



# Early Education Essentials

## A System to Measure and Strengthen Organizational Conditions Essential to Continuous Improvement in Early Childhood Education

Decades of evidence indicates that high-quality early childhood education (ECE) positively affects children from vulnerable populations — who are likely to start school with lower skills. Yet studies on ECE programs reveal that too few implement high-quality programming.

To date, efforts to improve high-quality ECE have primarily focused on what occurs *within* the classroom itself. However, a growing body of research on school improvement demonstrates that strong organizational conditions will be necessary to lift stagnant levels of quality in early childhood settings. Therefore, we are working to broaden the focus beyond the classroom to consider the organizational conditions that support the work of teachers and the relationships among staff, children, and families.<sup>1,2</sup>

### OVERVIEW

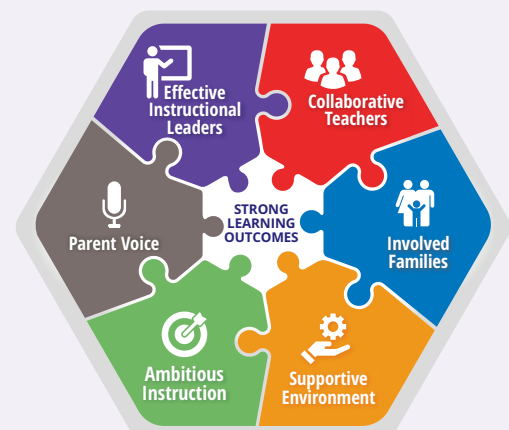
Early Education Essentials is a breakthrough new measurement system created in collaboration between the Ounce of Prevention Fund and the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research. This innovative system includes the following core components:

1. Teacher/staff and parent surveys that capture data on teachers' and parents' perceptions and experiences
2. Interactive Reports with Survey Data Visualizations
3. Data-use and Rapid-Cycle Improvement Tools

Early Education Essentials evolved from the five essentials framework and K-12 5Essentials surveys. Researchers adapted the teacher survey and created a new parent survey for ECE settings, then tested for reliability and validity.

Learn more at [www.theounce.org/eee](http://www.theounce.org/eee)

*Early Education Essentials measures the following organizational conditions\*:*



Relational Trust among Leaders, Teachers, and Families

*\*Definitions of each essential available at [www.theounce.org/eee](http://www.theounce.org/eee)*

1. Ehrlich, S.B., Pacchiano, D.M., Stein, A.G., & Luppescu, S. (2016). *Essential organizational supports for early education: The development of a new survey tool to measure organizational conditions*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Consortium on School Research and the Ounce of Prevention Fund.

2. Connors, M., Farwig, A., Kenefick, B., Wagner, M., & Pacchiano, D. (2018). *A new approach to policy: The case for strengthening organizational conditions to improve early childhood care and education quality*. Chicago, IL: Ounce of Prevention Fund.



## BENEFITS

We believe that a focus on program-level conditions is a critical, yet missing, piece in supporting improvements in instructional and emotional quality. Early Education Essentials is the ECE field's first measurement tool that: (a) comprehensively captures the complex nature of the conditions outside the classroom within varied types of educational settings,<sup>3</sup> (b) is feasible and cost-effective to administer and interpret, (c) is sensitive to variation across sites, (d) captures multiple perspectives, and (e) is associated with classroom and child outcomes.<sup>4</sup>

**Early Education Essentials provides reliable and valid survey data** to help ECE programs diagnose strengths and weaknesses in their organizational conditions. The teacher/staff and parent surveys can be used by ECE leaders and program staff to strengthen the conditions that enable more effective teaching and thus improvements in children's learning in early education programs.

The Early Education Essentials surveys were developed based on the 5Essentials (K-12) surveys and are **aligned to the 5Essentials framework**. Together, these provide leaders with a common lens, language, and metric to understand and strengthen essential organizational conditions across the educational continuum.

The **data-use tools within Early Education Essentials help transform data analysis** into a collaborative process, guide leaders to use the data to identify steps they can take collaboratively with staff to improve weak areas in their program. This collaboration then activates collective understanding, responsibility, and action for improvement.

### AVAILABLE TO BOTH EARLY EDUCATION LEADERS AND RESEARCHERS:

- 1. Early Education Leaders (School District & Community-Based Organizations)** including state leaders, organization and systems leaders, ECE program leaders, and influencers in the ECE sector.
- 2. Researchers** can use the surveys as part of their own research. Early Education Essentials has the potential to grow new areas of ECE research that can expand our understanding of program effectiveness and organizational conditions.

### ADDING STRENGTH TO SCHOOL DISTRICT AND COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS:

Early Education Essentials surveys and tools are designed for:

- 1. School District Settings:** Including pre-schools which are part of a larger elementary or secondary school and thus a K-12 district.
- 2. Community-based Organization Settings:** Including centers with a preschool program that receive public funding (e.g. Head Start, child care block grant) and/or private funding, such as community organizations, churches, and/or private schools.

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**OUNCE OF PREVENTION FUND** The Ounce of Prevention Fund gives children in poverty the best chance for success in school and in life by advocating for and providing the highest quality care and education from birth to age five.

3. Pacchiano, D.M., Wagner, M.R., & Lewandowski, H., with Ehrlich, S.B. & Stein, A.G. (2018). Early Education Essentials: Illustrations of Strong Organizational Practices in Programs Poised for Improvement. Chicago, IL: The Ounce of Prevention Fund and the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research

4. Ehrlich, S.B., Pacchiano, D.P., Stein, A.G., Wagner, M.R., Luppescu, S., Park, S., Frank, E., Lewandowski, H., & Young, C. (2018). Organizing early education for improvement: Testing a new survey tool. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Consortium on School Research and the Ounce of Prevention Fund.

Ehrlich, S.B., Pacchiano, D., Stein, A.G., Wagner, M.R., Park, S., Frank, E., Young, C. (Forthcoming). Early Education Essentials: Validation of surveys measuring early education organizational conditions. Early Education and Development. DOI:10.1080/10409289.2018.1556969

Zaslow, M., Tout, K., & Martinez-Beck, I. (2010). *Measuring the Quality of Early Care and Education Programs at the Intersection of Research, Policy, and Practice* (OPRE Research-to-Policy, Research-to-Practice Brief OPRE 2011-10a). Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration of Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

To learn more about Early Education Essentials:

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