Because this study is...
Research Findings

Essential Supports Framework

The Early Ed Essentials tool was created using the five essential supports framework and existing K-12 Everett Essentials surveys. Researchers adapted the teacher survey and created a new parent survey for ECE settings, then tested for reliability and validity.

Validity

If the Early Ed Essentials surveys do measure organizational constructs that research suggests are important for ECE programs, then survey results should be positively related to established measures of ECE quality. On the other hand, we do not expect the survey data to map perfectly onto these other measures—the surveys should be providing consistent information while also identifying practices and experiences that other tools do not yet capture.

Most, but not all, essential scores were significantly related to site-level outcomes.

- Neither ambitious instruction nor parent voice scores were significantly related to either outcome measured.

SNAPSHOT FIGURE 3

SNAPSHOT FIGURE 4

SNAPSHOT FIGURE 5

SNAPSHOT FIGURE 6

Reliability

It is critical to ensure that the measures on the Early Ed Essentials capture the true response (i.e., beliefs or experiences) of the respondent and do not have large amounts of random error. This tells us they are measuring what they’re intended to measure. Analyses showed:

- All measures on the surveys were reliable; we can trust they are accurately measuring people’s beliefs and experiences on the construct being asked about.
- Many measures were sensitive enough to detect differences between sites; the surveys are well-designed to effectively capture site-wide beliefs or experiences with organizational essential supports. Measures that were less sensitive fell under the ambitious instruction and parent voice essentials.
- The surveys did not have strong bias toward: Schools or community-based ECE sites; or English or Spanish speakers (parent survey only).
- This means the surveys can be used and compared across different types of sites.

“Practical” Validation: Observations and Interviews

To provide additional evidence of discriminant validity and “practical” validation that the Early Ed Essentials are able to differentiate between different types of early childhood programs, researchers asked: Are there qualitatively different climates, structures, and practices between ECE sites with high vs. low Early Ed Essentials’ survey scores?

Interview and observation evidence confirmed that the Early Ed Essentials differentials between ECE programs:

- Staff and families in sites with high and low survey responses provided qualitatively different descriptions and experiences of organizational climate and conditions, summarized in Table 1.

SNAPSHOT TABLE 1

Reports of Organizational Climate and Conditions

All ECE sites with High Essential Support Scores:

- Staff interviewers and early care providers were making sure they complied with the agenda of program regulations and procedures (e.g., attendance, inclusive practices, children’s behaviors) at one site, while others focused on the work of teaching and learning.
- There was an absence of leadership practice and organizational structures that reflected a commitment to improving classroom climate and aligning organizational structures to focus more formally on teaching and learning.
- Leaders, teachers, and staff emphasized rate making as the top priority in the organization whereas other staff focused more on organizational structures that support better teaching and learning, a barrier to their teaching and learning climate.

All ECE Sites with Low Essential Support Scores:

- A lack of leaders and teachers who believed that families in their program were not critical or valued,
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- The surveys did not have strong bias toward either: School- or community-based ECE sites; or English or Spanish speakers (parent survey only).

SNAPSHOT FIGURE 2: Essential scores related to CLASS Pre-K

SNAPSHOT FIGURE 3: Essential scores related to CLASS Instructional Support Score

SNAPSHOT FIGURE 4: Essential scores related to Student Attendance

Note: * New ECE measure (not on K-12).
Adapted slightly from K-12 measure.
* indicates that the surveys are comprised of an item-level score that is comprised of multiple items.
Note: **New ECE measure (not on K-12).
SNAPSHOT TABLE 1: Reports of Organizational Climate and Conditions

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<tr>
<td>High</td>
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<td>91.1%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.48</td>
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Interview and observation evidence confirmed that the Early Ed Essentials differentiates between ECE programs:

- Staff and families in sites with high-and low-school surveys responded providing qualitatively different descriptions and experiences of organizational climate and conditions, summarized in Table 1.

4. “Practical” Validation: Observations and Interviews

To provide additional evidence of discriminant validity and “practical” validation that the Early Ed Essentials are able to identify different climates, structures, and practices between ECE sites with highs vs. lows Early Ed Essentials survey scores?

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Research Findings

Essential Supports Framework

The Early Ed Essentials tool was created using the five essential supports framework[4] and existing K-3 Essentials surveys. Researchers adapted the teacher survey and created a new parent survey for ECE settings, then tested for reliability and validity.

Validity

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- Most, but not all, essential scores were significantly related to site-level outcomes.
- Neither ambiguous instruction nor parent voice scores were significantly related to either outcome measured.

Reliability

- Higher-order categories of organizational supports that are essential for improving student learning
- Comprised of multiple items
- Capture survey responses about the respondent’s beliefs or experiences of a single construct
- Comprised of multiple items
- Individual survey questions that capture a range of beliefs and experiences

The Measures Are Grouped into 6 Essentials for This Study

- In many ways, this aligns with the placement of measures into essentials on the K-3 survey.
- However, parents' responses to the survey indicated different perspectives from teachers' responses.
- Therefore, we created a sixth essential to test in our validation analyses: parent voice.

Validity

- Essential scores were significantly related to site-level outcomes.
- Neither ambiguous instruction nor parent voice scores were significantly related to either outcome measured.

Indicators of Organizational Climate and Conditions

To provide additional evidence of discriminant validity and “practical” validation that the Early Ed Essentials measure organizational climate and conditions, summarized in Table 1.

SNAPSHOT TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Essential Scores Related to CLASS Pre-K</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Bottom Quartile)</td>
<td>(Top Quartile)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CLASS Instructional Support Score</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5 Essentials</strong> (Bottom Quartile)</td>
<td><strong>5 Essentials</strong> (Top Quartile)</td>
<td><strong>5 Essentials</strong> (Bottom Quartile)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child-Child Interactions</strong></td>
<td><strong>5 Essentials</strong> (Bottom Quartile)</td>
<td><strong>5 Essentials</strong> (Top Quartile)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher Safety A</strong></td>
<td><strong>5 Essentials</strong> (Bottom Quartile)</td>
<td><strong>5 Essentials</strong> (Top Quartile)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher-Teacher Trust</strong></td>
<td><strong>5 Essentials</strong> (Bottom Quartile)</td>
<td><strong>5 Essentials</strong> (Top Quartile)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher Influence</strong></td>
<td><strong>5 Essentials</strong> (Bottom Quartile)</td>
<td><strong>5 Essentials</strong> (Top Quartile)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program Coherence</strong></td>
<td><strong>5 Essentials</strong> (Bottom Quartile)</td>
<td><strong>5 Essentials</strong> (Top Quartile)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instructional Leadership</strong></td>
<td><strong>5 Essentials</strong> (Bottom Quartile)</td>
<td><strong>5 Essentials</strong> (Top Quartile)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instructional Support</strong></td>
<td><strong>5 Essentials</strong> (Bottom Quartile)</td>
<td><strong>5 Essentials</strong> (Top Quartile)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * indicates that scores were then used to produce the top/bottom quartile average score. ** indicates that scores were significantly related to site-level outcomes. ** indicates that scores were significantly related to either outcome measured at the p<0.05 level; *** indicates significance at the p<0.01 level; **** indicates significance at the p<0.001 level.

Interview and observation evidence confirmed that the Early Ed Essentials differentials between ECE programs:

- Staff and families in Index high and low survey responses provided qualitatively different descriptions and experiences of organizational climate and conditions, summarized in Table 1.
Ed Essentials: Testing New Surveys to inform Program Improvement

High-quality, well-implemented early childhood education (ECE) positively affects the learning trajectories of children who start school with lower skills than their peers, according to decades of evidence. Yet studies on ECE programs across the country reveal that new and high-quality programming. To date, the ECE field has focused most improvement efforts on classroom materials and interactions. Broader these efforts to an organization wide focus can better support quality improvement.

The University of Chicago Consortium on School Research (UChicago Consortium) and the Ounce of Prevention Fund (Ounce) designed teacher and parent surveys, the “Early Education Essential Organizational Supports Measurement System” (Early Ed Essentials), to help ECE sites diagnose organizational strengths and weaknesses.

The current study tested whether the newly-adapted and designed Early Ed Essentials teacher and parent surveys capture reliable and valid information about the organization of ECE programs—information that is also associated with existing indicators of program quality.

Data Used in This Study:

Quantitative Data:

• Sample: 8 surveys in Chicago
• 8 school-based and 8 community based
• Early Ed Essentials survey, collected winter/spring 2018
• 46 school- and 40 community-based teacher and parent surveys
• 2,464 parent surveys
• 81 sites in Chicago
• Data collection included: a) interviews with teachers and parents, b) review of common area spaces and displays.

Qualitative Data:

• Sample: 1 focus group at the qualitative sample
• 2 sites with high and 2 sites with low ECE district survey scores, 1 school, and 1 community based for each
• Data collection included: a) interviews with teachers and parents, b) focus groups with teachers and parents, c) review of common areas spaces and displays.

The research reported here was supported by an anonymous funder; the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Zillow Foundation, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and the Pfeiffer Children’s Initiative. Additional support was provided by the Consortium’s Investor Council and Consortium general operating grants.

The Early Ed Essentials survey is dedicated to giving all children, especially those from diverse backgrounds and families, the best possible start in life. We provide research, tools, and resources for success in school and to the public policies and practices for high-quality early care and education. We communicate with ECE leaders, administrators, and researchers to understand its use as an improvement tool.

We are in the early stages of developing measures that can capture the essential characteristics of ECE programs, and thus the experiences children and families have as they transition from pre-kindergarten to early elementary grades.

The alignment between the Early Ed Essentials and K-12 Ed Essentials tools provides a common language, lens, and metric for understanding and promoting instructional improvement throughout the educational continuum. Leaders from both sectors can strengthen alignment of structures and practices, and thus the experiences children and families have as they transition from pre-kindergarten to early elementary grades.

A potential to grow new areas of ECE research and practice, and thus the experiences children and families have as they transition from pre-kindergarten to early elementary grades.
Early Ed Essentials: Testing new surveys to inform program improvement

High-quality, well-implemented early childhood education (ECE) positively affects the learning trajectories of children who start school with lower skills than their peers, according to decades of evidence. Yet studies on ECE programs across the country reveal low or even negative high-quality programming. To date, the ECE field has focused most improvement efforts on classroom materials and interactions. Broading these efforts to an organization-wide focus can better support quality improvement. The University of Chicago Consortium on School Research (UChicago Consortium) and the Ounce of Prevention Fund (Ounce) designed teacher and parent surveys, the “Early Education Essential Organizational Supports Measurement System” (Early Ed Essentials), to help ECE sites diagnose organizational strengths and weaknesses.

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**Data Used in This Study:**

- **Quantitative Data**
  - Survey: ECE scans in Chicago
  - 745 teacher surveys
  - 2,464 parent surveys
  - 2,653 pre-K classrooms

- **Qualitative Data**
  - Classroom observations in May–June 2016 using protocols to capture indicators of high-quality education

**Technical Report Publication Information:**


The research reported here was supported by an anonymous funder, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Joyce Foundation, the Ounce of Prevention Fund, the Council of Chief State School Officers, the Urban Education Institute, and the Ounce of Prevention Fund.

The Ounce of Prevention Fund

http://consortium.uchicago.edu/publication-tags/pre-k


All the data and research in this document have been compiled over the years and have been further analyzed to create this document. The field of early childhood education is vast, and the researchers have used various methods to gather information, from surveys to classroom observations. The current study tested whether the newly-adapted and designed Early Ed Essentials teacher and parent surveys capture reliable and valid information about the organization of ECE programs—information that is also associated with existing indicators of program quality.

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