



# SEATTLE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM PROCESS EVALUATION

Final Cross-Site Report





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## **Positive experiences during the first few years of life can considerably impact a child's future, setting a strong foundation for a child to thrive as he or she develops over the course of the lifespan.**

Decades of research and practice point to the specific role of high-quality early childhood programs in the facilitation of such experiences. The literature notes that access to high-quality early education opportunities

drives children's educational and lifelong outcomes as it is linked to greater achievement in school, better health outcomes, reduced involvement with the criminal justice system and increased earnings as adults, among other long-term benefits (Center on the Developing Child, n.d.; Schweinhart et al., 2005; Yoshikawa et al., 2013). All across the country, cities and states are striving to increase the availability and quality of early childhood programming—particularly with pre-K programs serving three- and four-year olds—to foster positive outcomes for young children, families and communities as a whole (Friedman-Krauss et al., 2019).

The city of Seattle has a history of investing in its youth, funding education-based initiatives since 1990. In response to the growing understanding of the benefits of preschool for children and communities, the city began investing in early learning in 2004. In 2015, the city deepened its commitment as the result of the 2014 Seattle Preschool Program (SPP) levy, and the Department of Education and Early Learning (DEEL) launched a demonstration phase of the SPP. This initiative aimed to meet three goals: (1) increase access to full-time preschool for three- and four-year-old children across the city; (2) ensure that the preschool program is one of high quality by using a research-based curriculum and offering culturally responsive, engaging and nurturing adult/child interactions; and (3) eliminate the racially disproportionate kindergarten-readiness gap.

Since the inception of the program in 2015, the SPP has been making strides in meeting its goals. First and foremost, the program has experienced enormous growth (Parker, 2018). It consisted of 15 classrooms serving fewer than 300 children in its first year. By 2018, the program had grown to an estimated 82 sites serving 1,500 children, with the addition of family child care programs as an option for preschool. Further, recent findings from an independent research study demonstrated steady improvements in program quality and strong gains in language, literacy and mathematics for participating children (Nores et al., 2018).

As DEEL moves beyond the demonstration phase of the SPP, it seeks to gain a better understanding of how its requirements, supports and systems impact its provider community. DEEL selected School Readiness Consulting (SRC) through a competitive process to conduct a process evaluation of the SPP with a focus on equity. SRC is a social-justice-focused consulting organization with a vision to activate all children's potential to create a just society. SRC seeks to transform early learning and affirm the right of all children to thrive by evaluating early learning initiatives and supporting strategy and implementation in early learning programs throughout the nation.

The evaluation addressed two questions focusing on the themes of classroom practices and DEEL supports:

1. How do SPP providers implement best practices in the areas of curriculum, classroom management, culturally responsive instructional strategies, assessment and family engagement?
2. What are SPP providers' experiences with DEEL supports in the areas of contracting and funding, application and enrollment, quality teaching (including culturally responsive strategies and equitable practices), and technical assistance and compliance monitoring?

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<sup>1</sup>For more information, visit <https://www.seattle.gov/education/early-learning/early-learning-providers/about-our-early-learning-programs-seattle-preschool-program>.

This executive summary highlights key findings of a cross-site analysis of themes from six sites that participated in the process evaluation. These findings include (1) experiences of diverse providers implementing generally accepted best practices in and out of the classroom and (2) these providers' experiences with program standards and DEEL supports. The executive summary also describes a number of recommendations based on these findings. The full report provides more detail about the findings and recommendations as well as the evaluation methodology.

In the spring of 2019, six sites engaged in one-on-one interviews, focus groups and classroom observations. Eight distinct findings surfaced during the analysis of the data collected during these activities. These key findings illuminate potential areas in which DEEL may focus strategic thinking and resources as the city prepares to offer preschool for another seven years.

## KEY FINDINGS

1. Providers leveraged support from the SPP program, administrators, peers and families to maximize their resources in efforts to provide high-quality and culturally responsive curriculum, instruction, assessment and family engagement strategies.
2. SPP providers struggled to meet the social-emotional needs of all children; they illuminated a need for support to manage behavior as staff worked to implement high-quality curriculum, instruction and assessment practices.
3. Staff demonstrated competence in implementing culturally responsive practices, but there were few examples of a more robust antibias approach, such as addressing inequities and issues of fairness, power and privilege in the classroom.
4. Staff valued partnerships with families as they strove to create a high-quality learning experience, especially in terms of building a safe and welcoming environment for children to thrive.
5. SPP providers described mixed experiences with DEEL funding and overall support and demonstrated inconsistencies, particularly by site type, in awareness and utilization of resources available to them through DEEL.
6. SPP providers noted key components of the SPP enrollment process that worked well but indicated that improvements would help the process run more smoothly.
7. Staff were highly motivated to improve their teaching practices, desiring deeper and more standardized additional support on topics they perceived as challenging in their practice with children and families.
8. SPP providers identified the coaching model and related professional development as critically important, but this frequently cited benefit of SPP participation was not consistently accessed and utilized in accordance with providers' varying needs.

As DEEL continues to expand its mixed-delivery system so it meets the needs of both providers and young children eligible for preschool, SRC crafted a set of recommendations informed by key findings from the process evaluation. These recommendations are organized into six key areas: curriculum and classroom management, culturally responsive practices, family engagement, contracting and funding, enrollment, and quality teaching supports. This executive summary highlights key findings of a cross-site analysis of themes from six sites that participated in the process evaluation. These findings include (1) experiences of diverse providers implementing generally accepted best practices in and out of the classroom and (2) these providers' experiences with program standards and DEEL supports. The executive summary also describes a number of recommendations based on these findings. The full report provides more detail about the findings and recommendations as well as the evaluation methodology.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Curriculum and classroom management

- Implement curriculum alignment to promote internal and cross-program collaboration
- Provide differentiated training on curricular approaches
- Continue to support administrators as instructional leaders
- Recommend supplementary resources that support social-emotional development
- Expand early childhood mental health and special education support

### Culturally responsive practices

- Further support movement along the equity continuum to an antibias approach
- Consider resources to help externalize practices related to equity and antibias
- Clarify with all stakeholders that the coaching model focuses on equity
- Provide additional coaching and professional development regarding practical approaches when working with dual-language learners and their families

### Family engagement

- Support programs in defining and employing clear goals and values for family engagement
- Engage family representatives to define ways families want to be involved in policy, programming and overall engagement with the SPP

### Contracting and funding

- Conduct a cost-of-quality study
- Consider differing resources across provider types when thinking about funding increases
- Make unique funding allocations/supports available and clear to all providers (e.g., a third teacher)
- Consider clarifying roles, responsibilities, requirements and supports for those directly and indirectly involved with the SPP

### Enrollment

- Examine solutions for enrollment delays due to system error or delays in communication between DEEL and the provider
- Ensure that all providers are aware of flexibility in supporting families experiencing challenging circumstances (e.g., homelessness)

### Quality teaching supports

- Offer differentiated professional learning opportunities such as peer-to-peer learning and professional learning communities across provider settings
- Consider targeted or tiered support to optimize coach and provider time
- Develop a substitute pool with professionals with a background in or insight into education or child development through partnerships with local colleges
- Provide differentiated training on curricular approaches

Evidence shows that SPP providers across the system are experiencing the effects of DEEL's efforts to support high-quality and culturally responsive programming. Several strengths exist within the areas of professional development and technical assistance, policy development, and oversight and accountability. There are opportunities to explore ways to increase quality in these areas as well as others such as family engagement and enrollment processes. Ultimately, SPP providers and DEEL administrators alike express immense passion for ushering SPP into the next chapter of implementation, which will undoubtedly help Seattle reach its goal of ensuring that its youngest learners have a strong foundation to develop and thrive.

The first five years of life are arguably the most critical. Research shows that these early years are particularly important for the development of a child's brain and that early experiences set the foundation for social, cognitive, emotional and physical development later in life (Center on the Developing Child, n.d.; Tierney & Nelson, 2009). A substantial body of evidence suggests that high-quality preschool can help facilitate positive outcomes for children (Mashburn et al., 2008; NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 2002; Sabol & Pianta, 2014; Yoshikawa et al., 2013). Specifically, the literature notes that access to high-quality early education opportunities drives children's educational and lifelong outcomes as it is linked to greater achievement in school, better health outcomes, reduced involvement with the criminal justice system and increased earnings as adults, among other long-term benefits (Schweinhart et al., 2005; Yoshikawa et al., 2013). Further, access to a range of early education programs is an important component of a healthy, viable community. For instance, studies demonstrate that access to early childhood programming provides important work support to families as they contribute to the local workforce (Del Grosso, Akers, Mraz Esposito, & Paulsell, 2014; Wat & Gayl, 2009; Wilinski, 2017).

The evidence is clear. But the reality is that not all children receive the same opportunities to learn and thrive in the early years. Data shows that nationally less than one-half of four-year-olds attended public preschool during the 2017-18 school year (Friedman-Krauss et al., 2019). Many families rely on public funding to access preschool, enrolling their children in public programs like Head Start, or receive subsidies for child care. All across the country, cities and states are striving to increase the availability and quality of early childhood programming—particularly within pre-K programs serving three- and four-year olds—to foster positive outcomes for young children, families and communities as a whole (Friedman-Krauss et al., 2019).

The city of Seattle aimed to address these issues of quality and access through a new initiative. In 2015, the Department of Education and Early Learning (DEEL) launched a demonstration phase of the Seattle Preschool Program (SPP) that used a research-based curriculum and offered culturally responsive, engaging and nurturing adult/child interactions. Further, the program aimed to eliminate the racially disproportionate kindergarten-readiness gap. Currently, the SPP partners with providers in a variety of settings across Seattle, including community-based programs, public schools and family child care homes. All participating providers commit to a variety of program requirements including implementation of a standard curriculum, documentation of students' progress, and participation in coaching and training provided by DEEL staff.

## PROGRAM STANDARDS<sup>2</sup>

To participate in the SPP, children needed to be residents of Seattle and were either four years old on August 31 (prior to the beginning of the school year of enrollment) or three years old on August 31 (prior to the beginning of the school year of enrollment) and from families with income equal to or below 300 percent of the federal poverty level.

Providers offering the program needed to operate their SPP classrooms 180 days per year on a full-day schedule (i.e., five days a week, six hours a day). Each classroom served up to 20 children, with a ratio of one adult for every 10 children. Ideally, these classrooms were led by (1) a lead teacher with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or a bachelor's degree and a state teaching credential with a P-3 endorsement and (2) an assistant teacher with an associate's degree in early childhood education or two years of approved course work in early childhood education.

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<sup>2</sup>This information is from the Seattle Preschool Program 2017-18 program manual. More-detailed information can be found at [https://www-seattle.gov/education/for-providers/funding-opportunities/spp-pathway-program-services\\_2017-18](https://www-seattle.gov/education/for-providers/funding-opportunities/spp-pathway-program-services_2017-18). Note that the program and eligibility standards shifted in 2019-20 with the passage of a new levy and action plan.

Providers needed to adhere to a number of requirements to be in compliance with SPP standards:

- Submitting staff reports and maintaining health records of enrolled children, records of observations from Teaching Strategies Gold® (TSG), children's individual learning plans and information related to each child's family
- Adopting an approved curriculum, either High-Scope® or Creative Curriculum®
- Offering health screenings using Ages & Stages Questionnaires® (ASQ) and ASQ: Social-Emotional, Second Edition, and tracking child development through TSG observations
- Participating in Early Achievers and holding a rating of Level 3 or above, which includes meeting specific threshold levels for the Classroom Assessment Scoring System® Pre-K (CLASS Pre-K) and Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale®, Revised (ECERS-R)
- Engaging with DEEL-approved and -required data entry systems such as the Child Information and Provider System (CHIPS), TSG, ASQ and the Managed Education and Registry Information Tool (MERIT)
- Developing a culturally relevant plan for engaging and partnering with families
- Participating in classroom assessments set by DEEL including CLASS Pre-K and ECERS-R as well as conducting child assessments such as ASQ and TSG and providing data to DEEL
- Participating in both agency-level self-assessments and external assessments conducted by DEEL or outside entities
- Having a deep understanding of Seattle Public Schools' enrollment processes and providing families with supports and services to ensure that children successfully transition into kindergarten

## PROGRAM SUPPORTS<sup>3</sup>

DEEL offered providers a variety of supports as they implemented the SPP. These included professional development, which entailed (1) coaching, including onsite curriculum assistance and support for teachers' professional growth, (2) training, on screenings, assessments and curriculum, and (3) a scholarship program for eligible staff working in SPP classrooms to meet SPP education standards. Support also included technical assistance provided by education specialists that related to conducting TSG assessments, meeting contract requirements, fulfilling performance-pay requirements and adhering to program standards. DEEL also partnered with Public Health Seattle-King County to provide ongoing health supports such as mental health consultation support and health, nutrition and safety assessments. Providers also had access to additional behavioral services to support children's social-emotional and behavioral development as well as professional development and coaching related to developmentally appropriate curriculum resources and practices.

## ABOUT THE STUDY

To better understand the experiences of SPP providers, DEEL contracted with School Readiness Consulting (SRC), a social-justice-focused consulting organization with experience in evaluating early learning initiatives and supporting strategy and implementation in early learning programs, to conduct a process evaluation of the SPP. The process evaluation addressed two questions focusing on the themes of classroom practices and DEEL supports:

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<sup>3</sup>This information is from the Seattle Preschool Program 2017-18 program manual. More-detailed information can be found at [https://www-seattle.gov/education/for-providers/funding-opportunities/spp-pathway-program-services\\_2017-18](https://www-seattle.gov/education/for-providers/funding-opportunities/spp-pathway-program-services_2017-18). Note that the program and eligibility standards shifted in 2019-20 with the passage of a new levy and action plan.

## QUESTIONS

1. How do SPP providers implement best practices in the areas of curriculum, classroom management, culturally responsive instructional strategies, assessment and family engagement?
2. What are SPP providers' experiences with DEEL supports in the areas of contracting and funding, application and enrollment, quality teaching (including culturally responsive strategies and equitable practices), and technical assistance and compliance monitoring?

The evaluation team addressed the questions by conducting classroom observations, interviews and focus groups, which provided information about provider experiences with the SPP from a sample of six sites. The team also examined existing data sources that contained information about demographics, program and classroom characteristics, and program and classroom quality. The team analyzed the collected information and developed six individual case studies of participating SPP providers and a cross-site report.



## ABOUT THE CASE STUDIES

The evaluation team developed a report containing six case studies, one for each of the six sites selected to participate in the process evaluation. The six case study reports drew from data collected during site visits (including interviews, focus groups and observations, as described in the Appendix B in this report and the study methods of the case study report) and demographic data provided by DEEL. Each case study described provider experiences implementing program standards, using DEEL supports and navigating DEEL systems—all of which are grounded in a racial equity and social justice lens.

## PARTICIPANTS IN THE PROCESS EVALUATION

1. A school based site with SPP Plus—exploring the experiences of offering education opportunities for students with and without disabilities
2. A school based site—illustrating the experiences of offering the SPP in a traditional K-5 setting
3. A center based site with an extended day option—showcasing the experiences of offering pre-school in a community-based setting
4. A center based site with Head Start offerings—exploring the experiences of offering the SPP in conjunction with Head Start
5. A center based site focused on dual-language learners (DLLs)—illustrating the experiences of customizing preschool for DLLs in a community-based setting
6. A family child care hub—showcasing the experiences of a group of family child care providers who offer preschool in home based settings



## ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report presents the results of a cross-site analysis of themes from all six participating sites. It aims to identify global lessons learned from the process evaluation, specifically how a diverse set of sites implemented program standards and used DEEL supports. The Methodology Overview section provides an overview of the sample, data collection activities and analysis. The Key Findings: SPP Provider Best Practices section describes participants' experiences implementing generally accepted best practices in and out of the classroom, including the ways sites engaged racially and linguistically diverse and historically marginalized children and families. This section also describes the range of experiences of participants from varying provider types and settings (community-based organizations, public schools and home based family child care providers), including experiences offering specific types of services (e.g., a focus on DLLs). The Key Findings: Experiences Using DEEL Supports section highlights participants' experiences with program standards and DEEL supports. The Insights and Recommendations section presents ideas for DEEL to consider as the Seattle Preschool Program moves from its pilot phase into full implementation. Lastly, this report includes appendices that include the following:

- A glossary with key terms and definitions
- Detailed methodology
- Data collection protocols—interview and focus group questions and the equity-focused observation tool
- Tables showcasing the demographics of the participants in the process evaluation
- Findings from equity-focused observations
- A summary of the briefs developed after each strategic learning session

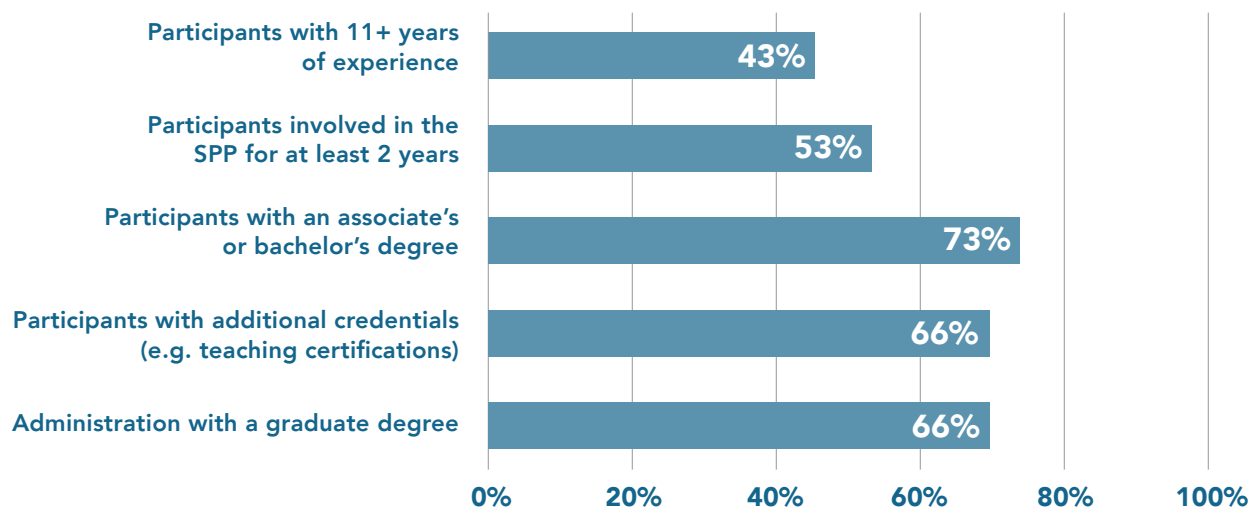




# METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

This process evaluation involved six SPP sites, which offered public pre-K in a variety of settings: center based, school based and home based settings. Further, these sites varied in type of service delivery models, such as offering extended day care, focusing on providing pre-K to children with a range of developmental needs (SPP Plus) and focusing on DLLs. In an effort to learn about how providers implemented program standards, used program resources, and followed DEEL processes, the evaluation team deployed a case study approach. A case study is a method of research that facilitates an in-depth accounting of a phenomenon and experiences with said phenomenon using a variety of data sources (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

## PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS



The evaluation team conducted two site visits to each of the participating sites. These visits entailed interviews with administrators, focus groups with staff and equity-focused classroom observations. Team members distributed exit surveys, which collected demographic information, at the end of interviews or focus groups or through a Google form sent via email. In an effort to deepen our understanding about the participating sites, the evaluation team also obtained available extant data on program and classroom quality (i.e., Seattle Early Learning Self-Assessment, CLASS, ECERS data). The evaluation team used a directed content analysis approach (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) to analyze the interview, focus group and observation data. The team ran descriptive statistics (e.g., frequencies) to analyze the data collected in the exit surveys. DEEL provided extant data in a summarized format, removing the need for the evaluation team to conduct any quantitative analyses. Rather, patterns of high scores and low scores from these data were triangulated with findings from the process evaluation. More-detailed information about the methodology (i.e., recruitment, sampling, site visit activities, extant data measures and data analysis) can be found in Appendix B.<sup>4</sup>



<sup>4</sup>Appendices C and D include interview and focus group questions, a copy of the observation tool, and tables demonstrating participant demographic information.



# KEY FINDINGS

SPP PROVIDER BEST PRACTICES

**Question 1:** How do SPP providers implement best practices in the areas of curriculum, classroom management, culturally responsive instructional strategies, assessment and family engagement?

## WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT BEST PRACTICES AND WHY THEY ARE IMPORTANT?

To meet the needs of young learners, pre-K programs and systems alike are charged with building and sustaining comprehensive, high-quality teaching and learning environments. Research shows that high-quality preschool programs lead to larger impacts on children's development while enrolled and a greater likelihood that these gains will be sustained after the child leaves the program (Schweinhart et al., 2005). For this reason, pre-K programs that focus on and are supported in obtaining higher levels of quality and improving classroom practices are more likely to promote stronger outcomes for young children (Yoshikawa et al., 2013). Researchers identify curriculum, instruction, assessment and family engagement as integral elements of quality (Sharpe, Davis, & Howard, 2017). The literature also points to culturally responsive practice as a critical aspect of quality that impacts the experiences of both children and families in pre-K programs (Johnson-Staub, 2017).



## WHAT DID WE AIM TO LEARN WITH THIS QUESTION?

With our initial question, we sought to explore the variety of ways that SPP providers enacted curriculum, instruction and assessment practices in the classroom that aligned with research and generally accepted principles of child development and culturally responsive or equity-informed practice. A key line of inquiry for DEEL centered on recognizing and documenting the ways in which SPP providers from multiple contexts leveraged human and material resources to provide high-quality early learning experiences to the children enrolled in the SPP. It is important to note that providers reported on their own experiences and perceptions, and the evaluation team captured participant voice (rather than triangulating to exclude participants' possible misunderstandings of generally accepted best practices in early childhood education) as a way to reflect to DEEL the authentic perceptions of SPP providers.



### KEY FINDING 1

*Providers leveraged support from the SPP program, administrators, peers and families to maximize their resources in efforts to provide high-quality and culturally responsive curriculum, instruction, assessment and family engagement strategies.*

**1.1) SPP providers valued children's identities and autonomy and invested time and resources to create classroom environments where children took the lead in their own learning.** They consistently reported and described a belief in child-centered pedagogy and practice. For some sites, this was explicit in their program philosophy, while for others, it was more subtly embedded in their approach. Regardless, the goal of providing high-quality, child-driven early learning experiences motivated practices across SPP sites. Staff consistently articulated a clear philosophy and lens: Children are capable of leading their own learning and should be empowered to follow their interests. Rather than force children to follow rigid activities, staff reported creating opportunities for play and exploration for children during which staff guided and facilitated rather than led. The importance SPP staff placed on child-centered practices was also evidenced through CLASS Pre-K scores for the 2018-19 school year, particularly the Emotional Support

domain. This domain focuses on how well teachers create a positive emotional climate, the extent to which they are aware of and responsive to children's needs, and the extent to which classroom activities and interactions follow children's interests and encourage autonomy. All participating SPP classrooms scored in the high range for this domain, reflecting the commitment SPP staff had to creating environments where children felt valued and empowered.

## **1.2) Participation in the SPP gave several providers access to curricula that helped them refine and organize their practice.**

Some staff noted that it was the first time they had the opportunity to work with an evidence-based curriculum in their careers. It was also the first time many staff had used a formal assessment like TSG. Across sites, staff voiced an appreciation for these resources and how they helped them grow as professionals. Staff noted, however, that implementing the curricula

that were selected for the SPP required extensive resources, especially if they committed to creating high-quality learning environments. While these resources predictably included money and materials, staff also cited ample time and creativity as other requirements for successfully implementing the curriculum. Staff members from one site shared how they compiled the materials they had gathered to complete curriculum studies into homegrown kits that could be used by the entire team. This was particularly useful when a classroom started a study that had been completed by another

classroom earlier in the year, and it allowed the program to reduce unnecessary purchases of duplicative materials. Staff also collaborated with their peers during planning time to generate alternative materials that might be more economical or sustainable. Staff cited time as the most important resource for effectively using the TSG assessment. The struggles some SPP staff faced with materials and, consequently, classroom activities were evidenced by results from ECERS-3 observations.<sup>5</sup> The ECERS-3 contains a subscale entirely dedicated to assessing the quality of learning activities in the classroom. Scores on the items that make up this subscale varied widely and encompassed all possible score ranges (inadequate through excellent). This pattern presents an opportunity for reflection on how materials impact the quality of learning activities and why some sites may be better equipped than others.

We learn by doing things with our hands, by experiencing it, kids helping kids, and kids being learners and kids being teachers. And so just getting down and experiencing things together is a way we're developing that relationship and that communication. And so instruction isn't necessarily from me; instruction is with the kids using different materials in their own way, and then we talk about it and communicate about what's happening. So it's not a lot of instruction that's from us as the teachers anymore.

— SPP Teacher

## **1.3) Following every child's lead could be difficult to accomplish alone. Staff described how their teams collaborated to ensure that children got the individualized care and attention required to create effective learning experiences.**

Within the classroom, teachers constantly shared information and documentation with one another and discussed their insights further during planning time and team meetings. They acknowledged that since they cannot see or hear everything in the classroom, they relied on one another to create a holistic profile for each child. Information shared from collaborating with team members helped staff find opportunities to scaffold and identify connections for children during play that they might not have captured on their own. Administrators also helped by stepping into the classroom and modeling for teachers or brainstorming ways to modify an activity to incorporate a child's interests at the time. In the absence of sufficient material resources to enact all curricular activities, staff utilized strategies for

<sup>5</sup> ECERS-3 observations were conducted in the 2016-17 school year.

creating high-quality learning environments that allowed them to follow children's interests. Staff shared that the foundational best practice was to always think and plan ahead for lessons, especially as an entire team, and to include the innovative ideas of each team member. Doing so allowed staff to identify gaps in resources well in advance so they could generate alternative ideas or adapt the lessons or activities to fit within existing resources.

#### **1.4) Curriculum alignment between SPP and non-SPP classrooms could facilitate collaboration and successful implementation of high-quality, child-led pedagogy and practice.**

Staff at sites with non-SPP classrooms expressed a desire to work more closely with their non-SPP colleagues. They believed that regardless of SPP participation, these colleagues

could be a useful resource for sharing ideas and planning as they likely shared many of the same challenges. However, non-SPP classrooms did not always follow the same curriculum or approach as SPP classrooms, which made it difficult to find entry points for collaboration. Staff shared that if practices in all classrooms at their sites were better aligned, it would create a larger peer support network and provide meaningful learning opportunities for teachers.

What are the goals and aspirations they have for their children? Anything we need to know about them? What are their favorite things? What are things they dislike? How do they manage emotions? Pretty much getting to know the child and the family—how do they feel that their education philosophy is going to align with us and why did they choose our program?

— SPP Administrator

#### **1.5) Staff at many sites emphasized that working with families was critical to successfully using child-driven practices in the classroom.**

While family engagement was generally important to staff at SPP sites, they shared that the time spent getting to know families at the beginning of the program year informed curriculum development as they began to plan lessons and activities. During this time, SPP staff made an effort to go beyond basic introductions and learn about families' goals for their children, their children's interests at home and the activities their children seem to enjoy most. By identifying children's interests and learning from families, staff were able to form small groups based on children's developmental levels and preferences. Staff also used this information to select studies and modify already planned studies to incorporate children's interests. Walking through TSG data together is another way staff engaged families in creating effective learning experiences for children. By triangulating the assessment data with families' experiences at home, staff better understood patterns in the data and how to proceed. Staff also cited the broader community as a key to successfully implementing the curriculum. For example, some sites welcomed volunteers as classroom guests to supplement the curriculum. In other cases, staff asked families for donations to prepare for some activities, though they understood that this could be a burden for some families and did so rarely.

## **WHY THIS FINDING MATTERS**

High-quality, coordinated early childhood programs and services are linked to improved developmental outcomes, lower participation in special education and higher overall achievement in school (Karoly, Kilburn, & Cannon, 2005; Muschkin, Ladd, & Dodge, 2015; Yoshikawa et al., 2013). Programs that have the strongest positive impact on children's growth and development are those that provide comprehensive curricula, ensure developmentally appropriate environments and interactions for young children by well-prepared teachers, and partner with families to make informed decisions about children's learning and care (Wechsler, Melnick, Maier, & Bishop, 2016). For the SPP-enrolled three- and four-year-olds, access to such pre-K programs with important characteristics of quality can lead to promoting the foundational skills and competencies on which all future learning is built (Center on the Developing Child, n.d.). Furthermore, for children who are experiencing poverty and other risk factors, participation in pre-K programs that exhibit high-quality attributes is shown to mitigate the impacts these conditions have on children's development and chance of success (García & Weiss, 2017).



## KEY FINDING 2

*SPP providers struggled to meet the social-emotional needs of all children and identified a need for support to manage behavior as they worked to implement high-quality curriculum, instruction and assessment practices.*

**2.1) Staff expressed that they experienced gaps in how the curriculum enabled them to support every child’s social and emotional development.** Staff reported that having an open-ended curriculum, like HighScope or Creative Curriculum, and the level of child autonomy sometimes posed challenges for children who needed more-direct support and instruction from teachers within specific learning domains. Teachers shared the perception that children struggling with the expectations of the curriculum possibly experienced frustration that manifested as behavioral issues. Staff also shared that many children had experienced trauma throughout their lives and that the curricula did not provide the tools necessary to address the effects of trauma in meaningful and robust ways. In an effort to create better learning environments for all children, sites developed several strategies and activities that they found helpful (see Figure 1).

## STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING BEHAVIOR AND SUPPORTING SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Curriculum Based

- Using the Mood Meter (RULER curriculum)
- Using a Meta-Moment prop (RULER curriculum)
- Using the Calm Down Kit (RULER curriculum)
- Using Mighty Minutes® (Creative Curriculum)
- Adjusting the curricular approach to meet children’s needs
- Having a trauma-informed focus, including self-reflection

### Classroom Environment/Routine

- Using the Mood Meter (RULER curriculum)
- Using a Meta-Moment prop (RULER curriculum)
- Using the Calm Down Kit (RULER curriculum)
- Using Mighty Minutes® (Creative Curriculum)
- Adjusting the curricular approach to meet children’s needs
- Having a trauma-informed focus, including self-reflection

### Teaching Team/Family Engagement

- Holding classroom meetings to discuss issues and challenges
- Having a supportive and qualified assistant teacher
- Engaging families to support self-regulation at home

### Other Approaches

- Facilitating children’s generation of solutions
- Using sign language in lieu of verbal communication during challenging moments
- Employing breathing techniques with children
- Allowing children to express themselves
- Keeping track of children’s behaviors
- Using social and scripted storytelling

FIGURE 1



**2.2) Administrators played a critical role in aiding teachers and supporting children with high social and emotional needs in their programs.** Some teachers described how simply having another person in the classroom to help respond to children and keep activities organized was helpful. Other teachers described scenarios in which administrators stepped in to help them think through the most effective solution to a classroom management issue or to model a new technique or practice to use with students. In cases in which the administrators were unsure of the best approach, they took time to request help from coaches or other DEEL staff. For example, teachers described cases in which administrators requested assistance from nurses or mental health professionals. In addition to joining teachers in the classroom, administrators stepped into the classroom to provide coverage for teachers who needed a break or who felt overwhelmed in the moment and requested to step out of the classroom. Administrators also helped outside the classroom by building time into team meetings for teachers to express themselves, which built a sense of comradery across all staff at the site.

I'm always seeing things through a special education lens and thinking about individualizing and, you know, using information from my background in terms of what would be a good strategy with each student, so there is collaboration and some of my experience has been brought into the classroom to support students, but I'm also trying to do that in a way that is very HighScope friendly, and it can be challenging at times because some students need more direct instruction and more structure.

— SPP Teacher

## WHY THIS FINDING MATTERS

Researchers identify practices that support social and emotional development as being consistent with positive child outcomes (Humphries, 2016; O'Conner et al., 2017). With respect to children's social-emotional development, findings suggested that SPP providers struggled to support children's individual needs, and illuminated a need for additional support and resources. The need for improvement in these areas was evidenced by results from the Seattle Early Learning Self-Assessment (SEA-ELSA). Based on results from 2018, SPP programs varied widely on the Meeting the Needs of All Children dimension of the tool, with scores ranging from 1.6 to 2.9 on a 3-point scale. Most programs scored in either the low or mid ranges, with an overall average of 2.3 (mid-range). In some cases, designated planning time on a weekly basis provided teachers with an opportunity to reflect on the progress and needs of children in the classroom and adjust planned activities and curriculum accordingly. Note that research shows that school based settings may have a more ingrained culture and policies that support assessment and planning that differ from the private-program realities in which some SPP providers work (Hawkinson, Allard Agnamba, Davis Tribble, & Sharpe, 2019).



### KEY FINDING 3

*Staff demonstrated competence in implementing culturally responsive practices, but there were few examples of a more robust antibias approach, such as addressing inequities and issues of fairness, power and privilege in the classroom.*

**3.1) Staff expressed a common value of honoring the children and families in their classroom community and desired to create and maintain an affirming learning environment.** All staff described culturally responsive practices they used to help affirm the identities of children, such as creating a learning environment where children can see themselves in the materials (e.g., dramatic play materials and the selection of books available in the class library). For many, this process entailed taking the time to get to know each child and learning about children's individual interests and things they do at home or with their family. Staff noted that they often learned about the heritage or cultural background of their students in this process. Commonly, staff also shared the belief of the importance of being sensitive to difference and taking time to be reflective of bias. Further, some staff believed that this developmental time period is a pivotal time for children not only to learn about and embrace their own identity but also to build appreciation of and respect for differences.

### **3.2) Most staff described their efforts to honor the children in their classroom as being culturally responsive.**

These efforts fell into three categories: customizing the environment, individualizing instruction and engaging families. With the support of DEEL, as a result of a training about culturally responsive instructional strategies and/or per conversations with their coach, staff frequently made updates to their book and music libraries and dramatic play areas to ensure children saw a positive representation of people like them (as well as people different from them) reflected in the classroom.

On a regular basis, staff also used information they learned about children's interests (and their background) as well as data from TSG to tailor instructional strategies for each child. Staff at one site deployed a number of strategies to ensure that instruction was not just culturally but also linguistically responsive to the needs of their students, for example, through the use of music, reading and total physical response, a technique in which they showed children physical objects and demonstrated physical movements that helped create a link to words they used. Additionally, they used scores from the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test<sup>TM</sup> to develop individualized language development plans. They also encouraged the use of children's home language and partnered with families on ways to help children maintain their fluency in their home language. Relatedly, staff across sites engaged with families to support culturally responsive practice, such as by working with families to learn key terms in home languages and encouraging families to bring in items from home to add to the classroom space (e.g., pictures, instruments, jewelry, clothing, food).

Your hair's a little bit curlier than mine.' 'Her skin is lighter than my skin.' They recognize who's a boy, who's a girl. Children recognize a lot more things than we give them credit. They realize more than we realize.

— SPP Teacher

While SPP sites implemented some best practices for creating culturally responsive classrooms, there is still room for growth, as evidenced by ECERS-3 and SEA-ELSA data. The ECERS-3 contains an item focused on how well classroom staff promote acceptance of diversity. Scores for participating sites varied and ranged from minimal to good. On the SEA-ELSA, scores were more aligned and spanned the meeting and sustaining levels.<sup>6</sup>

**3.3) Staff were asked about their practices related to antibias practices, but only a few shared experiences related to these principles or approaches.** Staff from one site described the importance of being mindful of implicit bias and how bias might impact how one interacts with different students. They also described their efforts to reconsider how they disciplined children and their attempts to figure out ways to implement more-restorative practices in the process. Staff at another site shared how they integrated social justice into their program tenets and strove to build on opportunities in children's play to challenge stereotypes and bias. Additionally, they described ways in which they initiated activities focused on this effort, such as expanding the types of people represented in classroom toys (e.g., adding in people of different genders and skin tones) and reading books about social activism.

**3.4) Generally, these kinds of efforts were reported to result from some combination of the site's or a staff member's commitment to social justice or equity and the emphasis within DEEL standards and supports.** Some participants recounted professional development resources made available from DEEL such as a training around equity and the provision of the book *The Guide for White Women Who Teach Black Boys*. One staff member attributed the site's modicum of success to its community of like-minded individuals: "I feel like if I didn't have so many people in my life over the years who have pushed me toward recognizing myself as a white teacher in a white structure, trying to really be actively antiracist, actively, culturally responsive, that I'd mess up all the time!" Nonetheless, staff were mind-

<sup>6</sup>ECERS-3 data are from the 2016-17 school year, and SEA-ELSA data was averaged at the agency level.

ful that they have much to learn in their efforts to address inequities. Several staff expressed the desire to have more spaces where they could practice addressing discriminatory or prejudicial comments from children (and sometimes from their families), and in effect increase their level of comfort with having these types of conversations. Additionally, staff desired having a space to process very personal emotions and reactions that emerge during tense and difficult interactions at the site.

Analysis of data collected from equity-focused observations at each site confirmed staff competence in implementing culturally responsive practices. The evaluation team collected data using the tool located in Appendix C, which assessed antibias and equitable classroom practices through four key areas: environment, interactions, curriculum and language use. Observations revealed practices such as encouraging children to communicate in their home language and customizing the environment so it reflects the racial, ethnic and cultural groups of children in the classroom, particularly through displays, the dramatic play area and the library (see Figure 2). Additionally, observations illuminated areas in which providers could implement a more robust antibias approach, including addressing inequities and issues of fairness, power and privilege in the classroom (see Figure 3). See Appendix E for a more comprehensive showcase of the results from observations.

When there’s any sort of discipline, we’re always thinking about how are we helping kids mediate and learn from the experience. And be really aware of disproportionality in our discipline data, of our own implicit biases that we might not be aware of...making sure that we’re responding in a way that’s fair.

— SPP Administrator

FIGURE 2

## OBSERVATION OF ANTIBIAS AND EQUITY PRACTICES IN THE CLASSROOM: STRENGTHS

### Environment

Provided People Colors® markers and paint that include a wide variety of skin-hued colors

Documented children’s reflections about human difference and identity through self-portraits

Provided tools, like problem-solving visuals, that promote children’s competence in working on issues

### Interactions

Leaned into teachable moments when children shared curiosity of human difference

Encouraged children in non-stereotypical ways, regardless of gender or ability

Recognized strengths and contributions, such as how children took care of their environment and helped each other

### Curriculum

Made connections between school and home/family life (e.g., after a lesson on garbage collection, the teacher asked the children about the location of a garbage can where they live)

Solicited the participation, thoughts and ideas—including solutions to problems—of all children present

### Language Use

Learned key phrases in children’s home languages, such as using the term “Lola” (Tagalog) when talking to a child about her grandmother

Consistently acknowledged all children’s perspectives with responses, such as when a teacher validated a child’s perspective that M&M’s could be a snack after the teacher said they were a treat.

## OBSERVATION OF ANTI-BIAS AND EQUITY PRACTICES IN THE CLASSROOM: AREAS FOR GROWTH

### Environment

Inclusion of books that could potentially perpetuate stereotypes about people of certain racial/ethnic groups, genders and differing abilities

Limited spaces or tools (e.g., classrooms displayed only problem-solving visuals) for children that fostered fairness and promoted productive communication skills

### Curriculum

Limited instances of activities designed in response to children's observations and questions about identity and human difference

Few instances of staff incorporating language and vocabulary that highlight human difference into projects, activities and book readings

### Interactions

Inconsistent responses to the same types of behavior

### Language Use

Minimal focus on and recognition of human characteristics of children, such as patience and compassion

Mixed responses to children when issues arose; sometimes staff did not help or minimized the situation

## WHY THIS FINDING MATTERS

The diversity that children bring to their early learning experience centers around racial, cultural, linguistic and a variety of other group and individual identities that shape how each child and his or her family experience and interact with others in our world. Very young children, including babies, are learning about themselves and their social identity from birth (Lee-Kennan, 2017). Early learning programs and the educators and leaders that staff them have a unique role in supporting children to develop a positive sense of identity, which contributes to developing self-esteem, confidence and a sense of belonging. Research shows that children with these strengths are more open to a variety of human differences, more likely to be optimistic and more likely to do well in school (Pulido-Tobiassen & Gonzalez-Mena, 1999). A review of the literature confirms these and other benefits from early childhood programming that respects and integrates the cultural and linguistic characteristics that children experience in their daily lives (Johnson-Staub, 2017).





## KEY FINDING 4

*Staff valued partnerships with families as they strove to create a high-quality learning experience, especially in terms of building a safe and welcoming environment for children to thrive.*

### 4.1) Across the six sites, staff shared great appreciation for the families of the children enrolled in their program.

Generally, staff respected the role that families have as their child's first teacher and desired to work with them in the preparation for kindergarten. Staff described the importance of building relationships with families by taking time to get to know them; at many sites, this was not limited to the parents but included siblings and grandparents. SPP providers at some sites did this before the program year started by having a staff member visit each family at their home. Other sites invited each family at the beginning of the year to an intimate meeting at the program site during which the family could build a deeper familiarity with staff and the child's classroom. Further, as staff recognized that families are not all the same, these initial exchanges provided them with perspective on each families' interests, needs and desires and likely allowed them to engage successfully with each family in the future.

### 4.2) In most cases, staff successfully connected with families because of their collaborative approach to family engagement.

Teachers and directors worked together to maximize the potential for interactions during pickup and drop-off, utilizing the time to gather information or provide updates or simply check in on a personal level. One site in this evaluation benefited from the support of a family coordinator who was dedicated to supporting every family. Teaching teams also contributed to information displayed on parent boards or sent out via text, email or newsletter. Additionally, teachers partnered together in preparation for quarterly family conference meetings, during which they often shared educational progress with family members. Recognizing that the reports produced by TSG are not always easy to interpret, a teaching team at one site reserved additional prep time to match visual evidence, such as pictures of children's work, to each domain reflected in the report in an effort to help families develop a more complete understanding of their children's progress. Results from the SEA-ELSA reflect the success SPP staff experienced with family engagement. Scores on the Family and School Connections domain are all in the sustaining range for participating sites, indicating that they excel in best practices related to this domain.

Our hope [is that] every parent gets at least a greeting. One of our biggest things is that you really get to know your community, and that includes knowing the parents' names. So, hey, Jill, how you doing? Hey, Jose, how you doing? We want to always highlight the strengths of each child. And how do we do [that] with not even knowing the parent's name? And I think that's where it starts from. And with what's called a family connection, we get to find out what language they speak, what language they prefer us to speak to their child. Teach us a little about their home language. It starts from the very, very beginning.

— SPP Administrator

We try to meet the needs of each family. Our staff is pretty diverse; most speak at least two languages. So we try to hire staff that reflect our families and [are] able to be culturally responsive to the needs of that culture. [For example], any letters that go out, we really take time to pause and translate them, and the staff help in the translation to make sure that we have the letter translated in each language that's represented by our families. We're also doing that with all of our enrollment forms...The top five languages of the center, we translate our enrollment forms into them.

— SPP Administrator

**4.3) Staff demonstrated their desire to be accommodating to the needs and interests of families.** They valued the input of families, particularly as they developed customized instructional plans to guide each child's development and deployed a number of methods for families to contribute as well as for family members to stay connected. Across the board, staff strove to learn key terms when families' home languages were languages other than English. Some sites also utilized bilingual staff or consulted with interpreters so they could send home information in each families' preferred language. In addition to those efforts, when possible, staff at the dual-language site also helped to translate materials outside of the program as families searched for various services. Staff across varying setting types also noted that they considered the interests and needs of families when they planned classroom or program events. For instance, they made sure to hold events close to pickup time, so families would be better able to attend. Or staff offered a multitude of options for families to contribute to or participate in classroom or program-related projects, such as by allowing those who had the time to come in and help lead activities.

## WHY THIS FINDING MATTERS

The research is clear—children succeed when families are authentically engaged as partners in supporting their children's development and learning. Studies show that quality interactions between young children and their families are associated with significant and long-term cognitive and social-emotional benefits. Along with these outcomes, researchers find that meaningful family engagement in early learning programs supports school readiness and later academic success. Research positively links family engagement in early childhood programming to a number of preliteracy skills, including vocabulary, early writing, book knowledge, letter and word recognition, letter identification tasks, story and print comprehension, and pre-math problem-solving (Arnold, Zeljo, Doctoroff, & Ortiz, 2008). Research also associates stronger parent-teacher communication with higher ratings of children's positive engagement with others as well as adaptive, language, social and motor skills (Bradley, Corwyn, Burchinal, McAdoo, & Garcia Coll, 2001).



# KEY FINDINGS

## EXPERIENCES USING DEEL SUPPORTS

**Question 2:** What are SPP providers' experiences with DEEL supports in the areas of contracting and funding, application and enrollment, quality teaching (including culturally responsive strategies and equitable practices), and technical assistance and compliance monitoring?

## WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT HOW SYSTEMS, POLICIES AND SUPPORTS ENABLE PROGRAMS?

Children and families come into contact with multiple systems throughout the early years. Access and continuity of care are often compromised as families of young children navigate complicated delivery systems, each with its own eligibility requirements, income thresholds and revenue streams. Increased funding, along with improved coordination and alignment across programs and systems, has the potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of pre-K and other early learning settings and to help alleviate critical access gaps that impact the most vulnerable children. As cities across the United States are working to expand access to early learning, the most-successful efforts to date work to align the various systems that impact children and families and take a holistic approach to meeting their needs. Such efforts enable streamlined access to programs and services, enhanced accountability, and the systematizing of equitable early learning practices. In addition, consistent standards and requirements support efficiency and navigability for community-based programs, bolster incentives for high quality, and ensure the alignment of programs and services with a commitment to equity.

## WHAT DID WE AIM TO LEARN WITH THIS QUESTION?

With our second question, we sought to listen to and explore the experiences of providers within DEEL-funded SPP programs. Key lines of inquiry for DEEL centered on recognizing and documenting the ways in which SPP providers experienced DEEL-specific supports in a number of areas, including funding, enrollment, teaching and compliance. It is important to note that providers reported on their own experiences and perceptions, and the evaluation team captured participant voice (rather than triangulating to exclude participants' possible misunderstanding of official DEEL policy) as a way to reflect to DEEL the authentic perceptions of SPP providers.



### KEY FINDING 5

*SPP providers described mixed experiences with DEEL funding and overall support and demonstrated inconsistencies, particularly by site type, in awareness and utilization of resources available to them through DEEL.*

**5.1) Some SPP providers described difficulties with and concerns about the sustainability of funding received through SPP.** They indicated that the funds received from SPP did not fully cover the costs of implementing the high-quality program they operated. Specifically, staff indicated that the costs of operation (e.g., rent, teacher salaries, materials, food) had risen since the program's inception, but reimbursement funds had remained relatively stable. Providers reported that this discrepancy made it difficult for them to continue to provide the high-quality experiences they wanted to provide and that DEEL expects. Contrary to the aforementioned experiences, providers at two sites indicated satisfaction with the level of funding provided by DEEL. They identified that the funds increased their ability



to improve their program, as it enabled them to purchase new classroom materials and plan more family engagement events. These inconsistencies suggested that sites possibly had different funding needs (and perhaps various funding streams available due to context) or providers had different expectations about the funding they received from DEEL (e.g., reimbursement covering costs in full versus reimbursement supplementing other funds).

## **5.2) Inconsistencies were evident in regard to the support received by sites, and these differences seemed to vary by the setting in which each site was embedded.**

While sites largely reported receiving similar types of supports from DEEL, the family child care (FCC) providers noted an additional support regarding business training, which they found to be extremely valuable. Additionally, as a function of the setting, staff at Seattle Public Schools (SPS) sites benefitted from receiving assistance from both their SPP manager as well as their school administrators and other staff personnel (e.g., front office staff). Further, staff had access to additional resources from the public school system's early learning department, such

as an online platform that supports communication between teachers and families. Staff at community-based organizations did not discuss these kinds of additional supports and would likely benefit from supplementary supports such as comparable business or instructional-leadership development trainings for directors. These experiences pointed to some discrepancies in how sites were supported to meet SPP standards and provide high-quality experiences.

It is a bit confusing about who is assessing us...There's lots of visitors and lots of different kinds of conversations often about the same stuff. But it could be kind of confusing about where that's coming from or where that's going and then sometimes there's not a lot of feedback about [it].

— SPP Teacher

## **5.3) In regard to their experiences with technical assistance and compliance monitoring, staff expressed general satisfaction with DEEL staff responsiveness.**

SPP staff were particularly satisfied with their education specialists, describing them to be responsive and attentive when they raised specific questions or concerns. However, administrators shared that at times they desired better communication from DEEL, especially regarding policy changes. In describing their experiences, some staff expressed confusion over sources of support and the origin of some program requirements. This was more common for sites that were part of much larger entities, such as SPS, and for teachers who might not have been directly informed about which elements of their responsibilities were specifically for SPP versus other city or state initiatives.

If you're trying to maintain or up the quality of programs, given all the policies and procedures that we have in place, the funding definitely has to increase.

— SPP Administrator

## **WHY THIS FINDING MATTERS**

Program quality always rises to the surface as a crucial aspect of an early childhood delivery system, but achieving high program quality is impossible without adequate funding and smart funding mechanisms. In fact, the ways funds are distributed can have impacts that resonate through all components of the system: providers, quality, families and, ultimately, child outcomes (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018). Unfortunately, funding and accountability are often two important components of an early childhood delivery system that are misunderstood by families and providers alike. As the 2018 Transforming the Financing of Early Care and Education report helped to illuminate, funding for early learning is a long-building crisis that is not likely to be fixed in the coming years. With

that in mind, SPP has the responsibility to increase the quality of the services provided to children and families while working within existing budgetary and financial constraints that may not always be clear to frontline providers and families. As the program moves to the next phase of implementation, several resources exist that can assist with communicating the issues and considerations regarding the cost of financing the SPP to both policy makers and providers and families.



## KEY FINDING 6

*SPP providers noted key components of the SPP enrollment process that worked well but indicated that improvements would help the process run more smoothly.*

**6.1) SPP providers were generally satisfied with their enrollment arrangement, whether that enrollment was handled by DEEL, by the site or primarily by DEEL with some site involvement.** Among the enrollment-related supports that providers regarded as helpful were policies that allowed consideration of neighborhood schools, support from an enrollment specialist and support from other administrators, such as the FCC hub coordinator.

**6.2) Staff described several enrollment elements that needed some improvement.** Staff at several sites indicated that additional work needed to be done by DEEL to improve communication with families and with SPP sites. For example, staff members at one site indicated that the application became available later than expected, while those at another site indicated that enrollment status and communication with families in general were often delayed, which created difficulties for the site and for families. Staff at certain sites indicated that they were unsure where or to whom to direct families when they had questions about enrollment, and they suggested that DEEL staff get out in the community to get to know the children and their families, as families might struggle to go through the enrollment process on their own. Staff at other sites indicated that they would like the opportunity to get to know children better before starting school, perhaps by improving communication or collecting more information about children and families—such as families' preferences for communication or details about family traditions—ahead of the start of the school year. Other providers described the level of effort required to make sure documents were processed, find out if any requirements were missing and make sure that the enrollment process was successful.

It would be nice to [know] about the children beforehand. At another program, before I even started I had to read these children's profiles to know these children: their behaviors they had been experiencing, the things they'd been through, their adversities that they've had—just to kind of get an idea. And that was the most helpful thing I've ever done in my whole career. It was so helpful to know the background of the child just by reading about them and then meeting them.

— SPP Teacher

**6.3) SPP providers described several technology issues with the enrollment and related systems.** Providers described difficulties with the CHIPS system, including deleted data, an interface that is not user friendly, training that wasn't very helpful and system glitches. They indicated that they would like to see some streamlining among systems used to track enrollment, attendance and children's progress. Staff members at one site also described a delay in being listed on the city website as an SPP provider, which they believed possibly resulted in decreased enrollment.

**6.4) Staff at some sites indicated that SPP requirements at times prevented some children from enrolling, and they would like to see some flexibility implemented around these requirements.** Staff at one site indicated that some families found it difficult to fulfill certain requirements at enrollment. For instance, families who were experiencing homelessness might have difficulty producing the documents required for enrollment. Not all providers were aware of flexibility within the enrollment process. Staff at another site indicated that the age cutoff for enrollment sometimes caused difficulty. While they understood that enrolling four-year-olds was their priority, after all interested and eligible four-year-olds were enrolled, providers wanted the flexibility to enroll children that didn't meet the age cutoff.

## WHY THIS FINDING MATTERS

In 2017, the percentage of three- to five-year-olds enrolled in preschool programs was higher for children whose parents' highest level of education was a graduate or professional degree (46 percent) or a bachelor's degree (47 percent) than for children whose parents' highest level of education was an associate's degree (36 percent), some college but no degree (34 percent), a high school credential (33 percent) or less than a high school credential (26 percent) (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). In addition, research indicates particular barriers for children of immigrants, which make up an important segment of SPP's enrollment (Greenberg, Michie, & Adams, 2018). As the SPP endeavors to serve children and families who research informs us can most benefit from pre-K programming, it is important to consider the integral systems and processes put into place with SPP providers that reduce barriers to enrollment for families of young children.



### KEY FINDING 7

*SPP providers noted key components of the SPP enrollment process that worked well but indicated that improvements would help the process run more smoothly.*

**7.1) Staff across SPP sites believed that learning from their peers was one of the most effective tools for professional development.** They specifically described their time within professional learning communities (PLCs), which had been termed "job alike" days, as beneficial experiences during which teachers gathered and shared best practices or asked questions regarding situations they were facing in their classrooms. Generally, providers believed this was a good use of time and provided a good opportunity for teachers, but standardizing the experience could help maximize the benefit they received. Some teachers shared that while they valued their time with peers, they also worried that some conversations focused more on venting and peers were not always able to brainstorm solutions together. How this time was structured and the goals of this time might also vary across setting and region. Staff believed that at least some of the time spent learning with peers should be consistent so that all SPP teachers felt equally supported and equipped to provide high-quality learning experiences.

The professional learning community] is a space for you to share your things, but [for] a few, it turns into [venting about] having trouble with challenging students. Then [it's just over].

— SPP Teacher

**7.2) Staff across SPP sites shared a desire for increased support with managing challenging behaviors, dealing with special needs in the classroom and implementing advanced techniques.** Staff were motivated to provide the best possible learning experience for every child in their classrooms, but they often felt ill-equipped to do so for children who required additional attention or resources. As a first step, staff believed that additional training during which practices are modeled for teachers would be helpful. However, they believed that effective support must go beyond

simply sending teachers to additional training. Staff also noted that training should be considerate of teachers' schedules, as they often had limited time to participate in sessions outside of class time.

Results from the CLASS Pre-K could help ensure professional development for teachers is targeted and aligned with indicators of high-quality practices in the classroom. For example, participating SPP classrooms scored in the mid and high ranges on the Emotional Support and Classroom Organization domains. However, there was a pattern of lower scores (mid and low ranges) for the Instructional Support domain. This domain focuses on how well teachers foster interactions that help children think critically and the extent to which these interactions foster language development. High scores in this domain are traditionally difficult to achieve, and early childhood educators across the country are constantly looking for ways to improve. In the case of SPP teachers, their desire for more-advanced and in-depth support aligns with the high-quality practices outlined in the Instructional Support domain.

### **7.3) Staff, especially teachers, desired increased access to mental health professionals and other experts who could provide further guidance—both for their students and for themselves.**

Concerns over teacher burnout were raised and staff believed that resources for wellness and self-care could help teachers as they strove to improve their practice. Some staff also shared that the presence of a third teacher might allow the teaching team to more effectively divide responsibilities and provide children with additional one-on-one attention throughout the day. Process improvements might also enhance sites' ability to meet all children's needs. For example, administrative staff shared that coaching and training specifically related to these topics could be more codified, which would provide a better understanding of available resources as they work with the classroom teaching teams. Staff also cited the Individualized Education Program process as an area for improvement. Staff often found that the process was not streamlined, and they experienced long gaps in communication or periods of time during which the status of a child was unclear. These periods of ambiguity created anxiety for staff and could prevent teaching teams from planning effectively.

If we're gonna have children with a lot of [adverse childhood experiences] and children that come from relatively well-off backgrounds, and we mix them together, then they all need to be taken care of. We are trained and educated to teach children at a preschool level. We don't have special degrees in mental behavior, child psychology, trauma. We do these one-day trainings or these few-hour trainings, but that doesn't make us counselors now.

— SPP Teacher

### **7.4) Staff suggested modifications and additional collaboration that would be helpful.**

For example, they shared that additional planning time would allow teaching teams to discuss and problem solve for issues they are having in the classroom. They believed this time would be particularly helpful if some of this time could also be spent with teachers from other classrooms who could share new ideas and strategies. Some staff also suggested hiring a third teacher in each classroom, and some discussed the need for establishing equal authority among all members of the teaching team as a way to better engage in child-centered classroom management.

## WHY THIS FINDING MATTERS

Over the years, the research on professional development has shifted from a focus on content alone to a greater focus on the processes through which professional development is delivered. The degree to which professional development is individualized and emphasizes application of knowledge to practice is now recognized as a critical feature of effective professional learning (Zaslow, Tout, Halle, Whittaker, & Lavelle, 2010). The assumption that a knowledge-based approach is what works best has been replaced by a new concept and compelling evidence that practice-based approaches, i.e., providing interventions and supports designed to influence practice and transform

knowledge, show promise (Zaslow et al., 2010). The goal for the SPP program is to move from an emphasis on learning about teaching to using teachers' individualized knowledge and competencies to develop practices that effectively address the learning needs of children. This approach supports intentionally linking practice to knowledge in an iterative process that leads to effective teaching and positive child outcomes (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2010).



## KEY FINDING 8

*SPP providers identified the coaching model and related professional development as critically important, but this frequently cited benefit of SPP participation was not consistently accessed and utilized in accordance with providers' varying needs.*

**8.1) Staff commonly cited the training and coaching provided by DEEL as one of the most highly valued aspects of SPP.** Teachers in particular described their excitement when they learned they would be receiving dedicated coaches throughout their participation in the program. Over the course of participation, however, staff developed or identified varying needs in regard to training and coaching. At their core, these needs varied with teacher experience and where staff believed they fell on a spectrum of expertise with the curriculum. Some staff were newer to implementing the curriculum and were happy with basic curriculum training, while others had been using the curriculum for several years or in a previous position and desired more advanced support.

I think the teachers really have to bring in their backgrounds and knowledge of culturally responsive teaching to what they do every day and weaving it into the curriculum. I think about HighScope. I went through the training. I don't know that's a huge emphasis in their training. I think they could weave that in a little more and that would be a benefit.

— SPP Administrator

**8.2) The experiences staff shared with training and coaching were inconsistent and suggested that not all staff were able to access the resources available to them.** For example, teachers described varying amounts of time with their coaches and varying experiences with cancellations. Some teachers shared that their coaches spent ample time in their classrooms, while others believed they would benefit from more time. Teachers also described varying experiences with accessing training. Some teachers believed they were not able to attend as many trainings as other teachers due to the location of their program in relation to the training, scheduling conflicts, lack of transportation and lack of coverage for their classroom that would allow them to step away. Staff were also aware that their coaches had large workloads and were doing their best to provide support. As a result, many staff suggested maximizing what they believed were the most effective components of coaching, which included in-classroom observations with real-time feedback, modeling and other forms of active learning.

**8.3) Staff desired a deepening of their understanding and implementation of culturally responsive practices.** Staff reported that, at times, their techniques felt superficial and did not actively promote learning about human difference in their classrooms or promote an antibias approach. While they believed they had done well in obtaining materials and responding to children when they raised questions of human difference, they hoped to more deeply embed culturally responsive practices and antibias approaches into everyday learning. On a related note, staff hoped to

learn how to better support DLLs in their classrooms. Based on their reported experiences, there were inconsistencies in how equipped staff felt to serve DLLs across sites. For example, staff at some sites (especially those in SPS and FCC settings) believed they had ample resources to support children who were DLLs and could fully support their home languages, while staff at other sites (especially in community-based settings) desired more assistance and felt that it was sometimes difficult for them to go beyond using a few simple phrases in a second language in the classroom.

## WHY THIS FINDING MATTERS

Research has consistently shown that effective professional learning systems support teachers in doing their best work with young children (Zaslow et al., 2010). Objectives for professional learning that are articulated in advance and focused on throughout the course of the professional development in a clear sequence that links new knowledge with practice and opportunities to demonstrate new practices in the context of the work environment is evidence-based approach that is currently an asset of SPP. This asset can be emphasized by ensuring that all teachers have opportunities to take meaningful part in these activities, and that ongoing reflection by the DEEL staff ensure that professional learning is consistently tailored to meet both the developmental and logistical needs of teachers within SPP. These findings can serve to encourage DEEL to further define the differentiated nature of the professional learning process and work to hold both teachers and coaches accountable to a process that provides teachers with the support they need to successfully implement classroom practices that ensure every child can be successful in the SPP.



**INSIGHTS**  
AND MORE

**Informed by key findings from the evaluation, these recommendations highlight six key areas: curriculum and classroom management, culturally responsive practices, family engagement, contracting and funding, enrollment, and quality teaching supports.**

This framework provides a guide for discussing potential actionable strategies for advancing early learning in the city of Seattle. These insights encourage DEEL to build upon its longstanding commitment to eradicating gaps in opportunity and preparedness by strengthening early learning experiences so children are prepared for kindergarten. Further, these insights affirm the goal of ensuring that every child has the opportunity to thrive in school and life.

## **Curriculum and Classroom Management**

- In several instances, SPP classrooms in community-based and school based programs used a different curriculum than their colleagues, which may prevent teachers from planning and collaborating using the same resources and tools. When possible, DEEL could consider aligning curricula within and possibly across sites and contexts to ensure teachers have the ability to plan and reflect on similar teaching and learning experiences with colleagues. If curricular choices lead to different curriculum being used at a particular site, DEEL could consider curricular choices aligning to a common framework for curricular and pedagogical approaches to promote internal and cross-program collaboration.
- When administrators were involved in supporting curriculum implementation and instructional practice, teachers reported feeling more successful. To support this important professional learning, DEEL could continue to emphasize the importance of instructional leaders, helping them to develop their own expertise in guiding and supporting teacher practice.
- Teachers and administrators believed that supplementary curricular resources were vital to meeting all children's social and emotional needs. DEEL could recommend a clearly vetted set of supplementary resources (e.g., RULER) specifically to support children's social-emotional development and support SPP providers in integrating these resources into overall curricular approach (through curriculum training as appropriate).
- Teachers were concerned that curricular resources were not sufficient to support the social, emotional and overall learning needs of all children in their care. DEEL could consider expanding Early Childhood Mental Health consultation and special education support for SPP programs, with a specific focus on those programs that do not currently have adequate access to these resources and supports. DEEL could also consider adjusting program policies to encourage direct referral for services from the agency.

## **Culturally Responsive Practices**

- Teachers and administrators primarily spoke about culturally responsive or respectful approaches in response to questions about culturally responsive and equity-focused practices. Because of DEEL's mission and focus on racial equity and its social justice orientation to programming, DEEL may want to further support programs' and professionals' movement along the continuum to an antibias approach, addressing inequities and issues of fairness, power and privilege in curricular approaches, family engagement and professional learning for teachers and administrators. DEEL could work to ensure that common language, definitions and accepted best practices move beyond cultural respect "tourist curriculum" and could meaningfully engage children, families and educators in deepening knowledge and capacity to work from an antibias perspective.



- To support SPP provider progress toward an antibias approach, DEEL could continue to determine the fit and appropriate implementation of both a continuum of practice and definitions to clearly spell out aspirations for antibias practices, as well as an observation tool to help externalize practices around equity and antibias.
- When discussing coaching, SPP providers did not consistently describe the coaching model as having a focus on equity. To ensure that coaching clearly helps educators develop in this area, all stakeholders should be clear that DEEL's coaching model focuses on equity, and coaches could use a common rubric to translate these expectations to coaching practice.
- Supports for DLLs were unevenly implemented, and DEEL could continue to provide additional coaching and professional development to SPP providers related to practical approaches to working with children and their families who speak a language other than English at home. If DEEL decides to adopt a common model for working with DLLs, based on recommendations from Linda Espinoza and colleagues, the model should be clearly articulated and SPP providers, administrators and families should understand the approach.

## **Family Engagement**

- SPP providers reported activities to engage families but could not point to exemplary practices or specific ways in which they endeavored to improve in this area. SPP programs could use support defining and employing (beyond the SPP program manual) clear goals and values for family engagement and meaningfully plan for and execute those goals.
- DEEL could bring SPP family representatives together to define the ways in which families can become involved in determining policy, programming and overall engagement with the program at the department level and at the individual program level.

## **Contracting and Funding**

- Several SPP providers discussed increasing requirements and the potential mismatch of funding to cost of quality. DEEL could engage in an SPP-specific cost-of-quality study, determining the funding needed to provide high-quality services for children in the variety of contexts in which SPP operates (community based, school based and family child care), with the recognition that operating high-quality environments and implementing increasing requirements can be measured as expenses and used in a formula for each context's funding allocation.
- Community-based providers, without a "backbone" organization, appeared to be lacking some of the resources that a school or an FCC hub brought to the SPP context. DEEL could focus on community-based settings when considering increasing funds (or possibly encourage and support community-based providers to engage in shared service cooperatives if available).
- Some SPP programs reported DEEL funding a third teacher in particular classrooms. DEEL could make the requirements for a third teacher, or other unique funding allocations/supports, clear to all SPP providers within the policy manual.
- SPP providers found the support from their education specialists to be helpful. As the program grows, DEEL should consider carefully documenting education specialists' roles and responsibilities.

## Enrollment

- As the enrollment process continues to be refined, DEEL could take further steps to ensure that sites avoid delays, non-payments and delayed enrollment due to system error.
- Not all SPP providers understood the flexibility they could apply to the enrollment process for families experiencing unique circumstances. DEEL could ensure that all SPP providers are aware of the requirements and possible flexibility in supporting families through enrollment and serving children and families in challenging circumstances (e.g., homelessness).

## Quality Teaching Supports (Including Training and Coaching)

- SPP providers sought differentiated professional learning opportunities. To facilitate this, DEEL could do the following:
  - » Differentiate professional learning across all topics, possibly hosting communities of practice as identified by assessment results
  - » Continue to structure peer learning opportunities to ensure that they engage teachers in differentiated ways
  - » Connect teachers and administrators across settings for PLCs
  - » Increase teacher leadership opportunities as peer mentors (across classrooms and contexts)
  - » Maximize coaching resources by differentiating professional learning, particularly for teachers who are at an advanced level of development in their teaching practice
- As a way to alleviate some of the difficulties related to geography, lack of funding and limited capacity to engage in professional development, DEEL could consider targeted or tiered support, planning intentionally for how to use SPP provider time in effective and efficient ways.
- Accessing professional learning opportunities was sometimes difficult for providers due to coverage issues. DEEL could consider the development of a substitute pool of professionals with some background in or insight into education, or early childhood education and child development in particular. It may target its recruitment by partnering with local colleges and universities in the area. In addition, DEEL could offer a half-day training to people interested in being a part of the substitute pool but who do not have a background in early childhood education or child development. This effort may help increase the capacity of substitutes and help maintain a quality learning experience for the children enrolled.
- Teachers described a desire for differentiated training on curricular approaches. By providing, for example, beginning, partial and full implementation training, DEEL could ensure that teachers get foundational training to fidelity and also pursue more-complex implementation as warranted. DEEL could invite teachers to attend selected differentiated training sessions in consultation with administrators and coaches.

# INSIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

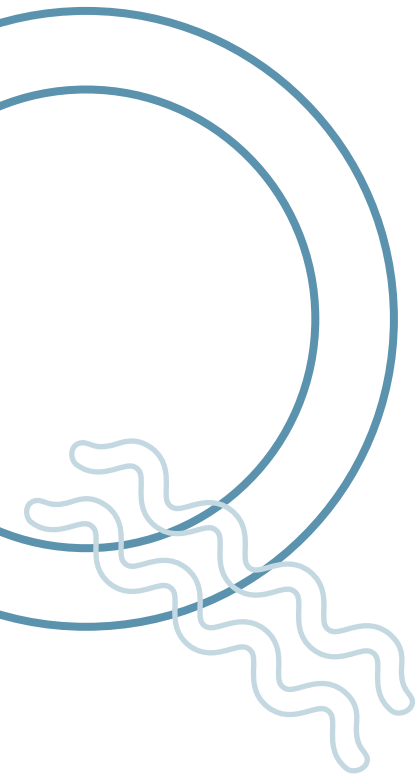
DEEL's efforts to support high-quality and culturally responsive programming are clearly being experienced and felt across partner sites. Several strengths exist across the areas of policy development, oversight and accountability, professional development and technical assistance. As the initial four years of the initiative come to a close and DEEL prepares to grow and expand the SPP, the considerations highlighted in this Insights and Recommendations section provide a starting place for continuous quality improvement. DEEL may consider selecting recommendations to implement that relate to each of the six cross-cutting themes listed above. While all areas are important, DEEL could begin with some of the recommendations that are low or no cost to create immediate momentum (e.g., clarifying policy requirements for providers, orienting stakeholders to the purpose of the coaching model, vetting social and emotional resources). DEEL can then move toward implementation of some of the recommendations that may need additional funding to complete (e.g., professional learning on antiracist approaches, targeted or tiered professional learning, expansion of mental health consultation opportunities). Looking forward, SPP providers and DEEL administrators alike express a great deal of enthusiasm for ushering SPP into the next chapter of implementation and supporting children and families throughout Seattle.



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We would like to express a special thank you to the many administrators, teachers and providers who participated in interviews and focus groups and who opened up their facilities for tours and observations. Your efforts and insights contributed to the successful completion of this process evaluation.

This report was prepared by School Readiness Consulting. As a consulting firm focused exclusively on early childhood, SRC partners with cities, districts, states, foundations and nonprofits to develop and implement systemwide strategies that improve outcomes for children in school and life. SRC believes that the greatest opportunity to create a just society is by enhancing early childhood experiences and affirming the right for all children to thrive.



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## **Antibias approach**

A method that seeks to respect and embrace human diversity and empower individuals to challenge unreasoned judgements and/or prejudices such as racism and ableism

## **Center based**

The term that references sites offering the SPP in a center setting; in some cases, the term community-based organization (CBO) refers to these sites

## **CHIPS**

The DEEL database system used by providers and DEEL to store and track child-related data such as attendance and screening results

## **Culturally responsive practices**

A way of acting that acknowledges and incorporates the cultural customs of children, families, communities and provider staff within the learning environment

## **Department of Education and Early Learning (DEEL)**

The city entity leading the Seattle Preschool Program (SPP) initiative

## **Dual language**

A form of bilingual education in which children gain a rich understanding of two languages via exposure to both languages through daily routines, music, books, activities and communication

## **Early Achievers**

The voluntary quality rating and improvement system for licensed child care providers in Washington that provides early learning programs with guidelines for high-quality care

## **Extended day**

The hours outside of the six-hour SPP day

## **Full day**

Care provided five days per week with six hours per day of classroom instruction

## **Home based**

The term that references sites offering the SPP in a home setting; in some cases, the term family child care (FCC) provider or FCC hub refers to these sites

## **Inclusive**

An environment that is welcoming of and seeks to integrate a multitude of identities—including cultural, racial/ethnic, religious, gender and ability—and that fosters feelings of respect, acceptance and belonging

## **MERIT**

The Managed Education and Registry Information Tool managed by the Washington State Department of Early Learning allows individuals who work in early child care and education to track their education and training experience online, find training by state-approved trainers, receive recognition and awards for their professional achievements, and more

## **Teaching Strategies Gold (TSG)**

An observation-based assessment system used to measure children's development and learning including literacy, social-emotional skills and language acquisition

## **School based**

The term that references SPP sites run by the school district and offered in a school setting; in some cases, the term Seattle Public Schools (SPS) refers to these sites

## **SPP administrator or SPP supervisor**

Participants in this process evaluation who held administrative roles and/or supervised or managed teachers including directors, assistant directors, principals, coordinators and SPS central staff; this term does not refer to any DEEL staff including coaches, education specialists and DEEL administrators

## **SPP Plus**

An educational model that supports the education of children with varying abilities and disabilities led by both the special education and general education teachers

## **Staff or SPP staff member**

The individuals who participated in this process including teachers, instructional aides, directors, assistant directors, coordinators and SPS central staff; this term does not refer to any city or DEEL staff including coaches, education specialists and DEEL administrators



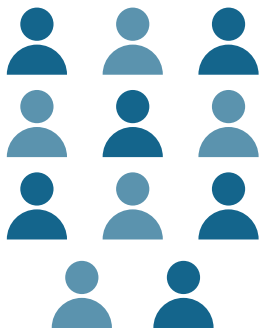
## APPROACH TO THE EVALUATION

In an effort to learn about how SPP providers implemented program standards, used program resources and followed DEEL processes, the evaluation team deployed a case study approach. A case study is a method of research that facilitates an in-depth accounting of a phenomenon and experiences with said phenomenon using a variety of data sources (Baxter & Jack, 2008). This multiplicity is an asset of case studies as it helps build a more complete understanding about the experiences of individuals, in this case, varying types of providers participating in the SPP. Additionally, due to the fact that evaluators collect the data in a natural setting, case studies provide rich context and a more authentic view of the experiences of individuals.

There are limitations, however, of this particular research that should be considered in the processing and interpreting of its findings. First, it is important to note that the findings are not intended to be representative of every provider's SPP experience. Second, evaluators spent a limited amount of time engaging with each participating site. While, to our knowledge, there is no minimum threshold of time to be spent in the field when using a case study approach, it is more than probable that additional field work would have deepened our understanding of the experiences of SPP providers at the six sites, thus providing additional detail and depth of understanding within the research. Nonetheless, we were able to collect a substantial amount of information across an average of two time points. We describe the process and the participants involved in the section below.

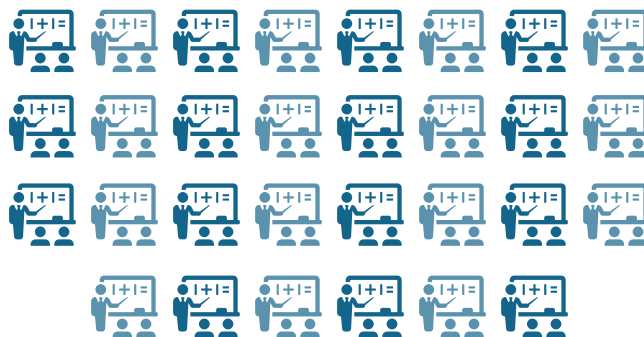
## SAMPLE

This process evaluation involved six SPP sites, which offered public pre-K in a variety of settings: center based, school based and home based. Further, these sites varied in type of service delivery models, such as offering extended day care, focusing on providing pre-K to children with a range of developmental needs (SPP Plus) and focusing on dual-language learners.



# 11

Administrators participated in one-on-one interviews



# 30

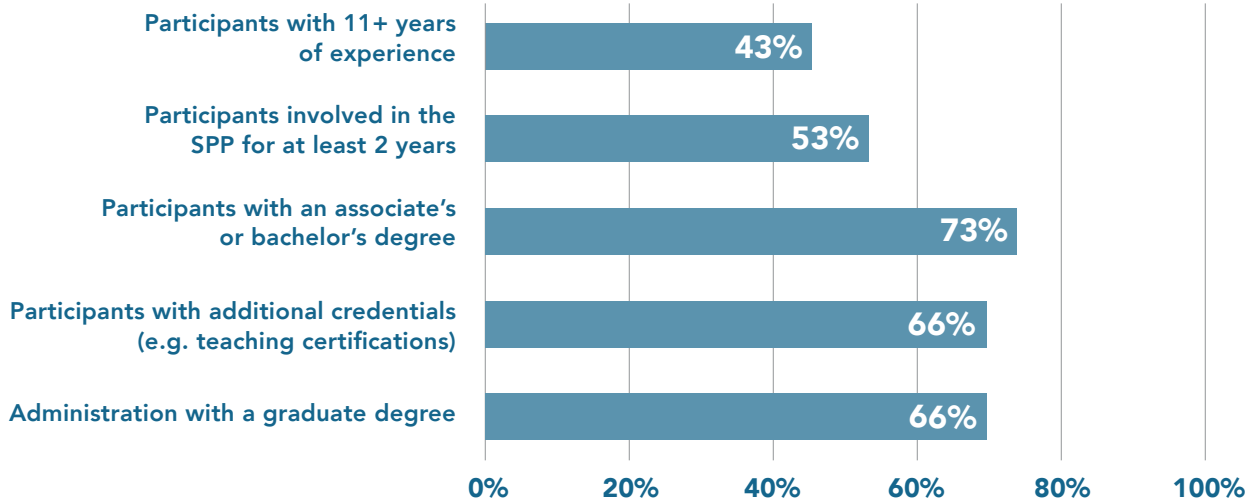
teachers and other teaching staff participated in focus groups or one-on-one interviews



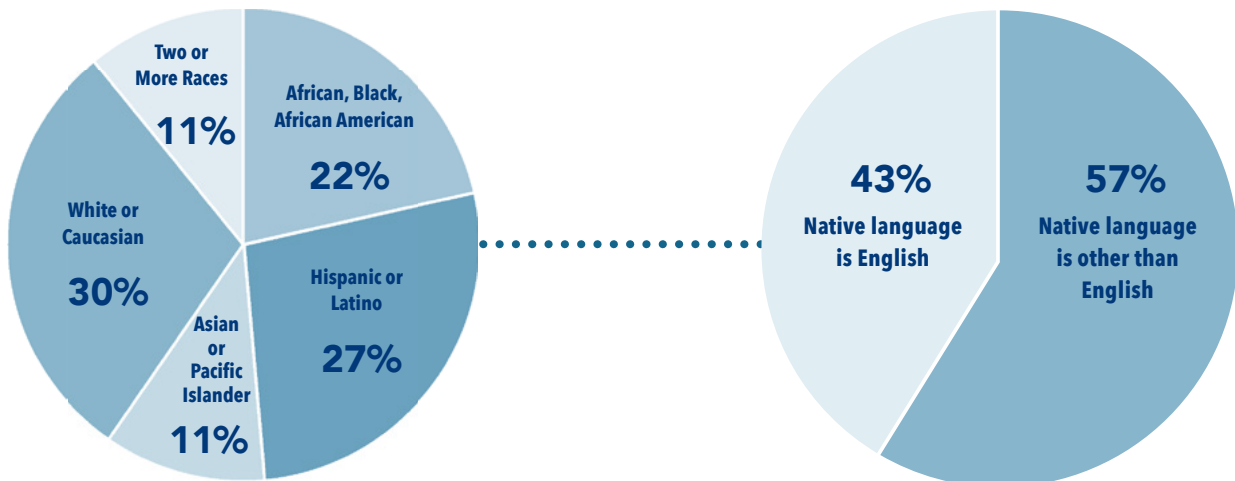
# 10

classrooms were involved in observations of equity-focused practice

## PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS



## PARTICIPANT COMPOSITION



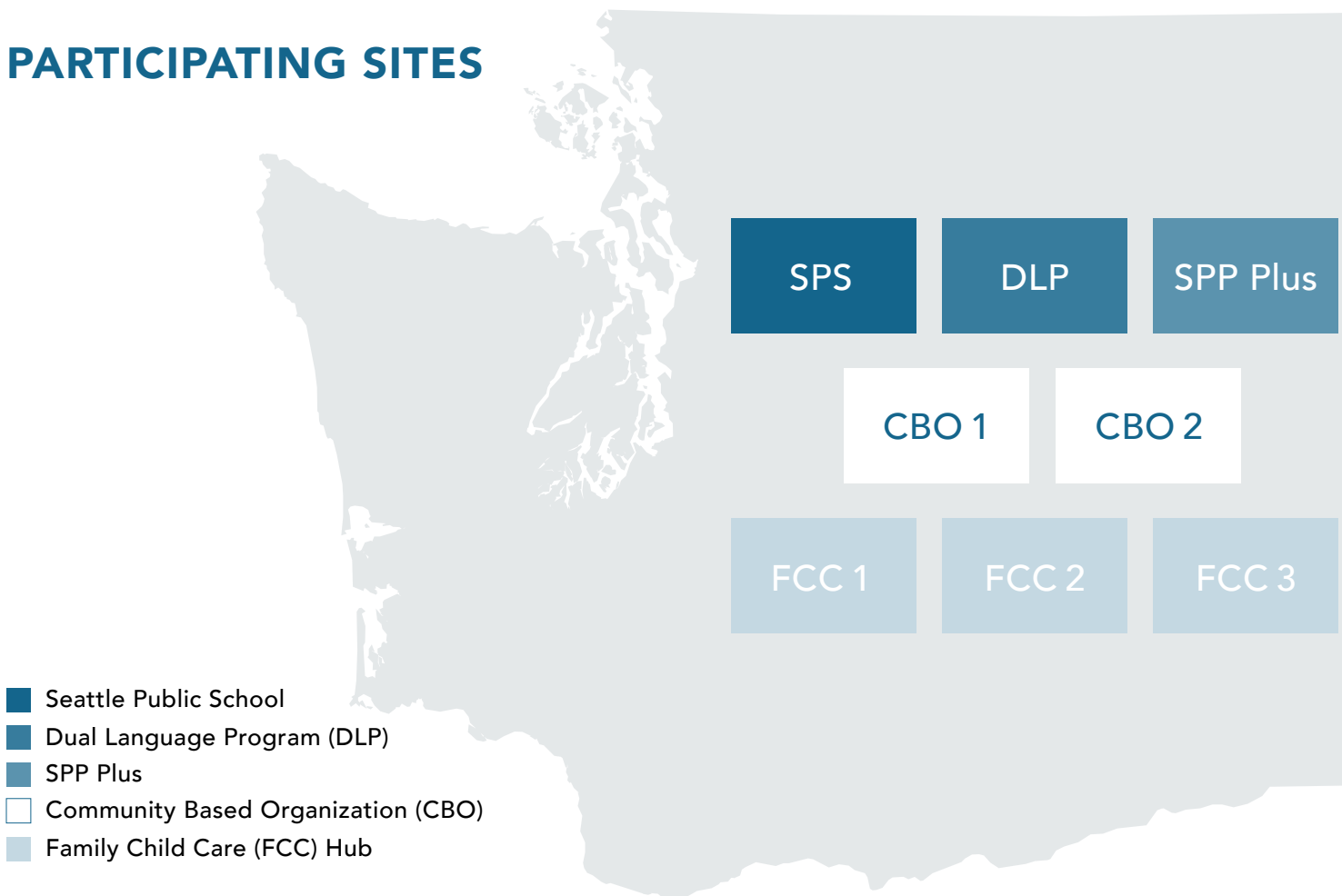
RELATEDLY, **73% OF TEACHERS** IDENTIFIED SPEAKING AT LEAST 2 DIFFERENT LANGUAGES WITH THE CHILDREN IN THEIR CLASS.

## PROCEDURES

**Recruitment:** The evaluation team held an informational stakeholder meeting after a mandatory monthly meeting with SPP directors. During the stakeholder meeting, we introduced the evaluation and answered questions from site staff. At the end of the meeting, we distributed participation interest forms for the represented sites to complete if interested and willing to be selected as a site for the process evaluation in spring 2019. Additionally, DEEL staff distributed meeting materials and interest forms to sites that were not able to have staff attend the stakeholder meeting. A total of 14 sites expressed interest in participating between November 2018 and January 2019. In January, DEEL notified the interested sites that the selection process was underway and they would be contacted by a member of the evaluation team. At this time, sites were also given the timeline for the study if they were selected to participate.

**Sample selection:** DEEL created a list of the 14 sites interested in participating in the research. The evaluation team reviewed sites' fit for the case study by using DEEL's priority categories of interest (i.e., service delivery model, focus inclusion, geographic location and focus on a specific population such as dual-language learners). This approach resulted in the identification of a family child care hub, an SPP Plus site and a community-based organization (a stand-alone site) to be included in the evaluation (n = 3). The evaluation team reviewed the secondary characteristics of six additional sites that had expressed an interest in participating in an effort to identify three additional sites for the evaluation sample with an eye for diversity in geographic location, demographics of children (e.g., race, language, socio-economic status) and site demographics (e.g., funding). In consultation with DEEL, we selected the remaining sample: a community-based site located within a school setting, a site based within a public school, and a site focused on dual-language learners (n = 3). In full, these six sites exemplified the diverse service delivery settings and models engaged in the SPP pilot initiative.

## PARTICIPATING SITES



After the identification of all six sites, DEEL reached out to directors via email to notify them that their sites had been selected to participate in the case study initiative. DEEL provided directors with a detailed timeline for the case study process, a sample schedule of activities and information about the reporting process and notified the directors that the evaluation team would require their assistance with the coordination of two site visits. DEEL asked the sites to confirm their participation within the week. The evaluation team and each site were connected for future correspondence and coordination of the case study initiative.

While all the sites confirmed their participation, one site ultimately withdrew from the process due to unforeseen circumstances that impacted the program's ability to participate. DEEL worked with the evaluation team to identify an additional site based on the priority categories of interest (e.g., SPP Plus). A new site (with two SPP classrooms) that met the criteria was identified; however, only one of the two classrooms within the site enrolled in the evaluation.

**Site visits<sup>9</sup>:** Prior to conducting site visits with each of the participating sites, the evaluation team worked with each site to identify a liaison, a person who would serve as the primary contact person and assist with the coordination of site visits, including scheduling interviews, focus groups and observations as well as recruiting non-SPP teachers for the focus group. Additionally, the evaluation team communicated with each identified liaison either via telephone or video call to learn more about the site, begin identifying blackout dates for data collection activities and continue relationship building.

The evaluation team conducted two visits per site. In most cases, the first visit was a half-day visit (four hours) during which the evaluation team conducted an interview with administrators and an equity-focused classroom observation. The evaluation team also conducted a one-on-one interview with a family child care provider during the first visit. The second visit to sites commonly lasted seven to eight hours and generally entailed additional interviews with other administrators, another equity-focused classroom observation, and a focus group with SPP and non-SPP staff.<sup>10</sup>

- **Interviews with administrators:** The evaluation team conducted semi-structured interviews, guided by an interview protocol, with SPP-affiliated administrators. One team member led the discussion and followed up with probes to ensure we received detailed information about SPP provider experiences. The second team member obtained the consent form, monitored the time, managed the recording and took notes. The interviews lasted approximately 75 minutes and were digitally recorded. Recordings were sent to a professional transcription company and transcribed for analysis. Participants did not receive a personal incentive; however, each program was granted an incentive for participation from DEEL at the end of the evaluation process.
- **Focus groups with staff:** The evaluation team conducted focus groups with SPP and non-SPP staff. The discussion was guided by a focus group protocol. One team member led the discussion and followed up with probes to ensure we received detailed information about SPP provider experiences. Additionally, this team member distributed and collected exit surveys that gathered demographic information about the participants. The second team member obtained consent forms, monitored the time, managed the recording, took notes and distributed incentives. Participants received a \$25 gift card as an incentive for participating in the focus group. The focus groups lasted 60 to 90 minutes and were digitally recorded. Recordings were sent to a professional transcription company and transcribed for analysis.

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<sup>9</sup>Interview and focus group questions and a copy of the observation tool are included in Appendix C.

<sup>10</sup>Due to the nature of the FCC hub, where providers were located within different settings, an evening meeting was scheduled at a central location for the focus group.

- » *Modifications to the focus group process:* The evaluation team was not able to hold a focus group with staff at the SPP Plus site. This was a consequence of the site's late addition to the sample in combination with conflicting schedules within the teaching staff and between the staff and evaluation team. However, the evaluation team was able to meet individually with each staff person and was able to include the perspectives of this site in the research. These interviews were conducted via a video conferencing system and ranged from 40 to 90 minutes. Additionally, due to schedule conflicts, the in-person focus group with FCC provider staff was rescheduled for a time that the majority of the staff was available. A 60-minute focus group with staff from this site took place a couple of weeks after the initial visits via a video conferencing system.
- **Equity-focused classroom observations:** The classroom observations drew from a qualitative reflective tool developed by SRC intended to examine antibias and equitable classroom practices in early learning settings. The tool promotes reflection on four areas of classroom practice: environment, interactions, language use and curriculum. Two evaluation team members conducted two to three observations at participating sites. Generally, evaluators conducted two observations for each site, with the exception of the FCC hub, which entailed observations of three provider settings. For the non-FCC sites, the two observations consisted of either two visits to the single (or the only participating) SPP classroom (n = 3) or one visit to two different classrooms (n = 2). Each classroom observation lasted approximately two hours, typically taking place during the morning.<sup>11</sup> Staff received a \$15 gift card for their participation.
- **Exit Surveys:** Surveys were distributed either in person after a focus group or through a Google form sent via email. The survey form collected demographic information, such as the teacher's or administrator's race/ethnicity and educational background, as well as details related to the SPP, such as the number of years the site has been involved with the SPP and the languages SPP providers use when speaking with children. We received surveys from all sites, with a final participation rate of 93 percent.

**Extant data:** In an effort to deepen our understanding about the participating sites, the evaluation team obtained available data on program and classroom quality. This quality data included SEA-ELSA scores from the 2017-18 program year, CLASS Pre-K scores from the 2018-19 program year and ECERS data from the 2016-17 program year (see the list below for more details). The team reviewed this data after the site visits to explore patterns between previously collected quality data and findings from the site visits. While definitive connections between the two sets of data cannot be made, mainly due to the varying program years and thus the presence of a multitude of variables that may have shifted over time, quality data is emphasized in the findings section to highlight possible patterns of experiences regarding best practices, environment and teacher-child interactions.

- **CLASS Pre-K:** The CLASS Pre-K was used to measure interactions between students and adults in SPP classrooms. It is composed of 10 dimensions, which are divided into three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization and Instructional Support. The Emotional Support domain is measured by four dimensions: Positive Climate, Negative Climate, Teacher Sensitivity and Regard for Student Perspectives. The Classroom Organization domain is measured by three dimensions: Productivity, Behavior Management and Instructional Learning Formats.

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<sup>11</sup>One FCC provider site was scheduled for an afternoon observation. The timing of this observation ultimately shortened the observation from the intended two hours in length to about one hour. Despite this, this observation still met the tool's threshold of observing for at least one hour.

The Instructional Support domain is measured by three dimensions: Concept Development, Quality of Feedback and Language Modeling. A rating scale between 1 and 7 was used, in which a score of 1 or 2 indicates low quality and a score of 6 or 7 indicates high quality. Observations consisted of four 20-minute cycles, with 10-minute coding periods between each cycle.

- **ECERS:** The ECERS-3 is an observation and environment rating instrument for SPP classrooms serving children aged three to five. The total ECERS-3 score represents an average of the scores on 35 items under six domains. A rating scale between 1 and 7 was used, in which a rating of 1 indicates inadequate quality, a rating of 3 indicates minimal quality, a rating of 5 indicates good quality and a rating of 7 indicates excellent quality. To our knowledge, the observers utilized the 2016 notes for clarification when scoring all classrooms.<sup>12</sup>
- **SEA-ELSA:** The SEA-ELSA was used as an informative and reflective assessment for SPP agencies. Each site supervisor along with a team composed of SPP teachers worked together to complete the research. This agency-level assessment is composed of six domains and a total average score. The domains are Diversity, Language and Culture; Planning and Instruction; Meeting the Needs of All Children; Family and School Connections; Work Environment; and Business Practices. Scores for this assessment range from 0-3:
  - » 0 = Not Yet—The agency is not yet working on this best practice indicator
  - » 1 = Developing—The agency is working toward meeting the best practice indicator
  - » 2 = Meeting—The agency meets and consistently demonstrates the best practice indicator
  - » 3 = Sustaining—The agency sustains and excels in the best practice indicator; it is embedded into the agency’s practice
- **Training and reliability:** While the evaluation team did not handle the training and reliability processes for the CLASS Pre-K and ECERS, DEEL provided the following information regarding the classroom observation data collection. Observers were trained on the ECERS-3 and the CLASS Pre-K for preschool classrooms by attending separate full-day workshops. ECERS-3 observers were trained by an ECERS-3 certified trainer and met the ERSI3 reliability requirements for observer certification (each trainee was required to complete three observations with the trainer with an average of 85 percent or above exact matches or one away from the true score). CLASS Pre-K observers were trained by a CLASS Pre-K certified trainer and met the Teachstone® reliability requirements for observer certification. All assessment and observation score sheets were cleaned and entered at the University of Washington by trained staff. The evaluation team did not receive information about the training or reliability process for the SEA-ELSA.

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<sup>12</sup>This was published online at [http://ersi.info/ecers3\\_notes.html](http://ersi.info/ecers3_notes.html) in November 2016.

## DATA ANALYSIS

**Social justice/equity orientation:** The evaluation team’s approach to data analysis included a commitment to a social justice lens. The evaluation team worked to meet this commitment using two main strategies:

- Team members used participant-centered methods and engagement in the evaluation throughout the study, including the use of relationship building, a clear opt-in process for individuals and sites, people-centered data collection through the gathering of voices in ways that were convenient and preferable for participants, member checks, and the presentation of data and discussion about thematic findings and recommendations to participants prior to the formal reporting process.
- Team members conducted classroom observations specifically focused on equitable and antibias classroom practice as well searched for any themes present regarding equity through the coding of focus groups and interview data.

**Focus groups and interviews:** The evaluation team used a qualitative analysis approach to analyze the focus group and interview data. Specifically, the team used a directed content analysis approach (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) in which we analyzed responses using a coding scheme based on the set of questions that were developed for the research. For the coding process, we applied the thematic codes directly to transcribed qualitative data. The principal investigator reviewed 15 percent of the coding data to validate the coding process and ensure that coding did not introduce any assumptions or biases. After coding was completed, team members reviewed each code and began the process of triangulating the data across various data sources for each site.<sup>13</sup>

The team surfaced patterns and main takeaways. This information was later organized into a memo and shared with site liaisons for distribution to all participants. This validation process, referred to as a member check, allowed participants to review the emerging themes and verify them for accuracy. It also provided an opportunity for participants to provide feedback on any misinterpretations. With the exception of one participant, site staff did not report anything to correct or clarify. The evaluation team incorporated the clarification of one participant before moving forward with the analysis process. The evaluation team held storyboard sessions to discuss key takeaways and supporting evidence for each individual site. During these sessions, themes were identified. After this process, the team went back to the data to locate quotes that best illustrated key themes and takeaways for each site. The principal investigator performed a similar process of reviewing codes and developing main takeaways. A cross-site storyboard session was held, and the team reviewed the evidence that supported the developing takeaways. During this process, the team identified themes that captured experiences across provider types and identified additional quotes to include as supporting evidence in the report.

**Observation data:** The evaluation team used a similar approach to the observation data collected using the equity-focused observation tool. Using a coding scheme informed by the four identified areas within the tool—environment, interactions, curriculum and language use—the lead analyst reviewed the notes from both observers for each site, examining the data within each indicator of each identified area. Next, the analyst organized the data for each identi-

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<sup>13</sup> The use of multiple sources of qualitative data (e.g., focus groups, interviews) allows for triangulation of the data to help corroborate themes and phenomena that arise during the analysis. This process also addresses problems of construct validity, as multiple sources of data serve as multiple measures of the same construct (Yin, 2009).

fied area into two categories: (1) strengths—it was apparent that the majority (more than half) of the sites were implementing several practices highlighted in the tool, and (2) areas for growth—a small number of sites (two or fewer) were implementing practices or there was no evidence at all. The evaluation team reviewed this data. Further, when relevant, the outcome of this data analysis was used to inform some interpretations of the focus group and interview data.

**Demographic and characteristic data:** Generally, participants were asked to complete an exit survey at the end of a focus group or interview. In some cases, participants were emailed a fillable pdf version or a link to a Google Forms survey. An evaluation team member entered the data collected from the hard copy and pdf versions of the survey into the Google Sheets spreadsheet affiliated with the Google Forms survey. This data was cleaned and prepped for use with Stata statistical software. Categorical variables were recoded. Descriptive statistics (e.g., frequencies) were run for all variables. More details can be found in Appendix D.

**Extant data:** As described above, the extant data included classroom observation data from the 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years. DEEL provided these data in a summarized format, removing the need for the process evaluation team to conduct any quantitative analyses. Rather, team members triangulated patterns of high scores and low scores from these data with findings from the process evaluation to enrich the story of providers' experiences. It is important to note that no conclusions should be drawn in cases of alignment between the extant data and findings from the process evaluation. There are several limitations in using the extant data; mainly the timing of data collection does not align with data collection for the process evaluation.

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<sup>13</sup> The use of multiple sources of qualitative data (e.g., focus groups, interviews) allows for triangulation of the data to help corroborate themes and phenomena that arise during the analysis. This process also addresses problems of construct validity, as multiple sources of data serve as multiple measures of the same construct (Yin, 2009).



## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR SEATTLE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS

### OPENING – 5 MINUTES

1. To start, we'd like for you to briefly describe your role and how long you have been working at this school/program.
2. How and when did your site start participating in the SPP?

### SPP STANDARDS – 15 MINUTES

Great, now we'd like to talk more about the expectations and standards that are in place for sites participating in the SPP.

#### 1. What do you understand to be DEEL's expectations for sites involved in the SPP?

- *If more information is needed:* What are your responsibilities/tasks as an SPP provider?
- *Follow-up:* What are the expectations of administrators at the schools/programs involved in the SPP?
  - » *If more information is needed:* What are your responsibilities/tasks in regard to the implementation of the Seattle Preschool Program?
- *Follow-up:* What are the expectations for teachers in SPP classrooms?
  - » *If more information is needed:* From your understanding, what are SPP teachers' responsibilities/tasks in the implementation of the Seattle Preschool Program?

#### 2. What strategies are you using to meet SPP standards?

- *If more information is needed:* What practices have helped you meet SPP standards?
- *Follow-up:* Please describe your most successful strategy.

#### 3. Please describe any challenges in meeting SPP standards.

- *Follow-up:* What strategies have you used to try to overcome these challenges?
- *Follow-up:* What changes to the program standards would help you better support your site (teaching staff, students and families)?

## BEST PRACTICES – 20 MINUTES

Thank you for answering these questions thus far. We'd like to switch gears now and talk about common practices in early childhood education that support the development of young children.

### 1. What strategies have been effective in implementing curriculum and planning instruction in your SPP classrooms?

- *Follow-up:* How have you supported teachers with implementing the curriculum with fidelity?
- *Follow-up:* What have been some of the barriers experienced in implementing the curriculum?
- *Follow-up:* What else is needed to support effective implementation of the curriculum?

### 2. Would you describe the approach to curriculum implementation and instruction in SPP classrooms to be culturally responsive? Why or why not?

- *Follow-up:* How do you define "culturally responsive practice"?
  - » *If more information is needed:* What does this look like in an early childhood classroom?
- *Follow-up:* How do you think teachers in your program define or understand equity and social justice?
  - » *Follow-up:* How does this definition translate to their classroom practice?
- (ONLY IF SITE SERVES DLLs) *Follow-up:* How is your site working to ensure you're meeting the needs of dual-language learners?
  - » *If more information is needed:* How are the needs of dual-language learners incorporated into the instruction in the classroom?

### 3. Would you describe the approach to curriculum implementation and instruction in SPP classrooms to be culturally responsive? Why or why not?

- *If more information is needed:* What systems do you have in place to support teachers in effectively managing the classroom?
- *If more information is needed:* What professional development opportunities do you provide to teachers to support effective classroom management?

### 4. How are you using information obtained through child assessments or classroom observations (data) at your site?

- *If more information is needed:* How is this information used program-wide?

- *Follow-up:* How are these data used to guide classroom instruction?
- *Follow-up:* What additional data or information would be helpful in planning for SPP classrooms?

**5. What strategies have been effective in engaging families in SPP classrooms?**

- *Follow-up:* What strategies does your site use to engage families that may be experiencing barriers to engagement, particularly families from diverse racial/ethnic, linguistic or socioeconomic backgrounds?
- *Follow-up:* What has not worked so well?
- *Follow-up:* What is still needed to be able to successfully engage families?

**6. What approaches or practices have teachers in SPP classrooms effectively used to support the social-emotional development of the children they serve?**

- *Follow-up:* What has worked well?
- *Follow-up:* What has not worked so well?

**7. (If time allows) Are there any innovative practices you have learned about that you would consider implementing at your site to help improve practice?**

**8. (If time allows) What opportunities do you provide for teachers to build knowledge and skills in these areas of early childhood education practice (for example, service trainings, professional development, internal coaching, and opportunities to attend workshops or conferences)?**

**9. (If time allows) What opportunities do you provide for teachers to build knowledge and skills in these areas of early childhood education practice (for example, service trainings, professional development, internal coaching, and opportunities to attend workshops or conferences)?**

## DEEL SUPPORTS – 15 MINUTES

We'd now like to understand your experiences with the SPP-specific supports provided by DEEL.

**1. What supports focused on contracting and funding have worked particularly well for your site, and why?**

- *If more information is needed:* What has been most helpful about these supports?
- *Follow-up:* What supports did not work as well for your site?
- *Follow-up:* What challenges have you experienced in accessing supports in this area?

**2. What supports focused on technical assistance and compliance monitoring have worked particularly well**

**for your site, and why?**

- *If more information is needed:* What has been most helpful about these supports?
- *Follow-up:* What supports did not work as well for your site?
- *Follow-up:* What challenges have you experienced in accessing supports in this area?

**3. What supports focused on application and enrollment have worked particularly well for your site, and why?**

- *If more information is needed:* What has been most helpful about these supports?
- *Follow-up:* What supports did not work as well for your site?
- *Follow-up:* What challenges have you experienced in accessing supports in this area?

**4. What supports focused on teaching practices have worked particularly well for your site, and why?**

- *If more information is needed:* What has been most helpful about these supports?
- *Follow-up:* What supports did not work as well for your site?
- *Follow-up:* What challenges have you experienced in accessing supports in this area?
- *Follow-up:* What supports have you used to help teachers implement culturally responsive strategies and practices in SPP classrooms?
- *(ONLY IF SITE SERVES DLLs) Follow-up:* What supports have you used to help meet the needs of dual-language learners?

**5. (If time allows) Please share your experience with any other supports that have worked particularly well for your site and tell us why.**

- *If more information is needed:* What has been most helpful about these supports?

**6. (If time allows) Please share your experience with any other supports that have not worked as well for your site and tell us why.**

- *If more information is needed:* What other supports might have been more useful?

## WRAP-UP – 5 MINUTES

We are almost at the end of our time. We would like to ask just a few more questions.

### 1. What advice would you give DEEL as it moves forward with the SPP?

- *If more information is needed:* What advice would you give an administrator who is implementing the SPP in a school/program?
- *If more information is needed:* What are some of the lessons you have learned during your participation in the SPP?

Thank you for your time and participation in this study. The information we learned from talking with you today will help DEEL better support early childhood professionals and improve the Seattle Preschool Program.

## FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS FOR SPP AND NON-SPP TEACHERS

### OPENING – 5 MINUTES

1. **To start, we'd like for you to each share your first name, role/position and whether you are involved with the Seattle Preschool Program.**

### SPP STANDARDS – 15 MINUTES

Great, now we'd like to talk about the expectations and standards that are in place for sites with SPP classrooms. These first few questions may be more relevant to teachers in SPP classrooms; if you are not a teacher in an SPP classroom, please bear with us.

1. **(Ask SPP teachers specifically) What do you understand to be the expectations for teachers leading SPP classrooms?**
  - *If more information is needed:* What are your responsibilities/tasks as a teacher in an SPP classroom?
  - *If more information is needed:* From your understanding, what are SPP administrators' responsibilities/tasks in the implementation of the Seattle Preschool Program?
2. **(Ask SPP teachers specifically) What strategies are you using to meet SPP standards?**
  - *If more information is needed:* What practices have helped you meet SPP standards?
  - *Follow-up:* Please describe your most successful strategy.
3. **(Ask SPP teachers specifically) Please describe any challenges in meeting SPP standards.**
  - *Follow-up:* What strategies have you used to try to overcome these challenges?
  - *Follow-up:* What changes to the program standards would help you better support the students and families you serve?
4. **What, if any, are the expectations for other teachers and/or school program staff in regard to the implementation of the Seattle Preschool Program?**

## BEST PRACTICES – 20 MINUTES

Thank you for answering these questions thus far. We'd like to switch gears now and talk about common practices in early childhood education that support the development of young children.

### 1. What strategies have been effective in implementing the curriculum and planning instruction in your classrooms?

- *Follow-up:* What supports have you received to help you implement the curriculum with fidelity?
- *Follow-up:* What have been some of the barriers you've experienced when implementing the curriculum?
- *Follow-up:* What else is needed to support effective implementation of the curriculum?

### 2. Would you describe the approach to curriculum implementation and instruction in your classrooms to be culturally responsive? Why or why not?

- *Follow-up:* How do you define "culturally responsive practice"?
- *If more information is needed:* What does this look like in an early childhood classroom?
- *Follow-up:* How do you define or understand equity and social justice?
  - » *Follow-up:* How consistent is the definition or understanding of equity and social justice across your program/school?
  - » *Follow-up:* How does this definition translate to your classroom practice?
- *(ONLY IF SITE SERVES DLLs) Follow-up:* How is your site working to ensure you're meeting the needs of dual-language learners?
  - » *If more information is needed:* How are the needs of dual-language learners incorporated into the instruction in the classroom?

### 3. What strategies do you use to manage your classroom effectively?

- *If more information is needed:* How do you manage children's behavior?
  - » *Follow-up:* What has worked well?
  - » *Follow-up:* What has not worked so well?

- 4. How are you using information obtained through child assessments or classroom observations (data) in your classroom?**
  - *If more information is needed:* How are these data used to guide classroom instruction?
  - *(Follow-up for those involved with SPP):* What additional data or information would be helpful in planning for SPP classrooms?
  
- 5. What strategies have been effective in engaging families in your classroom?**
  - *Follow-up:* What strategies do you use to engage families that may be experiencing barriers to engagement, particularly families from diverse racial/ethnic, linguistic or socioeconomic backgrounds?
  - *Follow-up:* What has not worked so well?
  - *Follow-up:* What is still needed to be able to successfully engage families?
  
- 6. What approaches or practices do you use to support the social-emotional development of the children you serve?**
  - *Follow-up:* What has worked well?
  - *Follow-up:* What has not worked so well?
  
- 7. (If time allows) Are there any innovative practices you have learned about that you would consider implementing in your classroom to help improve practice?**
  
- 8. (If time allows) What opportunities are available for you to build knowledge and skills in these areas of early childhood education practice (for example, service trainings, professional development, internal coaching, or opportunities to attend workshops or conferences)?**
  
- 9. How are SPP quality standards impacting your ability to implement effective practice in your classroom?**
  - *If more information is needed:* What about specifically in the areas of instruction, classroom management, assessment, family engagement and cultural responsiveness?



## DEEL SUPPORTS – 15 MINUTES

We'd now like to understand your experiences with the SPP-specific supports provided by DEEL.

### 1. What supports have you received that have been particularly effective or useful?

- *(Ask SPP teachers specifically) If more information is needed:* What DEEL supports have been most effective in the areas of contracting and funding, technical assistance, compliance monitoring, application and enrollment, and teaching practices?
  - » *Follow-up:* What supports are available to help teachers implement culturally responsive strategies and practices in their classrooms?
- *If non-SPP teachers respond that they have not experienced DEEL supports:* What other supports have you received that have been particularly effective?
- *Follow-up:* What supports have been less effective?
- *Follow-up:* What supports do you wish you had received that are not currently available or that you have not yet received?

## WRAP-UP – 5 MINUTES

We are almost at the end of our time. We would like to ask just one or two more questions.

### 1. If you could wave a magic wand, what would you wish for that would ensure that families in your community have access to a high-quality preschool program?

- *Follow-up:* What would you wish for that would allow you to provide the best-quality instruction to children in your classroom?
- *Follow-up:* What lessons have you learned during the implementation of the SPP?

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR SEATTLE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM FCC HUB ADMINISTRATORS

### OPENING – 5 MINUTES

1. To start, we'd like for you to briefly describe your role and how long you have been an FCC hub coordinator.
2. How and when did your FCC hub start participating in the SPP?

### SPP STANDARDS – 15 MINUTES

Great, now we'd like to talk more about the expectations and standards that are in place for sites participating in the SPP.

#### 3. What do you understand to be DEEL's expectations for sites involved in the SPP?

- *If more information is needed:* What are your responsibilities/tasks as a hub participating in the SPP?
- *Follow-up:* What are the expectations of hub coordinators who have providers involved in the SPP initiative?
  - » *If more information is needed:* What are your responsibilities/tasks in regard to the implementation of the Seattle Preschool Program?
- *Follow-up:* What are the expectations for providers engaged in SPP?
  - » *If more information is needed:* From your understanding, what are SPP providers' responsibilities/tasks in the implementation of the Seattle Preschool Program?

#### 4. What strategies are FCC providers using to meet SPP standards?

- *If more information is needed:* What practices have helped FCC providers meet SPP standards?

#### 5. Please describe any challenges FCC providers have faced in meeting SPP standards.

- *Follow-up:* What strategies have they used to try to overcome these challenges?
- *Follow-up:* What changes to the program standards would help you better support your hub (teaching staff, students and families)?

## BEST PRACTICES – 20 MINUTES

Thank you for answering these questions thus far. We'd like to switch gears now and talk about common practices in early childhood education that support the development of young children.

### 6. What strategies have been effective in implementing the curriculum and planning instruction in your SPP-affiliated FCC sites?

- *Follow-up:* How have you supported teachers with implementing the curriculum with fidelity?
- *Follow-up:* What have been some of the barriers experienced in implementing the curriculum?
- *Follow-up:* What else is needed to support effective implementation of the curriculum?

### 7. Would you describe the approach to curriculum implementation and instruction in SPP-affiliated FCC sites to be culturally responsive? Why or why not?

- *Follow-up:* How do you define "culturally responsive practice"?
- *If more information is needed:* What does this look like in an early childhood setting?
- *Follow-up:* How do you think providers in your hub define or understand equity and social justice?
  - » *Follow-up:* How does this definition translate to their teaching practice?
- *(ONLY IF SITE SERVES DLLs) Follow-up:* How is your hub working to ensure you're meeting the needs of dual-language learners?
  - » *If more information is needed:* How are the needs of dual-language learners incorporated into the instruction?

### 8. How do you support providers in effectively managing children participating in your program or in your home?

- *If more information is needed:* What systems do you have in place to support providers in effectively managing the "classroom"?
- *If more information is needed:* What professional development opportunities does your hub provide teachers to support effective classroom management?

### 9. How are you using information obtained through child assessments or classroom observations (data) at your hub?

- *If more information is needed:* How is this information used hub-wide?
- *Follow-up:* How are these data used to guide instruction?
- *Follow-up:* What additional data or information would be helpful to your providers?

**10. What strategies have been effective in engaging families in your SPP-affiliated FCC sites?**

- *Follow-up:* What strategies does your hub use to engage families that may be experiencing barriers to engagement, particularly families from diverse racial/ethnic, linguistic or socioeconomic backgrounds?
- *Follow-up:* What has not worked so well?
- *Follow-up:* What is still needed to be able to successfully engage families?

**11. What approaches or practices have providers in your SPP-affiliated FCC sites effectively used to support the social-emotional development of the children they serve?**

- *Follow-up:* What has worked well?
- *Follow-up:* What has not worked so well?

**12. (If time allows) What opportunities are available to help providers build knowledge and skills in these areas of early childhood education practice (for example, service trainings, professional development, internal coaching, or opportunities to attend workshops or conferences)?**

**13. What effect are SPP quality standards having on your hub's ability to implement effective practice in the areas of instruction, classroom management, assessment, family engagement and cultural responsiveness?**

## DEEL SUPPORTS – 15 MINUTES

We'd now like to understand your experiences with the SPP-specific supports provided by DEEL.

**14. What supports focused on contracting and funding have worked particularly well for your hub, and why?**

- *If more information is needed:* What has been most helpful about these supports?
- *Follow-up:* What supports did not work as well for your hub?
- *Follow-up:* What challenges has your hub experienced in accessing supports in this area?

**15. What supports focused on technical assistance and compliance monitoring have worked particularly well for your hub, and why?**

- *If more information is needed:* What has been most helpful about these supports?
- *Follow-up:* What supports did not work as well for your hub?
- *Follow-up:* What challenges has your hub experienced in accessing supports in this area?

**16. What supports focused on application and enrollment have worked particularly well for your hub, and why?**

- *If more information is needed:* What has been most helpful about these supports?
- *Follow-up:* What supports did not work as well for your hub?
- *Follow-up:* What challenges has your hub experienced in accessing supports in this area?

**17. What supports focused on teaching practices have worked particularly well for your hub, and why?**

- *If more information is needed:* What has been most helpful about these supports?
- *Follow-up:* What supports did not work as well for your hub?
- *Follow-up:* What challenges has your hub experienced in accessing supports in this area?
- *Follow-up:* What supports has your hub used to help providers implement culturally responsive strategies and practices?
- *(ONLY IF SITE SERVES DLLs) Follow-up:* What supports has your hub used to help meet the needs of dual-language learners?

**18. (If time allows) Please share your experience with any other supports that have worked particularly well for your hub and tell us why.**

- *If more information is needed:* What has been most helpful about these supports?

**19. (If time allows) Please share your experience with any other supports that have not worked as well for your hub and tell us why.**

- *If more information is needed:* What other supports might have been more useful?

## WRAP-UP – 5 MINUTES

We are almost at the end of our time. We would like to ask just one or two more questions.

**1. What advice would you give DEEL as it moves forward with the SPP?**

- *If more information is needed:* What advice would you give a coordinator who supports providers that wish to participate in the SPP?
- *If more information is needed:* What are some of the lessons you have learned during your participation in the SPP?

Thank you for your time and participation in this study. The information we learned from talking with you today will help DEEL better support early childhood professionals and improve the Seattle Preschool Program.

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR FCC PROVIDERS

### OPENING – 5 MINUTES

1. To start, please share how long you have been a family child care provider and how you began to participate in the SPP.

### SPP STANDARDS – 15 MINUTES

Great, now we'd like to talk about the expectations and standards that are in place for providers affiliated with SPP.

1. What do you understand to be the expectations for providers involved in the SPP?

- *If more information is needed:* What are your responsibilities/tasks as an SPP provider?
- *If more information is needed:* From your understanding, what are SPP hub coordinators' responsibilities/tasks in the implementation of the Seattle Preschool Program?

2. What strategies are you using to meet SPP standards?

- *If more information is needed:* What practices have helped you meet SPP standards?
- *Follow-up:* Please describe your most successful strategy.

3. Please describe any challenges in meeting SPP standards.

- *Follow-up:* What strategies have you used to try to overcome these challenges?
- *Follow-up:* What changes to the program standards would help you better support your students and families?

### BEST PRACTICES – 20 MINUTES

Thank you for answering these questions thus far. We'd like to switch gears now and talk about common practices in early childhood education that support the development of young children.

1. What strategies have been effective in implementing curriculum and planning instruction?

- *Follow-up:* What supports have you received to help you implement the curriculum with fidelity?
- *Follow-up:* What have been some of the barriers you've experienced when implementing the curriculum?
- *Follow-up:* What else is needed to support the effective implementation of the curriculum?

## 2. Would you describe your approach to curriculum implementation and instruction to be culturally responsive? Why or why not?

- *Follow-up:* How do you define “culturally responsive practice”?
- *If more information is needed:* What does this look like in an early childhood setting?
- *Follow-up:* How do you define or understand equity and social justice?
  - » *Follow-up:* How consistent is the definition or understanding of equity and social justice across your program/school?
  - » *Follow-up:* How does this definition translate to your practice?
- *(ONLY IF SITE SERVES DLLs) Follow-up:* How are you working to ensure you’re meeting the needs of dual-language learners?
  - » *If more information is needed:* How are the needs of dual-language learners incorporated into the instruction?

## 3. What strategies do you use to manage children’s behavior in your program or home effectively?

- *If more information is needed:* How do you manage children’s behavior?
  - » *Follow-up:* What has worked well?
  - » *Follow-up:* What has not worked so well?

## 4. How are you using information obtained through child assessments or classroom observations (data)?

- *Follow-up:* How are these data used to guide instruction?
- *Follow-up:* What additional data or information would be helpful to you?

## 5. What strategies have been effective for family engagement?

- *Follow-up:* What strategies do you use to engage families that may be experiencing barriers to engagement, particularly families from diverse racial/ethnic, linguistic or socioeconomic backgrounds?
- *Follow-up:* What has not worked so well?
- *Follow-up:* What is still needed to be able to engage families successfully?

6. **What approaches or practices do you use to support the social-emotional development of the children you serve?**
  - *Follow-up:* What has worked well?
  - *Follow-up:* What has not worked so well?
7. **(If time allows) Are there any innovative practices you have learned about that you would consider implementing at your site to help improve practice?**
8. **(If time allows) What opportunities are available for you to build knowledge and skills in these areas of early childhood education practice (for example, service trainings, professional development, internal coaching, or opportunities to attend workshops or conferences)?**
9. **How are SPP quality standards impacting your ability to implement effective practice in your classroom?**
10. **If more information is needed: What about specifically in the areas of instruction, classroom management, assessment, family engagement and cultural responsiveness?**

## DEEL SUPPORTS – 15 MINUTES

We'd now like to understand your experiences with the SPP-specific supports provided by DEEL.

1. **What strategies have been effective in implementing curriculum and planning instruction?**
  - *If more information is needed:* What has been most helpful about these supports?
  - *Follow-up:* What supports did not work as well for you?
  - *Follow-up:* What challenges have you experienced in accessing supports in this area?
2. **What supports focused on technical assistance and compliance monitoring have worked particularly well for you, and why?**
  - *If more information is needed:* What has been most helpful about these supports?
  - *Follow-up:* What supports did not work as well for you?
  - *Follow-up:* What challenges have you experienced in accessing supports in this area?
3. **What supports focused on application and enrollment have worked particularly well for you, and why?**
  - *If more information is needed:* What has been most helpful about these supports?



- *Follow-up:* What supports did not work as well for you?
- *Follow-up:* What challenges have you experienced in accessing supports in this area?

**4. What supports focused on teaching practices have worked particularly well for you, and why?**

- *If more information is needed:* What has been most helpful about these supports?
- *Follow-up:* What supports did not work as well for you?
- *Follow-up:* What challenges have you experienced in accessing supports in this area?
- *Follow-up:* What supports have you been provided to help you implement culturally responsive strategies and practices?

**5. (ONLY IF SITE SERVES DLLs) Follow-up: What supports have you used to help meet the needs of dual-language learners?**

**6. (If time allows) Please share your experience with any other supports that have worked particularly well for you and tell us why.**

- *If more information is needed:* What has been most helpful about these supports?

**7. (If time allows) Please share your experience with any other supports that have not worked as well for you and tell us why.**

- *If more information is needed:* What other supports might have been more useful?

## WRAP-UP – 5 MINUTES

We are almost at the end of our time. We would like to ask just one or two more questions.

**1. If you could wave a magic wand, what would you wish for that would ensure that families in your community have access to a high-quality preschool program?**

- *Follow-up:* What would you wish for that would allow you to provide the best-quality instruction to the children you serve?
- *Follow-up:* What lessons have you learned during the implementation of the SPP?

Thank you for your time and participation in this study. The information we learned from talking with you today will help DEEL better support early childhood professionals and improve the Seattle Preschool Program.

## FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS FOR FCC PROVIDERS

### OPENING – 5 MINUTES

1. To start, we'd like for you to each share your first name, your role/position and how you are involved with the Seattle Preschool Program.

### SPP STANDARDS – 15 MINUTES

Great, now we'd like to talk about the expectations and standards that are in place for providers affiliated with SPP.

1. What do you understand to be the expectations for providers engaged in SPP?

- *If more information is needed:* What are your responsibilities/tasks as an SPP provider in the implementation of the Seattle Preschool Program?

2. What strategies are you using to meet SPP standards?

- *If more information is needed:* What practices have helped you meet SPP standards?
- *Follow-up:* Please describe your most successful strategy.

3. Please describe any challenges in meeting SPP standards.

- *Follow-up:* What strategies have you used to try to overcome these challenges?
- *Follow-up:* What changes to the program standards would help you better support the students and families you serve?

4. What, if any, are the expectations for other teachers and/or school/program staff in regard to the implementation of the Seattle Preschool Program?

### BEST PRACTICES – 20 MINUTES

Thank you for answering these questions thus far. We'd like to switch gears now and talk about common practices in early childhood education that support the development of young children.

1. What strategies have been effective in implementing curriculum and planning instruction?

- *Follow-up:* What supports have you received to help you implement the curriculum with fidelity?
- *Follow-up:* What have been some of the barriers you've experienced when implementing the curriculum?
- *Follow-up:* What else is needed to support the effective implementation of the curriculum?

**2. Would you describe the approach to curriculum implementation and instruction at your site to be culturally responsive? Why or why not?**

- *Follow-up:* How do you define “culturally responsive practice”?
- *If more information is needed:* What does this look like in an early childhood setting?
- *Follow-up:* How do you define or understand equity and social justice?
- *Follow-up:* How consistent is the definition or understanding of equity and social justice across your program/school?

**3. (ONLY IF SITE SERVES DLLs) Follow-up: How are you working to ensure you’re meeting the needs of dual-language learners?**

- *If more information is needed:* How are the needs of dual-language learners incorporated into the instruction?

**4. What strategies do you use to manage children’s behavior in your program or home effectively?**

- *If more information is needed:* How do you manage children’s behavior?
- *Follow-up:* What has worked well?
- *Follow-up:* What has not worked so well?

**5. How are you using information obtained through child assessments or classroom observations (data)?**

- *Follow-up:* How are these data used to guide classroom instruction?
- *Follow up for those involved with SPP:* What additional data or information would be helpful in planning if you have an SPP-affiliated site?

**6. What strategies have been effective for family engagement?**

- *Follow-up:* What strategies do you use to engage families that may be experiencing barriers to engagement, particularly families from diverse racial/ethnic, linguistic or socioeconomic backgrounds?
- *Follow-up:* What has not worked so well?
- *Follow-up:* What is still needed to be able to successfully engage families?

**7. What strategies have been effective for family engagement?**

- *Follow-up:* What has worked well?
- *Follow-up:* What has not worked so well?

**8. (If time allows) Are there any innovative practices you have learned about that you would consider implementing to help improve practice?**

**9. (If time allows) What opportunities are available for you to build knowledge and skills in these areas of early childhood education practice (for example, service trainings, professional development, internal coaching, or opportunities to attend workshops or conferences)?**

**10. How are SPP quality standards impacting your ability to implement effective practice in your classroom?**

- *If more information is needed:* What about specifically in the areas of instruction, classroom management, assessment, family engagement and cultural responsiveness?

## **DEEL SUPPORTS – 15 MINUTES**

We'd now like to understand your experiences with the SPP-specific supports provided by DEEL.

**1. What supports have you received that have been particularly effective or useful?**

- *If more information is needed:* What DEEL supports have been most effective in the areas of contracting and funding, technical assistance, compliance monitoring, application and enrollment, and teaching practices?
  - » *Follow-up:* What supports are available to help teachers implement culturally responsive strategies and practices?
- *Follow-up:* What supports have been less effective?
- *Follow-up:* What supports do you wish you had received that are not currently available or that you have not yet received?

## WRAP-UP – 5 MINUTES

We are almost at the end of our time. We would like to ask just one or two more questions.

**1. If you could wave a magic wand, what would you wish for to ensure that families in your community have access to high-quality preschool?**

- *Follow-up:* What would you wish for that would allow you to provide the best-quality instruction to the children you serve?
- *Follow-up:* What lessons have you learned during the implementation of the SPP?

Thank you for your time and participation in this study. The information we learned from talking with you today will help DEEL better support early childhood professionals and improve the Seattle Preschool Program.

## THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EQUITY-FOCUSED CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT TOOL

### About the Tool

The Early Childhood Equity-Focused Classroom Assessment Tool is designed to facilitate a process that cultivates teachers' developing awareness of instructional practices that are culturally responsive and promote an equitable early learning environment for children from birth to five years old.

### How to Use the Tool

The Early Childhood Equity-Focused Classroom Assessment Tool is used to capture the conversation—teaching and learning interactions between teachers and children in early childhood settings in real time. The observations consist of observers recording direct notes of what is seen and heard without adding any implied interpretations or trying to draw conclusions about why something is or is not occurring. For example, if an adult mispronounces a child's name and the child corrects the adult, this interaction should be recorded without trying to add why the observer thinks this happened.

The tool has four core areas with a number of indicators in each area. For the Seattle Preschool Program process evaluation, observers will note all four focus areas within the tool during each two-hour classroom observation window.<sup>14</sup> Some of the indicators will be observable, while some may need to be further discussed with the adult(s) observed to gain clarity about what took place. It may be helpful to use the set of postobservation interview questions to gather evidence for some of the less observable indicators.



<sup>14</sup>It is ideal to conduct two two-hour classroom observations for each selected case study site. This tool has a debrief component after the observations because the tool is not being used for professional development training but instead in a research context.

## THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EQUITY-FOCUSED CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT TOOL

**Name of Observer:**

**Name of Teacher Being Observed:**

**Program Name:**

**Date:**

**Start Time:**

**End Time:**

**Focus Area(s):**

Symbol	Indicator
*	Appropriate for preschool-age children only

### Focus Area: ENVIRONMENT

Indicators	Evidence Notes
<p><b>1. Materials in the environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect and incorporate the ethnic and cultural heritage of children in the classroom through real-life images and objects in an authentic and familiar way (e.g., pictures, toys, dolls, puppets)</li> <li>• Reinforce positive images of children’s racial, cultural and linguistic groups and the surrounding community, including showing people within groups enjoying a variety of activities, living in different settings and participating in various family structures</li> <li>• Show people from different racial or cultural groups interacting positively with one another</li> </ul>	
<p><b>2. Books reflect</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The race and ethnicity of the children in the classroom, their families and the surrounding community</li> <li>• The multiple languages that are native to the children and families in the classroom</li> <li>• The diversity of religions, faiths and beliefs observed by children and their families</li> <li>• Characters, actions and roles that allow children to see themselves based on interests and capabilities rather than gender</li> </ul>	

Indicators	Evidence Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family structures that are representative of classroom families and of the larger community</li> <li>A range of economic circumstances that are portrayed factually and without judgment</li> <li>Children with differing abilities as competent and comfortable asking for help as they need it</li> </ul>	
<p><b>3. Play spaces and interest areas include materials (e.g., dress-up clothing) or have themes (e.g., play kitchen with foods and accessories) that accurately and nonstereotypically reflect the backgrounds of different racial and ethnic groups—especially those of the children in the classroom.*</b></p>	
<p><b>4. Adult displays documentation of children’s reflections and conversations about human differences and related themes.</b></p>	
<p><b>5. The classroom is designed to promote children’s competence in working on issues of fairness and justice in relevant and appropriate ways (e.g., there is a conversation corner with related accessories to promote productive communication, such as equity sticks, visuals to show problem-solving steps and puppets to promote perspective taking).*</b></p>	

## Focus Area: INTERACTIONS

Indicators	Evidence Notes
<p><b>1. Adult interacts with all children, reinforcing children’s strengths, responding to similar behaviors in similar ways and recognizing positive contributions to the learning community.</b></p>	
<p><b>2. Adult responds to children’s questions about human difference (e.g., skin color, hair texture, family structure, differing abilities) or supports children’s natural curiosity.</b></p>	



Indicators	Evidence Notes
<p>3. <b>Adult redirects inaccurate information shared by children using messages of superiority or oppression by creating a teachable moment (e.g., child: Jake can't play with me because he wears eyeglasses; adult: Jake is able to play and enjoys playing just like you do).</b></p>	
<p>4. <b>Adult encourages children in nonstereotypical ways (e.g., both girls and boys are equally encouraged to engage in active physical play and dramatic play).</b></p>	
<p>5. <b>Adult and children use the given names of children in all interactions (e.g., nicknames are not assigned to children or adults because given names are "difficult" to pronounce).</b></p>	

## Focus Area: CURRICULUM

Indicators	Evidence Notes
<p>1. <b>Adult builds on children's observations and questions to design activities that promote the development of strong identity in children pertaining to physical attributes (e.g., hair color/texture, eye color, skin color) and individual characteristics (e.g., race, class, gender, home language, religion, family structure).</b></p>	
<p>2. <b>Conversations and experiences in the classroom include and show respect for the thoughts, ideas and participation of all children present and are designed to do so without bias.</b></p>	
<p>3. <b>Adult demonstrates that the experiences children and families have outside the classroom are equally important as what is learned in the classroom (e.g., teachers ask children and families to share what they do at home and what values, beliefs and behaviors are important to them).</b></p>	
<p>4. <b>Adult incorporates language and vocabulary into projects, activities and book readings that highlight human differences (e.g., maintain a word wall and including sentence starters in All About Me books that prompt children to describe hair, skin color, etc.).</b></p>	

Indicators	Evidence Notes
<p>5. <b>Adult invites children to take action against and discuss the impact of unfairness, rigid gender roles, misuse of power and so on (e.g., restricting the use of materials or play space based on gender, ability).</b></p>	

## Focus Area: LANGUAGE USAGE

Indicators	Evidence Notes
<p>1. <b>Adult uses words that help children treat differences with respect (e.g., adult to child: It is OK if Mark walks differently than you).</b></p>	
<p>2. <b>Adult uses probing and clarifying techniques to assist children to answer (e.g., rephrasing the question; asking a related question; giving the child a hint, clue or prompt).</b></p>	
<p>3. <b>Adult acknowledges and validates all children's perspectives with responses (e.g., adult to child: That's one idea. Does anyone else have another?).</b></p>	
<p>4. <b>Adult asks higher-order-thinking questions of all children (e.g., analysis questions, synthesis questions and evaluation questions).</b></p>	
<p>5. <b>Adult comments on human characteristics of one another and children (e.g., adult to child: That was very kind. I appreciate the way you care for our classroom), rather than focusing on material possessions (e.g., adult to child: Your sneakers are so cool).</b></p>	
<p>6. <b>Children are encouraged to speak their home language, and educators learns key phrases in each child's language when possible.</b></p>	
<p>7. <b>Adult helps children to develop appropriate responses when they experience themselves or others being treated unfairly (e.g., adult to child: Tell Jon how that makes you feel).</b></p>	

Table 1. **Descriptive Statistics on Provider Demographics**

<i>Variable</i>	
<b>Provider Type</b>	
Center based	56.76%
Home based	21.62%
School based	21.62%
<b>Years Involved in SPP</b>	
One year	46.67%
Two years	30.00%
Three or more years	23.33%
<b>Role Within Program</b>	
Lead teacher	48.65%
Assistant teacher <sup>15</sup>	29.73%
Director, principal or hub coordinator	13.51%
Other administrative staff	8.11%
<b>Years of Experience</b>	
Less than 5 years	24.32%
5 to 10 years	32.43%
11 to 20 years	24.32%
More than 20 years	18.92%

<sup>15</sup>This term includes any supporting staff including instructional assistants.

# APPENDIX D: DEMOGRAPHICS OF PARTICIPANTS

## Highest Education Level

HS Diploma or GED	10.81%
Some college	8.11%
Associate's degree	24.32%
Bachelor's degree	35.14%
Graduate degree	21.62%

## Teaching Credentials

Teacher certificate	13.33%
Child Development Associate® (CDA) credential	23.33%
Teacher certificate and CDA	6.67%
Teacher certificate and license	6.67%
CDA plus early childhood education (ECE) certificate	6.67%
Other credentials	10.00%
No teaching credentials	33.33%

## Native Language

English	43.24%
Spanish	27.03%
Somali	13.51%
Other language	16.22%

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<sup>15</sup>This term includes any supporting staff including instructional assistants.

# APPENDIX D: DEMOGRAPHICS OF PARTICIPANTS

## Number of Languages Spoken in Class

One language (English)	25.00%
Two languages	41.67%
Three languages	16.67%
Four or more languages	16.67%

## Race/Ethnicity

African, African American or Black	21.62%
Hispanic or Latinx	27.03%
Asian or Pacific Islander	10.81%
Biracial or multiracial	10.81%
White	29.73%

Table 2. **Descriptive Statistics Regarding Teacher and Administrator Demographics**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Teacher (n = 29)</i>	<i>Administrator (n = 8)</i>	<i>χ<sup>2</sup></i>
<b>Highest Education Level</b>			10.70*
HS diploma or GED	13.79%		
Some college	10.34%		
Associate's degree	27.59%	12.50%	
Bachelor's degree	37.93%	25.00%	
Graduate degree	10.34%	62.50%	

# APPENDIX D: DEMOGRAPHICS OF PARTICIPANTS

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Teacher (n = 29)</i>	<i>Administrator (n = 8)</i>	<i>χ<sup>2</sup></i>
<b>Teaching Credentials</b>	(n = 29)	(n = 1) <sup>16</sup>	3.39
Teacher certificate	13.79%		
CDA	20.69%	100%	
Teacher certificate and CDA	6.90%		
Teacher certificate and license	6.90%		
CDA plus ECE certificate	6.90%		
Other credentials	10.34%		
No teaching credentials	34.48%		
<b>Native Language</b>	(n = 29)	(n = 8)	9.36*
English	48.28%	25.00%	
Spanish	27.59%	25.00%	
Somali	17.24%		
Other language	6.90%	50.00%	
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	(n = 29)	(n = 8)	3.15
African, African American or Black	20.69%	25.00%	
Hispanic or Latinx	27.59%	25.00%	
Asian or Pacific Islander	6.90%	25.00%	
Biracial or multiracial	13.79%	-	
White	31.03%	25.00%	

Note: Other language = Arabic, Cantonese, French, Laos, Slovak, Vietnamese; \* p < .05

<sup>16</sup>Only one administrator reported having teaching credentials.

# APPENDIX D: DEMOGRAPHICS OF PARTICIPANTS

Table 3. **Descriptive Statistics Regarding Center Based, School Based, and Home Based Providers' Demographics**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>CB (n = 21)</i>	<i>SB (n = 8)</i>	<i>HB (n = 8)</i>	<i>χ<sup>2</sup></i>
<b>Highest Education Level</b>				13.75
HS diploma or GED	4.76%		37.50%	
Some college	9.52%		12.50%	
Associate's degree	23.81%	12.50%	37.50%	
Bachelor's degree	42.86%	50.00%		
Graduate degree	19.05%	37.50%		
<b>Teaching Credentials</b>				9.23
Teacher certificate	6.25%	28.57%	14.29%	
CDA	18.75%	14.29%	42.86%	
Teacher certificate and CDA	6.25%		14.29%	
Teacher certificate and license	6.25%	14.29%		
CDA plus ECE certificate	12.50%			
Other credentials	12.50%		14.29%	
No teaching credentials	37.50%	42.86%	14.29%	
<b>Native Language</b>				30.70***
English	33.33%	87.50%	25.00%	
Spanish	47.62%			
Somali			62.50%	
Other language	19.05%	12.50%	12.50%	

# APPENDIX D: DEMOGRAPHICS OF PARTICIPANTS

<i>Variable</i>	<i>CB</i> <i>(n = 21)</i>	<i>SB</i> <i>(n = 8)</i>	<i>HB</i> <i>(n = 8)</i>	<i>x<sup>2</sup></i>
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>				47.00***
African, African American or Black			100%	
Hispanic or Latinx	47.62%			
Asian or Pacific Islander	14.29%	12.50%		
Biracial or multiracial	14.29%	12.50%		
White	23.81%	75.00%		

Note: CB = center based, SB = school based, HB = Home based; \* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001



Table 4. **Strengths and Areas for Growth in Equity-Focused Classroom Practices: Environment**

Areas for Growth

Environment Indicators	Strengths	Areas for Growth	Examples
Materials	X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People Colors markers and paint contained colors that represented a wide variety of skin tones</li> <li>• Cultural artifacts, such as fabric and jewelry in areas like the dramatic play area, represented children in the classroom</li> <li>• Calendars and puzzles contained positive images of people similar to children in the classroom</li> </ul>
Books	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People Colors markers and paint contained colors that represented a wide variety of skin tones</li> <li>• Books showcased different types of family structures, such as being raised by grandparents or having divorced parents</li> <li>• Books were written in more than one language</li> </ul>
Books	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some sites had books that potentially could perpetuate stereotypes about people of certain racial/ethnic groups, genders and abilities</li> <li>• A limited selection of books featured a range of economic circumstances without judgment</li> </ul>
Play Spaces	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Materials in play spaces— such as a play kitchen with a wide variety of foods including tortillas, sticky rice, tea—accurately and nonstereotypically reflected the children in the classroom</li> </ul>
Play Spaces	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some, but not all, sites included clothing such as dresses made from Ankara print or with specific patterns made through embroidery as well as kimonos, hijabs and kaftans</li> </ul>

Environment Indicators	Strengths	Areas for Growth	Examples
Displays		X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some, but not all, sites had some documentation of children’s reflections and conversations about human differences through self-portraits focused on identity</li> </ul>
Setup	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many sites had at least one type of space or tool—such as mood meters/feelings charts, problem-solving visuals, puppets that could be used for perspective taking that foster fairness and promote productive communication—that promoted children’s competence in working on issues</li> </ul>

Table 5. **Strengths and Areas for Growth in Equity-Focused Classroom Practices: Interactions**

Interactions Indicators	Strengths	Areas for Growth	Examples
Recognition of Strengths and Contributions and Consistent Responses to Same Behaviors	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers frequently remarked on how children were being safe, taking care of their environment and helping another person</li> </ul>
Recognition of Strengths and Contributions and Consistent Responses to Same Behaviors	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At some but not all sites, there were inconsistencies in responses to the same types of behavior</li> </ul>
Support of Curiosity	X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There were instances when children noted human differences, such as when a child made a comment about two adults having similar hair and skin color; the teacher did not ignore the comment and responded with agreement to his observation, “Yes, we do have similar hair textures”</li> </ul>

Interactions Indicators	Strengths	Areas for Growth	Examples
Redirection/ Teachable Moments <sup>17</sup>			
Encouragement	X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers frequently encouraged children in nonstereotypical ways, regardless of gender or ability, such as when a young child who appeared to be a boy wanted to wear a dress but another child picked it up first, he was told he would get a chance when the first child was done; later on, the teacher helped him put on the dress</li> </ul>
Names	X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers consistently referred to children using their given names</li> </ul>

Table 6. **Strengths and Areas for Growth in Equity-Focused Classroom Practices: Curriculum**

Areas for Growth

Interactions Indicators	Strengths	Areas for Growth	Examples
Activities About Identity		X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This was not observed; an example of this could be a teacher planning an activity about different head pieces that people wear after a child inquired whether a sweatshirt hood is the same as a hijab</li> </ul>
Inclusivity <sup>18</sup>	X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Teachers frequently solicited the thoughts, ideas and participation of all children present and were responsive and respectful to children's ideas and thoughts, including their solutions to problems</li> </ul>

<sup>18</sup>See the glossary for a definition of this term.

Interactions Indicators	Strengths	Areas for Growth	Examples
Value of Home Life	X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers frequently showcased their interest in and the importance of home or family life throughout the day, such as during lunch when children were asked if they eat jicama at home or after a lesson about garbage collection and children were asked where the garbage can is at their house</li> </ul>
Use of Language to Promote Identity		X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This was not observed; an example of this could be the teacher maintaining a word wall and including sentence starters that help children describe hair</li> </ul>
Action Against Power or Injustice		X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At a few sites, teachers invited children to discuss the impact of unfairness/injustice and/or take action against unfairness/injustice, such as when children were encouraged to write letters to local politicians about things they care about after reading</li> </ul>

Table 7. **Strengths and Areas for Growth in Equity-Focused Classroom Practices: Language Use**

Areas for Growth

Language Use Indicators	Strengths	Areas for Growth	Examples
Probing and Clarifying	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers frequently used probing and clarifying techniques, such as rephrasing a question, to help children form their answers and articulate their thoughts</li> </ul>
Validation	X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers consistently acknowledged and validated all children's perspectives with responses, such as when a child said that M&amp;M's could be a snack after the teacher said they were a treat</li> </ul>

# APPENDIX E: FINDINGS FROM CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Language Use Indicators	Strengths	Areas for Growth	Examples
Higher-Order-Thinking Questions		X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At a few sites, teachers asked higher-order-thinking questions of all children, such as encouraging children to brainstorm and explore multiple explanations for why</li> </ul>
Human Characteristics		X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At a few sites, teachers commented on human characteristics of children versus focusing on material possessions, such as when teachers noted children's friendliness, patience, ability to recall things and hard work</li> </ul>
Home Language	X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children were encouraged to speak their home language, children were encouraged to learn the languages of their peers, and educators learned key phrases in children's home languages, such as using the term "Lola" (Tagalog) when talking to a child about her grandmother</li> </ul>
Unfairness		X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sometimes teachers helped children develop appropriate responses when children experienced something unfair, such as modeling how to share one's feelings; however, there were instances in which teachers were aware of unfairness and did not</li> </ul>

Between March 2019 and May 2019, SRC held three Strategic Learning Sessions (SLS) with DEEL staff. The goal of these sessions was to provide updates regarding major project milestones, share examples of preliminary deliverables, and gather feedback from DEEL staff.

## SLS #1: MARCH 25, 2019—SHARING INITIAL INSIGHTS AND THE PROPOSED CASE STUDY TEMPLATE

On March 25, 2019, SRC and DEEL staff conducted the first SLS focused on sharing initial insights from the data collection process and reviewing the case study template as proposed by SRC. The initial insights revolved around coaching, support for challenging behaviors in the classroom, curriculum, family engagement, enrollment, funding, administrative burdens and equity practices. DEEL staff shared their thoughts on the initial insights, specifically regarding enrollment and coaching.



SRC staff shared a proposed case study outline containing the following sections: introduction, community context, overview of site characteristics, provider experiences, equity-focused practices and a summary of key site takeaways. DEEL staff shared feedback regarding the audience, vignettes and contextual considerations.

Key takeaways/decisions from this session included the following:

- In recognizing the importance of each site's unique characteristics, SRC and DEEL agreed to add vignettes and community context sections to the case study reports. The vignettes add a more descriptive layer, while the community context anchors the insights shared in the reports.
- SRC and DEEL discussed how coaching insights could be reported in a way that considers the limited capacity to expand coaching. This prompted SRC to think through recommendations for exploring shifts in how coaching time is spent so that it maximizes DEEL objectives and provider needs.
- DLLs were frequently discussed during the session. Specifically, DEEL wanted to see how best practices for serving DLLs can be folded up into the best practices sites are already using and discussed how this can be shared with participating sites.

## SLS #2: APRIL 23, 2019—SHARING EMERGING THEMES AND BRAINSTORMING FOR COMMUNITY CONTEXT

On April 23, 2019, SRC and DEEL staff conducted the second SLS focused on sharing emerging themes from ongoing analysis and brainstorming ways to gather more information regarding community context for the case studies. DEEL staff shared reactions to the emerging themes, which included recognition of a pattern of coaching needs. A full list of the emerging themes can be found in the brief for this session.

SRC staff shared a plan for bringing the case studies to life and discussed which data sources will be used to add context and craft vignettes. These sources include key informant interviews, site liaison surveys, site pictures and site observation notes. DEEL staff provided additional resources and guidance for gathering and working through these data.

- A prominent thread throughout the discussion was how to maximize resources, including time, money and expertise. Some of these resources may be limited, so there should be an emphasis on using them in the most efficient ways. SRC and DEEL discussed the following approaches: (1) recognizing best practices identified by sites and scaling them whenever possible and (2) differentiating supports for staff to meet their varying needs based on different settings, different levels of training and different levels of experience. SRC considered these while crafting recommendations.
- DEEL staff emphasized how gathering information can provide valuable insights regarding community context—particularly around strengths and assets—with the intent of providing color to the vignettes. SRC made sure to gather and review community context data with intentionality, thinking about the who, what, why and how.

## **SLS #3: MAY 23, 2019—SHOWCASE OF LEARNINGS AND REVIEW OF EQUITY-FOCUSED BEST PRACTICES**

On May 23, 2019, SRC and DEEL staff conducted the final SLS focused on showcasing learnings that would be incorporated into the case studies and reviewing equity-focused best practices. DEEL staff shared reactions to the findings and participated in a large-group discussion about the equity-focused best practices. A full list of themes can be found in the brief for this session.

After this session, SRC staff finalized the themes for the case studies and began the writing process for the case studies and cross-site report.



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