



Collaboration for
Early Childhood
Strong Start, Bright Future

ChapinHall
at the University of Chicago

REPORT TO THE IGA GOVERNING BOARD

ABSTRACT

The Collaboration for Early Childhood has a contract with the Village of Oak Park, Oak Park Elementary School District 97 and Oak Park River Forest High School District 200 to develop an integrated system of high-quality early childhood programs and services to benefit all children birth to kindergarten age living in Oak Park and River Forest. Data collection and use of data are integral to the Contract for Services to better understand Oak Park's and River Forest's youngest children, monitor service delivery and usage, and measure impact.

This report provides an preliminary overview of the data resulting from a deeper examination of the kindergarten class of 2015-2016. The results of this work funded by Grand Victoria Foundation will help to inform the work of the Collaboration. It also provides an addendum to the September 28, 2017 report to share results of our work to support the professional development of the early childhood workforce. The indicators for this work are on a different data collection schedule from the other indicators and so are reported in November of each year.

A historical record of the Collaboration for Early Childhood's measurement and evaluation is provided as an appendix for reference.

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Table of Contents

New Research: Characteristics of the 2015-16 District 97 Kindergarten Cohort	3
Progress on Indicators: A Scheduled Addendum to the September 27, 2017 IGA Report	
System Level Outcome 2: Percent of teachers and directors in Oak Park early childhood programs who have above minimum state educational requirements for their role	6
System Level Outcome 3: Percent of teachers and child care providers reporting more than the state-mandated 15 documented hours of continuing professional education each year	9
Appendix A: Reporting History	12
Appendix B: Progress Highlights Through the Years	14

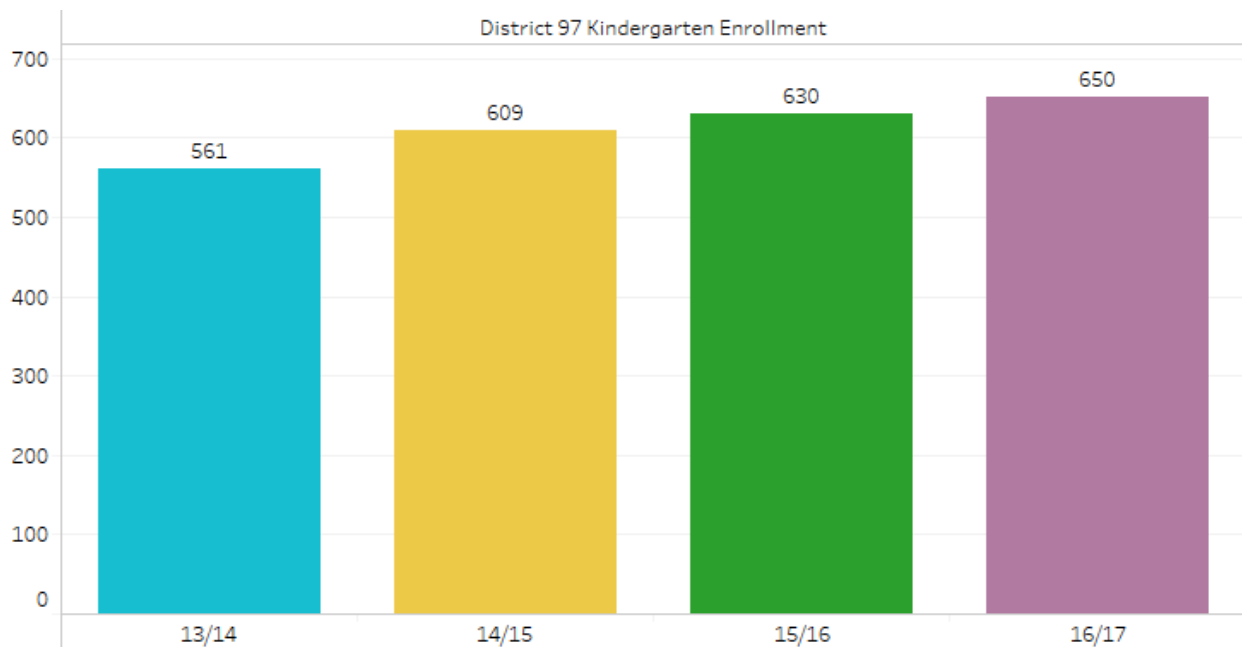
New Research: Characteristics of the 2015-16 District 97 Kindergarten Cohort

Overview

In November 2016, Grand Victoria Foundation granted \$90,000 over two years to the Collaboration for Early Childhood. This grant enables us to build on the important work around the development and use of our Unified Early Childhood Database. It also enables us to develop our own research agenda by asking deeper questions of the data collected based on the local context of our work, and to use the information generated to design appropriate and more powerful system responses.

The Measurement and Evaluation Committee determined that the initial research would focus on the kindergarten class of 2015-2016, the first year for which we had more robust data. The group decided that creating a portrait of this cohort using state and local data would be important to understanding their varied experiences prior to entering kindergarten. The second component of the new work focuses on understanding how those experiences may be influencing how prepared children are for kindergarten. Below are some preliminary findings. While the work is not yet complete (further analyses are underway), a couple of important findings are actionable and have resulted in programmatic responses to address the findings.

Kindergarten Enrollment Oak Park District 97	% Change 2013 to 2014	% Change 2014 to 2015	% Change 2013 to 2015	% Change 2013 to 2016
Kindergarten Students	8.6%	3.5%	12.3%	15.9%



The 2016-17 kindergarten cohort had the following racial composition: 56.6% white, 13.8% African-American, 13.5% Hispanic, 11.4% Mixed Race, and 4.6% Asian.

Regarding the race/ethnicity composition of the 203 children from families who moved to Oak Park before entering kindergarten, the majority were white (53%) while African-American and Hispanics make up considerably smaller percentages of that population (15% and 12% correspondingly).

Poverty

The new state-level administrative data adds an additional perspective to the census figures. For this project, Chapin Hall secured the use of Oak Park data from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, (formerly known as food stamps) and tied this data to District 97 registration data. While we are in the initial phase of diving into this new resource, these are some initial findings:



- Nearly one out of every six children - 15% (a total of 97 out of the 633 children in the 2015-16 kindergarten cohort) - come from families that received SNAP benefits at or before the time they enrolled in kindergarten in District 97.
- 58% of African-American children received SNAP during or prior to their kindergarten enrollment, compared to 24% of Hispanic and 2% of white children.
- The rate at which African-American children were eligible for Free and Reduced Price Lunch in kindergarten aligned with the early childhood participation in SNAP benefits. Compared to white children, African-American and Hispanic children exhibited considerably higher rates of eligibility for free lunch (compare a 3% among white children to 43% and 21% among black and Hispanics accordingly). (D97 data)

In-Migration

Chapin Hall has also analyzed the self-reported information families provide about their residential history during kindergarten registration.

33%

About 1/3 of all incoming 2015-16 District 97 kindergarten students moved into Oak Park prior to entering kindergarten. This seems to be the case for all sub-groups of children, as there were no differences in the rate of mobility by race, gender or age in months at kindergarten entry.

Prior Participation in Early Care and Education

Participation in early care and education programs is a critical component of what the Collaboration is monitoring to help ensure that children from low-income families access high-quality programs. This data comes from District 97 registration data, District 97 Free and Reduced Price Lunch data and state administrative data for the Child Care Assistance Program. (CCAP)

- 88% (557 out of a total of 633) of incoming 2015-16 District 97 kindergarten students had participated in at least one program of early care and education (ECE) prior to entering kindergarten. (Parent report at kindergarten registration)
- 95% of all white (335 out of 354), 65% of all African-American (62 out of 95), 80% of all Hispanic (57 out of 71), and 91% of all other race/ethnicity (103 out of 113) students had participated in at least one ECE program prior to kindergarten. (Parent report at kindergarten registration)

88%

Child Care Assistance Program Participation (CCAP)

CCAP provides critical assistance to low-income families (those earning less than 162% of the federal poverty level) in helping them afford higher quality and stable child care while they work. It's important to note that the income eligibility level for CCAP child care for the year under study (2015-16) was lower than the prior year (185% federal poverty level).

Less than one out of every ten children entering kindergarten during 2015-16 in District 97 would have been enrolled in ECE programs paid with CCAP subsidies (only 41 out of the 633 children entering kindergarten in 2015-16 did). Among the 41 children whose parents did use CCAP to afford paying for child care:

- 71% were African-American, 17% were Hispanic, and there were no white children. (IDHS data)

Disability Interventions

Understanding the rate and characteristics of children receiving services for developmental delays is important as we work to support early learning providers through the referral and screening process. We clearly need to see if we can better understand the reasons boys are receiving services at such disproportionate rates through the state and school programs.

- In general, boys are much more likely than girls to be referred and receive interventions for disabilities.
- Of all children referred and receiving interventions, 80% were boys. Specifically, of the 71 children in Early Intervention, 24 in CFC and 57 with a disability diagnoses, 77%, 88% and 81% were correspondingly boys.
- Similar percentages of children by race/ethnicity were referred to the state early intervention system. Only Hispanic children had been referred at a higher rate (15% to 11% for white and African-American. (IDHS data)
- More Hispanic children (7%) were also referred to District 97 from Child and Family Connections agencies than white (3%) or African-American (5%) children. (D97)

Follow up Questions about the 2015-2016 Kindergarten Cohort

1. Examine early care and learning experiences of children whose families received SNAP benefits. Where did they receive services and what services did they receive?
2. Examine where children receiving Child Care Assistance Program benefits received early care and learning services.
3. Examine the socio-economic variables and early learning experiences on children's kindergarten preparation and early elementary school performance by analyzing school assessments in kindergarten and the early elementary years.
4. Examine the children who were not enrolled in early care and learning programs to determine their socio-economic status, see where they were during their early years and if there were other benefits they were receiving.
5. Examine children who received Early Intervention services to determine if they continued to receive services through early childhood special education as 3-5 year olds and as kindergarteners and first graders through special education.
6. Look at qualifying risk factors for Preschool for All and Head Start and determine how many children qualified based on developmental delays in two or more domains.

Early Responses to Findings

Launch Parent Engagement and Leadership Project with Community Organizing and Family Issues to find and engage hard to reach families. We will foster a parent voice that is not represented at community tables. We then plan to identify parent leaders to act as ambassadors and engage in peer to peer outreach to encourage enrollment and participation in Head Start, Preschool for All and home visiting programs. Children eligible for these programs based on their families' incomes are underrepresented.

We plan to expand and improve coordinated intake efforts to simplify processes and ensure that social services agencies are clear about how to refer children who qualify for Preschool for All, Head Start and home visiting programs. Currently, social service agencies and even school personnel are not referring children who may qualify for these programs. A recent survey showed that they wanted one number to call (a single point of access) and found it burdensome to figure out which program to refer to.

We will be utilizing the data from this research and from measuring progress on our indicators to strengthen the Preschool for All re-competition applications.

System Level Outcome 2: Percent of teachers and directors in Oak Park early childhood programs who have above minimum state educational requirements for their role.

Submeasure: Percent of teachers and directors who hold or who increase their level of an Illinois Early Childhood Certificate.

All survey respondents	2015 #	2016 #	2017 #	2015 Above minimum requirements	2016 Above minimum requirements	2017 Above minimum requirements
Number (%) of directors	24	21	26	15 (63%)	14 (67%)	19 (73%)
Number (%) of assistant directors	18	16	6	10 (56%)	10 (63%)	<10
Number (%) of teachers	107	127	125	81 (76%)	95 (75%)	113 (90%)
Number (%) of assistant teachers	61	57	75	51 (84%)	52 (91%)	66 (88%)
Number (%) of early childhood professionals in Oak Park & River Forest responding to survey	210	221	232	157 (76%)	171 (77%)	201 (87%)

Calendar Year 2013 Results Completed by Site Directors*	2014 #	2014 Above minimum requirements	20 or more hours
Directors	21	15 (71%)	13
Teachers	12	8 (67%)	62
Assistant teachers	105	54 (49%)	24
Assistant directors	63	27 (43%)	<10
Number (%) of early childhood professionals in Oak Park and River Forest responding to survey	202	104 (52%)	107 (53%)

* The 2013 survey was completed by site directors, which was different from the 2015, 2016 and 2017 self-reported surveys.

System Level Outcome 2 continued

Illinois Early Childhood Credentials	2015	2016	2017
Have submitted a Gateways Credential Application	126 people 58%	136 people 59%	142 people 59%
Have a Gateways Illinois Director's Credential	20 people Level 1 5% Level 2 3% Level 3 1%	21 people Level 1 5% Level 2 2% Level 3 2%	23 people Level 1 4% Level 2 2% Level 3 2%
Have a Gateways Infant Toddler Credential	13 people Level 2 4% Level 3 1% Level 4 0.5% Level 5 0%	24 people Level 2 7% Level 3 2% Level 4 0.4% Level 5 2%	23 people Level 2 5% Level 3 1% Level 4 2% Level 5 1%
Have a Gateways Early Childhood Education Credential	48 people Level 1 7% Level 2 2% Level 3 1% Level 4 2% Level 5 7% Level 6 1%	86 people Level 1 10% Level 2 3% Level 3 6% Level 4 5% Level 5 13% Level 6 0.4%	104 people Level 1 13% Level 2 4% Level 3 5% Level 4 7% Level 5 12% Level 6 2%
Have an Illinois State Board of Education Professional Educators License (PEL)	62 people 28%	59 people 25%	63 people 26%

We are going to do additional analysis to determine the change in the subgroup of people who took the survey in both 2015, 2016 and 2017. The overall pool of survey participants is not exactly the same year to year.

We met our goal of a 5% increase in survey participants over last year. We saw an increase of 5% over the past year and 10% over the past two years.

While we are enthusiastic about the growth in the number of early childhood professionals who have above the minimum requirements (from 77% to 87%), we will learn more about the subgroup of those who took the survey across years as we perform additional analysis.

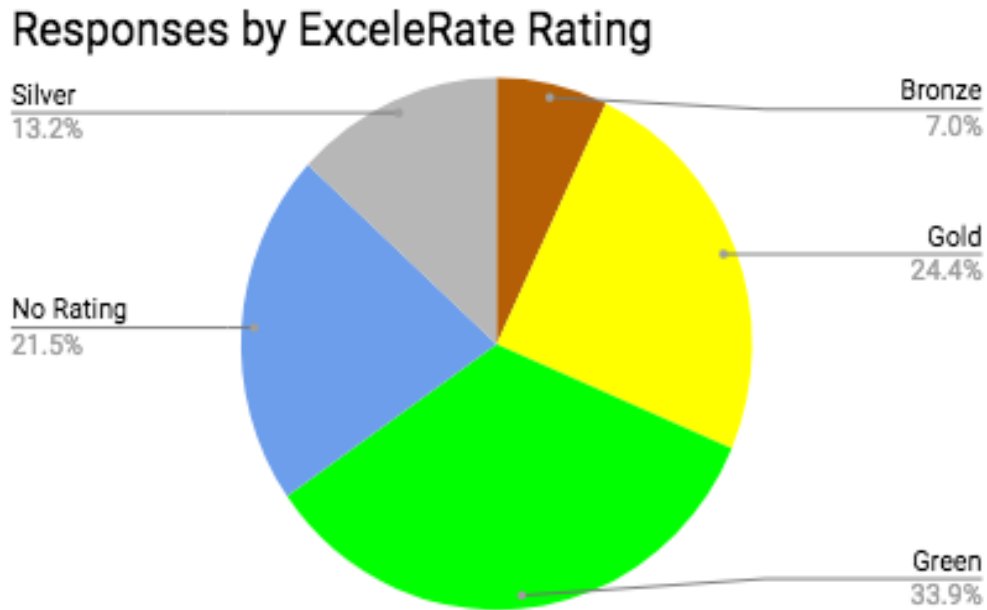
The number of early childhood professionals who hold a Gateways Early Childhood Education Credential has increased significantly, by 21% in the past year and by 117% in the past two years.

The number of professionals holding a Gateways Infant Toddler Credential has stayed about the same from last year, which is an increase of 77% from two years ago. Our continued analysis will determine how many people hold both credentials. The Infant Toddler Credential has additional requirements above the Early Childhood Education Credential.

Due to the state budget impasse, Professional Development Advisors (PDAs) were not available to assist child care providers for the first quarter of this reporting year (until October 2016). As of summer 2017, the PDA service from the state was reduced to one person for the entire state (based in Bloomington) from a previous staffing level of 35-50 people (based primarily in northern Illinois).

System Level Outcome 2 continued

45% of participants who took the survey work at early childhood programs with a Bronze, Silver or Gold ExceleRate rating, meaning their programs are committed to continuous quality improvement. (Sites with no ratings are usually license-exempt, for instance, faith-based or montessori. ExceleRate green indicates a DCFS license only.)



System Level Outcome 3: Percent of teachers and child care providers reporting more than the state-mandated 15 documented hours of continuing professional education each year.

All License Categories	Number			Less than 15 hours			15-19 hours	15 hours			16-19 hours		20 or more hours		
	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017	
Directors	24	21	26	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	14	14	15	
Assistant directors	18	16	6	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	
Teachers	107	127	125	29	37	29	30	22	17	25	20	48	43	59	
Assistant teachers	61	57	75	24	25	33	20	10	<10	<10	<10	17	19	28	
Total	210	221	232	63 (30%)	68 (31%)	65 (28%)	59 (28%)	37 (17%)	30 (13%)	34 (15%)	31 (13%)	88 (42%)	82 (37%)	106 (46%)	

Licensed Centers Only	Number		Less than 15 hours		15 hours		16-19 hours		20 or more hours	
	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017
Directors	19	21	<10	0	<10	<10	<10	<10	14	14
Assistant directors	15	6	<10	0	<10	<10	<10	0	<10	<10
Teachers	109	89	26	16	20	12	24	16	39	45
Assistant teachers	44	57	12	16	<10	<10	<10	<10	19	28
Total	187	173	42 (22%)	32 (18%)	34 (18%)	23 (13%)	33 (18%)	27 (16%)	78 (42%)	91 (53%)

System Level Outcome 3 continued

Calendar Year 2013			
Results Completed by Site Directors*	Number	15 hours	20 or more hours
Directors	21	<10	13
Teachers	105	16	62
Assistant teachers	63	20	24
Assistant directors	12	<10	<10
Number (%) of early childhood professionals in Oak Park and River Forest responding to survey	202	42 (21%)	107 (53%)

*The 2013 survey was completed by site directors, which was different from the 2015, 2016 and 2017 self-reported surveys.

We are going to do additional analysis to determine the change in the subgroup of people who took the survey in both 2015, 2016 and 2017.

The minimum requirement for staff at DCFS-licensed centers and homes and at ExceleRate Green sites is 15 credit hours per year. Staff at centers who have ExceleRate Silver or Gold ratings must have 20 or more credit hours per year.

It is encouraging to see a decrease in professionals who met or just exceeded the bare minimum of 15 credit hours per year since we are seeing an increase in the number of people who are completing 20 or more credit hours. This seems to be a sign that professionals are committing to increase their training more than necessary and that even staff at centers that do not have a higher level ExceleRate rating are engaged with their professional development. In fact, 21% of professionals have 20 or more in-service hours even though they work at programs that do not require this higher level.

Our goal was to increase the number of people who report 16 or more professional development hours by 15%. Our increase was 18%, exceeding our goal.

72% of professionals met or exceeded the professional development requirement of 15 hours, showing a slight increase - from 69% last year and 70% the year prior.

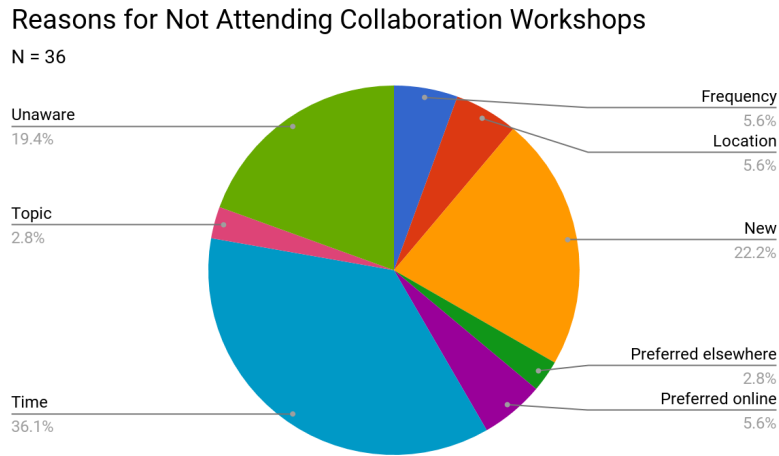
This year, 14% of survey participants used their college coursework hours to meet their DCFS-required 15 hours of professional development training. This is up from 8% last year.

Of the 242 professionals who attended workshops of any kind this year, 153 (63%) of them attended at least one workshop hosted by the Collaboration. In fact, the Collaboration was the sole source of workshops for 92 professionals who live or work in Oak Park or River Forest.

Our annual Symposium was attended by 384 people, some of whom are also counted in the 242 workshop attendees listed above.

System Level Outcome 3 continued

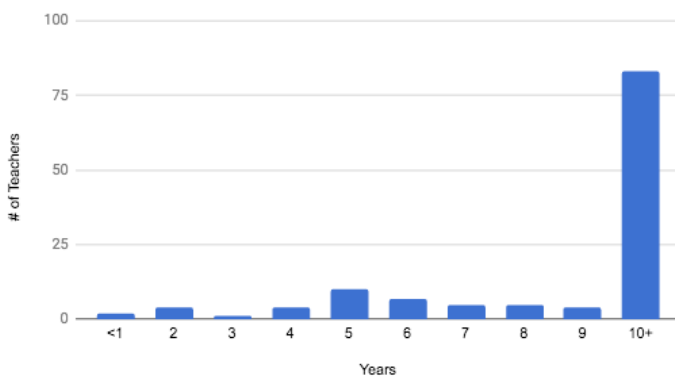
For the first time, we asked what kept people from attending Collaboration workshops. The primary reason given was time but many people were also new at their jobs. All the people who said they were too new to attend workshops had been employed at their program for less than one year. Of those who were unaware of our workshop offerings, most are Teacher Aides and/or work at unlicensed centers without workshop requirements. All but one of those who were unaware signed up to receive emails about our professional development opportunities in the future. We are able to follow up to make sure people know about our training opportunities. It was encouraging to note that topic, location and frequency were not major barriers to attending our workshops.



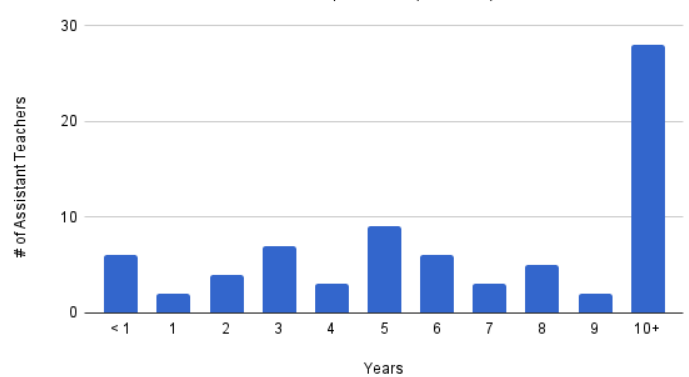
As we saw last year, most staff responding to the survey had been employed by their program for 10 or more years (28%) and the distribution of years remained the same, with the next most common time frame being less than one year of employment at the same program (14%).

Most of the early childhood professionals who took our survey were teachers (54%) or assistant teachers (32%). Professionals in both these roles have a long history of paid experience working with children under age five.

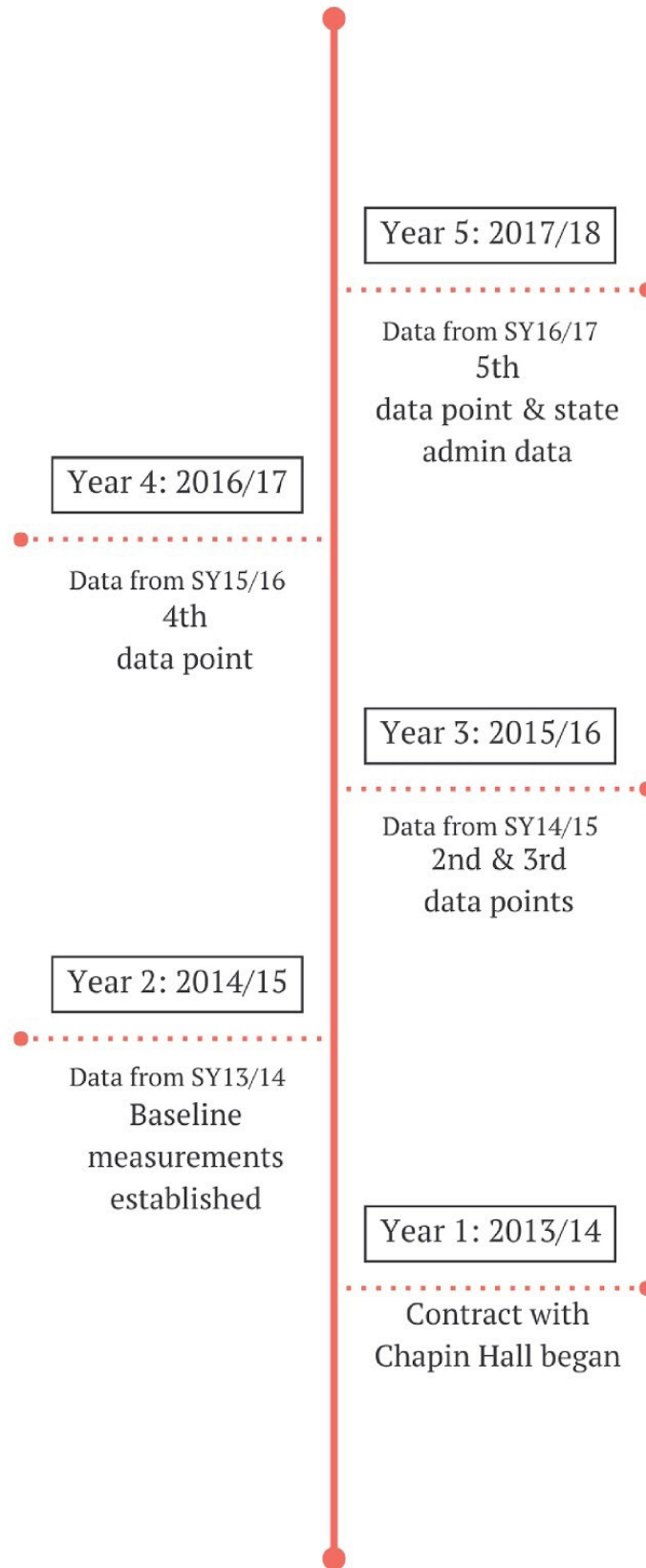
Teachers: Years of Paid Experience (Under 5)



Assistant Teachers: Years of Paid Experience (Under 5)



Appendix A: Reporting History



The Collaboration for Early Childhood reports on program activities quarterly through detailed data reports, progress reports and financial reports. A complete list of documents from these quarterly meetings is available on [our website](#) (under Meeting Materials > IGA).

Appendix A: Reporting History

Now that we have experience with gathering and analyzing the various data sources, our reporting schedule follows that in February we present goals for the next year, in May we review financials in preparation for the next fiscal year, in September we present the complete, detailed data analysis from the previous school year, and in November we present the results of the professional development workforce survey that are on a staggered schedule from the school-based data. Complete financial statements and a progress report of activities are presented at each quarterly meeting of the IGA and Tri-Board.

Here is a summary of the reporting to date:

Year 1: *July 2013 to June 2014*

- The [Contract for Services](#) began in April 2013.
- The Measurement & Evaluation Committee began in May 2013.
- The [Contract with Chapin Hall](#) began in November 2013.

Year 2: *July 2014 to June 2015*

The reports of May, September & November 2015 cover Years 1 & 2.

- The [May 2015 report](#) provided **baseline measurements** for each of the 11 outcome measures, using data primarily from the 2013-14 school year.
- In the [September 2015 report](#), the Collaboration proposed program-related action plans based on what we learned from the baseline measures. We also proposed updated ways for measuring progress for each outcome, based on new information about the various data sources.
- The [November 2015 report](#) was a special presentation on professional development with the results of our first workforce survey.

Year 3: *July 2015 to June 2016*

The reports of February, September & November 2016 cover Year 3.

- The [February 2016 report](#) provided the **second data point** on the outcomes using data from the 2014-15 school year.
- The [September 2016 report](#) provided a **third data point** in our longitudinal series using data from the 2015-16 school year. This adjustment to our reporting schedule allowed us to look at school year data in a more timely manner.
- The [November 2016 report](#) was an addendum to September with the results of the annual early childhood workforce survey.

Year 4: *July 2016 to June 2017*

The reports of February, September & November 2017 cover Year 4.

- The [February 2017 Plan for Progress](#) outlined goals for the next year based on input from our program committees after the September 2016 report.
- The [September 2017 report](#) provided the **fourth data point** from the outcome measures, along with a preview of the exciting new analysis of state administrative data that provides more of a robust demographic profile of the 2015-16 cohort of District 97 kindergarten students.
- This November 2017 report provides additional results of Chapin Hall's initial analysis of state administrative data such as SNAP and CCAP integrated with the District 97's data, as well as the results of our annual workforce survey that pertain to two of the contract indicators.

Year 5: *July 2017 to June 2018*

- The first data report on the 2017-18 school year will be in May 2018.

Appendix B: Measurement & Evaluation Progress Highlights Through the Years

Year 1

- The Collaboration's Measurement & Evaluation committee issued a Request for Proposals based on the longitudinal data collection and analysis requirements of the Contract for Services with the jurisdictions. Chapin Hall was selected to perform this work, which began in the middle of Year One.
- Extensive discussions were held around the technical requirements of the project - what the database's short and long term needs were, and what was useful to have in-house at the Collaboration versus at Chapin Hall.
- The many different data sources that existed in spreadsheet form, or on paper, or with partner organizations were all documented, analyzed and brought into alignment.
- Chapin Hall began conversations and negotiations with the Illinois Department of Human Services and other state agency representatives to utilize state administrative data for this project.

Year 2

- Baseline measures were established for all outcome measures based on our first year of available data, which covered the 2013-14 school year.
- For the first time, we learned about the preschool history of District 97 kindergarteners, thanks to the Collaboration's input on the new early childhood section of the school district's enrollment form.
- After ramping up the data implementation contract with Chapin Hall, then establishing baseline measures, we switched the primary reporting timeframe from May to September. This allowed program changes to be made without an additional school year passing by.
- Each Collaboration program committee took a close look at their outcome measures, which had been developed prior to the Contract for Services, and made changes to their measures based on the data available at the time and nature of their work. The committees also established the first set of progress goals for each outcome. The teams involved in this process included the Publicly-Funded Preschool committee, the Professional Development committee, the Developmental Screening Committee, and the Measurement and Evaluation committee.
- Conversations continued between Chapin Hall and the state for data permissions, which was complicated by staff turnover at the state level.

Year 3

- The third data point in the longitudinal analysis provided some trends and some questions that led to additional evaluation.
- After almost three years of negotiations, data sharing agreements for state administrative data were secured by Chapin Hall, who would finally be able to tie District 97 data with SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), WIC (Women, Infants and Children), Early Intervention, TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) and CCAP (Child Care Assistance Program).
- The state application process for the free/reduced lunch program changed, causing a decrease in the number of students deemed eligible. This process was returned to the previous method for the 2017-18 school year, however, we expect it had an impact on our portrait of low-income students for the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years.
- The developmental screening program screened 29% more children from the year prior.
- We transitioned our home visiting program from Parenthesis Family Center (now New Moms) to Easterseals.
- We worked closely with District 97 to administer the Kindergarten Readiness Test (KRT) to all children in Preschool for All or Head Start, resulting in 90% of students in publicly funded preschools taking the KRT.
- The number of families participating in the Collaboration's voluntary database for outreach information increased by 39%.
- The number of child care centers and preschools participating in the state's quality rating system started with 9 in 2013-14 and grew to 24 by June 2016.
- The lack of state budget was a severe hindrance to early childhood professional development offerings, and child care providers serving low-income families did not receive timely CCAP payments. The state budget impasse also meant long wait times for families needed Early Intervention services.

Appendix B: Measurement & Evaluation Progress Highlights Through the Years

Year 4

- The recent combination of state administrative data such as SNAP (nutrition subsidies) and CCAP (child care subsidies) with local school district data, preschool history, developmental screening and more provides a unique and actionable view into the past experiences that shape school readiness.
- Data quality has improved tremendously in both the accuracy of the data collected and the amount we have access to (i.e. there was a 74% increase in the number of children who took an important preschool assessment due to our diligence with both data collection and coaching/mentoring).
- We are making gains to ensure that children with the highest needs are prioritized for enrollment in Preschool for All or Head Start. Part of this commitment means the Collaboration is now the primary source of referring families to the PFA/HS program that may fit them best based on our coordinated intake and screening process.
- We have data sharing agreements with all three home visiting providers in Oak Park.
- Our developmental screening program screened 13% more children than last year, and we have expanded the screening locations to meet more parents where they are.
- Our professional development trainings have finally been able to include unlicensed home child care providers.
- We have dramatically increased our outreach work in the community through our Parent Resource Program. This outreach is based on feedback from families about what topics of interest they have and where they will look for information. Outreach is done in close tandem with our partner agencies like the Oak Park Public Library, Wonder Works, and all the primary organizations that serve families with young children in our community.