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R2LTP DATA – NOVEMBER 2013

# TEACHERS, CHILDREN SHOW STRONG GAINS IN EARLY READING FIRST PROGRAM

**I**nternal and external evaluations of Ready to Learn Providence’s third Early Reading First program show that both teachers and children made significant gains on a range of assessments over a period of four years. They also found that the gains made by teachers were not only sustained, but continued to grow after the intervention decreased.

ERF 3, which got under way in 2009, provided 14 classrooms in five urban early childhood centers with intensive professional development and mentoring support for three years. A no-cost extension of the grant allowed R2LP to provide a reduced level of technical assistance to four of those centers for a fourth year. The intervention ended in June 2013.

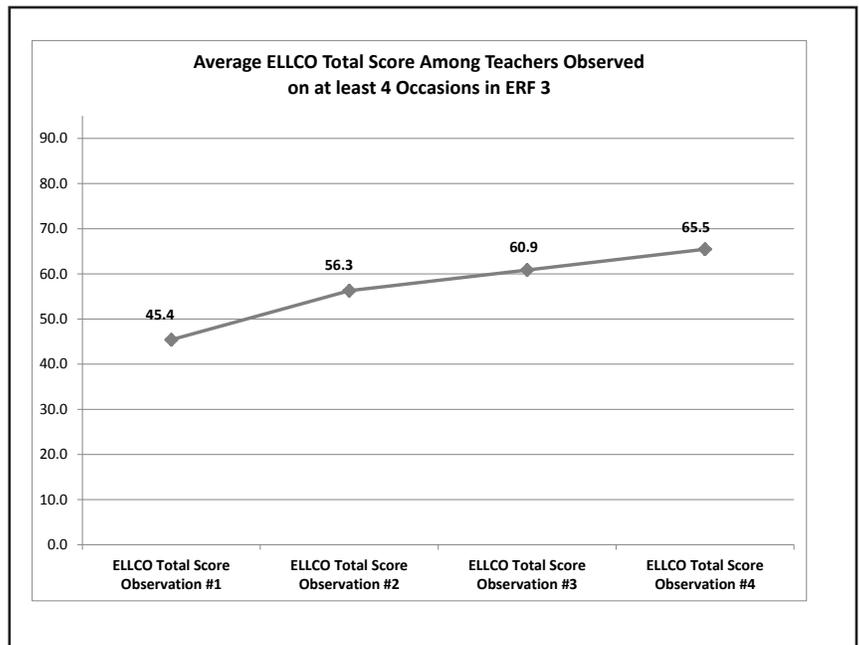
### Outcomes for Teachers

Evaluators used three instruments to observe and measure classroom quality and the sustainability of best practices in the field: the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-R), the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO) and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). Average ELLCO and CLASS data over the four years of the grant demonstrated “a signifi-

cant growth in classroom quality and teacher practice,” according to the final report from the Wellesley Centers for Women at Wellesley College, which conducted the external evaluation.

The ECERS-R was added to the observation battery in the spring of 2012 because it plays a significant role in the the state’s quality improvement initiatives, including BrightStars and public pre-kindergarten. The average scores for the ERF classrooms on the ECERS-R were 5.06, which falls within the high-quality range. Research indicates that this level of quality on the ECERS-R promotes children’s outcomes and school readiness. Teachers scored highest on the Language and Reasoning Subscale and the Interaction Subscale – the two subscales that have been found to be particularly important in promoting strong outcomes.

The Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO) measures classroom structure, curriculum, language environment, books and book reading, print and early writing. Subscales include general classroom environment and language and literacy. The graph at right shows the total scores of 15 teachers whose classrooms were assessed with the ELLCO at least four times.



Evaluators saw a significant jump in ELLCO scores between years 2 and 3, and a significant jump in CLASS scores between years 3 and 4. Evaluators found little growth across the first year of the grant, which they believe underscores the importance of a multi-year intervention. Of particular significance, the data suggest that despite the reduction in technical assistance and training in the fourth year, programs appear to be either sustaining quality as measured by the ELLCO or continuing to increase in quality as measured by the CLASS and ECERS-R.

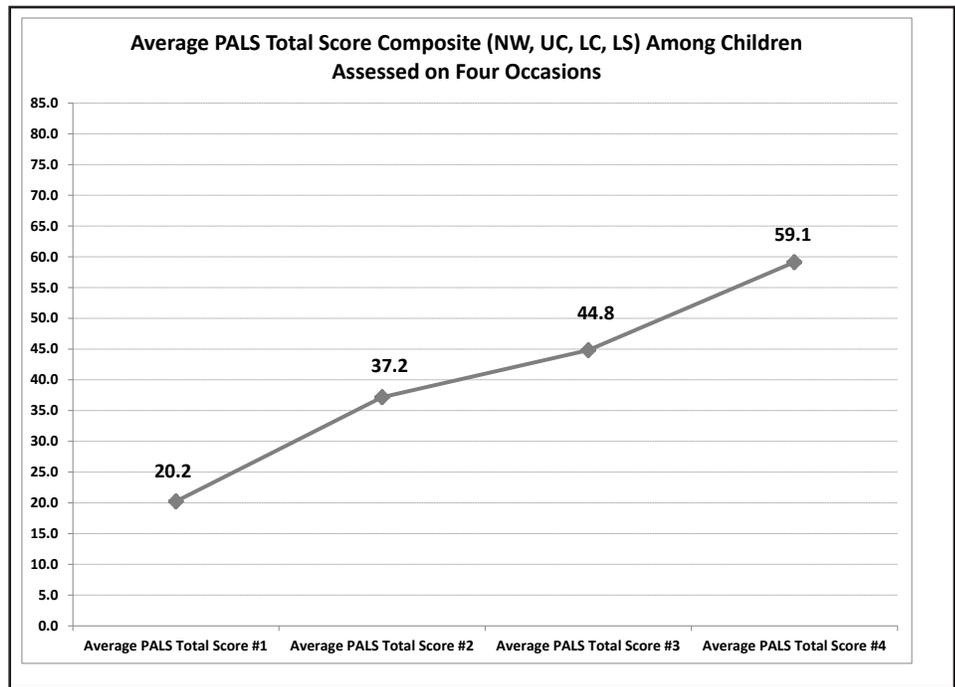
“Overall average scores suggest that teachers are engaging in developmentally appropriate practices and programs are exhibiting classroom environments that promote children’s outcome,” the Wellesley report concluded. “Teachers appear to have a stronger understanding of preschool children’s development when compared to a similar group of non-R2LP teachers.”

### Outcomes for Children

The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, 4th Edition (PPVT-IV), the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening PreK (PALS PreK), and the Test of Preschool Early Literacy (TOPEL) were the child assessment tools used with children in the ERF classrooms.

An analysis of children assessed four or more times with the PPVT-IV found sizable increases in oral language skills. On the PALS-PreK, children made remarkable progress in letter recognition and phonological awareness from pre- to post-test each year.

Children assessed with the TOPEL at least three times also showed impressive gains. At the outset children demonstrated scores within one standard deviation of the norm-referenced mean. By their second assessment, children

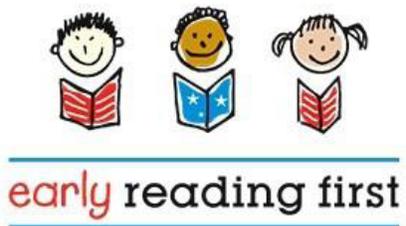


Four tests comprise this composite of total scores on the PALS PreK. They are Name Writing, Upper Case identification, Lower Case identification and Letter Sounds. In general, children demonstrated remarkable progress in their phonological awareness from pre- to post-test each year, and across two years for the subset of children represented in this graph.

had gained an average of 12.3 points, and they climbed to an average of 105.3 by the third assessment.

To download the full reports, please go to <http://r2lp.org/research/>

The Early Reading First grants were administered and funded by the U.S. Department of Education.



### R2LP’s Partners in ERF3

The five centers participating in R2LP’s third Early Reading First program were: Heritage Park YMCA Early Learning Center (Pawtucket), Pawtucket Day Child Development Center, Progreso Latino (Central Falls), Children’s Friend Child Care Program (Central Falls) and Roger Williams Day Care Center (Providence).

*“I learned how important it is to notice everything that children do.”*

A participating teacher

### READY TO LEARN PROVIDENCE

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Ready to Learn Providence is a program of The Providence Plan