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Beginning in 2023, the Special Needs Childcare Classroom Intensive Service support program was renamed "Prevention and Inclusion Programs."

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SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDCARE CLASSROOM INTENSIVE SERVICE: EVALUATION REPORT

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KEY FINDINGS

This evaluation provides an assessment of the Special Needs Child Care (SNCC) Classroom Intensive Service delivered to select UPK classrooms in the 2017-2018 school year. The Classroom Intensive Service represents an enhanced version of Cuyahoga County's SNCC program and was developed in response to early childhood professionals' request for additional services to support children demonstrating challenging behaviors in the preschool classroom. The service was initiated in 2017-2018; thus, this evaluation includes both process and outcome findings to document implementation of the enhanced program and initial outcomes achieved after a single year. The evaluation relies on a variety of data sources, both quantitative and qualitative, representing child assessments, as well as the perspectives of lead classroom teachers, UPK program directors, technical assistance providers, and external observers.

Twenty-two classrooms received the Classroom Intensive Service in the first year it was offered. In total, 428 visits were delivered to these classrooms, summing to more than 1,400 hours of service. The area of need addressed most often during these visits was children's self-regulation. Technical assistant providers most frequently targeted daily routines and classroom environment for change in an attempt to stabilize behavior in the classroom.

Below are the main findings regarding the Classroom Intensive Service from the perspective of each key stakeholder organized by data source:

- According to technical assistants' and external expert observers' Reflective Checklist ratings, classrooms ratings generally improved from pre- to post-observation in the three major areas assessed: Daily Routines, Caring Connections and Activities & Experiences. Interestingly, however, teachers did not see improvement at the subscale level. They rated themselves similarly at pre- and post-assessment on three of the five subscales (Daily Routines, Activities & Experiences, Partnerships between Teachers and Families) and slightly lower at post- than pre- on the remaining two subscales (Caring Connections, Environment). Teachers in four of the ten classrooms that completed the classroom teacher assessments reported small improvements in their overall Reflective Checklist score at post-assessment, while five teachers reported declines in performance and one teacher stayed the same. It would be interesting to learn directly from teachers why their ratings differed from technical assistants and external observers in future work. Perhaps, after working with technical assistants and increasing their knowledge in these critical areas of early childhood education, teachers viewed these subscales differently at post-assessment.
- After receiving the Classroom Intensive Service, teachers completed a brief survey about their experience. Eighty percent of teachers reported that they implemented the strategies suggested by the technical assistant and slightly more than half said it helped to reduce their job stress. Seventy-five percent said they felt confident to handle the challenging behavior in their classroom. Overall, responses were positive citing the benefit of having another trained professional in the classroom, the ideas, strategies and resources

- suggested to help manage children's behavior, and the opportunity to discuss ideas and concerns with another professional.
- Among UPK program directors interviewed for this evaluation, there was great interest in the Classroom Intensive Service. Dealing with problematic behaviors was cited as a rising concern among program directors. Those that had experience with the service were, for the most part, unanimously in support of the program and asked that it be expanded as the need is currently much greater than the supply.
- The majority of technical assistant consultants interviewed had a positive impression of the service, which they noted as greatly needed. In particular, they highlighted that the length of time they were able to spend in each classroom provided them with an opportunity to get to know everyone and tailor the service to each classroom's unique needs. They also felt the longer duration of the service helped them build strong relationships with classroom teachers and program directors. They felt that the opportunity to work with the entire classroom as opposed to one individual student allowed them to make more of an impact.
- For the majority of children in classrooms receiving the Classroom Intensive Service, teacher reported DECA scores did not show meaningful change from pre- to post-assessment; however, the majority of these children scored within 'Typical' and 'Strength' categories at pre-test. Among children whose behavior fell within the 'Area of Need' category, the majority showed meaningful improvement in protective factors, but not behavioral concerns. With currently available data, we are unable to determine whether this finding is an accurate reflection of children's behavior or rather an artifact of changes in how teachers perceive children's behavior after working with technical assistant providers. While results indicate that many children continue to express behavioral concerns at post-assessment, teacher self-report, self-efficacy and confidence in their ability in the classroom was high after receiving the Classroom Intensive Service, suggesting greater ability to address challenges.

Overall, findings from this first year evaluation of the Classroom Intensive Service are positive. A large number of technical assistance visits were delivered, most frequently addressing self-regulation needs within the classroom. As we would hope to see then as a result, "self-regulation" was the protective factor with the most (proportionately) children evidencing meaningful improvements. All stakeholders interviewed for this report would like to see the Classroom Intensive Service continued and even expanded; however, technical assistance providers highlight a number of areas for program improvement. They also suggest recommendations for communicating about the service to program directors and teachers, streamlining documentation of the service, reducing technical issues and addressing teacher turnover.

BACKGROUND

The Special Needs Child Care (SNCC) program in Cuyahoga County has been providing training and technical assistance to childcare providers for nearly two decades to enable them to

provide high quality care for children with developmental, behavioral and /or medical special needs. The service is administered by Starting Point, Cuyahoga County's childcare resource and referral agency. Building on this extensive prior experience and its success, and responding to Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) providers' requests for even more assistance to serve children with the most severe needs, Invest in Children, a public/private partnership in Cuyahoga County led by the County's Office of Early Childhood, developed an intensive model in collaboration with Starting Point, known as SNCC Classroom Intensive Service. In this more intensive model, eligible UPK classrooms receive a much higher dose of technical assistance for a longer period of time compared to the standard program: Rather than a few visits over the course of the year, the intensive service provides teachers with six hours of technical assistance weekly for up to 12 weeks.

Researchers from the Center on Urban Poverty & Community Development at Case Western Reserve University (CWRU) evaluated the new SNCC Classroom Intensive Service. Beginning in the fall 2017, Starting Point coordinated the multidimensional program that is designed to support teachers in their use of developmentally appropriate, evidence-based practices intended to contribute to inclusive classroom environments conducive to learning. Starting Point contracts with local community behavioral and mental health agencies, each with their own specialized capabilities, to deliver the service. To be eligible for the Classroom Intensive Service, UPK classrooms had to have at least one child demonstrating challenging and severe behaviors as identified through the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA) and had to have requested the short-term SNCC service for that child. UPK directors whose sites met this requirement then contacted Starting Point to enroll in the service. Starting Point contracted agencies provided up to six hours of weekly technical assistance to teachers to support children's social/emotional development for up to 12 weeks or more depending on level of need. The structure of weekly visits was as follows:

- At the first and second visits, the UPK classroom teacher and consultant providing technical assistance reviewed the DECA results for all of the children in the classroom. In addition, the SNCC technical assistance provider (TA) observed the classroom using the Devereux Reflective Checklist (RC) of teaching practices. Around this time, the UPK 2.0 TA—a Starting Point employee who works with teachers on implementation of the UPK model—asked the teacher to complete a survey addressing their needs and concerns for their classroom.
- At the third visit, the teacher completed the RC and the TA and teacher compared their results.
- At the fourth visit, the TA and teacher developed an Action Plan based upon the RC, the individual DECA results for children in the classroom, and any other teacher concerns.

- The SNCC Classroom Intensive Service continued with 6 hours of weekly consultation from the TA to assist the teacher in implementing the Action Plan and to provide feedback and guidance.
- Once the TA and teacher determined that the classroom environment was improving, each completed a closing RC to inform the Summary Plan. Services ended when the teacher and TA both scored 60% of the items from the Daily Routines and Caring Connections RC subscales as "Almost Always." Sixty percent of items A1, A3, A4, A5 and A6 from the Activities and Experiences subscale also had to be rated "Almost Always" (see the Appendix for a list of items on each subscale).
- When services ended, the UPK 2.0 TA asked the teacher to complete a post-survey.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

This evaluation of the SNCC Classroom Intensive Service addresses both the process and outcomes of the program using a single group pre-test, post-test methodology to answer the following research questions:

- Process
  - How many classrooms received the service?
  - What is the nature of the TA provided across classrooms?
  - What is the frequency and duration of the service?
  - What is the TA experience of delivering the service?
  - What is the UPK program director experience of receiving the service?
  - How do teachers evaluate their experience before and after receiving TA?
- Outcome
  - Are children in classrooms receiving the service displaying improvements in protective factors and declines in behavioral concerns over the course of the service?
  - Does teacher confidence and morale improve from pre- to post-service?
  - Do RC evaluations improve from pre- to post-service?

EVALUATION SAMPLE

A total of 22 classrooms were served in the 2017-18 UPK program year. All classrooms that received service are included in this evaluation, but not all classrooms have all available data points.

DATA SOURCES

- TA Record Form – The TA completed an electronic record via a web-based dashboard after each visit to the target classroom. The record captured information on the timing

and number of visits, the interventions implemented during each visit, and TA notes on areas of concern/needs, successes and materials given (n=22 classrooms).

- RC – The Devereux Reflective Checklist (RC) addresses five areas of teaching practices: daily routine (e.g., meals, clean-up time, transitions), environment (e.g., learning materials, sense of inclusiveness), caring connections (e.g., supportive teacher-child interactions), activities and experiences (i.e., planned and unplanned events that support learning), and partnership with families (i.e., fostering the school-to-home connection). Each classroom identified for the Classroom Intensive Service was assessed by the UPK classroom teacher and the TA before and after the service to gauge the extent to which the classroom was stabilizing. Responses to each item are scored on a 3-point Likert-type scale: 3=almost always; 2=sometimes; 1=not yet. Higher scores indicate greater frequency of the desired behavior. The instrument can be found here: https://centerforresilientchildren.org/wp-content/uploads/App-B-Reflective-Checklists-pp-317-323.pdf (n=12 classrooms).

- Adapted version of the RC – External, independent expert observers (two program managers from Invest in Children) completed an adapted version of the RC (see Appendix A) at the start of TA for each UPK 2.0 classroom receiving the service. The instrument was adapted from the original version to include a '0=Not observed' response option, as some data elements in the RC require a more long-standing relationship with the classroom and more observation time. The adapted version of the RC only contained the items that have been deemed essential to measuring classroom stabilization. The external observer returned to the classroom 12 weeks later and re-administer the RC, regardless of whether the TA was complete. Observers were kept 'blind' to the status of service to prevent bias in their post-observation. The purpose of the external, independent evaluative use of the RC is to triangulate and validate the reports provided by the teacher and TA (n=12 classrooms).

- Teacher Survey (Pre/Post) – UPK 2.0 classroom teachers receiving the SNCC Classroom Intensive Service completed pre- and post-surveys addressing their needs and concerns for their classroom via a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). If a new teacher joined the classroom in the middle of service provision, they were asked to complete the Teacher Survey at that point. UPK Tas, not SNCC Tas administered each survey so as not to bias self-reported data. Survey data were returned to Starting Point and then shared with researchers at the Center on Urban Poverty and Community Development for analysis. See Appendix A for the Teacher Survey (n=19 teachers).

- Interviews with Program Directors – As part of the larger process evaluation completed by CWRU, a sample of UPK 2.0 program directors were interviewed regarding their experience with the UPK 2.0 program (see Appendix A for the 12-item interview protocol developed by the study team and approved by the CWRU Institutional Review Board). Interviews were conducted between June and July of 2018. Program directors

whose sites received the SNCC Classroom Intensive Service were asked to respond to Question #4, which pertains to their experience with the service. See the larger process evaluation report for directors' responses to remaining interview questions (n=13 program directors).

- Interviews with Tas – TA consultants providing services for the SNCC Classroom Intensive Service were interviewed about their experiences with the program in the fall 2018. A six-item interview protocol was developed by the study team and approved by the CWRU Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A for the interview protocol) (n=8 Technical Assistants).

- DECA – The DECA is a nationally standardized, norm-referenced strengths-based behavior rating assessment designed to measure and promote protective factors related to resilience in children ages 3 through 5. Using the assessment, the teacher evaluates the frequency of 27 positive behaviors exhibited by preschoolers as well as behavioral concerns. Items are grouped into three subscales measuring within child protective factors related to resilience including Initiative, Self-regulation, and Attachment/relationships. These protective factors can generally be thought of as social and emotional skills important to a child's well-being. These subscale scores are also combined to produce a Total Protective Factors scale score. Scores fall along a continuum ranging from area of 'Need' (standardized scores of 40 and below) to 'Typical' (standardized scores of 41 to 59) to 'Strength' (standardized scores of 60 and above). Higher scores indicate more frequent occurrence of each behavior, according to the UPK teacher observation. The Behavioral Concern subscale only has area of 'Need' and 'Typical' categories. The instrument is typically completed by teachers at the beginning and end of the UPK school year. Devereux recommends that a teacher conduct the DECA once they have known a child for four weeks. In addition to analyzing changes in categorical ratings, we also explored 'meaningful change' in protective factors and behavioral concerns. As described in the DECA-Preschool Program (2nd edition) User's Guide and Technical Manual, this approach involves the comparison of the obtained post-test score with a range of scores that represent the variability expected by both regression to the mean and measurement error based on the pretest score. Post-test scores are compared to a post-test score range table (Appendix B - Table 2: Pretest-Posttest Comparison Table for Teacher Raters in DECA-P2 User's Guide and Technical Manual). If the post-test DECA T-score falls within the post-test range provided, there has been no significant change in the child's score (i.e., No change). A change is categorized as 'Decline' if the post-test score falls below the normed range derived from the initial pretest score (hence, the post-test score is significantly lower than the pre-test score). A change is categorized as 'Improve' if the post-test score falls above the normed range derived from the initial pretest score (hence, the post-test score is significantly higher than the pre-test score) (N=303 children enrolled in these 22 classrooms, n=178 (58.7%) met the above criteria for inclusion).

RESULTS

TA Record Form

The TA completed an electronic record via a web-based dashboard after each visit to the target classroom. The record captured information on the timing and number of visits, the interventions implemented during each visit, and TA notes on areas of concern/needs, successes and materials given.

A total of 429 SNCC Classroom Intensive Service TA visits were delivered to 22 different UPK classrooms throughout Cuyahoga County during the 2017-2018 year, totaling to 1,415 hours of service. The number of TA visits received by each classroom varied from a low of seven to a high of 34. On average, each UPK classroom received a total of M=64.3 hours (*SD*=21.1 hours, median=65.5, range=20.5 to 95.2 hours) of SNCC Classroom Intensive TA over 19 visits (*SD*=7 visits). The average visit duration was M=3.3 hours (*SD*=1.0 hour, median 3.0 hours, range=40 minutes to 8.0 hours).

Five different community agencies delivered the SNCC Classroom Intensive Service. OhioGuidestone and Beech Brook TAs delivered just under one-quarter of all visits each, Achievement Centers for Children delivered 23.1%, PEP 14.5% and Applewood 13.8%.

As shown in **Table 1**, nearly one-quarter of all SNCC Classroom Intensive Service TA visits addressed self-regulation needs. The next most frequently addressed needs were general classroom management, classroom accommodations/modifications and not listening to teacher. In two-thirds of all visits, TAs addressed more than one type of need. Self-regulation was also the most frequently addressed secondary classroom need followed by general classroom management, and transitions.

Each technical assistance visit can include an observation by the TA of the classroom, a meeting with parents, a meeting with classroom teachers and site administrators, or an intervention. TAs can use any or all four techniques at each visit. The most frequently used technique was intervention, used to describe 73.1% of all visits, followed by observation (59.8%), meeting with teachers and site administrators (52.3%) and meeting with parents (2.8%).

For each intervention delivered at a visit, TAs note the RC teaching practice areas addressed (daily routines, environment, caring connections, activities and experiences, and partnership with families). **Table 2** presents the frequency with which each area was addressed by TA interventions. Percentages sum to over 100% because TAs could address more than one area with a single intervention. As shown, daily routines were targeted by 82.2% of TA interventions. Partnerships with families was the area least frequently addressed.

In addition to these quantitative data, the TA Record Form included three open-ended questions where TAs could provide qualitative comments on each visit in the areas of concerns, successes and materials. To analyze qualitative data, researchers extracted and printed out all comments from the Access database provided by Starting Point. Printouts were cut so that each comment existed on its own small piece of paper. Comments were then sorted into mutually exclusive, but related categories for meaning making.

The first question asked TAs about areas of concern. Their comments fell into six categories including classroom management, challenging child behavior, structural classroom environment needs, staffing issues, teacher skill/training, and social-emotional functioning. The first four categories comprised the vast majority of TA comments. Examples of specific comments in each category are as follows:

- Classroom management – poor transitions (chaotic, vague teacher directions/expectations for children, too long in length); students not listening or following teacher direction; noisy and chaotic classroom climate.
- Challenging child behavior – inability to self-regulate, tantrums, inability to express emotions in a productive manner; physical aggression, fighting, inappropriate language toward teachers and peers; off task behavior; leaving classroom.
- Structural classroom environment needs – absence of posted visual schedule, classroom rules, or safe space for children to calm themselves; insufficient materials and activities.
- Staffing issues – teacher turnover, inconsistent rotating staff, no lead teacher; burn out; teacher/student ratio.
- Teacher skill/training – lack of communication between teachers; teacher tone of voice, flat affect; easily frustrated by children; excessive focus on children's negative attention seeking behaviors.
- Social-emotional functioning – insufficient attention to children's social-emotional needs; insufficient targeted instruction addressing social-emotional wellbeing; withdrawn child behavior.

These six categories, though somewhat distinct, clearly interact. For example, a teacher who has limited skill is going to experience difficulty managing a classroom that is comprised of children with challenging behaviors. A poorly structured classroom, lacking in stimulating materials and activities, led by a teacher demonstrating flat affect due to burnout is going to contribute to child dysregulation and behavior problems.

In response to the second question about areas of strength, TA comments also fell into six categories including teacher care and concern for their students, teacher social-emotional skill, structural classroom environment, teacher-student ratio, teacher openness to try new things, student peer interactions. The first three categories comprised the vast majority of TA comments. Examples of specific comments in each category are as follows:

- Teacher care and concern for their students – empathy; genuine care for the wellbeing of students; individualized bond with each student; commitment to their students; warm connections.
- Teacher social-emotional skill – patience, flexibility, sensitivity and responsiveness to students' needs in the moment; use of Conscious Discipline strategies, praise, attention, student choice; ability to maintain and model calm demeanor for children; encourage children to use their words to express emotions; ability to deescalate children's emotional dysregulation.
- Structural classroom environment – implementation of visual schedules, classroom rules and expectations, a "calm down" or "be-by-myself" area with feelings faces; use of songs during transitions; classroom activities, sensory materials; ample outdoor time for gross motor play; verbal prompts and explanations to support children through transitions.
- Teacher-student ratio – small class size; opportunities for small group interaction, one-on-one attention.
- Teacher openness to try new things – non-defensive stance toward TA suggestions, seek TA feedback, desire for improvement and willingness to make changes, self-reflective.
- Peer interactions – cooperation and sharing between children; kind words; inclusive play.

The final open-ended question captured information about the materials TAs used or provided to a classroom during a visit. The most common materials included:
- visual materials such as feelings faces (emotional intensity speedometer/thermometer), self-regulatory/calm down strategies (yoga poses, Conscious Discipline deep breathing techniques), daily routine schedule, first-then charts, flip-it charts, job boards.
- social stories (stories used to convey skills or concepts to children and individuals with developmental delays or other difficulty w/ comprehension)
- music/songs
- reading materials for teachers on various topics
- 'fidget' items

RC and Adapted Version of RC

For the purposes of triangulation, the Devereaux Reflective Checklist (RC) completed by both classroom teachers and technical assistants was compared with external observer assessments using an adapted version of the RC. The purpose of this multi-rater methodology was to assess classrooms prior to and after the intervention to better understand, from various perspectives, the extent to which classrooms were stabilizing as measured through impressions of daily routines, environment, caring connections, activities and experiences, and partnership with families.

External Observer Assessments

Twelve classrooms received both a pre-test and a post-test external observation; classrooms receiving only a pre-test observation from an external evaluator are not included in these analyses. **Table 3** (see Tables of Results beginning on p. 30) shows changes from pre to post-observation for each of the 20 items in the Adapted RC. Note that if a particular item was not observed in a classroom, it was not included in the analysis. As a group, the 12 classrooms saw improvements in scores on each of the three Adapted RC subscales (Daily Routines, Caring Connections, Activities & Experiences), although individual item post-test scores were lower than pretest scores in five instances (Individualize during daily routines and transitions; Give each child the opportunity to build a trusting relationship with a caring adult; Display respect, warmth, and interest in all children; Plan and facilitate a few small group learning opportunities each day based on children's skills and interests; Provide opportunities that promote cooperation and problem-solving). **Table 4** shows changes by classroom for each subscale and the overall Adapted RC score. Eight out of 12 classrooms saw an improvement in their overall score, with three classrooms improving by at least 25% (.75 points) on the three-point scale.

Technical Assistant Assessments

Seventeen classrooms received both a pre-test and a post-test observation from a technical assistant consultant. **Table 5** shows changes from pre- to post-observation for each item on the full RC assessment. On average, TAs rated all classrooms higher at post-test than pre-test on all RC items except one; there was no change in the mean score on "Establish clear, accessible, and well-stocked areas for different kinds of play and learning experiences" from the Environment subscale. **Table 6** shows changes by classroom for each subscale and the overall RC score. Looking at the Overall Score column, only one classroom had a lower post-test than pre-test score. Another classroom had the same score at both pre- and post- TA observation, a score of 3.0 on a 3.0 scale; thus, there was no room for improvement at post-test. Three classrooms improved by more than 25% (.75 points) on the three-point scale.

Classroom Teacher Assessments

Lastly, 10 classrooms received both a pre-test and a post-test observation from the classroom teacher. **Table 7** shows changes from pre- to post-observation for each item on the full RC scale. On average, at an item level, classroom teachers rated their teaching practices highly at both pre-test and post-test. They were fairly equally likely to rate their practices higher at post-test than pre-test (28.9% of the items) as they were to rate them lower (34.2% of the items) or the same (36.8% of the items). At the subscale level, teachers did not see improvement. They rated themselves the same at pre- and post-test on three of the five subscales and lower but nearly the same at post- than pre- on the remaining two subscales. **Table 8** shows that teachers in four of the ten classrooms reported small improvements in their overall RC score at post-test (ranging

from 1% to 4.3%) while five teachers reported declines in performance and one teacher's overall score stayed the same.

Interestingly, teachers reported the least amount of change according to the RC observational instrument. External observers and TAs considered the majority of classrooms to have improved at post-observation on each subscale, while teachers tended to rate their practices as unchanged or lower at post-test. In fact, four out of 10 teachers rated themselves lower at post-test on the Caring Connections and Partnerships subscales. In future work, it would be interesting to explore why teachers' ratings differed from TAs and external observers. Not all classrooms received a rating from each of the three groups: teachers, TAs, and external observers. However, all classrooms rated by teachers were also rated by at least one another person, either a TA or an external observer. Given the differences in teacher ratings compared to the ratings of TAs and external observers, it appears that teachers have a unique perspective on their classrooms. This is not surprising given the extensive amount of time teachers spend with their students compared to the other two types of observers. Again, it could be helpful to interview teachers after all RC classroom observations have been completed to discuss their reasons for their ratings. What are teachers seeing that TAs and external observers are not seeing? It is also possible that after working with technical assistants and increasing their knowledge in these critical areas of early childhood education, teachers viewed these subscales differently at post-assessment. Teacher interviews could tease apart these tentative explanations and interpretations of the findings reported here.

Teacher Survey (Pre/Post)

Classroom teachers receiving the SNCC Classroom Intensive Service were asked to complete a survey about their needs and concerns about their classroom both prior to and after the intervention.

Nineteen teachers completed surveys at the pre-test and 16 teachers completed surveys at post-test. Unfortunately, researchers were only able to link pre- and post-surveys with certainty in three cases. Several respondents did not include their name on the survey, indicated their identity as 'lead teacher,' or listed their classroom name instead of their actual name. In other cases, the teacher associated with a particular classroom at pre was not the same teacher listed for the classroom at post. Due to these data limitations, researchers were not able to explore changes from pre- to post-SNCC Classroom Intensive Service receipt because the samples at each time-point reflect different respondents.

Table 9 presents the percent of teachers at each time point who 'Agreed' or 'Strongly agreed' with each statement. At pre-survey, approximately one-third of teachers said that they had the tools they needed to handle problems in their classroom, highlighting great need for the service.

At post-survey, 80% of respondents said they had implemented the strategies suggested by their SNCC consultant and slightly more than half agreed that the skills/strategies imparted by their consultant helped to reduce their job stress. Of note, however, is that nearly two-thirds of teachers reported that their job stress was high at post-survey.

Prior to receiving the SNCC Classroom Intensive Service, teachers were asked, "What are the specific challenges you are facing within your classroom that you would like to receive help with?" Twelve teachers responded to this open-ended question and nine talked about wanting to learn techniques and strategies to help them manage children's challenging behavior in the classroom. The remaining teachers said they were looking for extra supports including speech therapy and other services to offer families.

After receiving the SNCC Classroom Intensive Service, teachers were asked, "Please list the specific skills and strategies that you've learned from your SNCC technical assistance consultant to help manage your classroom." The 11 teachers who responded to this item reported the following techniques:
- yoga, deep breathing, physical activities and other calming exercises including altering the classroom environment to include a calming area
- social stories
- use of music
- introduction of sensory options / activities
- emotional cue cards to encourage feelings expression
- use of books that show children cooperating and interacting productively
- individual behavior charts
- boy friendly checklist
- positive reinforcement and redirection

Teachers were also asked, "Overall, how would you describe your experience with the SNCC Classroom Intensive Service?" Thirteen teachers responded to this item, one to say that they had not yet received the service. Overall, the remaining responses were positive citing the benefit of having another trained professional in the classroom, the ideas, strategies and resources suggested to help manage children's behavior, and the opportunity to discuss ideas and concerns with another professional. In terms of areas for improvement, one teacher said they would have appreciated more in the moment coaching and modeling. Another reported not noticing much change as a result of the service, and felt the TA did not introduce new skills, ideas or strategies and was not hands on with the children. She did not receive follow-up and was disappointed with the service. Despite these two individuals, the qualitative data suggest teachers found the service helpful and would like continued support in the future.

Interviews with Program Directors

Program directors were asked about their impressions of the Classroom Intensive Service as part of a broader set of interviews conducted during the summer of 2018.

A sample of 23 program directors from sites where the intensive model was being implemented were selected from a pool of 38 individuals for a larger interview component of a process evaluation of the UPK program. Of the 23, 13 responded and agreed to be interviewed. All 13 were interviewed for the process evaluation. These program directors represented public school district, Head Start, and private center-based programs in both 1.0 and 2.0 iterations of UPK. Six out of the thirteen interviewed had experience with the SNCC Intensive Classroom model and their reflections are reported below.

There was great interest in the SNCC Classroom Intensive Service as dealing with problematic behaviors is a rising concern among program directors. Those that had experience with the service were, for the most part, unanimously in support of the program and asked that it be expanded as the need is currently much greater than the supply.

Most helpful aspect of service

The amount of time and energy devoted to each classroom was highlighted by those who had experience with the program as one of the main benefits of participation. Other services provided are typically for a much shorter timeframe, which does not always allow the consultant to become familiar with the classroom, the students, and the dynamics at play. Directors also appreciated the intensity of the service. Having the TA come so often provided a consistency that is key to changing behavior.

Specific examples of how service supported teachers

The TAs providing the service were very hands-on, tailored recommendations to the individuals involved, and provided new ideas and innovative solutions to the teachers and administrators. The feedback provided to the teachers and the administrators was helpful and well received. They appreciated the focus on the whole child, not just a child's challenging behavior, and the entire classroom in general. Another director talked about the increasing number of children presenting with IEPs and challenging behaviors. She was grateful for the teacher support that the service provides. The TA was able to reinforce positive changes for the teacher in a nonjudgmental manner. Having another competent, skilled adult in the classroom makes a huge difference.

Improvements associated with service

One director said she noticed the TA modeling best practices for the teacher by implementing positive redirection and incentives for the children. The consultant acted as an encouraging support to the teacher and a second set of eyes to point out things the teacher might not notice. Another director said that she saw the consultant help children use their words when they were frustrated rather than acting out physically. The same director said she has noticed a big change in the teacher who received the service. Before, the teacher wanted children to conform (i.e., sit quietly in the circle with everyone else), but after, the teacher realized that participation can look different for different children. She also commented that the entire classroom felt calmer. Lastly, one director said the TA helped the teacher create a 'be by myself' area where children could go to calm down. She showed the children how to use their breath to calm down when they were upset and taught the teacher that one size does not fit all children.

Recommendations for modifications to the service
One director did have some criticism of the TA her program received. She felt like the TA was doing too much sitting and talking with the teacher during classroom time when the children were present and that the coaching and mentorship should have been more active and engaged with the children. Another director said that she had observed changes in the classroom but was not sure she would attribute it to the SNCC Classroom Intensive Service as her program works closely with another behavioral health provider as well.

Interviews with Special Needs Child Care Classroom Intensive Service Technical Assistants

The technical assistants providing SNCC Classroom Intensive Service were interviewed during the Fall of 2018 to share their experiences and impressions of the program.

TA Background and Program Tenure

The eight TAs who delivered SNCC Classroom Intensive technical assistance were interviewed for this evaluation. Prior to the launch of the service, most TAs had several years of experience providing individual therapeutic services to children, either through the SNCC technical assistance program, early childhood mental health, or therapy. At the time of the interviews, all of the interviewees had completed the SNCC Classroom Intensive Service in at least one classroom; the majority had completed the service in at least three classrooms.

When asked about what aspects of their work they find most enjoyable, all respondents reported that working with the children is the most enjoyable part of their work. The duration of the intensive service and the coordination with the teachers to help with an array of classroom needs were also cited as particularly enjoyable aspects of the intensive service. The duration and intensity of the service allow for more relationship building with the teachers and children and provides an opportunity to observe progress when teachers implement strategies.

Impressions of the SNCC Intensive Classroom Service

Most of those interviewed had a positive overall impression of the service. In particular, they highlighted that the length of time they get to spend in each classroom is unique and provides them with an opportunity to get to know everyone in the classroom, tailor the service, and build strong relationships. A few also mentioned that working with the entire classroom as opposed to one individual student allows them to make more of an impact.

The overall impression from respondents is that the service is greatly needed, and some respondents indicated that they could easily spend more than six hours per week in these classrooms because of the level of need.

Many of the respondents indicated that they have experienced some resistance from the teachers, while other teachers were very receptive to the service (this issue is discussed in more detail below).

Effectiveness and Challenges

The majority of respondents thought service is effective, but the extent to which the teachers are receptive and willing to participate dictates whether the recommendations will be implemented and, in turn, the effectiveness of the service in stabilizing classrooms. Support from program directors and other administrators was also cited as an important factor in effectiveness.

> *"I find it effective if there is buy-in from the teachers and the directors. When people have no idea why you are there, or if they don't have competence in what they are doing and they revert to what works best for them from a personal perspective. As long as there is buy-in, it's easy."*

When asked how TAs can tell if the service has been effective, they cited the indicators they typically look to for success. In particular, one TA said she looks for things that she can measure and count. If there is a child that is having a hard time with tantrums, she will look for a reduction in the number of weekly tantrums from 10 to four or five. She asks the teachers to try and keep track of these things. Teacher reports and their own observations guide these assessments. TAs also mentioned that they look for effectiveness through improvement in individual child DECA scores and reflective checklist scores.

More than half of those interviewed said that they determine effectiveness through the teachers' responses at the end of the service. Teachers often report their gratitude for the service and cite ways in which they believe that their classroom management has improved as a result of the service. Some TAs report that they can tell that teacher stress levels have gone down as well.

> *"You see a difference in the classroom. Things are running more smoothly. More connections with kids from the teachers. You see a difference in both the kids and the teacher's behavior."*

When asked if there is a "secret ingredient" that makes the service most effective, responses were mixed. Half of the TAs reported that there is not one singular aspect of the program that is

more important than others, rather they believe that all aspects in concert are critical. Others cited specific pieces that they believe can be singled out. Several noted the critical importance of director/coordinator buy-in. If the director is involved and invested in the service, then it works. If not, it is much more difficult to have an impact. Another cited the reflective checklist as a key ingredient in the process as it provides a good "jumping off point" for the TA and teacher to start from.

TAs were asked to describe specific instances in which they felt that the service was most effective. Some of the examples are listed below:

- Transitions - Some strategies that TAs mentioned for aiding with transitions were:
  - put out placemats so that each child had their own place for circle time
  - audio and visual cues to prepare children for upcoming transitions
  - a pompom jar for positive reinforcement
  - a schedule with timers
  - sensory/tactile objects to keep children occupied
  - modeling behaviors for the teachers

- Problem Solving Skills - One TA described a situation in which she would model behaviors by helping individual children with problem solving during free time. Training teachers and students in calming yoga poses and introducing a "calm corner" were also implemented to help children to calm and problem solve. A TA noted that one teacher tended to raise her voice a good deal. The TA coached the teacher to speak in a more neutral tone and compliance increased.
- Structure - Several TAs also cited that classrooms needed more structure in terms of schedules, rules, and student jobs. One TA relayed that she was able to help the teacher to implement these types of strategies and that the teacher felt calmer. Another reflected upon a classroom where parents were dropping kids off at different times and this got in the way of establishing a routine. The TA, along with the teacher, talked to the parents about getting kids to school on time and having the teachers help with breakfast. This helped with needed structure.

When asked about challenges, TAs most often mentioned challenges associated with classroom teacher and program director buy-in. TAs noted that they sometimes noticed a reluctance from teachers who may have been working for a long time and perhaps did not think that they needed the TA. Other TAs noted that many of the teachers are "burnt out" making them far less receptive to feedback. Several of the TAs noted that other professionals are in and out of the classrooms quite a bit, the teachers, however, do not always get feedback (the program directors know what is going on, but the teachers may not). As a result, the teachers respond to a new TA by asking "who are you?" and the relationship may start on the wrong foot. The nature of the intensive service and its aim to help the teacher and the classroom is not always effectively communicated to the teachers in advance of the service starting.

Inconsistent staff and teacher turnover was also mentioned as a challenge. In one classroom in which there was no lead teacher identified, no one was taking ownership for implementing and following through with TA suggested strategies.

Another noted time to be a challenge. TAs indicated that they found it challenging to find the needed time to sit back and talk and reflect with the teachers because the teachers are so busy. One TA noted her strategy of trying to schedule five minutes with the teacher in advance of her next visit, to try and plan these sit-down times in advance. She noted that this helped.

Finally, another TA noted that when the parents are involved along with the teacher and the TA, the wraparound cohesive service works much better. The time constraints involved in the intensive service do not allow for parent involvement according to the TA, but she recommended that perhaps more involvement of parents for those children getting individual SNCC TA would be helpful.

Approaches to building rapport with teachers

TAs discussed their belief in the importance of building a strong relationship with teachers for the service to be effective. Overall, if the teacher is receptive and informed about the service at the outset, the TAs feel as though the service works really well. In addition, TAs noted the importance of the teacher and program director being on the same page – in situations where this is not the case, the TA has a more challenging time.

> *"Being able to get all of the parties on the same page, hearing the same information. I will give teachers strategies, but sometimes they haven't been implemented, but without director pushdown, there's no pressure to implement."*

When asked about how the TA approaches the teacher and the strategies that are used to build a strong relationship, all of the respondents said that they start with the positive, making sure to note and comment on small wins and positive things that they see at the beginning and throughout the service. Another strategy to build rapport is to start by observing, not jumping right in, but rather easing into the process. Building trust is key, and making sure that the teachers do not feel as though they are being judged. Along the same lines, other TAs make sure to let the teachers know that "the teachers are the experts" and to provide them with a lot of support and encouragement. One TA noted that she does not think that teachers are given positive support and encouragement enough and she makes a point to do this.

In addition, TAs are very aware of the time constraints that teachers face and making sure that they are meeting teachers' needs is very important to building the relationship. They do not want teachers to feel as though this time is a waste; they find out "where the teacher is and what they are looking for."

> *"A lot of them are being observed a lot from different funders. They are not sure of your purpose and worried that you might report them. They may see it as a judgement."*

> *"Some of them (teachers) think that all we do is write stuff down and tell them what to do (stuff they are already doing). It's more than just what's written down in a checklist, it's more about the attitude…the caring connection is really important."*

Relationships with other technical assistants

TAs were also asked to reflect upon their interaction/relationships with other technical assistants in the UPK classrooms. Responses were quite mixed – about half of the TAs reported knowing and collaborating with other TAs in the classrooms, while the other half noted that they had little to no interaction with other TAs in the UPK classrooms. A couple of TAs relayed that they would like to have these interactions be more coordinated and organized so that there is no duplication of effort, and so that strategies are coordinated and not conflicting with one another.

> *"The other TA and I communicate well and it is working. We laid out a plan where I'll go on days when she isn't there. This isn't formal, but it is working. In general, this can be overwhelming with too many cooks in the kitchen. The communication is critical so that we do not overwhelm the teachers."*

> *"If this was a bit more formally coordinated, that would be good. Some coming in for individual kids and some for other reasons. If everyone could work together…there maybe something that they may already know works that I'm not aware of, etc.…."*

Relationships with Program Directors

For the most part, the TAs reported strong working relationships with the program directors. TAs did report that some directors are much more engaged and communicative with the TAs than others. In addition, there also seems to be a bit of variation with respect to the program director presence in the classroom; TAs experienced some classrooms with very hands-on directors, and others where the directors were not engaged in the classroom.

The TAs report that they try to check in with the program directors when they visit and report to them about what they observe in the classroom and talk through the strategies that they have relayed to the teachers. One TA reported that she always tries to say something positive to the director about the teacher as a way to foster positivity between the directors and the teachers.

One TA reported that she thinks that she should have more contact and interaction with the directors than she has had; "*They are very busy. I think there should be more interaction with them especially for referrals for further needs for specific kids.*"

Documentation/Forms

- TA Record/Summary Form - Overall, the TAs that were interviewed view the Summary Form positively and reported that it provides a good record to refer to throughout the service.

  "It helps me to remember what we went over and discussed and what tools were implemented. It gives me a record. We know where we are and what we are working on."

  "The Summary Form is great. Gives a clear outline that both the teacher and the TA reported and a plan."

- The Reflective Checklist - Perspectives on the Reflective Checklist were mixed among those interviewed. On the positive side, some remarked that it was good for reflecting

upon the details of specific incidents and it provides a good baseline to start with the teacher. Another reported that it is helpful in giving her items to write about in talking points and in forming a discussion with the teachers.

"I like it. It's good when you have a few people doing it. It gives you something to work from and compare differences."

Some of the more critical feedback of the reflective checklist is listed below:

"It's a bit subjective, there are a number of different ways that people are completing it. No one is doing it wrong, but potentially inconsistent."

"The parent engagement questions are really hard to observe. I would imagine that the majority of centers struggle with parent communication/involvement anyway."

"When I look at the reflective checklist –even if I see that they aren't doing everything, I try not to go down the list because it might make them feel lacking. Instead, I look at it before I get there and build on the strengths first. I break it up using a sandwich technique to highlight strengths, the areas they are struggling in, and back to where they are strong and strategies to develop the plan."

"I'm not using it to gear what I'm doing. It's just the thing you do first…sees it kind of as a hoop (need to keep track) not a tool that I use to direct my work."

"The reflective checklist is helpful to give me, as a consultant, an overview of the classroom. Not sure the teachers need to do it as well. This can sometimes cause the teachers to think they are being watched and judged. I understand the purpose, but maybe there's a different way to do this."

RECOMMENDATIONS

Communication

TAs consistently reported that the relationship between the teacher and the program director was critical to teacher's receptivity to the service. If teachers were not informed about the aims and processes involved in the intensive service, they were less likely to be engaged participants.

"I think it would be nice to be able to have Starting Point meet with these teachers that are going to have this kind of support so that the teachers have information and can ask questions. I think this would help with the relationship and to improve buy-in. This would take some of the responsibility off of the director."

Documentation

One TA noted that she does not think that the forms allow for clear documentation of whether or not those things that were recommended were actually implemented. Holding the programs

accountable for following through on those things that were recommended by the TA in some formal documented way would be beneficial, according to one TA.

Dealing with Teacher Turnover

Teacher turnover is an issue across many programs. In order for this service to be most effective, a lead teacher needs to be designated so that someone has the authority to implement strategies recommended by the TA. One TA recommended that a formal procedure needs to be put in place when a lead teacher leaves so that a temporary lead can be assigned and the service can continue without interruption.

Technical Issues

One TA reported a delay in being assigned to new sites. The website issues at Starting Point were also mentioned, as TAs were not able to input notes into the system for over a month at one point early in program rollout.

On a final note, the TAs were asked if they had anything else to share that they were not asked about. One spoke in detail about her concerns about the general competency of the teachers in the UPK classrooms. *"They are not qualified and they don't have the tools. You would hope that they have some knowledge. There are a lot of people working with our children without the necessary experience."*

One other TA relayed that she thinks the service needs to be expanded to all childcare centers and preschools if possible. She finds that some of the non-UPK providers she works with could really use the service and are not currently eligible to receive it.

DECA

All children in UPK classrooms are assessed by their teachers throughout the school year using the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA). The DECA is a nationally standardized, norm-referenced strengths-based behavior rating assessment designed to measure and promote protective factors related to resilience in children ages 3 through 5. The DECA scores of children in classrooms receiving the SNCC Classroom Intensive Service are examined in comparison to DECA scores for UPK children not enrolled in classrooms receiving the SNCC Classroom Intensive Service.

Children enrolled in the 22 UPK classrooms receiving the Classroom Intensive Service met criteria for inclusion in this component of the evaluation. Inclusion criteria were as follows:
  1) To establish a pre-intervention baseline, a child's pre-DECA assessment had to occur prior to the first SNCC Classroom Intensive Service visit;
  2) A child's pre- and post-DECA assessments had to be at least two months apart to allow sufficient time for change to occur; and
  3) To ensure each child received a sufficient dose of the service, we required there be at least 10 SNCC Classroom Intensive Service visits between a child's pre- and post-DECA

assessment. It is important to note that data on children's attendance on days when visits occurred is unavailable. Thus, we do not know for certain whether a child was present on the day a visit occurred, only that they were enrolled at the site while the service was being delivered.

Of the N=303 children enrolled in these 22 classrooms, n=178 (58.7%) met the above criteria for inclusion. After conversation with Starting Point, we decided to use the 2017-2018 *and* 2018-2019 DECA data to ensure as many children as possible were included in this analysis. Of the 178 children included in this analysis, 139 (78.0%) had their pre- and post-test DECA assessments occur before and after all SNCC Classroom Intensive Service visits were delivered. The remaining children (n=39 or 22.0%) had their post-test DECA assessment occur during the time the Classroom Intensive Service was delivered. Thus, these children did not receive the 'full intervention,' but were enrolled in the classroom for at least 10 sessions. As a result, the length of time and the number of SNCC Classroom Intensive Service visits between pre-and post-test varied between children. On average, there were M=17.7 (*SD*=6.1, Range=10-34) visits between children's pre- and post-test assessments.

Table 10 below presents descriptive results for children's pre- and post-DECA assessments. As illustrated by T-score pre- and post-test means, on average (except for the Attachment/ relationships subscale), children's post-test protective factors scores were slightly higher than their pre-test scores, indicating increasing strength in these important areas of resilience. Simultaneously, average Behavioral Concerns subscale scores decreased from pre- to post-assessment suggesting decreasing frequency of behavioral concerns, per teacher observation, among children in classrooms that received SNCC Classroom Intensive Service visits. Looking at DECA results according to 'Area of Need,' 'Typical,' and 'Strength' categorical groupings, children's behavior, both in terms of strengths and behavioral concerns, converged toward 'Typical' from pre- to post-assessment. For example, approximately 60% of children scored within the 'Typical' range on the Total Protective Factors scale at pre-test. At post-test, 73% of children were categorized as such. The movement toward 'Typical' from pre- to post-test occurred as a result of children moving from the 'Area of Need' to 'Typical' category as well as the 'Strength' to 'Typical' category, representing improvements and declines in behavior, respectively. This pattern is consistent across all Protective Factor subscales (i.e., Initiative, Self-regulation, and Attachment/relationships). It might first seem counterintuitive that T-scores could generally increase from pre- to post-assessment, while the categorical picture of children's resilience suggests more movement toward average (i.e., the 'Typical' category). We might have expected that, based on T-score gains, the categorical picture at post-test would have reflected more children falling within the Strength category or perhaps just a mirroring of the frequency distribution found at pre-test (given that T-score gains are relatively small in size). This finding raises an important criticism of the categorical ratings when looking at change over time. Children whose T-scores fall near the border between 'Area of Need' and 'Typical' or 'Typical' and 'Strength,' can easily move to another category at post-test with only minimal raw score
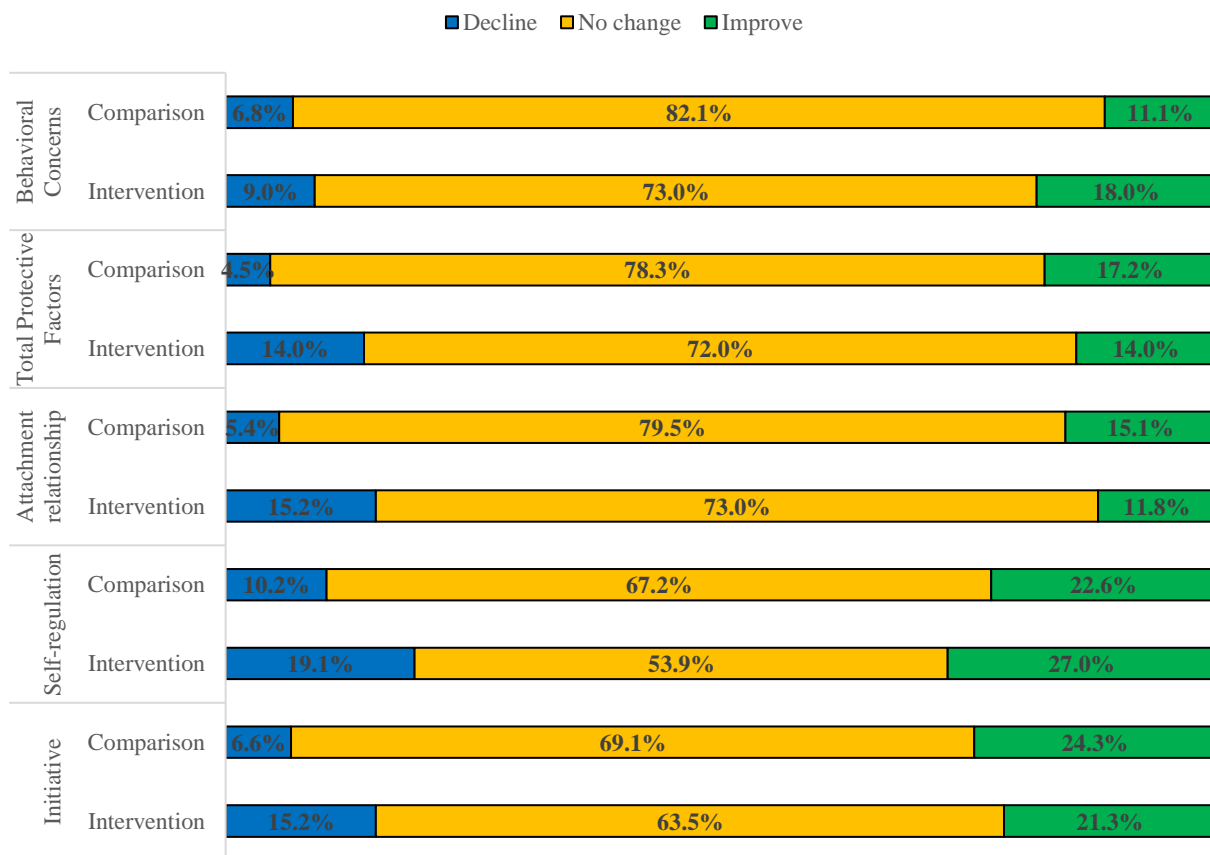
change. Thus, this raises the question of whether these categorical ratings hold much value when looking at within child change over time. It is this criticism that highlights the importance of exploring results according to 'meaningful change.'

Next, we explored 'meaningful change' in protective factors and behavioral concerns (an explanation of how we calculated 'meaningful change' can be found in the Data Sources section above). **Figure 1** below presents meaningful change for children in classrooms that received the SNCC Classroom Intensive Service (Intervention) and children who attended UPK classrooms that did not receive the intervention (Comparison). The performance of these children is included as a comparison, to illustrate 'typical' behavior in UPK classrooms. The only criterion for inclusion in the analysis for comparison children was that their pre- and post-test DECA assessments occur at least two months apart. If we assume that the highest need classrooms were those that received the Intensive Service (by design), then these two groups of children are different from one another in their strengths (protective factor scores) and needs (behavioral concerns). Thus, the Comparison condition should not be confused for a control, but rather a benchmark from which to consider the findings reported for Intervention classrooms.

As shown in **Figure 1**, the majority of Intervention (and Comparison) children scored within the same range at pre- and post-test DECA assessments (i.e., fell within the 'No meaningful change' category). For Intervention children, 72.0% were considered to have made no meaningful change on the Total Protective Factors scale from pre- to post-assessment. It is important to note that the majority of these children (88.2% - data not shown, but available upon request) scored within the 'Typical' or 'Strength' category on the Total Protective Factors scale at pre-test and therefore, no change for these children indicates that they maintained their typical or above performance. The remaining 11.8% of children scored within the 'Area of Need' category on the Total Protective Factors scale at pre-test. Unfortunately, these children remained within the 'Area of Need' category at post-test. Similarly, among the 73.0% of Intervention children who evidenced 'No meaningful change' from pre- to post-assessment on the Behavioral Concerns subscale, the majority (79.9%) scored within the 'Typical' category at pre-test. Again, 'No change' for these children is what we would hope to see at post-test. Their behavior has remained within the continuum of what is considered to be typical for their age. The remaining 20.1% of children, however, remained within the 'Area of Need' category from pre- to post-test on the Behavioral Concerns subscale.

In terms of meaningful improvement, the Self-regulation subscale shows the highest proportion of growth (i.e., improvement; see Figure 1). Twenty-seven percent of Intervention children made meaningful improvement on this subscale followed by the Initiative subscale at 21.3%. Eighteen percent of children in the Intervention condition demonstrated meaningful improvement on the Behavioral Concerns subscale from pre- to post-test. The subscale demonstrating the least

improvement was Attachment/relationships with 11.8% of children's behavior considered to have improved meaningfully. Interestingly, the largest proportion of Intervention children also made meaningful declines on the Self-regulation subscale (19.1%), followed by Initiative and Attachment/relationships (both at 15.2%). Nine percent of children demonstrated meaningful declines in behavior on the Behavioral Concerns subscale (indicating the frequency of their behavioral problems increased) from pre- to post-assessment. It is important to note however, that a meaningful decline in performance in the domains of protective factors does not necessarily indicate a child's behavior fell within the 'Area of Need' category at post-observation. For example, among the 14.0% of children whose Total Protective Factor behavior rating showed meaningful decline, 70.5% moved from 'Strength' to 'Typical.'

■ Decline ■ No change ■ Improve

Behavioral Concerns	Comparison	6.8%	82.1%	11.1%
	Intervention	9.0%	73.0%	18.0%
Total Protective Factors	Comparison	4.5%	78.3%	17.2%
	Intervention	14.0%	72.0%	14.0%
Attachment relationship	Comparison	5.4%	79.5%	15.1%
	Intervention	15.2%	73.0%	11.8%
Self-regulation	Comparison	10.2%	67.2%	22.6%
	Intervention	19.1%	53.9%	27.0%
Initiative	Comparison	6.6%	69.1%	24.3%
	Intervention	15.2%	63.5%	21.3%

Figure 1. DECA Assessment Pre- to Post-Test Meaningful Change Comparison among Children who received the SNCC Classroom Intensive Service and Children who Did Not

Overall, on each DECA scale and subscale, proportionately more children in the Intervention condition evidenced meaningful change (improvements and declines) from pre- to post-assessment than comparison children. Further discussion with classroom teachers and site administrators, Classroom Intensive Service technical assistance providers, and Starting Point is needed to understand this finding. Perhaps these data are highlighting two groups of children and their responses to the Classroom Intensive Service. The first group of children, represented in the

green bars in Figure 1, seem to respond positively over time. The second group of children, represented in the blue bars in Figure 1, seem to decompensate over time (but, again, not necessarily to 'Area of Need' with regard to the protective factors, as explained above).

As highlighted in this report by TAs, the scope of challenging behaviors in preschool classrooms is great. This finding was echoed by program directors, who said that they need even more support to address the challenging behaviors their teachers are facing in the classroom. Perhaps the children whose behavior declined over the course of the Classroom Intensive Service are those who need a higher level of support. Perhaps these classrooms need a greater intensity of service to stabilize. Future evaluation of the Classroom Intensive Service could also intentionally select a group of children who did not receive the service for comparison. In this report, our comparison condition includes all children in classrooms not receiving the service. It is possible, however, that these two groups (Intervention and Comparison) differ in more ways that just intervention receipt. Statistical matching techniques or sampling techniques could narrow in on a select group of classrooms for comparison that more closely resemble the classrooms that received the service (e.g., two classrooms within the same site, one that received Classroom Intensive Service and one that did not).

Or, this finding could reflect changes in the teacher over time. It is possible that after having collaborated with technical assistance providers, teachers receiving the Classroom Intensive Service view their students differently over time. Given the recognition of trauma and its impact on social-emotional health and behavior, teachers may view challenging child behavior through a different lens after the intervention. With greater knowledge, understanding, skills and supports, these behaviors, though still challenging, may be seen as less problematic. On the other hand, after working with technical assistants who are expert in early childhood development, teachers may be more attuned to the students in their classroom. Certain behaviors that may have gone unnoticed in the past may be correctly interpreted as evidencing a behavioral need. Further analysis and consultation with key informants are needed to better understand this finding.

The Classroom Intensive Service was designed specifically for classrooms with more than one child demonstrating challenging behavior per teacher observation. Thus, it is important to not only explore change over time for all children, but specifically, change for children who started out in the 'Area of Need' category. **Figure 2** below includes only those children whose pre-test DECA score fell within the 'Area of Need' category by subscale. Samples sizes are as follows:
- Behavioral Concerns – Intervention (n=49), Comparison (n=413)
- Total Protective Factors – Intervention (n=38), Comparison (n=448)
- Attachment/relationships – Intervention (n=30), Comparison (n=474)
- Self-regulation – Intervention (n=40), Comparison (n=451)
- Initiative – Intervention (n=39), Comparison (n=537)

Again, we see differences in the proportion of children showing meaningful change by intervention condition. Proportionately fewer Intervention than Comparison children (40.8% vs. 50.1%) who started out in the 'Area of Need' on the Behavioral Concerns subscale showed meaningful improvement per teacher report from pre- to post-assessment. Interestingly, however, the result is reversed for the Protective Factors. On the Total Protective Factors scale and two of the three subscales (i.e., Self-regulation and Initiative), proportionately more children in the Intervention condition who began in the 'Area of Need' demonstrated meaningful improvements in behavior. Protective Factors and Behavioral Concerns are not opposite ends of a single continuum. Protective Factors can exist and grow while Behavioral Concerns are present. The majority of Intervention children who started the year in the 'Area of Need' for the Protective Factors, made meaningful improvements; however, that was not the case on the Behavioral Concerns subscale. Nearly 60% of children whose Behavioral Concerns feel within 'Area of Need' evidenced no meaningful change by post-assessment. Perhaps concerning behavioral patterns, once established, are more resistant to change than protective factors are to strengthen.
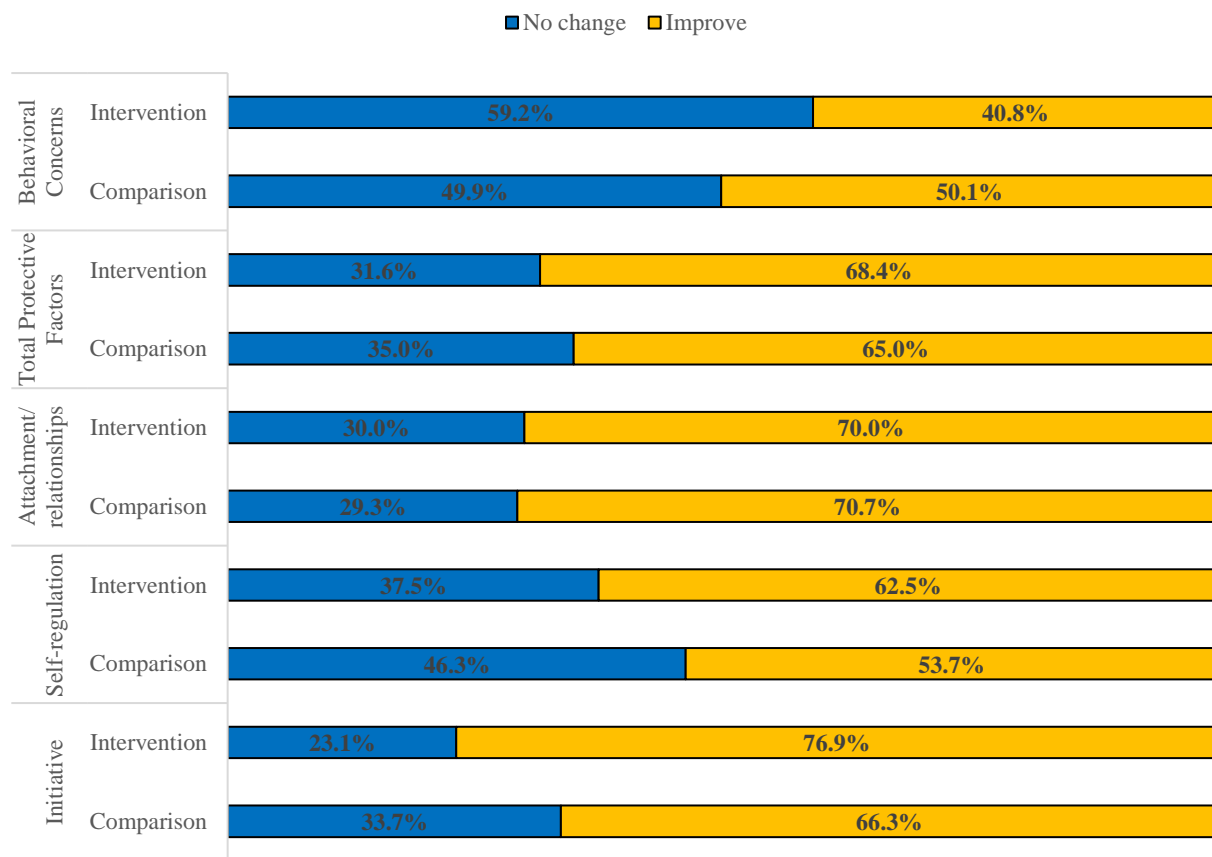
Figure 2. DECA Assessment Pre- to Post-Test Meaningful Change Comparison by Intervention and Comparison Conditions for Children whose Behavior was Rated within 'Area of Need' at Pre-test

CONCLUSIONS

This evaluation report summarizes findings from stakeholders integral to the functioning of the SNCC Classroom Intensive Service as well as key administrative data sources. Across reporters and data sources, results indicate that the first year of the program was successful in a number of ways. First, a significant number of hours of service was delivered to 22 UPK classrooms with teachers reporting overall satisfaction with their experience. Program directors were grateful for the additional support and technical assistant consultants believed the intensity of the program contributed to improvements in initially chaotic classrooms. Many children in classrooms receiving the service were considered to have made meaningful improvements in their protective factors, per teacher observation. Yet, in general, teacher-reported behavioral concerns were largely resistant to change for the majority of children.

Some important considerations about service delivery emerged from evaluation activities and are worth noting.

- In general, there were mixed feelings about the use of the Reflective Checklist as an evaluative tool due to the potential for subjective interpretations among observers. The triangulation and validation approach used in this study revealed some of this subjectivity through a lack of consistency in ratings across and within observer groups. It also revealed difficulties in linking data across sources (i.e., different observers, different data systems). Future evaluation activities that incorporate data on the same classroom from multiple stakeholders need assurance that all stakeholders are reflecting on the same classroom. Each classroom needs a unique ID that is pre-populated in any data system used to capture information on the classroom. Respondents should not be left to choose how to identify the classroom.
- The manner in which the Classroom Intensive Service is introduced and communicated to the lead teacher plays an important role in the receipt of the program. Teacher buy-in is paramount to the success of the intervention. Special attention should be paid to how the introductory period is handled so that teacher needs and morale are considered.
- The variability in teacher reported DECA results for children in Intervention classrooms compared to children in classrooms not receiving the Classroom Intensive Service is interesting and warrants further consideration. It might be worthwhile to examine parent reported DECA assessments to see if they similarly reflect differences between conditions.

There are limitations to this evaluation that should be noted. The pre-post design of the RC, DECA and teacher surveys were limited to the extent that a valid pre-and post- instrument was delivered, collected, and able to be linked together at a classroom level. Teacher-turnover played a part in this issue, and is something that needs to be investigated further as classrooms with teacher-turnover are likely systematically different than those without turnover and the absence of data for classrooms with more turnover could bias the findings. In addition, the timing of the SNCC Classroom Intensive Service is not directly aligned with the teacher administration of the DECA, leading to a restricted sample of eligible children and classrooms that could potentially

bias the findings. Finally, in understanding "meaningful change" on the DECA across classrooms that received the Classroom Intensive Service and those that did not, it will be important in future work to disentangle changes in teacher reporting behavior from actual child behavior, and gather a more in-depth understanding of the differences between classrooms receiving the service and those not receiving the service.

Tables of Results: Reflective Checklist and Adapted Version of Reflective Checklist

Table 1. Percent of SNCC Classroom Intensive Service visits by type of need addressed

Type of Need	%
Self-regulation	23.6
General classroom management	13.8
Classroom accommodations/modifications	8.6
Not listening to teacher	8.2
Transitions	7.9
Initiative	7.2
Social skills	7.0
Attention seeking behavior	3.3
Communication between teachers	3.3
Refusing to follow directions	2.8
Temper tantrums	2.8
Physical aggression	2.3
Disruptive behavior	1.9
Communication with children	1.2
Fighting	1.2
Anger management	0.9
Limited/poor self-control	0.9
Prevention	0.9
Attachment	0.2
Destructive behavior	0.2
Lack of peer interaction	0.2
Oppositional defiant disorder	0.2
Post-traumatic stress disorder	0.2
Relationship concerns with adults	0.2

Relationships concerns with peers	0.2
Trauma history	0.2
Withdrawal	0.2

Table 2. Percent of SNCC Classroom Intensive Service visits by target of TA intervention

RC area of teaching practice	%
Daily routines	82.2
Environment	65.7
Activities and experiences	52.6
Caring connections	50.9
Partnerships with families	18.5

Table 3. External observer reported means and changes on Adapted RC items

	Mean (number of classrooms)				Pre- to post-test change		
	Pretest		Posttest		Worsen	No change	Improve
Daily Routine							
D1: Plan and maintain a predictable daily schedule	2.00	(n=11)	2.42	(n=12)	2	5	4
D2: Adjust the schedule as needed to respond to children and circumstances	1.30	(n=10)	2.11	(n=9)	0	4	5
D3: Plan for smooth transitions	1.92	(n=12)	2.09	(n=11)	3	5	3
D4: Use daily routines as times to interact with children and support learning	2.17	(n=12)	2.58	(n=12)	4	1	7
D5: Encourage children to take on a role during daily routines	1.60	(n=10)	2.09	(n=11)	1	2	6
D6: Individualize during daily routines and transitions	2.42	(n=12)	2.25	(n=12)	4	6	2
D7: Invite children to be actively involved in planning and reflecting throughout day	1.78	(n=9)	2.00	(n=9)	2	1	3
D8: Support children as they transition between home and the program	1.56	(n=9)	2.00	(n=4)	1	0	3
Daily Routine scale average	**1.88**	**(n=12)**	**2.22**	**(n=12)**	**2**	**1**	**9**

Caring Connections								
C1: Give each child the opportunity to build a trusting relationship with a caring adult	2.83	(n=12)	2.50	(n=12)	6	5	1
C2: Display respect, warmth, and interest in all children	2.58	(n=12)	2.42	(n=12)	3	7	2
C3: Support children's growing independence by recognizing each child's strengths, efforts, and accomplishments	1.64	(n=11)	2.17	(n=12)	3	2	6
C4: Maintain realistic expectations for each child's behavior based on development	2.17	(n=12)	2.42	(n=12)	2	5	5
C5: Help children learn the skills necessary to play and learn with others	2.00	(n=11)	2.42	(n=12)	1	4	6
C6: Tailor positive guidance techniques to fit the child and the situation	1.92	(n=12)	2.17	(n=12)	3	4	5
C7: Involve children in setting a few important rules and guidelines	1.40	(n=10)	1.91	(n=11)	1	5	3
Caring Connections scale average	**2.11**	**(n=12)**	**2.30**	**(n=12)**	**4**	**0**	**8**
Activities & Experiences								
A1: Plan and facilitate a few small group learning opportunities each day based on children's skills and interests	2.56	(n=9)	2.00	(n=9)	4	0	2
A3: Provide opportunities that promote cooperation and problem-solving	2.27	(n=11)	2.00	(n=11)	4	3	3
A4: Encourage physical activity	2.73	(n=11)	2.88	(n=8)	0	7	1
A5: Offer a range of activities that support creative and dramatic play skills	2.50	(n=12)	2.67	(n=12)	2	6	4
A6: Include activities that help children learn about social skills and emotions	1.25	(n=12)	2.09	(n=11)	1	4	6
Activities & Experiences scale average	**2.22**	**(n=12)**	**2.32**	**(n=12)**	**4**	**0**	**8**

Table 4. Classroom changes in overall and subscale scores on Adapted RC as reported by external observers

	Daily Routines			Caring Connections			Activities & Experiences			Overall Score		
	pre	post	change	pre	post	change	pre	post	change	pre	post	change
1. Catholic Charities - Arbor Park	1.50	3.00	**1.50**	2.50	3.00	**0.50**	2.60	3.00	**0.40**	2.18	3.00	**0.82**
2. CEOGC - Willard	2.50	1.40	**-1.10**	2.43	2.71	**0.29**	2.60	3.00	**0.40**	2.50	2.33	**-0.17**
3. CEOGC - William Patrick Day	2.13	2.50	**0.38**	2.00	2.43	**0.43**	2.60	2.75	**0.15**	2.20	2.53	**0.33**
4. Creative Kids	2.00	1.29	**-0.71**	1.86	2.00	**0.14**	2.50	1.75	**-0.75**	2.06	1.67	**-0.39**
5. Centers - Glenville ELC	1.63	2.25	**0.63**	2.33	2.29	**-0.05**	2.20	1.40	**-0.80**	2.00	2.05	**0.05**
6. Horizon Market Square	1.86	2.13	**0.27**	2.14	1.86	**-0.29**	1.60	2.33	**0.73**	1.89	2.06	**0.16**
7. Horizon Old Brooklyn	1.63	1.83	**0.21**	2.00	1.14	**-0.86**	2.50	1.25	**-1.25**	1.94	1.41	**-0.53**

8. Horizon Cleveland	1.43	2.50	**1.07**	1.14	3.00	**1.86**	1.50	3.00	**1.50**	1.33	2.81	**1.48**
9. FUNdamentals at Menorah Park	1.71	2.71	**1.00**	2.29	2.86	**0.57**	2.20	2.80	**0.60**	2.05	2.79	**0.74**
10. Murtis Taylor - Glenville	1.88	2.00	**0.13**	1.57	1.71	**0.14**	2.00	2.80	**0.80**	1.79	2.11	**0.32**
11. Murtis Taylor - Mt. Pleasant	2.14	2.83	**0.69**	2.86	2.29	**-0.57**	2.60	2.00	**-0.60**	2.53	2.41	**-0.11**
12. St. Peter's Child Care	2.14	2.14	**0.00**	2.14	2.29	**0.14**	1.75	1.80	**0.05**	2.06	2.11	**0.05**

Table 5. Technical assistant reported means and changes on RC

	Mean (number of classrooms)				Pre- to post-test change		
	Pretest		Posttest		Worsen	No change	Improve
Daily Routine							
D1: Plan and maintain a predictable daily schedule	2.00	(n=17)	2.59	(n=17)	1	7	9
D2: Adjust the schedule as needed to respond to children and circumstances	2.47	(n=17)	2.88	(n=17)	0	12	5
D3: Plan for smooth transitions	2.12	(n=17)	2.53	(n=17)	1	8	8
D4: Use daily routines as times to interact with children and support learning	2.41	(n=17)	2.94	(n=17)	0	10	7
D5: Encourage children to take on a role during daily routines	1.94	(n=17)	2.65	(n=17)	0	7	10
D6: Individualize during daily routines and transitions	2.35	(n=17)	2.76	(n=17)	0	10	7
D7: Invite children to be actively involved in planning and reflecting throughout day	2.34	(n=17)	2.76	(n=17)	1	9	7
D8: Support children as they transition between home and the program	2.06	(n=17)	2.71	(n=17)	0	9	8
Daily Routine scale average	**2.20**	(n=17)	**2.73**	(n=17)	**1**	**3**	**13**
Environment							
E1: Create homelike environment that reflects all children and their families	2.47	(n=17)	2.94	(n=17)	0	11	6
E2: Provide materials and toys that correspond to children's varying skill and interests, and offer appropriate challenges	2.76	(n=17)	3.00	(n=17)	0	13	4
E3: Provide materials and toys that support group play and development of social skills	2.82	(n=17)	2.94	(n=17)	1	13	3
E4: Offer materials that encourage children to explore and express their feelings	2.35	(n=17)	2.76	(n=17)	1	11	5
E5: Provide be-by-myself spaces that are private but still visible to teachers	2.35	(n=17)	2.82	(n=17)	0	10	7
E6: Display togs and materials within reach so children can see what is available and choose what they want to use independently	2.94	(n=17)	3.00	(n=17)	0	16	1
E7: Establish clear, accessible, and well-stocked areas for different kinds of play and learning experiences	2.94	(n=17)	2.94	(n=17)	1	15	1
E8: Include space and materials for large muscle play, both indoors and out	2.47	(n=17)	2.71	(n=17)	0	14	3
E9: Post important classroom information for children, families, and visitors	2.53	(n=17)	3.00	(n=17)	0	11	6
Environment scale average	**2.63**	(n=17)	**2.90**	(n=17)	**1**	**4**	**12**
Caring Connections							
C1: Give each child the opportunity to build a trusting relationship with a caring adult	2.59	(n=17)	2.94	(n=17)	1	11	5
C2: Display respect, warmth, and interest in all children	2.53	(n=17)	2.82	(n=17)	1	12	4

C3: Support children's growing independence by recognizing each child's strengths, efforts, and accomplishments	2.53	(n=17)	2.94	(n=17)	0	10	7
C4: Maintain realistic expectations for each child's behavior based on development	2.47	(n=17)	2.88	(n=17)	1	10	6
C5: Help children learn the skills necessary to play and learn with others	2.35	(n=17)	2.82	(n=17)	0	10	7
C6: Tailor positive guidance techniques to fit the child and the situation	2.35	(n=17)	2.59	(n=17)	1	12	4
C7: Involve children in setting a few important rules and guidelines	2.06	(n=17)	2.59	(n=17)	0	11	6
Caring Connections scale average	**2.41**	(n=17)	**2.80**	(n=17)	**0**	**8**	**9**
Activities & Experiences							
A1: Plan and facilitate a few small group learning opportunities each day based on children's skills and interests	2.29	(n=17)	2.76	(n=17)	1	8	8
A2: Provide opportunities for children to plan, take part in, and review their own play experiences, alone or with others							
A3: Provide opportunities that promote cooperation and problem-solving	2.29	(n=17)	2.88	(n=17)	0	9	8
A4: Encourage physical activity	2.53	(n=17)	2.94	(n=17)	0	10	7
A5: Offer a range of activities that support creative and dramatic play skills	2.76	(n=17)	2.88	(n=17)	1	13	3
A6: Include activities that help children learn about social skills and emotions	2.18	(n=17)	2.71	(n=17)	0	10	7
A7: Provide many opportunities for children to build language and literacy skills	2.65	(n=17)	2.82	(n=17)	0	14	3
Activities & Experiences scale average	**2.40**	(n=17)	**2.79**	(n=17)	**1**	**4**	**12**
Partnerships between teachers and families							
P1: Gather and incorporate information from families	2.29	(n=17)	2.59	(n=17)	1	10	6
P2: Use a variety of communication strategies to keep families informed about the program	2.18	(n=17)	2.47	(n=17)	0	13	4
P3: Offer a variety of ways that families can be involved in their children's learning	2.35	(n=17)	2.65	(n=17)	0	12	5
P4: Establish an ongoing system for exchanging information with families about their children	2.35	(n=17)	2.65	(n=17)	0	13	4
P5: Provide families with information about typical child development and behavior	2.47	(n=17)	2.76	(n=17)	0	12	5
P6: Reduce or avoid adding to a family's stress	2.59	(n=17)	2.82	(n=17)	0	13	4
P7: Create opportunities for families to meet and form relationships with one another	2.35	(n=17)	2.59	(n=17)	0	14	3
Partnerships between teachers and families scale average	**2.37**	(n=17)	**2.65**	(n=17)	**1**	**5**	**11**

Table 6. Classroom changes in overall and subscale scores on RC as reported by technical assistants

	Daily Routines			Environment			Caring Connections			Activities & Experiences			Partnerships			Overall Score		
	pre	post	change	pre	post	change	pre	post	change	pre	post	change	pre	post	change	pre	post	change
1. St. Ignatius Head Start_Room1	2.62	3.00	**0.38**	3.00	3.00	**0.00**	3.00	3.00	**0.00**	2.57	3.00	**0.43**	3.00	3.00	**0.00**	2.84	3.00	**0.16**
2. St. Ignatius Head Start-Room 6	3.00	2.88	**-0.12**	3.00	2.89	**-0.11**	3.00	3.00	**0.00**	3.00	2.86	**-0.14**	3.00	2.86	**-0.14**	3.00	2.89	**-0.11**
3. Willard CEOGC - Grapes	3.00	3.00	**0.00**	3.00	3.00	**0.00**	3.00	3.00	**0.00**	3.00	3.00	**0.00**	3.00	3.00	**0.00**	3.00	3.00	**0.00**
4. William Patrick Day - Room 19	1.88	3.00	**1.12**	2.56	3.00	**.044**	2.00	2.86	**0.86**	2.29	3.00	**0.71**	2.43	3.00	**0.57**	2.24	2.97	**0.73**
5. St. Peter's Child Care Center –Full day 1	1.13	2.25	**1.12**	2.22	2.67	**0.45**	1.29	2.57	**1.28**	1.43	2.57	**1.14**	1.14	1.86	**0.72**	1.47	2.39	**0.92**
6. St. Peter's Child Care Center –Full day 2	2.13	2.75	**0.62**	2.78	2.88	**0.10**	2.86	2.86	**0.00**	2.43	2.71	**0.28**	2.57	2.71	**0.14**	2.55	2.79	**0.24**
7. Carl B. Stokes Head Start -Dolphins	2.13	2.75	**0.62**	2.56	2.78	**0.22**	3.00	3.00	**0.00**	3.00	3.00	**0.00**	3.00	3.00	**0.00**	2.71	2.89	**0.18**
8. Creative Kids - Lady bugs	2.88	2.88	**0.00**	2.67	2.89	**0.22**	3.00	3.00	**0.00**	2.86	2.86	**0.00**	3.00	3.00	**0.00**	2.87	2.92	**0.05**
9. Arbor Park - Preschool 2	2.25	2.75	**0.50**	2.78	2.89	**0.11**	2.14	2.71	**0.57**	2.43	2.86	**0.43**	2.57	2.71	**0.14**	2.45	2.79	**0.34**
10. Murtis Taylor - Mount Pleasant - Preschool	2.13	2.13	**0.00**	2.89	2.89	**0.00**	2.14	2.29	**0.15**	2.29	2.71	**0.42**	1.71	2.00	**0.29**	2.26	2.42	**0.16**
11. Salvation Army Child Care Center- Ohio City - Preschool	2.25	2.63	**2.38**	2.67	3.00	**0.33**	2.43	2.86	**0.43**	1.86	2.57	**0.71**	1.43	1.86	**0.43**	2.16	2.61	**0.45**
12. Murtis Taylor KRT - Pre-k	1.50	2.50	**1.00**	2.00	2.89	**0.89**	1.00	2.57	**1.57**	2.14	2.86	**0.72**	1.86	2.14	**0.28**	1.71	1.61	**0.90**
13. Green Road CEOGC - Room 22	2.63	3.00	**0.37**	3.00	3.00	**0.00**	3.00	3.00	**0.00**	2.71	2.86	**0.15**	3.00	3.00	**0.00**	2.87	2.97	**0.10**
14. Horizon Old Brooklyn - Blue room	1.38	2.25	**0.87**	2.56	2.78	**0.22**	1.86	2.29	**0.43**	1.86	2.29	**0.43**	2.14	2.43	**0.29**	1.97	2.42	**0.45**
15. Horizon Market Square - Blue room	2.50	2.88	**0.38**	2.56	3.00	**0.44**	2.71	2.71	**0.00**	1.86	2.71	**0.85**	2.43	3.00	**0.57**	2.42	2.87	**0.45**

16. Glenville Early Learning Center - Preschool 2	2.50	3.00	**0.50**	2.33	3.00	**0.67**	2.86	3.00	**0.14**	3.00	3.00	**0.00**	2.86	3.00	**0.14**	2.68	3.00	**0.32**
17. Horizon Child Development Center – Pre-k 1	1.50	2.75	**1.25**	2.11	2.78	**0.67**	1.71	2.85	**1.14**	2.14	2.57	**0.43**	1.14	2.43	**1.29**	1.74	2.68	**0.94**

Table 7. Teacher reported means and changes on RC

	Mean (number of classrooms)				Pre- to post-test change		
	Pretest		Posttest		Worsen	No change	Improve
Daily Routine							
D1: Plan and maintain a predictable daily schedule	2.70	(n=10)	2.70	(n=10)	1	8	1
D2: Adjust the schedule as needed to respond to children and circumstances	2.80	(n=10)	2.60	(n=10)	2	8	0
D3: Plan for smooth transitions	2.40	(n=10)	2.50	(n=10)	2	7	1
D4: Use daily routines as times to interact with children and support learning	3.00	(n=10)	3.00	(n=10)	0	10	0
D5: Encourage children to take on a role during daily routines	2.80	(n=10)	2.70	(n=10)	2	7	1
D6: Individualize during daily routines and transitions	2.90	(n=10)	2.90	(n=10)	0	10	0
D7: Invite children to be actively involved in planning and reflecting throughout day	2.60	(n=10)	2.70	(n=10)	0	9	1
D8: Support children as they transition between home and the program	2.80	(n=10)	2.90	(n=10)	1	7	2
Daily Routine scale average	**2.75**	**(n=10)**	**2.75**	**(n=10)**	**2**	**6**	**2**
Environment							
E1: Create homelike environment that reflects all children and their families	2.90	(n=10)	2.70	(n=10)	2	8	0
E2: Provide materials and toys that correspond to children's varying skill and interests, and offer appropriate challenges	2.80	(n=10)	2.90	(n=10)	0	9	1
E3: Provide materials and toys that support group play and development of social skills	3.00	(n=10)	2.90	(n=10)	1	9	0
E4: Offer materials that encourage children to explore and express their feelings	3.00	(n=10)	2.80	(n=10)	2	8	0
E5: Provide be-by-myself spaces that are private but still visible to teachers	2.70	(n=10)	2.70	(n=10)	1	8	1
E6: Display togs and materials within reach so children can see what is available and choose what they want to use independently	2.90	(n=10)	3.00	(n=10)	0	9	1
E7: Establish clear, accessible, and well-stocked areas for different kinds of play and learning experiences	2.90	(n=10)	3.00	(n=10)	0	9	1
E8: Include space and materials for large muscle play, both indoors and out	3.00	(n=10)	2.70	(n=10)	3	7	1
E9: Post important classroom information for children, families, and visitors	2.80	(n=10)	2.90	(n=10)	0	9	1
Environment scale average	**2.89**	**(n=10)**	**2.84**	**(n=10)**	**3**	**6**	**1**
Caring Connections							
C1: Give each child the opportunity to build a trusting relationship with a caring adult	3.00	(n=10)	3.00	(n=10)	0	10	0
C2: Display respect, warmth, and interest in all children	3.00	(n=10)	3.00	(n=10)	0	10	0
C3: Support children's growing independence by recognizing each child's strengths, efforts, and accomplishments	3.00	(n=10)	3.00	(n=10)	0	10	0

C4: Maintain realistic expectations for each child's behavior based on development	2.90	(n=10)	2.80	(n=10)	1	9	0
C5: Help children learn the skills necessary to play and learn with others	3.00	(n=10)	2.90	(n=10)	1	9	0
C6: Tailor positive guidance techniques to fit the child and the situation	2.90	(n=10)	2.80	(n=10)	1	9	0
C7: Involve children in setting a few important rules and guidelines	2.80	(n=10)	2.80	(n=10)	2	6	2
Caring Connections scale average	**2.94**	**(n=10)**	**2.90**	**(n=10)**	**4**	**4**	**2**
Activities & Experiences							
A1: Plan and facilitate a few small group learning opportunities each day based on children's skills and interests	3.00	(n=10)	2.90	(n=10)	1	9	0
A2: Provide opportunities for children to plan, take part in, and review their own play experiences, alone or with others	2.80	(n=10)	2.90	(n=10)	1	7	2
A3: Provide opportunities that promote cooperation and problem-solving	2.70	(n=10)	2.90	(n=10)	0	8	2
A4: Encourage physical activity	3.00	(n=10)	2.90	(n=10)	1	9	0
A5: Offer a range of activities that support creative and dramatic play skills	2.80	(n=10)	2.90	(n=10)	0	9	1
A6: Include activities that help children learn about social skills and emotions	2.80	(n=10)	2.60	(n=10)	3	6	1
A7: Provide many opportunities for children to build language and literacy skills	3.00	(n=10)	3.00	(n=10)	0	10	0
Activities & Experiences scale average	**2.87**	**(n=10)**	**2.87**	**(n=10)**	**2**	**6**	**2**
Partnerships between teachers and families							
P1: Gather and incorporate information from families	2.60	(n=10)	2.60	(n=10)	0	10	0
P2: Use a variety of communication strategies to keep families informed about the program	3.00	(n=10)	3.00	(n=10)	0	10	0
P3: Offer a variety of ways that families can be involved in their children's learning	2.80	(n=10)	2.80	(n=10)	1	8	1
P4: Establish an ongoing system for exchanging information with families about their children	2.80	(n=10)	2.90	(n=10)	0	9	1
P5: Provide families with information about typical child development and behavior	2.80	(n=10)	2.80	(n=10)	2	6	2
P6: Reduce or avoid adding to a family's stress	2.70	(n=10)	2.60	(n=10)	1	9	0
P7: Create opportunities for families to meet and form relationships with one another	2.60	(n=10)	2.60	(n=10)	2	6	2
Partnerships between teachers and families scale average	**2.76**	**(n=10)**	**2.76**	**(n=10)**	**4**	**4**	**2**

Table 8. Classroom changes in overall and subscale scores on RC as reported by teachers

	Daily Routines			Environment			Caring Connections			Activities & Experiences			Partnerships			Overall Score		
	pre	post	change	pre	post	change	pre	post	change	pre	post	change	pre	post	change	pre	post	change
1. Catholic Charities Head Start-Rainbow Terrace 2	2.88	2.88	**0.00**	3.00	2.78	**-0.22**	3.00	2.86	**-0.14**	3.00	3.00	**0.00**	3.00	2.86	**-0.14**	2.97	2.88	**-0.11**
2. Catholic Charities Head Start-Arbor Park 1	3	3	**0.00**	3.00	3.00	**0.00**	3.00	3.00	**0.00**	3.00	2.86	**-0.14**	2.86	2.71	**-0.15**	2.97	2.92	**-0.05**
3. Catholic Charities Head Start-St Ignatius	3	3	**0.00**	3.00	2.67	**-0.33**	3.00	2.86	**-0.14**	3.00	2.71	**-0.29**	3.00	2.86	**-0.14**	3.00	2.82	**-0.18**
4. Creative Kids-Preschool 1	2.5	2.5	**0.00**	2.78	2.78	**0.00**	2.86	2.86	**0.00**	2.86	2.86	**0.00**	2.43	2.43	**0.00**	2.68	2.68	**0.00**
5. HS Willard-Group room FD	2.88	2.63	**-0.25**	2.89	2.89	**0.00**	3.00	2.86	**-0.14**	2.71	2.71	**0.00**	2.71	2.57	**-0.14**	2.84	2.74	**-0.10**
6. William Patrick Day-Room 19	2.75	2.63	**-0.12**	2.89	2.89	**0.00**	3.00	3.00	**0.00**	3.00	3.00	**0.00**	2.86	2.86	**0.00**	2.89	2.87	**-0.02**
7. Glenville-Preschool 2	2.88	3	**0.12**	3.00	3.00	**0.00**	3.00	3.00	**0.00**	3.00	3.00	**0.00**	3.00	3.00	**0.00**	2.97	3.00	**0.03**
8. St. Peters-Pre-K	2.75	2.75	**0.00**	3.00	2.89	**-0.11**	2.86	3.00	**0.14**	2.71	3.00	**0.29**	2.43	2.86	**0.43**	2.76	2.89	**0.13**
9. Horizon Market Square-Green Room	2.63	2.88	**0.25**	2.89	2.89	**0.00**	2.86	3.00	**0.14**	2.86	3.00	**0.14**	2.86	2.86	**0.00**	2.82	2.92	**0.10**
10. Ohio City Preschool-Room 2	2.25	2.25	**0.00**	2.44	2.67	**0.23**	2.86	2.57	**-0.29**	2.57	2.57	**0.00**	2.43	2.57	**0.14**	2.50	2.53	**0.03**

Table 9. Percent of teachers who 'Agreed' or 'Strongly agreed' with each statement before and after SNCC Classroom Intensive Service receipt.

	Pre % Agree or Strongly Agree	Post % Agree or Strongly Agree
I feel confident to handle challenging behaviors in the classroom.	63.2	75.0
I feel content at work.	73.7	68.8
I have the tools I need to handle problems that arise in the classroom.	36.8	68.8
If I don't have the tools I need to handle a problem that may arise in the classroom, I know how to find resources to solve the problem.	57.9	81.3
I know how to use the DECA program and its strategies to support the classroom and individual students.	73.7	87.6
Teachers in my early care and education program work well as a team.	78.9	75.1
I feel supported by the administration to implement the tools I need to handle the problems that arise in the classroom.	52.6	75.1
I feel management supports the social/emotional needs of the children in my classroom.	52.6	62.6
My job stress is high.	47.4	62.6
I have implemented the strategies suggested by my SNCC consultant.	n/a	80.0
The skills and strategies I've learned from my SNCC consultant have helped to reduce my job stress.	n/a	53.4

Table 10. Pre- and Post-DECA Assessment Results, N=178

	T-score M (*SD*)		Pre (%)			Post (%)		
	Pre	Post	Need	Typical	Strength	Need	Typical	Strength
Total Protective Factors	48.8 (10.1)	50.0 (8.4)	21.4	60.7	18.0	12.4	73.0	14.6
Initiative	48.1 (9.9)	50.5 (8.3)	21.9	64.6	13.5	9.6	80.9	9.6
Self-regulation	48.0 (10.3)	49.1 (9.5)	22.5	64.0	13.5	18.5	69.7	11.8
Attachment/ Relationships	50.7 (10.9)	50.2 (8.2)	16.9	62.4	20.8	12.4	75.3	12.4
Behavioral Concerns	53.2 (9.8)	51.4 (10.0)	27.5	72.5	n/a	24.2	75.8	n/a

Appendix: Measures

Adapted version of the Reflective Checklist

Date of observation:	Name of UPK Site:				
Time of observation (start/end):	Name of classroom:				
Name of observer:	Names of teacher(s) present:				
	Number of children present:				
DAILY ROUTINE	Almost Always	Sometimes	Not Yet	Not Observed	Comments
D1: Plan and maintain a predictable daily schedule (for example, provide a posted picture schedule and review it regularly with children).					
D2: Adjust the schedule as needed to respond to children and circumstances (for example, allow more time to explore something in nature that the children discovered on a walk).					
D3: Plan for smooth transitions (for example, model and practice how a transition will run).					
D4: Use daily routines as times to interact with children and support learning (for example, sit together, talk together, and ask open-ended questions).					
D5: Encourage children to take on a role during daily routines (for example, provide opportunities to do jobs that build a sense of community).					
D6: Individualize during daily routines and transitions (for example, using a gentle touch to remind a child it's almost time to clean up).					
D7: Invite children to be actively involved in planning and reflecting throughout the day (for example, help children make decisions about what they will play with, and talk together about what they learned).					
D8: Support children as they transition between home and the program (for example, invite comfort items, or sing a special song).					
CARING CONNECTIONS	Almost Always	Sometimes	Not Yet	Not Observed	Comments
C1: Give each child the opportunity to build a trusting relationship with a caring adult.					
C2: Display respect, warmth, and interest in all children (for example, call each child by name, use effective encouragement).					

	Almost Always	Sometimes	Not Yet	Not Observed	Comments
C3: Support children's growing independence by recognizing each child's strengths, efforts, and accomplishments.					
C4: Maintain realistic expectations for each child's behavior based on his development.					
C5: Help children learn the skills necessary to play and learn with others (for example, how to make a friend, share a toy, resolve a conflict).					
C6: Tailor positive guidance techniques to fit the child and the situation.					
C7: Involve children in setting a few important rules and guidelines.					
ACTIVITIES AND EXPERIENCES	Almost Always	Sometimes	Not Yet	Not Observed	Comments
A1: Plan and facilitate a few small group learning opportunities each day based on children's skills and interests.					
A3: Provide opportunities that promote cooperation and problem-solving (for example, simple games, partner pairing).					
A4: Encourage physical activity.					
A5: Offer a range of activities that support creative and dramatic play skills.					
A6: Include activities that help children learn about social skills and emotions (for example, play emotion games, use feelings posters on the wall, support the use of conflict resolution steps).					
My Examples/Comments:					
Overall description of the classroom environment:					

Teacher Survey (Pre)

Dear Early Care and Education Teacher,

The survey on the next page is being used for the purposes of program improvement for the UPK Special Needs Child Care Classroom Intensive Service. The information you provide on the survey will be kept private and only shared with Cuyahoga County's Office of Early Childhood/Invest in Children, Starting Point, and Case Western Reserve University. Your employer will not see your responses and no one at your place of employment will have access to your survey data. We will ask you to complete this survey again at the end of your involvement with this service. Thank you for completing this survey!

Today's date:
Early care and education program name:
Classroom name:
Your name:

<p align="center">INSTRUCTIONS:</p>

Please take a few minutes to complete this survey. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel confident to handle challenging behaviors in the classroom.					
I feel content at work.					
I have the tools I need to handle problems that arise in the classroom.					
If I don't have the tools I need to handle a problem that may arise in the classroom, I know how to find resources to solve the problem.					
I know how to use the DECA program and its strategies to support the classroom and individual students.					
Teachers in my early care and education program work well as a team.					
I feel supported by the administration to implement the tools I need to handle the problems that arise in the classroom.					
I feel management supports the social/emotional needs of the children in my classroom.					
My job stress is high.					

What are the specific challenges you are facing within your classroom that you would like to receive help with?

Teacher Survey (Post)

Dear Early Care and Education Teacher,

      The survey on the next page is being used for the purposes of program improvement for the UPK Special Needs Child Care Classroom Intensive Service. The information you provide on the survey will be kept private and only shared with Cuyahoga County's Office of Early Childhood/Invest in Children, Starting Point, and Case Western Reserve University. Your employer will not see your responses and no one at your place of employment will have access to your survey data. Thank you for completing this survey!

Today's date:
Early care and education program name:
Classroom name:
Your name:

<div align="center">INSTRUCTIONS:</div>

    Please take a few minutes to complete this survey. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel confident to handle challenging behaviors in the classroom.					
I feel content at work.					
I have the tools I need to handle problems that arise in the classroom.					
If I don't have the tools I need to handle a problem that may arise in the classroom, I know how to find resources to solve the problem.					
I know how to use the DECA program and its strategies to support the classroom and individual students.					
Teachers in my early care and education program work well as a team.					
I feel supported by the administration to implement the tools I need to handle the problems that arise in the classroom					
I feel management supports the social/emotional needs of the children in my classroom.					
My job stress is high.					
I have implemented the strategies suggested by my SNCC consultant.					
The skills and strategies I've learned from my SNCC consultant have helped to reduce my job stress.					

Please list the specific skills and strategies that you've learned from your SNCC technical assistance consultant to help manage your classroom:

Overall, how would you describe your experience with the SNCC Classroom Intensive Service?

Program Director Interview Protocol

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this interview. Please answer these questions as best as you can, there are no 'right' answers. If you have any questions or are not sure what I'm asking, please stop me and ask. At any point during the interview, you can skip a question for any reason – just let me know. You are also free to stop participating at any time for any reason.

If participant gave permission for audio recording...

Please remember that I will be audio recording the interview so that I can refer back to your answers when reviewing my notes. If at any point during our conversation you would like me to stop recording, just let me know.

Do you have any questions before we get started? (Answer questions if any). Okay, great. Let's get started.

1. I'd like to begin by asking you why you decided to participate in the county's UPK program. Walk me through, as best you can, your reasons for submitting an application to the county's UPK program?
    a) How long has your site participated in UPK?
    b) How did you hope it would affect your site, staff, children and families served?
    c) What were you looking to gain from participation? Did you get that?
2. What type of technical assistance and other professional development supports did you receive as a UPK site?
    a) Were you a part of the director network? If so, how would you characterize your participation in this group?
3. Overall, what do you think about the technical assistance and other supports (trainings offered through Starting Point, scholarship dollars, Ready Rose) your site received through the UPK program?
4. *[ONLY ASK OF UPK DIRECTORS WHO RECEIVED **SNCC CLASSROOM INTENSIVE SERVICE**]*. Your site received technical assistance from the Special Needs Child Care Classroom Intensive Service (describe the service here, if needed, to jog memory).
    a) What did you find most helpful about this service?
    b) In what specific ways do you think the SNCC Classroom Intensive Service supported teacher(s) at your site?
    c) Did you see any improvements among teachers/classrooms who received the SNCC Classroom Intensive Service? If yes, what specifically?
    d) What changes, if any, would you like to see to the SNCC Classroom Intensive Service?
5. What have you found most useful about participating in UPK?
6. As a UPK site, you participated in the program directors' learning network. Can you talk about your overall experience with this group?
    a) Did you find it helpful? Why or why not?
    b) Did you to share anything you learned with teachers at your site? If so, what?
7. Okay, thank you for those answers. I'd like to switch gears a little bit and talk about changes you've noticed as a result of participating in UPK. How has your site changed as

a result of participating in the UPK program? It what ways do you believe the quality of your site has changed?

8. Have you had any challenges related to participating in UPK? Is there anything that could make your experience in UPK better? If so, please explain.
9. What support/resources do you still need? That is, does your site have unmet needs that UPK could help address?
10. Do you think the families you serve are aware that they attend a UPK site? Why or why not?
11. If you had a colleague who was considering whether to apply to become a UPK site, what would you tell them?
12. Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experience that we haven't covered?

TA Interview Protocol

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this interview. Please answer these questions as best as you can, there are no 'right' answers. If you have any questions or are not sure what I'm asking, please stop me and ask. At any point during the interview, you can skip a question for any reason – just let me know. You are also free to stop participating at any time for any reason.

If participant gave permission for audio recording…

Please remember that I will be audio recording the interview so that I can refer back to your answers when reviewing my notes. If at any point during our conversation you would like me to stop recording, just let me know.

Do you have any questions before we get started? (Answer questions if any). Okay, great. Let's get started.

1. First, about how long have you been providing technical assistance for the original Special Needs Child Care program coordinated by Starting Point (the pre-Fall 2017 version of the program)?
2. What do you enjoy most about your work?
3. Overall, what are your impressions of the new SNCC Classroom Intensive Service?
   a. Do you find it effective?
      i. [*If yes*] How do you know it's effective?
      ii. [*If yes*] In your opinion, what's the secret ingredient that makes the service work? If Starting Point was only going to keep <u>one</u> aspect of the program, what should it be and why?
      iii. [*If no*] Why not?
   b. Could you describe a specific instance when you thought the service was most effective? *Probe for specific details about the instance*.
   c. What are the biggest challenges you face to implementing the SNCC Classroom Intensive Service?
   d. Is there anything you would change about the service? In what ways could the service be improved?
4. One of the aspects of the service that we are particularly interested in is the relationship between the TA (you) and the teacher. In general, can you describe the nature of your relationships with the teachers you've worked with through the Classroom Intensive Service?
   a. Can you talk about a specific instance when you felt the relationship with the teacher was particularly effective?
      i. Why was it effective? How did you know it was effective?
      ii. What was it specifically that made this relationship effective?
   b. What aspects of the service facilitate a positive relationship between you and the teacher?
      i. The Reflective Checklist? The Summary form?
   c. What do you find most challenging about working with teachers through this service? Do you have ideas about how this challenge could be overcome?
5. We'd love to know more about the other relationships you have as a SNCC TA provider (*probe on strengths and challenges*):

       a. How would you describe your relationship with the other UPK TA providers?
       b. How would you describe your relationship with program directors?
6. Is there anything else that you'd like to share that I haven't asked you about?

Well, thank you for taking the time to speak with me today about your experience delivery the SNCC Classroom Intensive Service. I really appreciate your openness and all of the feedback you've provided. We will use this information to improve the service going forward.