

School Association for Special Education in  
DuPage County (SASED)  
Dr. Michael Volpe, Director



## SY 2018 End of Year Report

Funded through the  
Illinois State Board of Education  
Springfield, IL  
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## **Early CHOICES**

### **A Preschool LRE Initiative of the Illinois State Board of Education**

#### **Preface – Purpose**

Early CHOICES is operated through a grant awarded by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to the School Association for Special Education in DuPage County (SASED); 100% of annual funding for the project is from federal sources. Early CHOICES is the Preschool Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) initiative. We provide professional development and technical assistance to the early childhood community in Illinois. Early CHOICES assists ISBE in meeting their local needs by providing services throughout Illinois. Early CHOICES partners with the other technical assistance projects serving the early childhood community, such as Illinois Statewide Technical Assistance Regionally NETWORK (STAR NET) and Early Childhood Professional Learning (ECPL).

The purpose of this report is to provide a progress summary of Early CHOICES' activities for SY 2018. In SY 2015 Early CHOICES began as a stand-alone grant outside of Illinois Statewide Technical Assistance Collaborative (ISTAC). This is our fourth year as a standalone project. Early CHOICES worked to advance inclusive practices in the early childhood community. Data for the report was collected from ISBE and Early CHOICES assessment tools. The State Performance Plan (SPP) Indicators that impact preschool directly are addressed here:

- Indicator 6 Preschool Environments
- Indicator 7 Preschool Outcomes

The report is divided into sections by indicator. Each section lists and contains data relative to the activities Early CHOICES provides to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) or districts.

Early CHOICES also added a grant to our project that aligns closely to our work and has allowed us to expand our efforts. The grant is from the Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities (ICDD) to host an annual Illinois Early Childhood Inclusion Policy Summit. We hosted in February 2017 and May 2018.

## Early CHOICES

### State Performance Plan Indicator 6

#### Preschool Environments

#### Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment

**State Performance Plan (SPP) Indicator 6:** Percent of children aged 3 through 5 with Individual Education Programs (IEPs) attending a:

- A. Regular early childhood program and receiving the majority of special education and related services in the Regular Early Childhood Program (RECP), and
- B. Separate special education class, separate school or residential facility.

#### Charge from Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)

Early CHOICES staff will collaborate with districts as they support and increase the percent of children aged 3-5 with IEPs attending a RECP and receiving the majority of special education and related services in the RECP. The data below are the most recent SPP 6 A and 6 B data available from ISBE. While this overall report presents data findings through SY 18, the SPP data are a year in the rear and present data through SY 17.

#### SPP 6A: ISBE Early Childhood Students Ages 3-5 in Regular Early Childhood Programs and Receiving the Majority of Special Education Related Services in that Location

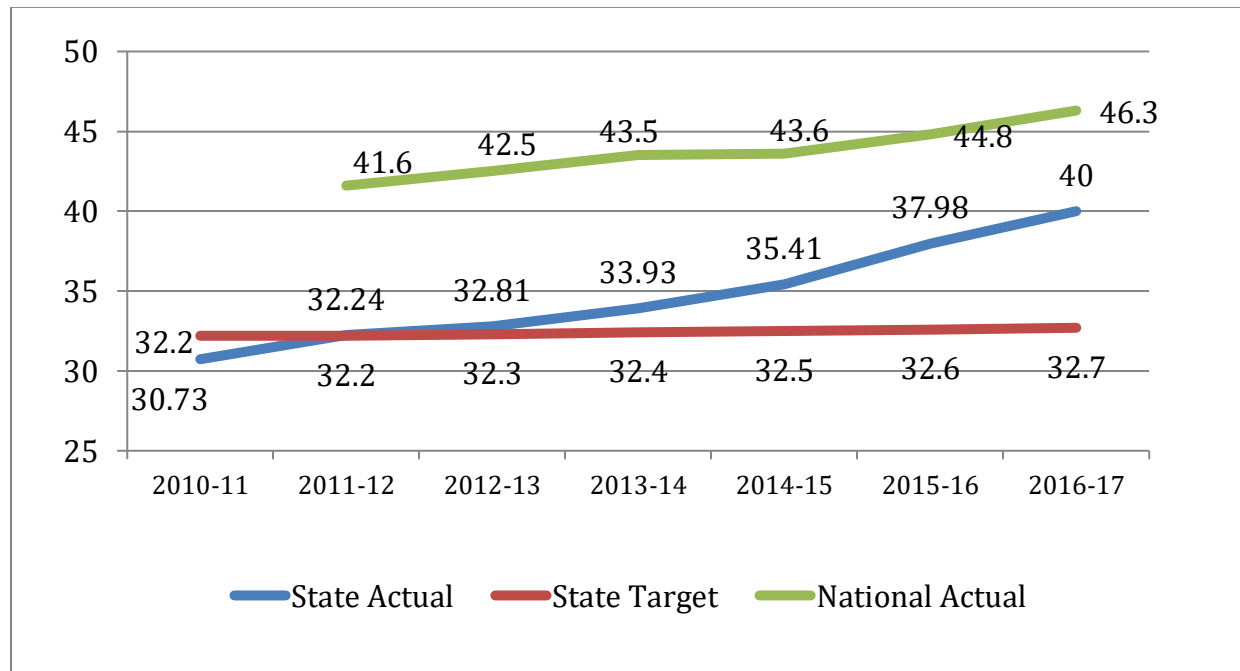


Figure 1 SPP 6A: Early Childhood students ages 3-5 in RECP

Timeframe	IL SY	FFY	# of students w/ IEPs in Indicator 6a	Total # students w/ IEPs	Ratio	State Target
2010-11	11	10	11213	36488	30.73	32.2
2011-12	12	11	11905	36929	32.24	32.2
2012-13	13	12	12311	37518	32.81	32.3
2013-14	14	13	12660	37311	33.93	32.4
2014-15	15	14	13312	37599	35.41	32.5
2015-16	16	15	14386	37878	37.98	32.6
2016-17	17	16	14902	37255	40.0	32.70

The percentage of students with IEPs age 3-5 educated in regular early childhood programs settings most of the day increased from 30.73 in SY 2011 to 40.0 in SY 2017. This represents an increase of **23%** over the seven-year school period. These findings suggest the state has met its targets relative to SPP 6A, 88% of the time or six out of the last seven years. This means that in SY 2017 approximately 3,689 more ISBE early childhood students were educated in regular early childhood program settings than in SY 2011. This trend is promising. In the seven years of comparison, Illinois went from being 26 percent behind the national average to being 14 percent behind the national average. While there is still room for vast improvement, the trend suggests Illinois is headed in the right direction when educating students with IEPs ages 3-5 in regular early childhood classrooms.

**SPP 6B: Percent of ISBE Early Childhood Students Ages 3-5 in a Separate Special Education**

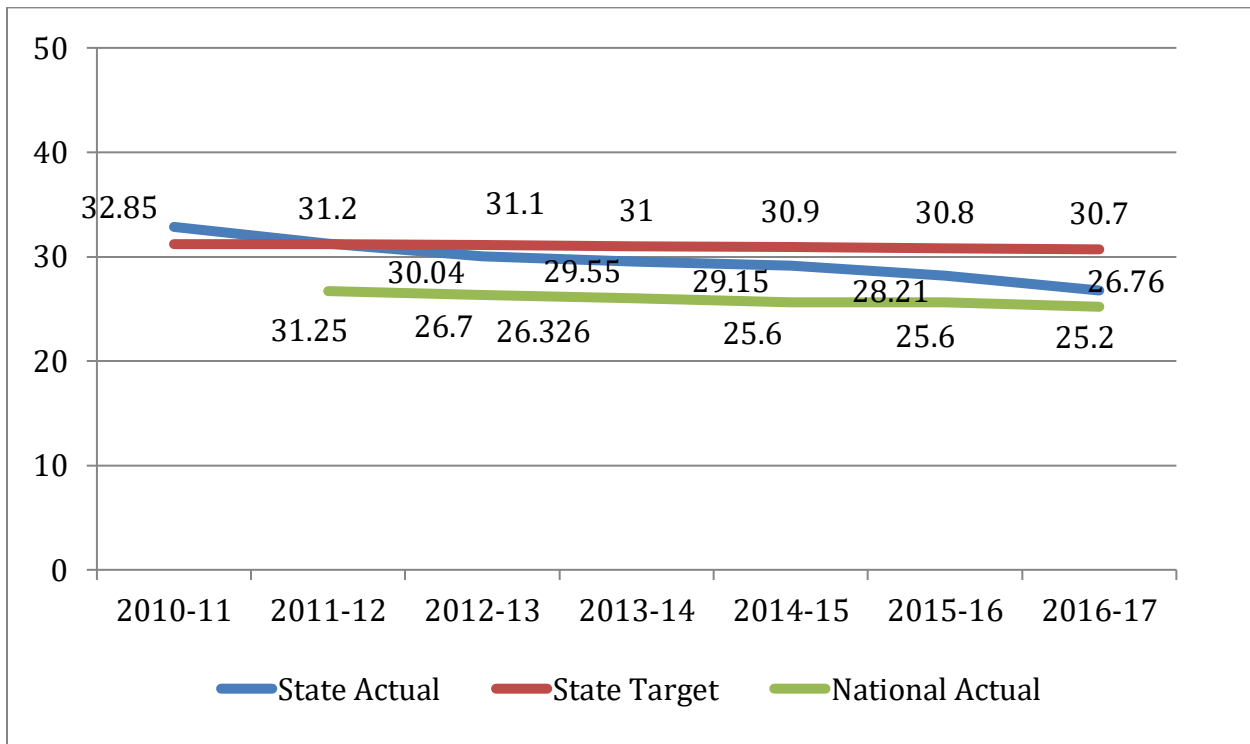


Figure 2 SPP 6B: Early Childhood students ages 3-5 in separate settings

Timeframe	IL SY	FFY	# of students w/ IEPs in Indicator 6b	Total # students w/ IEPs	Ratio	State Target
2010-11	11	10	11986	36488	32.85	31.2
2011-12	12	11	11540	36929	31.25	31.2
2012-13	13	12	11272	37518	30.04	31.1
2013-14	14	13	11024	37311	29.55	31
2014-15	15	14	10961	37599	29.15	30.9
2015-16	16	15	10685	37878	28.21	30.8
2016-17	17	16	9970	37255	26.76	30.70

## **SPP 6B Data Values for SY 2011 – SY 2017**

In SY 2011, 11,986 ISBE students, ages 3-5 received their preschool education services in a separate special education class, school or residential facility, representing 32.85 of all students 3-5 years of age with an IEP.

From SY 2011 to SY 2017, the percentage of 3-5 year old students educated in these restrictive special education settings decreased from 32.85 to 26.76, for a decrease of 18.5% over the seven-year period. This means that in SY 2017, approximately 2,016 fewer early childhood students with IEPs were educated in separate special education classes, schools and residential facilities than in SY 2011. The ISBE 6B data continue to trend in the desired direction. IN 2010-2011, Illinois placed 15% more students than the national average and in 2016-2017, Illinois decreased the gap to 6%.

## **Analysis Data against Early CHOICES Effort**

**Note: Early CHOICES has been unable to obtain SY 2018 SPP Indicator 6 data for this report. ISBE will release these data to Early CHOICES once the state has submitted SPP data findings to the US Department of Education. For all analysis in this report SY 2017 SPP6 data are used as the comparison point.**

### **Illinois School Districts with Early Childhood Programs New data for SY 18 121 Districts invited**

The graph below represents data on the 759 districts with early childhood programs in operation in SY 2016-17. Of the 759 districts, 16% (121 districts) placed more than 50% of their early childhood students with IEPs in separate special education classes, schools and/or residential facilities. The 121 districts are the same districts selected for TA in SY 2017. The 121 districts invited for TA support in SY 2018 will be the focus of the rest of the analyses presented in this report.

### Districts Targeted for Technical Assistance SY 2018

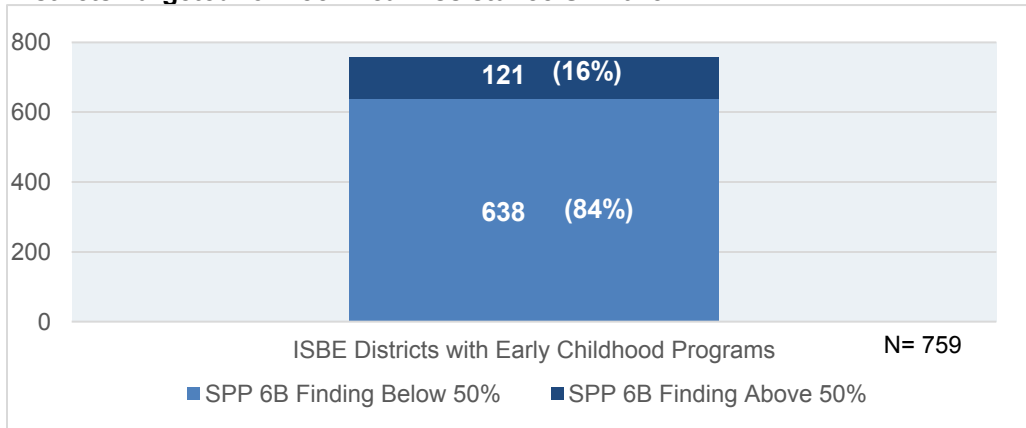


Figure 3 Districts targeted for TA SY 2018

In SY 2018 Early CHOICES provided direct and indirect Technical Assistance (TA) efforts to 20% of all ISBE school districts a total of 151 ISBE school districts (down from 219 Districts in SY 16). Of the 121 districts receiving TA the majority (74%/90) were districts that did not meet SPPA or SPPB benchmarks.

### ISBE Districts Receiving Early CHOICES TA in SY 2018

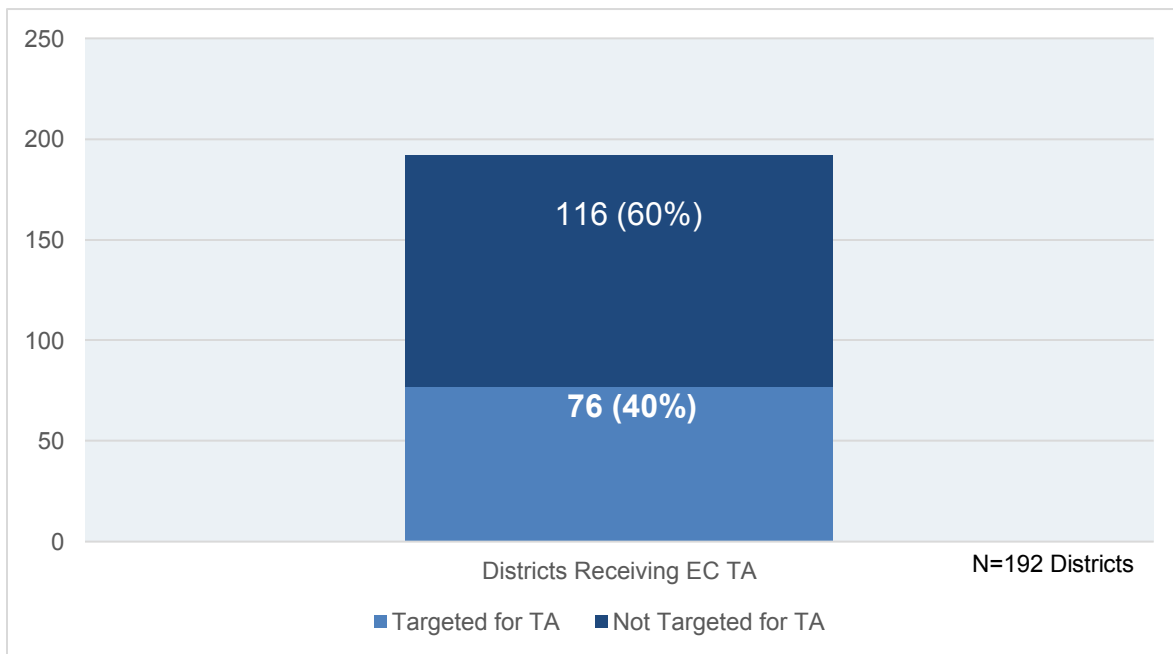


Figure 4 ISBE districts receiving Early CHOICES TA in SY 2018

In SY 2018, 76 districts received TA representing 64% of the 121 districts targets for TA in SY 2018.



## Districts Targeted for TA Receiving Early CHOICES TA in SY 2018

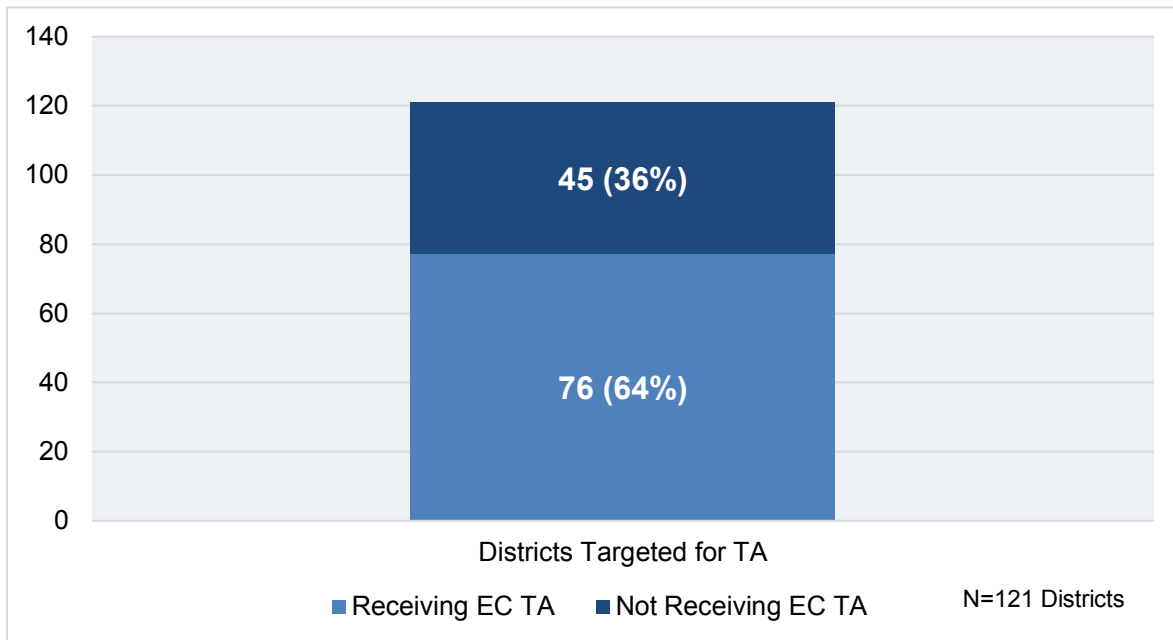


Figure 5 Districts targeted for TA receiving Early CHOICES TA in SY 2018

## Summary of Efforts to Impact SPP Indicator 6

### SPP 6 Data Analyzer

In order to impact SPP Indicator 6A and 6B, Early CHOICES collaborated with ISBE and Accountability Solutions to create a process to calculate the EE data for children ages 3-5 and sort the data to determine which districts met the state target and which districts were far from the target. This data process allowed identification of districts for ISBE to target for Indicator 6. Early CHOICES, along with ISBE and Illinois STARNET, created a plan for Technical Assistance to be implemented in SY 2014 and repeated in subsequent school years.

The EE codes for children ages 3-5 are configured differently than the codes for 6-21 year olds. The first task is assuring accuracy of data reporting. To that end in conjunction with ISBE, Early CHOICES created a presentation to simplify the coding process and use it to instruct district leaders on how the codes are to be arrived at using the [Decision Tree for Coding Educational Environments for Children Ages 3-5](#).

ISBE Early Childhood Division sent out invitations to 121 districts reporting 50% or more of their preschoolers were served in a separate class, school or facility or had a Preschool For All grant and reported 0% in 6A to view the online module *Determining EE Codes for Preschoolers* and to attend a roundtable.

Recognizing the need for continued training on the EE codes for preschool, Early CHOICES spent time and effort developing an online module that captured the EE webinar content we had created with ISBE in previous years. The online module is available to anyone via the website [www.eclre.org](http://www.eclre.org). Early CHOICES collects data via a voluntary online survey from those who watch the survey. Google analytics noted that there were 14999 unique views of the online module, with 11455 unique page views. Viewers spent an average of 1 minutes and 21 seconds while on the website.

Early CHOICES and STARNET collaborated again to host and facilitate the roundtables.

- September 25, 12PM-3PM Region II – Elk Grove Village, Illinois
- September 26, 9AM-12PM Regions VI – Tinley Park, Illinois
- October 2, 12PM-3PM Region I & III – Springfield, Illinois
- October 3, 9AM-12PM Region IV – Belleville, Illinois

Approximately 79 districts and 200 participants attended Early Childhood Regional Roundtables in SY 2018 and started strategic plans for improving inclusion of students 3-5 in general education settings. Of the 79 Districts, 60% ( 47) of the school districts in attendance were those with 2016-17 SPP 6B data of 50% or higher or had a PFA grant and had 0% in 6A.

Overall district data on 2016-2017 SPP 6A and SPP 6B are noted in the Figure 6 below.

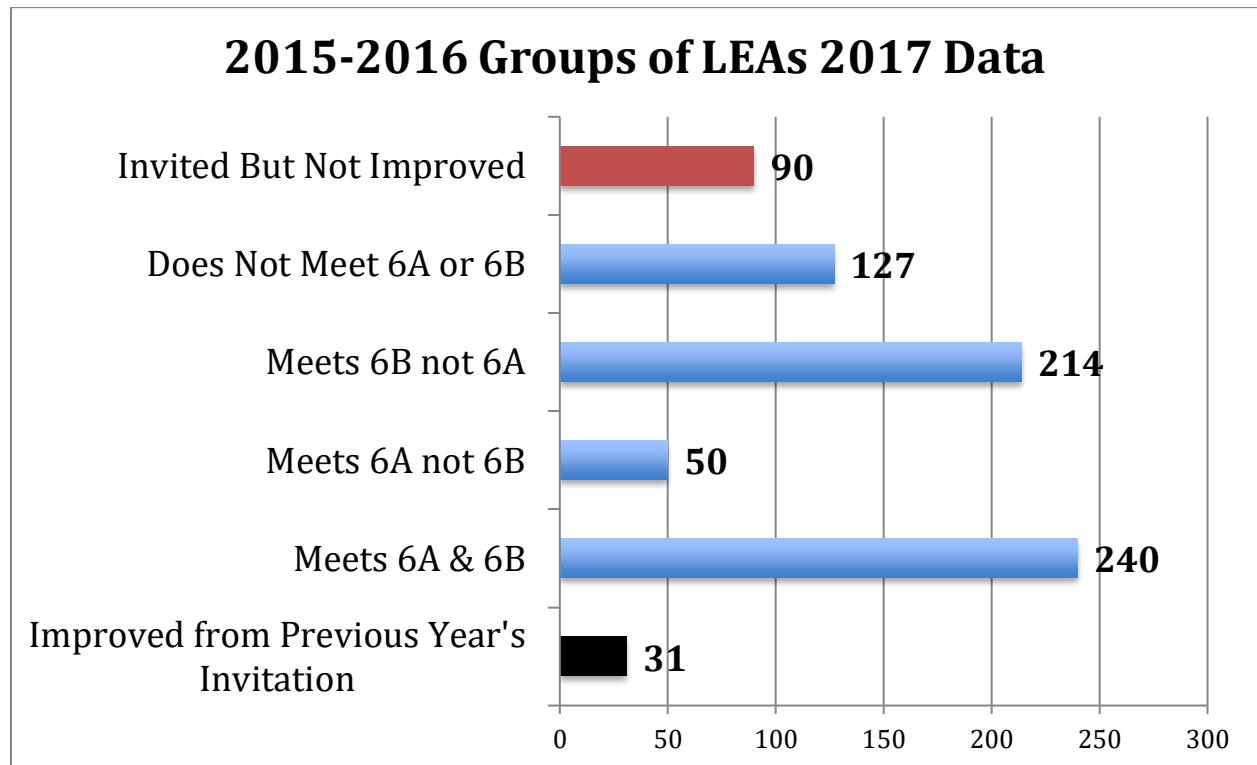


Figure 6 Groups of LEAs by Indicator 6 Performance

Each roundtable followed the same agenda with a review of the data to assure accuracy in coding and then a review of the various models that are used in Illinois to serve preschoolers in the LRE. Each roundtable had a regional early childhood leader who was implementing an inclusive model to serve preschoolers who shared their story and experience. Participants were asked to think about their own community and begin to consider ideas that would increase access to the LRE for preschoolers. We used the Inclusive Inquiry Cycle created by The Ounce of Prevention Fund for Lead Learn Excel and modified specifically for inclusion.

### **Educational Environment Code Generator Application**

In SY 2014 Early CHOICES commissioned the development of an online application to assist districts in more accurately identifying and generating the appropriate Educational Environment (EE) codes for early childhood students. The application known as, the EE Code Generator, was made available to districts in SY 2015. The application follows [Decision Tree for Coding Educational Environments for Children Ages 3-5](#) and allows the users to create a PDF as documentation that they used the application. See Appendix for example of the EE Code Generator app.

This application allowed for aggregate data collection on a number of districts and schools accessing the application and generating an EE code, the types of early childhood placements where students currently reside, the volume of use by districts with SPP 6 findings and the number of students receiving either a 6A or 6B EE codes based on application findings. These data were used to cross reference with other valuable early childhood data findings for purposes of application upgrades and for purposes of using data to better inform ISBE and Early CHOICES on whether valid EE codes translate to better early childhood practices and thus relates to a decrease in SPP 6B values over time.

### **SY 2018 Educational Environment Code Generator Application Use**

Since the introduction of the SPP 6 EE Code Generator application for use by ISBE Districts, the application has been used a cumulative total of 1775 since SY 2013. The graph below reflects an increase in the SPP 6 EE application use over the four school years. User ratings slightly decreased to 586 from 638 in SY 16 for an 8% decrease in overall ratings in SY 2018.

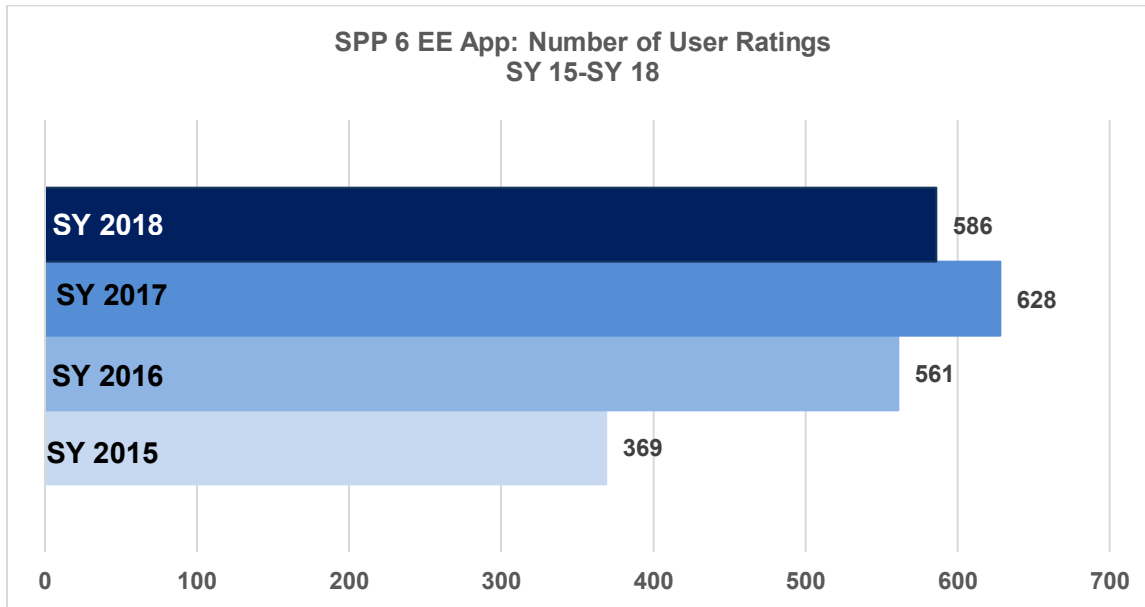


Figure 7 Number of EE App user ratings SY 18

### Unduplicated Number of Students Receiving Ratings

In SY 2018, the SPP 6 EE Code Generator application was used to uniquely rate a total of 416 students. This represents a 7% increase in unduplicated student ratings over SY 2017.

### Use of EE Code Generator Application by Districts

In SY 2018, 24 unique ISBE school districts used the SPP 6 EE Code Generator Application representing a decrease of 29% of districts using the SPP 6 Application over SY 2017.

The decrease in use may be that there is increased understanding of the educational environment codes for preschoolers. Also I-STAR was introduced statewide and district have reported this is an easier system for reporting the educational environment codes.

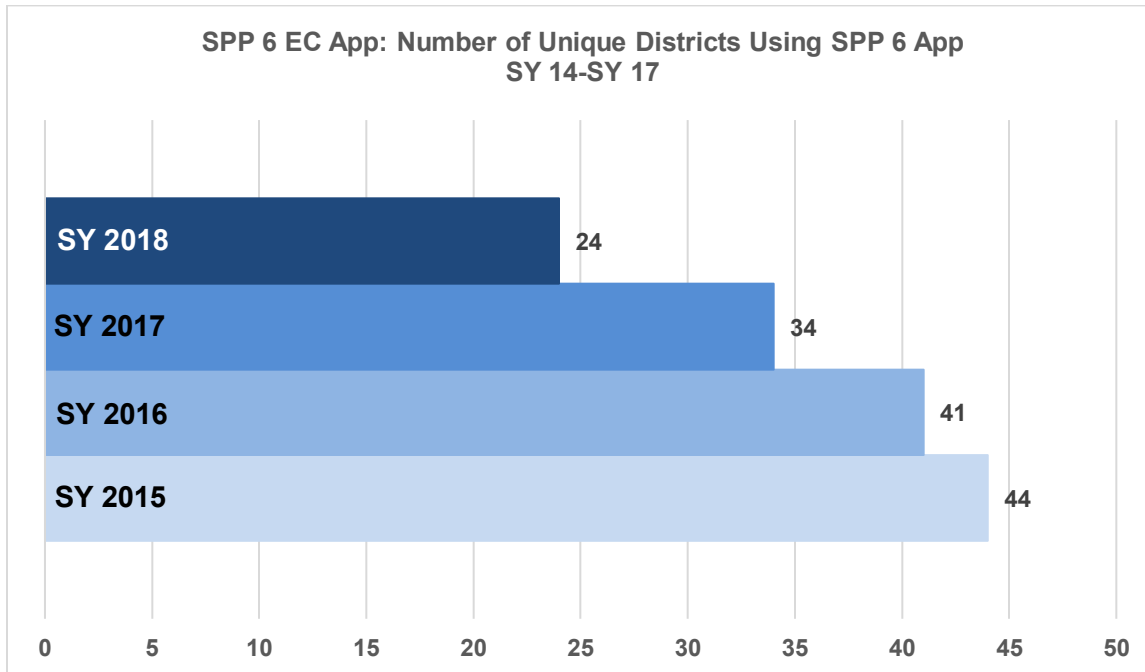


Figure 8 Unique Districts Using EE Code Generator

### **Educational Environment (EE) Data Sorter**

In SY 2018, Early CHOICES continued its efforts to monitor EE data to assist districts in driving the decision making process and change on the SPP Indicator 6A and 6B data. One data tool available for use by Early CHOICES is the SASSED- QWIZ database with a data sorter that provides immediate and up to date SPP 6 and 7 data reports for all applicable districts. While Early CHOICES uses these data to progress monitor their own performance relative to TA efforts, we also use these reports with districts so that districts can become better informed of their SPP 6 and SPP 7 indicator data findings, better understand how to progress monitor their efforts against longitudinal SPP data trends and understand the relationships between the early childhood SPP indicators 6 and 7.

### **Targeted TA Efforts Offered by Early CHOICES in SY 2018**

In SY 2018, Early CHOICES updated the signed data sharing agreement with ISBE to allow ISBE to share early childhood data findings 6 and 7. These longitudinal data will be essential to assisting districts in improve early childhood results.

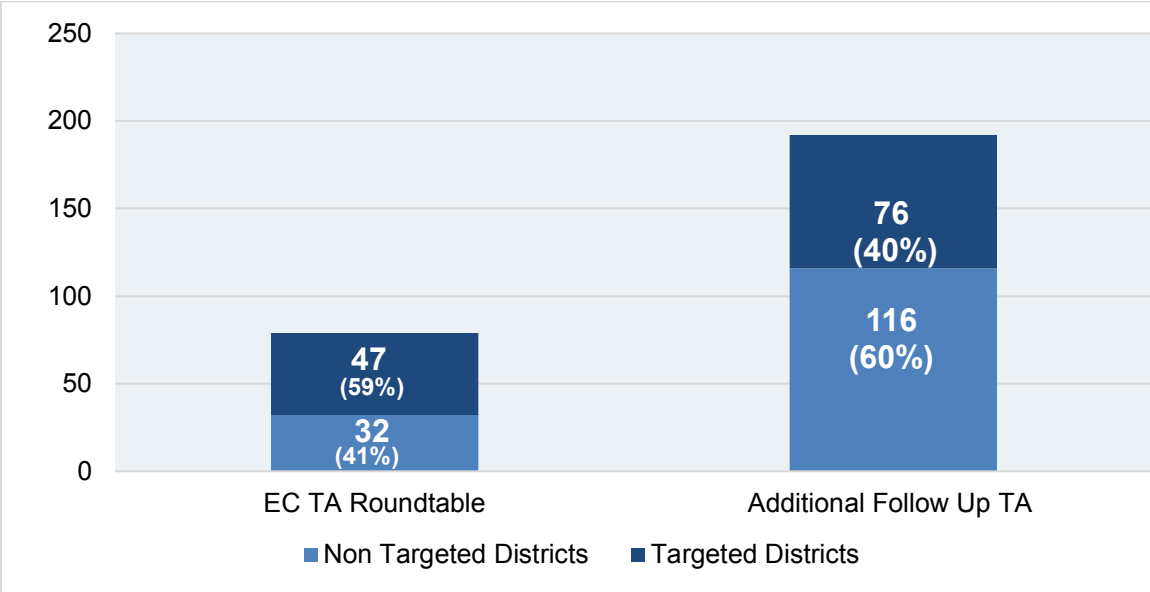


Figure 9 Targeted TA efforts offered by Early CHOICES in SY 2018

In SY 2018, Early CHOICES offered a total of nine unique TA efforts to include face to face TA, webinars, academies, etc. All 121 LEAs on the SPP 6 targeted TA list were invited to the hallmark TA effort in SY 2018, the Early Childhood LRE roundtable. A total of 79 LEAs attended the LRE roundtable with 59% (47) of the LEAs being LEAs on the SPP 6 targeted TA list. All participating LEAs were then invited to initiate requests for follow up TA from Early CHOICES. Approximately 192 of all LEAs engaged in some form of additional or follow up TA with Early CHOICES. Of those 192 LEAs, 76 (40%) were LEAs on the SPP 6 targeted TA list.

Of the 192 districts receiving TA efforts (those targeted for Indicator 6 and those not), 123 (64%) of the districts received one TA effort in SY 2018 from Early CHOICES. A smaller subset of districts or 65 districts (34%) received two to five TA efforts from Early CHOICES. An additional 4 (2%) districts receiving six or more TA efforts. Data on the distribution of number of TA efforts by those targeted for Indicator 6 and those not are presented in the figure below.

**Number of TA Efforts by District: Targeted vs Not Targeted**

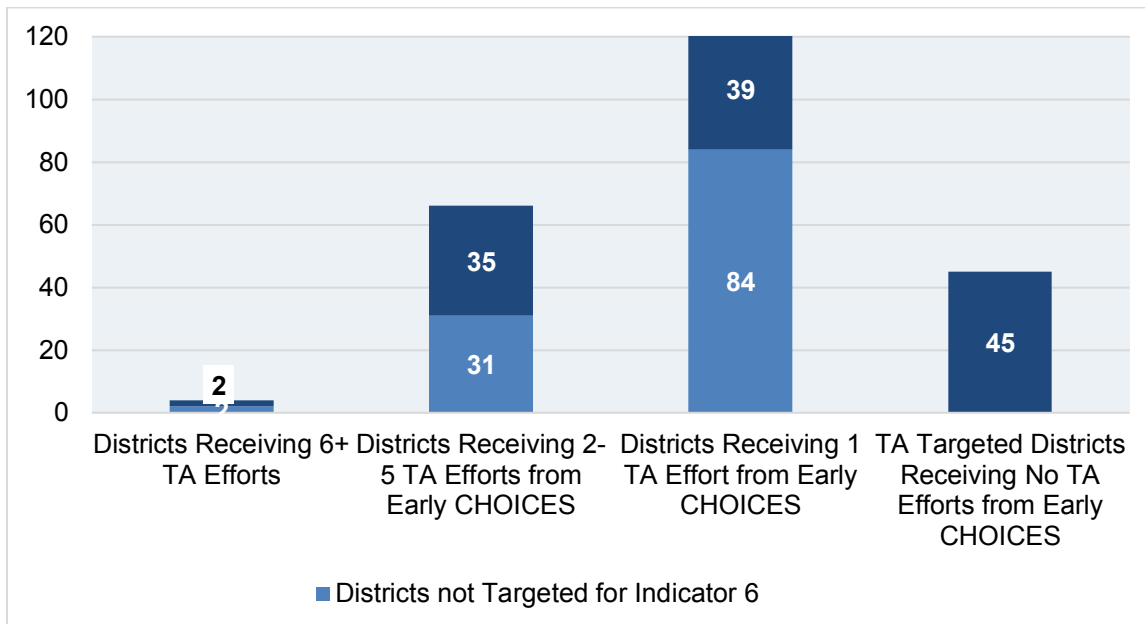


Figure 10 Number of TA efforts by district: Indicator 6 Targeted vs Not Targeted

The below graph reflects the 6A and 6B status of the 50 ISBE school districts who received three (3) or more TA efforts in SY 2018.

**6A and 6B Status for School Districts receiving 3 or More TA Efforts in SY 18**

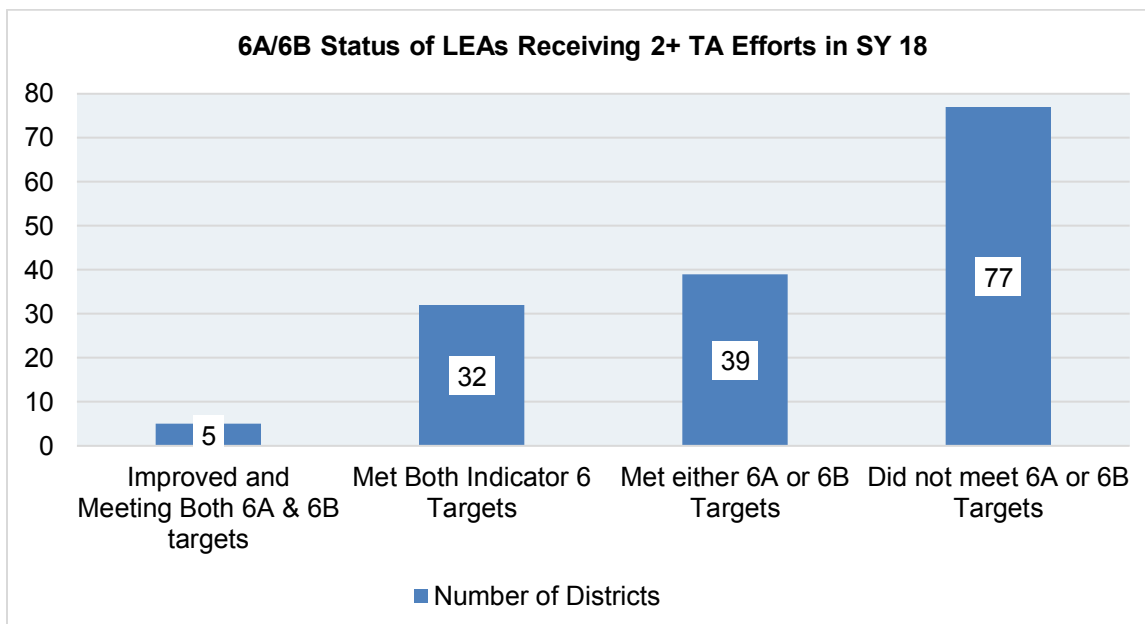


Figure 11 LEAs receiving 2+ TA efforts SY18

## Preschool Inclusion Toolbox and Community of Practice

Early CHOICES utilizes recommended practices regarding professional learning and implementation science and has moved away from doing one-time trainings. Each Community of Practice (COP) webinar featured a different chapter of the book, *The Preschool Inclusion Toolbox: How to build a High-Quality Program* by Erin E. Barton Ph.D., BCBA-D, Barbara J. Smith Ph.D. The COP provided opportunities to engage with peers from across the state, and to hear from guest speakers who have effectively put recommended practices into place in programs in Illinois. Programs were encouraged to attend as a team. Although not all sessions were required, the COP was designed as a complete series. Featured speakers included administrators of inclusive programs that had achieved the Award of Excellence for Inclusion or Outstanding Practice in Inclusion recognition, staff from STARNET and from ISBE. 76 people attended one or more of the webinars, from 40 different districts, special education cooperatives or community-based organizations.

The COP was held online via webinar from 3:30-4:45 pm on these dates.

- November 6, 2017 Quality, Challenges, Solutions
- December 4, 2017 Policies and Procedures
- January 9, 2018 Administrative Support
- February 5, 2018 Evidence-Based Practices
- March 5, 2018 Measuring Quality
- April 3, 2018 Making Placement Decisions

76 people attended one or more of the webinars, with the majority attending multiple events. Eight (8) districts that were targeted for roundtables attended the Community of Practice series. Evaluation data from 67 of the 76 (88%) of Community of Practice participants is provided in the figure below.

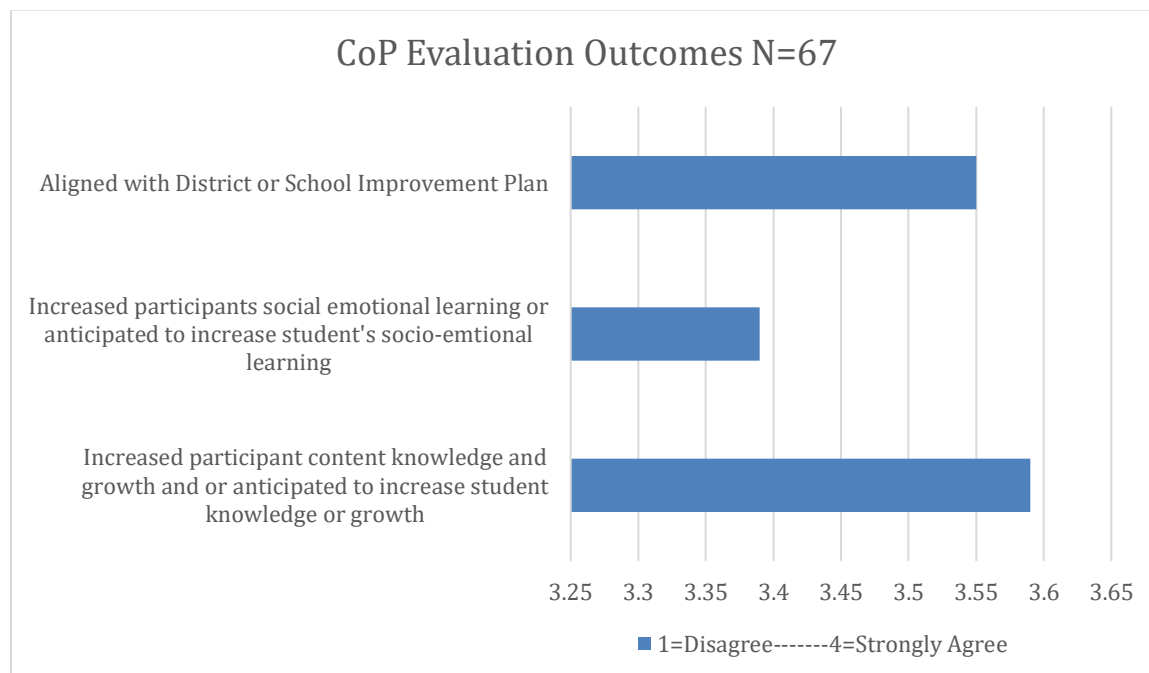


Figure 12 Community of Practice Outcomes



## Administrator Academy #1691 Early Childhood Inclusion: Supporting Children's Special Needs in High Quality Early Learning Environments

This online workshop in collaboration with Early Childhood Professional Learning and the Illinois Principals Association provides administrator academy credit. The workshop reviews the components of inclusion in early childhood programs. The goal is for administrators to determine what next steps to take in their program to assure high quality inclusive opportunities for all young learners. We had 43 people attend from 36 different school districts in Illinois. We had 37 people complete the Administrator Academy project for credit.

### Administrator Academy #1691 Early Childhood Inclusion Evaluation (N=37)

Post Academy Evaluation Results	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Disagree	Total Number of responses
1. The outcomes of the Academy were clearly identified as the knowledge and/or skills that I should gain as a result of participating in this course	75.68% 28	24.31% 9	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	37
2. As a result of participating in this Academy course, I believe that I can demonstrate new knowledge and/or skills gained in the areas identified by the presenter.	72.97% 27	24.32% 9	2.70% 1	0.00% 0	37
3. The content of this Academy course was presented in a manner that accommodated my personal learning style(s).	82.97% 27	27.03% 10	5000% 0	0.00% 0	37
4. The presenter appeared to be knowledgeable in the content area	81/08% 30	18.92% 7	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	37
5. The materials and presentation techniques utilized in this course were well organized.	75.68% 28	24.32% 9	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	37
6. The Academy provided information that I can use in an educational leadership role.	75.68% 28	24.32% 9	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	37

## Other SPP 6 Efforts

### Sharing a Vision Early Childhood Conference 2017 Planning

As a Platinum Sponsor of the 15th Biennial Sharing A Vision Conference, Early CHOICES is highly vested in supporting the preparation of this premier event with much in-kind time and effort by all staff. Early CHOICES co-chaired the Program Committee and chaired the Conversation Station Committee. The conference was attended by 800 early childhood professional and was at capacity. Early CHOICES Project Director Ann Kremer was awarded the Jeanette McCullom Award for leadership in early childhood in Illinois.

### **Early Childhood LRE Stakeholders Consortium**

As a leader in promoting the LRE, Early CHOICES leads a statewide stakeholder group to address access in early childhood. Education for children ages 3-5 is not mandated, so access to typical environments varies. The consortium was created with Pam Reising-Rechner, former 619 Coordinator, ISBE and input from STARNET in 2010 to support SPP 6 efforts. Current 619 Coordinator, Kristy Doan, continues to support the Consortium. The group has increased in number and diversity of participants, and maintains a family representative.

The primary focus of the group is to increase awareness and opportunities for inclusion for children ages 3-5. The importance of access to a quality education in the preschool years cannot be overlooked or underestimated. Meetings are held in Bloomington, Illinois, which allows statewide members to attend. The Consortium met September 8, 2016, December 2, 2016, April 4, 2017 and June 8, 2017. The Consortium supported the planning of the Illinois Early Childhood Policy Summit and identified a plan for increased public awareness of inclusion.

The Consortium has three key focus areas, based on the state-level recommendations of the federal Policy Statement: accountability (incentive structures, goals & data), policies to support inclusion (state-level interagency taskforce and plan for inclusion, and social-emotional and behavioral health (statewide supports for children). Each meeting we separate into work groups after a general meeting to work on the specific areas of interest.

### **Outstanding Practices in Inclusion**

The Award of Excellence for Inclusion of Children with Special Needs concluded in May of 2017 with the end of the Race to the Top funding which had been extended since December 2016. The EC LRE Stakeholders Consortium with Early CHOICES and ISBE created the Outstanding Practices in Inclusion recognition and launched in SY 2018. Outstanding Practices in Inclusion recognition will be celebrated at the next Sharing A Vision Conference in 2019.

We created an informational webinar and posted to the [www.eclre.org](http://www.eclre.org) page that covers who is eligible to apply, the overall process and requirements. The first recipients are:

- Schaumburg District 54 Early Learning Center
- Frederick Stock Elementary School (Chicago Public Schools)

### **Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP)**

As reliable ICP trainers, Early CHOICES staff delivered training on the use of ICP for classroom self-assessment by teachers in inclusive classrooms. Although the ICP was developed as an observation and assessment tool, it can be used to support professional learning. Early CHOICES has the intended outcomes of: building a deeper understanding of the practices that support inclusion, recognition that each adult in the classroom plays a crucial role in supporting individual children with special needs, and preparing participants to engage in more in-depth study with in their programs as teams. Early CHOICES has developed training materials and supplemental resources to guide practitioners through self-reflection related to the twelve items on the profile. The training itself is designed to move attendees between inquiry into the practices and application to their individual role in the team to support inclusion. Early CHOICES partnered with STARNET regions to host three events across SY 2018. On January 18, 2018 we partnered with Region II to host and had 19 attendees from 8 LEAs. On February 20, 2018 partnered with Region VI to host and had 9 attendees from 9 LEAs. In April Region IV partnered with us to host a webinar that had 29 attendees from 10 LEAs.

We also use the ICP to work with individual programs and create ongoing PD with the team. We did this in Mannheim 83, Stock Elementary and Naperville 203 in SY 2018.

The data below reflect ICP change over time data for two classrooms (A and B) with two inclusive classroom practices ratings over time. The baseline assessment was conducted in spring 2017 and the second assessment was conducted in spring 2018. Early CHOICES worked with the program administrator to support the building in using the ICP for self-reflection. The program chose to focus on improving visual supports and supporting children in participation. Early CHOICES provided some professional development to the program during the school year and facilitated the staff visiting each other's classrooms to share strategies and reflect together.

Classroom A data revealed the greatest gains in area of adaptations of group activities increasing two rating points from the baseline rating. The areas of family and professional partnerships monitoring children's learning and support for communication remained unchanged from baseline to the second assessment period. The areas of feedback and transition between activities increased by one rating point.

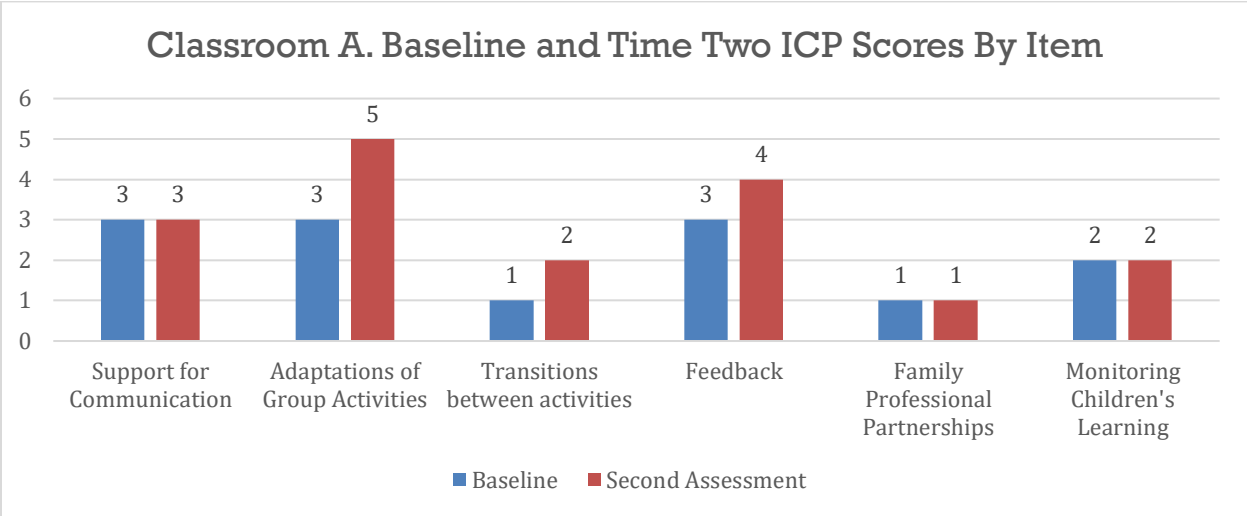


Figure 13 ICP Classroom A

Classroom B data revealed the greatest gains in area of adult guidance of children’s play increasing by 4 rating points (out of 8) from the baseline rating. The areas of management remained unchanged from baseline to the second assessment period. The areas of adaptations of space/material/equipment and adult involvement in peer interactions increase by two rating points, and relationships between adults and children by 1 rating point.

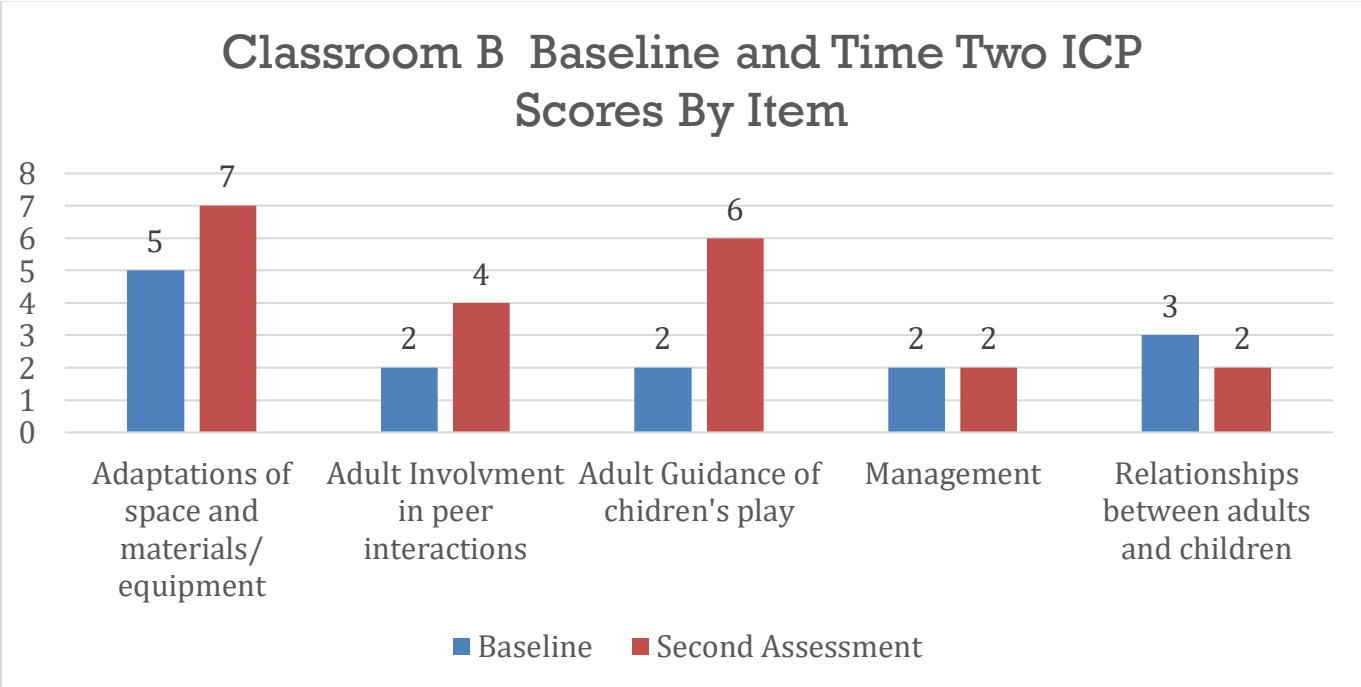


Figure 14 ICP Classroom B

## **Outreach Efforts in Illinois**

### **Website**

Early CHOICES created a new website in SY 2014 and launched [www.eclre.org](http://www.eclre.org) in SY 2015. We connected the website to social media such as Facebook and Twitter to increase traffic. The website uses Livebinders as a convenient, yet thorough, format for housing collections of resources the website holds and the two modules we have available as well as links to many resources. We have also archived the Community of Practice meetings and webinars so they can be seen by those who were not able to make the live event. The website actively posted the US Department of Education and Department of Health and Human Services' highly relevant *Policy Statement on the Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs* released in September 2015.

Website data analysis revealed that the Early CHOICES website had 14,999 page views in SY 2017, a 4% increase in page views over SY 16. Of the page views, approximately 76% were unique page views, with 87.2% being first time or new visitors and 12.8% returning visitors.

The data also revealed that when people visit the Early CHOICES website they tend to remain on the site for on average one and a half minutes, visiting at least two pages. These data suggest that the eclre.org website is frequently visited and often revisited. When people do visit the website they tend to stay on the site much longer than the average website suggesting that the site is of benefit to them in some way.

Early CHOICES also published early childhood training videos to their [YOUTUBE channel](#). Analytics revealed that 807 individuals viewed the videos and stayed an average of 2.29 minutes per visit. Approximately 96% of viewers were from the USA and the remaining 4% of viewers were from Canada, United Kingdom, Belgium and India.

The five most frequently view videos in order of viewing frequency are noted below:

- Inclusion Makes a Difference (Family's Perspective)
- Everyone Has Something to Say
- Early CHOICES-Chicago Inclusion Townhall
- Inclusion for Occupational Therapists
- Choices Time Support

Approximately 37% (299) individuals of the 807 who viewed the modules completed data that allowed a deeper reveal in to the population. Approximately 79 unique districts were represented in the views, along 68 other agency affiliations for a total of 147 unique organizations represented.

The 299 individuals defined their role related to Early Childhood with 38.8% noted a role of Early Childhood Professional. Teachers made up 13% of viewers and administrators represented 27% of viewers. The Figure below reflects the roles and organizations of the 299 individuals entering participant data.

Name of Module	Number of Participants	Participant Role (# / %)			Districts/Organizations (# / %)		
		Role	Count	Percentage	District/Organization	Count	Percentage
Understanding LRE	184	Administrator	17	9.24%	School District	39	21.2%
		Early Intervention Professional	115	62.5%	Co-Op	1	0.54%
		Other	18	9.78%	Child Family Connection (CFC)	85	46.2%
		Paraeducator	1	0.54%	Daycare	5	2.72%
		Parent	1	0.54%			
		Related Service Professional	10	5.44%	College/University	9	4.9%
		Teacher	22	11.96%	Other	45	24.46%
EE Data	32	Administrator	20	62.5%	School District	26	81.25%
		Other	4	12.5%			
		Parent	1	3.13%	Co-Op	5	15.63%
		Related Service Professional	4	12.5%			
		Teacher	3	9.38%			
Federal Policy	83	Administrator	44	53%	School District	55	66.27%
		Early Learning Professional	1	1.2%	Co-Op	10	12.05%
		Other	13	15.66%	Other	15	18.07%
		Related Service Professional	11	13.25%	College/University	3	3.6%
		Teacher	14	16.87%			
Total	299	Administrator	81	27%	School District	120	40.13%
		Early Intervention/ Learning Professional	116	38.8%	Co-Op	16	5.35%
		Paraeducator	1	0.33%	Child Family Connection (CFC)	86	28.76%
		Parent	1	0.33%	Daycare	5	1.67%
		Related Service Professional	25	8.4%	College/University	12	4%
		Teacher	39	13%	Other	60	20%
		Other	35	11.7%			

Figure 15 Early CHOICES Online Learning Modules Demographics

### **Constant Contact**

Early CHOICES also utilized Constant Contact service to email a monthly newsletter. Data regarding users online engagement with the seven (7) newsletters published to date are provided below:

- A total of seven (7) Early CHOICES Newsletters were sent to on average 1313 members of the Early CHOICES TA Community between July 2017 and June 2018.
- On average 34% (443 users) of the 1313 Early CHOICES Community Users who were sent the 7 Newsletters opened the Newsletters and actively engaged with the Newsletter material. This reflects a 4.5% decrease in user interaction with the newsletter in 2017 over 2016.
- The highest engagement rate occurred in May 2017 with 537 readers engages followed by 446 readers engaged in both December and January.
- The lowest engagement rate occurred in September 2017. Approximately 31% (391 users) of the Early CHOICES Community Users opened and actively engaged with the material in this newsletter.

### **Illinois DEC**

An Early CHOICES staff served on the Governing Board of the Illinois Division of Early Childhood (IDEC) of the Council of Exceptional Children during the SY 2016 year until June of 2017. In June of 2017, an Early CHOICES staff member was elected Vice President of IDEC. This on-going representation supports relationships across agencies and entities involved in early childhood. It is an opportunity to share updates regarding inclusion efforts underway in the state. In addition, initiatives underway with IDEC are shared at the EC LRE Stakeholders Consortium, broadening the scope of both entities. In the role as Vice President, the Early CHOICES staff member participated in national calls regarding policy updates, ongoing efforts in other states and resource-sharing regarding research-based practices that support inclusion, families and policy work.

### **DCFS Day Care Licensing Advisory Council**

An Early CHOICES staff is an elected member of the DCFS Day Care Licensing Advisory Council, a statewide body that work to streamline and professionalize child care licensing as well as to insure the health, safety and development of children enrolled in licensed programs. The board meets bi-monthly to discuss current topics in child care related to policies and practices. The Early CHOICES staff member is able to provide information related to children with disabilities and their families, inclusion, and provide resources to further inform decisions.

### Transitioning to Early Childhood: [Understanding LRE of Young Children](#) Module

Collaborating with a Transition Guidance Task Force, Early CHOICES created an online training module to help families understand LRE for preschoolers. The content was drafted by Early CHOICES and then reviewed and revised by a subcommittee of the Illinois Birth to Five Transition Guidance Committee. Early CHOICES worked with a contractor to create the presentation in Adobe Presenter. Data in Figure 22 below present some of the most salient data findings from the 131 individuals participating in the online “Understanding LRE of Young Children” Modules in SY 18.

Figure 22 Understanding LRE post survey findings

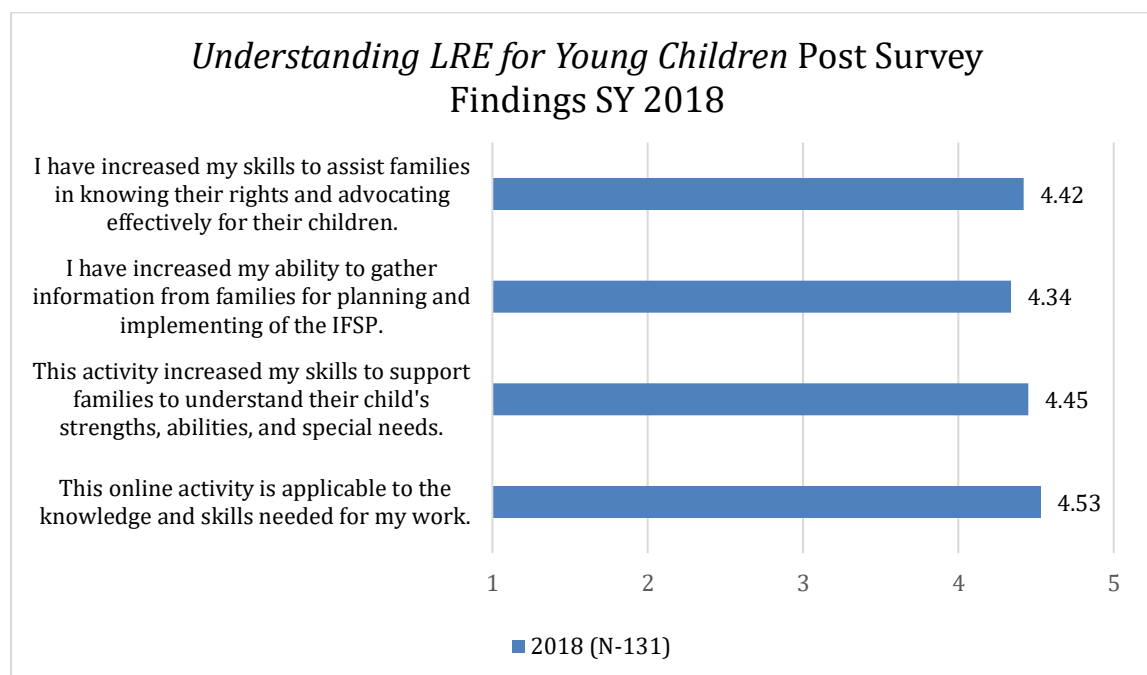


Figure 16 Understanding LRE survey

Early CHOICES worked with the Illinois Early Intervention Training Project (EITP) to also offer the *Understanding LRE* module for Early Intervention credit. Through the EITP 218 additional people attended the module and completed the EITP survey. Most participants were early intervention professionals who work closely with families. We do not have matching survey results for these participants but we have these sample comments captured from the EITP system:

- *I will definitely use the resources at the end of the presentation to assist families when needed as their child transitions out of the early Intervention program and into the public school system*
- *Ensure parents know their rights when it comes to transitioning from the EI program to the pre-school program. Some may not realize LRE is a law that ensures their children are learning in the most appropriate setting possible and have access to peer models, etc.*
- *I learned that research has shown that including children with disabilities in the least restrictive environment can help those children who have disabilities, the typically developing children who interact with them, and the communities around them. I also learned about the misconceptions of least restrictive environments and the true*



*characteristics of least restrictive environment.*

- *I have been in this field for 18 years. This training was a great reminder of rules and the importance of collaboration for the best interest of each individual child. I always attend IEP meetings with my EI families and school districts vary with their delivery of services. It is always frustrating when they say they don't have any more spots in their early childhood programs, even though that is their recommendation for a child. I appreciated the refresher with laws and resources.*
- *As a parent who have gone through the EI process, I have still leaned information that is useful to me assisting other families with children in need of early intervention. Nevertheless, I have learned is that it has over 20 years that researchers believe there is a benefit to teaching children with disabilities with those without disabilities is beneficially to all children.*

We will continue the collaboration with the Illinois EITP in the future

## **Early CHOICES State Performance Plan Indicator 7**

### **Preschool Outcomes**

Percent of preschool children aged 3 through 5 with IEPs who demonstrate improved:

- A. Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships);
- B. Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy); and
- C. Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.

### **ISBE Charge**

Early CHOICES staff will collaborate with districts as they support and increase the percent of preschool children aged 3-5 with IEPs who demonstrate improved:

- Positive social emotional skills (including social relationship)
- Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy);
- Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs

In SY 2017 Early CHOICES continued to work to support districts throughout Illinois to improve the Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO). Figure 13 reflects the SY 2013 statewide data compared to Illinois target Figure 14 reflects SY 2014, Figure 15 reflects SY 2015, Figure 16 reflects SY 2016 and Figure 17 reflects SY 17. SPP 7 data were not available for SY 18 were not available. Illinois did not meet targets for SY 2014 and Early CHOICES continues to work with the Illinois State Board of Education and other stakeholders to review the data and assist in improvement activities.

ISBE changed ECO reporting to include progress ratings yearly in SY 2014 and this has meant a change in our data. Without further clarification we are using the data for indicator 7 that ISBE has shared with Early CHOICES. The definitions for the data reflected in SPP Indicators 7A1, 7A2, 7B1, 7B2, 7C1 and 7C2 are noted below.

Indicator 7A: Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships)

Indicator 7B: Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy)

Indicator 7C: Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs

### SY 17 SPP 7 Data Summary

ISBE did not meet any of its targets for SPP 7 in SY 17. All indicators were at least 8.18% below the target value, with indicator 7B2 being the closest to the target at a difference of 8.18% points. Indicator 7C1 had the largest difference between target and actual values with an 8.7% difference. All SPP7 indicators also decreased in percentage value over SY 16, with the most significant decrease noted in indicator 7A1 with a 4% decrease. Early CHOICES serves on the Early Childhood Stakeholders Committee and takes guidance from this committee on actions needed to support collection and understanding of this data. Illinois continues to struggle with this indicator in terms of accurate reporting and coming to accurate ratings for each preschooler with an IEP.

### FY 13 SPP 7 ISBE Target and Actual Data Values

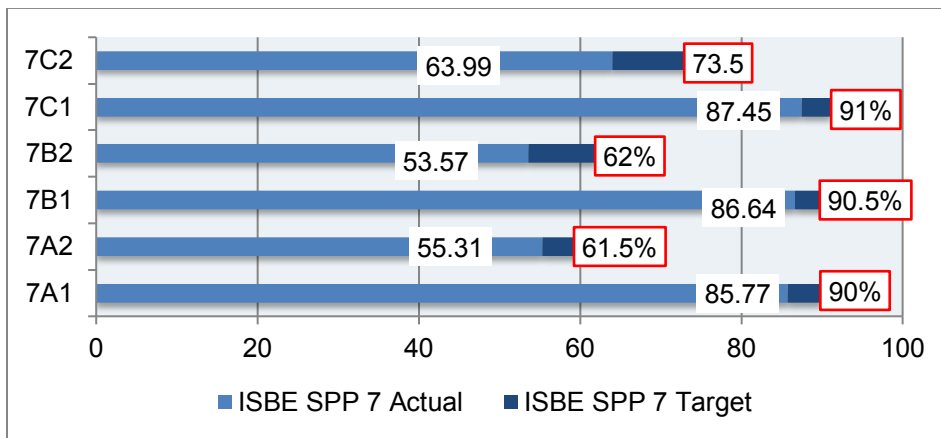


Figure 17 FY 13 SPP 7 ISBE target and actual data values

### FY 14 SPP 7 ISBE Target and Actual Data Values

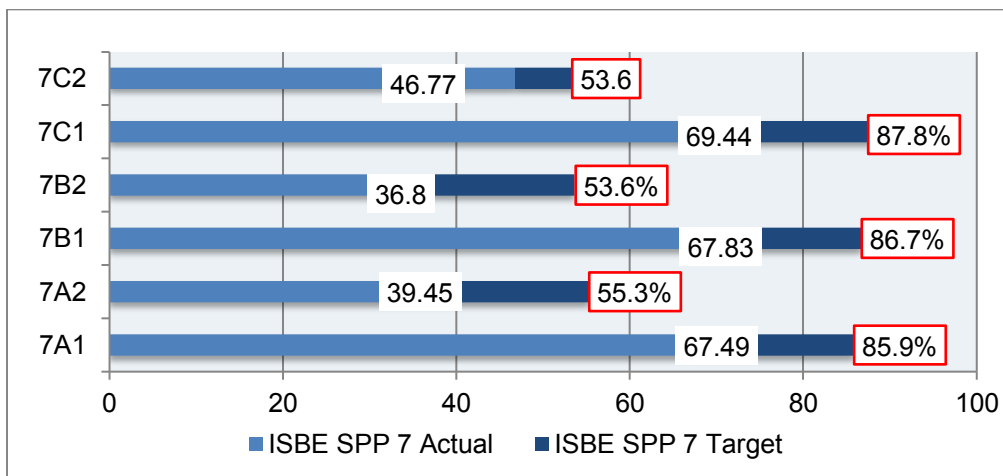


Figure 18 FY 14 SPP 7 ISBE target and actual data values

**FY 15 SPP 7 ISBE Target and Actual Data Values**

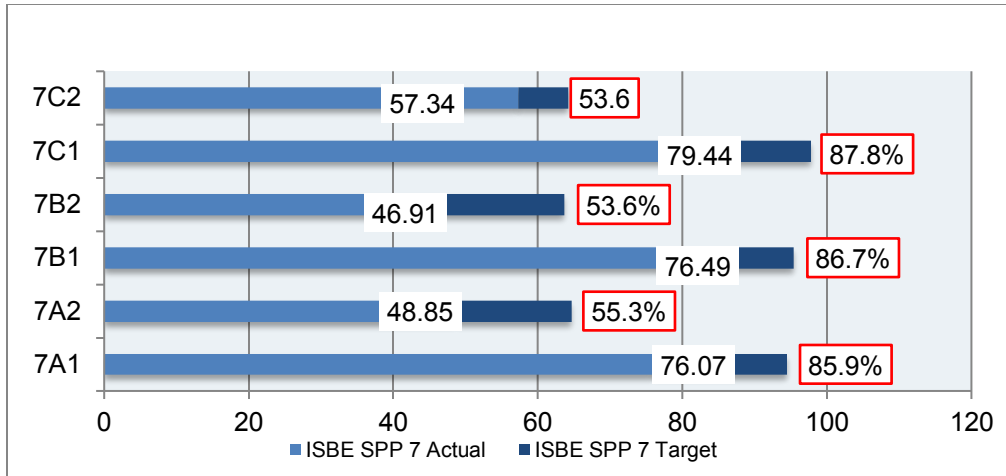


Figure 19 FY 15 SPP 7 ISBE target and actual data values

**FY 16 SPP 7 ISBE Target and Actual Data Values**

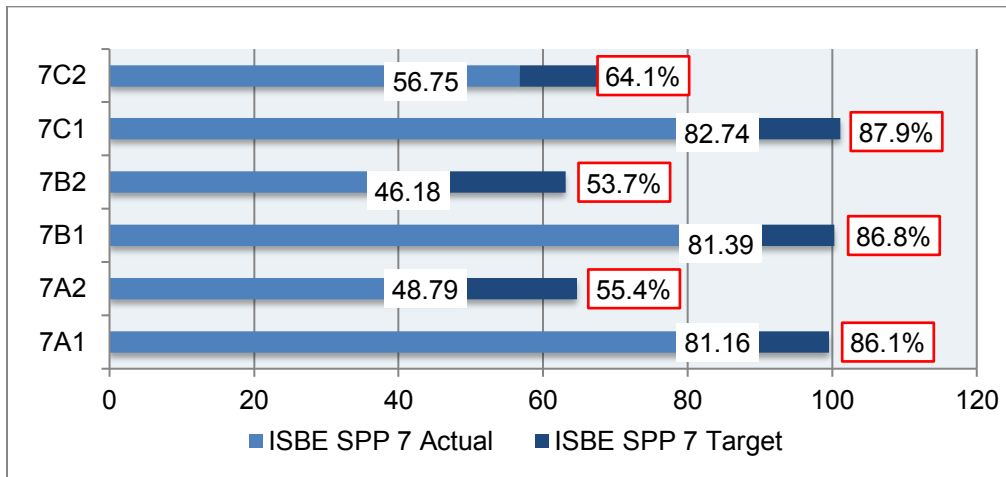


Figure 20 FY 16 SPP 7 ISBE target and actual data values

**FY 17 SPP 7 ISBE Target and Actual Data Values**

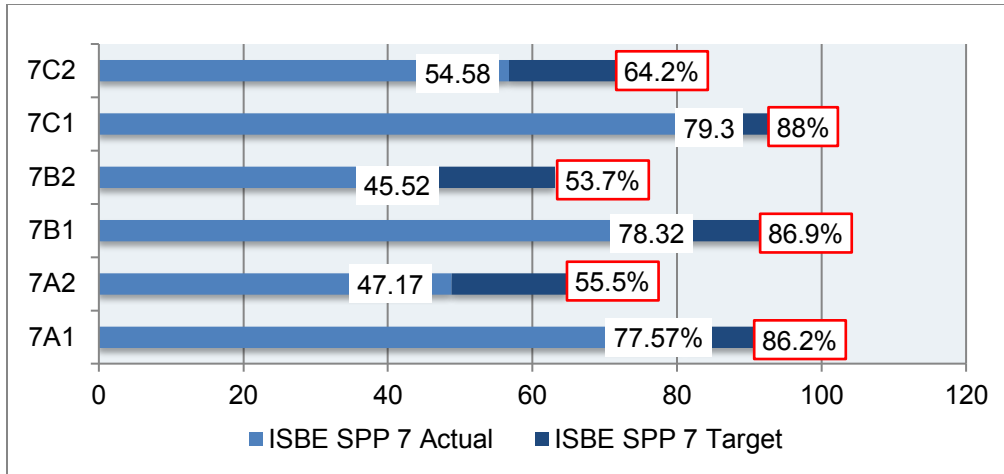


Figure 21 FY 17 SPP 7

Indicator 7A: Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships)

Indicator 7B: Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy)

Indicator 7C: Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs

**Early CHOICES Activities**

**SPP 7 Data Sorter**

The SPP Data sorter noted earlier in this report, developed by Early CHOICES evaluator, Dr. Kelly Hyde, will continue to be used to monitor SPP 7 data performance for all applicable districts. These data values will be used by Early CHOICES to progress monitor their impact on districts at risk of low performance on SPP 7. Additionally, in SY 2016, Early CHOICES had planned to share SPP 7 data reports generated by the data sorter with relevant districts to assist districts in using the data to improve SPP 7 performance.

We drafted a plan to implement in SY 2017 to share data with LEAs and provide technical assistance and support to the LEAs to improve rating process and use of data. A decision as made to hold on the data sharing plan because of continued issue with data reporting.

## Early Childhood Outcome Application

Early CHOICES worked to develop an application to assist school districts in the Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) ratings and the creation of the Child Outcome Summary Form (COSF). The ECO ratings data has been inconsistent across Illinois. The ECO Rating Tree was developed to assist early childhood professionals in determining ratings however it is suspected many programs were not using the tree. The [ec-ecotool.com](http://ec-ecotool.com) application forces the user to complete all the questions in the rating tree and it also generates the COSF. This allows districts to create a PDF of the COSF to save with the IEP. The ECO rating information still needs to be entered into the Student Information System (SIS). The ECO application was developed in SY 2014 and was rolled out for initial use in SY 2015, with 40 districts using the ECO application to determine Early Childhood Outcome ratings.

## Total Unique SPP 7 ECO App Ratings

Since the introduction of the SPP 7 ECO application for use by ISBE Districts, the application has been used a total of 2987 times to rate the initial and ongoing social emotional skills of students 3-5 years of age who have IEPs. The graph below reflects increase in the ECO application use over the last two school years. Unique ratings increased from SY 15 to SY 18 by 6% (52 ratings) and by 20% over the baseline launch year of SY 2015 by 20% (171 Ratings).

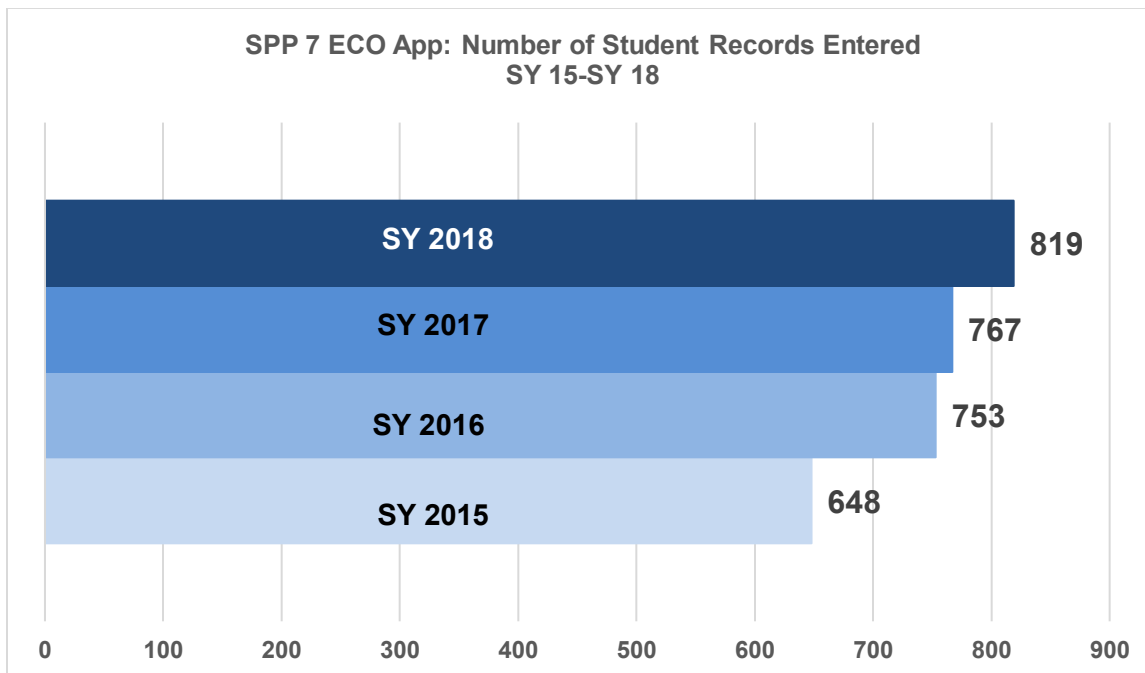


Figure 22 Unique ECO ratings

### Unduplicated Number of Students Receiving Ratings

In SY 2018, the SPP 7 ECO application was used to uniquely rate a total of 604 representing a 13% (94 ratings) decrease in unique student ratings in SY 2018.

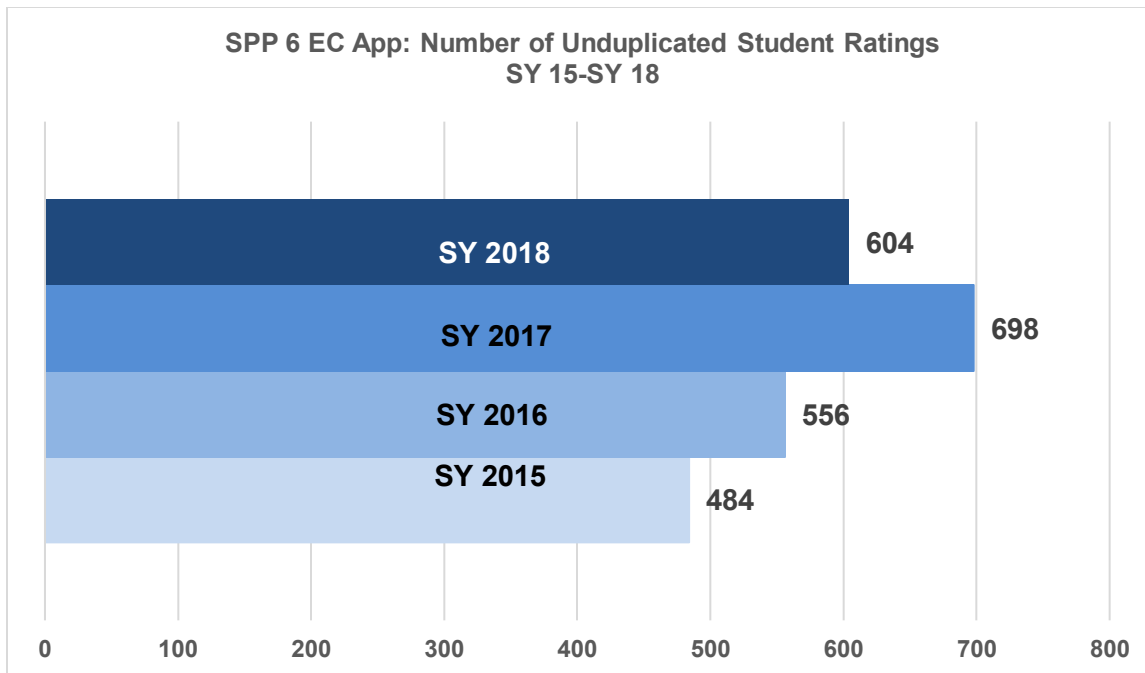


Figure 23 ECO unduplicated students rated

### Types of SPP 7 ECO App Ratings

In SY 2018, users of the ECO Ratings application used the application a collective total of 819 times. Of those rating, 604 (74%) were initial ratings and 215 (26%) were progress ratings. The ratio of initial to progress ratings has remained fairly consistent with on average three out of four ratings being initial SPP 7 ratings and one out of four ratings being progress ratings.

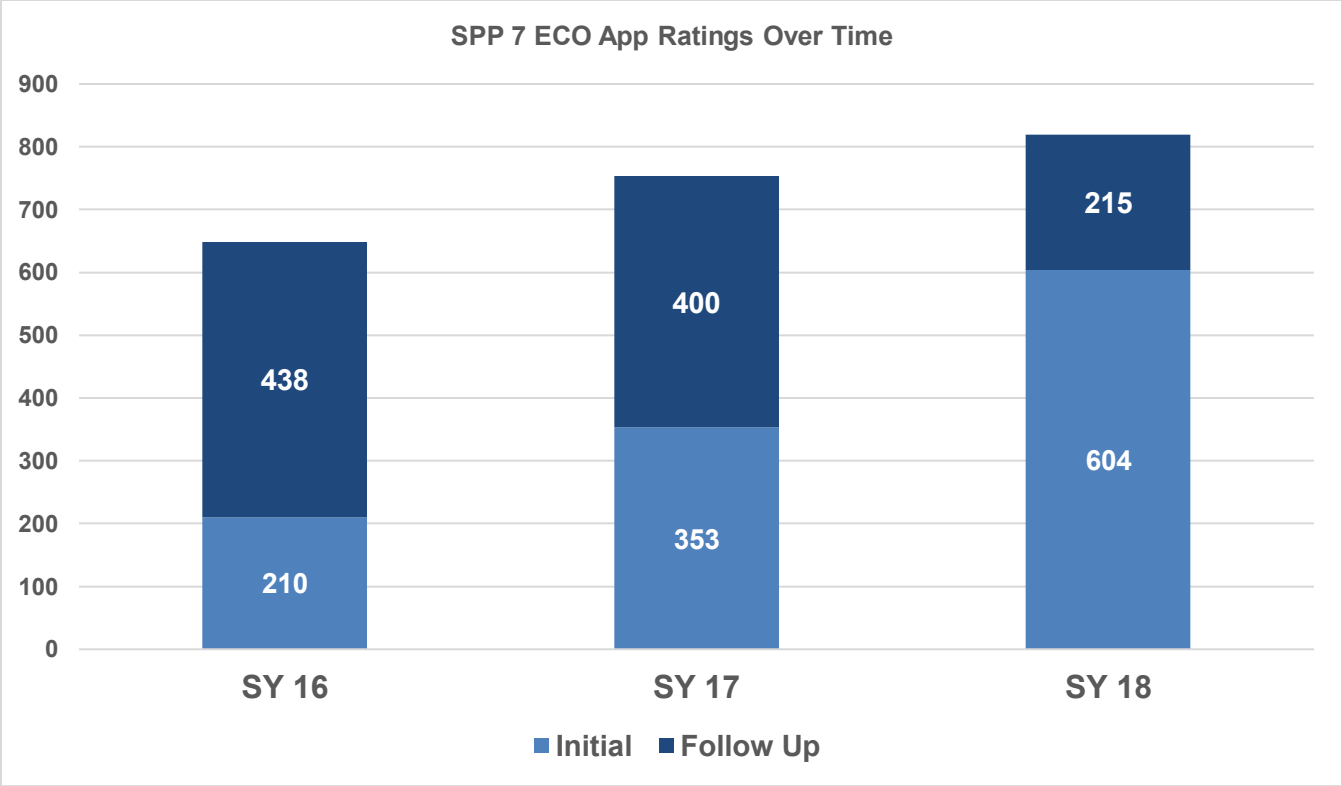


Figure 24 ECO Ratings

**Use of ECO Ratings Application by Districts**

In SY 2018, 63 unique ISBE school districts used the ECO Rating Application to assess early childhood outcomes, representing an increase of 13 (21%) districts over SY 2017 and a 39% (23 Districts) increase



over the baseline year or SY 2015.

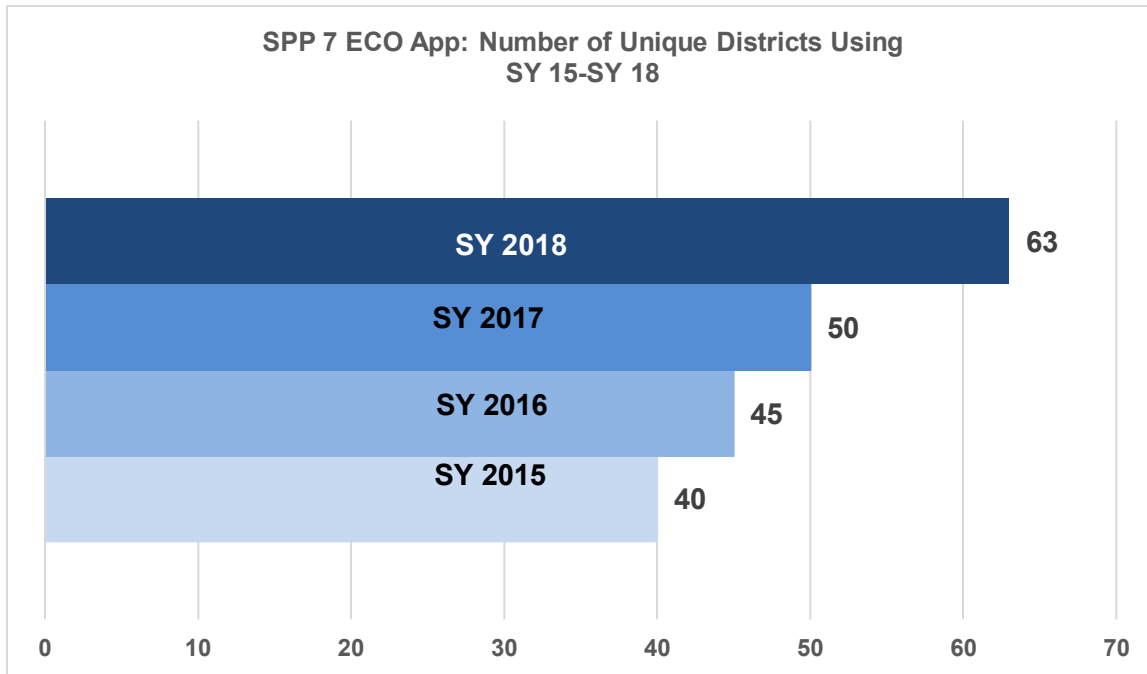


Figure 25 Unique districts using ECO ratings application

### Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) Stakeholders Committee

This committee is chaired by ISBE and meets quarterly throughout the year to increase the awareness of the ECO and to assure districts are implementing with integrity. For ISBE to have accurate information it is imperative the message to districts is communicated rapidly and clearly. The ECO Application was reviewed by members of this committee and feedback was provided in the development and usage. Early CHOICES also supports the work of this committee by planning with ISBE as needed. Data review strategies have been discussed but each year we continue to work on awareness and understanding

## **Creation of Online Learning Module *Early Childhood Outcomes in Illinois***

Early CHOICES worked with an Illinois expert on the ECO and an online learning designer to create a series on short online learning modules in SY 2018. This module reviews the three Early Childhood Outcomes that are used to help measure the impact early childhood intervention has on a child's ability to have positive social relationships, acquire and use knowledge and skills and take appropriate action to meet their needs. It is broken up into several sections with a closing activity.

- Section 1 – Overview of Early Childhood Outcomes
- Section 2 – The Three Early Childhood Outcomes
- Section 3 – Implementing Early Childhood Outcomes in Illinois
- Section 4 – Impact of Authentic Assessment on Early Childhood Outcomes
- Section 5 – Capturing Early Childhood Outcomes
- Section 6 – Decision Making Tools
- Section 7 – Closing Activity: A case study to practice ECO Ratings
- Section 8 – Summary of the Module

Run time of each section averages 10-15 minutes with some a little shorter and some a little longer. Each section includes numerous resources and reflective activities so actual completion time might be a little longer for each section. It takes approximately 90 minutes to get through all the sections and their corresponding activities.

The closing activity will take approximately 30 minutes to complete to review a case study and practice using some of the tools and resources shared to go through the three early childhood outcome ratings. Illinois school districts are welcome to use this module for professional learning and provide their own professional educator licensure (PEL) credit.

The modules launch in SY 2019 and we will share usage data in subsequent reports.

## **Administrator Academy AA #1610: Improving Performance on Early Childhood Indicators 6, 7 & 12: Meeting our Mandates**

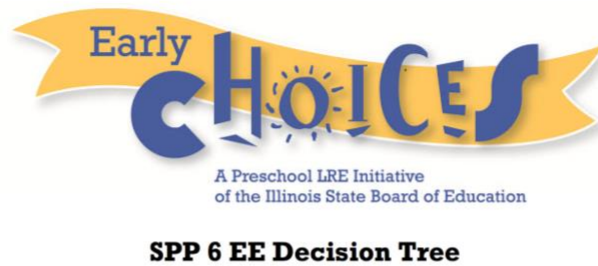
The Administrator Academy workshop reviews the three indicators from the State Performance Plan related to early childhood. The goal is for administrators to determine what next steps to take in their program to assure high quality inclusion, outcomes and transitions for their preschoolers. We had 26 people attend from 24 different school districts in Illinois. We had 18 people complete the Administrator Academy project for credit. Evaluation data from this academy was collected by the DuPage ROE.

# Early CHOICES Appendix

## Educational Environment Code Generator Application

<http://ec-sppsix.com/>

A screenshot of the home page is below. Users are able to add a new entry, which will take them through the EE code decision tree and generate the appropriate EE code for the preschooler.



Add New Entry

Questions, bugs, or other issues to report, email the support team

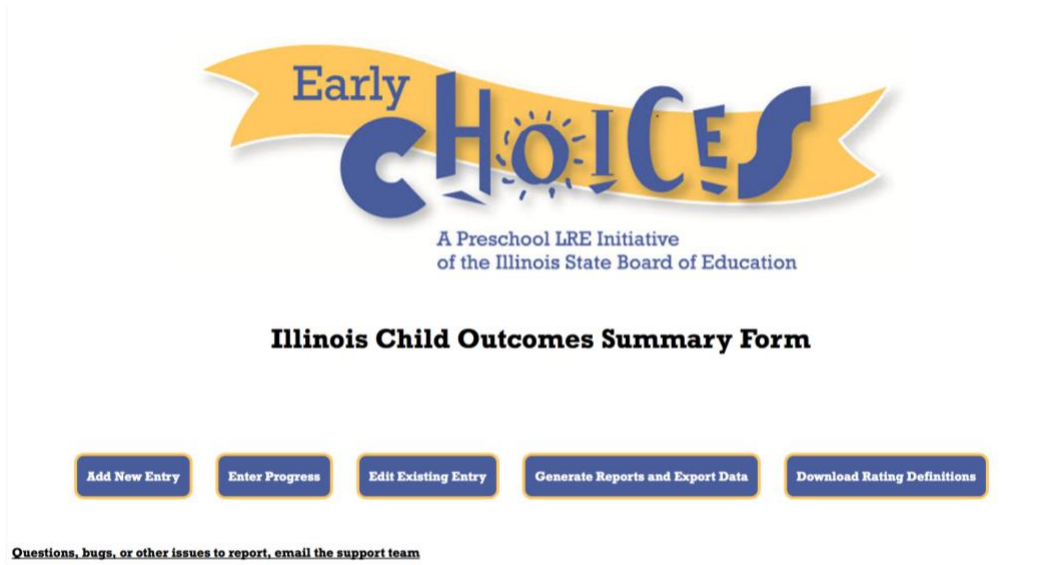
Below is a sample of the PDF generated from the application:

<b>EE Decision Tree</b>	
<b>Child Rating Details</b>	
<b>Student Initials</b>	EX
<b>Gender</b>	Male
<b>DOB</b>	01/04/2012
<b>District</b>	Abingdon CUSD 217
<b>Type of Early Childhood Program</b>	Head Start
<b>Code As</b>	31

## Early Childhood Outcomes Application

<http://ec-ecotool.com/>

A screenshot of the home page is below. Users are able to add a new entry, enter progress, or edit existing ratings. Users are able to generate a report of all the data they have entered into the application.



A sample Child Outcome Summary Form PDF generated is located on the following page.

Illinois Child Outcomes Summary (COS) Form Entry  Progress  Date: 12/10/2014

Name: Demo ann Male  Female  DOB: 12/02/2014  
 Last First Middle SIS ID: \_\_\_\_\_

District: Addison SD 4 School: \_\_\_\_\_

**Persons Involved in Deciding Summary Ratings - Role/Title**

Last Name:	First Name:	Middle Name:	Role:
Teacher	Betty		Coordinator, LEA Representative or Administrator
Demo	Mom		Family/Caretaker

Summary of Evidence: No examples of age appropriate function	Summary of Evidence: Acquires and use knowledge and skills	Summary of Evidence: Not age appropriate actions to meet needs
Sources of Supporting Evidence : Teacher, parent report,	Sources of Supporting Evidence : Teacher report, parent report and Creative Curriculum	Sources of Supporting Evidence : Teacher and parent reports. Classroom assessments
Special Considerations:	Special Considerations:	Special Considerations:

**Entry and Progress Ratings (use ECO Decision Tree to determine ratings, then choose from below and note rating in box)**

1-Not Yet	3-Nearly	5-Somewhat	7-Completely
2-Between Not Yet and Nearly		4-Between Nearly and Somewhat	
		6-Between Somewhat and Completely	

<input type="checkbox"/> 3 Outcome A: Positive Social Relationships	<input type="checkbox"/> 7 Outcome B: Acquire and Use Knowledge and Skills	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Outcome C: Take Appropriate Action to Meet Own Needs
---	--	---

Did \_\_\_\_\_ Participate in the Meeting?

**Coordinator, LEA Representative or Administrator**  Yes  No

**Early Childhood Teacher**  Yes  No

**Psychologist or Social Worker**  Yes  No

**Speech/ Language Pathologist**  Yes  No

**Another Related Service Provider (e.g. OT/PT)**  Yes  No

**How Was Parent Involved in the Ratings?**  1

1- Information Received in Team Meeting from Parent    2 - Information from Parent Incorporated into assessment(s)    3 - Parent Did Not Participate in Ratings Process

Entered into SIS by \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_ Form Revision Date - 07/24/2014