

North Dakota Department of Public Instruction

*Early Childhood Education Needs Assessment
Spring 2018*



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Introduction

The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) received a Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy (SRCL) Grant in 2017 from the U.S. Department of Education. To prepare for the grant, NDDPI contacted the North Central Comprehensive Center (NCCC) to assist in creating and analyzing a needs assessment for early childhood and K-12 educators. The purpose of the needs assessments was to provide NDDPI with a statewide view about literacy in early education programs, schools, and districts; how literacy aligns with the *North Dakota Comprehensive State Literacy Plan*; and what resources the educators need to implement literacy successfully within their programs, schools, and districts.

The following report summarizes the results from the Spring 2018 Early Childhood Programs Needs Assessment. Findings from the Spring 2018 K-12 Needs Assessment can be found in a complementary report.

The survey administration window was January 22 – February 5, 2018. NDDPI sent the survey link to listservs targeted to early childhood educators. Specific topics addressed by the survey included: (1) general background information about the staff and program; (2) program curricula and assessments; (3) alignment to state literacy goals; (4) kindergarten readiness assessment; (5) collaboration with the district; and (6) needs and resources. The concluding section of the report summarizes the survey results from each section.

Methods and Analysis

NDDPI sent the survey link to multiple listservs targeted to early childhood educators. Because the survey link was sent via listservs, a total number of people who were invited to take the survey is not known, although it is anticipated that over 1,000 people received the link. Following is a detailed description of the survey as well as a brief explanation of the procedures used for data analyses.

Surveys

NCCC created the survey in the online survey program Qualtrics and generated a unique survey link. See Appendix A for a Word version of the survey. NDDPI forwarded the link to early education listservs. Over 1,000 people were targeted via the listservs. There were 226 responses to the first question indicating that approximately 20% of the early education population responded to the survey.

The purpose of the survey was to provide NDDPI staff information about literacy within early education programs throughout the state. Topics addressed within the survey included: (1) general background information about the staff and program; (2) program curricula and assessments; (3) alignment to state literacy goals; (4) kindergarten readiness assessment; (5) collaboration with the district; and (6) needs and resources. A brief summary of each section is included in the conclusion of the report.

Data Analysis

NCCC staff imported numerical data from the survey into SPSS, a statistical analysis software package, and calculated descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and measures of central tendency (i.e., means) and dispersion (i.e., standard deviations). It is important to note that not every person answered each question, and that missing data were not included in the survey responses. For example, if only 100 people answered a question, the analysis was conducted only for the 100 responses, not for the entire population of 226. This approach was taken based on the assumption that some people who took the survey may not work directly within an early childhood program and chose not to answer the question. By eliminating the missing data, only those that answered the question are being counted in the analysis. Response numbers for each question are included in the analysis.

Findings

The next part of the report includes findings from the survey. Findings are organized by survey section: (1) general background information; (2) information about the early childhood program; (3) program curricula and assessments; (4) alignment to state literacy standards; (5) kindergarten readiness assessment; (6) collaboration with the district; and (7) needs and resources. The conclusion of the report summarizes the results from each section.

Section I: General Background Information

The first section of the ND SRCL grant Early Childhood Program Needs Assessment asked survey respondents to answer questions about their program and their personal history with the program. Specific questions addressed the type of early childhood program the participant worked in; their position in the program; their highest level of educational attainment; their early childhood and/or special education qualifications; and the county in which the program resides (see Appendix B). Two of the questions also addressed what types of literacy-related professional development opportunities the early learning program staff members had participated in and how the professional development activities were delivered. Table 1 shows the number and percentage of respondents who work in each type of early childhood program ranked from the highest number to the lowest number of respondents. The specific types of early childhood programs listed in the “other” category were extensive; thus, the listing of “other” early childhood programs can be found in Table 2.

Table 1. Type of Early Childhood Program in Which You Work

In what type of early childhood program do you work? (N = 226)	N	Percentage
Other (please specify): See Table 2 for listing of “other” specifications	57	25.2%
Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)	45	19.9%
Public Pre-Kindergarten	44	19.5%
Early Intervention (IE)	28	12.4%
Head Start	26	11.5%
Child Care	17	7.5%
Institution of Higher Education (IHE)	4	1.8%
Home Visiting	2	0.9%
Reading Corp	2	0.9%
Early Head Start	1	0.4%

Of the 226 early childhood program educators who responded to this question, a quarter (25%) said they worked in programs that were not listed as an option to this question. See Table 2 for a full list of the “other” responses. For the other respondents, a fifth (20%) reported they were from **ECSE programs** and another 20% indicated they worked in **public pre-kindergarten programs**. Other programs represented by survey respondents included: **Head Start** (12%); **Child Care** (8%); **IHEs** (2%); **Home Visiting** (1%); **Reading Corp** (1%); and **Early Head Start** (1%).

Table 2. “Other” Early Childhood Program Defined

In what type of early childhood program do you work? Responses to “Other” Option. (N = 55 written responses)
Both ECSE and public Prekindergarten
Child care consultant
Developmental disabilities
Early childhood classroom
Early childhood curriculum company
EI and Head Start (N = 3)
EI, Head Start, and Right Track Home Visiting
EL [English Language] Specialist
EL Specialist
Education Standards and Practices Board
Even Start
Head Start, Early Head Start, Public Prekindergarten, Home Visiting, and North Dakota Home School Association
High school/elementary teacher
I am currently a second-grade teacher in public school.
I do not work with any early childhood program.
Kindergarten teacher (N = 23)
Kindergarten and first grade teacher
North Dakota School for the Blind
None
PreK Support
Private Pre-Kindergarten (N = 4)
Private School Jr. Kindergarten
Public elementary music teacher
Public school (K-5)
Teacher
Title I Reading
Title I and Special Education
Was a Head Start teacher. Now I teach kindergarten.

The “other” responses varied. Several comments clarified that the respondent worked across multiple early childhood programs. Other survey participants seemed to work in fields outside early education (i.e., public schools [K-12]). As mentioned previously, to capture responses from as many people as possible working in early childhood programs, the survey link was sent to multiple listservs to which early childhood educators and those interested in early childhood subscribe. Thus, some people who currently may not be directly involved in early childhood programming may have participated in at least portions of the survey. Because the number of respondents varies across questions, for purposes of the analysis, an assumption has been made that if a person could not address a question about early childhood, they did not answer that question.

The next question on the survey asked respondents to select their position in the program. As shown in Table 3, survey participants had six options to choose from as well as an “other” option where they could specify a position not currently listed. Responses are listed from highest to lowest number of responses. Both “related service provider” and “other” options asked respondents to specify their position. The specifications for “related service provider” are shown in Table 4 and the specifications for “other” positions are listed in Table 5.

Table 3. Position in the Program

What is your position in your program? (N = 224)	N	Percentage
Teacher	134	59.8%
Director	29	12.9%
Related Service Provider (please specify): See Table 4 for listing of “Related Service Provider” specifications	29	12.9%
Other (please specify): See Table 5 for listing of “other” specifications	28	12.5%
Paraprofessional	4	1.8%

Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

Over half (60%) of the survey respondents said they were **teachers**. The percentage of respondents who reported they served as **directors, related service providers**, or an “**other**” field were the same, 13% for each position. Only 2% of the respondents indicated they were **paraprofessionals**. It should also be noted that the survey included two other options: (1) **lead teacher assistant** and (2) **aide**. No one selected either of those two options as describing their current position in an early childhood program. Table 4 lists the ways in which those identifying as a **related service provider** defined their position.

Table 4. Related Service Provider Title

What is your position in the program? Responses to “Related Service Provider” Option. (N = 29 written responses)
Compliance staff
Early intervention therapist
Early interventionist (N = 2)
Education coordinator (N = 2)
Experienced Parent (N = 2)
Home visitor
Music teacher
Occupational therapist
Primary Early Intervention Professional (PEIP) (N = 5)
Program manager
Physical therapist
Registered nurse
Social worker (N = 2)
Speech/language pathologist (N = 4)

**What is your position in the program? Responses to “Related Service Provider” Option.
(N = 29 written responses)**

Teacher of the Visually Impaired (N = 4)

Responses varied across the related service provider staff members. Five were PEIPs while four respondents were speech/language pathologists and another four were teachers of the visually impaired. There were two respondents in each of the following roles: (1) early interventionist; (2) education coordinator; (3) Experienced Parent; and (4) social worker. Only one survey respondent listed the following positions: compliance staff, early intervention therapist, home visitor, music teacher, occupational therapist, program manager, physical therapist, and registered nurse.

Similarly, 28 people provided responses to “other” positions. See Table 5 for responses.

Table 5. “Other” Title

What is your position in the program? Responses to “Other” Option. (N = 28 written responses)
Assist with assessment/Case manage some students
Assistant director
Case manager
Child care consultant
Coordinator (N = 2)
Curriculum coordinator
Early childhood special educator
Education coordinator (N = 2)
Family services
Instructor
Interventionist (N = 2)
Music teacher
No position (N =2)
Occupational therapist
Owner/operator
PEIP (N = 2)
Principal (N = 2)
Receptionist
Secretary/fiscal
Special education coordinator
Special education teacher
Teaching higher education

Most of the responses were only listed once and some of the “other” responses were duplicative of responses listed describing related service providers. However, six titles had two

respondents: (1) coordinator; (2) education coordinator; (3) interventionist; (4) no position; (5) PEIP; and (6) principals.

The next survey question asked respondents to indicate their highest level of educational attainment. Table 6 shows the results from the highest number of responses to the lowest number of responses. Because the “other” option asked respondents to specify what their highest level of education attainment, Table 7 lists the “other” descriptions provided.

Table 6. Educational Attainment

What is your highest level of educational attainment? (N = 225)	N	Percentage
Bachelor’s degree	109	48.4%
Master’s degree	100	44.4%
Other (please specify): See Table 7 for listing of “other” specifications	6	2.7%
Associate’s degree	4	1.8%
Doctorate	3	1.3%
High school diploma	2	0.9%
Less than high school diploma	1	0.4%

Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

Over 90 percent (93%) of the respondents have earned a **Bachelor’s** (48%) or **Master’s** degree (44%). Small percentages of respondents indicated the following as their highest level of educational attainment: “**other**” (3%); **associate’s degree** (2%); **doctorate** (1%); **high school diploma** (1%); and **less than high school diploma** (less than 1%). The “**other**” specifications are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. “Other” Highest Level of Education Attainment

What is your highest level of educational attainment? Responses to “Other” Option. (N = 6 written responses)
Child Development Associate’s degree (CDA)
Credits more than equivalent to master’s
Master’s in-progress
One-year junior college
Some graduate work after bachelor’s
Working towards master’s in ECSE

The “**other**” responses showed two people working towards their master’s degree. Two of the respondents indicated that they had credits after their bachelor’s degree but had not earned a master’s degree. Another person explained that he/she had completed one-year of junior college while the sixth “**other**” explanation was a CDA.

To learn more about respondents’ early childhood qualifications, the next question asked them to select all their earned early childhood and/or special education qualifications. Specific options for them to select included: (1) CDA; (2) Bachelors’ in Early Childhood; (3) Bachelor’s in

Child Development; (4) Master’s in Child Development-related field; (4) Doctorate in Child Development-related field; (5) Endorsement—Early Childhood Special Education; (6) Restricted Teaching License; or (7) Other. Like the previous questions, if the survey participant selected “other,” they were asked to specify. Table 8 shows their early childhood/special education qualifications from the most responses to the fewest responses.

Table 8. Early Childhood/Special Education Qualifications

What early childhood and/or special education qualification(s) do you have? Select all that apply. (N = 210)	N	Percentage
Other (please specify): See Table 9 for listing of “other” specifications	94	44.8%
Bachelor’s in Early Childhood	69	32.9%
Master’s in Child Development-related field	44	21.0%
Endorsement—Early Childhood Special Education	41	19.5%
Bachelor’s in Child Development	18	8.6%
CDA	11	5.2%
Restricted Teaching License	7	3.3%
Doctorate in Child Development-related field	1	0.5%

Note. Because more than one response could be selected, the total percentage does not equal 100.

Almost half (45%) of the respondents listed that they have early childhood and/or special education qualifications that were not listed as options. Table 9 below provides a listing of those “other” specifications. A third of the survey participants reported that they have a **Bachelor’s in Early Childhood** while just over a fifth (21%) said they hold a **Master’s in Child Development-related field**. Another fifth of the respondents selected an **Endorsement in Early Childhood Special Education** as an early childhood/special education qualification. A small number of respondents have earned the following qualifications: (1) **Bachelor’s in child development** (9%); (2) **CDA** (5%); (3) **Restricted Teaching License** (3%); and (4) **Doctorate in Child-Development-related field** (1%). There were 92 “other” qualifications written by the respondents. Several of the responses could be classified together. The overall classification of the “other” responses are shown in Table 9.

Table 9. “Other” Early Childhood/Special Education Qualifications

What early childhood and/or special education qualification(s) do you have? Responses to “Other” Option. (N = 92 written responses)
Aim 4 Excellence Director’s Credential (N = 2)
Associates in Early Childhood
Bachelors of Science Education in Elementary with Early Childhood minor;
Master’s in Education
Teaching with Technology and Library Media Specialist Credentials
I do take continuing education credits in the area of early childhood.
Bachelors of Arts, Licensed social worker, CDL
Bachelor in Education/Kindergarten Endorsement (N = 4)
Bachelor’s degrees in the following majors:

**What early childhood and/or special education qualification(s) do you have? Responses to “Other” Option.
(N = 92 written responses)**

- Elementary education, minor in early childhood (N = 2)
- Communication disorders
- Composite music education
- Deaf education
- Education
- Elementary education (N = 2)
- Elementary education and Master’s in early childhood special education
- Elementary education with a minor in early childhood and a full teaching license
- Elementary inclusive education and an Academic Behavioral Strategist licensure
- Occupational therapist registered
- Special education (N = 2)
- Special education and elementary education and a Master’s in special education
- Special education intellectual disabilities and Master’s in special education

Child development specialist

Deaf Education—Learning Disabled

Early childhood endorsement (N = 3)

ECSE teacher trainee through DPI

English Learners

Elementary/Secondary/Administration

Endorsement elementary education 1-6; Master Special Education K-12 (N = 2)

Experience with a special needs child

I have an AA in early childhood, a BA in elementary education, and Master’s in elementary education.

Kindergarten and early childhood endorsement; North Dakota master’s in curriculum and instruction.

Kindergarten endorsement (N = 3)

Licensed ECSE

M.S. in speech/language pathology and M.A. in autism

Master’s degrees in the following concentrations:

- Communication disorders (N = 2)
- Early childhood (N = 3)
- Early childhood literacy
- ECSE (N = 5)
- ECSE; Bachelors of Science in Education (Elementary Education and Special Education)
- Early childhood and master’s in early childhood special education
- Education leadership
- Literacy instruction
- Public administration
- Special education (N = 3)
- Special education with emphasis on children on the spectrum
- Special education, kindergarten endorsement, elementary education
- Specific learning disability /elementary education

Minor in early childhood education (2)

Minor in extension education

What early childhood and/or special education qualification(s) do you have? Responses to “Other” Option. (N = 92 written responses)
None (N = 6)
Pediatric nurse
Ph.D. in teacher education
Reading credential/title reading
Registered nurse (N = 2)
Some early childhood education courses
Special education strategist
Special education
Speech/language pathology
Teacher certificate K-5th grade
Teaching license
Visually impaired endorsement/COMS

The “**other**” write-in options are varied across individuals. Many of the written responses emphasized that the individual had multiple degrees or majors/minors affiliated with early childhood or special education. A small number (N = 6) indicated they had no early childhood or special education qualifications. Overall, most of the write-in options reflected that the survey respondents had education backgrounds including associate degrees, bachelor degrees, master degrees, endorsements, and licensures among others.

Next, the survey asked questions regarding professional development opportunities in which the early childhood program staff may have participated. The first question (see Table 10) asked about specific opportunities the program had, such as the Pyramid Model; Literacy Data Analysis; Reading and Writing Strategies Across the Content Areas/Grades; Emergent Literacy; Social Emotional Learning; and Other, with the ability to specify what the “other” professional development activity entailed (see Table 11). Staff were asked to select all that applied.

Table 10. Literacy-Related Professional Development Opportunities

In what literacy-related professional development opportunities has your early learning program participated? Select all that apply. (N = 176)	N	Percentage
Social and Emotional Learning	116	65.9%
Emergent Literacy	63	35.8%
Reading and Writing Strategies Across the Content Areas/Grades	53	30.1%
Pyramid Model	35	19.9%
Other (please specify): See Table 11 for a listing of “other” specifications	35	19.9%
Literacy Data Analysis	18	10.2%

Note. Because more than one response could be selected, the total percentage does not equal 100.

Most of the survey respondents who answered this question had received professional development on **Social and Emotional Learning** (66%). Around a third had participated in professional development focused on **Emergent Literacy** (36%) and **Reading and Writing Strategies Across the Content Areas/Grades** (30%). A fifth had participated in **Pyramid Model** or **Other** types of professional development while 10% indicated they had participated in **Literacy Data Analysis** professional development. Table 12 below lists the “other” professional development opportunities that early childhood educators had participated in that were not included in the options provided to them on the needs assessment.

Table 11. “Other” Literacy-Related Professional Development Opportunities

In what literacy-related professional development opportunities has your early learning program participated? Responses to “Other” option. (N = 31 written responses)
Creative Curriculum
Creative Curriculum, The Big 5
Daily 5
Dolly Parton Library
Learning Targets
Marzano Training
NA/None/I don’t know (N = 17)
Pathways to Reading
PreK Reading Corp
Reading Corp
SEEDS and Handwriting without Tears
Sequence Read Archive (SRA)
ZooPhonics (N = 3)

In addition to the five types of professional development offered as options, survey respondents also listed a variety of other professional development opportunities in which they had participated. Except for ZooPhonics, which three people reported participating in, only one person listed participating in the other programs. These programs included Creative Curriculum; The Big 5; Daily 5; Dolly Parton Library; Learning Targets; Marzano Training; Pathways to Reading; PreK Reading Corp; Reading Corp; SEEDS; Handwriting without Tears; and SRA.

NDDPI also was interested in learning more about how literacy professional development was delivered to participants. To answer this question, participants were asked to select if they had received professional developed through instructional coaching, face-to-face training, book studies, literacy conferences, online training, in collaboration with Dual Language Learners (DLL), or in some other manner. Table 12 shows the results from this needs assessment question.

Table 12. How Professional Development was Delivered

What type(s) of professional development have you received related to literacy instruction? Select all that apply. (N = 193)	N	Percentage
Face-to-Face Training	92	47.7%
Literacy Conferences	77	39.9%
Instructional Coaching	67	34.7%
Book Studies	64	33.2%
Online Training	60	31.1%
Collaboration with Dual Language Learners (DLL)	28	14.5%
Other (please specify): See Table 13 for listing of “other” specifications	23	11.9%

Note. Because more than one response could be selected, the total percentage does not equal 100.

Almost half (48%) of the early education program staff members said they had attended **face-to-face trainings**. That was followed by respondents who said they attended **literacy conferences** (40%). Approximately a third of the survey participants indicated they had attended professional development sessions that involved **instructional coaching** (35%); **book studies** (33%); and **online training** (31%). Twenty-eight of the respondents (15%) participated in professional development in **collaboration with DLL staff members** and 12% provided “**other**” responses, which can be seen in Table 13.

Table 13. “Other” Professional Development Delivery Methods

What type(s) of professional development have you received related to literacy instruction? Responses to “Other” option. (N = 22 written responses)
Differentiated instruction
ECE introduction class from Mayville
I have taken the ELL class within my district.
I was an education coordinator for a Head Start program for eight years and was trained in Creative Curriculum by Diane Tristor Dodge.
Literacy classes in college, Early Steps training, special education courses relating to teaching reading and writing.
Master’s in literacy instruction and curriculum development with an option to license in Minnesota as a literacy coach.
NA or none (N = 12)
Professional learning communities (PLC)
Pyramid Model Training; Participation in conferences that have topics related to literacy.
Reading conference
Washington AmeriCorps Reading program

Open-ended responses for how the professional development was delivered tended to focus more on the types of professional development received than on delivery of professional development. A few of the comments also discussed the types of courses the early childhood educators had taken in the past.

The last question in this introductory section asked the participants to select in what county they were located. There were 217 responses to this question. A listing of the counties represented and the number/percentage of respondents from each county who answered the question can be found in Appendix B.

Section II. About Your Program

The second section of the survey asked respondents to indicate how many children their program serves in each age-level overall (see Table 14) and then how many children they serve in each grade-level who have been identified as needing early intervention (EI) or Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) services (see Table 15). The third question in this section asked early childhood educators to report how many children they serve in each age-level who have been identified as an English Learner (EL) or Dual Language Learner (DLL) (see Table 16).

Table 14. Children Served Overall

How many children does your program serve in each age-level listed below?	Number of programs serving children	Range of number of children being served	Mean number of children served
Infant (under 1 year old):	29	1-100	31
1-year olds:	28	1-100	51
2-year olds:	27	1-101	59
3-year olds:	55	1-75	19
4-year olds:	82	1-141	23
5-year olds:	90	1-99*	17
Overall Means	52	1-103	34

*One program stated that they served 400 5-year olds. Because this number was such an outlier, it was removed from the analyses. Instead, 1-99 was used for the range, which was the next highest number of 5-year olds in a program.

The number of programs serving children in each age group ranged from 27 (**2-year olds**) to 90 (**5-year olds**). The overall mean number of programs serving children in these age groups was 52. While some programs only served one child in a particular age group, the highest number of children reported was 400 in the 5-year olds category. Because this number was such a high outlier, it was removed from the analysis and a range of 1 to 99 was used in this category because 99 was the next highest number in the 5-year olds group. This meant that the next highest number of children served was 141 (**4-year olds**). This provided an **average range of 1 to 103** students served overall across age groups. The mean number of children served ranged from 17 (**5-year olds**) to 59 (**2-year olds**) with an overall mean of **34 children served per program**. Figure 1 below provides a visual depiction of the means of total number of children served.

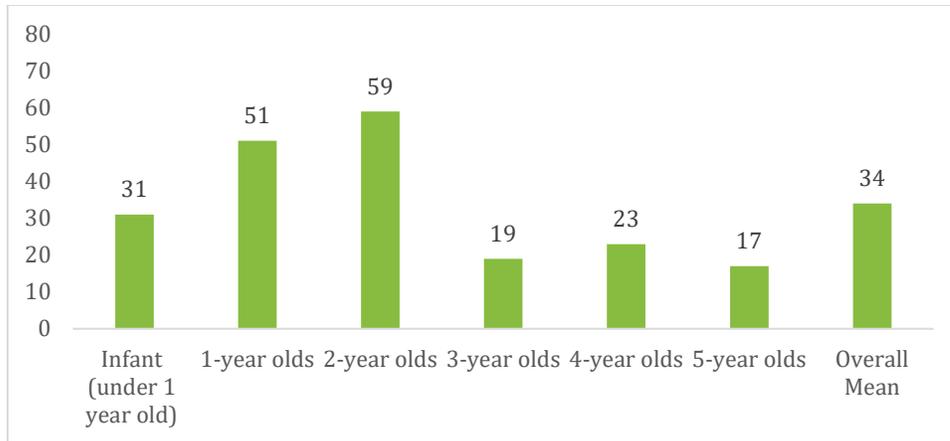


Figure 1. Mean Number of Children Served

Table 15. Children Served Identified for EI or ECSE Services

How many children does your program serve in each age-level listed below that has been identified as needing early intervention (EI) or early childhood special education (ECSE) services?	Number of programs serving children	Range of number of children being served	Mean number of children served
Infant (under 1 year old):	21	1-100	39
1-year olds:	21	1-100	63
2-year olds:	20	1-101	75
3-year olds:	51	1-88	15
4-year olds:	63	1-80	13
5-year olds:	64	1-50	8
Overall Means	40	1-87	36

The number of programs serving children identified as needing EI or ECSE services in each age group ranged from 20 (**2-year olds**) to 64 (**5-year olds**) with an **overall mean of 40 programs across all age groups**. All programs had at least one child in each age group identified as needing EI or ECSE services. The highest number of students needing these services was 101; the mean range across the age groups was 1 to 87. Overall, the programs **served a mean of 36 children identified as needing EI or ECSE services**. Children in the **5-year olds** category had the lowest number (N = 8) while children in the **2-year olds** group had the highest number (N = 75). Figure 2 below provides a visual depiction of the means of total number of children served identified as needing EI or ECSE services.



Figure 2. Mean Number of Children Served Identified as Needing EI or ECSE Services

Table 16. Children Served Identified for EL or DLL

How many children does your program serve in each age-level listed below that has been identified as an English Learner (EL) or Dual Language Learner (DLL)?	Number of programs serving children	Range of number of children being served	Mean number of children served
Infant (under 1 year old):	23		
1-year olds:	24		
2-year olds:	28		
3-year olds:	35		
4-year olds:	44		
5-year olds:	52		
Overall Means	35		

The last question in this section asked how many children in each age-group served had been identified as EL or DLL. The number of programs that reported serving students identified in each age group ranged from 23 to 52 for an **average of 35 programs serving EL or DLL students across the age groups**. However, all programs reported having only **one** student identified as EL or DLL.

Section III: Program Curricula and Assessments

This section of the Early Childhood Program Needs Assessment focused on what types of curricula educators used in their programs. Specific questions related to whether staff members purchased or used locally-developed curriculum, if they received training on how to use the curriculum, how long they have used the curriculum, if the curriculum includes literacy components, and how the curricula is assessed. Results from this section are summarized below.

General Curriculum

The first question asked survey respondents what type of curricula they used in the program. They had four choices: (1) I use purchased curricula; (2) My organization or district developed curriculum for the program; (3) I developed curriculum for the program; and (4) I use purchased curriculum and curriculum that has been created for the program. Table 17 shows the results for this question.

Table 17. Type of Curricula

What type of curricula do you use in the program? (N = 140)	N	Percentage
I use purchased curricula.	33	23.6%
My organization or district developed curriculum for the program.	18	12.9%
I developed curriculum for the program.	34	24.3%
I use purchased curriculum and curriculum that has been created for the program.	55	39.3%

Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

A total of 140 early childhood educators responded to this question. Most of the respondents selected “**I use purchased curriculum and curriculum that has been created for the program**” (39%) indicating that programs use a mix of different types of curricula. Approximately a quarter reported that they use “**purchased curricula**” (24%) or they “**developed curricula for the program**” (24%). The remaining 13% said that their “**organization or district developed curriculum for the program.**”

If respondents indicated that they had purchased curriculum, they were next asked what curriculum they used. A full listing of the curricula purchased by programs is listed in Table 18.

Table 18. Curriculum Used

If you purchase curriculum, what curriculum do you use? (N = 69)
Animated Literacy (Jim Stone), Second Step Social-Emotional Skills for Early Learning, and Handwriting without Tears
Bayley
Benchmark Literacy
Creative Curriculum (N = 8)
Creative Curriculum, Learning without Tears, Pathways
Creative Curriculum/Teaching Strategies

If you purchase curriculum, what curriculum do you use? (N = 69)

DIG by Abrams
Early Head Start—Creative Curriculum, Head Start Open the World of Learning (OWL)
Easy Breezy Prescho
Eureka Math for Preschool and PreK Literacy Units by Tara West
Everyday Math, Steve Dunn Writing Workshop, Project Lead the Way (PLTW) (Science)
Foundations, Amazing Action Alphabet, Guided Reading, Daily 5
Get Set for School
Handwriting without Tears (N = 4)
Handwriting without Tears, Language and Literacy, Writing, and Math
High Scope (N = 5)
Handwriting without Tears and ZooPhonics
Handwriting without Tears, Conscious Discipline, ZooPhonics
I don't know (N = 2)
Journeys English Language Arts (ELA), and I also use PreK Pages Venessa Levin blog, trainings, activities, and assessments
Kindervention
Language and Literacy Center for Early Childhood, Center for Early Care and Education Research – Dual Language Learners (CECER-DLL)
MacMillan/McGraw-Hill
McGraw Hill-World of Wonders
McGraw Hill Wonders, Handwriting without Tears
McMillian McGraw Hill Treasures 2010
Mother Goose
OWL
Partners for a Healthy Baby, Creative Curriculum Conscious Discipline
Pathways to Reading
Pearson Scott Foresman, OWL
Pocket of Preschool
Programs use their own curriculum (often Teaching Strategies Goals) in addition to the Reading Corps Model
Read it to Me Once Again
Read Live, Computer, Leveled Readers
Reading Corps curriculum used along with the host sites curriculum
Reading Street and My Math
Reading Wonders
Reading, Math, Science
Resources online from Teachers Pay Teachers, as well as our district resources
Scholastic Big Day
SRA Imagine It and Handwriting without Tears
SRA Imagine It, SEEDS, Handwriting without Tears
Social Skills Improvement System—Social Emotional Learning

If you purchase curriculum, what curriculum do you use? (N = 69)
Teaching Strategies Gold
Teaching Strategies Gold, Creative Curriculum, HELP
Varies depending on special education needs
We don't use curriculum as we are routine-based services.
We only use testing protocols.
Wonders
Zaner-Bloser ABC 123, Just for Me, and Second-Step Social Emotional Skills for Early Learning
ZooPhonics and Second Step
ZooPhonics
ZooPhonics, Handwriting without Tears, Conscious Discipline

Programs seemed to use a variety of purchased curriculum. Oftentimes, the survey respondents listed two or more types of curricula used in the program so they may select and use multiple curricula depending upon the needs of the students or the goals of the program.

The next question asked if the program staff had received training in how to use the curriculum. Results from the question are shown in Table 19.

Table 19. Curriculum Training

Did you receive training in how to use the curriculum? (N = 97)	N	Percentage
Yes	63	64.9%
No	34	35.1%

Almost two thirds (65%) said that they **had received training in the curriculum**. Just over a third (35%) reported that they **had not received training in how to use the curriculum**.

Respondents were next asked if the training adequately prepared them to use the curriculum. Seventy-nine people responded to that question, as shown in Table 20 below.

Table 20. Quality of Curriculum Training

If you received training on the curriculum, did the training adequately prepare you to use the curriculum? (N = 79)	N	Percentage
Yes	53	67.1%
No	26	32.9%

For this question, two thirds (67%) said that they **had received adequate training to prepare them to use the curriculum**. Conversely, a third (33%) said that the **training did not adequately prepare them to use the curriculum**.

To assess why people may have indicated the training was not adequate, the next question on the needs assessment asked participants “if you did not receive training on the curriculum, why not? Select all that apply.” Options included: (1) not offered; (2) too expensive; (3) I did receive training, but it did not adequately prepare me to use the curriculum; or (4) other (please specify).

Results from the question are displayed in Table 21 and the “other” specifications are listed in Table 22.

Table 21. Reasons why Training was Inadequate

If you did not receive adequate training to prepare you to use the curriculum, why not? Select all that apply. (N = 49)	N	Percentage
Not offered.	31	63.3%
Too expensive.	5	10.2%
I did receive training, but it did not adequately prepare me to use the curriculum.	7	14.3%
Other (please specify): See Table 22 for a listing of “other” specifications	14	28.6%

Note. Because more than one response could be selected, the total percentage does not equal 100.

The majority of respondents (63%) said that they did not receive training because **it was not offered**. Fourteen percent indicated that **although they did receive training, it did not prepare them to use the curriculum**. Only 10% of the survey respondents indicated that training was **too expensive**. Almost a third (29%) selected “**other**” and wrote in a reason why the training was inadequate.

Table 22. “Other” Reasons why Training was Inadequate

If you did not receive adequate training to prepare you to use the curriculum, why not? Responses to “Other” option. (N = 12 written responses)
A couple staff get trained and come back to train the rest of us.
Came in after the initial implementation
I am new to program and have taught preschool.
I have taken training on my own, at my own expense.
Not an early teacher.
Not in my specific area.
Not on-going. It was once, and I have staff turnover. Haven’t come up with a great way to introduce new staff to the curriculum.
Short staffed.
Training occurred a long time ago and needs to be redone.
Turnover. We haven’t been able to repeat the training for new employees.
We don’t use a curriculum-based program. We are natural environment.
We received adequate training.

Staffing seemed to be an issue across the “**other**” responses. Staff turnover was mentioned as a challenge as well as being short staffed. Another person commented that the program sends representative staff to the trainings who then are tasked to share the training with others. Other comments indicated that some did not think curriculum training was relevant to them because they worked in areas outside of early childhood programming.

The next question asked survey participants to reflect on how long they have used the curriculum. Results can be found in Table 23.

Table 23. Amount of Time Curriculum has been Used

How long have you used this curriculum? (N = 128)	N	Percentage
Less than a year	28	21.9%
One to three years	32	25.0%
Three to five years	37	28.9%
More than five years	31	24.2%

Overall, the amount of time the curriculum has been used was evenly dispersed across the time categories. The highest percentage of respondents (29%) said they had been using the curriculum for **three to five years**. A quarter (25%) reported they had been using their curriculum for one to three years while 24% had been using their curriculum for more than five years. The other 22% indicated they had been using the curriculum for less than a year.

Curriculum and Literacy

Because the NDDPI SRCL Needs Assessment focused on literacy, the next question directly asked survey respondents if the curriculum they used has a literacy component. Table 24 shows how many early childhood educators indicated they use a curriculum with a literacy component.

Table 24. Curriculum and Literacy

Does the curriculum you use have a literacy component? (N = 127)	N	Percentage
Yes	112	88.2%
No	15	11.8%

The majority (88%) said that their **curriculum did have a literacy component**. Only 12% reported that the curriculum did not have a literacy component. One person wanted to clarify his/her “no” response and left a comment in a previously open-ended response specifically referring to this question. The comment said, “There is not a specific literacy component, but literacy is embedded within the curriculum and intertwined with language, cognition, and social interaction. I selected “No” on Question 17 because there is not a specific literacy category.” Other people also may have struggled with parsing out literacy within an embedded curriculum.

Because there are multiple ways literacy can be covered or embedded within curriculum, NDDPI dug deeper into the literacy components by asking programs to state which literacy component(s) are included in their curriculum. The literacy components that the survey participants were asked to reflect upon align with literacy components from the *North Dakota Comprehensive State Literacy Plan*. Table 25 shows the number and percentage of respondents who indicated that each literacy component is covered by their program’s curriculum.

Table 25. Literacy Component(s) Covered by Curriculum

What literacy component(s) does your curriculum cover? Select all that apply. (N = 107)	N	Percentage
Listening and Understanding (Birth – 3 years)	39	36.4%
Communicating and Speaking (Birth – 3 years)	40	37.4%
Emergent Literacy (Birth – 3 years)	39	36.4%
Listening and Comprehension (3 – 5 years)	86	80.4%
Speaking and Communicating (3 – 5 years)	88	82.2%
Phonological Awareness (3 – 5 years)	89	83.2%
Emergent Reading (3 - 5 years)	78	72.9%
Emergent Writing (3 – 5 years)	75	70.1%

Note. Because more than one response could be selected, the total percentage does not equal 100.

Over a third of the respondents indicated that the curriculum the program used **included competencies for children ages Birth – 3 years**. Specifically, 36% said “**Listening and Understanding**” and “**Emergent Literacy**” were included while 37% reported “**Communicating and Speaking**” was part of the curriculum.

The percentages were higher for competencies related to children ages 3 – 5 years. Eighty or more percent of the respondents reported that their curriculum included: (1) **Listening and Comprehension** (80%); (2) **Speaking and Communicating** (82%); and (3) **Phonological Awareness** (83%). Similarly, 70 percent or more indicated that **Emergent Reading** (73%) and **Emergent Writing** (70%) were curriculum literacy components for children ages 3 – 5 years.

Curriculum Assessment

Understanding more about how early childhood education programs in North Dakota used assessment in their programs also was part of the Early Childhood Programs Needs Assessment. Table 26 shows the results for whether the curriculum used had an assessment component.

Table 26. Curriculum Assessment Component

Does the curriculum you use have an assessment component? (N = 126)	N	Percentage
Yes	79	62.7%
No	47	37.3%

Of the 126 people who responded to this question, 63% indicated that the curriculum they used **does have an assessment component**. Just over a third (37%) indicated that their chosen curriculum did not have an assessment component.

The next question targeted those who did not have an assessment component by asking if they did not have an assessment component, do they assess the children in the program. Table 27 below answers that question.

Table 27. “Other” Assessment

If the curriculum you use does not have an assessment component, do you assess the children in your program? (N = 85)	N	Percentage
Yes	74	87.1%
No	11	12.9%

Only 13% of the respondents indicated that they **did not assess the children** in their program. The majority, 87%, said that they **did assess the children**, even though their curriculum did not include an assessment component.

To gather more information about the assessment, the next question asked people to select describe the purpose of their assessment. As shown in Table 28, they could choose the purpose of the assessment was “formative,” “summative,” “both,” or “neither.”

Table 28. Purpose of Assessment

What is the purpose of your assessment? (N = 98)	N	Percentage
Formative (adjusting instruction to meet student needs)	28	28.6%
Summative (a final evaluation)	1	1.0%
Both	67	68.4%
Neither	2	2.0%

Most of the survey respondents (68%) said the assessment had **both a formative and summative purpose**. Almost a third (29%) reported the purpose of the assessment was **only formative**. Only one percent indicated the survey was **only summative** while two percent commented that their assessment was **neither formative nor summative**.

Next the early childhood educators were asked to select which assessment(s) they used in the program. Three popular assessments were provided as options: (1) Teaching Strategies Gold; (2) High Scope Child Observation Record (COR); and (3) The Work Sampling System (see Table 29). They could also select “other” and write-in the assessment that they use. Table 30 lists the “other” options mentioned by the survey respondents.

Table 29. Program Assessment

Select the program assessment(s) you use in your program. (N = 84)	N	Percentage
Teaching Strategies Gold	15	17.9%
High Scope Child Observation Record (COR)	6	7.1%
The Work Sampling System	12	14.3%
Other (please specify):	56	66.7%

Note. Because more than one response could be selected, the total percentage does not equal 100.

According to the survey results, two thirds (67%) indicated they used “other” assessments (see Table 30). Fewer than 20 percent of the respondents selected any other option: (1) **Teaching Strategies Gold** (18%); (2) **The Work Sampling System** (14%); and (3) **COR** (7%).

Table 30. List of Assessments Used by Programs

Select the program assessment(s) you use in your program. Response to “other” option. (N = 53 written responses)
AEPS Interactive (AEPSi)
AEPSi, Early Learning Accomplishment Profile (E-LAP), Bayley, Vineland
AIMSweb
AIMSweb, NWEA, MAP
AIMSweb and Star Literacy
Based on the North Dakota Early Childhood State Standards
Battelle, Developmental Skills Checklist
Bayley Scales of Development, Early Learning Accomplishment Profile, Battelle, etc.
Bayley, E-LAP, and Assessment, Evaluation, and Programming System (AEPS)
Bismarck Early Childhood Education Program Standards Based Assessment
Brigance Inventory for Early Development III and the Screener for the Brigance
Curriculum assessment created by early childhood special education teachers.
Data from Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals, data from standards charting
Developed own (N = 2)
Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning (DIAL) and I Can Statements
District-developed checklist
Early Reading Checklist taken from the Source of Early Literacy Development (Published by the Lingisystems 2001)
Educational Software for Guiding Instruction (ESGI)
Formative assessments developed by myself and other teachers
Galileo (N = 2)
I have created a progress report based on the North Dakota Prekindergarten Standards.
In-house
Informal assessment
My/our own (N = 3)
My own based on North Dakota Learning Standards.
Our own created progress report.
Pathways to Reading
Preschool and Early Literacy Indicator (PELI) and Fastbridge progress monitoring (N = 2)
Preschool created evaluation
Program benchmarks based on early learning standards
Program developed
Program specific
Quarterly report cards supposedly aligned with PreK standards.
School created curriculum assessment.
Self-made and Anchor assessment such as the Developmental Assessment of Young Children Second Edition (DAYC-2) and Brigance 3.
Skills based on the North Dakota Early Learning Guidelines.

Select the program assessment(s) you use in your program. Response to “other” option. (N = 53 written responses)
Skills-demonstration
Standardized [assessment]
Standards-based assessment
Standards-based report card
STAR
Student interview/informal classroom observation
Teacher-created
Teacher created and some that I have purchases on Teachers Pay Teachers
Unit tests and observations, Work samples
Variety of standardized and non-standardized [assessments]
West River Assessment Form
With my past experience, I was able to use Journey’s and Vanessa Levin’s resources for my formative and summative assessments while keeping the activities child-directed most of the time.

The early childhood program educators use a variety of assessments across the programs. Many use multiple assessments to gauge the children’s progress. Several of them use programs created for their programs or informal assessments. Others use assessments aligned to the North Dakota Early Childhood Standards. Purchased assessments also were listed by the survey respondents.

Another aspect of assessment is the frequency in which the program conducts assessments. Thus, the next question asked early childhood education providers how often assessments were administered to the children served. Table 31 shows the results of that question. Survey respondents could also select “**other**” and write-in a response. The written responses are listed in Table 32.

Table 31. Frequency of Assessment Administration

Select the program assessment(s) you use in your program. (N = 98)	N	Percentage
Daily	8	8.2%
Weekly	8	8.2%
Twice a month	8	8.2%
Monthly	18	18.4%
Twice a year	11	11.2%
Yearly	9	9.2%
Other (please specify):	36	36.7%

Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

Of the 98 people who responded to the question, equal numbers said they use assessments **daily, weekly, or twice a month** (8% for each response). Eighteen percent said they assessed

children **monthly**. Other respondents reported they assessed children **twice a year** (11%) or **yearly** (9%). The remaining 36% indicated “**other**” timeframes. Table 32 lists the “other” responses.

Table 32. “Other” Assessment Administration Frequency

To what extent do you think the assessment(s) adequately measure the progress of the children you serve? Responses to “Other” option. (N = 36 written responses)
Three times a year (N = 15)
Three times a year and ongoing
Three times per year plus progress monitoring for students in tier 2 interventions.
Three times per year unless otherwise specified in an IEP.
Four times a year (N = 8)
As often as needed, but for sure three times a year.
Benchmark three times a year, progress monitoring monthly for students receiving tier 2 interventions.
Daily observations
Depends on the skills and needs of the students.
Every 10 lessons (literacy)—three times a year all skills.
I use the screener to determine where children’s needs are or what is needed and use the Brigance IED III for qualification purposes. In case they do qualify for special education services and Early Childhood Outcome require this assessment for this purpose.
Minimum of three times per year.
Observation (daily), charting (weekly), and Anchor Tools (once to enter and once to exit program)
Ongoing (N = 2)

Many of the written responses (N = 20) mentioned administering assessments at least three times a year. Eight others said assessments were administered four times a year. The other responses included “daily observations” or the number of times assessments were conducted depended upon the needs of the children.

Finally, the last question regarding assessments asked early childhood educators to what extent did they think the assessment(s) adequately measured the progress of the children they served. Results are shown in Table 33.

Table 33. Extent Assessments Measure Children’s Progress

To what extent do you think the assessment(s) adequately measure the progress of the children you serve? (N = 97)	N	Percentage
To a great extent	41	42.3%
To some extent	52	53.6%
To a little extent	2	2.1%
Not at all	2	2.1%

Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

Almost all (96%) of the respondents said the assessment(s) adequately measured the progress of the children served *to a great extent* or *to some extent*. Less than five percent indicated *to a little extent* or *not at all*.

Literacy Competencies

The *North Dakota Comprehensive State Literacy Plan* lists several literacy competencies. For children ages Birth – 3 years, there are three competencies: (1) listening and understanding; (2) communicating and speaking; and (3) emergent literacy. For ages 3 – 5 years, the five competencies include: (1) listening and comprehension; (2) speaking and communicating; (3) phonological awareness; (4) emergent reading; and (5) emergent writing.

Early childhood educators were asked to reflect upon the extent to which they perceived their curriculum improved the literacy competencies of the children. The responses were scored using a 4-point Likert scale (i.e., To a great extent = 4; To some extent = 3; To a little extent = 2; and Not at all = 1). Table 34 shows the frequencies, means, and standard deviations for the Ages Birth –3 competencies.

Table 34. Ages Birth – 3 Years: Improving Literacy Competencies

To what extent do you think your curriculum improves the literacy competencies of the children you serve Birth – 3 years? If you do not cover the component in your program, select Not Applicable (NA).	Responses					Descriptive Statistics	
	N	To a great extent	To some extent	To a little extent	Not at all	M	SD
Listening and Understanding	48	47.9%	45.8%	6.3%	0.0%	3.42	0.61
Communicating and Speaking	48	47.9%	41.7%	10.4%	0.0%	3.38	0.67
Emergent Literacy	47	36.2%	51.1%	12.8%	0.0%	3.23	0.67

Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

Across the three competencies, the majority of early childhood educators who work with children ages Birth – 3 years reported the curriculum improved the literacy competencies of the children they served *to a great extent* or *to some extent*. Means ranged from 3.23 (i.e., “**Emergent Literacy**”) to 3.42 (“**Listening and Understanding**”). Table 35 shows the frequencies, means, and standard deviations for the ages 3 – 5 years literacy competencies.

Table 35. Ages 3 – 5 Years: Improving Literacy Competencies

To what extent do you think your curriculum improves the literacy competencies of the children you serve ages 3 – 5 years? If you do not cover the component in your program, select Not Applicable (N/A).	Responses					Descriptive Statistics	
	N	To a great extent	To some extent	To a little extent	Not at all	M	SD
Listening and Comprehension	82	50.0%	46.3%	3.7%	0.0%	3.46	0.57
Speaking and Communicating	83	48.2%	44.6%	7.2%	0.0%	3.41	0.63

To what extent do you think your curriculum improves the literacy competencies of the children you serve ages 3 – 5 years? If you do not cover the component in your program, select Not Applicable (N/A).	Responses					Descriptive Statistics	
	N	To a great extent	To some extent	To a little extent	Not at all	M	SD
Phonological Awareness	82	52.4%	37.8%	8.5%	1.2%	3.41	0.70
Emergent Reading	81	44.4%	39.5%	14.8%	1.2%	3.27	0.76
Emergent Writing	80	38.8%	45.0%	15.0%	1.3%	3.21	0.74

Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

Like the ages Birth – 3 literacy competencies, most of the early childhood educators who work with ages 3 – 5-year olds also reported that the curriculum improved the literacy competencies of the children *to a great extent* or *to a little extent*. Means ranged from 3.21 (“**Emergent Writing**”) to 3.46 (“**Listening and Comprehension**”).

Section IV. Alignment to State Literacy Goals

The next section of the Early Childhood Programs Needs Assessment focused on the State Literacy Goals as outlined in the *North Dakota Comprehensive State Literacy Plan*. North Dakota’s seven goals included: (1) leadership and sustainability; (2) instruction and intervention; (3) standards alignment; (4) professional development; (5) family and community engagement strategies; (6) literacy timeline for Birth – 3; and (7) literacy timeline for Ages 3 – 5. Each goal had multiple components associated with it. The needs assessment asked survey respondents to reflect on the extent to which their program included these components. Each response used a 4-point Likert scale (i.e., 4 = To a great extent; 3 = To some extent; 2 = To a little extent; and 1 = Not at all). Items that received means below 3.00 are highlighted in each section. Table 36 provides frequencies, means, and standard deviations for the first goal: Leadership and Sustainability.

Table 36. Leadership and Sustainability

The following items are components of implementation and instructional leadership. Please rate the extent to which your early childhood program includes these components.	Responses					Descriptive Statistics	
	N	To a great extent	To some extent	To a little extent	Not at all	M	SD
Commitment to common goals.	100	57.0%	35.0%	6.0%	2.0%	3.47	0.70
Prioritizing institutional structure support (scheduling for both collaboration and instruction).	99	34.3%	37.4%	17.2%	11.1%	2.95	0.98
Define job responsibilities, roles, and requirements.	99	49.5%	34.3%	14.1%	2.0%	3.31	0.79
Provide time and support for professional learning.	99	35.4%	38.4%	21.2%	5.1%	3.04	0.88
Professional development for program staff.	99	34.3%	43.4%	18.2%	4.0%	3.08	0.83
Professional collaboration (existing professional collegial teams should integrate instructional leadership components related to literacy into collaborative processes already in place).	99	33.3%	35.4%	21.2%	10.1%	2.92	0.98
Job-embedded support (early education programs should provide professional, job-embedded support to improve literacy instruction).	99	22.2%	41.4%	26.3%	10.1%	2.76	0.92
Overall						3.08	0.70

Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

The overall mean for the seven items under the Leadership and Sustainability goal was 3.08 ($SD = 0.70$) indicating that respondents rated the items just over *to some extent*. Means ranged from 3.47 to 2.76. The highest rated item was “**commitment to common goals**” ($M = 3.47$; $SD = 0.70$). Three items received means lower than 3.00. Those items are listed below:

- Job-embedded support (early education programs should provide professional, job-embedded support to improve literacy instruction). ($M = 2.76$; $SD = 0.92$)
- Professional collaboration (existing professional collegial teams should integrate instructional leadership components related to literacy into collaborative processes already in place). ($M = 2.92$; $SD = 0.98$)
- Prioritizing institutional structure support (scheduling for both collaboration and instruction). ($M = 2.95$; $SD = 0.98$)

The next goal was Instruction and Intervention. There were 16 components associated with this goal. Table 37 displays the frequencies, means, and standard deviations for each component.

Table 37. Instruction and Intervention

The following items are components of instruction and intervention. Please rate the extent to which your early childhood program includes these components.	Responses					Descriptive Statistics	
	N	To a great extent	To some extent	To a little extent	Not at all	M	SD
Standards-aligned curricular framework	93	44.1%	37.6%	14.0%	4.3%	3.22	0.85
21st Century Literacy skills, including digital literacy	93	18.3%	41.9%	24.7%	15.1%	2.63	0.95
Consistent approach-based on principles of responsive instruction	92	33.7%	43.5%	18.5%	4.3%	3.07	0.84
Evidence-based instructional strategies	92	47.8%	39.1%	9.8%	3.3%	3.32	0.78
Effective practices and strategies	92	56.5%	34.8%	6.5%	2.2%	3.46	0.72
Knowledge of early literacy learning	91	53.8%	36.3%	7.7%	2.2%	3.42	0.73
Knowledge of learners	93	60.2%	29.0%	7.5%	3.2%	3.46	0.77
Knowledge of language development	92	58.7%	33.7%	4.3%	3.3%	3.48	0.73
Accessible instructional materials	93	47.3%	31.2%	17.2%	4.3%	3.22	0.88
Evidence-based intervention	93	49.5%	29.0%	15.1%	6.5%	3.22	0.93
Project-based interventions/innovation	92	34.8%	26.1%	26.1%	13.0%	2.83	1.06
Pre-kindergarten development progression	93	47.3%	24.7%	15.1%	12.9%	3.06	1.07
Early Childhood Curriculum Selection Guide	93	26.9%	29.0%	21.5%	22.6%	2.60	1.12
Pyramid Model	88	13.6%	27.3%	30.7%	28.4%	2.26	1.02
Revised/Updated ND ELA Standards (2017)	91	28.6%	24.2%	22.0%	25.3%	2.56	1.16
National Math + Science Initiative (NMSI) with an additional focus on English Language Arts	91	18.7%	13.2%	26.4%	41.8%	2.09	1.14
Overall						3.00	0.66

Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

On the Instruction and Intervention goal, the overall mean was 3.00 ($SD = 0.66$). Thus, on average, respondents selected *to some extent* to explain how their program includes the Instruction and Intervention components. Means ranged from 2.09 to 3.48. The highest rated item was “**knowledge of language development**” ($M = 3.48$; $SD = 0.73$). In contrast, the lowest rated item was “**NMSI with an additional focus on English Language Arts**” ($M = 2.09$; $SD = 1.14$). Six items were rated below 3.00. Those items follow:

- NMSI with an additional focus on English Language Arts. ($M = 2.09$; $SD = 1.14$)
- Pyramid Model. ($M = 2.26$; $SD = 1.02$)
- Revised/Updated ND ELA Standards (2017). ($M = 2.56$; $SD = 1.16$)
- Early Childhood Curriculum Selection Guide. ($M = 2.60$; $SD = 1.12$)
- 21st Century literacy skills, including digital literacy. ($M = 2.63$; $SD = 0.95$)
- Project-based interventions/innovations. ($M = 2.83$; $SD = 1.06$)

The next section, as shown in Table 38, shows the results of the Standards Alignment goal. Standards Alignment had seven components. Three of those components related to children ages Birth – 3 years while four of the components focused on children ages 3 – 5.

Table 38. Standards Alignment

The following items are components of standards alignment. Please rate the extent to which your early childhood program includes these components.	Responses					Descriptive Statistics		
	N	To a great extent	To some extent	To a little extent	Not at all	M	SD	
Learning and Understanding (Birth – 3 Years)	81	29.6%	27.2%	6.2%	37.0%	2.49	1.27	
Communicating and Speaking (Birth – 3 Years)	81	30.9%	25.9%	6.2%	37.0%	2.51	1.28	
Emergent Literacy (Birth – 3 Years)	82	28.0%	26.8%	11.0%	34.1%	2.49	1.23	
Listening and Comprehension (3 – 5 years)	83	45.8%	36.1%	3.6%	14.5%	3.13	1.03	
Speaking and Communicating (3 – 5 Years)	84	52.4%	32.1%	1.2%	14.3%	3.23	1.03	
Phonological Awareness (3 – 5 Years)	84	50.0%	29.8%	6.0%	14.3%	3.15	1.06	
Emergent Reading (3 -5 Years)	84	39.3%	38.1%	7.1%	15.5%	3.01	1.05	
Emergent Writing (3 – 5 Years)	84	39.3%	38.1%	7.1%	15.5%	3.01	1.05	
						Overall	2.91	0.79

Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

The overall mean on the Standards Alignment goal was 2.91 ($SD = 0.79$) with means ranging from 2.49 to 3.23. It is interesting to note that the three components regarding Birth – 3-year olds all had means under 3.00 while the components focused on 3 – 5-year olds ranged from 3.01 to 3.23. The components with means rated under 3.00 are listed below:

- Learning and Understanding (Birth – 3 years). ($M = 2.49$; $SD = 1.27$)
- Emergent Literacy (Birth – 3 years). ($M = 2.49$; $SD = 1.23$)
- Communicating and Speaking (Birth – 3 years). ($M = 2.51$; $SD = 1.28$)

The next goal was professional development. Professional development asked early education program staff to reflect on four components (see Table 39).

Table 39. Professional Development

The following items are components of professional development. Please rate the extent to which your early childhood program received professional development in the following areas:	Responses					Descriptive Statistics		
	N	To a great extent	To some extent	To a little extent	Not at all	M	SD	
Teaching and learning research-based strategies	86	40.7%	37.2%	16.3%	5.8%	3.13	0.89	
The reading process	86	22.1%	40.7%	17.4%	19.8%	2.65	1.04	
Assessment: Administer, Score, and Analyze	86	34.9%	43.0%	11.6%	10.5%	3.02	0.95	
Professional Learning Communities	86	31.4%	46.5%	11.6%	10.5%	2.99	0.93	
						Overall	2.95	0.82

Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

The overall mean of the Professional Development goal was 2.95 ($SD = 0.82$). Thus, the early childhood education staff members rated this goal just below *to some extent*. Two of the items had means below 3.00:

- The reading process. ($M = 2.65$; $SD = 1.04$)
- Assessment: Administer, Score, and Analyze. ($M = 2.99$; $SD = 0.93$)

Another goal from the *North Dakota Comprehensive State Literacy Plan* was Family and Community Engagement Strategies. The plan includes eight strategies to which early childhood educators were to rate the extent to which they included those strategies in their program (see Table 40).

Table 40. Family and Community Engagement Strategies

The following items are components of family and community engagement strategies. Please rate the extent to which your early childhood program uses these strategies in engaging family and the community.	Responses					Descriptive Statistics	
	N	To a great extent	To some extent	To a little extent	Not at all	M	SD
Strategy 1: Using data to set priorities and focus strategies	82	43.9%	40.2%	8.5%	7.3%	3.21	0.89

The following items are components of family and community engagement strategies. Please rate the extent to which your early childhood program uses these strategies in engaging family and the community.	Responses					Descriptive Statistics		
	N	To a great extent	To some extent	To a little extent	Not at all	M	SD	
Strategy 2: Providing relevant, on-site professional development	82	26.8%	37.8%	24.4%	11.0%	2.80	0.96	
Strategy 3: Building collaborations with community partners	82	30.5%	36.6%	26.8%	6.1%	2.91	0.91	
Strategy 4: Using targeted outreach to focus on high-needs communities, children, early care, and education programs	82	23.2%	41.5%	22.0%	13.4%	2.74	0.97	
Strategy 5: Building one-on-one relationships between families and educators that are linked to learning	81	48.1%	32.1%	14.8%	4.9%	3.23	0.88	
Strategy 6: Setting, communicating, and supporting high and rigorous expectations	82	39.0%	50.0%	4.9%	6.1%	3.22	0.80	
Strategy 7: Addressing cultural differences	82	31.7%	42.7%	18.3%	7.3%	2.99	0.90	
Strategy 8: Connecting children and families to the community	82	47.6%	28.0%	18.3%	6.1%	3.17	0.94	
						Overall	3.04	0.70

Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

Across components related to Family and Community Engagement Strategies, the overall mean was 3.04 ($SD = 0.70$). Means ranged from 2.74 to 3.23. The highest rated component was “**Strategy 5: Building one-on-one relationships between families and educators that are linked to learning**” ($M = 3.23$; $SD = 0.88$). Half of the items had means, however, below 3.00. Those items are bulleted below:

- **Strategy 4:** Using targeted outreach to focus on high-needs communities, children, early care, and education programs. ($M = 2.74$; $SD = 0.97$)
- **Strategy 2:** Providing relevant, on-site professional development. ($M = 2.80$; $SD = 0.96$)
- **Strategy 3:** Building collaboration with community partners. ($M = 2.91$; $SD = 0.91$)
- **Strategy 7:** Addressing cultural differences ($M = 2.99$; $SD = 0.90$)

The last two goals outlined in the *North Dakota Comprehensive State Literacy Plan* focused on a literacy timeline for children ages Birth – 3 and 3 – 5. The next two tables show the results of early childhood programs’ staff’s reflections on the timeline. Table 41 focuses on ages Birth – 3.

Table 41. Literacy Timeline: Ages Birth – 3

The following items are listed in the ND Comprehensive State Literacy Plan as part of the literacy timeline for children ages Birth – 3. Please rate the extent to which your early childhood program includes these components.	Responses					Descriptive Statistics		
	N	To a great extent	To some extent	To a little extent	Not at all	M	SD	
Emphasize the importance of the child’s experiences and engagement in literacy experiences and engagement in literacy activities prior to starting school.	27	77.8%	18.5%	0.0%	3.7%	3.70	0.67	
Emphasize early literacy development and instruction based on the North Dakota Early Learning Guidelines Birth – Age 3 and/or the Head Start Early Learning Outcome Framework.	27	51.9%	22.2%	14.8%	11.1%	3.15	1.06	
Provide research-based, early literacy activities through collaborative agencies and programs, such as Early Intervention (e.g., ND Department of Human Services, Children and Family Services Division).	27	63.0%	18.5%	11.1%	7.4%	3.37	0.97	
High-quality activities and interventions matched to child need, and monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals. Data are used to allocate resources to improve child learning and support staff implementation of effective practices.	27	66.7%	14.8%	18.5%	0.0%	3.48	0.80	
Alignment of strategies to curriculum framework, ND State Standards, and DLL or Early Learning Development Standards.	27	40.7%	33.3%	14.8%	11.1%	3.04	1.02	
Goal for continuous statewide expansion.	27	30.8%	30.8%	26.9%	11.5%	2.81	1.02	
						Overall	3.27	0.80

Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

The number of people who indicated that they worked with ages Birth – 3 and responded to this section of questions was 27. The overall mean was 3.27 ($SD = 0.80$) indicating that respondents’ results were slightly above *to some extent*. Means ranged from 3.04 to 3.70 with the highest rated item being “**Emphasize the importance of the child’s experiences and engagement in literacy experiences and engagement in literacy activities prior to starting school**” ($M = 3.70$; $SD = 0.67$). Only one item had a mean below 3.00 and that was “**Goal for continuous statewide expansion**” ($M = 2.81$; $SD = 1.02$). This component may have received a

lower rating because it may not seem as relevant to early childhood educators in the field who may be more concerned about local goals than statewide goals.

The final goal in this section asked about the timeline for early childhood program educators who work with ages 3 – 5. Responses to the seven components under this goal can be seen in Table 42 below.

Table 42. Literacy Timeline: Ages 3 - 5

The following items are listed in the ND Comprehensive State Literacy Plan as part of the literacy timeline for children ages 3 - 5. Please rate the extent to which your early childhood program includes these components.	Responses					Descriptive Statistics	
	N	To a great extent	To some extent	To a little extent	Not at all	M	SD
Recognize the significance of the transition to school in terms of a child's learning and the importance of meeting the needs of those whose home literacy practices differ from those of the school, and understand the fact that children take different pathways toward becoming literate.	66	56.1%	39.4%	1.5%	3.0%	3.48	0.69
Provide research-based, early literacy instruction through collaborative agencies and programs (e.g., ND Department of Human Services Division). Emphasize early literacy development based on the ND Pre-Kindergarten content standards; Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework; the ND Early Learning Guidelines Ages 3 – 5; and the Early Childhood Special Education Outcomes Process. Provide early language development instruction for dual language learners.	66	36.4%	28.8%	19.7%	15.2%	2.86	1.08
Emphasize early literacy development based on the ND Pre-Kindergarten content standards; Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, the ND Early Learning Guidelines Ages 3 – 5; and the Early Childhood Special Education Outcomes Progress.	66	62.1%	24.2%	12.1%	1.5%	3.47	0.77
Provide early language development instruction for dual language learners.	66	28.8%	21.2%	22.7%	27.3%	2.52	1.18
Implement the Pyramid Model.	64	17.2%	21.9%	29.7%	31.3%	2.25	1.08
Participation in early DLL professional development.	65	18.5%	15.4%	30.8%	35.4%	2.17	1.11

The following items are listed in the ND Comprehensive State Literacy Plan as part of the literacy timeline for children ages 3 - 5. Please rate the extent to which your early childhood program includes these components.	Responses					Descriptive Statistics		
	N	To a great extent	To some extent	To a little extent	Not at all	M	SD	
Goals for local program professional development.	65	33.8%	18.5%	35.4%	12.3%	2.74	1.07	
						Overall	2.80	0.77

Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

A total of 66 early childhood educators responded to the literacy timeline goal for children ages 3 – 5. The overall mean was 2.80 ($SD = 0.77$); thus, respondents’ results tended to be above *to a little extent* but not quite at the *to some extent* level. Means ranged from 2.17 to 3.48 with “**Emphasize early literacy development based on the ND pre-kindergarten content standards; Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework; the ND Early Learning Guidelines Ages 3-5; and the Early Childhood Special Education Outcomes Process**” being the item with the highest mean. Five of the seven components under this goal had means of less than 3.00. Those items include:

- Participation in early DLL professional development. ($M = 2.17$; $SD = 1.11$)
- Implement the Pyramid Model. ($M = 2.25$; $SD = 1.08$)
- Provide early language development for dual language learners. ($M = 2.52$; $SD = 1.18$)
- Goals for local program professional development. ($M = 2.74$; $SD = 1.07$)
- Provide research-based, early literacy instruction through collaborative agencies and programs (e.g., ND Department of Human Services, Children and Family Services Division). ($M = 2.86$; $SD = 1.08$)

ND State Literacy Goals

Overall, the overall means for the seven goals ranged from 2.80 to 3.27. Table 43 below ranks the goals from highest to lowest mean.

Table 43. Literacy Goals Ranked by Mean

Goal	Descriptive Statistics	
	M	SD
Literacy Timeline: Ages Birth – 3	3.27	0.80
Leadership and Sustainability	3.08	0.70
Family and Community Engagement Strategies	3.04	0.70
Instruction and Intervention	3.00	0.66
Professional Development	2.95	0.82
Standards Alignment	2.91	0.79

Goal	Descriptive Statistics	
	M	SD
Literacy Timeline: Ages 3 – 5	2.80	0.77

Interestingly, the highest and lowest mean were from the Literacy Timeline. Ages Birth – 3 had the highest mean ($M = 3.27$; $SD = 0.80$) while Ages 3 – 5 had the lowest mean ($M = 2.80$; $SD = 0.77$). In addition to Literacy Timeline: Ages 3 – 5, two other items received overall means below 2.00. Those items include:

- Standards Alignment. ($M = 2.91$; $SD = 0.79$)
- Professional Development. ($M = 2.95$; $SD = 0.82$)

The remaining items receive means of just over 3.00. Those items follow:

- Instruction and Intervention. ($M = 3.00$; $SD = 0.66$)
- Family and Community Engagement Strategies ($M = 3.04$; $SD = 0.70$)
- Leadership and Sustainability. ($M = 3.08$; $SD = 0.70$)

Figure 3 provides a visual representation of how the means compare for each goal. The overall difference between the highest and lowest mean is 0.47.

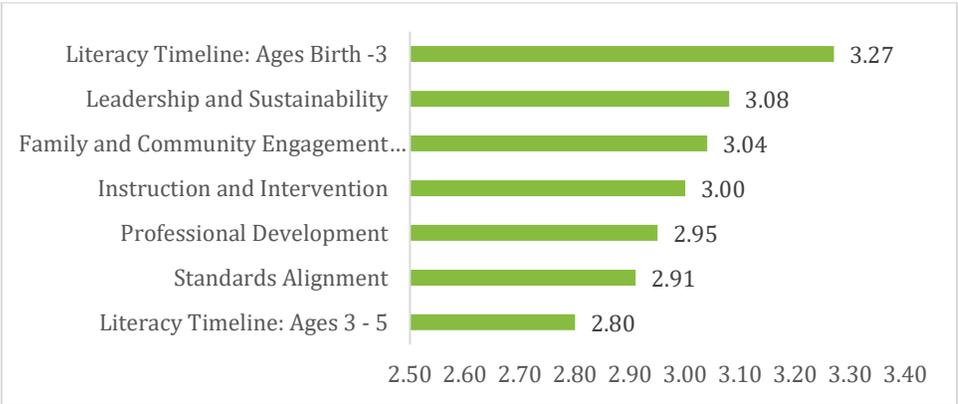


Figure 3. ND State Literacy Goals Ranked by Mean

Section V. Kindergarten Readiness Assessment

The purpose of the Spring 2018 North Dakota Early Childhood Needs Assessment section on kindergarten readiness was to collect data to learn how programs and/or districts across the state conduct kindergarten readiness assessments. Three questions were included this session. The first one inquired about how kindergarten readiness is assessed. Question two focused on when children were assessed for kindergarten while the last question explored how the assessment was used in the program or district.

Table 44 shows the results to the question, “How is kindergarten readiness assessed in your district or program”? Provided responses included: (1) I don’t know; (2) DPI Kindergarten formative assessment (pilot program); and (3) Kindergarten formative assessment (please specify).

Table 44. How Kindergarten Readiness is Assessed

How is kindergarten readiness assessed in your district or program? (N =81)	N	Percentage
I don’t know.	51	63.0%
DPI Kindergarten formative assessment (pilot program)	7	8.6%
Kindergarten formative assessment (please specify): See Table 45 for a listing of “other” specifications	23	28.4%

Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

Almost two thirds of the respondents (63%) said that they **did not know** how kindergarten readiness is assessed in the district or program. Only 9 percent indicated that they used the **DPI Kindergarten formative assessment (pilot program)**. Just under a third (28%) said they used another kind of kindergarten formative assessment. People who selected that option were asked to specify what they used. A listing of the responses can be found in Table 45.

Table 45. Kindergarten Formative Assessment Descriptions

How is kindergarten readiness assessed in your district or program? Kindergarten Formative Assessment Written Responses (N = 17 written responses)
5-Year-Old Brigance Screener
AIMSweb and Measures of Academic Progress (MAPS) testing
As a part of our assessment
Brigance, School readiness goals
Dial 4
District assessments (N = 2)
End-of-year skills assessment
ESGI
Phelps Kindergarten Readiness Scale
Pre-Kindergarten Assessment Screening, Children’s Progress Academic Assessment (CPPA) during the school year, and Rigby Literacy Assessment
Professional judgment/curriculum assessment

How is kindergarten readiness assessed in your district or program? Kindergarten Formative Assessment Written Responses (N = 17 written responses)
Stars Early Literature, Stars Math, Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS), and in-class assessment
Teacher observation/curriculum assessment
Teaching Strategies Goal
Use DPI Standards
We have seven locations and schools use different assessment tools.

Although there are numerous formative assessments listed, several of the assessments (e.g., Brigance, ESGI, and Teaching Strategies Goal) were mentioned previously as the assessments used across the program. Other people said they used district assessments and a few respondents indicated that multiple measures were used to assess children’s kindergarten readiness.

Next, early childhood program educators were asked when kindergarten readiness was assessed in their program or district. Five answers were provided as options: (1) I don’t know; (2) during pre-kindergarten; (3) summer prior to entering kindergarten; (4) beginning of kindergarten; and (5) other (please specify). Results are shown in Table 46. The listing of “other” responses can be found in Table 47.

Table 46. When Kindergarten Readiness is Assessed

When is kindergarten readiness assessed in your program or district? (N = 46)	N	Percentage
I don’t know.	0	0.0%
During Pre-Kindergarten	14	30.4%
Summer prior to entering kindergarten	7	15.2%
Beginning of kindergarten	17	37.0%
Other (please specify): See Table 47 for a listing of “other” specifications	8	17.4%

Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

Of the 46 responses, 37% said that kindergarten readiness was assessed at the **beginning of kindergarten** while 30% reported it was assessed **during pre-kindergarten**. Another 15% indicated kindergarten assessment was completed **the summer prior to entering kindergarten**. The other respondents selected the “**other**” option. Their written responses are listed in Table 47.

Table 47. “Other” When Kindergarten Readiness is Assessed

When is kindergarten readiness assessed in your program or district? Kindergarten Formative Assessment Written Responses (N = 8 written responses)
April prior to kindergarten year.
Before school and every nine weeks.
Beginning of kindergarten and three times during the school year.
Different approaches at different schools.

When is kindergarten readiness assessed in your program or district? Kindergarten Formative Assessment Written Responses (N = 8 written responses)
In the fall at the same time as preschool assessment.
Kindergarten is not assessed.
Spring prior to entering kindergarten (N = 2)

Two of the written responses indicated that assessments happened multiple times during the year while three respondents indicated spring prior to kindergarten. Another comment stated that different approaches were used at different schools. It should also be noted that one respondent indicated “kindergarten is not assessed.”

The last question regarding kindergarten readiness assessment focused on how kindergarten assessment was used. In addition to writing in an “other” response, survey participants could also select “I don’t know,” “kindergarten placement,” or “Title I eligibility.” Results are shown in Table 48 below.

Table 48. How Kindergarten Readiness Assessment is Used

How is the kindergarten readiness assessment used in your district or program? (N = 18)	N	Percentage
I don’t know.	0	0.0%
Kindergarten placement	0	0.0%
Title I Eligibility	10	55.6%
Other (please specify): See Table 49 for a listing of “other” specifications	8	44.4%

Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

No one selected “I don’t know” or “kindergarten placement.” Over half (56%) reported that kindergarten assessment was used to determine **Title I Eligibility**. Another 44 percent selected “other.” The written “other” responses are shown in Table 49.

Table 49. “Other” How Kindergarten Readiness is Used

How is the kindergarten readiness assessment used in your program or district? Other Written Responses (N = 8 written responses)
Benchmark data
Grant reporting
It’s not a formal assessment
Kindergarten placement and progress monitoring
No formal assessment
Not used. Total waste of time.
Placement for first grade and intervention along with data gathering for leveling groups for reading and math.

How is the kindergarten readiness assessment used in your program or district?

Other Written Responses

(N = 8 written responses)

Response to Intervention (RtI)/Title I placement/kindergarten placement or lack thereof

The written responses varied from “no formal assessment” to using intervention data for “leveling groups for reading and math.” One respondent indicated that the assessment was not used and was a “total waste of time.”

Section VI. Collaboration with District

The next section of the Spring 2018 ND SRCL Early Childhood Program Needs Assessment asked three questions about the early childhood program’s collaboration with the district. The first question asked the survey respondent to reflect on the extent to which the program collaborates with the transitioning district/school, as shown in Table 50.

Table 50. Extent of Program Collaboration with Transitioning District/School

To what extent does your program collaborate with the transitioning district/school?	N	Percentage
To a great extent	42	50.0%
To some extent	27	32.1%
To a little extent	11	13.1%
Not at all	4	4.8%
Mean	3.27	
Standard Deviation	0.87	

Of the 84 respondents who answered this question, 50% said *to a great extent* while 32% reported *to some extent*. Only 13 percent selected *to a little extent* and even fewer (5%) said *not at all*. The mean was 3.27 ($SD = 0.87$). Overall, these responses indicate that the early childhood programs seem to have some relationship with the transitioning district/school.

The next question asked respondents to indicate what barriers/challenges they faced when collaborating with the district/school where children transition after exiting the program. Sixty-five early childhood educators responded to the question. Table 51 lists the responses ranked from highest to lowest frequency with “**other**” responses at the end.

Table 51. Barriers/Challenges to Collaboration

What barriers/challenges do you face when collaborating with the district/school where children transition after exiting the program?	N	Percentage
I do not have time.	14	21.5%
I do not receive any communication from the district.	12	18.5%
I do not know who to reach out to in order to collaborate.	5	7.7%
Other (please specify): (See Table 41)	38	58.5%

Just over a fifth (22%) said that the barrier/challenge was **lack of time** while just under a fifth (19%) reported that they **did not receive any communication from the district**. Eight percent selected the “**I do not know who to reach out to in order to collaborate**” option. The “**other**” option asked people to specify other barriers/challenges. Because there were 38 “other” responses, the specifications for “other” are listed in Table 52.

Table 52. “Other” Barriers/Challenges to Collaboration

Other Responses
Attitudes of collaborating district.
Expectations are not consistent across the district.
Finding time for all staff involved to meet.
Going well in our area.
I am in the public school so this is not an issue.
I support families with knowing options available to them in the local community, but oftentimes, the [early program] is left out of that conversation collaboratively.
I’m the PK-12 music teacher so I continue to teach them after leaving preschool or kindergarten.
It is difficult to get the services needed for children at times due to limited staff availability and high enrollment numbers.
Not Applicable or None (N = 13) (The following statements were comments associated with the “none” response).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We communicate regularly. • We are part of the district. • Not an early childhood teacher.
Often do not hear from other districts.
Scheduling meetings. (N = 2)
Small enrollment and we only collaborate with the superintendent.
Testing is not always adequate on the school side.
The Head Start program in town is awful and doesn’t teach the students anything.
The kindergarten teachers are not always willing to collaborate.
The parents of the preschoolers in my class may not know what resources there are for children who have transition challenges/behavior issues.
Time (kindergarten staff)
Too many school districts.
Transition works well with all districts.
We are in the public school so transitioning is smooth.
We are in the same facility.
We contact them.
We do well.
We transition our own PreK students into kindergarten by offering “Gearing up for Kindergarten” sessions to our families of students entering kindergarten in the fall. Also, a kindergarten orientation is held each fall.

“Other” responses covered a broad range of topics. As shown in Table 41, 13 of the responses indicated that they had no challenges or barriers. Several of the responses (N = 9) discussed the positive aspects of the collaborating with the transitioning school or district. Four of those nine comments specifically indicated that the early childhood program was in the same district or same building, which facilitates the collaboration process. Another comment provided an example of a transitioning activity, “We transition our own PreK students into kindergarten by

offering “Gearing up for Kindergarten” sessions to our families of students entering kindergarten in the fall. Also, a kindergarten orientation is held each fall.”

The other responses listed challenges and barriers that the early childhood program staff face when collaborating with the transitioning district(s)/school(s). Timing, scheduling, enrollment number, and other logistical challenges were mentioned as challenges:

- *Finding time for all staff involved to meet.*
- *It is difficult to get the services needed for children at times due to limited staff availability and high enrollment numbers.*
- *Often do not hear from other districts.*
- *Scheduling meetings. (N = 2)*
- *Small enrollment and we only collaborate with the superintendent.*
- *Time (kindergarten staff).*
- *Too many school districts.*

Two other comments focused on family involvement. One of those comments discussed how the program was not part of the conversations offered to community members while the other comment suggested that parents may not be aware of resources, especially for children with transition/behavioral issues. The comments are listed below:

- *I support families with knowing options available to them in the local community, but oftentimes, the [early education program] is left out of that conversation collaboratively.*
- *The parents of the preschoolers in my class may not know what resources there are for children who have transition/behavior issues.*

Although the last few comments are important to note, they were isolated statements. Given the small number of comments provided, it is possible that there are others across the state that have similar viewpoints:

- *Attitudes of collaborating districts.*
- *Expectations are not consistent across the district.*
- *Testing is not always adequate on the school side.*
- *The Head Start program in town is awful and doesn't teach the students anything.*
- *The kindergarten teachers are not always willing to collaborate.*

The last question in this section was open-ended and asked respondents to provide up to two suggestions on how collaboration with the community, school, or district could be improved. Thirty-four responses were recorded. Since the respondents were asked to provide up to two suggestions, individual suggestions have been listed on separate lines in Table 53.

Table 53. Suggestions to Improve Collaboration

Provide up to two suggestions on how collaboration with the community, school, or district could be improved.
Allow parents to collaborate with teachers on lesson plans.
Better communication with the special education program teachers of children we serve on how to better meet their educational needs.
Change Head Start program so they actually teach the kids something so they're ready for kindergarten. Head Start kids in Valley City are extremely far behind their peers that went to preschool. We try to talk to Head Start about this, but they won't [discuss].
Collaboration within our program for literacy development and instruction.
Communication, personnel interactions to improve.
Community could have an early childhood center.
Continue to work as a community to meet the needs of people.
District could offer public preschool to the community.
During the monthly or quarterly meetings, continue to discuss school readiness and transition between the program and schools.
Grow your own pre-kindergarten teachers in the community so they have "buy-in"—a reason to make it work.
I am located within the school district so transitions are very smooth.
I need to receive information from the school systems.
I should find out what kindergarten readiness test the kindergarten teacher gives each student. We usually talk verbally about what she would like me to work on more, if there is anything.
Intentional times and days for these meetings built into the ECSE schedule.
Invite more community members to the school for involvement.
Meeting with all parties involved and follow-up meeting.
More administrative support on the importance of early learning.
More collaboration with surrounding towns to see what is being taught and what they are finding effective.
More collaboration with kindergarten teachers.
More collaborative communication.
More communication with the community on what PreK does.
More consistency throughout district for expectations, standards, etc.
More education on programs.
More extensive testing processes for determining eligibility.
More parent/family education.
More respect of families from the school system.
More time allowed for collaboration.
More variety of tools that can be used to determine eligibility for continued services for children.
Pre-kindergarten meetings with parents of kindergarten-aged students and those younger so they know how the program is run.
Provide preschool in-services. Many in-services are for older children.
Provide time to staff to collaborate with kindergarten staff, parents, and the community. Time is always short.

Provide up to two suggestions on how collaboration with the community, school, or district could be improved.

Preschool can inform child care more about what they focus on during the preschool years and any goals for children entering preschool.

Respect each job and learn about other cultures in order to serve DLL families better.

Simple phone call.

The community needs general knowledge and exposure to the programs available so they can access them when needed.

The family voice is a high need during transition. While it is part of the Early Program job description to support families that are going through transition at age 3, there has been no direction on what this should specifically look like from Pathfinder.

The preschool program where I work is part of the public school district. Yet, I was not informed when the school district opened another preschool classroom in another building. I think the public school should have contacted the licensing agent for our school.

The school considers other testing options and does not look so much at therapy scores. The school has more support and staff.

There is hardly a collaboration between the district and Head Start. We have one transition meeting, but other than that, the children exit Head Start and go into kindergarten. Quite often Head Start is excluded from the news of the district.

Time allotted for teachers to collaborate when students transition into kindergarten.

Timely Individual Education Plan (IEP) shared with collaborative partners.

We do send a transition letter to the new school, but we just forward it to the secretary and have no idea if it's helpful or not or even looked at by the new teacher. The letter was designed in conjunction with kindergarten teachers, but not every teacher will [look at it].

We have good communication with our schools.

We have great collaborations with most of the schools. The Head Start teacher and site supervisor meet with the kindergarten teacher and principal in the spring to discuss transitions, child outcomes data, curriculum, and school readiness expectations.

You can have monthly/quarterly education meetings with Head Start programs and local schools.

The comments can be divided into five main categories: (1) assessment; (2) communication, (3) community involvement; (4) family involvement; and (5) Head Start. Themes and a brief summary of each comment is provided below:

Assessment

Five suggestions were made regarding how collaboration between early childhood programs and the schools/districts could be improved through assessments. These statements ranged from one individual reflecting that he/she would find out what the readiness assessments are to creating time to review IEPs with collaborative partners. Two of the statements focused on assessments to determine eligibility for services while another statement mentioned that schools do not use therapy scores. Comments related to assessment are bulleted below:

- *I should find out what kindergarten readiness test the kindergarten teachers gives each student. We usually talk verbally about what she would like me to work on more, if there is anything.*
- *More extensive testing processes for determining eligibility.*

- *More variety of tools that can be used to determine eligibility for continued services for children.*
- *The school considers other testing options and does not look so much at therapy scores.*
- *Timely IEPs shared with collaborative partners.*

Communication

Communication was a key theme across the suggestions for improving collaboration with the community, school, or district. In addition to suggestions for improving communication among these groups, some statements also focused on improving communication within their own programs. Verbatim statements regarding communication follow:

- *Better communication with the special education program teachers of children we serve on how to better meet their educational needs.*
- *Collaboration, personnel interactions to improve.*
- *During the monthly or quarterly meetings, continue to discuss school readiness and transition between the program and schools.*
- *I am located within the school district so transitions are very smooth.*
- *I need to receive information from the school systems.*
- *Intentional times and days for these meetings built into the ECSE schedule.*
- *Meetings with all parties involved and follow-up meeting.*
- *More collaboration with kindergarten teachers.*
- *More collaborative communication.*
- *More consistency throughout district for expectations, standards, etc.*
- *More education on programs.*
- *More time allowed for collaboration.*
- *Provide preschool in-services. Many in-services are for older children.*
- *Provide time to staff to collaborate with kindergarten staff, parents, and the community. Time is always short.*
- *Preschool can inform childcare more about what they focus on during the preschool years and any goals for children entering preschool.*
- *Simple phone call.*
- *The preschool program where I work is part of the public school district. Yet, I was not informed when the school district opened another preschool classroom in another building. I think the public school should have contacted the licensing agent for our school.*
- *Time allotted for teachers to collaborate when students transition into kindergarten.*
- *We do send a transition letter to the new school, but we just forward it to the secretary and have no idea if it's helpful or not or even looked at by the new teacher. The letter was designed in conjunction with kindergarten teachers, but not every teacher will [look at it].*
- *We have good communication with our schools.*

Community Involvement

Several statements were made regarding how the early childhood program and community could become more collaborative. Other statements encouraged the community or district to provide early childhood programs. Overall, there seemed to be a call for more communication with the community to promote programs and ensure the early childhood programs are meeting the needs of the community. Ideas regarding community involvement are listed below:

- *Community could have an early childhood center.*
- *Continue to work as a community to meet the needs of people.*
- *District could offer public preschool to the community.*
- *Grow your own pre-kindergarten teachers in the community so they have “buy-in”—a reason to make it work.*
- *Invite more community members to the school for involvement.*
- *More collaboration with the surrounding towns to see what is being taught and what they are finding effective.*
- *More communication with the community on what PreK does.*
- *Respect each job and learn about other cultures in order to serve DLL families better.*
- *The community needs general knowledge and exposure to the programs available so they can access them when needed.*

Family Involvement

Most of the comments regarding family involvement encouraged programs, schools, and districts to build upon efforts to work with family members. Suggestions included allowing parents to collaborate with teachers on lesson plans, meeting with parents of PreK students so they understand what kindergarten will entail, and providing better support during transition times. Additionally, there was a comment recommending more parent/family education and more respect of families from the district. Verbatim comments included:

- *Allow parents to collaborate with teachers on lesson plans.*
- *More parent/family education.*
- *More respect of families from the school system.*
- *Pre-kindergarten meetings with parents of kindergarten-aged students and those younger so they know how the program is run.*
- *The family voice is a high need during transition. While it is part of the Early Program job description to support families that are going through transition at age 3, there has been no direction on what this should specifically look like from Pathfinder.*

Head Start

Based on the comments, it seems that collaboration with Head Start programs have different degrees of success. Comments were both positive and negative about the relationship between Head Start and the schools/districts. The comments concerning Head Start programs follow:

- *Change Head Start program so they actually teach the kids something so they're ready for kindergarten. Head Start kids in Valley City are extremely far behind their peers that went to preschool. We try to talk to Head Start about this, but they won't [discuss].*
- *There is hardly a collaboration between the district and Head Start. We have one transition meeting, but other than that, the children exit Head Start and go into kindergarten. Quite often Head Start is excluded from the news of the district.*
- *We have great collaborations with most of the schools. The Head Start teacher and site supervisor meet with the kindergarten teacher and principal in the spring to discuss transitions, child outcomes data, curriculum, and school readiness expectations.*
- *You can have monthly/quarterly education meetings with Head Start programs and local schools.*

Section VII. Needs and Resources

The last section of the survey asked early childhood educators questions about what they perceived to be their greatest needs regarding literacy and what resources would help them better support literacy. Two of the questions were force-choice but included an “other” option for survey respondents to type in additional thoughts. The remaining two questions were open-ended and allowed survey respondents to write out additional, in-depth comments about their literacy needs and resources that would help them better support literacy.

Biggest Needs Regarding Literacy

The first question in this section asked respondents to reflect on their biggest needs regarding literacy. Seventy-seven people answered this question. Table 54 shows the frequency and percentage of the respondents for each choice. Responses are listed from highest to lowest frequency.

Table 54. Biggest Needs

What are your biggest needs regarding literacy? Select all that apply. (N = 77)	N	Percentage
Training/professional development	46	59.7%
Curriculum selection/development	29	37.7%
Support by parents and community	28	36.4%
Curriculum implementation	25	32.5%
Coaching	17	22.1%
Collaboration with colleagues	15	19.5%
Policy changes at the state-level	10	13.0%
Leadership	8	10.4%
Other (please specify): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate curriculum and assessment. • Leadership demands that are not grade level appropriate for students with needs. Curriculum is chosen that is not appropriate for the students we work with and demands are very overwhelming for students and staff. There are better resources available to meet the needs of students. • Professional development based on skills. • State support for PreK. 	6	7.8%
Policy changes at the district-level	2	2.6%
Policy changes at the school-level	2	2.6%

Note. Respondents could choose more than one option so percentages may not add up to 100.

It is important to note that survey respondents were asked to select all that apply on this question so they may have chosen more than one response. The majority of respondents (60%) said that **training/professional development** was their biggest need regarding literacy. Other needs that a third or more of the respondents selected included **curriculum selection/development** (38%); **support by parents and community** (36%); and **curriculum implementation** (33%).

Four early childhood educators included “other” needs, but upon closer analysis, written comments also included references to **curriculum** and **professional development**, which aligned to the choices made above. Figure 4 below graphically displays the responses.

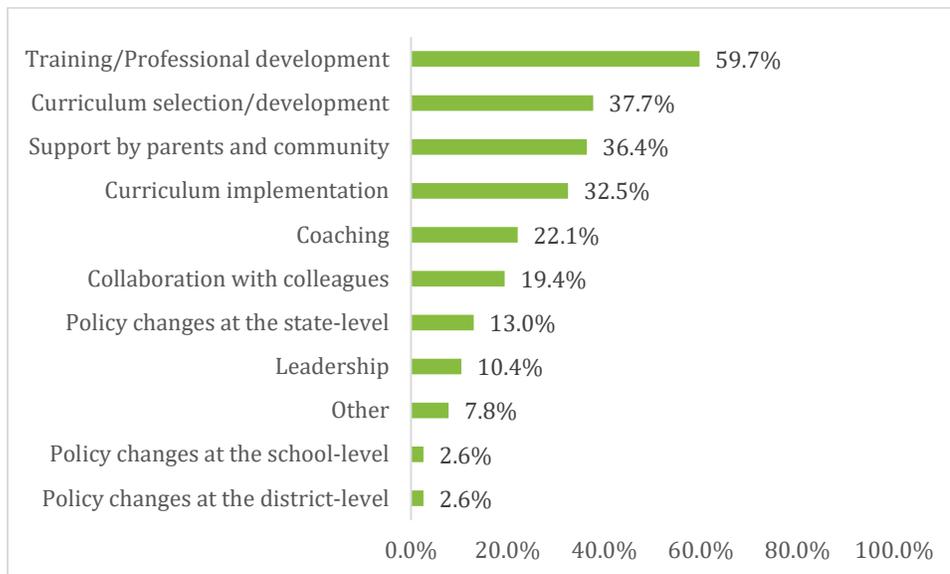


Figure 4. Literacy Needs

The next survey question was an open-ended question that provided early childhood educators an opportunity to write an in-depth comment about their needs regarding literacy. Twelve survey respondents included comments. Verbatim comments are included in Table 55.

Table 55. Literacy Needs (Open-Ended)

If you have other comments about your needs regarding literacy, please type them in the box below. (N = 12)
As Experienced Parents, we don't receive any formal curriculum or teaching about the benefits of early literacy besides those that we would have as parents supporting our own children. I would be more than open to hear about specific benefits to talk [about] with families when offering ideas of activities to do with children.
Families get busy, but they are the biggest support of their child's education. They need to realize the importance of their role and how we can work together even more.
High Scope (at least how it is implemented at this Head Start) does very little to encourage and increase literacy.
I love Handwriting without Tears. I think it covers the basics of literacy.
I wish my school would allow more time and money for professional development in this area.
I work in a laboratory preschool. I need to teach these methods to the students who work with the children in my classroom.
Our curriculum needs to be updated to a newer version. Head Start is required to use curriculum. . . .
We want to transition to a curriculum that will complement the state and local districts' curriculum and expectations. The update will cost \$35,000 plus professional development.
Parents need to be reading, talking, singing, and engaging with their children prior to entering preschool at age 3. We have implemented the Imagination Library program in our community to help facilitate this. So much of early literacy development occurs in the birth-3 years. If children do not

If you have other comments about your needs regarding literacy, please type them in the box below. (N = 12)

have books in their homes and exposure to pre-literacy phonological awareness, listening, and speaking, they very much struggle in preschool and beyond.

Teachers need more man power to assist with literacy. They cannot do it all by themselves anymore. I believe principals, districts, state, and parent stakeholders keep adding to teachers' job duties. Students need smaller class sizes, more push-in/pull-out supports, and more social-emotional supports and behavior guidance.

The state standards are too challenging for the younger children in our preschool. I like them, and teach to meet them, but the acceptance age for preschoolers should be moved to exclude summer birthday children. In short, children would be more successful if they were closer to 5 than 4 upon entering.

We need to teach to the individual needs of each student and stop micromanaging.

With the change to 1,020 school hours for children, we have very little time for professional development and collaboration with teachers. It has been difficult to implement coaching and PLC's [professional learning communities] because of the lack of time to do so.

The twelve comments offered diverse perspectives about early educators' literacy needs. Themes throughout the comments included **family support**, **curriculum**, and **professional development/additional support**. Summaries from each of these themes follow.

Family Support

Comments focused on family support indicated that the families of the children needed to be more supportive of their children's education. One respondent discussed how the program implemented Imagination Library in their community to assist in this. Another person indicated that he/she would benefit from learning more about how to provide ideas to parents.

Representative comments are listed below:

- *As Experienced Parents, we don't receive any formal curriculum or teaching about the benefits of early literacy besides those that we would have as parents supporting our own children. I would be more than open to hear about specific benefits to talk [about] with families when offering ideas of activities to do with children.*
- *Families get busy, but they are the biggest support of their child's education. They need to realize the importance of their role and how we can work together even more.*
- *Parents need to be reading, talking, singing, and engaging with their children prior to entering preschool at age 3. We have implemented the Imagination Library in our community to help facilitate this. So much of our early literacy development occurs in the birth – 3 years. If children do not have books in their homes and exposure to pre-literacy phonological awareness, listening, and speaking, they very much struggle in preschool and beyond.*

Curriculum

Comments about curriculum ranged from not having formal curriculum (see Experienced Parents example from above) to describing specific curriculum to raising concerns about the state standards. One respondent indicated that Handwriting without Tears covered the basics of literacy

while two comments concerning Head Start curriculum were not as positive about the curriculum’s ability to teach literacy. Representative comments follow:

- *High Scope (at least how it is implemented at this Head Start) does very little to encourage and increase literacy.*
- *Our curriculum needs to be updated to a new version. Head Start is required to use curriculum. . . We want to transition to a curriculum that will complement the state and local districts’ curriculum and expectations. The update will cost \$35,000 plus professional development.*
- *I love Handwriting without Tears. I think it covers the basics of literacy.*
- *The state standards are too challenging for the younger children in our preschool. I like them, and teach to meet them, but the acceptance age for preschoolers should be moved to exclude summer birthday children.*

Professional Development/Additional Support

The last major theme across the comments was about professional development and needing additional support. Comments primarily related to lack of time and financial resources. Another comment specifically discussed strategies in which teachers could be provided more support. Representative comments regarding professional development/additional support are bulleted below:

- *I wish my school would allow more time and money for professional development in this area.*
- *Teachers need more man power to assist with literacy. They cannot do it all by themselves anymore. I believe principals, districts, state, and parent stakeholders keep adding to the teachers’ job duties. Students need smaller class sizes, more push-in/pull-out supports, and more socio-emotional supports and behavior guidance.*
- *With the change to 1,020 school hours for children, we have very little professional development and collaboration with teachers. It has been difficult to implement coaching and PLC’s because of the lack of time to do so.*

Other Resources Needed to Better Support Literacy

The last two questions addressed issues regarding resources needed to better support literacy in early education programs. Sixty-nine people responded to this question. Table 56 shows the frequency and percentage of the respondents for each choice. Responses are listed from highest to lowest frequency.

Table 56. Other Resources

What other resources do you need in order to better support literacy? Select all that apply.	N	Percentage
Training/professional development	42	60.9%
Lesson ideas	30	43.5%
Collaboration opportunities/professional learning communities	27	39.1%
Situation support (e.g., I have a child who . . .)	25	36.2%

What other resources do you need in order to better support literacy? Select all that apply.	N	Percentage
Strategies	25	36.2%
Staff	15	21.7%
Data Access	7	10.1%
Other (please specify): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborating time to learn new ideas/strategies. • Our program is doing a fantastic job. • Staff, staff, staff, staff, staff; smaller class sizes 	3	4.3%

Note. Respondents could choose more than one option so percentages may not add up to 100.

It is important to note that survey respondents were asked to select all that apply on this question so they may have chosen more than one response. More than half (61%) indicated that **training/professional development** was a needed resource. Over a third selected the following resources as a need: (1) **lesson ideas** (44%); (2) **collaboration opportunities/professional learning communities** (39%); (3) **situation support (ex. I have a child who. . .)** (36%); and (4) **strategies** (36%). One of the “other” responses also referred to **collaboration** while a second comment emphasized that **staff** was a need. Both comments aligned with selected choices previously listed. Figure 5 below provides a visual representation of the needs suggested by survey respondents.

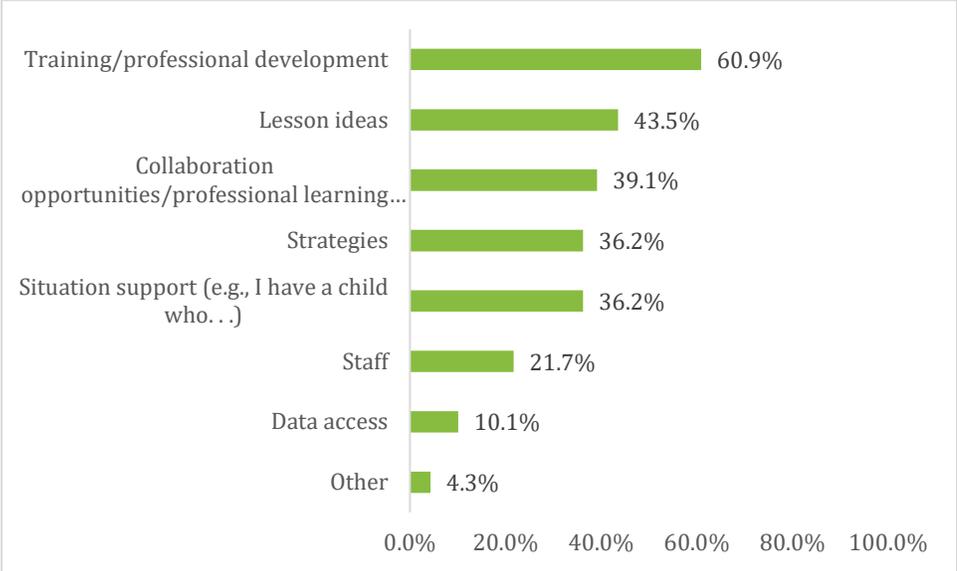


Figure 5. Resource Needs

The last survey question was an open-ended question that provided early childhood educators an opportunity to write an in-depth comment about what resources they needed to better support literacy. Seven survey respondents included comments. Verbatim comments are included in Table 57.

Table 57. Resources (Open-Ended)

If you have other comments about resources you need to better support literacy, please type them in the box below. (N =7)
Age appropriate books with a list of questions to ask children.
At Head Start we serve an extremely high special education population, some of which have extremely high needs making literacy instruction difficult to implement.
I do not have any ELL students. If I would have ELL students, this would be a need I would need help with teaching.
I feel like I had poor scoring for questions 25-30ish for instruction and leadership. These tangible areas, like a curriculum, are not areas that Experienced Parents work on with families (not that they couldn't). Part of this is the perspective that [what] Experienced Parents provide to families--it is not a clinical approach. I would be more than open to ideas and suggestions when meeting with families!
Online, free classes would be helpful.
Parent education about the importance of reading to their child and engaging in conversations with their child (rather than the child being put in front of a device that entertains them/acts as an observational learning tool—this is not how young children learn best) would better support early literacy from my viewpoint. It is evident when children come to preschool which children have had these critical experiences and which have not by how they speak, interact, listen to stories, engage with books, and have an attention span, not to mention the concepts that they have learned through books.
When we are short staffed, it is a goal just to make it through the day.

The comments varied. Two of the comments discussed needing more resources for working with families. Selected sections from those comments are highlighted below:

- *These tangible areas, like a curriculum, are not areas that Experienced Parents work on with families (not that they couldn't.) Part of this is the perspective that [what] Experienced Parents provide to families—it is not a clinical approach. I would be more than open to ideas and suggestions when meeting with families!*
- *Parent education about the importance of reading to their child and engaging in conversations with their child (rather than the child being put in front of a device that entertains them/ acts as an observation learning tool—that is not how young children learn best) would better support early literacy from my viewpoint.*

One of these comments focused on providing Experienced Parents with more information about how to work with families on providing literacy activities at home. Similarly, the second comment recommended providing family education on how to implement and participate in literacy activities at home.

The remaining comments covered diverse topics areas. For example, one comment suggested age-appropriate books with questions for children. Two other comments mentioned specific populations of students: (1) special education and (2) ELLs. Another comment suggested “online, free classes” while the last comment simply stated that staff shortages were an issue, “When we are short staffed, it is a goal to just make it through the day.”

Summary of Findings

General Background Information

The first section of the 2018 Spring Early Childhood Programs Needs Assessment asked survey respondents to address seven questions. Those questions included:

- (1) In what type of early childhood program do you work?
- (2) What is your position in your program?
- (3) What is your highest level of educational attainment?
- (4) What early childhood and/or special education qualification(s) do you have? Select all that apply.
- (5) In what literacy-related professional development opportunities has your early learning program participated? Select all that apply.
- (6) What type(s) of professional development have you received related to literacy instruction? Select all that apply.
- (7) In what county are you located?

A brief summary of the findings from questions one through six are provided below. A list of the counties represented by the survey respondents can be found in Appendix B.

Type of Early Childhood Program in Which You Work

Of the 226 early childhood program educators who responded to this question, a quarter (25%) selected “**other**”. Several of the “other” open-ended comments clarified that the respondent worked across multiple early childhood programs. Other survey participants seemed to work in fields outside early education (i.e., public schools [K-12]). For a full listing of the “other” comments, see Table 2.

The rest of the respondents selected the options listed on the survey. A fifth (20%) reported they were from **ECSE** programs and another 20% indicated they worked in **public pre-kindergarten** programs. Other programs represented by survey respondents included: **Head Start** (12%); **Child Care** (8%); **IHEs** (2%); **Home Visiting** (1%); **Reading Corp** (1%); and **Early Head Start** (1%).

Position in Program

The next question on the survey asked respondents to select their position in the program. Survey participants had six options to choose from as well as an “other” option where they could specify a position not currently listed. Over half (60%) of the survey respondents said they were **teachers**. The percentage of respondents who reported they served as **directors, related service providers**, or an “**other**” field were the same, 13% for each position. Only 2% of the respondents indicated they were **paraprofessionals**.

Highest Level of Educational Attainment

Respondents were next asked to indicate their highest level of educational attainment. Over 90 percent (93%) of the respondents have earned a **Bachelor's** (48%) or **Master's** degree (44%). Small percentages of respondents indicated the following as their highest level of educational attainment: “**other**” (3%); **associate's degree** (2%); **doctorate** (1%); **high school diploma** (1%); and **less than high school diploma** (less than 1%).

Early Childhood/Special Education Qualifications

To learn more about respondents' early childhood qualifications, the next question asked early childhood educators to select all their earned early childhood and/or special education qualifications. Almost half (45%) of the respondents listed that they have “**other**” early childhood and/or special education qualifications that were not listed as options. The “**other**” write-in options varied across individuals. Many of the written responses emphasized that the individual had multiple degrees or majors/minors affiliated with early childhood or special education. A small number (N = 6) indicated they had no early childhood or special education qualifications. Overall, most of the write-in options reflected that the survey respondents had education backgrounds including associate degrees, bachelor degrees, master degrees, endorsements, and licensures among others.

In addition to “other” responses, a third of the survey participants reported that they have a **Bachelor's in Early Childhood** while just over a fifth (21%) said they hold a **Master's in Child Development-related field**. Another fifth of the respondents selected an **Endorsement in Early Childhood Special Education** as an early childhood/special education qualification. A small number of respondents have earned the following qualifications: (1) **Bachelor's in child development** (9%); (2) **CDA** (5%); (3) **Restricted Teaching License** (3%); and (4) **Doctorate in Child-Development-related field** (1%).

Literacy-Related Professional Development

Next, the survey asked questions regarding professional development opportunities in which the early childhood program staff may have participated. The first question asked about specific opportunities the program had, such as the Pyramid Model; Literacy Data Analysis; Reading and Writing Strategies Across the Content Areas/Grades; Emergent Literacy; Social Emotional Learning; and Other, with the ability to specify what the “other” professional development activity entailed. Staff were asked to select all that applied.

Most of the survey respondents who answered this question had received professional development on **Social and Emotional Learning** (66%). Around a third had participated in professional development focused on **Emergent Literacy** (36%) and **Reading and Writing Strategies Across the Content Areas/Grades** (30%). A fifth had participated in **Pyramid Model** or **Other** types of professional development while 10% indicated they had participated in **Literacy Data Analysis** professional development.

NDDPI also was interested in learning more about how literacy professional development was delivered to participants. To answer this question, participants were asked to select if they had received professional developed through instructional coaching, face-to-face training, book studies, literacy conferences, online training, in collaboration with Dual Language Learners (DLL), or in some other manner.

Almost half (48%) of the early education program staff members said they had attended **face-to-face trainings**. That was followed by respondents who said they attended **literacy conferences** (40%). Approximately a third of the survey participants indicated they had attended professional development sessions that involved **instructional coaching** (35%); **book studies** (33%); and **online training** (31%). Twenty-eight of the respondents (15%) participated in professional development in **collaboration with DLL staff members** and 12% provided “**other**” responses.

About Your Program

The second section of the 2018 Early Childhood Programs Needs Assessment asked respondents to report how many children their program serves in each age-level overall, how many children they serve in each grade-level who have been identified as needing early intervention (EI) or Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) services, and how many children they serve in each age-level who have been identified as an English Learner (EL) or Dual Language Learner (DLL). Overall, the number of programs serving children in each age group ranged from 27 (2-year olds) to 90 (5-year olds). The mean number of programs serving children in these age groups was 52. The mean number of children served ranged from 17 (5-year olds) to 59 (2-year olds) with an overall mean of 34 children served per program.

The number of programs serving children identified as needing EI or ECSE services in each age group ranged from 20 (2-year olds) to 64 (5-year olds) with an overall mean of 40 programs across all age groups. Overall, the programs served a mean of 36 children identified as needing EI or ECSE services. Children in the 5-year olds category had the lowest number (N = 8) while children in the 2-year olds group had the highest number (N = 75).

The last question in this section asked how many children in each age-group served had been identified as EL or DLL. The number of programs that reported serving students identified in each age group ranged from 23 to 52 for an average of 35 programs serving EL or DLL students across the age groups. However, all programs reported having only **one** student identified as EL or DLL.

Program Curricula and Assessments

The next section of the Early Childhood Program Needs Assessment focused on what types of curricula educators used in their programs. Specific questions related to whether staff members purchased or used locally-developed curriculum, if they received training on how to use the curriculum, how long they have used the curriculum, if the curriculum includes literacy components, and how the curricula is assessed.

General Curriculum

The first question asked survey respondents what type of curricula they used in the program. Most of the respondents selected “**I use purchased curriculum and curriculum that has been created for the program**” (39%) indicating that programs use a mix of different types of curricula. Approximately a quarter reported that they use “**purchased curricula**” (24%) or they “**developed curricula for the program**” (24%). The remaining 13% said that their “**organization or district developed curriculum for the program.**”

If respondents indicated that they had purchased curriculum, they were next asked what curriculum they used. Programs seemed to use a variety of purchased curriculum. Oftentimes, the survey respondents listed two or more types of curricula used in the program so they may select and use multiple curricula depending upon the needs of the students or the goals of the program.

The next question asked if the program staff had received training in how to use the curriculum. Almost two thirds (65%) said that they **had received training** in the curriculum. Just over a third (35%) reported that they **had not received training** in how to use the curriculum.

Respondents were next asked if the training adequately prepared them to use the curriculum. For this question, two thirds (67%) said that **they had received adequate training** to prepare them to use the curriculum. Conversely, a third (33%) said that the **training did not adequately prepare** them to use the curriculum.

To assess why people may have indicated the training was not adequate, the next question on the needs assessment asked participants “if you did not receive training on the curriculum, why not? Select all that apply.” The majority of respondents (63%) said that they did not receive training because it was **not offered**. Fourteen percent indicated that although they did receive training, **it did not prepare them to use the curriculum**. Only 10% of the survey respondents indicated that training was **too expensive**. Almost a third (29%) selected “other” and wrote in a reason why the training was inadequate.

Staffing seemed to be an issue across the “other” responses. Staff turnover was mentioned as a challenge as well as being short staffed. Another person commented that the program sends representative staff to the trainings who then are tasked to share the training with others. Other comments indicated that some did not think curriculum training was relevant to them because they worked in areas outside of early childhood programming.

The next question asked survey participants to reflect on how long they have used the curriculum. Overall, the amount of time the curriculum has been used was evenly dispersed across the time categories. The highest percentage of respondents (29%) said they had been using the curriculum for **three to five years**. A quarter (25%) reported they had been using their curriculum for **one to three years** while 24% had been using their curriculum for **more than five years**. The other 22% indicated they had been using the curriculum for **less than a year**.

Curriculum and Literacy

Because the NDDPI SRCL Needs Assessment focused on literacy, the next question directly asked survey respondents if the curriculum they used has a literacy component. The majority (88%) said that their curriculum **did have a literacy component**. Only 12% reported that the curriculum did not have a literacy component.

Because there are multiple ways literacy can be covered or embedded within curriculum, NDDPI dug deeper into the literacy components by asking programs to state which literacy component(s) are included in their curriculum. The literacy components that the survey participants were asked to reflect upon align with literacy components from the *North Dakota Comprehensive State Literacy Plan*.

Over a third of the respondents indicated that the curriculum the program used included competencies for children ages Birth – 3 years. Specifically, 36% said “**Listening and Understanding**” and “**Emergent Literacy**” were included while 37% reported “**Communicating and Speaking**” was part of the curriculum.

The percentages were higher for competencies related to children 3 – 5 years. Eighty or more percent of the respondents reported that their curriculum included: (1) **Listening and Comprehension** (80%); (2) **Speaking and Communicating** (82%); and (3) **Phonological Awareness** (83%). Similarly, 70 percent or more indicated that **Emergent Reading** (73%) and **Emergent Writing** (70%) were curriculum literacy components for children ages 3 – 5 years.

Curriculum Assessment

Understanding more about how early childhood education programs in North Dakota used assessment in their programs also was part of the Early Childhood Programs Needs Assessment. Of the 126 people who responded to this question, 63% indicated that the **curriculum they used does have an assessment component**. Just over a third (37%) indicated that their chosen curriculum did not have an assessment component.

The next question targeted those who did not have an assessment component by asking if they did not have an assessment component, do they assess the children in the program. Only 13% of the respondents indicated that they did not assess the children in their program. The majority, 87%, said that **they did assess the children**, even though their curriculum did not include an assessment component.

To gather more information about the assessment, the next question asked people to select describe the purpose of their assessment. Many of the survey respondents (68%) said the **assessment had both a formative and summative purpose**. Almost a third (29%) reported the purpose of the assessment was **only formative**. Only one percent indicated the survey was only summative while two percent commented that their assessment was neither formative nor summative.

Next the early childhood educators were asked to select which assessment(s) they used in the program. Three popular assessments were provided as options: (1) Teaching Strategies Gold; (2) High Scope Child Observation Record (COR); and (3) The Work Sampling System. They could also select “other” and write-in the assessment that they use. According to the survey results, two thirds (67%) indicated they used “other” assessments. Fewer than 20 percent of the respondents selected any other option: (1) Teaching Strategies Gold (18%); (2) The Work Sampling System (14%); and (3) COR (7%).

The early childhood program educators use a variety of assessments across the programs. Many use multiple assessments to gauge the children’s progress. Several of them use programs created for their programs or informal assessments. Others use assessments aligned to the North Dakota Early Childhood Standards. Purchased assessments also were listed by the survey respondents.

Another aspect of assessment is the frequency in which the program conducts assessments. Thus, the next question asked early childhood education providers how often assessments were administered to the children served. Of the 98 people who responded to the question, equal numbers said they use assessments **daily, weekly, or twice a month** (8% for each response). Eighteen percent said they assessed children **monthly**. Other respondents reported they assessed children **twice a year** (11%) or **yearly** (9%). The remaining 36% indicated “other” timeframes. Many of the written responses (N = 20) mentioned administering assessments at least three times a year. Eight others said assessments were administered four times a year. The other responses included “daily observations” or the number of times assessments were conducted depended upon the needs of the children.

Finally, the last question regarding assessments asked early childhood educators to what extent did they think the assessment(s) adequately measured the progress of the children they served. Almost all (96%) of the respondents said the assessment(s) adequately measured the progress of the children served *to a great extent* or *to some extent*. Less than five percent indicated *to a little extent* or *not at all*.

Literacy Competencies

The *North Dakota Comprehensive State Literacy Plan* lists several literacy competencies. For children ages Birth – 3 years, there are three competencies: (1) listening and understanding; (2) communicating and speaking; and (3) emergent literacy. For ages 3 – 5 years, the five competencies include: (1) listening and comprehension; (2) speaking and communicating; (3) phonological awareness; (4) emergent reading; and (5) emergent writing.

Early childhood educators were asked to reflect upon the extent to which they perceived their curriculum improved the literacy competencies of the children. Across the three competencies, most of early childhood educators who work with children ages Birth – 3 years reported the curriculum improved the literacy competencies of the children they served *to a great extent* or *to some extent*. Means ranged from 3.23 (i.e., “Emergent Literacy”) to 3.42 (“Listening and Understanding”).

Like the Birth – 3 literacy competencies, most of the early childhood educators who work with 3 – 5-year olds also reported that the curriculum improved the literacy competencies of the children *to a great extent* or *to a little extent*. Means ranged from 3.21 (“Emergent Writing”) to 3.46 (“Listening and Comprehension”).

Alignment to State Literacy Goals

The next section of the Early Childhood Programs Needs Assessment focused on the State Literacy Goals as outlined in the *North Dakota Comprehensive State Literacy Plan*. North Dakota’s seven goals included: (1) leadership and sustainability; (2) instruction and intervention; (3) standards alignment; (4) professional development; (5) family and community engagement strategies; (6) literacy timeline for Birth – 3; and (7) literacy timeline for Ages 3 – 5. Each goal had multiple components associated with it. The needs assessment asked survey respondents to reflect on the extent to which their program included these components.

Overall, the overall means for the seven goals ranged from 2.80 to 3.27. Table 58 provides a reminder of how the means of the goals ranked compared to one another.

Table 58. Literacy Goals Ranked by Mean

Goal	Descriptive Statistics	
	M	SD
Literacy Timeline: Ages Birth – 3	3.27	0.80
Leadership and Sustainability	3.08	0.70
Family and Community Engagement Strategies	3.04	0.70
Instruction and Intervention	3.00	0.66
Professional Development	2.95	0.82
Standards Alignment	2.91	0.79
Literacy Timeline: Ages 3 – 5	2.80	0.77

Interestingly, the highest and lowest mean were from the Literacy Timeline. Ages Birth – 3 had the highest mean ($M = 3.27$; $SD = 0.80$) while Ages 3 – 5 had the lowest mean ($M = 2.80$; $SD = 0.77$). Other goals that were rated below 3.00 included: (1) standards alignment and (2) professional development. Three goals that received means of just over 3.00 or *to some extent*: (1) leadership and sustainability; (2) family and community engagement strategies; and (3) instruction and intervention.

Kindergarten Readiness Assessment

The purpose of the Spring 2018 North Dakota Early Childhood Needs Assessment section on kindergarten readiness was to collect data to learn how programs and/or districts across the state conduct kindergarten readiness assessments. Three questions were included this session. The first one inquired about how kindergarten readiness is assessed. Question two focused on when children were assessed for kindergarten while the last question explored how the assessment was used in the program or district.

Almost two thirds of the respondents (63%) said that they did not know how kindergarten readiness is assessed in the district or program. Only 9 percent indicated that they used the DPI Kindergarten formative assessment from the pilot program. Just under a third (28%) said they used another kind of kindergarten formative assessment. Although there are numerous formative assessments listed, several of the assessments (e.g., Brigance, ESGI, and Teaching Strategies Goal) were mentioned previously as the assessments used across the program. Other people said they used district assessments and a few respondents indicated that multiple measures were used to assess children's kindergarten readiness.

Next, early childhood program educators were asked when kindergarten readiness was assessed in their program or district. Of the 46 responses to this question, 37% said that kindergarten readiness was assessed at the beginning of kindergarten while 30% reported it was assessed during pre-kindergarten. Another 15% indicated kindergarten assessment was completed the summer prior to entering kindergarten.

Two of the written responses indicated that assessments happened multiple times during the year while three respondents indicated spring prior to kindergarten. Another comment stated that different approaches were used at different schools. It should also be noted that one respondent indicated "kindergarten is not assessed."

The last question regarding kindergarten readiness assessment focused on how kindergarten assessment was used. Over half (56%) reported that kindergarten assessment was used to determine Title I Eligibility. Another 44 percent selected "other." The written responses varied from "no formal assessment" to using intervention data for "leveling groups for reading and math." One respondent indicated that the assessment was not used and was a "total waste of time."

Collaboration with the District

The next section of the Spring 2018 ND SRCL Early Childhood Program Needs Assessment asked three questions about the early childhood program's collaboration with the district. The first question asked the survey respondent to reflect on the extent to which the program collaborates with the transitioning district/school. Of the 84 respondents who answered this question, 50% said *to a great extent* while 32% reported *to some extent*. Only 13 percent selected *to a little extent* and even fewer (5%) said *not at all*. Overall, these responses indicate that the early childhood programs seem to have some relationship with the transitioning district/school.

The next question asked respondents to indicate what barriers/challenges they faced when collaborating with the district/school where children transition after exiting the program. Sixty-five early childhood educators responded to the question. Just over a fifth (22%) said that the barrier/challenge was lack of time while just under a fifth (19%) reported that they did not receive any communication from the district. Eight percent selected the "I do not know who to reach out to in order to collaborate" option.

The “other” option asked people to specify other barriers/challenges. “Other” responses covered a broad range of topics. Thirteen of the responses indicated that they had no challenges or barriers. Several of the responses discussed the positive aspects of the collaborating with the transitioning school or district. Four of those nine comments specifically indicated that the early childhood program was in the same district or same building, which facilitates the collaboration process. Another comment provided an example of a transitioning activity, “We transition our own PreK students into kindergarten by offering “Gearing up for Kindergarten” sessions to our families of students entering kindergarten in the fall. Also, a kindergarten orientation is held each fall.” The other responses listed challenges and barriers that the early childhood program staff face when collaborating with the transitioning district(s)/school(s). Timing, scheduling, enrollment numbers, family involvement, and other logistical challenges were mentioned as challenges.

The last question in this section was open-ended and asked respondents to provide up to two suggestions on how collaboration with the community, school, or district could be improved. Five prevalent themes were seen throughout these comments on areas where improvements may be warranted. These themes include: (1) assessment; (2) communication, (3) community involvement; (4) family involvement; and (5) Head Start.

Needs and Resources

The concluding section of the 2018 Spring Early Childhood Programs Needs Assessment asked survey respondents to address questions about their biggest needs regarding literacy and other resources they needed to better support literacy. A brief summary of the findings from this section follow.

Biggest Needs

Most respondents (60%) said that **training/professional development** was their biggest need regarding literacy. Other needs that a third or more of the respondents selected included **curriculum selection/development** (38%); **support by parents and community** (36%); and **curriculum implementation** (33%).

When asked to write a comment about their needs regarding literacy, early childhood educators offered diverse perspectives about early educators’ literacy needs. Themes throughout the comments included **family support, curriculum, and professional development/additional support**. Family support comments indicated that early childhood educators thought that the families of the children needed to be more supportive of their children’s education. For example, one person commented “[Families] need to realize the importance of their role and how we can work together even more.” Another comment emphasized the importance of family involvement, “If children do not have books in their home and exposure to pre-literacy phonological awareness, listening, and speaking, they very much struggle in preschool and beyond.”

Comments about curriculum ranged from describing specific curriculum to raising concerns about the state standards. One respondent indicated that Handwriting without Tears covered the

basics of literacy while two comments concerning Head Start curriculum were not as positive about the curriculum's ability to teach literacy. The comment about the state standards indicated that the standards were "too challenging for younger students in your preschool" (i.e., summer birthday students).

Finally, the last major theme across the comments was about professional development and needing additional support. Comments primarily related to lack of time and financial resources. Another comment specifically discussed strategies in which teachers could be provided more support, "*Students need smaller class sizes, more push-in/pull-out supports, and more socio-emotional supports and behavior guidance.*"

Resources Needed to Better Support Literacy

More than half (61%) indicated that **training/professional development** was a needed resource. Over a third selected the following resources as a need: (1) **lesson ideas** (44%); (2) **collaboration opportunities/professional learning communities** (39%); (3) **situation support (ex. I have a child who. . .)** (36%); and (4) **strategies** (36%).

When asked to provide comments about resources they needed to better support literacy, a variety of comments were given. Two of the comments discussed needing more resources for working with families. One suggested providing the early childhood educators with more information about how to work with families on implementing literacy activities in the home while the other comment suggested providing education directly to the parents on how they can develop their children's literacy skills at home.

The remaining comments covered diverse topics areas. For example, one comment suggested age-appropriate books with questions for children. Two other comments mentioned specific populations of students: (1) special education and (2) ELLs. Another comment suggested "online, free classes" while the last comment simply stated that staff shortages were an issue, "When we are short staffed, it is a goal to just make it through the day."

Recommendations

This section includes recommendations based on the findings of the ND SRCL Spring 2018 Early Childhood Programs Needs Assessments. These recommendations are for NDDPI to review and consider. They are intended to provide guidance and offer initial thoughts on the current status of literacy in early childhood programs and ways in which the programs could move forward in North Dakota. These bulleted recommendations are suggestions for the NDDPI to consider as they move forward in planning their SRCL grant and working with early childhood programs throughout the state in the future.

General Background Information and About Your Program

The following recommendations are based on the findings of the General Background Information and About Your Program sections of the ND SRCL Spring 2018 Early Childhood Programs Needs Assessment. Because these sections focused on collecting general background information about the early childhood educators and their programs, the bulleted recommendations are focused on further data collection efforts and potential guidance NDDPI could offer programs.

- Collaborate with early childhood educators to collect more information about the staff working in the programs (e.g., credentials and qualifications) to ensure that the staff members are qualified to be working in these programs. This survey only reached a small sample of the programs so NDDPI may want to collect more statewide data in the future to learn more about the overall early childhood landscape in North Dakota.
- Learn more about early childhood education program's access to literacy-related professional development to determine if the availability of professional development opportunities meet the state's needs. If not, strategize on ways that more opportunities can be made to programs throughout the state.
- Facilitate learning opportunities across programs. For example, if one program successfully completes a professional development session, develop a networking system where they can share what they learned with other early education educators who may not have had the opportunity.
- Provide information to programs on services that can be provided to students who are identified as needing EI or ECSE services or as ELL or DLL. Make sure that programs understand how these students are identified and how to work with the families of students identified as such.
- Consider analyzing data from kindergarten teachers separately or collect further information from kindergarten teachers. Kindergarten teachers could offer unique perspectives about kindergarten readiness and the early childhood programs in which students are enrolled in prior to transitioning to kindergarten. Their perspectives could be enlightening since they work with children immediately after they exit the early childhood program.

- Review the “other” responses and consider how some of the survey options, such as “title”, may want to be revised on future iterations of the survey.

Program Curricula and Assessments

The following recommendations are based on the findings of the Curriculum and Assessment section of the Spring 2018 Early Childhood Programs Needs Assessment. These bulleted recommendations are suggestions for NDDPI to consider as they move forward in planning their SRCL grant and thinking about how curricula and assessment align to the *North Dakota Comprehensive State Literacy Plan*.

- Create a repository of information for early childhood educators on the curricula and assessments that are available to them. If time and resources allow, include summaries of each curricula and assessment. Multiple curricula and assessments seem to be used across the state so understanding the strengths and weaknesses of each would help programs select curricula and assessments that would best meet their needs. Training options available for each one could also be included so staff have a better understanding of how to implement the curricula and conduct the assessment.
- Provide guidance on how early childhood educators can receive additional training on implementing curricula, assessments, and literacy components into the early childhood programs. Because of the staff turnover and staff shortages, understanding how to do the most with the resources available and how to have smooth transition plans is critical for the programs.
- Learn more about why programs choose particular assessments and why they choose to use them for multiple years or why they choose to select another assessment. This will help develop an understanding of what each early childhood program assessment can and cannot do to inform the program of children’s progress.
- Focus on programs serving Birth – 3-year olds to learn how the curricula covers the literacy components. A much lower percentage of respondents in this group indicated that the curricula adequately covers the literacy components than the ages 3 – 5 group. Conduct program observations or focus groups with the staff members to learn more about their processes and how the integrate literacy components into their programs.
- Collect more data and information on how programs integrate literacy competencies into the programs. A high percentage indicated that the curriculum improves the literacy components of their children. NDDPI may find out more about how programs integrate the state standards into their programs and how they monitor student success by visiting programs to watch implementation and staff interactions with students, and by talking to staff members about how they interpret the competencies and integrate them into the program’s curriculum.

Alignment to State Literacy Goals

The following recommendations are based on the findings of the Alignment to State Literacy Goals section of the ND SRCL Spring 2018 Early Childhood Programs Needs Assessment. These bulleted recommendations are suggestions for the NDDPI to consider as they move forward in planning their SRCL grant and working with early childhood programs throughout the state in the future.

- Articulate the state goals and their meaning to all early childhood programs throughout North Dakota to ensure that everyone has a clear and collective understanding of the state's intent and understand how to implement literacy activities into the program that will help everyone achieve the goals. If it has not already been done, consider doing a statewide (or a series of statewide) webinars to discuss the goals and what it means for early childhood programs.
- Review each goal from the needs assessment carefully to understand fully areas that seem to be strong across programs and areas that may need improvement. Because there are multiple goals that cover many distinct aspects of literacy, perhaps approach one goal at a time or assign committees to each goal. More data could be collected on each goal to gain a fuller understanding of how programs implement literacy, why they choose to do it in that way, and their successes and challenges to receive a truly comprehensive picture of how early childhood programs throughout North Dakota have aligned their programs to the state literacy goals.

Kindergarten Readiness Assessment

The following recommendations are based on the findings of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment section of the ND SRCL Spring 2018 Early Childhood Programs Needs Assessment. These bulleted recommendations are suggestions for the NDDPI to consider as they move forward in planning their SRCL grant and working with early childhood programs throughout the state in the future.

- Determine if it would be helpful for the NDDPI to recommend a statewide readiness assessment for early childhood programs. This would allow more consistency across programs in determining kindergarten readiness.
- Develop a repository of information about kindergarten readiness assessments to inform early childhood programs about what is available and how to administer them.
- Collect more data and information about kindergarten assessments. Because this needs assessment only reached a small percentage of programs and staff members, consider ways to reach more early childhood educators to learn about their assessment processes.
- Collaborate with early education programs and districts to see how effective the kindergarten readiness assessments are in assessing the student's readiness. This

could involve conducting further analyses about how the readiness assessments accurately predict how well the child will do in kindergarten and beyond.

Collaboration with the District

The following recommendations are based on the findings of the Collaboration with the District section of the ND SRCL Spring 2018 Early Childhood Programs Needs Assessment. These bulleted recommendations are suggestions for the NDDPI to consider as they move forward in planning their SRCL grant and working with early childhood programs throughout the state in the future.

- Develop guidelines (e.g., fact sheets, FAQs, or guidebooks) on how early childhood programs and districts can better collaborate. Include ideas on scheduling meetings, communication structures, logistical issues, etc.
- Find “model” programs that seem to transition PreK students into kindergarten well. Learn how they are creating transition plans and showcase exemplars throughout the state.
- Focus on the five themes that came out of the open-ended questions about making suggestions for program improvement. Understanding the causes behind the challenges will be the first step in determining solutions. Initial ideas for approaching these themes follow:
 - **Assessment:** Collect data from programs and districts on how kindergarten readiness is conducted. Although this survey begins to look at this issue, a more systematic approach across the state may provide more insights than the small sample collected via this survey administration.
 - **Communication:** Conduct focus groups with programs to learn more about how they communicate internally as well as with families, the community, and the school district. Look for exemplars and models that could be adapted throughout the state and provide guidance to programs on how to follow through with implementing effective and efficient communication structures.
 - **Community and Family Involvement:** Encourage programs to continue to engage the community within their early childhood programs. Provide examples of effective media campaigns and needs assessments so programs know that they are meeting the needs of the community. Offer workshops and training on how parents, family members, and the community can become more involved with the programs.
 - **Head Start:** Initiate conversations with Head Start personnel to learn more about how Head Start is impacting the community and the transition district/school. Some Head Start programs seem to be challenging to the districts while others tend to have positive relationships. Learn more about these programs so guidance can be provided to the programs that may not be as effective as others.

Needs and Resources

The following recommendations are based on the findings of the Needs and Resources section of the Spring 2018 Early Childhood Programs Needs Assessment. These bulleted recommendations are suggestions for NDDPI to consider as they move forward in planning their SRCL grant and working with early childhood programs throughout the state in the future.

- Provide opportunities for early childhood program staff to participate in professional development opportunities. Because time and financial resources seem to be challenges, consider offering diverse types of opportunities, such as online sessions or facilitate collaborations between different school districts to combine professional development sessions.
- Assist early childhood program staff members in aligning their curriculum to the state standards. This may involve helping them find financial resources to complete the work and provide staff professional development.
- Work with early childhood program staff members to ensure that the curriculum and the standards alignment meet the needs of all children, including subgroups of children, such as special education, ELL, or DLL.
- Offer training to early childhood program staff **and** to family members of children in early childhood programs on how families can support the work of the early childhood programs by creating and implementing literacy activities for children at home. Emphasize to the family members how critical learning at home is for whole child development.
- Create opportunities to facilitate conversations with early childhood program staff members to learn more about their literacy needs and what types of resources they think will help them better support literacy. Although the needs assessment is a start in understanding what is happening in early childhood programs across the state, conducting formal interviews and focus groups would help dive deeper into their challenges and potential solutions to meet those challenges. More dialogue about the needs of early childhood educators and programs has the potential to lead to greater understanding about their needs and ways NDDPI or other state resources can help improve the literacy components of their program.

References

Baesler, K. (2017). *North Dakota Comprehensive State Literacy Plan*. North Dakota Department of Public Instruction.

Appendix A:
North Dakota Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grant
Spring 2018 Early Childhood Programs Needs Assessment

**North Dakota Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy
Grant**

Spring 2018 Early Childhood Programs Needs Assessment

The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) was awarded a Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grant (SRCL) from the U.S. Department of Education. To prepare for the grant, NDDPI would like to hear from all educators across the state to learn about literacy in your early education programs/schools/districts, how literacy aligns with the North Dakota Comprehensive State Literacy Plan, and what resources you need to implement literacy successfully within your early education programs, schools, and districts.

Your feedback is important to the DPI and will impact how the SRCL is implemented across the state. Please take 20 to 25 minutes to provide your candid responses. All responses are anonymous, and reported only in an aggregated manner. McREL International is a third-party institution collecting, analyzing, and reporting on the survey results. If you have any questions about this survey, please feel free to contact Tara Donahue, managing evaluator at McREL (800.858.6830, ext. 5551; tdonahue@mcrel.org). For more information on protection of your rights as a participant, you may contact Karen Bumgardner, Chair of McREL's Institutional Review Board (800.858.6830, ext. 1841; kbumgardner@mcrel.org) or Peg Wagner, program administrator, (701.328.3545; pswagner@nd.gov).

North Dakota Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grant

(Spring 2018 Early Childhood Programs Needs Assessment)

Please answer the following questions to provide background information about your early childhood education program.

1. In what type of early childhood program do you work?

- Child Care
 - Early Intervention (EI)
 - Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)
 - Education Child Care Associations
 - Early Head Start
 - Head Start
 - Home Visiting
 - Institution of Higher Education
 - North Dakota Head Start Association (NDHSA)
 - North Dakota State University (NDSU) Extension
 - Public Pre-Kindergarten
 - Reading Corp
 - Regional Education Association

 - Other (please specify): _____
-

2. What is your position in your program?

- Director
 - Teacher
 - Lead Teacher Assistant
 - Paraprofessional
 - Aide
 - Related Service Provider (please specify): _____
 - Other (please specify): _____
-

3. What is your highest level of educational attainment?

- Less than high school diploma
 - High school diploma
 - Associate's Degree
 - Bachelor's Degree
 - Master's Degree
 - Doctorate
 - Other (please specify): _____
-

4. What early childhood and/or special education qualification(s) do you have? Select all that apply.

- Child Development Associates degree (CDA)
 - Bachelor's in Early Childhood
 - Bachelor's in Child Development
 - Master's in Child Development-related field
 - Doctorate in Child Development-related field
 - Endorsement—Early Childhood Special Education
 - Restricted Teaching License
 - Other (please specify): _____
-

5. In what literacy-related professional development opportunities has your early learning program participated? Select all that apply.

- Pyramid Model
 - Literacy Data Analysis
 - Reading and Writing Strategies across the Content Areas/Grades
 - Emergent Literacy
 - Social and Emotional Learning
 - Other (please specify): _____
-

6. What type(s) of professional development have you received related to literacy instruction? Select all that apply.

- Instructional Coaching
 - Face-to-Face Training
 - Book Studies
 - Literacy Conferences
 - Online Training
 - Collaboration with Dual Language Learners (DLL)
 - Other (please specify): _____
-

7. In what county are you located?

- Barnes County
-

****Dropdown menu of all counties included in online version**

Section II: About Your Program

8. How many children does your program serve in each age-level listed below?

Infant (under 1 year old): _____

1 year olds: _____

2 year olds: _____

3 year olds: _____

4 year olds: _____

5 year olds: _____

9. How many children does your program serve in each age-level listed below that has been identified as needing early intervention or early childhood special education services?

Infant (under 1 year old): _____

1 year olds: _____

2 year olds: _____

3 year olds: _____

4 year olds: _____

5 year olds: _____

We do not serve any children needing early intervention or early childhood special education services.

10. How many children does your program serve in each age-level listed below that has been identified as an English Learner (EL) or Dual Language Learner (DLL)?

Infant (under 1 year old): _____

1 year olds: _____

2 year olds: _____

3 year olds: _____

4 year olds: _____

5 year olds: _____

We do not serve any EL/DLL children.

Section III: Program Curricula and Assessments

11. What type of curricula do you use in the program?

- I use purchased curriculum.
 - My organization or district developed curriculum for the program.
 - I developed curriculum for the program.
 - I use purchased curriculum and curriculum that has been created for the program.
-

12. If you purchase curriculum, what curriculum do you use?

13. Did you receive training in how to use the curriculum?

- Yes
 - No
-

14. If you received training on the curriculum, did the training adequately prepare you to use the curriculum?

- Yes
 - No
-

15. If you did not receive adequate training to prepare you to use the curriculum, why not? Select all that apply.

- Not offered.
 - Too expensive.
 - I did receive training, but it did not adequately prepare me to use the curriculum.
 - Other (please specific): _____
-

16. How long have you used this curriculum?

- Less than a year
 - One to three years
 - Three to five years
 - More than five years
-

17. Does the curriculum you use have a literacy component?

- Yes
 - No
-

18. What literacy component(s) does your curriculum cover? Select all that apply.

- Listening and Understanding (Birth -3 years)
- Communicating and Speaking (Birth -3 years)
- Emergent Literacy (Birth -3 years)
- Listening and Comprehension (3-5 years)
- Speaking and Communicating (3-5 years)
- Phonological Awareness (3-5 years)
- Emergent Reading (3-5 years)
- Emergent Writing (3-5 years)

19. Does the curriculum you use have an assessment component?

- Yes
- No

19a. If the curriculum you use does not have an assessment component, do you assess the children in your program?

- Yes
- No

20. What is the purpose of your assessment?

- Formative (adjusting instruction to meet student needs)
- Summative (a final evaluation)
- Both
- Neither

21. Select the program assessment(s) you use in your program.

- Teaching Strategies Gold
- High Scope Child Observation Record (COR)
- The Work Sampling System
- Other (please specify): _____

22. How often do you administer the assessment(s) to the children you serve?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Twice a month
- Monthly
- Twice a year
- Yearly
- Other (please specify): _____

23. To what extent do you think the assessment(s) adequately measure the progress of the children you serve?
- To a great extent
 - To some extent
 - To a little extent
 - Not at all

- 24a. To what extent do you think your curriculum improves the literacy competencies of the children you serve **birth – 3 years**? If you do not cover the component in your program, select Not Applicable (N/A)

		To a Great Extent	To Some Extent	To a Little Extent	Not at All	NA
a.	Listening and Understanding	<input type="radio"/>				
b.	Communicating and Speaking	<input type="radio"/>				
c.	Emergent Literacy	<input type="radio"/>				

- 24b. To what extent do you think your curriculum improves the literacy competencies of the children you serve **3 - 5 year olds**? If you do not cover the component in your program, select Not Applicable (N/A)

		To a Great Extent	To Some Extent	To a Little Extent	Not at All	NA
d.	Listening and Comprehension	<input type="radio"/>				
e.	Speaking and Communicating	<input type="radio"/>				
f.	Phonological Awareness	<input type="radio"/>				
g.	Emergent Reading	<input type="radio"/>				
h.	Emergent Writing	<input type="radio"/>				

Section IV: Alignment to State Literacy Goals

Leadership and Sustainability

The following items are components of implementation and instructional leadership. Please rate the extent to which your early childhood program includes these components.

	To a great extent	To some extent	To a little extent	Not at all
25a. Commitment to common goals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25b. Prioritizing institutional structure support (scheduling for both collaboration and instruction)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25c. Define job responsibilities, roles, and requirements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25d. Provide time and support for professional learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25e. Professional development for program staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25f. Professional collaboration (existing professional collegial teams should integrate instructional leadership components related to literacy into collaborative processes already in place).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25g. Job-embedded support (early education programs should provide professional, job-embedded support to improve literacy instruction)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Instruction and Intervention

The following items are components of instruction and intervention. Please rate the extent to which your early childhood program includes these components.

	To a great extent	To some extent	To a little extent	Not at all
26a. Standards-aligned curricular framework	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26b. 21 st Century Literacy skills, including digital literacy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26c. Consistent approach-based on principles of responsive instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26d. Evidence-based instructional strategies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26e. Effective practices and strategies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26f. Knowledge of early literacy learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26g. Knowledge of learners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26h. Knowledge of language development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26i. Accessible instructional materials	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26j. Evidence-based intervention	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26k. Project-based interventions/innovation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26l. Pre-kindergarten development progression	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

26m. Early Childhood Curriculum Selection Guide	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26n. Pyramid Model	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26o. Revised/Updated ND ELA Standards (2017)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26p. National Math + Science Initiative (NMSI) with an additional focus on English Language Arts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Standards Alignment

The following items are components of standards alignment. Please rate the extent to which your early childhood program includes these components.

	To a great extent	To some extent	To a little extent	Not at all
27a. Learning and Understanding (Birth-3 years)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27b. Communicating and Speaking (Birth-3 years)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27c. Emergent Literacy (Birth-3 years)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27d. Listening and Comprehension (3-5 years)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27e. Speaking and Communicating (3-5 years)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27f. Phonological Awareness (3-5 years)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27g. Emergent Reading (3-5 years)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27h. Emergent Writing (3-5 years)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Professional Development

The following items are components of professional development. Please rate the extent to which you have received professional development in the following areas.

	To a great extent	To some extent	To a little extent	Not at all
28a. Teaching and learning research-based strategies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
28b. The reading process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
28c. Assessment: Administer, Score, and Analyze	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
28d. Professional Learning Communities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Family and Community Engagement Strategies

The following items are components of family and community engagement strategies. Please rate the extent to which your early childhood program uses these strategies in engaging family and the community.

	To a great extent	To some extent	To a little extent	Not at all
29a. Strategy 1: Using data to set priorities and focus strategies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29b. Strategy 2: Providing relevant, on-site professional development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29c. Strategy 3: Building collaborations with community partners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29d. Strategy 4: Using targeted outreach to focus on high-needs communities, children, early care, and education programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29e. Strategy 5: Building one-on-one relationships between families and educators that are linked to learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29f. Strategy 6: Setting, communicating, and supporting high and rigorous expectations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29g. Strategy 7: Addressing cultural differences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29h. Strategy 8: Connecting children and families to the community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Literacy Timeline: Birth-3

The following items are listed in the ND Comprehensive State Literacy Plan as part of the literacy timeline for children ages Birth-3. Please rate the extent to which your early childhood program includes these components.

30. Do you serve children ages Birth – 3?	Yes		No	
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	To a great extent	To some extent	To a little extent	Not at all
30a. Emphasize the importance of the child's experiences and engagement in literacy experiences and engagement in literacy activities prior to starting school. .	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30b. Emphasize early literacy development and instruction based on the North Dakota Early Learning Guidelines Birth-Age 3 and/or the Head Start Early Learning Outcome Framework.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30c. Provide research-based, early literacy activities through collaborative agencies and programs such as Early Intervention (e.g., ND Dept. of Human Services, Children and Family Services Division).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30d. High-quality activities and interventions matched to child need, and monitoring progress frequently to make decisions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

about changes in instruction or goals. Data are used to allocate resources to improve child learning and support staff implementation of effective practices.				
30e. Alignment of strategies to curriculum framework, ND State Standards, and DLL or Early Learning Development Standards.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30f. Goal for continuous statewide expansion.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Literacy Timeline: Ages 3-5

The following items are listed in the ND Comprehensive State Literacy Plan as part of the literacy timeline for children ages 3 -5. Please rate the extent to which your early childhood program includes these components.

31. Do you serve children ages 3-5?	Yes		No	
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	To a great extent	To some extent	To a little extent	Not at all
31a. Recognize the significance of the transition to school in terms of a child's learning and the importance of meeting the needs of those whose home literacy practices differ from those of the school, and understand the fact that children take different pathways toward becoming literate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31b. Provide research-based, early literacy instruction through collaborative agencies and programs (e.g., ND Dept. of Human Services, Children and Family Services Division). Emphasize early literacy development based on the ND Pre-kindergarten content standards; Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework; the ND Early Learning Guidelines Ages 3-5; and the Early Childhood Special Education Outcomes Process. Provide early language development instruction for dual language learners.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31c. Emphasize early literacy development based on the ND Pre-kindergarten content standards; Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, the ND Early Learning Guidelines Ages 3-5; and the Early Childhood Special Education Outcomes Progress.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31d. Provide early language development instruction for dual language learners.				
31e. Implement Pyramid Model	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31f. Participation in early DLL professional development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31g. Goals for local program professional development.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Section V: Kindergarten Readiness Assessment

32. How is kindergarten readiness assessed in your program or district?

- I don't know.
 - DPI Kindergarten formative assessment (pilot program)
 - Kindergarten formative assessment (please specify): _____
-

33. When is kindergarten readiness assessed in your program or district?

- I don't know.
 - During Pre-Kindergarten
 - Summer prior to entering kindergarten
 - Beginning of kindergarten
 - Other (please specify): _____
-

34. How is the kindergarten readiness assessment used in your program or district?

- I don't know.
 - Kindergarten Placement
 - Title I Eligibility
 - Other (please specify): _____
-

Section VI: Collaboration with the District

35. To what extent does your program collaborate with the transitioning district/school?

- To a great extent
 - To some extent
 - To a little extent
 - Not at all
-

36. What barriers/challenges do you face when collaborating with the district/school where children transition after exiting your program?

- I do not know who to reach out to in order to collaborate.
 - I do not receive any communication from the district.
 - I do not have time.
 - Other (please specify): _____
-

37. Provide up to two suggestions on how collaboration with the community, school, or district could be improved.

Section VII: Needs and Resources

38. What are your biggest needs regarding literacy? Select all that apply,

- Coaching
 - Collaboration with colleagues
 - Curriculum implementation
 - Curriculum selection/development
 - Leadership
 - Policy changes at the state level
 - Policy changes at the district level
 - Policy changes at the school level
 - Support by parents and community
 - Training/professional development
 - Other (please specify): _____
-

39. If you have other comments about your needs regarding literacy, please type them in the box below.

40. What other resources do you need in order to better support literacy? Select all that apply,

- Collaboration opportunities/professional learning communities
 - Data access
 - Lesson ideas
 - Situational support (ex. I have a child who . . .)
 - Staff
 - Strategies
 - Training/professional development
 - Other (please specify): _____
-

41. If you have other comments about resources you need to better support literacy, please type them in the box below.

Thank you for taking this survey. Your time and feedback are much appreciated!

Appendix B: Counties Represented by Survey Participant

Table A-I. County

In what county are you located?	N	Percentage
Barnes County	5	2.3%
Benson County	1	0.5%
Bottineau County	1	0.5%
Bowman County	3	1.4%
Burke County	1	0.5%
Burleigh County	29	13.4%
Cass County	21	9.7%
Cavalier County	1	0.5%
Dunn County	2	0.9%
Emmons County	2	0.9%
Golden Valley County	2	0.9%
Grand Forks County	27	12.4%
Griggs County	1	0.5%
Kidder County	1	0.5%
LaMoure County	2	0.9%
McIntosh County	3	1.4%
McKenzie County	4	1.8%
McLean County	5	2.3%
Mercer County	1	0.5%
Morton County	11	5.1%
Nelson County	1	0.5%
Oliver County	1	0.5%
Pembina County	4	1.8%
Pierce County	2	0.9%
Ramsey County	11	5.1%
Ransom County	1	0.5%
Renville County	1	0.5%
Richland County	4	1.8%
Rolette County	2	0.9%
Sargent County	2	0.9%
Sioux County	3	1.4%
Stark County	24	11.1%
Stutsman County	8	3.7%
Towner County	2	0.9%
Walsh County	9	4.1%
Ward County	14	6.5%

In what county are you located?	N	Percentage
Wells County	1	0.5%
Williams County	4	1.8%

Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.