

# BUILDING A HIGH-QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM OF LEADERSHIP AND TEACHING PRACTICE

Sponsored by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation



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Year 5 Annual Report

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document serves as the Year 5 Annual report for the *Building a High-Quality Early Childhood System of Leadership and Teaching Practice* initiative (“the initiative”). Data summary reports with feedback on individual trainings throughout the year (e.g., Kindergarten Academy, trainings geared toward childcare providers and trainings related to COVID and better utilization of the OWL curriculum) are available in Appendix 1.

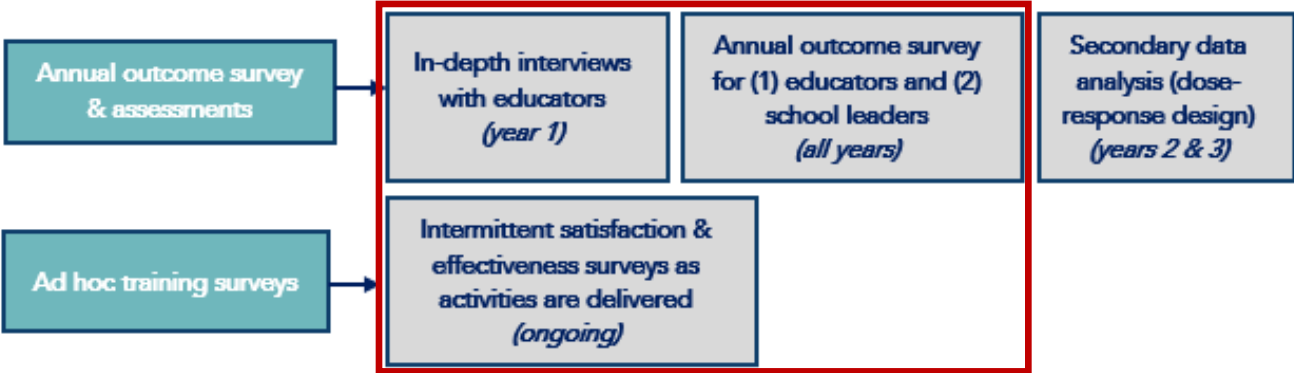
## BACKGROUND

The University of Mississippi’s Center for Research Evaluation (CERE) serves as the external evaluator for the initiative. CERE evaluated the first three-year cycle of the initiative (December 2016-November 2019) and is now evaluating the three-year continuation (December 2020-November 2023; thus, we are referring to this second year of the second three-year cycle as “Year 5”). The initiative aims to change the landscape of early childhood education across the state of Mississippi by training educators across all levels and roles about evidence-based teaching for early childhood. The initiative’s focus is not only on educators gaining knowledge, but also on their implementation of what they have learned in their districts, schools, and classrooms. Thus, the evaluation aims to determine the extent to which (1) participants **learned** from the initiative’s trainings and other activities, (2) participants **implemented** what they learned and (3) students’ **literacy** increased. At a higher level, the evaluation considers what **training** or **participant characteristics** impact these outcomes.

CERE used a mixed methods approach (see Figure 1) to evaluate the initiative. Data analyzed during this fifth year (in red box) drew from an online participant implementation survey, interviews with early childhood teachers and administrators<sup>1</sup> and ad hoc training surveys collected by the initiative (i.e., paper and online surveys). While publicly available student achievement data were not available this year due to COVID-19, we will use such data for future analyses once available. Evaluation efforts have been ongoing throughout the initiative’s five years, with a progressive focus shift away from training satisfaction (first cycle) and toward implementation and student outcomes (second cycle).

<sup>1</sup>While the original plan called for us to complete the educator interviews last year (the first year of the second cycle), COVID-19 hindered data collection and we were only able to interview Early Childhood Coaches. Thus, we supplemented with additional interviews, this time with teachers and administrators, this year.

Figure 1: Data Collection Methods



## FINDINGS

Using this mixed-methods approach, CERE derived the following high-level conclusions about the initiative's outcomes.<sup>2</sup>

1

Educators reported they are implementing what they learned during their training.

- We asked all educators who took part in the initiative to complete a **survey** about how much they implement what they learned in the initiative's training.
- Self-report data suggested educators feel they **regularly use** what they learned from the training(s) they attended.
- They tended to use what they learned in the National Institute for School Leadership (**NISL**) and three Opening the World to Learning curriculum (**OWL**)-**specific** trainings most, while they said **The Talk: Discussion for Childcare Directors** and **COVID-19 and Starting Back to School** least. Considering the content of the most-used trainings, we can conclude that educators are most likely to use what they learned from **hands-on** trainings related to **curriculum implementation** and **school improvement**. The least-used trainings were more informational, providing less “usable” content.
- Additionally, teachers, administrators and Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) Coaches who attended at least one best-practice training (i.e., the three OWL curriculum trainings, *Addressing Stress and Trauma in the Early Childhood Setting* and *Boot Camp*) reported implementing **best-practice strategies** regularly.
- Ways in which educators implemented what they learned in the training(s) they attended include: implemented content/skills **directly with students, shared resources and/or knowledge** with other professionals, **trained** other staff and enforced **COVID guidelines**.

Best-practice implementation refers to the use of early-childhood best practices (i.e., those measured by the CSS-T) by those who attended best-practice focused trainings (i.e., the three OWL curriculum trainings, *Addressing Stress and Trauma in the Early Childhood Setting* and *Boot Camp*) and provided perceptions/comments through our surveys and/or interviews.

<sup>2</sup>Detailed statistical results are available upon request.

- Information about **resources** available, implementing **centers**, practical/teaching **strategies** and **knowledgeable/supportive facilitators** were the most beneficial training components.
- Many benefitted from the convenience of **virtual trainings** and hope the initiative continues to offer this option in the future.
- Though the trainings offered through the initiative received high praise from the vast majority of survey and interview respondents, they further shared the following potential additions or changes: including/expecting more **interaction** and/or **participation** (especially in virtual trainings), a **reference/resource guide** and resuming **face-to-face** training.
- Ad hoc surveys developed and administered by the initiative further revealed which components participants found most useful for specific trainings. For example, a high number (84-91%) of **Kindergarten Academy** attendees were *Extremely Satisfied* with each of the four sessions' **organization, content, schedule** and **presenter/leader**. We report participant satisfaction and effectiveness ratings for other ad hoc surveys in Appendix 1.

3

Specific participant and training components appeared to increase implementation likelihood and self-reported implementation.

- Respondents who attended at least one **best-practice** training were not only **more likely to implement** what they learned, but also self-reported a higher level of **actual implementation** (i.e., high “use” scores for trainings they attended).
- Among those who attended Boot Camp, those with higher self-reported **capacity** (i.e., time, resources and skills) reported using what they learned from the **Boot Camp** training significantly more than those with lower capacity scores.
- Unfortunately, however, attending **Boot Camp** was also related to *lower best-practice implementation*. Possible explanations for this include: (1) differential level of Pre-K experience and professional development, (2) trainer and content differences and (3) Boot Camp attendees' strengthened awareness of what was involved in its practical implementation might lead them to self-report lower ratings for fidelity—ratings that might reflect a more realistic perception.
- For those who attended at least one best-practice training, higher self-reported **implementation capacity** positively influenced **best-practice implementation**. Those with higher **capacity** were also more likely to have a more positive **attitude** about the impact of implementing what they learned and come from a school with **cultural norms** (i.e., an expectation to implement what they learned and evidence of other educators using what they learned) that support implementation. We recommend efforts to improve cultural norms by

encouraging supervisors to attend trainings geared toward increasing understanding of best practices for early-childhood education and supporting staff implementation.

- Similarly, those who attended at least one **multi-day** and/or **best-practice** training tended to come from schools with stronger **cultural norms** about training implementation.

4

Most implementation challenges reported this year were related to time, resources, supervisor support/understanding required to implement best-practice early childhood education and COVID-19.

- Interview respondents further reported **contextual barriers**, largely out of supervisors' control, that keep them from being able to better-support their staff, such as: higher-level supervisors not understanding or prioritizing best-practices in early childhood, inconsistent rules/regulations, inconsistent support/funding for low-income centers and resources being unavailable due to COVID-19.
- Respondents with higher self-reported **implementation capacity** reported experiencing a number of challenges to a greater extent than those with lower capacity.
- Similarly, those without a **Bachelor's degree** in Elementary Education reported facing several challenges (e.g., lack of resources; misalignment of training and school/district procedures; and conflicting guidance from school, district, MDE, etc.) to a greater extent than those with such a degree.
- More **planning time, resources, pay** and **supervisor support** were among the most appreciated/needed supports.
- Respondents also experienced a high level of **COVID-19-related implementation challenges** this year; they suggested incorporating information for adapting teaching strategies for online and face to face, and shared resources as useful virtual learning supports.

5

Pre-K endorsement and certificate acquisition declined this year, which is consistent with last year's rates.

- While new Pre-K endorsement and certificate numbers had increased since the beginning of the initiative, numbers **declined** over the past two years.
- Program leaders Gena Puckett and Cathy Grace believe the recent decrease is likely related to **COVID-19** (e.g., educators had less time to devote to it, educators were hesitant to sign up without knowing the training modality, childcare center or school closed).
- They further noted that because last year was the original deadline for all practicing Pre-K teachers to be endorsed, it is possible the majority of those who require the endorsement or

certificate had already acquired it. Alternately, the number may be lower because the new deadline is now August 2024 and some may be waiting to participate until closer to the deadline.

### *Reach*

The initiative’s reach was extensive across the state of Mississippi over its five programming years. The following maps illustrate how many training participants lived in a particular area (see Figure 2) or worked for a particular district (for those that identified a district location; see Figure 3). Appendix 2 contains a more detailed summary of participants by role, based on implementation survey responses (n=172).

*Figure 2: Number of Participants by Residential City/Town*  
The initiative’s reach spanned across the state of Mississippi.

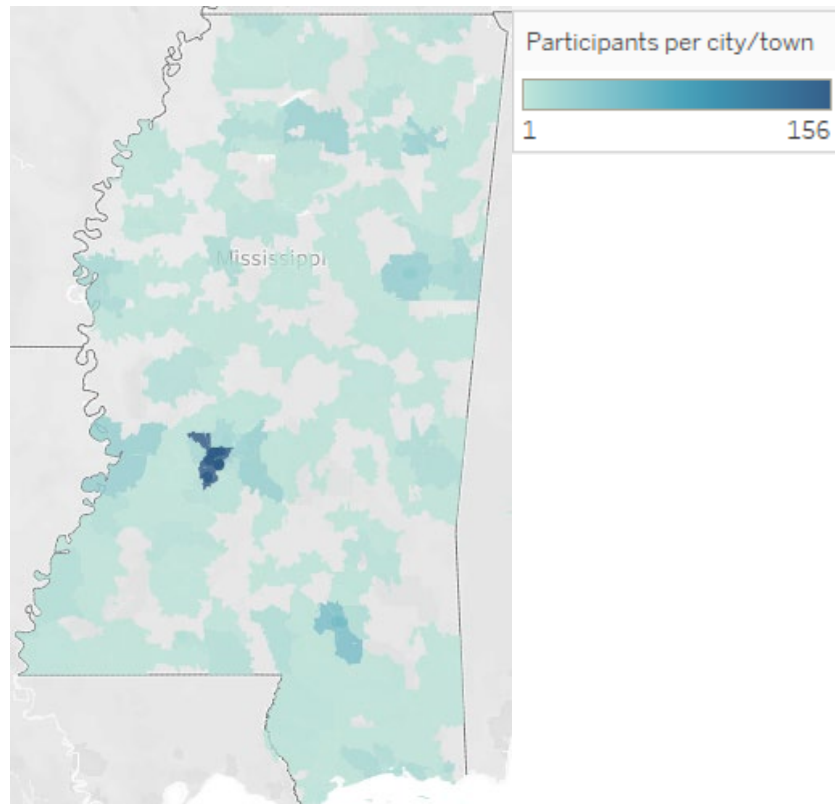
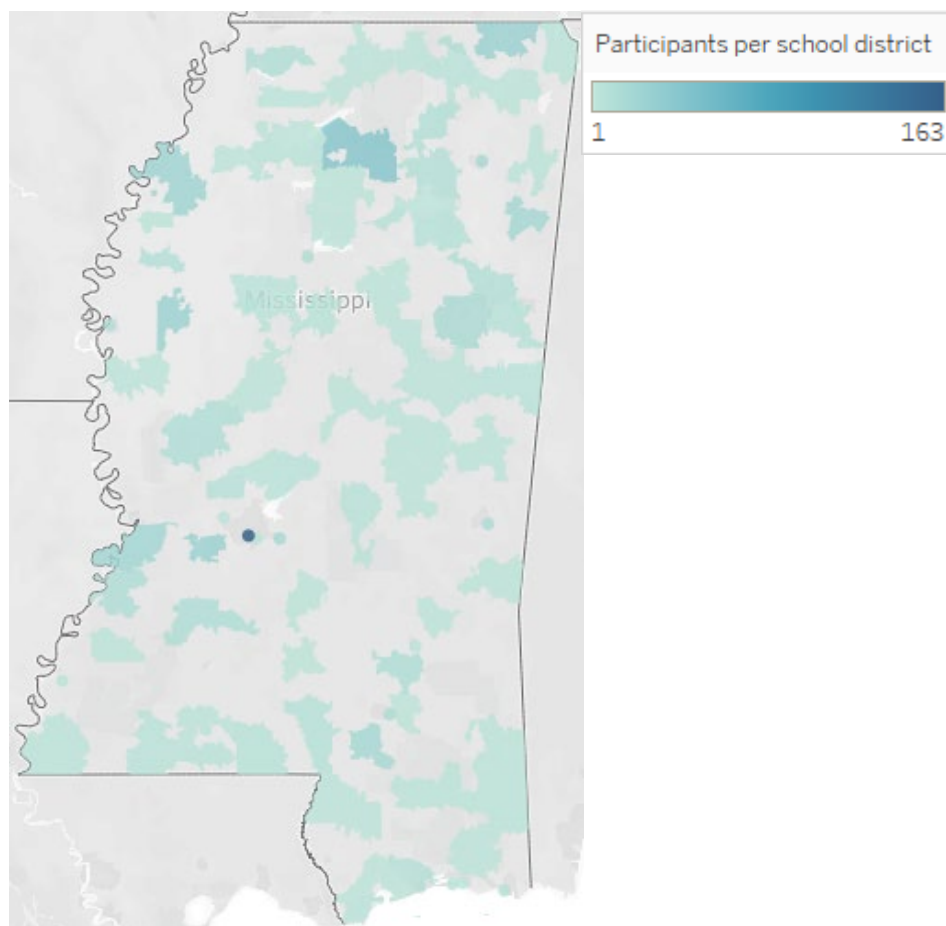


Figure 3: Number of Participants by School District

The initiative's reach spanned a wide range of school districts across the state of Mississippi.



It is important to note that the dark blue dot represents Jackson Public School District (JPS), which was the district with the highest participation (n=163). JPS is a target location for this Kellogg grant, as is Sunflower County Consolidated School District, which was also among the five highest-participating districts (24 participants). Oxford, Hinds County and Coahoma County school districts (25, 24 and 20 participants, respectively) rounded out the top five.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings, the evaluation team suggests it may be useful for the initiative team, and their funders, to consider the following recommendations.

1. **Continue implementation:** The initiative resulted in positive feedback and high self-reported implementation levels for training participants. Striving to include best-practice strategy content in all trainings should also increase implementation likelihood and actual implementation. Additionally, in previous years when standardized test



scores were available and analyzed, Pre-K students of participating schools showed a significant increase in literacy scores. For these reasons, there are data to suggest that continued implementation could further support literacy development across the state. Continued programming should include the following components, reported as most useful by participants: information about resources available, practical/teaching strategies, content related to using centers and knowledgeable/supportive facilitators. Continuing to offer an online training option, even when trainings resume face-to-face format, will encourage greater participation from those requiring more flexibility. Additionally, considering the content of the most-used trainings we recommend that future trainings include hands-on content related to curriculum implementation and school improvement. Trainings providing more informational and less “usable” content tended to be used least.

2. **Consider a hybrid training model:** With educator input suggesting they benefit from both face-to-face and online training formats, we suggest a hybrid model in which the initiative uses a face-to-face format for more-complex and/or hands-on content, while supplementing with follow-up online training to reinforce this content and encourage participation in more training hours. Online training viewed in participants’ workplace could also help generalize what they are learning to their own school/classroom.
3. **Encourage supervisors to attend trainings geared toward increasing understanding of best-practices for early-childhood education and supporting staff implementation:** The highest-reported challenges to best-practice implementation were lack of implementation time and resources. Supervisors are more likely to prioritize early-childhood best practices and implementation support if they have a good understanding of their importance. Additionally, our findings suggest that educators coming from work environments with positive norms regarding implementation (i.e., an expectation to implement what they learned and evidence of other educators using what they learned) were more likely to attend multi-day and/or best-practice trainings, both of which often resulted in a high level of implementation. As such, the initiative should also consider setting expectations about how they want to teach leaders/administrators to communicate implementation expectations with their staff, as well as how they can change their cultural norms regarding implementation through strategies such as sense-making conversations and incentives/rewards.
4. **Encourage and empower trainees to advocate for themselves in terms of implementation needs (e.g., time and resources).** With regard to any essential implementation support, research<sup>3</sup> shows that educators often need to ask supervisors

<sup>3</sup>Castro, A. J., Kelly, J., & Shih, M. (2010). Resilience strategies for new teachers in high-needs areas. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26(3): 622-629.

directly for things they need. In some cases, their supervisors have not provided these supports simply because they were not aware of the need. We recommend taking the time during the initiative’s trainings to not only encourage, but also empower, participants to advocate for themselves in this regard. Modeling and role-playing these important staff-supervisor interactions will help empower participants to advocate for the support they need.<sup>4</sup>

5. **Incorporate reflective learning<sup>5</sup> into shorter trainings to increase impact and implementation likelihood.** Though we have often recommended lengthening the initiative’s trainings and encouraging educators to attend more/longer trainings, we recognize that time constraints often make this unlikely. As such, incorporating reflective learning could maximize the effectiveness of shorter trainings by helping participants generalize from training to classroom and consider how they could implement what they are learning. When a training is short, it is important to incorporate reflection throughout the entire training, which may include warm-up activities that are relevant to course content while also meeting their social function, “stop and think” breaks after each phase of training and reflective follow-up emails. Though more training time is ideal, reflective learning techniques can supplement shorter trainings by helping participants envision and inspire implementation, while also helping them learn to adapt and find practical uses for training content.

## THIS REPORT

This report includes findings from activities and implementation during Years 4 and 5 (i.e., the first two years of the initiative continuation). We included data-summary reports with feedback on individual trainings throughout the year in Appendix 1.

<sup>4</sup>McFall, R.M., & Twentyman, C.T. (1973). *Four experiments on the relative contributions of rehearsal, modeling and coaching to assertion training.* *Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 81*(3): 199-218.

<sup>5</sup>Moon, J. (2004). Using Reflective learning to improve the impact of short courses and workshops. *The Journal of Continuing Education in the Health Professions, 24*: 4-11.

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# BACKGROUND & METHODS

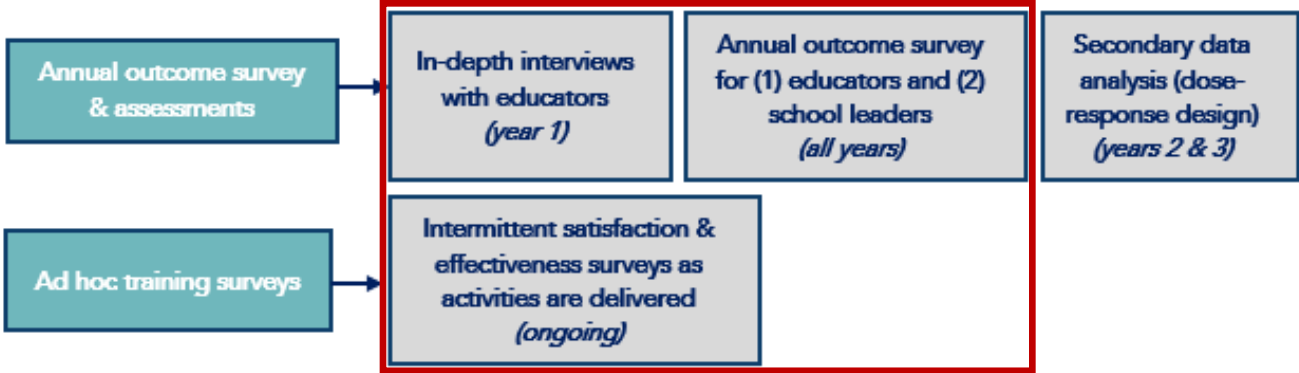
## BACKGROUND

The University of Mississippi’s Center for Research Evaluation (CERE) serves as the external evaluator for the *Building a High-Quality Early Childhood System of Leadership and Teaching Practice* initiative (“the initiative”). The initiative aims to change the landscape of early childhood education across the state of Mississippi by training educators across all levels and roles about best practices, state standards and guidelines and evidence-based teaching for early childhood. The focus is not only on educators gaining knowledge, but also implementing what they have learned in their districts, schools and classrooms. Specifically, Years 4 and 5 trainings focused primarily on supporting educators to implement the Mississippi standards and guidelines for evidence-based early childhood education and linking the Opening the World of Learning (OWL) curriculum to these standards and guidelines. Last year, trainings topics also included safety, budgeting and resources related to COVID-19, in an effort to help early childhood educators navigate this unprecedented situation.

## METHODS

CERE utilized a mixed methods approach to evaluate each component included as part of the initiative, and designed appropriate evaluation instruments or is utilizing evaluation data collected by the initiative. Evaluation efforts have been ongoing throughout the five initiative years. Figure 4 depicts the methods CERE is using to evaluate initiative elements throughout this three-year initiative continuation<sup>1</sup> and is followed by more details regarding this year’s data collection methods.

Figure 4: Data Collection Methods



## CERE-Developed and -Administered Surveys

- **Implementation survey of all initiative participants:** CERE developed this online survey, which focused on how much participants implemented the evidence-based early childhood education strategies they learned during initiative activities. It also examined participants' beliefs about their capacity/ability to implement what they learned, challenges to implementation and additional components that might support implementation. CERE distributed this survey online via Qualtrics at the end of Year 5, with weekly email reminders over the course of three weeks.



\*Consented, work in early childhood, completed a useful number of items and said they attended at least one training consistent with the official rolls.

Of the 174 respondents that met our inclusion criteria, 62 (36%) identified as teachers or teacher assistants, 37 (21%) as administrators and 73 (42%) filled other roles (such as Early Childhood Coach or Parent Educator). Two respondents did not report their role.

It is important to note that some respondents did not accurately recall which trainings they attended, according to the official attendance rolls. As such, we eliminated those that did not accurately recall at least one training (with the exception of those whose inconsistency was only in recalling the specific year—e.g., 2020 Virtual Resource Fair vs. 2021 Virtual Resource Fair—or specific title—e.g., Developing OWL Lesson Plans vs. Pre-K OWL Training—and analyzed survey responses based on attendance data from the official rolls.

Additionally, we incorporated validity items into the survey to screen out respondents who either did not seem to read the items carefully or tended to provide inflated responses despite the item's wording. Though we found that some response patterns were questionable, we elected to keep them in the analysis sample in order to ensure adequate analyses sample sizes. Please interpret the survey results with this in mind.

## CERE-Conducted Interviews

- **Early childhood teacher and administrator interviews:** CERE recruited interview volunteers through the implementation survey. We invited 47 teachers, teacher assistants, administrators (e.g., principals, childcare center directors) and online coaching recipients to participate in in-depth interviews to glean further insight into what they learned in the trainings they attended, challenges to implementation and additional components that might support implementation. We especially hoped to gain a better understanding of the context in which these educators work and how that context can support or hamper their ability to implement best-practice early childhood education strategies. CERE sent interview invitations weekly for at least three weeks at the end of Year 5 and offered a \$25 Amazon gift card incentive to maximize participation.



It is important to note that some interview respondents had difficulty (1) recalling exactly which Kellogg-funded training(s) they attended and (2) differentiating between what they learned/implemented from Kellogg-funded trainings versus other trainings. We attempted to weed this out from the official attendance rolls and what we know about the content of the Kellogg-funded trainings, but interview responses should be interpreted with this limitation in mind.

## Initiative-Provided Data

- **Ad hoc surveys:** Initiative personnel, with CERE input, developed short (usually 3- to 5-question) online surveys, which initiative personnel administered to participants following individual trainings. These surveys typically focused on (1) participant perspectives/feedback on the activity (2) knowledge gained through the activity and (3) perspectives on whether and how educators can apply what they learned into practice. Data summaries, developed by CERE, with findings from these short training-specific surveys are included in Appendix 1.

- **Licensure and certificate counts:** Gena Puckett provided Pre-K endorsement and certificate counts, which CERE used to determine rate growth among Mississippi Pre-K teachers and teacher assistants from the first three-year cycle to the end of Year 5.
- **Building Minds recruitment counts:** Dr. Grace provided Building Minds recruitment counts, by month, which CERE used to calculate range and mean from the program's launch in February 2021 through October 2021.

Note: Though we planned to conduct dose-response analyses using Mississippi Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (MKAS<sup>2</sup>) data this year, the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) indicated that 2021-2022 data were not available. We hope to conduct these analyses next year if necessary data are available.

## YEARS 4 & 5 ACTIVITIES

The initiative offered the following activities during Years 4 and 5. They held all trainings through March 2020 in Jackson, MS and then streamed the rest remotely due to COVID-19 unless otherwise noted below. We included CERÉ-developed data summaries with findings from most of these activities (\*) in Appendix 1. Note, this report covers activities held through October 2021.



### **National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) Early Childhood Series**

December 4-5, 2019; February 12-13, 2020 and April 2, 2020  
Principals



### **Research Series: Patricia Kuhl—Workforce Development Begins at Birth**

January 30, 2020  
Public



### **Development and Research in Early Math Education (DREME) Training**

February 20, 2020  
Hardin Scholars, JPS Pre-K Teachers, MDE Early Childhood Coaches



### **COVID-19 and Starting Back to School\***

June 8-10, 2020  
JPS elementary principals and administrators



### **OWL Curriculum Training**

June 11, 2020  
MDE Collaborative Leads, MDE Early Childhood Coaches



### **Using OWL to Develop Lesson Plans Based on MDE Learning Standards for Pre-K\***

July 9, 2020; July 16, 2020; July 23, 202 or July 30, 2020  
MDE Collaborative Pre-K Teachers, MDE Early Childhood Coaches



### **Revise Your Business Plan: How to Survive After COVID\***

July 20, 2020; July 27, 2020 or August 17, 2020  
Childcare Center Directors



### **Staff Orientation Decisions in COVID Times\***

July 20, 2020; July 27, 2020 or August 17, 2020  
Childcare Center Directors



### **The Importance of Being Counted: Census 2020\***

August 10, 2020 or August 18, 2020  
Childcare Providers



### **The Talk: Facilitated Problem-Solving Discussion Regarding COVID-19\***

August 21, 2020  
Childcare Center Directors




### **1st Annual Virtual Resource Fair\***

August 27, 2020  
Childcare Center Directors

\*Data summary with findings from these activities are in Appendix 1.




 **Pre-K OWL Training\***  
September 22, 2020; October 27, 2020, November 17, 2020 (4-part series)  
JPS Pre-K Teachers


 **Research Series: Camille Catlett—*From all to each and every: Resources and practices for supporting children of diverse cultures, languages and abilities, and their families, in the era of COVID-19\****  
October 23, 2020  
Public

 **Addressing Stress and Trauma in the Early Childhood Setting\***  
November 19, 2020  
MDE Early Childhood Coaches, MDHS Coaches and Home Visitors, First Steps Staff


 **Kindergarten Academy\***  
June 6-10, 2021  
Pre-K Teachers, Teacher Assistants and School Administrators

 **Early Childhood Specialized Training Program Boot Camp\***  
June 14-25, 2021  
Pre-K Teachers in need of Pre-K Endorsement and Teacher Assistants seeking a Certificate of Completion


 **Building Minds Resource Meeting\***  
July 31, 2021, Lee County Library  
In-Home Childcare Providers

 **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Virtual Resource Fair**  
September 30, 2021 & October 4, 2021  
Childcare Center Directors, Public

Leveraging her successful implementation of this Kellogg initiative, Dr. Grace applied for and received additional funding from other agencies (see Appendix 3 for a description and funding amounts). For example, additional trainings led by a Kellogg-funded facilitator, but with Governor's Emergency Education Response (GEER) funds include:

 **Introduction CLASS for Toddlers Training**  
August 25, 2020; October 27, 2020, November 4, 2020, December 1, 2020, December 15, 2020 or July 14, 2021 (Jackson)  
Early Childhood Academy, Health Department Staff, Childcare Providers

 **Introduction to CLASS for Infants Training**  
August 25, 2020; October 27, 2020, November 16, 2020 or July 14, 2021 (Jackson)  
Early Childhood Academy, Health Department Staff, Childcare Center Staff, Early Childhood Professionals

 **CLASS for Toddlers Observer Training**  
October 20-22, 2020 or October 5-7, 2021 (Jackson)  
Early Childhood Academy, Health Department Staff, MDHS Coaches, Childcare Licensing Officials, Resource & Referral Centers Coaches



**CLASS for Infants Observer Training**

December 8-12, 2020 or September 14, 2021 (Belden)  
MDHS Coaches, Childcare Licensing Officials



**CLASS for Toddlers and Infants Observer Training**

October 16, 2021 (Belden)  
Childcare providers



**The Healing Power of Optimism**

January 6, 2021  
Childcare staff, Public-School Staff



**Addressing Stress and Trauma in the Early Childhood Setting**

March 23, 2021  
Resource & Referral Center Staff



**Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes (ECHO) Meetings**

Ongoing, beginning in 2021  
Behavioral Healthcare Providers, Early Childcare Professionals

## FINDINGS

This section summarizes data relating to the following evaluation questions:

1. **Change:** To what extent is there evidence that the initiative contributed to its longer-term goal of shaping instructional practice and administration (i.e., the use of **evidence-based early childhood administration and instruction**)?
2. **Mechanisms:** Which **program components** appear to shape successful and non-successful outcomes?

We further summarize **perceived outcomes** for students and teachers as well as **licensure and certification** acquisition rates.

Due to lack of standardized-assessment data this year as a result of COVID-19, we could not currently address the evaluation question:

To what extent is there evidence that the project contributed to improving outcomes among Pre-K and K students as measured by standardized state assessments?

We will answer this question in future years when relevant data become available.

## EVALUATION QUESTION FINDINGS

We analyzed responses from the annual implementation survey and the teacher and administrator interviews to answer the evaluation questions. Rated survey items consist of response options on a 5-point scale where higher ratings reflect a higher level of agreement, thus all averages/means and outcome variable changes (for regression analyses) in this report are interpreted on a 5-point scale. Additionally, when analyzing survey data, we first conducted analyses for the total pool of respondents, then to answer the second evaluation questions (i.e., Which program components appear to shape successful and non-successful outcomes?) we ran comparisons based on:

- **training intensity** (i.e., multi-day vs. single-day, coaching-included vs. no coaching, total number of training days over the course of the year),
- **training frequency** (i.e., number of trainings attended over the course of the year) and
- **focus** (i.e., best-practice focused vs. not best-practice focused).

We also ran comparisons based on within-participant characteristics, including:

- **role** (i.e., teacher, teacher assistant, school administrator, childcare center administrator, other),
- **degree** (i.e., BA/BS in Elementary Education or not) and

- **capacity** (i.e., perception of their ability to implement what they learned).

Comparing respondents' scores in this way allowed us to explore whether particular types of participants benefited more from the initiative's activities. We were also able to test whether specific activities were associated with more (or less) implementation likelihood and self-reported implementation.

We further analyzed open-ended survey item and interview responses by coding common themes among survey and interview responses combined, as well as those evident in the surveys and interviews separately.

It is important to note that not all respondents answered all survey items, so the number of respondents varies for each individual item. Additionally, we administered best-practice strategy items only to respondents who (1) participated in a best-practice training—as we could not expect best-practice growth without this focus—and (2) work in a teaching, administrative or coaching role—as others do not directly influence strategy implementation in the classroom.



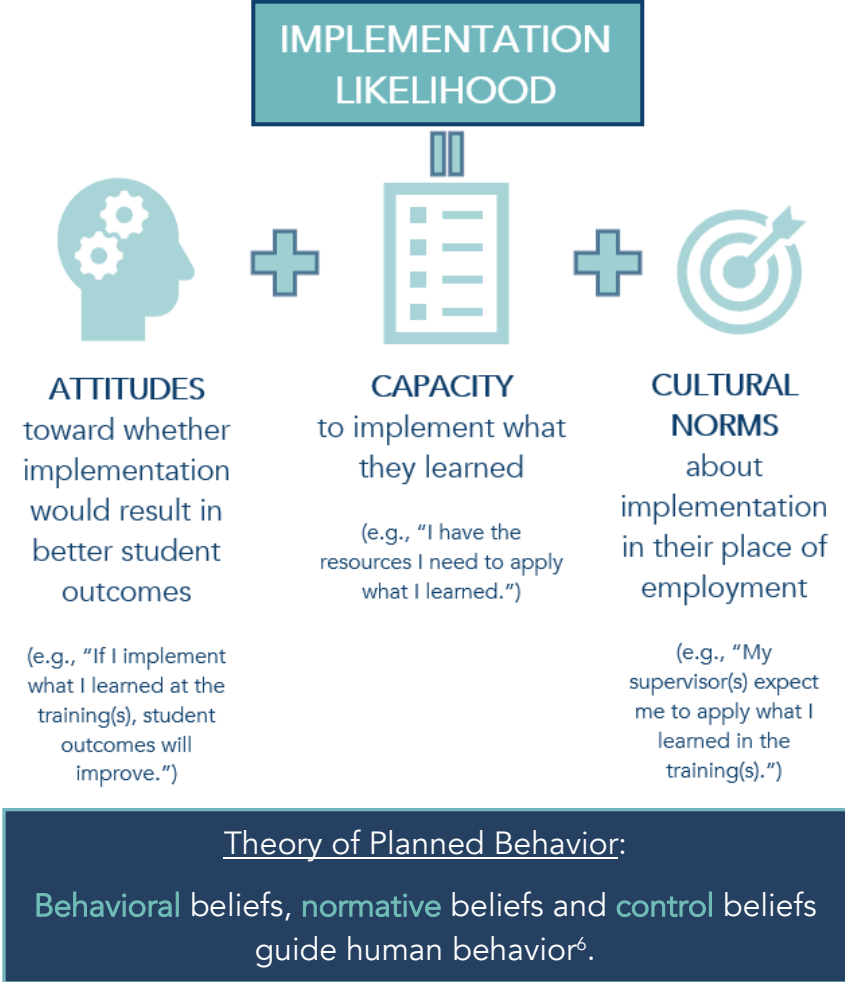
1. To what extent is there evidence that the initiative contributed to its longer-term goal of shaping **instructional practice** and **administration** (i.e., the use of evidence-based early childhood administration and instruction)?

### Summary

- Findings provide tentative (mostly self-report) evidence to suggest project participants felt not only likely to implement high-quality early childhood education, but actually did so regularly and in a variety of ways.
- Considering the content of the most-used trainings, we can conclude that educators are most likely to use what they learned from hands-on trainings related to curriculum implementation and school improvement. The least-used trainings were more informational, providing less “usable” content.
- Overall, lack of implementation time, resources (e.g., financial, material) and supervisor support/understanding (i.e., of early childhood education best practices) were among the most prevalent implementation challenges; relatedly, more planning time, resources, pay and supervisor support were among the most appreciated/needed supports.
- There were also some contextual barriers, largely out of supervisors’ control, that kept them from being able to better-support their staff, such as: higher-level supervisors not understanding or prioritizing best-practices in early childhood, inconsistent rules/regulations, inconsistent support/funding for low-income centers and resources being unavailable due to COVID-19.
- Respondents also experienced a high level of COVID-related challenges and felt tips for adapting strategies for online and face to face and shared resources were useful virtual learning supports. Offering a virtual option for trainings was convenient and should continue.

*Implementation Likelihood*

The annual implementation survey measured respondents’ overall **likelihood to implement** what they learned in the training(s) they participated in.



For the purposes of our analyses, we combined each participant’s answers into an overall **likelihood** score—i.e., a score that reflected how likely they are to implement what they learned—and also analyzed participants’ attitudes, norms and capacity separately.

On average, participants (N=173) provided high ratings for their overall **likelihood** to implement what they learned (4.19), as well as their **attitudes** toward whether implementation would result in better student learning outcomes (4.30), implementation **norms** in their place of employment (4.03) and their **capacity** to implement what they learned (4.26).

<sup>6</sup>Bosnjak, M., Ajzen, I., & Schmidt, P. (2020). The theory of planned behavior: Selected recent advances and applications. Europe’s Journal of Psychology, 16(3). 352-256. <https://doi.org/10.5964/ejop.v16i3.3107>

## *Self-Reported Implementation*

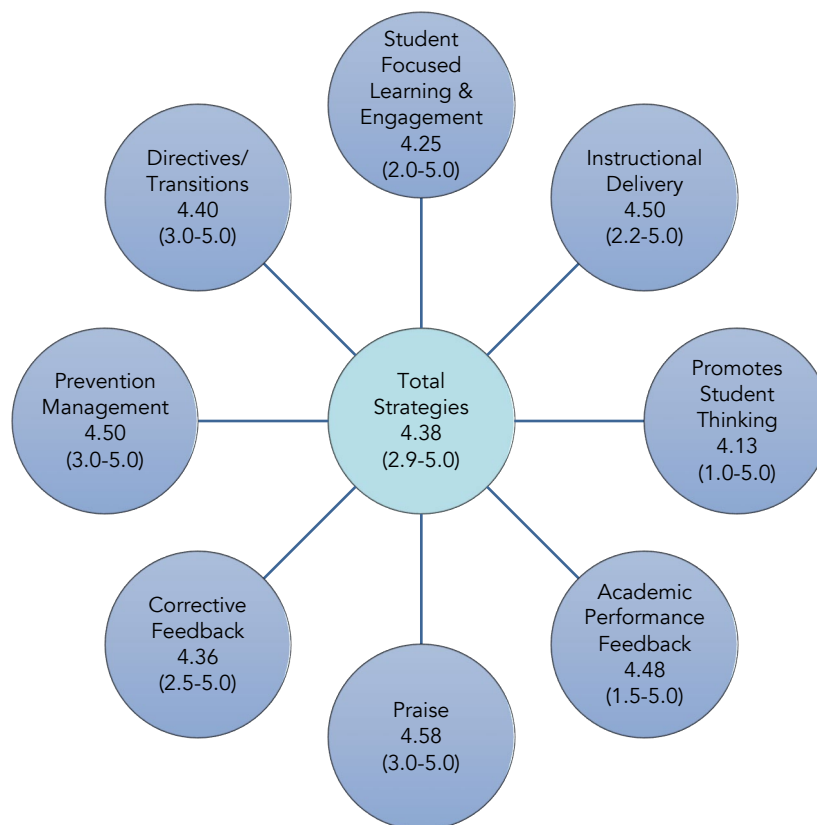
In the implementation survey, we asked educators how much they implement what they learned during their training. Additionally, we asked teachers, administrators and teaching coaches who attended at least one best-practice training to estimate how often they implemented (or in the case of administrators and teaching coaches, how much they re-teach, model or encouraged teachers to implement) each of 45 early childhood best-practice strategies covered in the Classroom Strategies Scale—Teacher Form<sup>7</sup>. These strategies, rated on a 5-point scale from *never use* to *always use*, are classified under eight high-level categories (see Appendix 4 for an overview of the specific strategies):

- **Student Focused Learning & Engagement** (N=7 strategies)
- **Instructional Delivery** (N=6 strategies),
- **Promotes Student Thinking** (N=6 strategies)
- **Academic Performance Feedback** (N=4 strategies)
- **Praise** (N=5 strategies)
- **Corrective Feedback** (N=6 strategies)
- **Prevention Management** (N=4 strategies)
- **Directives/Transitions** (N=7 strategies)

<sup>7</sup>Reddy, L. A., Dudek, C. M., Fabiano, G. A., & Peters, S. (2015). Measuring teacher self-report on classroom practices: Construct validity and reliability of the Classroom Strategies Scale—Teacher Form. *School Psychology Quarterly, 30*(4), 513-533.; Reddy, L. A., Dudek, C. M., Rualo, A. J., & Fabiano, G. A. (2016). Concurrent validity of the Classroom Strategies Scale—Teacher Form: A preliminary investigation. *Educational Assessment, 21*(4), 267-277.

Figure 5: Average Means (and Ranges) for Self-Reported Best-Practice Strategy Implementation (N=48-51)

Respondents report high levels of implementation in all best-practice areas.



Though all means were high, **Praise, Instructional Delivery** and **Prevention Management** appeared to be the most-consistently implemented, while there is room for improvement in the areas of **Promotes Student Thinking** and **Student Focused Learning & Engagement**.

Based on self-reported data, findings suggested that educators (N=136) felt they regularly **used what they learned** from each training, with an overall mean of **3.98** (5-point scale, ranging from “never use” to “always use”). They (N=3-38, depending on the training), tended to use what they learned in the **NISL** and three **OWL-specific** trainings most (100% *Often* and *Always*), and **The Talk: Discussion for Childcare Directors** and **COVID-19 and Starting Back to School** least (50% *Often* and *Always*).

At least **50%** of respondents who attended each training say they *often* or *always* use what they learned.

Considering the content of the most-used trainings, we can conclude that educators are most likely to use what they learned from **hands-on** trainings related to **curriculum**



**implementation** and **school improvement**. The least-used trainings were more informational, providing less “usable” content.

Interview (N=7) and open-ended survey responses (N=102) indicated that educators implemented what they learned in their trainings in various ways (see Appendix 5 for a summary of all interview responses).



### **Implemented content/skills directly with students**

Survey n=35, 34%<sup>8</sup>; Interviews n=7, 100%



### **Shared resources and/or knowledge with other professionals**

Survey n=21, 20%; Interviews n=4, 57%



### **Trained other staff**

Surveys n=17, 17%; Interviews n=2, 29%



### **Enforced COVID guidelines**

Interviews n=4, 57%

“I’m learning to maneuver more instruction [sic] my classroom a lot better than I did before the pandemic... We are teaching them to be more clean by allowing them to wash their hands, clean up behind themselves.”

“I have implemented what I learned by training my staff on it so they can apply it to lesson plans and ensuring that it also implies to the Early Learning Standards.”

“I have implemented more unique centers that pertain to the deficits and levels of my current class. I have broadened the classroom scope to apply more play to learn activities.”

“I have used the information concerning transition folders... to help private child care providers create transition folders for their 4 year old [sic] students. Doing this will help out Kindergarten teachers in our area.”

<sup>8</sup>All open-ended survey response percentages are reported as the number of respondents that endorsed a theme divided by the number of respondents who provided a relevant answer to that item. Interview percentages are reported as the number of respondents that endorsed a theme divided by the total number of interviewees (7) because all interviewees responded to all items.

When we split survey responses by training and respondent elements, some interesting trends emerged. For example, when split by **role** and **target location** (Jackson Public School District, Biloxi Public School District and Sunflower County Consolidated School District), data showed that all educators report a high level of content/skill implementation directly with students. However, using curricular information (e.g., content/skills) tended to be endorsed more by those in teaching and teaching assistant roles, as well as those working in target locations. Alternately, sharing with other professionals and training other staff were endorsed more by those identifying their role as “other” and those not working in a target location. This is not surprising considering “other” includes training-focused roles such as teaching coaches, university teachers/professors and educational consultants, and the audience for trainings in the target locations primarily included teaching and administrating roles, while trainings open to “other” roles often included participants in other locations.

We also found that those with **higher capacity** used what they learned by sharing and training others more than those with lower capacity. This is likely because those with lower capacity would not feel as confident in their ability to re-teach what they learned.

#### Implementation capacity = time + resources + skills

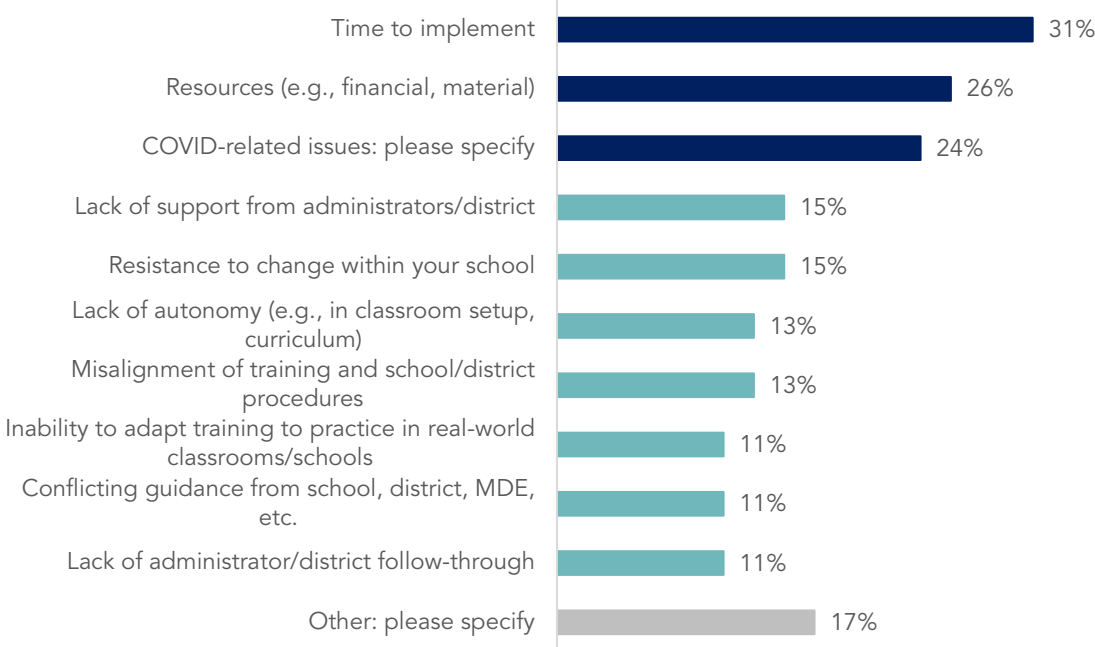
The initiative’s trainings aim to provide skills, but administrators need to prioritize best-practice implementation by providing the time and resources. They are most likely to make implementation a priority if it is expected and recognized and/or rewarded by others in the education system. Boosting expectations and incentives from the top down (e.g., superintendents to principals; principals to teachers) should result in more time and resources, and thus, higher implementation capacity.

When considering the information presented here, it is important to acknowledge the limits of self-report data, as prior educational research suggests educators typically report higher levels of implementation than objective observers.

*Implementation Challenges & Desired Supports*

Figure 6 illustrates challenges survey respondents faced in implementing what they learned in their training(s) to provide high-quality, research-based early childhood education.

*Figure 6: Implementation Challenges (n=86-151)*  
Time, resources and COVID-related issues were among the highest challenges to training implementations.



Of those that reported a high level of COVID-related challenges and provided further detail (n=14), **social distancing** (35%), **student absenteeism** (21%) and **mask-wearing** (14%) were among the most challenging aspects.

Half (n=3) of the challenges provided to specify “other” were also COVID-related, including **disinfecting** the building, **knowledge loss** and **restricting centers** to one student at a time. The remaining three challenges provided for “other” include:

- adding content to the curriculum,
- lack of knowledge or preconceived knowledge about centers-based learning and
- teachers being unresponsive to Early Childhood Coaches.

The interviews (n=7) revealed similar challenges to those reported in the survey.



### Lack of time

n=3, 57%



### Lack of resources

n=2, 29%



### Lack of supervisor support/understanding

n=2, 29%



### Implementing COVID-19 guidelines

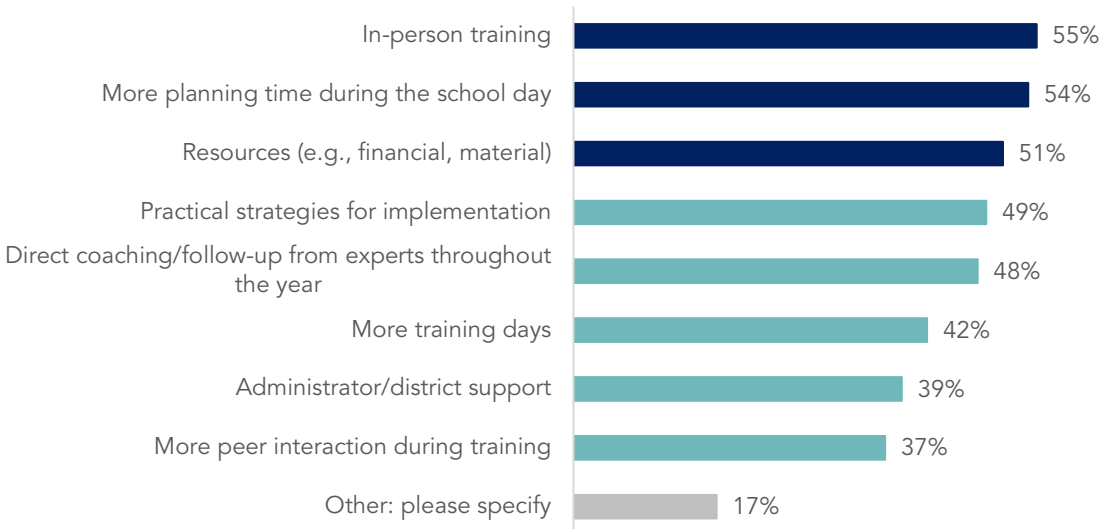
n=2, 29%



Survey responses further identified which training supplements would best support implementation, illustrated in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Implementation Supports (n=65-151)

More than half of respondents felt in-person training, more planning time during the school day and/or more resources would help support training implementation.



Only two respondents shared what “other” supports would be useful: “Partnered training” and “training at our schools.”

ANOVAs revealed a broader systemic issue, such that teachers—and to some extent teacher assistants—would benefit from more planning time during the school day and administrator/district support significantly more than administrators would (p<.01 and p<.05, respectively). Resources (e.g., financial, material) would help teachers implement what they learned more than they would for any other role (p<.01).

Interview respondents (n=7) shared supports they already received and found useful for implementing what they learned in the trainings they attended or felt would support implementation, if provided.

 **Resources (e.g., financial, material)**  
n=4, 57%

 **Supervisor encouragement/expectation to implement**  
n=4, 57%

 **Time**  
n=2, 29%

 **Higher pay and/or pay for off-the-clock work**  
n=2, 29%

"... to be able to pay my staff a living wage... There's a young lady in our program that would benefit from... She has a CDA, but I want her to have a true AA and a true BS."

"X is our director and she is an early childhood person, so she is super supportive... she'll go to our superintendent and say this is what we need to do. And thankfully, our superintendent has bought into early childhood. He's a proponent of it."

"...our city gives thousands of dollars to early childhood every year... We get us some personnel... It helps with furniture or a playground or anything like that."

"She come [sic] in and ask about it... 'What did y'all do? What did you learn? Anything I can do to help you?'"

Virtual trainings have their own learning and implementation challenges. Though slowly moving back to an in-person format, some trainings are likely to remain virtual. With this in mind, we asked survey respondents to identify components that can support and enhance such trainings (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Recommended Virtual Learning Supports (n=142)

At least half of the respondents indicated tips for adapting strategies for online and face to face and shared resources were useful virtual learning supports.



No respondents specified what “other” virtual learning supports would be useful.

When we asked interviewees (n=7) about virtual training supports, 43% (n=3) responded simply to **continue offering the virtual training option**, though two (29%) felt having more **technical support would be useful**. Other, more-specific supports were endorsed by only one respondent each (these can be found in the interview summary in Appendix 5)

“It relieved a lot of stress. And so, I hope that she will continue to offer those courses online.”

“There's so many that can't logistically get here for meetings, but they can be on the road and they can get on their phone and they can Zoom in with us.”

“When we do more face to face training, still offer the virtual option because you will have more people to attend... that will help some people that don't really travel.”

“I guess helping us use technology because we had a lot of ups and down with it. We was [sic] always trying to figure it out.”

## Interview respondents shared contextual barriers supervisors face in their attempt to support best-practice early childhood implementation.

Though some interview respondents shared challenges directly related to lack of supervisor (principal, childcare center director, superintendent, etc.) support, they—including some who are supervisors themselves—recognized there are sometimes contextual factors beyond supervisor control. Though each of these factors is reported by only one or two respondents, they provide insight into barriers that are difficult, if not impossible, for even the most supportive supervisor to overcome.

### **Example—District leaders do not understand early childhood education and/or do not prioritize play.**

"A lot of what the training that they're wanting us to use, some of it can be used in the Mississippi public schools. A lot of it can't be, not with what we are required to do today... Our children have to meet certain test score criteria at the end of the year."

"... If you're not in the early childhood world, which most are not at the district level, they really don't understand it fully. They think we just play all day and we're crazy... They don't understand the work... And you can say all day long, 'Oh yeah, early childhood is important,' but do you really know what all goes on in our building? in our level? They don't... They're asking, 'Why? Why do you need that?'"

### **Example—Inconsistent rules and regulations**

"I work with a lot of different entities and each one has their own set of rules... we have Head Start, which is a federal program. You have the primary school which is a state program. You have church-based preschools, which have rules there in the churches, in and of themselves. And then you have private childcare centers which have their own set of rules and Department of Health rules... 'Well, we can't do that because our federal regs won't allow us to do that,' 'This is because the church won't allow us to do this...' there's always something that comes up like we want to support you in this way and they're like, 'Yes, we want to,' and then they'll come back, 'no, our federal regulations say that we can't do that. We got to do dah, dah, dah.' So, we have to go back to the drawing board and do this. And they're constantly changing."

### **Example—Politics: inconsistent support/funding for low-income centers**

"There seems to be some resentment for the funding to a Black-owned-and-operated program receive... you see, when the governor is your boss and if the governor doesn't like your program, then there's a Catch-22. Department of Human Services needs to be under the purview of a board of directors, period. We don't need to be going through these changes and these politics with every election. And they all bring in their own people. And most of them don't know squat about how to operate a program, but they will sing loudly as though they do... if they award the Build Back Better funding, if that goes into the state of Mississippi, they'll just sit there and draw interest on it, I'm afraid. I don't know how that's going to be set up. I know the COVID- relief money was very poorly written. And the monitoring processes by HHS for the childcare development fund are a joke... So, they basically can do whatever they want to, whenever they want to. And the only way you can correct that, when they won't talk to you, or won't be honest with you, or won't meet with you, is to file federal complaints or lawsuits. And we don't have time for that. Everyone should be interested in the education of our children, regardless of race, regardless of gender, regardless of religion, we should all be interested in that, because that builds Mississippi. But unfortunately, that's just not the case... I think they need to get off of that trying to find a fault with the providers and they need to do their jobs, and that is provide childcare as a workforce support system..."

### **Example—Resources unavailable due to COVID-19**

"Not having the proper material to implement something due to when COVID came out. A lot of things that we were getting, we can't get, because the factory is not open, so things that we could get, we couldn't get.... I'd say for instance, this curriculum they bought. The material that we need we had to make a solar system out of the foam balls and we didn't have it... we didn't have what we need to actually do the activity, but we learned to improvise. So, we found something else to kind of implement the activities."





## 2. Which program components appear to shape successful and non-successful outcomes?

### Summary

- Respondents who attended at least one best-practice training were not only more likely to implement what they learned, but also self-reported a higher level of actual implementation (i.e., high “use” scores for trainings they attended).
- Additionally, those who attended at least one high-intensity and/or best-practice training tended to come from schools with stronger cultural norms about training implementation (i.e., an expectation to implement what they learned and evidence of other educators using what they learned).
- One interesting yet negative finding was that attending Boot Camp was related to lower best-practice implementation.
- Respondents with higher self-reported implementation capacity were more likely to have a more positive attitude about the impact of implementing what they learned and come from a school with cultural norms that support implementation. Unfortunately, they also experienced some challenges to a greater extent than those with lower capacity.
- Respondents without a Bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education also reported facing challenges to a greater extent than those with such a degree.
- Among those who attended Boot Camp, those with higher self-reported capacity reported using what they learned from the Boot Camp training significantly more than those with lower capacity scores.
- Overall, respondents reported information about resources available, practical/teaching strategies, content related to using centers and knowledgeable and supportive facilitators were the most useful training components.
- They recommended changing or adding to the trainings in the following ways: include/expect more interaction and/or participation, create a reference/resource guide and resume face-to-face training.

## *Components that Influence Implementation*

As noted at the beginning of this section, we analyzed outcomes based on a variety of program component comparisons: **training intensity** (i.e., multi-day vs. single-day, coaching-included vs. no coaching, total number of training days over the course of the year), **training frequency** (i.e., number of trainings attended over the course of the year) and **focus** (i.e., best-practice focused vs. not best-practice focused).

Though we did not find significant differences for many of these analyses, a few interesting findings emerged. First, Mann-Whitney<sup>9</sup> tests revealed that respondents who attended at least one **best-practice training** were not only **more likely to implement** what they learned, but also self-reported a higher level of **actual implementation** (i.e., high “use” scores for trainings they attended;  $p < .05$  for both).

Additionally, those who attended at least one **high-intensity** and/or **best-practice** training tended to come from schools with stronger cultural **norms** about training implementation (i.e., an expectation to implement what they learned and evidence of other educators using what they learned). Thus, a focus on improving school implementation norms could increase the number of educators attending multi-day and/or best-practice trainings.

One interesting yet negative finding was that attending **Boot Camp** (the only training with a follow-up coaching component at this point) was related to **lower best-practice implementation**. A multiple-regression analysis revealed that attending a training with follow-up coaching (which includes only Boot Camp at this time) significantly negatively influenced best-practice implementation ( $p < .01$ ,  $B = -0.51$ ). Bivariate correlations (analyzing the relationship between best-practice implementation and the total number of training days one attended, which is strongly impacted by Boot Camp attendance since it is a 10-day training) and Mann-Whitney tests (analyzing best-practice implementation based on whether one participated in a training with follow-up coaching, which, again, includes only Boot Camp at this time) supported this, showing negative correlations for four of the eight best-practice categories, as well as the relationship between Boot Camp attendance (see Table 1).

<sup>9</sup>The Mann-Whitney U test is a nonparametric t-test. It can be used to determine if there are statistically significant differences between an independent variable with two categorical, independent groups and a continuous or ordinal dependent variable

Table 1: Best-practice Implementation Relative to Boot Camp Attendance

A negative correlation exists between four of the eight best-practice categories and the total. Mann-Whitney tests identified lower best-practice implementation for seven of the eight categories and the total. Praise was the only category that was not significantly lower for Boot Camp attendees.

Best-Practice Category	Correlation Significance	Mann-Whitney Significance
Student Focused Learning & Engagement	.001	<.001
Instructional Delivery	.015	.009
Promotes Student Thinking	.003	<.001
Academic Performance Feedback	.053	.039
Praise	.054	.084
Corrective Feedback	.006	.003
Prevention Management	.074	.016
Directives/Transitions	.093	.015
<b>TOTAL STRATEGIES</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>

p<.001 p<.01 p<.05

Though this finding was surprising, as the Boot Camp’s training content and number of training hours should support best-practice implementation, we propose three potential explanations.

- Due to the purpose of Boot Camp (i.e., obtaining a Pre-K endorsement), participants were typically not already Pre-K teachers. Alternatively, the initiative’s other best-practice trainings were geared toward current Pre-K teachers. As such, participants of the other trainings likely had more Pre-K experience and professional development than Boot Camp participants; thus, they would be more likely to implement best-practice Pre-K strategies.
- Though Boot Camp is part of the Specialized Early Childhood Training Program (a partnership between MDE and the initiative; see p. 42), it is primarily run by MDE. As such, Boot Camp trainers and content are different from those from the other best-practice initiative trainings, which may account for implementation differences.

- Boot Camp participants may have reported lower implementation levels if the length and focus of Boot Camp led to a greater understanding of best-practice strategies, and thus, a more-accurate report of their actual level of implementation. In other words, those who attended the initiative’s other best-practice trainings may have reported elevated implementation levels if they were not as aware of what implementation should look like as Boot Camp attendees were.

The Dunning-Kruger effect:  
Those with low knowledge/competency in a particular domain tend to greatly overestimate their ability in that domain<sup>10</sup>.

We also ran comparisons based on within-participant characteristics, such as **role** (i.e., teacher, teacher assistant, school administrator, childcare center administrator, other), **degree** (i.e., BA/BS in Elementary Education or not) and **implementation likelihood** (i.e., comprised of their **attitudes** about implementation impact, cultural **norms** regarding implementation and implementation **capacity**—time, resources and skills). Comparing respondents’ scores in this way allowed us to explore whether particular types of participants benefited more from the initiative’s activities. We were also able to test whether specific activities were associated with more (or less) implementation likelihood and self-reported implementation. We summarize which components significantly influence implementation likelihood and/or self-reported implementation here.

A multiple-regression analysis revealed that high self-reported **capacity** (i.e., mean capacity score of 3.50 or higher out of 5) was a significant positive predictor of **best-practice implementation** ( $p < .05$ ,  $B = 0.51$ ).

Additionally, Mann-Whitney tests showed that respondents with higher self-reported **capacity** reported significantly higher **attitude** and **norms** ratings ( $p < .001$  for all). Among those who attended **Boot Camp**, those with higher self-reported **capacity** reported **using** what they learned from that training significantly more than those with lower capacity scores ( $p < .05$ ). Interestingly, those with higher **capacity** scores also reported facing several implementation **challenges** significantly more than those with lower capacity:

- Resources (e.g., financial, material;  $p < .01$ )
- Lack of support from administrators/district ( $p < .05$ )
- Misalignment of training and school/district procedures ( $p < .01$ )
- Conflicting guidance from school, district, MDE, etc. ( $p < .01$ )
- Lack of autonomy (e.g., in classroom setup, curriculum;  $p < .05$ )
- Inability to adapt training to practice in real-world classrooms/schools ( $p < .05$ )

<sup>10</sup>Kruger, J., & Dunning, D. (1999). Unskilled and unaware of it: how difficulties in recognizing one’s own incompetence lead to inflated self-assessments. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 77(6), 1121.

The idea that those with higher capacity would experience more implementation challenges is somewhat puzzling; however, similar to the Dunning-Kruger effect noted previously, those who implement more, such as those with higher capacity, may have a heightened sense of the specific challenges one would face during implementation because they experienced them themselves. Those who are implementing less would not have such a keen awareness of what implementation challenges exist, and thus, would endorse them at a lower level, overall. We include practical recommendations for alleviating some implementation challenges in this report's *Recommendations* and *What Do These Findings Mean* sections (e.g., training administrators so they understand and see the importance of implementation, expectations/rewards to show implementation is a priority, training teachers to advocate for themselves to get what they need to implement).

Mann-Whitney tests further revealed that respondents who do not have a **Bachelor's degree** in Elementary Education reported facing several implementation **challenges** significantly more than those with this degree.

- Resources (e.g., financial, material;  $p < .05$ )
- Lack of support from administrators/district ( $p < .05$ )
- Lack of administrator/district follow-through ( $p < .05$ )
- Misalignment of training and school/district procedures ( $p < .05$ )
- Inability to adapt training to practice in real-world classrooms/schools ( $p < .05$ )
- COVID-related issues, which appear from narrative comments to revolve around student absenteeism, social distancing and wearing masks ( $p < .01$ )

They would find administrator/district support & practical strategies for implementation to be beneficial ( $p < .05$ ).

Those without a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education likely felt that they experienced a higher level of challenges because their lack of related education left them less equipped to adapt to difficult or unanticipated situations. Thus, this group could benefit from degree-seeking opportunities/incentives and/or additional support and resources.

## Most Useful Components

Open-ended survey (N=112) and interview (N=7) responses reflected the following training components that participants considered most useful and/or recommend keeping:



### Information about resources available

Surveys n =13, 12%; Interviews n=2, 29%



### Practical/teaching strategies

Surveys n =15, 14%; Interviews n=5, 71%



### Content related to using centers

Surveys n=7, 6%



### Knowledgeable and supportive facilitators

Surveys n=4, 4%; Interviews n=2, 29%



When we split survey responses by training and respondent elements, we found that those who attended at least one **best-practice**, **high-intensity** or **coaching-involved** training *did not* tend to find **information on resources available** to be particularly useful. Upon closer examination of the responses that fell into this category, it appeared most of the comments were related to the resources provided at the Resource Fairs. It is likely that many who attended best-practice, high-intensity and/or coaching-involved trainings did not attend the Resource Fairs (as they tend to have different focuses and audiences), and thus did not receive information about the resources its attendees commented on.

Similarly, those who did not attend at least one **best-practice, high-intensity** or **coaching-involved** training *did not* tend to find **content related to implementing centers** to be particularly useful. This is likely because most trainings that focused on content related to implementing centers taught best-practice content, were multi-day and/or included follow-up coaching. Interestingly, those who attended **more than one training** also *did not* tend to endorse **content related to implementing centers**. We can only guess that perhaps these respondents had so much to choose from since they attended multiple trainings that content related to implementing centers was not at the top of their list. Additionally, **childcare center administrators** *did not* specifically indicate that they found **content related to implementing centers** useful, possibly because they were either already implementing centers using best practices or did not intend to change how their classrooms operate.

**School administrators** *did not* tend to endorse **practical/teaching strategies**, likely because they did not work in the classroom where these strategies would be most useful.

Aside from the most-highly-endorsed components listed above, no particular grouping endorsed a high level of any other useful components.

### *Components Participants Recommend Changing/Removing or Adding*

Implementation survey (N=32) and interview respondents (N=7) suggested changing or adding the following training components:



#### **Include/expect more interaction and/or participation**

Surveys n =4, 11%; Interviews n=2, 29%



#### **Include content that is useful for non-teaching roles**

Interviews n=2, 29%



#### **Create a reference/resource guide**

Surveys n =3, 8%



#### **Resume face-to-face training**

Surveys n =3, 8%

"And the breakout sessions are very important. Probably given more time in the breakout sessions for us to really talk. We like to talk, we like to share and we need a lot of time to do that peer to peer."

"I would love for the sections to become in person again!"

"I would nice to have a concise "guidebook" as a quick reference for ideas or subjects covered in the training."

"... sometime they don't go into depth on how serious a director/owner job consist of because you wear all the hats."

There were not enough survey responses for this item to split and analyze them by training and respondent elements as we did for other open-ended survey items.



## WHAT DO THESE FINDINGS MEAN...

### For teachers?

- If teachers are to share what they learned with their administrators (e.g., principals, supervisors, directors) and/or **encourage them to attend similar trainings**, they may have better success in being allotted more **time** and **resources** required to implement best-practice early childhood education.
- Similarly, teachers may need to **advocate for themselves** by telling administrators exactly what they need in order to implement what they learned.
- If those without a **Bachelor's degree** in Elementary Education could obtain such a degree, it may reduce the implementation **challenges** they feel they face.

### For school/district/childcare center leaders?

- It is important to understand **early childhood education best practices** (especially the benefits of learning through play) and support teachers with the **time** and **resources** required to implement them.
- If school/center leaders want their staff to **implement** what they learned in the training(s) they attended, they should consider sending them to training(s) with a **best-practice** focus and/or build **capacity** (i.e., provide the time, resources and training) necessary for implementation.
- Improving **school/district/center culture** related to implementing best-practice early childhood education may improve staff members' feelings of **capacity**, thus also improving their **attitudes** about the **impact of implementing** what they learned in their trainings and their **likelihood of implementing** what they learn if they attend **Boot Camp**.
- School/district/center culture can be improved through strategies such as **sensemaking conversations** (in this case, communication focused on best-practice expectations) and **incentivizing/rewarding** implementation<sup>11</sup>.
- Encouraging/incentivizing degree-seeking and/or providing more support and resources for those without a **degree in Elementary Education** could help reduce a number of challenges they face.

### For the initiative?

- Offering and encouraging attendance at **trainings for administrators** focusing on the importance of best-practice early childhood education could help alleviate implementation **challenges**.
- Similarly, by working with school/district/center leaders to improve **cultural norms** around best-practice implementation, you will likely attain higher attendance rates for the **multi-day** and **best-practice** trainings. You could **incentivize** improved cultural norms by **publicly recognizing** schools/districts/centers that exemplify best-practice early childhood education.
- You will also likely attain higher **training attendance rates**, overall, by keeping a **virtual or hybrid option**, even when trainings resume face-to-face format.
- Educators will appreciate if you continue to include information about **resources available**, practical/teaching **strategies**, content related to using **learning centers** and **knowledgeable/supportive facilitators** in your trainings, while also incorporating/expecting more **interaction** and/or **participation**, a **reference/resource guide** and resume **face-to-face** training format.

<sup>11</sup>Arlestig, Helen. (2008). In school communication: Developing a pedagogically focused school culture. *Values and Ethics in Educational Administration*, 7(1): 1-8; Deal, T.E., & Peterson, K.D. (2009). *Shaping school culture: Pitfalls, paradoxes and promises* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). Jossey-Bass.

## PERCEIVED OUTCOMES

When interviewed, teachers and administrators (n=7) shared potential student and teacher outcomes based on their personal experiences and interactions with students and other educators. In future years, when available, we plan to use Mississippi Kindergarten Assessment Support System (MKAS<sup>2</sup>) data to evaluate student outcomes and best-practice data to evaluate teacher outcomes.

### *Perceived Student Outcomes*



#### **Improved learning**

n=4, 57%



#### **Behavior management**

n=3, 43%



#### **helping students, in general**

n=2, 29%

"Going back to the play-based learning centers, the children have more freedom and autonomy and where they go in the learning centers."

"you'll hear them say, 'Oh, Ms. X, look at that—that's a P. That's the letter we [sic] working on. That's the color we [sic] working on. That's the shape we [sic] working on.'"

"It benefits them to get extra training, to kind of better help the children."

"Please let Kellogg know how much we appreciate the shared services and the mops and the classes because it has impacted us in a positive way and therefore, impacted children in a positive way."

*Perceived Teacher Outcomes*



**Working together to share ideas and/or determine what works best**  
n=4, 57%



**Behavior management ideas/skills**  
n=2, 29%



**Less stress**  
n=1, 14%

"I have to have a teacher next door to me... He said, 'Oh X, I like the way you're doing that. I'm going do it over here,' things like that. We share. I'll share with them the things that I have learned."

"I'm taking the knowledge that I obtained, sharing with them, and what we do is we kind of put it together as teachers and we do a what work [sic] and what didn't work?"

"... the way in which they've reacted with some of the children based on what I have shared with them from CLASS."

"... when the children are learning and they're having fun learning, then it affects the teachers as well. They don't feel as stressed."

## LICENSURE & CERTIFICATION ACQUISITION RATES

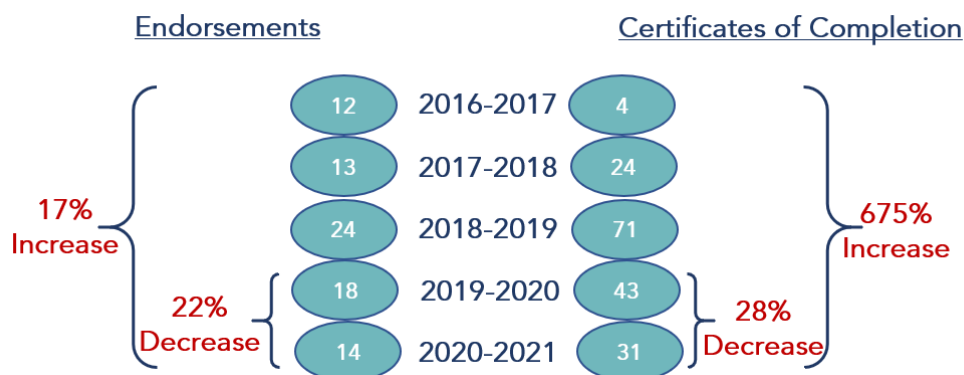
A key initiative goal is to support and increase the acquisition of Pre-K teaching **endorsements** in an effort to produce more Pre-K teachers in Mississippi. To do this, the initiative team developed the *Specialized Early Childhood Training Program*, a comprehensive training created to give licensed teachers a chance to obtain a Pre-K Endorsement. This consists of a two-week Boot Camp and continuous online coaching (both described in previous reports). Currently, this is the only free route to a **122 Pre-K Endorsement** for licensed teachers and a **certificate of completion** for teacher assistants employed by school districts to teach Pre-K.

A Pre-K Endorsement allows already-licensed educators to teach at a different grade level.

Gena Puckett, Education and Training Specialist with *the Graduate Center for the Study of Early Learning*, provided CERE with license and certificate numbers impacted by the Specialized Early Childhood Training Program. Figure 9 illustrates these numbers and how they have changed over the life of the initiative. Ms. Puckett indicated that the drop in participation over the past two years is expected, and due to more and more teachers already meeting the endorsement requirement. Additionally, she and Dr. Grace suggested last year that some decrease is likely related to COVID-19 (e.g., educators have less time to devote to it, educators are hesitant to sign up without knowing the training modality, childcare center or school closed, etc.). Alternately, they noted that the number may be lower because the new deadline is now August 2024, and some may be waiting until closer to the deadline. Looking forward, the program has 15 endorsement and 32 certificate candidates currently participating in the 2021-2022 cohort. We will report on how many of these obtain their endorsement or certificate in the Year 6 Annual Report.

*Figure 9: Endorsement and Certificate of Completion Rates*

Over the life of the initiative, the Specialized Early Childhood Training Program led to more new Pre-K Endorsements and Certificates of Completion; however, rates dropped over the past year.



## BUILDING MINDS RECRUITMENT COUNTS

The **Building Minds** program is a new component added to the initiative in February 2021 to provide **professional-development** support, such as information, resources and/or technical assistance, to **family childcare home providers** serving Mississippi children aged **birth to four years**.

**Family childcare home:** Defined by no more than five children not related, and an unspecified number of children related, to the provider.

To address a lack of knowledge regarding early learning standards and how to apply them in their family childcare home, Building Minds provides its participants no-cost age-appropriate activities and resources that are aligned with state learning standards for infants through four year olds.

The initiative recruits participating providers primarily through training and information sessions held throughout the year. In this first phase of the program, evaluation focused on recruitment counts, enumerated in Figure 10.

*Figure 10: Building Minds Recruitment Counts by Month*

Building Minds recruitment averaged eight new participating providers per month.



Thus far, from February through October 2021, the initiative has recruited 72 participants, with an average of eight participants recruited per month. Data show a monthly high of 13 recruits in May and June and monthly low of 3 recruits in September and October, with no clear upward or downward trend from the beginning of the program.

## CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The initiative provided a wealth of trainings for educators across a variety of roles throughout the state of Mississippi. Participants self-report a high level of implementation of what they learned and likelihood that they will continue doing so. Additionally, certain training and participant components appeared to result in greater implementation likelihood and self-reported implementation.

### KEY FINDINGS



**Information about resources available, implementing centers and practical/teaching strategies were the most beneficial training components.**



**Educators reported they implemented what they learned during their training.**



**Trainings with a best-practice component increased educators' likelihood to implement and actual implementation of what they learned.**



**Attending Boot Camp appears to be related to *lower* best-practice implementation, possibly due to (1) less Pre-K experience and professional development, (2) comparative trainer and content differences and/or (3) heightened awareness (and, thus, more accurate assessment) of best practices.**



**Most implementation challenges reported this year were related to time, resources and supervisor support/understanding required to implement best-practice early childhood education. COVID-19 also continued to pose implementation challenges.**



**Educators with higher implementation capacity and those without a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education reported a higher level of a variety of challenges.**



**While there have been positive gains in new Pre-K endorsements and certificates since the beginning of the initiative, numbers declined over the past two years, possibly impacted by COVID-19 and/or deadline changes.**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings, the evaluation team suggests it may be useful for the initiative team, and their funders, to consider the following recommendations.

- 1. Continue implementation:** The initiative resulted in positive feedback and high self-reported implementation levels for training participants. Striving to include best-practice strategy content in all trainings should also increase implementation likelihood and actual implementation. Additionally, in previous years when standardized test scores were available and analyzed, Pre-K students of participating schools showed a significant increase in literacy scores. For these reasons, there are data to suggest that continued implementation could further support literacy development across the state. Continued programming should include the following components, reported as most useful by participants: information about resources available, practical/teaching strategies, content related to using centers and knowledgeable/supportive facilitators. Continuing to offer an online training option, even when trainings resume face-to-face format, will encourage greater participation from those requiring more flexibility. Additionally, considering the content of the most-used trainings we recommend that future trainings include hands-on content related to curriculum implementation and school improvement. Trainings providing more informational and less “usable” content tended to be used least.
- 2. Consider a hybrid training model:** With educator input suggesting they benefit from both face-to-face and online training formats, we suggest a hybrid model in which the initiative uses a face-to-face format for more-complex and/or hands-on content, while supplementing with follow-up online training to reinforce this content and encourage participation in more training hours. Online training viewed in participants’ workplace could also help generalize what they are learning to their own school/classroom.
- 3. Encourage supervisors to attend trainings geared toward increasing understanding of best-practices for early-childhood education and supporting staff implementation:** The highest-reported challenges to best-practice implementation were lack of implementation time and resources. Supervisors are more likely to prioritize early-childhood best practices and implementation support if they have a good understanding of their importance. Additionally, our findings suggest that educators coming from work environments with positive norms regarding implementation (i.e., an expectation to implement what they learned and evidence of other educators using what they learned) were more likely to attend multi-day and/or best-practice trainings, both of which often resulted in a high level of implementation.



As such, the initiative should also consider setting expectations about how they want to teach leaders/administrators to communicate implementation expectations with their staff, as well as how they can change their cultural norms regarding implementation through strategies such as sense-making conversations and incentives/rewards.

4. **Encourage and empower trainees to advocate for themselves in terms of implementation needs (e.g., time and resources).** With regard to any essential implementation support, research<sup>3</sup> shows that educators often need to ask supervisors directly for things they need. In some cases, their supervisors have not provided these supports simply because they were not aware of the need. We recommend taking the time during the initiative’s trainings to not only encourage, but also empower, participants to advocate for themselves in this regard. Modeling and role-playing these important staff-supervisor interactions will help empower participants to advocate for the support they need<sup>4</sup>.
5. **Incorporate reflective learning<sup>5</sup> into shorter trainings to increase impact and implementation likelihood.** Though we have often recommended lengthening the initiative’s trainings and encouraging educators to attend more/longer trainings, we recognize that time constraints often make this unlikely. As such, incorporating reflective learning could maximize the effectiveness of shorter trainings by helping participants generalize from training to classroom and consider how they could implement what they are learning. When a training is short, it is important to incorporate reflection throughout the entire training, which may include warm-up activities that are relevant to course content while also meeting their social function, “stop and think” breaks after each phase of training and reflective follow-up emails. Though more training time is ideal, reflective learning techniques can supplement shorter trainings by helping participants envision and inspire implementation, while also helping them learn to adapt and find practical uses for training content.

# APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Data Summaries for Year 4 & 5 Activities (those we received data for)

# JUNE 2020 ADMINISTRATOR TRAINING: DATA SUMMARY



July 2020

Summary of Administrator Training  
Evaluation

Shannon Sharp & Sarah Mason  
Center for Research Evaluation, University of Mississippi

# JUNE 2020 ADMINISTRATOR TRAINING: DATA SUMMARY

*July 2020*

- This document summarizes findings from CERE and NMEC surveys of Jackson Public Schools (JPS) administrators who attended the *Implementing Pre-K and Kindergarten Using MDE Guidelines & Impact of COVID-19 on Staff, School and You* training via Zoom on June 8-10, 2020.
- The training was part of the Building a High-Quality Early Childcare System of Leadership and Teaching Practice project, funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.
- This document is divided into two core sections, each focused on data from one of these two surveys.
- *Note:* This document provides a brief summary of findings and may not report on all questions in the survey. Please feel free to let us know if you have specific follow up questions that you would like answered.

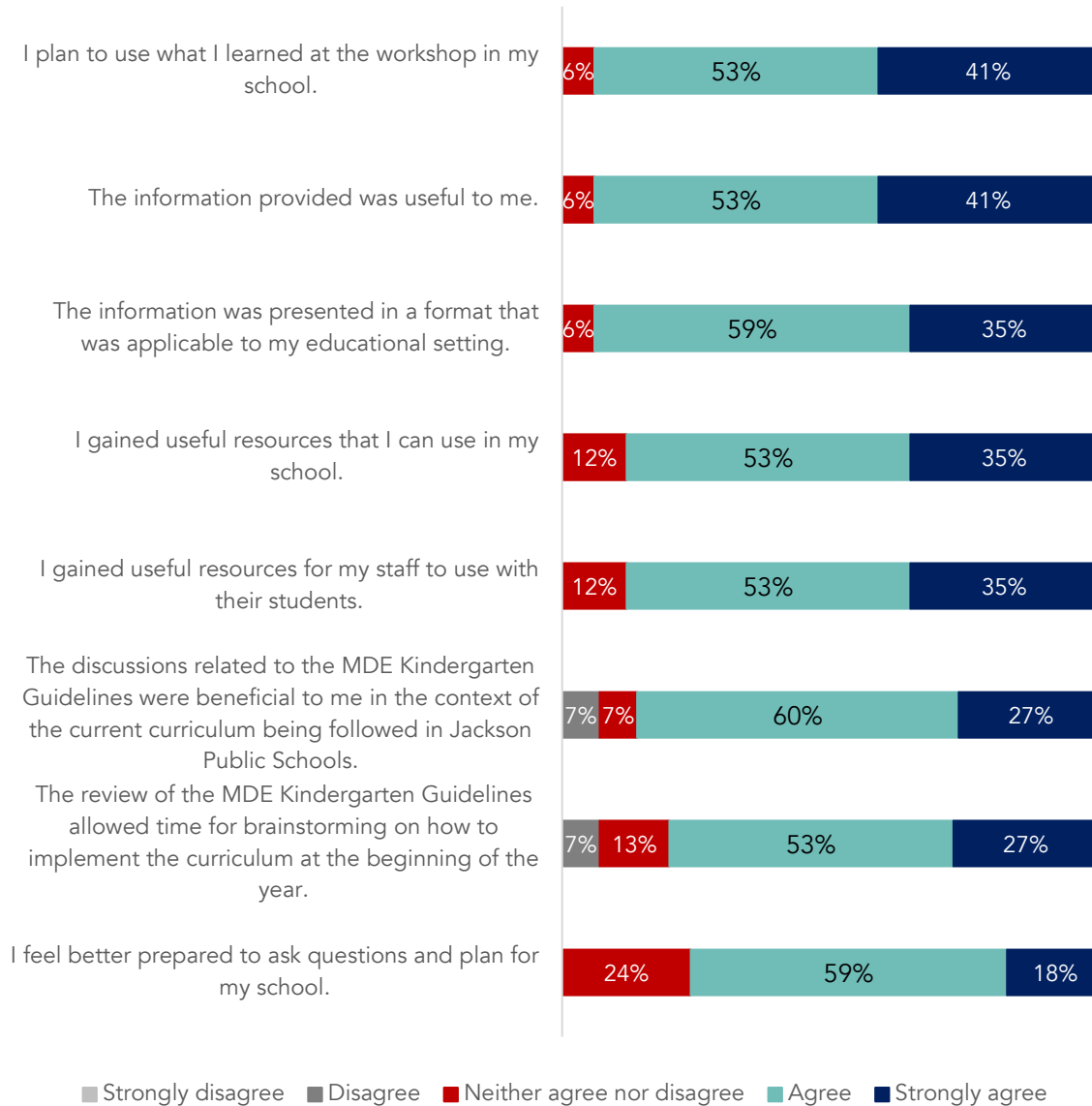
## Section 1: CERE Survey

- CERE administered a survey via Qualtrics in June 2020 following the training. Out of the 52 JPS administrators who attended the training, we sent the survey to the 47 participants for whom we had email addresses. Nineteen (37%) of these completed this online survey.
- We created survey questions to determine (1) relevance to participants, (2) knowledge gained regarding COVID-19, (3) plans for implementation and (4) practicality of the online workshop format. Key findings are described below.
  1. **Relevance:** Most respondents found the information provided to be useful and plan to use it in their schools. Some are unsure if the training prepared them to ask questions and plan for their schools.
  2. **Knowledge:** All respondents understood the potential sources and physical manifestations of anxiety for children related to COVID-19; however, over half did not know which of Maslow's needs should not be the focus when dealing with the effects of COVID-19.
  3. **Implementation:** All respondents plan to implement bathroom sanitation practices, limit mixing of children, implement a new "sickness" policy, and require students and staff to wear a face covering in their schools.
  4. **Online format:** Participants enjoyed the online experience and found it easy to remain engaged, especially when provided handouts. Some found the format to be difficult to take back to staff.

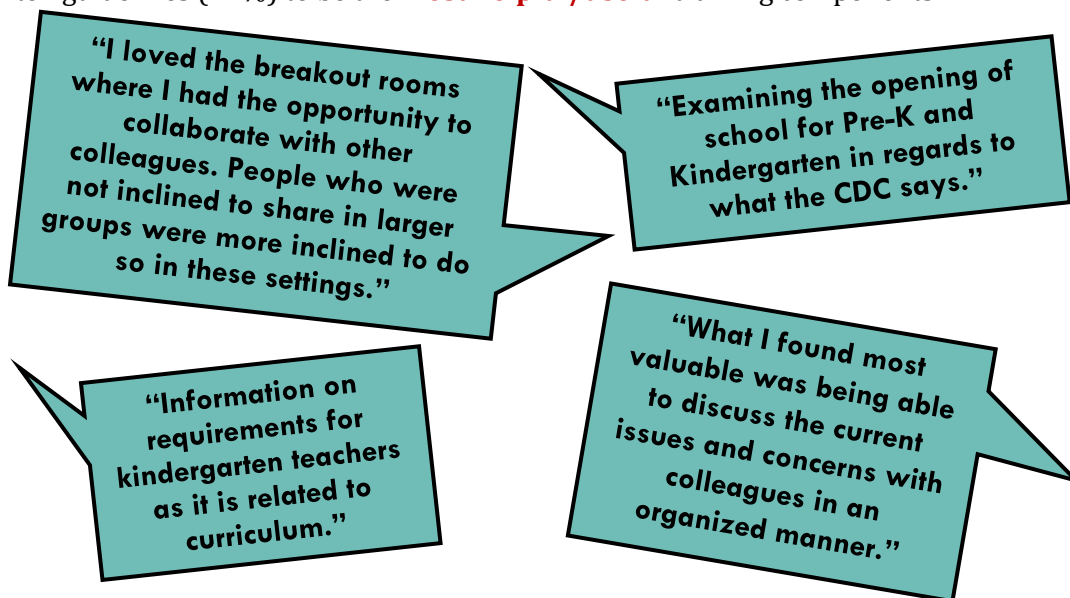
1

Most respondents found the information provided to be useful and plan to use it in their schools. Some are unsure if the training prepared them to ask questions and plan for their schools.

Respondents shared their thoughts on the training’s relevance and usefulness to them through the following survey questions:



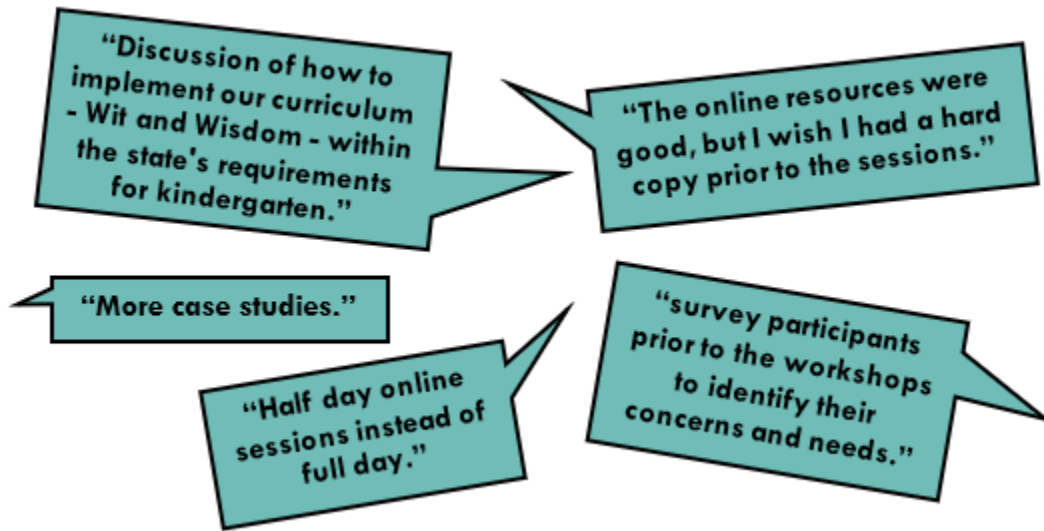
Respondents found the breakout sessions/group discussions (60%), CDC guidance (27%) and MDE Kindergarten guidelines (27%) to be the **most helpful/useful** training components.



They found the length of time online (38%) to be **least helpful/useful** training component.



To make this type of training more helpful/useful in the future, they mostly **recommended** more resources provided prior to the session (33%) and reducing the length online each day (33%).



2 All respondents understood the potential sources and physical manifestations of anxiety for children related to COVID-19; however, over half did not know which of Maslow’s needs should not be the focus when dealing with the effects of COVID-19.



**True or False:** Social distancing, heightened concerns about food scarcity, and lack of brain stimulation are some potential sources of anxiety for children related to COVID-19.

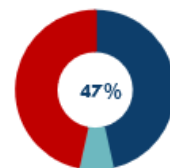
**ANSWER: TRUE**



Which of the following is not a likely physical manifestation of anxiety?

- A. Change in sleep patterns
- B. Lack of energy
- C. Increased hair growth
- D. Loss of appetite

**ANSWER: C**



Which of the following needs (based on Maslow’s hierarchy) should not be a focus while students and teachers are dealing with the effects COVID-19 has had on our community?

- A. Esteem
- B. Belonging and love
- C. Safety
- D. Physiological

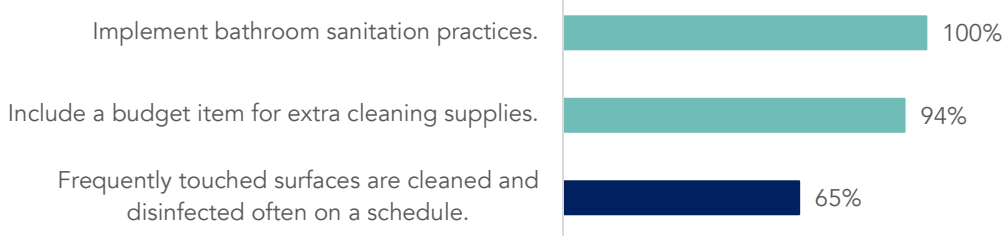
**ANSWER: A**

3 All respondents plan to implement bathroom sanitation practices, limit mixing of children, implement a new “sickness” policy, and require students and staff to wear a face covering in their schools.

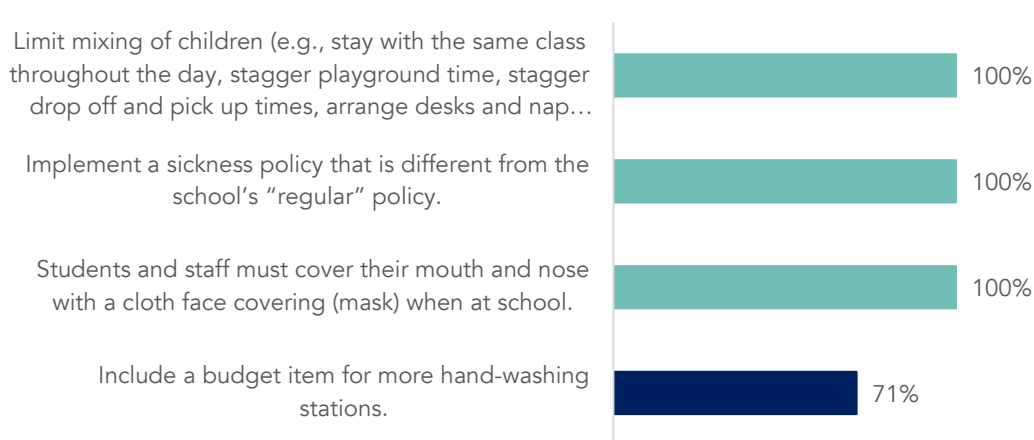
**Q:Which of the following hand-washing practices do you plan to implement in your school to help prevent the spread of infection? (Select all that apply.)**



**Q:Which of the following sanitation practices do you plan to implement in your school to help prevent the spread of infection? (Select all that apply.)**



**Q:Which of the following policy changes do you plan to implement in your school to help prevent the spread of infection? (Select all that apply.)**

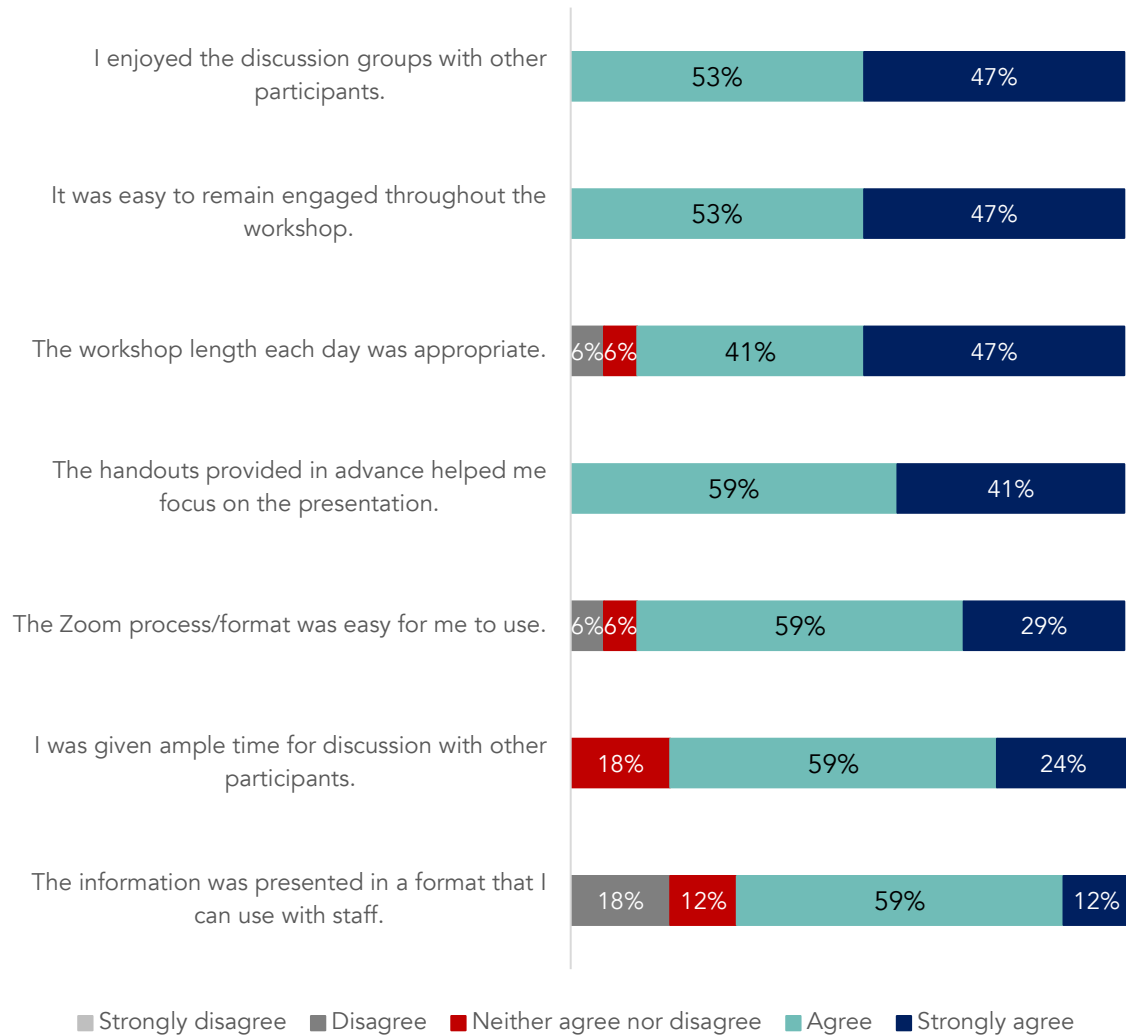




4

Participants enjoyed the online experience and found it easy to remain engaged, especially when provided handouts. Some found the format to be difficult to take back to staff.

Respondents shared their thoughts on the online workshop experience through the following survey questions:

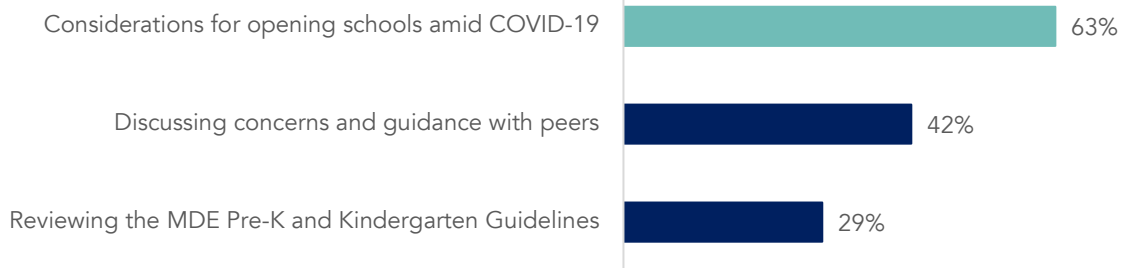


## Section 2: NMEC Survey

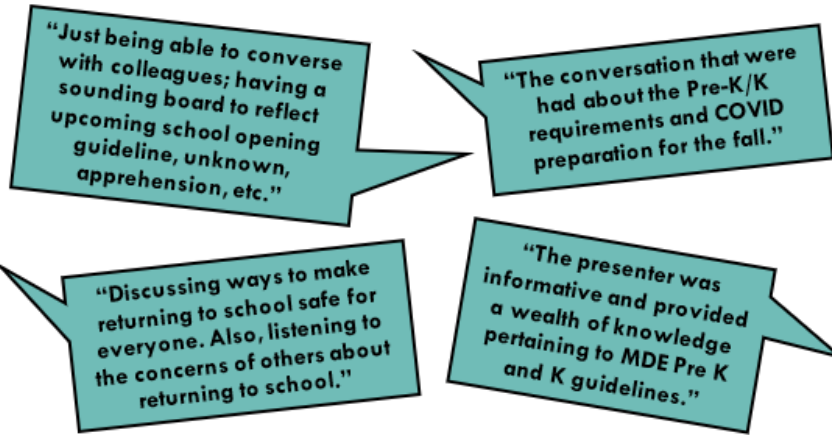
- The second part of this document summarizes findings from NMEC’s survey.
- Shortly after the training, the facilitators emailed the survey to participants who then completed it and emailed it back. Of the 52 JPS administrators who attended this training, 27 (52%) completed the survey.
- Survey questions focused on (1) relevance to participants, (2) satisfaction with organizational elements and (3) satisfaction with the trainer. They could also comment specifically on each item and on one open-ended value-based question. Key findings are described below.
  1. **Value:** Respondents found the following training elements to be most valuable: discussing concerns and guidance with their peers, considerations for opening schools amid COVID-19, and reviewing the MDE Pre-K and Kindergarten Guidelines.
  2. **Relevance:** Respondents found the training and supporting materials to be relevant, informative and useful to them.
  3. **Organizational elements:** Respondents were engaged and able to learn from the training’s format.
  4. **Trainer:** Respondents found the trainer to be approachable, organized, prepared and an expert on the topic.

1 Respondents found the following training elements to be most valuable: discussing concerns and guidance with their peers, considerations for opening schools amid COVID-19, and reviewing the MDE Pre-K and Kindergarten Guidelines.

### The most common themes from the open-ended question: What was the most valuable for you today?



These are some of the responses regarding the most valuable training elements:



2

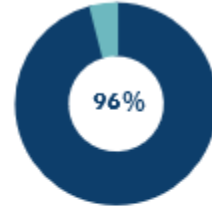
Respondents found the training and supporting materials to be relevant, informative and useful to them.



**Agree or Strongly Agree**  
"The materials used were user-friendly and informative."



**Agree or Strongly Agree**  
"Materials used were relevant, meaningful, and supported learning objectives."



**Agree or Strongly Agree**  
"The content presented was relevant, useful and supported learning objectives."

Respondents made the following comments about the relevance of the training's information, activities, and materials:



3

Respondents were engaged and able to learn from the training's format.

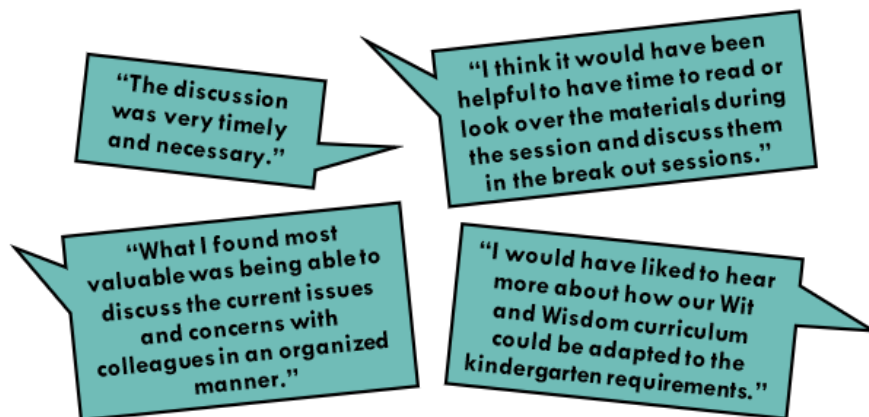


**Agree or Strongly Agree**  
"The ratio of lecture to discussions/activities was appropriate and useful for my learning."



**Agree or Strongly Agree**  
"The discussions and activities were engaging and interactive."

Respondents made the following comments about how the training was organized and executed:



4

The respondents found the trainer to be approachable, organized, prepared and an expert on the topic.



**Agree or Strongly Agree**  
"Trainer demonstrated expert knowledge of content presented and was organized and prepared."



**Agree or Strongly Agree**  
"The interaction between participants and trainer(s) was appropriate and comfortable for the purpose of the workshop."



**Agree or Strongly Agree**  
"Facilitator effectively managed group discussions and activities."



**Agree or Strongly Agree**  
"Facilitator followed schedule (arrival, departure, break, etc.)."

Respondents made the following comments about the trainer, Dr. Cathy Grace:



### Summary:

- Overall, participants found the training to be relevant, specifically gaining value from collaborating with peers, considering how to re-open schools amid COVID-19 and reviewing the MDE Pre-K and Kindergarten guidelines. At the same time, some are unsure about whether the training prepared them to immediately plan for their schools.
- They gained important knowledge about potential sources and physical manifestations of anxiety in children with regards to COVID-19, though many failed to relate this appropriately to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.
- Participants intend to implement what they learned and make changes in their schools to reduce COVID-19 exposure.
- They responded favorably to the trainer and the online learning format, indicating that they were able to remain engaged and learn, especially when provided handouts; however, some believe it will be difficult to re-teach this information to their staff.

# JULY/AUGUST 2020 ACTIVITIES: DATA SUMMARY



September 2020

Summary of July & August Activity  
Evaluations

Shannon Sharp & Sarah Mason  
Center for Research Evaluation, University of Mississippi



# JULY/AUGUST 2020 ACTIVITIES: DATA SUMMARY

## *September 2020*

- In this document, we summarize findings from Center for Research Evaluation (CERE) and North Mississippi Education Consortium (NMEC) surveys of various activities offered in July and August 2020 via Zoom.
- These activities were part of the Building a High-Quality Early Childcare System of Leadership and Teaching Practice project, funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.
- We divided this document into six core sections, focused on the evaluation components of the following activities:
  1. **OWL Curriculum** Training for MDE Collaborative Pre-K Teachers and Coaches
  2. **Business Plan** and **Staff Orientation** Training for Childcare Directors
  3. **Census** Training for Childcare Providers
  4. **“The Talk”** Discussion for Childcare Directors
  5. **Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)** Training for Early Childhood Academy and Health Department Staff
  6. **Virtual Resource Fair** for Childcare Directors
- CERE and NMEC deliberately designed all surveys analyzed in this document to be short and easy to respond to in an effort to increase response rates and respect participants’ time as they plan for the upcoming school year—particularly within the current context.
- Using Kirkpatrick’s (2006)<sup>1</sup> four-level training evaluation model as a guide, survey questions focused on the first three of these levels: (1) participant **reactions** to the training, (2) participant self-reports on what they have **learned** and (3) participant reports on how they plan to **use** what they learned in everyday practice. Given that we administered surveys shortly after training occurred, these data do not reflect (1) whether/how participants actually used the training material and (2) the **results** that flow from attending the training sessions.
- We do not report on response rates for surveys administered by NMEC because we do not know how many participants they sent surveys to. We do, however, provide the total number of responses used for analysis.

<sup>1</sup> Kirkpatrick, D., & Kirkpatrick, J. (2006). *Evaluating training programs: The four levels*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

- *Note:* In this document, we provide a brief summary of findings and may not report on all questions in the survey. Please feel free to let us know if you have specific follow up questions that you would like answered. At a high level, the data show:
  - Participants responded favorably to the activities, indicating that they felt they learned new information that they would use in their work with children.
  - The OWL Curriculum training for MDE Collaborative Pre-K Teachers and Coaches could be improved, according to the final survey, which indicates that some participants did not feel they gained knowledge about the OWL Curriculum and its resources, nor would the information be useful for lesson planning. Some also felt that the delivery style was not well-balanced.

### Section 1: OWL Curriculum Training for MDE Collaborative Pre-K Teachers and Coaches

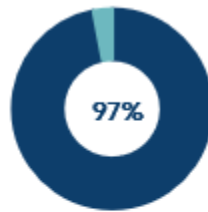
- Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) Pre-K Collaborative teachers and coaches participated in a four-session training on developing lesson plans based on the Opening the World of Learning (OWL) Curriculum. Sessions took place virtually once per week throughout July 2020.
- The OWL Curriculum “offers learning experiences and materials that develop language and early literacy skills in the context of content areas, such as math, science, and social studies. The curriculum is organized around eight thematic units that include daily lesson plans for whole group activities, small group activities, and learning centers.”<sup>2</sup>
- NMEC developed and administered **session surveys** via SurveyMonkey after each of the four training sessions. The following number of participants completed each survey: Session 1 = 86, Session 2 = 35, Session 3 = 106, Session 4 = 89.
- CERE developed and administered a final survey via Qualtrics in August 2020 to all participants following the four training sessions. Fifteen of the 132 attendee emails failed or bounced, leaving 117 surveys sent. Thirty-six (31%) of these completed this online survey.
- **Key Findings:** Most respondents gained a more in-depth knowledge of the OWL Curriculum and its resources, and plan to use what they learned for lesson planning and working with children and families.

**SESSION 1:** The vast majority of respondents learned something new and useful. All respondents felt they were given the opportunity to provide feedback about the training and could ask questions. The majority of respondents found explanations about the resource material and conducting OWL assessments to be useful.

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families. (2019, March 25). *Opening the World of Learning™ (OWL)* ©2014. Head Start: Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/curriculum/consumer-report/curricula/opening-world-learning-owl-2014>



Have you learned anything new today about the format of the OWL resource materials?

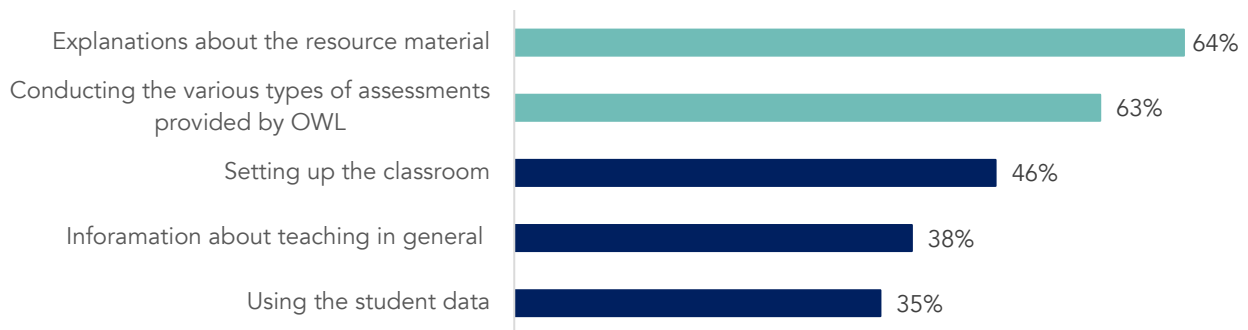


Did you get information that will be useful in your role as a teacher/assistant teacher/administrator?



Did you feel that you were given opportunities for feedback and asking questions?

What information did you find useful for your role as a teacher/assistant teacher/administrator from the OWL information? (Check all that apply.)



**SESSION 2:** All of the respondents feel they have a better understanding of the OWL teaching guide how it was formatted. Session leaders presented the interactive materials in a way that allows participants to use them in their daily teaching when engaged with children.



Do you have a better working knowledge of the OWL teacher's guide and the rationale for the way it is formatted?



Has the interactive portion of the curriculum materials been presented in a way that allows you to embed it in your daily teaching?

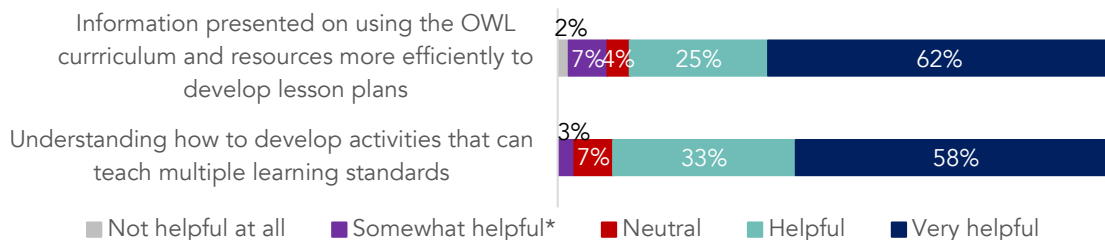


Do you have a better idea on how to use it as a teacher when engaged with children?

■ Yes ■ No

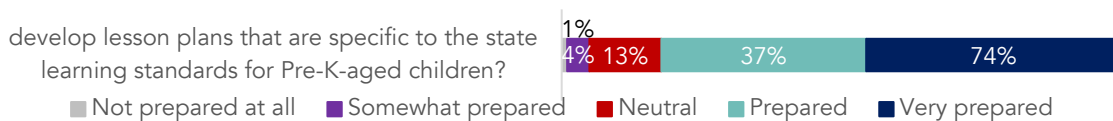
**SESSION 3:** Respondents learned how to more-efficiently develop lesson plans by matching the OWL Curriculum to the state learning standards and planning activities that fit more than one standard.

### How helpful were the following?



\*Respondents may have found this option (and those like it throughout the report) confusing since the survey developers placed it on the low end of the scale though it is a positive response.

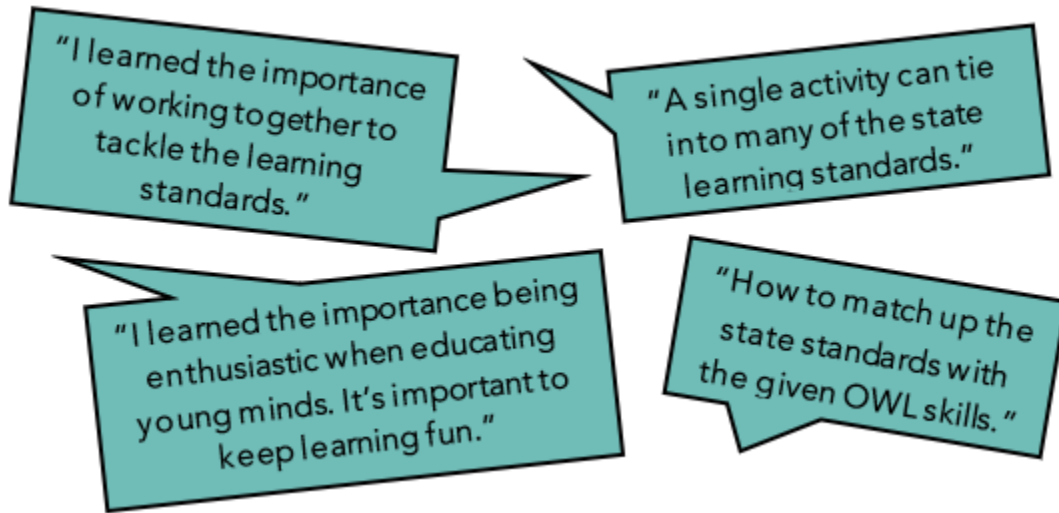
### As a result of the information presented, how prepared are you to...



### What was the most important thing you learned today about the state learning standards and the OWL Curriculum?

Of the 106 survey respondents, 80 provided meaningful responses to this question, with most indicating the most important thing they learned included one or more of the following:

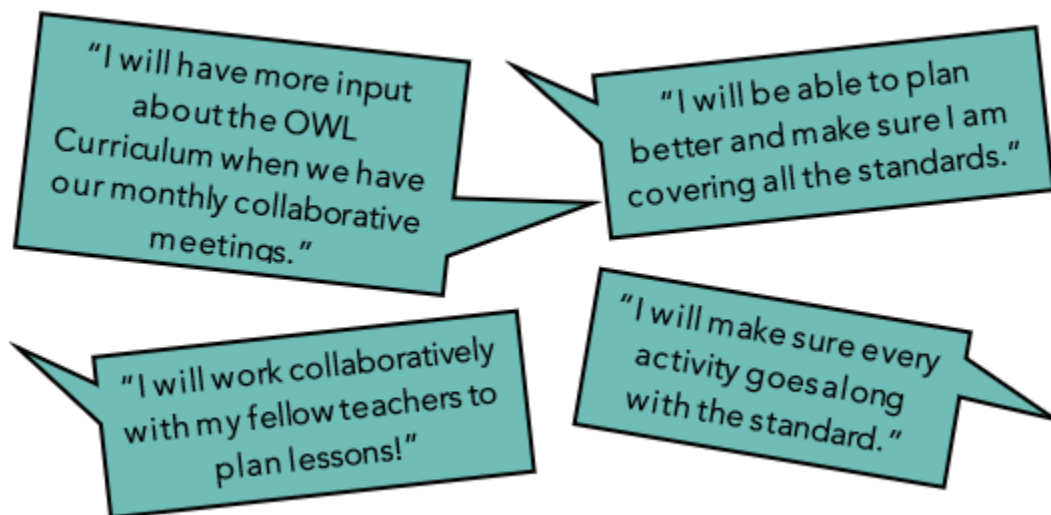
1. That they can integrate more than one standard/subject within a single activity (29%)
2. How to use the standards and/or develop lesson plans (28%)
3. That Mississippi Learning Standards and the OWL Curriculum are linked (14%)



### How will you put what you learned today into practice?

Of the 106 survey respondents, 80 provided meaningful responses to this question, with most indicating they will put what they learned into practice by:

1. Developing lesson plans (43%)
2. Improving classroom activities (15%)
3. Assisting teachers in implementing the standards and/or OWL Curriculum in their work with children (10%)



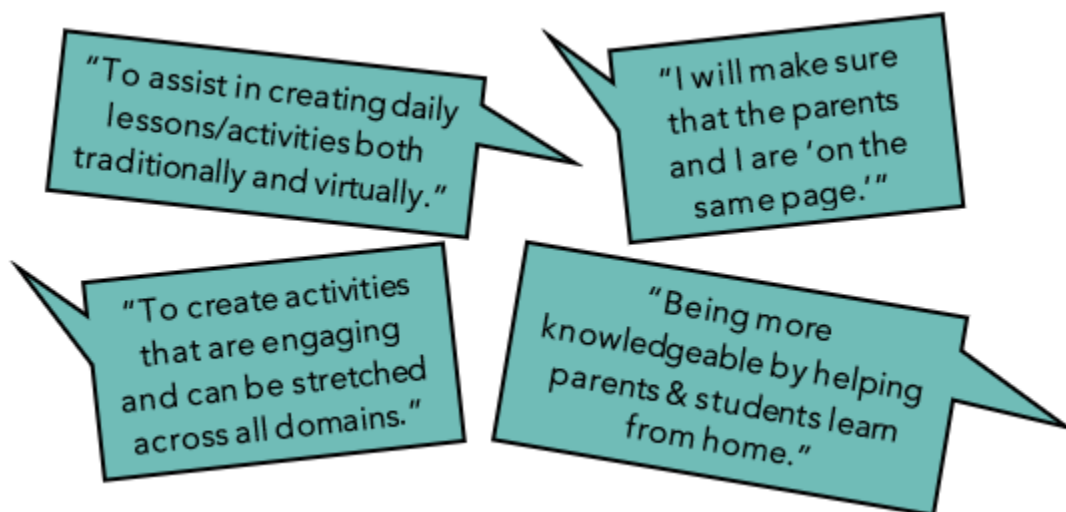
**SESSION 4:** Respondents say they will use information learned from this session to adapt the OWL Curriculum for virtual use in a parent- and child-friendly way.



### How will you use the information gained from this training session?

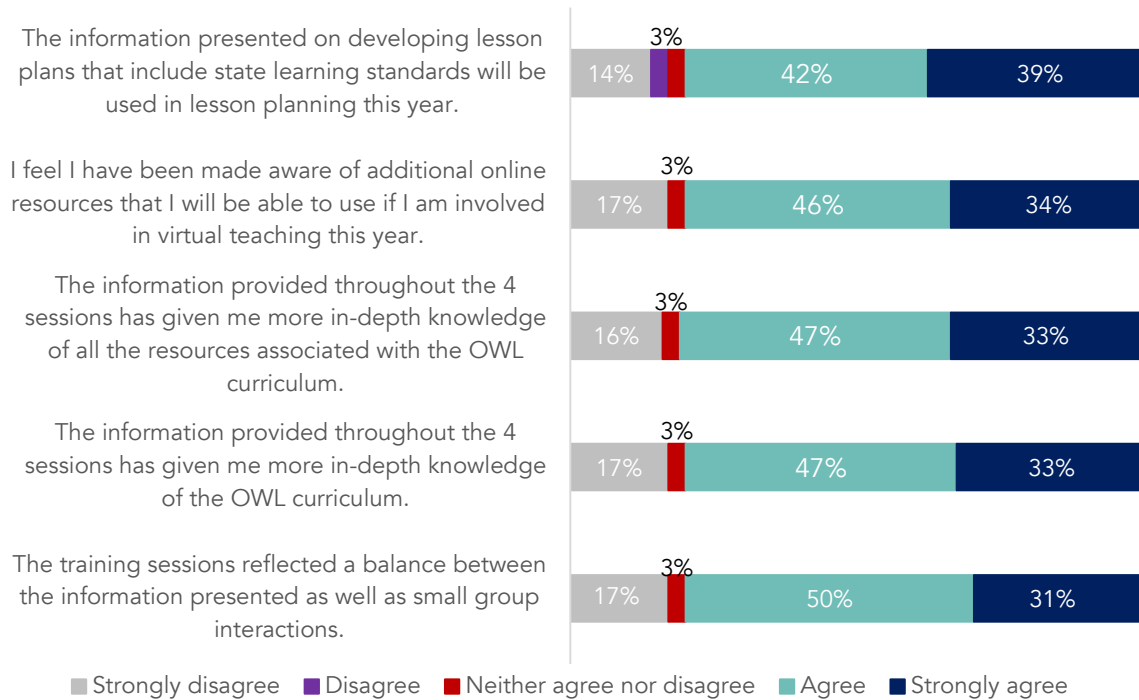
Of the 89 survey respondents, 69 provided meaningful responses to this question, with most indicating they will use the information gained to:

1. Plan/implement virtual learning (39%)
2. Help parents help their children (22%)
3. More effectively help children learn (16%)
4. Develop lesson plans (13%)



**FINAL SURVEY:** Most respondents feel they gained a more in-depth knowledge of the OWL Curriculum and its resources, and plan to use what they learned for lesson planning and working with children and families. However, some participants did not feel they gained knowledge about the OWL Curriculum and its resources, nor would the information be useful for lesson planning. Some also felt that the delivery style was not well-balanced.

### How much do you disagree or agree with the following statements?



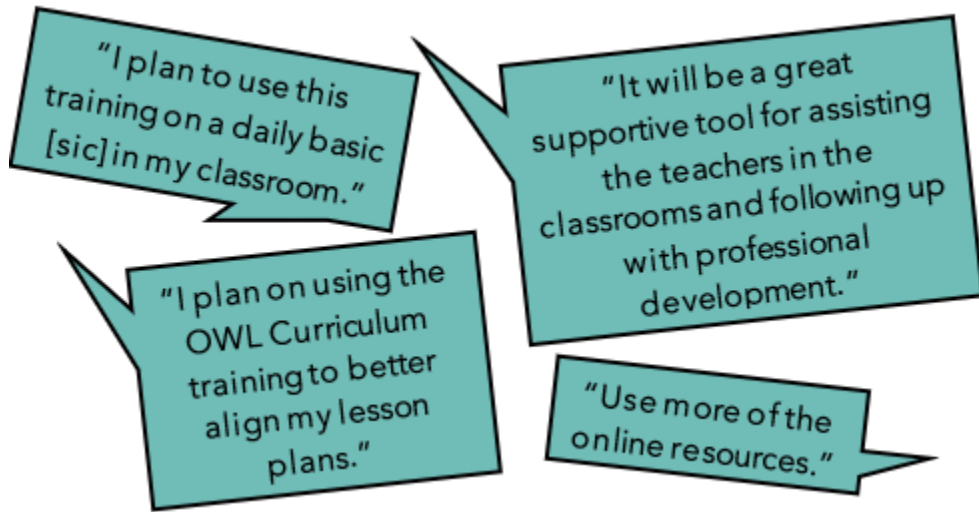
### Please describe how you intend to use what you learned in the OWL curriculum training.

Of the 36 survey respondents, 22 provided meaningful responses to this question, with most indicating they will use what they learned to:

1. Develop lesson plans (36%)
2. Assist/support teachers (9%)

Additionally, some provided more general uses that relate to when, where, or what more than how. These include:

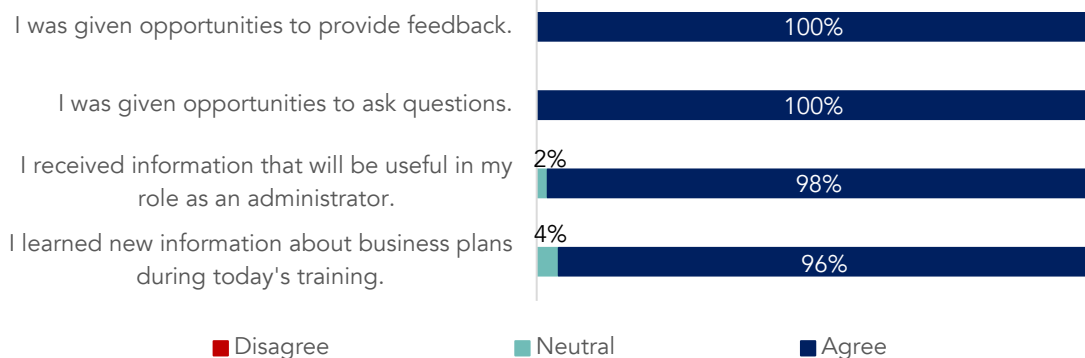
1. In the classroom and/or everyday (23%) and
2. Use more of the online resources (9%)



## Section 2: Business Plan and Staff Orientation Training for Childcare Directors

- Childcare Directors participated virtually in this two-part series covering the following topics:
  - Revising your Business Plans
  - Staff Orientation
- Participants could attend the two-training sessions on July 20, 2020; July 27, 2020; or August 17, 2020.
- NMEC developed and administered surveys via SurveyMonkey after each of the training sessions. Forty-seven participants completed the Business Plans survey and 52 completed the Staff Orientation survey.
- **Key Findings:** Respondents feel they learned new, useful information in these trainings. Specifically, they found the Cash Flow worksheet and information about shared services and COVID-19-related health and safety procedures to be the most helpful.

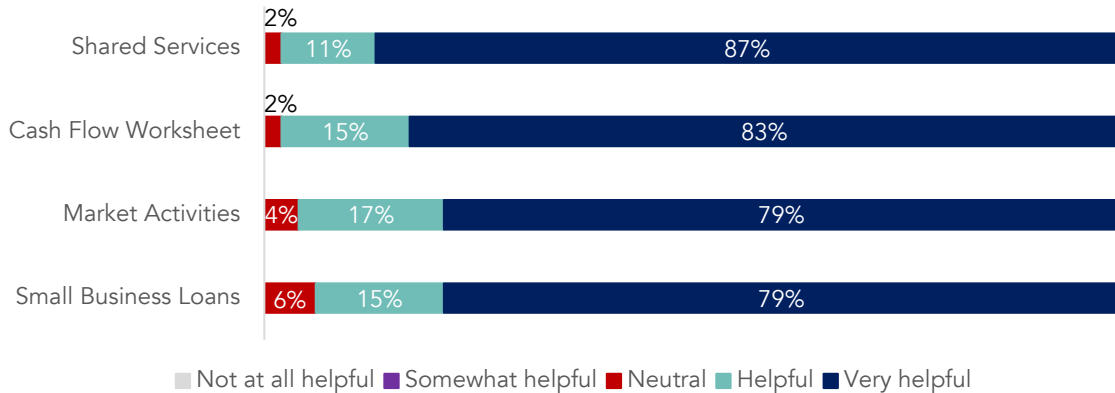
### How much do you disagree or agree with the following statements?





**BUSINESS PLANS:** Overall, respondents feel they learned new, useful information about business plans, finding the information about shared services and the Cash Flow Worksheet to be most helpful.

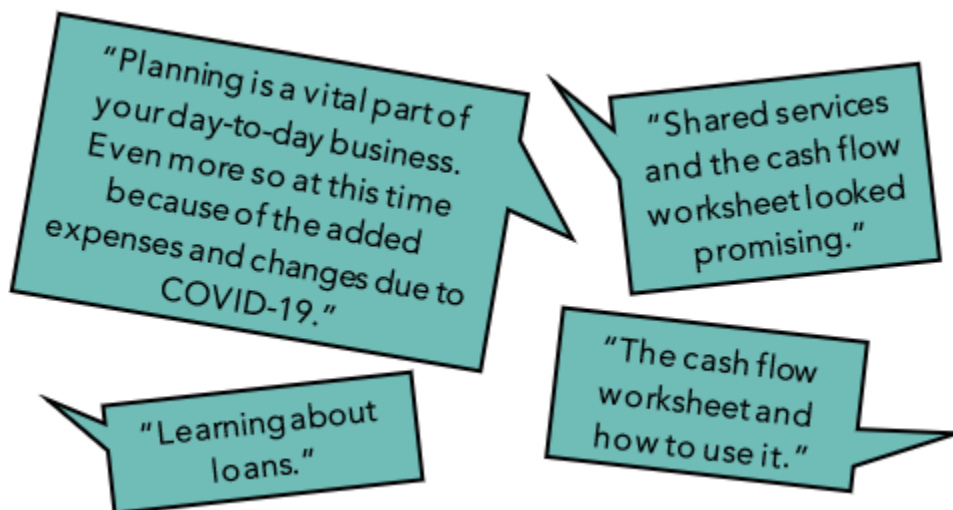
### How helpful were the following?



### What was the most important thing you learned today about business plans?

Of the 47 survey respondents, 42 provided meaningful responses to this question, with most indicating the most important thing they learned included one or more of the following:

1. Information about the Cash Flow Worksheet (33%)
2. The importance of planning (19%)
3. Services and funding available (17%)

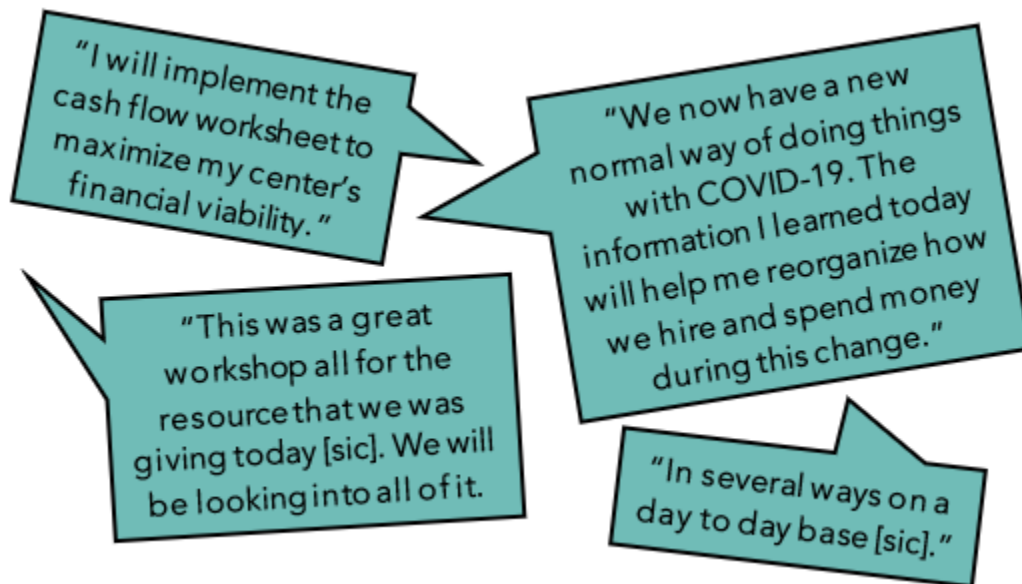


## How will you put what you learned today into practice?

Of the 47 survey respondents, 40 provided meaningful responses to this question, with most indicating they will put what they learned into practice by:

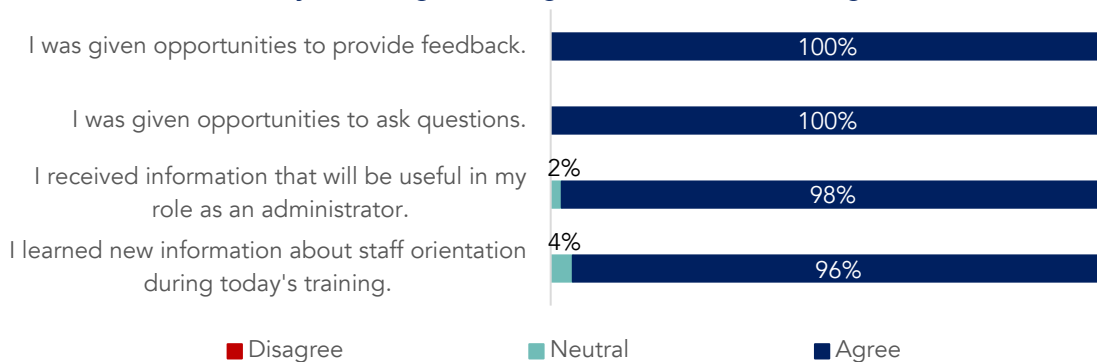
1. Applying it to budgeting/finance issues (25%)
2. Planning and organizing better (20%)

Many comments referred to applying/implementing what they learned in general, without providing specifics as to what they would apply or how (30%).

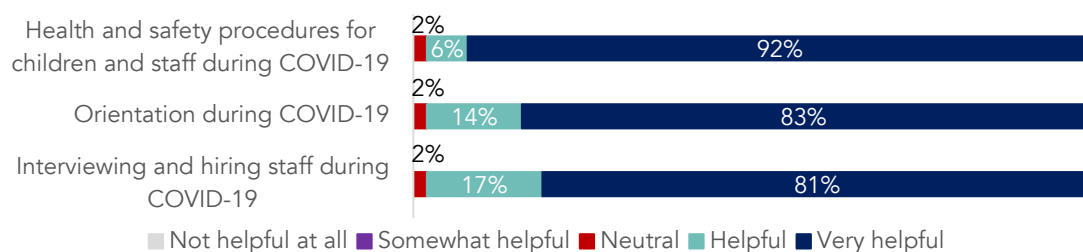


**STAFF ORIENTATION:** All respondents say they learned new, useful information about staff orientation. Participants said they found information about health and safety procedures during COVID-19 to be most helpful.

## How much do you disagree or agree with the following statements?



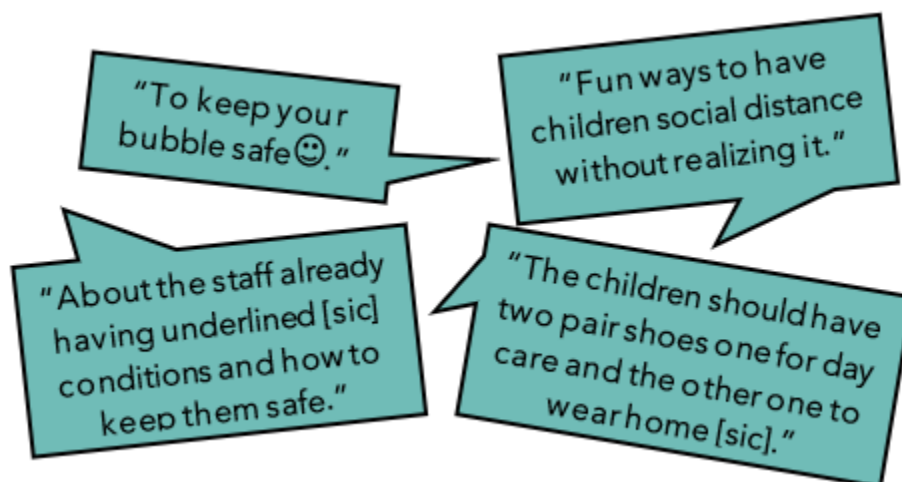
### How helpful were the following?



### What was the most important thing you learned today about staff orientation?

Of the 52 survey respondents, 50 provided meaningful responses to this question, with most indicating the most important thing they learned fell into one or more of the following categories:

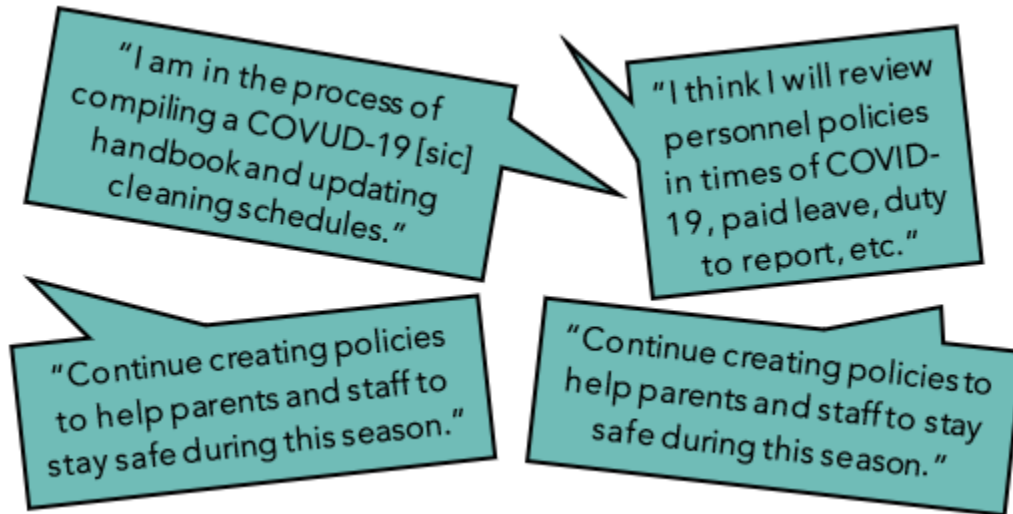
1. Operations/logistics (32%)
2. Safety (18%)



### How will you put what you learned today into practice?

Of the 52 survey respondents, 48 provided meaningful responses to this question, with most indicating they will put what they learned into practice in one or more of the following ways:

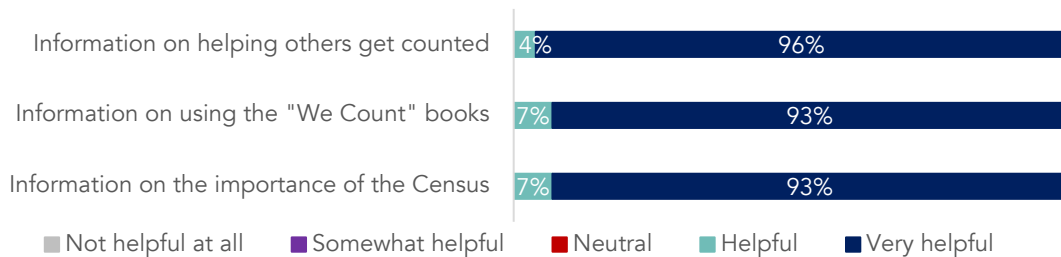
1. Operational review/changes (42%)
2. Policy review/changes (21%)
3. Share information with parents/staff (19%)



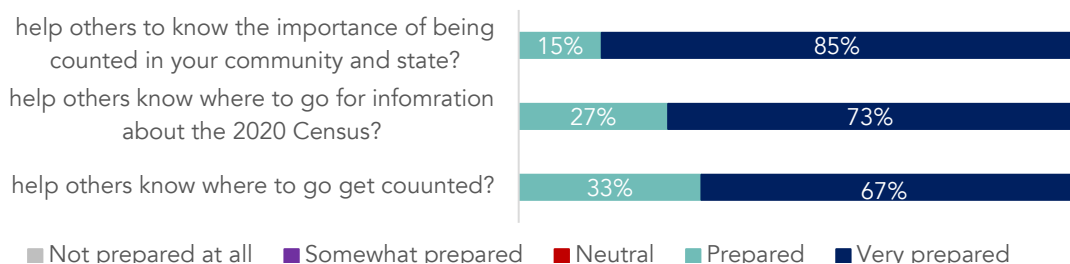
### Section 3: Census Training for Childcare Providers

- Childcare providers participated virtually in a training about the importance in being counted in the Census.
- Participants could attend the training on August 10, 2020 or August 19, 2020.
- NMEC developed and administered a survey via SurveyMonkey after the trainings. Twenty-seven participants completed the survey.
- **Key findings:** Respondents said they learned the importance of the Census, how to use the "We Count" books and how to help others get counted.

#### How helpful were the following?



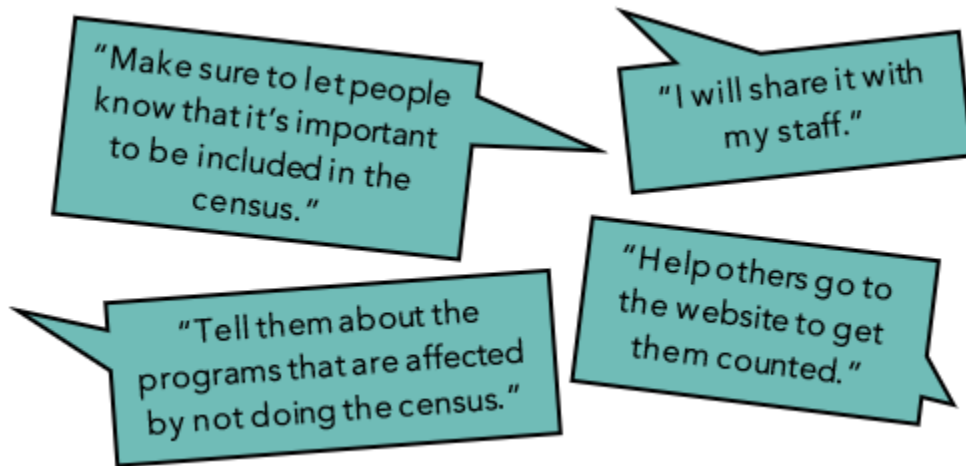
#### As a result of the information presented, how prepared are you to...



## How will you put what you learned today into practice?

Of the 27 survey respondents, 17 provided meaningful responses to this question, with most indicating they will put what they learned into practice by sharing it (with staff, parents, community members, etc.) in one or more of the following ways:

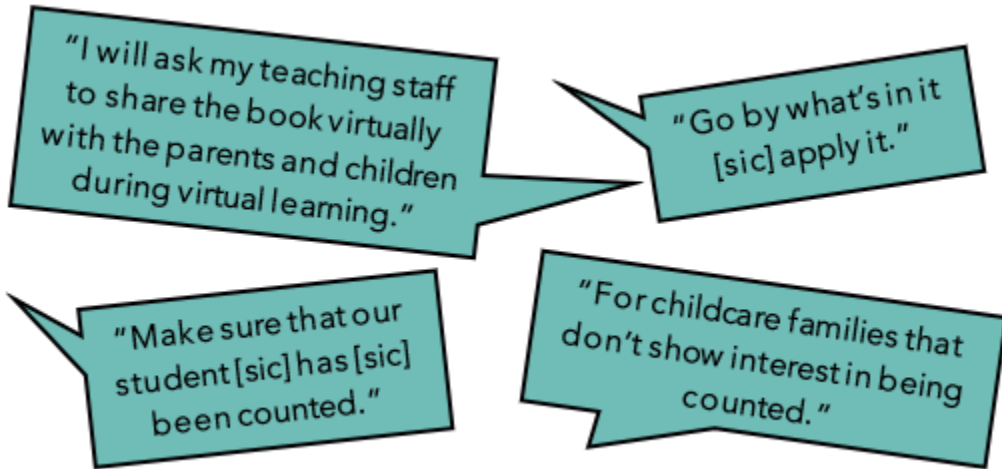
1. Share the information, in general (did not provide specific ways how; 41%)
2. Share the importance of completing the Census and/or ask if others have completed it (29%)
3. Share information about how to get counted in the Census (29%)
4. Share which programs the Census impacts (12%)



## How will you use the book "We Count" that you will receive for attending the training today?

Of the 27 survey respondents, 17 provided meaningful responses to this question, with most indicating they will use the "We Count" book in one or more of the following ways:

1. Share it with others (76%)
2. Implement the information it provides (18%)
3. Help make sure others are counted (18%)



#### Section 4: "The Talk" Discussion for Childcare Directors

- On August 21, 2020, Childcare Directors participated virtually in a supportive problem-solving discussion about caring for and educating children during COVID-19, with the goal of helping each other alleviate the stress of this unprecedented time.
- NMEC developed and administered a survey via SurveyMonkey after the session. Twenty-four participants completed the survey.
- **Key findings:** Respondents found this discussion to be beneficial in learning how others are addressing COVID virus precautions and identifying staff training needs.

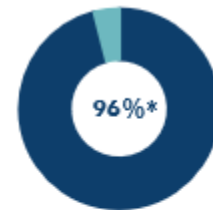


**Did you consider this talk beneficial in learning how others are dealing with health and sanitation of their facility in addressing COVID virus precautions?**



**Was the session helpful in helping to identify training needs of your staff?**

\*One responded "No Opinion."



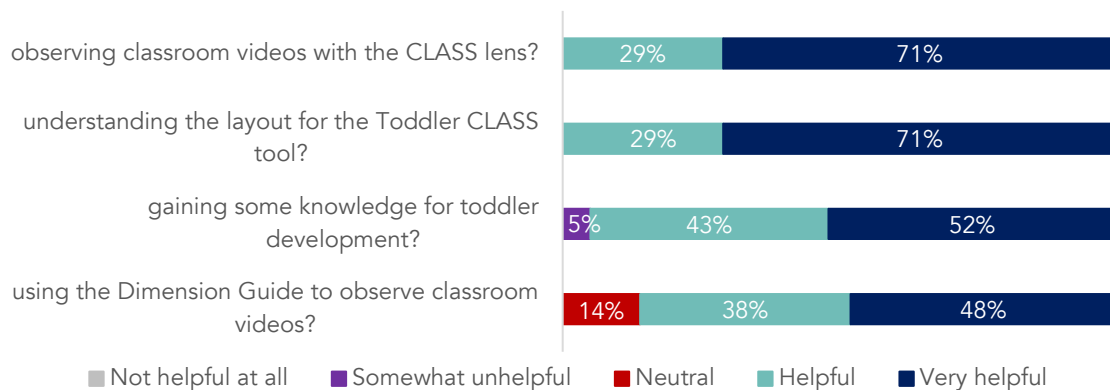
**Do you feel that round table discussions like this could benefit you as a director to feel support from your peers?**

■ Yes ■ No

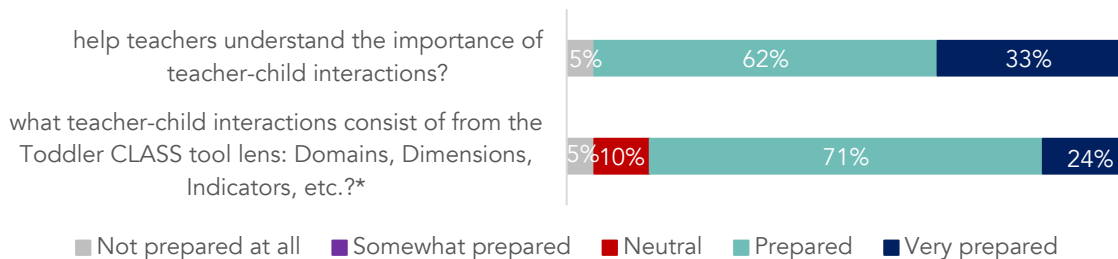
## Section 5: Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Training for Early Childhood Academy and Health Department Staff

- On August 25, 2020, staff from the Early Childhood Academy and Health Department participated in a virtual training on the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS).
- Some participants did not have the necessary training materials because the district did not receive them until the day of the training and did not have time to get them out to participants. Their survey responses may reflect this.
- NMEC developed and administered a survey via SurveyMonkey after the training session. Twenty-one participants completed this survey.
- **Key findings:** The training helped participants observe classroom videos with the CLASS lens and understand the layout for the Toddler CLASS tool. Participants now feel prepared to help teachers understand the importance of teacher-child interactions and what they consist of from the Toddler CLASS tool lens.

### How helpful was the training in...



### As a result of the information presented, how prepared are you to...

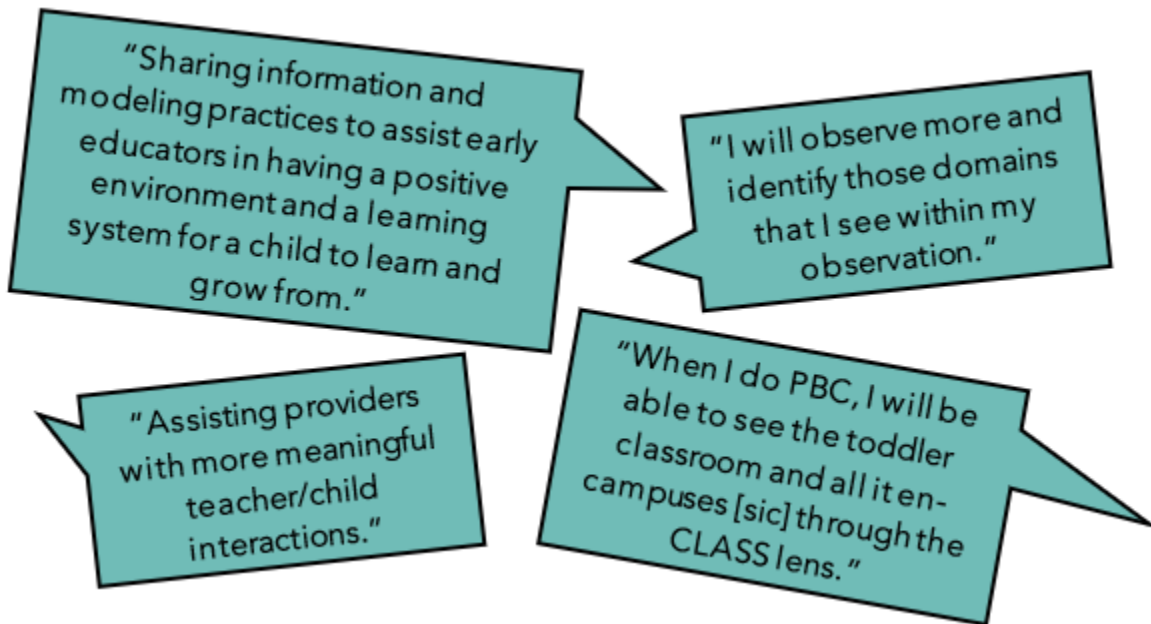


\*Respondents may have found the wording of this question confusing, as it appears to be missing a word before "what" (perhaps "know," or "share").

## How will you put what you learned today into practice?

Of the 21 survey respondents, 14 provided meaningful responses to this question, with most indicating they will put what they learned into practice in one or more of the following ways:

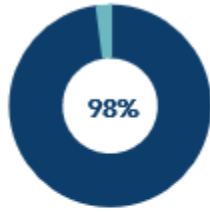
1. Share, model, and/or train early childhood educators/providers (50%)
2. Observe classrooms in a more meaningful way (29%)
3. Meet the emotional needs of students (14%)



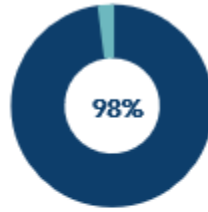
### Section 6: Virtual Resource Fair for Childcare Directors

- On August 27, 2020, Childcare Directors participated in a Virtual Resource Fair which aimed to provide information on a variety of (mostly) free services they can access within the community.
- NMEC developed and administered a survey via SurveyMonkey after the Fair. One hundred and thirty-two participants completed this survey.
- **Key findings:** Participants learned about services and resources they did not previously know about. They will use this new information to compile a list to share with others and apply for grants and other services/resources to benefit their centers/programs.

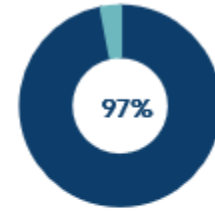




Since this is the first virtual resource conference, do you think it should be an annual event?



Did you learn about services that you had not known about before?



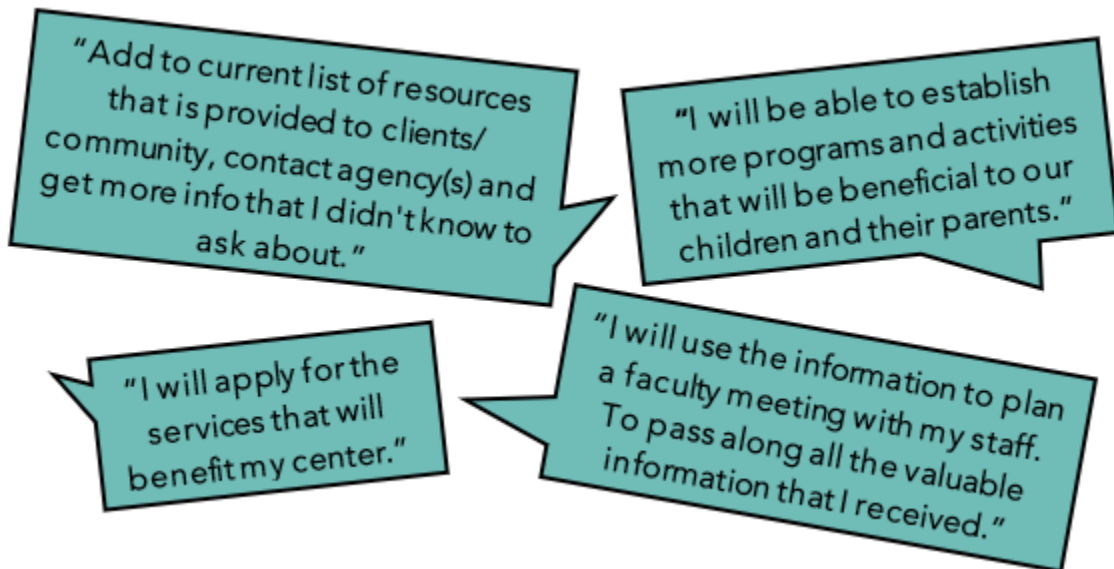
Did you learn about resources that you had not known about before?

■ Yes ■ No

### How will you use the information you learned today in your center/program?

Of the 132 survey respondents, 111 provided meaningful responses to this question, with most indicating they will use the information gained in one or more of the following ways:

1. Share it with others (staff, parents, community members, etc.; 48%)
2. Implement it to improve their center's activities (29%)
3. Access resources by contacting agencies and/or applying for funding (26%)



### Summary:

Overall, participants found the trainings and other activities offered during July and August 2020 to be informative and useful. Specific key findings are summarized below:

- **OWL Curriculum training:** Participants learned something new and useful in the trainings, finding explanations about the resource material and on conducting assessments provided by OWL to be particularly useful. They find the OWL Curriculum to be easy to understand and use, and learned how to efficiently match it to the state learning standards and adapt it for virtual use. However, some participants did not feel they gained knowledge about the OWL Curriculum and its resources, nor would the information be useful for lesson planning. Some also felt that the delivery style was not well-balanced.
- **Revising Your Business Plan training:** Participants learned new, useful information in this training, finding the information about shared services and the Cash Flow worksheet to be the most useful.
- **Staff Orientation training:** Participants learned new, useful information in this training, finding the information about health and safety procedures during COVID-19 to be most helpful.
- **Census training:** Participants learned the importance of the Census, how to use the “We Count” books and how to help others get counted.
- **“The Talk” discussion:** Participants found this discussion to be beneficial in learning how others are addressing COVID virus precautions and identifying staff training needs.
- **CLASS Training:** The training helped participants observe classroom videos with the CLASS lens and understand the layout for the Toddler CLASS tool. Participants now feel prepared to help teachers understand the importance of teacher-child interactions and what they consist of from the Toddler CLASS tool lens.
- **Virtual Resource Fair:** Participants learned about services and resources they did not previously know about. They will use this new information to compile a list to share with others and apply for grants and other services/resources to benefit their centers/programs.

# SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER 2020 ACTIVITIES: DATA SUMMARY



January 2021

Summary of September-November 2020  
Activity Evaluations

Shannon Sharp & Sarah Mason  
Center for Research Evaluation, University of Mississippi

# SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER 2020 ACTIVITIES: DATA SUMMARY

## *January 2021*

- In this document, we summarize findings from Center for Research Evaluation (CERE) and North Mississippi Education Consortium (NMEC) surveys of various activities offered from September through November 2020 via Zoom.
- These activities were part of the Building a High-Quality Early Childcare System of Leadership and Teaching Practice project, funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.
- We divided this document into three core sections, focused on the evaluation components of the following activities:
  1. **OWL Curriculum** training for Jackson Public Schools Pre-K teachers and teacher assistants
  2. **From All to Each and Every: Resources and Practices for Supporting Children of Diverse Cultures, Languages and Abilities, and their Families, in the Era of COVID-19** research seminar led by Camille Catlett's for the public
  3. **Addressing Stress and Trauma in the Early Childhood Setting** training for Coaches from the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) and Department of Human Services (DHS), First Steps staff and DHS Home Visitors.
- CERE and NMEC deliberately designed all surveys analyzed in this document to be short and easy to respond to in an effort to increase response rates and respect participants' time—particularly within the current context.
- Using Kirkpatrick's (2006)<sup>1</sup> four-level training evaluation model as a guide, survey questions focused on the first three of these levels: (1) participant **reactions** to the training, (2) participant self-reports on what they have **learned** and (3) participant reports on how they plan to **use** what they learned in everyday practice. Given that we administered surveys shortly after training occurred, these data do not reflect (1) whether/how participants actually used the training material and (2) the **results** that flow from attending the training sessions.
- We do not report on response rates for surveys administered by NMEC because we do not know how many participants they sent surveys to. We do, however, provide the total number of responses used for analysis.

<sup>1</sup> Kirkpatrick, D., & Kirkpatrick, J. (2006). *Evaluating training programs: The four levels*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

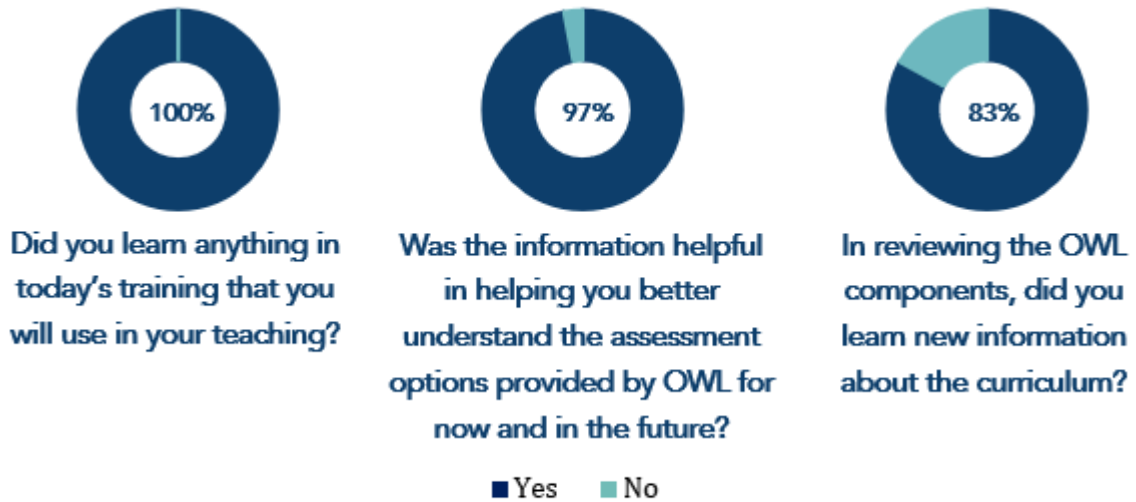
- *Note:* In this document, we provide a brief summary of findings and may not report on all questions in the survey. Please feel free to let us know if you have specific follow up questions that you would like answered. At a high level, the data show:
  - Participants responded favorably to the activities, indicating that they felt they learned new information that they would use in their work with children.
  - Many participants indicated they will share what they learned in the stress and trauma training and research seminar with other educators and families.
  - Some respondents feel they did not learn anything new from the OWL Curriculum training. This may be due to attending previous training sessions on this topic (this grant has provided several) or from information provided by their Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) Pre-K Coach.

### Section 1: OWL Curriculum training for Jackson Public Schools Pre-K teachers

- Jackson Public Schools (JPS) Pre-K teachers and teacher assistants participated in a three-session training on using the Opening the World of Learning (OWL) Curriculum and lesson planning. They held the sessions virtually on September 22, 2020, October 27, 2020 and November 17, 2020.
- The OWL Curriculum “offers learning experiences and materials that develop language and early literacy skills in the context of content areas, such as math, science, and social studies. The curriculum is organized around eight thematic units that include daily lesson plans for whole group activities, small group activities, and learning centers.”<sup>2</sup>
- NMEC developed and remotely administered a survey after the 9/22/20 session, while JPS did the same for the 11/17/20 session. We have been unable to obtain evaluations from the 10/27/20 session. The following number of participants completed each survey: 9/22/20 = 35, 11/17/20 = 23.
- **Key Findings:** Most respondents found this training relevant, practical and informative. Specifically, they gained knowledge of the OWL Curriculum and its assessments and plan to use what they learned. Some respondents do not feel they learned anything new about the OWL Curriculum, which may be due to attending previous training sessions on this topic or from information provided by their Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) Pre-K Coach.

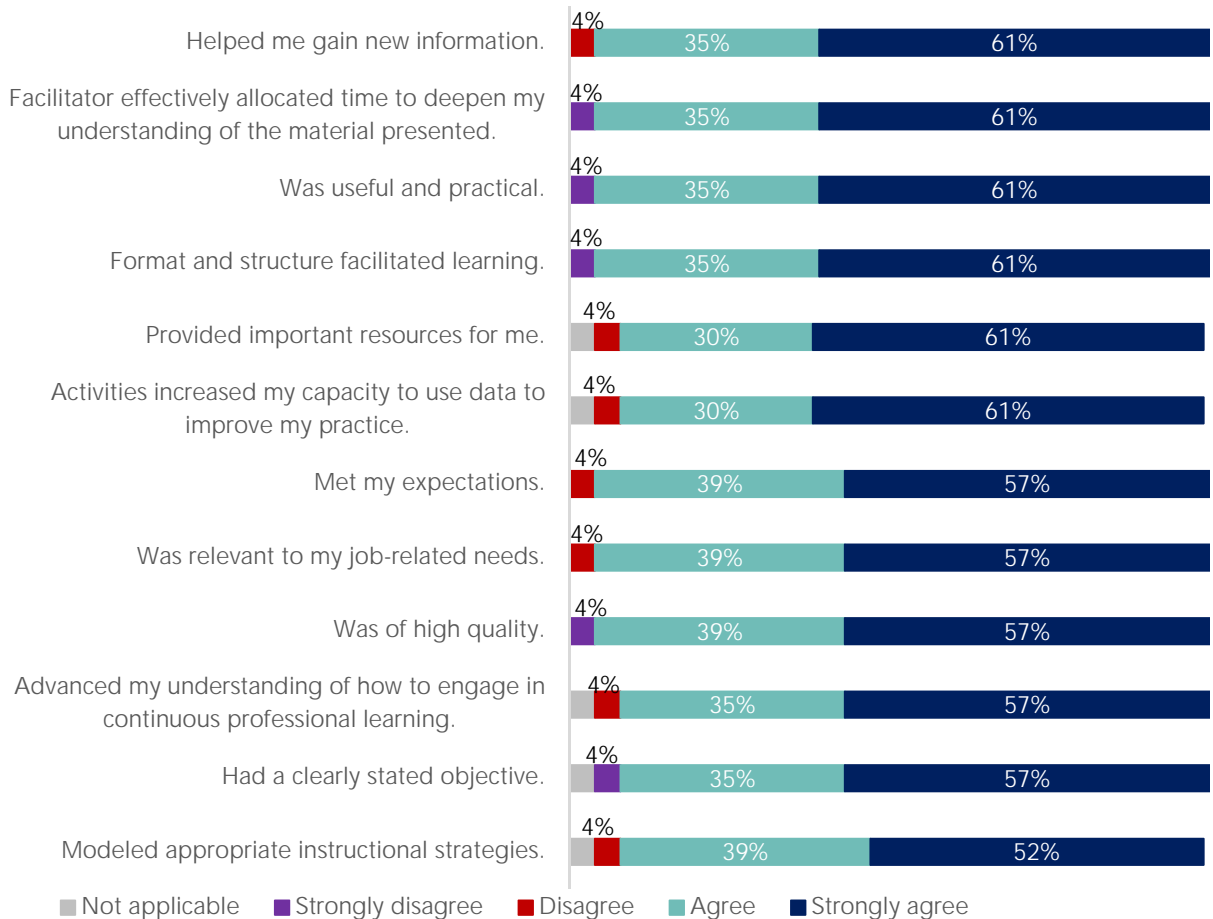
<sup>2</sup>U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families. (2019, March 25). *Opening the World of Learning™ (OWL)* ©2014. Head Start: Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/curriculum/consumer-report/curricula/opening-world-learning-owl-2014>

SEPTEMBER 22, 2020

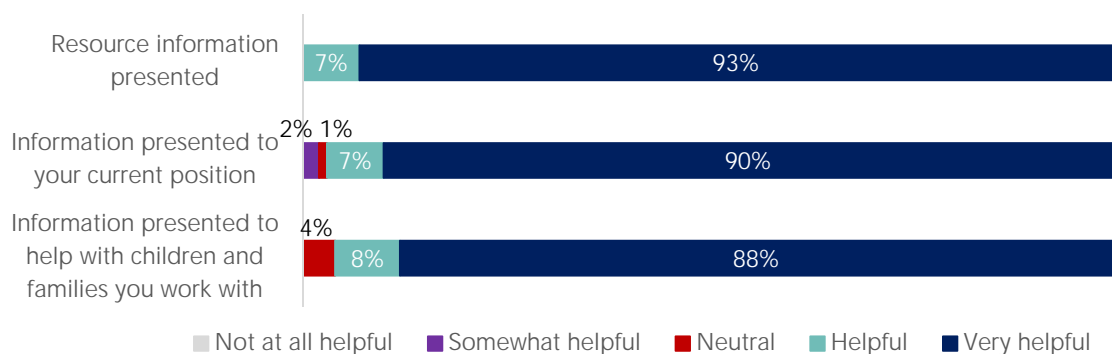


NOVEMBER 17, 2020

What is your level of agreement for the following training components?



## How helpful were the following?

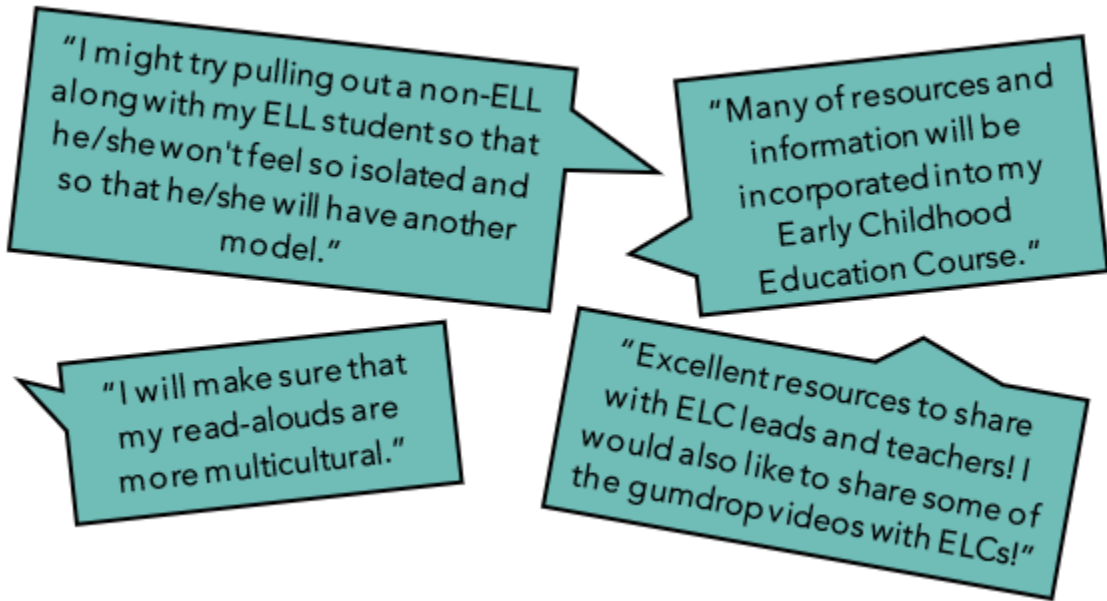


### Section 2: From All to Each and Every research seminar for the public

- The public was invited to attend this virtual installment of the Research Seminar Series that this grant has supported for the past several years.
- Camille Catlett led this seminar, subtitled: *Resources and Practices for Supporting Children of Diverse Cultures, Languages and Abilities, and their Families, in the Era of COVID-19*, on October 23, 2020.
- NMEC developed and remotely administered a survey after the seminar. Ninety-eight participants completed the survey.
- **Key Findings:** The vast majority of respondents found the information and resources presented in this seminar to be very helpful. Most respondents plan to share the information they learned with others and about a quarter specifically indicate that they plan to implement it in their classroom (note: not all attendees work in the classroom).

## How will you put what you learned today into practice?

Of the 98 survey respondents, 79 provided meaningful responses to this question, with the vast majority (75%) indicating they would share the information they learned with others (e.g., other teachers, college students, families, etc.) and one-quarter planning to implement what they learned in the classroom.



Section 3: Addressing Stress and Trauma in the Early Childhood Setting training for MDE and DHS Coaches, First Steps staff and DHS Home Visitors.

- MDE and DHS Coaches, First Steps staff and DHS Home Visitors participated virtually in a training about addressing early childhood stress and trauma on November 19, 2020.
- Training leaders worked with representatives from each group to tailor the content to meet the needs of each specific audience.
- NMEC developed and remotely administered a survey the training. Twenty-four participants completed the survey.
- **Key findings:** All respondents felt engaged with the presenter and peers during this training. They indicate the training taught them the importance of self-care, as well as strategies to better-identify and address stress and trauma in themselves and others. A high proportion plan to implement these strategies with their students and themselves.



**Was the information presented in a format that supported engagement with the presenter and your peers?**

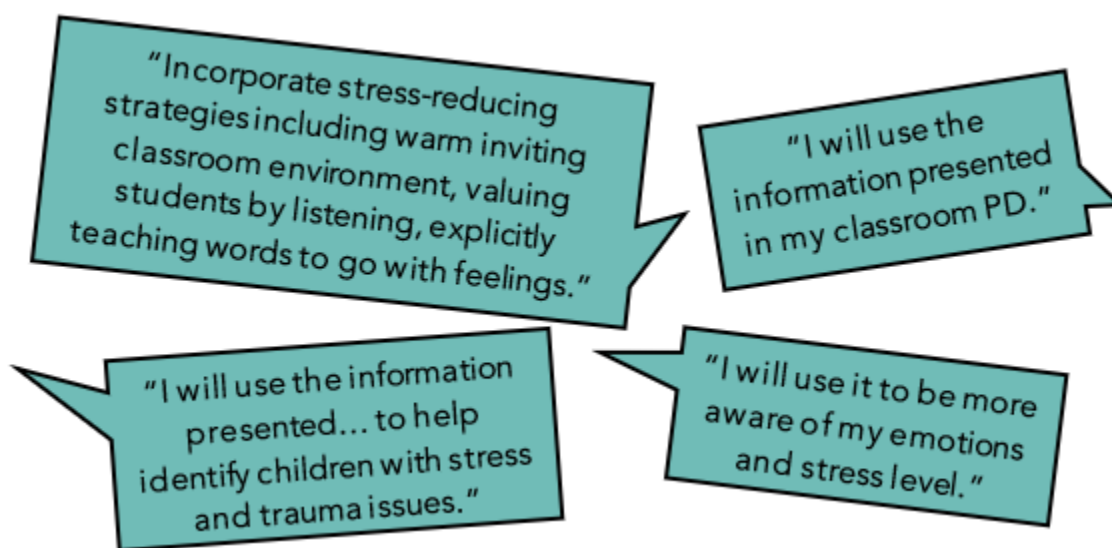
■ Yes ■ No



## How will you use the information presented in your classroom?

Of the 24 survey respondents, 21 provided meaningful responses to this question, sharing that they will use the information in one or more of the following ways:

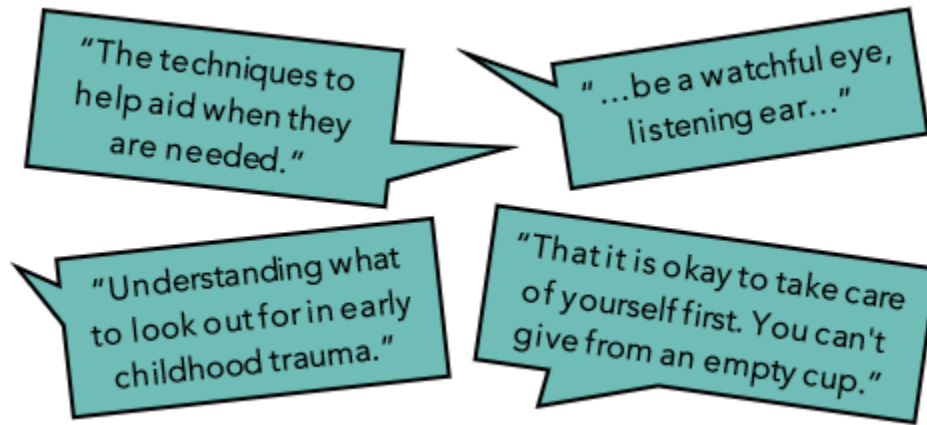
1. Implement directly with students (67%)
2. Better understand their students to identify stress/trauma-related issues (19%)
3. Be more aware of their own emotions (10%)
4. Share the information they learned with others (10%)



## What was the most helpful piece of information you took away from the training?

All of the 24 survey respondents provided meaningful responses to this question, with most indicating the training provided one or more of the following important pieces of information:

1. Take care of one's self (50%)
2. Strategies to help students facing stress/trauma (38%)
3. How to recognize stress/trauma in one's self and/or others (17%)



### Summary:

Overall, participants found the trainings and other activities offered from September through November 2020 to be informative and useful. Specific key findings are summarized below:

- **OWL Curriculum training:** Most respondents found this training relevant, practical and informative. Specifically, they gained knowledge of the OWL Curriculum and its assessments and plan to use what they learned. Some respondents do not feel they learned anything new about the OWL Curriculum, which may be due to attending previous training sessions on this topic or from information provided by their Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) Pre-K Coach.
- **From All to Each and Every: Resources and Practices for Supporting Children of Diverse Cultures, Languages and Abilities, and their Families, in the Era of COVID-19 (Camille Catlett's research seminar):** The vast majority of respondents found the information and resources presented in this seminar to be very helpful. Most respondents plan to share the information they learned with others and about a quarter plan to implement it in their classroom.
- **Addressing Stress and Trauma in the Early Childhood Setting training:** All respondents felt engaged with the presenter and peers during this training. They indicate the training taught them the importance of self-care, as well as strategies to better-identify and address stress and trauma in themselves and others. They plan to implement these strategies with their students and themselves.

# SUMMER 2021 ACTIVITIES: DATA SUMMARY



August 2021

Summary of Summer 2021 Activity  
Evaluations

Shannon Sharp, Moira Ragan & Sarah Mason  
Center for Research Evaluation, University of Mississippi

# SUMMER 2021 ACTIVITIES: DATA SUMMARY

## *August 2021*

- In this document, we summarize findings from the Graduate Center for the Study of Early Learning (GCSEL) and Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) surveys about activities offered via Zoom during the summer of 2021.
- These activities were part of the Building a High-Quality Early Childcare System of Leadership and Teaching Practice project, funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.
- We divided this document into three core sections, focused on the evaluation components.
  1. **Kindergarten Academy** training for kindergarten teachers, teacher assistants and administrators
  2. **Early Childhood Specialized Bootcamp** training for Pre-K teachers and teacher assistants seeking a Pre-K Endorsement or Certificate of Completion
  3. **Resource Meeting** for family child care providers
- The GCSEL deliberately designed their surveys to be short and easy to respond to in an effort to increase response rates and respect participants' time—particularly within the current context. Alternately, MDE adapted surveys from previous Bootcamp cohorts.
- Using Kirkpatrick's (2006)<sup>1</sup> four-level training evaluation model as a guide, survey questions focused on the first three of these levels: (1) participant **reactions** to the training, (2) participant self-reports on what they have **learned** and (3) participant reports on how they **plan to use** what they learned in everyday practice. Given that the GCSEL and MDE administered surveys shortly after training occurred, these data do not reflect (1) whether/how participants **actually used** the training material or (2) subsequent **impacts** of attending the training sessions.
- *Note:* In this document, we provide a brief summary of findings and may not report on all questions in the survey. Please feel free to let us know if you have specific follow up questions that you would like answered. At a high level, the data show:
  - Participants responded favorably to the activities, indicating that they felt they learned new information that they would use in their work with children and educators.

<sup>1</sup>Kirkpatrick, D., & Kirkpatrick, J. (2006). *Evaluating training programs: The four levels*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

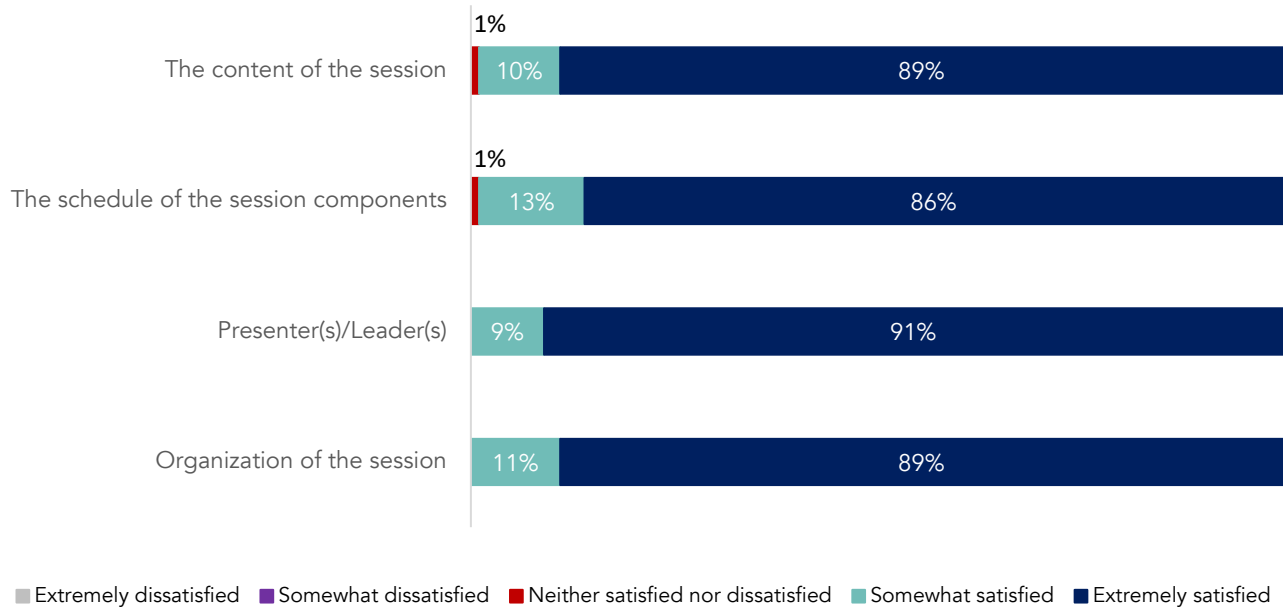
- The area endorsed least on each survey (though still at least 70%) refers to the content of the trainings being challenging for participants.
- Many Kindergarten Academy participants believe the training would be even better if held in person and with more interactive activities.
- A lower percentage of participants planned to seek the Pre-K Endorsement after attending Bootcamp than before, though it is important to note that not all the same participants completed the pre- and post-survey.
- Resource Meeting attendees found the information and resources to be clear and helpful for their programs, and plan to use them.

### Section 1: Kindergarten Academy training for kindergarten teachers, teacher assistants and administrators

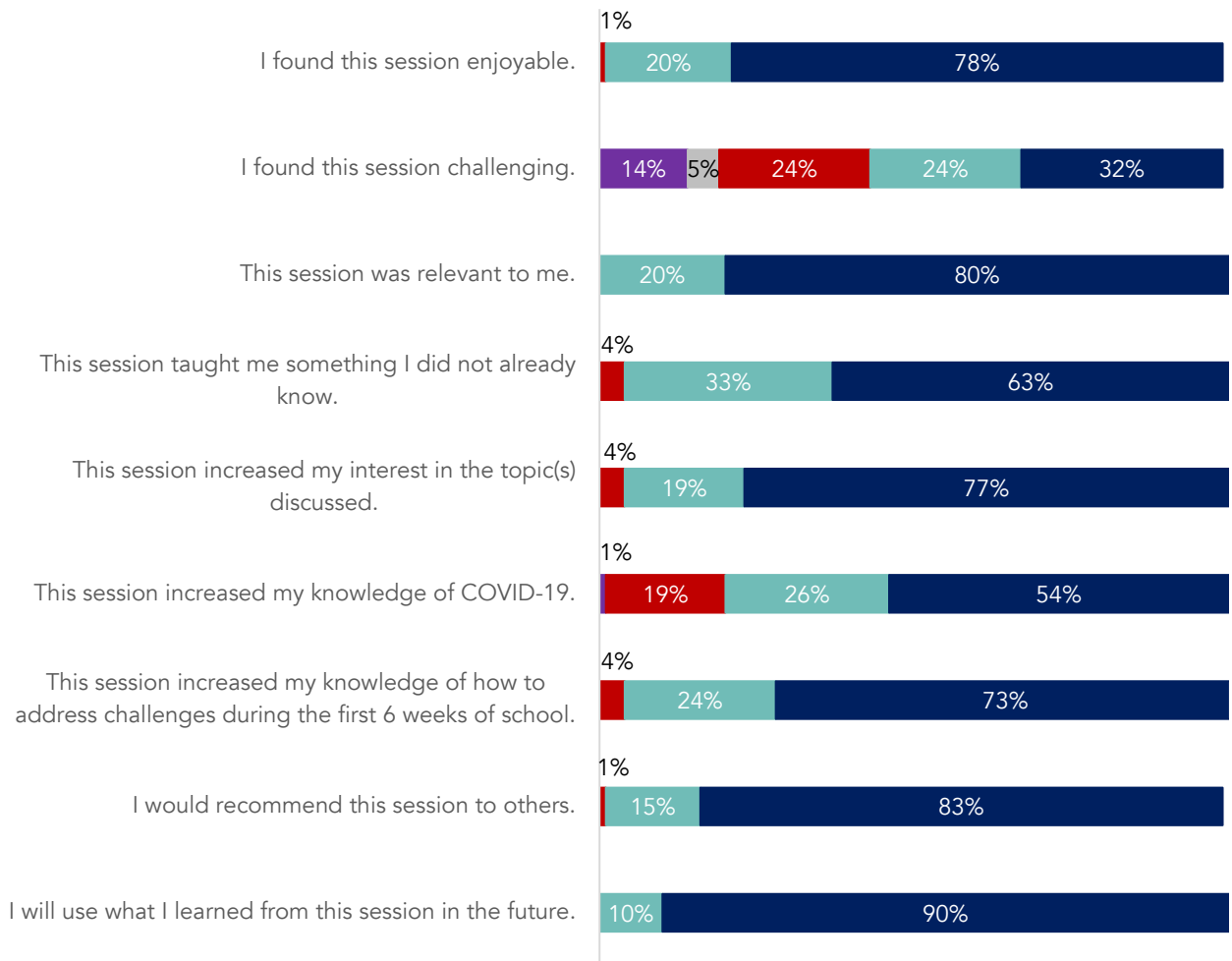
- Kindergarten teachers, teacher assistants and administrators participated in a virtual three-day training from June 8-10, 2021.
- The training focused on:
  - student and teacher life adjustments due to COVID-19;
  - social-emotional challenges and solutions for students and teachers;
  - math, science and social studies kindergarten standards and activities and
  - integrating art and music into science and social studies standards.
- GCSEL developed and remotely administered a survey after each session (note: they administered two surveys for the 6/9/21 session). The following number of participants completed each survey:
  - COVID and Me (6/8/21) = 79 (75%)
  - Math... It's Everywhere! (6/9/21) = 78 (82%)
  - Math Strategies for Kindergarten (6/9/21) = 76 (81%)
  - Teaching Through Familiar Content (6/10/21) = 67 (73%)
- **Key Findings:** Participants were highly satisfied with each session. Though some did not find the sessions challenging, almost all participants said they were relevant to them. They found the strategies, activities and examples; collaboration; resources and/or handouts; and videos especially useful. Almost all participants, across the four surveys, plan to use what they learned in ways such as incorporating it into their lessons and sharing it with others. Participants will also use some of the content to support social-emotional learning and build relationships with their students. Though respondents were highly complimentary of the sessions, the main changes they suggest are holding them in person and/or making them more interactive.

**COVID AND ME:** Participants were highly satisfied with this session. Though only about half found it challenging, all participants said it was relevant to them. Participants found learning about teaching strategies and dealing with COVID stress, as well as the collaboration the session allowed, particularly useful. All participants plan to use what they learned in ways such as planning for the new school year, incorporating it into their lessons and sharing it with others. Though respondents were highly complimentary of the session, the main change respondents suggest is holding it in person and/or making it more interactive.

Please indicate your level of satisfaction with each of the following training components:



Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements:



■ Strongly disagree 
 ■ Somewhat disagree 
 ■ Neither disagree nor agree 
 ■ Somewhat agree 
 ■ Strongly agree

## What were the most useful aspects of this session?

Of the 79 survey respondents, 62 provided meaningful<sup>2</sup> responses to this question, with most indicating the most useful aspects included one or more of the following:

1. Information on dealing with stress due to COVID-19 (39%)
2. Collaborations with colleagues and breakout sessions (27%)
3. Learning teaching strategies for Kindergarten (11%)



## How will you use what you learned in this session?

Of the 79 survey respondents, 70 provided meaningful responses to this question, with most indicating they will use what they learned in one or more of the following ways:

1. Planning for the new school year (26%)
2. Incorporating it into lessons and/or centers (17%)
3. Training or sharing with others (16%)
4. Building stronger relationships with students (14%)
5. Using with students and/or staff (how isn't specified; 14%)
6. Addressing social-emotional concerns (10%)

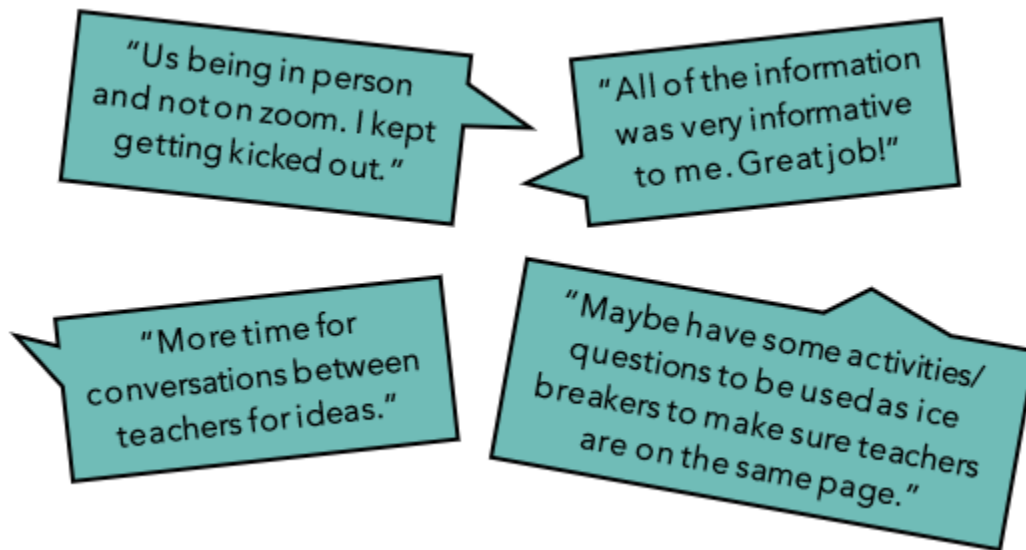
<sup>2</sup>Meaningful responses exclude those such as N/A, nothing, all, etc., which do not provide any useful detail, and comments unrelated to the question.





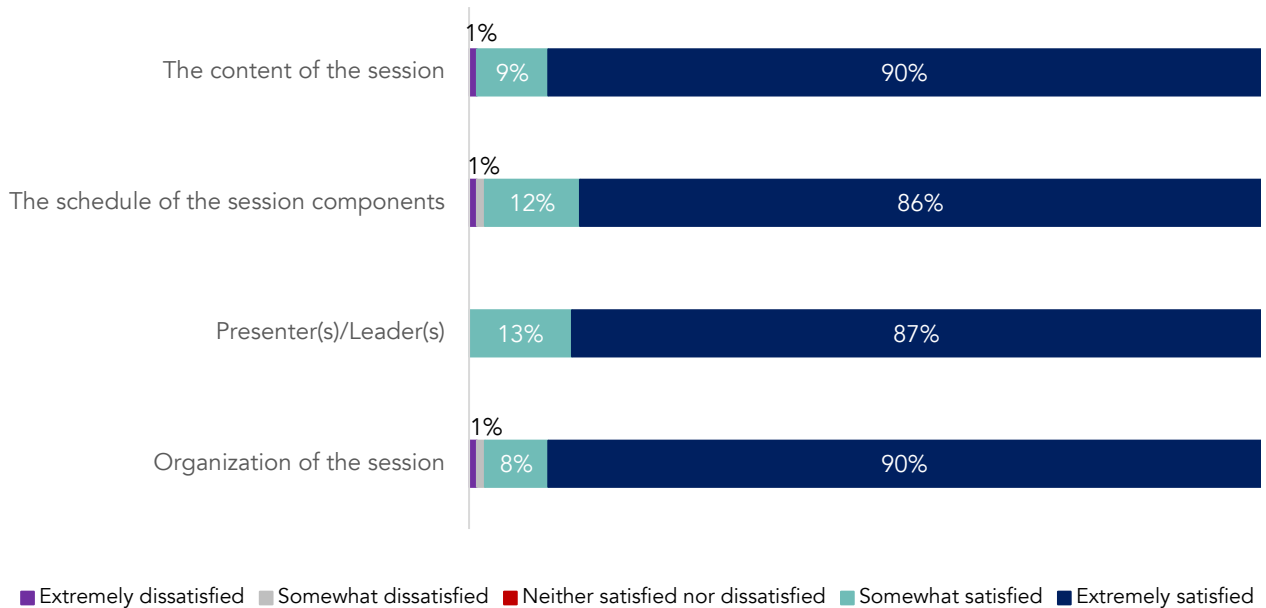
### What can be done to make this session better?

Of the 79 survey respondents, 49 provided meaningful responses to this question, though over half (53%) simply praised the session, without indicating anything to be changed. Of those that did offer suggestions to strengthen the session, most indicated they would prefer if the session was held in person and/or included more interactive activities (20%).

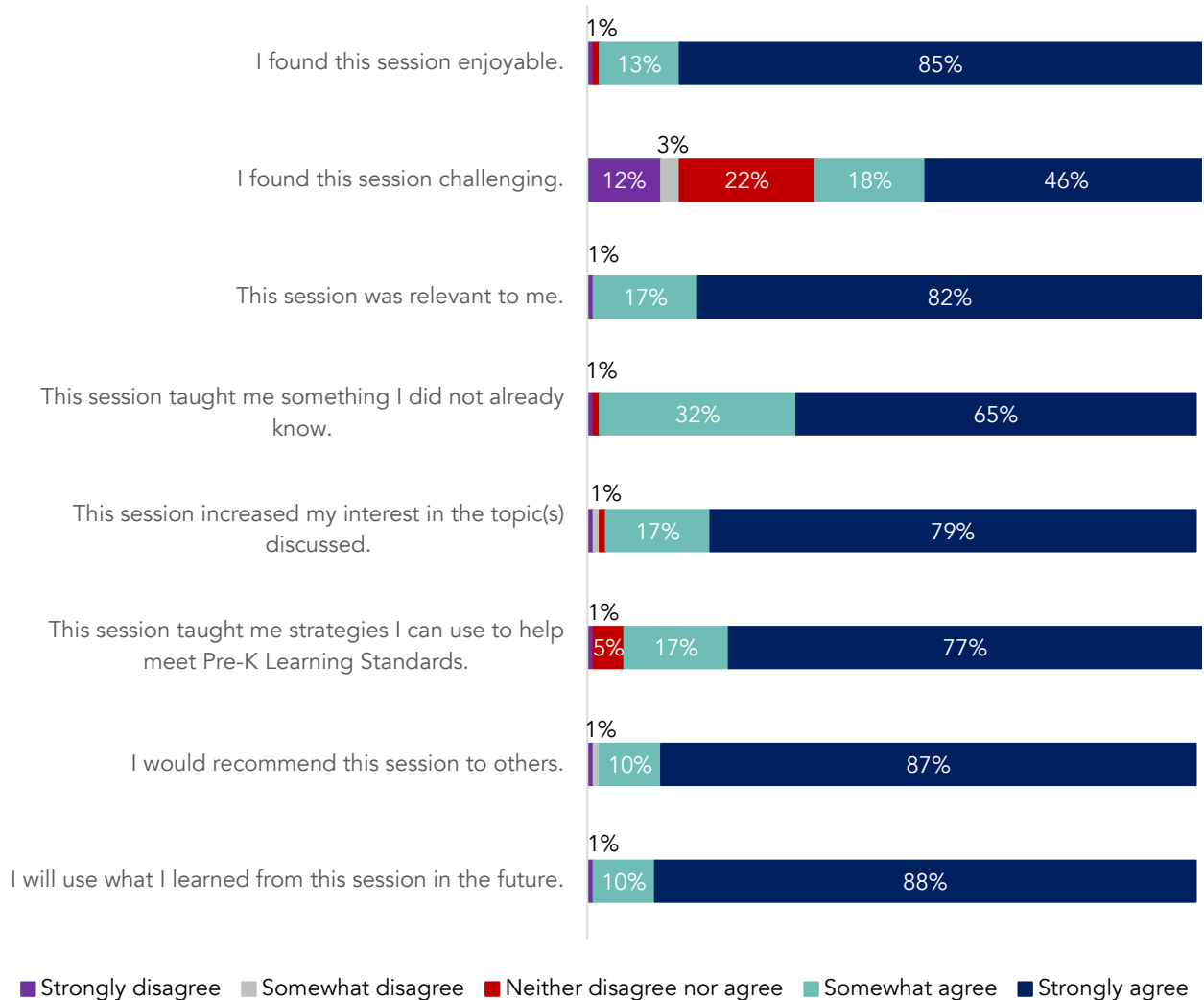


**MATH... IT'S EVERYWHERE!:** Participants were highly satisfied with this session. Though only about two-thirds found it challenging, almost all participants said it was relevant to them. They found the strategies, activities and examples; resources and/or handouts; and videos especially useful. Almost all participants plan to use what they learned in ways such as incorporating it into their lessons and sharing it with others. Though respondents were highly complimentary of the session, the main change respondents suggest is holding it in person and/or making it more

Please indicate your level of satisfaction with each of the following training components:



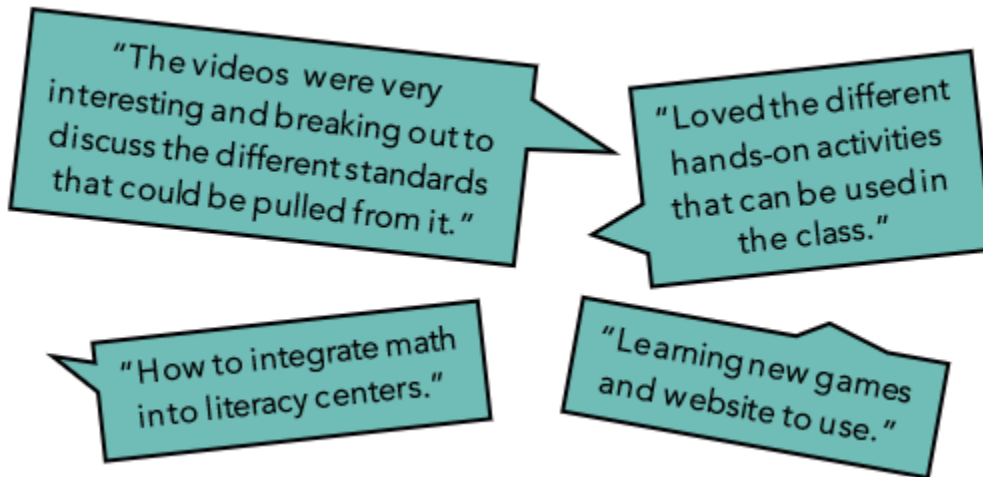
Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements:



### What were the most useful aspects of this session?

Of the 78 survey respondents, 66 provided meaningful responses to this question, with most indicating the most useful aspects included one or more of the following:

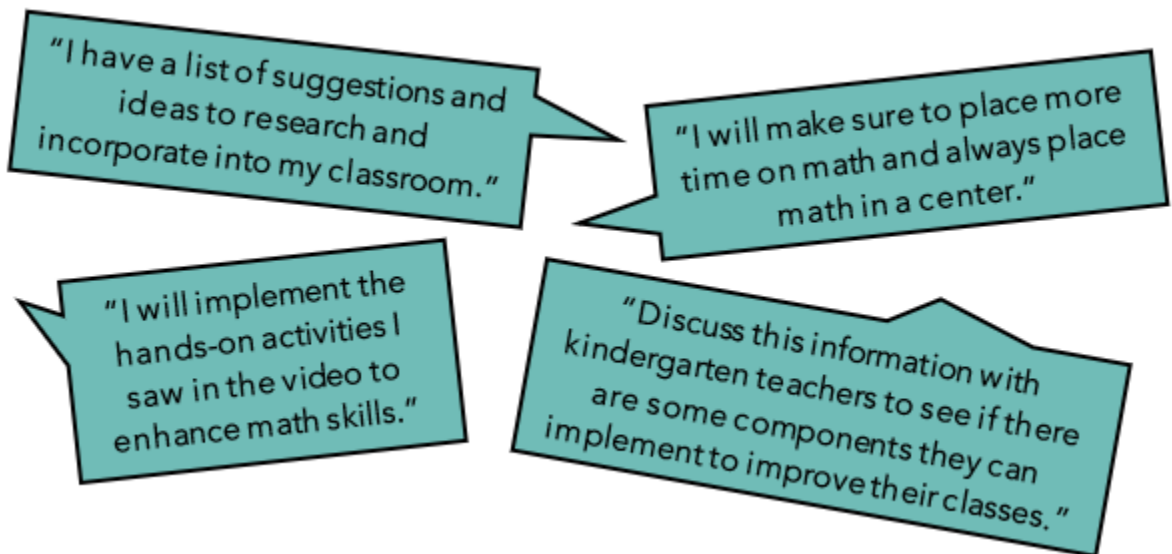
1. Strategies, activities and/or examples (61%)
2. Resources and/or handouts (18%)
3. Videos (15%)



### How will you use what you learned in this session?

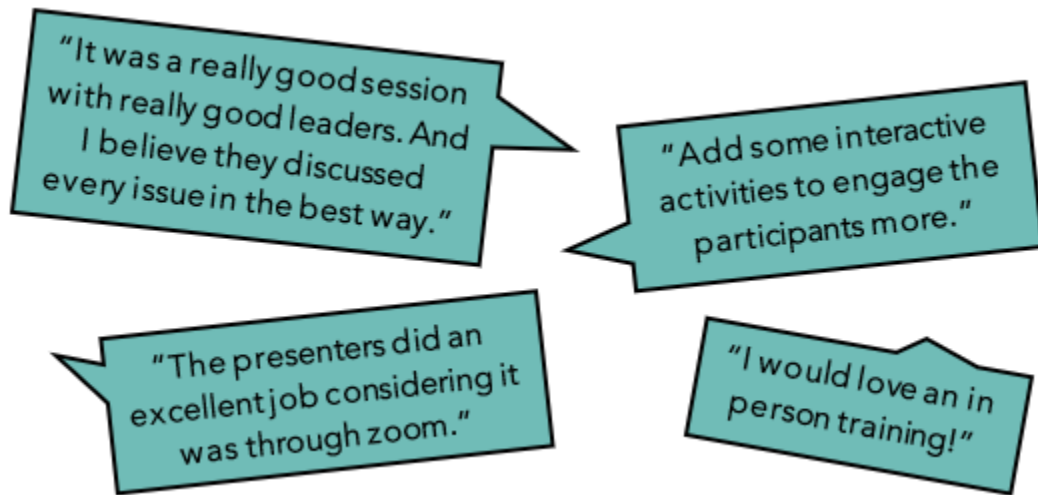
Of the 78 survey respondents, 69 provided meaningful responses to this question, with most indicating they will use what they learned in one or more of the following ways:

1. Incorporate it into lessons and/or centers (48%)
2. Train or share with others (30%)
3. Use with students and/or staff (how not specified; 10%)



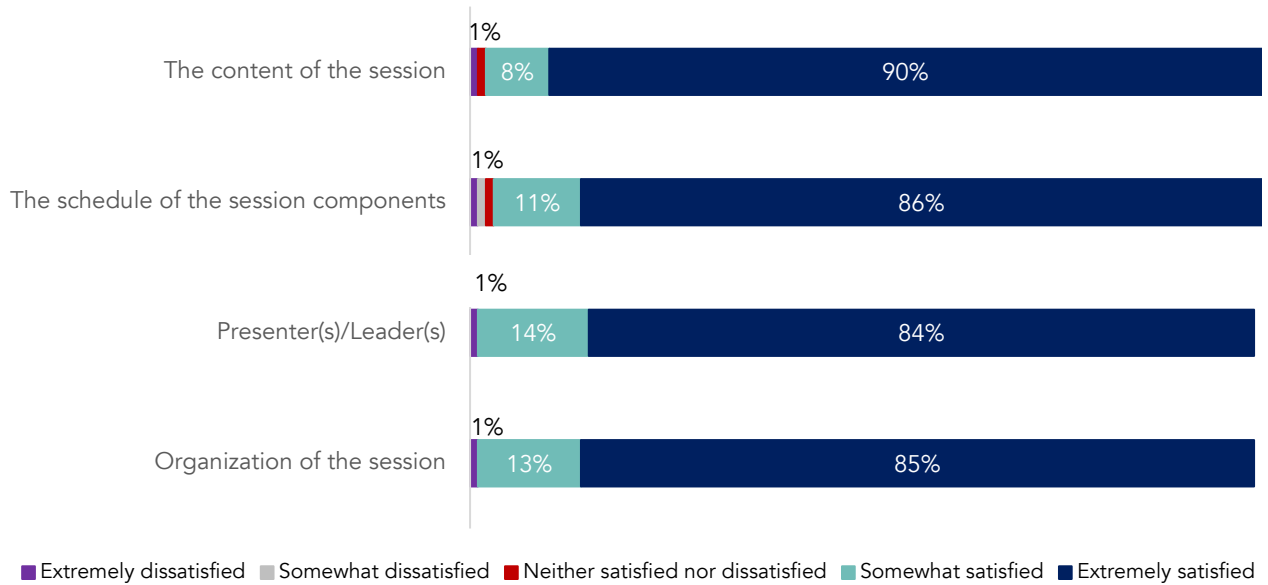
## What can be done to make this session better?

Of the 78 survey respondents, 43 provided meaningful responses to this question, though almost half (46%) simply praised the session, without indicating anything to be changed. Of those that did offer suggestions to strengthen the session, most indicated they would prefer if the session was held in person and/or included more interactive activities (30%).

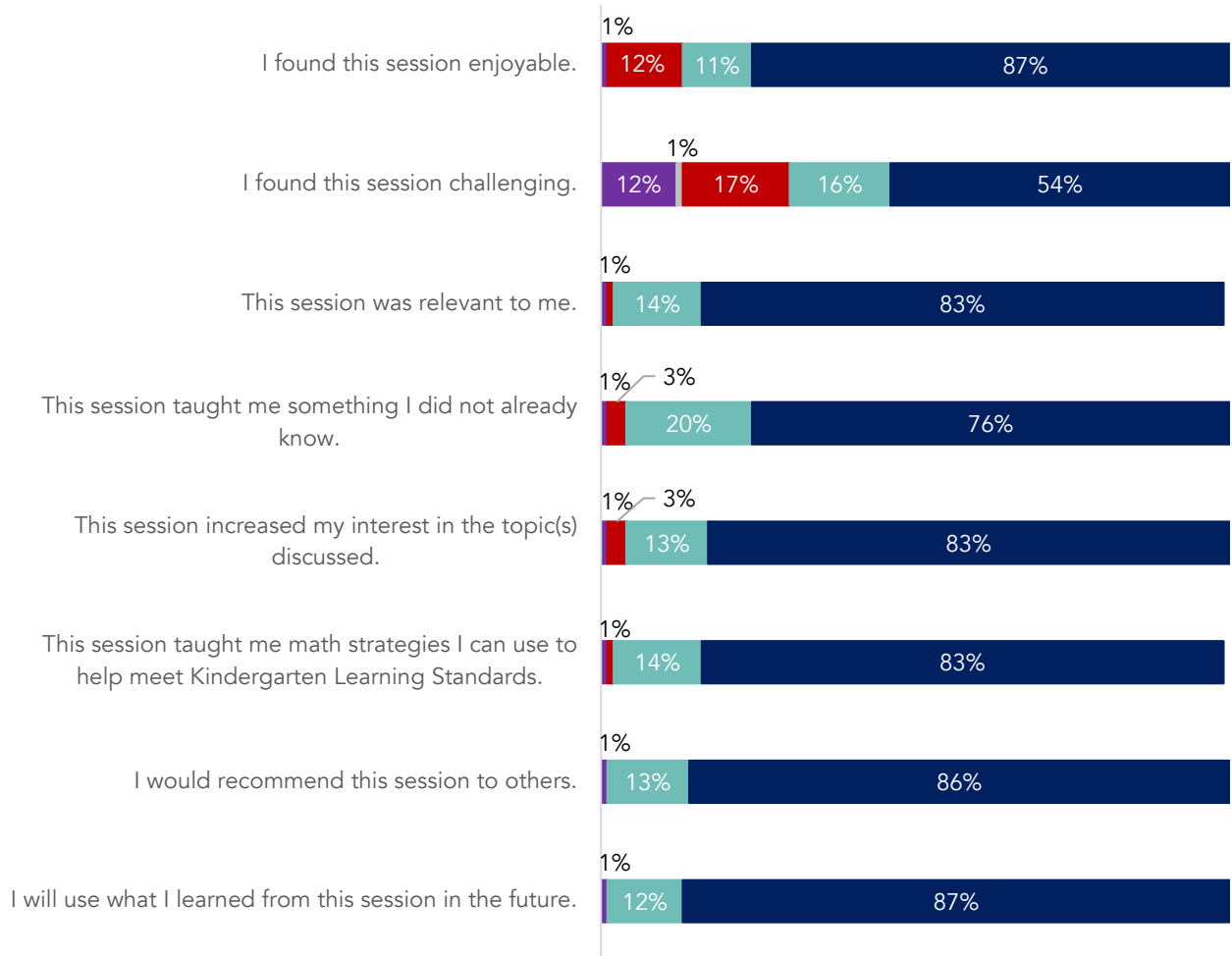


**MATH STRATEGIES FOR KINDERGARTEN:** Participants were highly satisfied with this session. Though only about two-thirds found it challenging, almost all participants said it was relevant to them. They found the strategies, activities and examples; collaboration; resources and/or handouts; and videos especially useful. Almost all participants plan to use what they learned in ways such as incorporating it into their lessons and sharing it with others. Though respondents were highly complimentary of the session, the main change respondents suggest is holding it in person or making it more interactive.

Please indicate your level of satisfaction with each of the following training components:



Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements:

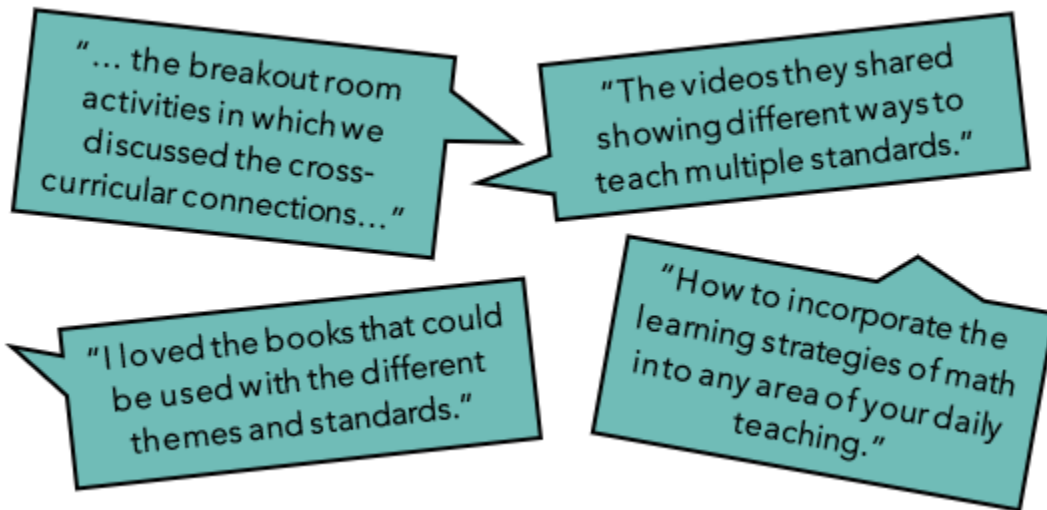


■ Strongly disagree 
 ■ Somewhat disagree 
 ■ Neither disagree nor agree 
 ■ Somewhat agree 
 ■ Strongly agree

### What were the most useful aspects of this session?

Of the 76 survey respondents, 66 provided meaningful responses to this question, with most indicating the most useful aspects included one or more of the following:

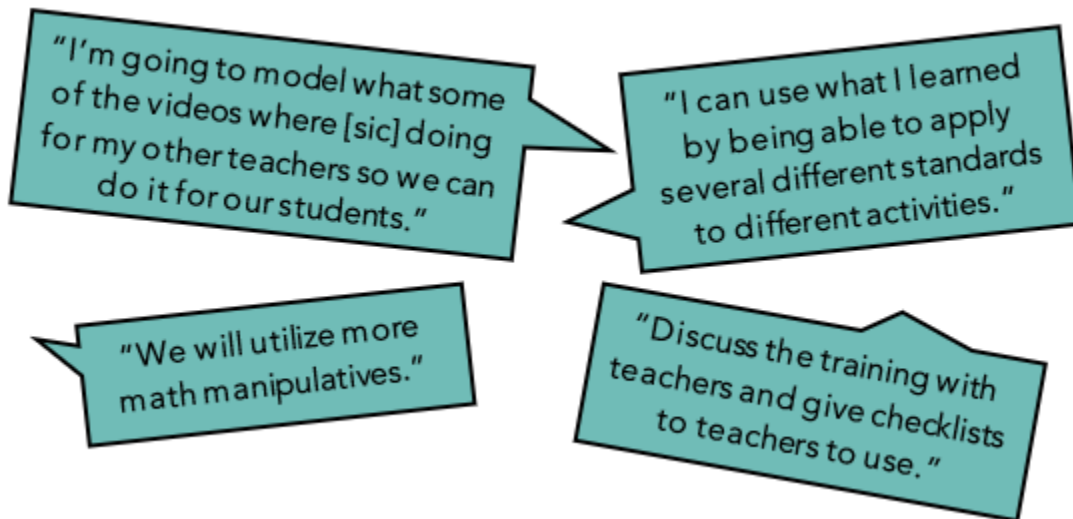
1. Strategies, activities and/or examples (45%)
2. Videos (26%)
3. Collaboration and/or ideas from other teachers (15%)
4. Resources and/or handouts (11%)



### How will you use what you learned in this session?

Of the 76 survey respondents, 66 provided meaningful responses to this question, with most indicating they will use what they learned in one or more of the following ways:

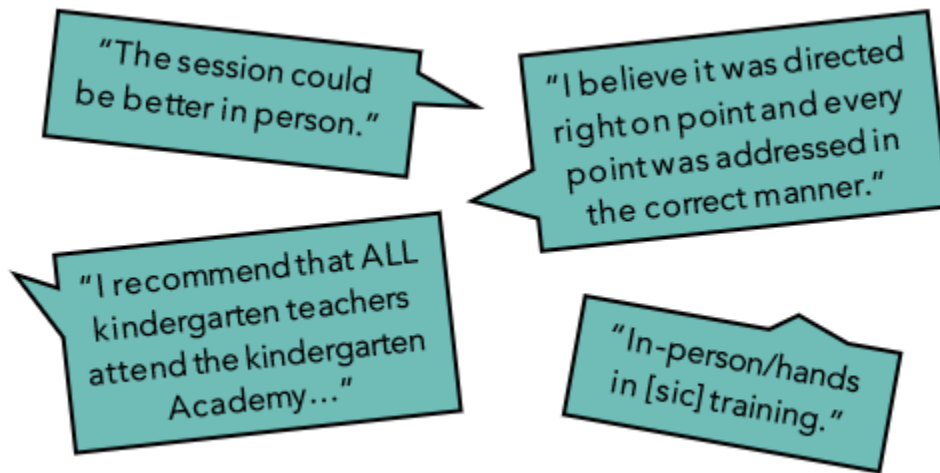
1. Incorporate it into lessons and/or centers (52%)
2. Train or share with others (32%)
3. Use with students and/or staff (how isn't specified; 11%)





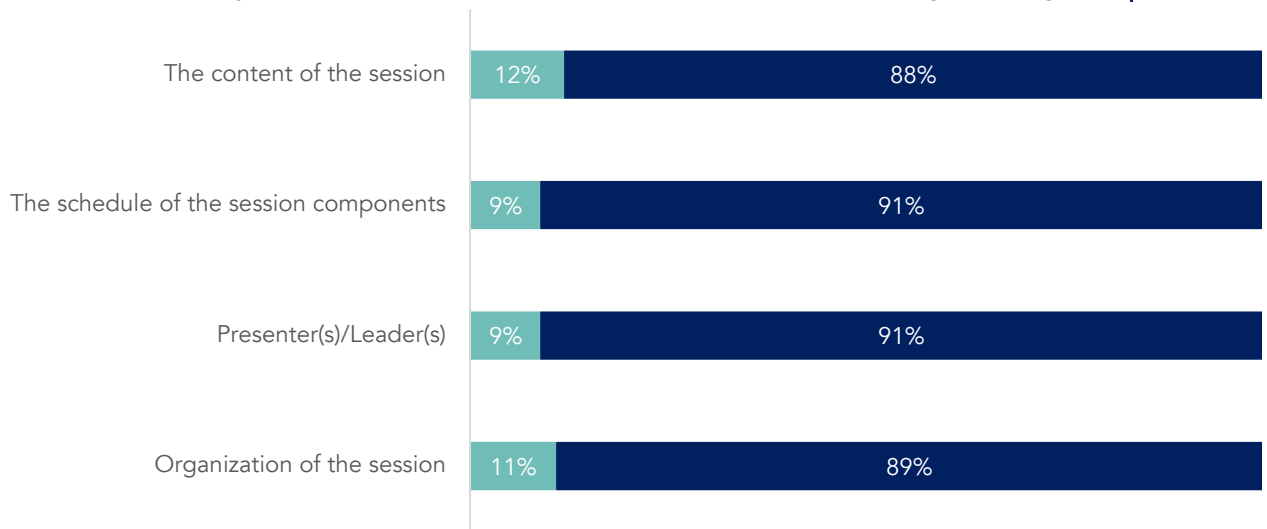
## What can be done to make this session better?

Of the 76 survey respondents, 40 provided meaningful responses to this question, though over half (53%) simply praised the session, without indicating anything to be changed. Of those that did offer suggestions to strengthen the session, most indicated they would prefer if the session was held in person and/or included more interactive activities (15%).



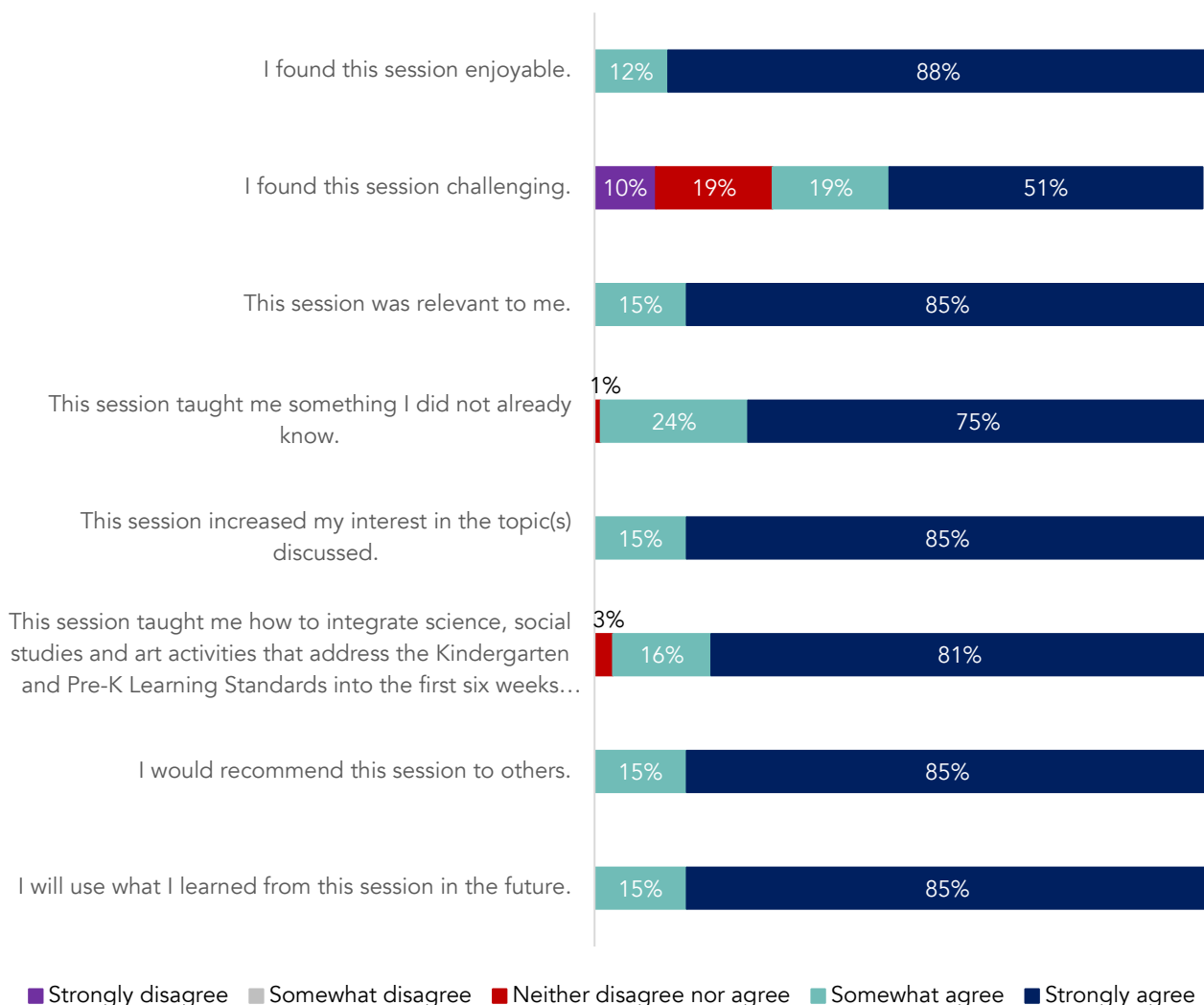
**TEACHING THROUGH FAMILIAR CONTENT:** Participants were highly satisfied with this session. Though only about two-thirds found it challenging, all participants said it was relevant to them. They found the strategies, activities and examples; information and activities related to the MDE Guidelines/Standards and collaboration especially useful. Almost all participants plan to use what they learned in ways such as incorporating it into their lessons and sharing it with others. Though respondents were highly complimentary of the session, the main change respondents suggest is holding it in person or making it more interactive.

Please indicate your level of satisfaction with each of the following training components:



■ Extremely dissatisfied 
 ■ Somewhat dissatisfied 
 ■ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 
 ■ Somewhat satisfied 
 ■ Extremely satisfied

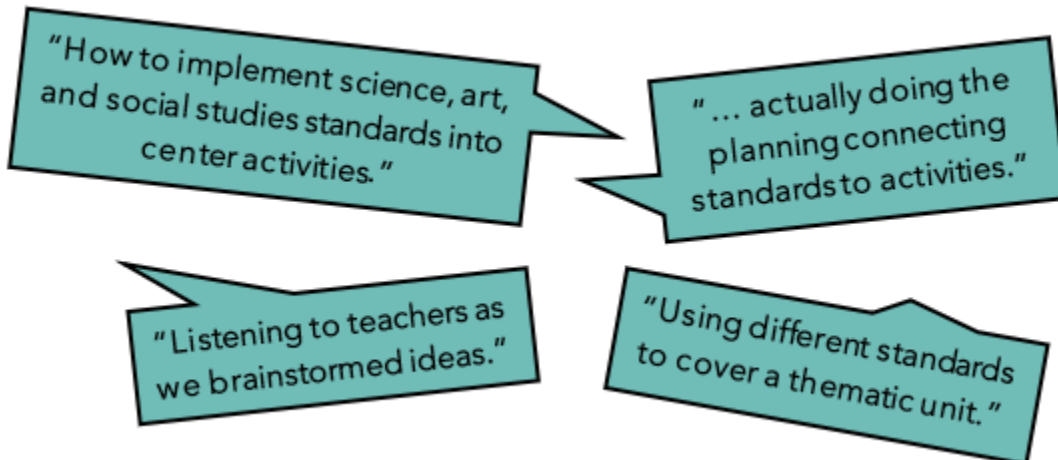
Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements:



### What were the most useful aspects of this session?

Of the 67 survey respondents, 58 provided meaningful responses to this question, with most indicating the most useful aspects included one or more of the following:

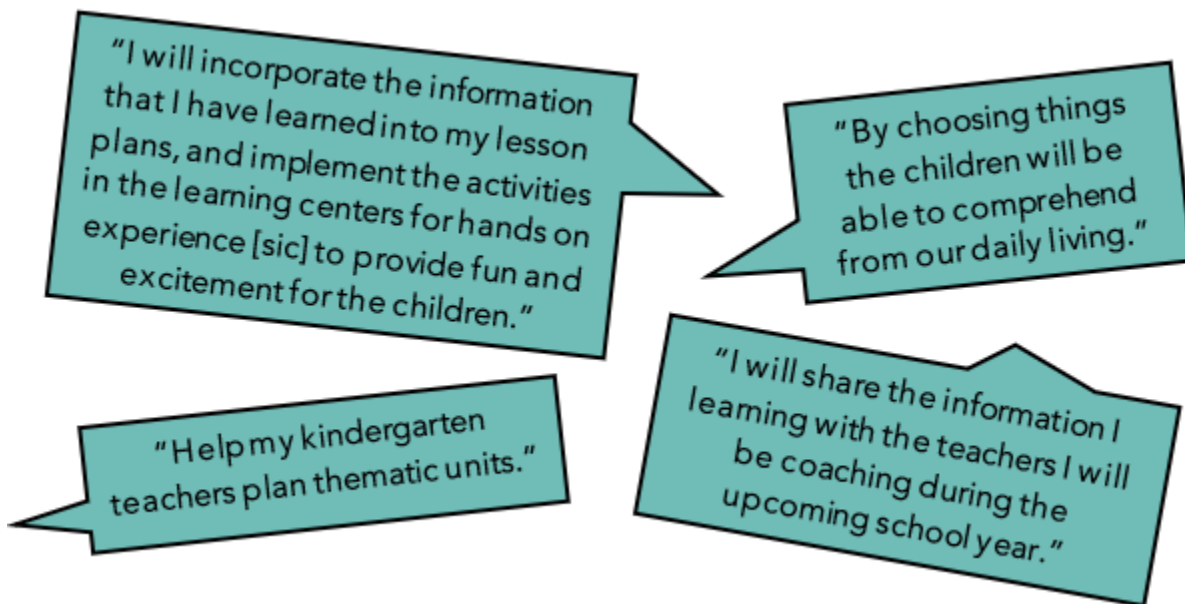
1. Strategies, activities and/or examples (41%)
2. MDE Guidelines/Standards information and/or activities (31%)
3. Collaborations with colleagues and breakout sessions (14%)



### How will you use what you learned in this session?

Of the 67 survey respondents, 58 provided meaningful responses to this question, with most indicating they will use what they learned in one or more of the following ways:

1. Incorporate it into lessons and/or centers (53%)
2. Train or share with others (28%)



## What can be done to make this session better?

Of the 67 survey respondents, 49 provided meaningful responses to this question, though roughly one-third (32%) simply praised the session, without indicating anything to be changed. Of those that did offer suggestions to strengthen the session, most indicated they would prefer if the session was held in person and/or included more interactive activities (12%).



## Section 2: Early Childhood Specialized Bootcamp training for Pre-K teachers and teacher assistants seeking a Pre-K Endorsement or Certificate of Completion

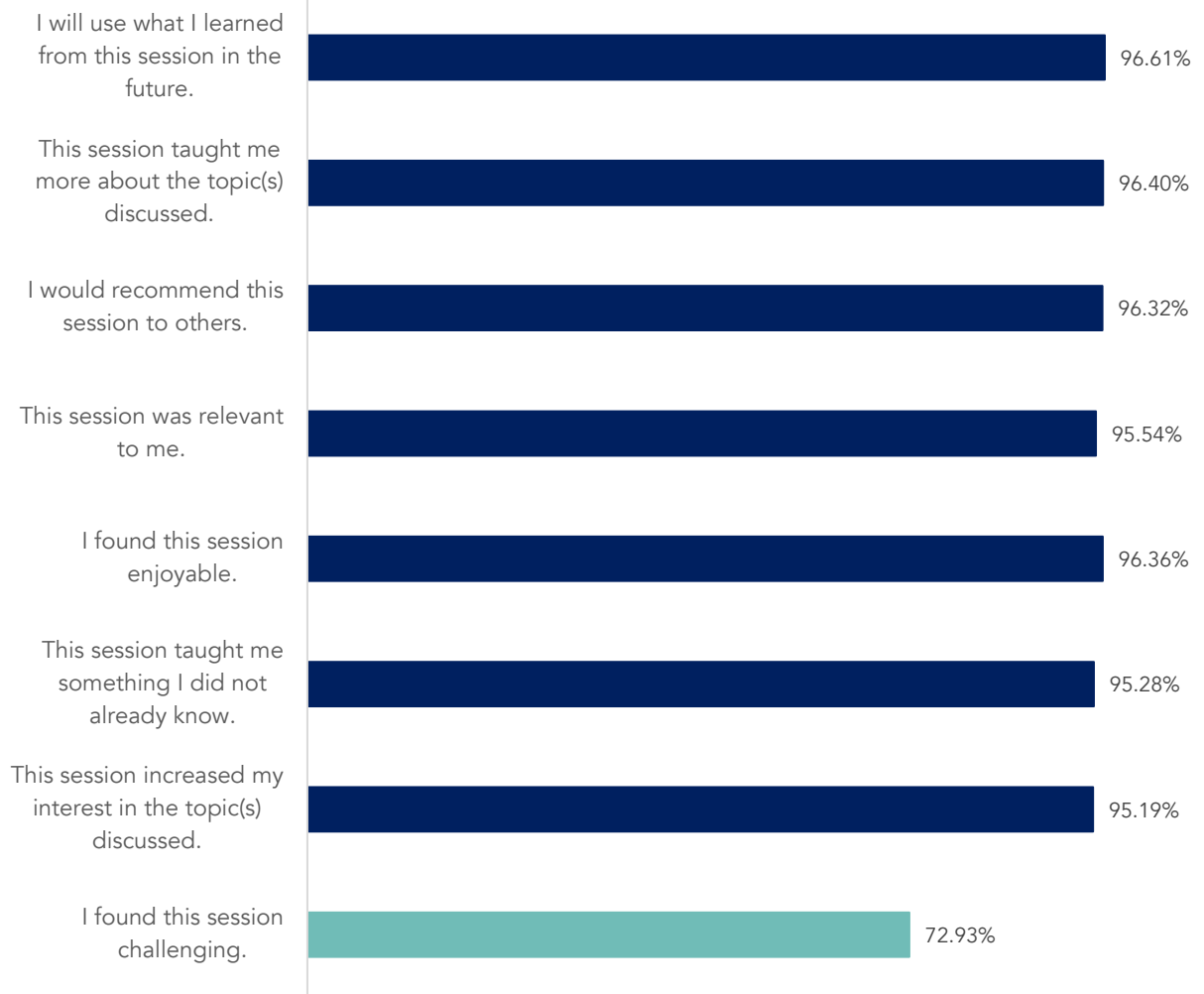
- Pre-K teachers and teacher assistants seeking Pre-K endorsement or Certificate of Completion participated in a virtual two-week training from June 14-18, 2021 and June 21-25, 2021.
- This bootcamp is part of the *Specialized Early Childhood Training Program*, which is one route for licensed teachers to obtain a Pre-K Endorsement.
- Average daily attendance over the 10-day training was 232 participants (out of 339 rostered).
- MDE developed and remotely administered a survey after each training day, as well as pre- and post-surveys at the beginning and end of the two-week training period. The following number of participants completed each survey:  
 Pre-Survey = 143 (42%)    6/14/21 = 246 (89%)    6/15/21 = 218 (89%)    6/16/21 = 206 (87%)  
 6/17/21 = 202 (87%)    6/18/21 = 186 (82%)    6/21/21 = 197 (82%)    6/22/21 = 219 (91%)  
 6/23/21 = 209 (83%)    6/24/21 = 213 (85%)    6/25/21 = 211 (91%)    Post-Survey = 87 (26%)
- **Key Findings:** Participants were highly satisfied with the Bootcamp. Though only about three-quarters found it challenging, almost all participants said it was relevant to them. Almost all participants learned something from the Bootcamp, including information on improving centers, available resources and technology, fostering social-emotional learning and language/literacy development. Their reported self-efficacy increased in all areas measured. Interestingly, a lower percentage of participants report that they will seek the Pre-K Endorsement after participating in the Bootcamp than thought they would beforehand.

Over the course of the 10-day bootcamp, participants completed surveys for each session. Each survey asked the same questions measuring satisfaction and agreement regarding various satisfaction and usability components. We computed the total percentage of positive responses (*extremely/somewhat satisfied and strongly/somewhat agree*) for each component across all ten surveys.

Please indicate your level of satisfaction with each of the following aspects of today's training:



Please indicated your level of agreement with each of the following statements:



The post-survey addressed satisfaction and effectiveness of the Bootcamp, overall (reported below as percentage of *mostly/strongly agree*), as well as participants' report of knowledge growth over the course of the Bootcamp.

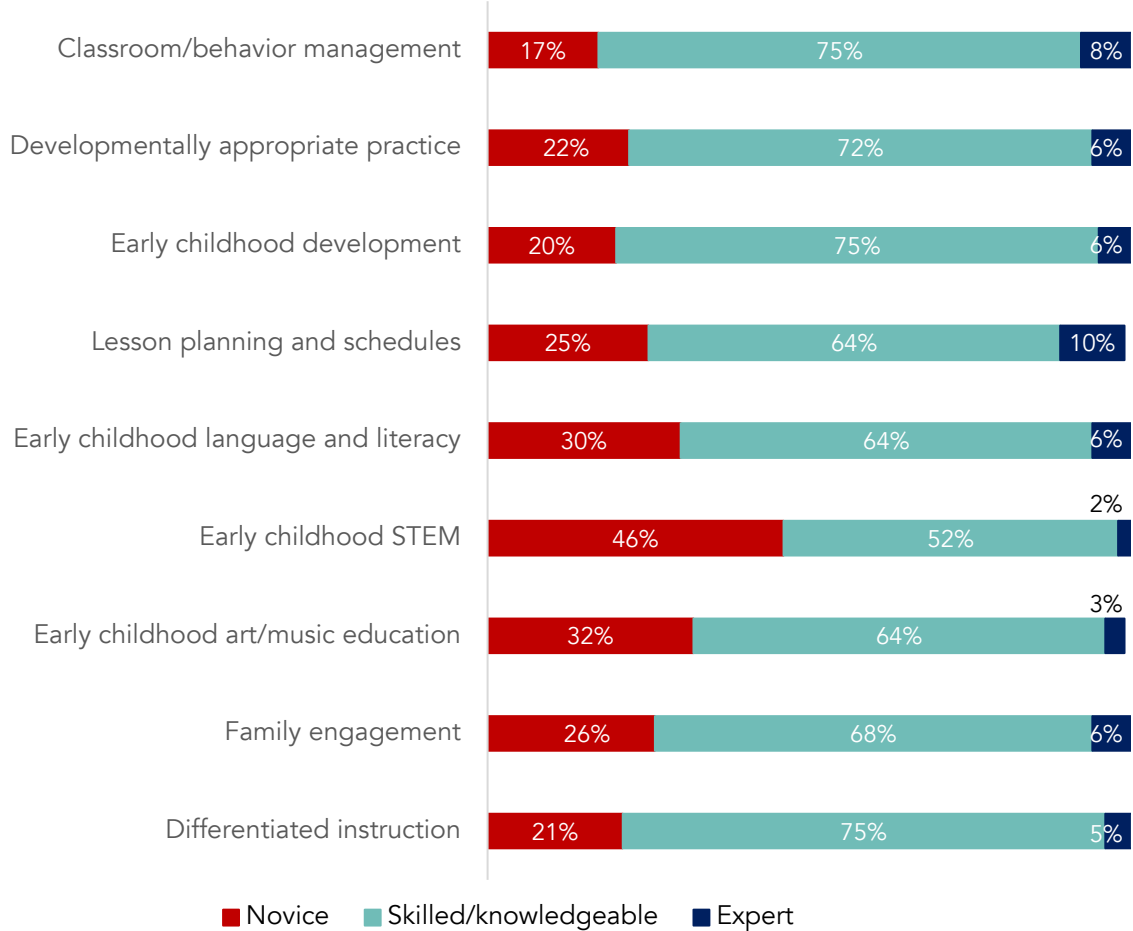
**Please tell how you feel about each of the following statements:**



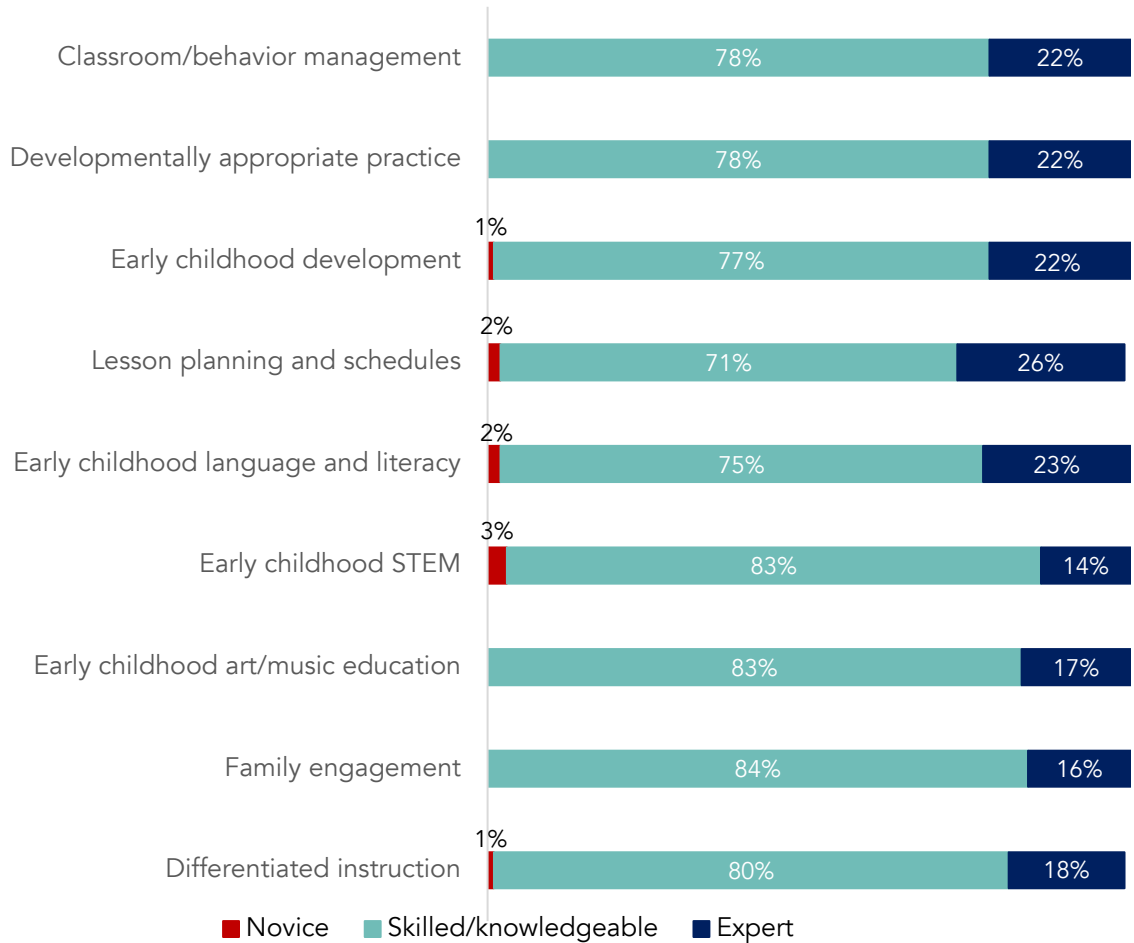


Pre- and post-survey data further compared self-reported expertise in various teaching-related areas, as well as intention to get the Pre-K Endorsement. Note that not all the same participants responded on the pre- and post-survey, and we do not have the identifying information necessary to match respondents, so we ran comparisons on aggregate data.

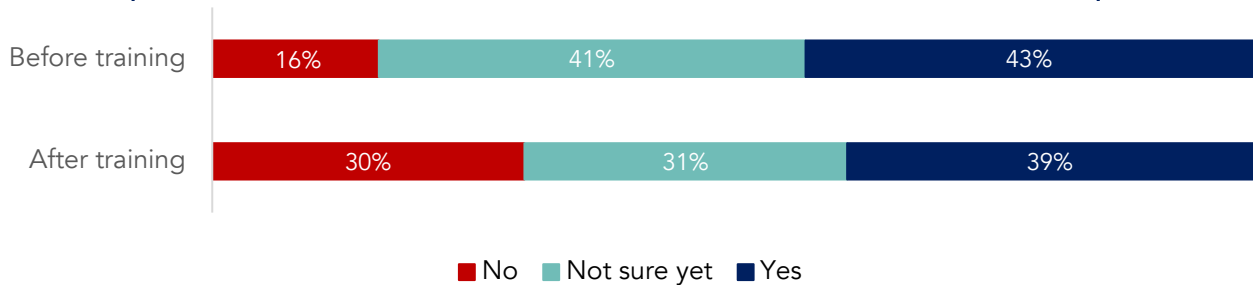
For each of the following topics, please indicate your level of expertise:  
(before training)



For each of the following topics, assess your growth as a result of Early Childhood Bootcamp Training:  
(after training)



Do you plan to get the add-on licensure endorsement available through this program?



Please tell us at least one new thing that you learned at Early Childhood Bootcamp Training. Of the 87 survey respondents, 81 provided meaningful responses to this question, with most indicating they learned information about one or more of the following topics:

1. Language and/or literacy development (27%)
2. Improving centers (25%)
3. Resources and technology available (14%)
4. Fostering social-emotional learning and/or classroom management (11%)



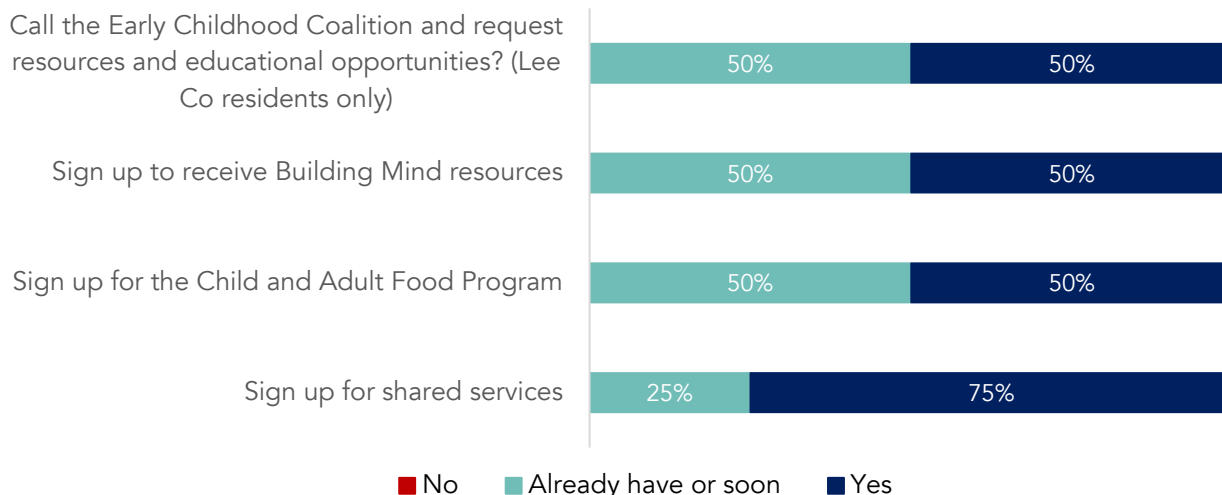
### Section 3: Family Child Care Provider Resource Meeting

- Family child care providers participated in a resource meeting at the Lee County Library on July 31, 2021.
- This meeting is part of the *Building Minds* initiative, which aims to provide resources and professional development to family child care providers.
- Four participants completed a survey developed and administered by GCSEL.
- **Key Findings:** Participants found the information and resources provided to be clear and helpful to their program. If they are not already using the resources presented, they plan to.

Please rate your satisfaction with the following information provided:



Do you plan to do the following?



### Summary:

Overall, participants found the trainings offered in the summer of 2021 to be informative and useful. Specific key findings are summarized below.

- **Kindergarten Academy training:** Participants were highly satisfied with each session. Though some did not find the sessions challenging, almost all participants said they were relevant to them. They found the strategies, activities and examples; collaboration; resources and/or handouts; and videos especially useful. Almost all participants plan to use what they learned in ways such as incorporating it into their lessons, sharing it with others. Participants will also use some of the content to support social-emotional learning and build relationships with their students. Though respondents were highly complimentary of the sessions, the main change they suggest is holding them in person or making them more interactive.
- **Early Childhood Specialized Bootcamp training:** Participants were also highly satisfied with the Bootcamp. Though only about three-quarters found it challenging, almost all participants said it was relevant to them. Almost all participants learned something from the Bootcamp, including information on improving centers, available resources and technology, fostering social-emotional learning and language/literacy development. Their reported self-efficacy increased in all areas measured. Interestingly, a lower percentage of participants report that they will seek the Pre-K Endorsement after participating in the Bootcamp than thought they would beforehand.
- **Family Child Care Provider Resource Meeting:** Participants found the information and resources provided to be clear and helpful to their program. If they are not already using the resources presented, they plan to.

## APPENDIX 2: Implementation Survey Respondents by Role

*Table 2: Overall Implementation Survey Respondents by Role: Years 4 & 5*

Role	Number of Participants
Teacher Assistant (general or special education)	32
Director of Preschool/Daycare	27
Teacher (general or special education)	20
Director (other)	15
Lead Teacher	10
MDE Coach	8
University Teacher/Professor	8
Technical Assistance Coordinator	5
Principal	4
Assistant Director	3
Assistant Principal	3
Community College Professor/Instructor	3
Curriculum Specialist	3
Educational Consultant	3
Early Childhood Program Specialist	3
Literacy Coach	2
Director of Curriculum	1
Director of Special Education	1
Intervention Specialist	1
Speech Pathologist	1
Other	19
Missing	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>174</b>

*Text Responses—“Other” Role:*

- Childcare
- Coach
- Coordinator of School Readiness
- District Case Manager
- Early childhood Instructional Specialist
- Early Childhood Regional Coordinator North Miss MDE
- Education Manager
- Family Advocate
- MSDH Trainer
- Outreach Worker

- Pre-K Parent Educator/Community Coordinator
- Pre-K Coordinator
- President of large Director's association in MS
- Professional Developmental Specialist
- Program Manager for local Early Learning Collaborative
- Project Manager (Nonprofit)
- School Readiness Coordinator
- Trainer

## APPENDIX 3: Additional Grant Funding<sup>12</sup>

### *GEER 1 (\$129,998)*

Goal: Given the timeframe of this grant, the immediate measurable goals will be to (1) increase the number of infant and toddler certified CLASS observers in the state and (2) increase the number of home visitors, early childhood coaches and First Steps staff using information related to how to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on children in congregate care as well as in the home.

### *GEER 2 (\$170,744)*

Goal: The primary goal of the program is to provide professional development to up to 800 teachers of children in grades k-5 and special education as well as elementary guidance counselors and school administrators to address the social and emotional issues children with special needs and identified as high-risk for school failure. The purpose is mitigating and minimizing the negative social behaviors caused by COVID-19 related stress.

### *GEER 3 (\$110,076)*

Goal: The primary goal is to increase childcare provider knowledge about social emotional health and behavioral management techniques through a Project ECHO platform that provides a subject-area didactic, access to specialized behavioral healthcare providers and problem-solving sessions with other early childhood professionals.

### *Child Care Clean Plus (CCC+; \$3,900,000)*

Goal: The goal is to provide equitable funding to all licensed centers in the state that want to participate in receiving funds allocated by the state legislature to NMEC/GCSEL for PPE and cleaning supplies as a means to protect staff and children from contacting COVID-19.

### *Hardin Scholars (\$450,000)*

Goal: A multi-year award continues to support the education and activity of early childhood teacher educators in all public universities offering an early childhood teaching degree and community colleges that offer a child development technology. The ultimate goal of the program is providing up-to-date information and research in their course syllabi.

<sup>12</sup>Descriptions and funding amounts were provided by Dr. Grace.



## APPENDIX 4: Best-Practice Strategies (from Classroom Strategies Scale: Teacher Form)

Subscale	Items
Student Focused Learning & Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively participates in new activities with students (e.g., takes a turn during “hands-on activities,” does not sit separately at his/her desk)</li> <li>Assigns students roles during lessons or learning activity</li> <li>Assigns students a task or project to complete with a partner or small group (two or more students)</li> <li>Encourages students to participate in lessons or learning activities</li> <li>Extends group discussions of key points and topics</li> <li>Uses different questions and activities to accommodate student learning needs</li> <li>Relates subject matter to everyday student experiences (e.g., a lesson on fractions might include a discussion of how the students divide a pizza)</li> </ul>
Instructional Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changes tone of voice to emphasize key concepts and words</li> <li>Uses multiple methods (e.g., writes on board, uses smart board, Internet or overhead projector) during lesson</li> <li>Summarizes major concepts</li> <li>Pauses to emphasize key concepts and words</li> <li>Models to class how to use new concepts or skills</li> <li>Introduces new learning activity or lesson before teaching it</li> <li>Relates new concepts and lessons to previous learning</li> </ul>
Promotes Student Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asks students to describe how they arrived at their answers</li> <li>Asks students to summarize or repeat key points</li> <li>Encourages students to perform a skill or answer a question independently</li> <li>Asks students open ended questions</li> <li>Encourages students to ask questions and brainstorm ideas</li> <li>Asks students to elaborate on their answers</li> </ul>
Academic Performance Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acknowledges a student’s positive contribution to the class activity or discussion</li> <li>Is accessible to students for questions and assistance</li> <li>Encourages students to check and correct their work</li> <li>Acknowledges students’ academic strengths</li> <li>Checks students’ completion of in-class assignments and homework</li> <li>Provides feedback to students on their learning or understanding of key content areas</li> </ul>
Praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increases frequency of praise when teaching new skills</li> <li>Verbally praises or rewards students for following rules</li> <li>Nonverbally praises students (e.g., smiles, nods, winks) for following rules</li> <li>Uses positive consequences or rewards following appropriate behavior</li> <li>Uses an enthusiastic tone of voice when issuing praise</li> </ul>

Corrective Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses a calm but firm tone of voice when redirecting student behavior</li> <li>• Provides corrective feedback to students</li> <li>• Uses physical prompts (e.g., touches student’s desk or paper) to redirect student behavior</li> <li>• Moves closer to a student (i.e., - feet) to nonverbally prompt him/her</li> <li>• Provides specific corrective feedback to students privately</li> <li>• Uses nonverbal gestures to prompt appropriate student behavior (e.g., finger to lip for silence, finger to eye for eye contact, flips lights on and off)</li> </ul>
Prevention Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviews classroom rules or routines before a transition or new activity</li> <li>• Calls on quiet students with their hands raised</li> <li>• Encourages students struggling with peers or class assignments</li> <li>• Encourages students to set short-term behavioral goals (e.g., remain quiet for the presentation, walk single file for the fire drill)</li> <li>• Moves around the classroom while teaching</li> </ul>
Directives/Transitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issues commands one or two steps at a time</li> <li>• Obtains the attention of students before giving an instruction</li> <li>• Instructions or commands are specific and issued as statements, not questions</li> <li>• Helps students transition from one task to another</li> <li>• Pauses before repeating directions or commands to students</li> <li>• Following a command or instruction, assesses for compliance or noncompliance</li> <li>• Implements consistent classroom routines and transitions for learning</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX 5: Interview Response Summary

### Role:

- Director, Daycare (3)
- Lead Teacher, Daycare (2)
- School Readiness Coordinator, Public School District (1)
- Teacher Assistant, Public School (1)

### Most useful training/program component:

- If we combine teaching/practical strategies (5)
- Practical solutions (4)
- Knowledgeable and supportive facilitators (especially Cathy; 2)
- Resources (2)
- Teaching strategies (2)
- Did not like trainings and believes children learning through play sets them back academically (1)
- Engaging/illustrative (1)
- Follow-up support from Cathy (1)
- PPE/material COVID support (1)
- Social-emotional learning strategies (1)

### Suggested training supports:

- Case examples from real classroom (1)
- Face-to-face training (1)
- Handouts for use after training (1)
- Videos (1)

### Virtual learning supports/adaptations:

- Continue offering virtual option/flexible time slots (3)
- Tech support (2)
- Engaging content (1)
- Peer interaction/breakouts (1)
- Videos (1)
- Showing rather than lecturing (1)
- Resources provided in advance (1)
- User-friendly registration (1)
- Ways to re-teach virtual information to others (1)

### Implementation ways (self or staff):

- In the classroom with students (7)
- Learning standards-specific (6)
- COVID-related (4)
- Share with/train others (4)
- Emotional support for children (1)

- Plan to implement but haven't yet (1)
- Policy change/reinforcement (1)
- Matching to OWL curriculum (1)
- Virtual learning strategies (1)
- With special needs students (1)

Implementation challenges (self or staff):

- Lack of time (3)
- COVID-19 (2)
- Lack of resources (2)
- Lack of supervisor support/understanding (2)
- IT issues (1)
- Kids' attention span (1)
- Lack of inclusion in decision-making (1)
- Lack of parental support/teaching at home (1)
- Lack of staff education (1)
- Politics: inconsistent support/funding for low-income centers (1)
- Role not well-suited to implementation (1)
- Staffing shortage (1)
- Working with a variety of entities (1)

Support provided to you by school/center/district/franchise/supervisor/state, etc.:

- Encouragement/expectation to implement (4)
- In general (2)
- Resources (4)
- Attending training with/similar to teachers (1) Note: one additional respondent indicated her staff prefer to train without her
- Encourage parental involvement (1)
- From community (1)
- From MDE coaches (1)
- Training staff who aren't grasping something (1)

How could school/center/district/franchise/supervisors help you/your staff?

- Resources (3)
- Time (2)
- Higher teacher pay/pay for off-hour work (2)
- Administrator training on preparing things for teachers (1)
- Administrator understanding of early childhood education (1)
- Talk to legislators (1)

Barriers to school/center ability to support you/your staff:

- District leaders not understanding early childhood education and/or do not prioritize play (2)
- Following guidelines/curriculum is time-intensive (1)

- Politics: inconsistent support/funding for low-income centers (1)
- Resources unavailable due to COVID (1)
- Tech issues (1)

Barriers to district/franchise/supervisor ability to support you/your staff:

- Federal regulations (1)
- Politics: inconsistent support/funding for low-income centers (1)

Outcomes for students:

- Learning (4)
- Behavior management (3)
- Help children, in general (2)
- Autonomy (1)

Outcomes for other teachers:

- Working together to sharing ideas and/or determine what works or doesn't work (4)
- Behavior management ideas (2)
- Less stressed/happier (1)

Redesign or utilize useful components of other trainings:

- Encourage/require participation when virtual to increase engagement (2)
- Useful content for other roles (2)
- Advertise more so others know about trainings available (1)
- Family engagement and/or social-emotional support for whole family (1)
- Filming demonstrations or demonstration classroom (1)
- More time with Cathy (1)
- Training on using technology for administrative tasks (1)