

SENATE BILL 8

NEVADA EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE) PROGRAM

2004-05
Evaluation Report



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

Prepared by
Dr. David Leitner
Pacific Research Associates

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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 2004-05, the ten Nevada ECE projects provided services to 1,023 families at 39 different sites, including 1,049 children and 1,078 adults. Of the 1,049 children served in Nevada ECE during the 2004-05 school year, 880 children were in the Nevada ECE program on December 15, 2004. Using the figures of 880 children and the total award amount of \$2,896,583 million, the average cost of the Nevada ECE program per child in 2004-05 was \$3,292. 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 are presented separately in *Nevada Early Childhood Education Program 2004-05 Longitudinal Evaluation Report* available at the Nevada Department of Education.)

The remainder of the executive summary is divided into key sections of the evaluation, followed by a set of conclusions from the evaluation findings. Many of the findings in this evaluation report are consistent with the findings from the 2003-04 evaluation report.

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.

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.

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.

Nevada ECE served families with a large range of incomes; however, the largest portion of families represents the poorer segment of the population. Thirty-six percent of Nevada ECE families (371 families) have incomes under \$20,000.

Most Nevada ECE children (737 children or 69 percent) did not participate in any educational program before participating in Nevada ECE, and 85 percent (893 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 (934 children or 89%) would spend all or a part of the time at home—

either with their parents (62 percent), grandparents or other adult family member (19 percent), or with siblings (8 percent). About 26 percent of the children (277 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 78 percent of families (780 families). Single parents headed 150 families (15 percent).

The adult Nevada ECE population is primarily female: 920 females (85 percent) vs. 158 males (15 percent). Most adult participants are between 20 and 29 years of age (482 adults or 45 percent), followed closely by adults between 30 and 39 years of age (474 adults or 44 percent). The Nevada ECE population also included a small number of teen parents (6 adults or 1 percent). The ethnic composition of Nevada ECE adults is primarily Hispanic (590 adults or 54 percent) and White (397 adults or 37 percent). Fifty percent of Nevada ECE adults (542 adults) spoke English as their primary language and 47 percent (504 adults) spoke Spanish.

Overall, Nevada ECE projects served children three and four years old. Like their parents, Nevada ECE children represent several ethnic/racial groups, with Hispanic (53 percent) and White (33 percent) representing the largest groups. Forty percent of Nevada ECE children (416 children) are Limited English Proficient.

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 39 sites. The evaluation visited 13 of the 39 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 94 staff, for a total of 66.9 FTE. The 94 staff included seven administrators, 34 teachers, 32 teacher aides, six family specialists, 11 support staff, and four "other staff."

Of the 34 teachers in the Nevada ECE program, 27 teachers (80 percent) meet the new state requirements for instruction of pre-kindergarten children. Twenty-two of these 27 teachers (81 percent) have an early childhood education certificate and/or endorsement. The remaining five of the 27 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. In other words, most teachers in the program have specific training and/or experience in early childhood education.

The seven of the 34 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 2004-05. Overall, projects provided teachers and aides with the most hours of training in *Curriculum* and *Developmental Areas*—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 *Children with special needs*, perhaps because many projects did not serve children with special needs.

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 an average of 8 to 9 months of service in parenting education during 2004-05. On average, projects offered a total of between 400 and 448 hours of early childhood education for 2004-05, depending upon the age of the child. All 10 projects scheduled three to four year olds an average of 444 hours and four to five year olds an average of 448 hours. One project offered children under three year olds an average of 400 hours of early childhood education.

Projects offered an average of 56 hours of parenting education during 2004-05, 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 220 hours. For comparison, in 2003-04, Nevada ECE children participated in early childhood education services an average of 267.6 hours.

Overall, Nevada ECE adults participated in an average of 19.3 hours. For comparison, in 2003-04, Nevada ECE adults participated in an average of 21.3 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 (886 of 1023 families) who enrolled in the projects during 2004-05 were still in the program at the end of the program year. For comparison, 87 percent of families who enrolled in the Nevada ECE during 2003-04 were still in the program at the end of the program year.

Overall, the families who were in the Nevada ECE program during 2004-05 spent an average of 9.3 months in the program, similar to 2003-04 at 9.5 months.

Of the 137 families who left the program, the most common reason why families exited was that the family moved out of the area served by the ECE project (56 families or 41 percent). The next most common reason was that the family had a conflict or problem that prevented the families' further participation (20 families or 15 percent).

Program Delivery Indicators. Based on ratings by an Early Childhood Education Evaluator, the projects scored relatively high on all sub-indicators—from an average of 3.7 to 5.0. *Curricular Base* and *Reading Readiness*, which had mean ratings of 5.0. The indicator, *Curricular Base*, refers to whether projects use a curriculum based on research when conducting activities. 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 and all projects had adopted an effective research based early childhood curriculum program.

Relatively, projects in 2004-05 scored the lowest on *Environment* and *Learning Environment, and Problem Solving*—which received mean ratings of 3.7, 4.2 and 4.2 respectively. Nevada ECE Projects also received the lowest ratings on Environment for the last two years. *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 or easy access to appropriate bathroom facilities. *Learning Environment* refers to the quality of classroom materials, learning centers, and outdoor play areas. Nevada ECE projects scored relatively low on this sub-indicator because some projects did not have the most appropriate playground area or a wide variety of learning centers. *Problem solving* refers to the activities that the program provides to help develop children reasoning and problem-solving skills. Nevada ECE projects scored relatively low on this sub-indicator because many projects did not challenge children's reasoning and problem-solving skills with activities as much as they could.

The evaluation also compared the overall ratings for the Nevada ECE program on the 17 program delivery indicators in 2004-05 with the program's ratings from the three previous years. Overall, the data shows that Nevada ECE projects showed an increase in the average ratings from 2001-02 to 2004-05 on 14 of the 17 indicators. The three indicators that show a slight decrease were *Environment*, *Learning Environment*, and *Interaction* primarily because of a lack of appropriate playground equipment and bathroom facilities, safety issues, and the high number of children at a couple sites beyond NAEYC recommendations.

The results also show a decrease in the average ratings across projects from 2003-04 to 2004-05 on 10 of the 17 indicators. Most of the decreases are very minor due to one or two projects that scored lower on some indicators in 2004-05 than in 2003-04. Other decreases are simply due to normal variations in the quality of implementation of any program from day to day and from year to year.

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, increasing the amount of time they spent with their children in meaningful interactions, and 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 two of three indicators. These ECE adults exceeded the expected performance level for achieving at least one parenting goal and 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 increasing the amount of time they spent with their children. Classroom on Wheels ECE adults made positive gains on the indicator, but they fell short of meeting the expected performance level.






Conclusions.

The 2004-05 school year is the fourth 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 2004-05 Nevada ECE program are: Nevada ECE

projects have improved the quality of their early childhood programs since 2001-02 when the Nevada ECE program began and Nevada ECE projects have positively impacted program participants in early childhood development and parenting skills. Other conclusions and key statements about the Nevada ECE program include—

-  Nevada ECE projects have implemented higher quality early childhood programs from 2001-02 to 2004-05 based on the average ratings of 14 of 17 program delivery indicators of effective early childhood programs. However, the overall quality of the early childhood education programs decreased slightly from 2003-04 to 2004-05 based on a decrease in the average ratings for 10 of the 17 program delivery indicators. Most of the decreases are very minor due to one or two projects that scored lower on some indicators, e.g., safety issues, a high child/adult ratio.
-  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 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 three of the four statewide outcome indicators.
-  Nevada ECE children, including children learning the English language, 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 2004-05 was \$3,292 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. However, some children who were enrolled in the program long enough, did not attend services frequently enough to benefit substantially from them.
-  Most parents attended Nevada ECE parenting education services regularly enough to benefit. 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 2004-05, the same as in 2003-04 and 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 four recommendations for improvement.

1. Continue to adopt, implement, and provide training to staff in high-quality, research-based early childhood programs and practices. Train all staff in Nevada Pre-kindergarten Content Standards.
2. Monitor children's attendance in the early childhood education program and develop policies to replace those children who are unable to attend frequently with children who are more likely to attend.
3. 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.
4. 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 train-

ing in the Nevada Pre-kindergarten Content Standards.

2. Continue to monitor project activities to ensure high-quality early childhood education projects based on the 17 program delivery indicators for effective early childhood education programs.
3. Continue to work with projects to improve services in the 17 program delivery indicators by having projects develop improvement plans for those indicators in which projects were rated low.
4. 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 fourth year of the Nevada ECE program: Classroom on Wheels ECE projects are in their second year.

Table 1 shows the ten early childhood education projects, the amount of funds each project received in 2004-05, and the number of early childhood education sites by project.² All together, the ten Nevada ECE projects funded under SB 8 supported 39 early childhood sites which served 1,049 children during the 2004-05 school year.

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

Table 1. The 2004-05 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	10
Classroom on Wheels (COW)	\$301,000	13
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	8
White Pine School District	\$108,779	1
Total	\$2,896,583	39

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 2004-05. The 10 projects initiated 24 pre-kindergarten sites and expanded services at 15 existing pre-kindergarten sites.

Of the 1,049 children served in Nevada ECE during the 2004-05 school year, 880 children were in the Nevada ECE program on December 15, 2004. Using the figures of 880 children and the total award amount of \$2,896,583, the average cost of the Nevada ECE program was \$3,292 per child slightly more the \$2,968 per child cost in 2003-04. However, this per child cost is an estimate since the calculation includes both children

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

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 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 \$3,292 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	5
Classroom on Wheels	7	6
Douglas County School District	1	
Great Basin College		1
Humboldt School District	1	
Pershing County School District	1	
Washoe County School District	6	2
White Pine School District	1	
Total	24	15

Organization of 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 edu-

cational 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 2004-05, 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) was presented in a separate report, *Nevada Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program 2004-05 Longitudinal Evaluation Report*, on children who participated in the Nevada ECE program in 2003-04 and enrolled in kindergarten in 2004-05.

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?

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.

3. How do projects implement Early Childhood Education?
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? How many families leave the ECE program before the end of the school year?

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 annual 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. *Does the Nevada Early Childhood Education Program have a longitudinal impact on the children and parents it serves?*

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 are presented in a separate evaluation report, *Nevada Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program 2004-05 Longitudinal Evaluation Report*.

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	7	2.8	0
Teachers	34	28.9	0
Aides (educational assistant)	32	26.8	0
Family Specialists (home-visitor/advocate)	6	4.5	0
Support Staff (secretary, clerk)	11	1.8	0
Others	4	2.1	1
TOTAL STAFF	94	66.9	1

Nevada ECE program funds purchased the services of 94 staff for 2004-05, many of whom are part-time or funded part-time with Nevada ECE funds. The 94 staff included seven administrators⁵ who managed the program at the project sites; 34 teachers who conducted the early childhood education programs; 32 teacher aides who assisted in the early childhood program; six family specialists who worked primarily on parenting

⁵ Although all 10 projects have an administrator, Early Childhood Education funds were used to pay a portion of the salary of seven administrators.

activities, including home visits; 11 support staff, such as a secretary or clerk; and four “other staff” which included a teacher on special assignment who helped coordinate the program, bus driver, and two testers. One staff member, a Special Education teacher who administered the early childhood assessments for a project, was 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, six of the seven administrators have at least a four-year college degree. One administrator has a two-year college degree.

Of the 34 teachers, 12 have a Master’s degree, 17 have a Bachelor’s degree, three have an Associate’s degree, and two have a high school diploma or GED.

Of the 32 aides, one has a Bachelor’s degree, six have an Associate’s degree, and 25 have a high school diploma/GED. There are six family specialists: one has a Bachelor’s degree, four have an Associate’s degree, and one has a high school diploma/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. Four of the seven administrators (57 percent) have over 10 years experience. Of the 34 teachers, eight (31 percent) had more than 10 years of experience. Of the 32 aides and six family specialists, five (14 percent) had more than 10 years of experience.

Table 4. Highest Level of Education and Experience of Nevada ECE Project Staff

	Adminis- trators	Teachers	Aides	Family Specialists
Highest Level of Education				
Did not complete diploma/GED	0	0	0	0
High school diploma or GED	0	3	25	1
AA	1	3	6	4
BA/BS	2	17	1	1
MA/MS/M.Ed	3	12	0	0
Ph.D./Ed.D	1	0	0	0
Years of Experience in primary area				
Less than 1 year	0	1	2	0
1-5 years	2	14	20	1
5-10 years	1	11	6	4
More than 10 years	4	8	4	1

In terms of state requirements for teachers in early childhood education programs, 27 of the 34 teachers (80 percent) meet the requirements. Twenty-two of these 27 teachers (82 percent) have an early childhood education certificate and/or endorsement. 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. In other words, most teachers in the program have specific training and/or experience in early childhood education.

Of the seven teachers who do not meet the state requirements for instruction of pre-kindergarten children, one has a bachelor’s degree, four have an AA degree, and two have a high school degree/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, the seven staff were “grand-fathered in” to the state requirements.

Inservice Training

Inservice training is a 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 2004-05.

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	0	2	4	1	3
b) Developmental areas	0	4	2	1	3
c) Learning environment	2	2	3	2	1
d) Children with special needs	3	5	1	0	1
e) Classroom or behavior management	1	5	2	1	1
f) Pedagogy-instructional strategies	3	2	2	1	2
g) Assessment	1	3	4	1	1
h) Involving parents	1	5	0	1	3

Overall, projects provided teachers and aides the most hours of training in *Curriculum* and *Developmental Areas* to help staff learn early childhood education best practices as well as the curriculum models implemented at the projects. Staff also had many hours of training in *Involving parents* since this is a required element of the project. Staff received the least amount of training in *Children with special needs*, perhaps because many projects did not serve children with special needs.

Chapter IV. Early Childhood Education Participant Characteristics

The characteristics of Nevada ECE participants are based on data from 10 projects that provided services to 1,023 families, including 1,049 children and 1,078 adults who participated in services from July 1, 2004 through June 30, 2005. Table 6 shows the number of families, adults, and children served by project.

Table 6. Number of Nevada ECE Participants by Project

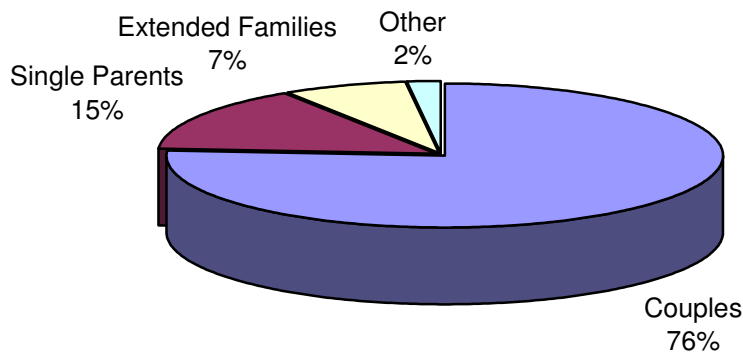
Project	Families	Children	Adults	Total Participants
Carson City	81	83	122	205
Churchill County	43	45	46	91
Clark County	262	271	264	535
Classroom on Wheels	227	234	229	463
Douglas County	28	28	31	59
Great Basin C.C.	42	42	44	86
Humboldt County	49	51	49	100
Pershing County	40	41	40	81
Washoe County	229	232	231	463
White Pine County	22	22	22	44
Total	1,023	1,049	1,078	2,127

In addition to the families served, all 10 projects maintained a waiting list for 2004-05. The 10 projects, which include 39 separate sites, reported they had 527 families waiting to enter the program—an average of 14 families for each of the 39 project sites.

Characteristics of Families

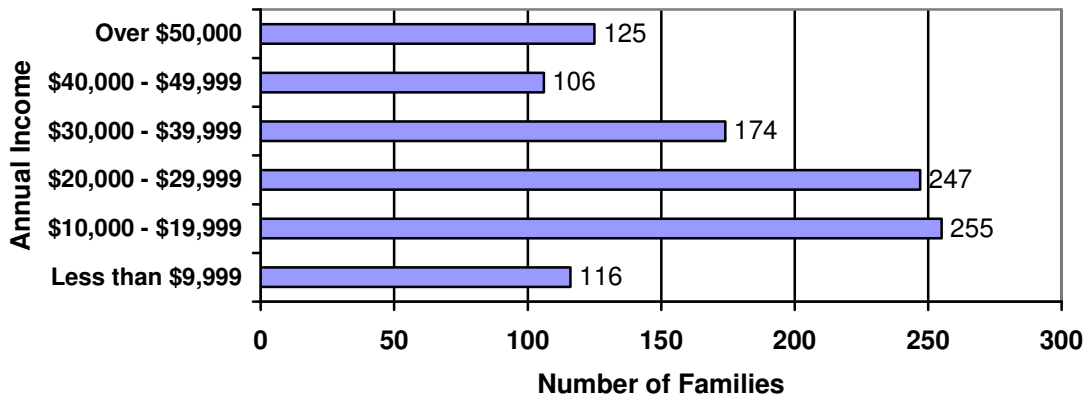
Household Composition. The largest percentage of families that participated in Nevada ECE described themselves as couples (780 families or 76 percent), followed by single parent families (150 families or 15 percent), extended family households (75 families or 7 percent), and “other” family structures (18 families or 2 percent). Extended families encompass children living with grandparents, stepparents, or guardians.

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

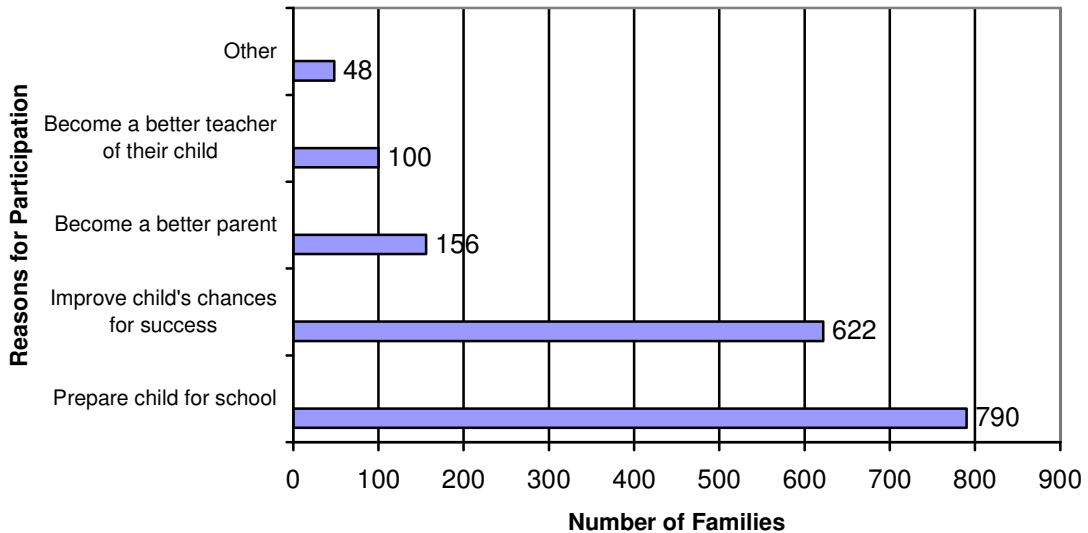
Figure 2. Income of Nevada ECE Families



served families with a large range of incomes, the largest portion of Nevada ECE families represent the poorer segment of the population. Thirty-six percent of Nevada ECE families (371 families) have incomes under \$20,000.

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 (790 families or 77 percent) and to improve their child’s chance of success in school (622 adults or 61 percent).

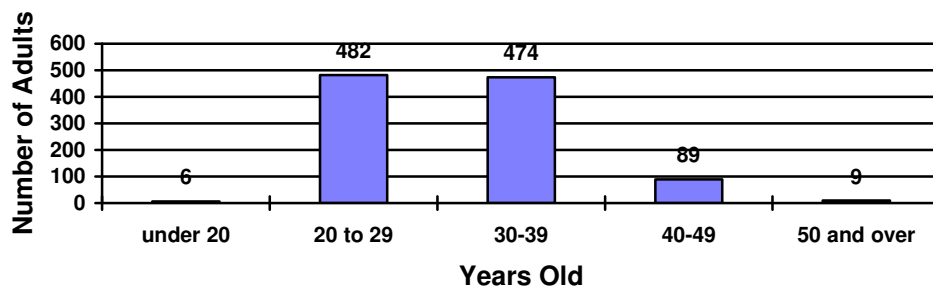
Figure 3. Reasons for Participating in Nevada ECE



Characteristics of Adults

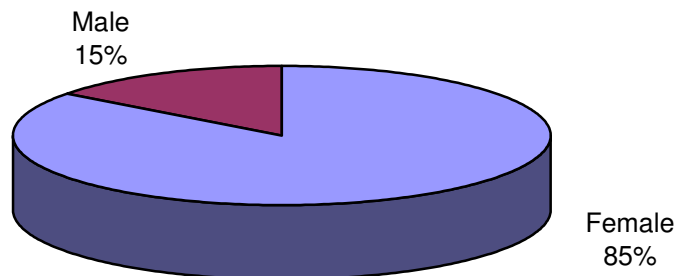
Age.⁷ Most adults were either 20 to 29 years of age (482 adults or 45 percent) or between 30 to 39 years old (474 adults or 44 percent). Six adults (1 percent) were under 20 years old, 89 adults (8 percent) were between 40 and 49 years old, and 19 adults (2 percent) were over 50 years old. Data were unavailable for eight 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 1,078 adults, 920 (85 percent) were female and 158 (15 percent) were male.

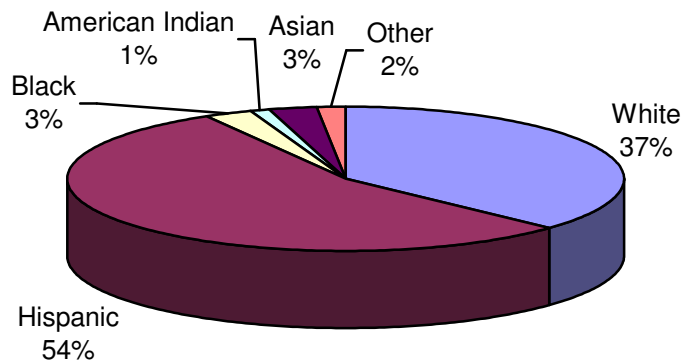
Figure 5. Gender of Nevada ECE Adults



⁷ Age was determined at the beginning of the program year as of September 1, 2004.

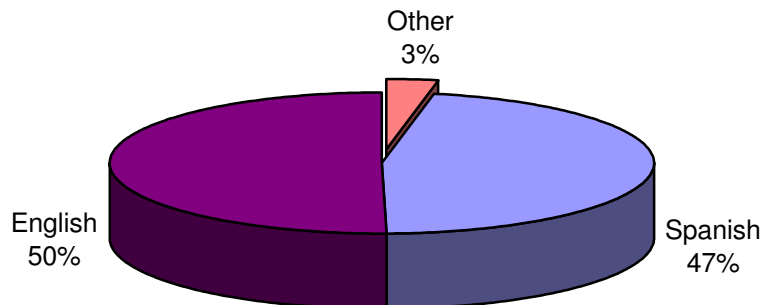
Ethnicity. The 10 projects served primarily Hispanic and White adults. Of the 1,078 adults, 590 (54 percent) categorized themselves as Hispanic, 397 (37 percent) categorized themselves as White not of Hispanic decent, 31 (3 percent) as Black, 30 (3 percent) as Asian, 12 (1 percent) as American Indian, and 18 (2 percent) adults categorized themselves as “Other.”

Figure 6. Ethnicity of Nevada ECE Adults



Language Spoken at Home. Of the 1,078 participating adults, 542 (50 percent) reported speaking English, 504 (47 percent) reported speaking Spanish at home, and 32 (3 percent) reported speaking “Other.”

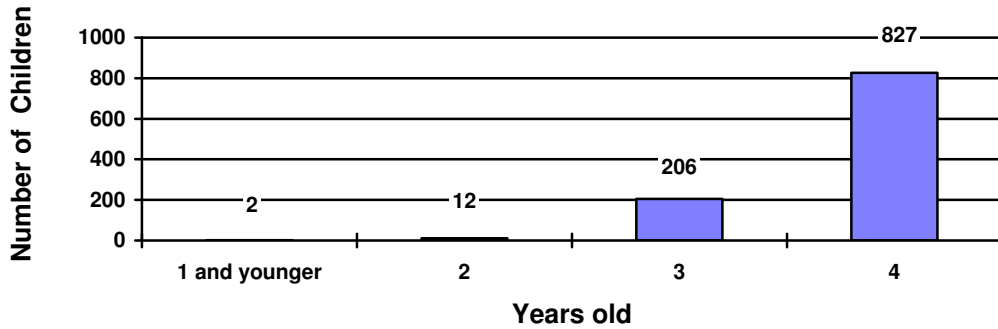
Figure 7. Language of Nevada ECE Adults



Characteristics of Children

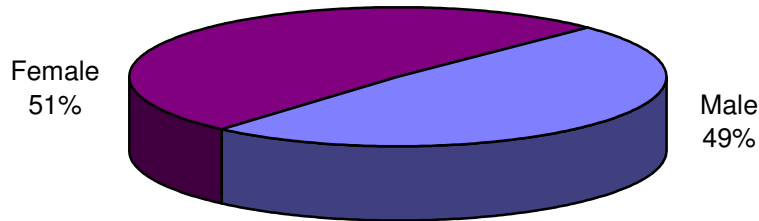
Age.⁸ Of the 1,047 children for whom data were available: 14 children (1 percent) were less than two years old; 206 children (20 percent) were two or three years old; and 827 children (79 percent) were 4 years old. Data were unavailable for two children.

Figure 8. Age of Nevada ECE Children



Gender. The 10 projects served equal numbers of male and female children. Of 1,049 children, 535 (51 percent) were female and 514 (49 percent) were male.

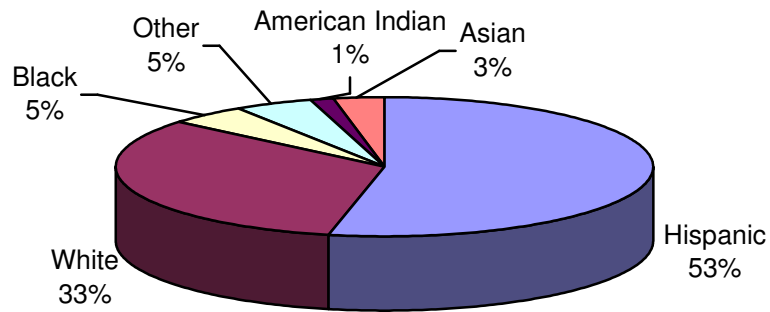
Figure 9. Gender of Nevada ECE Children



⁸ Age was determined at the beginning of the program year as of September 1, 2004. All of the two year olds turned three years old before they entered the ECE projects.

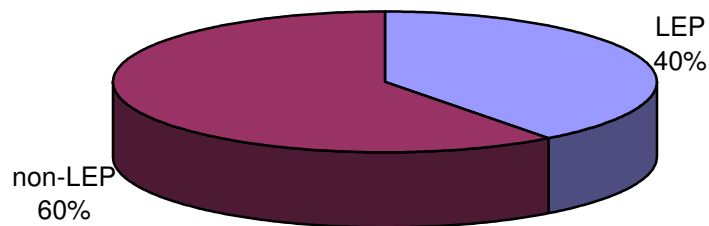
Ethnicity. Of the 1,049 children, 560 (53 percent) were Hispanic, 342 (33 percent) were White not of Hispanic decent, 52 (5 percent) were Black, 31 (3 percent) were Asian, 15 (1 percent) were American Indian, and 49 (5 percent) were categorized as “Other.”

Figure 10. Ethnicity of Nevada ECE Children



Limited English Proficient (LEP) Status. Of the 1,049 children, 416 children (40 percent) were Limited English Proficient while 633 (60 percent) were not.

Figure 11. Limited English Proficient Status 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 1,049 children, 69 percent (737 children) did not participate in any other educational program prior to Nevada ECE, and 85 percent (893 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	26	9
Even Start	23	10
Title I Preschool	8	9
Early Intervention, Early Childhood Special Education	38	57
Other Preschool or Infant/Toddler Program	142	32
Migrant Education	4	6
None	737	893
Other	87	45

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 enrollment 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 1049 children, the majority of children (934 children or 89%) would spend all or part of the time at home—either with their parents (62 percent), grandparents or other adult family member (19 percent), or with sib-

⁹ Children can participate in more than one option.

lings (8 percent). Smaller percentages of children would spend all or a part of their time attending another preschool or infant/toddler program (139 children or 13 percent) or attending day care (138 children or 13 percent). In other words, at least 74 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	139
b) Stay with grandparents or other adult family member	195
c) Stay at home with parents	651
d) Stay at home with siblings	88
e) Attend other preschool or infant/toddler program	138
f) Other (<i>specify</i>) _____	58

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 option.

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: not all projects 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	1	40.0	10	400
Age 3 and 4	10	49.6	9	444
Age 5	10	49.7	9	448
Parenting Education				
Parent alone	9	2.3	8.5	19.7
Parent and child are involved together	10	4.1	8.8	35.6

Early Childhood Education. The results show that all 10 projects served three to four year old children as well as five year old children. One project served children under three years old.

The scheduled hours of early childhood education differed only slightly among children of different age groups. On average, one project scheduled children under three years old an average of 400 hours of early childhood education (40 hours per month for ten months), 10 projects scheduled three to four year olds an average of 444 hours of early childhood education (49.6 hours per month for 9.0 months), and nine projects scheduled five year olds an average of 448 hours of early childhood education (49.7 hours per month for nine months).

For comparison, we looked at the scheduled hours of early childhood education per month in Nevada ECE projects from 2003-04. During 2003-04, Nevada ECE projects scheduled an average of 418 hours for three to four year olds, and 415 hours for five year olds. In other words, Nevada ECE programs offered slightly more hours of early childhood education program in 2004-05 than in 2003-04.¹¹ The primary reason for the difference is that the Nevada ECE program offered approximately three to four more hours of early childhood education per month in 2004-05 than in 2003-04.

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 2004-05. 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 19.7 hours of *Parenting education alone*—2.3 hours per month for 8.5 months. In addition, 10 projects offered an average of 35.6 hours of *Parent and child time together*—4.1 hours per month for 8.8 months. In other words, most adults could receive a total of about 56 hours of parenting education during 2004-05.

For comparison, the number of hours per month of parenting education offered by Nevada ECE projects in 2004-05 is less than the number of hours that Nevada ECE projects offered in 2003-04. On average, Nevada ECE projects offered a total of 24 hours of *Parenting education alone* and a total of 48 hours of *Parent and child time together* for a total of 72 hours.

¹¹ Nevada ECE projects reported they did not serve children under three years old in 2003-04.

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 nine 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: 10 projects had at least ‘some families’ participate in this activity with seven projects having ‘most families’ participate. The next most frequently conducted strategies were parent/teacher conferences (conducted by seven projects with ‘most families’), followed closely by home visits and parenting classes/workshops (conducted by six projects with ‘most families’). Five projects reported that at least ‘some families’ participated in other parenting services offered, including completing activities in homework bags and school events.

Table 10. The Number of Projects That Provided Various Parenting Services to Families

Type of Parenting Service	<i>Not provided</i>	<i>Few families</i>	<i>Some families</i>	<i>Most families</i>
a) Parenting classes/workshops	0	2	2	6
b) Parent and child together activities (<i>e.g., family literacy nights, field trips</i>)	0	0	3	7
c) Parent/Teacher Conferences	0	2	1	7
d) Home Visits	1	1	2	6
e) Parents volunteer in the classroom	0	0	5	5
f) Other	5	0	3	2

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 2005,
- ◆ 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 137 of the 1,023 families in Nevada ECE (13 percent) left the program during the 2004-05 school year. For comparison, 13 percent of Nevada ECE families also left the program before the end of the 2003-04 school year. In other words, 87 percent of the families completed the program for the last two years in 2003-04 and 2004-05. This figure represents a decrease in the percent of families who left the program in 2002-03 at 20 percent.

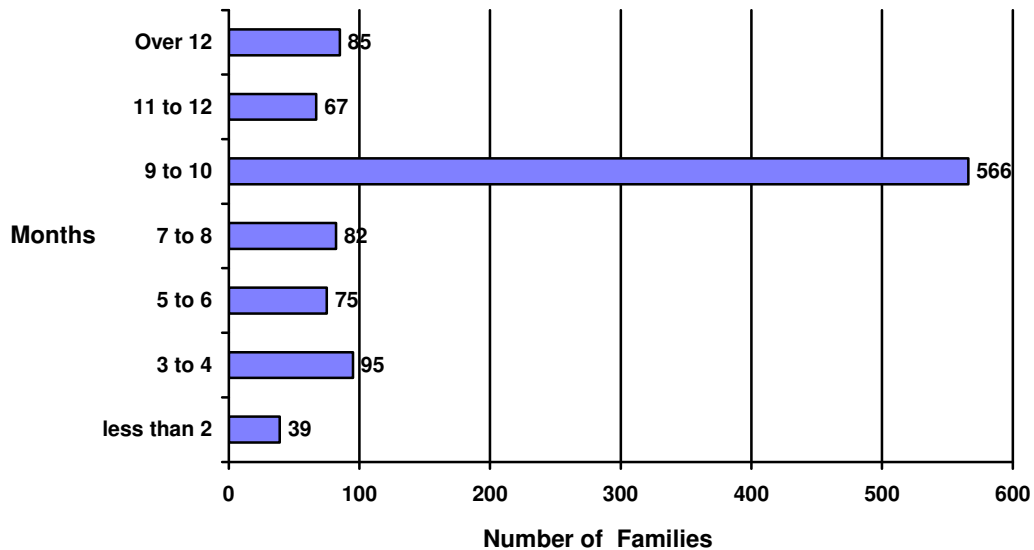
Length of Participation in Program.

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 1,020 of the 1,023 families in the program.

On average, Nevada ECE families were in the program for an average of 9.3 months between their initial enrollment date and the end of the 2004-05 program year or their exit 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 (566 or 55 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 each of the various reasons. Overall, the most common reason why families exited the program was the family moved out of the area served by the ECE project (56 families or 41 percent). The other common reasons why families exited the program included that the family had a conflict or problem that prevented further participation (20 families or 15 percent), was dropped due to incomplete participation or poor attendance (11 families or 8 percent), and (the family) switched to another program (11 families or 8 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	11
Family moved out of the area served by the ECE program	56
Family stopped participating due to a lack of interest	6
Family was dropped due to incomplete participation or poor attendance	11
Family crisis prevents further participation	3
Conflicts or problems prevents continued participation	20
Other reason (specify) _____	9
Reason unknown	21
Total	137

Child Participation

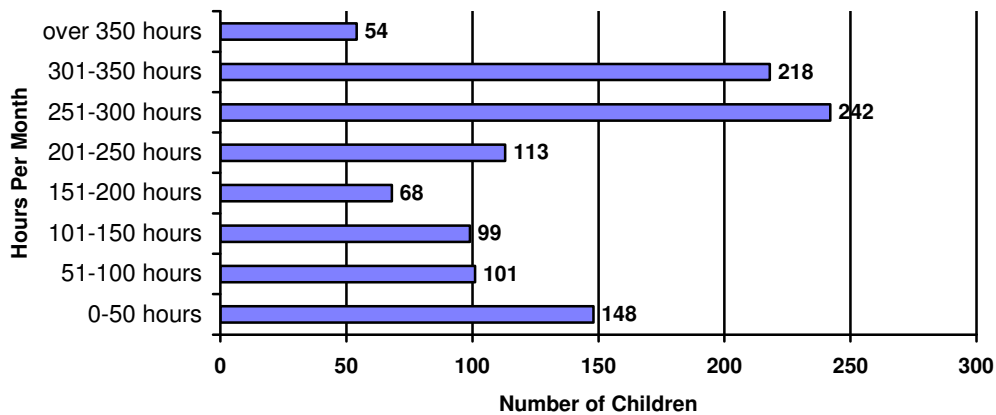
The primary component of Nevada ECE is early childhood education.

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 1,045 of the 1,049 children. Overall, Nevada ECE children participated in early childhood education an average of 220 hours, which represents a decrease from the total average hours of 267.6 reported in 2003-04.

To obtain a better picture of the amount of time children spent in early childhood programs, the evaluator determined the total number of hours that children spent in early childhood education within several hour ranges, as shown in Figure 13. The largest number of children (242 children or 23 percent) attended an average of 251 to 300 hours of early childhood education, followed by those who attended 301 to 350 hours (218 children or 21 percent). The figure also shows that a large number of children attended less than 50 hours of early childhood education (148 children or 14 percent). These children participated in the ECE program an average of 6.5 months, suggesting that the children attended sporadically—which also may, in part, explain why the average hours that children participated in early childhood education decreased from 2003-04 to 2004-05.

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.

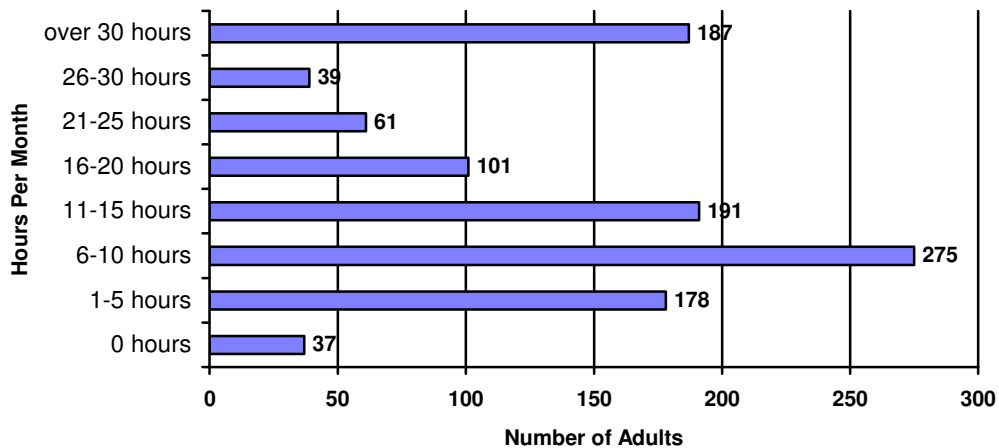
Hours of Parenting Education.

Data were available for 1,069 of the 1,078 adult participants. Projects reported that 37 parents (3 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.

Overall, the 1,069 adults participated in parenting education an average of 19.3 hours during the program compared to a slightly higher average of 21.3 hours in 2003-04.

Figure 14 shows that the distribution in the total number hours in parenting education is skewed. Most adults (644 adults or 60 percent) participated in one to 15 hours of parenting education. A smaller group of parents (187 parents 17 percent) who participated in over 30 hours of parenting education substantially increased the average hours in parenting education (19.3) for the entire group.

Figure 14. Hours of Parenting Education per Month



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 2005, making a total of 13 site visits since several projects operate multiple early childhood education sites with different program models.¹²

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

¹² 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 10 sites, Classroom on Wheels has four projects with 13 sites, and WCSD has eight sites. Instead, the evaluator visited one of two sites in Carson City, three of 10 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.)

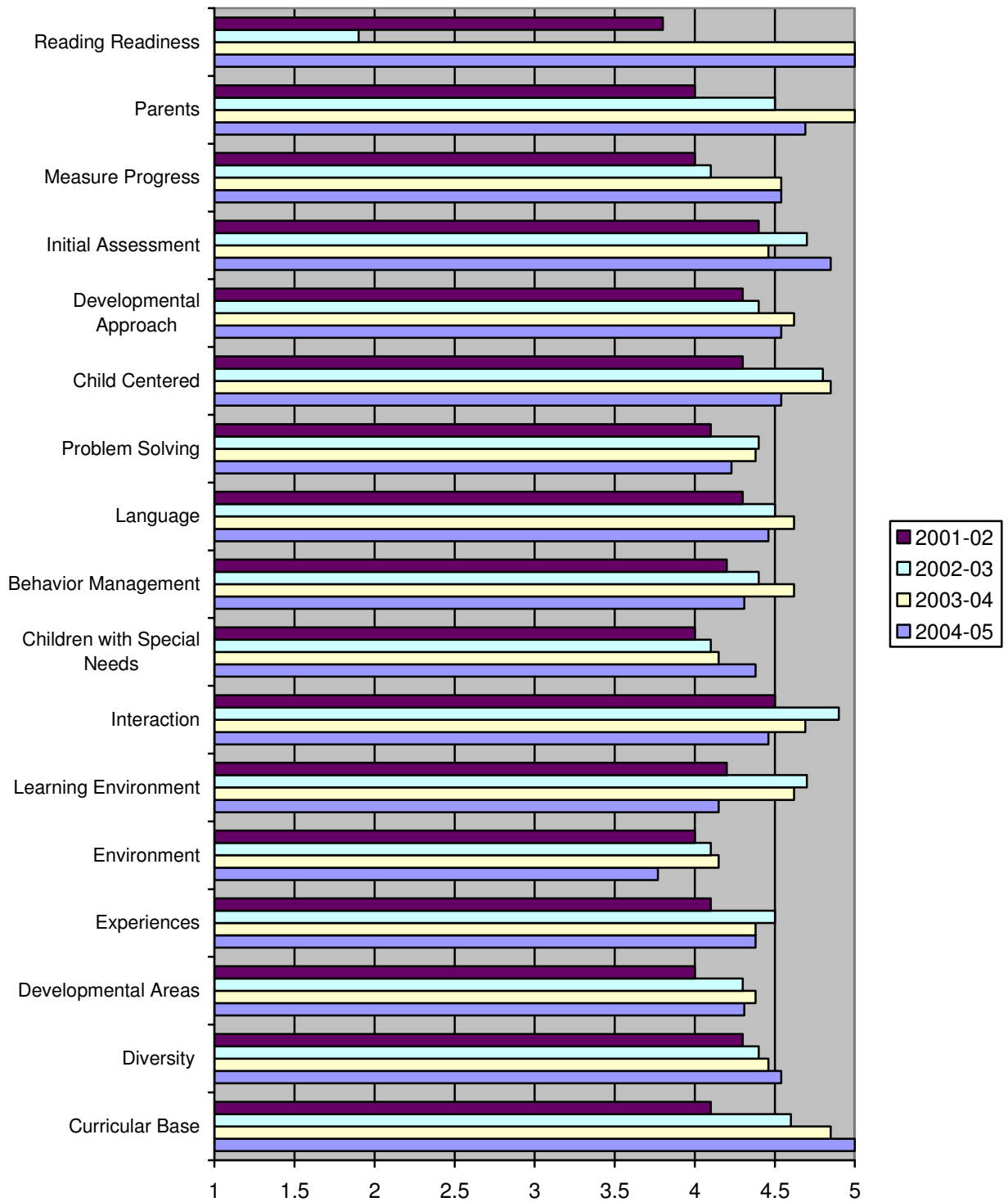
Nevada ECE Program Ratings. Figure 15 shows the Nevada ECE program ratings on the 17 sub-indicators of Early Childhood Program Settings across the project sites visited for each of the last four years, 2001-02 to 2004-05.¹³ (See Appendix C for each project’s rating on the 17 sub-indicators of Early Childhood Program Settings for 2004-05).

In 2004-05, the projects scored relatively high on all sub-indicators—from an average of 3.8 to 5.0. Projects scored relatively the highest on two indicators: *Curricular Base* and *Reading Readiness*, which had mean ratings of 5.0. The indicator, *Curricular Base*, refers to whether projects use a curriculum based on research when conducting activities. 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 and all projects had adopted an effective research based early childhood curriculum program.

Projects in 2004-05 scored the lowest on *Environment*, *Learning Environment*, and *Problem Solving*—which received mean ratings of 3.8, 4.2 and 4.2 respectively. Nevada ECE Projects also received the lowest ratings on Environment for the last two years. *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

¹³ The evaluator visited 10 project sites in 2001-02, 14 project sites in 2002-03, and 13 project sites in both 2003-04 and 2004-05. Eight of the project sites are the same for all four years; 11 project sites are the same for 2002-03, 2003-04, and 2004-05; and 12 project sites are the same for 2003-04 and 2004-05.

Figure 15. Nevada ECE Program Ratings on ECE Indicators (1=low, 5=high)



area nor have easy access to appropriate bathroom facilities, and because of safety issues at two sites. *Learning Environment* refers to the quality of classroom materials, learning centers, and outdoor play areas. Nevada ECE projects scored relatively low on this sub-indicator because some projects did not have an appropriate playground area or a wide variety of learning centers. *Problem solving* refers to the activities that the program provides to help develop children reasoning and problem-solving skills. Nevada ECE projects scored relatively low on this sub-indicator because many projects did not challenge children's reasoning and problem-solving skills with activities as much as they could.

The evaluation also compared ratings from 2004-05 with ratings from the previous three years. Overall, the data shows that Nevada ECE projects showed an increase in the average ratings from 2001-02 to 2004-05 on 14 of the 17 indicators. The three indicators that show a slight decrease were *Environment*, *Learning Environment*, and *Interaction* primarily because of a lack of appropriate playground equipment and bathroom facilities, safety issues, and the high number of children at a couple sites beyond NAEYC recommendations.

The results also show a decrease in the average ratings across projects from 2003-04 to 2004-05 on 10 of the 17 indicators. Most of the decreases are very minor due to one or two projects that scored lower on some indicators in 2004-05 than in 2003-04, such as for the reasons areas listed above, e.g., safety issues, a high child/adult ratio. Other decrease are due to the fact that the evaluator visited one new site in 2004-05, that replaced a more experienced site from the 2003-04 observations, because of a change in sites funded by Nevada ECE. Other decreases are simply due to normal variations in the quality of implementation of any program from day to day and from year to year.

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 12:1.¹⁴ 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 curricula with a variety of other programs, including *Leap into Literacy*, *Self-Concept*, and *Talking Hands*.

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	9:1	High Scope
Clark County School District		
♦ Early Literacy Model	8:1	♦ Creative Curriculum
♦ Classroom on Wheels Model	5:1	♦ High Scope
♦ Community Based Model	5:1	♦ 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		
♦ Early Literacy Model	9:1	♦ Scholastic’s Building Language for Literacy
♦ High School Model	9:1	♦ Scholastic’s Building Language for Literacy
White Pine School District	8:1	PreSchool Core Knowledge Curriculum

¹⁴ NAEYC guidelines state four year-olds should be in groups of no more than 20 children with 2 adults.

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 the 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 11:00 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. One aide is bilingual.

Number of Children. The program serves 20 children in each the morning and afternoon classes 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 Empire Elementary School implements in kindergarten through grade 5. 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, classroom management, and active family support approaches. *Curiosity Corner* provides the teacher with a kit of learning activities and materials that are theme-based for each week. The teacher decides how long to work on a given area and may modify the units to meet student needs. 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. The teacher uses Peabody Language Development Kits for additional materials and activities in language development.

The program accommodates 18 Hispanic children from the two classes who are English Language Learners. The class has two educational assistants: a bilingual assistant translates for the children as needed. The assistant reported that, at the time of the visit in late spring, 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 learning centers, which included 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 learning centers. On the day of the visit, all the activities related to the curriculum theme of "Roots and Shoots." In Opening Circle, the teacher read a book about seeds growing into plants and then talked with children about the seeds they had brought from home and the different parts of a plant. Next, 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 use frequent positive reinforcement and carefully listen to children. The teachers frequently help the children solve their own problems, encouraging children to talk and resolve issues among themselves.

Pedagogy. The teacher planned activities for the children appropriate for their ages and developmental stages. On the day of the visit the teacher reviewed the daily schedule with the children during the initial group time and covered the calendar, the day's activities, and discussed the letter "V" which was the letter for the day.

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. The other aide works in depth with other children, often writing up anecdotal observations of individual children to monitor their progress.

This year the teacher trained her assistants on cognitive questioning skills, having them ask children questions that push their thinking during activities.

Assessment and Continuous Improvement. A teacher aide administers the Preschool Language Scale (PLS-4) to all the children at the beginning and end of the year. All staff keep notes on daily observational forms to track the developing skills of the children, which they use to plan classroom activities. The program keeps a file for each child with work samples. Staff spend time at the end of the day discussing specific children and which activities seemed most effective.

There are some children in the classroom who are on Individual Education Plans (IEP) and receive special services, usually before the class session.

Parenting Program. Parents are required to sign a Commitment List which details their specific commitment to the program. The teacher conducts a home visit at the beginning of the year to discuss the program and identify parenting goals. The teacher also holds a parent conference during the year to review each child's "report card" with the parents. Parents receive a weekly newsletter, written in English and Spanish, which informs them of classroom activities, upcoming field trips, curriculum changes, etc.

The head teacher conducted three Family Storyteller sessions, helping parents learn specific techniques to read with their child. Parents regularly volunteer in the classroom or

make things at home for the class. Many parents assisted with field trips, such as to the public library and the hospital.

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.

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. The children receive 12 hours of early childhood education.

Staff. Program staff include a full-time teacher and a full-time aide. The program also includes parents who are required to volunteer in the classroom three times a month.

Number of Children. The program serves 18 children per session for a child/adult ratio of 9 to 1. However, the ratio is much lower with several parents in the classroom daily.

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 morning session serves several Hispanic children who are English Language Learners (ELL). The classroom assistant is bi-lingual and assists with the ELL children and their Spanish-speaking parents.

Learning Environment. The classroom, located in the elementary school, contains several large learning centers (dramatic play, blocks, art, computers, a library, manipulatives, a water table), all equipped with a variety of learning materials. The project does not have separate bathroom facilities. Instead, the children use the school's bathroom facilities across the hall.

The school made several improvements to the outdoor play area. The play area is now fenced, covered with sand, and includes a new multi-use climbing apparatus, swings, balance beams, and large tires. The school may add a tricycle trail during the summer if the school can obtain donations and volunteer help to build it.

Pedagogy. This classroom can be described as a “child & family center” with many parents and their other children involved each day in classroom activities. On the day of the visit, six parents attended the afternoon class. Parents assisted in each of the learning centers, e.g., one parent assisted with the closing Circle Time by reading a story and asking the children questions about the book. Parents also helped with clean up.

On the day of the visit, the class worked on a spring theme of seeds and plants. During Circle Time the teacher read a book about plants and then had the children sing an interactive “Seed Song” with the children dramatizing being seeds and then slowly growing into flowers. Then, the children planted seeds outside in the decorated pots they had made previously.

After clean up and bathroom time, the children sat at three tables for snack, with parents and teachers joining the children to talk with them about the day’s activities. Afterwards, the children went to the circle rug to read a book on their own or in small clusters on the floor, showing their clear understanding of their daily routine. The day ended with outside motor activity time.

The classroom walls displayed children art work and learning charts as well as a photo display highlighting how the new State Standards are incorporated into daily classroom activities.

Assessment and Continuous Improvement. The teacher administered the Preschool Language Scale, the Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning (DIAL-3), and the Denver Developmental Test during the year to all children. Staff and parents helped complete a Literacy Test, required by the school, which appraises reading readiness. The teacher also administered a Pre-Kindergarten skills assessment at the end of the year to assess children on specific skills needed for kindergarten.

The teacher keeps individual children's portfolios with ongoing samples of the children's work and test results. She also used a Developmental Milestones Collection Form and two other anecdotal observation forms to collect data on individual children.

The program served children who are on IEPs or receive special services, usually from the school district staff. The teacher referred several children for testing.

Parenting Program. Parents are required to sign a Parent-Teacher Contract in which they agree to participate in 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; at least three classroom volunteer visits per month; and complete one reading log per month. In other words, the parenting program requires parents to be very involved in the classroom.

The teacher made monthly home visits using the *Parents are Teachers (PAT)* program, a research-based parent education curriculum. Using the PAT curriculum, the teacher models a developmentally appropriate activity, observes the parent and child complete the activity together, and then provides feedback to the parent.

The teacher conducted workshops for the parents and children together on *Outdoor Play Activities & Outdoor Art, Reading with Your Child, Fun with Math, and Shadow Play*. A number of parents planned and coordinated several classroom festivals.

Clark County School District

Clark County School District (CCSD) used Nevada ECE funds to initiate and expand early childhood education programs at 10 project sites. The 10 project sites 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: 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.¹⁵ 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 three community-based child care sites: Lone Mountain Creative Learning Center, Creative Kids Learning Center in Henderson, and Variety Day Home.

*Classroom on Wheels.*¹⁶ 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. Another unique feature of the

¹⁵ The parents of the children with special needs select the child care placement in lieu of other options. At each child care center, ECE 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.

¹⁶ 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.

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 that accompanies the early childhood 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 (CCSD) Nevada ECE program developed district level activities in parenting education and staff development in which all ECE project sites could participate. In parenting education, the CCSD ECE program offered four activities.

- *The STAR (Sit Together and Read) Program.* CCSD developed the *STAR* program which 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.
- *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 complete a related activity together.
- *The Family Storyteller Program.* The University of Nevada Reno Cooperative Extension Office developed and offered the *Family Storyteller* program. It provides monthly workshops for six months to help parents and children learn to enjoy reading together. In 2004-05, CCSD offered Family Storyteller to families who participated in the COW model and will offer it to all sites in 2005-06.

In staff development, the CCSD ECE Program conducted monthly trainings which included workshops on *Behavior Management and Positive Behavioral Supports*, *Promoting Language Development Through Music (Jim Gill)*, *the Creative Curriculum (Various Workshops which included Setting the Stage; Self Assessment; Implementation Checklist; How Children Develop and Learn; Linking Curriculum and Assessment; Components of*

Early Literacy), *Visual Training for the Preschool-Aged Child*, *The Power of Observation*, *Parent Involvement*, *Lakeshore Staff Development Day (Trainings in science, math, and literacy activities)*, *Early Literacy: Tips, Tricks and Ideas from Dr. Jean*.

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 the bus that went to Halle Hewetson and C.C. Ronnow Elementary Schools as representative of the COW model. 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 full-time aide operate the program.

Number of Children. The program serves 15 children in the morning session and 15 children in the afternoon session for a child/adult ratio of 7.5 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!* and *River Deep*. *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 engage in activities alone or in small groups. The *LeapDesk Workstation* is a computer software program that 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 class also uses the *River Deep* computer series, which includes animated computerized stories and literacy activities, with matching books, as well as computerized art activities.

The program serves primarily Hispanic children. Near the end of the school year, the program hired a new aide (to replace another aide) who speaks Spanish to assist with the Hispanic children and their parents. She will attend the training offered by the Early Childhood Office to learn the program models.

Learning Environment. The classroom is located in a wing of the school and contains several learning centers (blocks, dramatic play, manipulatives, art, language arts, science and computer center) geared to the developmental needs of the children. The bathroom facility is adjacent to the classroom.

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. The children use a large multi-use climbing apparatus with a sponge-like base as well as wagons and tricycles, balls and jump rope.

The classroom contains many materials: most walls and shelves are covered with children's artwork and past projects. The large amount of the materials in the room may make it difficult for the children to focus on the current project. Areas of the room also have some traffic congestion.

Pedagogy. The teacher uses literature and nursery rhymes for her primary themes. On the day of the visit, the theme was T-shirts which included related activities and a book. For example, children decorated a construction paper T-shirt in the art area and the teacher read the Big Book *Tim's T-shirt* with the children in the library area. The program provides an extended activity time which allows children to become involved in activities in depth.

During Circle Time the teacher read *Tim's T-Shirt* and then had the children dramatize two songs, *Five Little Ducks* and *Five Little Monkeys*, using puppet sticks and

instruments. The teacher uses songs and fingerplays as a large part of her curriculum, and feels they are effective approaches for young children learning a new language.

The activities planned for the children were appropriate for their ages and developmental stages. The activities are open-ended, allowing children from a range of developmental levels and language abilities to experience success. Routines are followed carefully and kept simple. A picture chart shows the children the sequence of their session's activities. To track where children choose to work, staff have the children place photos of themselves on a chart next to the learning center where they plan to work.

The program focuses on literacy and language development. The teacher talks with the children throughout the day, carefully pronouncing and reinforcing word recognition and vocabulary development. During activity time, the teacher often reads to a child or small group of children, helping the children acquire and understand any new vocabulary from the book.

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 the *Creative Curriculum Program* three times a year (November, February and May) and kept a Child Progress and Planning Report on each child that included work samples and anecdotal notes. She also had the children do a figure drawing at the beginning of the year.

Children on IEPs receive special services in small groups at the school.

Parenting Program. The teacher conducted two family meetings for parents, using the University of Idaho Emergent Literacy Project Training Modules to teach *Creating a Home Literacy Environment* and *Reading to Your Child*. This particular module included a movie followed by a discussion.

In addition, parents receive a *STAR* book monthly and another book the children have read in class, e.g., *Old Woman Who Swallowed a Fly*, so parents can read it with their children at home. The teacher encourages parents to attend the CCSD parenting classes *Nurturing Parents & Families* offered for six weeks, as well as the Cooperative Exten-

sion's *Family Storyteller Program* and the PBS literacy workshops. Because most parents work or have younger children, they do not volunteer in the classroom often.

Classroom on Wheels (COW) Model

Location. The Classroom on Wheels bus parks in front of C.C. Ronnow Elementary School in the morning and Halle Hewetson Elementary School in the afternoon. The COW teacher drives the bus during the lunch break between sites.

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 both the morning and afternoon sessions for a child/adult ratio of a little over 5 to 1.

Early Childhood Program

Curriculum. Classroom on Wheels use *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 their work. The teachers carefully follow the *Plan-Do-Review* approach in the classroom. 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. This year the teachers used the *Bank Street Readers* series and *Ready, Set, Leap!* to supplement literacy activities.

In addition to the early childhood education program, children 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 COW teacher and the CCSD aide are Hispanic and bilingual. At the time of the visit in mid-spring, most children spoke English in class and to each other in learning centers.

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. At this time, the COW bus does not provide outdoor play because the program does not have an arrangement to use school playgrounds.

The COW bus contains mini-learning centers (blocks, dramatic play, manipulatives, art, sand and water play, writing center, listening center, 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. Centro de Escuchar/Listening Center, Area de Escribir/Writing Center, Area de la Casita/ Housekeeping).

On the day of the evaluation visit, all three COW bus staff engaged children in activities and conversation. The theme for the day was Spring and Growing Things. During initial group time, one teacher asked the children how plants grow, sang a song about *Growing Things*, and read *The Surprise Garden Book*. Staff then divided the children into two groups, where each teacher guided her group through a vocabulary-building activity using a farm theme.

The early childhood program has a long activity time which allows children to work in depth on activities. The back of the bus contains an art area with an easel and other art activities available. On the day of the visit, children painted water colors on a flower drawing. In the middle of the bus, several children worked at a small sand table, three boys built a casino with blocks on the floor, and other children wrote on paper in the writing area. In the front of the bus, a teacher talked to children about what they were doing in the dramatic play area.

The children do not have use of a playground area at the two schools which limits gross motor development. However, each session closes with active songs and movement.

Staff are positive and clear with children. There are three rules: no more than three children to a center, clean your area before you move to another center, and respect each other. Staff use a planning board to limit the number of children in each center. The children are well aware of routines in this very small space and follow them carefully, picking up after they complete an activity before they move on to another activity.

Pedagogy. Program staff plan activities for children appropriate for their ages and developmental stages. The teachers review the daily schedule with the children during small group time. There is a large block of time for children to choose their own activities, time for group discussion on the activities in which they participated, a book reading time, and an active music and song time.

Classroom walls are filled with drawings of family members, cars, fruits, and letters. A photo exhibit of the children involved in various activities is at the front of the bus for parents to see when they visit.

Assessment and Continuous Improvement. Program staff administered the PLS-4 and the Brigance Screening Tool to each child. Each family also completes an Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) at the beginning and end of the school year. Staff maintain portfolios that contain work samples and test results on each child and staff regularly write observations about child skill development on note cards posted around the bus.

Children on IEPs receive special services at the school. Staff referred other children for assessment.

Parenting Program. Staff encourage parents to be involved in the early childhood program. The program uses the *STAR Program*, sending a book home once a month with guidelines for the parent on reading the book (e.g., asking their children questions, such as, Do you remember how the story ended?) Parents also had the opportunity to join the Scholastic Book Club.

Classroom on Wheels provides several opportunities for parents to improve their parenting skills and literacy skills. To improve parenting skills, staff encourage 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 *Read, View and Do* 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 certain days. On these days the parents can drop their children off at the COW bus and then walk over to their own mobile classroom.

The COW bus class went on several Life Skills Field Trips with the help of parents, including trips to the Natural History Museum, the Leid Children's Museum, Anderson Dairy, and the public library.

Community Based Child Care Model

Location. Lone Mountain Creative Learning Center, Las Vegas, Nevada.¹⁷

Intensity and Duration. The Lone Mountain Creative Learning Center offers half-day and full-day preschool/day care to over 159 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 attend both the morning and afternoon sessions and receive 20 hours a week of early childhood education.

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

Number of Children. The project served 22 children: 14 children have special needs with Individual Education Plans and eight children are typically developing peers. Because the 22 children are in three separate classrooms, each with different numbers of children and because program staff vary their days in the classroom, it is difficult to

¹⁷ 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.

identify a specific child/adult ratio for the morning classes. In the afternoon session, the Nevada ECE staff are in their own classroom, 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 curriculum. This model emphasizes interactive learning through exploration in carefully designed learning centers. Program staff supplement *Creative Curriculum* with *Ready, Set, Leap!* which is an interactive, multi-sensory 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 and writing skills.

Staff use activities and materials, e.g., posters and puppets, from the *Peace Begins in the Preschool*, a conflict resolution violence prevention curriculum developed by the Clark County Neighborhood Justice Center. In addition, the Lone Mountain Center teaches all children some sign language. All teachers receive workshops in teaching American Sign Language to the children and utilize the *Wee Can Sign* curriculum throughout the year.

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 very large, carefully planned outdoor playground area appropriate for different age groups. The playground includes a multi-use climbing apparatus and a second smaller climber, 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.) which are frequently used with special needs children.

The 3-year olds classroom uses the *Bank Street Readers* series as the primary curriculum. The walls of the classrooms are filled with posters, learning charts, job charts, weather charts, and an area for the children's artwork, which changes with different projects.

The 3 and 4 year-old classrooms are very large and well equipped, containing a wide variety of learning materials and are particularly language-rich with books, signs, labels, and puppets. These larger classrooms have 30 children, beyond the group size limit recommended by NAEYC (especially for three year olds), but within the licensing standards for Clark County.

The 4 and 5 year old classrooms use the *LeapPads* and *LeapImagination Stations* with a variety of pre-reading activities.

The classrooms include children from several ethnic groups, including White, Black, Asian, and Hispanic. This year, the program purchased dolls from different cultures as well as diversity-oriented books and materials.

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 during the morning but rather acts as a trainer and mentor for the Center's pre-school classroom teachers. The ECE children, many of whom have Individual Education Plans, are mainstreamed into the two regular classrooms in the morning. Program staff work with both their own children and the Center's other children in these different classrooms.

At the time of the visit, one School District aide worked in each classroom and the teacher spent Monday and Tuesday morning in the 3-year old class, and Wednesday and Thursday in a 4-year old class. For example, on the day of the visit, the teacher was in the 3-year old classroom and she and her aide interacted with the ECE children who were busy in the many learning centers, e.g., dressing up in the housekeeping area and reading books in the library. During circle time, the classroom teacher led the children in a number of interactive songs with children signing the words.

In the afternoon, the teacher works with children in her own classroom with her two

aides. They focus on literacy activities and meeting individual children's Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals. On the day of the visit, children worked in two groups. In one group, an aide asked children to complete the sentence, "I will fly to" and then illustrate their wish (e.g., Disneyland) in a drawing. In the second group, a teacher led the children in a rhyming game, matching cards to sounds.

On Fridays, the ECSE teacher meets with the staff from the two rooms to discuss classroom procedures, techniques for working with the children with special needs, and teaching strategies.

Assessment and Continuous Improvement. The teacher administered 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 as well as the Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum Individual Child Profile three times during the year. Staff keep daily observations of children progress in a large notebook.

Most of these ECE children have special needs and receive extra services on identified IEP goals regularly from school district staff. Staff meet with the parents three times during the school year to share the child's overall progress.

Parenting Program. In September, the teacher met with each family to explain the program requirements and the early childhood curricula. The teacher also regularly contacts parents and sends home *STAR* packets to encourage the parent and child reading together. Parents can also checkout Lakeshore Activity Backpacks on a variety of topics, such as the Human Body, Measurement, and Magnifying, so parents can engage in educational activities with their child.

Nevada ECE families can also participate in the many Center events, including Halloween Parade and Party, Outdoor Thanksgiving Feast, and Spring Fling. The Center encourages all parents to participate in a "*Make It and Take It*" cooking activity held every third Thursday of the month.

Program staff also encourage parents to participate in the different CCSD parenting pro-

grams, including the *STAR Program*, *Nurturing Families* workshops, and the PBS literacy workshops. At this center, most parents work full time and can not volunteer in the classroom often.

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 13 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 adult education and parenting education classes. 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 visited the bus that provided services at Echo Loder and Bernice Mathews Elementary Schools in Reno.

Statewide Classroom on Wheels: Washoe County School District

Location. The Classroom on Wheels bus parks in front of Echo Loder Elementary School and then in front of Bernice Martin Mathews Elementary School in Reno, 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 operates from 12:45 to 2:45 p.m. Children receive eight hours per week of early childhood education.

Staff. A bi-lingual teacher and one aide work in the classroom.

Number of Children. The program serves 15 children in both morning and afternoon sessions 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 the *Ready, Set, Leap!* Curriculum, using the *LeapPad* and the *LeapSchool Desk* with their literacy-based activities.

The teacher also uses aspects of the *Reggio Emilia Approach*, which involve extended projects based on children's interests and an in-depth system of documentation to "make the learning visible" for the children, teachers, and parents. The program trains teachers to use questioning strategies to extend the children's thinking.

The children are predominantly Hispanic. The teacher, who is Hispanic, speaks Spanish and English languages inter-changeably during much of the school year. For example, she sings songs and read stories in both languages. At the time of the visit in mid spring, the teacher conducted most classroom activities in English only and the children conversed with each other in English.

Learning Environment. The Classroom on Wheels bus is a mobile early childhood education classroom—equipped with folding panels that fold out into learning centers 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, quiet area, and a com-

puter 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). When the weather is good, staff take easels, art materials, and the sand and water table outside in front of the school for expanded learning centers.

The last part of each class is held outside on the schools' playgrounds which include climbing apparatus, swings, and jungle gyms. Due to lack of storage space on the bus, the program does not have portable play equipment for outdoors.

Pedagogy. The class uses the *Reggio Emilia* philosophy of extended projects based on children's interests and of documenting children's work to extend their learning. This philosophy views children as researchers, always exploring and trying to understand how things work. During the session, the teacher took many pictures of the children involved in their activities and posed questions to them to encourage them to reflect about what they are doing or how they might do it differently. The teacher keeps journal pages, using the photos and children's words, to show parents what the children do and how they are progressing.

The classroom celebrated the "*Cinco de Mayo*" fiesta on the day of the visit. The teacher opened the day talking about *Cinco de Mayo* as a fiesta and had the children pretend to dress for the fiesta. Next, everybody danced the *Mexican Hat Dance*...and when the music stopped, each child jumped on a letter on the circle carpet and identified it. The teacher then introduced the session's activities: making tamales in the water table; grinding rice with a "piedra and molcajete" and eating tamales in the snack area; and painting a Mexican flag with red, green, and white fingerpaint in the art area.

The schedule is kept simple and is posted for parents at the front of the Bus and in pictures for the children. Children know their routines well and often remind each other of area limits. In this classroom respect for the children and their abilities is demonstrated in the staff's positive comments, probing questions, and very supportive atmosphere.

Assessment and Continuous Improvement. The teacher administers the PLS-4 to all the children. The teacher also administers the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) to

parents and completes the Pre-K Portfolio Assessment developed by the WCSD Early Childhood Office to assess developmental areas and literacy awareness. The teacher keeps a file on each child that contains the assessments, drawing and writing samples, and documentation photos.

The teacher referred some children for assessment of special needs.

Parenting Program. Parents are involved in the program in several ways. Parents can attend various classes, offered in English and Spanish, in the CALF Resource Van. The CALF Van also includes a lending library of educational toys, child and adult books, pre-school art materials, and craft kits that the parents are encouraged to check out.

The teacher offered two workshops on the COW Bus for her families...on "*The Value of Play*" and "*Reading with Your Child.*" In addition, staff encourage parents to volunteer in the classroom regularly. For example, on the day of the visit, a mother and her younger son brought tamales for snack and participated in the classroom activities for the morning session.

Douglas County School District

Location. Jacks Valley Elementary School, Minden, Nevada.

Intensity and Duration. Douglas County School District (DCSD) operates an afternoon pre-kindergarten classroom, Monday through Friday from 12:30 to 3:05 p.m. Children receive 12.5 hours per week of early childhood education.

Staff. A half-time early childhood teacher, a half-time special education teacher, and four half-time aides operate the program in a combined Early Childhood Education and Early Childhood Special Education class.

Number of Children. The program serves 25 children with six adults for a child/adult ratio of about 4.5 to 1.

Early Childhood Education Program

Curriculum. The Pre-kindergarten Program at Jacks Valley 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 and uses its materials in 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. 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 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.

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, if needed.

Learning Environment. This is the second year of a combined classroom with the Pre-kindergarten Program and the Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) programs. Children spend most of the session in the Pre-kindergarten classroom. However, during small group time, one group meets in the ECSE classroom, and, at the close of the session, all children go to the ECSE classroom for movement and music activities. The large sunken meeting area in this classroom accommodates the large number of children and staff.

The pre-kindergarten classroom is overcrowded with the large number of students and

teaching staff, exceeding the group size recommendation of NAEYC for four year-olds (n=20) by 7 children. Some children are on IEPs and receive special services from school district staff on identified goal areas.

The learning centers include blocks, dramatic play, manipulatives, art, writing, language arts, and a computer center geared toward the varying developmental needs of the children. The bathroom adjoins the classroom.

The school has developed a large early childhood playground area with an extensive tri-cycle path surrounding a variety of age-appropriate climbing equipment. The program has many tricycles and wagons.

The evaluator saw a possible safety issue for the early childhood environment during the site visit. The pre-kindergarten class is released at the same time as the rest of the elementary school at the end of the day. It seemed easy for the younger, smaller children to become lost among the older and larger elementary school children as they proceed to the buses and the many cars in the parking lot.

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 their planning time in small groups where children discussed what they planned to do. The children then moved into Center time, with adults leading several games on the floor. For example, the ECSE teacher played Concentration on the floor with two children, carefully providing a language model for the words on the cards. Another teacher played Trouble, a number game based on “6” with children counting out their moves. The head teacher moved about the room, interacting with children individually and asking them questions about the activity.

At the sound of a cymbal, the children cleaned up the centers and then lined up and went outside to the playground. The children spent 30 minutes in active play.

Back in the classroom, the children formed a large circle where a teacher aide led the children in songs. The Pre-k teacher then led a discussion about caterpillars and how they

change into a chrysalis. She then divided the children into four small groups, with each group conducting a different activity.

The school implements the concept of “looping” throughout the school. 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, and this class of children will be in her kindergarten class next year.

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

Parenting Program. The ECE teacher coordinated the family events for the entire school and conducted individual workshops for the classroom. The parents in this program must attend seven of 10 family literacy events. This year’s events included a Fall *Making Scarecrows* Event, a workshop on *Reading TO and WITH your Preschooler*, *Making Gingerbread Houses*, *Creating Home Job Charts with your Preschooler*, as well as a *Nutrition Night (Can I Help Make Dinner?)*, a *Book Fair*, a *Family Diversity Night*, and a *Bowling Night*.

The teachers conduct two home visits, one at the beginning and one at the end of the year. The teachers ask parents to choose their own personal goals during the first home visit. Parents can volunteer in the classroom, bring snacks, or make classroom materials.

The program has a Parent Video Library and a Preschool Book Library. 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 activities, primarily literacy-based, for the parent and child to do together.

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 literacy 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, and various student interns. During the second semester, due to illness of the new head teacher, the morning class was conducted by the three aides. The Director and Program Coordinator oversaw the classroom during the teacher's absence.

Number of Children. The program serves 17 children per session with three adults for a child/teacher ratio of about 5 to 1, which is lower when student interns are present.

Early Childhood Education Program.

The Mark Dawson Child & Family Center received Accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in 2005.

Curriculum. The Nevada ECE classroom follows a master curriculum plan outlined for all the Center's preschool classrooms. The Director and Preschool Coordinator have developed a literacy-based curriculum, called *Light Up for Literacy*, drawing strategies and materials from several sources. This curriculum incorporates the *Creative Curriculum*, the *Self-Concept Curriculum*, and the *Anti Bias Curriculum*. The *Creative Curriculum*, 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 places the child at the heart of the curriculum, focusing on experiences that will enhance the child's development and that are based on what is relevant to his or her life, such as family, school, and community. The *Anti Bias Curriculum* promotes projects that emphasize acceptance, respect, and co-

operation in the classroom and in the community.

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.

The teaching team carefully develops lesson plans incorporating the new Nevada Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards. All the classrooms at the Child and Family Center focus on general themes with theme-related books, videos, and other resource materials; however, each class moves at its own pace based on children's interest levels.

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. In fact, staff in the morning class conduct most activities in English and Spanish because of the large number of Hispanic children. Additionally, one staff member, versed in American Sign Language, teaches children to sign.

Learning Environment. The classroom contains exceptionally 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 between three and five years old. Child-sized bathroom facilities are adjacent to the classroom and shared with an adjoining classroom. The classroom also shares a kitchen with this classroom, allowing for many cooking activities.

The outdoor playground is large and well equipped with two extensive 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, and an expansive grassy area.

The Child and Family Center contains a Family Literacy Library with walls lined with early childhood books, flannel board stories, video materials, puppets and dramatic play prop boxes. The Library contains over 3,000 items available for checkout. 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 several strategies to encourage constructive behavior, including positive behavior management techniques, cognitively-based transitions between activities, and redirection. With the rich environment and number of adults available, children have opportunity for many one-on-one learning situations and positive 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 central theme focused on volcanoes, fossils, and dinosaurs. In the morning class, two aides introduced the words on the Word Wall (e.g., dinosaur, volcanoes) during circle time in English, Spanish, and sign language. The aide read a book on dinosaurs, translating into Spanish as she read and asking questions in both languages.

During learning center time, children made chocolate volcano cupcakes. In the discovery area, several children examined bins filled with small fossil pieces with large magnifiers and paint brushes to dust off the fossils. In the block area, children built with blocks and other accessories. Each learning area contained books related to dinosaurs and volcanoes.

Staff use transition time from one activity time to another to introduce or reinforce specific information needed to prepare for kindergarten, such as letters, numbers, and names. For example, after a 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.

Assessment and Continuous Improvement. The teacher administers the Preschool Language Scale (PLS-4) and the Brigance Screening Inventory to the children at the beginning and end of the school year. The teacher also uses a Preschool Portfolio Assessment, developed by last year's teacher, for ongoing assessment of areas (e.g., Early Literacy and Writing, Language, and Math) from the Nevada Preschool Standards.

The program serves some children who have an IEP. Staff from the Elko County School District work in the classroom with these children on identified needs.

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. On the day of the visit, a parent volunteer helped in the classroom.

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. Once a month, children take home a lightweight, child-sized suitcase on wheels that contains a literacy activity and book for children to complete with their parents. As mentioned previously, staff encourage parents to check books out from the Family Literacy Library.

The school holds several well-attended Parent Nights, including *a Harvest Walk and Literacy Circle and Luncheon, a Fall Feast, a Winter Carnival, A Ladies' Night Literacy Event (for Moms), a Fellows' Night Literacy Event (for Dads), an "Eating of the Greens" Luncheon and Literacy Circle, and a "Buckaroo Breakfast"* during the Annual Elko Cowboy Poetry Festival. The teacher holds Parent /Teacher Conferences at the beginning and the end of each school year to review the child's progress.

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 8:30 to 11:15 a.m. and 12:15 to 3:00 p.m. Children receive 11 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 parent involvement activities and testing. The coordinator and parent volunteers are often in the classroom.

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. (NAEYC Guidelines recommend a group size of no larger than 20 children with 4-year olds.)

Early Childhood Education Program

Curriculum. The pre-kindergarten program offers a literacy-based, family oriented program. The early childhood classroom uses the *High Scope Program* 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 teacher also uses *Zoo Phonics*, which introduces the alphabet through animal puppets and interactive activities.

The program accommodates 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. One family advocate is bi-lingual and works with the Hispanic children and families and translates classroom materials, as needed.

Learning Environment. The classroom is located in a large mobile building behind the Elementary School. This building contains two large classrooms: one classroom is for large group time, snack time, and literacy activities and the other is for learning centers including blocks, art area, computers, manipulatives, science area, and listening.

Although the classroom does not have a bathroom or running water, the school district has been working on the problem. The teacher brings in jugs of water each day and the classroom has a portable drinking water system. Staff allocate time during each session for the entire class to visit the main school building for bathroom needs. Aides also take individual children when needed, which can leave 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 classroom and the existing playground equipment for the older elementary children. The school district has raised over \$5,000 in public donations to build a new playground for the pre-kindergarten children.

The learning centers are well equipped, and each contains a wide variety of learning materials. The walls display children's artwork and materials from many past projects as well as various *High Scope* Learning Charts. With the huge variety of materials from sev-

eral past projects on the walls, the learning environment might be somewhat over stimulating for children to focus on the current theme.

Pedagogy. The teacher emphasizes literacy activities, starting with basic rhymes at the beginning of the year and then progressing into phonics, initial sounds, and syllabication. On the day of the visit, to introduce the letter “c,” the aide stood up and told the children she was going camping this weekend and taking her backpack. She then pulled out a number of items... a cup, corn, small car, and clothes, and asked the children what letter they started with. Then each child wrote the letter “c” on the whiteboard.

The staff use the *High Scope* curriculum, selecting activities which emphasize literacy and cognitive development. On the day of the visit, children started the day (as they do each day) by copying their names on laminated strips. During opening circle time, the teacher used interactive songs to introduce a number of routines. The teacher then read *Caps for Sale* while the aide dramatized it with several caps on her head and animated facial expressions. They then each went to a planning page and indicated which center they planned to work at and then went to the center.

Children were actively involved at all the learning centers. For example, children built with plastic interlocking pieces, painted at the easel, worked with playdough, and dug in the water table filled with soil and worms. The teachers and parents moved around the classroom, asking children questions to help them extend their learning and thinking.

The teacher and aide regularly use positive reinforcement to encourage appropriate behavior. For example, staff use a color-coded behavioral reward chart system with children’s names on clothespins.

Children are very aware of the classroom routines. The teacher uses 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 to the outside area.

Assessment and Continuous Improvement. The program coordinator administered the PLS-4 to all the children. The teacher uses a new District *Progress Report* which covers areas of Math, Literacy, Social & Emotional Development, Creativity, Science, Physical

Development and Health Areas. He uses the *Progress Report* at parent conferences scheduled twice a year to go over the children's progress.

The program serves some children with special needs who receive assistance from school district staff during the day.

Parenting Program. The program coordinator and family advocates implement the parenting program. As part of the parenting program, parents sign a contract that requires they be involved in the early childhood program six hours per month, including volunteering in the classroom once a month.

The family advocates conduct monthly home visits using the *Parent Are Teachers (PAT) Program*, a nationally recognized research-based parenting education model. During home visits, the family advocates help family members learn about stages in their child's overall development and activities that enhance this development.

Parents are encouraged to attend program workshops, conducted by community resources and staff, which have included *Communication Techniques, Making Home First Aid Kits, Dental Care, and Parenting Wisely*.

The teacher sends out a monthly newsletter to parents with information about upcoming classroom activities, parenting tips, and a parent volunteer calendar.

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. The Pre-kindergarten program integrates daily with the Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Classroom, which has a full time teacher and three aides.

Number of Children. Both morning and afternoon sessions serve 18 children; the ECSE classroom serves 10 children. The integrated classroom has a child/teacher ratio of 4 to 1.

Early Childhood Education Program

Curriculum. The Pershing County Pre-kindergarten Program uses *High Scope* as its primary curriculum. As described 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 Pershing Pre-kindergarten program is unique in that it provides an "inclusive" environment, combining children from the Nevada ECE classroom with the school district's early childhood special education classroom daily. All the children from both classes are in each room and are engaged with staff from both programs. After the opening circle time, the children in each classroom are divided and spend the rest of the session in one of the two classrooms.

The two classrooms are adjacent to each other. Both classrooms are clean, well lit, well organized and equipped with child-sized tables and chairs. Child-sized bathroom facilities are adjacent to the classroom. Each classroom has several learning centers (blocks, dramatic play, manipulatives, art, writing, science, library and computers). Adaptive equipment is kept primarily in the ECSE room, though can be moved to the other classroom if needed.

The outside playground area has been expanded to accommodate the two early childhood classrooms. The playground includes a large, outdoor climbing apparatus, a sand box, tri-cycles, wagons, appropriate adaptive outdoor play equipment, and a rather narrow tricycle trail that can cause accidents and may be a safety issue.

The learning centers contain a variety of learning materials appropriate for the wide age range and developmental levels of the children.

Staff use positive language and encourage positive conflict resolution techniques, according to the High Scope curriculum. Staff provide children with choices and use positive

reinforcement techniques frequently. The ECE head teacher conducts monthly behavior management training for all staff.

Pedagogy. The ECE teacher and the ECSE teacher plan their curricula together, scheduling different but complementary activities in the two classrooms. The ECSE classroom conducts thematic activities from a series of selected themes. The other classroom concentrates on High Scope related tasks.

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 calendar activities. The teacher counted (in English and Spanish) the children present. With the help of the teacher, one child called out the names of those children who were going into the ECSE classroom. Half of the children in each classroom then switched classrooms.

In the ECE classroom, the teacher asked each child where he/she planned to work today and the children then moved into active exploration of the learning centers, such as working in the art area making water color paintings. Other children worked with blocks on a table, acted out home life in the dramatic play area, or played with cars and trucks on the floor. The teacher helped one child sound out her name written on a paper.

In the ECSE classroom, the theme was transportation. Children painted a large carton box train they had previously made, painted small cars, or played with wheeled toys on the floor. Three children read books by themselves and another group played a game on the floor.

At the end of the open activity time, the children came together and the teacher used a phone to have the children discuss with a make-believe person on the other end where they had worked. She closed circle time with a song, the children had their snack, and then went outside to the playground. Both classes played together.

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) used in *High Scope*. Staff keep the records in children's portfolios along with work, art samples, and pictures to document the activities in the classroom and the abilities of the children.

School district staff work on specific skills with the special needs children, as identified in their IEPs.

Parenting Program. The teachers 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 family literacy staff monthly. Parents are also encouraged to attend parent workshops conducted by the local Even Start family literacy program.

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 also have backpacks with both Spanish and English books and activities available for parents to check out. Staff also encourage families to check out books from the school's Literacy Center. This year the teacher sends out a monthly newsletter which discusses the children's activities, planned field trips, trainings, etc.

Washoe County School District

Washoe County School District (WCSD) used Nevada ECE funds to initiate and expand early childhood education programs at eight sites. The eight 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: Anderson, Incline, Johnson, Alice Smith, and Veterans Memorial Elementary Schools.

High School Early Childhood Center Model. These early childhood education projects are located at high schools. The high schools benefit 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 three high school early childhood education project sites: Hug High School, Reed High School, and Sparks High School.

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.

In 2004-05, the Washoe County ECE program used the *Early Language and Literacy Childhood Observation Tool (ELLCO)* to assess the quality of early language and literacy environments and instruction.

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 project 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 engage in an activity together. The *Family Storyteller Program*, offered in collaboration with the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension Office, consists of six workshops which teach 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 related activities.

- **Family Literacy Festivals.** WCSD sponsored a School-District Winter Family Literacy Festival in which families and children participate in literacy activities at learning stations. At the end of the year, each program sponsored a "mini" literacy festival where families received 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. In 2004-05, training included sessions on the *Nevada Pre-K Standards and Lesson Plans, Working as a Team, Non-Competitive Games, Child Abuse & Neglect, The Nevada Registry, Cultural Sensitivity, Transitions, The Early Childhood Language and Literacy Classroom Observation Toolkit (ELLCO), STAR Literacy Program, Liquid Watercolor, The Importance of Writing for Pre-K Children, Science Ideas for the Pre-K Classroom, Literacy in the Pre-K Classroom, The Instant Writing Center, and Transitions in the Pre-K Classroom.*

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 (Golden Valley).

Intensity and Duration. Alice Smith Elementary School Pre-kindergarten Program operates a half-day early childhood session, Monday through Thursday from 12:45 to 3:15 p.m. Children receive 10 hours per week of early childhood education.

Staff. A full-time teacher and a full-time aide (bi-lingual) operate the afternoon 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. The class uses the 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. This year, based on training she received in *ELLCO*, the teacher placed books and writing materials related to her theme in each learning center and in the classroom language arts/library area.

Learning Environment. The pre-kindergarten class shares the classroom with a morning kindergarten class. The kindergarten class materials are evident throughout the room. In fact, most of the classroom space is filled with the work of the kindergarten students. Perhaps as a result, the pre-kindergarten program did not have space for many centers. The learning centers include a writing area, a listening center, a computer area and a dramatic play space. There is no language arts area, science center, or music center. 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. The playground is fenced off from the older children's playground.

The program provides services to both English Language Learners and children who are bi-lingual. The aide is bi-lingual and uses Spanish in the classroom as needed. There are books in both English and Spanish in the classroom.

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 outdoor activities.

The classroom conducts a variety of literacy activities. The teacher started the session with several interactive songs. One song emphasized letters, and the children made the sounds of the letters with their arms. The teacher then read a poem about seeds and flowers, talked with the children about how seeds grow into plants, and then discussed how they would plant flowers during activity time.

The children then worked in their centers...several at the computers, others in the dramatic play area, others planting flowers. The session closed with a final circle time, with the teacher reading a book on bumble bees, emphasizing the sound of “s” the bees make, and a song about flowers.

The staff were very positive and warm with the children and the parents. The teacher and aide reinforced children frequently, providing a good role model for parents to observe.

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, including English/Language Art, Book Handling/Concepts of Print, Math, 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 program serves children on IEP who receive services from school district staff during the school day. The teacher meets regularly with the special education teachers to discuss the children’s progress.

Parenting Program. The parents are required to attend two of the series of workshops conducted by the CALF Van. Most parents attended three workshops...*The Storyteller Program, Money on the Bookshelf Program,* and the PBS-related *READ, DO, & VIEW Program*. The parents are in the classroom often and have come to know, interact, and assist each other. Parents frequently bring food to share with the children.

The program sends home Activity Packs which includes journals, and specific activities for parents to complete with their child.

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 8:30 to 11:00 a.m. and from 11:45 to 2:15 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 student and assistance from 42 students in the Sparks High School Child Development classes, as their schedule allows. The ECE teacher trained the students to work in the class.

Number of Children. The program serves 18 children per session for a child/adult ratio of 9 to 1: it is lower when the regularly assigned student and child development students are present.

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. This classroom also uses the ELLCO assessment, placing literacy materials in every learning center. The teacher supplements the program with many self-developed materials from her many years of teaching.

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 includes many cooking activities, emphasizing the alphabet through food-oriented activities.

The program serves many English Language Learners, including many Hispanic children and children from other cultures. The teacher aide is Hispanic and frequently uses Spanish in the class, assisting those children who need translation. The classroom contains

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. Previously, the program used the front lawn area for outdoor activities, but due to safety concerns, the class now uses the central courtyard area. It is a concrete area where teachers bring out a water table, balls, Frisbees, jump rope, hula hoops, etc, for activities. The school has developed plans for a toddler center and a new playground.

The large classroom contains several well equipped learning centers (science, blocks, dramatic play, manipulatives, art, writing, language arts, listening, woodworking, music, and computer centers). One bulletin board presents the Nevada Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards through photos of activities related to the standards. The bulletin board also shows pictures of previous classroom activities.

The teacher uses a theme-based approach, working on topics over several weeks. On the day of the visit, the theme was Oceans and Fish. In most learning centers, the teachers placed ocean and fish-related books and writing materials. Children moved to several learning centers upon arriving. In the art area, children made “oceans in a bottle” with colored water and oil, small rubber fish, tiny shells, and glitter. Several children worked on “fish stories,” drawing pictures and dictating their own story to the teacher. Children examined shells and starfish with microscopes, matching them with a chart of shells in the science area. At one point, three high school child development students assisted the children. For example, one worked closely with a small group doing a long alphabet puzzle on the floor.

During outside playtime, as the children have no playground, the teachers involve them in activities. Children fished in a small fishpond, played in the sand table with fish, used hula hoops, joined in active singing and movement games in Spanish, and rode tricycles in the courtyard.

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. The teacher uses a new poster form of combined class schedule and daily activities as a planning tool, which helps the many high school students know the day's plans.

Children are very aware of classroom routines. The teacher uses songs to move between activities and the children appear to know the routines. The teacher and assistant both engage children in their "play" in the different learning centers, use positive language and redirection if needed, and are highly 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 conducts ongoing assessment of each child using the Pre-Kindergarten Portfolio Assessment developed by the WCSD ECE Office.

The teachers maintain a portfolio on each child that includes work samples of art, experience stories, etc., which staff give to the children's next year kindergarten teachers. Program staff also develop an individual notebook for each child with work samples, homework sheets, photos, 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 two parent workshops, teaching parents how to make games and providing them with ideas for PACT time. 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.*

Staff send home weekly "homework" for the children and their parents, using the *On Track for Kindergarten Program* and *STAR* booklets (*Sitting Together and Reading*). Both programs include interactive activities for the parent and child to complete together.

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. Breakfast and lunch are included.

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 20 children with two adults for a child/adult ratio of 10 to 1. When the Parent Outreach Coordinator is present, the ratio is 6.6 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, Fingerplays and Songs, Storybook Reading and Storytelling, Emerging Literacy Skills in Reading and Writing, and Mathematical Reasoning to name a few. The *CELL Program* includes a basic framework for daily literacy activities that includes oral language activities, phonological skills, reading aloud, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, interactive writing, and independent writing.

Learning Environment. The pre-kindergarten program contains several learning centers within two large classrooms. One classroom is the “quiet room” and contains the language arts and library area, a writing area, and a computer center. The second classroom

is the “active room” and contains blocks, dramatic play, manipulatives, art area, sand and water table, etc.

To enhance classroom learning, the pre-kindergarten program uses the local town environment frequently for experiences, going on several field trips during the year. Field trips have included the hospital, a dentist’s office, the Railroad Museum and train station, a heavy equipment store, and the Future Farmer’s Fair. All the field trips become curricula for class-made stories, writing and art activities, wood and box constructions, etc.

The pre-kindergarten program uses a fenced-in playground area, which community volunteers constructed. The school added a cement tricycle path in 2004-05 and will install an early childhood climbing apparatus next year. In the meantime, the children have been using the large climbing apparatus with the older children on the main playground.

Pedagogy. The classroom focuses on literacy and cognitive activities, offering the children many opportunities for hands-on exploration and verbal interaction. On the day of the visit, the children received new jobs for the week and then discussed going to a farm, which was the new theme.

The children discussed the animals that would be on a farm and then the teacher assistant read the *Big Red Barn Big Book*, asking children questions about each page. Next, the teacher introduced a poem about cows which they all read together with children noticing different letters and the teacher emphasizing different sounds.

Later, during activity time, all the children became involved in the first stages of building a farm habitat. Several children painted the cardboard for the background while other children constructed pigs and other animals from building clay.

All staff are very positive, allow the children to settle their own problems, and have used the *I Care Language* approach included as part of the Core Curriculum.

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.

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

The teacher identified some children for special services, which are provided weekly by school district staff. The head teacher has a special education background and works with those children who may have some minor developmental delays.

The teachers developed portfolios on all the children. They contain work samples, artwork, and assessment data and are given to the families at the end of the year.

Parenting Program. The Parent Outreach Coordinator works directly with families and implements the parenting program. The Coordinator conducted monthly home visits with families and conducted a series of *Tuesday Parent Nights* related to books and classroom themes. For example, one night the coordinator read *Froggy's Halloween* and then had the parents and children make finger puppets and frost sugar cookies. The parent nights are held in the Family Resource Literacy Center that the pre-kindergarten staff developed. Parents can check out literacy bags with books and activities for home use.

The Parent Coordinator also collects data on parent involvement, PACT time, and time spent reading with their children. Parents often volunteer in the classroom, as shown by one parent helping the day of the evaluator's visit.

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.)

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.

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

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 Early Childhood Outcome Indicators

Outcome Indicator	Expected	Actual
1. Auditory Comprehension	70%	81.2%
2. Expressive Comprehension	70%	83.6%

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.¹⁸ 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 100 of the 815 children (12 percent) 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

¹⁸ 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 his/her 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 815 children in school district and community-based projects, project personnel administered the pretest Auditory Comprehension subtest to 781 children and the pretest Expressive Communication subtest to 779 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 91.2, which is at about the 28th percentile, and a pretest mean on the Expressive Communication subtest of 89.5, which is at about the 24th 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 more likely 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=781)	91.2
Expressive Communication (n=779)	89.5

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 591 children on the Auditory Comprehension subtest and for 588 children the Expressive Communication subtests who were in the program at least four months and had both pretest and posttest scores.

In terms of the outcome indicator, 480 of the 591 children (81.2 percent) made a standard score gain on the Auditory Comprehension subtest and 492 of the 588 (83.6 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 591 children made a mean gain of 10.5 standard score points on the Auditory Comprehension subtest and that the 588 children made a mean gain of 12.6 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 Gains

Subtest (n)	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Mean Gain
Auditory Comprehension (591)	91.5	101.9	10.5
Expressive Communication (588)	89.7	102.3	12.6

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 100 of the 815 children (12 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 enrollment, 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 enrollment,¹⁹ children who had the English skills to take the test at enrollment but were categorized as Limited English Proficient,²⁰ and children who were English speaking and not identified as Limited English Proficient.²¹

Table 18 shows the pretest and posttest means for the three groups on the PLS-4 subtests and the percent of children that made a standard score gain on each subtest. The results show that, in general, children in the three groups made similar mean standard score gains on the Auditory Comprehension subtest, even though the groups' pretest means differed substantially from each other. English speaking children not identified as Limited English Proficient had the highest pretest mean followed by children who were Limited English Proficient but able to take the PLS-4 at enrollment and then those children who could not take the test at enrollment. In addition, the results show that all three groups had similar percent of children who made a standard score gain on the Auditory Comprehension pretest to posttest and all groups met the expected performance levels for this measure. The results suggest that all children benefited substantially from the developmental activities in early childhood education program, regardless of English language proficiency.

¹⁹ Project staff categorized these children as Limited English Proficient when they enrolled in the program and determined that these children did not have sufficient English proficiency to take the PLS-4 at enrollment. When categorizing children as Limited English Proficient, project staff used the federal definition of Limited English Proficient presented below.

The term limited English proficient, when used with respect to an individual means an individual –

- who is aged 3 through 21;
- who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school;
- who was not born in the United States whose language is other than English;
- who was born in the United States whose native language is a language other than English;
- who is Native American or Alaskan Native, or a native resident of the outlying areas and;
- who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency; or
- who is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant;

and

- whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to delay the individual
 - the ability to meet the State's proficient level of achievement on State assessment
 - the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or
 - the opportunity to participate fully in society.

²⁰ Project staff categorized these children as Limited English Proficient when they enrolled in the program and determined that these children had sufficient English proficiency to take the PLS-4 at enrollment.

²¹ Project staff did not identify these children as Limited English Proficient at enrollment.

On the Expressive Communication subtest, children who did not have sufficient English language skills to take the PLS-4 at enrollment made the largest gains, both in terms of the percent of students who made a standard score gain and in the mean standard score gain. The group of children with the smallest gains (average mean gain and the percent of children who made a gain) was the English speaking children not identified as Limited English Proficient. Nevertheless, all groups met the expected performance levels for this indicator. The results suggest that while a portion of the large gains that children made in Expressive Communication could be because 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 those categorized as Limited English Proficient, 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 population learning English.

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 Skills at Enrollment (49)	76.8	87.6	10.8	81.6
	Limited English Skills at Enrollment (148)	86.7	97.1	10.4	79.1
	English Speaking (394)	95.1	105.5	10.5	82.0
Expressive Communication	No English Skills at Enrollment (49)	66.1	82.2	16.1	89.8
	Limited English Skills at Enrollment (47)	82.9	97.7	14.8	86.4
	English Speaking (392)	95.2	106.6	11.4	81.9

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%	97.7%
2. Time With Children	60%	82.8%
3. Reading With Children	30%	72.6%

Individual Parenting Goals. Of the 849 Nevada ECE adults, 745 adults had children who were enrolled in school district and community based ECE projects for at least four months. Of these 745 adults, 742 adults had data at enrollment and at the end of the program year or when they exited. Of the 742 adults, 725 adults (97.7 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.

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 745 adults (that established goals) set a total of 2,482 goals, making 2,159 of them (87 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 815 children enrolled in school district and community based ECE projects, 721 children were first-year participants. A total of 619 of these children were in Nevada ECE

at least four months. Pretest and posttest data are available for 616 of the 619 children. At the time the 619 children enrolled in the program, 87 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 529 parents, 438 (83 percent) reported spending more time with their children at the time of the posttest or when they exited the program, 70 parents (13 percent) reported spending the same amount of time with their children, and 21 (4 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 619 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 616 of the 619 children. Of the 616 children, 447 (72.6 percent) of their parents reported spending more time reading with them at the end of the evaluation than when they began the program, 67 parents (10.8 percent) reported spending the same amount of time reading with their children, and 102 parents (16.6 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 think it is important to

note the amount of time that parents of all 815 children report spending reading with their children. Pretest and posttest data were available on 711 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 0.9 more hours (54 minutes) per week reading to or with their child (a gain of 64 percent) at the end of the evaluation period.

Table 20. Parent and Child Reading Time Together, n=711

Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Mean Gain
1.4	2.5	0.9

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 three of the four outcome indicators. On the one indicator 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)	2	1

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 36 (15 percent) of the 234 children, 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%	79.1%
2. Expressive Comprehension	70%	75.8%

Out of the 234 children in Classroom on Wheels Nevada ECE projects, project personnel administered the Auditory Comprehension pretest to 185 children and the Expressive

Communication pretest to 183 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 86.1, which is at about the 18th percentile, and a pretest mean on the Expressive Communication subtest of 84.1, which is at about the 14th percentile. Both mean scores suggest that many students are very low performing. However, as mentioned previously, part of the explanation for the low scores is that many students are English Language Learners. For English Language Learners, the low scores more likely 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=185)	86.1
Expressive Communication (n=183)	84.1

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 91 children on the Auditory Comprehension and on the Expressive Communication subtests who were in the program at least four months.

In terms of the outcome indicator, 72 of the 91 children (79.1 percent) made a standard score gain on the Auditory Comprehension subtest and 69 of the 91 (75.8 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 91 children made a mean gain of 12.0 standard score points on the Auditory Comprehension subtest and a mean gain of 14.1 standard score points on the Expressive Communication subtest. These results show that, overall, COW 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 Gains, n=91

Subtest	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Mean Gain
Auditory Comprehension	81.9	93.9	12.0
Expressive Communication	78.6	92.7	14.1

As mentioned previously, the results must be interpreted with caution because of the large numbers of children categorized as Limited English Proficient in the program. Overall, Classroom on Wheels ECE projects could not administer the PLS-4 at enrollment for 36 of the 234 children (15 percent) because the children 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 enrollment, children who had the English skills to take the test at enrollment but were categorized as Limited English Proficient, and English speaking children not identified as Limited English Proficient.

Table 25 shows the pretest and posttest means for the two of the three groups: the English speaking population not identified as Limited English Proficient and children who had the English skills to take the test at enrollment but were categorized as Limited English Proficient.

The results also show the two groups of children made similar mean standard score gains on the Auditory Comprehension subtest, even though the English speaking children not

identified as Limited English Proficient had the highest pretest mean. In addition, both groups had a similar percent of children who made a standard score gain on the Auditory Comprehension subtest and both groups met the expected performance levels for this indicator. The results suggest that all children benefited substantially from the developmental activities in early childhood education program, regardless of English language proficiency.

On the Expressive Communication subtest, children who had the English skills to take the test at enrollment but were categorized as Limited English Proficient made a larger average mean score gain than English speaking children not identified as Limited English Proficient: however, a smaller percent of these children made a standard score gain from the pretest to the posttest. Nevertheless, both groups met the expected performance levels for this indicator. 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 for expressive communication that children made could be because many children were learning the English language, all children benefited substantially from the developmental activities in early childhood education program.

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 Skills at Enrollment (0)	NR	NR	NR	NR
	Limited English Skills at Enrollment (44)	76.0	88.2	12.2	79.5
	English Speaking (47)	87.4	99.3	11.9	78.7
Expressive Communication	No English Skills at Enrollment (0)	NR	NR	NR	NR
	Limited English Skills at Enrollment (44)	73.8	88.2	14.7	70.4
	English Speaking (47)	83.3	96.9	13.6	80.9

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%	94.7%
2. Time With Children	60%	41.0%
3. Reading With Children	30%	63.0%

Individual Parenting Goals. Of the 229 Classroom on Wheels Nevada ECE adults, 192 adults had children who were enrolled in Classroom on Wheels for at least four months. Of these 192 adults, 188 had data at enrollment and at the end of the program year or exit. Of these 188 adults, 178 adults (94.7 percent) met at least one parenting goal. Thus, Classroom on Wheels met the expected performance level of 90 percent for this indicator.

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 210 adults set a total of 696 goals, making 611 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 234 children enrolled in Classroom on Wheels Nevada ECE projects, all children were first-year participants. A total of 198 of these children were in Classroom on Wheels at least four months. Pretest and posttest data are available for 190 children. At the time the 190 children enrolled in the program, 29 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 161 parents, 66 (41 percent) reported spending more time with their children at the time of the posttest or when they exited the program, 36 parents (22 percent) reported spending the same amount of time with their children, and 59 (37

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 198 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 189 of these children. Of the 189 children, 119 (63.0 percent) of their parents reported spending more time reading with them at the end of the evaluation than when they began the program, 18 parents (9.5 percent) reported spending the same amount of time reading with their children, and 56 parents (29 percent) reported a decrease in the amount of time they spent reading to their children. COW Nevada ECE Projects 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 reported spending reading with their children. Pretest and posttest data were available on 189 children who were enrolled in the Classroom on Wheels ECE projects at least four months. Table 27 shows that school district and community based ECE parents spent an average of 0.4 more hours (24 minutes) per week reading to or with their child (a gain of 19 percent) at the end of the evaluation period

Table 27. Parent and Child Reading Time Together, n=189

Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Mean Gain
2.1	2.5	0.4

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 two projects to collect and submit testimonials from their participating families. In addition, we also received and included a testimonial from a kindergarten teacher who sees the direct effect of the early childhood education program when these children enter kindergarten. 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 two projects to have the 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, such as with translation. This section of the report includes four testimonials: three testimonials from families and one testimonial from a grade 1 teacher.

Lisa—Participating Adult

Lisa is a 35 year-old Caucasian woman with one son. Her son, Cayson, is four years old and attends the Clark County School District (CCSD) Early Childhood Education program.

Lisa enrolled in the Early Childhood Education program to better prepare her child for school and to improve her son's chance of future success in school. She attended 12.5 hours of parenting education. Cayson attended 140 hours of early childhood education.

To Whom it May Concern:

I am a parent of a child with a speech disability. Because of this Grant my child is able to be enrolled at Lone Mountain Creative Learning center to receive services for his disability. He is able to interact with peers his age, have language role models, and receive speech therapy in a small group setting. I have appreciated these services and strongly believe it has increased his language use. He is speaking more often and more clearly. The staff and special education teachers are very helpful to him and myself in providing resources and classes on child development. They are very caring and I am very appreciative to them and to this program!

Sincerely,

Lisa C.

Joni—Participating Adult

Joni is a 34 year-old Caucasian woman with three children. Her son Adam is four years old and attends the CCSD Early Childhood Education program.

Joni enrolled in the Early Childhood Education program to better prepare her child for school, and so that she could become a better teacher of her children. She attended 28.25 hours of parenting education. Adam attended 245 hours of early childhood education.

To Whom It May Concern:

I am honored that my son, Adam, was chosen to participate in the Early Childhood Development program at Lone Mountain Creative Learning Center as a peer model. We have thoroughly enjoyed the activities offered and it has provided new learning opportunities for our family.

Before we enrolled our children in this pre-school, the director (Regina B.) told me about this program and how it allows special-needs children to interact with typical kids in all of their activities. She was very excited and proud that her school is one of the few pre-schools that offers this program. I was also excited that our children would be learning and playing with children that they may not normally be around.

The weekly activities we do at home have motivated our son and increased his love of learning. For example, we were asked to track the time we spent reading. We read books prior to being in this program, but now Adam is more excited about it and pocks out a big stack of books to read every night so we can “write them on Ms. Pam’s list.” We also really enjoy the backpack activities. I like that there is a theme which includes a new book to read and related activities that Adam can do (and our two younger children enjoy them too!). Adam calls it his “homework” and is eager to do it so we can get a new backpack to take home. These activities also offer good ideas for me to learn how to teach some of the basics – math, phonics, etc. so that I can work with them at home.

Regina and Pam really make the program work. They took the time to explain to me what the program would include, what we were expected to do, and what Adam would need to do. They are always very open and helpful with my questions, and have provided me with whatever information I requested. Adam loves having Ms. Pan in his class and often talks about things she has taught him or helped him make. I am happy to see teachers who care about our children and love what they do.

Overall, I think this is a great program and hope it will continue at our school. I have two-year-old twins that I hope can get involved in the future. This has provided so many opportunities for us to spend time together – playing, reading, learning and having fun.

Sincerely,

Joni

Andrea—Grade 1 Teacher

Andrea is a grade 1 teacher who teaches several children who participated in the Nevada ECE program at McCaw Elementary School in Las Vegas. Her perspective is consistent with the perspective of many kindergarten teachers who responded to surveys about the performance of students who participated in the Nevada ECE program as reported in the *Nevada Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program 2004-05 Longitudinal Evaluation Report*.

To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to take this opportunity to let you know that the class that Mrs. Patricia Hunter teaches, which is a pre-school class, under a Federal Grant to enrich children from disadvantaged homes, has been very successful. As a first grade teacher of 15 years at the same school, I have found that the students who attend Mrs. Hunters class have come into first grade better prepared to learn, and higher academically in reading, math, and language arts. I have had 2 of those children this year, a girl and a boy. I also had the boy's older brother who would have benefited from the program if it had existed years ago. The girl in my class has a younger brother in the program and it would be interesting to see if her performs as well as she does. She is reading at a second grade level since second trimester and her word recognition level is at 4th grade and the boy is reading at grade level and the year isn't over yet. I would recommend renewing the grant. It's working and Mrs. Hunter is making it happen!

Sincerely,

*Mrs. Andrea L.
1st Grade Teacher
Gordon McCaw Elementary School*

Leslie—Participating Adult

Leslie is a 42 year-old Caucasian woman with one child. Her son Anthony is six years old and attends the Early Childhood Education program in Douglas County School District.

Leslie enrolled in the Early Childhood Education program to become a better teacher of her son and to improve her son's chance of future school success. She attended 36 hours of parenting education. Anthony attended 50 hours of early childhood education.

The Value of Jack's Valley Pre-School

We think preschool is a valuable tool to help condition our child for kindergarten. Anthony loves going. There are many activities he participates in that become essential in his learning process. He is getting used to a routine and the responsibilities of going to school. He loves his teachers and classmates and he learns discipline from others as well as his parents. Anthony looks forward to Family Nights and he is always excited to attend.

The list can go on and on of the importance of this part of his life. We are so glad Anthony goes to Jack's Valley Elementary Preschool. His joy is expressed in our daily conversations and in his art work which we display proudly!





Thank you!

Leslie & Tony

Chapter XI. Conclusions and Recommendations

The 2004-05 school year is the fourth 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 2004-05 Nevada ECE program are: Nevada ECE projects have improved the quality of their early childhood programs since 2001-02 when the Nevada ECE program began and Nevada ECE projects have positively impacted program participants in early childhood development and parenting skills. Other conclusions and key statements about the Nevada ECE program include—

-  Nevada ECE projects have implemented higher quality early childhood programs from 2001-02 to 2004-05 based on the average ratings of 14 of 17 program delivery indicators of effective early childhood programs. However, the overall quality of the early childhood education programs decreased slightly from 2003-04 to 2004-05 based on a decrease in the average ratings for 10 of the 17 program delivery indicators. Most of the decreases are very minor due to one or two projects that scored lower on some indicators, e.g., safety issues, a high child/adult ratio.
-  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 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 three of the four statewide outcome indicators.
-  Nevada ECE children, including children learning the English language, 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 2004-05 was \$3,292 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. However, some children who were enrolled in the program long enough, did not attend services frequently enough to benefit substantially from them.
- 📖 Most parents attended Nevada ECE parenting education services regularly enough to benefit. 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 2004-05, the same as in 2003-04 and 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 four recommendations for improvement.

1. Continue to adopt, implement, and provide training to staff in high-quality, research-based early childhood programs and practices. Train all staff in Nevada Pre-kindergarten Content Standards.
2. Monitor children's attendance in the early childhood education program and develop policies to replace those children who are unable to attend frequently with children who are more likely to attend.

3. 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.
4. 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 based on the 17 program delivery indicators for effective early childhood education programs.
3. Continue to work with projects to improve services in the 17 program delivery indicators by having projects develop improvement plans for those indicators in which projects were rated low.
4. 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.

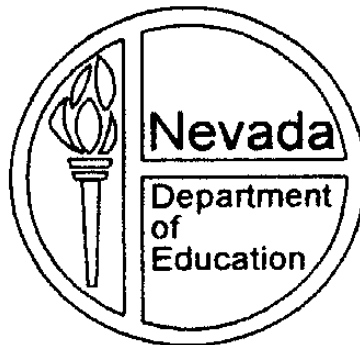
APPENDIX B

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.					
<i>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.</i>					
Curricular Base.			Not Descriptive		Very Descriptive
			1	2	3 4 5
<p>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.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philosophy of curricular base for program is provided to parents and staff • Curricular base is well founded and grounded in known research • Lesson plans show evidence of curricular base in use • Staff have received training consistent with curricular base 			Notes:		
Diversity.			Not Descriptive		Very Descriptive
			1	2	3 4 5
<p>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.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning materials show evidence of individual, cultural, and linguistic diversity (e.g., books, dolls, block accessories, etc.) • Activities reflect awareness of individual, cultural and linguistic diversity • All children are welcome in the program, including children with special needs and children with cultural and linguistic diversity • Staff are reflective of cultural diversity of classroom 			Notes:		

Early Childhood Program—cont.					
Developmental Areas.	Not Descriptive			Very Descriptive	
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>3. Early childhood program balances attention to all areas of development – social, emotional, physical, cultural, cognitive, aesthetic, and language.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom learning centers and activities reflect developmentally appropriate practices • Lesson plans reflect awareness of need to meet children’s varying developmental needs • Lesson plans include all areas of development 	Notes:				
Experiences.	Not Descriptive			Very Descriptive	
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>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.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning experiences are developmentally appropriate to age group • Learning experiences are a balance between active/quiet, group/individual, teacher-directed/child-directed, indoors/outdoors • Learning experiences are concrete, hands-on, and interactive • Learning experiences enable children the opportunity to make meaningful choices and provide a substantial block of time for children to explore and investigate • 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			Very Descriptive	
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>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.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom is clean, orderly, and well-lighted • Furniture is age-appropriate and safe • Fire drill procedures are posted • Room arrangement allows children to play and interact safely • Outdoor environment is clean, safe and equipped with age-appropriate apparatus • Bathroom and clean-up facilities are clean and convenient 	Notes:				
Learning Environment.	Not Descriptive			Very Descriptive	
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>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.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom contains age-appropriate learning materials accessible to all children and reflective of children’s interests and cultural and individual diversity • 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 • Outdoor equipment and learning materials are safe, and age-appropriate 	Notes:				

Early Childhood Program—cont.					
<i>Interaction.</i>	Not Descriptive			Very Descriptive	
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>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.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group size and ratio of teachers to children are limited to enable individualized and age-appropriate programming (<i>NAEYC Guidelines</i>) • Three year-olds are in groups of no more than 16 children with 2 adults • Four year-olds are in groups of no more than 20 children with 2 adults • Five year-olds are in groups of no more than 25 children with 2 adults • Multi-age grouping and children remaining with teacher for more than one year are strategies considered to build sustained relationships • 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			Very Descriptive	
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>8. A wide variety of learning experiences, materials and equipment, and instructional adaptations and accommodations are used for children with special needs.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptive materials are available and used, if needed • Accommodations for individual needs are incorporated into learning experiences, if needed • Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are implemented, if required • Therapeutic or other services are conducted within the classroom, if needed and appropriate 	Notes:				
Behavior Management.	Not Descriptive			Very Descriptive	
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>9. Staff use positive guidance techniques for discipline.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers model, encourage and reinforce the behavior that is desired • Teachers use redirection of children to more acceptable activities • Teachers set clear and realistic limits • Teachers intervene to enforce consequences for unacceptable, harmful behavior • Teachers encourage children to verbalize their feelings, wants and needs 	Notes:				

Early Childhood Program—cont.					
Language.	Not Descriptive			Very Descriptive	
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>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.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books and other reading materials are abundant • Songs, rhymes and stories are part of daily program • Classroom charts and signs in print are in evidence • Children are read to every day in various contexts (e.g., large groups, small groups, in laps) • Staff use various questioning techniques to get children to talk about what they are doing, thinking, and feeling • 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			Very Descriptive	
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>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.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers use open-ended questions, pose problems, make suggestions and add complexity to tasks • Teachers use many opportunities for children to plan, think about, reflect on, and revisit their own experiences • Teachers engage children in discussion and representation activities (e.g., dictating writing, drawing, painting, clay) • 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			Very Descriptive	
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>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.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily schedule is posted for all to read • Daily schedule includes large time block for free choice/child-selected activities • 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.					
<i>Developmental Approach.</i>	Not Descriptive			Very Descriptive	
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>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.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program staff have been trained in early childhood growth and development and diversity • Learning activities are age appropriate and reflect both group needs and individual needs • Staff have appropriate expectations for children from different age groups • Classroom environment is one of positive respect and concern for each child 	Notes:				

Early Childhood Program—cont.					
Initial Assessment.	Not Descriptive			Very Descriptive	
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>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.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s initial assessments are available for review (e.g., PLS-4, Brigance, DDST, teacher observations, etc.) • Procedures for further assessment of potential delays, if indicated, are established and followed (e.g., use of Child Find, etc.) • Decisions that have a major impact on an individual child are based on multiple sources of information, including data from parents, teachers and specialists • Staff discuss and use results from initial assessments to plan individual and group activities 	Notes:				
Measure Progress.	Not Descriptive			Very Descriptive	
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>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.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers keep files with children’s work samples, performance assessments, etc. • Children’s ongoing assessments are available for review (e.g., Teacher observations, work samples, interviews, performance assessments, etc.) • On-going assessments are planned and purposeful • 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
<p>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.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher’s keep Parent Involvement Form which records activities parents are involved in and duration/intensity • Teachers communicate (verbal or written) to parents they are always welcome to visit program • 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) • Teachers keep record of parent activities at school and of parent/child activities together at home • Teachers create opportunities for appropriate parent and child interactions during the program 	Notes:				

Early Childhood Program—cont.					
Reading Readiness.	Not Descriptive			Very Descriptive	
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>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.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.) • Teachers keep records of parents frequency of reading at home with child • Teachers show parents how to read to and with their children 	Notes:				

APPENDIX C

Project Ratings on ECE Program Delivery Indicators, 2004-05

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	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Diversity	5	4	4	5	5	4	5
Developmental areas	5	4	4	4	5	4	5
Experiences	5	4	5	4	4	4	5
Environment	5	4	3	3	5	4	5
Learning Environment	5	4	4	4	4	4	5
Interaction	5	5	3	5	4	3	5
Children with Special Needs	4	4	5	4	5	4	5
Behavior Management	4	4	5	5	4	4	4
Language	5	4	5	4	4	5	5
Problem Solving	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Child Centered	5	4	5	5	5	5	5
Developmental Approach	5	4	5	5	5	4	3
Initial Assessment	4	5	5	5	5	5	5
Measure Progress	5	5	4	4	5	4	5
Parents	4	5	5	5	4	4	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	5	5.0
Diversity	4	4	5	4	5	5	4.5
Developmental areas	4	4	4	4	4	5	4.3
Experiences	4	4	5	4	4	5	4.4
Environment	2	4	4	3	4	3	3.8
Learning Environment	3	5	4	4	3	5	4.2
Interaction	3	5	5	5	5	5	4.5
Children with Special Needs	4	5	4	5	4	4	4.4
Behavior Management	4	4	4	5	4	5	4.3
Language	5	4	4	5	4	4	4.5
Problem Solving	5	4	5	5	4	4	4.2
Child Centered	4	4	5	4	4	4	4.5
Developmental Approach	4	5	4	5	5	5	4.5
Initial Assessment	4	5	5	5	5	5	4.9
Measure Progress	4	5	4	5	4	5	4.5
Parents	5	4	5	5	5	5	4.7
Reading Readiness	5	5	5	5	5	5	5.0

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-4.

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 through 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.