NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

TO: Roger Breed, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Melody Hobson

SUBJECT: Early Childhood Education Program Evaluation Report

Proposed Board Action:

None

Background Information:

The Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Early Childhood has evaluated and reported on the Nebraska Early Childhood Education Grant Program, Ages 3 - 5 each year since it was created by state statute in 1990. Over the past few years, the number of public school districts and education service units (ESUs) offering early childhood programs has increased significantly. Because of this growth, preschool grant programs constitute only a portion of the early childhood services offered. The Office of Early Childhood has evaluated all early childhood programs operated by public school districts and ESUs and is reporting the evaluation findings.

Estimated Cost:

n/a

Supporting Documentation Included:

Report

For Additional Information on this item:

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NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Early Childhood Education
in Nebraska Public School Districts and Educational Service Units

2010-2011 State Report

Evaluation Report prepared by Barbara Jackson*, Ph.D.

The University of Nebraska Medical Center's Munroe-Meyer Institute:
A University Center of Excellence for Developmental Disabilities

*Supported (in part) by grant T73MC00023 from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Health Resources and Services Administration, Department of Health and Human Services.

*Supported in part by grant 90DD0601 from the Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD), Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services

SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S SUCCESS

The Nebraska Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program–Birth through Age 5 (B-5) includes all children who are part of Nebraska public education programs that are supported through the blending of multiple funding sources. Operated by Nebraska public school districts (hereafter referred to as districts) or Educational Service Units (ESUs), comprehensive early childhood education programs support the learning and development of children B-5 across home- and center-based settings. Many full or half-day center-based programs are provided in partnership with community agencies.

Districts and ESUs serve children within inclusive classrooms that represent a full range of abilities and disabilities, as well as the social, linguistic, and economic diversity of families within the community. The purpose of the Nebraska ECE Program is to provide high quality early childhood education experiences that assist children to reach their full potential and increase the likelihood of their later success in school.

Early childhood education programs follow Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) *Rule 11–Regulations for Early Childhood Programs*, *Rule 51–Regulations and Standards for Special Education Programs*, and the federal mandate of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C (birth to age 3) and Part B-619 (ages 3-5).

The Nebraska Early Childhood Education Program emphasizes:

- Teachers with an appropriate early childhood endorsement
- Authentic assessment and developmentally appropriate curriculum
- Inclusive programs and services
- Research-based elements of effective programs
- Home-school partnerships

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

Who are the children? One hundred and fifty-two (152) districts provided an early childhood program and four ESUs provided early childhood programs, which included another 23 districts. A total of 11,704 children were served by Nebraska districts and ESUs. Of these:

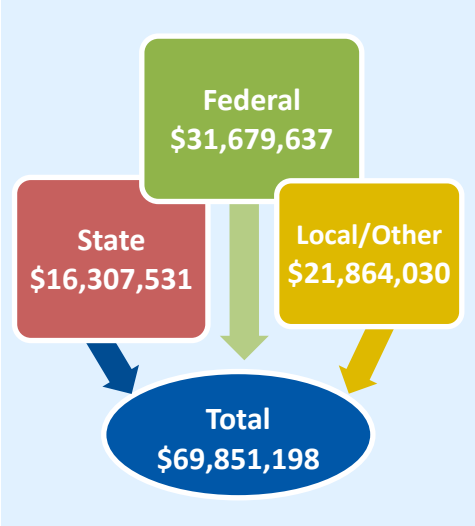
- 16% were infants and toddlers (birth to age 3)
- 84% were preschoolers (ages 3-5)
- 9% were English Language Learners (ELL)
- 30% were verified for special education services
- 43% represented minority populations
- 52% were eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL)

INTEGRATED FUNDS EXPAND EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

More than $69 million from multiple sources support Nebraska early childhood programs. Federal funds account for the largest percentage of support.

FUNDING RESOURCES BY CATEGORY		
Local /Other	**State**	**Federal**
▪ Local district ▪ Parent fees ▪ Private donations	▪ Early Childhood Grant Program – B to age 3 (Sixpence)* ▪ Early Childhood Grant Program–Ages three through five (3-5) ▪ TEEOSA (state aid) ▪ Special Education Flexible Funding	▪ IDEA Part B and B-619 ▪ IDEA Part C ▪ IDEA ARRA (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009) ▪ Head Start ▪ Title 1 Part A ▪ Title 1 Migrant ▪ HHS Child Care Subsidy

**funded through a combination of state & private dollars*



What funding sources support ECE programs? There are five primary funding sources that support children in ECE programs. The following provides a description of standard demographic variables for children served based on these major funding sources. The figures may represent duplicated counts of children who are served by more than one funding source.

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES OF CHILDREN SERVED					
	Minority %	**FRL %**	**ELL %**	**Verified Disability %**	**Total Served**
Infants and Toddlers (Birth to Age 3)					
Early Childhood Education Grant Program Ages B-3 (Sixpence)	59%	81%	23%	6%	**308**
IDEA Part C	26%	8%	0%	100%	**1513**
Preschool Children (Ages 3-5)					
Early Childhood Education Grant Programs Ages 3-5	43%	58%	15%	21%	**3273**
District Early Childhood Programs	58%	49%	6%	34%	**8024**
IDEA Part B	30%	41%	3%	100%	**3434**

ACCOUNTABILITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

The early childhood accountability system is called *Results Matter in Nebraska*, a program, child and family outcomes measurement system. It is designed and implemented to improve programs and supports for all young children B-5 served by districts, ESUs, the Early Development Network and community partners. Many Head Start and other community early childhood programs also participate in *Results Matter*. This report provides a summary of the Early Childhood Education Programs related to each of the three outcome areas.

The purpose of *Results Matter* is to:

- Improve experiences, learning, development and lives of young children and their families.
- Support, guide and inform program practices.
- Demonstrate program effectiveness.
- Guide the development of local and state policies and procedures.
- Provide data to demonstrate results.

Results Matter promotes:

- Use of ongoing child assessment as a standard practice in early childhood programs.
- Accountability to state and federal requirements.

The benefits of *Results Matter* are:

- Increased depth of understanding of child development.
- Increased awareness of the integration of systematic, on-going assessment, and responsive, developmentally-appropriate curriculum.
- Improved communication with families.
- Increased quality of programs.
- Improved validity and reliability of data to inform program practice and state policy.

RESULTS MATTER OUTCOME AREAS:

- **Program Outcomes**
- **Child Outcomes**
- **Family Outcomes**

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Quality early childhood education programs have been linked to immediate, positive developmental outcomes, as well as long-term positive academic performance (Gerber E.B., M. Whitebook, & R.S. Weinstein. 2007). Nebraska promotes quality programs through ongoing training and technical assistance. Progress for program quality is measured by the results of the environment and language and literacy rating scales for center-based programs and the quality ratings of the provider's coaching of parents in home visits.

EVALUATION PROCESS

For center-based programs, Nebraska measures program quality through direct observation and/or a self-assessment process. Each year NDE determines a subset of early childhood classrooms for direct observation by a trained observer. In addition, beginning in year 3 or 4 of program approval, each district and ESU completes a self-assessment. These self-assessments are completed by program staff who have participated in training. Only assessments completed by an outside observer trained to reliability were included in this report. The rating scales measure how the classroom environment supports children's physical, cognitive, social-emotional, and language and literacy development. The state standard of quality for both of the environment rating scales is an overall program score of at least 5 on a scale of 1-7 and a score of at least 5 on each of the seven subscales. The state standard of quality on the language and literacy environment rating scale is at least a 3.5 on a scale of 1-5 on both of the two subscales.

For home-based programs, Nebraska measures program quality through formal evaluations completed by an outside observer trained to reliability.

QUALITY MEASURES for INFANT and TODDLER PROGRAMS

Sixpence Classrooms. The *Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised* (*ITERS-R*) was used to evaluate the overall quality of the classrooms. The *ITERS-R* is an observational assessment of 39 items across seven subscales items designed to assess group programs for children birth to 2½ years of age years. Seventeen (17) classes were observed.

The ITERS rates seven areas: space and furnishings, personal care routines, listening and talking, activities, interaction, program structure, parents and staff.

- 100% of the 17 classrooms had an overall program score above a 5.
- 44% met the state standard in all seven areas.
- 81% met the state standard in all but one area.
- The highest scores across classrooms were in the areas of Listening and Talking and Interaction.

Assessments for Infant and Toddler Programs:

- ***ITERS-R***
  Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised

  Authors: Harms, Cryer & Clifford, 2006

- ***HoVRS-A***
  Home Visit Rating Scales-A

  Authors: Roggman, Cook Jump, Christiansen, Boyce & Innocenti, 2008

Sixpence Home Visitation. The *Home Visit Rating Scales-A* (*HoVRS-A*) is designed to assess the quality of family engagement sessions from a video of a direct observation. The measure includes seven items that are collapsed into two scales for the purposes of analysis. The scales are based on a 5 point scale. Fourteen (14) home visitors were rated.

- The family educators were effective in their practice as evidenced by the engagement of the parent and child (a rating of 4.65 on a 5 point rating scale) in the session and the instruction with the parent (4.7).
- The strengths of the instruction by the family educators were their skills in establishing positive relationships with the family and the strategies used to guide the parent-child interaction.

QUALITY MEASURES for PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

Measuring Classroom Quality. The *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R)* was used to evaluate the overall quality of the classrooms. The *ECERS-R* is an observational assessment of 43 items across seven subscales designed to assess group programs for children 2½ - 5 years of age. A total of 327 classroom observations and self-reports were completed. A total of 33 (10%) were completed as a direct observation.

The *ECERS-R* rates seven areas: space and furnishings, personal care routines, language and reasoning, activities, interaction, program structure, parents and staff.

- 94% of the 33 classrooms had an overall program score of 5 or higher.
- 36% met the state standard in all seven areas.
- 67% met the state standard in all but one area.
- Program strengths were in the areas of Language-Reasoning, Interaction, and Program Structure.
- The area that was most challenging for programs was Personal Care Routines.

Assessments for Preschool Programs

- ***ECERS-R***
  Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised

  Authors: Harms, Cryer & Clifford, 2005

- ***ELLCO-PreK***
  Early Literacy & Language Classroom Observation-PreK

  Authors: Smith, Brady & Anastasopoulas, 2008

Measuring Literacy and Language Quality. The *Early Literacy and Language Classroom Observation–PreK (ELLCO–PreK)* was used to evaluate the quality of literacy and language practices in the classrooms. The *ELLCO–PreK* is an observational assessment of 19 items across two subscales designed to assess group programs for children 3 to 5 years of age. A total of 320 classroom observations and self-reports were completed. A total of 30 (9%) were completed as direct observations.

- 90% met the state quality standard on the General Classroom Environment subscale.
- 93% met the quality standard on and the Language and Literacy subscale.

CHILD OUTCOMES

Early Childhood programs are informed by ongoing systematic, formal, and informal assessment approaches that provide teachers with information about children's learning and development (NAEYC and NAECS/SDE, 2003).

Research-based, authentic assessment systems were selected by NDE based on the recommendations of the Results Matter Child Measurement Task Force (state stakeholders group). The tools were selected based on the high reliability and validity, and the link to curriculum and instruction. Scientifically-based cutoff scores defining comparability to same-aged peers was determined by each of the publishers (updated in 2011). This maximized the validity of the data used to report early childhood outcomes.

What outcomes are assessed? Three child outcomes that reflect a child's ability to take meaningful action in the context of everyday living are assessed and analyzed. These outcome areas cross developmental domains, emphasizing the integration of skills and behaviors across domains. The outcomes address the child's ability to integrate skills and put them to use across settings and situations. The three outcomes are:

- **Outcome A**: Children have positive social skills including positive social relationships.
- **Outcome B**: Children acquire and use knowledge and skills including language/communication.
- **Outcome C**: Children take appropriate action to meet their needs (e.g., self-help and initiative).

How are children assessed? Children are observed on an ongoing basis during daily activities and routines. Their skills and abilities are documented through the use of anecdotes, photos, recordings and/or samples of the children's work. The documentation is scored using criteria determined by the assessment publishers.

Online Assessment Systems for Child Outcomes:

- ***CreativeCurriculum.net***

  TeachingStrategies.com/ GOLD

  Publisher: Teaching Strategies, Inc
- ***Online COR.net*** *(Child Observation Record)*

  Publisher: High Scope Foundation
- ***AEPSi.com*** *(Assessment, Evaluation, and Programming System)*

  Publisher: Brookes Publishing Co.

What data is reported? NDE uses assessment data for both state and federal reports. Fall and spring data of each school year is aggregated to determine children's progress towards achieving the three outcomes. NDE reports this data for all children served by districts or ESUs. For federal reporting, entry and exit data measure the degree that programs meet state determined targets on the three functional outcomes. This data is annually reported to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)and only includes data for children with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) or Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs).

How is the data summarized? The data summarizes the percentage of children meeting a performance goal (a score within the typical range of widely held age expectations that predicts success in school) and those making greater than expected gains.

OUTCOME A: POSITIVE SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

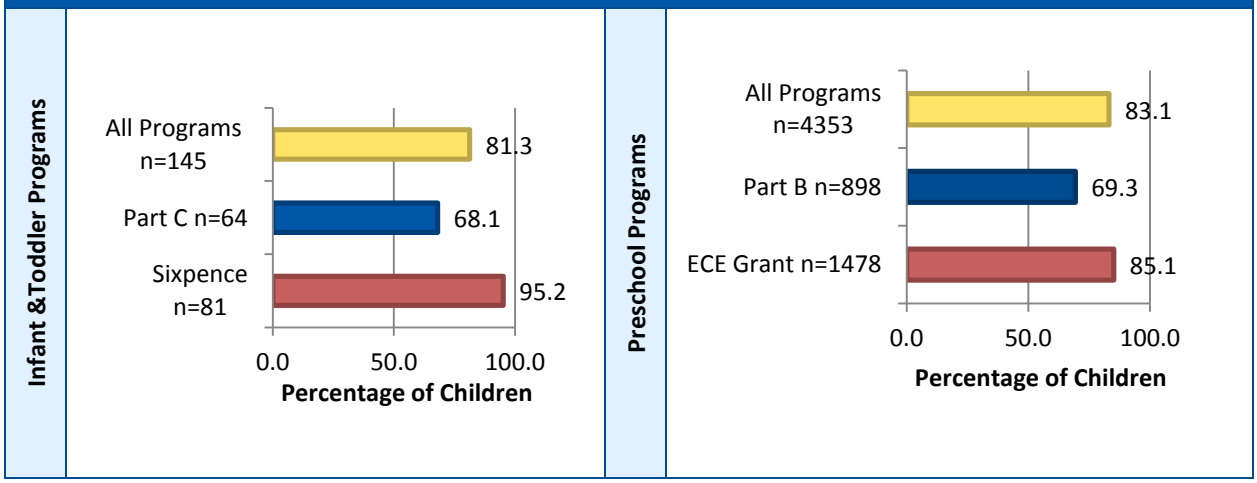
What does "social relationships" mean? Positive social relationships involve relating with adults and other children, and for older children, following rules related to groups or interacting with others. This outcome includes attachment, expressing emotions and feelings, learning rules and expectations, and social interactions and play. When assessing these skills, early childhood teachers observe many behaviors such as how infants comfort themselves, whether children can follow classroom routines, and how they negotiate conflict.

What does the research say? Children's interactions with others are important to learning. Children who have opportunities to develop socially and emotionally are more likely to succeed in school (Raver, 2002). Learning is considered a social process. Children encounter learning difficulties when they are distracted from educational activities or have problems following directions, getting along with others or controlling negative emotions (Zin, et al., 2004). This strong relationship between early relationships and later behavior stresses the importance for early childhood experiences to support children's social growth.

IMPACT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS ON CHILDREN'S SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

High percentages of children across programs are demonstrating substantial gains in social development. It is anticipated that this growth will help to narrow the gap between children at risk* or children with an IFSP or IEP and their typically developing peers. A larger percentage of children at risk made substantial gains than their counterparts with an IFSP or IEP.

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS: PERCENT OF CHILDREN MAKING SUBSTANTIAL GAINS



The term "All Programs" represents all of the children served in early childhood programs through districts or ESUs across funding sources.

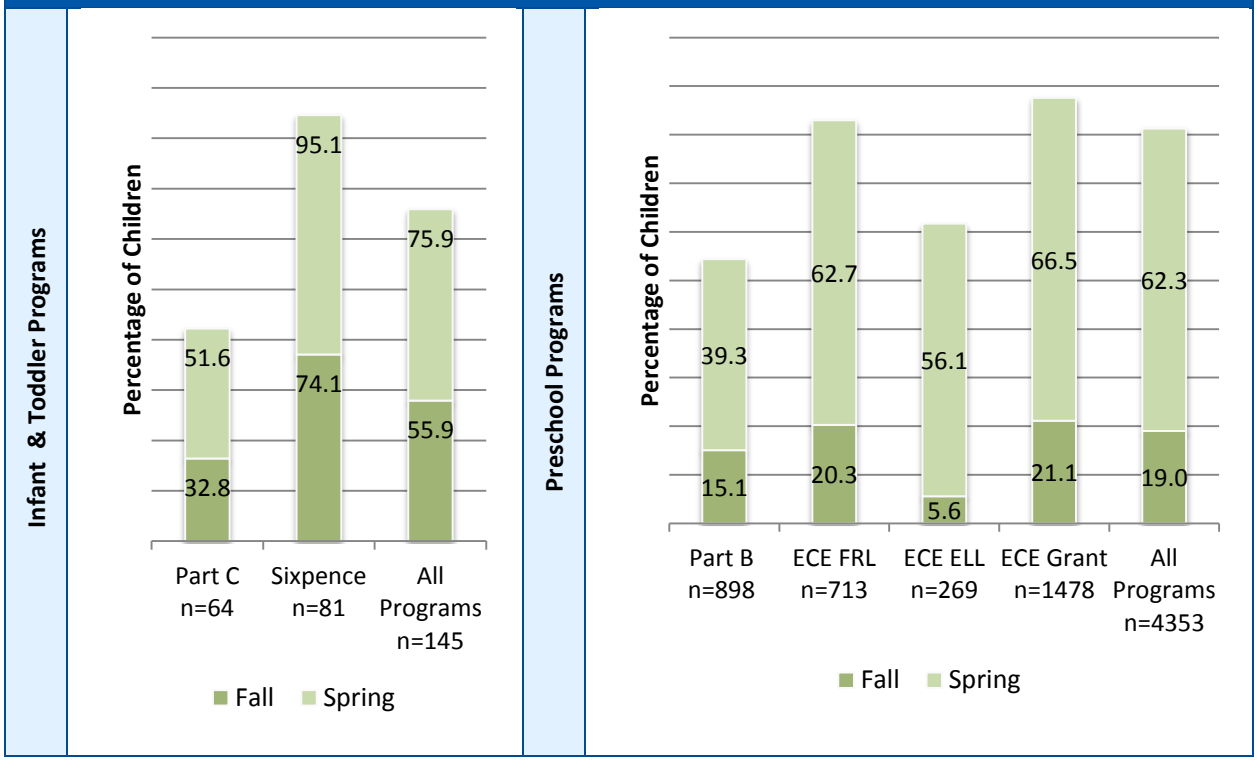
* *Throughout this report, "children at risk" is defined as children whose family income qualifies them for the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) program and/or children who reside in a home where English is not the primary language.*

Percentage of Children Meeting the NDE Performance Goal

A performance goal was established by NDE based on the assessment recommendations of the publisher. This performance goal is different from the targets that were set for reporting child outcomes to the US Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). The performance goal was established based on the attainment of a set of age expected skills that would be predictive of a child's future success in school.

The percent of children that met the goal was compared both during the fall and spring assessments. Greater numbers of children in early childhood education programs met this goal in the spring of 2011. Of the group, fewer children who were English language learners met the performance goal. Higher percentages of children at risk met the goal than children with an IFSP or IEP. This trend would be expected. Higher percentages of infants and toddlers than preschool age children met the performance goal.

Social Relationships: Percent of Children Meeting the NDE Performance Goal



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OUTCOME B: KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

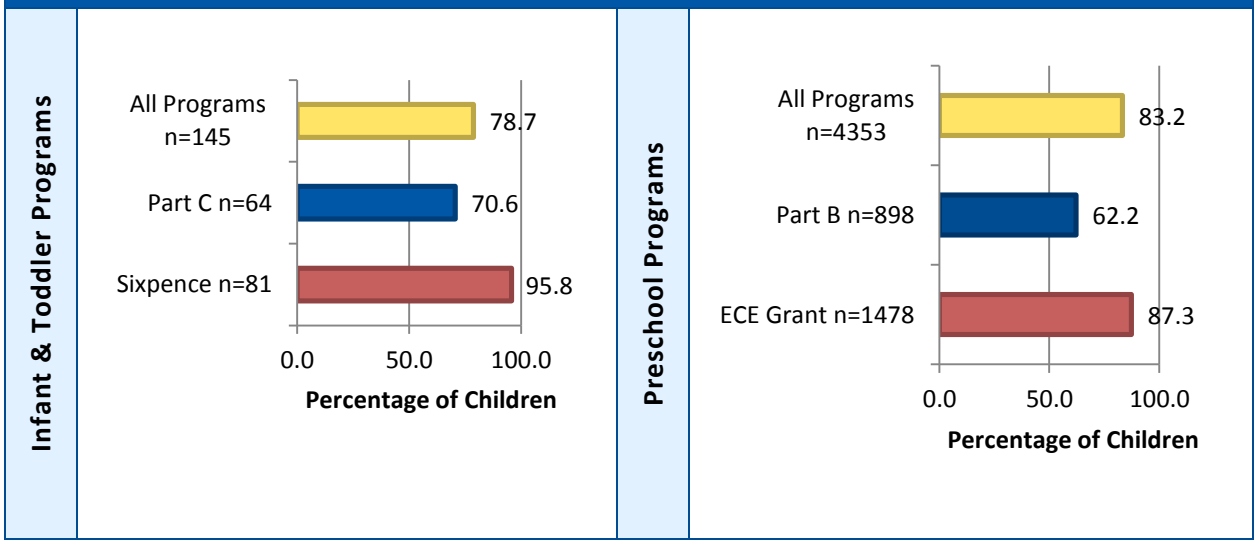
What does "knowledge and skills" mean? Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills involves thinking, reasoning, remembering, problem solving, using symbols and language, and understanding physical and social worlds. This outcome includes early concepts (symbols, pictures, numbers, classification, spatial relationships), imitation, object permanence, and language skills.

What does the research say? The foundation for literacy, positive approaches to learning and cognition is laid in the early years and has a strong link to children's success in school (National Education Goals Panel, 1997). It is important that children encounter opportunities within daily routines and activities to develop oral language skills, gain knowledge about the forms and functions of written language, practice their emerging literacy skills, and refine their cognitive abilities. Experiences in these conceptual areas are key for children from poverty who will benefit from content-rich instruction (Neuman, 2006; Shaywitz and Shaywitz, 2005).

IMPACT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS ON CHILDREN'S USE OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Large percentages of children across programs demonstrated substantial gains in use of knowledge and language skills. These gains narrow the gap in skills between children who are at risk or children with an IFSP or IEP and their typically developing peers. Higher percentages of children at risk made substantial gains than their counterparts with an IFSP or IEP.

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS: PERCENT OF THE CHILDREN MAKING SUBSTANTIAL GAINS



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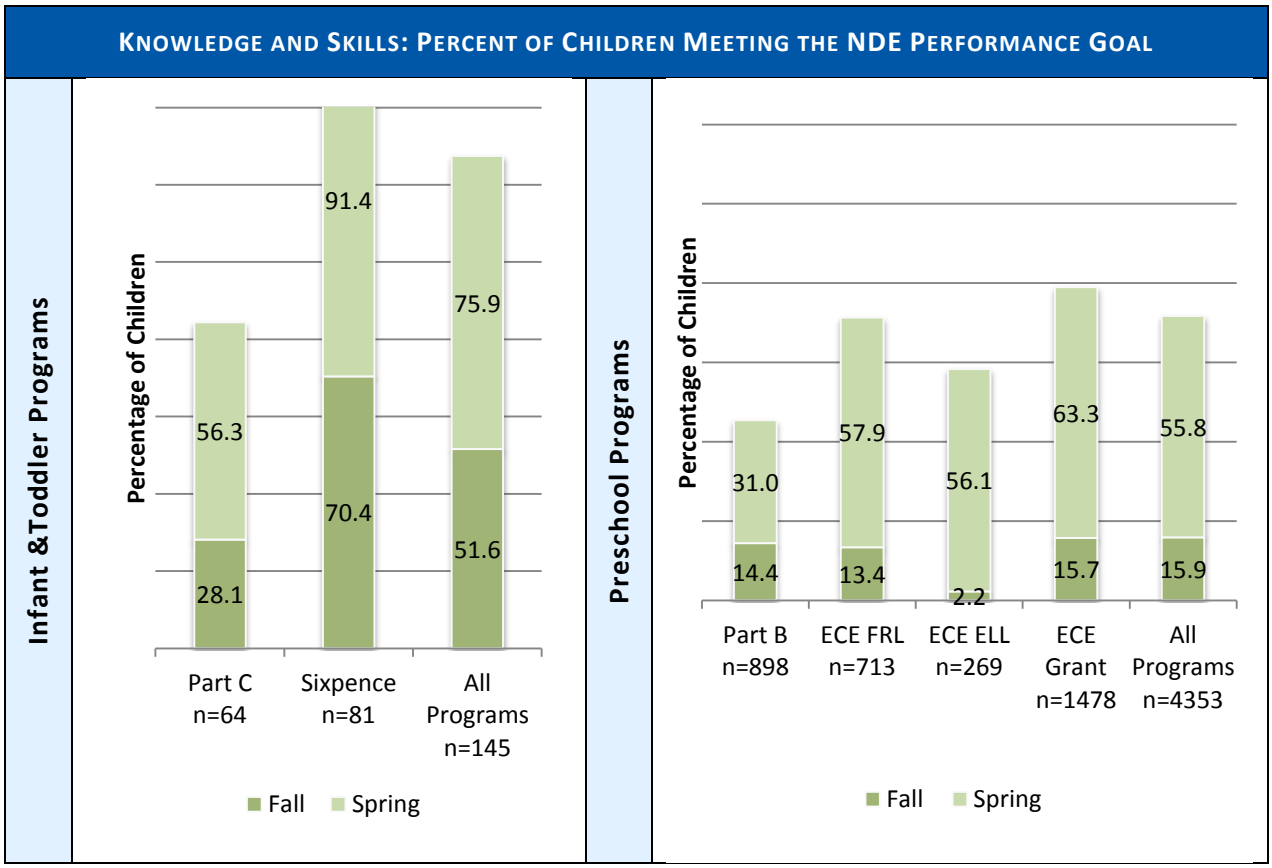
PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN MEETING THE NDE PERFORMANCE GOAL

Higher percentages of children at risk met the goal than children with an IFSP or IEP. This trend would be expected. Higher percentages of infants and toddlers than preschool age children met the performance goal. In preschool classrooms partially funded with an Early Childhood Education Grant, a smaller percentage of children who were English language learners (ELL) and/or qualified for free and reduced lunch (FRL) met the state performance goal. Children who were ELL made greater than expected change in their rate of development. Although the children who were ELL had similar percentages of children that met the state performance goal in the fall, their overall scores were lower. Children who were ELL had the lowest percentage that met the performance goal in the fall. Although this group had the largest percentage of increase over the year, they continued to be out-performed by the English-speaking peers in the spring.



The term "All Programs" represents all of the children served in early childhood programs through districts or ESUs across funding sources.

OUTCOME C: TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION TO MEET NEEDS

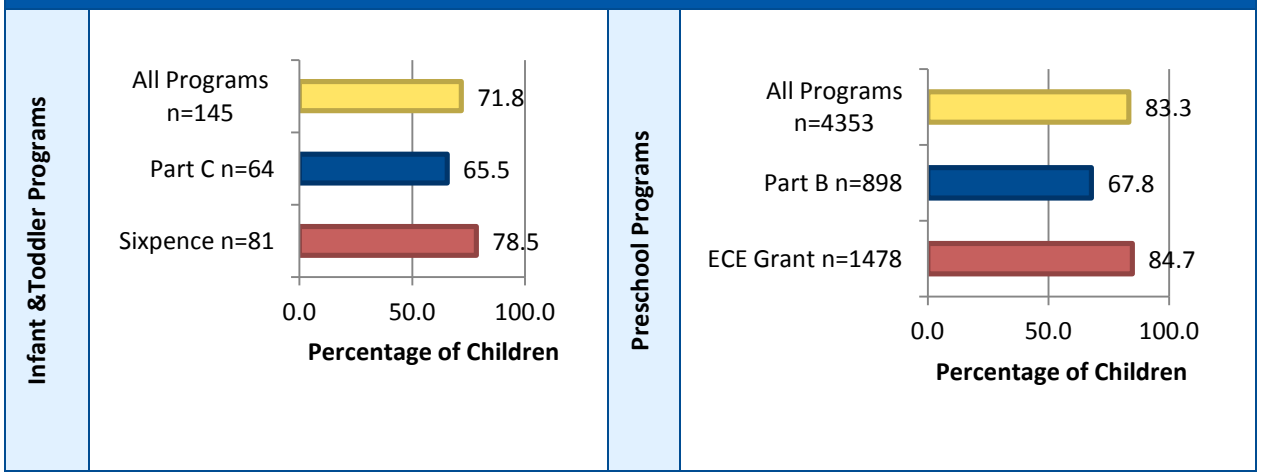
What does "take appropriate action to meet needs" mean? Use of appropriate behaviors to meet needs involves taking care of basic needs, getting from place to place, using tools and, for older children contributing to their own health and safety. This outcome includes integrating motor skills to complete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

What does the research say? While cognitive development and early literacy are important for children's school readiness and early success in school, other areas of development (i.e., health, social development, engagement) are of equal or greater importance (Snow, et.al, 2008). Researchers agree that children's physical well-being frames their learning opportunities, either expanding or limiting them and is linked to both emotional development and the child's school performance (Pica, 2006). A child's physical well-being can affect the ability to actively engage both physically and mentally, in learning opportunities during these early years. Disruption in engagement with learning can have a negative impact on the attainment of the complexity of skills necessary for school success.

IMPACT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS ON CHILDREN'S TAKING ACTION TO MEET NEEDS

High percentages of children across programs demonstrated substantial change in taking action to meet needs during enrollment in the program. Of the three outcome areas, fewer infants and toddlers demonstrated greater than expected gains in this area. Higher percentages of preschool children made greater than expected gains than infants and toddlers for this outcome.

ACTIONS TO MEET NEEDS: PERCENT OF CHILDREN MAKING SUBSTANTIAL GAINS



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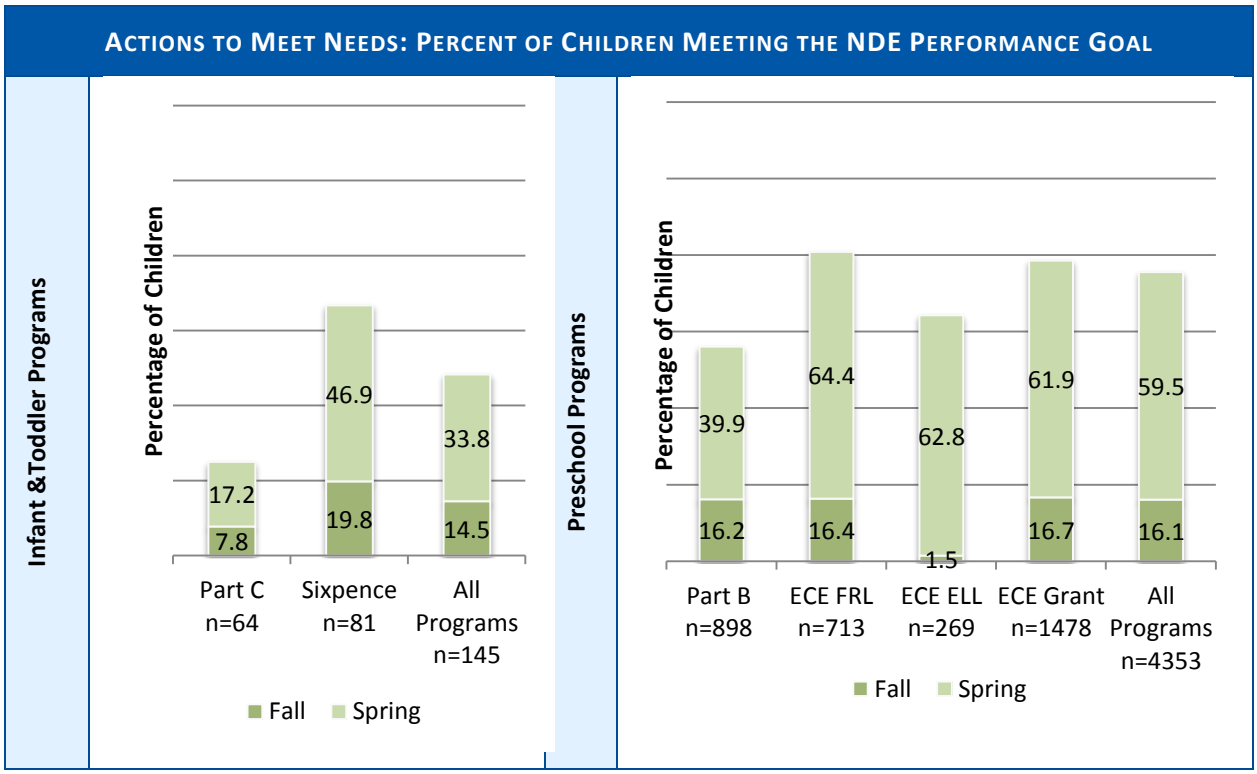
PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN MEETING THE NDE PERFORMANCE GOAL

Higher percentages of children at risk met the goal than children with an IFSP or IEP. This trend would be expected. Higher percentages of preschoolers than infant and toddlers met the performance goal. Of the three outcome areas, fewer infants and toddlers met the performance goal in this area. In preschool classrooms partially funded with an Early Childhood Education Grant, the highest percentage of children that met the performance goal in this area were those who qualified for free and reduced lunch (FRL).



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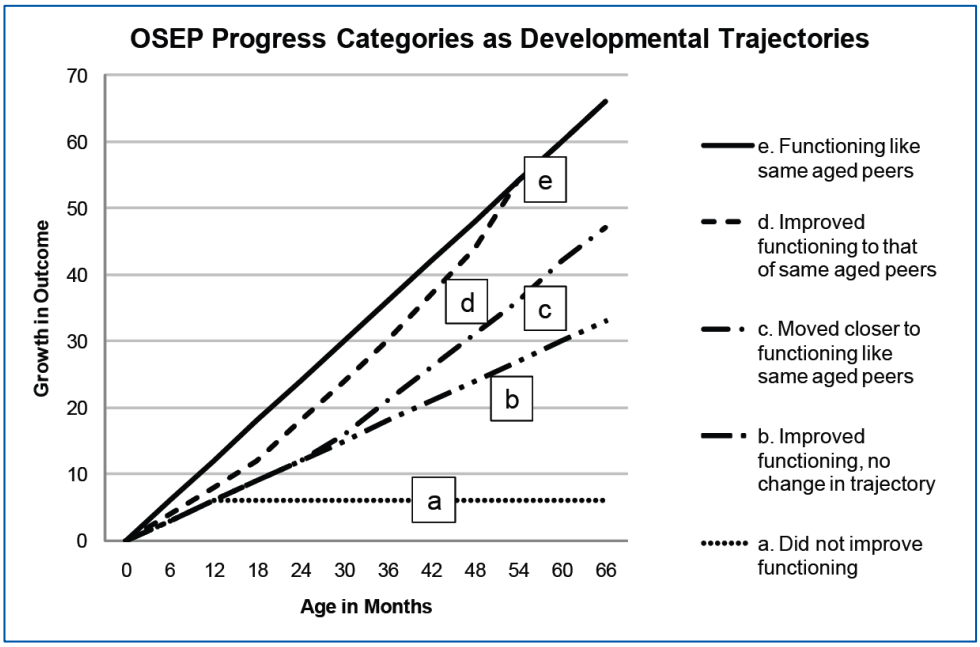
OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN WITH AN IFSP OR IEP

What is greater than expected growth? Developmental science has provided information about the skills children master at different ages. Knowing what is expected for each age allows us to identify children who are developing too slowly. Children who are substantially behind their peers are described as having a developmental delay. On this graph, *line e* illustrates typical development. All the other lines represent some kind of delay in the early years.

If a child is 12 months old with the skills of a 6 month old, without intervention it is likely the child will continue to grow at the same rate, and have the skills of 9 months old at 18 months of age. Intervention services are provided because the child is acquiring skills at about half the rate of typically developing peers and will continue to fall farther behind. This pattern of growth is illustrated by *line b* in the graph.



The purpose of intervening is to improve the child's rate of skill acquisition. *Line c* and *line d* illustrate children whose growth was greater than expected because their growth rate with intervention was greater than their growth rate before intervention. The children with growth pattern d catch up to developmental expectations. States report to OSEP the percentage of children in each of the five growth trajectories illustrated in the graph.

This section is excerpted from *Outcomes for Children Through IDEA's Early Childhood Programs*. (ECO, 2011).

REPORTING CHILD OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN WITH AN IFSP OR IEP

In addition to NDE's annual statewide report of child outcomes, the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) requires NDE to report child outcomes for infants and toddlers with disabilities (IDEA Part C, ages B to 3) and preschoolers with disabilities (IDEA Part B, ages 3-5). The report to OSEP identifies the number of children who 1) show substantial gains and 2) who function within age expectations. Children showing substantial gains at exit acquired skills at a faster rate than at entry into the program. Each year the actual results are compared to state targets. The results found that all

targets were met. The status of children who exited between July 1, 2010 and June 30, 2011 is reported in the following chart.

MEASURABLE AND RIGOROUS TARGETS/ ACTUAL DATA FOR CHILDREN EXITING 2010-11				
	Part C n=566		**Part B** n=1649	
Summary Statements	**Targets** (% of children)	**Actual** (% of children)	**Targets** (% of children)	**Actual** (% of children)
Outcome A: Positive social relationships				
Showed greater than expected growth	70.9%	74.0%	63.1%	76.3%
Exited the program within age expectations	74.1%	75.4%	72.9%	77.1%
Outcome B: Knowledge and skills				
Showed greater than expected growth	61.2%	63.0%	60.9%	70.8%
Exited the program within age expectations	64.8%	68.6%	61.3%	67.4%
Outcome C: Take appropriate actions to meet needs				
Showed greater than expected growth	74.3%	74.2%	63.7%	80.4%
Exited the program within age expectations	69.4%	72.9%	74.5%	81,3%

For infants and toddlers:

- Between 63% and 74.2% showed greater than expected growth across the three outcomes.
- Between 68.2% and 75.4% of the children exited the program functioning within age expectations across outcomes

For preschool children:

- Between 70.8% and 80.4%showed greater than expected growth across the three outcomes.
- Between 67.4% and 81.3% of the children exited the program functioning within age expectations across outcomes.

CHILD OUTCOMES: A LONGITUDINAL PERSPECTIVE

The Nebraska Early Childhood Education Program is designed to provide high quality educational experiences in order to positively impact the long-term outcomes for young students, including continuing success in school. Based on the targeted population, which would be characterized as "at-risk", the goal is to have students achieve at academic levels comparable to or higher than the classroom peers. To date these comparisons can only be made with children who were enrolled in a preschool classroom partially funded with an Early Childhood Education Grant–Ages 3-5 (ECEG). Comparisons were made to both classroom peers and children eligible for free and reduced lunch (FRL). The longitudinal data reported in this section includes 2532 students who had attended an Early Childhood Education Grant Program–Ages 3-5. Of that group, 67% continued to qualify for FRL. It is important to note that of the total public school population within the state, approximately 40% of the children were eligible for FRL. As a result, interpretation of the findings needs to be made with caution as the two groups are not comparable due to the differences in the proportion of children eligible for FRL in each group. The following figures show the comparisons across groups in the areas of reading, math, and writing.

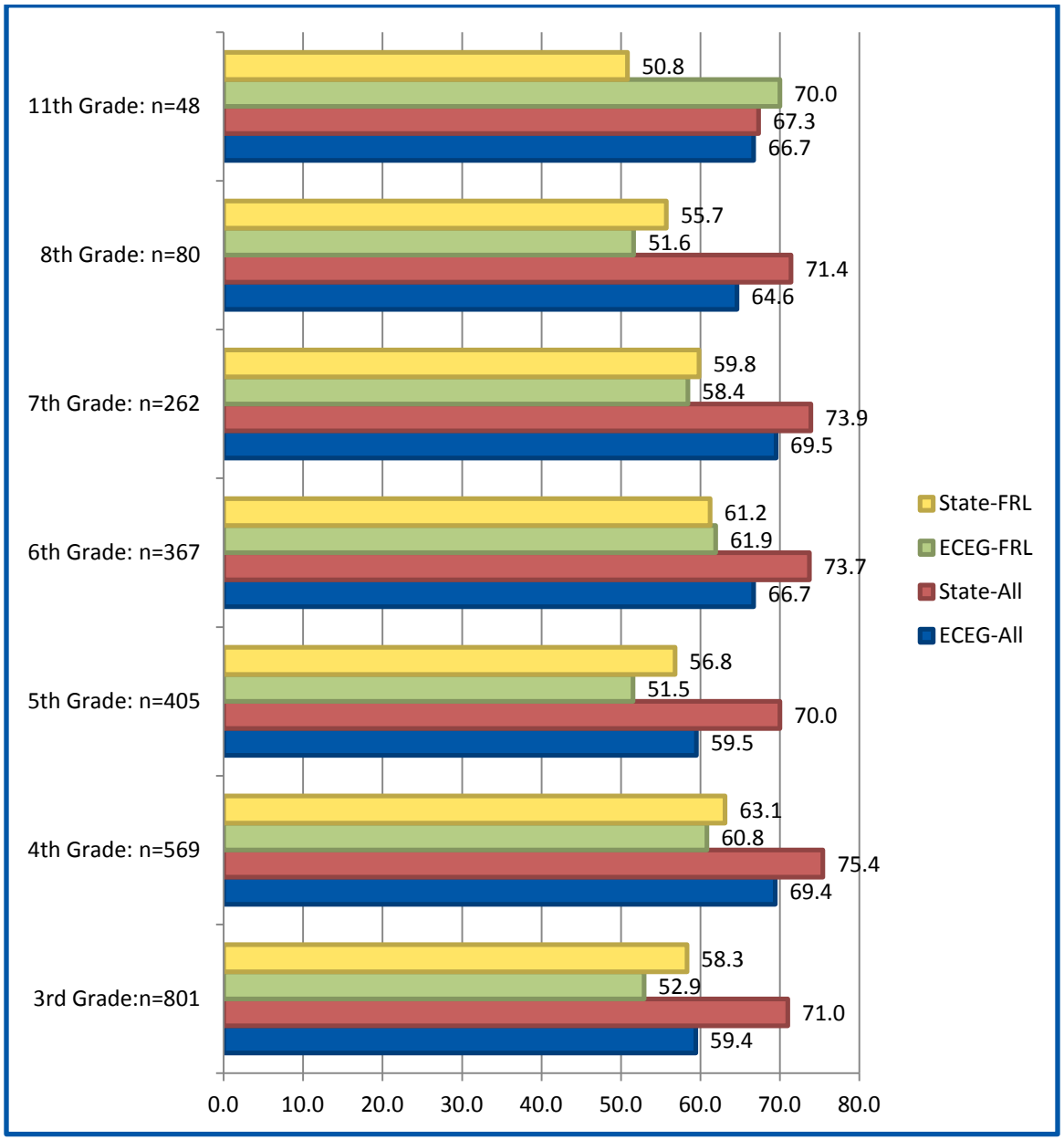
READING SCORES: COMPARISONS ACROSS GROUPS

Nebraska Statewide Assessment (NeSA) reading tests were administered in grades 3-8 and 11. The tests measured reading skills and determined whether Nebraska students met or exceeded state standards.

The results found:

- The majority of the children in ECEG classrooms met or exceeded the state standards in reading.
- Across grades, there was variability in results regarding children eligible for FRL when comparisons were made between ECEG classrooms and all state classrooms. At all grades except for 6th and 11th, state percentages were slightly higher than the ECEG classrooms.
- When comparisons were made of all children, the state classrooms out-performed the ECEG classrooms in the majority of the grade levels. This was not unexpected when considering that ECEG classrooms have approximately 20% percent more children who were eligible for FRL.

PERCENT OF STUDENTS MEETING OR EXCEEDING STATE STANDARDS IN READING BY GRADE LEVEL



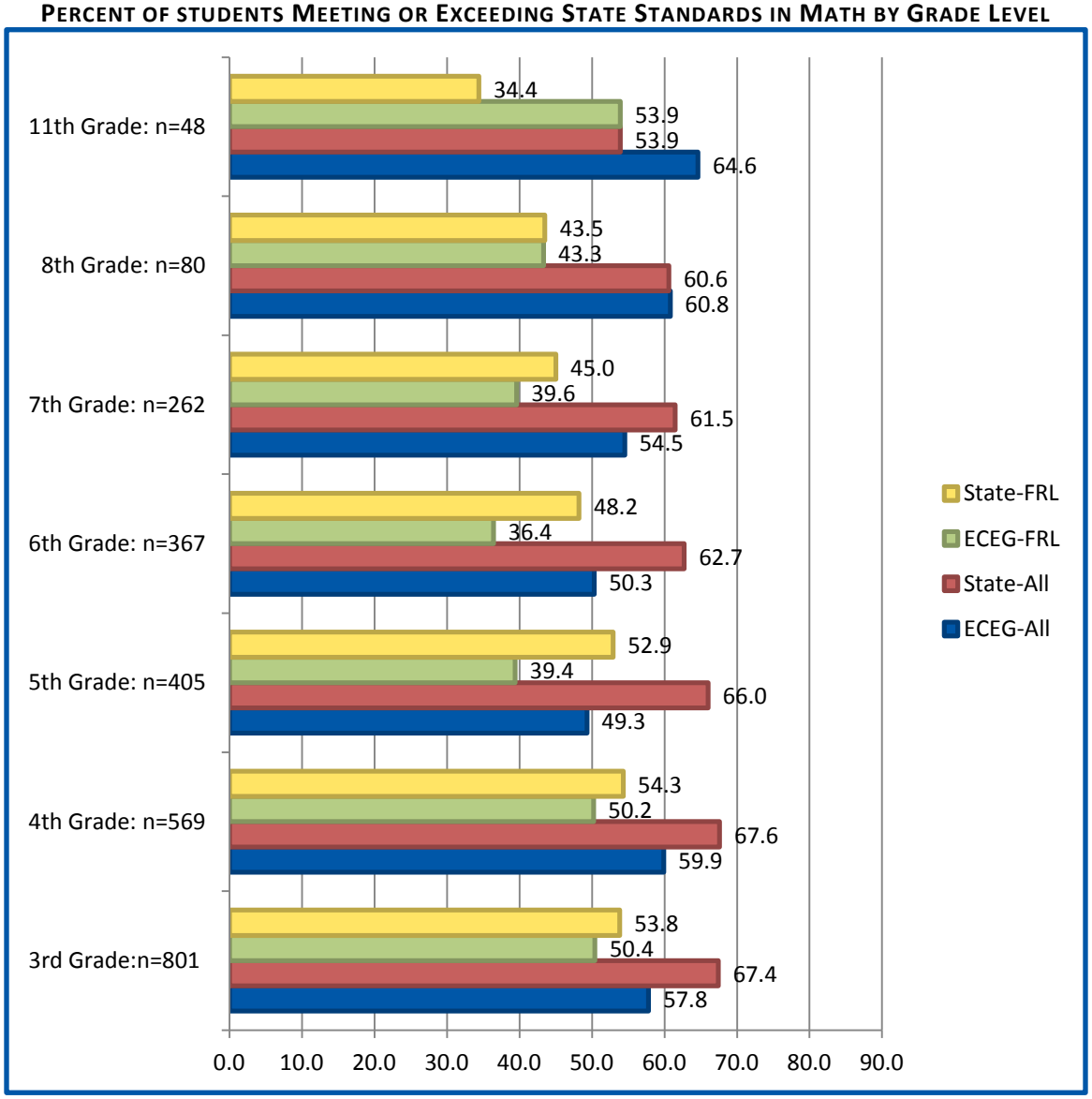
MATH SCORES: COMPARISONS ACROSS GROUPS

Nebraska Statewide Assessment (NeSA) math tests were administered in grades 3-8 and 11. The tests measured math skills and determined whether Nebraska students met or exceeded the state standards.

The results found:

- The majority of students who were in ECEG classrooms met or exceeded the state standard in math.
- Across grades, there was variability in results regarding children eligible for FRL when comparisons were made between ECEG classrooms and all state classrooms. At all grades except 11th, state percentages were slightly higher than the ECEG classrooms.
- When comparisons were made of all children, the state classrooms out-performed the ECEG classrooms in all grades. This was not unexpected when considering that ECEG classrooms have approximately 20% percent more children who were eligible for FRL. The exception was 8th and 11th grades.

PERCENT OF STUDENTS MEETING OR EXCEEDING STATE STANDARDS IN MATH BY GRADE LEVEL



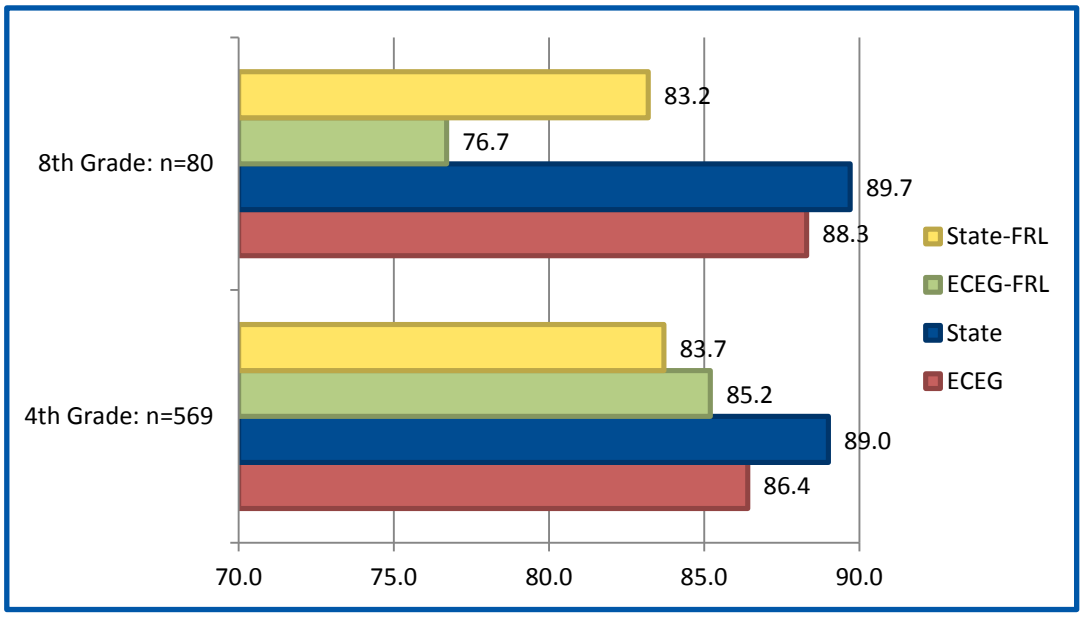
Writing Scores: Comparisons across Groups

Nebraska Statewide Assessment (NeSA) writing tests were administered in grades 4 and 8. The tests measured writing skills and determined whether Nebraska students met or exceeded state standards.

The results found:

- High percentages of students who were in ECEG classrooms met or exceeded the state standards in writing.
- Across grades, there was variability in results regarding children eligible for FRL when comparisons were made between ECEG classrooms and all state classrooms. At 4th grade ECEG students out-performed their peers and in 8th grade the state classrooms out-performed the ECEG classrooms.
- When comparisons were made of all children, the state classrooms out-performed the ECEG classrooms in all grades. This was not unexpected when considering that ECEG classrooms have approximately 20% percent more children who were eligible for FRL.

Percent of Students Meeting or Exceeding State Standards in Writing by Grade Level



FAMILY OUTCOMES

Data has been collected to assess the impact of infant and toddler programs whose primary focus is family engagement. Research has shown family engagement as a means to support children's development.

IDEA PART C

OSEP requires monitoring of family outcomes for infants and toddlers with disabilities. Three outcomes have been 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 have 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 974 surveys were completed with a return rate of 63%. 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.

MEASURABLE AND RIGOROUS TARGETS/ACTUAL DATA OF THE PART C FAMILY SURVEY

Family Outcomes	Targets % of Families	Actual % of Families
A. Know their rights	74%	78.4%
B: Effectively communicate their children's needs	71%	74.4%
C. Help their children develop and learn	84%	88.9%

SIXPENCE

For children and families participating in the Sixpence programs, family outcomes focused on improved parent-child interaction and the degree to which the home environment supports development and provides emotional support. Results found that participation in Sixpence positively impacted families. Parents with low scores on a measure of the home environment that promotes cognitive and emotional support for their child, demonstrated significant increases in skills. Parents who scored high on these measures, maintained high quality environments and interaction skills. Parents in the family engagement component demonstrated significant increases in parent-child interactional skills. The full report of these findings is posted at: http://www.singasongofsixpence.org/.

FINDINGS AT A GLANCE

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

- The majority of the classrooms had an overall rating above a 5.
- Continued improvement in the area of Personal Care Routines is recommended.
- Home-based programs were of high quality with family educators establishing positive family engagement.

CHILD OUTCOMES

- The majority of preschool children met the state performance goal and made greater than expected gains across all areas of development, thereby narrowing the achievement gap.
- The majority of infants and toddlers met the state performance goal and made greater than expected gains in the areas of social relationships and knowledge and skills. Somewhat lower percentages were found in the area of taking actions to meet needs.
- Fewer children who were English Language Learners made greater than expected gains or met the state performance goal than their English-speaking peers.
- Statewide, children with an IFSP or IEP met or exceeded the state targets on all three child outcomes.

CHILD OUTCOMES: A LONGITUDINAL PERSPECTIVE

- The majority of children in an ECEG classroom met or exceeded the state standards for reading, writing, and math.
- The strength of the ECEG students was in the area of writing, where higher percentages met or exceeded state standards than in areas of reading and math.
- The lowest percentage of children met the state standards for math.
- It is recommended that a matched comparison group be identified to better determine the long term impact of the ECEG Program.

FAMILY OUTCOMES

- The state targets for all of the family outcomes for children with an IFSP were met.
- Families who participated in Sixpence programs increased or maintained home environments that promote emotional support and cognitive skills and showed increased parent-child interaction skills.

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