For several years of development and testing, the Early Ed Essentials has now evidence that it provides valid and reliable evidence for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers. As the near future, the valid portions of these surveys will be available for use in early education settings. Other areas will continue to be used under the Early Ed Essentials. A desirable good for this measurement system in the years ahead. Key practices for consideration, for policy, and research include:

- Expanding the definition of “quality.” The Early Ed Essentials and National Outline offer a better way to understand the quality of space and services within communities. With few ECE measures currently available to understand organizational conditions, these surveys provide a cost-effective way to gain staff and parent perspectives on the organi- zations, climate, and conditions. The Early Ed Essentials can also provide actionable information about programs that may help the long-standing ECE research questions, such as why some children thrive and others do not, even when similar conditions exist.

- Limitations in the field. This study is the first of its kind on these surveys, there will be more to study and learn over time. When considering the use of these surveys, it is important to recognize that:
  - The surveys and outcomes (CLASS and atten- dance) are related to each other, but we do not yet know whether essential supports in early education settings change in outcomes. Because these surveys were tested in ECE settings with education-based classrooms serving 3-5-year-olds, we cannot assume they will work similarly in other settings, such as in infant/toddler classrooms.
  - Some areas of the surveys will continue to be re- fined and tested, including additional training on the teacher survey and the full parent survey.

- We are in the early stages of developing measures and repositioning the relationships between organizational conditions and outcomes within ECE programs. The authors therefore caution against using the Early Ed Essentials as an accountability metric, at least until there is ample opportunity for the field to understand its use as an improvement tool.

### Data Used in This Study:

**Quantitative Data**

- Teachers (n = 81 in Chicago)
- 9 school-based and 60 community-based
- Early Ed Essences surveys, collected in fall 2018
- 2,464 parent surveys
- 745 teacher surveys

**Qualitative Data**

- Interview data from 81 teachers in fall 2018
- 10 interviews with high- and low-child care costs
- 4 sites (from the quantitative sample)
- 30 interviews with parents in fall 2018
- Family interviews with parent support tools like how they use the support tools and their activities, and interactions:

Data collection included:

- Individual interviews of teachers and families, and group interviews of families.
- Observation of classrooms, activities, and interactions;
- Collection of student assessment and interven- tion data collected from different fields and spaces.
Research Findings

Essential Supports Framework

The Early Ed Essentials tool was created using the five essential supports frameworks1 and existing K-12 Essential survey frameworks. Researchers adapted the teacher survey and created a new parent survey for ECE settings, then tested for reliability and validity.

The Measures Are Grouped into 6 Essentials for This Study

1. In many ways, these align with the placement of measures into the 5Essentials K-12 surveys.
2. However, parents’ responses to the survey indicate different perspectives from teachers’ responses.
3. Therefore, we created a sixth essential to test in our validation analyses: parent voice.

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.

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 the measures on the surveys were reliable; we can trust them 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 either:
  • Schools- or community-based ECE sites; or
  • Staff or parent questions (parent survey only).

“Practical” Validation: Observations and Interviews

To provide additional evidence of discriminant validity and provide “practical” validation of the Early Ed Essentials, we observed and interviewed ECE leaders in different climates, structures, and practices between ECE sites with high vs. low Early Ed Essentials survey scores.

Interview and observation evidence confirmed the Early Ed ESSENTIALS differences 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.

Table 1: Reports of Organizational Climate and Conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESSENTIALS MEASURE</th>
<th>Category: Collaborative</th>
<th>Category: Supportive</th>
<th>Category: Ambitious</th>
<th>Category: Informed</th>
<th>Category: Involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CLASS Instructional Support Score</td>
<td>4.03 (Bottom Quartile)</td>
<td>4.26 (Top Quartile)</td>
<td>4.29 (Top Quartile)</td>
<td>4.07 (Top Quartile)</td>
<td>4.23 (Top Quartile)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLASS Collaborative Learning Scores</td>
<td>4.00 (Bottom Quartile)</td>
<td>4.22 (Top Quartile)</td>
<td>4.19 (Top Quartile)</td>
<td>3.98 (Top Quartile)</td>
<td>4.19 (Top Quartile)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Attendance Rate</td>
<td>81.6% (Bottom Quartile)</td>
<td>89.3% (Top Quartile)</td>
<td>88.6% (Top Quartile)</td>
<td>87.9% (Top Quartile)</td>
<td>90.2% (Top Quartile)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * Indicates that scores were significantly related to either outcome measured.

1. Adapted slightly from K-12 surveys.
2. Note: Early Ed ESSENTIALS measures include the 5Essentials K-12 surveys.

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2. Note: Early Ed ESSENTIALS measures include the 5Essentials K-12 surveys.
Research Findings

Essential Supports Framework

The Early Ed Essentials tool was created using the five essential supports framework and existing K-12 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 into 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 other outcome measures.

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 are intended to measure. Analyses showed:

• All the measures on the surveys were reliable; we 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 either: Schools or community-based ECE sites; or English or Spanish speakers (parent survey only).

Interview and observation evidence confirmed the effectiveness of the Early Ed Essentials differentiates across 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.

“Practical” Validation: Observations and Interviews

To provide additional evidence of discriminant validity and provide “practical” validation that the Early Ed Essentials tool can be used to identify sites with different climates, structures, and practices between ECE sites with high vs. low Early Ed Essentials survey scores?
Research Findings

Essential Supports Framework

The Early Ed Essentials tool was created using the five essential supports framework and existing K-12 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.

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 that 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 essential.
- The surveys did not have strong bias toward either: Schools or community-based ECE sites; or English or Spanish speakers (parent survey only).

“Practical” Validation: Observations and Interviews

To provide additional evidence of discriminant validity and “practical” validation that the Early Ed Essentials is able to differentiate between 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 differentiates between ICE 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1</th>
<th>Reports of Organizational Climate and Conditions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essential Score</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strongest Essential Scores</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>Teachers and leaders believed that partnerships with families were critical to children’s success, including the role of families in high-stakes educational decision-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>Teachers and staff believed that organizational structures were designed to support learning environments for children and their families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weakest Essential Scores</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>Leaders and teachers built emotionally-encouraging relationships with staff, and it was noted that the positive outcomes of these relationships were transferred to classrooms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>There was an absence of leadership practices and organizational structures that advanced a pedagogical orientation and focus on meaningful learning across all classrooms.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the Words of a Teacher:

“Teach A”

“I feel like it’s empowering [here]. It’s not just from the top down. We believe in what we’re doing. We have to have something to show and it’s valued by your administration and your colleagues also buy in, too, and you have that energy and we find ourselves as an administrator that pushes you in that way and supports you and praises you and nudges you a bit further.”

“Teach B”

“That’s one thing that gets to me [here]. There is no collaboration. I used to go to another classroom and say, ‘Hey, I couldn’t do this way. Can you help me now how I can do this way, or didn’t they work for you?’ (Brick teacher at one school) (Byron teacher at one school). Everyone is not even using the same curriculum [name]... That’s what gets me because if I have a problem...and I want to compare, I can’t.”

- **Teach A**
- **Teach B**
After several years of development and testing, the Early Ed Essentials now has evidence that it can provide valuable data to educational leaders and researchers. In the near future, the valid portions of these surveys will be available for use in early education settings. Other areas will continue to be under development. There is considerable promise for this measurement system in the years ahead. Key considerations for practice, policy, and research include:

- Expanding the definition of “quality.” The Early Ed Essentials and its component surveys are the first tools that allow policymakers and practitioners to operationalize ‘quality’ in ECE politics and practice. As such, we need to seek a common language that practitioners in early education settings can use to define and discuss quality. For example, because the UChicago Consortium has evidence that the organizational conditions and outcomes within ECE settings are related to characteristics of ECC settings and the developmental needs of young children, we need to align language that policymakers and practitioners use in different settings. Other areas will continue to be under development.

- Technical Report Publication Information:


- Implications

  • The UChicago Consortium has evidence that the organizational conditions and outcomes within ECE settings are related to characteristics of ECC settings and the developmental needs of young children. Because this study is not, even when similar structural conditions exist, why some programs seem to thrive and others do not, even when similar structural conditions exist.

  • Limitations in the field. Because this study is the first of its kind and these surveys, there will be more to study and learn over time. When consistent with the field and the developmental needs of children, it is important to recognize that:
  
  - The surveys and outcome (CLASS and attention) are related to each other, but we do not yet know whether essential supports in early education settings cause changes in outcomes.
  - Because these surveys were tested in ECC settings with education-focused classrooms serving 3- to 5-year-olds, we cannot assume they will work similarly in other settings, such as in other/holder classrooms.
  - Some areas of the surveys will continue to be refined and tested, including without notice the teacher survey and the full parent survey.
  - We are in the early stages of developing measures and researching the relationships between organizational conditions and outcomes within ECC programs. The authors therefore caution against using the Early Ed Essentials as an accountability metric—least of all when there is ample opportunity for the field to understand its use as an improvement tool.
A research include:

settings. Other areas will continue to be under development. There is considerable promise
the near future, the valid portions of these surveys will be available for use in early education
settings, staff, leaders, students, families, and/or communities. With few ECE measures currently
available to understand organizational supports, these provide a cost-effective way to gain
staff and parent perspectives on the organizational climate and conditions. The Early Ed Essentials
can also provide contextual information about programs that may shed light on other
long-standing ECE research questions, such as why some programs seem to thrive and others
do not, even when similar structural conditions exist.

• Limitations in the field. Because this study is the first of its kind on these surveys, there
will be more to study and learn over time. When combined with the results of the Early Ed
Essentials in the field, it’s important to recognize that:

• The surveys and outcome (CLASS and atten-
dance) are related to each other, but we do not yet
know especially those of the University of Chicago Consortium, the University of Chicago, or the Ounce of Growth Fund.

The University of Chicago Consortium on School Research (UChicago Consortium) and the Ounce of Prevention Fund (Ounce) designed teacher and parent surveys, and the "Early Education Essential Organizations 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

- Teacher: 8 sites in Chicago
- 1 school-based and 60 community
- Data: Early Ed Essentials surveys, collected winter–spring 2016:
  - 81 sites in Chicago
  - 2,464 parent surveys
  - 1 community-based site for each
  - 2 sites with high & 2 sites with low
  - 1 school and 1 community-based site for each
  - 2,500 parent surveys
  - 1 school- and community-based site
  - 1 school and 1 community-based site
  - 1 school and 1 community-based site

Qualitative Data

- 1 school and 1 community-based site
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- 1 school and 1 community-based site

Data collection included:

- Individual interviews of leaders, teachers, and group interviews of families;
- Documentation of observations of classrooms, activities, and interactions;
- Observation of common areas and Boiler.

Early 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 too few offer high-quality programming. To date, the ECE field has focused most improvement efforts on classroom materials and interactions. Broadening 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 Organizations Support 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.

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