



Demonstrating Results III: Child Progress in Minnesota Head Start

2013/2014 REPORT

Building from the 2012/2013 Minnesota Head Start Child Progress Report,¹ Minnesota Head Start Programs aggregated child assessment data for independent data analysis at the end of the 2013/2014 school year. These data represent a large sample of 4 year old children (n=3048) enrolled in Minnesota Head Start programs with a rural and urban mix. Nineteen of the 33 programs in the State voluntarily shared data. The sample represents 40% of all 4 year olds enrolled in Head Start programming. The sample mirrors the overall characteristics of the Head Start population served: 44% racially diverse, 31% primary language not English, 16% diagnosed with a disability, 6.5% homeless or foster children. This report will highlight some new findings in this latest analysis of child progress for 4 year olds enrolled in Head Start in Minnesota.

Child Progress toward Kindergarten Benchmarks

At the end of the school year, children's progress as measured on research-based assessment tools indicated that nearly 90% of 4 year olds enrolled in the Head Start sample had met accepted kindergarten benchmarks.

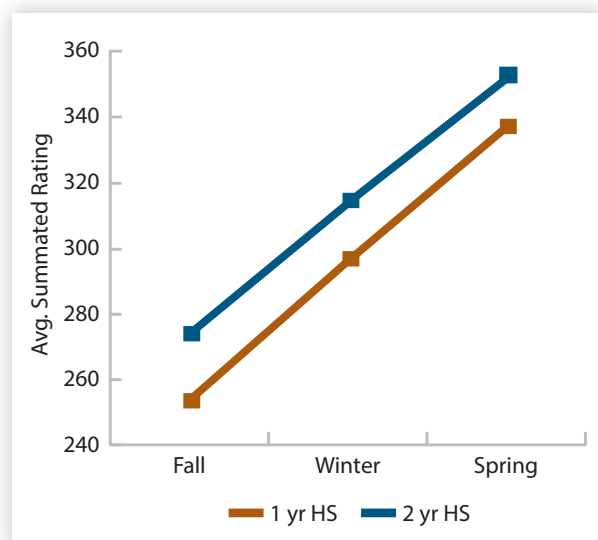
Table 1: % of Head Start Children meeting Kindergarten Benchmarks, 2014

Tool used for Assessment of Child Outcomes, Spring 2014	% of 4 year olds meeting kindergarten benchmarks	# of children
Teaching Strategies Gold	91%	2226
COR/COR Advantage	88%	346
Work Sampling Online	95%	228

Impact of Multiple Years of Head Start Experience on Child Progress

Children who came in with previous Head Start experience as 3 year olds showed higher fall scores relative to first-time Head Start participants. Children with an extra year of experience not only came in with higher fall scores but continued to develop on a similar growth trajectory over the school year. This means they maintained their developmental gains over children who have only one year of Head Start. Multiple years of Head Start or previous experience in Early Head Start can change a child's developmental trajectory.

Graph 1: Gains for Children Receiving 1 versus 2 years of Head Start, Teaching Strategies Gold (n=2226)



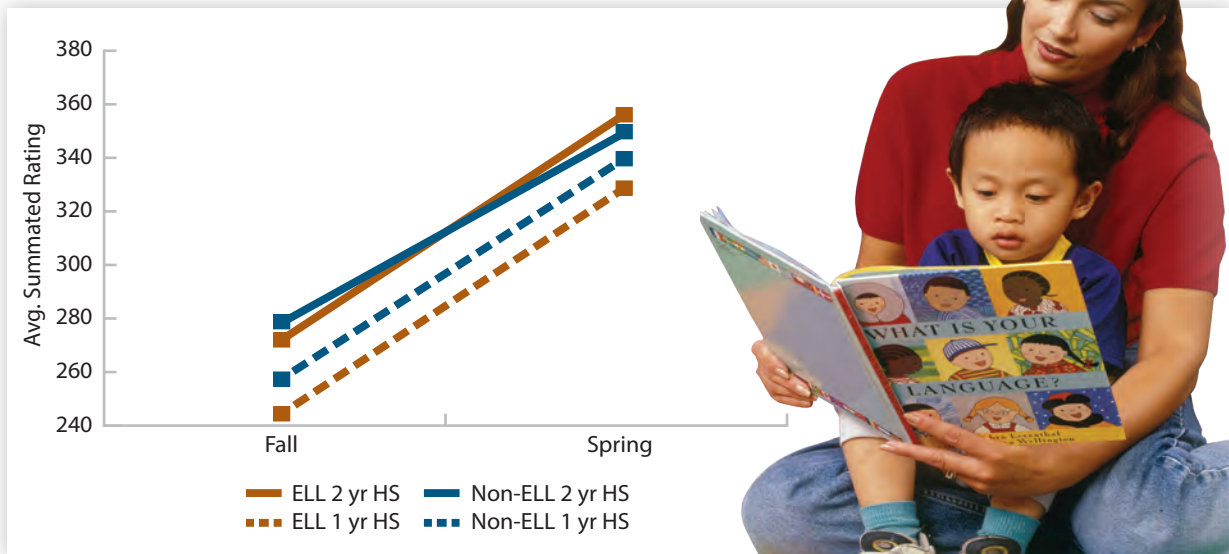
¹<http://www.mnheadstart.org/PDF/Demonstrating%20Results%20II%20Report%2012131.pdf>

Impact of Multiple Years of Head Start Experience on English Language Learners (ELL)

Multiple years of Head Start experience is particularly important for children who are English Language Learners (ELL). Fall scores for ELL were found to be lower unless children have had a prior year of Head Start. Children with a prior year of Head Start score only slightly lower than non-ELL with a prior year of Head Start. Also the benefit of an additional year of Head Start appears to be greater for ELL kids. A prior year of Head Start for children who are ELL is associated with about a 28 point increase in their overall gain, while the same effect is 21 points for children who are non-ELL. These differences were statistically significant.

By spring, children who are ELL with two years of Head Start outperformed non-ELL. Again, this suggests that Head Start may have a larger effect on developmental growth for ELL. The gap between ELL and non-ELL who attended only 1 year of Head Start has also narrowed by spring.

Graph 2: Gains for English Language Learners Receiving 1 versus 2 of Head Start, Teaching Strategies Gold (n=813)



Supporting Ruby's Dual Language Development

Ruby came to Head Start speaking very little English and did not speak in her home language of Karen. She was very withdrawn and would generally choose to play by herself. She struggled to form relationships with adults and peers. Ruby's development was assessed below expectations for her age in most areas.

To support Ruby's language development she was given her own class schedule with pictures and photo's to explain each activity. Karen-speaking parents and staff would speak to Ruby in her home language to help her understand concepts and encourage her to speak and interact with others. The Head Start teachers would plan individualized activities to meet Ruby's needs to increase her math and literacy concepts; these activities would be consistently repeated to offer

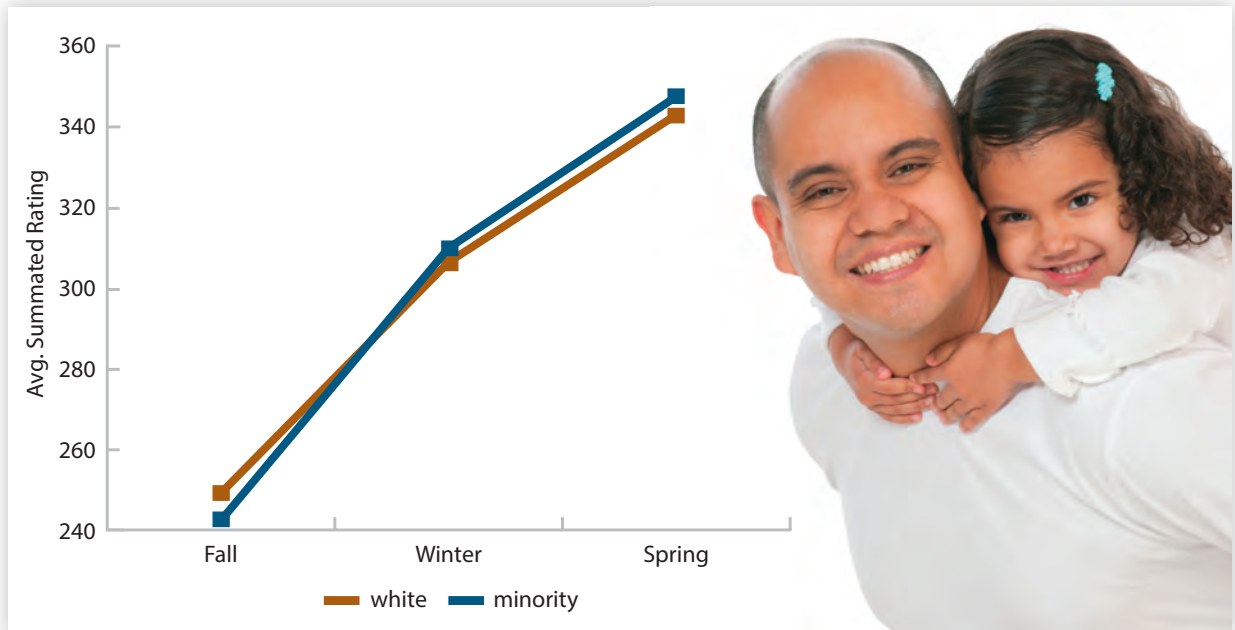
multiple opportunities to gain understanding. By the end of the first year, Ruby would greet teachers and speak some English. She was starting to show understanding of numbers, letters and was forming a friendship with another child.

Ruby's second year at Head Start started off with her introducing herself to the class on the first day and talking about her summer. Ruby was assessed now at or above her age band in all areas. Ruby was able to speak English to teachers, peers and visitors fluently and would also speak Karen to the class, often teaching both teachers and peers new words in her home language. When a visiting teacher was in the classroom, she was surprised to hear that Ruby was not a native English speaker.

Developmental Gains Related to Gender and Race

Child characteristics that were statistically significantly related to developmental gains included gender and race. Racially diverse students had similar fall scores as white children, but their developmental growth was slightly larger over the school year. Racially diverse children also had larger growth rates in the social emotional and literacy domains. These differences in growth rates across nonwhite and white children are roughly equal to the differences in growth rates between girls and boys. Girls developmental growth outpaces boys.

Graph 3: Gains for Racially Diverse Children compared to White Children, Teaching Strategies Gold (n=2226)



Reducing The Gap: Minnesota's Expansion Of Early Head Start

Every year about 10% of 4 year olds enter Head Start with significant, undiagnosed developmental delays that needed earlier intervention. Early Head Start was designed to address at-risk families who need early support to:

- ensure healthy prenatal outcomes for pregnant women,
- improve the social and emotional development of infants and toddlers, and
- foster parent/child relationships toward healthy family functioning.

Across Minnesota, Head Start programs are shifting services to expand Early Head Start, which offers families services prenatally to age 3. Early Head Start enrollment has increased from just 518 slots in 2000 to 2256 slots in 2015.

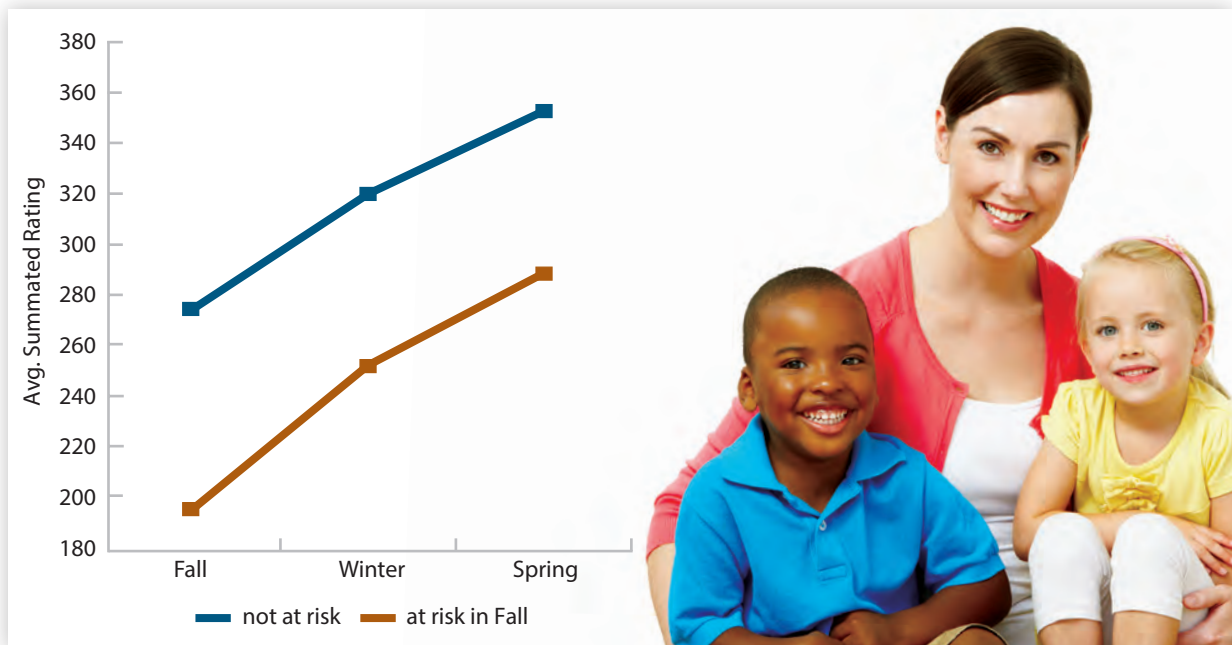
In 2015, the Federal Government announced \$6.2 million in new federal grants to Minnesota Head Start programs to expand Early Head Start in partnership with licensed child care. In the coming year this means the comprehensive, family-focused approach of Early Head Start will reach an additional 435 children served in child care homes and centers throughout Minnesota.

Early Identification of Children At Risk of Missing Kindergarten Benchmarks

Using multiple years of Head Start children’s outcomes data, a prediction model has been developed to determine the children who are most at risk of not meeting the kindergarten benchmarks based on their Fall or Winter assessment scores. The prediction model takes into account a child’s literacy and math scores in the Fall or Winter given their age, gender, race and English-Language status. Teachers are given the names of children in their classrooms whose Fall and Winter scores put them at risk of lower developmental growth so they can plan to offer more individualized supports for these children.

Graph 4 demonstrates the developmental gains of children identified at risk for not making Spring targets and the growth of children who were not a risk. Education staff indicate this early identification process helps teachers confirm the children who need more support and special interventions, and has resulted in some children out-performing these early expectations.

Graph 4: Gains for Children Identified At-Risk and not At-Risk based on Fall Assessments, Teaching Strategies Gold (n=2226)



For more information about this analysis of Minnesota Head Start data, please contact:

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