

EARLY LEARNING PERFORMANCE FUNDING PILOT PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT 2015-2016

A STUDY PREPARED FOR THE FLORIDA OFFICE OF EARLY LEARNING

Evaluated by:



PURPOSE

The Florida Legislature and the Office of Early Learning developed the **Early Learning Performance Funding Pilot Project (ELPFPP)** to incentivize early learning program improvement and compensate programs that met higher quality standards. High quality early learning programs improve language skills and help reduce the achievement gap, increasing kindergarten readiness and early grade success. Programs in the ELPFPP must serve at least 30% of children who receive school readiness funds. School readiness funding is provided to children who are the greatest risk of school failure.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The ELPFPP provided a set of supports to improve teacher practice and improve child outcomes, including:

- Over 20 hours of high quality, focused professional development
- Requirement of participants to demonstrate mastery of skills learned in professional development
- Coaching interventions to improve teacher practice
- Support in implementing individualized instruction to young children

Throughout the duration of the project, ELPFPP sites **improved program quality for 14,733 children** who received school readiness funds. Over 1300 teachers from 275 early learning providers completed more than twice the typical professional development and improved their skills and knowledge in educating young children.

FINDINGS SUMMARY

Overall Impact of ELPFPP in 2015-2016

The ELPFPP had **significant impact on the quality of early childhood programs** as measured by the increase in both teacher knowledge and teacher-child interactions. Every teacher reported specific growth from this process, illuminating the need to further educational opportunity and advancement of Florida's early childhood educators.

Impact on program performance

Teacher-child interactions are the strongest predictor of children's readiness for school and developmental outcomes. **Adult-child interactions significantly improved for all participants in the ELPFPP, as measured by the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®).**

- **23%** average improvement in program quality
- Increase from 21% of providers meeting threshold scores for improving children's outcomes before ELPFPP to **50% of providers** meeting these scores after ELPFPP. This growth represents a dramatic improvement in program quality, seen by very few quality improvement initiatives nationally in such a short period of time.

Impact on teacher knowledge gains

Teacher content knowledge significantly increased as a result of completing Early Learning Florida courses during the ELPFPP.

- **43%** average increase for Infant-Toddler courses
- **23%** average increase for Preschool courses

Impact on teacher implementation of practices and collaboration in the classroom

Teachers indicated that the ELPFPP had a significant positive impact on their practice and collaboration with peers.

- **88%** reported a positive change in teaching practice as a result of participating in the ELPFPP
- **87%** collaborated with other colleagues when implementing new teaching strategies
- **72%** indicated they are able to easily implement the new strategies into their classrooms