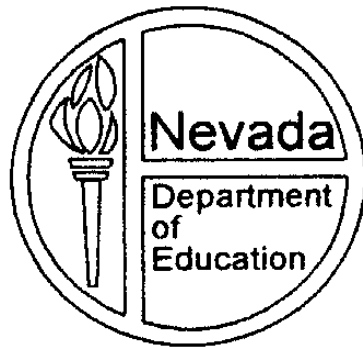


# SENATE BILL 525

# NEVADA EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE) PROGRAM

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2006-07  
Evaluation Report



NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Special Education, Elementary and Secondary Education, and School Improvement  
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## **Executive Summary**

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The 2005 Nevada State Legislature passed Senate Bill (SB) 525 that continued the funding of the Nevada Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program and appropriated \$3,032,172 in the 2005-06 fiscal year and \$3,152,479 in the 2006-2007 fiscal year for early childhood education. The money must be used by the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) to award competitive grants to school districts and community-based organizations for early childhood education programs. According to SB 525, the grants are “to initiate or expand pre-kindergarten education programs.” In addition, the grants must have a parenting component, as specified in the original legislation for the Nevada ECE Program. Families are eligible for the program if they have a child up to the age the child is eligible to attend kindergarten.

In July 2005, NDE awarded a competitive grant to 10 school districts and community-based organizations to operate an early childhood education program based on the recommendations of peer reviewers. Eight of the successful applications are school districts, including Carson City, Churchill County, Clark County, Douglas County, Humboldt County, Pershing County, Washoe County, and White Pine. The two remaining applications were Great Basin Community College in Elko and the Classroom on Wheels Program which operates three programs in four counties.

During 2006-07, the ten Nevada ECE projects provided services to 1,055 families at 41 different sites, including 1,073 children and 1,070 adults. Of the 1,073 children served in Nevada ECE during the 2006-07 school year, 949 children were in the Nevada ECE program on December 15, 2006. Using the figures of 949 children and the total award amount of \$3,152,479, the average cost of the Nevada ECE program per child in 2006-07 was \$3,322. This per child cost underestimates the total cost of providing an early childhood education program to children since the calculation does not include the monies from all the funding streams that support Nevada ECE project sites. That is, some Nevada ECE projects are funded with both Nevada ECE funds as well as other funds.

The purposes of this report are to describe the Nevada ECE projects and populations they served and to report the results of data collected on four program outcome indicators in

early childhood education and parenting. The evaluation addressed five major questions:

1. How is the funding spent on the program?
2. Who is served by the program?
3. How do projects implement Early Childhood Education?
4. What are the outcomes of Early Childhood Education?
5. Does the Nevada Early Childhood Education Program have a longitudinal impact on the program children and parents? (The results to this question are presented separately in *Nevada Early Childhood Education Program 2006-07 Longitudinal Evaluation Report* available at the Nevada Department of Education.)

The remainder of the executive summary is divided into key sections of the evaluation, followed by a set of key findings and conclusions from the evaluation. Many of the findings in this evaluation report are consistent with the findings from the two previous evaluation reports in 2004-05 and 2005-06.

**Nevada ECE Participants.** The profile of Nevada ECE families is that many have provided their children with limited formal educational experiences prior to the program, are from minority ethnic backgrounds, are learning English as a second language, and a sizeable number of families are poor. For many families, Nevada ECE gives them an important opportunity to better their lives by providing their children with developmentally supportive experiences to prepare them for school.

Adults cited two primary reasons for participating in Nevada ECE: to better prepare their child for school and to improve their child's chance of success in school.

Nevada ECE served families with a large range of incomes; however, the largest portion of families represents the poorer segment of the population. Thirty-one percent of Nevada ECE families (326 families) have incomes under \$20,000.

Most Nevada ECE children (880 children or 82 percent) did not participate in any educational program before participating in Nevada ECE, and 89 percent (951 children) did not participate in any other educational program while enrolled in Nevada ECE.

When asked what would Nevada ECE children do if they did not participate in the early childhood education program, parents reported the vast majority of children (955 children or 89%) would spend all or a part of the time at home—either with their parents (65 percent), grandparents or other adult family member (15 percent), or with siblings (5 percent). About 20 percent of the children (218 children) would spend all or a part of their time in a structured or semi-structured early childhood setting. In other words, the majority of children would not attend any structured or semi-structured early childhood education program prior to entering kindergarten without Nevada ECE.

The typical Nevada ECE family included two parents—representing 74 percent of families (777 families). Single parents headed 148 families (14 percent).

The adult Nevada ECE population is primarily female: 965 females (90 percent) and 105 males (10 percent). Most adult participants are between 20 to 29 years old (471 adults or 44 percent) or between 30 to 39 years old (469 adults or 43 percent). The Nevada ECE adult population also included a small number of teen parents (5 adults or less than 1 percent). The ethnic composition of Nevada ECE adults is primarily Hispanic (658 adults or 62 percent) and White (321 adults or 30 percent). Fifty-two percent of Nevada ECE adults (558 adults) speak Spanish as their primary language and 46 percent (484 adults) speak English.

Overall, Nevada ECE projects served children three and four years old. Like their parents, Nevada ECE children represent several ethnic groups, with Hispanic (62 percent) and White (26 percent) representing the largest groups. Project staff identified 52 percent of Nevada ECE children (560 children) with limited or no English language skills.

**Nevada ECE Program Development.** One way to help develop a quality early childhood program is to draw upon effective or established programs and practices when planning program activities. As mentioned previously, Nevada ECE funded 10 projects that operated 41 sites. The evaluator visited 13 of the 41 sites, with at least one site from each of the 10 projects. Twelve of the 13 sites used a commercial early childhood education program as their primary curriculum: several sites used multiple commercial programs. Many of the programs are effective research-based programs: five sites used *High*

*Scope*, three sites used the *Creative Curriculum*, and three sites used the Scholastic's *Building Language for Literacy*. Single sites used *Curiosity Corner* or *PreSchool Core Knowledge Curriculum*.

**Nevada ECE Program Implementation.** Nevada ECE funds purchased the services of 91 staff, for a total of 66.63 FTE. The 91 staff included seven administrators, 37 teachers, 33 teacher aides, two family specialists, six support staff, and four “other staff.”

Of the 37 teachers in the Nevada ECE program, 29 teachers (86 percent) meet state requirements for instruction of pre-kindergarten children. Twenty-eight of these 29 teachers (94 percent) have an early childhood education certificate and/or endorsement. The remaining teacher has an elementary teaching certificate and was employed full-time in a pre-kindergarten program as of July 1, 2002, and thus, meet state requirements. In other words, most teachers in the program have specific training and/or experience in early childhood education.

Of the eight teachers who do not meet the criteria of the state requirements for instruction of pre-kindergarten children, two have elementary teaching certificates and are long-term teacher substitutes for the early childhood teacher position in their respective school districts. These two school districts were unable to hire a teacher who met state requirements, so filled the position temporarily with long-term teacher substitutes. The remaining six teachers have worked in the early childhood education program at Classroom on Wheels for several years. To enable these staff to continue their job status, after the new state requirements went into effect in July 2002, these six instructors were “grand-fathered in” to the state requirements.

All instructors and aides received some training during 2006-07. Overall, projects provided teachers and aides with the most hours of training in *Curriculum* and *Developmental Areas*—to help staff learn early childhood education best practices as well as the curriculum models implemented at the projects. Staff received the least amount of training in *Children with special needs*, perhaps because many projects did not serve

children with special needs, and those that did, collaborated closely with special education teachers.

**Intensity of Services Offered.** The number of service hours that Nevada ECE projects offer to program participants is an important variable in determining the potential impact of the program. The more hours of service offered typically result in the more hours of service attended—increasing the likelihood the program would impact participants positively.

Projects offered an average of 9 to 10 months of service in early childhood education and an average of 9 to 10 months of service in parenting education during 2006-07, following a traditional school year calendar. On average, projects offered between 471 and 480 hours of early childhood education for 2006-07, depending upon the age of the child. The 10 projects scheduled three to four year olds and five year olds an average of 471 hours. One project offered services to children under three years old, for an average of 480 hours.

Projects offered an average of 105 hours of parenting education during 2006-07, which includes 74 hours of parent and child activities and 31 hours of parenting education alone.

All projects used a variety of strategies to involve parents in the program. All 10 projects provided parent/teacher conferences and nine projects provided opportunities for parent and child together activities.

**Levels of Participation.** It is important to distinguish between services offered by projects and participation in services. Nevada ECE children participated in early childhood education services an average of 275 hours, which is a slight increase from the total average hours of 264 reported in 2005-06.

Overall, Nevada ECE adults participated in an average of 13.8 hours in parenting education during the program, less than the 19.3 hours reported in 2004-05 and the 15.8 hours reported in 2005-06.

One reason why the average hours of participation for early childhood education and parenting are less than the average hours of services offered is that some ECE children and adults did not participate for the entire program year, entering after the school year began or leaving before the school year ended.

**Retention and Reasons for Leaving.** Nevada ECE projects retained the majority of families in the program. Eighty-five percent of Nevada ECE families (897 of 1,055 families) who enrolled in the program during 2006-07 were still in the program at the end of the school year. For comparison, 84 percent of families who enrolled in the Nevada ECE during 2005-06 were still in the program at the end of the school year.

Overall, the families who were in the Nevada ECE program during 2006-07 spent an average of 9.4 months in the program, more than the 8.9 months in 2005-06.

Of the 158 families who left the program, the most common reason why families exited was that the family moved out of the area served by the ECE project (65 families or 41 percent). The next most common reason was that the parent or child switched to a different program (18 families or 11 percent).

**Program Delivery Indicators.** Based on ratings by an Early Childhood Education Evaluator, the projects scored relatively high on 17 sub-indicators—from an average of 4.0 to 5.0 on a five-point scale. *Language* had the highest rating at 5.0. The indicator, *Language*, refers to the use of oral language through books, songs, rhymes, and talking. Nevada ECE projects scored high on this indicator because all the projects use a variety of materials and activities to support children's oral language development.

The evaluation also compared ratings from 2006-07 with ratings from the first year (2001-02) and fifth year (2005-06) of the program. Overall, the data shows that Nevada ECE projects showed an increase in the average ratings from 2001-02 to 2006-07 on all 17 indicators. The results also show that the ratings of seven of the 17 indicators increased 2005-06 to 2006-07 and the ratings of 10 indicators decreased. However, all of the changes from 2005-06 to 2006-07, whether an increase or decrease, were small, rang-

ing from a decrease of -0.31 to an increase of 0.31, suggesting the changes were minor across the Nevada ECE program.

**Educational and Developmental Outcomes of Nevada ECE.** The primary purpose of the state evaluation is accountability—to relate program participation in Nevada ECE to outcomes for children and adults. The evaluation investigated the performance of children and adults on four outcome indicators: one indicator in early childhood education and three indicators in parenting.








In early childhood education, Nevada ECE children met the expected performance level on assessments measuring receptive vocabulary and expressive communication. However, a growing number of children are not included in the analysis of these assessments because they do not have the English language skills at enrollment to take the assessments. That is, projects reported that 391 of the 1,073 children (36 percent) in the project did not have sufficient English language skills to complete the early childhood assessments in English when the children first enrolled in Nevada ECE. In these cases, project staff waited to test children until the children had sufficient English skills to be tested. For some children, this meant that they did not have the required four months between the pretest and posttest dates to be included in the analysis.







In parenting skills, Nevada ECE adults exceeded the expected performance levels on all three indicators. ECE adults exceeded the expected performance level for achieving at least one parenting goal, increasing the amount of time they spent with their children in meaningful interactions, and increasing the amount of time they spent reading with their children.

## **Conclusions.**

The 2006-07 school year is the sixth year of the Nevada Early Childhood Education Program. This evaluation report presents data on participant characteristics (e.g., age, ethnicity, family structure), project operations (e.g., staffing, intensity of services offered), ratings of the services provided by Nevada ECE projects based on program delivery indicators of effective early childhood programs, and data on child and adult outcomes.

The two overall conclusions about the 2006-07 Nevada ECE program are: Nevada ECE projects have improved the quality of their early childhood programs since 2001-02 when the Nevada ECE program began and Nevada ECE projects have positively impacted program participants in early childhood development and parenting skills. Other conclusions and key statements about the Nevada ECE program include—

-  Nevada ECE projects have implemented higher quality early childhood programs from 2001-02 to 2006-07 based on increases in the average ratings of all 17 program delivery indicators of effective early childhood programs. While the overall quality of the early childhood education programs did not increase from 2005-06 to 2006-07, the projects scored relatively high on all sub-indicators—ranging from an average of 4.2 to 5.0 on a five point scale, providing little room for improvement.
-  All Nevada ECE projects are helping to improve adult’s parenting skills and children’s language development and school readiness skills. Nevada ECE projects showed gains on all child and adult measures and exceeded the expected performance levels on all four statewide outcome indicators used for family literacy programs.
-  A growing number of children are not included in the analysis of the early childhood education outcome indicator because they do not have the English language skills to take the English language assessment at enrollment. In these cases, project staff waited to test these children until they had sufficient English skills. As a result, some children did not have the required four months between the pretest and post-test dates to be included in the analysis.
-  Nevada ECE children, including children learning the English language, are more likely to succeed in kindergarten because of their participation in the program.
-  Projects recruited many families who were in need and could benefit from the Nevada ECE program. Many families had multiple economic and social disadvantages (e.g., limited educational experience, limited skills in English). At enrollment, most Nevada ECE children started below their peers on a measure of school readiness.
-  For many families, Nevada ECE was the only structured opportunity to better prepare their children for school. Most children from Nevada ECE families did not participate in any preschool or toddler program before Nevada ECE and many Nevada ECE children did not participate in any other program while in Nevada ECE.
-  The vast majority of children would have stayed at home with their parents, grandparents, siblings, or other family member for all or part of the time if they did not participate in Nevada ECE.

-  The majority of early childhood education teachers (86 percent) meet new state requirements for teaching pre-kindergarten children. The teachers who do not meet the criteria of the new state requirements were either ‘grandfathered in’ due to their previous experience and employment in existing early childhood programs (six teachers) or were long term teacher substitutes (2 teachers). Of the qualified teachers, almost all (94 percent) have an early childhood education certificate or endorsement.
-  The average cost for providing the Nevada Early Childhood Education Program in 2006-07 was \$3,322 per child. This per child cost underestimates the total per child cost for providing an early childhood education program to children since the calculation does not include the monies from all the funding streams that support Nevada ECE project sites.
-  Projects offered services in early childhood education of sufficient intensity and duration, which if attended regularly, would positively impact Nevada ECE children.
-  Most children attended services in early childhood education at a level which could show positive benefits of the services they received.
-  Most parents attended Nevada ECE parenting education services regularly enough to benefit.
-  Projects retained 85 percent of families enrolled in Nevada ECE during 2006-07 until the end of the school year, about the same as the 84 percent who completed the program in 2005-06.

Although Nevada ECE projects have established sound early childhood education programs, Nevada ECE projects can still improve the services they provide to families. Below are five recommendations for improvement.

1. Continue to adopt, implement, and provide training to staff in high-quality, research-based early childhood programs and practices. Train all staff in Nevada Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards.
2. Examine the project’s ratings on the 17 program delivery indicators of effective early childhood education programs and develop program improvement plans for indicators that received a rating of “3” or “4.”
3. Monitor children’s attendance in the early childhood education program and develop policies to replace those children who are unable to attend frequently with children who are more likely to attend.
4. Whenever possible, ensure early childhood classrooms have or have use of an outdoor playground with equipment for pre-kindergarten children to provide an outdoor curriculum that improves gross motor development.

5. In classes that include large numbers of children with little or no English language skills, research and implement practices that are a good fit with program and children characteristics to facilitate the learning of English.

The Nevada Department of Education can help projects meet their goals by considering five recommendations.

1. Continue to locate and provide technical assistance and training in high-quality early childhood education programs and practices, including information and training in the Nevada Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards.
2. Continue to monitor project activities to ensure high-quality early childhood education projects based on the 17 program delivery indicators for effective early childhood education programs.
3. Continue to work with projects to improve services in the 17 program delivery indicators by having projects develop improvement plans for those indicators in which projects were rated low.
4. Establish a Task Force to examine assessment instruments that would accurately measure the impact of Nevada Early Childhood Education on learning English for the growing number of children who enter the program with little or no English skills.
5. Continue to monitor data collection for the statewide evaluation.

## Chapter I. Introduction

The 2005 Nevada State Legislature passed Senate Bill (SB) 525 that appropriated \$3,032,172 in the 2005-06 fiscal year and \$3,152,479 in the 2006-2007 fiscal year for early childhood education.<sup>1</sup> According to SB 525, the grants are “to initiate or expand pre-kindergarten education programs” that are consistent with “*August 2000 Public Support for Prekindergarten Education For School Readiness in Nevada*” —a publication from NDE. The publication identifies a list of features that contribute to an educational setting in which a child can receive high-quality early care and education. The grants must also have a parenting component as specified in the original legislation for the Nevada Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program.

In July 2005, NDE announced a competitive process to select the school districts and community-based organizations to operate the early childhood education programs for the 2005-2007 biennium. To qualify for funding, applicants had to already operate a Nevada ECE program and provide a detailed description of the proposed early childhood education program, the proposed parenting program, and how the money would be used to supplement and not supplant money that would otherwise be expended for early childhood education programs.

NDE received applications from the 10 school districts and community-based organizations that operated a Nevada ECE project in the 2003-05 biennium. A panel of peer reviewers judged the 10 applications using criteria developed for the program. Eight of the successful applications are school districts, including Carson City, Churchill County, Clark County, Douglas County, Humboldt County, Pershing County, Washoe County, and White Pine. The two remaining application were from Great Basin Community College in Elko and Classroom on Wheels Program.

Table 1 shows the ten early childhood education projects, the amount of funds each project received in 2006-07, and the number of early childhood education sites by project.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The 2001 Nevada State Legislature funded Nevada Early Childhood Education with \$3.5 million.

<sup>2</sup> Four projects supported early childhood education programs at more than one site.

All together, the ten Nevada ECE projects funded under SB 525 supported 41 early childhood sites which served 1,070 children during the 2006-07 school year.

**Table 1.** The 2006-07 Monetary Awards and Number of Early Childhood Education Sites

<b>Nevada ECE Project</b>	<b>Monetary Award</b>	<b>Number of Sites</b>
Carson City School District	\$240,800	2
Churchill County School District	\$119,350	1
Clark County School District	\$1,354,500	11
Classroom on Wheels (COW)	\$322,050	13
Douglas County School District	\$82,900	1
Great Basin College	\$119,350	1
Humboldt County School District	\$184,185	1
Pershing County School District	\$120,150	1
Washoe County School District	\$491,200	9
White Pine County School District	\$117,994	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,152,479</b>	<b>41</b>

According to SB 525, projects can use the funds “to initiate or expand pre-kindergarten education programs.” For the purposes of the evaluation, ‘initiate’ is defined as starting a new pre-kindergarten program where one did not exist previously, serving new children, based on when the Nevada ECE Program originally started in 2001.<sup>3</sup> ‘Expand’ is defined as adding a new classroom to an existing pre-kindergarten program, which then serves new children, or improving the services offered to children at existing pre-kindergarten programs, such as by providing more staff or new materials. Table 2 shows the number of sites that projects initiated or expanded during 2006-07. The 10 projects initiated 26 pre-kindergarten sites and expanded services at 15 existing pre-kindergarten sites.

Of the 1,070 children served in Nevada ECE during the 2006-07 school year, 949 children were in the Nevada ECE program on December 15, 2006. Using the figures of 949 children and the total award amount of \$3,152,479, the average cost of the Nevada

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

ECE program was \$3,322 per child slightly more the \$3,116 per child cost in 2005-06. This per child cost is an estimate of the total per child cost of providing an early childhood education experience since the calculation includes both children from project sites fully funded by Nevada ECE and children from project sites funded by multiple sources. To determine a precise per child cost for providing an early childhood education experience funded in whole or part by Nevada ECE, the evaluation would have to collect budget information from all the funding streams that support children from project sites partially funded under Nevada ECE. As a result, the \$3,322 per child figure underestimates the actual per child cost for early childhood education because it does not include the monies from all the funding streams for project sites only partially funded by Nevada ECE. For comparison, the average per child cost for participation in the national Head Start program is \$6,934 for FY 2002.

**Table 2.** The Number of Initiated and Expanded Early Childhood Education Sites

<b>Nevada ECE Project</b>	<b>Initiated</b>	<b>Expanded</b>
Carson City School District	1	1
Churchill County School District	1	
Clark County School District	6	5
Classroom on Wheels	7	6
Douglas County School District	1	
Great Basin College		1
Humboldt County School District	1	
Pershing County School District	1	
Washoe County School District	7	2
White Pine County School District	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>15</b>

### **Organization of Report**

Following this chapter, *Chapter II: Early Childhood Education Evaluation* describes the components of the statewide evaluation of Nevada ECE. *Chapter III: Early Childhood Education Program Implementation* provides additional project level information about

the administrative context of Nevada ECE projects including staffing patterns, professional qualifications, and inservice training. *Chapter IV: Early Childhood Education Participant Characteristics* presents descriptive information of Nevada ECE families, children, and adults. *Chapter V: Early Childhood Education Services* describes the educational services that projects offer to participating families. The next chapter, *Chapter VI: Participation in Services* reports on children and adult participation in program services. This chapter helps distinguish between the services that projects offer and the extent to which the families participate in services. *Chapter VII: Early Childhood Education Project Descriptions* presents a rating of each project on program delivery indicators for early childhood education programs and a description of the project. *Chapter VIII: Participant Outcomes* presents data on the educational progress of program participants. *Chapter IX: Testimonials* provides a description written by Nevada ECE families of the benefits they received from participation. Finally, *Chapter X: Conclusions and Recommendations* presents the conclusions of Nevada ECE implementation based on the results reported in all previous chapters of this report.

## Chapter II. Early Childhood Education Evaluation

Senate Bill 525, Section 14 identifies specific evaluation requirements for early childhood education programs funded under the legislation. (See subsections 5, 6, and 7 of SB 525 in Appendix A.) Essentially, the three key components of the evaluation are:

- ◆ a description of the programs of early childhood education,
- ◆ a summary of the data showing the effectiveness on indicators of early childhood education and parenting, and
- ◆ a longitudinal comparison of the data showing the effectiveness of different programs.

This report, the Nevada Early Childhood Education Evaluation Report 2006-07, presents data on two of the three elements of the evaluation: project descriptions and a summary of the data showing the effectiveness on indicators of early childhood education and parenting. Data on the third evaluation component (a longitudinal comparison of the data showing the effectiveness of different programs) is presented in a separate report, *Nevada Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program 2006-07 Longitudinal Evaluation Report*, on children who participated in the Nevada ECE program in 2003-04 and enrolled in grade 2 in 2006-07, children who participated in the Nevada ECE program in 2004-05 and enrolled in grade 1 in 2006-07, and on children who participated in the Nevada ECE program in 2005-06 and enrolled in kindergarten in 2006-07.

The Nevada Department of Education established an Early Childhood Education Evaluation Design Team in summer 2006 to develop an evaluation design consistent with the evaluation requirements outlined in SB 525. The Evaluation Design Team identified five primary research questions to guide a statewide evaluation of the early childhood education program.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> In addition to the statewide evaluation, projects must also participate in program monitoring activities. Program monitoring involves two parts. Local projects must submit a mid-year and an end-of-year progress report to the state Early Childhood Education Coordinator to describe progress toward meeting program objectives and in implementing the strategies to meet the objectives as outlined in the project application. In addition, the state Early Childhood Education Coordinator conducted site visits to determine project compliance with program requirements.

1. How is the funding spent on the program?
2. Who is served by the program?
3. How do projects implement Early Childhood Education?
4. What are the annual outcomes of Early Childhood Education?
5. Does the Nevada Early Childhood Education Program have a longitudinal impact on the children and parents it serves?

The five research questions are based on information requested by the Nevada Legislature and questions of interest to NDE, drawing from previous evaluations of the Nevada ECE and Even Start programs. The five primary research questions are restated below—followed by sub-questions. Together, these questions and sub-questions guided data collection for the statewide evaluation.

**Research Question # 1. *How is the funding spent on the program?***

This research question addresses the concern of how program dollars are used at the local level. It provides both program-level and project-level data on the amount of state expenditures on ECE. The specific sub-questions in this research area are listed below.

- ◆ How many ECE grants were awarded and to which organizations? What are the funding levels for ECE projects?
- ◆ How many ECE sites did each recipient operate?
- ◆ Were ECE grants used to initiate or expand early childhood education programs?
- ◆ What is the average cost of the program per participant?

**Research Question # 2. *Who is served by the program?***

An interest of the Nevada Legislature is to describe the people who participate in ECE. This research question addresses the legislature's interest by focusing on the participants. Specific sub-questions to be addressed under this primary research question are listed below.

- ◆ How many families, children, and adults participate in ECE? What are the characteristics of families participating in ECE, e.g., family structure, income level?

- ◆ What are the background characteristics of the children and their parents who participate in ECE (e.g., gender, age, race/ethnicity, and primary language)?
- ◆ What is the educational history of ECE children?
- ◆ How long (how many months) do children and adults participate in ECE? How many families leave the ECE program before the end of the school year?

**Research Question # 3. *How do projects implement Early Childhood Education?***

This question focuses on a range of implementation issues. An important issue is to determine what services are provided in early childhood education and the quality of those services. The specific sub-questions in this research area are listed below.

- ◆ What is the nature of services in early childhood education and parenting education offered by the projects? What activities, if any, do projects offer for parents and children together?
- ◆ How do ECE projects implement key components of early childhood education and parenting education services?
- ◆ How well do projects implement quality indicators of program delivery for early childhood education programs based on *Nevada Family Literacy Programs—Quality Indicators for Program Delivery*?
- ◆ What is the educational background of ECE staff? What kinds of continued training have ECE staff received to implement the early childhood education project effectively?
- ◆ On average, what is the intensity (hours) of the services *provided* in early childhood education and parenting education?
- ◆ To what extent do children *participate* in early childhood education and to what extent do adults *participate* in parenting education services?

**Research Question # 4. *What are the annual outcomes of Early Childhood Education?***

This set of research questions is designed to address the annual impact of the program on early childhood education and parent involvement measures. The specific sub-questions in this research area are listed below.

- ◆ What gains are observed for ECE children on measures of developmental progress?
- ◆ What gains are observed for ECE adults on measures of parenting skills, including parenting goals, parent and child together time, and reading time with the child?

**Research Question # 5. *Does the Nevada Early Childhood Education Program have a longitudinal impact on the children and parents it serves?***

This set of research questions is designed to address the longitudinal impact of the program on children and adults. The specific sub-questions in this research area are listed below.

- ◆ What longitudinal gains are observed for ECE children on measures of developmental progress?
- ◆ What longitudinal gains are observed for ECE adults on measures of parent involvement?

As mentioned previously, the results to the longitudinal evaluation are presented in a separate evaluation report, *Nevada Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program 2006-07 Longitudinal Evaluation Report*.

## Chapter III. Early Childhood Education Implementation

This chapter presents a first look at the Nevada ECE projects and how they are implemented by examining their administrative and operational issues. The chapter examines staffing patterns, professional qualifications, and inservice training.

### Staffing Patterns

Project directors were asked to report the number of paid Nevada ECE staff and their full-time equivalents (FTE) or whether they were paid on contract. To avoid duplicating staff counts, we asked project directors to count each staff member only once according to his or her primary assignment area even though staff members may perform multiple roles and functions. Table 3 presents the number of staff across all 10 projects at the end of the project year, their FTE, and the number of these staff on contract.

**Table 3.** The number of Nevada ECE staff by position

Position	Number of Staff	FTE of Staff	Number on Contract
Administrators	7	2.53	-
Teachers	37	32.48	-
Aides (educational assistant)	33	27.1	-
Family Specialists (home-visitor/advocate)	2	1.75	-
Support Staff (secretary, clerk)	6	1.57	-
Others	4	1.62	-
<b>TOTAL STAFF</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>68.63</b>	<b>-</b>

Nevada ECE program funds purchased the services of 91 staff for 2006-07, many of whom are part-time or funded part-time with Nevada ECE funds. The 91 staff included seven administrators<sup>5</sup> who managed the program at the project sites; 37 teachers who instructed in the early childhood education classes; 33 teacher aides who assisted in the

<sup>5</sup> Although all 10 projects have an administrator, Early Childhood Education funds were used to pay only a portion of the salary of seven administrators at five projects, from as little as 10 percent up to 100 percent of their salary. Five projects used other funds to support their administrators.

early childhood classes; two family specialists who worked primarily on parenting activities, including home visits; six support staff, such as a secretary or clerk; and four “other staff” which included a teacher on special assignment who helped coordinate the program, two maintenance staff to maintain the school buses for the COW program, and a bus driver.

## **Professional Qualifications**

Project directors reported the qualifications of their administrative and educational staff (teachers and aides) in terms of their highest level of education and years of professional experience in their position. For teachers, the evaluation also collected data on the type of teacher license/certificate and endorsement. Data on the type of certificate and endorsement held by the early childhood teachers are important because of state requirements regarding teachers in early childhood education programs. According to state law, a teacher must hold a special license or endorsement in early childhood education to teach in a program of instruction for pre-kindergarten children.<sup>6</sup> The law does not apply to a teacher who holds an elementary license, is employed full-time in a prekindergarten program as of July 1, 2002, and continues to teach full-time in a prekindergarten program after July 1, 2002.

Table 4 shows the highest level of education attained for Nevada ECE administrators, teachers, aides or para-professionals, and family specialists. Although there is no specific required education level for administrators, all seven administrators have at least a four-year college degree and six have at least a master’s degree.

Of the 37 teachers, one has a Ph.D., 10 have a Master’s degree, 21 have a Bachelor’s degree, three have an Associate’s degree, and three have a high school diploma or GED.

Of the 33 aides, four have a Bachelor’s degree, six have an Associate’s degree, and 23 have a high school diploma/GED. There are two family specialists: both have a high school diploma/GED.

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<sup>6</sup> See Nevada Revised Statutes 391.019 and Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) 391.087 for the complete list of qualifications, provisions, and exceptions for the revised law.

Table 4 also shows that Nevada ECE instructors and administrators had more experience than other Nevada ECE staff. Five of the seven administrators (71 percent) have over 10 years experience. Of the 37 teachers, nine (24 percent) had more than 10 years of experience. Of the 33 aides and two family specialists, five (14 percent) had more than 10 years of experience.

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

	<b>Adminis- trators</b>	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Aides</b>	<b>Family Specialists</b>
<b>Highest Level of Education</b>				
Did not complete diploma/GED	0	0	0	0
High school diploma or GED	0	3	23	2
AA	0	3	6	0
BA/BS	1	21	4	0
MA/MS/M.Ed	5	10	0	0
Ph.D./Ed.D	1	1	0	0
<b>Years of Experience in primary area</b>				
Less than 1 year	0	1	4	1
1-5 years	1	15	13	1
5-10 years	1	13	11	0
More than 10 years	5	9	5	0

In terms of state requirements for teachers in early childhood education programs, 29 of the 37 teachers (86 percent) meet the requirements. Twenty-eight of these 29 teachers (94 percent) have an early childhood education certificate and/or endorsement. The remaining teacher has an elementary teaching certificate and was employed full-time in a prekindergarten program as of July 1, 2002, and thus, also meets the state requirements. In other words, most teachers in the program have specific training and/or experience in early childhood education.

Of the eight teachers who do not meet the criteria of the state requirements for instruction of pre-kindergarten children, two have elementary teaching certificates and are long-term teacher substitutes for the early childhood teacher position in their respective school districts. These two school districts were unable to hire a teacher who met state require-

ments, so filled the position temporarily with long-term teacher substitutes. Of the six remaining teachers, three have an AA degree and three have a high school degree/GED certificate. All six teachers have worked in the early childhood education program at Classroom on Wheels for several years prior to the July 1, 2002. To enable these staff to continue their job status, the five staff were “grand-fathered in” to the state requirements.

**Inservice Training**

Inservice training is a critical part of providing quality services to Nevada ECE families so that staff can learn about best practices in early childhood education and receive training in the program models (e.g., *High Scope*) projects adopt. Table 5 presents the number of projects that provided training to teachers and aides in eight inservice areas by specific hour ranges. The results show that project staff received substantial training in 2006-07.

**Table 5.** Number of Projects That Provided Teachers and Aides Training by Hour Ranges

<b>Inservice Topics</b>	<b>No hours</b>	<b>0 to 5 hours</b>	<b>6 to 10 hours</b>	<b>11 to 15 hours</b>	<b>Over 15 hours</b>
a) Curriculum	0	1	3	0	6
b) Developmental areas	1	1	4	0	4
c) Learning environment	1	1	6	0	2
d) Children with special needs	1	4	1	3	1
e) Classroom or behavior management	0	2	3	3	2
f) Pedagogy-instructional strategies	1	1	4	1	3
g) Assessment	0	2	5	1	2
h) Involving parents	0	4	2	1	3

Overall, projects provided teachers and aides the most hours of training in *Curriculum* and *Developmental Areas* to help staff learn early childhood education best practices as well as the curriculum models implemented at the projects. Staff received the least amount of training in *Children with special needs*, perhaps because many projects did not serve children with special needs, and those that did, collaborated closely with special education teachers.

## Chapter IV. Early Childhood Education Participant Characteristics

The characteristics of Nevada ECE participants are based on data from 10 projects that provided services to 1,055 families, including 1,073 children and 1,070 adults who participated in services from July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007. Table 6 shows the number of families, adults, and children served by project.

**Table 6.** Number of Nevada ECE Participants by Project

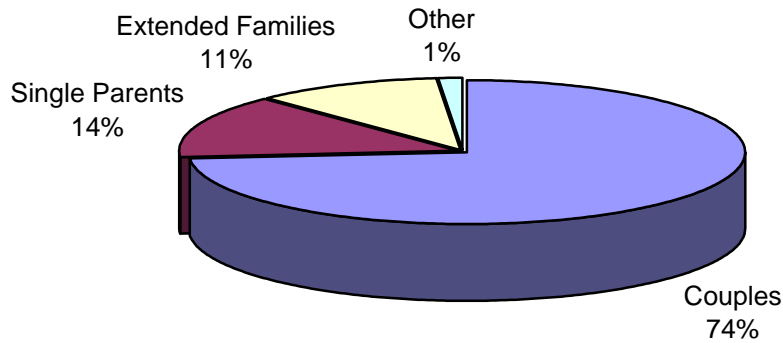
<b>Project</b>	<b>Families</b>	<b>Children</b>	<b>Adults</b>	<b>Total Participants</b>
Carson City	88	88	92	<b>180</b>
Churchill County	37	38	37	<b>75</b>
Clark County	302	315	307	<b>622</b>
Classroom on Wheels	178	178	179	<b>357</b>
Douglas County	19	20	21	<b>41</b>
Great Basin C.C.	35	35	35	<b>70</b>
Humboldt County	45	46	45	<b>91</b>
Pershing County	43	44	44	<b>88</b>
Washoe County	287	288	289	<b>577</b>
White Pine County	21	21	21	<b>42</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,055</b>	<b>1,073</b>	<b>1,070</b>	<b>2,143</b>

In addition to the families served, all 10 projects maintained a waiting list for 2006-07. The 10 projects, which include 41 separate sites, reported they had 1,450 families waiting to enter the program. The project that had the largest number of families was the State-wide Classroom on Wheels (COW) program which reported 665 families.

## Characteristics of Families

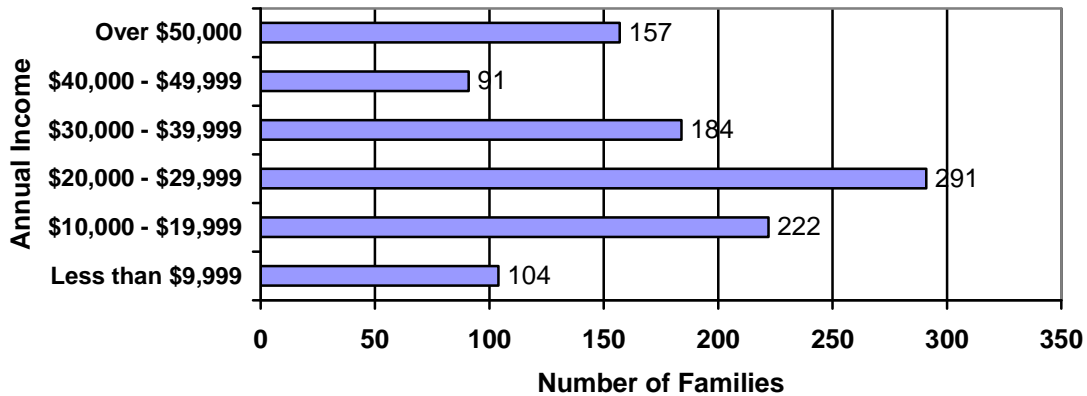
**Household Composition.** The largest percentage of families that participated in Nevada ECE described themselves as couples (777 families or 74 percent), followed by single parent families (148 families or 14 percent), extended family households (116 families or 11 percent), and “other” family structures (14 families or 1 percent). Extended families encompass children living with grandparents, stepparents, or guardians.

**Figure 1.** Structure of Nevada ECE Families



**Family Income Level.** Although family income level is not a criterion for Nevada ECE eligibility, the evaluation collected information about family income to describe the population served in the program. The data in Figure 2 indicate that while the program

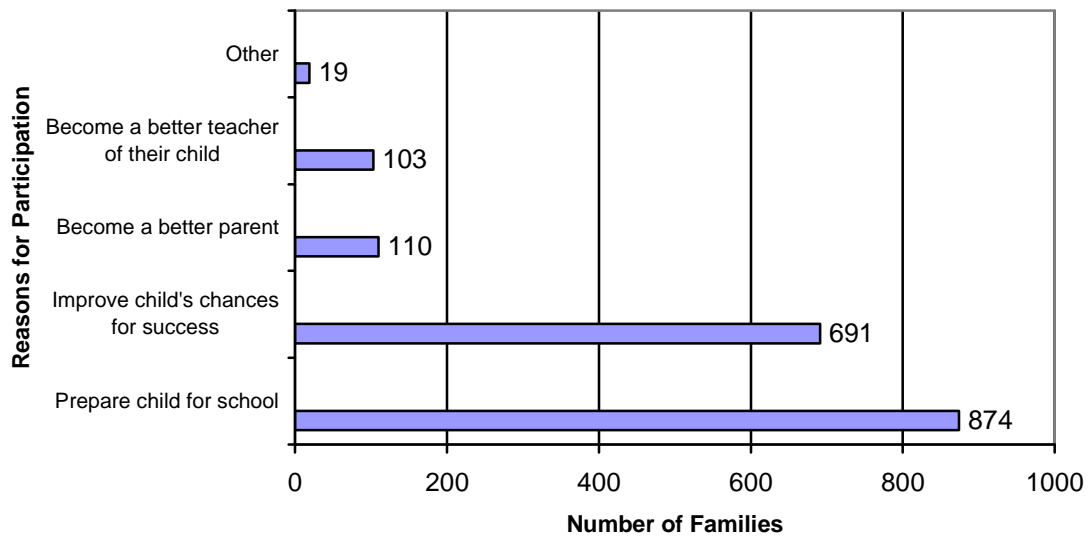
**Figure 2.** Income of Nevada ECE Families



served families with a large range of incomes, the largest portion of Nevada ECE families represent the poorer segment of the population. Thirty-one percent of Nevada ECE families (326 families) have incomes under \$20,000. Projects did not collect data on the income level of six families.

**Reasons for Participating in Early Childhood Education.** Parents were asked to provide up to two reasons why they wanted to participate in Nevada ECE. As shown in Figure 3, the two primary reasons for enrolling in the program were to better prepare their child for school (874 families or 83 percent) and to improve their child's chance of success in school (691 adults or 65 percent).

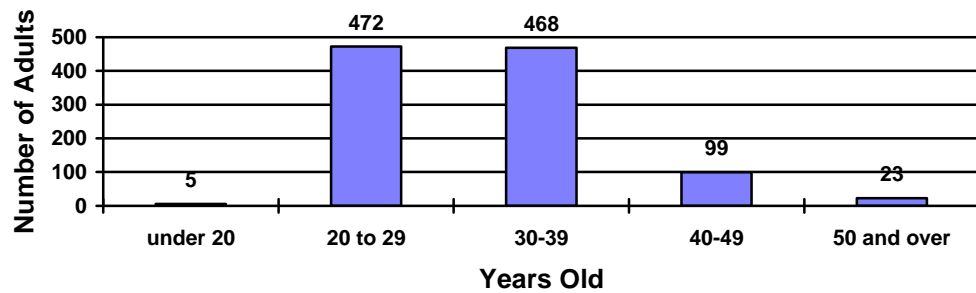
**Figure 3.** Reasons for Participating in Nevada ECE



## Characteristics of Adults

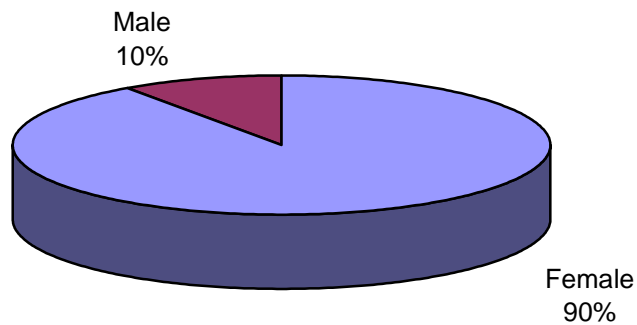
**Age.**<sup>7</sup> Most adults were either 20 to 29 years old (472 adults or 44 percent) or between 30 to 39 years old (468 adults or 44 percent). Five adults (less than 1 percent) were under 20 years old, 99 adults (9 percent) were between 40 and 49 years old, and 23 adults (2 percent) were over 50 years old. Data were unavailable for three adults.

**Figure 4.** Age of Nevada ECE Adults



**Gender.** Most of the parents who participated with their children in Nevada ECE were female. Of the 1,070 adults, 966 (90 percent) were female and 104 (10 percent) were male.

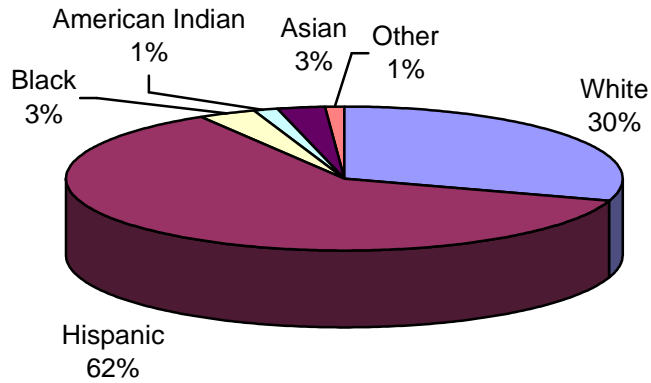
**Figure 5.** Gender of Nevada ECE Adults



<sup>7</sup> Age was determined at the beginning of the program year as of September 1, 2006.

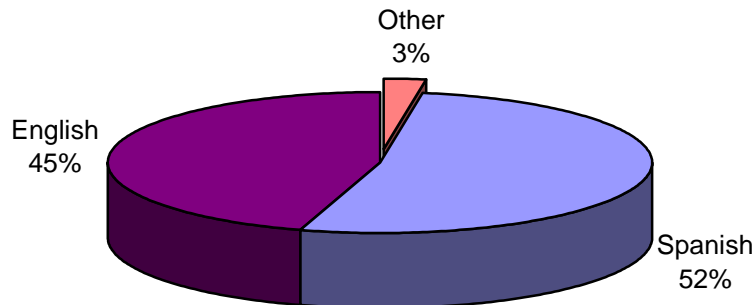
**Ethnicity.** The 10 projects served primarily Hispanic and White adults. Of the 1,070 adults, 658 (62 percent) categorized themselves as Hispanic, 321 (30 percent) categorized themselves as White not of Hispanic decent, 36 (3 percent) as Black, 31 (3 percent) as Asian, 12 (1 percent) as American Indian, and 12 (1 percent) adults categorized themselves as “Other.”

**Figure 6.** Ethnicity of Nevada ECE Adults



**Language Spoken at Home.** Of the 1,070 participating adults, 558 (52 percent) reported speaking Spanish at home, 484 (46 percent) reported speaking English, and 28 (3 percent) reported speaking “Other.”

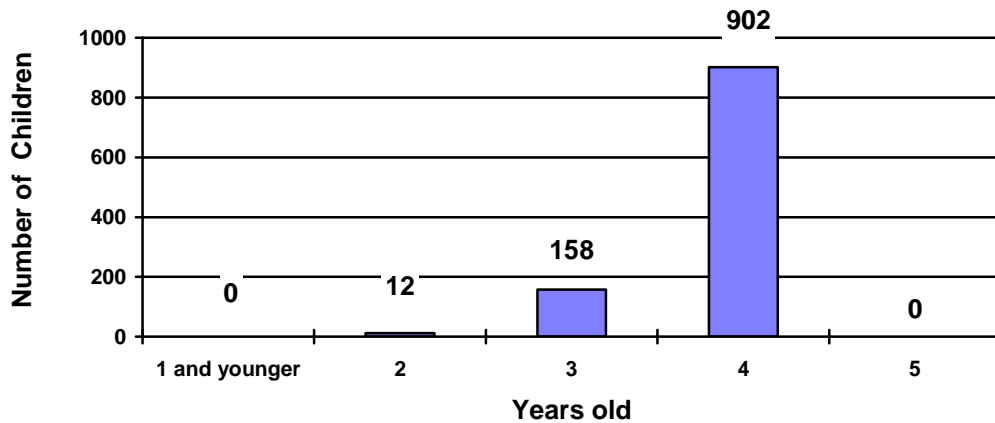
**Figure 7.** Language of Nevada ECE Adults



## Characteristics of Children

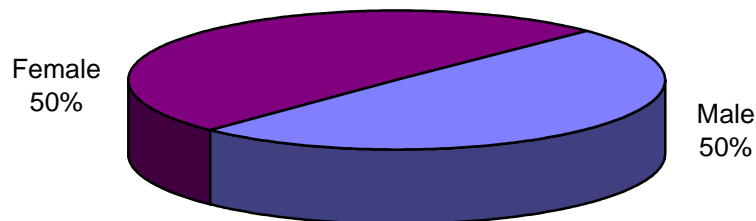
**Age.**<sup>8</sup> Data were available on all but one of the 1,073 children: 12 children (1 percent) were less than three years old; 158 children (15 percent) were three years old; and 902 children (84 percent) were 4 years old.

**Figure 8.** Age of Nevada ECE Children



**Gender.** The 10 projects served equal numbers of male and female children. Of 1,073 children, 538 (50 percent) were female and 535 (50 percent) were male.

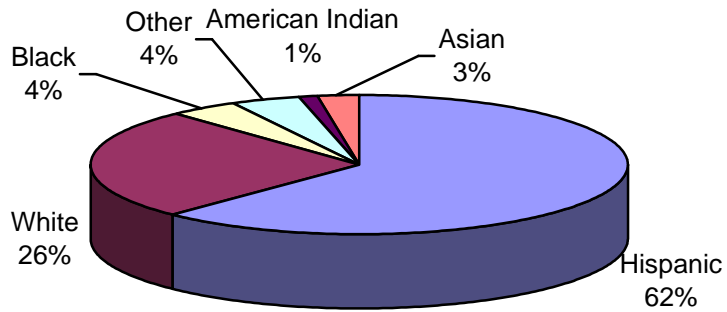
**Figure 9.** Gender of Nevada ECE Children



<sup>8</sup> Age was determined at the beginning of the program year as of September 30, 2006.

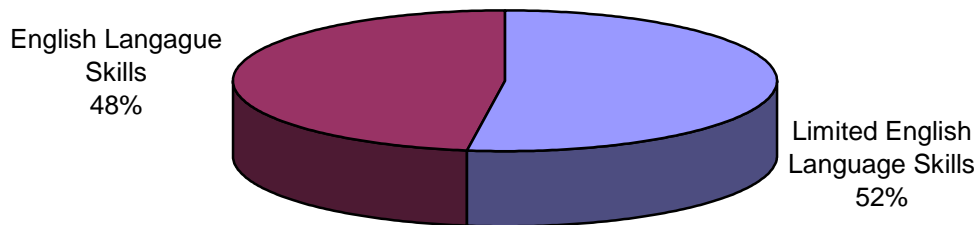
**Ethnicity.** Of the 1,073 children, 669 (62 percent) were Hispanic, 277 (26 percent) were White not of Hispanic decent, 43 (4 percent) were Black, 27 (3 percent) were Asian, 13 (1 percent) were American Indian, and 44 (4 percent) were categorized as “Other.”

**Figure 10.** Ethnicity of Nevada ECE Children



**English Language Skills.** Of the 1,073 children, project staff identified 560 children (52 percent) as learning English as a second language with limited or no English language skills: 513 children (48 percent) had English language skills, not learning English as a second language.

**Figure 11.** English Language Skills of Nevada ECE Children



**History of Participation in Non-Early Childhood Education Programs.**

Nevada ECE plays an important role in the lives of children as reflected in their lack of participation in other educational programs. Of the 1,073 children, 82 percent (880 children) did not participate in any other educational program prior to Nevada ECE, and 89 percent (951 children) did not participate in any other educational program while in Nevada ECE. Without Nevada ECE, many children may not have participated in any educational program before enrolling in school. For many children, Nevada ECE helped prepare them for school.

**Table 7.** Number of Children Participating in Non-Nevada ECE Programs Before and Simultaneous with Nevada ECE <sup>9</sup>

<b>Non-Nevada ECE Programs</b>	<b>Before Nevada ECE Program</b>	<b>Simultaneous with Nevada ECE Program</b>
Head Start	27	2
Even Start	18	29
Title I Preschool	9	4
Early Intervention, Early Childhood Special Education	39	46
Other Preschool or Infant/Toddler Program	70	19
Migrant Education	7	8
None	880	951
Other	41	17

**Status If Child Did Not Participate in Early Childhood Education Program**

An important question is what would Nevada ECE children do if they did not participate in the early childhood education program? Project staff asked participating adults at enrollment what would the child do if he/she did not participate in Nevada ECE—based on a list of possible choices as shown in Table 8. Of the 1,073 children, the majority of children (955 children or 89%) would spend all or part of the time at home—either with their parents (69 percent), grandparents or other adult family member (15 percent), or with sib-

<sup>9</sup> Children can participate in more than one option.

lings (5 percent). Smaller percentages of children would spend all or a part of their time attending day care (94 children or 9 percent) or attending another preschool or infant/toddler program (124 children or 11 percent). In other words, at least 80 percent of the children would not have attended any structured or semi-structured early childhood education program prior to entering kindergarten without Nevada ECE. Thus, the Nevada Early Childhood Education program provides many children with an important opportunity to be better prepared when they enter school so they are more likely to succeed.

**Table 8.** The Status of Children if They Did Not Participate in the Nevada ECE Program

Status of child if not in the Nevada ECE program	Number of Children <sup>10</sup>
a) Attend day care	94
b) Stay with grandparents or other adult family member	165
c) Stay at home with parents	736
d) Stay at home with siblings	54
e) Attend other preschool or infant/toddler program	124
f) Other ( <i>specify</i> ) _____	30

The profile of Nevada ECE families that emerges from the descriptive analyses is that many Nevada ECE families have provided their children with limited formal educational experiences prior to the program, are from minority ethnic backgrounds, are learning the English language, and a sizeable number of families are poor. For many families, Nevada ECE gives them an important opportunity to better their lives by providing their children with developmentally supportive experiences to prepare them for school.

<sup>10</sup> The number in Table 8 total more than the children in the program because children can participate in more than one option.

## Chapter V. Early Childhood Education Services

Nevada ECE projects are required to provide services in early childhood education and parenting education. This chapter describes the intensity of these services to children and parents and the types of parenting services provided to parents.

### Intensity of Services

A very important piece of information is the number of hours Nevada ECE projects offered participants in early childhood education and parenting education. Typically, research has found that the more hours participants spend in program activities, the larger the impact.

To determine the intensity of educational services, we asked directors to report the scheduled hours per month and duration of instruction in months for early childhood education and parenting education, as shown in Table 9. The number of projects that offered the service is shown as well: not all projects offer services in all areas.

**Table 9.** Average Scheduled Hours of Parenting and Early Childhood Services

Service Area	Number of projects	Hours per month	Duration of instruction in months	Total Average Hours
<b>Early Childhood Education</b>				
Under age 3	1	40.0	12.0	480.0
Age 3 and 4	10	51.2	9.2	471.0
Age 5	10	51.2	9.2	471.0
<b>Parenting Education</b>				
Parent alone	9	23.4	9.1	30.8
Parent and child are involved together	10	8.1	9.1	73.7

**Early Childhood Education.** The results show that 10 projects served three to four year old children as well as five year-old children age ineligible for kindergarten. One project served children under three years old.

The scheduled hours of early childhood education differed only slightly among children of different age groups. On average, the 10 projects scheduled three to four year olds as well as five year olds an average of 471 hours of early childhood education (51.2 hours per month for 9.3 months). One project scheduled children under three years old an average of 480 hours of early childhood education (40 hours per month for 12 months).

For comparison, we looked at the scheduled hours of early childhood education per month in Nevada ECE projects from 2004-05 and 2005-06. During 2004-05, Nevada ECE projects scheduled an average of 444 hours for three to four year olds and 448 hours for five year olds. In 2005-06, Nevada ECE projects scheduled an average of 437 hours for three to four year olds as well for five year olds. In other words, Nevada ECE programs offered more hours of early childhood education program in 2006-07 than for the two previous years.

**Parenting Component.** According to the original legislation for the Nevada ECE Program, Nevada ECE projects must have a parenting component. Project directors reported that all 10 projects provided some parenting education services in 2006-07. Nine projects provided parenting services to parents alone and all 10 projects provided parent and child together (PACT) time. On average, nine projects offered a total of 30.8 hours of *Parenting education alone*—3.4 hours per month for 9.1 months. In addition, 10 projects offered an average of 73.7 hours of *Parent and child time together*—8.1 hours per month for 9.1 months. In other words, most adults could receive a total of about 105 hours of parenting education during 2006-07, which is about the same as the 102 hours offered in 2005-06, but more than the 56 hours offered in 2004-05.

### **Types of Parenting Services**

Ten project directors were asked to identify the degree to which (not provided, provided to a few families, provided to some families, and provided to most families) they provided five types of parenting services to participating adults. Table 10 shows the number of projects that provided the five different parenting services. The evaluation found that although some projects do not provide all five services, each project provides at least four services and six projects provide all five specified services to at least a “few families.”

The most frequently conducted strategy was parent/teacher conferences: 10 projects conducted parent/teacher conferences with “most families.” The next most frequently strategy was parent and child activities together (PACT) time, followed by having parents volunteer in the classroom. Home visits was the least conducted strategy, four projects did not provide home visits.

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

<b>Type of Parenting Service</b>	<i>Not provided</i>	<i>Few families</i>	<i>Some families</i>	<i>Most families</i>
a) Parenting classes/workshops	1	2	3	4
b) Parent and child together activities ( <i>e.g., family literacy nights, field trips</i> )	0	0	1	9
c) Parent/Teacher Conferences	0	0	0	10
d) Home Visits	4	2	0	4
e) Parents volunteer in the classroom	0	0	5	5
f) Other	0	0	2	5

## Chapter VI. Participation in Services

Chapter IV showed that many Nevada ECE families have multiple disadvantages, including limited educational experiences, poverty, and limited English proficiency. Chapter V showed the amount of services and types of services (for parenting education) that Nevada ECE projects offer to address the educational needs of these families. This chapter will present the extent to which Nevada ECE families participated in the services.

For families, we examined—

- ◆ the percentage of families still participating in the program in June 2007,
- ◆ how many months families participated in the program, and
- ◆ the reasons they exited the program during the year.

For children, we examined—

- ◆ the number of hours children participated in early childhood education.

For adults, we examined—

- ◆ the number of hours adults participated in parenting education.

The results are presented in three sections: family participation, child participation, and adult participation.

### Family Participation

#### *Program Completion Rate.*

A requirement of SB 525 is to determine the percentage of participants who drop out of the program before completion. The results show that 158 of the 1,055 families in Nevada ECE (15 percent) left the program during the 2006-07 school year. In other words, 85 percent of the families completed the program for 2006-07, which is similar to the percent of families who completed the program during the previous three years. That is, 87 percent of Nevada ECE families completed the program in both the 2003-04 and 2004-05 school years and 84 percent in 2005-06.

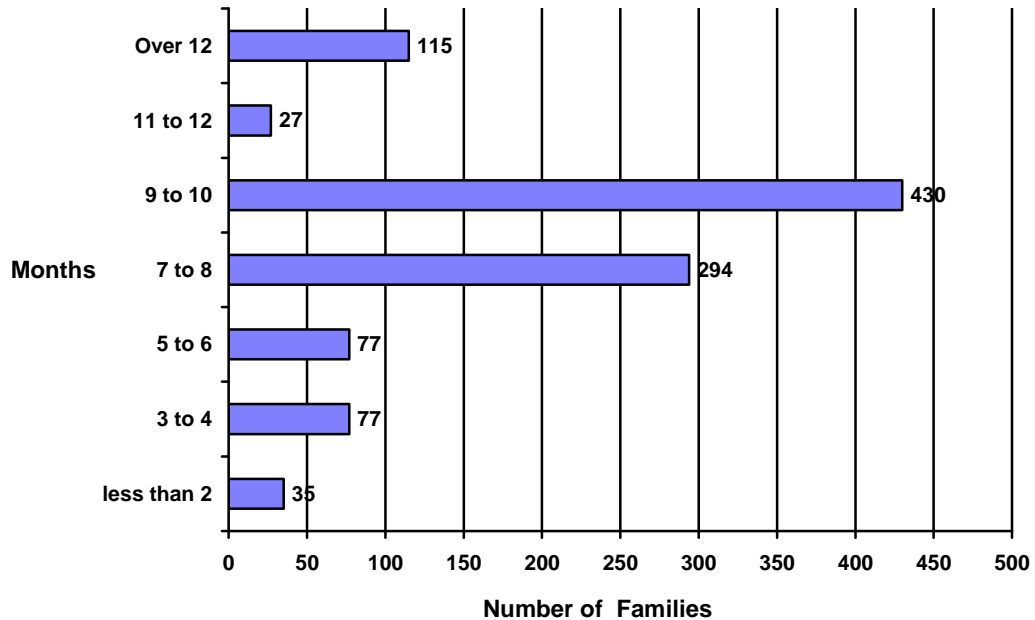
**Length of Participation in Program.**

Research has found that the length of time families participate in Early Childhood Education is positively correlated with the gains of adults in parenting skills and children in school readiness. Clearly, a primary purpose of the program is to retain children and adults in the program long enough so that they can reach program goals.

Figure 12 shows the number of families enrolled in Nevada ECE projects by months in the program. Data are available on all 1,055 families in the program.

On average, Nevada ECE families were in the program for an average of 9.4 months between their initial enrollment date and the end of the 2006-07 school year or their exit date, more than the 8.9 months 2005-06. Figure 12 shows the average months of participation in two months intervals. The distribution shows that the majority of families (724 or 69 percent) stayed in the program for seven to 10 months. In other words, most families started Nevada ECE at the beginning of the program year and stayed until the end of the program year.

**Figure 12.** Number of Months Families Spent in ECE Program



***Reason for Exiting Program.***

Project staff reported a range of reasons why the 158 families left the program. Table 11 shows the number of families that exited the program for eight possible reasons. Overall, the most common reason why families exited the program was the family moved out of the area served by the ECE project (65 families or 41 percent). The other most common reason given why families exited the program was that the parent or child switched to a different program (18 families or 11 percent). Projects indicated that 18 families exited the program for “Reason unknown.”

**Table 11.** The Number of Families Exiting the Program by Reason

<b>Reasons for Exiting Program</b>	<b>Families</b>
Parent or child switched to a different program	18
Family moved out of the area served by the ECE program	65
Family stopped participating due to a lack of interest	6
Family was dropped due to incomplete participation or poor attendance	12
Family crisis prevents further participation	14
Conflicts or problems prevents continued participation	13
Other reason (specify) _____	12
Reason unknown	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>158</b>

**Child Participation**

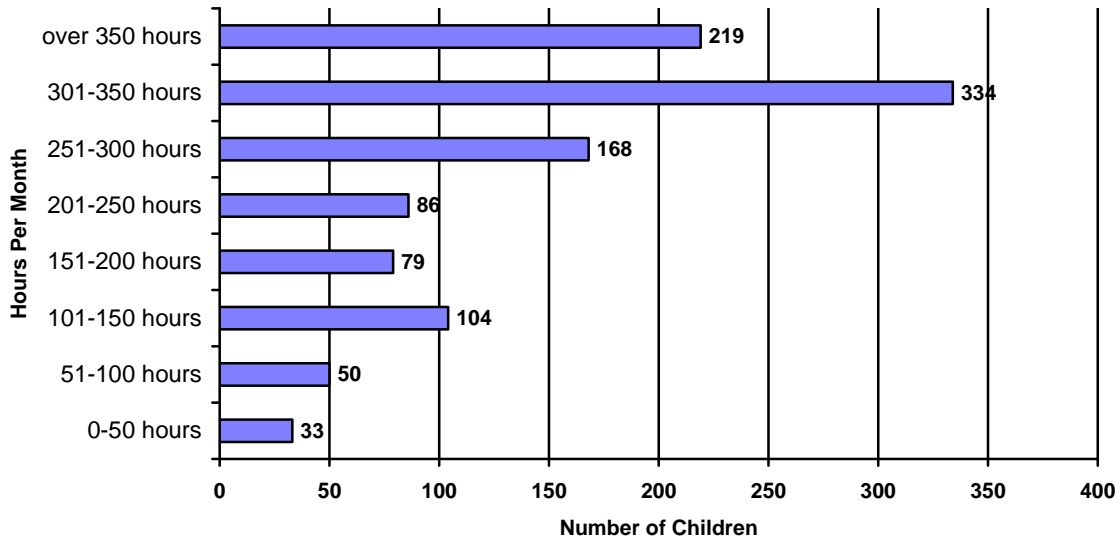
The primary component of Nevada ECE is early childhood education.

***Hours of Participation in Early Childhood Education.***

The amount of time Nevada ECE children participated in early childhood education should be a positive predictor of performance on early childhood measures. Data were available for all 1,073 children. Overall, Nevada ECE children participated in early childhood education an average of 276 hours, which is the most reported in any previous year: the 267 hours in 2003-04 was the highest reported previously.

To obtain a better picture of the amount of time children spent in early childhood programs, the evaluator determined the total number of hours that children spent in early childhood education within several hour ranges, as shown in Figure 13. The largest number of children (334 children or 31percent) attended an average of 301 to 350 hours of early childhood education, followed by those who attended over 350 hours (219 children or 20 percent).

**Figure 13. Hours Per Month Children Spent in ECE**



**Adult Participation**

The evaluation collected data on adult participation in parenting education, the second required component for Nevada ECE participation. The component is intended to better equip parents to support their children’s social, emotional, and academic development.

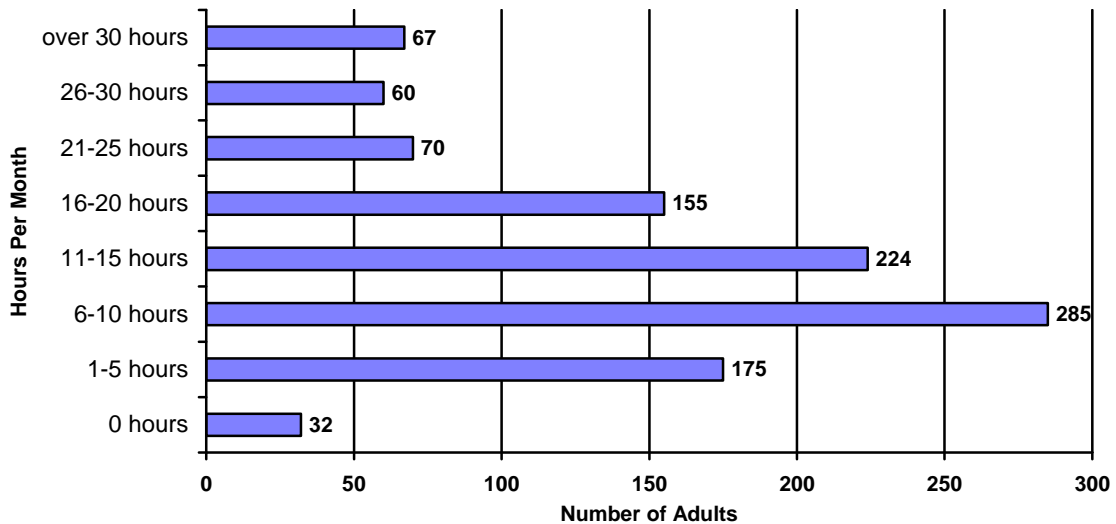
***Hours of Parenting Education.***

Data were available for 1,068 of the 1,070 adult participants. Projects reported that 32 parents (3 percent) had yet to participate in any parenting education services. While some of these parents had just enrolled their children in the program, other parents simply did not participate in parenting services.

Overall, the 1,068 adults participated in parenting education an average of 13.8 hours during the program, which is less the average hours reported in the three previous years: 15.8 in 2005-06, 19.3 hours in 2004-05, and 21.3 hours reported in 2003-04.

Figure 14 shows that the distribution in the total number hours in parenting education is skewed. Most adults (684 adults or 64 percent) participated in one to 15 hours of parenting education. A smaller group of parents (67 parents or 6 percent), who participated in over 30 hours of parenting education, substantially increased the average hours in parenting education (13.8) for the entire group.

**Figure 14.** Hours Per Month Adults Spent in Parenting Education



## **Chapter VII. Nevada ECE Project Descriptions**

As mentioned previously, SB 525 requires three components for the evaluation: project descriptions, a summary of the effectiveness of the projects on early childhood education and parenting outcome indicators, and a longitudinal comparison of the data showing the effectiveness of different programs. This chapter presents the project descriptions. The evaluators visited all 10 projects in spring 2007, making a total of 13 site visits since several projects operate multiple early childhood education sites with different program models.<sup>11</sup>

The evaluators collected information from each project based on a common set of program delivery indicators for effective early childhood education programs. The program delivery indicators were developed in June 2001 by the Nevada Even Start Statewide Family Literacy Initiative. The Initiative developed the program delivery indicators to monitor, evaluate, and improve Even Start projects within the State. In fact, Nevada developed two sets of indicators for Even Start: one set for program delivery and a second set for program outcomes. Even Start projects use the program delivery indicators as part of the required local evaluation to assess the program and build a program improvement plan. NDE uses the program outcome indicators as part of the statewide evaluation of all Even Start projects in Nevada. Because Nevada ECE provides services in some of the same areas as Even Start, the Early Childhood Education Evaluation Design Team decided to use some of the Even Start program delivery and program outcome indicators in the statewide evaluation of Nevada ECE.

The Even Start program delivery indicators cover 12 areas of family literacy programs. One area is Early Childhood Education Settings: it includes 17 sub-indicators. The 17

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<sup>11</sup> All of the sites visited at projects with multiple sites were representative of types of early childhood education models offered at these projects. The evaluators did not visit all the Nevada ECE sites in Carson City School District, Clark County School District, Classroom on Wheels, or Washoe County School District because of time and resource constraints. Carson City has two Nevada ECE sites, Clark County has 11 sites, Classroom on Wheels has three projects with 13 sites, and WCSD has nine sites. Instead, the evaluators visited one of two sites in Carson City, three of 11 sites in Clark County, one of three projects for Classroom on Wheels, and two of the nine sites in Washoe County.

sub-indicators are placed on a 5-point rubric, in which “1” is “not at all descriptive” of the program and “5” is “very descriptive” of the program. The Nevada ECE evaluator further developed the rubric by identifying specific evidence to look for when using the rubric to rate the project. The Nevada ECE evaluator used the quality indicators from Early Childhood Education Settings to rate and to describe the quality of the implementation of Nevada ECE projects. (See Appendix B for a copy of the 17 sub-indicators and the Site Visitation Form used by the evaluator.)

*Nevada ECE Program Ratings.* Figure 15 shows the Nevada ECE program ratings on the 17 sub-indicators of Early Childhood Program Settings across the project sites visited for the first year of the Nevada ECE program in 2001-02, the fifth year in 2005-06, and the sixth year in 2006-07.<sup>12</sup> (See Appendix C for each project’s rating on the 17 sub-indicators of Early Childhood Program Settings for 2006-07. See Appendix D for a summary of the last six years of project ratings from 2001-02 through 2006-07).

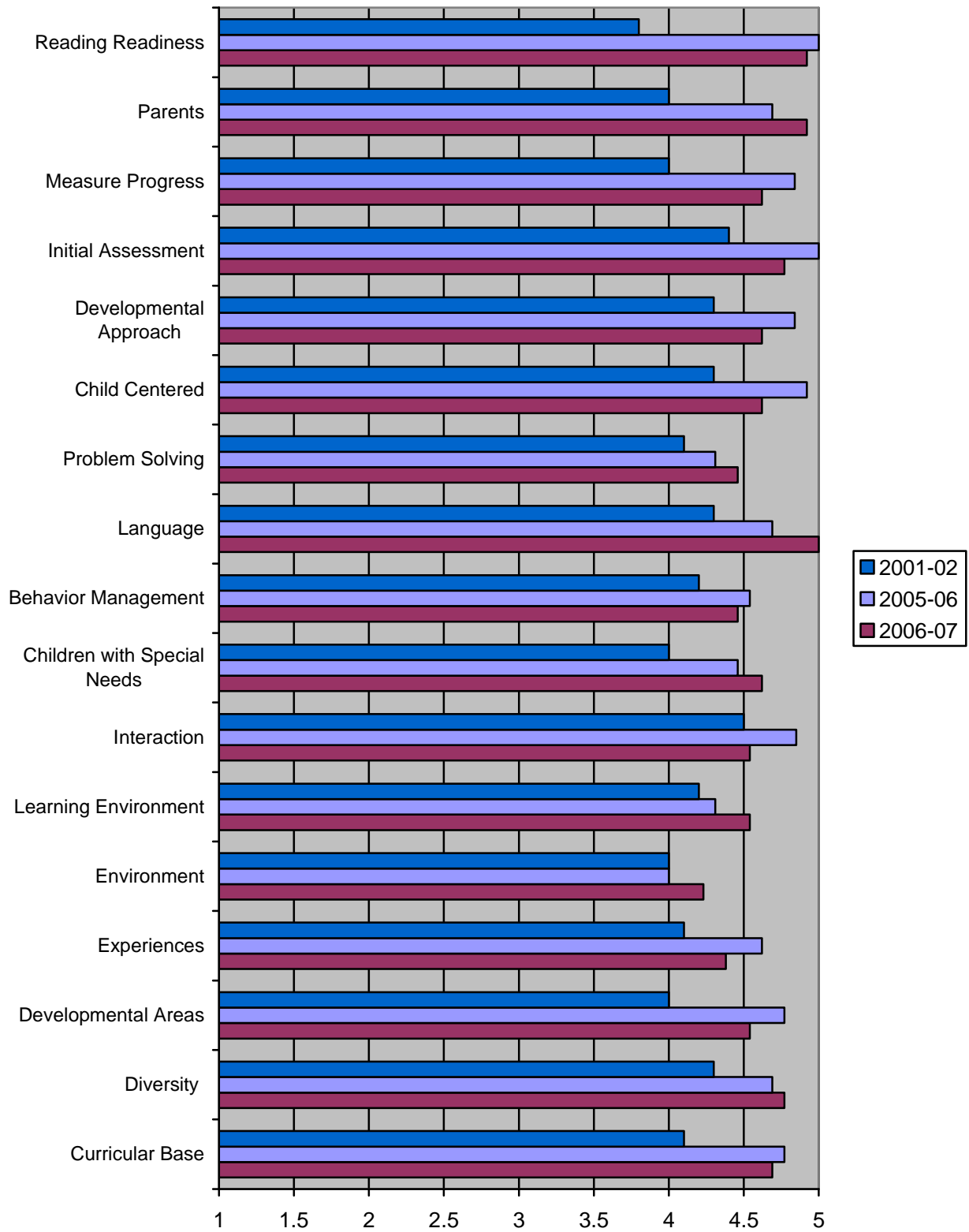
In 2006-07, projects scored relatively high on all sub-indicators—ranging from an average of 4.2 to 5.0. Projects scored the highest on *Language*, a mean rating of 5.0. The indicator, *Language*, refers to the use of oral language through books, songs, rhymes, and talking. Nevada ECE projects scored high on this indicator because all the projects use a variety of materials and activities to support children’s oral language development. Projects also scored high on two indicators related to parent involvement: *Reading Readiness* and *Parents*. All projects are required to develop and implement parenting components that promote spending time with their children, especially reading with their children.

Projects in 2006-07 scored the lowest on *Environment*—a mean rating of 4.23. In fact, Nevada ECE projects have scored the lowest on *Environment* for the last four years. *Environment* refers to whether the physical environment is safe, clean, well-lighted, comfortable, and age appropriate. Nevada ECE projects scored relatively low on this sub-indicator because three projects did not have playground areas or the most appropriate playground areas and/or bathroom facilities.

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<sup>12</sup> The evaluator visited 10 project sites in 2001-02 and 13 project sites in 2005-06 and 2006-07. Seven of the project sites are the same for the three years.

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



The evaluation also compared ratings from 2006-07 with ratings from the first and fifth years of the program. Overall, the data shows that Nevada ECE projects showed an increase in the average ratings from 2001-02 to 2006-07 on all indicators. The results also show that the ratings of seven of the 17 indicators increased 2005-06 to 2006-07 and 10 decreased. However, all of the changes from 2005-06 to 2006-07, whether an increase or decrease, were small, ranging from a decrease of -0.31 to an increase of 0.31, suggesting the changes were minor across the Nevada ECE program.

**Project Descriptions.** The project descriptions, starting on page 34, include three sections:

- ♦ **project information** on location, intensity and duration of the early childhood program, staff, and child/adult ratio;
- ♦ **early childhood program** includes information on curriculum, learning environment, pedagogy, and assessment and continuous improvement; and
- ♦ **parenting program** includes information on the types of activities conducted to involve parents in the early childhood education program and parenting activities.

Table 13 presents information on the child/staff ratio and the primary early childhood education curriculum for the 13 project sites visited by the evaluator. Overall, the 13 project sites had a child/adult ratio from 4:1 to 10:1.<sup>13</sup> The results also show that 12 of the 13 project sites used research-based, commercial early childhood education programs as their primary curriculum. Four sites used *High Scope*, three sites used the *Creative Curriculum*, and three sites used the Scholastic's *Building Language for Literacy*. Single sites used *Curiosity Corner* or *PreSchool Core Knowledge Curriculum*. The ECE projects supplemented these curricula with a variety of other programs, including *Leap into Literacy*, *Self-Concept*, and *Talking Hands*. One site used a locally developed curriculum (*Light Up For Literacy*) that drew from several commercial early childhood education programs.

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<sup>13</sup> National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) guidelines state four year-olds should be in groups of no more than 20 children with 2 adults. Nevada ECE Projects meet the NAEYC guidelines.

**Table 13.** Child/Staff Ratio and Early Childhood Curriculum at Nevada ECE Projects

<b>Project</b>	<b>Child/Staff Ratio</b>	<b>Primary Early Childhood Education Curriculum</b>
Carson City School District	7:1	Curiosity Corner (Success For All)
Churchill County School District	9:1	High Scope
Clark County School District		
♦ Early Literacy Model	8:1	♦ Creative Curriculum
♦ Classroom on Wheels Model	5:1	♦ High Scope, Macmillan/McGraw-Hill Pre-K Reading Program
♦ Community Based Model	9:1	♦ Creative Curriculum
Classroom on Wheels	8:1	Scholastic’s Building Language for Literacy
Douglas County School District	5:1	High Scope
Great Basin College	5:1	Light Up For Literacy
Humboldt School District	10:1	Creative Curriculum
Pershing County School District	4:1	High Scope
Washoe County School District		
♦ Early Literacy Model	8:1	♦ Scholastic’s Building Language for Literacy
♦ High School Model	9:1	♦ Scholastic’s Building Language for Literacy
White Pine School District	10:1	PreSchool Core Knowledge Curriculum

**Carson City School District**

Carson City School District (CCSD) used Nevada ECE funds to initiate and expand early childhood education programs at two project sites: Empire and Mark Twain Elementary Schools. Both sites use *Curiosity Corner*, which is the preschool component of *Success For All*, as the early childhood education curriculum. The evaluator visited Mark Twain Elementary School as representative of the CCSD Early Childhood Education Program.

**Location.** Mark Twain Elementary School, Carson City, Nevada.

**Intensity and Duration.** The Mark Twain Elementary School Pre-Kindergarten Program operates two half-day early childhood classes: 8:25 to 11:15 a.m. and 12:10 to 3:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Children receive 11 hours per week of early childhood education.

**Staff.** A full-time teacher, with K-8 certification and an ECE endorsement, and two full-time aides operate the program. One aide is bi-lingual.

**Number of Children.** The program serves 20 children in each the morning and afternoon classes for a child/adult ratio of approximately 6.5 to 1.

### **Early Childhood Program**

**Curriculum.** The Mark Twain Elementary Pre-Kindergarten Program uses *Curiosity Corner* as the early childhood curriculum. *Curiosity Corner* is the preschool component of *Success For All* which Mark Twain and Empire Elementary Schools implement in kindergarten through grade 5. Developed at John Hopkins University, *Success For All* is a research-based, comprehensive school reform program that aims to restructure schools to ensure the success of every child. *Success For All* provides the school with research-based curriculum materials, extensive professional development in proven strategies for assessment, instruction, classroom management, and active family support approaches. *Curiosity Corner* provides the teacher with a kit of learning activities and materials that are theme-based for each week. Some themes covered throughout the year include *Fun With Families*, *Sensational Senses*, *Here We Go...Transportation*, *To Market to Market*, and *Art and Artists*. The teacher decides how long to spend on a given theme and may modify the units to meet student needs and interests. The teacher also uses curriculum materials from her 30 years of experience in early childhood education.

*Curiosity Corner* emphasizes oral language development using thematic units, children's literature, oral and written expression, and learning centers, called "labs." Pre-reading activities promote the development of concepts about print, alphabet familiarity, and phonemic awareness. The teacher uses the Peabody Language Development Kit for additional materials and activities in language development.

The program accommodates 20 Hispanic children in the two classes who are learning English as a second language. The class has two educational assistants: one assistant is bilingual and translates for children as needed, reads books in Spanish, interacts with the Spanish-speaking parents, and translates written materials. At the time of the visit in late

spring, most of the children spoke English during class. The classroom contains many bilingual books and other bilingual curriculum materials.

**Learning Environment.** The program is located in a large modular classroom: one-half is used for classroom space and the other half for equipment storage, teacher planning and preparation, and parent trainings. The classroom is equipped with child-sized tables and chairs as well as a child-sized bathroom. The classroom contains well-developed and very well-equipped learning centers, which include blocks, dramatic play, manipulatives, art, science, writing, language arts, computers, and water play. The materials in the dramatic play area changes as themes change...one week a farm, another week a grocery store, and another week a greenhouse. On the day of the visit, the theme for the week was camping, which gave children the opportunity to pretend to be at a campfire. There was a “stream” set up for fishing, and logs with a grate for cooking. Children had lanterns and bug catchers, sleeping bags, and card games and were read to by the campfire. The materials in the library area and listening centers also change with the themes. The classroom also includes a very large children’s library and children are encouraged to take books out daily. A parent library of books and resource materials are available in an adjacent room.

The school has two early childhood playgrounds for the children. One is shared with children in kindergarten through grade 3 and includes a large multi-center climbing apparatus plus additional gym bar climbers and swings. A second smaller playground includes a large sand area with appropriate toys and a tricycle trail.

**Pedagogy.** The program provides both a teacher-led group time and a large block of time for active exploration in the learning “labs.” On the day of the visit, most activities related to the topic of “Insects.” In the Opening Circle, the teacher and the children enacted a song sung to the tune of “head, shoulders, knees and toes”, entitled “head, thorax, abdomen.” The teacher then opened a discussion, asking the children if they had seen any interesting insects at their home last night. The teacher showed the children several jars of honey and asked why they thought the colors of the different honeys varied.

The aide then introduced the various activities available in the Learning Labs...honey with bread at the snack lab...bee patterns and insect painting in the art area... ..a camp-

ing experience in dramatic play...insects and magnifiers in the science area. For the next hour children actively explored the labs...fishing and cooking in the camp area, experiencing and talking about the taste of honey in the snack area, reading and working puzzles, and watering their garden on the deck.

The teacher and aides use frequent positive reinforcement and carefully listen to and converse with the children. Staff often help children solve their own problems, encouraging children to talk and resolve issues among themselves.

The three-member teaching team is well balanced and works well together. The teacher provides the leadership for most activities while one aide works closely with the bilingual children, making sure they understand and participate in the activities. The other aide works in depth with other children, often writing anecdotal observations of individual children to monitor their progress.

Previously, the teacher trained her assistants in how to draw out a shy child through the use of questioning strategies, asking children questions that extend their thinking during activities. The assistants often questioned students this year to further the children's learning. Program staff also used the concept of Key Vocabulary this year, highlighting key words each week to make sure all the children know and understand their meaning.

**Assessment and Continuous Improvement.** One of the teacher assistants administers the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III and the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test to all the children at the beginning and end of the year. All staff keep notes on daily observational forms to track the developing skills of the children, which they review on Fridays to plan classroom activities. The program keeps a file for each child with his/her work samples. Staff spend time at the end of each day discussing specific children and which learning activities seemed most effective. This year the Elementary School, including the pre-kindergarten program, adopted the *Lexia* computer software program to track individual children's skill development.

**Parenting Program.** Parents are required to sign a Commitment List that details their commitment to the program. This includes providing transportation, ensuring excellent

attendance, participating in six school-related activities, and spending time each day with their child reading, playing, and talking.

The teacher conducts a home visit at the beginning of the year to discuss the program and identify parenting goals. The teacher also holds a parent conference in November and at the end of the year to review each child's "report card" with the parent. Parents receive a weekly newsletter, written in English and Spanish, which informs them of classroom activities, upcoming field trips, etc.

The head teacher conducted three Family Storyteller sessions, helping parents learn specific techniques to read with their child. Parents regularly volunteer in the classroom or make things at home for the classroom. Many parents assisted with field trips, such as to the public library and the Farm Day at the Park. Parents can check books or tapes out from the classroom library as well as Parent Backpacks which include specific books and activities for the parent and child to do together. Teachers keep a parent phone log and record incoming and outgoing calls. Parents are encouraged to contact teachers to facilitate communication about their child.

### **Churchill County School District**

**Location.** E.C. Best Elementary School, Fallon, Nevada.

**Intensity and Duration.** Churchill County School District operates two half-day early childhood classes, Monday through Thursday from 7:45 to 10:45 a.m. and from 11:45 to 2:45 p.m. This year the teacher added alternate Fridays to the children's schedule and eliminated the monthly home visits. The children receive an average of 13.5 hours of early childhood education.

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

**Number of Children.** The Churchill County Pre-Kindergarten program serves 18 children per session for a child/adult ratio of 9 to 1. However, the ratio is much lower because several parents are in the classroom daily.

## **Early Childhood Education Program**

**Curriculum.** The program uses *High Scope*, a research-based program that addresses all aspects of early childhood education. Based on the child development ideas of Jean Piaget, the High/Scope Preschool Curriculum views children as active learners, who learn best from activities that they themselves plan, carry out, and reflect upon. The children are encouraged to engage in a variety of key experiences that help them to make choices, solve problems, and actively contribute to their own development.

The teacher also uses the *Parents Are Teachers* program, which includes developmental materials for parents and parent/child activities that the teacher distributes to parents for use at home.

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

The program uses an outdoor play area, which is fenced to protect the area from the wind and the noise of the highway. The play area includes a multi-use climbing apparatus, swings, balance beams, and large tires. A large storage shed was built by volunteers from the nearby Fallon Naval Air Base to house outdoor equipment. Program staff hope to build a tricycle trail with the assistance of a local construction company.

The class is culturally diverse, including Hispanic, Filipino, and Native American children. A couple of these parents worked in the classroom on the day of the visit. Several children have Individualized Educational Programs and receive the assistance of school district staff.

**Pedagogy.** The classroom can be described as a "*Child & Family Center*" because many parents and other siblings are involved in classroom activities daily. On the day of the visit, one parent helped with the morning class and one parent assisted in the afternoon

class. Parents helped prepare the learning centers, brought in and assisted with snack, and read to the children.

In developing her lesson plans, the teacher incorporates the Nevada Pre-K Standards as a general guide for daily activities in conjunction with her ongoing theme. On the day of the visit, the theme was farm and farm animals. The children played with a farm in block area and other designated activities during arrival in the morning. In circle time, the teacher read *“Duck on a bike”* where the teacher demonstrated excellent higher-level questioning skills, asking the children questions such as “do you remember what it is about?” Later the children constructed horses out of construction paper to go with the barns and chickens they had made previously.

The teacher calls children to participate with roll call, calendar, and “weather bear.” The teacher incorporates music into many aspects of the program.

**Assessment and Continuous Improvement.** The teacher administered the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test at the beginning and end of the year to all children. In addition, she used the High Scope Literacy Assessment to assess literacy ability, STAR early literacy diagnostic assessment, as well as the Speed DIAL, a shortened version of Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning assessment. The teacher also administers a Pre-Kindergarten skills assessment three times during the year to assess children on specific skills needed for kindergarten and completes an Exit Skills assessment at the end of the school year. The teacher keeps individual children’s portfolios with ongoing samples of the children’s work and test results. Children who are suspected of having special needs are referred to the Early Childhood Special Education program for further assessment and placement.

**Parenting Program.** Parents are required to sign a Parent-Teacher Contract in which they agree to participate in several activities, two school-wide Family Activity Nights (e.g. *Reading Night and Multi-Cultural Night*); four parenting classes; three parent-teacher conferences; at least three classroom volunteer visits per month; and the completion of one reading log per month.

The teacher conducted a number of workshops for the parents and children together. The parents planned a number of in-class festivals, including a picnic in the park with children's activities and an end-of-year celebration. The program provides books, games, and other resources the parents can check out to use in their homes.

### **Clark County School District**

Clark County School District (CCSD) used Nevada ECE funds to initiate and expand early childhood education programs at 11 project sites. The 11 project sites represent three distinct models of providing early childhood education services: Early Literacy, Community-Based Child Care, and Classroom on Wheels (COW) models.

*Early Literacy.* The early literacy projects are located at elementary schools in areas designated as empowerment zones. The projects serve typically developing children from the school's attendance area. Because of the large number of families who applied, the schools used a lottery to select children for the program. All the project sites in this model use *Creative Curriculum* as the primary early childhood education curriculum in conjunction with the Macmillan/McGraw-Hill Reading Program. These are supplemented with *Ready, Set, Leap!* and *River Deep*—which emphasizes the use of technology to facilitate literacy learning. The Nevada ECE program supported six early literacy project sites: Bracken Elementary, Cunningham Elementary, G.E. Harris Elementary, McCaw Elementary, McWilliams Elementary, and Warren Elementary.

*Community-Based Child Care.* These early childhood education projects are located in community-based childcare centers that volunteered for the program. Under this model, children with special needs who have an Individual Education Plan are placed in childcare centers that primarily serve typically developing children.<sup>14</sup> CCSD places a Special Education early childhood teacher and an instructional aide at the community-based childcare centers to work with these children. An important feature of this model is

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<sup>14</sup> The parents of the children with special needs select the child care placement in lieu of other options. At each child care center, ECE program staff select a small group of typically developing peers to participate in the program. The typically developing children are volunteers selected from the child care center's existing population. These typically developing children receive instruction from the Special Education teacher and assistant as well as participate in the program evaluation.

the role of the Special Education teachers placed in the childcare centers. The Special Education teachers are teacher-mentors who provide training in early childhood education to all the child care center's instructors and aides. As a result, the Special Education teachers help to improve the overall quality of the early childhood activities conducted at these centers, benefiting all the children who attend them. The Nevada ECE program supported three community-based child care sites: Lone Mountain Creative Learning Center, Creative Kids Learning Center in Henderson, and Variety Day Home.

*Classroom on Wheels.*<sup>15</sup> The Classroom on Wheels Model is unique in that the early childhood education project is located on a school bus converted into a mini-early childhood learning environment. The Classroom on Wheels program in Clark County adopted *High Scope* as the early childhood education curriculum. Another unique feature of the Classroom on Wheels Model is that it also supports adult literacy and parenting education. While children attend the early childhood education program in one bus, parents can attend adult literacy, computer literacy, or parenting education classes in another bus that accompanies the early childhood bus.

The Clark County School District ECE project supported two Classroom on Wheels sites: at Halle Hewetson Elementary School and at C.C. Ronnow Elementary School.

The Clark County School District (CCSD) Nevada ECE program developed district level activities in parenting education and staff development in which all ECE project sites could participate. In parenting education, the CCSD ECE program offered four activities.

- The *STAR (Sit Together and Read) Program*. CCSD developed the *STAR* program which provides families with a tote bag monthly containing a book and activity, helping parents learn specific skills in reading one-to-one with their child.
- *Nurturing Parents & Families Series*. The Clark County Department of Family Services developed this program which includes six two-hour workshops covering topics such as understanding the developmental stages of early childhood, stress

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<sup>15</sup> The Classroom on Wheels Model, described here, is the same model implemented in the Statewide Classroom on Wheels Program. The main difference is that Classroom on Wheels Model described here is funded jointly between Clark County School District and the Statewide Classroom on Wheels Program. Other Statewide Classroom on Wheels buses are not necessarily funded with other school district ECE project funds.

management techniques, establishing routines, solving problems, and using positive discipline methods.

- *Ready to Learn Program.* Las Vegas' Public Broadcasting Service station, KLVX, developed the program to help parents learn to view a TV program with their child, read a book about the program, and then complete a related activity together.
- *The Family Storyteller Program.* The University of Nevada Reno Cooperative Extension Office developed and offered the *Family Storyteller* program. It provides monthly workshops for six months to help parents and children learn to enjoy reading together.
- *Nevada Virtual Pre-K Program.* The CCSD ECE program trained staff and families in the Nevada Virtual Pre-K program and provided kits for all families and a lending library of program materials at each site.

In staff development, the CCSD ECE Program conducted monthly trainings which included workshops on early childhood assessments (Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III, Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test, Preschool Language Scale-III), Macmillan/ McGraw-Hill Early Reading Curriculum, Encore System/IEP Procedures, Behavior Management, Positive Behavior Supports, English Language Learners, Creative Curriculum, Early Literacy, Family Storyteller for English Language Learners, Nevada Virtual Pre K program, Portfolio Assessment, Classroom Learning Environment, ECE Parenting Programs, Child Development, Intentional Teaching Strategies, Nevada Math Standards, and Interventions in the Pre-K Classroom.

The evaluator visited J.T. McWilliams Elementary School as representative of an early literacy model, Lone Mountain Learning Center as representative of a community-based child care model, and the bus that went to both Halle Hewetson and C.C. Ronnow Elementary Schools as representative of the COW model. Each project is described briefly below.

### **Early Literacy Model**

**Location.** J. T. McWilliams Elementary School, Las Vegas, Nevada.

**Intensity and Duration.** The McWilliams Early Childhood Literacy Program operates a

morning class from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m., and an afternoon class from 12:35 to 3:06 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Children receive approximately 10 hours per week of early childhood education.

**Staff.** A full-time teacher and full-time aide operate the program. The teacher is licensed in early childhood education and elementary education. This teacher has taught in early childhood programs internationally. The aide is bilingual.

**Number of Children.** The program serves 15 children in the morning session and 15 children in the afternoon session for a child/adult ratio of 7.5 to 1. On the day of the visit, 11 children attended in the morning and 14 in the afternoon.

### **Early Childhood Program**

**Curriculum.** The McWilliams Early Childhood Literacy Program uses the *Creative Curriculum* as the primary early childhood curriculum. *Creative Curriculum* is a research-based program that includes well-developed learning centers and extensive time periods for children to actively explore and interact with their environment. The program includes seven literacy components: literacy as a source of enjoyment, vocabulary and language, phonological awareness, knowledge of print, letters and words, comprehension, and books and other texts. The curriculum is linked to Nevada Pre-K Standards.

The teacher also uses the *Ready, Set, LEAP! Program*, which is an interactive, multi-sensory literacy program using different technological tools. For example, the *LeapPad* is an interactive technology platform which allows children to listen to different stories, learn vocabulary and concepts, and engage in activities alone or in small groups. The *LeapDesk Workstation* is a computer software program that speaks the names of letters of the alphabet and pronounces them in the context of specific words. Children can manipulate the plastic letters, numbers, or shapes to begin writing words and simple sentences.

The program serves primarily Hispanic children. The aide is Hispanic and frequently uses Spanish in the classroom and in working with the parents.

**Learning Environment.** The classroom is located in a wing of the school and contains

several learning centers (blocks, dramatic play, manipulatives, art, language arts, science and computer center) geared to the developmental needs of the children. A new tool center was added this year. The bathroom facility is adjacent to the classroom.

The early childhood program uses the regular school playground that accommodates the younger elementary children. The playground is located on the other side of the school, a considerable distance from the preschool classroom, making opportunities for indoor-outdoor classroom activities difficult. The teacher reported that some play equipment, such as a tricycle and balls, are brought in for use in assessment of gross motor skills, but are not a regular part of the outdoor activities.

The classroom is relatively small and contains many materials: most walls and shelves are covered with children's artwork and past projects. The classroom appeared well organized and the children are actively involved in all centers around the room. The classroom contains a number of materials reflecting the Hispanic culture, including books, dolls, and clothing in the dramatic play area.

**Pedagogy.** The teacher incorporated the new State Preschool Standards into the daily lesson plans. On the day of the visit, the children learned about snails. The science area contained a small aquarium with several snails and several books on snails and slugs. During the extended activity, several children looked at the snails with magnifying glasses and small lenses. The teacher then read *Snail Trail* to the children, which led to the follow up activity during center time of making snail trails with white crayon and black paper.

On the day of the visit, all activities were language and literacy rich. The teacher used several unique approaches to expressive language. The children made pizza wheels (consistent with the transportation unit) with tortillas, sauce, and cheese. They worked in small groups with the teacher who used words such as "on, over, around, thick, thin" and sang a version of wheels on the bus to explain the process of spreading the sauce. He carried a "W" card in his pocket which he brought out to emphasize "W" words as the children observed nouns that began with "W." The teacher did not use music and song frequently on the day of the visit.

The activities planned for the children were appropriate for their ages, which in this classroom, included three, four, and five year-olds. The activities are open-ended, allowing children from a range of developmental levels and language abilities to experience success. Routines are followed carefully and kept simple.

The program focuses on literacy and language development. The teacher talks with the children throughout the day, carefully pronouncing and reinforcing word recognition and vocabulary development. The aide uses some Spanish but primarily speaks in English. During activity time, the teacher often reads to a child or small group of children, helping the children acquire and understand new vocabulary from the book. On the day of the visit, staff and children used Spanish very little. The children were engaged with the teacher and understood his directions in English.

**Assessment and Continuous Improvement.** The teacher administered the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test to the children at the beginning and end of the year. In addition, he completes a Developmental Continuum Assessment from *Creative Curriculum* three times a year (November, February and May) and keeps a Child Progress and Planning Report on each child that includes work samples and anecdotal notes. He also has the children do a figure drawing at the beginning of the year. He shares this data with the families at the end of the year during parent conferences.

This teacher used a unique approach to lesson plans, individualizing them for all children across skill levels and domains. The teacher maintains an individualized math assessment form and a differentiated instruction form, including levels of mastery, for all children in each session.

**Parenting Program.** Parents are invited to participate in the parenting activities that all the Clark County early childhood education programs are invited to attend. For example, Cooperative Extension provided four half-day parenting trainings throughout the year. On the day of the visit, parents were reminded to sign their children up to participate in a music concert, with Jim Gill, at Sam's Town.

The PBS Station (KLVX) offered workshops to the families twice a year.

The teacher makes available Virtual Pre-K materials to families and sent them home on a regular basis for parents and children to enjoy together.

The teacher also provides opportunities for the parents to participate in the curriculum.

On the day of the visit, one of the children brought in a delivery vehicle for Guerra's Tortillas that he had made with his father to contribute to the transportation unit. Other families had constructed different vehicles out of cardboard which were on display.

Parents receive a *STAR* book monthly with interactive activities for the parent and child to do daily. The teacher has parents record the amount of PACT time and reading time they spend with their children.

### **Classroom on Wheels (COW) Model**

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

**Intensity and Duration.** This COW Bus operates two half-day early childhood classes, four days a week. Children attend class from Monday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. or from 12:00 noon to 2:30 p.m. Children receive 10 hours per week of early childhood education.

**Staff.** Two full-time teachers, one funded by the Nevada ECE program and one funded by the Classroom on Wheels Program, operate the program with a CCSD teacher aide.

**Number of Children.** The program serves 16 children in both the morning and afternoon sessions for a child/adult ratio of a little over 5 to 1.

### **Early Childhood Program**

**Curriculum.** Classroom on Wheels uses two early childhood education programs. *High Scope* is a well-researched early childhood education program that covers all aspects of early childhood education, allowing children to plan their day, make choices of activities

and materials, and then review their work. The teachers carefully follow the *Plan-Do-Review* approach in the classroom. The second program is the *Macmillan/McGraw-Hill Pre-K Reading Program* developed by Bank Street School of Education in New York City. This program provides a model for developing skills in listening and speaking, phonological awareness, print and book awareness and comprehension, and drawing and writing skills. The curriculum contains eight units on various topics and includes Big Books, Sing Along Charts, and CD's with interactive rhymes and songs.

The teachers on this bus have also integrated activities from *Peace in the Preschool Curriculum* into the class and activities from *Second Step*, a conflict resolution, anti-violence curriculum.

The program serves primarily Hispanic children who are non-English speaking. The COW teacher and the CCSD aide are Hispanic and bilingual. At the time of the visit in mid-spring, children spoke in both English and Spanish to each other.

**Learning Environment.** The COW bus is a mobile early childhood education classroom, equipped with folding panels that flip out and become mini-learning centers (blocks, dramatic play, manipulatives, art, sand and water play, writing center, listening center, reading area) when the classroom is in session. The learning centers contain a wide variety of learning materials considering the limited space on the bus, 8 feet by 39 feet. All centers have signs in both English and Spanish (e.g. Centro de Escuchar/Listening Center, Area de Escribir/Writing Center).

On the day of the visit, all three COW bus staff engaged children in activities and conversation. The theme of the week was transportation. The teacher read the book, *I Love Trucks* and then led the children in the song "*The Long Short and Tall of It.*" Next, using a planning board showing the learning centers, each child chose where they wanted to start working. They use a classroom management system where they take their Velcro-backed name shapes to the centers and attach them to a matching Velcro shape.

The early childhood program has a long activity time that allows children to work in-depth on activities. The back of the bus contains an art area with an easel and other art ac-

tivities available. On the day of the visit, children painted with tempera paints on the easels, used small cars to draw patterns on paper, and worked with various colors of play dough. In the middle of the bus, several children worked at a small sand table filled with water and utensils for measuring and pouring. Children drew on paper and wrote letters in the writing area. Several children built a community together with blocks and engaged in conversation and cooperative play. Children made a restaurant in housekeeping (in the afternoon session) and used word cards to develop menus. Some children cared for plants they started for Mother's Day gifts.

The children do not have use of a playground area which does limit gross motor development. However, each session closes with active songs and movement.

Staff are positive and clear with children. There are three rules: use your name tag to establish your place in the learning center, clean your area before you move to another center, and take turns. Behavior problems appear to be rare and enthusiasm for learning is apparent.

**Pedagogy.** Program staff plan activities for children appropriate for their ages and developmental stages using the McGraw-Hill curriculum units as their guide. The teachers review the daily schedule with the children during small group time; have children plan where they are going; and allow a large block of time for children to choose their own activities, to discuss the activities in which they participated, to read a book, and to sing a song. Lessons are presented in English and Spanish as well as some American Sign Language.

The class made several field trips, such as to the Las Vegas Library, the Lied Children's Museum, Anderson Dairy, and the Shark Reef at Mandalay Bay Resort. The teacher incorporates learning activities into every field trip. On the day of the visit, children were excited about a field trip with their families to the fire station, consistent with the transportation theme, on the following day.

**Assessment and Continuous Improvement.** Program staff administer the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test as part of

program evaluation. They also administer the Brigance Screening Tool to each child three times a year and use the Creative Curriculum Child Progress and Planning Report to summarize each child's developmental progress.

Staff maintain individual child portfolios with work samples and test results. Staff write observations about child skill development regularly on note cards posted around the bus.

Program staff have sent children to Child Find for assessment. No special education services are available to this program.

**Parenting Program.** Staff encourage parents to be involved in the early childhood program. The program uses the *STAR Program*, sending a book home once a month with guidelines for the parent on reading the book (e.g., asking their children questions, such as, Do you remember how the story ended?). Parents participate in PACT and teachers log their participation. There is a provision for parents to volunteer in the classroom and participate with *Virtual Pre-K*. This program makes use of a parent suggestion box.

Classroom on Wheels provides several opportunities for parents to improve their parenting skills and literacy skills. To improve parenting skills, staff encourage parents to attend the community-based parenting programs mentioned previously, i.e., the County's *Nurturing Parents & Families Program*, the Cooperative Extension Office's *Family Storyteller Program*, and the PBS *Read, View and Do* workshops.

To improve their own literacy skills, parents can attend the Computer on Wheels Program, which offers English as a Second Language and computer literacy classes in a separate bus parked alongside the early childhood bus on certain days. On these days, parents drop their children off at the COW bus and walk over to their own classroom.

### **Community Based Child Care Model**

**Location.** Lone Mountain Creative Learning Center, Las Vegas, Nevada.<sup>16</sup>

**Intensity and Duration.** The Lone Mountain Creative Learning Center (LMCLC) offers

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<sup>16</sup> This is a private child care center, a community-based option for parents whose child has been assessed and qualified for an early childhood special education program.

preschool/day care to over 184 children: 30 children participate in the Nevada ECE program. In 2006-07, the two Nevada ECE classes adopted an alternate day classroom schedule: 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM on Mondays and Wednesdays, and 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Fridays are reserved for parent trainings and activities and teacher in-service. Children receive 10 hours per week of early childhood education.

The ECE program is integrated into two classrooms (Yellow Room and Purple Room) serving children enrolled at LMCLC for full-service care. 30 children attend preschool in each classroom. Typically, 11 children with special needs and 4 children designated as typical peers are served by the ECE program on a given day, and are divided between the two classrooms.

**Staff.** A full-time early childhood special education teacher divides her time between the two classrooms and is responsible for most of the assessments, observations, record keeping, staff development, and onsite administration of the program. Two additional teacher's aides are employed by the Clark County School District, one per classroom. In addition to the ECE staff, four teachers (2 per classroom) are employed and supervised by LMCLC. All teachers assigned to these classrooms are experienced and have at least a child development associate (CDA) credential.

**Number of Children.** The project serves 30 children: 22 children have special needs with Individualized Educational Programs and eight children are typically developing peers. The Yellow Room serves children who are predominantly three years old turning four, and the Purple Room serves mostly children eligible for kindergarten in fall, 2007. Because the 30 children are in two separate classrooms in the morning session, each with different numbers of children it is difficult to identify a specific child/adult ratio for the morning classes, though the ratio would never exceed 9:1. On the day of the visit, 26 children attended in the Yellow Room and 22 in the Purple Room (7:1 ratio).

### **Early Childhood Program**

**Curriculum.** The Lone Mountain Creative Learning Center Pre-Kindergarten program uses *Creative Curriculum* as the primary early childhood curriculum. This model empha-

sizes interactive learning through exploration in carefully designed learning centers. The Nevada Pre-Kindergarten Standards are used to guide the lesson plans. The program also contains literacy activities that emphasize books as a source of enjoyment, vocabulary and language, phonological awareness, knowledge of print, letters and words, and basic comprehension. Program staff supplements the curriculum with *Ready, Set, Leap!* - an interactive, multi-sensory program that uses technology to provide literacy activities, including alphabet recognition, phonemic awareness and pre-reading lessons. The teacher also uses the *Macmillan/McGraw-Hill Curriculum* for thematic units.

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

**Learning Environment.** Each classroom is large, well lit, and equipped with child-sized tables and chairs and a wide array of learning materials appropriate for the age range in the classroom. The very high ceilings in the classrooms, however, can cause the noise level to become very loud. On the day of the visit, the professional team in one classroom said that the noise had been a major consideration in training during the year and they had found ways to improve the sound quality. The noise in the Purple classroom seemed excessive, though the children were engaged appropriately in activities. The learning centers are labeled and indicate the number of children for each center. Child-sized bathroom facilities are adjacent to each classroom.

The Center has a beautiful, carefully planned outdoor playground area appropriate for different age groups. The playground includes a multi-use climbing apparatus and a second smaller climber, tricycle trails, swings, shaded sand play areas, and a children's garden, allowing the children to plant vegetables and flowers. The program includes special adaptive equipment (e.g., adaptive scissors, writing implements, etc.) which are frequently used with special needs children.

The three and four year-old classrooms are very large and well equipped, containing a

wide variety of learning materials and are particularly language-rich with books, signs, labels, puppets, *LEAP* materials, computers, etc. These larger classrooms have 30 children, beyond the group size limit recommended by National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), especially for three year olds, but within the licensing standards for Clark County.

The classrooms include children from several ethnic groups, including Caucasian, Black, Asian, and Hispanic. The classrooms contain a number of diversity-oriented books, dolls, and other learning materials. The program serves children with special needs as determined by the Clark County School District. Their integration into the classroom supports the growth and development of all children placed in this program.

**Pedagogy.** This early childhood project is different from other models funded under Nevada ECE in that the early childhood special education teacher does not have her own classroom but rather acts as a trainer and mentor for the Center's preschool classroom teachers. The Nevada ECE children, most of whom have Individualized Educational Programs, are mainstreamed into the two regular classrooms. Program staff work with both their own children and the Center's other children in these different classrooms.

The program is literacy-rich. On the day of the visit, children in the Yellow Room followed the *McGraw-Hill Bank Street* program with the morning message, poem, and circle time songs. The teacher read to the children in whole group and in small groups. They practiced writing letters and some traced their names. The children worked in center-based activities using *Creative Curriculum* and were free to make choices using a classroom management system where they posted their names in the centers according to the number of children allowed in each center. Children were guided and questioned about their work and thinking. They were allowed to solve interpersonal problems with adult help. Children were free to manage personal needs (e.g., bathroom, hand-washing) and make personal choices for participation. For example, during snack-time, one child was allowed to choose to read a book instead of participating with the group.

The Purple Room activities focused on animal activities and followed similar routines as the Yellow Room.

The outdoor classroom is an extension of the indoor classroom. Each area of the playground had activities set up and the children rotated through these activities as they would in classroom centers. On the day of the visit, the children participated in bean bag and music activities as well as playing on the equipment and riding bikes.

On Fridays, the ECSE teacher meets with the staff from the two rooms to discuss classroom procedures, techniques for working with the children with special needs, and teaching strategies. The teacher also closely coordinates with the School District speech therapist and occupational therapist that see many of the children during the week.

**Assessment and Continuous Improvement.** The teacher administered the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test to the program children at the beginning and end of the program year. Program staff also completed the Brigance Developmental Screening Test on each child as well as the Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum Individual Child Profile three times during the year. Staff keep daily observations of individual children's progress in a large notebook.

**Parenting Program.** In September, the teacher met with each family to explain the program requirements and the various early childhood curricula. Teachers hold IEP meetings with the family for those children with special needs to determine their individual goals twice during the year. The teacher maintains regular contact with parents through notes, letters, flyers, phone calls and at school pickup. Nevada ECE families also participate in the many Lone Mountain Learning Center events, including the *Fall Festival*, the *Outdoor Thanksgiving Feast*, the *Dinner with Santa* and the *Spring Fling Carnival*. On the day of the visit, parents were signing their children up to participate in a musical conference to be held at Sam's Town Hotel and Casino, featuring children's musical artist, Jim Gill.

Program staff also encourages parents to participate in the different CCSD parenting programs, including the *Nurturing Families*, *Family Storyteller*, and PBS literacy workshops. The teacher sends *Star* booklets home regularly with each child as well as Activity Backpacks that she sends home monthly. The teacher carefully tracks family participation in the literacy activities to make sure that the forms are accurate and that the parents meet

their commitment to the ECE program by interacting with the children at home. The teacher conducts parent conferences at the end of the year to discuss child progress.

### **Statewide Classroom on Wheels Program**

The Classroom on Wheels Program operates three early childhood projects in Nevada: Clark County, Storey/Lyon Counties, and Washoe County with funds the program receives from a variety of sources. Classroom on Wheels also receives Nevada ECE funds which the program uses to support the provision of early childhood education activities at 13 separate locations or stops.

The Classroom on Wheels Program provides early childhood education services in converted school buses painted black and white to resemble Holstein cows. The buses become mobile preschool classrooms, equipped with educational materials, a computer and printer, and a bathroom. They are typically parked in front of elementary schools for a two hour session, from two to four days a week, often moving during the lunch break to a second school site.

In addition to the early childhood bus, the Classroom on Wheels Program in Clark and Washoe Counties also includes a second bus for adults where they can attend adult education and parenting education classes. The second bus supports the parenting education program required of all Nevada ECE projects.

The evaluator visited the Washoe County School District Classroom on Wheels project as representative of the Classroom on Wheels Program, and visited the bus that provided services at Echo Loder Elementary School and Fred W. Traner Middle School in Reno.

### **Statewide Classroom on Wheels: Washoe County School District**

**Location.** The Classroom on Wheels bus parks at Echo Loder Elementary School in the morning and Fred W. Traner Middle School in the afternoon; both are in Reno, Nevada.

**Intensity and Duration.** This Classroom on Wheels program operates two sessions a day, four days a week, Monday through Thursday. The morning class is from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. at one school. The staff then drives the bus to the second school site, where

the afternoon class operates from 12:30 to 3:00 p.m. Children receive 10 hours per week of early childhood education.

**Staff.** A bilingual teacher and one aide work in the classroom.

**Number of Children.** The program serves 15 children in both morning and afternoon sessions for a child/adult ratio of approximately 7.5 to 1. Parents volunteer in the classroom on the day they provide snack.

### **Early Childhood Education Program**

**Curriculum.** The Pre-Kindergarten program uses *Scholastic's Building Language for Literacy* as the primary early childhood curriculum. It is a research-based program with emphasis on helping children learn to read. The curriculum emphasizes oral language, phonological awareness, letter knowledge, and concepts of print. The teacher supplements the program with the *Ready, Set, Leap!* using the *LeapPad* and the *LeapSchool Desk* for literacy-based activities.

This teacher also uses strategies from the *ReggioEmilia Approach*, which involve extended projects based on children's interests and an in-depth system of documentation to "make the learning visible" for the children, teachers, and parents. In the *Reggio Emilia Approach* teachers are seen as researchers, always observing and documenting what the child is working on, and then facilitating the learning through carefully selected materials and provocative questions.

Almost all the children in the program are Hispanic. The teacher is Hispanic and speaks Spanish and English interchangeably during class. The class sings songs mostly in English but read books in Spanish first and then in English later in the session. At the time of the visit in late spring, the evaluator observed children speaking both English and Spanish among themselves during center time. Some children spoke only Spanish.

**Learning Environment.** The Classroom on Wheels bus is a mobile early childhood education classroom—equipped with folding panels that fold out into learning centers when the classroom is in session. The bus contains a child-sized bathroom facility but has no

hot, running water. Staff use an antibacterial solution for hand washing. The COW bus contains unique, mini-learning centers (blocks, dramatic play, manipulatives, art, sand and water play, reading area, quiet area, and a computer area) geared to the developmental needs of the children. The learning centers contain a wide variety of learning materials considering the limited space on the bus (8 feet by 39 feet). When the weather is good, staff take easels, art materials, and the sand and water table outside in front of the school for expanded learning centers.

The last part of each session is spent outdoors. The morning class uses the playground space at Echo Loder Elementary School and then walks to the Community Services Agency Head Start Program to use their well-developed early childhood-oriented playground with a tricycle trail and many tricycles, a large shaded multi-use climber, a sand box, and many outdoor toys (balls, bouncers, plastic trucks, shovels and pails, etc.) The afternoon class, located at Traner Middle School, does not have play equipment for young children. Instead, the teachers use either a grassy area located next to their bus or walk across a long field and through a passageway to a fenced kindergarten playground located at the adjacent elementary school. These outdoor areas raise some safety issues because cars drive directly by the COW bus to pick up middle school students with preschoolers close by.

**Pedagogy.** The class uses the *Reggio Emilia* philosophy of extended projects based on children's interests, of collaborative work in small groups, and of documenting children's work through their drawings and words. For example, the walls of the bus had several collaborative group murals of past activities. The teachers also made several classroom books which include the children's drawings and a re-telling of the story in their own words.

On the day of the visit, the theme was "Transition to Kindergarten". Children talked about concerns they had about going to kindergarten, such as leaving their COW bus teachers, not knowing their new teacher, leaving their friends, and making new ones. They sang a song, with lots of movement, about holding a year-end party ... "Come on everybody, it's time to have a party". They read *Look out Kindergarten, Here I Come*, by

Nancy Carlson. The teacher started by asking the children to recall the story from the previous day and to discuss the character's concerns about going to kindergarten. The ECE teacher demonstrates excellent questioning skills, such as "What do you think will happen? ... What is your plan?... "What do you think you should do?" Children transition to center time with the directive "go explore."

During Center Time, children made mortarboard hats, painted on easels, and played at the sensory table with water, water play toys, decorative rocks, and other elements at the back of the bus. Children rotated through snack center. In the middle of the bus, several children worked in the block center, played dress up in dramatic play, and played literacy games with the teacher aid, read books, and worked on the computer. Many children used writing in their center play.

**Assessment and Continuous Improvement.** The staff administered the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test to all the children at the beginning of the year and at the end. Staff held parent workshops this year to train the parents to complete the Ages & Stages Questionnaire themselves. Staff also administered the Pre-K Portfolio Assessment developed by the WCSD Early Childhood Office to assess specific developmental areas and literacy awareness. The teacher keeps a file on each child that contains the assessments, drawing and writing samples, and documentation photos of activities in progress.

The teacher refers children to Child Find when appropriate. The teacher does not become involved in the IEP process for those children identified with special needs. The school district ECE office encourages teachers to attend IEP meetings and will provide a substitute, if needed.

**Parenting Program.** Parents are involved in the program in several ways. They bring in snacks regularly and volunteer in the classroom one day each month. (A mother with two young children helped out in the morning session.) Parents are required to attend various workshops, offered in English and Spanish, in the CALF Resource Van which travels to their site during certain weeks in the school year. (See WCSD workshops above.) Parents are encouraged to check out materials from the CALF Van which includes a lending li-

brary of educational toys, child and adult books, preschool art materials, and craft kits.

The staff of this COW bus also offered monthly workshops, usually conducted in the school building. In addition, the teacher holds parent/teacher conferences in November and June during the school year to report on progress and show parents how they can help their child at home.

Staff send out homework sheets every Thursday and expect the homework back the following week along with records of PACT time and reading times.

### **Douglas County School District**

**Location.** Jacks Valley Elementary School, Minden, Nevada.

**Intensity and Duration.** Douglas County School District (DCSD) operates a morning pre-kindergarten class, Monday through Friday from 9:00 to 11:40 a.m. Children receive 12.5 hours per week of early childhood education.

**Staff.** A half-time early childhood teacher with an ECE endorsement, and three paraprofessionals operate the program.

**Number of Children.** The program serves 20 children in the ECE Program. The classroom child-staff ratio is 5 to 1.

### **Early Childhood Education Program**

**Curriculum.** The Pre-Kindergarten Program at Jacks Valley uses *High Scope* as the primary early childhood curriculum, supplemented by the *California Early Literacy Learning (CELL)* program that the entire school uses. The teacher also uses materials from the *Parents as Teachers (PAT)* program in Homework Bags.

Both *High Scope* and *CELL* are research-based and address different elements of the pre-kindergarten program. *High Scope* is an early childhood classroom model that covers all aspects of early childhood education. Children plan where they are going to work in Centers and then review their work at the end of Center time. The *CELL* program focuses on literacy skills, emphasizing skills to master alphabetic principles, phonemic

awareness, and concepts related to printed material. The *CELL* curriculum includes shared and independent reading, read-alouds, and interactive writing as well as various phonological activities.

*Parents as Teachers (PAT)* is a parenting program which includes parent packets designed to help parents understand the importance of their role as their child's primary teacher. Packets contain information on developmental areas and activities for the parent and child to do together.

The classroom contains numerous materials that reflect the Hispanic culture (e.g., dolls, books). In addition, one aide is Hispanic and speaks Spanish and translates materials, as needed.

**Learning Environment.** The learning environment is large enough and is arranged to accommodate large group, small group, and individual activities. All materials are age-appropriate. Learning centers are well organized and the materials in the centers reflect the center's purpose. The learning centers include blocks, dramatic play, manipulatives, art, writing, language arts, music, and a computer center geared toward the developmental needs of the children.

The environment is clean with child-size furniture. Bathroom facilities adjoin the classroom. The teacher posted the safety procedures, lesson plans, and curricular guides.

The school has developed a very large early childhood playground area with an extensive tricycle path surrounding a variety of age-appropriate climbing equipment, sand boxes, swings and picnic tables.

**Pedagogy.** The classroom session includes large group and small group time, a short self-selected activity time and outdoor time, using the plan-do-review approach of *High Scope*. On the day of the visit, the class started their day in groups where children discussed what they planned to do during Center Time. The classroom learning theme was "what type of animals live in the ocean?"

The environment is language-rich and the children are read to in small and whole group contexts. Children are allowed to choose books during transition times. On the day of the visit, the group time included shared reading where a rhyme (“Wiggle, wiggle, little fish”) was presented in print and the children followed along. The children listened to Dr. Seuss’ *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish*.” The teacher used a “pinky partner” technique to encourage children to discuss certain concepts with each other. One of the aids directs a daily music time with movement, which the children enjoyed very much.

### **Assessment and Continuous Improvement.**

The teacher administered the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the Expressive One-Word Vocabulary Test in the fall and again in the spring. In addition to these program evaluation assessments, the teacher conducted the ongoing assessments from the *High Scope* program to document child progress.

The teacher also worked with the early childhood special education teacher to discuss the children’s progress. The pre-kindergarten teacher documented progress in portfolios that are kept on all children.

**Parenting Program.** Parents sign a contract and agree to take part in 70 percent of school events, some school wide, others preschool-oriented. The pre-kindergarten events included an orientation and get acquainted picnic, parent night, pumpkin patch, scrapbook making, making a holiday game, a sock hop, and ice cream social. The teacher said that she initially had difficulty obtaining parent participation and held a meeting to review the requirements. She reported that most parents are now meeting their agreement.

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

The teachers developed Homework Bags that staff send home weekly. The Homework Bags include a variety of activities from the Parents as Teachers program for the parent and child to do together. The teacher also sends a weekly newsletter to parents, in English and Spanish, letting families know what the children are working on in the classroom.

## **Great Basin College Firefly Preschool Program**

**Location.** Great Basin College, Mark H. Dawson Child and Family Center, Elko, Nevada.

**Intensity and Duration.** Great Basin College operates two half-day early childhood literacy classes on Monday through Thursday from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. and from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m. Children receive 10 hours per week of early childhood education.

**Staff.** Program staff include a full-time teacher, four half-time aides (two per session), and various student interns. The full-time teacher has a teaching degree with an early childhood education endorsement.

**Number of Children.** The program serves 16 children per session with three adults for a child/teacher ratio of about 5 to 1, which is lower when student interns are present. There were ten students in the morning class on the day of the visit.

### **Early Childhood Education Program.**

The Mark Dawson Child & Family Center received Accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in 2005. Since then, staff complete a self assessment of the program annually using an NAEYC Checklist to renew their Accreditation Certificate. Staff also complete the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO) which examines literacy and language practices and materials in early childhood classrooms.

**Curriculum.** As in previous years, the Nevada ECE classroom follows a master curriculum plan outlined for all the Center's preschool classrooms. This Center has 10 preschool classrooms with about 150 children. The past Director and Preschool Coordinator developed a literacy-based curriculum, called *Light Up for Literacy*, drawing strategies and materials from several sources. This curriculum incorporates the *Creative Curriculum*, the *Self-Concept Curriculum*, and the *Anti Bias Curriculum*. The *Creative Curriculum*, is a research-based curriculum that emphasizes interactive learning in carefully designed learning centers, using the classroom environment as an effective teaching tool. The *Self-Concept Curriculum*, developed at the University of Nevada, Reno, focuses on the devel-

opment of the child's self-concept with units that follow the development of the child in a natural, logical, and sequential process. This model places the child at the heart of the curriculum, focusing on experiences that will enhance the child's development and that are based on what is relevant to his or her life, such as family, school, and community. The *Anti-Bias Curriculum* promotes projects that emphasize acceptance, respect, and cooperation in the classroom and in the community.

The Child & Family Center operates as a lab school for college students enrolled in the Early Childhood Education and Nursing Programs at Great Basin College.

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

The Center has a large number of diversity-related materials, from books to puppets to flannel board stories. One aide speaks Spanish, assisting several children learning English. The teacher will also use Spanish occasionally, such as by naming objects or reading a book in both English and Spanish to help build a bridge for English language learners.

**Learning Environment.** The classroom contains exceptionally well-developed and well-equipped learning centers (blocks, dramatic play, manipulatives, art, writing, science, language arts, and computer centers) geared to the developmental needs of the children between three and five years old. Child-sized bathroom facilities are adjacent to the classroom and shared with an adjoining classroom. The classroom also shares a kitchen with the classroom, allowing for many cooking activities.

The outdoor playground is very large and well equipped with two extensive multi-unit play stations and many other early childhood climbing units. The playground includes a large sand box with child-sized dump trucks and backhoes, a tricycle path with many tricycles and wagons, and an expansive grassy area with trees.

The Child and Family Center contains a Family Literacy Library with walls lined with

early childhood books, flannel board stories, video materials, puppets, and dramatic play prop boxes. The Library contains over 3,000 items available for checkout. The Library contains large sofas, chairs and a rug. Staff encourage families to stay before and after class to read with their children, play with a puppet, or check out a book.

**Pedagogy.** The classroom uses a thematic approach, beginning each week with a story and following up with activities related to the story during the week. The classroom schedule and activities allow for large group time, small group time, and a long self-selected activity time; for teacher-directed and child-choice activities; for indoor and extensive outdoor activities; and for age-appropriate activities for different age levels of children. On the day of the visit, the central theme focused on dinosaurs. During the opening Circle Time, the teacher involved the children in reading a book on dinosaurs by asking the children many questions and to make predictions about what happens in the book, since they read the book the previous day.

The children then moved to centers, working on various activities most of which were related to the theme of dinosaurs, such as creating playdough dynoramas of the age of dinosaurs, tracing dinosaur feet on paper, drawing pictures of dinosaurs, playing a game about dinosaurs on the computer, and pretending to be paleontologists tracking down dinosaurs in the dramatic play area. Two boys read a book about dinosaurs to each other and two others played with blocks and small plastic dinosaurs. Most learning areas contained books related to dinosaurs.

Staff use transition time from one activity time to another to introduce or reinforce specific information needed to prepare children for kindergarten, such as names, telephone numbers, etc. For example, after a group circle time, the teacher asked children to identify the first letter of their first name before going into the next activity.

**Assessment and Continuous Improvement.** The teacher administered the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, Expressive One Word Picture Vocabulary Test, as well as the Brigance Screening Inventory to the children at the beginning and end of the school year. The teacher also keeps an oral language checklist on the children. In addition, the teacher uses a Preschool Portfolio Assessment to track child progress based on the Nevada Preschool

Standards. The Checklist includes basic information about self and social and emotional development, language, early literacy and writing, mathematics, and physical development.

The program served a large number of children on Individualized Educational Programs. The early interventionist and the speech therapist from the Elko County School District work with these children at least once weekly. On the day of the visit, the speech therapist conducted an activity on her “sound rug” where she had the children repeat different speech sounds, allowing her to work with the entire group as well as the individual students targeted for intervention.

**Parenting Program.** Program staff encourage parents to participate in the early childhood education program. Parents often visit and volunteer in the classroom and provide snacks for each session.

An important part of the parenting program is to involve parents in their child’s learning at home. The program developed a “Homework on Wheels” Program. Once a month, children take home a lightweight, child-sized suitcase on wheels that contains a literacy activity and book for children to complete with their parents. As mentioned previously, staff encourage parents to checkout books from the Family Literacy Library.

The school holds monthly parent participation events, such as a *Trikathon* and a “*Buckaroo Breakfast*” during the Annual Elko Cowboy Poetry Festival. The teacher holds Parent/Teacher Conferences twice annually to review the child’s progress and she sends home a monthly newsletter in English and Spanish.

### **Humboldt County School District**

**Location.** Grass Valley Elementary School, Winnemucca, Nevada.

**Intensity and Duration.** Humboldt County School District operates a morning and afternoon pre-kindergarten class, Monday through Thursday from 8:35 to 11:15 a.m. and 12:10 to 2:55 p.m. Children receive 11 hours per week of early childhood education.

**Staff.** A full-time teacher (K-8 certification with ELL endorsement) and full-time aide

operate the classroom. There is also a program coordinator who conducts parent involvement activities and tests the children. The coordinator is in the class half-time and parents volunteer in the classroom often. Parents are required and are trained to serve in the classroom one session per month. On the day of the visit, two parents participated in each session.

**Number of Children.** The program serves 20 children in the morning session and 20 children in the afternoon session for a child/adult ratio of 10 to 1: it is lower when the coordinator and/or parents are in the class.

### **Early Childhood Education Program**

**Curriculum.** The Humboldt County Pre-Kindergarten program offers a literacy-based, family oriented program. *Creative Curriculum* is the primary curriculum. The *Creative Curriculum*, developed by Teaching Strategies Inc, focuses on developing an experientially rich, developmentally appropriate environment that responds to the creativity of children and teachers. *Creative Curriculum* includes well-planned learning centers that allow for child choice and self-directed play, small groups, and supportive teaching designed to ensure future academic success. The development of language, mathematical reasoning, and scientific thought are emphasized throughout the centers.

The assistant teacher who has been with the program since its inception has continued to introduce the *Zoo Phonics* Program to the children which introduces the alphabet through animal puppets and interactive activities.

**Learning Environment.** The Grass Valley Pre-K Program made many changes this year. The program moved into a new portable unit, set up for center-based, child-directed, exploration. The children have a large block of time to work in centers in this building. Centers in this building include art, library, math/manipulatives, a large dramatic play center, a listening center, puzzles, blocks, a doll house, woodworking, a tent, science center with aquarium, a flannel board center, a loft with quiet activities, computers with printers, and a writing center. A second classroom, where children are greeted and released and where whole and small group activities take place, is located at the end of a

hall of a new wing of the school. Bathroom facilities are adjacent. It is well organized and includes a language arts and listening center, an area for manipulative toys (puzzles, legos, games, etc.), a science area, a writing area, a puppet show space, a small dramatic play area, and a computer center, as well as a large plant growing unit with grow lights.

This year, the program opened a pre-kindergarten outdoor play area with slides and a multi-structure climber. The school also fenced off and improved an area off of the kindergarten wing. It contains a large sand area, a large concrete-surfaced area for bike riding, and an outdoor easel. This space will also include an area for gardening. Water play activities, painting, and chalk activities were conducted on the day of the visit.

**Pedagogy.** On the day of the visit, the theme was “Transition to Kindergarten.” The teacher greeted the children in quiet activities at tables and in centers for a period of about 20 minutes. Children were engaged in writing activities, building puzzles, and discussion. The teacher held a circle time, where she called on children to participate in calendar and weather activities. She read “*Look out Kindergarten, Here I Come*” by Nancy Carlson. The class then went to the portable for an extended center-based time with parent volunteers actively stationed at centers to assist with computers and art. Children used a clothespin system to sign-in and plan their activities. While the children were working, the teacher, the program director, the aid, and two parents circulated among the children questioning and directing the learning through the children’s experiences. The teacher asked open-ended questions such as “what was your reasoning?”

The children used the new small outside play area, which included a new art easel. The teacher rolled a shopping cart full of outside equipment (balls, jump ropes, sand toys, and paint) into the space and the children had an extended time to play. They returned to the smaller classroom for a snack of bananas and milk.

Children are very aware of the classroom routines. The class uses a behavior chart with clothespins with the children’s names as a behavior management technique. The child’s name is called when misbehaving and the clothespin moved down. The teacher uses this technique to help the child to be aware of inappropriate behaviors and change the behavior within the class period. The child has every opportunity and is expected to move the

clothespin back up to the acceptable level within the class period. The teacher stated that her goal was to respond immediately to appropriate behavior and allow the children to end the day in the acceptable range. In addition to regular classroom activities, the school counselor reads with the children on a bi-weekly basis, using a story to illustrate and discuss a social-emotional issue.

**Assessment and Continuous Improvement.** The program coordinator administered the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the Expressive One-Word Vocabulary Test to all the children. Staff keep work sheets in the children's individual folders to show parents their progress.

Parents are required to conduct biweekly activities with their children, using activities contained in the Literacy Backpack program. At the end of an activity, children are required to draw a picture of their favorite part of the activity. The parent writes the child's dictation of their narrative about the picture. The teacher keeps the drawings in a special portfolio for each child as a record of their involvement and improvement through the year.

**Parenting Program.** The program coordinator implements the parenting program. Parents sign a contract that requires they be involved in the early childhood program six hours per month, including volunteering in the classroom once a month. As mentioned previously, parents receive training and direction in how to support the children's learning. In addition, the teacher developed a system of posters in each learning center that explain the value of the center, what children will learn by participating in the center, and questions to ask the child to support the child's learning through play. On the day of the visit, one grandparent in each session worked in the art center, guiding the children and discussing their paintings. Another parent helped in the computer center to assist the children with loading software.

Parents are also encouraged to attend monthly Parent Nights, conducted by community resources and staff. A monthly calendar is sent home to keep parents informed of school and classroom activities.

The program coordinator developed Literacy Backpacks, described previously, which include the materials and descriptions of activities for the parent and child to do together.

### **Pershing County School District**

**Location.** Lovelock Elementary School, Lovelock, Nevada.

**Intensity and Duration.** The Pershing County School District Pre-Kindergarten Program operates two half-day early childhood classes, Monday through Friday from 8:15 to 10:45 a.m. and from 12:10 to 2:40 p.m. Children receive about 12.5 hours per week of early childhood education.

**Staff.** Program staff include a full-time teacher and two full-time teacher aides. The Pre-Kindergarten program integrates daily with the Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Classroom, which has a full-time teacher and three aides.

**Number of Children.** Both morning and afternoon sessions serve 18 children; the ECSE classroom serves 10 children. The integrated classroom, with between 13 to 14 children normally, has a child/teacher ratio of around 4 to 1.

### **Early Childhood Education Program**

The Pershing County Pre-Kindergarten Program received accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children in 2005-06.

**Curriculum.** The Pershing County Pre-Kindergarten Program uses *High Scope* as the primary curriculum. As described previously, *High Scope* is a research-based early childhood program in which children plan their activities, actively participate in learning centers, and complete the cycle by reviewing what they did during the day's session.

The class also uses the Pre-K portion of the *Houghton Mifflin Reading Program* which Lovelock Elementary School implements. The teacher uses the *Alpha Friends Big Book* each day to expose the children to the letters of the alphabet. This program emphasizes alphabet recognition, oral language and vocabulary development, and print awareness and beginning phonics.

**Learning Environment.** The Pershing Pre-Kindergarten program is unique in that it provides an “inclusive” environment, combining children from the Nevada ECE classroom with the school district’s early childhood special education classroom daily. All the children from both classes spend time in each room and are engaged with staff from both programs. After the opening circle time, the children in each classroom are divided and spend the rest of the session in the other classroom. The outdoor play area is shared at the end of each session by both classes.

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

The school expanded the outside playground area to accommodate the two early childhood classrooms. The playground includes a large, outdoor climbing apparatus, a sand box, tricycles, wagons, appropriate adaptive outdoor play equipment, and a narrow tricycle trail. The program plans to widen and expand the tricycle trail so it encircles the entire playground.

The learning centers contain a variety of learning materials appropriate for the wide age range and developmental levels of all the children, many of whom have special needs. Children in this program are between 3 and 5 years.

Staff use positive language and encourage positive conflict resolution techniques, using the *High Scope* model as a guideline. Staff provide the children with many choices daily during the long open activity period and opportunity for collaborative planning and learning.

**Pedagogy.** The ECE teacher and the ECSE teacher plan their curricula together on Fridays, using IEP goals and daily observations of skill levels as guideposts. The two teachers conduct different but complementary activities for the two classrooms based on

selected themes (e.g., farm life, weather, dinosaurs).

The program emphasizes literacy activities, incorporating many classroom writing experiences, teacher and child-made books, and poems. The child-made books include the children's own words, drawings, and photos. Children frequently read their own books. The children also visit the school library once a week and during a field trip to the Lovelock Community Library: all families obtained library cards.

On the day of the visit, the theme was "gardening." Children planted flowers in their hand-crafted wooden flower boxes, made flower pots for Mother's Day gifts, and read *The Billy Goat in the Garden*. At large group time, the teacher called out a number of children's names and they proceeded to the other classroom. Children from the other classroom, in exchange, then joined the circle and opening activities. Using both English and Spanish, the teacher involved the children in calendar activities and opening songs. The teacher incorporated Spanish and sign language into her lesson.

In the ECE classroom, the teacher then asked each child where he/she planned to work and the child moved into active exploration of one of the learning centers: painting at the easel in the art area, building with blocks on the floor, playing with dinosaurs on a work table, reading books in the loft, etc. Outdoor classroom activities (water table play and flower planting) were incorporated into the center-based time block. The teacher and aides worked with children at the various learning centers, individually and in small groups.

In the ECSE classroom, the theme was also flowers and planting. Several children used flowers and created arrangements. Other children played with building blocks or toys and several children worked on the computers. Some read books by themselves.

After the open activity time, the children in the ECE classroom came together and the teacher gave each child a bouquet of artificial flowers which they sorted into flower pots by color as a circle time activity. She closed circle time with a song, the children had their snack, and made choices in center-based play.

**Assessment and Continuous Improvement.** Staff administered the Peabody Picture Vo-

cabulary Test and the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test at the beginning of the year and will again at the end of the year. The school also administered the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening Test to all children. The teachers kept observational notes based on the COR areas (Initiative, Social Relations, Creative Representation, Music and Movement, Language and Literacy, and Logic and Math) used in *High Scope*.

**Parenting Program.** The teachers require parents to sign a contract at the beginning of the program. In the contract, parents agree to complete one goal at home with their child, participate in the preschool program at least two hours per month, and attend any required trainings or meetings.

Parents are also encouraged to attend Developmental Preschool nights held monthly. For example, Preschool night activities this year included math night, art night, movement night, child CPR night, literacy night, game night and a family picnic.

A monthly newsletter is distributed in English and Spanish, which discusses the children's activities, planned field trips, trainings, etc. In addition, staff encourage families to check out books from the school's Literacy Center and backpacks from the program that contain materials in English and Spanish.

### **Washoe County School District**

Washoe County School District (WCSD) used Nevada ECE funds to initiate and expand early childhood education programs at nine sites. The nine sites represent two distinct models of providing early childhood education services to families: early literacy and high school early childhood centers. The evaluator visited one site from each model.

*Early Literacy Model.* Located primarily at elementary schools, these projects typically serve children from the school's attendance area. The Nevada ECE program supported five early literacy project sites: Anderson, Booth, Incline, Johnson, and Veteran's Memorial Elementary Schools.

*High School Early Childhood Center Model.* These early childhood education projects are located at high schools. The high schools benefit by providing students in Child Development classes with a practicum to learn about early childhood education and Nevada ECE benefits by receiving extra assistance in the classroom with the children. The Nevada ECE program supported four high school early childhood education projects: Hug, Reed, Sparks, and Wooster High Schools.

All early childhood education programs in Washoe County School District use Scholastic's *Building Language for Literacy* as the primary early childhood curriculum. It is a research-based program on how children best learn to read. The curriculum emphasizes oral language, phonological awareness, letter knowledge, and concepts of print. Each teacher, then, supplements the program with many other commercial and self-developed materials.

In 2006-07, the Washoe County ECE program used the *Early Language and Literacy Childhood Observation Tool (ELLCO)* to assess the quality of early language and literacy environments and instruction.

The Washoe County School District Nevada ECE program developed district level activities in parenting education and staff development in which all ECE project sites could participate. In terms of parenting education, district ECE staff made available two parenting education activities to all ECE project sites.

- ***The COW Adult Learning Facility (CALF) Van.*** The CALF Van visits each early childhood program regularly during the year. It houses learning materials and books available for families to check out. During 2006-07, the CALF Van offered Make-It and Take-It Workshops and three series of parent/child literacy workshops in both English and Spanish. The "*Ready to Learn Series*" (*Read, Do and View*), developed with the local PBS Station, consists of six workshops in which parents learn to view a television program with their child, read a follow-up book together, and then engage in an activity together. The *Family Storyteller Program*, offered in collaboration with the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension Office, consists of six workshops which teach parents how to read interactively with their child. The *Money on the Bookshelf Program*, also offered in collaboration with the Cooperative Extension, consists of four workshops

designed to help parents teach their children money management skills through the reading of children's books and related activities.

- **Family Literacy Festivals.** WCSD sponsored two Family Literacy Festivals: one in December 2006 and a second in May 2007. During the Literacy Festivals, families and children participate in literacy activities at learning stations.

In terms of staff development, the WCSD central early childhood staff provided monthly trainings in early childhood related topics. In 2006-07, training included sessions on *Family Resource Centers, Born Learning, Child Abuse and Child Neglect, Special Issues for Infants and Toddler Teachers, Eye Care in Early Childhood, Literature for Early Childhood, Indoor Large Motor Activities, Raising Children in the Internet Age, Ages & Stages Questionnaire, The Early Childhood Language and Literacy Classroom Observation Toolkit (ELLCO) Review, ECERS Review, and Virtual Pre-K.*

The evaluator visited Veteran's Memorial Elementary School as representative of an Early Literacy model and Sparks High School as representative of high school early childhood center model. Each is described briefly below.

### **Veteran's Memorial Elementary School Preschool Program**

**Location.** Veteran's Memorial Elementary School, Reno, Nevada

**Intensity and Duration.** Veteran's Memorial Elementary School Pre-Kindergarten Program operates two half-day early childhood sessions, Monday through Thursday from 8:45 to 11:15 a.m. and 12:20 to 2:50 p.m. Children receive 10 hours per week of early childhood education.

**Staff.** A full-time teacher (certified in ECE and special education) and a full-time bilingual aide, nearing completion of a Bachelor's Degree in Education, operate the program.

**Number of Children.** The program serves 17 children in the morning and 17 children in the afternoon for a child/adult ratio of approximately 8 to 1.

### **Early Childhood Education Program**

**Curriculum.** The class uses the Scholastic's *Building Language for Literacy* as the pri-

mary early childhood curriculum. It is a research-based program based on how children best learn to read. The curriculum emphasizes oral language, phonological awareness, letter knowledge, and concepts of print. The teacher also uses the *Reggio Emilia Approach* which is a program developed in Reggio Emilia, Italy and taught and modeled at the University of Nevada, Reno. The model emphasizes respecting children's inherent interests and competence, working on long term projects often based on children's ideas, and documentation of the children's ongoing learning via photos, the children's words, their works of art, etc.

**Learning Environment.** This year, the class moved to a new modular classroom placed behind the school. The classroom contains many learning centers, including a language arts and puppet center adjacent to the listening center and computer, a combined home/store dramatic play space, a block area, a science shelf, an art table and sensory table, and a math/manipulative area. Bathrooms for the boys and girls are located off the room, in a small hallway and shared by the elementary music department.

The early childhood program uses the older children's playground which is adjacent to the portable, located in the front of the building. It does not contain early childhood playground equipment or fencing. The teacher brings out learning materials for activities. The playground for young children is being remodeled over the summer and should be available and appropriate for the 2007-2008 school year.

The program provides services to primarily Hispanic learning English as a second language. The aide is bilingual and uses Spanish and English in the classroom and acts as the "bridge" for both parents and the children at the beginning of the year. Both teachers celebrate and respect the two cultures in the class. The classroom contains books, songs, and videos in both English and Spanish.

**Pedagogy.** The classroom schedule allows for an extensive self-selected activity time, small group and large group time, and outdoor time. The schedule is posted and there are teacher-made books for the children with photos and simple drawings on both the daily schedule and on various routines (fire drills, outdoor play, classroom rules, etc.). The teacher read *A Very Hungry Caterpillar* using a flannel board activity where children

placed elements of the story as they were encountered in the reading. This was part of a unit on insects and plants. Many activities linked the story to children's learning; a favorite food graph was on display and a collection of children's still life paintings entitled "painting Sophia's flowers" was on display in the art center.

During center time, the children worked throughout the class...some in the dramatic play area playing store and others at the art easel. Some children made necklaces based on the *Very Hungry Caterpillar*; others read in small groups, built floor puzzles, or worked with manipulatives. Some children worked for a long time with wheels and ramps investigating angles and speed. Children had snack time as part of center based time and followed a rebus chart to know how many banana chips and marshmallows they were allowed.

During outside time, the staff brought out equipment and materials to augment the limited playground. Some children rode tricycles. Other children brought indoor activities outside, such as puzzles and writing.

The teachers are attentive to the children's needs, speak slowly and carefully, providing them with new words in English. Staff used positive reinforcement and redirection as guidance techniques.

**Assessment and Continuous Improvement.** The teacher completed the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test on all children and had the parents complete the Ages and Stages Questionnaire. The teacher also uses the Pre-Kindergarten Portfolio Assessment developed by the School District, which tracks skill development in various areas, including Language Arts, Book Handling/Concepts of Print, Math, Social/Emotional Development, and Personal Data.

The teacher maintains a portfolio for each child that contains work samples, art samples, photos, etc. The teacher shares these portfolios with parents at end-of-year conferences. This program serves children on IEPs who are hearing impaired and have hearing aids, receiving services from a School District speech therapist twice a week. The teacher has her degree in both Early Childhood Education and Early Childhood Special Education so she is well trained to work with both groups of children.

**Parenting Program.** The parents are required to sign an Adult Participation Contract where they agree to attend workshops conducted by the *CALF* Van and by the classroom teachers. Most parents attended the four-session *Family Storyteller Program* and the four workshops put on by the teacher: *Classroom Orientation Workshop*, *Music and Literacy Workshop*, *Homework Activities Workshop* and the *Virtual Pre-K Curriculum*. Some parents volunteered in the classroom and other parents prepared snacks for the children.

The program sends home weekly Activity Homework Packs which includes journals, and specific activities for parents to complete with their child. On the day of the visit, the children took home an activity asking them to cut out letters in print and put them in a paper bag to return to school. The teacher keeps an ongoing record of PACT time and reading time by each family.

The teacher holds parent/teacher conferences twice during the year to report on progress and encourage parents to be actively involved in their child's learning.

### **Sparks High School "Little Railroaders" Preschool Program**

**Location.** Sparks High School, *Little Railroaders Preschool*, Sparks, Nevada.

**Intensity and Duration.** Sparks High School operates two half-day pre-kindergarten classes, Monday through Thursday from 8:30 to 11:00 a.m. and from 12:30 to 3:00 p.m. Children receive 10 hours per week of early childhood education.

**Staff.** A full-time teacher and full-time aide operate the program. In the morning program, a Washoe County ECE special education teacher and her aide assist with four special education students, each alternating every other day. In addition, the teacher allows three students taking Child Development I and II classes at the high school to assist in the early childhood program. On the day of the visit, one high school student was present.

**Number of Children.** The program serves 18 children per session for a child/adult ratio of 9 to 1 in the morning and 6 to 1 in the afternoon; it is lower when the Child Development high school students are present.

## **Early Childhood Education Program**

**Curriculum.** The Pre-Kindergarten program uses *Scholastic's Building Language for Literacy* as the primary early childhood curriculum. It is a research-based program on how children best learn to read. The curriculum emphasizes oral language, phonological awareness, letter knowledge, and concepts of print. The teacher supplements *Language for Literacy* with the *Houghton Mifflin Pre-K Program*, which includes thematic kits and materials, and with many self-developed materials from her many years of teaching.

The program serves many children learning English, primarily Hispanic children as well as some children from other cultures. The teacher aide is Hispanic and frequently speaks Spanish in the class, assisting those children who need translation, and with the many parents who speak Spanish only. The teacher is learning Spanish and, was practicing it with the children throughout the day of the visit. The classroom contains many materials reflecting diverse cultures. Staff send all communications home to the families in English or Spanish, as needed. On the day of the visit, the unit of study was "Mexico". The teacher brought in artifacts from Mexico (sombrero, dress, sandals, etc.) for the children to explore.

**Learning Environment.** The classroom is located at the end of a wing of the high school with its own separate entrance for the pre-kindergarten families. Bathrooms are located across the hall. The program purchased new playground equipment, adjacent to the new Sparks Community Learning Center, which includes climbing equipment and a slide, an outdoor art easel, and a balance beam. The teacher adds outdoor classroom equipment, such as water tables, balls, frisbees, jump ropes, hula hoops, etc, for activities.

The large classroom contains 11 well-equipped learning centers (science, blocks, dramatic play, math/manipulatives, art, writing, language arts, listening, woodworking, music, and computer centers). The classroom includes a loft area housing a library, puppets, a doll house, and an enclosed housekeeping area.

**Pedagogy.** The teacher uses a theme-based approach, working on topics for a week or longer. On the day of the visit, the theme was Mexico. During group time the teacher in-

roduced items from Mexico (brought in by one of the children), talked about Mexico on the map, and read *Hairs and Pelitos* with the children talking about hair color and texture, relating the book to individual children's hair style and color.

The classroom schedule allows for a balance between teacher-directed and child-choice activities. On the day of the visit, during children's choice time, children were busy with their painting (exploring color mixing), working with play dough, exploring the Mexican artifacts, and writing on white boards. They moved from area to area taking their name-tags with them and sticking them on the backs of their chairs. All staff engage the children in their "play" in the different learning centers, use positive language and redirection if needed, and are effective role models for the high school students.

The morning program serves children with special needs. An ECE special education teacher or aide assist in the classroom everyday. Together, the two teachers plan developmentally appropriate activities for these children, related to the class theme, that support the children's IEP goals. A speech therapist works in the classroom, as needed, assisting the children with speech and language needs.

**Assessment and Continuous Improvement.** The teacher administered the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test, and the Ages and Stages Questionnaire to the children at the beginning and end of the year. She also conducts ongoing assessments of each child using the Pre-Kindergarten Portfolio Assessment developed by the WCSD ECE Office. At the end of the school year, the teachers gives the portfolios, which includes work samples of art, writing, etc., to the children's next year kindergarten teachers.

In addition to the portfolio assessment to track child progress, program staff developed an individual notebook for each child with work samples, homework sheets, photos, etc., which staff present to parents at the end of the year.

**Parenting Program.** Staff encourage parents to read with their children at home and have established a classroom library for parents to checkout books and learning games. Parents are asked to keep monthly reading logs and families receive a children's book

when they return the log at the end of the month.

Parents are required to attend monthly workshops on a variety of programs, such as *Family Storyteller*, *Read, View and Do*, *Nevada Virtual Pre-K*, or *Money on the Bookshelf*, which promote parent and child together time (PACT) activities.

Staff sends home weekly “homework” for the children and their parents, using the *On Track for Kindergarten Program* and *STAR* booklets (*Sitting Together and Reading*).

### **White Pine County School District**

**Location.** McGill Elementary School, McGill, Nevada.

**Intensity and Duration.** White Pine County School District operates a half-day early childhood program, Monday through Friday from 8:00 to 11:00 p.m. Children receive 15 hours per week of early childhood education.

**Staff.** Program staff include a three-quarter-time teacher and a three-quarter-time aide who operate the early childhood program as well as a three-quarter-time Parent Outreach Coordinator who works with parents and families, but is also in the classroom most days.

**Number of Children.** The program serves 20 children with two adults for a child/adult ratio of 10 to 1. When either the Parent Outreach Coordinator or a parent volunteer is present, which is about half the time, the ratio is 7 to 1.

### **Early Childhood Education Program**

**Curriculum.** The White Pine County Pre-Kindergarten program uses the *Core Knowledge Program-Preschool* as the primary early childhood education curriculum and supplements it with the *California Early Literacy Learning (CELL) Program*. Both programs are research-based programs, which are also used by the other grades in McGill Elementary School. The early childhood education teacher linked the Core Knowledge Program with the Nevada PreK Standards to ensure that program activities support state standards.

The *Core Knowledge Program* is based on research in cognitive psychology that supports the premise that children must learn a grade-by-grade core of common material to ensure

a sound preschool and elementary school education. In other words, the curriculum focuses on a set of fundamental competencies and specific knowledge appropriate for the age group. The competency areas include Movement, Oral Language, Autonomy/ Social Skills, Nursery Rhymes, Fingerplays and Songs, Storybook Reading and Storytelling, Emerging Literacy Skills in Reading and Writing, and Mathematical Reasoning to name a few. The *CELL Program* includes a basic framework for daily literacy activities that includes oral language activities, phonological skills, reading aloud, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, interactive writing, and independent writing.

**Learning Environment.** The White Pine County Pre-Kindergarten program is housed in two large, connecting classrooms. One classroom is used primarily for large group activities, such as circle time at the beginning of the day, story book time at the end of the day, as well as free play time before the program begins for the day. The second classroom contains the various learning centers, including a library and listening area, a writing area, blocks, dramatic play, math, art area, science area, pets, etc. The teacher ensures that all the centers contain materials that support state standards and will rotate the centers depending on the theme being presented.

The early childhood education teacher expands the learning environment beyond the classroom by using the local town environment for experiences, going on several field trips during the year. This year, the class made field trips to the hospital, a dentist's office, the sheriff's office, fire station, Railroad Museum and train station, a machinery shop, and the Future Farmer's Fair. All the field trips become curricula for class-made stories, writing and art activities, wood and box constructions, and other projects.

The program uses two adjacent playground areas: a fenced-in smaller playground area developed exclusively for the Pre-K program, which community volunteers constructed. It contains a tricycle trail and a central gravel area with animal climbers and a beam walker. The lower, main playground used by the other elementary children has swings and a multi-use climber with slides, forts, etc. Program staff hope to expend pre-k playground area next year to include a sandbox. Child-size facilities are directly across the school hall from one of the classrooms.

**Pedagogy.** The classroom focuses on literacy and cognitive activities, offering the children many opportunities for hands-on exploration and verbal interaction. On the day of the visit, the teacher opened the first Circle Time with the active song, *Animal Action* with the children acting out various animal movements. They then sang about the days of the week, and heard a weather report from one of the children. The children also added to their weather graph on numbers of sunny days, cloudy days, rainy days, and snowy days.

Afterwards, the children went outside to their playground where they rode tricycles around the trail, played in the sandbox, and interacted with staff in play. The children then returned to the classroom where they had snack time, cleaning up their tables when they were done.

Children had a 30 minute center-time where they choose which of the many centers they wanted to play at. Three children went to the art center where they painted with water colors, two boys went to block center and made several trucks and moving equipment with blocks, two other children wrote stories at the literacy center, and three children caught play fish at the science center with fishing poles. After center time, children returned to the for large group activity classroom where the teacher read a story, asking children questions about the book as she read.

Staff are very positive and allow the children to settle their own problems, using the Second Step program, which is also used school wide.

**Assessment and Continuous Improvement.** The McGill Pre-K Project Coordinator administers the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test at the beginning and end of the school year. Staff also complete the Brigance Developmental Inventory for all children. Staff use this initial information to develop an Individualized Learning Plan for each child.

The teachers develop portfolios on all the children. They contain work samples, artwork, and assessment data, which are given to the parents at the end of the year. Program staff use a variety of checklists to record student progress. The teacher also provides parents with children report cards, based on state standards, quarterly.

The program serves special needs children, who receive additional services from the School District's special education teacher and speech therapist twice a week within the classroom. Occasionally, other children with special needs, such as from kindergarten, are placed in the early childhood education classroom in specific activities from which these children can benefit.

**Parenting Program.** The Parent Outreach Coordinator works directly with families to implement the parenting program. The parents sign a Home/School Involvement Compact in which the parents agree to volunteer in the classroom one day a month and participate in at least one family literacy night per year. They also agree to a monthly visit to monitor their goals. She makes home visits with individual families or meets with them in the classroom once a month to review their goals for themselves and their child. The Coordinator collects data on parent involvement, PACT time, and time parents spent reading with their children.

The Parent Outreach Coordinator also holds a monthly "Family Hour" where she discusses parenting topics from the Love and Logic Program, models the reading of a book for families, conducts a follow-up activity, and provides a snack related to the book. The Parent Coordinator also sends out homework bags once a month with activities for the parent and child to do together.

## Chapter VIII. Participant Outcomes

This chapter provides a summary of the effectiveness of Nevada ECE projects on the early childhood education and parenting outcome indicators. The outcome indicators were developed in June 2001 by the Nevada Even Start Statewide Family Literacy Initiative. The Nevada Department of Education played an important role in this process since the outcome indicators had to be used to evaluate federal funded Even Start projects in Nevada, which NDE administers.

The Nevada Even Start Statewide Family Literacy Initiative developed 14 outcome indicators: four in early childhood education, six in adult literacy, and four in parenting. After reviewing the Even Start outcome indicators, the Nevada ECE Evaluation Design Team selected four outcome indicators from Even Start consistent with Nevada ECE goals to evaluate the program: one indicator in early childhood education and three in parenting.

The 2006-07 results show that Nevada ECE children and adults made positive gains and achieved the expected level of performance on all four outcome indicators.

**Table 14.** The Number of Outcome Indicators met by the Nevada ECE Program

Indicator Area (n)	Yes	No
A. Early Childhood (1)	1	0
B. Parenting (3)	3	0

To establish the expected performance levels for the indicators, SB 525 directs the Department to review and “increase the expected performance rates on a yearly basis, based upon the performance results of the participants.” During 2006-07, the Department established a Task Force to review the expected performance levels of the four outcome indicators. After reviewing the data from previous years, the Task Force recommended that the expected performance level for two outcome indicators be increased. The first outcome indicator is the percent of children who show improvement in auditory comprehension and expressive communication. The original standard for this indicator was 70 percent. The Task Force recommended the standard be raised to “75 percent” in 2006-07 based on data from 2003-04 through 2005-06. The second outcome indicator is the percent of first-year adults who increase the amount of time that they spend reading to or with their children. The original standard for this indicator was 30 percent and it was

raised to 50 percent in 2005-06. The 2006-07 Task Force recommended the standard be raised again to “60 percent” in 2006-07 based on data from 2003-04 through 2005-06. (See Appendix E for a discussion of how the performance levels were established.)

**Outcome Indicators**

**A. Early Childhood Education**

**Outcome Indicator 1.** *Seventy-five percent (75%) of Early Childhood Education children with a minimum of four months of participation will show improvement in auditory comprehension and expressive communication—*

- *as measured by a standard score increase on the Preschool Language Scale-4 (PLS-4) for children up to three years old.*
- *as measured by a standard score increase on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III and the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test-2000 Edition for children from three to five years old.*

**Table 15.** Performance on Early Childhood Outcome Indicators

<b>Outcome Indicator</b>	<b>Expected</b>	<b>Actual</b>
1. Auditory Comprehension (PPVT)	75%	79.9%
2. Expressive Comprehension (EOWPVT)	75%	89.2%

**Preschool Language Scale-4 (PLS-4).** Two children were less than three years old when they enrolled in the Nevada ECE program. One of the two children did not have the English skills at the time of enrollment to take the PLS-4 in English and was not administered the test during the school year. Thus, data are available on one child. The results show the child made a standard score gain on both the auditory comprehension and the expressive communication subtests on the PLS-4, meeting the expected performance level for this measure. Because data are available on only one student, the result is not presented in Table 15.

**Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III (PPVT).** The PPVT is an individually administered norm-referenced test that measures receptive vocabulary (understanding/interpreting what is heard) and gives a quick estimate of the child’s verbal and other literacy-related skills.

The PPVT is appropriate for children between two and 18 years old. Nevada ECE pro-

grams administered the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test to children beginning at three years-old.

It can be administered in English or Spanish depending on the individual child. All ten Nevada ECE projects elected to administer the test in English only since school readiness, which includes learning the English language, is a goal for the program. In the 10 Nevada ECE projects, project staff waited to test children who could not be tested in English at enrollment into the program because of limited or no English skills until he/she had sufficient English skills. Projects reported that 390 of the 1,071 children (36 percent) did not have sufficient English language skills to complete the PPVT in English when the children first enrolled in Nevada ECE. In addition, many other children who could complete the assessment were still learning the English language.

The PPVT data are expressed in standard score units. PPVT scores have a standard score mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15. There is no “maturation effect” for the PPVT. Therefore, our expectation is that the PPVT standard scores should not change in the absence of a “treatment.” Thus, an increase in the standard score on the PPVT during the time a child is participating in Nevada ECE is taken as an indication that Nevada ECE is helping increase the child’s receptive vocabulary.

Nevada ECE projects served 1,071 children age-eligible to take the PPVT. Out of these 1,071 children, 984 children were in the program at least four months in 2006-07. Out of these 984 children, 717 children had at least four months between the administration of their pretest and posttest and were included in this analysis. In terms of the expected level of performance on the PPVT, 573 of the 717 children (79.9 percent) made a standard score gain — above the expected performance level of 75 percent on this measure. Thus, Nevada ECE projects met the expected level of performance for this measure.

The evaluation calculated the mean gain scores on the PPVT to help interpret the impact of Nevada ECE on children’s receptive vocabulary. Table 16 shows that the 717 children made a mean gain of 8.7 standard score points on the PPVT. The results suggest that Nevada ECE projects had a positive effect on the receptive vocabulary of program children.

**Table 16.** Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test Mean Scores, n=717

Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Mean Gain
85.8	94.5	8.7

The gains of Nevada ECE children on the PPVT were compared to the gains of children reported in the national evaluation of Even Start. The national study calculated monthly standard score gains for children who were administered the PPVT. Children in the national sample made a monthly gain of 0.94 standard score points.

Nevada ECE children were in the program (between the pretest and posttest) an average of 6.2 months. Based on the gains of Nevada children reported above, Nevada ECE children made an average monthly gain of 1.40 standard score points on the PPVT. In other words, Nevada ECE children made monthly gains in receptive vocabulary more than 50 percent larger as the monthly gains reported for children in the national Even Start evaluation.

The results, however, must be interpreted with caution because of the large numbers of children learning English in the program. As mentioned previously, projects could not administer the PPVT in English when the child enrolled into the program initially for 390 of the 1,071 children (36 percent). These children simply did not have sufficient English language skills to take the test. In these instances, Nevada ECE staff would wait to administer the early childhood assessment until the teacher determined the child had sufficient language skills.

In addition to the children who simply did not have sufficient English language skills to take the test at enrollment, many other children may have had enough English language skills to take the test, but they were still learning the English language. As a result, the large gains on the PPVT are probably due to the impact of the early childhood program on the children’s developmental skills as well as on helping many children learn English.

In an attempt to learn the effect of Nevada ECE on different groups of children, the PPVT results were divided into three different groups: children learning English as a second

language who did not have sufficient English language skills to take the PPVT at enrollment,<sup>17</sup> children who had the English skills to take the test at enrollment but were still learning English as a second language,<sup>18</sup> and children who were English speaking and not learning English as a second language.<sup>19</sup>

Table 17 shows the pretest and posttest means for the three groups on the PPVT and the percent of children that made a standard score gain. The results show that children in the three groups had different pretest means, as expected. The children learning English as a second language and unable to take the PPVT at enrollment had the lowest pretest mean, followed by children learning English as a second language and able to take the PPVT at enrollment, and the English speaking children.

The results also show that two groups (children learning English as a second language and able to take the PPVT at enrollment and English speaking children) made the largest mean standard score gains and had the largest percent of children making a standard score gain. Children learning English as a second language and unable to take the PPVT at enrollment had the smallest mean standard score gain and the smallest percent of students making a standard score gain.

**Table 17.** Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test Mean Scores and Gains, n=717

<b>Group (n)</b>	<b>Pretest Mean</b>	<b>Posttest Mean</b>	<b>Mean Gain</b>	<b>Percent Who Made Gain</b>
No English Skills at Enrollment (176)	70.6	78.3	7.7	75.6%
Some English Skills at Enrollment (156)	82.3	91.3	9.0	80.1%
English Speaking (385)	94.3	103.2	8.9	81.8%

<sup>17</sup> Project staff categorized these children as learning English as a second language when they enrolled in the program and determined that these children did not have sufficient English skills to obtain a valid score on the early childhood assessment for their age level at enrollment.

<sup>18</sup> Project staff categorized these children as learning English as a second language when they enrolled in the program and determined that these children had sufficient English skills to obtain a valid score on the early childhood assessment for their age level at enrollment.

<sup>19</sup> Project staff identified children as English speaking if not learning English as a second language.

Even though there are slight differences among the three groups, the results suggest that all children benefited from the developmental activities in early childhood education program, regardless of English language skills.

*Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test (EOWPVT).* The EOWPVT is a standardized, norm-referenced test designed to assess an individual's English speaking vocabulary by asking the child to name objects, actions, and concepts depicted in illustrations. The age-range for the test is 2 years 0 months to 18 years 11 months. Like the PPVT, Nevada ECE projects administered the EOWPVT to children beginning at three years-old. The test contains 170 test items that begin relatively easy and become progressively more difficult. The starting point is staggered based on the child's age so that typically fewer than 50 items are given to any one child. The EOWPVT is widely used in early childhood and family literacy programs for evaluating progress.

As mentioned previously, projects reported that 390 of the 1,071 children (36 percent) did not have sufficient English language skills to complete the PPVT in English when the children first enrolled in Nevada ECE. In addition, many other children may have had enough English language skills to take the test, but they were still learning English as a second language.

The EOWPVT data are expressed in standard score units. EOWPVT scores have a standard score mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15. Like the PPVT, our expectation is that the EOWPVT standard scores should not change in the absence of a "treatment."

As mentioned previously, Nevada ECE projects served 1,071 children age-eligible to take the EOWPVT. Out of these 1,071 children, 984 children were in the program at least four months in 2006-07. Out of these 984 children, 665 children had at least four months between the administration of their pretest and posttest and were included in this analysis. In terms of the expected level of performance on the EOWPVT, 593 of the 665 children<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> The sample size of students who had pretest and posttest scores on the EOWPVT (n=665) is less than the sample size of students who had pretest and posttest scores on the PPVT (n=717) because it is more difficult for English Language Learners to obtain a score in the valid range on a test that measures expressive communication (EOWPVT) than receptive vocabulary (PPVT) in English. In other words, it is harder to speak a new language than understand a new language when spoken to.

(89.2 percent) made a standard score gain on the EOWPVT— above the expected performance level of 75 percent on this measure for the outcome indicator.

As with the PPVT, the mean gain scores of the 665 children on the EOWPVT were calculated to help interpret the impact of Nevada ECE on children as shown in Table 18.

**Table 18.** Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test Mean Scores, n = 665

Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Mean Gain
82.6	95.1	12.5

Children made a mean gain of 12.5 standard score points. The EOWPVT was not used in the national evaluation of Even Start, so no national comparisons are possible. Instead, an “effect size,” which researchers sometimes use to estimate the “value” of the gain, was calculated.<sup>21</sup> In this case, the effect size was medium—a standard deviation of 0.70 as compared to the effect of other social programs. This means that if Nevada ECE children were “typical” children at the time of the pretest, half of the population they were drawn from would have scored above the Nevada ECE pretest score and half would have scored below. However, by the posttest, only about 24 percent of the same population they were chosen from would have scored above the Nevada ECE children. Thus, the Nevada ECE program had a positive effect in improving the English skills of children in the program.

The results, however, must be interpreted with caution because of the large numbers of children learning English in the program. As mentioned previously, projects could not administer the EOWPVT in English when the child enrolled into the program for 390 of the 1,071 children (36 percent) age-eligible to take the test. These children simply did not have sufficient English language skills to take the test. In these instances, Nevada ECE

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<sup>21</sup> Effect size is a type of standard score. It is found by dividing the difference between experimental and control group means divided by the standard deviation of the control group. In this instance, it is found by dividing the difference between the pretest and posttest means by the standard deviation of the pretest. It would then represent, in standard score terms, the superiority of the average person in the treated group over the untreated group. To help interpret the meaning of effect sizes: 1.0 is considered large, .5 considered medium, and .2 considered small.

staff would wait to administer the early childhood assessment until the teacher determined the child had sufficient language skills.

In addition to those children who simply did not have sufficient English language skills to take the test at enrollment, many other children may have had enough English skills to take the test, but they were still learning English as a second language. As a result, the large gains on the EOWPVT are probably due to the impact of the early childhood program on the children's developmental skills as well as on helping many children learn the English language.

In an attempt to learn the effect of Nevada ECE on different groups of children, the EOWPVT results were divided into three different groups: children learning the English language who did not have the English language skills to take the EOWPVT at enrollment, children who had the English skills to take the test at enrollment but were still learning the English language, and children with English skills and not learning English as a second language.

Table 19 shows the pretest and posttest means for the three groups on the EOWPVT and the percent of children that made a standard score gain. The results show that children in the three groups had different pretest means, as expected. The children learning English as a second language and unable to take the EOWPVT at enrollment had the lowest pretest mean, followed by children learning English as a second language and able to take the EOWPVT at enrollment, and the English speaking children.

The results also show, in general, children with fewer English skills made slightly larger gains on the EOWPVT than children with better English skills. That is, children in the two groups learning the English language had a slightly larger mean gain and a slightly larger percent of children who made a standard score gain than children in the English speaking group, not learning English as a second language.

**Table 19.** Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test Mean Scores and Gains, n=665

<b>Group (n)</b>	<b>Pretest Mean</b>	<b>Posttest Mean</b>	<b>Mean Gain</b>	<b>Percent Gain</b>
No English Skills at Enrollment (130)	65.8	79.1	13.3	89.2
Some English Skills at Enrollment (155)	74.8	87.8	13.0	92.9
English Speaking (380)	91.6	103.5	11.9	87.6

However, when examining the results from the PPVT and the EOWPVT, there are only slight differences between the gains of the three groups of children. All children, regardless of English language proficiency, benefited substantially from the activities in early childhood education program whether the activities impacted the children’s developmental skills or English language skills or both.

Nevada ECE children in Nevada met the expected performance level for this outcome indicator for early childhood education.

**B. Parenting**

**Outcome Indicator 1.** *Ninety percent (90%) of all participating adults enrolled in Early Childhood Education for at least four months will meet at least one goal related to parenting skills (e.g., developmental appropriateness, positive discipline, teaching and learning, care-giving environment) within the reporting year.*

**Table 20.** Performance on Parenting Outcome Indicators

Outcome Indicator	Expected	Actual
1. Individual Parenting Goals	90%	98.7%
2. Time With Children	60%	90.7%
3. Reading With Children	60%	85.4%

*Individual Parenting Goals.* Of the 1,070 Nevada ECE adults, 979 adults were enrolled in ECE projects for at least four months. Of the 979 adults, 966 adults (98.7 percent) met at least one parenting goal. Nevada ECE projects met the expected performance level of 90 percent for this indicator.

The evaluation also determined the number of adults who met at least one parenting goal, regardless if they met the criteria of being in the program for four months. Overall, the 1,068 adults (that established goals) set a total of 3,660 goals, making 3,077 of them (84.1 percent).

**Outcome Indicator 2.** *Sixty percent (60%) of first-year Early Childhood Education parents will increase the amount of time they spend with their children daily within a reporting year.*

*Time With Children.* Nevada ECE staff asked parents to estimate the number of hours they spent with their child each day when they enrolled in the program and again at the end of the evaluation period. Increasing the amount of time parents spend with their children is an important goal in parenting education. Parent and child together (PACT) time provides an opportunity for parents to become increasingly involved in their children’s education, to increase their parenting skills, and to ultimately play a more important role in their child’s learning.

Of the 1,073 children enrolled in Nevada ECE projects, 949 children were first-year participants. A total of 867 of these children were in Nevada ECE at least four months. Pre-test and posttest data are available for 860 of the 867 children. Of the 860 parents, 780 (90.7 percent) reported spending more time with their children at the time of the posttest

or when they exited the program, 19 parents (2.2 percent) reported spending the same amount of time, and 61 (7.1 percent) reported spending less time with their children. Thus, Nevada ECE projects met the expected performance level of 60 percent.

**Outcome Indicator 3.** *Sixty percent (60%) of first-year Early Childhood Education parents will increase the amount of time they spend reading with their children within a reporting year.*

*Reading With Children.* An even more specific Nevada ECE goal is to increase the amount of time adults spend reading to or with their children. Reading together has many benefits. It provides parents with an opportunity to become more involved in their child’s education and increases the child’s readiness for school.

Nevada ECE staff asked parents to estimate the number of minutes each week they spent reading with or to their children when they enrolled in the program and again at the end of the program year. As mentioned previously, there were 867 first-year children enrolled in Nevada ECE projects who were in the program at least four months. Pretest and posttest data were available for 859 of the 867 children. Of the 859 children, 734 (85.5 percent) of their parents reported spending more time reading with them at the end of the evaluation than when they began the program, 36 parents (9.2 percent) reported spending the same amount of time reading with their children, and 89 parents (10.3 percent) reported a decrease in the amount of time. Nevada ECE projects exceeded the expected performance level of 60 percent for this outcome indicator.

Although the outcome indicator is for first-year parents, I think it is important to note the amount of time that parents of all children report spend reading with their children. Pretest and posttest data were available on 974 children enrolled in the program at least four months. Table 21 shows that ECE parents spent an average of 62 more minutes per week reading to or with their child (a gain of 128 percent) at the end of the evaluation period.

**Table 21.** Parent and Child Reading Time in Minutes, n=974

Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Mean Gain
48.2	110.1	61.9

## **Chapter IX. Testimonials**

The impact of social and educational programs is sometimes difficult to measure because of the imprecise assessment instruments in these areas. This is especially true for early childhood assessments. In order to provide a more complete picture of the impact of Nevada ECE on families, we asked two projects to collect and submit testimonials from their participating families.<sup>22</sup> We asked that, if possible, the participating adult write the testimonial. Project staff were to help only if necessary, such as with translation. While anecdotal, testimonials can be a powerful medium to convey the impact of a program on the lives of participants, which is sometimes missed by standardized assessment instruments.

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<sup>22</sup> The names of the participating family members have been changed for confidentiality.

### **Sandy—Participating Adult**

Sandy is a 26 year-old Caucasian single parent with one son in the program. Her son is four years old and attends the Washoe County School District (WCSD) Early Childhood Education program.

Sandy enrolled in the Early Childhood Education (ECE) program to better prepare her son for school. Sandy attended 12 hours of parenting education as part of the ECE Program and her son attended over 310 hours of early childhood education.

*Letter:*

*We just had our last day at Huggable's Pre-K & I really wanted to let you as the director know that we think that this program has made a tremendous impact on my son, and the others in their class. I can't remember having a teacher as great as Mrs. Barclay & Ms. Sloan! They are the best. I really wish that they could come & teach my son's Kindergarten class!*

*Huggable's Pre-K made a great 1st impression of school to our 4 & 5 yr old students! My son can't wait to go to school. He was so upset after we left & I told him to tell the school goodbye. He loves going to Pre-K.*

*Not only did your program provide us parents with the safe & secure feeling of the teachers chosen for this program, but it gave our children a head start in the school system in making friends, listening, have set rules at school & at home, and having a great learning experience.*

*I did nominate these two ladies for Excellence in Education from News 4, but I'm guessing that they don't think that Pre-K counts, or they can't do 2 teachers at one time! But they do deserve special honor for teaching such a young class!*

*I want you to know that it wasn't taken lightly that we were allowed to use your program, teachers, facility, and finances to provide our children a wonderful experience! We thank the WCSD for thinking of the young children & providing us with this program! If we ever become rich we will make sure to repay the SD for this! I hope that the Pre-K lasts forever & that many other children benefit from it, as I know at least 19 students(in our class) will!*

*Thanks again,*

*Sandy*

### **Karen—Participating Adult**

Karen is a 39 year-old Caucasian, married mother of Calvin who attends the Clark County School District Early Childhood Education (ECE) program at the Creative Kids Learning Center. Calvin is four years old.

Karen enrolled in the Early Childhood Education program to improve Calvin's chances for future success. Karen attended nine hours of parenting education as part of the ECE Program and Calvin attended over 310 hours of early childhood education.

*Letter.*

*I would just like to let you know how happy we are with our son's experience with Early Childhood at Creative Kids Learning Centers on Harris in Henderson. Ms. Mary, Ms. Annie, Ms. Tracy,, Ms. Gloria, and Ms. Linda have all been wonderful. Our son Calvin needed speech therapy and my husband and I are amazed at how far he has come. A year and a half ago, you could hardly understand a word he said. Today, you would never know he ever needed special help with his language.*

*Calvin has also learned more than I expected him to learn from a preschool program. We have two older children who both went to private preschools who did not learn as much from them as Calvin has from Ms. Mary and her great staff. They have been nurturing and very concerned about his progress. I will admit I was very apprehensive when I realized that my son had a need and would have an "IEP." I was worried about his future education in the school district system. However, I feel he has made major progress and is ready for Kindergarten. We appreciate the effort and the money spent in our behalf, for the staff, bus, books, snacks, and art projects. Calvin has wanted for nothing.*

*Again, we just wanted to thank you for all we have received and tell you how wonderful we think Ms. Mary S. and her staff have been.*





*Sincerely,*










*Karen*

## Chapter X. Conclusions and Recommendations

The 2006-07 school year is the sixth year of the Nevada Early Childhood Education Program. This evaluation report presents data on participant characteristics (e.g., age, ethnicity, family structure), project operations (e.g., staffing, intensity of services offered), ratings of the services provided by Nevada ECE projects based on program delivery indicators of effective early childhood programs, and data on child and adult outcomes.

The two overall conclusions about the 2006-07 Nevada ECE program are: Nevada ECE projects have improved the quality of their early childhood programs since 2001-02 when the Nevada ECE program began and Nevada ECE projects have positively impacted program participants in early childhood development and parenting skills. Other conclusions and key statements about the Nevada ECE program include—

-  Nevada ECE projects have implemented higher quality early childhood programs from 2001-02 to 2006-07 based on increases in the average ratings of all 17 program delivery indicators of effective early childhood programs. While the overall quality of the early childhood education programs did not increase from 2005-06 to 2006-07, the projects scored relatively high on all sub-indicators—ranging from an average of 4.2 to 5.0 on a five point scale, providing little room for improvement.
-  All Nevada ECE projects are helping to improve adult’s parenting skills and children’s language development and school readiness skills. Nevada ECE projects showed gains on all child and adult measures and exceeded the expected performance levels on all four statewide outcome indicators used for family literacy programs.
-  A growing number of children are not included in the analysis of the early childhood education outcome indicator because they do not have the English language skills to take the English language assessment at enrollment. In these cases, project staff waited to test these children until they had sufficient English skills. As a result, some children did not have the required four months between the pretest and post-test dates to be included in the analysis.
-  Nevada ECE children, including children learning the English language, are more likely to succeed in kindergarten because of their participation in the program.

-  Projects recruited many families who were in need and could benefit from the Nevada ECE program. Many families had multiple economic and social disadvantages (e.g., limited educational experience, limited skills in English). At enrollment, most Nevada ECE children started below their peers on a measure of school readiness.
-  For many families, Nevada ECE was the only structured opportunity to better prepare their children for school. Most children from Nevada ECE families did not participate in any preschool or toddler program before Nevada ECE and many Nevada ECE children did not participate in any other program while in Nevada ECE.
-  The vast majority of children would have stayed at home with their parents, grandparents, siblings, or other family member for all or part of the time if they did not participate in Nevada ECE.
-  The majority of early childhood education teachers (86 percent) meet new state requirements for teaching pre-kindergarten children. The teachers who do not meet the criteria of the new state requirements were either ‘grandfathered in’ due to their previous experience and employment in existing early childhood programs (six teachers) or were long term teacher substitutes (2 teachers). Of the qualified teachers, almost all (94 percent) have an early childhood education certificate or endorsement.
-  The average cost for providing the Nevada Early Childhood Education Program in 2006-07 was \$3,322 per child. This per child cost underestimates the total per child cost for providing an early childhood education program to children since the calculation does not include the monies from all the funding streams that support Nevada ECE project sites.
-  Projects offered services in early childhood education of sufficient intensity and duration, which if attended regularly, would positively impact Nevada ECE children.
-  Most children attended services in early childhood education at a level which could show positive benefits of the services they received.
-  Most parents attended Nevada ECE parenting education services regularly enough to benefit.
-  Projects retained 85 percent of families enrolled in Nevada ECE during 2006-07 until the end of the school year, about the same as the 84 percent who completed the program in 2005-06.

Although Nevada ECE projects have established sound early childhood education programs, Nevada ECE projects can still improve the services they provide to families. Below are five recommendations for improvement.

1. Continue to adopt, implement, and provide training to staff in high-quality, research-based early childhood programs and practices. Train all staff in Nevada Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards.
2. Examine the project's ratings on the 17 program delivery indicators of effective early childhood education programs and develop program improvement plans for indicators that received a rating of "3" or "4."
3. Monitor children's attendance in the early childhood education program and develop policies to replace those children who are unable to attend frequently with children who are more likely to attend.
4. Whenever possible, ensure early childhood classrooms have or have use of an outdoor playground with equipment for pre-kindergarten children to provide an outdoor curriculum that improves gross motor development.
5. In classes that include large numbers of children with little or no English language skills, research and implement practices that are a good fit with program and children characteristics to facilitate the learning of English.

The Nevada Department of Education can help projects meet their goals by considering five recommendations.

1. Continue to locate and provide technical assistance and training in high-quality early childhood education programs and practices, including information and training in the Nevada Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards.
2. Continue to monitor project activities to ensure high-quality early childhood education projects based on the 17 program delivery indicators for effective early childhood education programs.
3. Continue to work with projects to improve services in the 17 program delivery indicators by having projects develop improvement plans for those indicators in which projects were rated low.
4. Establish a Task Force to examine assessment instruments that would accurately measure the impact of Nevada Early Childhood Education on learning English for the growing number of children who enter the program with little or no English skills.
5. Continue to monitor data collection for the statewide evaluation.

## **APPENDIX A**

# **Senate Bill 525, Section 14— Nevada Early Childhood Education**

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**Sec. 14.**

1. The Department of Education shall transfer from the State Distributive School Account the following sums for early childhood education:  

For the Fiscal Year 2005-2006.....	\$3,032,172
For the Fiscal Year 2006-2007.....	\$3,152,479
2. The money transferred by subsection 1 must be used by the Department of Education for competitive state grants to school districts and community-based organizations for early childhood education programs.
3. To receive a grant of money pursuant to subsection 2, school districts and community-based organizations must submit a comprehensive plan to the Department of Education that includes, without limitation:
  - (a) A detailed description of the proposed early childhood education program;
  - (b) A description of the manner in which the money will be used, which must supplement and not replace the money that would otherwise be expended for early childhood education programs; and
  - (c) A plan for the longitudinal evaluation of the program to determine the effectiveness of the program on the academic achievement of children who participate in the program.
4. A school district or community-based organization that receives a grant of money shall:
  - (a) Use the money to initiate or expand prekindergarten educational programs that meet the criteria set forth in the publication of the Department of Education, entitled "August 2000 Public Support for Prekindergarten Education for School Readiness in Nevada."
  - (b) Use the money to supplement and not replace the money that the school district or community-based organization would otherwise expend for early childhood educational programs, as described in this section.
  - (c) Use the money to pay for the salaries and other items directly related to the instruction of pupils in the classroom.
  - (d) Submit a longitudinal evaluation of the program in accordance with the plan submitted pursuant to paragraph (c) of subsection 3. The money must not be used to remodel classrooms or facilities or for playground equipment.
5. The Department of Education shall develop statewide performance and outcome indicators to measure the effectiveness of the early childhood education programs for which grants of money were awarded pursuant to this section. In developing the indi-

cators, the Department shall establish minimum performance levels and increase the expected performance rates on a yearly basis, based upon the performance results of the participants. The indicators must include, without limitation:

- (a) Longitudinal measures of the developmental progress of children before and after their completion of the program;
  - (b) Longitudinal measures of parental involvement in the program before and after completion of the program; and
  - (c) The percentage of participants who drop out of the program before completion.
6. The Department of Education shall review the evaluations of the early childhood education programs submitted by each school district and community-based organization pursuant to paragraph (d) of subsection 4 and prepare a compilation of the evaluations for inclusion in the report submitted pursuant to subsection 7.
7. The Department of Education shall, on an annual basis, provide a written report to the Governor, Legislative Committee on Education and the Legislative Bureau of Educational Accountability and Program Evaluation regarding the effectiveness of the early childhood programs for which grants of money were received. The report must include, without limitation:
- (a) The number of grants awarded;
  - (b) An identification of each school district and community based organization that received a grant of money and the amount of each grant awarded;
  - (c) For each school district and community-based organization that received a grant of money:
    - (1) The number of children who received services through a program funded by the grant for each year that the program received funding from the State for early childhood programs; and
    - (2) The average per child expenditure for the program for each year the program received funding from the State for early childhood educational programs;
  - (d) A compilation of the evaluations reviewed pursuant to subsection 6 that includes, without limitation:
    - (1) A longitudinal comparison of the data showing the effectiveness of the different programs; and
    - (2) A description of the programs in this State that are the most effective;
  - (e) Based upon the performance of children in the program on established performance and outcome indicators, a description of revised performance and outcome indicators, including any revised minimum performance levels and performance rates; and

(f) Any recommendations for legislation.

8. The sums transferred by subsection 1 are available for either fiscal year. Any remaining balance of those sums must not be committed for expenditure after June 30, 2007, and must be reverted to the State Distributive School Account on or before September 21, 2007.

# APPENDIX B

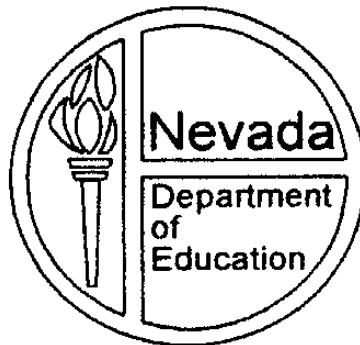
## Site Visitation Form

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# Senate Bill 525— Nevada Early Childhood Education

## Site Visitation Form

Using Nevada Early Childhood Education Program Delivery Indicators



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

Prepared by  
PACIFIC RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

April 2004

**Project Information** *(Location, number of children, intensity and duration)*

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**Early Childhood Staff** *(Number of staff [ECE and non-ECE], staff education, staff certification, staff experience in education)*

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**Parenting Program** *(Description of parenting activities to include the types of activities, duration/intensity of the program, and the curriculum used, if any)*

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<b>Early Childhood Program.</b>					
<i>The program enhances development and eases children's transition to school by providing developmentally appropriate programs for all children from the families enrolled in home or center-based literacy programs.</i>					
<b>Curricular Base.</b>	Not Descriptive			Very Descriptive	
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>1. Program has a curricular base for all age groups served by the program. Early childhood curriculum has a research base. Staff make use of curricular philosophy when planning activities for individual children.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Philosophy of curricular base for program is provided to parents and staff</li> <li>• Curricular base is well founded and grounded in known research</li> <li>• Lesson plans show evidence of curricular base in use</li> <li>• Staff have received training consistent with curricular base</li> </ul>	Notes:				
<b>Diversity.</b>	Not Descriptive			Very Descriptive	
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>2. The curriculum respects and supports individual, cultural, and linguistic diversity. The curriculum provides a balance between learning about majority and minority cultures. Curriculum accommodates children who have limited English proficiency. All of the cultures and primary languages of the children are respected in the curriculum.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning materials show evidence of individual, cultural, and linguistic diversity (e.g., books, dolls, block accessories, etc.)</li> <li>• Activities reflect awareness of individual, cultural and linguistic diversity</li> <li>• All children are welcome in the program, including children with special needs and children with cultural and linguistic diversity</li> <li>• Staff are reflective of cultural diversity of classroom</li> </ul>	Notes:				

<b>Early Childhood Program—cont.</b>					
<b>Developmental Areas.</b>	Not Descriptive			Very Descriptive	
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>3. Early childhood program balances attention to all areas of development – social, emotional, physical, cultural, cognitive, aesthetic, and language.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom learning centers and activities reflect developmentally appropriate practices</li> <li>• Lesson plans reflect awareness of need to meet children’s varying developmental needs</li> <li>• Lesson plans include all areas of development</li> </ul>	Notes:				
<b>Experiences.</b>	Not Descriptive			Very Descriptive	
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>4. Staff encourage direct, firsthand, interactive learning experiences. Staff recognize that children develop knowledge and skills through active experiences and social interactions. The real world is the subject of learning activities. Activities are integrated and interdisciplinary, building on children’s interests and knowledge.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning experiences are developmentally appropriate to age group</li> <li>• Learning experiences are a balance between active/quiet, group/individual, teacher-directed/child-directed, indoors/outdoors</li> <li>• Learning experiences are concrete, hands-on, and interactive</li> <li>• Learning experiences enable children the opportunity to make meaningful choices and provide a substantial block of time for children to explore and investigate</li> <li>• Learning experiences reflect the community in which the children live as well as the children’s own interests and existing knowledge</li> </ul>	Notes:				

<b>Early Childhood Program—cont.</b>					
<b>Environment.</b>	Not Descriptive			Very Descriptive	
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>5. The physical environment is safe, clean, well-lighted, comfortable, and age-appropriate in terms of furniture, equipment, materials, and access to bathrooms and clean-up facilities.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom is clean, orderly, and well-lighted</li> <li>• Furniture is age-appropriate and safe</li> <li>• Fire drill procedures are posted</li> <li>• Room arrangement allows children to play and interact safely</li> <li>• Outdoor environment is clean, safe and equipped with age-appropriate apparatus</li> <li>• Bathroom and clean-up facilities are clean and convenient</li> </ul>	Notes:				
<b>Learning Environment.</b>	Not Descriptive			Very Descriptive	
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>6. The learning environment reflects the children’s interests and displays varied and culturally rich materials. Classrooms contain a wide variety of materials accessible to all children, including books, math manipulatives, art supplies, dramatic play props, and science areas. The outdoor area is safe and contains appropriate equipment to encourage development.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom contains age-appropriate learning materials accessible to all children and reflective of children’s interests and cultural and individual diversity</li> <li>• Classroom contains learning centers which include language arts materials (e.g., books, puppets, flannel board stories, etc.), blocks, math manipulatives, art supplies, dramatic play props, science materials, musical instruments</li> <li>• Outdoor equipment and learning materials are safe, and age-appropriate</li> </ul>	Notes:				

Early Childhood Program—cont.					
Interaction.	Not Descriptive			Very Descriptive	
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>7. The adult-child ratio and group size allow for frequent interaction between children and adults. Adult-child ratios are consistent with licensing standards. Children have sustained relationships with primary teachers/caregivers.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group size and ratio of teachers to children are limited to enable individualized and age-appropriate programming (<i>NAEYC Guidelines</i>)</li> <li>• Three year-olds are in groups of no more than 16 children with 2 adults</li> <li>• Four year-olds are in groups of no more than 20 children with 2 adults</li> <li>• Five year-olds are in groups of no more than 25 children with 2 adults</li> <li>• Multi-age grouping and children remaining with teacher for more than one year are strategies considered to build sustained relationships</li> <li>• Teachers create a nurturing, caring environment by showing respect for children in their daily interactions (e.g., using respectful and inclusive language, getting down at children’s level, showing signs of affection and genuine caring)</li> </ul>	Notes:				

<b>Early Childhood Program—cont.</b>					
<b><i>Children with Special Needs.</i></b>	Not Descriptive			Very Descriptive	
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>8. A wide variety of learning experiences, materials and equipment, and instructional adaptations and accommodations are used for children with special needs.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adaptive materials are available and used, if needed</li> <li>• Accommodations for individual needs are incorporated into learning experiences, if needed</li> <li>• Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs) are implemented, if required</li> <li>• Therapeutic or other services are conducted within the classroom, if needed and appropriate</li> </ul>	Notes:				
<b><i>Behavior Management.</i></b>	Not Descriptive			Very Descriptive	
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>9. Staff use positive guidance techniques for discipline.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers model, encourage and reinforce the behavior that is desired</li> <li>• Teachers use redirection of children to more acceptable activities</li> <li>• Teachers set clear and realistic limits</li> <li>• Teachers intervene to enforce consequences for unacceptable, harmful behavior</li> <li>• Teachers encourage children to verbalize their feelings, wants and needs</li> </ul>	Notes:				

<b>Early Childhood Program—cont.</b>					
<i>Language.</i>	Not Descriptive			Very Descriptive	
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>10. The environment is language-rich. During contact time, children are read to regularly. Books and other reading material are abundant. Songs, rhymes, and stories are common activities. Staff demonstrate many ways to encourage children to talk about their experiences and to represent their ideas in stories and pictures.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Books and other reading materials are abundant</li> <li>• Songs, rhymes and stories are part of daily program</li> <li>• Classroom charts and signs in print are in evidence</li> <li>• Children are read to every day in various contexts (e.g., large groups, small groups, in laps)</li> <li>• Staff use various questioning techniques to get children to talk about what they are doing, thinking, and feeling</li> <li>• Materials (paper, pencils, glue, etc.,) are available for children to represent their ideas and experiences in stories and pictures</li> </ul>	Notes:				

<b>Early Childhood Program—cont.</b>					
<b><i>Problem Solving.</i></b>	Not Descriptive			Very Descriptive	
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>11. Staff encourage development of reasoning and problem-solving by providing challenging learning experiences and encouraging children’s development through skillful questioning and expanding activities.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers use open-ended questions, pose problems, make suggestions and add complexity to tasks</li> <li>• Teachers use many opportunities for children to plan, think about, reflect on, and revisit their own experiences</li> <li>• Teachers engage children in discussion and representation activities (e.g., dictating writing, drawing, painting, clay)</li> <li>• Teachers provide many opportunities for children to learn to work collaboratively with others and to learn how to solve problems cooperatively</li> </ul>	Notes:				
<b><i>Child-Centered.</i></b>	Not Descriptive			Very Descriptive	
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>12. Program staff provide many opportunities for child-selected learning and children are aware of basic routines. Children’s play is respected by staff as legitimate learning time.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily schedule is posted for all to read</li> <li>• Daily schedule includes large time block for free choice/child-selected activities</li> <li>• Children are aware of routines and participate in activities which reinforce daily schedule (e.g., use of calendar, weather chart, group discussion of day’s activities, etc.)</li> </ul>	Notes:				

<b>Early Childhood Program—cont.</b>					
<i>Developmental Approach.</i>	Not Descriptive			Very Descriptive	
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>13. Program staff have appropriate expectations for children and provide activities based on their individual developmental needs. Staff provide opportunities for all children to succeed.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program staff have been trained in early childhood growth and development and diversity</li> <li>• Learning activities are age appropriate and reflect both group needs and individual needs</li> <li>• Staff have appropriate expectations for children from different age groups</li> <li>• Classroom environment is one of positive respect and concern for each child</li> </ul>	Notes:				

<b>Early Childhood Program—cont.</b>					
<b>Initial Assessment.</b>	Not Descriptive			Very Descriptive	
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>14. Staff use a variety of formal and informal assessment techniques to measure domains of learning and development. The results are used in guiding curriculum development, teaching to meet the development needs of children, and assisting in determining if further early intervention measures are necessary.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children’s initial assessments are available for review (e.g., PLS-4, Brigance, DDST, teacher observations, etc.)</li> <li>• Procedures for further assessment of potential delays, if indicated, are established and followed (e.g., use of Child Find, etc.)</li> <li>• Decisions that have a major impact on an individual child are based on multiple sources of information, including data from parents, teachers and specialists</li> <li>• Staff discuss and use results from initial assessments to plan individual and group activities</li> </ul>	Notes:				
<b>Measure Progress.</b>	Not Descriptive			Very Descriptive	
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>15. Staff use a variety of formal and informal assessment procedures on an ongoing basis, including observation, performance assessment, work samples, and interviews so that the results reflect children’s progress.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers keep files with children’s work samples, performance assessments, etc.</li> <li>• Children’s ongoing assessments are available for review (e.g., Teacher observations, work samples, interviews, performance assessments, etc.)</li> <li>• On-going assessments are planned and purposeful</li> <li>• Staff discuss and use results from on-going assessments to plan individual and group activities</li> </ul>	Notes:				

<b>Early Childhood Program—cont.</b>					
<b>Parents.</b>	Not Descriptive			Very Descriptive	
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>16. Parents are active partners in their child’s education process and have the opportunity to provide input in their child’s readiness for participation in various activities and their progress.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher’s keep Parent Involvement Form which records activities parents are involved in and duration/intensity</li> <li>• Teachers communicate (verbal or written) to parents they are always welcome to visit program</li> <li>• Parents are encouraged to participate in the program in a wide variety of ways (e.g., attending parent workshops, participating in home visits, volunteering in the classroom, attending parent conferences, etc)</li> <li>• Teachers keep record of parent activities at school and of parent/child activities together at home</li> <li>• Teachers create opportunities for appropriate parent and child interactions during the program</li> </ul>	Notes:				

<b>Early Childhood Program—cont.</b>					
<b>Reading Readiness.</b>	Not Descriptive			Very Descriptive	
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>17. Parents and caregivers regularly read with children, encouraging them to ask questions and to become actively involved in the reading experience. Shared literacy activities also include discussions around books, letters, and word sounds.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers keep records of parent involvement with their child in reading and literacy activities at home (e.g., goals can include reading with child at least 30 minutes a day, taking child to public library at least two times a month, establishing a weekly time where all family members read for 60 minutes, etc.)</li> <li>• Teachers keep records of parents frequency of reading at home with child</li> <li>• Teachers show parents how to read to and with their children</li> </ul>	Notes:				

# **APPENDIX C**

## **Project Ratings on ECE Program Delivery Indicators, 2006-07**

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**Table 22.** Project Ratings on Early Childhood Education Indicators, (1=low, 5=high)

Early Childhood Education Indicators	Carson City	Churchill	Douglas	Clark			Great Basin
				C.O.W.	Lone Mt.	Mc-Williams	
Curricular Base	5	4	4	5	5	5	5
Diversity	5	5	4	5	5	5	5
Developmental areas	5	3	2	5	5	5	5
Experiences	5	3	2	5	4	5	5
Environment	5	4	5	3	5	4	5
Learning Environment	5	4	5	4	5	4	5
Interaction	4	4	4	4	5	5	5
Children with Special Needs	5	5	5	4	5	4	5
Behavior Management	5	3	5	4	5	5	5
Language	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Problem Solving	5	4	4	5	4	5	4
Child Centered	5	3	3	5	5	5	5
Developmental Approach	5	3	3	4	5	5	5
Initial Assessment	5	5	4	4	4	5	5
Measure Progress	5	4	4	4	5	5	5
Parents	5	5	5	4	5	5	5
Reading Readiness	5	5	4	5	5	5	5

**Table 22.** Project Ratings on Early Childhood Education Indicators, (1=low, 5=high)

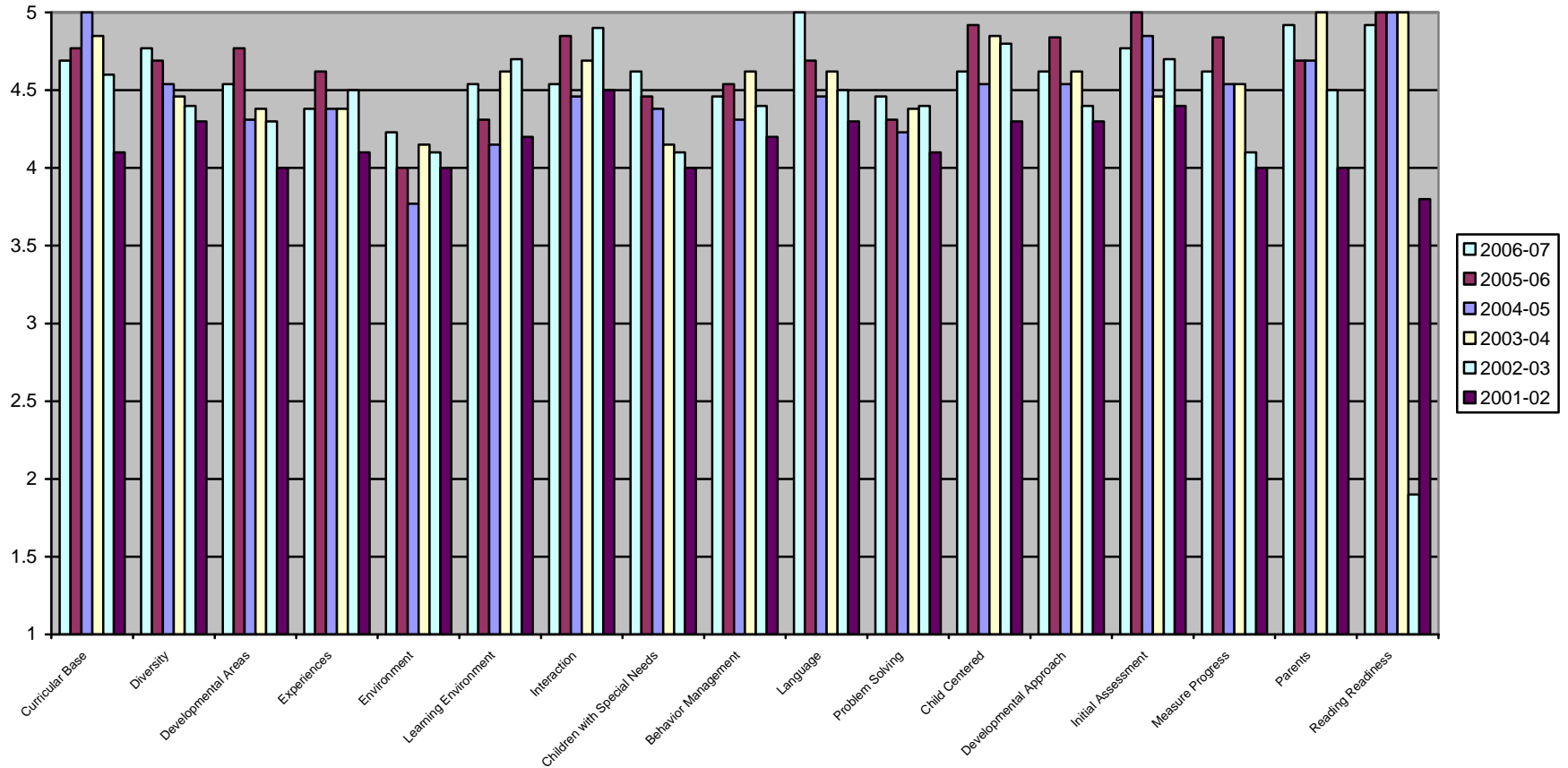
Early Childhood Education Indicators	Humboldt	Pershing	Statewide COW	White Pine	Washoe		Average Rating
					Veterans	Sparks High	
Curricular Base	5	5	5	5	3	5	4.69
Diversity	4	5	5	4	5	5	4.77
Developmental areas	5	5	5	5	4	5	4.54
Experiences	5	5	5	5	3	5	4.38
Environment	5	4	3	4	3	5	4.23
Learning Environment	5	4	5	4	4	5	4.54
Interaction	4	5	4	5	5	5	4.54
Children with Special Needs	3	5	4	5	5	5	4.62
Behavior Management	5	5	3	5	4	4	4.46
Language	5	5	5	5	5	5	5.00
Problem Solving	5	5	5	4	4	4	4.46
Child Centered	5	5	5	4	5	5	4.62
Developmental Approach	5	5	5	5	5	5	4.62
Initial Assessment	5	5	5	5	5	5	4.77
Measure Progress	5	5	5	5	4	4	4.62
Parents	5	5	5	5	5	5	4.92
Reading Readiness	5	5	5	5	5	5	4.92

## **APPENDIX D**

# **Summary Ratings on ECE Program Delivery Indicators, 2001-02 through 2006-07**

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**Figure 16.** Nevada ECE Program Ratings on ECE Indicators (1=low, 5=high)<sup>23</sup>



<sup>23</sup> The evaluator visited 10 project sites in 2001-02, 14 project sites in 2002-03, and 13 project sites in the last three years: 2003-04, 2004-05, and 2005-06. Seven of the project sites are the same for all five years; 11 project sites are the same for 2002-03, 2003-04, 2004-05, and 2005-06; and 12 project sites are the same for 2003-04, 2004-05, and 2005-06; and 12 project sites are the same for 2004-05, 2005-06, and 2006-07.

# **APPENDIX E**

## **Additional Information on Nevada Early Childhood Education Program Outcome Indicators**

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## A. Early Childhood Education

### *Improvement in Ability to Read on Grade Level or Reading Readiness.*

**Outcome Indicator 1.** *Seventy percent (70%) of Early Childhood Education children with a minimum of four months of participation will show improvement in auditory comprehension and expressive communication—*

- ♦ *as measured by a standard score increase on the Preschool Language Scale-4 (PLS-4) for children up to three years old.*
- ♦ *as measured by a standard score increase on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III and the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test-2000 Edition for children from three to five years old.*

*Performance Level.* The original standard for this indicator was 70 percent. The standard was raised to “75 percent” in 2006-07 based on data from 2002-03 through 2005-06. During the four years, 74 percent to 86 percent of Nevada ECE made a standard score gain on one of the three early childhood measures of reading and reading ability.

*Project Data Collection.* Early Childhood Education projects are expected to administer the PLS-4 to children receiving Early Childhood Education services from birth through three years old or the PPVT and the EOWPVT to children from three to five years old when they enter the program and again at the end of the program year, or when the children exit the program.

*Project Reporting.* Nevada ECE projects are expected to report this information in the web-based Nevada ECE Database.

## B. Parenting Education

### *Parenting Skills.*

**Indicator 1.** *Ninety percent (90%) of participating adults enrolled in Early Childhood Education for at least four months will meet at least one goal related to parenting skills (e.g., developmental appropriateness, positive discipline, teaching and learning, caregiving environment) within the reporting year.*

*Performance Level.* Data have not been collected on this performance indicator previously nor are parenting goals established consistently across projects to estimate a reasonable performance level. In the absence of evaluation data, the standard of “90 percent” was determined through discussion with experienced Even Start project directors who thought the expectation was reasonable.

*Project Data Collection.* Early Childhood Education projects are expected to help parents establish annual goals for themselves in parenting (e.g., attending monthly

parenting workshops, learning positive discipline techniques, attending six Family Storyteller workshops) and criteria for determining whether the goals are met.

*Project Reporting.* Nevada ECE projects are expected to report this information in the web-based Nevada ECE Database.

### ***Parent and Child Together Time (PACT).***

***Indicator 2.*** Sixty percent (60%) of first-year Early Childhood Education parents will increase the amount of time they spend with their children weekly within a reporting year.

*Performance Level.* The standard of “60 percent” is based on data for state funded Even Start parents during 1999-2000. Sixty-two percent of first-year Even Start adults increased the amount of time they spent with their children weekly from when they entered the program to the end of the reporting year, or when they exited the program.

*Project Data Collection.* Early Childhood Education projects are expected to administer a survey when a family enters the program and again at the end of the program year or when the family exits the program. Local project staff need only administer a posttest survey to parents who have been in the program a minimum of four months.

*Project Reporting.* Nevada ECE projects are expected to report this information in the web-based Nevada ECE Database.

### ***Parents and Children Reading Together.***

***Indicator 3.*** Fifty percent (50%) of first-year Early Childhood Education parents will increase the amount of time they spend reading with their children within a reporting year.

*Performance Level.* The original standard for this indicator was 30 percent. The standard was raised to “50 percent” in 2005-06 based on data from Nevada ECE Projects from 2001-02 to 2004-05. The standard was raised again in 2006-07 to “60 percent” based on data from 2002-03 through 2005-06. During the four years, 56 percent to 72 percent of Nevada ECE first-year adults increased the amount of time they spent reading to or with their children from when they entered the program to the end of the reporting year, or when they exited the program.

*Project Data Collection.* Early Childhood Education projects are expected to administer a survey when a family enters the program and again at the end of the program year, or when the family exits the program. Project need only administer a posttest survey to parents who have been in the program at least four months.

*Project Reporting.* Nevada ECE projects are expected to report this information in the web-based Nevada ECE Database.