



Research News

January 2011
Volume 1, Number 6

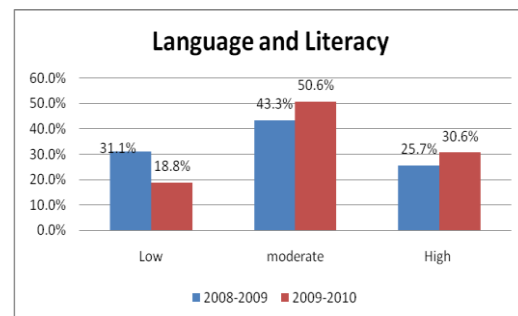
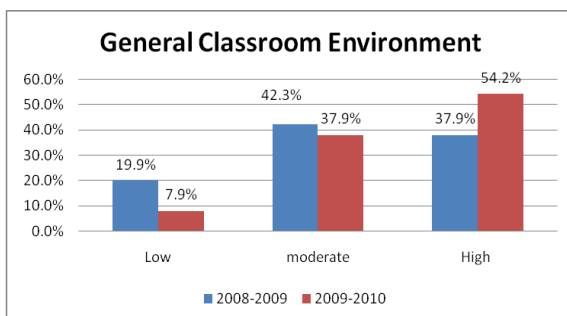
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Provisions for Language and Literacy in Preschool Classrooms

There is a growing body of research that links preschool children's learning skills with later school success. The Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO) is a standardized, widely used tool that measures the degree to which teachers promote young children's literacy development through materials and interactions. The ELLCO tool identifies literacy-specific practices that have proven to provide a rich learning environment that enhances children's literacy development.

This newsletter presents findings regarding provisions for materials (*General Classroom Environment* subscale), and teacher-child interactions (*Language and Literacy* subscale) over a two-year period. A total of 705 classrooms were observed in 2009, and 578 were observed in 2010, 347 of which were observed in both years.

Findings: Average scores for literacy provisions and practices increased from 2009 for all programs except Child-Parent Centers. Average scores for other programs (*Preschool for All, Head Start, Tuition-Based Preschool*) remain at a moderate level of quality for language and literacy practices.



Discussion: While minor improvements have been made in early-childhood education in both *General Classroom Environment* and *Language and Literacy* scores, overall children are not being provided with high-quality, literacy-specific practices. Consequently, there is still a need for improvement in order to fully prepare children for kindergarten success.

Recommendations: Teachers need to begin making targeted efforts to engage children in these skills by discussing books, extending oral language, vocabulary development, developing phonological awareness, building awareness of print, and varied purposes of writing. For instance, children's ideas from a book reading could be written, discussed, and displayed. In doing so, the teacher engages children in conversation, extending oral language development, while modeling print. Intentional practices such as these encourage children to use their emerging literacy language and literacy skills. Furthermore, coaches should work with individual teachers to make tailored interventions. Similarly, programs can draw upon these results to create program level programmatic supports geared toward language and literacy. Taken together, results of these supports will be evident by increased ELLCO scores.

We want to know what YOU think!

For additional information, you may e-mail us at contactus@ecechicago.org or go to "Teacher Resources" on the home page of the OECE Web site: <http://www.ecechicago.org/teacher/>. Stay tuned! Results from other studies will be published in forthcoming newsletters!

