the following people?

	<i>Very Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Satisfied</i>	<i>Very Satisfied</i>	<i>N/A</i>
a. Your resource teacher or coach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Other classroom staff (teachers, ELAs, CDAs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Other teachers in the school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. The school principal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. The children in your classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Classroom volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Beacon Center staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. School nurse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Comprehensive Services program staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



20. Educators have different ideas about the most important elements in a high quality preschool program. Please number from 1 to 3 the areas you believe are the **three** most important elements:

- ___ Curriculum emphasizing academic skills
- ___ Curriculum emphasizing social and emotional development
- ___ Full day program (vs. a half-day program)
- ___ Home visiting by teachers
- ___ Low classroom staff-child ratio (at least 1 staff per 6 children)
- ___ Ongoing training and mentoring of teachers
- ___ Parent education
- ___ Parent involvement in the classroom or school
- ___ Small class size (no more than 18 children)
- ___ Teacher with a bachelor's degree and certified in early childhood education
- ___ Warm and caring relationships between children and staff
- ___ Other _____

Please explain why you think these are the three most important elements below:

21. Please rate how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with the various aspects of your job.

	<i>Very Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Satisfied</i>	<i>Very Satisfied</i>
a. Your workload	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. The supervision you receive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. The support you receive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. The training you receive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Opportunities for professional development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Being valued for your work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Cultural sensitivity in your school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Physical working conditions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Salary and benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Your influence on the program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Responsibilities for working with parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. Administrative responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. Overall job satisfaction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



22. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following:

	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
a. I have a lot of control over the curriculum and the way I teach.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. I really enjoy my present teaching job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. I am making a difference in the lives of children I teach.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. If I could start over, I would choose teaching again as my career.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Children's readiness for school depends more on what happens at home than at school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. I have a lot of influence on how children behave in my classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. I have a lot of influence on how parents help their children so they do well in school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. The children in my classroom are motivated to learn.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. The parents of children in my classroom are motivated to help their children learn.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

23. What is your gender? **Male** **Female**

24. What is your position?

Teacher **Early Learning Associate** **CDA-I** **CDA-II**

25. Which best describes your race? (Please check all that apply)

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black/African American
- Hispanic/Latino
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- White
- Multiracial
- Other – please specify: _____

26. Counting this school year, how many years have you taught each of the following?

Preschool: _____
 Kindergarten: _____
 First grade: _____
 Second through fifth grades: _____
 Sixth grade or higher: _____



27. Counting this school year, how many years have you been at your current school? _____

28. How many years of experience do you have with the High/Scope curriculum? _____

29. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- High School
- Some college
- Associates degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Masters degree
- Other – please specify: _____

30. What kind of certifications do you have? (please check all that apply)

- Early childhood teacher certification
- Elementary education teacher certification
- CDA
- Other – please specify: _____

31. Please add other comments and suggestions for improving the preschool program at your school below:

Thank you for your time and help!

--	--	--

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APPENDIX D

Survey Sample Characteristics

An overall response rate of 77 percent was achieved with the spring 2007 surveys of VPK and ECCI staff. As shown in Table D1, the highest response rate was among prekindergarten teachers (84%) and the lowest (63%) was in the group of kindergarten teachers. Within ECCI, the highest response rate was among administrators (95%) and the lowest among kindergarten teachers (67%).

Table D-1. Response Rates for Spring 2007 Surveys

	<i>N</i>	Administrator (School-Based)			Kindergarten Teachers			School-based Pre-K			Community Pre-K
		ECCI	VPK	Total	ECCI	VPK	Total ^a	ECCI	VPK	Total	Total
Total Sent	290	21	26	47	49	84	133	62	47	109	7
Total Returned	222^a	20	19	39	33	50	84	47	45	92	7
Percent Returned	77%	95%	73%	83%	67%	60%	63%	76%	96%	84%	100%

^aNote: One kindergarten teacher could not be identified as either VPK or ECCI.

Prekindergarten Teachers

Ninety-two prekindergarten teachers responded to the survey. All respondents were female (see Table D2). As expected, given the presence of certified teachers in the ECCI program but not VPK, staff members in these programs differ in their educational background. There also were some differences in the ethnic backgrounds of the two groups of teachers, although these differences were not statistically significant. Over half (54%) of all prekindergarten respondents, 47 percent of ECCI prekindergarten teachers, and 62 percent of all VPK prekindergarten teachers identified themselves as being black. Twenty-three percent of all ECCI prekindergarten teachers identified themselves as white, while 13 percent of VPK prekindergarten teachers identified themselves as white. Finally, 15 percent of all ECCI prekindergarten teachers identified themselves as Hispanic, while 11 percent of VPK prekindergarten teachers identified themselves as Hispanic.

There was a significant difference ($F=3.006, p=0.087$) between ECCI and VPK schools with regard to the years of experience that teachers have at the preschool level. In ECCI schools, prekindergarten teachers have an average of 10 years of experience while prekindergarten teachers in VPK schools have almost 13 years of experience. All prekindergarten teachers, regardless of the type of school they are at, have been working in that school for just over 7 years.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ The seven teachers at the community child-care center work with children in prekindergarten as well as infants and toddlers, so are not directly comparable to the teachers in the ECCI and VPK programs. All had either an early childhood certificate or a CDA, and four of the seven had both types of certifications. Four of the seven had

Table D-2. Year 2 Prekindergarten Teacher Survey Sample Characteristics

Characteristic	Total N=99	School-based Programs	
		ECCI n=47	VPK n=45
Gender			
Male	0	0	0
Female	100	100	100
Position***			
CDA II	20	0	40
CDA I	30	0	60
Early Learning Assoc. Teacher	39	76	0
	12	24	0
Certification			
Early childhood**	12	23	0
Elementary educ.**	12	23	0
CDA**	80	68	93
Other	22	28	16
Ethnicity			
Black	54	47	62
Hispanic	13	15	11
White	19	23	13
Other	4	4	4
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	1	2	0
Education*			
High school	5	2	7
Some college	53	48	59
Associate's degree	18	16	21
Bachelor's degree	15	23	7
Master's degree	5	9	0
Other	5	2	7
Mean Years Experience (sd)			
Preschool*	11.20 (6.9)	10.02 (7.4)	12.59 (6.1)
Kindergarten	4.04 (6.4)	5.00 (7.5)	2.30 (3.5)
First grade	1.24 (1.5)	1.38 (1.6)	1.00 (1.4)
2 nd -5 th grade	3.17 (4.4)	4.00 (5.2)	1.82 (2.2)
6 th grade or more	2.18 (3.8)	3.56 (4.9)	0.63 (1.2)
Current school^c			
Mean (sd)	7.47 (8.1)	7.59 (8.3)	7.35 (8.0)

Chi-square tests indicate differences between ECCI and VPK samples were statistically significant at * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, or *** $p < .001$.

education beyond high school, including, in one case, a master's degree. Four staff identified themselves as "Hispanic," two as "other," and one as "black."

Kindergarten Teachers

A total of eighty-three kindergarten teachers responded to the survey, with thirty-three coming from ECCI schools and fifty from VPK schools (see Table c). As indicated in Table D-3, teachers in these two groups were statistically indistinguishable except in two measures. A larger proportion of ECCI teachers identified themselves as “black” than VPK teachers (33% to 14%), and ECCI kindergarten teachers had, on average, under 2 years of preschool experience, while VPK teachers had almost five years of experience. Overall, 95 percent of respondents were female. Eighty percent reported having an elementary education certification, and 49 percent reported having an early childhood certification. Seventy-five percent reported having a bachelor’s degree with another 19 percent reporting having a master’s degree. Teachers had an average of 6 years of experience as kindergarten teachers, and responding teachers had been in their current schools on average just under 6 years.

Table D-3. Year 2 Kindergarten Teacher Survey Sample Characteristics

	Total N=83	ECCI Schools n=33	VPK Schools n=50
Gender^a			
Male	5	6	4
Female	95	94	96
Certification			
Early childhood	49	49	50
Elementary education	80	76	82
CDA	10	9	10
Other	22	15	26
Ethnicity			
Black**	22	33	14
Hispanic	4	3	4
White	68	58	74
Other	2	3	2
Education			
Associate’s degree	1	3	0
Bachelor’s degree	75	79	72
Master’s degree	19	15	22
Other	5	3	6
Experience^b mean (sd)			
Preschool**	3.60 (3.9)	1.93 (1.6)	4.92 (4.6)
Kindergarten	5.63 (6.4)	4.61 (4.3)	6.30 (7.5)
First grade	4.77 (7.5)	4.86 (7.8)	4.71 (7.6)
2 nd –5 th grade	3.11 (4.2)	2.93 (4.1)	3.31 (4.4)
6 th grade or more	2.00 (3.2)	1.00 (1.4)	3.00 (4.2)
Current school^c			
Mean (sd)	5.67 (7.5)	5.42 (6.2)	5.82 (8.3)

^aGender, n=81.

^b Experience, Preschool n=34, Kindergarten n=83, 1st grade n=31, 2nd–5th grades n=27, and 6th grade n=10.

^cYears at current school, n=79.

Administrators

A total of thirty-nine principals and assistant principals responded to the administrator survey (see Table b), with 62 percent reporting as principals and 39 percent reporting as assistant principals. All of the administrators reported having at least a master’s degree. Twenty-one percent of VPK administrators reported having a doctoral degree, and 10 percent of ECCI administrators have a doctoral degree. The greatest number of years of experience reported by all administrators was teaching second through fifth grade (8 years overall and 8 for ECCI and 6 for VPK). ECCI administrators had significantly more years of experience teaching kindergarten - 2 years of experience for ECCI administrators and less than one year of experience for VPK administrators ($F=5.470$, $p=0.048$). Additionally, ECCI administrators had more years of experience teaching first grade, with ECCI administrators reporting an average of 5 years and VPK administrators reporting an average of 2 years ($F=3.362$, $p=0.087$). The responding administrators reported having worked in their current school for, on average, 5 years and this was consistent among ECCI (5.0 years) and VPK (5.2 years) administrators.

Table D-4. Year 2 Administrator Survey Sample Characteristics

	Total (N=39)	ECCI (n=20)	VPK (n=19)
Position			
Principal	62	55	68
Assistant Principal	39	45	32
Education			
Bachelor’s degree	0	0	0
Master’s degree	69	65	74
Doctoral degree	15	10	21
Other	15	25	5
Experience^a mean (sd)			
Preschool	0.67 (1.0)	0.50 (1.0)	0.80 (1.1)
Kindergarten**	1.30 (1.4)	2.00 (1.4)	0.25 (0.5)
First grade*	3.59 (4.5)	5.33 (5.2)	1.63 (2.4)
2 nd –5 th grade	7.54 (5.0)	8.12 (5.1)	6.64 (5.1)
6 th grade ore more	5.39 (5.4)	3.43 (5.3)	6.64 (5.3)
Current school^b			
Mean (sd)	5.1 (3.8)	5.0 (4.0)	5.2 (3.7)

^aExperience, Preschool n=9, Kindergarten n=10, 1st grade n=17, 2nd–5th grades n=28, and 6th grade n=18.

^bYears at current school, n=37.

Table D-5. Year 2 Survey Sample Characteristics by Survey Type

	Total	Administrator	Kindergarten Teachers	School-based Pre-K	Community-based Pre-K
	<i>N</i> =222	<i>n</i> =39	<i>n</i> =84	<i>n</i> =92	<i>n</i> =7
Gender (n=172)					
Male	--	--	5	0	--
Female	--	--	95	100	--
Position					
Principal	--	62	--	--	--
Assistant Principal	--	39	--	--	--
Teacher	--	--	--	12	--
CDA I	--	--	--	30	--
CDA II	--	--	--	20	--
ELA	--	--	--	39	--
Certification (n=183)					
Early childhood***	--	--	49	12	57
Elementary education***	--	--	79	12	0
CDA***	--	--	10	80	57
Other	--	--	21	22	14
Ethnicity (n=183)					
Black***	--	--	21	54	14
Hispanic***	--	--	4	13	57
White***	--	--	67	19	0
Asian	--	--	0	0	0
American Indian/Alaskan Native	--	--	0	1	0
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	--	--	0	0	0
Multiracial	--	--	0	0	0
Other**	--	--	2	4	29
Education ***					
High School	4	0	1	4	43
Some college	22	0	0	51	29
Associate's degree	8	0	1	17	0
Bachelor's degree	34	0	74	14	0
Master's degree	22	69	19	4	14
Doctoral degree	3	15	0	0	0
Other	7	15	5	4	14
Experience mean (sd)					
Preschool*** (n=128)	8.44 (7.1)	0.67 (1.0)	3.60 (3.9)	11.20 (6.9)	--
Kindergarten* (n=121)	4.90 (6.3)	1.30 (1.4)	5.63 (6.4)	4.04 (6.4)	--
First grade* (n=69)	3.41 (5.7)	3.59 (4.5)	4.77 (7.5)	1.24 (1.5)	--
2 nd -5 th grade*** (n=84)	4.61 (5.0)	7.54 (5.0)	3.11 (4.2)	3.17 (4.4)	--
6 th grade or more* (n=45)	3.42 (4.6)	5.39 (5.4)	2.00 (3.2)	2.18 (3.8)	--
Current school (n=202)					
Mean (sd)	6.32 (7.3)	5.06 (3.8)	5.67 (7.5)	7.47 (8.1)	--

Table D-6. Educational Background of School and Community-Based Staff

	Administrator (School-Based)			Kindergarten Teachers			School-based Pre-K			Community- based Pre-K
	ECCI	VPK	Total	ECCI	VPK	Total ^a	ECCI	VPK	Total	Total
Education										
HS/GED	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	3	4	3
							2%	7%	4%	43%
Some College	--	--	--	--	--	--	21	26	47	2
							45%	58%	51%	29%
Associates	--	--	--	1	--	1	7	9	16	--
				3%		1%	15%	20%	17%	
Bachelor's	--	--	--	26	36	62	10	3	13	--
				79%	72%	75%	21%	7%	14%	
Master's	13	14	27	5	11	16	4	--	4	1
	65%	74%	69%	15%	22%	19%	9%		4%	14%
Doctoral	2	4	6	--	--	--	--	--	0	--
	10%	21%	15%						0%	
Other ^{b,c,d,e}	5	1	6	1	3	4	1	3	4	1
	25%	5%	15%	3%	6%	5%	2%	7%	4%	14%
Not specified	--	--	--	--	--	--	3	1	4	--
							6%	2%	4%	

^aPlease note that one kindergarten teacher could not be identified as either VPK or ECCI.

^bOther for administrators includes master's plus, double master's, and education specialist, among others.

^cOther for kindergarten teachers includes graduate work in reading for additional certification, plus forty hours toward PhD, education specialist in early childhood, some graduate courses toward a master's.

^dOther for school-based prekindergarten includes pending AA degree and BS degree—have AS degree and preschool High/Scope track, eight classes away from AS degree in early childhood education, associate's degree working toward a BA, continues education.

^eOther for administrators includes: "Not weat" (this is really what the survey says).

Table D-7. Years of Teaching Experience by Grade of School Staff

	Administrators (School-Based)			Kindergarten Teachers ^a			School-based Pre-K Teachers		
	ECCI	VPK	Total	ECCI	VPK	Total	ECCI	VPK	Total
Preschool									
N	4	5	9	15	19	34	46	39	85
Mean	.50	.80	.67	1.9	4.9	3.6	10.0	12.6	11.2
(SD)	(1.0)	(1.1)	(1.0)	(1.6)	(4.6)	(3.9)	(7.4)	(6.1)	(6.9)
Range	0-2	0-2	0-2	0-6	0-15	0-15	1-26.5	1-27	1-27
Kindergarten									
N	6	4	10	33	50	83	18	10	28
Mean	2.0	.25	1.3	4.6	6.3	5.6	5.0	2.3	4.0
(SD)	(1.4)	(0.5)	(1.4)	(4.3)	(7.5)	(6.4)	(7.5)	(3.5)	(6.4)
Range	0-4	0-1	0-4	1-22	1-34	1-34	0-32	0-11	0-32
First grade									
N	9	8	17	14	17	31	13	8	21
Mean	5.3	1.6	3.6	4.9	4.7	4.8	1.4	1.0	1.2
(SD)	(5.2)	(2.4)	(4.5)	(7.8)	(7.5)	(7.5)	(1.6)	(1.4)	(1.5)
Range	1-15	0-7	0-15	0-25	0-27	0-27	0-5	0-3	0-5
Second–Fifth grades									
N	17	11	28	14	13	27	18	11	29
Mean	8.1	6.6	7.5	2.9	3.3	3.1	4.0	1.8	3.2
(SD)	(5.1)	(5.1)	(5.0)	(4.1)	(4.4)	(4.2)	(5.2)	(2.2)	(4.4)
Range	0-17	0-16	0-17	0-16	0-17	0-17	0-22	0-5	0-22
Sixth grade or higher									
N	7	11	18	5	5	10	9	8	17
Mean	3.4	6.6	5.4	1.0	3.0	2.0	3.6	0.6	2.2
(SD)	(5.3)	(5.3)	(5.4)	(1.4)	(4.2)	(3.2)	(4.9)	(2.2)	(3.8)
Range	0-15	0-17	0-17	0-3	0-10	0-10	0-15	0-3	0-15

^aPlease note that one kindergarten teacher could not be identified as either VPK or ECCI.

APPENDIX E

Interview and Focus Group Guides



Early Childhood Cluster Initiative (Program)

Individual Interview

Informed Consent Protocol

➤ **Who is conducting this study:**

- Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago is a policy research center that focuses its research on improving the well-being of children and youth. United Way of Palm Beach County and the Children's Services Council (CSC) of Palm Beach County have asked us to learn about experiences with the ECCI prekindergarten program.
- The purpose of this statement is to tell you about our research and obtain your agreement to participate.

➤ **What the study is about:**

- The primary purpose of the study is to examine the implementation of the prekindergarten program in Palm Beach County. We will be looking at the experiences, perceptions, and expectations of staff at the school and parents. Our work will end with a report to the United Way and CSC.
- The Children's Services Council may or may not release the report to a wider audience. We may also write papers or make presentations about what we learn about the program.

➤ **What we are asking you to do:**

- The purpose of today's interview or survey is to understand *your perspective* on the ECCI prekindergarten program.

➤ **Your participation is voluntary:**

- Participation in the interview is voluntary. There is no penalty for not taking part. You may end your participation in the interview at anytime, or chose not discuss a topic that is raised.

➤ **The information you provide will be confidential:**

- **Do not** write your name or any personal identifying information on interview materials, so it stays anonymous and confidential.
- Chapin Hall treats all information from you as confidential unless we think a child is being harmed and then we are required to report it to the appropriate authorities.
- While I and other project team participants will take notes during our interview, we will not keep your name with these notes. Nothing you say today will ever be connected directly to you or your place of business. Your name and center will not be used in written reports, presentations, or articles.
- We may wish to quote you in our reports, publications, or presentations. If you tell us something and we write it in a report, no one will know that you were the person who said it.
- The information you provide will be accessible only to research staff, and data files will be password protected, and will be kept indefinitely. Any information that identifies you will be destroyed two years after the end of the study.

➤ **With your permission, we would like to audiotape the conversation:**

- With your permission we would like to record the interview to ensure an accurate record of your responses. We will use the recording and any transcriptions of it solely for research purposes, and only research staff will listen to and have access to the recording.



- No names or identifying materials will be associated with any audiotapes or the transcripts. The recordings will be destroyed two years after the end this project.
- During the audiotaping of the discussion you have the right to review, edit, and delete any materials that you do not want on the tape. You also have the right to request that the tape be turned off at any time during the interview without consequences of any kind.
- If you do not agree to audiotape, you can still participate in the interview and we will not audiotape the discussion. We will write notes to record your responses.

➤ **The risks to you if you participate in this study:**

- The risks to you are minimal. You could become upset at something we ask you, and you don't have to answer anything you don't want to. It is possible that you might tell us something that could reflect poorly on you if it were revealed. We will do everything we can to make sure that doesn't happen.

➤ **The benefits if you participate in this study:**

- Your participation will provide you with an opportunity to tell us how you feel about your work and your ideas for improving the ECCI program.

➤ **If you agree to participate today, and have questions about the study later:**

- You can contact the Study Director:
Julie Spielberger, Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago, 1313 E. 60th St., Chicago, IL 60637; 773-256-5155; julies@uchicago.edu or toll-free at 1-866-263-8896.
- You can contact the Institutional Review Board Coordinator with questions. You can also contact the coordinator if you feel that your rights have been violated, or you were not treated fairly:
Institutional Review Board (IRB) Coordinator, SSA/Chapin Hall, University of Chicago-URA, 969 E. 60th Street, Chicago, IL 60637; 773-834-0402; irb@ssa.uchicago.edu
- You will receive a copy of this form to keep.



Verbal Consent Checklist

The following list summarizes the purpose and procedures of this study, and the conditions under which you can participate. I will read through this list with you and talk with you about any questions you may have. The first two pages of this document provide detailed information about these topics. A copy of the whole document is for you to keep.

- Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago is conducting a study to examine the prekindergarten program at your school. You are one of several individuals (including parents, teachers, and other school staff) that are being asked to participate in an interview about the program and its effects on children, families, and staff in the program.
- Participation in the interview is voluntary. There is no penalty for not taking part.
- Your refusal to participate or to answer any question will not involve any penalties. You may skip any question in the interview or stop the interview at any point without any consequences to you.
- Everything you say in this interview will be kept confidential, unless we think a child is being harmed and then we are required to report it to the appropriate authorities.
- We will not put your name on any of the interview materials or keep your name with our notes. Your name and the name of your center will not be used in written reports, presentations, or articles.
- We may wish to quote you in our reports, publications, or presentations. If you tell us something and we write it in a report, no one will know that you were the person who said it.
- The information you provide will be accessible only to research staff, and data files will be password protected, and will be kept indefinitely. Any information that identifies you will be destroyed two years after the completion the study.
- With your permission we would like to record the interview to ensure an accurate record of your responses. During the recording of the discussion you have the right to review, edit, and delete any materials that you do not want on the tape. The recordings will be destroyed two years after the completion of this project.
- If you do not agree to be recorded, you can still participate in the interview and we will not record the discussion. We will write notes to record your responses.
- The risks to you are minimal. You could become upset at something we ask you, and you don't have to answer anything you don't want to. It is possible that you might tell us something that could reflect poorly on you if it were revealed. We will do everything we can to make sure that doesn't happen.
- This discussion may provide you with an opportunity to tell us how you feel about the ECCI prekindergarten program and its effect on children and families.
- If you have questions about the study or concerns about how you are treated, you can call the Study Director or the Institutional Review Board Coordinator at the University of Chicago at the University of Chicago (see phone numbers and addresses on first two pages).

Please circle "YES" or "NO" to indicate whether you understand each of the following statements:

- YES NO All of your questions have been answered.
- YES NO You agree to participate in this study.
- YES NO You agree to have the discussion audiotaped.



ECCI YEAR 2 INTERVIEW GUIDE for Community Members, Intermediaries, Assessors, and Teacher Trainers and Mentors

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS:

I (we) really appreciate your taking the time to talk with me (us).

Before we get started I must get your informed consent....

Background and Role in ECCI

1. To start, I'd like to know about you and your background and position...
 - How long have you been with this [agency, school, other organization]?
2. How long have you been involved with the ECCI? How would you describe your role in ECCI??
 - How did you become involved?
 - How often are you engaged in activities related to ECCI?
 - Who do you primarily have contact with?

ECCI Goals and Purposes

3. What is your perception of what ECCI is? Why was it developed or how did it come to be?
4. What in your view are the primary goals of ECCI?
5. Is there general agreement, do you think, in the community about the goals and purposes of ECCI?
6. What is the relationship of ECCI to—or how does it fit with—other early childhood programs (community-based and school-based) in Palm Beach County?
 - What is the general quality of child care and early childhood education in PBC?
 - What do you think are the most important issues pertaining to quality?

ECCI Implementation

7. What do you understand as the primary ECCI activities in this first year?
8. How well have these activities been carried out?
9. What do you think are the strengths of ECCI?
10. What challenges do you see for ECCI?
11. What areas should ECCI address?



We would also like to know more about your knowledge and perceptions of the experiences of teachers, other school staff, and children and families with ECCI this first year.

Administrators and Other School Staff

12. Beyond teachers, how has ECCI been integrated into the schools?
- Are administrators aware of the program and supportive of it?
 - What activities or strategies have worked to build support from administrators?
 - What are relationships between teachers in ECCI and other school staff?

Children and Families in Palm Beach County

13. What are the most pressing needs of children and families in Palm Beach County? How does ECCI meet these needs?
14. Considering that resources are limited, how would you prioritize what the county should be doing for children and families to help promote child development and school readiness?
- What do you think prekindergarten teachers and other providers need most to help children be ready for school?
 - What do you think parents need most to help children be ready for school?

Final Questions

We are almost done. To wrap-up our conversation, I'd like to get any other thoughts you have about ECCI and recommendations for the future.

15. What have you learned from participating in ECCI this year?
16. Do you think the goals and purposes of ECCI are clear? Are they realistic?
17. What do you think are the biggest challenges in implementing ECCI?
18. What recommendations would you make for improving the initiative or what areas do you think should be changed?
19. Is there anything else you would like to add that we haven't covered? Is there anything else you would like to add about your views of ECCI?

Thank you for your time. I (we) have enjoyed talking with you. If you have any questions or comments later, you may contact us at the toll-free number on the consent form.



ECCI YEAR 2 INTERVIEW GUIDE for Principals

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS:

I (we) really appreciate your taking the time to talk with me (us).

Before we get started I must get your informed consent, following specific University guidelines, to participate in the study, to make sure you understand your role in the study. Let's go over that consent form together. [READ OVER CONSENT FORM CHECKLIST. RESPONDENT SHOULD FILL OUT THE COPY OF THE 3RD PAGE AND RETURN TO THE INTERVIEWER.]

HAS RESPONDENT PROVIDED VERBAL CONSENT? YES ⇒ GO TO NEXT BOX NO ⇒ END INTERVIEW

RECORD THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION: DATE: _____ LOCATION: _____ ORGANIZATION: _____ RESPONDENT ID NUMBER: _____

DID RESPONDENT CONSENT TO AUDIO RECORDING? YES ⇒ START INTERVIEW AND RECORDING NO ⇒ START INTERVIEW WITHOUT RECORDING



The purpose of this interview is to follow up on some of the issues that we identified in our survey of principals and other staff.

Background and Role in ECCI

20. To start, I'd like to know about you and your background and position. How long have you been with this [school, school district]?
21. How is it that the ECCI program came to this school?

ECCI Goals and Purposes

22. What in your view are the primary goals of ECCI?
23. How well have these activities been carried out?
 - How much effect has ECCI had on school readiness?
24. How does ECCI compare to other prekindergarten programs that you are familiar with?

ECCI School Integration

25. As you think about all the things you are responsible for in this school, what are the specific benefits of having the ECCI program here?
26. Likewise, as you think about all the things you are responsible for in this school, what are the specific challenges of having the ECCI program here?
27. What are your thoughts about the High/Scope curriculum? How does it fit with the goals and practices in the rest of the school?

Final Questions

We are almost done. To wrap-up our conversation, I'd like to get any other thoughts you have about ECCI and recommendations for the future.

28. How has ECCI changed during the two years of its implementation?
29. What recommendations would you make for improving the initiative or what areas do you think should be changed?
30. What do you think is the future of ECCI?
31. Is there anything else you would like to add that we haven't covered? Is there anything else you would like to add about your views of ECCI?

Thank you for your time. If you have any questions or comments later, you may contact us at the toll-free number on the consent form.



Community Child-Care Interview Guide Spring 2007

Before starting the interview please review the consent process, and confirm that the conversation can be recorded.

1. What is the most important thing you think about as you care for the children in this area?
2. What do you think children need the most to be ready for kindergarten?
3. How does the program here match up with what you think children need to be prepared?
4. Tell me about parent involvement here at Tiny Tikes. (Follow-up: what works well? How could it be improved?)
5. What parts of the High/Scope curriculum are you most enthusiastic about? Least enthusiastic about?
6. Tell me a little about the training you got this year, and what you think of it.
7. What else do you think it would be helpful for us to know, in order to understand how well things are going, and what might be improved?

Please administer the survey section of this interview.



APPENDIX F

Comparison of School Readiness Measures: ECHOS, DIBELS, and T-CRS

One question of interest is the relationships between the various measures of school readiness represented by the FLKRS and T-CRS screening instruments. Tables below present the results of an analysis of the ECHOS, DIBELS, and T-CRS results for all kindergarten children who were screened in Palm Beach County in the fall of 2006. Table F-1 shows that children who were screened as ready for school on the ECHOS with ratings of either *consistently demonstrating* or *emerging/progressing* were less likely to have a low-T-CRS score than children rated *not yet demonstrating* on the ECHOS. As shown in Table F-2, children who were screened as *above average* or *low risk* on the two DIBELS scales were also less likely to have a low-T-CRS score than children screened as *moderate risk* or *high risk*. Finally, Table F-3 indicates that children who scored *consistently demonstrating* or *emerging/progressing* on the ECHOS were much more likely than other children to score *above average* or *low risk* on the two DIBELS scales.⁶⁸

Table F-1. Comparison of FLKRS, ECHOS, and T-CRS Results among Kindergartners^a

ECHOS Classification	N	Low T-CRS (≤ 30)	T-CRS (>30)
		%	%
Consistently Demonstrating	1,652	30 %	70 %
Emerging/Progressing	1,900	48 %	52 %
Not Yet Demonstrating	970	69 %	31 %

Table F-2. Comparison of FLKRS, DIBELS, and T-CRS Results among Kindergartners^a

DIBELS Classification	N	Low T-CRS (≤ 30)	T-CRS (>30)
		%	%
Letter Naming Fluency			
Above Average/Low Risk	2,799	41	59
Moderate/High Risk	1,532	58	42
Initial Sound Fluency			
Above Average/Low Risk	2,487	40	60
Moderate/High Risk	1,865	53	47

Table F-3. Comparison of FLKRS, ECHOS, and DIBELS Results among Kindergartners^a

ECHOS Classification	N	Above Average/Low Risk	Moderate/High Risk
		%	%
Letter Naming Fluency			
Consistently Demonstrating	4,938	90	10
Emerging/Progressing	4,562	68	32
Not Yet Demonstrating	1,863	33	67
Initial Sound Fluency			
Consistently Demonstrating	4,870	80	20
Emerging/Progressing	4,357	60	40
Not Yet Demonstrating	1,756	35	65

⁶⁸ Results showing the correspondences among the various kindergarten screens for just the children who were enrolled in the ECCI program in 2005–2006 were similar.



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