A Job-Embedded Initiative to Develop Early Childhood Education Site Leaders

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THESIS

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**ACRONYM LIST**

**AC**- Ashburn Center (one of the four early childhood centers in the project)

**CLASS**- Classroom Assessment Scoring System

**EC**- Englewood Center (one of the four early childhood centers in the project)

**ECE**- Early Childhood Education

**ECEBC**- Early Childhood Education of British Columbia

**ECERS**- Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale

**KWLH**- Know, Want, Learn, How (Embedded Knowledge Assessment)

**NAESP**- National Association for Elementary School Principals

**NAEYC**- National Association for the Education of Young Children

**NCEDL**- National Center for Early Development and Learning

**NCLB**- No Child Left Behind

**NIEER**- National Institute for Early Education Research

**NSC**- Near South Center (one of the four early childhood centers in the project)

**Ounce**- Ounce of Prevention Fund

**PDI**- Professional Development Initiative

**UChicagoCCSR**- University of Chicago Consortium of Chicago School Research

**UNESCO**- United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

**RPC**- Rogers Park Center (one of the early childhood centers in the project)

**RPG**- Reflective Practice Group
SUMMARY

Since 1982, the Ounce of Prevention Fund (Ounce) has focused much of its attention upon one major goal: expanding access to high quality early childhood education for all children. High-quality early childhood education, however, requires teachers or caregivers with sufficient education or experience to be able to offer the education and care known to provide significant benefits to all children.

This project evolved from the Ounce of Prevention Fund’s recognition of the need for early childhood education centers to build the professional capacity of staff. Based significantly but not exclusively on the University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research’s Five Essential Supports, the Ounce of Prevention Fund designed an ongoing, job-embedded professional development program that requires early childhood center leaders to build the systems and structures to support optimal adult learning. The aim is to establish a professional learning community within each site that is led by the center leader, whose attention is otherwise diverted in many directions. The task of this study is to investigate the extent to which the Ounce Professional Development Initiative is making progress in meeting this challenge by examining how the leaders involved in the project are experiencing the initiative.

The findings of this study provide supportive evidence for the early-stage effectiveness of the Ounce’s model. Three consistent themes emerged throughout the first year: 1) this initiative is different than the leaders’ previous experiences with professional development, 2) it is important to establish a common language among the staff, and 3) it is incumbent upon the leaders to ensure they protect the time necessary for this work to take
place. While only one of these themes was an explicit goal of the Ounce of Prevention Fund’s initiative, the other two were strongly implied.
Chapter 1: Problem Statement

Providing high-quality early childhood education for all children, especially to those from impoverished areas, is a major concern in educational and social policy. Childhood poverty is associated with high rates of academic failure, likelihood of dropping out of school, teen parenthood and increased health risks such as smoking and drug/alcohol abuse. A high-quality early childhood education can help alleviate the detrimental effects of poverty, but teachers or care givers without sufficient education or experience may not be able to offer the quality early education and care proven to provide significant benefits to all children. Studies have shown that positive, caring early childhood experiences can help a child mature into a well-adjusted adolescent; conversely negative experiences can have detrimental effects, even on an otherwise healthy child. In addition, research confirms that high-quality early learning provides significant benefits to the child as well as social and economic benefits to society as a whole.

Children who do not receive high-quality early learning and care are:

- 25% more likely to drop out of school
- 40% more likely to become a teen parent
- 50% more likely to be placed in special education
- 60% more likely to never attend college
- 70% more likely to be arrested for a violent crime

Access to Early Childhood Education

General consensus prevails within the field of education that early learning lays the crucial foundation for future cognitive, social and physical development. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) determined access to educational opportunities at all stages of life to be a human right. Participation in high-quality early learning programs can lead to long-term, positive academic and social development. Without it, many children will not be in a position to take advantage of subsequent educational opportunities (retrieved November, 2012 from www.unesco.org).

Local and federal policies have attempted to address this need through a variety of publicly funded programs such as Head Start and Preschool for All, but the reach of these types of programs inadequately meets the need (Neuman et al, 2010). In 2006, Illinois passed its Preschool for All law but, while a great improvement, it does not go far enough. In 2012, the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) ranked Illinois 15th in the country when considering the state’s work in providing early childhood educational opportunities to four year olds living in poverty (29% of that population). The state did fare much better, though, when considering its work with three year olds of the same socio-economic background; being ranked number one (retrieved February, 2013 from http://www.chicagoparent.com/magazines/web-only/2012-april/preschool-yearbook). While the numbers of those three and four year olds in Illinois enrolled in early childhood education have increased, Illinois state funding has decreased (Tables 1.1 and 1.3).
State and federal aid are the major sources of funding for K-12 education in the United States. While it varies from state to state, on average about 47% of the funding available for schools comes from the state. Much of this funding is derived from either property taxes or other local sources; therefore state funding formulas are used in attempts to more fairly distribute the available dollars. Federal aid attempts to make up any shortfalls, but because of the 2009 recession, state budgets are limited. In response, the federal government initiated the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The states were given $39 billion to help their struggling public schools. This, in addition to the $10 billion meant to preserve jobs in education, was directed to K-12 education solely (retrieved October, 2012 from http://www.cbpp.org). Funding for Pre-K education remains bleak.

Table 1.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>3 year olds</th>
<th>4 year olds</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
State-funded Pre-K does increase access for those children living in poverty, but that access does not come close to reaching enough of the population. At age four years, enrollment in any early childhood education program (either public or private pre-kindergarten) is only about 65% for those children whose family income is in the bottom 40%; compared to more than 90% of four year olds whose family income falls in the highest 20%. Public funding for early childhood education reaches less than half of the four year-old children and fewer still of the three year olds.
olds. While there have been moderate increases over the past ten years, federal funding is often tied to specific governmental policies, making it unreliable from year to year.

<table>
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<th>Percent of 4 year olds served per state</th>
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<tr>
<td>0%</td>
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<td>----</td>
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<td>Idaho</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
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<td>Delaware</td>
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Although the funding for K-12 education is a bit more stable, the needs of the children and staff in early childhood education and care are just as great. As with K-12 education, effective teachers and caregivers of very young children require a structured, supportive environment that encourages professional learning and furthers their professional practice. As is the case with K-12 education, the academic and social/emotional needs of the young children must be addressed. To do so, the caregivers, teachers and site administrators must understand these unique needs.

From Access to High Quality

Access to early educational learning and care opportunities is only half the battle, though. It is with high-quality early education that we see the greatest personal, academic and social benefits. Children most in need are too often either not provided with any, or provided with poor quality early education and care. The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER)
has established a rating system for early childhood education. This organization determines the quality of the site based on three criteria: program quality, access and resources.

If not provided by caring, knowledgeable providers, the effect of early learning on future educational opportunities is minimal at best. Because the pre-service, professional training for early education providers varies so greatly from state to state, or even within different sites in the same state, in-service training is a critical component to the professional learning of the staff. This leads to a major issue in early education and care; providing effective, on-the-job professional development to the staff (Winton, 2008). One issue inhibiting professional development in early childhood education stems from limited available funding. While the site’s focus must be on the developmental and instructional needs of the children, shortages in funding force difficult decisions about where to make spending cuts. It is difficult for the early childhood education centers to justify money spent on professional learning that does not address an immediate, specific need. Therefore topics for professional development are often reactive and not meant to build professional knowledge. Programs that promise a quick fix to a very specific issue are easier to sell to those providing the funding (Winton, 2008).

The leaders of early childhood centers are a vital component to a professional learning community. They establish a climate of trust among the caregivers and teachers, create structures and schedules that sustain the work being done, work with the staff to decide upon shared and individual responsibilities, and ensure that the focus always remains on the children (Copland and Knapp, 2006). A primary challenge facing a site leader in early childhood education is negotiating time spent monitoring instructional quality with that of carrying out necessary administrative responsibilities. This is especially true of centers serving children in economically
stressed neighborhoods. Too often the needs of licensing, reporting mandates or accreditation requirements pull the leaders’ focus from the developmental and instructional needs of the children as well as the professional learning needs of the staff (retrieved October, 2012 from www.ounceofprevention.org/).

In contrast to the strong research addressing the work of the K-12 school leader, there is little research available on the work of early childhood center leaders. This paucity of research contrasts also to the vast amount of evidence supporting the need for high-quality early childhood education as a means by which to begin to close the achievement gap (Thornton et al, 2009).

Taking into account the importance of high-quality early education, the oftentimes inadequate professional training of the early learning and care providers, and the limited funding available to institute real change, the site leader plays a critical role, for better or for worse, in efforts to improve teaching, learning and care giving. Effective, sustainable change, though, takes more than the requisite array of knowledge and skills, but also the disposition to be willing to take on such a challenge.

To summarize:

- Early childhood education and care is an essential component to a child’s future academic success, especially for low-income children.
- State and federal funding is necessary to ensure access, but those funding sources are uneven and often inadequate.
• Access to early childhood education programs is only half the battle; those experiences must also be of high quality.

• Quality greatly depends on the professional skills and dispositions of the caregivers/educators.

• The professional preparation of early childhood teachers and care providers is inconsistent and oftentimes inadequate.

• Quality of in-service professional development is, therefore, critical to quality of early childhood education practice.

• The literature on K-12 professional development suggests that to optimize the success of the in-service, ongoing professional development, the quality of the school leadership is critical.

• Although there is substantial research available on the development of strong K-12 school leadership, there is comparatively little research available on developing high-quality Pre-K leadership. So, while the quality of the staff development hinges on the quality of the leadership, little is known how to develop leaders.

Research shows the benefits, particularly to children living in impoverished neighborhoods, to providing high-quality early childhood education and the role the site leaders play in realizing those benefits. Not nearly enough is known about how early childhood education leaders can learn to initiate and sustain high-quality professional development in their centers, especially those that serve low-income populations most in need of high-quality early childhood education and care. Those aiming to design a professional development plan for early childhood education center leaders must take into account the stress of limited
resources and the countless number of mandates diverting their attention away from the work going on in the classrooms.
Chapter 2: Review of Literature

The review of the literature supporting this work revolves around three major themes; 1) that the needs of very young children are unique, and should be approached in particular ways differently from K-12 education, 2) that specific provisions are required to progress from simply providing early childhood care to providing high-quality early education and care, and 3) that the role of the center leader is important in this work. The first theme begins with an historical perspective on educating young children and its significant social and economic benefits, particularly in urban, impoverished neighborhoods. The second theme concerns a descriptive look at high quality early childhood education, from the process and structures of quality to the professional learning needs of the teachers, care providers and site administrators. The final theme considers the vital role of the leader in implementing high-quality programs.

The uniqueness of Early Education and Care

Historical perspective of early education and care

“That’s what education should be… the art of orientation. Educators should devise the simplest and most effective methods of turning minds around. It shouldn’t be the art of implanting sight in the organ, but should proceed on the understanding that the organ already has the capacity, but is improperly aligned and isn’t facing the right way.”

Plato- The Republic

Early childhood educators agree that the education of young children is unique and should be approached differently than that of K-12 education. Previous theoretical influences contribute to contemporary models of early education and care. The importance of early learning has been addressed by many of the greatest thinkers in the history. Plato believed the child
began to develop his cultural and social values very early in life. He understood that the very young child did not learn through rote recitation, but through play and experiences. Moreover, Plato argued in the Republic that early childhood was too important a public issue to be left up to individual families, but should be a matter of public policy and support (Plato, 380 B.C.E).

Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi believed in the innate goodness of children and that their early education was a means by which to improve society. Much of his work is credited as the predecessor to more contemporary ideas about developmentally appropriate practices (Roopnarine, 2005). Jean Jacques Rousseau stated that education should be rational and developmental; that young children should not be exposed to books before they express an interest in reading (Roopnarine, 2005). Through observing and documenting the child’s activities, the teacher or caregiver begins to determine readiness for learning. Froebel agreed, postulating that it was incumbent upon educators to foster a child’s natural curiosity not to simply impart knowledge (Fuller, 2007).

For Rousseau, the traditional school setting was an inappropriate environment for early education. He believed school should be child-centered in a “prepared setting”. This is especially significant when working with infants who learn through exposure to various objects. Rousseau famously proposed that children are educated by humans, by nature and by objects. Humans create the learning environment, nature determines when the child is ready to learn, and the objects in the environment teach through the child’s observations and experiences with them. It is through these experiences that memories are formed and imagination is activated (Gutek, 2005).
Though some were posited centuries ago, many of these historical, philosophical and ideological origins of early childhood education and care are still evident in the behaviors, practices and theories of today.

Neuroscience confirms the importance and uniqueness of high quality early childhood experiences. Babies are born with over 100 billion neurons searching for stimulation. An infant’s experiences influence the development of vision, logic, emotional stability, language, numeracy, and the entire range of cognitive and sensory function. Sensory experiences stimulate the synapses, the connections between neurons. Situations that require the child to involve multiple senses help develop stronger synapses, thus building understanding of the concepts. Experiences, both positive and negative, influence the formation of synapses. By the age of 8 months the child has over 1,000 trillion synapses. Memories of the concepts are built when the experience is repeated over and over. Only those synapses that are used frequently are maintained. It is from early infancy to early childhood that these vital connections are made permanent: the child’s brain physically changes. It begins to “prune” unnecessary synapses, thereby allowing those most used to function more effectively. Sensory experiences that are predictable and loving build solid connections, but because the brain prunes unused synapses, the lack of such experiences can cause the brain to remain small. Children without positive relationships can “over-prune” (Shonkoff, 2000). Studies conducted on neglected or abused children show that their brains can be as much as 20-30% smaller than other same aged children. Positive, caring early childhood experiences can help a child mature into a well-adjusted adolescent; while negative experiences can be detrimental, even to an otherwise healthy child. The first three years are absolutely critical because it is at this time the brain is most flexible and prepared to learn (Ounce of Prevention, 2000).
Particular importance of early education and care in urban, impoverished neighborhoods

High-quality early childhood education is especially important in impoverished, urban neighborhoods where a child’s academic success is increasingly determined through the results of high stakes tests. As with K-12 education, top-down, rote learning threatens early childhood education, particularly in low-income areas.

Unfortunately good teaching in many urban schools is measured by student compliance, created by constant direction. The goal is to raise standardized test scores, doing little to prepare the students for success later in life (Haberman, 1991). Similar conclusions have been drawn by other education researchers such as Jonathan Kozol (2005) and Jean Anyon (1980). Alfie Kohn (2011) characterizes this as “pedagogy of poverty” and Howard Gardner elaborates on the ways in which we fail to provide optimal learning experiences to children in general:

“"As an American educator, I cannot help but be struck by certain paradoxes. In America we pride ourselves on being focused on the children, and yet we do not pay sufficient attention to what they are actually expressing. We call for cooperative learning among children, and yet we rarely have sustained cooperation at the level of the teacher and administrator. We call for artistic works, but we rarely fashion environments that can truly support and inspire them. We call for parental involvement, but are loather to share ownership, responsibility, and credit with parents. We recognize the need for community but we often crystallize immediately into interest groups. We hail the discovery method, but we do not have the confidence to allow children to follow their own noses or hunches. We call for debate, but often spurn it; we call for listening, but we prefer to talk; we are affluent, but we do not safeguard those resources that can allow us to remain so and to foster the affluences of others..."

(Howard Gardner, 100 Languages of Children)
Societal Costs Associated with Poor Quality Early Childhood Educational Opportunities

“It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.”

Frederick Douglas

“In states that make it a priority to educate our youngest children... studies show student grow up more likely to read and do math at grade level, graduate high school, hold a job, and form more stable families of their own. We know this works. So let’s do what works and make sure none of our children start the race of life already behind”

President Barack Obama, State of the Union Address (February 12, 2013).

Numerous longitudinal studies have demonstrated the positive effects of high quality early education, both for the students and society as a whole. The High Scope Perry Preschool Study began in the 1960s and followed a group of 123 African American students through age 27. Indicators such as levels of education, earnings, home ownership, specialized services, arrest records and general IQ were compared between the program and control groups to determine if there were any long or short term differences between those receiving high quality preschool education and those who did not. The students, 3-4 years old when the study began, were divided randomly into the two groups. Students in the program group were enrolled in a high quality preschool education program, while the control group received no preschool education whatsoever. The program group’s preschool education ran for 2.5 hours a day, 5 days per week for two years (Sweinhart et.al, 1993).

When compared to the control group, the program group, at age 27, showed:

________________________

1 58 students were randomly assigned the program group while 65 students were randomly assigned the control group
Higher monthly earnings (with 29% vs. 7% earning $2,000 or more per month)
Higher percentages of home ownership (36% vs. 13%)
Higher level of schooling completed (with 71% vs. 54% completing 12th grade or higher)
Lower percentage receiving social services at some time in the previous 10 years (59% vs. 80%)
Fewer participants with 5 or more arrests (7% vs. 35%)
Fewer years spent in special education programs (15% vs. 34%) (Sweinhart et al, 1993)

The Abecedarian Project (1972) produced similar findings. This project offered the 57 students in the program group full time, intensive early childhood education consisting of interactive games, individualized learning plans and special attention paid to social/emotional and language development. Like the High Scope program, this opportunity was offered to low income families, but unlike the High Scope program, it began the early childhood education at birth and lasted for 5 years. The progress of both the program and the control groups (54 students) was reviewed at ages 12, 15 and 21. By age 21:
  • 42% of the program group vs. 20% of the control group were still enrolled in school
  • 36% of the program group vs. 14% of the control group were enrolled in a four-year college
  • 47% of the program group vs. 27% of the control group were employed in highly skilled jobs
  • 26% of the program group vs. 45% of the control group were teen parents
(retrieved August, 2012 from http://www.childtrends.org)

2 57 students were put into the program group while 54 into the control group (retrieved August, 2012 from childtrends.org).
Yet another study, *Age 21 Cost-Benefit Analysis of the Title I Chicago Child-Parent Center Program*, sought to determine the cost benefit, if any, associated with the Title I funded Child-Parent Centers (CPS) opened in Chicago in 1967. The CPC program provided comprehensive educational and family support services from ages 3 to 9 in neighborhood schools. The mission of the program was to help children develop skills in reading, math, and communication through a wide array of classroom/parent activities and field trips. The researchers based their finding on 5 broad categories:

- *Reductions in expenditures in school remedial services such as grade retention and special education.*
- *Reductions in criminal justice expenditures for both juveniles and adults*
- *Reduction in child welfare expenditures associated with child abuse and neglect*
- *Reduction in expenditures associated with costs to the victims of crime*
- *Projected increased adult earnings and tax revenue associated with increased educational attainment* (Reynolds et al, 2001).

Results found in this study are similar to those found in the High Scope and Abecederian. Children who attended the CPCs had a:

- 29% higher rate of high school completion
- 33% lower rate of juvenile arrest
- 42% reduction in arrest for a violent offense
- 41% reduction in special education placement
- 40% reduction in the rate of grade retention
- 51% reduction in child maltreatment (Age 21 Cost-Benefit Analysis of the Title I Chicago Child-Parent Center Program, Executive Summary, 2001).
Research into the long term effects of participation in such programs show reductions in high school dropout rates, special education placements, teen pregnancies and the future likelihood of committing crime; in turn reducing the long term economic burden to society and taxpayers. In 2005 The Campaign for Educational Equity outlined the specific cost benefits.

- Increasing the high school completion rate by just 1 percent for all men ages 20-60 would save the U.S. up to $1.4 billion per year in reduced costs from crime.

- A one-year increase in average years of schooling for dropouts would reduce murder and assault by almost 30%, motor vehicle theft by 20%, arson by 13%, and burglary and larceny by about 6%.

- A high school dropout earns about $260,000 less over a lifetime than a high school graduate and pays about $60,000 less in taxes.

- Annual losses exceed $50 billion in federal and state income taxes for all 23,000,000 U.S. high school dropouts ages 18-67.

- America loses $192 billion in combined income and tax revenue with each cohort of 18-year-olds who never complete high school.

- Health-related losses for the estimated 600,000 high school dropouts in 2004 totaled at least $58 billion, or nearly $100,000 per student (The Campaign for Educational Equity, 2005).

So if early childhood education and care reduces the likelihood of a student later dropping out of high school and the Campaign for Educational Equity shows the significant cost-benefit to society realized by increasing high school graduation rates; one could argue the significant cost benefits to society offering early childhood education to all young people.

According to The Campaign for Educational Equity (2005), the United States could have a return of $7 for each dollar invested in early childhood education. Results of the cost-benefit
analysis of the Chicago Child-Parent Center program had economic benefits that also exceeded costs. With an average cost per child of $6,730 for 1.5 years of participation, the program generated a total return to society of $47,759 per child. This was accomplished by increasing economic well-being and reducing future educational and social expenditures associated with special education and social ills such as crime (Age 21 Cost-Benefit Analysis of the Title I Chicago Child-Parent Center Program, Executive Summary, 2001). Both the Abecederian and the High Scope Perry Project found increased numbers of high school completion among the students in their program groups. The Campaign for Educational Equity surely expressed the cost-benefit to taxpayers related to higher graduation rates. Investment in early childhood education and care, particularly for economically disadvantaged children, not only increases future academic success but, reduces the need for future special education and other remedial education practices, lowers the crime rate, and reduces the overall cost to society. We can either invest early to prevent academic disparities or we can wait and pay to remediate the issues with more expensive solutions. The previously cited studies show how the adverse impacts of poverty and environment can be substantially reduced through an investment in early childhood education and care. Either way, society is going to pay. Just as the child derives personal and academic benefits from attending a high quality early childhood center, society benefits as a whole. “Early interventions can improve cognitive as well as socio-emotional skills. They promote schooling, reduce crime, foster workforce productivity, and reduce teenage pregnancy. And they have much greater economic and social impact than the later interventions that are the focus of conventional public policy debate: reducing pupil-teacher ratios, providing public job training, convict rehabilitation programs, adult literacy programs, and tuition subsidies, and spending on police.” (Heckman, 2012)
The need to progress from simply providing early education and care to providing high-quality early education and care

While these studies address the importance of investing in early childhood education and care in an effort to reduce the future costs to society, they also stress the need for those programs to be of high quality. Inadequate early learning and care can be as detrimental to a child as none at all. The earlier discussion on brain research stated that positive, caring early childhood experiences can help a child mature into a well-adjusted adolescent; while negative experiences can be detrimental, even to an otherwise healthy child. Society pays to remediate when it fails to provide early learning to all its children, as well as if the early learning opportunities it does provide are not of high quality. Ensuring children’s basic physical needs are met— to be warm, safe and fed— is not enough to support both their academic and social development. According to the National Institute of Child Health and Human Services, only about 10% of early childhood education is considered “high-quality” (retrieved May, 2012 from http://www.nichd.nih.gov)

Overall, the quality of an early childhood education program is determined using two broad categories, process and structure (Shonkoff et al, 2000). Process considers the interaction between the students and teachers, the activities, the available materials, the learning opportunities and the health and safety of the students. The structure considers the group size, the education and experience of the staff and the child: teacher ratios. The Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECRES) measures these two broad categories by looking at 43 specific items.³ In a school considered inadequate one may see some activities aimed at

³ Each of the 43 items is rated on a 1-7 scale; 1 inadequate, 3 minimal, 5 good and 7 excellent (The Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale).
promoting communication, but with limited reading materials- while excellent schools encourage the staff to listen to the students and link the children’s spoken word or artistic representation with written language. High scoring early childhood education fosters positive attachments between the teachers and the students, as well as establishes an environment that promotes verbal and cognitive language development (process). Such programs offer staff competitive wages, opportunities for professional development, and thus have lower staff turnover (structure).

Children who attended higher quality child care centers performed better on measures of both cognitive and social skills in child care, as well as into elementary school (Shonkoff et al, 2000).

A follow up study to The Cost, Quality, and Outcomes Study, entitled The Children of the Cost, Quality, and Outcomes Study go to School (1999) concluded:

- High-quality child care is an important element in achieving the national goal of having all children ready for school.
- High-quality child care continues to positively predict children’s performance well into their school careers.
- The quality of child care classroom practices was related to children’s cognitive development, while the closeness of the child care teacher-child relationship influenced children’s social development through the early school years (National Center for Early Development and Learning, 1999).

In an attempt to answer the “threshold question-” how good does an early childhood program have to be in order to achieve school readiness outcomes for children?- a team of researchers conducted a study using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). The CLASS measures the quality of education/care in two areas (instructional and emotional support)
using a seven point scoring scale. The purpose of this study was to determine the level of quality, if one existed, that a center must achieve so as to meet its child outcome goals. The study found that early childhood centers providing high-quality teacher-child interactions and at least moderate quality instruction were most likely to meet these goals. The researchers concluded that anything less than those thresholds were ineffective in preparing children for school (Burchinal et al 2009).

The Current State of Professional Training of Early Childhood Educators and Care Providers

“Adult education will become an agency of progress if its short term goal of self-improvement can be compatible with a long-term, experimental, but resolute policy of changing the social order.”

Eduard Lindeman - The Meaning of Adult Education (1926)

The research on professional learning in early childhood education falls into two categories, pre-service and in-service (Winton et al, 2008). As their names would suggest, pre-service prepares teachers ahead of their teaching assignment while in-service is on-the-job training.

The professional, pre-service education required to teach in early childhood education is varied. The National Center for Early Development and Learning (NCEDL) identified various policy reasons that may describe why this is the case. For example, each of the 50 states and the

CLASS Domains (Dimensions): Emotional Support (positive/negative climate, teacher sensitivity, regard for student perspectives), Classroom Organization (behavior management, productivity, instructional learning formats), Instructional Support (concept development, quality of feedback, language modeling)
District of Columbia has their own set of rules and regulations outlining the requirements for working in an early childhood setting (Zaslow, 2006). While some sites demand college degrees and Early Childhood Education (ECE) teaching certifications, others simply require a high school diploma. A 2005 report published by the Economic Policy Institute states that only 30% of all early childhood teachers, administrators and care providers hold 4 year college degrees (Winton et al, 2008). In other words the training requirements for early education teachers and care providers depend on the state, the locale and the type of early learning center. Of course this concern is elevated in urban centers that are difficult to staff (retrieved December, 2012 from http://www.bls.gov/ooh/education-training-and-library/preschool-teachers.htm#tab-4). In addition to the staffing qualifications, there are vast discrepancies concerning salary, funding sources, licensing requirements, adult-child ratios and other factors used in assessing center quality (Zaslow et al, 2006). In summary, those charged with educating and caring for the youngest and most at risk range from the highly educated, certified professional teacher, to those with no specialized training whatsoever. While organizations such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) stress the importance of pre-service training for early childhood teachers, little research has been conducted comparing the quality or commonalities across early childhood higher education programs.

In 2009 NAEYC began a push to standardize the preparation of early childhood educators and care providers. In doing so, the organization created a list of standards required of any early childhood teacher/care provider certification program necessary to receive NAEYC accreditation.
1. **Promoting child development and learning**
   a. Knowing and understanding young children’s characteristics and needs
   b. Knowing and understanding the multiple influences on development and learning
   c. Using developmental knowledge to create healthy, respectful, supportive and challenging learning environments

2. **Building family and community relationships**
   a. Knowing about and understanding diverse family and community characteristics
   b. Supporting and engaging families and communities through respectful, reciprocal relationships
   c. Involving families and communities in their children’s development and learning

3. **Observing, documenting, and assessing to support young children and families**
   a. Understanding the goals, benefits, and uses of assessment
   b. Knowing about and using observation, documentation, and other appropriate assessment tools and approaches
   c. Understanding and practicing responsible assessment to promote positive outcomes for each child
   d. Knowing about assessment partnerships with families and with professional colleagues

4. **Using developmentally effective approaches to connect with children and families**
   a. Understanding positive relationship and supportive interactions as the foundation of their work with children
   b. Knowing and understanding effective strategies and tools for early education
c. Using a broad repertoire of developmentally appropriate teaching/learning approaches

d. Reflecting on their own practice to promote positive outcomes for each child

5. Using content knowledge to build meaningful curriculum

a. Understanding content knowledge and resources in academic discipline

b. Knowing and using the central concepts, inquiry tools, and structures of content areas of academic disciplines

c. Using their own knowledge, appropriate early learning standards, and other resources to design, implement, and evaluate meaningful, challenging curricula for each child

6. Becoming a professional

a. Identifying and involving oneself with the early childhood field

b. Knowing about and upholding ethical standards and other professional guidelines

c. Engaging in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice

d. Integrating knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives on early education

e. Engaging in informed advocacy for children and the profession (NAEYC, 2009).

The presumption, supported by research, underlying the establishment of such standards is that not all early childhood teacher training programs are based on common standards for teacher preparation. A survey of a sample of directors of college level, early childhood education programs found significant differences in the content of the courses and resources allotted to the program (Winton et al, 2008). While this survey did not include on-site observations nor follow any students as they began their teaching career, it did reiterate the need for high quality on-the-
job training for all early childhood teachers. If we can’t rely on the professional pre-service training of early childhood teachers and care providers, we must ensure high-quality in-service training.

Due to the variety of pre-service preparation provided, in-service staff development must address the gaps in professional training. Unfortunately, the current state of the in-service or on-the-job training does not fare much better. There is enormous pressure to reform early learning and care to better prepare children for kindergarten however, much of the professional development being offered turns the participants into passive learners, doing little to meet the challenges of reform measures (Birman, 2000). If a site is to address the needs of a staff from varied levels of educational experience and training, effective on-the-job professional development is critical. Designing an effective professional development program falls on the heads of every adult in the building (Neuman & Kamil, 2010). That said, there is limited access to high-quality professional development for early childhood educators and care providers. Federal legislation such as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 emphasizes the importance of robust professional development opportunities for K-12 educators, but few policies make the same link between sound professional development and high quality early childhood education and care. Failing to connect the professional learning of early childhood educators and care providers with child outcomes may partly explain the doubt associated with continuing to invest in this type of training (Zaslow, 2006). Winton (2008) interviewed early childhood teachers and care providers concerning their feelings about professional development. Most found little relevance to their daily with children. This is especially true of single day in-service trainings. Another survey conducted in school districts in both Virginia and California found that most of the teachers believed a better use of their time would be to collaborate with
their colleagues rather than spend a day in professional development (Sundeman et al, 2004). Neuman and Kamil suggest a reason why the professional development of early childhood educators is so disjointed and disconnected with daily practice; researchers and policy makers are so concerned with improving specific child outcomes, the professional development programs distance themselves from focusing on adult learning (Neuman & Kamil, 2010).

While organizations such as The National Education Association and the National Staff Development Council have, independently, published guidelines for effective professional development, unless they are aligned with curriculum, program needs and understanding of adult learning, they are not likely to improve practice (Duessen et al, 2009). If the content of the session is designed and implemented without an understanding of particular needs of the participants, it may not only be perceived as irrelevant to those in attendance, but may also be resented. Varela (2012) claims that many professional development providers commit three major sins; 1) using a one-size fits all mentality, 2) isolating the content of the session from the daily practice of the participants and 3) providing very little, if any, follow up. All of this leads to what Winston describes as the need for “systemic strategies to promote the adaptation, implementation and institutionalization of practices based on research” (Winton, 2008 p.9).

Neuman and Kamil agree that “Although extensive anecdotal evidence suggests that professional development serves as a change agent for teachers, professional development continues to be situated in a culture of ‘make and take’ workshops with disjointed, fragmented content. It has historically followed a course of workshops in which the material was presented in a superficial way, the presenters and/or the content were evaluated by the attendees, and the teachers were to return to their settings to supplement or change their practice with little planning, no support, and no follow-up” (Neuman & Kamil, 2010 p.89).
Moving toward job-embedded professional development

Often, on-the-job research that is done by teachers takes the form of action research. The goal of traditional action research is to identify and generate solutions to problems within the individual teacher’s classroom. This certainly contributes to the teacher’s own professional learning, but the end result is usually that of a single action. Action research, though, that intends to be generalized across varied contexts or either contributes to the knowledge base or a sustained change in practice would be an example of job-embedded professional learning (Croft et al, 2010). Job-embedded professional learning that is action research oriented is a cyclical process, where theories are generated, tested, reviewed and modified and then retested: creating empirically tested theories and instructional practices intended to inform the fields of research and practice more broadly while at the same time addressing challenges of practice in the sites where data are collected (van der Akker et al, 1999). Like action research, job-embedded professional learning in grounded in the daily practice of the teacher, but goes further in that it is focused more on a cycle of continuous improvement than on discovery of new knowledge. While examples of job-embedded professional learning can be the teacher working in isolation, it is generally understood to be a social interaction amongst the staff. Thereby, generating context specific conversations and positively affecting the entire staff (Croft et al, 2010).

Whether action-research oriented, or simply committed to job-embedded continuous improvement, staff development in early childhood education is a developing field. In a paper presented to the U.S. Department of Education: Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy
Development Zaslow (in press) identifies 4 target areas of early childhood professional development:

1. **The human and social capital of early educators**
   - Increasing early educators educational attainment
   - Increasing early educator training in ECE
   - Improving early educator literacy
   - Improving educator psychological well-being

2. **The effectiveness of institutions or organizations providing professional development**
   - Improving overall program quality in higher education ECE programs and training programs
   - Aligning content of courses or workshops with research and standards
   - Adapting ECE programs for non-traditional learners
   - Modifying approaches to include all early educators and administrators in a site in professional development to create a community of learners

3. **Children’s outcomes in specific developmental domains, such as early literacy and early mathematics**
   - Providing training on implementation of early childhood curricula focusing on specific content areas
   - Providing on-site follow-up support
   - Using targeted measures of quality to improve practices in specific domains

4. **The overall quality of children’s experiences and outcomes**
   - Providing on-site coaching or technical assistance to improve overall quality, using quality measures to set goals
   - Introducing comprehensive or integrated curricula and assuring fidelity of implementation (Zaslow, in press).
While the Zaslow paper has only recently been submitted to the U.S. Department of Education, the support for focused, extensive, and job-embedded professional development in education is not a new idea.

Darling-Hammond, McLaughlin & Milbrey (1995), Birman, Desimone, Porter & Garet (2000) and Neuman & Kamil (2010) proposed very similar lists of criteria for effective professional development. Each researcher promotes the idea of sustained professional learning that is job-embedded, as the table on the next page illustrates (Table 2.1).
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*It must engage teachers in concrete tasks of teaching, assessment, observation, and reflection that illuminate the processes of learning and development.* | *It deepens content knowledge* | *There are specific and articulated objectives for the PD*

*It must be grounded in inquiry, reflection, and experimentation that are participant-driven.* | *It provides for active learning* | *Practice is an explicit focus of the professional development, and attention is given to linking the focus on early educator knowledge and practice*

*It must be collaborative, involving a sharing of knowledge among educators and a focus on teachers’ communities of practice rather than on individual teachers* | *There is collective participation* | *There is collective participation of teachers from the same classrooms or schools in the PD*

*It must be sustained, ongoing, intensive, and supported by modeling, coaching, and the collective solving of specific problems of practice.* | *The duration of the PD is over many months or years.* | *The dosage of the PD is matched to the content being conveyed*

*It must be connected to other aspects of school change.* | *There is coherence throughout the organization concerning policy and other professional development initiatives* | *It is appropriate for the organizational context and is aligned with standards of practice.*

*It must be connected to and derived from teachers' work with their students.* | *Educators are prepared to conduct child assessments and interpret their results as a tool for monitoring the PD*
Few professionals working in the field of early childhood education would argue with the suggestion that sound professional development is the key to improving the quality of early education and care in this country. To be effective, professional development must be embedded in practice and situated in content and context (Neuman & Kamil, 2010) (Birman, Desimone, Porter & Garet, 2000) (Birman, 2000).

**The Significant Role of the Leader in Early Childhood Education**

*Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.*

John F. Kennedy

*If your action inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.*

John Quincy Adams

Despite the vast amount of literature on the role of the principal in K-12 education, research on the role of the early childhood leader is comparatively scarce. This is surprising in light of the general consensus among educators and lawmakers for the need for high-quality early learning (Ord, et al, 2013). Leadership plays a key role in assuring the success of any type of program. Leaders must assess the situation, rally support around a common vision, and ensure that the staff is provided the necessary material and human resources to complete the mission. To do so, they must inspire and motivate the staff (Marotz & Lawson, 2007).

There is very little leadership training in early childhood education, but the impact of a center leader is apparent throughout the building (Marotz & Lawson, 2007). Effective site leaders understand the need to build relationships, both within and outside the building. They are ready to take action when needed, but more importantly, arm others with the ability and know how to take similar action; thereby promoting leadership in others. While not specific to
leadership in early childhood education, Robert Evans identified three values of authentic leadership: personal ethics, vision, and belief in others (Evans, 199). Successful leaders are committed and hold high standards for themselves and those who work with them. They have a vision of the future of the organization and are able to communicate that vision to the staff. Most importantly, they believe in the staff to fulfill that vision. They develop their staff by providing all necessary supports and by implementing local and federal mandates in such ways as not to inhibit the education and learning process (Leithwood et.al, 2004). While the early childhood center administrators may not affect learning and care directly, they do so significantly by hiring, supporting, and developing those who do. It is their duty to carry out the mission of the program as well as develop and implement policies and practices aimed at supporting that mission (NAEYC, 2006). Effective administrators in early childhood education oversee the entire program from its design to the daily work with children to how it is represented to the community (NAEYC, 2006).

While there are some similarities between leading an early childhood center and leading in K-12 education, the nature and context of early childhood education makes it unique and certainly worthy of further examination (Thornton et al, 2009). Much of the current literature describes what a good early childhood center leader does on a daily basis, but does little to discuss the interactive role the leader plays in the school community. Thornton discusses the difference between a leader and a manager in early childhood education. A manager attends to the day to day duties of running a child care center, while a leader is oriented toward a broader vision, managing the day to day while furthering the mission of the school (Thornton et al, 2009). Both roles are essential and complementary to the running of a successful early childhood center, but must be negotiated so that the benefit of one is not to the detriment of the other.
Current literature on effective leaders in early childhood education suggests that leadership should be distributed. For that reason, the preparation of early childhood leaders must go beyond the traditional management training to include an understanding of building organizational capacity (Ord et al, 2013).

Leithwood (2004) discusses the significant role the site administrator plays in the professional learning of the staff. There are many types of school reform models. Some attempt to improve the overall professional practice in the early learning site, while others focus attention on one aspect of the children’s learning and development, such as literacy skill building. As different as these approaches are, they must have the support of the site administrator in order to be successful. This is not simply monetary support. The administrator must believe in the reform, must allow the needed time for it to take shape, and provide the necessary, ongoing professional learning (Leithwood et al, 2004). The main function of the early childhood administrator is to establish a safe, effective learning environment for the children and the staff. Administrators influence the climate of the workplace for the staff, the learning environment for the children and the sense of community for the parents and families.

In 2005 the National Association for Elementary School Principals (NAESP) released a paper titled *Leading Early Childhood Learning Communities - What principals should know and be able to do*, citing six standards associated with effective early childhood education programs as well as strategies by which to meet those standards.

1. **Standard One: Embrace early childhood education**
2. **Standard Two: Engage families and community**
3. **Standard Three: Promote appropriate learning environments for young children**
4. **Standard Four: Ensure quality teaching**
5. _Standard Five: Use multiple assessments to strengthen learning_

6. _Standard Six: Advocate for high quality, universal early childhood education_

(NAESP, 2005).

These standards are to some extent mirrored in the University of Chicago’s 5 Essential Supports generated after studying the components evident in successful elementary schools. These supports are:

1. _School leadership_

2. _Parent-community ties_

3. _Professional capacity_

4. _Student-centered learning climate_

5. _Instructional guidance_ (Chicago Consortium of Chicago School Research, 2006).

The Consortium found that schools measuring high in 3 of the 5 essential supports were more likely to make substantial gains in both reading and math, while schools with low scores in even just one area struggled to improve student learning. While this list was based on the study of elementary schools, it closely aligns with what the NAESP determined to be vital components of leadership for a high quality early childhood education.

Early childhood administrators are responsible for the entire program, from the curricular design to the staffing to engaging the community. The administrators are the bridge between the governing board, parents and staff, but most importantly they ensure the learning environment meets the needs of young children. A high quality early childhood education requires, not only the skills of highly effective teachers and care providers but also those of effective administrators who understand development and learning of young children. Their knowledge, skills and dispositions have a profound effect on the school as a whole.
Professional Identity of the Early Childhood Center Leader

Research suggests that leaders in early childhood education do not readily identify themselves as leaders in their professional role (Rodd, 1994). This concern is partly a result of the poorly defined capacities and competencies related to leaders in early childhood education (Rodd, 1994). Early childhood leaders ascend to such positions through a variety of pathways, few having had attained a higher level of professional education or training. This could suggest that specific leadership training is not a requirement for effective leadership (Rodd, 1994).

Educators in K-12 education have been more visible and more highly valued than those of young children, thereby affecting the identity of the early learning educators and leaders (Ord et al, 2013). Just as the responsibilities of center leaders continue to grow, so too must the definition of this role continue to develop. Organizations such as the Early Childhood Educators of British Columbia (ECEBC) have been working to change the less-professional image. The ECEBC Leadership Initiative was created to establish a network of early childhood leaders focused on furthering their professional identity. They see themselves as interpreters, rather than implementers, of early learning curriculum and as creators, rather than consumers of educational knowledge (retrieved November 20, 2013 from ecebc.ca)

Theoretical Framework

“One of the central lessons we think we have learned about previous rounds of innovation is that they failed because they didn’t get at fundamental, underlying, systemic features of school life: they didn’t change behaviors, norms, and beliefs of practitioners. Consequently, these reforms ended up being grafted on to exiting practices, and they were greatly modified, if not fully overcome, but those practices.”

Evans, p.5 1996
The theoretical framework of this investigation focuses on the leadership development experiences of early childhood site leaders. Because these early childhood site leaders are participating in a distinctive, job-embedded program of professional development, this study is designed to investigate how these site leaders have experienced the early stages of this program. To accomplish this goal, this study asks three questions:

A. *What is the intended intervention with leaders?* What makes this kind of intervention more ambitious than what leaders have likely experienced before, and more ambitious than what the field typically requires of leadership professional development?

B. *What is the implemented intervention with leaders?* How completely has the PD design for leaders themselves been implemented?

C. *How have the leaders responded to this intervention?* Have they found this different from what they have experienced in the past, and how?

I am approaching this study with certain, identified biases. I am a researcher who:

- highly values early childhood education,
- believes that professional development is critical to the quality of that early childhood education,
- believes the leader of the site is an essential component to assuring that the professional development addresses the needs of each specific site and its educators, and
- in general finds the logic model of leadership and organizational capacity-building in the program of this study plausible and even compelling, though I would not need to accept the theoretical framework of the professional development program for the theoretical framework of my investigation to serve the study well: the theoretical framework of the study is a relatively
straightforward qualitative investigation of selected participants’ experience of a specific organization, about which more will be said in the methodology section.

While the list above describes me as a researcher, I have also been involved with numerous professional development programs; both as a facilitator and a participant. I, therefore, approach this study with a degree of understanding of both perspectives concerning adult learning. I also have extensive experience as a counselor so, while I find this project compelling, I also understand that we must be aware and responsive to the experiences of the participants for it to succeed.

The theoretical framework of the program under study is worth explaining briefly. Ever since Plato, educators have recognized the importance of providing high quality early education and care to all children. Considerable funding, organizational, administrative and dispositional shifts are required if high quality early childhood education is to be widely established. Such shifts, though, will not be realized without addressing the serious inadequacies found in the professional training of the teachers and care providers. Zaslow and Neuman & Kamil posit the importance of individualizing both the content and the delivery of the professional development of early childhood educators. The Ounce of Prevention Professional Development Initiative (PDI) attempts to do just that. Based significantly but not exclusively on the University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research’s Five Essential Supports, the Ounce designed an ongoing, job-embedded professional development program that is developmental in nature; meaning that content is developed by on-site coaches and redesigned as needs and issues come to light. The Ounce of Prevention Fund and the Consortium found that Effective Leaders; a) practice shared leadership, b) set high goals for quality instruction, c) maintain mutually trusting and respectful relationships, d) support professional advancement for faculty and staff and, e)
manage resources for sustained program development. In schools rated high in Professional Collaboration, all teachers collaborate to promote professional growth. In schools rated high on Involved Families, the entire staff builds strong external relationships. Schools that provide Child-Centered Learning Environments are safe, demanding and supportive. In schools with Ambitious Instruction, the classes are challenging and engaging. The instruction is well-structured and encourages students to build and apply knowledge (Consortium of Chicago School Research, 2006).

Hargreaves et al. (2012) discuss the vital role the site leader plays in schools in general: “the more effective principals were those who defined their roles as facilitators of teacher success in terms of accessing resources, focusing on teacher’ teamwork, and building relationships with parents and the community.... In brief, the effective principals were successful because they went about systematically developing internal and external social capital” (Hargreaves, p. 145, 2012). The role of the site leader is indirect, but explicit. The leader is the lynchpin to effective implementation of education reform.

While it was necessary to establish the need for high quality early childhood education and care, as well as describe the inadequacies of the current professional training of those charged with this mission, this study recognizes two main components of the literature: the importance of job embedded professional development and its ability to change the mindsets of the early childhood center leaders so that they see themselves as instructional leaders. The Ounce of Prevention Fund’s Professional Development Initiative aims to do both. The Ounce initiative is based on the theory that:

- Effective leaders have a strategic focus on children’s achievement and on helping teachers to be effective. In normative early childhood settings, the focus of
leaders/supervisors is fractured by the need to attend to separate and often competing licensing, eligibility and reporting requirements of multiple public funding streams. This fractured focus limits school leaders’ ability to build staff capacity effectively and develop a coherent emphasis on educational goals and outcomes across their programs.

- Effective leaders build key organizational systems that support teachers to be effective.

Leaders in early childhood settings typically lack knowledge of these organization systems because such systems stem from an educational reform perspective to which leaders are rarely exposed. Workshops for early childhood leaders are overwhelmingly focused on building their knowledge of strategies and systems to meet accountability requirements of the various early childhood funding streams. Professional development that aims to cultivate a focus on organizational systems and practices to support effective teaching are not the prevailing experiences for early childhood directors.

- Effective leaders build strong relational ties among their teaching community and across parents, the school and the community, including ties between the early learning setting and the elementary school setting” (Ounce of Prevention, 2012).

The Once PDI hopes to establish a professional learning community that is contextualized, reflective and cyclical. If it can accomplish this goal, it could potentially offer a considerable contribution to the research on the professional learning of early childhood education leaders; particularly in reconstructing how they view their role as the instructional leader in the building.

The challenge to the Ounce initiative is to provide the professional development to early childhood center leaders that will enable them to build the systems and structures to support optimal adult learning. The aim is to establish a professional learning community within each site that is able to thrive and be led by the center leader whose attention is constantly diverted in
many directions. The task of this study is to investigate the extent to which the Ounce Professional Development Initiative is making progress in meeting this challenge by examining how the leaders involved in the project are experiencing the initiative.
Chapter 3: Methodology

This study seeks to interpret the understandings and experiences of the leaders of four early childhood centers in Chicago throughout the first year of an innovative professional development initiative. The names of the sites have been coded according to the neighborhood they are located within to protect the identities. The four sites are Englewood Center (EC), Rogers Park Center (RPC), Ashburn Center (AC) and Near South Center (NSC).

As demonstrated throughout the review of the current literature, the urgent need to improve the education of young children persists, particularly among those living in low income neighborhoods. To do so, it is incumbent on the center to build the professional capacity of its staff. This project evolved from the Ounce of Prevention Fund’s recognition of that need. Because of the varied educational backgrounds of the teaching staff and the overwhelming responsibilities of the early childhood education site leaders, a comprehensive professional development approach that addresses the students’ educational needs while also considering the particular context of each site is crucial. The Ounce aims to develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions of the center leaders and, to do so effectively, they may have to deconstruct the leaders’ thinking in order to reconstruct. The idea that leaders in early childhood do not see themselves as instructional leaders is supported in the literature. My study seeks to understand how the leaders are experiencing this undertaking, particularly in the first year of implementation, by examining the following questions:

A. **What is the intended intervention with leaders? What makes this kind of intervention more ambitious that what leaders have likely experienced before, and more ambitious than what the field typically requires of leadership professional development?**
B. What is the implemented intervention with leaders? How completely has the PD design for leaders themselves been implemented?

C. How have the leaders responded to this intervention? Have they found this different from what they have experienced in the past, and how?

Answers to these questions could potentially begin to generate solutions to a major roadblock inhibiting early childhood education: How can the leaders of early childhood centers, with limited resources, but countless mandates diverting their attention, learn to facilitate a sustainable professional learning community tailored to the needs of the children at their sites?

To examine these questions, I employed a qualitative case study methodology. A case study, “involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system” (Creswell, 2007 p. 73). A case study looks at a particular phenomenon within a real world context. This research took the form of a collective case study; a single concept- the Ounce of Prevention Fund’s Professional Development Initiative- viewed through the eyes of the leaders from four different early childhood centers. This affords the researcher the opportunity to look at a particular phenomenon through multiple lenses allowing varied experiences to be revealed and interpreted. A case study approach was chosen because it asks the questions of why and how. According to Yin (2003) a case study methodology is appropriate to study situations that the researcher cannot control. The researcher’s focus is on understanding and interpreting the experiences of the site leaders as they progress through the initial year of the Ounce of Prevention Professional Development Initiative. Are there indications that the Ounce is successfully deconstructing the thinking of the center leaders? Is there evidence of growth in their knowledge, skills and dispositions?
The Ounce of Prevention Professional Development Initiative (PDI) is being implemented in four early childhood centers serving children from low income neighborhoods in Chicago. Interested sites were required to complete an application process, and four early childhood education centers were selected. The course of this project will run for three years and involve 67 infant, toddler and preschool teachers, 40 school leaders, and 912 students across the four sites. This particular study focused upon the initial year of implementation and solely on the work of the site leaders. The design of the Ounce of Prevention’s PDI is cyclical in nature and includes the administrators, the teachers and on site coaches. The study focused on one particular part of the Ounce of Prevention Initiative; the work of the site administration. The goal from the Ounce is that “leaders will increase (a) knowledge to build trust and inquiry-based problem solving with staff; and (b) facilitative leadership to partner with supervisors to maintain organizational supports that promote improved instruction by teachers and achievement of high-needs children in their program” (Ounce of Prevention Fund, 2012).

The Ounce PDI focuses on three distinct groups within each school- the school leaders, teachers, and coaches. Leaders and teachers are involved in parallel learning cycles- or “contexts of learning”- consisting of learning labs, on site coaching (consultations), and reflective practice groups. The theory behind this model is that continuous reflection, coupled with the ability to redesign the training as needed, affords the participants the ability to connect research based practices to their particular contexts. Coaches, hired by the Ounce of Prevention because of their expertise in early childhood, lead the learning. The training component takes place during bi-monthly, three-hour-long “learning labs”. The content of the first year’s leaders’ learning labs concerned the 5 Essential Supports; organizational features of successful
schools identified by researchers at the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research from 20 years of study. Subsequent to the learning labs the school leaders met with on-site coaches to further discuss the topics and contextualize them for their particular situation. The Ounce of Prevention coaches act as experienced mentors helping the leaders become more effective and reflective in their daily practice. The final component - or learning context- during that initial year was the reflective practice group. During these bimonthly sessions the participants reflected upon the topics discussed during the learning labs, as well as their experiences in implementing that learning within their sites. A complete iteration began with the Leader Learning Lab one month, followed by a Reflective Practice Group the next month-interwoven with on-site consultations by Ounce coaches.

Since 1982, the Ounce of Prevention Fund (Ounce) has focused much of its attention upon one major goal; high quality early childhood education for all children, particularly those most in need, living in low income neighborhoods. The Ounce believes that the first five years are crucial to the positive academic and social development of children. The Ounce’s Professional Development Initiative (PDI) focuses on developing- within early childhood education centers-professional learning communities that are both developmental in nature and embedded in practice. The teachers and administrators involved in this initiative are not only trained in the model, but also receive on-site coaching and participate in reflective practice groups. Teachers, administrators and coaches work collaboratively to improve classroom instruction and school leadership. This is accomplished through focusing on each center’s adult learning through a comprehensive, job-embedded professional development model. A primary goal of the Ounce of Prevention’s Professional Development Initiative is to implement a professional learning
community that affords the caregivers, teachers and site administrators the opportunity to better their understanding of the academic and developmental needs of the children, improve their own practice and reflect upon their professional learning. This, in turn, aims at closing the achievement gap for low income children (Ounce of Prevention Fund, 2012).

Evaluation Methodology

The Ounce of Prevention Fund has two main goals in this project. The first goal is to study how effective their Professional Development Initiative (PDI) is in its ability to strengthen early childhood education instruction in low income, high need neighborhoods. The second goal is to study how changes are made to the project design in order to meet the needs of each individual site (Ounce of Prevention Fund, 2012). In order to evaluate the project, the Ounce partnered with the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). The research team from UIC will evaluate progress toward these two goals. Six main questions drive UIC’s evaluation of the project.

1. (Documentation) What are the baseline demographic and organizational characteristics of the PDI implementation sites? Do these remain stable over the course of the grant?

2. (Documentation) What is the intended PDI design for each PD cycle or specific adaptations to cycle, and what resources and expertise do they require?

3. (Implementation and Fidelity) What challenges arise at each successive iteration of implementation of the three professional learning cycles, and how do they impact realized vs. intended levels of implementation? What adaptations emerge from professional reflection on these challenges within reflective practice groups?

4. (Adult Learning Impacts) What features of implementation are most critical to realizing targeted adult learning outcomes? What impact do successive professional learning cycles have on the targeted professional learning outcomes for leaders, coaches and teachers?
5. **(Student Learning Outcomes)** Does the PDI produce evidence of superior outcomes for low income, under-served students and families in community based provider settings?

6. **(Feasibility)** How feasible is the implementation of the Ounce PDI in diverse community based provider settings and contexts? What threshold characteristics do community based organizations need to engage the Ounce PDI productively? *(Ounce of Prevention, 2012)*

Because the Ounce PDI was designed to adapt to the needs of the learners throughout, the evaluation methodology employed by UIC is development research. Development research seeks to address problems educators have found with more traditional forms of research that seem rarely to translate into improved practice *(van der Akker et al, 1999)*. The needs of each school vary dramatically and the exact problems are sometimes difficult to clearly state and are likely to change over time. Any educational reform initiative must be flexible as it is likely to require modification in design if it to be successful. Development research allows researchers to adapt the evaluation/research model to meet the dynamic needs of their particular site and to modify the project as challenges or new learning arises. Development research employs an evolutionary approach, subject to modification to answer new questions or integrate new research activities. The central aim is to inform decisions at the site as choices and challenge arise while at the same time generating findings- empirical and theoretical- that can inform theory, research and practice in the field at large. Applying learning from traditional research can be frustrating because “the answers may be too narrow to be meaningful, too superficial to be instrumental, too artificial to be relevant or, come too late to be of any use” *(van der Akker et al, 1999)*. Development research generates findings on a timelier basis. The findings from development research add insights and information that are both theoretically sound and empirically tested.
**Data Collection**

This study’s data collection took three main forms; analysis of two Ounce developed documents, embedded knowledge assessment –KWLH- (appendix xiii) and post evaluations (appendices vii, ix, xiii, and xv), a review of the Ounce’s instructional grids, agendas and handouts, and my own field notes taken during PDI site leader events. The KWLH document asked the participants to respond to 6 prompts (Rows1-6).

1. Row 1: What do I **K**now now
2. Row 2: What do I **W**ant to know
3. Row 3: What have I **L**earned
4. Row 4: **H**ow I can learn more
5. Row 5: What do I **K**now now
6. Row 6: What I **W**ant to know

While rows 1 and 5 and rows 2 and 6 appear to be asking the same questions, the Ounce clarified the differences. Rows 1-4 were answered during each learning lab, while 5 and 6 were responded to following the RPG and Coaching cycle. For example, in addition to “What do I Know now”, row 5 of the KWLH chart for module 5 elaborated with:

- Through the last Learning Lab, Coaches’ consultation and practice, and today’s RPG, please think about what you have learned about applying the lens and language of the CLASS Dimensions to your supervisory dialogue and feedback.
• Please write what you Know now about this topic and the corresponding leadership practices.

Row 6 for the same KWLH chart read:

• Think about what you Want to continue learning about the 5E’s and supervisory dialogue and feedback. Then, write down 1-2 questions you have that you would like to explore in consultation with your Coaches and through this Leadership group.

Answers to additional questions necessary to fill in some blanks came from an interview with one of the Ounce facilitators.

The content presented during the Leaders’ Learning Labs centered on the 5 Essential Supports. Based on 20 years of research, the University of Chicago’s Consortium on Chicago School Research (U Chicago CCSR) determined that successful schools were strong on 3 to 5 of these supports. The 5 Essential Supports developed by U Chicago CCSR are

• Effective Leaders
• Collaborative Teachers
• Involved Families
• Supportive Environments
• Ambitious Instruction (http://uchicagoimpact.org)

While the Ounce modified the names of these supports to be more reflective of early childhood education, they believe the concepts to be as important to Pre-K as they are to K-12 education.
Data collected from the Ounce generated evaluation documents and the instructional grids helped answer my first two research questions: *the intended intervention and the implemented intervention with the leaders during the initial year of the project*. One of the documents reviewed in this study was the Embedded Knowledge Assessment (KWLH- What I Know, What I Want to Know, What I Learned, and How I plan to learn more). Following the Leaders’ Learning Labs for Modules 3, 4, and 5 participants were asked to complete this tool (Tables 3.1, 3.2, 3.3). These assessments were a series of open ended, reflective questions, prepared and administered by the Ounce. Responses to these assessments indicated the participants’ understanding of the content presented during the learning labs, as well as provide a sense of how they accepted the validity of the content and its relevance to their particular sites. In addition to Rows 1-4, leaders were asked to also complete Rows 5 and 6 following the Module 5 RPG.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KWLH Graphic Organizer Category</th>
<th>Your Thinking, Reflection, and Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Row 1: What do I Know now</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think first about today’s topic:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Five Essential Supports for</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous Learning and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement: Building</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Capacity through</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Routines of Collaboration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Then write what you know now</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about today’s topic by responding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to the following guiding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>questions:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What do leaders and leadership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do to support teachers to learn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1
and improve?
- How do routines of collaboration support teachers to learn and improve?

**Row 2: What I Want to know**
Think about what you want to learn about today’s topic, and then write down 1-2 questions you have about today’s topic and leadership practices.

**Row 3: What I have Learned**
Think about, and then write, what new information you have learned today. Did you answer any of your questions from row 2?

**Row 4: How I can learn more**
The information and leadership practices from this Learning Lab have me wondering about, thinking, or feeling?

Think about all the information we explored in this learning lab. Of that, what leadership practices do you want to explore further:
- With you Coaches in your onsite leadership meetings?
- With your peers in the next Leader Reflective Practice Group?

### Table 3.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module 4 Leader Learning Lab KWLH Chart</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>KWLH Graphic Organizer Category</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Row 1: What do I Know now</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think first about today’s topic:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Five Essential Supports for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous Learning and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement: Ambitious Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Then write what you know now about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>today’s topic by responding to the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>following guiding questions:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- What does “good teaching” look like, sound like, feel like in ECE?

- How can supervisory practices and professional collaboration support teachers to plan, implement, and continuously improve teaching and learning?

**Row 2: What I Want to know**
Think about what you want to learn about today’s topic, and then write down 1-2 questions you have about today’s topic and the corresponding leadership practices.

**Row 3: What I have Learned**
Think about, and then write, what new information you have learned today. Did you answer any of the questions from row 2?

**Row 4: How I can learn more**
The information and leadership practices from this Learning Lab have me wondering about, thinking, or feeling?

Think about all the information we explored in this learning lab. Of that, what leadership practices do you want to explore further:

- With your Coaches in your onsite leadership meetings?
- With your peers in the next Leaders Reflective Practice Group?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KWLH Graphic Organizer Category</th>
<th>Your Thinking, Reflection, and Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Row 3: What I have Learned</strong></td>
<td>Think about, and then write, what new information or skills you learned today with applying the Lens and Language of specific CLASS Dimensions to your supervisory leadership practices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.3

Module 5 Leader Learning Lab

KWLH Chart
dialogue and feedback?

Did you answer any of your questions from our previous Learning Lab together?

**Row 4: How I can learn more**
The information and leadership practices from this Learning Lab have me wondering about, thinking, or feeling?

Think about all the information we explore in this learning lab. Of that, what *leadership practices* do you want to explore further:

- With your Coaches in your onsite leadership meetings?
- With your peers in the next Leaders Reflective Practice Group?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module 5 Reflective Practice Group</th>
<th>KWLH Chart</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>KWLH Graphic Organizer Category</strong></td>
<td><strong>Your Thinking, Reflection, and Questions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Row 5: What do I Know now</strong></td>
<td>Through the last Learning Lab, Coaches’ consultation and practice, and today’s RPG, please think about what you have learned about applying the lens and language of the CLASS Dimensions to your supervisory dialogue and feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please write what you <strong>Know</strong> now about this topic and the corresponding leadership practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Row 6: What I Want to know</strong></td>
<td>Think about what you <strong>Want</strong> to continue learning about the 5E’s and supervisory dialogue and feedback. Then, write down 1-2 questions you have that you would like to explore in consultation with your Coaches and through this Leadership group.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The second Ounce generated document used in the analysis for this study were the post evaluations the leaders were asked to complete following each of the learning labs (Table 3.4, Table 3.5, Table 3.6, and Table 3.7). These assessments gauged how the participants were experiencing the project, from how they were responding to the format to how relevant they thought the content was to their practice. Post-evaluations consisted of both multiple choice and open ended questions. Over the course of the first year these evaluations changed slightly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please circle your level of satisfaction</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject matter was organized and easy to follow.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenters used examples relevant to my work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenters were knowledgeable about the topics.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenters involved the group through discussion and other learning activities.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handouts and visuals were useful.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3.4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our Presentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have a better understanding of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The research rationale or “needs” for the Ounce PDI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ounce PDI visions for success for teachers and leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The “5 Essential Supports” from K-12 school improvement literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The definition of the Essential Support: Effective and Inclusive Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The definition of the Essential Support: Professional Capacity through Routines of Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The definition of the Essential Support: Supportive and Child-centered Learning Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The definition of the Essential Support: Ambitious Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The definition of the Essential Support: Strong Ties and Partnerships among Families, Schools and Communities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Your Satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please circle your level of satisfaction</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The information presented to me was new.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend this training to others.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that follow-up trainings and consultation on the information is needed.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will be able to apply this training information in my work.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How important do you think the 5E’s leadership framework will be in your efforts to continuously learn about and improve your leadership practice?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

How confident are you about applying the 5E’s in your work to lead and continuously improve an early childhood care and education program? Please rate yourself on the scale below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

What would it take to get to the next number higher than the number you chose?

The following suggestions might help strengthen this workshop in the future...

### Table 3.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our Presentation</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject matter was organized and easy to follow.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenters used examples relevant to my work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenters were knowledgeable about the topics.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenters involved the group through discussion and other learning activities.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handouts and visuals were useful.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Your Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I have a better understanding of</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>That the framework of the 5 Essential Supports directs my attention to creating conditions that support educators to be effective in their day-to-day work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The definition of the Essential Support: Effective and Inclusive Leaders</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective and Inclusive Leaders Dimension: Educator Influence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective and Inclusive Leaders Dimension: Educator-Leader Trust</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective and Inclusive Leaders Dimension: Instructional Leadership</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective and Inclusive Leaders Dimension: Program Coherence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership as “social influence” versus regulation, monitoring, and control.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How allowing leaders to emerge in your program assists you with motivating staff and building collective responsibility for improvement.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How the Decision Making Cycle supports me with intentionally seeking staff influence to solve problems and improve their own practice and children’s outcomes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your Satisfaction

| Please circle your level of satisfaction                                                      | Yes | Somewhat | No |
| The information presented to me was new.                                                     | Yes | Somewhat | No |
| I would recommend this training to others.                                                    | Yes | Somewhat | No |
| I feel that follow-up trainings and consultation on the information is needed.                | Yes | Somewhat | No |
| I will be able to apply this training information in my work.                                | Yes | Somewhat | No |

When thinking about the two dimensions- Educator Influence and Educator-Leader Trust- of Inclusive and Effective Leaders, which dimension most challenges you to think differently about your leadership style and interactions with staff? Please share how and why?

What are your beliefs and hopes about the benefits of problem-solving with staff to advance your quality improvement goals?

What concerns about problem-solving with staff to advance your quality improvement goals?

The following suggestions might help strengthen this workshop in the future...
### IMPACT OF THE CONTENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The content presented in this learning lab…</th>
<th>NOT AT ALL</th>
<th>A LITTLE</th>
<th>SOME</th>
<th>A LOT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>is USEFUL to me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is APPLICABLE to the work I do.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has CHANGED my THINKING.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has REINFORCED my THINKING.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### IMPACT OF THE LEARNING LAB EXPERIENCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>This learning has INCREASED…</th>
<th>NOT AT ALL</th>
<th>A LITTLE</th>
<th>SOME</th>
<th>A LOT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>my understanding of the content presented.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the IMPORTANCE I place on improving my practices.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>my READINESS to apply this knowledge to the work I do.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>my MOTIVATION to try out the leadership practices.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### YOUR SATISFACTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please circle your level of satisfaction.</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>A LITTLE</th>
<th>SOME</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The information presented to me was either new or presented in a way that has advanced my knowledge.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that follow-up Consultation will help me apply these leadership practices into my daily work.</td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that follow-up Reflective Practice Group discussion will help me learn more from my peers about applying these practices into my daily work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### OUR PRESENTATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please circle your level of satisfaction</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject matter was organized and easy to follow.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenters used examples relevant to my work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenters were knowledgeable about the topics.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenters involved the group through discussion and other learning activities.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handouts and visuals were useful.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following suggestions might help strengthen LEARNING LABS in the future…
Table 3.7

**IMPACT OF THE CONTENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The content presented in this learning lab...</th>
<th>NOT AT ALL</th>
<th>A LITTLE</th>
<th>SOME</th>
<th>A LOT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>is USEFUL to me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is APPLICABLE to the work I do.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has CHANGED my THINKING.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has REINFORCED my THINKING.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IMPACT OF THE LEARNING LAB EXPERIENCE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>This learning has INCREASED...</th>
<th>NOT AT ALL</th>
<th>A LITTLE</th>
<th>SOME</th>
<th>A LOT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>my understanding of the content presented.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the IMPORTANCE I place on improving my practices.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>my READINESS to apply this knowledge to the work I do.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>my MOTIVATION to try out the leadership practices.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**YOUR SATISFACTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please circle your level of satisfaction.</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>A LITTLE</th>
<th>SOME</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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**OUR PRESENTATION**

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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenters were knowledgeable about the topics.</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handouts and visuals were useful.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following suggestions might help strengthen LEARNING LABS in the future...

Much of the answers to my third question- *How have the leaders responded to this intervention? Have they found this different from what they have experienced in the past, and how?* - came from direct observation, an analysis of the KWLH charts, and comments made by
the Ounce coaches during on-site consultations. Throughout the initial year, I attended the leader learning labs and the reflective practice groups and took detailed field notes. In all, I attended 12 events throughout the initial year, 9 of which were specifically designed for the site leaders and three Coaches’ Research to Practice meetings. Not being part of the on-site consultations, I found it very informative to attend some coaches’ Research to Practice events as well, particularly those concerning the coaches’ work with the leaders during the on-site consultations. In order to organize the data from my field notes and begin to get a sense of common themes, I created a matrix listing the 5 Essential Supports along the top and the sites down the side. Following each session I recorded direct quotations and questions from the leaders based upon their relationship to the 5 Essential Supports.

In addition to my personal field notes, data taken from the KWLH charts and post evaluation documents were analyzed to look for clues about how the leaders understood the content as well as evidence concerning how they felt it to be relevant and applicable to their practice.

I used the same coding matrix to sort the data. Data taken directly from the KWLH charts and the post-evaluations were recorded on the matrix (Table 3.7).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5 Essential Supports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Englewood Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rogers Park Center</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Completing this matrix led me to draw conclusions concerning changes made to the knowledge base of the leaders, but question three asks much more than simple advancement of knowledge. It concerns getting a sense of how the Ounce is progressing towards its goal of changing practice. To assess this, I needed to expand my examination of the data to look for repetitive patterns and common themes throughout the data set; outside of those directly related to the 5 Essential Supports. I began coding each of the comments recorded during the learning events as well as those written on the post-evaluations and KWLH charts. I assigned descriptive single-word or short phrases to each. For example:

| “I learned the importance of approaching PD in a new way. I think I have always believed there was something wrong with the way PD was done…” | Different approach to professional development |
| “The focus on Personalization and precision as individualized and intentional…” | Differentiation in professional development |
| “The CLASS can be used to help staff learn to set the tone in the classroom. It can help us model supervisory feedback as we strive to improve instruction in the classroom…” | Using the CLASS in supervisory feedback |
| “Model the practices with teachers on the CLASS tools.” | Using the CLASS in discussions with teachers |
| “I learned the parallels of the CLASS tool for teacher-child interactions and supervisor-learner interactions. I also learned that ambitious instruction happens within a system that is supported by protected time and collaboration.” | Using the CLASS Protecting time Collaboration |

This coding exercise afforded me the opportunity to comb through the data to begin to generate common themes, ideas and categories. From there I marked similar passages and began grouping the data so that I could refer back to it as I began my analysis.


**Research timeline**

While the grant period for the entire Ounce Professional Development Initiative runs for three years, my part in the research was briefer. I investigated the answers to my driving questions during the initial year of implementation, in order to describe the experiences of the site leaders during the early iterations. As evidenced in the previous chapter, the role of the leader in any school wide initiative is vital, from the onset throughout the full implementation. By attempting to describe and understand how the leaders are experiencing this initiative, I can get a sense of whether they are experiencing the project as it was intended, which should provide some insights into the nature and value of the overall professional development approach, given the centrality of site leaders to its success.
Chapter 4: Findings

To participate in the Ounce Professional Development Initiative, each site had to complete an application asking them specifics concerning the numbers of children served, funding sources, and other factors describing their site (Appendix i). All four sites host Head Start programs. Head Start is a federally funded program providing early childhood education and care to low income children. Because being part of the federal Head Start program was a criterion for involvement in this initiative, the requirements for the Head Start program created a foundation for understanding the social and economic factors affecting each site. “Head Start is a federal program that promotes the school readiness of children ages birth to 5 from low-income families by enhancing their cognitive, social and emotional development” (retrieved October, 2013 from http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/obs). The following two tables provide census data concerning the neighborhoods (Table 4.1) and specific data for each of the four sites (Table 4.2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.1</th>
<th>Population and Poverty Data by Chicago Community Area, September 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Englewood Center</td>
<td>37,737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rogers Park Center</td>
<td>56,652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashburn Center</td>
<td>42,940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Near South Center</td>
<td>18,954</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Ilinois Action for Children, 2011)
### Table 4.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Englewood Center</th>
<th>Rogers Park Center</th>
<th>Ashburn Center</th>
<th>Near South Center</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of Agency</strong></td>
<td>Community Based</td>
<td>For Profit</td>
<td>For Profit</td>
<td>For Profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding Sources</strong></td>
<td>• Child Care Assistance</td>
<td>• Child Care Assistance</td>
<td>• Child Care Assistance</td>
<td>• Child Care Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Head Start</td>
<td>• Head Start</td>
<td>• Head Start</td>
<td>• Head Start</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Early Head Start</td>
<td>• Preschool for All</td>
<td>• Preschool for All</td>
<td>• Preschool for All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Preschool for All</td>
<td>• Prevention Initiative</td>
<td>• Prevention Initiative</td>
<td>• Prevention Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Tuition</td>
<td>• Tuition</td>
<td>• Tuition</td>
<td>• Tuition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% Free/Reduced Lunch</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong># Children Served</strong></td>
<td>0-3y/o 64</td>
<td>3-5y/o 132</td>
<td>0-3y/o 8</td>
<td>3-5y/o 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3-5y/o 132</td>
<td>3-5y/o 120</td>
<td>3-5y/o 8</td>
<td>3-5y/o 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong># Teachers participating</strong></td>
<td>0-3y/o 8</td>
<td>3-5y/o 4</td>
<td>0-3y/o 10</td>
<td>3-5y/o 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3-5y/o 8</td>
<td>3-5y/o 12</td>
<td>3-5y/o 10</td>
<td>3-5y/o 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong># Supervisors</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong># Family Support Specialists</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average experience- teachers</strong></td>
<td>0-3y/o 7.25 years</td>
<td>3-5y/o 10 years</td>
<td>0-3y/o 2.5 years</td>
<td>3-5y/o 1.125 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3-5y/o 10 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>3-5y/o 5.4 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3-5y/o 4 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average experience-supervisors</strong></td>
<td>5.5 years</td>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>9 years</td>
<td>23.5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level achieved on CPS Prevention Initiative Model (1-3)</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Illinois Quality Rating Scale (0-4)</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NAEYC accredited</strong></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The experience of one teacher at this site is 26 years, after removing that teacher’s experience, the remaining 4 teachers average 5.4 years of experience.**

(Out of Prevention Professional Development Initiative Application Information)

Englewood Center is a community based childcare center located in the West Englewood neighborhood on Chicago’s southwest side. West Englewood is defined by the boundaries Garfield Blvd. to the north, Racine Ave. to the east, the CSX and Norfolk Southern railroad tracks to the west, and the Belt Railway of Chicago to the south. The population of West
Englewood has declined from over 63,000 in the 1930s to its current number of 37,737. Nearly 97% of the population was White in the 1920s and 30s, mostly employed by the surrounding railroads and stockyards. The 1940s began to see an influx of African American families moving into West Englewood as they migrated from the south. The African American population grew from 48 to 98% by the 1980s. In addition to the closing of many of the railroads and stockyards in the area, the closing of the Chicago Transit Authority bus barn in the 1970s caused an economic downturn (Retrieved January 2014 from www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org). A report generated by the Illinois Action for Children (2011) states that there are 13 childcare centers with 785 slots and 58 licensed family childcare homes with 549 slots in the West Englewood neighborhood. That equals a total of 1,334 early childcare slots available for the 2,166 families with children under the age of 6 living in the West Englewood neighborhood (Table 4.1). The current population of West Englewood is comprised of 2% Hispanic, 96% African American, and 1% White. 60% of the children ages 0-5 live in poverty while 86% of them are below the 185% poverty level, making them eligible for child care assistance (Table 4.1). 100% of the children served at Englewood Center are eligible for free/reduced lunch. There are 196 children involved in the Ounce PDI program (64 aged 0-3 and 132 aged 3-5). In addition to the 3 supervisors participating in the project, there are 8 teachers from the 0-3y/o program and 4 from the 3-5y/o. The PDI participating teachers at Englewood Center average 8.6 years of experience. The supervisors average 5.5 years of experience (Table 4.2).

Rogers Park Center, a for-profit center, is located in the far north side neighborhood of Rogers Park whose boundaries are Evanston on the north, the “L” tracks to the west, Lake Michigan on the east and Howard St. on the south. While the population in numbers has remained fairly constant from the 1930s to today (57,094 in the 30s to 56,652 today), the makeup
has changed. In the 1930s, nearly 99% of the community was White. The community is now more diverse with 25% Hispanic, 26% African American, 39% White and 7% Asian (Retrieved January 2014 from www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org). Rogers Park has 10 early childcare centers with 693 spaces and 15 licensed home-based centers with 121 spaces; totaling 814 early childcare slots for the 3,527 families with children less than 6 years old (Illinois Action for Children, 2011). 33% of the children ages 0-5 in Rogers Park live in poverty with 51% of those living below the 185% poverty rate (Table 4.2). As with Englewood Center, 100% of the children at Rogers Park Center are eligible for free/reduced lunch. There are 31 children ages 0-3 and 120 ages 3-5. 20 teachers in total are participating in the project- 8 from the 0-3 program and 12 from the 3-5 year age range. Four site leaders are involved in this project. Of the four sites involved in the program, the teachers at Rogers Park Center average the least amount of experience with only 1.8 years. The site leaders average 6 years of experience.

Also a for-profit early child center, Ashburn Center is found in the Ashburn neighborhood on Chicago’s southwest side. The Ashburn community is surrounded by 75th St. on the north, Western Ave. on the east, Cicero Ave. on the west and 87th St. on the south. While the population of Ashburn grew slowly at first (733 in 1930), the automobile industry and the baby boom following World War II led to a population jump of over 900% in the 1950s. From there, the population grew steadily to its current number of 42,940. Serious racial strife occurred in the 1960s over the issue of school desegregation in Ashburn (Retrieved January 2014 from www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org). As schools and churches became more and more integrated, the population make-up shifted from nearly 100% White in the 60s to its current, more diverse, make-up of 31% Hispanic, 52% African American, and 16% White. There are 19 early childcare centers with 1,280 slots and 73 licensed home-based childcare providers with 736
slots- 2016 total slots for the 2,320 families with children under 6. Of the children ages 0-5 living in Ashburn, 20% live in poverty and 45% of them live below the 185% poverty rate (Table 4.1). 99% of the children enrolled in Ashburn Center qualify for free/reduced lunch. 105 children are involved in the study- 50 from the 0-3 program and 55 from the 3-5. There are 4 site leaders working with 16 teachers in this project- 10 of which teach in the 0-3y/o classrooms and 6 from the 3-5 group. The teachers at Ashburn Center average 4.7 years of experience while the leaders average 9 years.

Near South Center is a for-profit center located in the Near South Side neighborhood; surrounded by Roosevelt Rd. on the north, 26th St. to the south, and Lake Michigan to the east. The western border is made up of a combination of the Chicago River, Clark St., and the Stevenson Expressway. The Field Museum, Shedd Aquarium, Adler Planetarium, Soldier Field and McCormick Place are located in the Near South Side neighborhood. With the exception of a short resurgence in the 1950s the population steadily decreased from its high in the 1930s of 10,416 to its low in the 1990s of 6,828. A smaller growth in 2000 and a 120% jump in 2010 have brought the Near South Side to its current population of 18,954. The racial make-up of the Near South Side moved from 75% White and 24% African American in 1930, to almost the opposite of 27% White and 65% African American by 2000. The current racial make-up is that of 6% Hispanic, 30% African American, 46% White and 16% Asian. There are 8 early childhood centers with 893 spaces and only 1 licensed home-based center with 8 slots in the Near South Side neighborhood. For the 1,087 families with a child under 6 years old there are 901 early childcare slots. 11% of the children in the Near South Side neighborhood live in poverty while 17% of them below the 185% poverty level. 95% the children at Near South Center receive free/reduced lunch. Of the 114 children involved in the project, 67 come from the 0-3y/o group
and 47 from the 3-5. There are 2 leaders supporting the work of 24 teachers: 16 teachers of children ages 0-3 and 8 teachers of children ages 3-5. The site leaders at Near South Center have considerably more experience than those of the other three sites averaging more than 23 years. The teachers average 9.6 years of experience.

While the Ounce of Prevention Fund’s Professional Development Initiative involves the leaders, teachers and coaches, my particular study focused solely on the experiences of the leaders. With regards to the leaders in this project, the goal of the Ounce of Prevention Fund (Ounce) was to “[develop] leader knowledge, skills and dispositions to transform their center/school into a learning organization that supports teachers and staff with continuously learning about and improving their practice. Using the 5Essential Supports, starting with effective and inclusive leadership and building capacity through routines of collaboration, to support leaders and supervisors with developing a ‘system of embedded professional development’ that structure and protect time for teachers and staff to routinely come together to reflect, examine practice, and collaborate for improvement” (Ounce of Prevention Fund, 2012).

To accomplish the above mission, the Ounce designed a three-year long Professional Development Initiative (PDI) employing three distinct learning contexts: Learning Labs, Reflective Practice Groups and On-site Consultations.

What the Ounce intends to be different about this initiative, and thereby more ambitious than the types of professional development experienced by these leaders in the past, is the three learning contexts. Rather than the traditional, one shot professional development workshops of the past, this model uses an iterative process. Content from the learning labs were put into practice with the help of the Ounce coaches and then reflected upon during the reflective practice.
groups. Decisions concerning subsequent learning were made, in part, after the Ounce facilitators reflect upon the written and oral responses made during previous monthly events.

The content for the learning labs was modeled after the University of Chicago’s Consortium on School Research Five Essential Supports. While the label for each support was modified by the Ounce to be more reflective of the needs of early childhood education, the content remained the same. Learning Labs were very structured and mainly directed by the Ounce facilitators. The month following each lab, the leaders are invited back to a reflective practice group to discuss how the learning has impacted their practice. The third learning context is an on-site consultative meeting with Ounce coaches, woven throughout to support the leaders. The teachers and coaches involved in this project experience learning cycles that are parallel to those of the leaders. The Ounce believes that this approach is innovative and more ambitious in three ways “(1) it is tri-level (i.e. it involves 3 groups of early childhood professionals); (2) it purposefully creates varied contexts for adult learning that collectively result in building knowledge, transferring that knowledge to practice and sustaining learning and improvement over time; and (3) it uses an iterative process to refine the design and implementation during the initiative to improve its functionality given emerging learner- and context-specific conditions” (Ounce of Prevention, 2012 p.9). The ultimate goal of which is to establish a community of

\[5\] The University of Chicago’s Consortium on School Research Five Essential Supports: School Leadership, Parent and Community Ties, Professional Capacity of the Faculty, Student-centered Learning Environment, and Instructional Guidance

\[6\] The Ounce of Prevention Fund’s Five Essential Supports: Inclusive Leadership, Strong Ties and Partnerships Among Families, Schools & Communities, Building Professional Capacity through Routines of Collaboration, Child-centered Learning Environments, and Ambitious Instruction
learners who are ready, willing and able to sustain this work after the initial three year implementation.

According to the Ounce of Prevention Fund, the original design and descriptions for the three learning contexts for the leaders were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Time commitments</th>
<th>Stipends</th>
<th>Credentials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leader Training</strong></td>
<td>An Ounce or UIC location, depending on availability of space</td>
<td>5x per year (alternate months with leader reflective practice group)</td>
<td>None, since they occur during the work day</td>
<td>Points to Gateways to Opportunity IL Director Credential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description: Leadership Training brings Program Administrators and Direct Supervisors together to build knowledge and deepen understanding of best practices in leadership and supervision.</td>
<td>Direct Supervisors and Program Administrators from all the sites participating in the Ounce PDI Leaders from the pilot sites are also invited to participate</td>
<td>Three hour sessions</td>
<td>During the work day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership Team Consultation</strong></td>
<td>Onsite</td>
<td>2 hours per month</td>
<td>Program Administrators and Direct Supervisors from both 0-3 and 3-5 programs participate with both 0-3 Coach and 3-5 Coach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description: Leadership Team Consultation supports the leadership teams in using information from training labs into</td>
<td>Program Administrators and Direct Supervisors from both 0-3 and 3-5 programs participate with both 0-3 Coach and 3-5 Coach</td>
<td>2 hours per month</td>
<td>Program Administrators and Direct Supervisors from both 0-3 and 3-5 programs participate with both 0-3 Coach and 3-5 Coach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.SYSTEMATIC PRACTICES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direct Supervisor Consultation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description:</strong>  Direct Supervisor Consultation supports Direct Supervisors in implementing and leading cycles of coaching and reflective practice groups for teachers in their programs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Onsite</strong></td>
<td><strong>Direct Supervisors from both 0-3 and 3-5 programs participate with both 0-3 Coach and 3-5 Coach</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2 hours per month</strong></td>
<td><strong>During the work day</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| **Leader Reflective Practice Groups**  |
| **Description:**  In Reflective Practice Groups, Program Administrators and Direct Supervisors come together to share reflections, examine systems and practices, and jointly problem-solve issues to improve  |
| **An Ounce or UIC location** | **Direct Supervisors and Program Administrators from all the sites participating in the Ounce PDI Leaders from pilot sites also invited to participate**  |
| **5x per year** (alternate months with leader training) | **Two hour sessions During the work day**  |
| **None, since they occur during the work day**  |  |
Findings for research questions 1 and 2

1. What was the intended intervention with leaders? What makes this kind of intervention more ambitious than what leaders have likely experienced before, and more ambitious than what the field typically requires of leadership professional development?

2. What is the implemented intervention with leaders? How completely has the PD design for leaders themselves been implemented?

The written plan for the Professional Development Initiative (PDI)

Much of the answers to the first two research questions could be found through a review of the original plan set out by the Ounce of Prevention, including the instructional grids and agenda, and then observing how the plan was actually implemented.

Each learning cycle was intended to consist of three learning contexts: learning labs, on-site consultations and reflective practice groups. “Training labs [later renamed Learning Labs] are interactive sessions that develop knowledge and understanding of professional competencies related to... leading. On-site [consultations] support the systemic transfer of the knowledge learned by...leaders... into practice. Reflective Practice Groups engage...leaders...in shared reflection, inquiry, and examination of practice” (Ounce of Prevention Fund p. 10, 2012).

The initial written schedule for the first year was as follows (Table 4.4):
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intended Content</th>
<th>Date of Learning Lab</th>
<th>Date of Reflective Practice Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Module 1</strong>: Introduction to the 5 Essential Supports for Continuous Learning and Improvement</td>
<td>July 24, 2012</td>
<td>August 21, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Module 2</strong>: Effective and Inclusive Leadership</td>
<td>September 18, 2012</td>
<td>October 16, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Module 3</strong>: Child-Centered Learning Environments and Ambitious Instruction</td>
<td>November 20, 2012</td>
<td>January 15, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Module 4</strong>: Strong Ties and Partnerships Among Families, Schools and Communities</td>
<td>February 19, 2013</td>
<td>March 19, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Module 5</strong>: Building Capacity through Routines of Collaboration</td>
<td>April 16, 2013</td>
<td>May 21, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Module 6</strong>: TBD</td>
<td>June 18, 2013</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The program’s intention for the professional development activities indicated on this calendar can be documented in the agendas for each module. The agendas developed in the planning phase of the project were modified slightly before the day they were to be presented, which is not unexpected since the Ounce is employing an iterative process. As indicators of the program director’s intended intervention, I used the agenda presented on the day of the event.

**Intended- Module 1**

*Module 1: Introduction to the 5 Essential Supports for Continuous Learning and Improvement (July 24, 2012)*

While I was not present for the events of the first module, the Ounce of Prevention and researchers from UIC provided me with detailed accounts of each session. I was able to access the agendas, handouts, PowerPoint presentations and research field notes describing the 2 Ounce led training contexts (module 1 learning lab held on July 24, 2012 and reflective practice group held on August 21, 2012). The agenda for the initial Leaders’ Learning Lab was as follows:
1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Aspirations and Goals as Leaders
   a. Inspiring Leader quotes activity and report out
   b. Need for the project and visions of success
   c. Aspirations and Goals small group discussion and report out
3. Introduction to the Five Essential Supports for Continuous Learning and Improvement (5E’s)
4. Exploration of the 5E’s
   a. 15 minutes with each Essential Support - 3 rotations
   b. Break after first 3 rounds
   c. 15 minutes with each Essential Support - 2 rotations
5. Closing Reflections on the 5E’s
6. Outline of Future Trainings and Events
7. Evaluation

The agenda listed 7 components, starting with a welcome, moving through an introduction to the Five Essential Supports for Continuous Improvement and, ending with a look at the year ahead and an evaluation. The facilitators created a detailed outline of the event including the learning objectives for each component and how the participant progress toward meeting each objective would be assessed.

Of the 26 participants who attended this event, 15 were center leaders while the remaining participants consisted of Ounce staff, Ounce coaches, and UIC researchers. None of the then-current site leaders was absent for this session (there was some turnover in site leadership by the end of the period under study).

The intention of that first module was to introduce the Five Essential Supports, as designed by the Ounce of Prevention Fund based on the Chicago Consortium for School Research’s work. The Ounce defined each of these supports as follows:

**Inclusive Leadership:** “Leaders establish a strategic focus on children’s health, learning, development and school readiness, and they support teachers to be effective in their work. In
daily activities, they build and maintain mutually trusting and respectful relationships. They set high goals for quality instruction. They hire staff determined to continuously improve learning opportunities and outcomes for young children and families. They galvanize staff activity, programs, and resources towards a vision for sustained improvement. They enlist teachers in improvement efforts. They practice shared leadership and cultivate a cadre of leaders among teachers, parents, and community. They support professional advancement for faculty and staff. They manage resources for sustained program improvement.

**Building Professional Capacity through Routines of Collaboration:** Leaders use supervisory resources, performance feedback, professional development, and social resources within the staff to build professional capacity. They work together with staff to define their strategic focus for improvement and to solve problems. Leaders design and protect routines for staff to reflect, review data, examine practice and collaborate to promote their own and their colleagues’ professional growth. In such schools, teachers and staff are: active partners in school improvement; committed to the school; and focused on professional learning and continuous improvement.

**Child-centered Learning Environment:** All adults in the school community create physical environments, a daily structure, and an emotional climate that enables children to consistently feel safe, liked, able to actively explore and competent in their approaches to learning. All adults build supportive relationships with each other and with children- the most basic prerequisite for learning. Teachers are trust-worthy and responsive to the children’s individual emotional and
academic needs. Teachers hold high expectations for children's capacity for learning and development and affirm children's exploration, engagement and persistence.

Ambitious Instruction: An instructional guidance system articulates the "what" and "how" of teaching and learning for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. All adults endorse early learning and development standards to align expectations and instruction. All adults use assessment data and information on children’s progress to plan emotionally supportive, organized, and instructionally meaningful learning opportunities individualized to the needs of the each child. Structures for implementation of curricula, assessments, and use of materials are coordinated across the school. Teachers may have substantial discretion in how these resources are used, but efficacy depends on the quality of the supports and the community of practice that forms around their use and refinement. When combined with a child-centered supportive environment, Ambitious Instruction has the most direct effect on children’s learning and development.

Strong Ties among Families, School and Communities: Children do not exist alone; they are a member of a family that lives within a community. In schools with involved families, the entire staff works to build respectful partnerships among families, schools and the community. Parents are viewed as partners in supporting children’s learning and development both within the school and in the home. Staff value parents’ input and participation in defining and advancing the school’s mission by interacting with families respectfully and collaboratively, and by sharing and seeking information to enhance children’s participation, health, learning and development. Leaders and staff build and maintain strong ties with elementary schools to support successful transitions to kindergarten. Staff supports efforts to reduce hardships experienced by families
and increase community partners and brokering the community’s resources (Ounce of Prevention Fund, 2012).

**Implemented- Module 1**

*Module 1: Introduction to the 5 Essential Supports for Continuous Learning and Improvement*

Two objectives were presented to participants for the first module:

1. **Describe the importance of leadership supports that promote teachers to be effective and children to experience positive outcomes.**

2. **List and briefly describe each of the Five Essential Supports for Continuous Learning and Improvement.**

The first learning lab began with a discussion concerning the aspirations and goals for the leaders. The following quotes about leadership were displayed around the room.

*We may have all come on different ships, but were in the same boat now.*
- Martin L. King Jr.

*The human mind is our fundamental resource*
John F. Kennedy

*Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.*
- Nelson Mandela

*We lose ourselves when we compromise the very ideals that we fight to defend. And we honor those ideas by upholding them not when it’s easy, but when it is hard.*
- Barack Obama

*Surround yourself with only people who are going to lift you higher.*
- Oprah Winfrey

*You know you have to start with hope… You don’t get anywhere in this country without hope. So it’s a necessity. …People have to understand hope isn’t blind optimism. It isn’t*
passive. It isn’t sitting there waiting for things to get better. Hope is the vision that you have
to have. It is the inspiration that moves most people to action… There are more people
engaged in this political process in this year than we’ve seen in my lifetime. And it is all
because of hope because people believe in the possibility of something unseen.
-Michelle Obama

The participants were asked to reflect on these quotes, determine which most resonated
with them and guess who authored their chosen quote. After that activity, the leaders were
asked to complete a worksheet asking them to reflect upon their aspirations and goals for the
project (appendix v) and then to break into small groups to discuss their responses. The
worksheet asked them to consider two questions:

1. What are you already doing to support teachers and enhance outcomes for children and
   families?

2. What aspirations and goals do you have in your efforts to continuously improve your
   leadership?

As they shared their responses to the whole group, one facilitator wrote them on chart
paper.

The facilitators then introduced the 5 Essential Supports for Continuous Learning and
Improvement, as well as their vision of success for this project. They first laid out what was
needed to improve early childhood education and then what they believed to be the outcomes
realized by this initiative.

- There is a need to raise the achievement of young, high needs children before they enter
  kindergarten. Teachers and leaders are highly effective in their work with high-needs
  children in the early years.
• There is a need for models of professional development capable of advancing learning and improvement while on the job. Professional development is effectively designed to simultaneously advance knowledge, skills and dispositions and the application of that in daily practice.

• There is a need for leaders to focus strategically on children’s outcomes and on supporting teachers to be effective in their work. Leaders cultivate a culture and specific organizational supports that improve teaching effectiveness and enhance child and family outcomes. (Ounce of Prevention Fund, July, 2012).

Two key graphics were presented to the participants. One displayed the Ounce of Prevention Fund’s 5 Essential Supports (appendix iii.) and the other the Inclusive Exploration, Inquiry and Decision-Making Cycle (Table 4.5). The Essential Supports laid out the content for the first year’s implementation while the Inclusive Exploration, Inquiry, and Decision-Making Cycle described the process by which each site would be examining data and collaborating to make decisions.
To introduce the 5 Essential Supports, the facilitators asked the participants to count off by 5s and move to their respective tables. They began with reading the definition for each support, discussed their initial reactions about the support and the language used to describe it, and then were instructed to read a sample survey assessing their understanding. The facilitator explained the purpose of the survey was “to think of the usefulness of the item in helping clarify the definition of the 5E and how the items changed their thinking about this particular 5E”. The groups were given 10 minutes to complete the task for each of the supports.

The session concluded with a Reflection Protocol (appendix vi) asking the participants to consider the following questions:

1. At this time, what do I value about the 5 E’s as an organization and leadership framework?
2. What would I like to understand better about the 5 E’s?
3. What are my concerns about the 5 E’s?
4. What about the 5 E’s would I like to discuss further with my i3 Coaches?

Module 1 Reflective Practice Group (RPG) (August 21, 2012)

This session was followed with a Reflective Practice Group (RPG), the second learning context in the iteration. One leader, hired subsequent to the July Leader Learning Lab, was added to this session. Of the 13 leaders involved in this initiative at the time, only one was absent for the RPG.

The intended and the implemented module were closely aligned. The learning labs and reflective practice groups were help on the originally scheduled dates and the facilitators stayed true to the original agenda items.

Intended- Module 2

Module 2: Effective and Inclusive Leadership (September 18, 2012)

The agenda for the second module read as follows:

1. Welcome and Icebreaker
2. Staff Influence
3. Effective and Inclusive Leadership: A Tale of Two Schools
4. From Anecdotes to Evidence: Research demonstrating the Value of Inclusive Leadership
5. Break
6. Exploration, Inquiry, and Decision Making Cycle
7. Closing Reflections
8. Program Updates and Questions
9. Evaluation

While Module 1 was designed to provide an introduction to the 5 Essential Supports, subsequent modules were to delve deeply into each. Module 2 concerned Inclusive Leadership.
As with the first module, the agenda was written in detail for the facilitators to follow, including the times allotted for each section, which facilitator was to lead each component and a variety of driving questions to further the discussion.

15 leaders were invited and expected to attend this session; 7 were present.

**Implemented- Module 2**

**Module 2: Effective and Inclusive Leadership**

The second leader learning lab was held, as scheduled, on September 18, 2012 and focused on what the Ounce facilitators deemed to be the one essential support driving the other four, Effective and Inclusive Leadership. In addition to a Welcome, Break and Evaluation, the agenda contained 6 other items.

- Welcome and Icebreaker
- Staff Influence
- Effective and Inclusive Leadership: A Tale of Two Schools
- From Anecdotes to Evidence: Research demonstrating the Value of Inclusive Leadership
- Break
- Explorations, Inquiry, and Decision Making Cycle
- Closing Reflections
- Program Updates and Questions
- Evaluation

The participants were provided with two handouts:

- an article titled, A Tale of Two School: Organizing Schools for Improvement by: Bryk and Sebring and,
- a graphic organizer called the Inclusive Exploration, Inquiry, and Decision Making Cycle (appendix iv).
This event began with an icebreaker activity during which the participants were asked to complete a T-chart and the break into small groups to discuss their responses.

| Think of a time when you wanted to influence a situation you were in and were able to have influence. | Think of time when you wanted to influence a situation you were in but were not able to have influence. |
| What was happening? How did you feel? | What was happening? How did you feel? |
| Please, find someone who you do not know well yet and share. |

To assess the leaders understanding of and prior experiences with the notion of inclusive leadership they were asked to complete the Staff Influence handout (appendix viii):

*Think of a time when you had a situation to address or a problem to solve in the center and you sought staff perspectives on the issues and their ideas to address or improve the situation.*

- How did you seek their perspectives and ideas?
- Why did you seek their perspectives and ideas?
- What happened? What surprised you?
- What did you learn from this?

The participants were asked to read an article entitled “A Tale of Two Schools” comparing Hancock and Alexander schools and asked to consider the following prompts:

1. How did these two schools become such different places? What conditions did they create for their staff and for improvement?
   a. How did Hancock beat the odds?
   b. Why did Alexander fail to do so?
2. What did the two leaders do that led the schools to become different places?
   a. How did they differ in their leadership style?
   b. How did they differ in terms of what they focused on to improve?
c. How did they differ in their engagement of staff and parents in their improvement efforts?

3. How does this tale help us think about our work in early childhood?

Following a short break the facilitators reintroduced the Inclusive Exploration, Inquiry and Decision Making graphic from the first module. To provide practice in using this cycle of decision making they asked the leaders to consider situations they would like to improve at their sites, opportunities that exist for the staff to improve practice, and what information or data the site currently has concerning the situation they wish to improve.

**Module 2 Reflective Practice Group (RPG) (October 16, 2012)**

The Reflective Practice Group for module 2 was held on October 16, 2012. It began with a few housekeeping items such as an update from the Gateways project on offering points towards credentialing for the directors involved in the Ounce PDI. They then reviewed the norms established during the previous module for their meetings:

- **Listening**
  - Be present; listen to each other without interruption.
  - Listen before talking, seek to understand others.
- **Respect**
  - Be open to each person’s contributions.
  - No judgments.
  - Be respectful of different perspectives, opinions, life experiences, and culture
- **Participation**
  - Ensure everyone has the chance to contribute to the discussion.
- **Time management**
  - Start on time. End on time. Be forgiving of those who are late.
- **Learning**
  - Consider all questions or needs for clarity as valid.
  - Be open to new ideas.
  - Remember learning is the work.
  - Feel safe to share, ask questions, and have open, brave and honest conversations to support real learning and change.
  - Feel safe to share with supervisors present. All are equals and all are here to learn.
• Confidentiality
  o Maintain confidentiality. Do not share what is discussed within the group about individuals or programs with those outside the group.
  o Agree comfortable with observations by the evaluation team. Statements within the group will not be attributed to individuals in any documentation.
• Technology
  o Keep cell phones on vibrate.
  o Step out if need to take a call.

The facilitators were very clear that this was a safe place and that all participants should feel safe to respectfully disagree with their superiors.

After a review of the norms, the group was asked to divide into pairs to reflect upon the implementation thus far. Members from each site were intentionally mixed with other sites in this activity. The whole group, then, reconvened to share out. The participants brought up issues they were having with the initiative such as finding and protecting time for the professional development. The facilitators attempted to address their concerns with the fact that this project would require a bit of trial and error on the part of the leaders and the teachers. It is a development project and that modifications and adaptations are a natural and crucial component to its success.

The RPG ended with the Ounce staff and UIC researchers reviewing the Informed Consents. In order for the UIC team of researcher to evaluate this implementation, the leaders were asked to consent to the following 7 distinct activities:

1. Allow researchers to observe sessions- video and/or audio record
2. Respond to surveys concerning their understanding and beliefs about early childhood education and leader an early childhood center
3. Respond to surveys concerning specifics about their early childhood centers
4. Allow researchers to video/audio record individual interviews
5. Allow researchers to video/ audio record group interviews
6. Allow coaches to assess instructional practices using various instruments and tools
7. Allow coaches and research staff to make copies of certain documents; i.e. lesson plans

UIC researchers emphasized two main points in particular; 1) the participants were able to withdraw at any time even after signing Informed Consent agreement, and 2) the steps they were
taking to ensure that all data would be kept secure. Of the 15 leaders 7 were in attendance for the RPG.

The intended and the implemented interventions for module 2 were very closely aligned. The sessions were held on the dates posted and the facilitators followed the agendas with fidelity.

**Intended- Module 3**

**Module 3: Building Professional Capacity through Routines of Collaboration (November 20, 2012)**

The agenda for Module 3 read as follows:

1. Welcome, Review Prior Learning, and Clarify Learning Objectives for the day
2. What do we know now? What do we want to know?
3. Anchor Reading Discussion- “Change the Terms for Teacher Learning”
4. Transforming from Traditional to Embedded PD
5. Break
7. Key Characteristics, Processes and Impacts of Professional Collaboration
8. What have we learned? How can we learn more?
9. Closing Reflections, Questions, Evaluation

It is during this module where changes to the project began to be made. While originally designed to cover the essential supports of Child-Centered Learning Environments and Ambitious Instruction, this module was revised to focus on Building Professional Capacity through Routines of Collaboration.

Sixteen were invited to attend, including one new site leader; 11 were present.
Implemented- Module 3

Module 3: Building Professional Capacity through Routines of Collaboration

More changes came about during the third module than for any of the others. Module 3 was initially set for November 20, 2012, but, because of low projected attendance due to the Thanksgiving holiday, was rescheduled for December 18, 2012. It was also originally designed to cover Child-centered Learning Environment and Ambitious Instruction, but that too was changed. The new topic for discussion became Building Professional Capacity through Routines of Collaboration. The reasons behind these changes were revealed to me during an interview with one of the Ounce of Prevention facilitators. After considering the participants’ responses and reactions to the idea of inclusive leadership during the previous module it became apparent to the Ounce facilitators that they must deconstruct and then reconstruct the leaders’ mindsets concerning their work with their staff. To do this, they determined the need to discuss the notion of establishing routines of collaboration. Through these routines, the leaders could create a foundation for building the capacity necessary for the success of the other supports. Therefore, the Ounce facilitators revised the order of which they would discuss the remaining essential supports.

As with the previous sessions, this one began with a review of the agenda, but the topic for discussion centered on an “anchor reading”- Change the Terms for Teacher Learning by Michael Fullan (appendix x). In addition to that article, the leaders were also provided with the Focused Teaching Cycle graphic (appendix xi).

Presenters introduced the focus for that day’s event to be Building Capacity through Routines of Professional Collaboration. The facilitators outlined 8 impacts associated with professional collaboration:
1. Clarity of and increased commitment to the vision and goals of the school/program
2. Collective responsibility and commitment to continuous improvement towards the vision and outcomes
3. Moral commitment and inspiration to making significant and lasting changes
4. Teacher and staff authored learning that defines best practice and created new knowledge and beliefs
5. Increased understanding of standards and content and how they drive meaningful interactions and instruction
6. Significant advances in adapting practice for individual children and families
7. Reduction of isolation and opportunities for leadership that result in greater satisfaction, higher morale and lower absenteeism
8. Enhanced child and family outcomes

Questions were posed to the group such as “how do you protect the time necessary for this work?” and “are you familiar with any models of collaboration already in existence?”

A copy of Michael Fullan’s article “Change the terms for teacher learning” (2007) had been emailed to all of the leaders, but only a couple of the participants admitted to reading it ahead of the session so they were given time to do so. 3 of the 4 groups immediately started to discuss the writing while the 4th spent the first few minutes reading. The key points made in this article addressed the issues with the current state of professional development; in particular how it inadequately meets the needs of educators. Fullan argues the need for job-embedded professional development, affording the staff time to collaborate in order to continuously improve practice.

After reading the article, comments and questions began to come from the participants such as;

- “Teachers have to associate training with their own children, their own classrooms.”
- “We have to find those teachable moments.”
- “How do you get others invested?”
- “It’s ok to make mistakes and try new stuff.”
- “What struck me is how hard it is to change the culture. Some don’t want to go to training, they are culturally stagnant.”
Participants responded positively to the key concept presented by Fullan: “personalization and precision”. As Fullan states: “personalization involves understanding and addressing the individual needs of each student… precision consists of meeting these learning needs in a focused, effective way, again as the needs occur- timely, on-the-spot precision, not packaged prescription” (Fullan, 2007). He goes on to suggest that this type of work can only occur if they are immersed in it on a daily basis so that they may adapt as the needs of the students change.

As the Ounce states in its narrative for this project and as evidenced in the Fullan article this model of professional development is different than that of the past. The focus of this discussion was the move from the traditional design of professional development the leaders had experienced in the past to the embedded model of professional development, a significant design component of the Professional Development Initiative (PDI) (Table 4.6)

### Table 4.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our Challenge</th>
<th>Traditional Professional Development</th>
<th>Embedded Professional Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supporting simultaneous transformations in the professional development mindset, methods, and practices of each educator group.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
After displaying the previous graphic, the facilitators asked questions such as: *what have you seen or heard from your teachers that signals they are learning?* One participant described the old way was to send teachers out and hope they come back with accurate information, but we are moving towards working together to infuse what you know and what I know. Another participant noted that traditional PD is really irrelevant now. The answers can’t be to look for trainings to send you to, but to work to learn by doing. A third participant related this day’s discussion with one held during a teacher training lab. The teachers were asked to look at their “icebergs”, meaning understanding there is much more under the surface than above. She stated we are “used to focusing on the surface”.

**Module 3 Reflective Practice Group (January 22, 2013)**

The Reflective Practice Group for module 3 was held on January 22, 2013. It began with a review of the learning objectives from this module:

- Define the 5E, Building Professional Capacity through Routines of Collaboration
- Unpack the complexities of teaching and reframe our thinking from the “work of teaching” to the “learning is the work”.
- Explain why the complexity of teaching requires a transformation in our PD mindset, methods, and practices towards embedded routines of continuous learning and improvement.
- Describe how this 5E in particular helps us transform into a Learning Organization, and why routines of professional collaboration are key to staff learning, effectiveness, and improvement.
From there, the facilitators reviewed a few of the previous responses to the KWLH chart. One conclusion drawn from the participants was that, based on the KWLH, there is a need for a group effort for successful reform to take place. Another discussion prompt from the facilitators was for the participants to contemplate what it means to be a learning organization.

In this module, as with those prior, the intended and the implemented were closely aligned. While there were significant changes made ahead of the events, the facilitators stayed true to the revised agenda. In total, 17 leaders were to attend this session, and 9 did so.

**Intended- Module 4**

*Module 4: Ambitious Instruction (February 19, 2013)*

The agenda for Module 4 read as follows:

1. Welcome, Review Prior Learning, and Clarify Learning Objectives for the day
2. What do we Know now? What do we Want to know?
3. Define the Essential Support: Ambitious Instruction (Part One)
   a. What makes Teacher-Child Interactions and Instruction effective?
   b. Use CLASS lens and the language to explore what Ambitious Instruction looks like, feels like, sounds like in ECE
4. Break
5. Define the Essential Support: Ambitious Instruction (Part Two)
   a. What must be included in the Guidance and Support System for Effective Interactions and Instruction?
   b. What are the parallels between the Teacher’s learning and the Children’s learning AND the ways both types of learning are supported? What are the implications for leaders?
6. Plan for sharing and analyzing CLASS scores together
7. What have we Learned? How can we learn more?
8. Closing Reflections, Questions, Evaluation
The focus of Module 4 was Ambitious Instruction. The group was to look at the CLASS data specific to their individual sites. 15 of the 16 leaders involved in this initiative at that time were in attendance for this learning lab.

**Implemented- Module 4**

*Module 4: Ambitious Instruction*

The Leader Learning Lab for module 4 was held as originally scheduled on February 19, 2013. The session began with the participants completing row 5 and row 6 of the KWLH form—What do I Know now, and What do I Want to know, concerning the Essential Support of Building Professional Capacity through Routines of Collaboration. Following this exercise, the discussion turned toward Ambitious Instruction.

In expansion of the definition presented during the first module, the 5E of Ambitious Instruction was divided into two parts when presented during this session.

*Part One: All adults are provided guidance that articulates the "what" and "how" of teaching and learning for infants, toddlers and preschoolers. All adults endorse and use early learning and development standards and assessment information about children’s progress towards the standards to design meaningful learning opportunities. Teachers reflect on and plan intentionally for their role in providing children with interactions that are emotionally supportive, organized, and instructionally meaningful individualized to the needs of each child. All adults partner with families in continuing to learn about meaningful and effective learning opportunities for the children at home and at school.*
Part Two: A guidance system supports implementation and continuous improvement of interactions and instruction. Structures for implementation of curricula, assessments, and use of materials are coordinated across the program. While teachers may have substantial discretion in how these resources are used, teaching effectiveness depends on the community of practice and supervisory dialogue and feedback that supports implementation. When combined with a Child-Centered Supportive Learning Environments, Ambitious Instruction has the most direct effect on children’s learning and development. (Ounce, 2012)

A review of the Inclusive Exploration, Inquiry, and Decision Making cycle (appendix iv) followed a discussion linking Professional Collaboration with Inclusive and Effective Leadership. As with the previous learning lab, this one was centered on an article for discussion. The participants were asked to read “Poor teaching for poor children” by Alfie Kohn (appendix xiv). During the reading, the participants were instructed to pick out words or phrases that describe what they believed to be indicative of good teaching, and the contrary. They were asked to write their responses on the T-Chart provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pedagogy of Poverty</th>
<th>Pedagogy of Good Teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do these teacher-child interactions look like, sound like, feel like, and result in?</td>
<td>What do these teacher-child interactions look like, sound like, feel like, and result in?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Upon completing that exercise, the participants were instructed to use the language of the CLASS to map the characteristics of good teaching. While originally allotted only a few minutes on the agenda, this idea sparked quite a discussion. The facilitators asked; “When you reflect on
the highly effective learning experience you observed, what you think the teachers included in their plans for this experience? What do you think they desired for the children and themselves in this experiences? What do teachers need to think about when designing explorations, interactions, and instruction?”

As the discussion progressed, the participants began to make parallels between using the language of the CLASS with their work with the children as well as with their work with the staff. The facilitators asked the group to:

1. **Think about how the CLASS domains and dimensions help us to better understand the nature of interactions that support children's learning.**

2. **How can we think about these same domains and dimensions to help us advance the nature of supervisory dialogue and feedback that will support teachers' learning?**

*For example, how might the Quality of Feedback Dimension and its indicators like Scaffolding and Prompting Thought Processes apply to what a supervisor can do to support teacher learning and improvement of interaction and instruction?*

To conclude this event the facilitators asked the participants to state one adjective that best expressed how they were feeling. Responses included:

- Enlightened
- Hopeful
- Encouraged
- Percolating
- Excited
- Compelled
- Blessed
- Reflective
- Open-minded
- Fortunate
- Energized
- Supported
Unlike previous sessions, this one ended with a foreshadowing of the upcoming RPG. The participants were told that the next meeting would require them to look at CLASS data specific to their sites, share and analyze this data, begin to use the Inclusive Inquiry and Decision Making Cycle when planning to use the data for continuous learning and improvement, and discuss routines of this project as part of that plan. This event also differed from the prior one in that the participants were provided with a list of suggested readings to further their understanding of the 5E of Ambitious Instruction.

Module 4 Reflective Practice Group (March 19, 2013)

The Reflective Practice Group for Module 4 was held on March 19, 2013. A subsequent decision to modify the next Learning Lab, Module 5, was made in response to the discussions held during this RPG. While the leaders had been forewarned that this session would require them to analyze and discuss CLASS data specific to their sites, many were either disappointed or surprised by what they found. It was after reflecting upon some responses by the leaders present at that session when the facilitators decided to revise the course of the first year’s implementation. Responses such as, “we taught the teachers how to do this” alerted the Ounce facilitators that there might be some regression in thinking. It was necessary that they regroup and reiterate that while Ambitious Instruction is crucial to the success of the site, it is also linked to, and dependent upon the other 4 E’s. Facilitators decided to redesign the next module to remind the participants of the mission of this project. Until this session, the content of module 5
was to be that of Strong Ties among Families, Community and School, again showing evidence that the Ounce of Prevention was constantly assessing and revising its plan so as to maximize its success. 10 of the 16 leaders were in attendance for this session.

**Intended- Module 5**

*Module 5: Consolidated Learning about the Five Essential Supports for Continuous Learning and Improvement (April 16, 2013)*

Module 5 learning lab was initially designed to dive deeply into the importance of Strong Ties and Partnerships among Families, Schools and Communities, but was revamped to become an intensive review of the content covered thus far. The goal was to refresh everyone about the mission and the vision of the project. The revised agenda written for this module was closely followed in its implementation.

The agenda for Module 5 read as follows:

1. Welcome, Review Agenda and Clarify Learning Objectives for the Day
2. Consolidation and Application of Learning to Date
3. Break
4. Practice Supervisory Dialogue and Feedback to Facilitate Continuous Learning and Improvement
5. What have you Learned? How can we learn more?
6. Closing Reflections, Discussion, and Evaluation

**Implemented- Module 5**

*Module 5: Consolidated Learning about the Five Essential Supports for Continuous Learning and Improvement*
The Leader Learning Lab for module 5 was held on April 16, 2013. What was originally going to be a look at the next essential support—Strong Ties and Partnerships among Families, Schools and Communities—became a *Consolidation and Application of Learning to Date*.

The Ounce of Prevention’s objectives for this module were:

- Explain the key concepts of the 5 E’s discussed so far: Inclusive Leadership, Building Profession Capacity through Routines of Collaboration, Ambitious Instruction
- Apply the lens and language of the CLASS to their supervisory dialogue and feedback to facilitate teacher learning and improvement

Progress toward meeting these objectives would be measured through an analysis of the discussion and responses to the KWLH chart completed at the end.

Upon entering the room, it was immediately apparent that this lab was different. Around the room were posted the 3 Essential Supports discussed in-depth to date: *Inclusive Leadership, Building Professional Capacity through Routines of Collaboration, and Ambitious Instruction*. Next to the posters hung the articles and handouts provided to the participants during each of those sessions. The participants were instructed to rotate around to each display and complete each side of a poster-sized T-chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What have been the key concepts, principles, insights or ah-ha moments for you so far about…? [Inclusive Leadership, Building Professional Capacity through Routines of Collaboration, Ambitious Instruction]</th>
<th>What initial steps have you taken to apply…? [Inclusive Leadership, Building Professional Capacity through Routines of Collaboration, Ambitious Instruction] to your practice and/or your center?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

95
Volunteers were asked to share their responses. As the discussion progressed, the Ounce facilitators reviewed the key concepts associated with each of the Essential Supports.

**Inclusive Leadership:**

- Establish vision/expectations for children’s school readiness, family partnerships, and quality practices - then rally staff around this vision

- Teacher/staff influence in decisions impacting their daily work - create “buy-in” for the vision and improvements by including them in analyzing the current state, getting their perspectives, and working together towards the vision, towards improvement. By including them in making decisions impacting their work, you are more likely to come up with a plan that will actually work, that people will be more likely to implement. And they’ll by being part of the process, instead of it just being top down - they will feel more professional, more respected, more invested.

- Relational trust - Also when inclusive leadership is implemented there is greater relational trust, less us vs. them from both sides. Less defensiveness. People feel motivated to learn and to improve. They feel safe to try new things because they are supported.

**Building Professional Capacity through Routines of Collaboration:**

- Teaching is complex work - precision and personalization - must learn to use observation and assessment data to make individualized plans for children, must learn to read their cues and be sensitive and responsive in the moment.

- Learning must occur all the time for improvement to occur - because of this teacher must be learning all the time - with every child, every family, every group, every day. This kind
of learning isn’t necessarily new knowledge they get in training, but it’s the learning that happens on the job in the course of doing the work, trial and error.

- Embedding professional development into the routines of the program, supervisory dialogue and feedback, and teachers’ daily work supports learning and improvement on the job- learning must be embedded in the work- so must the professional development.

Ambitious Instruction:

- Clarity of pedagogy- the "what" and "how" of teaching and learning- what good teaching looks like, the intentionality that good teaching requires. Teacher must know the learning standards or the GOLD objectives. They have to use data to individualize, and they have to think about their role in the activities they provide- the Focused Teaching Cycle.

- Clarity of the Guidance and Supports for teachers to implement, continuously learn about, and improve teaching and learning

- Teaching effectiveness depends on the community of practice, supervisory dialogue and feedback, and job aids that support implementation.

Following the review of the 3 Essential Supports discussed throughout the first year, the facilitators moved to the idea of using Supervisory Dialogue and Feedback by asking, “How do we transform tradition supervisor reactions into reflective supervisory dialogue and feedback that facilitates learning and improvement?” The facilitators reminded the participants that this was an iterative process. If the plan is not working as well as hoped, authentic conversations had to happen and changes be made: innovation comes up when the solutions aren’t perfect. It is during this cycle of ongoing reflection, discussion and redesign that real changes are made. One Ounce facilitator observed that many of the leaders, when presented with a problem, were quick to jump to generating solutions- the old way of creating change- rather than working with the
teacher to fully understand the situation and advance that teacher’s learning. She reminded the
group of how critical it was to stay within the Inclusive Exploration, Inquiry and Decision-
Making Cycle instead of jumping to alternative plans. It was clear that the facilitators were
concerned with what seemed to be a regression in the thinking of the leaders. This was further
described to me during my interview with one of the Ounce facilitators.

**Module 5 RPG (May 14, 2013)**

Due to scheduling issues- unrelated to the program’s design- the Module 5 RPG was
moved May 21, 2013 to May 14, 2013. The focus of the RPG for this module concerned the
work of the leaders and coaches in facilitating discussions with the teachers. The leaders
expressed concern over the lack of continuity from the lesson planning to the lesson
implementation.

While the dates and the topic of conversation were modified, the facilitators covered the
content listed on the agenda presented to the participants on the day of the event. The final
Leader Learning Lab and its Reflective Practice Group were cancelled and not made up. It was
determined by the Ounce facilitators that the project needed to take a step back and refocus in the
fall.

**Leadership Consultations (conducted by Ounce coaches)**

**Intended Coaching Learning Context**

The third learning context for this project was that of the on-site consultations with
Ounce coaches (referred to as on-site coaching when working with teachers). The intended
consultation model consisted of two parts: direct supervisors consultations and leadership team
consultations. Because the Ounce believes that leadership is the driver of the other 4 Essential Supports, it is critical that they develop leaders to be ready, willing, and able to sustain the work at their sites after the project’s 3 year implementation. During the Leadership Team Consultation meetings, the group would explore the application of the 5 Essential Supports, as well as build and strengthen systems in an inclusive and inquiry based way to support teacher effectiveness and promote positive outcomes for children and families. The purpose of the Direct Supervisor meetings was to support the supervisors’ reflection and learning about embedded professional development routines, the support they provide to staff as they participate in the project routines, and the implementation of embedded professional routines to sustain teacher learning and improvement practice following the project (Ounce, 2012).

**Implemented Coaching Learning Context**

Because the consultations took place at each site and were only comprised of the leaders and the Ounce coaches, documentation is limited. The following are samples of minutes taken directly from the coaches’ reflections following Leadership Team meetings at each of the sites. I chose two sets of minutes from each site. No specific format was given to the coaches to record these meetings, so the minutes differ from site to site. The leaders are identified according to their site code and the number of which they were listed on the Ounce’s attendance sheet.

**Englewood Center (EC):**

When this session was held, the leaders had been exposed to the overview of the 5 Essential Supports (Module 1), as well as deepened their understanding of Effective and Inclusive Leadership (Module 2) and Building Capacity through Routines of Collaboration (Module 3).
March 14, 2013

Took a while for everyone to find a focus and determine common threads to talk about, which were lesson planning, observations, and time management. At the end of the meeting we began to talk about transitions, especially between EHS and HS (Early Head Start and Head Start). We talked about an inclusive conversation and exploration of the last topic.

Knowledge: Leader EC21 believes that if everyone is looking at the same thing (an observation) everyone should see the same thing. Leader EC20 is much more open with a more holistic philosophy of leadership. She encourages her teachers to be as autonomous as they can.

Skills: Leader EC20 needs a deeper understanding of what infant toddler development and curriculum should look like. She is reflective and instinctively recognizes good practice. She needs to be able to articulate philosophy.

Disposition: Both supervisors recognize the importance of collaboration with each other, the leadership, and with their teachers. Leader EC21 seems to have greater difficulty with supervisor/teacher boundaries, which gets in her way of being an effective supervisor. Leader EC20 believes in inclusive leaderships and encourages her staff to look at and take ownership of their own practice. She advocates for them so that they can advocate for their families.

The coaches’ reflections indicate that the leaders at Englewood Center agree on the importance of professional collaboration and, while they seem to understand the significance of inclusive leadership, have not quite developed the skills necessary for implementing it successfully.
July 11, 2013

This meeting was held at the end of the first year. The leadership had, not only completed
the learning labs for the first three supports, but had also had a comprehensive review of each in
the Module 5 Learning Lab.

*The leadership doesn’t seem to buy in to the idea of inclusive leadership on any level. Never
once during the meeting did they entertain the idea to involve the teachers. Even when asked
directly.*

*According to the teachers, they learned of the changes on Friday and it happened on the
following Wednesday. They were not involved in the process.*

While the leaders were able to articulate the meaning of the support, Effective and Inclusive
Leadership, the coaches reported they were not seeing it in practice.

Rogers Park Center (RPC):

May 3, 2013

As of this dates for the following two Coaches’ reflections- May 3 and June 26, the
leaders had had the overview of all 5 Essential Supports as well as detailed discussions
concerning Effective and Inclusive Leadership, Building Capacity through Routines of
Collaboration and Ambitious Instruction.

*In your words, what leaders ’/supervisors’ goal or practice were they working on in this
consultation?*

- The leaders were working on their goal of becoming a learning organization by
  meeting with leaders from a program that is further along on the journey of program
improvement than they perceive themselves to be. They also discussed the steps they have taken toward improving the “E” of Ambitious Instruction.

Briefly describe the process of how the goal/focus came to be identified.

- They identified the goal of wanting to become a Learning Organization back in January and the past few months have been focused around that goal.

Your reflections on knowledge, awareness, readiness or confidence that emerged (or did not yet emerge) from this session

- Both leaders have a high level of knowledge, awareness, and readiness to achieve their goal of program development. They really seem to be getting the content, if not yet the “collaboration” part with staff.

While they expressed the desire to become a collaborative learning environment, the coaches did not seem convinced that they were ready to fully commit to the idea.

June 26, 2013

In your words, what leaders’/supervisors’ goal or practice were they working on in this consultation?

- Plans to become a learning organization and create a system for Ambitious Instruction to move forward their agenda WITH using the Inclusive Inquiry and Decision Making cycle.

Your reflections on knowledge, awareness, readiness or confidence that emerged (or did not yet emerge) from the session

- It seemed like Leader RPC11 definitely has some declarative knowledge about “knowledge, skills and dispositions” and mentioned that the Action Research could
help advance disposition (she actually used the term) as it could help foster inquiry and curiosity about practice. She also shared how Leader RPC4 tentatively agreed to monthly early closings (rather than every 6 weeks or so)... Leader RPC11 also shared how pleased she was with teachers (3-5) “inquiry” at the data dialogue meeting about where they could improve (without seeming at all resistant or overwhelmed by any negative scores, or lower than ideal scores).

The leaders at Rogers Park Center seemed to be moving toward the idea of professional collaboration and inclusive leadership.

Ashburn Center (AC):

April 17, 2013

The day before this meeting the leaders attended the learning lab for Module 5 which, while changed from the original design, was meant to reinforce their thinking and understanding of the first three Essential Supports. The content for Module 5 was redesigned after considering the responses of the leaders when confronted with their site’s CLASS scores during the Module 4 RPG.

Reflections

Leader AC13 came to the meeting with an idea. The teachers liked looking at each other’s rooms and discussing what they were doing. Leader AC13 observed this natural interest and would like to use it for learning
The team wanted to discuss how to let teachers observe each other in a meaningful way in order to learn from each other

This fits with how to make improvements using DATA...How can they practice inclusive leadership in deciding the CLASS dimensions to focus on –how can they individualize for those at different levels with different strengths and weaknesses and encourage collaboration.

It clear the CLASS has made an impact on Rogers Park Center

It was clear that this site was still reeling from the less than expected CLASS scores.

May 15, 2013

All 3 leaders were present and engaged. There were minimal distractions and interruptions which we considered great progress.

They continue to be concerned about CLASS and other scores. They are not confident that many of the teachers understand the CLASS dimensions. They are also concerned about the quality of their written observations.

We were pleased that they are beginning to value teacher input and collaboration. Leader AC13 really likes the idea of having teachers observe in each other’s classroom and sharing feedback. We all agreed to focus on that next time.

The leaders at Rogers Park Center seem affected by their less than ideal CLASS scores presented during the March RPG. This was not only evident during this consultation, but the one prior as well. Although they did seem excited that the teachers wanted to collaborate among
themselves, the coaches expressed concern that the leaders were still not yet ready to share leadership with the teachers.

Near South Center (NSC):

April 3, 2013

As of this date, the leaders had attended learning labs addressing an overview of the 5 Essential Supports, as well as in-depth discussions of Effective and Inclusive Leadership, Building Capacity through Routines of Collaboration, and Ambitious Instruction.

*Leader NSC19 had some questions about the CLASS scores that they received. There were some questions about identifying the participating classrooms and the scores being sent to CPS. Leaders NSC19 and NSC9 talked about meeting with the teachers to discuss the scores. Teachers expressed the need for more clarification about the observations that led to the scores, but in the meantime are formulating action plans to help improve the low scoring areas. Leader NSC19 noted that some classroom teams may need some support from leadership to help them communicate more effectively as a team.*

*There was a discussion of the policies for transitioning children into the center. Leader NSC19 stated that she feels that parents need to stay. When asked about their philosophy on the issue of transitioning children into the center, Leader NSC19 restated that parents need to stay and that they are being more intentional about making sure that this happens. She also expressed the thought that maybe they need to let parents know when they come in or call to find out about enrollment, that they will be expected to stay to help the child transition into the classroom. The goal is to up the percentage of families that DO spend time transitioning into*
the new program even if it is only for an hour or two. Making it more of an expectation for families rather than a choice is what administration will be thinking about.

Next there was a discussion of the 5E’s and Near South Center leaderships’ understanding of what has been covered so far. Leader NSC19 mentioned that one of their milestones in terms of Fostering Inclusive Leadership was trying to develop leaders in the center by giving staff and teachers more responsibility for “making things happen.”

Leader NSC19 did mention that it was sometimes difficult to put decisions in the hands of other people. That you have to trust people because you have to hand off projects that are critical and not know if you are going to get good results.

We then talked about Building Professional Capacity through Routines. It was shared that 3-5 Head Teachers meet on Mondays to share information and do some collaborative problem solving, and that everyone meets monthly to share information or do an activity such as reading and discussing an article.

The discussion moved to lesson planning (Ambitious Instruction). Leader NSC19 and NSC9 also shared how they are working on a master calendar and have hired someone temporarily to provide coverage so that classroom staff can have protected time for lesson planning.

Both coaches feel they are now ready to work with the inquiry cycle worksheet. The focus will be peer observations but we will also work on connecting this plan to the CLASS and GOLD objectives.
June 20, 2013

In addition to the in-depth discussion of the essential supports of Effective and Inclusive Leadership, Building Capacity through Routines of Collaboration and Ambitious Instruction, the leaders at Near South Center had also attended the Learning Lab for Module 5 - a Consolidated Learning of the Five Essential Supports for Continuous Learning and Improvement when these minutes were recorded.

Leaders NSC19 and NSC5 were very reflective about the discussion of Ambitious Instruction. Leader NSC9 also seemed to be invested in the discussion. It was clear that they have done some thinking about this because they had very insightful comments and questions from the very start of the conversation. There was a lot of talking about how to move forward and how to help teachers with this process. There was also a high level of reflection about the Data Dialogue and how the process made the scores clear and how they plan to use this information. Leader NSC19 contributed some ideas for topics for the August 3\textsuperscript{rd} meeting, including something about teamwork. During the discussion about mentoring, Leaders NSC19 and NSC5 looked very critically at how what they have done in the past was and was not working, what changes might need to be made and ways to include the staff in making those changes.

Leader NSC19 started the conversation this time about Ambitious Instruction. She had very specific questions that she was wondering about and information about what has been happening so far. Leader NSC5’s level of engagement was also very high, with lots of comments and wonderings of her own.
Leaders at Near South Center seem invested in the ideas presented during this first year of implementation. They are reflective and engaged in the discussions, even thinking ahead to ideas for future meetings.

Findings for research question 3

3. How have the leaders responded to this intervention? Have they found this different from what they have experienced in the past, and how?

As discussed in the review of literature, the professional identity of center leaders in early childhood education is not that of leaders in K-12 education. While elementary and high school administrators see themselves as the instructional leaders in the building, early childhood leaders view their roles more as managers. The Ounce of Prevention recognized this disconnect and designed their project to first deconstruct and then reconstruct the leaders’ thinking. To improve upon the leaders’ practice, the Ounce had to do more than simply provide them with new knowledge; they had to change their mindsets as well. My third research question seeks to determine the extent to which the Ounce was successful in this approach by examining how each leader experienced the first year of the project’s implementation.

In order to begin to answer my third research question I wanted to get a sense of what they were expecting when they applied. Each site wishing to be part of this initiative had to complete an application. Information on the chart below was taken from responses included on the applications (appendix i). Three questions, in particular, helped inform this study (Table 4.7):

1. What changes in your own practices and in those of supervisors are you hoping to see and that you think will support effective teaching?

2. Thinking back to our approach to professional development on page 2 of the Investigating in Innovation Professional Development Initiative Overview, what is it
about this initiative that you think will promote the improvement in practice identified above?

3. Have you or other supervisors participated in any leadership development programs (e.g. Coaching for Success) in the past Or are you currently participating in any leadership development programs? If so, describe.

| Table 4.7 |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| **Hoping to Change** | **Why PDI?** | **Leaders’ Past Experience with Professional Development** |
| **Englewood Center** | We would like the supervisors and administrators to gain tools to provide more instructional guidance and support to teachers, support teaching teams as they engage in teaching and learning themselves, and understand how their personal learning translates to learning in the classroom. Because the work is often overwhelming, supervisors are not always able to provide the reflective support teachers need The emphasis is on “getting the work done”. The work must get done of course, however learning how to promote a team focused on how to support a learning space for staff and balance these competing needs would be beneficial to staff and ultimately the families we serve. | The overall program philosophy and program approach is consistent with the goals we want to achieve- and it is focused on the staff that need the training the most (teachers, family support and leadership). Most importantly, the use of the three learning contexts- Training Labs, Coaching and Reflective practice groups sets the stage for the greatest possibility that change will occur. We know that just training an isolated group is not enough to support sustained learning and change. The use of coaches, who themselves are learning, is in many ways modeling the process that the programs will need to implement long term. As we are moving towards introducing to our EHS programs, we see the PDI work as critical foundational work for this task. | The management staff has participated in the following leadership programs: The Next Generation of Leaders (NLU), Program Assessment Reliability Training; OPF Teach Leadership, Value, Vision and Legacy Workshop series CPS admin trainings. |
| **Rogers Park Center** | I am hoping that through this initiative we will gain strategies and skills that will enable us to provide pedagogical leadership to the teaching staff. This will help our staff feel supported as they work on improving their teaching practices. I would also like for us to learn how to establish learning communities and develop the leadership potential in our staff. | I believe the three professional development strategies- training labs, coaching and reflective practice groups- will promote the results that I am hoping to see. The training labs will fill any gaps there exists in our knowledge base. The coaching will help us to practice skills that we learn while the reflective practice groups will help to build a sense of community and establish a culture of continuous learning. | I have participated in Coaching for Results in the past. I am currently participating in the Bridging the Gap- Mentoring Connections program through McCormick Center on Early Childhood Leadership. |
| Ashburn Center | We are hoping that we will have more planning time. We also want to make sure that the curriculum is covering the diversity that we have throughout the school. The supervisors must be more observant and know what they are looking for. They must be comfortable with developmentally appropriate practices. Infant/toddler staff needs to perfect the teaching during routine care times. Staff needs to be aware of new theories, materials and activities that promote learning and share them with parents. All staff must use information from ASQ’s, ESI’s, Teaching Strategies, ITERs and the HS Monitoring Tool to improve instruction and individualized instruction. | This initiative will support the staff through the process of trying something new and making adjustments that help it to fit our children and families. It will give us time to consult with people who have more expertise than we have to improve our program and maximize our performance. It will help us to set higher goals. It will help us to better align objectives and outcomes with what we do in the classroom. The leaders and supervisors will also spend more time listening to staff and work together in developing the team, learning how to set the stage for change and progress, and strategizing how to engage families. | The directors at both sites are enrolled in the AIM for Excellence Program at NLU. |
| Near South Center | I am hoping that I will be more diligent in creating an effective system for reflective supervision and observation feedback. With that being said, I am hoping that the time and workspace to allow me to do this successfully will be given to me and that the systems that I create are not only supported but reinforced as well. | I think the Training Labs will help those staff members that may have limited knowledge and/or training. In addition, I feel that having a system in place such as a Training Lab provides one with accountability which may be a necessary motivator for being open to and implementing change. Also, Coaching will offer support with documented research findings that substantiate or give validity to practice. Lastly, Reflective Practice Groups will help staff to honestly look at themselves as caregivers and teachers of young children and decide if this is the professional route they want to continue on. |
Introduction to the 5 Essential Supports for Continuous Learning and Improvement:

Module 1

Following the completion of Module 1, the leaders were asked to complete an evaluation of their experience (appendix vii). The post evaluations were anonymous so it was not possible to connect the response with the particular leaders or sites. First they were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the presentation based on the following criteria:

- Subject matter was organized and easy to follow.
- Presenters used examples relevant to my work.
- Presenters were knowledgeable about the topics.
- Presenters involved the group through discussion and other learning activities.
- Handouts and visual were useful.

Secondly they were asked to rate their learning.

I have a better understanding of:

- The researcher rationale or “needs” for the Ounce PDI
- The Ounce PDI visions for success for teacher
- The “5 Essential Supports” from K-12 school improvement literature
- The definition of the Essential Support: Effective and Inclusive Leaders
- The definition of the Essential Support: Professional Capacity through Routines of Collaboration
- The definition of the Essential Support: Supportive and Child-Centered Learning Environment
- The definition of the Essential Support: Ambitious Instruction
• The definition of the Essential Support: Strong Ties and Partnerships among Families, Schools, and Communities

Lastly, the participants were asked to rate their level of satisfaction based on the following items:

• The information presented to me was new.
• I would recommend this training to others.
• I feel that follow-up trainings and consultation on the information is needed.
• I will be able to apply this training information in my work.

Overall the participants rated this module highly.

N=19

**OUR PRESENTATION** Scale of 1-5

| Subject matter was organized and easy to follow.     | Average: 4.5 |
| Presenters used examples relevant to my work.       | Average: 4.4 |
| Presenters were knowledgeable.                      | Average: 4.7 |
| Presenters involved the group through discussion and other learning activities. | Average: 4.7 |
| Handouts and visuals were useful.                   | Average: 4.7 |

**YOUR LEARNING** Scale of 1-5

| Needs of PDI                                        | Average: 4.2 |
| PDI Visions for Success                             | Average: 4.3 |
| 5 Essential Supports                                 | Average: 4.0 |
| Effective & Inclusive Leaders                       | Average: 4.3 |
| Capacity via Collaboration                           | Average: 4.2 |
| Child-Centered Learning Environment                 | Average: 4.2 |
| Ambitious Instruction                               | Average: 4.1 |
| Strong Ties among Family, Schools, and Community    | Average: 4.3 |

The participants were also asked to rate their level of satisfaction: yes=3, somewhat=2, and no=1

**YOUR SATISFACTION**

| The information presented to me was new.            | Average: 2.3 |
| I would recommend this training to others.          | Average: 3   |
| I feel that follow-up training and consultation on this information is needed. | Average: 2.8 |
| I will be able to apply this training information to my work. | Average: 2.8 |
Next the participants were asked to rate the following two questions on a scale of 0-10.

| How important do you think the 5E’s leadership framework will be in your efforts to continuously learn about and improve your leadership practice? | Average: 9.6 |
| How confident are you about applying the 5E’s in your work to lead and continuously improve and early childhood care and education program? | Average: 7.47 |

The final piece of the evaluation consisted of two open ended questions.

1. What would it take to get to the next number higher than the number you chose?

2. The following suggestions might help strengthen this workshop in the future...

Most of the participants responded that more training would be the answer to what it would take to advance them to the next number higher. Only five offered suggestions on how to improve this workshop.

**Effective and Inclusive Leadership- Module 2**

The following quotations were taken from the leaders’ responses to the KWLH charts, statement made during learning labs/ reflective practice groups and/or written on the posters hung around the room during the module 5 learning carousel activity.

“Teachers giving input and talking together made positive change happen more quickly and more effectively than if it just comes from me.”

“If you get insight from the staff they feel valued.”

“Everyone’s voice, no matter what, is essential to outcomes.”
So while these quotes were taken from different events, they do evidence the fact that the site leaders were developing an understanding and belief in the importance and value in a shared leadership model. These comments are representative of the entire group.

As with the first module, the participants were asked to complete a post evaluation for this module (appendix ix). They, once again, rated the event very highly.

N = 10

**OUR PRESENTATION Scale of 1-5**

| Subject matter was organized and easy to follow. | Average: 4.6 |
| Presenters used examples relevant to my work. | Average: 4.6 |
| Presenters were knowledgeable about the topics. | Average: 4.7 |
| Presenters involved the group through discussion and other learning activities. | Average: 4.6 |
| Handouts and visuals were useful. | Average: 4.8 |

**YOUR LEARNING Scale of 1-5**

| That the framework of the 5 Essential Supports directs my attention to creating conditions that support educators to be effective in their day-to-day work. | Average: 4.5 |
| The definition of the Essential Support: Effective and Inclusive Leaders | Average: 4.6 |
| Effective and Inclusive Leaders Dimension: Educator Influence | Average: 4.4 |
| Effective and Inclusive Leaders Dimension: Educator-Leader Trust | Average: 4.4 |
| Effective and Inclusive Leaders Dimension: Instructional Leadership | Average: 4.4 |
| Effective and Inclusive Leaders Dimension: Program Coherence | Average: 4.1 |
| Leadership as “social influence” versus regulation, monitoring, and control. | Average: 4.4 |
| How allowing leaders to emerge in your program assists you with motivating staff and building collective responsibility for improvement. | Average: 4.7 |
| How the Decision Making Cycle supports me with intentionally seeking staff influence to solve problems and improve their own practice and children’s outcomes | Average: 4.7 |

**YOUR SATISFACTION Scale of 1-3 (yes=3, somewhat=2, no=1)**

| The information presented to me was new. | Average: 2 |
| I would recommend this training to others. | Average: 2 |
| I feel that follow-up trainings and consultation on the information is needed. | Average: 0.9 |
| I will be able to apply this training information in my work. | Average: 1.9 |

The multiple choice section was followed by 4 open-ended questions. *(Few responded to this portion, all responses are included in this section.)*
• When thinking about the two dimensions- Educator Influence and Educator-Leader Trust- of Inclusive and Effective Leaders, which dimension most challenges you to think differently about your leadership style and interactions with staff? Please share how and why?
  o “It is my leadership style.”
  o “All are not convinced that [inclusive leadership] is the way to proceed.”
  o “I don’t really have a challenge with influence; I try to be inclusive with parents and teachers.”

• What are your beliefs and hopes about the benefits of problem-solving with staff to advance your quality improvement goals?
  o “I hope that the staff would be open and willing to participate in the problem solving to improve quality.”
  o “I believe this will empower the staff.”
  o Collective problem solving allows everyone to mutually invest in the overall program improvement process.”

• What concerns about problem-solving with staff to advance your quality improvement goals?
  o “My concern is with the staff’s willingness to participate.”
  o “Taking time to come together as a group to solve problems.”
  o “Dominant personalities.”

• The following suggestions might help strengthen this workshop in the future...
  o “Would love to see a session in action.”

Building Capacity through Routines of Professional Collaboration- module 3

At the end of this module, the leaders were asked to complete a KWLH (appendix xii). The responses to this assessment seem to support the need for professional collaboration. Many responses focused on the need of the leaders to provide opportunities for these types of collaborations to take place. In order for continuous learning to take place, the teachers and staff needed to engage in ongoing professional development. Some leaders indicated they had
arranged the schedule to allow for the teachers to observe each other; while others talked about how they are moving towards becoming solid learning organizations. One idea permeated the group: that it is important to move away from the disconnected in-service model of professional development and ensure the staff share ideas and work as a team to improve practice. These types of routines help the entire staff stay focused on the goals of the program. The old way was to send teachers out to workshops and hope they retained enough information to bring back and share with the others. The new way is to work together to combine the learning and thereby, build capacity.

As with the previous learning labs, the participants completed a post evaluation (appendix xiii). The participants rated this session highly.

N=12

**IMPACT OF THE CONTENT Scale of 1-4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>is USEFUL to me.</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is APPLICABLE to the work I do.</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has CHANGED my THINKING.</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has REINFORCED my THINKING.</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IMPACT OF THE LEARNING LAB EXPERIENCE Scale of 1-4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>my UNDERSTANDING of the content presented.</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the IMPORTANCE I place on improving my practices.</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>my READINESS to apply this knowledge to the work I do.</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>my MOTIVATION to try out the leadership practices.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**YOUR SATISFACTION Scale of 1-3 (yes=3, somewhat=2, no=1)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The information presented to me was either new or presented in a way that has advanced my knowledge.</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that follow-up Consultation will help me apply these leadership practices into my daily work.</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that follow-up RPG discussion will help me learn more from my peers about applying these practices into my daily work.</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**OUR PRESENTATION Scale of 1-5**

| Subject matter was organized and easy to follow. | Average: 4.6 |
| Presenters used examples relevant to my work. | Average: 4.6 |
| Presenters were knowledgeable about the topics. | Average: 4.7 |
| Presenters involved the group through discussion and other learning activities. | Average: 4.5 |
| Handouts and visuals were useful. | Average: 4.6 |

Unlike the evaluations from the previous 3 Modules, this post evaluation only asked one open-ended question:

*The following suggestions might help strengthen LEARNING LABS in the future...*

Only two participants answered the final question asking for any suggestions on how the learning lab could be strengthened, both of which simply commented on how much they enjoyed the session.

**Ambitious Instruction- Module 4**

The following quotations were taken from responses to the leaders’ KWLH charts, statements made and recorded during learning labs/reflective practice groups and/or comments written on the posters hung in the room during the module 5 learning lab. The codes used to identify the leaders correspond to those used in the attendance chart (Table 4.8) as well as the minutes recorded from the consultative meetings: L=Leader, EC/RPC/AC/NSC= site name, and the number is that of their place on the sign-in sheets. While these are not all of the comments made, they are representative of the group at large.
LNSC19- “Good teaching promotes a climate that is positive, interactive, engaging, purposeful, and intentionally planned to provide positive outcomes for all children. The activities are child-centered and provide varied opportunities for children to extend their learning.”

LNSC9- “Good teaching looks organized and engaging. It feels comfortable and welcoming. With good teaching you have rice conversations among most of the classrooms.”

LRPC14- “The children are engaged in their learning; exploring the environment and materials. Children ask questions and the teacher and child work together to find solutions.”

Responses to the KWLH chart following this module indicate that the leaders were developing both an understanding of and a belief in the importance of the essential support of ambitious instruction. The leaders expressed their understanding of what good teaching looks like and sounds like. “In classrooms where there is ambitious instruction, there is wonder and engagement.” “The teacher and children learn together.” “The teachers create experiences that promote higher order thinking and the leaders observe and provide critical feedback.”

This module ended with a post evaluation identical to the one from the previous module (appendix xv). The leaders in attendance rated this event rather highly.

N=15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPACT OF THE CONTENT Scale of 1-4</th>
<th>Average</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>is USEFUL to me.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is APPLICABLE to the work I do.</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has CHANGED my THINKING.</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has REINFORCED my THINKING.</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**IMPACT OF THE LEARNING LAB EXPERIENCE** Scale of 1-4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My understanding of the content presented.</th>
<th>Average: 3.8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The importance I place on improving my practices.</td>
<td>Average: 3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My readiness to apply this knowledge to the work I do.</td>
<td>Average: 3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My motivation to try out the leadership practices.</td>
<td>Average: 3.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**YOUR SATISFACTION** Scale of 1-3 (yes=3, somewhat=2, no=1)

| The information presented to me was either new or presented in a way that has advanced my knowledge. | Average: 2.9 |
| I feel that follow-up Consultation will help me apply these leadership practices into my daily work. | Average: 2.9 |
| I feel that follow-up RPG discussion will help me learn more from my peers about applying these practices into my daily work. | Average: 2.8 |

**OUR PRESENTATION** Scale of 1-5

| Subject matter was organized and easy to follow.                        | Average: 4.7 |
| Presenters used examples relevant to my work.                           | Average: 4.7 |
| Presenters were knowledgeable about the topics.                         | Average: 4.7 |
| Presenters involved the group through discussion and other learning activities. | Average: 4.7 |
| Handouts and visuals were useful.                                        | Average: 4.7 |

**Consolidation of Learning- Module 5**

Much of my findings for questions three-

*How have the leaders responded to this intervention? Have they found this different from what they have experienced in the past, and how?*- came from field notes collected during the final module, as well as their responses to Row 5 of the KWLH chart that followed. The leaders were asked to reflect upon their learning thus far in the implementation. Row 5 asked:

**Row 5: What do I Know now**

- Through the last Learning Lab, Coaches’ consultation and practice, and today’s RPG, please think about what you have learned about applying the lens and language of the CLASS Dimensions to you supervisory dialogue and feedback.
• Please write what you know now about this topic and the corresponding leadership practices.

In order to get a sense of the growth made, I compared these responses to those of Row 3 from Modules 3, 4, and 5 (Table 4.8). While Row 3 asked for knowledge gained, Row 5 was asking for the degree to which that learning has been put into practice, as an indication of the degree to which Ounce was able to disrupt the thinking of the leaders so that they could begin to reconstruct. Row 3 asked:

Module 3

Row 3: What I have Learned

• Think about, and then write, what new information you have learned today.
• Did you answer any of your questions from Row 2?

Module 4

Row 3: What I have Learned

• Think about, and then write, what new information you have learned today.
• Did you answer any of your questions from Row 2?

Module 5

Row 3: What I have Learned

• Think about, and then write, what new information or skills you learned today with applying the Lens and Language of specific CLASS Dimensions to your supervisory dialogue and feedback.
• Did you answer any of your questions from our previous Learning Lab together?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Englewood Center</th>
<th>Row 3 LL- Module 3</th>
<th>Row 3 LL- Module 4</th>
<th>Row 3 LL- Module 5</th>
<th>Row 5 Module 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEC2</strong></td>
<td>The notion that tradition PD is not working and there is a need for us to look at PD differently. Staff may not be interested in attending external trainings... They may get knowledge from the training, but how do they move into practice.</td>
<td><strong>LEC2</strong> - I liked the discussion on CLASS dimensions and how to relate it to your teachers to support them.</td>
<td><strong>LEC2</strong> - I have witnessed the results of communicating with staff in a safe climate and regard for students’ perspective. Watching how the teachers are open to and interact with the staff tells me that approaching communications with teachers in a different way can get different results.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEC8</strong></td>
<td>Since this was my first time offering the training I’ve learned about inclusive learned about inclusive leadership. Building capacity through routines of collaboration and ambitious instruction it was great hearing insight from other programs and what they are doing in their programs.</td>
<td><strong>LEC8</strong> - As I am still continuing to learn the model I’ve heard others reflect on their discrepancies on how their teachers are engaging in their child’s learning. Focusing on best practice teaching practices. Prompting teachers thought process and reflecting on their teaching practices.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEC10</strong></td>
<td>Using the CLASS dimensions-changing the “child” to learner and “teacher” to supervisor when supporting their learning.</td>
<td><strong>LEC10</strong> - The process of CLASS domains and dimensions and how they are pertinent to teacher growth and learning.</td>
<td><strong>LEC10</strong> - Being patient and letting process work pays off. Going backwards as a supervisor- that is making mistakes can be</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rogers Park Center</td>
<td>LRPC11- I learned the importance of approaching PD in a new way. I think I have always believed there was something wrong with the way PD was done... The LL reinforced my thinking and challenged me to think about what type of experiences we are providing our teachers.</td>
<td>LRPC11- I learned the parallels of the CLASS tool for teacher-child interactions and supervisor-teacher interactions. I also learned that continuous instruction happens within a system that is supported by protected time and collaboration.</td>
<td>LRPC11- I have learned to play through interactions with teachers in terms of how you will prompt their thinking, offering them regard for their perspectives.</td>
<td>LRPC11- I know that you should recognize teachers’ efforts as well as success. Also the importance of keeping teachers engaged in the decisions by prompting their thinking and offering them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LRPC7- I learned the meaning of ambitious instruction, exploring the tools needed to support ambitious instruction- the use of the CLASS as a tool to support ambitious instruction and the importance of collaboratively working alongside of the teachers to individualize needs.</td>
<td>LRPC7- I found it really hard to ask these questions in the moment. I found it really important for me to truly understand the CLASS language and practice with intention the supervisory dialogue and feedback. I also found how difficult it must be for teachers to use CLASS under pressure in the moment as well as thinking about all of the dimensions at the same time.</td>
<td>LRPC7- Understanding CLASS language has been extremely helpful as a parallel to support leaders to support teachers in their work. More and more I dig into the CLASS I am continuously learning what to look for and scaffold teacher on when they reflect on their practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashburn Center</td>
<td>LAC13- [I learned] ways to identify that teachers are learning. This program will spend a lot of time helping us to grasp and implement continuous learning. This is not just a research program that will end one day and we won’t truly be changed forever. The program seeks to embed a lifestyle of learning in each of us.</td>
<td>LAC13- I learned that it is very difficult to approach supervisory problems in a positive manner. It requires a lot of thought. It may require that the supervisor take time to get in the right frame of mind before speaking. Never begin the dialogue if you are stressed, angry or not feeling well.</td>
<td>LAC13- I have learned new phrases that help me start a dialogue with staff about issues that arise. We have been introduced to handling situations differently. We know we must speak in a professional manner to our staff. We have been given more details as to how and why it should be done. Now we understand why the coaches use the specific language that they use and we can see the benefits of that language. It creates and atmosphere of respect, collaboration and learning for all that are involved.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAC1- I now know that our organization is getting a better understanding of collaboration with staff. I know now that this will take some time to get better at this way of training.</td>
<td>LAC1- Using CLASS Dimensions to dialogue and feedback new skills. I learned to use all steps: positive regard for learner, quality of feedback- not to just pick one.</td>
<td>LAC1- I now know that it will take some time before I fully apply the CLASS lens and language to our supervisor dialogue and feedback. I know I don’t use all the time but when I do it works. The teachers open up and talk about what is</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**LAC16** - What I have learned is that behavior changes before beliefs. And that not all collaboration is equal. I also learned about the different forms for embedded PD and professional collaboration.

**LAC16** - I learned just as we use the CLASS to guide teacher interactions with the children, we can also use it to guide us as supervisor with the teachers. It is all about learning how to individualize for each teacher just as we do with each child-parallels!

**LAC16** - I learned a different way to look at the CLASS for the teachers and supervise them. I have tried this a little already however I think some of the steps have been skipped so it gives me more of a structured way of doing it.

**LAC16** - I know that it takes time to develop the language and apply the CLASS lens to our supervisory dialogue and feedback. I also learned that I am not the only one who may have some struggles with this and it was great to hear from everyone in the group about how it went for them.

**Near South Center**

**LNSC19** - All teachers, administration and support staff are learning all of the time. Teachers and staff need time and opportunity to engage in continuous and sustained professional development over time about the work and practices.

**LNSC19** - Model the practices with teachers on CLASS tools.

**LNSC19** - Ambitious Instruction is complex and requires much more planning and implementing changes and strategies to support outcomes for teachers and children.

**LNSC19** - Supporting teachers along the journey to improving practices by modeling the CLASS dimensions in our interactions and relationships. Being more present when meeting with the teachers and reflect more about how the meetings went and measuring happening and how it can be better.
LNSC9- I leaned that my role as a leader is a key component in helping teachers implement ambitious instruction. I can provide them with materials and feedback. I can offer protected planning time.

LNSC9- I have learned how to implement the CLASS dimensions as a supervisor. I have also learned how to effectively dialogue with staff when addressing my concerns.

LNSC9- Applying the CLASS dimensions to supervisory feedback is effective. In most cases it works. I now know how to implement the CLASS practices with staff in order to provide supervision and support.

The above chart displays the responses from leaders at all four sites from the knowledge gained (Row 3) to how they have been implementing the learning into practice (Row 5). Leader EC2 learned that this professional development initiative is different, how to use the CLASS when providing supervisory feedback, and now understands the importance of collaboration. Leader EC10 learned to use the CLASS when providing feedback thereby changing how this leader interacts with the staff. Leader RPC14 learned to approach professional development differently, how to use the CLASS tool when providing feedback and is now using the CLASS tool on a regular basis. Leader RPC7 learned to use the CLASS to support ambitious instruction as well as when providing supervisory feedback and now uses it in practice. Leader AC13 learned that this project is different than previous professional development in that it is
meant to do more than impart knowledge, but change practice and now uses feedback to create a more professional learning climate. Leader AC1 learned that building a community of collaborators takes time, how to use the CLASS tool in providing feedback and indeed now does use that tool. Leader AC16 learned that behavior changes before beliefs, how to use the CLASS in providing feedback and is now taking the time necessary to use the CLASS tool when working with teachers. Leader NSC19 learned the idea of continuous learning, how to model using the CLASS with the teachers, that ambitious instruction is a truly complex idea that requires support and now uses the CLASS to facilitate that needed support. Leader NSC9 learned that importance of protecting time for the teachers to collaborate, how to use the CLASS tool when providing feedback and now uses the CLASS regularly and feels it is working for that site.

**Three Constant Themes**

Three constant themes arose during this first year of implementation. Those themes were 1) the importance of protecting time for the staff to collaborate, plan and reflect, 2) the concept of using the language of the CLASS in working with teachers, and 3) that this professional development initiative is different and a more effective model than the traditional PD they had previously experienced. Evidence of these three themes was found in the KWLH charts, direct quotations by the leaders during the various events and their responses made during the Module 5 Learning Lab.

**Protecting Time**

The following quotations were taken from responses to the leaders’ KWLH charts, statements made and recorded during learning labs/reflective practice groups and comments written on the posters hung in the room during the module 5 learning lab. The codes used to
identify the leaders correspond to those used in the attendance chart as well as the minutes recorded from the consultative meetings.

Leader NSC9- “A key component to my role as a leader is helping teachers implement Ambitious Instruction. I can provide them with materials and feedback and protect time for planning.”

Leader RPC11- “I learned that Ambitious Instruction happens within a system that is supported by protected time for collaboration.”

Leader AC16- “As a supervisor I can help teachers implement Ambitious Instruction by protecting time where teachers can meet, discuss, and plan.”

Leader NSC19- “As a supervisor, I can acknowledge the importance of planning and provide time, space, and opportunities to improve practice.”

It became very clear that a key concern among the leaders of these 4 early childhood centers was that of finding the time and the human resources needed to support the learning and planning time of their teachers. While they did offer some suggestions, such as revamping the master schedule to shorten one day each week or hold meetings during nap times, this concern was repeated often and by many of the leaders.
Using the language of the CLASS in working with teachers

The following quotations were taken from responses to the leaders’ KWLH charts, statements made and recorded during learning labs/reflective practice groups and/or comments written on the posters hung in the room during the module 5 learning lab.

Leader RPC7- “If I think about this as a tool and use it with the teachers, I support the teachers’ learning as they support the children’s.”

Leader EC10- “I learned to modify the wording of the CLASS when working with teachers in evaluation of their work.”

Leader RPC14- “Use the CLASS and substitute the word child with learner in my discussions with teachers…”

Leader AC16- “We can use the CLASS in our interactions with teachers just as they do with children. It is about learning to individualize with teachers.”

Leader NSC19- “…model my work with the teachers using the CLASS.”

Leader EC20- “Good teaching can be encouraged using the CLASS instrument to scaffold feedback.”
According to its website the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) is an observational tool that provides a common lens and language focused on what matters - the classroom interactions that boost student learning (retrieved July 25, 2013 from www.teacherstone.org). CLASS observations are done through three domains:

- Emotional Support
- Classroom Organization
- Instructional Support

Within each of these domains are two dimensions:

- **Positive Climate** - focuses on how teachers interact with children to develop warm relationships that promote children’s enjoyment of the classroom community.

- **Concept Development** - focuses on how teachers interact with children to promote higher-order thinking and cognition. (retrieved July 25, 2013 from www.teachstone.org)

During Module 4 the Ounce facilitators introduced the idea of using the domains and dimensions of the CLASS to anchor their feedback sessions with teachers. It was discussed that, as with the teachers’ work with children, these three domains are equally important to the leaders’ work with the teachers. The intention was not to imply that working with the teachers was the same as working with children, but to think of them as learners; and therefore individualizing the feedback, recognizing their accomplishments and affirming their practice; exactly what they are asked to do with children. The response to this suggestion was dramatic, not only during the session, but in their responses to the KWLH charts. Using the language of the CLASS in their interactions with the teachers was mentioned by 10 different leaders. Many seemed relieved to find a structure for their feedback sessions. While the leaders were familiar with the language of the CLASS, they did not seem to think of it as a protocol to guide their discussions with the
teachers until this event. This theme shows solid evidence that the Ounce’s aim to first deconstruct and then reconstruct the thinking of the leaders is progressing as hoped.

**This professional development initiative is different and a more effective model of PD**

The following quotations were taken from responses to the leaders’ KWLH charts, statements made and recorded during learning labs/reflective practice groups and/or comments written on the posters hung in the room during the module 5 learning lab. The codes used to identify the leaders correspond to those used in the attendance chart as well as the minutes recorded from the consultative meetings.

Leader EC2- “The notion of professional development is changing; [the old way] is not working and we need to look at it in another way. They might get knowledge at outside PD, but how do they bring that new learning into practice?”

Leader EC6- “The teachers attending workshops doesn’t mean they will bring back the information.”

Leader RPC11- “I learned the importance of approaching professional development in a new way. I have always believed there was something wrong with the way PD had been enacted before. I see firsthand that knowing better didn’t always translate to doing better. This new learning has reinforced my thinking and challenged me to think about what types of experiences we are providing to the teachers.”
Leader AC13- “This is not just a project that will end one day and we won’t truly be changed forever; this project sets out to embed a lifestyle of learning in each of us.”

Leader EC20- “I will support my staff by learning to do the right thing in the setting where they work.”

One claim made by the Ounce in its application is that this project is different than the traditional in-service professional development experienced by most early childhood center leaders. The varied learning contexts allows for differentiated approaches to adult learning. While the learning labs are designed to deliver content, they are not sufficient at ensuring that information is put into practice. The consultative meetings are designed to contextualize that content while the reflective practice groups afford the leaders the opportunity to problem solve and examine their own practice (Ounce Narrative- Appendix D, 2012). Responses made during the labs as well as written in their KWLH charts seem to support the idea that this initiative is different than previous professional development experiences.

Fidelity of the First Year’s Implementation

There certainly were major modifications made to the original plan, but that is to be expected in a development project. Agendas were handed out and the facilitators covered the topics as planned. While some minor changes were made to the schedule of events, the biggest changes were made to the topics of each event.
Decisions about these changes were driven by the participants’ responses on their post evaluations, as well as comments made during each of the events. Ounce facilitators stated that this project is about *more than simply improving practice; it is also about changing behavior.* To successfully establish a program of continuous improvement, they must “deconstruct and then reconstruct” how the participants approach early childhood education.

While changes made to the content of the learning as designed in the original plan is an expected component of a development project, the fidelity of an intervention like this is dependent upon the attendance of the participants. The following table (Table 4.10) displays the attendance of the leaders at the first year’s Learning Labs (LL) and Reflective Practice Groups (RPG).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Intended Content</th>
<th>Implemented Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Module 1</td>
<td>Introduction to the 5 Essential Supports for Continuous Learning and Improvement</td>
<td>As originally intended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module 2</td>
<td>Effective and Inclusive Leadership</td>
<td>As originally intended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module 3</td>
<td>Child-Centered Learning Environments and Ambitious Instruction</td>
<td>Building Professional Capacity through Routines of Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module 4</td>
<td>Strong Ties and Partnerships among Families, Schools and Communities</td>
<td>Ambitious Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module 5</td>
<td>Building Professional Capacity through Routines of Collaboration</td>
<td>Consolidated Learning about the Five Essential Supports for Continuous Learning and Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module 6</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Postponed until fall, 2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Leader attendance: July 2012- May 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LAC1</th>
<th>LEC2</th>
<th>LS3</th>
<th>LRPC 4</th>
<th>LNSC 5</th>
<th>LEC6</th>
<th>LRPC 7</th>
<th>LEC8</th>
<th>LRPC 9</th>
<th>LEC 10</th>
<th>LRPC 11</th>
<th>LEC 12</th>
<th>LAC 13</th>
<th>LRPC 14</th>
<th>LS15</th>
<th>LAC 16</th>
<th>LS17</th>
<th>LS18</th>
<th>LNSC 19</th>
<th>LEC 20</th>
<th>LEC 21</th>
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<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**L** = Leader  
**EC/RPC/AC/NSC** = Center  
**S** = Participants not from the 4 ECE sites (responses from these were not considered in analysis)  
**Numbers 1-21** = leaders in the order as listed on the Ounce’s attendance sheet  
**LL** = Leader Learning Lab  
**RPG** = Leader Reflective Practice Group  
**NL** = Not Listed on attendance sheet  
**X** = not at event

Of the original 16 leaders to start the project in July, 2012, 15 were still with the project at the completion of the first year. 4 new leaders were added to the project within that first year,
one during the final month of the initial year of implementation. When asked about the sparse attendance of leaders RPC4 and NSC5, an Ounce facilitator indicated that these two leaders are actually site owners and were invited to, but not required to attend each of the events. According to Ounce facilitators, missed learning labs were made up on site to help ensure continuity of the learning.
Chapter 5: Analysis

Implication for Practice

Chapter one describes a primary issue with the current state of early childhood education: the need for high quality early learning and care as a critical component to the positive social and academic development of all children and the huge discrepancies in the pre-service training of early childhood educators and funding sources. Meeting this need is a great challenge. A review of the literature concerning early childhood education supports the idea that job-embedded professional development may, in fact, address this need with the limited training and resources available.

In its original i3 proposal narrative the Ounce of Prevention Fund outlined what they believed to be an effective leader in early childhood education. “Effective teaching requires an organizational context effectively designed and led to support teachers’ ongoing learning and practice. Effective leaders focus strategically and intensively on children’s achievement and on helping teachers to be effective. They promote alignment to standards and goals, tracking of children’s progress and rigorous curriculum implementation. They attend to the quality of instruction in their classrooms and they organize the supports teachers need to be effective, including building relationships among the teaching staff and between the teachers, families and the community…. There is an urgent need to cultivate an educational leadership perspective that has a strategic focus on children’s educational outcomes and the concurrent building of key systems of support” (Ounce of Prevention Fund, 2012).
To realize this vision of leadership, the Ounce initiated a three-year-long professional development program designed, among other intentions, to adapt the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research’s 5 Essential Supports to meet the needs of early childhood education center leaders. While the first year of implementation did not address all 5 in depth, evidence that the leaders found them important was apparent. The following remarks made by site leaders were recorded during the series of leadership development events during the first year of the professional development initiative.

“Leaders ask for input and insight rather than simply stating this is the way it is. Leaders also include the teachers in decision-making. I have learned that behaviors change before beliefs.” (Effective and Inclusive Leadership)

“Leaders create a culture within the organization that encourage teachers to question, think creatively and work together to reach program goals. Routines support teacher learning by providing time, space and place where the teachers come together to learn from each other and from themselves.” (Building Professional Capacity through Routines of Collaboration)

“Good teaching brings wonder into the classroom. These experiences are balanced between teacher learning and child learning and will lead to higher order thinking.” (Ambitious Instruction)

“Classroom environment greatly impacts children’s learning. The leader establishes this by providing feedback based on the CLASS.” (Child-Centered Learning Environment)

“Together with the teachers the leadership team is developing a system for bringing in new students that invites the parents into the classroom. This allows us to establish our expectations and make the parents feel welcome in the school”. (Strong Ties among Families, Community and School)

Such comments provide initial evidence of site leaders’ understanding of key constructs of the professional development initiative. As demonstrated in the Findings chapter, the leaders show evidence of both increasing their understanding of the content as well as beginning to incorporate it into practice. Inherent in a development project is the notion that as the program
advances, changes and adaptations will be made as needed. Even though the Ounce administrators were unsuccessful in meeting their goal of covering all 5 Essential Supports, the evidence indicates that they were successful in positively influencing the leaders’ thinking with regard to three of the five—and as noted, the intention is to address the remaining two in year two of the project.

Three distinct themes arose during the analysis of this project. While these three themes were not the written goals of this project, they were implied in the Ounce’s definition of effective leadership.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.1</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>This initiative is different from traditional professional development.</td>
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<td>The leader must protect time for this work to be successful</td>
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<td>There is a need to develop a common language</td>
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Responses from the center leaders participating in this study evidence the claim made by the Ounce that this type of professional development is very different from what the leaders had experienced in the past. The Ounce PDI employed varied learning contexts “to support the transfer of knowledge into daily decision-making and practice” (Ounce, 2012), which it is safe
to assume is the general idea behind most professional development of educators and educational leadership.

An unwritten goal of the project was to deconstruct the thinking of the leaders in order to reconstruct it. This idea is supported in the literature concerning the professional identity of the leaders in early childhood education. While K-12 school leaders see themselves as instructional leaders, early childhood center leaders are less likely to (Rodd, 1994). The Ounce hopes to change this notion. This project, however, in contrast to most traditional professional development, seeks to be truly job-embedded. Through a review of the literature it is clear that the notion of job-embedded professional development is not a new idea, but is of particular importance in early childhood education due to the widely varying levels of pre-service teacher training, as well as the developmental needs of low-income and second-language learners who will soon find themselves in K-12 schools. Job-embedded professional development employs empirically tested theories and practices intended to further inform the fields of research and practice while at the same time addressing challenges of practice where it takes place (van der Akker et al., 1999). In other words, a professional development model that is job-embedded not only addresses content necessary to improving practice, but also ensures its application by being grounded in teachers’ daily practice and being more interested in establishing a cycle of continuous improvement rather than simply imparting new knowledge (Croft et al., 2010).

This study reiterates the importance of creating a job-embedded professional development model. Some conclusions drawn from the minutes taken by the coaches during on-site consultations seem to indicate an understanding of the content, but some issues in its implementation also surfaced:
• While the leaders were able to articulate the meaning of the support, Effective and Inclusive Leadership, the coaches reported they were not always seeing it in practice. (Englewood Center)

• While they expressed the desire to become a collaborative learning environment, the coaches did not seem convinced that they were ready to fully commit to the idea. (Rogers Park Center)

• Clearly the leaders at Ashburn Center were affected by their less than ideal CLASS scores presented during the March RPG. This was evidenced through the coaches’ notes during two separate consultations. Although they did seem excited that the teachers wanted to collaborate among themselves, the coaches expressed concern that the leaders were still not yet ready to share leadership with the teachers.

So, while evidence pulled from my field notes and written responses made by the leaders indicate buy-in to the content presented, application of these ideas is less evident. Without the on-site coaching to help apply the learning to practice, these concerns would not only go unchallenged, but also unanswered—much of the problem associated with traditional professional development.

While the leaders were exposed to and reflected upon the content presented off-site, on-site consultations with the coaches revealed issues with translating that learning into practice. This certainly raises concerns because the leader must develop a school culture in which this type of continuous learning is considered an essential component of professional practice.

The three themes closely align with three of the 5 Essential Supports addressed during the first year indicated that, while the Ounce did not reach its original goal of covering all 5 Supports, those they did address have become part of the leaders’ mindsets: an obvious goal of
this initiative. As evidenced in chapter 1, funding for early childhood is precarious at best, but the need to improve the quality of early childhood experiences is priceless. The apparent internalization of these three themes demonstrates that real change is possible with the limited resources available if the leaders think strategically.

**Early evidence: Application Statements**

To further answer how the leaders were experiencing this initiative I looked back at their responses to one particular question on the Ounce PDI application, comparing what they hoped to get from the initiative with comments made throughout the first year of implementation. While these responses were written prior to the start of the initiative, they seem to indicate an early inclination toward the three themes discovered through this analysis (Table 5.2).

The application question stated: *What changes in your own practices and in those of supervisors are you hoping to see and that you think will support effective teaching?* (Ounce Investing in Innovations PDI Application, 2012). Throughout these statements there is evidence of the leaders’ willingness to accept the Ounce’s position that the 5 Essential Supports are as relevant in early childhood education as they are to K-12 education, as well as early predispositions toward the three themes that developed throughout the first year’s implementation.

**Englewood Center**

*We would like the supervisors and administrators to gain tools to provide more instructional guidance and support to teachers, support teaching teams as they engage in teaching and learning themselves, and understand how their personal learning translates to learning in the*
classroom. Because the work is often overwhelming, supervisors are not always able to provide the reflective support teachers need. The emphasis is on “getting the work done”. The work must get done of course, however learning how to promote a team focused on how to support a learning space for staff and balance these competing needs would be beneficial to staff and ultimately the families we serve.

Rogers Park Center

I am hoping that through this initiative we will gain strategies and skills that will enable us to provide pedagogical leadership to the teaching staff. This will help our staff to feel supported as they work on improving their teaching practices. I would also like for us to learn how to establish learning communities and develop the leadership potential in our staff.

Ashburn Center

We are hoping that we will have more planning time. We also want to make sure that the curriculum is covering the diversity that we have throughout the school. The supervisors must be more observant and know what they are looking for. They must be comfortable with developmentally appropriate practices. Infant/toddler staff needs to perfect the teaching during routine care times... Staff needs to be aware of new theories, materials and activities that promote learning and share them with parents.

Near South Center

I am hoping that I will be more diligent in creating an effective system for reflective supervision and observation feedback. With that being said, I am hoping that the time and workspace to allow me to do this successfully will be given to me and that the systems that I create are not only supported but reinforced as well.
Three Themes | Responses pulled from PDI applications
--- | ---
This initiative is different than past experiences with professional development. | • We would like the supervisors and administrators to gain tools to provide more instructional guidance and support to teachers... and help them understand how their personal learning translates to learning in the classroom
• Gain the skills that will enable us to provide pedagogical leadership to the staff

There is a need to protect time for this work. | • Supporting teaching teams as they engage in teaching and learning themselves
• Have more planning time

There is a need to establish a common language among the staff. | • Providing reflective feedback for the teachers
• Establish learning communities
• [Establish] an effective system for reflective supervision and observation feedback

This Ounce of Prevention PDI is a three-year long project. The aim at the end of these three years would be to have changed practice and mindsets such that each site is ready, willing and able to sustain this work after the Ounce team is gone. During an interview with one of the Ounce facilitators I learned that the aim of this project was to initially deconstruct the thinking of the leaders in order to reconstruct it. The Ounce strives to build the professional identity of the site leaders so that they view themselves as instructional leaders, an identity rarely found in an early childhood education leader.

While some issues did arise during the first year, the Ounce was able to make adjustments and achieve a level of success in achieving school leader identities as instructional leaders. One issue concerned the attendance of the leaders at the monthly events. The Ounce
was able to mitigate the effects of some leaders’ sporadic attendance by meeting with them at a later time to discuss the content of the event. This raises a concern when considering the notion of bringing this project to scale. Attendance at each of the learning contexts is an essential component to the success of such an ambitious project because this model is cyclical. High quality reflective practice requires an introduction to the content presented at the learning labs, while the effectiveness of the on-site consultations depends upon a grasp of the content and a chance to reflect upon practice. The leaders’ presence at all three contexts is paramount to optimizing the success of the program. Tracking attendance and making up missed sessions would be difficult with a larger scaled project—probably not impossible, but something to consider when envisioning scaling up.

Through an analysis of my findings, I was able to answer my three research questions.

A. **What is the intended intervention with leaders? What makes this kind of intervention more ambitious than what leaders have likely experienced before, and more ambitious than what the field typically requires of leadership professional development?**

The need to improve the quality of early childhood education is evident. The High Scope Perry Preschool Study (1960’s), the Abecedarian Project (1972), the Age 21 Cost-Benefit Analysis (2001), and the Campaign for Educational Equity (2005) emphasize not only the important academic gains provided the child, but also the social and economic benefits provided to society as a whole if we invest in early learning and care for all children. But access to early learning and care is only half the battle. If these experiences are not of high quality, they will not provide the solid foundation necessary for future academic and personal success (National Institute of Child Health and Human Services, 2012).
How do we provide these types of experiences in a field where the pre-service preparation of the educators range from that of a high school diploma to those that are certified early childhood education professionals? Even more so, how do we provide these types of experiences in a field where the funding sources are not only limited but, often unsustainable (NIEER, 2011)? The Ounce of Prevention Fund intention was to implement a professional development initiative that recognized these issues. Their three tiered approach is different than what the center leaders had experienced in the past. Traditional professional development simply employs the first tier- the learning labs (Neuman & Kamil, 2010). Without the on-site consultations and reflective practice groups, the leaders are not afforded the opportunity to apply their learning to their specific context. The goal is to build the capacity for ongoing professional development as a property of the site, for this work to continue after the Ounce team is gone. The key difference, then as suggested by the book, *Organizing Schools for Improvement* (Bryk et al, 2009), so influential in the design of the Ounce Professional Development Initiative, is the building of capacity for ongoing professional development as a property of the day-to-day organizational functioning of the site, as opposed to something that is a periodic event, such as a professional development workshop.

According to Varela (2012), traditional professional development commits three major sins: a) using a one size fits all mentality, b) isolating the content of the session from the daily practice of the participants and, c) providing very little, if any, follow up. The Ounce PDI is a job-embedded professional development model aimed at changing practice and mindsets; to do so, constant reevaluation must take place to assess the success of the intervention and make necessary modifications. Job-embedded professional development is a cyclical process, where
theories are generated, tested, reviewed, modified if needed, then retested (van der Akker et al, 1999). The Ounce model addresses the concerns presented by Varela (2012) in that it is designed to be flexible and reflective, provides coaches to help ensure the learning is adapted to each particular context, and provides continuous on-site follow up.

B. What is the implemented intervention with leaders? How completely has the PD design for leaders themselves been implemented?

While the Ounce did not cover the full range of material originally planned for the first year of implementation, they are committed to a development approach to implementing its model, and to the development research that will inform cycles of inquiry to improve its goal-setting and implementation. The goal of development research is to continuously reflect upon and make modifications to the project as necessary. Evidence from the leaders participating in this initiative seems to indicate that they are, in fact, meeting this challenge.

Even though the Ounce did not address all five of the Essential Supports in depth during the first year of implementation as originally planned, they stayed true to the professional development model as designed. All three learning contexts occurred with consistency. The cyclical nature of this initiative meant that learning from one event was built upon during subsequent events. Commitment to that feature was evident through the Ounce facilitators’ on-site visits with leaders who were not in attendance at various events.

The fidelity of the coaching component is more difficult to measure. While the coaches submitted minutes of their meetings, the thoroughness of these minutes varied greatly from one site to the next. According to the Ounce facilitator, while it appears that these meetings did occur with regularity, the depth of the conversations will be addressed in the next year of implementation.
C. How have the leaders responded to this intervention? Have they found this different from what they have experienced in the past, and how?

Through the Ounce’s deconstruct-then-reconstruct logic model, three distinct themes came up throughout the first year of implementation: a) that this initiative is different than any professional development the leaders had experienced in the past, b) the need for protecting time for this work to occur, and c) the importance of establishing a common language among the staff. This all goes back to the idea of moving from a role of manager attending to the day to day routines of the site to that of leader, with a broader mission and vision (Thornton et al, 2009). In their original applications, many of the leaders indicated a need to build their skills so that they can be more successful in their management and leading. They were seeking a professional learning model that was different than what they were finding in the field. Throughout the first year, discussions concerning the need to protect time and establish a common language indicate a growing sense of urgency in addressing them with specific actions. Written and oral responses recorded throughout the initial year of implementation suggest the leaders are ingraining these ideas into their practice and beginning to change their mindsets.

While the leaders are accepting the content of the discussions as necessary to improving their practice, there seems to be lesser acceptance with regards to the coaching component. One leader commented that she wished the coaches would sometimes tell the teachers what they are doing wrong because the teachers seem to want that at times, indicating that there may be some lingering attachment to the more traditional model of professional development. An Ounce facilitator stated this, too, will be addressed in the coming year of implementation.
Implications for Further Research

As evidenced in the review of literature, there is growing recognition of the benefits of high-quality early education and care, particularly in improving the academic outcomes for children living in poverty. The quality of those early learning and care experiences depends upon a number of factors, an important one being the quality of training and preparation provided the teachers. While some teachers and care providers in early childhood education have extensive pre-service training, it is not a requirement in many sites. The teachers and care givers come in with varying degrees of professional education; therefore their in-service learning is of utmost importance. The Ounce PDI addresses this concern with a comprehensive job-embedded professional development model. The next issue becomes how to bring this project to scale. How can good early childhood educational practice move beyond the work in a few sites to reach many more children, thereby effecting the improvements in practice proven to provide significant learning outcomes for children?

What makes the Ounce PDI so unique, in part, is that it is context specific. To be effective and able to be practiced at scale, professional development must be situated in content as well as context (Neuman & Kamil, 2010) (Birman, Desimone, Porter & Garet, 2000) (Birman, 2000). This brings up a serious concern with scaling up: we can no longer count on the prepackaged professional development models used in the past. This is certainly a more effective professional development design, but also much more difficult to manage. On the other hand, by conducting a federally funded evaluation of the effectiveness of this model in four sites that are so different from one another, the Ounce is building a case for replicating and bringing to scale across varied contexts. Four sites cannot adequately represent the variations
across an entire field, or even the city of Chicago, but there is preliminary evidence that the model is adaptable to different neighborhood conditions and sponsoring organizations.

The importance of early childhood education in improving future academic outcomes is evident throughout the literature, as is the crucial role of the school leader in improving K-12 education, but research concerning the role of the leader in early childhood education is lacking. The Chicago Consortium found leadership in K12 education to be an important catalyst for change. If it is inclusive and focused on instruction and strategic in its implementation, it can stimulate the development of the other 4 Essential Supports. The role of the principal in K-12 education is steadily changing to an instructional leader, but that shift is slow in coming to early childhood education. Because the long-term effect of early childhood education depends on the quality of teaching/care-giving, it is critical that site leaders have the capacity to boost teacher effectiveness. The research is clear that both school leadership and early learning experiences play a key role in promoting student success, but little research has been done connecting those two fields to concern the role of the leaders in early childhood education.
Appendix i.

Section 1- Agency and Site Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency name:</th>
<th>Phone:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
<td>Zip Code:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary contact name:</td>
<td>Title:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary contact phone:</td>
<td>Email:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secondary contact name:</td>
<td>Title:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secondary contact phone (if different than above) or extension if same as above</td>
<td>Email:</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participating Site name (if in addition to or different from above)</th>
<th>Phone:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
<td>Zip code:</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Agency</th>
<th>Funding Sources for 0-5 Center-Based Program</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not-for-profit child care center</td>
<td>Child Care Assistance</td>
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<td>For-profit child care center</td>
<td>Head Start</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faith-based organization</td>
<td>Early Head Start</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community-based organization</td>
<td>Preschool for All</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Prevention Initiative</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Private pay/tuition</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Other: Agency support</td>
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<td>Site Numbers</td>
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<td>Total number of children served:</td>
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<td>Total number of classrooms:</td>
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<td>Age range served:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total number of staff:</td>
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<tr>
<td>% of families currently in program eligible for free or reduced lunch:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of 0-3 children served:</td>
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<td>Number of 3-5 children served:</td>
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<td>Number of 0-3 classrooms:</td>
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<td>Number of 0-3 supervisors:</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early Head Start (EHS)</th>
<th>Head Start (HS)</th>
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<tr>
<td>If your agency has an EHS program:</td>
<td>If your agency has an HS program:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Length of time with EHS:</td>
<td>Length of time with HS:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who is the grantee and/or partner?</td>
<td>Who is the grantee and/or partner:</td>
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</table>

**Section 2- Site Status**

**Prevention Initiative**

What level of the CPS Prevention Initiative model has the site achieved?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
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Please describe your plans to achieve the next level:

**Quality Rating System**

Has the participating site been evaluated for the IL Quality Rating System?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What level has been achieved?</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date of last QRS rating:</td>
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</table>

Please describe your plans to apply or to achieve the next level in the Quality Rating System.
### NAEYCA accreditation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is the participating site NAEYCA accredited?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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**What are your plans, if any, for NAEYCA accreditation?**

### Early/Head Start

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of the last self-assessment:</th>
<th>Date of the last Federal Review:</th>
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<tr>
<th>Were any deficiencies found in the most recent Federal Review?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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**Please describe any aspects of your program that the Federal Review team complimented you on:**

### Section 3- Staff to Participate in the Professional Development Initiative

Please list the program administrators and supervisors who would participate in the Professional Development Initiative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Job Title</th>
<th>Number of supervisees</th>
<th>Length of time in position</th>
<th>Length of time at this agency</th>
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Please list the 0-3 teachers who would participate in the Professional Development Initiative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Job Title</th>
<th>Classroom name</th>
<th>Classroom Age Range</th>
<th>Length of time at this agency</th>
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151
Please list the 3-5 teachers who would participate in the Professional Development Initiative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Job Title</th>
<th>Classroom name</th>
<th>Classroom Age Range</th>
<th>Length of time at this agency</th>
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Please list any additional staff who would participate in the Professional Development Initiative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Job Title</th>
<th>Number of supervisees</th>
<th>Length of time in position</th>
<th>Length of time at this agency</th>
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Please explain here why these classrooms and staff were chosen to participate in the program. Also, please attach brief statements from the staff listed in this application describing why they are interested in participating in the Ounce PDI.

Section 4- Logistics of Training and Reflective Practice Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scheduling Monthly Reflective Practice Groups (RPG) for Teachers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please check when you and your staff would like to have the monthly reflective practice groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly group on Saturdays. Best time for 1.5 hour groups.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monthly group in the evening. Best time for 1.5 hour groups.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monthly group during the day. Best time for 1.5 hour groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly group on Professional Development(s) when center is closed to children.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Currently scheduled PD dates: Best time for RPG: Combination. Please describe:
Section 5- Experiences, Readiness, and Intentions

Through your participation in the Professional Development Initiative what changes in teachers’ practice are you hoping to see and that you think will promote or enhance children’s development, learning, and school readiness?

What changes in your own practices and in those of supervisors are you hoping to see and that you think will support effective teaching?

What changes are you hoping to see in how your program builds partnerships with families and engages them in their child’s care and education?

Thinking back to our approach to professional development on page 2 of the Investigating in Innovation Professional Development Initiative Overview, what is it about this initiative that you think will promote the improvement in practice identified above?

Describe successes and challenge you program has had in promoting improvements in practice/incorporating change into the program in the past. Discuss some of the lesson learned about the process.

Program Evaluation and Use of Data for Quality Improvement
How do you use program evaluation data (i.e. child progress and outcome data like the GOLD, classroom quality data like the ITERS or the CLASS, program administration data like the PAS, Head Start Self-Monitoring Tool, or NAEYC accreditation tool(s) to help inform ongoing improvements in practice? Please give an example.
Participation in Professional Development Opportunities
Have you or other supervisors participated in any leadership development programs (e.g. Coaching for Success) in the past or are you currently participating in any leadership development programs? If so, describe.

Are you or your participating staff currently receiving any coaching, technical assistance and/or consultation (e.g. CPS coach, Caregiver Connections mental health consultant, etc.)? If so, please describe the provider, the content, the frequency, and duration.

Transitions and Continuity for Children, Families, and Staff
What do you do to support the transition of children and families into your program, through your program, and into kindergarten?

What are your thoughts about the potential benefits of keeping children and families with the same teaching teams as long as possible?

Closing
Please describe anything else you would like us to know about your program.
## Calendar of Initial Year’s Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>Leader Reflective Practice Group</td>
<td>August 21, 2012</td>
<td>12:00-2:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leader Training: Inclusive Leadership</td>
<td>September 18, 2012</td>
<td>12:00-3:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leader Reflective Practice Group</td>
<td>October 16, 2012</td>
<td>12:00-2:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leader Training: Child-Centered Learning Environments and Ambitious Instruction</td>
<td>November 20, 2012</td>
<td>12:00-3:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leader Reflective Practice Group</td>
<td>January 15, 2013</td>
<td>12:00-2:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leader Training: Strong Ties and Partnerships Among Families, Schools and Communities</td>
<td>February 19, 2013</td>
<td>12:00-3:00</td>
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<td>Leader Reflective Practice Group</td>
<td>March 19, 2013</td>
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<td>Leader Training: Routines of Collaboration to Build Professional Capacity</td>
<td>April 16, 2013</td>
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<td>Leader Training: TBD</td>
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Appendix iii.

5 Essential Supports

- Inclusive Leadership
- Ambitious Instruction
- Child-Centered Learning Environment
- Building Professional Capacity through Routines of Collaboration
- Strong Ties and Partnerships Among Families, Schools & Communities
Appendix iv.

Data Dialogue and Inclusive Decision-Making Cycle

1. Analyze Data
2. Frame/Reframe Key Issues and Questions
3. Investigate Literature, field Expertise and Reframe Questions
4. Develop and Tune Action Plan
5. Carry Out Strategies, Collect Data, Recycle
Appendix v.

**Aspirations and Goals**

Name_______________________________________

What are you already doing to support teachers and enhance outcomes for children and families?

What aspirations and goals do you have in your efforts to continuously improve your leadership?

There is a need for leaders to focus strategically on children’s outcomes and with supporting teachers to be effective in their work.

Leaders cultivate a culture and the specific organizational supports that improve teaching effectiveness and enhance child and family...
Appendix vi.

Reflecting on the Five Essential Supports for Continuous Learning and Improvement

NAME: ___________________________

Reflection Protocol

Step 1. Value
• At this time, what do I value about the 5 E’s as an organizational and leadership framework?

Step 2. Clarify
• What would I like to understand better about the 5 E’s?

Step 3. Concerns
• What are my concerns about the 5 E’s?

Step 4. Explore
• What about the 5 E’s would I like to discuss further with my i3 Coaches?
Appendix vii.

Our Presentation

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<td>Presenters involved the group through discussion and other learning activities.</td>
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Your Learning

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Your Satisfaction

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<tr>
<td>I feel that follow-up trainings and consultation on the information is needed.</td>
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<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will be able to apply this training information in my work.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How important do you think the 5E’s leadership framework will be in your efforts to continuously learn about and improve your leadership practice?

| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

How confident are you about applying the 5E’s in your work to lead and continuously improve an early childhood care and education program? Please rate yourself on the scale below:

| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

What would it take to get to the next number higher than the number you chose?

The following suggestions might help strengthen this workshop in the future…
Think of a time when you had a situation to address or a problem to solve in the center (for example, the latest GOLD report shows most children are behind in language development, particularly the dual language learners; the licensing representative finds ..., a parent request) and you sought staff perspectives on the issue and their ideas to address or improve the situation.

- How did you seek their perspectives and ideas?

- Why did you seek their perspective and ideas?
• What happened? What surprised you?

• What did you learn from this?

On a scale from 1 to 10, when problems come up, how frequently do you seek staff perspectives and their ideas to address or improve the situation?

1 3 5 7 10
Almost never  Rarely  Fairly regularly  Nearly always
Appendix ix.

**Our Presentation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please circle your level of satisfaction</th>
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<th>Agree</th>
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<td>That the framework of the 5 Essential Supports directs my attention to creating conditions that support educators to be effective in their day-to-day work.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>The definition of the Essential Support: Effective and Inclusive Leaders</td>
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<td>Effective and Inclusive Leaders Dimension: Educator-Leader Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>How allowing leaders to emerge in your program assists you with motivating staff and building collective responsibility for improvement.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>How the Decision Making Cycle supports me with intentionally seeking staff influence to solve problems and improve their own practice and children’s outcomes</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>I will be able to apply this training information in my work.</td>
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<td>No</td>
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</table>
When thinking about the two dimensions—Educator Influence and Educator-Leader Trust—of Inclusive and Effective Leaders, which dimension most challenges you to think differently about your leadership style and interactions with staff? Please share how and why?

What are your beliefs and hopes about the benefits of problem-solving with staff to advance your quality improvement goals?

What concerns about problem-solving with staff to advance your quality improvement goals?

The following suggestions might help strengthen this workshop in the future…
Michael Fullan

Change the terms for teacher learning

Professional development as a term and as a strategy has run its course. The future of improvement, indeed of the profession itself, depends on a radical shift in how we conceive learning and the conditions under which teachers and students work. Five key ideas together foreshadow my argument and represent a clarion call to radically change our concept of what teacher learning should entail. These ideas are:

• Professional development as a term is a major obstacle to progress in teacher learning;

• We need to deeply appreciate the meaning of noted educator Richard Elmore’s observation (2004) that improvement above all entails “learning to do the right things in the setting where you work” (p. 73);

• Student learning depends on every teacher learning all the time;

• The first three components depend on deprivatizing teaching as teachers work together to continuously improve instruction; and

• Teachers’ working conditions are inimical to the four previous points.

Understand these five ideas and their interrelationships and you will understand the future of teacher learning over the next decade. Professional development involves workshops, courses, programs, and related activities that are designed presumably to provide teachers with new ideas, skills, and competencies necessary for improvement in the classroom. The notion that external ideas alone will result in changes in the classroom and school is deeply flawed as a theory of action. I am not only referring to irrelevant or poorly conducted professional development, but also to sessions that meet the highest standard of adult learning. These activities are not useless, but they can never be powerful enough, specific enough, or sustained enough to alter the culture of the classroom and school. One author went so far as to title his article, “Professional development: A great way to avoid change” (Cole, 2004). And professional development is a great way to avoid change — because it lessens the pressure for change, diverts people’s energy into thinking they are doing something valuable, and drains energy that should be directed at the hard work of changing school cultures that are deeply rooted in the past. Second, and more to the point, we have failed to appreciate the profound meaning and implications of Elmore’s (2004, p. 73, author’s italics) plaintive refrain that we have it all wrong: “What is missing … is any recognition that improvement is more a function of learning to do the right things in the setting where you work than it is of what you know when you start to do the work” — (and, I would add, than it is of what you know when you come from the latest workshop). And: “The problem (is that) there is almost no opportunity for teachers to engage in continuous and sustained learning about their practice in the settings in which they actually work, observing and being observed by their colleagues in their own classrooms and classrooms of other teachers in other schools confronting similar problems” (p. 127). In other words — my third point- every teacher has to learn virtually every day. Peter Hill, Carmel Crévola, and I have made just such a case in our recent publication, Breakthrough (Corwin, 2006). Breakthrough sets the high standard of what it would take to get full success (say 95% or more of students learning to be proficient in literacy and mathematics). We conclude that this high level of success is a mission driven at its core by moral purpose, but that the means of getting there require personalization, precision, and professional learning by teachers. Personalization involves understanding
and addressing the individual needs of each student as these appear day-by-day, week-by-week. Precision consists of meeting these learning needs in a focused, effective way, again as the needs occur and evolve — timely, on-the-spot precision, not packaged prescription. We then conclude that personalization and precision as just defined cannot possibly occur unless every teacher is deeply immersed daily in learning how to do this, all the while adapting to the dynamic learning needs of students, all the while getting better at meeting those needs. Obviously schools are not set up for personalization, precision, and professional learning. Such work is demanding, and is not professional development but ongoing learning. My fourth claim is that deprivatizing teaching will be much harder than anyone thought. Deprivatizing teaching changes culture and practice so that teachers observe other teachers, are observed by others, and participate in informed and telling debate on the quality and effectiveness of their instruction. I am not naive here. I realize that in punitive and otherwise misguided accountability regimes, teachers are ill-advised to open their classroom doors. But the research also reveals that even when conditions are more favorable, when implementation strategies are highly supportive, that many teachers subtly or in other ways play the privatization card (Fullan, Hill, & Crévola, 2006, pp. 2-8). Changing this deeply rooted norm of privacy is tough because such a change requires tremendous sophistication as well as some risk taking by teachers and other leaders. But the future of professional learning requires that we bite the bullet on this one. We are not talking here about just individual cases of teachers opening their doors, but rather all teachers, the professional learning community if you like, embracing this demanding standard. Fifth, all of these ideas come to a head in the concept of teachers’ and principals’ working conditions. Working conditions include the structures, norms, and physical and other resource factors that characterize teachers’ and principals’ daily work. No other profession experiences the dismal, limiting conditions educators face. In 1996, the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future reported a crisis of recruitment in the profession. Among other matters, the report recommended that focus should be placed on “creating schools that are organized for student and teacher success” (p. 2), or what I would call improving working conditions at the school level. No one paid much attention to this aspect of the report, and by the time the commission issued its second report in 2003, it had concluded that recruitment is less the problem than retention. Retention problems have much to do with poor working conditions. Addressing working conditions is critical to improving the capacity of the profession and is an enormously thorny problem. Focusing solutions only on structural matters (e.g. more time for teachers to work together) is a waste of resources. A whole set of issues must be addressed simultaneously: structure, norms, deprivatization, focus on results, improved instruction through continuous development, and the like. This revolution implicates governments, unions, school districts, schools, teachers and principals, students and parents, and community alike. Creating change will have to proceed with joint effort and on a pilot, evolutionary basis. Changes in working conditions should be guided by the four components described above. Nothing could be more important to the future of public education than tackling the fundamental agenda laid out here. I am reminded of Matthew E. May’s (2007) account of the principles underlying Toyota’s continuing and growing success over the course of a century. May boils it down to three basic principles: ingenuity of craft, pursuit of perfection, and fit with society (p. 3). None of these principles characterize the teaching profession, and that is why we must abandon professional development and make professional learning an everyday experience for all educators.

REFERENCES


Appendix xi.

Focused Teaching Cycle

- Standards & Curriculum Goals
- Observation, Screening, and Assessment
- Designing Explorations, Interactions, and Instruction
- Facilitating and Documenting Learning
- Observe
- Respond
- Reflect
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<th>KWLH GRAPHIC ORGANIZER CATEGORY</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Row 1: What do I Know now</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Think first about today's topic:</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Five Essential Supports for Continuous Learning and Improvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Then write what you know now about today's topic by responding to the following guiding questions:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. What do leaders and leadership do to support teachers to learn and improve?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How do routines of collaboration support teachers to learn and improve?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Row 2: What I Want to know</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Think about what you want to learn about today’s topic, and then write down 1-2 questions you have about today’s topic and leadership practices.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Row 3: What I have Learned</strong></td>
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<td>• Think about, and then write, what new information you have learned today. Did you answer any of your questions from Row 2?</td>
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<td><strong>Row 4: How I can learn more</strong></td>
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<td>• The information and leadership practices from this Learning Lab have me wondering about, thinking, or feeling?</td>
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• Think about all the information we explored in this learning lab. Of that, what leadership practices do you want to explore further:
  o With your Coaches in your onsite leadership meetings?
  o With your peers in the next Leader Reflective Practice Group?

**Row 5: What do I Know now**

• Through the last Learning Lab, Coaches’ consultation and practice, and today’s RPG, please think about applying the lens and language of the CLASS Dimensions to your supervisory dialogue and feedback.

• Please write what you Know now about this topic and the corresponding leadership practices.

**Row 6: What I Want to know**

• Think about what you Want to continue learning about the 5E’s and supervisory dialogue and feedback. Then, write down 1-2 questions you have that you would like to explore in consultation with you Coaches and through this Leadership group.
### IMPACT OF THE CONTENT

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<thead>
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<th>A LOT</th>
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<td>is APPLICABLE to the work I do.</td>
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### IMPACT OF THE LEARNING LAB EXPERIENCE

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<td>my READINESS to apply this knowledge to the work I do.</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>my MOTIVATION to try out the leadership practices.</td>
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<td>3</td>
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### YOUR SATISFACTION

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<th>NO</th>
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<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that follow-up Consultation will help me apply these leadership practices into my daily work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that follow-up Reflective Practice Group discussion will help me learn more from my peers about applying these practices into my daily work.</td>
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<td>3</td>
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### OUR PRESENTATION

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The following suggestions might help strengthen LEARNING LABS in the future…
Poor Teaching for Poor Children … in the Name of Reform

By Alfie Kohn

[This is a slightly expanded version of the published article.]

Love them or hate them, the proposals collectively known as “school reform” are mostly top-down policies: divert public money to quasi-private charter schools, pit states against one another in a race for federal education dollars, offer rewards when test scores go up, fire the teachers or close the schools when they don’t.

Policy makers and the general public have paid much less attention to what happens inside classrooms -- the particulars of teaching and learning -- especially in low-income neighborhoods. The news here has been discouraging for quite some time, but, in a painfully ironic twist, things seem to be getting worse as a direct result of the “reform” strategies pursued by the Bush administration, then intensified under President Obama, and cheered by corporate executives and journalists.

In an article published in Phi Delta Kappan back in 1991, Martin Haberman, a professor at the University of Wisconsin, coined the phrase “pedagogy of poverty.” Based on his observations in thousands of urban classrooms, Haberman described a tightly controlled routine in which teachers dispense, and then test students on, factual information; assign seatwork; and punish noncompliance. It is a regimen, he said, “in which learners can ‘succeed’ without becoming either involved or thoughtful” -- and it is noticeably different from the questioning, discovering, arguing, and collaborating that is more common (though by no means universal) among students in suburban and private schools.

Now, two decades later, Haberman reports that “the overly directive, mind-numbing… anti-intellectual acts” that pass for teaching in most urban schools “not only remain the coin of the realm but have become the gold standard.” It’s how you’re supposed to teach kids of color.
Earlier this year, Natalie Hopkinson, an African American writer, put it this way in an article called “The McEducation of the Negro”: “In the name of reform... education -- for those "failing" urban kids, anyway -- is about learning the rules and following directions. Not critical thinking. Not creativity. It's about how to correctly eliminate three out of four bubbles.”

Those who demand that we “close the achievement gap” generally focus only on results, which in practice refers only to test scores. High-quality instruction is defined as whatever raises those scores. But when teaching strategies are considered, there is wide agreement (again, among non-educators) about what constitutes appropriate instruction in the inner city.

The curriculum consists of a series of separate skills, with more worksheets than real books, more rote practice than exploration of ideas, more memorization (sometimes assisted with chanting and clapping) than thinking. In books like The Shame of the Nation, Jonathan Kozol, another frequent visitor to urban schools, describes a mechanical, precisely paced process for drilling black and Latino children in “obsessively enumerated particles of amputated skill associated with upcoming state exams.”

Not only is the teaching scripted, with students required to answer fact-based questions on command, but a system of almost militaristic behavior control is common, with public humiliation for noncompliance and an array of rewards for obedience that calls to mind the token economy programs developed in prisons and psychiatric hospitals.

Deborah Meier, the educator and author who has founded extraordinary schools in New York and Boston, points out that the very idea of “school” has radically different meanings for middle-class kids, who are “expected to have opinions,” and poor kids, who are expected to do what they’re told. Schools for the well-off are about inquiry and choices; schools for the poor are about drills and compliance. The two types of institutions “barely have any connection to each other,” she says.

Adds Kozol: “The children of the suburbs learn to think and to interrogate reality,” while inner-city kids “are trained for non-reflective acquiescence.” (Work hard, be nice.) At one of the urban schools he visited, a teacher told him, “If there were middle-class white children here, the parents would rebel at this curriculum and stop it cold.”

Among the research that has confirmed the disparity are two studies based on data from the periodic National Assessment of Educational Progress. One found that black children are much more likely than white children to be taught with workbooks or worksheets on a daily basis. The other revealed a racial disparity in how computers are used for instruction, with African Americans mostly getting drill and practice exercises (which, the study also found, are associated with poorer results).
Yet another study, by a researcher at Michigan State University, discovered that students in more affluent neighborhoods were given more choice in their reading, more opportunities to talk with one another about books, the chance to analyze and write poetry and to learn skills in the context of real literature.

Well before his brief tenure last year as New Jersey’s Commissioner of Education, Bret Schundler expressed considerable enthusiasm about the sort of teaching that involves constant drill and repetition and “doesn’t allow children not to answer.” This approach is “bringing a lot of value-added for our children,” he enthused. Our children? Does that mean he would send his own kids to that kind of school? Of course not. “Those schools are best for certain children,” he explained.

The result is that “certain children” are left farther and farther behind. The rich get richer, while the poor get worksheets.

To be sure, the gap is not entirely due to how kids are taught. As economist Richard Rothstein reminds us, all school-related variables combined can explain only about one-third of the variation in student achievement. Similarly, if you look closely at those international test comparisons that supposedly find the U.S. trailing, it turns out that socioeconomic factors are largely responsible. Our wealthier students do very well compared to other countries; our poorer students do not. And we have more poor children than do other industrialized nations.

To whatever extent education does matter, though, the pedagogy of poverty traps those who are subject to it. The problem isn’t that their education lacks “rigor” -- in fact, a single-minded focus on “raising the bar” has served mostly to push more low-income youths out of school -- but that it lacks depth and relevance and the capacity to engage students. As Deborah Stipek, dean of Stanford’s School of Education, once commented, drill-and-skill instruction isn’t how middle-class children got their edge, so “why use a strategy to help poor kids catch up that didn’t help middle class kids in the first place?”

Essentially the same point has been made by one educational expert after another, including two prominent African Americans in the field: Linda Darling-Hammond (who observed that the “most counterproductive [teaching] approaches” are “enforced most rigidly in the schools serving the most disadvantaged students”) and Claude Steele (“a skills-focused, remedial education…virtually guarantee[s] the persistence of the race gap”).

Rather than viewing the pedagogy of poverty as a disgrace, however, many of the charter schools championed by the new reformers have concentrated on perfecting and intensifying techniques to keep children “on task” and compel them to follow directions. (Interestingly, their carrot-and-stick methods mirror those used by policy
makers to control educators.) Bunches of eager, mostly white, college students are invited to drop by for a couple of years to lend their energy to this dubious enterprise.

Is racism to blame here -- or perhaps behaviorism? Or could it be that, at its core, the corporate version of “school reform” was never intended to promote thinking -- let alone interest in learning -- but merely to improve test results? That pressure is highest in the inner cities, where the scores are lowest. And the pedagogy of poverty can sometimes “work” to raise those scores, which makes everyone happy and inclined to reward those teachers.

Unfortunately, that result is often at the expense of real learning, the sort that more privileged students enjoy, because the tests measure what matters least. Thus, it’s possible for the accountability movement to simultaneously narrow the test-score gap and widen the learning gap.

What’s to be done? In the short run, Deborah Meier is probably right when she remarks, “Only secretly rebellious teachers have ever done right by our least advantaged kids.” To do right by them in the open, we would need structural changes that make the best kind of teaching available to the kids who need it most.

And we know it can work -- which is to say, the pedagogy of poverty is not what’s best for the poor. There’s plenty of precedent. A three-year study (published by the U.S. Department of Education) of 140 elementary classrooms with high concentrations of poor children found that students whose teachers emphasized “meaning and understanding” were far more successful than those who received basic-skills instruction. The researchers concluded by decisively rejecting “schooling for the children of poverty . . . [that] emphasizes basic skills, sequential curricula, and tight control of instruction by the teacher.”

Remarkable results with low-income students of all ages have also been found with the Reggio Emilia model of early-childhood education, the “performance assessment” high schools in New York, and “Big Picture” schools around the country. All of these start with students’ interests and questions; learning is organized around real-life problems and projects. Exploration is both active and interactive, reflecting the simple truth that kids learn how to make good decisions by making decisions, not by following directions. Finally, success is judged by authentic indicators of thinking and motivation, not by multiple-choice tests.

That last point is critical. Standardized exams serve mostly to make dreadful forms of teaching appear successful. As long as they remain our primary way of evaluating, we may never see real school reform -- only an intensification of traditional practices, with the very worst reserved for the disadvantaged.
A British educator named David Gribble was once speaking in favor of the kind of education that honors children’s interests and helps them to think deeply about questions that matter. Of course, he added, that sort of education is appropriate for affluent children. For disadvantaged children, on the other hand, it is . . . essential.
Appendix xv.

**IMPACT OF THE CONTENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The content presented in this learning lab...</th>
<th>NOT AT ALL</th>
<th>A LITTLE</th>
<th>SOME</th>
<th>A LOT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>is USEFUL to me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is APPLICABLE to the work I do.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has CHANGED my THINKING.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has REINFORCED my THINKING.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IMPACT OF THE LEARNING LAB EXPERIENCE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>This learning has INCREASED...</th>
<th>NOT AT ALL</th>
<th>A LITTLE</th>
<th>SOME</th>
<th>A LOT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>my understanding of the content presented.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the IMPORTANCE I place on improving my practices.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>my READINESS to apply this knowledge to the work I do.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>my MOTIVATION to try out the leadership practices.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

**YOUR SATISFACTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please circle your level of satisfaction.</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>A LITTLE</th>
<th>SOME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The information presented to me was either new or presented in a way that has advanced my knowledge.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that follow-up Consultation will help me apply these leadership practices into my daily work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that follow-up Reflective Practice Group discussion will help me learn more from my peers about applying these practices into my daily work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**OUR PRESENTATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please circle your level of satisfaction</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
</tr>
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Graduation: December 1995

CERTIFICATIONS
Illinois School Administration Certification Type 75
Illinois School Guidance Certification Type 73
Illinois Elementary Certification Type 03
Early Childhood Education hours- 6+

PUBLICATIONS AND AWARDS

City-wide Exemplary Counselor Award for curriculum writing

Awarded small grant to implement a Peer Mediation program

EDUCATIONAL CONSULTING EXPERIENCE
Chicago Public Schools
Chicago Public Schools Vendor #67323 8/2011- 8/2013
Be the Change Charter School
Design Team Member 7/2013- 2/2014
EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE
Zion School District 6  Zion, IL  2/2014-present
Shiloh Park School
Interim Assistant Principal

ASPIRA, Inc. of Illinois  Chicago, IL
ASPIRA Early College High School  08/2006-12/2007
Founding Principal- High School

Chicago Public Schools
Fernwood School
Principal Intern

TEACHING EXPERIENCE
Chicago Public Schools  Chicago, IL
Foster Park School  2/2008- 08/2009
6th. 7th Grade Teacher

University of Illinois at Chicago  Chicago, IL  1/2009- 8/2013
Adjunct Professor
Instruct course entitled Curriculum and Instruction for Middle School Teachers
Instruct course entitled Human Development

COUNSELING EXPERIENCE
Chicago Public Schools  Chicago, IL
Multicultural Academy of Scholarship  08/2009- 7/2010
Guidance Counselor

Office of Specialized Services  8/2004-8/2005
City-wide/ Lead Counselor

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Guidance Counselor/ Special Education Case Manager

Kelly High School  8/2001- 6/2002
Guidance Counselor

St. Louis Public Schools  St. Louis, MO
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Member of the American Counseling Association