



EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER
Indiana Institute on Disability and Community
Indiana's University Center for Excellence on Disabilities
Indiana University-Bloomington

What's Happening?

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A quarterly newsletter published by the Early Childhood Center at the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community (IIDC), focusing on current research and best practices for Early Childhood professionals and settings to inform practices in the state of Indiana.

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Early Education Matching Grant: A Discussion on the Findings

The Early Education Matching Grant (EEMG) program began in 2014 and provided publicly funded preschool services to four-year-old children from eligible low-income families. The Indiana Social Services Administration (FSSA) contracted with The Early Childhood Center (ECC) to administer the evaluation of the EEMG for the four 2014-2017 program years. The statewide expansion of Indiana's On My Way Pre-K program absorbed the EEMG programs in 2017, thus dissolving the EEMG at the end of the 2016 program year. During its third and final year, the EEMG evaluative focus has continued to include children's gains in learning and development, the level of families' engagement in their children's learning and development, and classroom quality. The last EEMG research sample consisted of 217 randomly selected children within 16 programs, throughout 34 classrooms.

As in the first two years, the third year EEMG evaluation results found that children made marked gains in nearly all assessment measures. Once again, significant improvements were seen in areas of receptive language, concept development, and key school readiness skills. Additionally, the percentage of children showing developmental delays decreased substantially. At the beginning of the EEMG 2016-17 year, 17.8% of the children in the sample showed delays in their receptive language as measured on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT-4) while 39.7% showed delays in concept development on the Bracken School Readiness Assessment (BSRA-3). These numbers had reduced by more than half by the end of the year, to 3.7% and 17.1% respectively. Likewise, the Indiana Standards Tool for Alternate Reporting of Kindergarten Readiness (ISTAR-KR) captured similar changes in children's developmental status. At the beginning of the 2016-17 year, 58% of children were delayed in two or more English/Language Arts skill areas, 75% were delayed in two or more Mathematics skills areas, and 63% were delayed in two or more Social-Emotional skill areas. By the end of the program year, those respective numbers had reduced to 11%, 16%, and 34%. Consistent with previous EEMG results, EEMG Y3 families and teachers reported significant gains in social skills on the Preschool Kindergarten Behavior Skills (PKBS-2) assessment.



Classrooms were observed using the Classroom Assessment and Scoring System (CLASS), which evaluates observable indicators of adult-child interactions along a 1-7 rating scale. Findings revealed that Indiana's EEMG Y3 teachers scored well in the areas of emotional support and classroom organization, but in the low-mid range for instructional support. Examining classroom schedules found that children continue to be exposed to a wide range of activities, and yet similar to previous results, they spent about half their time in non-instructional activities like free choice, basics, and recess. Not

surprisingly, children attending full-day programs continue to spend more time in activities coded as "basics", such as: nap time, waiting in line, and restroom breaks than those in half-day programs. Interestingly, teachers in classrooms where children spent more time in group instruction, consistently reported significant decreases in problem behavior

Indiana's Early Education Matching Grant program was in effect during the 2014-2016 prekindergarten program years. The cumulative results of the three EEMG evaluations have yielded the following consistent findings: programs rated 3 or 4 on Indiana's voluntary rating system, Paths to Quality (PTQ), had similar child outcomes; chronically absent children had teachers that reported more problematic behavior in the spring; and classrooms where children spent more time in group instruction had teachers that reported less problem behaviors over the course of the year. Please [click here](#) to connect to our website and read the full EEMG Year 3 report.

EEMG Y3 Average CLASS scores:

Emotional Support: 6.0

Organizational Support: 6.02

Instructional Support: 3.80



The Indiana Institute on Disability and Community (IIDC) is a part of the Office of the Vice Provost for Research at Indiana University, Bloomington (OVPR). OVPR works with individuals, teams, centers, institutes, and schools to foster excellence in research and creative activities and to support faculty in successfully competing for external funding.

Preschool Outcomes Project Results

In 2016, the Early Childhood Center (ECC), together with the Indiana Department of Education Special Education Office (OSE), launched the *Preschool Outcomes Project*. The long-term outcome of the project is to increase the number of preschool children with disabilities who are served in high-quality, inclusive, and regular early childhood programming. The first phase of this project was to identify the quality practices and resources Indiana districts currently employ, or have the opportunity to employ, while supporting preschool children with disabilities in inclusive settings. The Preschool Outcomes Project is in alignment with the overall OSE goal: **All students, including those with disabilities, are held to high expectations and have equitable access to educational opportunities that enrich their lives and prepare them for future success.**

Following a review of the literature and development of a Theory of Action, a number of research activities were conducted: We analyzed data from the Office of Special Education's Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and ISTAR-KR, identified evidence-based practices, examined current Indiana practices, and summarized many of the challenges and needed resources.

2015 LRE and ISTAR-KR data reflected the state percentages for including preschoolers with disabilities in general education classrooms was 29% (of 12, 890 children), while the substantial impact was 76%. Seventeen districts agreed to participate in the study, and were categorized in three ranges of inclusion and impact percentages: above state averages, at state averages, or below state averages. Seventeen districts participated, with 57 personnel providing information regarding the evidenced-based practices in use, models of service delivery, their challenges and needed resources for implementing high quality inclusion.



Using our Theory of Action as well as recommended practices in the literature, we surveyed, interviewed, and observed classrooms during the 2016-2017 school year. According to our data, 15 out of 17 participating districts included preschool children in the general education classroom at or above the state average (29%). In these 15 districts, the preschool children receiving inclusive services made substantial gains in learning either at or above the state average of 79%.

Data from the 15 districts reflected the following models and evidenced-based practices: embedded special education within activities and routines including some co-teaching or consultative services; some level of collaboration on a regular basis; and made instructional adjustments based on ongoing data collection and analysis.

The following challenges to designing and implementing inclusive early childhood special education services were commonly reported by all participants: They lacked sufficient staff in the classroom to meet individual needs; there were children with intensive educational and behavioral needs; they experienced time challenges (to collaborate, collect data, travel to different schools, do paperwork, eligibility evaluations, provide direct services); and they reported limited access to ongoing professional development.

We theorized what practices might also contribute to children's learning. While this part of our study is exploratory, we looked for discrete practices that are supported in the literature as contributing to children learning and answering the fundamental question:

How do we include children with intense learning needs and provide individualized instruction to meet those needs?

Four practices that answered this question were identified: embedded instruction; universal design for learning; ongoing progress monitoring; and collaborative decision-making. The second phase of the *Preschool Outcomes Project* will develop technical assistance for districts to implement system change efforts in order to implement these practices and thereby to include even more children in general education classrooms.



[View the full report](#)

While this article provides highlights of the findings from our initial phase of research, the full report can be viewed at [Preschool Inclusion Study Final Report](#).



2018 First Steps Conference

Come spend a day and a half learning, sharing, and making new connections at the First Steps Conference 2018 in beautiful Monroe County. Fueled by relaxing walks and delicious food, spend your time talking through concrete skills to support your practice, learning about inspiring new research from national keynote speakers, and developing strong connections with fellow providers across the state

The conference committee is pleased to announce two national keynote speakers will be included in the conference program. Dr. Rosemarie Allen will speak about implicit bias in early intervention, and Dr. Dipesh Navsaria will present on how trauma in early childhood impacts brain development with implications across the life course.



Call for proposals!

2018 First Steps Conference Call for Presentations

Please help us make this inaugural First Steps Conference amazing by submitting a proposal to give on of 32 breakout session presentations. If you have questions about this process, please email Katie Herron at kgherron@indiana.edu. The deadline for submission is February 15, 2018. [Click here to submit a proposal!](#)

