

REPORT TO THE IGA GOVERNING BOARD



Collaboration for
Early Childhood
Strong Start, Bright Future

 **CHAPIN HALL**
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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.

The Collaboration presents this report to show the results of activity during the 2020-2021 school year.

Submitted November 17, 2021.

Collaboration for Early Childhood

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“There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul than the way in which it treats its children.”

– Nelson Mandela

Partners of the IGA Governing Board:

Hope is the spark inside us that incites us to continue to work toward a community where every child can thrive. It's what keeps us asking questions that lead to innovations in our programming and outreach. It's what keeps us striving to increase equitable access. For us, all that we hope for is attainable. We've seen it over and over again. It is fitting that The Village of Oak Park [proclaimed 2021 as the "Year of the Butterfly."](#) Butterflies inspire hope and renewal; two qualities that define this past year, and that we continue to see this year as we take steps to come together again.

This year, the Collaboration had three goals that we set out to achieve:

1. Elevate voice.

We strived to position ourselves as conveners and to provide a space that spotlights our partners working in the field of early childhood care and education. Through a Rapid Response and Recovery Grant from the Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation, we unpacked the experiences of child care providers during COVID-19. In February, we held our first Early Childhood Forum: *Lifting Little Voices: Planning for Change*. The event convened local leaders to discuss the importance of early childhood in policy and leadership decisions. These are two examples of how we have been intentional about bringing multiple voices together to tell a more comprehensive story about how our young children here in Oak Park and River Forest are doing.

2. Facilitate access.

One of the Collaboration's contributions is to conduct coordinated intake for Oak Park's public preschools, home visiting programs, and developmental support services. This has always been a vital part of our work. It needs to be. In April, we added an Intake Coordinator to our team. The Intake Coordinator provides holistic, intersecting support and access to services and serves as a first point of contact for our families. Our parenting workshops, leadership trainings, and parent check-ins continued this year, albeit virtually. We continue to be there when we are needed.

3. Illuminate health needs.

The Collaboration's Health and Development program service area, in addition to providing hearing and vision screenings and facilitating the Developmental Screening Project, brings awareness to the health needs of young children and their families. This Spring's Physicians' Network Event took the form of a web series that took a hard look at health equity in early childhood. We deepened our partnership with Sarah's Inn to create informational materials about the impact of domestic violence on families and children. It is our hope that engaging in this work will better enable families experiencing domestic violence to navigate through this experience safely.

Elevating voice, facilitating access, and illuminating health needs have always been priorities in our work, but as we remain remote and the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve, we will continue to innovate.

In the pages of this report, you will find a brief history of this community-built agency. You'll see a portrait of our children here in Oak Park and River Forest. You'll get an update on our equity work, and you will hear from our partners, who will offer their perspectives on the experiences of families and children in our community this past year. The final chapter is a comprehensive look at the Early Childhood communities in Oak Park and River Forest through the lens of research and data. Throughout, we hope to have meaningful dialogues about the opportunities that are so necessary for the success of our youngest people.

Chapter 1. Introduction

During the pandemic, many of our schools and child care centers were closed, to keep children and staff safe. When they reopened, many programs experienced diminished capacity because of State mandated safety protocols. You will see this reflected in our data. Child screening and assessment were affected. Teachers were not able to assess students in the 2020-21 school year using the Kindergarten Readiness Test, a marker that we use to identify summer enrichment opportunities for children entering kindergarten.

Teaching Strategies GOLD, the authentic child assessment tool used in the publicly funded preschool programs, was not administered in spring 2020. Enrollment was also impacted. (This was a trend that we saw across the nation.) We have worked hard to supplement these data points, but the pandemic, which has affected all aspects of our lives, has also affected this data. There is more context provided in chapter 7 of this report: Appendices.

This November report serves as an addendum to the report we presented to the IGA on October 20 of this year. It includes additional data to tell the story of our indicators, specifically Service Delivery Outcome 1 and Service Delivery Outcome 4.

Please keep reading. Be curious. Ask questions. Join us on the pages ahead as we seek to emphasize the breathtaking resilience of our children this past year. It is not to be missed.



John C. Borrero

Executive Director

The Collaboration for Early Childhood



“Hope is born again in the faces of children.”

– Maya Angelou



Chapter 2: The Collaboration for Early Childhood: History of a Community Effort

Since its beginnings in 2002, the Collaboration for Early Childhood has embraced the vision that all children should arrive at kindergarten safe, healthy, ready to succeed and eager to learn. It is a large and ambitious vision. We began by looking at how much we could impact.

At the beginning of our work, our goal was that:

- all parents should have information about child development and about services available in the community;
- all children should be provided with developmental screening and follow-up so that developmental delays and disabilities could be detected early and be appropriately addressed;
- parents should have access to intensive parent coaching services so that all families with children birth to three-years-old could have the opportunity to participate;
- there would be opportunities for all parents to participate in some kind of parent group or network;
- all children in Oak Park who needed preschool could attend preschool (either a part-day or an enriched full-day program), and that these programs would provide the educational experience needed for children to arrive at kindergarten ready to succeed;
- all early childhood teachers and child care providers in Oak Park would be engaged in ongoing, meaningful professional development, and;
- programs would take full advantage of state-level resources for quality enhancement.



We did not take these early ideological steps alone. All of the governing bodies in Oak Park helped to create the Collaboration. Through in-kind and direct financial support, they affirmed the vital role that high quality early learning and care experiences play in assuring the success of every child. They committed resources to working with early care and education providers to weave a web of support for all parents of young children and to raise the skill level of early childhood staff and offer a continuum of services to all families with children birth to five.

By the mid 2010s, the ability for this mindset to expand beyond our borders had become a part of the Collaboration's narrative. The Collaboration for Early Childhood became the model for the statewide Illinois Early Learning Council, which developed the Preschool for All proposal. Years later, as a former Illinois Senator, President Obama proposed a national early learning council, based on the Illinois prototype. And it began in Oak Park.

Now, concern for the wellbeing of children is part of the fabric of this community. We hope that it always will be. Each August, when our children begin their journeys through the school system in Oak Park, the community dedicates significant energy and resources to narrowing the opportunity gap that begins in the first few years of a child's life and stubbornly threatens to extend through to their elementary, middle and high school years.



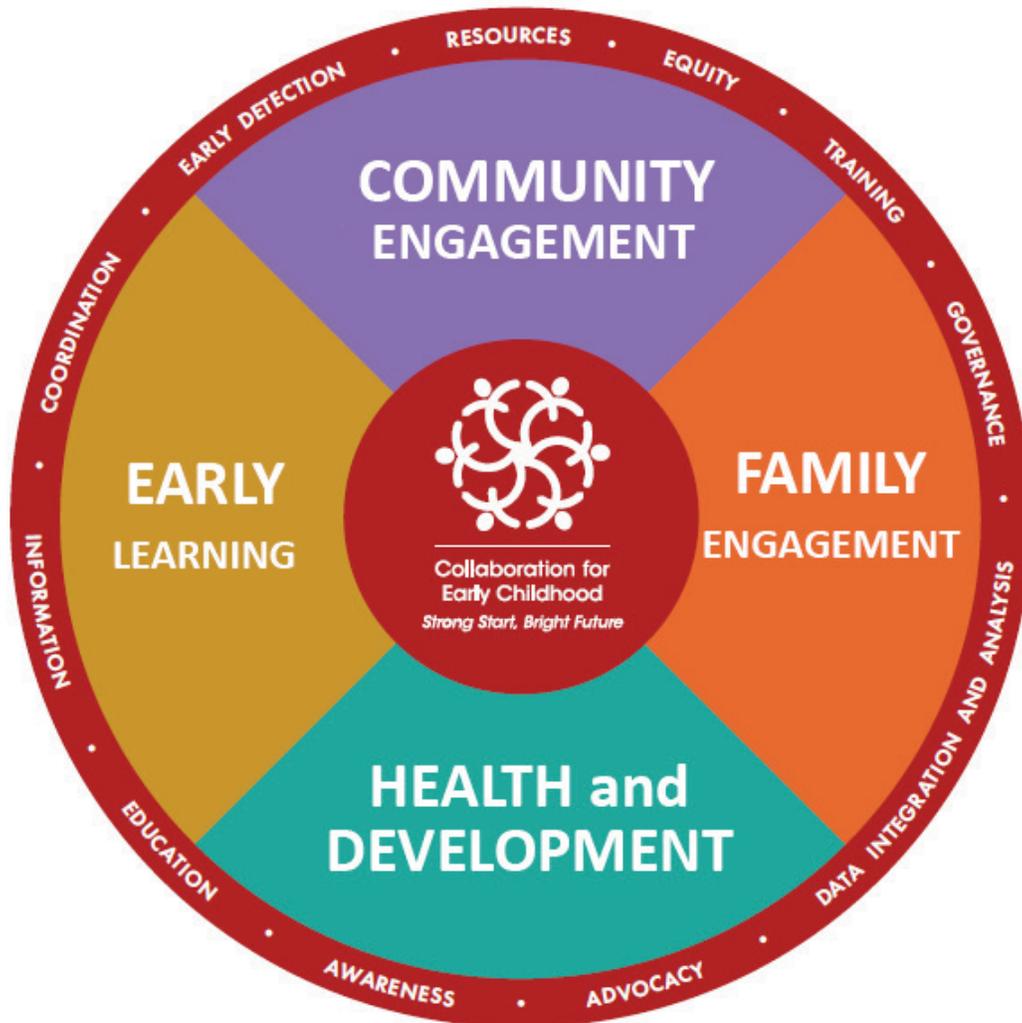


“The most important thing children need to thrive is to live in an environment of relationships that begins in their family but also extends out to include adults who aren’t family members, in child care centers and other programs. What children need is for that entire environment of relationships to be invested in their healthy development.”

- Jack P. Shonkoff, MD, Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University

Chapter 3. Overview of the Collaboration's Work in Four Parts

The graphic below depicts the four program service areas that make up the work of the Collaboration to support the whole child in Oak Park and River Forest. Our program service areas are not silos. These four areas overlap and work in concert to support children from many different angles. For example, a new mother who meets one of our community ambassadors in the park may pick up materials about breastfeeding, an infant program in the community, and sign up to receive a Baby Bundle. That one interaction touches on all of our program service areas: Family Engagement, Community Engagement, Health and Development, and Early Learning.



Community Engagement

Community Engagement refers to the Collaboration's efforts to engage the entire community in the success of our children, leveraging resources from other agencies to support children and families on their journeys to kindergarten. The Community Engagement work includes:

- Community Resources
- Coordinated Intake
- Public Events
- Communications and Social Media
- Public Awareness Building

The Community Engagement program service area has seen a significant amount of growth this year with the hiring of a part time Intake Coordinator who joined the team in April and a part time Community Engagement Coordinator, who came on staff in January.

With greater staff capacity, we have been able to coordinate and cultivate volunteers more strategically, and expand our calendar of public events. In April we hosted a family friendly Drive-In Movie screening of the documentary film *Babies* at Triton College, and as mentioned earlier in this report, we virtually hosted our inaugural Early Childhood Forum, *Lifting Little Voices: Planning for Change*.

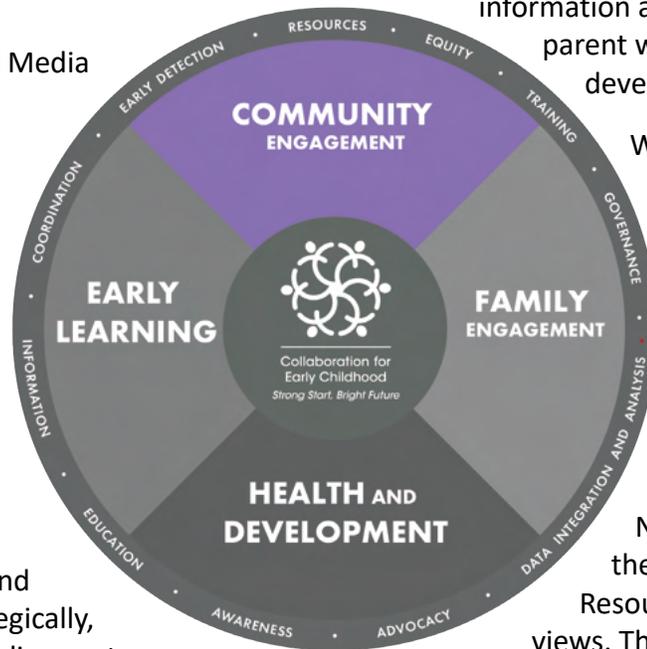
The contrasting format of these two events attracted different audiences, allowing us to share our mission and the value of early childhood care and education in different ways.

The Collaboration for Early Childhood provides coordinated intake for home visiting programs, publicly funded preschool, and developmental services in Oak Park and River Forest. The Collaboration's Intake Coordinator serves as a guide for families through the many programs and service agencies available, reducing their time and efforts while ensuring we are supporting families who need

support the most. Since our Intake Coordinator began in April, she has served 91 families. Of these families our Intake Coordinator has recorded 13 different languages spoken at home in addition to English. This is a wonderful asset to our community.

Communications, social media in particular, have been crucial this year as we continued to work remotely and advance access to home-bound families and educators. We leveraged our website and our social media channels to share information about our public events, parent workshops, and professional development opportunities.

We also amplified the community resources available to parents and caregivers through re-shares to our audiences from the Library, the Township, the Village and the school districts. Our new website launched in November of 2020. Between November and June 30, 2020, the Online Early Childhood Resource Directory received 2,888 views. The average pageview per user on the new site is 8.24, which means that each visitor to our site is exploring around eight different webpages.



Family Engagement

Family engagement refers to the work that is done under the auspices of the Collaboration to empower families to be effective leaders in the education of their children.

In practice, the Collaboration's Family Engagement work includes:

- Parenting Skills Training
- Parent Leadership Development
- Parenting Resource Program
- Fatherhood Support
- Parent Wellness Support

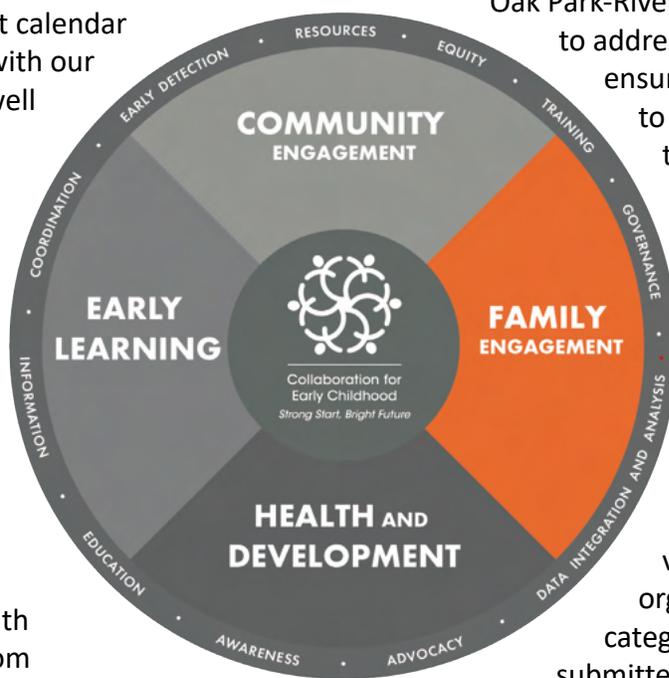
The Family Engagement arm of the Collaboration has a robust calendar of workshops co-hosted with our community partners, as well as a variety of resources and community outreach approaches to connect with families and caregivers.

The Family Engagement team facilitates the Home Visiting Task Force, where all of the home visiting programs come together to develop new approaches to connect with families. One outcome from these discussions was to celebrate new and expecting parents with 'Baby Bundles.'

Baby Bundles are goodie-filled packs of diapers, onesies, books, parent resources and more that are given out free to new and expecting parents and are immediately useful. This positive, first touch-point for parents helps them get connected to the network of supports available to parents here in Oak Park and River Forest.



In the spring, we were able to expand the impact of the Baby Bundle initiative through a grant from the Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation to address postpartum mental health and ensure that new mothers have access to mental health resources when they need it.



Family Engagement's Parenting Resource Program Committee works together to organize the annual Child Care Meet and Greet and the Early Childhood Resource Fair.

This year, the Early Childhood Resource Fair was held virtually on a platform where visitors could browse information organized by child age and resource category. Community partners submitted videos that introduced their services. We recorded 383 link clicks to the virtual resource fair webpage.

As programming shifted to virtual platforms, Family Engagement also launched a text-based parent engagement tool called Ready4K. Families of 126 children are enrolled in the text-service, and receive three texts a week that are customized to their child's age. Each week's texts include a fact, a tip, and a suggestion for growth.

The Power of Parent Leadership



Whitney Brooks has made early childhood a central part of her life. She is a parent, and a preschool teacher at the Park District, and she participated in the Collaboration's first Parent Leadership Training. Through that, she deepened her work in early childhood to become one of the Collaboration's Community Ambassadors. In her role as Community Ambassador, Whitney attends events in the community and distributes information to parents, and hosts parent meet ups and family-friendly events. She also is one of the facilitators of the Parent Leadership Training. In the spring, she was selected to sit on the Illinois Action for Children's Family Advisory Committee. "Doing this work, has been really helpful in rounding out my whole early childhood experience and I feel like that makes me a better ambassador," she says. We are glad to have Whitney on our team because she is an example of the impact an empowered parent can have as an advocate for our children.

Early Learning

Early learning refers to the Collaboration's work to influence the success of the preschool classroom experience in areas of teacher quality, classroom experience and teacher training.

In practice, the Early Learning work includes:

- Educational Leadership
- Classroom Quality
- Transition to Kindergarten
- Professional Development
- Equity and Access to Preschool

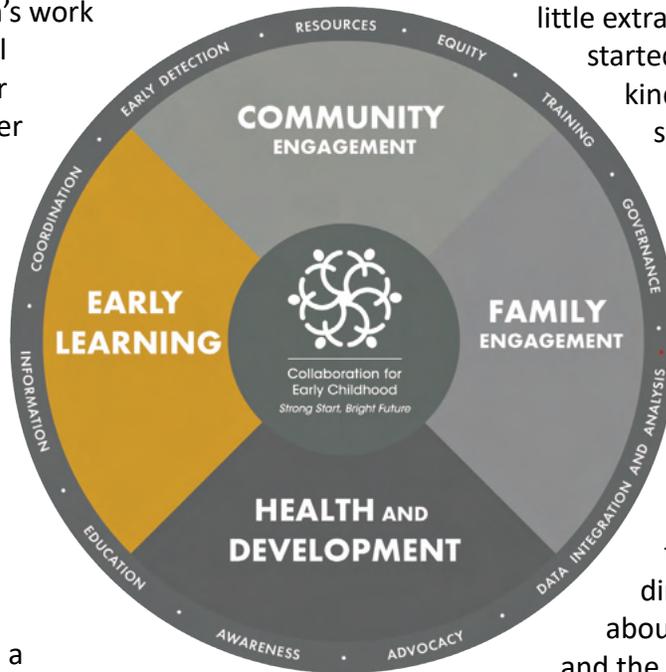
The annual calendar of professional development opportunities for teachers and early childhood educators moved to a virtual platform, like everything else during the pandemic. The program year workshop's subject-matter responded directly to the needs of the Early Learning Community. *Becoming Upended: Teaching and Learning in Times of Pandemic and Racial Unrest* was co-facilitated with New Teacher Center and offered in live and webinar format. A three-part workshop addressed trauma sensitive practices for our earliest learners.

We also hosted our 18th Early Childhood Symposium virtually for the first time ever. The Professional Development Committee's chosen theme was *ComPASSION Matters*, and the online format allowed for two keynote addresses. Dr. Kristen Neff, a specialist in self-compassion spoke about caring for others without losing yourself. Rachel Giannini of *No Small Matter* renown, spoke about why early childhood education is such important work. The Collaboration granted 16 Joan White Scholarships in 2021 to cover the \$45 admission fee, more than we have ever given in our 18 years of hosting this event.

In the summer, the Collaboration worked in partnership with the Oak Park Public Library and E-Team Oak Park to launch *Ready, Set, Kindergarten!* which ran from July 27-August 19, 2020. Six virtual classes were taught by licensed

pre-K and kindergarten teachers who worked with 5 students each to give them a little extra boost before they started their first day of kindergarten. In the spring, we received a grant from the Albrecht-Poss Family Foundation, to launch the Growing Gardeners Program. It was conceived as a way for children to "get their hands dirty" while learning about STEM concepts and the natural world.

Eleven early learning programs (including schools, centers, and home day cares) received raised beds and materials, along with a binder of 12 Lessons designed and written by the Collaboration for Early Childhood.



Children at St. Catherine St. Lucy School watering their new strawberry plants.

Health and Development

Health and Development refer to the efforts of the Collaboration to view child success as influenced by indicators of good health, and the extent to which a family is supported by the health services community.

In practice, that work is:

- Child Health and Screening
- Maternal Health and Home Visiting Support
- Early Childhood Mental Health
- Health Practitioner Support
- Support for Children with Disabilities

Preschools are mandated to provide annual vision and hearing screenings to be in compliance with the Illinois Department of Public Health requirements. The Collaboration for Early Childhood's hearing and vision screening technician provides these screenings through the preschool vision and hearing program, and continued to do so through the 2020-21 school year with COVID-19 protocols in place. We serviced 30 early learning programs last year.

After seeing a year of successful, safe, hearing and vision screenings, 31 programs will be participating this year. The earlier we can catch hearing and vision issues in young children, the more effective any necessary interventions will be. 731 children received hearing screenings and 729 children received vision screenings in the 2020-21 program year.

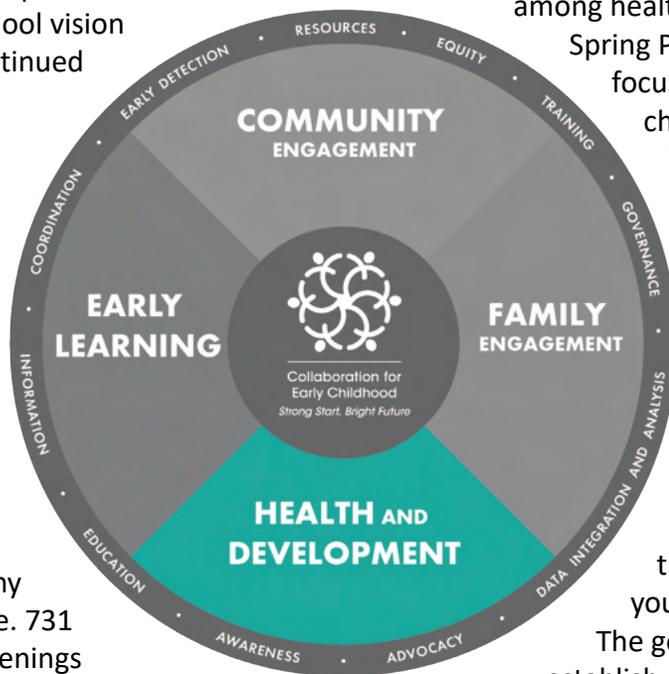
The Health and Development and Early Learning program areas share the use of our Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant and will continue to do so as mental health support becomes more pronounced in our communities and the ripple effects of COVID-19 continue to impact all aspects



of our lives. Strain on mental health isn't only being seen in our children. In the fall, we released a three-part web series called "Running on Empty: The Cost of Caring in the Time of COVID-19" for health professionals. It looked at the impact of COVID-19 on healthcare teams, strategies for self-care, and the role leadership can play in mitigating burnout among health care professionals. The Spring Physicians' Network event focused on health equity in early childhood. You can read about it in more detail in the next chapter.

The Collaboration facilitates the Developmental Screening Project, a network of early childhood programs, community partners and medical practices that routinely screen the young children they serve.

The goal of the project is to establish a sustainable, community-wide way to ensure that all young children receive developmental screenings and receive any follow up supports and/or referrals as a result of those screenings. There are currently 23 partners in the project and they administer the ASQ-3 developmental screening and the ASQ:SE-2, which is a social emotional screening.



In addition, families in our community contributed 391 research questionnaires to Brookes Publishing, who are the authors of the developmental screening tool. That feedback will help them improve the screening in future editions.

As part of our capacity building efforts in past years, we offered a 'training of trainers' in specific skill areas such as administering the ASQ. In the spring of 2020, we held a session that focused on training facilitation in general, and how to conduct trainings remotely. This was open to people with a variety of entry points into the early childhood realm. The training ended up being crucial to our offerings in 2020 and beyond. Our Community Ambassadors and home visiting staff felt it was very beneficial to helping them offer services virtually during the 2020-21 program year.





“Whether you want to support the current workforce, lower crime rates, increase high school graduation, improve the health of our people or close the gender wage gap, you’d be hard-pressed to find a better place to start than quality child care and early childhood education.”

– Governor J.B. Pritzker

Demographic & Economic Changes in Oak Park

Decennial Census Data

The recently released 2020 Census redistricting data show a small increase in the total population of Oak Park Village since the 2010 census count. For the population under age 18, there is a negligible decrease (-0.5%) in the number of children in contrast with a larger decrease in the child population for Cook County as a whole (-10.5%).

Oak Park Village, IL

Population	2020 Count	2010 Count	Change 2010-2020	Percent Change
Total	54,583	51,878	2,705	5.20%
18 Years and Older	42,125	39,352	2,773	7.00%
Under 18	12,458	12,526	-68	-0.50%

Cook County, IL

Population	2020 Count	2010 Count	Change 2010-2020	Percent Change
Total	5,275,541	5,194,675	80,866	1.60%
18 Years and Older	4,172,402	3,962,395	210,007	5.30%
Under 18	1,103,139	1,232,280	-129,141	-10.50%

While the change in the total number of children under age 18 is very small for Oak Park, changes vary across racial and ethnic groups. Overall, there is a 33% increase in the number of children who report being Hispanic or Latino. The number of Black or African American (with no other race) children has decreased by 28% and the number of White only children has decreased by 9%, while the number of children identifying as Two or More Races has significantly increased (+128%).

Change in Population of Children Under Age 18 by Race and Ethnicity, 2010-2020

Population	2020 Count	2010 Count	Change 2010-2020	Percent Change
Total Under 18	12,458	12,526	-68	-0.5%
<i>Total not Hispanic or Latino</i>	<i>10,928</i>	<i>11,371</i>	<i>-443</i>	<i>-3.9%</i>
<i>Total Hispanic or Latino</i>	<i>1,530</i>	<i>1,155</i>	<i>375</i>	<i>32.5%</i>
White	7,171	7,899	-728	-9.2%
<i>White not Hispanic or Latino</i>	<i>6,859</i>	<i>7,249</i>	<i>-390</i>	<i>-5.4%</i>
<i>White Hispanic or Latino</i>	<i>312</i>	<i>650</i>	<i>-338</i>	<i>-52.0%</i>
Black or African American	1,966	2,731	-765	-28.0%
<i>Black/AA not Hispanic or Latino</i>	<i>1,882</i>	<i>2,648</i>	<i>-766</i>	<i>-28.9%</i>
<i>Black/AA Hispanic or Latino</i>	<i>84</i>	<i>83</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1.2%</i>
Asian	535	508	27	5.3%
<i>Asian not Hispanic or Latino</i>	<i>515</i>	<i>494</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>4.3%</i>
<i>Asian Hispanic or Latino</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>42.9%</i>
Some Other Race	346	316	30	9.5%
<i>Other not Hispanic or Latino</i>	<i>88</i>	<i>103</i>	<i>-15</i>	<i>-14.6%</i>
<i>Other Hispanic or Latino</i>	<i>258</i>	<i>213</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>21.1%</i>
Two or more Races	2,440	1,072	1,368	127.6%
<i>Two or more races not Hispanic or Latino</i>	<i>1,584</i>	<i>877</i>	<i>707</i>	<i>80.6%</i>
<i>Two or more races Hispanic or Latino</i>	<i>856</i>	<i>195</i>	<i>661</i>	<i>339.0%</i>

A further breakdown of the Two or More Races category shows the increase in the Multiracial population is driven primarily by an increase in children identifying as White in combination with Some Other Race or Asian. The increase in children identifying as Two or More Races that include Black or African American (145) is much smaller than the decrease in the number of Black or African American only children (765).

While the data appear to show a decrease in the number of Black or African American children in Oak Park, these are relatively small numbers making the data more prone to error. It should also be noted that the Census Bureau believes the observed changes in the White, Some Other Race, and Multiracial populations from 2010 to 2020 are due in part to changes in the design, processing, and coding of the questions on race and ethnicity, reflecting a more accurate depiction of how people prefer to self-identify. For those reasons any changes in population from 2010 to 2020 should be viewed with some caution.

Decennial census data on children age 5 and under will be released some time in 2022, giving us a more accurate count of young children in Oak Park.

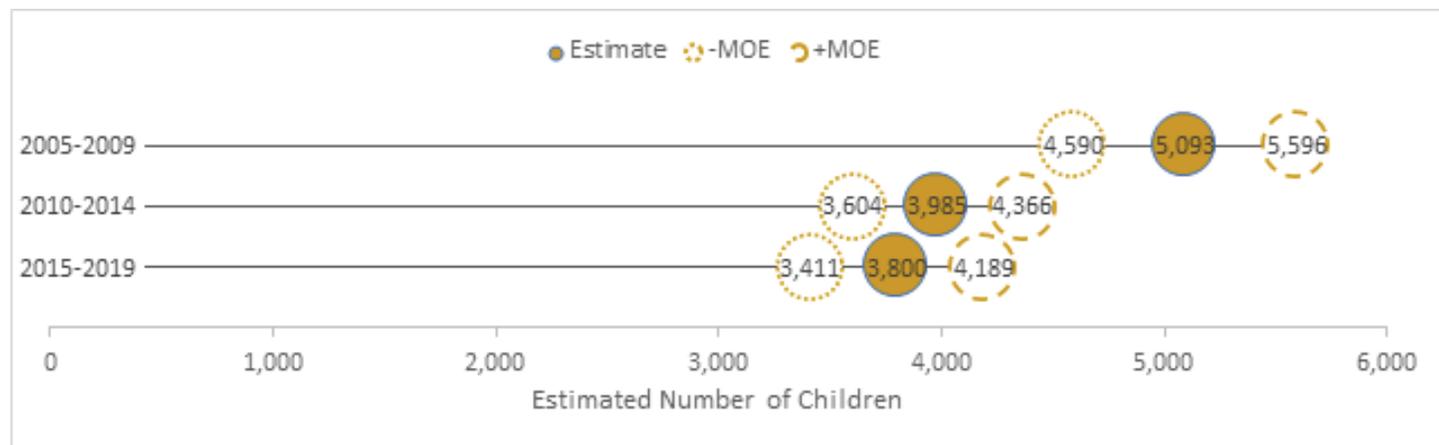
American Community Survey Data

The American Community Survey (ACS), also conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, is an annual, nationally representative survey that collects detailed information on demographic, social, economic, and housing characteristics of the US population. The 5-year estimates from the ACS are “period” estimates that represent data collected over the entire 5-year period. The primary advantage of using these multiyear estimates is that data is available for smaller geographies like Oak Park and River Forest.

The annual IGA report includes information on children aged 5 and under from the most recent ACS 5-year data as well as historical ACS years. Because the ACS is based on a sample of the population, every estimate includes a Margin of Error (MOE). The margin of error (MOE) is an indicator of the reliability of ACS estimates. The MOEs for published ACS estimates are provided at a 90 percent confidence level. Adding the MOE to the estimate provides an upper limit and subtracting the MOE from the estimate provides a lower limit of the range where the true value of the estimate falls. Datasets with non-overlapping years can be compared, so we are able to compare the most recent 2015-2019 ACS 5-Year estimates with 2010-2014 ACS 5-Year estimates or any earlier data sets.

Generally, the ACS data for ages 5 and under reflect the trends we see above in the decennial census data. Figure 1 compares the estimated population of children under age 6 for three non-overlapping ACS data sets. The 2005-2009 ACS estimated there were 5,093 children under age 6 with an MOE of +/- 503. Therefore, we are 90 percent confident the number of young children in Oak Park falls somewhere between 4,590 and 5,596. The 2015-2019 ACS estimates 3,800 children under age 6 with an MOE of +/- 389, so the population falls somewhere between 3,411 and 4,189 children. Even with the margin of error, this decrease is significant. The estimated percent change of children from 2005-2009 to 2010-2014 is -25.4%, with an MOE Percent Change of +/- 10.6%. The change in children between the 2010-2014 and the 2015-2019 ACS surveys is not significant given imprecision in the data (i.e., large margin of errors (MOE)).

Figure 1: Estimated Population of Children Ages 0-5, Oak Park Village, IL

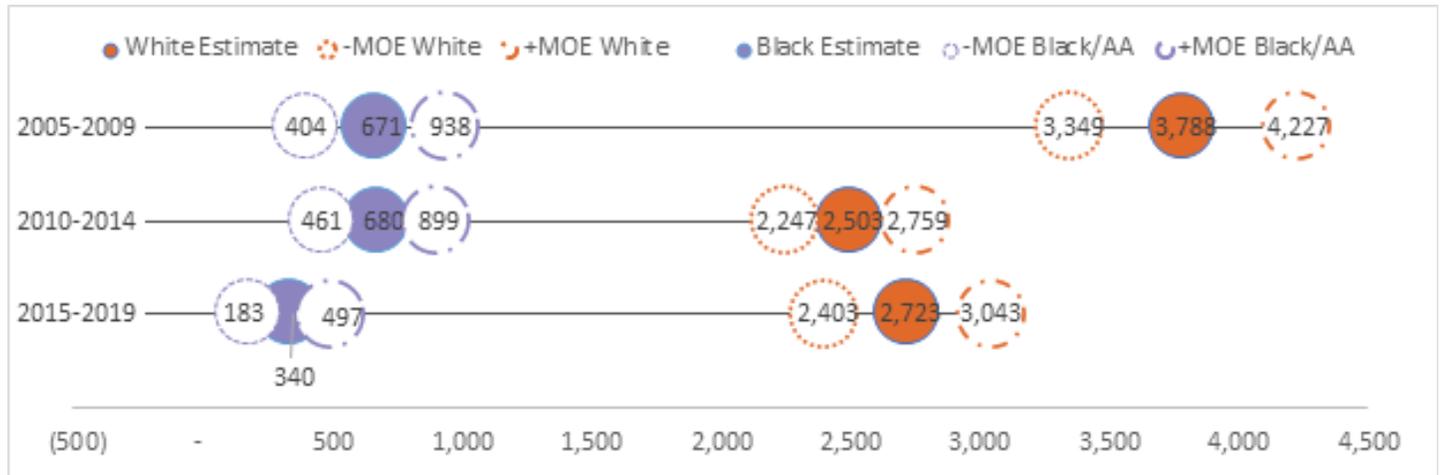


Source: Chapin Hall Analysis of American Community Survey 5-Year Data

MOE stands for margin of error.

Figure 2 compares the estimated population of young children who identified as White only or Black/African American only for the same three non-overlapping ACS data sets. There is a significant decrease in the number of White children in 2015-2019 compared with 2005-2009 (-28% /±11.9%). There is not a significant decrease between 2010-2014 and 2015-2019. There is a significant decrease in Black or African American children in 2015-2019 when compared with both 2005-2009 (-49% /±30.9%) and 2010-2014 (-50% /±28.2%). There was an increase in children identifying as Other Race, Two or More Races, and Hispanic, but these increases are not significant when MOE is taken into account.

Figure 2 : Estimated Population of Children Ages 0-5 by Race, Oak Park Village, IL



Source: Chapin Hall Analysis of American Community Survey 5-Year Data

Poverty

In addition to population estimates, the ACS produces estimates of the population living below various thresholds of the poverty line. The 2015-2019 ACS estimates that 5.9 percent of the population under age 6 lives below the federal poverty line. Given the relatively small population of young children living in poverty in Oak Park, the margin of error on these estimates is quite high – so we do not see significant differences in the number or percent of children in poverty between 2005-2009 and 2015-2019.

Socio-economics of Oak Park		
For a family of four		Number of OP children under 5 whose families make this
FPL	Income	
100% FPL	\$26,500	225
200% FPL	\$53,000	432
300% FPL	\$79,500	645

Source: Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map





“Nothing about us without us.”

*— Mantra of the Disability Rights Movement,
started by James Charlton*

Chapter 5: The Collaboration's Equity Continuum

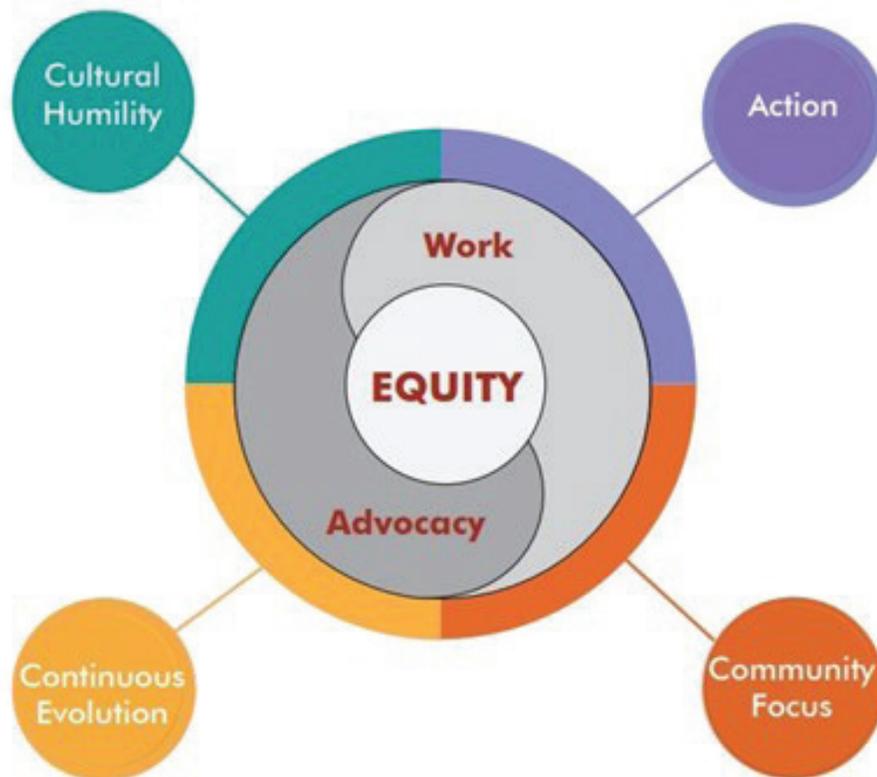
Equity is built into our original mission and vision and it continues to guide us today. In 2020-21 we embarked on a partnership with other systems leaders in our community doing similar work.

In March, 2021 we held our Inaugural Early Childhood Equity Summit funded by the Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation. Partners from Pilgrim Community Nursery School, District 97, the Oak Park Public Library, and experts from UIC and Erikson Institute came together virtually for thoughtful and passionate discussion. At this event we invited the community to engage in our new Racial Equity Framework and provide feedback.

The Collaboration's Racial Equity Framework is the culmination of our agency's journey to create a concrete equity lens for ourselves and our partners. We created the framework in partnership with New Teacher Center with the goal of building something that could be used and adapted by providers and organizations in their own racial equity work. The Collaboration presented this process at the Illinois Action for Children's Partner Plan Act Conference this summer.



RACIAL EQUITY FRAMEWORK



Chapter 5: The Collaboration's Equity Continuum

The Collaboration contracted with The Morten Group to work internally on our diversity, racial equity and inclusion (DREI) journey. The team at The Morten Group have guided us through listening sessions, individual interviews with staff and board, and trainings that outline the ongoing work of creating cultures of racial equity starting from within.

The Physicians' Network event is a biannual gathering that brings child health providers together to learn about a topic related to young children's health. This spring's event, which was presented in the format of a web series, focused on health equity in early childhood. The Collaboration broadened its reach and hosted presentations from child health professionals based in Ohio, Massachusetts, California and Texas. The presentations were:

- Addressing the Social Determinants of Health Within Your Practice Settings
- Practical Tips to Support Children Exposed to Adversity
- Racism: A Societal Pathogen

A Rapid Response and Recovery grant from the Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation allowed the Collaboration to partner with early learning programs to explore best practices and procedures that child care centers are implementing during the pandemic. Meetings focused on all aspects of working during a pandemic, including understanding the social emotional load on educators.

Children arrive at the door of an early childhood experience with more than just their innate culture. They also arrive with a set of life experiences also influenced by culture. The more we can build this understanding into the way we serve our society and influence the learning environment of our children, the better we can be for all. To learn more about the research behind culture and the foundational impact of early experiences on brain development, [please reference pages 23-26](#) of last year's report.



“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together”

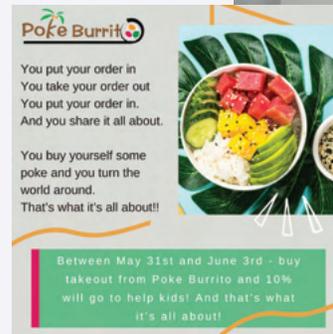
– Proverb

This year, we wanted to paint a more comprehensive picture of the state of early childhood across all aspects of the community through an array of different perspectives and voices. We have selected observations from our partners and supporters that tell Oak Park and River Forest's story. These voices raise important ideas and areas of inquiry for further exploration. One of our roles in the community is to serve as a convener. In that spirit, we've convened these different community members and their stories.

Community Engagement

Last fall our community launched Takeout 25 in Oak Park to help support local restaurants on the brink of closure in Oak Park due to the pandemic. The pledge, which includes spending \$25 dollars a week on takeout with locally owned Oak Park food establishments, took on a life of its own. It is now a thriving foodie community on Facebook, and Take Out 25 events have not only supported the local restaurant ecosystem, but they've expanded to raise money for local causes including early childhood. In April, Take Out 25 Oak Park hosted their second "Taste the Town" and raised \$31,804.25 for local restaurants and The Day Nursery. In May, Jimmy Chen, owner of Poke Burrito, was inspired to pay it forward in his own way. In his words:

"This whole year what I have been through has been a lifetime's experience. I would say this community is one of the greatest gifts to my business, my team, and I. We care for and love everything about this community. I'm so happy to announce that starting Sunday May 31st to Wednesday June 3rd, 10% of the online ordering revenue will be donated to charity and those that need it most (this will exclude third party online companies such as Grubhub and Uber Eats). Please feel free to donate if you want to help be part of the fundraising. Anything you can give will help. The more people that help the more we can raise. I feel this is the least I can do for the community that we are so proud to be a part of."



He chose the Collaboration for Early Childhood as charity campaign recipient. This is the magic of our community. We are so honored and proud to be a part of it.

Family Engagement

Our home visiting programs were working with families to navigate work, remote schooling, and the social emotional toll of life during a pandemic. Michelle Howell of Easterseal's Partnering with Parents Home Visiting Program had the following observations about what the past year looked like for families.

"It's interesting to talk about last year because nothing about it was typical. A lot of our [Parents as Teachers] curriculum focuses on child development. But we've seen a shift now, a balance between what the parent needs mentally, and what the kids need developmentally, and how do we assess that through ZOOM? Another thing that we saw last year was that there was a lot of marital discord. We had never seen that before. COVID wasn't necessarily the reason for that, but it was heightening some of those relationship questions that they might have already had prior to being with each other all the time because of quarantining."



"There were a lot of visits with a lot of emotion."

"We partnered with the library for their [Books Empower Grant](#) and we requested books about social emotional development, kid's books that talk about situations that they could potentially be going through. Any situation that's new to a child, a lot of times you can address that through a book. So we were giving out more books about that, as well as flip charts that helped children identify their feelings and what they can do to regulate those emotions."

You can read in more detail about the work of our community's home visiting programs in the Appendices of this report, Service Delivery Outcome 3.

Health and Development

We spoke with Nadia Spencer, who is a Clinical Supervisor and Staff Clinician at the Center for Children and Families at Erikson Institute. She was able to share her observations of the past year from her work in both Early Intervention and her work as a counselor for children up to age 8. Here are her observations, paraphrased.

“I had an intake call about a child who was suddenly afraid of bugs, just out of the blue. I think it was because the child was hearing germs and COVID-19 referred to as ‘bugs’. Children take everything so literally, and that’s what I expect was happening.”

“When COVID-19 first started, kids who were receiving Early Intervention were simply not able to get services. Early Intervention did pivot quickly to virtual visits, but when you are working with kids who are ages 0-3 over a computer it isn’t as productive as in-person visits. Kids that age are not able to stay still in front of a computer so a lot of Early Intervention work became more parent-facing. We would work with parents and coach them on how to work with their kids. There is a term used called the “COVID Slide” and we did see regression in developmental capacities in some of our children in Early Intervention.”



“Anxiety is the leading mental health diagnosis in young children, but last year we saw an increase in anxiety. Some of the reasons for this was because parents were working from home. The fact that they were home, but not able to be present and available for their children during certain times of the day was confusing and stressful for children. Also, we saw a lot of anxiety among our parents. Anxiety about going back to school and whether their children would be safe. We had a huge waiting list for families who needed services from us and we felt helpless because we wanted to help everyone but we also didn’t want to burn out our clinicians. In August we hired another clinician and have been working through our waitlist. One thing we’ve been seeing is that a lot of parents no longer need our services now that the kids are back in school. We’re also seeing a decrease in parental anxiety.”

“This year I expected to see an uptick in separation anxiety among our children who were starting school or returning to school, but I haven’t seen it here. I’ll be curious to see how mask wearing affects infants. Young children take in so much information from facial expressions, but I think we’ve all found ways to express ourselves even while wearing a mask. I know our early childhood educators are doing a fantastic job with that.”

Early Learning

One theme that we heard across the board from our early learning programs and day care center directors was how much mental energy is required of directors and teachers to keep programs running smoothly while adhering to safety protocols. These individuals are tasked with the important responsibility of keeping our children safe and that can take an emotional toll. Below is a selection of voices from local directors and preschool teachers that reflect on the past year and its impact on the current year in preschools and day care centers.

“I do worry about my staff as we go into a second year of battling, and the fatigue that I see from them. The needs of the children that we have right now are so substantial that my teachers are already exhausted and now we have a lot of children who are really, really having a hard time starting school. The students need more from the teachers and the teachers are already depleted.” – Oak Park Program Director

“We appreciated our parents because they trusted us. We couldn’t have gotten through the year without their trust. We would’ve had to close our program and that would have been terrible and I don’t know how we would’ve gotten teachers back if we had to shut the whole thing down.” – Oak Park Program Director

“The children are exhibiting a lot of strong emotions and having difficulty staying on task or being redirected...these kids have never had any real experience in a group...we are putting every single intervention possible in place and it’s just not enough.” – Oak Park Early Childhood Educator

“Some of these kids are going on to kindergarten next year and this is their first group preschool type experience because they didn’t have that last year. Is [what we are seeing in our kids] because of the pandemic? Or is it a special education need? How long do you wait? Because this is escalating and impacting everybody in the classroom.” – Oak Park Early Childhood Educator



“It is very stressful right now in these times trying to manage the children, manage the staff, sick notices, you can’t come to school, then feeling bad because the parents then have to take off of work, so sometimes you take that pressure with you. We are exhausted. We are completely exhausted.” – Oak Park Program Director

“I wish I could think about the community big picture and higher levels of childcare right now, but I just can’t. It takes all I have to run my program well right now. I am always on alert that this email, or that phone call may be a COVID exposure notice and we will have to shut down classrooms. If I wake up overnight, I will check to make sure there’s not an emergency I need to attend to before we open for the day. It’s exhausting and has been like this since we reopened after the first shut down. I’m exhausted, my teachers are exhausted.” – Oak Park Program Director



“Our task is to help children communicate with the world using all their potential, strengths and languages, and to overcome any obstacle presented by our culture.”

– Loris Malaguzzi

Reporting History

The below timeline shows the history of the Collaboration’s data collection and reporting to the IGA Board. You can see how our data collection has evolved and you can also see that the information that we share every year reflects findings from the previous year. This is the nature of data gathering and analysis: we will always be looking over our shoulder at the previous year, and making tweaks as we go for better and more comprehensive data gathering processes.

On May 6, 2015 the Collaboration provided its first full report to the IGA Governing Board. That first report provided baseline measurements for the 11 outcome measures which you will see in the following pages. The two following reports to the Governing Board included updates and adjustments to those baseline measures. To learn more about the history of the first few reports, please [see page 2 of the 2016 IGA Report](#).

Data Pipeline

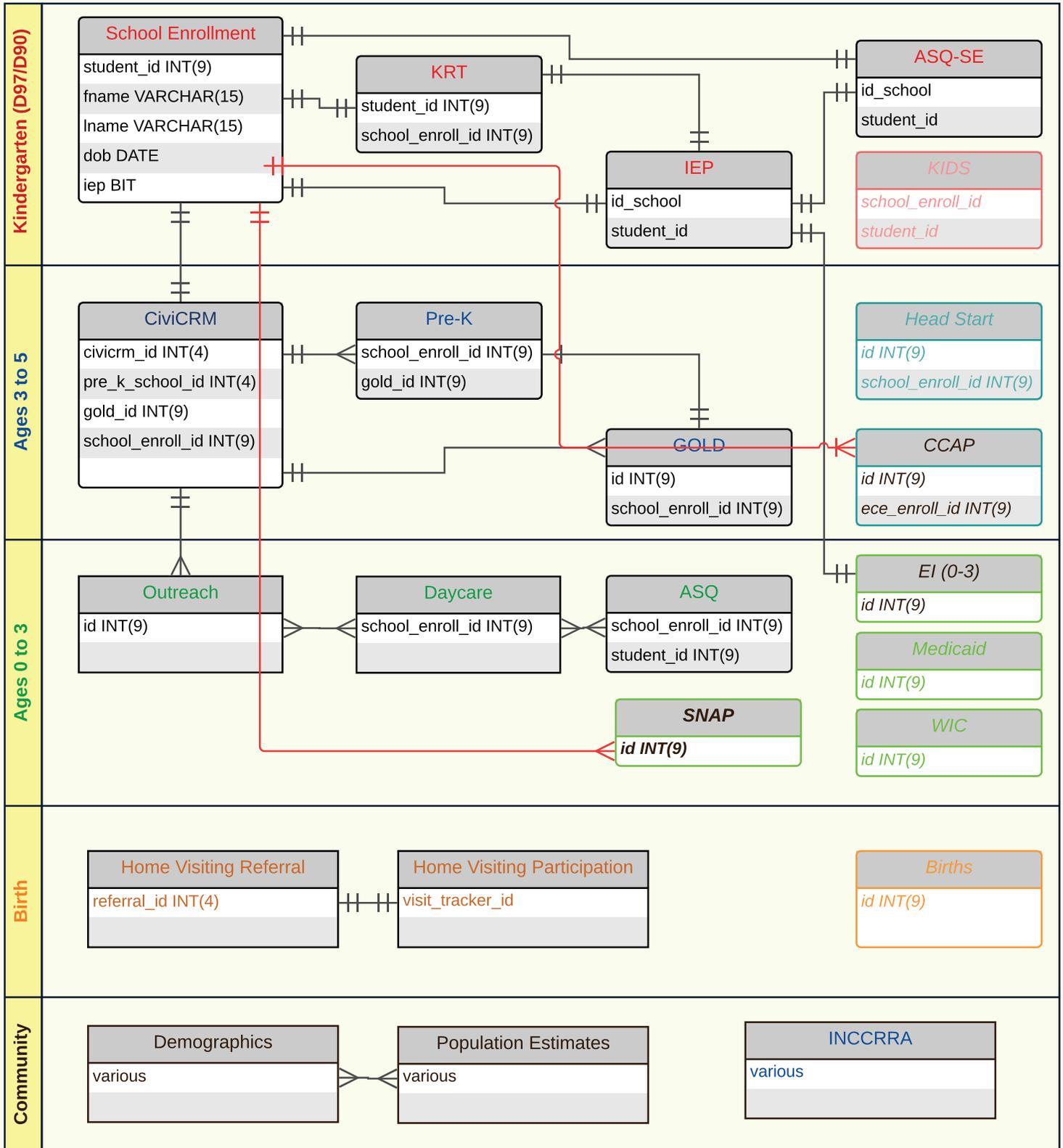
This past year the Chapin Hall team has devoted significant effort into revising the Collaboration’s data pipeline, procedures, and codebase. The data pipeline steps include: ingesting raw data from the District 97 school district, Teaching Strategies GOLD and ASQ assessment data collected by the Collaboration, and other available sources of data on young children (i.e., SNAP enrollment, Early Intervention involvement, CCAP use); sorting, verifying and deduplicating the raw data to create standardized data sets across school years; using probabilistic record linkage to match children across datasets from different sources; and building de-identified cohort files for analysis. The revised pipeline and code base will facilitate a more efficient workflow for future IGA reports. They also institute quality control best practices such as version control and automated data checks. Finally, in addition to creating annual data for the IGA report, the new pipeline standardizes and compiles current and historical data to be ready for a range of additional analyses.



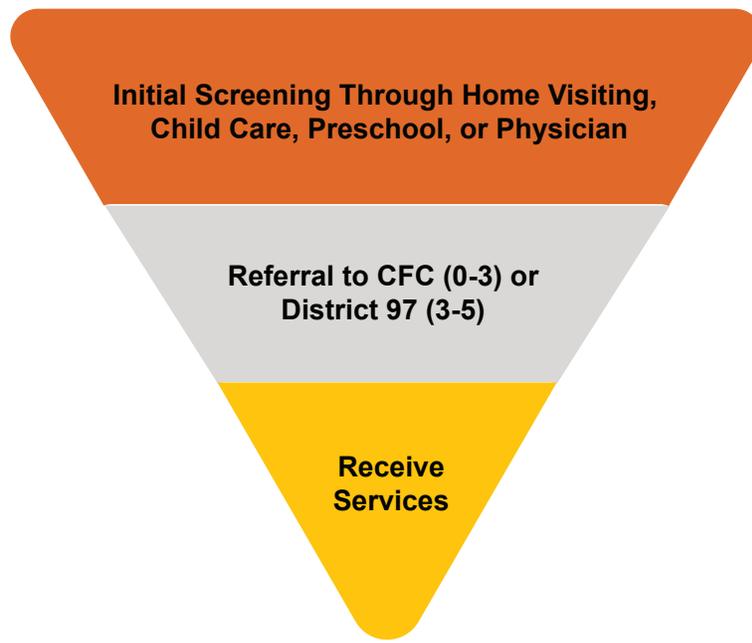
Integrated Database Schema

Oak Park Collaboration for Early Childhood

Integrated Database Schema 2018



Child Outcome 1: Children identified through screening as needing assessment or services receive them.



Submeasure 1: Number of children screened

The ASQ-3 is a global developmental screening tool and the ASQ: SE-2 is a social-emotional screening tool. The tools do not provide diagnosis, rather they offer a valuable perspective on where the child is developmentally in relation to their age. The results may indicate that additional evaluation is warranted. The Collaboration strives to ensure as many children as possible are screened at regular intervals, at least once per year, prior to kindergarten entry.

The ASQ screening tools can be completed by parents or other caregivers in a variety of settings. Medical practices make them available to families, as do preschools and child care programs, home visitation programs or even the public library. While caregivers (parents, guardians, grandparents, etc.) complete the screening questionnaires, early learning and health professionals review the completed questionnaires and should share the screening results with caregivers soon after screening completion. There were 23 programs in the Developmental Screening Project last year.

The Collaboration makes it easier for families to share their results across providers. For instance, if a caregiver completes a screening for the child's preschool program, the caregiver can give permission for the completed screening to be shared with their doctor, also in the ASQ Online system. This service has been received very positively by both families and providers. It means the family doesn't have to complete the screening questionnaire multiple times within a close time period and important information about the child is shared among those who are supporting families.



Impact from COVID-19

The State issued guidance on conducting hearing and vision screenings and we were able to schedule our Hearing & Vision Screening Technician on-site using strict health and safety protocols. Thirty programs participated in our hearing & vision screening project. One parochial program declined to participate at the direction of the Archdiocese and one declined due to their "no visitor" policy. For the coming year, 32 programs are committed to participating in screening.

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-2020	2020-2021
Total children receiving ASQ-3 or ASQ: SE-2	1,806	1,787	1,969	1,868	1,643
Total children receiving ASQ-3 and ASQ: SE-2	1,524	1,509	1,575	1,556	1,362
Total children receiving ASQ-3	1,726	1,711	1,830	1,810	1,603
Total children receiving ASQ:SE-2	1,604	1,585	1,714	1,614	1,402
Hearing screenings	1,353	1,313	1,375	945	729
Vision screenings	1,411	1,367	1,425	947	731

Submeasure 2: Number (percent) of children referred for assessments receive them.

- 14 (58%) programs participating in the Developmental Screening Project (24 total) used ASQ Online to document follow-up needs. One of the participating programs had no children who scored in the “refer” range in any developmental areas. This means that 14 of the 23 (61%) programs with enrolled children who scored “refer” in one or more developmental area used ASQ Online to document follow-up needs and further documented those needs as requested by the Collaboration.
- In order to streamline this complex data collection effort more efficiently, we continue to work with Chapin Hall to revise code to streamline the ASQ:3 and ASQ:SE-2 screening data compilation process.
- 660 children scored as “monitor” or “refer” (for further evaluation for additional support services) on the ASQ:3 questionnaire and 185 children scored as such on the ASQ:SE-2 questionnaire.
- In order to make developmental screening follow-up data collection more user-friendly for our screening partners, we are in the process of creating a follow-up survey using the secure survey system called Qualtrics. This new survey will allow programs to report on follow-up specific to each child who scored in the “refer” range on the ASQ-3 and/or ASQ:SE-2 in a consistent way. This will help us to tabulate the numbers of children referred, determined eligible and receiving services as a result of the Collaboration’s Developmental Screening project as tracked by screening partners.
- 10 (45%) of the children who were referred for assessments due to concerns identified through the vision screening were assessed and received treatment. Medical facilities were closed for non-emergency procedures for part of the reporting period due to COVID-19. This potentially prevented families from receiving follow-up examinations.
- 1 (100%) of the children who were referred for assessments due to concerns identified through the hearing screening were assessed and received treatment.

Child Outcome 2: Percent of children in Oak Park and River Forest Preschool for All and Head Start (PFA/HS) who demonstrate age-appropriate proficiency in each domain of development in accordance with the Illinois Early Learning Standards.

Proficiency is typically measured using the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment system; an authentic, ongoing, observational, portfolio-based assessment tool used by Preschool for All Teachers to regularly evaluate children's proficiency of 38 developmentally appropriate learning objectives across 8 early learning domains. These learning domains include Social-Emotional, Physical, Language, Cognitive, Literacy, Science and Technology, Social Studies, and the Arts. In 2015, the Preschool for All committee, with the guidance of a researcher at Loyola University who studies preschool transitions to kindergarten, identified 10 of these objectives as representative of proficiency in the different domains. You can see an overview of the objectives below.

By entering observational data for children at regular benchmarks through the school year: fall, winter, spring, the GOLD assessment allows teachers to individualize their instruction to meet and support the developmental stages of each child in their classroom. The Collaboration reviews the quarterly benchmark data to assist in identifying programmatic support needs and topics for professional development. Focusing on the spring benchmark scoring data, we are able to make year-to-year comparisons for students who attended PFA in Oak Park and link to District 97 registration data to provide even further insight when cross-referenced by race or income.



Impact from COVID-19

- Due to COVID-19 and program shutdowns, staff were not able to assess students in the Spring of 2020, which is the benchmark data used for proficiency analysis in this report. Therefore, our data is incomplete for measuring proficiency during that time.
- Chapin Hall has analyzed the methodology for how we look at Teaching Strategies GOLD and made recommendations for improvements. In the coming months, a team will look at our options for reporting out on GOLD in ways that may be more insightful and useful to everyone who looks at these data.
- During the 2020/21 school year, Preschool for All programs were able to administer GOLD assessments for fall, winter, and spring. PFA proficiency will be reported in the fall of 2022 once it is linked to data from District 97. However, we do expect anomalies due to the pandemic school environment.

Objectives for Development & Learning

Birth Through Kindergarten

Social-Emotional

1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors
2. Establishes and sustains positive relationships
3. Participates cooperatively and constructively in group situations



Physical

4. Demonstrates traveling skills
5. Demonstrates balancing skills
6. Demonstrates gross-motor manipulative skills
7. Demonstrates fine-motor strength and coordination



Language

8. Listens to and understands increasingly complex language
9. Uses language to express thoughts and needs
10. Uses appropriate conversational and other communication skills



Cognitive

11. Demonstrates positive approaches to learning
12. Remembers and connects experiences
13. Uses classifications skills
14. Uses symbols and images to represent something not present



Literacy

15. Demonstrates phonological awareness
16. Demonstrates knowledge of the alphabet
17. Demonstrates knowledge of print and its uses
18. Comprehends and responds to books and other texts
19. Demonstrates emergent writing skills



Mathematics

20. Uses number concepts and operations
21. Explores and describes spatial relationships and shapes
22. Compares and measures
23. Demonstrates knowledge of patterns



Science and Technology

24. Uses scientific inquiry skills
25. Demonstrates knowledge of the characteristics of living things
26. Demonstrates knowledge of the physical properties of objects and materials
27. Demonstrates knowledge of Earth's environment
28. Uses tools and other technology to perform tasks



Social Studies

29. Demonstrates knowledge about self
30. Shows basic understanding of people and how they live
31. Explores change related to familiar people or places



The Arts

32. Explores the visual arts
33. Explores musical concepts and expression
34. Explores dance and movement concepts
35. Explores drama through actions and language



English Language Acquisition

36. Demonstrates progress in listening to and understanding English
37. Demonstrates progress in speaking English

Child Outcome 3: Percent of children entering kindergarten demonstrating age-appropriate proficiency in the kindergarten readiness assessment administered by District 97.

We rely on the Kindergarten Readiness Test (KRT) for assessing the proficiency of children entering kindergarten. In a typical year, the KRT is administered to incoming kindergarten students over the summer and through the third week of school. It is conducted by someone, usually a teacher, who sits with the child for approximately half an hour, asking them to complete questions in a workbook.

For students attending the three Preschool for All programs, the Collaboration administers the KRT during the month of May at the very end of their preschool year. These results inform additional kindergarten readiness opportunities such as summer enrichment with District 97 and the E-Team.

District 97 administers the KRT for all children entering kindergarten. The Collaboration provides District 97 with the KRT results of students from Preschool for All programs if they are attending kindergarten in District 97.



Impact from COVID-19

- Due to the pandemic, the Collaboration did not administer the KRT to students in any of the Preschool for All programs, which had gone remote in the Spring of 2020.
- Due to the pandemic, District 97 did not administer the KRT to any incoming kindergarten students for the 2020/2021 school year.

In partnership with E-Team and Oak Park Public Library, we launched Ready, Set, Kindergarten! a virtual support system for 30 families whose children were transitioning to kindergarten in the midst of COVID-19. This was a free program with recruitment through social media, Preschool for All connections, and general outreach. Led by the E-Team, teachers provided academic, social, and emotional support to incoming kindergartners with the goals of increased readiness and family connection to community resources like the library, the school district, and the Collaboration.

Service Delivery Outcome 1: Kindergarten students with Free and Reduced-Price Lunch (FRPL) assistance have a history of participation in a PFA/HS/NAEYC accredited program, or a program meeting the Illinois Quality Rating System (ExceleRate) Gold Circle of Quality.

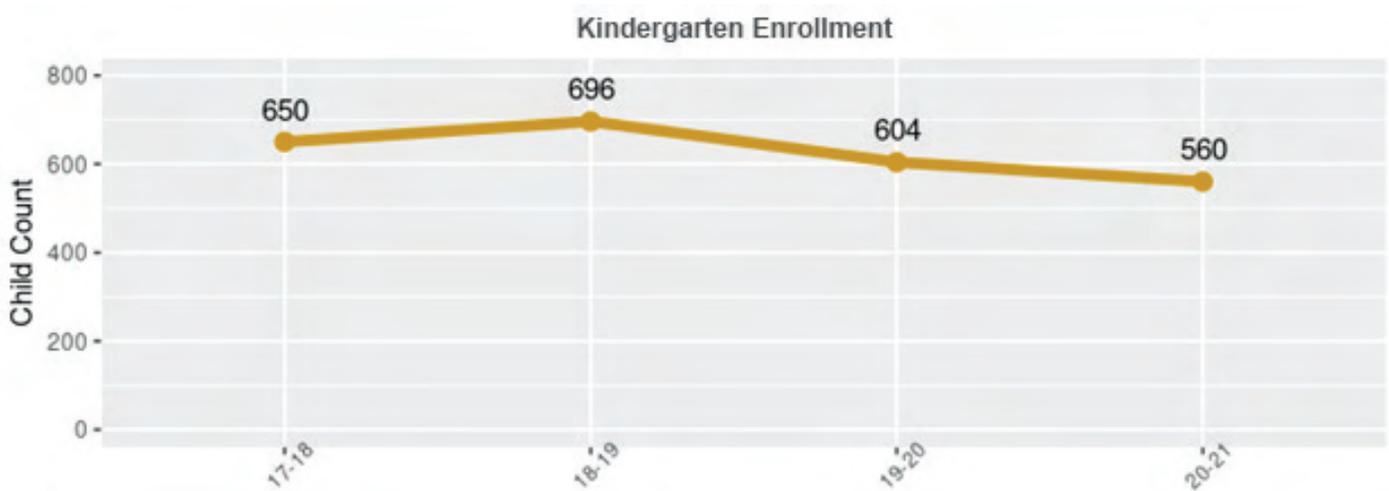
Sub-measure: What percent of kindergarten students with an IEP were enrolled in one of the programs described above?

This indicator looks at whether District 97 kindergarten students have had a history of high-quality preschool. When families enroll in kindergarten, they answer a set of questions about the child’s preschool history and early experiences. This data is connected with the quality ratings of those preschools to provide a snapshot of whether children attended preschool, and whether it was a program we can identify as high-quality.

The Preschool for All (PFA) programs are all high-quality and free. They are designed to support the needs of children who meet certain criteria including, but not limited to, developmental delays, economic circumstances, and multilingualism.

The Collaboration coordinates intake for the three PFA programs in Oak Park by conducting an initial screening with families and connecting them with the program that may fit their needs the best. Each program continues the enrollment process until their available spaces have been filled. The PFA programs in Oak Park are District 97’s PKP program at Longfellow School, ABC Toon Town, and Day Nursery. All of the spots at Longfellow are for PFA students and some of the spots at ABC Toon Town and Day Nursery are for PFA students.

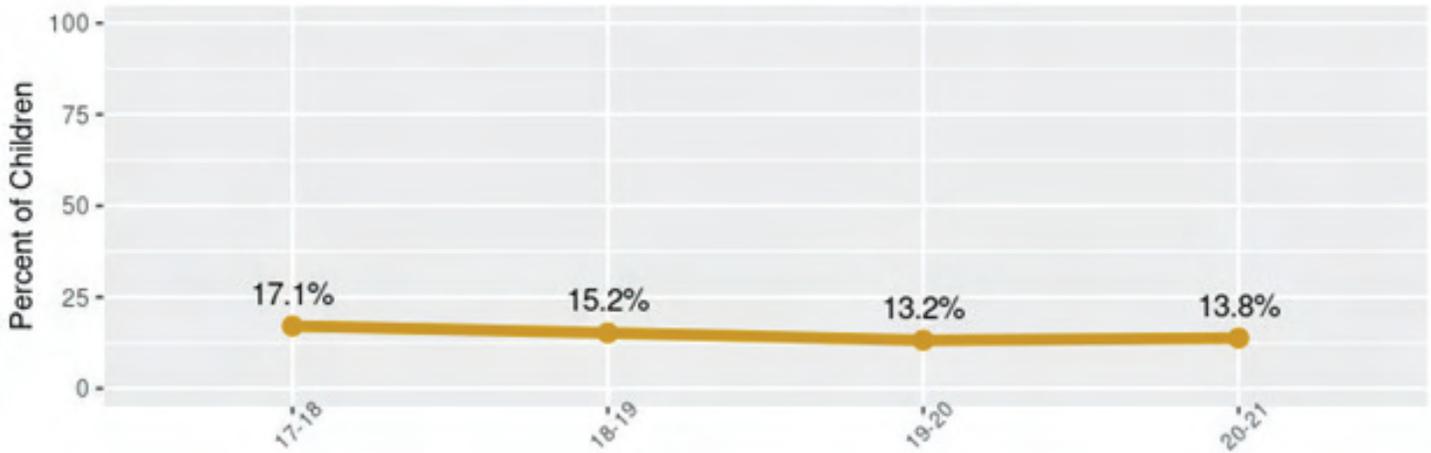
District 97 Enrollment



Kindergarten and first grade enrollment counts

Cohort Year	# of kindergartners enrolled	# of kindergartners attended OP/RF PFA/HS preschool	# of kindergartners receiving FRPL	# of 1st graders enrolled	# of 1st graders attended OP/RF PFA/HS preschool	# of 1st graders receiving FRPL
2017-2018	650	112	111	707	100	126
2018-2019	696	130	106	691	106	129
2019-2020	604	90	80	714	124	103
2020-2021	560	92	77	577	74	79

Percent of kindergartners that received FRPL

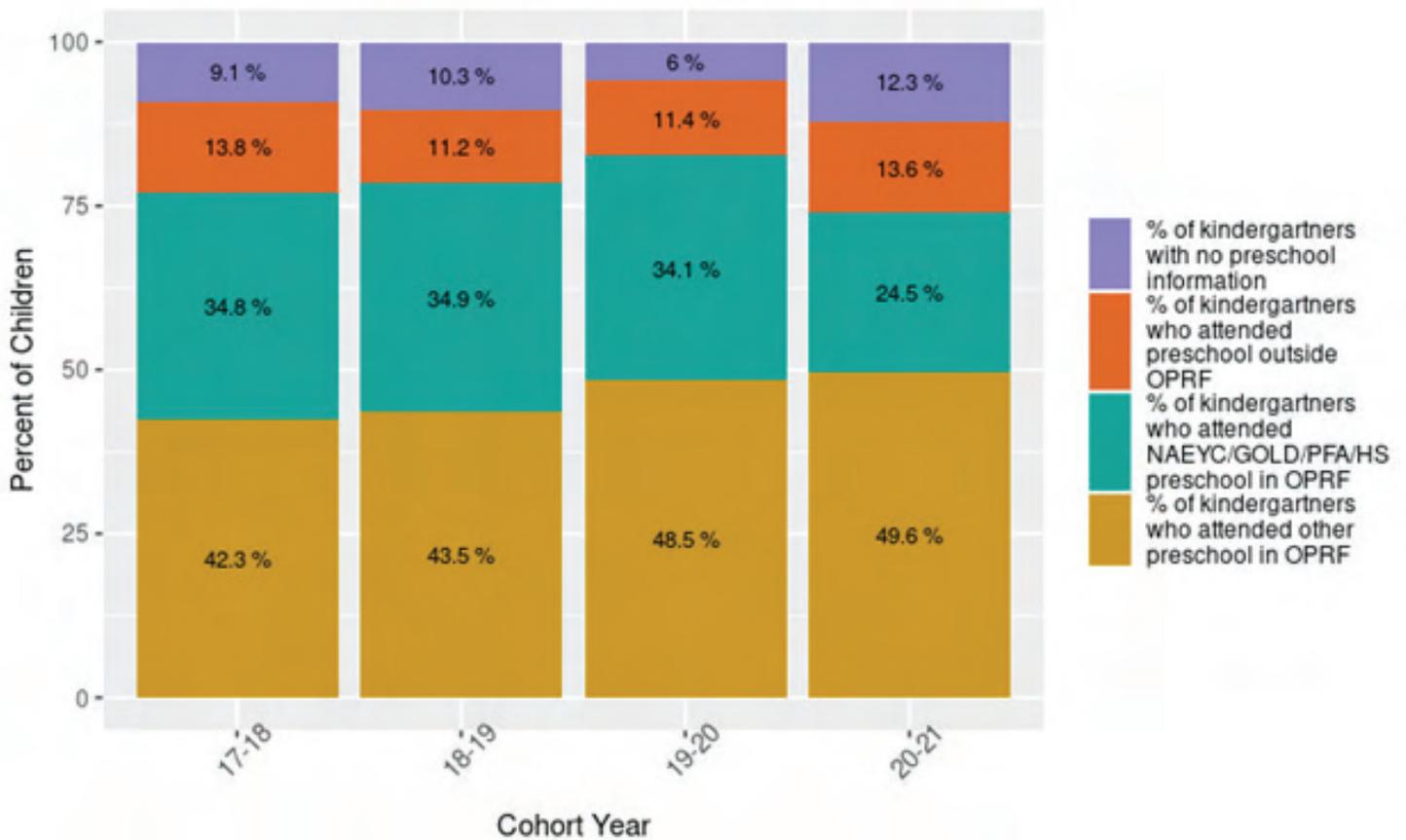


Impact from COVID-19

- This area had many fluctuations due to the pandemic. Programs had limited capacity due to pandemic restrictions and staffing issues. Enrollment changed throughout the year as circumstances changed for both health & safety requirements and family situations.
- Shortly before the pandemic shut-down in SY19/20, there were 157 students enrolled in Preschool for All across the three programs. At the start of SY20/21, once restrictions were in place and programs were allowed to open again in-person, there were 124 students in Preschool for All programs.
- The Preschool for All program at District 97's Longfellow School typically has full enrollment. In order to accommodate COVID-19 protocols, they had to reduce their enrollment by 30 spots to handle distancing requirements. Their current enrollment capacity is 90 students. They were full at reduced numbers during SY20/21.
- The 20/21 school year indicates preschool history for the year prior, which was impacted by the pandemic only in the spring. We cannot say with certainty why there was an increase in the number of kindergartners with no preschool information, however, it could be related to how parents reported this during registration.

Preschool History

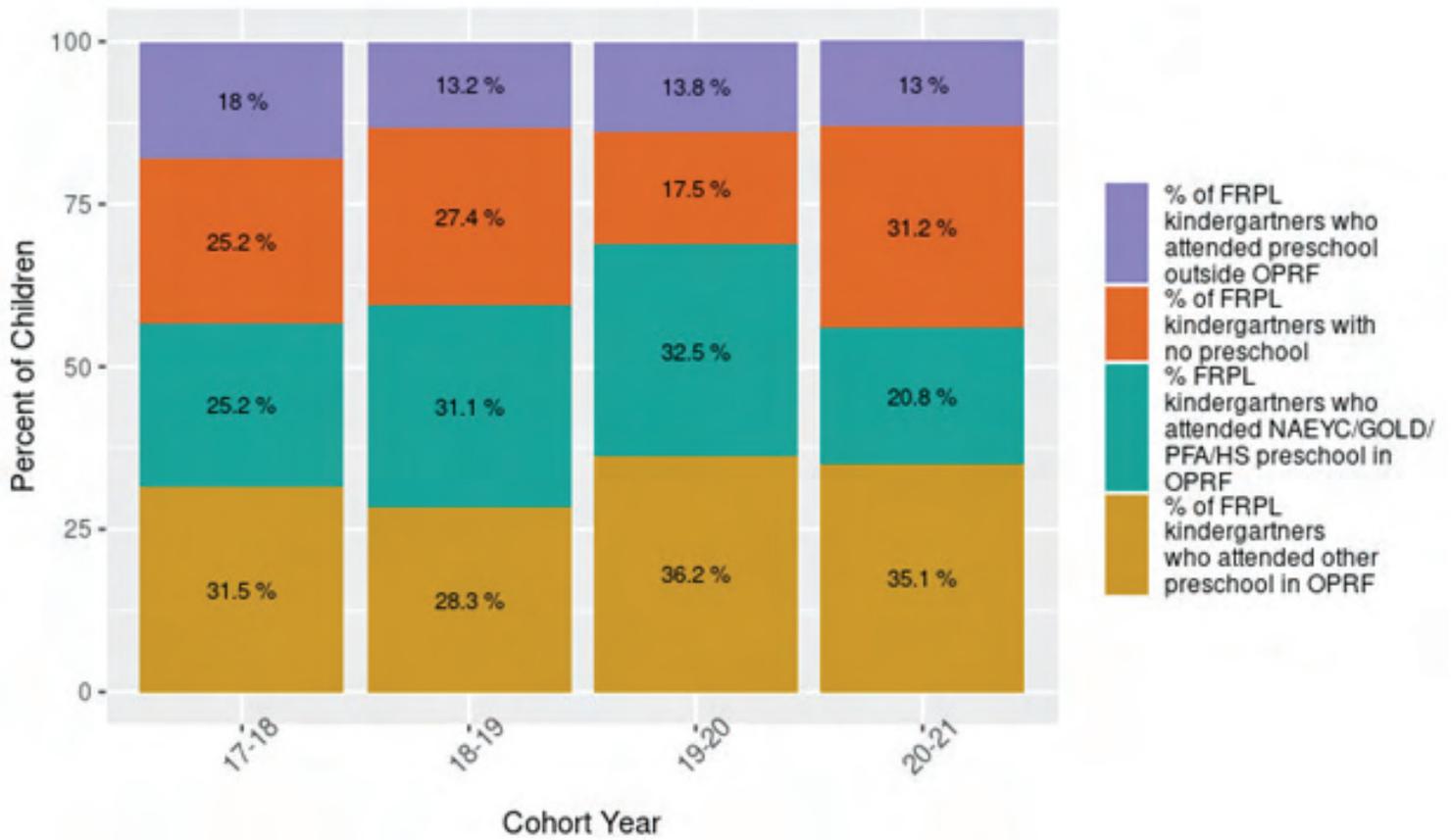
Kindergartners by preschool location and accreditation



Kindergarten by preschool location and accreditation (counts)

Cohort Year	# of kindergartners who attended NAEYC/GOLD/PFA/HS preschool in OP/RF	# of kindergartners who attended other preschool in OP/RF	# of kindergartners who attended preschool outside OP/PF	# of kindergartners with no preschool information	Total kindergarten enrollment
2017-2018	226	275	90	59	650
2018-2019	243	303	78	72	696
2019-2020	206	293	69	36	604
2020-2021	137	278	75	69	560

FRPL kindergartners by preschool locations and accreditation



Kindergartners receiving FRPL by preschool location and accreditation (counts)

Cohort Year	# of FRPL kindergartners who attended NAEYC/GOLD/PFA/HS preschool in OP/RF	# of FRPL kindergartners who attended other preschool in OP/RF	# of FRPL kindergartners who attended preschool outside OP/PF	# of FRPL kindergartners with no preschool information	Total count of FRPL kindergartners
2017-2018	28	35	20	28	111
2018-2019	33	30	14	29	105
2019-2020	26	29	11	14	80
2020-2021	16	27	10	24	77

Service Delivery Outcome 2: Teen parents and families receiving up through All Kids Level 1 health insurance for their child under age 3 receive referral to intensive parent education program.

This measure continues to be difficult to obtain due to the limitations of available data on the number of parenting teens and the number of families receiving All Kids health insurance. However, we have four home visiting programs operating in Oak Park, and all are providing some level of reporting to the Collaboration about the number of families who have been referred to their programs.

Teen or Non-Teen Parents	Teen June 2018	Non-Teen June 2018	Teen June 2019	Non-Teen June 2019	Teen June 2020	Non-Teen June 2020	Teen June 2020	Non-Teen June 2020
Number of families in Oak Park and River Forest receiving up through All Kids Level 1*	Not avail	Not avail						
Number of families referred to local home visiting programs for parenting support	*	47	*	31	*	41	*	33

We do not have a source of data for the number of teen parents or the number of families participating in All Kids Level 1 health insurance.

Additional information on intensive parent education can be found in Service Delivery Outcome 3.

Service Delivery Outcome 3: Percent of referred parents who choose to participate in the intensive parent education program.

Easterseals, Children’s Home & Aid, New Moms, and Kids Above All offer the Parents as Teachers parent education model in each of their home visiting programs. The Easterseals program, funded by the Collaboration, combines Parents as Teachers (PAT) program requirements with Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) requirements and standards.



Impact from COVID-19

New home visiting program enrollment was affected by COVID-19. In-person home visits shifted to remote visits. Fewer families were referred in the early part of the program year and referrals picked up as the year progressed. Staff remained committed to providing all services virtually including visits, group connections, Chicago Parent Program, and even infant massage classes. MIECHV and PAT recommended guidance for shifting to virtual services and now they have offered standards for returning to gradual in-person activities.

	June 2018	June 2019	June 2020	June 2021
Number of families referred for home visiting to all 4 programs	47	31	41	33
Number of families who actively engaged as <i>new families</i> in the home visiting program funded through the Collaboration (Easterseals)	32	21	28	17
Total number of Oak Park and River Forest families engaged in the home visiting programs.	66	71	61	55

Coordinated Intake is an initiative of the Collaboration for Early Childhood, Easterseals / Partnering with Parents, Children’s Home & Aid, New Moms, and Kids Above All that is designed to make it easy for social service providers, physicians, hospitals, child care providers, and anyone to refer families by providing a single point of entry for home visiting programs in Oak Park.

Each program has slightly different criteria and works with families with varying circumstances. Kids Above All (formerly ChildServ) serves the Western Suburbs, including Oak Park and River Forest, and has the capacity to enroll 20 families. Their primary funding source is the ISBE prevention initiative. Children’s Home & Aid serves the Western Suburbs, including Oak Park and River Forest, and has the capacity to enroll 24 families. Their primary funding source is Early Head Start.

The newest program partner, Kids Above All, began activities at the beginning of the program year, July 2020. Children’s Home & Aid came on in November 2020. Since the fall of 2020, both programs have been actively participating in home visiting coordinated intake. New Moms has been a longstanding partner.

The Collaboration, in partnership with home visiting programs and the Village of Oak Park’s Public Health Nurse, works to make sure families can get connected to a program through a single point of entry. Home visiting programs work in tandem with the Public Health Nurse, who visits newborns and their mothers over the course of the first year of their child’s life. Home visiting programs continue to support children and families through preschool.

Home visiting program partners continue to meet monthly while the Home Visiting Task Force meets quarterly and parents are asked to participate in two meetings per year. Task Force partners are from RUSH, Beyond Hunger, Oak-Leyden Developmental Services, Housing Forward, CEDA WIC, Thrive, CFC #7, and IWS Children's Clinic. Task Force meetings are essential to strengthening relationships with referral sources.

Easterseals / Partnering with Parents and New Moms helped launch a new initiative in October 2020 to provide new and expecting families with "baby bundles." These are large tote bags filled with items that all new families can use like diapers, onesies, bibs, bath thermometers, books, and materials, particularly about maternal health. All the home visiting partners supported a large [Mother's Day Baby Bundle Giveaway in May 2021](#). This successful initiative is growing with the support of a grant from the Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation. 65 Baby Bundles were distributed to new and expecting parents during the 20-21 program year.

In a two-month period, the Collaboration's new Intake Coordinator referred 9 families to home visiting based on her conversations with parents looking for a publicly funded preschool program. This new level of outreach is an exciting development to let families know what resources are available in our community.

Key Accomplishments from Easterseals Partnering with Parents Home Visiting Program

<Report from Easterseals program staff>

In this program year, adaptability and flexibility were key accomplishments of our program. We moved all our services to an online platform, including visits, group connections, Chicago Parent Program (CPP), and infant massage. Three staff were certified as CPP group leaders and our fourth staff member received virtual training. We successfully navigated through both a pandemic and two maternity leaves with little disruption to quality services.

Through recommendations from MIECHV and Parents as Teachers (PAT), we safely and successfully shifted all services to be done virtually or over the phone for a total of five hundred and forty visits and fifteen group connections. One in-person group was held in June 2021. We partnered with the Oak Park Public Library and Beyond Hunger for two groups, offered a two-part discipline workshop for dads in February and March, and other fun activities and craft groups throughout the year.

Another accomplishment this year was the retention of families in our program throughout the change in format to our visits and services. We worked with fifty-four families and seventy-four children; seventeen families enrolled between July 1, 2020, and June 30, 2021. Seventeen families exited, with nearly fifty percent exiting due to graduation and completion of the program. Other reasons for exiting included moving out of our service area, transitioning to a new program, no longer being able to locate the family after creative outreach, and two families no longer wanting to receive services. Forty-six percent of our families joined at least one group connection this program year.

Of the twenty-six referrals, no family declined, however, five families never responded. Seventeen families enrolled, one family was referred to New Moms based on the age of the mother, and three families are still receiving outreach.

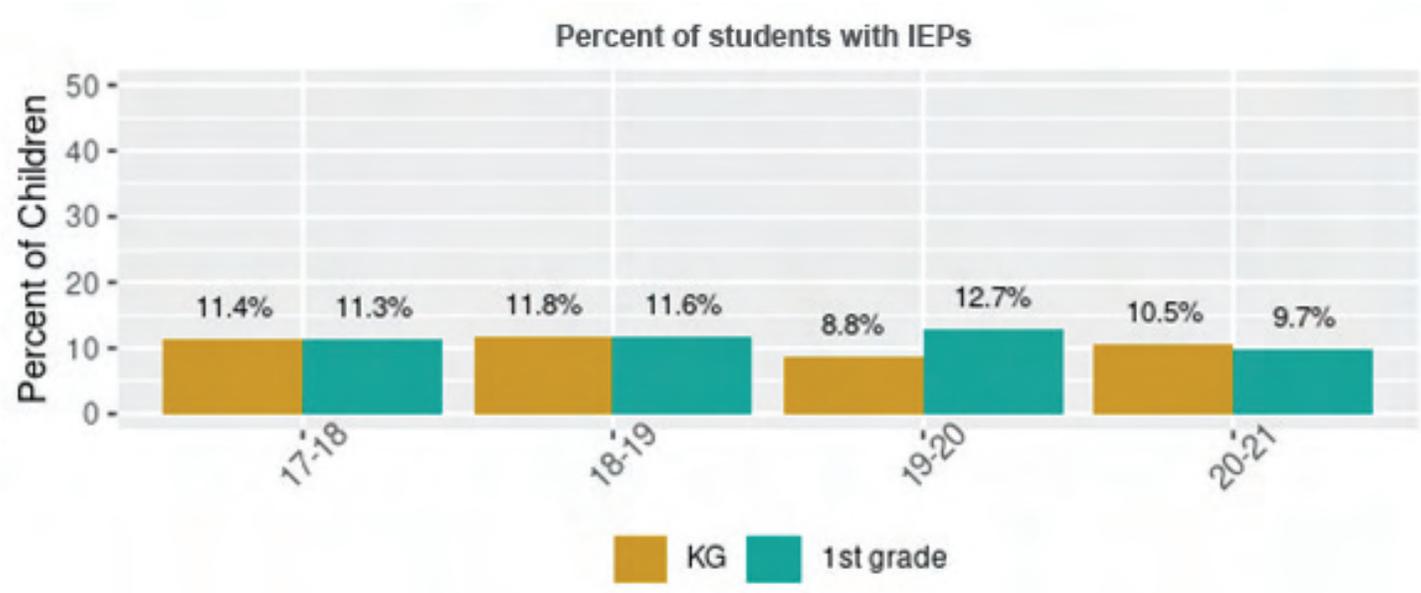
In October of 2020, we learned that our program is a Blue-Ribbon Parents as Teachers Affiliate, meeting ninety-nine of the one hundred quality standards. The benchmark for PAT is to meet seventy-five of these standards at a minimum.

* Our acceptance rate for home visiting was sixty-five percent for referrals with the potential for three more enrollments. If these families enroll, our acceptance rate will be seventy-seven percent. Our attrition rate for the year was ten percent. At the end of FY21, thirty-five percent of our families are high needs, which means they have at least two stressors as defined by MIECHV and PAT.

Service Delivery Outcome 4: Percent of kindergarten and 1st-grade students with Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) who have documentation of receiving services in early childhood (if they lived in Oak Park or River Forest during their early childhood years).

The goal of the special education system is to serve all children who need special services. A low percentage of children with IEPs in kindergarten does not indicate success or failure to provide services to children. We look at the children who received IEPs or Early Intervention support prior to kindergarten to determine if they do in fact have fewer IEPs as they progress through elementary school.

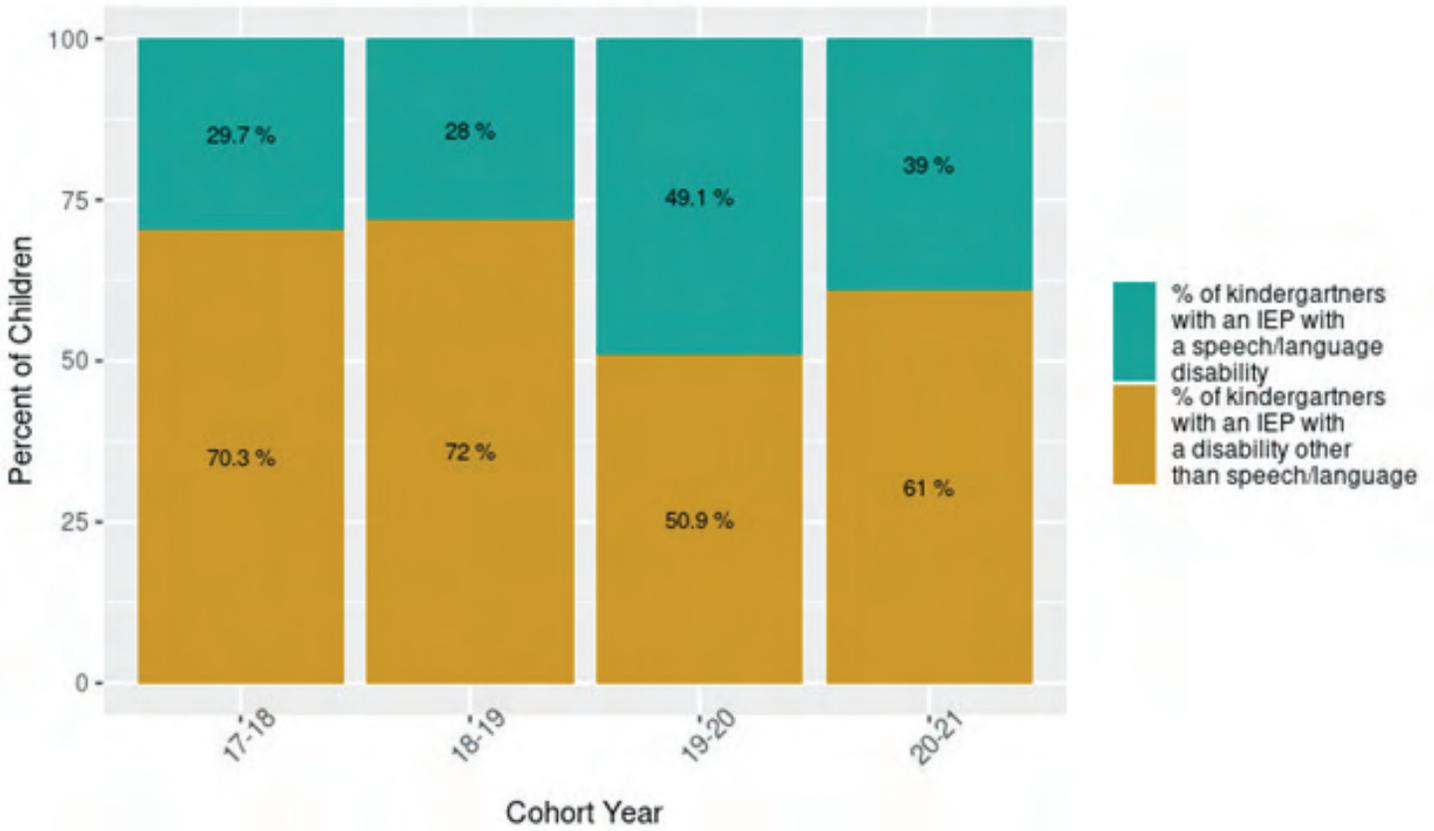
Disability status and services received



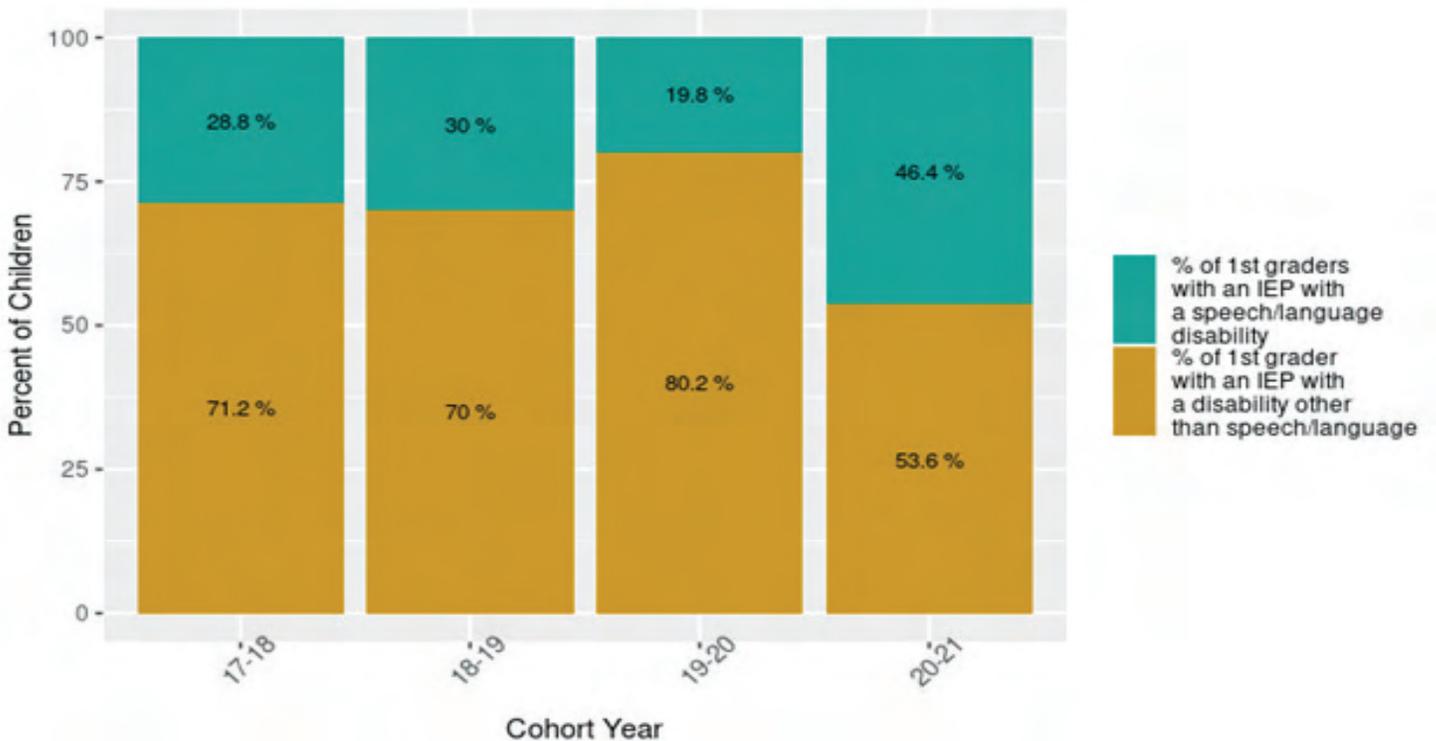
Kindergartners and 1st graders by IEP status (counts)

Cohort Year	# of kindergartners with an IEP with a speech/ language disability	# of kindergartners with an IEP disability other than speech/ language	# of kindergartners with an IEP	# of 1st graders with an IEP with a speech/ language disability	# of 1st graders with an IEP disability other than speech/ language	# of 1st graders with an IEP
2017-2018	22	52	74	23	57	80
2018-2019	23	59	82	24	56	80
2019-2020	26	27	53	18	73	91
2020-2021	23	36	59	26	30	56

Kindergartners by IEP status



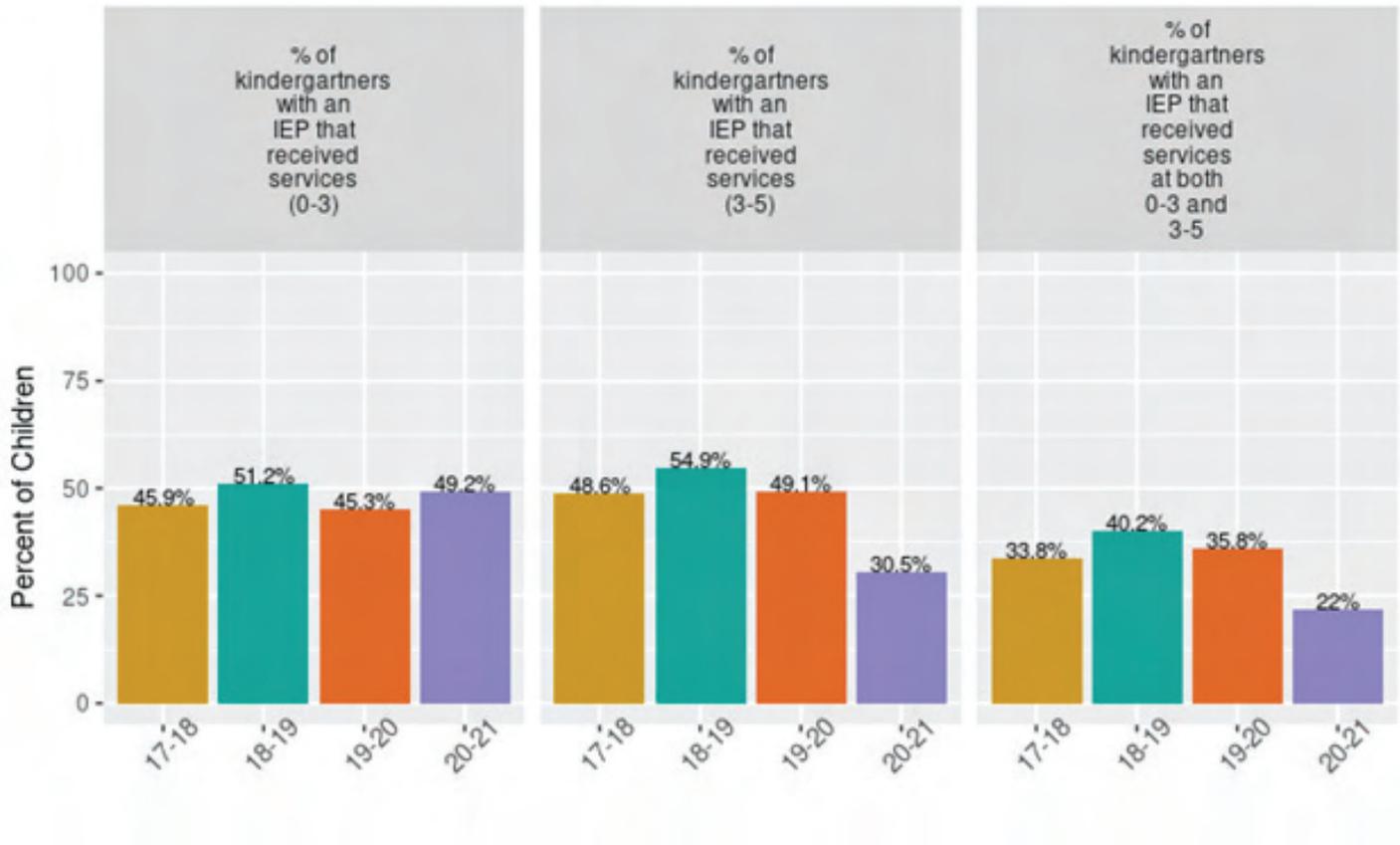
1st graders by IEP status



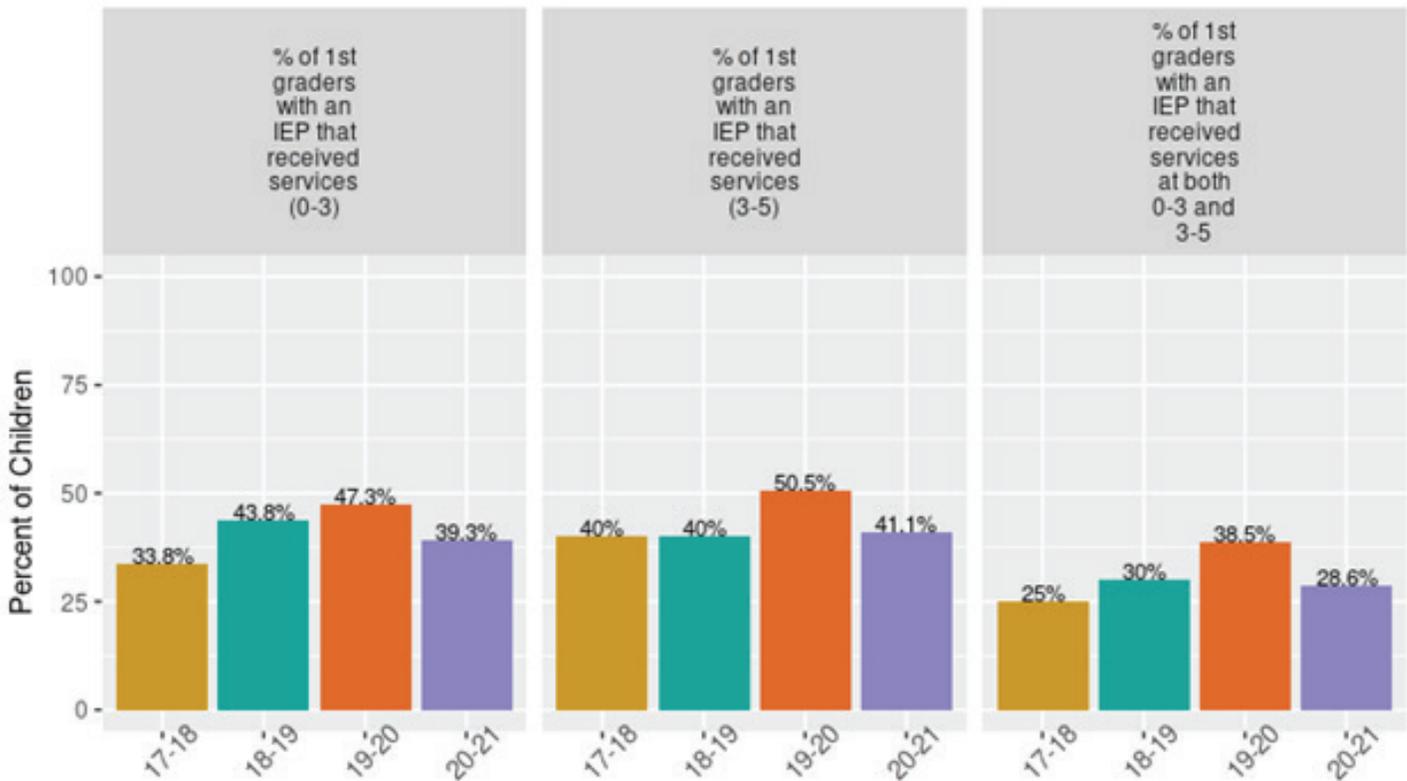
Kindergartners and first graders with an IEP that received services

Cohort Year	# of kindergartners with an IEP	% of kindergartners with an IEP that received services (0-3)	% of kindergartners with an IEP that received services (3-5)	% of kindergartners with an IEP that received services at both 0-3 and 3-5	# of 1st graders with an IEP	% of 1st graders with an IEP that received services (0-3)	% of 1st graders with an IEP that received services (3-5)	% of kindergartners with an IEP that received services at both 0-3 and 3-5
2017-2018	74	45.9%	48.6%	33.8%	80	33.8%	40.0%	25.0%
2018-2019	82	51.2%	54.9%	40.2%	80	43.8%	40.0%	30.0%
2019-2020	53	45.3%	49.1%	35.8%	91	47.3%	50.5%	38.5%
2020-2021	59	79.2%	30.5%	22.0%	56	39.3%	41.1%	28.6%

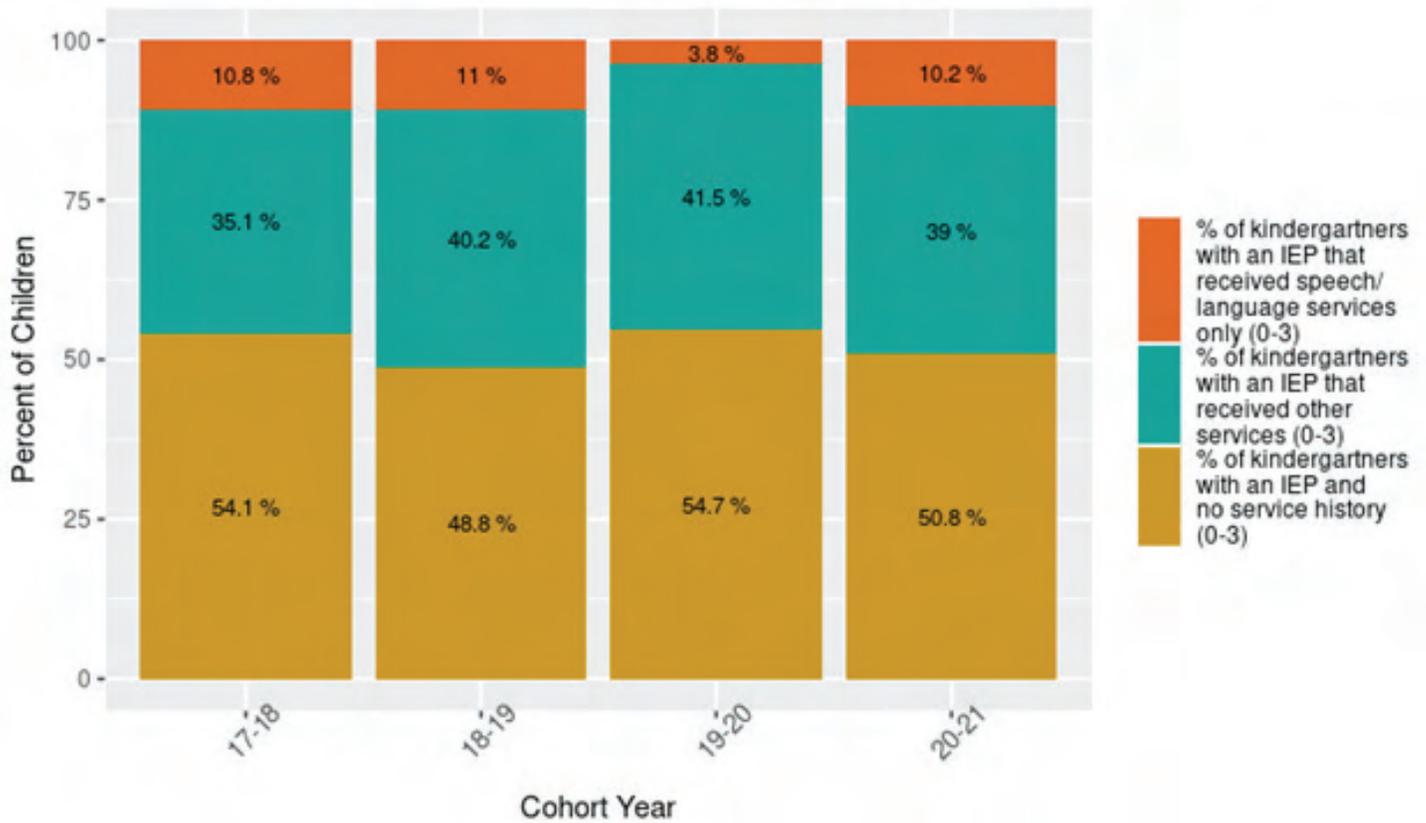
Kindergartners with an IEP that received services, 0-5



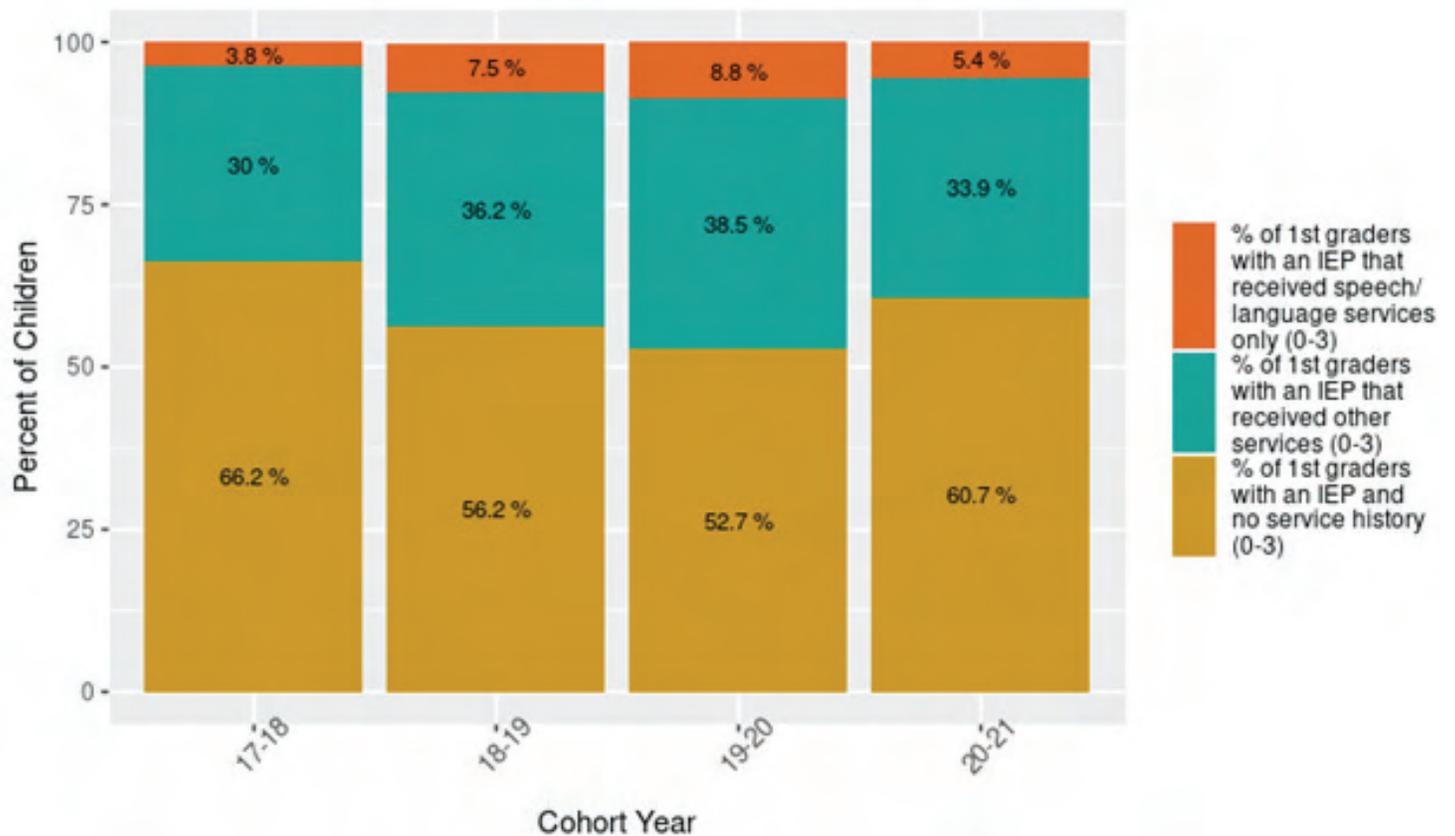
1st graders with an IEP that received services, 0-5



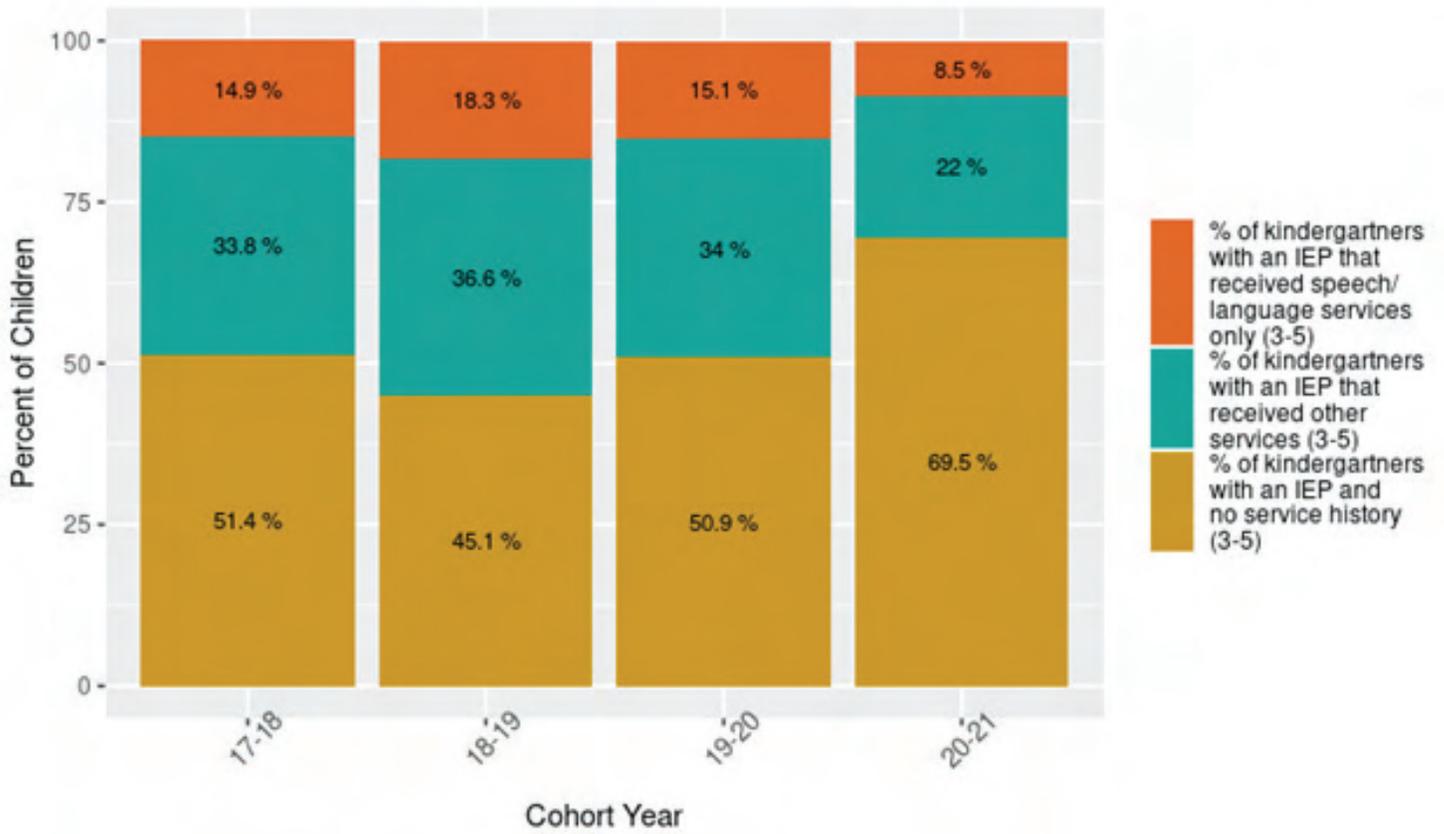
Kindergartners with an IEP that received services by type of services received, 0-3



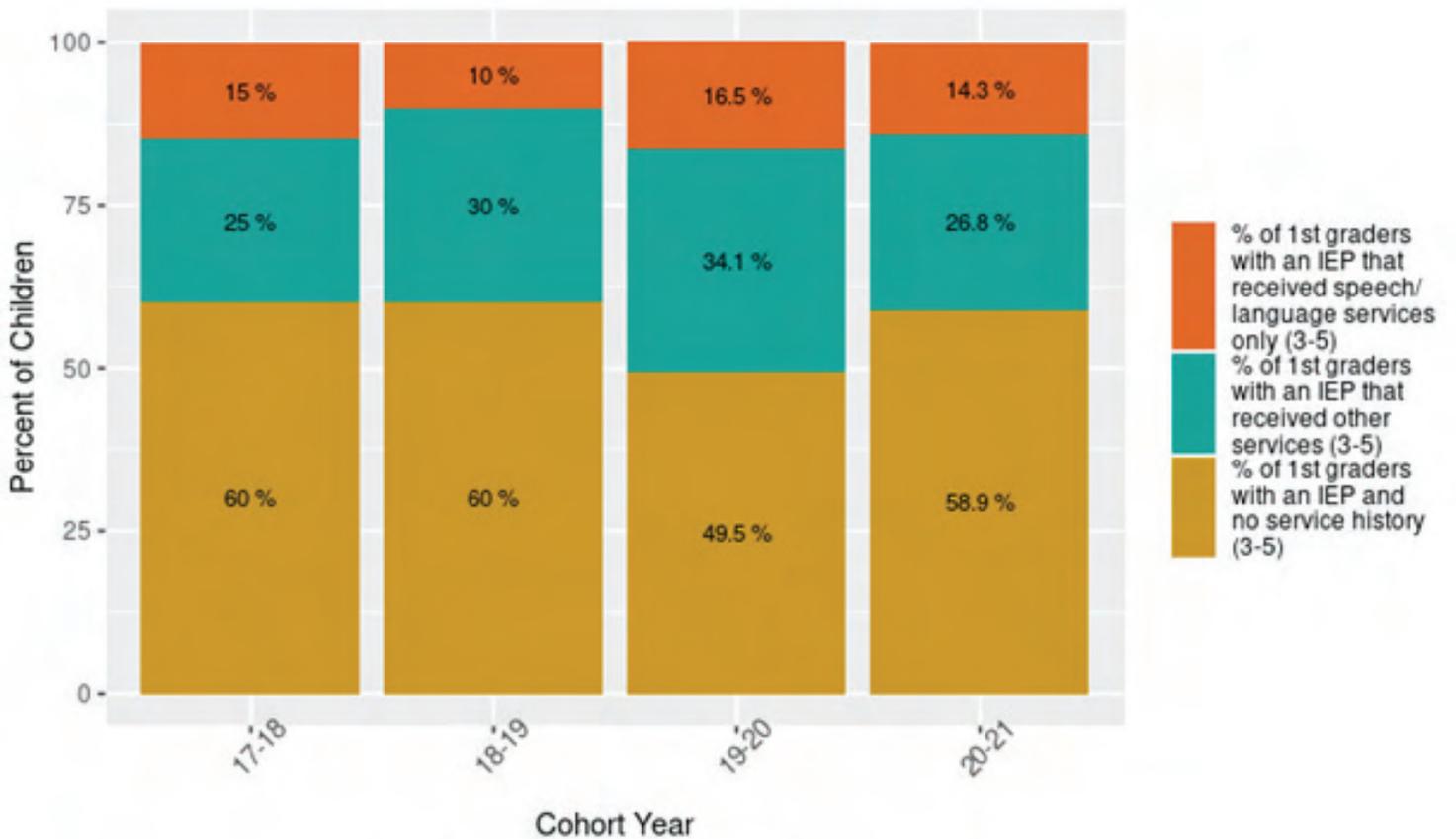
1st graders with an IEP that received services by type of service received , 0-3



Kindergartens with an IEP that received services by type of service received, 3-5



1st graders with an IEP that received services by type of services received, 3-5



System Level Outcome 1: Estimate the Collaboration’s connection with all families in Oak Park and River Forest with children under five via direct and indirect measures.

- Estimated percent of families with children under five touched by Collaboration services.
 - Direct: Number of families reached through collaboration-sponsored outreach activities and services who provide information voluntarily and are included in our database.
 - Indirect: Counts of information distributed, subscribers to information (social media, other open distribution channels).

	June 2017	June 2018	June 2019	June 2020	June 2021
Number of people in Oak Park*	51,878	51,878	51,878	51,878	54,583
Number of families with children < age 6 in Oak Park**	3,800	3,800	3,800	3,800	3,800
Direct: Oak Park/River Forest participants in the voluntary database:					
Number of children enrolled in publicly funded preschool (Preschool for All and Head Start)	212	199	190	215	124
Number of children participating in the developmental screening program	1,806	1,787	1,969	1,868	1,643
Number of families participating in the Parents As Teachers home visiting parent education program	53	44	47	51	54
Indirect: Families receiving information or support through the Collaboration’s efforts***:					
Number of families receiving outreach materials from the Parenting Resource Program	2,700	7,500	3,500	2,358	2,568
Number of people on the Collaboration’s email list who receive early childhood information	1,808	2,577	2,624	2,956	4,765
Number of unduplicated visitors to the Collaboration’s website	7,925	9,213	8,154	8,204	9,800
Number of people following the Collaboration’s Facebook page for parenting resources and information about early childhood	465	616	781	970	1,311
Number of printed Early Childhood Resource Directories distributed	2,500	10,000	3,000	500	2,500

* Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 and 2020 Decennial Census.

** Source: Chapin Hall Analysis of American Community Survey 5-Year Data.

*** Many of the indirect counts are duplicated since people encounter our materials in many ways.



Impact from COVID-19

- Our outreach activities have been a hybrid of mostly virtual and some in-person events this past program year. All parent workshops were virtual. Our Community Ambassadors started to safely meet families face-to-face during outdoor events in our local parks once the weather warmed up and COVID-19 vaccinations were rolled out.
- We printed a newly revised Early Childhood Resource Directory in June 2021. We reduced the number of copies from 10,000 to 5,000 since the pandemic has reduced the need for printed copies and we are promoting the new online version. Look for printed copies around town in the coming months.

Digital Communications

Ready4K Text App

We continued the research-based text app for families that started last year. 10,243 text messages were sent to 126 families via Ready4K's text-based family engagement curriculum during the 2020/2021 school year. 100% of parents said their relationship with their child is stronger after doing Ready4K activities and 95% said the texts helped their child learn and grow.

Website Activity

We launched a significant redesign of collab4kids.org in November 2020. Two new major features are the searchable Early Childhood Resource Directory and Developmental Referral and Services Directory. The printed Early Childhood Resource Directory is one of our earliest resources and is well-known around the community. It's the go-to guide for families with young children, full of child development information in addition to a listing of all child care programs in Oak Park and River Forest. The new online version has received 2,888 views since the launch, with a very high engagement rate (8.24 average pageview/user). We work with local designer Yearbook Studios to keep the website fresh and it is updated frequently by Collaboration staff.

Social Media

We maintain a consistent presence on social media. Collaboration staff and consultant DM Burton plan a calendar of posts in advance and analyze what gets engagement. In addition to the 1,311 people who like our Facebook page, we have 704 followers on Instagram. The largest following on both those sites are women (85-88%) in the 35-44 age range.

Newsletters

Our Early Learning program sent out monthly e-newsletters to child care center directors, early learning professionals, and family child care providers in Oak Park and River Forest. These newsletters shared information on COVID-19, including funding resources and guidance on PPE, as well as general training opportunities and other important information. We received feedback that they were a valuable resource for program staff who were stretched thin this year. The Early Learning Newsletter received 2,044 views this year.

The Parenting Resource Program and Families First | La Familia Primero distributed two monthly newsletters to 463 people. These newsletters focused on parent support and included a calendar of events for families with links to parenting resources.

Workshops

Monthly Parent Workshops

In partnership with First United Nursery School, Erikson Institute Town Square, and a lineup of monthly speakers, a variety of virtual parent workshops were offered to caregivers of young children. Hot topics were Kindergarten Readiness, the Anti-Racist Preschooler, and Potty Training.

Workshop topics included:

- Potty Training (4 sessions throughout the year)
- Creating a Peaceful Family
- Cooking with Preschoolers
- Banish Cabin Fever: Ideas for Indoor play
- How to Support Your Child's Development
- Cooking Healthy for Busy Families
- Managing Fears During a Pandemic (and Beyond)
- How to successfully deescalate, guide, and thrive in challenging times
- The Anti-Racist Preschooler
- 3-Part Series: How to Grow Your Mental Muscles
- The Importance of Free Play for Young Children
- Kindergarten Readiness (2 sessions throughout the year)
- When Your Child Asks: "Where do babies come from"
- Supporting Language Development through Play
- Cómo apoyar el desarrollo del lenguaje a través del juego

Chicago Parent Program

The Chicago Parent Program is a group-based parenting program led by trained facilitators. We have run this program for many years in person and this year it took place remotely. Facilitating the 12-week, evidence-based program, parents, and caregivers gain parenting confidence while also meeting and learning from other parents and caregivers raising young children in the community. During the program year, 15 parents and caregivers completed the entire 12-week series of the Chicago Parent Program. Three Easterseals' staff were certified as CPP group leaders and a fourth staff member received virtual training.

Welcome to Fatherhood

The Collaboration is one of the partners supporting Welcome to Fatherhood. Welcome to Fatherhood discusses different issues around parenting, relationships, and self-development twice a month. The 15 session program ran from September 2020 through April 2021. During these 15 meetings, they had more than 75 people participate in at least one session. On average, each session had 14 participants. Due to COVID-19, all sessions were held via Zoom video conferencing.

Community Outreach

In the summer of 2020, Community Ambassadors, Whitney Brooks and Azucena Galvez, along with Collaboration staff, joined other Illinois parent leaders and advocates to contribute their expertise to “A Handbook for Community Engagement: Engaging Parents in Early Childhood Collaboration.” This was put together by Illinois Action for Children (IAFC). The team also appears in two videos that emphasize the importance of Parent Engagement and core values of effective parent engagement work.

Families First | La Familia Primero

Families First formed in April 2019. In 2020, they shifted their community outreach efforts to organize activity kits and host virtual events. This also included the development of a monthly bilingual (English/Spanish) newsletter. Virtual events responded to the needs and interests of families, parents and caregivers. Topics included time management for families, trivia, social emotional learning at home, yoga, and more general gatherings for parents to meet and socialize called Parent Check-Ins.

To end the summer of 2020, in August, they teamed up with Dynamic Lynks and Oak-Leyden Developmental Services to distribute 150 activity kits to families of children with disabilities. Many activities shifted to a virtual format for a majority of the year with resource deliveries. To help families celebrate Halloween, the team distributed 200 “Boo Bags” to children under six in the community. They also built a Día de Los Muertos ofrenda as part of the Day of the Dead Oak Park and River Forest Community Display. For the winter, they developed a winter holiday display that included a Christmas tree and shared information about Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, and the winter solstice. Each holiday, the Community Ambassadors coordinated with families to make decorations at-home and put them in the windows to display. The team also built beautiful and powerful displays that highlight the importance of Black history and Black lives which remain up in our office windows at 171 S. Oak Park Avenue year round.

Parent Leadership Training

In January 2021, three Oak Park parents led the 7-week Parent Leadership Training online. Eight parents completed the training. Parent Leadership Training uses the Community Organizing & Family Issues (COFI) Family Focus Organizing model. After completing the training, participants continued to meet one to two times a month to support each other with their personal and family goals.

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.

This is the first year we have workforce data as provided by the state via INCCRRA. The Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) is the statewide organization that oversees Gateways to Opportunity and the Gateways Registry. Gateways tracks the credits for early childhood providers to meet DCFS licensing requirements.

This is a major success in our data collection efforts.

In the past, Collaboration staff have administered our own survey of questions to ask whether someone had earned credits in the previous year. The process took many months with in-person visits to collect paper surveys in addition to those that were completed online. While we have always been impressed with our response rate, the INCCRRA report provides us with a systematic, consistent source of the same data with less overhead effort. We may be one of only a couple of communities in the state looking at this workforce data on a community level. This success is a result of our partnership with Chapin Hall, which works with INCCRRA.

Why haven't we done this before? The Gateways Registry system has grown significantly in recent years, with mandatory reporting required by multiple state agencies. The result is that this system is now a reliable source of information on the state's early childhood workforce. Their data collection and analysis have grown at a similar pace to our own. The data INCCRRA has provided us aligns with their recent report, "[Illinois' Early Childhood Workforce, 2020 Report](#)"¹ As this new connection develops, we may also receive additional data points, such as the race/ethnicity of child care providers or whether providers are bilingual.

We have one year of data from INCCRRA, reported as of March 1, 2020. They have offered to provide us with the same data in future years. In the meantime, we are displaying the data from our past surveys separately from the new data from INCCRRA.

We are particularly fortunate to receive a solid portrait of the pre-pandemic early childhood workforce.

Employment Setting and Role	2020 # Licensed	2020 # License-Exempt	2020 Total
Center Administrator	62	9	71
Center Teacher	171	10	181
Center Assistant Teacher / Aide	179	13	192
Total Center Staff	412	32	444
Family Child Care Owner/Provider	32	37	69
Family Child Care Assistant	25	—	25
Total Family Child Care Staff	57	37	94
Total Center and Family Child Care Staff	469	69	538

¹ https://www.inccrra.org/images/datareports/Illinois_Early_Childhood_Education_Workforce_2020_Report.pdf

Source: Gateways to Opportunity Registry 2020 Data Set

Population in Data Set: Zip codes 60301, 60302, 60304, 60305

Gateways credentials are mandated by DCFS (as of 2012) for licensed providers and individuals in programs receiving Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) funds (including license-exempt centers and homes) (as of 2017). This is why we now have the new number of license-exempt family child care providers.

License-exempt centers may include those that are parochial, Montessori, or have other accreditation.

INCCRRA has also provided additional numbers of substitutes/floaters, assistants, and school-age workers which we can review as needed. With those auxiliary roles added, the total number of people who are employed by licensed or exempt centers or family child care homes in Oak Park or River Forest is 617 (as of March 1, 2020).

Illinois Early Childhood Certificates	2017	2018	2019	2020 INCCRRA
Have submitted a Gateways Credential Application	142 people 59%	145 people 67%	122 people 69%	38 people 7%
Have a Gateways Illinois Director's Credential (INCCRRA=Licensed Centers Only)	23 people Level 1 4% Level 2 2% Level 3 2%	27 people Level 1 8% Level 2 2% Level 3 0%	23 people Level 1 8% Level 2 8% Level 3 2%	21 people Level 1 17.7% Level 2 11.3% Level 3 4.8%
Have a Gateways Infant Toddler Credential	23 people Level 2 5% Level 3 1% Level 4 2% Level 5 1%	39 people Level 2 6% Level 3 5% Level 4 1% Level 5 3%	38 people Level 2 18% Level 3 2% Level 4 5% Level 5 7%	32 people Level 2 2.1% Level 3 0.3% Level 4 1.8% Level 5 1.0%
Have a Gateways Early Childhood Education Credential	104 people Level 1 13% Level 2 4% Level 3 5% Level 4 7% Level 5 12% Level 6 2%	117 people Level 1 23% Level 2 4% Level 3 7% Level 4 6% Level 5 11% Level 6 3%	101 people Level 1 25% Level 2 11% Level 3 8% Level 4 10% Level 5 23% Level 6 6%	225 people Level 1 19.4% Level 2 1.0% Level 3 1.8% Level 4 5.0% Level 5 9.1% Level 6 0.2%
Have an Illinois State Board of Education Professional Educators License (PEL)	63 people 26%	45 people 21%	47 people 27%	n/a

2017-2019 Data provided by Collaboration for Early Childhood

All survey respondents	2017 #	2018 #	2019 #	2017 Above minimum requirements	2018 Above minimum requirements	2019 Above minimum requirements
Number (%) of directors	26	28	23	19 (73%)	22 (79%)	18 (78%)
Number (%) of assistant directors	6	10	11	<10	<10	<10
Number (%) of teachers	125	116	100	113 (90%)	98 (84%)	75 (75%)
Number (%) of assistant teachers	75	62	42	66 (88%)	53 (85%)	35 (83%)
Number (%) of early childhood professionals in Oak Park & River Forest responding to survey	232	216	176	201 (87%)	181 ((84%)	133 (76%)

The last Collaboration for Early Childhood annual workforce survey was open from July through November 2019 with regular reminders and incentives to child care professionals to complete the survey. The survey was administered via email as an online form and offered on paper to those who requested it. It was also available in Spanish, although no one elected to take it in Spanish. Collaboration staff visited child care programs in person and made multiple communication attempts to solicit responses.

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.

Professional Development Offered by the Collaboration

From July 2020 to June 2021, the Collaboration pivoted its regular schedule of monthly professional development training to a virtual format. We offered 28.5 hours of professional development, well over the 15 hours required by DCFS, and 8 hours more than the previous year. Average attendance certainly waned as the pandemic wore on and Zoom fatigue set in but our offerings persisted.

We hosted our Annual Early Childhood Symposium virtually in February 2021. This was our 18th Symposium and the first-ever virtual one. The theme was *ComPASSION* Matters. The online format allowed us to feature two keynote addresses and 24 workshops, which all offered Gateways credit hours. This year we approved a record number of scholarships, ensuring that cost was not a barrier to attending the Symposium.

15 volunteers and Collab staff assisted with Zoom rooms and general technical assistance and supported a wonderfully received event as evidenced by nearly all positive evaluations participants completed. Although overall attendance was lower than usual, 178 attendees received credit for attending and 970 total credit hours were awarded.

Workforce Survey

As mentioned in System Level Outcome 2, this is the first year we have workforce data as provided by the state via INCCRRA. The Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) is the statewide organization that oversees Gateways to Opportunity and the Gateways Registry. Gateways tracks the credits for early childhood providers to meet DCFS licensing requirements.

This is a major success in our data collection efforts.

See System Level Outcome 2 for more details.

We have one year of data from INCCRRA, for 2020. They have offered to provide us with the same data in future years. In the meantime, we are displaying the data from our past surveys separately from the new data from INCCRRA.

Percent of teachers and providers with more than 15 hours of continuing professional education*

All License Categories 2020	Number**	Less than 15 hours	15 hours	16-19 hours	20+ hours
Directors	37	<10	<10	0	29
Assistant Directors	<10	<10	0	0	<10
Teachers	127	32	0	13	82
Assistant Teachers	91	21	<10	11	57
Total	263	62 (24%)	3 (1%)	24 (9%)	174 (66%)
Licensed Centers Only 2020	Number*	Less than 15 hours	15 hours	16-19 hours	20+ hours
Directors	35	<10	<10	0	29
Assistant Directors	<10	<10	0	0	<10
Teachers	124	32	0	12	80
Assistant Teachers	86	20	<0	11	53
Total	253	59 (23%)	3(1%)	23 (9%)	168 (66%)

Source: Gateways to Opportunity Registry 2020 Data Set

Population in Data Set: Zip codes 60301, 60302, 60304, 60305

* This includes training and college coursework (converted as 1 semester hour = 15 training hours) and is inclusive of both the continuing education that is verified through the Gateways Registry and any additional hours self-reported by the individual.

** For this table, the “N” is limited to those that had at least one training/coursework record for the calendar year 2019.

The minimum requirement for staff at DCFS-licensed centers and homes 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.

2017-2019 Data provided by Collaboration for Early Childhood

All License Categories	Number			Less than 15 hours			15 hours			16-19 hours			20 or more hours		
	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019
Directors	26	28	28	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	15	20	17
Assistant Directors	6	10	20	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10
Teachers	125	116	96	29	24	14	17	15	21	20	<10	17	59	69	44
Assistant Teachers	75	62	42	33	25	16	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	28	25	17
Total	232	216	176	65 (28%)	55 (25%)	34 (19%)	30 (13%)	23 (11%)	31 (18%)	31 (13%)	18 (8%)	32 (18%)	106 (46%)	120 (56%)	79 (45%)

All License Categories	Number			Less than 15 hours			15 hours			16-19 hours			20 or more hours		
	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019
Directors	21	23	27	0	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	14	18	17
Assistant Directors	6	<10	<10	0	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	0	0	<10	<10	<10	<10
Teachers	89	96	81	16	15	12	12	14	17	16	<10	15	45	61	37
Assistant Teachers	57	53	35	16	17	12	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	28	24	12
Total	173	180	152	32 (18%)	36 (20%)	27 (18%)	23 (13%)	21 (12%)	24 (16%)	27 (16%)	15 (8%)	30 (20%)	91 (53%)	108 (60%)	71 (47%)

System Level Outcome 4: Percent of preschools, child care centers, and homes that are engaged in the Illinois Quality Rating System (ExceleRate) and improve their scores each year.

	June 2017	June 2018	June 2019	June 2020	June 2021
Center-Based Programs					
Number of licensed and exempt preschools and child care centers.	46	44	45	45	42
Number of licensed preschools and child care centers.	29	27	28	28	29
A. Number (%) of licensed and exempt preschools and child care centers who engaged in the ExceleRate program.	20 (43%)	21 (48%)	22 (49%)	27 (60%)	28 (66%)
B.1. Number (%) of licensed and exempt preschools and child care centers engaged in ExceleRate and have received a score.	15 (33%)	14 (32%)	14 (31%)	19 (42%)	18 (43%)
B.2. Number (%) of licensed preschools and child care centers engaged in ExceleRate and have received a score.	15 (52%)	13 (48%)	13 (46%)	14 (50%)	13 (45%)
C. Number (%) of licensed and exempt preschools and child care centers involved in ExceleRate that improved their scores.	4 (9%)	6 (14%)	6 (13%)	6 (13%)	4 (9%)
D. Number (%) of centers initially involved with ExceleRate and choosing NAEYC-accreditation	4 (9%)	4 (9%)	4 (9%)	6 (13%)	4 (9%)
Family Child Care Providers					
Number of licensed family child care homes.	34	34	34	34	32
A. Number (%) of licensed family child care homes that engaged in ExceleRate.	10 (29%)	14 (41%)	14 (41%)	15 (41%)	4 (12%)
B. Number (%) of licensed family child care homes engaged in ExceleRate who received a score.	2 (6%)	2 (6%)	2 (6%)	2 (6%)	2 (6%)
C. Number (%) licensed family child care homes engaged in ExceleRate who improved their scores.	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

In the Spring of 2021, we called or visited all licensed and exempt centers and family child care homes in Oak Park and River Forest in order to update the new edition of the Early Childhood Resource Directory. Three center-based providers closed, including Hephzibah Head Start, which closed unrelated to the pandemic. Two licensed family child care providers closed as of the time frame of this report (June 30, 2021), however, another three have closed since then. In addition, two after-school programs closed and four enrichment programs closed.

This seems to be in line with reports from the State of Illinois that 98% of licensed centers that received grants kept their doors open during the pandemic.

Four family child care providers engaged with the Collaboration by attending professional development opportunities such as the Symposium, trainings, our regular Family Child Care Providers Roundtables, or our garden grant.

Despite the burden of the pandemic, five staff members from four centers committed to improving their quality rating by enrolling in an AIM for Excellence training provided by the Collaboration. This is a major step toward achieving ExceleRate Silver status. This “silver cohort” began work after this reporting period and progress will be shared at our next checkpoint.

Engaged in ExceleRate

A program that maintains a Bronze, Silver or Gold Circle of Quality in the Illinois ExceleRate System or NAEYC Accreditation, within a given fiscal year, is counted as engaged for that year.

ExceleRate Green

A Green rating means a center has had a DCFS license for at least one year. This is a requirement for engagement in ExceleRate.

1. Engaging in ExceleRate while having a Green Circle of Quality

Within a given fiscal year, a program that is engaged in ExceleRate must accomplish 50% of the following items:

- Complete and submit the “ExceleRate Licensed Center Application.”
- Connect with an Action for Children Quality Specialist.
- Attend ExceleRate Illinois Orientation. (This is required for the program administrator.)
- Attend ECERS-3. (This is attended by the administrator and 50% of staff.)
- All staff are able to pull up and review their Illinois Gateways Professional Development Record (PDR) to create a Professional Development Plan (PDP).
- All staff submit official transcripts to Gateways to Opportunity.
- All staff complete and submit applications for Gateways credentials.
- Help staff attain Credentials and trainings based on program needs for Circle of Quality (Professional Development Advising).
- 50% of staff must complete 50% of Bronze Circle trainings.

For a non-licensed program to be counted as engaged in ExceleRate they must apply and receive a DCFS license within the fiscal year.

2. **Engaging in ExceleRate while having a Bronze Circle of Quality**

Once a program receives a Bronze Circle of Quality, a program can be counted as engaged by completing the yearly required report called a Continuous Quality Improvement Plan (CQUIP).

Programs that achieve the Bronze Circle of Quality can hold it for three years. During the three years, the program will need to complete an annual report every 12 months, updating program information and working towards achieving the Silver Circle of Quality. The Bronze Circle of Quality cannot be renewed.

3. **Engaging in ExceleRate while having a Silver or Gold Circle of Quality**

Working towards and/or maintaining an ExceleRate Silver or Gold Circle of Quality is a process with too many parts to describe here. Once a program has a Silver or Gold rating, it can be counted as engaged if a minimum of 50% of requirements are completed within a fiscal year. Programs receive a checklist of requirements that cover the areas of teaching & learning, family & community engagement, leadership & management, and qualifications & continuing education.

Family Child Care Providers

The same percentages apply to Family Child Care Programs using the Family Child Care Program ExceleRate checklists.



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