

# Kindergarten Readiness Over Multiple Years at Educare Lincoln

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## Background

Educare Lincoln is one of 25 Educare programs in the United States designed to give children and families in poverty an improved opportunity for success in school and life. Educare's model is designed to support at-risk families as they face unique challenges and barriers by providing high quality education and care that encourages strong family-school partnerships. Educare's mission is to ensure these children arrive to Kindergarten ready to learn and engage on par with their more economically advantaged peers.



## Purpose

The purpose of this presentation is to examine kindergarten-bound preschoolers' school readiness over seven years at Educare Lincoln. Kindergarten-bound children include those who are eligible to enter kindergarten the following fall.

This poster will present multiple years' data including language development, executive functioning, and social emotional indices for k-bound children. Children achieving normative scores the spring prior to kindergarten entrance are considered "ready for school."

This poster will report the total percentage of children meeting normative standards by:

- ❖ Developmental Domain
- ❖ Academic Year.

## Research Questions

**Question 1:** Are k-bound children attending Educare Lincoln on track in their social-emotional development?

**Question 2:** Are k-bound children attending Educare Lincoln on track in their language development?

**Question 3:** Are k-bound children attending Educare Lincoln on track in their executive function development?

## Methods

### Participants

Our population includes approximately 50 kindergarten-bound children each year over the span of seven years. These children have attended Educare Lincoln, a full-day, full-year intervention program designed to create opportunities for low-income children before they reach kindergarten age.

N = 304

### Assessments

❑ **The Devereux Early Childhood Assessment for Preschoolers, Second Addition (DECA-P2)** (LeBuffe & Naglieri, 1999): A measure of protective factors and risk factors completed by teachers to assess social-emotional development

❑ **Preschool Language Scale, Fifth Addition (PLS-5)** (Zimmerman, Steiner, & Pond, 2011): A measure of auditory comprehension skills

❑ **Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, Fifth Addition (PPVT-IV)** (Dunn & Dunn, 2007): A measure of receptive language skills

❑ **Minnesota Executive Function Scale (MEFS):** A direct behavioral measure of executive function skills

\*Only total protective factors (TPF) and behavioral concerns (BC) are represented in this poster. The normative score for TPF is 41 and higher. The normative score for BC is 59 and lower.

All other measures share a normative score of 100.

### Procedures

This study used secondary data from Lincoln Educare Evaluation. Individual child assessment data were collected in a joint effort between the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) Local Evaluation Partner (LEP) and Speech Language and Pathology (SLP) teams from 2015 to 2020. Data were collected both fall and spring each year for Educare evaluation purposes. We will examine spring assessment scores from children's final year attending Educare Lincoln. The data collected for the year of 2021-2022 is partial data for both PPVT-IV and MEFS.

## Results

### Question 1: Are k-bound children attending Educare Lincoln on track in their social-emotional development?

**TOTAL PROTECTIVE FACTORS:** From 2015 through 2022, 92% (N = 304) of children achieved normative scores on DECA-P2 Total Protective Factors. Across all years, the mean standard DECA-P2 Total Protective Factors score was 52.84 (N = 304; SD = 6.92). The mean standard DECA-P2 Total Protective Factors scores by cohort are as follows:

	DECA-P2-Total Protective Factors		
	Sample	M	SD
2015-16	n = 41	50.00	7.48
2016-17	n = 31	54.97	10.28
2017-18	n = 44	51.75	8.89
2018-19	n = 50	53.04	11.39
2019-20	n = 47	49.85	8.78
2020-21	n = 50	53.86	7.63
2021-22	n = 41	57.17	6.92

**BEHAVIOR CONCERNS:** From 2015 through 2022, 74% (N = 304) of children achieved positive normative scores on DECA-P2 Behavior Concerns. Across all years, the mean standard DECA-P2 Behavior Concerns score was 50.5 (N = 304; SD = 9.86); lower scores represent fewer Behavior Concerns. The mean standard DECA-P2 Behavior Concerns scores by cohort are as follows:

	DECA-P2-Behavior Concerns		
	Sample	M	SD
2015-16	n = 41	49.68	10.14
2016-17	n = 31	54.77	10.49
2017-18	n = 44	50.66	9.87
2018-19	n = 50	47.76	10.73
2019-20	n = 47	53.45	10.30
2020-21	n = 50	49.14	8.09
2021-22	n = 41	49.58	8.06

### Question 2: Are k-bound children attending Educare Lincoln on track in their language development?

From 2015 through 2022, 43.4% (N = 244) of children achieved normative scores on the PPVT-IV. Across all years, the mean standard PPVT-IV scores were 95.56 (N = 244, SD = 14.49). The mean standard PPVT-IV scores for each cohort were as follows:

	PPVT		
	Sample	M	SD
2015-16	n = 40	98.75	12.99
2016-17	n = 29	100.21	11.27
2017-18	n = 41	96.12	17.44
2018-19	n = 41	92.22	13.96
2019-20	NA	NA	NA
2020-21	n = 47	94.72	11.59
2021-22	n = 44	93.45	17.06

## Results Cont'd

From 2015 through 2021, 38.2% (N = 165) of children achieved normative scores on the PLS-5. Across all years, the mean standard PLS-5 score was 94.59 (N=165; SD=13.33). The mean standard PLS-5 scores for each cohort were as follows:

	Sample	*PLS-5	
		M	SD
2015-16	n = 17	98.88	11.10
2016-17	n = 25	98.72	9.92
2017-18	n = 42	95.93	13.69
2018-19	n = 35	93.40	15.50
2019-20	NA	NA	NA
2020-21	n = 46	90.46	12.64
2021-22	n = N/A	N/A	N/A

\*PLS scores include all assessments administered to K-bound children in English and Spanish.

### Question 3: Are k-bound children attending Educare Lincoln on track in their executive function development?

From 2016 through 2022, 33.5% (N = 179) of children achieved normative scores on the MEFS. Across all years, the mean standard MEFS scores were 95.78 (n = 151; SD = 9.89). The mean standard MEFS scores by cohort are as follows:

	Sample	MEFS	
		M	SD
2015-16	NA	NA	NA
2016-17	n = 27	98.33	12.62
2017-18	n = 31	97.11	10.33
2018-19	n = 50	94.75	9.62
2019-20	NA	NA	NA
2020-21	n = 43	94.42	7.58
2021-22	n = 28	97.07	7.63

## Implications for Policy & Practice

- ❖ Policies are needed that support early childhood programs that target at-risk populations. These policies should target needs including funding, high-quality education, and continued professional development for educators.
- ❖ Early childhood programs should be evaluated regularly to determine the quality and effectiveness of their programming in relationship to children's social-emotional development, language development, and executive functioning skills.