



2007-2008

Outcomes for  
Snohomish County  
Early Childhood Education & Assistance Program



Making a Difference for  
Children and Families

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## Outcomes for Snohomish County Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program

**S**nohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon has identified Early Learning as a strategy to break the cycle of poverty and address its root causes. He describes ECEAP as “an important service that gives children a better start in life and parents the tools they need to raise healthier children.” Snohomish County ECEAP served more than 900 children and families at 18 sites in Snohomish and Skagit Counties last year, providing a comprehensive preschool program integrating education, family support and health services. This summary attests to the importance and vitality of this program.



Our program includes these curricula:

- *Creative Curriculum* provides high quality, emergent curriculum that is both developmentally appropriate and strength-based.
- *Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)* is a comprehensive, child-centered assessment designed to promote resiliency in young children by strengthening protective factors including attachment, initiative, and self-control, which in turn, typically leads to a reduction in behavioral concerns.
- *Second Step Violence Prevention Curriculum* is designed to reduce aggressive behavior and increase social competence in children.
- *Talking About Touching Curriculum* teaches basic rules and skills for protective action in a variety of dangerous situations (car, traffic and fire safety lessons).

# Social-Emotional Skills

The Devereux Early Childhood Assessment Program (DECA) is a strength-based, family-inclusive, social-emotional assessment and planning tool. DECA is designed to promote resiliency in young children by strengthening protective factors including attachment, initiative and self-control and by reducing behavioral concerns (i.e. hurt others physically/emotionally, destroy property, show disrespect).

## **DECA Definitions**

**Resiliency** is the ability to recover from or adjust to misfortune or change.

**Protective Factors** are characteristics or processes that help children offset or balance the effects of risk and adversity.

**Initiative** is a child's ability to use independent thought and action to meet his or her needs.

**Self-Control** is a child's ability to experience and express a range of feelings using words and actions that society considers appropriate.

**Attachment** is the mutual, strong and long-lasting relationships between a child and significant adults.

The comprehensive nature of the DECA tool supports parents and teachers in identifying priorities and planning to strengthen protective factors, both at school and at home. DECA consists of four components: assessment, classroom strategies, working with families and continuous follow-up.

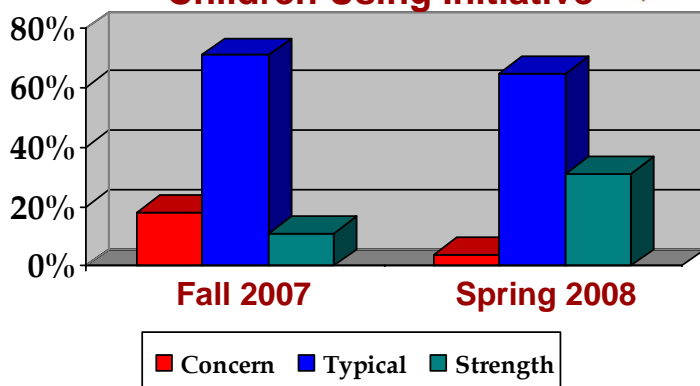


In addition to being an exceptional tool for designing curriculum and classroom environments, the assessment component of the DECA Program is especially useful as an outcome measure related to children's social and emotional health. By comparing changes over time for an individual child, or for an entire group of children, DECA can evaluate the effectiveness of primary prevention and/or early intervention efforts. DECA results from the 2007-2008 school year indicate significant progress in strengthening protective factors and in reducing behavioral concerns.



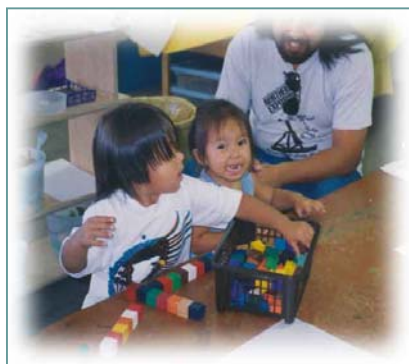
# Social-Emotional Skills

**Percent of ECEAP Children Using Initiative** 

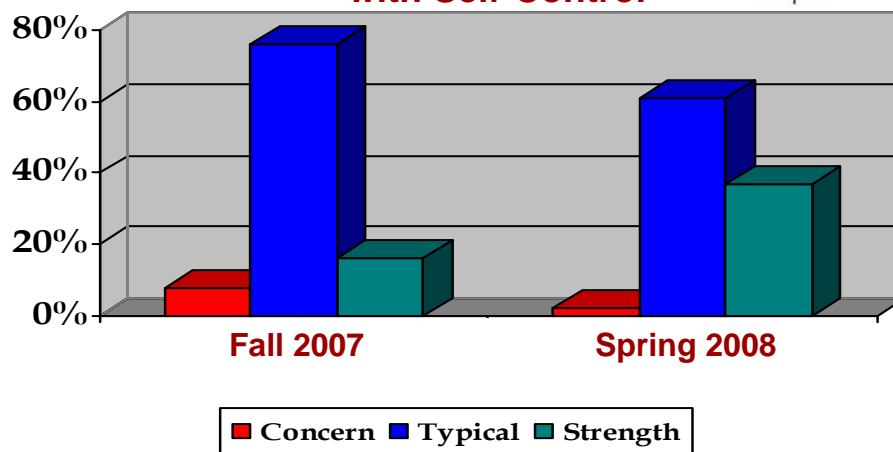


During the 2007-2008 school year:

- The number of children with serious concerns in Initiative was reduced from 18% of ECEAP children to 4%.
- The number of children with typical levels of Initiative is reduced as many of them moved to the strength category.
- The number of children exhibiting strength in Initiative increased from 11% to 31%.



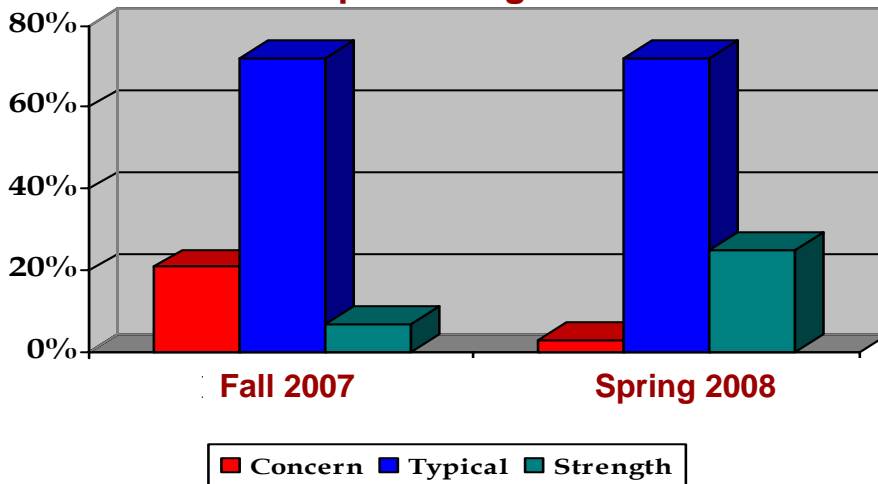
**Percent of ECEAP Children with Self-Control** 



During the 2007-2008 school year:

- The number of children with serious concerns in Self-Control was reduced from 8% of ECEAP children to 2%.
- The number of children with typical levels of Self-Control was reduced as many of them moved to the strength category.
- The number of children exhibiting strength in Self-Control increased from 16% to 37%.

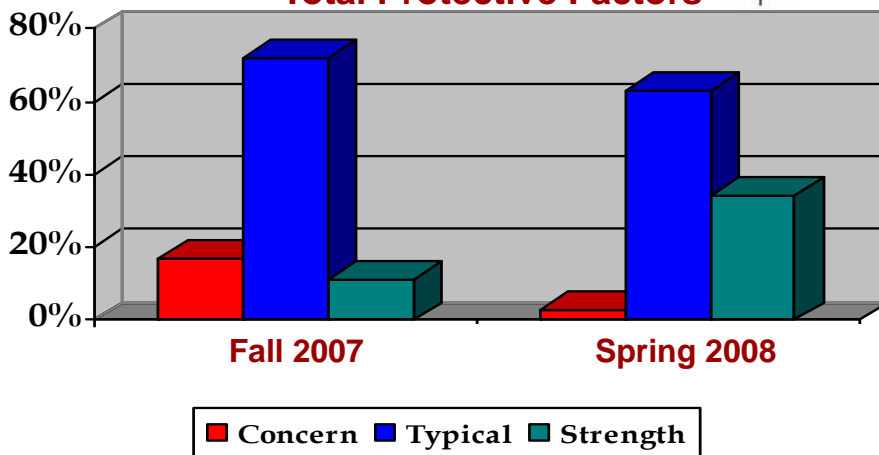
## Percent of ECEAP Children Experiencing Attachment



During the 2007-2008 school year:

- The number of ECEAP children with serious concerns in Attachment was reduced from 21 percent to 3 percent.
- The number of children with typical levels of Attachment stayed the same as many of them moved to the strength category and many from the concerns category moved into typical.
- The number of children exhibiting strength in Attachment increased from 7 percent to 25 percent.

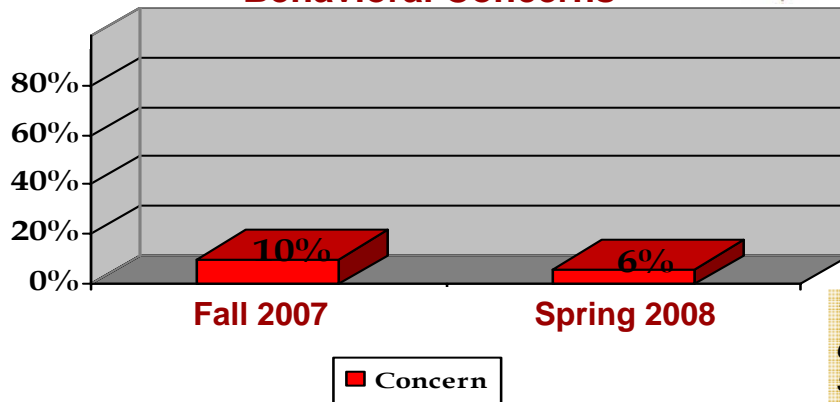
## DECA Total Protective Factors



During the 2007-2008 school year:

- The number of ECEAP children whose total Protective Factors were rated as a concern was reduced from 17 percent to 3 percent.
- The number of children with typical levels was reduced as many of them moved into the strength category.
- The number of children whose total Protective Factors were rated as strength increased from 11 percent to 34 percent.

## Percent of ECEAP Children with Behavioral Concerns



During the 2007-2008 school year, the number of ECEAP children with significant behavioral concerns was reduced from 10 percent (77 children) to 6 percent (50 children).

**This is important** because preschool children with well-developed emotional skills have a strong foundation for the development of positive social relationships, are more ready for kindergarten and typically have greater success in school.

## Health and Nutrition

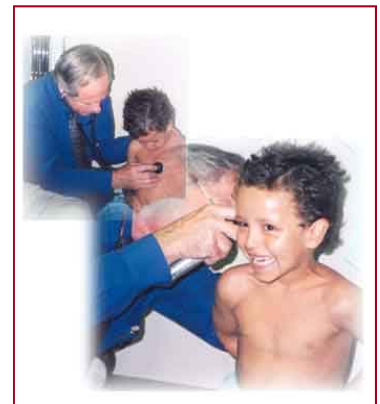
Health and nutrition services are also critical components of the comprehensive services we provide children and families.

**Health:** More than 95 percent of all children enrolled in ECEAP were fully immunized or exempt from immunizations and 96 percent of children received medical and dental exams.

**This is important** because families with a medical and dental "home" are more likely to receive prompt treatment which directly impacts time missed from school and work.

**Basic Food Nutrition and Education Program (BFNEP):** Focusing on healthy eating habits, BFNEP provides three different activities to help families develop wise nutritional choices. *Families Eating and Sharing Together (FEAST)* encourages a sit down meal with the family, *Community Homemade Options for Wellness (CHOW)* provides an opportunity for parents to create nutritionally sound cookbooks, and *Children's Home to School Project (CHOMP)* are activities families can use at home.

- FEAST was implemented at 15 ECEAP sites and more than 645 families participated.
- CHOW was implemented at four sites and more than 440 families received cookbooks.
- CHOMP projects were used at eight sites and more than 2,200 activity kits were distributed.



**This is important** because proper nutrition directly affects learning, and the development of healthy eating habits as a child typically results in adults making healthy nutritional choices.

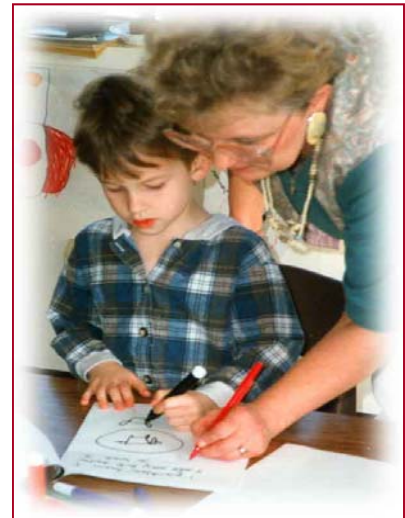
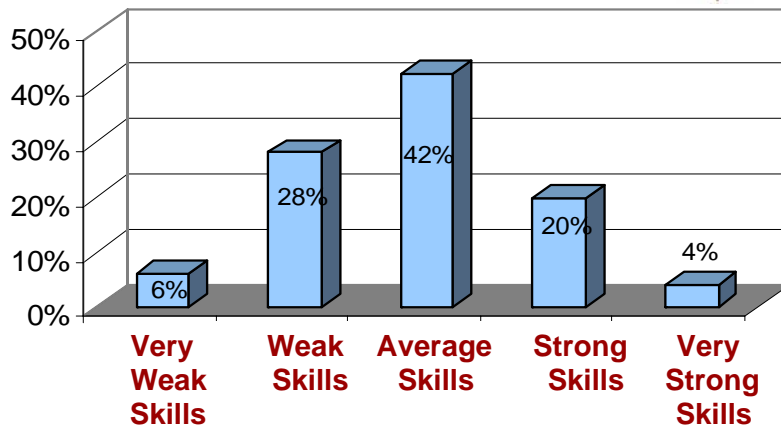
# Literacy Skills



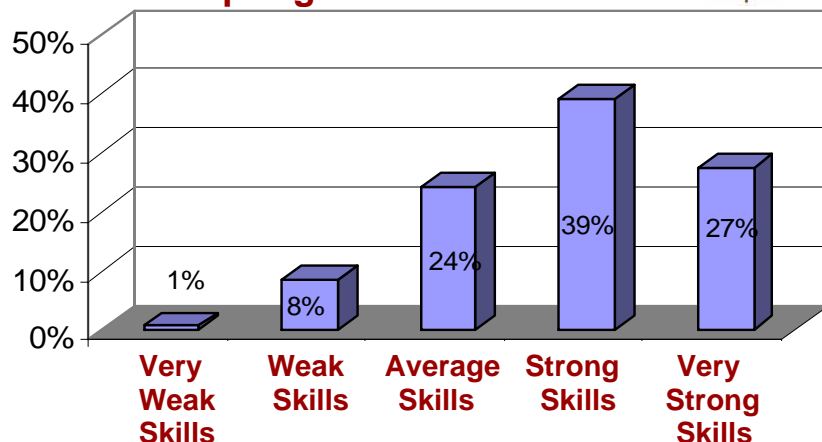
Snohomish County ECEAP programs used *Get Ready to Read! (GRTR!)*, a 20-item screening tool that helps parents and professionals understand where a preschool-age child is on the road to developing key early literacy skills. Based on the validity and reliability research associated with *GRTR!*, the total score on the screening tool at the end of pre-kindergarten is a very good predictor of how well a child will do in the early grades, particularly in terms of reading success. 571 ECEAP children were screened with *GRTR!* in the fall of 2007 and again in the spring of 2008. These children showed significant progress in developing early literacy skills, with nearly two-thirds of children falling into either the “strong skills” or “very strong skills” categories in Spring 2008.

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### Fall 2007 GRTR! Scores



### Spring 2008 GRTR! Scores



***This is important*** because children with strong early literacy skills are more likely to experience success in their early years of school.

# Family Support

Snohomish County ECEAP offers a variety of programs and services dedicated to supporting the families of children in the program. Family support staff work, in partnership with families, to identify family strengths and needs, set goals/follow-up on progress toward those goals, access resources and coordinate transitions between ECEAP, the home and childcare/ kindergarten. **During the 2007–2008 school year, 5,494 professional referrals were provided to ECEAP families, helping them progress toward their goals and obtain services from appropriate community resources.**



Parent education is another key component of ECEAP's Family Support Services. Our programs strive to offer parents educational opportunities based upon their expressed interests and needs. In 2007–2008, topics included child development, safety, child guidance, kindergarten readiness, English language learners, leadership and advocacy, communication skills. More than 2,800 parents attended the Parent Education Activities offered by the various Snohomish County ECEAP sites.

***This is important** because families who access community resources and develop skills are more likely to be able to meet the needs of their children and achieve their personal, economic and career goals.*



## Conclusion



Snohomish County's future prosperity and security begins with the well-being of our children. Research increasingly demonstrates that investing in high-quality pre-kindergarten provides a wide array of significant benefits to children, families and society as a whole. The findings of neuroscience, behavioral science and economics all agree that prevention is more effective and less costly than remediation with earlier assistance being far better than later.

This outcomes report demonstrates Snohomish County ECEAP is truly making a difference for children and families.

For more information, contact Joe Varano, ECEAP Supervisor, at 425-388-7251 or [joe.varano@snoco.org](mailto:joe.varano@snoco.org).



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