



# Demonstrating Results

## Educare Prepares Young Children for Success

Executive Summary  
December 2017



## Comprehensive Evaluation of Educare's Effectiveness

Educare advances high-quality early education practices and the policies that support them. Educare's comprehensive model is grounded in research from early childhood development, education and social work, and is implemented in a coast-to-coast network of early childhood schools. Educare develops and tests innovative practices and shares that knowledge with early childhood providers across the country. Educare also brings together policymakers, business leaders and other champions to call for more efficient use of existing resources and increased investments in early learning.

Educare schools serve children ages 6 weeks to 5 years from financially challenged families. The research-based program offers full-day, full-year services, classrooms that maintain low child-staff

ratios and small class sizes. Each Educare school is a Head Start and Early Head Start program. State child care and local education dollars also support programming, and private philanthropic dollars fund innovative features.

Researchers from the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and evaluators at each Educare school assess child and family outcomes, staff practices, and classroom and program quality.

This report summarizes data from the 2014–2015 school year, collected from 20 schools and more than 2,700 children and families. Longitudinal findings are also included. For more information about Educare results and citations for related research, see the full edition of *Demonstrating Results* at [educareschools.org](http://educareschools.org).

**Research shows that when children leave Educare for elementary school, the majority are academically, socially and emotionally prepared for kindergarten.**

## Educare Serves Diverse Young Children and Families Across the Country

- Twenty-three Educare schools are located in urban, suburban and rural communities.
- Nearly 90% of Educare students are from minority backgrounds, and about 1 in 3 are dual-language learners.
- Educare families report having fewer resources and encountering more daily financial challenges and substantial life stressors than higher-income families.

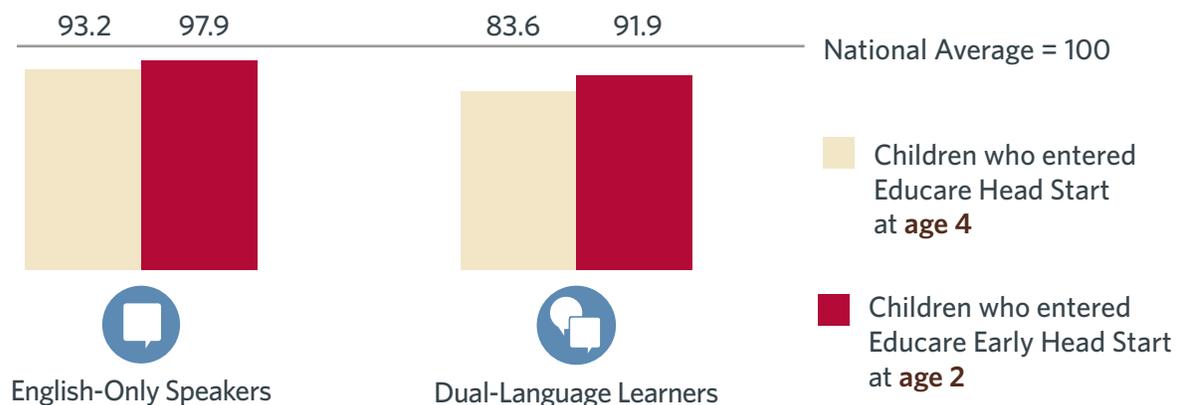
## Educare’s High-Quality Program Narrows the Achievement Gap

Educare schools work intensively to prepare children and their families for elementary school. The

majority of Educare students enter kindergarten exhibiting average or above average school readiness and social-emotional skills.

- Educare places a strong emphasis on parent engagement. The majority of Educare parents report engaging with their children at least three times a week in activities like talking to them about their day at Educare, teaching them letters or numbers and reading to them.
- Educare students, including dual-language learners, outperform low-income peers on vocabulary assessments.
- Children who enter Educare at younger ages have higher levels of receptive vocabulary skills at kindergarten entry than children who start Educare later (Figure 1).
- Dual-language learners benefit even more from earlier entry and longer involvement in Educare, demonstrating stronger gains in English-language ability.
- Educare’s intentional focus on building children’s social-emotional skills before age 3 and continuing through age 5 works. (Figure 2).

Overall, children who enroll in Educare earlier have stronger vocabulary skills compared to children who enroll later.



**Figure 1** | Language scores at age 5 by entry age in Educare and home language, 2007–2013 (N=3,542 English-only speakers and N=1,492 dual-language learners). Vocabulary measured the spring before kindergarten entry using the *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, Fourth Edition*.

## Educare's intentional focus on building children's social-emotional skills before age 3 and continuing through age 5 works.



More time in Educare is associated with higher ratings of social-emotional skills among most children, including teacher-rated self-control and initiative.



Dual-language learners enrolled in Educare longer receive higher ratings at kindergarten entry and demonstrate stronger gains over time on teacher ratings of social-emotional skills compared to their English-only peers who spent the same amount of time in Educare.



Children in Educare demonstrate better self-control than the majority of their same-age peers at kindergarten entry.

**Figure 2** | Findings from social-emotional assessments completed in fall and spring 2007-2013 for Educare children ages 1 to 5 (N=3,542 English-only speakers and N=1,492 dual-language learners). Teacher-rated social-emotional student competencies measured using the *Devereux Early Childhood Assessment*.

High-quality classroom environments and teacher-child interactions are related to the growth of young learners' language, vocabulary, early math and social skills.

- Educare classroom quality, which contributes to positive student outcomes, consistently exceeds that of classrooms in other national studies.
- Educare rates higher than other national early childhood providers on measures of classroom climate, routines and procedures, as well as how teachers promote positive cognitive and language development.

## Educare Graduates Succeed in Elementary School

Two Educare schools are conducting studies to track and monitor the progress of children and families after they leave Educare and enter elementary school.

- On average, Educare Chicago graduates' vocabulary and social-emotional skills don't fade out in elementary school.
- A small sample of students who attended Educare Omaha for at least two years had significantly higher average state reading and math assessment scores in elementary school compared to other low-income students in the same school district and grade levels.

## Educare Continues to Evaluate Its Work and Share Results

Educare is committed to conducting research and using the results to improve practices not only in our own schools but also in programs serving vulnerable young children and families across the country.

Additional studies are underway, including a multischool, coordinated follow-up study and a randomized control study of the Educare model. Educare's *National Research Agenda for Early Education* aims to catalyze new research that builds a national body of evidence about effective early education practices.

For more information about Educare and its research agenda, visit [educareschools.org](http://educareschools.org).



Please direct questions about Educare research to Tony Raden, senior vice president, research and policy initiatives ([araden@theounce.org](mailto:araden@theounce.org)), or Amanda Stein, director, research and evaluation ([astein@theounce.org](mailto:astein@theounce.org)), at the Ounce of Prevention Fund.

Suggested citation:  
Stein, A., Simon, N., and Britten, J. (2017). "Demonstrating Results: Educare Prepares Young Children for Success. Executive Summary." Ounce of Prevention Fund.

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