

CLI ENGAGE RESOURCES • COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES  
TEACHER & STUDENT GROWTH • QUALITY IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATION



**TEXAS SCHOOL READY™**

# 2020

## ANNUAL REPORT



Dear Governor Abbott, Lieutenant Governor Patrick, Speaker Bonnen, Chairman Taylor, Vice Chairman Lucio, Chairman Nelson, Chairman Huberty, Vice Chairman Bernal, Chairman Capriglione, Chairman Bonnen, MD, Commissioner Morath, Members of the Legislative Budget Board, and Members of the Texas Legislature:

Since our inception as the Center for Improving the Readiness of Children for Learning and Education (CIRCLE), the Children’s Learning Institute (CLI) at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) has developed and implemented the Texas School Ready (TSR) Project and served more than 1.2 million at-risk children.

CLI is unique in the range of research and programs represented and its philosophical commitment to ensuring real and lasting change for young children and families. Since 2005, CLI has received competitive research grants to study and implement various approaches to child development and played a critical role in reforming how early childhood educational practice supports school readiness. None of this would have been possible without the support and leadership of the Texas Executive and Legislative branches.

It is with great pleasure that I share with you some exciting results pertaining to the TSR project for FY 2020. CLI continued our important work serving early childhood schools and families as the COVID-19 pandemic affected learning across the state. Leveraging our existing suite of professional development, curricula, and other resources available online at no cost, CLI developed new materials to serve educators and families. For instance, our online activity collection received more than 1 million pageviews, more than triple FY2019. Additional information about our response to COVID-19 is available in this report beginning on page 20.

The TSR project is the result of seventeen years of grant-funded work from the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), National Institutes of Health (NIH), United States Department of Education (USDOE), Texas Education Agency (TEA), and Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to improve “school readiness” for at-risk children in Texas. Pursuant to House Bill 1, General Appropriations Act, Article III, Education, Texas Education Agency Rider No. 42 and Article VII, Business and Economic Development, Texas Workforce Commission Rider No. 25 of the 86th Legislative Session, CLI is pleased to present the following report.

Should you have any questions about the details contained in this report, please contact the Director of CLI Strategic Initiatives and Program Implementation, Dr. April Crawford at 713.500.3740 or April.Crawford@uth.tmc.edu.

Sincerely,



Susan H. Landry, Ph.D  
Professor and Founding Director, Children’s Learning Institute  
The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston

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# HIGHLIGHTS

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Celebrating our seventeenth year of the Texas School Ready (TSR) Project, the Children's Learning Institute (CLI) continues to implement programs and provide resources to positively impact the school readiness of young Texans. As part of our mission as a research-to-practice institute, CLI continually seeks new opportunities to integrate new research and practices to advance the program and its effectiveness across the state. During the past extraordinary year, we share the following highlights, detailed throughout the report:

**p8** Texas School Ready and CLI Engage continue a five-year trend of increasing numbers of schools, teachers, and children served each year. Before CLI Engage, TSR served about 2,000 teachers each year. Today, that number exceeds 30,000 registered teachers and an additional 25,000 administrators, specialists, and family members.

**p16** As part of an ongoing effort, CLI supported development of a state-wide prekindergarten to 2nd grade assessment system available at no cost to Texas public schools.

**p20** CLI leveraged existing web-based resources on our platform CLI Engage to continue statewide service delivery following school and child care closures due to COVID-19. Looking forward to the 2020-2021 school year, CLI also prepared materials to support all early childhood programs in implementing remote progress monitoring and educational resources, all available at no cost on CLI Engage.

**p26** Through TSR, CLI is able to create a tiered service delivery model that includes large-scale resource access alongside targeted, high intensity interventions.

**p35** CLI Engage provides a wealth of data to examine how the TSR program quantitatively impacts student success and teacher effectiveness, as well as an opportunity to examine children's skill levels across state prekindergarten and kindergarten classrooms using CLI's progress monitoring tools.

**p55** In collaboration with our state partners, CLI supported opportunities to leverage the state's investment in CLI Engage and the Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System (TECPDS) to provide additional services to schools, educators, and families.



# INTRODUCTION

Texas School Ready (TSR) is administered by the State Center for Early Childhood Development at the Children’s Learning Institute at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth).

The TSR program is the result of more than 17 years of research, implementation, and innovation of targeted interventions that prioritize “school readiness” for at-risk children in Texas. The program realizes this goal through a focus on research-based curriculum, classroom resources, technology-driven child progress monitoring, teacher/staff professional development with one-on-one coaching, and ongoing program evaluation.

Originally known as the Texas Early Education Model (TEEM), TSR has been made possible with combined grant funds from the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), National Institutes of Health (NIH), United States Department of Education (USDE), the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), and multiple philanthropic foundations. Texas School Ready serves children across diverse settings including public school programs, federal Head Start programs, and community-based childcare (including for-profit, non-profit, faith-based, and federally subsidized settings). Our mission is to positively impact the early learning experiences and environments of our most academically at-risk children. no cost to a wide range of programs across Texas.

## **TSR's design is driven by the following research-based concerns:**

Early childhood is a critical period for building school readiness skills in language; literacy; mathematics; and social, emotional, and cognitive development.

Children who come from families in poverty and disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to receive quality early learning experiences at home and at school.

Cognitive readiness can be achieved in ways that support the whole child.

Research-based, comprehensive curricula are essential classroom tools.

Responsive teaching that attunes to children's signals promotes social and cognitive development.

Progress monitoring that informs adjustments to instruction better assures school readiness.

Effective professional development, with ongoing coaching, assures instructional goals are achieved.

In 2014, TSR launched a web-based platform to house its high quality program improvement tools, known as CLI Engage. CLI Engage now serves as the backbone of TSR, delivering the program's professional development courses, child progress monitoring tools, supplemental lessons, and more. State investment in CLI Engage has expanded our impact tenfold, allowing us to deliver TSR's quality resources at no cost to a wide range of programs across Texas.

This report provides a brief overview of the resources delivered through the CLI Engage platform, comprehensive professional development services and materials delivered to participating Texas School Ready sites, and recent findings in teacher gains and child skill growth for both TSR classrooms and public schools across the state using the platform's progress monitoring tools. Peer-reviewed studies of the TSR model and its tools can be found in the appendices, as well as multiple samples of TSR resources.

Questions can be directed to the TSR communications team at [ms.cli@uth.tmc.edu](mailto:ms.cli@uth.tmc.edu).

# TSR RESOURCES

**TSR Quality Improvement Resources support a wide range of diverse users.**

School Districts & Charter Schools

Texas School Ready Participants

Head Start & Early Head Start Programs

Texas Rising Star Providers

Center- & Home-based Child Care

Higher Education Institutions

Workforce Development Boards

Education Service Centers

Directors Families Teachers

Home-based Providers

CTE Teachers

Early Childhood Specialists

District Administrators

TSR Coaches

Principals

TRS Mentors & Assessors

Higher Ed Faculty

LWDB Staff

ESC Staff



## CLI Engage Resources

CIRCLE Curriculum

Child Progress Monitoring

Professional Development

Texas Rising Star Assessment & Training

Coaching & Observation Tools

# 2020 BY THE NUMBERS

## Children Supported through Progress Monitoring

**285,072**

2019: 271,131  
2018: 244,933  
2017: 192,584  
2016: 116,676

## Participating Schools and Centers

**8,430**

2019: 7,147  
2018: 6,814  
2017: 3,771  
2016: 2,343

## Registered Teachers

**30,510**

2019: 24,994  
2018: 19,357  
2017: 14,687  
2016: 8,349

## Professional Development Certificates

**55,190**

2019: 24,709  
2018: 19,395  
2017: 12,658  
2016: 8,016

## Communities

**1,356**

Districts and charters: 1,080	2019: 1,171
Head Start agencies: 42	2018: 998
Higher education institutions and high school CTE programs: 161	2017: 773
Community organizations: 73	2016: 38

# CLI ENGAGE RESOURCES

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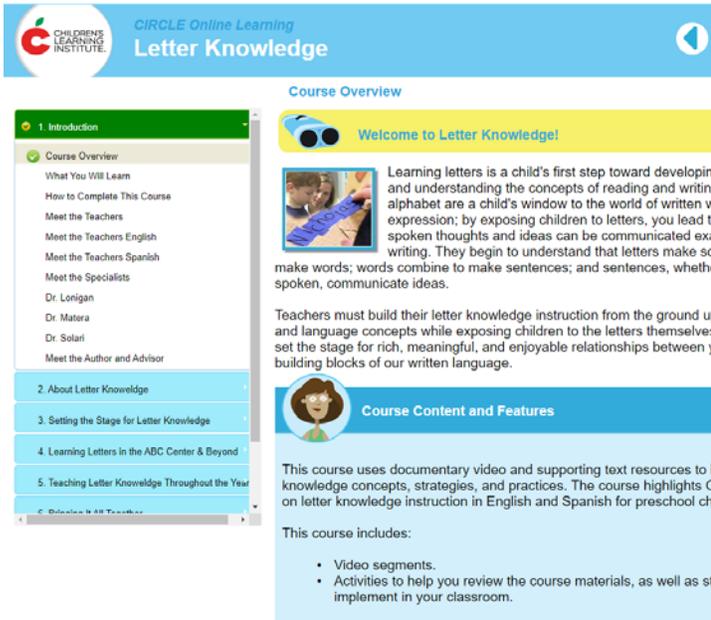


**cli**•engage

The Children’s Learning Institute is a leader in the development of research-based tools to improve early education quality. In 2014, CLI partnered with state agencies to build a platform, known as CLI Engage, that could deliver Texas School Ready tools to a greater number of programs. Today CLI Engage is not only integral to the implementation of Texas School Ready, but also houses free resources for all educators and families of children ages 0-6.

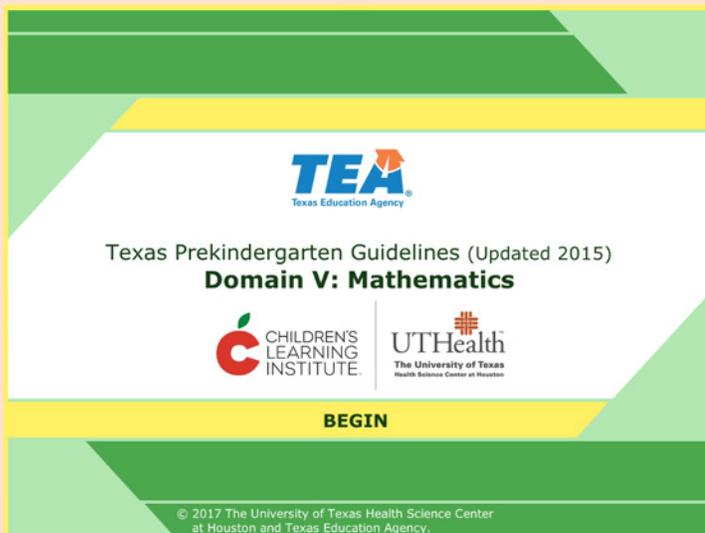
# Online Learning and Professional Development

CLI Engage hosts many online professional development courses for early childhood teachers, administrators, coaches, and parents. Users can receive a certificate validating their completion in every course on CLI Engage for either Continuing Professional Education hours (CPEs) or Child Care Licensing clock hours.



## eCIRCLE Professional Development Program

eCIRCLE includes over 70 hours of professional development for teachers and administrators serving children three to six years of age. These courses include extensive video-based demonstrations of effective instructional practices, as well as application-based assignments and activities. eCIRCLE is well-aligned to the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines, covering topics in classroom management, language and literacy, social and emotional development, science, and mathematics. This program can be self-paced or facilitated in a group setting.

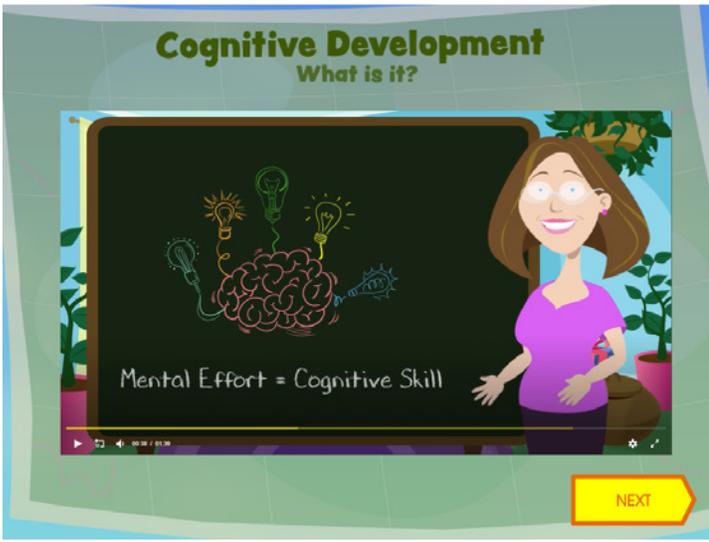


## Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines Training

CLI partnered with TEA to provide over 20 hours of free, online training that guides teachers through the child outcomes and instructional strategies presented in the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines (Revised 2015). Child outcomes and specific instructional strategies are explored through extensive video filmed in real Texas pre-K classrooms. Each subdomain also links to video lessons in the CIRCLE Activity Collection that support the child skills discussed.

## CIRCLE Infant & Toddler Training

With funding from multiple foundations, TSR expanded its preschool resources to serve children ages birth to three. The CIRCLE Infant-Toddler Teacher Training: Play with Me series introduces instructional strategies through video of real teacher-child interactions, discusses common child development theories, presents expert commentary on frequently asked questions, tracks child developmental milestones, and more. The series includes courses for supporting language, literacy, and social and emotional development, as well as using developmental assessments. Courses released over the 2020-2021 fiscal year will include early cognitive and physical development.



## Child Progress Monitoring Training

This training is designed to introduce users to the development and research design of the child progress monitoring tools on CLI Engage, the CIRCLE Progress Monitoring System and the Texas Kindergarten Entry Assessment, the learning domains assessed through these tools, guidelines for administering each assessment, and reporting features.



## ITELG Training

The Infant, Toddler, and Three-Year-Old Early Learning Guidelines present developmental information for children from birth to 48 months in four key domains (physical health and motor, social and emotional, language and communication, and cognitive) and caregiver strategies to support optimal development. The goal of the guidelines training is to help early childhood professionals and parents understand what very young Texans should know and be able to do at different points in their development.





## Beginning Education: Early Child-care at Home (BEECH)

BEECH is an online professional development system specifically designed for home-based child care providers, available in both English and Spanish. BEECH was used with home-based providers in the TSR Comprehensive program and is now available statewide at no cost to participants.



## CIRCLE CDA Training Program

CLI has expanded its online courses to provide early childhood teachers the training hours needed to apply for the Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential™ for Center-Based Programs, Preschool Endorsement. This training program provides a new professional development opportunity and career pathway for early childhood teachers. In this training program, teachers receive all 120 hours of high-quality professional development in the 13 CDA Functional Areas, as well as support to complete the required CDA competency statements and professional portfolio.

## Texas Core Competencies for Early Childhood Practitioners and Administrators Training

This training, linked to the Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System, was designed for use by early childhood professionals to improve the quality of care and education young children receive. The content and structure of the competencies can be thought of as a framework for assessing knowledge and skills, guiding training and professional development opportunities, and monitoring progress.

## Webinars

CLI periodically records webinars to support implementation of specific resources on the CLI Engage platform. Example webinar topics include:

Observing in the Classroom: The Classroom Environment Checklist

A Closer Look at Analyzing CIRCLE Progress Monitoring Classroom Data

How to Start Self-Paced Online Professional Development

Family Engagement

## Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System

Through a technology integration to support career advancement of early childhood professionals, professional development certificates on CLI Engage automatically transfer into a user's personal account on the Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System (TECPDS) at no cost. This integration provides opportunities for local, regional, and statewide agencies to learn about the state of the early childhood workforce in Texas.

# CIRCLE Activity Collections

## All by Myself

Children will identify things they are able to do by themselves and contribute to a class book.



### SETTING

Whole Group

### MATERIALS

- drawing paper
- crayons or pencils
- chart paper
- marker

### PREPARATION

Make a book cover with the title "Things I Can Do Myself." Write this title on a piece of chart paper as well. Create a model page for the book with something you can do (e.g., cook a favorite meal).

### 1. INTRODUCE

"Today we are going to make a class book of all the things you can do by yourselves. I want you to think about what you can do, who helped you learn, and how you learned it."

### 2. MODEL AND EXPLAIN

"I made this cover for our book. It says 'Things I Can Do Myself.'" Show children the book cover that you created. "Here's my drawing for our book." Talk about your picture and explain how you learned how to do it. Complete the following sentence stem on the illustration: I can \_\_\_\_\_ by myself. Include your name at the bottom.

### 3. GUIDE PRACTICE

"Let's think of some things you can do by yourself. Think about what it is, who helped you, and how you learned it." On chart paper, have children brainstorm things they are able to do on their own. Include an illustration for each thing that they mention. Ask questions to help children elaborate on their responses.

Guide children to return to their desks to create their drawings of things that they know how to do on their own. They can select something from the chart list if needed. Circulate and support children in completing the sentence stem, and have them include their names at the bottom of their illustrations.

### 4. SUMMARIZE

"You can do so many things by yourselves! I bet you feel proud. You will each have a chance to share your message in the Author's Chair this week."

### SCAFFOLDING

Downward scaffold: Reduce choices: "Can you drive by yourself or can you write your name by yourself?"

Upward scaffold: "Let's set a goal. What is something you want to learn how to do?"

### TEACHER TIPS

- Bind children's final products into a book with the cover you created, and place it in the library center.
- Before teaching this lesson, you can read a book related to this topic, such as *All by Myself* by Mercer Mayer.

PRINT ACTIVITY

VIEW ALL ACTIVITIES

Your Activities Display

### ACTIVITY GRADE LEVEL(S)

- Pre-K
- Kindergarten

### LEARNING AREA(S)

- Pre-K Primary Domain: Social and Emotional Development - Self-Concept
- Pre-K Secondary Domain: Writing - Writing Process
- K2 Primary Domain: Social, Emotional, and Self-Regulation Skills - Self-Concept
- K2 Secondary Domain: Language, Reading, and Writing - Writing Composition

### HEAD START EARLY

#### LEARNING OUTCOMES

Goal P.22.D. Child recognizes self as a unique individual having own abilities, characteristics, emotions, and interests.

Goal P.17.D. Child writes for a variety of purposes using increasingly sophisticated conventions.

### TEXAS

#### PREKINDERGARTEN GUIDELINES

IA.2. Child shows self awareness and can express pride in age appropriate abilities and skills.

IA.3. Child shows reasonable opinion of his own abilities and limitations.

IIA.2. Child independently writes to communicate his/her ideas for a variety of purposes.

III.1. Child discusses and contributes ideas for drafts composed in individual group writing activities.

III.2. Child shares and celebrates classroom and individual writing products.

#### KINDERGARTEN TEKS ALIGNMENT

W.102.2(a)(1)(A) plan by generating ideas for writing through class discussions and drawings.

W.102.2(a)(1)(B) share writing.

W.102.2(b)(1)(A) recognize and describe individual differences and communicate appropriately and respectfully with all individuals.

#### FIRST GRADE TEKS ALIGNMENT

W.102.2(b)(1)(A) plan a first draft by generating ideas for writing such as by drawing and brainstorming.

W.102.2(b)(1)(B) publish and share writing.

The CIRCLE Activity Collections translate the best early childhood development research into practice through a variety of activities that teachers can implement during large group, small group, and one-on-one instruction. Three activity collections (pre-K to grade 2, infant and toddler, and family) are delivered through a web-based format on CLI Engage that includes filtering and favoriting features for easier instructional planning. Combined across collections and languages, the CAC offers over 1,800 activities for teachers.

Activities support language, literacy, social-emotional, mathematics, and science skills. Each activity is matched to a specific age group. Infant and toddler classroom activities are very flexible, focus on promoting the quality of language and sensitivity of the caregiver, and provide useful tips and suggestions for helping children understand new words and concepts. Pre-K to grade 2 activities incorporate the same goals but are structured around a standard lesson cycle, with teacher tips and extensions to enrich implementation. Scripting is included, providing example dialogue for what a teacher might say to introduce the activity, model the objective, scaffold children's responses, and so on. Finally, our family collection includes activities that are designed or adapted for parents and caregivers to support skill growth using everyday materials in the home environment. English and Spanish versions of all activities are now available.

Many activities also include a demonstration video for teachers/caregivers to see the activity implemented with high quality. CLI partners with local schools, child care centers, and families to film the activities in authen-

tic contexts. Each video is then edited and overlaid with annotations that help viewers track the quality caregiving and/or instructional strategies used. The videos themselves serve as powerful professional development resources that complement other online and face-to-face trainings and are used extensively in CLI's statewide intervention as a tool in teacher coaching.

All the activity pieces are put together in a web-based platform that is linked directly from the progress monitoring system. This integration with other research-based tools provides a comprehensive set of instructional supports at no cost to eligible programs—a unique effort among initiatives aiming to support at-risk children in under-served communities.



In FY2020, CLI launched its first CIRCLE Pre-K Curriculum, integrated with the online activity collection and freely accessible to the public. Incorporating time-tested lessons from the CIRCLE Activity Collection: Pre-K to Grade 2, the CIRCLE Pre-K Curriculum provides all the resources needed to support weekly planning and delivery of comprehensive prekindergarten instruction. The curriculum includes Scope and Sequences for 35 weeks of instruction and 10 Theme Guides for use throughout the school year. Users are able to navigate seamlessly between the activity collection and the curriculum as they use the two resources to build their lesson plans.



**Family Collection**

[Click here to learn about the CIRCLE Family Collection](#)



**Infant & Toddler Collection**

[Click here to find activities for infants and toddlers.](#)



**Pre-K to Grade 2 Collection**

[Click here to find activities for students in pre-K through second grade.](#)



**Pre-K Curriculum**

[Click here to learn about the CIRCLE Pre-K Curriculum.](#)

# Screening, Progress Monitoring, and Observation

## CIRCLE Progress Monitoring System (C-PM) Pre-K

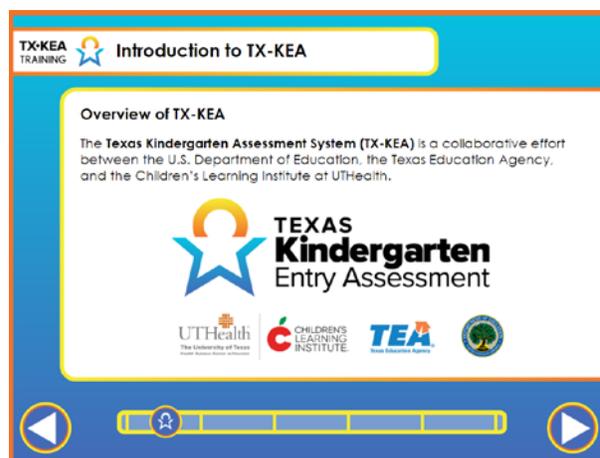
Used by more than 80% of Texas public prekindergarten programs, C-PM is a user-friendly, technology-driven tool that enables teachers to quickly assess children’s progress in multiple learning domains important for kindergarten readiness. This simple yet reliable data collection allows teachers to focus on lessons that target their students’ least developed skill sets. Along with a sophisticated reporting system, the tool uses benchmark status to automatically group children for skill-based small group instruction. This grouping feature links directly to lessons in the CIRCLE Activity Collection that support the targeted skill.

C-PM is based upon well-established prekindergarten guidelines and covers all domains in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework. It is a criterion-referenced measure that relates well to established standardized tests and is sensitive to growth in children’s skills over time. The data used to support the reliability and validity of C-PM came from numerous research studies and continues to be evaluated with data from CLI Engage. Samples of C-PM direct assessments, observables, and reporting features can be found in the appendices.

The breadth of data collected by C-PM provides greater opportunities to analyze student skill growth at the state level.

## Texas Kindergarten Entry Assessment (TX-KEA)

TX-KEA is the result of a collaborative effort between the US Department of Education, the Texas Education Agency, and CLI to develop and validate a school readiness screener that can be reliably administered by kindergarten teachers in Texas. It covers multiple child development domains and better informs kindergarten teachers about the children in their classes, helping them to design more appropriate learning opportunities. TX-KEA launched to the state on CLI Engage in August 2017. Through a statewide outreach campaign, we received regular feedback from educators, administrators, and other stakeholders calling for us to expand the screener into a progress monitoring system with three administration timepoints across the year. CLI secured private funding in fall 2017 to complete the expansion and pilot the items. We monitored and refined benchmarks through analysis of larger data sets over the 2018–2020 school years. In preparation for the 2020–21 school year, TX-KEA was enhanced in summer 2020 to include the statewide literacy screener for kindergarten.



## Pre-K to 2nd Grade Assessment Development

In collaboration with the Texas Education Agency, CLI is developing a comprehensive prekindergarten to 2nd grade assessment system on CLI Engage with all assessment tools available at no cost to Texas public schools. The Texas Education Agency and CLI have a long-held partnership that led to the development of high quality early childhood assessments widely used in prekindergarten (C-PM) and kindergarten (TX-KEA) classrooms. We continue to share a common goal to build a rigorous, scientifically validated pre-K to second grade progress monitoring system that meets the strategic aims of the state and leverages previous investments from state and federal agencies. Efforts to advance this goal continued into the 2019–2020 school year, with CLI launching several new progress monitoring and screening tools and reports in summer 2020 on CLI Engage, to meet fall 2020 statewide requirements:

**TPRI and Tejas LEE early reading assessments for 1st and 2nd grades**, launching the existing English and Spanish assessments on CLI Engage at no cost for Texas public schools

**TX-KEA statewide literacy screener**, leveraging the existing Texas Kindergarten Entry Assessment measures to provide a snapshot of a child’s development in early reading, writing, and language at kindergarten entry

**Dyslexia referral checklists for kindergarten, 1st grade, and 2nd grade**, aligned to TEA’s Dyslexia Handbook for use in conjunction with any child progress monitoring tool to determine possible referral for additional dyslexia screening

CIRCLE Progress Monitoring PreK > Student View

[Reports](#)
[View Groups](#)
[Click to Assess in Spanish](#)
[Reset Class](#)
[Offline Assessment](#)

Student Name ↑	Phonological Awareness											
	Launch Selected	Student Summary	Rapid Letter Naming	Rapid Vocabulary 1	Syllabication	Onset-Rime	Attention	Blending 1	Total Click to collapse	Listening	Words in a Sentence	Blending 2
Exclude All	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Maximum Score	52	55	7	5	7	9	28	5	5	5		
1 Demo 1												
2 Demo 10												



## Developmental Checklists

CLI created these checklists to support parents and teachers in tracking infant, toddler, and three-year-old developmental milestones and to provide a foundational framework for the early detection of developmental delay and the need for further assessment and intervention. The checklists are divided into age ranges (birth to 48 months) and areas of development: Language, Social-Emotional, Cognitive, Early Literacy, Physical Health & Motor Development. Both print and web-based versions of the checklists are freely available. Online training on use of the developmental checklists is provided through the CIRCLE Infant-Toddler Teacher Training: Play with Me series.

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# Quality Improvement and Innovation

## Classroom Observation Tool (COT) and Classroom Environment Checklist (CEC)

TSR coaches use the Classroom Observation Tool (COT) to capture evidence-based teaching behaviors that research has shown improve child outcomes. The tool provides a clear, unbiased system for tracking and monitoring teacher performance and progress. Item level indicators are highly targeted and address the breadth of learning domains important for school readiness. The system is well aligned with the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines and can be used by teachers, school leaders, and intervention specialists to promote effective teaching. Samples of COT items and the teacher goal report can be found in the appendices. CLI launched a version of the tool for infant and toddler teachers in 2019 that aligns with the key strategies in the CIRCLE Infant and Toddler Teacher Training: Play with Me course series.

The COT is accompanied by the Short-Term Goal Setting and Reporting System, which allows coaches and teachers to set achievable goals for incorporating specific instructional practices on the COT within a specified amount of time. For example, one goal report might target five strategies for a two-week period. These reports link directly to video clips, photographs, or other resources that provide an authentic snapshot of the strategy in action.

Similar to the COT, the Classroom Environment Checklist (CEC) is a quality evaluation tool designed to track improvement over time. The CEC's focus is the presence and quality level of instructional planning tools, mean-

ingful literacy and print centers and materials, and the overall design and management of the classroom and individual centers.

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## Family Engagement Resources

There is a growing recognition that parent engagement is an indicator of high quality early education and care programs. To help teachers strengthen the home-school connection, CLI has developed a number of resources that are free to the public.



**C-PM and TX-KEA parent reports** communicate assessment results in parent-friendly language that describes what the scores mean and how they change over time. Teachers can either print the reports directly for parents or provide a PIN for them to access the reports securely online. In FY2020, CLI significantly revised the parent reports to include user-friendly visuals of each benchmark status (e.g., on track, needs support) and graphs of growth over time, as well as a new “At a Glance” sum-

mary of results. CLI also built a new Family Resources webpage as a complement to the report, which includes home-based activities, descriptions of assessment measures, and tips for getting ready for parent-teacher conferences. The webpage is directly accessible through a QR code on the parent report and is customized to the child's assessment results.

**Understanding Developmental Screening & Early Intervention Video Series.** In this series, CLI faculty and Early Childhood Intervention specialists explain what young children typically know and are able to do at different ages, as well as what resources are available when family members have developmental concerns about their child.

**Developmental Milestones Checklists.** As described in the previous section, these checklists allow caregivers to screen for developmental delays against important milestones in the early learning guidelines. A special “red flag” section lists behaviors that, if not demonstrated, indicate a need for further assessment and possible intervention. Parents can use the checklists from birth up to four years of age.

As part of CLI Engage resources for schools and families during COVID-19, CLI developed lesson plans designed for remote education delivery based on the CIRCLE Activity Collections. These resources are available to download from CLI Engage at no cost.

**CIRCLE Activity Collection: Family.** This collection includes over 300 play-based activities that are designed specifically for families to support children's skills using everyday household materials. The collection is integrated with the progress monitoring system, and teachers can print or email recommended activities based on student assessment results. Families can also freely browse the collection through the CLI Engage platform. In FY2020, CLI added approximately 40 new activities and video demonstrations to both the English and Spanish collections.



Lastly, CLI received private funds to develop a comprehensive family engagement training and toolkit for teachers that provides in depth implementation guidance for using numerous resources on CLI Engage, including those listed above. The project sought to make the most of the touchpoints with families that schools already have in place, such as family-teacher conferences and open houses. The toolkit includes resources to support teachers across four family engagement topics:

Partnering with Families and Promoting Positive Communication

Encouraging Play-Based learning and Responsive Interactions at Home

Supporting Families with Tracking Children's Development

Hosting Family Events to Support Children's Development



# Support for Texas Schools and Families: COVID-19

As the COVID-19 pandemic affected schools and families across the state, CLI looked for opportunities to share our resources in new ways to continue serving our partners. Through the existing tools hosted on CLI Engage, CLI developed additional materials and training opportunities to support education at home, teacher professional development, and remote child progress monitoring. CLI targeted the following efforts to maximize benefits to the state.

**CLI Engage** hosts information for schools, teachers, and families to support learning, skill development, and targeted instruction through remote assessment administration. Our primary webpages with resources for teachers and families are available publicly:

Family resources during COVID-19

Teacher/school resources during COVID-19

Remote administration guidance for pre-K through grade 2 assessments on CLI Engage

**CLI's CIRCLE Activity Collection for Families had a dramatic increase in usage during the 2019-2020 school year.**

## Activities for Learning at Home.

Offering free home-based activities for families with children from 0-6, the collection attracted more than 500,000 pageviews, with 80% of the traffic occurring from March

15 to the end of August. Many school districts across the state sent these activities home to parents, and the collection is linked as a pre-k resource for families on TEA's "Texas Home Learning" website. Overall, our activity collections received more than 1 million pageviews, more than triple the 2018-2019 school year.

**Professional Development.** Use of CLI's web-based professional development for early childhood educators on CLI Engage experienced dramatic increases. Offering free online training courses for teachers and administrators from infant/toddler through kindergarten, we awarded more than 75,000 training hours since March 2020, equal to all of the previous school year. As shown in Figure 1, we saw an increase in the uptake of professional development from teachers in the months starting in March of 2020 compared to the same month in 2019. In April 2020 alone, the number of professional development courses more than quadrupled compared to April 2019. The courses with the highest utilization were: Read Aloud, Building Vocabulary, Letter Knowledge, School Readiness in pre-K, Emergent Literacy Writing, Language and Communication, Early Childhood Science, and Emergent Literacy Reading. In addition, we also saw an increase in the number of courses accessed by public access users and those in supportive roles. Specific to public access users, there was an increase of about 900% in the months of April and May of 2020 compared to 2019. For supportive roles, the professional development course utilization increase in April and May of this year was approximately 340% that of 2019.

We also opened our eCIRCLE preschool professional development to "public access"

status, offering these courses to all users at no cost (previously restricted to TSR Online-eligible programs only).

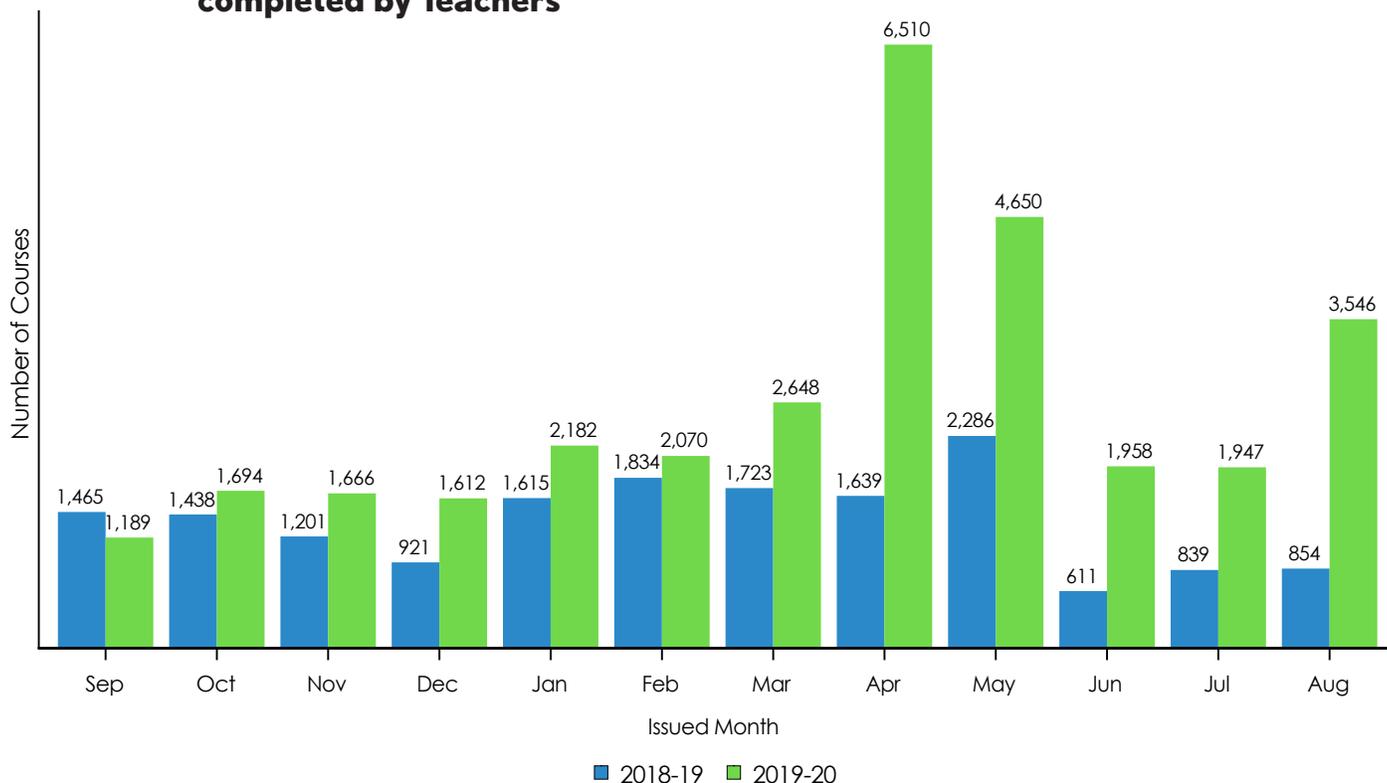
**Higher Education Support.** In addition to school district and child care support, CLI supported higher education institutions to leverage our resources, including our video library, to support students through virtual practicums and course content. We recorded a webinar and supported several new institutions to register on CLI Engage.

**Remote Learning and Progress Monitoring Webinars.** CLI hosted several webinars in July and August 2020 to support schools and teachers with transitioning to remote learning and assessment administration for Fall 2020. We conducted extensive outreach across the state to administrators to share these opportunities. Nearly 5,000 school personnel attended our remote adminis-

tration webinars. CLI also added an optional metric for teachers to indicate remote or face-to-face assessment administration, so school districts can evaluate student growth; additionally, CLI will be able to provide this information at the state or regional level for large-scale planning and analysis.

**Remote Instruction Resources.** CLI developed a new program of remote/online remote instruction and family engagement resources, leveraging our current family engagement toolkit, to share with school districts for Fall 2020. These resources provide 10 weeks of lesson plans using activities from our CIRCLE Activity Collection and other resources to guide school-based coaches in supporting teachers with remote instruction. We also hosted a webinar to kick-off this initiative on July 16, 2020, with more than 1,000 teachers viewing.

FIGURE 1 **Distribution of Number of Professional Development Courses completed by Teachers**



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## ESC Collaboration across the State

Since our inception in 2003, CLI has been collaborating with education service centers (ESC) across the state to deliver training and support quality improvement in early childhood settings through the Texas School Ready Project. More recently, the free tools and resources available on CLI Engage have offered new opportunities for CLI to collaborate with the ESCs to support school district and charter school teachers and administrators. These collaborative efforts are a critical step in the scaling and sustainability of the TSR program and its resources. The most common collaborations are described below.

**Serving as a TSR Lead Agent:** TSR Comprehensive Lead Agents serve as the hub for Texas School Ready in their communities, organizing program recruitment and direct service delivery, including hosting professional development and one-on-one coaching, to participating programs.

**Providing CLI Engage Outreach:** CLI has conducted significant outreach across the state to encourage school districts and charter schools to sign-up for free access to CLI Engage. Many ESCs directly support their regions by assisting ISDs in the registration process and throughout implementation, providing a much-needed local support for new and continuing users.

**Supporting schools with CLI Engage Implementation:** Many school districts and charter schools across the state are utilizing the Texas School Ready tools and resources on

CLI Engage. CLI has been providing direct guidance to support individualized implementation, but some ESCs are also supporting schools in their region in this capacity. The type of support varies across the state (based on the ESC's capacity and experience with Texas School Ready) but can include support for onboarding new teachers, supporting student uploads for progress monitoring, and training on the system and its tools.

**eCIRCLE Facilitation:** Used in Texas School Ready for over ten years, eCIRCLE provides more than 70 hours of online professional development that can be completed self-instructionally or facilitated, following a brief (and free) application process. CLI encourages ESC staff to become eCIRCLE facilitators, so they can extend their support to public school teachers through facilitated sessions of TSR's established professional development courses.

**Delivering CIRCLE Preschool Foundations Training:** ESC staff have been delivering the training (also known as CIRCLE Two-Day Training) for more than 10 years. Many ESCs have trainers on staff who are certified to conduct the training for teachers in their regions.

**Remote Coaching:** In prior years, CLI had the opportunity to train ESC staff to deliver our coaching model through a remote/online delivery (see additional information on page 33) to support teachers in advancing their practice. Many ESCs offer coaching for teachers, but this remote model can offer a more cost-effective option, particularly for schools far from the regional ESC's offices.

FIGURE 2

# ESC Collaboration by Region

EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS	EDINBURG	CORPUS CHRISTI	VICTORIA	HOUSTON	BEAUMONT	HUNTSVILLE	KILGORE	MT PLEASANT	WICHITA FALLS	RICHARDSON	FORT WORTH	WACO	AUSTIN	ABILENE	SAN ANGELO	AMARILLO	LUBBOCK	MIDLAND	EL PASO	SAN ANTONIO	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
Serving as a TSR Comprehensive Lead Agent		◆	◆		◆			◆			◆				◆						◆
Providing CLI Engage Outreach	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Supporting Schools with CLI Engage Implementation	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆		◆	◆		◆			◆	◆
eCIRCLE Facilitation	◆	◆	◆	◆		◆	◆		◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆							◆
Delivering CIRCLE Pre-K Foundations Training	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆		◆			◆	◆
Remote Coaching		◆	◆					◆			◆									◆	

## Integrated Outreach Efforts

CLI continues to expand outreach across the state to increase engagement with our resources and programs. FY2020 efforts included:

Multi-day “coaching camp” trainings in TSR’s coaching competencies for TSR Comprehensive coaches and coordinators to support continued growth in their coaching practice.

Three virtual coaching workshops for CLI to educate early childhood coaches in our evidence-based coaching model and coaching strategies.

Two virtual training workshops to educate early childhood trainers in training best practices.

Workshops, many delivered virtually after March 2020, and exhibit booths showcasing CLI resources at regional and state conferences, such as the Texas Association for the Education of Young Children.

A virtual conference, the Texas School Ready Early Childhood Summer Institute, that offered professional development to almost 700 attendees in June 2020.

Two annual Lunch & Learn presentations hosted by CLI in Houston to feature faculty updates and allow opportunities for intimate interactions with local early childhood educators.

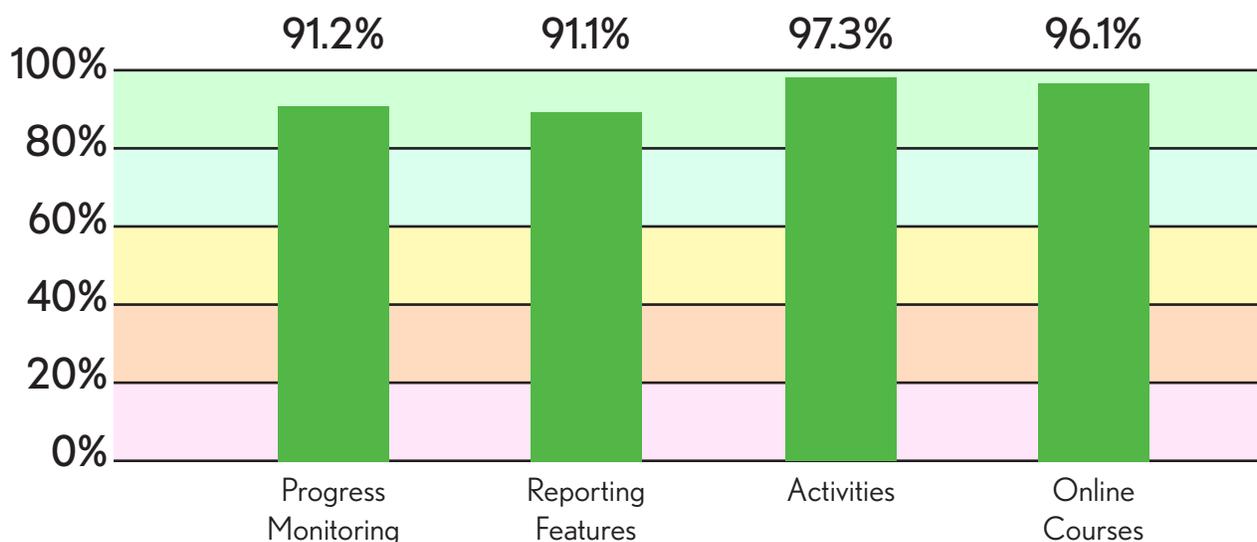
Various webinars, newsletters, e-communications, and platform enhancements that increased information sharing and integration between CLI Engage and the Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System.

### CLI Engage Client Support & Satisfaction

As TSR’s service expanded with the launch of CLI Engage, TSR staff developed protocols for measuring the ongoing performance

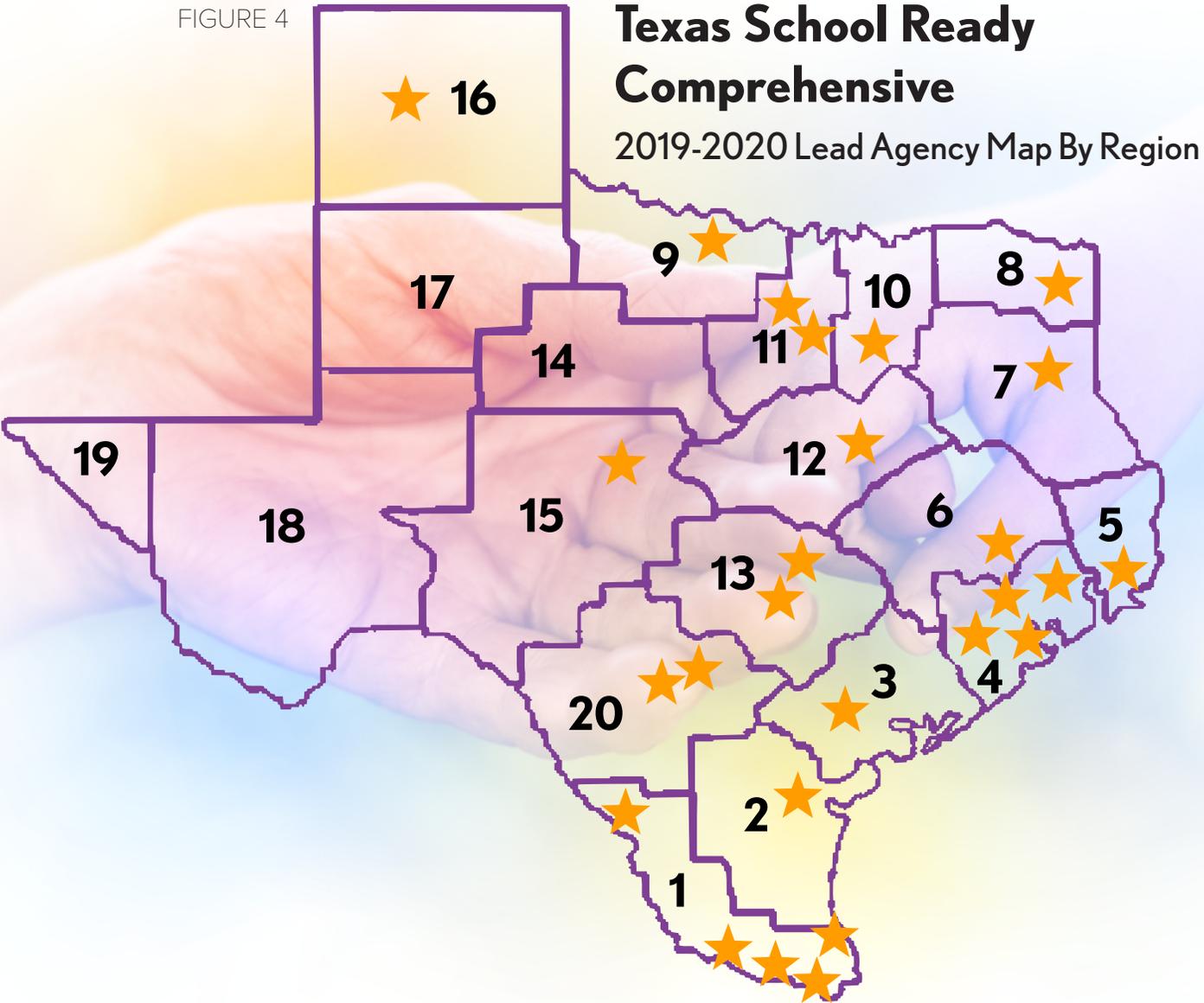
of the platform and its tools. This requires careful monitoring of the platform’s help ticket system, which categorizes the support issues submitted by users and tracks responses from CLI’s team of Client Support Analysts. Ticket submissions seek support for common issues such as help establishing accounts, uploading data, finding solutions to technical issues, navigating the platform, and becoming comfortable with the individual tools. In FY2020, the technology team continued to streamline this process to successfully close over 25,000 help tickets. Each year CLI conducts multiple surveys to gain feedback from users on numerous performance indicators. Over 86% of respondents reported being likely or very likely to recommend CLI Engage to peers during 2019–20 school year. The graph in Figure 3 indicates user satisfaction level with the most commonly used tools.

FIGURE 3 CLI Engage Client Support & Satisfaction



# COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES

FIGURE 4

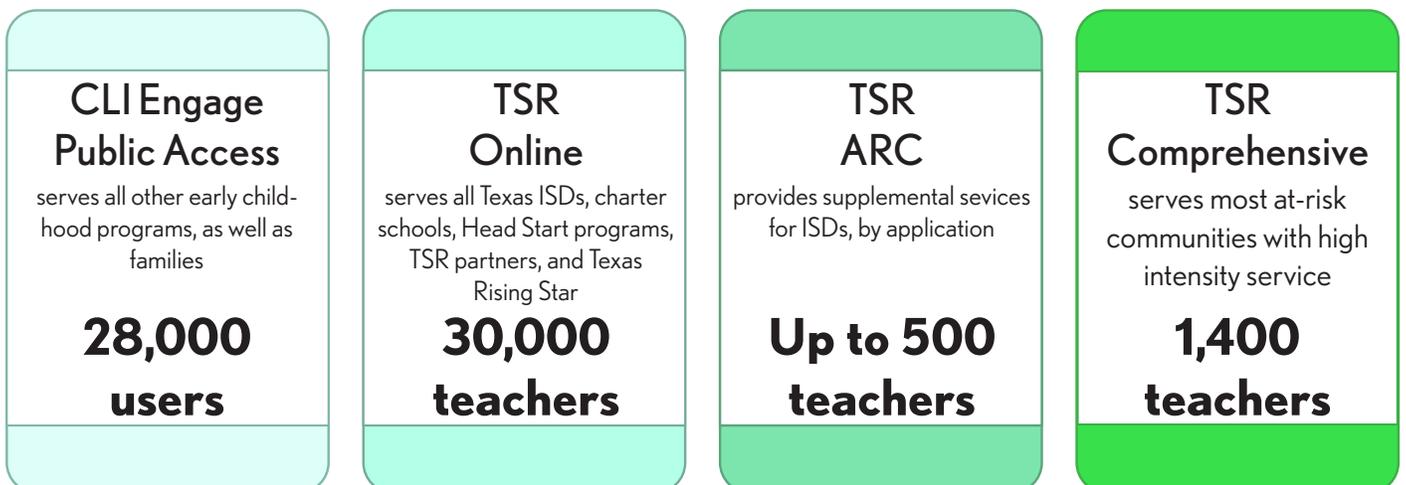
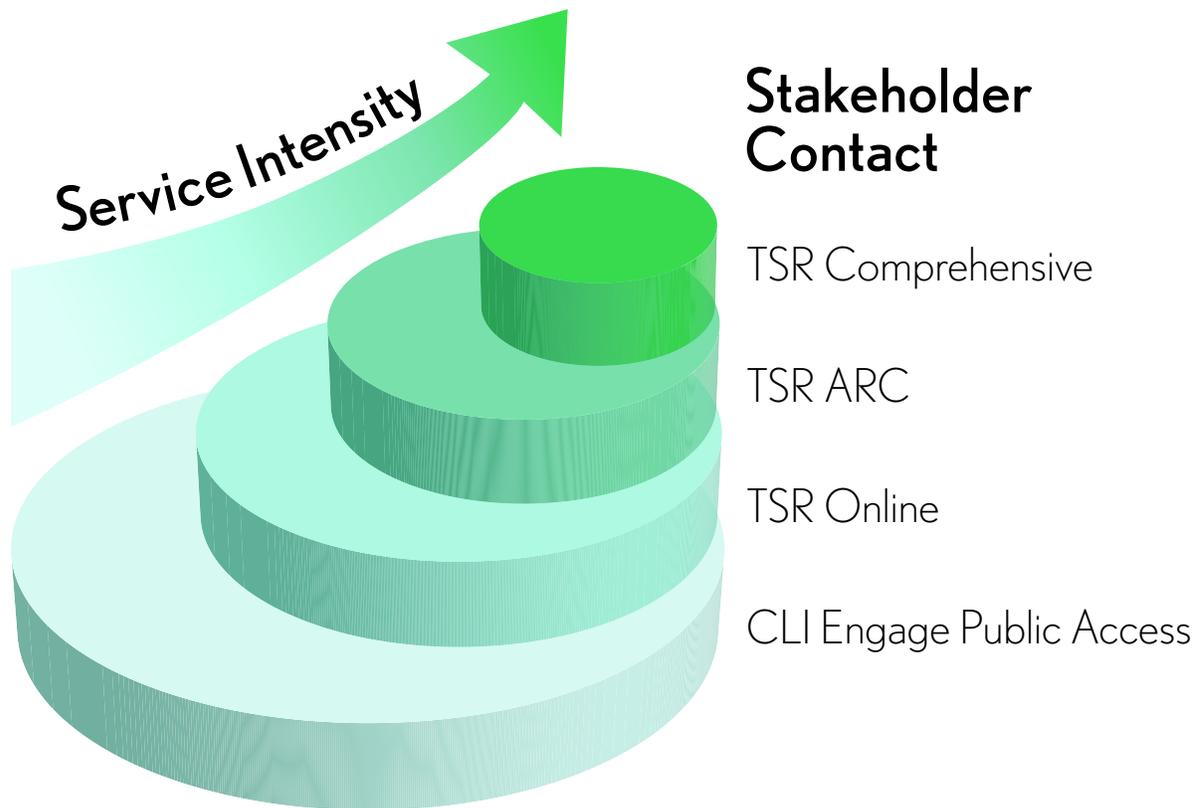


TSR Comprehensive is the research validated, three-year professional development program that provides high-intensity support to early education teachers in communities that are most in need of quality resources and individualized technical assistance. TSR Comprehensive is made possible by collaboration and partnership at state, regional, and local levels.

TSR is delivered through several models across the state, varying in intensity of the support offered and direct contact with stakeholders. TSR Comprehensive is our most intensive service delivery model, offering comprehensive support for early childhood programs serving the most at-risk communities and children.

# TSR PROGRAMS

**Service intensity increases as stakeholder contact becomes more focused.**



# Eligibility & Leadership

Programs are eligible to participate in TSR Comprehensive if they meet certain requirements: all childcare programs must be in good standing with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Programs must be serving at least 50% at-risk children meeting eligibility requirements for state-funded prekindergarten and/or at least 50% children eligible to receive Child Care Management System (CCMS) funding. All Head Start programs are eligible, as are public school pre-K programs if they are partnered with a child care or Head Start program. As part of TSR Comprehensive, licensed home-based child care providers in good standing are also eligible to receive some professional development services through the program.

Every two years, community-based organizations can apply to become TSR Comprehensive “lead agents,” serving as the hub

for TSR in their local community. These lead agents recruit eligible Head Start, child care programs, and public schools to participate in TSR for three years and coordinate the delivery of services to TSR participants. In April 2019, a request for applications (RFA) launched for 2019-21 TSR Comprehensive Lead Agents. After a thorough review process, twenty-six lead agents were selected for the 2019-2021 grant term (see image on the previous page). Through calls, emails, webinars, in-person trainings, and site visits, CLI provides implementation support to lead agents that enhances the program’s performance and ensures fidelity to the model.

TSR Comprehensive enrollment for the 2019-2020 school year is described in Figure 5. CLI maintains a waiting list of approximately 100 programs that would like to participate.

FIGURE 5 **TSR Comprehensive 2019-2020 Numbers**

Setting	Schools	Teachers	Students
Childcare	618	974	4,967
Head Start	170	368	4,933
District/Charter	40	67	1,207
<b>Totals</b>	<b>828</b>	<b>1,409</b>	<b>11,107</b>

As part of ongoing evaluation activities, participating TSR teachers are asked to complete an anonymous survey regarding their satisfaction with the program. The table in Figure 6 indicates that an overwhelming majority of participants feel that the pro-

gram improved their teaching strategies, that their professional development was differentiated based on their current skills and goals, and that coaches demonstrated professionalism in their work with teachers.

FIGURE 6

<b>Improving Teaching Strategies</b>	<b>“Strongly Agree”</b>
My TSR coach asked me about my classroom challenges and showed me effective ways to handle them.	93%
My TSR coach gave the right amount of interjections with instruction or interactions with children during the visit/video.	91%
My TSR coach was able to model new teaching practices in ways that were comfortable for me.	90%
My TSR coach supported me while I tried out new teaching strategies.	92%
My TSR coach taught me how to use teaching strategies to improve my children’s school readiness skills.	91%
<b>Setting Goals and Skills Development</b>	<b>“Strongly Agree”</b>
My TSR coach helped me set my own goals for improvement.	92%
My TSR coach considered my interest or opinions when setting goals with me.	91%
My TSR coach helped me increase my knowledge about child development.	91%
My TSR coach helped me identify my own strengths regarding teaching skills or interactions with children.	89%
My TSR coach asked me about my professional interest.	86%
<b>Professionalism</b>	<b>“Strongly Agree”</b>
My TSR coach was engaged and enthusiastic while observing/coaching in my classroom or during reflection calls.	92%
My TSR coach respected my authority in the classroom.	93%
My TSR coach was friendly and enjoyable to work with.	95%
My TSR coach understood my challenges.	92%
My TSR coach talked respectfully to me.	96%

In Spring 2020, CLI worked with our local lead agencies to transition the Texas School Ready Comprehensive program to complete remote delivery (coaching and professional development) across the state due to COVID-19. Supporting continued program delivery through the end of the school year for all participating teachers, this remote, online service delivery will continue into the 2020-21 school year.

## Curriculum, Materials, and Technology

Many TSR childcare centers located in high risk communities lack the foundational instructional materials necessary to help children build school readiness skills. In addition to full access to the resources on CLI Engage, TSR centers receive the following materials.

Print editions of the **CIRCLE Pre-K Curriculum**, published by CLI, which includes 35 weeks of Scope and Sequence and 10 Theme Guides. TSR coaches then train teachers to implement the curriculum in conjunction

with quality teaching strategies. In previous years, CLI would provide a state-approved curriculum to centers in need. The introduction of the CIRCLE Pre-K Curriculum in 2020 allowed CLI to deliver the same high quality to all participating centers at a fraction of the cost.

**Classroom Startup Kits** include pre-printed posters, sentence strips, charts, letter walls, labels, and other materials that aid in classroom management.





**School Readiness Kits** contain manipulatives, books, and activity cards for instruction across six content areas—math, science, written expression, letter knowledge, oral language, and phonological awareness. This kit is used in combination with the CIRCLE Activity Collection to ensure teachers have the materials necessary to deliver hands-on learning experiences.

**Developing Talkers / Hablemos Juntos Supplemental Curriculum kits** are provided to TSR Comprehensive teachers who have progressed beyond the foundational concepts of instruction (after year 1). Developing Talkers targets listening comprehension and vocabulary skills by providing lessons, materials, and instructional templates. Each of the four units provides 80 Tier-1 and 64 Tier-2 lesson plans for 16 weeks of instruction, vocabulary and picture cards for each week of instruction, and two books per week (32 books total).

Printed copies of the **Texas Infant, Toddler, and Three-Year-Old Early Learning Guide-**

**lines** and **Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines** are given to all TSR Comprehensive programs. The CIRCLE Activity Collection is aligned to these state standards, as well as the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework. These alignments support teachers in planning for instruction across learning domains and targeting end-of-year outcomes.

Many centers participating in TSR do not have computers in individual classrooms. TSR provides laptops to teachers to effectively administer CIRCLE Progress Monitoring and access the online professional development resources.

TSR comprehensive teachers participating in the remote model of coaching are given cameras to record instructional assignments for their coaches.

Home-based child care providers are eligible to receive a kit of specially selected classroom materials to use in their family child care program.

# Training Services

Teachers who participate in TSR Comprehensive receive three years of professional development, including individualized coaching (discussed in detail in the following section). Training services include:

**CIRCLE Preschool Foundations Training** (also referred to as CIRCLE Two-day) is a face-to-face introduction to the foundational concepts underpinning Texas School Ready and its tools. The goal of the training is to provide a strong knowledge base of early childhood development and quality instructional strategies that support it.

**Facilitated eCIRCLE classes** are monthly sessions in which course topics are discussed in depth and connected to implementation and practice assignments. eCIRCLE facilitation ensures progress through online coursework and supports connections between content and practical implementation. Several education service centers have adopted eCIRCLE facilitation outside the TSR Comprehensive model.

Each teacher participating in TSR Comprehensive attends an eight-hour training on the **CIRCLE Progress Monitoring System** that features the goals of tracking child progress, conducting the assessments on our web-based tool, using reporting features, and interpreting data to inform instructional planning.

**Texas Infant, Toddler, and Three-Year-Old Early Learning Guidelines Training** is a face-to-face introduction to the ITELG domains and how to effectively use the guidelines in

the classroom. Infant and toddler teachers and administrators at participating Texas School Ready sites and other in the community are invited to this training.

**Beginning Education: Early Childcare at Home (BEECH)** professional development modules are available on CLI Engage for all participating home-based child care providers. Successful completion of the modules provides a kit of materials for the providers.

In 2020, TSR hosted its annual Texas School Ready Early Childhood Summer Institute as a virtual conference due to the impact of COVID-19. A total of 659 early child professionals attended. As in previous years, the institute was provided at no cost to attendees. The virtual training sessions were recorded and posted on CLI Engage for free viewing for those unable to attend the event.



# Coaching

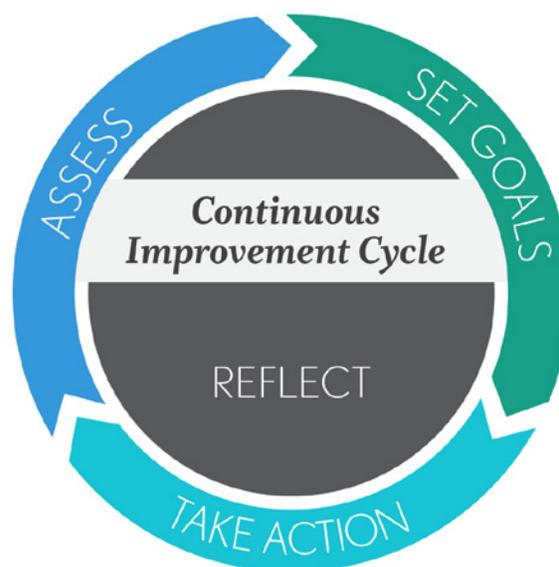
Ongoing coaching, as opposed to more common types of professional development approaches such as workshops, takes into consideration the teacher’s current level of understanding and skill, which can vary greatly across learning domains or types of curricular activities. By supporting the individual professional development needs of each teacher, ongoing coaching has been shown to improve teacher and child outcomes (Crawford, Zucker, Van Horne, & Landry, 2016; Crawford et al, 2013; Zucker, Crawford, & Landry, 2013; Landry, Swank, Anthony, & Assel, 2010; Landry, Anthony, Swank, & Monsegue-Bailey, 2009).

TSR is structured to provide four hours of individualized coaching (face-to-face or remote) per month during the first year of participation, two hours in the second year, and one hour in the third year. Driven by the CLI Coaching Competency Framework, coaches receive intensive training that includes a week-long coaching conference; a “lunch and learn” series, delivered via webinar; and monthly “collaborative coaching” phone conferences that use coach-recorded videos to encourage reflection and provide feedback to improve coaching practice.

## The Coaching Cycle

Increasingly, schools are adopting data-based improvement approaches that involve repeated cycles of assessment and observation, interpretation, planning, intervention, and follow-up. This approach can be used to promote a culture of contin-

uous improvement that aims to reduce the gap between actual performance and possible performance, often done by making incremental improvements to a particular process or skill. Placed in the education context, teachers first need to understand the quality of their instruction at a particular point in time (assess), have a clearly defined idea about the quality they want to achieve (set goals), and have access to resources or training opportunities that are aligned with the goal behavior and sensitive to a teacher’s current level of practice (take action). The continuous improvement cycle is repeated across the year and incorporates multiple forms of data, as well as TSR’s content resources.



## Remote Coaching

TSR coaches teachers both onsite and remotely, with remote teachers receiving coaching through video and technology-driven feedback. Video reflection is the key process driver used to support reflection and assess progress within the coaching cycle. Watching recordings of one's own practice can be used to help teachers notice aspects of behavior that are difficult to detect in the moment, and in particular can help teachers learn more about the connection between teaching practices and student learning. Video recordings allow a teacher to revisit instructional situations and interactions, multiple times if necessary, to better

understand student perspectives and plan for improvement.

Remote coaching procedures includes the following steps: (1) teacher videotapes assigned lessons and securely uploads the video and a self-reflection form via CLI Engage; (2) coach edits the video and embeds comments to identify skills mastered and areas to improve, then uploads the video for the teacher; (3) teacher reviews edited video/comments; (4) teacher and coach video conference to discuss the video, problem solve, and set new goals; and (5) coach tracks goals set/met and provides follow-up resources (e.g., classroom activities, exemplar videos).



## Scaling Coaching

TSR has been working with ESCs and districts to use these approaches to meet coaching goals associated with the TEA's High Quality Prekindergarten Program requirements. Specifically, through webinars, workshops, and direct communications, TSR has been supporting specialists/coaches in using the Classroom Observation Tool to set goals, conduct observations of teachers' instructional practice associated with goals set (either through a face-to-face observation or video upload), and use reflection to analyze their practice.

## TSR Advancing Remote Coaching (ARC) Project

As part of CLI's efforts to continue to scale coaching across the state, TSR offered additional support for public school districts and charter schools in Texas through our TSR ARC Project. Through a competitive application process, school districts and charter schools applied for individualized remote coaching support for their prekindergarten teachers, delivered from September 2019 to March 2020. Leveraging the coaching resources on CLI Engage and meeting TEA's High Quality Prekindergarten Program requirements for teacher professional development, the goal of this coaching support is to help teachers improve their practice using targeted tools and methods to meet each teacher's specific needs in the classroom.

Due to COVID-19, service delivery through the TSR ARC project ended prematurely, but 350 teachers from 30 school districts and charter schools participated in the TSR ARC project during the 2019-20 school year. CLI's TSR ARC coaches delivered 934 coaching hours to teachers in FY2020.

For teachers that were able to complete the program, testimonials in a follow-up survey were overwhelmingly positive:

*"My coach provides an outside perspective and can see things that I may be doing wrong, or need to do better, my coach also helps to find resources to bring growth in teaching and my students learning. She made me feel very good at all times and she was a great leader for me. She is very sweet, polite and caring. It was a great experience for me."*

*"My coach helped me exercise my ability to REFLECT on my lessons, student engagement, and overall learning."*

*"I like how the program was one on one mentoring and how it made us look at ourselves in a different way. It made us think of or see things that maybe we didn't see or notice before. And it helped to see other videos of teachers to get new ideas to take back to our classroom and maybe use them also."*

*"[The program] helped me be much more intentional about planning small group instruction that actually met the needs of my students and helped me be more aware of differentiating [instruction]."*

# TEACHER AND STUDENT GROWTH

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A hallmark of the Texas School Ready project is its focus on data-driven resources and decision making. TSR routinely measures performance of professional development efforts in terms of both gains in specific teaching practices and gains in student skills important for school readiness.

For most of the descriptions of teacher and student growth presented in the pages that follow, we have used data collected during the 2019–20 academic year. Due to COVID-19, the end-of-year assessment data were not available and thus, except when indicated, all descriptive and inferential analysis that we report for the 2019–20 academic year only include beginning-of-year and middle-of-year assessments. Thus, in contrast to prior reports for which we were able to speak to growth across three assessment windows, this year we are only able to speak to change across the two assessment windows that we observed.

# Tracking Gains in Child Skills

Progress monitoring of children’s learning is a key feature of the Texas School Ready model. TSR teachers are trained to use this data to differentiate instruction so that children receive targeted support in the skills areas with which they struggle the most. Research in the field has consistently indicated that this differentiated instruction is critical for closing skill gaps among at-risk student populations. The more that young learners have an early mastery of letters, words, sounds, and math, the better they tend to do in school as they progress into the upper elementary grades and beyond. The following section presents progress monitoring data for both TSR Comprehensive classrooms and pre-K and kindergarten classrooms across the state that use the CIRCLE Progress Monitoring System (C-PM). We examine this data in various ways to ensure that TSR is effective in advancing children’s early learning skills and that our progress monitoring system is accurately measuring skill levels and predicting future skill growth.

## Overall Child Growth for TSR Comprehensive Classrooms

The graphs in Figures 7 through 10 depict progress monitoring results for TSR Comprehensive students across two time periods during FY2020. The scores presented in the graphs come from the C-PM and include early writing skills, mathematics, phonological awareness, letter knowledge, and vocabulary. These learning domains are important indicators that correlate highly with a child’s success upon kindergarten entry and long-term academic success. Scores for students assessed in English and Spanish are presented.

Descriptively, we see that between the beginning-of-year (BOY) and middle-of-year (MOY), children are making gains in all areas, regardless of the language of assessment. Note, due to the impact of COVID-19, students were largely not assessed at end-of-year (EOY).

FIGURE 7 **2019-20 CIRCLE Progress Monitoring: Average for TSR-COMP Students Three to Four Years Old Assessed in English**

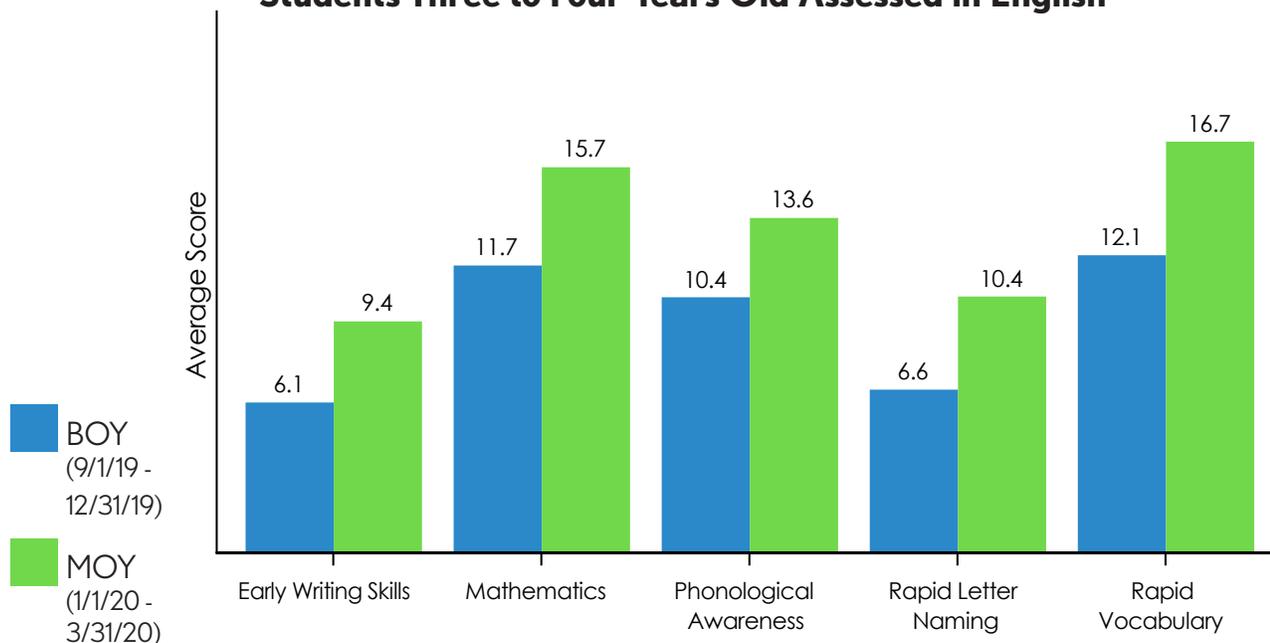


FIGURE 8

**2019-20 CIRCLE Progress Monitoring: Average for TSR-COMP Students Three to Four Years Old Assessed in Spanish**

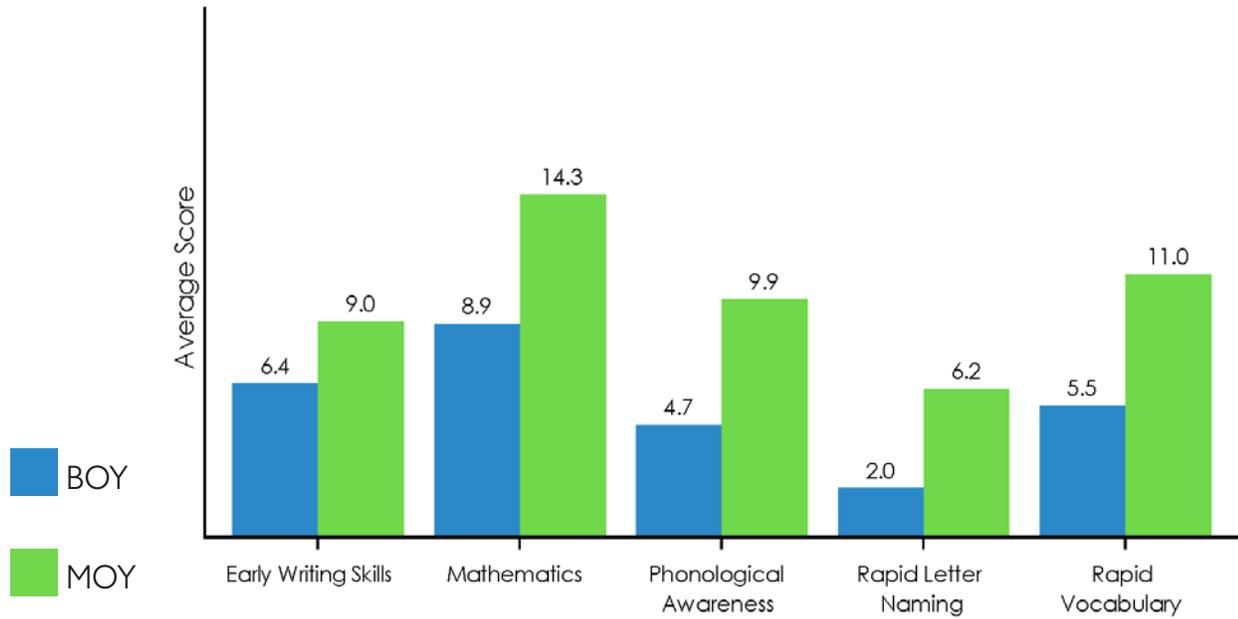


FIGURE 9

**2019-20 CIRCLE Progress Monitoring: Average for TSR-COMP Students Four to Five Years Old Assessed in English**

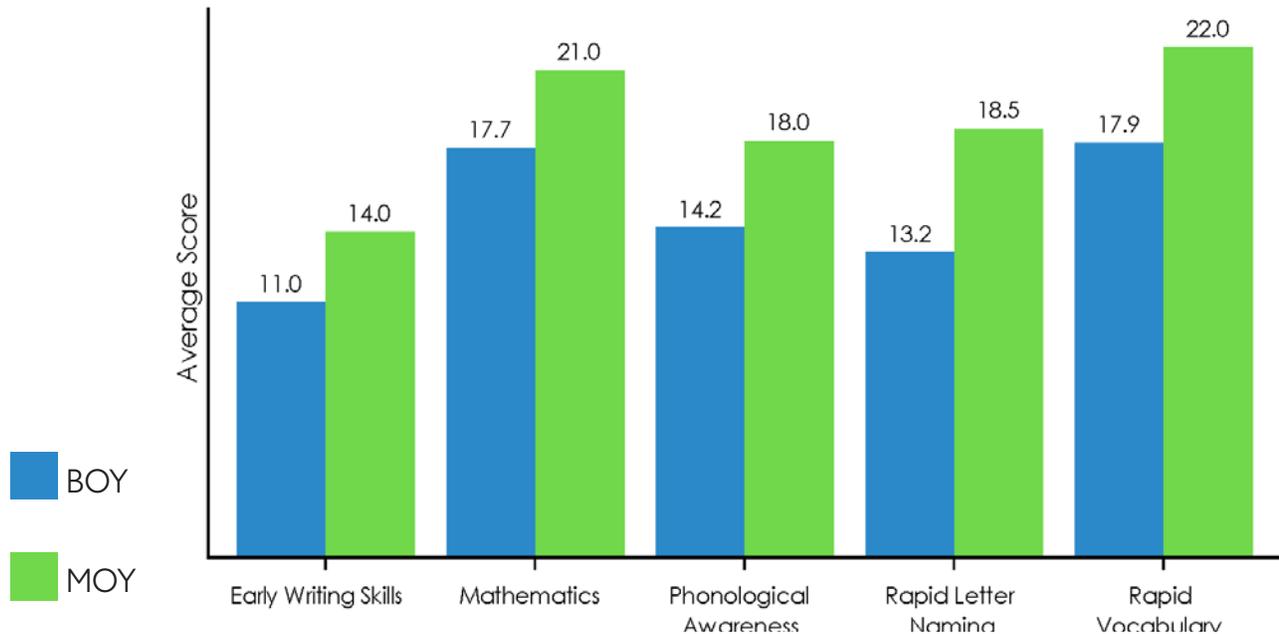
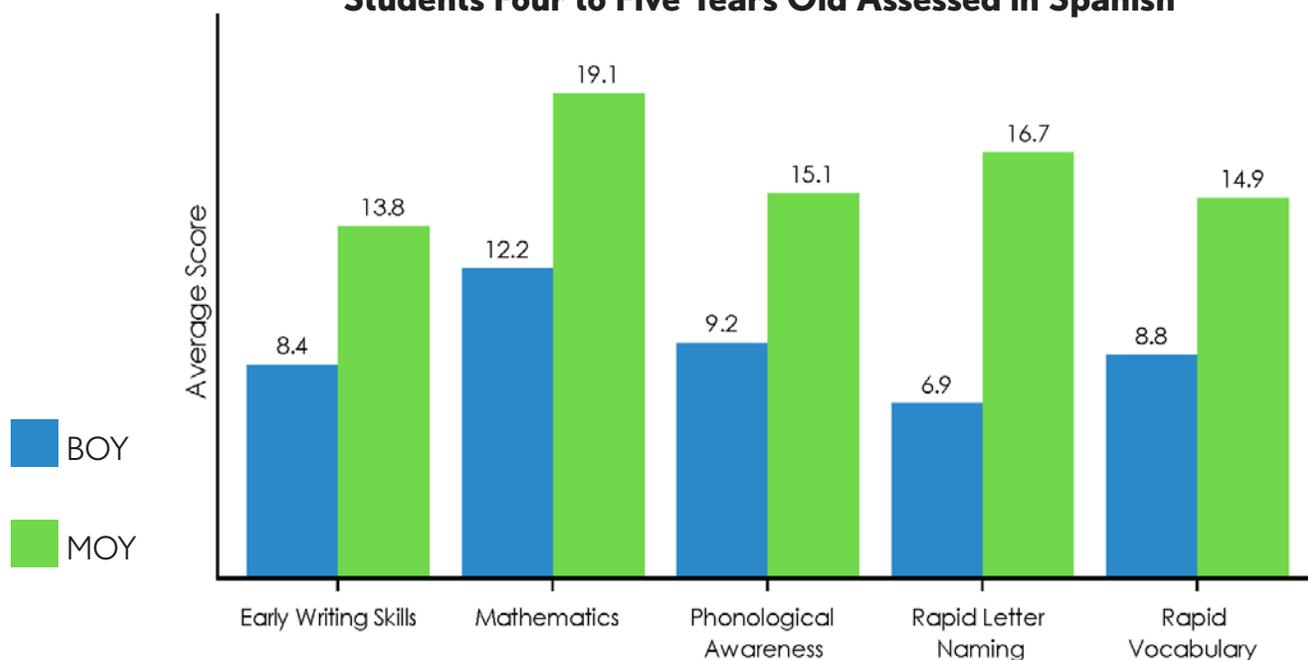


FIGURE 10

### 2019-20 CIRCLE Progress Monitoring: Average for TSR-COMP Students Four to Five Years Old Assessed in Spanish



### Child Growth in TSR by Setting

TSR Comprehensive classrooms are located in one of three settings: private child care, Head Start, or public prekindergarten. While each of these partnership classrooms serves at-risk children, we have found that the children served by these settings have differing skill levels at the beginning of the year. Overall, as measured by the C-PM beginning-of-year assessment, students enrolled at public schools and Head Start programs enter with the least developed skills.

We analyzed the differences in how skills changed between beginning-of-year (BOY) and middle-of-year (MOY) across settings for a set of fourteen domains including book and print knowledge, early writing skills, letter knowledge, mathematics, phonological awareness, vocabulary, social-emotional

skills, science, social studies, story retell, and motivation to read, among others.

The graphs in Figure 11 illustrate the change between middle-of-year and beginning-of-year for five of the skills we examined (3- to 5-year-old children are included in the analysis). For example, for letter knowledge, the height of each bar represents the number of points that children gained from beginning-of-year to middle-of-year, controlling for their initial skills and age. Looking at these bars by setting allows us to understand the difference in gains that TSR Comprehensive children made by setting. We statistically tested whether these gains were different by program type and report on the effect size of this difference.

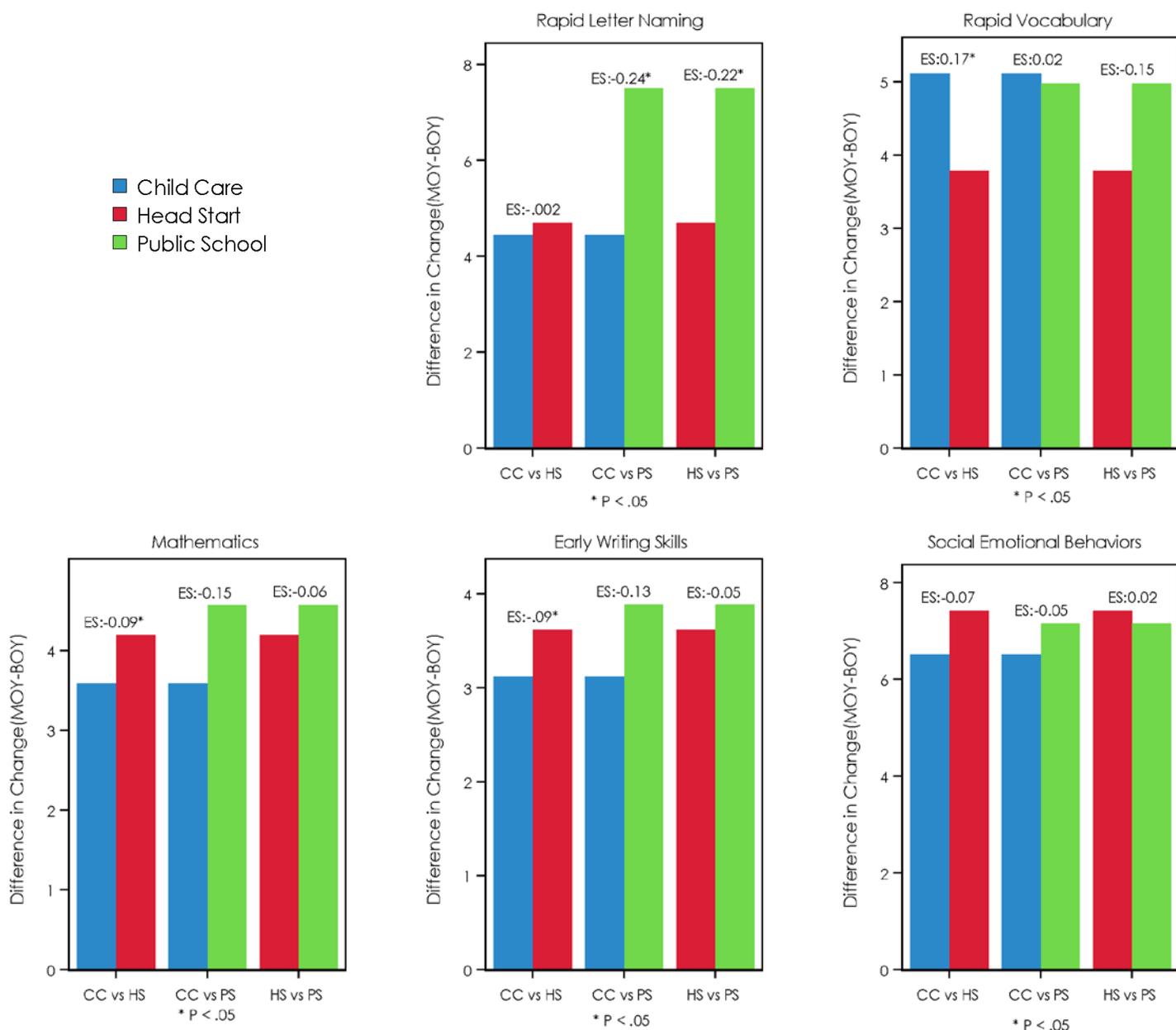
We found that, with the exception of four skills, by the middle-of-year in preschool,

differences in the amount of gains in skill levels across settings was comparable. We found differences in the amount of gains in skills by setting for letter naming, vocabulary, mathematics, and early writing. For vocabulary, children in child care were gaining significantly more than children enrolled in Head Start. For math and early writing, we saw significant differences in gains between child care and Head Start, where children in Head Start were gaining significantly more

than children enrolled in child care. For letter knowledge, public school children experienced higher gains compared to children in both Head Start and child care.

Overall, findings suggest that except for the four skills described above, children in TSR Comprehensive are making similar gains from BOY to MOY regardless of program type.

FIGURE 11 **Change Between MOY and BOY**



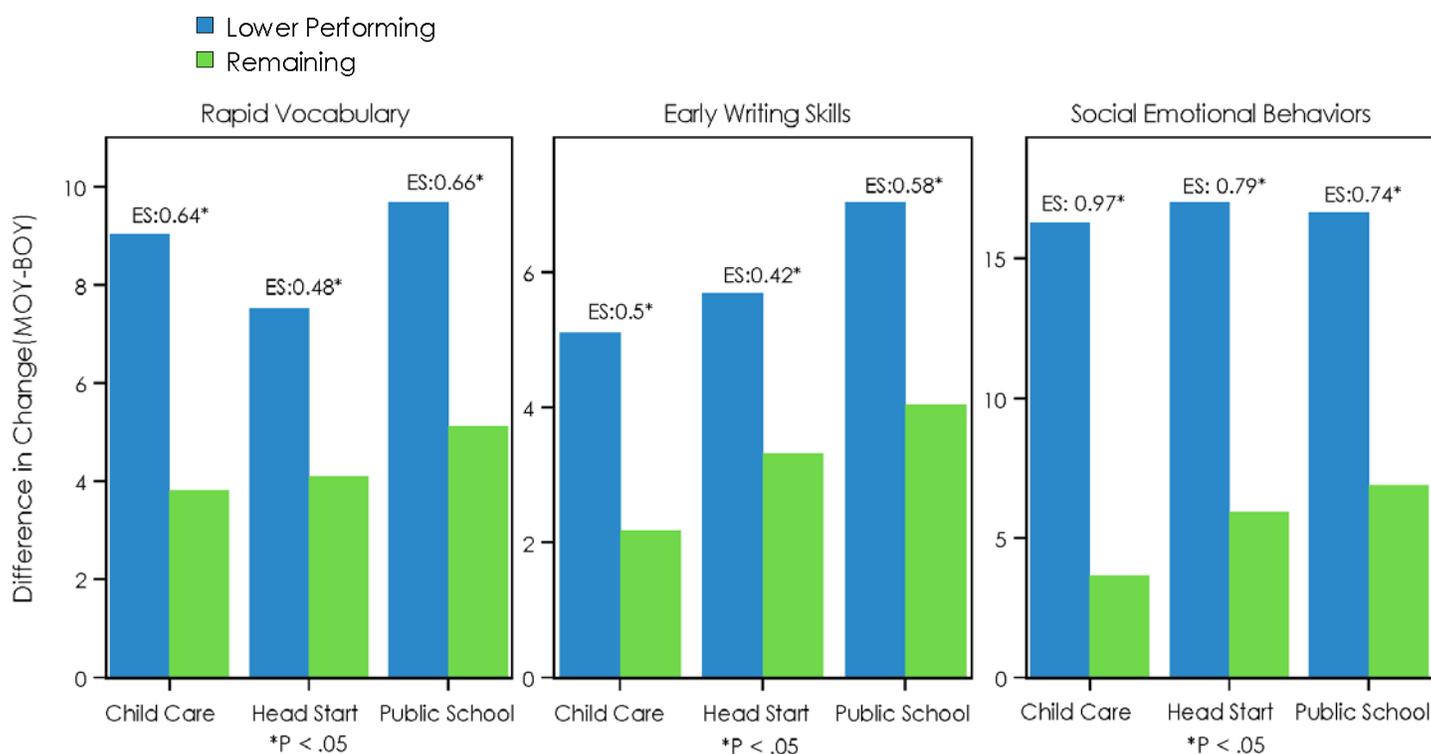
## Growth of Lowest Performing Children

We also analyzed the amount of gains that children who entered the program with the least developed skills (defined as children one standard deviation below the mean, based on their beginning-of-year performance) exhibited compared to their peers. TSR uses progress monitoring to identify low performing children, who are then placed in skill-based small groups where they receive more targeted support and instruction. Compared to their peers, children with the least developed skills experience the most dramatic gains from beginning of year to middle-of-year. For example, the three graphs in Figure 12 indicate larger and significant gains for the lowest performing students in vocabulary, early writing, and socio-emotional skills across all three set-

tings in which TSR is implemented. For example, looking at early writing skills, lower performing children made larger gains of the magnitude of 0.58 standard deviations compared to their peers. This pattern of larger gains was consistent and statistically significant across all 12 skills that we analyzed (including rapid vocabulary, phonological awareness, science, motivation to read, and approaches to learning, among others). All models control for children's initial skills at beginning-of-year and child's age.

In summary, this analysis suggests that, while the gaps between lowest performing children and their peers remain at the middle-of-year in TSR Comprehensive, the gaps have been substantially narrowed given the larger gains that lower performing children are able to make.

FIGURE 12 **Growth of Low Performing Children**



## Statewide Child Growth

State funding of CLI Engage allows publicly supported programs across the state (i.e., public pre-K, Head Start, and Texas Rising Star certified providers) to utilize CIRCLE Progress Monitoring at no cost. Whereas TSR Comprehensive serves a sub-population of children in the most at-risk commu-

nities, the statewide population represents a broader range of children (for example, the majority of children are served by public pre-K, which also accepts students on a tuition basis). The following graphs (Figures 13-16) depict student gains across the two available assessment windows using aggregate data from the state, including TSR Comprehensive children.

FIGURE 13 **2019-20 CIRCLE Progress Monitoring: Statewide Average Students Three to Four Years Old Assessed in English**

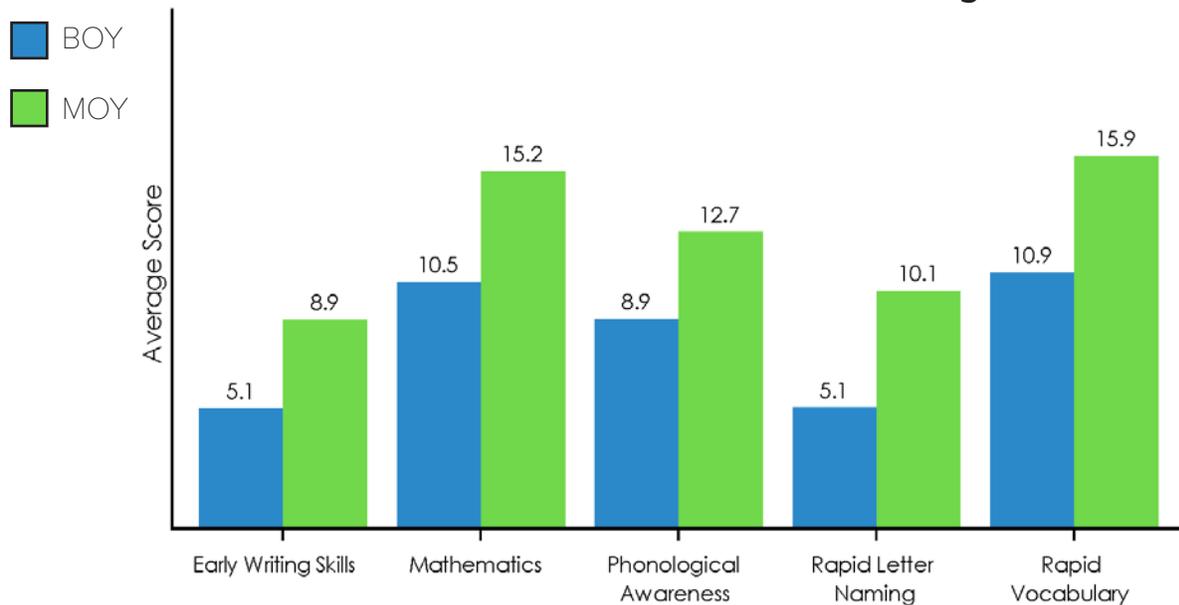


FIGURE 14 **2019-20 CIRCLE Progress Monitoring: Statewide Average Students Three to Four Years Old Assessed in Spanish**

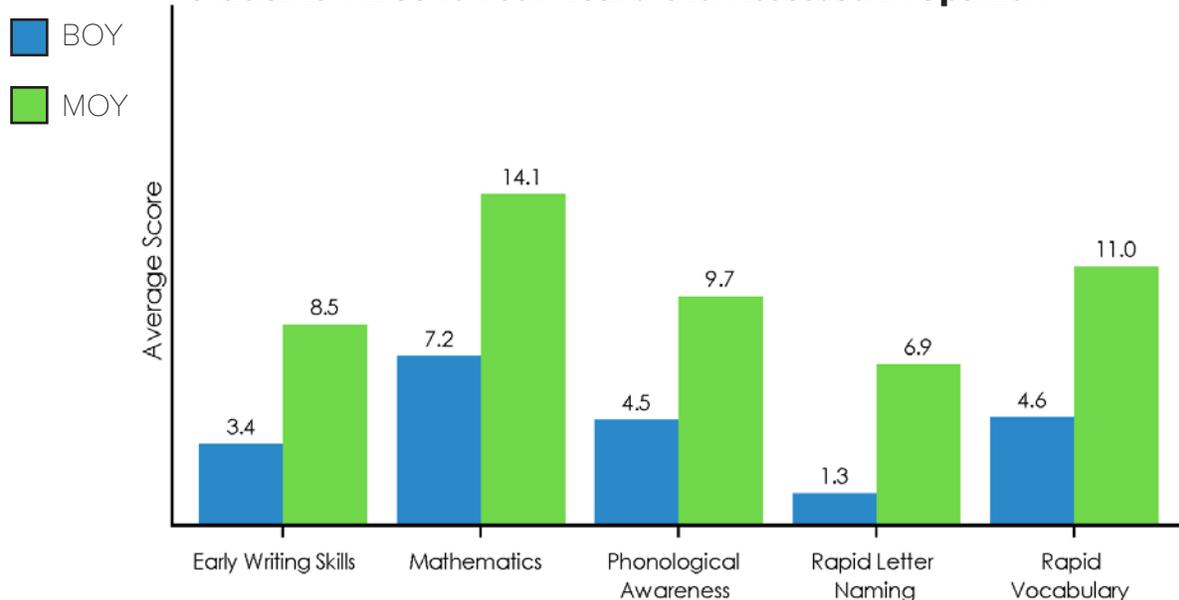


FIGURE 15

### 2019-20 CIRCLE Progress Monitoring: Statewide Average Students Four to Five Years Old Assessed in English

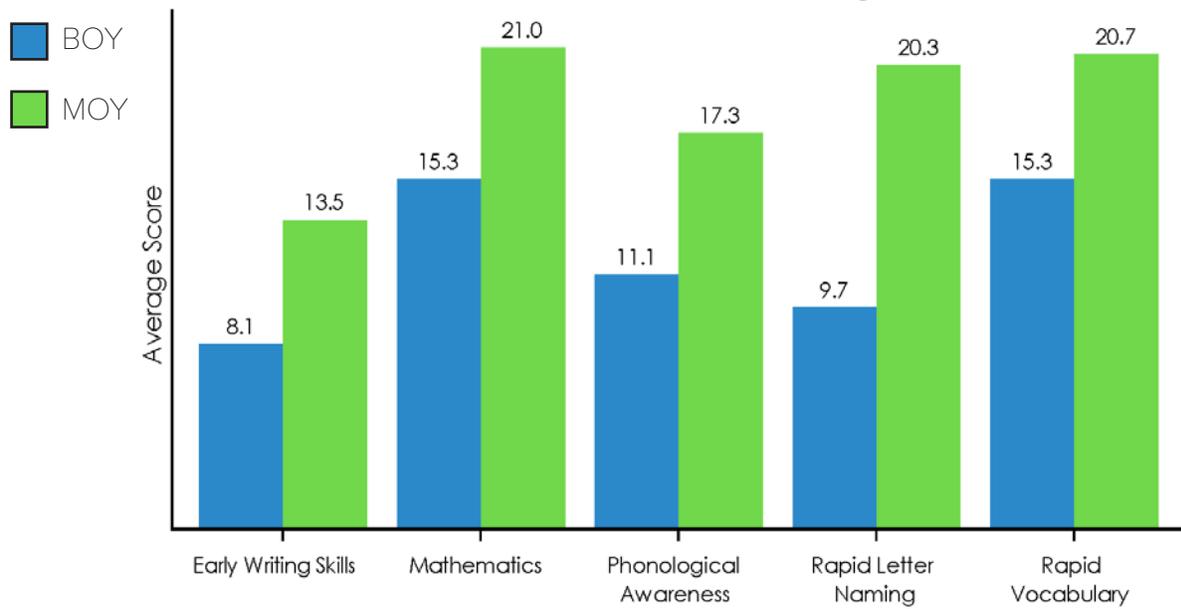
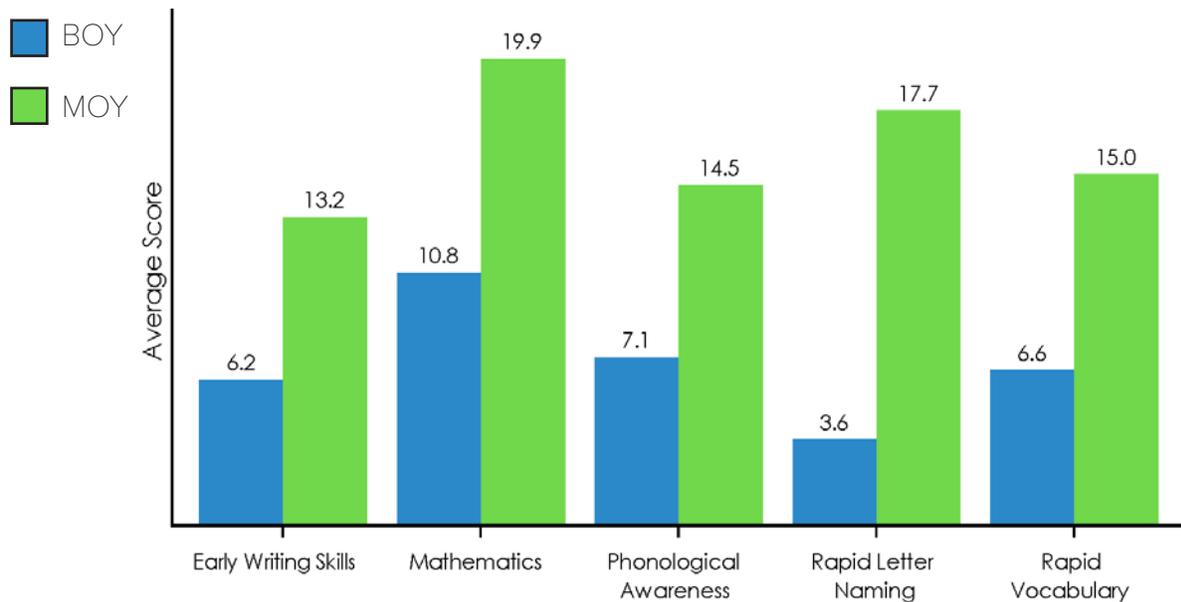


FIGURE 16

### 2019-20 CIRCLE Progress Monitoring: Statewide Average Students Four to Five Years Old Assessed in Spanish

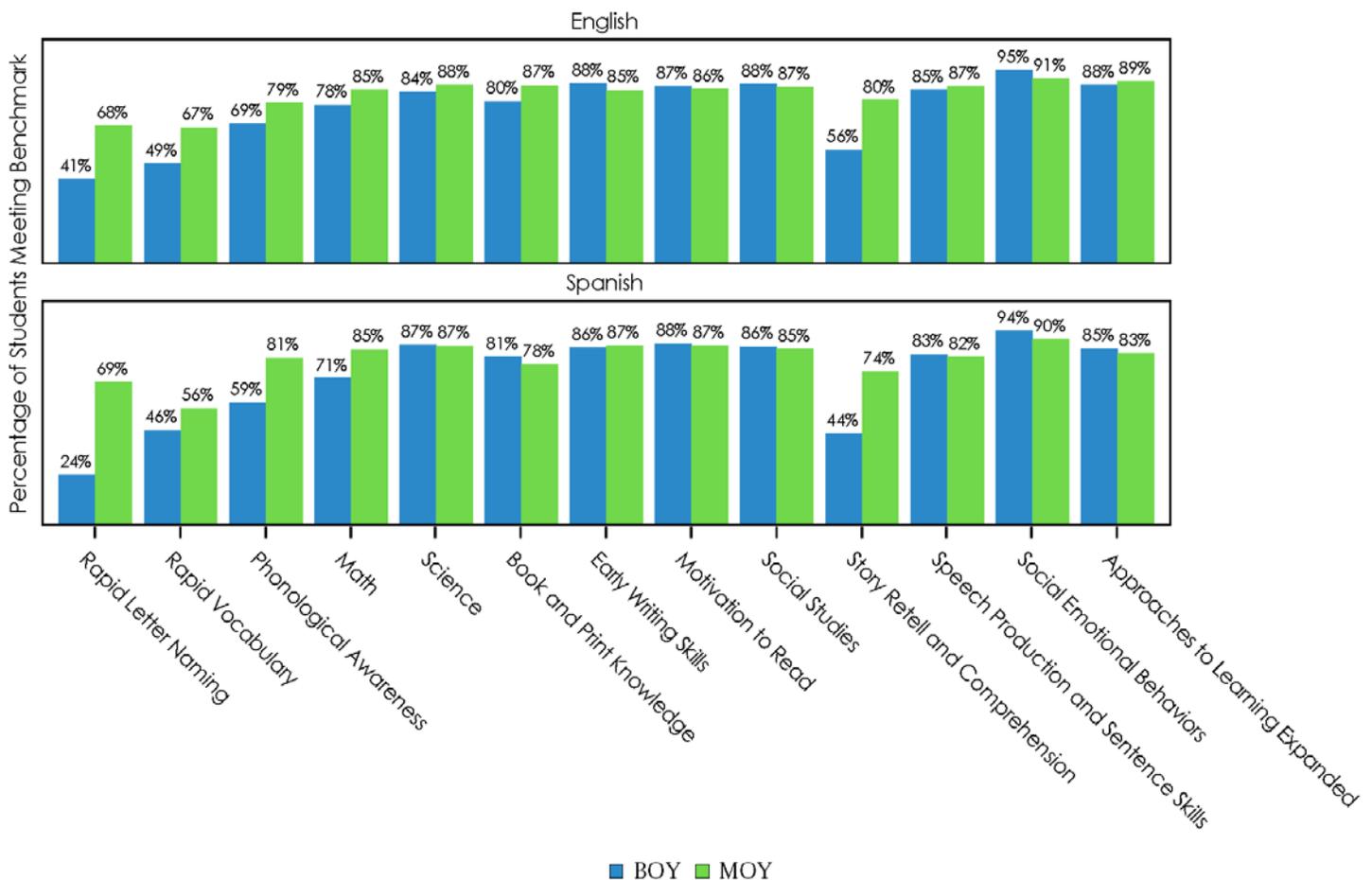


The bar graph in Figure 17 shows the percentage of children meeting benchmarks at beginning-of-year and middle-of-year in all C-PM measures.

These data correspond to all 4- to 5-year-old preschool children. The bar graphs on the top illustrate the percent of students meeting benchmarks for assessments administered in English, followed by those administered in Spanish. For most skills, we see that the percent of children meeting benchmarks increases from beginning-of-year to middle-of-year. At middle-of-year for English skills, about 68% of children are meeting

benchmarks in letter knowledge/naming, and only 56–67% are meeting benchmarks in vocabulary, a critical skill for reading comprehension. Note that due to COVID-19 we are unable to present the end-of-year threshold for the current fiscal year. From last year’s fiscal data (FY2019), we know that only 72% of children assessed in English and 62% in Spanish were meeting the end-of-year benchmark for vocabulary knowledge—evidence that intervention at an earlier age is necessary. Note that benchmarks change across the academic year to reflect the instruction and the learning of children that occur between assessment windows.

FIGURE 17 **2019-20 CIRCLE Progress Monitoring: Percent of Pre-K Students Meeting Benchmark for 4 to 5 Years Old**



## C-PM Predicting Third Grade STAAR Reading

Researchers at CLI conducted analysis to understand if children’s performance in preschool as measured with the C-PM assessments predicts reading in third grade as measured by the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR). This study evaluated whether (1) the beginning-of-year C-PM assessment predicted third-grade reading scores on the STAAR, and (2) growth in the C-PM assessment across preschool predicted third grade scores on STAAR.

Based on data requested from TEA, researchers at CLI matched 2013-14 C-PM data to the same students’ third-grade scores in 2017-18. In total, between 9,300 to 10,500 students were used in analyses, representing about 2-3% of the total third graders in Texas in 2017-18, and 2,662 schools. Notably, the 2013-14 C-PM assessments were only administered to a handful of districts given that it was its first year of implementation.

For the C-PM assessments, we examined the following measures: letter names, rap-

id vocabulary, phonological awareness, and math. For the third-grade reading STAAR scores, we used two types of scores. First, we examined the reading score as a raw score. Second, we used TEA’s performance standards classification, which categorizes students into three levels: approaches grade level performance, meets grade level performance, and masters grade level performance. We used the middle category (“meets grade level performance”) to understand if our beginning-of-year C-PM measures predicted this category.

### The main findings of the study were:

For each of the four C-PM tests that we considered (i.e., letter names, rapid vocabulary, phonological awareness, and math), children’s performance on BOY was associated with higher odds of “Meeting Grade Level Performance” as defined by the 3rd-grade STAAR, with probabilities ranging from 51% to 55%.

Growth on each C-PM subtest predicts students raw scores in third-grade reading.

FIGURE 18

### Prediction of C-PM (2013-14) on 3rd-grade STAAR (2017-18)

C-PM test	Does BOY C-PM predict the category “Meet Grade Level” Performance from 3rd-grade STAAR?	Does growth in C-PM (based on BOY, MOY, and EOY) predict higher levels of 3rd-grade scores?
Letter Names	Yes. Higher scores in BOY were 51% more likely to “Meet Grade Level” performance based on 3rd grade STAAR.	Yes
Rapid Vocabulary	Yes. Higher scores in BOY were 52% more likely to “Meet Grade Level” performance based on 3rd grade STAAR.	Yes
Phonological Awareness	Yes. Higher scores in BOY were 52% more likely to “Meet Grade Level” performance based on 3rd grade STAAR.	Yes
Math	Yes. Higher scores in BOY were 55% more likely to “Meet Grade Level” performance based on 3rd grade STAAR.	Yes

We are currently examining whether being on-track at BOY on the C-PM assessments predicts the “Meets Grade Level” performance based on third-grade STAAR. Further, we plan to extend the analysis to the 2018–19 third-grade cohort since C-PM was more broadly used in 2014–15 when children from this cohort were enrolled in pre-K.

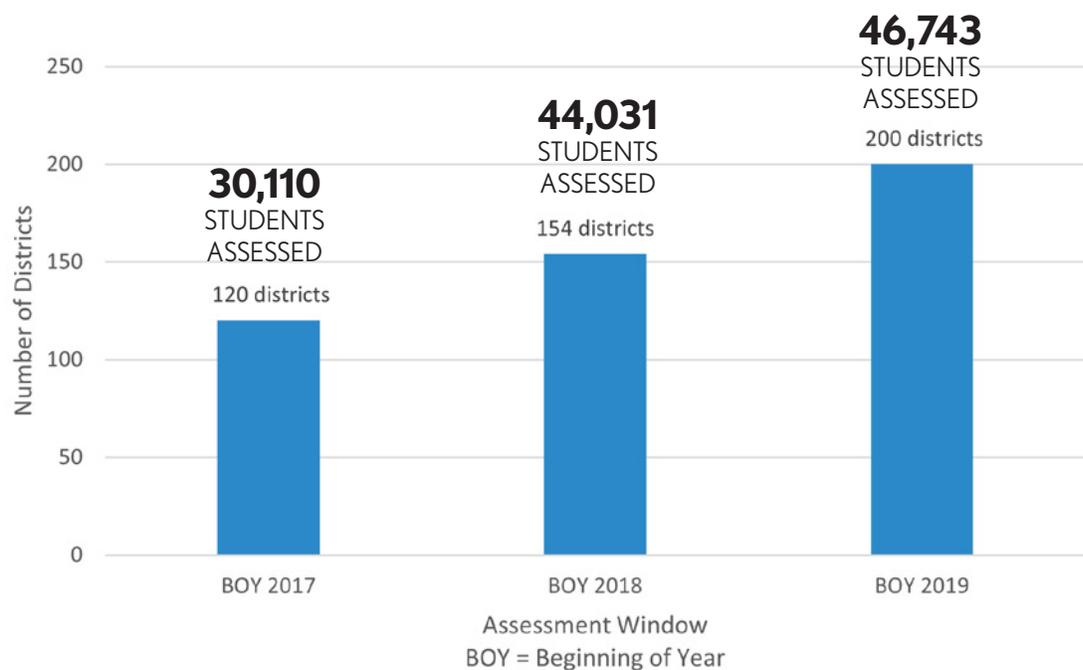
**What did we learn from this study?** Overall, we learned that C-PM, a preschool progress monitoring assessment, predicts how children are doing in reading based on the STAAR in third grade. This speaks to the importance of incorporating progress monitoring assessments in preschool given their ability to predict future children’s skills. Moreover, using preschool progress monitoring data to differentiate instruction that supports children in meeting preschool benchmarks is likely to set children on a path for future school success.

## Texas Kindergarten Entry Assessment (TX-KEA)

TX-KEA was developed in partnership with TEA to assess five different domains: language, literacy, STEM, social-emotional skills, executive functions, and academic motor skills. TX-KEA can be used to satisfy beginning-of-year (BOY) state reporting requirements for language and literacy. Recently, researchers at CLI published a study on the development, validation, and launch of the English version of the Texas Kindergarten Entry Assessment (TX-KEA). This study was published in the journal *Early Education and Development* in 2020. CLI is planning a similar study on the validation of the **Spanish version of TX-KEA**.

Since its launch in 2017–18, the use of TX-KEA at BOY by school districts has grown by about 66%, from 120 districts in 2017–18 to 200 in 2019–20. Preliminary analysis for the BOY 2020 indicates an uptake in TX-KEA usage at BOY, with about 400 districts administering TX-KEA during the fall of 2020. More details on 2020–21 TX-KEA utilization will be provided in next years’ annual report.

FIGURE 19  
**Number of Districts using BOY TX-KEA and number of students assessed**



The table in Figure 20 depicts the percent of children assessed in English and Spanish across the state of Texas who are meeting benchmarks in literacy skills, STEM skills, and other assessed skills. Over 46,000 students were assessed in at least one domain of TX-KEA in fall 2019. The data indicates a significant percentage of students are arriving at school behind in key skills across all domain areas. Across all skills assessed in English, blending, which refers to the skill of combining sounds in a word, had the low-

est percent of children meeting benchmark at the BOY (48%), while motor skills had the highest percent of students meeting benchmarks (82%). For those children assessed in Spanish, the skill where children were struggling the most was math, where only 54% met the benchmarks. Similarly to the students assessed in English, motor skills was where most children were meeting the benchmark (82%).

**FIGURE 20 Percent of children meeting benchmarks for the 2019-2020 BOY TX-KEA**

Skills Assessed	TX-KEA English	TX-KEA Spanish
Academic Motor Skills	82%	82%
Attention	74%	67%
Blending	48%	66%
Emotion Management	81%	80%
Inhibition	66%	65%
Letter Names	74%	73%
Letter Sounds	72%	65%
Listening Comprehension	72%	66%
Math	51%	54%
Science	54%	59%
Social Emotional Competence	78%	72%
Spelling	72%	71%
Vocabulary	63%	61%
Working Memory	72%	65%

Note. The number of unique students assessed across the English and Spanish BOY administrations for at least one of the TX-KEA subdomains was 46,743. A total of 200 districts used at least one subdomain from the TX-KEA at BOY; 52 of those districts also utilized the TX-KEA Spanish.

In addition to capturing student benchmark data at the state level, we also examined the variability in the percentages of children meeting benchmarks at the district level. The graphs in Figure 21 display the number of districts whose students are meeting BOY benchmarks across four categories: 0–25% of students in the district are meeting benchmarks, 26–50% of students are meeting benchmarks, 51–75% of students are meeting benchmarks, and 76–100% of students are meeting benchmarks. For English TX-KEA (see Figure 21), a large number of districts are serving student populations with less than 75% of students meeting benchmarks in certain skill areas. For example, most districts serve children failing to meet math benchmarks, and about half of the districts administering vocabulary have children meeting benchmarks at a rate of 75% or less. Math and vocabulary are two critical early learning skills that predict later school success. Overall, there are fewer districts using the TX-KEA Spanish (see Figure 22), but the information that we present tells a similar story as the TX-KEA English. That is, although there is a sizable number of districts who have >75% of students meeting benchmarks, there still is work to be done in most skills assessed, with many districts struggling across a greater number of skill areas. This data suggests that some districts with larger populations of students struggling to meet benchmarks may benefit from additional support.

FIGURE 21 **Number of Districts Meeting Different Thresholds in the English 2019 TX-KEA (Beginning of Year)**

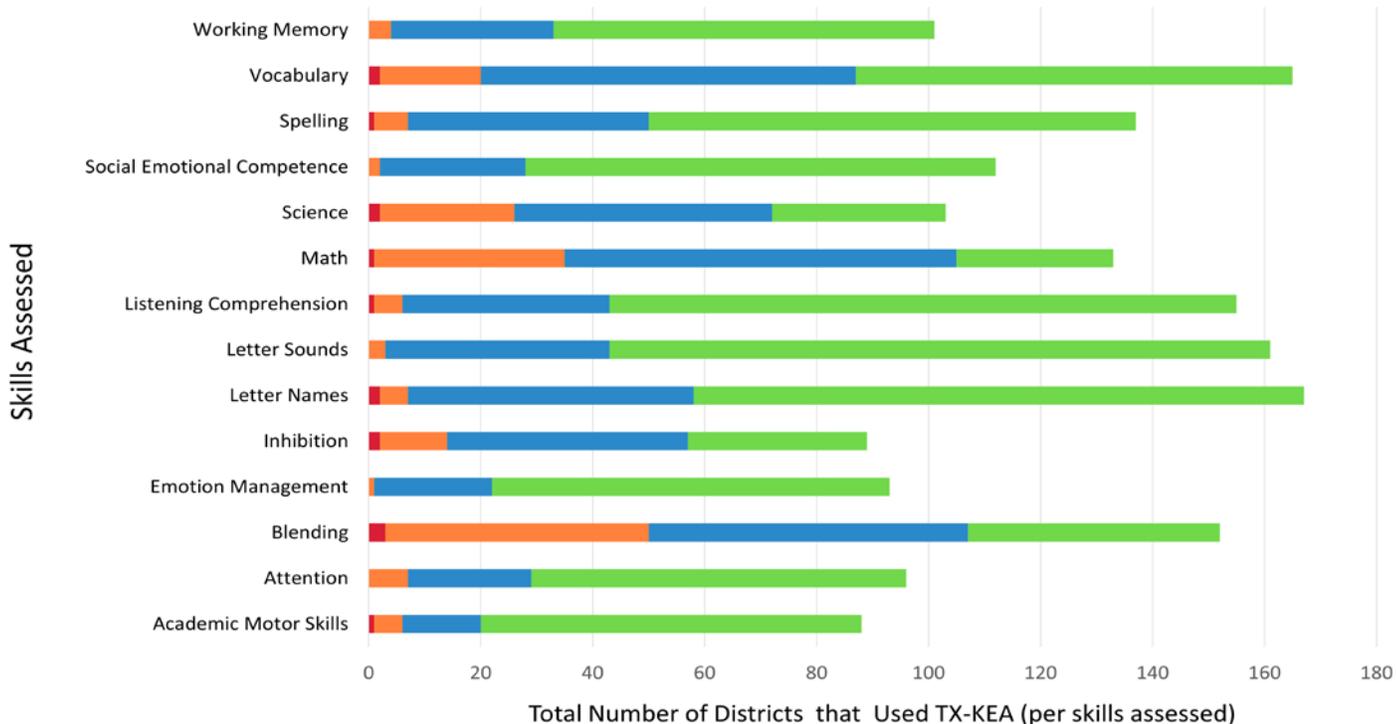
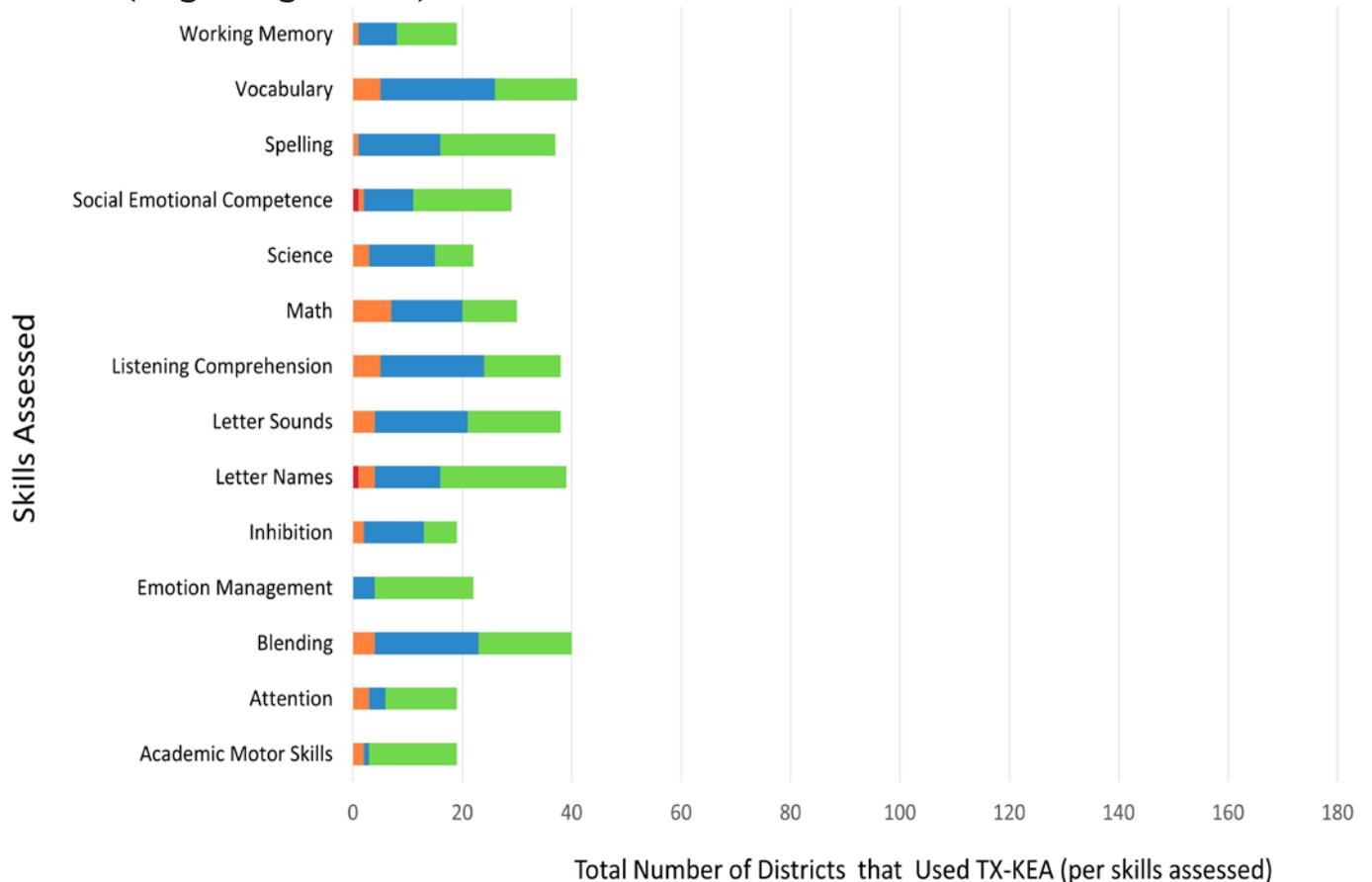


FIGURE 22 **Number of Districts Meeting Different Thresholds in the Spanish 2019 TX-KEA (Beginning of Year)**



Total Number of Districts that Used TX-KEA (per skills assessed)

Percent of Students in District Meeting BOY TX-KEA benchmark

■ 0-25% ■ 26-50% ■ 51-75% ■ 76-100%

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## End-of-Year Preschool and Kindergarten Entry Scores

Similar to last year, we examined whether end-of-year (EOY) scores on C-PM administered in 2018-19 predict TX-KEA scores administered at the beginning-of-year (BOY) in school-year 2019-20. Consistent with prior reports, all five C-PM skills continue to predict kindergarten entry skills in its analogous learning area. Looking at vocabulary, for every one-point increase in C-PM rapid

vocabulary at the child's EOY assessment, they increase 0.21 points on their BOY TX-KEA vocabulary assessment. So, for example, if child A scores 23 points in their EOY C-PM rapid vocabulary (23 points represents the average score on this test), and child B scores 16 points (this represents about a standard deviation below the rapid vocabulary average), then we should expect child A to score about 1.5 points higher on the kindergarten entry vocabulary assessment than child B.

FIGURE 23 Skill Prediction

C-PM test measured at EOY	BOY TX-KEA domain that is predicted by C-PM	Estimate	Significant?*
Rapid Vocabulary	Vocabulary	0.21	yes
Phonological Awareness	Blending	0.22	yes
Rapid Letter Naming	Letter Names	0.13	yes
Mathematics	Mathematics	0.47	yes
Science	Science	0.38	yes

Note: Estimates were calculated with a multilevel model (students nested within schools), and controlled for age of student, and preschool setting (i.e., child care, head start, public school).

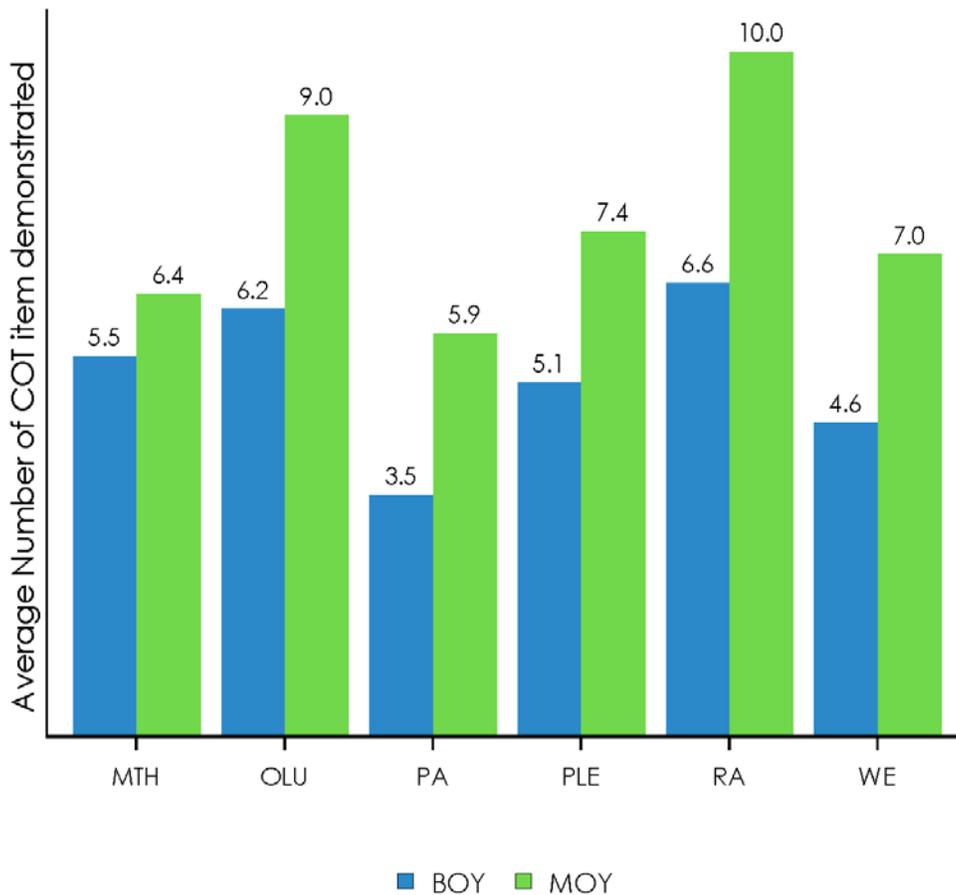
\*We examined statistical significance at  $p < .05$ . BOY = Beginning of year; EOY = End of year.

# Tracking Gains in Teacher Skills

TSR measures teacher gains in instructional behaviors known to advance child outcomes using a standardized assessment tool known as the Classroom Observation Tool or COT (see page 17). Pre-K teachers in TSR Comprehensive have shown meaningful changes after just a few months of participation in the project. In the graph in Figure 24, BOY refers to beginning-of-year observations; MOY, middle-of-year. Change from BOY to MOY represents the average increase in instructional strategies observed during

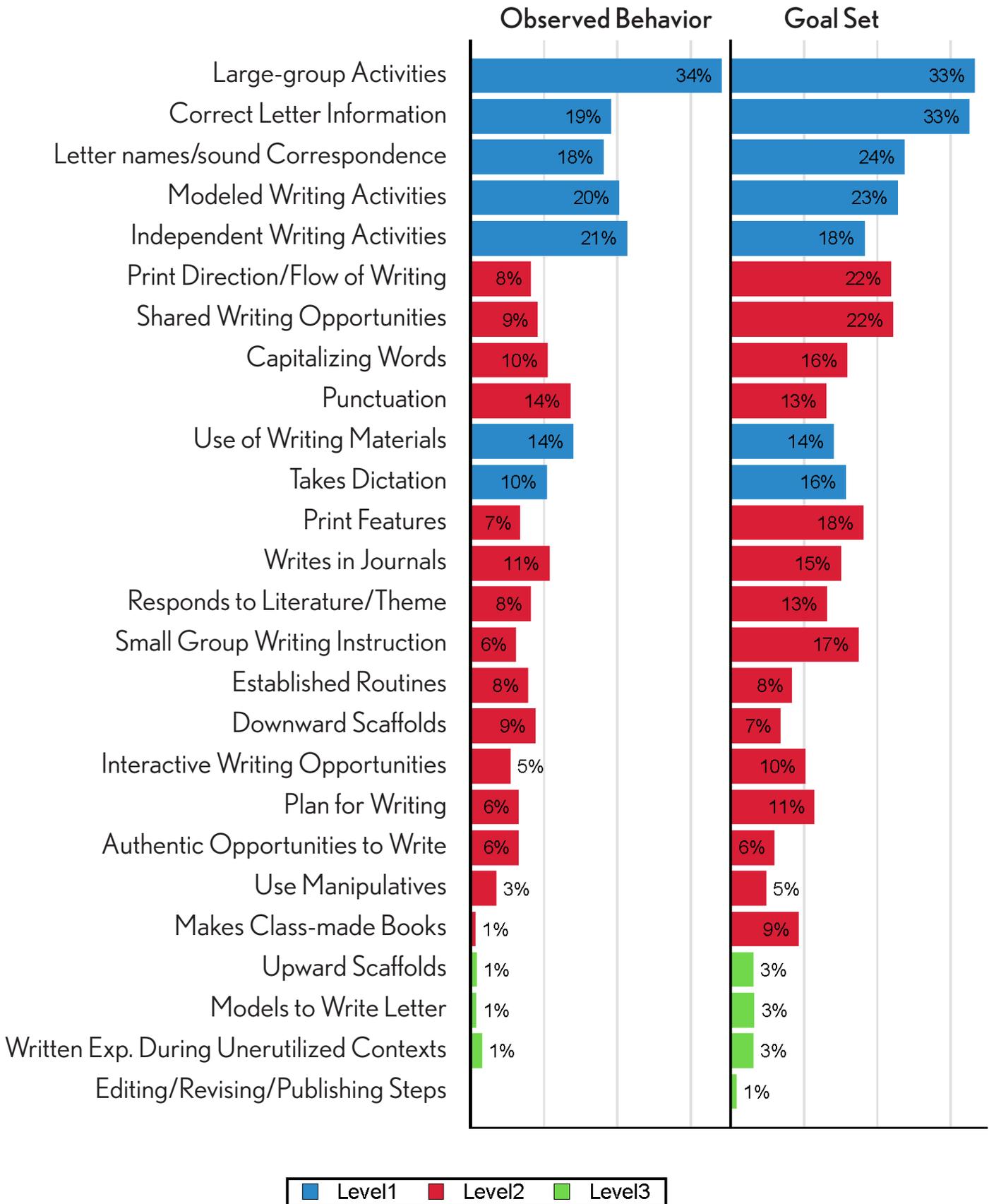
a two-hour classroom observation. The graph illustrates improvements across all content areas related to key early childhood indicators: math, oral language, phonological awareness, print/letter knowledge and early reading, read alouds, and written expression. Across all content areas presented in the graph, we observe gains based on the COT from BOY to MOY. Descriptively, the largest gains are observed in read alouds, written expression, oral language, and phonological awareness.

FIGURE 24 **Teacher Gain in the Use of Instructional Strategies from the Beginning to Middle of School Year**



MTH: Math, OLU: Oral Language, PA: Phonological Awareness, PLE: Print/Letter & Early Reading, RA: Read Alouds, WE: Written Expression  
 1st and 2nd year Active Teachers included  
 2nd year teacher's BOY score is from 2018-19 BOY assessment

FIGURE 25 2018-19 COT for TSR-COMP Teachers: Written Expression



Additionally, the COT provides specific and rich data that allows for classification of instructional behaviors into three levels.

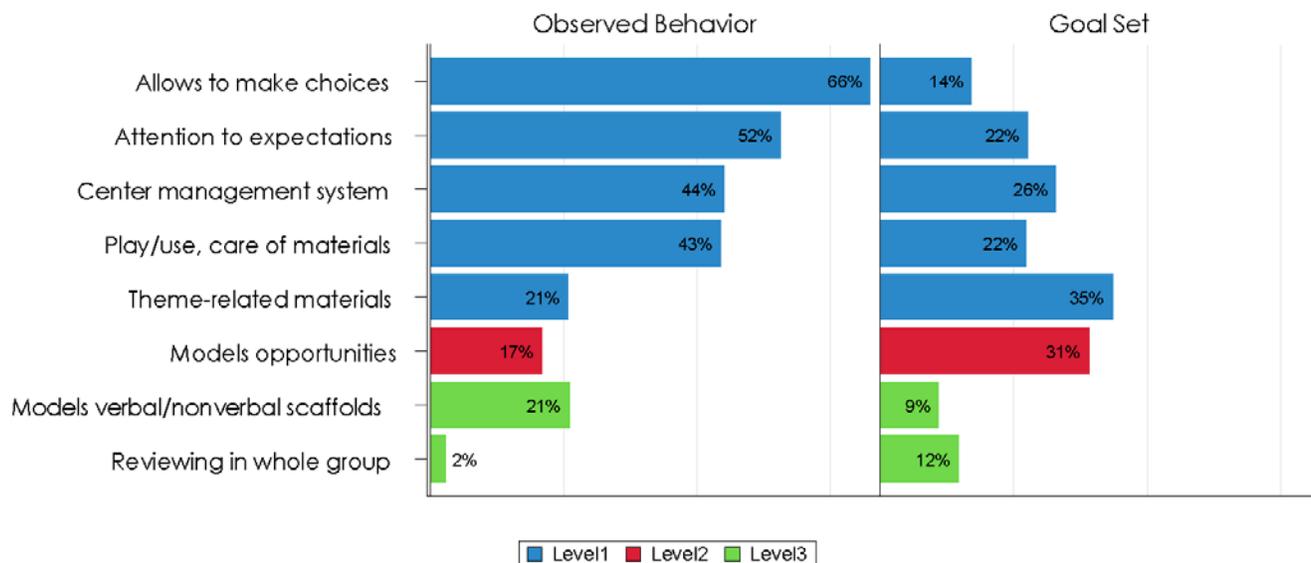
**Level 1** are foundational behaviors, **Level 2** are intermediate behaviors, and **Level 3** are advanced instructional behaviors, and TSR coaching is adjusted to meet teachers where they are and help them advance towards higher-level skills.

For example, the graph in Figure 25 illustrates all the behaviors that encompass the written expression domain. This domain includes 26 behaviors: 7 which are classified as level-1, 15 as level-2, and 4 as level-3. The graph illustrates the percent of teachers in TSR Comprehensive that were exhibiting that behavior at the beginning-of-year. For example, we observed that 34% of teachers were engaging in large-group writing activities, a level-1 behavior, while only 1% of teachers were modeling to write letters, a level-3 behavior. As the year progresses, TSR’s approach is to support teachers to work toward levels 2 and 3 instructional behaviors which are linked to higher-level

written expression skills.

In addition to measuring observed behaviors, the COT also allows teachers and coaches to set goals. The same figure illustrates the distribution of teachers who set goals for each of the instructional behaviors during the 2018–19 academic year. Although most goal settings concentrate in level-1 behaviors, there is an increase in the percent of goals set for level-2 activities when compared to the observed behaviors. This suggests that when teachers are not demonstrating level-2 behaviors, they are setting these behaviors as goals for improvement—a reassuring sign that the program is leading to continuous improvement for teachers. For level-3 behaviors, only a small percent (< 3%) have set level-3 behaviors as a goal, which may be an indication that teachers need more time to address the most challenging instructional behaviors. A similar graph (Figure 26) is included for Center/Independent Workstation Activities. Note that the data presented is for 2018–19, since this was the most recent year for which we had complete teacher observation data due to the impact of COVID-19.

FIGURE 26 **2018-19 COT for TSR Comprehensive Teachers  
Center/Independent Workstation Activities**



## Comparative Coaching Study

The comparative coaching study was a part of our ongoing effort to validate TSR's approach in new settings and delivery models. The study, funded by the US Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, brought together two widely used coaching approaches for supporting early childhood teachers, both used in TSR: face-to-face (in-class) and remote (video-based). This three-year study, the first of its kind, contrasted the two approaches in order to carefully examine the cost-effectiveness of using a technology-mediated coaching model. Remote coaching has the potential to save costs and increase access to professional development, especially for early care providers in rural communities. Through this study, an economic analysis will help us to identify the most effective and efficient methods for providing coaching that effectively advances teacher's instructional practices.

Findings from the study showed that both teachers receiving face-to-face and remote coaching were observed as having stronger instructional practices compared to teachers in the business-as-usual group.

In this study, which included 174 teachers (49 randomized to business-as-usual, 59 to remote coaching, and 66 to face-to-face coaching), teacher practice was measured with the Teacher Behavior Rating Scale (TBRS), a pre- and post-intervention observational tool used to measure teacher instructional practices. Sample indicators for the TBRS are:

**Book Reading Quality:** Introduces the book; Encourages discussion of book features; Vocabulary words are combined with pictures or objects; Reads with expression; Extends book

through activities and discussion

**Oral Language Quality:** Models speaking in complete sentences; Uses scaffolding language; Uses thinking questions; Makes links with previously learned words and concepts; Engages children in conversations

**Phonological Awareness Quality:** Integrates PA activities in listening, sentence segmenting, syllable blending and segmenting, onset rime blending and segmenting, and alliteration

**Print and Letter Knowledge Quantity:** Promotes letter word knowledge; Compares and discusses differences in letter and words; Discusses concepts of print; Breadth of print and letter activities; Literacy connection in centers; Print in the environment and centers; Letter wall

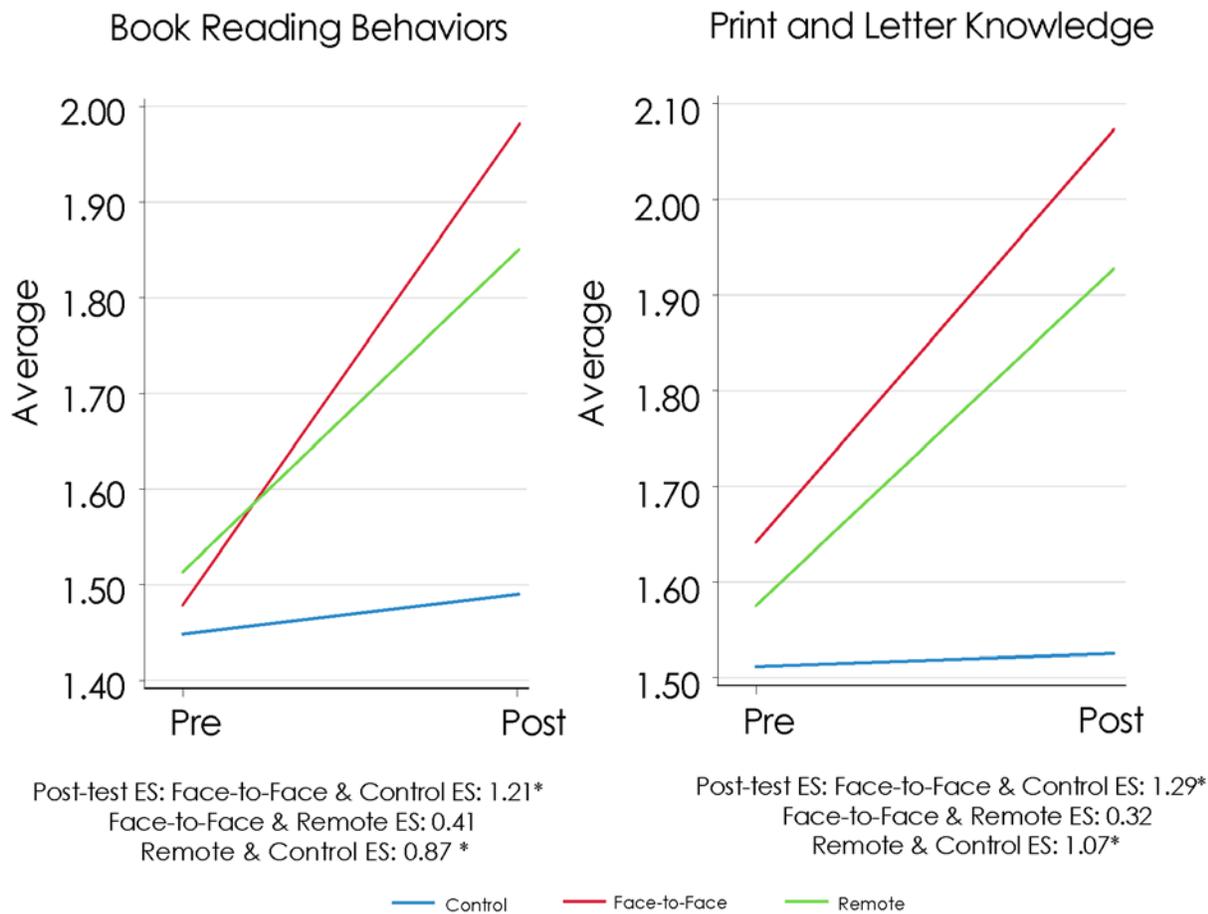
## Coaching vs. No-Coaching

When comparing the business-as-usual to the coaching intervention (either face-to-face or remote), coaching was found to have significant and moderate-to-strong effect sizes on all but one of the 10 instructional areas, with effect sizes ranging from 0.55 (for classroom community) to 1.12 (for print and letter knowledge). All models controlled for beginning-of-the-year scores as well as teacher-level covariates (i.e., ethnicity, years of teaching, and teacher education). This suggests that regardless of model, teachers benefit from some coaching support.

FIGURE 27

## Teacher Growth in Two TBRS Instructional Area

These graphs show gains made by teachers in both coaching conditions compared to the control group for two sample instructional areas.



### Face-to-Face vs. Remote Coaching

When comparing the face-to-face coaching versus the remote coaching, we found that face-to-face coaching was superior to remote coaching in six out of the ten TBRS instructional areas: teacher sensitivity ( $d = 0.43$ ), learning centers ( $d = 0.34$ ), book reading ( $d = 0.41$ ), print and letter knowledge ( $d = 0.32$ ), written expression ( $d = 0.53$ ) and oral language ( $d = 0.44$ ). These models controlled for the same characteristics listed above. (See Figure 27 for this comparison for two sample instructional areas.) After accounting for teachers' responsiveness to the intervention (i.e., overall participation and engagement), most of the differences of effects between coaching modalities on teachers' TBRS subscores were no longer statistically significant (with the exception

of written expression). This suggests that face-to-face and remote coaching models may be comparable in improving outcomes if coaching models explicitly design support for increasing teachers' responsiveness. This is an important finding, as remote coaching models may be a more cost-effective approach for improving teacher change, and particularly relevant during times of social distancing.

*The research reported here was supported by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, through Grant R305A140378 to the Children's Learning Institute. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not represent the views of the Institute or the U.S. Department of Education.*

# QUALITY IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIONS

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CLI frequently seeks to further its mission through collaboration with other quality improvement initiatives aimed at closing achievement gaps for at-risk children. As described in the following pages, CLI is lending expertise and leveraging our existing technology and professional development resources to support an even larger portion of the early education workforce in Texas.

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## Strengthening Texas Rising Star Implementation Study

CLI and the Texas Workforce Commission have partnered together to strengthen implementation of Texas' quality rating and improvement system, Texas Rising Star. Child care providers who participate in Texas Rising Star receive tiered child care subsidy reimbursements based on their quality rating (i.e., star level). In 2015, CLI developed a web-based version of the TRS assessor's instrument, as well as an online course series for assessor and mentor training, both of which are housed on CLI Engage. Because of CLI's extensive experience developing and implementing assessment instruments, as well as training and working with observation coders, CLI assisted TWC with a large-scale evaluation of the reliability and initial validity of the assessment instrument. The full report is available on CLI's website. The majority of recommendations that came out of the study were adopted during the four-year review of the Texas Rising Star program in 2020.

In FY2020, CLI completed the design and development of the TRS Assessment and Certification Training Program to align to the revised TRS Standards. The certification and training program will be used to determine whether or not a user meets the criteria for being a TRS Assessor or Mentor, integrating CLI's established coaching model and TRS continuous quality improvement. The user will participate in up to four certification activities, including: (1) a series of self-instructional certification courses housed on CLI Engage; (2) virtual professional learning communities (PLCs) to support users who do not meet required scores on the course assessments; (3) a certification exam that assesses how reliable the user is in applying the TRS Assessment Tool to score various

child care facility types and classrooms; and (4) quarterly reliability checks that ensure certified assessors maintain inter-rater reliability, including supportive PLCs.

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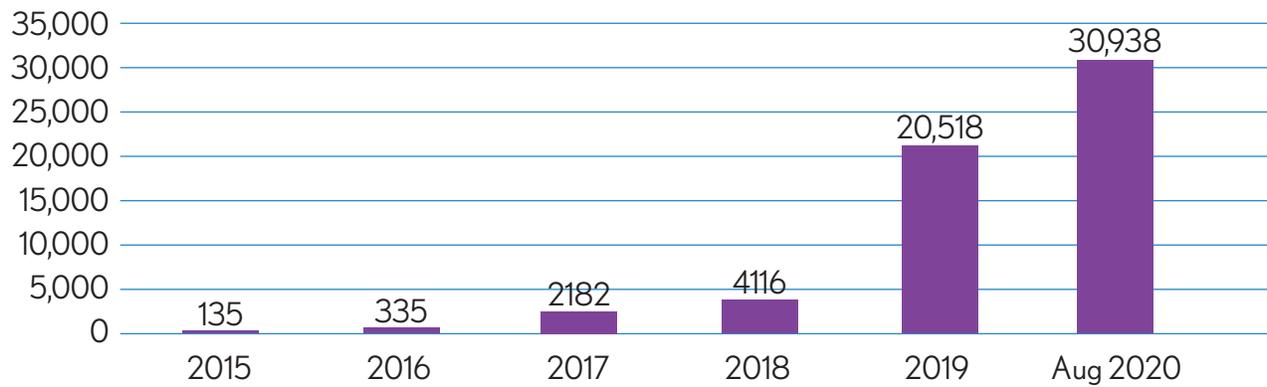
## Leveraging TECPDS

CLI manages the Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System (TECPDS) and within TECPDS, the Texas Workforce Registry. The workforce registry is a web-based database where early childhood professionals can store and access their education, employment, and professional development records. CLI worked with Texas Workforce Commission to centralize records within the workforce registry so that Texas Rising Star assessment staff can readily access documents when assessing the Director and Staff Qualifications, Education, and Training category for the Texas Rising Star Provider Certification System. Additionally, CLI published technology enhancements to TECPDS to simplify the sign-up and onboarding process for all users, now totaling more than 30,000.

Through a technology integration between CLI Engage and TECPDS, CLI provides an option for CLI Engage users to opt-in to a free account on TECPDS and automatically transfer professional development earned on CLI Engage into their personal TECPDS accounts. See figure 28 for user growth over time.

In FY2020, CLI initiated implementation of a TECPDS statewide rollout, including comprehensive onboarding and training, system management, user support, and technology enhancements. CLI is validating all TRS practitioner and administrator records uploaded by users into the workforce registry, including education, employment, and

FIGURE 28 **TECPDS Texas Workforce Registry Users (2015-2020)**



professional development, for the user’s entire early childhood career. This effort will greatly enhance the efficiency and accuracy of TRS scoring for director and staff qualifications.

In addition to the benefits to assessment staff, local workforce development boards have access to new organizational-level training management and conference management system and public-facing profile pages with advertising opportunities. TRS Providers (both administrators and practitioners) benefit from centralization of their education, employment, and professional development records. They can access their career pathway level and professional development records and reports, assisting with professional development planning for themselves and for staff. CLI will continue the statewide rollout into FY2021, including implementing the TECPDS website entirely in Spanish as a resource for Spanish-speaking professionals.

As functionality for TECPDS is expanded and refined, there is significant potential for public schools to benefit from the platform. In FY2020, CLI hosted a meeting with Houston-area school districts to discuss a pilot of TECPDS’ professional development reports for teachers. CLI expects to support this growing interest through additional enhancements to TECPDS that would allow

for ISD-focused reporting tools. Similar to Texas Rising Star programs, centralization of these records for school districts would allow administrators to target professional development efforts based on teachers’ current levels of training, and public school teachers can benefit from the same career pathway tools.

Additionally, through the workforce registry, TECPDS offers many strategic opportunities to the state to review and analyze data on the early childhood workforce to help guide planning at the local, regional, and state levels. Providing workforce data on the education, credentials, experience, and annual training for early childhood program directors, classroom staff, and specialists offers opportunities to guide professional development, quality improvement support, and state and local investments in the early childhood system. For instance, although much of early childhood professional development is undocumented, TECPDS offers an opportunity to better track and understand offerings across the state and workforce access. Aggregate professional development data uploaded into TECPDS indicates that 56% of these training hours are provided by online courses (technology integrations with CLI Engage and other online training providers are represented in the current user data) and 21% provided by trainings or workshops; professional development delivered

by coaching/mentoring and professional learning communities (PLC) represent 0.3% of professional development in TECPDS, illustrating opportunities to expand these formats linked with greater teacher gains. As the user base and workforce data expands, CLI is exploring opportunities for additional partnerships with state agencies to increase efficiency and continue serving professionals across the state. For example, CLI is currently exploring opportunities to leverage TECPDS reports to support public school administrators and teachers in tracking their professional development over time to guide professional development investments at the local and regional levels.

## Micro-credentials for Early Childhood Specialists

Throughout FY2020, CLI continued developing a new micro-credentialing program to award credentials to early childhood specialists who successfully demonstrate specific behaviors, or competencies. Micro-credentials offer specialists, such as early childhood trainers, coaches, mentors, school-support staff, and assessors, opportunities to receive professional acknowledgement for demonstrable skills learned and acquired throughout their careers, but also advance their skills into new areas. Hosted on the CLI Engage platform, the micro-credentials feature an online delivery with focused professional learning communities to support ongoing skill development and awarding of badges that align to specific competencies. In FY2021, CLI will launch a micro-credentialing program for Texas School Ready coaches, Infant-Toddler Specialist Network members (see additional information in the next section), and other early childhood specialists, offering oppor-

tunities for guided peer learning, advancing their practice, and receiving professional recognition.



### Micro-credentials are:

- Competency-based
- Based on evidence or demonstration of practice
- Scored against a defined rubric
- Personalized and self-directed
- Research-backed

In developing this micro-credentialing program, CLI is focused on raising quality among early childhood specialists who are dedicated to improving quality with the program directors and classroom staff that they serve. The micro-credentialing program offers opportunities to train specialists in high-quality skills, so they can better serve early childhood programs across the state. Additionally, CLI developed an integration between this program and TECPDS, so all micro-credentials will automatically transfer to a specialist's personal account within the workforce registry. This integration is designed to support efficiency

for users, eliminating the need to upload these records, but also increase the data in the workforce registry to continue supporting local, regional, and statewide strategic planning.

Currently, CLI Engage features micro-credentialing programs for early childhood coaches and trainers. With the micro-credential framework established on CLI Engage, CLI is exploring opportunities to expand to other early childhood professionals, including center directors and teachers.

observation and goal-setting tool for teachers, developmental checklists to monitor student growth, and activity collections for both teachers and families to support development. (Sample screenshots can be found in the appendices.) The training is also featured on the Early Educator Central platform, a website jointly administered by the Administration for Children & Families' Office of Head Start and Office of Child Care. Early Educator Central is designed to connect early care providers to recommended training that supports their attainment of professional certifications, such as the Child Development Associate credential.

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## Birth to Three Program

In early 2015, CLI began developing a coordinated approach to improving quality of care for children from birth to age three. The vision was to maximize the critical birth to three window in brain development—and thereby ensure at-risk children are on a healthy developmental path much sooner—by training caregivers of infants and toddlers in the most recent, evidence-based strategies for supporting language, social-emotional, cognitive, and physical growth.

To accomplish this, CLI combined the technology of our online platform (CLI Engage) with the professional development approach of CLI's preschool model, TSR.

TSR has long used data-driven resources that build teachers' professional capacity for delivering high quality instruction in preschool classrooms serving three- and four-year-old children. We sought to expand this continuum of quality to classrooms serving infants and toddlers. Through generous contributions from multiple foundations and agencies, the online program now includes a comprehensive training series, an

In order to fully maximize the benefits of these resources, we paired them with TSR's model for individualized coaching in a pilot evaluation supported by multiple foundations. The pilot evaluation involves close measurement of teaching behaviors and child outcomes in two groups of classrooms: target (receives intervention) and control (does not receive intervention). Teachers working in child care centers that serve low income families across Houston, Dallas, and Fort Worth participated, with a total of 40 teachers randomized to either condition.

Findings from this study showed that child care providers who participated in the intervention were observed as demonstrating stronger interactions with toddlers using three separate measures (Arnett Caregiver Interactions, QRIS Caregiver Interactions, and Shared Book Reading Quality), with effect sizes ranging from 0.55 to 0.85, corresponding to medium to large effects. The intervention appeared to have the strongest effects in the areas of child care provider's responsive interactions and language support strategies. In terms of responsive caregiver-child interactions, there were moder-

ate to large effects on child care providers' positive relationship with children (ES = .54), use of a warm responsive style (QRIS Caregiver Interactions ES = .63), and contingent responsiveness during shared reading (ES = .75). Likewise for language support strategies, there were moderate to large intervention impacts on both the QRIS Caregiver Interactions (effect size [ES] = .41) and the Shared Book Reading Quality (ES = .77) measures. However, there were only marginal effects on child care provider's use of questions during book reading; perhaps this suggests an area for intervention improvement.

Our next steps are to continue to scale the program to serve new infant and toddler care providers. We believe TSR's network of lead agencies, local workforce development boards, TSR participating child care centers, and Texas Rising Star certified providers is an established infrastructure for an efficient and effective scale-up of birth to three quality improvement across Texas communities. TSR coaches will be delivering infant-toddler coaching services to teachers at participating TSR sites beginning fall 2020. The program is also well-positioned to achieve further adoption through the Texas Infant-Toddler Specialist Network, described in the following section.

## **Texas Infant-Toddler Specialist Network (ITSN)**

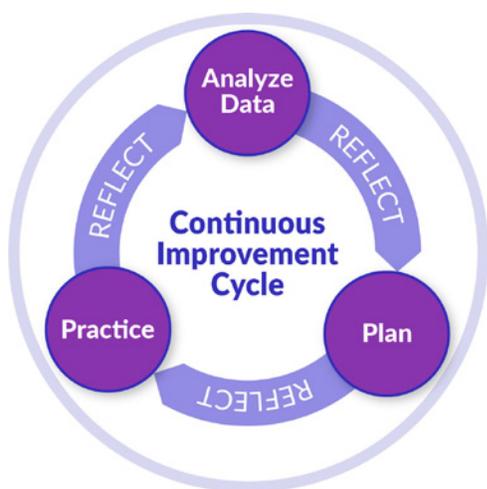
In 2019, the Texas Workforce Commission sought a partner to establish an Infant-Toddler Specialist Network for Texas. An ITSN is a state-based system that supports and coordinates the work of specialists who serve infant and toddler care providers. Although each state uses different strategies and approaches, the common goal for all ITSNs is

to create a community of professional development and peer support that leads to better quality experiences for infants and toddlers. TWC's goal was to "improve teacher practices and increase availability and quality of infant and toddler care by providing specialized technical assistance, professional development, and collaboration with other programs serving infants and toddlers." The Children's Learning Institute (CLI) was awarded the grant and began preparations in 2020.



CLI's approach for the Texas ITSN includes bringing specialists and teachers together for a wide variety of professional development and peer networking support on topics such as infant-toddler development, effective caregiving and instructional practices, supporting young children with disabilities, understanding Early Childhood Intervention, and becoming a certified Texas Rising Star child care provider. The ITSN also provides a unique opportunity to support specialists in scaling the CIRCLE Infant-Toddler Teacher Training Program, whose web-based resources are freely accessible to the public. Through the ITSN, CLI is offering webinars, online courses, virtual small-group PLCs, and an annual specialist summit. Membership to the network is open and at no cost to the public. In FY2020, CLI developed a total of 12 webinars and 28 PLC scripts that will provide the basis for initial professional development opportunities. Thus far, CLI has awarded 607 certificates for the ITSN-relat-

ed webinars, totaling 324 training hours. In summer of 2020, 51 teachers and 7 internal specialists participated in a pilot of the first round of PLCs, providing critical feedback to improve and expand the PLC scripts that will launch to the public in FY2021. Finally, further webinar and PLC development is planned for FY2021 to ensure ITSN members continually receive up-to-date and varied professional development content.



## Continuous Improvement for Teachers (CIT) Project

The CIT Project is a five-year study funded by the Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences to test the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of using TSR resources in three contrasting PD approaches (guided self-study, facilitated professional learning communities, and remote coaching). The project introduces two highly scalable practices using widely used resources on the CLI Engage platform. In fact, CLI is designing the intervention so that districts across the state can replicate any of the three continuous improvement models using the free resources on CLI Engage—potentially freeing up funds for districts. Teachers are randomized into one of three intervention models or a “business as usual” group.

**Guided Self-Study:** Teachers will engage with content independently, supported by a toolkit and technology tools that guide them through 12 continuous improvement cycles of goal setting, action planning, and video reflection exercises. A monthly check-in call will help keep teachers on track.

**Facilitated PLCs:** Teachers will engage with content independently and participate in 12 PLC sessions, during which a trained facilitator will support teachers’ continuous improvement cycles through collaborative discussion and reflective guidance.

**Remote Coaching:** Teachers will engage with content independently and participate in 12 individualized remote coaching sessions. In this model, the coach leads the improvement cycle through goal setting, action planning, and documenting teacher progress.

A total of 440 teachers will be randomized across the four-year intervention, which will measure impacts on both teaching quality and student outcomes. Due to the impact of COVID-19, the CIT Study was temporarily suspended in the spring of the 2020 school year and for the 2020-2021 school year. CLI hopes to resume the study in the fall of 2021.

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