# SENATE BILL 8

# NEVADA EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE) PROGRAM

2003-04
Evaluation Report

NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Special Education, Elementary and Secondary Education, and School Improvement
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November 2004

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## Executive Summary

The 2003 Nevada State Legislature passed Senate Bill (SB) 8 that continued the funding of the Nevada Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program and appropriated $2,896,583 in each fiscal year of the 2003-2005 biennium for early childhood education. A total of $301,000 in each fiscal year must be used for the Classroom on Wheels Program. The remaining money, ($2,595,593), must be used by the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) to award competitive grants to school districts and community-based organizations for early childhood education programs. According to SB 8, the grants are "to initiate or expand pre-kindergarten education programs." In addition, the grants must have a parenting component, as specified in the original legislation for the Nevada ECE Program. Families are eligible for the program if they have a child up to the age the child is eligible to attend kindergarten.

In July 2003**,** NDE awarded a competitive grant to nine school districts and community-based organizations to operate an early childhood education program based on the recommendations of peer reviewers. Eight of the successful applications are school districts, including Carson City, Churchill County, Clark County, Douglas County, Humboldt County, Pershing County, Washoe County, and White Pine. The one remaining application was from Great Basin Community College in Elko.

In addition to the competitive portion of the bill, SB 8 set aside funds for the Classroom on Wheels Program. NDE received and reviewed an application from the Classroom on Wheels Program to ensure it contained the criteria developed for the Nevada ECE program.

During 2003-04, the ten Nevada ECE projects provided services to 1027 families at 42 different sites, including 1054 children and 1055 adults. Of the 1054 children served in Nevada ECE during the 2003-04 school year, 976 children were in the Nevada ECE program on December 15, 2003. Using the figures of 976 children and the total award amount of $2,896,583 million, the average cost of the Nevada ECE program per child in 2003-04 was $2,968. However, this per child cost is an estimate since the calculation does not include the monies from all the funding streams that support Nevada ECE

project sites. That is, some Nevada ECE projects are funded with both Nevada ECE funds as well as other funds.

The purposes of this report are to describe the Nevada ECE projects and populations they served and to report the results of data collected on four program outcome indicators in early childhood education and parenting. The evaluation addressed five major questions:

1. How is the funding spent on the program?
2. Who is served by the program?
3. How do projects implement Early Childhood Education?
4. What are the outcomes of Early Childhood Education?
5. Does the Nevada Early Childhood Education Program have a longitudinal impact on the program children and parents? (The results to this question will be presented separately in 2004-05 after the children transition to kindergarten.)

The remainder of the executive summary is divided into key sections of the evaluation, followed by a set of conclusions from the evaluation findings.

**Nevada ECE Participants.** The profile of Nevada ECE families is that while the program serves a wider variety of families than many at-risk programs, many Nevada ECE families have provided their children with limited formal educational experiences prior to the program, are from minority ethnic backgrounds, are English language learners, and a sizeable number of families are poor. For many families, Nevada ECE gives them an important opportunity to better their lives by providing their children with developmentally supportive experiences to prepare them for school.

> The primary reasons families participated in Nevada Early Childhood Education were to better prepare their child for school and to improve their child's future success in school.

Adults cited two primary reasons for participating in Nevada ECE: to better prepare their child for school and to improve their child's chance of success in school.

Nevada ECE served families with a large range of incomes; however, the largest portion of families represents the poorer segment of the population. Thirty-eight percent of Nevada ECE families (385 families) have incomes under $20,000.

Most Nevada ECE children (704 children or 67 percent) did not participate in any educational program before participating in Nevada ECE, and 79 percent (823 children) did not participate in any other educational program while enrolled in Nevada ECE.

When asked what would Nevada ECE children do if they did not participate in the early childhood education program, adults reported the vast majority of children (924 children or 87%) would spend all or a part of the time at home—either with their parents (61 percent), grandparents or other adult family member (19 percent), or with siblings (8 percent). About 30 percent of the children (310 children) would spend all or a part of their time in a structured or semi-structured early childhood setting. In other words, the majority of children would not attend any structured or semi-structured early childhood education program prior to entering kindergarten without Nevada ECE.

> Most children would have stayed at home with their parents, grandparents, siblings, or other family member if they did not participate in Nevada ECE.

The typical Nevada ECE family included two parents—representing 75 percent of families (773 families). Single parents headed 162 families (16 percent).

The adult Nevada ECE population is primarily female: 952 females (90 percent) vs. 103 males (10 percent). Most adult participants were between 20 and 29 years of age (486 adults or 47 percent), followed closely by adults between 30 and 39 years of age (444 adults or 43 percent). The Nevada ECE population also included smaller groups of adults between 40 and 49 years of age (91 adults or 9 percent), 50 years of age and over (11 adults or 1 percent), and teen parents (9 teen parents or 1 percent). The ethnic composition of Nevada ECE adults was primarily Hispanic (592 adults or 55 percent) and White (365 adults or 35 percent). Forty-nine percent of Nevada ECE adults (512 adults) spoke Spanish as their primary language and 48 percent (501 adults) spoke English.

Overall, Nevada ECE projects served children three to five years old. Like their parents, Nevada ECE children represent several ethnic/racial groups, with Hispanic (57 percent) and White (30 percent) representing the largest groups. Almost half of Nevada ECE children spoke English at home (511 children or 49 percent) and the other half (509 families or 448 percent) spoke Spanish.

**Nevada ECE Program Development.** One way to help develop a quality early childhood program is to draw upon effective or established programs and practices when planning program activities. As mentioned previously, Nevada ECE funded 10 projects that operated 42 sites. The evaluation visited 13 of the 42 sites, with at least one site from each of the 10 projects. All 13 sites used commercial early childhood education programs as their primary curriculum: several sites used multiple commercial programs. Many of the programs are based on reading research: five sites used *High Scope,* three sites used the *Creative Curriculum,* and three sites used the Scholastic's *Building Language for Literacy.* Single sites used *Curiosity Corner* or *PreSchool Core Knowledge Curriculum.*

**Nevada ECE Program Implementation.** Nevada ECE funds purchased the services of 89 staff, for a total of 66.6 FTE. The 89 staff included five administrators, 35 teachers, 38 teacher aides, five family specialists, four support staff, and two "other staff."

Of the 35 teachers in the Nevada ECE program, 28 teachers (80 percent) meet the new state requirements for instruction of pre-kindergarten children. Twenty-three of these 28 teachers (82 percent) have an early childhood education certificate and/or endorsement. In other words, most teachers in the program have specific training in early childhood education. The remaining five teachers have an elementary teaching certificate and were employed full time in a pre-kindergarten program as of July 1, 2002, and thus, meet the new state requirements.

The seven instructors who do not meet the new state requirements for instruction of pre-kindergarten children have worked in the early childhood education at Classroom on Wheels for several years. To enable these staff to continue their job status, these seven staff were "grand-fathered in" to the new state requirements.

The instructors and aides received some training during 2003-04. Overall, projects provided teachers and aides with the most hours of training in *Curriculum, Developmental Areas,* and *Pedagogy-instructional strategies*—to help staff learn early childhood education best practices as well as the curriculum models implemented at the projects. Staff

received the least amount of training in *Assessment*, because most teachers and aides were experienced and did not need training in that area.

**Intensity of Services Offered.** The number of service hours that Nevada ECE projects offer to program participants is an important variable in determining the potential impact of the program. The more hours of service offered typically result in the more hours of service attended—increasing the likelihood the program would impact participants positively.

Projects offered an average of 9 to 10 months of service in early childhood education and parenting education during 2003-04. On average, projects offered a total of between 415 and 418 hours of early childhood education for 2003-04, depending upon the age of the child. All 10 projects scheduled three to four year olds an average of 418 hours and five year olds an average of 415 hours.

Projects offered an average of 72 hours of parenting education during 2003-04, primarily through parent and child activities.

All projects used a variety of strategies to involve parents in the program. All 10 projects provided opportunities for parent and child together activities, opportunities for parents to volunteer in the classroom, as well as parenting classes and workshops.

**Levels of Participation.** It is important to distinguish between services offered by projects and participation in services. Nevada ECE children participated in early childhood education services an average of 34.1 hours per month for 7.8 months—a total of 267.6 hours. For comparison, in 2002-03, Nevada ECE children participated in early childhood education services an average of 32.7 hours per month for 7.2 months—a total of 237.6 hours.

Overall, Nevada ECE adults participated in an average of 3.1 hours of parenting education per month for 7.0 months in 2003-04—a total of 21 hours. For comparison, in 2002-03, Nevada ECE adults participated in an average of 2.6 hours of parenting education per month for 6.2 months— total of 16 hours.

The primary reason why the average hours of participation for early childhood education and parenting are less than the average hours of services offered is that many ECE children and adults did not participate for the entire program year.

**Retention and Reasons for Leaving.** Nevada ECE projects retained the majority of families in the program. Eighty-seven percent of Nevada ECE families (892 of 1027 families) who enrolled in the projects during 2003-04 were still in the program at the end of the program year. For comparison, 80 percent of families who enrolled in the Nevada ECE during 2002-03 were still in the program at the end of the program year.

Overall, the families who were in the Nevada ECE Program during 2003-04 spent an average of 9.5 months in the program.

Of the 135 families who left the program, the most common reason why families exited was the family moved out of the area served by the ECE program (41 families or 30 percent). The next most common reasons why families exited were that the family was dropped due to incomplete participation or poor attendance (16 families or 12 percent) or a conflict or problem prevented the families' further participation (16 families or 12 percent).

**Program Delivery Indicators.** Based on ratings by an Early Childhood Education Evaluator, the projects scored relatively high on 17 program delivery indicators for effective early childhood education settings. Projects scored relatively the highest on two indicators*: Parents* and *Reading Readiness.* The indicator, *Parents,* refers to whether projects encouraged parents to be active partners in their child's education process. The indicator, *Reading Readiness,* refers to whether projects encouraged parents and caregivers to regularly read with children and to become actively involved in the reading experience. Nevada ECE projects scored high on these two indicators because all the projects had developed and implemented parenting components in their early childhood education programs.

Relatively, projects scored the lowest on two indicators, *Environment* and *Children with Special Needs. Environment* refers to whether the physical environment is safe, clean,

well-lighted, comfortable, and age appropriate. Nevada ECE projects scored relatively low on this sub-indicator because some projects did not have the most appropriate playground area nor have easy access to appropriate bathroom facilities. *Children with Special Needs* refers to the use of a variety of learning experiences, materials and equipment, and instructional adaptations and for children with special needs. Nevada ECE projects scored relatively low on this indicator because some projects did not serve children with special needs and may be lacking some of these materials.

The evaluation also compared the overall ratings for the Nevada ECE program on the 17 program delivery indicators in 2003-04 with the program's ratings from the two previous years. Nevada ECE projects showed higher scores in 2003-04 than in 2001-02 on all 17 program delivery indicators. Nevada ECE projects also showed higher scores in 2003-04 than in 2002-03 on 12 of the 17 sub-indicators. The five indicators in which Nevada ECE projects scored higher in 2002-03 than in 2003-04 are *Initial Assessment, Problem Solving, Interaction, Learning Environment,* and *Experiences.*

**Educational and Developmental Outcomes of Nevada ECE.** The primary purpose of the state evaluation is accountability—to relate program participation in Nevada ECE to outcomes for children and adults. The evaluation investigated four outcome indicators developed for Even Start projects in Nevada. The four outcome indicators included one indicator in early childhood education and three indicators in parenting. The results are divided between participants in school district and community-based projects and Classroom on Wheels projects.

*School District and Community-Based Nevada ECE Projects.* In early childhood education, school district and community-based ECE children met the expected performance level on an assessment measuring auditory comprehension and expressive communication.

In parenting skills, school district and community-based ECE adults exceeded the expected performance levels on all three indicators. These ECE adults exceeded the expected performance level for achieving at least one parenting goal, for increasing the

amount of time they spent with their children in meaningful interactions, and for increasing the amount of time they spent reading with their children.

*Classroom on Wheels Nevada ECE Projects.* In early childhood education, Classroom on Wheels ECE children met the expected performance level on an assessment measuring auditory comprehension and expressive communication.

In parenting skills, Classroom on Wheels ECE adults exceeded the expected performance levels on one of three indicators. These ECE adults exceeded the expected performance level for increasing the amount of time they spent reading with their children. Classroom on Wheels adults, however, did not meet the expected performance level for the remaining two indicators: achieving at least one parenting goal and increasing the amount of time they spent with their children. Classroom on Wheels ECE adults made positive gains on both indicators, but they fell short of meeting the expected performance level.

## Conclusions.

The 2003-04 school year is the third year of the Nevada Early Childhood Education Program. This evaluation report presents data on participant characteristics (e.g., age, ethnicity, family structure), project operations (e.g., staffing, intensity of services offered) as well as ratings of the services provided by Nevada ECE projects based on program delivery indicators of effective early childhood programs and data on child and adult outcomes.

The two overall conclusions about the 2003-04 Nevada ECE program are: Nevada ECE projects have improved the quality of their early childhood programs and Nevada ECE projects have positively impacted program participants in early childhood development and parenting skills. Other conclusions and statements about the Nevada ECE program include—

- Nevada ECE projects have implemented higher quality early childhood programs for the last three years based on ratings of 17 program delivery indicators of effective early childhood programs.

- All Nevada ECE projects are helping to improve adult's parenting skills and children's language development and school readiness skills. School district and community-based ECE projects showed gains on all child and adult measures and met or exceeded the expected performance levels on all four statewide outcome indicators used for family literacy programs. Classroom on Wheels ECE projects showed gains on all child and adult measures and met or exceeded the expected performance levels on two of the four statewide outcome indicators. For the two indicators that Classroom on Wheels ECE participants did not meet, the participants fell just a little short of meeting the expected performance levels.
- Nevada ECE children, including English Language Learners, are more likely to succeed in kindergarten because of their participation in the program.
- Projects recruited many families who were in need and could benefit from the Nevada ECE program. Many families had multiple economic and social disadvantages (e.g., limited educational experience, limited English proficiency). At enrollment, Nevada ECE children typically started below their peers on a measure of school readiness.
- For many families, Nevada ECE was the only structured opportunity to better prepare their children for school. Most children from Nevada ECE families did not participate in any preschool or toddler program before Nevada ECE and many Nevada ECE children did not participate in any other program while in Nevada ECE.
- The vast majority of children would have stayed at home with their parents, grandparents, siblings, or other family member for all or part of the time if they did not participate in Nevada ECE.
- The majority of early childhood education teachers (80 percent) meet new state requirements for teaching pre-kindergarten children. Of the qualified teachers, most (82 percent) have an early childhood education certificate or endorsement.
- The average cost for providing the Nevada Early Childhood Education Program in 2003-04 was $2,968 per child. However, this per child cost is an estimate since the calculation does not include the monies from all the funding streams that support Nevada ECE project sites.
- Projects offered services in early childhood education of sufficient intensity and duration, which if attended regularly, would positively impact Nevada ECE children.
- Most children attended services in early childhood education at a level which could show positive benefits of the services they received.

- Most parents attended Nevada ECE parenting education services regularly enough to benefit. In addition, Nevada ECE adults attended more average hours of parenting education in 2003-04 than 2002-03. However, some parents were not in the program long enough or did not attend services frequently enough to benefit substantially from them.
- Projects retained a large percentage of families enrolled in Nevada ECE during 2003-04, larger than in 2002-03. In addition, all projects had a list of families waiting to enroll into the program.

Although Nevada ECE projects have established sound early childhood education programs, Nevada ECE projects can still improve the services they provide to families. Below are three recommendations for improvement.

1. Continue to adopt, implement, and provide training to staff in high-quality, research-based early childhood programs and practices.
2. Whenever possible, ensure early childhood classrooms have or are near an outdoor playground with equipment for pre-kindergarten children to provide an outdoor curriculum that improves gross motor development.
3. Whenever possible, ensure early childhood classrooms have or are near appropriate bathroom facilities.

The Nevada Department of Education can help projects meet their goals by considering three recommendations.

1. Continue to locate and provide technical assistance and training in high-quality early childhood education programs and practices, including information and training in the Nevada Pre-kindergarten Content Standards.
2. Continue to monitor project activities to ensure high-quality early childhood education projects.
3. Continue to monitor data collection for the statewide evaluation.

# Chapter I. Introduction

The 2003 Nevada State Legislature passed Senate Bill (SB) 8 that appropriated $2,896,583 in each fiscal year of the 2003-2005 biennium for early childhood education.[1] A total of $301,000 in each fiscal year must be used for the Classroom on Wheels Program. The remaining money, ($2,595,593), must be used by the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) to award competitive grants to school districts and community-based organizations for early childhood education programs. According to SB 8, the grants are "to initiate or expand pre-kindergarten education programs" that are consistent with "*August 2000 Public Support for Prekindergarten Education For School Readiness in Nevada*" —a publication from NDE. The publication identifies a list of features that contribute to an educational setting in which a child can receive high-quality early care and education. The grants must also have a parenting component as specified in the original legislation for the Nevada Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program.

In July 2003, NDE announced a competitive process to select the school districts and community-based organizations to operate the early childhood education programs. To qualify for funding, applicants had to already operate a Nevada ECE program and provide a detailed description of the proposed early childhood education program, the proposed parenting program, and how the money would be used to supplement and not supplant money that would otherwise be expended for early childhood education programs.

NDE received applications from the 10 school districts and community-based organizations that operated a Nevada ECE project in the 2001-03 biennium. A panel of peer reviewers judged the 10 applications using criteria developed for the program. Due to decreased funding, NDE selected to award funds to nine of the 10 applications based on the recommendations of peer reviewers. Eight of the successful applications are school districts, including Carson City, Churchill County, Clark County, Douglas County,

[1] The 2001 Nevada State Legislature funded Nevada Early Childhood Education with $3.5 million.

Humboldt County, Pershing County, Washoe County, and White Pine. The one remaining application was from Great Basin Community College in Elko.

NDE also received an application from the Classroom on Wheels Program. NDE reviewed the application to ensure it contained the criteria developed for the program and awarded the Classroom on Wheels Program the money set aside for the program in the legislation. Classroom on Wheels has received funding from the Nevada State Legislature since 1997.

Data from the Classroom on Wheels ECE projects are combined with the data from the school district and community-based ECE projects in all sections of the evaluation report, except program outcomes. Data on the program outcomes for the school district and community-based ECE projects are presented in Chapter VIII while data on the program outcomes for the Classroom on Wheels ECE projects are presented in Chapter IX. The primary reason for reporting the program outcome results separately is that most of the school district and community-based ECE projects are in their third year of the Nevada ECE program: Classroom on Wheels ECE projects are in their first year.

Table 1 shows the ten early childhood education projects, the amount of funds each project received in 2003-04, and the number of early childhood education sites by project. [2] All together, the ten Nevada ECE projects funded under SB 8 supported 42 early childhood sites in 2003-04. These 42 sites served 1054 children during the 2003-04 school year.

[2] Four projects supported early childhood education programs at more than one site.

**Table 1.** The 2003-04 monetary awards and number of early childhood education sites

| Nevada ECE Project | Monetary Award | Number of Sites |
|---|---|---|
| Carson City School District | $220,000 | 2 |
| Churchill County School District | $108,000 | 1 |
| Clark County School District | $1,229,804 | 12 |
| Classroom on Wheels (COW) | $301,000 | 15 |
| Douglas County School District | $100,000 | 1 |
| Great Basin College | $105,000 | 1 |
| Humboldt School District | $180,000 | 1 |
| Pershing County School District | $100,000 | 1 |
| Washoe County School District | $444,000 | 7 |
| White Pine School District | $108,779 | 1 |
| **Total** | **$2,896,583** | **42** |

According to SB 8, projects can use the funds "to initiate or expand pre-kindergarten education programs." For the purposes of the evaluation, 'initiate' is defined as starting a new pre-kindergarten program where one did not exist previously, serving new children, based on when the Nevada ECE Program originally started in 2001.3 'Expand' is defined as adding a new classroom to an existing pre-kindergarten program, which then serves new children, or improving the services offered to children at existing pre-kindergarten programs, such as by providing more staff or new materials. Table 2 shows the number of sites that projects initiated or expanded during 2003-04. The 10 projects initiated 24 pre-kindergarten sites and expanded services at 18 existing pre-kindergarten sites.

Of the 1,054 children served in Nevada ECE during the 2003-04 school year, 976 children were in the Nevada ECE program on December 15, 2003. Using the figures of 976 children and the total award amount of $2,896,583, the average cost of the Nevada ECE program was $2,968 per child. However, this per child cost is an estimate since the calculation includes both children from project sites fully funded by Nevada ECE and children from project sites funded by multiple sources. To determine a precise per child cost for

3 For Classroom on Wheels, the definitions are based on when the program originally received funds from the Nevada State Legislature in 1999

all children funded in whole or part by Nevada ECE, the evaluation would have to collect budget information from all the funding streams that support children from project sites partially funded under Nevada ECE. As a result, the $2,968 per child figure underestimates the actual per child cost because it does not include the monies from all the funding streams for project sites only partially funded by Nevada ECE. For comparison, the average per child cost for participation in the national Head Start program is $6,934 for FY 2002.

**Table 2.** The number of initiated and expanded early childhood education sites

| Nevada ECE Project | Initiated | Expanded |
|---|---|---|
| Carson County School District | 1 | 1 |
| Churchill County School District | 1 | |
| Clark County School District | 5 | 7 |
| Classroom on Wheels | 8 | 7 |
| Douglas County School District | 1 | |
| Great Basin College | | 1 |
| Humboldt School District | 1 | |
| Pershing County School District | 1 | |
| Washoe County School District | 5 | 2 |
| White Pine School District | 1 | |
| **Total** | **24** | **18** |

## Organization of this Report

Following this chapter, *Chapter II: Early Childhood Education Evaluation* describes the components of the statewide evaluation of Nevada ECE. *Chapter III: Early Childhood Education Program Implementation* provides additional project level information about the administrative context of Nevada ECE projects including staffing patterns, professional qualifications, and inservice training. *Chapter IV: Early Childhood Education Participant Characteristics* presents descriptive information of Nevada ECE families, children, and adults. *Chapter V: Early Childhood Education Services* describes the educational services that projects offer to participating families. The next chapter, *Chapter*

*VI: Participation in Services* reports on children and adult participation in program services. This chapter helps distinguish between the services that projects offer and the extent to which the families participate in services. *Chapter VII: Early Childhood Education Project Descriptions* presents a rating of each project on program delivery indicators for early childhood education programs and a description of the project. *Chapter VIII: Participant Outcomes: School District and Community-based Organizations* presents data on the educational progress of participants in school district and community based ECE projects, while *Chapter IX: Participant Outcomes: Classroom on Wheels* presents similar information on participants in Classroom on Wheels ECE projects. *Chapter X: Testimonials* provides a description written by Nevada ECE families of the benefits they received from participation. Finally, *Chapter XI: Conclusions and Recommendations* presents the conclusions of Nevada ECE implementation based on the results reported in all previous chapters of this report.

# Chapter II. Early Childhood Education Evaluation

Senate Bill 8, Section 189.50 identifies specific evaluation requirements for early childhood education programs funded under the legislation. (See subsections 6, 7, and 8 of SB 8 in Appendix A.) Essentially, the three key components of the evaluation are:

- a description of the programs of early childhood education,
- a summary of the data showing the effectiveness on indicators of early childhood education and parenting, and
- a longitudinal comparison of the data showing the effectiveness of different programs.

This report, the Nevada Early Childhood Education Evaluation Report 2003-04, presents data on two of the three elements of the evaluation: project descriptions and a summary of the data showing the effectiveness on indicators of early childhood education and parenting. Data on the third evaluation component (a longitudinal comparison of the data showing the effectiveness of different programs) will be presented in a separate report in 2004-05, after the children reach kindergarten.

The Nevada Department of Education established an Early Childhood Education Evaluation Design Team in summer 2003 to develop an evaluation design consistent with the evaluation requirements outlined in SB 8. The Evaluation Design Team identified five primary research questions to guide a statewide evaluation of the early childhood education program.[4]

1. How is the funding spent on the program?
2. Who is served by the program?
3. How do projects implement Early Childhood Education?

[4] In addition to the statewide evaluation, projects must also participate in program monitoring activities. Program monitoring involves two parts. Local projects must submit a mid-year and an end-of-year progress report to the state Early Childhood Education Coordinator to describe progress toward meeting program objectives and in implementing the strategies to meet the objectives as outlined in the project application. In addition, the state Early Childhood Education Coordinator conducted site visits to determine project compliance with program requirements.

4. What are the annual outcomes of Early Childhood Education?
5. Does the Nevada Early Childhood Education Program have a longitudinal impact on the children and parents it serves?

The five research questions are based on information requested by the Nevada Legislature and questions of interest to NDE, drawing from previous evaluations of the Nevada ECE and Even Start program. The five primary research questions are restated below—followed by sub-questions. Together, these questions and sub-questions guided data collection for the statewide evaluation.

**Research Question # 1.** ***How is the funding spent on the program?***

This research question addresses the concern of how program dollars are used at the local level. It provides both program-level and project-level data on the amount of state expenditures on ECE. The specific sub-questions in this research area are listed below.

- How many ECE grants were awarded and to which organizations? What are the funding levels for ECE projects?
- How many ECE sites did each recipient operate?
- Were ECE grants used to initiate or expand early childhood education programs?
- What is the average cost of the program per participant?

**Research Question # 2.** ***Who is served by the program?***

A concern of the Nevada Legislature is to describe the people who participate in ECE. This research question addresses the legislature's concern by focusing on the participants. Specific sub-questions to be addressed under this primary research question are listed below.

- How many families, children, and adults participate in ECE? What are the characteristics of families participating in ECE, e.g., family structure, income level?
- What are the background characteristics of the children and their parents who participate in ECE (e.g., gender, age, race/ethnicity, and primary language)?
- What is the educational history of ECE children?
- How long (how many months) do children and adults participate in ECE?

**Research Question # 3.** ***How do projects implement Early Childhood Education?***

This question focuses on a range of implementation issues. An important issue is to determine what services are provided in early childhood education and the quality of those services. The specific sub-questions in this research area are listed below.

- What is the nature of services in early childhood education and parenting education offered by the projects? What activities, if any, do projects offer for parents and children together?
- How do ECE projects implement key components of early childhood education and parenting education services?
- How well do projects implement quality indicators of program delivery for early childhood education programs based on *Nevada Family Literacy Programs—Quality Indicators for Program Delivery?*
- What is the educational background of ECE staff? What kinds of continued training have ECE staff received to implement the early childhood education project effectively?
- On average, what is the intensity (hours) of the services ***provided*** in early childhood education and parenting education?
- To what extent do children ***participate*** in early childhood education and to what extent do adults ***participate*** in parenting education services?

**Research Question # 4.** ***What are the outcomes of Early Childhood Education?***

This set of research questions is designed to address the annual impact of the program on early childhood education and parent involvement measures. The specific sub-questions in this research area are listed below.

- What gains are observed for ECE children on measures of developmental progress?
- What gains are observed for ECE adults on measures of parenting skills, including parenting goals, parent and child together time, and reading time with the child?

**Research Question # 5.** ***What are the outcomes of Early Childhood Education?***

This set of research questions is designed to address the longitudinal impact of the program on children and adults. The specific sub-questions in this research area are listed below.

- What longitudinal gains are observed for ECE children on measures of developmental progress?

- What longitudinal gains are observed for ECE adults on measures of parent involvement?

As mentioned previously, the results to the longitudinal evaluation (Research Question #5) will be presented in a separate evaluation report in 2004-05 when the children who received services in 2003-04 reach kindergarten.

# Chapter III. Early Childhood Education Implementation

This chapter presents a first look at the Nevada ECE projects and how they are implemented by examining their administrative and operational issues. The chapter examines staffing patterns, professional qualifications, and inservice training.

## Staffing Patterns

Project directors were asked to report the number of paid Nevada ECE staff and their full-time equivalents (FTE) or whether they were paid on contract. To avoid duplicating staff counts, we asked project directors to count each staff member only once according to his or her primary assignment area even though staff members may perform multiple roles and functions. Table 3 presents the number of staff across all 10 projects at the end of the project year, their FTE, and the number of these staff on contract.

**Table 3.** The number of Nevada ECE staff by position

| Position | Number of Staff | FTE of Staff | Number on Contract |
|---|---|---|---|
| Administrators | 5 | 2.25 | 0 |
| Teachers | 35 | 29.6 | 0 |
| Aides (educational assistant) | 38 | 28.23 | 0 |
| Family Specialists (home-visitor/advocate) | 5 | 6 | 0 |
| Support Staff (secretary, clerk) | 4 | 1.05 | 0 |
| Others | 2 | 1.5 | 0 |
| **TOTAL STAFF** | **89** | **66.63** | **0** |

Nevada ECE program funds purchased the services of 89 staff for 2003-04, many of whom are part-time or funded part-time with Nevada ECE funds. The 89 staff included five administrators[5] who managed the program at the project sites; 35 teachers who conducted the early childhood education programs; 38 teacher aides who assisted in the early childhood program; five family specialists who presumably took primary

[5] Although all projects have an administrator, Early Childhood Education funds were used to pay a portion of the salary of only five administrators.

responsibility for parenting activities, including home visits; four support staff, such as a secretary or clerk; and two "other staff." The "other staff" included a teacher on special assignment who helped coordinate the program and substitutes. No staff were paid "on contract."

## Professional Qualifications

Project directors reported the qualifications of their administrative and educational staff (teachers and aides) in terms of their highest level of education and years of professional experience in their position. For teachers, the evaluation also collected data on the type of teacher license/certificate and endorsement. Data on the type of certificate and endorsement held by the early childhood teachers are important because of new state requirements regarding teachers in early childhood education programs. According to the new state law, a teacher must hold a special license or endorsement in early childhood education to teach in a program of instruction for pre-kindergarten children.[6] The new law does not apply to a teacher who holds an elementary license, is employed full time in a prekindergarten program as of July 1, 2002, and continues to teach full time in a prekindergarten program after July 1, 2002.

Table 4 shows the highest level of education attained for Nevada ECE administrators, teachers, aides or para-professionals, and family specialists. Although there is no specific required education level for administrators, four of the five administrators have at least a four-year college degree. One administrator has a two-year college degree.

Of the 35 teachers, 11 have a Master's degree, 18 have a Bachelor's degree, three have an Associate's degree, and three have a high school diploma or GED.

Of the 38 aides, three have a Bachelor's degree, six have an Associate's degree, and 29 have a high school diploma or GED. Nevada ECE projects have five family specialists: one has an Associate's degree and four have a high school diploma or GED.

Table 4 also shows that Nevada ECE instructors and administrators had more experience

[6] See Nevada Revised Statutes 391.019 and Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) 391.087 for the complete list of qualifications, provisions, and exceptions for the revised law.

than other Nevada ECE staff. Two of the five administrators have over 10 years experience. Of the 35 teachers, 11 (31 percent) had more than 10 years of experience, seven teachers (20 percent) had 5 to 10 years of experience, and 17 teachers (49 percent) had 1 to 5 years of experience. Of the 38 aides and five family specialists, seven (17 percent) had more than 5 years of experience, three (7 percent) had more than 10 years of experience, five aides (12 percent) had 5 to 10 years of experience, 23 teachers (53 percent) had 1 to 5 years of experience, and seven (16 percent) had less than a year of experience.

**Table 4.** Highest level of education and experience of Nevada ECE project staff

| | Administrators | Teachers | Aides | Family Specialists |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Highest Level of Education | | | | |
| Did not complete diploma/GED | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| High school diploma or GED | 0 | 3 | 29 | 1 |
| AA | 1 | 3 | 6 | 4 |
| BA/BS | 2 | 18 | 3 | 0 |
| MA/MS/M.Ed | 1 | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| Ph.D./Ed.D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Years of Experience in primary area | | | | |
| Less than 1 year | 1 | 0 | 7 | 0 |
| 1-5 years | 1 | 17 | 23 | 5 |
| 5-10 years | 1 | 7 | 5 | 0 |
| More than 10 years | 2 | 11 | 3 | 0 |

In terms of state requirements for teachers in early childhood education programs, 28 of the 35 teachers (80 percent) meet the requirements. Twenty-three of these 28 teachers (82 percent) have an early childhood education certificate and/or endorsement. In other words, most teachers in the program have specific training in early childhood education. The remaining five teachers have an elementary teaching certificate and were employed full time in a prekindergarten program as of July 1, 2002, and thus, also meet the new state requirements.

Of the seven teachers who do not meet the new state requirements for instruction of

pre-kindergarten children, one has a bachelor's degree, three have an AA degree, and three have a high school degree or GED certificate. All seven teachers have worked in the early childhood education at Classroom on Wheels for several years. To enable these staff to continue their job status, these seven staff "grand-fathered in" to the new state requirements.

## Inservice Training

Inservice training is an critical part of providing quality services to Nevada ECE families so that staff can learn about best practices in early childhood education and receive training in the program models (e.g., *High Scope*) projects adopt. Table 5 presents the number of projects that provided training to teachers and aides in eight inservice areas by specific hour ranges. The results show that project staff received substantial training in 2003-04.

**Table 5.** The number of projects that provided teachers and aides training by hour ranges

| **Inservice Topics** | ***No hours*** | ***0 to 5 hours*** | ***6 to 10 hours*** | ***11 to 15 hours*** | ***Over 15 hours*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Curriculum | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| b) Developmental areas | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| c) Learning environment | 2 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| d) Children with special needs | 3 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| e) Classroom or behavior management | 2 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| f) Pedagogy-instructional strategies | 1 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| g) Assessment | 2 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| h) Involving parents | 2 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 2 |

Overall, projects provided teachers and aides the most hours of training in *Curriculum, Developmental Areas,* and *Pedagogy-instructional strategies,* to help staff learn early childhood education best practices as well as the curriculum models implemented at the projects. Staff received the least amount of training in *Assessment*, because most teachers and aides were experienced and did not need training in that area.

# Chapter IV. Early Childhood Education Participant Characteristics

The characteristics of Nevada ECE participants are based on data from 10 projects that provided services to 1,027 families, including 1,054 children and 1,055 adults who participated in services from July 1, 2003 through June 30, 2004. Table 6 shows the number of families, adults, and children served by project.

**Table 6.** Number of Nevada ECE participants by project

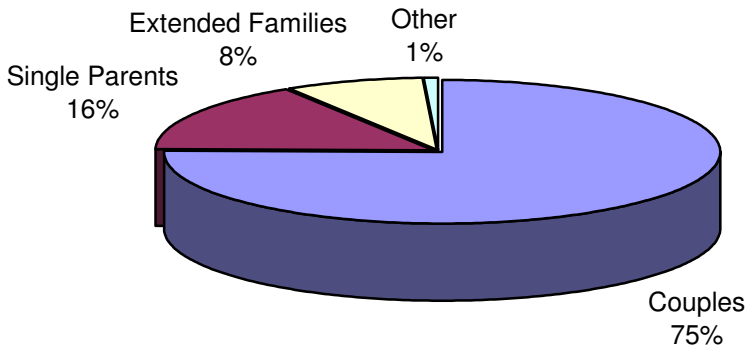
| Project | Families | Children | Adults | Total Participants |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Carson City | 84 | 84 | 86 | 170 |
| Churchill County | 35 | 35 | 39 | 74 |
| Clark County | 291 | 298 | 299 | 597 |
| Classroom on Wheels | 236 | 242 | 236 | 478 |
| Douglas County | 25 | 25 | 28 | 53 |
| Great Basin C.C. | 34 | 35 | 35 | 70 |
| Humboldt County | 49 | 49 | 49 | 98 |
| Pershing County | 36 | 38 | 38 | 76 |
| Washoe County | 220 | 230 | 228 | 458 |
| White Pine County | 17 | 18 | 17 | 35 |
| **Total** | **1,027** | **1,054** | **1,055** | **2,109** |

In addition to the families served, all 10 projects maintained a waiting list for 2003-04. The 10 projects, which include 42 separate sites, reported they had 672 families waiting to enter the program—an average of 16 families for each of the 42 project sites.

## Characteristics of Families

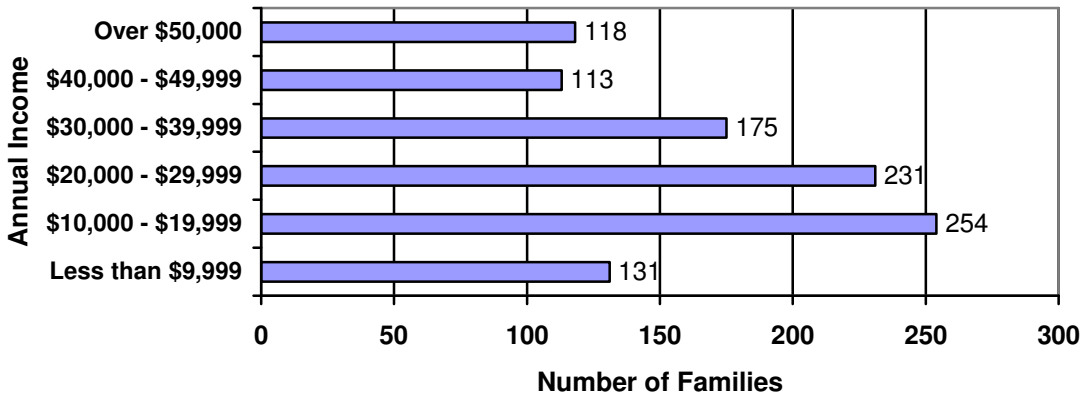
**Household Composition.** The largest percentage of families that participated in Nevada ECE described themselves as couples (773 families or 75 percent), followed by single parent families (162 families or 16 percent), extended family households (81 families or 8 percent), and "other" family structures (9 families or 1 percent). Extended families encompass children living with grandparents, stepparents, or guardians. Data were not available for two families.

**Figure 1.** Structure of Nevada ECE families




**Family Income Level.** Although family income level is not a criterion for Nevada ECE eligibility, the evaluation collected information about family income to describe the population served in the program. The data in Figure 2 indicate that while the program

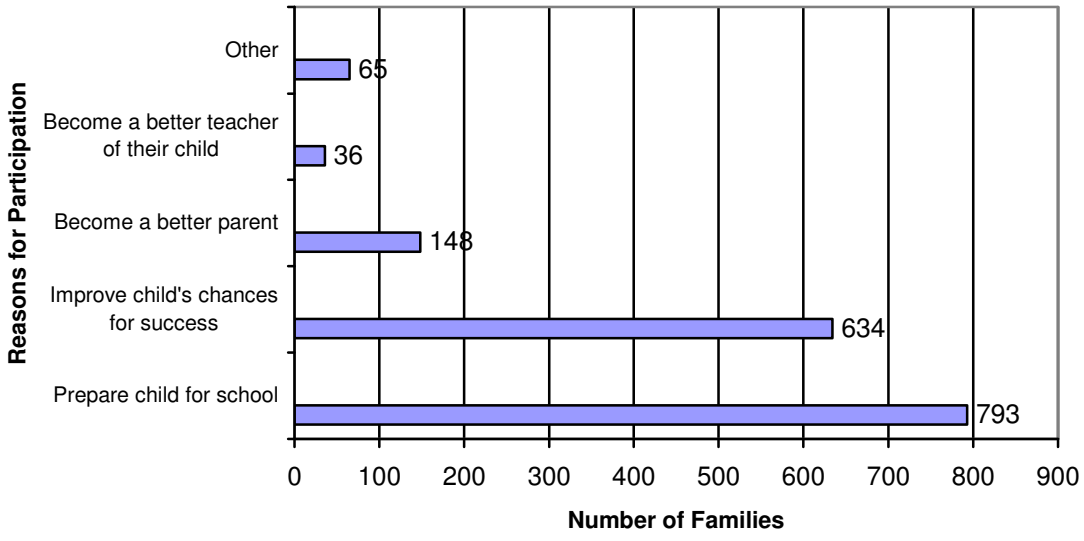
**Figure 2**. Income of Nevada ECE families



served families with a large range of incomes, the largest portion of Nevada ECE families represent the poorer segment of the population. Thirty-eight percent of Nevada ECE families (385 families) have incomes under $20,000. Data were not available for five families.

**Reasons for Participating in Early Childhood Education.** Parents were asked to provide up to two reasons why they wanted to participate in Nevada ECE. As shown in Figure 3, the two primary reasons for enrolling in the program were to better prepare their child for school (793 families or 78 percent) and to improve their child's chance of success in school (634 adults or 62 percent). Data were unavailable for four families.

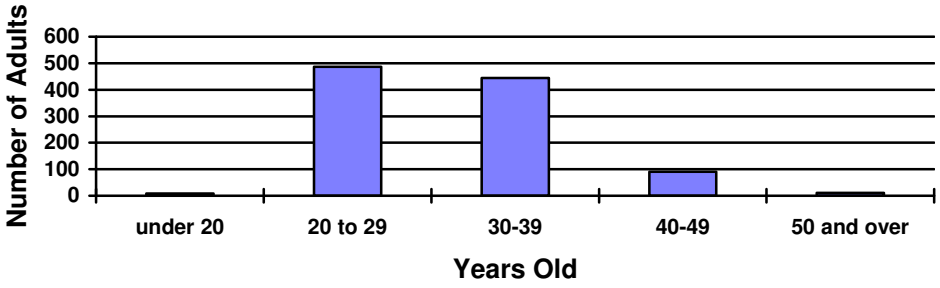
**Figure 3.** Reasons for participating in Nevada ECE



## Characteristics of Adults

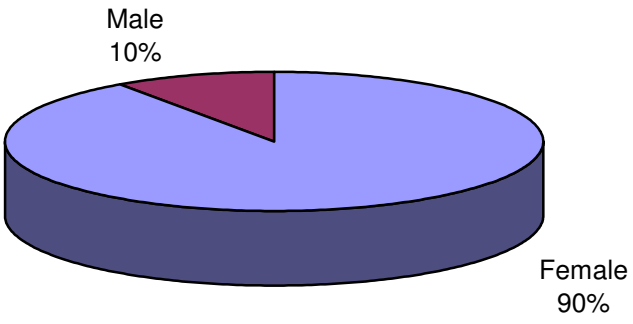
**Age.**[7] Most adults were 20 to 29 years of age (486 adults or 47 percent). Nine adults (1 percent) were under 20 years old; 444 adults (43 percent) were 30 to 39 years old; 91 adults (9 percent) were 40 to 49 years old; and 11 adults (1 percent) were over 50 years old. Data were unavailable for 14 adults.

**Figure 4.** Age of Nevada ECE adults




**Gender.** Most of the parents who participated with their children in Nevada ECE were female. Of the 1,055 adults, 952 (90 percent) were female and 103 (10 percent) were male.

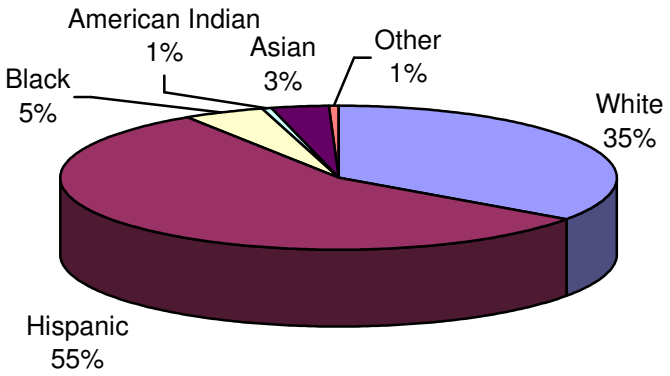
**Figure 5.** Gender of Nevada ECE adults




[7] Age was determined at the beginning of the program year as of September 1, 2003.

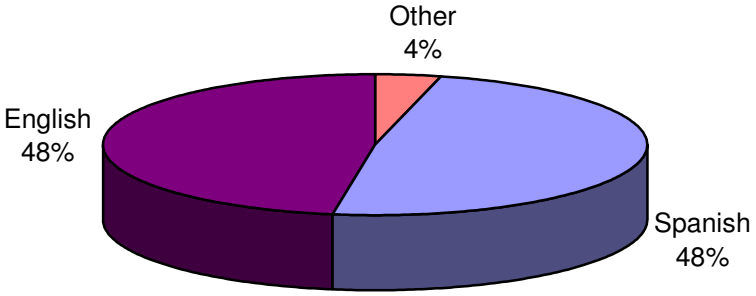
**Ethnicity.** The 10 projects served primarily Hispanic and White adults. Of the 1,054 adults for whom data were available, 592 (55 percent) categorized themselves as Hispanic, 365 (35 percent) categorized themselves as White not of Hispanic decent, 49 (5 percent) as Black, 34 (3 percent) as Asian, 7 (1 percent) as American Indian, and 7 (1 percent) adults categorized themselves as "Other." Data were unavailable for one adult.

**Figure 6.** Ethnicity of Nevada ECE adults




**Language Spoken at Home.** Of the 1,055 participating adults, 512 (48 percent) reported speaking Spanish at home, 501 (48 percent) reported speaking English, and 41 (4 percent) reported speaking "Other." Data were unavailable for one adult.

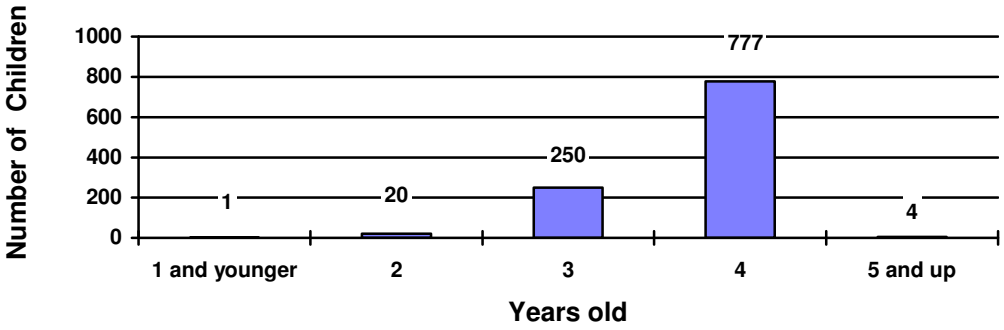
**Figure 7.** Language of Nevada ECE adults



## Characteristics of Children

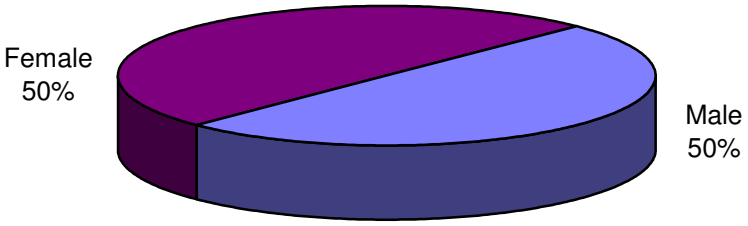
**Age.**[8] Of the 1,053 children for whom data were available: 1 child (<1 percent) was less than two years old; 270 children (26 percent) were two or three years old; 777 children (74 percent) were 4 years old; and 4 children (<1 percent) were 5 years or older. Data were unavailable for one child.

**Figure 8.** Age of Nevada ECE children




**Gender.** The 10 projects served equal numbers of male and female children. Of 1,054 children, 527 (50 percent) were male and 527 (50 percent) were female.

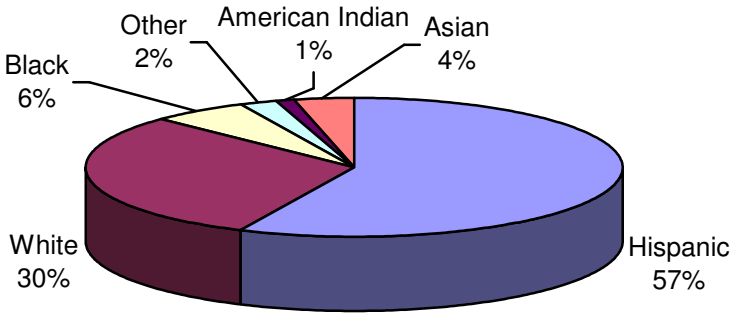
**Figure 9.** Gender of Nevada ECE children




[8] Age was determined at the beginning of the program year as of September 1, 2003. All of the two year olds turned three years old before they entered the ECE projects.

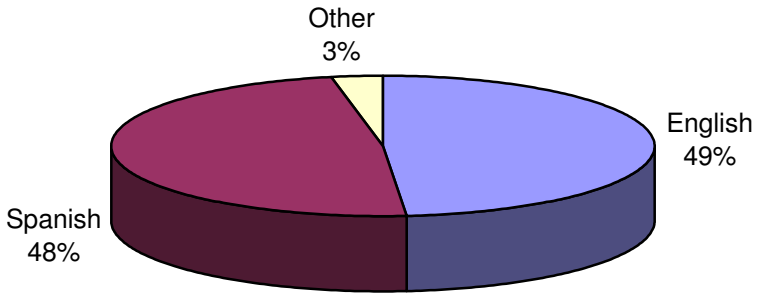
**Ethnicity.** Of the 1,053 children for whom data were available, 601 (57 percent) were Hispanic, 318 (30 percent) were White not of Hispanic decent, 60 (6 percent) were Black, 38 (4 percent) were Asian, 25 (2 percent) were categorized as "Other," and 11 (1 percent) were American Indian.

**Figure 10.** Ethnicity of Nevada ECE children




**Language Spoken at Home.** Of the 1,053 children for whom data were available, 511 children (49 percent) speak English at home while 509 (48 percent) speak Spanish. In addition, 33 (3 percent) of the children were reported as speaking "Other."

**Figure 11.** Language of Nevada ECE children



### History of Participation in Non-Early Childhood Education Programs.

Nevada ECE plays an important role in the lives of children as reflected in their lack of participation in other educational programs. Of the 1,047 children for whom data were available, 67 percent (704 children) did not participate in any other educational program prior to Nevada ECE, and 79 percent (823 children) did not participate in any other educational program while in Nevada ECE. Without Nevada ECE, many children may not have participated in any educational program before enrolling in school. For many children, Nevada ECE helped prepare them for school.

**Table 7.** Number of children participating in non- Nevada ECE programs before and simultaneous with Nevada ECE [9]

| Non-Nevada ECE Programs | Before Nevada ECE Program | Simultaneous with Nevada ECE Program |
|---|---|---|
| Head Start | 34 | 10 |
| Even Start | 52 | 58 |
| Title I Preschool | 8 | 14 |
| Early Intervention, Early Childhood Special Education | 2 | 90 |
| Other Preschool or Infant/Toddler Program | 64 | 5 |
| Migrant Education | 149 | 49 |
| Other | 704 | 823 |
| None | 61 | 22 |

### Status If Child Did Not Participate in Early Childhood Education Program

An important question is what would Nevada ECE children do if they did not participate in the early childhood education program. Project staff asked participating adults at intake what would the child do if he/she did not participate in Nevada ECE—based on a list of possible choices as shown in Table 8. Of the 1047 children for whom data were available, the majority of children (924 children or 87%) would spend all or part of the time at home—either with their parents (61 percent), grandparents or other adult family member

[9] Children can participate in more than one program.

(19 percent), or with siblings (8 percent). Smaller percentages of children would spend all or a part of their time attending another preschool or infant/toddler program (166 children or 16 percent) or attending day care (144 children or 14 percent). In other words, at least 70 percent of the children would not have attended any structured or semi-structured early childhood education program prior to entering kindergarten without Nevada ECE. Thus, the Nevada Early Childhood Education program provides many children with an important opportunity to be better prepared when they enter school so they are more likely to succeed.

**Table 8.** The status of children if they did not participate in the Nevada ECE program

| **Status of child if not in the Nevada ECE program** | **Number of Children**[10] |
|---|---|
| a) Attend day care | 144 |
| b) Stay with grandparents or other adult family member | 196 |
| c) Stay at home with parents | 641 |
| d) Stay at home with siblings | 87 |
| e) Attend other preschool or infant/toddler program | 166 |
| f) Other *(specify)* _____ | 48 |

The profile of Nevada ECE families that emerges from the descriptive analyses is that while the program serves a wider variety of families than many at-risk programs, many Nevada ECE families have provided their children with limited formal educational experiences prior to the program, are from minority ethnic backgrounds, are English language learners, and a sizeable number of families are poor. For many families, Nevada ECE gives them an important opportunity to better their lives by providing their children with developmentally supportive experiences to prepare them for school.

[10] The number in Table 8 total more than the children in the program because children can participate in more than one program.

# Chapter V. Early Childhood Education Services

Nevada ECE projects are required to provide services in early childhood education and parenting education. This chapter describes the intensity of these services to children and parents and the types of parenting services provided to parents.

## Intensity of Services

A very important piece of information is the number of hours Nevada ECE projects offered participants in early childhood education and parenting education. Typically, research has found that the more hours participants spend in program activities, the larger the impact.

To determine the intensity of educational services, we asked directors to report the scheduled hours per month and duration of instruction in months for early childhood education and parenting education, as shown in Table 9. The number of projects that offered the service is shown as well: one project did not offer services in all areas.

**Table 9.** Average scheduled hours of parenting and early childhood services

| Service Area | Number of projects | Hours per month | Duration of instruction in months | Total Average Hours |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Early Childhood Education** | | | | |
| Under age 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Age 3 and 4 | 10 | 46.2 | 9.1 | 418.3 |
| Age 5 | 10 | 45.9 | 9.1 | 415.6 |
| **Parenting Education** | | | | |
| Parent alone | 9 | 3.1 | 7.7 | 23.6 |
| Parent and child are involved together | 10 | 5.5 | 8.8 | 48.4 |

***Early Childhood Education.*** The results show that all 10 projects served three to four year old children as well as five year old children. No projects served children under three years old.

The scheduled hours of early childhood education differed only slightly between children three to four years old and five years old. On average, 10 projects scheduled three to four year olds an average of 418 hours of early childhood education (46.2 hours per month for nine months), and nine projects scheduled five year olds an average of 416 hours of early childhood education (45.9 hours per month for nine months). The only difference between the two averages is the data from the one project are not reported for five year olds because they did not serve five year olds.

For comparison, we looked at the scheduled hours of early childhood education per month in Nevada ECE projects from 2002-03. During 2002-03, Nevada ECE projects scheduled an average of 44.1 hours per month for three to four year olds, and 45.2 hours per month for five year olds. In other words, Nevada ECE programs offered slightly more hours of early childhood education program per month in 2003-04 than in 2002-03. The primary reason for the difference between the two years is that the Nevada ECE program included one home-based program in 2002-03, but none in 2003-04. Home-based programs offer substantially fewer hours of early childhood education than center-based programs. All Nevada ECE projects for 2003-04 are center-based.

***Parenting Component.*** According to the original legislation for the Nevada ECE Program, Nevada ECE projects must have a parenting component. Project directors reported that all 10 projects provided some parenting education services in 2003-04. Nine projects provided parenting services to parents alone and all 10 projects provided parent and child together (PACT) time. On average, nine projects offered a total of 24 hours of *Parenting education alone*—3.1 hours per month for 7.7 months. In addition, 10 projects offered an average of 48 hours of *Parent and child time together*—5.5 hours per month for 8.8 months. In other words, most adults could receive a total of about 72 hours of parenting education during 2003-04.

For comparison, the number of hours per month of parenting education offered by Nevada ECE projects in 2003-04 is similar to the number of hours that Nevada ECE projects offered in 2002-03. On average, Nevada ECE projects offered a total of 28 hours of *Parenting education alone* and a total of 48 hours of *Parent and child time together*.

## Types of Parenting Services

Ten project directors were asked to identify the types of parenting services provided to participating adults. Table 10 shows the number of projects that provided different parenting services. The evaluation found that although some projects do not provide all of the parenting services, each project provides at least four services and eight projects provided all five specified services to at least some families.

The most frequently conducted strategy was parent and child activities together (PACT) time, such as during class or at family literacy nights: nine projects had most parents participate in this activity. The next most frequently conducted strategies were parent/teacher conferences (conducted by eight projects with most families), followed closely by home visits and parenting classes/workshops (conducted by seven projects with most families).

**Table 10.** The number of projects that provided various parenting services to families

| Type of Parenting Service | *Not provided* | *Few families* | *Some families* | *Most families* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Parenting classes/workshops | 0 | 3 | 0 | 7 |
| b) Parent and child together activities *(e.g., family literacy nights, field trips)* | 0 | 0 | 1 | 9 |
| c) Parent/Teacher Conferences | 1 | 0 | 1 | 8 |
| d) Home Visits | 1 | 2 | 0 | 7 |
| e) Parents volunteer in the classroom | 0 | 1 | 3 | 6 |
| f) Other | 1 | 0 | 3 | 3 |

# Chapter VI. Participation in Services

Chapter IV showed that many Nevada ECE families have multiple disadvantages, including limited educational experiences, poverty, and limited English proficiency. Chapter V showed the amount of services and types of services (for parenting education) that Nevada ECE projects offer to address the educational needs of these families. This chapter will present the extent to which Nevada ECE families participated in the services.

For families, we examined—

- the percentage of families still participating in the program in June 2004,
- how many months families participated in the program, and
- the reasons they exited the program during the year.

For children, we examined—

- the number of hours children participated in early childhood education.

For adults, we examined—

- the number of hours adults participated in parenting education.

The results are presented in three sections: family participation, child participation, and adult participation.

## Family Participation

***Program Completion Rate.***

A requirement of SB 8 is to determine the percentage of participants who drop out of the program before completion. The results show that 135 of the 1,027 families in Nevada ECE (13 percent) left the program during the 2003-04 school year. In other words, 87 percent of the families completed the program. For comparison, 20 percent of Nevada ECE families left the program before the end of the 2002-03 school year, or 80 percent of the families completed the program. In other words, Nevada ECE projects increased the percent of families who remained in the program until the end of the program year from 2002-03 to 2003-04.

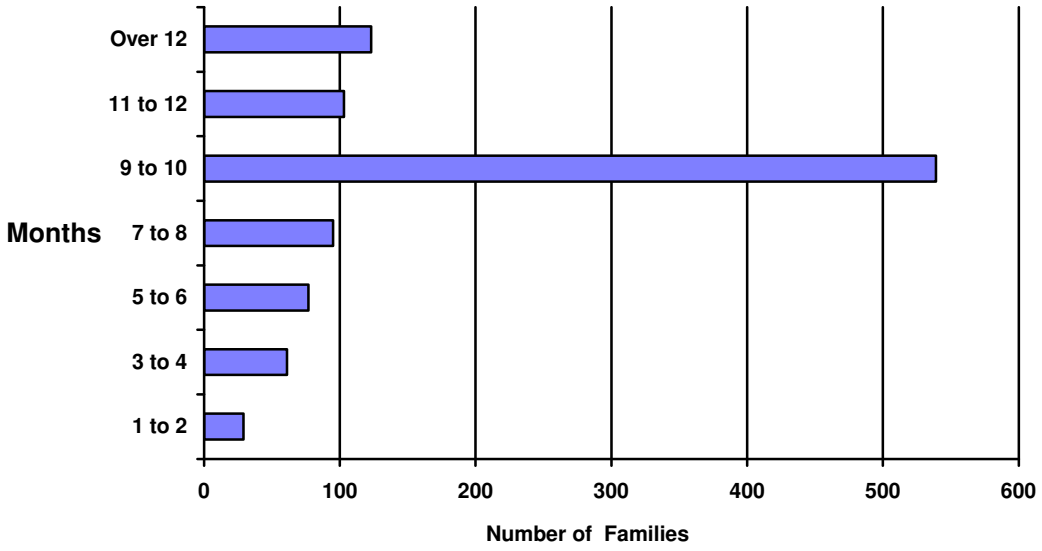
***Length of Participation in Program.***

Research has found that the length of time families participate in Early Childhood Education is positively correlated with the gains of adults in parenting skills and children in school readiness. Clearly, a primary purpose of the program is to retain children and adults in the program long enough so that they can reach program goals.

Figure 12 shows the number of families enrolled in Nevada ECE projects by months in the program. Data are available on all 1,027 families in the program.

On average, Nevada ECE families were in the program for an average of 9.5 months between their initial intake date and the end of the 2003-04 program year or their exit interview date (if they exited the program before the end of the program year). Figure 12 shows the average months of participation in two months intervals. The distribution shows that the majority of families (539 or 52 percent) stayed in the program for nine to 10 months. In other words, most families started Nevada ECE at the beginning of the program year and stayed until the end of the program year.

**Figure 12.** Length of participation in months



***Reason for Exiting Program.***

Project staff reported a range of reasons why families left the program. Table 11 shows the number of families that exited the program for various reasons. Overall, the most common reason why families exited the program was the family moved out of the area served by the ECE program (41 families or 30 percent). The other reasons why families exited the program included that the family was dropped due to incomplete participation or poor attendance (16 families or 12 percent), a conflict or problem prevented further participation (16 families or 12 percent), the family switched to another program (13 families or 10 percent), a family crises prevented further participation (12 families or 9 percent), the family stopped participating due to a lack of interest (5 families or 4 percent), and "other reason" (19 families or 14 percent).

**Table 11**. The number of families exiting the program by reason

| Reasons for exiting program | Families |
|---|---|
| Parent or child switched to a different program | 13 |
| Family moved out of the area served by the ECE program | 41 |
| Family stopped participating due to a lack of interest | 5 |
| Family was dropped due to incomplete participation or poor attendance | 16 |
| Family crisis prevents further participation | 12 |
| Conflicts or problems prevents continued participation | 16 |
| Other reason (specify) _____ | 19 |
| Reason unknown | 13 |
| **Total** | **135** |

## Child Participation

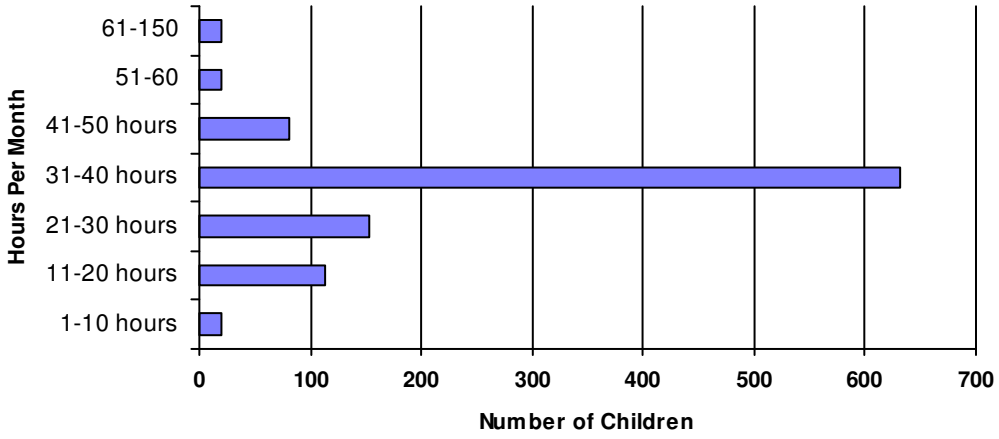
The primary component of Nevada ECE is early childhood education.

***Hours of Participation in Early Childhood Education.***

The amount of time Nevada ECE children participated in early childhood education should be a strong positive predictor of performance on early childhood measures. Data were available for 1,038 of the 1,055 children. Overall, Nevada ECE children participated in early childhood education an average of 34.1 hours per month for 7.8 months—a total of 267.6 hours. Children showed a wide range of participation in hours per month of early childhood education (from 1 to 150 hours per month).

To obtain a better picture of the amount of time children spent in early childhood programs, the evaluator determined the number of hours per month that children spent in early childhood education within several hour ranges, as shown in Figure 13. Most children (632 of 1,038, or 61 percent) attended an average of 31 to 40 hours of early childhood education per month. The second largest group (153 children or 15 percent) attended an average of 21 to 30 hours of early childhood education per month.

**Figure 13.** Hours per month in an Early Childhood Program



## Adult Participation

The evaluation collected data on adult participation in parenting education, the second required component for Nevada ECE participation. The component is intended to better equip parents to support their children's social, emotional, and academic development.

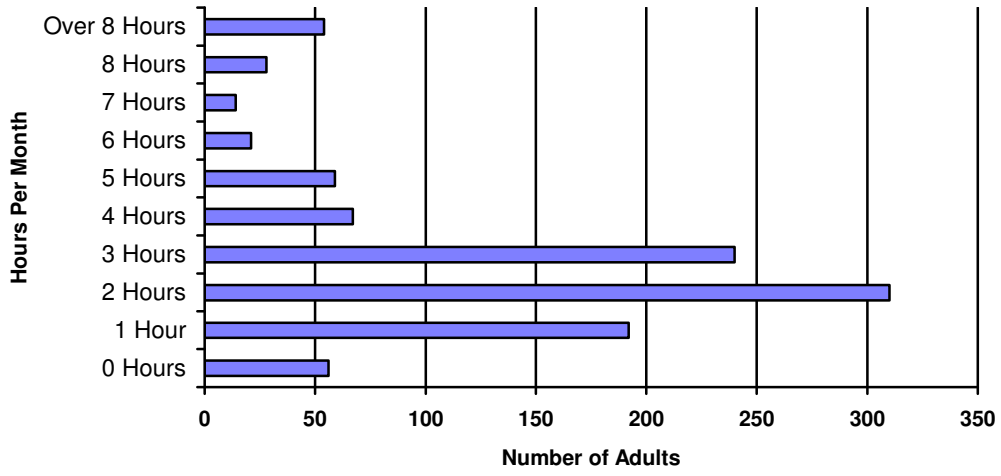
***Hours of Parenting Education.***

Data were available for 1,041 of the 1,055 adult participants (99 percent). Of the 1,041 adults for whom data were available, 56 parents (5 percent) had yet to participate in any parenting education services. While some of these parents had just enrolled their children in the program, other parents simply did not participate in parenting services.

For the 1,041 adults for whom data were available, the adults participated in parenting education an average of 3.1 hours per month for 7.0 months—a total of 21.3 hours during the program. For comparison, in 2002-03, Nevada ECE adults participated in an average of 2.6 hours of parenting education per month for 6.2 months— total of 15.8 hours.

Figure 14 shows the number of adults who participated in parenting education by hours per month. Projects reported that most adults (550 or 53 percent) for whom data were

**Figure 14**. Hours of Parenting Education per month



available participated in two to three hours of parenting education per month. If we exclude the 56 adults who projects reported as not participating in parenting education, the remaining 985 adults participated in an average of 3.2 hours per month for 7.3 months—a total of 23.4 hours during the program

# Chapter VII. Nevada ECE Project Descriptions

As mentioned previously, SB 8 requires three components for the evaluation: project descriptions, a summary of the effectiveness of the projects on early childhood education and parenting outcome indicators, and a longitudinal comparison of the data showing the effectiveness of different programs. This chapter presents the project descriptions. The evaluator visited all 10 projects in spring 2004, making a total of 13 site visits since several projects operate multiple early childhood education sites with different program models.[11]

The evaluator collected information from each project based on a common set of program delivery indicators for effective early childhood education programs. The program delivery indicators were developed in June 2001 by the Nevada Even Start Statewide Family Literacy Initiative. The Initiative developed the program delivery indicators to monitor, evaluate, and improve Even Start projects within the State. In fact, Nevada developed two sets of indicators for Even Start: one set for program delivery and a second set for program outcomes. Even Start projects use the program delivery indicators as part of the required local evaluation to assess the program and build a program improvement plan. NDE uses the program outcome indicators as part of the statewide evaluation of all Even Start projects in Nevada. Because Nevada ECE provides services in some of the same areas as Even Start, the Early Childhood Education Evaluation Design Team decided to use some of the Even Start program delivery and program outcome indicators in the statewide evaluation of Nevada ECE.

The Even Start program delivery indicators cover 12 areas of family literacy programs. One area is Early Childhood Education Settings: it includes 17 sub-indicators. The 17

[11] The evaluator did not visit all the Nevada ECE sites in Carson City School District, Clark County School District, Classroom on Wheels, or Washoe County School District because of time and resource constraints. Carson City has two Nevada ECE sites, Clark County has 12 sites, Classroom on Wheels has four projects with 15 sites, and WCSD has seven sites. Instead, the evaluator visited one of two sites in Carson City, three of 12 sites in Clark County, one of four projects for Classroom on Wheels, and two of the seven sites in Washoe County. All of the sites visited at projects with multiple sites were representative of types of early childhood education models offered at these projects.

sub-indicators are placed on a 5-point rubric, in which "1" is "not at all descriptive" of the program and "5" is "very descriptive" of the program. The Nevada ECE evaluator further developed the rubric by identifying specific evidence to look for when using the rubric to rate the project. The Nevada ECE evaluator used the quality indicators from Early Childhood Education Settings to rate and to describe the quality of the implementation of Nevada ECE projects. (See Appendix B for a copy of the 17 sub-indicators and the Site Visitation Form used by the evaluator.)

*Nevada ECE Program Ratings.* Figure 15 shows the Nevada ECE program ratings on the 17 sub-indicators of Early Childhood Program Settings across the project sites visited for each of the last three years, 2001-02 to 2003-04.[12] (See Appendix C for each project's rating on the 17 sub-indicators of Early Childhood Program Settings for 2003-04).

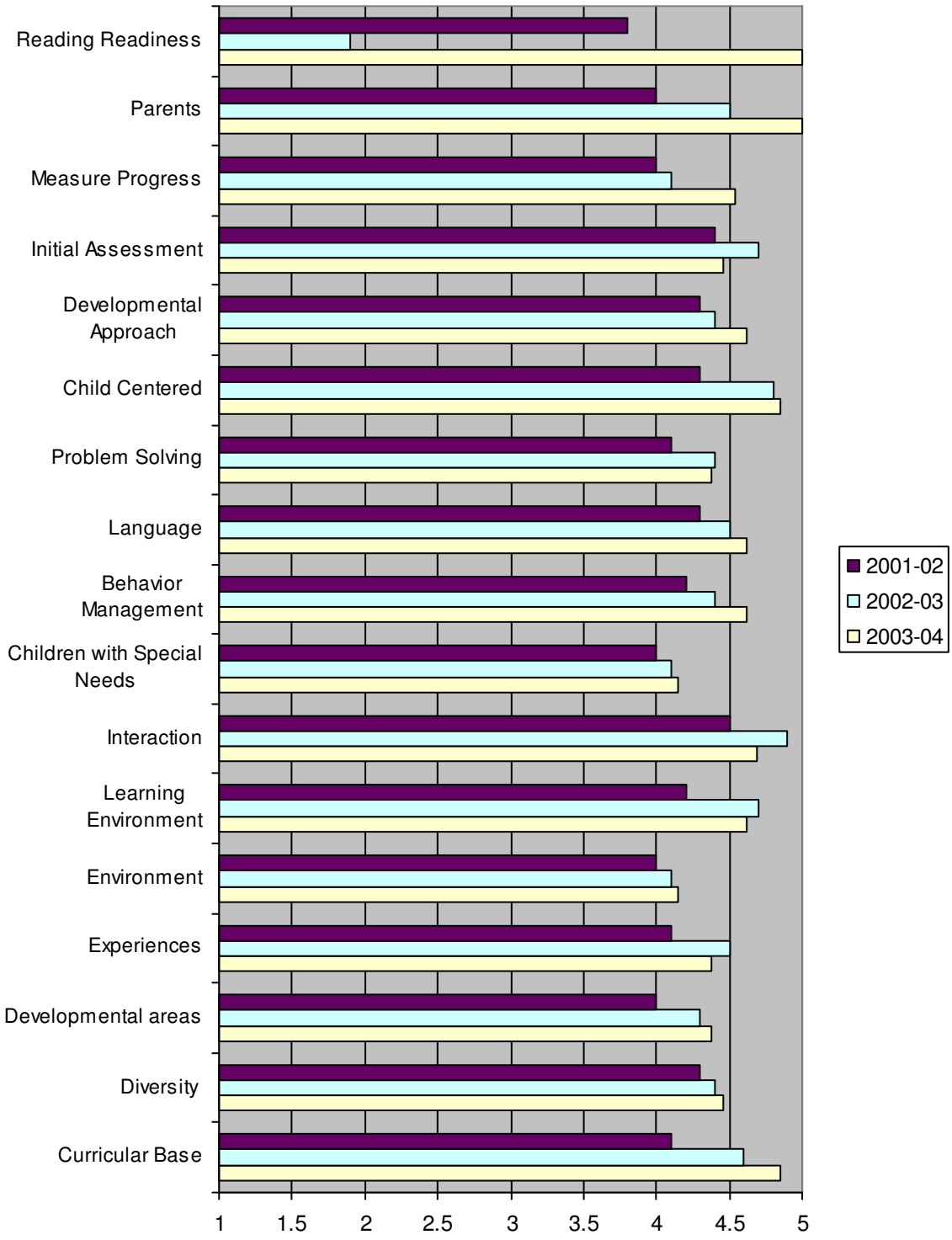
In 2003-04, the projects scored relatively high on all sub-indicators—from an average of 4.1 to 5.0. Projects scored relatively the highest on two indicators*: Parents* and *Reading Readiness,* which had mean ratings of 5.0. The indicator, *Parents,* refers to whether projects encouraged parents to be active partners in their child's education process. The indicator, *Reading Readiness,* refers to whether projects encouraged parents and caregivers to regularly read with children and to become actively involved in the reading experience. Nevada ECE projects scored high on these two indicators because all the projects had developed and implemented parenting components in their early childhood education programs.

Relatively, projects in 2003-04 scored the lowest on *Environment* and *Children with Special Needs*—which received mean ratings of 4.1. Nevada ECE Projects also received the lowest ratings on these two sub-indicators in 2002-03. *Environment* refers to whether the physical environment is safe, clean, well-lighted, comfortable, and age appropriate. Nevada ECE projects scored relatively low on this sub-indicator because some projects did not have the most appropriate playground area nor have easy access to appropriate bathroom facilities. *Children with Special Needs* refers to the use of a variety of learning

12 The evaluator visited 10 project sites in 2001-02, 14 project sites in 2002-03, and 13 project sites in 2003-04. Eight of the project sites are the same for all three years and 11 project sites are the same for 2002-03 and 2003-04.

experiences, materials and equipment, and instructional adaptations and for children with special needs.

**Figure 15.** Nevada ECE program ratings on ECE indicators (1=low, 5=high)



Nevada ECE projects scored relatively low on this sub-indicator because some projects did not serve children with special needs and may be lacking some of these materials. Nevada ECE projects also scored low on the *Developmental areas, Experiences,* and *Problem solving* sub-indicators.

Over the last three years, Nevada ECE projects appear to have implemented stronger early childhood programs annually. Nevada ECE projects showed higher scores in 2003-04 than in 2001-02 on all 17 sub-indicators of early childhood programs. Nevada ECE projects also showed higher scores in 2003-04 than in 2002-03 on 12 of the 17 sub-indicators. The five indicators in which Nevada ECE projects scored higher in 2002-03 than in 2003-04 are *Initial Assessment, Problem Solving, Interaction, Learning Environment,* and *Experiences.*

***Project Descriptions.*** The project descriptions, starting on the page 36, include three sections:

- ***project information*** on location, intensity and duration of the early childhood program, staff, and child/adult ratio;
- ***early childhood program*** includes information on curriculum, learning environment, pedagogy, and assessment and continuous improvement; and
- ***parenting program*** includes information on the types of activities conducted to involve parents in the early childhood education program and in parenting activities.

Table 13 presents information on the child/staff ratio and the primary early childhood education curriculum for the 13 project sites visited by the evaluator. Overall, the 13 project sites had a child/adult ratio from 5:1 to 12:1.[13] The results also show that all 13 project sites used research-based, commercial early childhood education programs as their primary curriculum. Five sites used *High Scope,* three sites used the *Creative Curriculum,* and three sites used the Scholastic's *Building Language for Literacy*. Single sites used *Curiosity Corner* or *PreSchool Core Knowledge Curriculum*. The ECE projects supplemented these curriculum with a variety of other programs, including *Leap into Literacy, River Deep, Self-Concept,* and *Talking Hands*.

[13] NAEYC guidelines state four year-olds should be in groups of no more than 20 children with 2 adults.

**Table 13**. Child/staff ratio and early childhood curriculum at Nevada ECE projects

| Project | Child/Staff Ratio | Primary Early Childhood Education Curriculum |
|---|---|---|
| Carson City School District | 7:1 | Curiosity Corner (Success For All) |
| Churchill County School District | 8:1 | High Scope |
| Clark County School District<br>◆ Early Literacy Model<br>◆ Classroom on Wheels Model<br>◆ Community Based Model | <br>6:1<br>5:1<br>5:1 | <br>◆ Creative Curriculum<br>◆ High Scope<br>◆ Creative Curriculum |
| Classroom on Wheels | 8:1 | Scholastic's Building Language for Literacy |
| Douglas County School District | 5:1 | High Scope |
| Great Basin College | 5:1 | Creative Curriculum |
| Humboldt School District | 12:1 | High Scope |
| Pershing County School District | 6:1 | High Scope |
| Washoe County School District<br>◆ Early Literacy Model<br>◆ High School Model | <br>9:1<br>9:1 | ◆ Scholastic's Building Language for Literacy<br>◆ Scholastic's Building Language for Literacy |
| White Pine School District | 8:1 | PreSchool Core Knowledge Curriculum |

## Carson City School District

Carson City School District (CCSD) used Nevada ECE funds to initiate and expand early childhood education programs at two project sites: Empire and Mark Twain Elementary Schools. Both sites use *Curiosity Corner*, which is the preschool component of *Success For All,* as the early childhood education curriculum. The evaluator visited Mark Twain Elementary School as representative of CCSD Early Childhood Education Program.

**Location.** Mark Twain Elementary School, Carson City, Nevada.

**Intensity and Duration.** The Mark Twain Elementary School Pre-kindergarten Program operates two half-day early childhood classes from 8:30 to ll:00 a.m. and 12:25 to 2:55 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Children receive 10 hours per week of early childhood education.

**Staff.** A full-time teacher and two full-time aides operate the program.

**Number of Children.** The program serves 20 children in a morning class and 20 children in an afternoon class for a child/adult ratio of approximately 6.5 to 1.

**Early Childhood Program**

**Curriculum.** The Mark Twain Elementary Pre-kindergarten Program uses *Curiosity Corner* as the early childhood curriculum. *Curiosity Corner* is the preschool component of *Success For All* which was developed at John Hopkins University. *Success For All* is a research-based, comprehensive school reform program that aims to restructure schools to ensure the success of every child. *Success For All* provides the school with research-based curriculum materials, extensive professional development in proven strategies for assessment, instruction and classroom management, and active family support approaches. *Curiosity Corner* provides the teacher with a kit for each week of the curriculum, specific activities and books, as well as other learning resources. The teacher also uses curriculum materials from her 30-years of experience in early childhood education. *Curiosity Corner* emphasizes oral language development using thematic units, children's literature, oral and written expression, and learning centers, called "labs." Pre-reading activities promote the development of concepts about print, alphabet familiarity, and phonemic awareness. Peabody Language Development Kits provide additional experience in language.

The program accommodates several Hispanic children who are English language learners. There are two educational assistants: one is bilingual who translates for the children as needed. The assistant reported that at this time, late in the school year, he translates very little. The classroom contains many bilingual books and other bilingual curriculum materials.

**Learning Environment.** The program is located in a large modular classroom: one-half is used for classroom space and the other half for equipment storage and teacher planning and preparation. The classroom is equipped with child-sized tables and chairs as well as

child-sized bathroom facilities. The classroom contains well-developed and very well-equipped labs (blocks, dramatic play, manipulatives, art, science, writing, language arts, computers, and water play). The school has a separate early childhood playground for the children, which contains a new, large multi-center climbing apparatus. The ECE program also uses a smaller second playground that has a tricycle area, a sand area, and a small climber.

The program provides children with a large block of time for exploration in the various "labs." On the day of the visit, the curriculum theme emphasized "spring seeds and plants." The teacher first read a book about seeds growing into plants and then they discussed the seeds children planted the day before, now in plastic bags around the classroom. Next, with the teacher guiding them, the children dramatized how a small seed lies dormant, grows and flowers with sun and rain, withers under the sun, and finally, dies in the fall.

The teacher and aides used frequent positive reinforcement and carefully listened to what children had to say. The teachers helped the children solve their own problems, encouraging children to talk issues out, or work out their anger at the sand table.

**Pedagogy.** The teacher planned activities for the children appropriate for their ages and developmental stages. The children signed in when entering the classroom with their parents who often helped them write their names. The teacher reviewed the daily schedule with the children during the initial group time and covered the calendar and the week's theme.

The three-member teaching team is well-balanced and works well together. The teacher provides the leadership for most activities while one aide works closely with the bilingual children, making sure they understand and participate in the activities in progress and the other aide works in depth with other children.

**Assessment and Continuous Improvement.** A teacher aide administered the Preschool Language Scale (PLS-4) to all the children at the beginning of the year. Program staff kept a "Dynamic Portfolio Assessment" of basic skills on each child as part of *Curiosity*

*Corner*. The teacher developed individual portfolios for each child and an observation/anecdotal record form, which staff completed each day and used to plan daily activities.

Four children have Individual Education Plans for speech; they receive weekly speech therapy either before or after the class session.

**Parenting Program.** Parents are required to sign a Commitment List when they enroll their child in the program. The List, which is posted in the classroom, requires parents to provide transportation to and from the program, ensure excellent student attendance, participate in at least six school-related activities, and spend time with their child everyday reading, playing, and talking.

Parents attended a variety of school activities to fulfill their Commitment List. Many parents attended a class Open House and as well as the school Root Beer Float Night, Spaghetti Dinner Night, ESL Night, and Read and Feed Night. Several parents attended the three *Active Parenting* classes conducted by the teacher (in both English and Spanish) and the *Raising Readers* workshop on reading strategies. Other parents assisted with Fun Family Friday field trips to Safeway Store, Mills Park Farm Day, and the Public Library. Parents regularly volunteered in the classroom or made things at home for the class.

Parents can check books or tapes out from the classroom library as well as Parent Backpacks which have specific books and activities for the parent and child to do together. This year program staff made a home visit to each family at the beginning of the school year and held parent conferences to review their child's "report cards" at the end of the year. Additionally, the teacher sends a Parent Newsletter home each week, in English and Spanish, on classroom and school activities.

## Churchill County School District

**Location.** E.C. Best Elementary School, Fallon, Nevada.

**Intensity and Duration.** Churchill County School District operates two half-day early childhood classes, Monday through Thursday from 7:45 to 10:50 a.m. and from 11:45 to

2:50 p.m. Children also attend the program every other Friday for a half-day, while program staff use the other half-day for planning and parent meetings. The children receive 12 hours of early childhood education one week, 15 hours the next week, for an average of 13.5 hours.

**Staff.** Program staff include a full-time teacher, a full-time classroom aide, and a second aide who conducts monthly home visits and works part time in the classroom. The program also includes parents who are required to volunteer in the classroom three times a month.

**Number of Children.** The program serves 15 children per session for a child/adult ratio of 7.5 to 1.

**Early Childhood Education Program**

**Curriculum.** The program uses the *High Scope Curriculum*, a research-based program that addresses all aspects of early childhood education. This curriculum encourages children to plan their day, work actively in learning centers and then think about and review their activities with each other. The teacher uses many of the Key Experiences outlined in this curriculum.

The afternoon session serves several Hispanic children who are English language learners. The classroom contains many bilingual books and other bilingual curriculum materials. Both aides are bilingual, one working full-time in the classroom, the other conducting monthly home visits in English and Spanish, translating materials, and administering the needed tests for the children.

**Learning Environment.** The classroom contains several large learning centers (dramatic play, blocks, art, computers, a library, and an area where baby chicks were growing) equipped with a large variety of learning materials. In fact, the program had a storage shed built to store the many program materials that could no longer be stored in the classroom. A group of parent volunteers built the shed. The children use the school's boys' and girls' bathroom facilities across the hall.

The school made several improvements to the outdoor play area in 2003-04. The play area is now fenced, covered with sand, and includes a multi-use climbing apparatus, swings, balance beams, and large tires.

**Pedagogy.** Program staff post the daily schedule on the door entering the classroom. On the day of the visit, the theme for the week was Farm Animals and Mixing Colors. The children were first involved in a kindergarten readiness activity, coloring a chicken, gluing multi-colored tissue on the chick, and then carefully cutting the chicken out. During the first group time, a child led the calendar and weather activities with the help of the teacher. Next, the teacher read a class-made book about their recent field trip to Raley's Grocery Store. The group then broke into three small groups to discuss where they were going to work and headed to learning centers, the planning stage of *High Scope.*

During activity time, several children were in the dramatic play area, playing house and visiting the doctor's office. Four children worked in the large computer area. Other children moved dolls around in a large doll house and built a barn with farm animals. Two other children painted at the easel, and one played in "clean mud," a sensorial material at the water table.

After activity time, the teacher drew the children together to read the book *Mouse Paint* to help children learn about colors. She then explained a group activity: mix shaving cream with a variety of color paints to make new colors. The session ended with clean up, a short outdoor play time, and snack.

The children appeared to know their routines well. The teachers led the children with songs between activities.

**Assessment and Continuous Improvement.** The classroom aide administered the Preschool Language Scale (PLS-4) twice a year and the Denver Developmental Test three times a year to all of the children. The teacher also adapted a Basic Pre-K Skills assessment to meet their needs which she administered at the end of the year.

This year the teacher developed individual children's portfolios with ongoing samples of the children's work and test results. The children also make individual journals which included writing and drawing.

The program served two children on speech IEPs: they received speech therapy individually from the school's speech therapist twice a week.

**Parenting Program** Parents are required to sign a Parent-Teacher Contract in which they agree to participate a number of activities, including one home visit per month; two school-wide Family Activity Nights (e.g. Reading Night, Math Night, Multi-Cultural Night); at least four parenting classes; three parent-teacher conferences; volunteer in the classroom three times a month; and complete monthly reading logs.

This year the teacher conducted workshops for the parents and children together on *The Importance of Play, The Importance of Reading, The Importance of Mathematics, The Importance of Art, Your Child and the Alphabet.* The school counselor conducted a workshop on *Parenting Strategies and Discipline.* Some parents planned and coordinated several classroom festivals.
One of the aides conducts monthly home visits using *Parents Are Teachers (PAT)*, a researched-based parenting education curriculum. During the visit, the aide models an activity which is then replicated by the parent. The curriculum follows developmentally designed activities appropriate for the child's age.

## Clark County School District

Clark County School District (CCSD) used Nevada ECE funds to initiate and expand early childhood education programs at 12 project sites. The 12 projects represent three distinct models of providing early childhood education services: Early Literacy, Community-Based Child Care, and Classroom on Wheels (COW) models.

*Early Literacy.* The early literacy projects are located at elementary schools in areas designated as empowerment zones. The projects serve typically developing children from the school's attendance area. Because of the large number of families who applied, the schools used a lottery to select children for the program. All the project sites in this model

use *Creative Curriculum* as the primary early childhood education curriculum and supplement it with *Ready, Set, Leap!* and *River Deep*—both emphasize the use of technology to facilitate literacy learning. The Nevada ECE program supported five early literacy project sites in CCSD: Cunningham Elementary, G.E. Harris Elementary, McCaw Elementary, McWilliams Elementary, and Warren Elementary.

*Community-Based Child Care.* These early childhood education projects are located in community-based childcare centers that volunteered for the program. Under this model, children with special needs who have an Individual Education Plan are placed in childcare centers that primarily serve typically developing children.[14] CCSD places a Special Education early childhood teacher and an instructional aide at the community-based childcare centers to work with these children. An important feature of this model is the role of the Special Education teachers placed in the childcare centers. The Special Education teachers are teacher-mentors who provide training in early childhood education to all the child care center's instructors and aides. As a result, the Special Education teachers help to improve the overall quality of the early childhood activities conducted at these centers, benefiting all the children who attend them. The Nevada ECE program supported five community-based child care sites: Lone Mountain Creative Learning Center, Children's Choice at Boulder Station, Children's Choice at Texas Station, Creative Kids Learning Center in Henderson, and Variety Day Home.

*Classroom on Wheels*.[15] The Classroom on Wheels Model is unique in that the early childhood education project is located on a school bus converted into a mini-early childhood learning environment. The Classroom on Wheels program in Clark County adopted *High Scope* as the early childhood education curriculum for its preschool buses. Another

[14] The parents of the children with special needs select the child care placement in lieu of other options. At each child care center, program staff select a small group of typically developing peers to participate in the program. The typically developing children are volunteers selected from the child care center's existing population. These typically developing children receive instruction from the Special Education teacher and assistant as well as participate in the program evaluation.

[15] The Classroom on Wheels Model, described here, is the same model implemented in the Statewide Classroom on Wheels Program. The main difference is that Classroom on Wheels Model described here is funded jointly between Clark County School District and the Statewide Classroom on Wheels Program. Other Statewide Classroom on Wheels buses are not necessarily funded with other school district or community based ECE project funds.

unique feature of the Classroom on Wheels Model is that it also supports adult literacy and parenting education. While children attend the early childhood education program in one bus, parents can attend adult literacy, computer literacy, or parenting education classes in another bus. The Clark County School District ECE project supported two Classroom on Wheels buses: one that went to Halle Hewetson and C.C. Ronnow Elementary Schools and a second bus that went to Quanah McCall Elementary School.

The Clark County School District Nevada ECE program developed district level activities in parenting education and staff development in which all ECE project sites could participate. In terms of parenting education, the CCSD ECE program made available several parenting education activities to all ECE projects sites.

- The *STAR (Sit Together and Read) Program.* CCSD developed this program. It provides families with a tote bag monthly with a book and activity, helping parents learn specific skills in reading one-to-one with their child.
- *Nurturing Parents & Families Series.* The Clark County Department of Family Services developed this program which includes six two-hour workshops covering topics such as understanding the developmental stages of early childhood, stress management techniques, establishing routines, solving problems, and using positive discipline methods.
- The *Family Storyteller Program.* The program was developed and offered by the University of Nevada Reno Cooperative Extension Office. It provides monthly workshops for six months to help parents and children learn to enjoy reading together.
- *Ready to Learn Program.* Las Vegas' Public Broadcasting Service station, KLVX, developed the program to help parents learn to view a TV program with their child, read a book about the program, and then do a related activity together.

In terms of staff development, the CCSD ECE Program conducted monthly trainings which included workshops on the new Nevada Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards, Linking Curriculum and Assessment, the *Bank Street Reading Program, Positive Behavioral Support for the Difficult Child, Animated Literacy*, the *Creative Curriculum,* and *Ready, Set, Leap!*

The evaluator visited J.T. McWilliams Elementary School as representative of an early literacy model, Lone Mountain Learning Center as representative of a community-based child care model, and one of the two Classroom on Wheels buses supported with Nevada ECE funds. Each project is described briefly below.

## Early Literacy Model

**Location.** J. T. McWilliams Elementary School, Las Vegas, Nevada.

**Intensity and Duration.** The McWilliams Early Childhood Literacy Program operates a morning class from 9:10 to 11:40 a.m. and an afternoon class from 12:50 to 3:20 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Children receive approximately 10 hours per week of early childhood education.

**Staff.** A full-time teacher and aide operate the program.

**Number of Children.** The program serves 12 children in the morning session and 12 children in the afternoon session for a child/adult ratio of 6 to 1.

### Early Childhood Program

**Curriculum.** The McWilliams Early Childhood Literacy Program uses the *Creative Curriculum* as the primary early childhood curriculum, supplemented by *Ready, Set, LEAP! Creative Curriculum* is a research-based program that includes well-developed learning centers and extensive time periods for children to actively explore and interact with their environment. *Ready, Set, LEAP!* is an interactive, multi-sensory literacy program using different technological tools. For example, the *LeapPad* is an interactive technology platform which allows children to listen to different stories, learn vocabulary and concepts, and do activities alone or in small groups. The *LeapDesk Workstation* speaks the name of letters of the alphabet and also pronounces them in the context of specific words. Children can manipulate the plastic letters, numbers or shapes to begin writing words and simple sentences.

The program serves primarily Hispanic children, but no classroom staff speak Spanish. The program has a few books in Spanish in the Library Center and the teacher conducts

some counting activities in Spanish. The teacher receives assistance from a bilingual colleague to help translate materials and attend occasional parent conferences.

**Learning Environment.** The classroom contains several learning centers (blocks, dramatic play, manipulatives, art, language arts, science and computer center) geared to the developmental needs of the children. The classroom is equipped with child-sized tables and chairs and an adjoining child-sized bathroom.

The early childhood program uses the regular school playground that accommodates the younger elementary children. The playground is located on the other side of the school, a considerable distance from the preschool classroom. It contains two large multi-use climbing apparatus. Children also use wagons and tricycles.

The classroom contains many materials and the classroom's walls are covered with children's artwork and literacy-related charts and signs. On the day of the visit, the theme focused on oceans and fish. During activity time the children made "wave bottles" with blue water, plastic fish, shells, sparkles, and tiny snakes. At the water play table, children played with blue water and various plastic fish and shells. On the science table, children used magnifiers to observe snails in a terrarium. Children could also look at and read books on snails, oceans, and fish topics at a nearby table. In the art area, children made sea paintings with glitter paint and sponge fish figures. A small group of boys built structures with blocks on the floor while a teacher aide assisted and provided constant vocabulary input. Other children sat at the computers and used the *LeapPad* and *LeapDesk Workstation.* At different times during the day, either the aide or teacher read a book to a small group of children.

Program staff used frequent positive behavior management techniques. The teacher established routines for the children to follow. For example, the teacher used a planning board and had each child takes his/her picture to the area he/she wants to work.

**Pedagogy.** The activities planned for the children were appropriate for their ages and developmental stages. The classroom schedule and activities include a large block of time for children to choose their own activities in the various learning centers, group time, and

several action oriented songs to allow for large motor movement. Routines are followed carefully and kept simple. A picture chart shows the children the sequence of their session.

The program focuses on literacy and language development. The teacher and assistant talked with the children throughout the session, carefully pronouncing and continually reinforcing word recognition and vocabulary development. By this time in the school year, most of the older children have converted from speaking Spanish to speaking English when talking among themselves during center time. Several of the younger children still speak Spanish among themselves.

**Assessment and Continuous Improvement.** The teacher administered the Preschool Language Scale (PLS-4) to the children as part of the initial assessment. In addition, she completed a Developmental Continuum assessment from *Creative Curriculum* three times a year (November, February and May) and kept a Child Progress and Planning Report on each child that includes work samples and anecdotal notes.

One child, who is on a Speech IEP, received speech therapy weekly.

**Parenting Program.** The teacher conducted three literacy-based workshops for parents during the year in both Spanish and English. In addition, parents can participate in the *STAR Program* developed by CCSD staff and used by all the ECE programs. Staff encouraged parents to attend the County parenting classes *Nurturing Parents & Families* offered for six weeks, as well as the Cooperative Extension's F*amily Storyteller Program* and the PBS literacy workshops. In addition, parents have the opportunity to meet individually with the teacher on most Fridays to discuss their child's progress and learn a new skill (e.g. learning a computer game, learning a specific literacy skill.)

All parents have identified goals and work toward them. The teacher keeps a log on PACT time and time parents spend reading with their child.

## Classroom on Wheels (COW) Model

**Location.** The Classroom on Wheels bus parks in front of C.C. Ronnow Elementary School and Halle Hewetson Elementary School, Las Vegas, Nevada.

**Intensity and Duration.** This COW Bus operates two half-day early childhood classes, four days a week. Children attend from Monday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. or from 12:00 noon to 2:30 p.m. Children receive 10 hours per week of early childhood education.

**Staff.** Two full-time teachers, one funded by the Nevada ECE program and one funded by the Classroom on Wheels Program, operate the program with a CCSD teacher aide.

**Number of Children.** The program serves 16 children in the morning session and 16 children in the afternoon session for a child/adult ratio of a little over 5 to 1.

### Early Childhood Program

**Curriculum.** Classroom on Wheels uses *High Scope* as the early childhood education model. *High Scope* is a well-researched early childhood education program that covers all aspects of early childhood education, allowing children to plan their day, make choices of activities and materials, and then review the work completed. The teachers carefully follow the *Plan-Do-Review* approach in the classroom. This year the teachers also used the *Bank Street Readers* series for some of their literacy activities as well as *LeapPads* and the *LeapImagination Desk*. The teachers also integrated activities from *Peace in the Preschool Curriculum* into the curriculum and activities from *Second Step*, another conflict resolution, anti-violence curriculum.

In addition to the early childhood education program, children also receive services from the Clinic on Wheels bus, which provides assistance with medical and dental screenings, immunizations, and developmentally appropriate health education lessons.

The program serves primarily Hispanic children who are non-English speaking. The teacher aide is Hispanic and bilingual and speaks Spanish and English, as needed. As the school year progressed, she reported that she spoke mostly English with the children.

**Learning Environment.** The COW bus is a mobile early childhood education classroom, equipped with folding panels that flip out and become activity centers when the classroom is in session. The bus contains a small, child-sized bathroom facility. The teacher drives the bus to different sites during the lunch period. At this time, the COW bus does not provide outdoor play because the program does not have an arrangement to use the individual school's playgrounds.

The COW bus contains well-developed mini-learning centers (blocks, dramatic play, manipulatives, art, sand and water play, reading area) geared to the developmental needs of the children. The learning centers contain a wide variety of learning materials considering the limited space on the bus, 8 feet by 39 feet. All centers have signs in both English and Spanish (e.g. Bloques/Blocks, Area de Escribar/Writing Center, Area de la Casita/ Housekeeping). On the day of the visit, all three staff engaged children in activities and conversation, each located in one third of the bus. During initial group time, children listened to a story on the theme of spring, including planting, seeds, and bugs. Then, after one teacher explained the day's activities, each child selected where he/she wanted to work, went and got his or her name, and took it to that specific area, placing it on a Velcro strip.

During the long activity time, the children moved throughout the bus. Children had the opportunity to water their plants, to make a seed collage, to paint in water colors or draw on a white board at the back of the bus, to make flowers out of construction paper, to play in housekeeping with the many foods and clothes, and to build with small blocks or plastic linking builders.

Staff are positive and clear with children. Staff use a planning board to limit the number of children in each center. All teachers also use a "thumbs up" technique to quiet children which appeared to work well. Children are all well aware of routines and follow them carefully.

**Pedagogy.** Program staff planned activities for children appropriate for their ages and developmental stages. The teacher reviewed the daily schedule with the children during the initial group time. The classroom schedule allowed for group planning time using a plan board, a large block of time for children to choose their own activities, time for

group discussion on the activities in which they participated, book reading time, and an active music and song time. On the day of the visit, the teacher read a Big Book on bugs. Then everyone participated in an animated singing of the *Bugs Go Marching Five by Five*. Staff use interactive music activities to take the place of outdoor gross motor play.

**Assessment and Continuous Improvement.** Program staff administered the PLS-4 and the Brigance Screening Tool to each child. Each family also completed an Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) at the beginning and end of the school year. Staff kept individual portfolios with work samples and test results on each child and posted anecdotal observation note cards around the bus on which the teachers regularly wrote observations of the children. No children on the COW bus have an Individual Education Plan. However, on occasion, staff referred children to Child Find.

**Parenting Program.** Staff encourage parents to participate in the early childhood program. Classroom on Wheels provides several opportunities for parents to improve their parenting skills and literacy skills. Parents also had the opportunity to join the Scholastic Book Club. The program uses the *STAR Program*, mentioned previously. Parents log the amount of time they read and spend with their children in activities daily when the parents bring their child to the bus.

To improve parenting skills, staff encouraged parents to attend the community-based parenting programs mentioned previously, i.e., the County's *Nurturing Parents & Families Program,* the Cooperative Extension Office's *Family Storyteller Program*, and the PBS literacy workshops.

To improve their own literacy skills, parents can attend the Computer on Wheels Program, which offers English as a Second Language and computer literacy classes in a separate bus parked alongside the early childhood bus. On some days the parents drop their children off at the COW bus and then walk over to their own mobile classroom.

This year, the early childhood and adult literacy classes held a number of Friday Family Field Trips together, including trips to the library and children's museum. These field trips not only promote parent and child together (PACT) time, but also help adults and families develop bonds and support systems.

## Community Based Child Care Model

**Location.** Lone Mountain Creative Learning Center, Las Vegas, Nevada.[16]

**Intensity and Duration.** The Lone Mountain Creative Learning Center offers half-day and full-day preschool/day care to over 197 children: 22 children participate in the Nevada ECE program. The morning session operates from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. and the afternoon session is from 12:30 to 3:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Most children receive 10 hours of early childhood education a week; a few children who attend both the morning and afternoon sessions receive 20 hours.

**Staff.** A full-time early childhood special education teacher and aide work with the Center's teachers.

**Number of Children.** The project served 22 children: 15 children have special needs with Individual Education Plans and seven children are typically developing peers. Because the 22 children are in three separate classrooms, each with different numbers of children and because program staff float between classrooms in the morning, it is difficult to identify a specific child/adult ratio. In the afternoon session, the Nevada ECE staff are in their own classroom, assisted by an aide from Lone Mountain and the child/adult ratio is 5 to 1.

### Early Childhood Program

**Curriculum.** The Lone Mountain Creative Learning Center Pre-kindergarten program uses *Creative Curriculum* as the primary early childhood model which emphasizes interactive learning through exploration in carefully designed learning centers. Program staff supplement *Creative Curriculum* with *Ready, Set, Leap!* which is an interactive, multisensory program that uses technology (*LeapPads* and *LeapDesks*) to provide literacy activities, including alphabet recognition, phonemic awareness and pre-reading lessons. The teacher also uses the Bank Street *Building Blocks for Readers Program* which emphasizes listening and speaking activities, phonological awareness, and printing, drawing

[16] This is a private child care center, a community-based option for parents whose child has been assessed and qualified for an early childhood special education program.

and writing skills. In addition, staff integrated activities from the *Peace Begins in the Preschool,* a conflict resolution violence prevention curriculum developed by the Clark County Neighborhood Justice Center which uses posters and puppets. Some of the topics include Understanding Conflict, Interacting Cooperatively, Understanding Feelings, Understanding Communication, Managing Anger, and Resolving Conflict.

**Learning Environment.** Each classroom is large, well lit and equipped with child-sized tables and chairs and a wide array of learning materials appropriate for the age range in the classroom. Child-sized bathroom facilities are adjacent to each classroom. The Center has a large, carefully planned outdoor playground area appropriate for different age groups. The playground includes large multi-use climbing apparatus, tricycle trails, swings, sand play areas, and a children's garden allowing the children to plant vegetables and flowers. The program includes special adaptive equipment (e.g., adaptive scissors, writing implements, etc.) frequently used with special needs children.

The learning centers are well equipped and well designed. The larger classrooms hold thirty children and contain a wide variety of learning materials, being particularly language-rich with books, signs, labels, and puppets. Older children use the *LeapPads* and *LeapImagination Stations* available in the classroom. The walls are filled with posters, learning charts, job charts, weather charts, and the children's artwork.

**Pedagogy.** This early childhood project is different from other models funded under Nevada ECE in that the early childhood special education teacher does not have her own classroom. Rather, the teacher works with her children in the existing classrooms at the Center, working individually with her program children or role modeling activities for the classroom staff. The teacher regularly plans lessons with the different classroom staff as well as with the school district speech therapist who works regularly with many of the children.

Program staff work with both their own children and the Center's other children in the different classrooms. For example, on the day of the visit, the teacher joined the three year-old "Yellow" classroom and interacted with her children who were in the many learning centers: reading books in the library, doing puzzles in the manipulative area, cut-

ting in the art area, measuring at the sensory table with flour and measuring spoons, and working with water at the water table. At group time she read a story, *Everybody's Different, Nobody's Perfect*, to all the children discussing how all children are special and unique, introducing several dolls with special handicapping conditions (e.g., a doll with a seeing eye dog, a doll in a wheelchair). While she was in this classroom, her aide was in the other classroom working with other project children. After completing a number of interactive songs with the children, the teacher moved onto the four-year old "Purple" classroom. In this class, the teacher joined children who were actively involved in their learning centers, working with letter and number tiles, gluing yarn on a traced letter "H," stringing beads, building with blocks, and playing with small cars on a road rug.
In the afternoon, the teacher was in her own classroom where she emphasized many literacy and numerical activities. The children wrote words and sentences and placed drawings and writings in their own journals.

**Assessment and Continuous Improvement.** The teacher administers the Preschool Language Scale (PLS-4) to the program children at the beginning and end of the program year. Program staff also complete the Brigance Developmental Screening on each child and the aide regularly notes the children's skills in the Brigance records. Staff also complete the *Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum Individual Child Profile* three times during the year.

Half of the children in the classroom are special needs. CCSD therapists and specialists (e.g., speech, occupational, vision) work with individual children regularly on identified IEP goals. Staff meet with the parents during IEP meetings and at the end of the school year to share the child's overall progress.

**Parenting Program.** In September, the teacher met with each family to explain the program and its requirements. Staff also conducted home visits to explain the *Leap* materials and to share class-made books. The Center sends home a weekly newsletter detailing both classroom and Center activities. Program families can also participate in Center events and activities, such as all-school parties (Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas) and babysitting nights available for parents wanting to go out.

The aide sends home a notebook daily with a note related to the child's work/behavior at school. Program staff include parenting articles when the homework goes out weekly. The teacher held parent conferences at the end of the year to discuss the child's progress and review assessment data.

Program staff encourage parents to participate in the different parenting programs offered by CCSD for all the ECE programs. These include the *STAR Program*, *Nurturing Families* workshops, *Family Storyteller* workshops, and the PBS literacy workshops.

### Statewide Classroom on Wheels Program

The Classroom on Wheels Program operates four early childhood projects in Nevada: Clark County, Elko County, Storey/Lyon Counties, and Washoe County with funds the program receives from a variety of sources. Classroom on Wheels also receives Nevada ECE funds which the program uses to support the provision of early childhood education activities at 15 separate locations or stops.

The Classroom on Wheels Program provides early childhood education services in converted school buses painted black and white to resemble Holstein cows. The buses become mobile preschool classrooms, equipped with educational materials, a computer and printer, and a bathroom. They are typically parked in front of elementary schools for a two hour session, from two to four days a week, often moving during the lunch break to a second school site.

In addition to the early childhood bus, the Classroom on Wheels Program in Clark and Washoe Counties often includes a second bus for adults where they can attend either adult education and parenting education classes and workshops. The second bus supports the parenting education program required of all Nevada ECE projects.

The evaluator visited the Washoe County School District Classroom on Wheels project as representative of the Classroom on Wheels Program, and specifically visited the bus that provided services in front of Sierra Vista Elementary School in Reno and in front of Kate Smith Elementary School in Sparks.

## Statewide Classroom on Wheels: Washoe County School District

**Location.** The Classroom on Wheels bus parks in front of Sierra Vista Elementary School, Reno, Nevada and in front of Kate Smith Elementary School, Sparks, Nevada.

**Intensity and Duration.** This Classroom on Wheels program operates two sessions a day, four days a week, Monday through Thursday. The morning class is from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. at one school. Then staff drive the bus to the second school site, where the afternoon class runs from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Children receive eight hours per week of early childhood education in this class.

**Staff.** A teacher and one aide work in the classroom.

**Number of Children.** The program serves 15 children who attend a two-hour program for a child/adult ratio of approximately 7.5 to 1.

**Early Childhood Education Program**

**Curriculum.** The pre-kindergarten program uses *Scholastic's Building Language for Literacy* as the primary early childhood curriculum. It is a research-based program on how children best learn to read, the curriculum emphasizes oral language, phonological awareness, letter knowledge, and concepts of print. The teacher supplements the program with *Ready, Set, Leap!*, puppets, as well as many self-developed materials.

**Learning Environment.** The Classroom on Wheels bus is a mobile early childhood education classroom—equipped with folding panels that fold out when the classroom is in session. The bus contains a child-sized bathroom facility but has no hot, running water. The COW bus contains unique, mini learning centers (blocks, dramatic play, manipulatives, art, sand and water play, reading area) geared to the developmental needs of the children. The learning centers contain a wide variety of learning materials considering the limited space on the bus, 8 feet by 39 feet. On good weather days, staff take easels and other art materials outside on the sidewalk for expanded learning centers.

The teacher held the last part of each class outside on the schools' playgrounds which includes large climbing apparatus, swings, small jungle gyms, and tether balls. Due to lack

of storage space on the bus, the program does not have play equipment for outdoors.

**Pedagogy.** Program staff use the *Reggio Emilia Approach,* developed in Italy after World War II, which involves extended projects and an in-depth system of documentation to "make the learning visible" for the children, teachers, parents, and visitors. The teacher attended monthly *Reggio* Roundtable sessions offered through a collaborative training by the School District and the University of Nevada, Reno.
As part of the approach, the teacher compiles a daily journal which 'documents' the children's activities through photos, the children's words and art, and summary statements which are included in a class book. Some of the projects the class covered during the year included various nature studies and the study of an early childhood book author, Eric Carle. The children had read several of his books together or individually with the teacher or aide.

On the day of the visit, the teacher presented to the children the book they had created over several days, entitled *The Other Secret Birthday Book,* which included the children's words and self-made illustrations. After the book reading, the children went to the learning centers…building on a new Lego table, working in the play dough area, painting in a butterfly project, cutting fruit and eating their self-made fruit salad, and measuring and pouring in the water play area.

The children are primarily Hispanic. At the beginning of the school year, none of the children spoke English during class. By January, most children understood English but still spoke in Spanish. On the day of the visit in March, most children spoke English among themselves and with the teacher. The teacher speaks some Spanish and the aide, who is bi-lingual, is from Mexico.

**Assessment and Continuous Improvement.** The teacher and aide administered the PLS-4 to all the children at the beginning and again at the end of the school year. They also administered the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) and a new Pre-K Portfolio Assessment developed by the school district.

The teacher keeps a file on each child which includes the various assessments. The staff also keeps the documentation pages from the daily journal which include photos of the children and what children said while involved in various learning activities.

Four children in the program have an IEP with special needs. Speech therapy, if needed, is provided before or after the class since classroom time is limited to two hours. Program staff referred three children to Child Find.

**Parenting Program.** Parents are involved in the program in several ways. Parents attend the CALF Resource Van which is parked behind the COW Bus once a week. The services, offered in English and Spanish, include a lending library of educational toys, child and adult books, preschool art materials, craft kits, as well as workshops for parents on various parenting and educational skills.

Parents have contact with program staff every day when they walk their children to and from school at the beginning and end of each session. When they sign their children in, they also report the amount of time spent the preceding evening reading to their child or playing in activities together (PACT). Staff kept monthly records of this data.

Parents also visit the classroom on occasion, and assist on the walking field trips which included visits to a nearby Asian Market and a local Mexican restaurant and bakery. The class conducted two special performances for the parents on the school stage.

## Douglas County School District

**Location.** Jacks Valley Elementary School, Minden, Nevada.

**Intensity and Duration.** Douglas County School District (DCSD) operates an afternoon half-day pre-kindergarten class, Monday through Friday from 12:30 to 3:00 p.m. Children receive 12.5 hours per week of early childhood education.

**Staff.** A half-time early childhood teacher and half-time early childhood special education teacher and four half-time aides operate the program.

**Number of Children.** The program serves 28 children with six adults for a child/adult ratio of about 4.5 to 1.

**Early Childhood Education Program**

**Curriculum.** The pre-kindergarten program uses *High Scope* as the primary early childhood curriculum, supplemented by the *California Early Literacy Learning (CELL)* program which the entire school uses. The teacher has also received training in the *Parents as Teachers* (PAT) program, using its materials in the Homework Bags.

Both *High Scope* and *CELL* are research-based and address different elements of the pre-kindergarten program. *High Scope* is an early childhood classroom model that covers all aspects of early childhood education, using Key Experiences as a framework for activities. Children plan where they are going to work in Centers and then review their work at the end of Center time. The *CELL* program focuses on literacy skills, emphasizing skills to master alphabetic principles, phonemic awareness, and concepts related to printed material. The *CELL* curriculum includes shared and independent reading, read alouds, and interactive writing as well as various phonological activities.

*The Parents as Teachers (PAT) Program* is a nation-wide parenting program which includes parent packets designed to help parents understand the importance of their role as their child's primary teacher. Packets contain information on developmental areas and activities for the parent and child to do together.

**Learning Environment.** The afternoon pre-kindergarten class shares the classroom with a morning kindergarten class. The learning centers include blocks, dramatic play, manipulatives, art, writing, language arts, and a computer center geared toward the developmental needs of the children. The bathroom adjoins the classroom.

This year, the teachers from the Nevada ECE classroom and the school's early childhood special education classroom began to combine children from both classrooms for activities in the early childhood classroom. The special education children rotate in and out of the classroom at different times with their teacher and aide. The classroom accommodated as many as 28 children with six adults, including six children with Individual Education Plans with their teacher and aide as well as an adaptive physical education teacher, an occupational therapist, and speech therapist at times. The classroom was very stimulating when all these people were present.

The program accommodates English language learners by having activities and materials that reflect the Hispanic culture in the classroom (e.g., dolls, block accessories, books, etc.). In addition, one aide is Hispanic and speaks Spanish. In small group sessions, her group includes the Spanish-speaking and English-speaking children.

The classroom uses a newly-developed early childhood playground area which includes a large tricycle path surrounding a variety of climbing equipment. The program has a large number of tricycles and other vehicular pieces.

**Pedagogy.** The classroom session includes large group and small group time, self-selected activity time and outdoor time, using the plan-do-review approach of *High Scope*. On the day of the visit, the class started with a large group time. Using a photo name chart, the teacher noted those children present and absent, and then introduced two interactive songs. Then using a CELL technique of interactive reading, the class read together two books and then discussed the animals in the books, writing down the sounds the animals make. For the benefit of the Hispanic children, the teacher often asked, "How do you say this in Spanish?"

The class then broke into small groups in which each group spent time discussing letters on different children's carpet squares. Then, using the *High Scope* approach, program staff asked children where they planned to work. With 28 children, the class is extremely busy during center time. On the day of the visit, children worked on computers, built Lego constructions, worked on farm puzzles, while other children collaboratively played a floor game, worked on geo boards and pattern boards, created head bands and crowns

with various art materials, or joined an aide on the floor to read a book related to the farm theme. Staff moved from center to center, sometimes working with children in small groups, other times working with children individually.

The school implements the concept of "looping" with the pre-kindergarten class. In looping, children have the same teacher for two years in a row. Thus, many of the pre-kindergarten children from last year are in the teacher's morning kindergarten class this year.

**Assessment and Continuous Improvement.** DCSD speech therapists administer the Preschool Language Scale (PLS-4) in the fall to all children and again in the spring. Staff also completed a developmental checklist for four and five-year olds on each child. The teacher and aides keep regular anecdotal notes on the children's individual skills.

**Parenting Program.** The teachers conducted two home visits, one at the beginning of the year and one at the end. The teachers ask parents to choose their own personal goals during the first home visit. In terms of classroom involvement, parents can volunteer in the classroom, bring snacks, or make classroom materials.

Additionally, parents must attend seven of 10 family literacy events conducted by the program staff or as full school events. The events include Fall Fun, Bedtime Stories, Thanksgiving Feast, Gingerbread Houses, Readers Theater, Family Activity Night, Family Game Night, Run and Read, Mom's Day, and Dad's Day Events.

The program has a Parent Video Library and a Preschool Book Library for families to check out materials. The teachers developed Homework Bags which staff send home on Tuesday and children return on the following Monday. The Homework Bags include a variety of different activities, primarily literacy-based, for the parent and child to do together. Staff also collect data from the parents on time spent reading to their children and doing activities together weekly.

## Great Basin College Firefly Preschool Program

**Location.** Great Basin College, Mark H. Dawson Child and Family Center, Elko, Nevada.

**Intensity and Duration.** Great Basin College operates two half-day early childhood classes on Monday through Thursday from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. and from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m. Children receive 10 hours per week of early childhood education.

**Staff.** Program staff include a full-time teacher, two half-time aides for each class, and various student interns.

**Number of Children.** The program serves 16 children per session with three adults for a child/teacher ratio of about 5 to 1 (which lowers when student interns are included).

### Early Childhood Education Program

**Curriculum.** The Nevada ECE classroom follows a master curriculum plan outlined for all the preschool classrooms at the Child and Family Center. The pre-kindergarten program uses the *Creative Curriculum* as well as the *Self-Concept Curriculum* and the *Anti Bias Curriculum*. Program staff supplement these curricula with additional thematic units developed by staff.

The *Creative Curriculum*, a national early childhood education model, is a research-based curriculum that emphasizes interactive learning in carefully designed learning centers, using the classroom environment as an effective teaching tool. The *Self-Concept Curriculum,* developed at the University of Nevada, Reno, focuses on the development of the child's self-concept with units that follow the development of the child in a natural, logical and sequential process. This model recognizes the child at the heart of the curriculum and takes into account the types of experiences that will enhance the child's development and what is relevant to him or her (child, family, school, community). The *Anti Bias Curriculum* promotes projects that emphasize acceptance, respect, and cooperation in the classroom and in the community.

Staff also use strategies from other program models, including documentation skills from the *Reggio Emilia Approach* and the Plan, Do, and Review from the *High Scope Program.*

The Child & Family Center operates as a lab school for college students enrolled in the Early Childhood Education and Nursing Programs at Great Basin College. Students receive college credit for practicum and student teaching coursework. Students from the college as well as from Elko and Spring Creek High Schools work in the classroom under the direction of the teaching team.

The teaching team carefully develops lesson plans and have started to incorporate the new Nevada Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards into them. All the classrooms at the Child and Family Center focus on a general theme; however, each class moves at its own pace determined by the interest levels of the children.

The Center has a large number of diversity related materials, from books to puppets to flannel board stories. One aide speaks Spanish, assisting those children who are English language learners.

**Learning Environment.** The classroom contains very well-developed and well-equipped learning centers (blocks, dramatic play, manipulatives, art, writing, science, language arts, and computer centers) geared to the developmental needs of the children. Child-sized bathroom facilities are adjacent to the classroom. The classroom also shares a kitchen with another classroom, allowing for many cooking activities.

The outdoor playground is exceptional, equipped with two large multi-unit play stations and many other early childhood climbing units. The playground includes a large sand box with child-sized dump trucks and backhoes, a tricycle path with many tricycles and wagons, large and small blooming trees, and an extensive grassy area.

The Child and Family Center developed a spacious, family-friendly Family Literacy Library with walls lined with early childhood books, flannel board stories, video materials, puppets and dramatic play prop boxes. The Library contains large sofas and chairs and a

rug. Staff encourage families to stay before and after class to read with their children, play with a puppet, or check out a book.

Program staff use positive behavior management techniques and often redirect children when they start to act out. With the rich environment and number of teachers and student teachers available, children have a great opportunity for many one-on-one learning situations and social interactions.

**Pedagogy.** The classroom schedule and activities allow for large group time, small group time, and a long self-selected activity time; for teacher-directed and child-choice activities; and for indoor and extensive outdoor activities. On the day of the visit, the theme focused on volcanoes, fossils, and dinosaurs. After an opening interactive circle time, the teacher talked with the children about where dinosaurs came from and then read the *Dinosaur Train*. During learning center time, children in the art area made two large volcanoes, carefully following a recipe chart for "fossil dough." Adjacent, children made chocolate volcano cupcakes which they then ate for a snack. In the dramatic play area, children put on hard hats and goggles, and with hammers and magnifying glasses in hand, went on a fossil hunt around the room. In the block area, children built small dinosaurs. In the library, children could read books on dinosaurs and fossils and volcanoes. At the science table, children studied small fossil replicas with magnifying glasses.

This classroom emphasizes cognitive transitions from one activity time to another. For example, after the first group circle time, the teacher asked children who were sitting on a drawing of a telephone their home phone numbers before going into the next activity. During transition to outdoor play, the teacher asked each child to write the letter "d" for dinosaur before they went outside.

Program staff model positive classroom management practices in all classes and encouraged children to verbalize their concerns.

**Assessment and Continuous Improvement.** The teacher and one aide administered the Preschool Language Scale (PLS-4) to all the children. Staff also keep art and work samples of the children's work to gauge their progress.

The program served eight children on an Individual Education Plan, who had a variety of special needs. An Early Interventionist from the School District worked in the classroom with the children twice a week. A School District speech therapist also worked weekly with children who needed assistance.

**Parenting Program.** Program staff encourage parents to participate in the early childhood education program. Parents often visit and volunteer in the classroom and provide snacks for each session. Staff conducted two home visits with each family during the school year.

An important part of the parenting program is to involve parents in their child's learning at home. The program developed a "Homework on Wheels" Program. Twice monthly, children take home a lightweight, child-sized suitcase on wheels that contains a literacy activity and book for children to complete with their parents. Staff also encourage parents to take books out from the Family Literacy Library.

The school held several well-attended Parent Nights, including a Fall Feast, a Winter Carnival, and a Buckaroo Breakfast (during the Cowboy Poetry Festival). The program also conducted a Mother's Night with three storybook activities, and a Father's Night.

To inform the families of what children did during class, the teacher sends home a "Today we did…" note each day as well as a weekly "Firefly News" telling about classroom activities and upcoming events.

### Humboldt County School District

**Location.** Grass Valley Elementary School, Winnemucca, Nevada

**Intensity and Duration.** Humboldt County School District operates a morning and afternoon pre-kindergarten class, Monday through Thursday from 8:25 to 11:15 a.m. and 12:10 to 3:00 p.m. Children receive about 12 hours per week of early childhood education.

**Staff.** A full-time teacher and full-time aide operate the classroom. The program also includes three family literacy staff (a coordinator and two family advocates) who conduct

the parent involvement activities and testing. Previously, the coordinator and two family advocates operated a Nevada Even Start family literacy project.

**Number of Children.** The program serves 24 children in the morning session and 24 children in the afternoon session for a child/adult ratio of 12 to 1.

**Early Childhood Education Program**

**Curriculum.** The pre-kindergarten program offers an intensive literacy-based, family oriented program with a four-day classroom experience coupled with monthly home visits and workshops for parents. The classroom uses the *High Scope Model* as its early childhood education curriculum. *High Scope* is a research-based early childhood classroom model that has children plan their day's activities, work on experiential activities in learning centers, and then review those activities completed. The class also uses *Zoo Phonics*, which introduces the alphabet through the use of animal puppets and interactive activities.

Program staff use the *Parent Are Teachers (PAT) Program,* a nationally recognized research-based parenting education model, during home visits. The two family advocates conducted monthly home visits to help family members learn about stages in their child's development and activities that enhance this development, as well as to provide information on research related to how the brain develops.

The program accommodates several Hispanic English language learners. The teacher speaks some Spanish and often uses Spanish songs or phrases and has the children learn numbers in both English and Spanish. The program has a number of bilingual books and the circle time rug has writing in both English and Spanish.

**Learning Environment.** The classroom is located in a large mobile unit behind the Elementary School. This unit contains two large classrooms: one classroom is for large group time, snack time, and literacy activities and the other classroom is for learning centers including blocks, art area, computers, math manipulatives, science area, and listening center. The classrooms do not have a bathroom or running water. Time is allocated during each session to visit the main school building for bathroom needs. (Individual visits

with a teacher are also made as needed, at times leaving the 24 preschoolers with one teacher.).

The program does not have a pre-kindergarten outdoor play area. The class uses the open space in front of the mobile unit and existing playground equipment for the elementary children. The program plans to build a separate playground for the younger children during the summer and add a bathroom.

The learning centers are well equipped and each contains a wide variety of learning materials. The walls display children's art work and various *High Scope* Learning Charts. The teacher emphasizes literacy activities, including phonics, initial sounds, and syllabication. On the day of the visit, children started the day by copying their names. Then in circle time, children played a literacy game related to farm animals, sounding out the animals' names. Together the teacher and children spelled and sounded out the word DUCK…and then the teacher had them write the letters in the air, as one child wrote it on the board.

The group then lined up and went to the main school building for a bathroom and wash-up break, returning to have a snack. After the snack the children each selected a book and sat around the teacher on the floor, some reading with him, others individually. Then the teacher read and sang *Mary Had a Little Lamb* and the children acted it out.

The teacher and aide regularly use positive reinforcement to encourage appropriate behavior. Parents came in at different times and took part in different activities, watching the teacher as a role model.

**Pedagogy.** The classroom schedule and activities allow for large group time, small group time, and self-selected activity time; for teacher-directed and child-choice activities; and for some outdoor activities. On the day of the visit, the teacher helped children with a group barnyard mural; the aide helped children with drawings of farm animals; and a parent played a farm concentration game with several children. In addition, the children had the opportunity to write and spell animal words, read and sing about animals, and draw animals in a group and individually.

Children are very aware of the classroom routines. The teacher used songs to help with all transitions, with children helping during clean up, knowing when to go to circle time, and waiting in line to go to the bathroom and out to the playground.

**Assessment and Continuous Improvement.** The program coordinator administered the PLS-4 to all the children and completed a new Progress Report they developed covering areas of Math, Literacy, Social & Emotional Development, Creativity, Science, Physical Development and Health Areas.

The teacher, with the help of a parent, continued to use the "Photo Parade" computer software program to create "photo stories" of the children to document the children's activities for their parents. The teacher takes digital photos of the children in various activities and writes the text of their conversations. Then, the teacher digitally sends this to a parent volunteer who develops a mini-presentation of the activity for the parents.

**Parenting Program.** The program coordinator and family advocates operated the parenting program, using the many materials from the previous Nevada Even Start family literacy project. As part of the parenting program, parents sign a contract which requires they be involved in the early childhood program six hours per month, including two hours of volunteering in the classroom. The family advocates also conduct monthly home visits using a *PAT* activity packet related to children's developmental skills. Additionally, parents can attend monthly workshops put on by the family literacy staff which included sessions on Reducing Holiday Stress, Bike Safety, Making Piñatas, Taming Temper Tantrums, Having Healthy Families and Having Safe Families, and Suicide Prevention Training.

The program sends out a monthly newsletter to parents about classroom activities, parenting tips, and information about *High Scope*.

## Pershing County School District

**Location.** Lovelock Elementary School, Lovelock, Nevada.

**Intensity and Duration.** The Pershing County School District Pre-kindergarten Program operates two half-day early childhood classes, Monday through Friday from 8:30 to 10:55 a.m. and from 12:30 to 2:55 p.m. Children receive about 12.5 hours per week of early childhood education.

**Staff.** Program staff include a full time teacher and two teacher aides. Parents frequently volunteer in the classroom.

**Number of Children.** Both morning and afternoon sessions serve 18 children for a child/adult ratio of 6 to l.

### Early Childhood Education Program

**Curriculum.** The Pershing County Pre-kindergarten Program uses *High Scope* as its primary curriculum. As mentioned previously, *High Scope* is a research-based early childhood education model in which children plan their activities, actively participate in learning centers, and complete the cycle by reviewing what they did during the day's session.

**Learning Environment.** The pre-kindergarten program at Lovelock Elementary is unique in that it provides a true "inclusive" environment, combining children from the Nevada ECE classroom with the school's early childhood special education classroom daily. All the children from both classes are in each room daily and are engaged with the staff from both programs. Most of the children in the early childhood special education classroom are language-delayed; one child has multiple problems and is in a wheelchair.

The Nevada ECE classroom is clean, well lit, well organized and equipped with child-sized tables and chairs. Child-sized bathroom facilities are adjacent to the classroom. This classroom is adjacent to the early childhood special education classroom and children move back and forth for activities throughout the session. The classroom contains

several learning centers (blocks, dramatic play, manipulatives, art, writing, science, library and computers).

The outside playground area has been expanded to accommodate the two early childhood classrooms. It includes a large, outdoor climbing apparatus, a sand box, a tricycle trail, bikes, wagons, and appropriate adaptive outdoor play equipment.

The learning centers contain a variety of learning materials appropriate for a wide age range and developmental levels of the children. The program has various adaptive equipment for the early childhood special education children, as needed.

To encourage appropriate child behavior, staff use positive language and encourage positive conflict resolution techniques among the children. Staff provide children with choices and use positive reinforcement techniques frequently.

**Pedagogy.** The pre-kindergarten teacher and the early childhood special education teachers plan their curricula together, scheduling different but complementary activities in the two classrooms.

The program emphasizes literacy activities, incorporating many classroom writing experiences, teacher and child-made books, and poems. The child-made books include the children's own words, drawings, and photos. Children frequently read their own books. The children also visit the school library once a week and during a field trip to the Lovelock Community Library, all families obtained library cards.

On the day of the visit, the class started with a large group time, opening with a Hello Song, calendar activities, and introduction of the letter "U." Several children from the two programs switched classrooms. The teacher counted (in both English and Spanish) the children present. The children then moved into active exploration of the learning centers…fishing for Easter eggs in the sand table filled with grass, creating with play dough, building with wood blocks, working on the computers, and exploring with magnetic letters on magnetic boards.

Several children switched classrooms again. Children cleaned up and helped prepare the morning snack. After a snack, children read books by themselves or with staff.

The two classes combined for a literacy activity, led by the Nevada Reading Excellence Act (NREA) teacher. The teacher read a Big Book on seeds, had children do a writing activity, and then had children make a structured plant picture. The session ended with active play in the outside playground.

**Assessment and Continuous Improvement.** Staff administered the PLS-4 and the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening Test to all children. Teachers keep observational notes based on the COR areas (Initiative, Social Relations, Creative Representation, Music and Movement, Language and Literacy, and Logic and Math) which is used in *High Scope*. Staff keep the records in children's portfolios along with work and art samples.

A School District speech therapist, occupational therapist, and physical therapist worked on specific skills with the special needs children, as identified by their Individual Education Plans. In addition, the speech therapist often pulled children out to work with them individually.

**Parenting Program.** Program staff require parents to sign a contract at the beginning of the program. In the contract, parents agree to complete one goal at home with their child, participate in the preschool program at least two hours per month, and attend any required trainings or meetings. Parents participate by volunteering in the classroom, providing a snack, and attending workshops presented by the NREA and family literacy staff.
The teachers send home a Parent Report Card weekly asking parents to keep a record of what books they read to their child each day, to note the length of time they read to their children, and to record the activities and time spent together.

The teachers send home a "Personal Reader" each week, with simple poems, fingerplays, and simple reading activities. The teachers also send home backpacks with both Spanish and English books and activities on Thursdays for the weekend and encourage families to check out books from the school's Literacy Center.

## Washoe County School District

Washoe County School District (WCSD) used Nevada ECE funds to initiate and expand early childhood education programs at seven sites. The seven sites represent two distinct models of providing early childhood education services to families: early literacy and high school early childhood center. The evaluator visited one site from each model.

*Early Literacy Model.* Located primarily at elementary schools, these projects typically serve children from the school's attendance area. The Nevada ECE program supported five early literacy project sites in WCSD: Incline, Johnson, Alice Smith, and Veterans Memorial Elementary Schools as well as the Even Start Family Literacy Center.

*High School Early Childhood Center Model*. These early childhood education projects are located at high schools. The high school benefits by providing students in Child Development classes with a practicum to learn about early childhood education and Nevada ECE benefits by receiving extra assistance in the classroom with the children. The Nevada ECE program supported two high school early childhood education project sites: Hug High School and Sparks High School.

The Washoe County School District Nevada ECE program developed district level activities in parenting education and staff development in which all ECE project sites could participate. In terms of parenting education, district ECE staff made available two parenting education activities to all ECE projects sites.

- *The COW Adult Learning Facility (CALF) Van*. The CALF Van visits each early childhood program regularly during the year. It houses learning materials and books available for families to check out. This past year, in addition to Make-It and Take-It Workshops, the CALF Van offered three series of parent/child literacy workshops in both English and Spanish. The "*Ready to Learn Series"* (Read, Do and View), developed with the local PBS Station, consists of six workshops in which parents learn to view a television program with their child, read a follow-up book together, and then do an activity together. The *Family Storyteller Program,* offered in collaboration with the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension Office, consists of six workshops which teaches parents how to read interactively with their child. The *Money on the Bookshelf Program*, also offered in collaboration with the Cooperative Extension, consists of four workshops designed to help

parents teach their children money management skills through the reading of children's books and accompanying activities.

- ***Family Literacy Festivals.*** WCSD sponsored two large Family Literacy Festivals in which families and children participate in literacy activities at learning stations led by the District Early Childhood teachers. During the spring Literacy Festival, families received a backpack filled with books to read over the summer.

In terms of staff development, the WCSD central early childhood staff provided monthly trainings in early childhood related topics, including an Arts Workshop, Block Play, Effective Strategies for Working with Difficult Children, Yoga Relaxation Session, Children in Transition Homelessness Workshop, Sensory Arts Workshop, Cuisenaire Math Workshop, and Health Services. In addition, the school district held six monthly *Reggio Emilia* Roundtables for teachers using the approach.

The evaluator visited Alice Smith Elementary School as representative of an Early Literacy model and Sparks High School as representative of high school early childhood center model. Each is described briefly below.

### Alice Smith Elementary School Preschool Program

**Location.** Alice Smith Elementary School, Reno, Nevada.

**Intensity and Duration.** Alice Smith Elementary School Pre-kindergarten Program operates a half-day early childhood class, Monday through Thursday from 12:35 to 3:15 p.m. Children receive 10 hours and 40 minutes per week of early childhood education.

**Staff.** A half-time teacher and a half-time aide operate the program.

**Number of Children.** The program serves 18 children with two adults for a child/adult ratio of 9 to 1.

**Early Childhood Education Program**

**Curriculum.** All early childhood education programs in Washoe County School District use Scholastic's *Building Language for Literacy* as the primary early childhood curriculum. It is a research-based program on how children best learn to read. The curriculum emphasizes oral language, phonological awareness, letter knowledge, and concepts of

print. Each teacher, then, supplements the program with many other commercial and self-developed materials.

The class is ethnically diverse and includes Tongan, Chinese, Black, Caucasian, and Hispanic children. The classroom includes some materials in Spanish. Parents have brought in food dishes from their various cultures

**Learning Environment.** The afternoon pre-kindergarten class shares the classroom with a morning kindergarten class. Kindergarten materials are evident on most of the walls. The documentation panels of the pre-kindergarten class cover two walls. The classroom includes several learning centers, equipped with a variety of learning resources. Child-sized bathroom facilities are adjacent to the classroom. The early childhood program has a newly developed playground adjacent to the classroom with swings, a small climbing apparatus, a sand area, and a paved area for tricycles. This area is fenced off from the larger children's playground and shared with the kindergarten classes.

On the day of the visit, after a discussion and a story related to shadows, children participate in several activities. Several children drew various shadow shapes outlined by an overhead projector onto white paper. Other children went on a "shadow hunt" wandering around the classroom with flashlights, trying to find shadows. Four children recreated a large block building structure they had created the day before. Other children built several structures with smaller blocks.

**Pedagogy.** This classroom uses the *Reggio Emilia Approach* as its philosophical base. In this approach the child is valued as a researcher and as a learner who continually establishes hypotheses about how things work and then, through hands-on exploration of the environment and resources, draws conclusions. The approach places value on children learning from each other in small groups working in-depth over long periods of time on projects drawn from the children's interests. In the *Reggio* approach, staff believe children learn to think and speak in many different "languages," i.e., using observational drawing, painting, drama, clay, wire sculpting, shadow boards, and various experiential activities. The staff create daily journals which "make the learning visible," containing photos of the children involved in their activities, children's statements while involved in

activities, and a summary statement on what the children learned. These journals later become part of larger documentation panels which are hung on the wall and visibly portray a summation of the skills and knowledge the children have integrated in the project.

On the day of the visit, the evaluator reviewed past projects by studying the documentation panels completed on earlier projects. The children had just finished a two month study which began with examining shapes in the environment that led them to a study of the Egyptian Pyramids. The panels included the children's initial drawings, later drawings of top and side views, and then photos of a clay-brick pyramid that the children made.

The staff were very positive with the children, using effective group management techniques in circle time and during work time to help children solve their own problems.

**Assessment and Continuous Improvement.** The teacher completed the PLS-4 on all children and had the parents complete the Ages and Stages Questionnaire. The teacher also completed the new Pre-Kindergarten Portfolio Assessment developed by the School District, which tracks skill development in various areas (English/Language Art, Book Handling/Concepts of Print, Math, Gross Motor, Social/Emotional, and Personal Data.)

The teacher maintains a portfolio for each child that contains work samples, art samples, photos, etc. These are shared with the parents at end of year conferences. The teacher also maintains a daily journal which includes photos, children's statements, and summation sentences documenting what the children learned in the activity.

The program has one child on an Individual Education Plan who received weekly speech therapy from a WCSD speech therapist. The teacher meets regularly with the special education teacher to discuss the child's progress.

**Parenting Program.** This year, staff conducted monthly workshops in the classroom during the last 45 minutes of class. The workshops included sessions on literacy, family math, PACT time activities, the new pre-kindergarten content standards, and other areas. The teacher estimated that 95 percent of families attended. The parents are also required to attend one of the series of workshops conducted by the Classroom on Wheels program.

The program sends home Parent Backpacks weekly, filled with a monthly classroom newsletter and a book and activities for the parent and child to do together. Program staff keep data on parent involvement hours and PACT activities monthly using a form developed by the school district early childhood program.

## Sparks High School "Little Railroaders" Preschool Program

**Location.** Sparks High School, Little Railroaders Preschool, Sparks, Nevada.

**Intensity and Duration.** Sparks High School operates two half-day pre-kindergarten classes, Monday through Thursday from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. and from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m. Children receive 10 hours per week of early childhood education.

**Staff.** A full-time teacher and full-time aide operate the program with assistance from a regularly assigned high school special education student and additional assistance from students in the Sparks High School Child Development classes, as their schedule allows.

**Number of Children.** The program serves 18 children per session for a child/adult ratio of 9 to 1 (with the special education assistant and child development students this ratio is lower).

### Early Childhood Education Program

**Curriculum.** The pre-kindergarten program uses *Scholastic's Building Language for Literacy* as the primary early childhood curriculum. It is a research-based program on how children best learn to read. The curriculum emphasizes oral language, phonological awareness, letter knowledge, and concepts of print. The teacher supplements the program with many self-developed materials.

Program staff also use the "*Ready, Set, Leap!"* program that includes *Leap Desk Workstations* and *LeapPads* - interactive letter recognition and phonemic awareness tools. The teacher also conducted weekly cooking activities, emphasizing the alphabet through food-oriented activities.

The program includes many English language learners. The teacher aide is Hispanic and

frequently uses Spanish in the class, assisting those children who need translation. At the end of the school year, most children spoke in English. The classroom includes many materials reflecting diverse cultures. Staff send all communications home to the families in English or Spanish, as needed.

**Learning Environment.** The classroom is located at the end of a wing of the high school with its own separate entrance for the pre-kindergarten families. Bathrooms are located across the hall. The program does not have a playground facility for the preschool children on the school ground. Previously, the program used the front lawn area for outdoor activities, but due to safety concerns, the class now uses the central courtyard area. This is primarily a concrete area where the teachers bring out a water table, balls, Frisbees, jump rope, hop scotch mats, hula hoops, etc. Next year, the program plans to build a preschool playground, adjacent to a new infant-toddler-preschool facility on the high school's grounds.

The classroom has several learning centers (science, blocks, dramatic play, manipulatives, art, writing, language arts, listening, and computer centers) which are well equipped. One bulletin board outlined the new Nevada Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards through photos of activities related to the standards.

The teacher uses a theme-based approach. On the day of the visit, the theme was oceans and fish. Children moved to the various learning centers after arriving. In the art area, children made sea plates with glue, colored sand, shells, pictures, and small rubber fish. Several children examined toads in the aquarium and other children developed sea stories using fish ink stamps and dictating their story to a teacher. Three other children played a sea animal lotto game. Three high school students assisted in the various learning centers for the first forty minutes. During circle time the teacher showed the children several types of shells and pictures of sea animals and coral and then read *Famous Seaweed Soup*, introducing the author and illustrator and asking questions throughout. The session ended with a music activity related to the fish theme.

The pre-kindergarten program had fewer high school students involved this year due to scheduling conflicts. Ten child development class students participated in the program.

Program staff also included two high school special education students as well as several 8th and 9th grade students who occasionally helped after their school day ended. All the high school students gained skills in working in an early childhood educational environment and the class benefited by having additional personnel to regularly assist with activities.

**Pedagogy.** The teacher planned activities appropriate for the children's ages and developmental stages. The classroom schedule allows for a balance between teacher-directed and child-choice activities. During outside time, as there is no real playground, the teachers provide materials and activities to improve the children's gross motor abilities (e.g., hop scotch, jump ropes, hula hoops, trikes, etc.)

Children are very aware of classroom routines. The teacher uses songs to move between activities and the children know exactly what to do next. The teacher and assistant both engage children in their "play" in the different learning centers and are effective role models for the high school students.

**Assessment and Continuous Improvement.** The teacher administered the PLS-4 to the children twice during the year and conducted an ongoing assessment of each child using the Pre-Kindergarten Portfolio Assessment developed by the school district.
The teachers maintain a portfolio on each child which includes work samples of art, writing, experience stories, etc., which staff gave to the children's next year kindergarten teachers. Program staff also developed an individual notebook/journal for each child with work samples, homework sheets, etc., which staff present to parents at the end of the year.

**Parenting Program.** Staff encourage parents to read with their children at home and have established a classroom library for parents to check out books and learning games. Children check out new books every Monday. Parents keep reading logs and when they return the log at the end of the month, the family receives a book of their own.

Staff held several parent workshops, teaching parents how to make games, etc. Program staff also required parents to attend at least one of the of CALF Van workshop series…*Family Storyteller, Read, View and Do,* and *Money on the Bookshelf.*

Program staff gave weekly homework assignments for the children and their parents, using the *On Track for Kindergarten Program.* The program includes a variety of interactive activities for the parent and child to complete together. Staff always welcome parents into the classroom and several parents volunteer regularly.

## White Pine County School District

**Location.** McGill Elementary School, McGill, Nevada.

**Intensity and Duration.** White Pine County School District operates a half-day early childhood program, Monday through Friday from 8:00 to 11:30 p.m. Children receive 17.5 hours per week of early childhood education.

**Staff.** Program staff include a half-time teacher, a half-time aide, and a Parent Outreach Coordinator who often works in the classroom.

**Number of Children.** The program serves 16 children with two adults for a child/adult ratio of 8 to 1. When the Parent Outreach Coordinator is present, the ratio is 5 to 1.

### Early Childhood Education Program

**Curriculum.** The pre-kindergarten program uses both the *Core Knowledge Program-Preschool* and the *California Early Literacy Learning* (*CELL*) *Program* as the primary curricula—both programs are also used by the other grades in McGill Elementary School. The *Core Knowledge Program* is based on research in cognitive psychology that supports the premise that children must learn a grade-by-grade core of common material to ensure a sound preschool and elementary school education. Therefore, the curriculum focuses on a set of fundamental competencies and specific knowledge appropriate for the age group. The competency areas include Movement, Oral Language, Autonomy/ Social Skills, Nursery Rhymes, Poems, Fingerplays and Songs, Storybook Reading and Storytelling, Emerging Literacy Skills in Reading and Writing, Mathematical Reasoning, Orientation

in Time and Space, Scientific Reasoning, Music, and Visual Arts. The *CELL Program* includes a basic framework for daily literacy activities which includes oral language activities, phonological skills, reading aloud, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, interactive writing, and independent writing.

**Learning Environment**. The McGill ECE program contains several learning centers within two classrooms. One classroom is the "quiet room" -- language arts and library area, writing area, computer centers, and space for pets (three rats, a bunny, and an enormous fish in a large aquarium). The second classroom is the "active room" -- blocks, dramatic play, manipulatives, art, sand and water table, and fix-it center with old phones, technology equipment, etc. Additionally, the program uses the local town environment frequently for learning, going on several field trips throughout the year, including the hospital, a dentist's office, the Railroad Museum and train station, Wheeler Machinery, a heavy equipment store, and the local casino and motel. All the field trips become curricula for class-made stories, writing and art activities, wood and box constructions, etc.

The school built a new, fenced in safe playground area for the preschoolers, paying for it from various community fund raisers and building it with volunteers. The playground includes a sizable cement tricycle path, sand area, and a climbing apparatus.
To help with behavior management, the staff uses the "*I Care Language*" approach which is part of the *Core Curriculum* Program, which they taught children at the beginning of the school year. It emphasizes having children learn to listen to each other; use hands for helping not hurting; care about each other's feelings; and be responsible for what one says and does. The classroom also has a Winnie the Pooh "Thinking Tent" where a child can go if he or she needs special quiet time.

**Pedagogy.** The classroom combines both active and quiet play, teacher directed and child centered activities. On the day of the visit, after breakfast and a circle time, the children spent a large block of time out on their new playground. The teachers reported that the children concentrated much better the rest of the day when they started their day with active physical movement.

The classroom is language-rich. Staff read books to the children at least twice a day and have children develop experience stories, create their own books, and put on their own plays. Staff emphasize syllabication, sounding out words, and encourage the children to write words and sentences during interactive writing. The walls are filled with poems and nursery rhymes connected to curriculum themes.

Children appear to know class routines well, including their lunch-time routine at the end of their day with older school classmates.

**Assessment and Continuous Improvement.** The School District's speech therapist administered the Preschool Language Scale (PLS-4) at the beginning and end of the school year. Staff also completed the Brigance Developmental Inventory on all the children and a Core Knowledge assessment used with that curriculum.

The teacher identified two children for speech therapy and referred two other children to Child Find. A school district speech therapist works in the classroom every Friday and an early interventionist works in the classroom every Wednesday for an hour and a half.

The teachers developed portfolios on all the children. They contain work samples, art work, and assessment data.

**Parenting Program.** The Parent Outreach Coordinator, who works directly with the families, plans and implements the ECE parenting program. The Coordinator conducts monthly home visits with most families. She talks with those parents each day when they bring or pick up their child, and helps parents get to school for events or medical appointments. This year the Coordinator conducted a series of Parent Nights related to books and the classroom themes. The Coordinator introduces books, such as *Papa, Please Get the Moon for Me*, to the families and then provides them with activities throughout the month related to the book.

The Parent Outreach Coordinator Parent also keeps data on volunteering as well as the amount of time parents spend reading with their child and doing activities together.

This year the pre-kindergarten staff renovated the school library into a Family Literacy Center. Using donated material, they painted the room and installed new shelving. The Center is now the site for many family trainings and social events.

Staff send "Love Notes" to the families regularly with photos of their child and a note about the day's activities, behavior, etc. Program staff have also created Literacy Bags to go home with the children for families to work on together.

# Chapter VIII. Participant Outcomes – School Districts and Community-Based Organizations

This chapter provides a summary of the effectiveness of the school district and community-based Nevada ECE projects on the early childhood education and parenting outcome indicators. Data on the effectiveness of Classroom on Wheels Nevada ECE projects are presented in Chapter IX. The outcome indicators were developed in June 2001 by the Nevada Even Start Statewide Family Literacy Initiative—as mentioned previously. The Nevada Department of Education played an important role in this process since the outcome indicators had to be used to evaluate federal funded Even Start projects in Nevada, which NDE administers.

The Nevada Even Start Statewide Family Literacy Initiative developed 14 outcome indicators for Even Start: four in early childhood education, six in adult literacy, and four in parenting. After reviewing the Even Start outcome indicators, the Nevada ECE Evaluation Design Team selected the four outcome indicators from Even Start consistent with Nevada ECE goals to evaluate the program: one indicator in early childhood education and three in parenting. (See Appendix C for a list of the four outcome indicators and how the performance levels were established.)

**Table 14.** The number of outcome indicators met by the Nevada ECE program

| Indicator Area (n) | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| A. Early Childhood (1) | 1 | 0 |
| B. Parenting (3) | 3 | 0 |

The results show that school district and community-based Nevada ECE children and adults made positive gains on all four indicators, and achieved the expected level of performance on all four outcome indicators. The results from each outcome indicator are presented below.

## Outcome Indicators

### A. Early Childhood Education

***Outcome Indicator 1.*** *Seventy percent (70%) of Early Childhood Education children from birth until they enter kindergarten with a minimum of four months of participation will increase their standard score on the auditory comprehension and expressive communication subtests of the Preschool Language Scale-4 (PLS-4).*

**Table 15.** Performance on **e**arly childhood outcome indicators

| Outcome Indicator | Expected | Actual |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Auditory Comprehension | 70% | 78% |
| 2. Expressive Comprehension | 70% | 81% |

*Reading Readiness.* The PLS-4 is an individually administered norm-referenced language assessment for children from birth to six years old. The Nevada ECE projects administered the Preschool Language Scale-4 to children from birth to five years old. The test produces scores for auditory comprehension and expressive communication. It can be administered in English or Spanish depending on the individual child. All nine school district and community-based projects elected to administer the test in English only since school readiness, which includes English language proficiency, is a goal for the program.[17] In these nine projects, project staff waited to test children who could not be tested in English at enrollment into the program because of limited English proficiency until he/she had sufficient English skills. Projects reported that 167 of the 808 children (21 percent) for whom data were available, did not have sufficient English language proficiency to complete the PLS-4 in English when the children first enrolled in Nevada ECE. In addition, many other children who could complete the assessment were still English Language Learners.

The PLS-4 data are expressed in standard score units. Standard scores express the extent to which a child's score exceeds or falls below the mean score of children the same age upon which the test was normed. PLS-4 scores have a standard score mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15. For example, one-year-old children in the PLS-4 norm group

[17] Two students were reported to have been administered the test in Spanish.

have an average raw score of 11 in expressive communication which equates to a standard score of 100; two-year-olds have a average raw score of 20, which is also assigned a standard score of 100; three-year-olds have an average raw score of 29 which equates to a standard score of 100, and so on.

The analysis of data on the PLS is done with standard scores, and because of the way a standard score scale is constructed (as explained above), the expectation is that the PLS-4 standard scores should not change in the absence of a "treatment." That is, assuming children develop at about the same rate, a child's relative position with respect to children's skills their own age should not change without a treatment or intervention. There is no "maturation effect" for the PLS-4, because the standard scores are age-linked. A one-year-old who scores at the mean for all one-year-olds will have the same standard score as a three-year old who scores at the mean for all three-year-olds. Hence, there is no particular reason a child's standard score in relation to the PLS-4 norm group should change over time unless that child is receiving special services. An increase in standard score during the time that a child is participating in Nevada ECE is, therefore, taken as an indication that Nevada ECE is helping increase the child's auditory comprehension and expressive communication.

Out of the 812 children in school district and community-based projects, project personnel administered the pretest Auditory Comprehension subtest to 759 children and the pretest Expressive Communication subtest to 720 children. Project staff did not administer the PLS-4 to the other children because the children had just recently enrolled in the program or because the child did not have sufficient English Language proficiency to complete the test in English. Table 16 shows the pretest mean for all children who had been administered the Auditory Comprehension or the Expressive Communication subtests. Nevada ECE children have a pretest mean on the Auditory Comprehension subtest of 92.3, which is at about the 31st percentile, and a pretest mean on the Expressive Communication subtest of 90.3, which is at about the 26th percentile. Both mean scores suggest that many students are very low performing. However, part of the explanation for the low scores is that many students are English Language Learners. For English Language

Learners, the low scores reflect the lack of English language proficiency rather than any developmental delays.

**Table 16.** Preschool Language Scale-4 pretest mean scores

| Subtest (n) | Pretest Mean |
|---|---|
| Auditory Comprehension (n=759) | 92.3 |
| Expressive Communication (n=720) | 90.3 |

Next, we calculated the pre- and posttest scores for Nevada ECE children who had been in the program at least four months, i.e., those children eligible to be assessed on the outcome indicator. Data are available for 630 children on the Auditory Comprehension subtest and for 607 children the Expressive Communication subtests who were in the program at least four months.

In terms of the outcome indicator, 492 of the 630 children (78 percent) made a standard score gain on the Auditory Comprehension subtest and 493 of the 607 (81 percent) made a standard score gain on the Expressive Communication subtest—above the expected performance level at 70 percent of children. Therefore, Nevada ECE achieved this outcome indicator for early childhood education.

To help interpret the overall impact of Nevada ECE on children as measured by the PLS-4, we calculated the mean gain scores. Table 17 shows that the 630 children made a mean gain of 9.7 standard score points on the Auditory Comprehension subtest and that the 607 children made a mean gain of 12.2 standard score points on the Expressive Communication subtest. These results show that, overall, Nevada ECE had a strong positive effect on the auditory comprehension and expressive communication of participating children, and the gains were consistent enough across children to achieve the state outcome indicator.

**Table 17.** Preschool Language Scale-4 mean scores and gain

| Subtest (n) | Pretest Mean | Posttest Mean | Mean Gain |
|---|---|---|---|
| Auditory Comprehension (630) | 92.3 | 102.0 | 9.7 |
| Expressive Communication (607) | 90.3 | 102.5 | 12.2 |

In comparison, data from the *National Evaluation of the Even Start Family Literacy Program (1997)* shows that Even Start children made a mean gain of 5.2 standard score points on the PLS-3—an earlier but comparable version of the instrument. Thus, the gains of Nevada ECE children on the PLS-4 were substantially larger than the gains of children in the National Evaluation of Even Start.

The results, however, must be interpreted with caution because of the large numbers of English Language Learners in the program. As mentioned previously, projects could not administer the PLS-4 in English when the child enrolled into the program for 167 of the 808 children (21 percent) for whom data were available. These children simply did not have sufficient English language skills to take the test. In these instances, Nevada ECE staff would wait to administer the early childhood assessment until the teacher thought the child had sufficient language skills.

In addition to those children who simply did not have sufficient English language skills to take the test at intake, many other children may have had enough English proficiency to take the test, but they were still in the process of learning the English language. As a result, the large gains on the PLS-4 most likely represent gains because many children were learning the English language as well as developmental gains due to the early childhood program.

In an attempt to learn the effect of Nevada ECE on different groups of children, we divided the results from the PLS-4 into three different groups: children who did not have sufficient English language skills to take the PLS-4 at intake, children who had the

English skills to take the test at intake but were probably English language learners,[18] and native English speaking children.[19]

Table 18 shows the pretest and posttest means for the three groups on the PLS-4 subtests as well as the percent of children that made a standard score gain on each subtest. The results show that, in general, children who did not have sufficient English language skills to take the PLS-4 at intake made the largest gains, both in terms of the percent who made a standard score gain and in the mean standard score gain. The group of children with the smallest gains was the native English speaking children. More importantly, all groups met the expected performance levels for this indicator. The results suggest that while a portion of the large gains that children made overall could be due to the fact that many children were learning the English language, all children benefited substantially from the developmental activities in early childhood education program.

It is interesting that children, especially English Language Learners, made the largest gains in expressive communication rather than auditory comprehension. In other words, children made the largest gains in speaking rather than listening, consistent with a large English language learner population.

[18] These children were defined as children who were of Hispanic origin. This definition assumes that all Hispanic children are English Language Learners, which may not be true.

[19] These children were defined as all other children. This definition assumes that all other children are native English speakers, which may not be true.

**Table 18.** Preschool Language Scale-4 mean scores and gains

| Subtest | Group (n) | Pretest Mean | Posttest Mean | Mean Gain | Percent Gain |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Auditory Comprehension | No English Skill at Intake (79) | 76.0 | 86.2 | 10.2 | 81% |
| | English Language Learners (206) | 86.8 | 98.1 | 11.3 | 76% |
| | Native English Speaking (345) | 99.3 | 108.0 | 8.7 | 79% |
| Expressive Communication | No English Skill at Intake (57) | 67.1 | 86.1 | 19.0 | 91% |
| | English Language Learners (205) | 82.4 | 97.3 | 14.9 | 85% |
| | Native English Speaking (345) | 98.8 | 108.3 | 9.5 | 77% |

## B. Parenting

***Outcome Indicator 1.*** *Ninety percent (90%) of all participating adults enrolled in Early Childhood Education for at least four months will meet at least one goal related to parenting skills (e.g., developmental appropriateness, positive discipline, teaching and learning, care-giving environment) within the reporting year.*

**Table 19.** Performance on parenting outcome indicators

| Outcome Indicator | Expected | Actual |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Individual Parenting Goals | 90% | 96% |
| 2. Time With Children | 60% | 75% |
| 3. Reading With Children | 30% | 64% |

*Individual Parenting Goals.* Of the 819 Nevada ECE adults, 749 adults had children who were enrolled in school district and community based ECE projects for at least four months. Of these 749 adults, 716 adults (96 percent) met at least one parenting goal. School district and community based ECE projects met the expected performance level of 90 percent for this indicator. It should be noted that 13 of the adults who did not meet a parenting goal also did not set any parenting goals. If these adults are removed from the analysis, then 716 out of 736 adults (97 percent) met at least one parenting goal.

The evaluation also determined the number of adults who met at least one parenting goal,

regardless if they met the criteria of being in the program for four months. Overall, the 796 adults (that established goals) set a total of 2,697 goals, making 2,265 of them (94 percent).

***Outcome Indicator 2.*** *Sixty percent (60%) of first-year Early Childhood Education parents will increase the amount of time they spend with their children daily within a reporting year.*

*Time With Children.* Nevada ECE staff asked parents to estimate the number of hours they spent with their child each day when they enrolled in the program and again at the end of the evaluation period. Increasing the amount of time parents spend with their children is an important goal in parenting education. Parent and child together (PACT) time provides an opportunity for parents to become increasingly involved in their children's education, to increase their parenting skills, and to ultimately play a more important role in their child's learning.

Of the 812 children enrolled in school district and community based ECE projects, 689 children were first-year participants. A total of 630 of these children were in Nevada ECE at least four months. Pretest and posttest data are available for all 630 children. At the time the 630 children enrolled in the program, 97 parents reported already spending more than two hours a day with their child (the highest possible time on the interview survey). I excluded these parents from the analysis since they were already at the highest possible time at enrollment and could not report a higher amount of time on the posttest. Of the remaining 533 parents, 399 (75 percent) reported spending more time with their children at the time of the posttest or when they exited the program, 93 parents (17 percent) reported spending the same amount of time with their children, and 41 (8 percent) reported spending less time with their children. Thus, school district and community based ECE projects met the expected performance level of 60 percent.

***Outcome Indicator 3.*** *Thirty percent (30%) of first-year Early Childhood Education parents will increase the amount of time they spend reading with their children within a reporting year.*

*Reading With Children.* An even more specific Nevada ECE goal is to increase the amount of time adults spend reading to or with their children. Reading together has many

benefits. It provides parents with an opportunity to become more involved in their child's education and increases the child's readiness for school.

Nevada ECE staff asked parents to estimate the number of hours each week they spent reading with or to their children when they enrolled in the program and again at the end of the program year. As mentioned previously, there were 630 first-year children enrolled in school district and community based ECE projects who were in the program at least four months. Pretest and posttest data were available for all 630 children. Of the 630 children, 406 (64 percent) of their parents reported spending more time reading with them at the end of the evaluation than when they began the program, 90 parents (14 percent) reported spending the same amount of time reading with their children, and 134 parents (21 percent) reported a decrease in the amount of time they spent reading to their children. School district and community based ECE projects exceeded the expected performance level of 30 percent for this outcome indicator.

Although the outcome indicator focuses on first-year parents, I feel it is important to note the amount of time that parents of all 812 children report spending reading with their children. Pretest and posttest data were available on 743 children who were enrolled in the program at least four months. Table 20 shows that school district and community based ECE parents spent an average of 0.76 more hours (46 minutes) per week reading to or with their child (a gain of 45 percent) at the end of the evaluation period.

**Table 20.** Parent and Child Reading Time Together, n=743

| Pretest Mean | Posttest Mean | Mean Gain |
|---|---|---|
| 1.69 | 2.35 | 0.76 |

# Chapter IX. Participant Outcomes – Classroom on Wheels

This chapter provides a summary of the effectiveness of Classroom on Wheels Nevada ECE projects on the early childhood education and parenting outcome indicators. The results found that Classroom on Wheels children and adults made positive gains on all four indicators, and achieved the expected level of performance on two of the four outcome indicators. On the two indicators that participants did not meet, Classroom on Wheels participants made gains but fell short of meeting the expected performance level. The results from each outcome indicator are presented below.

**Table 21.** The number of outcome indicators met by Classroom on Wheels Program

| Indicator Area (n) | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| A. Early Childhood (1) | 1 | 0 |
| B. Parenting (3) | 1 | 2 |

## Outcome Indicators

### A. Early Childhood Education

***Outcome Indicator 1.*** *Seventy percent (70%) of Early Childhood Education children from birth until they enter kindergarten with a minimum of four months of participation will increase their standard score on the auditory comprehension and expressive communication subtests of the Preschool Language Scale-4 (PLS-4).*

*Reading Readiness.* Classroom on Wheels elected to administer the test in English since school readiness, which includes English language proficiency, is a goal for the program. Classroom on Wheels reported that 67 (28 percent) of the 238 children for whom data were available, did not have sufficient English language proficiency to complete the PLS-4 in English when the children first enrolled in Nevada ECE.

**Table 22.** Performance on early childhood outcome indicators

| Outcome Indicator | Expected | Actual |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Auditory Comprehension | 70% | 78% |
| 2. Expressive Comprehension | 70% | 81% |

Out of the 242 children in Classroom on Wheels Nevada ECE projects, project personnel administered the pretest Auditory Comprehension subtest to 221 children and the pretest Expressive Communication subtest to 220 children. Project staff did not administer the PLS-4 to the other children because the children had just recently enrolled in the program or because the child did not have sufficient English Language proficiency to complete the test in English. Table 23 shows the pretest mean for all children who had been administered the Auditory Comprehension or the Expressive Communication subtests. Classroom on Wheels children have a pretest mean on the Auditory Comprehension subtest of 81.3, which is at about the 11$^{th}$ percentile, and a pretest mean on the Expressive Communication subtest of 76.8, which is at about the 6$^{th}$ percentile. Both mean scores suggest that many students are very low performing. However, part of the explanation for the low scores is that many students are English Language Learners. For English Language Learners, the low scores reflect the lack of English language skills rather than any developmental delays.

**Table 23.** Preschool Language Scale-4 pretest mean scores

| **Subtest (n)** | **Pretest Mean** |
|---|---|
| Auditory Comprehension (n=221) | 81.3 |
| Expressive Communication (n=220) | 76.8 |

Next, we calculated the pre- and posttest scores for Classroom on Wheels ECE children who had been in the program at least four months, i.e., those children eligible to be assessed on the outcome indicator. Data are available for 141 children on the Auditory Comprehension and the Expressive Communication subtests who were in the program at least four months.

In terms of the outcome indicator, 110 of the 141 children (78 percent) made a standard score gain on the Auditory Comprehension subtest and 114 of the 141 (81 percent) made gains on the Expressive Communication subtest—above the expected performance level

at 70 percent of children. Therefore, Classroom on Wheels ECE projects achieved this outcome indicator for early childhood education.

To help interpret the overall impact of Classroom on Wheels on children as measured by the PLS-4, we calculated the mean gain scores. Table 24 shows that the 141 children made a mean gain of 12.4 standard score points on the Auditory Comprehension subtest and a mean gain of 13.7 standard score points on the Expressive Communication subtest. These results show that, overall, Nevada ECE had a strong positive effect on the auditory comprehension and expressive communication of participating children, and the gains were consistent enough across children to achieve the state outcome indicator.

**Table 24.** Preschool Language Scale-4 mean scores and gain, n=141

| Subtest | Pretest Mean | Posttest Mean | Mean Gain |
|---|---|---|---|
| Auditory Comprehension | 80.6 | 92.9 | 12.4 |
| Expressive Communication | 75.7 | 89.4 | 13.7 |

As mentioned previously, the results must be interpreted with caution because of the large numbers of English Language Learners in the program. Overall, Classroom on Wheels ECE projects could not administer the PLS-4 at intake for 67 of the 238 children (28 percent) because the child did not have sufficient English language skills.

In an attempt to learn the effect of Nevada ECE on different groups of children, we again divided the results from the PLS-4 into three different groups: children who did not have sufficient English language skills to take the PLS-4 at intake, children who had the English skills to take the test at intake but were probably English language learners, and native English speaking children.

Table 25 shows the pretest and posttest means for the three groups on the PLS-4 subtests as well as the percent of students that made a standard score gain on each subtest. The results show that, in general, children who did not have sufficient English language skills to take the PLS-4 at intake made the largest gains, both in terms of the percent who made a standard score gain and in the mean standard score gain. The group of children who made

the smallest gains was the native English speaking children. More importantly, all but one group met the expected performance levels for this indicator. The native English speaking group fell just short of meeting the expected performance on the expressive communication subtest: 68 percent of these children made a standard score gain as compared to the expected performance level of 70 percent.

The results, like the results of children in the school district and community-based ECE projects, suggest that while a portion of the large gains that children made could be due to the fact that many children were learning the English language, all children benefited substantially from the developmental activities in early childhood education program.

Again, as with the children in the school district and community-based ECE projects, children, especially English Language Learners, made the largest gains in expressive communication rather than auditory comprehension. In other words, children made the largest gains in speaking rather than listening, consistent with a large English language learner population.

**Table 25.** Preschool Language Scale-4 mean scores and gains

| Subtest | Group (n) | Pretest Mean | Posttest Mean | Mean Gain | Percent Gain |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Auditory Comprehension | No English Skill at Intake (79) | 68.5 | 86.3 | 17.8 | 92% |
| | English Language Learners (206) | 79.7 | 92.0 | 12.3 | 77% |
| | Native English Speaking (345) | 93.2 | 102.6 | 9.5 | 74% |
| Expressive Communication | No English Skill at Intake (57) | 57.7 | 77.8 | 20.2 | 92% |
| | English Language Learners (205) | 74.3 | 87.9 | 13.6 | 82% |
| | Native English Speaking (345) | 95.2 | 105.4 | 10.2 | 68% |

## B. Parenting

***Outcome Indicator 1.*** *Ninety percent (90%) of all participating adults enrolled in Early Childhood Education for at least four months will meet at least one goal related to parenting skills (e.g., developmental appropriateness, positive discipline, teaching and learning, care-giving environment) within the reporting year.*

**Table 26.** Performance on parenting outcome indicators

| Outcome Indicator | Expected | Actual |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Individual Parenting Goals | 90% | 89% |
| 2. Time With Children | 60% | 54% |
| 3. Reading With Children | 30% | 54% |

*Individual Parenting Goals.* Of the 236 Classroom on Wheels Nevada ECE adults, 222 adults had children who were enrolled in Classroom on Wheels for at least four months. Of these 222 adults, 198 adults (89 percent) met at least one parenting goal. Classroom on Wheels fell just short of meeting the expected performance level of 90 percent for this indicator. It should be noted that 20 of the adults who did not meet a parenting goal also did not set any parenting goals. If these adults are removed from the analysis, then 198 out of 202 adults (98 percent) met at least one parenting goal—above the expected performance level of 90 percent. Overall, the 213 adults (that established goals) set a total of 907 goals, making 836 of them (88 percent).

***Outcome Indicator 2.*** *Sixty percent (60%) of first-year Early Childhood Education parents will increase the amount of time they spend with their children daily within a reporting year.*

*Time With Children.* Of the 242 children enrolled in Classroom on Wheels Nevada ECE projects, 215 children were first-year participants. A total of 200 of these children were in Classroom on Wheels at least four months. Pretest and posttest data are available for all 200 children. At the time the 200 children enrolled in the program, 45 parents reported already spending more than two hours a day with their child (the highest possible time on the interview survey). I excluded these parents from the analysis since they were already at the highest possible time at enrollment and could not report a higher amount of time on the posttest. Of the remaining 155 parents, 84 (54 percent) reported spending more time with their children at the time of the posttest or when they exited the program, 37 parents (24 percent) reported spending the same amount of time with their children, and 34 (22

percent) reported spending less time with their children. Thus, Classroom on Wheels did not meet the expected performance level of 60 percent.

***Outcome Indicator 3.*** *Thirty percent (30%) of first-year Early Childhood Education parents will increase the amount of time they spend reading with their children within a reporting year.*

*Reading With Children.* As mentioned previously, there were 200 first-year children enrolled in Classroom on Wheels Nevada ECE Projects who were in the program at least four months. Pretest and posttest data were available for all 200 children. Of the 200 children, 107 (54 percent) of their parents reported spending more time reading with them at the end of the evaluation than when they began the program, 17 parents (9 percent) reported spending the same amount of time reading with their children, and 79 parents (40 percent) reported a decrease in the amount of time they spent reading to their children. Nevada ECE exceeded the expected performance level of 30 percent for this outcome indicator.

As with the school district and community-based ECE projects, we calculated the amount of time that parents of all children report spending reading with their children. Pretest and posttest data were available on 227 children who were enrolled in the Classroom on Wheels ECE projects at least four months. Table 27 shows that Classroom on Wheels ECE parents spent an average of 0.48 fewer hours (29 minutes) per week reading to or with their child (a gain of 24 percent) at the end of the evaluation period. The apparent loss in reading time may be because parents may have overestimated the amount of time they reported reading with their children at intake. At intake, 45 parents reported spending four or more hours reading with their children. Not one of these parents reported an increase at the end of the program year.

**Table 27.** Parent and Child Reading Time Together, n=227

| Pretest Mean | Posttest Mean | Mean Gain |
|---|---|---|
| 1.98 | 1.50 | -.48 |

# Chapter X. Testimonials

The impact of social and educational programs is sometimes difficult to measure because of the imprecise assessment instruments in these areas. This is especially true for early childhood assessments. In order to provide a more complete picture of the impact of Nevada ECE on families, we asked three projects to collect and submit testimonials from their participating families. While anecdotal, testimonials can be a powerful medium to convey the impact of a program on the lives of participants, which is sometimes missed by standardized assessment instruments.

We asked the three projects to have families write about their experiences in the project and what it has meant to them. We asked that, if possible, the participating adult write the testimonial. Project staff were to help only if necessary. This section of the report includes one testimonial from each of three projects.

## Laura – Carson City

Laura is a 37 year-old Caucasian woman with one daughter. Her five year old daughter Elizabeth is in the Early Childhood Education Program. Elizabeth attended 39.5 hours of early childhood education each month.

The main reason Laura enrolled Elizabeth in the ECE program was so that her daughter could be part of a pre-kindergarten program. Laura attended one hour of parenting education each month.

***Letter.***

***Dear Sir or Madam:***

*Our daughter, Elizabeth…, attends Mark Twain's Pre-K program this year. We are English speaking and in the higher income bracket, so we did not hold a lot of hope in her being accepted. I was delighted when the call came in from Mrs. Baum informing us that Ellie would be attending come the new school year. We were nervous, knowing that Ellie would be the youngest in her classroom, but we were at ease after first meeting Mrs. Baum.*

*From the moment we met Mrs. Baum, we knew that this program was going to benefit Ellie and be an incredible learning experience for all of us. Mrs. Baum is a gift to the teaching profession. She has been an incredible influence on Ellie, teaching more than the simple basics, which will help Ellie next year in Kindergarten.*

*The friendships our daughter has made will forever be an influence on the person she is. Thusly, the first teachers she had will forever be an influence on the student she'll be. We feel incredible fortunate that our daughter had had these three particular mentors in her life at this early stage. We know that her first experience of school would have been a weak impression of what she has received, if not for Mrs. Paula Baum, Mrs. Rose Etchison and Mr. Luiz Ramirez.*

*All of the children in this Pre-K program would have had weaker and less impressive experience had these particular 3 teachers not been placed in the same classroom. Mrs. Baum has the experience with youngsters, enthusiasm, and years of knowledge behind her. Mrs. Etchison has education and a loving, nurturing way of interacting with the children. Mr. Ramirez has youth, masculinity, eagerness to succeed and the much-needed ability to speak Spanish.*

*When all three of these extraordinary people were placed in one classroom with 20 eager, scared, trusting children, an incredible thing was created. A well-rounded, fun, exciting, challenging and learning atmosphere was formed. You see, these three*

*educators worked so well together, there were almost no noticeable seams separating their individual strengths in the classroom. This is what every school should strive to achieve.*

*In closing, we wanted to say thank you for giving our community this program and even more so, thank you for Ellie's teachers and for the basis which our daughter will always judge future scholars. Mrs. Paula Baum, Mrs. Rose Etchison, and Mr. Luiz Ramirez have certainly made future teachers' work a little more difficult.*

*Sincerely,*

*Mr. and Mrs. …*

### Heather – Churchill

Heather is a 36 year-old Caucasian woman with three children. Her five year old daughter Bailey attended the Early Childhood Education Program in 2002-03 and her four year old daughter, Savana, participated in Early Childhood Education Program in 2003-04. Savana attended 53 hours of early childhood education each month.

The main reason Heather enrolled Savana in the ECE program was to become a better parent and improve her daughter's chance for future success. Heather attended two and a quarter hours of parenting education each month.

*Letter*

*To Whom It May Concern:*

*I am writing to you in regards to the Early Childhood Education Program, at E.C. Best Elementary in Fallon, Nevada. I write to you about this preschool grant program with great pleasure and admiration for the program and the teacher.*

*I became aware of the program in the year 2002 and signed my middle daughter, Bailey, up. I was glad to get the call that she had made it into the program, not only for the education but the social interaction as well. The program had strict guidelines and criteria for us to meet but it was worth it to see the changes and advances in education bailey made. At the time Bailey was in I signed her sister Savana up for the program for the following school year in 2003. Again, with the best of education in mind for my daughter and the social interaction needed to prepare for kindergarten. This preschool program takes a wonderful hands-on experience for the children and was perfect for my girls that had not been away from me for long periods. This program helps them to understand and adjust to school for short periods of times. It teaches them to respect themselves, others and the school and equipment.*

*The preschool grant program was a great success for my daughters, in many aspects of the education process needed to advance in kindergarten. Bailey learned to read just before beginning kindergarten and Savana is following in her steps. This was accomplished because of the nightly reading session with my daughters that were required of the program, along with a reading log. The girls also went to the library at school once a week for checking out books. Bailey was so ahead because of the program, that in kindergarten, she would finish assignments early and be given extra work. Savana is enjoying kindergarten so far but also need extra work to keep her going because she finishes early. When the girls went for their kindergarten screening, the girls both finished early and had high marks from the testing. The girls have both*

*loved the program, as well as, Miss King and have established a lasting bond with her.*

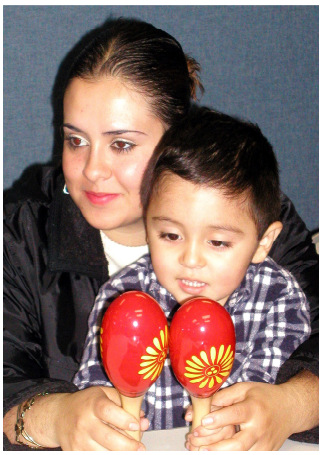
*During my time volunteering in the classroom, again a requirement for success, I have seen several students achieve and change. The students learned to behave in a classroom setting with the required principal and counselor nearby. I have recommended the program to other parents and watched as their children are and/or will if the Early Childhood Education Program is able to keep running. My daughters are a great success in school today because of this program and its impact on education for the younger children.*

*I have volunteered for the class in the past not just because it was required for the program and the children. I will continue to help out Miss King if she needs it or wants me to help out in her classroom. This program is irreplaceable at E.C. Best Elementary and in the school system as a whole. The students have in the past, Bailey and Savana as well, are better students because of this program. I saw many students come through the program that didn't speak English upon entry very well, leave with a wonderful grasp in it. I hope to see this program continue in the future for the children that need the early start and help in school. I hope that this preschool program gets the funding necessary for these children to get the early education that they need and deserve. Just as my daughters were given the opportunity and chance to advance in their early education.*

*Sincerely,*

*Mrs. Heather …*

## Alma – Washoe[20]



Alma is a 27 year-old Hispanic woman with one son. She received all of her formal education in Mexico. Her four year old son Kevin is in the Nevada ECE program.

Alma enrolled in the Nevada ECE program to become a better parent, to encourage the success of her child, and to further her own education. She attended 5.5 hours of parenting education each month. Kevin attended 22.9 hours of early childhood education each month.

> *Letter: My name is Alma… and I'm a homemaker. I have a small family, my husband and son. My more valuable experience in Even Start was the first time my son learn his first word in English. He's learned a lot in six months, new games, English songs, dancing and to share toys. He has many friends. My son is happy and I am too because he loves to read books. He has changed because before he didn't like strangers. Now he is friendly. Every day get gets up early and happy because he wants to go to school and when sometimes he can't go he's sad.*
>
> *Even Start is for me one of the most important things in this country. Before going to school I always felt lonely. I didn't have friends and no goals. I only stayed in my apartment and watched T.V. but now is different, I have many schoolmates and we can speak about the same topics.*
>
> *Mari is the person that visits me. She helps me when I have some problems or I need to ask for advise she always help me.*
>
> *In Even Start I learn to speak and write in English and they helped me to be a better parent. Now when I go anyplace or somebody asks me something I don't feel bad and I can speak English.*
>
> *I want to get my GED this year and my teacher helps me a lot. I feel like is a second chance in my life because I got married too young and now I don't want to miss the opportunity.*
>
> *I want to be prepared to someone to set a good example for my son so I can feel proud of myself and my family proud of me.*

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20 As mentioned previously, funds from Nevada ECE are occasionally combined with monies from other funding streams to support early childhood education. In this case, funds from Nevada ECE are combined with federal Even Start funds.

# Chapter XI. Conclusions and Recommendations

The 2003-04 school year is the third year of the Nevada Early Childhood Education Program. This evaluation report presents data on participant characteristics (e.g., age, ethnicity, family structure), project operations (e.g., staffing, intensity of services offered) as well as ratings of the services provided by Nevada ECE projects based on program delivery indicators of effective early childhood programs and data on child and adult outcomes.

The two overall conclusions about the 2003-04 Nevada ECE program are: Nevada ECE projects have improved the quality of their early childhood programs and Nevada ECE projects have positively impacted program participants in early childhood development and parenting skills. Other conclusions and statements about the Nevada ECE program include—

- Nevada ECE projects have implemented higher quality early childhood programs for the last three years based on ratings of 17 program delivery indicators of effective early childhood programs.
- All Nevada ECE projects are helping to improve adult's parenting skills and children's language development and school readiness skills. School district and community-based ECE projects showed gains on all child and adult measures and met or exceeded the expected performance levels on all four statewide outcome indicators used for family literacy programs. Classroom on Wheels ECE projects showed gains on all child and adult measures and met or exceeded the expected performance levels on two of the four statewide outcome indicators. For the two indicators that Classroom on Wheels ECE participants did not meet, the participants fell just a little short of meeting the expected performance levels.
- Nevada ECE children, including English Language Learners, are more likely to succeed in kindergarten because of their participation in the program.
- Projects recruited many families who were in need and could benefit from the Nevada ECE program. Many families had multiple economic and social disadvantages (e.g., limited educational experience, limited English proficiency). At enrollment, Nevada ECE children typically started below their peers on a measure of school readiness.
- For many families, Nevada ECE was the only structured opportunity to better prepare their children for school. Most children from Nevada ECE families did not

participate in any preschool or toddler program before Nevada ECE and many Nevada ECE children did not participate in any other program while in Nevada ECE.

- The vast majority of children would have stayed at home with their parents, grandparents, siblings, or other family member for all or part of the time if they did not participate in Nevada ECE.
- The majority of early childhood education teachers (80 percent) meet new state requirements for teaching pre-kindergarten children. Of the qualified teachers, most (82 percent) have an early childhood education certificate or endorsement.
- The average cost for providing the Nevada Early Childhood Education Program in 2003-04 was $2,968 per child. However, this per child cost is an estimate since the calculation does not include the monies from all the funding streams that support Nevada ECE project sites.
- Projects offered services in early childhood education of sufficient intensity and duration, which if attended regularly, would positively impact Nevada ECE children.
- Most children attended services in early childhood education at a level which could show positive benefits of the services they received.
- Most parents attended Nevada ECE parenting education services regularly enough to benefit. In addition, Nevada ECE adults attended more average hours of parenting education in 2003-04 than 2002-03. However, some parents were not in the program long enough or did not attend services frequently enough to benefit substantially from them.
- Projects retained a large percentage of families enrolled in Nevada ECE during 2003-04, larger than in 2002-03. In addition, all projects had a list of families waiting to enroll into the program.

Although Nevada ECE projects have established sound early childhood education programs, Nevada ECE projects can still improve the services they provide to families. Below are three recommendations for improvement.

1. Continue to adopt, implement, and provide training to staff in high-quality, research-based early childhood programs and practices.
2. Whenever possible, ensure early childhood classrooms have or are near an outdoor playground with equipment for pre-kindergarten children to provide an outdoor curriculum that improves gross motor development.
3. Whenever possible, ensure early childhood classrooms have or are near appropriate bathroom facilities.

The Nevada Department of Education can help projects meet their goals by considering three recommendations.

1. Continue to locate and provide technical assistance and training in high-quality early childhood education programs and practices, including information and training in the Nevada Pre-kindergarten Content Standards.
2. Continue to monitor project activities to ensure high-quality early childhood education projects.
3. Continue to monitor data collection for the statewide evaluation.

# APPENDIX A

# Senate Bill 8, Section 189.50— Nevada Early Childhood Education

**Sec. 189.50.**

1. The Department of Education shall transfer from the State Distributive School Account the following sums for early childhood education:

   For the Fiscal Year 2003-2004. $2,896,583
   For the Fiscal Year 2004-2005. $2,896,583

2. Of the sums transferred pursuant to subsection 1, $301,000 in each fiscal year of the 2003-2005 biennium must be used for the Classroom on Wheels Program.

3. The remaining money transferred by subsection 1 must be used by the Department of Education for competitive state grants to school districts and community-based organizations for early childhood education programs.

4. To receive a grant of money pursuant to subsections 2 and 3, school districts, community-based organizations and the Classroom on Wheels Program must submit a comprehensive plan to the Department of Education that includes, without limitation:

   (a) A detailed description of the proposed early childhood program;
   (b) A description of the manner in which the money will be used, which must supplement and not replace the money that would otherwise be expended for early childhood education programs; and
   (c) A plan for the longitudinal evaluation of the program to determine the effectiveness of the program on the academic achievement of children who participate in the program.

5. A school district, community-based organization or Classroom on Wheels Program that receives a grant of money shall:

   (a) Use the money to initiate or expand prekindergarten education programs that meet the criteria set forth in the publication of the Department of Education, entitled "August 2000 Public Support for Prekindergarten Education For School Readiness in Nevada."
   (b) Use the money to supplement and not replace the money that the school district, community-based organization or Classroom on Wheels Program would otherwise expend for early childhood education programs, as described in this section.
   (c) Use the money to pay for the salaries and other items directly related to the instruction of pupils in the classroom.
   (d) Submit a longitudinal evaluation of the program in accordance with the plan submitted pursuant to paragraph (c) of subsection 4. The money must not be used to remodel classrooms or facilities or for playground equipment.

6. The Department of Education shall develop statewide performance and outcome indicators to measure the effectiveness of the early childhood education programs for

which grants of money were awarded pursuant to this section. The indicators must include, without limitation:

(a) Longitudinal measures of the developmental progress of children before and after their completion of the program;
(b) Longitudinal measures of parental involvement in the program before and after completion of the program; and
(c) The percentage of participants who drop out of the program before completion.

7. The Department of Education shall review the evaluations of the early childhood education programs submitted by each school district, community-based organization and the Classroom on Wheels Program pursuant to paragraph (d) of subsection 5 and prepare a compilation of the evaluations for inclusion in the report submitted pursuant to subsection 8.

8. The Department of Education shall, on an annual basis, provide a written report to the Governor, Legislative Committee on Education and the Legislative Bureau of Educational Accountability and Program Evaluation regarding the effectiveness of the early childhood programs for which grants of money were received. The report must include, without limitation:

(a) The number of grants awarded;
(b) An identification of each school district, community-based organization and the Classroom on Wheels Program that received a grant of money and the amount of each grant awarded;
(c) For each school district, community based-organization and the Classroom on Wheels Program that received a grant of money:
    (1) The number of children who received services through a program funded by the grant for each year that the program received funding from the State for early childhood programs; and
    (2) The average per child expenditure for the program for each year the program received funding from the State for early childhood programs;
(d) A compilation of the evaluations reviewed pursuant to subsection 7 that includes, without limitation:
    (1) A longitudinal comparison of the data showing the effectiveness of the different programs; and
    (2) A description of the programs in this state that are the most effective; and
(e) Any recommendations for legislation.

9. Any balance of the sums transferred pursuant to subsection 1 remaining at the end of the respective fiscal years must not be committed for expenditure after June 30 of the respective fiscal years and reverts to the State Distributive School Account as soon as all payments of money committed have been made.

# APPENDIX B

# Site Visitation Form

# Senate Bill 8—
# Nevada
# Early Childhood Education

## Site Visitation Form

Using Nevada Early Childhood Education Program Delivery Indicators

NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Special Education, Elementary and Secondary Education, and School Improvement
700 East Fifth Street
Carson City, NV 89701

Prepared by
PACIFIC RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

April 2004

**Project Information** *(Location, number of children, intensity and duration)*

**Early Childhood Staff** *(Number of staff [ECE and non-ECE], staff education, staff certification, staff experience in education)*

**Parenting Program** *(Description of parenting activities to include the types of activities, duration/intensity of the program, and the curriculum used, if any)*

# Early Childhood Program.

*The program enhances development and eases children's transition to school by providing developmentally appropriate programs for all children from the families enrolled in home or center-based literacy programs.*

| ***Curricular Base.*** | Not Descriptive 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very Descriptive 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Program has a curricular base for all age groups served by the program. Early childhood curriculum has a research base. Staff make use of curricular philosophy when planning activities for individual children.<br>*Evidence—*<br>• Philosophy of curricular base for program is provided to parents and staff<br>• Curricular base is well founded and grounded in known research<br>• Lesson plans show evidence of curricular base in use<br>• Staff have received training consistent with curricular base | Notes: | | | | |

| ***Diversity.*** | Not Descriptive 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very Descriptive 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2. The curriculum respects and supports individual, cultural, and linguistic diversity. The curriculum provides a balance between learning about majority and minority cultures. Curriculum accommodates children who have limited English proficiency. All of the cultures and primary languages of the children are respected in the curriculum.<br>***Evidence—***<br>• Learning materials show evidence of individual, cultural, and linguistic diversity (e.g., books, dolls, block accessories, etc.)<br>• Activities reflect awareness of individual, cultural and linguistic diversity<br>• All children are welcome in the program, including children with special needs and children with cultural and linguistic diversity<br>• Staff are reflective of cultural diversity of classroom | Notes: | | | | |

## Early Childhood Program—cont.

| ***Developmental Areas.*** | Not Descriptive 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very Descriptive 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3. Early childhood program balances attention to all areas of development – social, emotional, physical, cultural, cognitive, aesthetic, and language.<br>*Evidence—*<br>• Classroom learning centers and activities reflect developmentally appropriate practices<br>• Lesson plans reflect awareness of need to meet children's varying developmental needs<br>• Lesson plans include all areas of development | Notes: | | | | |
| ***Experiences.*** | Not Descriptive 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very Descriptive 5 |
| 4. Staff encourage direct, firsthand, interactive learning experiences. Staff recognize that children develop knowledge and skills through active experiences and social interactions. The real world is the subject of learning activities. Activities are integrated and interdisciplinary, building on children's interests and knowledge.<br>*Evidence—*<br>• Learning experiences are developmentally appropriate to age group<br>• Learning experiences are a balance between active/quiet, group/individual, teacher-directed/child-directed, indoors/outdoors<br>• Learning experiences are concrete, hands-on, and interactive<br>• Learning experiences enable children the opportunity to make meaningful choices and provide a substantial block of time for children to explore and investigate<br>• Learning experiences reflect the community in which the children live as well as the children's own interests and existing knowledge | Notes: | | | | |

## Early Childhood Program—cont.

| ***Environment.*** | Not Descriptive 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very Descriptive 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5. The physical environment is safe, clean, well-lighted, comfortable, and age-appropriate in terms of furniture, equipment, materials, and access to bathrooms and clean-up facilities.<br>***Evidence—***<br>• Classroom is clean, orderly, and well-lighted<br>• Furniture is age-appropriate and safe<br>• Fire drill procedures are posted<br>• Room arrangement allows children to play and interact safely<br>• Outdoor environment is clean, safe and equipped with age-appropriate apparatus<br>• Bathroom and clean-up facilities are clean and convenient | Notes: | | | | |

| ***Learning Environment.*** | Not Descriptive 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very Descriptive 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6. The learning environment reflects the children's interests and displays varied and culturally rich materials. Classrooms contain a wide variety of materials accessible to all children, including books, math manipulatives, art supplies, dramatic play props, and science areas. The outdoor area is safe and contains appropriate equipment to encourage development.<br>*Evidence—*<br>• Classroom contains age-appropriate learning materials accessible to all children and reflective of children's interests and cultural and individual diversity<br>• Classroom contains learning centers which include language arts materials (e.g., books, puppets, flannel board stories, etc.), blocks, math manipulatives, art supplies, dramatic play props, science materials, musical instruments<br>• Outdoor equipment and learning materials are safe, and age-appropriate | Notes: | | | | |

## Early Childhood Program—cont.

| ***Interaction.*** | Not Descriptive | | | | Very Descriptive |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. The adult-child ratio and group size allow for frequent interaction between children and adults. Adult-child ratios are consistent with licensing standards. Children have sustained relationships with primary teachers/caregivers.<br>*Evidence—*<br>• Group size and ratio of teachers to children are limited to enable individualized and age-appropriate programming (*NAEYC Guidelines)*<br>• Three year-olds are in groups of no more than 16 children with 2 adults<br>• Four year-olds are in groups of no more than 20 children with 2 adults<br>• Five year-olds are in groups of no more than 25 children with 2 adults<br>• Multi-age grouping and children remaining with teacher for more than one year are strategies considered to build sustained relationships<br>• Teachers create a nurturing, caring environment by showing respect for children in their daily interactions (e.g., using respectful and inclusive language, getting down at children's level, showing signs of affection and genuine caring) | Notes: | | | | |

## Early Childhood Program—cont.

| ***Children with Special Needs.*** | Not Descriptive 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very Descriptive 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8. A wide variety of learning experiences, materials and equipment, and instructional adaptations and accommodations are used for children with special needs.<br>*Evidence—*<br>• Adaptive materials are available and used, if needed<br>• Accommodations for individual needs are incorporated into learning experiences, if needed<br>• Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are implemented, if required<br>• Therapeutic or other services are conducted within the classroom, if needed and appropriate | Notes: | | | | |

| ***Behavior Management.*** | Not Descriptive 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very Descriptive 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9. Staff use positive guidance techniques for discipline.<br>*Evidence—*<br>• Teachers model, encourage and reinforce the behavior that is desired<br>• Teachers use redirection of children to more acceptable activities<br>• Teachers set clear and realistic limits<br>• Teachers intervene to enforce consequences for unacceptable, harmful behavior<br>• Teachers encourage children to verbalize their feelings, wants and needs | Notes: | | | | |

## Early Childhood Program—cont.

| ***Language.*** | Not Descriptive 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very Descriptive 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10. The environment is language-rich. During contact time, children are read to regularly. Books and other reading material are abundant. Songs, rhymes, and stories are common activities. Staff demonstrate many ways to encourage children to talk about their experiences and to represent their ideas in stories and pictures.<br>*Evidence—*<br>• Books and other reading materials are abundant<br>• Songs, rhymes and stories are part of daily program<br>• Classroom charts and signs in print are in evidence<br>• Children are read to every day in various contexts (e.g., large groups, small groups, in laps)<br>• Staff use various questioning techniques to get children to talk about what they are doing, thinking, and feeling<br>• Materials (paper, pencils, glue, etc.,) are available for children to represent their ideas and experiences in stories and pictures | Notes: | | | | |

## Early Childhood Program—cont.

| ***Problem Solving.*** | Not Descriptive 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very Descriptive 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11. Staff encourage development of reasoning and problem-solving by providing challenging learning experiences and encouraging children's development through skillful questioning and expanding activities.<br>*Evidence—*<br>• Teachers use open-ended questions, pose problems, make suggestions and add complexity to tasks<br>• Teachers use many opportunities for children to plan, think about, reflect on, and revisit their own experiences<br>• Teachers engage children in discussion and representation activities (e.g., dictating writing, drawing, painting, clay)<br>• Teachers provide many opportunities for children to learn to work collaboratively with others and to learn how to solve problems cooperatively | Notes: | | | | |

| ***Child-Centered.*** | Not Descriptive 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very Descriptive 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12. Program staff provide many opportunities for child-selected learning and children are aware of basic routines. Children's play is respected by staff as legitimate learning time.<br>*Evidence—*<br>• Daily schedule is posted for all to read<br>• Daily schedule includes large time block for free choice/child-selected activities<br>• Children are aware of routines and participate in activities which reinforce daily schedule (e.g., use of calendar, weather chart, group discussion of day's activities, etc.) | Notes: | | | | |

## Early Childhood Program—cont.

| ***Developmental Approach.*** | Not Descriptive 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very Descriptive 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13. Program staff have appropriate expectations for children and provide activities based on their individual developmental needs. Staff provide opportunities for all children to succeed.<br>*Evidence—*<br>• Program staff have been trained in early childhood growth and development and diversity<br>• Learning activities are age appropriate and reflect both group needs and individual needs<br>• Staff have appropriate expectations for children from different age groups<br>• Classroom environment is one of positive respect and concern for each child | Notes: | | | | |

## Early Childhood Program—cont.

| ***Initial Assessment.*** | Not Descriptive 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very Descriptive 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14. Staff use a variety of formal and informal assessment techniques to measure domains of learning and development. The results are used in guiding curriculum development, teaching to meet the development needs of children, and assisting in determining if further early intervention measures are necessary.<br>*Evidence—*<br>• Children's initial assessments are available for review (e.g., PLS-4, Brigance, DDST, teacher observations, etc.)<br>• Procedures for further assessment of potential delays, if indicated, are established and followed (e.g., use of Child Find, etc.)<br>• Decisions that have a major impact on an individual child are based on multiple sources of information, including data from parents, teachers and specialists<br>• Staff discuss and use results from initial assessments to plan individual and group activities | Notes: | | | | |

| ***Measure Progress.*** | Not Descriptive 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very Descriptive 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15. Staff use a variety of formal and informal assessment procedures on an ongoing basis, including observation, performance assessment, work samples, and interviews so that the results reflect children's progress.<br>*Evidence—*<br>• Teachers keep files with children's work samples, performance assessments, etc.<br>• Children's ongoing assessments are available for review (e.g., Teacher observations, work samples, interviews, performance assessments, etc.)<br>• On-going assessments are planned and purposeful<br>• Staff discuss and use results from on-going assessments to plan individual and group activities | Notes: | | | | |

## Early Childhood Program—cont.

| ***Parents***. | Not Descriptive | | | | Very Descriptive |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. Parents are active partners in their child's education process and have the opportunity to provide input in their child's readiness for participation in various activities and their progress.<br>*Evidence—*<br>• Teacher's keep Parent Involvement Form which records activities parents are involved in and duration/intensity<br>• Teachers communicate (verbal or written) to parents they are always welcome to visit program<br>• Parents are encouraged to participate in the program in a wide variety of ways (e.g., attending parent workshops, participating in home visits, volunteering in the classroom, attending parent conferences, etc)<br>• Teachers keep record of parent activities at school and of parent/child activities together at home<br>• Teachers create opportunities for appropriate parent and child interactions during the program | Notes: | | | | |

## Early Childhood Program—cont.

| ***Reading Readiness.*** | Not Descriptive 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very Descriptive 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 17. Parents and caregivers regularly read with children, encouraging them to ask questions and to become actively involved in the reading experience. Shared literacy activities also include discussions around books, letters, and word sounds.<br><br>*Evidence—*<br>• Teachers keep records of parent involvement with their child in reading and literacy activities at home (e.g., goals can include reading with child at least 30 minutes a day, taking child to public library at least two times a month, establishing a weekly time where all family members read for 60 minutes, etc.)<br>• Teachers keep records of parents frequency of reading at home with child<br>• Teachers show parents how to read to and with their children | Notes: | | | | |

# APPENDIX C

# Project Ratings on ECE Program Delivery Indicators, 2003-04

**Table 12.** Project Ratings on Early Childhood Education Indicators, (1=low, 5=high)

| Early Childhood Education Indicators | Carson City | Churchill | Douglas | Clark | | | Great Basin |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | C.O.W. | Lone Mt. | Mc-Williams | |
| Curricular Base | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Diversity | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 5 |
| Developmental areas | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 |
| Experiences | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 |
| Environment | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Learning Environment | 5 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 |
| Interaction | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 5 |
| Children with Special Needs | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 5 |
| Behavior Management | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Language | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Problem Solving | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 4 |
| Child Centered | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Developmental Approach | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Initial Assessment | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 |
| Measure Progress | 5 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 |
| Parents | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Reading Readiness | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |

**Table 12.** Project Ratings on Early Childhood Education Indicators, (1=low, 5=high)

| Early Childhood Education Indicators | Humboldt | Pershing | Statewide COW | White Pine | Washoe | | Average Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Alice Smith | Sparks High | |
| Curricular Base | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4.85 |
| Diversity | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4.46 |
| Developmental areas | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4.38 |
| Experiences | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 1.62 |
| Environment | 2 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4.15 |
| Learning Environment | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4.62 |
| Interaction | 3 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4.69 |
| Children with Special Needs | 4 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 4.15 |
| Behavior Management | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4.62 |
| Language | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4.62 |
| Problem Solving | 5 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4.38 |
| Child Centered | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4.85 |
| Developmental Approach | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4.62 |
| Initial Assessment | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4.46 |
| Measure Progress | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4.54 |
| Parents | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5.00 |
| Reading Readiness | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5.00 |

# APPENDIX D

# Additional Information on Nevada Early Childhood Education Program Outcome Indicators

## A. Early Childhood Education

***Improvement in Ability to Read on Grade Level or Reading Readiness.***

***Indicator 1.*** Seventy percent (70%) of Early Childhood Education Program children from birth until they enter kindergarten with a minimum of four months of participation will increase their standard score on the auditory comprehension and expressive communication subtests of the Preschool Language Scale-4 (PLS-4).

> *Performance Level.* The standard of "70 percent" is based on data for state funded Even Start children from birth through two and one-half years of age on the PLS-3 during 1999-2000. Seventy-three percent of Even Start children made a standard score point gain from the pretest to posttest on auditory comprehensive and 65 percent on expressive communication.
>
> *Project Data Collection.* Early Childhood Education projects are expected to administer the PLS-3 to children receiving Early Childhood Education services from birth through five years old when they enter the program and again at the end of the program year, or when the children exit the program.
>
> *Project Reporting.* Early Childhood Education projects are expected to provide a list of all children from birth to five years old who received Early Childhood Education services for at least four months. The list should contain the children's names and a pretest and posttest score on the PLS-3.

## B. Parenting Education

***Parenting Skills.***

***Indicator 1.*** Ninety percent (90%) of participating adults enrolled in Early Childhood Education for at least four months will meet at least one goal related to parenting skills (e.g., developmental appropriateness, positive discipline, teaching and learning, caregiving environment) within the reporting year.

> *Performance Level.* Data have not been collected on this performance indicator previously nor are parenting goals established consistently across projects to estimate a reasonable performance level. In the absence of evaluation data, the standard of "90 percent" was determined though discussion with experienced Even Start project directors who thought the expectation was reasonable.
>
> *Project Data Collection.* Early Childhood Education projects are expected to help parents establish annual goals for themselves in parenting (e.g., attending monthly parenting workshops, learning positive discipline techniques, attending six Family Storyteller workshops) and criteria for determining whether the goals are met.

*Project Reporting.* Early Childhood Education projects are expected to provide a list of all Nevada ECE parents, the number of parenting goals the parents established for the year, and the number that they met.

***Parent and Child Together Time (PACT).***

***Indicator 2.*** Sixty percent (60%) of first-year Early Childhood Education parents will increase the amount of time they spend with their children weekly within a reporting year.

*Performance Level.* The standard of "60 percent" is based on data for state funded Even Start parents during 1999-2000. Sixty-two percent of first-year Even Start adults increased the amount of time they spent with their children weekly from when they entered the program to the end of the reporting year, or when they exited the program.

*Project Data Collection.* Early Childhood Education projects are expected to administer a survey when a family enters the program and again at the end of the program year or when the family exits the program. Local project staff need only administer a posttest survey to parents who have been in the program a minimum of four months.

*Project Reporting.* Early Childhood Education projects are expected to provide a list of all children who received Early Childhood Education services. The list should contain the children's names, the amount of time the parent spent with the child when they entered the program and again at the end of the program year, or when they exited the program.

***Parents and Children Reading Together.***

***Indicator 3.*** Thirty percent (30%) of first-year Early Childhood Education parents will increase the amount of time they spend reading with their children within a reporting year.

*Performance Level.* The standard of "30 percent" is based on data for state funded Even Start parents during 1999-2000. Thirty percent of first-year Even Start adults increased the amount of time they spent reading to or with their children from when they entered the program to the end of the reporting year, or when they exited the program.

*Project Data Collection.* Early Childhood Education projects are expected to administer a survey when a family enters the program and again at the end of the program year, or when the family exits the program. Local project staff need only administer a posttest survey to parents who have been in the program a minimum of four months.

*Project Reporting.* Early Childhood Education projects are expected to provide a list of all children who received Early Childhood Education services. The list should contain the children's names, the amount of time the parent spent reading to or with the child when they entered the program and again at the end of the program year, or when they exited the program.