

Program Evaluation: Early Learning 2024-2025



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Leadership

- How is our mission determined?
- What is our purpose?

Parents as Teachers Team

Emily Brown, Jen Beeman, Rachel Doughty, Courtney Webster (District Liaison)

Great Beginnings Team

Emily Brown, Susie Murphy, Glenda Hudson, Kim McGinness, Christina Pfaff (District Liaison), Vicki Tharp, Susan Mongeau, Joyce Born, Ashley Kelly, Cassandra Rush, Julie Romney, Jan Holderbaum, Amy Poncavage, Hollie Finnell, Tyson Van Dyke, Jessica Cochennet, Amanda Rogers, Michael Austin, Meghan Marsh, Amanda Hooten, Diane McKinney, Kristin Joplin, Jennifer Minnis, Tiffany Fox, Faith Spoonmore, Amy Crawford

CSIP Goal:

- **Academics:** Develop and enhance quality educational/instructional programs to improve overall and individual student academic performance
- **Community Students:** Provide each student with a relevant education in a safe and caring environment

Purpose

The Parents as Teachers (PAT) and Great Beginnings Early Learning programs share a common goal: to collaborate with families in addressing the unique needs of children from prenatal to age five through high-quality, developmentally appropriate instruction and support. The PAT program emphasizes home visits, annual screenings, facilitating group connections, and providing resources and support to families. In parallel, the Great Beginnings program offers specialized instruction and related services on an individualized basis, incorporating evidence-based curriculum and instructional practices to enrich the early learning experience.



Customer Focus

- Who are our customers relative to this program?
- How do we determine the needs of the customer?
- What are the needs of the customer?

This program's customers are students, their families, and our community. This year, the program has 66 ECSE students (to date), 27 currently in process, 5 itinerant IEP students, 11 SII students, 25 tuition preschool students, and 2 peers. We screen students using the DIAL-4 (Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning | Fourth Edition) and determine needs based on comprehensive special education evaluations if a disability is suspected, parent surveys, parent conferences, and the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP).

The needs of students may include a range of special education (SPED) services, resources, and support from social workers, therapists, counselors and more. Key areas of focus for addressing these needs include smooth transitions from First Steps and Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) for children ages birth to 3, as well as Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings, parent conferences, and consistent communication with families. This communication is facilitated through newsletters, daily updates, and enhanced learning resources via Google Classroom.

Staff involved in early learning have consistently identified a gap in services for at-risk learners at the preschool level. Currently, we serve preschoolers who are considered at risk based on their learning and behavioral profiles. Our team, along with the Early Learning Community Advisory, is actively exploring options for expanding early learning programs, including the potential for full-day preschool. Expanding classroom spaces and utilizing existing staff to accommodate additional non-SPED preschoolers beyond the current tuition-based program is a service that the district recognizes as being essential to the Platte County community.

Parent educators in the PAT program provide education, screenings, and support to families in the district with children from prenatal to age 5. Their home-visit program is structured to assess needs and refer to community agencies if needed, but their largest impact is as ambassadors for the District and preparing children and their families for kindergarten. The team currently supports 73 families (109 children) and has provided 254 home visits to date. We refer children for services through Great Beginnings, First Steps, KU Med, Children's Mercy to name a few.

Workforce Focus

- How do we determine our staff needs?
- What are we doing to support our staff to achieve our goals?

Staff needs are evaluated annually based upon the program's objectives. This year, the program focused on co-teaching and large group instruction/teaming, behavior management, and Conscious Discipline (a social/emotional learning curriculum approach that includes direct instruction in self regulation). These will continue.

Current Staff Focus Areas

- Continued implementation of new curriculum (Emerging Language and Literacy Curriculum~ ELLC)
- Phonemic Awareness Implementation (Heggerty)
- Safe and Civil Schools
- Kindergarten alignment



- Second Step Early Learning Curriculum
- Using AAC in the classrooms

Prior Staff Focus Areas

- Investigation process to determine a new curriculum resource
- Staff needs are dependent on students and their individual needs.
- Specific professional development (Autism, Picture Exchange Communication System [PECS], Desired Results Developmental Profile [DRDP])
- Transdisciplinary approaches to increase collaboration and development of the whole child
- Monthly program-wide Professional Learning Community (PLC)
- Theme-based planning
- PECS training for all certified staff
- Continued implementation of new curriculum (Emerging Language and Literacy Curriculum~ ELLC)
- Phonemic Awareness Implementation (Heggerty)
- Trauma supports
- Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling- Early Childhood version (LETRS) training
- Kindergarten alignment

Process

- **What process/improvement actions did we focus on last year to improve this program?**

Prior Process Improvement Actions

- DRDP implementation for program-wide data
- Co-teaching
- Develop longitudinal tracking for Great Beginnings through the PCR3 experience.
- One additional ECSE classroom added to the program.
- Additional staff added

Current Process Improvement Actions

- Development and implementation of Fidelity Protocols
- Participation on the Community Advisory for Early Learning to expand program offerings
- Alignment of PAT and EC process improvements, including PAT screening for ECSE
- Implementation of new curriculum resource (Emerging Language & Literacy Curriculum)
- LETRS training implementation
- Exploration of At-Risk preschool programming
- Refine recruitment efforts for PAT and peer programming
- Piloting Second Step Early Learning SEL curriculum in two classrooms

Measurement/Analysis/Knowledge

- **What are the results of our SWOT analysis for this year?**
- **What are our measures to determine progress/success?**



Measurements

- A2 Achievement Data
- Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO)
- SWOT
- DESE Special Education Profile

Early Learning SWOT ANALYSIS Themes

Current Strengths & Positive Practices:

- **Strong Relationships with Families:** Staff build close relationships with families, providing a nurturing environment.
- **Fully Staffed:** The department is fully staffed, offering stability compared to previous years.
- **Small Class Ratios:** Maintaining small ratios allows for individualized learning and goal-oriented progress.
- **Collaborative Team:** The staff is supportive of each other, promoting a cohesive work environment.

Key Issues Identified:

1. **Communication Challenges:**
 - Lack of clear communication from the administration, causing confusion and uncertainty.
 - Staff feel left out of decision-making processes and need to be more informed about changes.
2. **Staff Morale & Stability:**
 - Rapid changes (e.g., moving programs, shifting to full-day schedules) are causing anxiety.
 - Staff feel unstable due to new leadership and role changes.
 - No formal "temperature checks" for staff well-being, leading to feelings of being overlooked.
3. **Training & Professional Development:**
 - Need for specialized training in early childhood (EC) and early childhood special education (ECSE) for teachers and paraprofessionals.
 - Desire for investment in professional development for handling social, emotional, and behavioral challenges.
4. **Program Expansion Concerns:**
 - Expansion to full-day programs and integrating at-risk students raises concerns about readiness and quality of care.
 - Staff fear losing planning time, which impacts quality IEPs and individualized support.
5. **Discipline & Classroom Management:**
 - Concerns about inappropriate use of time-outs and inconsistent behavior management practices.

Recommendations for Improvement:

- **Enhanced Communication:**
 - Foster transparent communication from administration, including staff input in decisions affecting their roles.
 - Schedule regular check-ins to gauge staff morale and address concerns.
- **Professional Development:**
 - Provide targeted training for staff lacking EC/ECSE experience.
 - Invest in skill-building programs for managing student behavior and supporting diverse needs.
- **Maintaining Quality Ratios & Support:**
 - Ensure appropriate staff-to-student ratios by having two paras per classroom.



- Protect planning time by maintaining a four-day student week with one day for planning and meetings.
- **Program Design:**
 - Plan program expansions thoughtfully, considering both staff readiness and family impact.
 - Blend at-risk, tuition, and special education students strategically to balance staffing needs and student outcomes.

Results

- **How are we doing? How have we done over time? How have we done compared to others (if applicable)?**

Special Education District Profile, 2023-24 Data

Early Childhood Special Education Child Count (A1)

The following indicates the number of children who are eligible for and receiving early childhood special education services.

Total Early Childhood 3-PK5				
	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	State 2023-24
Child Count	35	37	44	12,600

Source: District reported data via MOSIS Student Core (December cycle)



Early Childhood Special Education Educational Environments (ages 3-PK5) (SPP 6) (A2)

The following indicates the educational environment of children receiving early childhood special education services.

Educational Environments	2021-22		2022-23		2023-24		State 2023-24
	#	%	#	%	#	%	%
<i>In the regular early childhood program:</i>	2	5.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	47.5%
10+ hours with majority of SPED services in EC Program*	1	2.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	22.4%
10+ hours with majority of SPED services in Other Location	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	19.1%
less than 10 hours with majority of SPED services in EC Program*	1	2.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.8%
less than 10 hours with majority of SPED services in Other Location	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4.2%
Separate Class	29	82.9%	36	97.3%	44	100.0%	44.9%
Separate School	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.1%
Residential Facility	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Home (SPP 6C)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.7%
Service Provider Location	4	11.4%	1	2.7%	0	0.0%	5.8%
Total Early Childhood	35	100.0%	37	100.0%	44	100.0%	100.0%
Total attending and receiving majority of services in early childhood program* (SPP 6A)	2	5.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	24.2%
Total separate placements** (SPP 6B)	29	82.9%	36	97.3%	44	100.0%	46.0%

Source: District reported data via MOSIS Student Core (December cycle)

Percentage = Educational Environment / Total Early Childhood

*Total attending includes children in an early childhood program and receiving the majority of their SPED services in the EC program

**Total separate includes children reported in Separate Class, Separate School, and Residential Facility

Transition from First Steps (Part C) (SPP 12) (A3)

For children referred from the First Steps program, districts are required to develop and implement an IEP by the third birthday. The following data shows the percent of children referred by First Steps prior to age 3, who were found eligible for ECSE, and who had an IEP developed and implemented by their third birthdays.

Reporting Year	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Number referred and eligible	9	NA	NA	8	NA
IEPs developed with acceptable timelines	9	NA	NA	8	NA
Percent developed within acceptable timelines	100.0%	NA	NA	100.0%	NA
State % developed within acceptable timelines	99.5%	97.8%	97.8%	98.5%	98.1%



Early Childhood Outcome Data (SPP 7) (A4)

Districts are required to assess children's abilities when they enter and exit ECSE. The following table indicates the progress, or outcome, made between entering and exiting ECSE for children who exited ECSE during the reporting year.

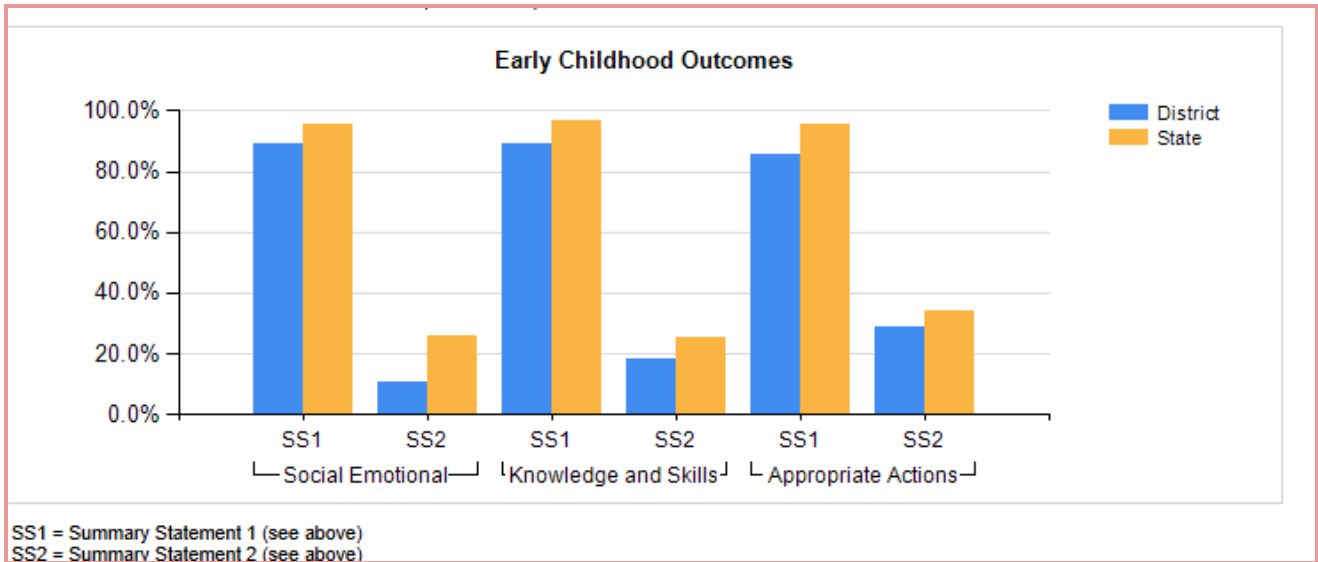
2023-24 School Year	Social Emotional Skills			Acquiring and Using Knowledge and Skills			Taking Appropriate Action to Meet Needs		
Outcomes: Percent of children who	#	%	State %	#	%	State %	#	%	State %
a. did not improve functioning	3	10.7%	2.7%	3	10.7%	2.5%	4	14.3%	2.5%
b. improved functioning but not sufficient to move nearer to functioning comparable to same-age peers	0	0.0%	1.2%	0	0.0%	0.9%	0	0.0%	1.4%
c. improved functioning to a level nearer to same-aged peers but did not reach	22	78.6%	70.2%	20	71.4%	71.3%	16	57.1%	61.9%
d. improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same-aged peers	3	10.7%	21.0%	5	17.9%	22.3%	8	28.6%	28.6%
e. maintained functioning at a level comparable to same-aged peers	0	0.0%	4.8%	0	0.0%	2.9%	0	0.0%	5.6%
Total:	28	100.0%	100.0%	28	100.0%	100.0%	28	100.0%	100.0%
Summary Statements									
1. Of those children who entered the program below age expectation, the percent that substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they exited.		89.3%	95.9%		89.3%	96.5%		85.7%	95.8%
2. Percent of children who were functioning within age expectations by the time they exited.		10.7%	25.9%		17.9%	25.3%		28.6%	34.2%

Summary Calculations: 1. $((c+d)/(a+b+c+d))*100$ 2. $((d+e)/(a+b+c+d+e))$

Source: MOSIS Student Core (June cycle)

Note: Excludes children who transferred districts (district totals) and children in ECSE less than 6 months





Parent Survey Data

Parent Survey: I am satisfied with the special education services my child receives. (Parents)						
Building	2018 SPI	2019 SPI	2020 SPI	2021 SPI	2022 SPI	2023 SPI
<i>Great Beginnings</i>	440.74	*	461.54	445.83	444.44	437.50
<i>Respondents</i>	27	*	13	24	18	16

Parents as Teachers Data as of November 2024

Total Families Served	73
Minority Families Served	15
Children Served	12
Total Family Personal Visits	300
Total Screenings Completed	65

