Results Matter: Improving Preschool Outcomes for Children with Disabilities



Data Teams

The purpose of this publication is to showcase preschool special education practices that support positive outcomes for children with disabilities and their families across Colorado's schools, districts, and Administrative Units. More than six decades of research demonstrate that children flourish in inclusive environments, particularly when they learn alongside non-disabled peers in general education preschool classrooms.

These practice profiles build on evidence-based approaches to enhance Preschool Outcomes, offering practical strategies and guidance for establishing a strong foundation of high-quality learning for children with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).

Program Spotlight

Englewood Schools Early Childhood Education (ECE) serves more than 40 children with disabilities in an inclusive preschool center located centrally within the district. The new facility, which opened in January 2019, was purposefully designed to meet the developmental needs of preschool-aged children. Students learn in multi-age classrooms with small class sizes, each led by highly qualified teachers.

Families may select full-day, morning, or afternoon schedules, with extended care available before and after school. Children are supported through play-based and intentionally designed learning experiences. The program maintains a five-star rating through Colorado Shines, the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS).

ECE leadership in Englewood has implemented a data-based decision-making model to guide instruction across the program. Data teams use a four-step process aligned with the approach used by grade-level teams districtwide, ensuring coherence and continuous improvement. Universal screening using Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs) is implemented to identify children who may be at risk on key learning outcomes.

Collaborative Lesson Plans and Setting Learning Targets

Each data team cycle begins with a

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meeting focused on developing a collaborative lesson plan grounded in student data collected through *GOLD*® by Teaching Strategies. The plan outlines an activity or series of activities to be implemented across all classrooms, intentionally designed to address the needs of all learners, including multilingual learners, children with disabilities, and those demonstrating advanced skills. Learning targets may be identified within a single domain or span multiple developmental domains.

Children are grouped based on all formative assessment data. Reliable assessment information helps teams identify which children are not yet meeting age-level expectations, which are performing within widely held expectations, and which are exceeding them. Lessons are differentiated accordingly, and accommodations, particularly those required through a child's IEP, are embedded directly into the plans.

Embedded Instruction and Data Collection

Teachers implement the agreed-upon lesson plan and activities for a designated period prior to the next data team meeting. During this phase, the team determines what data will be collected, how it will be collected, and the frequency of collection. Baseline data are typically gathered at the start of the lesson or unit, followed by ongoing data collection throughout implementation.

Data Analysis

At the subsequent meeting, teachers andspecial education staff review the collected data to determine what children have learned and whether they have made progress toward age-level expectations and IEP goals. Based on this analysis, the team adjusts instruction to better meet student needs.

The cycle then continues, with teams preparing for the next collaborative planning session. This process repeats approximately every six weeks, supporting continuous improvement and responsive instruction.



Shared instructional leadership is a core component of program-wide improvement.

To ensure data teams are implemented with fidelity, instructional leaders meet regularly to review program data, analyze overall learning trends, and identify staff needs related to implementing high-quality instructional materials (HQIM). Ongoing coaching in the Data Team process, professional learning focused on understanding and unpacking standards, and targeted classroom support to strengthen instructional practices are integrated into training days and staff meetings.

Practices that Contribute to Improving Outcomes

Englewood ECE provides regular, curriculum-based collaborative planning time that brings together all staff who support students. These sessions focus on designing lessons that embed specially designed instruction within the High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM).

The program supports teams in analyzing data, with particular attention to using formative assessment during lesson planning and incorporating Results Matter (RM) data gathered through ongoing observation. Dedicated time and an evidence-based structure help teachers understand how children's skills are developing along established learning trajectories. Englewood equips teachers to act on data so that all students have access to the regular classroom. Instruction is aligned with the adopted HQIM selected by the shared leadership team to improve outcomes for all children.

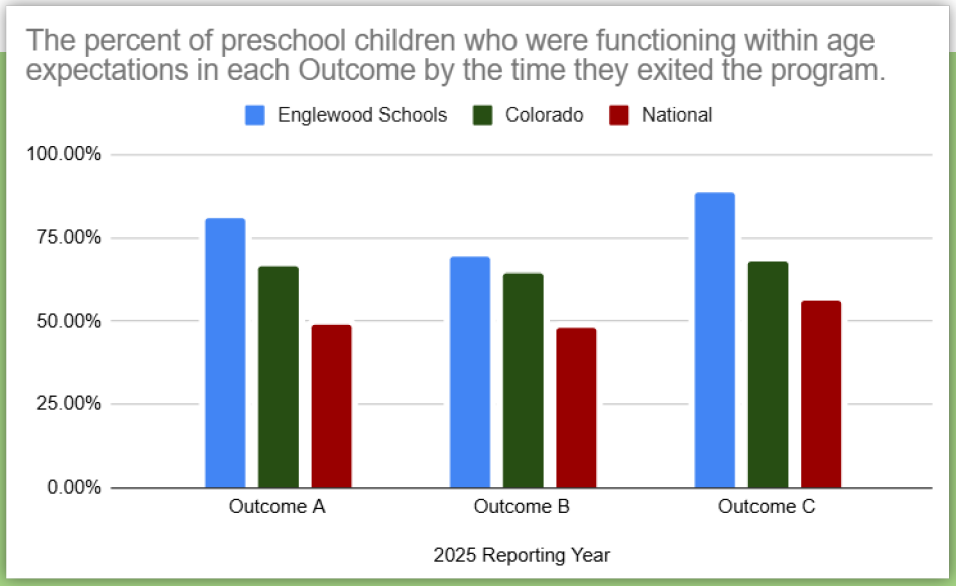
Distributed leadership roles clarify who is responsible for each aspect of teacher development. As a result, teachers are grounded in the HQIM and implement curriculum and assessment with fidelity. The ongoing cycle of collaborative planning, observation, and data-based feedback ensures that the learning experiences provided by the program reflect the needs and strengths of all children and their families

What do the Preschool Outcomes Data say?

Outcome A: Children develop positive social-emotional skills, including social relationships.

Outcome B: Children acquire and use knowledge and skills, including early language, communication, and literacy.

Outcome C: Children use appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.



Core Components: Expected Use in Practice

Data from child assessments are used to identify achievement gaps and to drive instructional improvement.

- Teachers work in teams to analyze data and student work to plan instruction and identify learning needs to improve outcomes.
- Leaders use data to inform, establish, and deliver professional learning priorities.

Articulate a vision across the program on the value and potential of the Preschool Outcomes data.

- Use Results Matter (RM) progress monitoring tools to understand children's strengths and learning trajectories.
- Understand the data, including strengths, limitations, and quality.
- Monitor trends by taking a closer look at the data over time for factors such as race, geography, age, and disability category. These factors influence continuous improvement and can provide insights into the strengths and challenges of a program.

Leverage formalized data teams to build a culture of data use.

- Bring staff together for a team representing multiple diverse perspectives.
- Invest time and energy to thoughtfully build a formalized data team.
- Integrate a clear, consistent data-informed inquiry process, making data-informed decision-making routine.
- Use evidence-based, standards-aligned RM assessment with fidelity to ensure reliable results.
- Monitor and celebrate progress.



Access state-level supports.

- CDE Technical Assistance Specialists have experience with Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) data collection and the RM assessment tools to help address issues that might arise in the data systems being used and understand the processes for entering and using the data.

Getting Started: Developmental Use in Practice

Creating a team:

- What is the purpose of the data team?
- What is the process or framework the team will use for data-informed decision-making?
- What role does each member of the team have? How many members does the team have?
- What types of data does the data team have access to, and where do the data reside?
- What is the frequency of data team meetings?
- When will the data team meet?
- What is the duration of the data team meetings?
- Where or how will the data team meet (e.g., what location and space or via what technology)?
- Who will coordinate the work of the data team, including developing meeting agendas, facilitating meetings, and communicating progress to members and other key partners?

Common Barriers

- Data literacy varies among staff.
- Teaching staff do not understand how the data is used for Preschool Outcomes improvement.
- Staff do not complete data entry in a timely manner.
- Teams stop meeting and/or re-examining the data.
- Teaching staff receive inadequate support (materials and training) from leadership (administrators and principals) to use data.

Measuring Progress

Improving child outcomes involves working with data relevant to children and families that promotes inclusion and shows progress in routines. Data culture is a part of the fabric of what we do, data helps us tell the story.

Critical Question

- What is the quality of the Early Childhood program where young children receive special education services?

Indicators:

- Child data are consistently gathered from multiple sources.
- Data is used to observe patterns of achievement across sub-groups of children.
- Resource allocation and supports to children, classrooms, schools is made based on data.
- Data is shared among teachers within and across age/grade levels.
- Data is shared with families at parent teacher confernces.

Resource Highlights

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Results Matter improves outcomes for Colorado's preschool children who receive special education services by helping teachers, administrators, families, and other education partners use authentic assessment data to inform classroom instruction as well as program and policy decision-making.