



Early Childhood Education

In Nebraska Public School District,
Educational Service Unit and Head Start Programs



2016-2017 State Report

Evaluation Report
prepared by
Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Early Childhood
In collaboration with
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SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S SUCCESS

The Early Childhood Education Program—Birth through Age 5 (B-5) included all children who were part of Nebraska public education programs that were supported through the blending of multiple funding sources. Comprehensive early childhood education programs operated by Nebraska public school districts (hereafter referred to as districts) or Educational Service Units (ESUs) supported the learning and development of children B-5 across home and center-based settings including Sixpence programs. Many of these full or half-day center-based programs received support through partnerships with community agencies.

Districts and ESUs served children who represented a full range of abilities, languages, and economic diversity of families within the community. The purpose of the Early Childhood Program was to provide high quality early childhood education experiences that empower children to reach their full potential and increase the likelihood of their later success in school.

PROGRAM FEATURES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO QUALITY

NDE requirements for Early Childhood programs included:

- Use of developmentally appropriate curriculum and authentic assessment
- Inclusive programs and services
- Attention to research-based elements of effective programs
- Teachers in classrooms hold a Nebraska teaching certificate with an approved early childhood endorsement.
- Teachers in home-based Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education Programs hold a Nebraska teaching certificate with an approved endorsement.
- Staff in home visiting programs hold a degree in early childhood education, early childhood special education, social work, nursing or related field.
- Home-school-community partnerships



INTEGRATED FUNDS EXPANDED EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

Nebraska early childhood programs were funded with multiple sources. In 2016-17, over 88 million dollars supported ECE programs. Federal dollars accounted for the majority of Early Childhood Education funds and were provided through IDEA, Head Start, Title 1 Part A, and Title 1 Migrant. State sources of funding were provided through early childhood grants for ages three through five, state aid, lottery funds, and general funds. Local district funds as well as parent fees were included in local funding sources. Districts also received funding from the Early Childhood Education Endowment Fund.



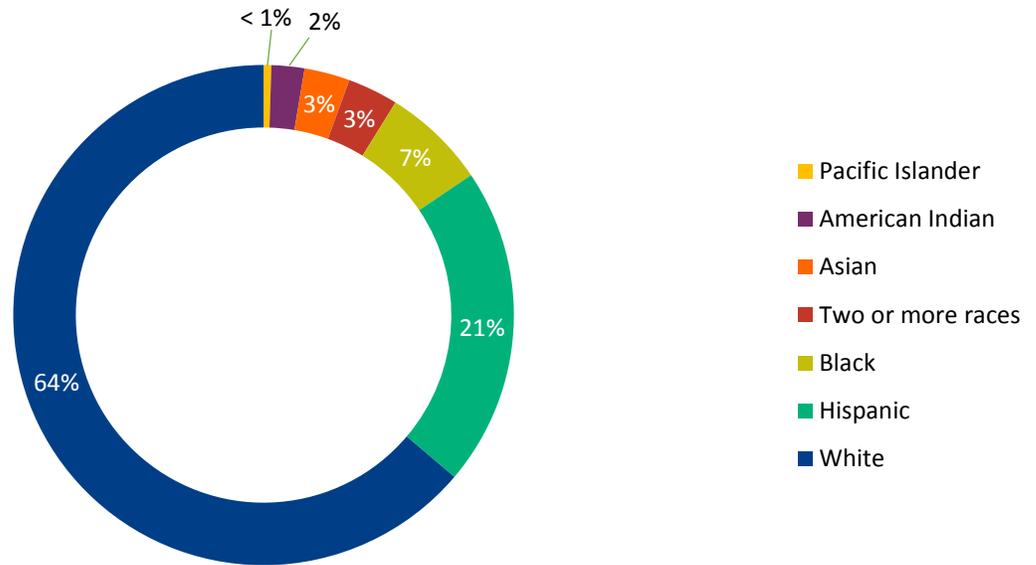
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

Program Type	Kid Count	Percent
NDE Grant Funded Early Childhood Education Programs	2044	11%
NDE non-Grant Funded Early Childhood Education Programs	10820	58%
Early Childhood Birth to Age 3 Endowment Grant Program	1068	6%
Home-based Early Childhood Education Program	196	1%
SPED ONLY	4430	24%
Total	18,558	100%

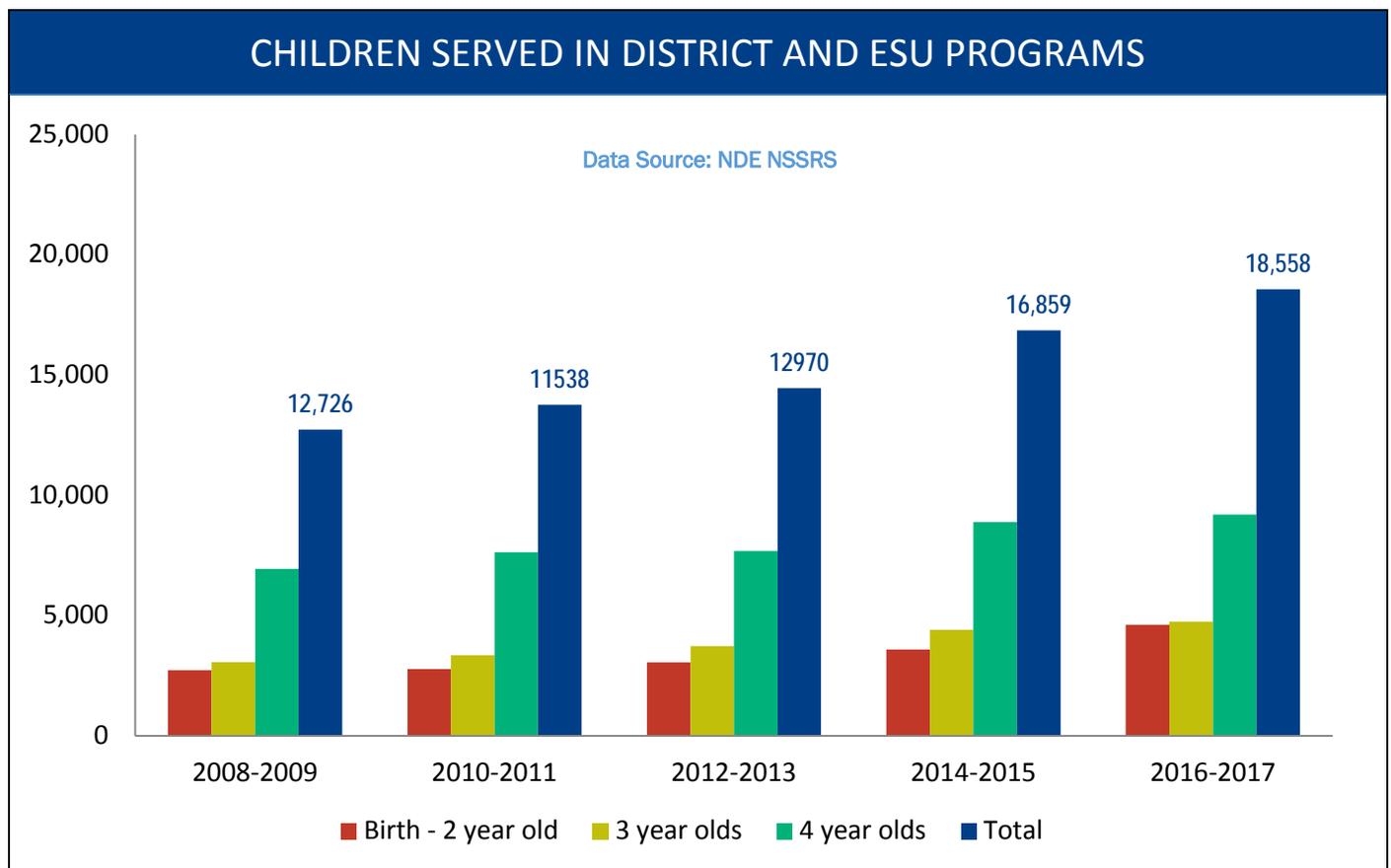
Nebraska school districts and ESUs provided early childhood programs and services to 18,558 children, aged birth to five. Of the total number of children served:

- 7,933 - 43% qualified for Free and Reduced Lunch
- 448 - 2% were English Language Learners
- 8,306 - 45% had an IEP or IFSP

DEMOGRAPHICS OF CHILDREN IN DISTRICT & ESU PROGRAMS



Longitudinal data was reviewed to track the pattern of children served by district and ESU operated programs across ages. Previously, only center based and home based program numbers were included in the number of children served in district and ESU programs. These presented a different picture as the children receiving Special Education services only were not included. The *Children Served in District and ESU Programs* graph represents all three groups of programs and the children served in home based, center based and Special Education only. The numbers reflect all those children from 2008-09 through 2016-17. Previous reports indicated a higher percentage of increases across years for children; the current numbers more accurately reflect the increases. Since 2008, there has been a 46% increase in the total number of children served. Each age group has seen a steady increase over the past 9 years: Birth to 2-year-old (69% increase), 3 year olds (55% increase) and 4 year olds (33% increase).



RESULTS MATTER IN NEBRASKA: A COMPREHENSIVE ACCOUNTABILITY

Results Matter in Nebraska is a child, family, and program outcomes measurement system designed and implemented to improve programs and supports for all young children birth to age five, served through districts, ESUs, the Early Development Network (EDN), Early Head Start, Head Start, Tribal and Migrant seasonal Head Start programs, and community partners. Child, family, and program outcome data is used to inform early childhood program practices and policy.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Quality early childhood education programs have been linked to immediate, positive developmental outcomes, as well as long-term positive academic outcomes (Campbell & Pungello, 2012). Nebraska promotes quality programs through ongoing training and technical assistance.

Program quality is measured through onsite observations. The assessment tools used measure how the classroom environment supports children’s physical, cognitive, social-emotional, language and literacy development.

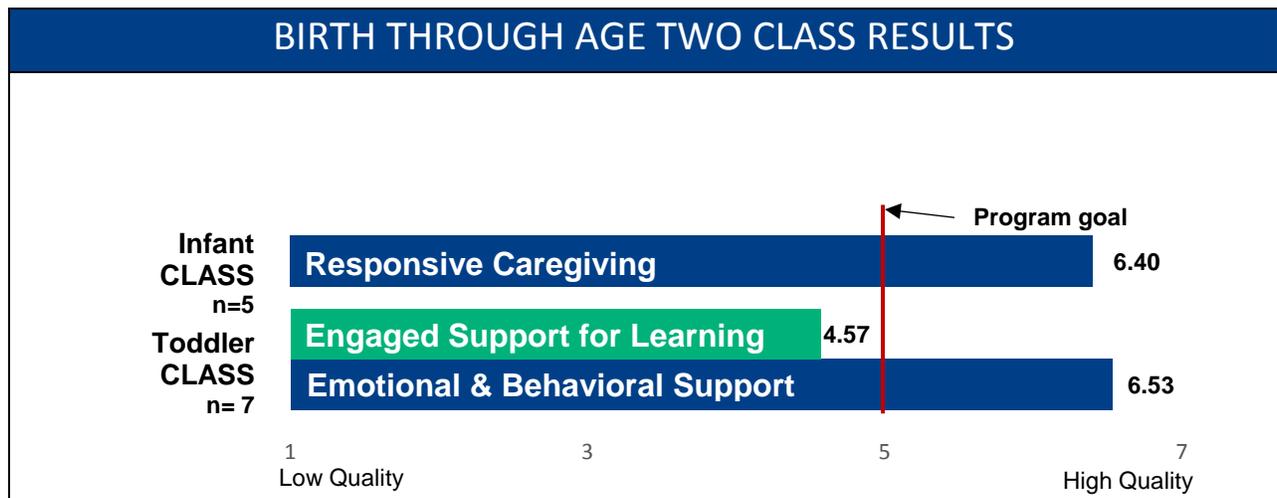
QUALITY MEASURES FOR SIXPENCE INFANT AND TODDLER PROGRAMS

Two tools were chosen to evaluate the quality of Sixpence classrooms, the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) and the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scales-Revised (ITERS-R). The CLASS “is a rating tool that provides a common lens and language focused on what matters—the classroom interactions that boost student learning” (LaParo, Hamre, & Pianta, 2012). The ITERS-R assesses classroom quality with a focus on classroom structure, activities, and play materials.

This report included highlights from the Sixpence Classroom results. The complete Sixpence Report and analysis can be accessed at <http://www.singasongofsixpence.org>.

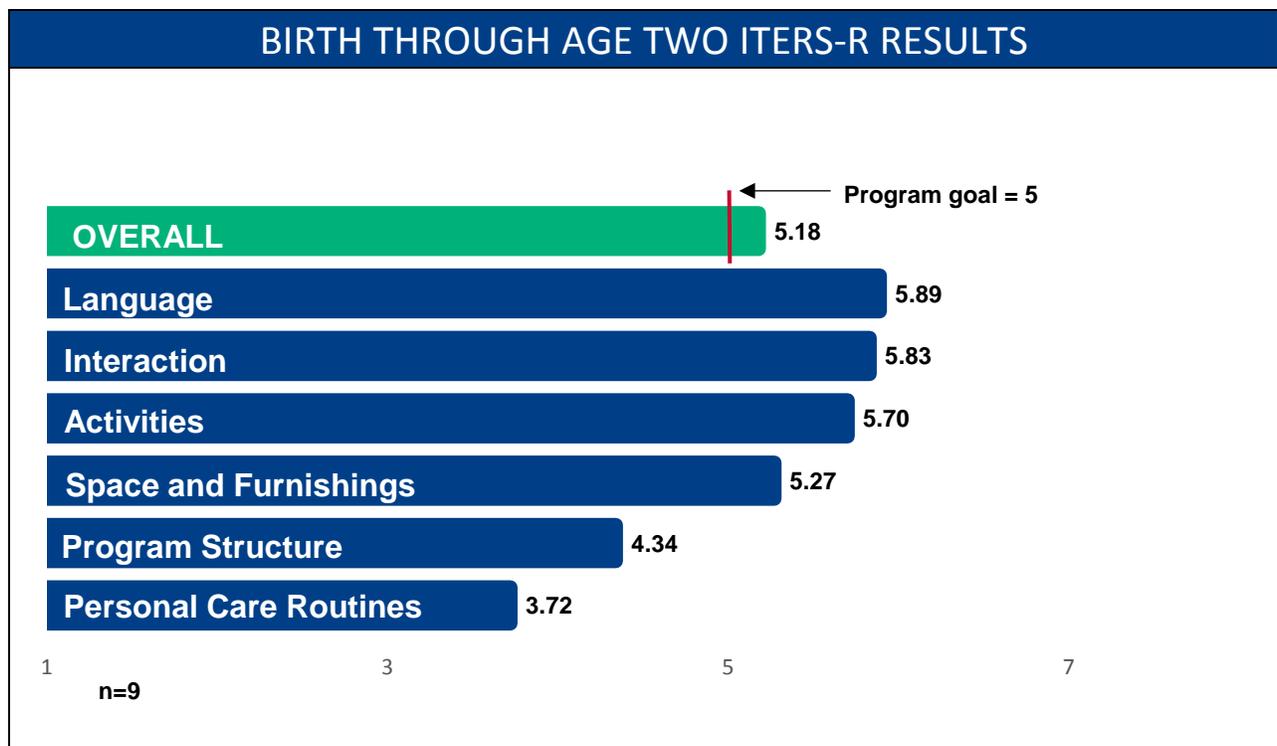
Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Results

CLASS scoring was based on a one-hour videotape of classroom interactions. Both the Infant and Toddler CLASS rate teacher-child relationships based on social-emotional supports. The Toddler CLASS has an additional domain, Engaged Support for Learning, which measures how teachers engage children in discovery, promote critical thinking, and provide rich language experiences. Scoring is based on a 7-point scale with 7 indicating highest quality. The quality program benchmark is a score of 5 or higher. The CLASS results for the 12 classrooms are presented below.



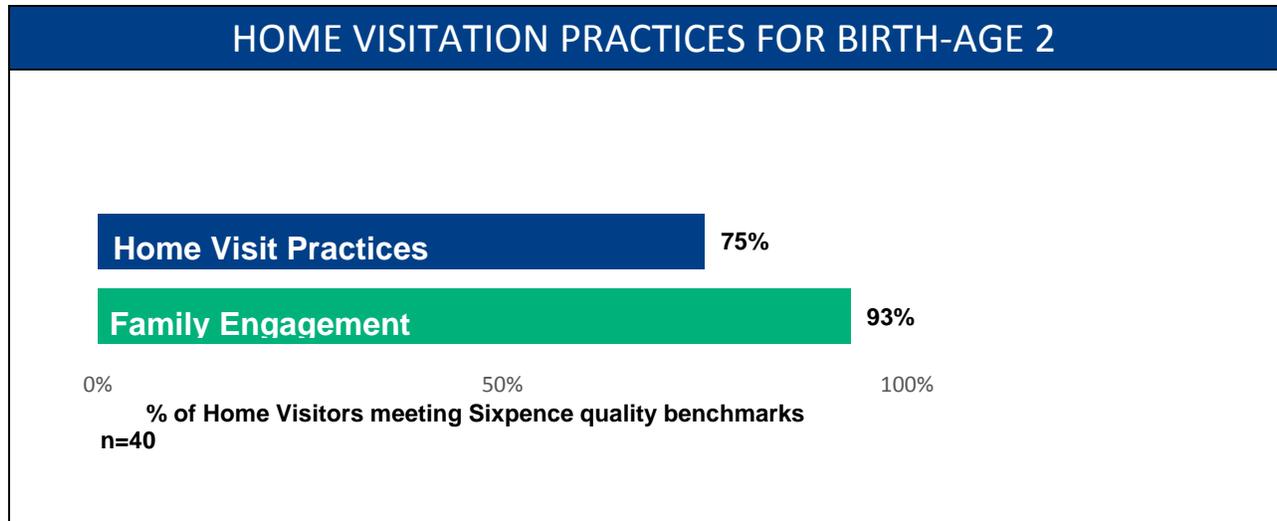
Infant/Toddler Rating Scales-Revised (ITERS-R) Results

The ITERS-R assessment was conducted in classrooms with a new teacher or a new setting, or in classrooms that had not met the quality benchmark in the previous year. The ITERS-R is based on a three-hour, in-person observation. Scoring is based on a 7-point scale with 7 indicating highest quality in each of the six subscales. The Space and Furnishings subscale considers the space, furniture, room arrangement, and provisions for comfort. Personal Care Routines includes meals, toileting/diapering, nap time, and health and safety practices. Listening and Talking, which focuses on language, also encompasses the use of books. The Activities subscale consists of materials and activities provided in eleven areas including fine motor, sand and water play, and promoting diversity. Discipline, supervision, and interactions between children and adults are under Interaction. Program Structure examines the classroom schedule, free play, and provisions for children with disabilities. The following graph shows ITERS-R subscale and overall averages for nine classrooms. The program goal is a score of 5 overall.



The Home Visit Rating Scales-Adaptive and Extended (HOVRS-A+ v.2.1)

The HOVRS-A+ v.2.1 assesses the quality of family engagement sessions based on a video recording of a home visit. HOVRS-A+ v.2.1 is scored on a 7 point scale, with 7 indicating high quality home visitation practices. The HOVRS-A+ v.2.1 results are reported in two domains. The first, Home Visit Practices, measures the home visitor's responsiveness to the family and how the visitor facilitates parent-child interaction, builds relationships with the family, and uses non-intrusive approaches. The second domain, Family Engagement, measures parent-child interaction, and the level of parent and child engagement within the activities of the home visit.



QUALITY MEASURES FOR THREE TO FIVE YEAR-OLD PROGRAMS

The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-3 (ECERS-3) and Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) were used to evaluate the overall quality of Pre-k programs.

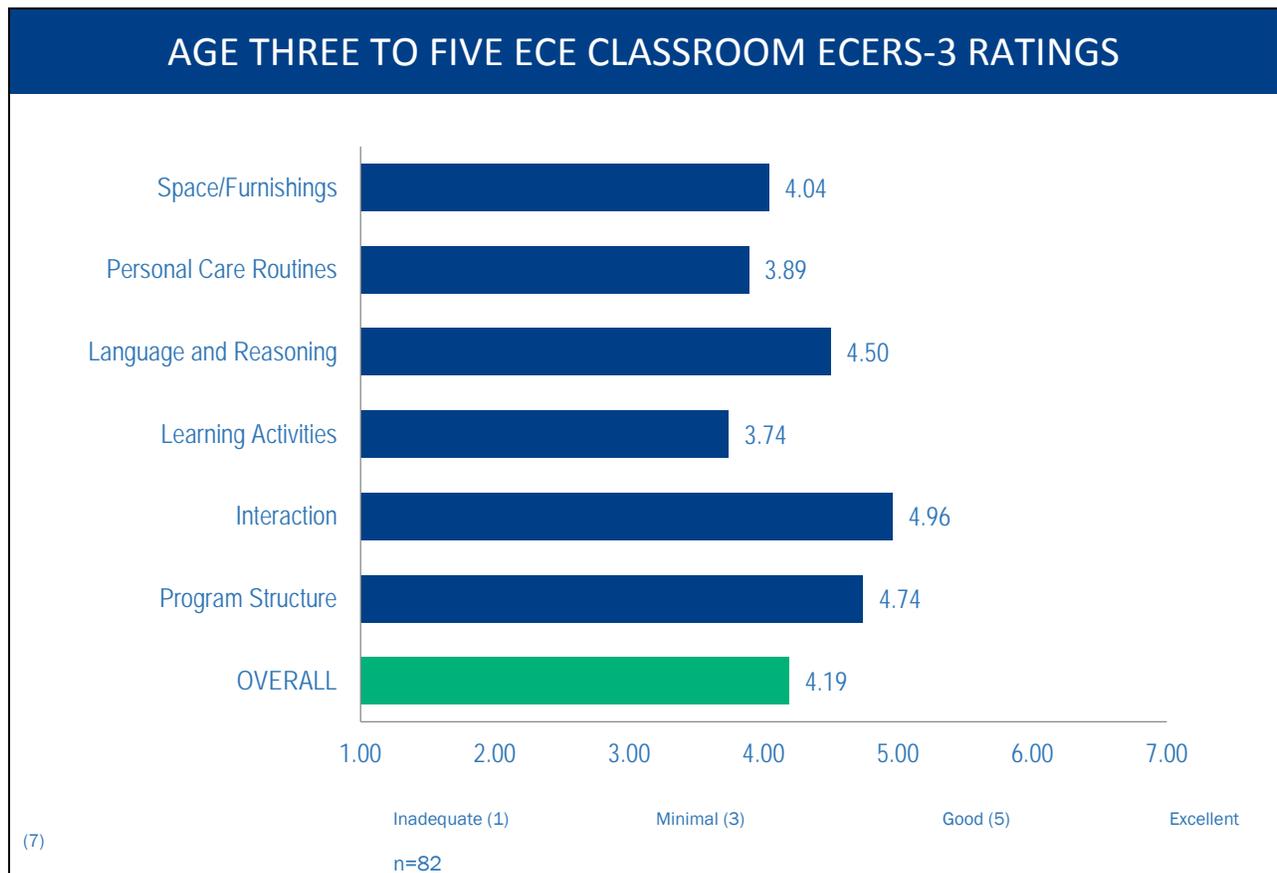
The ECERS-3 is an observational assessment of 43 items across seven subscales, designed to assess center-based programs for children 3 ½ -5 years of age. The program standard of quality is a rating of five across all seven subscales (based on a 7-point scale with 7 = excellent). The ECERS-3 rates seven areas: Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Language and Reasoning, Learning Activities, Interaction, Program Structure.

The CLASS is an observational tool designed to measure the interactions between teachers and Pre-K students and how those interactions affect student learning. The CLASS is divided into three broad domains to measure the interactions between teachers and students: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support. Each Domain is scored on a 7-point scale with 7 = excellent.

NDE selected the district classrooms in which observations were conducted. Districts were able to decide which observation tool, ECERS-3 or CLASS, would be used.

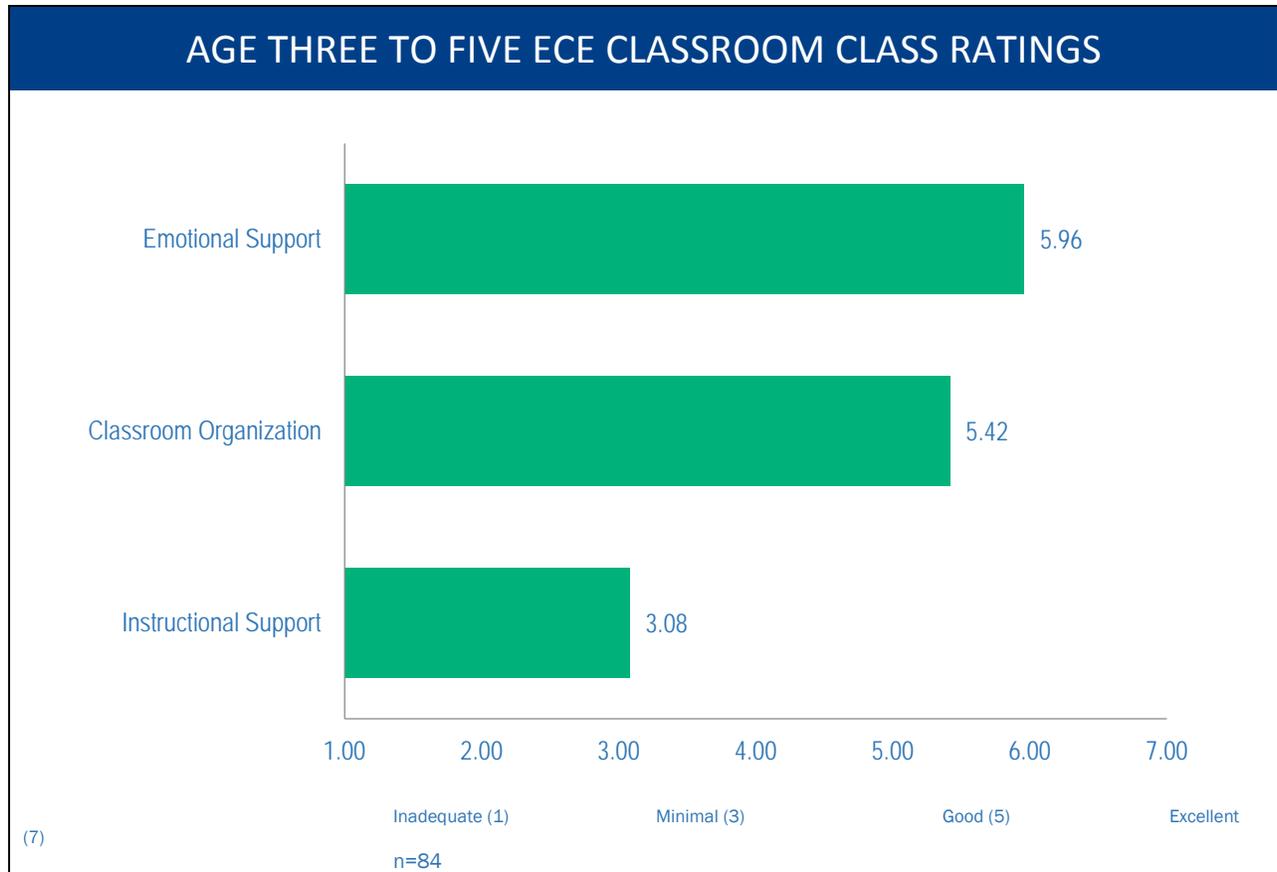
ECERS-3

ECERS-3 observations were completed in 82 classrooms. The results showed that classroom quality was strongest in the subscales of Interaction, Language and Reasoning, and Program Structure. The lowest ratings were in Learning Activities and Personal Care Routines. While most of the six subscales in the ECERS-3 are similar to the ITERS-R, there are some additional items in the ECERS-3. Space and Furnishings assesses both the outdoor and indoor environment. The Language and Reasoning subscale includes vocabulary, children’s use of books, and becoming familiar with print. Math and written numbers are part of the Learning Activities subscale. The Interaction subscale also considers individualized teaching and learning. Transitions and wait times are observed in the Program Structure subscale.



CLASS

Eighty four CLASS observations were completed. The results showed the strongest ratings in Emotional Support and Classroom Organization. The Emotional Support domain determines the positive or negative climate in the classroom as well as measuring teacher sensitivity and how teacher interactions show an understanding of the child's point of view. The Classroom Organization domain focuses on how smoothly the classroom operates along with ensuring that children are engaged in productive learning activities. The Instructional Support domain emphasizes how teachers promote higher order thinking skills, provide effective feedback, and encourage the development of children's language skills.



CHILD OUTCOMES

CHILD ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Early Childhood programs are informed by ongoing systematic, formal, and informal assessment approaches that provide teachers and families with information about children's learning and development. Teaching Strategies (TS) GOLD™ is a research-based, authentic assessment system used by district and ESU programs, as well as in many federally funded Head Start programs. This report includes data from district and ESU programs and Head Start programs through a data sharing agreement with NDE. TS GOLD™ data is collected through observation of six areas of development and learning on an ongoing basis for all children B-5 served by districts, ESUs, and Head Start. The data is used by teachers and programs to inform and improve instruction to meet the needs of individual children and groups of children. NDE uses TS GOLD™ data for state and federal reporting purposes. Fall and spring checkpoint data is analyzed and used to monitor district progress toward achieving widely held expectations across the six areas.

The areas of development and learning are:

Social-Emotional: Regulates emotions and builds relationships with others.

Physical: Demonstrates traveling, balancing, and coordinated physical manipulation skills.

Cognitive: Demonstrates positive approaches to learning, classification skills, and uses representational skills.

Language: Learning to understand and use words/gestures to effectively communicate.

Literacy: Engages in emergent reading and writing behaviors.

Mathematics: Explores spatial relationships and demonstrates knowledge of patterns and number concepts.

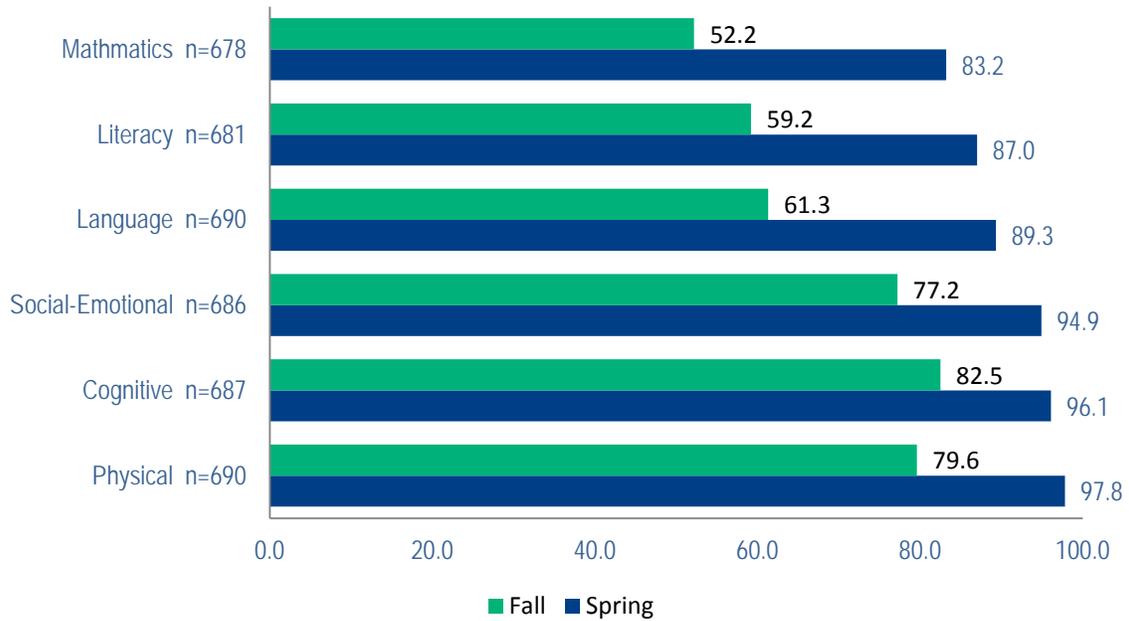
PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN WITHIN AGE EXPECTATIONS

For this report, spring checkpoint data were analyzed to monitor children's progress towards achieving widely held expectations. A total of 15,938 children birth to age 5 had completed assessment data in the spring. The *TS GOLD™ Widely Held Expectations* report identified children who met or exceeded age expectations. The report indicated that a higher percentage of infants and toddlers, as well as preschool aged children, obtained age expected skills than those that did not.

Outcomes for 2016-2017 Birth through Age Two

Data were collected for infants and toddlers that participated in Sixpence, Public School/ESU operated childcare, Special Education and Early Head Start programs. A total of 1,213 children, including 13% that were on IFSPs, had assessment data collected. Fall to spring comparisons could not be completed for 527 children as they were assessed across two different age based color bands. Analyses were completed on the 686 children who remained on the same age color band across both the fall and the spring assessments. The results found the majority of the children were meeting widely held expectations across all developmental areas. Strengths were in the areas of physical, cognitive, and social-emotional competencies. Fewer children met expectations in language, math and literacy; however, the greatest gains between fall and spring were in these same domains.

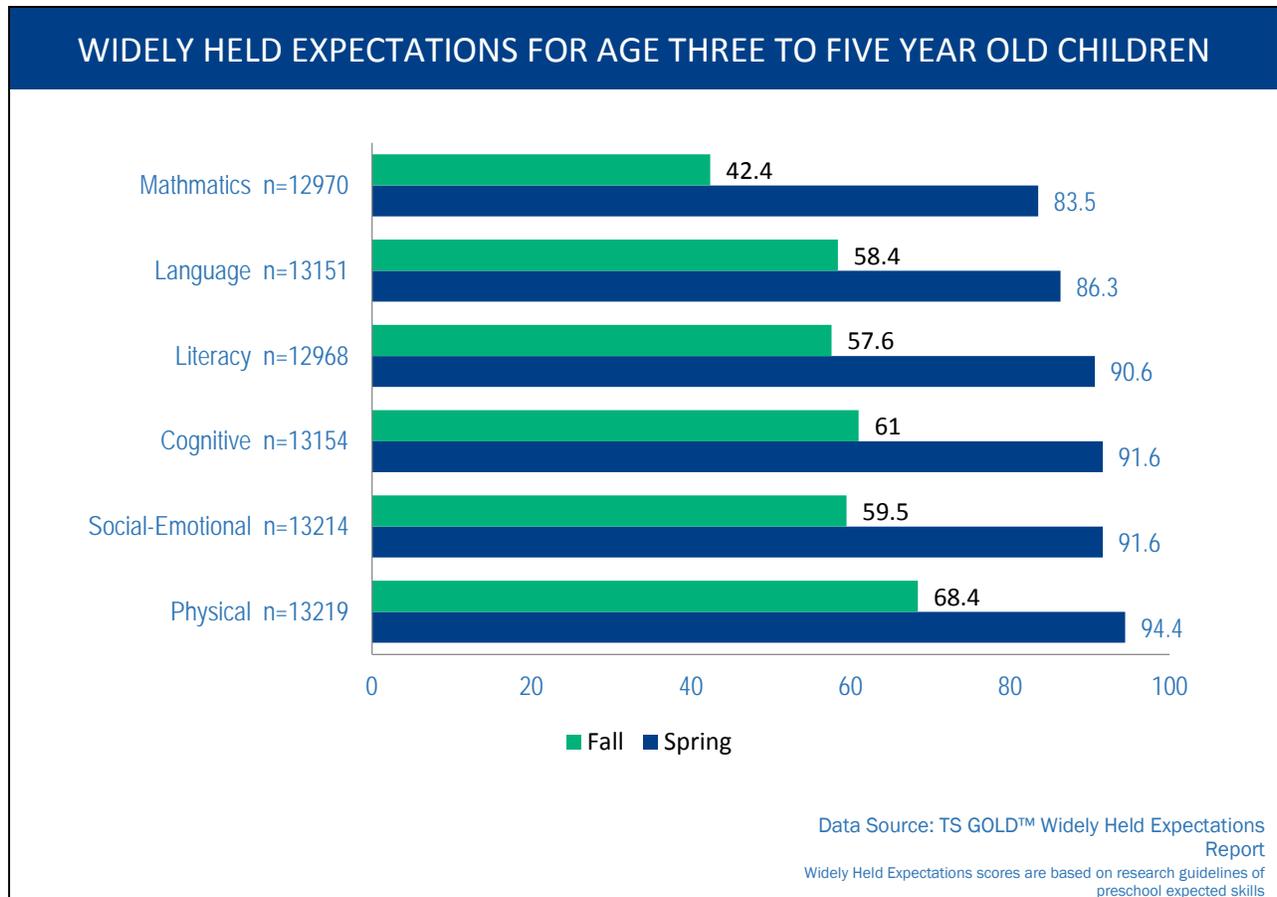
WIDELY HELD EXPECTATIONS FOR BIRTH THROUGH AGE TWO CHILDREN



Data Source: TS GOLD™ Widely Held Expectations Report
Widely Held Expectations scores are based on research guidelines of infant/toddler expected skills

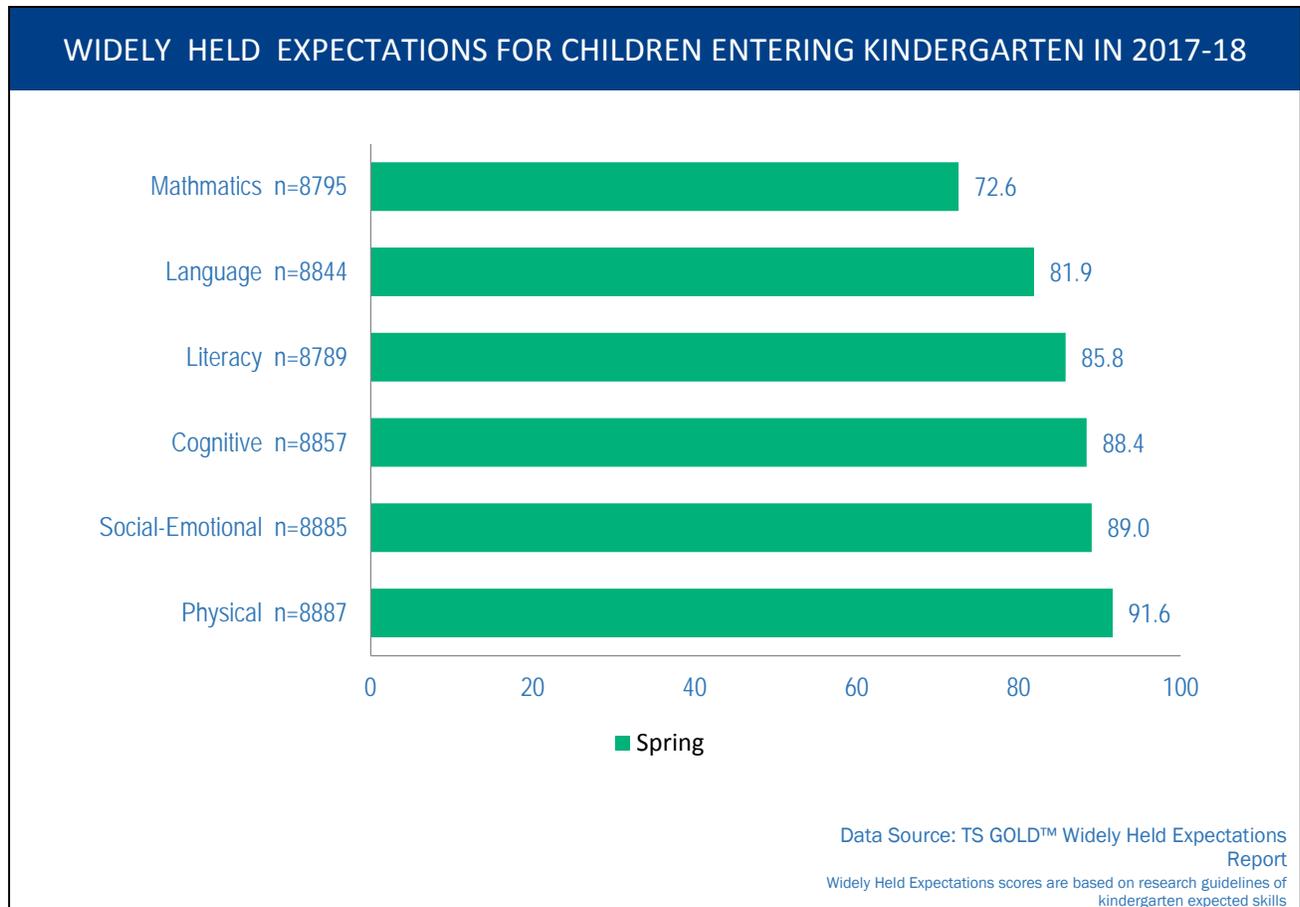
OUTCOMES FOR 2016-17 AGE THREE TO FIVE YEAR OLD CHILDREN

The preschool data included children in district, ESU and Head Start classrooms. For this report, fall and spring checkpoint data were analyzed to monitor children's progress towards achieving widely held expectations. Data for this report was collected for all children [i.e., typically developing (76%) and those with IEPs (24%)]. By the end of the program year, the highest number of children met the widely held expectations in the areas of physical, literacy, social-emotional, and cognitive development. Fewer preschool students met widely held expectations in language and math; however, the highest increase between fall and spring scores was in math.



OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN ENTERING KINDERGARTEN IN 2017-2018

To evaluate the growth and learning of children eligible to enter kindergarten in 2017-18, data was gathered during the spring of 2016 for children who participated in district, ESU, and/or Head Start programs and would be eligible for kindergarten in the fall of 2017. The data was analyzed in six areas of development. The majority of children age eligible for kindergarten for the upcoming fall demonstrated the foundational skills for entrance to school. More children met widely held expectations in the areas of physical, social-emotional, and cognitive skills. Fewer children met expectations in math and language.



REPORTING CHILD OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN WITH AN IFSP OR IEP

In addition to the NDE annual Early Childhood Education State Report, the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) requires NDE to annually report child outcomes for infants and toddlers with disabilities (IDEA Part C, ages Birth to 3) and preschoolers with disabilities (IDEA Part B, ages 3-5). To meet annual reporting requirements of the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), child program entry and exit checkpoint data is analyzed to determine if NDE's annual targets are being met for the three outcomes. The NDE Annual Reports to OSEP includes the number and percentage of children who showed greater than expected growth and who function within age expectations.

Annual reporting is based on functional outcome areas across areas of development and learning that reflect the integration and progression of child development and learning. Child outcomes reflect the child's ability to be successful in the context of everyday living. The three functional outcomes are:

Outcome A: Children have positive social skills including positive social relationships.

Positive social relationships involve relating with adults and other children, and for older children, following rules related to groups or interacting with others. This outcome includes attachment, expressing emotions and feelings, learning rules and expectations, and social interactions and play.

Outcome B: Children acquire and use knowledge and skills including language/communication.

Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills involves thinking, reasoning, remembering, problem solving, using symbols and language, and understanding physical and social worlds. This outcome includes early concepts such as symbols, pictures, numbers, classification, spatial relationships, imitation, object permanence, and language skills.

Outcome C: Children take appropriate action to meet needs (e.g., self-help and initiative).

Use of appropriate behaviors to meet needs involves taking care of basic needs, getting from place to place, using tools, and for older children contributing to their own health and safety. The outcome includes integrating motor skills to complete tasks and self-help skills (dressing, feeding, grooming, toileting, and household responsibility).

Each year the results are compared to state targets. The following chart shows the status of children who exited between July 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017.

COMPARISON OF CHILDREN'S PART C OR B OUTCOME DATA TO STATE TARGETS				
SUMMARY STATEMENTS	PART C N=961		PART B N=1781	
	TARGETS (% OF CHILDREN)	ACTUAL (% OF CHILDREN)	TARGETS (% OF CHILDREN)	ACTUAL (% OF CHILDREN)
OUTCOME A: POSITIVE SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS				
Showed greater than expected growth	40.5%	55.7%	74.75%	76.4%
Exited the program within age expectations	45.5%	29.4%	70.00%	68.8%
OUTCOME B: KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS				
Showed greater than expected growth	41.0%	45.2%	75.25%	78.0%
Exited the program within age expectations	34.5%	23.1%	70.00%	69.2%
OUTCOME C: TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTIONS TO MEET NEEDS				
Showed greater than expected growth	57.0%	64.7%	75.75%	74.3%
Exited the program within age expectations	73.0%	63.4%	75.25%	88.0%

Nebraska met half of the established targets for Part B Child OSEP outcomes data for the preschool children (ages 3-5). In the areas where targets were not met, the results were just slightly under the target.

The results of this year's Part C Child Outcomes data indicated that the state is meeting the targets across all outcomes in Summary Statement 1 (children demonstrated greater than expected growth). The state did not meet any of the outcomes in Summary Statement 2 (children exited the program within age expectations). This has been the pattern for the last three years. It is felt these revisions of the infant/toddler assessment scores influenced the decreased percentages in Summary Statement 2. New targets will need to be established.

BIRTH THROUGH AGE TWO FAMILY OUTCOMES

Data is collected to assess the impact of birth through age two programs. The primary focus of the program is family engagement as a means to support children's development. Family data from two programs is summarized including Sixpence and the Early Development network (EDN).

IDEA PART C: EARLY DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

OSEP requires monitoring of family outcomes for infants and toddlers with disabilities. Three outcomes are identified for families who have a child with an IFSP. They include the percent of families participating in Part C who report that early intervention services helped the family:

- Know their rights;
- Effectively communicate their children's needs; and
- Help their children develop and learn.

Each year families are asked to complete a family survey. A total of 1,457 surveys were completed in 2016-2017, which was a return rate of 82%. Data was analyzed and compared against state determined targets. The results found that the state met or exceeded all targets. Meeting the targets is attributed to the program's strong belief in the importance of family involvement in all areas of Early Intervention.

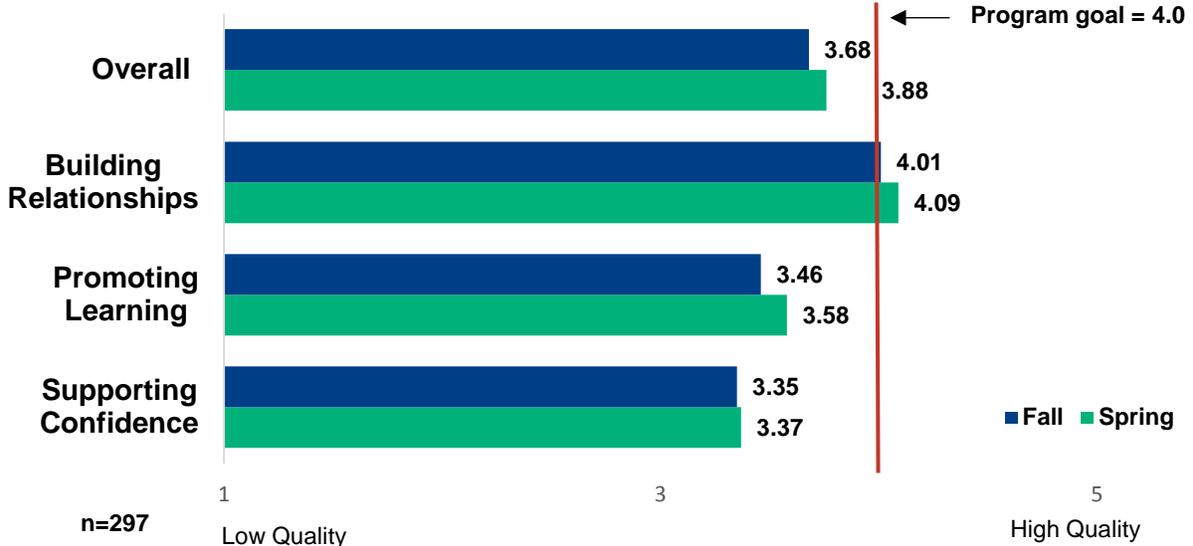
SIXPENCE

For children and families participating in the Sixpence programs, family outcomes focused on parent-child interaction and the degree to which families embraced protective factors (e.g., access to services, social connections, knowledge of child development, parent resiliency, and parent nurturing and attachment). These outcomes were assessed through the family's completion of a survey and coding of a videotape of the parent's interaction with their child.

Parent-Child Interaction

An analysis was done to measure parent-child interactions over time. A total of 297 families had fall-spring Keys to Interactive Parenting Skills (KIPS). Sixpence families demonstrated strong skills in building relationships with their children. Average scores exceeded the program goal in this area. Overall average KIPS scores approached the program goal of a 4.0. Parents demonstrated more moderate skills in the other subscales, but average scores were still in the upper range of "good" quality. Family home language was a significant predictor of Overall scores. Families with English for a home language scored significantly higher ($p < .05$), averaging 13 points higher. The full report is posted at <http://www.singasongofsixpence.org>.

SIXPENCE KIPS RESULTS



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