

# Ounce of Prevention Fund (The Ounce)

## Ounce Professional Development Initiative (PDI)

### WAS THE OUNCE PDI EFFECTIVE IN ADVANCING THE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND DISPOSITIONS OF COMMUNITY-BASED EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS AND LEARNERS?

## Project Overview

### THE INTERVENTION

#### THE PROBLEM: What Challenge Did the Program Try to Address?

The Ounce Professional Development Initiative (PDI)<sup>1</sup> addressed constraints on instructional improvement within the early childhood sector. A summary of the key challenges PDI aimed to combat can be found below.

- Education levels among early childhood educators are the lowest across sectors of American schooling.
- Teacher turnover, burnout, depression, and attrition are endemic to community-based early childhood education (ECE) centers, especially centers located in under-served and minority communities.
- Head Start and allied state and local funding regimes have presented complex regulatory requirements and institutional affiliations, leading to professional cultures of compliance and risk-aversion.

#### THE APPROACH: What Strategies Did the Program Employ?

The Ounce of Prevention Fund (the Ounce) was awarded a 3-year i3 development grant from 2011–2014 to accelerate the design of an embedded professional development (PD) framework for community-based urban ECE centers. To help address these challenges discussed above, the Ounce created the Ounce PDI which targeted four representative community-based ECE centers in Chicago. The PDI aimed to build ECE leaders' systemic support of birth-to-five teachers' capacity to design and deliver standards-aligned, data-driven instruction. The PDI engaged community-based center leaders, teachers, and coaches in parallel learning cycles simultaneously advancing their knowledge, skills, and dispositions to improve organizational systems, instructional planning and implementation, fidelity in the delivery of PD, and children's early achievement.

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<sup>1</sup> The Ounce of Prevention Fund received an i3 development grant supported by the U.S. Department of Education's Investing in Innovation program through Grant Number U411C110401. Development grants provide funding to support the development or testing of novel or substantially more effective practices that address widely shared education challenges. All i3 grantees are required to conduct rigorous evaluations of their projects. The quality of evidence required to demonstrate a project's effectiveness depends on a project's level of scale or grant type.

## THE OUNCE MODEL

- **PDI COACHES.** Coaches provided reflective supervision and engagement in a community practice of a weekly six-hour day (training, content development, etc.) over a one-month period.
- **PD FOR LEADERS.** The Ounce facilitated PD for direct supervisors and center leaders. This included bimonthly three-hour training lab, one-hour monthly on-site leadership team consultation, one-hour monthly on-site direct supervisor consultation, and 1.5 hour bimonthly reflective practice group.
- **PD AND LEARNING LABS FOR TEACHERS.** PDI coaches co-constructed content for learning labs and RPGs for teachers. This was a two-part cycle of a bimonthly training lab, lesson planning meeting, planning conversation, observation, reflecting conversation, and a reflective practice group.

## Summary of Results

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### IMPACT EVALUATION FINDINGS: WAS THE OUNCE PDI EFFECTIVE IN IMPROVING KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND DISPOSITIONS OF COMMUNITY-BASED EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS, LEADERS, AND DIRECT SUPERVISORS?

**THE PDI MODEL WAS EFFECTIVE** in supporting instructional practice that acknowledges that the best learning occurs within the context of supportive relationships. The study, which focused on the PDI's effect on 1) Leader Learning and Development, 2) Teacher Learning and Development, and 3) Child Learning and Development, had the following key findings in each area:

- **LEADER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT.** PDI leader learning cycles were successful in supporting the majority of center leaders to critically examine their current leadership conceptions and grapple with a new set of leadership principles.
- **TEACHER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT.** The evidence suggests that the PDI helped the teachers develop a more accurate, coherent, and comprehensive pedagogical narrative
- **CHILD LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT.** There were no significant intervention effects on children for the PDI model. However, a comparative time-series analysis for a subgroup of children yielded a PDI effect in children's average growth rates in social emotional learning and development.

Please see Appendices B and C for information about the evaluation's design and the quality of the evidence, respectively.

### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

A few program features that contributed to the efficacy of the PDI and recommendations for future implementations of the PDI design are discussed below:

- **SYNERGIES:** There was an exceptional synergy between the curricular focus of the PDI and the two-month cycle of learning labs, on-site consultations, and RPGs for leaders.
- **EMBEDDEDNESS:** The embeddedness of leader learning within the teaching learning cycles created weekly opportunities for leaders to translate new principles into instructional observation, stretch their comfort zones, and receive regular feedback from their coaches.
- **CROSS-SITE LEARNING LABS AND RPGs:** For leaders whose daily professional experiences were often limited to their center buildings, the cross-site learning labs and RPGs provided a venue for collaborative learning and professional encouragement.
- **INTENSIVE PREPARATION:** Center directors suggested that an intensive period of orientation and PD prior to engaging teacher teams would advance the implementation of PDI with teachers.

## For More Information

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### Evaluation Reports

[Final Evaluation Report \(Full Report\)](#) (Center for Urban Education Leadership, March 2016)<sup>2</sup>

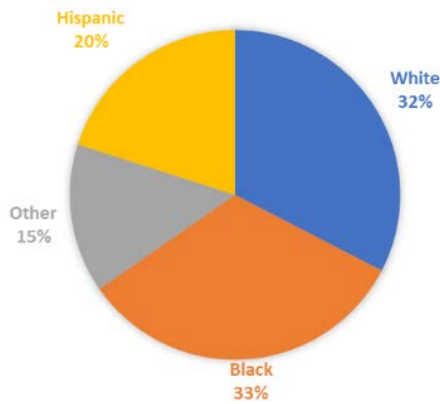
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<sup>2</sup> The information and data for this result summary was collected from the most recent reports as of 01/23/2020: "The Ounce PDI Study: Development Evaluation of a Job-Embedded Professional Development Initiative for Early Childhood Professionals," Center for Urban Education Leadership, 2016. Retrieved from <https://www.theounce.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Ounce-i3-UIC-Evaluation-Report.pdf>

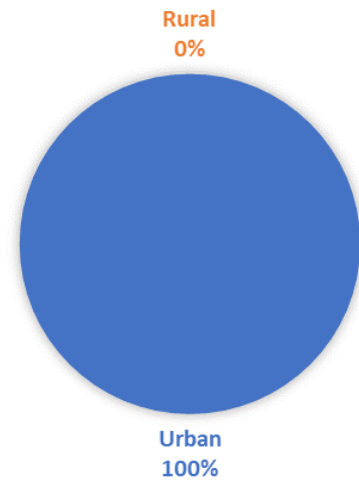
## Appendix A: Students Served by the Project<sup>3</sup>

**GRADE(S)**  
6 weeks – 5.5 years

**GENDER**



**COMMUNITY**



**HIGH-NEED STUDENTS<sup>i</sup>**

Free/Reduced Price Lunch	English Learners	Students with Disabilities
Not Reported/Not Applicable	Not Reported/Not Applicable	Not Reported/Not Applicable

<sup>3</sup>These data reflect the entire student population served by the intervention, not just the evaluation sample used in the impact study.

## Appendix B: Impact Evaluation Methodology<sup>4</sup>

### RESEARCH DESIGN

<b>Design:</b>	Quasi-experimental design
<b>Approach:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The impact of PDI's implementation was assessed across two levels: the quality of instruction of intervention teachers, and the learning and development of students attending intervention centers.</li> <li>The study tested the impacts for both children (as measured by the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment) and classrooms examined (as measured using the CLASS assessment) from the baseline for treatment and comparison conditions.</li> </ul>
<b>Study Length:</b>	Three years

### DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

<b>Study Setting</b>	Four Ounce PDI centers, 16 non-PDI comparison centers
<b>Final Sample Sizes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Intervention Group</i>: 272 children</li> <li><i>Comparison Group</i>: 1,088 children<sup>5</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Intervention Group Characteristics By PDI Intervention Center</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rogers Park: 41.1% Female, 0.9% White, 36.6% African American, 57.1% Hispanic, 50% Spanish as Primary Language</li> <li>Near South Loop: 65% Female, 5% White, 81.7% African American, 10% Asian</li> <li>Ashburn Center A: 34.8% Female, 78.3% African American, 13% Hispanic, 8.7% Spanish as Primary Language</li> <li>Ashburn Center B: 35.7% Female, 26.2% African American, 69% Hispanic, 52.4% Spanish as Primary Language</li> </ul>
<b>Comparison Group Characteristics Combined Chicago Head Start Centers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>47.3% Female, 1.8% White, 50.6% African American, 41.5% Hispanic, 2.5% Asian, 28.5% Spanish as Primary Language</li> </ul>
<b>Data Sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observation-based assessments</li> <li>Surveys ("Stages of Change" Questionnaire, center staff background survey)</li> <li>Interviews (Baseline individual and group interviews with teachers and center leaders, annual follow-up group interviews with center teachers, annual follow-up individual interviews with center leaders, annual interviews with PDI coaches)</li> </ul>
<b>Key Measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)</li> <li>Teaching Strategies GOLD</li> <li>Bracken School Readiness Assessment – Third Edition (BSRA-3)</li> </ul>

<sup>4</sup> These data reflect only the evaluation sample in the impact study, not the entire population served.

<sup>5</sup> Final sample sizes were found on the i3 website profile, which is no longer available online.

## Appendix C: Quality of the Evidence

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### WHAT WORKS CLEARINGHOUSE REVIEW<sup>ii</sup>

STUDY	RATING
Not reviewed as of 01/23/2020	N/A

### EVIDENCE FOR ESSA REVIEW<sup>iii</sup>

STUDY	RATING
Not reviewed as of 01/23/2020	N/A

### NATIONAL CENTER ON INTENSIVE INTERVENTIONS REVIEW<sup>iv</sup>

STUDY	RATING
Not reviewed as of 01/23/2020	N/A

# Investing in Innovation (i3) Grantee Results Summary

Development, 2012-2015

The [\*Investing in Innovation Fund \(i3\)\*](#), established under section 14007 of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, is a Federal discretionary grant program at the U.S. Department of Education within the Office of Innovation and Improvement. i3 grants help schools and local education agencies work in partnership with the private sector and the philanthropic community to develop and expand innovative practices that improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, and/or increase college enrollment and completion rates for high-need students.

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<sup>i</sup> "High-need student" refers to a student at risk of academic failure or otherwise in need of special assistance and support, such as students who are living in poverty, attend high-minority schools, are far below grade level, who have left school before receiving a regular high school diploma, at risk of not graduating with a diploma on time, who are homeless, in foster care, have been incarcerated, have disabilities, or who are English learners. For more information see: [\*Applications for New Awards; Investing in Innovation Fund-Development Grants, 81 FR 24070 \(April 25, 2016\)\*](#).

<sup>ii</sup> <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/FWW>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.evidenceforessa.org/>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://intensiveintervention.org/>