

SUPERINTENDENTS' EARLY CHILDHOOD PLAN EVALUATION: FACT SHEET FOR FULL IMPLEMENTATION SITES (BIRTH – GRADE 3)

Evaluation Overview

The Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan was introduced in the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties in the fall of 2015. It offers an innovative, comprehensive approach to reducing achievement gaps for young children from birth through Grade 3 in the Omaha metro area. This evaluation will provide information about how well this program is working for families and children, schools, and teachers.

The Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan Evaluation focuses on full implementation of the birth – Grade 3 approach. The evaluation has two purposes. First, it will provide information about the usefulness of core components of the plan and areas for improvement. Second, it will give teachers, principals, directors, superintendents, Buffett Institute staff, the Learning Community Coordinating Council, and policymakers data about the impact of the plan on children, families, teachers/classrooms, and schools. Children will be followed through Grade 3 once they are enrolled in the evaluation study.

Evaluation Questions

The evaluation is designed to answer a series of questions that focus on implementation of the Superintendents' Plan and impact on child, family, teacher/classroom, and schools:

Implementation

1. To what extent are core components of the Superintendents' Plan being implemented as intended and at the expected level of quality?
2. How useful are the core components of the plan to achieving the goals of school and program leadership, their staff, and other participants?
3. What are the enabling factors and the obstacles to implementing the Superintendents' Plan at the system, school, and family levels?

Evidence of Impact

1. Child: What is the effect on children's outcomes in cognitive, language, academic, socio-emotional, and executive function domains?
2. Family: What is the effect on families' positive parenting, school engagement, and social support outcomes?
3. Teacher/Classroom: What is the effect on teachers' practices?
4. School: What is the effect on schools' culture and practices?

Sample

Twelve schools at 10 sites within six school districts will take part in the full implementation birth – Grade 3 model and will participate in the evaluation. A sample of approximately 350 children and their families will be included. About 150 children, birth to age 3, and 200 children in PreK and Kindergarten

classrooms (3 to 4 children per classroom) will be assessed. Approximately 200 teachers in PreK – Grade 3 classrooms in participating schools will also be included. Schools, families, and children will be followed over approximately nine years.

Data Collection

Data will be collected once per year by experienced and trained data collectors. The following summarizes the type of assessment and approximate annual time commitment for those participating in the evaluation:

- Child: Direct assessment of children’s language, academic skills, learning skills, and socio-emotional skills will be gathered. These assessments will take approximately 30 – 60 minutes.
- Family: Video observations, surveys, and focus groups will be conducted with families to learn about their interactions with their child, home visitors, teachers, and school personnel. These observations, surveys, and focus groups will take approximately 2 – 3 hours.
- PreK – K Teacher/Classroom: Video observations, surveys, and interviews/focus groups will be conducted with PreK and Kindergarten teachers to assess quality of instruction and interactions with students. These observations, surveys, and interviews/focus groups will take approximately 5 hours.
- Grade 1 – Grade 3 Teacher/Classroom: Video observations and interviews/focus groups will be conducted with Grade 1, 2, and 3 teachers to assess quality of instruction and interactions with students. These observations and interviews/focus groups will take approximately 3.5 hours.
- School: Surveys and interviews/focus groups will be conducted with the school leadership team. These surveys and interviews/focus groups will take approximately 3.5 hours to assess school leaders’ perspectives regarding the implementation of the plan.

During the school year, observation of school processes and interactions, such as school-based family activities and events and school leadership meetings, will also take place.

Incentives

- Parents will receive a \$40 gift card each year for participating in the evaluation.
- Teachers who complete surveys about individual children will receive a gift card equivalent to \$10 per child per year.

Data Feedback

- Data for all participating schools will be shared at the aggregate level once a year.
- General feedback will be provided to families participating in the home visiting programs about their child’s strengths and needs.
- Teachers will receive individual feedback based on classroom observation.
- School districts and schools will receive aggregate information about classrooms, children, and families.

Timeline

- February 2016: Seek school district, building, teacher, and family approval for conducting evaluation.
- February 2016 – March 2016: Identify and select children and families, and schedule evaluation data collection with schools, teachers, and families.

- March 2016 – May 2016: (a) conduct classroom and home observations, (b) distribute and collect school, teacher, and parent surveys, (c) conduct direct child assessments, and (d) conduct school observations.
- May 2016: Conduct school, teacher, and parent interviews/focus groups.
- July 2016: Collect school survey at Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan Summer Institute.
- Ongoing school observations.

Evaluation Team

The research and evaluation unit of the Buffett Early Childhood Institute will manage the evaluation in collaboration with the Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) and the Interdisciplinary Center for Program Evaluation of the Munroe-Meyer Institute at the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC). UNL will lead the birth – age 3 component and will contribute to the overall design of the evaluation and the development of the database. UNMC will lead the PreK – third grade component of the evaluation. Dr. Iheoma Iruka, director of research and evaluation at the Buffett Early Childhood Institute, will provide overall guidance for the evaluation.

General questions about the evaluation may be sent to SupsECEvaluation@nebraska.edu.

For school-specific questions please contact:

Rosie Zweiback (zweibackr@unmc.edu) or 402-559-5274.

- Rosie Zweiback can answer questions about the following elementary schools: Gomez Heritage and Pinewood (Omaha Public Schools), William Cody and Mari Sandoz (Millard Public Schools), and Douglas County West (DC West Community Schools).

Linda Comfort (linda.comfort@unmc.edu) or 402-559-3139.

- Linda Comfort can answer questions about the following elementary schools: Belleaire (Bellevue Public Schools), Liberty and Mount View (Omaha Public Schools), Karen Western, Meadows, and Mockingbird (Ralston Public Schools), and Westbrook (Westside Community Schools).

Additional Information

Frequently Asked Questions about the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan Evaluation can be found at <http://buffettinstitute.nebraska.edu/our-work/childhood-plan>

General information about the Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan can be found at <http://buffettinstitute.nebraska.edu/our-work/FAQ>

Coming Soon

The Institute will provide an information session about the classroom observation tools and family and child surveys in Fall 2016.