

**Evaluation Report
2015-2016
Educare of Lincoln**



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Executive Summary

Educare of Lincoln. Educare of Lincoln opened in March, 2013 as a collaborative effort among Community Action of Lincoln (CAL), the Buffett Early Childhood Fund (BECF), Lincoln Public Schools (LPS), and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL). This evaluation report represents responses of 122 parents who completed the parent survey, from 118 children for whom assessments were completed fall and spring, and 122 children who had either a fall or spring assessment, and were from 11 classrooms (7 infant/toddler and 4 preschool).

The Educare Model. Educare of Lincoln is part of the larger, national network of 21 Educare Centers located throughout the US. Educare builds on Head Start and Early Head Start. In Lincoln, Community Action of Lincoln has been the grantee for Head Start and Lincoln Public Schools has been the delegate for Head Start. The Buffett Early Childhood Fund and University of Nebraska join this partnership www.educareschools.org. As of July 1, 2016, the partnership has been reconfigured and subsequently includes Lincoln Public Schools, the University of Nebraska and The Buffett Early Childhood Fund.

Educare is a program designed to give students in poverty an improved chance for success in school and in life by advocating for and providing the highest quality care and education from birth to age five. Students and families from low-income homes often face unique barriers in developing foundations for academic success. Educare's program model is specifically designed to help these at-risk students and their families overcome such barriers. Educare's mission is to ensure that these students receive the services they need to arrive at kindergarten ready to learn and participate on par with their more economically advantaged peers.

Evaluation of Educare Lincoln is provided by the College of Education and Human Sciences, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, as the Local Evaluation Partner (LEP). Data collectors work in conjunction with LEPs from other Educare programs and the National Evaluation Partner (NEP), Frank Porter Graham Institute, University of North Carolina.

Who are Educare Lincoln Families and Children?

The Educare Lincoln population is diverse and busy, comprised of many immigrants, non-English speaking families, and mostly employed parents with more than one child.

Educare Lincoln continues to serve a large percentage of diverse immigrants (41%). In all, parents were born in 14 different countries. In 35% of the homes, English is not the language children hear most often. Parents report that for 31% of children, their first language is not English. When race and ethnicity are combined, 30% of children's race/ethnicity is reported to

be white, 34% black, 25% Hispanic and 11% other. Educare Lincoln serves 50% boys and nearly 9% of the children have been identified as needing special education services (IEP or IFSP) while 30% of parents completing the parent interview said their children have special health needs. It should be underscored, as was true a year ago, that nearly all parents are employed; many are also in training and most families have multiple children. Altogether, diverse and busy continues to describe this Educare population presenting both challenges and opportunities. *Recommendation: Plan activities that affirm parent diversity. Offer parent meetings and activities that support families selecting topics of and scheduling as described in the “Are Families Benefitting?” section below.*

What was the Quality of Implementation for Educare Lincoln?

Four of five measures of classroom quality converge to demonstrate that classroom quality improved during 2015-2016 over that of the previous year.

- **ITERS-R:** Overall scores on the Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale in six infant-toddler classrooms improved from 6.57 to 6.7 for 2014-2015 to 2015-2016. Scores improved on Activities, Language and Space-Furnishings Subscales and decreased some on Personal Care.
- **ECERS-3:** This was the first year to use the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Version 3. As is true nationally and as expected, scores did decrease on this more rigorous scale when compared to the ECERS-R (previously used). Overall score for 2015-2016 went from 5.7 in 2014-2015 to 4.8 in 2015-2016. Scores went up in Space and Furnishings. Areas where scores indicate the need for greatest focus are Activities, followed by Personal Care and Language.
- **Infant CLASS:** Scores on the single Responsive Caregiving domain of the Infant Classroom Assessment Scoring System improved from 4.47 to 6.19 from 2014-2015 to 2015-2016. While every one of the four dimensions improved, the greatest opportunities for growth (lowest scores) were in Facilitated Exploration and Early Language Support.
- **Toddler CLASS:** Scores on the two domains of the Toddler Classroom Assessment Scoring System also improved from 5.29 in 2014-2015 to 6.03 in 2015-2016 on the Emotional Support and Behavior Guidance dimension and, rather amazingly, from 2.27 in 2014-2015 to 4.11 in 2015-2016 on the Instructional Support dimension. Relatively lower domains were Behavior Guidance, Quality of Feedback, and Language Modeling.
- **Preschool CLASS:** Scores also increased on all three dimensions of the Preschool Classroom Assessment Scoring System. Scores for 2015-2016 were 5.68 on Emotional Support, 4.96 on Classroom Organization and 3.05 on Instructional Support, an improvement from 2014-2015 when scores were 5.17, 4.26 and 1.66, respectively.

Relatively lower scores were in Regard for Child Perspective (Emotional Support Domain), Instructional Learning Formats (Classroom Management Domain), and Concept Development (Instructional Support Domain).

Recommendations: Infant-Toddler: Keep focus on caregiving procedures while holding steady in other areas. Focus on improving opportunities for children's exploration and language (infant) and develop strategies for behavior guidance; focus on feedback loops and modeling creative and interesting language (toddler). Preschool: Focus on offering additional math and science activities, provide interactions to support language development. Focus preschool attention on all aspects of Instructional Support and on understanding of and ability to reflect on the child's perspective and extend learning.

Are Children Benefitting?

Scores of preschool-age children on several measures administered in the fall and spring demonstrate that Educare Lincoln children progressed relative to their peers during the 2014-2015 school year.

- **PPVT-4:** Scores on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Version 4, a measure of receptive language ability with a national average of 100 administered to 62 children at both fall and spring time points, moved from 94.8 to 97.4 from fall 2015 to spring 2016. The 2.6-point gain was better than the gain of the previous year when improvement was 1.6 points. The test was also administered to all children turning 3 (n=10) who averaged 102, slightly above the national average, considerably above the average for the previous year for 3-year olds (93.8; n=5) and reaching the goal suggested last year to aim for the 50th percentile (score of 100).
- **PLS-5:** Scores on the English language version of the Preschool Language Scale-Version 5 improved from 96.7 in fall of 2015 to 98.2 in spring of 2016 (a 1.5-point gain), also greater improvement than seen the previous year when there was no gain on the PLS-5, English. Twelve Spanish-speaking children also improved their PLS-5 scores from 98.8 in the fall to 99.7 in the spring of 2016 (no comparison available to previous year). Children turning 2 and 3 (both English and Spanish-speakers; n=16) averaged 101.9 on the PLS-5 compared to 100.4 a year prior.
- **Bracken School Readiness:** This measure was administered to 37 kindergarten-bound children fall and spring. Children improved on all subscales from fall to spring. Score with a national mean of 100 was 90.8 in the spring, down from 92.3 and 93.8 the previous years. Greatest need for growth was on the Numbers Subscale.
- **DECA:** Teachers completed Devereux Early Childhood Assessments for all children from infants to preschoolers. Although there is some variation across infant, toddler and

preschool versions, altogether, there are up to 3 subscales—Attachment, Initiative and Self Control—that total to Protective Factors and a stand-alone Behavior Problems Subscale. All ages improved in Total Protective Factors. In preschool, Behavior Problems increased slightly but the fall and spring averages were both lower than for the previous year.

Recommendations: Greater focus on school readiness in math and letter skills, literacy, and social-emotional development. Provide support and resources for staff to incorporate meaningful interactions in these areas throughout the day.

Are Families Benefitting?

From the 122 parents who completed the Parent Survey in the fall, Educare parents demonstrate parenting strengths (e.g., close relationships with their children) but also are less involved in school readiness activities and have particularly high levels of certain stressors. Here we compare Educare Lincoln parents to those in the Educare Learning Network (ELN) overall.

- As noted above, parents in Educare Lincoln are older, more likely to be immigrant, have larger families, more likely to be employed, more likely to be single, have fewer fathers living in the household, have fewer adults and more children per household than is true for the ELN in general. Also, as part of the context, there are fewer children in Lincoln receiving special education services than is true for the ELN generally.
- When it comes to parent-child activities, parents in Educare Lincoln talk more with their children than ELN parents (e.g., describing what child is doing; talking during errands; talking about Educare), but they are less involved in activities with children (e.g., reading stories; telling stories; singing songs; teaching children letters, words or numbers; working on art projects; participating in sports or exercise) than ELN overall.
- When it comes to involving their child in the community, Educare Lincoln parents more often take their children to parks, playgrounds and the zoo than ELN parents do overall. However, Lincoln parents were less likely to visit a library, concert, or live show than ELN parents overall.
- Regarding books, 27% of parents report their child has 50 or more books, same as for ELN. However, 11% of parents say their child has no books in their language (almost twice as many as for ELN).
- In reporting on their relationship with their child, Educare Lincoln parents were slightly higher than the ELN generally in Closeness scale scores to their child (e.g., child seeks comfort from parent; child shares information; child shares feelings and experiences), but Educare Lincoln parents also have higher Conflict scores than for the ELN (e.g., child

becomes easily angry with parent; child is sneaky and unpredictable; parent and child are always struggling; child is uncomfortable with physical affection).

- Parents have high aspirations for their children; 85% of Lincoln and ELN parents hope their child will attain a BA or more.
- Educare Lincoln parents report more parenting stress than ELN generally; almost one in five Lincoln parents are identified as highly stressed (e.g., cannot handle things; giving up more of my life; quite a few things bother me about my life; not as interested in other people as before), vs. closer to one in ten for ELN.
- Parents also report more depression in Educare Lincoln than is true for the ELN. Examples: in past 12 months parents were depressed 2+ weeks; in last month, parent was depressed 1 month; parent felt depressed 2 years or more.
- Educare Lincoln parents report somewhat more history of homelessness and worry about being homeless, and report more worry about food running out.
- Educare Lincoln parents have more positive perceptions of their neighborhoods (e.g., child is safe in neighborhood, there are people I can count on) than is true for the ELN generally.
- Educare Lincoln parents had more life changes (e.g., stressful life events), than was true for the ELN in general. For example, Educare Lincoln had more separation from partners; change in living conditions; child changed schools; change in work; and more family members in jail (twice ELN rate).
- When it comes to relationships with other parents, Educare Lincoln parents receive more recommendations from other parents but also are less likely to talk to other parents (e.g., when volunteering, during meetings, in classroom-based activities) than the ELN generally. Also, slightly more parents have no friendships with other parents than is true in the ELN.

Recommendations: A number of recommendations rise to the surface: examine Part B and Part C referral processes; participate in Trauma Informed Care seminars to understand the stressors parents may be experiencing; provide books in children's languages; promote books, reading, and math; support families in connecting with libraries; feature families' cultural and personal backgrounds; encourage conversation during parent meetings to help parents build relationships with one another; focus on stress relievers and help parents recognize child stress; offer parent meetings in child guidance.

Introduction

Educare of Lincoln

Educare of Lincoln opened in March, 2013, as a collaborative effort among Community Action of Lincoln (CAL), the Buffett Early Childhood Fund (BECF), Lincoln Public Schools (LPS), and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL). In order to provide high quality early childhood education and care, funds were provided through multiple sources including the Buffett Early Childhood Fund, Head Start, Lincoln Public Schools, the College of Education and Human Sciences, UNL, and the University of Nebraska Foundation. Funds also were provided from the Lincoln Community Foundation. On July 1, 2016, the partnership was reconfigured. At that time Educare of Lincoln became a partnership of Lincoln Public Schools, the University of Nebraska, and the Buffett Early Childhood Fund.

The Educare Model

Educare of Lincoln is part of the larger, national network of 21 Educare Centers located throughout the US. Educare builds on Head Start and Early Head Start. In Lincoln, Community



Action of Lincoln is the grantee for Head Start and Lincoln Public Schools has long been the delegate for many of the Head Start children. The Buffett Early Childhood Fund and University of Nebraska join this partnership and the Educare Model builds to a new level as described below, in the Theory of Change

schematic that follows and at this URL, www.educareschools.org.

Educare is designed to give students in poverty an improved chance for success in school and life by advocating for and providing the highest quality care and education from birth to age five. Students and families from low-income homes often face unique barriers in developing foundations for academic success. Educare's program model is designed to help at-risk students and their families overcome such barriers. Educare's mission is to ensure that these students receive the services they need to arrive at kindergarten ready to learn and participate on par with their more economically advantaged peers.

Educare is based on research from a variety of relevant disciplines, such as early childhood development, social work, and other allied fields. Social-emotional developmental theory

informs all aspects of the model as the development of healthy relationships and positive social-emotional skills are a key component of student academic success. Educare incorporates ongoing evaluations to assess the quality of classroom environments and students' progress. Data is used for program improvements and policy development at the state and national levels.

The Educare Model's core features include data utilization, embedded professional development, high-quality teaching practices, and intensive family engagement. Data utilization encompasses research-based and data-driven practices, while embedded professional development emphasizes highly qualified staff, intensive staff development, an interdisciplinary approach that encourages communication and collaboration, and reflective supervision and practice throughout the program. High-quality teaching practices integrate full-day, full-year care and education for children, small class sizes with high staff-child ratios, and continuity of care to help students develop secure relationships. Moreover, it involves a research-based curriculum with an intentional and specific focus on the development of language and literacy, social-emotional development, early math concepts, problem solving and motor development, as well as using the arts to strengthen and support these skills. Intensive family engagement supports strong parent-child relationships, family well-being, and ongoing learning and development by providing on-site family support services and emphasizing prenatal and birth-to-three services.

Through the coordinated implementation of these core features, Educare promotes high-quality early childhood programs that encourage strong family-school partnerships and parental support for children's learning, helping to ensure that children grow up safe, healthy, and eager to learn. In turn, children are better prepared for kindergarten, increasing their chances for long-term academic and life success.

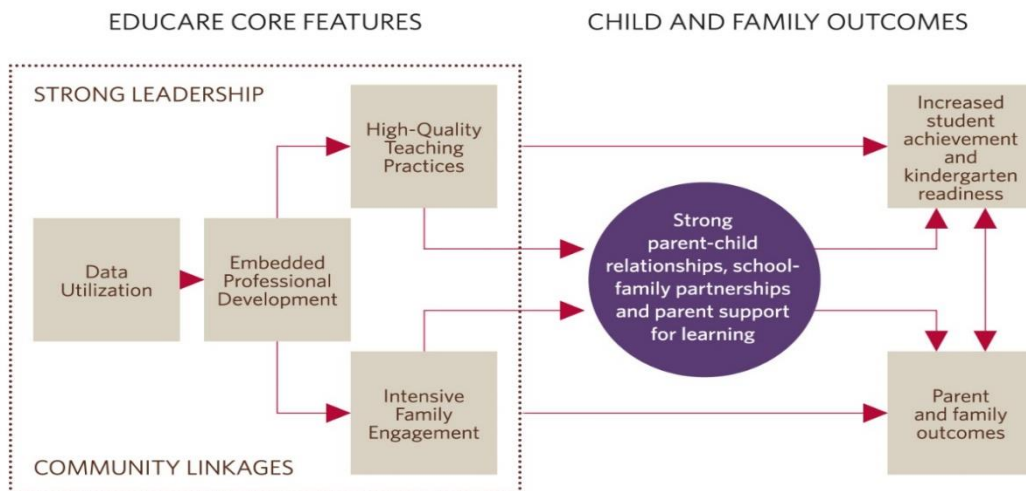


Figure 1. Educare Theory of Change

Evaluation

As noted above, the data and evaluation play a special role in the Educare Network. Each Educare has a Local Evaluation Partner (LEP) and common data are collected across all sites that are aggregated by the National Evaluation Partner (NEP). LEPs collect some unique local data as well to help the program understand matters of local interest. In Educare Lincoln, the College of Education and Human Sciences, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, is the LEP. The evaluation is coordinated by Departments of Child, Youth, and Family Studies and Speech and Language Pathology. Under the supervision of faculty, graduate students are involved in data collection (see Appendix 1). In addition, after data are collected, teachers and parents are informed about children's development, teachers and Master Teachers receive classroom observation scores, data dashboards are prepared, and this annual report aggregates for the year. Altogether, there are two major purposes of the evaluation:

1. Internal: to use data in a timely fashion to inform the program about its own practices and progress and
2. External: to present aggregate reports and scholarly articles that can inform about the network's efforts overall and inform the field as innovations are implemented in Educare (e.g. Yazejian, Bryant, Freel, & Burchinal, 2015).

Throughout 2015-2016, evaluation activities have focused on the first goal by providing, as timely as possible, child-level reports to classroom teachers and administrative staff. Parents were also given data reports about their own children in order to bring all possible sources of information into the planning process for children's growth and well-being. In addition, classroom reports were given to all classroom teams and master teachers for all the classroom measures. Dashboard reports have been prepared for the Policy Council as data became available during the school year. For aggregate reporting, data are shared with Frank Porter Graham for Educare cross-site reports.



This evaluation report of Educare focuses on determining the overall effectiveness of the programs in providing early childhood services, parenting education, and family support services. The purpose of the program evaluation is to help the program improve and develop practices while concurrently examining the overall effectiveness of the program. The information in this evaluation report should be considered part of an ongoing evaluation.

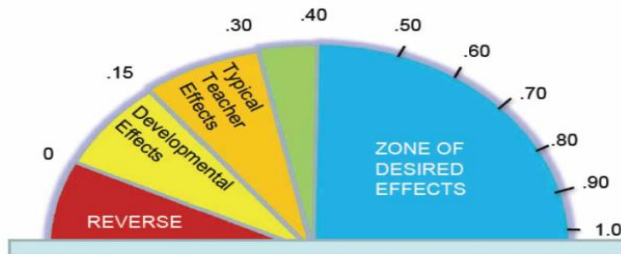
Throughout we identify (*in italics*) recommendations that the data suggest for program consideration.

This evaluation report strives to answer the following questions:

- Who does Educare Lincoln serve?
- Are classrooms of high quality?
- Are students benefitting and achieving positive outcomes in language development, general school readiness, social-emotional development, and other ways
- Are families benefitting and achieving positive outcomes?

These questions are answered by collecting data across multiple sources and utilizing mixed methods approaches.

To quantify program impacts, we report all pre and post measures relative to significance (were the results statistically significant) and if so, what was the magnitude of the change (effect size). To understand effect size and to place it in context, Cohen suggests using $d=0.20$ to be small,



$d=0.50$ to be medium, and $d=.80$ to be a large effect. Therefore, when significant differences were found, effect sizes of those differences were measured using a Cohen's d (Cohen, 1988)¹. To describe this another way, John Hattie in *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of over 800 Meta-*

Analyses Relating to Achievement, uses a concept called “zone of desired effects” that starts at a medium effect size, 0.40 (Hattie, 2009). Hattie suggests that a 1.0 effect size (as shown in the graph) is equal to about 2-3 years of student growth and learning. Effect sizes can be greater than 1.0; however, they are less common and are therefore not shown on the graphic. Effect size is often smaller with infant through kindergarten students because the range of measurement error is larger with these very young children (Burchinal, 2008). Additionally, there are a smaller number of early childhood assessments that measure learning domains with young children; the result is the possibility of more measurement error in this testing.

Therefore, for the very young, an effect size as low as .15 to .30 may be the beginning of the zone of desired effects. This current report includes descriptive fall to spring change and effect sizes for change when there were fall to spring changes noted descriptively. We provide data from this year for Lincoln and compare it to the Educare Learning Network (ELN) data from 2014-2015 (the most recent data available). Comparisons to the network data offer good insight into what programs across the country are doing in similar settings and what outcomes

¹ When paired samples testing (t-tests) were used for analysis, Cohen's d was computed using the paired differences mean divided by the paired differences standard deviation.

they are seeing, not as a way to make a direct comparison between programs but as a reference point.

Diverse Cultural Context

Perhaps because of Lincoln's role as an Immigration and Naturalization Service-receiving community, Educare Lincoln is unique to the Educare network in that the families of children served include a large percentage of diverse immigrants (41%). Parents were born in different parts of the world (e.g., central and Latin America, Africa, central Asia, eastern and central Europe). In all, parents were born in 14 different countries. In 35% of the homes, English is not the language children hear most often. In 16% of homes Spanish is prevalent or Spanish and English in 2%, but in another 24% a diversity of other languages are spoken, with Arabic the most prevalent, or a combination of other languages besides Spanish and English in 2%. Another way to think about this is to inquire about first language. Parents report for 31% of children, their first language is not English. In Educare Lincoln, diversity goes beyond the countries of origin and assorted languages; when race and ethnicity are combined, 30% of children's race/ethnicity is reported to be white, 34% black, 25% Hispanic and 11% other. Children contribute further to the culture; Educare Lincoln serves 50% boys and nearly 9% of the children have been identified as needing special education services (IEP or IFSP) and 30% of parents completing the parent interview said their children have special health needs. It should be underscored, as was true a year ago, that nearly all parents are employed; many are also in training and most families have multiple children. Altogether, diverse and busy continues to describe this Educare population presenting both challenges (e.g., for communication, staffing) and opportunities.

Recommendation: build on diversity as a strength for celebration, learning about and intentionally adding to all the ways diversity can enhance discourse, classrooms, the Educare Lincoln environment, and community, but do so in ways that communicate quickly and bring fun to these busy parents.

Who are the Families and Children Served by Educare of Lincoln?

Lincoln served 122 families who completed the parent survey in 2015-16, across 11 classrooms. Not all classroom spaces were used this past year.

Characteristics of Population Served by Educare Lincoln

% White/ Caucasian	% Black	% Hispanic	% Children Verified for Special Education	% Male Children
30%	34%	25%	9%	50%

Characteristics of Families: Parents were born in 14 different countries, including China, Colombia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guatemala (3), Haiti (4), Honduras (3), Jordan (2), Libya (4), Mexico (25), Nigeria (8), South Sudan, and Sudan (12). Altogether, 40% of primary caregivers were born outside the USA. More children than parents were born in the USA; 4% of children were born outside the USA. Children not born in the USA were born in Libya, Mexico and Sudan.

Children’s First Language; Languages Spoken in Homes: Parents reported that for 69% of children, child’s first language is English, 17% Spanish, with 14% speaking first other languages, many Arabic. Similar were reports of languages spoken most in homes: 65% reported English was spoken most, 26% reported Spanish is spoken



most and 9% reported speaking other languages most at home. In 34% of the homes, English is not what children hear most at home. However, for 80% of children, parents reported English was the child’s strongest language, for 15% Spanish was strongest, and for 5% it was other languages. Thus, parents perceive children to be more proficient in English than use of language in the home would suggest. *Recommendation: Discuss specific intentions at Educare Lincoln about bilingualism and English language learning. What are the goals? What will be the strategies for reaching the goals? How will those strategies be implemented?*

Race/Ethnicity: When race and ethnicity are combined, 30% of children’s race/ethnicity is reported to be white, 34% black, 25% Hispanic and 11% other.

Completed Surveys: Mothers report they were survey respondents in 91% of cases but fathers completed for 2%, and 7% were completed by grandparents and foster parents.

Education and Work: Primary caregivers report having no high school degree in 20% of cases; 14% have a high school degree; 29% have some college or some technical training; 37% have 2 years of college or more. Of the first category, 7 primary caregivers have an 8th grade education or less, 11 have some high school, and 13 have a high school or GED degree. The majority of Educare caregivers are employed full time (58%), another 29% indicated they were employed part-time or part of year. Only 7 (9%) of the primary caregivers listed themselves as not in the labor force at all. As well, 11% indicated they were in school or in a training program.

Recommendation: As parents are very busy with work and training, continuing to hold parent meetings that include supports for them (e.g., something to take home for dinner and child care) can help support and enable them to participate.

Family Structure: Two-parent (47%) and single-parent (51%) families are fairly evenly divided in the Lincoln Educare population. Children live with their mothers in 94% of cases reporting; with their father in 39%, with a brother (62%) or sister (53%), with a grandmother (8%) or grandfather (4%). The mean number of adults in households was 1.7 and mean number of children is 3.1. More households have two or more adults (56%) than one adult (44%). More households have two (25%), three (34%), four (15%) or more (10%) children living together than having only one child (14%). Interestingly, Lincoln Educare has fewer two-parent, more single-parent households than is true for the ELN. Correspondingly, there are fewer adults living in households than is true for the network, and there are more children per household than for the ELN, 2.0 and 2.0 for the ELN on average. Altogether, there are .55 adults per child per household in Lincoln Educare vs. 1.0 adult/child in the network. *Recommendation: Since most households have more than one child (and most parents work as well) some parent meeting activities (e.g., group games to take home and that can be played by all children or fun family gatherings) may be welcome.*

Mother's Age: Over 61% of children's birth mothers at the time of the interview were 30 or older; another 24% were in the 26-30 age range and 15% were in the 20-25 age range. When children were born, 7% were 19 or younger; the teenager birth rate for the ELN is over double this (16%). Mean age for mothers when the Educare Lincoln child was born was 28 years.

Child Sex: 61 (50%) of Educare Lincoln children are boys, and 61 (50%) are girls. *Recommendation: Work to keep the balance of boys and girls.*

Children with Special Needs: Head Start requires that at least 10% of children served qualify for special education, Educare Lincoln is close to that with 7% qualifying for an IEP (Individualized Education Plan and Part B for 3-5 year olds), and 2% who have an IFSP (Individualized Family Support Plan and Part C for 0-3 year olds). There is a total of 11 children with verified disabilities within the program (compared to 39 at this time last year). Even more parents report that their child had some kind of special need-30% indicated on a different question that the child had special health needs. Most frequently mentioned health needs were



allergies, eczema and asthma, and other needs. *Recommendation: Continue with timely referrals to Part B and Part C. Radical drop from one year ago suggests that demographics or procedures may have changed.*

Child Health: While 63% of parents report children are in excellent or very good health, another 36% report children are in good to fair health. This is a considerably higher rate than reported for the Educare Learning Network (at 17% for 2015-2016).

Recommendation: The relatively high percentage of children whose parents do not rate them in very good or better health categories suggests that health needs to continue to be a high priority for Lincoln Educare and that goals, strategies, and implementation need to be closely monitored.

What was the quality of implementation for Educare Lincoln?

Infant and Toddler Classroom Quality

Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R; Harms, Cryer & Clifford, 2006). The quality of infant and toddler classrooms was measured using the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ITERS-R). This observational tool is used to assess the quality of infant and toddler classrooms in various domains including: Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Language (Listening and Talking), Learning Activities, Interaction, Program Structure, and Parents and Staff, as well as an overall rating of quality. Six classrooms were observed and rated using the ITERS-R this year. The resulting scores are illustrated below. Note: the older toddler room was observed and rated with the early childhood version of this tool due to the ages of the children.

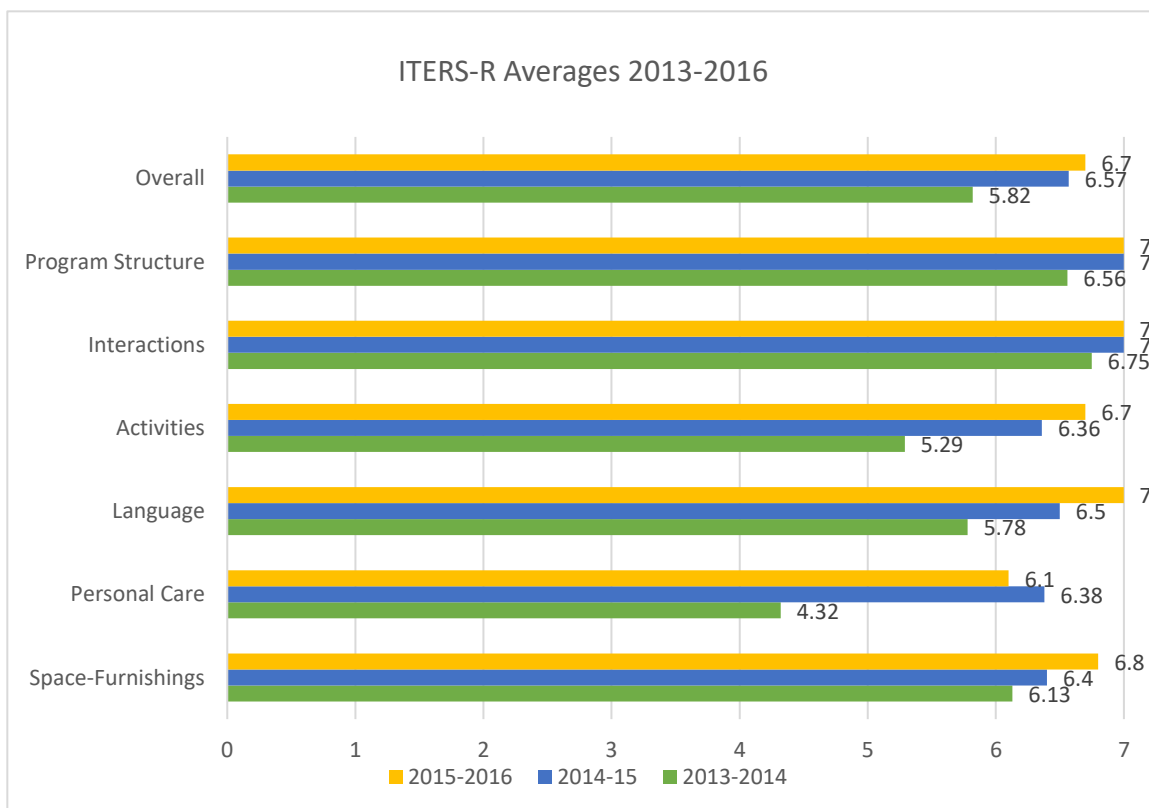
ITERS-R

Infant/Toddler
Environment Rating
Scale – Revised

Authors: Harms, Cryer
& Clifford, 2006

Scale: 1 to 7

1 = Inadequate
3 = Minimal
5 = Good
7 = Excellent



Classrooms were rated as good quality (6.7 overall rating across classrooms). Areas of highest ratings (all at 7.0 across all rooms) were interactions and language supports (listening and talking in infant and toddler classrooms), and program structure. Opportunities for

improvement exist within personal care routines (hand washing, meals and snacks, etc.) but scores are very good. Improvements from previous years in these areas are notable! The infant/toddler rooms scored higher than the Educare Network average overall score of 5.7 in 2014-2015.

Recommendations: keep focusing on activities, language, personal care, space and furnishings. More stringent interpretation of some scales for the next year will need to be anticipated.

Infant CLASS Observation Rating (Hamre, Paro, Pianta, & LoCasale-Crouch, 2014). According to its authors, the CLASS “is a rating tool that provides a common lens and language focused on what matters—the classroom interactions that boost student learning.” This was the third year that the Infant Classroom Assessment Scoring System (Infant CLASS) was completed in classrooms with the majority of students under the age of 12 months. Whereas the Environment Rating Scales (ITERS and ECERS) rate materials and the environment, the CLASS focuses instead on what teachers are doing with those materials to boost learning, examining closely the interactions occurring. The Infant CLASS has one overall domain—Responsive Caregiving.

Infant CLASS
Infant Classroom
Assessment Scoring
System

Authors: Hamre, Paro,
Pianta, & LoCasale-
Crouch (2014)

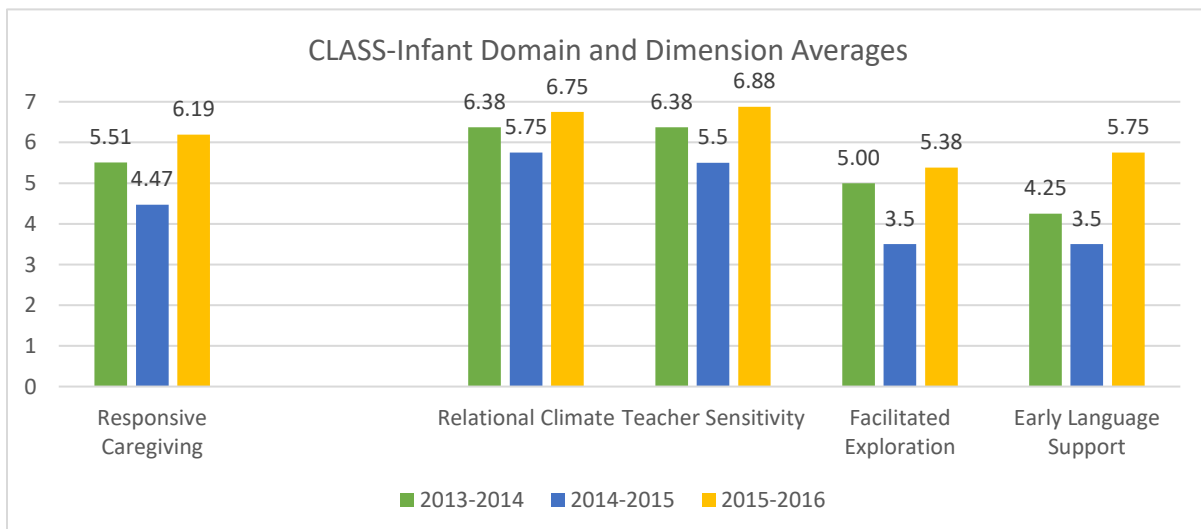
Scale: 1 to 7
1-2 = Low Range
3-5 = Middle Range
6-7 = High Range

Responsive Caregiving

- Relational Climate
- Teacher Sensitivity
- Facilitated Exploration
- Early Language Support

Infant CLASS Domain Averages

Year	# of rooms	Responsive Caregiving
2015-2016	2	6.19
2014-2015	2	4.47
2013-2014	2	5.51



When we look at the domain and dimension scores for the Infant scale, we see a pattern of improvements over last year’s scores across dimensions, with the largest gain in early language support (moving from 3.5 to 5.75). Improvement in CLASS scores was a goal set by teaching staff and supported by Master Teachers and additional professional development activities throughout the year that clearly affected these observation scores. Scores on the Infant CLASS were very good and were much higher than the previous year, for which we had seen a drop from 2013-2014 to 2014-2015.

Recommendation: While currently supporting good scores, aim to raise Responsive Caregiving each year. With new incoming staff, repeat prior professional development activities and goal setting to maintain a focus on these teaching strategies.

Toddler CLASS Observation Rating (Pianta, LaParo, & Hamre, 2012). The Toddler Classroom Assessment Scoring System (Toddler CLASS) was completed in each infant or toddler classroom with the majority of enrolled students over the age of 12 months. The Toddler CLASS has two domains: Emotional-Behavioral Support and Engaged Support for Learning. These dimensions include aspects such as: Positive Climate (focuses on how teachers interact with students to develop warm relationships that promote students’ enjoyment of the classroom community) and Facilitation of Learning and Development (focuses on how well teachers facilitate activities to support students’ learning and understanding opportunities).

Toddler CLASS
Toddler Classroom
Assessment Scoring System

Authors: Pianta, LaParo, &
Hamre, 2012

Scale: 1 to 7
1-2 = Low Range
3-5 = Middle Range
6-7 = High Range

Emotional and Behavioral Support

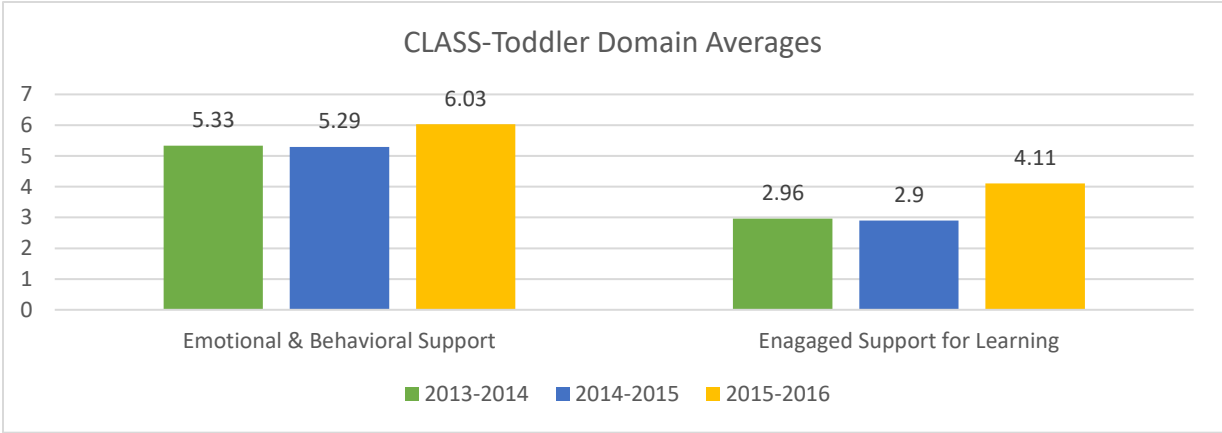
- Positive Climate
- Negative Climate
- Teacher Sensitivity
- Child Perspectives
- Behavior Guidance

Engaged Support for Learning

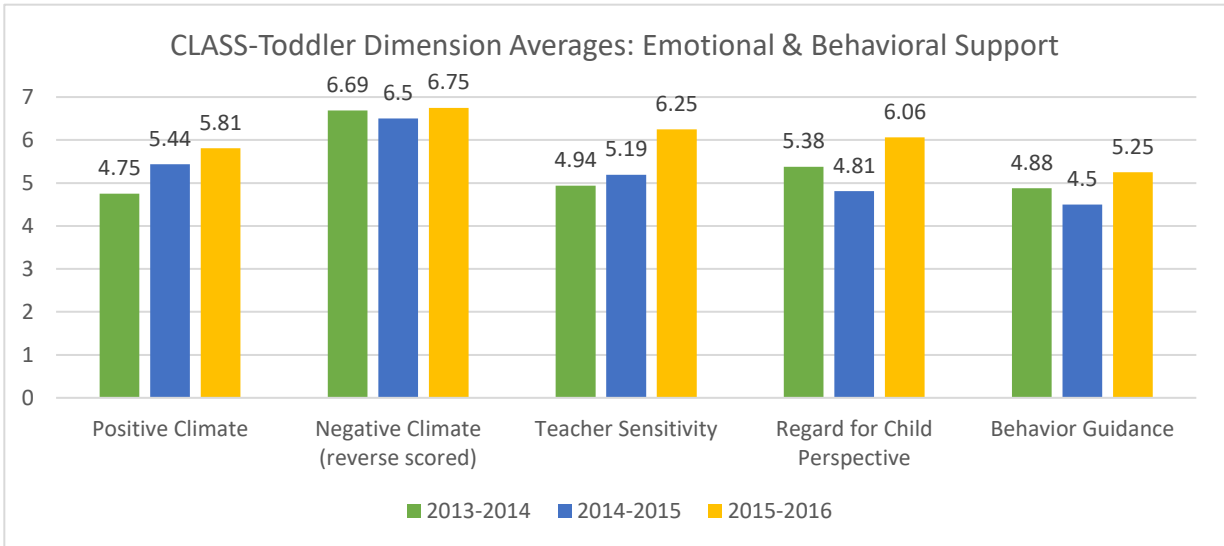
- Facilitation of Learning & Development
- Quality of Feedback
- Language Modeling

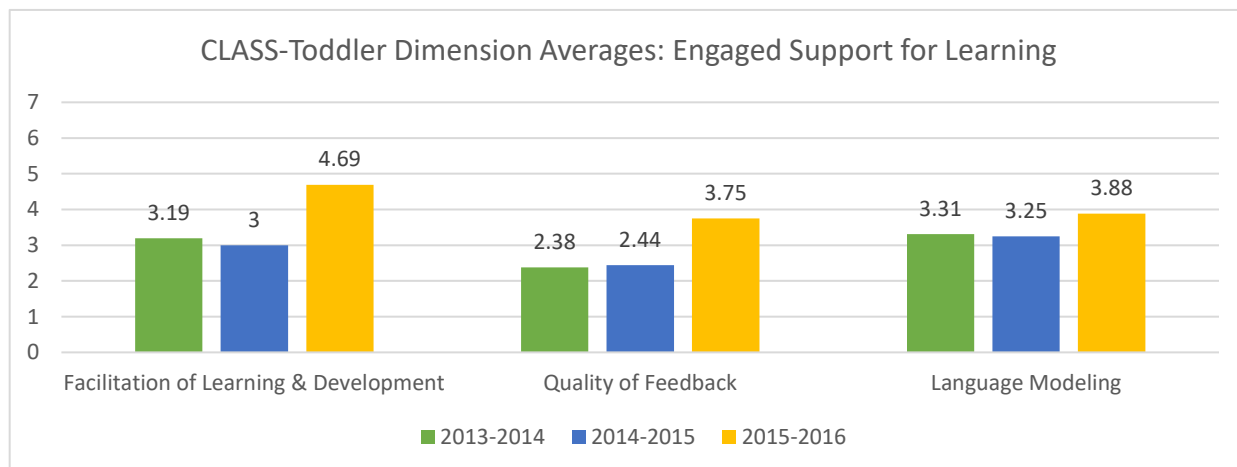
Toddler CLASS Domain Averages

Year	# of rooms	Emotional Support & Behavior Guidance	Engaged Support for Learning
2015-2016	4	6.03	4.11
2014-2015	4	5.29	2.27
2013-2014	5	5.34	2.94



Toddler CLASS scores increased from previous years, with a large improvement in Engaged Support for Learning (from 2.27 to 4.11). Students in the Lincoln infant and toddler classrooms experienced interactions in the good quality range. When we look at the domain and dimension scores for the Toddler scale, we see a pattern of improvements over last year's scores across dimensions. Improvement in CLASS scores was a goal set by teaching staff and supported by Master Teachers and additional professional development activities throughout the year that clearly impacted these observation scores. Scores on the Toddler CLASS were very good and were higher than the previous year, which dropped from 2013-2014 to 2014-2015. The ratings are close to the Educare Learning Network averages of 6.3 for Emotional and Behavioral Support and 4.3 for Engaged Support for Learning in 2014-2015.





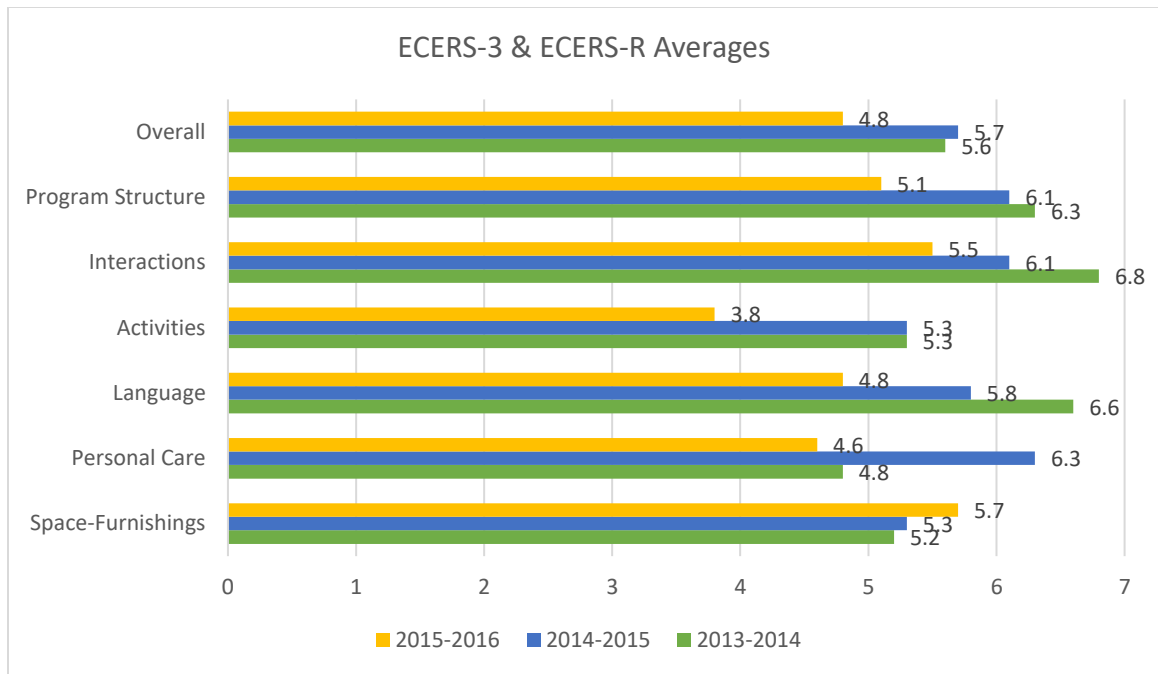
Recommendation: While currently supporting good scores, aim to raise scores each year. With new incoming staff, repeat prior professional development activities and goal setting to maintain a focus on these teaching strategies. Focus in toddler rooms particularly on Engaged Support for Learning.

Preschool Classroom Quality

Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-3rd Edition (ECERS-3; Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 2015). The quality of preschool classrooms was measured using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – 3rd Edition (ECERS-3). This observational tool is used to assess the quality of preschool classrooms in various domains including: Space and Furnishings; Personal Care Routines; Language and Literacy; Learning Activities; Interactions; Program Structure, as well as an overall rating of quality. Previous years we used the ECERS-R to measure classroom quality. The ECERS-3 revisions include additional items around math, language and literacy support and interactions. Findings by the developers show that scores on the ECERS-3 tend to be slightly lower than the ECERS-R, which is consistent with our observations as seen below.

ECERS-3
 Early Childhood
 Environment Rating Scale
 – Revised
 Authors: Harms, Clifford, &
 Cryer, 2015
 Scale: 1 to 7
 1 = Inadequate
 3 = Minimal
 5 = Good
 7 = Excellent

Five older toddler and preschool classrooms were observed and rated using the ECERS-3 this year. The following chart illustrates the resulting classroom observation ratings, both by domain and overall.



As can be seen, the ECERS-3 tends to provide lower ratings than the ECERS-R; this is a trend across the entire nation. The ECERS-3 is different from the ECERS-R in that it focuses more on the interactions staff have with children, less on materials in the room, assesses the observed schedule (rather than the posted schedule), and includes additional math and literacy items. The ECERS-3, while producing lower scores, also provides more information that can be used for program improvement. This new ECERS-3 demonstrates growth in space and furnishings over three years. The ECERS-3 also shows that Interactions continue to be a strength. However, Activities, followed by Personal Care and Language, are areas for possible growth going forward.

Recommendation: Focus on activities, specifically including more math and literacy opportunities within the classroom that also involve meaning conversations between children and staff. Have Master teachers complete ECERS-3 training and provide staff professional development around the new version.

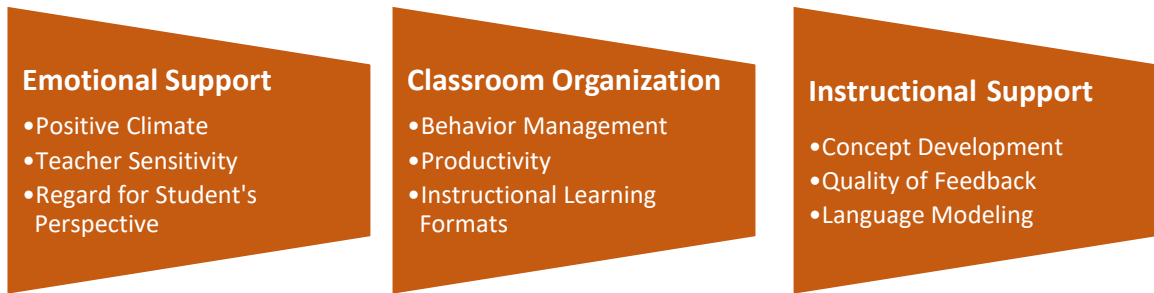
Preschool CLASS Observation Rating (Pianta, LaParo, & Hamre, 2008).

The Pre-K version of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) was completed with each preschool classroom. The Pre-K CLASS has three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support. Instructional Support tends to be the domain with the most opportunity for improvement as it challenges teachers to effectively extend language, model advanced language, and to promote higher-order thinking skills.

Pre-K CLASS
Classroom Assessment
Scoring System

Authors: Pianta, LaParo, & Hamre, 2008

Scale: 1 to 7
1-2 = Low Range
3-5 = Middle Range
6-7 = High Range



Pre-K CLASS Domain Averages

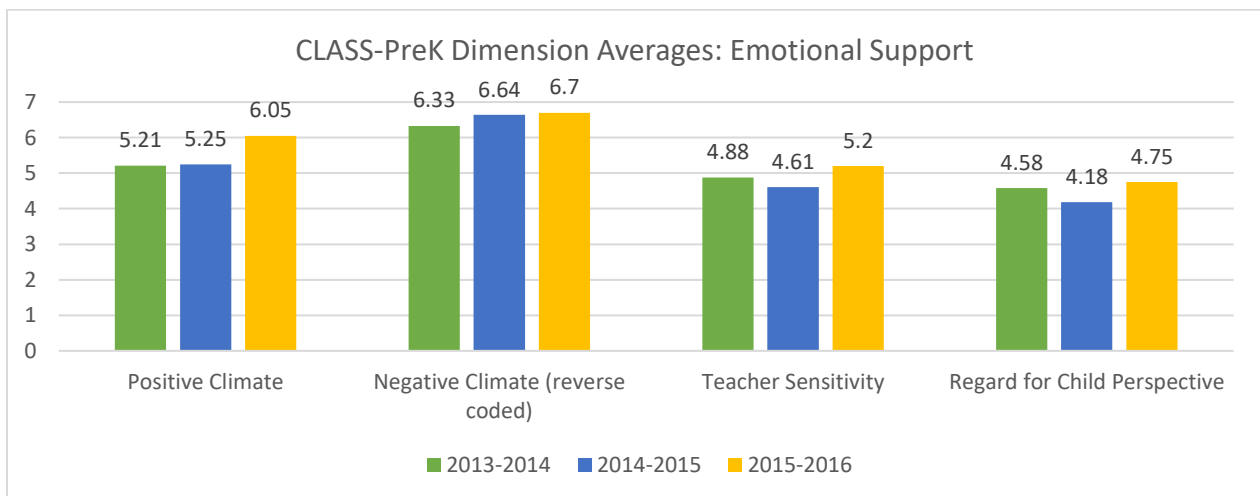
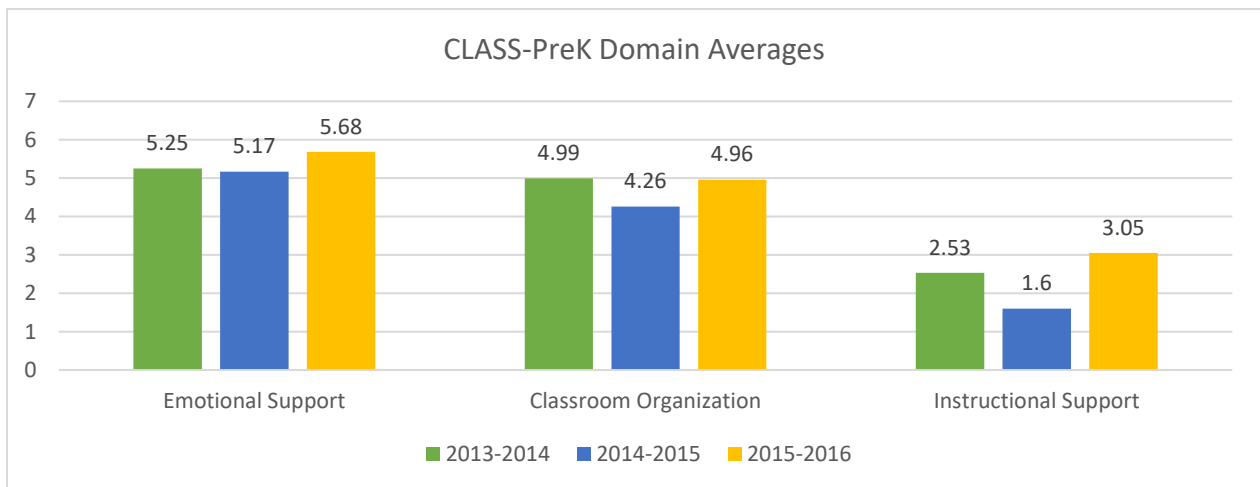
Year	# of rooms	Emotional Support	Classroom Organization	Instructional Support
2015-2016	5	5.68	4.96	3.05
2014-2015	7	5.17	4.26	1.66
2013-2-14	6	5.30	5.03	2.49

Classrooms were in the middle range for Emotional Support with average scores of 5.68 but provide opportunity for improvement in Classroom Organization and Instructional Support. Research on the CLASS tool supports ratings of 5 or greater within the domain of Emotional Support and 3.25 or greater within the domain of Instructional Support as being indicators of good quality (Burchinal, Vandergrift, Pianta & Mashburn, 2010). There were improvements in scores over last year for each of the domains. Tables below show the individual domains and dimensions, where improvements from the previous year can be seen across dimensions. Educare Learning Network scores were slightly higher with averages of 6.3 for Emotional Support, 5.7 for Classroom Organization, and 3.5 for Instructional Support in 2014-2015.

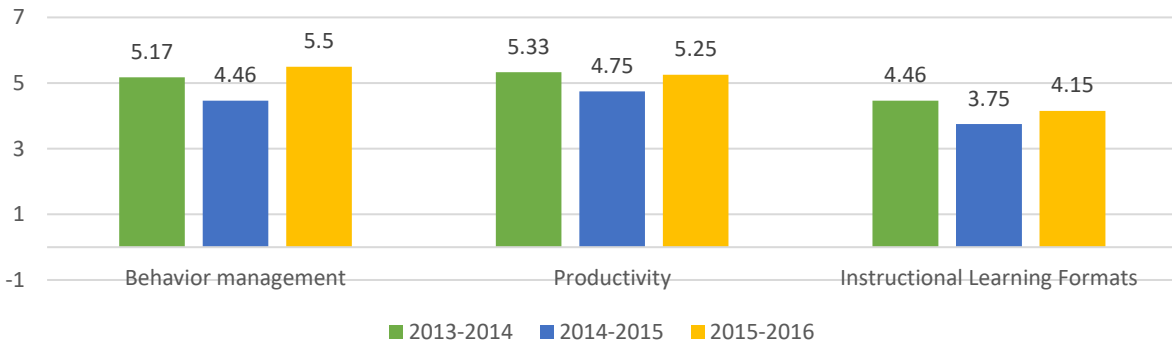
Recommendation: Educare Lincoln would benefit from focused coaching in the area of Instructional Support, with a goal of raising these ratings to exceed 3.25. Additional coaching in Classroom Organization would be of benefit with the goal to raise this score to over 5.0.

Following the pattern of the Infant and Toddler rooms, Preschool CLASS scores increased from previous years, with a large improvement in Instructional Support (from 1.66 to 3.05). Children experienced interactions in the good quality range. When we look at the domain and dimension scores for the Preschool scale, we see a pattern of improvements over last year's scores across dimensions. Improvement in CLASS scores was a goal set by teaching staff and supported by Master Teachers. Professional development activities throughout the year that clearly helped to improve these observation scores. Scores on the Preschool CLASS were very good and were higher than the previous year, which dropped from 2013-2014 to 2014-2015.

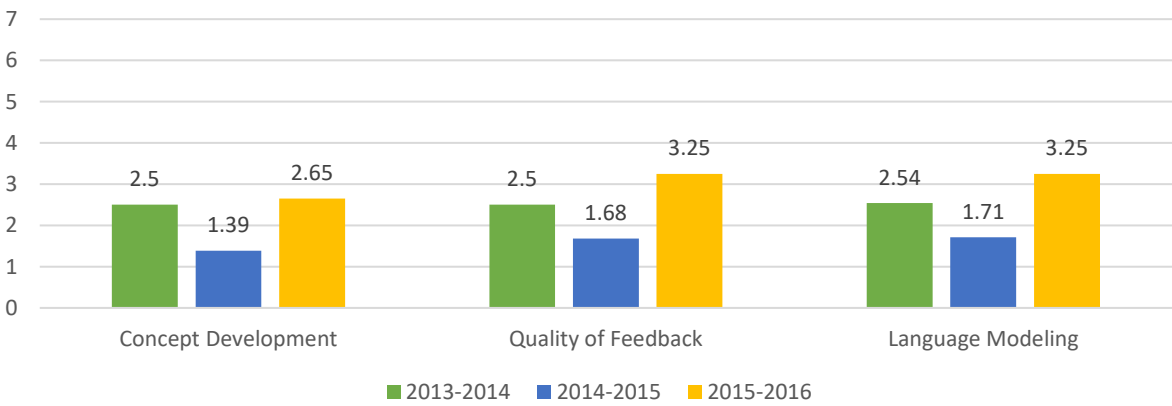
Recommendation: While currently supporting good scores, Educare Lincoln will want to aim to raise scores each year. With new incoming staff, repeat prior professional development activities and goal setting to maintain a focus on these teaching strategies. Focus particularly on raising Instructional Support to 3.25.



CLASS-PreK Dimension Averages: Classroom Organization



CLASS-PreK Dimension Averages: Instructional Support



Are Children Benefitting?

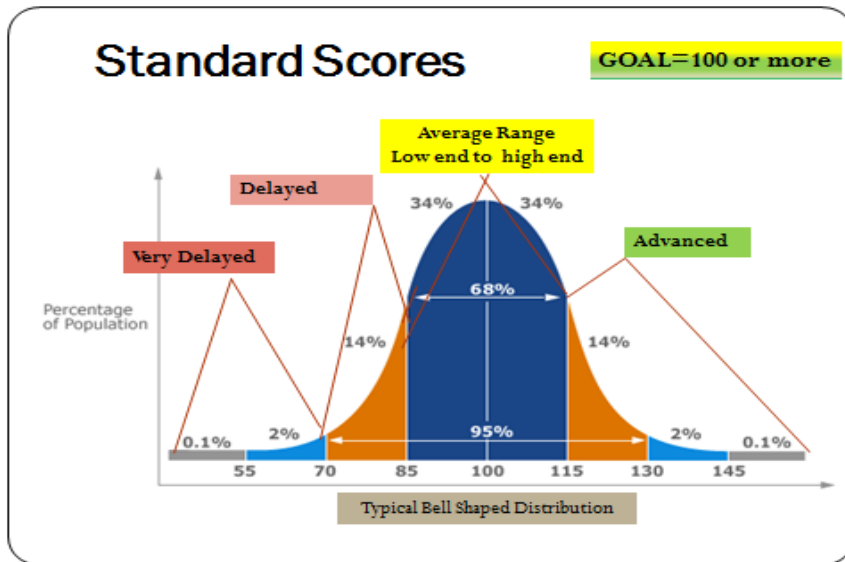
Lincoln Educare learning network child assessments: How did children progress during the 2015-2016 school year?

Student Outcome Data

Students were assessed twice each school year on multiple measures. There was typically at least a six-month interval between fall and spring assessments on these measures. The measures selected are from the national Educare evaluation model and evaluate individual students on language, vocabulary, school readiness and social/emotional factors. For all of the norm-referenced assessments given, the goal is for students to score at or above a standard score of 100 (standard score). The assessments for which the standard scores are used are the Bracken School Readiness Assessment (BSRA; Bracken, 2007), the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT-4; Dunn & Dunn, 2007) and the Preschool Language Scales (PLS-5; Zimmerman, Steiner, & Pond, 2011; Zimmerman, Steiner, & Pond, 2012).

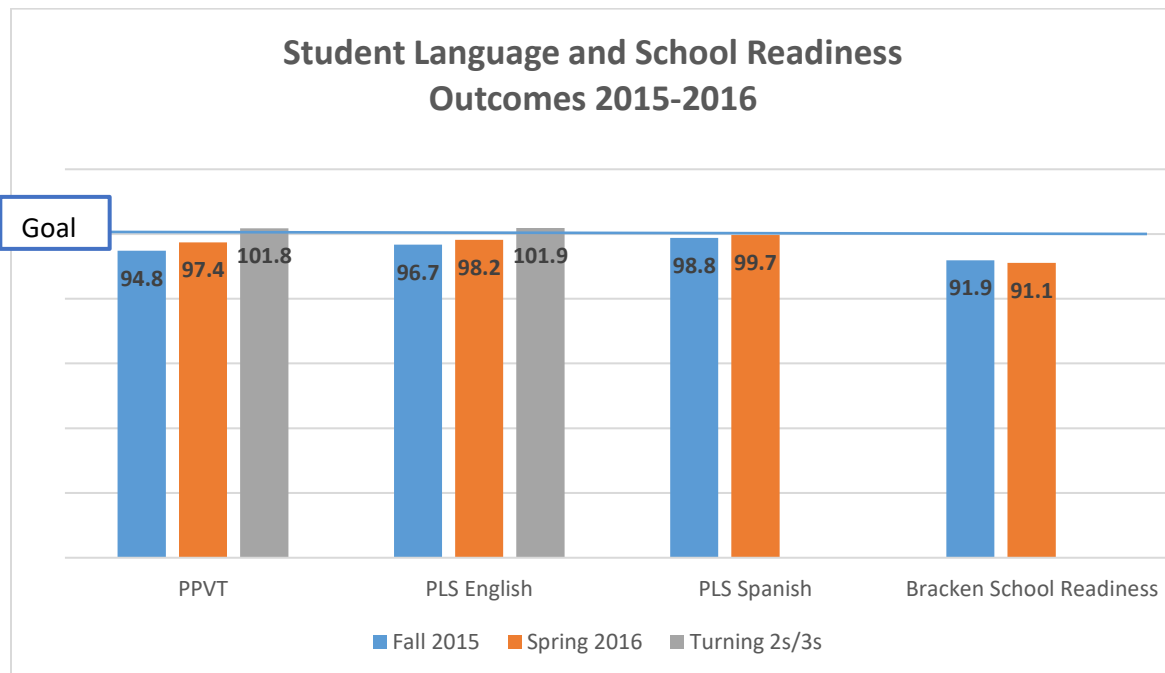
Measure	What it measures	Collected by whom?	Collected with who?	Collected when?
DECA	Social-emotional, protective factors	Teaching staff	All children	Fall & Spring
PPVT-4	English Receptive Language	LEP team	PreK, 2 & 3 year olds	Fall & Spring for PreK At 2 & 3 year birthdays (once a year)
PLS-5	Auditory comprehension, expressive communication and beginning literacy skills.	LEP team	PreK, 2 & 3 year olds English & Spanish	Fall & Spring for PreK At 3 year birthday (once a year)
Bracken	Kindergarten readiness skills	LEP team	PreK only	Fall & Spring
McArthur CDI	Early language skills	Teaching staff or parents (for SixPence)	Infants and Toddlers (in SixPence rooms)	Fall & Spring

Understanding Standard Scores



Standard scores are used for assessments because they allow teachers, evaluators, and researchers to make comparisons across assessments, grade levels and age groups. Standard scores are scores that have the same meaning no matter the context. For example, a standard score of 100 is always average. The goal of Educare is for all students to reach standard scores of 100 or higher on the assessments given.

The following charts present student baseline data across multiple measures.



In the 2015-2016 year, students' fall and spring scores on each assessment were used for paired analyses to test for change. There were 72 matched children on the vocabulary measures (PPVT, Dunn & Dunn, 2007), 37 children on the school readiness measure in the fall and spring

(BSRA, Bracken, 2007). There were 100 matched Devereux social-emotional ratings by teachers (DECA, LeBuffe & Naglieri, 1999), and 71 matched PLS-5 (Zimmerman, Steiner, & Pond, 2011; Zimmerman, Steiner, & Pond, 2012) scores. We report first on fall to spring match and then scores from unmatched assessments.

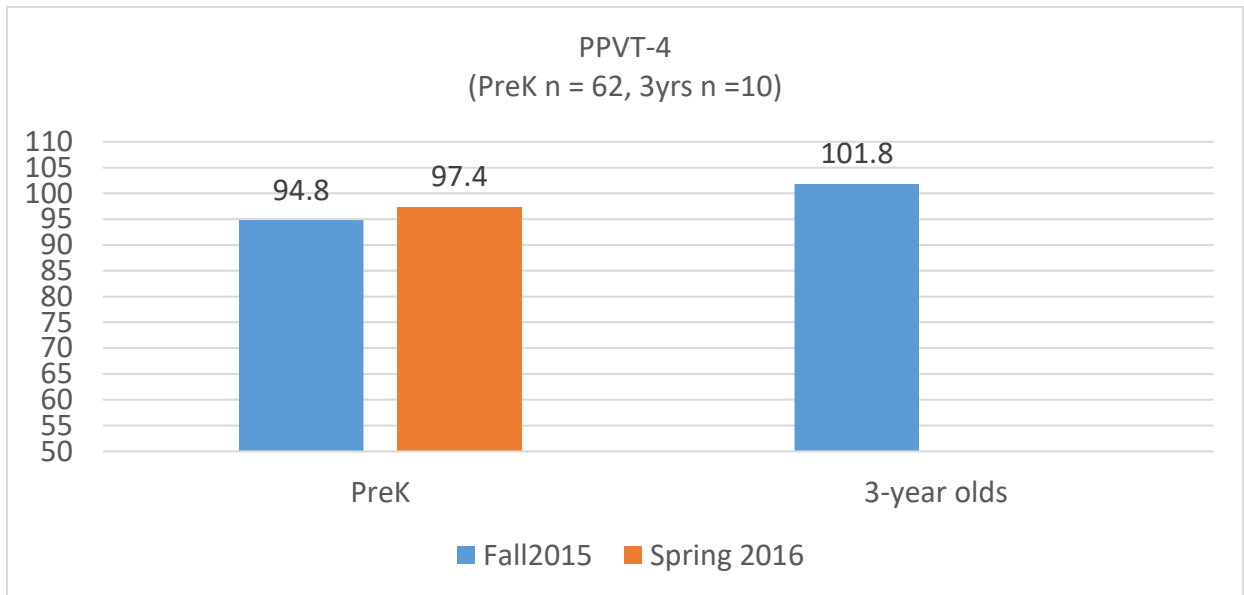


Language and School Readiness Outcomes. PPVT-4, Bracken, and PLS-5 in English were administered individually to children by UNL Speech and Language Pathology (SLP) masters students under direct supervision of senior SLP faculty. Administration was conducted at the Educare site. Children were invited to come to the testing rooms with SLP administrators. PPVTs took about 10-15 minutes each; Bracken administration was about 10-15 minutes. PLS English administration was about 45 minutes and was conducted in a separate session from PPVT or Bracken; PLS Spanish administration took about 1 hour because the administration assessed the child's Spanish and English simultaneously (see score reporting below). Spanish assessment was completed by 2 SLP students and 2 UNL Child, Youth and Family Studies (CYAF) students.

PPVT-4. Head Start children completing the PPVT-4 included 62 matched children. The children averaged 94.8 in the fall and 97.4 in the spring an increase of 2.6 points over the school year, thus children gained more than expected/more than national averages from fall to spring but are still below the national average of 100 which is the 50th percentile. Children also complete the PPVT-4 when they become age 3 if they are in the Early Head Start program. This year, 10 children completed the PPVT-4 as “turning 3s.” These children averaged 101.8 or slightly above the national average and goal of 100. PPVT scores of children in the Educare Learning network were slightly lower, averaging 97.3 for “turning 3s” and 95.6 in fall 2014 and 97.7 in spring 2015 for the preschool aged children.

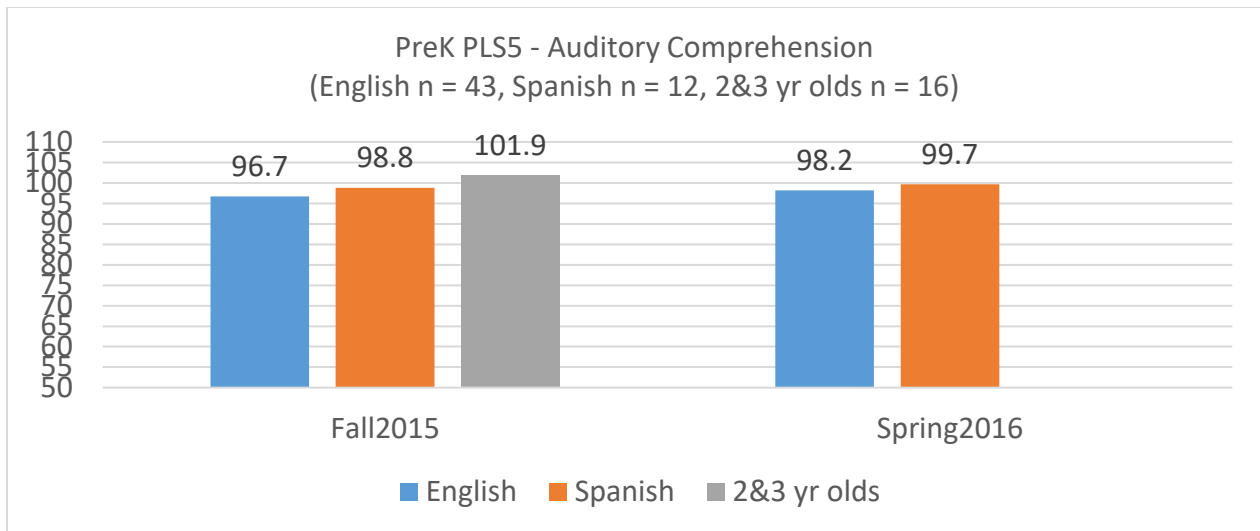
Recommendation: A 50th percentile goal—average score of 100—is doable for children who have multiple years of Early Head Start/Head Start, with time for the program to develop. It is doable but realistic to expect a 2-point increase for each year of program and to aim to be close to national averages at end of EHS as well. This means that with Educare, children would be

gaining approximately 2 points a year more than their peers. Vocabulary needs to be emphasized every day to do this—lots of talk at Educare and at home!



PLS-5 Auditory Comprehension (AC) English. Head Start children completed the PLS-5 AC in English including 43 matched fall and spring children. These children averaged 96.7 in the fall and 98.2 in the spring. Thus, children gained an average of 1.5 points during the school year. This year 16 children were assessed in English as “turning 2s and turning 3s” and these children were just above the national average with an average score of 101.9. English speaking preschool children in the network averaged slightly below with means of 95.0 in the fall and 95.7 in spring. *Recommendation: While children gain as expected (they don’t go backwards relative to the population), set a goal for a 2-point gain on national averages for each year in Early Head Start or Head Start.*

PLS-5 Auditory Comprehension (AC) Spanish Combination Scores. Spanish-speaking children were only assessed on the PLS-5 AC in fall and spring. Twelve children were assessed for a combination score in Spanish and English (first in Spanish and then in English) and these children averaged 98.8 in fall and 99.7 in the spring, just a little higher than their English-speaking peers at both points but with a smaller gain of .9 points. These scores are comparable to the network means of 99.9 in fall and 99.0 in spring. *Recommendation: Focus on language learning for children speaking other languages. Encourage support for home languages with families.*



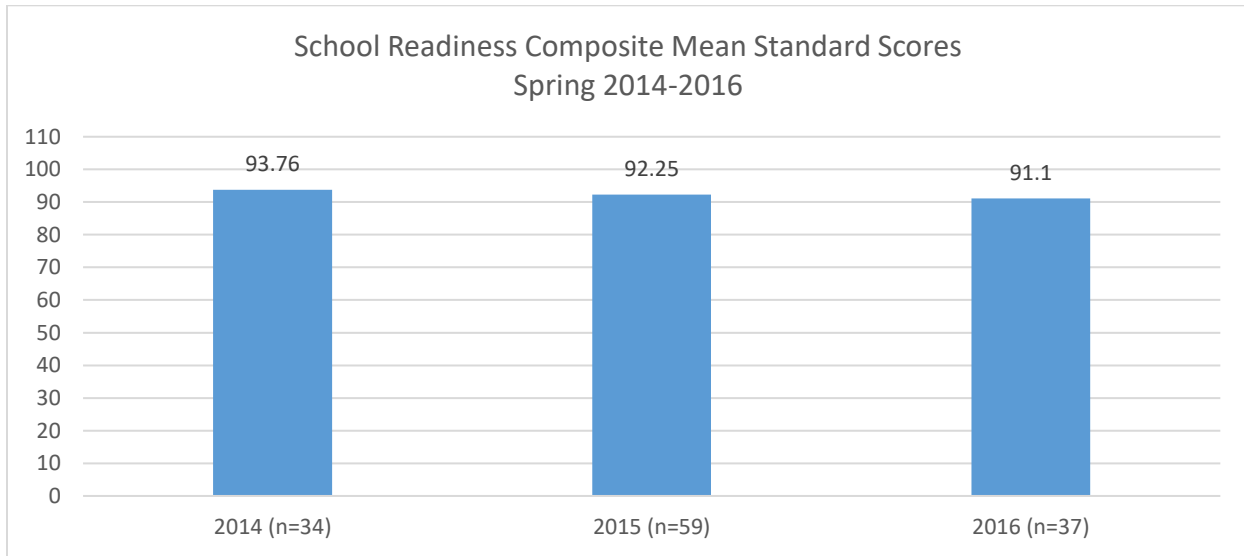
MacArthur-Bates Communicative Development Inventory (CDI). The CDI (Fenson et al., 2007) is a parent-report measure of infant/toddler language comprehension and production. Data were collected by Munroe Meyer Institute, University of Nebraska Medical Center, for the Sixpence evaluation and shared with UNL under a data sharing agreement. Percentile scores of all children completing the CDI comprehension scale in the fall of 2015 were 16.88 (n=8) and in the spring were 15.8 (n=6), indicating that comprehension essentially stayed fairly constant fall and spring and that comprehension was reported at a relatively low level (16th/17th percentile). On the other hand, with a larger sample of children with production scores, scores went from 15.9 (n=23) in the fall to 26 (n=17) in the spring demonstrating that children assessed had improving language production (words the children produced during their communications) relative to the norming population. The 26th percentile is still low relative to national norms so it is important to continue to emphasize children’s language development but the improved scores for spring over fall is outstanding.

Recommendations: Continue to focus on talking to children in classrooms and homes, encouraging child talk. There is obviously good progress in this area given the improvement in class averages. On the other hand, it appears that there could be much more emphasis on talking to children to encourage their comprehension even before they can produce language.

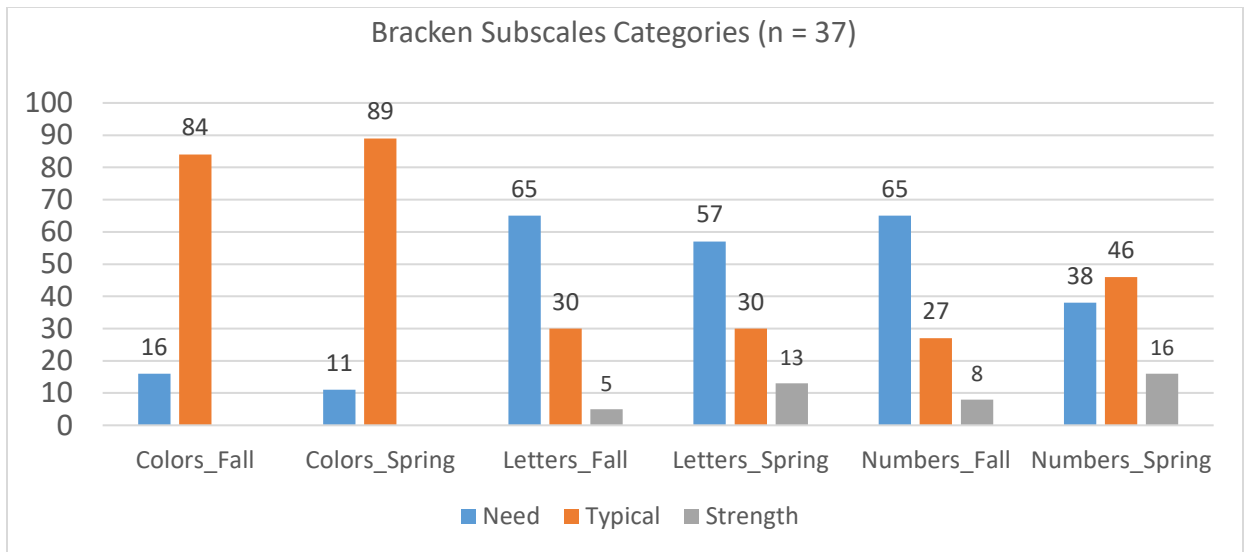
Bracken. Bracken school readiness assessment was completed in fall 2015 and spring 2016 with 37 matched children who were kindergarten bound for fall 2016. These 37 matched children averaged 91.8 on the School Readiness Composite standard score in fall and 91.1 in spring, showing no change. When we look at the break down across areas (see table), we see growth in specific areas. Overall, there has been a slight decrease in the mean overall school readiness

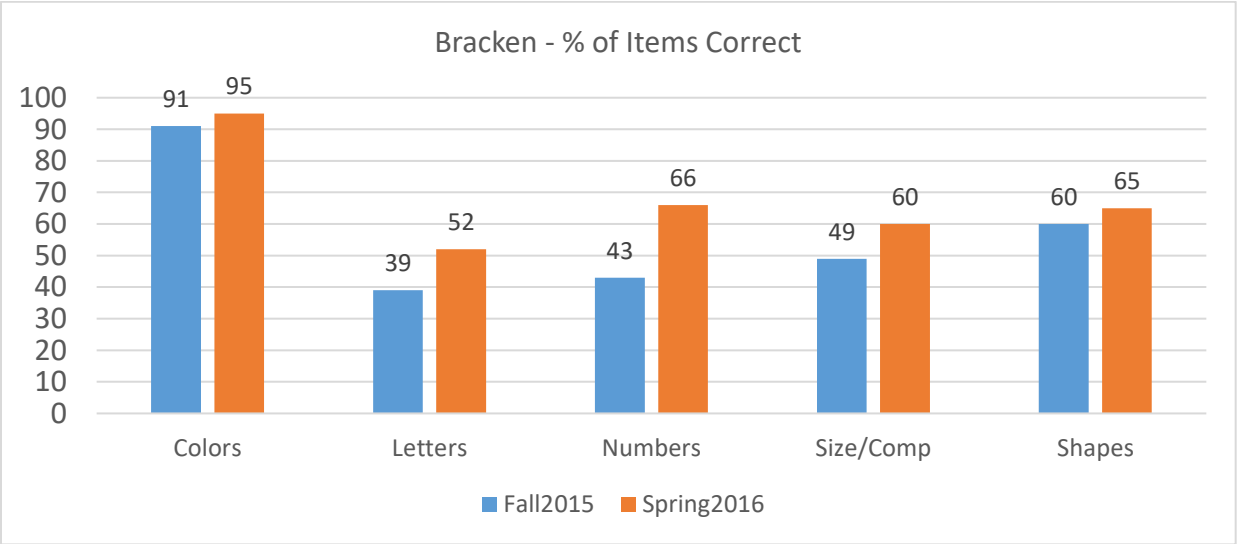
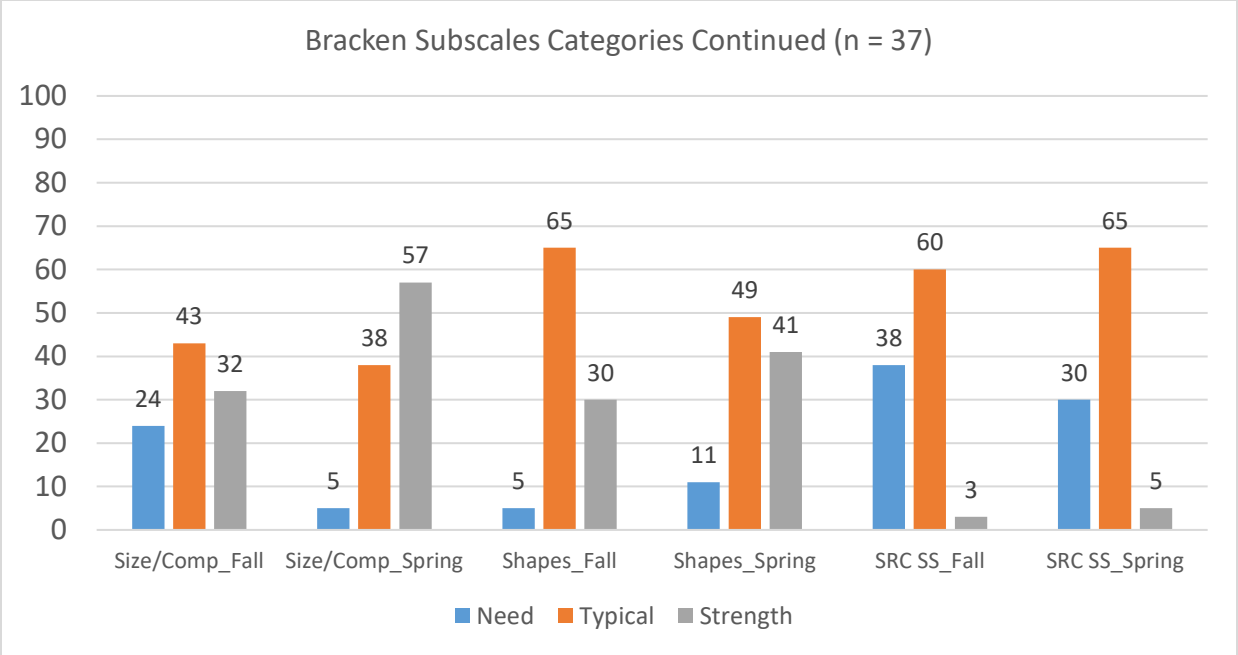
scores from 2014 -2016 (see table). All children in the network are assessed the spring before their kindergarten year and those children averaged 91.2.

Recommendations: The program may aim for higher scores on the Bracken towards the goal of school readiness. The fall Bracken helped teaching staff focus on specific areas for each individual child and the classroom. Continue focus on the concepts measures by the Bracken (particularly around letters and size/comparison concepts). There are plans to assess fall Bracken again in 2016 which should be helpful for planning instruction.



What amount of growth in kindergarten readiness skills is seen from fall to spring?





Social Emotional Outcomes. Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA; LeBuffe & Naglieri, 1999) scores were obtained from classroom teachers in both fall and spring. In fall, the initial DECA was completed after children had been with the teacher for at least a month.

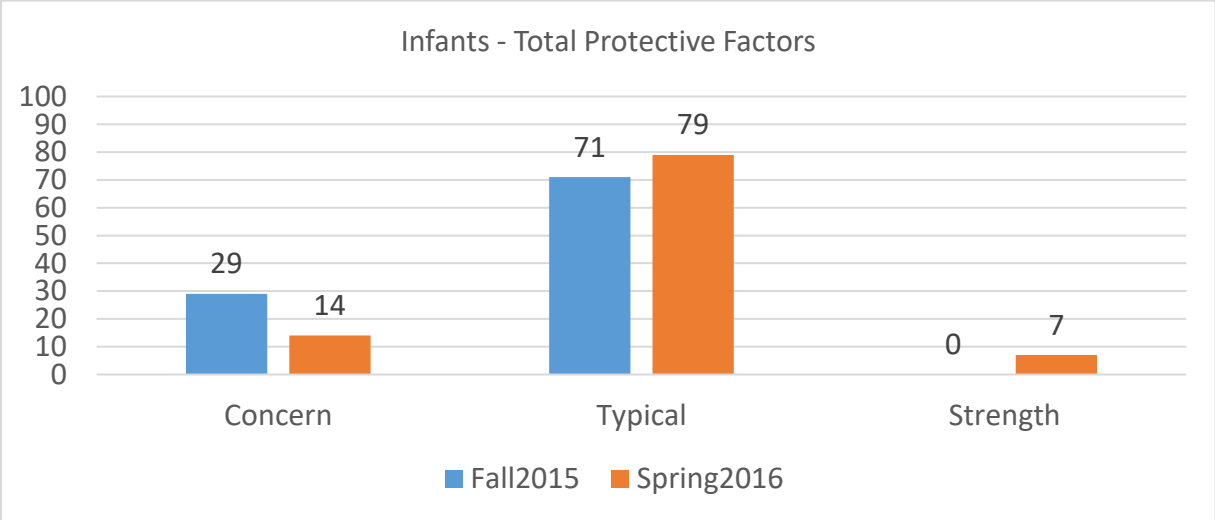
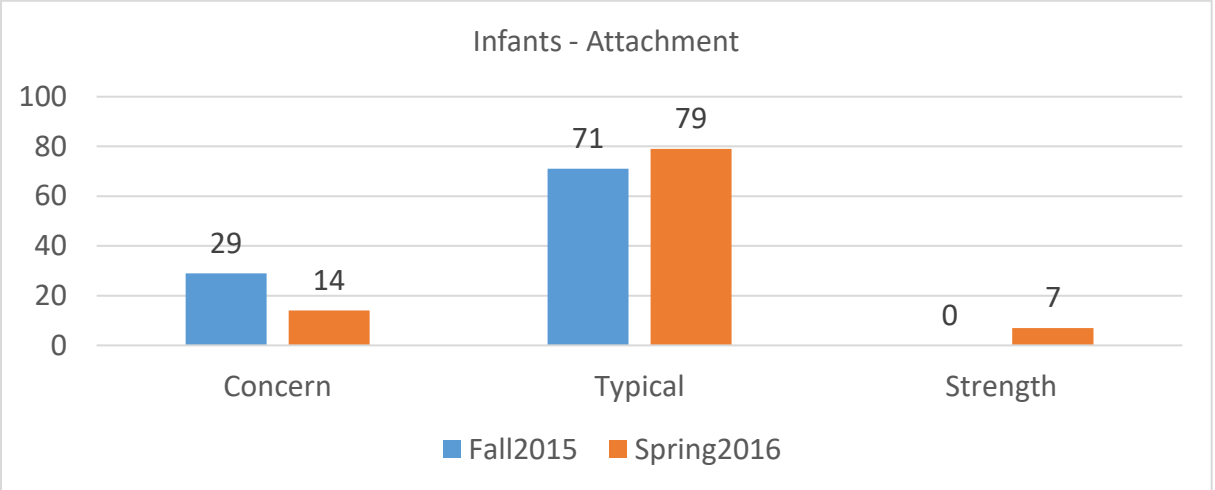
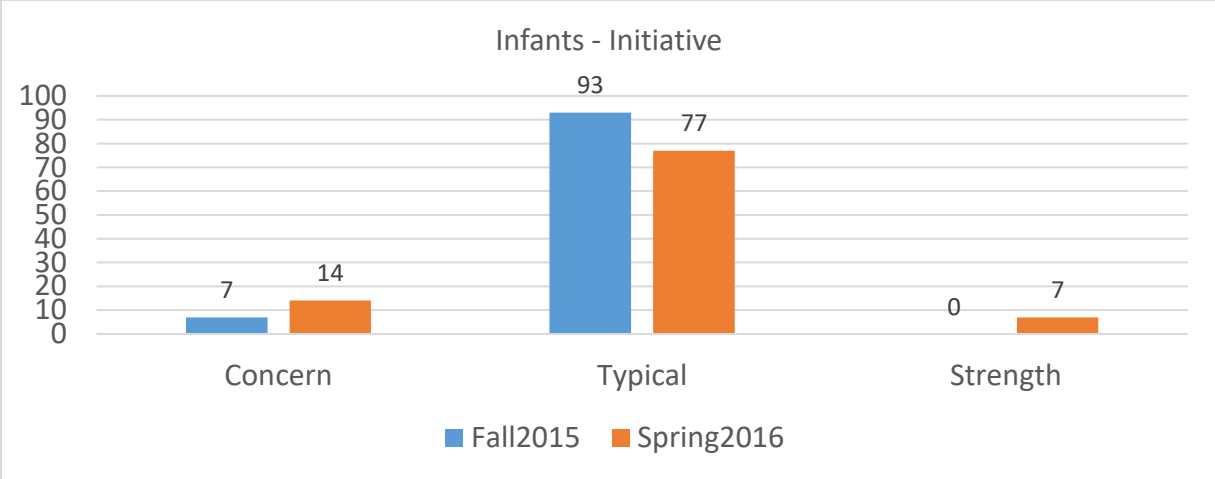
DECA. DECA's were completed on 113 children in fall and spring. Average Protective Factor T scores (composite social emotional scores) across groups were 50.4 for fall and 50.7 for spring, indicating slight progress in Protective Factors over all the infant, toddler and preschool levels. For the entire sample, fall Initiative T scores were 51.2 and in spring were 52.0. Fall Self-Regulation scores for preschool and toddlers were 48.6 and in the spring were 47.8 so Self Control was not a gain area overall, although it was mixed for the age groups, with preschool showing a slight drop and toddlers showing gains (see table below for details). Fall Attachment scores were 51.2 and spring Attachment scores were 52.0 so small gains were made overall in relationships.

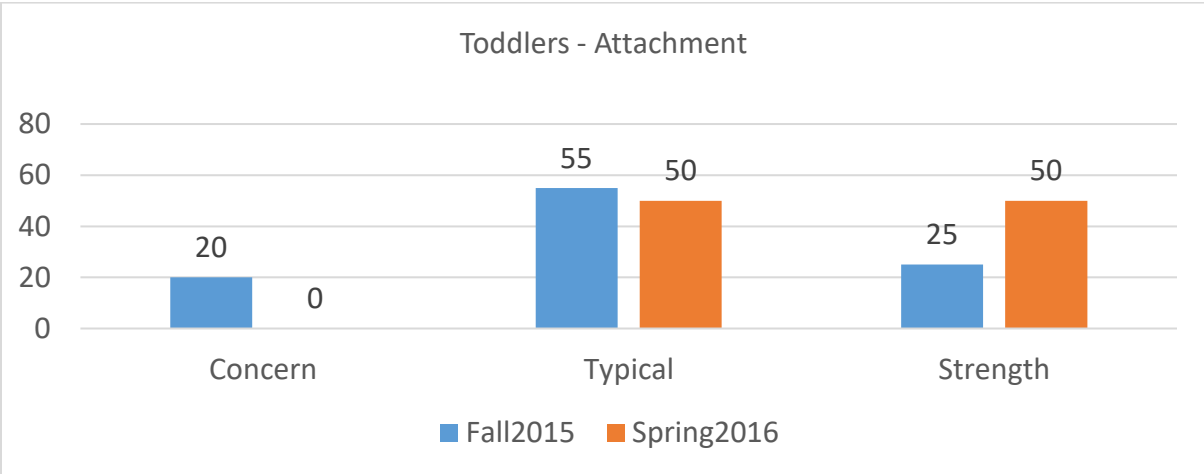
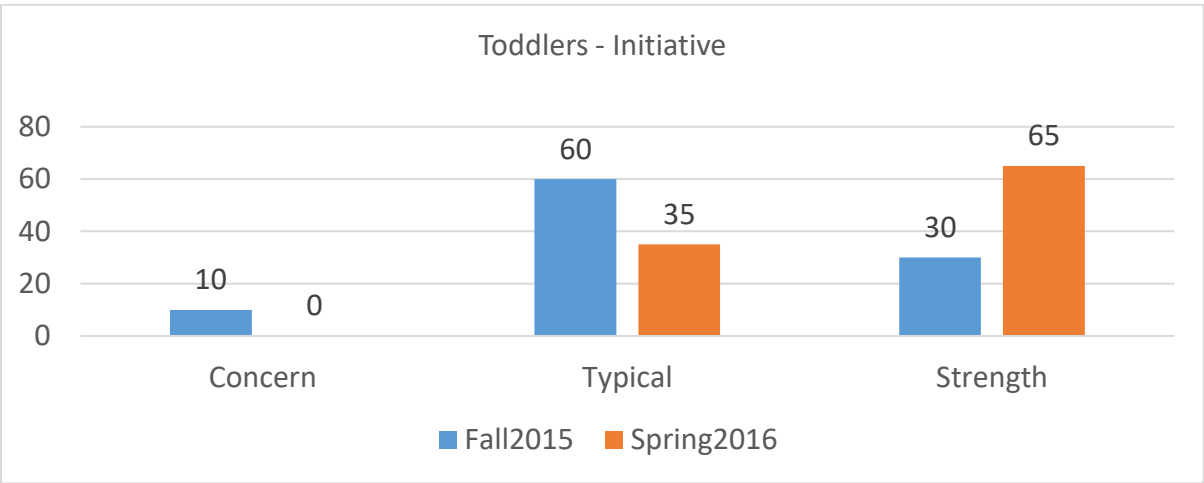
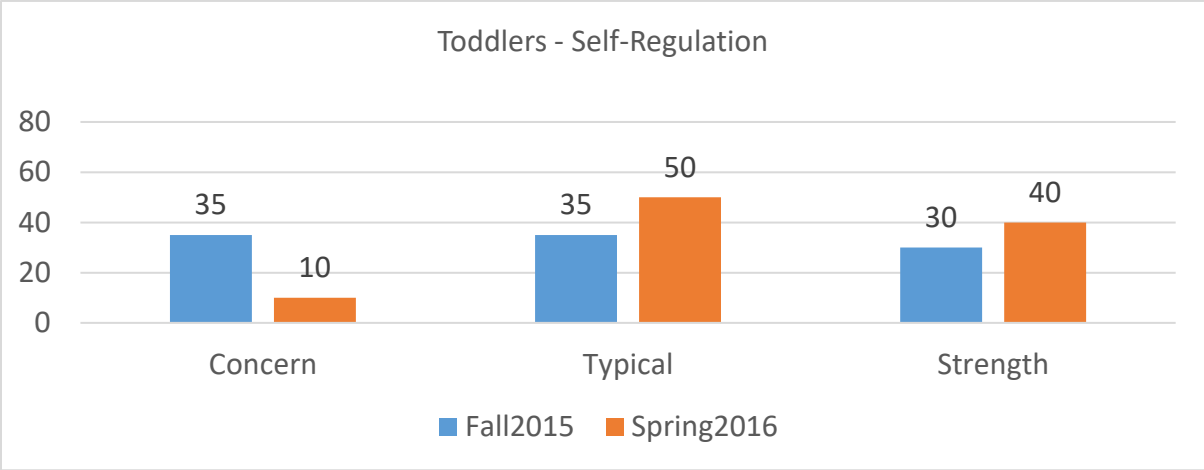
The DECA story can be broken down by infant, toddler and preschool versions as the table below shows for the full sample (matched pairs by version of the DECA findings are presented later in this section). Green shading demonstrates where scores increased from fall to spring and pink where there was a drop in scores (with the exception of Behavior Problems where a drop would be desired). White indicates essentially no change or change of less than .5 points. The outstanding progress was among toddlers, whose teachers rated them having major increases in Initiative and Relationships.

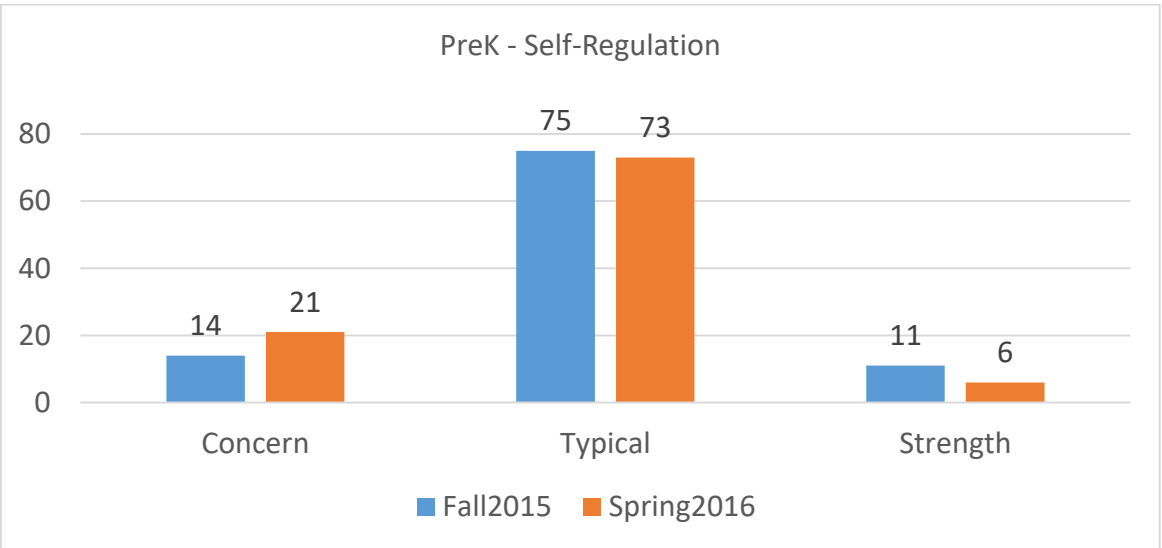
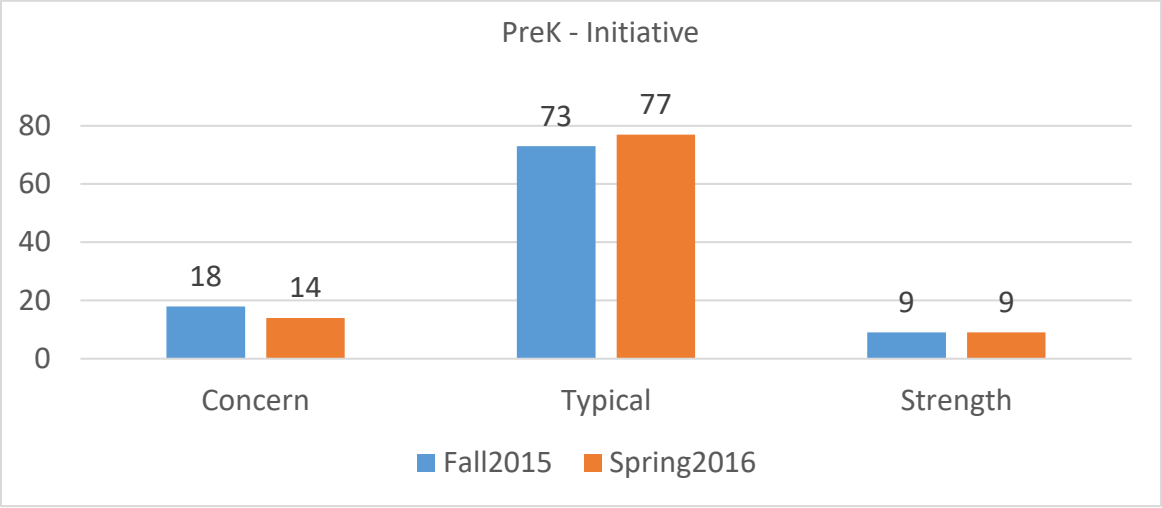
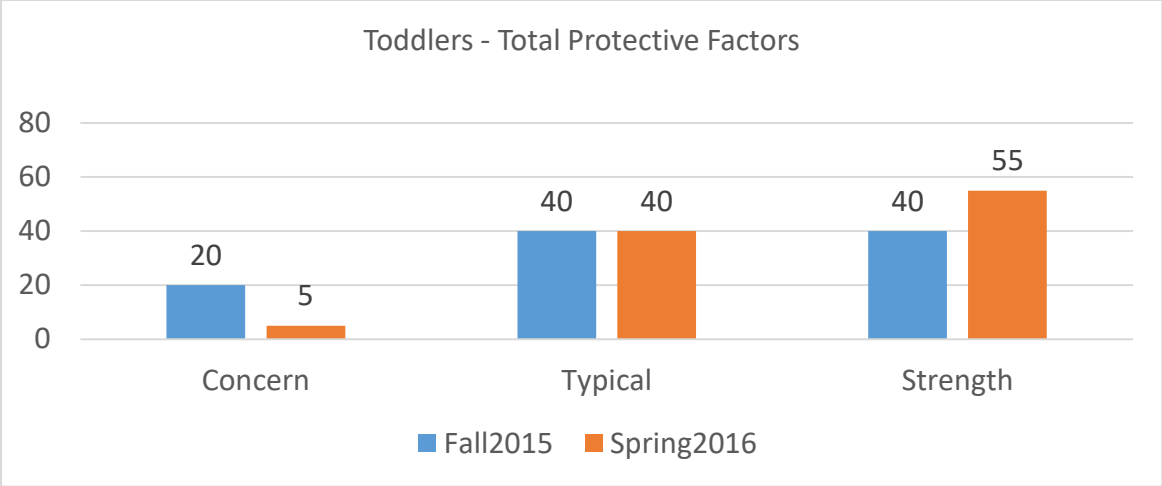


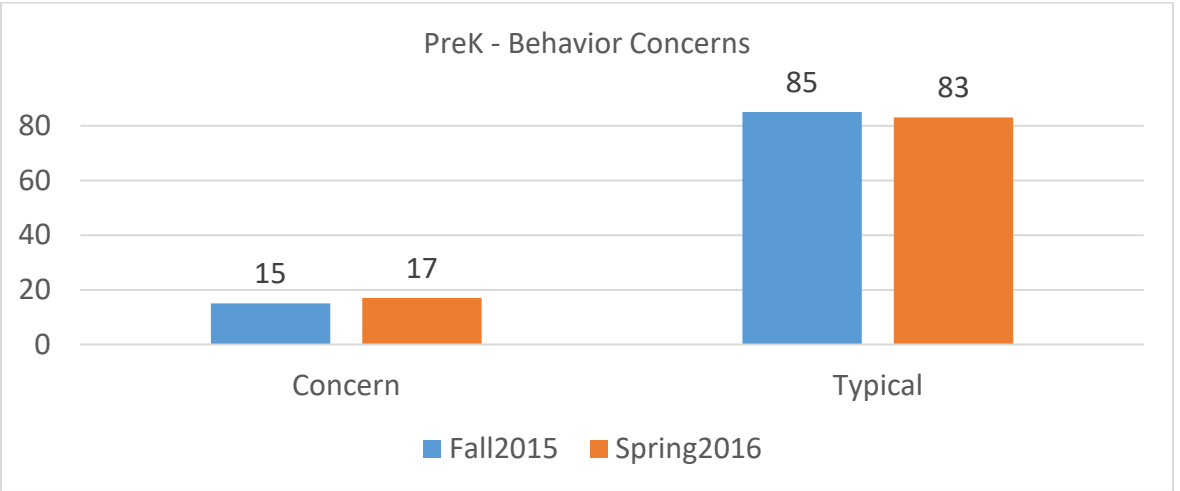
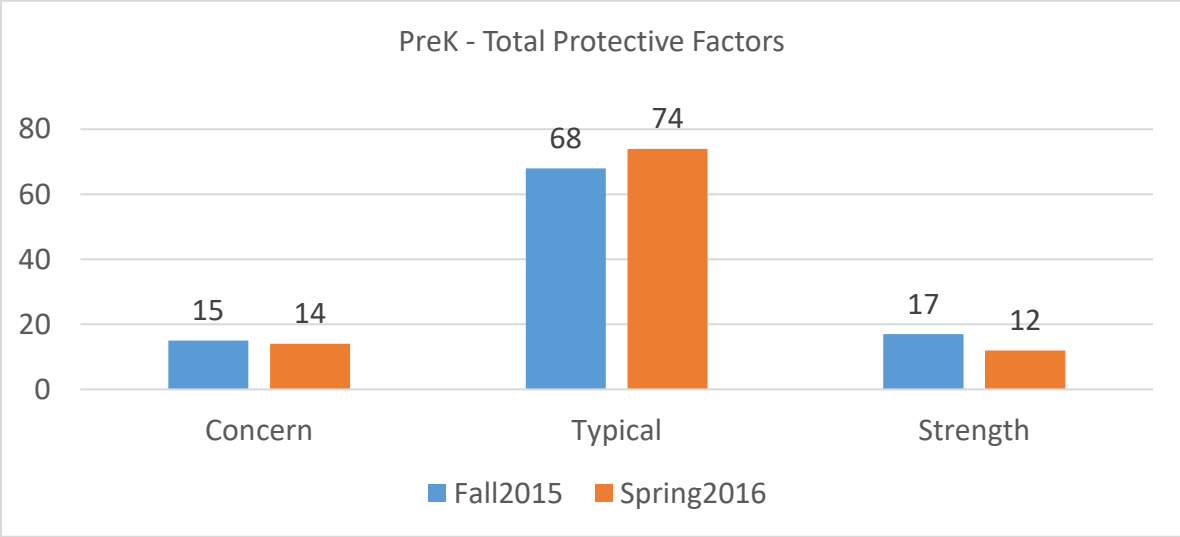
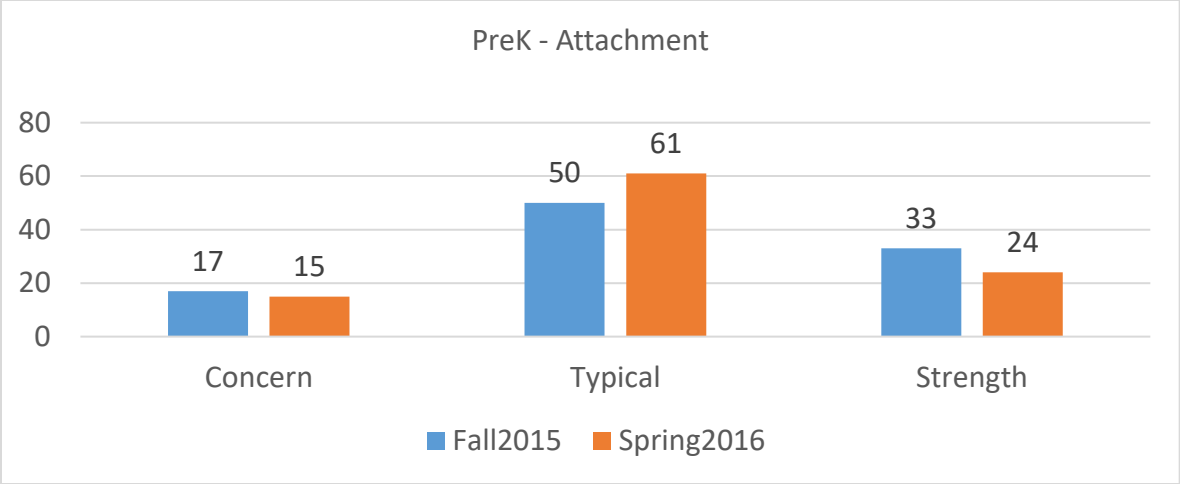
	Fall T Score	Spring T Score
ATTACHMENT		
Infant (n=18/14)	48.8	48.4
Toddler (n=29/24)	50.9	58.0
Preschool (n=66/75)	52.0	50.7
Overall (n=113)	51.2	52.0
INITIATIVE		
Infant (n=18/14)	51.7	49.7
Toddler (n=29/24)	51.7	59.2
Preschool (n=66/75)	49.8	50.3
Overall (n=113)	50.6	52.1
SELF-REGULATION		
Toddler (n=29/24)	49.1	51.7
Preschool (n=66/75)	48.4	46.3
Overall (n=99)	48.6	47.8
PROTECTIVE FACTORS		
Infant (n=18/14)	50.3	48.9
Toddler (n=29/24)	50.8	57.3
Preschool (n=66/75)	50.2	48.9
Overall (n=113)	50.4	50.7
BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS		
Preschool (n=66/75)	52.1	51.5

Looking only at children that received the same age version from fall to spring (infant n=14, toddler n=20, pre-k n=66), we see growth in Total Protective Factors. Infants, for example, showed a small decrease in Initiative while exhibiting a minor increase in Attachment. Toddlers showed growth in all areas with no children displaying concerns in Attachment or Initiative. Pre-K students showed small increases in both Initiative and Behavior Concerns while yielding a small decrease in Self-Regulation.









There are different ways to think about goals related to the DECA. Good goals could be to aim to improve from fall to spring; to have collective scores in the typical (40-60) or strength categories (above 60) and not above 60 (concern) for Behavior Problems, or to see scores at least above the 50th Percentile. Areas where there was improvement from fall to spring include Toddler Attachment, Initiative, Self-regulation, Protective Factors, and Preschool Behavior Problems (they decreased).

Recommendations: For Preschool and Toddlers: Aim for improvements in Self Control and Protective Factors. For Preschool: Aim to reduce Behavior Problems. The DECA information system provides many suggestions for improvements in each area. These could be used in both classrooms and homes.



Are Families Benefitting?

For the 2015-2016 school year, parent surveys were completed for 122 children. Surveys were sent to Frank Porter Graham (FPG), University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC, and compiled by FPG and returned to the UNL Evaluation Team. In some cases, where information is available, we compare 2015-2016 data to data from 2014-2015 and in some cases to ELN for 2014-2015.

What do families report about their nutrition and health-related matters?

Food sufficiency: While 65% of parents said they never worry about running out of food, 33% still sometimes have this worry and 2% worry often. This combined total of 35% is down from 38% of last year but still higher than for the ELN where 26% sometimes or often worry. Additionally, for Educare Lincoln 77% never worry about being homeless but 23% either sometimes or often worry, (higher than the 15% in the ELN). And 7% in Lincoln Educare report having been homeless in the past.

What do families report about stressors and supports?

Neighborhood: People were asked questions about their neighborhoods. The overall score indicated that about 45% of parents (44% last year; 45% for ELN) live in neighborhoods where they feel a lack of or low support. However, there were some items where Lincoln Educare parents were higher than for the ELN: 65% definitely agree child is safe in neighborhood (vs. 56% for ELN); 46% definitely agree there are people they can count on (vs. 36% for ELN), and 50% definitely agree there are people they can trust (vs. 42% for ELN). *Recommendation: work to build community in the Educare community so parents who do not have support where they live can feel supported by other parents at Educare.*



Relationships with Other Parents:

Parents were asked how many times they have a conversation with other parents when they drop off

children—45% of parents said they never do this and 44% do so once or twice a week. Also, 90% said they never talked to other parents in a meeting the previous week; 51% said they did not have a friendship with other parents. *Recommendations: During parent meetings emphasize team work, getting to know other parents. Pictures of parents and families in hallways with mini stories about families and children.*

Parenting Distress, Depression, Life Events. Eleven items from the Parenting Stress Scale are asked on the Parent Survey and items were also asked regarding depression. Educare parents are also asked to report on whether 19 different life events occurred for them in the previous year—these involve major changes in family life, including death, divorce, job changes, and housing changes that cumulatively have been associated with stress.

On the *Parenting Distress Scale*, 79% (same as for last year but lower than for the 86% of the ELN) of parents were rated as not-highly-stressed but 19% of parents were categorized as highly stressed (vs. 11% for the ELN). Items where Educare of Lincoln rated stressors as markedly higher than was true for the ELN included these: I am giving up more of my life; Quite a few things bother me about my life; I am not as interested in other people (as I once was).

Depression. Regarding depression, most parents reported they had not felt depressed in the past 2 years. However, 36% (34% last year and 20% for ELN) reported they had been depressed for 2 weeks or more in the past year and 18% said they had been depressed for a week or more in the past month. Finally, 22% of parents (vs. 29% last year and 17% for ELN) answered yes to all three depression questions.

Life Events. Educare Lincoln parents reported 3.4 (down from 3.67 last year) of the measured life events on average, and the maximum was 12 major changes. This compares to 2.9 for the ELN at large demonstrating that lives of Educare Lincoln parents may involve more major changes than is true for the Educare network at large. What kinds of life events particularly differentiated Educare Lincoln families from those of the ELN? Lincoln parents reported more marriage, more divorce, more separation from partner, more separation from other family members, more major changes in living conditions, more child living with someone else, more family members in jail (27% which was over twice that as for the ELN), more child changing schools, more child saw domestic violence, more change in work, and more other change events that affected parent.

What do we know about parenting activities and relationships with children?

Activities with Child: What do parents do with their children? Parents were asked how frequently they performed a number of typical parent-child activities with their child. These items are from the Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment Scale (HOME; Caldwell & Bradley, 1984). The patterns were similar to those seen last year. Most frequent activities during the past week were as follows: playing with toys or games indoors; talking during errands; and talking about Educare. Less frequent were as follows: telling child a story, working on arts, teaching child songs, music, doing sports or exercising together, working on an

art project, talking about TV or videos, playing counting games, or reading a story together. Parents were three to four times more likely to take a child to a park than to a library, play or concert, museum, or zoo. However, 71% (66% last year and 56% for ELN) reported playing with toys or games indoors with the child every day and 61% said they talk with their child about Educare every day (same as for last year; 54% for ELN). In general, Educare Lincoln parents tended to talk with their children more about their experiences and play with toys more but also do less with songs, storytelling, math, and art than is true for the ELN in general.



Special experiences seem to be in short order; 74% (78% last year) of parents have never been to a play, concert, or live show with their child; 74% (63% last year) have never been to a museum or art gallery; and 36% (46% last year) had never been to zoo/aquarium or petting fair. Educare Lincoln parents were fairly comparable to others in the ELN in frequenting these community activities, but made some progress in shows and zoo attendance since last year.

Recommendations: Emphasize field trips and free tickets to the Lincoln Children’s Museum, Lincoln Zoo and special performances perhaps in classroom groups.

Reading and Literacy Activities with Children. Reading to children daily is often found to be an important predictor of language development; 26% (down from 33% of parents last year) reported they read to children daily or 6 times a week but 66% report reading at least three times a week (down from 72% last year, and slightly below the 68% reported by the ELN). Some 12% (10% Educare Lincoln last year, 5% for ELN) of parents report they never read to their child. Slightly more (34%, 35% last year, 48% for ELN) said they talk with their child about letters or numbers daily (and 25% play counting games daily—both years--vs. 38% for ELN) while 7% said they never did this the past week (5% last year and 8% for ELN). Over half (61% vs. 53% last year and 58% for ELN) have never visited a library with their child while 8% (5% last year and for ELN) visit a library every week and 39% (43% last year) visit a library at least monthly (below the average for the ELN with 42% visiting a library monthly). Children have some books in their homes; 27% (25% last year; 27% for ELN) have over 50 books but 18% (11% last year; 20% for ELN) percent have 10 or fewer and 29% (27% last year and 22% for ELN) have no or few books in their home language.

Recommendations: Generally, parents are reading less, visiting the library less, providing math activities less than is true for the ELN and even less than they did the previous year. Parent meetings may include books for families to borrow and in multiple languages; taking field trips to the library. These busy parents are doing a better job than the average ELN Educare parent in at least obtaining some books for their child (with the exception of non-English speaking families); but there are greater bonuses for language growth when parents read nearly daily.

Parent-Child Relationship Scale: Parents report many positive aspects of their relationships with children. The 16-item Parent-Child Relationship Scale (CPRS; Pianta, 1992) reports on parent-child Closeness, Conflict and Parent-Child Total. A full 93% (same as last year) said that they share an affectionate relationship with their child. The mean Closeness score on this scale was 4.77 out of 5.00 possible which was very close to the ELN mean of 4.66 across all sites. Lincoln parents were slightly higher than the ELN on items: Child seeks comfort. Child values relationship with parents. Child shares information. Child shares feelings and experiences. However, Conflict scores averaged 2.4 (up from last year's 2.16 out of 5.00 whereas the ELN average was near 2.0). Thus, scores showed that Conflict was a bigger issue than Closeness, relative to the ELN and even relative to last year. Conflict items that were higher than for the ELN were: Child and parent are always struggling. Child is uncomfortable with physical affection. Child easily becomes angry with you. Child is angry after being disciplined. Child is sneaky and unpredictable.

Recommendations: Hold parent meetings focused on helping children manage anger, or discipline without anger and power struggles. Incorporate the recommendations into Acceleration Grant social emotional strategies.

Parents' Aspirations for their Children: Parents have high aspirations for their children; 85% (83% last year) indicated they hoped their child would attain a BA degree or grad school (similar to the ELN where 85% of parents said they expect their child to finish college); only 2% indicated they hoped for only a high school degree for their child.

Recommendations: In parent meetings, demonstrate relations between reading and talking to children, executive functioning during Educare years and children's success in school and between early success in school and success trajectories from secondary education and college. Busy parents may not be aware of connections between their behaviors today and later successes. Signs in hallways emphasizing language, positive outcomes-promoting parenting behaviors and school success. Help parents make connections.

Appendix 1

Additional Research Activities

I. Acceleration Grant

Educare Lincoln joined Educare of Omaha, Winnebago and New Orleans in proposing an Acceleration Grant to the Buffett Early Childhood Fund. This grant focuses on social-emotional development of children. It is a three year grant, awarded to University of Nebraska Medical Center. Year 1 (2015-2016) grant activities were to learn about social emotional strategies in all the schools and to synthesize approaches so all staff and teachers could have a large toolbox of approaches and be on the “same page.” The Positive Behavior Supports program was developed in Nebraska schools. All teachers completed PBIS Module 1, received social emotional training, and reviewed a building wide approach to PBIS.

Year 2 (2016 -2017) will focus on ensuring all staff complete PBIS Modules 1 and 2, implementing a PBIS team, reviewing building-wide social emotional goals, orientation to executive functioning, implementing an executive functioning measure fall and spring, building-wide executive functioning training.

Year 3 (2017-2018) will focus on a program for parents, further work with executive functioning, growing building wide PBIS policies and skills, and coaching around trauma-informed care. PBIS, and executive functioning.

II. Student Research projects

With its partnership with UNL, secondary, de-identified data (data that do not contain names of children and families) have been used to generate additional understanding about Educare children’s development and about influences on that. In many cases, Lincoln and Omaha data have been combined to address important questions to advance our understanding about early development and its influences in the Educare context.

- 1. Predictors of preschool children’s body mass index: Breastfeeding duration, child eating behaviors and parental feeding practices.** Main findings: breast feeding predicted (lower) BMI, feeding practices and child eating behaviors (in expected directions); breast feeding was mediated by child food responsiveness such that children who are were not breast feed had more food responsiveness and these children had higher BMI. Amy Encinger, MS thesis. COMPLETED, AUGUST 2015.
- 2. Examining the roles of child temperament, home and classroom environments on low-income preschool children’s self regulation.** Findings highlighted the importance of positive parent-child and teacher-child relationships for children’s self-regulation, in particular children with low regulatory and high reactive temperament. Ibrahim Acar PhD dissertation. COMPLETED, MAY 2016.

3. **Temperament, parent and teacher relationships and parent and teacher feeding practices and child eating behaviors at home and in the classroom among Latinos in Lincoln and Omaha Educare and Colombia, South America: A mixed methods study** (3-4 year olds). Main findings: TBA, Elsa Escalante, PhD Dissertation. Elsa has been awarded the Patrice Engel Fund Award, Society for Research in Child Development. COMPLETED, AUGUST 2016.
4. **The effects of digital media use and parent-child co-use on Head Start children's self-regulation.** Multiple regression analyses showed a significant positive main effect of children's amount of digital media use on their self-control and a negative main effect for behavioral concerns. As parent co-use increased, the benefits compounded in a multiplicative manner. Jan Eстераich. Comprehensive Exam project. COMPLETED, AUGUST 2016.
5. **Influence of child behavioral problems and parenting stress on parent-child conflict among low-income families: The moderating role of maternal nativity.** While predicted relations were found between parenting stress and parent-child conflict for immigrant and non-immigrant families, relations between behavior problems and parent-child were significant only for non-immigrants. Aileen Garcia, Jan Eстераich and Lixin Ren. Secondary, de-identified Lincoln/Omaha data. COMPLETED, MAY 2016. Submitted to *Merrill Palmer Quarterly*.
6. **Parent-child relationships and preschoolers' social-emotional functioning among low-income families: The moderating role of parental nativity.** More parent-child conflict was related to behavioral concerns, social-emotional strengths and executive functioning, but only for U.S. born parents, not foreign-born. Secondary Lincoln/Omaha, de-identified data. Lixin Ren, Aileen Garcia and Jan Eстераich. IN FINAL PREPARATION PROCESS.

Projects UPCOMING, INCLUDING UCARE:

7. Handheld media use, educational apps and co-use with parents. Proposed for January 2017 in Lincoln and Omaha Educare (3-4 year olds). Jan Eстераich, PhD Dissertation, Proposed. Jan has applied for funding from Head Start Scholars Grants.
8. Child progress on PPVT-4 and parent and teacher relationship. Amy Colgrove, Lixin Ren, Aileen Garcia. Secondary Lincoln/Omaha data. IN PROCESS.
9. Relations between child observed and teacher report of Executive Functioning. Proposed for UCARE. Kenzie Easley. UCARE 2016-2017.
10. Experiences of parents and teachers in working with Part C and Part B students and system (or something of that nature). This would involve qualitative data collection- some interviews or focus groups. Reina Sebastian (Reina is Spanish speaking and certified on PLS-5 so will help in that data collection). UCARE 2016-2017.