

ECBG

2025-2026

Evaluation Report



WICHITA STATE
UNIVERSITY

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INSTITUTE
CENTER FOR APPLIED RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

ECBG by the Numbers

25 grantees throughout the state

7,242 children served

69 counties served by ECBG programs

65% qualified for free/reduced priced lunch

51% with an indicator of developmental delay

87% with at least one risk factor

42% with three or more risk factors



Outcomes by the Numbers

Positive parenting remained at a **10** year high

3% decrease in parental stress

Full-time care was similar to last year

Improved to **72%** high-quality classrooms

42% on track in early communication

68% on track in language comprehension

79% on track in early numeracy



How do ECBG programs focus on fulfilling the vision of the Blueprint for Early Childhood?



Healthy Development

Developmental Screening

- Promotes prevention and early intervention

Early Life Skills

- Attention
- Emotion regulation
- Cooperation



Strong Families

Home Visiting, Parent Education, & Case Management

- Promotes positive parenting
- Reduces parenting stress
- Connects families to resources
- Improves child outcomes



Early Learning

Quality Care & Education

- Quality matters
- Phonemic awareness is critical
- Fosters positive adult-child interactions
- Impacts future academics

Range of ECBG Services

CAREGIVERS Home Visits Case Management Parent Education



PRENATAL

Home Visits



0 – 3 YEARS OLD

Home Visits

Child Care

Part C Services

Classroom Infrastructure

Mental & Behavioral Health

Dev. Screening & Referral



3 – 5 YEARS OLD

Home Visits

PreK

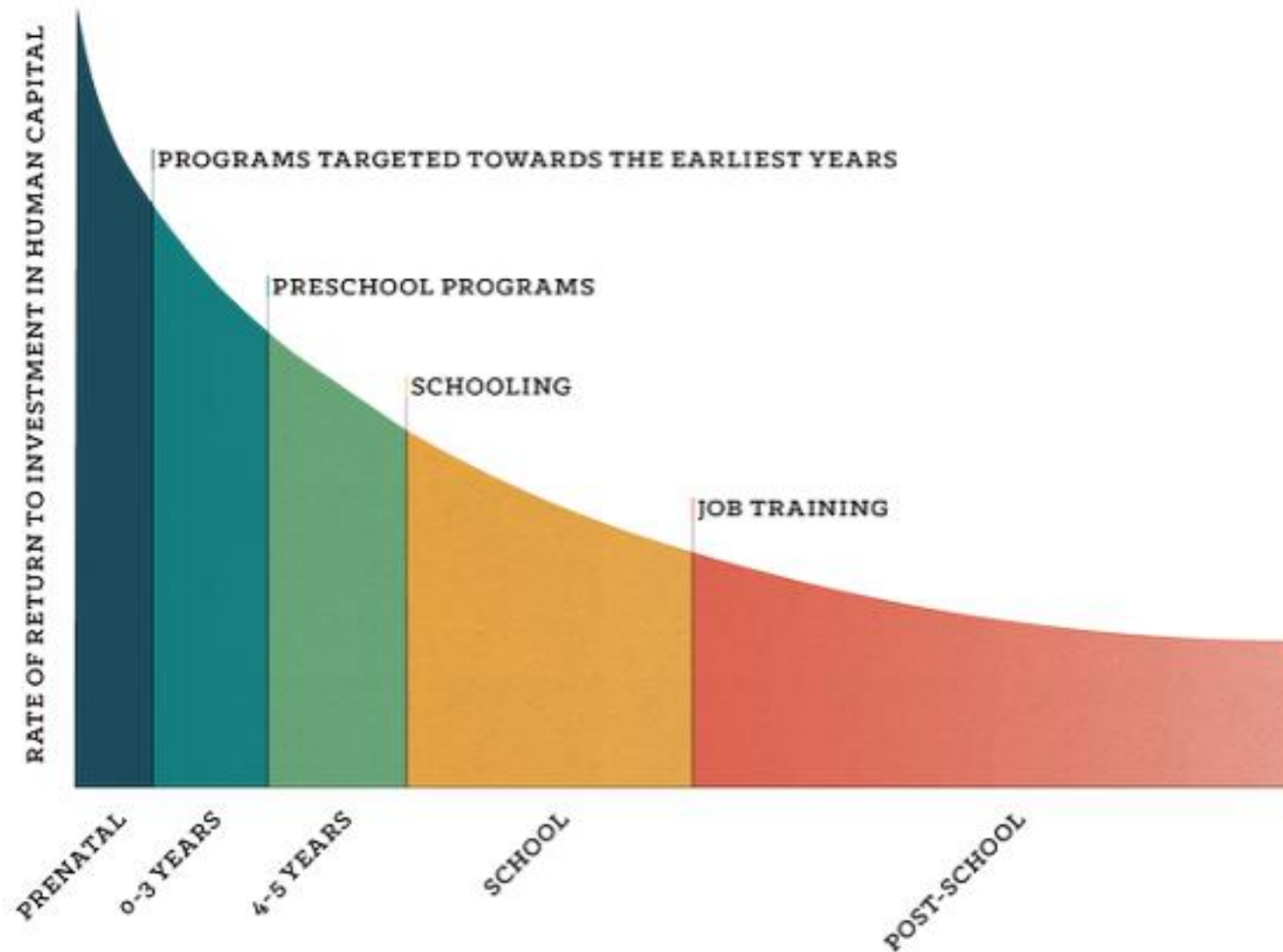
Classroom Infrastructure

Literacy Activities

Mental & Behavioral Health

Dev. Screening & Referral

Schools, Skills, and Synapses by James Heckman



ECBG Risk Factors

This report contains descriptive information for children and families served during the 2025-2026 grant year.

- Poverty
- Single parent families
- Out-of-home placement
- Teen parents
- At least one parent had less than a high school education
- Limited English proficiency
- Lower-than-expected developmental progress
- Caregiver was a migrant worker
- Families without stable housing
- Children lacking health insurance

Early Childhood Block Grant

Counties Served by ECBG Programs



CHILDREN

7,242

Children Served

Risk Factors

4% Foster care/out of home care

4% Children without health insurance

18% Children whose first language was not English

51% Indicator of developmental delay



FAMILIES

6,209

Families Served

Risk Factors

1%	Migrant families
4%	Teen parents
5%	Without stable housing
10%	< than a high school education
20%	Limited English Proficiency
44%	Earned < \$40,000 annually
48%	Unmarried



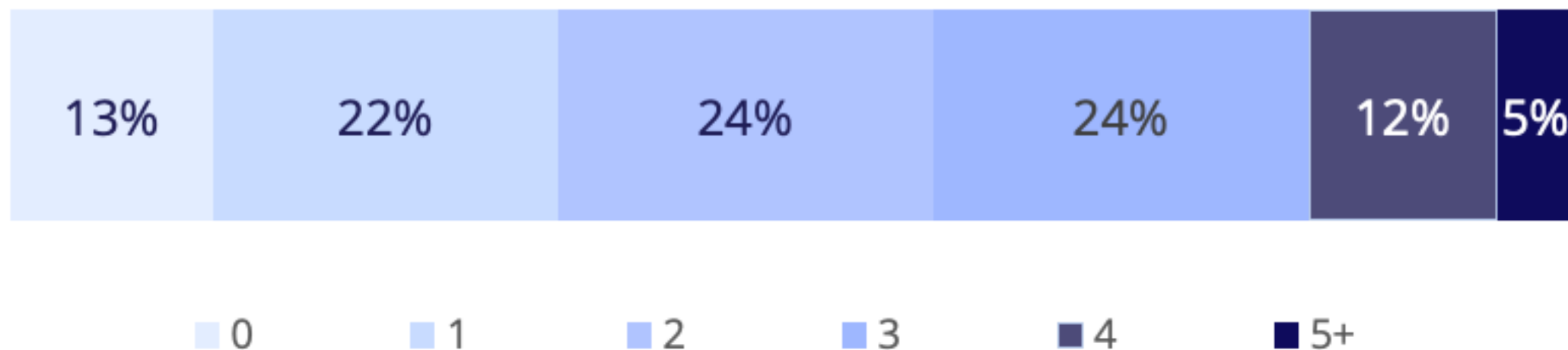
65%

At or below 185% of the federal poverty line

CHILDREN & FAMILIES

While the presence of risk does not inevitably determine whether a child will fall behind, the existence of risk is powerful enough to create barriers. The likelihood of delays is proportionate to the number of risk factors a child experiences; the more risk factors experienced in early childhood, the less likely a child is to be ready for kindergarten.¹

Total Risk Factors



PROCESS

The design and implementation
of a statewide evaluation in Kansas



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Why common measures?



Measures were selected to assess common goals in programs of the same type to:

- Build the capacity of grantees to collect and utilize data to inform their programs and services for continuous quality improvement
- Have common metrics to discuss outcomes for similar programs
- Provide a statewide snapshot of similar programs
- Assess the impact of early childhood interventions across multiple grantees and programs
- Provide policy makers with important information regarding early childhood program outcomes in Kansas

How are programs similar?



Developed a Common Language

Categorized Similar Programs and Connected Similar Goals

Mapped Programs onto the Blueprint for Early Childhood

Assigned Programs to a Program Type

What are the criteria for measures?

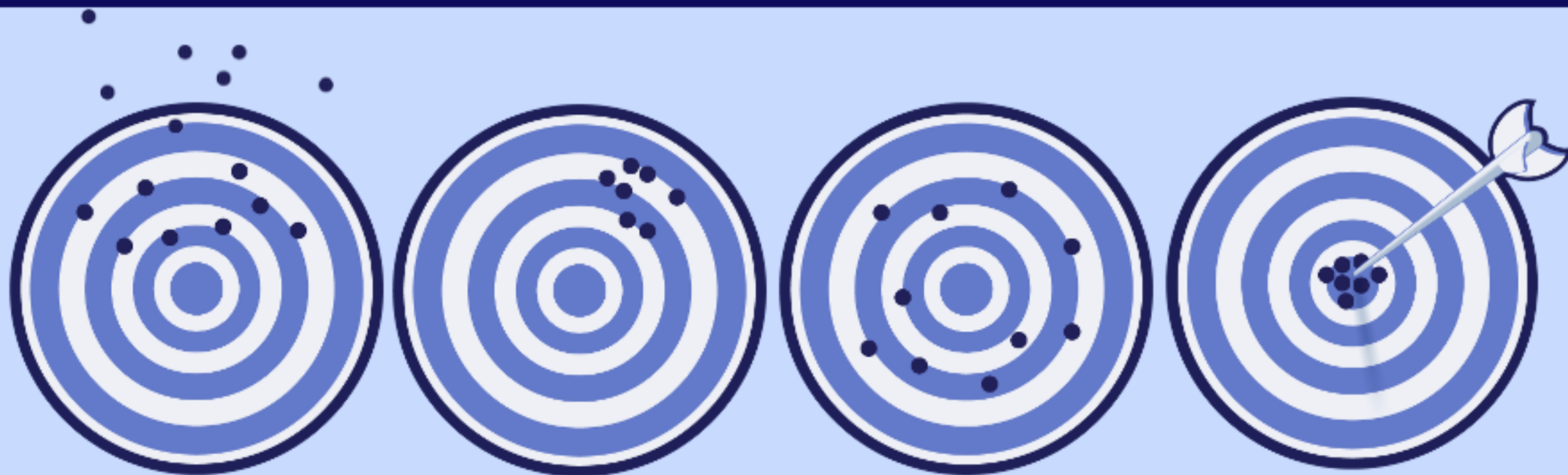
Measures are required to have:

- Established Reliability
- Established Validity
- Sensitivity to Change

Measures must also have empirically derived benchmarks.



Understanding Reliability and Validity



Not Reliable
Not Valid

Reliable
Not Valid

Valid
Not Reliable

Both Reliable
and Valid

How were the measures implemented?

- Measures were assigned based on program type.
- The cost and intensity of the program were considered in identifying the most appropriate measures.
- Recommended measures were presented to and endorsed by the Cabinet in February 2014.
- A Pilot Phase was implemented in 2014 to introduce the measures and to assist with implementation.
- Measures were then field tested from Fall 2014 to Spring 2015, with data presented to the Cabinet in August 2015.



Ongoing Review of Measures



- Evaluation of the measures as evidence of desired outcomes is an ongoing process.
- Alternative measures that meet the established criteria are regularly reviewed.
- This ongoing work of scanning and reviewing measures allows us to pivot when a new measure is needed (for example, during COVID) or when a better measure is available.

HEALTHY Development

2025-2026



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WHY HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT?

A key component of healthy development is early life skills. Early life skills, which are based on executive functioning, are a more stable predictor of outcomes through 5th grade than even academic assessment scores.^{8,9}



"Children who receive high-quality early childhood supports have significantly better life outcomes and pass the positive effects on to their children."

— James Heckman et al.^{6,7}

Executive functioning supports:

- Self-management
- Engaged learning
- Social competency
- Working memory ^{9,12,13,14,15,16}

Early identification and intervention promote:

- Achievement of future developmental milestones
- School readiness ^{10,11}

HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Counties Impacted



HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT



EARLY & FREQUENT SCREENING



EARLY INTERVENTION



BETTER OUTCOMES & LOWER COST



HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT

Programs use screenings to:



Educate parents on developmental stages



Address and inform parent and teacher concerns



Promote activities and interactions to encourage skill development

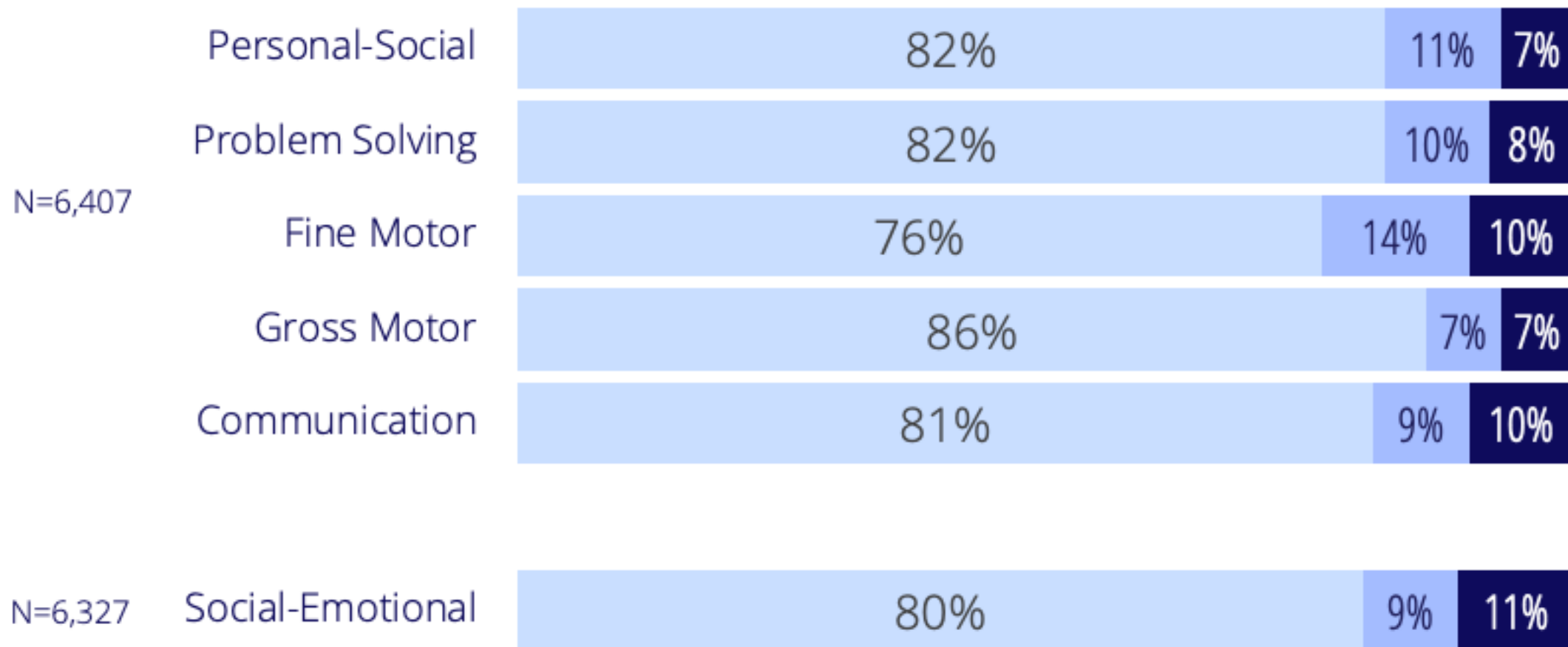


Make referrals to additional services as needed

SCREENING FOR HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT



Met Benchmarks Monitoring At Risk



HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

The measure used to evaluate early life skills (DECA) is associated with resiliency and protective factors such as Attachment/Relationships, Self-Regulation, and Initiative.¹⁷



Why is a measure of early life skills so important?

Understanding and regulating feelings are important skills that contribute to a child's ability to effectively interact and focus in the classroom. Competence in early life skills provides a strong foundation for school readiness.^{18,19,20,21}

HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES



Early life skills improved for at-risk children after participating in ECBG programs.



Of the 221 children
who were at risk at
Time 1,
48%
were proficient at
Time 2 after
participating in ECBG
programs.

STRONG Families

2025-2026



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WHY POSITIVE PARENTING?

Evidence-based parent education programs have a positive impact on parents' engagement with their children and improve child outcomes, even years after participation.^{22,23,34,25}



Impacts continue for years following the intervention.^{22,23,34,25}

Parents can choose to participate in family services.

Home visiting programs improve:

- Positive parenting skills
- Early development and health for children
- School readiness
- Behavioral problems^{26,27,28,29,30,31,32,33,34}

Parent education programs impact:

- Overall parental stress
- Disruptive child behavior
- Parent perception of parenting^{22,23,34,25}

STRONG FAMILIES



Home Visiting



Parent Education

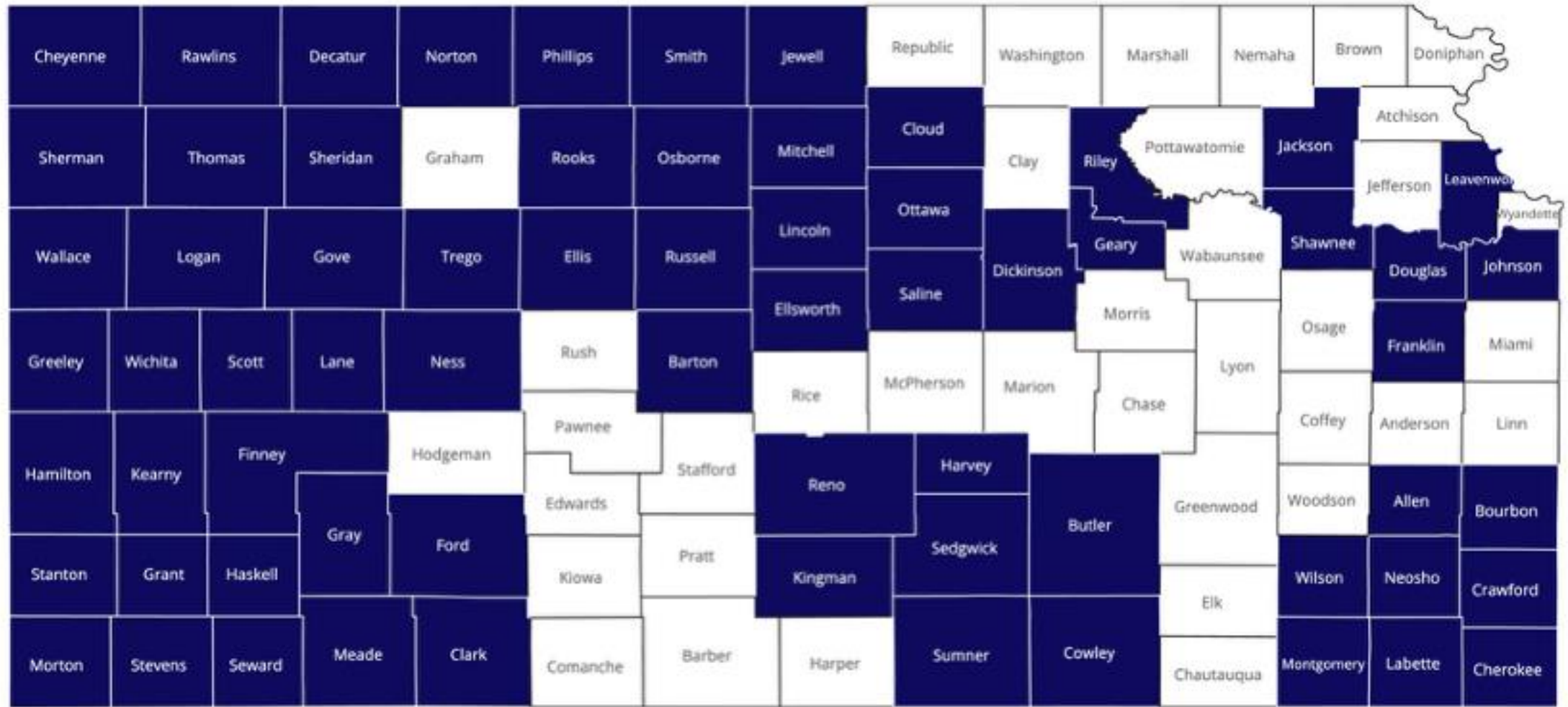


Case Management

- Family programs meet a variety of needs, vary in intensity as needed, and are offered based on the needs of the community.
- Programs can ameliorate the impacts of trauma and toxic stress. ^{22,23,34,25}
- They also positively impact communication, life skills, brain development, and school readiness for children. ^{26,27,28,29,30,31,32,33,34}

STRONG FAMILIES PROGRAMS

Counties Impacted



POSITIVE PARENTING OUTCOMES

A strengths-based observation of positive parenting and parent-child interactions is used as a measure of responsive parenting. Observations of responsive parenting skills are essential to capture an unbiased assessment of the parent-child interactions predictive of strong long-term outcomes for children.²⁹

Observers complete a training and certification process and recertify annually.

Why is positive parenting so important?

Parental encouragement and the ability to set consistent age-appropriate limits and consequences promote social skills and cognitive development.^{30,31,32,33}

Play-based
measure of parental:

- Sensitivity
- Support
- Involvement
- Adaptability
- Engagement
- Limit Setting
- Encouragement
- Promoting Exploration ³⁴

POSITIVE PARENTING OUTCOMES

Participation in parent education contributed to observed increases in positive parenting in all areas.



Time 1

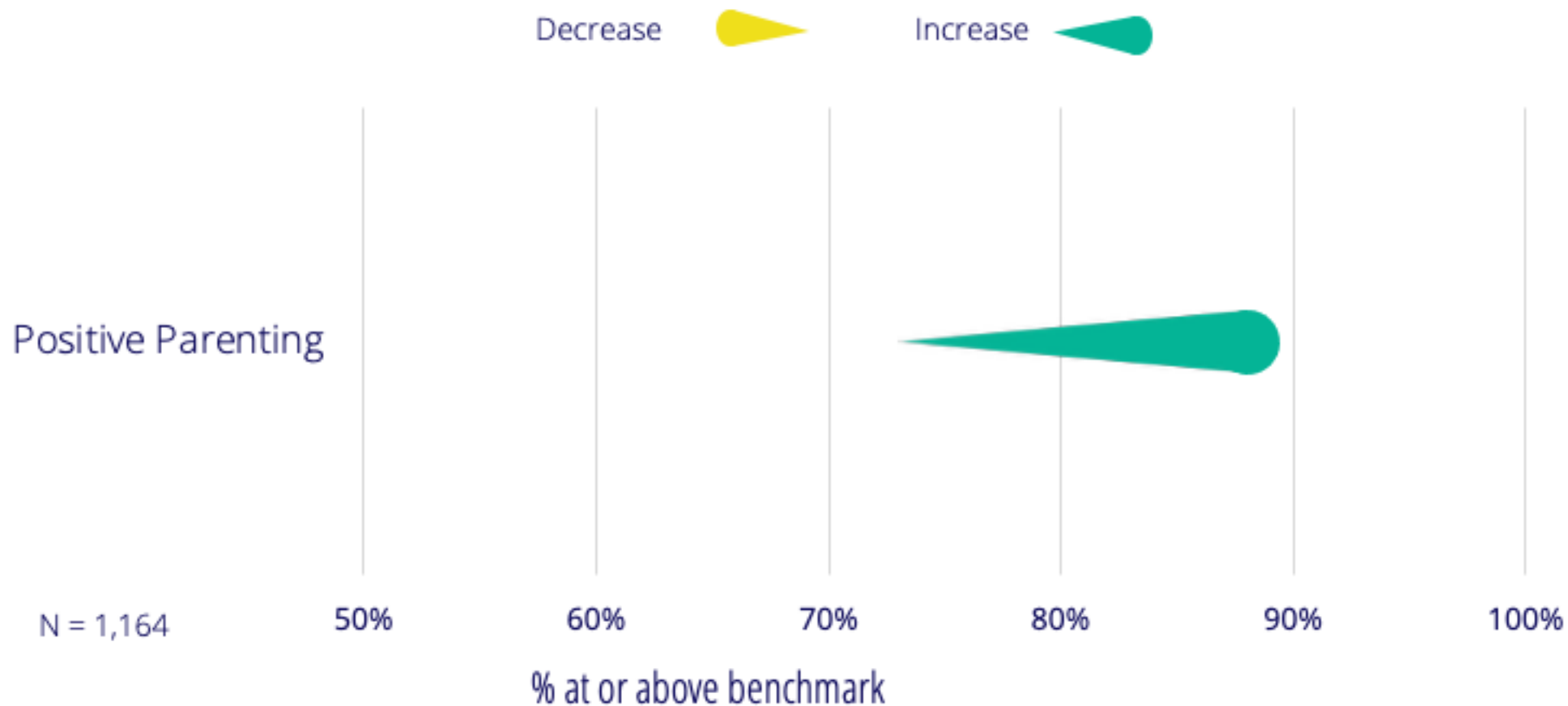
Time 2

Change in
skills
(range 1-5)



POSITIVE PARENTING OUTCOMES

Consistent with last year, positive parenting was at its highest rate in 10 years. There was a 15% increase in parents who engaged in positive parenting.



POSITIVE PARENTING OUTCOMES



Of the 314 caregivers at risk at Time 1,
65%
demonstrated positive parenting at Time 2 after participation in ECBG Parent Education.

Parent education promotes supportive and nurturing parent-child relationships.
Evidence-based parent education programs promote positive parenting and reduce developmental risk.^{35,36}

EARLY Learning

2025-2026



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WHY EARLY LEARNING?



“Access to high-quality early childhood education can break the cycle of poverty across generations.” ^{6,7}



13% return on investment ³⁷

Significantly better outcomes for:

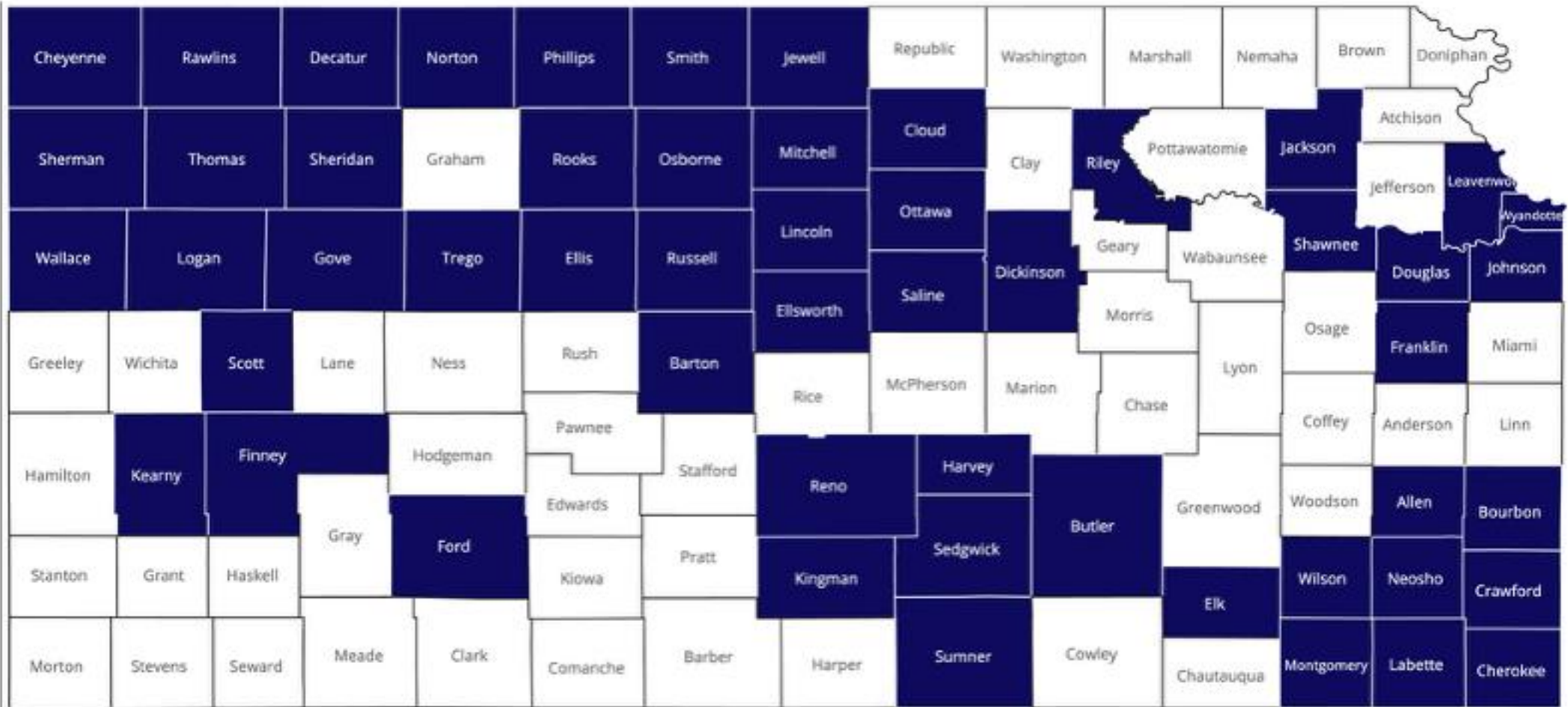
- Employment
- Education
- Social behaviors
- Health ^{6,7,12,38,39,40,41}

Improved second-generation effects:

- Lower school suspension and higher high school completion
- Higher full-time employment
- Lower crime ^{6,7,39}

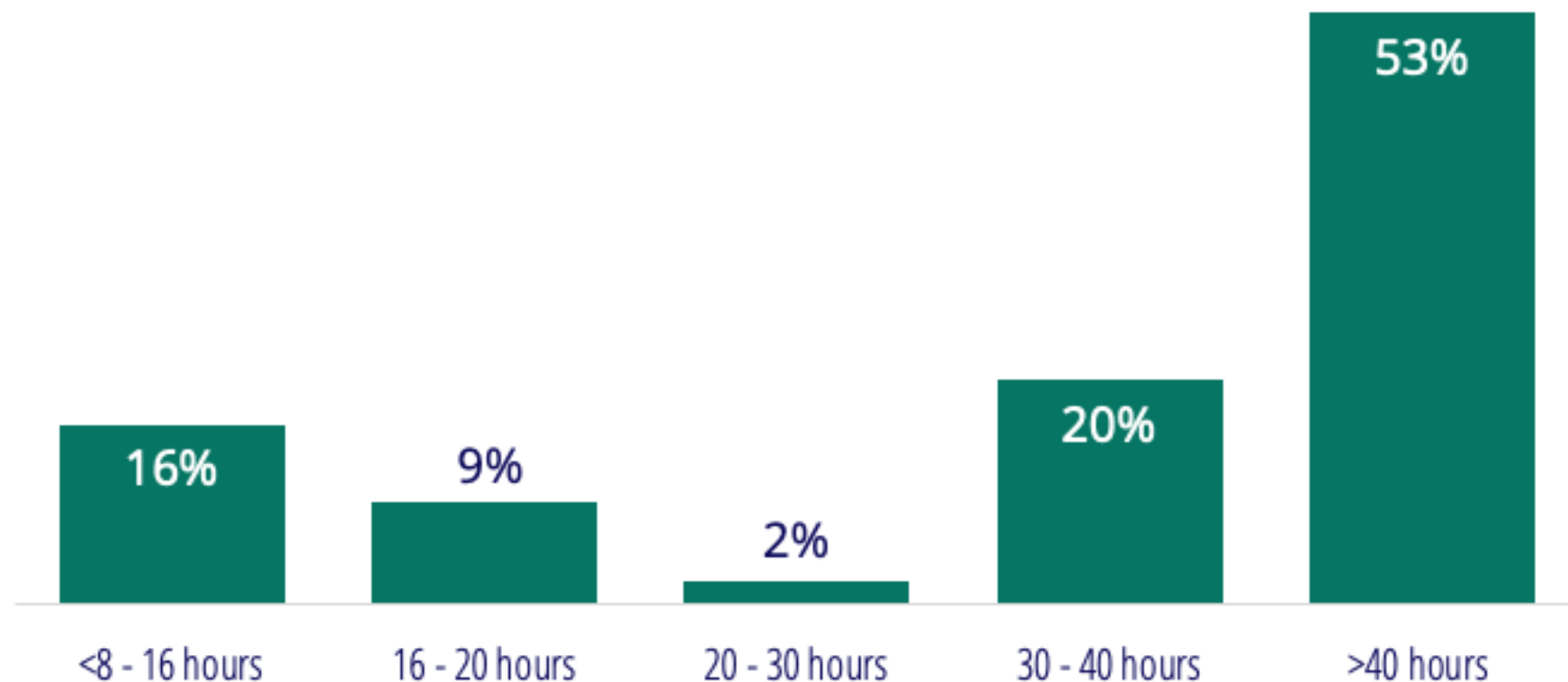
EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS

Counties Impacted



EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS

The number of hours per week varied in Early Learning and Child Care programs.



EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS

CLASS – Classroom Quality

Why are classroom interactions so important?

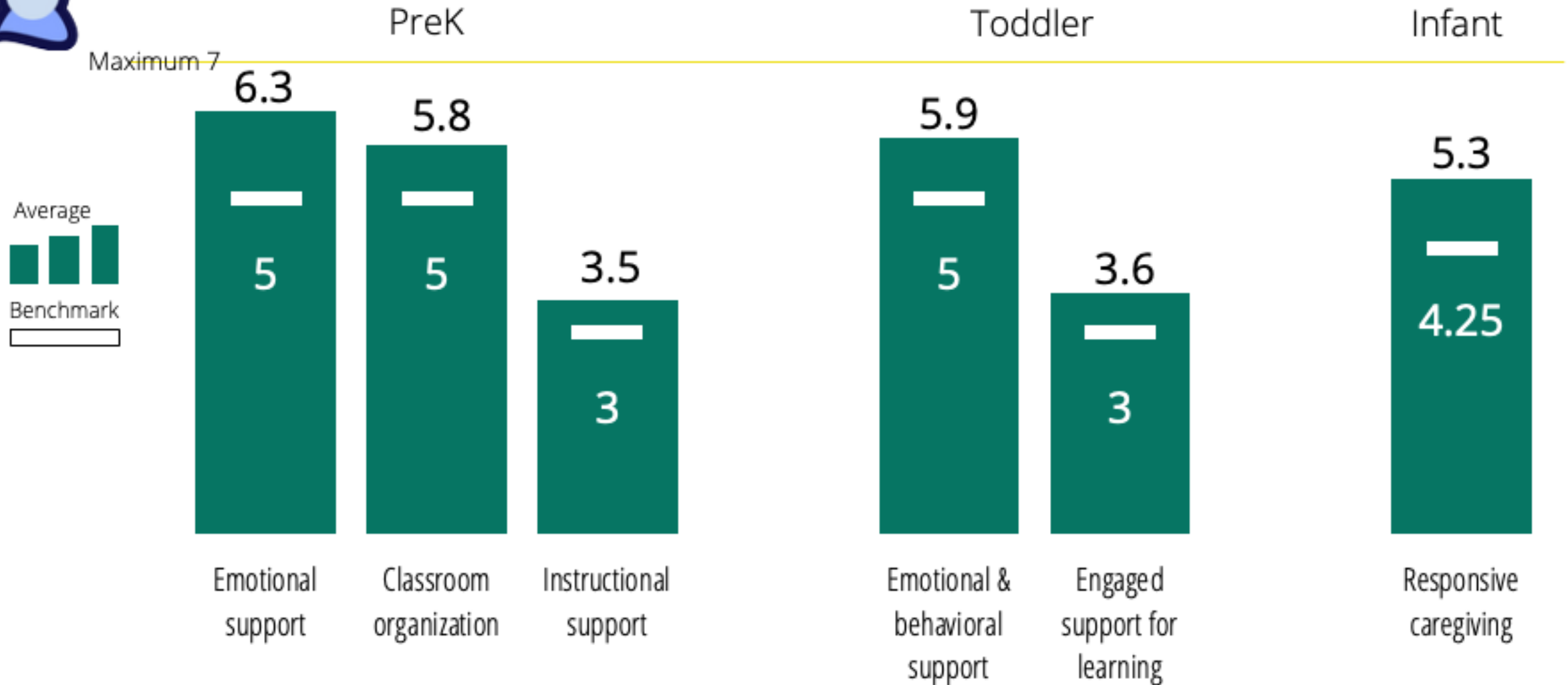
Observations that measure high-quality, responsive teacher-child interactions/relationships are most predictive of positive change in academic outcomes and social skills.^{42,43}

Children who experience high-quality relationships and care from infancy through PreK have higher cognitive, language, pre-academic, and social skills upon school entry.^{44,45}

Quality early care is defined as positive, responsive serve and return relationships with adults.⁴⁶

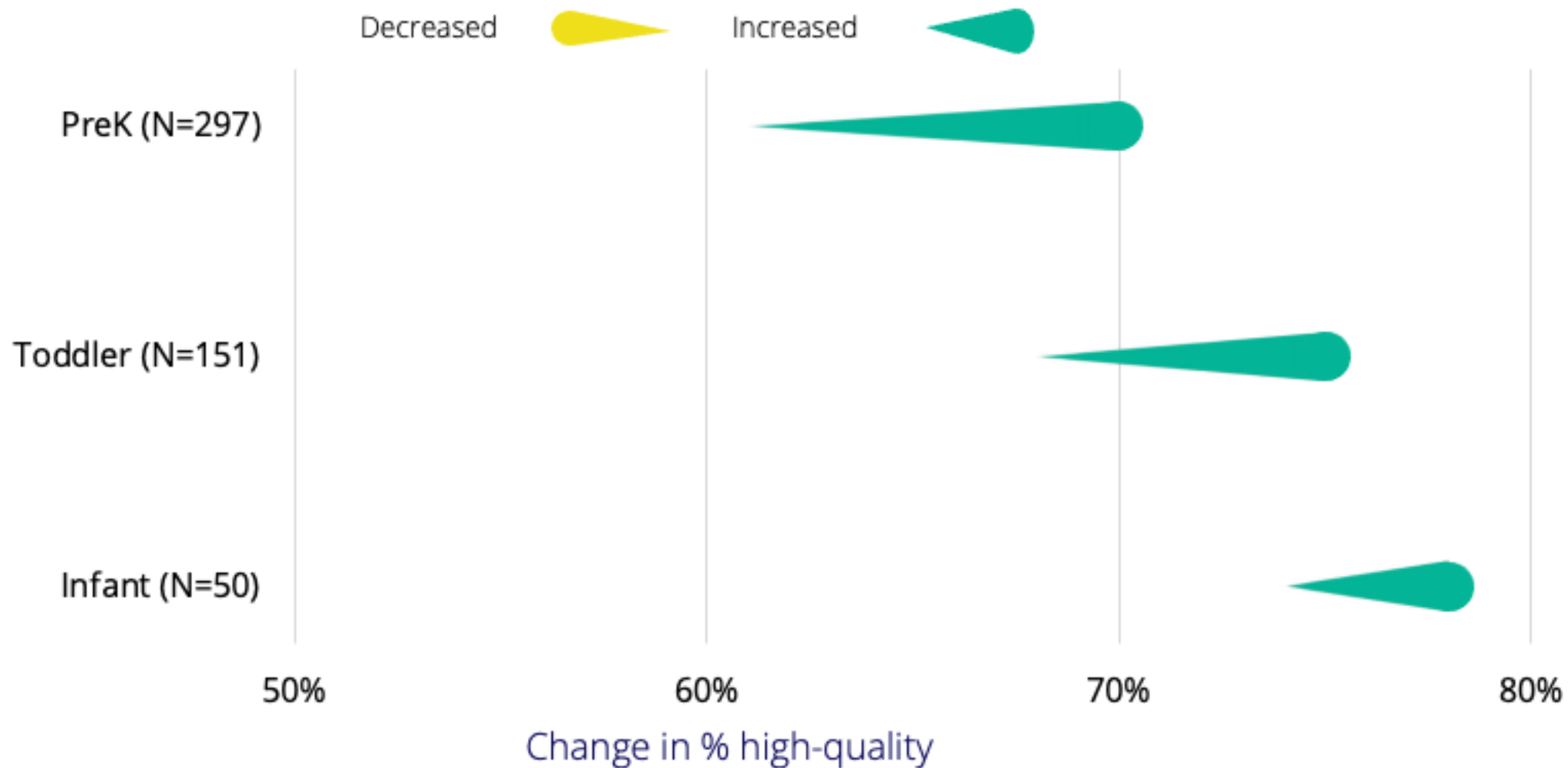
EARLY LEARNING OUTCOMES

Classroom quality averages continue to be well above benchmarks for High Quality on all CLASS indicators.



EARLY LEARNING OUTCOMES

Observed classroom quality improved to reach 72% high-quality classrooms.



EARLY LEARNING OUTCOMES

3- and 4-Year-Old Literacy and Numeracy

Why are measures of early literacy and numeracy important?

- The ability to derive meaning and draw inferences from written and spoken language predicts literacy and reading outcomes.⁴⁷
- Larger vocabularies at school entry predict stronger acquisition of new words and language comprehension.⁴⁸
- The ability to detect, identify, and manipulate individual sounds in spoken language is key to learning to read.⁴⁹
- Strong phonological awareness in PreK predicts third grade reading proficiency.^{49,50}
- Key early literacy skills develop at different points for 3- and 4-year-olds. Instruction and progress monitoring in individual skills is necessary to identify children who need additional support.
- Multiple longitudinal studies have demonstrated preschool numeracy skills are strongly associated with future academic success.^{51,52}

EARLY LITERACY OUTCOMES

4-Year-Old Literacy

Why is a measure of language comprehension important?

- Language comprehension predicts literacy and reading outcomes.⁵⁶
- This refers to the ability to derive meaning and draw inferences from written and spoken language.⁵⁶
- Larger vocabularies at school entry predict stronger acquisition of new words and language comprehension.⁵⁷

myIGDIs Language Comprehension focuses on:

Picture Naming



Which One Doesn't Belong ⁵⁸



EARLY LITERACY OUTCOMES

4-Year-Old Literacy

Why is a measure of phonological awareness important?

- The ability to detect, identify, and manipulate individual sounds in spoken language is key to learning to read.⁵⁹
- Strong phonological awareness in PreK predicts third-grade reading proficiency.^{59,60}
- It is vital for teacher-child interactions in small group instruction to support these emergent skills and provide frequent opportunities to practice.⁶¹

myIGDIs Phonological Awareness focuses on:

Rhyming



Alliteration



Sound Identification ⁵⁸

U Z B

4-YEAR-OLD LITERACY OUTCOMES



4-year-old literacy scores improved in 4 out of 5 individual skill areas from fall to spring.

Decreased



Increased



Alliteration



This skill does not start to develop until around the middle of the 4-year-old year and is only assessed in winter and spring.

Sound Identification



Rhyming



Picture Naming



Which One Doesn't
Belong



N = 1,452

35%

45%

55%

65%

75%

85%

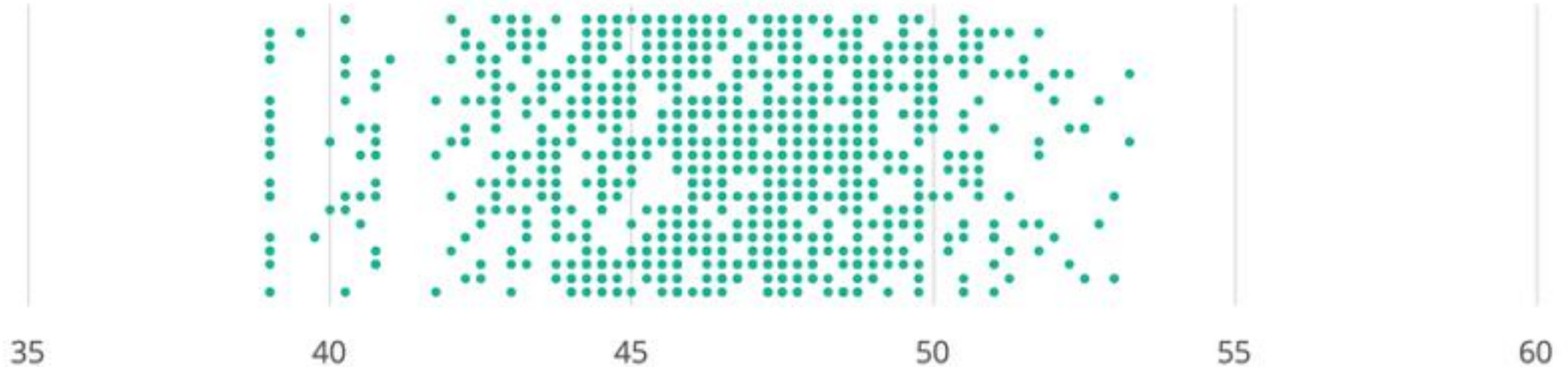
Change in % on track in each area

4-YEAR-OLD LITERACY OUTCOMES

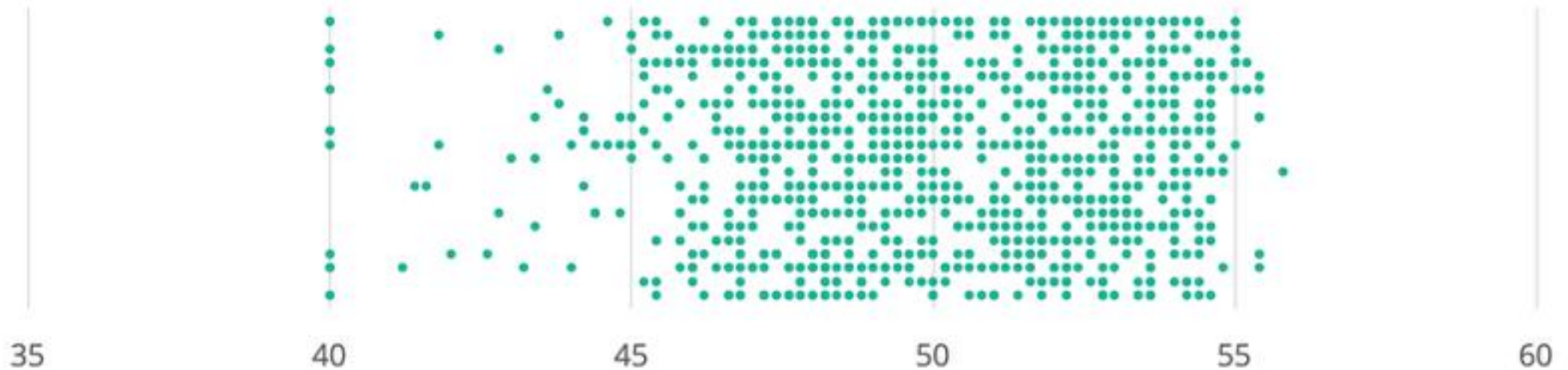
Overall, 4-year-old literacy scores improved from fall to spring.



Fall



Spring



N = 1,452

EARLY NUMERACY OUTCOMES

3- and 4-Year-Old Numeracy

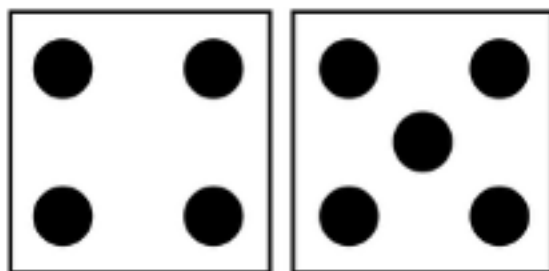
Why is a measure of numeracy important?

Multiple longitudinal studies demonstrated that preschool numeracy skills are strongly associated with future academic success.^{62,63}

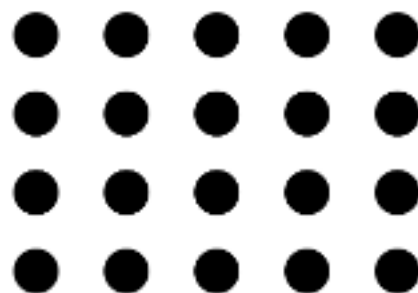
myIGDIs Numeracy focuses on:

- Oral Counting
- Number Naming
- Quantity Comparison
- 1-to-1 Correspondence Counting⁵⁸

Quantity Comparison

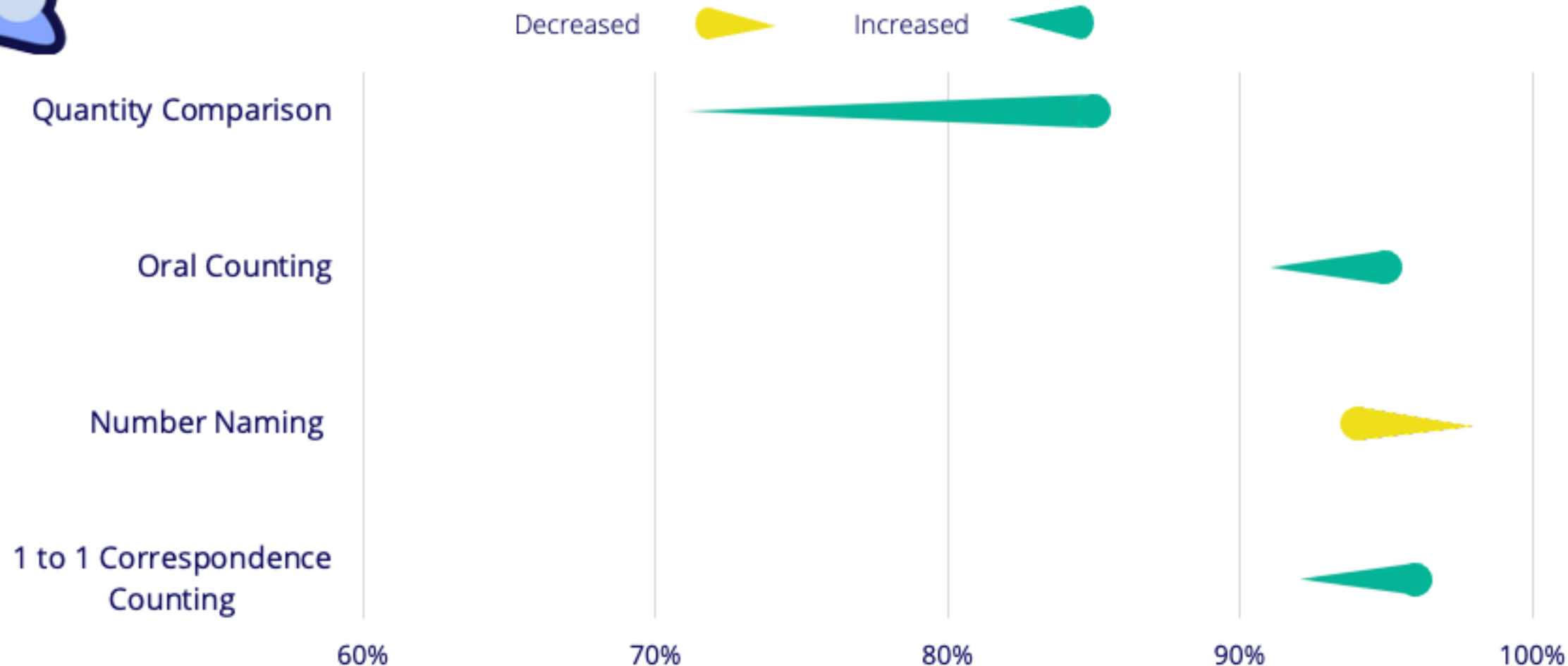


1-to-1 Correspondence Counting



EARLY NUMERACY OUTCOMES

ECBG 3- and 4-year-olds continue to perform well on Numeracy.



N = 2,101

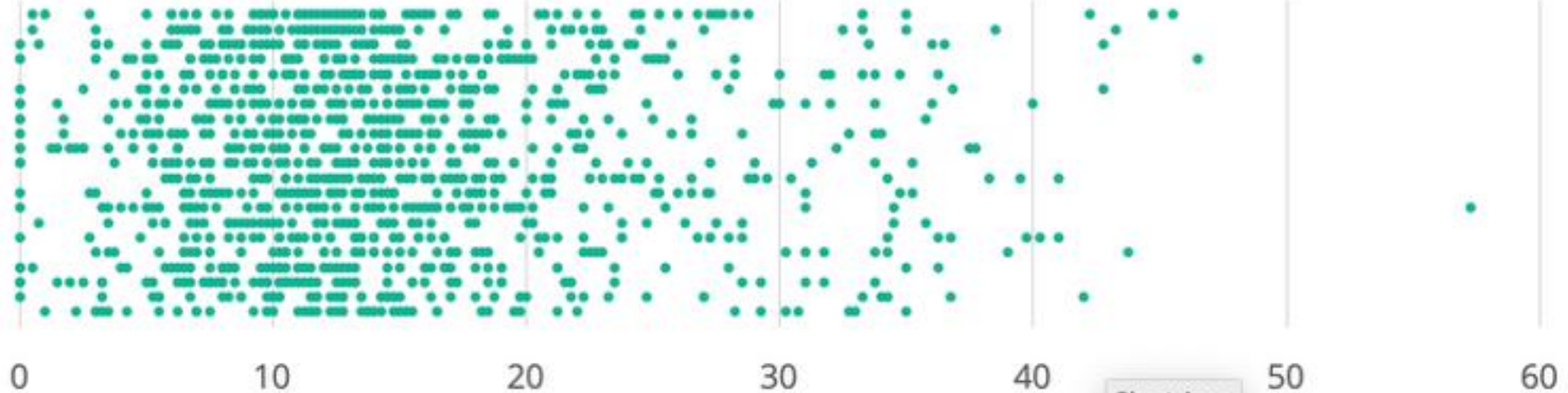
Change in % on track in each area

EARLY NUMERACY OUTCOMES

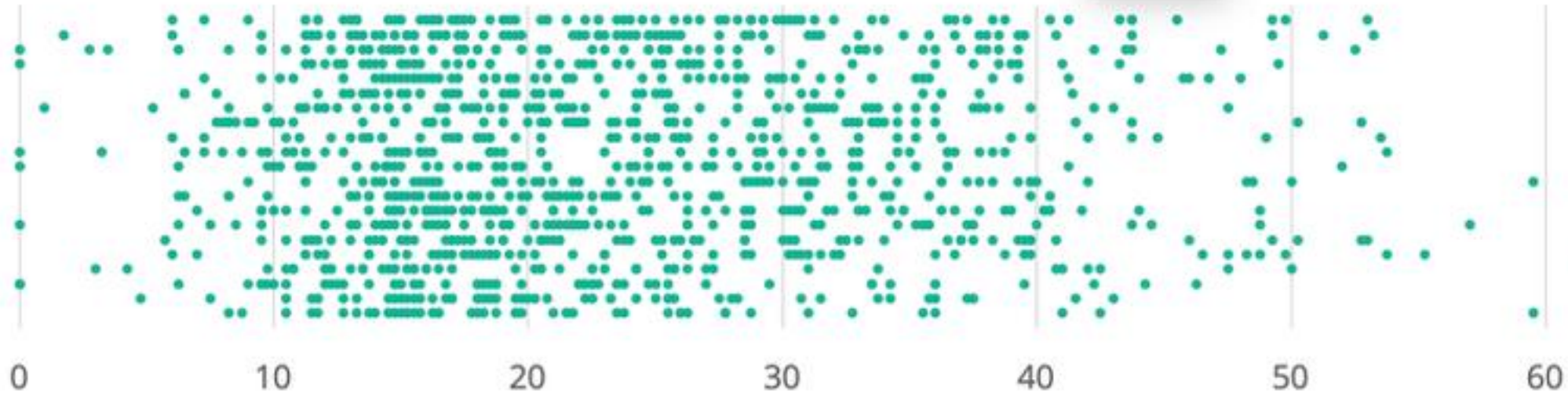
By spring, almost all 4-year-olds were on track.



Fall



Spring



N = 1,245

ECBG 2025-2026 EVALUATION

7,242 children from 69 counties served by 25 grantees

87% had at least 1 risk factor, and 42% had 3 or more

88% of parents demonstrated positive parenting after participation in ECBG programs

72% of classrooms were high-quality by spring

68% of 4-year-olds were on track in language comprehension subtests

79% were on track in early numeracy



Positive parenting continued to be at its highest rate in 10 years.