

## Description of the Ounce Professional Development Intervention (PDI)

From 2012 to 2014, in partnership with Chicago Public Schools and the Chicago Department of Family Support Services, and with support from the Stranahan Foundation, The Crown Family, and a US Department of Education Investing in Innovation (i3) development grant, the Ounce of Prevention Fund designed, implemented, and refined our professional development intervention (PDI) in four community-based early learning programs serving infants, toddler, preschoolers, and their families. Our work involved 15 administrators and 60 teachers serving approximately 600 low-income, racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse children in Chicago.

The PDI aligns the professional learning cycles of four key groups of educators—center leaders, direct supervisors, teachers, and assistant teachers—to transform centers into learning organizations collaboratively focused on excellence and on generating improvement through strong organizational conditions, including job-embedded professional learning. The PDI is grounded in a systems understanding of educational improvement and includes three core components:

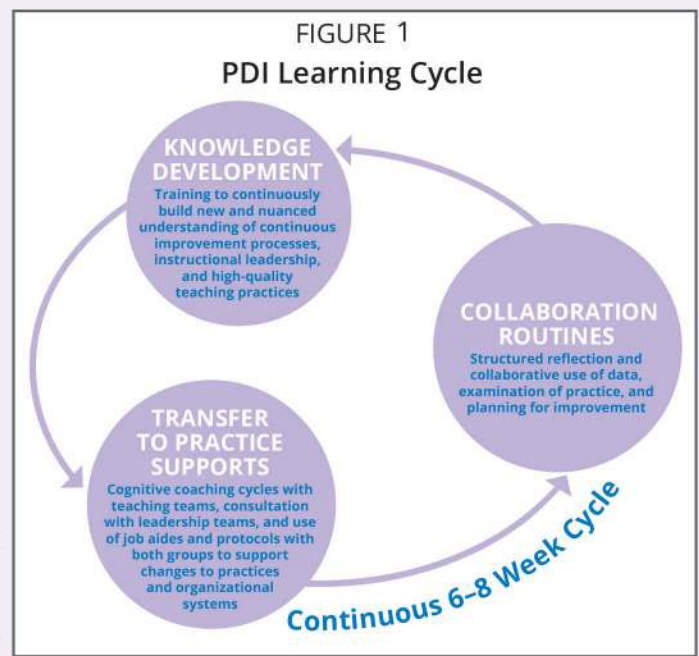
- 1. Intensive cycles of job-embedded professional learning.** These cycles develop role-specific knowledge, skills and dispositions of instructional leadership aligned to the five essential supports framework for improvement, and high-impact teaching and learning aligned to the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) respectively.<sup>1</sup> These intensive cycles spanned six to eight weeks and consisted of training to build knowledge, coaching and consultation supports to transfer that knowledge to practice, and reflective practice groups to support collaborative examination of practice and planning for improvement (See Figure 1).
- 2. Center-wide systems of job-embedded professional learning** that protect time routinely and structure teacher collaboration during the program week and month.
- 3. Job aides and protocols to shape complex work and decision-making processes.** These job aides and protocols systematize how people approach and deal with tasks associated with core practices, including center-wide decision-making, collaborative data dialogues, and lesson planning.

Job-embedded professional learning routines were the primary vehicle for advancing the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of the leaders, supervisors, and teachers during the intervention. These routines were also intended to be the vehicle leaders used to sustain gains and generate continuous learning and improvement in their centers beyond the intervention.

Our work was independently evaluated by the University of Illinois at Chicago, Center for Urban Education Leadership ([urbanedleadership.org](http://urbanedleadership.org)). The evaluation found that we successfully:

- Increased leaders' knowledge, skills, and dispositions with instructional leadership, including inclusive decision-making and facilitation of job-embedded professional learning that shaped a culture of collaboration, excellence, and improvement
- Established a system of instructional guidance and feedback, and weekly and monthly job-embedded professional learning routines structured by job aides and protocols
- Increased teachers' knowledge, skills, and dispositions with intentionally planning and deliberately implementing higher-quality interactions and instruction as measured by the CLASS<sup>2</sup>
- Realized statistically significant improvements in children's social-emotional learning and development

FIGURE 1  
PDI Learning Cycle



<sup>1</sup> Bryk, et al. *Organizing Schools*; Pianta, R., LaParo, K., and Hamre, B. (2008). *The Classroom Assessment Scoring System: Pre-K Manual*. Baltimore: Brookes; LaParo, K., Hamre, B., and Pianta, R. (2011). *Classroom Assessment Scoring System: Toddler Manual*. Baltimore: Brookes; Hamre, B., La Paro, K., Pianta, R., and Locasale-Crouch, J. (2014). *Classroom Assessment Scoring System: Infant Manual*. Baltimore: Brookes.

<sup>2</sup> Pianta et al. *Pre-K Manual*. La Paro et al. *Toddler Manual*. Hamre et al. *Infant Manual*.