EARLY LEARNING

The following appendix documents progress made on the Commission goal area of Early Learning. This includes one funding subcategory:

- Early Learning Programs

Children & Families
Commission
of Orange County

APPENDIX 8:
EARLY LEARNING
PROGRAMS
FY 15/16

Children and Families Commission of Orange County Early Learning Programs Report

This report describes the Commission's investments in early learning programs for young children, as well as the impact of those investments. The Early Learning programs are intended to support the strategic plan goal to provide early learning opportunities for young children to maximize their potential to succeed in school. The Commission supports programmatic initiatives in school readiness, early literacy and language development, early STEM education (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) and early learning quality improvement programs.

Background

Early learning skills lay the foundation for children's success in school. An analysis of six longitudinal studies showed the strongest predictors of later achievement in school are school-entry math, reading, and attention skills.[20] Yet there are many children in Orange County who start kindergarten behind. This gap in early learning skills is exacerbated by poverty. By the time children from low-income families enter kindergarten, they are typically 12-14 months below national norms in language and pre-reading skills.[21] Children who are not proficient readers by the end of third grade are four times more likely to leave school without a diploma than proficient readers.[22] These high school dropouts earn approximately $10,000 a year less than graduates,[23] and cost society an estimated $292,000 over their lifetime.[24]

Years of research show the achievement gap appears before children start kindergarten. Early care and education for young children has been shown to have a return of $7 to every $1 invested,[25] and result in greater employment and fewer social system demands.[26] Children who attend preschool have a high school graduation rate about eight percentage points higher than those who do not, even after controlling for other factors.[27] Additionally, at-risk children who do not receive a high-quality early childhood education are:

- 25% more likely to drop out of high school
- 40% more likely to become a teen parent
- 50% more likely to be placed in special education

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[20] Duncan GJ, Dowsett CJ, Claessens A, Magnuson K, Huston AC, Klebanov P, Pagani LS, Feinstein L, Engel M, Brooks-Gunn J, Sexton H, Duckworth K, Japel C. (2007). "School readiness and later achievement." Developmental Psychology 43.06: 1428-46. Web. 6 Sept. 2015.

[21] The Council of Chief State School Officers. (2009). "A Quiet Crisis: The Urgent Need to Build Early Childhood Systems and Quality Programs for Children Birth to Age Five." Web. 6 Sept. 2015.

[22] Hernandez DJ. (2012). "Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade reading skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation." The Annie E. Casey Foundation. Web. 6 Sept. 2015.

[23] http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/2012/tables/12s0232.pdf

[24] Sum A, KhatiwadaI, McLaughlin J. (2009). "The Consequences of Dropping Out of High School." Northeastern University.

[25] National Institute for Early Childhood Education Research (http://nieer.org)

[26] According to the National Dropout Prevention Center, studies with matched control groups showed that more students who had early schooling experiences were employed at age 19, fewer were on welfare, and fewer were involved with the criminal justice system.

[27] Reynolds AJ, et al. Effects of a school-based, early childhood intervention on adult health and well-being. Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med. 2007; 161(8):730-739.

- 60% more likely to never attend college
- 70% more likely to be arrested for a violent crime[28]

Conversely, at-risk children who receive high-quality early care and education benefit greatly, often exceeding national averages on measures of school readiness. When controlling for risk factors such as maternal education, race, and parents' ages, these gains persist. Kindergarteners who spend their early years in high-quality early care and education programs arrive at elementary school ready to learn and on par with middle-income peers. These children experience the benefits that result from early instruction that includes a focus on language development, literacy, vocabulary growth, and early math skills.[29] Additionally, children in a high caliber early learning environment acquire the skills that allow them to develop positive relationships with adults and peers, while they learn to become resilient.

To help Orange County's children enter kindergarten ready to learn and start them on the best possible trajectory for success in school and in life, the Commission invests in early learning programs to develop these important skills. To address the achievement gap that exists in Orange County, many programs are focused on reaching children and families in high need communities. The Commission's Early Learning programs consist of the following programs and initiatives:

- Early Literacy Specialists
- Orange County Department of Education Technical Assistance
- Early Learning Programs
- Child Signature Program / CARES Plus
- Boys & Girls Club of Garden Grove School Readiness Program
- OC STEM Initiative
- Providence Speech & Hearing
- Network Anaheim
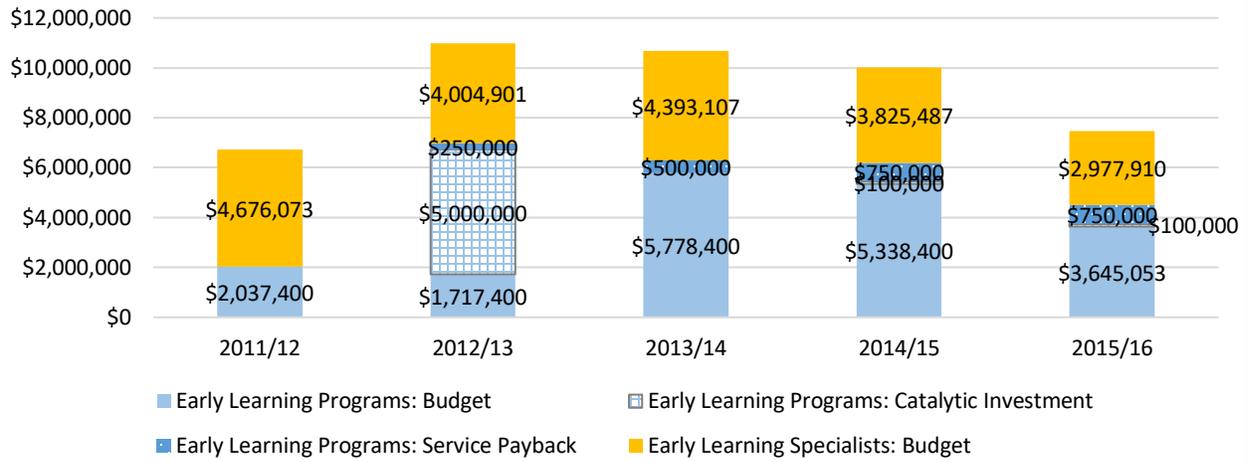
Commission Investment

The investment in the Early Learning programs supports the strategic plan outcomes to:
- Increase all children's developmental skills to be proficient learners in school;
- Increase quality of early care and education;
- Increase early educator, parent and caregiver knowledge and skills to promote children's readiness for school; and
- Improve transitions of children from preschool to kindergarten.

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[28] Ounce of Prevention (http://www.ounceofprevention.org/)
[29] http://heckmanequation.org/

Early Learning Program Investments
Children and Families Commission Program Budget, Fiscal Years 2011/12 - 2015/16

		$4,004,901	$4,393,107	$3,825,487	

(Chart data by year)

2011/12:
- $2,037,400 (Early Learning Programs: Budget)
- $4,676,073 (Early Learning Specialists: Budget)

2012/13:
- $1,717,400 (Early Learning Programs: Budget)
- $5,000,000 (Early Learning Programs: Catalytic Investment)
- $250,000 (Service Payback)
- $4,004,901 (Early Learning Specialists: Budget)

2013/14:
- $5,778,400 (Budget)
- $500,000
- $4,393,107 (Specialists: Budget)

2014/15:
- $5,338,400 (Budget)
- $100,000
- $750,000
- $3,825,487 (Specialists: Budget)

2015/16:
- $3,645,053 (Budget)
- $750,000
- $100,000
- $2,977,910 (Specialists: Budget)

Legend:
- Early Learning Programs: Budget
- Early Learning Programs: Catalytic Investment
- Early Learning Programs: Service Payback
- Early Learning Specialists: Budget

Commission-funded Services in Orange County

Early Learning Specialists

Since 2000, the Commission has partnered with the following 24 school districts in Orange County that provide kindergarten to fund and hire Early Learning Specialists. School districts receive funding based on their kindergarten population to support up to two Early Learning Specialist positions. The Early Learning Specialists provide early care and education opportunities to meet early childhood development needs in their school district and connect families with community resources.

1. Anaheim Elementary
2. Brea Olinda Unified
3. Buena Park
4. Capistrano Unified
5. Centralia
6. Cypress
7. Fountain Valley
8. Fullerton
9. Garden Grove Unified
10. Huntington Beach City
11. Irvine Unified
12. La Habra City/Lowell Joint
13. Laguna Beach Unified
14. Los Alamitos Unified
15. Magnolia
16. Newport-Mesa Unified
17. Ocean View
18. Orange Unified
19. Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified
20. Saddleback Valley Unified
21. Santa Ana Unified
22. Savanna
23. Tustin Unified
24. Westminster

School district based early learning programs have received Commission funding since fiscal year 2000/01 with over $90 million invested in school readiness programs through the Early Learning Specialists, and former Capacity Building Programs, and competitive funding cycles.

Early Learning Specialists Investments
Children and Families Commission Program Budget, Fiscal Years 2011/12 - 2015/16
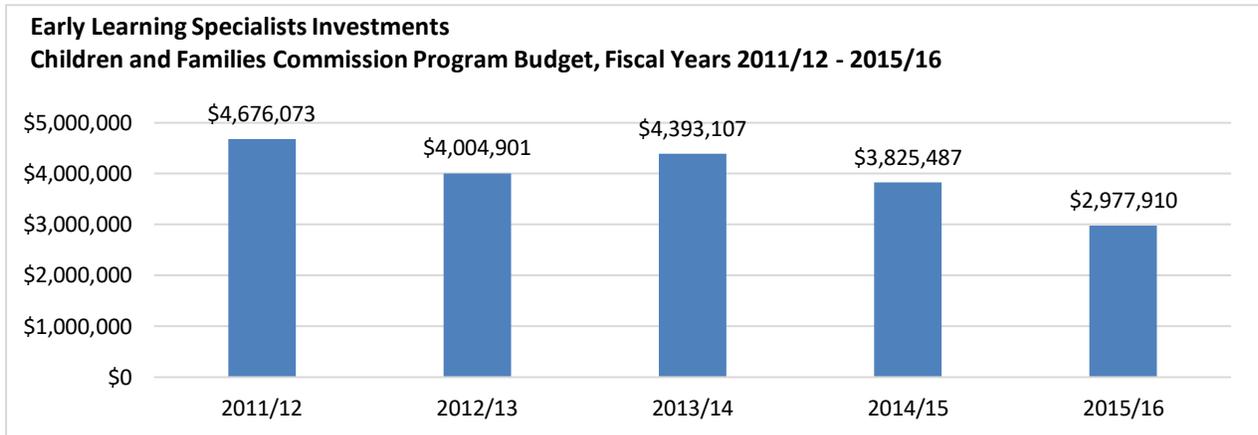
In February 2014, the Commission approved a three-year agreement to fund school districts with a kindergarten population through June 2017. The school districts received funding for a part-time, full-time or two full-time Early Learning Specialist positions, based on their district's kindergarten enrollment. A full-time equivalent position is funded at $87,500. In addition, eight school districts that are performing below the county average in math and/or reading based on second-grade proficiency scores received an additional one-time allocation of $150,000 to meet targeted district needs for early learning. The Early Learning Specialists in these eight districts provided specialized and services to young children and parents in an effort to provide a smoother transition into kindergarten.

1. Anaheim Elementary
2. Buena Park
3. Fullerton
4. Garden Grove Unified
5. La Habra City/Lowell Joint
6. Magnolia
7. Orange Unified
8. Santa Ana Unified

Early Learning Specialists District Allocation
Fiscal Years 2014/15 to 2016/17
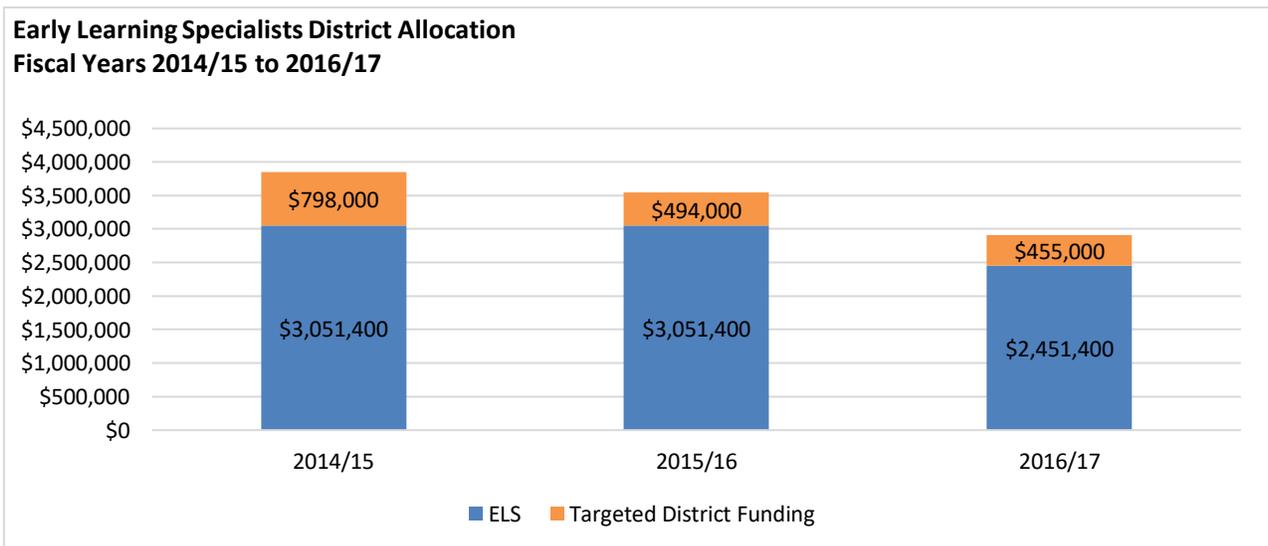
Sustainability Planning

The Early Learning Specialists also develop strategies for program sustainability and to build the capacity of organizations that help parents to become excellent first teachers for their children. These strategies have included internal cost reductions and program efficiencies, fee-for-service models, and

federal and state revenue sources such as the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). Many school districts now include early learning in their school district's Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP). In fiscal year 2015/16, Orange County school distsricts were awarded over $4.1 million in ongoing state preschool funding to serve approximately 700 children in all-inclusive full day and part day programs.

Learning Link Program

Operated in conjunction with the Early Learning Specialists, 20 school districts have Learning Link sites. The goal of Learning Link program is to provide an accessible and creative learning environment to help young children become better prepared for kindergarten and guides parents in their role as their children's first teachers. Learning Link is an interactive place for parents to bond with their children and to support their growth across a range of disciplines, including early education, language development, health and wellness, and family support. In fiscal year 2015/16, almost 3,300 children participated in drop-in, family focused early learning programs such as Learning Link and over 41,000 services were provided.

Orange County Department of Education Technical Assistance

The Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) supports the Early Learning initiative by providing training and technical assistance to the school district Early Learning Specialists. In fiscal year 2015/16, early care providers received specialized training to strengthen early care and education opportunities for all young children. The OCDE facilitated training programs, workshops and meetings for school districts in the area of early learning and school readiness.

Early Literacy Programs

The Commission funds the Champions for Children's Literacy and the Early Literacy and Math Program to implement early literacy programs in Orange County.

The **Champions for Children's Literacy** a collaborative partnership with the Orange County United Way and the Orange County Community Foundation. In fiscal year 2015/16, the Commission approved the allocation of $150,000 annually for three years to a shared funding pool to improve literacy outcomes. The United Way and Community Foundation added $100,000 each to the pool for a total annual funding amount of $350,000. In March 2016, Champions for Children's Literacy requested applications to implement or expand evidence-based early literacy programs that support children at-risk of not reading by grade level by the third grade. Four applications were approved for implementation in the next fiscal year.

Early Literacy and Math Program. Fiscal year 2015/16 marked the fifth year of the catalytic funding agreement with THINK Together to implement the following early literacy and programs: the Book Bank, Read for the Record, Raising a Reader, Center-Based Early Literacy programs, Reach Out and Read (ROR), and the Early Learning STEM Conference.

THINK Together also manages 30 AmeriCorps members that support the early learning programs targeted at low income children at the Boys and Girls Clubs of Garden Grove and THINK Together. In addition to providing direct services to children, the AmeriCorps members assist agencies with developing long-term sustainability through the recruitment and support of volunteers.

Book Bank Program

The Book Bank collects new and gently-used books throughout the year and processes them for redistribution to all communities in Orange County so families can begin to build a home-library. The book collection and distribution goals were exceeded in fiscal year 2015/16, with 122,061 children's books being redistributed to multiple communities across Orange County.

The *We Care Wednesday* event at the Orange County Fair garnered over 56,000 books. Relationships with existing partners were successfully strengthened cultivating a host of new valuable partners that positively increased the number of children's books collected throughout the year. Moving forward, the program will continue to expand its scope within the county by fostering and solidifying new partnerships, refining current book cleaning and distribution systems, and providing more opportunities for partners to contribute.

In 2015/16, a new partnership was formed with Discover Books, a nationwide nonprofit organization that consistently donates children's books to the Book Bank. This partnership offset the pressure for smaller book drives that resulted in the collection of a couple hundred to a few thousand children's books. A record number of 122,061 books were distributed in fiscal year 2015/16.

Read for the Record

Read for the Record is a national event led by Jumpstart to raise awareness of the importance of early literacy. Jumpstart selects a children's book to be read at various venues across the country, setting records for the largest reading experience. During the week of October 22, 2015, "*Not Norman: A Goldfish Story,*" by Kelly Bennett, was read to 58,501 children across the country, breaking the previous record of children read to within a single week. In total, 1,200 books were distributed to 131 partners. Historically, the number of children read to has continued to grow since 2009. Since 2012-2013, the number of children ages 0 – 5 that have been read to has risen steadily.

Figure 1. Read for the Record: Historical Growth
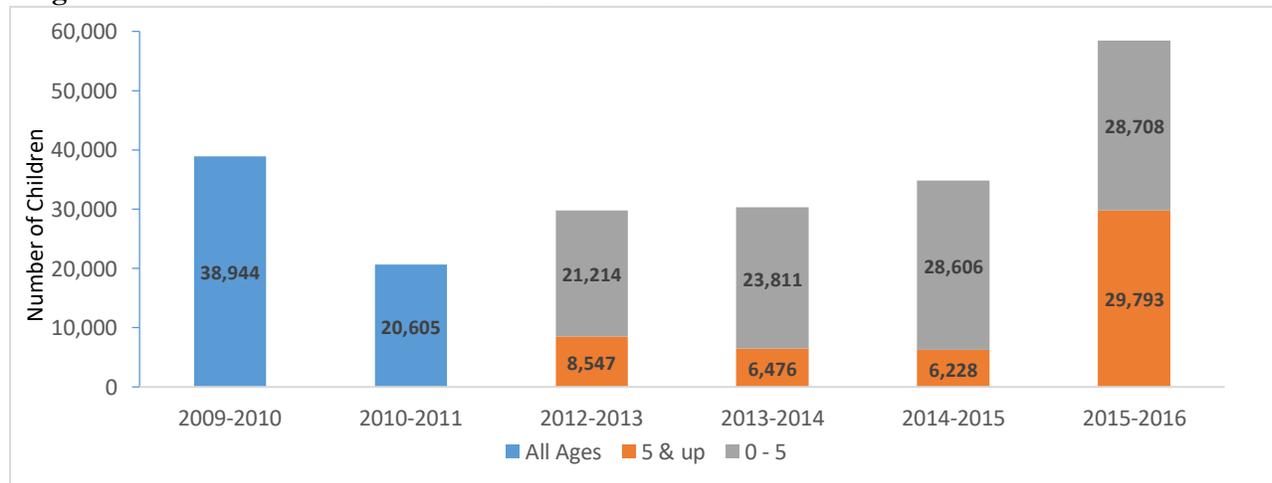
Raising a Reader

Raising a Reader is an early literacy and family engagement program designed to help families develop book sharing routines with their child(ren). To practice the habit of sharing books, families are provided

with a different book bag each week that contains award-winning books that they can read with their children. With constant access to new books, caregivers can engage children in regular reading to develop a child's literacy. Raising a Reader is provided through the Center-Based Early Literacy program sites as well as a total of seven external corporate partnership sites. The relationship with the Raising a Reader organization is continuously seeking new opportunities and funding new classrooms.

In total, 2,377 bags are in rotation. The program process includes required trainings, agreements with partnering organizations, and scheduled site visits. The Raising a Reader organization has expanded their book selections. In addition to each bag including a financial literacy books, the bags continue to include a book focusing on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). The Raising a Reader program continues to expand according to the goals set forth in the strategic plan.

Reach Out and Read

The Reach Out and Read program promotes the importance of parents reading with their young children at home. Pediatric medical clinics receive new and gently used books for pediatricians to use during Child Wellness Visits trained volunteer readers to read to children in the waiting room. Readers model how to engage the child in early literacy behaviors and effective reading strategies for parents. Parents receive materials and other resources that support literacy development in their child(ren).

In 2015/16, the Reach Out and Read program provided one-time modeling of side-by-side reading to more than 1,379 children who were with their parents in 13 clinic waiting rooms in nine different cities throughout Orange County. In addition, the program has provided 53 clinic waiting rooms with books throughout Orange County. All of these clinics have been identified by the American Academy of Pediatrics as eligible for support by the Reach Out and Read program, as 60% or more of the population served have been identified as low socio-economic status. In 2015/16, feedback was obtained from observations made during site visits and routine meetings that resulted in positive changes to program.

Center-Based Early Literacy Programs

Center-Based Early Literacy programs strive to foster early learning and math literacy among three to four year-olds by fostering foundational skills in literacy and math that are aligned to the Pre-school Foundations utilized by the state of California. A child-led, or developmentalist, approach is utilized where the children learn through play in strategically planned, early literacy-rich, environments.

Another objective of the program is to provide the parents/caregivers with age-appropriate early learning and math literacy strategies that can be used at home to engage their children and support their continued learning. As parents begin to emulate the strategies they have learned in the class within their home, children experience reinforcement of skills that foster early learning and math literacy.

In 2015/16, the Center-Based Early Literacy programs served 725 children and 192 adult participants/guardians in one of the two 15 week sessions focused on evidence-based school readiness services and/or drop-in, family focused early learning programs. These sessions took place at eight different school sites located in six different cities in Orange County. The demographic makeup of the communities served at the different sites varied widely, but the data confirm that communities of high-need were successfully targeted.

The Center-Based Early Literacy programs operated at eight sites, rotating within the Anaheim Elementary, Buena Park, Huntington Beach City, Santa Ana, Saddleback Valley, and Tustin school districts. One of these sites included Shalimar Learning Center in Costa Mesa, which opened an Early Learning Program for children ages 0-5. In order to stay consistent with program delivery in the past two years, the same two sub-sets of the High Scope curriculum were chosen for implementation during the 2015/16 year. The first one is "Growing Readers" and is designed to focus on four key areas of early literacy learning: comprehension, phonological awareness, alphabetic principle, and concepts about print. The second set "Numbers Plus" is aligned with the standards of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and is divided into five content areas: number sense and operations, geometry, measurement, algebra, and data analysis.

The "once a week parent workshop" aspect of the program continues to be a key component, and this was the second full year of implementation. "The Incredible Years" curriculum is designed for children ages 0-12 years, with a focus on educating parents that they are their child's primary teacher and the ways in which they can build the social and emotional skills of their child(ren). Supplementing the parenting component, a continued focus was put forth by the Site Facilitators and AmeriCorps members to continue to teach adult participants/guardians through modeling during lessons/activities with the children.

In 2015/16, an evaluation was conducted for Center-Based Early Literacy programs. Unlike the other often one-touch programs, Center-Based program serves children and adult participants/guardians, on average, 90 hours through the duration of the year. While more robust outcomes were measured for the center-based programs, the other programs were assessed on whether or not they met particular outputs; typically, numerical counts such as attendance and/or book counts.

The Center-based programs were evaluated, quantitatively, using the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) tool, a scientifically-based phonological awareness and literacy screening that measures children's development of important literacy fundamentals. The individually administered assessment allows for staff to measure the skills that are predictive of future reading success: name writing ability, upper-case and lower-case alphabet recognition, letter sound and beginning sound production, print and word awareness, rhyme awareness and nursery rhyme awareness. The assessment was originally designed to be an outcomes-based assessment, measuring a child's growth from the beginning to end of a program, but given the limited amount of time in the current program, it was decided to preserve program time by only administering a post-assessment. The post, administered to all children within the last two weeks of program, provides a snapshot of the children's readiness within each of the categories mentioned above. These results serve to inform the primary caregivers and future programs of the needs of the children.

While the tool is validated and normed, there are few evident limitations of using the assessment in the context of the current Center-Based model. First, the assessment is designed to measure growth over a year-long program, in which a child will typically receive more than double the dosage of the children in the current program (30 or more weeks compared to 15 weeks of programming). The tool is intended for four year-olds in traditional pre-kindergarten programs, so three year-olds are not at the same stage of development and therefore were not assessed. This was the most practical, cost and time effective option and is scientifically proven to be a valid measure and includes largely age-appropriate items.

The Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) was administered for a third year to each student at the end of the first and second session of program. The PALS was administered only to children four years old and older. Compared to last year, children four years old and older did better in many domains, with the biggest increase in sound awareness. (See Figure 3).

Figure 2. PALS Results the Past Two Years
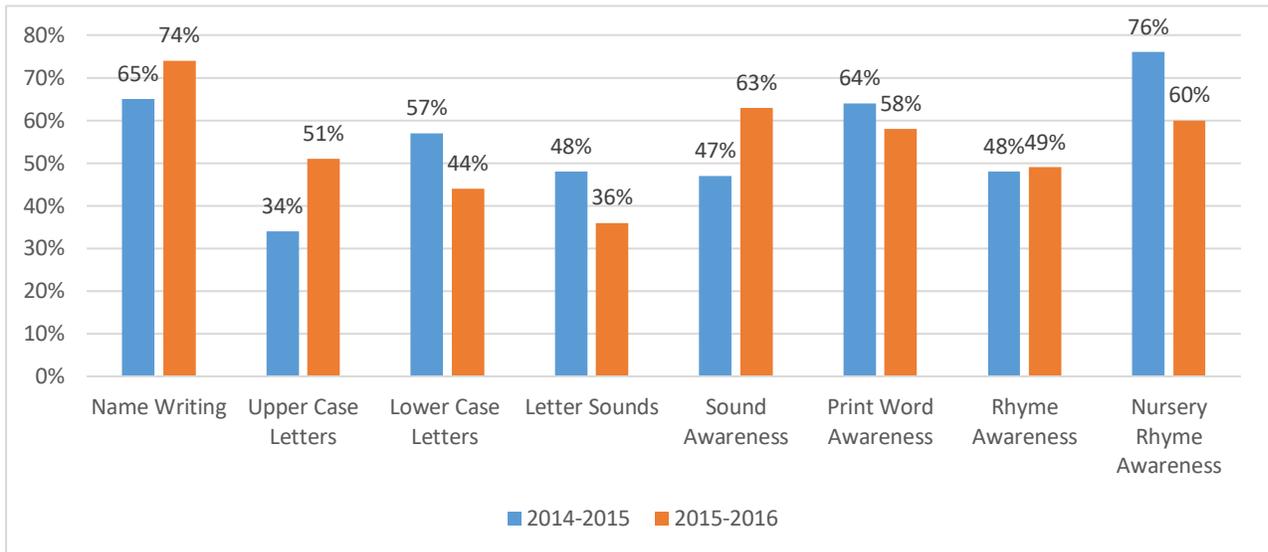
Similar to last year, children were assessed on Social Emotional Learning, Literacy Skills and Math Skills through the GOLD Assessment. Over 600 students were assessed in all of these areas. As Figures 4-6 demonstrate, the average scores of students increased for every area of the assessment, with the greatest growth shown in Social Emotional Learning, specifically that children improved regulating emotions and behaviors showing the biggest growth.

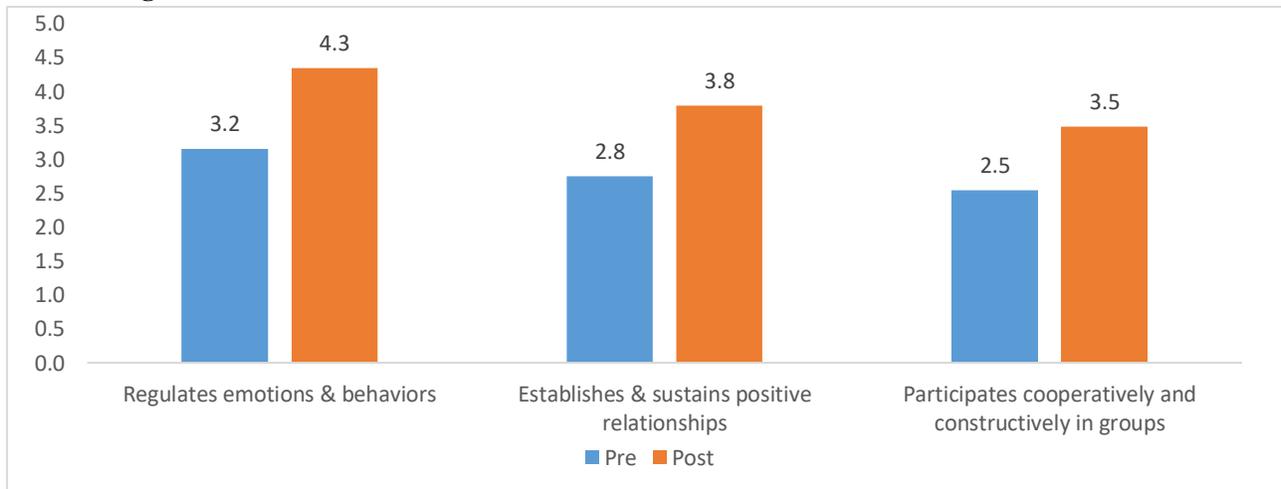**Figure 3. GOLD Assessment: Social Emotional Skills**
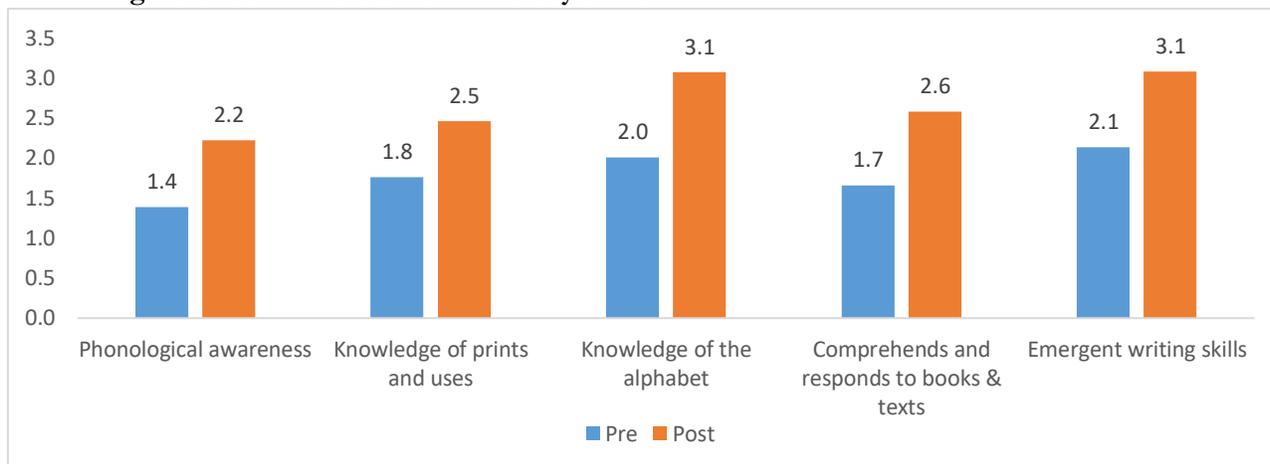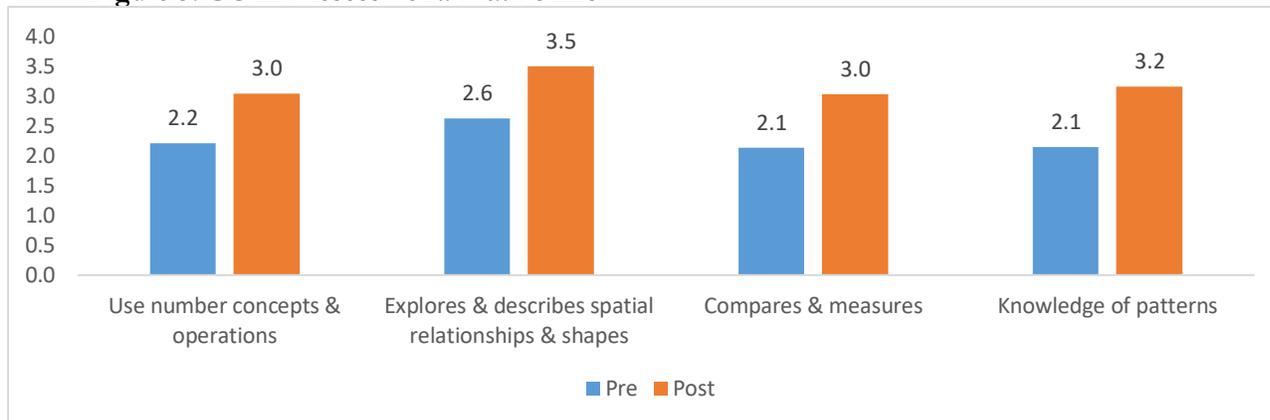
Figure 4. GOLD Assessment: Literacy Skills

Pre/Post values by category:
- Phonological awareness: Pre 1.4, Post 2.2
- Knowledge of prints and uses: Pre 1.8, Post 2.5
- Knowledge of the alphabet: Pre 2.0, Post 3.1
- Comprehends and responds to books & texts: Pre 1.7, Post 2.6
- Emergent writing skills: Pre 2.1, Post 3.1

Figure 5. GOLD Assessment: Math Skills

Pre/Post values by category:
- Use number concepts & operations: Pre 2.2, Post 3.0
- Explores & describes spatial relationships & shapes: Pre 2.6, Post 3.5
- Compares & measures: Pre 2.1, Post 3.0
- Knowledge of patterns: Pre 2.1, Post 3.2

Child Signature Program and CARES Plus

The Child Signature Program (CSP) and Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Education Standards (CARES) Plus are First 5 California matching fund programs that ended on June 30, 2016. Orange County CARES Plus partnership was developed in 2011 to provide training and professional development for early educators working with high need, at-risk children and, to-date, has served close to 1,000 educators. The Orange County Child Signature Program partnership began in 2012 and invited eligible subsidized early childhood programs to participate in a quality assessment and improvement process. Child Signature Program was expanded in 2013 to provide direct services to children and families attending the Child Signature Program programs.

The aim of the Child Signature Program and CARES Plus programs is to invest in high quality preschool programs that enhance the quality of care and education that children receive. Studies conclude that high quality preschool programs improve school readiness and lead to better long-term academic achievement. Furthermore, research shows high quality early education helps reduce unemployment, drug or alcohol abuse, high school dropout rates, and crime. Studies conclude high quality preschool programs improve school readiness and lead to better long-term academic achievement.[30]

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[30] http://www.theounce.org/who-we-are/economic-return-on-investment.

Child Signature Program

The Child Signature Program (CSP) was designed to offer support services to subsidized early education programs that had already demonstrated a baseline level of quality. The program offered intensive onsite teacher coaching, training, and continuous quality improvement support through a variety of expert staff. In addition, many support services were offered to the children and families in the programs, including case management, resource and referral, school readiness nurse screening, parent education, behavioral, and nutritional support. In fiscal year 2015/16, approximately 700 children and families attended the 13 centers and 66 classrooms that participated in the program.

The Commission contracted Help Me Grow Orange County, Child Behavior Pathways and the Orange County Department of Education to implement the CSP program. Over the course of the program 1,721 children received services. Of these, 1,244 children had at least one concern and 2,646 concerns were documented (children could have more than one concern). At the close of the program 1,476 services had been connected with an additional 149 services pending.

In addition, 132 early education classrooms received staff training, individual teacher coaching, assessment with two separate tools measuring quality, child behavior support, nutrition and physical activity materials and activities, quality classroom materials, and access to a Family Support Specialists. All families had access to case management services for resource and referral, parent education, behavior support, family physical activity experiences, and nutritional counseling. Each family that received services completed a pre- and post- Protective Factors survey measuring family functioning and support.

CARES Plus

The CARES Plus program served 227 early educators in the fiscal year 2015/16. These educators came from all types of early education settings, including for-profit, nonprofit, subsidized, and family childcare. Educators were able to choose from a variety of professional development options designed to support them in increasing quality in their programs. They were compensated with a small stipend for their time.

The Commission contracted with both Children's Home Society and the Orange County Department of Education to implement the CARES Plus training and administrative components. Both organizations have strong connections to early educators in Orange County and were able to maintain the trusting relationships needed for quality improvement. In addition, Help Me Grow Orange County trained the CARES Plus participants on the importance of early developmental screening and the Help Me Grow care coordination system.

Since 2011, 928 early educators participated in the CARES Plus program. Nearly 220 work with infants, 268 work with toddlers, and 808 work with preschool age children. Among these professionals, 158 were trained as Professional Growth Advisors and 128 participated in the My Teaching Partner video coaching program. In all CARES Plus providers attended over 8,200 hours of training throughout the five years of CARES Plus. Finally, over $555,000 in stipends has been provided to these early educators for their commitment to learning.

Boys and Girls Club of Garden Grove

The Boys and Girls Club of Garden Grove provides early learning services as well as health services. The early learning portion of the contract includes an evidence-based school readiness program (Readiness on the Road), which uses a modified High Scope curricula and is located both at Club sites as well as other early education facilities. The program also includes developmental screenings, referrals and follow up; parent education classes; professional development classes for early care providers; and support for Learning Links.

The health component, known as Access to Resources for Children's Health, Education, and Support (ARCHES) links families with young children with health services at the Garden Grove Health Center, including referrals and follow up for general health, dental, vision and family support; assists with insurance enrollment; and provides outreach to homeless families for health services.

One of the most important outcomes of the Boys and Girls Club of Garden Grove's work with young children and families is the developmental screenings that occur in the parent-child classes and the early intervention that results in follow up. Using the American Academy of Pediatrics recommended tool of the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), the Boys and Girls Club of Garden Grove works with parents to assess children in the program, identify issues or concerns, and then teach parents how to navigate the systems in order to help children be healthy and ready to learn.

In fiscal year 2015/16, 155 children received developmental screenings, and 57 parents participated in parenting classes. A total of 118 parents received follow up on a referral made for their child, and services were accessed. The Boys and Girls Club early learning program had 149 children participating and 26 parents to increase the frequency of reading to their children at home.

OC STEM Initiative

Compelling evidence suggests that the achievement gaps that exist between student groups in second grade are foreshadowed at kindergarten entry.[31] Research also suggests that very young children are ready to learn a broad array of mathematics content that will give them a solid base for future learning.[32] Six longitudinal studies showed that early math skills are the most powerful predictor of later school success.[33] And in a survey conducted in 2010, Californians reported seeing early science as foundational to success in high school.[34]

This is important because while the United States lags behind other nations in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education, California is projecting a growth in STEM careers, and over 40% of all jobs vacancies in Orange County in 2014 are STEM-related.

Further, overall STEM occupations pay well at all educational levels. People in STEM occupations with a high school diploma or less have higher lifetime earnings than people in other occupations with

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[31] California's Math Pipeline: Success Begins Early, July 2011

[32] Duncan, G, Dowsett, C., Claessens, A., Magnuson, K., Huston, A., Klebanov, P., Pagani, L., et al. (2007) School Readiness and Later Achievement. Developmental Psychology, 43, 1428-1446.

[33] Duncan, G, Dowsett, C., Claessens, A., Magnuson, K., Huston, A., Klebanov, P., Pagani, L., et al. (2007) School Readiness and Later Achievement. Developmental Psychology, 43, 1428-1446.

[34] A Priority for California's Future: Science for Students – Analysis of Public Opinion Research (2010). Sacramento, CA: The Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning at WestEd.

similar education levels (approximately $500,000 more). Similarly, STEM majors make substantially more over their lifetime than non-STEM majors.[35] Quality STEM education is important for Orange County's youngest children to be able to succeed in school, as well as for the development of Orange County's future workforce.

The Commission is a member of the OC STEM Initiative that began in 2011 and is comprised of 15 business foundations, educational organizations, and content experts. The focus is on the full continuum of learning from preschool through college, with the overarching goal that students are college and career ready in the STEM field.

In February 2016, the Commission, OC STEM, THINK Together and the Orange County Department of Education hosted the Early Childhood STEM symposium. The event was attended by approximately 400 early learning teachers, administrators and coaching staff. The focus of the full day event was to promote professional development in STEM related strategies both in the classroom and at the program implementation level.

Providence Speech and Hearing

Providence Speech and Hearing Center developed the Building Blocks of Communication™ (Building Blocks), a group therapy model for children with mild to moderate speech delays. Providence implements this model, conducting classes with parents and young children. Additionally, Providence conducts training of professionals (e.g., Early Learning Specialists) so they can, in turn, conduct classes for parents of young children to assist with speech and language development using Building Blocks. Providence has developed an online portal to train professionals on the Building Blocks, and has made the online portal user-friendly for parents seeking to use the Building Blocks with their children.

In 2015/16, there were approximately 14,000 children with a speech or language impairment enrolled in, or receiving services from, Orange County public schools and requiring special education. More than 4,000 of those were children between the ages of three and five years old.[36] A recent report from the American Speech-Language Hearing Association entitled, "Roles and Responsibilities of Speech-Language Pathologists with Respect to Reading and Writing in Children and Adolescents", links a child's speech ability with literacy and ultimately their ability to succeed in their educational careers. Further, a research brief by the RAND Corporation entitled, "Proven Benefits of Early Childhood Interventions", states that the cost benefit to early childhood interventions can range up to $17.07 for each dollar spent on the program.

Recent analysis completed by the Commission shows that children who receive speech and language services at an earlier age are exiting special education earlier, resulting in better outcomes for the children as well as reduced special education costs. Finally, research also shows the positive effects of parents working with their children – such as occurs in the Providence Speech and Language program's Building Blocks of Communication – in everything from literacy to therapy.

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[35] Carnevale, A, Smith, N. and Melton, M. (2011). STEM Science, Technology Engineering, Mathematics – Full Report. Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce.
[36] California Department of Education, DataQuest (http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/)

Network Anaheim is a collaboration of public and private entities and residents in Anaheim that has removed traditional organizational boundaries in favor of a single, more easily accessible delivery system of support services that maximizes existing local resources and produces greater success.

Network Anaheim's productive approach is one that is connected, responsive and collaborative; recognizes and builds on the assets of individuals, families and communities, and; focuses on prevention first, then on needed interventions. Key to the process is the preservation of the dignity of clients and their active involvement in realizing Network Anaheim's vision that children of all ages and their families in Anaheim will lead healthy, meaningful, productive lives that enrich society.

The Early Learning Specialists within the five elementary schools that serve the city of Anaheim are knowledgeable about the work of Network Anaheim especially the largest school district in the city – Anaheim Elementary School District (AESD). All five districts have participated in the Early Developmental Index (EDI) since 2009. These data help to understand observed child outcomes and contributes to valuable planning information for community stakeholders. Data are analyzed and compared at a group level to identify developmental vulnerabilities and strengths of children in target communities. Use of the EDI data has been shown to result in: increased community awareness of the importance of childhood development; more collaborative relationships between stakeholders; data-informed planning processes; changes to early childhood strategies, policies and levels of funding; and strengthened grant applications.

As the largest elementary school district in the City of Anaheim, AESD participates in EDI data collection at all of its 24 schools. These data reveal that on average 11% of children in these schools are developmentally vulnerable in at least one of the five domain areas (lowest 10th percentile) compared to 9% countywide.[37] The data prove invaluable for community change efforts underway in Anaheim. Network Anaheim is a driving force to get EDI shared out into the community.

Detailed Program Outcomes: Early Learning Specialists

Services Provided

In fiscal year 2015/16, the Commission's investment in Early Learning Specialists produced the following services and outcomes for children ages birth through five:

Table 1. Aggregate Data for Early Learning Specialist

	Children Ages 0-5	Family Members	Service Providers
Number of people receiving services*	13,607	11,403	1,777
Number of services provided	1,396,330	572,702	5,135

* Although each grantee reports an unduplicated count, clients served by more than one program may be counted more than once when data from multiple grantees are added together.

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[37] *Early Development Index District Profile Report, Anaheim Elementary School District*, prepared by Children & Families Commission of Orange County and UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities, 2014.

Table 2. Description of Children Served in FY 15/16 by Early Learning Specialist Programs

Variable Considered	Category Label	Count[1]	Percent
Total number of children with client-level data		525	100.0
Age at most recent interview	Under Three	573	4.2
	Three through Five	12,146	89.3
	Unknown	888	6.5
Ethnicity	Amer. Indian/Alaska Native	3	0.6
	Asian	29	5.5
	Black/African American	6	1.1
	Hispanic/Latino	358	68.2
	Pacific Islander	5	1.0
	White	64	12.2
	Vietnamese	20	3.8
	Multiracial	20	3.8
	Middle Eastern	3	0.6
	Other	5	1.0
	Unknown	12	2.3
Primary Language	Arabic	1	0.2
	English	179	34.1
	Farsi (Persian)	2	0.4
	Filipino (Tagalog)	1	0.2
	Korean	6	1.1
	Mandarin (Putonghua)	2	0.4
	Spanish	290	55.2
	Vietnamese	21	4.0
	Other	13	2.5
	Unknown	10	2.7
At or Below 200% Federal Poverty Level		369	85.1

[1]The counts for specific demographic variables may be less than the total number of children entered into the Commission's Data Collection and Reporting System. This typically occurs because survey respondents decline to answer a specific question, or an error in data entry results in an out-of-range value that must be deleted.

Table 3. Services Provided by Early Learning Specialist Grantees

Strategic Plan Outcome	Service	Clients Served	Number of Services
HC.4 Increased percent of children growing up in healthy and safe environments	Parents receive speech and language services	1,288	1,774
EL.1 Increased all children's developmental skills to be proficient learners in school	Parents participate in a program designed to increase the frequency of reading at home	10,600	468,839
	Parents receive literacy information/assistance in waiting rooms or community events	1,313	1,026
	Books distributed to children	N/A	47,532
	New and used books collected for distribution	N/A	41,852
	Children participating in early literacy programs	13,624	1,237,399
	Children participate in early math/STEM programs	1,099	32,734

Strategic Plan Outcome	Service	Clients Served	Number of Services
EL.2 Increased quality of early care and education	Providers will conduct classroom assessments using an established tool such as ECERS or CLASS, and develop improvement plans, when needed, to improve the quality of existing district and/or community ECE programs	448	492
	Parents participate in a drop-in, family-focused early learning program (i.e., Learning Link)	3,769	38,433
	Children participate in a drop-in, family-focused early learning program (i.e., Learning Link)	3,296	41,808
EL.3 Increased early educator, parent and caregiver knowledge and skills to promote children's readiness for school	Parents receive tools, resources, information and/or training needed to transition their child to school	21,987	12,347
	Participate in EDI at one of the following levels: planning for future implementation; implementing EDI; or incorporating EDI data in planning efforts	N/A	72
EL.4 Improved transitions of children entering Kindergarten and K-12 system	Children visit Kindergarten classrooms prior to start of school year	8,203	N/A
	Children's health and development records are transferred to their elementary school prior to entering Kindergarten	7,380	N/A
	Children entering preschool programs are assigned a unique identifier	9,322	9,322
SF.4 Increased access to and availability of family support services and resources	Providers are educated to increase awareness and identification of behavioral health issues for children 0-5	1,085	846
CB.1 Maximize all sustainability activities	Dollar amount raised from program fees/revenue	N/A	$5,443,725
	Dollar amount raised from individual donations	N/A	$11,523
	Dollar amount raised from Foundation donations	N/A	$92,889
	Dollar amount raised from government funds/grants	N/A	$27,681,538
CB.2 Increase access and efficiency, quality and effectiveness	Developing partnerships, coordinating and collaborating with other agencies to improve service delivery	N/A	576
	Provide trainings to build the capacity of the agency to increase quality services (including STEM related activities)	1,775	126

Table 4. Service Outcomes (SOQs) for Early Learning Specialists

Key Strategic Plan Objectives	SOQ Results
Early Learning	
• 75% of typically developing children are effective learners in literacy	• 23.4% of children knew none of the alphabet letters by name at the beginning of services compared to only 4.8% at the end of services
• 75% of typically developing children are effective learners in literacy	• 93.3% of children could identify his or her written name at the end of services, compared to only 68.0% at the beginning of services

Key Strategic Plan Objectives	SOQ Results
• 75% of typically developing children are effective learners in literacy	• 98.8% of children had familiarity with books at the end of services, compared to 90.2% at the beginning of services
• 80% of typically developing children are effective learners in numeracy	• 93.2% of children could count a group of three to five objects by touching each object at the end of services, compared to 81.7% at the beginning of services.
• 80% of typically developing children are effective learners in numeracy	• 94.1% of children could correctly name at least two shapes at the end of services, compared to only 75.6% at the beginning of services
• 80% of typically developing children are effective learners in numeracy	• 82.8% of children could recite at least five numbers in order at the end of services, compared to only 56.8% at the beginning of services
• 75% of typically developing children are socially competent	• 96.1% of children could follow simple two-step oral directions at the end of services, compared to 95.5% at the beginning of services
• 75% of typically developing children are socially competent	• 96.6% of children cooperated with the daily classroom routine most of the time at the end of services, compared to 95.4% at the beginning of services
• Increase parents' knowledge and involvement in preparing children for school	• 82.8% of parents taught their children letters, numbers, or words at least three times in the prior week at the end of services, compared to 68.6% at the beginning of services
• Increase parents' knowledge and involvement in preparing children for school	• 91.1% of parents played with toys or games indoors at least three times in the prior week at the end of services, compared to 86.7% at the beginning of services
• Increase parents' knowledge and involvement in preparing children for school	• 69.6% of parents went on outings with their child at least three times in the prior week at the end of services, compared to 64.0% at the beginning of services
• Increase parents' knowledge and involvement in preparing children for school	• 88.7% of parents talked with their child about daily activities at least three times in the prior week at the end of services, compared to 86.7% at the beginning of services
• Increase parents' knowledge and involvement in preparing children for school	• 69.2% of parents played, games, sports or exercised with their child at least three times in the prior week at the end of services, compared to 60.5% at the beginning of services
• Increase parents' knowledge and involvement in preparing children for school	• 85.4% of parents felt they had sufficient information and support for their child to attend Kindergarten at the end of services, compared to 90.4% at the beginning of services

Key Strategic Plan Objectives	SOQ Results
Healthy Children	
• Increase to 100% the number of children with health coverage	• 99.7% of children served had health insurance at the end of services (compared to 98.9% at the beginning of services)
• Increase to 100% the proportion of children who have a health care home	• 99.2% of children had a medical health home at the end of services (compared to 98.0% at the beginning of services)

Detailed Program Outcomes: Early Learning Programs

Services Provided

In fiscal year 2015/16, the Commission's investment in early learning programs produced the following services for children ages birth through five:

Table 5. Aggregate Data for Early Learning Programs

	Children Ages 0-5	Family Members	Service Providers
Number of people receiving services	37,947	13,014	3,989
Number of services provided	215,589	60,356	2,399

Table 6. Description of Children Served in FY 15/16 by Early Learning Programs (n=517)

Variable Considered	Category Label	Count[1]	Percent
Age at most recent interview	Under Three	174	33.7
	Three through Five	343	66.3
Ethnicity	Amer. Indian/Alaska Native	2	0.4
	Asian	45	8.7
	Black/African American	1	0.2
	Hispanic/Latino	419	81.0
	Middle Eastern	1	0.2
	Pacific Islander	1	0.2
	White/Caucasian	25	4.8
	Vietnamese	11	2.1
	Multiracial	5	1.0
	Other	3	0.6
	Unknown	4	0.8
Primary Language	Arabic	0	0.0
	English	242	46.8
	Farsi (Persian)	2	0.4
	Filipino (Tagalog)	1	0.2
	Korean	0	0.0
	Mandarin (Putonghua)	0	0.0

Spanish		249	48.2
Vietnamese		8	1.5
Other		13	2.5
Unknown		2	0.4
At or Below 200% Federal Poverty Level		385	82.2

[1] The counts for specific demographic variables may be less than the total number of children entered into the Commission's Data Collection and Reporting System. This typically occurs because survey respondents decline to answer a specific question, or an error in data entry results in an out-of-range value that must be deleted.

Table 7. Services Provided by Early Learning Program Grantees

Strategic Plan Outcome	Service	Clients Served	Number of Services
HC.2 Increased percent of children receiving developmental / behavioral screenings at milestone ages with linkage to appropriate services	Children receive developmental and/or behavioral screening using evidence-based screening tools (i.e., PEDS, ASQ, ASQ-SE, MCHAT, Child Behavior Checklist)	142	155
HC.4 Increased percent of children growing up in healthy and safe environments	Parents receive speech and language services	182	182
EL.1 Increased all children's developmental skills to be proficient learners in school	Children read to at physicians' offices or clinics	1,379	201
	Parents participate in a program designed to increase the frequency of reading at home	2,403	48,332
	Parents receive literacy information/assistance in waiting rooms or community events	6,836	1,142
	Books distributed to children	N/A	122,061
	New and used books collected for distribution	N/A	114,629
	Children participating in early literacy programs	31,452	77,202
	Providers participate in Building Blocks of Communication	76	76
EL.2 Increased quality of early care and education	Providers will conduct a comprehensive quality evaluation using an established tool such as CLASS, and develop improvement plans, when needed	122	122
	Children receive enhanced evidence-based school readiness services through early education programs	775	16,171
	Parents participate in a drop-in, family-focused early learning program (i.e., Learning Link)	93	780
	Children participate in a drop-in, family-focused early learning program (i.e., Learning Link)	95	834

Strategic Plan Outcome	Service	Clients Served	Number of Services
	Providers are given resources and early intervention strategies for appropriate early care and education practices	352	351
EL.3 Increased early educator, parent and caregiver knowledge and skills to promote children's readiness for school	Parents receive tools, resources, information and/or training needed to transition their child to school	153	306
	School readiness and child development teacher trainings	956	530
	Provide coaching and in-class training for early educators	93	732
SF.1 Increased percent of families are stably housed	Children receive emergency or transitional shelter (bed nights)	754	754
	Family members receive emergency or transitional shelter (bed nights)	670	670
SF.3 Increased parent knowledge and skills to help prepare children to reach their optimal potential	Home visitors and/or program staff will assess and provide service plans to improve parent knowledge of healthy child development using a Commission-approved tool	13	659
	Parents participate in a parenting education class or series on healthy child development	1,058	4,287
	Children receive group interventions to improve healthy child development	1,977	3,147
SF.4 Increased access to and availability of family support services and resources	Parents receive follow up on referrals and services are accessed	936	2,029
	Family support and child development teacher trainings	12	13
	Providers receive training on behavioral health treatment services for children 0-5	913	9
	Parents receive education, resources, referrals, and support regarding their child's behavioral health issues	4,004	1,823
	Staff participate in case management team meetings to support the needs of the families served	12	34
CB.1 Maximize all sustainability activities	Dollar amount raised from program fees/revenue	N/A	$4,494
	CSP match dollars submitted	N/A	$2,055,962
	Dollar amount raised from individual donations	N/A	$378,615
	Dollar amount raised from Foundation donations	N/A	$125,063
	Dollar amount raised from government funds/grants	N/A	$144,000
	Dollar amount of in-kind contribution generated	N/A	$70,962
	Dollar amount received by leveraging Commission dollars	N/A	$2
	Number of volunteers recruited	1,677	1,677
CB.2 Increase access and efficiency, quality and effectiveness	Public information and outreach campaign to increase community awareness of an issue or to promote awareness of access to services	N/A	15
	Developing partnerships, coordinating and collaborating with other agencies to improve service delivery	N/A	150

Strategic Plan Outcome	Service	Clients Served	Number of Services
	Technical assistance is provided, such as assistance with sustainability plans, evaluation activities, and providing quality services	19	16
	Provide trainings to build the capacity of the agency to increase quality services (including STEM related activities)	169	2,524

Table 8. Service Outcomes (SOQs) for Early Learning Programs

Key Strategic Plan Objectives	SOQ Results
Early Learning	
• 75% of typically developing children are effective learners in literacy	• 31.7% of children knew none of the alphabet letters by name at the beginning of services compared to only 13.9% at the end of services
• 75% of typically developing children are effective learners in literacy	• 77.0% of children could identify his or her written name at the end of services, compared to only 41.8% at the beginning of services
• 75% of typically developing children are effective learners in literacy	• 95.3% of children had familiarity with books at the end of services, compared to 91.5% at the beginning of services
• 80% of typically developing children are effective learners in numeracy	• 83.9% of children could count a group of three to five objects by touching each object at the end of services, compared to 79.9% at the beginning of services.
• 80% of typically developing children are effective learners in numeracy	• 83.0% of children could correctly name at least two shapes at the end of services, compared to only 68.3% at the beginning of services
• 80% of typically developing children are effective learners in numeracy	• 68.4% of children could recite more than five numbers in order at the end of services, compared to only 61.9% at the beginning of services
• 75% of typically developing children are socially competent	• 94.1% of children could follow simple two-step oral directions at the end of services, compared to 89.7% at the beginning of services
• 75% of typically developing children are socially competent	• 96.9% of children cooperated with the daily classroom routine most of the time at the end of services, compared to 85.4% at the beginning of services
• Increase parents' knowledge and involvement in preparing children for school	• 73.8% of parents taught their children letters, numbers, or words at least three times in the prior week at the end of services, compared to 64.6% at the beginning of services

Key Strategic Plan Objectives	SOQ Results
• Increase parents' knowledge and involvement in preparing children for school	• 98.1% of parents played with toys or games indoors at least three times in the prior week at the end of services, compared to 90.8% at the beginning of services
• Increase parents' knowledge and involvement in preparing children for school	• 77.1% of parents went on outings with their child at least three times in the prior week at the end of services, compared to 72.1% at the beginning of services
• Increase parents' knowledge and involvement in preparing children for school	• 90.5% of parents talked with their child about daily activities at least three times in the prior week at the end of services, compared to 85.6% at the beginning of services
• Increase parents' knowledge and involvement in preparing children for school	• 82.1% of parents played, games, sports or exercised with their child at least three times in the prior week at the end of services, compared to 75.2% at the beginning of services
• Increase parents' knowledge and involvement in preparing children for school	• 83.9% of parents felt they had sufficient information and support for their child to attend Kindergarten at the end of services, compared to 72.5% at the beginning of services
Healthy Children	
• Increase to 100% the number of children with health coverage	• 99.5% of children served had health insurance at the end of services (compared to 99.4% at the beginning of services)
• Increase to 100% the proportion of children who have a health care home	• 99.5% of children had a medical health home at the end of services (compared to 98.5% at the beginning of services)

Next Steps

As Proposition 10 revenue declines school district support of early learning is important. School districts are encouraged to include early learning in their Local Control Accountability Plans (LCAP) and to seek federal and state funding to support effective programs. Other priorities in the coming year include aligning services with community need. This will require working with the Early Learning Specialists, school district administrators, and other early childhood providers to consider strategies to modify their approaches to implementing programs and services. Approaches to consider may include determining fee schedules to support program sustainability, while allowing continued low or no-cost programming in communities with high need. Finally, with the addition of transitional kindergarten at the school district, the future early learning programs may need to focus on the younger population, such as birth to three year olds.