



# Early Education Emergent Leaders Program Evaluation Report 2011-2012

Prepared for



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June 2012

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## Acknowledgements

This research was made possible through the generous support of the Helios Education Foundation. The conclusions and views presented in this report are those of the author only and not of the study's funders or reviewers.

Special thanks to:

Karen Ortiz at Helios for her individual interest in and support of this project.

Alan Taylor and Mary Jamsa at Southwest Human Development, for the guidance and support on the design of the evaluation, and for their enthusiasm and dedication to all the participants in Emergent Leaders.

The Indigo Cultural Center evaluation team:

Leslie Jackson for her amazing insight into the world of child care administration as she collected data and conducted dozens of interviews with participants all over the state.

Gisela Jimenez for her assistance and amazing attention to detail in managing the database for this evaluation.

Dr. Patricia Goubeaux for her thoughtful research assistance and editing skills.

And finally, to the child care administrators and mentors of this year's Emergent Leaders cohort for their time and effort in completing all the survey instruments, and for so graciously allowing us into their programs.

# Early Education Emergent Leaders Program Evaluation Report 2011 - 2012

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## **I**ntroduction

Child care directors and administrators are often described as the “gatekeepers to quality” (Bella & Bloom, 2003; Whitebook, 1997). Findings from research have demonstrated a strong link between classroom quality and the leadership and management practices of child care administrators. Higher levels of sophistication and skills are required to implement and maintain a high quality organizational climate (McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership, 2011). For example, administrators must have the capacity to shift from one perspective to another, and be able to consider the broader picture while simultaneously holding on to the details that influence their staff’s day-to-day practices (Bella & Bloom, 2003).

Too often, however, child care administrators lack the levels of confidence and skills necessary for fostering a high quality organizational climate. A study conducted by the McCormick Center for Early Childhood showed only 27% of directors feeling they were well-prepared for their administrative role. Over one-half of them describe the transition experience as overwhelming (MCECL, 2003). Specialized training in leadership development for child care administrators has proven effective in increasing the skill level of administrators, thereby improving classroom quality and a program’s overall organizational climate (Bella & Bloom, 2003; Doherty, 2011; Parsons, 2006). In addition, there is evidence that participation in a leadership training program is an impetus for child care administrators to continue to pursue additional professional development opportunities (e.g. college course work, peer networks, learning communities, etc.) and assume a more active role in advocating for their children, families, and staff (Bella & Bloom, 2003).

It is this continued focus on growth that is the hallmark of effective leadership and sustained quality. Leadership may be seen as a journey – a developmental path that involves a system of training, mentoring, and networking opportunities to increase both personal and professional effectiveness. A recent summary of the BUILD Initiative’s cross-system work with nine states to build early learning systems emphasizes “a long-term organic approach that builds individual leaders as well as systems capacity. “ The BUILD findings further stress that collaboration and networking through learning communities are important strategies in comprehensive system reform (Bruner & Wright, 2009). However, while there is consensus among researchers, practitioners and policymakers about the importance of strong leadership in early childhood programs and systems building, there are still very few states that have made leadership development a high priority in their professional development and quality improvement systems. Even in the nine states participating in The BUILD Initiative, there is little evidence of an intentional and systematic approach for identifying and developing leadership competencies.

While Arizona has yet to provide specialized training and support to child care administrators in a wide-spread, systematic manner, it has taken important steps to provide developmental opportunities. The *Arizona Early Education Emergent Leaders Program*, which offers administrators training and mentoring experiences designed to facilitate the leadership capacities necessary for enhancing the quality of their programs, is one such opportunity. Key program components that include a cohort learning model and workshops with state and national experts provide opportunities for networking and collaboration among participants and poise them for assuming statewide and community leadership positions. In addition, applicants for the *Arizona Early Education Emergent Leaders Program* can apply to participate in the National Association for the Education of Young Children’s (NAEYC)’s *Legacy Leader Fellows Program*. As a Fellow, they have the opportunity to build valuable skill sets through exposure to a broad view of the early education field as well as real time, practical activities. These outcomes are especially significant as the State of Arizona, through its First Things First initiative, seeks to build a quality child care system and create a comprehensive system that insures that all Arizona children arrive at their first year of school healthy and ready to learn.

### Program Overview

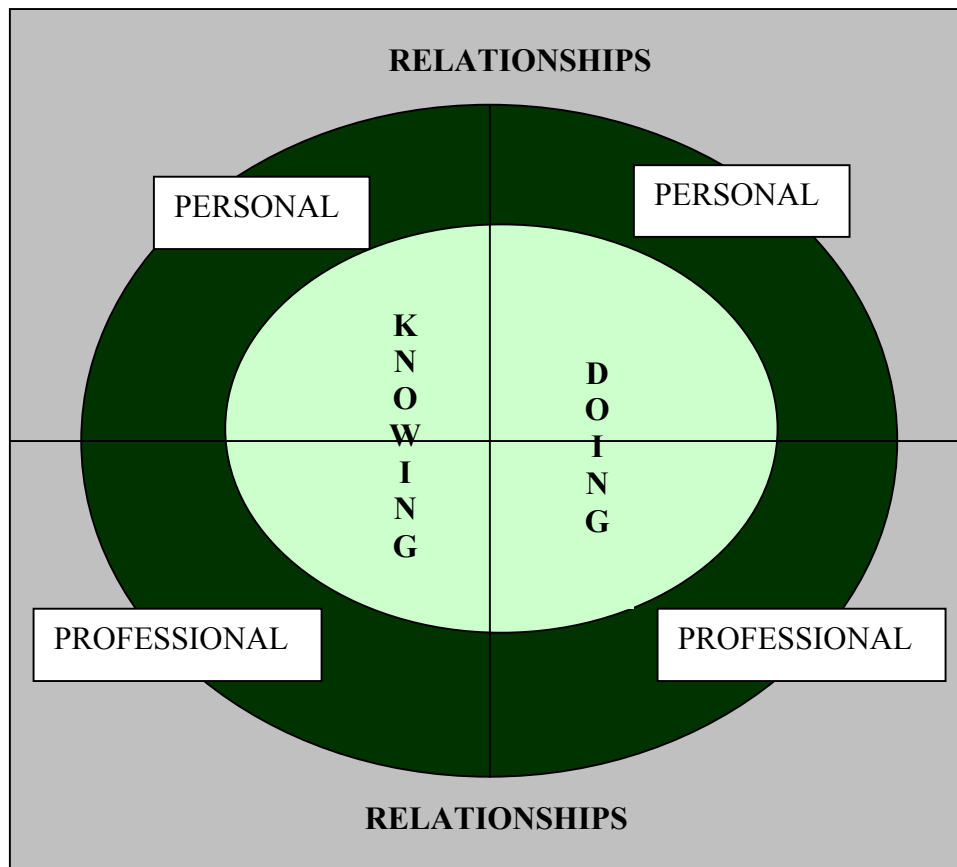
The purpose of the *Emergent Leaders Program* is to increase the capacity of administrators in early care and education programs through training, networking and technical assistance, and to actively create, support and advocate for quality early childhood programs.

## Theoretical Model

Three distinct, yet complementary theoretical models guide the Early Education Emergent Leaders Program. The first model is proposed by Paula Jorde Bloom, a noted researcher on the topic of child care administrator leadership. Bloom’s model emphasizes that change is an ongoing process, and that in order to effectively run high quality programs, administrators must be comfortable with both the theory and practice of leading change efforts (Bella & Bloom, 2003).

The second model, proposed by Zero to Three, echoes the importance of theory and practice by identifying two main contributors to administrators’ leadership potential – knowledge and action. This model suggests that *knowing* and *doing* are equally important elements of leadership and are manifested in both the personal and professional dimensions. And finally, the change that comes about as a result of *knowing* and *doing* is embedded in the social context of *relationships* (Kellebrew & Youcha, 2004).

## Zero to Three's Relationship-Based Leadership Development Model



Lastly, *Emergent Leaders* is also informed by a basic premise used in “adaptive leadership” work. This adaptation of Ron Heifetz’ conceptualization is adeptly applied to the field of early care and education in Goffin and Washington’s book, *Ready or Not: Leadership Choices in Early Care and Education* (2007). This framework basically states that if we are to assume a greater leadership role on behalf of early care and education as a public good, and for the system that delivers it, we cannot rely on others to resolve our issues. The leadership work needs to be our work, and should be a collective activity that engages a wide range of people who are in varied positions and who have diverse points of contact with the field’s adaptive challenges.

### Program Design

The 2011-2012 program year marked the seventh cohort of *Early Education Emergent Leaders* (EL). The agency that provided coordination for this program was *Southwest Human Development*.

*Outreach* – EL coordinators targeted a group of child care administrators that was diverse in terms of types of programs, geography, level of experience, and culture/ethnicity. Outreach activities included mailings to centers all over the state, visits to child care administrator support groups, word of mouth from past EL participants, outreach in conjunction with community-based organizations working with child care providers, recruitment by First Things First Regional Partnership Council directors, and targeted recruitment through other training programs.

*Key Elements* – This year *Early Education Emergent Leaders* consisted of a 12-month program that began in June 2011 and ended with a “Graduation Ceremony” in May 2012.

The EL coordinators at *Southwest Human Development* designed a four-pronged approach to helping participants apply new concepts and theories in their everyday practice. The key elements included: using a cohort learning model, attending monthly training workshops that included nationally-recognized experts, working with an individual mentor, and completing an individual project related to language and literacy. The design of this approach was informed by what research tells us about adult learning principles. For example, each element of the EL program was designed so that participants had the opportunity to be self-directing and could immediately apply new concepts and theories to their practice (Knowles, 1998).

Early Education Emergent Leaders Program Objectives
1. Enhance directors’ leadership skills
2. Enhance administrative and management skills
3. Enhance teacher-child interactions
4. Help translate theories into practice
5. Enhance classroom environments
6. Foster self-confidence, self-reflection, and own leadership style
7. Help extend professional networks
8. Help develop and implement a language and literacy project
9. Increase meaningful involvement and leadership skills in ECE professional groups

The sections below present additional details about the key elements of Emergent Leaders:

*Cohort Learning Model* – The *Early Education Emergent Leaders* program was comprised of a year-long cohort experience which built a learning community, provided participants with opportunities to share resources and strategies, and developed relationships that provided ongoing support to child care administrators, their programs, and their staff. This opportunity to network and build relationships with other child care center administrators from throughout Arizona – including Emergent Leader alumni, as well as state leaders in early care and education – helped administrators feel less isolated in their own programs and helped them gather resources that supported their day-to-day work with children and families.

*Training* – Administrators and mentors attended one to two day-long monthly workshops with state and national experts. Monthly topics and events included:

“Leadership is Communication” (Holly Elissa Bruno, MA, JD, Founder and Executive Director of Bruno Duraturo Keynotes and Teambuilding)

“Vision/Value & Quality is a Moving Target” (Luis Hernandez, MA, Western Kentucky University Training & Technical Assistance Services; Barb Milner; EL Mentors)

“Mentoring Teachers for Reflective Practices” (Margie Carter & Deb Curtis, Founders of Harvest Resources)

“The Critical Role of Language and Literacy” (Mary Jamsa, Southwest Human Development)

“Supporting Social Emotional Development” (Dr. Kay Albrecht, President, Innovations in Early Childhood Education, Inc.)

“A Great Place to Work” Mary Jamsa (Southwest Human Development)

“Making the Most of Meetings” Mary Jamsa (Southwest Human Development)

“Advocating for Quality in Early Care and Education” (Bruce Liggett, President, Arizona Child Care Association)

“The Right Fit: Recruiting, Selecting & Orientating Staff” (Dr. Kay Albrecht, President, Innovations in Early Childhood Education, Inc.)

“Language and Literacy Project Presentations” (Emergent Leaders participants)

Each session involved learning new content, an opportunity for discussion and networking among participants, and discussion with the presenter(s).

*Mentoring* – Each administrator was assigned one mentor whose role it was to facilitate key learning from the monthly workshops and prepare and support administrators for leadership action such as designing and implementing their Literacy Individual Projects and participating in various advocacy opportunities. Mentors met with their assigned child care administrators about once a month and maintained communication via email and phone calls whenever needed.

In supporting the mentors in their work, the EL coordinators facilitated the use of a learning model, which moves the mentor from “sage on the stage” to “guide on the side.” This learning model promotes the development of participants’ critical thinking skills and leadership and administrative strategies (Martin, 2000). Developing sound critical thinking skills is as important as content, because learners are challenged to explain *why* they do what they do. This is referred to as “transformational learning” which supports adult learning more effectively than “directed learning,” which focus on acquisition of skills and knowledge (Martin, 2000 Cranton, 1994; Mezirow, 1991). Mentors met with the EL coordinators once a month to discuss their mentees’ progress and offer support and advice for one another, and to reflect on their own mentoring practices. The monthly meetings allowed for mentors to continue with ongoing discussions of strategies used to help build the relationship with their mentees, as well as identify strengths and areas of challenge in their work with them.

*Language and Literacy Individual Projects* – Administrators developed a Language and Literacy Individual Project for their centers with training and technical assistance from their mentors and the EL coordinators. Language and literacy were chosen as the topic areas of focus due to their importance in school readiness (Bowman, Donovan, & Burns, 2001; Dickinson, 2001). Administrators were trained and supported in using a standardized evaluation assessment tool – the *Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation Tool* (ELLCO) – to assess language and literacy in one of their classrooms. Based on the results of using this assessment tool, administrators were asked to identify



a center-wide or classroom need around the issue of language and literacy, articulate a goal, develop a plan to meet the need, implement the plans at their centers, and measure the impact of their project. The ELLCO was used again at the end of the EL program to determine whether there had been improvements in that particular classroom. Administrators then presented their Language and Literacy Individual Project in the form of a poster-presentation in front of their peers and other community guests. Participants' posters were prominently displayed at the EL Graduation Ceremony.

*Putting it all together. . .*

The key elements that comprised the basic delivery design for Emergent Leaders did not operate in isolation. For example, the language and literacy workshop was attended by the EL participant-administrator, plus two targeted teachers from their center. The Language and Literacy Individual Project provided an opportunity for a "leadership in action" project. Administrators applied design, delivery and evaluation concepts from other EL workshops as they implemented their projects and simultaneously improved the literacy environment at their centers. The mentors guided and supported administrators as they designed, implemented, presented and assessed their Individual Projects.

## **Evaluation Rationale**

Conducting an in-depth evaluation serves three main purposes. First, it allows us to build on knowledge gained from earlier evaluations in order to strengthen the impact of the program.

Second, findings from the past three years point to several ways that conducting a formal evaluation of Emergent Leaders has impacted the delivery of the program itself and the administrators' experiences. This year we also included evaluation as an additional dimension in the leadership intervention. The evaluation team hired Leslie Jackson, a former child care administrator and now leadership and staff consultant, to collect data using an interview process known as the Program Administration Scale (Talan & Bloom, 2004). These interviews with the administrators were seen not only as an opportunity to focus on specific administrative practices at their centers, but to also reflect on how they might be able to make the most of their time with their EL mentors to work on enhancing systems and policies. This level of involvement by an evaluator is common in community participatory action-based research.

Third, the research on leadership development for child care professionals is still sparse (Muijs, Aubrey, Harris, & Briggs, 2004). Findings from this evaluation are likely to address some existing questions, and will point to many other research questions that researchers and future evaluations must explore in order to push the field towards a deeper understanding on how leadership development of child care administrators can assist in statewide system-building of access to quality child care for all children.

# Evaluation Methods

This section describes the participants in the evaluation, procedures, instruments, and data analysis procedures.

## Research Questions:

1. Do participants' scores on key outcome measures<sup>1</sup> increase after going through the Emergent Leaders program?
2. How do participants rate their experiences in Emergent Leaders?

## Participants

Twenty-two child care administrators and twelve mentors participated in this year's EL program. Participants' demographic characteristics are described below.

*Administrators* – Twenty-two child care administrators (22) were enrolled in the EL program; however, two participants dropped the program at different points in the year. All of the administrators were female, and the average age was 43.71 years (min. 36; max. 60). Seventy-seven percent (77%) of the administrator participants were White, 13% were Latina, 5% were African American, and 5% were Native American.

**Table 1 – Child Care Administrators' Highest Level of Education**

	Frequency	Percent
High school graduate/GED	5	22.7
AA in Ch Dev or related field	5	22.7
BA	5	22.7
MA / MS	7	31.8
Total	22	100.0

*Child Care Program Characteristics* – We also collected data on various features of the child care programs in which child care administrators worked. Overall, there was wide diversity in the types of programs represented in Emergent Leaders. Table 2 presents detailed information about the auspices of programs represented in Emergent Leaders.

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<sup>1</sup> Key outcome measures included: Leadership Self-Assessment scales; Director Self-Efficacy Scale; Program Administration Scale (PAS); Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation Tool (ELLCO).

**Table 2 – Child Care Program Auspice**

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Non-profit	8	36.4
For-profit / independently owned	6	23.7
Faith-based	4	18.2
Head start	2	9.1
District preschool	1	4.5
Corporate	1	4.5
Total	22	100.0

Although almost half of the programs served children that were predominantly White, there was wide ethnic and cultural diversity in the EL child care programs. Table 3 presents percentages of different ethnic categories.

**Table 3 – Ethnic & Cultural Categories of Children Served in EL Child Care Programs**

	Frequency	Percentage
Predominately White	9	40.9
50 White/50 nonwhite	1	4.5
Predominantly Latino	5	22.7
Predominantly nonwhite	1	4.5
Wide diversity	6	27.3
Total	22	100.0

The average number of classrooms in EL child care programs was 5.11 (min. 1; max. 13). Forty-one percent (41%) of the programs offered child care from infancy through Kindergarten or higher. Only one center offered child care for pre-K only, and fifty-five percent (55%) had programs that offered child care plus after-school care for school-age children.

Many of the EL child care programs served English language learners (ELLs). Only two programs reported not serving any ELLs. Forty-two percent (42%) of administrators reported that more than a quarter of their children were ELLs.

Seventy-five percent (75%) of participants reported that they serve predominantly low-income families. Fifty-eight percent (58%) reported that more than 65% of their children were subsidy-or FTF scholarship-eligible.

*Program Quality Characteristics* – We asked participants whether or not their child care programs were accredited by a nationally-recognized organization. Forty-five percent (45%) of the administrators reported that their center was accredited (5 = NAEYC; 5 = other national bodies; 2 = Head Start). Two participants reported that their centers were in the process of pursuing accreditation. We also asked administrators to report whether they had been involved in other quality improvement projects. Sixty-three percent (63%) reported enrollment in *Quality First* and/or TEACH. Twenty-

three percent (23%) also reported enrollment in other initiatives (e.g., Inclusion Project; CDA Pathways; Smart Support; FTF Health Coach; etc.). Finally, 46% of the administrators reported that they had previous experience working with a child care mentor, coach, or consultant.

## Procedures

Participating administrators completed pre and post self-assessments, consented to a pre and post interview / document review on administrative practices, and provided written feedback on the EL program.

## Instruments<sup>2</sup>

*Director Background Survey* – This survey captured basic demographic information about administrators and their programs. It also asked about previous experience with quality enhancement training programs – including previous work with a mentor.

*Director Self-Assessments* – This survey was administered pre and post EL program. It used scales adapted from “Visionary Director” (Carter & Curtis, 1998) to assess administrators’ vision about their programs, the organizational climate of their programs, and the frequency of various tasks and responsibilities (Durst, 2006).

*Director Self-Efficacy Scale* – This survey was adapted from Lamorey and Wilcox (2005). It consists of 14 items pertaining to participants’ feelings of influence, frustration, and capabilities regarding their role as a child care administrator. Ratings on each item vary from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. Examples of items include: “When a teacher shows improvement it is because I am effective in the leadership strategies I use,” and “A child’s genetic predisposition for growth and development has more influence than a highly skilled teacher or high quality center.” Items from this scale form a subscale that taps into administrators’ sense of personal efficacy in their work.

*Program Administration Scale* – the PAS (Talan & Bloom, 2004) was used pre and post EL program to assess the quality of administrative practices of the administrators’. Data collectors completed the PAS with administrators using an interview format that took about 3 hours to complete. Interviews were conducted by a trained evaluator with extensive experience in interviewing child care professionals as well as previous experience in child care administration.

*Early Language & Literacy Classroom Observation* – the ELLCO (Smith, Dickinson, Sangeorge, & Anastasopoulos, 2002) was used pre and post EL to assess five key literacy elements: classroom structure, curriculum, the language environment, books and book reading opportunities, and print and early writing supports<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> For questions about any of the instruments used in this study, please contact the study’s author. [www.IndigoCulturalCenter.org](http://www.IndigoCulturalCenter.org)

<sup>3</sup> For those programs and classrooms where conducting an ELLCO was not appropriate, other evaluation tools were used – such as the *Infant Toddler Environmental Rating Scale – Revised* (Harms, Cryer, & Clifford, 2006) and *Get Ready to Read* (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998).

*EL Feedback Survey* – Each administrator filled out a survey at the end of the EL program. The survey solicited feedback on the EL program and also asked administrators to rate their mentors and the Emergent Leaders project coordination.

## Data Analysis Procedures

For each survey instrument, evaluators analyzed frequency of responses to survey items, mean scores, and summarized themes from open-ended responses. T-tests were then conducted in order to determine change in scores from pre to post program. For the PAS and the ELLCO, evaluators conducted descriptive data analysis, and then conducted correlations and analysis of variance to examine the survey and observational/interview data for associations. T-tests were also conducted on the PAS and ELLCO in order to determine whether there were any changes in scores pre and post EL.

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### Key Outcomes – Pre/Post Comparisons

There were four key outcomes that we hypothesized would be impacted by child care administrators’ involvement with Emergent Leaders:

- 1) Child Care Administrators’ Self-Assessments scores
- 2) Child Care Administrator Self-Efficacy scores
- 3) Program Administration Scale scores
- 4) Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation scores.

Data was collected on these measures both pre and post EL.

**Directors’ Self Assessments** – We used three different instruments that each captured different dimensions of participants’ view of themselves as effective administrators – the *Vision Assessment* scale, the *Organizational Climate* scale, and *Director’s Tasks & Responsibilities* scale. We hypothesized that these scales addressed areas where EL would provide an impetus for change.

Even though there were increases in administrators’ self-assessment scores, they were not statistically significant. Table 4 lists the mean scores for each data collection time point.

**Table 4 – Directors’ Self Assessments Pre/Post Comparisons**

Measure	Mean
Vision Assessment Time 1	3.39 n.s.
Vision Assessment Time 2	3.94 n.s.
Organizational Climate Time 1	2.45 n.s.
Organizational Climate Time 2	2.67 n.s.

Director's Tasks & Responsibilities Time 1	2.17 n.s.
Director's Tasks & Responsibilities Time 2	1.85 n.s.

n.s. = not statistically significant

**Director Self-Efficacy Scale** – We used an adapted version of Lamorey and Wilcox’s self-efficacy scale (2005). There is a rich literature on K-12 teacher self-efficacy, which demonstrates that efficacious teachers bring about more positive change in their teaching practices and students’ outcomes (Armor et al., 1976; Berman et al., 1977). Furthermore, teacher self-efficacy is reported to be malleable as a result of professional development interventions (Mullholland & Wallace, 2001). Although there is less literature about self-efficacy with early care and education administrators, researchers are starting to include this variable in their analyses as the field moves towards professional development models that include one-on-one technical assistance approaches (Deaver, 2005; Green et al., 2003). We hypothesized that child care administrators who believe in their ability to implement change have the motivation to adapt their practices based on new knowledge, and will ultimately improve aspects of their administrative and leadership skills.

We conducted a paired sample t-test analysis and discovered that while there was an increase in self-efficacy scores, it was not statistically significant.

**Table 5 – Director Self-Efficacy Scale Pre/Post Comparisons**

Measure	Mean
Director Self-Efficacy Scale Time 1	4.18 n.s.
Director Self-Efficacy Scale Time 2	4.27 n.s.

**Program Administration Scale** – This scale was administered in an interview format that lasted approximately 3 hours. It was completed pre and post EL. PAS scoring can range from 1 to 7 (7 = Excellent; 1 = Inadequate). There were statistically significant increases in administrators’ overall scores from Time 1 to Time 2. See Table 6 below.

**Table 6 – Program Administration Scale**

PAS Item	Mean Score
Overall PAS Score Time 1	4.37
Overall PAS Score Time 2	4.64**

\* =  $p < .05$ ; \*\* =  $p < .01$ ;

**Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation Tool (ELLCO)** – Lastly, we conducted paired sample t-test analyses to determine whether administrators increased their scores on the language and literacy classroom observation. Both the administrators and their mentors both initially collected data using the ELLCO. Their scores were averaged to obtain a baseline score. At the end of Emergent Leaders – after attending a workshop on language and literacy, implementing their individual projects, and participating in dozens of conversations about language acquisition and

emergent literacy with their mentors – a second observation was conducted by both the mentor and administrator. Again, their scores were averaged to obtain the second score.

Results demonstrate a statistically significant increase on all ELLCO subscales. See Table 7 below.

**Table 7 – ELLCO Subscale Scores Pre / Post Comparisons**

ELLCO Subscale	Mean Score
Classroom Structure Time 1	15.50
Classroom Structure Time 2	16.88*
Curriculum Time 1	8.88
Curriculum Time 2	11.13***
The Language Environment Time 1	11.46
The Language Environment Time 2	13.54**
Books and Book Reading Time 1	14.54
Books and Book Reading Time 2	17.88**
Print and Early Writing Time 1	8.25
Print and Early Writing Time 2	10.46**

\* =  $p < .05$ ; \*\* =  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* =  $p < .001$

It is also interesting to note that those programs and administrators that started with lower scores tended to have higher rates of growth. For example, participants who had lower scores on the following scales demonstrated more growth by the end of the EL program. This pattern of growth is consistent with other professional development and quality enhancement interventions (Shivers, 2011a; Shivers, 2011b):

- ELLCO Classroom Structure
- ELLCO Curriculum
- ELLCO Language Environment
- Program Administration Scale (PAS)

## Experiences and Feedback on the Emergent Leaders Program

**Overall Ratings on EL Objectives** – Administrators were asked to rate how well the Emergent Leaders program met their expectations for the major program objectives. See Table 8 below.

**Table 8 – Ratings on EL Project Objectives**

<b>EL Objective</b>	<b>Fell far below expectations</b>	<b>Minimally met expectations</b>	<b>Met expectations</b>	<b>Exceeded expectations</b>
1. Enhance leadership skills that will directly impact a director’s program				100%
2. Enhance directors’ administrative and management skills				100%
3. Help directors enhance teacher-child interactions				100%
4. Help directors translate learned theories into program practice			20%	80%
5. Help directors enhance classroom environments			40%	60%
6. Foster self-confidence, self-reflection, and the enhancement of a director’s own leadership style				100%
7. Help directors extend their professional networks				100%
8. Help directors develop and implement a language and literacy project			20%	80%
9. Increase directors’ meaningful involvement and leadership skills in ECE professional groups			60%	40%

## **Program Coordination**

Southwest Human Development’s Training Department provided the coordination for Emergent Leaders. The coordinators were responsible for recruiting participants, hiring and supervising mentors, organizing all training sessions – including monthly mentor meetings, being the touch-point for all questions and concerns related to EL, and organizing the EL Graduation Ceremony. See Table 9 for a listing of participants’ ratings on individual items.



**Table 9 – Administrators’ Ratings of EL Coordination**

		1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 agree	4 strongly agree
<b>Effectiveness of Emergent Leader Coordination</b>					
1.	the program objectives for Emergent Leaders were clearly defined	--	--	50%	50%
2.	methods for gathering information to assess our needs were helpful	--	--	75%	25%
3.	the activities and events planned by the EL coordinators were tailored to our needs	--	--	--	100%
4.	the EL coordinators were flexible enough to change if it wasn't meeting our needs	--	--	50%	50%
6.	the process of working with EL coordinators met our expectations	--	--	25%	75%
7.	the overall quality of EL coordination was high	--	--	25%	75%

## Training: Monthly Workshops

The training component of EL consisted of one to two day-long monthly workshops led by local, state and national experts. Both administrators and mentors were present during the training events. Each training session involved learning new content, an opportunity for discussion and networking among participants, and discussion with the presenter(s).

Administrators were asked to rank their top three choices for their favorite training sessions. Table 9 lists their responses.

**Table 9 – Participants’ Ranking of Top 3 Training Sessions**

<b>(percentage) Please rate your top three workshops/speakers in terms of “most beneficial”</b>	
75%	Mentoring Teachers for Reflective Practices (Margie Carter & Deb Curtis)
50%	The Right Fit: Recruiting, Selecting, Orienting Staff (Dr. Kay Albrecht)
50%	Quality is a Moving Target (Mission, Values & Vision; Quality Assessment Instruments) (Luis Hernandez; Barb Milner; EL Mentors)
50%	Supporting Social and Emotional Development (Dr. Kay Albrecht)
50%	The Critical Role of Language & Literacy (Mary Jamsa, SWHD)

## Individual Projects

Completing an Individual Language and Literacy Project was another cornerstone of the EL program. This strategy builds on theories of adult learning, which tell us that optimal learning happens when students can apply content knowledge to a grounded experience – like implementing a project at their place of employment.

The amount of time the EL administrators spent working on their Individual Projects ranged from 20 hours to over 80 hours. Although administrators had the latitude to select and implement a project of their own choosing, each of the projects addressed one or more of the following four language and literacy contexts:

1. Classroom literacy environments
2. Classroom literacy activities
3. Engaging families in literacy activities
4. Engaging the community in literacy activities

Barriers and challenges in implementing the Individual Project:

- Resistance from staff
- Not enough time
- Not knowing the full expectations and parameters for the project.

Impact of completing the Individual Project:

- More emphasis on language and literacy with children as well as families
- Higher quality services to families in both English and Spanish
- Conducting background research for project expanded participants’ professional knowledge.

## Mentoring Experience

*Directors’ Ratings of the EL Mentors* – The EL administrators rated the effectiveness of the mentors on their knowledge and skills. Overall, EL mentors received impressive ratings in all these domains. The table below list ratings on specific items.

**Table 10 – Mentor Skill & Knowledge**

		1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 agree	4 strongly agree
<b>Mentor’s knowledge and skills</b>					
1.	Our Mentor is versed not only in early childhood content, but also in the process of building collaborations.	--	--	50%	50%
2.	Our Mentor demonstrated respectful awareness of the unique	--	--	50%	50%

	cultural diversity in our community.				
3.	Our Mentor recommended appropriate strategies and resources.	--	--	50%	50%
4.	Our Mentor elicited information from others and is a good listener.	--	--	--	100%
5.	Our Mentor demonstrated effective organizational skills (e.g., used time efficiently, was prepared for each meeting).	--	--	25%	75%
6.	Our Mentor provided prompt feedback.	--	--	25%	75%
7.	Our Mentor worked collaboratively to clarify our roles and responsibilities throughout the learning process.	--	--	50%	50%

**Describe your relationship with your Mentor.**

- *While our relationship was very professional, many issues were open for discussion, and I felt I could be totally honest about what I agreed or disagreed with and why.*
- *Warm and engaging.*
- *Positive, supportive, unconditional.*

**How did you benefit from this relationship professionally?**

- *She gave me ideas and resources and connected me with other directors and programs.*
- *I was able to consider and see problems and answers to challenges at our center by having discussions with another professional who was not biased.*
- *She helped me increase my confidence.*

“Our center is working with Quality First and Smart Support. My mentor helped me tie everything together, so we could get the most out of each of these programs.”

~EL Administrator

Participants’ responses described in this section reflect a developmental trend that has resulted from a burgeoning of professional development and technical assistance programs. Increasingly, administrators require more sophistication in the way they think about and implement organizational systems and policies in their programs. In order for them to keep up with the demands of increasing classroom quality and increasing levels of education for themselves and their staff, they will need mentors who can challenge and support them in both global and specific ways.

# Evaluation Summary

There were significant increases on the Program Administration Scale (PAS) and the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observations (ELLCO) from Time 1 to Time 2. While, Emergent Leaders participants increased the way they viewed their role as an administrator, these findings were not statistically significant. And finally, participants rated their experiences with their mentors, the workshops, and overall program coordination as highly positive.

The rich empirical and anecdotal evidence received from Emergent Leaders participants provides compelling evidence of how leadership training can change the early childhood profession through changes in early childhood educators themselves. The results of this evaluation underscore the need for systematic, intensive, and relevant training focused on the unique needs of early childhood administrators.

This year's findings, along with the findings from extensive evaluations from the last three years, provide persuasive support for counting Emergent Leaders as an effective evidence-based program for delivering high quality leadership training for child care administrators.

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